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**BUNNY BROWN
AND HIS SISTER SUE
AT CHRISTMAS TREE COVE**

BY

LAURA LEE HOPE

AUTHOR OF
THE BUNNY BROWN SERIES, THE BOBBSEY
TWINS SERIES, THE OUTDOOR GIRLS
SERIES, THE SIX LITTLE BUNKERS
SERIES, THE MAKE-BELIEVE
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Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue at Christmas Tree Cove



**MRS. SLATER AND SUE
WATCH BUNNY AND
HARRY BRING IN THE
BOX.**

*Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue at Christmas Tree Cove.
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BUNNY BROWN AND HIS SISTER SUE AT CHRISTMAS TREE COVE

CHAPTER I

THE BIG DOG

"Come on, Bunny, let's just have one more teeter-tauter!" cried Sue, dancing around on the grass of the yard. "Just one more!" and she raced over toward a board, put across a sawhorse, swaying up and down as though inviting children to have a seesaw.

"We can't teeter-tauter any more, Sue," objected Bunny Brown. "We have to go to the store for mother."

"Yes, I know we have to go; but we can go after we've had another seesaw just the same, can't we?"

Bunny Brown, who was carrying by the leather handle a black handbag his mother had given him, looked first at his sister and then at the board on the sawhorse, gently moving up and down in the summer breeze. [2]

"Come on!" cried Sue again, "and this time she danced off toward the swaying board, singing as she did so:

"Teeter-tauter
Bread and water,
First your son and
Then your daughter."

Bunny Brown stood still for a moment, looking back toward the house, out of which he and Sue had come a little while before.

"Mother told us to go to the store," said Bunny slowly.

"Yes, and we're going. I'll go with you in a minute—just as soon as I have a seesaw," said Sue. "And, besides, mother didn't say we were *not* to. If she had told us *not* to teeter-tauter I wouldn't do it, of course. But she didn't, Bunny! You know she didn't!"

"No, that's so; she didn't," agreed Bunny. "Well, I'll play it with you a little while."

"That's nice," laughed Sue. "'Cause it isn't any fun teetering and tautering all by yourself. You stay down on the ground all the while, lessen you jump yourself up, and then you don't stay—you just bump." [3]

"Yes," agreed Bunny. "I've been bumped lots of times all alone."

He was getting on the end of the seesaw, opposite that on which Sue had taken her place, when the little girl noticed that her brother still carried the small, black bag. Mother Brown called it a pocketbook, but it would have taken a larger pocket than she ever had to hold the bag. It was, however, a sort of large purse, and she had given it to Bunny Brown and his sister Sue a little while before to carry to the store.

"Put that on the bench," called Sue, when she saw that her brother had the purse, holding it by the leather handle. "You can't teeter-tauter and hold on with that in your hand."

There was a bench not far away from the seesaw—a bench under a shady tree—and Mrs. Brown often sat there with the children on warm summer afternoons and told them stories or read to them from a book. [4]

"Yes, I guess I can teeter better if I don't have this," agreed Bunny. "Hold on, Sue, I'm going to get off."

"All right, I'm ready," his sister answered. You know if you get off a seesaw without telling the boy or girl on the other end what you are going to do, somebody is going to be bumped hard. Bunny Brown didn't want that.

Sue put her fat, chubby little legs down on the ground and held herself up, while Bunny ran across the grass and laid the pocketbook on the bench. I suppose I had better call it, as Mrs. Brown did, a pocketbook, and then we shall not get mixed up. But, as I said before, you couldn't really put it in a pocket.

"Seesaw, Margery Daw!" sang Sue, as Bunny came back to play with her. "Now we'll have some fun!"

And the children did. Up and down they went on the board their father had sent up from his

boat dock for them to play with. He had also sent up the sawhorse. A sawhorse, you know, is made of wood, and, though it has legs, it can't run. It's just a sort of thin bench, and a seesaw board can easily be put across it.

[5]

Bunny Brown and his sister Sue were gaily swaying up and down on the seesaw, and, for the time, they had forgotten all about the fact that their mother had sent them to the store to pay a bill, and also to get some groceries. They had not meant to stay so long, but you know how it is when you get to seesawing.

"It's just the finest fun ever!" cried Sue.

"I'm sorry for boys and girls that ain't got any seesaws," said her brother.

"Oh, I guess a lot of boys and girls have 'em, Bunny. Daddy said so, once."

"Did he? I didn't hear him."

Up and down, up and down went the children, laughing and having a splendid time. Sue felt so happy she began to sing a little song and Bunny joined in. It was the old ditty of the Cow that Jumped Over the Moon.

"We'd better go now, Sue!" called Bunny, after a while. "We can seesaw when we get back."

"Oh, just five more times up and down!" pleaded the little girl, shaking her curls and fairly laughing out of her eyes. "Just five more!"

[6]

"All right!" agreed Bunny. "Just five—that's all!"

Again the board swayed up and down, and when Sue was just sorrowfully counting the last of the five, shouting and laughter were heard in the street in front of the Brown house.

"Oh, there's Mary Watson and Sadie West!" cried Sue.

"Yes, and Charlie Star and Harry Bentley!" added Bunny. "Come on in and have a lot of fun!" he called, as two boys and two girls came past the gate. "We can take turns seesawing."

"That'll be fun!" said Charlie.

"Can't we get another board and make another seesaw?" asked Harry. "We can't all get on that one. It'll break."

"I guess we can find another board," said Bunny. "I'll go and ask my mother."

"No!" said Sue quickly. "You'd better not, Bunny!"

"Why?" asked her brother, in surprise.

[7]

"'Cause if you go in now mother will know we didn't go to the store, and she might not like it. We'd better go now and let Charlie and Harry and Sadie and Mary have the teeter-tauter until we come back," suggested Sue. "It'll hold four, our board will, but not six."

Bunny Brown thought this over a minute.

"Yes, I guess we had better do that," he said. Then, speaking to his playmates, he added: "We have to go to the store, Charlie, Sue and I. You can play on the seesaw until we come back. And then, maybe, we can find another board, and make two teeters."

"I have a board over in my yard. I'll get that," offered Charlie, "if we can get another sawhorse."

"We'll look when we come back," suggested Sue. "Come on, Bunny."

Sue got off the seesaw, as did her brother, and their places were taken by Charlie, Harry, Mary and Sadie. Though Sue was a little younger than Bunny, she often led him when there was something to do, either in work or play. And just now there was work to do.

[8]

It was not hard work, only going to the store for their mother with the pocketbook to pay a bill at the grocer's and get some things for supper. And it was work Bunny Brown and his sister Sue liked, for often when they went to the grocer's he gave each a sweet cracker to eat on the way home.

Bunny, followed by Sue, started for the bench where the pocketbook had been left. But, before they reached it, and all of a sudden, a big yellow dog bounced into the yard from the street. It leaped the fence and stood for a moment looking at the children.

"Oh, what a dandy dog!" cried Charlie.

"Is that your dog, Splash, come back?" asked Harry, for Bunny and his sister had once owned a dog of that name. Splash had run away or been stolen in the winter and had never come back.

"No, that isn't Splash," said Bunny. "He's a nice dog, though. Here, boy!" he called.

The dog, that had come to a stop, turned suddenly on hearing himself spoken to. He gave one bound over toward the bench, and a moment later caught in his mouth the leather handle of Mrs. Brown's black pocketbook and darted away.

[9]

Over the fence he jumped, out into the street, so quickly that the children could hardly follow him with their eyes. But it was only an instant that Bunny Brown remained still, watching the dog. Then he gave a cry:

"Oh, Sue! The dog has mother's pocketbook and the money! Come on! We've got to get it away from him!"

"Oh, yes!" echoed Sue.

Bunny ran out of the yard and into the street, following the dog. Sue followed her brother. The four other children, being on the seesaw, could not move so quickly, and by the time they did get off the board, taking turns carefully, so no one would get bounced, Bunny Brown and his sister Sue were out of sight, down the street and around a corner, chasing after the dog that had snatched up their mother's pocketbook.

"We've got to get him!" cried Bunny, looking back at his sister. "Come on!"

"I am a-comin' on!" she panted, half out of breath.

[10]

The big yellow dog was in plain sight, bounding along and still holding in his mouth, as Bunny could see, the dangling pocketbook.

Suddenly the animal turned into some building, and was at once out of sight.

"Where'd he go?" asked Sue.

"Into Mr. Foswick's carpenter shop," her brother answered. "I saw him go in. We can get him easy now."

On they ran, Bunny Brown and his sister Sue. A few seconds later they stood in front of the open door of a carpenter shop built near the sidewalk. Within they could see piles of lumber and boards and heaps of sawdust and shavings. The dog was not in sight, but Bunny and Sue knew he must be somewhere in the shop. They scurried through the piles of sawdust and shavings toward the back of the shop, looking eagerly on all sides for a sight of the dog.

"Where is he?" asked Sue. "Oh, Bunny, if that pocketbook and the money are lost!"

"We'll find it!" exclaimed Bunny. "We'll make the dog give it back!"

[11]

As he spoke there was a noise at the door by which the children had entered the carpenter shop. The door was quickly slammed shut, and a key was turned. Then a harsh voice cried:

"Now I've got you! You sha'n't play tricks on me any more! I've got you locked up now!"

[12]

CHAPTER II

IN THE CARPENTER SHOP

Bunny Brown and his sister Sue were so surprised at hearing that harsh voice, and at hearing the door slammed shut and locked behind them, that they just stood and looked at each other in the carpenter shop. They forgot, for the moment, all about the big yellow dog and the pocketbook he had carried away. Then Bunny managed to find his voice and he cried:

"Who was that, Sue?"

"I—I guess it was Mr. Foswick," she answered. "I'm almost sure it was."

"Yes," agreed Bunny, "I guess it was. But what did he want to lock us in for? We didn't do anything. We just came in to get mother's pocketbook and the grocery money away from the dog."

"I p'sume he made a mistake," said Sue. "He must have thought we were the bad boys that tease him. I saw some of 'em come in once and scatter the sawdust all over. And I heard Mr. Foswick say he'd fix 'em if he caught 'em. He must have thought we was them," she added, letting her English get badly tangled in her excitement.

[13]

"I guess so," agreed Bunny. "Well, we'll tell him we aren't. Come on, Sue!"

Giving up, for the time being, their search in the carpenter shop for the strange, big yellow dog, Bunny and Sue walked back toward the front door, which had been slammed shut. And while they are seeking to make Mr. Foswick understand that he had made a mistake, and had punished the wrong children, I shall have a moment or two to tell my new readers something about the characters whose adventures I hope to relate to you in this story.

The town of Bellemere, which was on the seacoast and near a small river, was the home of Bunny Brown and his sister Sue. Their father, Walter Brown, was in the boat and fish business, owning a wharf, where he had his office. Men and boys worked for him, and one big boy, Bunker Blue, was a great friend of Bunny and his sister. In the Brown home was also Uncle Tad, an old soldier.

[14]

In the first book of this series, called "Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue," I told you many of the things that happened to the children. After that they went to Grandpa's farm, and played circus, and there are books about both those happy times. Next the children paid a visit to Aunt Lu's city home, and from there they went to Camp Rest-a-While.

In the big woods Bunny and Sue had many adventures, and they had so much fun on their auto tour that I could hardly get it all in one book.

When Mr. Brown bought a Shetland pony for the children they were delighted, and they had as much fun with it as they did in giving a show. That is the name of the book just before the present one you are reading—"Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue Giving a Show." In that volume you may learn how a stranded company of players came to Bellemere, and what happened. Bunny and Sue, as well as some of their playmates, were actors and actresses in the show, and Splash, the dog, did a trick also. But Splash had run away, or been taken away, during the winter that had just passed, and Bunny and Sue no longer had a dog. [15]

Perhaps they thought they might induce the big one that had jumped into the yard to come and live with them, after they had taken the pocketbook away from him. He was not quite the same sort of dog as Splash, but he seemed very nice. Bunny and Sue kept hoping Splash would return or be brought back, but, up to the time this story opens, that had not come about.

The show the two Brown children gave was talked about for a long time in Bellemere. Of course, Bunny and Sue had had help in giving it, and the show was also a means of helping others. Now winter had passed, spring had come and gone, and it was early summer. Bunny and Sue had been playing in the yard before going to the store for their mother when the strange dog had sprung over the fence, snatched up the pocketbook, and had run off with it, darting into the carpenter shop. [16]

"I don't see anything of him," said Sue, as she and Bunny made their way amid the piles of boards and lumber and over piles of sawdust and shavings toward the door.

"You don't see anything of who?" asked Bunny. "Mr. Foswick or the big dog?"

"The dog," answered Sue. "I couldn't see Mr. Foswick, 'cause he's outside. He shut the door on us."

"Yes," agreed Bunny, "so he did. Well, maybe we can open it."

But, alas! when Bunny and Sue tried the door they found it locked tight. Bunny had been afraid of that, for he thought he had heard a key turned in the lock. But he had not wanted to say anything to Sue until he made sure.

Rattle and pull at the door as the children did, and turn the knob, which they also did several times, the door remained shut.

"We—we're locked in!" said Sue in a sort of gasping voice, looking at Bunny.

"Yes," agreed her brother, and he tried to speak cheerfully, for he was a year older than Sue, and, besides, boys oughtn't to be frightened as easily as girls, Bunny thought. "But I guess we can get out," Bunny went on. "Mr. Foswick thinks we're some of the bad boys that bother him. We'll just yell and tell him we aren't." [17]

"All right—you yell," suggested Sue.

So Bunny shouted as loudly as he could:

"Mr. Foswick! We didn't do anything! We didn't scatter your sawdust! You locked us in by mistake! Let us out, please!"

Then he waited and listened, and so did Sue. There was no answer.

"I guess you didn't yell loud enough," said Sue. "Try again, Bunny."

Bunny did so. Once more he shouted through the closed door, or at least at the closed door. He shouted loudly, hoping the carpenter would hear him and open the door.

"Mr. Foswick! We didn't do anything!" yelled Bunny Brown.

Still there was silence. No one came to let the children out.

"I guess we'd better both yell," suggested Sue. "You can shout louder than I can, Bunny, but it isn't loud enough. We've both got to yell." [18]

"Yes, I better guess we had," agreed the small boy.

Standing close to one another near the door, they lifted their voices in a shout, saying:

"Mr. Foswick! Mr. Foswick! *We—didn't—do—anything!*"

They called this several times, but no answer came to them.

"I guess he's gone away," said Sue, after a bit.

"Yes, I guess so," agreed Bunny. "Well, we've got to get out by ourselves, then."

"How can we?" his sister wanted to know. "The door's locked, and we can't break it down. It's a big door, Bunny."

"Yes, I know it is," he answered. "But there's windows. I'll open a window and we can get out of one of them. They aren't high from the ground. We got out of a window once when Bunker Blue, by mistake, locked us in the shed on the dock, and we can get out a window now." [19]

"Oh, I hope we can!" cried Sue. "And can we get the dog out of the window, too, Bunny?"

"The dog!" exclaimed Bunny, forgetting for the moment about the animal. "Oh, I guess we won't have to get him out. He isn't here."

"But he ran in here," insisted Sue. "We saw him come into this carpenter shop."

"Yes," agreed Bunny. "But he isn't here now. If he was we'd see him or hear him."

"Maybe he's hiding," suggested Sue. "Maybe he's afraid 'cause he took mother's pocketbook and the money in it, and he's hiding in the sawdust or shavings."

"Maybe," Bunny admitted. "Well, I'll call to him to come out. He only took the pocketbook in fun, I guess. Here, Splash, come on out! We won't hurt you!" he cried, moving back toward the center of the shop and away from the locked front door. "Come on, Splash!"

"His name isn't Splash!" objected Sue. "This isn't our nice dog Splash that ran away, and I wish he'd come back." [20]

"I know he isn't Splash," agreed Bunny. "But it might be. And Splash is a dog's name, and if this dog hears me call it he may come out. Come on, old fellow!" he called again coaxingly. But no dog crawled out from under the shavings, sawdust, or piles of boards.

"Where can he be?" asked Sue.

"I guess he ran out the back door," suggested Bunny.

"Then maybe we can get out there, too!" cried the little girl, and she and her brother, with the same thought, ran to the rear of the shop.

"Here is the door," said Bunny, as he pointed it out.

It was a large affair that slid back from the middle of the wall to one corner. It was tight shut.

"And it's locked, too," cried Sue, pointing to a big padlock.

To make sure, her brother tried the padlock. Sure enough, it was locked, and the key was nowhere in sight.

"I can slide the door a little bit," said Bunny, and by hard work he managed to move it about an inch. This allowed a little of the breeze to come into the carpenter shop but that was all. [21]

"We can't get out through that crack," protested Sue, pouting. "Nobody could. Oh, dear! I don't see why this old carpenter shop has got to have all the doors locked."

"Hum, that's funny!" said Bunny Brown.

"How do you s'pose that dog got out with both doors locked?" asked Sue of her brother.

Bunny paused to think. Then an idea came to him.

"He must have jumped out a window, that dog did," he said. "There must be a window open, and he got out that way. And that's how we can get out, Sue. We'll crawl out a window just like that dog jumped out. Now we're all right. Mr. Foswick locked us in his carpenter shop by mistake, but we can get out a window."

"Oh, yes!" agreed Sue, and she felt happier now.

But again came disappointment. When the children made the rounds of the shop, looking on both sides, they not only saw that not a window was open, but when Bunny tried to raise one he could not. [22]

"Are they stuck?" asked Sue.

"No," replied Bunny. "They're nailed shut! Every window in this shop is nailed shut, Sue, and the doors are both locked!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Sue in a faint voice, and she looked at her brother in a way he felt sure meant she was going to cry. [23]

CHAPTER III

THE DIAMOND RING

Whistling as cheerfully as he could, Bunny Brown glanced all around the carpenter shop.

"Are you whistling for the dog?" asked Sue.

"No, not zactly," Bunny answered. "I'm just whistlin' for myself. I'm going to do something."

"What?" asked Sue.

She knew that whenever Bunny was making anything, such as a boat out of a piece of wood or a sidewalk scooter from an old roller skate, he always whistled. The more he worked the louder he whistled.

"What are you going to make now?" asked Sue.

"Oh, I'm not going zactly to *make* anything," Bunny explained. "I'm just going to *do* something. I'm going to open one of these windows so we can get out, same as the dog did." [24]

"But he didn't get out of a window," objected Sue. "How could he, if they were nailed shut before we came in? And they must 'a' been, 'cause we didn't hear Mr. Foswick hammering."

"Yes, I guess the windows have been nailed shut maybe a long time," agreed Bunny. "But, anyhow, the dog got out and we can get out."

"But how could he get out if both doors are locked and the windows nailed shut?" Sue wanted to know.

Bunny could not answer that. Besides, he had other things to look after. He wanted to get himself and his sister out of the carpenter shop before Sue began to cry. Bunny didn't like crying girls, even his sister, though he felt sorry for them.

"I can take a hammer and pull the nails out of a window where it's nailed shut, and then I can raise it and we can crawl out," explained Bunny to his sister. "There's sure to be a hammer in a carpenter shop." [25]

There were, several of them, lying around on the benches and sawhorses that seemed to fill the place. There were other tools, also; sharp chisels and planes, but Bunny and Sue knew enough not to touch these. The children might have been cut if they had handled the sharp tools. Mr. Brown kept sharp tools at his dock for mending old boats and making new ones, so Bunny and his sister knew something about carpentry.

"I guess this hammer will be a good one," said Bunny, picking up one with a claw on the end for pulling out nails. He had often seen Bunker Blue at the boat dock use just such a hammer as this.

Bunny climbed up on a workbench near a window which, as he could look out and see, was only a short distance from the ground. If that window could be opened, the little boy and his sister could easily drop out and not be hurt in the least.

"Can you get it open?" asked Sue anxiously, as she watched Bunny climb upon the dusty carpenter bench.

"Oh, sure!" he answered. "We'll be out in a little while now; and then we can go and hunt that big dog that has our mother's pocketbook." [26]

"And the money, too," added Sue. "We've got to get the money and go to the store, Bunny."

"Yes, that's right," he agreed.

With the hammer in his hand, he began looking over the window. He wanted to see where the heads of the nails were sticking out, so he could slip the claw of the hammer under them and pull them out by prying on the handle. Bunny had not only pulled out nails himself before this, but he had watched his father and Bunker Blue do it.

Bunny Brown also knew how windows were nailed shut. Once the Browns owned a little cottage on an island in the river. They sometimes spent their summer vacations in the cottage, and in the fall, when winter was approaching and the cottage was to be closed, the windows were nailed shut from the inside.

Once Bunny had helped his father nail the windows shut, and once he had helped pull the nails out the next summer when the cottage was to be opened. So Bunny was now looking for the heads of nails in the window of Mr. Foswick's carpenter shop. [27]

The first window he looked at was so tightly nailed, with all the heads driven so far into the wood, that Bunny could get the claw of the hammer under none of them. He made his way along the bench to the next window. This window was nearer the street.

"Can you open that one?" asked Sue.

"Yes, I guess so!" exclaimed Bunny.

The little boy saw a nail head sticking out. He slipped the claw of the hammer under it and pressed hard on the handle.

Whether Bunny had not put the claw far enough under the nail, or whether the head was so

small that the claw slipped off, neither of the children knew. But what happened was that Bunny's hand slipped, the hammer also slipped away from his grasp, and the next moment, with a crash and tinkle of glass, the hammer broke through the window and fell outside.

"Oh, Bunny! are you hurt?" cried Sue, for once she had seen her mother cut her hand trying to open a window that stuck. [28]

"No, I'm not hurt," answered her brother. "But the hammer's gone out."

"You can get another. There's lots here," said Sue.

"But I can't fix the window," said Bunny, rather sadly. "It's all busted!"

"It wasn't your fault!" said Sue stormily. "Mr. Foswick ought never to have locked us in, and then you wouldn't have to try to unnailed a window to get out! It's his fault!"

"Maybe it is," said Bunny, leaning forward to look out of the broken window.

"Don't try to crawl out!" exclaimed Sue. "You might get cut!"

"I'm not going to," said Bunny. "I was just seeing how far it was and where the hammer went. It's on the grass, and it isn't far out of the window at all. If we could only crawl out——"

"And get all cut on the glass? I guess not!" cried Sue. "Oh, Bunny!" she suddenly exclaimed. "Look! There goes Mr. Reinberg, who keeps the drygoods store. Call to him through the broken window, and he'll get us out!" [29]

Through the window, which he had broken with the hammer, Bunny had a glimpse of the street. As Sue had said, the drygoods merchant was just then passing.

"Hi!" suddenly called Bunny. "Let us out, please! Help us out, Mr. Reinberg!"

The merchant looked up, down, and sideways. He could not at first tell where the voice was coming from.

"Who are you and where are you?" he demanded.

"I'm Bunny Brown, and my sister Sue is with me," came the answer from the little boy. "And we're locked in Mr. Foswick's carpenter shop."

"Oh, now I see you!" said the drygoods store man, glancing toward Bunny, who could be seen through the window. "So you're locked in, are you? How did it happen?"

"Mr. Foswick locked us in," said Bunny.

"He did! What for?"

"Oh, I guess he thought we were bad boys. But Sue isn't a boy; she's a girl," explained Bunny. "If you could only open a door, or pull the nails out of one of the windows, we could get out. I was trying to pull out a nail and I broke the glass." [30]

"Well, I don't believe I can get you out either way," said Mr. Reinberg, and Bunny and Sue felt much disappointed. "I haven't a key to the door, and I can't reach in and pull out the nails," went on the drygoods merchant, as he came down the side alley and talked to Bunny through the hole in the glass.

"But I'll go over to Mr. Foswick's house, which isn't far away, and get him to come and let you out," went on Mr. Reinberg. "I'll go right away, Bunny. Don't be afraid."

"Thank you; we're not," Bunny answered, as cheerfully as he could.

After the man had gone away it seemed more lonely in the old carpenter shop than ever to Bunny Brown and his sister Sue. They walked away from the window and Sue sat down on a bench.

"Do you suppose he'll be long?" she asked.

"Maybe not—Mr. Foswick doesn't live far." [31]

To amuse himself and his sister Bunny picked up a handful of nails and laid out a long railroad track. Then he got a big bolt and pretended that was a locomotive and shoved it along the track.

"Where does the train run to?" asked the little girl.

