

PEE - WEE HARRIS:  
AS GOOD AS HIS WORD

PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

**\* A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook \***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please contact a <https://www.fadedpage.com> administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at <https://www.fadedpage.com>.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. IF THE BOOK IS UNDER COPYRIGHT IN YOUR COUNTRY, DO NOT DOWNLOAD OR REDISTRIBUTE THIS FILE.

*Title:* Pee-wee Harris: As Good As His Word

*Date of first publication:* 1925

*Author:* Percy Keese Fitzhugh (1876-1950)

*Date first posted:* June 8, 2019

*Date last updated:* June 8, 2019

Faded Page eBook #20190614

This eBook was produced by: Roger Frank and Sue Clark.

# PEE-WEE HARRIS: AS GOOD AS HIS WORD



**“YOU ATE THE ICE CREAM!” PEE-WEE ROARED. “NOW SEE  
WHAT YOU DID!”**

PEE-WEE HARRIS  
AS GOOD AS HIS WORD

BY  
PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

*Author of*  
THE TOM SLADE BOOKS  
THE ROY BLAKELEY BOOKS  
THE PEE-WEE HARRIS BOOKS  
THE WESTY MARTIN BOOKS

ILLUSTRATED BY  
H. S. BARBOUR

Published with the approval of  
THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

GROSSET & DUNLAP  
PUBLISHERS : : NEW YORK

Made in the United States of America

COPYRIGHT, 1925, BY  
GROSSET & DUNLAP

## CONTENTS

- I [Googy](#)
- II [Up in the Air](#)
- III [News](#)
- IV [The Truth Is Out](#)
- V [A Promise](#)
- VI [Pee-wee's Territory](#)
- VII [Called Out](#)
- VIII [Pee-wee Bears Up](#)
- IX [Micky](#)
- X [Safe](#)
- XI [Private Property](#)
- XII [Getting Ready](#)
- XIII [A Wager](#)
- XIV [Whack](#)
- XV [The Great Game](#)
- XVI [The Arrival of the Inspector](#)
- XVII [Going Down](#)
- XVIII [If](#)
- XIX [Strangers in Our State](#)
- XX [Stop](#)
- XXI [Official and Scout](#)
- XXII [The Belated Guest](#)
- XXIII [Pee-wee's Good Turn](#)
- XXIV [Music Hath Charms](#)
- XXV [The Great Legal Battle](#)
- XXVI [Over the Wire](#)
- XXVII [To the Rescue](#)
- XXVIII [On the Job](#)
- XXIX [An Inspiration](#)
- XXX [Short and Sweet](#)
- XXXI [Petit Larceny](#)
- XXXII [A Scout's Reward](#)

- XXXIII [The Gala Night](#)
- XXXIV [Trash](#)
- XXXV [A New Step](#)
- XXXVI [Off with the Dance](#)
- XXXVII [As Good As His Word](#)
- XXXVIII [According to the Law](#)
- XXXIX [The Round-up](#)
- XL [Counting the Spoils](#)
- XLI [A Big Deal](#)



# PEE-WEE HARRIS: AS GOOD AS HIS WORD

## CHAPTER I

### GOOY

You are not for a minute to suppose that Pee-wee Harris' object in affiliating himself with the grand Clean-up Drive was to beautify back yards and fire escapes and to tidy up the streets of his native town of Bridgeboro.

It is true that he spoke with enthusiasm of the task of cleaning up, but in this he probably referred to the great banquet which was to be given to the clean-up workers. It was the banquet which Pee-wee was most anxious to clean up, not the streets.

"I'm going to join in! I'm going to join in!" he shouted on reading of this enticing feature of the campaign. "I know all about cleaning up; I did lots of it!"

Authorities differ as to just what he meant, for he was on the roof of his father's garage at the time and trying to shout and consume a jaw-breaker simultaneously. But the consensus of opinion is that he referred to the banquet.

The question of how the great Clean-up Drive struck quiet Bridgeboro is also a subject on which historical authorities differ.

Mayor Rufstuff received a batch of printed material from some civic organization in Chicago, outlining the way in which boy scouts could be used in capacity of municipal housemaids, tidying up the thoroughfares of towns, making raids against accumulated rubbish in vacant lots, proceeding against neglected ash cans and uncovered refuse utensils, and instituting diplomatic negotiations with the careless occupants of tenements. "Make your town a Spotless Town," urged the circulars. "Make every scout a city official. Let them teach your townspeople that it is unlawful to throw papers and fruit and cakes and candy in the streets."

The idea of throwing cakes and candy in the streets seemed to Pee-wee preposterous, for he had never in all his life thrown away such treasures. He saw himself in a uniform with brass buttons, wearing a dazzling badge and wielding an appalling club.

The actual story of his adventures in this new field of action begins with our young hero straddling the peaked roof of the garage on the lawn of his home, deeply concerned with a puzzling question which his friend, Roy Blakeley, had asked him. "*Which is the other end of a banana?*" He was so interested in this scientific poser that he had even gone to the trouble of procuring a banana from the fruit basket on the dining-room table and, being unable to determine which was the other end of it, he had settled the matter in

the most satisfactory way by disposing of both ends of it, thus proving that the most perplexing problem may be solved by eating it.

It was just in that triumphant moment that Googy, the newspaper boy, happened along with his burden of local newspapers.

Googy daily bore upon his little back all the sins and joys of Bridgeboro in the form of the *Bridgeboro Evening Bugle*, or the *Bungle*, as some people called it. Cheerily he trudged about upon his rounds each afternoon dextrously rolling up each copy into a sort of tube and bending it so that it formed a suitable missile for hurling onto porches.

Such a dextrous little sharpshooter was Googy that he could throw the *Evening Bugle* over a hedge fence, over a porch rail, and straight into the lap of a waiting citizen. He had even been known to send one of these news-laden projectiles around a corner and straight into a hammock for the accommodation of some lolling maiden.

Along the quiet, shaded streets he would go, his bare feet pattering ever and again across from house to house as he hastened on his zigzag course, throwing his papers straight at the chosen marks and seldom having to venture to the thresholds of the people who lived in those wonderful, lawn-surrounded homes.

When an unlucky shot caused him to follow up his folded paper and trespass upon the hallowed premises of some customer along his route, he did so with fear and trepidation as if he were entering a new world. Once his shot had gone wild and landed plunk in the pudgy countenance of Doctor Atom, who was sitting on his porch. That was a good shot, even if accidental. It was not often that the *Bridgeboro Evening Bugle* gave such a vigorous and appropriate rap. . . .

## CHAPTER II UP IN THE AIR

Googy had the Harris paper already folded and was about to dispatch it across the lawn and into a wicker chair on the porch when his arm was arrested in air by the thunderous voice of our young hero.

Pee-wee and his voice suggested a Ford with a locomotive whistle. He never talked, he shouted. Consequently when he intended to shout the effect was like unto nothing but an earthquake. On this occasion the vibration created by his voice caused him almost to roll down off the garage.

“I bet you can’t hit me with it,” he shouted.

Googy looked up and beheld our hero straddling the roof of the garage, his round face streaked with the goeey memorial of a departed jaw-breaker, and with one hand held behind his back. His head was as round as the earth and contained a greater variety of things than the earth. His ideas alone would have been sufficient to fill Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

His eyes were brown, his hair curly, and he had five freckles disposed, like the stars of the Big Dipper, on the firmament of his small nose. Some of his scout rivals in the Silver Fox Patrol said that these were intended to represent not the Big Dipper at all, but a frying pan, and that Providence had placed this symbol on Pee-wee’s nose as a sort of merit badge for his colossal stunts in eating.

Likewise, his stockings were symbolic of his many ups and downs, for one of them was always down and the other one always up. The front of his khaki scout shirt, like his mouth, was always open, and his scout scarf was symbolic of his talk in general, for it was always tied in a complicated series of knots.

“I’ll give you a shot if you’ll give me one,” he called down.

Googy advanced across the lawn to the garage and shrewdly observing that Pee-wee held one hand behind him wisely demanded to know the nature of the weapons with which this proposed duel was to be fought.

“Lee me see wotcher got,” said Googy.

“You’ll know when you get it,” said Pee-wee. “We’ll both fire at the same time, hey? When I say *three*.”

“Lee me see wotcher got,” said Googy.

“I’ll tell you the color of it,” compromised Pee-wee; “it’s yellow—and it’s soft. There!”

“Leave us look.”

“I will not.”

“Is it holler?”

“Sure, it hasn’t got any more in it than the *Bugle* has,” said Pee-wee. “The *Bugle* never has anything in it.”

“Is it black?” asked Googy, observing the sticky embellishment in the vicinity of Pee-wee’s mouth.

“I told you it was yellow—and soft.”

Googy hesitated. “Wot’s de shape of it?” he asked.

“It’s yellow—and long—and kind of—kind of all crunched up and like velvet—kind of. Come on, one, two,—*four*. *Yaaaaah*, you thought I was going to say *three*, didn’t you? Come on, I dare you to do it. Everybody says you’re such a good shot, so are you going to take a dare?”

“Yer dassn’t throw till you say *three*,” warned Googy.

“That shows how much you know about scouts,” Pee-wee shouted. “Because scouts are always fair,—don’t you know that? They have rules and they never break the rules; no matter what it says in the book, they have to do it.”

Googy edged around toward the side of the garage for a sly glimpse at the invisible missile, but Pee-wee edged around on the peak of the roof simultaneously.

“Tain’t fair, ’cause I dunno wotcher got in yer hand,” said Googy.

“I don’t know what’s in the *Bugle*, either,” shouted Pee-wee; “let’s hear you answer that argument. Do I know what’s in the *Bugle*?”

This masterful argument seemed a poser to poor Googy.

“Maybe it’s in it about—about the president of the United States being killed; how do I know?” said Pee-wee. “It’s just as fair one way as the other. I don’t know what’s in the newspaper and you don’t know what’s in my hand. Come on, one—two——”

Surely the little oracle on the roof must be right; Googy did not question that. He was not only a good little marksman, but a good little sport.

“Do you say all right?” demanded Pee-wee.

“Say three good and loud,” said Googy, holding himself in an attitude for accurate throwing.

The words came out of Pee-wee’s mouth slowly, ominously,—“one—two—two—two——”

## CHAPTER III

### NEWS

“Three!”

Simultaneously the banana peel sailed down into the face of little Googy and the *Bridgeboro Evening Bugle* sailed up and smote Scout Harris plunk on the nose. He caught it before it slid two feet down the roof and, unrolling it and straightening it out, scanned the big headline on the front page:

#### SCOUTS TO CLEAN UP TOWN

Without pausing for further perusal he summoned Googy to the roof.

“Look what it’s got! Look what it’s got!” he said. “Come on up, it’s all about scouts!”

Googy, whose humble calling it was to distribute the *Bugle*, never read it. Like the shoemaker’s children who are said to go barefoot, he dealt in news but had none. He had no more papers to deliver, the Harris copy was the last one, and he longed to ascend to the exalted throne where the scout sat entirely concealed by the opened news sheet.

“Didn’t I tell you I didn’t know what was in it?” Pee-wee demanded. “That shows I’m always right. If I say I don’t know a thing, I know it. Here’s a lot about a clean-up drive, all about cleaning up the streets and everything and I’m going to be in it and they’re going to have a banquet for the workers and—and—*now, you see*, here’s something about the fellers in the Martha Caldwell Home too. Come on up! It says how they’re going to play the Ridgedale baseball team, and I bet they get licked too, because the Ridgedale fellers can lick the scouts and the scouts can lick the Martha Caldwell Home fellers, so that proves it.”

“They can’t lick ’em, neither,” said Googy.

“They can too, I can prove it,” said Pee-wee, “because you fellers can’t play at all. Come on up; there’s a lot of things. There’s a new law about dogs and everything and they can’t get the school fixed in time to open in September because the workmen are on a strike, and I’m on their side and there’s a big clean-up drive, and I’m going to join and stop people from throwing banana peels and things around.”

“Wot?” gasped Googy.

“You can throw them *at* people,” said Pee-wee; “that’s different. Come on up; there’s a list of the fellers that are going to play on your team; it’s all printed here.”

Now in the heart of little Googy there was a secret. Among the names of the boys who were to play on the Martha Caldwell Home team was the name of Halstead Tanner. That was not a bad-sounding name and no one could have told you why the owner of that name was known simply as Googy. But such was the case.

The Martha Caldwell Home was an institution for orphans and homeless boys. It had been founded and endowed by a benevolent lady of Bridgeboro who had long since gone to her reward. The boys who lived in the home were not Bridgeboro boys; they came from distant parts, and because they were kept together after the fashion of an institution, they were not a part of the boy life of Bridgeboro. They marched to school in a body and back home in a body and they were known as the Martha Caldwell boys. They played on their own grounds and wore the dull gray suits of the institution.

How little Halstead Tanner had been given the job of delivering the evening paper about town, no one knew and no one cared. He seemed to have attained to one point higher in the social scale than his comrades, for his individuality was recognized by a name. They did not call him "one of the Home boys," they called him Googy. It was not much of a name, but it was better than no name at all.

But all the same Googy knew he had a real name. And he knew more than that; he knew that, because he was a very little devil at his dextrous art and could throw papers around corners and through windows, he had been chosen to pitch (think of that!) in the forthcoming game that the Home boys were to play with the Ridgedale team.

He had trembled when he heard the great news and now, when Scout Harris called down that the names of those boys were actually printed in the paper, this little demon of a sharpshooter fairly shook with fear. He was afraid to let Scout Harris know that *he*, Googy the paper boy, was none other than Halstead Tanner who was going to stand in the box and baffle Ridgedale with his uncanny twists and curves. Because if Scout Harris knew that, he would guy him and make fun of him.

But just the same Googy longed to clamber up on that roof and behold his own name, his real name, in print. Could he do that without giving himself away?

"Come on up, there are a lot of things printed here," encouraged Pee-wee.

## CHAPTER IV THE TRUTH IS OUT

Of course Googy knew that he could not go on leading this double life forever. He knew that he would stand in the box in the field at the end of Barrel Alley with all eyes upon him, blushing scarlet, trembling, but happy. Then the great big outer world would know. But he would not have to tell them.

“Come on up,” said Pee-wee; “gee whiz, you don’t have to go back to the Home yet, do you?”

“I don’t have to be back till five,” said Googy.

Rather hesitatingly, for he had never decorated the roof of a private garage before, he ascended by means of the window ledge and the top of the open door and crawled up to the peak where he sat side by side with Pee-wee. There before him in the spread-out paper were two articles.

One was a headliner and that was about the Grand Clean-up Drive featuring Mayor Rufstuff and several local officials, giving them vast credit for originality and public spirit for an enterprise which they had never dreamed of prior to the receipt of the program forwarded by some distant civic organization. That was the *Evening Bugle* all over.

Nestling unpretentiously down in a corner under a very modest heading was another article as follows:

### HOME BOYS TO PLAY RIDGEDALE

The baseball team of the Martha Caldwell Home is to play the Ridgedale team on Temple’s Field on Saturday next. The Home team is as follows:

Halstead Tanner,	pitcher
George Battel,	catcher
Forrest Blythe,	1st base
Harry Davey,	2nd base
Charles McMann,	3rd base
Edwin Corry,	left field
Daniel Carter,	right field
John Wyne,	center field
William Jones,	short-stop

It was just one of those notices sent in by the Home and was certainly in no sense obtrusive in the paper. But Googy could see nothing but his own name at



the top of the list. It glowed there as if it were written in fire. If it had been scrawled across the black heaven in shining stars it could not have been more conspicuous. *Halstead Tanner, pitcher*. At the top of the list—first. He—Googy!

In his glowing, secret pride he heard Pee-wee say, “Look at this big one with the big heading. I’m going to join it. Look where it says there’s going to be a banquet. Do you know what those are?”

Googy did not know what those were and he did not care. But he could afford to be generous and show an interest and listen while Pee-wee read, offering occasional original comments. The feature article, together with Pee-wee’s running commentary, are given intact:

#### MAYOR RUFSTUFF STARTS BIG CLEAN-UP DRIVE

AGAIN SHOWS HIS PUBLIC SPIRIT AND INITIATIVE  
BY BIG CAMPAIGN FOR CLEAN STREETS

#### BOY SCOUTS TO SERVE

Mayor Rufstuff has decided on a Clean-up Drive. The Health Department is with him. Chief Bray [gee, I’ve got no use for him] is resolved that the town ordinances for maintaining clean streets shall be enforced.

Each boy scout in town [I’m one of ’em] is to be made a special officer for the enforcement of the laws relating to tidiness and cleanliness of the public places and thoroughfares.

Each scout is to be given a district and it will be his duty to see that the streets of his territory are kept clear of refuse. He will pick up papers, remonstrate with citizens who litter the streets and leave refuse uncovered and if necessary report them to the proper authorities.

He will go into candy stores and bakeries [gee whiz, lots of times I do that] and will ask proprietors to keep edibles under cover and free of insect pests. It will be his duty to visit fruit and peanut stands [that’s easy, I visited lots of ’em] and see that fruit and candy are covered, and it will be his especial care to see that ash and garbage utensils are properly covered when standing on the public streets.

At intervals during the campaign the neighborhood leaders are to meet at the armory to discuss progress, when speeches will be made and refreshments served [yum—yum—mmm, I’ll be there]. And the campaign is to open with a gala banquet to be given to the willing workers.

And so on and so on.

“Don’t you wish you were a scout,” said Pee-wee, “and could go round outside everywhere you want to? You bet I’m going to be a neighborhood leader.”

“I don’t care,” said Googy.

“You only say that because you can’t do it,” said Pee-wee. “I’ll have my name printed in the paper, you see.”

This was almost more than Googy could bear. “I don’t care,” he said. “I

got things to be glad about.”

“What have you got?” Pee-wee asked incredulously. “Do you mean to tell me I won’t have more fun than you will going to banquets and everything and visiting candy stores and bakeries? Even, maybe, I’ll have a club; I have to be no respecter of persons.”

“You have to have respect,” said Googy.

“No, you don’t.”

“You do, too, you have to respect grown-up people.”

“That shows how much you know,” Pee-wee said; “the law hasn’t got any respect for anybody. Gee whiz, I had to write that a hundred times after school—I ought to know it.”

“Not even old ladies and—and lame people?” Googy inquired incredulously.

“Not even anybody, everybody’s the same; the law doesn’t have any respect for them.”

Googy pondered on this astonishing bit of information. Respect for one’s elders and teachers and parents was the rule of the Martha Caldwell Home. Respect for the law and the institution’s rules was emphasized to all the boys there. And here was this little oracle straddling the roof top telling him that the law itself was without this worthy quality. To him Pee-wee was almost as great as the law, so he did not contradict him, but he did not understand it.

“I’ll be the boss, maybe, of a whole block,” said Pee-wee. “Maybe I’ll have to stay out at night as late as midnight, maybe, except when I’m eating at banquets. I’m going to join in to-morrow, you can bet. I bet you wish you could join in that, I bet you do, and have all you want to eat and be the boss of people and even have your name in the papers.”

This was more than Googy could bear and he delivered his knock-out blow. He had intended to defend his lot in life by the reminder that he often had two desserts at the Home, but Pee-wee’s proud mention of newspaper publicity was too much for him.

“Do you see that top name in the baseball line?” he asked with nervous elation. “Do you see it?”

“Sure, I see it,” said Pee-wee.

“Do you—do you know who it is?”

“It’s that big feller that always goes first when you march to school.”

Googy could not speak and he would not tax Pee-wee’s credulity with a verbal announcement. He pulled out of his pocket a crumpled paper which he treasured. It was his pass giving him the privilege of absenting himself from the Home grounds each afternoon to go upon his route. It bore his own name—Halstead Tanner. He held, it up against the newspaper announcement with trembling hand as if inviting a comparison of colors.

“It’s—it’s me,” he said. “That’s my name. Nobody knows it, but it is. That’s my real, true name.”

Pee-wee nearly fell off the roof.

## CHAPTER V

### A PROMISE

Pee-wee knew that the game which loomed so large in the eyes of Googy was not of the sort to attract general interest, that it was a small boys' affair. But he was properly impressed at the revelation about the Home team's pitcher.

"Now, haven't I got something to be glad about?" Googy asked.

"You bet you have and I'm for your side, that's one sure thing. I'll be there and I'll shout for you the same as I do for the big fellers, the same as I do for the High School fellers. Did you ever hear me shout?"

Googy might have said that he never heard Pee-wee do anything else, but he was too simple for that. He felt highly elated that a scout from Terrace Avenue should volunteer to attend the game—and to shout. He felt that even if the game, even if the pitching were amateur, the shouting at least would be professional.

"Is it going to be in Temple's lot?" Pee-wee asked.

"Yep, next Saturday," Googy said proudly.

"I'll be there," Pee-wee declared, "and I'll root for your side. I'll coach you, too, and I bet you win and, anyway, I have no use for those Ridgedale kids. They're such sissies they couldn't even start a scout troop. They don't know so much about baseball but that they think a foul is a chicken; they think a bat that flies is named after Babe Ruth."

This sudden change of front about the Ridgedale boys was surprising to Googy, but reassuring. He did not know that with Scout Harris loyalty always took precedence over consistency. The appalling ignorance of the Ridgedale boys was a matter for great encouragement to the little Home boy.

"They think a pitcher is something to put water in," Pee-wee added. "You'll beat them all right—I'll see that you beat them."

"Do you think some people will come?" Googy asked.

"Sure, they will," Pee-wee encouraged, notwithstanding that there was no provision made for fans in Temple's field. The events held there were usually not considered to be epoch-making. "And anyway I'll be there, you can bet. Even if I'm busy with banquets and arresting people and all that, I'll be there. And, gee whiz, don't you worry about winning, because you'll win. I'm on your side. Gee whiz, those fellers over in Ridgedale, do you think they can stand up against you fellers? Gee whiz! And, besides, I know you can pitch all right."

Googy went his way highly elated to think that he had enlisted the interest and patronage of this great personality in the boy life of Bridgeboro. He saw the importance of the game with Ridgedale magnified several times. And Pee-wee went his way (which was straight for the pantry) full of the great clean-up drive, and saw himself magnified several thousand times in dignity and importance.

## CHAPTER VI

### PEE-WEE'S TERRITORY

Pee-wee was given a territory worthy of his spirit of enterprise—Barrel Alley. Like Pee-wee himself Barrel Alley was small, but—oh, my! It was as small for a street as Pee-wee was for a boy and it made quite as much noise as he did. Likewise it had as much (or almost as much) superfluous paraphernalia as was usually to be seen upon the sturdy form of our young hero.

Barrel Alley was the little slum of Bridgeboro. It was the habitat of Slats Corbett and his gang, the refuge of Nicola Sigliottalani the junkman, and the Mecca of stray dogs and cats for miles around. Hundreds of canine pilgrims journeyed thither to partake of its hospitable bounty which overflowed from ash cans and other refuse containers that decorated its narrow, muddy length.

At the big meeting at which the campaign was launched, Pee-wee had received, in addition to chicken salad and cake and ice cream, full information about his duties as a neighborhood leader.

He had learned, to his chagrin, that his autocratic authority was somewhat curbed, and that if he intimidated the citizens of Barrel Alley at all, it must be with the aid of the large pasteboard badge which he wore and not with the cudgel that he had hoped to wield. This badge bore a pleasing resemblance to a gingerbread cooky, being of the size and color of that pocket edible, and our hero was almost completely concealed behind it.

