

A MYSTERY STORY FOR BOYS

# GALLOPING GHOST

ROY J. SNELL

The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Galloping Ghost, by Roy J. Snell

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)

Title: The Galloping Ghost  
A Mystery Story for Boys

Author: Roy J. Snell

Release Date: September 30, 2013 [EBook #43853]

Language: English

\*\*\* START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE GALLOPING GHOST \*\*\*

Produced by Stephen Hutcheson, Rod Crawford, Dave Morgan  
and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at  
<http://www.pgdp.net>

***A Mystery Story for Boys***

*The*  
**GALLOPING GHOST**

*By*  
ROY J. SNELL

Author's Logo

The Reilly & Lee Co.  
Chicago

COPYRIGHT 1933  
BY  
THE REILLY & LEE CO.  
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER

	PAGE
<u>I KIDNAPER'S ISLAND</u>	11
<u>II WHISPERS IN THE NIGHT</u>	22
<u>III "WE MUST ESCAPE"</u>	30
<u>IV THE GHOST APPEARS</u>	38
<u>V RED WINS TO LOSE</u>	49
<u>VI THE RED ROVER GETS THE BREAKS</u>	56
<u>VII A JOURNEY IN THE NIGHT</u>	67
<u>VIII "THE RAT"</u>	78
<u>IX RED GOES INTO ACTION</u>	89
<u>X THE INVISIBLE FOOTPRINT</u>	100
<u>XI HOTCAKES AT DAWN</u>	109
<u>XII JOHNNY GETS A "JIMMY"</u>	116
<u>XIII LIGHT ON THE WATER</u>	127
<u>XIV DREW LANE STEPS INTO SOMETHING</u>	137
<u>XV "SHOOTIN' IRONS"</u>	146
<u>XVI THE BRANDED BULLET</u>	156
<u>XVII JOHNNY'S JIMMY</u>	164
<u>XVIII DREAMING AT DAWN</u>	173
<u>XIX NIGHT ON ISLE ROYALE</u>	180
<u>XX RIDING A MOOSE</u>	190
<u>XXI THE SHOE</u>	200
<u>XXII ON THE "SLEEPING LION"</u>	207
<u>XXIII A VISIT IN THE NIGHT</u>	213
<u>XXIV UNCLE NED DOES HIS BIT</u>	226
<u>XXV THE TRAIL LEADS NORTH</u>	236
<u>XXVI BATTLE OVER THE WAVES</u>	245
<u>XXVII A HAUNTED BAY</u>	255
<u>XXVIII THE LIGHT THAT FAILED</u>	262

<u>XXIX SILENT NIGHT</u>	269
<u>XXX HOLLOW CHUCKLES</u>	276
<u>XXXI "PLAY BY PLAY"</u>	289
<u>XXXII "70,000 WITNESSES"</u>	296
<u>XXXIII THE FLEA FLICKER</u>	309

# **THE GALLOPING GHOST**

## CHAPTER I

# KIDNAPER'S ISLAND

Red Rodgers rolled half over, squirmed about, then sat up. For a long time he had felt the floor beneath him vibrate with the throb of powerful motors. His eardrums, beaten upon as they had been by the roar of those motors, now seemed incapable of registering sound.

Not the slightest murmur suggesting life reached his ears. "Not the rustle of a leaf, nor the lap of a tiny wave; not the whisper of a village child asleep," he told himself. "Can I have gone stone deaf?" Cold perspiration started out upon the tip of his nose.

And then, piercing the silence like a siren's scream in the night, came a wild, weird, mad, hilarious laugh.

Startled by this sudden shock of sound, he shuddered from head to foot. Then, at once, he felt better.

"At least I am not deaf."

"That laugh," he mused a moment later, "it was almost human, but not quite. What could it have been?"

To this question he could form no answer. The wild places, wilderness, forest, lakes, rivers, were sealed books to Red. He had lived his life in a city, lived strenuously and with a purpose.

"Some wild thing," he murmured. "But where am I?" His brow wrinkled. "I've been kidnaped, dragged from my berth in a sleeping car, thrown into a speed boat, carried miles down a river, bundled into this airplane, whirled for hours through the air, and landed here. But where is here? And why am I here at all?"

“Hours,” he whispered slowly. A stray moonbeam lighted a spot on his knee. He placed his wrist there and read the dial of his watch.

“Yes, hours. It’s five after midnight. And to-morrow, hundreds of miles away, I was to have made at least two touchdowns. The crowd would expect at least one sixty-yard dash by the Red Rover.”

“The Red Rover.” That was the name the fans had given him. Well, the Red Rover would not run. He smiled grimly. But, after all, what did it matter? They were to play Woodville. What was Woodville? A weak team. Old Midway’s cubs could beat them. It was a midweek game, mainly for practice. He wasn’t needed for that. But Saturday’s game! Ah, well, that was another story.

“But kidnaped!” He brought himself up with a start. “I’ve been kidnaped! Dragged from my berth. Whirled all the way to some place where wild creatures laugh at midnight.”

Kidnaped. The whole affair seemed absurd to him. He had read of kidnappings. There had been many of late. It had always made his blood boil when some innocent child, some helpless woman had been carried away to a dismal hole and held for ransom. “Low-lived curs,” he had called the kidnapers.

“Ransom!” He laughed a low laugh. He was a college student, a football player for two months of the year, a night clerk in a hotel the rest of the year, an orphan boy working his way through the university. He thought there were three dollars in his pocket, but he could not be sure.

“Kidnaped! Must have got the wrong fellow this time. Tell ’em who I am, and they’ll turn me loose; hustle me back, like as not.”

He was wrong. They would neither turn him loose nor hustle him back.

“All right, Red. You can get out.” These words were spoken as the airplane door swung open.

“Red!” the boy thought with a start. “So they *do* know who I am. They did mean to get me. I wonder why!

“Whew!” he whistled as a cold breeze struck his cheek. “Cold up here.”



“Cold enough,” the other grumbled. “Come on, shake a leg! This boat swings about.”

“Boat.” It’s strange how a single word tells a long story. The whiff of cold air had told him that they had flown north. Now he knew that they had landed on water. But what water? And where?

“There you are.” A hand in the moonlight guided him to a seat in the stern of a small boat.

Red opened his eyes wide at the scene that lay before him, a broad, deep bay fringed by a black ribbon of spruce and balsam. The moonlight, forming a path of gold across the water, fell upon some dark object. As the oars of the boat creaked, the dark object made a splashing sound; it moved.

As if reading the boy’s thoughts, the oarsman ceased his labors to cast the circle of a powerful flashlight in the direction of the moving creature.

With a quick intake of breath Red stared enchanted; for there, not twenty yards away, standing at the end of the small island which he had reached at this moment, was a moose.

Nowhere in all his life had the boy beheld such complete majesty. Erect, silent, powerful, the monarch of the forest stood there defiant and unafraid.

“Where in all the earth could one find a spot such as this?” Red breathed to himself. “A spot so sheltered that even the shyest of the forest’s great ones shows no fear.”

He had expected the oarsman to drag a rifle from the prow and fire point-blank at this moose. Instead, he sat there for a second, his rough face disfigured by a semblance of a smile; then, pocketing his flashlight, he once again took up his oars.

For Red there was little enough time for thought. The boat swung about. Before them lay a point of land, perhaps the end of an island. At its extreme end was a little half-clearing where a score of girdled birches pointed their barren trunks, like dead fingers, toward the sky.

At the edge of this clearing was a small log cabin. From this a pale light

gleamed. Toward this cabin the boat directed its course.

“This is the forest primeval.” The words sprang unbidden to the boy’s lips. “The murmuring pines and the hemlocks, bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight, stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic, stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.’

“And to-morrow was to have been—”

As he closed his eyes he saw what it was to have been: a wild, shouting throng; college songs, college yells, bands, waving banners. “Go, Midway! Go!” Two squads battling for victory. Wild scrambles. Futile dashes. And, with good fortune, a mad dash of fifty yards to triumphal victory.

“Life,” he whispered, “is strange.”

The boat bumped. A narrow landing lay beside him.

“We get off here.” There was something impersonal in the tone of this strange pilot of the night. “This’ll be home for you, son, for quite some considerable time.”

“I hope you’re wrong,” Red thought.

The room he entered a moment later was small and very narrow. In one corner was a cot, in another a table and chair. Across from the table was a curious affair of sheet iron that, he guessed, might be a stove. The place was agreeably warm. There must be a small fire. On the table a candle burned.

Turning about to seek for an explanation of all that had been happening and of his strange surroundings, he was not a little startled to find himself alone. The door had been silently closed behind him. And locked? Well, perhaps. What could it matter? He was, beyond doubt, surrounded by water, the merciless water of the north country—some north country in November; surrounded, too, by determined men, hostile men, perhaps, who had apparently ordained that his stay in the cabin should be a long one. Once again, as he dropped into the chair, there came to his mind that forceful interrogation:

“Why?”

As before, he could form no adequate answer.

His mind was busy with this problem when, with startling suddenness, his attention was caught and held by the low sound of voices.

“Have you signed?” It was a man who spoke. The voice was not gruff; a low, smooth, persuasive voice, too smooth, too persuasive.

Quite in contrast was the answer. Unmistakably feminine, it came sharp and crisp as the crash of icicles fallen from the eaves. “I will never sign.”

“But consider.” The man’s voice was not raised, still smooth, persuasive. “You are on an island.”

“An island. I thought so,” Red whispered to himself. “But who can this girl be?” That the one beyond the partition was a girl he did not doubt.

“I will never sign!” the girl broke in upon the other’s oily speech. “My father owes you nothing.”

“Consider,” the other persisted. “You are on a narrow island within a bay. The water of the bay is icy cold. You might swim it in safety, though I doubt it. Should you succeed, it would be but to find yourself upon a much larger island. That island is fifteen miles from the nearest mainland, a hundred from the farthest. Can you swim that, or row it even if you should find a boat? Ah, no. The waters of this great lake are terrible in their fury. And Superior never gives up her dead.”

There was something so sepulchral about these last words that the listening boy shuddered in spite of himself.

“On such an island there are people.” The girl’s tone was stubborn, defiant.

“There is no one.” The tone of the speaker carried conviction. “In summer, yes. In winter, no. We are here alone.”

“Then,” said the girl, “I shall stay here until summer comes. Winter will soon be here. And ‘if winter comes,’” she quoted, “‘can spring be far behind?’”

“Very far.”

There was a quiet cadence in the speaker's tone that sent chills coursing up Red Rodger's spine. At the same time he hardly suppressed a desire to shout: "Bravo!" to the girl.

The closing of a door some seconds later told him that this was a cabin of at least two rooms and, strangely enough, between these rooms was no connecting door.

## CHAPTER II

# WHISPERS IN THE NIGHT

As Red Rodgers stretched his feet out before the tiny stove in his narrow room, his brow wrinkled. Here was a situation for you! A football game to be played to-morrow four or five hundred miles away. He laughed a silent, mirthless laugh.

“Football,” he whispered. He was surprised to find within his being a certain feeling of relief. He relaxed to the very tips of his toes. “Football.” He had seen a lot of it. Too much. This was his first year on the varsity. Almost without willing it, or even realizing it, he had become the central attraction of his team. He was the hub about which the offense circled. His had been the power and the glory, the power to dash and beat, weave and wind his way to many a touchdown, the glory of the victor.

“The power and the glory.” Little enough Red cared for glory. But power? Ah, yes! All his life he had striven for power, physical power for the most part. But he meant in the end to go forward, to succeed in life.

Born and raised in a city of mills, he had, from the age of fourteen, played his little part in the making of steel. For three summers and at every other available hour he had toiled at steel. Bare to the waist, brown, heat-burned, perspiring, he had dragged at long bars, raking away at steel bars, but recently formed by rushing, crashing rollers, that were still smoking hot. Other hours he had spent on the gridiron. The one helped the other. Struggling with steel, he had become like steel himself, hard, elastic, resisting. As he went down the field men were repelled from his Robot-like body as they might had he been a thing of white-hot metal.

And then had come his great opportunity. A quiet, solidly built man, with wrinkled face, bright eyes and tangled hair, had watched his high school football exploits from the sidelines. From time to time he had beckoned and had

whispered: “Hold the ball closer to your body. Lean. Lean far over. Don’t run for the sidelines. Break your way through.”

There had been an air of authority and knowledge not to be questioned about this old man. Red had listened and had tried to follow the other’s teaching.

Then, one day during his senior year at Central High the old man had touched him on the arm and had pronounced magical words:

“The university will need you.”

Red had thrilled at these words. He knew now, on the instant, that this was the “Grand Old Man” of football, the fairest, squarest coach that ever lived.

It had been good to know that the university would need him, for long ago he had learned that in his upward climb he would need the university. The university had found him. He had found the university. In his freshman year, a cub, there had been bitter days and hours of triumph. But why think of all that?

With a restless motion he rose, took three steps, the extent of his cabin, retraced them and sat down. “Like a beast in a cage!” he muttered low. “I’ll not stand it!”

He thought soberly: “No, this is not to be endured. Better the hard grind of football.”

But this girl in that other log-walled prison cell? His mind did a sudden flip-flop.

“She’s rich,” he mused. “At least her father is. That crook said he was. She did not deny it.” Red did not approve of rich people. They had too much, others too little. He thought still less of their children. It mattered little to him that the sons and daughters of certain rich men had endeavored to make friends with him since his success at football. He could not understand them, was puzzled by their ways, and wished quite sincerely that they would leave him alone.

“Soft,” he had said to his roommate, “that’s what they are. No experiences worth having.”

“But this girl over there beyond the log wall,” he said to himself now, “she’s different. Got spunk. Stands up and defies them, she does, when she knows they are beasts, as all kidnapers are. Tells ’em she’ll freeze here all winter rather than

do the thing they want her to do. Nerve, that's what!"

He was conscious of an invisible bond that bound his life to that of the girl. "In the end we may fight it out together."

The hour was late. Once again the drowsy warmth of this narrow cell settled down upon him.

"Football," he mused. "A tough business. Thousands screaming their lungs out, ten, twenty, thirty, forty thousand people losing their heads while you must keep yours. Wish this were the end, wish it were all over. Wish—"

Once again, in the twinkling of an eye, his mood changed.

"For all that," he muttered beneath his breath, "I've got to get away!" Leaping to his feet, he stood there, hard, straight, square, with purpose written in every line of his well formed body. "To-morrow's game, that is nothing. But Saturday's game, that is everything. It is the end. Final, that's what it is. Defeat or victory, that's what it means. The championship or nothing. And Prang, the Grand Old Man, says it depends on us!

"That means me!" There came a stoop to his shoulders as if a load had fallen upon them. "For the Grand Old Man, for the school that gave me a chance, for my mother, for clean sport all over the world, I must escape. I must play. I must win. I must! Must! *Must!*"

Yet, even as these words formed themselves into thought he seemed to hear others. "On a narrow island within a bay. Icy water. Another larger island. Fifteen, seventy-five, a hundred miles from shore. Superior never gives up her dead." Of a sudden the boy cursed the school days when he had neglected his study of geography. He saw it all now. Geography was travel. And how could one find travel dull?

"But travel!" Again that silent, mirthless laugh. "Who expects to travel as I have?"

His thoughts were not finished. From somewhere had come a long, low, hissing sound. It was followed by a whisper:

"Over here! Come close to the wall."

“Must be that girl.” His heart skipped a beat.

“What did they take you for?” the whisper demanded.

“I—I don’t know.”

“Don’t know?”

“Fact.”

After that a great silence settled over the place. This Red could not understand. Why had she started the conversation if she did not expect to finish it?

“Oh, well,” he told himself at last, “girls are queer anyway.” He settled back comfortably in his place.

Truth was, the girl suspected him of being a decoy placed there by the kidnapers. In the end she came to see that she had little to lose if she confided in a decoy.

Again came her long-drawn signal, demanding attention. And after that:

“Don’t you want to escape?”

“Never wanted anything half so much in my life!” Then in a sudden burst of confidence he told her of the game that was to be on Saturday, of the veteran coach’s fatherly interest in his career, of his hopes, his fears, his secret ambitions. All this he poured into a not unwilling ear. Only he did not tell her he was the far-famed “Red Rover.” This he reserved for the future.

“Good!” the girl exclaimed, still in a whisper. “Then our purposes are one. We must join hands. Put her there! Shake on it!”

This, considering that a log wall eight inches thick lay between them, was of course impossible. But they pledged themselves in pantomime.



### CHAPTER III

## “WE MUST ESCAPE”

“We must find some way of escape.”

The girl’s tone, low, mellow, earnest, was scarcely more than a whisper.

“But we are upon an island within an island. Or did that man lie to you?”

“He did not lie.”

“What then?”

“We can do but one thing at a time. We must escape. And after that—” She did not finish.

The boy found it difficult, this discussing plans with one he could not see, had never seen.

“I could soon cut a small hole between two logs,” he told himself.

He thought of suggesting this, but considered it better to wait.

He set about planning their escape methodically. The staple that held the padlock to his door was large. It was clinched on the inside. By working first with a nail pulled out of the wall, then a bit of wire, he managed to straighten these points. Then, little by little, without sound, he pushed the staple back until only the points showed.

“Two or three good yanks and the door will fly open,” he confided to the girl.

“But mine? How are we to manage it?”

Red pondered this problem. He could, he told himself, pass his crude instruments through to her. But were her fingers strong enough for the task? He doubted this.

He studied the wall that lay between them. He was at a loss to account for this wall, which had, from all appearances, stood there for some years. Then it occurred to him that a trapper had built the cabin, using one room for himself, the other for his dogs. Campers of a later date had doubtless cleared up the dogs' kennel and made a bunk room of it without removing the partition.

"But this partition," he whispered excitedly, "is not notched into the cabin wall. The logs were merely laid up, one upon another, then a white birch pole spiked in each corner to hold them into position. Once the poles are removed, the logs may be taken down."

"And then?" the girl breathed.

"Your room will be mine and mine yours."

"Until they discover."

"They will not discover. We will not remove the logs until the hour set for our escape. When they discover the cage door open, the birds will have flown."

It was with strangely mixed feelings that Red began the task of removing the white birch poles which held the logs in place. Until that moment the girl had seemed quite remote, one living in another world, a rich man's daughter. But as the last spike yielded and the last pole stood leaning lightly in its place, as he realized that the logs that lay between them could be removed as easily as stones are piled or grain shocked, he became conscious of a new sort of comradeship such as he had experienced with none other.

"We are in for it," he breathed, "for better or for worse."

"For better or for worse," came the girl's faint answer. "And, oh, I'm sure it is for better than we dare dream."

"Only one thing could be truly good: to get back to Soldiers' Field on time." Red thought this, but he did not say it.

With the preparations all made there remained but to wait. To one of Red's nature, this was hardest of all. He was ever for action.

"But we must wait," he said to the log wall before him, in tones loud enough for the girl's ears. "The guard will be on the alert early in the night. Later he will relax his vigil."

"Yes, yes. We must wait!" came from the other side of the wall.

"I'm putting out my light, retiring for the night." These words, ending in a subdued laugh, came from behind the wall half an hour later, telling Red that for the eyes of the guard she had retired for the night.

"Retired for the night," Red thought soberly. "Wonder when we will retire, and where?"

As he thought of the cold black waters of this inland bay, a mental picture of his own form, lying ten fathoms deep where the fishes play, came to him. He saw his hands waved about by the currents. Then with a shudder he shook himself free from the illusion.

Fifteen minutes later he too "retired for the night." After that, with the cabin shrouded in darkness, he sat and listened to the sounds of the night.

Curious sounds they were to one who knew nothing of wild life; the shrill, long-drawn whistle of some bird calling to his mate; the throaty call of a bull moose from down the bay, and that piercing scream of the loon, never failing to set his blood running cold.

He thought he caught the sound of footsteps. The guard! What if he appeared and discovered all that had been done? He listened long for a rattle at the lock, but none came.

At last, standing erect, he stretched himself like a cat, then said in a hoarse whisper:

"I'm taking down the wall."

In absolute silence he lifted the birch poles from their places. He put a hand to the topmost log. It did not yield to his pull.

“Spiked on the other side.”

He tried the second one.

“Ah!”

It came away. Without a sound he placed it at his feet. A second, a third, fourth, fifth. Still no sound.

An opening three feet wide now lay before him. He put out a hand. It touched some one. Groping about, he found the girl’s hand, then guided her through the opening.

“It is strange,” he thought. “I have never seen this person. Is she dark or fair, beautiful or ugly?”

One or two things he could know. She was short and rather plump. Her muscles were hard. He was surprised at this. He had supposed that rich men’s daughters were always soft and white.

He drew the girl to a place on the bench beside him. She was trembling. As her shoulder pressed against his, he felt the wild beating of her heart. This would never do. She must be calm.

As for his own feelings, he had gone cold all over, just as he had at the beginning of every gridiron battle.

“Warm enough when time comes for action,” he told himself. It had always been that way.

The time for action had not yet come. They continued to listen there in the dark; a boy and a girl; the girl kidnaped for ransom which she refused to assist in collecting, the boy carried away and held for he knew not what.

The ticking of their watches sounded loud in this lonely place. Water lapped on the shore. From time to time there came a low bump-bump.

“Rowboat tied to the dock,” Red whispered to the girl. “Wonder if we could get it?”

She made no reply.

From somewhere back in the forest a hoot owl began his silly noise. Red did not know what it was. He asked the girl about it. She explained briefly.

“Hope he keeps it up,” he sighed. “Cover up any little nasty sounds we may stir up.”

“Will there be noises?” The girl seemed to shrink. Then suddenly her form stiffened. “Count me in on—on anything. They are dirty dogs, these kidnapers; deserve the worst!”

“Yes, the very worst!” Red agreed.

He felt loath to leave this place of warmth and momentary peace. There was something altogether agreeable about being so near to this girl he had never seen. “Well, the zero hour approaches.”

“Yes.” She sprang to her feet. “Let’s make it now!”

“Now it is.”

He rose to stand beside her. So for one full moment, side by side in the dark, they stood.

At last, with a long-drawn sigh, he seized her hand to lead her out into the night.

## CHAPTER IV

# THE GHOST APPEARS

The mysterious disappearance of Red Rodgers, or the Red Rover, as every one knew him, caused a great commotion. Had a President been assassinated it could not have caused a greater stir.

Not an hour had passed after he vanished before the newspapers came out with an extra with a story telling in detail all that was known about the affair.

“Red Rover,” the story ran, “has never cared for crowds. Being the star of the team, he has often of late been all but mobbed by impetuous youths, foolish old women and infatuated girls. For this reason he had formed a friendship with the watchman at the tracks by the river where the trains are made up. To-night, once safely past this watchman, he went directly to his berth and turned in for the night.

“It is to be assumed that he fell asleep at once, for, though the watchman was not two hundred yards away, he heard no outcry such as might be expected had the boy been surprised while asleep and gagged before fully awake.

“There are few clues,” the story went on to state. “In their haste the kidnapers dragged a pillow from the berth. It was this pillow, standing out white in the moonlight, that attracted the watchman’s attention. The watchman distinctly recalls hearing the sudden whir and thunder of a powerful motor shortly before making this discovery. He believes this to have been the motor of a speed boat, and has the impression that it went south.

“Various motives have been brought forward. The Rover, some say, was kidnaped for ransom. He is the all-important factor in the game to be played at the end of the week. Without him Old Midway cannot hope to win. For this reason the kidnapers may have believed that a sum might be extorted from

officials of the university for his return. Knowing the stand that President Lovell of Old Midway has taken against kidnapers, and the work the Crime Institute of that university has done in this connection, it is the opinion of those close to the president that no ransom will be paid.

“We have before us the question: Was the Red Rover kidnaped for ransom or as a retaliation for work against master criminals carried on by the university? There are those who will whisper that the school against whom the Red Rover was to have played is behind this affair. This, to any fair-minded person, is unthinkable.

“Sergeants Drew Lane and Tom Howe, two of the keenest young minds of the city’s detective force, have been assigned to the case. It is the hope of the entire city that their labors will bear fruit and that the Red Rover’s beloved sorrel top will be seen in the line when the line-up is formed for the greatest game of the year.”

An hour had not passed after the discovery of the crime, when the broad-shouldered, athletic Drew Lane, with derby pushed well back on his head, stood beside his slim, hawk-nosed partner overlooking the car yards at the spot where the Red Rover had vanished.

“Let’s have a look inside the car,” suggested Howe.

“You look.” Drew Lane turned toward the river. “If a speed boat left the river near this spot, there’ll be marks to show. May get a sure tip showing the direction she was headed. That’s important.”

Sergeant Howe swung up to the platform of the car, then slipped quietly inside. The place seemed deserted. A double row of curtains, one on either side, flanked the narrow, dimly lighted aisle.

“Ready for the night. All the other players get on at the depot, I suppose,” Howe mumbled in a low monotone.

He paused to look and listen. He had always found a sleeping car, made up for the night, a spooky affair. Dim lights, silence, long rows of curtains. And behind the curtains, what? Death? Perhaps. Men have died of heart disease in their berths. Died of a knife in the heart as well.

“Capital place for a murder.”

Involuntarily he looked behind him. Had he caught the sound of light footsteps?

There was no one in sight. “Boo! Who’d bother to bump off a city detective!” He laughed a low, unpleasant laugh. “We’re supposed to be too dumb to do anything disturbing to criminals.

“All the same!” He straightened up with a snap. “This is a case where we *must* win. We simply *must*! The Red Rover must be in the line-up when the big day comes. And it’s up to Drew and me!” Howe was a loyal son of Old Midway. Loyalty to his Alma Mater compelled him to do his best. More than that, Red Rodgers was the type he admired, a silent worker.

“He works,” Drew Lane had said once, with a note of admiration in his voice. “He’s like you, Howe. He digs in and says never a word.”

“Digs in,” Howe muttered. “That’s what we must do; dig in hard.”

With that he went gliding down the aisle to pause before Section Nine.

“Ah!” he breathed as he parted the curtains. “Seems I am in time. Nothing disturbed.”

His keen, hawk-like eyes took in all at a glance. The hammock, where clothing was deposited for the night, was gone.

“Just yanked it down and took it, clothes and all. You might think from that that Red had something they wanted in his clothes. Guess not, though.”

His eyes wandered from corner to corner of the narrow space. “Covers gone. Wrapped him in them and tied him up. Need to do that. Scrapper, Red is. Take six of those soft, beer-soaked bums to hold him if he had an even break. You—”

He broke off to stare at the center of the lower sheet which still remained on the bed. At its very center was a deep dent.

“Stepped there,” he told himself, “one of ’em.”

Switching on his flashlight, he examined the sheet in minute detail.



“Not a mark,” he muttered. “Take it along all the same.”

“You all goin’ t’ take that sheet?” The porter was at his elbow.

“Sure am.” Howe showed his star.

“All right, Mister Police. Ah cain’t stop you. But t’ain’t no sort of use. Ain’t no marks on that sheet. I examined it particular.”

“Were you here when the thing happened?” Howe’s eagle eyes snapped.

“No. Oh, no, suh! Ah don’t come on ’fore half a hour ago.”

“But you weren’t far away,” Howe thought to himself. “Hiding in the linen closet, like as not. Bribed you, maybe. Wonder how much it would cost to buy a porter?”

“What’s your number?” he demanded sharply.

“Three twenty-seven.” The porter’s wide eyes rolled. “But hones’, Mister Policeman, I don’ know nothin’, nothin’ at all! But you take that sheet, just take it right square along.”

“Did you find something, Sergeant?” a fresh voice broke in.

“Just a sheet that had been stepped on.” Howe looked into the frank, fearless eyes of a boy. It was Johnny Thompson. You know Johnny.

“Gee!” Howe muttered. “I’m glad to see you! Are you in this with us?”

“All my heart and hand!” The hand Johnny gave to Howe was as hard as a rock. “This will be a night and day affair. I’m glad. That’s the sort I like.”

“Day and night and all the time,” Howe answered. “But let’s get out of here. The section is due to move, and I’ve finished. Drew’s scouting around down by the river.”

Thus, while the forces that make for evil had been whirling Red Rodgers northward, the forces that make for good, like faithful watch dogs, were assembling, making ready to take up the trail, heedless of the perils that most

certainly lurked beside the way.

The pair had just alighted from the car when of a sudden a startling figure appeared before them. Rounding the end of the car it started toward them—a skeleton with bones bleached white, a white robe flowing behind it! This was the form that in the dim light of the car-yard approached them.

With an involuntary exclamation Johnny started back. Not Tom Howe. With the spring of a panther he was upon the creature. Next instant he was sprawling upon the ground. He had received such a blow on the head as put him out for the count of ten. Then, with a laugh as hollow as a voice from a graveyard at midnight, the skeleton set off at a long striding gallop. He was lost from sight before Johnny could recover from his surprise or Tom Howe could scramble to his feet.

