

**ROY BLAKELEY'S
ROUNDAABOUT HIKE**

PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

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ROY BLAKELEY'S ROUNDABOUT HIKE



HE AND PEE-WEE WERE TRYING TO CLIMB UP OVER THE SAME SIDE OF THE BOAT.

ROY BLAKELEY'S ROUNDAABOUT HIKE

BY

PERCY KEESE FITZHUGH

Author of

THE TOM SLADE BOOKS, THE ROY BLAKELEY
BOOKS, THE PEE-WEE HARRIS BOOKS,
WESTY MARTIN, HERVEY
WILLETTS, ETC.

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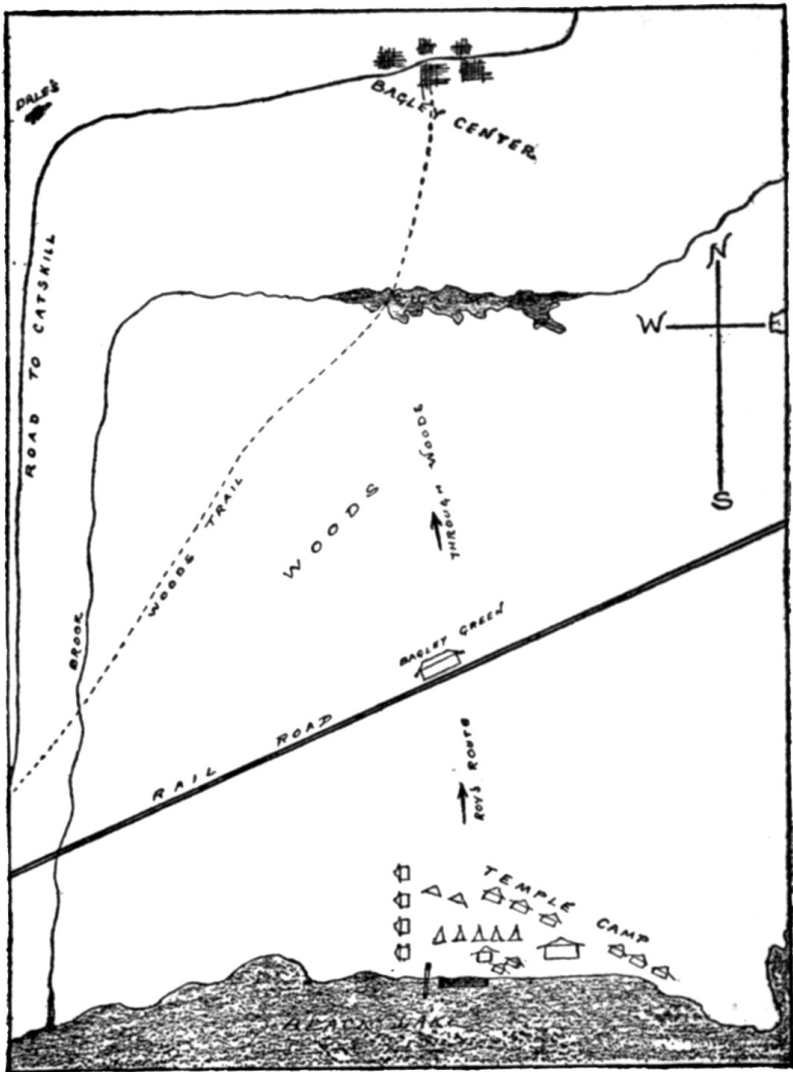
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ROY BLAKELEY'S ROUNDABOUT HIKE

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CHAPTER I HERE WE ARE

Every time I start telling you about one of our hikes, I say it's the craziest hike I ever took. I guess it's true, because they're all crazier than each other. If there are a lot of things and each one of them is crazier than the other, that shows they're all the craziest. If you don't believe it, you can do it by long division only I like short division better—the shorter it is the better I like it. Even if there wasn't any arithmetic at all I'd be satisfied.

But there's one good thing about ancient history and that is we don't study it in my grade. Next term I get civilized government and French pastry or history or something or other—I'm going to get a bicycle too. Then I'm going to have a bicycle trip and write about it.

So now I'm going to tell you about our latest hike—it's a nineteen twenty-six model only it hasn't got four wheel brakes. It hasn't got any brakes at all—we just kept on going and going and going. The noise you hear will be Pee-wee Harris; when he talks, he's always trying to get distance. Don't blame me, I couldn't get rid of him.

I'll tell you how it was. When we got to Temple Camp, I said I was going to start a new up-to-date hike with all improvements. I said it was going to be so crazy that all the other hikes would have a lot of sense compared to it. Even I wrote a proclamation and tacked it up on the bulletin-board outside of Administration Shack, calling for volunteers absolutely positively for not more than one day's service—maybe two days. It said that any one who was interested should call on Roy Blakeley at Silver Fox Cabin and that if I wasn't there they should hunt around for me. Because most always if I'm not in one place, I'm in another. I'm sure to be somewhere. It said if they were interested they were lucky.

Of course, the first one to come up was Pee-wee Harris. He didn't have far to come, because his patrol bunks in the next cabin to ours. He's the head chip of the Chipmunks. He's the one that had the law of supply and demand passed, especially demand. He's a nice little scout, only he hasn't got a voice to fit his size. His voice is a large thirty-six—it was made for a couple of giants. If there was a volcano going you couldn't even hear it on account of Pee-wee.

Right away he wanted to know all about the hike. "When is it going to be and where is it going to be to?" he wanted to know.

"It's not going to be *to*, it's going to be *from*," I told him. "And there are going to be only four Scouts in it—maybe six or seven. It's going to start to-

morrow morning at about three o'clock in the afternoon if it's a pleasant evening and you're not going to be in it. So you can see how good it's going to be."

"What's the name of it?" he wanted to know. Because all our crazy hikes have names.

"It's named the table d'hote hike," I said, "and I got the idea of it from a grab-bag. It's got a little of all our other hikes mixed into it; they're going to be all separated together."

He said, "What do you want to call it the table d'hote hike for? Don't you know that's a kind of a dinner? You're crazy! Anyway, how can a hike be *from* a place? It's got to be *to* a place. You can't come from a place till you go to it first, can you?" He was starting to shout—you know how he does.

"Sure, doesn't mince-meat come from an animal called a mince?" I said to him. "This hike is going to start from somewhere else and go to another place. As long as two places are separated there can be a hike. Anybody that knows geometry can do that. If two places are mixed into one, there can't be any hike—that's a fundamental proposition."

"You don't know what fundamental means," he yelled.

"It's derived from the word *fun*," I told him, "and that's my middle name. *Mental* means the opposite from *physical*—you learn that in the second grade. Mental means in your mind. Fundamental means fun in your mind. Ask me another."

"Are you going to tell me about the hike or not?" the kid shouted. "How can I make up my mind if I want to go on it if I don't know what it is?"

By that time a lot of Scouts were standing around laughing. Gee whiz, it doesn't take much to get Pee-wee started.

I said, "Do you think a big enterprise like a hike can be started without due thought and consideration—and you needn't tell me I got those words out of a book, because I know I did. Do you think Christopher Columbus started out to discover Columbus, Ohio, without making all plans and everything? I don't know what kind of a hike it's going to be yet. I'll probably decide yesterday afternoon. And then I'll pick out who's going to go on it. I want four fellows and they've all got to be crazy."

"They'll be good and hungry before they get back," said Pee-wee.

"That's nothing, *you're* good and hungry before you start out," I told him. "You never get hungry, because you're already that way." Gee whiz, a meal a minute is that kid's speed. The reason he never boils his vegetables is he's afraid they'll shrink. One night he stayed awake three hours trying to figure out how he could eat more than one meal at a time and after a while he woke up and found his mouth open, so he had to get up and shut it. This isn't so much of a chapter, anyway I should worry, maybe the next one will be even

still worse.

CHAPTER II

KERFLOP

Now I'm going to start writing the next chapter and I'm going to keep writing it till the dinner gong rings, so you can see it's going to have a good ending. It has a good ending even before it starts. It ends in a rice pudding, but oh boy, wait till you see what the last one ends in. I bet you think I'm a crazy author, hey? Anyway, I have a lot of fun.

So now I guess I'll tell you how my celebrated, world renowned, crazy hikes started. First we got carried away in a railroad car and that was a dandy hike only it wasn't a hike at all, but it was like one only different. Then four of us had a bee-line hike and went straight to a place on account of a solemn vow that we wouldn't turn right or left. Then, the next one was a funny-bone hike dedicated to an insane asylum and the next time I go on one like that, I'll know it—follow your leader, that was it; *oh boy!* Then we had a tangled trail hike where we had to keep turning to the left no matter what—some mixup! We went home by the way of the Cape of Good Hopeless. Then, we had an elastic hike, because it stretched way out. Most of the fellows that read about our hikes like them—no wonder, because they don't have to go on them.

Anyway, that night up at Temple Camp I didn't think any more about a new kind of a hike, because I couldn't think of a way to have a table d'hote hike, having all the different kinds of hikes kind of separated together. But anyway, I thought up a good name for that kind of a hike, I'd call it the symposium hike, it's taken from the word simp and it means a lot of different things together.