His duties as an "official" were rather of a diplomatic than a warlike nature. He was to visit his territory twice a day, morning and evening. He was to pick up papers and other litter and was to confer "with careful politeness and tact" with those responsible for cluttered fire escapes, and particularly he was to see that all refuse containers "on the public streets" were properly covered and were not set out except at the proper times nor left out after they had been emptied.

The part of Pee-wee's duties which gladdened his heart was his privilege of calling up or calling at the local police headquarters and reporting any instances of persistent violation of the town ordinances, and in this respect he was to be "particularly observant and prompt in reporting any condition which increased the danger of fire." He was to patrol his territory, not as an invading host, but as an "ambassador of order and cleanliness," and he was to make friends with the citizens and "carefully guard against being regarded as a busy-body."

So enthusiastic was Pee-wee to enter this new field of glory that on the

momentous first day of his incumbency he trudged straight to Barrel Alley without pausing at Bennett's Fresh Confectionery for his usual eye opener, a chocolate ice cream soda. "I don't see how on earth he can drink such stuff early in the morning," his mother had often said; "the very thought of it nauseates me."

The summer sun shone brightly down on that fair day and flickered the ash cans in Barrel Alley with a silvern light, as Pee-wee strolled into that unconventional thoroughfare, his bosom swelling with pride, his left cheek swelling with a licorice jaw-breaker. Now and again he adjusted his pasteboard badge as here and there he picked up a discarded newspaper or a rusty tin can. Few noticed him; certainly none were offended at this first unobtrusive essay in the cause of cleanliness.

Since it had always been Pee-wee's habit to pick things up, his new duties came natural to him and before he had reached the spot where a new building was under construction he had made contraband of two muskmelons long past their stage of usefulness, several tin cans, a miscellaneous collection of papers which had been sporting in the breeze, and his greatest find of all, a dead rat.

His intention was to deposit these trophies of his tour in a large receptacle for waste matter which stood in front of the unfinished building; all but the departed rat which he intended to give Christian burial in Temple's field just beyond. As he approached the large box which was half full of shavings and bits of plaster he became suddenly aware of a man wearing a black derby hat standing by the little shack in which the workmen kept their implements and overalls. He seemed to be waiting, and somehow or other the impression was conveyed to Pee-wee that something was wrong here, that something had happened or was going to happen.

## CHAPTER VII CALLED OUT

Presently Pee-wee saw workmen emerging from the building letting down the straps of their overalls as they came forth in groups, some clambering out through the unglazed frame of the big store window.

“Hey, mister, what’s the matter?” Pee-wee asked, forgetting, in his curiosity, to deposit his load in the big box. He saw now that citizens of Barrel Alley were gathering about; he was one of quite a little group.

“Nartin’s de matter, nartin’ at all,” said the man, never looking at Pee-wee and speaking with an air of careless superiority.

Several of the men who had been carrying a beam laid it down across the new sidewalk which had not yet hardened and left it there. The man of the black derby cast a look of approval at them and made a gesture indicating satisfaction at a man who laid down an electrical chandelier fixture at the curb and proceeded to remove his overalls. Instinctively Pee-wee knew a strike had been called and he knew that the loitering audience was in sympathy with it.

Then suddenly he became aware of something which passed his young comprehension. Being a scout, he gazed on what he next saw with as much wonder as if he were witnessing a miracle. But a few minutes before a wagon with a flat matted body had backed up against the curb and two workmen had carefully lifted a large square of plate glass from it. This now stood at the edge of the curb, the men holding it upright as the wagon moved away. The glass was half on the sidewalk and half out over the curb and a man held it at either end.

Suddenly Pee-wee saw the man in the derby hat wave his hand impatiently in the direction of these men, and to his consternation beheld the men lower the glass, anything but gently, toward the sidewalk. Whether they actually intended to drop it Pee-wee did not know. But to lay it down half on the sidewalk and half in the street was enough. In any case it could hardly escape damage. By a quick impulse he dropped his burden and ran forward grasping one end of the tilting glass.

“Dirty little strike-breaker,” he heard some one mutter. “Get away from there.”

“You get away yourself,” Pee-wee shouted to no one in particular. “I’d rather be a strike-breaker than a glass breaker. Gee whiz, this glass is worth a lot of money, it is.”

The men who had let go the glass just as Pee-wee’s hands touched it



seemed quite unconcerned about its fate. They began removing their overalls and collecting some tools. Some one, Pee-wee did not know who, threw a lump of sticky putty in his face. Slatternly women laughed sneeringly. Some one said something about trash from “up Terrace Avenue.”

But the sturdy little scout from up Terrace Avenue clutched tightly an edge of the great sheet of glass with one hand, his other hand laid against the flat surface to steady it. The glass moved a little on the sidewalk and he adjusted his bracing attitude to meet the danger. Strength and skill were both required, and forbearance too, for the vulgar loiterers, hoodlums ready for any mischief, hatless women holding babies, and harsh-voiced girls of the Barrel Alley stamp, laughed and jeered as they wandered off.

“Give us a hand, will you?” Pee-wee called to one atrocious looking urchin whose sole garment seemed to be a pair of men’s trousers draped like a Grecian garb about his form. “Hey, give us a hand, will you? Come on, do a good turn.”

The urchin seemed in two minds about complying, but was ordered into a nearby house by his mother. “Show ’im wot ’e’s up agin, the fresh little scab,” she said.

It was surprising how soon the scene of the unfinished building was deserted. In five minutes not a sign of a workman was there about the place. The audience, too, had dispersed and disappeared into its squalid homes.

And there was Scout Harris laboring under that towering slab of fabulous value, valiantly striving like a wrestler to get the right hold upon it as it swayed and sometimes slid a little on the sidewalk. He seemed very small and insignificant beside that great, shiny, transparent square which towered above him, swaying now and then and standing upright again like a tipsy man.

“Gee whiz,” said Pee-wee, breathing hard, “as long—*oh, boy*—as long as I can—whooooaaa—the pacific gravy—gravity—I’m—as long as the pacific gravity is—I can keep it standing—only——”

He released one hand for just a second in order to wipe its perspiration off on his trousers. And just then a bell sounded in the distance and he saw up at the next corner an automobile covered with garish posters and in it a man shouting lustily through a huge megaphone:

“Iceberg pies! Iceberg pies! We’re giving them away! Free samples! Send the kiddies! Free samples of the latest and most *deeee*—licious *concoction* for a summer day! Iceberg pies! Free to the kiddies! Get your free samples! They melt in your mouth! Cooling and refreshing. Free samples, to-day only! They’re *deeeeeee*—licious!”

## CHAPTER VIII

### PEE-WEE BEARS UP

Out of doorways and down the sordid thoroughfare the rising generation of Barrel Alley bounded and ran pell-mell.

“Come on, we got free eats!” yelled little Horace Levy.

“You bring vone home to Becky yet, yer hear?” screamed Mrs. Levy after him. “You bring vone fer baby, yer hear?”

“Come on, step on it,” said Slats Corbett, detained by traffic congestion in his doorway. “Beat it, yuze kids, give ’er de gas.” The kids arose in a body and followed him.

“Hey, bring me one, will you?” called Pee-wee. His face was dripping with perspiration, his hands were slippery, his sturdy little back ached, his head pounded from this continuous exposure to the sweltering sun. The big sheet of glass which momentarily threatened to bear him down and bury him under its million fragments seemed to magnify the sun’s burning rays and concentrate them on the little scout. No one paused to heed his plaintive call. *Oh, for just one iceberg pie—just one.*

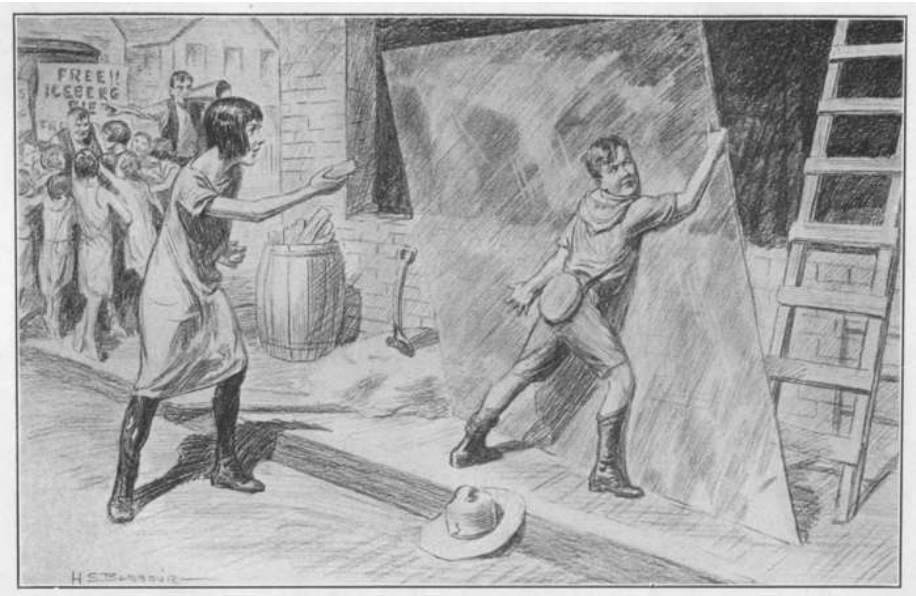
Out of Murphy’s flats sped little Bruno Sorretti, straight for the seductive megaphone. Behind him straggled little Irene Gerstein, dragging a reluctant smaller sister after her.

“Deeeee—licious! Free samples!”

Pee-wee’s desperation was manifested by his heartrending appeal to Kid Lanski, who sped past. But Kid Lanski was following on general principles; he did not understand English. Nor was Rose Myrtle Flynn susceptible to the call of distress. With a hardness of heart unworthy of her sex she called, “Git one yerself, yer so smart.”

“I never said I was smart,” Pee-wee roared.

“Smarty, smarty, git one yerself,” she answered.



“GIT ONE YERSELF. YER’ SO SMART!”

Pee-wee gingerly balanced the glass with one hand and both knees while he rubbed the perspiration from his other hand and stretched and wriggled his stiff and weary fingers. Each time he heard the word *deee*—licious it made his mouth water and the very words, *iceberg pie*, struck him like a refreshing breeze.

One frantic pilgrim paused in his hurry to the cooling shrine, contemplating the tortured victim. This was little Marcus Kaplan. “How much you give me I bring you vone, yes?” he inquired.

“I’ll give you five cents,” the fettered millionaire agreed.

Marcus paused, considering. “You hold dot cless, how you get the nickal out of your pockat yet?”

“I’ll get it out, don’t you worry,” Pee-wee encouraged. “You can feed me the iceberg pie and then I’ll tell you which pocket to feel in, see?”

“I should feel in your pockat!”

On the whole, Marcus appeared to consider the investment an unwise one. He hurried on and joined the clamoring group about the auto where iceberg pies were being advertised before introduction to the local retail trade.

Soon the gorged stragglers began returning, their lips dripping. Some, like the prodigal coming into his inheritance, had run through their unexpected fortunes, or perhaps it would be nearer the fact to say that the remains of their unexpected fortunes were running down them.

Marcus, more foresighted than others, had still two whole iceberg pies intact. As the returning host passed by, the sufferer had a glimpse of the new dainty which had not yet reached the counter of Bennett's. It was oblong and of a creamy, pink complexion, and he understood from the talk and from visible signs, that these candy shells were packed with ice cream loaded with nuts and cherries. The color of the cooling contents hidden in these luscious containers was proved to Pee-wee's wistful gaze as a rich yellow which showed in striking contrast on the black chin of "Collie, de coon," whose racial good humor impelled him to smile all over his face as he passed our hero by and inscribe mystic circles with his hand upon his stomach.

"If I have one dem I gib 'im ter yer," he laughed. A vain declaration since he had no vestige of one.

And now the sensation was over, the iceberg pies which had been distributed "just to introduce them" were gone, the auto had moved on, the throng was dispersed, and there was Scout Harris alone in the blazing sun holding up the big square of glass. He was weary, very weary.

This good turn of his was all very well, but it was by no means the glorious beginning of the official career which he had permitted himself to dream about. His collection of papers had been dispersed like the crowd and were again disporting in the playful breeze, his dead rat still awaited Christian burial, the flies were holding a mass meeting on his two muskmelons.

He began to consider whether he could let the glass slowly down to a prone position on the ground, but a preliminary experiment showed him the peril which would attend such an attempt.

With the glass upright he moved along from the edge which he held till he reached a position near the center, then began letting the top edge down slowly against his form. As he did so the lower edge of the glass slipped a little on the sidewalk and, being partly on the walk and partly projecting over the curb, it swerved a trifle also. Pee-wee saw that trying to lay it down was a perilous business. It would surely be chipped, perhaps cracked; more likely its whole area would be broken. Yet on the other hand if this thing continued much longer, Pee-wee's back would be broken.

"Gee whiz, anyway I won't give up in the middle," he said to himself. "Not even if they do."

He started gingerly edging his way back to where he could get hold of a vertical edge, thus enabling himself to hold the big pane from falling either way. He found it easier thus to balance it than to let it lean against his form. It was less tiring, too. What he was most afraid of was not his own desperate and increasing fatigue, but the strong breeze which was springing up. This was refreshing, but bore possibilities of disaster.

At about the same time that the breeze sprang up Micky also sprang up and

that also bore grave possibilities of disaster. . . .

## CHAPTER IX

### MICKY

Why the wanton breeze patronized Barrel Alley need not concern us. It stirred up a veritable army of buoyant refuse, and a multitude of crumpled bits of waxed tissue paper which had been wrapped around the iceberg pies came dancing gayly back like pesky little ghosts to haunt Pee-wee. But he could not gather them up.

Sticky and insect-laden, they danced about him and went sailing off again, rising as high as second story windows. Some terminated their gay careers by plastering themselves here and there. Wherever the seductive megaphone went that day, a flying squadron of gummy bits of tissue paper, licked by many tongues, were left cavorting in the favored neighborhoods, to do perhaps more harm than the pies themselves could ever do.

Manfully the baffled clean-up worker kept his post, balancing upright the huge pane of glass. He might have held out for an hour or two if Micky had not taken the situation in hand.

Micky's object in visiting Barrel Alley was to get his dinner. He knew of a garbage can which, like certain restaurants, was always open. Delving in its enchanting depths he was always able to excavate many luscious treasures. There were other garbage cans in Barrel Alley, but this one was dear to the heart of Micky.

Micky was not a proud and haughty dog, bred to the luxurious custom of riding in limousines. He was a model of humility. His pedigree was obscure and his habit of life befittingly lowly. In running he had a kind of sideways gate and was continually glancing furtively to right and left in apprehension of flying sticks and stones. In Barrel Alley he was particularly wary of these and had acquired an uncanny genius for ducking them.

With sublime confidence born of a long series of sumptuous repasts, Micky approached his favorite eating place and found it closed. Already the clean-up campaign had hit poor Micky. For Scout Harris had laid a board over the top of the can and a rock on top of the board.

Micky examined these, pawed them, then cast a wistful, accusing look at Pee-wee. The mute reproach in that look went to our hero's heart. Pee-wee saw now that in all great enterprises for good some innocents must suffer; and Micky was a martyr to the cause.

With a sudden pang of remorse Pee-wee whistled to Micky, but the dog disregarded the friendly overture. The kind heart of the scout (who was sworn

to be friendly and humane to animals) was touched by the look eloquent of utter despair on the unkempt countenance of the little pilgrim. He had proceeded so straight, and with such perfect confidence, to his destination.

“Here you go, come here,” Pee-wee urged, and whistled again.

Micky cocked his head, contemplating Pee-wee doubtfully. He did not actually commit himself by wagging his tail, but it vibrated a little as a sort of preliminary to a wag. Then he looked at the garbage can and whined a little as if to say that if Pee-wee really wished to institute friendly relations he would unbar the door to Micky’s commissary. Indeed, if Pee-wee had been free he probably would have done so, for in his stout little heart the call of anguish was ever stronger than the call of a clean-up drive. But being himself marooned on the desolate curb of Barrel Alley he could only watch the suffering which he had caused.

Presently he whistled again and this time the injured pilgrim advanced cautiously with an unmistakable wag of his tail. He seemed not to harbor any deep resentment against the wrecker of his hopes.

It was just in that moment that Pee-Wee, by a well-considered gymnastic effort, succeeded in reaching the ground with one hand and lifting the dead rat by the tail. His object was to remove a horrible temptation from Micky. In that same moment also Micky, like the breeze, sprang up, and there ensued a resounding catastrophe which filled every window in Barrel Alley with astonished, gaping faces.

Micky himself was not the least amazed of the spectators, for he had never dreamed of creating such a stir in the world. He did not linger for the sequel, but disappeared precipitately leaving Scout Harris standing amid the ten billion fragments of glass which lay scattered across the narrow, muddy thoroughfare.

Just at that moment the sound of an automobile could be heard and a big sedan car rounded the corner and headed down the alley at breakneck speed.

## CHAPTER X

### SAFE

The clean-up worker stood in the midst of an area of crystal shining in the sun. The whole world seemed to be reduced to sparkling fragments and projectile-like splinters.

"It's good furr 'im," he heard a distant spectator say. Evidently the pro-strike element was watching.

"That's wot 'e gits, meddlin'," another said.

But Pee-wee heard them not. "Stop, stop!" he yelled at the approaching car. "There's glass all over, *stop!*"

The driver of the speeding car paid no attention. Along came the big sedan, pell-mell, scattering mud as it danced upon its springs over the miniature mountains and valleys of Barrel Alley. Such a speed in such a mud-hole!

"Stop!" screamed Pee-wee. "*Glass! Can't you see the glass all over?*"

But the driver heeded not the warning. He seemed to be quite as excited as Pee-wee. If Barrel Alley had been paved the speeding car might have gone safely over the area of glass. But Barrel Alley was not paved and some of the crystal splinters stood upright in the mud like tiny steeples. It seemed more than likely that the neighborhood leader whose duty it was to safeguard motor cars from these very dangers was doomed to be the cause of an epidemic of punctures.

"*Stop!*" he fairly screamed.

But the driver, looking straight ahead, and with both hands firmly grasping the wheel, apparently neither saw nor heard. The speeding car entered the danger zone following a choppy, zigzag course through the fragments, then suddenly slowed down, dragged, stopped.

"They got a flat," a window spectator shouted.

They had more than a flat, they had two flats. The front right tire and left rear tire were flat as pancakes. Apparently the excited driver had been so bent on his urgent errand that he had been willing to take a chance of zigzagging through this area. And he had lost out.

Pee-wee saw one, then another, man jump from the car and hurriedly inspect the collapsed tires. Then another man stepped out and ran back to a point where he could see around the corner. From there he waved assurance to his companions, then came running back.

A hurried, whispered conference followed, during which the spare tire in back of the car was referred to. The decision seemed to be that since there was



but one spare tire the case was hopeless. At all events the men, who seemed greatly agitated, did not tarry. One seemed bent on getting into the car again; the others, cursing and calling him a fool, deterred him.

In less than ten seconds, and almost before Pee-wee realized it, they were gone; they seemed to have evaporated in air. And there stood the handsome, big sedan on two flat tires deserted and looking queer amid the sordid environment of Barrel Alley.

"I bet they're bandits," Pee-wee said to himself; "or else they wouldn't have come down this way. I bet they were stealing that car, anyway, so I'm glad I stopped them. Gee whiz, I *foiled* them," he added. If he had deliberately stopped them at the point of a revolver he could scarcely have taken more credit to himself.

He was now surrounded by a gaping throng of natives ranging from six to sixty years old, and others beneath this minimum age limit were carried in their mothers' arms. Available parking space was filled with baby carriages. Pee-wee, possessed by the conviction that he had "foiled" a group of bandits, proceeded to enter the car.

Whether the lookers-on would have made bold to follow him if their attention had not been otherwise diverted may only be conjectured. Just as Pee-wee entered the car some loitering hoodlum set up a shout which perhaps saved the sumptuous auto from the effects of a storming party.

"Here come the dog catchers! Look at the dog catchers!"

Barrel Alley was ever fickle; it was a case of off with the old sensation, on with the new. In ten seconds Pee-wee was quite alone, craning his neck out of the marooned car and watching a man with a long rope held lasso fashion, who had just alighted from a queer looking wagon. The appearance of the dog catcher in Barrel Alley bore almost the possibilities of diversion possessed by a circus. Not even the ambulance held the prospect of such delight.

For the dog catcher brings the brutal joy of the chase. His sordid calling has all the cruelty of the fox hunt without any of its romantic glamor. Low and commonplace as he is, he brings with him the dubious pleasure which some derive from witnessing a game of chance. For the dog catcher sometimes wins out and sometimes does not and poor human nature revels in this wretched game.

So, at least, it was in Barrel Alley. Even as Pee-wee looked he saw the men and boys of the group (for the girls, all honor to them, held aloof) spreading out to head off and drive back the poor, confused and baffled little creature whose favorite eating place Pee-wee had closed.

How he had happened back to this scene of his bitter disappointment one cannot say. Perhaps he had cherished a lingering hope that Pee-wee would uncover the treasure house. If so, his hunger seemed likely to prove his

undoing. The man with the rope made a dextrous throw, advised and coached by his companion on the wagon.

"Yer almost got 'im," some one yelled, as several others headed off the panic-stricken little waif. He was about to make a getaway between the legs of a bystander when Slats Corbett, head of the Barrel Alley gang, gave him a kick which sent him sprawling.

"You—you—you cross-eyed mick—you!" Pee-wee yelled. "You're a big coward!"

Pee-wee, with his usual inspiration, had chosen his epithet well, for Slats Corbett was certainly cross-eyed. With a horrible, menacing leer he turned toward the auto, but Micky saw it first. One of the doors stood invitingly open, for Pee-wee had been about to emerge, and the frantic little waif paused just the fraction of a second, looking straight at the round face and curly head of the little scout.

How that face, those clear brown eyes, impressed him, who shall say? But he heard a friendly whistle amid all that tumult and saw the door standing open. Poor little Micky acted on instinct and took a chance. Like lightning he darted for the car and bounded into it just as the loop of the dog-catcher's rope hit the running board and the door itself was slammed in the man's face.

"Leave 'im ter me," said Slats Corbett, advancing; "I'll fetch him ter yer."

"You open that door and you'll be sorry for it," screamed Pee-wee, reaching for a shiny, cylindrical, brass thing. "You open it and you'll see." Slats Corbett, the terror of Barrel Alley, did not note the tenseness in Pee-wee's voice. He did not know that a scout's word may be relied upon. With a fine, swaggering show of public spirit and bravado he swung wide the door of the big sedan and like a flash of lightning received the full contents of a pyrene fire extinguisher in his grimy face.

It was the first bath that Slats Corbett had ever had.

## CHAPTER XI

### PRIVATE PROPERTY

All the world loves a winner. And it maybe said to the comparative credit of the Barrel Alleyites that they had no particular prejudice against Micky. They had kicked him and baffled him and tried to drive him into the arms of the law. But they took no interest in the law as such.

They thought it was rather a good situation, like three on base in the ninth inning, the dog-catcher outside the car and Micky inside it. They waited to see what would happen next. They presently received a hint as to this.