“A—a galloping ghost!” Johnny exclaimed, as he bent over his companion. “Are you hurt?”

“No—not much.” Howe was coming round. “Hardly at all. But, man! Oh, man! What hard knuckles that ghost has!”

“What’s this? A ghost?” Once more a new voice broke in upon them.

Johnny looked up, then scowled. He had recognized the voice of a reporter from the city’s pink journal. He hated the paper and disliked this reporter. But when one speaks of a ghost he needs must explain.

Explain he did, and that with the least possible number of words.

“A ghost! A galloping ghost on the scene of a kidnaping that is sure to cause a nation-wide search! What a scoop!” The reporter was away even before Johnny had completed his meager description.

“A galloping ghost.” Johnny pronounced the words slowly as Howe, now quite recovered, stood up beside him, then scowled. “What do you make of that?”

“Not a thing,” Howe answered bluntly. “But, after all, the real question is, is this ghost for us or against us?”

“Do ghosts always take sides?”

“Oh, inevitably!” Howe laughed a short cackling laugh that went far toward relieving the tension of the moment.

“Come!” he said. “Let’s see what Drew has been doing. He—

“Watch out! Duck!” Seizing Johnny’s arm with a vice-like grip, he dragged him down.

Not an instant too soon. There came the crack of a pistol, followed by the dull thwack of a bullet against the side of the car just over their heads. And after that a cold, dead silence.

## CHAPTER V

### RED WINS TO LOSE

Drew Lane, Tom Howe's team mate, had not seen the Galloping Ghost. In truth it was some distance from the sleeping car to the river bank. After picking his way across the tracks, flashing his light this way and that in search of clues—some article dropped in hasty flight, a broken match, a cigaret thrown away—he came at last to a narrow stretch of rock-strewn, cinder-embedded ground.

Here his mood changed. Snapping off his light, he thrust one hand deep in his coat pocket and sauntered forward like some college youth taking the air.

This was Drew Lane's favorite pose. With his faultless derby, his spotless suit of sea-green and his natty tie, he carried it off well. Many a tough egg had called him a "fresh college kid," only to find himself the next moment lying on the sidewalk feeling of a lump on his jaw caused only by Drew's capable fist.

That fist at this moment was curled around a nasty looking thing of blue steel. At a second's notice Drew could set that blue steel pal of his spouting fire, right through his pocket. And his aim, while indulging in this type of shooting, was the despair of all evil doers.

Drew was approaching what appeared to be a dangerous spot. In the half darkness before him a great steam shovel mounted on a dredge stood with crane outstretched like some fabled bird ready to bend down and pluck his lifeless body from the river. Plenty there were, too, who would have witnessed the act with a grunt of satisfaction.

As he approached the dredge a small craft, moored ahead of the dredge and smelling strongly of fish, gave forth a hollow bump-bump.

Fearlessly the young detective hopped aboard this fishing schooner. For a

moment his light flashed here and there.

“No one,” he muttered.

Hopping ashore, he made his way to the scow supporting the dredge. Having reached it, he dropped on hands and knees, to creep its entire length. From time to time, with the aid of his flashlight, he examined several posts and the outer surface of the scow. When at last he stood once more upon his feet it was with a grunt of satisfaction.

“Went south,” he muttered. “Speed boat, all right. Wonder how far? Go up the river in the morning. Find out—”

His thoughts were broken short off by the bark of an automatic. One shot, that was all; then silence.

With the spring of a panther Drew was off the barge, across the narrow open space and lost in the labyrinth of sleeping cars.

In an astonishingly short time he was close to the scene of the mysterious kidnaping.

“Tom! Tom Howe!” he called softly. “Are you there?”

There came no answer. Only from the river came the hollow bump-bump of the fishing schooner. “Tom! Tom Howe!” he called. Still no answer.

Then, without warning, the car before him began to move. For lack of a better thing to do, he hopped aboard and went rattling away into the city’s great depot.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was during this same night, at a somewhat later hour, that Red Rodgers and the mysterious girl stood in the obscurity of the cabin doorway. Breathing hard and peering out into the night, they were poised as if for flight.

The slight hold of the lock had been broken. They were free to go. But which way? They were on an island. How long was this island? How large was the island? What was its nature? Was it all tangled forest? Were there trails, clearings, deserted cabins? To these questions Red could form no answers.

“We’d better have a try for their boat,” he whispered.

In answer the girl pressed his arm.

Then together they stole out in the night. The shadow of a giant spruce tree swallowed them up.

After that, to an impersonal observer there might have appeared a gliding bit of darkness from time to time, followed by two black figures leaping at one another by the foot of the small dock.

The action of the figures increased in its intensity, yet there was no sound. They writhed and twisted. One went down upon a knee, but was up again on the instant. They went over in a heap to roll upon the ground. They tumbled about until they reached the dock and all but tumbled into the icy water.

Then, as suddenly as it began, the struggle ceased.

For ten brief seconds one figure sat upon his opponent. Then he beckoned. A third figure appeared. Groping about the dock, this figure at last seized upon some object that cast little shadow. This it handed to the crouching figure.

Some seconds of suspense, and at last two figures, one tall, one short, stood side by side looking at the water and the dock.

As they stood there, some trick of the moonlight and shadows made their two forms appear to melt into one; and that form presented a spectacle of abject despair. Thirty seconds this pose was held. Then the shadow appeared to explode and two figures melted into the shadows to the right.

What had happened? Red Rodgers had fought a battle and won, only to find that he had in reality lost. While groping his way toward the dock he had been detected and pounced upon by the kidnapers’ guard.

From earliest childhood Red had been prepared. A boy, reared among the tough fists of a steel town school, must be. When, in his teens, he had wrestled with red hot steel, this instinct for absolute preparedness had been intensified. Football had added to this training. When one considers that he was as quick as a panther, as strong as a lion and as cool-headed as a prize fighter, one must know that the flabby guard stood little chance. Instantly Red’s arm was about his neck in a

clinch that prevented the least outcry.

The outcome of the battle you already know; but not quite. When the boy had conquered his opponent, when he had bound and gagged him, he went to look for the rowboat. Then it was that his lips formed a single word:

“Gone!”

And the girl, who in the moonlight seemed pitifully small, echoed:

“Gone!”

Where was this boat? Had it drifted away? Or had a second kidnaper rowed away to a second island, lying a stone’s throw away, for help?

No answer could be found. One thing remained to be done: to vanish into the night. This the strange pair lost no time in doing.

## CHAPTER VI

# THE RED ROVER GETS THE BREAKS

Drew Lane entered his room at three o'clock that morning. He and Tom Howe occupied a room together in the Hotel Starling. It was a very large place. Their room was on the top floor.

Throwing his coat over a chair he sank into a place by a table in the corner and allowing his head to drop on his arm tried to collect his thoughts. He had been following clues. A reporter from the News had given him a "hot tip" that grew cold almost at once. Casey from the State Street Police Station had given him another. It had led to nothing. After that he had begun setting traps. Calling in three trusted stool-pigeons, he had laid out their tasks for them. Having consulted his chief, he had begun laying plans for raiding all known hang-outs for kidnaping gangs. After that he had picked up a copy of the city's pink sheet and had read in glaring headlines:

GHOST NO LONGER WALKS. HE GALLOPS.

He had read with some surprise the story of the Galloping Ghost.

"Rotten bit of sensation," he muttered. "I saw no ghost. Don't believe Howe did either. But that shot? Who fired it?"

He glanced at Howe's bed in the corner. Howe lay across it fully clad, sound asleep.

"Like to ask him," Drew muttered. "Like—"

He made a sudden move with his arm. Some unusually hard object rested beneath it.

To his surprise he found on the table a coarse brown envelope. On the face of it



was scrawled:

*Sergeants Lane and Howe.*

Turning it over, he dumped its contents upon the table. A handful of shavings and one very misshapen bullet, that was all; or so he thought until he thrust in a hand and drew forth a much crumpled bit of paper.

With a quick intake of breath, he flattened the paper on the table.

Words were scrawled across the page. The writing was very bad, as if a right-handed man had undertaken to write with his left hand. In time he made out the message.

*Here are some important clues. Guard them with care. When raids are made you will collect firearms. Collect pocket knives as well. You will hear from me later.*

*“The G.G.”*

“Some crank,” Drew muttered.

Then a thought struck him all of a heap. How had the message gotten into their room?

“Howe brought it.

“No. That is impossible. Had he read that note he would have folded it neatly. That’s Howe every time.”

Well, here was fresh mystery. And what of these clues? A bullet. That was always important. But where had it been found? He examined it closely. “Wood sticking to it,” he muttered. “Been dug out.”

But what of the shavings? These too he examined. After studying them carefully he was convinced that some one, while waiting for a second person perhaps, had occupied his time whittling a bit of soft wood he had picked up.

“The world is strewn with such piles made by whittle-bugs,” he told himself. He was tempted to toss them into the waste paper basket. Instead he slid them back into the envelope.

After that he read the note through again. "Collect pocket knives." His voice took on a note of disgust. "What could be the good of that?"

"You will hear from me again.' Well, here's hoping."

He threw the envelope to a back corner of the table. But startling revelations would drag it again to the light.

"Collect pocket knives." Down deep in his heart he knew that he would start this collection to-morrow. He hated doing silly things. But more than this he dreaded making fatal blunders. "A clue is a clue," he had said many times, "be it faint as a moon at midday."

\* \* \* \* \*

The battle Red Rodgers waged after leaving the cabin at the edge of the narrow clearing on that mysterious island was something quite outside his past experience. True, he was not unacquainted with struggle and peril. More than once in the vast steel mill he had watched hot sheet steel, caught by a defective roller, curl itself into a serpent of fire, and had dodged in the nick of time. On the gridiron, with mad crowds screaming, with forms leaping at him from right and left, he had over and over battled his way to victory.

Now he faced neither man-made steel nor man himself, but nature. Before him in the dark lay a primeval wilderness; a small wilderness, to be sure, but a real one for all that. Here, on a rocky ridge scarcely one hundred yards wide, for ages without number trees had fought a battle to the death.

He had not gone a dozen paces when he tripped and fell.

He felt ashamed that the girl must put out a slender hand to guide him. "I—I've never been in a forest," he half apologized.

"Not even by day?" The girl's awed whisper showed her astonishment. Her next remark gave him a shock. "Then you have never truly lived."

Gladly would he have argued this point. But this was no time for mere talk. It was a time for action. They were on an island within a bay. The bay reached far, to a larger island. The larger island was far from the mainland. If the kidnaper's statement was to be accepted, there were no people on this larger island save the

kidnapers themselves.

“I wonder if there are other cabins on this island?” He whispered this more to himself than to the girl. She answered nevertheless.

“There are none. We must get away as far as we can. To the far end of the island. Then we must think what is to be done next. Come, we must go. Follow close behind me.”

For a full half hour after that they waged a silent battle with nature. Over fallen trees that now tore at them with their tangled branches and now sank treacherously beneath their feet, around rocky ridges that offered dangerous descents into tiny valleys so dark that one might not see his hand before him, they struggled on until with a sigh the girl whispered:

“A trail.”

Too engrossed was Red in the unaccustomed struggle to ask: “What has made this trail?”

He was soon enough to know. In his pocket he carried a small flashlight. Judging that they were now far enough from the cabin to use this, he pressed the button, then cast the light down the trail.

Instantly he sprang back. The light was reflected by a pair of large and burning eyes.

A confused impression of brown hair, of antlers like spiked slabs of wood, and those burning eyes held him rooted to the spot until the girl’s hand at his elbow guided him off the trail and into the broad-spreading branches of a fir tree. There, after a false step, he tumbled into the fragrant boughs.

Without willing it, he drew the girl after him. After that, for a full moment he remained half reclining, feeling the wild beating of the girl’s heart and listening for he scarcely knew what.

When he heard the sound he recognized it; a slow, soft-padded plump-plump, and he was relieved.

“The thing we have met on the trail,” he told himself, “was not a horned demon,

but a giant moose.” That he had been utterly at a loss, and that the girl had directed their course in a safe and sensible manner, he also recognized.

After listening to the padded footsteps until they faded out into the silence of the night, he assisted the girl to her feet and whispered:

“You are not a real person. You come from a book. Your name is Alice, and we are having adventures in Wonderland.”

“I am real enough.” She laughed a low laugh. “My name is not Alice, but Berley Todd. I am five feet tall and I weigh ninety pounds. My favorite dish is blueberries with ice cream on top.” She laughed again.

“And that moose, I suppose, was quite an old friend.”

“I suppose not. But a moose will not harm you if you give him the right of way, which I suppose is fair enough since this is his forest.

“But come. We must be near the end of the island.”

Red did not ask, “How do you know this?” He merely followed on.

Scarcely a moment had passed when they came out upon a pebbly shore. And there, as he flashed his light about, he discovered a nondescript raft of spruce logs. Dragged half way up on the shore, it seemed for all its crudeness to be a rather substantial affair.

“I suppose,” he said in a low tone, “that this entire affair has been arranged. You knew the raft was here.”

Becoming suspicious, he flashed his light into a pair of very innocent-appearing blue eyes. “I suppose,” he said slowly, “you know why I have been carried away.”

“Don’t you?” The eyes opened wide.

“As I live, no.”

“Then you’ll have to ask some one else. It’s plain enough why they took me. Want my dad’s money. Expect my help in getting it. They’ll have no help from

me!

“And now, Mister Man-who-don’t-know-why-he’s-here, let’s thank kind Providence for this raft which some summer fisherman left here, and shove off. Looks like we might go across with nothing more than wet feet. What luck!”

“And what do you think is on the other shore?”

“Cabins. Cabins and cottages, fireplaces, blankets, easy chairs, and things to eat; not so near, but not so far away, either.”

Red stared at her in silence. Did this girl speak from knowledge of the island, or was she romancing, bolstering up courage with dreams that might prove false?

He dared not ask. Putting his stout shoulders to work at shoving off the raft, he had it afloat at once. Then, after selecting a stout spruce pole and assisting the girl to a place beside him, he shoved away toward that other shore that, looming dark and distant, seemed to beckon and to whisper of “cabins and fireplaces, blankets, easy chairs, and things to eat.”

“Well,” he sighed, “thus far we get the breaks.”

## CHAPTER VII

# A JOURNEY IN THE NIGHT

While Drew Lane sat meditating on the various aspects of the kidnaping, Tom Howe groaned and sat up.

“Drew,” he drawled, rubbing his head, “I’ve been felled by a ghost, a galloping ghost.”

“You don’t mean to say you believe that stuff!” Drew held up the pink sheet.

“I believe,” said Howe with a wry grin, “that I have a large lump on the top of my head and that it’s sore. I believe it was put there by a thing that looked like a ghost. That’s all I have to say about that.”

“Well, then, what have you to say about this?” Drew held up the envelope containing the shavings and bullet.

“What is it?”

Drew showed him the contents and read the note.

“Curious sort of writing,” he ended. “And look how he signed it: ‘The G.G.’”

“That,” drawled Howe, “could stand for ‘The Galloping Ghost.’”

“It *must!*” Drew struck the table with his fist. “But why all the secrecy?”

“That,” Howe replied thoughtfully, “will probably come out later. The only question that matters seems to be: Is this ghost with us or against us?”

“With us. Can’t be any doubt about that.”

“Then we’d better follow his suggestions.”

“Collect pocket knives?”

“Why not? Interesting collection. What sort of knives do crooks carry? Bet you can’t tell. Well, now we’ll know.”

“Guess you’re right. But say!” Drew exclaimed. “What did you get from the car, the one the Red Rover was snatched from?”

“A bed sheet.” Howe held it up.

“Marked?”

“Not a mark.”

“Then what—?” Drew stared at his partner.

“Some one had stepped on the bed, probably with his shoe on. I thought I’d try the ultra-violet ray on it. Surprising what it brings out sometimes.”

“Probably worth a try.” Drew was not enthusiastic. Howe had gone in for scientific crime detection lately. Drew was still for going out and getting his man.

“Howe,” he demanded after a moment of silence, “who fired that shot back there in the train yards?”

“You answer that. A hand was all I saw, a hand thrust out from behind a car. Fired point-blank at me. And missed.”

“This may be the bullet,” Drew mused, weighing the battered bullet from the mystery envelope in his hand.

“It might be. Don’t seem likely, though. That bullet struck the side of a steel car.”

“Might have glanced. Mighty fine evidence. Find the gun that fired this bullet and you’ve got the man. Gun scratches the bullet as no other gun would. Microscope brings out that, doesn’t it?”

“Sure does. You find the man and his gun. I’ll do the rest.” Howe gave vent to a low chuckle. “Nothing would please me more! Not a nice thing, this being shot at.”

“Kidnapers are not nice people.” Drew’s tone changed. “Fact is, they’re about the worst people in all the world. Should be shot at sunrise, every man of ’em.

“It’s not so bad,” he philosophized, “stealing diamonds. They’re only a lot of stones after all. And money. ‘Who steals my purse steals trash. ’Twas mine. ’Tis his, and has been a curse to thousands.’

“But think!” He sprang to his feet. “Think of the cowards that steal a human life, a helpless woman, an innocent child, and then send back word, ‘Money, much money, or we will take the life of this one we have snatched.’

“That—why, that’s like going into battle holding a woman before you to stop the bullets! Howe, old boy, we’ve got a task laid out for us, a man-sized task, and we’re going to do it! You see if we don’t!”

Howe smiled in a quiet way. A quiet chap, was this slender detective; quiet, but feared in the underworld as many a big blustering cop was not.

“Drew,” he said after a long silence, “why did they snatch the Red Rover?”

“Revenge, perhaps. The university has been fighting kidnapers. Think what a bold stroke it would be to carry off their super-star just a few days before the final great game of the season!”

“Sounds pretty,” said Howe thoughtfully. “But it doesn’t click. Crooks waste little time on revenge. Dough is what they are after. Money. Money. Money. That is their long cry.”

“But where’s there money in snatching a football star?”

“Who knows? Perhaps they’re being paid.”

“Paid? By whom?”

“Northern wants to win. Isn’t Northern Old Midway’s ancient rival? Doesn’t the championship hang in the balance? What’s a few thousand dollars when such a



prize is at stake?”

“But universities are not like that!”

“Not the schools. Of course not. But alumni. Who can say what some rich and over-enthusiastic alumnus would risk to see that game won?”

“Not much sense to that.”

“Perhaps not. But what then?”

“They may be hoping that Old Midway will dig deep to get their star back.”

“If that’s the racket we’ll know soon enough. There’ll be letters, phone calls, demanding ransom. What say we turn in? To-morrow is just around the corner. And to-morrow we must be out and after ’em.”

“What’s the first move?”

“Trace that speed boat down the river, the one that carried him away. It went south, that’s clear enough. I saw where they tied up to an old scow. Scraped her side when they left; rubbed off a lot of mud. The shape of the spot showed plain enough which way they were going. Somehow we’ve got to find their hide-out and get the Red Rover back.”

Had the speaker been privileged to see the Red Rover at that moment ankle deep in icy water, making his way as best he could with pole and improvised paddle on a raft that, turning round and round, seemed to go nowhere, he would surely have understood that a long trail lay before him. Not being granted such a vision, he crawled into his bed and went sound asleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was no sleep for Red Rodgers and his mysterious little friend on the raft.

There had been clumsy, flat-bottomed boats in the rust-blackened slips where monster ore boats lay near Red’s boyhood home, but no rafts.

Just how does one propel a raft? By a long pole where water is shallow. But one does not endeavor to drive the raft in the direction he wishes to go. He is more

likely to achieve his end if he shoves in the opposite direction. For a raft, like an ox, a mule or a reindeer, is likely to go its own cranky way.

This Red learned soon enough. Scarcely had he begun poling than the raft started spinning like a top. It was only under the girl's expert direction that he at last started for the shore that loomed dark and ragged in the distance.

They had not gone a dozen yards when the bottom sank beneath the end of the pole.

"Now we must paddle." Heedless of the icy water, the girl dropped upon one knee, seized a narrow slab of wood and began a vigorous dip-dip that in time, it seemed, must take them somewhere.

Following her example, Red, on the opposite side, did his bit.

Under this treatment the raft behaved admirably. Keeping in view only the shore they had left, they paddled for a good half hour when, with a shock that all but sent them splashing into the water, they struck a hard object that gave out a hollow sound.

"Shore?" There was relief in Red's tone.

"No shore." The girl stood up. Her head struck something and she bounced down again.

"Thunder and guns! What now?" Red turned about to stare with all his eyes. The thing they had bumped into was a hydroplane, the very one that had carried them to this deserted spot.

"Oh!" The girl seized his arm. "Can—can you fly it?" Hope and fear were mingled in her tone.

"I—I'm sorry," Red stammered. "To-night I took my first airplane journey.

"And I can't say I wanted to come," he added as a witty afterthought.

"But say!" he exclaimed suddenly. "You just hang on here a bit. I—I'll be right back."

They were beneath one of the machine's great wings. Reaching up, he swung himself to the upper surface, and disappeared into the dark.

"Dangerous business," he muttered to himself. "May have heard that bump, those fellows. May see my light. Might come upon us here any minute, but it's a chance you can't pass up."

By dropping here, climbing there, then moving over to the right, he reached one of the twin motors. There, after flashing his light for a moment, he put out a hand, fumbled about, then pocketed a small object. These actions were repeated when he reached the second motor.

After that, with a sigh of relief, he dropped back upon the raft.

"Fix 'em!" he muttered. "Fix 'em plenty, the dirty dogs!"

"Now come on. Let's get out of here quick! Wish we could take one of those pontoons for a boat; but that's impossible."

A cloud had gone over the moon. He felt the girl's cold hand as she steadied him down to a safe place of balance on the raft, and he chided himself for being so long.

"Cabins," he whispered. "Cabins with fireplaces, easy chairs, blankets, and things to eat."

All this seemed very, very far away. And yet with youth "hope springs eternal."

Once again they worked their imperfect oars. In a surprisingly short time they once more bumped. With a low cry of hope, the girl sprang ashore.

"There should be a trail," she called back.

"Moose trail?"

"Moose and men. Here! Here it is! We go this way."

She led on over a trail so carpeted with moss that their footsteps made no sound.

"This girl knows a lot about this island," Red said to himself. "How come?"

Once again he was tempted to believe that she was in league with the kidnapers. “That doesn’t make sense either. Mixed up mess. Just have to tramp on and see how it all comes out.”

He tramped on.

## CHAPTER VIII

### “THE RAT”

The path followed by Red Rodgers and the girl was little more than a wild animal trail along the edge of a wilderness.

Evening dew had placed its cold wet hand over all. Here they passed through clumps of alder that showered icy drops upon them, here waded waist deep in ferns that were like a tossing sea, and here again they crowded their way through clusters of young spruce huddled close together like children afraid of the night.

They had not gone a quarter of a mile when they were soaked to the skin. Still, without a word, the girl, gripping Red's small flashlight, trudged pluckily forward.

“We could lose ourselves in this wilderness,” Red commented.

“Not if we follow the shore.”

That, Red told himself, was true enough. But where would the shore lead them? To cabins, fireplaces, chairs, things to eat? He fancied that this girl had been romancing, dreaming to keep up her courage.

“Queer old world,” he told himself. “Here I was, twenty-four hours ago, watched over like a child. Must eat this, must not eat that. Must sleep so long. Was there an ache, a slight sprain? Send for the rub-doctor. Did I cough once? Send in the M.D. And now this. In the wilderness. Drenched to the skin. No doctor. No osteopath. No one to tell me what to eat. Free!

“And yet, such freedom! I may be caught any time and brought back.

“Back to what?” He shuddered. Well, they'd have to find him. That would be difficult. And then they'd have a fight on their hands. He was strong, as strong as

a bull moose. They'd not get that girl again without a fight.

"Queer sort of girl," he mused. "Queer place this. You meet a moose on the trail, you politely step aside and he walks calmly past. You'd think he'd snort and vanish or roar a challenge and charge. Never heard of such things. That girl's got the place bewitched. I—"

"Look!" The girl had come to a halt. One hand was on his arm. With the other she parted the bushes. "Do you see?"

"See what?"

"That dark spot over yonder."

"Y-yes."

"It's another island. There's a cabin on it, and a boat house. Boats too. And in the cabin there is a fireplace and easy chairs, blankets, and—and things to eat." She swayed a little.

"It—it's not far." She steadied herself on his arm. "I—I think I could swim it."

"But you'll not!" Red began stripping off his coat. "I'll swim it and bring back a boat. Here, hold this. I'll take off my shoes, too. The rest doesn't matter. I'll be soaked anyway."

Another moment and he was in the water swimming strongly.

Red was a fine swimmer. In the slips where rusty ore boats lay at anchor in his home city he had learned to swim before he could talk well.

The distance to the island he found surprisingly short. Before he knew it he was touching rocky shoals that led up to a low bank lined with spruce and birches.

As he stood there shaking the water from him like a spaniel, he saw a dark bulk to his right.

"Boat house." He flashed the electric torch, which he had carried across in his teeth.

“And there’s the cabin.” Once again his light darted about. There appeared to be a number of small cabins grouped around a larger central one.

“Mysterious sort of place!” he told himself. “Wonder who built it. Who lives there? And when?”

A cold blast of wind came sweeping up the narrow channel. It chilled him to the bone.

“Going to storm. I must get back.

“A fireplace and easy chairs, blankets, things to eat,” he whispered as he stumbled along over the slippery stones.

He thought of the girl standing back there alone, drenched with dew, chilled by the wind.

“I must get back. At once!” He quickened his steps.

On reaching the shore side door of the boat house, he found it locked. With a mutter of disgust, he hurried along a narrow plank walk to the other end. There he plunged waist deep into water, to make his way beneath the great outer door.

“Room for a rowboat beneath this door,” he murmured. “Let ’em keep their launch. No gas anyway.”

A swing of the light showed him a sizeable launch suspended above the water. But that which gladdened his heart was a staunch little rowboat tipped on its side and resting on a narrow ledge at the right of the hole of black water.

“All we ask,” he grumbled. “Oars? Ah, yes! There they are. Now to tip her over.”

This he accomplished without a sound. The oars dropped silently into their places. He was in the act of pushing the boat into the black hole of water when a blood-curdling scream, coming from the shore side, froze every drop of blood in his veins.

“They—they got her!” he gasped. “And after all this!”

For a space of many seconds his heart stood still. Then it raced like an engine without a governor.

“They’ve got her. Will they keep her? We’ll see!”

Red’s fighting blood was up. And could Red fight? Ask the boys of the gridiron. Count them as they go down before him; one, two, three. Yes, Red could fight. He could fight steel and had; could fight hard opponents on the gridiron. And as for these kidnapers—dirty dogs, buzzards, beasts in human form—he’d show ’em!

\* \* \* \* \*

It was at this same hour that Tom Howe received a visitor, and a very curious specimen of humanity he was. You will need to become well acquainted with him, as he plays an important role in our story. That is one of the jolly features of this life we live; on life’s stage the humblest individual can, and often does, play an important role.

This visitor, who knocked timidly on the young detective’s door just as he was dressing, was known all up and down the river front as “The Rat.” I say he was known; the truth is that he was known to but a few. As a sort of compensation, those few knew him very well. Tom Howe knew him well.

He had a curious occupation, did the Rat. He found out things that people wished to know. And his particular province was the river. He never left it save to deliver a message. At night, in a narrow boat, little more than a canoe and painted dark gray inside and out, he might have been seen cruising up and down the river. Or rather, he was not likely to be seen; his craft and his dirty, dull-colored garb blended in with breakwaters, with piles and all manner of dark and shadowy places.

Thus the Rat lurked about the river at night, gathering scraps of information which might be sold for a price to certain gentlemen who wished to know such things.

Was the Rat particular regarding the character of his customers? Probably not. Some were favored before others, for all that. Tom Howe and Johnny Thompson might have his services at their very best, and that with no thought of charge. Every creature, even a rat, has a sense of gratitude. Johnny Thompson, who, as



you will recall, was a great friend of Drew Lane and Tom Howe, had once found the Rat dying of fever. He and Howe had saved him from the hospital, which he dreaded with the fear of death, by hiring a nurse to care for him in his river front hovel.

Now, after an all-night search at Howe's request, he had something of importance to report.

The Rat had a way of seeming in a great rush. He puffed as he talked and from time to time his sharp nose shot forward, his small black eyes popped just as a rat's will.

"Dat speed boat, it—it—dat boat," he puffed now, "you know de Wop what camps under de Twelfth Street bridge?"

"Yes, I know," Howe replied eagerly.

"De Wop saw it. Fine speed boat. Very fast."

"What color?"

"Col-color? Can't see. Too dark.

"You know de Chink got laundry by de river just past de scrap yard?"

"Yes, I know him."

"He heard de speed boat." The Rat took a turn around the room.

"So it went that far?"