Early the next morning, as soon as anybody could see the bulletin-board, Scouts started coming up to my patrol cabin to join the hike—jiminies, you'd think I was the Pilgrim Fathers starting out. I told them there wouldn't be any hike till I thought of a good one. "Do you think I haven't got my vast public to think about?" I told them. "Boy scouts all over the country who are always writing letters to find out if I'm real or just imitation. And anyway," I said, "I'm not going to take the whole of Temple Camp with me—only just four fellows."

That same morning I got an idea and I'm sorry now that I got it. I was just going out on the lake with Dub Smedley—he comes from Jersey City, I don't blame him. We were going to catch some sunfish. All of a sudden I saw Pee-wee sitting way out on the end of the springboard dangling his legs. He belongs in my troop (I guess you know that) only up at Temple Camp, I don't

see much of him, lucky for that, I'm not kicking. He hangs around the cook shack most of the time. Me, I'm out for life, liberty and the pursuit of snappiness. You follow me and you'll have some fun, don't worry, especially in this story that's every word true. Even the ink I'm writing with is true blue or true too or too true. I'm even greater than George Washington, because he couldn't tell a lie and I can only I won't. And besides, I'd rather be myself than George Washington, because he's dead—anyway, we were going out to fish for sunfish when I happened to see Pee-wee. I was eating an apple and I threw the core at him and that's the end of this paragraph, just where he starts to yell. Gee whiz, you'd think it was the end of the world.

"One strike out," I shouted at him. "What's that you've got in your hand?"

"It's something I invented," he hollered at me, "and you're so fresh you nearly knocked it in the lake. Did I say I'd give you a shot?"

"Come on, let's row over to him," I said to Dub. "I'd rather jolly him along than catch sunfish." That's my favorite outdoor sport, jollyng Pee-wee.

So we rowed over just under the springboard and I caught hold of one of his legs so the boat wouldn't drift. "What is it anyway?" I asked him. "Let's look at it."

"It's a windmeter," he said.

"A which?" I asked him.

"It's for telling which way the wind blows," he said, "and I'm going to see if I can sell a lot of them. Maybe the Boy Scouts of America could use them and maybe they'll get advertised in *Boys' Life*."

"They don't care which way the wind blows," I told him. "Let's look at it."

Oh boy, that was some invention. I'm glad Edison never saw it or he'd have died from jealousy. It was a long, thin bottle, maybe about ten inches long; Dub Smedley said a tooth-brush came in it. There were a lot of crinkly strips of confetti all different colors fixed to the cork; the ends of the strips were bound together and fixed to the cork with a pin. It was kind of like a comet only smaller. It was quite a little smaller. The way you did was to stick the cork in the bottle and hold on to the bottle and let the confetti all fly loose. Then, you could tell what way the wind was blowing. You moved it around in your fingers like a compass till the confetti blew straight out and then you knew that the closed up end of the bottle was pointed the way the wind *wasn't* blowing. And the other end was pointing the way the wind *was* blowing. When you wanted to put that wonderful instrument in your pocket you just stuffed the confetti into the bottle and put the cork in that way. There were three or four matches in the bottle and a lightning bug in case the matches wouldn't work. There was a cricket too and there was a hole in the cork so the wild animals could breathe.

"What's the cricket for?" I asked the kid.

“Will you let go my leg?” he shouted. “Do you think I’m a mooring buoy or something?”

“What’s the cricket for?” I asked him. All the while Dub Smedley was laughing.

“That shows how much you don’t know about scouting,” Pee-wee said, good and excited. “That’s named the *Chipmunk Scout Emergency Kit*, and maybe I’m going to get it patented. It’s a combination windmeter and you can drink out of the tube if you’re famishing and you can use it for a compass too, because if you lay a cricket on the ground he’ll always start going south——”

“Starting for Florida, I guess,” said Dub.

“It’s wonderful,” I said. “It’s the most wonderful invention since Luther Burbank invented the shoe-tree.”

All of a sudden Dub said, “That would be a good idea for a crazy hike; we could go whichever way the wind blows.”

“If we do, I’m the one that invented it,” Pee-wee shouted. He meant the hike. You know he’s the one that invented the Boy Scouts of America. I wouldn’t just exactly say he invented the earth, but just the same, he made some wonderful improvements on it.

I said, “That’s a very fine crazy idea; we can hike to the four points of the compass.”

“You mean six points,” Dub said; “north, east, south, west, and hither and thither.”

So then I began to see that he’d be a good one to go on one of my crazy hikes.

I said, “How about yonder? We might go there, too. As long as we have a windmeter we can go everywhere.”

“Oh, we can go more places than that,” Dub said.

I said, “Sure, only one thing, I hope the windmeter reverses so we can come home again.” I said, “Has it got a reverse gear, kid?”

“Will you let go my leg!” Pee-wee hollered. “Geeeeeee whiz! You grab my windmeter in one hand and you grab my leg with the other and if you don’t look out, you’ll pull me off the springboard; a lot you care with your crazy talk! Now you’ve got a new feller started with all your nonsensical nonsense!”

I said, “Those are harsh words, Scout Harris. I’ve made a special study of crazy hikes ever since I was eighteen years old; I’m fifteen or sixteen now, and don’t you suppose that by this time I can be sure I don’t know what I’m talking about?”

“Will you let go my leg!” Pee-wee kept hollering. All the while Dub Smedley was laughing so hard I thought he’d tip the boat over.

I said, “You’d better look out, the water is supposed to be on the outside of the boat, it’s put there on purpose.”

Oh boy, you know how it is when I get started in mortal comeback with Pee-wee. Dub he just sat in the stern of the boat laughing and laughing. I had hold of Pee-wee's leg, I mean one of them, because he's got two and I'm thankful he hasn't got four. All of a sudden a fellow that was in swimming caught hold of the boat so as he could rest and he kind of pulled it around and before I could let go of Pee-wee's leg down he came kerflop into the water. I grabbed hold of his hat and pulled it down over the head of the fellow who was hanging on to the boat so he couldn't see and he let go and then the next minute he and Pee-wee were trying to climb up over the same side of the boat and it was getting swamped and Dud and I were laughing and the kid was sputtering and——

Oh boy, there goes the dinner gong. I should worry about this chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE BIG FOUR

Now I'm going to write another chapter till I have to go to scout meeting. I have to get there at eight o'clock, but if I don't get there till seven it won't make any difference. Even if I didn't get there at all, Pee-wee would be satisfied, but most always he's never satisfied, especially about eats; say it with eats, that's his motto. Anyway, this story isn't about Bridgeboro where I am now; it's about Temple Camp. Bridgeboro is where I live, it's a good place to start out from, I'll say that much for it. Anyway, I've had some pretty good fun there. I live in a dandy big house, it's a two part house, it's got an inside and an outside and I like the outside best, because it's bigger—anyway, this story isn't about Bridgeboro.

So then the four of us decided that as long as we were in a grand mixup together we'd stick together and have a hike the next morning. And that's what this story is about—that hike. Some hike! The other fellow, the one that had on a bathing suit, was named Egg Sandwich and I guess that's why Pee-wee wanted him to go. That wasn't really his name; his name was Egbert Sanderson, but everybody called him Egg Sandwich for short. He comes from Rye, New York, so I guess he's made of rye bread, but anyway, I like frankfurters better.

I said, "Now we have to hang together separately, because fate has thrown us together."

"You think you're smart talking like a book," Pee-wee said. He was all wet and shivering, jiminies he looked awful funny.

"You'd better go up to your patrol cabin," I told him, "and get some dry clothes on and we'll row around and wait for you. You're *shaking all over from head to foot*, you remind me of a milk shake and you needn't ask me if I got shaking all over from head to foot out of a book, because I got it out of an ash barrel." That kid thinks whenever I use dandy language I got it out of a book. He doesn't know I'm such a famous author, I'm the only one that knows it, that proves I'm smarter than anybody else, because I know something that nobody else knows. "Go on up, we'll wait for you," I said.

I bet you like this story already, hey? But only you just wait, it's going to be even worse.

So, now, kind of, while we're waiting for Pee-wee to come back, I'll tell you about us, because we're the ones you're going to be with for a whole lot of chapters—you should worry about Temple Camp. But it's one dandy place, I'll

say that. They have as many as four hundred Scouts there to say nothing of trustees and scoutmasters—why should I say anything about them? I mind my business and they mind mine. Chocolate Drop, he's cook, and I mind his business, believe me. Two helpings of dessert—*yum, yum!*

I'm the patrol leader of the Silver-plated Fox Patrol, First Bridgeboro, New Jersey Troop. We're solid plated silver and we're guaranteed for a year. Thank goodness you won't meet any of that bunch in this story. If you want to know how I look you'll see my face on the cover of this book and it shows me laughing at Pee-wee. A lot of fellows write to me and want to know all about me so now I guess I'll tell them. My favorite recreation is jollyng Pee-wee. I like schools, I mean a school of perch, and next to roasting Pee-wee I like roast pork. My favorite flower is graham flour and I like graham crackers next to animal crackers and my favorite color is a blackish white. I like the water, but I like root beer better. You can have lots of fun jollyng girls. I hope now you're satisfied.

Pee-wee, like I told you, is in the same troop with me. He lives on Terris Avenue in Bridgeboro. He's got one mother, one father, one sister and three million appetites. He used to be in the Raving Ravens, then he started the Chipmunks and all that bunch were up at camp when we had this hike, but most of the time Pee-wee doesn't bother much with his patrol—they're lucky. Anyway, I guess you know all about Pee-wee and me. If you're not deaf, dumb and blind, you must know about him. Me, I'm more quiet like a sawmill.