"New York, Chicago and—and Camp Rest-A-While," said Bunny—the last name being that of a place where they had once had a delightful vacation.

He and Sue did not have long to wait. Soon along came the old carpenter and Mr. Reinberg.

"Dear me! I didn't know I'd locked Bunny and Sue in," said Mr. Foswick, as he opened the front door, unlocking it with a big key. "I thought it was some of those pesky boys. They run in when I have the door open, and when I'm away in the back part of the shop, and busy, they scatter the shavings and sawdust all about."

"They came in once this afternoon," said Mr. Foswick, "and I made up my mind if they did it again I'd teach 'em a lesson. So I locked my back door, and I went into the alley near my front [32]

door. I knew all the windows were nailed shut.

"Then, when I was in the alley, I heard somebody run into my shop, and, quick as I could, I ran out, pulled the door shut, and locked 'em in. I supposed it was some of those pesky boys, and I was going to keep 'em locked up until I could go get their fathers and tell 'em how they pester me. I didn't have a notion, Bunny, that it was you and Sue, or I'd never have done such a thing—never!"

Mr. Brown often hired Mr. Foswick to do carpentry, and the rather crabbed and cross old man did not want to offend a good customer.

"I'm very sorry about this thing I did, Bunny and Sue," went on Mr. Foswick. "I'd no idea it was you I'd locked up. I supposed it was those pesky boys. Both doors were locked—I made sure of that—and the windows were nailed shut. I keep 'em shut so nobody can get in at night."

"Bunny tried to open one of the windows with a hammer," said Sue. [33]

"And I—I guess I broke it—I mean the window," said Bunny. "I didn't mean to."

"Oh, broke a window, did you?" exclaimed Mr. Foswick, and he seemed surprised.

"If they hadn't broken the glass I might not have heard them calling," said the drygoods merchant.

"Oh, well, I guess you couldn't help it; and a broken window won't cost much to fix," said the old carpenter. "I'm sorry you had all that trouble, and I'm glad you're neither of you cut. Tell your pa and ma I'm real sorry."

"We will," promised Bunny.

And then, after Bunny and Sue had started home on the run, for it was getting late and toward supper time, Sue suddenly thought of something. She turned back.

"Oh, Bunny!" she cried. "We forgot to ask Mr. Foswick about the dog!"

"So we did! The dog that has mother's pocketbook. Maybe he saw him run out of the carpenter shop, and noticed which way he went. Let's go back and ask him."

Back they turned, to find Mr. Foswick nailing a board over the broken pane of glass. [34]

"Well, you haven't come back to stay the rest of the night, have you?" asked the old carpenter, smiling at them over his dusty spectacles.

"No, sir. We came back about the dog," said Bunny. "We were chasing a strange dog that had mother's pocketbook, and he ran in here. That's why we came in," the boy explained, and he told how they had been playing with the seesaw when the strange animal jumped into the Brown yard.

"Did you see him come out of your shop?" asked Sue. "'Cause he wasn't in there when we were."

"No, I didn't see any dog," said Mr. Foswick. "But there are some holes at the back where he could have crawled out. That's what he must have done. He didn't come out the front door. But we'll take a look."

It did not take the carpenter and the children long to search through the shop and make sure there was no dog there. As Mr. Foswick had said, there were several holes in the back wall of his shop, out of which a dog might have crawled. [35]

"What can we do?" asked Sue, looking at her brother after the unsuccessful search.

"We've got to go home and tell mother," said Bunny. "Then we can maybe find the dog and the pocketbook somewhere else. It isn't here."

"No, I don't see anything of it," remarked Mr. Foswick, looking around his little shop. "You'd better go and tell your folks. They may be worried about you. And tell 'em I'm sorry for locking you in."

Bunny and Sue hurried home. They found Mrs. Brown looking up and down the street for them. The other children had gone away.

"Where have you been?" asked Mother Brown. "It is very late for little people to be out alone. And where is my pocketbook and the groceries I sent you for? Where is my pocketbook?" She looked at Bunny and then at his sister, noting their empty hands.

"A big dog ran off with your pocketbook, Mother," explained Bunny. "He jumped into the yard and picked it up off the bench when Sue was teeter-tautering with me. Then he ran into Mr. Foswick's shop, and we ran after him, and we got locked in, and I broke a window, and we couldn't find the dog nor your pocketbook." [36]

"Nor the money, either," added Sue. "There was money in the pocketbook, wasn't there, Mother?"

Mrs. Brown did not answer that question at once.

"Do you mean to say a strange dog ran off with the pocketbook and everything in it?" she asked Bunny.

"Yes, Mother," he answered.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown in a faint voice, and she sank with white face into a chair. Mr. Brown, who had just come in, sprang to his wife's side.

"Oh, don't take on so!" he exclaimed. "The loss of the pocketbook isn't much. Was there a great amount of money in it?"

"A five-dollar bill," his wife answered.

"Oh, well, we shall not worry over that if we never find it," he went on. "And you can get another purse." Daddy Brown was smiling.

"But you don't understand!" cried Mother Brown. "Just before I sent the children to the store I was doing something in the kitchen. I took off the beautiful diamond engagement ring you gave me, and put it in the pocketbook. I meant to take it out in a moment, but Mrs. Newton came over, and I forgot it. Then I slipped a five-dollar bill in the purse and gave it to the children to go to the store. Oh, dear! what shall I do?"

[37]

Mr. Brown looked serious.

"Are you sure the diamond ring was in the pocketbook?" he asked.

"Yes," replied his wife, and there were tears in her eyes. "The dog ran away with the five-dollar bill, the pocketbook and my beautiful diamond ring! Oh, what shall I do? What a terrible loss!"

[38]

CHAPTER IV

DADDY BRINGS NEWS

Bunny Brown and his sister Sue did not know what to do or what to say when they saw how bad their mother felt. There were tears in her eyes as she looked at the finger which had held the diamond ring.

The little boy and girl well knew the "sparkler," as they sometimes called it. Daddy had given it to mother before their wedding, and Mrs. Brown prized it very much.

"It was very careless of me to put my lovely ring in the pocketbook, and then to forget all about it and let you children take it to the store," said Mother Brown.

"But are you sure you did put it in the pocketbook?" asked Mr. Brown again. "You may have done that, my dear, and then have taken it out again and carried the diamond ring into the house before Bunny and Sue went to the store. Try to think." And he sat down beside his wife while the little boy and his sister looked on wonderingly.

[39]

"I know I left the ring in the pocketbook," replied Mrs. Brown, wiping her eyes on her handkerchief. "I didn't think of it until a little while ago, and then I thought Bunny and Sue would bring it back with the change from the five-dollar bill. The ring was inside the middle part of the pocketbook, and they wouldn't have to open that to get at the money. Oh, children, did a dog really run away with the pocketbook?"

"Yes, he really did," said Bunny.

"And he run into the carpenter shop, and we ran after him, and Mr. Foswick locked us in, and he was sorry, and Bunny broke a window, and he was sorry, too," explained Sue, almost in one long breath.

"Well, that's quite a story," said Mr. Brown. "Let's hear it all over again."

So Bunny and Sue told all that had happened, from the time they had been teetering until they were let out of the carpenter shop after Mr. Reinberg had heard them calling through the broken window.

[40]

"Oh, what shall I do?" asked Mrs. Brown once more, when the story was finished.

"There is only one thing to do," said Mr. Brown. "I'll go back to the carpenter shop, and Mr. Foswick and I will look for the pocketbook. The dog probably dropped it among the shavings."

"Let us come, too," said Bunny. "We can show you where the dog ran in the front door that was open."

"I think I can see that place all right myself," answered Mr. Brown. "You children get your supper. I'll be back in a little while."

It was not a very joyful supper for Bunny Brown and his sister Sue. Every once in a while they would see tears in their mother's eyes, and they could not help but feel it was partly their fault

that the diamond ring was lost.

For if Bunny and Sue had gone to the store as soon as their mother had told them to go, and had not stopped to play on the seesaw, and had not put the pocketbook down on the bench where the dog so easily reached it, all this trouble would not have come upon their mother. [41]

Mrs. Brown must have known that Bunny and Sue were thinking this, for she very kindly said to them:

"Now, don't worry, my dears. Perhaps daddy will find the pocketbook, and the money and ring safely in it. I know you wanted to play, and that is why you did not go to the store at once. But never mind. Mother should not have left the ring in the pocketbook. It is largely mother's own fault. Anyway, daddy will come back with the ring."

But Daddy Brown did not. Bunny and Sue had finished their supper, Mrs. Brown taking only a cup of tea, when their father came in. It needed only a look at his face to show that he had found nothing.

"Wasn't it there?" his wife asked, as he sat up to the table, though, to tell the truth, he did not feel much like eating. He felt bad because his wife was so unhappy about her lost diamond ring. [42]

"Mr. Foswick and I searched the carpenter shop as well as we could," said Mr. Brown. "It was rather dark in there, and we could not see much. But we found no pocketbook."

"Did you find the dog?" asked Sue eagerly.

"No, he had run out," said Mr. Brown. "We saw where he had scattered the sawdust and shavings, though. Was it a dog you ever saw before, Bunny?"

"No, Daddy," answered the little boy. "He was a big, strange, new dog. I wish we had him, 'cause we haven't any dog, now that Splash has run away."

"I guess this dog has run away, also," said Mr. Brown. "There wasn't a trace of him; nor of the pocketbook, either. But Mr. Foswick and I are going to look in the shop again to-morrow by daylight. It may be the dog dropped the pocketbook, and it got kicked under a pile of sawdust or shavings."

"Did you see the place where I broke the window with the hammer?" asked Bunny.

"Yes, the window was still broken," answered his father, who began to eat his supper. [43]

It was not at all a cheerful evening in the Brown home. Never before had Bunny and Sue felt so unhappy—at least, they could not remember such a time. They did not feel like playing as they generally did, though it was a warm early summer night, and lovely to be out of doors.

"Never mind, dears," said Mrs. Brown, when she was putting them to bed. "Perhaps we shall find the ring to-morrow."

"And the money, too," added Bunny. "Five dollars is a lot to lose."

"Maybe the dog ate it," suggested Sue.

"How could he?" asked her brother.

"Well, didn't Splash once chew up my picture-book? He ate one of the paper leaves that had on it about Bo Peep and her sheep," said Sue. "A five-dollar bill is paper, and so was my Mother Goose book, and Splash ate that."

"No, I don't believe the dog ate the money," said Mrs. Brown. "It is probably still in the pocketbook with my ring wherever the dog dropped it. I should not mind the loss of the money if I could only get back my lovely diamond ring. But go to sleep, dears. To-morrow we may have good news." [44]

And so Bunny and Sue went to sleep. They were up early the next morning, but not so early as Mr. Brown, who, their mother said, had gone to the carpenter shop to help Mr. Foswick look among the sawdust and shavings.

After a while Bunny and Sue went out in the yard to play with some of the boys and girls who lived near by. And to them Bunny and his sister told the story of what the strange dog had done.

"I am sure I saw that big yellow dog," cried Lulu Dare, one of the girls. "It was down near Bradley's livery stable."

"Oh, maybe he's down by the livery stable now!" exclaimed Bunny.

"Let us go and see," added his sister Sue.

"No, I don't think the dog is there now," said Lulu. "He wasn't standing still. He was running along."

"Did he have anything in his mouth?"

"Only his tongue and that was hanging out at first. Then he stopped to get a drink at that box where Mr. Bradley waters his horses, and then his tongue didn't hang out any more." [45]

"Say, did that dog have a spot on his left leg?" asked one of the boys.

"Yes—a long, up-and-down spot."

"Then he wasn't the dog who took the pocketbook. That old dog belongs at the hotel and he never comes up this way at all."

"Let us make sure," said Bunny; and a little later all of the boys and girls visited the hotel. One of the boys was a nephew of the proprietor so they had little trouble in getting the man's attention.

"No, my dog wouldn't do such a thing," said the hotel man. "He hasn't been up your way. It must have been some other dog." And then the boys and girls went home.

A little later Bunny went into the house to get some cookies, and then he asked his mother if his father had come back with the ring.

"No, he telephoned that he and Mr. Foswick went all over the shop, but they could not find the pocketbook," she said. "The dog must have carried it farther off."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Bunny Brown. "What are you going to do, Mother?"

[46]

"I don't know just what daddy is going to do," she answered. "He said he would talk it over when he came home to lunch. But don't worry. Run out and play. Here are your cookies."

Bunny wanted to help his mother, but he soon forgot all about the ring, the pocketbook, and the five dollars in the jolly times he and Sue and their playmates had in the yard.

Soon after the twelve o'clock whistles blew, Bunny saw his father coming along the street on his way home to lunch.

"Oh, Daddy! did you find mother's ring?" called the little boy, as he ran to meet his father.

"No, not yet," was the answer. "But I have some good news for all of you."

"Oh, maybe he's found Splash or the other dog!" cried Sue, as she, also, ran to meet her father.

[47]

CHAPTER V

ADRIFT

The faces of Bunny and Sue shone with delight as they hurried along, one on one side and one on the other of their father, each having hold of a hand. Mr. Brown, too, was more joyful than he had been the night before when the story of the lost ring had been told.

"Did you find Splash?" asked Sue, as she tripped along.

"No, I am sorry to say I did not," replied Mr. Brown. "I guess you will have to give Splash up as lost. Though he may run back again some day as suddenly as he ran off."

"And didn't you find the other dog—the one that took mother's ring in the pocketbook?" asked Bunny.

His father shook his head.

"There was no sign of the other dog, either," Mr. Brown answered. "He must have been a stray dog that just ran through the town. A sort of tramp dog, I fancy."

[48]

"Then there isn't any good news," remarked Bunny, and he grew a little sad and unhappy again.

"Yes, there is good news; though it isn't about mother's ring," said Mr. Brown.

"Nor about a dog?" asked Sue.

"No, it isn't about a dog, either," her father said. "Come along, and we'll tell mother. Perhaps it will cheer her up."

Mrs. Brown looked sharply at her husband when he entered the house with the two children. She wanted to see if she could tell, by his face, whether he had any better word than that which he had telephoned after his visit to the carpenter shop.

"No," he said, in answer to her look, "we didn't find the pocketbook. But Mr. Foswick is going to have a regular house-cleaning in his shop. He is going to get the sawdust and shavings out of the way, and then we can make a better search."

"I hope he will be careful when he takes them out," said Mrs. Brown. "My pocketbook was not very large, and it might easily be thrown away in a shovelful of shavings or sawdust."

[49]

"He will be very careful," her husband promised. "He is very sorry he locked Bunny and Sue in his shop, very sorry indeed."

"Oh, we didn't mind!" exclaimed Bunny. "We were scared a little, at first, but not much. Only I broke the window."

"Mr. Foswick didn't seem to mind that much," went on Mr. Brown. "The 'pesky' boys, as he calls them, certainly do bother him a lot by running in the open front door when he is busy in the back of his shop. They scatter the sawdust and shavings all about."

"Maybe some of those boys ran in and took my pocketbook and ring," suggested Mrs. Brown.

"Oh, no," explained Bunny. "We ran right in after the dog, and there were no big boys around. We didn't see the dog run out, but Mr. Foswick said there were holes in the back of his shop and he could get out that way."

"Yes," agreed Mr. Brown, "he could. And he may have done so. We are going to look around in the back of the shop as soon as the inside is cleaned out." [50]

"I do hope he will be careful," murmured Mrs. Brown.

"Why, the dog won't bite him!" exclaimed Bunny. "He ran away, that dog did!"

"Oh, I mean I hope Mr. Foswick will be careful about looking in the shavings and sawdust for my pocketbook," said Mother Brown.

"I will send Bunker Blue over to help him look," promised Mr. Brown. "Bunker is a very careful lad."

"But what story are you going to tell us, Daddy?" asked Sue, as she climbed up in her father's lap.

"A story! This time of day?" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, in surprise.

"She means the news," said Mr. Brown. "I have some for you, and I hope you will think it is good, though it isn't about your lost diamond ring. Did you children ever hear of Christmas Tree Cove?" he asked.

"Christmas Tree Cove!" exclaimed Bunny. "Oh, I know where that is! It's up the river back of the bay. Is the dog there, Daddy?" [51]

"Oh, no!" laughed his father. "Can't you think of anything but dogs, Bunny boy? Well, as long as you know where Christmas Tree Cove is, how would you like to go there to spend the summer?" As he spoke he looked at his wife.

"Do you really mean it?" she inquired, her face brightening.

"Oh, won't that be fun!" cried Bunny and Sue together, almost like twins, though Bunny was a year older than his sister.

"Well, I hope you will have some fun there," said their father. "Now let's have lunch, and while we are eating I can tell you all about it."

"Is this the news you meant, Daddy?" asked Bunny.

"Yes," was the answer.

Christmas Tree Cove, as I may as well explain to you, was a sort of bay, or wide place, in Turtle River, which ran into Sandport Bay. The town of Bellemere, where Bunny and his sister lived, was partly on Sandport Bay and partly on the ocean. The bay extended back of the town, and if one sailed up the bay or went up in a motor boat one would come, after a while, to Turtle River. I suppose it was called that because it had so many turtles in it, and sometimes Bunny and Sue had caught them. [52]

Christmas Tree Cove was so named because on the banks of it were many evergreen trees, called Christmas trees by the children, and also by some of the grown folk. And the cove had in it a few little islands. It was a place where camping parties sometimes went, and often there were picnics held there.

"What is going on at Christmas Tree Cove that you should want to take us there?" asked Mrs. Brown, as she passed her husband some sliced peaches.

"I have been trying to think of a nice place where you and the children might spend the summer," he answered, "and when I heard that Captain Ross had his motor boat *Fairy* to hire for trips, I thought it would be just the chance for us.

"There is a bungalow at Christmas Tree Cove I can hire for the summer, and, if you want to go, we can all pile on board the *Fairy* and make the trip." [53]

"Would you come, too?" asked Bunny.

"Yes, I would be with you part of the time," said Mr. Brown. "Of course I should also have to be at my dock down here in Bellemere part of the time to look after business, but I could come up and down. Christmas Tree Cove is not far away, and there are boats going up and down the river and the bay each week. So, if you think you will like it, we will spend the summer in a bungalow at Christmas Tree Cove."

"Oh, we'll just love it!" cried Sue, dancing around and clapping her fat hands.

"Will you like it, Mother?" asked Bunny. "Even if you don't find your diamond ring?"

"Yes, my dear, I think I shall like it there," said Mrs. Brown, with a smile. "Though, of course, I want to find my diamond ring that the dog carried away. I hope Bunker Blue finds it in the shavings or the sawdust of Mr. Foswick's shop before we go."

"I hope so, too," said Bunny.

"Then it's decided. We shall go to Christmas Tree Cove," said Mr. Brown. "I am sure you will have a nice summer. I'll tell Captain Ross that we will hire his boat for the trip and the voyage back." [54]

"Is he the funny Captain Ross who is always cracking jokes or asking riddles?" Mrs. Brown asked.

"Yes, that's Captain Dick Ross," her husband replied. "He's very jolly, and I'm sure the children will like him. In fact, they may see him and his boat this afternoon if they wish."

"How?" asked Bunny eagerly. And Sue waited for the answer.

"He is down at my dock, with his boat *Fairy*," was the answer. "He is having some repairs made to it. The boat is a sailing boat with a motor in it, so it can travel both ways. If you like, Bunny and Sue, you may come down to the dock with me and see Cap'n Dick!"

"Oh! Oh!" exclaimed the children in delight, and they hurried through their meal that they might go with their father.

On the way to the boat and the fish dock, where Mr. Brown carried on his business, the children and their father stopped at Mr. Foswick's carpenter shop to ask if anything had been found. [55]

"No, not yet," answered the old man, looking at Bunny and Sue through his spectacles all dim and dusty with wood dust. "But I haven't got all the sawdust and shavings out yet. I hope to find your wife's ring."

"So do I," said Mr. Brown. "She feels quite bad over the loss, and I'm afraid she will not have a happy summer even at Christmas Tree Cove."

"It is too bad," agreed Mr. Foswick. "Well, when Bunker Blue comes this afternoon, he and I will go all over the place. You haven't seen anything of the dog since, have you?" he asked.

"No," answered Bunny, while Sue shook her head.

"I'll send Bunker Blue back as soon as I get to the dock," promised Mr. Brown, and then he and the children went on.

Tied up at the end of the wharf was the boat *Fairy*, of which jolly Mr. Ross was captain. [56]

"May we go on board?" asked Bunny, as they ran down the pier while their father was telling Bunker Blue to make a good search in the sawdust and shavings for the pocketbook containing the diamond ring.

"Yes," answered Mr. Brown. "I think Captain Ross is on board himself, pattering away in the cabin."

But he was not, though that did not matter to Bunny and Sue. They knew a great deal about boats, having lived near water all their lives and their father having been in the boat business for years.

"Come on!" called Bunny to his sister, and they easily jumped from the dock to the deck of the *Fairy*. No one was on board, it seemed, and Bunny and Sue enjoyed themselves by running about. They thought what fun it would be to make the trip to Christmas Tree Cove in such a craft.

"Let's make-believe I'm the captain and you're the cook," said Bunny to his sister after a while. "I'll go down in the cabin, and you must bring me my dinner, and we'll pretend there's a storm." [57]

"All right," agreed Sue, and then began this little game, one of many with which the children amused themselves.

"Now, you know, I'm a reg'lar captain," said Bunny, putting on his most important manner. "So you must serve me real nice."

"Real captains have uniforms," said Sue. "You ought to have a uniform—and if I am to be the cook I ought to have a big white apron."

"I'll look for a uniform," said Bunny, and after hunting around a bit found a storm coat and a rubber hat. "I'll put these on."

The coat was much too big for him and so was the hat. But he did not mind this. Then Sue hunted around and at last found a white apron a good deal soiled.

"Oh, I don't like that," she pouted. "It's not a bit clean. Good cooks always have real clean aprons."

"There is a clean towel—you pin that on for an apron," suggested Bunny. And then he did the pinning himself.

They were both down in the cabin, and Bunny was making believe he was very hungry and he was asking Sue to bring him some more "plum duff" when the little girl gave a sudden cry. [58]

"What's the matter?" asked Bunny, as he sat at Captain Ross's cabin table.

"We're moving!" cried Sue. "The *Fairy* is moving away! She isn't fast to the wharf any more!"

With a cry, Bunny scrambled up on deck.

Surely enough, the boat was adrift and he and Sue were alone on board! [59]

CHAPTER VI

THE STRANGE DOG

Sue followed her brother Bunny up on the deck of the *Fairy*. They were quite a distance out from the dock now, and were drifting farther and farther each minute, for the tide was running out. Sandport Bay connected with the ocean, and twice every day there is a great movement of the water in the ocean, called the tide. The tides make the water high twice each twenty-four hours, and then the tides get low, or run out. The moon and sun are thought to cause the tides, as you will learn when you get a little older and have to study about such things.

And the tide, after having run up into Sandport Bay, was now running out, or ebbing, and in some way it was taking the *Fairy* with it, floating the boat along as the rain water in the gutter floats chips along. [60]

"How do you s'pose we got loose?" asked Sue.

"I don't know, lessen the rope came unhitched," Bunny answered. "But if Cap'n Ross tied his boat to the dock, I don't see how it could come unhitched."

Bunny was enough of a sailor to know that no boat captain ever tied such a knot as could easily come loose. And yet this is what seemed to have happened. For when Bunny and Sue ran to the side of the *Fairy* to look over, they saw, trailing in the water, the long rope, or cable, by which the boat had been made fast to the dock. As Bunny had said, it had come "unhitched." The children did not know how this had happened.

But there they were, alone on rather a large sailing boat, which also had a gasoline motor, like that in a motor boat, to make it travel when there was no wind to blow on the sails. And each moment they were being carried by the tide farther and farther away from their father's dock.

Bunny and Sue looked across the water toward the wharf whereon Mr. Brown had his office. They could not see their father, nor any one else. The dock was deserted. [61]

"What are we going to do?" asked Sue; and there was a catch in her voice, as though she was frightened; and she was.

"Well," said Bunny slowly, "I guess maybe we'd better call."

"Call!" exclaimed Sue. "What for?"

"So daddy or Cap'n Ross will hear us and come and get us."

"How are they going to come and get us?" asked Sue. "They can't swim that far."

"Oh, yes, they could!" declared Bunny. "But I don't s'pose they'll have to swim. They can come and get us in a boat."