"Dat far!" The Rat bulged his eyes. "Dat's not a start. You know de t'ree bums dat hang round de old warehouse way down de river, de big warehouse?"

"Yes."

"Dey saw it."

"That's not strange," Drew Lane put in. "A speed boat comes near being a curiosity that far down the river. They'd be sure to notice it."

“Dat’s it.” The Rat took another turn around the room. “Dat’s what I say.

“You know de gypsies campin’ by de river? Cottonwood trees grow on dat place.”

“Yes. I know the place.”

“Dey don’t see it, don’t hear it.”

“Perhaps they were asleep.”

“No, no. Not dat. Squattin’ by de fire, playin’ cards. Dey don’t hear dat boat. Don’t see it, I tell you.”

“Then,” said Drew Lane, “our search narrows. The boat landed somewhere between the old warehouse and the gypsy camp. Can’t be more than six blocks apart. Let’s see, what’s out that way?”

“Some homes,” said Howe. “Some shacks—abandoned, tumble-down places—a roadhouse or two. The airport is not far away.”

“That’s right, the airport.” Drew said these words with little animation. At that moment the airport did not enter deeply into his conscious thoughts. In time it was to take on a deep significance.

“All right, Rat. Good work! Here’s your breakfast.” Howe pressed a bill into the Rat’s paw-like hand.

At this instant there came a loud banging at the door.

With a startled glance the Rat sprang for a second door at the opposite end of the room. This door opened into Tom Howe’s tiny laboratory for the scientific study of crime. The window of this room looked out on the fire escape.

Neither Drew Lane nor Tom Howe paid the slightest attention to the Rat’s going. He was by nature what his name implied; a loud banging at any door found him seeking a hole through which he might escape.

“Who’s that at this hour of the morning?” Drew grumbled.

“Search me.” Tom Howe slipped a blue-barreled automatic into his coat pocket, gripped it firmly in his left hand, then threw the door wide, to exclaim:

“Oh! So it’s you!”

## CHAPTER IX

# RED GOES INTO ACTION

All his life Red Rodgers had been trained for action. In the steel mills there come times when men are divided into two classes, the quick and the dead. Red was not dead. The instant that piercing cry, coming from the opposite shore, reached his ears, he was alert, ready to act. His hand, already on the side of the rowboat, relaxed.

“Oars creak,” he murmured.

Across the dark pool rested a canoe. He was there in a flash, canoe in the water, paddle in place.

“But a weapon!”

He was, of course, unarmed. As his eyes roved about in that narrow space, they fell upon a pike pole. With a stout eight-foot handle and a steel point it was a weapon of a sort, spear or club, whichever he might choose. Reaching for this, he placed it without a sound in the canoe.

Then he slid out into the silent night. The wind, he found, was growing stronger. It chilled him through. “Be warm enough soon.” He set his teeth grimly.

Waves sweeping in from somewhere down the channel threatened to overturn his fragile craft. He handled it with skill. Great black banks of cloud came rolling across the sky. The darkness was intense; yet he knew his direction. He pressed forward—to what? He could not say.

“If it’s a fight, it will be a good one.” His hands grasped the paddle with a grip of steel. “God is on the side of the fellow who fights for the right. There’s nothing right about men who carry away innocent girls and then demand a reward for their return!”

He was sending the canoe forward with strong, sweeping strokes. Now he judged himself to be halfway across, now two-thirds. His pulse quickened. Had he heard a sound? Some one moving?

A question came suddenly into his mind. He ceased paddling. How should he come upon them? In the canoe? He'd be knocked into the water, first pop. Better to land below, then creep upon them.

“Six inches of moss everywhere. I'll make no sound.”

He changed his course. The canoe shot away.

He beached his canoe among alder bushes, then, pike pole in hand, crept forward. Holding his breath he parted bushes here, crossed a log there, climbed over a moss-covered boulder, then paused to listen. No sound save the rush of water against rocky shores. Boo! How cold it was! How the clouds raced! Going to snow.

“Should be about there,” he told himself, and his pulse pounded.

Ten more steps on the yielding moss, and again he paused. “Just one or two more trees.” A black old spruce stood before him. “Just one or two, and then—”

But what was that? A voice? Some one humming low? Yes, there it was!

“Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie, where the coyotes howl ee-e—”

The song trailed off into nothing.

He stood there too astounded to move. The voice was that of a girl.

“It must be that girl, Berley Todd. But she—she screamed.”

Having regained his power of motion, he rounded the spruce tree's spreading branches.

And then the moon rolled out from behind a cloud.

What he saw held him spellbound. There stood the girl, her graceful figure swathed in dew-drenched clothing, her face scanning the black waters as she still

sang:

“Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie—”

A gasp of astonishment from his lips startled her. She turned with the suddenness of a frightened deer. Then, as she saw his figure outlined against the spruce tree, she cried:

“It is you! I’m glad. I’m drenched with the dews of Heaven. I’m frozen to a statue. Please, let’s hurry!”

Red said never a word. In response to her request he hurried. Five minutes had not passed when their canoe bumped on the other shore. They skirted the boat house, rounded a long low cabin and at last reached a door.

The door, which was fastened, yielded to Red’s sturdy shoulder. Then they were inside.

“Oh-o!” the girl breathed. “How warm it seems! As if there were a fire.”

“There will be soon.”

Red flashed his torch about the room. A large fireplace, built of channel rocks, was just before him. As if they had been expected, the fire was laid, and a box of safety matches lay on the rustic mantel.

A match flared, a slow yellow flame mounted higher and higher and filled the room with light.

“Oh!” the girl cried suddenly. “You are the Red Rover? I—I’m glad!”

“That’s what they call me.” Red did not smile. “I—I’m sorry.”

“Sorry! Why are you sorry?”

“Sorry that you know. I’d rather be plain Red Rodgers who works in a steel mill and has ambitions of his own to become a foreman or a steel tester, or something like that.”

She looked at him in a puzzled way. Then her mood changed.

“Do you know, I believe you’re wet. See! You are making puddles on the floor. And I—I’m sort of dampish myself.”

“We’ll have a look about,” said Red.

Fifteen minutes later they returned to the fire. The girl had garbed herself in patched knickers a size too large, and a flaming red jacket. Red wore a mechanic’s coveralls.

And now he said: “Perhaps you will tell me why you screamed.”

\* \* \* \* \*

But what of Drew Lane and Tom Howe? And who was the one who stood banging on their door at dawn?

You will be surprised when I tell you it was none other than our old friend, Johnny Thompson. Johnny was not in the habit of banging on doors at dawn. At this moment, however, his business was urgent.

“Just saw the Chief,” he panted. “He sent me over hot-foot with a message for you. He says you are to get those kidnapers without delay and return the Red Rover to his squad.”

“That right?” Drew Lane arched his brows. “Didn’t tell you where we’d be likely to find these kidnapers, did he?”

“He did, and he didn’t,” Johnny replied shortly. Being young and only an amateur detective, he held the Chief of Police in great respect. For that matter, so did Drew Lane.

“The Chief says,” Johnny went on after swallowing hard, “that ‘the public is already aroused. Why couldn’t they have snatched a senator or a governor instead of the greatest football star of the age?’ That’s what he said.

“There wasn’t much time for saying anything.” Johnny’s excitement grew. “Telephone jangling all the time. Newspaper men, university professors, rich graduates, and all the little fellows who’ve bought tickets for Soldiers’ Field to see the Red Rover rove—all calling at once and demanding that something be done!

“The Chief says you are to raid these places.” He passed a slip of paper to Drew. “Suspected of kidnaping—the gangs that hang out in these places.”

“Not without good reason,” Drew grumbled. “You’d think—”

The telephone rang. Drew snatched the receiver. “Sergeant Lane speaking.”

He listened a moment, then:

“No, Chief. Just got the message. We’ll get those raids off at once.... Yes, some evidence—a bed sheet....

“No—no marks. Bullet, and some shavings....

“Seize all guns, oh, sure! How about jack-knives?...

“Not customary? Not against the rules, is it?... A pocketknife is a weapon?... Thought so. All right, I’ll collect ’em.”

Johnny thought he heard the Chief grumble something about “fool college kids collecting pocket knives.” Then Drew hung up.

“Well,” Drew drawled, “time for a cup of coffee and a plate of hots; then we’ve got to get out and give the public a great thrill by bringing those kidnapers right in.”

“It won’t be as easy as that, will it?” Johnny asked.

“Not by a whole lot! The Red Rover must be in his place on the gridiron of Soldiers’ Field when the big game starts or the Police Department is forever disgraced.”

“It’s worse than that,” Johnny put in solemnly. “The Chief says it means his job and yours if we fail.”

“We? Are you with us?” Drew looked at the boy detective hopefully.

“To the bitter end!” Johnny grinned. “Never had less of other things to do, and never wanted to do anything quite so much as to help find the Red Rover.

“Think what it means!” he enthused. “Think what sort of fellow the Red Rover



is. None of your rich man's pampered sons! A steel mill worker, that's what he was. But he's a student as well as a star. Been leading his class in chemistry and math. Been working his way, too. They say Marmon, the big meat packer, offered to pay his way. He's a graduate of Old Midway. But Red turned him down; said it wasn't his idea of good sportsmanship, nor the idea of the Grand Old Man's. Said he was going on his own.

"And he has. Three years. Steel mill worker in summer, hotel clerk in winter. Who wouldn't hunt for a chap like that?"

"Never had the swell-head either. Always pushing the other fellows ahead of himself when he could. They say he has practically refused to take a play through on more than one occasion when he considered the game won. Insisted on the other chaps having a chance at a touchdown. Went in for interference instead and did double duty. Who wouldn't want to go out and help get some dirty crook who's snatched a chap like that? What did they want him for? Revenge, or to get a wad of filthy greenbacks?"

"Bravo!" Quiet Tom Howe sprang to his feet and clapped his hands. "Bravo! That's a grand oration! I could go to work now without my coffee."

"And, by George, I will! Come on in here, Johnny. I want you to help me try a thing out." Tucking under his arm the bed sheet he had taken from the Red Rover's car berth, he disappeared inside his cubby-hole of a laboratory. Johnny followed.

"I'll bring up a can of coffee and some doughnuts," Drew called.

"O. K." was the muffled answer.

## CHAPTER X

# THE INVISIBLE FOOTPRINT

“I scream?” The girl in the patched knickers sitting before the roaring fire stared at Red Rodgers. “Why should I scream?”

“I don’t know.” Red was puzzled. “I only know I heard you.”

“But I did not scream.”

It was Red’s turn to start. He had heard a scream. No man, even in mortal agony, could scream in that manner. What did it mean? Who—?

His thoughts were broken off by a sudden burst of laughter. It was the mystery girl.

“That—that,” she stammered, with an effort at self control. “It was not I who screamed, but a loon, a silly old loon! Have you never heard a loon scream in the night?”

“Never.”

“Then you are to be forgiven. When a loon goes about the business of screaming in earnest, he can put a drowning woman to shame. We who have heard them often become so accustomed to them that we scarcely hear them at all.”

Red stared first at the girl, then at the fire. He was wondering in a vague sort of way just how much he had missed by living all his life within the confines of a city. He was to wonder this many times before this business of being kidnaped and carried to a deserted island was over.

“I wonder what that old loon is doing here?” the girl mused. “All his pals must have gone south by now. The gulls stay all winter. Some kinds of ducks, too, and

the jays and the chickadees. It can't be very lonely here even in winter. Wouldn't it be thrilling if we had to stay here on and on?"

Red stared harder at the fire as he tried in vain to think what that would be like.

"You seem to know a lot about this island," he blurted out quite suddenly. "How does it happen that kidnapers bring you to a place where you have been before? Seems a trifle mixed."

"I've wondered about that." Her big blue eyes were round and frank. "I think I've got it figured out. Do you believe in God?"

"Why, yes, I—I do. I've prayed about football sometimes; asked the One who gave me my body to help me keep it clean and fit; asked Him, too, to give me a clear brain and a sharp eye for every play."

"Oh," she breathed, dropping a hand gently on his arm, "I'm glad! Because I—I believe in God. I hope He outwits evil men. And I—I've sort of felt that He saw that those men were going to carry us off, you and me, so He sort of winked, don't you know, like the man in the moon seems to do, and He said: 'I'll have those kidnapers take that boy and girl to the island where the girl has spent her summers as long as she can remember.' And so, don't you see? Here we are."

"That," said Red with conviction, "that's great!"

Reaching for a large spruce log, he threw it on the fire. When the shower of sparks had subsided, he turned to her eagerly.

"What place is this? Tell me about it, all you can. We—we may be parted at any moment. And I—I need to know a lot. In the end they may get us, at least one of us, and the other must be able to make his way out, in the end, to see that justice is done."

At the thought of the kidnapers he strode to the door and opened it a crack.

"Safe enough for the present." His tension relaxed. "It's snowing, snowing hard. They'll never find us here in a snowstorm."

"You are right," she replied quietly. Her eyes closed. They remained closed so long that Red thought her asleep. But again they opened. "You are right, they

will not find us in the snow. You should know about this place. I will tell you all I can. And then—then we must rest, for long, hard hours are before us. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to escape from this place in November. But we must try.”

“What place is this?” the boy asked once more.

“What? You don’t know our island?” The girl’s eyes opened wide. “This,” her tone became impressive, “this is Isle Royale!”

“She expects me to be greatly surprised,” Red said to himself. Out of respect for her desire he did his best to show great astonishment. The truth was that the part of social science that deals with the world we live in had interested him very little. He was all for chemistry, physics, mathematics. He had no more notion where Isle Royale was than the Little Diomed Island, or King William’s Land. He had never heard of it. “But she evidently thinks it a great place,” he told himself, “so great it shall be.”

“Tell me more about it,” he demanded at last. He was truly interested. If he was to escape from this island, wild and uninhabited as it appeared to be, he must at least know his way about.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the meantime, Tom Howe, in his box-like laboratory, had revealed to Johnny Thompson’s astonished eyes a bit of scientific crime detection that for sheer cunning would have put any ancient astrologer or alchemist to shame.

Having spread the bed sheet taken from Red Rodger’s berth out on a small table, he had switched on a 200-watt lamp and had proceeded to examine it inch by inch as he slid it across the table.

“Not a mark,” Johnny commented, as the examination was completed.

“I’m not so sure,” Howe drawled. “A man stepped on that sheet, a very heavy man. He left a deep dent in the mattress and bedding. It’s hard to step on anything as clean as a sheet without leaving some sort of mark.

“Let’s see.” He drew the sheet endwise until the very center rested on the smooth top of the table. “It would be about there.”

He turned off the powerful light. At once the room was plunged in utter darkness.

Then, while Johnny waited as breathless as a child at his first picture show, a curious violet light pervaded the room.

“Look!” Tom Howe whispered, pointing to the center of the sheet.

Johnny did look, and there, to his vast astonishment, he beheld quite clearly outlined the footprint of a man.

“The sole of a heavy shoe!” He was dumbfounded. “It was not there before! And see! There are the marks of the nails; a heavy workman’s shoe. You could count those nails. And a heel of some hard, prepared stuff with the maker’s name wrong way over.”

“Yes,” Howe added quietly, “and a deep, jagged cut across the sole. Slipped on some sharp stone perhaps, when the sole was wet. That marks the shoe. It’s not like any other shoe in the world. Find that shoe, find the man who wears it, and we have made a discovery of great importance.”

“But I don’t understand!” Johnny was puzzled. “That mark was not there a moment ago.”

“Nor is it now.” Tom Howe chuckled. The violet light faded; the brilliant white light flashed on. The footprint was gone.

“Magic!” Johnny murmured. “Some form of magic. You can’t convict a man with magic.”

“Not magic, but science!” Howe’s tone was impressive. “Crooks are learning to use science as an aid in committing crimes. We must use science to detect crimes.”

Once again the white light was gone; the violet light returned and with it that mysterious vanishing footprint.

“You see,” Howe explained, “when that fellow entered the car to assist in carrying the famous football star away, he had been walking over a surface that contained some chemical solution. If he had passed over damp coffee grounds,

or through a forest where rank vegetable matter rotted, the effect would have been as you see it now. His foot would have left a mark invisible in white light, but quite clearly outlined when subjected to the rays of an ultra-violet lamp.

“This lamp,” he went on, “has detected the secret writing of many a spy and jailbird. A spy, wishing to forward a secret report, dips his pen into a liquid made by soaking a few quinine pills in water. This writing will not show in white light until it has been treated. He writes some commonplace letter over this message and sends it forth. Our Secret service men seize it, put it under the ultra-violet lamp, and there it is; you can read every word. The moment the lamp is snapped off the message is gone.

“A criminal may dip the corner of his jacket in coffee, return to his cell, wring out the coffee and write with the coffee a secret message to some one who plots his deliverance. He, too, may be caught by this ultra-violet lamp.

“So now,” he concluded, “we have only to find the man who wears this shoe. Very simple in a city of three million.” He smiled a slow smile. “All the same, it’s a step.”

“An invisible step,” Johnny chuckled.

## CHAPTER XI

# HOTCAKES AT DAWN

When a person is thrown with a stranger in an empty land he is sure to learn much of that other's ways. It was so with Red Rodgers. He was destined to learn much regarding the true nature of that mysterious young person who called herself Berley Todd. One fact he learned at once: that she was fond of doing things in a dramatic manner. In her own mind she was ever on the stage. Red had asked her to tell of her beloved Isle Royale. She was weary, had been awake all night. She had been cold and wet. She was hungry. Surely this was no time for telling of a place she loved.

"A cabin," she recited, "a fireplace, chairs, blankets. We have all these. And now for the last of all—things to eat."

Lighting a candle that stood on a ledge beside the fireplace, she went into the kitchen of the cabin. Soon she was calling to Red.

Together they carried in two large tin boxes of what were quite evidently leftovers of the party camping there that summer.

"Crackers, dried beans, oatmeal, a little rice." The girl named the packages as she drew them forth. "Tea, coffee. Hurrah! Some coffee and prepared pancake flour. Hotcakes at dawn!" She tossed the package to the ceiling and caught it as it came down. "What could be better than hot cakes and coffee at dawn?"

Glancing toward the window, Red discovered that she was right; dawn was breaking. But to his relief he saw that snow was still falling fast.

"If those fellows get on our trail," he thought with a shudder, "they'll keep on it until they get us. They've got to."

Red brewed the coffee. The girl mixed the batter and fried the cakes.

The meal was eaten in silence. Red found himself in no mood for talk; nor did the girl.

“It—it’s like a communion,” he told himself with a gulp. He was sobered by the thought of the future that lay just before them.

“You know,” said the girl, as the last cup was drained, “since this thing had to happen, I am glad you are you.” A curious smile overspread her face.

“Thank—er—thanks,” Red stammered. “I’ll do my best to be myself.”

“And now,” said the girl, leading him to a place beside her on a rug near the hearth, “I’ll show you about Isle Royale.”

Dragging a quantity of ashes out on the smooth hearth, she busied herself for some time smoothing them out, drawing her finger through them here and dropping a pinch of them there.

“Now,” she sighed at last, “ashes are land, bare spaces are water. See this little pile here? That’s the island we are on. See, it’s in a narrow stretch of water. That’s Tobin’s Harbor. It’s about three miles long. See this one over to the right? That’s Rock Harbor. It’s much longer. Off to the left of Tobin’s Harbor is Duncan’s Bay. It may not matter. And it may. You can’t tell where we’ll end up.

“See that bit of a pile here? That’s Passage Island. There’s a lighthouse out there with people in it, a big light and a foghorn. Listen, you can hear that horn now.”

Red listened and to his waiting ears came the distant hoot of a giant foghorn.

“How simple it all is!” He heaved a sigh of relief. “All we have to do is to get out to the lighthouse before those fellows catch up to us.”

“Yes,” she sighed, “that’s all. But it’s four miles out there. This is the stormy season of the year. We have only a rowboat. And remember this—” Her tone was as solemn as a parson’s at a funeral. “Remember this: ‘Superior never gives up her dead!’”

“Is all that water you’ve left there Lake Superior?” Red was truly impressed.

“Yes, and a great deal more. Miles and miles and miles. Isle Royale is nearer



Canada than the United States. It is not near enough to any place to do us much good in November. The lighthouse is our hope. But after the snow it will blow. I am almost sure of that. So, you see, that which was begun to-night may not be finished at once, my friend the Red Rover.

“And now—” Her eyes closed for a moment. “Now I would be glad to tell you of my island home. I love it as I do no other home. If danger did not threaten, I should dearly love to remain here, even now when everyone is gone.”

“Everyone?”

“There may be fishermen staying at the other end of the island. But that is forty-five miles away. Forty-five miles of wilderness, do you understand?”

“I understand,” said Red Rodgers. A new note had crept into his voice. He was beginning to sense the brave part this girl was playing.

“And now you must rest.”

He set about preparing a place for her on a broad seat before the fire.

“But you—” she protested.

“Oh, I’ll sleep with one eye open, here in a chair. As long as snow continues to fall, we are safe.”

“And when the sky clears you will call me?”

“Never fear.”

“While I sleep I will dream what we are to do next.”

“Success to your dreams.”

Turning his back on her, Red busied himself by drawing a crude map of the island modeled after her relief map of ashes.

“Going to be tough,” he whispered with a sigh. “Tough for both of us. But somehow we’ll make it. We’ve got to!”

After another look at the falling snow, he curled up for three winks. He slept

them through, all unconscious of the commotion his disappearance had stirred up. The hundreds of columns printed about him in the papers all over the land, the scores of detectives on the trail of the kidnapers, the thousands of earnest persons in all walks of life who had volunteered to do all in their power to help bring him back—all this he would have found, had he known it, a matter for surprise and great bewilderment. For the Red Rover was, above all, a very humble and modest young man who loved doing things for their own sake, and who thought little of honor or great reward. That the world at large had been so greatly stirred by his disappearance he did not dream.

## CHAPTER XII

### JOHNNY GETS A “JIMMY”

That day Johnny Thompson, in quite an accidental manner, came into possession of certain facts that, while increasing his perplexity at the time, were destined in the end to go far toward solving a great mystery.

These facts were discovered as he went about the business of purchasing a large bouquet of chrysanthemums. No, Johnny had not gone soft. He was not buying flowers for a cigar clerk nor a telephone operator. Far from that. There was a school for crippled children just around the corner from his lodging. He had come to know many of these children. They loved flowers, as all right-minded children do. He was sending them a bouquet. Drew Lane and Tom Howe had gone about the business of conducting a raid which, they assured him, would be quite a tame affair.

“They’ll be expecting us,” Drew grinned. “There’s never a big bank robbery pulled but next day all the successful bank robbers are called on by the police. It’s the same with kidnapers.”

“If you know they’re bank robbers or kidnapers, why don’t you just send them down to State’s Prison and have it over with?” Johnny asked.

“That would be neat and quite simple.” Drew smiled a broad smile. “But the Constitution grants every man a trial. You’ve got to prove what down deep in your heart you know, so you have to go out and get the facts.”

“And we’ll get some facts to-day, whether they realize it or not,” Tom Howe put in. “Drew’s going to collect a gallon of pocket knives. That’s something.”

“It may be a lot,” said Drew soberly.

So Johnny went to the shop at the foot of the river bridge to buy flowers. He

liked this shop and its dark-skinned proprietor. The man's name was Angelo Piccalo.

"Hello, Johnny!" Piccalo welcomed him. "Some flowers to-day?"

"Yes. Big yellow ones for the kids—crippled kids."

"Crippled keeds." The flower merchant grinned a broad grin. "The biggest, the ver' best!"

The flowers had been boxed and paid for, the proprietor stood in his doorway bidding Johnny good-bye, when a motor horn sounded close at hand. Johnny started. He believed it a car. To his surprise, though he looked up and down the street, there was no car near enough to have produced that sound.

"Speed boat." Angelo Piccalo grinned once more. "My boy. Name Angelo. See! Fine boy, that one. No cripple heem!"

The boy who grinned up at them from the river was surely no cripple. Some eighteen years of age, he was the picture of perfect youth.

"Go to college next year," Piccalo confided. "Beeg gentleman some time, my boy!"

Johnny will never know why he went down the iron steps that led to the landing place where the speed boat rested. There were times when he almost regretted having done so.

"Hello, Angelo!" he greeted. "That's a fine boat."

"Not so bad." The younger Angelo's eyes took him in at a glance. "Not much speed. Trade it in for a better one soon."

"This flower business must pay very well," Johnny told himself. "Bet he's got a car, a fast one. Going to college, too."

Angelo had bent over to lift up the rear seat of his boat. He was looking for something. Plainly it was not there. Another object was there that apparently annoyed him.

“Who’s been making my boat into a junk wagon?” He lifted out a bent iron bar and was about to drop it in the river, when Johnny stopped him.

“Hey! Don’t do that!”

“Why not? You want it? All right. Here it is.” The boy tossed the bar to Johnny’s feet. It fell with a noisy jangle.

Thinking he had caught some sound from above, Johnny looked up in time to surprise a black look on the older Piccalo’s usually smiling face. One moment it was there. The next it was gone.

“Strange!” Johnny thought. “I must have been mistaken.” Yet he knew he had not been, and found himself disturbed by that insistent question, “Why?”

“That’s a curious band you have for your wrist watch,” he said to the boy in the speed boat. “All green.”

“Made of green stones,” Angelo explained. “Got ’em on Isle Royale last summer. Fine place, Isle Royale. Plenty big fish, wild moose. Plenty pretty girls.” He grinned broadly. “Found these stones on the beach up there.”

Johnny picked up the iron bar, climbed the stairs and walked away. This bar might at one time have been used by a merchant for opening boxes and at another by some gentleman of evil intentions in opening the window of some other person’s home. It is, I believe, known in some circles as a “jimmy.”

Feeling a little foolish walking down the street, he wondered why he had saved the bar at all.

“Hate to see the work of some man’s hands wasted,” he told himself. “Many a poor shopkeeper on Maxwell Street would be glad to own it.”

At that he wrapped it in his morning paper and at last deposited it in back of a small desk in Drew Lane’s room. There it was to remain until the time appointed. Then it was to offer its bit of evidence regarding certain dark deeds committed on a night in November of that same year.

\* \* \* \* \*

The snow that had fallen steadily since the hour before dawn upon that tiny island in Tobin's Harbor of Isle Royale ceased at ten o'clock.

Standing before the window, Red Rodgers watched a scene of matchless beauty unfold before him. Dark, unruffled waters widened moment by moment until at last trees, great dark giant spruce and slender ghosts of birches, began appearing.

When at last the snow fog had vanished altogether he saw on the not-too-distant shore spruce and balsam standing like rows of tall tents of the Indians.

And even as he stood there some dark object moved amongst the birch trees.

"A moose!" he exclaimed under his breath. Then again he wondered that the girl had shown no fear at their encounter with an antlered monarch back there on the trail.

"Life," he told himself, as he watched the great sleek creature on the opposite shore step out to stand ankle deep in water, head high, antlers gleaming, "Life is strange! Here I have lived all my life in a city. Never would have known of this other world but for the work of these outlaws who carried me away. And now—"

He paused. Well, what of now? He could form no answer.

He turned about to look long and steadily at the sleeping girl.

Yes, life surely was strange. Nothing like this had come to him before. As he looked at the perfect repose of that face, something welled up within him.

"She trusts me," he whispered. Until this moment he had not known that such perfect trust existed in the world. "She trusts me. She believes in me. Her father may be rich. That does not matter. I will neither desert nor betray her. We shall fight it out together, to the bitter end."

To this serious-minded boy who until this moment had known little of life as it is lived save on the gridiron and in the steel mills, this was a solemn covenant never to be broken.

"But now," he asked himself, "what is to be done now?"

This problem he thought through with care. "They're likely to be looking for

us,” he told himself. “Yes, their search will be rather a wild one, when they know.” He put a hand to his pocket. Then his face sobered. Had he made a mistake?

“If only we can make a clean get-away they are sunk!” he muttered, clenching his fists. “I am not sorry I took the chance.”

Once again his thoughts returned to the problem at hand. “A step in the snow will betray us,” he told himself. “Now the unmarked snow says we are not here. Better to wait for darkness.”

Having come to this conclusion, he sank deep in his chair and fell fast asleep.

He awoke some hours later to be greeted by the faint aroma of tea brewing and biscuits baking on the hearth.

“It’s dark now,” a voice whispered in his ear. “We must be moving soon. But first we must eat.”

Red ate that meal in silence. He was thinking hard. “The game for to-day is over,” he told himself. “We have won. No radio must tell me that. They didn’t need me to-day. Probably the Grand Old Man would not have put me in to-day at all; save me for Saturday’s game. He said I was getting slow on my feet. Well, probably I was. Tired, that’s what I was. Football takes it out of a fellow.

“Saving me.” He grinned in spite of himself. “I was saved all right; put away for the winter, like as not; pickled like a cucumber in a jar.”