Dub Smedley belongs in Jersey City, it's right next to a ferry. He belongs to a troop there only his troop wasn't up in Temple Camp with him. They went somewhere, I don't know where. He said his scoutmaster was named Redman, so I guess that bunch are a lot of Indians. Dub was a second-hand Scout, I mean second class. He was a nice fellow all right. His favorite outdoor sport is sitting on the ground and moving back and forth and laughing so hard when I jolly Pee-wee, that sometimes he even falls over and rolls on the ground—he laughs so hard. He's got freckles, that fellow has.

Egg Sandwich was alone at Temple Camp too. He belongs in a troop at Rye in New York. He's an awful nice fellow, kind of sober like. I asked him if he thought he could be crazy enough to go on one of my hikes and he said yes—he said he was crazy to go.

Pee-wee said, "Sure, you're crazy to go—anybody that goes is crazy. I'm not, because I'm so used to him I don't mind him—" he meant me.

"The pleasure is yours and many of them," I told him. "I take you because I want to do Temple Camp a good turn. I'd like to be here sometime when you're away to see how it is when you're not here. If I could be somewhere else when you're in another place, that's my idea of the end of a perfect day."

"Now you hear how he talks!" the kid shouted. I said, "Look out, you'll tip

the boat over.”

“When he talks like that he calls it an argument,” he yelled. “You fellers will see before we get through—you’ll rue the day——”

“Goodness me, such fine language to be using on a week day,” I told him. “I never rued a day yet, but even if I knew how to rue one, I wouldn’t do it.”

“Even before we start he has to talk crazy,” Pee-wee said.

All the while we were rowing around on the lake. I said, “This is my idea—all those not in favor of it, shut up. If two vote against the other two, it’s a majority.”

“For which side?” the kid shouted.

“For both sides,” I told him. “What’s fair for one is fair for the other. United——”

“If you’re going to say, ‘*united, we stand, divided we sprawl*’ you needn’t say it,” the kid screamed at me. “I heard you say it fifty quadrillion times and it hasn’t got any sense to it!”

I said, “Young Harris, you’re speaking to the leader of the Silver Foxes, modify your tones.”

“I haven’t got any tones,” he yelled, “and——”

“Well, that’s your lookout,” I said. “Are we going to talk about the hike or are we going to discuss it—which? My idea is to start to-morrow just before breakfast——”

“You mean just *after* breakfast,” Pee-wee said.

Dub said, “No, Roy is right as he usually isn’t. That’s a good idea, we’ll start before breakfast.”

“Then you can count me out,” Pee-wee said “and you can’t use my windmeter and you won’t know where you’re going.”

“We don’t want to know where we’re going,” Egg Sandwich said. “The less knowledge we carry with us, the better. Scouts are supposed not to carry a lot of stuff when they go hiking.”

“Right the first time,” I told him. “Ideas are stuff, just the same as any other stuff. Deny it if you dare.”

“Will you answer me a civilized question?” the kid asked me.

“If it’s not too civilized,” I said. “What is it?”

“Why do we have to go on a hike without eating breakfast?”

“I never said we did,” I told him. “Wrong the first time. I said we’d start before breakfast—from my patrol cabin. Then we’ll stop in the eats pavilion for breakfast.”

He said, “Oh.”

“Then we’ll go out in front of Administration Shack and hold the windmeter up and see which way the wind is blowing if any and if so, why not. Am I right? Do you follow me?”

“We’re way ahead of you,” Dub said.

“Then we’ll all raise our hands and make a solemn vow——”

“There you go with your solemn vows,” the kid shouted. “That means we won’t have anything to eat all day, *I* know.”

I said, “Your leader would like to have a large chunk of silence and very little of that. We are going to go whichever way the wind blows, north, south, east, west——”

“Hither,” said Dub.

“Thither,” said Egg Sandwich.

“Or yon,” I said. “It’s settled. The rules will be very simple. We’ll go where the wind goes. We’ll return when we get back. We won’t take anything with us, not even any ideas. The only excess baggage that we carry will be Pee-wee.”

Dub said, “The object of the expedition is to find out where the wind goes—to stalk it.”

I said, “Sure, and to find out what it does when it gets there and if so where. Am I right?”

“Absolutely, unanimously,” said Egg Sandwich.

CHAPTER IV THE QUITTER

Now pretty soon it's going to start. The next morning we went in front of Administration Shack and everybody was there laughing at us. I made a kind of a speech. I said, "We, the big four, I mean the big three and a half, on account of Pee-wee, do solemnly pledge our words that we will go the way the wind blows till five o'clock to-night, because then we'll have to come home on account of supper. The solemn pledge only lasts till five o'clock."

One Scout said, "Why don't you make it last for the rest of the season? If you got back by Labor Day that would be all right. What's your hurry?"

I said, "We will be at camp-fire to-night with much scientific information to impart about the winds because wherever they go, we're going to follow them with Scout Harris' famous windmeter, patent not applied for."

So then I held up that crazy thing and the confetti all blew out pointing into the woods up in back of the camp. That was west. The cricket escaped out of the bottle—I guess he decided he didn't want to go. I dumped the lightning bug out, too. So then we started up into the woods and every now and then we held up the windmeter to make sure we were going right. Oh boy, we were having a peachy hike. It was like a regular, sensible hike, even. Pretty soon I knew we were coming to Bagley's Green, that's a village. You go through the woods about two miles and then you come to the railroad cut and then Bagley's Green.

Now I'll tell you how it was. When we started out it was early in the morning and there was a good breeze. You know how it is mornings. But by the time we got to Bagley's Green the breeze had died down. There's a kind of a little park sort of where the railroad station is and when we got to that, there wasn't any breeze at all.

I said, "A Scout's honor is to be toasted or trusted or something or other. We've got to stop here till the wind springs up. And anyway, I just as soon take a rest. If the wind can take a rest, we can, too. What's fair for one is fair for all."

So we all sat down on the grass in the middle of that place, we should worry. It was a kind of a big lawn all around the station.

Dub said, "If the breeze started coming from the east we wouldn't know it on account of the station; the station would act like a windshield."

I said, "Don't worry, if we see it acting that way, we'll know the wind is around on the other side of it. We'll appoint Pee-wee a committee to watch

how the station acts.”

Egg Sandwich said, “What are we going to do, just sit here?”

“Sure,” I said, “it’s according to rules. We’re governed by the wind. We may have to stay here for hours.”

“How can we be governed by the wind when there isn’t any?” the kid wanted to know.

“That’s easy,” I told him. “You might as well say how can we starve if we haven’t got any food to be deprived of. Gee whiz, you’re in the third grade and take up zoology and you don’t know that! I’ll have a game of mumbly-peg with anybody,” I said.

Dub said, “This is a fine kind of a hike—two miles and then get stalled.”

“Look at ships; don’t they get becalmed?” I said. “Come on, let’s have a game of mumbly-peg.”

So then we all started playing mumbly-peg with Dub’s jack-knife. I said, “Gee, this is a dandy hike; it’s the best hike I ever didn’t take; you don’t get all tired out, that’s one thing.”

“It’s a hikeless hike,” Sandy said. Sometimes we called that fellow Sandy, but that’s not saying anything against egg sandwiches.

“If we don’t think up some other kind of a hike, we’ll be stalled here all night, maybe,” Pee-wee said. “Anyway, till five o’clock. Do you think I want to sit here in the sun and play mumbly-peg all afternoon? Geeeee whiz!”

“Don’t blame me, blame the wind,” I told him.

“How can I blame it when there isn’t any to blame?” he shouted.

“That’s a good argument,” I told him.

“I’m thinking about lunch-time more than I’m thinking about arguments,” Pee-wee said. “What are we going to do at twelve o’clock?”

“We’ll eat our own words,” Sandy said, “and go any way we want to.”

“Sure, a couple of solemn vows will make a nice lunch,” I said. “What do we care where we go? The wind is the quitter, not us, I should worry.” I said, “We’ll stay here till twelve o’clock and if the breeze doesn’t spring up by that time, we’ll go to the next village willynilly, that means any way no matter what. Then, we’ll buy some eats.”

“If we had brought some with us like I wanted to do, we could eat them now,” Pee-wee said. “That’s what we get for starting out not prepared like Scouts are supposed not ever to do—now you see what we get.”

“I don’t see it,” Dub said.

“You mean what we don’t get,” I said. “Where do you suppose that breeze went anyway? I’d just like to know where it went.”

“Maybe it went crazy like you,” Pee-wee shouted.

“I never thought of that,” I told him.

Jiminies, we were all sprawling on the grass talking a lot of nonsense and

kidding Pee-wee and taking each other's hats off and pulling up grass and throwing it in each other's faces—a lot we cared about hiking.

“Now you see how it is,” the Kid said to Dub and Sandy. “Do you blame the Scouts over at camp that they won't go on hikes with him—gee whiz, they all had a taste of it. We always get stalled like this and just sit around fooling and don't do anything and he calls it a hike. Even he'll write all about it and a publisher will print it to show how crazy he is and he'll expect fellers to buy those books where he tells a lot of crazy nonsense. This is the first summer you fellers ever saw him, but he's like this all the time, you ask Westy Martin in his own patrol. He's the only one of them that's got any sense.”

I said, “Scout Harris, you will cease talking about my old college chump, Westy Martin. I won't hear another word against him. He can't help it if he has some sense—he's more to be pitied than blamed. I won't hear a word against him—not even a punctuation mark. Anyway, what's the use of having sense? That's one law I have no use for, the law of gravity.”