“You come in this car, any one of you,” Pee-wee shouted, “and you’ll get this over the head; you mind what I’m telling you!” Always picturesque and dramatic, he held the fire extinguisher aloft in a kind of caveman posture, glancing quickly about to keep the four doors ever in view. “This car is private property and you’ve got no right to trespass in it—it’s—it’s—it’s just like a house—only—even more so. Keep out! No trespassing! Positively under penalty of the law! I know whose car this is; it belongs to Mr. John Temple and I’m a friend of his and I had supper at his house even—lots of times—and I got a right in here and anybody that trespasses, under penalty of the law, gets persecuted, I mean prosecuted, so keep out!”

“Hand out that mutt, sonny,” arose the authoritative voice of the dog-catcher, as he pressed roughly through the crowd.

Pee-wee’s quick glance now saw that the doors of the rolling palace he was in could be locked on the inside by the turning of little nickel knobs. Dextrously he locked the doors and being thus safely barricaded he laid down the fire extinguisher while Micky, being somewhat restored to calmness, sniffed at it curiously. Pee-wee now plastered his nose against a window and Micky, placing his forepaws up, sat alongside him, gazing out. From outside the end of Pee-wee’s nose looked flat.

The dog-catcher tried one door, then another roughly. “Open that door, Sonny,” he called.

“Open it yourself,” shouted Pee-wee; “let’s see you do it. If you do you’re—you’re a burglar. If you break it open you’ll see what happens to you. Catching a dog isn’t so important that you got a right to be a burglar, is it? And, anyway, even if the doors were open this is private property and you couldn’t come in.”

“Open the door, Sonny.”

“I will not.”

“Come on, now, open it, ’nes yer want to get in trouble.”

“Say it again, then whistle it,” shouted Pee-wee. “If you don’t believe what I say you go and get a cop. Do you think I’m a-scared of you? Because, anyway, I’m not in the public streets and neither is this dog. You break this car in and you’ll see and, anyway, I wouldn’t be a dog-catcher. I wouldn’t; gee whiz, I’d rather be a—a—principal of a school—I would. Do you think I’m a-scared of dog-catchers when I just foiled some bandits and saved this car—gee whiz!” he added heroically.

Already he was taking full credit for the assumed result of the catastrophe for which he and Micky were jointly responsible. Micky too seemed to be imbued with the consciousness of his collaboration in this noble achievement, for he now began barking defiance at the throng without.

It was little Marcus Kaplan whom Pee-wee now selected as his messenger. “Hey, Markie,” said he, rubbing the glass, for his verbal torrent had somewhat clouded it, “you go and get a cop, don’t you be a-scared of them, and I’ll give you a nickel. And if the cop says I got to open the door I’ll do it,” he announced to the crowd.

The immediate effect of this request was seen in the precipitate disappearance of Slats Corbett. At the very mention of the word cop he seemed to evaporate. The dog-catcher tried the doors, his efforts to penetrate Pee-wee’s stronghold being accompanied by threats and imprecations, until the crowd, now wholly in sympathy with the besieged pair, laughed immoderately.

Presently little Marcus returned with a large officer sauntering after him. The policeman appeared not to apprehend anything very serious. He seemed to bring all the quiet majesty of the law with him in a way to set the exploits of a dog-catcher to shame. He was not handicapped by lack of information, but above all voices thundered the voice of Pee-wee, who had cautiously opened one window of the car to address him.

“Hey, don’t you believe him!” he shouted, alluding to the dog-catcher. “Because this is private property and I can prove it, because it’s got Mr. John Temple’s initials on it and it’s his and I can prove it and it’s private property and anybody that takes anything that’s in it is stealing, because I can prove it. No trespassing under positively absolutely the law; it’s positively forbidden, because I’m—I’m—I’m just as much of an official as you are, because, do you see this badge? I got a right to call up police headquarters if I want to I took this car away from bandits I did—by—by——”

“By dropping a sheet of plate glass all over the street,” some one concluded for him.

“An accident can be just as good as if it was on purpose, can’t it?” Pee-wee demanded. “If I do something I’m to blame for, I get the credit for it, don’t I?”

“He cleans up the streets by spreading broken glass around,” some one

laughed.

“That shows how much you know about logic!” Pee-wee fairly yelled. “It’s better to clean up bandits than it is to clean up the streets, isn’t it?”

“That’s a fine argument,” said a man who was evidently not an inhabitant of Barrel Alley.

“I know even better ones than that,” Pee-wee fairly roared at him. “It’s what you do that counts, isn’t it? Maybe you might do a thing on account of a dandy accident, mightn’t you? Gee whiz, anybody knows that!”

“Whose mutt is that?” the smiling officer asked.

“He’s mine, because findings is keepings and he’s on private property and you can’t touch him and I saved this car from bandits and anybody that comes in here is trespassing under penalty of the law.”

“How about yourself?” some one asked.

“I have to guard the car because I rescued it, didn’t I?” Pee-wee demanded.

The police officer reached in through the window and patted Micky on the head to the immediate agitation of his tail. Gratefully he licked the strong hand of the law and all seemed to be well.

“What are yez all doin’ blockin’ up the street?” the officer suddenly demanded. “Go on, git away wid yez!”

The crowd scattered, then cautiously approached again, as crowds will.

“Open the door, Buddy,” said the cop with a kind of weary kindness.

“Will he take the dog?” Pee-wee demanded.

“Nah, he won’t take the dog,” said the officer; “you take ’im home wid yer. Go on, beat it, all a yez—you too,” he added, addressing the dog-catcher.

Thus adequately safeguarded by the huge cop, Pee-wee stepped out of the sumptuous sedan car with Micky tightly clutched in his arms. With a few curious loiterers still gaping at them the collaborators in this dramatic “foiling” of a gang of bandits proceeded to the nearest telephone to advise Mr. John Temple of the whereabouts of his car.

“Tell him I rescued it,” urged Pee-wee to the officer. “Tell him I circum—circumnavigated them. Tell him how I did it with broken glass. Tell him how Micky gets credit too, because he was the one that made me smash the glass on account of his being hungry. Tell him—you tell him how I saved his automobile, because scouts are resourceful. You tell him that, do you hear?”

## CHAPTER XII GETTING READY

Pee-wee did not return to Barrel Alley until the following day and his fame preceded him there. The *Evening Bugle* of the night before told how he had collaborated with a stray dog in rescuing Mr. Temple's car, and the fact that the thieves were later caught that same night gave additional glamor to the renown of the clean-up worker. His glory was none the less because he had stumbled into it. With him catastrophes were always triumphs. His baffling of the dog-catcher by skillful recourse to the law relating to trespass was highly praised. And Mr. John Temple insisted on paying for Micky's dog license.

The next episode which brings our hero out in bold relief relates to the great ball game between the Martha Caldwell team and the team from the neighboring town of Ridgedale. In the interval Pee-wee had done well as a clean-up worker. The inhabitants of Barrel Alley liked him, he made friends everywhere, and his two daily pilgrimages through the sordid place were always heralded with delight, for wherever he went the unexpected was sure to happen.

It cannot be said that the Alleyites were greatly impressed with the cause which Pee-wee represented, but they were greatly impressed with Pee-wee. Each Saturday afternoon the grown-up inspector passed through Barrel Alley on her rounds of the town and the Alleyites did not like her at all.

Like most the others engaged in the worthy enterprise, she was a willing worker, a public-spirited soul of the welfare type, whose business was rather with the boy workers than the residents. Hers was the pleasant duty of noting the comparative success of the "little workers," of encouraging and advising them, and observing the results of their activities with a view to the fair awarding of the prize for the "tidiest neighborhood territory."

No doubt Miss Snookem meant well and was kind and public-spirited, but she wore horn spectacles and carried a note book and Barrel Alley did not like her. They had no reason to dislike her, but she had not made a hit. Perhaps it was because she sniffed frowningly at refuse while Pee-wee made friends with it.

On the momentous Saturday of the great game, Pee-wee passed through Barrel Alley on his morning round in accordance with his avowed duty. He sometimes found these trips irksome, while again he would find enough diversion in the alley to fill the interval between his two rounds. Perhaps this was the secret of his success.

On this morning he ambled through the alley armed with a pointed stick for spearing papers, a camp device which he had introduced into his "territory" the day before. He had demonstrated it to the great enjoyment of the children till it was full of papers to the hilt. These he had pushed off into the public refuse barrel at the corner.

As a consequence of this interesting exhibition a hundred or more pointed sticks had been hurriedly prepared during the night and early morning and not a stray bit of paper was to be seen in Barrel Alley. But on the other hand the street was littered with twigs whittled or broken from these hurriedly contrived tools, shavings were blowing about, and as many as a score of clean-up spears had been thrown away in the middle of the street. More than that, the children of the alley had discovered a new and terrible use for the fascinating clean-up spears.

They were equipping the pointed ends of them with dubious-looking apples and veteran tomatoes and casting these missiles about with extraordinary force at each other and against shop windows and even into the privacy of homes. Worst of all, they were being called scout spears!

It was fortunate that simultaneously with Pee-wee's arrival several of the Martha Caldwell boys arrived on the field up at the corner to mow the grass preliminary to the great game in the afternoon. Perhaps it was their gray suits suggestive of uniforms, perhaps their lawn-mowers or perhaps only the natural fickleness of Barrel Alley's younger set, but at sight of these arrivals the Alleyites ran pell-mell to the field leaving Pee-wee to pick up such a litter of sticks and decayed fruit and vegetables as had not been seen there since the campaign began.

It was characteristic of Barrel Alley that the inhabitants were always behind in their rent and always well beforehand with the ash and garbage man. Sometimes they set their cans and barrels out three or four days before his scheduled arrival. On Saturdays, when the housewives were particularly busy, they got this matter off their minds early in the morning, notwithstanding that the wagon did not reach Barrel Alley till about six o'clock in the evening.

Pee-wee now proceeded to replace the ammunition of the late war in the galvanized receptacles which dotted the thoroughfare. Owing to the efforts of himself and his superiors in the campaign many of these were new and shiny and had nicely fitting covers. He gave a final survey of the vicinity for stray apples and tomatoes and then strolled over to the field where intensive preparations for the great ball game were going forward.

From the field the alley looked spick and span, with its row of covered cans extending away into the distance. They looked like a company of soldiers awaiting inspection.

Pee-wee was glad that the refuse wagon did not come along till late in the

day and that the great ball game in the afternoon would keep the children away from his territorial allotment until after Miss Snookem's Saturday afternoon tour of inspection. Miss Snookem was always very punctilious and could be counted on to stalk through the alley at five o'clock.



## CHAPTER XIII

### A WAGER

The Martha Caldwell Home boys, conspicuous in their gray gingham suits, were clearing up and mowing the field, and among them was Googy working with might and main. Towering above the gaping and rather disorderly audience was Slats Corbett. He no longer menaced Pee-wee, but seeing him and knowing him to be strong for the Home team, he ventured the prediction that the Martha Caldwell boys would be annihilated.

“Dem guys is goin’ ter git trimmed,” he said.

“They are not,” said Pee-wee; “they’re going to win. I bet you ten dollars they win.”

“Yer ain’t got no ten dollars,” said Slats Corbett, which was the truth.

“Never you mind how much I got,” said Pee-wee. “Do you think that old Ridgedale nine can lick these fellers?”

“Put up your ten bucks,” said Slats Corbett.

“You put up yours,” said Pee-wee; “*nah, hah*, you haven’t got it, that’s why!”

“How d’yer know wot I got?” said Slats.

“Let me search you?” Pee-wee asked.

“Will you let me search you?” asked Slats.

“I bet you don’t know what ten dollars looks like,” said Pee-wee.

“Who don’t know what it looks like?”

“You don’t.”

“Me?”

“Yes, you, and anyway Ridgedale is going to get beaten and I can prove it, because you have to stick up for your own town.”

“Stickin’ up fer yer own town don’t mean beatin’, because they should win too if they stick up fer their town,” said little Marcus Kaplan.

“Anyway, Ridgedale is going to get beaten,” said Pee-wee emphatically, “and I can prove it because I know it.”

“I bet on Ridgedale because the fellers is bigger,” said little Matty Farrell, “and I got no use fer orphant asylems because you don’t git nothin’ ter eat in ’em, because I was in one.”

“No, you weren’t in one because you’re not an orphan,” said Pee-wee.

“How do yer know I wasn’t an orphant wonst?” said Matty. “I bet I was an orphan.”

“How much do you bet?” asked Pee-wee excitedly. He felt sure of his

ground because Matty's mother did cleaning for Mrs. Harris and Matty's father was a familiar sight on street corners.

"I betcher an apple," said Matty.

"Make 'im show it ter yer," warned Marcus Kaplan, "because I know where he'll get it yet."

"You can't take it out of a garbage pail," said Pee-wee. "Anyway, I wouldn't bet with you because I saw your mother and father and they're both alive, so how can you be an orphan?"

"I said I *was* one and I was in the State Home," said Matty.

"How could you get not to be one?" demanded Pee-wee. "Do you mean to tell me your mother and father came to life again?"

"Wasn't I an orphant when my father was in jail?" asked Matty triumphantly.

"How long was he in jail?" Pee-wee demanded.

"Longer than *your* father was or your mother, either," said Matty.

"I bet my uncle was in jail longer than your father was," said little Irene Flynn, "because he kilt a man, so there."

"That's nothin'," said Matty, rather abashed, "and anyway, I *was* an orphant and I can prove it and I bet on Ridgedale because all yer git in them places is stew and bread without any butter on it."

"How much do you bet Ridgedale will win?" Pee-wee demanded hotly. "You can't bet fruit."

"If they don't win I'll show yer a man wot hasn't got legs," said Matty.

"How many legs hasn't he got?" Pee-wee demanded shrewdly.

"He hasn't got both of them and he's in a back yard and he's in a little kind of a wagon. So what do yer bet?"

"If the Martha Caldwell nine doesn't win," said Pee-wee, "I'll take you to Mary Temple's birthday party and you can have all the ice cream you want to eat; you can have candy and cake and everything. I guess Mr. Temple can afford to buy more than you can eat, because he can buy railroads even."

The prospect of being taken to Mary Temple's birthday party in Grantly Square swelled the pride of little Matty Farrell even more than his father's recent sojourn in the county jail. It was a reckless bet so far as Pee-wee was concerned, for he had no authority to take a guest from Barrel Alley to the palatial Temple residence.

However, he had no expectation of doing this, for he knew that the Martha Caldwell boys were going to win. He made the bet in the same way that he made bets of ten dollars and sometimes a hundred dollars. He staked Grantly Square and all its social opportunities against a man without any legs who was in some back yard or other.

## CHAPTER XIV

### WHACK

Pee-wee did not arrive at the ball field until the game was well under way. He had been detained at clean-up headquarters in the Armory where he had heard the good news that one more credit mark accorded him by the all-observant Miss Snookem would complete the twenty required for the winning of the neighborhood banner. To plant this banner at the head of his conquered territory had been his dream since the beginning of things.

“And we shall call your territory Spotless Street,” said the young lady who was clean-up secretary. “I understand that your work down in that dreadful slum has been simply *wonderful*.”

With such commendations still ringing in his ears and with the imminent triumph of the banner filling his mind, our hero hastened to the ball field which bordered his official domain.

A flattering audience of Bridgeboro’s younger set was watching the game and there was much excitement. But Pee-wee’s gaze was not long upon the game, for as he looked at the batter he discovered to his unspeakable consternation that the round and glittering home plate was nothing else than the galvanized metal cover of a refuse can “borrowed” in the interest of clean sport. Even as he looked the boy who stood by it tapped it with his bat as a sort of hopeful preliminary to a home run. It was evidently held in place by stakes driven around it.

The boy at the bat was a Martha Caldwell boy and he knocked a fielder. Amid the enthusiasm which attended his run to first base, Pee-wee saw that this also was a shining metal cover and a hurried look at second and third revealed the same shocking fact. Four of the neighboring garbage cans had been divested of their covers, which made exceedingly conspicuous and satisfactory bases. Evidently, the Martha Caldwell boys believed in clean sport, but not clean streets.

For a moment Pee-wee scarcely knew what to do, and while he paused he saw in a kind of trance that a Martha Caldwell boy was now on each base. Three on base and——

Pee-wee strained his eyes and concentrated his astonished gaze at home plate. Yes, as sure as he lived, there was Googy at the bat! There he was, proud and joyous, tapping the garbage can cover with the bat ready to pile up three runs for Martha Caldwell and sail around on a home run himself. Such responsibility! Such pride! Oh, he was trembling, but happy.

The figures in gray gingham which stole and darted back and forth at the three bases seemed hardly able to await the action of the batter. No one could see how the heart of Googy beat as he tapped the plate nervously, waiting for the fatal throw from the catcher's box.

"Soak it to her, Googy!" one yelled.

"Put it up on Main Street!"

The boy on third advanced a few feet cautiously, then darted back. The runners on first and second were all alert. The moment was tense.

"Soak it to her, you little Indian!" some one yelled.

For just a moment Pee-wee's gaze wandered from this spectacle of suspense and excitement to the neighboring alley which was the scene of his proud and especial care. For a second his eyes lingered upon the coverless garbage cans and then his gaze was arrested by something far more terrible. For in the distance he perceived coming down the alley a tall and commanding figure, advancing like a conquering host. He could just glimpse a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles. Miss Snookem proceeded slowly, glancing interestedly to right and left. Now and again she paused.

Suddenly, Pee-wee's fascinated gaze was terminated by a resounding whack on the ball field. Googy, the paper boy, had knocked a home run!

## CHAPTER XV

### THE GREAT GAME

Thereupon there ensued such tumult and confusion as would make Bedlam look like an orderly class-room. Pee-wee, standing between love and duty, made a wild rush. Taking Irene Flynn by storm, he capsized her completely and with her one of the McNulty twins whom she held by the hand.

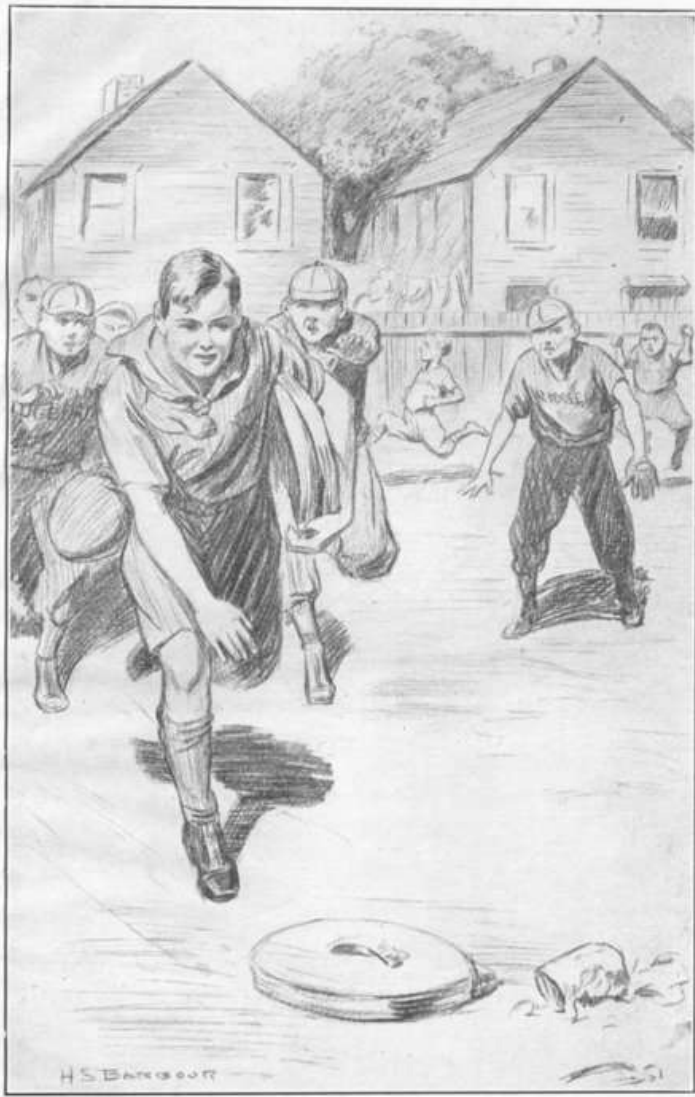
Pushing his way like a British tank through the line of spectators, he emerged upon the field, a picture of frenzy, encountering Tony Sigliano head on and scattering his basket of candy and peanuts like chaff before the wind.

Heading straight for home plate, he made a fine maneuver around the umpire, stumbled into the new batter and rescued the home plate just as a triumphant runner was about to reach it. Rushing frantically to first base, he rescued that at the strategic moment when a runner was leaving it.

Confusion reigned. The runners, not knowing where to run, ran everywhere like lost sheep, while a score of voices from astounded players screamed imprecations at the destroyer.

Heedless of the chaos he was causing, deaf to threats which rose in angry chorus from an outraged world, Pee-wee rushed frantically around the field gathering the covers and leaving the runners and basemen bewildered and staring. The tin covers clanking in his arms sounded martial defiance like some heroic tom-tom band, till two of them escaped his close embrace and went rolling off in opposite directions. There followed a mad rush to recover these, and one small Martha Caldwell boy who had been making a run to third followed it in the vain hope of reestablishing his place in its official shelter.

But the runs were being made by the bases now, and one of them, rolling gayly, seemed in a fair way to make a home run till our hero rescued it after a sensational pursuit, dropping two other covers in the very moment of his triumph. These went rolling off on separate careers, one beneath the triumphal arch of Tony Sigliano's legs and was captured in a flank move by Pee-wee, while the other was stopped in its flight by Marcus Kaplan's infant sister whose laughing triumph was interrupted by a peremptory demand from the pursuer.



PEE-WEE RUSHED FRANTICALLY AROUND THE FIELD  
GATHERING THE COVERS.

“You give me that cover,” Pee-wee ordered. The astonished child, greatly frightened, handed it over.

Pee-wee now held four covers, clutching them in a very frenzy of affection as he made a dash toward the alley where the figure of Miss Snookem could be seen looming larger as she advanced along the narrow way. She was now but a block and a half distant. The ball players, shouting threats, pursued the

diminutive clean-up worker, while the less heroic stared aghast at the extraordinary turn of affairs.

All might have gone well and Pee-wee might have completed his sensational home run with the four bases, if one of them had not fallen from his straining arms. He picked it up and dropped two. He picked the two up and dropped one. He picked the one up and dropped four. He picked up three of the four and dropped two. He ran after one of the two, caught it and dropped another one. The other rolling fugitive had disappeared in the No Man's Land between the field and Barrel Alley. A frantic search revealed it at the brink of the sewer in which it had probably hoped to terminate its unhappy career.

Pee-wee seemed now well upon his way to triumph, while utter confusion reigned upon the devastated field. Some of the ball players were in pursuit of Pee-wee while others moved about in a saner quest of stones which might be used for bases.

One bewildered runner, conscientious to the last, was still hurrying to the spot from which third base had disappeared. From thence he started for home plate, but there was no home to receive him and he rushed into a gaping group, recruited from the late spectators, which marked the spot from which home sweet home had vanished.

The late audience, representing the wanton and mirthful spirit of Barrel Alley, was now in full possession of the field and seemed well pleased with the turn affairs had taken. They sacked the devastated territory, seizing balls and bats and catching mask and instituted a riotous game of which the sinister Slat Corbett was the leader. It was the anarchy which follows war. The Martha Caldwell and Ridgedale boys were quite unequal to the task of restoring their orderly game after this havoc resulting from the invasion of their field by Pee-wee.