Without really thinking what he was doing, he rose and began pacing the floor.

“Worried?” The girl smiled up at him.

“Yep, quite a little. About Saturday’s game.” He dropped into a chair. “You see, our coach, the Grand Old Man, we call him, is getting along in years. This may be his last season. Who knows? It’s almost sure to be his last winning team. Five of our best men graduate this year. Breaks up the line. And, well, you know, the coach is such a square shooter, he’s so human and kind, seems to love his boys so, that you just naturally want to do things for him.”

“Yes, I know,” said the girl quietly. “And I know the success of the team depends

on you, Red Rover. Read all about it in the papers. You're going to play on Saturday. And I'll be cheering on the side lines."

Red flashed her a grateful smile. "That's right, keep on kidding me. It all helps."

"I'm not kidding. We will get away."

"But tell me more about this island. Well, no, perhaps we had better be on our way."

Rising, they went to the window. A large silver moon was tipping every wave with a point of light.

"We can't go to the lighthouse to-night." There was a note of finality in the girl's voice. "The waves out there are as high as a house."

"And we'd better not venture out just now, either. The moon's too bright. In an hour or two there may be clouds. See, they are coming in from the north."

"And where shall we go when the clouds are here?"

"Home." The girl whispered the word softly. "To my island home."



## CHAPTER XIII

# LIGHT ON THE WATER

“My island home,” the girl said musingly. “How can I tell you about it so that you will love it as I do?”

“This is Isle Royale.” She spread her arms wide as if to gather its miles of wide expanse into one embrace. “Beautiful bays and tiny lakes where the loon and the wild duck come to build their nests.

“A hundred enchanted islands where gulls soar and scream at sundown, where the sea hawk soars above you to complain in his shrill voice of your intrusion.

“Deep dark pools beside the shelving rocks where black shadows play and spotted trout dart away.

“This is Isle Royale.” Her eyes were dreamy as she stared at the fire, that petite, vivacious little lady, Berley Todd. “This is the place where I have always played my summer away.

“And to think—” Her tone changed. “To think that those men might have killed me. Then I would have played no more.

“To think,” she mused, “never again to feel the lift of my boat as I danced along in Tobin’s Harbor or out on the open lake. Never again to skim along before a gentle gale. Never to climb the low mountains and look away, away, away to where the blue begins!

“You know,” her tone became confidential, “we were always children on this island. Sometimes we’d take blankets and a grub box, boys and girls together, four, six, ten, a dozen of us, and tramp away to the top of Mount Franklin. There, beside a fire on the rocks, we watched the twilight fade and counted the stars as they came out one by one.

“Then, rolling up in our blankets, we slept beneath those stars. Playing all summer long. Don’t you love to play?”

“I don’t know,” said Red slowly.

“But you have played! Football. You play football. That’s a game.”

“Is it?” He smiled a curious smile. “Well, perhaps. But it’s work, too, if you win. You have to keep everlastingly at it. And the thing you keep everlastingly at is pretty sure to seem like work.

“Play,” he mused, “play all summer. Play all winter would be good enough for me.” Football had taken its toll of his young life. He was weary, desperately weary; not the weariness that comes from a day of sudden, arduous toil, to be dispelled by a night’s repose, but the dull, dragged-out weariness experienced by an Arctic dog team after a five hundred mile trek over the frozen snow.

“Tell me,” the girl demanded suddenly, “what do you like?”

“What do I like?” Red spoke slowly. “I can’t tell you that. I can only tell you what I have liked in the past.”

“Tell me.” She laid her hand on his arm.

“This,” he said slowly, as if recalling some scene in the remote past, “this is what I have liked: to stand before an open hearth in the steel mill where twenty tons of scrap-iron, together with limestone and tungsten, boil at white heat; to reach in a long ladle and sample it as the New England farmer samples his maple syrup; to watch the sample cool, to crack it with a hammer, to study its gleam; to do this again and again until at last you make a motion that says, ‘The batch is done.’

“Then to throw a lever and watch that white hot metal, twenty tons of it, pour into a massive brick-lined pot of steel that hangs suspended from a crane.

“Then—” He paused to take a long breath. The girl was staring at him with all her eyes. “Then to stand beneath that twenty tons of molten steel and make the gesture that sets flat cars in motion, flat cars loaded with forms to receive the steel. Then to watch the white hot steel pour once more; to follow its course until the forms have been lifted off and the billets of steel stand, red hot, sizzling in the snow, row on row.”

He looked at her as if uncertain whether or not to go on.

“Yes—yes. Please?” whispered Berley Todd.

“To climb a steel stairway—” He took a fresh start. “To seize a lever that swings a crane. To lift a red hot billet of steel into its place before heavy steel rollers, then to lift it and toss it, to turn it and bump it, to roll it here and roll it there, to press it and cut it, then slide it to one side, a long, perfect steel rail over which rich and poor, presidents and princes may ride in safety. That,” he ended, “has seemed to me a very large sample of life.”

“Oh!” she breathed. And again, “Oh!”

She said never a word. For all that, he sensed the fact that she had grasped the meaning of all this and was glad.

“You’ll go back to that,” she said after a time.

“When studies and football are things of the past. I hope so.”

“But you’ll learn to love my island just a little, won’t you? And you will come back here when summer has come and the loons are nesting in Tobin’s Harbor?” There was pleading in her voice. She loved Isle Royale. How could others fail to love it?

“I feel,” said Red with a curious smile, “I sort of feel that I will come, too.

“But look!” He sprang to his feet. “The clouds are here. The moon has vanished. Time to be going!”

He did not now say: “Where shall we go?” He knew they were to row up the bay half a mile, then climb over a ridge to her family’s summer home. He was more than eager to reach that home. Curiosity regarding that home entered into that desire. But more than that was the feeling that there she would know of many places of hiding. And hide they must until they could leave the island.

“I’ll bring the boat around.” He vanished into the outer darkness.

Closing the door softly behind her, Berley Todd stepped out upon the short platform which served both as doorstep and dock. What emotion surged through

her being as she stood alone there in the dark? Only she could answer that.

Soon came the low dip-dip of oars, and they were away.

“We’d better cross straight over,” she said in a low tone. “Then we can follow the shore. We’ll come at last to a small landing. Better try to keep in the shadows if the moon comes out.”

That this was wise counsel he was soon enough to know.

Just as they reached the opposite shore the moon, breaking through the clouds, painted the channel with a million spangles of silver.

Swinging the boat about quickly, Red drew it into the shadow of an overhanging cedar.

Resting there for a moment, they allowed their eyes to wander back. There, lighted up by the silver moon was the cabin that had offered them sanctuary for a day. Would they ever forget it? How could they?

And who would wish to forget so lovely a picture? Great spruce trees towered toward the sky. Half hidden by the lesser growth of birch and balsam, the cabins stood. There were three in all, yet in this uncertain light they seemed but one.

“It is one of the loveliest spots on earth!” The girl took one long deep breath that came near being a sob. “It is so beautiful it seems like a dream. Like a southern home beside a river in a moving picture.

“A man built it years ago. He built into it all his love for nature and the great out-of-doors. He had planned it that those he loved might be happy there. And they have been very, very happy.

“Wouldn’t this world be wonderful if all men were like that? If we lived for others more than for ourselves? If no one were greedy or ambitious for power? If we all lived the life God has given us for the pure joy of living?” Then again she murmured, “It’s like some southern home.” Her voice trailed off into silence.

Then, after a moment, she began again, only this time she was singing, singing so softly that she would not waken a sleeping bird:

“Carry me back to old Virginia,  
The place where I was born.”

And then, as if the island home were but a beautiful dream, the moonlight faded, leaving all in darkness.

Once again Red Rodgers took up the oars and they glided onward over the dark mysterious waters of the night.

It was strange, this passing on and on into the unknown. Water and air seemed to meet. Did they ride in air or on water? What could it matter?

Only the rough outline of tree tops served to guide him. Off to the right a tiny island loomed for a time, then faded into the night.

Before them some wild creature swam. Was it duck or beaver? Who could say? Nothing appeared to matter. All was swallowed up in the mystery of the night.

Then, by a sudden flash of light, all was changed.

“There!” the girl whispered. “There, to the left, is the dock!”

A moment more and they glided silently alongside the narrow platform.

“Tie up here.” The girl stepped from the boat.

Until this time they had not flashed a light. Why did the girl flash Red’s light now? Who can say? She did throw it on for a second. Instantly a low cry escaped her lips.

“Look! Footprints!” Dismay was registered in her tone. “They—they have gone before us!”

It was true that the narrow circle of light revealed the prints of a very large boot in the snow. To the right of the dock a boat was tied.

The girl snapped off the light. For a moment they stood there in silence side by side, a moment only, then the girl gripped Red’s arm until it hurt.

“Look! Look! Light on the water! They are behind us and before!”

Some distance away, on the black surface of the water a pale light shone.

“Come!” she whispered. “I know a hundred hiding places! We can best escape them here!” She led him to the foot of the hill, then began to climb, leaving him to follow in the dark as best he could.

## CHAPTER XIV

# DREW LANE STEPS INTO SOMETHING

That same night Drew Lane “stepped into something,” something that was quite unexpected and—well, you’ll see.

During the day he had conducted his raids on the city’s two “kidnaping centers.” They had turned out as he had prophesied they might—quite tame affairs. Most of the gentlemen, expecting a call, had stepped out. The raids yielded three guns, sixteen pocket knives and no information of importance regarding the mysterious disappearance of the Red Rover. Indeed the protestations of innocence, the ready offer of assistance which he received on every hand led him to believe that this was a job pulled off by some one quite outside the well-ordered circle of kidnaping gentlemen.

“Honest, Lane, we don’t know a thing!” one smooth-spoken gentleman assured him. “We don’t want the Red Rover snatched. Why should we? Our money is up on him, a lot of it. We want him to come through with a touchdown, a whole flock of ’em. Tell you what—” His voice dropped to a whisper. “Your pay isn’t too big. Know where you can pick up a piece of change? I do. You just step out and bring the Red Rover back. The boys here will make up a purse for you. Just you say: ‘The Red Rover plays,’ and you’ll hear the clink of gold.”

“Do men gamble on football?” Drew had opened his eyes wide.

“Do they? Why, say! They—”

But something—a wink, a thrust in the side, a dark look, something—silenced the talkative one. He said no more. He had said enough, however, to put Drew in a thoughtful mood.

His collecting of pocket knives was received on the whole as a huge joke. It was

suggested that he go out on a sand lot and take up a jack-knife collection from the boys playing ball.

Drew felt a bit silly about it himself and, since he had no notion what purpose it was intended to serve, he was tempted to chuck it. In the end he carried it through. So sixteen pocket knives all duly labeled reposed in the drawer of his desk.

All of which has nothing whatever to do with the thing he “stepped into” after darkness had fallen.

He had gone into a place for a belated dinner. This place, he knew, had a bad reputation. That was why he wished to eat there. A born detective, Drew was always looking for things, and sometimes he found them.

Having ordered baked flank steak, French fried potatoes, pie, and black coffee, he sat back in his chair to stare dreamily about him. He was truly hungry. “Flank steak all filled with dressing! Um!” he whispered. Little did he dream that the meal would never be eaten.

Just before him eight men were grouped around a double table. Their meal over, they sat drinking amber liquid from tall glasses.

“Might be soda water,” Drew mused. The men were far more interesting than their drink. They were a strange lot. Three of them, dark complexioned gentlemen with short black moustaches, looked exactly alike. They were dressed alike and often all spoke at the same time. They laughed together in a sort of symphonic chorus. To the right of these was a large man with a huge red nose who roared when he laughed. A smaller and younger man, who might well have been his son, sat beside him. Across from these were two others who did not fall under Drew’s gaze.

The man at the end caught and held Drew’s attention. A small man, he said never a word, but all the time sat poised as if for a spring.

“Looks like a jack-in-the-box,” Drew told himself.

This little man’s eyes were roving from one to another of his companions. Once, these eyes, swinging in a wide circle, took Drew in. Cold steel-gray eyes that glittered, they sent a chill coursing down his spine. He felt in his pocket. Yes, the



safety on his automatic was snapped off.

It was then that Drew's keen mind registered an important fact. This little man with the fiery eyes was branded, or so it seemed; there was a double scar on the right side of his forehead. Together these scars, one red, the other purple, formed a Maltese Cross.

"Know him anywhere," Drew told himself. "And yet, those scars might be faked, little touches of colored wax. It's been done."

Drew was expecting something to happen. The room was like a country place before a thunderstorm. One expects the roar of it long before the first peal comes rolling in.

When the thing did happen Drew was ready. It was nothing much at that, you might say. The little man half rose in his chair. As he did so something heavy slipped from his pocket and fell to the floor with a crash. It was a blue-barreled automatic.

Without so much as glancing about, the little man reached down to pick it up.

A look of pained surprise overspread his face as he realized the gun was not on the floor.

Then, as if a thought had struck him all of a heap, he whirled about to fix his fiery eyes on Drew Lane and to remark in a tone as smooth and hard as glass:

"You got that."

"Sure did." Sliding back his chair, Drew stood up, thrust both hands deep in his pockets, then with a trick he had learned by long practice, threw out the lapel of his coat to display his star pinned underneath.

He said never another word—just stood there smiling a little. What more was to be said? The man had carried concealed weapons. This he had no right to do. As an officer Drew was doing his duty.

The little man's face went red all over, like an angry sunset. His eyes swept the circle of his companions and, as if attached to strings held in his hand, they arose—the three all alike, the big man, his son and the other two.

Drew Lane was young. But he was no novice. He knew what it meant. He was prepared.

“Gentlemen,” he spoke in an even tone, “you can take me. You are eight to one. But I’ll get two of you first.” His eyes fell a trifle.

There was not a man in the group but read his meaning. In his pockets were two automatics. Time and again he had won the police prize for straight shooting from the hips. One false move and a member of the little man’s gang would get a bullet in his heart or his brain. Drew was good for exactly two of them.

It was a tense moment. Perhaps the glittering eyes of that little man had never wavered. Perhaps they would not have wavered now. Who could say? No one. For at that instant the lights went out, and on the instant, save for the feeble light of one small window, the place was dark.

A deep silence fell upon the room. Without realizing it, Drew began counting under his breath: “One, two, three, four, five, six.” Perhaps he was counting the seconds before things began to happen. Keeping a tight grip with either hand on the things of blue steel in his pockets, he waited, silent, breathless.

He had just become conscious of a clock that ticked loudly in a corner, when a low gasp caught his attention.

Without knowing why, he fixed his eyes upon the one small window. Other eyes were fixed upon that narrow window. How many pairs of eyes? Who could say? It was dark.

Something was moving by the window. Not a person—no, surely not that! A skull perhaps, an ugly skull with hollow eye sockets from which a pale light gleamed. A sigh passed over the room like the low moan of the sea at night.

And then something stranger happened. The skull disappeared and a ghost with bones bleached white and a long, flowing sheet went racing away across an empty space beside the building. Again the long sigh swept across the room.

And then the lights went on. These lights disclosed eight gentlemen standing just as they had stood before, staring rather stupidly at one another—the three alike, the big man and his son, the little one with glittering eyes and the other two. Drew Lane had vanished.

For a full minute by the clock on the wall they stood there staring at one another. Then the big man said in a loud voice:

“The Galloping Ghost!” After which he let forth a roar of laughter that suggested a crazy baboon roaring in the night.

Ten minutes later the place was raided by the police. There was no one there.

One fact about this affair seems important. Drew Lane retained possession of the automatic that had fallen on the floor. This automatic was the key to a situation. What situation? This, for a while, was to remain a mystery.

## CHAPTER XV

### “SHOOTIN’ IRONS”

As Red Rodgers followed the girl in the dark over the narrow trail that led away from the dock where they had discovered mysterious footprints in the snow, he found himself climbing what seemed to him an almost perpendicular wall. Here he stumbled over a boulder, there slipped on a stretch of earth that appeared to stand on end, and here found himself clawing madly in air for some form of hand-hold. That the girl knew the trail well enough became evident at once. She reached the crest of the ridge far in advance of him.

“Here! Give me your hand,” she breathed as he came up. “It’s not so steep on this side. Almost not steep at all.”

Red heaved a sigh of relief, then prepared to follow on.

The trail was much longer on this side. It seemed strange, this prowling about in the darkness on an island he knew only by name.

As his eyes became more accustomed to the darkness he made out vague black bulks to the right and to the left. “Trees,” he told himself.

When one of these black bulks let out a low grunt and vanished into the night, he stopped short.

“Moose,” the girl said in a low tone. “All over the island. Like the bears of Yellowstone. That was probably old Uncle Ned.”

“Uncle Ned?”

“I’ll tell you about him some time,” she whispered.

Dense darkness lay before them. The girl plunged into this darkness, the shadow

of a narrow stretch of forest.

Red's ears caught the low murmur of water; his gaze fell upon the white gleam of light upon the water.

"We—we'll go to the left. Lots of places there to hide." Once again the girl led the way, but not for long. Suddenly she stopped dead in her tracks to whisper:

"See! A light!"

As Red looked he caught a yellow gleam that came filtering through the branches.

"Wha—what shall we do now?" For the first time the girl appeared at her wits' end.

"That light comes from a cabin." Red tried to think the thing out straight. "Might be best to try for a look. Then we'll know what we're up against, at least."

Except to give him her hand the girl made no reply.

Slowly now, with pulses pounding, they made their way forward.

To the left of the trail they saw a white bulk, a cabin. They passed another. Then suddenly he dragged the girl from the trail. An unexpected sound had reached his ears, a dog's bark.

"A dog!" Berley Todd shuddered. "Why would they bring a dog in the plane?"

"To track us. No wonder they were so sure we wouldn't get away!"

"But listen! That dog's inside. Let's go back while there's a chance."

"It can't be ten steps farther. I'm for a look. You—you stay here."

"Not alone." She gripped his arm hard. "I—I'll go." It was she who led now.

A dozen paces more and they stood within sight of the window through which the light shone. And then a tall man, who was just in the act of removing a ten gallon hat, moved in front of the light.

“Oh! It’s Ed!”

There was a melodious ring in the girl’s voice that told plainer than words that they had found a friend.

“Ed who? Who’s Ed?” Red was puzzled by this fresh turn of affairs.

“Just Ed. A scout. He has a camp on the island in summer. Always before he left with the rest. But now he’s here, and I’m glad!” There was a ring of pure joy in her voice. “Now—now we are three, three of us and a dog. Come on!” She dragged him forward. “Come on before he turns that dog loose!”

As Berley flashed the light for an instant the boy read, above the door:

#### TRAILSIDE.

He wondered what that stood for. There was no time now for talk. Berley’s hard little knuckles had made contact with the door.

The next instant they stood blinking in the light that came from the cabin. Before them, holding his dog by the collar, was a tall, well-built man whose graying hair said he might be forty. His face, though seamed and tanned from constant exposure, bore the touch of eternal youth, a heritage of those who spend their lives in wild and silent places.

For a space of seconds he stared at them. Then his face lighted with a smile as he exclaimed:

“Why! It’s the little half-portion, Berley Todd! Put her there!” He extended a brawny brown hand.

Then, as if struck by a sudden thought, he drew back and stared.

“But—but what are you doing here at this time?”

“Came by plane,” Berley explained with a laugh. “Didn’t you hear us arrive?”

“N-no.” The look on the guide’s face was strange to see.

“You wouldn’t of course. We came in the night.

“And this—” She pushed her companion forward. “This is the Red Rover. You’ve heard of him, haven’t you? The famous football star, the Red Rover?”

“Y-e-s?” The guide continued to stare. It was plain that he believed little of that which he had just heard. And who could blame him? What chance was there that the most famous football star of the season should go off into a wilderness in an airplane a few days before the big game of the year?

“It’s cold. We—we’d like to come in,” the girl pleaded.

The scout stared for ten seconds, then exclaimed:

“Beg pardon! Been a long time since any one was here. Didn’t expect to see a soul until spring. Come in. Got a big kettle of Mulligan stew on the stove. Big feed, what?”

“Can’t be too big for us!” said Berley, closing the door and, to the scout’s bewilderment, turning the key in the lock, as she said quite calmly: “I’d like to pull the shades if you don’t mind.”

“Why, yes. Just pull ’em right down.” The scout stared afresh.

“You see,” explained “the little half-portion,” dropping into a chair, “Red, here, and I ran away. We—we don’t want any one to know we are here. Not a soul—except, of course, you.”

“Thanks for the compliment, Miss. But I assure you there’ll not be a soul here until spring. Do you plan to stay that long?”

The muscles of Berley’s mouth were twitching desperately. It was great fun, this posing as the stolen bride of a famous football star, but bottling up her mirth was quite another matter.

“Why—why, we—” She tried hard to steady her voice. “We—we haven’t made any definite plans, have we?” She turned to Red. Then, as if a second thought had taken possession of her, she demanded:

“Red, what did you do to that plane when you left me out on the raft at the back of Tobin’s Harbor?”

“I took the breaker assemblies out of their magnetos.”

“Whatever that means.” She wrinkled her brow in a peculiar way.

“It means,” Red measured his words, “that they will have to send to the factory for parts before they can fly; in other words, that they can’t leave the island.”

“That makes it bad.” Berley seemed worried.

“For them.”

“For us. They’ll be after us night and day to get those parts back. They’ll not leave a stone unturned. If we leave the island before they do, they are trapped here. Even if they reached the lighthouse no one would aid them.”

“And the officers will come here after them.” Red went on where she left off. “My old friend, Drew Lane, will be here in his red racer. Grand coup, I call it! A bit hazardous, but what is life but a series of exciting adventures? If you can make those adventures count for good, why that’s fine and dandy, I’d say.”

“It is.” Beaming, Berley put out her hand.

Then, turning to the puzzled scout, she exclaimed: “Ed, you’ve got us all wrong. We haven’t eloped. We’ve been kidnaped, one at a time, and have escaped together. Now Red has got to get back to the gridiron for Saturday’s game and I to the bleachers. You are elected to help us. You may get shot and all that, but you’ve got to come along. You’ve been drafted.”

Understanding very little of all this, but game to the last, the scout threw open a cupboard to drag down two huge pistols.

“Then,” he said solemnly, “it’s shootin’ irons. Inherited them from my dad. Never had much use for ’em except to take a crack at a prowlin’ coyote now and then, but I reckon I can hit a tin can at fifty yards mighty nigh every pop. And that’s good enough for coarse work. I’m with you, little half-portion, with you to the end.” Then, as if she were a child, he seized her about the waist and bumped her head against the ceiling.

“Mulligan’s done,” he announced a moment later. “What am I really drafted into? You’ll tell me that, won’t you, over the Mulligan stew and coffee?”



## CHAPTER XVI

# THE BRANDED BULLET

To inform you that Drew Lane made his escape from a perilous position while the Galloping Ghost was doing his bit would be to waste words. There are times, of course, when it is an officer's duty to stand his ground and shoot it out with the outlaws who chance to cross his path. This was not one of those times. Drew Lane went for reinforcements. That he did not return in time was an unavoidable misfortune. He was obliged to content himself with turning in a detailed report of the affair together with an accurate description of the individuals who composed the band.

"I'd know that little fellow with the fiery eyes anywhere," he said to Tom Howe, as he sat at his desk. "His scar marks him if nothing else does.

"But those three fellows that look just alike. Suppose they scatter. How's a fellow to tell which is which? Clever, I call it. Suppose one is suspected of a stick-up. Suppose he's put in the 'show up' on Sunday morning. Then suppose the victim says: 'That's the man.' But suppose the other two are in the line and the victim says again and yet again: 'That's the man.' And each time he's seeing a different one. Which of the three will be tried and convicted?"

"There'd be a mix-up," Tom grinned.

"Sure would.

"But look, Tom." Drew placed a thing of blue steel on the table. "Here's the automatic that the little fellow with fiery eyes dropped. He's the sort that shoots on sight. He may have done some shooting right here in town. It might just happen that you've got a bullet in your collection that came from his gun."

"Might at that." Tom took the gun. "Quite a collection of bullets I've got right

now. There's the one that stopped Patrolman O'Malley down by the Stock Yards. There's the one that passed through the Chink's heart and landed in a wall down in Chinatown. Six or seven more. I'll try it out. Want to come along, Johnny?"

Johnny Thompson dropped the book he was reading. "I'll be glad to!" Anything that had to do with scientific crime detection might claim this boy's attention, be it day or night.

Tom Howe and Johnny dropped down to the basement where a bullet might be fired into a barrel of sawdust without disturbing the guests of the hotel. Drew finished his report, dispatched it by a messenger and then, having extinguished his lamp of gleaming white light, switched on one of faint blue that gave the whole place an air of spooky mystery. It was thus that he could best think out the problems which lay directly before him.

"A whole day gone," he told himself. "And what have we? A bed sheet taken from a sleeping car. An invisible footprint on that sheet. But whose footprint? Shall we ever know? A bullet."

He spread out a sheet of paper to examine it afresh. "A second message from the dead," he murmured. "At least from the Galloping Ghost. Pretty hard-fisted ghost at that. Knocks Tom down; then when he is gone, digs a bullet from some post or railway tie, and presents it for our inspection. He says here that the bullet is the one fired at Tom out there by the Red Rover's sleeping car. 'Find that man.' And then—sure, find him if you can!

"But this jack-knife business," he mused on. "The Ghost says one of the kidnapers has the whittling habit, that while waiting for Red to fall asleep he sat on a pile of ties and whittled at a soft stick. A knife blade, he says, when examined under a microscope shows some irregularities on its edge, even the sharpest of 'em. I suppose that's right. But what of it?"

He sat for some time in a brown study from which he emerged with a start and a low exclamation:

"Something to it! What? Might be a lot! I'll have to get Tom digging into that. He and his microscope have solved many a baffling crime."

Once again he settled back into meditation. "Speed boat tied up far down the river. Airplane hangar nearby. Police have searched all buildings near there. No

result. Looks like an airplane job. Spirited away in an airplane. What could be simpler? Wonder if the night mechanic at the airport knows anything? If he does, like as not he wouldn't tell.

“One thing sure!” He brought his chair down with a bang. “We’ve got to get action, and get it quick!”

Seizing the evening paper he scanned its front page. GHOST GALLOPS AGAIN was sprawled across the front page. And below, RED ROVER STILL MISSING. POLICE HAVE NOTHING TO REPORT.

“Well—” Drew smiled grimly. “Hold your horses. We may report something yet.”

Again he read, in smaller type: “The public is aroused by this daring crime. A large purse is being raised as a reward for the return of the Red Rover. The Midway coach is game. He is drilling his team hard in the face of almost certain defeat.”

“Too bad!” Drew shook his head. “Probably his last great game. They say he is to retire at the close of this season. Everything was set for a glorious victory. And now this! The plans wrecked by a gang of outlaws who deserve nothing but to die horribly. And here we are doing our best, working night and day, following blind trails, getting nowhere. We—”

He broke short off as a fist banged the door and a voice demanded:

“Open up! Let me in!”

It was Johnny. As a bringer of good news he had outstripped Tom Howe.

“Drew! Drew!” he panted. “That’s the gun!”

“What gun is which gun?” Drew grinned in spite of himself.

“That bullet fits that gun.”

“Which bullet fits what gun? Sit down and tell me about it.” He pushed him into a chair.

After a breathing spell Johnny was able to tell a connected story. He and Tom Howe had gone to the basement and had fired three bullets from the gun Drew had picked up on the floor of the place where, for a very good reason, he had eaten no supper. Having fired the bullets into sawdust, they had picked them out and had examined them under the microscope.

“You know how it is,” he went on. “Every gun barrel has microscopic defects on the inside. These leave their marks on the bullet. The bullet left by the Galloping Ghost apparently struck the steel car a glancing blow and then entered a block of wood. One side was flat, but the other showed its marking clearly. And the scratches on that bullet, four of them, clearly marked, exactly matched the ones fired from the gun you took from that little fellow with a branded forehead and fiery eye.”

“They did!” Drew dropped in a heap on a chair. “So that was the man! And I had him, had him in my hands! And I let him go! What a break!”

Johnny, as he recalled the circumstances, was not sure whether Drew had had the little man or the little man and his gang had had Drew; but he said nothing.

“We’ll get ’em. We’ll get ’em yet!” Drew came to his feet with a bound. “Get the Chief on the wire. He’ll send out a drag-net. A mob like that can’t cruise about this city without being caught. They’re marked men, every one of them!”

Was he right? Only time would tell.

## CHAPTER XVII

### JOHNNY'S JIMMY

In the meantime Red Rodgers, the object of all this activity in a great city, sat at a small table in a cozy cabin on Isle Royale, hundreds of miles away, calmly sipping the broth from a delicious Mulligan stew (which, by the way, is made by cooking up everything you have in the way of meat and vegetables, then adding much sliced bacon and many onions).