Dub said, “Let's tell riddles.”

“Sure,” I said, “that's a good idea. Now the hike is really started. Why doesn't Santa Claus wear a scout suit? Give me any answer, I don't care what, and I'll give you the question to it.”

“Why doesn't Santa Claus wear a scout suit?” the kid shouted.

“Because there isn't any Santa Claus,” I told him. “No sooner said than stung. Open your mouth and I'll shoot this grasshopper in it.”

By that time, Dub and Sandy were lying on their backs kicking their legs and laughing so hard they couldn't speak.

After a while, Dub said, “Here's an answer, and you give me the question to it.”

“Absotively, posolutely,” I told him.

He said, “The answer is yes.”

“The question is, is it?” I told him. “Any one else wants to ask an answer?”

“I'll ask one,” Sandy said. “Yes, we *have no marbles*.”

“The question to that is, *Why don't we make some marble cake?*” I said. “The way you do it is to subtract the adverb from the combined total with one to carry. Here comes a man.”

“You better stop your nonsense or he'll think you're crazy,” Pee-wee said. “I bet he's going to chase us away from here.”

“I wonder where *he* blew in from,” Sandy said.

“*Blew in!* That's a good one!” Dub said. “There isn't enough breeze to blow any one to an ice cream soda.”

“Well, I'm going to go to one pretty soon whether I get blown to it or not,” Pee-wee shouted.

By that time we were all sitting up brushing the grass off ourselves and

straightening up our hair kind of, on account of the man who was coming toward us.

“I think something is going to happen,” Dub said.

CHAPTER V

THE STRANGER

That man kept coming straight toward us across the green.

“Maybe we’re trespassing, hey?” Pee-wee said, kind of scared. “Now maybe we’re going to get into trouble.”

Pretty soon I saw the man was smiling and I knew everything was all right. He took off his hat and wiped his forehead and I saw he had a bald head—he didn’t have one hair on his head even. It looked like an egg. But anyway, he was smiling.

Dub said, “It’s all right, the face with a smile, grins.”

I said, “Hey mister, will you please tell us how to get off this field? We were hiking whichever way the wind blew and it stopped blowing, so now we can’t move.”

“You better look out how you talk,” Pee-wee said in a whisper.

By that time the man was right there. He was an awful nice man. He said, “There isn’t the slightest thing to worry about.”

I said, “We thought maybe we were going to get arrested.”

He said, “Oh dear me, no. I wouldn’t *think* of arresting Boy Scouts.”

“You might do it without thinking,” Dub said.

The man said, “I always look before I leap.” Then he said, “May I sit down and make myself at home?”

He sat down on the grass with his knees up and his arms around them. Gee, he was nice and friendly like. He said, “I’m tired myself. I’ve had a long walk.” When I told him we were Scouts from Temple Camp, he was a lot interested. He said he knew all about Temple Camp.

I asked him, “Do you live around here?”

“Not just here,” he said; “I live in Bagley Center. This is Bagley’s Green. I’m Saul Bagley. My people settled all this country around here. My father was Ephraim Bagley. This was all the old Bagley farm through here. Where that station is, used to be an apple orchard. You know if I had my way that whole strip of forest land east of Black Lake would belong to Temple Camp now. No one was sorrier than I was, when the camp didn’t get it; it was a pretty mean business all through. I told Mr. John Temple so myself. He’s a very fine man, Mr. John Temple.”

“Even I’ve been to his house,” Pee-wee piped up. “Even I had supper at his house—he’s a magnet. He owns so many railroads, he has a kind of a collection of them. Didn’t I make him a willow whistle to blow in case he gets

held up by bandits—I leave it to Roy if I didn't.”

Mr. Bagley put out his hand and shook hands with Pee-wee, like as if Pee-wee was a kind of a hero. I had to laugh.

I said, “You mustn't mind our young hero. He's the one that invented the Boy Scouts of America.”

Mr. Bagley said, “That was a very good invention.” Then he shook hands with Pee-wee again.

Jiminies, we knew all about the forest land east of Black Lake—anyway, Pee-wee and I did. Dub and Sandy were new fellows at camp, so maybe they didn't. I'll tell you how it was. Everybody at camp calls that the Bagley land—sometimes we call it Bagley woods. It's east of Temple Camp. All the Scouts at camp knew about Mr. Temple wanting to buy it and give it to the camp. But anyway, he couldn't buy it, because the Bagley estate wouldn't sell it to him. But jiminy crinkums, I never bothered my head about it. Last summer it was fenced off with barbed-wire from Temple Camp and we couldn't even go on it. A lot I should worry, they can take the land away altogether for all I care.

I asked Mr. Bagley, I said, “Are you one of the people that wouldn't sell it to Temple Camp?”

He said, “Oh, goodness no!” just like that. He said those were the heirs and there were a lot of them. But he said anyway, he was the real heir. Jiminies, I felt sorry for him. He was mighty nice, just sitting there and talking to us like that. He said he liked boys, especially Scouts, and he said only for a tragedy that happened, Temple Camp would have all that land.

Oh boy, you should have seen Pee-wee's eyes open—that's his middle name, *tragedies*. He eats them alive. He said, “Was it a regular tragedy where somebody got killed—or maybe murdered or something?”

Mr. Bagley said, “My father, Ephraim Bagley was killed, and it was less than a mile from here. I have just visited the spot. I could hardly find it, it looked so different from when I was last there.”

Pee-wee said, “You ought to have blazed a trail, that's the way Scouts do.” I guess Mr. Bagley must have thought he was very smart, because he just reached over and shook hands with him.

Mr. Bagley said, “My father was an old man and he had a very tragic end.” Then he kind of whispered to Dub and said, “And the Boy Scouts are the losers.”

“Will you tell us about it?” Pee-wee piped up.

Believe me, that was some tragedy he told us about. He said he lived in Bagley Center. That's about five or six miles from Bagley's Green. He said that several years ago his father—that was old Ephraim Bagley—made a will and it was going to be his last one. He said in that will the old man left him the farm at Bagley Center and all that woods near Temple Camp and everything.

The day he made the will, he started to Catskill with it so as to see his lawyer and to sign it in front of witnesses and everything. That night he didn't come home and the next day they telephoned to Catskill and they found that he had been there and had signed his will and had it witnessed. Oh boy, you should have seen Pee-wee how he stared.

"Did bandits get him?" he wanted to know.

Mr. Bagley said, "No, but Beaver Chasm got him. We found him in the bottom of the chasm next day—dead."

"Jiminies!" I said.

"You know Beaver Chasm, don't you?" Mr. Bagley said.

"Sure, I know it!" Pee-wee shouted. "Didn't I stalk a turtle down there? *Suuuure*, I know it."

Mr. Bagley reached over and shook hands with Pee-wee just the same as before. I couldn't make out whether he thought the kid was a wonderful hero for stalking a turtle, or whether he was just kind of making fun of him. I had to laugh, Pee-wee was so serious the way he shook hands.

Dub and Sandy didn't know anything about Beaver Chasm, because they were new Scouts at camp. But I knew all about it. And Pee-wee knew all about it—he even owned it. It was a wonder he never had it wrapped up and sent home.

Mr. Bagley said, "Yes, sir, we found him lying in the bottom of the chasm—*dead*. Both of his legs and one of his arms were broken. We found his coat a few yards from where his body lay; it was caught on a clump of brush." All of a sudden, Mr. Bagley leaned away over toward us and whispered, "And my father's oilskin dispatch container with his will in it was gone. Was *gone!*" Then he sat up straight and just looked at us.

I said, "Gee, that was funny."

"You call it *funny!*" Pee-wee shouted. "Don't you even know when a thing is serious?"

Mr. Bagley just kept looking at us, kind of dark and suspicious like. I saw Dub sort of move as if he was uneasy for fear Mr. Bagley was thinking we knew something about it. Then Sandy asked him if it was ever found.

"It was never found," he said, sort of slow like, and very serious. "And that's the mystery. *The oilskin dispatch container presented to my poor father by an overseas boy who carried a message from General Pershing to the British commander in it was gone from the pocket of my father's coat—and with it his last will and testament.*"

We were sort of scared, he looked at us so serious. He just kept looking at us. Then he said, "But I want you boys to know that if that will had been found, I would have been glad to sell all that woodland to Temple Camp, as sure as my name is Saul Bagley. I am for the Boy Scouts first, last and always.

But I can't be held responsible for the meanness, and the stubbornness, and the lack of public spirit of a crew of undeserving beneficiaries under a former will of my poor father, now can I?"

That's just what he said; he used dandy big words.

CHAPTER VI

WHERE THERE'S A WILL

Jiminies, up to that time I never knew how near Temple Camp had come to getting that land. Because Mr. Saul Bagley sure was strong for the Scouts. He was mighty nice the way he spoke about Mr. Temple and all the councilors and trustees. And oh boy, didn't he roast the people that owned the land! They were his cousins, but anyway, he didn't have much use for them.

Pee-wee said, "Maybe those cousins knew about that will where he left everything to you and maybe they waited for him when he was on his way home and maybe they—maybe they did something to him, hey? So you wouldn't get all the property and everything; hey? Maybe they got the will."

