

# THE GO AHEAD BOYS AND THE RACING MOTOR-BOAT



## Chapter 13: A Surprise

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“Wait a minute, fellows!” called Fred when his companions prepared to depart from the dock and go to the hotel for their luncheon. “I have lost my knife. I think I must have dropped it somewhere behind the cushions.”

The boys halted on the dock while Fred speedily turned over the cushions. He did not discover his missing knife, but he did find a large envelope lying directly beneath the cushion in the stern of the cockpit.

“What’s that?” he called as he held the paper up to view. “Have any of you fellows lost anything?”

All three Go Ahead boys declared that the paper did not belong to any of them. Approaching the place where Fred was standing on board and still looking at the document Grant suggested that he should open the envelope as it was unsealed and unaddressed.

Fred followed the suggestion and to the amazement as well as to the consternation of his friends he drew forth a bond for five thousand dollars. For a moment an expression of blank amazement appeared on the faces of all on board.

“What’s that?” demanded Fred at last. “Whose is it? What is it doing on board the Black Growler?”

“It’s a railway mortgage bond and given by one of the strongest railroads in the United States,” said Grant, who had been looking carefully at the surprising discovery which his friend had made.

“Is it good for anything?” inquired John.

“Not much,” laughed Grant. “Only five thousand dollars, that’s all.”

“Do you mean to tell me you could get five thousand dollars for that piece of paper?”

“Yes, sir, I think you could.”

“Well, then,” said John, “why don’t we do it? It may be as good as money, as you say, but I think I’d rather see the cold cash. Where can we get the money?”

“It might take a little time to get it cashed, but almost any bank would pay it. It’s not a registered bond and it looks as if it was all right every way.”

“Yes, but whose is it?” said Fred. “That’s what troubles me.”

“I guess you won’t have any trouble in finding out whose bond it is,” laughed George. “Though I must confess I don’t see how it came on board.”

“Neither do I,” said Fred slowly. “It must have been here some time.”

“Yes,” said John dryly. “I guess this is the first time we have turned over or shaken out the cushions.”

“We’ have shaken out, is good,” retorted Fred. “I was doing this little job all myself. There wasn’t a fellow who offered to lend a hand. But what shall I do with the thing?” he added.

“Put it in your pocket now,” said Grant, “and wait until we have had our luncheon. We can talk it over while we are at the table and decide what is the best thing to do.”

Grant’s advice was followed. Fred thrust the bond into the envelope and then placed the package in the inner pocket of his jacket.

Throughout their meal the discovery of the bond was the chief topic of conversation. The mystery of its presence on board the Black Growler as well as that of its ownership again and again were talked over, but no satisfactory conclusion had been obtained when at last the boys departed from the hotel.

“I’ll tell you what we’ll do, fellows,” said Grant. “Let’s take that bond down to the bank. There must be one or two banks here and we can find out about it and leave it there, if it is thought best. It may be that we shan’t want to be found with the goods on us a little later.”

“That’s all right, Soc,” said Fred, who was more nervous than any of the boys concerning the discovery which he had made. “I’ll find out where there’s a bank.”

In response to his inquiries, Fred soon was informed where a bank could be found and together with his companions at once entered it.

He inquired for the president and soon was introduced to that official. Briefly Fred then related the story of the discovery of the bond. The man before him listened attentively and when Fred ceased he said, “Let me see the bond.”

As soon as he received it he carefully read its contents and then said slowly, “That is a perfectly good bond and is worth at least fifty-two hundred and fifty dollars. What do you intend to do with it?”

“That’s what we wanted to ask you,” explained Fred.

“And you haven’t any idea where it came from?” inquired the banker, looking keenly at Fred as he spoke.

“Not the slightest,” answered Fred. “I never was more surprised in my life than when I found that bond under the cushion on our boat.”

“Hum,” said the banker slowly. “Will you accept a suggestion from me?”