The stew was good. The cabin was warm. The hour was late. When Red had emptied his bowl he sat back to nod drowsily.

“It’s good to be lazy and comfortable and to do nothing,” he murmured. It seemed to him now that he had somehow been drugged. Never before had he felt so little desire for action. “I wish those crooks would leave us alone,” he thought to himself. “I wish I could sleep for a week.”

But what was this? A voice sounded in the room, a strange voice. And what was this man saying?

“The listening world will be interested to know that while the football star, officially known as the Red Rover—”

“Red—Red Rover.” The boy sat up, quite awake now. “Why, that is the radio! They’re talking about me. And here I am listening in.”

“Yes,” the scout chuckled, “that’s Chicago. Haven’t listened to that station before, or I’d have known. Bet they’re broadcasting reports every hour.”

“About me?”

“Why not? You’re a star.”

“A star to-day; to-morrow a steel mill worker. What does one star more or less matter?”

For all that, he sat up and listened with increasing interest as the speaker told of all that was being done to apprehend the kidnapers and return the Rover to his team.

“Good old Drew Lane,” he murmured. “He’ll get ’em. You’ll see.”

But after all—. His spirits drooped. After all, what could it matter? He might discover who the kidnapers were. But would he trace them to Isle Royale? Ah, no. That was expecting too much!

He felt a tightening at his throat as he thought of his team mates and the coach, the Grand Old Man, doing their best to stave off defeat. “It’s not that I’m so important as an individual,” he told himself humbly, “but I’m part of the piece, like one stone in an arch. Without me the team must fail.

“Why am I here?” he cried out suddenly, springing to his feet. “How can I get away?”

“Perhaps you can’t,” the guide said quietly. “We’ll do the best we can.

“Listen!” The guide blew out the lamp, then quietly opened the door. Bing, the dog, uttered a low growl. He was silenced by his master.

From somewhere away off in the dark came a weird, wild call. It was answered here and answered there. Then such a chorus as never before was heard on sea or land rose above the sound of rushing water and sighing pines.

“Wolves,” Ed commented briefly. “Bush wolves. Hundreds of ’em on the island. They’re all singing to-night. There will be a storm. Listen again.

“There is a little sea to-night. To-morrow it will be raging. The distance from Rock of Ages on this island to the mainland is seventeen miles. Rock of Ages is forty miles from here. There are power boats here, but no gasoline. You’d have to row. You’d never make it.”

“Our only chance is Passage Island,” Berley Todd put in.

“Absolutely! But that is four miles from Blake’s Point. Four miles of raging black waters. And Lake Superior never gives up her dead. No. No, son. You’ll be staying here a spell yet. And why not? Really you should see a little of Rock Harbor while you’re here. That’s what they say in summer.” He laughed. “Why not now?”

Red was to see something of Rock Harbor indeed. Pictures of this unusual little corner of the world were to hang for many a day on the walls of his memory. Some of these he would cherish, and some he would be glad to forget.

\* \* \* \* \*

Next morning, in the distant city, there was a council of war. Drew Lane, Tom Howe and Johnny Thompson sat around Drew’s desk. Coffee had been sent up in a tin pail. They were imbibing freely as they talked.

“The police drag-net caught never a thing,” Drew announced. “They’ve vanished, all that gang belonging to the fiery-eyed fellow, the big man and his son, the three just alike, and the two others. And that,” he sighed, “leaves us just where we were. We have the gun that was fired at you, Tom, but we haven’t the man. The Red Rover is still a captive. And why? Will you answer me that? Have the authorities over at Old Midway received demands for ransom money?”

“Not a scratch.” Tom’s brow wrinkled. “Had them on the wire half an hour ago. There’s another case up just now, too; just as strange in a way. Little lady named Berley Todd; old man Todd’s daughter, steel magnate, or something of the sort. Not a word from her either, though that’s not our problem. We’re out to find the Red Rover.”

“Yes, and that promises to be enough to keep us awake nights.

“Tom,” Drew’s tone changed, “did you ever hear of a pocket knife convicting a man?”

“Stabbing case?”

“No, whittling, just plain whittling.”

“Why, yes. Let me see. There was one. A fellow shot a former partner of his. Trapper he was, I think. He built a blind of green willow branches. Cut the

branches with his pocket knife. Shot the fellow behind this blind. The sheriff found the blind. Then he found the knife in the fellow's cabin. He sent the knife and willow stubs to the Crime Laboratory. They studied the knife blade and the cuttings. That was the knife all right; irregularities in the cuttings were the same as on the knife blade. The trouble was, they couldn't prove that the knife had not been planted in the fellow's cabin, so the thing fell through."

"Sounds interesting." Drew drained his cup. "Wish you'd take a look at these through your microscope." He pushed a handful of shavings toward his partner. "The Galloping Ghost left them, you remember.

"And here is the collection of pocket knives. You'll be able to tell whether one of these did the whittling.

"You see," he explained, "some fellow connected with the kidnaping sat and whittled while he waited for the Red Rover to fall asleep.

"Strange how often men's habits convict them," he philosophized. "If you're a whittler you'll have your knife out on every occasion, whittling, just whittling.

"This man," he took up a shaving, "must be a nervous sort. See how short these are. If he were a meditative person, quite at ease, he would take long, smooth strokes."

"I'll look these over." Tom swept the shavings into an envelope. "There might be something in it. Can't afford to neglect the least clue. If it interests the old G.G. it should have our attention. By the way, what's your idea about this Galloping Ghost? Who is he? And what's he after?"

"You answer." Drew grinned. "All I know is that he seems to be on our side. That's enough for the present. I—

"Be careful!" He turned suddenly to Johnny. "Don't bend that. It might be important."

"What is it?" The boy held up a thin bit of sheet aluminum that had been pressed into a curious form.

"That," Tom explained, "is an impression taken from the bottom of a sleeping car window. When the Red Rover was kidnaped the window was jimmied. The



end of the bar made a deep impression in the wood. It was an old bar with several nicks in it. If I ever come upon it I could identify it by this impression.”

“This,” said Johnny, “is getting too deep for me. Invisible footprints on sheets. Shavings from some whittler’s knife. Impressions in wood. These are to bring a man to justice. Pipe dreaming, I call it.

“By the way!” he exclaimed. “I have a jimmy bar all my own. Saved it from a watery grave.”

Stepping to the corner he produced a paper-wrapped package and then revealed the bar he had taken from the speed boat of Angelo Piccalo, Junior.

“Let’s have a look!” Tom Howe’s eyes fairly bulged.

“Say, boy!” he cried ten seconds later. “That’s the bar! Where’d you get it?”

“Why, what do you mean? The bar?”

“I mean it’s the bar that pried that car window open. See! The impression fits exactly. I say! Where’d you get it?”

“Nothing to get excited about,” Johnny grumbled. “Some one stuck it in the back of Angelo’s speed boat. Young Angelo, you know, son of the flower shop man.”

“Back of the boy’s speed boat. Humph!” Slouching down in his chair, Tom fell into a brown study.

“I’ll dig into this whittling business,” he said, at last rousing himself. “There might be something in it. You never can tell.”

## CHAPTER XVIII

### DREAMING AT DAWN

After ten winks caught in the scout's cozy cabin, Red Rodgers and Berley Todd were up before dawn.

"I don't think much of the bush wolves as weather prophets," Red said in a hoarse whisper. He was ever conscious that their lives were in danger. "What a morning! We must get a rowboat and be away for Passage Island."

"In the light of day?" The girl pressed his arm hard. "They'd see us. Then all would be at an end. But no, perhaps not. There are islands, small islands all in a row that lie half a mile off this main shore. Once behind those, we would be hidden."

"Let's have a look. Which way is the shore?"

"Over this way." The girl led him down a path that, circling a clump of bushes, led them past a group of buildings that loomed large in the blue-gray dawn.

They passed through tall grass drenched with dew, to climb at last a pile of rocks and finally reach a great boulder that overlooked the water.

In this moment of hushed silence just before dawn, the water was like glass, smooth white glass.

"What could be sweeter? We must find a boat at once." Red turned his eyes upon the girl.

He realized at once that she had not heard him. She was listening instead for some sound that must come from far away.

Without willing it, he also listened; heard it, too, a long, deep, long-drawn sigh.

No human sigh was this, but the sigh of great waters. He heard it again and yet again.

“It is as if Father Superior were waking from his sleep,” the girl whispered. “It tells of a coming storm. We must not go. We must wait.”

They had not long to wait. As the water took on the faint pink of dawn a mist appeared to rise from afar and to steal upon them.

One by one the distant points of land became misty suggestions, mere ghosts of earth. Like ten thousand great white fish leaping in the sea, two miles away white-caps appeared, while in the foreground with the gray-black sky as a reflecting mirror, the water took on a startling clearness.

Gulls ceased to soar and scream. Settling upon a rocky ledge, they stood erect, silent, like uniformed officers observing the outcome of a battle. From time to time a member of the party, some aid-de-camp, came soaring in to report the results of his observation.

And all the time ten thousand spots of gleaming white advanced. Now they were two miles away, a mile and a half, a mile, half a mile. Like some dirigible swept from its mooring, a fragment of cloud detached itself from the vast mass and came sweeping over. It left in its wake a disturbing chill.

And now the spots of white lay before them, at their very feet. A burst of wind swept the hair back from the girl’s temples. The wind increased in volume. Waves began beating at the rocks. A few large rain drops spattered.

And then, with a suddenness that was startling, the storm broke. Rain came down in torrents. Wind twisted at the birches, and set all the spruces whispering and sighing. The ever-increasing roar of water on the rocks vied with the din of crashing thunder. The sky, laced and interlaced by lightning, revealed itself as some vast shroud. There are no storms like the storms of November.

But even the fury of nature is futile. Men do not agree upon man’s destiny. No more does nature agree upon its own. Rain beating upon the water subdued it. White water vanished. The beating of waves subsided. Having outdone itself, in its mad fury, the wind swept the clouds to other lands and other waters. A brief half hour and a scene of surpassing beauty, a tiny world studded with diamonds lay before the waiting pair.

“It is over,” Red whispered from the depths of a great spruce where they had found shelter.

“For now,” came the girl’s experienced reply. “For all that, we do not stir from this spot. Superior has moods all its own. And remember, Superior never gives up its dead.”

Leading the way out from their sheltered nook, she perched herself upon a high rock. Red took a place beside her. When she spoke again a dreamy look had overspread her countenance.

“This,” she said, spreading her arms wide, “this is Isle Royale. Forget the drifting leaves, the gray tossing branches. It is summer now. Night has come and a great golden moon paints a patch of silver down the bay. The rippling water seems alive. Every tiny wave bears a tinier craft upon its bosom—the silver schooner of a fairy.

“Listen! From far down the bay comes, wafted on by the breeze, the faintest suggestion of a song. What is it, the whisper of a bird talking to his mate?

“No. There comes the put-put of a motor, yet even this seems to keep time to the music that, gathering power and sweetness, floats on and on down the bay. A craft appears. All white in the moonlight, it seems as unreal as a fairy’s dream.

“Strange men who drift about our island in tiny gas boats. Like gypsies they are. They are here. Who are they? You do not care to know. Where did they come from? The mines, the forests, the pulp mills perhaps. This does not matter. They are here. They have a tune for you. They belong to the night.

“So, with the moon hanging high, they drift down that silver patch of moonlight to vanish into the night. And still, long after they are lost from sight, comes wafted in by the wind and waves faint, sweet music that one cannot forget. This,” she sighed, “is Isle Royale in summer. And you have not seen it, and have never heard it.”

“But all this—” Red smiled down at her. “All this is play. And I never play.”

“But you will! You must!” she exclaimed in a breath. “You will play with me here. See! A storm is rising, a three days’ storm.

“See! It is light. We are in danger! We must hurry back to our refuge.” Like a gleam of white light she was away.

## CHAPTER XIX

# NIGHT ON ISLE ROYALE

Once again it was night on Isle Royale. All day a wild south-easter had lashed the waters of Lake Superior into foam. All day in the scout's cabin Red Rodgers and Berley Todd had waited for that which they felt to be inevitable—the arrival of the kidnapers and the battle that must follow. Or would there be a battle? The snow had melted. No footprints remained. Perhaps Ed could make the outlaws believe they were not there.

For a time after a breakfast of sour dough flapjacks they sat discussing possibilities. After that, overcome by their long vigil, they slept.

Now that night had come, they were as wide awake as night owls.

“It's tough to be waiting without knowing what they are about,” Red exploded at last. “I'd almost rather meet them face to face and fight it out.”

“Oh, no! Not that!” The girl shuddered. “But we might have a look at them from the Palisades. Surely we'd not meet them on that trail. And, if we should, we could lose ourselves on the instant.”

“Safe enough,” Ed commented.

“What are the Palisades?” Red rose as if prepared to go.

“The highest point on this ridge,” the guide explained. “Trees are cut away there. You can look down a hundred feet to Tobin's Harbor. Their camp's back there. If there's a light showing they will still be in camp. If one moves on the water, you'll know they are out looking around.”

“No need for me to go,” he added, nodding at Berley Todd. “She knows every step of the way.”

“In the dark?”

“In the dark. But there’s a little light. Better take your flashlight. Don’t use it unless you have to.”

A short time later two dusky figures stole out into the night, a tall one and a short one.

In silence they passed through a narrow fringe of spruce, birch and balsam with here and there a cottage looming black and silent in the dark.

Once the girl seized Red’s arm to point through a clump of shapely spruce trees. “That,” she whispered impressively, “is my home—my summer home.”

“If the storm keeps up, shall we go there, perhaps to-morrow night, you and I and Ed?”

“Perhaps.”

They mounted a low hill, then followed along a tree-grown ridge. He marveled at her ability to find her way in the dark. “Great little sport, this one,” he told himself. “Not soft like so many girls.” This was true. The hand that gripped his arm was as hard and muscular as a boy’s. So was her arm.

In his mind’s eye he saw Lake Superior flecked with foam, four miles of it. “It’s going to be tough, at best.”

“Here!” the girl whispered in his ear. “It’s just up there. The trail’s almost straight up. Follow me. Be sure of your footing.”

Her dark form loomed above him, but from her lips came no panting breath. “Fit,” he told himself. “As fit as a marathon runner.” A moment of wild scrambling and he stood beside her. At that instant the clouds parted and, for a space of seconds, the harbor lay beneath them in all the dark, majestic beauty of a moonlight night. Almost directly beneath them, a golden ball, lay the reflection of the moon. Off to the left a dark bulk loomed.

“Island.” Berley caught her breath as she whispered: “Kidnaper’s island.”

Then a black cloud obscured the light and the harbor. The distant shore lay

beneath them, a vast well of darkness.

Darkness? Not quite all. From the far end of that long, narrow island on which their log prison stood, a pale yellow light shone.

“They are there,” the girl whispered.

“At least some of them,” Red amended.

“We can go down this way.” Once again the girl led.

In time they came to a spot Red recognized, the short dock at which they had disembarked on the previous night. The rowboat they had taken from the island still bumped at the dock.

To Red, reared as he had been close to the slips where rusty ore boats lay at anchor, a boat, any sort of boat, had an all but irresistible appeal.

Apparently some such spell hung over the girl, for when he gave her his hand to help her into the boat she did not say, “No, no! We dare not.” Instead, she whispered: “We will glide along in the shadows.”

The oars made no sound. Sky and water seemed one. To the girl, as she sat in the stern, they appeared to float in air.

And then, all in a flash, this stillness was shattered. The prow of their boat struck some solid object with a dull thud. That same instant it reared high in air to pitch the dreaming girl into cold, black waters of night.

Paralyzed by the suddenness of it all, the boy, riding high in air but still clinging to his seat, saw her go.

For a space of seconds he hung there in midair. Then with a dull splash the boat fell once more to the water. At that same instant he saw that which caused him to rub his eyes and stare. At a speed quite impossible for a swimmer of the girl’s skill or strength she was streaking away across the water toward an island that loomed out of the dark.

“A trap,” he thought. “They—they got her!”



Seizing the oars, he swung the boat about and began rowing madly.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was during this same hour that Johnny Thompson happened upon something that mystified him more than he was willing to admit. This affair might have ended badly but for the boy's splendid physique and careful training.

He was about to pass over the river bridge on his way home when his eye was caught by a brilliant display of flowers in Angelo Piccalo's window. Coming to a halt, he stood there studying the flowers for some little time. "Some flowers I never saw," he told himself. "Have to ask Angelo about them. Those red, heart-shaped ones and—"

His thoughts broke off. Two men, having crossed the bridge, hesitated a moment, then went down the stairway leading to the breakwater landing.

"That's queer," he told himself, "at this hour of the night!"

As he lingered his wonder grew, for two more men appeared from the dark bridge and descended into the depths below, and after these came three others.

"I'll have a look," he told himself.

As he shifted his position a door at the foot of the stairs opened and a man disappeared. "Odd sort of business. A door opens. No light comes out. Yet the man goes in. Something wrong about that. That's beneath Angelo's flower shop. He's my friend. I'll have a glimpse inside."

His glance inside netted nothing but darkness. Putting out a hand, he pressed against a surface that yielded—a silent, swinging door.

At once he was in a large, smoke-filled room. A curious place it was, fitted with tables and a counter; yet there was apparently nothing to sell.

A strange feeling of discontent appeared to hover over the room. Johnny felt a desire to vanish. He resisted this to stare at the men who sat about in groups grumbling in monotones and at two who complained loudly in a strange language to a large, poker-faced man leaning over the counter.

All this will remain in the boy's mind as a scene from some mystery drama, for a rough voice at his ear said:

"How'd you get here?"

Startled, he looked at the speaker. He was almost twice Johnny's size. And he had help. A companion stood at his side. Together they glared at the boy.

"I walked in," he said in deliberate tones.

"Well, walk out again."

"Who says so? This is Angelo's place."

"It may be, and it may not. Out you go!"

Seizing the boy by the shoulder, they pushed him through the folding doors and, following, gave him a sudden shove and a vicious kick that landed him outside.

It was a brutal and cowardly act. Unfortunately for the perpetrator, he followed halfway through the door. Like a flash of light, Johnny was on his feet. The next instant his left arm was about the big man's neck with a vise-like grip that both choked and silenced him in one act. Next Johnny's good right played a tattoo on the other's face. He went down like a log. With a deft twist, Johnny pitched him into the river.

Just in time he caught the shadow of the second man as he leaped toward him. Dropping like a deadfall, he stopped the headlong plunge of the man and sent him to join his pal in the river where they did a spluttering act.

"Coarse lot!" Johnny grumbled. "On second thought, I'll not stay."

Climbing the stairs, he vanished into the night.

This affair was to linger in his memory. What place was this? What were those men doing there? Some were grumbling, some smiling. Why? Was this Angelo's place? It couldn't be. But it was beneath his flower store. Would he rent the space to such men if he knew their nature?

"Naturally he wouldn't," Johnny assured himself. "I'll speak to him about it next

time I see him.”

This resolve was never carried out. Before he chanced upon Angelo’s flower shop again, strange discoveries were made. These discoveries were to change his entire course of action.

## CHAPTER XX

# RIDING A MOOSE

As Red Rodgers raced after the floating figure of the girl he gained little by little. Boat length by boat length he decreased the distance. Now she was twenty yards away, now ten, now five, as he pulled madly at the oars.

And then, as he glanced over his shoulder a cry of surprise and dismay escaped his lips. With a snort and a mad splashing of water a dark bulk sprang from the water, rattled over the pebbly shore, and then disappeared into the dense forest that covered the narrow island.

For one full minute he looked in vain for Berley Todd. Then, catching the sound of what seemed a low laugh, he whirled about to find her two white hands clinging to the prow.

“Please give me a hand!” she pleaded. “I’m soaked. And boo! It’s so cold!”

“I always wanted to do it,” she chuckled as she tumbled into the boat.

“Do what?” Red was dumbfounded.

“Ride a moose.”

“Ride—a—moose?”

“Sure! Didn’t you know it was done? Easy enough. All you have to do is to find one swimming and run him down with a canoe or an outboard motor, and then hop overboard and seize him by the antlers. As long as he is in the water he can’t harm you. But on shore, just look out!”

“That,” she added quietly, as Red once more swung the boat about and rowed for shore, “was Old Uncle Ned.”

“Old Uncle Ned? Oh, yes, you spoke of him once before.”

“He’s huge, and is quite a character on the island. Comes coughing around timid ladies’ windows at night.” She laughed quietly.

“When you ran into him he must have been feeding on grass off the bottom. He came up quick and pitched me out. Somehow I was thrown on top of him, and I got hold of his antlers. The rest was too good to lose, so I just hung right on and took a ride.

“I hope,” she ended quite meekly, “that you don’t mind.”

“N-no.” Red was rowing hard. “But you’ll be frozen before we reach the cabin.”

“Oh-o nn-o.” The girl strove in vain to prevent her teeth from chattering. “I-I’m all—all right.”

The instant they touched the dock she was out of the boat and on the dock doing a wild dance. She stopped suddenly right in the midst of this to stare away at the black water.

“Wha-what’s moving over there?” She sank away into the shadows.

For a time Red could discover nothing. Then it seemed to him that he did make out something moving close to the surface of the water.

“It may be a boat. Perhaps we had better—”

“See!” She whispered excitedly. “It *is* a boat!”

Suddenly a bright light shone across the water. A figure crouching behind the light was faintly seen. He was in the prow of a boat.

But now the thing within that circle of light caught and held their attention. A moose, splendid in his glory of shapely body and wide-spreading antlers, stood at the point of the island. Apparently blinded by the light, he stood there like a statue.

“How perfect!” Red breathed.

“Monarch of the forest!” the girl whispered low.

And then stark tragedy came crashing across the waters. A high-power rifle roared. The moose leaped high and then fell with a splash into the black water. The light blinked out, and again all was night.

As if to escape the sight, Berley Todd turned and glided silently up the hill. She was closely followed by the Red Rover.

\* \* \* \* \*

While the Red Rover and Berley Todd were meeting with strange adventures on the “Mystic Isle,” Drew Lane and his companions were striving in vain to unravel the tangled skein of mystery that surrounded their disappearance.

“Everything’s gone haywire!” Drew exclaimed disconsolately, thrusting out his feet before him and staring moodily at his littered desk.

“Not so bad as that, I’m sure,” Johnny Thompson put in hopefully.

“Just exactly as bad, and worse!” Drew struck the desk a blow with his fist that set even a “Meditating Buddha” dancing. “Why, look at it; we raid two well-known headquarters, and what do we get? A quart of pocket knives. The Galloping Ghost suggests that we whittle soft wood with each one of these, then examine the cuttings for irregularities on the edge of the knife, after which we are to compare each with the shavings found on the night of the now famous kidnaping. And what do we find? Exactly nothing. The whittling was not done by any one of these knives. So back they go. And where are we? Nowhere.

“The Chief’s yelling his head off. People are saying the police are asleep. Daily papers are impatient. University people are furious. The Red Rover is still a captive, and each day brings the great game nearer. Football! Why did anyone ever invent the game?” He sprang to his feet and began pacing the floor.

“Why did they kidnap Red anyway?” he demanded fiercely. “I ask you that. No ransom money has been demanded. Why?”

“Perhaps,” suggested Johnny, “they mean to wait until the very day of the game. They may figure that is the psychological moment for making a demand.”

“There might be something to that,” Drew said earnestly. “Might be a lot. And if there is—” Once again his voice rose. “If there is, we’ve got to get them before that time comes! Kidnaping’s been too easy. Too many soft-livered millionaires have paid large sums for their release or the release of some child. We’ve got to give ’em a lesson!”

“But how are you to get them?”

“We must find a way. There’s still that invisible footprint on the sleeping car bed sheet.”

“And there’s my jimmy bar,” said Johnny hopefully.

“Yes, that’s the very bar, right enough. But where did you find it? In the speed boat of a boy in his ’teens. You can’t very well pin a super-kidnaping on a mere boy.”

“N-no,” Johnny said slowly, “and you wouldn’t want to. Young Angelo is a fine chap. Good looking, and all that. Got everything—speed boat—going to have a faster one—big car—going to college, and all that.”

“All that?” Drew sat up and stared at him. “Didn’t know there was that much in the cut flower business, not these days. Flowers, you’d say, are a luxury. And luxuries have been hit hard. Guess I’ll quit being a cop, and go in for flowers.”

Johnny thought of the rough reception accorded him in the place beneath the flower shop, and wondered a big wonder. Should he tell Drew about that? Well, perhaps, some time. Not now. He hadn’t quite thought the thing through yet.

“But the man with the scar and the fiery eyes!” he suggested. “You’ve got the goods on him. That was his gun. He fired that shot at Tom, didn’t he?”

“Yes, he fired the shot. But he’s vanished off the earth, so far as we can see.

“And besides,” he added, pushing a sheet of paper toward the boy, “besides, there is this.”

“The old G.G. again!” Johnny said, catching his breath.

“None other. Read it.”

Johnny read:

*Drew Lane: You are on the wrong track. The man who fired the shot was not the kidnaper. For his motives consult the Rogues' Gallery. The trail you seek leads north.*

*"The G.G."*

"North!" Drew exploded. "How far north? Which way? How? By train, plane or boat? If he wishes to help us, why doesn't he be more explicit?"

"Perhaps," suggested Johnny, "that's all he knows at present.

"And," he added thoughtfully, "we ourselves might go on from there."

"How?"

"Well, you know, in the newspaper offices they have what they call an Exchange Department. Papers from all over the world are on file there. If a fellow went there and studied all the papers published up north in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Canada, he might discover a clue. Some paragraph telling of some mysterious occurrence might just put a fellow on the right track."

"It might." Drew's tone was dubious. "Sounds a little like it came out of a book. But you go ahead and try it. Jimmie Drury over at the News will see that you get a look at the files. Tell him I sent you.

"And while you're on the ramble, just drop over to the State Street Station and see if you can find the picture of a crook with a cross branded on his temple. Old G.G. suggested that.

"But I'll tell you what I am beginning to think of that Galloping Ghost! I think he's a fake! Or even worse, a crook that's giving us a bum steer, throwing us off the trail. I've more than half a notion to burn every other love letter he sends us before I read it.

"Because, look!" Once more he was pacing the floor. "If an honest fellow was wearing a sheet and posing as a ghost, if he had some real information about a



case like this—one that interests the whole country—why wouldn't he let us in on his secret, come right round in his street clothes and tell us his story? What I say is—”

He broke straight off to stare at the door. Some one had begun rattling it violently.

“Johnny, see who's there.”

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE SHOE

Red Rodgers and Berley Todd lost no time in making their way back to the scout's cabin. If those men who blinded and shot the moose were the kidnapers then they were safest under the protection of Ed's "shootin' irons."

"Those men," Ed said, when he had heard their story, "more'n likely were not your kidnapers at all. Moose hunters, more'n likely."

"Moose hunters!" Berley Todd exploded. "You're not allowed to kill a moose on Isle Royale!"

"Who said you were?" Ed threw back his head and laughed. "They're not allowed to kidnap star football players and little half-portions like you, but here you are all the same!

"Case is not parallel though," he added thoughtfully. "These men who come to the island for moose need the meat to feed their families; anyway that's their excuse.

"And it's good enough excuse for me!" he added emphatically. "I'm neither deputy nor game warden. I'm here to guard the buildings of this resort from fire and theft. If I interfere with these moose hunters I'm likely to be found cold and stiff under the snow."

"But it is a shame!" Berley said quietly. "Moose are such magnificent creatures! And Isle Royale is about the only place you can see them. Think of the hundreds who come to the island every year just to see them."

"Y-e-s," Ed drawled, "I've thought of them and I've wondered why the moose are not protected in winter. But that distinctly ain't my job. So there you are."

“I’m not so sure those men were not members of the kidnaping band. There must be batteries and spotlights on the plane. They could hook those up and use them. They’ll be needing meat. Why shouldn’t they hunt moose?”

“Might be, but I doubt it.” Ed stirred the fire.

“Oh, oh!” exclaimed Berley Todd, as a sudden thought took possession of her. “Suppose those were moose hunters. Suppose they were to meet the kidnapers. Suppose they think the kidnapers are wardens and deputies; and the kidnapers think they’re detectives from the city. Suppose they meet and shoot it out!”

“And then suppose we come upon them all dead with their boots on,” Red drawled. “They do that in the movies.

“Ed,” he demanded, “when will this storm end?”

“Perhaps day after to-morrow.”

Red stared angrily at the fire. The girl threw him a teasing glance as she sang low:

“Come, play with me.”

“All right!” he exclaimed almost fiercely, “I’ll play with you to-morrow and the day after if need be; anyway until the kidnapers catch up with us or we are able to leave the island.”

“If you care to row,” Ed suggested, “it’s not too rough in the harbor. If you were to wear my canvas coat and cowboy hat—” He turned to Red. “If you went out before dawn and if Berley, here, sat low in the stern, no one would know but that it was just old Ed and his dog. You could play around among the little islands all day and be safe.”