Mr. Bagley said to Pee-wee, "I see you are a Boy Scout with brains. But you are mistaken. My cousins who came into my father's property were all at home that night. I investigated everything myself. They were having a barn dance in their home. They are not murderers. There was no murder or foul play of any kind as far as I have been able to find out. *And that's the mystery.*"

He said he would take us and show us just where his father's body was found and that was when we forgot all about the wind dying down and our solemn pledge and everything. So you see our following-the-wind hike didn't last long. And that's why I'll never trust the wind again—because it's a quitter. Even a tempest I wouldn't trust. Just like I told you in the beginning this hike goes every which way, and anyway, it isn't a hike at all. But if you want to follow us you'll see some fun.

On the way to Beaver Chasm, Mr. Bagley told us that he used to live with his father on the farm in Bagley Center. His cousins lived on another farm. After his father lost his life, Mr. Bagley went to live on the other farm with his cousins. Those were the people that got all of old man Bagley's property. He said the reason why his father had left everything to those cousins was because he was good and mad on account of him running away from home. He said he ran away when he was fifteen years old and never came back till he was thirty—jimminies, I bet he had a lot of fun.

Dub said, "I bet you were a wild boy all right."

Mr. Bagley said, "I sailed before the mast, twice around the Cape of Good Hope and once to Africa. I can show you boys an elephant's tusk from an elephant I shot; I suppose that piece of ivory is worth a hundred dollars." All the while he was walking along, he talked to us; *oh boy*, he was interesting.

Dub asked him how he happened to come home and he said he came home

when his mother died. But even still his father kept on being mad at him, because he didn't like to work around the farm—gee whiz, I didn't blame him, I wouldn't either, not after being in Africa and all places like that. But anyway, after a while old Ephraim Bagley decided he was sorry he had left him out of his will and he made a new one and took it to Catskill and got witnesses to it and everything. And that was where the cousins got left out entirely, in that will. But anyway, it didn't do poor Mr. Saul Bagley any good.

Sandy, he's very sober like when he's not laughing at Pee-wee and me. He's kind of sensible like Westy Martin, only different. He asked Mr. Bagley why he didn't think that maybe those cousins did have something to do with the way old Mr. Bagley died and something to do with the way the will disappeared, too. Mr. Bagley said because nobody except him and his father knew about the will, so why should any one want to kill him?

"That's a dandy argument," Pee-wee said. "And it's a dandy mystery too, because what became of the will?"

"That's the question," Mr. Bagley said.

"A will is no good just if you steal it or happen to find it," Sandy said. "I can't see why any one would want to get hold of it—except maybe those cousins."

All of a sudden, Mr. Bagley stopped right short where we were in the woods and he looked straight at Pee-wee and said very slow and scary like, "That—will—is—still—in—Beaver Chasm."

"Good night!" I said.

"Do you want us to find it?" Pee-wee piped up. "Those are just the kinds of things we're supposed to do, because we're scouts and we even find lost people sometimes—you look in the newspapers and see. And I bet if that will is down there we can find it, because anyway, I know a feller that lost a licorice jaw-breaker through a cellar grating in front of a grocery store in Bridgeboro where I live and because I told him to buy an ice cream cone instead and he wouldn't so I said I'd get it from him because Scouts have to be out for service."

"Sometimes they're out for jaw-breakers," Dub said.

Pee-wee went right on and he said, "I went in the store and so I could get on the right side of the grocery man I bought three bananas——"

"Talk about service!" Sandy said.

"Yes, continue," I said, "and be sure to stop when you get to the end. We now have two bananas and the problem is which was the other one——"

"Are you going to let me tell Mr. Bagley or not?" the kid yelled at me.

I said, "Mr. Bagley, you must excuse our young hero, he was born during the famine in Hiawatha and that's why he's always eating Indian meal. His favorite fairy tale is Beauty and the Feast. When it comes to stalking a licorice

jaw-breaker——”

Just then Mr. Bagley stopped and laid his hand on my shoulder and he said, “If you boys want a *real* hunt; if you want to make *names* for yourselves, now is your chance. And it’s no matter for joking.”

Jiminies, that made us all sober. Even I was sorry that I started kidding Pee-wee. I said, “Believe me, if there’s anything we can do to help you we’ll be only too glad to do it.”

“Sure, that’s our middle name,” Pee-wee said.

Mr. Bagley said, “And you’ll be helping yourselves too; you’ll be helping Temple Camp.”

“That’s us,” I said.

CHAPTER VII BEAVER CHASM

Pretty soon we came to Beaver Chasm—it's in the woods. Lots of times I saw it but I never went down in it. Once a couple of Scouts from camp told me there were rattlesnakes in it; I guess that was the reason. All the times I had been to it before I followed the brook from Black Lake. You can see how it goes on the map I made, not saying what kind of a map it is. I guess I'd get about six minus for it in school—I should worry. Anyway Beaver Chasm is a deep place that the brook flows through. That brook starts away off some place or other and goes west through the chasm, then south into Black Lake. It takes a west southerly course—gee, I remind myself of a geography lesson—that's one study I have no use for.

Anyway you needn't bother about the brook now so you can let it flow merrily, merrily, what care we—that's in my school reader. Do you see where the arrows are pointing? Where it says *Roy's route* and *Through the woods*? Well that's the way the four of us went and you can see where we got becalmed near the Bagley's Green railroad station, only the map doesn't show where the wind went and anyway I don't know how to make a picture of the wind.

After we started off with Mr. Bagley we went north up through the woods toward the chasm. I never went to it that way before. All the times I had gone to it I had gone in at the end of it like the brook does, I hope I make myself plain, that's dandy language like a real author. You see where Bagley Center is? It's about two miles north of the chasm. There are a lot of stores there and everything. It's a flourishing met—something or other, only I don't know how to spell it.

I don't like maps any better than you do and there are only two more things about this one. Do you see how there's a road going from Bagley Center to Catskill? You can't see Catskill but anyway it's off in that direction and you can get dandy big ice cream cones there in Schnizel's Confectionery. But if you're hiking from Catskill to Bagley Center there's a short cut through the woods and for quite a ways you don't have to bother with the road. I made a dotted line for that trail and it goes across Beaver Chasm on three or four logs side by side—*some bridge!* So now you know all about the country where we were going to have some adventures.

So now you have to answer questions. 1. Which way did Roy Blakeley and his four companions approach Beaver Chasm? Correct, be seated. 2. Which

way can you take a short cut through the woods from Catskill to Bagley Center? Point out where the log bridge is? Then you can go home if you want to, I don't care.

When we got to the chasm we were on the south side of it, and I can tell you one thing, that chasm is good and deep. The sides are pretty steep too—all rocks. When I looked down into it I saw that there wasn't any brook at all, it was dried up. Then I remembered how every one at camp was saying that the lake was very low that season. Uncle Jeb (he's manager) said it was lower than he had ever seen it before. That was the first thing Pee-wee said to me; he said, "Oh, look how the brook isn't there!"

I said, "Yes, I can see the brook, it isn't there. No, we have plenty of bananas."

We were standing right on the edge near the logs that go across. Dub and Sandy were seeing the chasm for the first time. They both said they never thought it was anything like that—so deep. I guess they were surprised.

Dub said, "*Jumping jiminies*, why didn't you ever tell us about this place?" That's the way it is with new fellows at Temple Camp.

But anyway the place even seemed different to me now on account of what I heard about it. Oh boy, did we listen! Mr. Bagley said that when they found his father in the chasm one of the logs was lying in the bottom of the chasm too; it was broken in halves. The old man must have been on his way back from Catskill and he was taking the short cut through the woods. While he was crossing on the logs one of them broke and he fell and was killed. Mr. Bagley pointed down to the very spot where they found his father. Then he pointed down to a lot of bushes and he said that was where they found his father's coat. For a couple of minutes we all stood there just staring down into the chasm. Even Pee-wee didn't say anything. When you know something happened in a place—like getting killed—that place seems kind of scary. And besides I had never looked down into it like that before. When you go in where the brook is, it doesn't seem so deep and dark.

One of us asked Mr. Bagley if he had any idea how his father's coat happened to be away from his body, because that seemed funny.

He said, "I have no more idea than the man in the moon. All *I* know is that when we lifted his coat off that clump of brush the oilskin container *was not in any of the pockets*. We *know* that he went to Catskill. We *know* that he signed his will and had it witnessed. We *know* that he started back. We found him the next day lying against that big rock down there. On the night that he met his death his two cousins, Caleb and Bertha Clemm, were in their home. I live with them there now. He is an old bachelor and she is an old maid. But I don't hold that against them—I'm an old bachelor too. But I've had a roving career. Now you boys who are so clever, what do you make out of that mystery?"

“*Jiminies*,” I just gasped.

Sandy and Dub just shook their heads.

Pee-wee said, “Do you know what I bet? I bet that oilskin thing is down there, somewhere; I bet it’s there yet. And I bet we can find it.”

Mr. Bagley said, “My young friend, that is what I have thought for several years. I have searched this chasm many times. But I want you to notice one thing—*the brook is dry*. There are a hundred new places to search—dried up pools, crevices under rocks, places where I could only *feel* before, but which may now be *seen*. Well, I’ve brought you here and you are Boy Scouts. Here is an adventure for you.”

Pee-wee could hardly speak, he was so excited. He said, “And if we find it and you get all the property like that will says, do you cross your heart you’ll sell that woods over near the lake to Temple Camp? That’s only fair, so do you promise?”