"Oh, yes!" cried Sue, more joyfully. "So they can. And I wish they would. Let's call, Bunny!"



**BUNNY AND SUE
SHOUTED FOR HELP.**

Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue at Christmas Tree Cove. Page 61

Together the two children raised their voices in a shout. They were healthy and strong and had excellent voices. And, as sound carries a long distance over open water, the shouts of Bunny and Sue were heard on Mr. Brown's dock.

As it happened, the children's father was in the office talking with Captain Ross about the coming trip to Christmas Tree Cove when they heard the cries of distress. [62]

"That's Bunny and Sue!" exclaimed Mr. Brown, leaping from his chair.

"Gracious sakes alive! I hope they haven't fallen overboard!" shouted Captain Ross.

"I think they know enough not to do that," Mr. Brown answered.

He ran out on the wharf, followed by the captain and some of the men who worked for Mr. Brown. There they saw the *Fairy* drifting out into the bay, and they could see the figures of Bunny and Sue at the boat rail.

"Stay there! We'll send a boat for you!" called Mr. Brown, making a sort of trumpet of his hands. "Stay on board! You'll be all right."

Bunny and Sue heard him and felt better. They had no notion, of course, of jumping overboard and trying to swim to shore. They knew they were safe on the *Fairy* while it was in the rather quiet water of Sandport Bay. Out on the rough ocean it would be a different matter, though they had sailed on the open sea with their father and mother, of course in a larger boat. [63]

"How are we going to get 'em back?" asked one of Mr. Brown's men.

"Oh, we'll do that easily enough," was the answer. "Bring around the big motor boat. We'll have to tow the *Fairy* back here. I don't see how she ever got adrift," went on Mr. Brown. "I'm sure neither Bunny nor Sue loosened the cable."

"I'm positive they didn't," said Captain Ross. "It must have been that greenhorn cabin boy I had. I hired him yesterday, and let him go this morning because he didn't know one end of a rope from the other. I told him to make the *Fairy* fast to your dock while I came up here to talk to you. But he must have tied a grannie's or a landlubber's knot, and she pulled loose. I'm glad I'm rid of that boy!"

"Yes," agreed Mr. Brown, "a boy who doesn't know enough to tie a safe knot isn't of much use around boats. But there's no great harm done. She isn't drifting fast, and the motor boat will soon pick her up."

"I'll go along with you," offered Captain Ross, and soon he and Mr. Brown, with one of the dock men, were racing after the drifting *Fairy*. [64]

On deck Bunny Brown and his sister Sue watched the rescue.

"It's just like being shipwrecked, isn't it, Bunny?" suggested Sue, as they sat down on deck to wait.

"Yes. It's fun when you know daddy is coming," said the little boy.

In a short time the motor boat reached the drifting *Fairy*. Mr. Brown and Captain Ross went on board, and you can just imagine how glad Bunny and Sue were to see them.

"Guess you'll have to tow us back," said Captain Ross to Mr. Brown. "The motor of my boat needs fixing. That's one reason why I tied up at your dock. There isn't enough wind to blow us

back against the tide that's running out now."

"My motor boat will tow you back all right," said Mr. Brown.

And while this was being done Bunny and Sue sat on the deck of the *Fairy* with their father and Captain Ross. [65]

"Well, you had quite an adventure, didn't you?" laughed Captain Ross, taking Sue up on his knees. "And it reminds me of a riddle. When is a boat not a boat?"

"When is a boat not a boat?" repeated Bunny. "Why, a boat is always a boat, Cap'n Ross, lessen you mean it's like a house 'cause people sometimes live in it."

"No, I don't mean that," chuckled Captain Ross. "I'll ask you again. When is a boat not a boat? Can you guess?"

Bunny and Sue shook their heads sideways to say "No."

"Do you give up?" asked Captain Ross.

Bunny and Sue shook their heads up and down to say "Yes."

"When is a boat not a boat?" asked the Captain again. "When she's a *drift*, of course, like this one of mine was! Ho! Ho!" and he laughed heartily. "You see a boat's not a boat when she's adrift—a sort of snow *drift*! Ha! Ha! That's a riddle," and he laughed so heartily that Sue slipped from his lap.

Bunny and Sue laughed also, and they liked Captain Ross. [66]

"Here we are now, all shipshape and Bristol fashion!" went on the captain as the motor boat towed the *Fairy* back to the wharf. This time Captain Ross tied the rope himself to make sure it would not come loose again.

"May we stay on the boat?" asked Bunny, as his father started back up to his office with Captain Ross.

"Yes, you may play on board until it's time to go home to supper," promised Mr. Brown. "But don't fall overboard and don't go adrift again."

"No, we won't!" said Bunny.

"If you do I'll never tell you any more riddles," laughed Captain Ross.

"Oh, what fun we'll have when the boat goes to Christmas Tree Cove and takes us there!" shouted Sue, as she and Bunny played about the deck.

The children had almost forgotten about their mother's lost ring and pocketbook, to say nothing of the five-dollar bill. But that afternoon, when they were going home with their father, they saw something that brought the loss back to their minds. [67]

They were walking along the street with Daddy Brown when, all of a sudden, Bunny cried:

"There he is! There! There!"

"Who?" asked his father.

"That big dog that took mother's pocketbook in his mouth and bounced away with it!" was the answer. "There he goes!"

Bunny pointed out a large, yellowish-brown dog just running around the corner of the next street. Then Bunny pulled his hand from his father's and raced after the strange animal.

"I'll make him show me where mother's ring and pocketbook are!" cried Bunny as he ran down the street. [68]

CHAPTER VII

THE SLEEP-WALKER

So quickly did Bunny Brown pull away from his father to run after the strange dog that Mr. Brown had no chance to call to the little boy to be careful. Sue, however, who had hold of her father's other hand, seemed anxious.

"Maybe the dog will bite Bunny!" exclaimed the little girl. "Sometimes Splash used to growl if you took a bone away from him, and maybe this dog will growl if Bunny takes the pocketbook away from him."

"That might happen if the dog had mother's pocketbook," replied Mr. Brown. "But I didn't see him have it, and I don't believe Bunny knows, for sure, whether or not this is the same dog."

"Maybe if he hasn't the pocketbook in his mouth he has it hid somewhere, and he's going to dig [69]

it up just as Splash used to dig up the bones he hid," went on Sue. "Let's go and look, Daddy!"

This was just what Mr. Brown wanted to do—to see what happened to Bunny, who had turned the corner running after the strange dog. So, taking a firmer hold of Sue's hand, daddy started to run. When they turned the corner they could see the chubby legs of Bunny working to and fro as he ran along some distance ahead of them. Ahead of him the big, yellow dog was also racing along and Bunny could be heard calling:

"Stop! Hold on there! Come back with my mother's pocketbook and her diamond ring!"

Several persons in the street were attracted by the shouts of the boy and his race after the dog.

"There'll be more excitement here in a little while than I want," thought Mr. Brown. "People will think there has been a theft, and they will join in the chase. Then the dog may get excited and bite some one. I must catch Bunny and stop him from shouting." [70]

Now Sue could not, of course, run as fast as could her father, and, though her legs worked to and fro in her very best style, Bunny was getting far ahead of them.

"I'll have to pick you up and carry you, Sue," said her father. And, stooping, he caught her up in his arms. It was easier for him to run fast this way, and he knew he would soon catch up to Bunny. As for the small boy, he was still chasing the dog. And the dog seemed to know he was being chased, for he ran on, looking back now and then, but never stopping.

"What's the matter, Mr. Brown?" asked a man who knew the fish dealer, as he saw Sue's father hurrying down the street, carrying her and racing after Bunny. "Has anything happened?"

"Oh, not much," was the answer. "My boy is trying to catch that strange dog, and I don't want him to—the dog might bite him."

"That's so," said the man.

"Stop, Bunny! Stop!" cried Mr. Brown, getting within calling distance of his little son. "Don't run after the dog any more!" [71]

"But I want to get mother's pocketbook and ring," Sue's brother answered, as he slowed up and looked back.

"That dog hasn't it," went on Mr. Brown. "He has nothing in his mouth, and——"

"Oh, he has something in his mouth. It's red and I can see it sticking out!" interrupted Sue eagerly. "Maybe it's mother's pocketbook, Bunny."

"It's his tongue!" declared Bunny. "It's the dog's red tongue you see. Mother's pocketbook was black."

"Well, this dog hasn't it, at any rate," went on Mr. Brown with a smile, as he put Sue down on the sidewalk beside Bunny, with whom he had now caught up. "And even if this were the same dog, we could not make him understand that we wanted him to take us to the place where he dropped the purse."

"I'm sure it's the same dog," insisted Bunny. "But he's gone now, anyhow."

This was true. Just as Bunny stopped after his father called to him the dog ran into an alley between two buildings, and though Mr. Brown, again holding his two children by the hands, looked in, there was no sight of the animal. [72]

"Yes, he's gone," agreed Mr. Brown.

"You scared him, chasing after him like that, you did," went on Sue to her brother. "Didn't he, Daddy?" she asked her father.

"I guess the dog didn't need much scaring," said Mr. Brown. "Are you sure he's the same one, Bunny?"

Of this Bunny was quite positive, though Sue was not so much so. The animal looked like the one that had snatched the pocketbook off the bench and had run into Mr. Foswick's carpenter shop with it. But that was as far as Sue could go.

The crowd which had started to gather when it saw the chase, now began to separate when it found there was to be no more excitement, and Mr. Brown took a short cut through the back streets home with Bunny and Sue.

"We had a lot of adventures, Mother!" said Bunny, when they reached the house. "We got adrift on a boat, and we had a tow back, and I saw the dog that had your pocketbook, and I chased him and—and——" [73]

"And I know a riddle about when is a snowdrift like a boat," broke in Sue, not wanting Bunny to receive all the attention.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "What does all this mean?" she asked her husband. "Did you really get back my pocketbook? Oh, if my ring has been found——"

"I'm sorry to say it hasn't," her husband said. "Bunny did think he saw the dog that took it, but I very much doubt that."

"And what's that about being adrift?"

"They were on the *Fairy*, and she floated out a little way from the dock."

"That's rather dangerous," said Mother Brown. "If such things are going to happen it will not be safe for us to go to Christmas Tree Cove."

"Oh, can't we go?" cried Bunny and Sue, thinking their mother was going to call off the trip.

"There was no danger," their father said, and he explained how it had happened. "It was not the fault of Bunny and Sue," he added. "The boat might have drifted off with any one on board." [74]

"But it is strange if that dog should still be around here, after running off with my pocketbook," went on Mrs. Brown.

"I am not at all sure it was the same dog," her husband said. "Though Bunny may have thought it looked the same. But did you have any report from Mr. Foswick or Bunker Blue about their search in the carpenter shop for the pocketbook?" he asked his wife.

"Yes," she answered. "Bunker Blue and Mr. Foswick looked carefully. They swept out the shop, which hasn't happened in over a year, I imagine; but all they found was an old pair of spectacles Mr. Foswick lost six months back. Bunker was here a little while ago, and said there was no use of searching any further. He went back to the dock, as you told him to."

"It's too bad," said Mr. Brown. "Still, it can't be helped, and it shall not spoil our trip to Christmas Tree Cove. Can you be ready to start day after to-morrow?" he asked his wife.

"I think so," she answered. "How many of us are going?" [75]

"The children, of course, and you and Uncle Tad; and I'll send Bunker along to help when I am not there."

"Oh, aren't you going, Daddy?" asked Bunny.

"Yes, I'll start with you," Mr. Brown promised. "But I can't always be with you. I shall have to spend part of each week here at my boat and fish dock. But Bunker will be with you all summer, and so will Uncle Tad."

"I'm glad he's going!" exclaimed Bunny. "He'll be lots of fun!"

"So will Captain Ross!" added Sue. "He can ask awful funny riddles."

During supper the plans for the summer vacation at Christmas Tree Cove were talked over, the children becoming more and more jolly and excited as they thought of the fun ahead of them. After the meal Bunny and Sue went out in the yard to play. George Watson, Harry Bentley and Charlie Star had a race with Bunny, while Mary Watson, Sadie West and Helen Newton brought their jumping ropes and the four little girls had a great game. Of course Bunny and Sue told about the coming trip and, naturally, all the other children wished they could go. [76]

"Maybe we can come up on a picnic and see you," said Harry.

"Oh, I hope you can!" exclaimed Sue.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown sat on the porch in the evening glow, watching the children at play and talking over what it would be necessary to take on the little voyage which would start aboard the *Fairy*. Every once in a while Mrs. Brown would give a sigh.

"Are you thinking of your lost pocketbook?" her husband asked.

"I am thinking more of my lovely engagement ring," she answered.

"It is too bad," he agreed. "But never mind. Perhaps it may be found."

"No, I am afraid it never will be," she went on. "You had better come into the house now," she called to Bunny and Sue. "It is getting late, and you'll have plenty to do to-morrow to get ready for the trip to Christmas Tree Cove."

Bunny and Sue said good-night to their playmates, and were soon ready for bed. Their father and mother sat up a little later. They were about to retire when a noise on the stairs caused them to look out into the hall. [77]

There was Bunny, in his blue pajamas, coming down the stairs. His eyes were wide open, but they had a funny look in them.

"I know where it is!" he said. "That dog has it on his tail."

"What?" asked Mr. Brown. "What do you mean, Bunny? What has the dog on his tail?"

"Mother's diamond ring," was the answer. "I'm going to get it. The dog is asleep on the shavings in the carpenter shop."

Bunny came down a few more stairs, and his mother, looking at him, exclaimed:

CHAPTER VIII

A COLLISION

Mr. Brown caught the little boy up in his arms. Somehow, Bunny seemed much smaller in his pajamas.

"Wake up, Bunny! Wake up!" his father said, gently shaking him. "What's the matter?"

"I've got to find it. I know where it is—on the end of the dog's tail. And Sue——" Bunny stopped suddenly. A change came over his face, and a different look flashed into his eyes.

"What—what's the matter? What am I down here for?" he asked wonderingly. And then his parents knew he was fully awake.

"You have been walking in your sleep, dear," said his mother. "That's something you haven't done for a long time. The day had too much excitement in it for you. Are you all right now?" and she patted his cheeks as he nestled in his father's arms. [79]

"Oh, yes. I'm all right now," Bunny said. "I had a funny dream. I thought the dog came to me and said the diamond ring was on the end of his tail, and I was going to get one of Mr. Foswick's hammers and knock it off. The dog was on a bed of shavings in the carpenter shop and—and——"

"Yes, and then you got out of bed and walked in your sleep," finished his father, with a laugh. "I must see if Sue is all right."

She was. In her little bed she was slumbering peacefully, and Bunny was soon back with his head on the pillow.

"Poor little dears!" said their mother, as the lights were put out and the house locked for the night. "They are thinking too hard about the lost ring. I mustn't let them see that I care so much, or it will spoil their summer at Christmas Tree Cove."

"Yes, forget your loss if you can," suggested her husband.

There was much to do the next day—so much that only once in a while did Bunny and Sue think of the strange dog that had run away with their mother's pocketbook and diamond ring. Bunker Blue was busy, also, and so was Uncle Tad, helping to get ready for the trip. [80]

Bunny and Sue wanted to help pack, but their mother said they could best help by running on errands. One of these took them to the carpenter shop of Mr. Foswick for a piece of wood Bunker wanted to nail across certain shutters in the house, which was to be closed for the summer.

"Well, have you come to take another look for the ring?" asked the carpenter. "It isn't here. Bunker Blue and I looked all over."

"I don't see what that dog could have done with it," said Bunny, as he glanced around the newly-swept shop. "He surely came in here with the pocketbook."

"Yes, I saw the dog running around my yard," admitted the carpenter. "But I didn't see him have anything. Well, it's one of those things that never will be found, I s'pose. Here's the wood you want, and I'll not lock you in this time," and he smiled at Bunny and Sue as he thought of what had happened the other night. [81]

Another errand took the children down to their father's dock, and there they saw Bunker Blue and Captain Ross working aboard the *Fairy*.

"I'm getting her in good shape for you, messmates!" called the jolly sailor. "And it reminds me of a riddle. Do you see that barrel of water there?" he asked, pointing to one on deck.

"Yes, I see it," admitted Bunny.

"Well, here's a riddle about it," went on the captain. "That barrel, we'll say, weighs ten pounds when it is empty. Now, what could I fill it with so it would weigh only seven pounds?"

"Why, Captain Ross, if that barrel weighs *ten* pounds when it hasn't got anything in it, you couldn't fill it with anything to make it weigh *seven* pounds. It would weigh *more* than ten pounds if you filled it with anything."

"Oh, no, it wouldn't!" the sailor said. "If I filled it full of holes, boring 'em in with one of Mr. Foswick's augers, then the barrel wouldn't weigh so much, would it? I'd cut a lot of wood out of the sides when I made the holes. Ha! Ha!" [82]

Bunny thought it over for a minute. Then he laughed.

"That's a pretty good riddle," he said.

"I'm glad you like it," went on Captain Ross. "After this, when anybody asks what you can fill a

barrel or a box with to make it weigh less, just tell 'em to fill it full of holes! Ha! Ha!" and he clapped his big hand down on his bigger leg and laughed heartily.

Bunny and Sue laughed also, and they knew they were going to have a jolly time on the trip to Christmas Tree Cove with Captain Ross to sail the *Fairy*, or, if there was no wind, to send the craft through the water by her gasolene engine.

This engine Bunker Blue was working on to mend, as it had been broken just before the two Bunker children went adrift from their father's dock.

"Will it be ready to sail to-morrow?" asked Bunny, as he watched Bunker hammering away at the motor. [83]

"Oh, yes," was the answer. "There isn't much the matter with her. We'll be able to pull out in the morning."

And by hard work everything was finished that night on board the *Fairy*. Uncle Tad, the jolly old soldier, announced that he had his "knapsack" packed and enough "rations" to last him for a week, anyhow.

As they were to make an early morning start, Bunny and Sue had said good-bye to their boy and girl friends the evening before. As they walked past Mr. Foswick's carpenter shop with Uncle Tad, who went down the street with them at the last minute to buy something Mrs. Brown wanted, the children looked at the wood-working place.

"Wouldn't it be funny if that dog should be hiding around here?" asked Sue of her brother.

"Yes," he agreed, "it would be. But I don't see him."

"I guess if he is here he's hiding," Sue went on. "Maybe there's a hole under the floor of the shop and he's there, just as once at Grandpa's farm in the country we found where a hen had her nest under the floor in the barn. And it had eggs in it!" [84]

"Dogs don't make nests like hens," said Bunny.

"Oh, I know that!" retorted Sue. "But maybe this dog hid the pocketbook under the boards in the shop floor."

"I hardly think so," put in Uncle Tad. "He probably dropped that pocketbook in the street, and either some one picked it up and kept it, or else it was dropped down a sewer."

"But if anybody found it, wouldn't we have got it back?" asked Bunny. "Daddy put an advertisement in the paper."

"Maybe we would and maybe we wouldn't," said Uncle Tad. "Anyhow, it's gone."

Bright and early the next morning Bunny Brown and his sister Sue went aboard the *Fairy*, which was tied at their father's dock. The Brown home had been shut up, the things that were needed had been put on board the boat, Mrs. Brown was keeping an eye on the children to see that they did not stray away, and Uncle Tad was stowing away the baggage in the cabin. [85]

Soon Mr. Brown, Bunker Blue, and Captain Ross would come on board and the voyage would start.

The *Fairy* was large enough for the whole family, as well as the "crew," to sleep on board. The crew generally was made up of Captain Ross and a man and a boy. But this time Mr. Brown was going to take the place of the man, and Bunker Blue would be the "boy," so that it was more of a family party. Mr. Brown had known Captain Ross for many years, and the children felt as though he were as nearly related to them as was Uncle Tad.

"All aboard!" called the captain, as he came down the wharf from Mr. Brown's office, accompanied by Mr. Brown and Bunker Blue. "Are you all aboard?" and he smiled at Bunny and Sue.

"Yes, we're here," Bunny answered.

"Isn't he funny, Mother?" whispered Sue. "He can look right at us, and yet he wants to know if we're here!"

"It's just his joking way," said Mrs. Brown.

"I've got another good riddle for you, youngsters," called Captain Ross, as he made his way along the deck. "What kind of tree would scare a cat?" [86]

"There wouldn't any tree scare a cat," declared Bunny. "I've seen a cat climb up a tree lots of times. Cats aren't scared of trees!"

"Well, wouldn't a dogwood tree scare a cat?" chuckled the sailor. "Ha! Ha! I'm sure it would. I don't believe you could get a cat to climb a *dogwood* tree!" he went on.

"That *is* a funny riddle!" declared Bunny. "I'm going to tell it to Charlie Star when we come back from Christmas Tree Cove."

"We'd better get there first," went on Captain Ross, still chuckling at his riddle. "Cast off,

Bunker Blue!"

Bunker loosed the ropes that held the *Fairy* to the wharf, and the boat slowly drifted away.

"Oh, we've really started!" cried Sue, as she saw the open water between the rail and the string-piece of the wharf.

"We'll go faster than this!" exclaimed Bunny. "Wait till Bunker Blue starts the motor."

As there was not enough wind to allow the sails to be used, it was needful to start the motor, and soon it was chugging away, sending the *Fairy* swiftly along through the water. [87]

Bunny and Sue were delighted with the trip. They sat in camp-chairs on deck and watched the different sights. They expected to cruise about on the boat for perhaps three days before going to the Cove. They could sleep in the little bunks with which the boat was provided.

"It's a funny way to go to bed," said Sue, after looking at the bunks for the tenth time.

"Well, I guess you can sleep here just as well as at home," answered her brother.

"You'd better not walk in your sleep, Bunny, 'cause you might walk overboard."

"I ain't going to walk in my sleep any more," answered Bunny. "I told daddy I wasn't."

"Maybe you can't help it."

"Yes, I can. You wait and see."

It was toward the close of the afternoon, and Bunny and Sue were beginning to wonder how much longer it would be before supper was ready, when, as they stood near Bunker, who was steering, the children saw a canoe with two young men and two young women in it being slowly paddled across the bay. [88]

"They'd better watch where they're going," said Bunker Blue. "They seem to be aiming to cross our bows, and if they do—— Look out there!" he suddenly cried, as the canoe turned. "Do you want to be run down?"

The next moment there was a collision. The *Fairy* struck the small boat, upsetting it and spilling into the water the two young men and the young women.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Sue. "We've run over 'em!" [89]

CHAPTER IX

THE MERRY GOAT

Bunny Brown, who had been sitting near his sister Sue on the deck of the *Fairy*, had jumped to his feet and run to the rail, or side of the boat, as the little girl cried out that their craft had run over the canoe. That was really what had happened. The two young men and the young women in the canoe had got in the way of the motor boat, and had been struck.

"Man overboard!" yelled Bunny. He had often enough heard that cry on his father's boat and on the pier, for more than once boys or men had fallen off into the water. Sometimes on warm summer days the boys pushed each other off, just for fun.

And often, at such times, the cry would be raised:

"Man overboard!" [90]

Bunny knew what that meant. It meant that somebody ought to jump to the rescue or throw into the water something the person who had fallen in could grab. There were, on his father's dock, a number of life buoys—round rings of cork covered with canvas and having a long rope attached to them. And there were some of these same things on the deck of the *Fairy*.

"Man overboard!" cried Bunny again, and, running to the nearest life ring, he took it off the hook and sent it spinning into the water. Bunny knew that the end of the rope was fast to the rail, so the buoy would not be lost.

Bunker Blue also acted quickly. Near the wheel by which the *Fairy* was steered was a wire, which, when pulled, shut off the motor down in the hold of the craft. Bunker Blue pulled this wire, and the boat began to slow up. Then Bunker leaped to the side of the *Fairy* near Bunny, and Bunker caught up another life ring and tossed it over the rail.

As Bunny and Sue leaned over to catch sight of the four people in the water, Captain Ross and Daddy Brown came hurrying up on deck from the little cabin, where they had been talking with Mrs. Brown. [91]

"What's the matter?" cried Captain Ross. "Did we hit anything, Bunker?"

"Yes, a canoe with four people in it. We ran 'em down. They crossed right in front of our bows!"

I'll get 'em!"

The next minute Bunker peeled off his coat, slipped from his feet the loose, rubber-soled shoes he wore, and leaped over the rail.

"Oh! Oh!" gasped Sue.