“Shall we?” Berley’s tone was almost wistful. “We’ll take a lunch and eat it on the rocks.”

“Might be worse,” Red admitted. “Rowing will at least keep me in trim for the great day. And now for some sleep!” He disappeared behind the narrow curtain that led to one of the cubby-hole bedrooms in Ed’s cabin.

“The great day,” he whispered to himself, as he slid beneath the covers. That day now seemed very, very far away. But quite unconsciously he was losing his feeling of long weariness. The spring of youth was flooding back through every nerve and fiber of his being. “If only I could get a whack at that line,” he thought dreamily. “If only I could!”

\* \* \* \* \*

The person banging at Drew Lane’s door was none other than the person known as the Rat. Drew was surprised to see him. The Rat, like others of his kind, seldom appeared unless called. The object he unwrapped before the young detective’s astonished eyes was, he thought, worth a trip half way round the world. It was the shoe that had made the invisible footprint on the sleeping car sheet. Once Drew’s eyes fell upon it, he sat and stared. A full minute had passed into eternity before he could say:

“Where did you find it?”

“You know dat place beside de river? Down below de flower shop? Angelo Piccalo’s shop? Dat’s de place.”

Drew looked at Johnny. Johnny looked at Drew.

“Rat,” said Drew, “you’re a great old finder. Here’s a fiver. Now scram!”

The Rat vanished.

For a long time the detective and his young friend sat staring at the shoe.

“Johnny,” said Drew at last, “they say you can’t keep birds from flying over your head, but you can prevent their building nests in your hair. Also, ‘Where there is much smoke there must be some fire.’ First there’s the jimmy bar, and now there’s this shoe. Looks as if we were beginning to see light. Do you get me?”

“I—I think I do,” replied Johnny, in anything but a cheerful voice.

Johnny was on his way early next morning. He crossed the bridge and was about to pass the flower shop without going in, when Angelo stepped out of the door.

“Gooda morning, meester Johnny! Dees ees one—a fine morning.”

“Yes, sure, Angelo, it is fine.”

Apparently a box had been opened beside the flower shop door. The box was gone, but some broken fragments of wood remained. Picking up one of these, Angelo began to whittle absent-mindedly. His actions so fascinated the boy that he found it hard to talk coherently. However, he forced himself into the task of talking about the weather, the river, speed boats and rare flowers. In the meantime he watched the keen blade of Angelo’s knife chipping out short, sharp shavings of wood.

“He’s nervous. His fingers tremble,” he told himself.

A customer appeared. Angelo went inside. After a furtive glance, Johnny bent over, seized a handful of Angelo’s shavings, then hurried away.

A block down the street he paused to drop the shavings into a used envelope and thrust them into the side pocket of his coat. “Exhibit A,” he murmured as he marched on toward the office of the News where he was to study Exchanges. “Exhibit A. I wonder!”

## CHAPTER XXII

### ON THE “SLEEPING LION”

That morning, in the ghostly hour just before dawn, Red Rodgers and Berley Todd crept out into the frosty air of Isle Royale.

“To-day,” the girl whispered, “we are to play.”

And yet, as she stood upon the rocks watching the waves that, now roaring as they rose, now whispering as they fell, broke upon those rugged shores, she seemed to see beneath their surface grim black hands stretching out to grasp her.

It was strange, those black waters in the eerie hour before dawn. Even the staunch young athlete felt it and was silent.

Once stout oars were in their hands, however, all was changed. To feel the rise and fall of the boat, to skim the crests of waves, to catch the rhythmic rowing that, like a song in the night, seemed to lift them and bear them down—this was life.

“How she can row!” Red told himself, as he felt the push of her oars send the boat along.

“When the time comes,” he said aloud, “we will make it.”

“Yes,” the girl replied, “but the time is not to-day.”

That she spoke the truth Red was soon enough to know. In the sheltered channel of Rock Harbor the waves were mere rushing ripples of foam. But once they came to a gap between two small islands that looked out into the open sea, great swells caught their frail craft and, tossing it back, flecked them with foam.

“The voice of many waters.” In the girl’s tone there was a touch of awe. “In that

storm, on the open lake, no small boat could live. To-morrow we play.”

Surrendering himself to the will of the elements, Red Rodgers played. But even as they sent their boat gliding along to the time of a song, as they climbed some rocky ledge to stand breathless looking off at the storm-tossed waters, or fought their way forward through masses of tangled vegetation to some crag where they might find a broader view, he whispered to himself:

“I am keeping fit. Even this is training for the day that is to come.” And then, as his mind sobered, he wondered: “Will that day ever come?”

At noon they built a fire on a tiny beach and brewed coffee. They ate their lunch in silence. There was that about this day of storm which made silence seem a mood to prize.

Just as the sun was sinking in the west, they turned the prow of their boat into a narrow opening, then shot her squarely into the teeth of a storm. Throwing all the force of their perfect bodies into the business of rowing, they conquered one gigantic wave, another, another, and yet another.

Their boat was but a cork in the midst of a great ocean, yet they dared accept the wild waves’ challenge. Again, again, and yet again, they fought their way up and over, up and over until they were twenty boat-lengths out to sea.

Then, with a laugh that was good to hear, Red swung the boat about and they went riding the waves back to shelter and safety.

“That,” he breathed, “is life—life—life!”

Five minutes later they lay upon a bed of moss at the back of a tiny island known as “Sleeping Lion” because of the mane-like crest of bushes that crowns its ridge, watching the blue-black waters turn to the silvery gray of night.

Never had the boy witnessed such a sight. Starting at the rocks nearest them, the spray moved along the island shores. And every separate spray seemed a light that flashed with one white gleam, then faded into darkness.

“Old Father Superior is lighting his lamps,” the girl whispered. Once again there was awe in her tone.

So they lingered on the “Sleeping Lion” until the afterglow had faded and Father Superior’s lamps were lost in the shades of night.

It was the girl who at last broke the silence. “See!” She spoke in a voice that was mellow as the tones of a cello. “See! The light that beckons!”

As Red looked away across the surging sea he caught the gleam of a lamp that, winking and blinking, cast its beams from afar.

“The Passage Island light,” he murmured huskily. “The light that shall guide us safely when the time comes. But to-night—”

“To-night we dare not.”

Rising as if to break the spell that had been cast upon her, Berley Todd went whirling through a wild dance. A weird place for a dance. Sea gulls, wakened by this sudden commotion, circled aloft screaming. The very waves appeared to lapse into silence, a silence that was to be broken at once by such a mad onrush as threatened to seize her and drag her away into waters as black as night.

“Come!” she cried. “We must go!”

Shoving their boat off the rocks, they paddled silently back to the island shore where, after concealing their boat, they made their way cautiously through the spruce trees to Ed’s cabin, and one more steaming bowl of Mulligan stew.

The day, however, was not over. Wild adventures awaited them in the night.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### A VISIT IN THE NIGHT

As Johnny Thompson returned to Drew Lane's room in the early evening of that day, he found himself now in a mood of high exaltation and now in one of deep depression. He felt that he had, half by good fortune and half by earnest endeavor, come close to the solution of a crime that had filled the front pages of the nation's press for days. At the same time he found the accusing hand of Fate pointing straight at a friend.

To Johnny friendship was a sacred thing. He worshiped often at the altar of friendship. To his friends he gave his utmost in loyalty and devotion. Never until now had he asked himself the question: "What am I to do if one of these friends proves unworthy of this loyalty and devotion?" There had been no need. But now—

"There's the matter of the jimmy bar found in the speed boat," he told himself gloomily. "There is the shoe that made the invisible footprint on the sheet. There is the wrist-watch band studded with green stones from Isle Royale. There is that place down by the river front from which I was ejected. Ejected!" He chuckled at this. They had put him out of the place, right enough. But he had done plenty to them after that, those two bouncers. "Yes," he sighed, "it sure looks bad!"

He was relieved to find that both Drew and Tom were away. Letting himself in by a key Drew had given him, he dropped into a chair and for a full half hour sat there alone in the dark, thinking; and those were long, long thoughts.

"After all," he sighed, as at last he sat up in his chair, "one's first duty is to his nation and her laws, to the whole community and not to one individual who has gone wrong."

At this he switched on a light and began to write. When he had finished he

placed on Drew Lane's desk a concise statement of all that had come under his observation regarding the kidnaping of the Red Rover. To this he attached a single newspaper clipping. He had found this after hours of search in a humble sheet which bore the name "Mining Gazette." This paper was published in a small city far up on the North Peninsula of Michigan. The clipping read:

#### MYSTERIOUS PLANE HEARD OVER ISLE ROYALE

*Pierre LeBlanc, the head lighthouse keeper on Passage Island, four miles off Isle Royale, reports by radio this morning that late in the night he heard the drum of an airplane motor in the direction of Isle Royale. It is his belief that the plane landed in one of the bays or harbors of the island. Whether it took off later, he was unable to tell.*

*Since the only persons on the island are a fisherman or two and a care-taker at Rock Harbor Lodge, the reason for this mysterious landing will not soon be known.*

"Drew," Johnny wrote after pinning the clipping to a sheet of paper, "this newspaper was printed the day after the Red Rover's disappearance. I have stated all the facts as I have them, and leave you to draw your own conclusions.

"Here also is an envelope containing some shavings. Have Tom examine them. They may have been made by the knife he has been seeking.

"One thing more. I found the picture of your friend of the scar and the fiery eye in the Rogues' Gallery. Can't be any mistake. He is Bat Morgan. His home is in St. Louis. That is probably why you did not find him when you really wanted him."

After scribbling "Johnny" after this note, he dropped a paper weight on it, pulled his cap down over his eyes, caught an elevator and was soon out in the cool air of night.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I wonder!" There was a look of longing in Berley's eyes as she stared at Ed's half burned out fire. "Wonder if we dare venture out into the night."

“Why?” The scout shot her a glance.

“I was thinking of our summer home. Do you have the key?”

“Yes.”

“It would be fine if Red could see it. I—I want him to come back when summer comes.” A dreamy look overspread her face. “Good old summer time,” she murmured, “with southern breezes whispering softly, birches gleaming white in the moonlight and strange birds singing one another to sleep. Summer time—” She was singing softly now: “Good old summer time. Will you come and play with me?”

Red grinned in spite of himself. Then his face sobered as he replied huskily:

“Perhaps—if summer ever comes again for you and me.”

He had not forgotten, would not forget as long as they were on the island, that they were escaped victims of kidnapers, that those men were still about and that he carried in his pocket the magneto parts that would keep them from escaping from the island.

Why did he not cast these bits of metal into the lake where water is deep? Because he had hopes, rather wild hopes, but hopes all the same, that some one would arrive at the island who could pilot that powerful plane. He could not. Ed could not, but there were many who could. So he clung to his hopes and to the magneto parts.

“Come!” said Berley Todd, snuffing out the candle. “Come with me to the place where I have always found happiness—my summer home.”

Obedying her command, Ed strapped on one “shootin’ iron,” handed the other to the young football star, and then led the way out into the night.

The darkness at this moment was complete. Later there was to be a moon, a fact long to be remembered. With the unerring instinct of a woodsman, the scout led the way over the winding path. Berley and Red followed silently.

There were sounds in that night of darkness. Off to the right the snapping of a twig sounded like the report of a gun.

“Probably Old Uncle Ned,” the girl whispered.

And then, from Ed: “Here we are. Now for the key.”

Up a tall flight of stairs they tiptoed. Next moment they were inside some place that seemed vast and silent in that darkness.

“Wait!”

Berley moved about. There were sounds of shades being drawn.

“Now.”

A match flared. Shavings on the hearth blazed up. Soon a great fire on the wide hearth was burning freely and the place was as light as day.

They were safe enough for all that. The massive door was locked and barred. The windows were high from the ground, and all were shaded.

Red took the place in with one sweeping glance. The fireplace was immense. Up from this ran a wide chimney covered by a curious rug woven by Indians.

Before the fire were wide-seated, comfortable chairs. On the mantel stood a rustic clock made of birchwood. Berley set this going. Its cheerful tick-tock, tick-tock filled the silent place.

As Berley stole a glance at the young football star she read approval in his eyes, and was satisfied.

“Makes you think of those places you read about in English history.” His smile was good to see. “There should be a whole quarter of beef roasting over the fire, spears and armor hanging on the walls, the head of a wild boar above the mantel.

“But after all it’s great just as it is. I only wish we were here under more happy circumstances.” He dropped into the chair farthest from the blazing fire.

“We’re safe enough for the present, at least,” said Ed, lighting his pipe.

Berley Todd sent him a smile of gratitude. It was evident that for one short evening she wished to feel safe and quite at home.

Our minds are strange. One moment we may be in the dark, surrounded, we imagine, by hostile foes. Our minds are filled with all sorts of forebodings. The next we are before a blazing fire in our own home where we have known peace, and presto! all is changed; fear goes, peace comes, we know not how.

“I’m glad you like it.” Berley Todd spoke as one in a dream. “When I think of the good times we have had here, and of the trips we have planned before this fire! How good it all was!” Her voice trailed off to nothing.

Red saw from the look on her face that she was thinking: “Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie.” He wished she might forget entirely for one short hour.

“Tell me about it, those other days.” There was an unaccustomed gentleness in his tone.

“Those golden days?” Her face brightened. “How we would sit here planning by the fire! ‘To-morrow we will round the Point in the little boat and go far back into Tobin’s Harbor; back to Talman’s Island. There are wild raspberries growing round that cabin. And some great old speckled trout lie in the rocks nearby.’

“Talman’s Island!” Her voice changed. It was shot through with fear and pain. “That is the island where they were holding us prisoners, you and I. There’s another little island close by where they stayed themselves in a tumble-down cabin.

“Tell me,” again the girl changed the subject, “how did they come to get you?”

“Took me in my sleep. Rolled me up in my blankets on the Pullman and shoved me through the window. I went to sleep waiting for the train to move up and pick up the rest of the squad. Carried me down the river in the speed boat, then over to some place where they put me on the plane. Then, thunder through the night, the roar of motors, and there I was in that cabin, there on the island.

“And you?”

“It was all absurdly simple,” she sighed. “One can’t be rich and happy, it seems, these days. Perhaps no one should wish to be. I don’t know.” There was a world of questioning in her tone.

“Our home is large. The grounds that surround it are broad. I loved to walk there

in the moonlight alone. Had I been the cook or the maid, I might have walked in peace. But the daughter—

“Well, two men seized me one night and carried me away in a car. I kicked out and bit and tried to scream. It did no good.”

She paused as if exhausted by the very thought of it.

“They brought me up here,” she began again, after a time. “Just as they did you. I had been in that little pen of logs a whole day before they brought you. It—it was rather terrible. But by and by it came to me that I was on Isle Royale.

“Do you know,” a faint smile played about her lips, “if I must leave this gloriously beautiful world, which of course some time I must, I’d sort of like to be on Isle Royale when that day comes. It wouldn’t be so hard, the parting. And somehow I feel that, after all, it’s just passing from beauty to more beauty.”

For a long time after that there was silence in the room. Only the ceaseless rush of waters on the shore, and the friendly tick-tock of the clock disturbed the stillness of the night.

“They wanted you to sign a paper,” Red suggested after a time.

“The kidnapers? Yes, they did. Wanted me to say I was in great distress. Wanted me to beg my father to give them money, twenty thousand dollars, to save my life.”

“And you wouldn’t.”

“No.” Her big blue eyes shone with a new light. “Why should I? They are outlaws of the worst type. If I had done what they wished I would have been helping them. I have not much strength. I have a little. If they get my father’s money they will be encouraged, will go on with their terrible business. They will take some one far weaker than I, a defenseless baby, perhaps.

“Some time one must die.” Her eyes were large and round. “Why not now, if need be, and for a good cause? If they catch me again and put an end to me, my father will spend his fortune hunting them down. What finer tribute could one have to one’s memory?”

“What indeed?” Red’s eyes shone with true admiration. “But they’ll not get you.”

Berley Todd did not reply. Instead she rose and began walking slowly back and forth in the large room. She was humming, and the words were these: “Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie.”

“Now,” said the boy with a laugh that came perilously near being a sob, “it’s time we were going back.”

## CHAPTER XXIV

# UNCLE NED DOES HIS BIT

The moon was out when they took the trail that led to Ed's cabin. By moving along single file in the shadows they were able to keep themselves concealed.

They had covered more than half the distance to the cabin when of a sudden Berley, who was in the lead, stopped short to press her companions back into the deeper shadows.

"Some—some one skulking about the cabin!" she whispered tensely.

And there he was. There could be no doubt about it. The moon, skirting a corner of their cabin, left there for a space of seconds the wavering shadow of a man. Ten seconds passed, and the shadow vanished.

"Do—do you think it's the kidnapers?" Despite her bravest efforts the girl could not prevent her teeth from chattering.

"Don't know who it is," the scout grumbled in a hoarse whisper. "Only one way to deal with a skulker. Go after him!"

"Look!" He turned to Red. "In another moment a cloud will be over the moon. Only a small cloud. Soon pass. But time enough. When it gets dark, you go scooting down the Tobin's Harbor trail. He went that way. Go down two hundred feet or more, then drop off into the bush. I'll go round the cabin and come in from the left. When the moon comes out I'll flush him some way. After that the best man wins.

"You—you'd better stay here," he said to Berley.

Berley did not stay there. As Red went skulking down that trail in the dark, she followed. She was afraid, but being in the darkness alone with prowlers about,



who might carry her away, was worse than being on the firing line.

Obeying instructions, Red followed the trail a hundred paces or less, then dropped away into the shadows.

Finding a place where the moss grew thick before a great rock, he drew the girl down beside him. "Really there's no reason to be excited." He felt her heart's wild beating. "Probably we'll not see him again this night. He's just scouting around to see who's here. Not likely to find out much. He—"

The girl's hand pressed hard on his arm. Off to the left there was a sound of movement. And then the moon came out.

Instantly from the bush an automatic barked. The shot had been fired at the scout. He dropped—not with a bullet wound, for the rascal had missed—but for the purpose of securing a safe position and waiting his turn. It had been many years since any one had presumed to shoot at this scout; years of peace they had been, and now this, a shot in the night. His mighty "shootin' iron" roared its reply.

The thing that happened after that will never be fully credited by either Red or the girl, and that in spite of the fact that they saw it with their own eyes.

The moon was out in all its glory. From their observation post before the great rock they thought they made out a skulking figure off to the right and not far off the Tobin's Harbor trail. At the same time they caught a sound of movement still further back in the bush.

"There are more, perhaps three or four of them." Berley pressed Red's arm hard. "They—they're trying to surround us!"

How wrong she was they were soon enough to know, for the skulking figure, having come to rest, lifted his head so far above the thimbleberry bushes as to leave it in clear view.

"That—" Red's voice was a bit unsteady. "That's one of them. Sha-shall I shoot?"

"No, no. That one in the bushes will get you if you do."

Then astonishing things began to happen. The man on the moonlit trail lifted his gun, took quick aim and fired, not at the scout, not at Red, but at the moving spot in the bushes.

Instantly from out those bushes came a charging terror. All legs and head and saber-pointed antlers, he came straight at the offender who had fired that last shot. Old Uncle Ned, veteran bull moose of Isle Royale, had beyond doubt been nicked by a bullet. Revenge he would have, and did.

At sight of him the terrified gangster leaped high in air to clear the bushes. He was caught squarely by those murderous antlers. Then moose and man plunged forward into the dark clump of evergreen growing by the trail.

There came the sound of crashing boards, followed by the hoarse breathing of some creature engaged in a life and death struggle. There were many seconds of this and then, staggering like a drunken man, Old Uncle Ned came out to the trail and went slowly plodding his way into the distant dark.

They waited for the man to appear. A moment ticked its way into eternity, a second and a third. From far away came the maniacal laugh of a loon.

“Red,” the girl whispered at last, “did you hear that cracking sound?”

“Yes. What was it?”

“Red, do you know what there is by that clump of black trees?”

“No. What is it?”

“Red, can you guess what has happened?”

“No.” Red was very patient. “What has happened?”

“Red,” she drew a long breath, “Red, there is a hole, a very deep hole, ninety feet they say, at the edge of that clump of black trees. It’s an old mine, almost full of water, green slimy water. There—there was a fence around it, a very poor fence. Old Uncle Ned pushed the man in there! He—he fell part way in, Uncle Ned did, but he came out again. The man did not come out. He will never come out.”

“Is—is that true?” Red half rose on one elbow. “Then we must try to save him. He’s bad. But he’s a man. Can’t let a man die that way.”

Red went creeping away in the shadows. The girl followed. When they reached the edge of the clump of trees they found the scout flat on his stomach, flashing a light into the dark hole that had once been a copper mine.

“Gone, I guess,” he said in a very even tone. “His cap is floating down there. Some bubbles came up, but he—he hasn’t come.”

Red squatted down beside him. The girl stood looking down. For five minutes, like figures posed for a piece of statuary, they held their positions. Then, as he rose stiffly, the scout said:

“Gone, all right enough!” Then in a tone that was like a church bell tolling in the night: “He was bad, probably all through; but for all that he was a man. It’s our duty to ask peace on his soul.”

For a moment their heads were bowed in silent prayer. Then, like a squad that has fired a salute over a comrade’s grave, they right-about-faced and marched solemnly away into the night.

The scout led the way in silence back to the cabin. He did not stop there, but marched straight on. The others, not a little puzzled at his actions, paused and then followed. Before a stone slab standing out black in the uncertain light, he paused.

“That,” he said, “marks the grave of an honest man, a copper miner. No word is inscribed on that stone, yet the fact that he worked as a miner marks him as one who at least was willing to labor for his bread.

“It seems a little strange,” there was a curious huskiness in his voice, “that more than fifty years ago this one, whom his comrades honored with a marked grave, should have labored to dig that deep hole in the earth that, never a success as a mine, has now become a grave for one who deserved little honor. Sort of seems to prove that no man labors in vain.”

Having delivered this simple sermon, he turned and led the way back to the cabin.

A few moments later he left once more to return with a heavy object in his hands.

“Here. Take this,” he said to Red.

Red reached out for the thing, sank forward, all but dropped it, then exclaimed:

“Whew! How heavy!”

“Native copper,” said Ed with a smile. “Taken from the earth when the foundation for the lodge was laid.”

“Looks as if it had been melted,” said Red.

“Probably was, before man came upon the earth. Float copper, they call it. Indians mined it on Isle Royale many generations before the white men came. It was a prized possession. Spear points, arrow points, skinning knives, knives for fighting could be made from it.”

“But why are there no mines here now?” Red had visions of becoming a pioneer copper miner. Next to steel he loved copper best of all.

“That was tried more than fifty years ago. That’s what that miner’s grave means out there. Copper mining was tried in many places. Had it not been for the supposed wealth of copper deposits here, the United States would never have owned Isle Royale. It would have gone to Canada. We bought it from the Indians. And, after years of labor, the copper miners discovered that copper mining on Isle Royale would never pay.

“And now,” he concluded, “it is one great big beautiful playground, the safe home of wild life, and will be, I hope, for years to come.”

“I believe,” he said, after a period of silence, “that some time to-morrow the wind will fall. To-morrow night you may have an opportunity to tackle the great adventure—your row to Passage Island. To-night and to-morrow you must rest.

“I’d gladly go with you when the time comes,” he added thoughtfully, “but I am large and heavy. I have a left arm that goes back on me when I row hard and long. Got a bullet there once. But you’ll make it all right. You’ll make it. Never fear.”

## CHAPTER XXV

# THE TRAIL LEADS NORTH

After leaving Drew Lane's room, Johnny Thompson had walked the streets for hours. He needed to think. He could think best while walking, so he walked.

He had gone back on a man he thought of as a friend. Or had he? At least, it appeared that way to him now. Does there ever come a time when it is one's duty to turn his back upon a friend? A hard question. He could not answer it.

Three times he passed the flower shop by the bridge. The shop was closed, yet a light cast upon the flowers in the window displayed Angelo's skill as a florist. He was an artist in this field. No one could equal him. Could a man be an artist and yet be a rascal? Angelo loved music. Often he had talked to Johnny of symphony concerts, and of grand opera. Could one love the best in music and yet be a villain at heart?

He walked across the bridge and back again. The place below the shop was completely dark to-night. No procession of men was passing down that flight of stairs. Perhaps Angelo had nothing to do with that which went on below his shop. Perhaps he knew nothing of it.

Once again his mind took up the problem. Angelo had always been friendly. His smile was contagious. Was it true that a man could "smile and smile, and be a villain"?

He gave the problem up at last, returned to his room, and was soon fast asleep.

He was awakened next moment by the jangling of the telephone. Snatching the receiver, he said:

"Good morning! Johnny Thompson speaking."

“Johnny,” came back an excited voice, “it’s Drew! We’re on the right trail at last. The old G.G. was right, has been right all the time. The trail leads north, five hundred miles, I’d say. Going in the red racer just after noon. Want to see this thing through with me?”

“You—you mean go—” Johnny was shaking all over.

“Sure! Go north with me.”

“You—you know I do.”

“Right! I’ll be over here at twelve. We’ll have a bite of chow; shoot over to the aviation field, and be on our way.” The receiver clicked. He was gone.

Johnny sat down on his bed. He was dizzy. “The trail leads north,” he muttered. “He didn’t say: ‘Johnny, you’re a brick!’ or any of that sort of stuff, or ‘You put us right.’ Nothing like that. Just ‘The trail leads north.’”

“Well,” he thought more soberly, “perhaps I’m not a brick. Perhaps I didn’t put them right. Perhaps I’m a hundred per cent dumb.”

As he sat there alone he realized that he hoped with all his heart that he had been entirely wrong. “And yet,” he murmured, “and yet—

“Oh, well!” he exclaimed, “‘A cup of coffee, a piece of pie and you.’ To-morrow’s another day. To-morrow we shall probably know.

“But five hundred miles due north!” His mind sobered. “Just Drew Lane and I.

“Drew’s developed into a swell pilot. He’ll take us there O.K. But after that?”

He had been through some tight places with Drew Lane, as you will know if you have read *The Arrow of Fire*.

“Tight places,” he muttered. “Looks like this might be tighter!

“But, as I said before, ‘A cup of coffee, a piece of pie and you.’”

\* \* \* \* \*

As Johnny Thompson and Drew Lane sped northward in the red racer that

afternoon, Johnny found plenty of time for thought. Sober thoughts were his. At the airport Drew had said never a word regarding their coming adventure, nor the facts that had led him to take this wild dash into the north.

Like a mill set to grind out products by electrical power, the boy's mind went over the facts that lay before him. As he closed his eyes he could see a rusty jimmy bar lying in the back of young Angelo's boat. He could feel the weight of it as he carried it home and he experienced again his sharp surprise as Tom Howe discovered that this was the very bar that had pried open Red's car window.

"But that proved nothing," he told himself. "Any one could have hidden the bar in that speed boat.

"But there is the invisible footprint." His mind was off again. He saw the footprint appearing under the eerie purple light, saw it fade, then appear again.

"And the shoe that made that footprint on the Red Rover's sheet was found close to the door beneath Angelo's flower shop.

"But *that* proves nothing." He said the words aloud to the thundering motors. "Any one can drop a pair of shoes by your door.

"And yet—" He saw again the figures in that room of mystery beneath Angelo's shop. Who were those men? Why were they there? Why were so many of them wearing black looks? And why had they attempted to throw him out?

"After all," he told himself, "it all depends upon the last bit of evidence I turned in, the shavings made by Angelo's pocket knife. If Tom Howe can show that the shavings found near the Red Rover's car were made by that same knife, then I shall be convinced. And once one is convinced that a supposed friend is a law-breaker there is but one thing he can do: see that he is brought to justice. No enemy of my country can continue to claim me as a friend."

But what had Tom and Drew found out? This remained to be seen.

Suddenly his attention was caught by Drew Lane. Drew was leaning far over, looking at something. There was a worried look on his face. But at last he settled back in his place.

Again Johnny saw in his mind's eye the picture of that glassy-eyed one with the scar. Then a thought struck him all of a heap. "Suppose we are going after that man and his pals. Suppose they are all there, the glassy-eyed one, the big man like a baboon and his son, the three all alike, and the others!" A thrill coursed up and down his spine. A not entirely comfortable feeling took possession of him. They were but two, he and Drew. There was a small black bag at Drew's feet. It was full of blue-black weapons and ammunition. He knew that. "But two—just two of us."

He dismissed the thought. Drew was game, game to the last drop. But he was no fool.

Once again Johnny closed his eyes. This time it was a different sort of person who walked across the walls of his memory; a tall man with smiling eyes; very tall and very thin; Jimmie Drury, the reporter from the News.