Mr. Bagley just looked straight at him, then he shot out his hand and gave Pee-wee’s hand a good long shake. I had to laugh to look at Pee-wee standing there looking very important with his hand being shaken up and down. Then Mr. Bagley said, “A promise is a promise. And I think—you—boys—are—going—to—do—something—BIG.”

All of a sudden he dropped Pee-wee’s hand and started off through the woods. It was hot and he had his hat off and he was wiping his bald head with his handkerchief. I had to laugh, he looked so funny starting off that way. There was about as much hair on his head as there is on an egg.

“That’s right, *laugh!*” Pee-wee shouted good and mad. “That’s all the sense you’ve got—to laugh at somebody when they’re feeling bad! I suppose you’d stand here laughing if *your* father fell down and got killed in this chasm—you’ve always got a smirk on your face no matter what!”

I was just going to start kidding him along when Sandy said, “I think the man was starting to cry; gee, I feel sorry for him. I think he didn’t want us to see him and that’s why he started away so suddenly.”

We all stood there just looking down into the chasm and not saying anything. It looked pretty spooky. I’ll say that.

“Do you know what I think?” Dub said. “I think that’s one fine idea—about now being a good time to hunt on account of the brook being dry. Gee williger, we fellows have got the chance of our lives. Something big! Well, *I’ll say so.*”

“*Jiminies*,” I said, “I’m just beginning to see it.”

“Sure,” Pee-wee shouted at me. “After a new feller that was never at Temple Camp before begins to talk sober about it, then you sit up and listen. And when we find the wallet you’ll write it all up in a story and take all the credit. Even you’ll be more important than Mr. Bagley who will own the land

and Mr. Temple who will buy the land—if we find the wallet. Do you know what we're going to do?"

"Sure," I said, "we're going to sit down. Ask me another one."

CHAPTER VIII

PLANS OF CAMPAIGN

Gee whiz, I can be sober when I have to. I could see all right enough that we had a chance to do something big. I wasn't going to start fooling about it. I knew if old Mr. Bagley's last will was in that chasm and we could find it, *oh boy*, there would be some excitement. His son would get all that land that Temple Camp wanted and he would sell it to Mr. Temple. You can see where we would fit in—*oh boy!* Talk about good turns!

"There are only two things bothering me," I said.

"There are six things bothering me," Dub said, "and all of them *when are we going to eat and if so, what?*"

"Those are the same twenty things that are bothering me," Sandy said.

I said, "Pee-wee can't even speak, he's starving to death."

All of a sudden the kid piped up, "The reason I don't speak is because I'm disgusted——"

"Good," I said, "I hope you'll be disgusted for the rest of your life."

"If I kept on going around with you I'd be disgusted twice at the same time," he said.

"Fancy that," I said to him. "If you don't like going around with us, you can go my way and I'll go yours."

"You start out in the morning," he shouted, "without any lunch and look where we are now, with no village anywhere around and nothing to eat."

"Do you expect me to get a village and bring it here?" I asked him. "Is it my fault there isn't any village here? Did I make the map of the Catskill Mountains? I'll leave it to Dub. We're having a fine hike with detours. What are you kicking about?"

"I can't eat detours!" the kid shouted.

"Well you couldn't eat a village either," I said; "so what are you talking about?"

"Will you fellows listen?" Dub said. "For just two seconds will you listen? We've got a big chance, haven't we? We've got a chance to do something that will knock Temple Camp off its feet. Suppose we can find that will! First will somebody please tell me what one of those dispatch containers is like. I'd like to know whether one would last all this while—whether it would be preserved."

"If you're talking about preserves," I said, "you'd better ask Pee-wee. He knows all about preserves."

“Are you going to be serious when there’s a real mystery or not?” the kid yelled. “Now we’ve got a chance to do something, are you going to have some sense or not? Are we going to get something to eat I don’t know how, and are we going to try to find that oilskin cover or whatever you call it, or are we just going to stay here talking crazy and acting like fools—which?”

“We are going to plan our campaign at once, ain’t it,” I told him. “The answer is no we do, *by an unanimous minority.*”

“Listen,” said Sandy, kind of sober like. “It’s noon-time and we thought that by this time we’d be at a village or some place or other. We’ve got a chance to do something big. Are we just going to fool around or what? I’d like to hunt for that thing, only we’ve got to have something to eat, that’s sure.”

“It’s even more than sure, it’s absolutely positive,” Pee-wee piped up.

I said, “All right then, listen——”

“Are you going to be serious?” Pee-wee shouted.

“Now listen,” I said, “and no more fooling. Hunting for that thing means work. You don’t think we can go down there and just pick it up, do you? All right then. How about eats? There are a lot of things to be considered if we’re going to do this and what we need first of all is a leader——”

“I thought you were going to say that,” Pee-wee shouted.

“You wanted me to be serious, didn’t you?” I said. “All right then, listen. I’m willing to hunt for that oilskin container, only if we do we’re going to do it right. We’re going to start out like Columbus did, only different.”

“There you go,” Pee-wee shouted.

“All right,” I said. “We’re at Beaver Chasm, aren’t we. And it’s time for lunch. We’re about two miles from Bagley Center and we’re about five miles from camp. How long can we hold out without eats?”

“Maybe five minutes,” Dub said.

“Maybe three at a pinch,” Sandy said.

“I can’t hold out at all,” Pee-wee piped up; “not even at a pinch.”

“A fine lot of Scouts!” I said. “Now I’ll show you what a fine Scout I am. The brook down there in the chasm has run dry but there will be water standing in pools between the rocks and all places like that. Further along is a place they call the Giant’s Basin—all rock. There will be water in there, I bet you. And that’s just where all the fish go when the brook runs dry. I bet in places down there we’ll be able to scoop them up in our hands—please shut up till I finish.”

“This is what I say let’s do. Let’s go down in the chasm and find a hollow place where some fish are and let’s scoop some up and cook them—I’ve got some matches.”

“I can even get a light from the sun,” Pee-wee said, all excited.

“The sun is too far to go for a light,” I told him. “Even if you went scout

pace you wouldn't get back in time for lunch. After we've had something to eat——”

“That shows you how we've got resources,” Pee-wee said. He was talking for the benefit of Dub and Sandy because they were new fellows at camp.

“Sure,” I said, “and we can fry some resources or boil them in ice water. I say let's *eat* and after that let's hike back to camp and get permission to start out again to-morrow and camp for a couple of days in the chasm. We can bring a tent and some provisions and everything and we won't say anything to any one why we're going to do it and if we find that oilskin container we'll be the big noise at Temple Camp. Now that's the way I say to do. We'll go back this afternoon and get ready for to-morrow and you fellows can leave it to me about getting permission to come back and camp here.”

“Do you promise you won't let any other Scouts in on it?” Pee-wee asked me, all excited. “Now's our chance, if we only keep still!”

I had to laugh, Pee-wee talking about keeping still.

CHAPTER IX

HERCULES HARRIS

I guess you're in a hurry for the next day to come, but anyway you'll have to wait till after we've had our lunch because we were good and hungry. Mostly I have eats come between the chapters so as you won't be interrupted. Oh boy, the things that happen between the chapters are even more than the things that happen in the chapters. Between chapters we have ice cream cones and everything, but they're not a part of the story.

It was nice and dim down there in the chasm. We couldn't go down the side, so we went to the end where it sloped down sort of and we went in the way the brook does—I mean the way it comes out. Only then there wasn't any brook. It was all rocks in the chasm. I guess that chasm is about a half a mile long. Where it's widest there is grass growing but everywhere else there are rocks. When there's any water in there it kind of wriggles in and out among the rocks.

Just like I thought, there was water in the Giant's Basin. That's a deep pool made by rocks. It was full of killies, just like I knew it would be. Because when the brook dried up the fish would have to go where there was water. They were all crowded in it and we could scoop them up in our hands—jiminies it was easy. We found an old tin dipper that I guess used to be used to drink out of and we hammered it flat with a stone so it was kind of like a frying-pan. Then we started a fire and I fried killies and they were good. Sandy kept cleaning them with his knife while I kept frying them and Dub kept getting wood for the fire. I bet you can guess what Pee-wee was doing—honest that kid could cause a shortage in the Atlantic Ocean. You have to eat a lot of killies but that's easy.

Afterward I took a long stick and felt around on the bottom of the pool. There were other places like that pool, only not so big. There were lots of crevices between rocks too. All of a sudden I began to think we did stand a pretty good chance of finding that lost will. Because I'll tell you why. If the dispatch container fell out of the old man's pocket into the water it would have been carried along and most likely get wedged in somewhere between rocks. Or else it might get into one of those pools. I didn't bother my head thinking how the wallet or whatever you call it, got out of the old man's pocket because I believed it fell out before his coat was taken off. And I didn't worry about how his coat happened to be off, either.

I said, "To tell you the honest truth the only thing that makes me think we

won't find anything is because Pee-wee is mixed up in it. You fellows don't know because you've never been up to camp before, but Pee-wee is the big hero of about three million things that never happened. I'm sorry it wasn't him that tried to start the world war because then it never would have happened. You see how the wind died down when we started out on a windmeter hike. But if it wasn't for Pee-wee I'd think we might find that oil-can or oil container or whatever you call it. It looks good to me. Only there's no use hunting around. We ought to come and camp here a couple of days or so and work spasmodically——”

“You mean systematically!” Pee-wee yelled.

“What difference does it make what I mean?” I shot back at him. “It's actions that count, not meanings—I'll leave it to Dub. We've got to go to work under deficient leadership—or sufficient or inefficient, I don't care.”