Meanwhile our hero, fleeing from this bedlam, made his frantic way across the street to the end of Barrel Alley, where he was met by enthusiastic reënforcements in the heroic form of Micky, who jumped upon him, wagging his tail fraternally and scattering the four covers in as many directions. He was so excited that he did not know whether to consume Pee-wee with affectionate demonstration or pursue one of the covers. He decided in favor of a cover which was rolling headlong toward Chin Foo's Laundry, while Pee-wee pursued the others in a very ecstasy of haste.

And meanwhile Miss Snookem, the inspector, advanced slowly and observantly down the street.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE ARRIVAL OF THE INSPECTOR

If Pee-wee had stolen the four points of the compass he could scarcely have caused more confusion. But he was not concerned with the mirthful riot which ensued upon his violation of athletic territory. Rather were his eyes fixed upon the figure which was coming slowly down the next block glancing approvingly at the street in which waste paper was conspicuous by its absence.

"You ole fool—you—you keep away—you hear!" Pee-wee panted, as he recovered the last of the four fugitive covers. "You go home—you."

Micky did not go home, but he became less aggressive and Pee-wee's further progress was uninterrupted. With a resounding clang of triumph he restored one of the four borrowed covers to its native pail, then another and another, and breathed a sigh of relief as he slammed the last one down upon its waiting pail. Dented from many taps and hopeful bats the late home plate, but a few minutes since the center of such excitement, was restored to its lowly mission.

"What a *perfectly lovely* clean street!" said Miss Snookem.

"Yes'm," said Pee-wee, panting, exhausted.

"And all the people along here are so fond of you, Walter. They say they feel just as if you were their own boy."

"Yes'm."

"And all the pails out and all the covers on them and not so much as a *scrap* to be found in the street. You're going to have the banner for your territory, Walter."

"Yes'm."

Miss Snookem gazed across to the field and adjusted her spectacles. "And that is where the great game is to be," she said. "I'm going to make you come over and explain the game to me, Walter. You know little Googy, who brings the papers around? I promised him I'd come and see him and his comrades win. It's—isn't it rather rough—the game?"

"Yes'm," said Pee-wee, "it isn't exactly, just exactly what you would call a game—not now; it's sort of more kind of like a riot. It got broken up—the game. It—something kind of happened to it."



## CHAPTER XVII

### GOING DOWN

“Yer busted de game up so yer gotta take me where dem eats is,” said Matty Farrell to Pee-wee a few days later. And Pee-wee realized the justice of Matty’s claim.

There had been no victory unless, indeed, Slats Corbett may be said to have been the victor, since he went home with a catching mitt, two bats and a mask. But Pee-wee, always fair in his calmer moods, was forced to acknowledge that under the circumstances the wager which he had so blithely made to Matty must be paid. He must take Matty to Mary Temple’s lawn party. Matty cared nothing for society but he cared everything for ice cream and cake and would gladly accept these at the hands of “rich guys.” He was not coy where such delights were concerned.

The responsibility of introducing this outlandish urchin under the shade trees at Grantly Square did not press heavily on Pee-wee. He was not noted for a nice discrimination in social matters. But he was thoughtful enough to stipulate that Matty should wear a regular suit of clothes, which he knew him to possess for he had seen it on sundry occasions.

“Yer ain’t foolin’. Der yer cross yer heart?” asked Matty.

“That shows how much you know about scouts,” Pee-wee thundered, “because they always keep their words. No matter if you—even if—no matter what—I’d take you. Gee whiz, that’s only fair. I got to be fair to everybody, haven’t I? I said you’d get three plates of ice cream and lots of cake and things and you will, you see.” In his abounding fairness he saw Mary Temple’s lawn party only as the means of paying an honest debt. And what better use could a lawn party be put to?

“Yer said chicken, too,” said Matty.

“Sure I did, and nuts and lemonade and everything.”

When Matty communicated these good tidings to his mother, backing his glowing representations with the unimpeachable word of the scout, Mrs. Farrell could only stare. She was willing to believe that Pee-wee was quite master of the situation and knew what he was about, so she arrayed her happy son in his Sunday suit, including a white collar, clean shirt, and gorgeous striped necktie.

He looked very stiff and uncomfortable as he emerged from the tenement in all his sartorial splendor and joined Pee-wee, who was waiting for him. It was five o’clock on Saturday, the clean-up delegate had just completed his

afternoon round, and was appareled in his best scout uniform, including all the scouting paraphernalia which is portable and wearable.

“You stick right close to me,” Pee-wee said, “and don’t you be afraid of anybody, because they won’t hurt you. All the fellers in my troop are going to be there, especially Roy Blakeley, he’s crazy, and his whole patrol is crazy, so don’t you mind them. There’ll be a lot of girls too, but, gee whiz, you don’t have to be afraid of them. You stick to me.”

There wasn’t much doubt of Matty sticking to Pee-wee; Pee-wee was his light and his guide. Already Matty was feeling the first chill of an adventure entirely new and strange to him. He did not feel at home in his good suit, especially on a week day. Straining his eyes downward he could see his striped scarf, and its colorful pattern was ever luring his gaze away from the straight and narrow path ahead. Perhaps this was the cause of the catastrophe which presently occurred. Be that as it might, in following Pee-wee across a muddy area, stepping from one barrel stave to another, one of these supports slid upon the mud, precipitating Matty into the thick, soft mire.

“Gee whiz, now look what you did,” said Pee-wee.

Matty struggled to his feet, dripping mud. His immersion had been complete. No detail of his sumptuous toilet had been neglected by the clinging, dripping mire. Standing upon the faithless barrel stave and holding his arms outstretched, he looked the picture of fright and despair.

“Don’t you care,” said Pee-wee; “I’ll get you all cleaned up.”

“If I go in de house me mudder won’t leave me out again,” said Matty.

“You don’t have to go in,” said Pee-wee, “because I’m a scout and I got a lot of resources and I got an inspiration, too.”

“Can I wash me face with it?” Matty inquired.

“Come over to the sprinkler wagon,” said Pee-wee, “and I’ll get you all cleaned up; it’ll be kind of just like a shower bath. Gee whiz, you don’t have to go back to the house. We can get all the water we want.”

The idea seemed a good one; anything seemed better to Matty than returning home.

The sprinkler wagon stood at the edge of the field where it was customarily parked by the man who drove it, he being a resident of the alley. During the day he had been cleaning its mechanical parts with gasoline and this had first attracted Pee-wee’s distant notice to it.

To the bespattered candidate for society it seemed now to have been sent by Providence to cleanse his bespattered face, affording all the facilities of home, and having none of the perilous qualities of home under the circumstances. He saw it as a sparkling fountain and Pee-wee as the genius who would restore cleanliness and hope.

“It’s good you thought of it,” he said.

"I always think of things," said Pee-wee.

"Gee whiz, no matter what happens I can fix it. I bet you were scared because you thought you'd have to go home. Right away I knew you wouldn't because I thought of the sprinkler wagon. If you think of a way when it seems as if there isn't any way that's what you call resourceful. You got to be resourceful if you're a scout."

In such safe hands Matty felt reassured, and gladly followed Pee-wee to the rolling fountain.

"I tell you what you do," Pee-wee said. "You lie down under the sprinkler and I'll turn the faucet that lets the water come out and I'll let it come out very slow and I'll wash you off with my scarf and I'll wash the mud all away. Then we can start a bonfire in the field so as you can get dry and I know how to iron your clothes while they're on you with a flat stick, I just keep pressing against your clothes with a shingle while they're getting dry because that's the way a general did when he heard the king was coming to review his troops; I can iron them while they're drying—you see."

Matty had heard much about scouting during the previous week or two and he was not likely to be staggered by any such original process of washing and ironing his clothes on him while he waited. He was indeed taking a course in the preliminaries of scouting under Pee-wee's enthusiastic direction.

He already knew the scout laws, motto, sign, salute and meaning of the badge. He had the required knowledge of the flag and had (under Pee-wee's authority) involved his mother's clothes line in a series of complicated knots.

He had indeed already qualified for tenderfoot. He hoped to join Pee-wee's troop some time or other when there was a vacancy. If that did not happen soon, Pee-wee had promised to build a new troop around him. His main interest now was in the fourth requirement in the second class scouting tests—tracking. But he had not made much of a success in tracking. He had followed a line supposing it to be the wriggling track of a snake, but had only succeeded in trailing a wobbly-wheeled baby carriage to its lair.

"That don't count," Pee-wee had said, "because baby carriages aren't wild animals."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### IF

But Matty's paramount interest was to be cleansed of the mud which bespattered his face and clothing and to go to the lawn party where the eats were spread in tempting profusion. He was grateful to be in the hands of such a resourceful and learned genius as Pee-wee and he watched him with reverence as Pee-wee picked up a small piece of board to be used as an iron.

"First you lie down under the sprinkler," Pee-wee said, "and I'll turn it on and don't you care how wet you get, because that's the way you're supposed to get. Then, we'll start a good ole fire and while your clothes are drying I have to keep rubbing and when they're all dry you'll look even better than you did before, because your clothes will be all pressed, kind of. See?"

"Do you have to iron my face with it?" Matty inquired.

"No, only your clothes; you'll see."

If any general driven to the need of a hasty toilet really had recourse to this ingenious system of rustic cleaning and pressing, there is no record of it outside of Pee-wee's authority. The things he found in books were numerous and varied. It is a fact, however, that poor little Matty never reached the final stage of the novel process.

"Now first you lay flat under the sprinkler," Pee-wee said, "and shut your eyes and don't yell and all the mud will be washed away."

Dutifully, trustfully, Matty stretched his small form under the horizontal, perforated pipe, prepared to receive the cleansing baptism.

"You have to lie lengthwise under it," Pee-wee said, pulling him around, "so it'll go all over you. And don't you care if it's cold, it'll be just like a shower bath, and don't get up till I tell you."

Not even Charles I, laying his royal head upon the block, could have been meeker than little Matty. Nor was the fate of Charles I so much more terrible. For scarcely had Pee-wee's hand, groping about the mechanism near the driver's seat, grasped an innocent looking little lever, than there descended upon the prostrate Matty (as it seemed to him) all the terrible outpourings of all the volcanoes in history. Almost instantly he was bathed in a slimy, dripping liquid as black as sin itself and with a pungent, stifling odor, which all but overwhelmed him.

"*Turn it off! Turn it off!*" he screamed, as he rolled from under the oily torrent. "It's—oil—it's tar—the stuff they use to—to—it's all black and thick—it isn't water at all!"

Alas, it was only too true, Matty had been immersed in a kind of negro Niagara Falls. The slimy liquid was dripping from his face and form, and he was a horrible spectacle. The unholy substance used to lay the dust in Bridgeboro's streets had so effectually laid the dust on Matty as to cover it entirely; he was a kind of human stick of licorice, oozing, slimy, dripping. Wallowing out of the black puddle, he faced Pee-wee's astonished gaze.

"That shows how you never know what's going to happen," said Pee-wee, taking refuge in a general comment. "Did I know what was in it?" he demanded. "Gee whiz, did I know what was in it? Now you can see yourself if it had been water it would have cleaned you up fine, because it went all over you, didn't it? So you see I was right. It would have worked dandy if it had been water, that's one sure thing."

## CHAPTER XIX

### STRANGERS IN OUR STATE

We are now at a parting of the ways where we may either follow Pee-wee to the lawn party or Matty to his home. Let us follow Pee-wee to the party.

It was customary with Pee-wee always to wear his full scout regalia at social functions. Not only that, but he invariably wore his belt ax to parties, as an officer in military full dress wears his sword. The ax was a great nuisance and had to be hoisted up from time to time and was in the way when he sat down, but it was the badge and symbol of pioneering and wild life. So he wore it to all the wild parties he attended.

On this particular occasion he had another honorable and official symbol which he wore with pride and even ostentation. This was his clean-up worker's badge. It was round and large and depicted a boy standing in an area evidently intended to represent Spotless Town.

It bespoke Pee-wee's quasi-official character as a clean-up worker and representative of the law. The trouble with it was that it almost completely obscured the officer whom it was intended to dignify. The clean-up badge almost cleaned up Pee-wee. But he strode manfully behind it with a glowing consciousness of official power.

Up to this day he had never exercised his official power. He had in the very beginning been schooled to a certain discreetness and had been properly warned against making complaints or "calling a cop" save in cases of flagrant violation of the town ordinances. He had become a mirthful institution in Barrel Alley and had never found it necessary to antagonize his lowly friends with the strong arm of the law. But he knew the power that was his, that he was an official, and he would not shirk an unpleasant duty if it confronted him.

He was nothing if not thorough, entering into each and all of his multifarious enterprises with heart and soul, and it had lately become second nature with him to pick up papers as he passed along the streets and to keep a weather eye out for treacherous banana peels.

But on this fair Saturday afternoon he was not thinking of waste paper. He was thinking of the party on the beautiful lawn of Mary Temple's home in Grantly Square. Nay, he was thinking of the eats that he would get there. For he knew the Temple munificence, that it stopped at nothing, and as he swaggered proudly up through Terrace Avenue toward Grantly Square, adjusting his clean-up badge, his thoughts dwelt fondly on the Belshazzar's feast which he was going to attend, and which he was going to help clean up.

And every one would say “Shhh, look! There is Walter Harris, autocrat of Barrel Alley, rescuer of the Temple automobile, partner of cops, ally of judges, etc.”

Now as you pass along Terrace Avenue you come to a vacant field flanked by fine mansions with spacious grounds around them. There is just room there for another fine house. In that field is a sign which says *no trespassing*. In the springtime the first violets may be found there hiding under the quick growing grass. Later you may see the field dotted with daisies. And as the fall approaches the graceful goldenrod fills that little oasis with its yellow glow.

The sign does not mean for the children to keep out any more than it means for the flowers to keep out, or the locusts or the cheery little crickets who make the solemn neighborhood seem like a countryside. But it means that you shall not stop there with your overloaded flivver and eat your lunch there and leave shoe boxes and olive bottles and tin cans and newspapers in that little green alcove. The man who owns that field was driven to putting the sign there.

Now as Pee-wee approached this fragrant little green gap in the fashionable thoroughfare he saw a business car going in the same direction half a block or so ahead of him. Always observant, he noticed that it had a New York license plate at the rear, so he knew it had come from the great neighboring state of New York. It was rattling along the street at a prohibited speed and keeping the center of the road to the embarrassment of other vehicles—which was also a fairly safe indication that it hailed from New York.

Suddenly, in its monopolizing progress, something happened. A suburban nail sticking up in the road attacked it as only a nail can and its left rear tire collapsed slowly but surely.

As Pee-wee came abreast of the vehicle, where its two occupants were inspecting the flat tire, he saw it to be a small truck, or perhaps rather a large, covered delivery wagon with the good old American name of Pastrilitta Bros. sprawling all over the side. Evidently Pastrilitta Bros. were so well-known that it was thought unnecessary, perhaps even undignified, to blazon forth on the exterior of their big car the particular business they were in. The name and the sumptuous fashion of the printing seemed to say “Enough said.”

The two men seemed to be in a great hurry, but Pee-wee was in no hurry and if he had been he would still have tarried to watch the ever-engrossing work of changing a tire. If there was anything to stop and watch Pee-wee always stopped and watched it. In this case there was much to watch which recalled fond memories, for the stricken wheel was bespattered with thick black grease overflowing from the rear mechanism so that Pee-wee beheld a vision of poor little Matty Farrell in the clinging substance which soon spread all over the hands of the men as they changed the tire.

“Guess she’s done for, hey?” said one of the men after a dubious

inspection of the old tire.

“That’s what,” said the other, as he mounted a new one. “Where’s the rags?”

“There’s some in a crate inside,” said the other man.

“Why don’t you chuck this stuff?” the searcher called from inside.

“You mean the melons?” called the other. “Bring the crate out; chuck me out a rag too. Stand from under, sonny; ain’t yer never seen a tire changed before? Is this Terrace Avenue?”

“Yes,” said Pee-wee, backing out of the way a little.

The other man emerged from the rear of the car carrying several rags and also dragging a large crate after him. Pee-wee saw that this crate contained cantaloups which were not in a flourishing state. He wondered why in their preoccupation the men should pause to rid themselves of this load.

He was presently to learn from their rather definite observations that this casual expulsion of the crate was because of its unfragrant quality, and that its eviction had already been too long postponed. One of the men conveyed it to the field and threw it there where its contents spilled out.

“You haven’t got any right to do that,” said Pee-wee.

“Oh, ain’t we,” said one of the men, as he wiped his hands with one after another of the oily rags, casting each into the street. “Roll that old tire over into the lot, Bill, and get a hustle and pick up that tire wrench. Is Bridge Street up that way, sonny?”

Pee-wee was not in the habit of dealing officially with men; now that there was a call upon his real power, he was perturbed and nervous, and knew not what to say.

“Yop,” he said, “it’s about ten blocks up.”

“Throw that old tube over in the field too, Bill,” said his questioner, kicking the filthy rags together. “Come ahead, get in.”

The utter disregard of everything save their own interests, perhaps also the utter disregard of himself, was too much for Pee-wee. He stood amid a litter of alien, unclean paraphernalia disfiguring the street and the field and beheld the wanton, surly heedlessness of these rough men selfishly intent on their own mission.

They could not even take seriously the thought that they were doing something wrong in defiling that orderly thoroughfare and its adjacent field. The old discarded tire, the limp tube, the inverted crate with its decaying contents sprawling out, made a squalid litter in the grass-grown lot. And there at his very feet was a sordid heap of black, greasy rags.

A month before, scout though he was, he would not have thought twice about this sort of thing, for defiling public places with dirty rubbish is so common that it seldom occurs to any one that it is against the law.



These very offenders against the beauty of a small town they happened to be passing through could give only a surly laugh in answer to the sturdy little scout. Well, here would be the test of David and Goliath. Pee-wee had but a few seconds in which to speak before the car was on its way again. His voice trembled just a little, but it gained in steadiness as the half good-natured laughter of the men strengthened his anger and determination.

“If you don’t pick up everything you left here,” he said, “that box and everything—and everything that was in it—and all these rags and—and that old tire—if you don’t pick them up you’ll get arrested.”

“Yere?” laughed one of the men, as he climbed into the seat. “Good fer you, sonny, who’ll arrest us?”

“I will!” shouted Pee-wee. “Do you—do you see this badge?”

“Some kid, hey?” laughed the other man.

“Are you going to do it?” demanded Pee-wee.

“Sure, next Christmas,” laughed one of the men, as the car started.

Goaded as much by their good-humored indifference as by what they had done, Pee-wee paused not to plead or argue. He knew his Bridgeboro and the enemy was in his country. Running pell-mell to the next corner he turned and ran through one block of the cross street to Main Street, which ran parallel with Terrace Avenue, the scene of his encounter.

At the intersection of Main and the cross street stood an enormous parasol whose kindly function it was to shield the florid countenance of Officer McMahan from the sun. Perhaps it helped also to shield the sun from the beaming countenance of Officer McMahan. Officer McMahan could turn this parasol like a merry-go-round, showing by turns the words *stop* and *go*.

It happened as Pee-wee rushed wildly through the side street that the mandatory word *stop* confronted him, but he only pulled up his left stocking and ran faster. Pee-wee’s left stocking was always a pretty reliable thermometer of his speed, for the faster he went the farther it descended. At six miles an hour it was at zero—down over the top of his scout shoe.

## CHAPTER XX

### STOP

Then directly under the parasol occurred a collision; Pee-wee ran plunk into Officer McMahon, excited and panting.

“There’s a—a wagon—a—a—round on T—t—terrace—Avenue—and I’m an—of—fof—fof—ficial you can see—and they dumped a lot of stuff, so hurry up, you got to come, ’cause I’m an official! Hurry up, they got to get arrested because—if they don’t take the stuff—because I got a right to make a com—com—com—*plaint!*”

Officer McMahon turned the parasol to a position exhibiting neither word in full and sauntered after Pee-wee with that demeanor of calmness and skepticism which policemen show in responding to frantic calls.

“Hurry, hurry!” called Pee-wee, running ahead.

There must have been some delay in starting the car, for it was only approaching the corner when Pee-wee, breathless and excited, reached this point in company with his reënforcement. He was in a state bordering on panic, for notwithstanding his exalted official station, he had never before invoked the law against any one, and now he had a strange feeling that he was doing something mean. His stout little heart, thumping away in his breast, rebuked him, for the two men had not been unkindly; they were no worse than most other men, and most tourists if it came to that.

“That them?” asked the officer.

“Yop,” said Pee-wee rather tremulously, “you don’t have to be mad at them—exactly—but anyway they haven’t got any right——”

Officer McMahon sauntered leisurely out into the middle of the street and to Pee-wee he seemed to fill it like an army. The police whistle sounded, the big blue sleeve went up, the car slowed down, stopped. And Pee-wee felt nervous—and just a little contemptible.

Officer McMahon, like most policemen and all traffic policemen, showed a kind of mock cordiality deeply weighted with cynicism and disgust. “What’s the large idea?” he asked wearily. “What’s your hurry? Yez didn’ ferget nothin’, did yez?”

“What do we have to do, pay to get through New Jersey?” asked the driver. “Fifteen miles an hour, do you call that speeding?”

“Let’s see your license?” asked the officer, in pursuance of the invariable custom when stopping a car for any purpose.

“I ain’t got it with me,” said the driver rather more respectfully and a trifle

apprehensive.

“No?” drawled the officer. “That’s too bad because yer have ter pay ter get through Jersey without a license. Where did they throw them things?” he asked, turning to Pee-wee.

Pee-wee had never felt so mean as when he pointed to the field up the street. He knew he was right, all that he had been told in the past month was fresh in his memory, but he felt a little ashamed.

“If they pick the things all up again they don’t have to get arrested, do they?” he asked. “Gee whiz, I’ll help them pick them up.”

“That ain’t no matter when they’re driving without a license,” said the officer. Then to the driver he added with a kind of weary courtesy which seemed odd to Pee-wee: “Turn her round, Bill; just back in there and turn her round. Guess I can squeeze in between yez, can’t I?”

That he could be friendly with people he was about to arrest seemed very queer.

“Climb in back there, kiddo,” said the officer to Pee-wee.

## CHAPTER XXI

### OFFICIAL AND SCOUT

But Pee-wee did not get into the car. It seemed too much like accepting hospitality from those whom he had betrayed. He had read of young heroes arresting bandits and train robbers, but now that he was an actual participant in the adventure of a commonplace arrest, he did not like it. He was not that kind of a young hero. He felt sorry for these ignorant, heedless, good-natured men.

He walked back to the field and waited while the lumbering car turned around. He was almost ashamed to look as it came slowly back toward him with Officer McMahan on the seat with the two men. They were roughly clad, one in his shirt sleeves; they were of a sort that Pee-wee always made friends with, the kind of men that always liked him. He thought these two must hate him.

The car stopped abreast of the field and Officer McMahan took casual note of the adjacent litter. It seemed to Pee-wee that this matter did not interest the officer as much as the license business.

“All right,” said the officer, after his perfunctory inspection; “you want to make a complaint against these men?”

“I—I did, didn’t I?” asked Pee-wee.

“I mean at the station,” the officer said. “Do you want to swear?”