He had gone to Jimmie to obtain permission to go through the exchange files, and then a curious thing had happened. It puzzled him still. "How'd he know?" he grumbled. "How *could* he? And yet, he seemed terribly sure."

Jimmie had been very cordial. "A fellow that's Drew Lane's friend is welcome here any time." He had smiled a broad smile. "What are you looking up?"

"It has to do with the kidnaping of the Red Rover," Johnny explained.

"The Red Rover!" Jimmie whistled. "What do you know about that case?"

"Several things." Johnny had been on his guard. "Got a lot of disconnected facts. Why don't you get in touch with Drew Lane and find out about it?"

"I am in touch with Drew." A curious look came over Jimmie's face. "Closer than even he may—" He had checked himself as if he had said too much.

Johnny looked at him and then a curious suspicion had popped into his mind. Jimmie was long and slim, little more than a skeleton in blue serge.

"A—a skeleton. A—" He had nearly thought another word, but not quite.

What he had said to Jimmie was: "Drew doubts the Galloping Ghost; thinks he's trying to get him off on the wrong trail."



Then again a strange look had flashed across the reporter's face as he exclaimed in a tone suggesting anger: "You tell Drew he'd better stick by the Galloping Ghost. He's giving him straight dope!"

"How could he know that?" Johnny asked himself now as he looked down once more at the masses of black, white and dull green that were fields, lakes and forests far below.

There was little enough time to study this problem, for suddenly Drew headed the red racer downward at a rakish slant.

Down, down, down they went. Once the motor was off for a second.

"This is the place?" Johnny demanded breathlessly.

"Far from it. Something wrong." Drew spoke rapidly. "Got to go down and see what. Land on the little lake yonder."

Once more the motor roared. As the plane circled downward Johnny's hopes fell. "Something wrong! We'll be here perhaps for hours. And get there too late. What rotten luck!"

## CHAPTER XXVI

# BATTLE OVER THE WAVES

There were hours of rest for the Red Rover and his staunch little companion, a lulling of the wild storm that for many hours had lashed the rocky shores of Isle Royale. Then came darkness and with it a swift resolve to risk all on a night of pure adventure.

A hearty handshake with the guide who had stood by them so staunchly, and they were away.

Slowly the tiny craft crept out upon the black waters of night. They had dressed for the occasion, this girl and boy. He wore a suit of khaki borrowed from the scout, she a boy's shirt found in one of the cabins, and the patched knickers. Dressed so, and riding in their dark green boat, only with difficulty would they be seen upon the dark waters.

There were reasons for this precaution, the scout had assured them. Having guessed their plan, the kidnapers might even now be lurking in the shadow of some cove, ready to pounce upon them. For this Red was not unprepared. One of the "shootin' irons" hung at his belt.

Keeping close to shore, they passed great jagged piles of rock that loomed large in the night. They crossed "Nebraska Bay," skirted more rocks, then, following the scout's advice, cut boldly away toward the rocky shoals which, because of the darkness, could not be seen.

"Listen!" The boy rested on his oars. There came no sound save the sound of heavy swells breaking lazily over distant rocks.

"There'll be some roll out there," he murmured.

Then over the waters there moved a breath of air that, beginning with a whisper,

ended with a sigh as it passed on into the night.

“How weird it seems out here!”

“Spooky!”

To break the spell, they took up the oars.

And now, as on that other occasion, they dropped into the steady rhythmic swing that would carry them far and tire them not at all.

They did not sing, nor whistle, nor even hum. That would not be safe. For all that, their spirits blended as one as they swept along to the dreamy swing of “Blue Danube,” “Indian Love Song” and “Where the River Shannon Flows.”

In the steel mill and on the gridiron the young football star had known team work, but never such as this. Forgotten were the perils that lurked in the night; forgotten the danger of darkness and possible storm. For the moment here was life, life as he had never before known it. What else could matter?

So, with the moon just showing over the rocky crest of Isle Royale, they swept across the narrow channel, then took up a course that in time would lead them out into the wide open sea.

The girl too had caught the spell of the night. As they stole into the shadow of a great rock towering up from the depths, she shuddered, but rowed steadily on.

“A real little brick!” Red thought to himself. “Nothing soft.”

He resolved that, should they make it, she certainly must be on the side lines in that greatest of all games that was to come.

The rocks they passed grew lower and lower. The shoal was breaking up here. Soon they would leave it all behind. And then, with only that winking, blinking light to guide them, they would face the swells and go gliding over them to—. Red’s thoughts broke off.

“Listen!”

Had he heard something, the low groan of an oarlock, the mumble of a voice?

Who could say? It did not come again.

Swinging the boat about, he headed it straight for the Passage Island light that, gleaming a good four miles away, seemed to send them an encouraging wink.

With a rush of glee a great swell seized them and lifted them lightly. But, like some good-natured giant, it let them down gently to go on their way with a whispering swish of foam.

And now, forgetting their songs, they put their shoulders to the task before them. Meeting the swells at an angle to avoid the dash of chilling waters, they rose on the crest of a high one to drop into the trough, then swept across a half score of low crests, to be again lifted on high.

“Listen!”

This time it was the girl whose instinct told her to rest on her oars. Once again there passed over the waters that whisper that ended in a sigh.

“It is as if voices of the Unseen were trying to tell us something, perhaps to warn us.” Her voice was low. “Do you believe in the Unseen?”

“I—I don’t know.” It was weird, this whisper in the night.

Once again they took up their oars. Not long had they to wait ere they saw that which was creeping upon them in the night. The moon had long been under a cloud. Now it sent its beams across every sweeping swell. And upon one of these swells rode a boat.

“A rowboat,” Red grumbled low. “A boat and two men. Now it is life or death. They are armed. They will not hesitate to shoot.”

Realizing the truth of his words, the girl thrilled to the very center of her being.

There was need for no explaining. The scout had been right; these men had been watching. They had, perhaps, watched from the wrong point. This had given the boy and girl a start. But now here they were, some hundreds of yards behind, two men against a boy and a girl, and half the distance yet to go.

“Now!” The boy’s hiss answered the hiss of a wave that rolled by. “Now we

must show them!”

They did show them. They rowed with unity of motion and with all the force God had given them; rowed until even in the chill of night their faces ran with perspiration and their arms became bars of aching fire.

And yet, it was not enough. Those others were rowing with the desperation of those who hear the clanging of a prison gate behind them. Beyond a doubt they knew prison life. Theirs was the frenzy of those whose souls are stirred to the depths by great fear. They knew fear. This was their only emotion. Love, pity, compassion, these they did not know. So they worked with the frenzy of despair.

And they gained now a boat's length, now another, another and yet another. Each wave crest that lifted them high found them closer to their prey.

They would have won but for one man's over-reaching hate and the hosts of "Invisible Ones" that the girl believed peopled the heavens.

Of a sudden, weary with rowing, overcome by his burning hate, the man nearest the prow threw down his oars. The next instant a shot rang out and a bullet sang across the waters.

"Lie down in the boat!" was Red's command to Berley.

The girl hesitated, but obeyed.

On the crest of the wave the boy bent low. Once again a bullet sang close at hand.

In the trough he rowed desperately. Swinging his boat half about, he avoided, as long as he could, rising on the next crest. When at last he did rise, he dropped flat beside his companion.

Just in time. A bullet crashing into the boat passed over them.

"Two can play at that."

Red crept forward, placed his "shootin' iron" across the stern, waited his time, then loosed a roar like the burst of a cannon.

The answer came singing over—too high.

Then, as if provoked by the unfairness of the battle, the “Unseen” took a hand. Sudden darkness settled upon the water. A cloud as black as ink came sweeping in from the north. A voice from the air, not a whisper, but a roar, told them that one of those sudden storms that sweep across Lake Superior in November was at hand.

The girl was up and in her place on the instant.

“And now may God have mercy on our souls!” she murmured, as Red seized his oars and they began to row.

Who can describe the fury of such a storm, the rushing of wind, waves mounting higher and higher, foam hissing to the right and left of you, darkness all about you, even the gleam of the light from Passage Island lost for long, desperate moments?

And yet you battle as never before. Heading your boat squarely into the teeth of the storm, you rise and fall, rise and fall like a cork in the center of the Atlantic. You battle. You pray. You hope until hope seems vain.

And then, just as all seems over, the storm passes with one long, whispering sigh.

As the moon came out and the rush of wind passed, the boy and girl looked upon a world of steel-blue waves flecked with foam. And on those waves some distance away there rode a boat. It was a white boat with an orange-colored bottom. A great deal of orange was showing; very little white. The boat was upside down.

Once again, as they looked, Red said hoarsely: “Listen!”

As before, there came the long whisper that ended with a sigh.

But even as they rested on their oars there came to their listening ears a louder sound, the drumming of an airplane’s motor.

“They are coming!” Red took up his oars. “Passage Island is just over there. It can’t be far now.”

## **CHAPTER XXVII**

### **A HAUNTED BAY**

As you have guessed, the plane heard by the Red Rover and Berley Todd was Drew Lane's red racer. And Johnny Thompson was riding in the rear cockpit.

Drew had planned his trip well. They should have reached the island before dark. But misfortune had befallen them. Forced down by a leaky fuel pipe, they had found themselves on the surface of a small lake in the midst of a great forest where there was no one. After two hours of labor with a few tools and scant material, they had managed to repair the leak. This delay had forced them to fly in the night, and here they were approaching an island known to them only by reports and by a map that lay spread out before Drew in the cockpit.

Despite his meager knowledge, he did wonderfully well. Having arrived at the east end of the island, he flew directly across it. Catching the gleams of light that came from three narrow bands of water, he knew them to be Rock Harbor, Tobin's Harbor and Duncan's Bay. Choosing the middle one of these, he dropped low to go scooting along less than two hundred feet in air.

As he flew, the gleam of a powerful searchlight, attached to the plane, played upon the water.

Of a sudden that light shot upward, then blinked out.

"Found what he was looking for," Johnny Thompson told himself. "But what was it?"

To this question he could form no certain answer; perhaps a boat, a cabin or an airplane. In fact, Johnny was almost completely in the dark regarding the purpose and probable outcome of this, the latest of Drew Lane's adventures.

When he had met the young detective he had said never a word. In silence they

had climbed into the plane and flown away. Who had kidnaped the Red Rover and Berley Todd? Johnny did not know. Did Drew Lane know? Were the kidnapers on this island? Was the Red Rover? Was Berley Todd? The boy did not know. All he knew was that he appeared to be right bang up against one more exciting adventure, and that was enough.

Tipping the plane at a rakish angle, Drew Lane sent it over a narrow ridge of land to drop at last upon a narrow stretch of black water. This was Rock Harbor. The scout's cabin was not half a mile away. Hearing the drum of a motor, he extinguished his light, then sprang to the door just in time to see the plane land.

“Hm!” he breathed. “More kidnapers, officers of the law, or just ordinary folks. I expected to have a dull time at this place, all by myself, but blamed if it ain't been exciting so far.”

At that he buckled his one remaining “shootin' iron” about his waist and disappeared into the night.

At that same hour a second plane, all silver and white, circled over a stretch of water black as night, then, graceful as a sea gull, sank to rest.

The body of water was Duncan's Bay. Two miles long, one quarter as wide, with trees growing to the very edge of its lapping waters and never so much as an abandoned shack standing beside it, this bay at all seasons of the year is a dark and lonesome spot as night falls across the world.

Night was here. So too were the chill winds of November. But the single occupant of the plane appeared to give little heed to all this. Unfolding a curious sort of collapsible rubber boat, he filled it with air, took a short paddle from his fusilage, stepped into the rubber affair and paddled ashore.

The spot upon which he landed had perhaps at one time been a barren stretch of sand. Overgrown now with tangled grass and low bushes, it forms a perfect camping ground. Such it has been for countless generations. From this spot ten thousand camp fires have sent their golden gleams across the black waters of Duncan's Bay. Each in turn has faded into the darkness of night. Had this strange visitor, a slender person in a long black coat, cared for such things, he might have dug beneath his very feet and found there charcoal and half burned bones from fires that had gleamed a hundred, perhaps two hundred years ago. For, since Isle Royale lifted its rocky head from out the deep and took on a cap of



green, this spot has been the camping place of man.

The stranger did not dig. He stood there long as if in silent contemplation.

He might have fished, for in these very waters such great northern pikes (wolves of all fresh water seas) as are not found elsewhere play among the wavering weeds. Had he cared to wait for dawn, then had he put out across the narrow bay to set a silver spoon gleaming through the black waters, he might have experienced such a thrill as is seldom accorded a fisherman.

He did not wait for dawn. Instead, by the gleam of a small flashlight he studied a slip of paper for a moment; then turning abruptly about, lost himself in the dense brush that lines the slope of a high ridge just back of this narrow clearing.

Duncan's Bay is separated from Tobin's Harbor—which, as you will recall, was the landing place of first the kidnapers' plane and after that Drew Lane's red racer—by a tall and narrow ridge of rocks heavily overgrown with brush.

A half hour after this tall person from the silver plane vanished from the camping grounds of Duncan's Bay, a strange apparition might have been seen at the very crest of the ridge.

At this spot, known as Lookout Louise, one may stand at a point some hundreds of feet above the water level and look down upon the dark and somber bay that lies below. On this particular night, viewed from this height, the silver plane seemed a giant sea gull with wings outspread.

But the apparition—he wore a long flowing robe of filmy white. As the moon came out to gleam upon him, his head appeared as white as his robe. And his body was bones, just gleaming white bones, or so it would have seemed had some one been there to look. There was no one.

For one full moment he stood gazing down at the black waters and the silver plane. Then, turning slowly about, he gave utterance to a low, hollow chuckle as weird as the song of the wind in the pines of a churchyard at midnight. Then, like the phantom he seemed, he dropped away into the shadows that lay above Tobin's Harbor where at that very moment the fate of Drew Lane, Johnny Thompson and the kidnapers swung uncertainly in the balance. And even as this strange apparition vanished, he appeared to gallop.

## Chapter XXVIII

# THE LIGHT THAT FAILED

“Red! Red! The light is gone!” Berley Todd’s voice rang with tragedy.

She had endured much that night, had this little daughter of the rich. She had rowed until she felt herself near to exhaustion when of a sudden she had discovered that they were pursued. Getting her second wind, she had rowed as she had never dreamed any one could row. She had dodged bullets and battled a storm. Now the light from Passage Island that had guided them all the way had failed. It was too much.

“Red! The light is gone!”

Somewhere in the dark, waves were dashing against rocks. The roar of it filled her ears. Still their boat, tossed about, moved forward.

“We must row.” Three words escaped Red’s tight set lips; no more.

The roar of waters sounded louder. The boy changed their course. They glided from danger. Now and then the girl caught the gleam of a white-cap when with the hiss of a sea serpent it broke close beside them.

Then of a sudden the boy put all the strength of his splendid arms into a dozen titanic strokes. They rose to the crest of a wave; another, yet another and then as if by magic they glided out upon a sea of glass.

The girl caught her breath. What was it? Had she fallen asleep? Was she dreaming?

No, no. As if by pre-arrangement, the moon came out to shine upon a scene of matchless beauty. A harbor, walled in on every side by steep, rocky cliffs, lay about them.

“This,” said Red Rodgers, with a touch of the dramatic in his voice, “is the harbor on Passage Island. We are safe!”

Sinking down to a place in the prow, the girl allowed her head to drop into her hands while she strove in vain to drive from her senses the ceaseless roar of the beating surf.

After a time she lifted her head to admit into her consciousness certain vital facts. Her feet were ankle deep in water, and had been for an hour; yet she had not known it. Her hands were blistered. Her arms ached. Red had found a flashlight and had switched it on. They were nearing a shore. On the shore was a narrow dock and a boathouse. All this came to her as if she were a very small child reading it from a book.

“This harbor,” Red spoke at last, “is about a mile from the lighthouse. There is no safe landing there for such a night. The light is not out. We were passing along close to a rocky wall that hid the light.

“There is a trail from this place to the lighthouse. And at the lighthouse there is a fire and blankets, food and good cheer.”

“Food and good cheer,” the girl repeated after him as in a dream. “Then we will go there.”

They did go there, though the girl will not recall the long stretch of pasture-like land over which they passed, nor the ridge they scaled to descend on the other side and to catch again the blinking rays of that cheering light. She will not recall all this because she walked as one in a dream.

At the lighthouse, besides two men, there was a woman, the head keeper’s sister. To her care Berley Todd was entrusted. When she had wrapped her in hot blankets and poured steaming broth down her throat, she bundled her off to bed where for long hours Berley dreamed of kidnapers, wild waves and cracking guns.

The Red Rover did not sleep. Never more awake in his life, he found himself in a position to act; and the Red Rover was born for action alone. For days his immediate future, the possibility of getting back to Old Midway in the great game, his very life itself, had hung in the balance. Now the balance had swung down. Fate had given him a break.

As he stood outside the lighthouse, his mind still in a whirl, a short chubby man with a beaming sort of smile approached him.

“I am Pierre Gagnon. And you,” he beamed afresh, “are the great Red Rover.”

“That’s what they call me,” Red said quietly. “But that doesn’t matter. Only one thing truly matters. How am I to get back to the city in time for that game?”

“You see—” He was growing eager now; all the dull feeling of weariness had left him. He yearned for battle. “You see, a lot depends on that game. Not—not for me, but for others. There’s the school, great Old Midway! It gave me a chance. Took me out of the steel mill and taught me the things I needed most to know.

“Then there’s the Grand Old Man, our coach. The cleanest sportsman the world has ever known. And this is his last year, his last game. That game must be won!

“There’s the public, too. They’re hoping against hope. They suppose that I’ll be there. They bought tickets to help out a great cause. They should get a show for their money.

“So you see,” he smiled grimly, “it’s up to us, just you and me. To-morrow at two p. m. the team lines up. Seventy thousand people will be crying for victory. You should see it, Pierre, you really should! It’s inspiring!”

“You’ll go in an airplane,” said Pierre. “You must. There can be no other way. We have here a radio telephone. We can speak with Detroit, Chicago, any big city of the midwest. To-day there are airplanes everywhere. It will be easy. Come! We will send out the call.”

“The call. Wait!” Once again the boy’s mind was in a whirl. “The call.” It would be heard everywhere. Men would rush to newspaper offices to sell the story. “*The Red Rover found!*” would be flashed across the country. The radio, the press, and after that every man, woman and child would take up the cry: “*The Red Rover has been found!*” He thrilled at the thought, thrilled to the very center of his being. But did he want this? A voice deep within his very soul whispered: “No.”

“Wait!” His hand was on the arm of the genial lighthouse keeper. “Wait for a time, at least.”

He recalled the sound of drumming motors that had struck his ears out there while he and the girl still tossed upon the waters. "There may be some other way," he told himself. "No brass bands for me. If only I can slip back to the city unheralded; if I could take my place behind the line when the great moment comes; if only I could do that without even the Grand Old Man knowing! Oh, boy!"

Once again he murmured, "Wait."

## CHAPTER XXIX

### SILENT NIGHT

It would seem that Red Rodgers' reasons for wishing to rejoin his team were all that one might ask; yet at the very moment he stood there talking with the chubby lighthouse keeper, Drew Lane was telling Johnny Thompson of reasons that to him seemed tremendously important. These reasons had to do with the cause of the kidnaping. Who would not find this a subject of absorbing interest?

Drew Lane possessed an all but superhuman power of finding his way about in the dark. Though he had never before seen Isle Royale, he not only was able to land safely in the channel known as Rock Harbor, but once ashore, he experienced little difficulty in making his way across the ridge to the other channel that lay on the opposite side.

"This," he said to Johnny as they at last came out upon a short boat landing, "is Tobin's Harbor. At the back of this harbor the powerful amphibian that carried the Red Rover to Isle Royale lies at anchor. Thus far we are in luck. If the Red Rover is still in their midst we shall be in greater luck. And if we succeed in rescuing him without having our much treasured heads blown off, ours will be the greatest luck in all the world."

"But whose plane is that amphibian?" Johnny could no longer suppress a question.

"You have a right to know." Drew Lane's tone was serious. "It's quite a story. We have some distance to go. Here's a boat beside the landing. Probably chained up, but we'll break her loose. Suppose we get her off? Then you can row while I talk."

"O.K. Let's go."

The padlock that held the boat was a cheap one. Two knocks with a rock opened it as though it were a clam shell.

Ed, the scout, crouching with his dog at the top of the ridge, heard those blows, but wisdom counseled no interference.

Only when the boat was gone did he descend the hill. After skirting the shore for a short distance, he proceeded to drag a light canoe from the center of a clump of bushes where it stood on end, safely concealed. In this, by cutting off at an angle, he was able to keep Drew Lane and Johnny Thompson within striking distance without himself being observed. Did he mean to strike? Perhaps he could not have answered this question himself.

“It’s a curious business.” Drew spoke in low tones, as Johnny with long, strong strokes drove the light rowboat along. “If you hadn’t been in on it perhaps we would have gotten nowhere. You had all the luck.”

“I?” Johnny lost a stroke.

“Luck no end!” Drew rumbled. “Remember the jimmy bar? The invisible footprint? The shavings? Sure you do. They were red hot clues that led us straight to the spot.”

“Then—then it was Angelo, the—the flower shop keeper?” Johnny lost two strokes.

“It was Angelo.”

For a time after that there was silence. This silence was broken by Johnny. His voice was husky. “I only feel bad for the boy, young Angelo. He is a fine young chap. And he has had everything—big car, speed boat—going to college. Everything. And now—”

“Now his father is going to be broke. We are here to arrange all that. We must not fail. To-night Angelo Piccalo is rich. He believes he is safe, that his riches are safe. To-morrow night at this hour, if our plans work out, he will be broke, broke and in prison.

“Too many times—” Drew’s voice was tense with pent-up emotion. “Too many times we go out and get a rich crook and he is able to buy his freedom, by

corrupting a judge or a jury with the very money he stole from honest men. This time there shall be no chance for this; not a chance. We—

“Look!” His voice suddenly fell to a hoarse whisper. “Look! Over yonder is the light of a camp fire. Must be their camp, the kidnapers’ camp.

“Here!” Drew bent over, then straightened up to thrust a thing of cold steel into Johnny’s hand. “Put this in your pocket. And this.”

Johnny obeyed.

“Don’t use ’em unless you have to.” The young detective’s tone was low and tense. “But if you have to, shoot often and straight. It’s a tough bunch. Don’t know how many, but plenty, I’m afraid.

“As for the boy, Angelo,” his tone changed, “don’t worry too much about him. He’ll have to get along without his car and speed boat all right. But then there are plenty of people who’ll tell you big cars and speed boats do a boy more harm than good. Gives them false notions of life; that’s what they’d tell you. I don’t know much about that. An old police flivver with, like as not, a share of bullets waiting at the end of the road—that’s as far as I ever got.

“But one thing I *do* know.” He sat up straight and stiff. “Crooked dollars never did any one any real good. And every dollar Angelo Piccalo spent on that boy was crooked. Flowers! That flower shop was only a blind.”

“It seems strange,” Johnny mused, pulling hard at the oars. “Angelo is an artist at heart. He can make flowers talk. He loves music, and the best in pictures. Why should such a man be a crook?”

“A man’s love of honesty has—

“Look, Johnny! Swing a little more to the left. We’ll keep well out. Then when we’ve passed their camp we’ll swing in. They’re in a sort of clearing. Trees beyond them. Plenty of chance to slip up. They’ll not see us out here on the water. The moon is low yet.”

Again for a time there was silence, such silence as one finds only on a calm bay of Isle Royale at night. Now came from afar the sharp yip-yip-yip of a bush wolf. And now, from the opposite shore of the bay they caught the faint splash-



plash of a moose swimming along the shore. Or was it a boat? Johnny's heart skipped a beat.

“Can't see us. Works both ways. We can't see them. Might slip up on us. Then \_\_\_”

“This artist business,” Drew broke in with a hoarse whisper. “Curious thing. A man can be a fine musician or a painter, and still be a crook. They've got some fine artists in Sing Sing. Art and conscience have no connection, it seems. The only thing that saves a fellow from being a crook is a desire deep down in his heart to be honest, to do right by all men.”

Drew lapsed into silence. There were many things Johnny wished to know. How was it that Drew felt so sure he was on the right track? What fresh evidence had he uncovered? How much had his own discoveries helped to bring things about? But this, he knew, was no time for questions. They were nearing a camp. Was it the enemies' camp? Who could doubt it? The big amphibian could not be a quarter of a mile from that camp.

So in that silence, broken only by the cries of wild things in the night, he rowed on.

And after them, in utter silence, there came a canoe.

## CHAPTER XXX

# HOLLOW CHUCKLES

On a moose trail that leads down the steep slope of the ridge lying between Duncan's Bay and Tobin's Harbor a flashlight gleamed. Once, twice, and yet again Johnny Thompson saw that light flashing among the trees high up and far away, and he wondered a long wonder. He said nothing to Drew Lane. The time had come for silence and action. Bending low, he drove their boat forward at increased speed.

Meanwhile the light on the slope blinked on and off, was lost among the shadows of tall spruce trees, came out into the open, vanished behind overhanging rocks, then was lost to view altogether as it reached lower levels where giant spruce trees, a primeval forest, cast deep shadows over a small world as dark as a tomb.

"That light," Johnny told himself, "is no witch light of the night. Some one is coming down the ridge. Wonder who? And why? Drew said this island was practically uninhabited in winter. Looks as if the ghost of every Indian, explorer or trader who ever visited these shores has returned to-night.

"Ghosts," he whispered to himself, "surely are queer!" He was thinking of the Galloping Ghost.

"Now we'll swing in." It was Drew who broke this curious chain of thoughts.

Fifteen minutes more of silent rowing and their boat touched without a sound on a mossy shore.

"Good!" Drew breathed. "Bushes here. We can hide the boat. May need it in case—"

He did not finish, but Johnny caught the meaning—in case the men they were

after were too strong for them. He had visions of Drew stumbling through the brush carrying his bullet-riddled body. It was not a pleasing vision. He put it out of his mind.

And indeed there was need of this. There was little or no trail on this side of the channel. Here a moose had crowded his way through the brush; and here, becoming discouraged, he had left the next comer to make the best of things and had taken to the water.

There was need for extreme caution. The snapping of a twig, the sudden rush of a moose disturbed in the night, would betray their presence.

“About half the way,” Drew breathed at last.

A stretch of barren, sloping rocks greeted their eyes.

“Skirt it.”

They crept across in the shadows.

“Must be nearly there. Get ready.” Drew was calm. Though little more than a boy, he was a seasoned trooper.

“There! There’s a gleam of light!” Johnny gripped his arm.

“Just around this next clump of pines we’ll get a clear view. And then—”

They were around those pines before Johnny in his suspense breathed twice.

“Now! You ready?” Drew squared his shoulders.

“Now then, you fellows!” His voice sounded out strangely in the night. “We got you covered. Reach for the stars!”

There was a sound of sudden commotion by the camp fire. Three figures leaped into view. But they were not “reaching for the stars.” Their hands hung awkwardly at their sides.

“Now what—” Drew all but dropped his gun.

“That’s not the bunch we’re after,” he said in a low tone aside to Johnny. “Got to

keep 'em comin' though. Got guns. May shoot us without knowing what it's all about.

“As you are!” he commanded sharply. “One move, and out goes your light.”

The men did not move. Instead, as Drew approached them slowly, they stood blinking into his flashlight.

Drew took in the scene at a glance. The camp had been made on a shelving rock. A little back from the fire lay the hind quarters of a moose.

“Great luck!” he thought to himself. “Poachers. Not allowed to kill moose on this island.”

“Honest, mister,” it was a grown boy who spoke at last, “we only kill what we got to have to eat. We can't starve.”

“Ya, we do,” put in a heavy-set man with ham-like hands.

“We-l-l—” Drew was thinking fast. “I'm an officer of the law. I could take you all right. But I'm after bigger game. There are kidnapers on this island. Know that?” He turned to the boy of the group.

“No, I— There's some queer ones back there at Baley's cabin. We seen 'em. Sort of black. But not niggers, I don't think.”

“They're the ones. How'd you like to help catch them?”

“We—” The boy stared. Then of a sudden he started talking rapidly in a strange language. His two beefy companions listened with popping eyes.

“They'll do it, all right,” Drew whispered to Johnny. “Got to! Between the devil and the deep blue sea, they are. Go to jail for poaching or help catch crooks. What would you do?”

“We'll go,” the strange boy said simply.

“Ya. We do,” one of the men agreed.

“Good! Now we are five,” Drew exulted. “Not a bad lot,” he mumbled to

Johnny. “Just ignorant and hungry. Good shots, too, I’ll bet on that.”

Johnny took a long breath. All that suspense, and the kidnapers still some distance away! He felt very much like an empty sack. But he must carry on. Shaking himself, he set his teeth hard. “All right, I’m ready.”

Once again they plunged into the night. Now they were five men and two boats.