All of a sudden Pee-wee went up in the air. “Are you going to have some sense or not?” he shouted. “Now we've got a chance to find a paper that will fix it so Mr. Bagley can sell all that woods to Temple Camp and every newspaper in the United States will have pictures of us how we found a lost will and maybe I bet even that woods will be named after us even! And all you can do is to keep on fooling about it, you think it's a joke to not get some property that you ought to get, you're such a big fool always laughing and talking a lot of nonsensical nonsense! Do you think that's the way to discover something serious?”

“I don't want to discover anything serious,” I said.

“That's because you're a Silver Fox,” the kid yelled, “and they're all the same only you're worse than any of them and they ought to be named the Laughing Hyenas!”

By that time Dub and Sandy were laughing so hard they couldn't speak. Dub was lying on his back kicking his legs.

I said, “This has gone far enough. We shall find that will, say no more.”

So then we all started for Temple Camp and on the way there we were good and serious about what we were going to do, because I could see we had a chance to do a pretty big stunt. We all said we wouldn't tell anybody why we were going to camp in Beaver Chasm, so nobody would come there, because in Temple Camp, *oh boy*, they're a snoopy bunch. After supper that night I went in Administration Shack and got permission for the four of us to camp in Beaver Chasm for three days—that's the most you can get permission for unless a scoutmaster goes along. They give you an eats ticket; it's a requisition slip, that's what it really is, only we call it an eats ticket. Then you take that to the cooking shack and Chocolate Drop (he's cook) gives you enough food to last for the time you're going to be away. But he always gives more than you need. We had to come home late the third day so he gave us enough so we

could cook eight meals—coffee and beans and egg powder and Indian meal (I make flapjacks out of that) and canned pineapple and salmon and crackers and, oh gee, all kinds of stuff. Chocolate too. And dandy bacon.

We got a tent from the commissary and four army cots. We could have made hemlock beds, that's easy, only you can carry things in army cots by carrying them like stretchers. Two of them we carried rolled up and the other two open and full of things. Pee-wee was all dressed up like a Christmas tree or a hardware store or something, with his belt-axe and his aluminum frying-pan and his scout-knife and his compass all hanging from his belt. He didn't bother about his windmeter. He sounded like a freight train when he walked.

We started out early in the morning—that's two starts for this story. In most stories you get only one start. But in this story you get two starts and a lot of different endings. This time we didn't go up through the woods because on account of all the things we had to carry. There's too much brush in the woods and not even a trail in most places. So we went along the shore of the lake where there's a path and all the Scouts thought we were going camping around the lake. That was one good thing to throw them off the scent. Then we turned north where the brook is, and you better look at the map. There's a good path right beside the brook and we followed it till we came to the woods trail, the same way that old Mr. Bagley went home the day he didn't get there. It was pretty easy walking along that trail to the chasm. So that's how we got there.

We picked out a peach of a place in the chasm and put up our tent there and built a fireplace out of stones. Oh boy, it was nice where we camped. We put the tent right close to one side of the chasm where the wall was almost straight up and down. We were good and tired so we just sprawled around getting rested till lunch time, and after that we said we'd start hunting. Where the side of the chasm went up there was a kind of a shelf, all rocks, and Pee-wee sat on that. Dub and Sandy and I sat on rocks on the ground. It was so rocky around there that even there was a big flat rock inside the tent, we put the tent up around it and we used the rock for a dining table.

Sandy was feeling kind of silly, I guess we all were, and he said, "Did we put that flat rock in the tent, or didn't we?"

Dub said, "If we did we can claim to be pretty strong to put a rock the size of that one inside the tent. Most fellows couldn't even lift it." Pee-wee almost fell off his royal throne. "That shows the two of you are getting to be as crazy as Roy," he shouted.

I said, "Silence! Those are harsh words, Scout Harris. What Dub says is perfectly true. It's an interesting question in natural science——"

"You make me sick with your natural silence, I mean science!" he shouted.

I said, "I accept your apology for using the word *silence*. I never thought you knew there was such a word. But you're wrong as I usually never am. If

that rock is in the tent, we are the ones who put it there—deny it if you can. If we didn't put the rock in the tent, then how did the tent get outside the rock? It's as clear as mud, I'll leave it to Sandy."

By that time Dub and Sandy were both laughing because they had Pee-wee and me started.

I said, very sober like, "We can claim that we lifted a rock weighing about a quarter of a ton because we put it in that tent and *we did not have a derrick*. Therefore by the same line of reasoning we're stronger than mustard. Am I right?"

"Sure you are," Dub said.

"You couldn't be righter," Sandy said.

I said, "Now I have a peach of an idea and it will cause a great sensation in scout circles throughout the civilized world——"

"You think you're smart using big words," Pee-wee shouted.

I said, "As long as you have your camera with you, Dub, we'll let Pee-wee take our pictures standing on the rock inside the tent and we'll write underneath it, *Picture shows three Boy Scouts standing on huge rock which they put inside camping tent without the aid of a derrick*. Then we'll send it to *Boys' Magazine* and they'll print it. What do you say?"

"It's a fine idea," Dub said.

"We ought to have our coats off showing our sinewy arms," Sandy said.

"Maybe we can even get the Pathé Weekly to send and take pictures of us," I said. "Where's your camera anyway?"

"Do you think you can get me to take a picture of a lie?" Pee-wee started. "So you can get famous for what you didn't do. *No sireeeeeee!*"

"Do you claim we didn't put that rock in the tent—without the aid of a derrick?" I asked him. "That shows how much you know about comparative logic."

"It shows how much I know about not being a big fool and a big bluff," he screamed.

"Oh I know a better idea," I said, "and it's absolutely, positively honorable—it's even guaranteed for one year. We'll stand Pee-wee on the rock with his coat off and his arms folded kind of like a gladiator and a fierce scowl on his face. Then we'll take his picture and we'll write on it, *Boy Scout of superhuman strength! He is standing on the huge rock which he put inside the tent by his own tremendous scout prowess. Write and ask him how he did it.*"

Oh boy! I'm sorry we ever did that crazy thing because we've been getting letters from Boy Scouts ever since. But jiminies, I had to laugh. We stripped Pee-wee to the waist and stood him on the rock inside the tent with his arms folded and a scowl all over his face. We made him look like a gladiator. Then we raised up one side of the tent so as to get plenty of light and we took a

dandy picture of him standing on the flat rock. Afterward we got some printed in Catskill and I pasted one on a card and I typed some stuff on the card with the typewriter in Administration Shack. I'm so strong I can use a typewriter with one hand. It said:

YOUNG HERCULES HARRIS
BOY SCOUT.

WHO WITHOUT THE AID OF A DERRICK OR EVEN
A CROWBAR SUCCEEDED IN PLACING THE HUGE
ROCK INSIDE THE TENT. ASK HOW HE DID IT.

ROY BLAKELEY—SCOUT SCRIBE OF
1ST BRIDGEBORO, N. J. TROOP.
CABIN L, TEMPLE CAMP.

Dub and Sandy and I tacked that picture on the bulletin-board at Temple Camp and a Scout came and asked me how Pee-wee ever did it.

"That's easy," I said. "He put the tent up over the rock. No sooner said than stung."

I think it was that fellow that sent the picture to *Boys' Magazine*. Anyway, pretty soon letters began coming to me asking how any Boy Scout could lift such a rock and ever since then I've been sending postal cards to Scouts all over the country telling them and it's getting to be no joke because, jiminy crinkums, don't you suppose I've got anything to do with my money but buy postage stamps? I can't even get a new tennis racket and I had to stop eating ice cream cones. So please stop writing to me because now you know how it is. Write to Pee-wee and address him care of the cooking shack—that's where he usually hangs out. I'm through answering letters.

CHAPTER X

THE DISTANT FLICKER

I made flipflops for lunch and Pee-wee ate eleven of them. Dub ate seven. Sandy said he could eat them as fast as I could make them, but I was four ahead of him when he stopped. So then we each took one. That made twelve for Pee-wee. He wanted one more but I said it would be bad luck.

We had bad luck anyway. We dug around all afternoon in all the crevices and places and we drained out that pool and poked all around between the rocks in the bottom of it. We couldn't find any oilskin container. We turned over lots of rocks in the bed of the brook and looked underneath to see if anything might have got wedged there. Wherever two rocks were close together we pried them apart. We found lots of things that had got caught when they were floating down the stream, pieces of wood and things like that. And we felt all around at the roots of bushes that were under water when the brook was running. One place, in a crevice between two rocks, we found a whistle made out of willow wood. It was so dry the bark curled right off it. I said I guessed it came from Temple Camp. But Sandy said *no*, because the brook flowed into Black Lake. Maybe some kid away up in the mountains made that whistle and lost it in the brook, hey?

We kept on hunting till suppertime and then I fried bacon and we roasted potatoes and Pee-wee's face got all blackened up eating them. So I opened a can of soup so he could get the black off his face and that only made his face worse—honest he looked like a coal-bin. There was a spring and we got water from that. There was a cross cut in the rock over it and Pee-wee said it was an Indian sign. Dub said, "Maybe the last of the Mohegans are camping around here."