“I wouldn’t swear because I’m a scout,” said Pee-wee.

“Yer got ter come along to the station if you want to make a complaint against these men.”

“I decided I’d do a good turn instead,” said Pee-wee. “Gee whiz, I can change my mind, can’t I? I decided I’d put the stuff all back in the wagon for them. It’s just as important being a scout as it is being an official, isn’t it? I’m not going to make any complaint because anyway I don’t swear and I’d rather do a good turn anyway.”

His heart was thumping, his eyes brimming. His first experience at wielding his official power was a dismal failure. And this was the sequel of the fine boast that he had made to poor little Googy that he would be arresting people right and left. Poor Pee-wee, he was just an insignificant little scout after all. But a scout, at that.

Through glistening eyes he saw the man who had promised to remove the litter “next Christmas” climb down out of the car. “Give us a hand, sonny,” he said; “they leave stray bricks around the streets, anyhow, don’t they, over here in Jersey?”

“Bricks?” said Pee-wee.

“Yere, ain’t *you* a little brick? Come on, let’s chuck the stuff back in; you got the right dope, sonny. Nobody’ll ever throw you away fer trash and rubbish, I’ll tell the King of Egypt.”

“Egypt?” Pee-wee gaped.

“Sure, don’t cher know him? Help me chuck them melons in the box. Hand me them rags; that’s right, and roll that old tire over here. Now gimme your hand for a shake, Jersey. That’s right! What the heck are you cryin’ about?”

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE BELATED GUEST

That was Pee-wee's first real experience as an official and he had flunked because he was too much of a scout. That was the trouble with Pee-wee, his character of scout was always getting in the way.

The men, or one of them, was going to be arrested in any case, but at least Pee-wee was out of it. Yet, if it had not been for the policeman and the license revelation, Pee-wee could not have shown his colors as a scout. He hoped the men were not in any serious trouble.

But they were at least in this much trouble, that being from another state they could not be given a New Jersey summons and allowed to go their way. A charge of driving without a license was to be lodged against them. They would have to leave their car or give security for their later appearance in the Jersey court.

As they had not the required security, and as, no for one reason or another, they could not get in telephone communication with their headquarters in New York, they were forced to leave the car in the hospitable yard adjacent to police headquarters while they returned to New York by trolley.

Thus while Pee-wee made his way up through Bridge Street to Grantly Square the hapless car of Pastrilitta Bros. was parked in the secure enclosure kept for recreant cars from other states, under the shadow of Police Chief Bray's frowning fortress.

Now that the episode with its human touch was over, Pee-wee began again to see himself as a hero. And not only as a hero, but a diplomat. It was only at intervals that Pee-wee forgot that he was a hero and a high official. Not high in the physical sense, but high in the sense of glory.

As he strode along the street, he realized the magnificent thing he had done. He had not *had* the men arrested, but he had taught them a good lesson and caused them to be arrested for something with which he, Pee-wee, had nothing to do. They were going to be inconvenienced because they threw rubbish about and they could not blame him, for he had made no charge against them. Now that they were not present to make him feel ashamed he was glad of the issue for which he took full credit.

What afforded him the most satisfaction and relief was that he would not be detained in the police station while Mary Temple's guests were consuming the refreshments.

Now that his sympathy had somewhat subsided he realized what a narrow

escape, perhaps, had been his. They might have kept him in the police station for hours and even days, in connection with his great case. "Gee whiz, I bet maybe I had a narrow escape," he said to himself, as he trudged along.

Mary Temple's party was an afternoon and early evening affair, affording every facility for outdoor and indoor pastimes. Pee-wee was late and as he approached the handsome stone mansion of the best friend scouting ever had, he saw the beautiful grounds and the veranda and hall filled with young people.

Soft strains of music floated out of the lower rooms where dancing was going on. A lively game of tennis was engrossing the enthusiastic attention of a large group on the spacious lawn. Out from somewhere among these festive throngs tripped Mary Temple, golden-haired and laughing, to greet the belated guest.

"You're perfectly horrid not to come earlier," she said. "I thought scouts were always on time."

"I was going to bring a feller," Pee-wee said, "but I was washing his face for him under the sprinkler wagon only it turned out there was tar or something in it so he couldn't come."

"Such an adventure!"

"Gee whiz, you wouldn't know him," said Pee-wee.

"Do I know him? Who is he?"

"No, you don't know him, but you'd even know him less if you saw him. You know what licorice looks like?"

"The very idea! You're always having adventures."

"That's nothing," said Pee-wee. "I had two men—I mean I made it so they'd get arrested for littering up the streets only they got arrested for something else, but it's just the same because I—anyway they got arrested on account of me for littering up the streets."

Pee-wee's revised opinion about his recent exploit was that he would take full credit for the predicament of the arrested men. Since they were arrested their predicament would be none the greater if he took the glory that was his. Pee-wee was an official. He was also a scout. But most of all he was Pee-wee Harris. . . .

## CHAPTER XXIII

### PEE-WEE'S GOOD TURN

"Here's Walter Harris and he's had an adventure," called Mary.

"Did he bring it with him?" called Roy Blakeley from the tennis court. "Tell him to park his adventures outside—also his appetite."

"Don't mention the word appetite," said Mary; "it's just perfectly *terrible*."

"You mean mine?" asked Pee-wee.

"Gracious, no, of course not. But it's just perfectly terrible——"

"Oh, look who's here!" interrupted Warde Hollister, as he joined the little group that was forming about Pee-wee. "Hello, Kid, are you going to clean up the place?"

"There isn't anything to clean up," said Mary ruefully. "Did you ever *see* such an enormous badge? We simply *never* see you any more since you went down to Barrel Alley. Isn't it *perfectly wonderful* they're going to pave it all on account of your *splendid* campaign! Everybody says you're just *wonderful*, Walter, and everybody down there *adores* you. Mrs. Flynn told us all about you."

"Did she tell you what a swell ball player he is?" queried Roy, as he sauntered over, bouncing a ball on his racket. "Stole four bases. Who did you have pinched, Kid? Break it to us gently, we're all weak from hunger."

"I think you're perfectly terrible," said Mary.

"I had two men arrested," said Pee-wee defiantly.

"Yes? Tell us all about that," said Roy, idly bouncing the ball on his racket. "Begin at the end so you won't have so far to go. When are you going to have that block party down there, anyway?"

"As soon as it's paved," said Pee-wee.

"I hope you'll have some eats."

"You're just too mean for anything," said Mary. "He's *sarcastic* when he says that," she said, turning to Pee-wee. "It's just because our refreshments haven't come—they're all making fun of me. We've been just waiting and waiting and waiting. If you can keep still a minute, Roy, we all want to hear how Walter had two men arrested."

"Oh, *do* tell us," caroled Winnie Somers.

"Yes, *do* tell us," chirped Madge Warren.

"Did you *really*?" gasped Estelle Hollister.

"Arrested!" breathed Dora Daring.

"What for?"



“When?”

“How?”

“Where?”

“To-day?”

“Honestly?”

“Grown-up men?”

“He’s a hold-up man himself,” said Roy. “Didn’t you hear how he held up a piece of plate glass?”

Pee-wee found himself the center of a bevy of girls and he fancied he could trace a note of banter in their chorused enthusiasm. There was certainly no mistake about Roy’s familiar tone. In the face of all this, he was on the defensive. He did not impugn the motive of the girls, but upon Roy he bestowed a withering glare. “You think you’re so smart,” he said; “always trying to jolly. If you were those two men you’d laugh on the other side of your face——”

“You mean the inside?” laughed Roy.

“I mean both sides,” shouted Pee-wee.

“Did they laugh on both sides?” asked Roy. “They got arrested, that’s what,” said Pee-wee; “and if I hadn’t done a good turn they’d be worse off than they are. I got a cop to stop their car—that was on the way up here—because they threw a lot of junk and stuff in Marshall’s field—you know where I mean—and I helped them pick it all up again, because I was sorry for them on account of their having to be arrested, but anyway they got arrested, and I’m glad of it only I’m sorry for them, but, anyway, I have to do those things because I’m a clean-up official, so now they’re in jail and that’s what made me late.”

“It serves them right,” said Mary Temple.

“I think you were perfectly fine,” said Dora.

“You did just exactly right,” said Warde’s sister.

“It will teach some of these Bridgeboro drivers a lesson,” said another girl; “they just don’t care where they throw their old rubbish.”

“They weren’t Bridgeboro men,” said Pee-wee. “They were driving a car with a funny name on it and it came from New York. Pastry something Brothers, that’s what it said on the outside and——”

But Pee-wee never finished. Throwing his tennis racket away, Roy Blakeley lay prone upon the ground, holding his head in an agony of despair. Mary Temple sank back into the arms of one of her chums. Warde’s sister leaned limp against her brother’s form.

“You’ve fixed it, Kid,” moaned Roy. “When it comes to good turns you’ve got a merry-go-round beat twenty ways.”

“What’s the matter?” gasped Pee-wee.

“You tell him, I can’t,” groaned Roy.

“Walter,” said Mary Temple, in a tone of tragedy, “Pastrilitta Brothers are the big New York caterers. They were bringing ice cream and, oh, ever so many things, to this house!”

“The ice cream and chicken salad have gone to jail,” moaned Roy.

“The sandwiches have been sent up for thirty days,” wailed Connie Bennett.

“The macaroons are doing time,” sighed Westy Martin.

“The eats are in the lock-up!” wailed Roy, rolling over and over on the ground. “Is that what you call a good turn?”

“And they promised us a prompt delivery,” said Mary.

“It’ll have to be a jail delivery,” groaned Roy. “He cleans up the eats before he gets them. Can you beat that? *Some—good—turn!*”

## CHAPTER XXIV

### MUSIC HATH CHARMS

“Oh, I think it’s just perfectly detestable,” said Mary Temple.

“You mean me?” asked Pee-wee, a trifle uncomfortable.

“Oh, far be it from it,” said Roy. “We’re only too maglighted to have the big clean-up cleaner with us; the pleasure is ours. I honestly believe you would have been willing to help us eat the refreshments if they were here. That’s how much I think of you, Kid.”

“You make me tired,” shouted Pee-wee.

“You make me hungry,” said Roy. “What do you say we all go and eat the paper napkins before Pee-wee picks them up for litter?”

“I’ve got an inspiration!” shouted Pee-wee.

“That’s nothing, we’ve got an exasperation,” said Roy. “The party’s beginning to look like starving Russia. What do you say we issue food cards?”

“I think you’re terrible to make it worse,” said Mary.

“It *couldn’t* be worse,” said Roy. “The clean-up cleaner cleaned us up in advance.”

“We can get the stuff all right, you leave it to me,” said Pee-wee.

“Leave the refreshments to you? *Not much*,” said Roy.

“We can go and get it, can’t we?” said Pee-wee. “We know where it is.”

“Oh, we know where it is,” said Westy Martin.

“Oh, absotively, posilutely,” said Roy. “Maybe the governor of the state would be willing to pardon it.”

“If he’d parole it I’d be satisfied,” said Dorry Renton. “We’ve had many troubles, but here is one we can’t swallow.”

“A joke,” said Roy.

“Why didn’t you order the things from Bennett’s?” Pee-wee asked.

“Because Bennett’s is too busy supplying you,” said Roy.

“Oh, I think Bennett’s is horrid,” said Mary, stamping her foot in perplexity. “We thought it would be lovely to get everything from Pastrilitta’s, they’re such wonderful caterers; their salads are *delicious*.”

“Mmm, yum, yum,” said Roy.

“Oh, I hate Bennett’s cream,” said Dora Daring.

“You shouldn’t hate,” said Warde; “it’s wicked to hate. Look at Pee-wee, he doesn’t hate anybody’s cream.”

“No, he has it arrested,” said Roy. “It’s good North America is nailed down or he’d have it pinched for littering up the Atlantic Ocean. This has gone

too far!”

“What do you mean, far?” screamed Pee-wee. “The police station isn’t so far, is it? We’re scouts, gee whiz, haven’t we got resources enough to go and get the things, instead of standing here talking about it?”

“Oh, we’ve been waiting for nearly an hour and a half,” said Mary, weeping. “We ’phoned to New York and they said the men had started and then——”

“And then,” said Roy.

“And then,” said Westy.

“And then,” said Hunt Ward.

“Our young hero,” said Roy, “stepping boldly out from behind a tree, cried ‘stop’ and, snapping his trusty handcuffs around the ice cream freezers, while covering the chicken salad with his forty-seven caliber revolver, marched them to the lock-up and——”

“Silly,” said Minerva Skybrow, who could always be counted on for common sense. “Instead of making fun of him, why don’t some of you boys go and get the things? Better late than never.”

“That’s just what I’m telling them,” said Pee-wee.

“How long will it take?” asked Mary.

“You leave it to me,” said Pee-wee; “I’ll fix everything all right. Gee whiz, the longer we wait the better the things will taste, won’t they? I know a short-cut to the police station. We can go through Grumpson’s lot and come out on Rawson Street, and we’ll be right there.”

“Now you’re talking,” said Minerva.

“I often do that,” vociferated Pee-wee.

“I’ve heard him do it once or twice,” said Roy.

“I mean cut through Grumpson’s lot,” Pee-wee screamed at him. “*Gee williger*, you make me sick. The Silver Foxes are all crazier than each other and you’re crazier than all of them——”

“I’m crazed with hunger,” said Roy.

“Will you promise not to stop and clean up the lot if we go?” asked Warde.

“Oh, do stop fooling and go if you’re going to go,” Mary pled.

“We’ll be back with it in half an hour,” said Pee-wee.

“If we don’t come back you’ll know we ate it,” said Warde.

“You tell those detestable police that we *must* have it at *once*,” said Mary.

“If not sooner,” said Roy.

“You leave it to me,” said Pee-wee, “because I’m an official. We’ll be back with it in—in about twenty minutes. We’ll go scout pace. Anyway, it isn’t as bad as if that car had broken down away back near the ferry, because then we couldn’t get it at all and, besides, you ought to be glad I got here——”

“We’ll be gladder to see you start,” said Minerva.

“Because, anyway, if I hadn’t come——”

“The things would have come instead,” said Minerva.

“Do you call that an argument?” Pee-wee shouted. “If I hadn’t come how would you know where the eats were?”

“I know where my share of it would have been,” said Roy. “I wouldn’t have been taking a course in watchful waiting.”

It was dusk when Roy, Pee-wee, Warde and Westy started on their heroic expedition to rescue the refreshments. It was too dark to play tennis now and the guests wandered to the veranda and into the house where they sat about listlessly and listened to the soothing notes of the victrola.

In the great hall a gorgeously decorated table, gay with flowers, stood, bare of every edible excepting a couple of heroic little dishes, one filled with candies and the other with salted peanuts. Dainty, crinkly paper napkins formed into steeples stood at each place like tombstones of departed food.

“Shall we play *Think of a number?*” asked Dora.

“No, I can’t think of anything but one thing,” said poor Mary, “and that I’m trying to forget. Put on that record that Walter brought up here the other night; he’s always bringing records.” She leaned back listlessly as the victrola began,

Come, gather about with a hearty good cheer,  
At the drink and the food all so plentiful here;  
Forget we the night——

“For mercy’s sake, take it off!” cried Mary.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE GREAT LEGAL BATTLE

There was only one police station in Bridgeboro and that was also police headquarters. The enclosed "parking space" adjacent to this frowning fortress was not the least important feature of its facilities.

Here, on Sundays, might be seen herded a variety of hostage cars from neighboring states whose owners had journeyed home to procure their forgotten license cards, or perchance had been required to leave their property in lieu of other security. It was a sort of jail for automobiles and was surrounded by a high picket fence.

Through these forbidding bars one might look in upon some forlorn Lizzie mingling on equal terms with lawless Cadillacs and Packards. High and low were equal here. New Jersey cars, disporting at fifty miles an hour, were not liable to be detained here. But aliens who were allowed to ride away with summonses had a habit of not coming back to answer charges and pay fines.

As the rescue expedition approached this grim area, they saw but one car within it, the hapless delivery car of Pastrilitta Brothers, the famous New York caterers. It was facing the fence and seemed to be looking pensively out upon this land of its undoing. Not only that, but it seemed to be weeping also, for there was a continuous and audible dripping from somewhere beneath it.

One of the headlights was disfigured and the glass gone and this black eye, sustained in its riotous career in the complicated traffic of New York, had a certain pathos about it; it was like a man who had been locked up for fighting.

"That dripping is from the ice cream freezer," said Pee-wee; "I bet it is."

"The ice is escaping under the very nose of the police," said Roy.

"Well, let's not waste any time here, then," said Warde.

They entered the building and saw, confronting them, Captain Simpe sitting behind a desk which seemed a mile high and perusing a spread-out newspaper.

The awful solemnity of this exalted throne, together with the sight of a gavel close at hand, impressed Pee-wee deeply and left him for a few moments speechless. He had a feeling that any one who entered such a place as this was automatically arrested. He knew that he was himself an arm of the law, but it had for the moment a subduing effect upon his exuberance to be so close to the rest of the law's imposing body. He nervously adjusted his clean-up badge.

"Hey, mister," said Roy, "there's a car locked in the yard and it's got some stuff belonging to us in it and we'd like to get it."

“You want to make a complaint?” asked Captain Simpe, poisoning a formidable pen.

“Sure, we want to make a complaint that we’re hungry and that there’s some eats in that car and we want them. They were going to be delivered to Mr. Temple in Grantly Square. We’re having a party up there and please hurry up because the ice cream’s melting.”

Pee-wee now found his voice and knowing that witnesses are always requisite in matters of the law he piped up, “If you want witnesses the whole four of us saw that it was melting.”

“So will you please let us get it?” urged Warde. Captain Simpe appeared to cogitate a moment. Here, perhaps, was a legal point which he had never encountered before. He fell back on a casual query.

“Have you got an order for it?”

“No, but you can ’phone Mr. Temple if you want to,” said Westy.

“What’s all this stuff you want?”

“They’re all eats,” said Roy, “and we’ve all been waiting up there for them to be delivered. This kid told us the driver of the car was arrested.”

“Eh huh,” said Captain Simpe, as if not willing to commit himself.

“So will you please hurry,” said Roy, “because the party is supposed to be over at nine o’clock and we’ve only got just about time enough to eat the refreshments.”

“Can you identify the things?”

“Believe me, we can do more than that, we can eat them.”

“Eh huh.”

“I think the chicken salad has some olives stuck on the top of it, but I’m not sure,” said Roy.

“Maybe it isn’t made up yet. Anyway the ice cream is quite cold, so you’ll know it by that. And the ice is melting very fast, so will you please hurry?”

Captain Simpe appeared to be considering. “You say you’re the owner and possessor and have full right and title to said things?” he inquired.

“Something like that,” said Roy.

“And we’re good and hungry too,” said Pee-wee, “because I didn’t eat any dinner.”

“And the ice is melting,” said Warde.

“And I didn’t eat such a lot of lunch either, on account of knowing they’d have a lot of things at the party and my mother said I shouldn’t overeat,” said Pee-wee.

“So can we get the things?” asked Westy. “Because the girls are all waiting.”

But the law moves slowly and is not gallant toward girls. Captain Simpe was not going to be seduced into a legal error by boyish impatience.

“Have you got a receipted bill to show those things belong to said Temple?” he asked.

“Gee whiz, weren’t they being sent to his house when the car was stopped by—by——”

“Sure,” said Roy.

“By kind of what you might call circumstances?” Pee-wee concluded.

“Did right and title to those things pass to said Temple?” asked Captain Simpe sternly.

“How could the things be passed when we haven’t even got them?” Pee-wee thundered. “Can you pass the cake if you haven’t got it?”

“That’s a good argument,” said Westy.

“It’s a teckinality,” said Pee-wee; “I know lots of them.”

“So will you please let us get in the car and get the stuff?” Warde asked.

“Because we’re getting weaker every minute,” said Roy.

“I can hardly lift my arm,” said Warde.

“Pee-wee can hardly lift his voice,” said Westy.

Captain Simpe fell into a kind of learned reverie, twirling his pen. “Those things are part and parcel of the property held,” he said. “That car and all that pertains thereto including all accessories and appurtenances is held as security and I couldn’t do anything for you except by a court order. I might if you kids had a receipted bill, for that would be competent evidence of right and title by Mr. Temple and his heirs and assigns——”

“Believe me, the heirs and assigns won’t get much because the ice is melting,” said Roy.

“Those things are accessories and appurtenances,” said Captain Simpe with final decision.

“Does he mean we’re impertinent?” Pee-wee whispered to Westy.

“He means we have to go back and have those girls give us the laugh,” said Warde, his spirit suddenly chilled.

“It means we’re scouts and fail,” said Westy.

“I don’t mind the rest of them,” said Roy, “but, *Christopher*, I can’t face that Skybrow girl and admit we failed. We’re fine go-getters,” he added disgustedly.

“Isn’t there any way we can get the things?” Warde asked pleadingly. “You know as well as I do that Mr. John Temple will pay the bill when he gets it. If the things are being sent to him, they’re his, aren’t they? That’s common sense, isn’t it?”

“Now looker here, young feller,” said Captain Simpe, nettled, “you mind how you shout in here. The law ain’t run by common sense,” he added with unconscious truth. “Those things is part and parcel of the property held by law and right and title vests with the owners of the property and has got to be held



with it. Now you all clear out of here.”

“*Good night*,” said Roy, disheartened and disgusted.

“I’ll be hanged if I can go back there and face Mary Temple,” said Warde.

“Same here,” said Westy. “And her father started Temple Camp.”

“Jiminies, I don’t care such an awful lot about the eats,” said Roy, banishing his joking on this topic at last and becoming suddenly crestfallen. “When Mr. Temple gave us a spiel up at camp he told us the way to do a thing is to do it. Come on, let’s get out. The law’s the law, I suppose. We’re beaten.”

Then arose like thunder in a dismal and hopeless sky, the voice of Pee-wee Harris, scout. He had not lost his voice, he had only mislaid it.

“The way to do a thing is to do it whether you can do it or not,” he shouted. “Scouts don’t fail—especially about eats, they don’t fail. I got a right to give an argument, haven’t I? Sure I have! You say that stuff can’t be taken away, but all the time it’s going away—it’s melting. So that shows how much you know about logic and things like that, especially teckinalities. But, anyway, I won’t get out till I’m finished.

“Do you see this badge? Do you know what it means? It means I’m an officer in the clean-up campaign and I went to the banquet and I heard the lecture and if there’s uncovered reciprocals, I mean receptibles, I mean receptacles and decaying vegetable matter it says I got a right to go where it is and remove it and *you got to give me a permit!* I’m just as much of an official as you are, I am, and there’s a box with old rotten melons in it in that car, so you give me a permit to get in there and remove all that stuff, because if you don’t I’ll get every member of the board of health here—that’s what I’ll do! You see!”

## CHAPTER XXVI OVER THE WIRE

For a moment silence reigned, while the officer behind the high desk twirled the gavel ruminatively. He was nothing if not discreet. The clean-up campaign which had an honored place in the *Daily Bugle* each evening had not gone unnoticed by him.

Strange and summary things had happened in that campaign, and he knew it. A defiant baker had gone to jail. Junkmen had run foul of the reform and its young workers.