"He's going to save 'em!" cried Bunny. "I wish I could jump in and——"

"Don't dare try that, Bunny Brown!" cried his mother, who heard what he started to say, and she put a hand on his shoulder to hold him.

"They're all right," reported Mr. Brown, looking over the side of the boat. "All four of them can swim, and the young men have given the young ladies the life rings. They don't seem to be much frightened. Bunker is swimming for the canoe. I guess they'll be all right."

"Yes, it looks so," said Captain Ross, also taking a look over the side. "Though the canoe may be stove in so it'll leak. Mighty foolish of 'em to try to cross in front of our bows! I expect we'll have to take 'em all on board here." [92]

"Oh, yes, we must!" cried Mrs. Brown. "But what shall we do about dry clothes for them? Possibly I can let the young ladies have some of my extra dresses, but the young men——"

"Oh, I guess we can fit 'em out," broke in Captain Ross. "It's warm, and they won't want much. First thing to do is to get 'em on board I reckon. How about you?" he called down to the struggling people in the water. "Need any more help?"

"We're all right," answered one of the young men. "But will you take us aboard? The canoe's smashed!"

"Sure, we'll take you on board," answered the captain.

And then, as Bunny and Sue watched, they saw their father and Captain Ross help pull up to the deck of the *Fairy* first the two young women, dripping wet. They looked very much bedraggled, but they were laughing and did not seem to mind what had happened. [93]

Next the two young men scrambled up, pulling themselves by means of the ropes from the life buoys. And last of all came Bunker Blue. He had the rope of the smashed and overturned canoe in one hand and was towing it along as he swam slowly. It was not easy work to drag the canoe through the water, submerged as it was, but Bunker did it, fastening the canoe rope to the rail of the *Fairy*.

Then he scrambled up on deck, shook the water from his face and hair, and said:

"I'll get a boat hook and fish up the paddles. They're floating around down there."

"Oh, don't bother," urged one of the young ladies. "It was all my fault. I steered the canoe right in your way. We ran into you—you didn't run into us."

"Well, I'm glad you feel that way about it," said Captain Ross, while Bunny and Sue watched the little puddles and streams of water dripping from the recent occupants of the canoe and from Bunker Blue.

"Is the canoe worth saving?" asked Mr. Brown, as he looked down to where it now floated at the side of the *Fairy*, held fast by the line Bunker had brought on board. [94]

"I don't think so," said one of the young men. "It was an old one, and now the side is stove in. Let it go. It will drift ashore anyhow, and we can get it later if we want to. You might save the paddles if you can. I'll help," he offered.

"I'll help," offered the other young man, and while these two, with Bunker, sought to save the paddles with boat hooks, the broken canoe was cast loose from the *Fairy* and allowed to drift off.

"If you'll come down to the cabin with me," said Mrs. Brown to the young ladies, "I'll see if I can lend you some other clothes while yours are drying."

"Oh, don't bother!" said one of the young ladies. "It was all just fun. We had on old clothes, for we half expected to be upset before we got back."

But Mrs. Brown insisted on making them change, and so she led them down into the cabin. Uncle Tad helped in the work of recovering the paddles, and then he suggested that the two young men might also like to take off their wet things. [95]

"Oh, not at all," said one. "We're used to being wet. And we'll soon dry, anyhow. It was very decent of you to jump in after us," he said to Bunker. "As it happens, we can all swim pretty well, and it isn't the first time we've been upset. But I was afraid one of the girls might have been hurt. As it is, we're all right."

"And mighty lucky you are to be that way," commented Captain Ross. "I'm glad it was no worse. Now where do you want to be set ashore?"

"We're staying at that hotel," said Mr. Watson, for such was the name of one of the young men. He pointed to a large seaside resort on the shore not far away.

"Well, we'll head for the dock," decided the captain, and soon the *Fairy* was moving along again, the floating paddles having been recovered.

The young ladies soon came on deck, wearing some garments belonging to Mrs. Brown. They were laughing and joking at the upset. The young men refused to change, saying it was not worth while. [96]

"It's too bad you lost your canoe," said Bunny, as he and his sister listened to the talk of the rescued party.

"Oh, it was only an old one I owned," said Mr. Watson. "It isn't a great loss. I'm afraid you girls had some things sunk, though," he added. "There wasn't much time to save anything."

"I lost my pocketbook," said one of the young women, who was called Mildred by her companions. "There was only about a dollar in it, though," she added.

"My mother lost her pocketbook, and it had five dollars and her diamond ring in it," put in Sue.

"Did you? Do you mean to-day?" asked the other young lady, who had been addressed as Grace.

"Oh, no. It was some time ago," explained Mrs. Brown.

"A dog took it," volunteered Bunny. "And he ran into a carpenter shop, and we ran after him— Sue and I did—and we got locked in and I busted a window and——" [97]

"He's going into all the details!" laughed Mr. Brown.

But the young men and the young women were so interested in what the children said that they had to hear the whole story.

"I'm sure I hope you get your engagement ring back," said Mildred to Mrs. Brown, and the young lady looked at her own hand, on which sparkled a diamond. Perhaps it was her engagement ring.

"It is too much to hope for," replied Mrs. Brown. "I am trying not to think of it."

"Did you see me throw the life buoy to you?" asked Bunny, changing the subject.

"I'm afraid I didn't," answered Grace with a laugh.

"And my eyes were too full of water," added Mildred.

"Well, anyhow, I threw one in to you," went on Bunny.

"And I yelled when I saw you get run over," added Sue, just as if that, too, had helped. [98]

"I'm sure you did all you could," declared Mr. Watson. "And it was all our own fault that we got in your way. But no one is hurt, and we're little the worse for our adventure."

The *Fairy* slowly headed toward the dock near the big summer hotel, which was one of a number at a well-known resort on the bay. Some other boats had come up after having seen the canoe run down, but when it was found no help was needed, they sheered off again.

"How can we return your things to you?" asked the young ladies of Mrs. Brown, as they prepared to go ashore when the boat tied up at the dock.

"There is no special hurry," was the answer. "We are going to Christmas Tree Cove for the summer. You can send them there."

"I have a better plan," said Mr. Brown. "Why should we not stay here over night? We can tie up at this dock and go ashore for an evening of enjoyment. That will give the young ladies a chance to get into other dry clothes and give you back yours," he said to his wife. [99]

"Oh, yes! Let's stay!" cried Bunny. "We can have a lot of fun on shore!"

"And there's a merry-go-round!" added Sue. "I can see it!"

She pointed to one of the popular summer attractions set up near the hotel on the beach.

"Very well, we'll stay," said Mother Brown; and so it was arranged.

The four young people went ashore, the young ladies in borrowed clothes, and the men, in their own damp garments, carrying the paddles. They attracted some little attention from the crowd on the dock. It was very evident what had happened. But as canoe upsets are very common at shore resorts in the summer, no one took it very seriously, especially as no one was drowned or hurt.

"We'll send back your things in the morning," called Mildred and Grace to Mrs. Brown, as they went up to the hotel.

"You'll find us right here," said Captain Ross. "I'm mighty glad it was no worse," he said to his friends on the *Fairy*. "I should hate to have your summer outing spoiled by an accident, even if it was the fault of those in the canoe. But it reminds me of a riddle. See if you can guess it, Bunny and Sue. What goes under the water and over the water and never touches the water?" [100]

"A fish!" guessed Bunny.

"A fish is always in the water," cried Sue, laughing.

"Oh, so it is," said her brother.

"Say it again," begged Sue.

The jolly captain did so, and when Bunny and Sue gave up, after several wrong guesses, the seaman said:

"A man walking over a bridge with a pail of water on his head. He goes *over* the water, and he's *under* the water in the pail, and yet he doesn't touch the water."

"Oh, that's a good riddle!" laughed Bunny. "I'm going to fool Bunker on that."

"If the water pail upset and spilled on him then the water would touch him," said Sue, after a moment of thought. "And if he fell in the water he'd be wet."

"Yes, but you aren't supposed to do that in riddles," returned Captain Ross.

After supper on the *Fairy*, Uncle Tad took the two children on shore, Bunny and Sue having secured their mother's permission to ride on the merry-go-round. It was a big affair, playing jolly tunes, and the animals were large and gaily painted. [101]

Bunny and Sue had a number of rides, always begging for "just one more," until Uncle Tad finally said:

"No, that's enough! You'll be ill if you whirl around any more. Come, we'll walk around and look at things, and then we'll go back to the boat."

He led them around to see the other attractions at the little park near the big hotel. Somehow or other, Bunny wandered away from Uncle Tad and Sue while Sue and the old soldier were looking at a man blowing colored glass into birds, feathers, balloons and other fantastic shapes.

But finally Uncle Tad said:

"Come, Sue, we must be going now. Where's Bunny?"

"He was here a minute ago," answered Bunny's sister.

She looked around. They were on a plaza, or open space, at one end of which stood the musical merry-go-round. At the other end was a drive where little ponies and carts could be hired for short rides. [102]

As Sue and Uncle Tad looked, there suddenly dashed from this place a large, white goat. And on the back of the goat was Bunny Brown, clinging fast!

"Oh, look! Look!" cried Sue. "It's a merry-go-round goat! It's a merry goat, and Bunny's having a ride on his back!"

As she spoke the animal dashed straight for the whirling carousel, and Bunny's face, showing some fright, was turned toward his uncle and his sister. [103]

CHAPTER X

IN THE STORM

Before Sue and Uncle Tad could do anything, even if they had known what to do, something very queer happened. The goat, on whose back Bunny was riding, jumped up on the big, circular platform of the merry-go-round. It was on this platform that the wooden animals, birds, and fishes were built, and where, also, were the broad wooden seats for older folk, who did not like to get on the back of a lion or a camel and be twirled around.

The platform was broad, for boys and girls had to step up on it to make their way to whatever animal they wanted to sit on, and the men who collected the tickets also had to walk around on this wooden platform while the machine was in motion. And it was in motion when the live goat jumped on it. [104]

There was plenty of room for "Billy" on the merry-go-round, though why he jumped up on it I cannot say. You can hardly ever tell why a goat does things, anyhow.



**THE GOAT LEAPED UPON
THE MOVING MERRY-GO-
ROUND.**

Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue at Christmas Tree Cove. Page 104

Right up on the moving merry-go-round leaped the goat, with Bunny clinging to the long hair of his back. The goat slid along until he came up beside a lion, on whose back a frowsy young person was riding.

"Oh, my!" cried this girl, "one of the wooden animals has come to life." She screamed and would have fallen from the lion, Sue thought, but for the fact that a young man was standing beside her. He had come around to collect her ticket and when he heard her scream and saw her sway back and forth he grasped her.

"Sit still!" advised the ticket-taker.

"But look! Look!" cried the girl. "One of the wooden animals has come to life! Oh, I'm so afraid! And look! He has a little boy on his back!"

The goat on which Bunny was riding was quite large, really as big as one of the wooden goats of the merry-go-round, and, as the make-believe creatures were painted to resemble the real animals as nearly as possible, the sight was a surprising one. [105]

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the young man ticket-taker. "It isn't one of the wooden animals! It's a real goat from the ones over by the ponies. He's alive, of course."

The frowsy girl giggled.

"And I'm alive, too!" added Bunny, his hands wound in the goat's long hair. "But I didn't want to ride the goat up here!"

"Oh, Bunny! Bunny!" shouted Sue from the outer edge of the merry-go-round, which she and Uncle Tad had now reached. "Look out, Bunny, or you'll fall off!"

There was a laugh from the crowd of evening pleasure-seekers that had gathered at the shore resort.

"I am holding on!" cried Bunny. "Whoa now, goat!" he called.

"Stop the machine!" exclaimed Uncle Tad.

"All right; we'll stop it," said the ticket-taker, who still held to the frowsy young person on the back of the lion.

The goat seemed quiet enough now. After it had jumped up on the moving platform, with Bunny on its back, the animal just stood there, looking around. Perhaps it felt quite at home with the wooden horses, the ostriches, lions, tigers, camels, and other creatures so gaily painted and with pieces of looking glass stuck all over them. [106]

Slowly the merry-go-round came to a stop, and the ticket-taker, letting go of the girl, who had not fallen from the back of the lion, hurried to Bunny's side.

"I'll lift you off," he said.

"Thank you," answered Bunny. A moment later he was walking over to join Sue and Uncle Tad, while a man stepped from the crowd and took charge of the goat, which he led to the edge of the platform. The goat leaped down and off as Bunny had done.

"I hope my goat didn't hurt you when he ran away with you," said the man, walking up to Bunny, Sue, and Uncle Tad and leading the horned creature.

"Oh, no, he didn't hurt me," Bunny answered. "But I didn't think he'd run away with me just 'cause I got on his back."

[107]

"He isn't used to having boys and girls on his back unless he wears a saddle," the man explained.

"Did you jump on the goat's back, Bunny?" asked Uncle Tad.

"Well, I didn't exactly *jump* on," replied the little boy. "I was leaning over, looking at him, and I sort of wanted to see how it would feel to get on his back. And I did, and then he ran up on the merry-go-round with me. But I held on so I wouldn't fall."

"It's a good thing you did!" declared Sue.

"How did it happen?" asked Uncle Tad.

"All I know about it is this," said the man who owned the goat. "I have a few of these Billies and Nannies for children that don't want a ponyback ride. But I was getting the goats ready to put in the stable for the night, and I'd taken off the saddles. I had my back turned, and the first I knew I heard a shout. I turned and saw this boy on Nero's back, heading for the merry-go-round. I followed as fast as I could. Nero is a gentle goat, but I couldn't tell what he'd do when he got mixed up with the wooden animals," he finished.

[108]

"No," said Uncle Tad, "that's so. You did wrong, Bunny, to get on the goat's back without asking permission."

"I—I didn't mean to," said the little boy. "When you and Sue were looking at the glass-blower I went over to look at the ponies and the goats. And I just sort of leaned over this goat, and, first I remember, I was on his back and he ran away with me."

"There's no harm done," said the goat's owner, as the people in the crowd smiled and laughed at what had happened. "Come over in the morning and I'll let you have a regular ride on a saddle—you and your sister," he added as he looked at Sue.

"Thank you," she answered. "I'll come if mother will let me."

"I guess we have to go on to Christmas Tree Cove in the morning," announced Bunny. "Anyhow, I'm much obliged for this ride," he said. "Nero's a good goat," and he patted the head of the animal.

"Yes, he's a good goat," agreed the owner.

Then he took his horned steed back to the pony stand, the merry-go-round started off again with the loud music, and Uncle Tad took Bunny and Sue back to the *Fairy*.

[109]

Of course there was considerable talk and some laughter on board the boat when the story was told of Bunny's goat ride. His mother, laughing, told him never to do such a thing again, and, of course, Bunny said he wouldn't.

"Did you like that ride?" questioned Sue, when they were getting ready to go to bed.

"I did and I didn't," was Bunny's answer. "I got on the goat so sudden-like I didn't have time to make up my mind about it. He was an awful quick goat, Nero was."

"I guess most goats are quick. Once I saw a goat go after a man who was pasting up bills on a board. My, but that man had to run to get out of the way!"

"Maybe the goat wanted his bills or his paste," said Bunny. "I once heard that goats love to eat billboard paper just for the paste on it."

"Maybe so."

Bright and early the next morning Bunker Blue arose and began to wash down the decks of the boat. As he was splashing the water around in his bare feet with his trousers rolled up, a young man with a bundle under his arm came down to the dock.

[110]

"Here are the dresses and things Mrs. Brown lent to the young ladies," said the young man. "They are very much obliged. I brought them early, for I thought maybe you'd want to get an early start."

"Yes, I believe we are going to leave soon," answered Bunker. "But I don't like the looks of the weather," he added. "It seems to me we are going to have a storm. If you get another canoe and paddle out in it," he said, "I wouldn't go too far from shore."

"Thank you, I'll be careful," was the answer.

Bunny and Sue awakened and got ready for breakfast, and Bunker told about the visit of the young man. Then the children went out on deck to look at the sea and sky.

I say the "sea," though really it was all part of Sandport Bay, and not exactly the open ocean, though it was a very large body of water.

[111]

"Do you think it's going to rain, Bunker?" asked Sue.

"I think it's going to rain and blow, too," answered the fish and boat boy, who had learned to

read the weather signs. "But the *Fairy* is able to stand it, I think. How are you after your goat ride, Bunny?"

"Oh, I feel fine!" declared the little boy. "But I want to get to Christmas Tree Cove before long."

"So do I," added Sue. "I'm going to make a little bungalow there for my dolls."

"And I'm going to make one to camp in," declared her brother.

They started off right after breakfast, and as Bunny and Sue played around on the deck they could see their father and Captain Ross talking together and looking up at the sky every now and then.

"We'll keep near shore," they heard the captain say. "Then if the storm breaks we can tie up."

But, though the clouds scudded across the sky all day, the storm did not break. It was black and lowering when evening came, but, after another look all around, Bunny heard the captain say to their father and mother:

[112]

"We may as well keep on. It may blow over, and if we tie up over night it will take us just so much longer to get there. I'd better keep on, don't you think?"

"Yes," said Mr. Brown, "keep on."

So the *Fairy* kept on through the waters of the bay. Bunny and Sue, after being allowed out on deck to watch the distant twinkling lights of other vessels, were put to bed in their bunks, and Mrs. Brown fastened some broad canvas straps up in front of their berths.

"What are they for?" asked Sue, as she kissed her mother good night.

"So you won't fall out if the boat rolls and rocks too much in the storm," was the answer.

"Oh, I like to be out in a storm!" exclaimed Bunny.

"I do if it's not too hard a storm," said Sue.

"I think this will be only a small one," replied Mrs. Brown, but as she went out on deck and felt the strong wind and noticed how high the waves were she felt a trifle uneasy.

[113]

Some hours later Bunny and Sue were each awakened about the same time by feeling themselves being tossed about in their berths. Bunny was flung up against the canvas straps his mother had fastened, and at first he did not know what was happening. Then he heard Sue ask:

"What's the matter?"

"Don't be afraid," said Bunny. "It's only the storm, I guess. Oh, feel that!" he cried, and as he spoke the *Fairy* seemed to be trying to stand on her "head."

[114]

CHAPTER XI

WHERE IS BUNNY?

Sue Brown did not know quite what to do. As she cuddled up in the little berth aboard the *Fairy*, she felt herself being tossed over toward the edge. At first she was afraid she would be thrown out on the cabin floor, but the strips of canvas her mother had fastened in place stopped the little girl from having a fall, just as they had stopped Bunny.

Sue looked up at the tiny electric light, operated by a storage battery. Captain Ross had put it there so the children would not be in the dark if they awakened in the night and needed something.

"Bunny! Bunny!" exclaimed Sue, "I don't like a storm on a boat at night!"

Before Bunny could answer his sister the door of the little stateroom where they were was opened and Mother Brown looked in. She was dressed, and her head, face and hair were wet as though she had been out in the storm. And she really had, for a moment.

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"So you're awake, children," she said. "The storm is a bad one, and we are heading for a quiet cove where we will soon be sheltered and more quiet."

"Can't I get up, Mother, and dress?" asked Bunny. "Maybe we'll have to get off the *Fairy* and into the rowboat, and I want my clothes on."

"Yes, you may get up and dress," said Mrs. Brown. "But there is no danger that we shall have to take to the small boat. It is just a severe summer storm, with much wind and rain, but not much else."

"Does it thunder and lightning?" asked Sue.

"No; or you would have heard it and seen it before this," her mother said. "Here, Sue, I'll take you over in my room and you may dress there. Bunny, can you manage by yourself?"

"Yes, Mother," he answered.

Mrs. Brown carried Sue in her arms to the room across the main cabin. It was not easy work with the boat pitching and tossing as it was, but finally the affair was managed, and Sue had her clothes put on. Bunny dressed himself, though not without some difficulty, for when he tried to stand on his right foot to put his left shoe on he slid across the little room and against the opposite wall. But he was not hurt.

[116]

Soon all of them except Captain Ross were in the main cabin. In answer to a question about the sailor, Mr. Brown said:

"He's out steering the boat. He wants to bring her safe into Clam Cove, he says, and then we'll anchor for the night. But he thought it best for us all to be dressed. The storm is worse than any of us thought it would be."

After the first feeling had worn off of being suddenly awakened in the night, Bunny and Sue did not mind it much. They sat around, looking a little anxiously at their father or mother as the boat plunged and rolled, but when they saw how calm their father, mother, Uncle Tad and Bunker Blue were, the children took heart also.

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"Here are some cookies," said their mother, bringing out a bag from a locker. "I'd give you some milk to drink, only it would spill the way the boat is rocking."

"Yes," said Mr. Brown, with a smile, "there'd be as much milk on the floor, I imagine, as the children would drink."

The storm grew worse instead of less, but Captain Ross was a good seaman, and in about an hour he brought the *Fairy* into a sheltered harbor known as Clam Cove, because of the number of clams that were dug there.

"Now we'll ride easier," said Bunker Blue. "I'll go up and help get the anchor over," he added.

Soon Bunny Brown and his sister Sue heard sounds on deck which told of the big anchor being put over the side, and then the boat came to rest. She still pitched and tossed a little, but not nearly as much as before. The wind still blew and the rain came down in pelting drops. But the craft was water-tight and it was, as Bunker Blue said, "as dry as a bone" inside.

"You children can go back to your berths now," said Mother Brown, when the cookies had all been eaten. "I don't believe you'll be tossed out now."

[118]

"All right," assented Bunny and Sue, for they were beginning to feel sleepy in spite of the excitement of having been awakened by the storm.

And soon, save for the uneasy motion of the storm, which was not felt much in Clam Cove, there was once again calm aboard the *Fairy*.

In the morning, though the wind was still high, the rain had stopped. The outer bay, though, was a mass of big waves, and after one look at them Captain Ross said:

"I think we'd better stay here until it quiets down. We could navigate, but there's no special hurry."

"No," agreed Mr. Brown, "there isn't. We are not due at Christmas Tree Cove at any special time, so we'll take it easy."

"Then we can watch the clam boats," said Bunny. "I like to watch them."

The clam boats were of two kinds, large rowing craft in which one or two men went out and with a long-handled rake pulled clams up from the bottom of the cove. The other boats were sailing craft. They would start at one side of Clam Cove, spread their sails in a certain way, and drift across the stretch of water. Over the side of the boat were tossed big rakes with long, iron teeth. These rakes, fastened to ropes attached to the boat, dragged over the bottom of the cove much as the fishermen in the small boats dragged their rakes.

[119]

Of course the sailboats could use much larger rakes and cover a wider part of the cove. Now and then the men on board the sailboats would haul up the rakes, which were shaped something like a man's hand is when half closed and all the fingers and the thumb are spread out. The clams were dumped on deck, afterward to be washed and sorted.

The sight was not new to any of the Browns, and of course Bunker, Uncle Tad, and Captain Ross had often taken part in clam raking. But Bunny and Sue never tired of watching it. Now they sat on deck, as much out of the wind as possible, and looked at the drifting boats and at the clammers in their dorries.

The storm was passing. Gradually the wind was dying out and the waves were getting smaller.

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"I think we can start again by this afternoon," said Mr. Brown, coming up on deck following a short nap in the cabin. He had felt sleepy after dinner.

"Yes, we can leave before evening if you say so," replied Captain Ross. "How are you enjoying it?" he asked Sue. "Let's see, I know a riddle about a clam, if I can think of it. Let me see now, I wonder——"

"Where's Bunny?" asked Mrs. Brown, coming up on the deck at that moment.

"Wasn't he with you?" asked her husband.

"No, he didn't come down. I asked Bunker some time ago about him, and Bunker said he was on deck with Sue. But he isn't. Where is Bunny?"

[121]

CHAPTER XII

CHRISTMAS TREE COVE

When a family is making a trip on a boat and one of the children becomes lost, or is missing, there is always more worry than if the same thing happened on land. For the first thing a father and a mother think of when on a boat and they do not see their children or know where they are, is that the missing child has fallen into the lake, river or ocean—whatever the body of water may be.

So when Mrs. Brown came up on the deck of the *Fairy* and did not see Bunny, who she had thought was with Sue, she asked at once where he was.

And when Mr. Brown heard his wife say that Bunny had not come to the cabin he, too, began to wonder where the little boy was.

"Where did Bunny go, Sue?" asked Mother Brown. "Wasn't he sitting here with you?"

[122]

"Yes, he was here a little while ago," answered Sue. "And then I was watching two of the sailboats to see if they would bump together, and I didn't look at Bunny. When I did look he was gone, but I thought he was downstairs."

