

# THE GO AHEAD BOYS AND THE RACING MOTOR-BOAT



## Chapter 7: An Unwelcome Party

---

“Who’s there? Who’s there?” demanded Fred sharply.

The noise in the room below had prevented him from sleeping soundly. Several times he sat erect in bed, convinced that some one was in the room. Even when his fears proved to be groundless he was unable to ignore the shouts and songs and calls that frequently indicated that the men in the room below were angry. Before he had retired he had obtained a glimpse of the shouting assembly when a door had been opened and the sight had not soothed his feelings. And now he was positive some one was trying to open the door of their room.

Aroused by the call of his friend, John also quickly sat up and stared about him. There was no mistaking the fact that some one was trying to enter by the door which yielded slightly to the pressure and the chair which had been placed by Fred to protect them had been moved back a few inches from its place.

“Who’s there? Who’s there?” demanded Fred sharply.

No reply was given to his question although the door slowly was closed again and the sound of the footsteps of some one moving down the hall was plainly heard.

“What do you suppose that was?” demanded Fred in a whisper.

“Somebody was trying to break in,” replied John.

“What do you suppose he wanted?”

“He wanted to get in.”

“What for?”

“I don’t know. You’ll have to ask him, I guess,” replied John drowsily for by this time he had resumed his place on the pillow.

“I think he wanted our money,” suggested Fred.

“He didn’t want much then. Maybe he wanted our money and our lives.”

“All the same I’m scared. I don’t like this place. I don’t know why we stopped here. It must be past one o’clock now and yet hear those men yell down there in the bar-room. I’m going to see what time it is.”

Fred climbed out of bed and striking a match looked at his watch. “It’s quarter past one,” he said, but the sound which came from John did not indicate that he was specially interested in the report of the watch.

Fred looked out of the window and saw that the storm long since had passed. The air was cool and fresh and had it not been for the uproar in the hotel the night would have been an ideal one.

Before he rejoined his companion Fred replaced the chair so that it barred the opening

of the door.

Convinced that he had done all in his power he climbed back into bed once more and in spite of his declaration when daylight came that he had not been asleep John was not convinced.

“Come on, String,” said Fred when once more he had looked at his watch to discover the time. “It’s five o’clock. It’s time for us to be moving. I wouldn’t have breakfast in this hole if they paid me for it.”

“Why can’t you leave a fellow alone and let him sleep? I’m tired. I got left at Poughkeepsie and I had a hard day yesterday too.”

“No, sir,” said Fred firmly. “This party starts from this place in thirty minutes. Any one who isn’t ready will have to come by canal-boat. The Black Growler leaves here at five-thirty sharp.”

With a groan John arose and began to dress, although he protested feelingly all the time against the unreasonable demands of Fred.

The other two Go Ahead boys were speedily aroused and twenty minutes later they departed from the hotel.

“It looks worse in the morning than it does at night and we thought that wasn’t possible when we came here last evening,” said George when the Go Ahead boys looked behind them after their departure.

“I think I will send that landlady a Christmas present of a cake of soap,” said Grant soberly.

“She wouldn’t know what it was for,” laughed John, “if you did.”

“My, I would like to hear what my mother would say if she could see the inside of that old tavern.”

“The worst thing of all,” said Fred, “was the riot in the bar-room. I didn’t sleep a wink last night.”

“You didn’t sound that way, Freddie,” said George.

“What time did the noise downstairs stop, Peewee?” inquired John.

“It didn’t stop, I guess,” laughed Fred. “The landlady said the storm drove all the canal-men into the house, but it didn’t seem to me there was anything that drove them out. I shouldn’t like to meet one of those men in a dark alley.”

“You don’t have to meet them,” suggested George. “We have lived through the night somehow and are all safe. Now if the Black Growler is ready we are. We’ll get our breakfast at Rome, I suppose.”

“That’s what we will,” said Fred, quickening his pace as he spoke.