Captain Simpe, who was of the conservative school of legal lights, paused, considering whether discretion might not be the better part of valor, since he was not quite sure of his ground. For, strange as it may seem, it had lately appeared that there was a whole brood of surprising, coy little laws and ordinances which had been brought into action in the campaign for a cleaner Bridgeboro. So he did not call Pee-wee a "young feller" and order him out of his presence.

As for Pee-wee, he never looked smaller and yet more terrible than in that heroic moment of his official life. Panting and excited from his effort, he stooped and tugged up his official stocking which had gone down to three degrees above zero during his performance. As a sort of byproduct of his masterly declaration, his three scout companions stood silent, respectful, aghast. They had seen the neighborhood leader of Barrel Alley in action. Slowly, still ruminating, Captain Simpe drew the telephone toward him and called, deliberately, "Four, four, one."

"Health Board," answered a voice.

"Mr. Martin? Police Headquarters. How about a car being held here with a lot of food and stuff in it?"

"Well, what about it?"

"Are we supposed to throw that stuff out? It belongs to the owner of the car."

"Perishable?"

"Yes, guess so."

"Any decaying vegetable matter?"

"So they say."

"Who?"

"Oh, one of those kids."

"Authorized?"

“He’s got a badge.”

“Well, what’s the use of asking me then? He can take care of it; he knows the rules and ordinances.”

“All right to let him do what he wants?”

“Absolutely.”

“He’s just a kid, that’s why I asked.”

“Absolutely.”

“We can’t dispose of stuff that’s held, you know.”

“You don’t want to hold disease germs, do you? What boy is it?”

“Little curly-headed youngster with a voice like a volcano.”

“Well, he’ll take care of it.”

“Let him have it, huh?”

“Yes, he’s on the job. If it’s perishable let him have it and he’ll get in touch with us. He knows what sort of stuff to take. I know the boy, he’s taking care of Barrel Alley. He knows where he’s at, all right.”

“Well, he’s got some voice.”

“Yes, that goes with him.”

“All right. Good-by.”

## CHAPTER XXVII TO THE RESCUE

When the gates of the yard to the station house were opened upon Pee-wee's authoritative demand, the fugitive ice cream was found to be in a desperate condition. Like many prisoners who languish in jail, it had grown thin. The freezer looked as if it might have resisted arrest and been subjected to rough handling. It lay on its side in the wagon, most of the ice spilled out and melting rapidly.

The oblong metal box in which the ice cream reposed lay quite deserted by its protecting ice and a thin, creamy substance which oozed out from under its cover gave evidence of the condition within that zinc holy-of-holies. Pee-wee drew his finger along the leaky line under the cover and sampled the luscious, melting concoction. Then, finding it to his liking, he repeated the operation.

"Have a heart, give us a chance, will you?" said Warde.

"Yum, yum, that's good," said Pee-wee, drawing his finger along the oozy line again and licking it with an expression of heavenly joy. "Gee whiz, I like it melted just as well as I do hard. It's pineapple flavor—*mm, mmmmmm!*"

"Open it," said Westy.

Pee-wee, sitting with his legs dangling from the rear of the wagon and holding the large metal receptacle on his lap, lifted the cover gingerly, expectantly, like a pirate opening a treasure chest. As he raised the cover the oozy, clinging substance which had lately been of the consistency of a brick sent forth such a divine odor that the reformer of Barrel Alley was fain to dip his finger in it and regale himself by the process of suction. He was about to repeat the heavenly operation when Westy stopped him. "Keep your finger out of that," said Westy, forcibly replacing the cover over the fragrant, liquid mass. "You claim to be so sanitary and everything——"

"Don't I have to find out if it's good?" said Pee-wee. "Don't I have to make sure it's all right before I let anybody eat it?"

"Nobody'll have a chance to eat it if you keep on," said Warde.

"Nobody'll want to eat it now," said Westy. "There's no use carting it to Mary Temple's that way."

"What are you talking about!" shouted Pee-wee. "Sure we'll take it! Did I tell them we'd bring it? Listen, I've got an inspiration. It's only one block to my house; let's take it around there and refreeze it in our freezer. Then I'll have our chauffeur drive us up to Temple's with it, hey? We'll 'phone to Mary and say we've got it only we won't say it's melted, we'll just say we've got it,

and then we'll take it to my house because nobody's there, anyway, because my mother and father went to New York but, anyway, we'll get rid of this refuse first, hey, and then we'll go to my house. I bet it won't take more than a half an hour altogether."

"Good idea," said Westy. "We ought to get back to Temple's before twelve; better late than never."

"Twelve o'clock isn't too late to eat ice cream," said Westy.

"Any time isn't too late," said Pee-wee, enthused to sudden activity; "come on, hurry up!" The unsavory refuse in the car being properly disposed of, the ice cream container was placed in the huge bucket and the scattered ice piled upon it. Then the rescue party started for Pee-wee's home, carrying the bucket midway of a long stick which they held at either end.

"Gee whiz," said Pee-wee, as he carried one end of the stick, "I bet there's enough in that tin box for everybody to have two helpings, hey?"

"How long will it take to freeze it again?" the practical Westy wanted to know.

"It'll only take about fifteen minutes," Pee-wee said, "because it's a special kind of a freezer—I'll show you. As soon as we get to the house, we'll 'phone up to Temple's, hey? We'll tell 'em we rescued it by using scout resources, hey? We'll tell 'em to expect us in about half an hour, hey?"

"Some heroes," said Westy.

"Gee whiz, I bet they'll be good and glad to see us, hey?" Pee-wee shouted, all excitement. "Anyway, when a scout says he'll do a thing, he does it, that's one sure thing, hey?"

"That's what," said Warde.

"Better late than never," said Warde.

## CHAPTER XXVIII ON THE JOB

The first thing that Pee-wee did when he and his comrades reached the Harris residence was to call up Mary Temple. Pee-wee's telephone conversations always made the telephone seem rather superfluous; he shouted into it with such a thunderous voice that one might have supposed that he scorned the scientific aid which the instrument afforded him for the transmission of his ear-splitting tones. Moreover, if the black mouthpiece had been a stick of licorice, Pee-wee could hardly have kept it in more affectionate proximity to his mouth.

The boys stood waiting while he announced their triumph to the party at Temple's; and Mary Temple received his heroic words of assurance as if she were the starving leader in some besieged fortress cheered by the promises of reinforcements. The huge, ice-filled bucket reposed upon the library rug while he talked. There was no sound about; the boys seemed to have the house to themselves.

"Is this you, Mary?" shouted Pee-wee, without any punctuating pauses to his talk. "We've got the ice cream we made them let us take it and, oh, gee, there's about two gallons of it I guess and some of it's pineapple flavor so you tell everybody to wait till we get there with it—*sure*. So now anyway didn't I tell you scouts if they say they'll do a thing they do it—didn't I tell you that? So you just wait—*what?* Sure we will! Just as soon as we can get there so you make everybody stay because there's a special reason why we can't get there quite yet but anyway we'll be there in a half an hour so—*don't cut me off*—so we'll be there with it in half an hour so you make everybody stay because we've got it absolutely positively, you ask Warde.

"*Oh, boy, wasn't she glad,*" he announced, as he hung up the receiver. "One thing, I bet she'll never make fun of scouts again and anyway I'm glad Minerva Skybrow isn't here because she thinks she's so smart always jollying me and now she'll see I got resources because anyway she laughs at my clean-up badge so anyway now she'll see. Come on, let's hurry up. One of you fellers go out in the garage and wake up James and tell him to get ready because he has to take us to Temple's, and when you come back we'll be in the cellar. Never mind, I'll go because maybe he wouldn't wake up if you called him."

There was no danger at all of James not waking up when Pee-wee called him. His excited voice echoed from the silent walls of the garage and

penetrated to the apartment above where James, the chauffeur, slept.

“Wake up! Get up! You’ve got to take us to Temple’s!” Pee-wee roared. “Get the small Cadillac out, I’ll do something for you some day. I’ve got to freeze some ice cream first and we’ll be ready in about ten minutes, maybe fifteen.” He did not wait to assure himself of the effect of this mandate; it would have been better if he had. He was off, all haste and excitement, to the cellar of the house. Meanwhile, James, the chauffeur, being accustomed to Pee-wee’s thunderous appeals, did no more than turn over in bed. In delicious half sleep, he recalled that the doctor and Mrs. Harris were in the city and hazily sensed the fact that the young master was engineering some nocturnal enterprise. Whatever it was, James had no desire to cooperate in it. Pee-wee’s voice was strong enough to turn him over, but not strong enough to arouse him. So James turned over and presently was sound asleep.

Meanwhile, all was commotion in the cellar. The ice-box was divested of its square of ice, which was frantically assailed with ice-pick, monkey-wrench, and screw-drivers. Fragments flew about and littered the concrete floor. One flew against the electric light, demolishing it, which necessitated a hurried levy upon the piano lamp in the parlor, where a bulb was frantically detached.

As the cake of ice diminished into fragments, Pee-wee swept these up and stuffed them into the Harris’ modern “North Pole” freezer while Roy turned the handle, simulating an organ-grinder as he did so, the while he hummed a song. Soon the handle began to resist so that in order to keep the proper time, it was necessary to hum the song more slowly. Finally it required two scouts to turn the handle.

The ice cream was beginning to make itself felt.

Soon it was almost impossible to turn the handle. The creamy mass was again in its right mind, frozen solid, a luscious, unseen brick. They carried the huge bucket upstairs and discovering no sign of the faithless James, rested their burden in the kitchen passageway while they went out to the garage to investigate.

## CHAPTER XXIX AN INSPIRATION

While the memorable events of the last several chapters were occurring, a large touring car was speeding along the state road toward Bridgeboro. It was on its way from Stufham College in Gayville, en route to New York, and carried a merry company who had been liberated from Stufham for the Easter vacation. All except one lived in New York, and that one was none other than Elsie Harris, sister of the renowned Scout Harris, and one of the freshest of the freshman class. The others had kindly offered to drop her at Bridgeboro on their way through to the ferry.

These others were five in number. The car was driven by Willie Swallow, pride of the wealthy Swallow family of New York. Somerson Gorger, popularly known as Sum Gorger, sat beside him. In the rear seat Phil Upton sat enclosed by a laughing bevy of Stufham maidens, Joy Eaton, Letta Famish and Elsie Harris. They seemed to find an exquisite humor in fidgeting and being crowded.

“Do you know what I’d like?” asked Phil Upton.

“No, tell us,” laughed his audience in chorus.

“I’d like one, big, tall, juicy, chocolate soda,” said Phil.

“Oh, aren’t you perfectly *brutal*?” chirped Letta Famish. “Now you’ve put the idea into my head and I won’t be able to think of anything else.”

Phil Upton deliberately made matters worse. “I’d like—one—tall—juicy—dark brown——”

“Oh, don’t!” pled Joy Eaton, placing her hands over the hair which covered her ears.

“Isn’t he simply *terrible*!” said Letta Famish.

But Phil was merciless. “I’d like one—tall—juicy—dark brown—foaming—ice cream—chocolate soda. And—er—with a slice of—a three story slice of cocoanut cake on the side.”

The three girls assumed a posture of fainting.

“How about two slices?” said Willie Swallow, from in front.

“Oh, that would be better, it goes without saying.”

“It goes without eating, you mean,” said Sum Gorger.

“A raspberry soda would be nice,” suggested Will.

“It would go fast, all right,” commented Phil.

“I think you’re *utterly* without human feeling,” said Letta Famish; “without a village anywhere in this *desert waste*. We haven’t passed a store in *ages*. I



don't believe they have any stores in Jersey. The only one I've seen is a hardware store and that was about twenty miles back and it was closed."

"We might have bought some nuts there," said Will; "they say nuts are nourishing."

"I was thinking of buying some bolts there so we could bolt our food, only I happened to remember that we didn't have any food to bolt," said Phil.

"You're very smart," said Letta. "If that tire hadn't collapsed and held us up for *hours*, we'd be all right now."

"You mean you'd have eaten the tire?" said Phil.

"If you're asking *me*, I'd eat anything that could be eaten," said Letta. "I'm sorry now we didn't stop at that tea room for supper. Here it is nearly eleven o'clock and we haven't had a thing since lunch."

"That's just what I'm saying," said Phil. "A hot frankfurter and a nice, big, tall, overflowing——"

"Don't!" said his agonized listeners.

"In mercy's name," said Joy Eaton, "is there no place between here and New York where we can get a bite to eat?"

"Oh, lots of them," said Willie Swallow.

"Only they're all closed up," said Sum Gorger.

It was at this point that Elsie Harris had her memorable inspiration. Though she was older than her scout brother, she inherited many traits from him and among these was a tendency to inspirations. The one she had on this occasion turned out to be one of the most sensational of her young career.

"I have a perfectly *dandy* idea," she said. "When we reach the house I want you all to come in for some refreshments, I don't care how late it is. I don't believe there's a single soul about. I know mother and dad were going to New York, and the maid will be asleep, but we'll just ransack the pantry and take whatever there is. Walter will be in bed, thank goodness."

"So we can't eat *him*," commented Willie Swallow.

"He'd want to make hunter's stew if he was up," said Elsie. "It's an *atrocious* concoction the scouts make. Don't you feel like something sweet?"

"Do I look like something sweet?" asked Phil Upton.

"I wasn't asking you—silly!" said Elsie.

## CHAPTER XXX

### SHORT AND SWEET

The big touring car rolled silently up before the Harris residence and the predatory group stepped out. There was an ill-concealed aspect of hungry inquiry about the males of the party as they followed their young hostess into the dining-room. The girls preserved a more seemly demeanor. All, however, waived superfluous delicacy by ranging themselves wearily around the dining table awaiting the results of a hasty inspection of the pantry.

"You feel the heat as soon as you stop riding," commented Letta Famish.

"It's oppressive for this time of year," said Joy Eaton.

"I'm so tired I could just sit here all night," said Phil Upton, stretching himself in luxurious relief after the long hours of compression in the middle of the rear seat of the car. "I'm not so stuck on being a sandwich."

"Don't speak of sandwiches! Don't speak of sandwiches!" caroled Elsie, appearing in the doorway. "Come and see what I've found; it's perfectly miraculous! One of you boys come and carry it. I can't understand why it's here. Walter must have gone blind not to see it. It's ice cream! I don't know what in the world—I just bet mother and dad ordered it, thinking you might all stop here—that's just like mother and dad. Isn't it too *scrumptuous!*"

In less than three seconds the boys of Stufham were stooping over the goodly receptacle, groping in the ice for the treasure chest which they knew was there.

"Oh, let's eat it last," said Letta.

"Let's eat it first," said Willie Swallow.

"I'll see if I can find some cake," said Elsie. "It's too late to go to any trouble," said Joy Eaton. "Just let's eat cake and ice cream and be on our way."

"There are oceans of cookies," said Elsie. "Well, bring in a couple of oceans," said the unblushing Sum Gorger, as he carried the dripping metal container into the dining-room and inverted it in a huge platter.

In less than five minutes the travelers, having completely surrounded the ice cream, were making a masterly assault upon it from every point. The first round of generous helpings reduced the goodly brick by about one-quarter. The second slicing (preceded by experimental markings with a knife) was conceived with the bold view of demolishing the brick entirely. By this apportioning the party enterprisingly undertook to dispatch slices of nearly two inches in thickness.

Little did the snowy angel cake which stood close by in all its spotless

purity know that this same ice cream was a jailbird. But this need not have troubled it for soon there was no ice cream; its adventurous career was over.

“It went good, hey?”

“It certainly went,” said Letta Famish, concluding her participation with a piece of angel cake.

“We’d better be starting soon,” said Phil Upton.

“We might as well finish the cake and things and make a clean job of it,” said Sum Gorger, helping himself from the diminishing pile.

“Wasn’t that too sweet of mother and dad?” chirped Elsie. “They just thought you’d drop me here and they did it for a surprise. Oh, wasn’t it just a wonderful surprise? Have another piece of cake, everybody. And don’t be afraid of the cookies; there’s a great jar of them. Walter eats them from morning till night.”

“I wanted to see that brother of yours,” said Joy Eaton, helping herself to a cookie.

“Oh, he’s in bed long ago,” said Elsie. “And when he sleeps, really, I don’t believe an earthquake would wake him. Have just one more cookie, *do*.”

“He’s some kid, isn’t he?” Willie Swallow inquired casually, as he helped himself to several cookies.

“Yes, but he’s at his best when asleep, that’s what dad says,” said Elsie. “How he happened to miss that bucket is utterly beyond my comprehension; I can’t understand it.”

“Have another cookie?” said Willie Swallow.

“Thanks,” said Elsie, “you have one, too.”

“I’ll have a couple,” said Phil Upton, passing them on to Letta Famish.

“Following your lead,” said Sum Gorger, helping himself.

“We really must be going,” said Joy Eaton, coyly extracting a cookie from the passing dish.

“Not till the cookies have gone,” said Sum Gorger.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### PETIT LARCENY

During this massacre in the dining-room Pee-wee, watched by his admiring scout companions, was making frantic efforts to arouse the sleeping James to a sense of the emergency which existed.

“Wake up, do you hear?” he bawled, accompanying the summons with a vigorous shake. “Gee whiz, what’s the matter with you? They’re waiting at Temple’s. Get up, you have to drive there, do you hear? They’re waiting and we’ve got to take a big pail there, so hurry up and wake up and I’ll do something for you some day, do you hear?”

“Wassmatuptemples?” was the only response.

“You hurry up and wake up, do you hear?” persisted Pee-wee, increasing the vigor of his physical efforts.

At last James seemed aroused to a hazy knowledge that something was going on. He sat up, rubbed his eyes and yawned, and looked vacantly from one to the other of the group.

“Wassuptemples?” he asked.

“A whole lot is the matter!” shouted Pee-wee. “Ice cream is the matter! They’re waiting for ice cream and we’ve got to take it—I just froze it and if you lie down and go to sleep again, I’ll throw water in your face, because scouts have to do good turns and I have to take that ice cream to Temple’s, so hurry up.”

“All right,” said James in a tone of weary resignation. “You kids better put some gas in the car and blow up the front left tire, it’s a little flat; I’ll be down in a minute.”

By the time the five-gallon can was filled from the stationary gas tank and emptied into the Cadillac roadster the drowsy James staggered down from his apartment, contemplating the car in a tipsy way, as if he had never seen it before. As soon as the tire was inflated the scouts piled in and James drove along the winding roadway behind the house and up to the street where, to the surprise of all, another car was parked.

“Maybe it’s a hired car that brought my mother and father home,” said Pee-wee.

“There’s no chauffeur in it,” said Warde.

“Wait a minute and I’ll get the ice cream,” said Pee-wee.

The scene which followed is not easily described. Our hero entered the house and was about to proceed through the hall to the pantry passageway

when he heard a voice say, "Have another cooky." These innocent and hospitable words, relating to an article dear to his own heart, caused him to pause. Presently, he heard another voice say, "I'll have a couple more."

For a few seconds Pee-wee paused, speechless. Could burglars be eating the cookies—*his* cookies?

He strode through the parlor, cast aside the velvet portieres to right and left, and stood revealed to the astonished feasters. One glance told him the worst. With a terrific frown he gazed about the table like some enraged and fallen warrior contemplating a battle-field after the carnage is over. Never did he look so great—and so little. Never was his famous scowl so ominous. He looked about speechless with sublime wrath, nor heeded the sisterly greeting of "Why, Walter," from Elsie. He gazed from one to the other in horror and mounting fury. Then he denounced them.

*"You ate the ice cream!"* he roared. *"Now you see what you did!"*

"Walter," said Elsie sweetly, "these are my friends from Stufham and they've just brought me home."

"I don't care who they are!" Pee-wee roared. "You ate the ice cream that belongs to Mary Temple, and it got arrested because I had it arrested on account of the driver of the truck violating a sanitary ordinance, but anyway it was on its way to Mary Temple's party when it got arrested in the truck and Roy and Warde and Westy and I got it out and brought it here and froze it over again—*now you see what you did!* We were just going to take it to Temple's, and they're waiting for it and you went and ate it, so anyway that shows what you learn in college, you're so smart—to eat other people's ice cream. Now you're in a lot of trouble because Mr. Temple's brother is a judge and I'm an official too, do you see this badge? You think you're so smart laughing, but, anyway, you could all get arrested because that's grand larceny eating other people's ice cream! *Now you see what you all went and did!*"

"Goodness, gracious me," laughed Elsie. "Grand larceny——"

"Maybe it ain't so grand," thundered the baffled hero, "but there are different kinds of larceny and anyway it's petit larceny, that means stealing not so much, and I bet Mary Temple will never speak to you again when I tell her and she's going to have a bigger party than this one and she won't invite you to it and anyway these big fellers think they're so smart laughing that shows what fools they are—college fellers; anyway, you'll see!"

He stamped out of the room, leaving them half-laughing, half-gaping. He strode out to the waiting Cadillac, roaring his grievance in thunderous tones. Never before did innocent ice cream cause such an upheaval in the world.

Nor was this tragic sequel of Pee-wee's boasted enterprise made the more bearable by his mirthful companions, particularly the flippant Roy. It is a scout's duty to smile when things go wrong, the theory being that smiles are

more important even than ice cream. Roy was a good scout and he did more than smile, he laughed. He even roared. He was an exceptionally good scout. As for Westy and Warde, they did not make a sound. They were too far gone for that.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### A SCOUT'S REWARD

"Anyway, one thing," said the exhausted and disconsolate hero, as they drove to Temple's, "Roy has to be the one to tell Mary because he's the best talker."

"Oh, you flatter me," said Roy. "I wouldn't deprive you of the pleasure because this is really your party. It was you who had the ice cream arrested and it met its death in your house. We can't eat it, but, anyway, we can listen while you tell Mary."

"What shall I tell her?" said Pee-wee.

"Tell her how a scout is resourceful," said Roy. "Tell her how if he makes up his mind to do a thing he doesn't do it; she'll understand."

"Tell her about scouts being invincible," said Warde.

"I'd rather be invisible just now," said Westy.

"I'd rather be back in bed," said James, the chauffeur.

"Anyway, maybe it's better not to eat ice cream so late," said Pee-wee. "I'll tell her that, hey?"

"Absolutely," said Roy. "Tell them all how it's better not to eat ice cream if you haven't got any, because if you eat it when you haven't got any, you won't have any anyway. That's logic."

"She's a smart girl, she ought to understand that," said Warde.

"It serves you all right for stayin' up so late," said James, the chauffeur.

"The ice cream quit the game before we did," said Westy.

"That shows we're real sports, real scouts," said Warde. "We're not quitters."

"It's better for us to show up victorious without the ice cream," said Roy, "than for the ice cream to show up without us, because——"

"You're crazy!" shouted Pee-wee.

"It serves us right for mixing up with ice cream that's been in jail," said Roy. "Scouts are known by the company they keep. Mary will be proud of us when the kid tells her how we decided not to have anything to do with such ice cream; leave it to the kid, he knows what to say."

"The matter is in his hands," said Westy.

"But not the ice cream," said Warde.

"The next time I get up in the middle of the night you young fools will know it," said James, the chauffeur.

"You ought to be glad you're here to see Pee-wee's triumph," said Roy.

“He expects a warm reception. It’ll be so warm it would melt the cream, anyway, so everything is as bad as can be if not better. This is Pee-wee’s big night. You ought to be glad we called you.”

Pee-wee, wedged in among the others, preserved a frowning silence.

