

THE GO AHEAD BOYS AND THE RACING MOTOR-BOAT



Chapter 11: Rescued

No change occurred for another hour in the position in which the boys found themselves. Fred still was lying helpless on the cushions and the boys by taking turns or working together at the wheel had somehow, in spite of numerous moments of peril, been able to keep the Black Growler headed to the wind.

At that time George broke in upon the silence by saying excitedly, "Look yonder, fellows! Isn't that a boat coming this way?"

Instantly the eyes of all three turned in the direction in which George pointed. Far away a trail of smoke was visible and from the direction in which it was moving it was apparent that it had come from a boat which was coming nearer the place where the boys were drifting than had any boats since their mishap.

"I believe it's coming," exclaimed Grant. "We'll get some help pretty soon."

"Yes," broke in John, whose hands now were blistered and whose temper had suffered from his efforts. "Yes, she's probably bound for Liverpool and won't stop until she's gone across the ocean. A lot of good it will do us!"

"Don't take all the joy out of living, String," laughed George good-naturedly. "Maybe we shan't have any chance to be taken on board, but we'll do our best anyway."

Silence followed as the three boys eagerly watched the approaching boat, for there was no question in their minds now that the unknown steamer was approaching.

A few minutes later Grant said, looking through the field glasses at the approaching stranger, "That's a yacht of some kind, in my opinion." As soon as he had spoken, his companions eagerly demanded an opportunity to confirm his statement.

"Soc is right," said John after a long inspection.

"Of course he is," said Grant lightly. "He always is right. How many times must I tell you that if you would only follow my advice you would soon be improving?"

"It's no time to joke," said John solemnly. "We've just got to make them take us on board or help us out of our trouble."

"We'll have to wait until they come nearer than they are now," said George. "Have we got a big white cloth that we can use as a signal?"

"I think there are some sheets down in the cabin," suggested Grant.

"Then I'll get them," said Grant quickly, as he disappeared from sight.

In a brief time he returned with two sheets in his arms. Handing one to Grant, while John was still busy at the wheel, George said excitedly, "Now we have got to stand up and let them know that we're here."

It was plain to the watching boys that the approaching boat was a yacht as Grant had suggested. Her graceful outlines now could be plainly seen and she was swiftly approaching.

"I'm wondering," suggested George thoughtfully, "if we are tossing around on the water the way she is. Just look at her," he added excitedly as the yacht in the distance pitched visibly in the rough water.

"Of course we are," said John, "only worse. A little boat like the Black Growler is not worth much more than an egg shell."

"Still I think I would rather be in the Black Growler," laughed George.

The spray continued to dash over the motor-boat and the little craft was roughly tossed by the passing waves. Fred twice had rolled from his position on the cushions and fallen upon the floor. The assistance of his friends had been required to restore him to his former position. His ghastly appearance by this time had aroused the sympathies of his companions and besides they were all three anxious for the safety of the boat as well as of themselves.

The sun was still shining brightly and there was life in the air as it swept across the great mass of fresh water. Steadily the Black Growler had been moving before the wind, which was blowing directly from the lake. As a result they were able to see more distinctly the outlines of the shore before them, which now was not more than two miles distant.

A few minutes had elapsed when George said excitedly, "Do you see what boat that is?"

His companions did not reply for a brief time and then Grant said quietly, "It's the Caledonia."

"Yes, I believe it is," joined in John.

"I know it is," said George. "We're sure now that we'll get some help."

"We may have our troubles," suggested Grant, "if the captain answers our hail, or he may pick us up and claim salvage."

"I guess there won't be anything like that," exclaimed George, who was greatly relieved by the sight of the approaching yacht. Her black sides glistened in the sunlight and her graceful outline now that she was near had never appeared to greater advantage.

Two of the boys were still waving and shaking the sheets as their signals of distress. It was evident, however, that they had been seen by the crew of the Caledonia and that the big black yacht was directly bearing down upon them.

A few minutes later the Caledonia shut off steam and the captain was seen on deck.