"He isn't," said Mrs. Brown, "and he isn't here on deck. Oh, if he——"

She did not finish what she was going to say, but quickly ran to the side of the boat and looked down into the water, as if she might see Bunny paddling around there. The *Fairy* was still anchored in Clam Cove, waiting for the storm to blow out.

"Is Bunny in swimming?" asked Sue.

"What's the matter?" asked Captain Ross, who was up "for'ard," as he called it, meaning the front of the boat. He and Bunker Blue were mending one of the sails. "Anything wrong, Mrs. Brown?" asked the jolly old sailor.

"I can't find Bunny," she answered. "He was here with Sue a moment ago. Oh, I'm afraid Bunny ——"

"Now, don't think that anything has happened!" interrupted Mr. Brown. "He's probably hiding somewhere."

[123]

"Bunny wouldn't do that," declared his mother.

"No, we weren't playing hide and go seek," said Sue.

"Then he must be downstairs in one of the cabins, or he is asleep in his berth," said Mr. Brown. "I'll look."

"I'll help," offered Uncle Tad, who, himself, had been taking a nap in his berth.

"I suppose he must be down below if he isn't up here," said Mrs. Brown, hoping this was true. "I want to look, too."

Sue was beginning to be a bit frightened now, and she started to follow the others below, while Captain Ross and Bunker Blue, seeing how worried Mr. and Mrs. Brown were, dropped the sail on which they were working and decided to join in the search.

It did not take them long to make a search of the boat below decks. No Bunny was to be found. He was not in his own bunk, nor in that of any one else, nor was he in the small room where the gasolene motor was built, though Bunny liked to go there to watch the whirring wheels when the motor was in motion.

[124]

"Where can he be?" exclaimed Mrs. Brown.

Then, suddenly, Sue gave a joyful cry and clapped her hands.

"I think I know where he is!" exclaimed the little girl. "I just happened to think about it. Come on!"

Wonderingly they followed her. Sue ran to the stern of the *Fairy*, where the steering wheel was placed. Here was a small rowboat turned bottomside up. It was kept for the purpose of going to and from shore when the larger craft was anchored out in the bay.

Going close to this overturned boat Sue leaned down so she could look under it. The two ends

of the boat, being higher than the middle, raised it slightly from the deck, leaving a sort of long, narrow slot. And Sue called into this slot:

"Bunny! are you there? Answer me. Are you there?"

For an instant there was no reply, and Mrs. Brown, who had begun to think she should have looked there first, was about to conclude that, after all, it was a wrong guess, when suddenly a voice answered:

[125]

"Yes; here I am."

The boat tilted to one side and out from beneath it came rolling Bunny Brown. He seemed sleepy, and his clothes were mussed while his hair was ruffled. And there was a queer look on his face.

"Why, Bunny! Bunny Brown, what possessed you to crawl under that boat and go to sleep?" asked his mother. "You have frightened us! We thought perhaps you had fallen overboard."

"No," said Bunny slowly, shaking his head, "I didn't."

"We see you didn't," said his father, a bit sternly. "But why did you hide under the boat?"

"I wasn't hiding," answered Bunny. "And if I had fallen overboard into the water you would have heard me yell," he went on, speaking slowly.

"I suppose so," agreed Mr. Brown. "But if you weren't hiding under that boat, what were you doing?"

[126]

"I was—I was thinking," answered Bunny sheepishly.

"Thinking!" exclaimed his mother.

"Yes, about the dog that took your pocketbook," went on the little boy. "I wanted to be in a quiet place where I could think about him and maybe guess where he was so I could make him give back your diamond ring, Mother. So I crawled under the boat. It was nice and warm there, and the wind didn't blow on me, and I was thinking and I was thinking, and——"

"And then you fell asleep, didn't you?" asked Uncle Tad, as they all stood around Bunny on deck.

"Yes, I guess I did," was the answer. "And I didn't dream about the dog, either."

"Did you think of any way to find him?" asked Captain Ross.

"No," answered Bunny, "I didn't. But I wish I could."

"Oh, you mustn't think any more about that dog," said his mother, with a smile, as she patted the little boy's tousled head. "I'll manage to get along without my diamond ring, though I would like to have it back."

[127]

"Well, I couldn't think," complained Bunny, with a sigh. "I guess maybe I was too sleepy."

"Better not hide yourself away again," cautioned his father. "You must be extra careful aboard a boat so your mother will not have to worry, or this trip to Christmas Tree Cove will not be any pleasure to her."

"When shall we get there—to the place where the Christmas trees are, Daddy?" asked Sue.

"Oh, to-morrow, I guess," answered Captain Ross. "I'll land you up there, and then I'll cruise back. And I'll come after you, to bring you home, whenever you want me," he added to Mr. Brown.

"We're going to stay all summer," said Bunny. "Wouldn't it be funny if we could find that big dog and your pocketbook at the Cove, Mother?" he asked.

"Oh, that could never happen!" declared Sue.

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So the lost Bunny was found, and then it was nearly time to get supper. The wind had all died out now, and it was so calm in the cove that Captain Ross decided to start the boat without further delay.

"We can tie up wherever you want to over night, or we can anchor out in the bay, or keep on going," he said to his passengers.

"I think we'd better keep on going," said Mrs. Brown. "I shall worry less about Bunny and Sue when they are lost if it happens on dry land. I'll know then that they haven't fallen overboard."

"We could fall in off shore, just the same as off a boat," suggested Bunny.

"Not quite so easily. And you must be careful when you get to the bungalow in Christmas Tree Cove," said Daddy Brown. "The bungalow is right on the shore, but the water is shallow for a long distance out," he went on.

"Oh, I'm not going to fall in!" declared Bunny.

"Then we'll start and travel all night," said Captain Ross. "Speaking of falling into the water,"

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he said, with a jolly laugh, "can you tell me the answer to this riddle, Bunny or Sue? Why should you tie a cake of soap around your neck when you go in swimming?"

"I never tied a cake of soap around my neck," said the little girl.

"I like to play the cake of soap is a boat in the bathtub," remarked Bunny. "It's lots of fun."

"But this is a riddle," went on the seaman. "Why should you tie a cake of soap around your neck if you go in swimming in deep water?"

"It can't be for you to eat if you get hungry," said Bunny, "can it, Captain Ross?"

"Of course not!" cried his sister. "How could you eat a cake of *soap*?"

"You could if it was a chocolate cake," returned the little boy. "But that isn't the answer to the riddle. Please tell us, Captain," he begged, as Bunker Blue began to pull up the anchor.

"When you go swimming in deep water and get carried too far out, if you have a cake of soap tied around your neck it might wash you ashore! Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed the jolly old sailor. "Do you see, Bunny—Sue? If you had a cake of soap on your neck it could *wash you ashore*. Soap washes, you know." [130]

"That's a pretty good riddle," said Uncle Tad, while the two children laughed. "I must remember that to tell my old friend Joe Jamison when I get back to Bellemere. A cake of soap washes you ashore! Ha! Ha!"

"Oh, I know a lot of better ones than that," said Captain Ross. "Only I can't think of 'em just now. Well, all clear, Bunker?" he called.

"Yes, sir," was the answer.

"Then start the motor."

And soon the *Fairy* was under way again.

Supper was served as the boat slipped through the blue water of the big bay. It was a calm, quiet, peaceful night, quite different from the one of the storm, and Bunny and Sue did not have to be strapped in their bunks. They slept well, and when they came on deck in the morning they looked over toward shore.

"Oh, what a lot of Santa Claus trees!" cried Sue. "Look, Bunny!"

"That's Christmas Tree Cove up there," said Captain Ross, pointing to the evergreens where they were thickest. "We'll soon be there." [131]

"And, oh, what fun we'll have!" cried Bunny. "I'm going to dig clams and catch crabs, and we'll have a clambake on shore, Sue."

"And my dolls can come to it, can't they?" asked the little girl. "I brought some of my dolls with me, but they're packed up," she added.

"Oh, yes, your dolls can come to the clambake," agreed Bunny. "Will there be any other boys up at Christmas Tree Cove to play with?" he asked his father.

"Or girls?" Sue wanted to know.

"Yes. It is quite a summer resort," was the answer. "I fancy you will have plenty of playmates."

"I had better be getting things ready to go ashore, I suppose," said Mrs. Brown.

"Yes," answered her husband. "I'll help you."

They were just going down into the cabin, and Bunny and Sue were on deck, looking at the distant green trees, when there was a sudden shock, a bump, and the boat keeled far over to one side. It seemed as if the *Fairy* had struck something in the water. [132]

"Oh, we're going to sink!" cried Sue. [133]

CHAPTER XIII

A CRASH

Bunker Blue, who was at the steering wheel of the *Fairy*, heard the dull noise, felt the shock, and saw the boat tip over to one side. Instantly he pulled the wire which shut off the motor, and then he turned the steering wheel over, trying to make the boat come upright again.

This the craft did, though Sue kept on calling:

"We're going to sink!"

Soon the boat was resting quietly in the water, on a "level keel," as a sailor would say, and

floating slowly along.

"Now we're all right, Sue!" said Bunny. "Stop your yelling! We're not going to sink!"

"How do you know?" she asked. "We bumped into something, and maybe there's a hole, and the water's coming in, and——"

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Just then Mr. and Mrs. Brown came running up on deck, followed by Uncle Tad and Captain Ross. The old seaman, with an anxious look around, called to Bunker Blue.

"What happened? Did some one run into us?"

"Felt more as if we ran into something," Bunker answered. "But I didn't see so much as a canoe."

"We struck something under water, of that I'm sure," said Captain Ross. "We'd better take a look. We're near shore, anyhow, and it won't take long to row over if we have to," he added. "But we surely did hit something."

"Maybe it was a whale," suggested Sue.

"Whales don't come up in the bay. They're too big and fat," declared Bunny.

"Well, maybe then it was a shark," the little girl went on. "They're not so fat."

Captain Ross and Mr. Brown hurried below deck again, but presently came up, and the seaman said:

"We can't find anything wrong below—no leak or anything. We may have hit a big, submerged log or piece of a wreck. Start the motor again, Bunker, and we'll see if that's all right."

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The gasolene engine was not damaged, but something else was wrong. As soon as the machinery started there was a trembling and throbbing throughout the whole boat, but she did not move ahead.

"I see what the matter is!" said Captain Ross. "The propeller is broken. It hit something."

"Oh, can't we go to Christmas Tree Cove?" asked Sue.

"We'll get there somehow," answered Captain Ross. "But the propeller is surely broken."

And so it proved. The propeller, you know, is something like an electric fan. It whirls around underwater and pushes the boat ahead. The propeller on the *Fairy* had struck a floating log and had been broken, as they found out later.

"If we can't go by means of the engine we can sail," remarked Captain Ross, when it was found that the boat would not move an inch, no matter how fast the motor whirled around. "Hoist the sail, Bunker. We'll get Bunny Brown and his sister Sue to Christmas Tree Cove yet! Hoist the sail!"

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"Oh, it's lots of fun to sail!" cried Bunny.

"I like it better than motoring!" added Sue, who was no longer yelling.

Soon the white sail was hoisted, and, as the wind blew, the *Fairy* slipped easily along through the water. There was no "jiggle" now, as Bunny called it, for the motor was not running like a sewing machine down in the hold of the boat.

Nearer and nearer the boat approached the shore. The clumps of green trees became more plain. Soon little houses and bungalows could be seen. Then the children saw a long dock extending out into the water.

"That's where we tie up," said Captain Ross. "I think the wind will hold until we get there."

"It's too bad you had such bad luck bringing us here," said Mrs. Brown. "I'm sorry, Captain, that your boat is broken."

"Oh, a smashed propeller isn't anything," he answered, with a laugh. "I was going to get a new one, anyhow. I'll just land you folks and then I'll sail back to Bellemere and have my boat fixed."

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"And then you can come back and get us," said Sue; "but not for a long, long time, 'cause Bunny and I are going to stay at Christmas Tree Cove and have fun."

"That's what we are!" said Bunny Brown.

Slowly the boat swept up to the dock. Then the sail was lowered, and she was tied fast. Next began the work of unloading the things the Browns had brought with them to keep house all summer in the little bungalow, which was not far from the dock.

Mr. Brown, Uncle Tad, Captain Ross and Bunker Blue unloaded the things, and Mr. Brown hired a man to cart them to the bungalow. Bunny and Sue said good-bye to Captain Ross, who, with the help of a man whom he could hire at Christmas Tree Cove, would sail his boat back later that day. Then the children, with their mother, walked up a little hill to the little house where they hoped to spend many happy days.

"Oh, isn't it pretty!" exclaimed Sue, as she strolled up the path, bordered with clam shells. "It's awful nice here."

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"I hope you will like it," said Mrs. Madden, the woman who had been engaged by Mr. Brown to open the bungalow and sweep it out in readiness for the family. "I live near here, and we like it very much," she added, as she held the door open for Mrs. Brown and the children.

"Can you catch any fish?" asked Bunny, looking down toward the water and the dock where his father and the others were lifting things out from the boat.

"Oh, yes, there's fine fishing and clamming and crabbing," said Mrs. Madden. "My boy and girl will show you the best places."

"That will be nice," said Mrs. Brown. "Now we'll have a look at the place." Neither Mother Brown nor the children had yet seen the bungalow which Mr. Brown had engaged for them.

They went inside, and while Mrs. Madden was showing Mrs. Brown about the house Bunny and Sue ran off by themselves to see what they could find.

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Mrs. Madden was just pointing out to Mrs. Brown what a pleasant place the dining-room was, giving a view of the bay, when suddenly a great crash sounded throughout the house. It was followed by silence, and then Sue's voice rang out, saying:

"Oh, Mother! Come quick! Bunny's in! Bunny's in!"

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CHAPTER XIV

IN THE DARK

Mrs. Brown, who had been looking at the beautiful view of Christmas Tree Cove from the window of the bungalow dining-room, turned to Mrs. Madden when Sue's cry rang out.

"Something has happened to those children!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "Where are they calling from? I must go to them."

"That cry sounded as if it came from the pantry," answered the other woman. "It's just through that door," and she pointed.

As Mother Brown started for the place Sue called again:

"Please come quick! Bunny's in and he can't get out!"

"What can't he get out of?" asked Mrs. Brown.

Mother Brown pushed open the door leading into the pantry, and there she saw a strange sight. Sue was standing beside Bunny and trying to pull him out of a barrel in which he was doubled up in a funny way, almost as a clown in a circus sometimes doubles himself up to slide through a keg. Only Bunny was not sliding through. He was doubled up and stuck in the barrel.

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"He's in," explained Sue, "and I can't get him out."

"And I can't get out either!" added Bunny. "I'm stuck!"

"Are you hurt?" asked his mother.

"No, not 'zactly," he replied. "'Cept it sort of pinches me."

Mrs. Brown did not stop to ask how it had happened. She took hold of Bunny on one side, and Mrs. Madden took hold of him on the other. Then, while Sue helped them hold down on the barrel, they pulled up on the little fellow and soon had him out. Luckily the edge of the barrel was smooth and without any nails, so that Bunny was not scratched nor were his clothes torn.

"Now tell me about it," said his mother, as she set him on the floor and led him and Sue out of the small pantry.

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"Well, I—I was climbing up on the barrel to see if there was anything to eat on the shelves," explained Bunny Brown. "And some boards were on the barrel. I stepped on them, but they slipped; and then——"

"And then Bunny slipped!" broke in Sue. "I saw him slip, but I couldn't stop him."

"And then I went right on down into the barrel," resumed Bunny. "And I was stuck there, and Sue hollered like anything, and—well, I didn't find a single thing to eat," he ended.

"No, I didn't order any food for you, as I didn't know just what you'd want," explained Mrs. Madden. "If you're hungry," she said to the children, "you can come over to my cottage—it isn't far—and I can give you some bread and milk."

"Oh, I am hungry!" said Bunny.

"So'm I," added Sue.

"I couldn't think of troubling you," put in Mrs. Brown. "We have some things on the boat, and ___"

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"I've just baked some cookies," went on Mrs. Madden, who lived at Christmas Tree Cove all the year around. "I'm sure the children would like them. My boy and girl, who are about the same age as yours, like my cookies very much;" and she smiled at Bunny and Sue.

"Oh, Mother," began Bunny, "couldn't we—"

"Let me take them over and give them a little lunch while you are getting things to rights," urged the kind woman to Mrs. Brown. "It will be no trouble at all, and Rose and Jimmie will be glad to see them."

"Are they your children?" asked Bunny.

"Yes, dear. And they'll be glad if you'll play with them."

"Very well, they may go. And thank you very much for the invitation," said Mrs. Brown. "It will be better to have them out of the way when the men are bringing in the trunks and things. But I hope they will give you no trouble. Don't fall into any more barrels, Bunny!"

"I won't," promised the little boy. "I wouldn't 'a' fallen in this one if the boards hadn't slipped."

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"It's the flour barrel," explained Mrs. Madden. "The family that was here last year used to have a regular cover for the barrel, but one of the boys took the cover to make a boat of, and after that they put some loose boards back on."

"I'll have Mr. Brown make a new cover for the barrel," said Mrs. Brown. "But that doesn't mean, Bunny, that you may climb on it again," she added.

"Oh, I won't," he agreed. "I was just climbing up to see if there was anything to eat on the pantry shelves. But I won't have to do that if you're going to give us some cookies," he added, looking at Mrs. Madden.

"Yes, I'm going to give you some cookies," she laughed. "Come along. I'll bring them back safely," she added.

So, while Mr. Brown, Captain Ross, Bunker Blue and Uncle Tad carried the things up to the bungalow from the boat and dock, Bunny and Sue followed Mrs. Madden to her cottage not far from the bungalow. Mr. Madden was a clammer and fisherman, and his wife did some work for the summer colonists.

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Bunny and Sue saw a little boy and girl of about their own ages looking at them as they neared the cottage.

"Here are some new playmates for you, Jimmie and Rose," said their mother. "They are hungry, too."

"And my brother Bunny fell in a barrel when he was looking for something to eat on the pantry shelves," explained Sue.

"Did it hurt you?" Jimmie Madden wanted to know.

"No; it was fun," laughed Bunny Brown, and then he told of that adventure.

Mrs. Madden brought out some glasses of milk, slices of bread and jam, and also a plateful of cookies, at the sight of which the eyes of Bunny and Sue opened wide with delight. Then followed a pleasant little play party on the shady porch of the cottage.

Rose and Jimmie told of the fun to be had at Christmas Tree Cove—how there were shallow wading places, deeper pools for bathing, and little nooks where one could fish.

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"Can you go out in a boat?" asked Jimmie of Bunny.

"Yes, if somebody bigger goes with us," Bunny answered. "We can get my Uncle Tad to take us out."

"Sometimes Rose and I go out with my father when he's fishing or digging clams," said the Christmas Tree Cove lad. "I can dig clams at low tide."

"I've done that, too," said Bunny. "We live on Sandport Bay."

The four children talked and played until it was time for Bunny and Sue to run back to the bungalow. They found that all the things had been brought up from the boat and that Captain Ross had sailed away again. The bungalow was furnished, and Mrs. Brown had only to bring such things as knives and forks for the table, linen for the beds, and the clothes they were to wear.

A grocer and a butcher had called while Bunny and Sue were at the Madden cottage, and now supper was being prepared by Bunker Blue and Uncle Tad, each of them being almost as good a cook as was Mrs. Brown.

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Mrs. Brown and her husband were busy making up the beds for the night, and as Bunny and Sue came racing in, almost as hungry as though they had not been given a lunch by Mrs. Madden, their mother called to them:

"Get washed for supper now, children."

A little later they were sitting down to their first meal in the bungalow at Christmas Tree Cove.

"Do you think you are going to like it here?" asked Daddy Brown.

"It's dandy!" exclaimed Bunny, being careful not to talk with his mouth too full of bread and butter. "And Jimmie is a nice boy."

"I like Rose, too," said Sue.

After supper the children ran over to the cottage to play again, and before bedtime they walked along the sandy beach with their father and mother. But pretty soon it was noticed that Bunny and Sue were not saying much, and their walk was becoming slow.

"Time for little sailors to turn in!" said Mother Brown, and soon Bunny and Sue were slumbering in little white beds in the bungalow. [148]

The rest of the family, except Bunker Blue, sat up rather late, talking over the events of the past few days. They had enjoyed the trip to Christmas Tree Cove, all except the storm.

"I know we'll have a lovely summer," said Mrs. Brown, as she and her husband went to bed.

When they were passing Bunny's room a dog barked in the distance. The little fellow seemed to hear it, for he sat up in bed and cried:

"There! There he is! There's the dog that has your ring, Mother! I'm going to get it!"

"He's talking in his sleep again," whispered Mr. Brown.

"Yes," agreed his wife in a low voice. "The loss of the pocketbook seems to get on his mind. Go to sleep, Bunny," she murmured to him, going into his room, and pressing his head down on the pillow. Then he turned over and went off to Slumberland again.

The next day and the many that followed were full of joy for Bunny Brown and his sister Sue. They played with Rose and Jimmie, they waded in the water, they sailed little boats, and they made houses in the sand. Often, as they sat on the beach, Bunny would look back toward the thick green clumps of evergreen trees which gave the place its name. [149]

"Couldn't we go and take a walk in them?" he asked Jimmie one day.

"Yes," was the answer. "Only you want to be careful."

"Why?" asked Bunny.

"'Cause the woods are awful thick. You can't see your way very well, and once Rose and I got lost."

"Oh, we wouldn't go in very far," said Bunny. "Some day I'm going into those woods."

Two or three days after that, when he and Sue had played in the sand until they were tired, Bunny said:

"Let's go to the woods!"

"All right!" agreed Sue. "Shall we get Jimmie and Rose?"

"No, let's go by ourselves," said her brother. "I want to see if we can find our way all by ourselves." [150]

And so, not telling their father or mother or Uncle Tad or Bunker Blue anything about it, off the two children started.

It was pleasant, shady and cool in the evergreen woods of Christmas Tree Cove. On the ground were brown pine needles and the shorter ones from the spruces and the hemlocks. Here and there the sun shone down through the thick branches, but not too much. It was like being in a green bower.

On and on wandered Bunny and Sue, thinking what a nice place it was. They found pine cones and odd stones, with, here and there, a bright flower.

All of a sudden Sue looked around.

"Bunny, it's getting dark," she said. "I can't see the sun any more. I guess it's night, and we'd better go back home."

"I don't believe it's night," said the little boy. "I guess the trees are so thick we can't see the sun. But we can go home. I'm getting hungry, anyhow. Come on."

They turned about to go back, and walked on for some time. Sue took hold of Bunny's hand. [151]

"It's getting terrible dark," she said. "Where's home, Bunny?"

The little boy looked around.

"I—I guess it isn't far," he said. "But it is dark, Sue. I wish I had a flashlight. Next time I'm

going to bring one. But we'll soon be home."

However, they were not. It rapidly grew darker, and at last Bunny Brown knew what had happened.

"We're lost, and it's going to be a dark night," he said, holding more tightly to Sue's hand. "We're lost in the Christmas trees!" he added, and his sister gave a little cry and held tightly to him.

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CHAPTER XV

BUNNY'S TOE

For some little time Bunny Brown and his sister Sue stood among the Christmas trees, as they called the evergreens that lined the shore of the cove. The night seemed to get darker and darker. It was really only dusk, and it was much lighter out on the open beach than it was under the trees. But the trouble was that Bunny and Sue were in among the evergreens and they thought it later than it really was.

"Oh, Bunny, what are we going to do?" asked his sister after a while, during which she had held tightly to his hand and looked about.

Bunny was looking around also, trying to think what was the best thing to do. He was older than his sister, and he felt that he must take care of her and not frighten her.

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"I—I guess we'd better walk along, Sue," said Bunny at last.

"But maybe then we'll get lost more," Sue suggested.

"We can't be lost any more than we are," declared Bunny. "We can't see our bungalow and we don't know where it is and—and, well, we'd better walk on."

Bunny looked at his sister. He saw her lips beginning to tremble, dark as it was under the trees. And when Sue's lips quivered in that way Bunny knew what it meant.

"Sue, are you going to cry?" he asked, coming to a stop after they had walked on a little way. "Are you going to cry—real?"

"I—I was, Bunny," she answered. "Don't you want me to?"

"No, I don't!" he said, very decidedly. "It's of no use to cry, 'cause you can't find your house that way, and it makes your nose hurt. Don't cry, Sue."