At Temple’s they gave him a warm reception indeed, crowding around the auto, cheering and clapping their hands. From the piano indoors floated the inspiring strains of “Hark, the Conquering Hero Comes.”

“Let me carry the bucket,” one called.

“Hand it out here,” said another.

“Don’t you bother, we’ll carry it,” protested a third.

“When a scout says he’ll do a thing,” said a laughing girl.

“It’s as good as done,” said a young fellow.

Pee-wee’s discomfort reached an acute stage as the clamoring group of merry-makers groped expectantly about the floor of the car and in the compartment in the rear. Never was his frown so inscrutable as at that moment when he sat wedged in between the laughing members of his futile expedition while a gathering, joyous host sang his praises and did honor to the Boy Scouts of America.

It would be difficult to say what inspired response he would have made if something had not relieved him of the burden of explanation and defense. This something was nothing less than the laughing countenance of that arch-criminal, Sum Gorger, who was beaming on him from among the throng. Scarcely was he aware of this apparition when he saw also another familiar face—that of Willie Swallow. And then he beheld the depraved countenance of his sister Elsie, laughing as if she had no remembrance of her petit larceny.

He was just about to renew his tirade against this band of thieves when Mary Temple, laughing all over, elbowed her way through the mirthful party and leaned over into the car and kissed Pee-wee plunk on his mouth, just as he was about to pour a fresh stream of denunciation from that inexhaustible source.

“Don’t you pay any attention to them,” she said. “I think you’re just a little brick and I like this kind of brick better than bricks of ice cream, so there! Elsie telephoned me all about it and I told her to come right away and bring her band of robbers with her; so here they all are—they speeded here. And we’re going to have one last dance and everything is all right and I say we all give three cheers for the Boy Scouts of America and it will be a cold day when they get left and——”

“Don’t talk about freezing, *please*,” said Roy.

“And I think your clean-up campaign is perfectly *splendid*,” said Mary, “and we’re all coming to your block party down in Barrel Alley.”

“No more bricks, only blocks,” said Roy.



“Don’t you mind them,” said Mary.

And with that she leaned into the car again and kissed the clean-up worker of Barrel Alley plunk on his mouth.

So there you are; it was the same old story again of Pee-wee triumphant, proving conclusively that even when he failed he triumphed. He started forth to get a bucket of ice cream and instead he got two kisses from Mary Temple. And any one who says that a kiss from Mary Temple is not sweeter than a gallon or so of ice cream doesn’t know what he’s talking about.

## CHAPTER XXXIII THE GALA NIGHT

The willing worker of Barrel Alley had his reward at the dinner with which the intensive campaign for a cleaner Bridgeboro was celebrated. No less a personage than Mayor Rufstuff himself presented Pee-wee with the silken banner containing the words *Make our Town a Spotless Town*. And Pee-wee looked like a knight of the Holy Grail as he stood holding this testimonial while he dextrously ate a bunch of grapes, using only one hand.

If Pee-wee had proven a good worker (as he unquestionably had) it should at least be said in justice to the others whose careers we have not followed that our redoubtable hero had wrought in an exceptionally good territory. If you are going to clean up you must have the raw material for this work, and that is dirt and litter. Barrel Alley had been rich in these things.

He had made friends with the Barrel Alleyites, and that is saying much for Pee-wee. Even Mrs. Farrell, mother of the besmeared Matty Farrell, had forgiven Pee-wee, and Matty himself had forgotten his near plunge into fashionable society. The McNulty twins regarded Pee-wee as a world hero. Kid Lanski respected him. Rose Myrtle Flynn worshiped the ground he walked on. And that ground was solid concrete. For Barrel Alley had been paved.

The barrel staves whence the place derived its name had been replaced by tidy sidewalks. The muddy area between, where hapless auto trucks had been stuck in the mire, was now as smooth and clean as glass. Upon its inviting stretch, Irene Gerstein's skinny little legs poked this way and that on treacherous roller-skates. Collie de Coon chalked pictures upon it, and in one place was printed in sprawling white the declaration **MARCUS KAPLAN LOVES ROSALIE MCGARRIGAN**.

Barrel Alley was a tidy little street one block long, and it was going to celebrate its acceptance into the polite society of streets with a block dance. Rosalie McGarrigan, beloved of Marcus Kaplan, had already acquired pumps and stockings of snowy white for this gala function. Rose Myrtle Flynn was likewise prepared.

The elder sisters of this younger set, who had ignored the clean-up enterprise of Pee-wee, now began to take note of the new order of things and to procure fine raiment for the occasion. They were, so to speak, going to dance on the crest of a clean-up wave with which they had had nothing to do.

If our hero had been a little more sensitive it would have galled him to note how these complacent factory girls made ready to enjoy the pleasures rendered

possible by the work which they had tolerated with haughty disdain. It was Pee-wee's part to sow, and theirs to reap. Their one thought was the block dance and what they should wear.

On the evening of the great event, Barrel Alley (now called Bank Place because it ran along the rear of the big bank building on Main Street) presented a gay spectacle. Housewives representing as many countries as the League of Nations sat upon the doorstep of the tenements or took balcony seats in upper windows, leaning on cushions placed upon the window-sills.

From casement to casement across the street were hung streamers of bunting from which depended parti-colored Japanese lanterns. The poles supporting the new arc lights were wound in the same festive material like scout bandages in first aid practice. At either end of the little street ropes completely insulated with patriotic bunting shut out the scene of gayety from traffic, and here also were little booths similarly attired where ten cents admission was to be paid.

The middle of the street had been scrubbed clean, obliterating the artistic efforts of the younger set. The exact middle of the block was determined by the new fire hydrant placed there, and with this as a guide to the center of festivities a large motor truck had been placed in the middle of the street midway of the block. This was decorated with flags and bunting and filled with camp chairs. These were for the accommodation of Rudolph Slambanger's band. The rickety little camp chairs seemed destined to a heavy responsibility for the Slambanger musicians were men of vast dimensions, Professor Rudolph himself being exactly five feet one inch in height and six feet one inch in circumference. In a sense they were a little German band, but in a broader sense they were a huge German band.

Near this colorful, makeshift bandstand stood a portly sugar barrel painted red on which was printed the word REFUSE. The word was upside down, for the empty barrel had been inverted to form a small platform from which Bridgeboro's famous orator, Doctor Atom, was to celebrate the new order of things with a speech on the subject of public spirit and cleanliness. After that the barrel would stand at the corner for the reception of contributions: paper bags, discarded cigarette boxes, apple cores, banana peels, and such other articles of discard as had formerly terminated their careers in the muddy gutter.

Doctor Atom was easily the most dignified and self-important man in Bridgeboro. He was on the School Board, he was on the Board of Health, he was on the Clean-up Committee, he was on the Municipal League, he was on the Swat-the-fly Committee, he was on the Mosquito Exterminating Committee. He was on everything. And so now he was going to be on the barrel. It seemed not altogether inappropriate that he had been chosen to speak on the subject of trash. . . .

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### TRASH

On the memorable evening of Barrel Alley's "coming out," the little renamed street presented a gala scene. The moon shone brightly down upon the spotless little thoroughfare; a myriad of stars lit the sky. A fitful breeze just strong enough to fan and exhilarate the dancers carried the strains of Rudolph Slambanger's band beyond the borders of festivity and up to the tenement windows where the matrons of the alley lolled upon their cushioned window-sills.

To those who preferred to look down rather than up, the picture was equally festive, showing a gliding multitude of snowy pumps and silken stockings white as snow. The "cake-eater" was there in all his glory, some of this sprightly race having skillfully evaded the admission booth by coming through the dark alley beside Ching Foo's Laundry.

Among these was Orville Cheape, in belted jacket with slanting pockets and miniature bow tie. His spider-like legs, encased in trousers fitting like a glove, could be seen gliding here and there supporting a body given to weird gymnastics. Only his hair parted precisely in the middle kept him from losing his center of gravity altogether. He was frantically busy dancing, losing never a minute or a dance; he paused like a restive horse in the intervals of music, then went to it again, pell-mell. Such concentration might have won him a fortune in any practical line of endeavor.

In the midst of this gala scene sat Pee-wee Harris, perched upon the new fire hydrant like some ancient king witnessing a court ball or a tournament. He had selected this seat partly because of its novelty, and partly also because of its proximity to the inverted barrel and to the bandstand. For it was Pee-wee's rule never to miss anything whether it appealed to him especially or not. About him on the curb lolled members of his particular set in this scene of his toils and triumphs, Marcus Kaplan, Horace Levy, Rose Myrtle Flynn, and Matty Farrell. Several of the scouts from his own troop in the outer world also sat upon the curb near by.

It was in an intermission of the dancing that Miss Snookem of the Clean-up Committee worked her way among the pausing couples, escorting the clean-up orator, Doctor Atom.

"Gee whiz, I've got no use for him," Pee-wee confided to his official staff. "Once he came to school and started talking just before school got out, and he kept on talking and we had to sit there about a half an hour after school time."

“He says we dassn’t eat pie and candy,” said Rose Myrtle Flynn.

“Who dassn’t?” demanded Pee-wee. “He’s crazy.”

“He says yer git consumthing from leavin’ yer mouth open,” observed Matty Farrell.

“That shows he’s crazy, because I can prove it, because mine’s open all the time,” said Pee-wee, with undoubted truth.

“Is it open when you’re asleep?” asked Rose Myrtle.

“I can’t see it when it’s asleep,” said Pee-wee.

“Yer gotta keep it shut when yer asleep, he says, that’s what he says,” said Rose Myrtle.

“I got no use for him,” said Pee-wee, “because anyway he’s against jaw-breakers; he’s against mince pie too.”

“He thinks he’s a smarty,” said little Irene Gerstein.

She was right, he did think he was a smarty. And he was in his element tonight, stopping the world from turning round, so that he might hear himself talk. He was portly and gracious and consequential. His eye-glasses hung on a cord and he dangled them in one hand as he advanced through the impatiently waiting groups. It was time for the party to take its pill, and he was about to administer the pill. He glanced about to see if a reporter from the *Evening Bugle* was present and, being assured of this, he made the ascent of the barrel by means of a grocery box. Rudolph Slambanger threw open his brass-buttoned coat, revealing his suspenders, and sat back oblivious to the orator to enjoy a longer interval of ease. The standing couples waited impatiently.

“Smarty, smarty, smarty,” said Irene Gerstein in an undertone.

“Shut up,” whispered Pee-wee, “he’ll hear you.”

“This is a great occasion for the citizens of your flourishing neighborhood,” said Doctor Atom, “and I congratulate you. The committee has asked me to speak to you for a few minutes about the work, the wonderful work that has been done in our town, and especially down here, looking to a new era of, er, what shall I say—cleanliness and order. We are proud of our town, but our town needed an awakening.

“Here where the mud was thick is now a neatly paved street, a street to be proud of. The attention of the town was drawn to this street by the wonderful work done down here by the sturdy little representative of the Boy Scouts who has [“He makes me tired,” whispered Pee-wee] won your coöperation in helping to make your street a spotless street and your town a spotless town.

“This barrel on which I am standing is for refuse. Similar receptacles have been placed at street corners throughout the town. They are for your use in helping to keep our streets free of rubbish.” (Doctor Atom paused, dangling his eye-glasses and beaming upon the restless waiters.) “Nothing but rubbish is to go into these barrels. They are——”

At this point an ominous cracking sound was heard, then a pronounced crash, as Doctor Atom precipitately descended into the depths of the treacherous rubbish barrel which was intended to contain nothing but rubbish!

## CHAPTER XXXV

### A NEW STEP

We will charitably draw the curtain before the inglorious efforts of the doctor to emerge from the barrel, observing only that a barrel is an easier thing to get into than to get out of. And this is not the less so in the case of a portly and dignified personage. It is said that music has charms to soothe the savage breast and it is to be hoped the *one-step* shortly begun by Rudolph Slambanger's band soothed the wounded dignity if not the bodily bruises of Doctor Atom. The Alleyites always remembered, when they looked at the familiar refuse barrel standing at the corner, that the first thing to go into it had been Doctor Atom, who was so fond of getting into everything.

The party was now in full swing, fashionable late arrivals appearing every minute. Lines of cars were parked along adjoining blocks. Mary Temple and her set were there. Sum Gorger had come all the way from New York to be the escort of Elsie Harris, and Pee-wee called to him from his seat upon the hydrant, "Hey, Gorger, don't steal the band-wagon."

Ever and again Orville Cheape swung past this miniature, makeshift grandstand, where our hero sat enthroned reviewing the motley spectacle, his courtiers and favorites on the curb at his feet.

At the height of the festivities these watchers were regaling themselves with peanuts, candy and bananas purchased from Bruno Sigliano, who had cautiously threaded the moving throng with a basket reposing against his abdomen supported by a strap around his neck. Bruno's trade was mostly with the younger non-dancing set.

In the course of his strenuous gyrations Orville Cheape appeared and disappeared, now with this fair partner, now with that, always with a kind of frantic concentration on his dancing. His ankles shook, he swayed, he dipped; and once, as he passed, he reached out casually and deftly detached a banana which was protruding out of its surrounding peel in the small hand of Rose Myrtle Flynn.

Having pulled away the rind, she was holding the luscious refreshment like a lily in her little, freckled hand ready to take the initial bite. Suddenly the banana was not there, it had been removed like a prize ring in a merry-go-round, and only the yellow empty memorial remained in the clutch of Rose Myrtle. She looked at it incredulously as if a miracle had been performed. Meanwhile, Orville Cheape went swirling around enjoying his refreshment en route.

“You big, fresh, skinny jumping-jack!” shouted Pee-wee from his throne. “Haven’t you got two cents to buy a banana?”

But Orville Cheape only glanced back over his shoulder and laughed. Though thin, he was abnormally thick in some respects and Pee-wee’s altogether accurate surmise as to his financial condition did not embarrass him in the least.

“He’s a smarty, that’s what he is,” said little Irene Gerstein.

Rose Myrtle Flynn, now fully aware of what had happened, did not conceal her disappointment; she wept.

“He’s a crazy fool of a jumping-jack, that’s what he is,” said Pee-wee.

“He’s a freshy,” said little Sadie Lanski.

“Give me the peel,” said Pee-wee, “and I’ll throw it in the barrel for you. Gee whiz, I’ll get you another banana when the man comes round; don’t you cry. I’ve got more than—I’ve got less than a dollar, I have.”

But Rose Myrtle would not be comforted. Worse, she would not consign the empty peel to the masterly, accurate aiming hand of the scout. She would have her willful woman’s way. In her despairing abandon of grief she heeded not the offer of the scout, but swinging the banana peel to and fro like a kind of wigwag signal of distress, hurled it despairingly at the barrel. Her heart was not in this effort and the peel fell short of the barrel just at the propitious moment when Orville Cheape and his fair partner came tripping, twirling, gliding again toward the little party about the hydrant.

Almost immediately Orville Cheape invented a new step never heard of in modern dancing before. The first evidence that something was wrong was observable in a gallant effort of Orville’s partner to assist him to preserve his balance. But her inspired effort was useless. She could not cope with a banana peel. He slid, he reeled, he performed a kind of pinwheel loop, he vainly sought to save himself with wildly out-swung arms, while neighboring couples paused and waited. As if to celebrate his descent, Rudolph Slambanger’s band united in a mighty effort, puffing their red cheeks heroically as their clamorous instruments sounded above the unholy laughter of merry maidens and their swains.

And then he went down—*kerplunk*. No descent in all the history of the world, not even the fall of Napoleon or that of the Roman Empire, could have equaled the fall of Orville Cheape. For Napoleon and the Roman Empire did not fall *kerplunk*. They fell gradually, whereas Orville fell *kerplunk*.

And there he lay sprawling on the spotless concrete pavement, one hand pressed against an aching side, the other held against his forehead. And in those few moments of anguish Orville Cheape was a good scout, for he saw all the stars in the universe. No scout could have sought a more panoramic view of the starry firmament than Orville saw.



“Oh, you fell down,” said an inspired girl nearby.

“You don’t have to tell him,” shouted Pee-wee, “he knows it.”

“Smarty, smarty, smarty,” called little Irene Gerstein, scorning restraint and jumping up and down with glee. She was even inspired to poetry as she bobbed up and down, calling:

“You thought you were a smarty,  
You fell down at the party;  
And I’m glad, and I’m glad, and I’m glad!”

A swelling chorus of the younger set sent up the joyous refrain of “I’m glad, I’m glad, I’m glad!” Pee-wee, never at a loss for an inspiration, composed an immortal couplet then and there and shocked the quiet heaven as he thundered it:

“The crazy jumping-jack,  
He fell down on his back;  
And we’re glad, and we’re glad, and we’re glad.”

The fallen “cake-eater” contemplated them severely as he was helped to his feet, every bone in his agile body hurting. If his head was not injured it must have been because it contained nothing subject to injury. Nor did he appreciate the unconscious humor of Rudolph Slambanger, who, pausing not to learn the sequel of this new step, upraised his baton and started his round-cheeked musicians playing the familiar dance air known as *Stumbling*. And, meanwhile, the autocrat of the hydrant kept up a discordant accompaniment with his own inspired composition:

“The sharpy thief,  
He came to grief.  
The jumping-jack,  
He hurt his back  
And we’re glad, and we’re glad . . .”

And the moral of this chapter is that if you are going to steal a banana at a dance it is best to steal the whole article, skin and all.

## CHAPTER XXXVI OFF WITH THE DANCE

Orville Cheape was not seen upon the festive concrete again that evening; perhaps he was studying the stars. But he was the unconscious, indirect cause of an occurrence unrivaled by anything of its kind in history since the days of Noah's Ark.

The best information as to the original cause of this novel variation in the festivities is furnished by little Irene Gerstein who, in alluding to Pee-wee's vociferous celebration of Orville Cheape's fall, declared:

"He was yellin' so loud, he couldn' keep his feet still, he couldn', an' he nearly tumbled off the hydrant, he did, he was yellin' so; I seen him and yer can ask Rose Myrtle if he didn'."

It is her reference to Pee-wee's feet with which we are chiefly concerned.

"He kep' kickin' and kickin'," she said, "an' pretty soon water began drippin' out an' I says to 'im it was drippin' out, I says, 'Oh, looker what yer done,' I says, didn' I, Rose Myrtle?"

The most rational deduction seems to be that Pee-wee's foot exercised some unintentional pressure upon a large wrench designed especially to fit around the huge octagonal nozzle of the hydrant. That this had been left in place by the silver buttoned official from the fire-house who had flushed the street preparatory to the dance, was no fault of Pee-wee's. He never meddled with a public apparatus. Nay, the very warning of *Hands Off* printed near the nozzle would have deterred Pee-wee from meddling, though indeed he might have been technically safe in meddling with his feet, since the warning referred only to the hands.

When Pee-wee's active foot hit upon the projecting end of the wrench that treacherous tool inscribed about forty-five degrees of a circle in its downward course. It was then that Irene Gerstein noticed a slight dribbling from below the nozzle and remarked, "Looker what yer done." Pee-wee looked and, being a fixer, resolved to fix it. He never knew himself exactly what he did, more than that the flat wrench fell on the ground, that he replaced it and turned it, evidently the wrong way. . . .

At that epochal moment Rudolph Slambanger's band was playing the *Three O'clock in the Morning* waltz while a hundred couples, fallen for a few minutes under the spell of the graceful dancing of a better day, were moving in unison with a real melody.

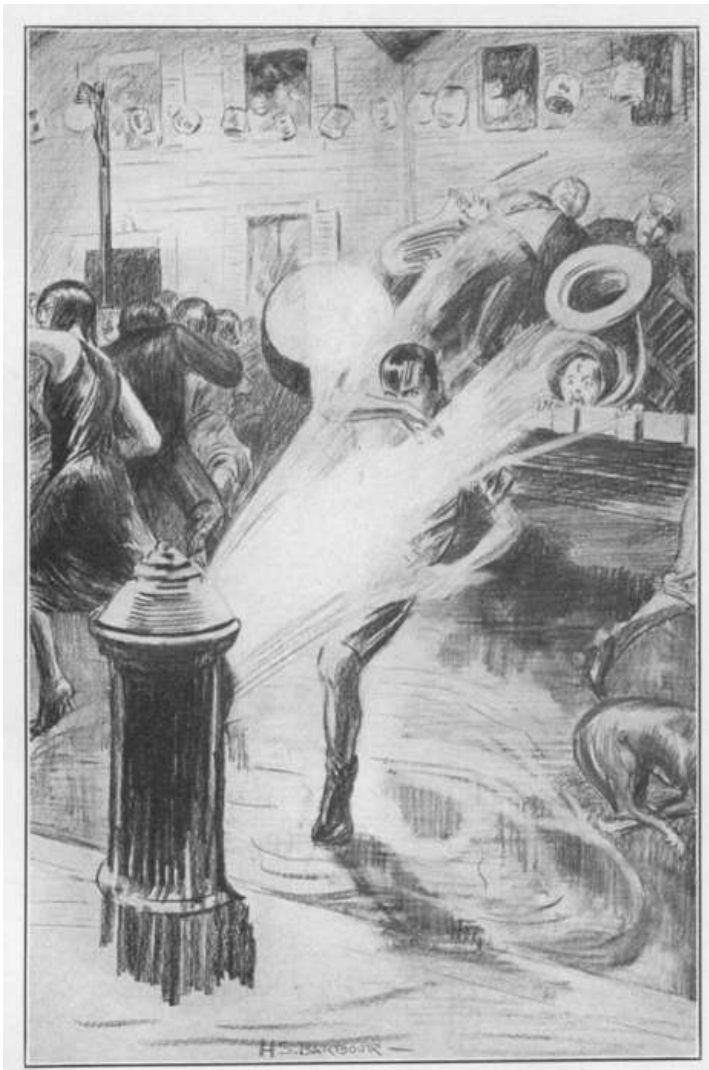
Suddenly, the huge brass instrument which affectionately encircled the

neck of Gustav Schwindmetz, and pointed its capacious opening directly at Pee-wee, emitted a series of weird sounds as if it were sneezing, and Gustav withdrew his lips from the mouthpiece in consternation. At this instant Professor Rudolph himself was struck full in his rosy face with a gushing column of water. A scream from one fair dancer, a sudden pause and frantic retreat by others, a familiar but incredible exclamation from the band-wagon, and the show was on in full force. A horizontal stream of goodly volume poured into the band-wagon, routing the musicians, and causing chaos and confusion within the bunting-bedecked confines.

“Voss iss diss?” roared Franz Lobspiel, inverting his saxophone as he frantically sought refuge in the corner of the wagon. The instrument emitted water like a faucet. “Didn’ you got no sense a’ready? Turn it off yet! My gosh, diss iss no joke yet!”

“My gosh, ve got drouned!” roared Professor Slambanger. “Get de vagon in de road out! Turn over it mitt der crank!”

By this time pandemonium reigned. Pee-wee, intent on replacing the nozzle cap, stood manfully at his post directly in front of the stream, trying vainly to combat the force of the water which drenched him and all but bowled him over whenever he placed his whole small form full in its vigorous path. His reeling body had the effect of splitting the outflow and sending several streams this way and that with increased force, assailing the scurrying revelers, seeking them out as it took new and freakish directions, drenching white pumps and fluffy raiment, and leaving a multitude of frantic refugees shivering and breathless upon the curbs.