“Yes, sir,” said Fred eagerly. “That’s what we came for.”

“Then my advice to you is to leave the bond here. I’ll give you a description of it and the number, and will make such inquiries as are in my power concerning its ownership. You must give me your names and addresses and tell me where I can get you on the ‘phone within the next few days if I want to call you.”

Fred glanced questioningly at his companions and when Grant nodded his head, he

said, "All right Mr.—"

"My name is Reese," explained the banker.

"All right, Mr. Reese," said Fred. "You give us the paper and we'll be glad to leave the bond here in your keeping. Have you any idea," he added, "how that bond may have been placed on board our boat?"

"No, sir, not the slightest," replied the banker.

Mr. Reese retired from the room in which the boys were waiting and in a moment returned stating that as soon as the chief facts concerning the bond had been transcribed he would give a copy to the boys. Meanwhile he took the names of all four Go Ahead boys and also their addresses.

"I know your grandfather quite well," he explained when Fred gave his name as that in the care of which all letters and messages for the boys should be sent. "He frequently comes up to Cape Vincent in his yacht. I am glad to meet you on his account as well as on your own."

The task at last having been completed, the Go Ahead boys at once started toward the dock where their motor-boat had been left.

As they drew near the place, John suddenly stopped and clutching George by his arm, who was walking beside him, said, "Look at that man over on the dock! Who is it?"

"It's the fellow who was the leader of that gang of canal-men that boarded us the other morning."

"What do you suppose he's doing here?" demanded John in a whisper.

"I can't say. I'm not sure that it is the same man, but it certainly looks like him."

The boys stopped and excitedly explained to their friends the discovery which they had made.

The opinion was general as soon as all had looked at the man that it was indeed their unwelcome visitor who had fled precipitately with his companions when the *Caledonia* had stopped to aid them.

The stranger was only a few yards from the place where the *Black Growler* had been made fast, and as the boys approached he looked up and said with a laugh, "Glad to see yer. I thought I'd come down and look ye up. I wonder if yer got any gasoline?"

"Yes, sir, we have," answered Fred tartly. He was not desirous of continuing the conversation.

Sam Hodge, who had come with the boys from Henderson Harbor, had departed soon after the landing at Cape Vincent had been made. Consequently the *Black Growler* had been left without any one on board when the Go Ahead boys had gone to the hotel for their luncheon. Whether or not the man before them had made investigations or helped himself

to anything of value on board the boat no one knew. There was, however, no one to prevent him from doing such things as he had desired.

“Where did you come from?” demanded George as he stepped in front of the stranger.

“I jes’ started for me summer home,” laughed the canal-man. “I didn’t think I would go down before the Fourth of July, but the sight of you boys made me homesick.”

“Where is your island?”

“I can’t jes’ describe it,” said the man, “but if you’ll give me a lift in your boat I’ll p’int it out to you when we come to it.”

“How did you come down here?” demanded George.

“The same as any gintleman might come. I thought of comin’ in me yacht, but I finally decided I’d take me own car and in that way I would be independant of the whole world. Now, then, boys,” he added, “I’m a bit fearful that I shan’t be able to stay with ye very long. Did any of ye find a document of any value after I left ye the other day? I was a bit sorry I couldn’t stop to shake hands with ye, but there were several reasons why me and me pals thought it might be a good thing not to interfere with you when your friends on that black yacht stopped to say good mornin’.”

The four boys looked shyly at one another, every one of them convinced that the mystery of the presence of the bond which they had discovered was in part explained.

“What was your document?” asked Grant.

“That wasn’t what I said,” replied the man. “I asked you if you had found any document.”

“Of course we’d find a good many things on board,” explained Grant. “You’ll have to tell us just what it is you lost, if you want us to say whether or not we have found it.”

“You found it all the same. I can see it by the look in your eyes,” declared the man. “Now, what I want to know is if you’ll give it up peaceable-like or do you want me to call a policeman and get him to help me take what belongs to me.”