"All right, I won't," bravely agreed the little girl. "I won't cry real, I'll just cry make-believe."

And then and there some tears rolled out of her eyes, down her cheeks, and dropped on the ground. Sue also "sniffled" a little, and she seemed to be holding back gasping, choking sounds in her throat.

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Bunny looked at her in some surprise. He saw the salty tears on her cheeks.

"That's awful like real crying, Sue," he said.

"Well, it isn't. It's only *make-believe*, like—like the crying we saw the lady do in the mov-movin' pictures!" exclaimed Sue, choking back what was really a real sob. "I'm only making believe," she went on. "But if we don't stop being lost pretty soon, Bunny, maybe I'll have to cry real."

"Well," answered the little boy, with a sigh, as he took a firmer hold of Sue's hand, "maybe you will."



**BUNNY AND SUE GET
LOST IN THE WOODS.**

Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue at Christmas Tree Cove. Page 154

Then the children walked on together, making their way through the dark Christmas woods. They really did not know where they were going. It was some time since Bunny had glimpsed a sight of the bungalow.

All at once, as they walked along, they heard the distant bark of a dog. At once Sue stood still and pulled her brother to a stop also. [155]

"Bunny! did you hear that?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied, "I did. It's nothing but a dog, and he's a good way off, 'cause his bark was real little."

"But, Bunny! maybe it's the dog that took mother's pocketbook and ring," Sue went on. "If it is we ought to chase him!" She was forgetting her fear of being lost now in the excitement over hearing the dog bark and in thinking he might be the one that had caused the loss of the diamond ring.

"Listen!" whispered Bunny.

He and Sue stood in the fast-darkening woods and to their ears the bark of the dog sounded fainter now.

"He's going away," announced Bunny. "Anyhow, I don't s'pose he was the same dog. That dog never could get away up here. It must be some other one."

"Well, maybe it is," agreed Sue. "Oh, Bunny, when are we going to get home?" she asked, and this time it sounded very much as though she were going to cry in earnest. [156]

"I guess we'll be home pretty soon now," said Bunny hopefully. "Let's walk over this way;" and he pointed to a new path that crossed the one they had been walking along for some time.

Sue was very willing to leave it to Bunny, and she walked along beside her brother, never once letting go his hand. All at once the children heard a rustling in the leaves of the bushes that grew amid the trees. They could hear little sticks being broken, as though some one were stepping on them.

"Oh, Bunny!" exclaimed Sue, shrinking close to her brother, "maybe it is the dog coming after us!"

"It couldn't be," said Bunny quickly. "If it was the dog he'd bark, wouldn't he?"

"I guess he would," Sue answered. "But we—we'd, better look out, Bunny."

"I'll get a stick," offered the little boy, "and if it's a bad dog I'll—"

He was interrupted by a cry from Sue—a joyful cry.

"Oh, Bunny," shouted the little girl, "it isn't a dog at all! It's Bunker Blue! Here he is! Did you come for us, Bunker?" she asked, as Mr. Brown's boat boy came brushing his way through the shrubbery. [157]

"Yes, I've been looking for you," answered Bunker. "Your mother was getting worried, but Rose and Jimmie Madden said they'd seen you come up into these woods, and I thought I'd find you here."

"Oh, I'm so glad you did, Bunker!" cried Sue, catching hold of one of his hands. "We were lost—"

Bunny and I were—and we heard a dog bark; and maybe he was the one that took my mother's pocketbook. Did you hear him, Bunker?"

"Yes, I heard him, Sue," he said, with a smile at the children who were no longer lost. "But it isn't the same dog, I'm pretty sure. That pocketbook and ring are gone forever, I guess. Now come on home."

"Do you know the way?" asked Sue, as Bunny took hold of Bunker's other hand.

"Oh, yes. And it isn't far to the bungalow," answered the fish boy. "You couldn't see it on account of the thick trees."

And, surely enough, in a little while he led them out on the path to the beach and they were soon at the bungalow again. [158]

"You must not go off into these woods alone again," said Mrs. Brown. "They are thicker and darker than the woods at home, Bunny, and it is easier for you to get lost in them. Don't go to them alone again."

"No'm, I won't," promised the little fellow. "But wouldn't it have been fine, Mother, if we could have found the dog that took your diamond ring?"

"Yes, Bunny, it would be lovely," said Mrs. Brown. "But I'm afraid that will never happen."

There were so many things to do to have fun at Christmas Tree Cove that Bunny Brown and his sister Sue hardly knew what to play at first. Each day brought new joys. They could build houses on the sand, paddle or bathe in the cool, shallow water, sail tiny boats which Uncle Tad made for them, or take walks with their mother.

Daddy Brown stayed for several days at the cove, and then he had to go back to Bellemere to his dock and boat business. But he said he would come to the cove again as soon as he could. [159]

Uncle Tad and Bunker stayed at the bungalow to help Mrs. Brown, and Bunker often took Bunny and Sue out in a rowboat on the quiet waters of the cove.

One day Mrs. Brown took some sewing, packed a small basket of lunch, and said to the children:

"Now, Bunny and Sue, we will have a little picnic all by ourselves. Bunker and Uncle Tad are going fishing, so we will go down to the beach and stay all the afternoon. We will eat our lunch there, and while I sit and sew you children can play around."

Bunny and Sue thought this would be fun, and soon they started off. It was a beautiful day, sunny but not too hot, and soon Mrs. Brown was busy with her needle while Sue and her brother played on the sand.

Mother Brown was trying to thread a very fine needle, which seemed to have closed its eye and gone to sleep, when suddenly Sue came running up to her so fast that she almost overturned the sun umbrella which Mrs. Brown had raised to make a shade. [160]

"Oh, Mother! Mother!" gasped Sue, so out of breath that she could hardly speak. "Oh, Mother! Come quick!"

"What's the matter?" asked Mrs. Brown, getting quickly to her feet.

"Oh, it's Bunny's toe! It's Bunny's toe!" was all Sue said, and, catching hold of her mother's hand, she pulled her down toward the water. [161]

CHAPTER XVI

OVERBOARD

Mrs. Brown was used to seeing things happen to Bunny and Sue. They were lively children, getting into mischief fully as often as other tots of their same age did, and it was not unusual to have one of them hurt slightly.

So when Sue ran up to her mother and began to cry out about Bunny's toe, Mrs. Brown looked down the beach where she had left the two children playing. There she saw Bunny dancing around on one foot in a shallow pool of water, left there when the tide went out. And as he danced on one foot Bunny held the other up in the air, and he was crying something which his mother could not hear.

"Sue," asked Mrs. Brown, as she hurried down the slope leading to the beach proper, "did Bunny step on a broken bottle and cut his toe?" [162]

"No, Mother, it isn't that," answered the little girl. "I don't know just what it is. I was making a little house on the sand, and Bunny was wading in the water. All of a sudden he yelled, and told me to go and get you 'cause there was something the matter with his toe."

"He probably cut himself," said Mrs. Brown, and she began to search in her pocket for an extra handkerchief. It would not be the first time Bunny or Sue had suffered a cut foot because of stepping on a sharp shell or a piece of glass while in wading.

But when Mrs. Brown and Sue reached the edge of the little pool in which Bunny was hopping about on one foot, holding himself up by leaning on a piece of driftwood he had picked up and was using as a crutch, his mother saw what the matter was.

"Take it off my toe! Take it off my toe!" cried Bunny.

"It's a big, pinching crab," said Mrs. Brown. "Oh, Bunny, I'm so sorry! Come out of the water and I'll make it let go of you. Come out!"

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By this time Sue, also, had seen the cause of the trouble. A big crab had been caught when the tide went down, and was in the pool of water, which, surrounded by sand, was like a little lake. Bunny must have stepped on the creature when wading. It had nipped the big toe of his left foot, and was holding on, though Bunny had raised his foot out of the water as far as he could.

"Come here, Bunny. I'll get him off for you," his mother called.

"I can't come! How am I going to walk on one foot?" and Bunny howled, for the crab was pinching hard.

"Can't you skip, as we do when we play hopscotch?" asked Sue.

"Maybe," her brother answered.

He was about to try it, and his mother was just going to tell him that a better way would be to dip his foot back in the water when the crab might swim away, when the pinching creature decided to let go anyhow. It loosened its claws and dropped with a splash into the puddle of water.

"Oh, he's gone! He let go my toe!" cried Bunny, and then he ran up the sandy shore as fast as he could go.

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"Let me see where he pinched you," said Mrs. Brown, when Bunny had reached her side. "Is it bleeding?"

"Yes, I guess it is! And maybe he pinched my whole toe off," said Bunny, almost ready to cry.

He held up his bare foot, and his mother looked at the toe. It was quite red, but the skin was not broken and there was no blood.

"Is it—is it off?" asked Bunny, his voice trembling.

"No, you silly boy, it isn't even bleeding," laughed his mother.

"Well, it—it felt as if it was off," said Bunny. "I don't like crabs."

"No, they aren't very pleasant when they nip you," agreed his mother. "But this one took such a big pinch and his claw was so much over your toe nail that he really did very little damage. You'd better not wade in that pool any more."

"I won't," decided Bunny.

He sat down and softly rubbed his toe where the crab had pinched him. As Mrs. Brown had said, there was no blood, though it does not take much of a nip from even a small crab to break the skin and cause a bleeding. And sometimes the pinch of a crab, where it does draw blood, becomes very sore.

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However, Bunny was well out of this adventure, and when he had got over his fright his mother took him and Sue up under the shady umbrella and gave them some lunch.

"But I don't want any more crabs to bite me," said Bunny.

The remainder of the day was spent in happy fashion, though Bunny waded in no more pools.

"I'm glad the crab didn't pinch me," said Sue, as she wiggled her toes in the soft sand. "'Cause my foot's littler than Bunny's," she went on, holding it near his, "and maybe that crab would have taken hold of two of my toes, and bitten them all off."

"Oh, I think that wouldn't have happened," said Mrs. Brown. "A crab doesn't really want to nip children just for fun. They'll get away from you if they can; but if they think you are going to hurt them they'll open their claws and pinch. Bunny must have stepped on the one that took hold of his toe."

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"Maybe I did," said Bunny. "I stepped on something, and I thought it was a clam shell, but it wiggled out from under my foot and then my toe was grabbed."

When Bunny and Sue went back to the bungalow that night they saw Bunker Blue busy at work on a small boat at the dock, which was at the end of the walk leading down from "Bark Lodge," as their place was named, for it was made of logs with the bark on.

"What are you doing, Bunker?" Sue called to him.

"I got bit by a crab!" announced Bunny, not giving the fish boy time to answer. "He held on to my toe and I lifted him right out of the water, same as we catch crabs on a string and fishhead."

"Is that so?" asked Bunker, and he went on hammering away at the boat. It was another craft than the one Mr. Brown had hired for the use of his family.

"What are you making?" Bunny wanted to know, satisfied, now that he had told the story of the crab. [167]

"Oh, I'm making a little sailboat," answered Bunker. "A man on the other side of the cove, where your Uncle Tad and I were fishing to-day, sold me this boat cheap, and I'm going to rig up a sail for it. I don't want to row around all summer, so I'm going to sail."

"Oh, can we go with you?" asked Sue.

"I can help you sail, can't I, Bunker?" questioned Bunny.

"Yes, if your mother lets you," was the answer.

After supper Uncle Tad helped Bunker put the sail on the boat. It was not a very large boat nor did it have a very large sail, but the fish boy said it would do for cruising about the cove.

"May we sail with him, Mother?" asked Bunny the next day, when Bunker announced that the boat was ready for a trial.

"Is it safe?" asked Mrs. Brown of the tall lad.

"I think so," he answered. "I'll give it a tryout by myself first, though." [168]

Bunny and Sue watched Bunker Blue sailing to and fro in Christmas Tree Cove, and finally he headed back for the dock.

"I'll take Bunny and Sue out now if you'll let them come with me," said Bunker to Mrs. Brown, who, with the children, was watching the trial of the new sailboat.

"Very well. But be careful and don't go too far!" cautioned the children's mother.

Delighted by the prospect of a ride before the wind around the cove, Bunny and Sue got into the boat. There was just about room enough for three. Bunker had rigged up a rudder on the boat and there was a small centerboard in the middle to keep the craft from tipping over in a hard blow.

"All aboard!" cried Bunny, pretending to help Sue to her place.

"All aboard!" answered Bunker, as he pulled over the tiller and let the boat swing out from the dock. Then for some time the children sailed about the cove, while Mrs. Brown watched them from the bank. Mr. Brown was to come up to the cove that night on the evening train, to stay for several days. [169]

As Mrs. Brown was watching, she saw something dark slide suddenly over the side of the sailboat, and at the same time she heard Sue's screams and saw Bunker let go the sail and make a grab for an object in the water.

"Bunny has fallen overboard!" cried his mother, springing to her feet and running down to the dock. "Uncle Tad, come quickly! Bunny has fallen overboard!" [170]

CHAPTER XVII

THE NEW BOY

Uncle Tad, who was mending a broken fishing rod just outside the bungalow, heard Mrs. Brown's cry and saw her running down to the dock. He also looked across the cove and saw the sailboat in which he knew Bunny and Sue had gone for a ride with Bunker Blue. And then Uncle Tad guessed what had happened.

"Man overboard!" he cried, though of course Bunny was only a little boy. But that is what is always said when anybody—man, woman, or child—falls into the water.

"Man overboard!"

Uncle Tad raced down to the dock and saw Mrs. Brown trying to loosen the rope that held to the pier the boat Mr. Brown had hired for the summer.

"Let me do it," said Uncle Tad, who knew considerable about boats from having lived so long with the Browns. [171]

Just then a voice behind Mrs. Brown cried:

"He's got him out! Bunker Blue has got him out!" And there, on the pier, stood Jimmie Madden with his sister Rose. He pointed across to the now motionless sailboat.

Uncle Tad and Mrs. Brown had not looked at it for the last few seconds, as they were busy trying to get ready the other boat to go to the rescue. But, looking now, they saw Bunker Blue lift Bunny Brown from the water. And a moment later Bunker's voice rang out as he called:

"You don't need to come! Bunny is all right! I'll soon bring him to shore!"

"Oh, I'm so glad!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, and she dropped the rope she had been trying to loosen, while Uncle Tad, who had knelt down on the pier to do the same thing, stood up.

As Jimmie had said and Uncle Tad and Mother Brown had seen, Bunker had pulled Bunny from the water, and a little later the sail was filled with wind and was bringing the boat to the dock. Bunny and Sue could be seen sitting safely in it, and Bunny did not appear much the worse from having fallen overboard, though, of course, he was soaking wet. [172]

"I saw him fall in," explained Jimmie Madden. "Then I ran over here."

"And I ran over, too," said his sister Rose.

"I could 'a' jumped in and got him out if he'd been near shore. I can swim," went on Jimmie, who was a regular seashore boy and quite at home in the water.

"I can swim, too," went on Rose.

"I'm glad neither of you had to jump in after Bunny," said Mrs. Brown, as the boat neared the dock. "I wonder how Bunny happened to fall overboard."

This was explained when the wet, dripping little chap was helped out of the boat to which Bunker had fitted a sail.

"He saw something floating in the water," said Bunker, "and he reached for it, though I told him not to, as I was going about. But he did, and he lost his balance, and in he went."

"But Bunker got him right out again!" Sue made haste to say. [173]

"It wasn't Bunker's fault," added Bunny. "He told me not to lean over."

"Then you should have minded," said his mother. "It was very wrong of you, Bunny, to do that. I told you to mind Bunker when you went out with him. Now, as a punishment, you may not go sailing again this week."

And though Bunny cried and said he would never disobey again, he was punished just as his mother said he must be. Sue was allowed to go for a sail, while Bunny had to stay on shore.

"You must be made to understand that you have done wrong," his mother said.

There was really very little danger, for the water in the cove was not deep, and Bunker was such a good swimmer that he, very likely, could have managed to get out both Bunny Brown and his sister Sue if they had fallen in together.

After his days of punishment, however, Bunny was allowed to go sailing again, and Bunker even let him steer a little, which made Bunny very happy.

"Some day I am going to learn all about steering," declared Bunny to Sue, "and then I'll be able to take out a boat all alone." [174]

"You be careful, Bunny Brown, or maybe the boat will sail off with you," warned Sue, earnestly. "And it might sail 'way off to—to Boston, or—or China—or—or Mexico."

"It couldn't sail that far. I wouldn't let it."

"It might run away with you."

"Boats can't run—they sail. You ought to know that."

"It could sail away ever so far, if it wanted to, Bunny Brown. An' if it sailed 'way off to—to China, how ever would you get back?"

"I'd sail back."

"How could you if you didn't know the way?"

"I'd ask some—some Chinaman. I know how to talk to 'em. I can talk to that Chinaman who has the laundry near the school."

"Huh! He ain't a real Chinaman—he's an American Chinaman. I mean a real Chinaman Chinaman—that can't talk like we do."

"I'd find a way—just you wait and see," said Bunny confidently. [175]

The summer days passed pleasantly at Christmas Tree Cove. Mr. Brown found it possible to come up more often than he had expected, and he and his wife, with the children, Uncle Tad and Bunker Blue, went on excursions on land and water.

Often when her husband would arrive at the bungalow, coming up from his dock office at Bellemere, Mrs. Brown would ask:

"Did you hear anything about the strange dog or my lost pocketbook and ring?"

And her husband would shake his head and answer:

"There is no news. I saw Mr. Foswick, the carpenter. He said he keeps looking around his shop, thinking he may find the things the dog dropped, but they have not been discovered yet."

Then Mrs. Brown would be sad for a little while as she thought of her lovely diamond engagement ring, but she did not let Bunny or Sue see that she was unhappy.

One afternoon it was very hot at Christmas Tree Cove. The sun's rays beat down and there was scarcely any breeze.

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"Come on, kiddies!" called Mother Brown to Bunny and Sue. "We will put on our bathing suits and go down to the water. If there is any cool place this hot day it is there."

Of course Bunny and Sue were delighted with this. They never tired of bathing, and soon they were splashing about in the cove. They were not the only ones, for many of the neighboring cottagers and bungalow residents took advantage of the water to cool off.

"Be careful and don't go out too far!" called Mrs. Brown to Bunny and Sue, as she went up on the beach to talk to some friends, leaving the children in the water. "The tide is coming in."

"We'll be careful!" promised Bunny. "Here, Sue, give me your hand and we'll wade out to the float."

The float was made of some planks fastened to empty barrels, and it was a fine place to play. As Sue and Bunny were wading out they noticed a boy whom they had not seen before wading beside them.

"Hello!" said Bunny, in friendly spirit. "Did you just come?"

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"Yes. We came to the hotel last night," was the answer. "I never was at the ocean before. We're going to stay all through August."

"This isn't the ocean," said Bunny. "It's just Christmas Tree Cove. The ocean is lots bigger."

"I'd like to see it," said the new boy.

"Look out!" suddenly called Sue. "Here comes a big wave!"

She had just time to take a tighter hold of Bunny and turn, but the new boy did not seem to know much about bathing or waves. He stood waiting, and, an instant later he was knocked down and his head went under water.

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CHAPTER XVIII

HELD FAST

The first that Mrs. Brown knew of what was happening was when a woman near her screamed. Then this woman hurried down the sands to the edge of the water in which Bunny, Sue, and a number of other children were bathing.

Mrs. Brown had been talking to several women of the summer bungalow colony near Bark Lodge, and one of these ladies had just remarked that a new family had come to the hotel.

"It is Mr. and Mrs. Jonas Slater," Mrs. Brown was told. "They have a little boy named Harry, about as old as your Bunny."

And just as Mrs. Blaney, who was telling this to Mrs. Brown, finished, Mrs. Brown heard a woman scream and saw her run down to the water.

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"That's Mrs. Slater now," said Mrs. Blaney. "I wonder what the matter is."

"Her little boy was just knocked down by a big wave," said another woman who had been sitting on the sand talking to Mrs. Brown. "Perhaps we had better go and help her."

It was Harry Slater, the new boy to whom Bunny had been talking, who had been knocked down and rolled over by the big wave. His mother, sitting on the beach, had seen what had taken place. Then she had screamed and had hurried down the sands.

But, as it happened, Bunny Brown was nearer at hand to give the needed help. He and Sue were used to the big waves, which came in Christmas Tree Cove only when one of the large excursion steamers stopped at a nearby dock. The propeller of the steamer sent the waves rushing inshore almost like the surf of the larger ocean outside.

"Oh, the wave knocked him down!" cried Sue, who had seen the mass of water coming, and had held to Bunny while they turned a little and jumped so they did not fall. "Look, Bunny, he's down in the water!"

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"I know!" exclaimed Bunny! "I see him! I'll get him up!"

Bunny and Sue had lived so long in Bellemere near the water that, young as they were, they knew the thing to do when people fall into or down in the water is to get them out as soon as possible, in order that they may not be smothered.

So, as soon as he had made sure that Sue was all right, Bunny leaned down, and, catching hold of Harry Slater, the new boy, who was floundering around under water, lifted him up. It was easy for Bunny to do this, as a body in water weighs less than outside.

Thus Bunny easily lifted Harry up and held him on his feet, while the new boy choked and gasped to get his breath. By this time his mother was at the edge of the water, where the waves broke on the sand, and she was just going to go in, all dressed as she was, for she did not wear a bathing suit.

"Harry," cried Mrs. Slater, "mother is coming!"

"There isn't any need, lady!" said Duncan Porter, the life-saver who was always on duty during the bathing hour. "I'll bring him in to you. But, anyhow, Bunny has him safe."

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The guard, who had been on another part of the beach, had run up when he heard Mrs. Slater scream, and now he waded out and brought Harry to shore in his arms. The new boy was more frightened than hurt, and was soon all right again, though he coughed a little because of the water he had swallowed.

"Oh, Harry Slater, you were nearly drowned!" cried some of the other children.

"Oh, he wasn't in much danger," said the life guard. "I'd have had him out in another second or two. But, as it was, Bunny Brown got him out of the water all right."

"How can I thank you?" said Harry's mother, as she gave Bunny a hug, all wet as he was, for he and Sue, with many other children, had followed the life-saver to shore when he carried the choking, gasping new boy.

"Oh, it wasn't anything much!" protested Bunny, who did not like a fuss being made over him. "The big wave just knocked him down, and I picked him up."

"He's a brave and clever little boy!" said several ladies on the beach, and if Bunny had not been so tanned and sunburned he might have blushed.

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"It was a big wave knocked him down," said Sue. "One of the steamer waves. You have to look out for 'em! I saw him go down and I yelled."

"You were both very watchful of Harry," said Mrs. Slater. "Your mother should be proud of you children."

"There's my mother now," said Bunny, pointing to Mrs. Brown, who had come down with a number of other women.

Thus it was that Bunny, Sue and the new boy became acquainted and Mrs. Slater also formed a friendship for Mrs. Brown. Soon the excitement had passed and the children were in bathing again, while their mothers either bathed, too, or sat on the beach and talked. Bunny and Sue liked Harry, and you may be sure the new boy was very thankful to Bunny Brown for pulling him up out of the water.

"Do they have bigger waves in the ocean than the one that knocked me down?" asked Harry, when the three children were once more having a good time in the bathing pool.

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"Oh, I guess they do!" cried Sue. "He should see some of the big waves, shouldn't he, Bunny?"

"Well, I'd like to see 'em," said Harry, with a laugh. "But I wouldn't want to be knocked down by 'em—not if they were bigger than the wave that hit me."

"The waves in the ocean are ever so much bigger," went on Bunny. "And in a storm they're twice as big."

"We were in a storm coming here," explained Sue. "We were on a boat and it rocked like anything, didn't it, Bunny?"

"Yes, it rocked a lot," he agreed. "Come on," he called to his sister. "Let's go over and dig clams."

"Where can you dig clams?" asked Harry eagerly. Anything about the seashore interested him, as it was his first summer at the beach.

"They get hard clams away out in the cove," explained Bunny. "But soft clams grow over there where the tide is out."

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"Clams don't grow," declared Sue. "They aren't like apples."

"Yes, clams do grow," declared Bunny. "Else how could a little clam get to be a big one. They grow over there, in that place where there isn't any water," went on Bunny. "And when the tide is out we dig for 'em."

"I was up on my grandpa's farm once, and I helped dig for potatoes in the ground," said Harry. "But I never dug for clams. I'd like to."