PEE-WEE'S REELING BODY HAD THE EFFECT OF SPLITTING  
THE OUTFLOW.

Those who had at first been within the radius of the horizontal geyser's activity were thoroughly soaked, their streaming raiment clinging to them like bathing suits. Others, beyond the sphere of assault, escaped with no greater damage than soaking feet caused by the pursuing water which spread over the street before they could seek refuge on the curb.

*"Leave it to me! Leave it to me! I'll manage it!"* roared Pee-wee above the tumult, as he vainly tried to stem the bee-line column.

His heroic efforts to get the octagonal stopper back in place as he jumped from one side of the stream to the other were excruciating if the company had been in a humor to be amused. Now he was full in front of the assailing column, staggering under its force; now he was at one side of it, now at the other. When his swaying body was not impeding its progress it shot full at the musical center of Barrel Alley where the confusion was greatest.

“Leave it to me! Leave it to me!” he roared, waving aside all proffers of assistance. “Wait a minute, I’ll fix it!”

By this time the middle of the street was flooded while upon the curbs bordering this swelling river crowded the bedraggled revelers, watching the heroic efforts of the hero to turn back the assailing host of rushing water.

Meanwhile a rotund German musician was trying to crank the engine of the gay bandstand while the other members of the band hurriedly moved their easels and saturated sheet music out of line of the rushing column.

“Giff me dot Blou Danube yet!” roared Professor Rudolph, alluding to the dance about to be played. “Look out for dot Prite Eyes vonsdpepp. Och! Dake dot poy away vrum dere, he don’t do nuddings a’ready!”

“Wait a minute! Wait a minute!” Pee-wee roared.

Those who sat luxuriously in upper windows could afford to laugh. And they did laugh—especially Mrs. Flynn, proud mother of Rose Myrtle. She was a woman built upon the architectural lines of a bowl of jelly, and she shook when she laughed as the jolly Santa Claus in the poem is said to have done. “He’s give me a headache laughin’,” she said, her capacious form shaking in uncontrollable mirth. “It’s loik Charlie Chaplin, so it is.”

At this moment some misguided youngster handed Pee-wee a board, probably upon the ill-advised theory that by slapping it against the nozzle the outflowing stream could be checked. It proved to be unsound engineering in the last degree. The stream pushed the board away with Pee-wee behind it, and as he strove to hold it upright the powerful column tilted it to such an angle that the unruly water went careering upward upon it and straight into the window where Mrs. Flynn sat.

Here indeed was a Charlie Chaplin comedy. The widow Flynn, emerging drenched from the deluge, shook her fist, uttering imprecations almost as forceful as the water itself, and seized by an impulse of retaliation hurled the cushion on which she had been resting her arms straight at the form of Scout Harris. It alighted instead upon the great mass of yellow hair surmounting the head of Violetta Mochlotif, who for a moment resembled some tipsy East Indian. She acknowledged its receipt not in the language of gratitude, as she pulled it from her streaming hair.

At last, while our hero was still vigorously opposing every kindly proffer of coöperation in his gallant efforts, the engine of the motor truck was

persuaded to start, and the band-wagon, driven by Fritz Schmitt, went rolling along the flooded thoroughfare and paused at the corner, where a general housecleaning of its saturated interior proceeded.

Meanwhile, a policeman accompanied by a fireman hurried through the throngs crowding the narrow sidewalk and promptly relieved Pee-wee of his self-imposed responsibility. He yielded only to the strong arm of the law, supplemented by the fire department.

This sensational cleansing process, of which he had been the genius, ended the block party which had been intended to celebrate the debut of Barrel Alley as Bank Place, and to terminate the great clean-up campaign in a blaze of glory. And what matter whether it terminated in a blaze of glory or a stream of water. Perhaps the climax was an instance of our hero's inspired genius, for is not water the symbol of cleanliness?

And since Barrel Alley was to appear henceforth under a new name perhaps it was not inappropriate that it should go through the ordeal of baptism.

## CHAPTER XXXVII AS GOOD AS HIS WORD

A clean-up drive, like any other kind of a drive, is of the nature of a spasm. It is easy to arouse interest, but it is not so easy to perpetuate it. People like novelty. Newspapers in small towns encourage drives because such spurts of interest and activity and public spirit afford them material for news.

It is easy to contribute small sums of money for the preparation of rubbish barrels and prize banners. It is not so easy to acquire the conviction that cleanliness and order are just as important out of doors as indoors. To maintain an interest in outdoor tidiness one must be able to think of the woods as a sort of vast outdoor parlor without the jimcracks of a stuffy indoor parlor.

It was amusing how Bridgeboro, having sent around willing workers with wagons to clean up street and field and neighboring grove, settled complacently back in its old ways when the drive was over. Men scaled their cigarette boxes into the street as of yore. Vacant fields, even in the most exclusive neighborhoods, became miniature dumps for the disposal of tin cans and all sorts of cellar and attic rubbish.

The people who did these things cleaned their houses every Friday, had flower-beds, and kept their automobiles spic and span. But they had no regard for the land outside their own premises. In the little grove on the quiet, shaded Terrace Avenue, you could have picked up any kind of discarded household paraphernalia, old hats, broken phonograph records, rusty tin cans. . . .

But an idea once implanted in the head of Scout Harris was not easily eradicated. He had had the time of his life cleaning up, he had learned (what apparently few people knew) that there are laws about these things which can be invoked. And that it was good fun invoking them. If a law can be invoked during a drive, it can as easily be invoked at other times, and the knowledge of this fact was the cause of Pee-wee's celebrated encounter with Messthal's Mammoth Dollar Down Furniture House.

On a certain fair morning Pee-wee emerged from his home to find the street littered with square white papers. Wherever he looked he saw them. There seemed to be thousands of them, blowing about in the fresh spring breeze.

Glancing along the pleasant, shaded block, he saw a young fellow, equipped with a leather receptacle held by a strap over one shoulder, hurrying from porch to porch. He paid no attention whatever to private walks but took a short-cut across the lawns in his hurrying progress.

One of these flitting papers had been thrown on the porch of Pee-wee's home and from it he learned that Messthal's Mammoth Dollar Down Furniture House was to have one of its "smashing" annual clearance sales, the sort of "annual" sale that it held about once a month. Pee-wee learned that "while the stock lasted" articles might be had "for less than cost." And so on, and so on. The young fellow who was scattering these handbills was only one of many idle youths earning a little pin-money in the spring vacation, and to do this he and his colleagues were littering up the pleasant residential streets with these printed lies.

The drive being over, no one paid any particular attention to this youth who was blazing his trail on Terrace Avenue; that is, no one except Pee-wee. He lost no time in catching up with the young fellow against whom he emphatically made a double charge, looking up at him without the least sign of fear or embarrassment.

"Gee whiz, don't you know better than to be crossing everybody's lawns? Anyway, you've got no right to be throwing handbills around; that shows how much you know about town ordinances. You better stop throwing those things around, that's all I've got to say."

There is one universal answer to such talk when addressed by a boy to an older boy; it is a phrase eloquent of contempt and of sneering disregard.

"Hey, how do you get that way, Kid?"

"Never you mind how I get that way," said Pee-wee. "If I had my clean-up drive badge with me, I'd show you how I got that way, and I had some people arrested, too, and if you don't believe it you can ask Chief Bray. And you haven't got any right to be throwing those things around and if you don't believe it, I'll show you."

"Yere?" drawled the youth. "Hey, Kid, where do you get that stuff? Go on home and dust out the coal bin; chase yourself and shovel the air off the front porch."

By way of illustrating his contempt, the young fellow threw half a dozen handbills instead of one on the nearest porch and took a short-cut across the lawn to the next porch.

Meanwhile Pee-wee hurried in breathless excitement to the police station. Here was a good test case in which the power of the law might be used in ordinary times when there was no "drive" to stimulate public spirit.

Chief Bray heard Pee-wee patiently. "Well," said he, "we'll soon put a stop to that sort of thing. You show Officer Corbin where this young fellow is and, meanwhile, I'll get in touch with Messthal's."

Pee-wee, highly elated, accompanied the burly officer to the block on Terrace Avenue where the heedless distributor was still hurrying from house to house, scattering his handbills like dried leaves in autumn. It surprised Pee-



wee that the officer seemed not in the least excited, for Pee-wee himself was in a state of high suspense.

“You—you ain’t going to arrest him, are you?” he asked. “Because, gee whiz, if he’ll only stop——”

“Oh, he’ll stop,” said Officer Corbin grimly.

“I’m not mad at him,” said Pee-wee, “only——”

“He’ll stop all right,” said the officer.

The distributor was rather less flippant with the official. He did not ask him how he got that way, but seemed rather dismayed at being summarily ordered to desist from his honest labors.

“I didn’t know I couldn’t distribute bills,” he said in meek surprise.

“Didn’ yer?” said Officer Corbin. “Well, now I’m tellin’ yer. So pack up yer stuff and beat it out o’ here before I lock yer up.”

Pee-wee had promised himself the luxury of saying “I told you so.” But now that the game was going his way, he felt embarrassed, almost ashamed. He had put this sneering, heedless young fellow at a humiliating disadvantage where no flippant retort was possible. And now, being master of the situation, he felt just a little mean at having such a powerful ally as the law.

He was a pretty good, all round little scout, was Pee-wee. . . .

## CHAPTER XXXVIII ACCORDING TO THE LAW

So far, so good. The law had worked as if it were oiled. Now that the young man had been eliminated, Pee-wee felt proud of what he had done. Why do people leave it for boy scouts to do such things? It had been very simple.

Feeling the dignity of his affiliation with the law, Pee-wee accompanied the burly officer back to the police station. Here he found that the wheels of justice do not always move so smoothly. Mr. Max Messthal, head of Messthal's Mammoth Dollar Down Furniture House, was in the police station talking with the Chief. And he had brought a lawyer with him. Both of these callers were very insistent and emphatic. Pee-wee saw that he had indeed started something. Chief Bray was not to be browbeaten and Pee-wee felt a thrill and a sense of awe in listening to him.

"I told you, you can't throw handbills in doorways and that's all there is to it," said the chief.

"We got twenty men doing this," protested Mr. Messthal.

"Well, you'd better call them in or every one of them will be locked up—and you too," said the chief with appalling emphasis.

"They have a right to deliver communications to private residences," insisted the lawyer. "They have a big enterprise hanging on this publicity work. They can't advertise in the newspaper because the printers are on strike. How are they going to make this big sale known? You can't interfere——"

The chief interrupted him peremptorily; to Pee-wee, Chief Bray seemed nothing less than a world hero. And he, Scout Harris, had started a world war. "I'll tell you just exactly what you've got a right to do," said the chief. "And if you do anything else, you'll be locked up. Now, is that plain enough?"

"That boy should be in school," said Mr. Messthal. "Why don't you enforce the law about children going to school, I'd like to know?"

"You're so smart, it's vacation," thundered Pee-wee. "And I got ninety-eight for attendance this term and I was only out twice and once was from eating four bananas and I had gas something or other and anyway, your son Herman was out about twenty times because he's in my class so that shows how much you care about boys going to school—*geeeeeee whiz!*"

"Never mind about that," said the chief.

"He doesn't even know it's vacation," said Pee-wee.

"We have some rights," said Mr. Messthal. "And I'm going to tell you what they are," said the chief. "You can take the law straight from me and it

won't cost you a cent," he added, with a significant nod of his head toward the lawyer. "If you want to put handbills in letter-boxes, you can do that."

"Most people haven't got no letter-boxes," said Mr. Messthal.

"Then you've got to ring the front door bell and hand your ad to whoever comes to the door. Or you can stick them under doors if you want to, for all I care."

"They got weather strips," said the furniture man.

"All right, that's all there is to it. You can hand those bills to people or actually *deliver* them at houses. But you can't throw them around. And I'll tell you this too, if any more of this business goes on, you'll find yourself in trouble."

"You admit we can stand and hand out bills?" demanded the lawyer.

"Yes, you can do that."

"The people he hands them to will only throw them away," ventured Pee-wee. "Gee whiz, nobody wants to know about his old furniture sale."

"Well, we can't help that," said the impartial official. "If he hands a circular to somebody on a public street and the person receiving it throws it away it's no fault of his."

"Absolutely not," concurred Mr. Messthal with alacrity. "It's them that will be making the litter."

"Yes, but it's you that's making it now," said the chief, "and you'd better call your distributors in before they get into trouble."

"Gee whiz, I don't see how it'll keep the streets any cleaner if they hand them out," Pee-wee said, inspired to boldness by the utter absurdity of the alternative.

"Well, that's the way it is," said the chief.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### THE ROUND-UP

Pee-wee had never dreamed that the law had jokers in it. He took the simple view that the law was devised for the accomplishment of certain ends. But here was a most ridiculous situation. It was a violation of an ordinance to distribute handbills in doorways and on porches because they blew about and made a litter in the street. But the free-born citizen might stand on the street and hand a handbill to any other free-born citizen who would forthwith throw it in the street. And there you are—there is your handbill in the street.

It would be legal to arrest every individual who threw a handbill in the street, but manifestly that would not be possible. Because *all* the people throw them in the street. There were not enough policemen in Bridgeboro to arrest them all. So the law, so worthily invoked by Pee-wee, was just a farce.

When he sallied forth after lunch that same day, he perceived the helplessness of the law in such matters. At every street corner along Main Street was stationed a man, or in some cases a girl, passing out handbills of the great annual clearance sale. Everybody willingly accepted these, glanced at them and threw them away. About one person in every twenty stuffed one carelessly in his pocket. People received them with rather more show of interest from the girl distributors than from the men. But practically all the handbills found their way to the gutter.

It was during the futile task of picking some of these up that Pee-wee had one of his greatest inspirations. So great was it, indeed, that he dropped the papers he had picked up and ran pell-mell to the home of his patrol leader, Artie Van Arlen.

“Wait till I tell you something,” he shouted, “and shut up till I get through a lot of things happened to-day while you were mowing your lawn and I nearly had a feller arrested for throwing handbills around and I was in an argument with a lawyer and Mr. Dollar Mammoth whatever his name is, you know the man that keeps the furniture store and Chief Bray stopped them from throwing handbills on porches on account of me because I made a complaint [pause for air] but anyway now they’re handing them to people on Main Street—*listen*—they’re *handing* them to people on Main Street and they got a right to do that and nobody can stop them and I’ve got a dandy idea. [Pause for air.] Did you have your lunch?”

“You don’t want me to eat the handbills, do you?” Artie asked.

“You’re crazier than Roy Blakeley,” Pee-wee said. “Listen, there are a

whole lot of big peach baskets in our cellar, gee whiz, I guess about a hundred, and let's get all the scouts in our troop and a scout will stand with a basket near each man that's giving out handbills and we'll have a sign on each basket that says *Throw your hand-hills here*. Isn't that a peach of an idea? Because there aren't any refuse barrels on Main Street. And that will save the street from getting all littered up and it will remind people that we're on the job. So let's hurry up and get all the troop right now before they go out of their houses after lunch. Gee whiz, we'll have a lot of fun, you'll see!"

It was a masterly piece of strategy, rounding up the First Bridgeboro Troop at the propitious noon hour. And it was fortunate for the cause of public tidiness that Pee-wee had been seized with an acute fit of hunger rather earlier than usual on that memorable day. He had eaten his luncheon at eleven-thirty.

It is interesting to note that of the twenty scouts of the troop who were in town at the time, eighteen were available by 'phone or personal call during luncheon time. The other two were off on a hike. If you are ever hunting for a scout it is a good rule to stay close to the luncheon and you are almost sure to find him. . . .

## CHAPTER XL COUNTING THE SPOILS

That afternoon a very interesting exhibition of scout activity might have been seen along the thronging business thoroughfare of Bridgeboro. Hustling enterprise was matched against hustling enterprise. At every corner stood an unprofitable looking individual handing out handbills. At a strategic distance from him, but not too far off to permit of previous disposal, stood a scout of the First Bridgeboro Troop with a tall peach basket set directly in front of him. In Pee-wee's case the basket was so tall and he was so small that it gave him not a little the appearance of a lecturer standing behind a high desk ready to deliver a discourse on cleanliness and order.

On each one of these baskets was a large square of cardboard on which was chalked:

Throw your waste paper here!  
Keep your town clean!

BRIDGEBORO BOY SCOUTS.

This was the conventional sign on all the baskets, but the more flippant and original among the scouts devised additional signs of their own.

Most conspicuous of all among these was Pee-wee, who planted himself at one street corner with his clean-up prize banner erected beside him in a discarded Christmas tree base, where he looked like a knight of the Holy Grail. Within eight feet of him was a shabby looking man in a faded, buttonless frock coat, and a clashing straw hat, who was intent on passing out the handbills. He looked as if his costume might have come to him through the kindly channels of the Salvation Army. He was a conscientious man and allowed nobody to pass without one or more handbills.

Pee-wee's invaluable ally, his mouth, was kept busy supplementing the exhortations on the various signs with which he had surrounded himself.

"Here you are!" he shouted. "Throw your waste papers in the basket! Help the boy scouts to help keep your town clean! Don't throw papers in the streets! Don't forget the drive just because it's over! *Heeeeere* you are, right in the basket! I got more baskets, too, so don't worry. I got a basket or whatever you call it, that a baby used to sleep in. *Heeeer* you are! Throw them right in here. I got a lot of empty peaches—peach baskets—and boxes and things in that drug store—plenty of room for all. If you want to read about trash take the papers home, I should worry. If you want to get rid of trash throw it in the

basket. Don't forget the boy scouts and the clean-up drive—I was a leader in it. *Heeeeer* you are!”

Very few people glanced at the handbills, they were too busy laughing and watching Pee-wee. None resisted him; his basket filled rapidly.

“If you want to read them go ahead and do it,” he shouted; “you’ll find another scout on the next corner. *Don't throw them in the street whatever you do!*”

It was amusing how few people were interested in the annual clearance sale at Messthal's Mammoth Dollar Down Furniture Store. It was significant how everybody seemed caught by the activities of the scouts. At six o'clock that evening Dorry Benton came along in the Benton flivver driven by Dorry's big brother and gathered up the scouts and their baskets. Not a distributor was left upon the thoroughfare at that time; not a handbill was to be seen.

Since Pee-wee had been the genius of this enterprise the scouts adjourned to his house where he insisted that in the interest of cleanliness and order, the members of the troop should be served with refreshments.

“In the interest of cleanliness and order,” said Pee-wee's gentle and long-suffering mother, “I think you had better ask all the boys to wipe their feet and leave their baskets on the porch.”

“That shows how much you know about cleanliness and order,” Pee-wee thundered. “If we leave them out there the papers will blow out of the baskets and all over the street. *Do you want to be on the side of Messthal's?*” he demanded. “*Do you want to be the same as them?*”

“Heaven forbid,” said Mrs. Harris.

So in the interest of cleanliness and order the baskets were carried into the library, which was forthwith turned into a kind of military headquarters. And after light rations had been served to the starving workers, they all gathered about the large library table to pool their several collections of handbills and ascertain about how many they had brought in.

## CHAPTER XLI A BIG DEAL

There was only one circumstance that kept this sensational scout drive out of the local newspaper. And that was that there wasn't any local newspaper at the time. The paper had not been published for two days because of the printers' strike. It was the same in all the surrounding towns. The job printers were all intentionally out of jobs. The town was out of news.

Mr. Reelman, the enterprising proprietor of the Refined Vaudeville and Movie Theater, had succeeded in getting the programs of his "ten big acts" printed in the metropolis. But so far as Bridgeboro and adjacent towns were concerned the only printing being done was in the nature of footprints.

It was on the next afternoon, Saturday, that Roy, Pee-wee and Warde Hollister were playing tennis on the Harris lawn, when Pee-wee noticed their scoutmaster, Mr. Ellsworth, coming up the gravel walk toward the porch, accompanied by no less a personage than Mr. Max Messthal, proprietor of Messthal's Mammoth Dollar Down Furniture House. Mr. Messthal himself was a rather large piece of furniture built on the plan of a dining-room sideboard, being wider than he was high, and he waddled along at Mr. Ellsworth's side talking volubly and seeming greatly excited.

"Gee whiz, something's up," said Pee-wee; "let's go over."

"I bet we're all going to be arrested," said Roy.

By the time the three scouts had reached the porch, Mr. Messthal was sitting in one of the big, low wicker chairs, while Mr. Ellsworth sat upon the porch rail with a rather amused look on his face.

"Walter," said Mr. Ellsworth (evidently with full knowledge of the characteristics of his smallest scout), "I want to consult you about something and I want you to keep still till I finish. Understand? Then you can do the deciding."

There was a rather significant and very amused twinkle in the scoutmaster's eye, as if he greatly relished the conference. As for Pee-wee, his supplementary drive was now a thing of the past and he had forgotten it. He, therefore, stared blankly from his scoutmaster to Mr. Messthal, then back at his scoutmaster again.

"Sure, I can keep still," he said, not without some show of apprehension.

"Well, then," said Mr. Ellsworth easily, "Mr. Messthal, who owns the big furniture store, has a little trouble on his hands and he thought we might be willing to help him out. I told him that's our middle name. And, of course



[here he winked emphatically at Roy and Warde], I expect he'll be willing to help us out too. It seems he wants to put handbills—he has the handbill fever, Mr. Messthal has——”

“It pays to advertise,” said Mr. Messthal.

“That’s just the point,” said Mr. Ellsworth, “and Mr. Messthal can’t advertise because he hasn’t anything to advertise with and all the printers are sitting around home and Mr. Messthal is worrying. Now, when he came to see me about the handbills you scouts collected, I told him some of them were all crunched up, but that I *thought* you might have, oh, well, say as many as a couple of thousand——”

“Roy Blakeley’s going to write one of his crazy stories on the backs of them,” Pee-wee piped up, “and he’s going to tell a lot of stuff about me—how he jollies me—and everybody’ll believe——”

“Well, we must prevent that at any cost,” said Mr. Ellsworth.

“The pleasure is mine,” said Roy.

“So this is what I told Mr. Messthal,” Mr. Ellsworth continued. “You see, Mr. Messthal wants a lot of handbills to slip into the programs at the Lyric Theater to-night. I told him they’d only get all over the floor—but that isn’t the street. So I made him a proposition subject to your approval. I told him he could have all the good handbills we have on hand for ten dollars, the condition of the sale being that we will purchase six good sugar barrels and some black and red paint with the money. Then we’ll paint those barrels red and print REFUSE on them and stand them along Main Street. You see, Walter, the great thing about it is that we’ll prevent Roy from writing another story and at the same time—well, we’ll make a stab at two kinds of trash at once. Now, what do you say?”

“Thanks for your kind words,” said Roy. “The same to you and not so many of them.”

“I tell your scoutmister I would be most happy to do this,” said Mr. Messthal. “I would be happy to furnish the barrels to make our town clean.”

“That’s the idea,” laughed Mr. Ellsworth.

“And they’ll be—I would say—eh, a monument—a memorial to the scout boys,” said Mr. Messthal in his most ingratiating tone.

“*Good night*, he thinks we’re dead!” shouted Roy.

“Anyway, I’m not,” thundered Pee-wee, “because anyway I can prove it.”

“We’ll take your word for it,” said Mr. Ellsworth. “How about the deal?”

“You said it,” shouted Pee-wee.

## THE END

[The end of *Pee-wee Harris: As Good As His Word* by Percy Keese Fitzhugh]