And all the while the mysterious flashlight was making its way along the shore, coming from the opposite direction toward Baley’s cabin which might, Johnny believed, be the scene of a bloody battle within the hour.

This time, after a careful study of the situation, Drew decided that the journey should be made entirely by water. The island was narrow, the boy moose hunter explained. A dock virtually formed a door step to the cabin. One had but to reach that dock, and he was at the cabin.

“You fellows lead the way,” Drew commanded. “Not too fast. Watch your oars. Not a creak from them. Keep your oarlocks damp. And don’t talk! Not a whisper! If these men get the drop on you, whang! You’re gone!”

“Ya. We do,” the older of the men agreed hastily. Johnny noticed that his knees were shaking.

“Good shock troops,” was his mental comment. “No good for a real scrap.”

A half hour of breathless suspense, and they were gliding along the island’s short shore line, nearing the dock.

“Now!” Drew had driven their boat alongside the others. “You fellows fall back. We’ll take the lead. Wherever we go, you follow close!”

They caught this whispered command, fell back, then followed on.

Drew had driven their boat to the very side of the dock, and was in the act of creeping toward the prow, when he paused to hiss:

“Listen!”

No need for this command. Johnny’s keen ears had caught it, the most unearthly

sound heard on land or sea—a hollow chuckle that fairly dried the marrow in his bones.

“Wha-what is it?” he whispered.

“Who knows?” Drew was creeping forward once more.

“Light in the cabin,” came back to Johnny faintly. “They’re there all right. We’ll creep up on ’em. Get the drop if we can. We—”

“Listen!”

Again came that hollow chuckle. “As if it came from an empty cabin.” Johnny shuddered.

“All set. Come on.” Hollow chuckles meant little to Drew Lane.

Forgetting the moose hunters at their backs, they crept across the short stretch of planking that led to the cabin door.

Johnny thought he heard his heart’s wild beating. Some creature, small and very fast, shot across the way before them. It was with the utmost difficulty that he kept his lips sealed.

“Now!” Drew’s hand was on the knob. “I’ll throw the door open. You cover ’em. Shoot if they make a false move. Kidnapers have little claim on life.”

“If the door is—”

Johnny did not finish. The door was open. He found himself standing beside Drew in the dark; the candle light of the room was gone. Two bulky figures stood before them. On the table something bright gleamed.

“Guns!” he told himself.

Astonishment all but overcame him as he realized that their presence was not even suspected. Then men were standing with their backs to them.

It took but one glance at the window in the opposite wall to discover the cause of this unheard-of suspense. Outside the window was a grinning, gleaming skull.

And even as Johnny saw it there came again that unearthly chuckle.

Quite as paralyzed as those before him, Johnny stood open-mouthed, staring.

It was Drew Lane who broke the spell. "All right there!" His tone was smooth and cold as ice. "You, Tony Piccalo, and you, Spike O'Connor! Just reach for the sky! And if you can't get it, just keep on reaching!"

With one hand he held his own automatic, with the other he was removing the gangsters' weapons to his own pockets.

The men whirled about. For a second silence too deep for words hung over the place.

"Oh, all right," one of the men grumbled. "You got us. We don't fight spooks. That was the Galloping Ghost."

"I don't believe in ghosts." Drew switched on his flashlight. "Now, then, you fellows sit right down there in the corner, and I'll tell you what we want you for, and why.

"No, I won't." His voice changed as his eyes roved the room. "Where's the Red Rover and that girl, Berley Todd? Come, now! Quick! Where are they?" The steel in his gun was not harder than the ring in his voice.

"Honest—" The man known as Spike O'Connor, a bad one according to his own previous estimation, was shaking. "Honest, we don't know."

"Don't know?" Drew's finger trembled at the trigger.

"Fact!" the other man put in hastily. "Got away from us, they did, more'n three days ago. We sent out a man to look for them. He didn't come back. We sent out two more. They didn't come back. I tell you, this island gets 'em! Ghosts and all that." The way this bad man trembled was good to see.

"Perhaps I might be able to help you," came from the doorway. Johnny whirled about to find himself staring into a pair of friendly eyes that gleamed beneath a ten-gallon hat. Ed, the scout, had caught up with them at last.

"They've been with me until to-night, the Red Rover and Berley Todd have."

The scout advanced to the center of the room. “Now unless that squall we had an hour or two ago took ’em out to sea, they should be on Passage Island where there are civilized human beings.”

“In that case,” said Drew, spinning about, “we’ve got to fly over to Passage Island. And that on the double quick! Can’t let this get out.

“Where is this Passage Island?” he demanded of the scout. “Can a fellow land there in a sea plane?”

“Four miles off Blake’s Point. Land on the lee side all right.”

“Then we’re off.”

“Here, Johnny, slip these on ’em.” He dangled two pairs of handcuffs. “It’ll be a little crowded with four of us in the red racer, but we’ll make it. We—”

He broke off to stare at the doorway. Standing there was a very tall and very thin young man in a tight-fitting suit.

“Jimmie Drury!” he exclaimed. “How’d you come here?”

“Walked, old son. Walked. How’d you suppose?” Jimmie Drury, reporter for the News, grinned from ear to ear. “Worth it, too! Grand story. Good old scoop!”

“Good enough story,” Drew grumbled. “But you’ll not shoot it till I tell you when. I’ll tell you about that later.

“We’re off for Passage Island,” he grinned. “You’ll walk there, too, I suppose; just four miles of Lake Superior. And they tell me Superior never gives up her dead.”

“I’ll be there, never fear!” Jimmie laughed. “Sooner than you’d think! Before you arrive, perhaps. Who knows?”



## CHAPTER XXXI

### “PLAY BY PLAY”

At one o'clock the next afternoon the cement seats of Soldiers' Field, where seventy thousand spectators were to witness a football classic of unparalleled interest, began filling up. The place had been sold out for ten days. Even before the Red Rover vanished every ticket was gone. There were several reasons for this. It was a charity game; the entire net proceeds of the game were to be expended on the city's needy. It was the great game of the year. The rivalry between Old Midway and Northern had ever been keen, never keener than now, for this game was to decide the championship of the conference. The Red Rover was to play, and it had been rumored abroad that this would be his last game, that he would not return to his squad in the following autumn. It was to be the Old Midway coach's last game. He had definitely retired. And those who loved the Grand Old Man of football were legion.

So here they were gathering early. Some coming from afar had arrived early. Some, fearing that the place had been oversold, were hastening to secure their seats.

All morning there had been a whisper abroad. "The Red Rover will play to-day." Thus the whisper ran. One heard it on the street corner, behind the counters in department stores, in the corner cigar store. When the over-curious rang up a newspaper office they were greeted by a curt denial. "We know nothing of it. Wish we did!" Bang! went the receiver. The phones of Old Midway's office rang constantly. "No! No! No!" the patient clerks repeated over and over. "He has not returned to Old Midway."

So over that great city expectancy hung like a thin cloud. And the early arrivals on the field whispered:

"Will he be here?"

\* \* \* \* \*

In the office beside the lighthouse on far away Passage Island sat Drew Lane and Johnny Thompson. Whatever else happened, they would not see the game. There were two others who would not see that game. Tony Piccalo and Spike O'Connor sat moodily in the far corner.

“It’s some time before the game,” Drew commented dryly, casting a significant glance at a radio that stood against the wall. “Just about time for a little story. You’ll be interested in this.” He turned to Johnny. “You’ve guessed at a part of it. Now it all may be told.

“You fellows—” He addressed himself to the others. “You fellows are not kidnapers by profession. Give the devil his dues. But for all that, the fellow who stoops to kidnaping in order that he may gain an end just once is lost, or should be. It’s the lowest crime on the docket, the least romantic, the most cowardly.

“You,” his voice rose, “are professional gamblers, and that rates you pretty low, too.”

He turned to Johnny. “You see, what happened was this. These fellows, with Tony’s brother, Angelo, have been operating a gambling den beneath Angelo’s flower shop for a long time. Race track stuff, baseball pools and all that. Somehow we didn’t get next to them until you found that jimmy bar that lifted the Red Rover’s window, and the shoe that made the invisible footprint was brought in by the Rat. Then we began to suspect something.

“When you brought in that batch of shavings from Angelo’s favorite pocket knife and we found they matched those made near the scene of the kidnaping; when you told us about being thrown from that room beneath the flower shop, we knew we were on the way.”

The pair of culprits sat listening in stolid silence. Johnny heaved a sigh. So he had been useful in this search. He was glad.

“We found out in no time at all,” Drew went on, “that these birds had organized a football pool. They were betting on a grand scale on to-day’s game, giving all manner of odds. And why not? You cowards!” He shot a look at the corner of the room. “You knew all the time that you meant to kidnap the Red Rover and hide him on Isle Royale until the game was over.

“The game.” His voice dropped. “The game has not yet started. The kick-off is at two o’clock. And such a game as it will be!

“You see,” he turned again to Johnny, “when we knew what you had discovered, the rest was easy. Tony, here, is a licensed pilot and owns that big amphibian. Owns it! Strange what some men will do to get more money when they are already rich! But crooked money calls for more and more, always more and more. That’s why a crooked dollar is such a terrible thing to possess.

“Since Tony had that plane and he had been at Isle Royale last summer, as young Angelo told you, as soon as we saw that clipping about the mysterious plane over Isle Royale, we knew just where to go.

“You know the rest.” He smiled at Johnny. “How we found them and got them, how we flew here in the red racer just in time to prevent the broadcasting of our great discovery.

“What you don’t know, and what these fellows don’t exactly know,” his eyes snapped, “is what is about to happen down there in the city.

“There’ll be a football game played. Right! The Red Rover will play. He’ll win!

“And here comes the kidnapers’ reward. Some crooks get to jail rich. They beat the rap or go free in two years, still rich. None of that here!”

He turned once more to the corner. “You fellows, you and your associates have bet your last dollar on the team that was to defeat Old Midway because of your crookedness. We know where all that money is stored. That team will not win. My pal, Tom Howe, and plenty more cops are ready to see that every dollar you wagered is paid. And then—you—will—be—broke!”

A groan came from the corner.

“You think that’s too tough!” Drew leaped to his feet. “It’s not! Nothing is too bad for a kidnaper.

“And you, Tony!” He pointed a finger. “You kidnaped that Berley Todd, a defenseless girl, because you could, and because you thought you could pull down twenty extra grand for yourself.

“She’ll be cheering on the side lines.” He laughed a happy laugh. “That little girl will be cheering for the Red Rover, the best sport that ever lived. And you fellows are going to sit right in this room, getting the radio report and hearing yourselves go broke play by play. *Play by Play!*”

## CHAPTER XXXII

### “70,000 WITNESSES”

As Johnny listened to Drew Lane’s rapid-fire report of events and their outcomes, he realized that he had played no small part in the breaking up of a notorious band of gamblers and the thwarting of their plans.

“More luck than skill on my part,” he whispered to himself.

Just then a thought struck him with the force of a blow. What if the gamblers’ plans had not been thwarted after all? Had Drew Lane talked too soon? How could they know that the Red Rover had reached the city safely? Hour by hour, with monotonous regularity the radio reported: “Still missing.” Was he still missing? Would he fail to appear when the team lined up for the kick-off?

“We’ll know that soon enough.” He glanced at the clock on the wall. “Twenty minutes more, and then—” He took a long breath.

“It means so much!” He all but prayed.

Then again doubt assailed him. Suppose the Red Rover *had* reached the city; suppose he did line up with his team? He had been away from practice for days; had missed all the elaborate plans made for this game of games. He had not lived as players live who are training for a major event. “And every one feels that if he were only there the game would be won before the kick-off!” He fairly groaned.

Once again he glanced at the clock. “Fifteen minutes to go.”

With nervous fingers he snapped on the radio.

“Here we are,” the announcer was saying. “The seats are rapidly filling up. The aisles are packed. What a picture! Gay sport costumes; bright banners; pennants waving; bands playing. Listen!”

Out from the radio came the stirring notes of a march.

“There! There!” the announcer shouted into the microphone. “They’re coming out now. The players are coming on the field. There’s Old Midway. Number twenty-one, Masters, the giant fullback; eighteen, Dwyer, right half.”

Johnny caught his breath. Was it known by now? Would Red come upon the field? His number was twenty. Would he hear it?

“Twenty-eight, Sullivan, the slim quarterback,” the announcer recited. “Seventeen, Clarke, the center; and now Johnson, the left half, who as you know, replaces the famous All-American star, Red Rodgers.”

Johnny heard no more. His hopes sank. From the corner came an exultant whisper.

But the whisper came too soon. Jimmie Drury, the slender reporter from the News, had carried the Red Rover and his diminutive companion, Berley Todd, speedily and safely from the enchanted isle back to the city. After landing in an open field close to the city, they tramped into the suburbs and registered under assumed names at a small hotel. Jimmie made no effort to get in touch with his paper. In his pocket he carried a story that would have made the first page in every newspaper of the land. “The Red Rover has been found. He is safe. He will play.” He could see it across the page in glaring letters.

The story was not told. Jimmie was loyal, loyal to the core. Drew Lane had told him what to do. He would do it, cost what it might.

“These men,” Drew had said sternly, “must not know. They must pay in full for their greed and for their cowardly deeds.”

“And they shall pay!” Jimmie had agreed. So it came about that just as the ball was being placed for the kick, a youth whose shining new suit bore the number twenty came trotting out to say a word to the referee, then to tap number fourteen on the back and to mumble apologetically:

“Sorry, Johnson. Better luck next time!”

It was the Red Rover.

From the vast throng there came a sound like the wind flowing through the tops of a thousand trees. They had seen that number. Were they to believe their eyes?

The sigh, the whisper, grew to a shout. Then the sons and daughters of Old Midway leaped to their feet and such a cheer rent the air as was echoed back again and again by the distant skyscrapers.

Hearing this, Red Rodgers felt a chill rise up his spine. They had seen him. They expected so much.

“And if I lose,” he murmured low, “if I lose!”

He set his teeth hard. He could not, he must not lose!

On far away Passage Island Johnny Thompson and Drew Lane heard the shout that, growing in volume, came welling forth from the radio like the increasing roar of a raging sea. They heard it and understood. And from the corner where the kidnapers sat there came again a low groan.

At this moment Johnny was tempted to feel sorry for these men who had lost so much. “And yet,” he told himself, “a week ago they were riding in powerful cars purchased by crooked money. They wore diamonds. Nothing was too good for their ladies; furs, silks, jewels. They denied themselves nothing. Then, that they might win still greater wealth, they kidnaped a boy who had nothing, who was working his way through college.

“At the same time they snatched a defenseless girl. These they would have murdered had it served their purpose. They know no mercy. They deserve none. They—”

“Look!” came the announcer’s shout from the radio. “Look! There’s the Red Rover! Can you beat that? You can’t even tie it! He was kidnaped, as you know, several days ago. The country has been gone over with a fine-tooth comb. They couldn’t find him. Every detective in the country was on the trail of the abductors. And now he walks calmly out on the field to take his place. It can’t be the Red Rover. It must be his ghost. And yet—yes, it is!

“Listen to that crowd roar! They’re standing up. All over the stadium they’re on their feet. Even Northern is applauding. Good sports! What a game this is going to be!”

And it was; such a game as one witnesses but once in a lifetime. And yet, as Drew Lane and Johnny Thompson sat there in that room on Passage Island, looking away now and then to the tossing waters of Lake Superior, listening always with all their ears, they sank lower and lower in their chairs. Something seemed to be wrong. The Red Rover could not get going. Midway's hopes had been centered on him. The team had been built around him. A strong offensive team, able to charge the line, to block and to run; yet always as he followed through the opening made for him, some one from the opposing team broke through and downed him. Sometimes they smeared him for a loss.

Red could not understand this himself. Had the opposing players schooled themselves so thoroughly in defensive tactics that no man could go through for a touchdown? In the days away from his team had he grown soft? He hated those kidnapers with a bitter hate; was tempted even to hate old Ed, the scout, Berley Todd and Drew Lane.

“Ah, no!” he grumbled to himself once, as he lay sprawled upon the turf during “time out.” “‘The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves that we are underlings.’ I’ll blame no other one than myself. I’m not so good. But this once I must win. I must! I *must!*”

But could he? On the defense his team acquitted itself well. During the first half not a touchdown was made on either side.

Then, at the very beginning of the second half catastrophe befell them. Midway kicked off. Northern carried the ball to Midway's forty-yard line. A forward pass was completed, a second following in quick succession. One mad plunge, and Northern went over for a touchdown. Their fans went mad. The kick for an extra point was successful. The score stood Northern 7. Midway 0.

Gloom, deep and ominous, settled down upon the room out there on far away Passage Island. Gloom, but not for all. From the corner came in a loud whisper:

“Tony. We are going broke play by play. Just like he said, play by play.” This was followed by a hoarse chuckle that made Johnny's blood boil. If Drew Lane heard it he did not show it by so much as the flicker of an eyelash.

“Does he believe that the Red Rover can still go through to victory?” Johnny asked himself.



Then, as if what appeared almost sure defeat were not enough, at the middle of the third quarter one more terrible thing happened.

To Drew and Johnny it appeared all the more terrible since, receiving it on the radio, they could but half understand what was going on. "Now play will be resumed," the announcer droned. "The men are taking their positions. Northern has the ball on their own forty-five yard line.

"The crowd is on its toes. Seventy thousand people. Bright blankets, fluttering flags. Plenty of color out here. Plenty of noise.

"Marvelous day. Clear as glass. Not a cloud. Snappy. Just the kind of day that makes them fight.

"Now they're lined up. Now—

"Oh! Oh!" There came a sudden change in the announcer's voice. "Something's happening down there. A player comes racing onto the field. He's leaping at some one. Looks like the Red Rover. It *is* the Red Rover! What do you make of that? Two men of Old Midway fighting it out before seventy thousand witnesses!

"Now a tall youth in black leaps in. They're piling up. What a scrap!"

In the corner of a room up there on Passage Island Tony and Spike stirred uneasily. Johnny leaned far forward as if he would drag more words from the radio. But for a time it was still. Deep silence fell in the room. Drew Lane, keeping a wary eye on his prisoners, waited for more.

The thing that had happened there on Soldiers' Field was scarcely to be credited. Tom Howe, who had appointed himself bodyguard for the Red Rover, had been seated on the bench near the door leading from Old Midway's dressing rooms. A youth in a brand new uniform had walked out from that door, had stood quite still for a moment, studying the field.

"Looking for some one," Tom told himself. Then he got a good look at the man's face, and caught his breath. This fellow seemed old for an under-graduate. There was about that face a suggestion of long nights and dissipation such as one does not see topping a varsity football uniform.

"Looks like a tin horn gambler!" Tom rose slowly to his feet.

Next instant the stranger went trotting toward the field. It was a nervous trot. Nothing nervous about the man that followed him, Tom Howe.

Of a sudden, as he neared the group of players, the man in the football suit, flashing a knife, leaped at Red Rodgers.

Tom Howe was light and quick. With a panther-like leap he was upon the mysterious assassin.

Down they went. Rolling over and over, they strove for possession of the knife. Now Tom had it. Now it was wrenched from his grasp. Now he gripped the other's wrist. He was fighting with the power of desperation, this stranger. Prison bars yawned for him. He knew prison. He had been there.

Now by sheer strength he forced Tom's arm back until the point of the knife was within an inch of Tom's good right eye.

"Let me go!" hissed the dark assassin.

"Never!" Tom set his teeth hard.

All this happened in the space of seconds. Then a terrific blow from the right sent the dark stranger rolling over the earth. His knife went spinning high in the air.

The Red Rover had seen. He had understood. He had struck.

Leaping once more upon the stranger, Tom dragged him to his feet. "You would!" he hissed. "One more of those 'seventy thousand witnesses' stunts. But it don't go. The hoosegow for you!"

He led him from the field.

Just how much of all this the vast throng understood would be hard to say.

All that Drew and Johnny got over the radio was a brief account of a more or less mysterious fight on the gridiron. They were shrewd enough to understand that an attempt had been made upon the Red Rover's life and that quick-witted Tom Howe had saved the day.

“Saved!” Johnny breathed. “Saved! But the score is still 7 to 0. Wonder how a football player behaves after an attempt has been made upon his life.” He was to see.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

# THE FLEA FLICKER

“Paying me a compliment,” Red grumbled to himself, as the third quarter ended with no success. “Tried to kill me, that tough egg sent by Angelo and his gang. As if I’d do them any harm playing football!” He was thoroughly disgusted with himself. What was the trouble? He could not get going, that was all. And the game was slipping away, with one more quarter to play.

The fourth quarter began as the third had ended, with the two teams driving one another back and forth across the field. Eleven precious minutes of play passed into eternity. Still no score. And then came a change.

From time to time, as the teams moved toward the center of the field, Red had stolen a glance at Berley Todd. She had not been home. Apparently this game was, for the time, all that mattered. As the young football star thought of this a lump rising in his throat all but choked him.

Somehow Berley had secured a place directly behind the rail in the first tier of seats. Every time Red stole a glance at her he found her sitting there, sober-faced, tense, expectant. She did not leap and scream as others did. She did not join in the shouting.

“I’d almost say she was praying,” Red told himself. “Wonder if any one ever prayed at a football game?”

Surely if ever there was occasion for sober thoughts over a ball game, this was the time. A thousand, five thousand, perhaps ten thousand foolish men had been tricked into gambling on what they believed to be a sure thing.

“We don’t care for them,” Drew Lane had said. “If they were the only ones to suffer they should lose. But if they *do* lose, their families will suffer; women and

children. So Red, you must fight! Fight! *Fight!*”

He *had* fought. But all in vain. Somehow he could not get into the game. The very weight of responsibility seemed to crush the spirit out of him.

Then, four minutes before the end, a strange thing happened. He was beyond the center of the field on the enemy’s territory. There was “time out.” He heard a thin voice calling. It was Berley Todd.

“Red,” she whispered hoarsely as he came near, “why don’t you try the Flea Flicker?” Then she smiled. It was her first smile that day.

There was something about that smile that lifted the heavy burden from Red’s shoulders.

“The Flea Flicker. Why not?”

He had described the play to her while on one of their wild boat rides before the island.

“The Flea Flicker. Four minutes to play. Why not? Why not forget all but the game? Play for the mere sport of it? Football is sport, not business. The Flea Flicker, that’s it!”

He joined his team in a huddle. “The Flea Flicker” was whispered from man to man. A ripple of mirth passed over the weary fighters.

Old Midway had the ball. It was the fourth down. Four minutes to play. If they lost the ball they might never regain it. This play was a complicated one. What did it matter? Win or lose; the Flea Flicker.

Signals were called. Masters, the fullback, dropped to the rear in position for a place kick. Red sank to his knee as if to receive the ball.

The play was on. The ball was snapped, not to Red but to Masters. Northern players charged. Dwyer, the right half, ignoring his man, stood up, facing Masters. Red ran wide to the right. Masters pitched the ball to Dwyer. Dwyer tossed it to Red and he was away.

It was strange, the feeling that came over Red Rodgers as he leaped forward. He

was not on a football field dodging men, but on the water, heading into waves that threatened to swamp his frail craft. There was one to the right, a huge one. This way out. Here were two at the left. A quick turn here, a short twist there, and he was on again. Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five yards, he raced forward. The field was clear now. The crowd was on its feet. They were shouting themselves hoarse. The miracle had happened. The Red Rover, their idol, was away at last.

“Touchdown! Touchdown!” they screamed. And at last Berley Todd joined in the cry. “Touchdown! Touchdown!”

Touchdown it was. Then the crowd waited, breathless, for the kick that promised a tie or defeat; the crowd waited and lost, for the ball went wild. The score stood Northern 7; Midway 6.

“Two minutes to play,” Red muttered to himself. “Two minutes are enough for any man’s touchdown.” But were they?

Midway called for “time out.” As the team dropped to the ground one word was passed from man to man.

A moment’s rest and they were up again. A hush fell over the great throng as Northern sent the ball soaring high.

Watching as a hunter watches a hawk, Red measured the distance, dashed a clean twenty yards, gathered the ball in his arms and, never pausing, sped on toward the goal line.

It was strange. Only half conscious of his opponents, he passed them one by one. As one leaped at his feet he swerved and sagged far over. The man missed. Now three were bunched against him. They formed a pinwheel. He was at the center of the wheel. They whirled round and round like sparks. They flew to right and left of him. Again he sped on. One man remained. Red leaped at him, then stopped dead. The man went on his face.

Then, with the thundering roar of a victory mad throng beating on his ears, he fell across the line for a touchdown.

Johnny Thompson and Drew Lane, away up on Passage Island, heard all this, and greeted one another with a solemn handclasp.

“They try for the extra point,” the announcer called. What did it matter? The game was won.

“It’s good! What matter? The score stands 13 to 7. One minute to play. Time out. The Red Rover is leaving the game.”

What did it matter? The game was won.

\* \* \* \* \*

Tom Howe’s mop-up men did their work well. Angelo the impostor and his band of crooks and kidnapers were sent to jail; not, however, until their bank accounts were exhausted, their safety boxes emptied, paying back the money they had hoped to steal.

With a pilot imported from Houghton, Johnny rode in the big amphibian with Drew’s prisoners back to the city. Drew rode alone in the red racer.

As for Red, a cold shower woke him from the half-trance that had carried him to victory in one of the famous football games of history. Two days later he found himself sitting before a small fire in his own room, meditating on the future. Berley Todd had urged him to visit her in her father’s palatial home. Would he go? She had asked him to go with her to Isle Royale in the good old summer time.

“Isle Royale,” he murmured. “The land of dreams.” Would he go?

The Grand Old Man was leaving football forever. Should he, too, leave and go back to the steel mill? Surely life was strange.

A book lay on his lap. It was “Burton’s Analytic Geometry.” He must dig in. He dug.

The morning after his return Drew Lane met Jimmie Drury. “Jimmie,” he demanded, “why did you play the Galloping Ghost?”

“How do you know I did?” Jimmie grinned.

“Come on. Quit your kidding! Own up!”

“Well, you see,” Jimmie’s smile broadened, “it happened that I was at a masquerade party the night the Red Rover was kidnaped. I had dressed as a ghost. I was on my way home when the thing broke. Got out of my taxi and went after the story, just as I was. When the myth about the Galloping Ghost got out, I decided to continue the part. You know the rest.”

“Yes, I know. You helped a lot.”

“In a case like that,” said Jimmie soberly, “every man of us must do his best.”

So the story ends. There will be another called *Whispers at Dawn*. Will Drew Lane, Johnny, and the others walk through these pages? Who can say? Time moves swiftly. Yesterday’s hero is forgotten to-day. To-morrow brings another. Read and see.



Author's Autograph

Book Jacket

## Transcriber's Notes

- Copyright notice provided as in the original printed text—this e-text is public domain in the country of publication.
- Silently corrected palpable typos; left non-standard spellings and dialect unchanged.
- In the text versions, included italics inside underscores (the HTML version replicates the format of the original.)

End of the Project Gutenberg EBook of The Galloping Ghost, by Roy J. Snell

\*\*\* END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE GALLOPING GHOST \*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\* This file should be named 43853-h.htm or 43853-h.zip \*\*\*\*\*  
This and all associated files of various formats will be found in:  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/4/3/8/5/43853/>

Produced by Stephen Hutcheson, Rod Crawford, Dave Morgan  
and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at  
<http://www.pgdp.net>

Updated editions will replace the previous one--the old editions  
will be renamed.

Creating the works from public domain print editions means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for the eBooks, unless you receive specific permission. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the rules is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. They may be modified and printed and given away--you may do practically ANYTHING with public domain eBooks. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

\*\*\* START: FULL LICENSE \*\*\*

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE  
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg-tm License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is in the public domain in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg-tm works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg-tm name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg-tm License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg-tm work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country outside the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg-tm License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg-tm work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is derived from the public domain (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg-tm License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg-tm License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg-tm.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg-tm License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg-tm work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg-tm web site ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg-tm License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg-tm works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works provided that

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from

the use of Project Gutenberg-tm works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg-tm License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg-tm works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and Michael Hart, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

#### 1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread public domain works in creating the Project Gutenberg-tm collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can

receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg-tm work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg-tm work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg-tm

Project Gutenberg-tm is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg-tm's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg-tm collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg-tm and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)

## Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent

permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's principal office is located at 4557 Melan Dr. S. Fairbanks, AK, 99712., but its volunteers and employees are scattered throughout numerous locations. Its business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's web site and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

For additional contact information:

Dr. Gregory B. Newby  
Chief Executive and Director  
[gnewby@pglaf.org](mailto:gnewby@pglaf.org)

#### Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg-tm depends upon and cannot survive without wide spread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg Web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

#### Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works.

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg-tm concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as Public Domain in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our Web site which has the main PG search facility:

[www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)

This Web site includes information about Project Gutenberg-tm, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.