"We'll show you how," offered Bunny. "Mother lets us dig soft clams, and she makes chowder of 'em. Come on, we'll go over and dig clams."

Harry was very glad of this chance for fun, and when Mrs. Brown had said her two children might go, and when Mrs. Slater had also consented to let her boy accompany his two new playmates, they set off.

"There isn't any water on the flats when the tide is out," said Mrs. Brown. "Bunny and Sue often go there to dig clams, and we can see them from here."

Soft clams are not like hard clams. The shell is a sort of bluish black and is quite thin, so it is easily crushed. The soft clam is long and thin, instead of being almost round, like a hard clam. [185]

A soft clam lives down in the mud or sand under water. Within his shell the soft clam has a long tube, which seems as if made of rubber, for it can be stretched out greatly, or made so small as to fit inside the shell.

When the tide covered the low flats at one part of Christmas Tree Cove the soft clams could not be found. But when the tide went out it left bare a large space of sand and sticky mud, or muck. Then was the time to dig soft clams.

Bunny and Sue knew how to do it. They used a little shovel, though a regular clammer uses a short-handled hoe, digging the wet earth away much as a farmer digs away the earth from a hill of potatoes. Down under the surface the clams are found.

"Here's a good place to dig," said Bunny, as he led Sue and Harry through little pools of water to the clam flats. "Sue, you hold the basket and Harry and I will dig." [186]

"Well, this time I will, 'cause Harry's new," answered Sue. "But after this I'll dig, too."

Bunny had brought two shovels, and, giving the new boy one, Sue's brother used the other. He dug a hole in the mucky, black sand, and Harry did likewise.

"When you see something that looks like a black stone pick it up," advised Bunny. "'Cause that's a clam."

The two boys dug away for some time, and at last Harry cried:

"I got one!"

"Yes, that's a soft clam, and a nice big one," declared Bunny. "And I've got one myself!"

Soon the two little boys had found a number of clams, which they put in the basket Sue held. Bunny was just digging out an extra large one when, all of a sudden, Sue cried:

"Bunny, I'm stuck! I can't get my feet up! Oh, Oh!"

"Maybe a big clam has hold of her," said Harry. "What'll we do, Bunny?" [187]

CHAPTER XIX

ANOTHER STORM

The two boys stopped their clam-digging and stood staring at Sue, who was holding the basket of shellfish and looking at her brother and Harry.

"I'm stuck fast!" cried Sue again. "I can't lift up either of my legs, Bunny! What shall I do?"

"Is it a clam that has hold of you?" asked Harry.

"Clams don't grab hold of you like crabs," declared Bunny. "Once a crab got hold of my toe, and it pinched like anything."

"Maybe it's a crab, then," said Harry.

"This isn't a crab or a clam," said Sue. "But my feet are all tight in the mud, and I can't lift 'em out! Look!"

She struggled hard, trying first to lift one foot and then the other. But she only swayed in a little pool of water that collected around her bare legs. [188]

"Oh, I know what the matter is!" exclaimed Bunny, as he looked again at his sister. "It's like getting into a muck hole in the swamp. There's a lot of soft sand and muck here on the flats, and you've stepped into one of the holes, Sue."

"Shall I—shall I sink down through the hole all the way to—to China?" asked the little girl, and it looked as if she might be going to cry, as she had the time she and Bunny were lost in the Christmas Tree woods.

"We'll get you up," said Bunny. "Come on, Harry. You take hold of Sue on one side and I'll take hold of her on the other. Then maybe she can lift up her own legs."

The boys went toward her.

"Take the basket of clams," directed Sue. "I don't want to spill 'em!"

She handed Bunny the basket of soft clams which the two boys had dug, and Bunny set it on top of the pile of dirt that had been piled up as he and Harry dug holes to get at the shellfish. Then the two boys stood, one on either side of Sue, so she could put her hands on their shoulders. [189]

"Maybe we'll get stuck in the mud, too," suggested Harry.

"Oh, I guess not," said Bunny. "Anyhow, if we do, it'll be fun."

Seeing Bunny and Harry about to help her, Sue felt better. She gave up the notion of crying, and began to pull up, first on one foot and then on the other.

At first it seemed that neither one would move, so sticky was the mud and muck. But at last Sue felt one giving, and she cried:

"Oh, I'm getting loose! I'm getting loose, Bunny!"

"Pull harder!" directed her brother. "Pull as hard as you can!"

Just about this time Mrs. Brown, who was sitting on the sand under the sun umbrella talking to Mrs. Slater, happened to look over toward the children who had gone clam-digging. She saw Bunny and Harry standing close to Sue, and she knew, by the way the children were acting, that something had happened. [190]

Then Mrs. Slater, too, looked toward the three children.

"Is Harry in trouble again?" asked his mother.

"No, this time it seems to be Sue," said Mrs. Brown. "I think she is stuck in the mud."

"Is that serious?" asked Mrs. Slater, for she had not been to the seashore enough to know anything about clam-digging.

"Oh, there is no danger," said Mrs. Brown. "They may get very muddy. But they have on their bathing suits, and can easily wash. However, we might walk over as near as we can go, so they may see us."

"Very well," agreed Mrs. Slater. "I don't want Harry frightened again to-day."

But she need not have worried. The children were laughing as Sue used the two boys like a pair of crutches to help her lift her feet from the muck. Soon she had pulled loose, and she held one foot out so she could see it.

"Oh, look!" cried the little girl. "There's so much mud on my foot I can't see my toes wiggle!"

And this was really so. [191]

"It looks as if you had a black shoe on," added Bunny. "Come on now, you'd better step away from here if you don't want to get stuck again, Sue."

"And I'm getting stuck myself!" exclaimed Harry, as he felt one foot sinking. "Is it all like this on the clam flats?"

"No," answered Bunny, "only in some places. It was all right where you and I stood."

By this time Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Slater had reached the edge of the clam flats, and they saw that the three children were all right. Harry and Bunny again started to dig for the shellfish and Sue held the basket for them. But she took care to stand on a big flat stone, so there was no more danger of sinking down.

"Mother!" cried Harry, when he saw Mrs. Slater with Mrs. Brown, "digging clams is lots of fun, and Sue got stuck in the mud."

"So we saw," his mother answered. "The seashore is a funny place. You don't seem to know what will happen on land or in the water."

"Oh, it is all right when you get used to it," said Mrs. Brown, laughing. "Have you enough clams, Bunny?" [192]

"Not quite," he answered. "I like lots of 'em in my chowder."

"Well, you may dig a few more. We'll sit here and wait for you," said his mother, and, finding a place on shore where a clump of trees gave a little shade, she and Mrs. Slater sat down.

Bunny, Sue, and Harry kept on digging, Sue finally insisting on taking a turn with the shovel.

"I'm coming to the seashore every year," declared Harry, as he dug out an extra large clam. "I guess my dog would like it here, too. He's fond of water."

"Where is your dog?" asked Bunny. "I didn't see you have any."

"We didn't bring him with us 'cause he's lost," said Harry, leaning on his shovel. "He's an awful nice dog, too. We were going to bring him here with us, but one day, when we were out in the automobile, he jumped out and ran away and we never saw him again."

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"We had a dog Splash, and he ran away, too," said Sue.

"My dog would carry things in his mouth," went on Harry. "He used to carry our paper, and sometimes he would take things you didn't want him to, and carry them away."

"Oh, Bunny!" suddenly exclaimed Sue, "that's just what the big yellow dog did. He took mother's pocketbook when we didn't want him to and carried it away. Maybe this is the same dog!"

"What kind of a dog was yours?" asked Bunny of his new friend.

"He was a big yellow one," was the answer. "But he was never here in this place, 'cause we were never here ourselves before this summer. So he couldn't have taken your mother's pocketbook."

"But the pocketbook wasn't taken from here," said Bunny. "It was where we live—in Bellemere. And it was a big, yellow dog! Could your dog run fast?" he asked Harry.

"Oh, yes, terribly fast. But what's that about your mother's pocketbook?"

Bunny and Sue told the story by turns, how they had seen the dog running away with the pocketbook containing the five-dollar bill and their mother's diamond ring.

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"And he ran into a carpenter shop, and we ran in after him, and Mr. Foswick locked us in, and Bunny broke a window, and we had a terrible time!" explained Sue.

"I don't believe that was my dog," said Harry. "But Sandy—that was my dog's name—would carry away lots of things in his mouth. I wish I had him back. My father said he'd give a lot of money to find him—a reward, you know."

"And I guess my father would give a reward if he could get back my mother's diamond ring," added Sue. "But he can't. Bunker Blue says it's gone forever."

"Children! Children!" called Mrs. Brown from the shore. "I think we had better go now. It is getting late and it looks as if we might have another storm. Come along. You have clams enough."

"Yes, I guess we have," said Bunny, looking in the basket.

The children started for the mainland, stopping in a little pool to wash the mud off themselves and also to cleanse their shovels.

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Bunny "sozzled" the basket of clams in the water to wash them, and when Mrs. Brown explained how she made them into chowder Mrs. Slater remarked:

"I wish they served that at the hotel."

"Won't you and Harry come over and have supper with us this evening?" asked Mrs. Brown. "We'll give you some of the chowder then."

"Oh, yes, Mother, please do!" begged Harry, and Mrs. Slater consented.

"I'll tell you more about my lost dog when I come over to-night," called Harry to Bunny and Sue, as they parted.

That evening Mrs. Slater and her son Harry were guests of the Browns at supper, at which was served the chowder made from the clams dug by the children that afternoon.

"It is delicious!" said Mrs. Slater, as she was helped to a second plateful.

"I like it lots!" declared Harry. "I guess Sandy would, too, if he was here."

"What's this about your dog being lost?" asked Mr. Brown, for he had heard the children talking about it.

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"We did lose a very valuable animal," explained Mrs. Slater. "We were out automobiling one day, and in driving through a place called Bellemere, on Sandport Bay——"

"Bellemere!" cried Bunny Brown. "Why, that's where we live!"

"That's where our dog was lost," said Mrs. Slater, smiling at him. "For some reason he leaped out of the auto and went bounding away down the street. My husband stopped and tried to get him back, but he would not come. And he has been lost ever since. Harry misses him very much."

"What day was it that your dog ran away?" asked Mr. Brown, with a look at his wife.

"Why, it was—let me see," answered Mrs. Slater slowly. "It was on——"

Her words were interrupted by a loud crash of thunder that shook the bungalow, and all the electric lights suddenly went out.

"Oh!" cried Bunny, Sue, and Harry, all at the same time.

"I presume we're in for another storm," said Mr. Brown. "Sit still until I light some candles. Often the electric lights go out in a severe thunderstorm." [197]

As Mr. Brown arose to strike a match another loud clap of thunder pealed out. [198]

CHAPTER XX

THE FLOATING BOX

The electric light service in Christmas Tree Cove was uncertain in storms, and Mr. Brown always kept a supply of candles on hand, as well as some kerosene lamps. Soon there was plenty of light in the room, and as supper was about over when the storm broke the family and their two visitors went into the sitting-room of the bungalow.

"I don't like storms," said Harry, and he kept close to his mother.

"There isn't any danger," remarked Mr. Brown. "The lightning hardly ever strikes near the ocean or the bay. I think it may hit out far from shore. But no houses have ever been struck up here."

"I guess the Christmas trees keep it away," said Bunny.

"Perhaps," laughed his mother. "It isn't bad, now that the worst outburst is over. Come, Harry, tell us about your lost dog. We have lost one, too." [199]

So, while the thunder boomed and the lightning flashed, Mrs. Slater and Harry told about their dog Sandy.

"And so he left us in Bellemere, and we haven't seen him since," finished Harry's mother.

"How strange!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "He left you the same day the strange dog ran into our yard, where Bunny and Sue were playing seesaw, and grabbed up my pocketbook. I wonder if, by any chance, it could be the same animal in both cases."

"This dog was a big, yellow one," said Bunny, and he described the animal that had caused him and Sue so much trouble.

"Sandy was yellow in color," remarked Mrs. Slater. "But I would not call him a very large dog."

"Perhaps the dog that took my wife's pocketbook and diamond ring seemed larger to Bunny and Sue than he really was," said Mr. Brown. "He rushed into the yard and out again so quickly that he may have looked extra big." [200]

"It would be very strange if it should turn out to be our dog who made so much trouble over your pocketbook," went on Harry's mother. "Sandy did have a bad habit of running off with things. We tried to break him of it. And, now that I recall it, he took one of my gloves when he leaped out of the auto that day."

"The big, yellow dog that came into our yard and took my mother's pocketbook didn't have any gloves on," explained Sue.

"No, he wouldn't be likely to have any on," agreed Mrs. Slater. "But he might have carried one in his mouth."

"I didn't see it," said Bunny, shaking his head. "But he took the pocketbook in his mouth and ran away."

They talked over the dog matter for some time, and then, as the storm seemed to be growing worse again, Mrs. Slater began to think it was time for her and Harry to go back to the hotel. A closed automobile was called from the village, and in that the lady and her son prepared to go to their hotel. It was then about eight o'clock in the evening. [201]

"Mr. Slater has advertised for our lost dog," his wife said, as she was departing. "If we ever find him, Bunny and Sue can look at Sandy and make sure whether or not he is the dog that ran into their yard. Though, of course, that will not bring back your ring, I am sorry to say," she added.

The storm kept up all night and part of the next day. It rained hard and the wind blew, though the thunder and lightning were soon over. It settled into what the cove dwellers called a "nor'easter," and it was not at all pleasant.

Bunny and Sue could not go out to play, but Uncle Tad and Bunker Blue amused the children indoors. Mr. Brown had to go back to Bellemere, but he went on the train, as the bay was so rough the boat did not run, and Captain Ross had not returned with the *Fairy*.

"I wish Harry could come over and play with us," said Bunny on the second day of the storm, as he stood with his nose pressed against the window. [202]

"It will be clear to-morrow," said Bunker Blue, who had come in from a trip to the store. "The

wind is working around and the sun will be out to-morrow."

Bunny and Sue certainly hoped so, and when they arose the next morning the first thing they did was to run to the window and look out anxiously.

Bunker's prophecy had come true. The sun was shining and the wind was no longer blowing, though the water in the bay was still rough.

"Let's go down to the beach!" cried Bunny, as soon as breakfast was over. "Maybe we'll find a lot of things washed up on shore."

This was not unusual, for the storms along the coast, even in summer, sometimes caused wrecks, and parts of them were often washed up on the beach.

"Yes, let's," agreed Sue.

A little later Bunny and Sue were running down to the sandy shore, and there they saw their new friend Harry, who was walking along with his mother.

"Wasn't it a terrible storm?" called Mrs. Slater, when she saw the two Brown children. "I never remember a worse one!" [203]

"Yes, it was bad," agreed Bunny. "It was worse than when we were on the *Fairy*. Did you see anything washed up?" he asked.

"Not yet," replied Harry. "What do you find after a storm?"

"Oh, lots of things," answered Bunny. "Once I saw a whale washed up on shore. He was awful big."

"I wish I could see a whale washed up," said Harry longingly.

He looked across the tumbling waters of Christmas Tree Cove, as though he might catch sight of some monster of the sea. But there was nothing in view just then.

The three children, with Mrs. Slater, walked along a little farther. Suddenly Sue, who was a short distance ahead, gave a delighted cry.

"What is it?" asked Bunny. "A cocoanut?" Once a ship laden with cocoanuts had been wrecked and the shore strewn with the nuts.

"Is it a whale?" asked Harry.

"It's a big box," answered Sue, pointing. "Look, it's floating out there, and I guess it's coming to shore right here." [204]

The others looked toward the object at which Sue pointed and saw, bobbing up and down in the waves, what appeared to be a large chest. The wind and tide were fast bringing it up to where they stood on the beach. [205]

CHAPTER XXI

MR. RAVENWOOD

Bunny Brown and his sister Sue stood with Harry Slater and his mother on the beach and watched the wind and the tide bringing nearer and nearer to shore the floating box. As it came into plainer view, the children could see that it was no ordinary refuse of the sea, like a broken orange or lemon box, some of which floated ashore at Bellemere.

"That's a nice, good box," said Bunny, as he watched it bobbing up and down on the waves. "It's a box just like Mr. Foswick, the carpenter, makes."

"And it isn't broken, either," added Sue. Usually the boxes she and her brother found on the beach were empty and smashed.

"Maybe it has something in it," suggested Harry. "Oh, wouldn't it be funny if my dog was in it!" he cried. [206]

"How could your dog be in it, dear?" asked his mother. "Sandy was lost on shore. How could he be out in the ocean?"

"Well, maybe, after he jumped out of our auto he went on a boat and maybe the boat sank and he got in this box, like a little boat, and now he's coming back to me," explained Harry.

"Oh, no, you mustn't hope for any such good luck as that," said his mother, with a smile. "If Sandy were in that box you would hear him barking. And, besides, that box seems to be tightly nailed or screwed shut. We'll soon see what's in it, for it is coming ashore," she added.

"Maybe it's Sandy," insisted Harry.

"I don't think there's any dog in it," Sue remarked. "But maybe there's pirates' gold."

"Maybe," assented Bunny.

"What's pirates' gold?" asked Harry.

"It's gold the robber pirates take off ships," explained Bunny. "And they put it in boxes, and then they bring it on shore and bury it in the sand, and then they make a map in red ink so they won't forget where they buried the box, and then they go off and get more gold, the pirates do." [207]

"What makes 'em bury the gold they already have?" asked Harry.

"So nobody can find it," explained Bunny.

Bunny and Sue liked to hear tales of the sea. Bunker Blue had told them some, and I am afraid they were not altogether true, however interesting they were.

"But that can't be a pirates' box," said Sue, "'cause I don't see any pirates, and they wouldn't send a box to shore all by itself."

"No," agreed Bunny, "I guess they wouldn't, 'cause a box couldn't bury itself in the sand. But I think there's something in this box."

"It does seem so," said Mrs. Slater, who was now quite as interested as were the children. "Look," she went on. "It is going to come ashore at that little point. Let's walk out on it, and we can pull it up on the sand."

A little tongue of land extended out into the water near the spot where they were standing, and soon Bunny, his sister, and Harry and Mrs. Slater were out on the very tip of it, waiting for the box to be washed ashore. The tide was rising, and the waves were still rather high on account of the storm. [208]

Nearer and nearer the box came, but when it was almost at the point of land it seemed about to be washed away, farther up the coast.

"Oh, it is going past us!" exclaimed Mrs. Slater.

"I can wade in and get it!" said Bunny. "I'll take off my shoes and stockings and get it," and, sitting down, he began to do this.

"I don't want to take off my shoes. You can get it without me, Bunny," remarked Sue.

"May I wade in, Mother?" asked Harry.

"It isn't deep," said Bunny, as Mrs. Slater hesitated. "And we won't have to wade out very far."

"All right," agreed Harry's mother, with a smile. "You two boys may wade in, and Sue and I will watch you. But maybe the box will be too heavy for you."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Bunny, as Harry began taking off his shoes and stockings. "Things in the water move easy. I can push or pull a big boat all alone, if it's in the water, but I can't if it's on land. And the box isn't very big." [209]

"I wonder what's in it," said Sue, as her brother and Harry prepared to wade out. "Maybe it's a lot of dolls from China."

"What makes you think it might be that?" asked Mrs. Slater, as she put the boys' shoes and stockings up on the sand.

"Once some Chinese dolls came ashore at Bellemere," said Sue. "I got one, but her eyes were washed out. I always had to make believe she was asleep."

"How did they happen to come ashore?" asked Mrs. Slater.

"A ship that was coming from China got wrecked," explained Sue, "and the boxes with the dolls in washed up on shore. But I guess this isn't a doll box," she added.

"It doesn't look so," said Harry's mother. "It seems to be a very heavy case, such as machinery comes in, but of course there can't be machinery in it, or it would sink."

"And there can't be a dog in it, or he'd smother," added Sue, "'cause the cover is nailed on tight." [210]

The box was near the point of land now, and Bunny and Harry were wading out to get it. Mrs. Slater and Sue could see that the box was a square one, about three feet long, and as many high and wide. And there was a cover on it.

"Catch hold now!" cried Bunny to Harry, and the two boys took hold of the sides of the box and easily guided it up to the beach. It soon grounded in the shallow water, but it was so heavy that when Bunny and Harry had got it to the shore of the point of land they could move it no farther.

"It's nailed tight shut all around," Bunny said, as he looked on all four sides.

"Ain't there a cover that you can put back like on a trunk?" Sue wanted to know.

"No, there ain't," answered Harry, "for if there was the hinges would show—they always do."

"Oh, what do you think can really be in it?" cried Sue, dancing around in excitement.

"Maybe it's a boat chest of some sort," suggested Bunny, who had heard Captain Ross speak of such things.

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"From China?"

"Oh, I guess it couldn't come from as far away as that."

"Course it couldn't," declared Harry.

"Children, I think we have made quite a find," said Mrs. Slater, as she looked carefully at the box. "I wonder to whom it belongs."

"There's a name printed on it over here," said Bunny, pointing to the side of the box turned away from shore.

"What does it say?" asked Mrs. Slater, for she could not look without stepping into the water.

"There's an F and an R and an A and an N and a K," said Bunny slowly.

"That spells Frank," said Mrs. Slater. "What else is there?"

Bunny spelled out the rest of the name, and also an address.

"Well, then it would seem this box belongs to a Mr. Frank Ravenwood of Sea Gate," said Harry's mother. "Is there anything else on that side, Bunny?"

"No'm," he answered.

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"Frank Ravenwood, of Sea Gate," went on Mrs. Slater. "Where is Sea Gate, Bunny?"

"It's on the coast, just down below where we live," was the answer.

"Then we can write and tell Mr. Ravenwood of Sea Gate that we have his box that was washed ashore," went on Harry's mother. "But we must get it higher up on the beach or it will wash away again. I wonder——"

But she suddenly stopped, for Sue gave a cry of alarm and pointed toward shore.

"Oh, look!" exclaimed the little girl. "Look!"

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CHAPTER XXII

THE SURPRISING LETTER

Mrs. Slater was so interested in looking at the strange box which had been washed up on shore, and was thinking so deeply about the name of Frank Ravenwood which Bunny spelled for her that, for the moment, she did not quite understand what Sue meant.

"What is it, Sue?" she asked the little girl, for Sue kept on pointing toward something behind Mrs. Slater.

"The tide!" exclaimed Bunny's sister. "The tide's coming up and it's washing over the sand and we're on an island! We can't get back less'n we wade!"

Mrs. Slater gave a startled cry, and looked toward where Sue pointed.

Surely enough, while they had been watching the box and while Bunny and Harry had been getting it to shore the tide had risen and now covered part of the strip of sand on which they had all walked out. As Sue said, it was an island, and the only way to get to shore was to wade.

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"I'm going to take off my shoes and stockings!" cried the little girl, hopping up on the box and beginning to loosen her laces. "You'd better take off your shoes, too, Mrs. Slater. If you don't you'll get your feet wet when you have to wade to shore. Course you haven't got your mother here to scold you if you get your shoes wet, but maybe your husband mightn't like it," went on Sue. "You can wade same as I can."

"We don't have to take off our shoes and stockings, 'cause we have 'em off already," said Bunny. "Harry and I can wade."

"It looks as if I'd have to do that," said Harry's mother. "I wonder if the water is very deep," she went on, as she looked at the water which had covered the shore end of the little tongue of land.

"No, it isn't deep!" declared Bunny, and he waded out into it. "But it keeps on getting deeper when the tide comes up. You'd better take your shoes and stockings off now, Mrs. Slater, else maybe it'll be away up over your head soon."

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"I shouldn't want that to happen," she said, with a laugh. "I believe I shall have to do as you children have done, and go barefoot," and she glanced at Sue, who, by this time, had off her shoes and stockings.

Harry's mother looked at the stretch of water separating the little party from the mainland. As

Bunny had said, it would get deeper the higher the tide rose, though, of course, it would not go over Mrs. Slater's head. She sat down on the box, as Sue had done, and was just beginning to take off her shoes when a voice called to them.

"Wait a minute! I'm coming to get you!" was what they all heard, and, looking up, Bunny Brown saw Bunker Blue rowing along in his sailboat. The sail, however, was not up now.