“Look yonder!” exclaimed John, abruptly halting as he spoke and pointing in surprise

at their motor-boat, which was only a few yards distant.

In response to his suggestion the Go Ahead boys all stopped and stared in amazement at the sight before them.

On board the Black Growler were at least a half-dozen men and it required no explanation to enable the boys to understand that they were a part of the noisy assembly which had made night hideous in the hotel.

“Here,” called Fred, running ahead of his companions. “What are you doing in that boat?”

“Who are you?” demanded one of the occupants, turning and facing Fred as he spoke.

“That’s my boat,” declared Fred.

“You don’t say so!” replied the man in shrill tones, at which his companions laughed loudly.

For a moment Fred stopped and stared blankly at the men, who had apparently made themselves fully at home on board his motor-boat. The awnings had been taken in and the self-invited guests had been examining various parts of the fleet little craft.

“Did you ever hear,” continued the spokesman, “that possession is nine points of the law and that the tenth isn’t worth fighting about? Maybe we’ll ask you to prove that this boat is yours. According to the records of my private secretary this here yacht is mine. I’m goin’ on a cruise up to Buffalo and I have invited a few o’ my pals to come along with me.”

The men were a brutal and powerful lot. Every one showed the effect of the night which he had spent in the bar-room. The boys were powerless to compel them to leave the boat if they did not choose to do so.

The predicament in which the Go Ahead boys now found themselves seemed to appeal strongly to the men on board. They laughed loudly and the leader who had spoken before, said, “Why don’t you come on board? If this boat is yours all you have to do is to come and take it.”

“It is, all right. That is our boat,” said Fred.

“If you don’t get out I shall have to get some one to put you out.”

“Don’t be so unkind, mister,” retorted the leader, while his companions again united in a shout of glee. “There aren’t many men around this place that will want to undertake that job. If you would really like to have us go ashore it seems to me the best plan would be for you to come and throw us out.”

Once more the unwelcome guests laughed loudly at the words of their leader, while the confusion among the Go Ahead boys became more marked.

Withdrawing a few feet from the bank Fred called his companions about him and in low

tones they discussed the course of action which they ought to follow.

“We had better go up and get the constable,” suggested John. “Get out a warrant for these men. They won’t make any trouble even if the constable comes down alone.”

“I’m not so sure,” said Fred. “What do you think, Grant?”

“I don’t believe the men intend to stay on board,” replied Grant. “They probably were attracted by the appearance of the Black Growler and when they saw us coming they put up a bold front and just tried to scare Fred.”

“What do you think is the best thing to do?” inquired Fred.

“My suggestion is to go back to the boat, not have much to say to the men and get ready to start. They won’t bother us, at least I don’t believe they will.”

“What shall we do if they make trouble?”

“It will be time enough to decide that when we have to,” replied Grant. “I’m sure they won’t make any trouble after they see that we are going to start.”

“All right, we’ll try it,” said Fred dubiously, and once more returning to the place where the Black Growler was awaiting them, the three bags which contained the belongings of the boys were placed on board and ignoring the bantering of the men, they at once prepared to cast off.

“You don’t mean to say we’re going to start now, do you?” inquired the leader.

“Yes,” said Fred shortly.

“Why, we didn’t think you’d go for an hour yet. We haven’t got our trunks.”

Again his companions laughed loudly at the wit of their leader, but as yet not one of them had made any move to leave the boat.

Fred’s alarm was plain in spite of the boldness with which he cast off the bow line. Grant already had performed a similar service with the stern line and the boys were now ready to depart.

“It’s nice of you to invite us to go along with you,” said the leader. “This is a purty little boat and me and my pals will enjoy a ride in her.”

“We’re going to start now,” said Fred quietly, striving to conceal his fear.

“Why, I guess we’re ready, aren’t we?” said the leader as he glanced at his companions.

“I reckon we are, cap’n,” replied one of the men.

The six men occupied most of the available space on board the little boat. Striving to appear indifferent to their presence Fred advanced to the wheel, turned on the power and prepared to depart.