Approaching the rail, with his speaking trumpet in his hand, he called, "Ahoy, there! What's the trouble?"

"Our engine is broken down," replied John.

“Aren’t you the same boys we towed through the Erie Canal yesterday?”

“Yes, sir,” replied John.

“You seem to be in trouble most of the way,” retorted the captain. “It seems to me the best thing we can do is to take you up and send you back to your mothers. You aren’t fit to be out here on Lake Ontario all alone. What do you want us to do?”

At that moment the owner of the yacht again appeared by the captain’s side and taking the speaking trumpet from that officer he called to the boys, “Are you in trouble?”

“Yes, sir,” replied John, who still was the spokesman for the Go Ahead boys.

“What can we do for you?”

“If you will take us on board, or give us a tow until we can land somewhere we shall be very grateful to you.”

“What’s the trouble?”

“That’s just what we do not know,” said John.

“Have you got plenty of gasoline?”

“Yes, sir. It’s something wrong with the machinery this time.”

Fred now was sitting erect and gazing interestedly at the people on the deck of the Caledonia. His face was still ghastly in its color but the opportunity to secure help apparently had aroused him from the semi-stupor into which he had fallen.

“I think the best thing will be to take you on board and tow the boat. We’re going to put in for the night right here and if there isn’t anybody there who can fix up your machinery then you’ll have to stay until to-morrow morning when we can take you on to Sacket’s Harbor. I think it will be better for all you boys to come aboard,” he added. “In a sea like this there’s no knowing what may happen to a boat in tow.”

“You fellows go on board,” said Fred. “I’ll stay here and look after the boat.”

“You’ll do nothing of the kind,” retorted John promptly. “If you stay I shall stay with you.”

It finally was agreed that the four boys should be taken on board the Caledonia and that one of the crew of the yacht should take his place on board the Black Growler and do his best to see that she was guided aright while she was being towed by the larger boat.

The big yacht was drifting steadily nearer the motor-boat and in a brief time it was possible for a rope to be cast. The boys succeeded in making this fast and then the yacht swung around so that the Black Growler was in the lea.

In spite of the rough water the boys succeeded in making their way to the deck of the yacht while one of the crew took his place on board the Black Growler.

The motor-boat then was dropped back and when the Caledonia started, she was fifty feet in the rear of the larger boat.

Mr. Stevens cordially and yet laughingly greeted the boys, whom he dubbed at the time the “sons of misfortune.”

Relieved as the Go Ahead boys were by their rescue they nevertheless all showed traces of chagrin over the fact that twice they had been helped by the big, black yacht.

“We’re going to put up at Henderson Harbor,” explained Mr. Stevens. “I have some friends staying at the big club-house and I have promised to spend the night there. I’m sure there will be a welcome for you boys if you wish to stop. It may be, however, that there will be some one there who can fix you up so that you can go on to Sacket’s Harbor if you desire. My suggestion is, however, that you spend the night at the club-house. In the morning we can take your boat in tow again and drop you at Sacket’s Harbor or Cape Vincent for such repairs as you may need.”

“Thank you,” replied John. “I’m sure we shall all be glad to do as you suggest.”

At this time the members of Mr. Stevens’ family approached the little group and the Go Ahead boys one by one were introduced.

The ghastly expression on the face of Fred in part disappeared when he was introduced to the older daughter of the owner. Miss Susie Stevens laughed in a manner which increased Fred’s annoyance when his companions explained the cause of his troubles.

“I wasn’t seasick!” declared Fred glibly. “I just had a headache.”

“That’s all right, Peewee,” said George in mock seriousness. “That’s all right. All I can say is that if I was not seasick I’m mighty sure I wouldn’t be doing some of the things you did.”

The young people all laughed at Fred’s manifest irritation but the subject was changed, for the Caledonia by this time was drawing near the island on which the club house they were seeking was located.

The water within the harbor was much smoother than on the open lake and the relief from the motion produced by the tossing waves speedily restored Fred so that when at last the yacht was anchored and the Black Growler was safely drawn into the boat house he was ready to take his part with his companions in the events that speedily followed.