"Oh, Bunker, come and get us!" cried Sue. "We're caught by the tide, and——"

"And we found a box and maybe it has pirate gold in it!" sang out Bunny. "Look, Bunker!" and the little boy pointed to the box on the sand. It was still partly in the water. [216]

"I see," answered Bunker Blue. "I noticed that you'd been caught by the tide, so I came in the boat to get you. Wait there, Mrs. Slater," he went on. "There's no need of getting your feet wet."

In a little while Bunker rowed up to the place where the box rested and where Bunny, Sue, and the others stood around it, the three children barefooted. The little tongue, or peninsula, of land, was now an island, rapidly growing smaller in size as the tide rose.

"Get in the boat and I'll row you to shore," said Bunker, as he grounded his craft in the sand.

"Have we got to leave the box here?" asked Bunny.

"No, I'll come back and get that after I land you," said the fish boy.

So they all got into the boat, and it did not take Bunker Blue long to row them to shore. Then he went back, and, after a little hard work, he managed to get the box into his boat.

"I'll row this box down to the dock," called Bunker to those on shore. "You walk along the beach until you meet me. Then we can see what's in it." [217]

This was done, and soon Uncle Tad and Mrs. Brown were down on the little pier of Christmas Tree Cove, looking at the box and wondering what could be in it.

"It's heavy, whatever it is," said Uncle Tad.

"Pirate gold is always heavy, I guess," said Bunny.

"Oh, it couldn't be gold!" declared Bunker Blue. "If it was gold in the box I never could have lifted it."

"Let's open it!" suggested Sue.

"No, we must not do that," said Mrs. Brown. "When your father comes home to-night I'll have him write to this Mr. Frank Ravenwood of Sea Gate. In the letter daddy can explain how the box was found, and Mr. Ravenwood can come here and get it if he wishes to. Until then, Bunker, you had better take it up to the woodshed, where it will be safe from harm."

Uncle Tad and Bunker put the box on a wheelbarrow, and it was soon stored in the woodshed back of the bungalow. For some time Bunny, Sue and Harry wondered what could be in it, but, after a while, the children ran off to play in the sand, and to wade and paddle in the water. [218]

"Let's build a big sand fort," suggested Bunny.

"Oh, no, make it a doll house," cried Sue.

"All right, a doll house," said Harry, who was beginning to like Sue as much as he did Bunny.

So they built a wonderful doll house of sand, with four rooms and an elegant driveway. But just as it was completed the whole thing caved in.

"My! ain't I glad none of my dolls were in that," declared Sue.

Mr. Brown came up to his summer home that night, and, after looking at the box, wrote a letter to Mr. Ravenwood, telling how it had been found. This letter was mailed to Sea Gate, and then followed a time of waiting. In the letter Mr. Brown had told how Bunny, Sue, and Harry Slater had found the box.

"I wonder when we'll get an answer," remarked Bunny several times in the next two days. [219]

"If the box is at all valuable Mr. Ravenwood ought to answer daddy's letter very soon," said Mrs. Brown. "I don't see how the box got into the bay and floated all the way up here from Sea Gate. It is quite a distance."

Three days after the strange find, when Bunny, Sue, and Harry were playing with Rose and Jimmie Madden near the bungalow one afternoon, Uncle Tad came up from the village with the mail.

"Here's a letter from Mr. Ravenwood, children!" said the old soldier.

"Oh, goody!" exclaimed Sue.

"Did he say his box had pirate gold in?" asked Bunny.

"I don't know. I didn't open the letter," answered Uncle Tad.

But Mrs. Brown soon read the note and, as she did so, a look of surprise came over her face.

"Yes, that is Mr. Ravenwood's box," said Bunny's mother. "He is coming here to-morrow in his motor boat to get it. But here is something else very strange. I'll read it to you," she went on. [220]
Then she read:

"Thank you, very much, for saving my valuable box. I see a little boy named Harry Slater helped in saving it. I wonder if he is any relation to a Mr. Thomas Slater who has been advertising for a lost yellow dog. I have found such a dog, and I am going to bring him to Christmas Tree Cove in my motor boat when I come after my box. If this is the lost dog that is being advertised for, Harry may have him back."

"Oh, I wonder if that is my dog!" exclaimed Harry.

"And if it is, I wonder if he can tell us where he left mother's pocketbook," said Bunny Brown. [221]

CHAPTER XXIII

"THAT'S THE DOG!"

When Daddy Brown came up to Christmas Tree Cove from his dock in Bellemere that evening he, of course, was told about the letter from Mr. Ravenwood.

"I am glad that we can give him back his box," said Bunny's father. "But what is this about a dog?"

"You know we had a big dog named Sandy, of whom we were very fond," said Mrs. Slater, who, with Harry, was paying a call after supper on the Browns. "As I have told Bunny and Sue, one day, when we were out in our auto looking for a place to spend the summer, Sandy leaped out and ran away. We did all we could to get him back, but he disappeared, and we had to go on without him, much to Harry's sorrow.

"The place where Sandy leaped from the auto and ran away was Bellemere, and we were quite surprised when we got here to find that you people lived there," went on Mrs. Slater, nodding at Mrs. Brown and her family. [222]

"And maybe it was Sandy who ran in the yard and took the pocketbook when Sue and I were having a seesaw out in the barn," suggested Bunny.

"Of course it is possible," admitted Mr. Brown, when there had been more talk and it was discovered that the Sandy dog was lost the very same day that Mrs. Brown's pocketbook was picked up off the bench and carried away by a strange yellow animal that then ran into Mr. Foswick's carpenter shop.

"Yes, Sandy could very easily have run down the street on which your house is located," said Harry's mother. "As I told the children, he had a habit of taking things in his mouth and running away with them. And he might have picked up the pocketbook. Of course it seems a very strange thing to have happened, but it is possible."

"How did Mr. Ravenwood get the dog which he says in his letter he has?" asked Mr. Brown, while Bunny and the others listened carefully. [223]

"It is not certain this is our dog," went on Mrs. Slater. "We shall know that when he comes here after his box. I see how it may have happened. After Sandy disappeared my husband put advertisements about him in many seashore papers. He asked that word of finding of the dog be sent to him at his city office or to me here at Christmas Tree Cove. The advertisements spoke of how fond Harry was of Sandy. I hope Harry is not disappointed, and that this will prove to be his dog. And I hope your wife will find her pocketbook and diamond ring."

"Oh, she will now!" exclaimed Harry.

"That is too much," said Bunny's mother. "I have given up hope of ever seeing my beautiful ring again. Even if it was your dog that ran in and picked up the pocketbook, he must have dropped it in some out-of-the-way place, and there is no telling where it is."

"No, unfortunately, Sandy can not talk," said Mrs. Slater.

"But he can sit up on his hind legs and beg!" exclaimed Harry. "Oh, I do hope I get him back!" [224]

"So do I!" echoed Bunny and Sue.

The next day was such an anxious one for the children, who were waiting for the appearance of Mr. Ravenwood in his motor boat with the dog he had found, that Mrs. Brown finally said:

"Come, kiddies, we'll go for a little picnic down on the beach."

"May Harry come?" asked Bunny, for Harry was over at the bungalow playing with Bunny and Sue.

"Yes. And we'll invite Harry's mother and Bunker Blue and Uncle Tad," said Mrs. Brown. "We'll spend the afternoon on the beach. It will make the time pass more quickly."

Indeed the time did seem to drag for Bunny, Sue, and Harry. They did not know just what time to expect Mr. Ravenwood in his boat, to claim his box and to bring the strange dog. Every now and again the children would ask:

"When do you think he'll come?"

Then, at last, Mrs. Brown had decided on the picnic as a means of keeping them quiet.

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Picnics were often held at Christmas Tree Cove, and could be quickly got up. All that was necessary to do was to put up a lunch and go down to one of the many nice places on the beach.

Harry was sent over to the hotel to ask his mother if he might go, and also to invite her to be one of the party, and soon Mrs. Slater was on her way back to Bark Lodge with her little son.

"It is very nice of you, Mrs. Brown, to ask us," said Mrs. Slater.

"I shall have just as much fun as the children," replied the mother of Bunny and Sue Brown.

Uncle Tad and Bunker Blue were also delighted to go, and Bunny wanted to take his shovel and dig for soft clams and have a clambake on the beach.

"Not now, dear," said his mother. "It is quite a lot of work, and you get so muddy digging clams. After a while, when daddy can be with us, we may have a big bake on the beach some night."

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"And maybe Mr. Ravenwood will come!" exclaimed Sue.

"Maybe he will," agreed her mother.

A little later they were all seated on the sands, the older folk in the shade of some sun umbrellas that Bunker Blue and Uncle Tad put up, while Bunny, Sue, and Harry played out in the sunshine. They were tanned as brown as autumn leaves and no longer sunburned.

The children dug holes in the sand, made miniature cities and railroads, built tunnels which caved in, and finally started to make a cabin of driftwood.

Uncle Tad and Bunker Blue were helping at this, and they planned to make a regular thatched roof of seaweed. The little shack on the sand was half done when the puffing of a motor boat was heard near shore and a voice hailed the little party.

"Can you tell me where Christmas Tree Cove is?" asked a young man in the boat.

"It is right here," answered Mrs. Brown, waving her hand toward the groups of evergreens on the shore.

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Bunny, Sue, and Harry looked at the man in the boat, and then at something else. And the something else was a big, yellow dog that stood on one of the seats. At the sight of this animal Mrs. Slater stood up and Harry cried:

"There's Sandy! That's my Sandy all right!"

Instantly, at the sound of the little boy's voice, the dog gave a loud bark and leaped into the bay to swim to shore. He reached the sand and ran at full speed toward the party of picnickers. As he ran, Bunny Brown cried:

"That's the dog! That's the dog that took my mother's pocketbook and diamond ring!"

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CHAPTER XXIV

IN THE BOAT

Nearer and nearer to the picnic party on the beach raced the big, yellow dog. He was barking in delight and his tail was wagging from side to side.

"He'll get us wet!" exclaimed Mrs. Slater. "Down, Sandy! Down!" she commanded.

Instantly the dog stopped and began to shake himself vigorously, sending the water in a shower from his shaggy coat.

"Oh, he minded you! He's your dog all right, isn't he?" cried Bunny.

"Yes, he's my Sandy," answered Harry. "He always minds sometimes."

At the sound of his young master's voice the dog, with another joyful bark, again leaped forward. He had stopped to get rid of as much of the water as possible, but a moment later he was jumping and tumbling about Harry and Mrs. Slater, while the little boy, caring not at all about the dog's damp coat, was hugging his pet.

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"Oh, Sandy! Sandy! I'm so glad you came back!" cried Harry.

"Is it really your dog?" asked Mrs. Brown of her friend.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Slater. "Oh, do be quiet, you crazy animal," she said, as he leaped up and tried to put his tongue on her face.

"He wants to kiss you," said Sue.

Then the dog turned to Sue, and he really did "kiss" her, for Sue was sitting down and the dog easily reached her tanned cheeks with his red tongue.

"Be careful," warned Mrs. Brown.

"Oh, Sandy is gentle and loves children," said Harry's mother. "But I fancy that young man in the boat wants some explanation," she went on. "Though, since we have told him this is Christmas Tree Cove, he must have guessed that we are the people to whom the dog belongs."

The man in the boat had stopped his engine, and the craft was now grounded in the sand not far from where the picnic was being held. A four-pronged anchor was tossed out to prevent the motor boat from drifting away, and then the young man came up the beach. He was smiling pleasantly, and as he took off his cap and bowed to the ladies he said:

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"Davy Jones seems to have found out where he belongs all right. I presume this is Harry Slater," he went on, looking at the boy around whom the dog was leaping.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Slater. "And this is Mr. Ravenwood?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I called the dog Davy Jones, for he seemed to love the sea, and I didn't know what his right name was. He is evidently yours."

"Sandy belongs to us," returned Mrs. Slater. "It is all rather a strange story from the time Sandy ran away from us until we found your box and learned that you had our dog. But there is a stranger part to it still, it seems, if what Bunny and Sue think proves to be true."

"What is that?" asked Mr. Ravenwood.

Then he was told about the missing pocketbook and ring.

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"Are you sure, children, that this is the same dog that ran into the yard that day and made off with my pocketbook?" asked Mrs. Brown of Bunny and Sue.

"Oh, yes!" declared Bunny. "He runs just the same, and he barks just the same, and he looks just the same."

Sue agreed with this, and when Mrs. Slater told again what a habit Sandy had of carrying things off in his mouth it was decided that this was the animal that had caused Bunny and Sue so much trouble, including the locking in at Mr. Foswick's carpenter shop.

"How did you get Sandy?" asked Mrs. Slater of Mr. Ravenwood.

"He came to me," was the answer. "I am a sort of carpenter myself," he went on. "I make things of wood, called patterns. They are for the use of foundries in casting objects in metal. The box you found is full of wooden patterns, and that is why it floated away up here after I lost it."

"How did you lose it?" asked Sue.

"And isn't there *any* pirate gold in the box?" asked Bunny, much disappointed.

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"No, not a bit of pirate gold, or any other kind," laughed Mr. Ravenwood. "I wish there might be some real, good gold in it, but such things don't happen outside of books, I'm afraid," he added. "Perhaps I had better tell you the whole story," he suggested.

"I should like to hear it," said Mrs. Brown. "That is, unless you want to go up to our woodshed and make sure it is your box we have found."

"No," was the reply. "I am pretty certain, from your description of it and from the fact that it has my name on it, that it is mine. Now I will tell you how Davy Jones, as I called him, or Sandy, as you call him, came to me.

"I was in my motor boat one day at a dock in Bellemere, getting some wood to take to my shop in Sea Gate to make into patterns. I was just about to start off when this big, yellow dog came running along the pier. He jumped into my boat and made himself at home. I tried to make him go ashore, but he wouldn't. As I had no time to get out myself and tie him up, I took him with me back to Sea Gate. He proved to be very friendly, and though I was sure he was a valuable animal and that some one would want him back, I had no time then to make inquiries. I just kept him and took him home with me."

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"Did he have a pocketbook when he jumped into your boat?" asked Bunny.

"No, I don't believe he did," answered Mr. Ravenwood. "He had nothing in his mouth that I recall; though, to tell you the truth, my back was turned when he leaped aboard."

"He couldn't have had my pocketbook," said Mrs. Brown. "If this is the same dog that was in our yard, and he seems to be, he either dropped my purse in the carpenter shop or else in some

other place which we shall never know. The shop has been searched, but where else to look no one knows."

"Well, as I said," went on Mr. Ravenwood, "Sandy came aboard my boat and I kept him. It was not until the other day that I noticed an advertisement about him, and then I knew what to do with him. That was the day after I lost my box."

"How did you lose that?" asked Uncle Tad.

"I lost it overboard out of my boat in the fierce storm of the other night," was the answer. "I had packed the box full of wooden patterns, put it in my boat, and I had lettered my name and address on it in readiness for sending it away by express. I was also going to put the name of the place where the box was to go, but I was called away just then to the telephone at the dock in Sea Gate, and when I came back I was thinking so much about something else that I forgot all about putting the other name on the box. I started out in my boat to take the box across the bay to the express office, and I was caught in the storm. I was nearly capsized and had to put back to shore, the box tipping overboard and floating off. I was glad enough to let it go and get safely back myself."

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"And did Sandy go overboard, too?" asked Harry, his arms about his dog's neck.

"No, I had left Sandy on shore," answered Mr. Ravenwood. "Though he always wanted to go with me; didn't you, old fellow?" he asked, and the dog wagged his tail to show how happy he was.

"Well, that's about all there is to my story," said Mr. Ravenwood. "After the storm was over I set out in search of my box of patterns, for I knew they would float, but I could not find them. Sandy went with me on these trips. Then I got Mr. Brown's letter, telling me that the box with my name on was here in Christmas Tree Cove, and, at the same time, I noticed the advertisement in one of the papers about the lost dog."

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"I connected the two names, and then I thought the best thing to do was to bring Sandy here and see if he belonged to you folks. And I am glad to know that he does," he went on. "And now, if I may get my box and pay any expenses there may be attached to it—"

"There aren't any expenses," interrupted Mrs. Brown, with a smile. "The box is in our shed, and you are welcome to it at any time. But won't you have lunch with us? The children were so anxious for you to come that I thought this would make the time pass more quickly. We did not dream of your coming to us here."

"I'm glad I did," said the young man, as he took a sandwich which Sue passed him.

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Then there was a happy time on the beach, different parts of the strange stories being told over and over again. Sandy seemed to be thoroughly enjoying himself, and he eagerly ate the pieces of bread and meat the children tossed to him.

At last, however, the time came to go home. Mr. Brown was expected up from Bellemere and Mr. Ravenwood said he would wait over and meet him.

"We can all get in my boat, and ride to the dock," proposed the young pattern-maker.

"Oh, that will be fun!" cried Bunny. "Come on!"

The lunch baskets were gathered up, and as they went down the beach to Mr. Ravenwood's boat Sue put her arms around Sandy's neck, looked into the brown eyes of the dog, and said very seriously:

"Can't you tell what you did with my mother's pocketbook and diamond ring?"

Sandy only wagged his tail, gave a little bark, and raced off after Harry and Bunny, who were getting into the boat.

"All aboard!" called Mr. Ravenwood, as he helped in Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Slater. "All aboard!"

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"I'll push off and you can start the engine," offered Bunker Blue. "I'm used to it and I can hop on after she gets started."

"All right," said Mr. Ravenwood, and he went back to the stern of the craft where the gasoline motor was placed under a cover made of wood, to keep out the rain and the salty spray.

Bunker pushed the bow of the boat free from the sand and then leaped on board himself.

"Start her up!" he cried to Mr. Ravenwood.

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CHAPTER XXV

WHAT STOPPED THE ENGINE

With a chug-chug the motor boat started down along the sandy shore of Christmas Tree Cove.

The children sat up in front, at the bow, as it is called, and Harry's recently recovered dog was with them, being petted first by one and then the other of the three little friends. Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Slater sat behind the children, and in the back, or stern, near the engine, were Mr. Ravenwood and Uncle Tad and Bunker Blue.

"Which dock shall I steer for?" asked Mr. Ravenwood, as the boat moved out from shore.

"Right there," and Uncle Tad pointed to the one nearest Bark Lodge.

"It certainly is strange how things happen in this world," said Uncle Tad, as he and Mr. Ravenwood were talking about the finding of the floating box and the recovery of Sandy. "If we could only find the lost pocketbook and the diamond ring now, I would say it might be almost like a fairy story." [239]

"Yes," agreed Mr. Ravenwood, "it certainly might be called that." He was listening to the noise of the engine as he sat with one hand on the steering wheel.

"What's the matter?" asked Bunker Blue. "Anything wrong?"

"The motor sounds rather strange," answered the pattern-maker. "I was just wondering——"

He did not finish the sentence before the engine suddenly stopped with a sort of wheeze and groan which showed something was wrong.

"Something's caught in the flywheel," declared Bunker Blue.

"That's what it sounds like to me," added Uncle Tad.

"We'll have a look," stated Mr. Ravenwood, as he shut off the gasoline supply and opened the electric switch. Then he proceeded to lift the wooden covering of the engine. [240]

"What's the matter?" asked Bunny Brown, looking back.

"The engine has stopped," his mother told him.

"What made it?" Sue wanted to know.

"That's what Mr. Ravenwood is trying to find out," said Uncle Tad.

Idly the boat floated on the water while Mr. Ravenwood looked in the covering case and around the flywheel.

"There's something jammed down under the flywheel, between it and the keel of the boat," he said. "I can just feel it. Seems to be a bit of rag or cotton waste that I use to wipe off the oil and grease from my hands and to polish the machinery. Wait, I can get it out," he went on, as he thrust his arm down deeper. "I have my hand on it, but it is jammed in pretty tight and——"

He gave a grunt and a pull, and then up came his arm, and in his hand he held something black, which dripped with water and oil.

"There it is," said the young man. "It must have been in the pit for some time to get so soaked as that. I don't remember dropping anything in there. In fact, I'm very careful, for there isn't much room between the rim of the flywheel and the keel, and even a small bit of waste will stop the wheel, just as this did." [241]

"Is it waste?" asked Uncle Tad.

"No, it doesn't seem to be," was Mr. Ravenwood's answer. "Why—why——" he went on in surprise, as he laid the object down on top of the engine cover and examined it. "Why, it's an old leather pocketbook!"

"A pocketbook!" cried Bunny Brown and his sister Sue, and they looked at one another with startled eyes.

"Yes, that's what it is—an old pocketbook," went on Mr. Ravenwood. "How in the world it ever came here I can't imagine, unless——"

"Is it really a pocketbook?" asked Mrs. Brown in a strange voice, and her face was slightly pale as she turned to look at what had been taken out from under the engine. "Let me see it."

"Don't touch it!" cautioned Mr. Ravenwood. "It's soaked with oil and grease." [242]

"What is in it—if anything?" went on Bunny's mother, in that same strange voice.

"I'll look," offered Mr. Ravenwood. "My hands can't get much more oily."

While the others eagerly watched, he opened the object, which really was a water and oil-soaked pocketbook, and he thrust his fingers down in the different compartments.

"Seems to have a little money in," he said, as he took out some nickles and pennies, and laid them on the cover. "Here's a—well, I declare, it's a five-dollar bill!" he said, as he opened a piece of paper. "It's covered with oil and grease, but it can be washed clean and will be as good as ever."

"A five-dollar bill!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "Oh, is there—is there anything else in the

pocketbook? If there is, it must be——"

Mr. Ravenwood thrust his fingers into another section. A strange look came over his face as he drew out and held up in the sunlight something that gleamed and glinted and sparkled.

"A diamond ring!" he cried.

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"Oh, it's my mother's! It's my mother's!" shouted Bunny Brown. "Give it to her!"

Mr. Ravenwood wiped the diamond ring on a clean bit of white waste, and then handed it to Mrs. Brown.

"Yes, it is mine. It's my diamond engagement ring that was in the pocketbook the dog took away! Oh, how glad I am!" she said, and there were tears in her eyes as she slipped the ring on her finger.

"Of all the remarkable happenings!" exclaimed Mrs. Slater.

"Just like a fairy story!" laughed Sue.

"Did Sandy drop the pocketbook in the boat?" asked Bunny.

"I think that must be how it happened," answered Mr. Ravenwood, as he looked in the purse for anything more that it might contain; but there was nothing. "Do you want it saved?" he asked Mrs. Brown.

"No, it was an old pocketbook and you might as well toss it overboard," she answered. "I have all I wanted out of it—my diamond ring."

"Well, we got the money back, too," said Bunny. "Can you really wash a five-dollar bill?" he asked.

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"Oh, yes," Uncle Tad assured him. "I'll wash this and iron it and make it look like new." And this he did a little later.

The old pocketbook was tossed overboard. It sank in a circle of rainbow colors, caused by the oil on it, and as the boat started off again Mrs. Brown looked joyfully at her diamond ring so strangely recovered.

"I see how it must have happened," said Mr. Ravenwood, as they landed at the dock. "Sandy must have had the pocketbook in his mouth when he leaped aboard my boat, but I didn't notice it, as my back was turned. He must have dropped it inside the engine box, which was open, and it has been there ever since. To-day it worked its way under the wheel and stopped the machinery, or I might not have found it until I laid the boat up for the winter, when I always take the engine out to clean it."

"I think that is how it really did happen," said Mrs. Slater. "Sandy, you were a bad dog to take the pocketbook!" and she shook her finger at him. Sandy hung his head for a moment, but he was soon wagging his tail joyfully as Bunny, Sue, and Harry petted him.

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And so Mrs. Brown's pocketbook and diamond ring, so strangely taken away, were found again. Sandy did not drop the purse in the carpenter shop, as was supposed. He carried it out again in his mouth, and kept it until he leaped aboard the boat, when he dropped it.

Mr. Ravenwood looked at the box in the woodshed, declaring it to be the one that had been lost overboard in the storm.

"So each one has his own again," said the young pattern-maker. "I have my box, Harry has his dog, and Mrs. Brown has her diamond ring."

There was much rejoicing, as you may imagine, and when Daddy Brown came up that night he had to hear the whole story over and over again.

Mr. Ravenwood departed that evening, taking his box with him and promising to call and see the Browns in Bellemere when they returned home.

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But the joyous days at Christmas Tree Cove were not yet over. Many happy times followed, and Bunny Brown and his sister Sue were in the midst of them. They had some adventures, also, but every one agreed that the one of the lost and found diamond ring and dog was the most remarkable. And now, for a time, we shall take leave of our little friends, perhaps to meet them again in new scenes.

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