"Sure," I said, "maybe there's a tribe of Indian motorcycles parked up the line. Wherever Pee-wee goes he sees Indian signs. Once he saw some Indian meal in the street and he thought a tribe of Indians had passed through. He thinks a hotel reservation is where Indians live. I can tell you what that cross means," I said, "and you want to remember it wherever you hike around these parts. It means the water in that spring has been tested and it's all right. That cross was put there by a savage tribe of doctors. Pee-wee knows all about signs. He went to night school and he can even read them in the dark."

I had to laugh at the kid, he was sitting there with his face all blackened up, munching an apple. I said, "Are you sure you had enough to eat? Pretty soon it will be dark and then you won't be able to find your mouth any more."

“You think you’re smart showing off in front of new fellers,” the kid said. He could hardly speak, he was having such a mortal combat with a big bite of apple.

“If you took smaller bites they wouldn’t be so big,” I told him. “You ought to take your bites in two sections, then you’d think you were eating two apples—don’t answer till convenient.”

“Ythnkersmartdontyer,” Pee-wee munched at me.

“Explain all that,” I said. “Do you know Pee-wee’s favorite word?” I asked Dub and Sandy. “*Troop* because it rhymes with *soup*. Look out now, he’s going to speak.”

“Do you mean to say Indians were never around here?” the kid shouted. “Didn’t Uncle Jeb even find an old arrow in the woods?”

“It was an old Pierce-Arrow,” I said. “Pee-wee is so dumb he thinks an especially fine ford across a stream is called a Lincoln—take your time and answer, pronouncing each word distinctly.”

“Do you know what he said?” Pee-wee screamed at Dub and Sandy. “He has to be so smart with new fellers at camp he told Harold Titus that a tomahawk is a male bird and Harold Titus wrote it down in his scout record book. I’m warning you to be careful because you’re new fellers and the first thing you know he’ll make fools of you like when he told even a little lame tenderfoot that Robin Hood is a bird’s hat, you can ask Westy Martin in his own patrol and even worse he told another little feller——”

“We’ll wait while you take a bite,” I said.

“I can eat and talk too!” the kid shouted. “Even he told another tenderfoot that the rule that says you have to hike one mile and back means that you have to come back backwards and that tenderfoot tried to do it and he slipped and hurt his kneecap——”

“That’s no place to wear a cap,” Dub said.

“Absolutely right,” I spoke up gallantly.

“He hurt himself in three places,” the kid yelled.

“He should keep out of such places,” Sandy said.

“Absolutely positively correct the first time,” I said. “A true Scout wouldn’t go to such places—I leave it to Dub.”

“What places are you talking about?” Pee-wee yelled.

“Any places,” I said. “What’s the difference? As for that tenderfoot or tender knee or whatever he was, his name was Piker, he was so mean that when the flag was raised he only gave two cheers. Anyway what’s that got to do with Indians? Whenever Pee-wee can’t answer an argument he takes a big bite of his apple—it’s a cinch.”

By that time it was dark and we were just getting ready to start a little camp-fire when all of a sudden the kid said, “Look!”

“Is it Indians?” I asked him.

“Shh—look!” he said. “There’s a light way down in the other end of the chasm.”

We all looked, and jiminy crinkums if he wasn’t right. Away far down at the other end we could see a little light shining. I guess maybe that was a half a mile away.

“That’s blamed funny,” I said. “I wonder what that is.”

“It’s human beings,” Pee-wee said in a kind of a scared whisper.

“I never heard of anybody camping in here,” I said. Dub and Sandy just looked. We were all good and surprised. It was just a teeny little light, away off, but it had us guessing.

Sandy said, “I don’t just like to turn in for the night without knowing who that is.”

“You’re right,” I said.

“What’s the difference?” Dub said.

“The difference is I’m going to find out who it is,” Pee-wee said. “I’m going to sneak up and find out. Do you think I’m going to sleep in this chasm with bandits, maybe? Maybe it’s those same bandits that robbed the post office in Warnerville the other night.”

I said, “It’s too bad you threw away the core of your apple, you might need it to throw at them.”

But Dub and Sandy didn’t laugh, they just kept gazing down through the dark chasm at that little light. Seeing it there kind of made the chasm seem even more dark and spooky. I wouldn’t have minded so much if there was some one else in the chasm only, gee whiz, I wanted to know who it was. A light isn’t always so cheerful—sometimes it’s kind of scary.

CHAPTER XI IN THE DARK

The fire was already started so I said I'd go with Pee-wee while Dub and Sandy stayed and tended to it. Because there's a rule that you must never leave a fire, no matter where, without somebody to watch it.

When Pee-wee and I are alone we never have any mortal comebacks. That's one thing I'll say about him, he gets excited but he never stays mad. He's the biggest enemy I've got among all my special friends. It was good and dark walking through the chasm. You have to go over rocks and through brush and you don't get along very fast.

I said, "If it turns out to be somebody camping, remember don't say anything about why we're camping here—don't say anything about the will or anything Mr. Bagley told us."

"Yes but maybe he might have told somebody else too," Pee-wee said.

I said no I didn't think so, because he seemed to like us and he kind of gave us the job.

"Even if we make friends with them we'll keep it a secret, hey?" the kid said. "Because I think we're going to find that thing, hey?"

"Sure, we've got all to-morrow and most of the next day to hunt," I said. "And don't worry, because if Mr. Bagley told anybody else, they wouldn't be camping down at the other end of the chasm."

After a little while we came near enough to see that the light was in a funny kind of a tent, I suppose you'd call it. It was up against the side of the chasm—it was slanting from the side of the chasm to the ground. We stopped about two or three hundred feet away from it. As near as I could make out the cloth was fixed to the side of the chasm and went down over a couple of poles. It was like a lean-to shelter only there was so much canvas it went right down to the ground. A lean-to hasn't got any sides but this had sides and you couldn't see inside it. All we could see was a bright spot on the canvas where the light was inside.



ALL WE COULD SEE WAS A BRIGHT SPOT ON THE CANVAS.

“They’re not Scouts anyway,” I said.

“What’s that on top of the thing?” Pee-wee whispered to me.

Honest, I couldn’t make out that crazy tent at all. We went a little closer

and stopped short when I stepped on a twig. Gee williger, that twig sounded like a cannon when it broke, it was so dark and quiet all around.

“Shall we go on our hands and knees?” Pee-wee asked in my ear.

“No, just stand here a minute and don’t move your feet,” I said. “There are all dried leaves and brittle twigs under us. If I start to run you do the same.”

“And I won’t sneeze either, hey?” the kid said.

“You stay where you are,” I told him.

I went ahead a little bit, close enough so I could see that shelter better. It had *me* guessing. As near as I could make out there were branches laid all over the canvas—I mean on top. I didn’t know why any one would want to do that. The whole thing looked sort of like a thatch roof sticking out from the rocky wall, with canvas hanging down to the ground on the side where I was. It was a blamed crazy looking outfit, I’ll say that. Maybe it was meant to be camouflaged, that’s what I thought. I wasn’t going to go marching up to it, you bet.

Even I took off my sneaks before I went back to Pee-wee so I could feel the twigs with my bare feet and wouldn’t make a sound by breaking them. All of a sudden I heard a kind of a rustling sound but I guess it was only a bird.

“Come back a little,” I said to Pee-wee, “and be careful how you walk.”

“I’ve got my shoes off already,” the kid whispered, “and I tied the laces together and I’ve got the shoes hung around my neck—that’s the way Scouts used to do. And if you keep your mouth shut then you’ll be sure to keep from sneezing.” I had to laugh. “Well, you keep your mouth shut,” I said.

When we got a little further away from the place we stopped and I said, “That’s the darnedest, funniest thing *I* ever saw. It looks like a pigpen with tent sides to it. The top is all covered with brush. That would never keep it from leaking. What do you suppose is the idea? Maybe it’s meant to be disguised—what do you say?”

Pee-wee grabbed hold of me and pushed his mouth tight against my ear and whispered, “I bet you it’s those bandits that robbed the post office, I bet you it is! And I’m going to find out.”

“You’re going to do nothing of the kind,” I said. “If it’s robbers, or even tramps, we better keep away. Come ahead back to our tent—we’ll find out tomorrow.”

“Do you think I’m a quitter?” Pee-wee said. “Do you think I can’t sneak up there without making any sound? Didn’t I stalk a rabbit and he never knew it till another rabbit told him? You wait here and hold my shoes. Now we’ve got a dandy mystery—it’s a good mysterious one.”

“All right,” I said, “but for the love of goodness be careful. When you come back, how can you tell where to find me in the dark? I tell you the way we’ll do. I’ll—shh——”

“What is it?” he said.

“I thought I heard a sound,” I told him. “This is the way I’ll do—shh—I’ll keep close in by the wall and you come along close to it, then you’ll be sure to find me. I know a place where we can scramble up if we have to and get out of the chasm. And look out you don’t make any sound. I don’t know who’s there, but the place has got *me* guessing.”

One thing I’ll say for Pee-wee, he can make the loudest noise with his mouth and the smallest noise with his feet of any Scout I ever knew. He’s sure one little fiend when it comes to stalking—grasshoppers, crickets, field-mice and everything he stalks. And believe me, you just try to stalk a field-mouse, you just try it. But just the same I felt kind of scary waiting for him. I picked my way along the rocky wall till I came to the place where we could make a short cut out if we had to. It was a kind of wide crevice where you could scramble up.

I kept waiting and waiting, and he didn’t come back. Then I began thinking what I would do if he didn’t come back at all. Gee whiz, bandits these days, they don’t care what they do. I was kind of sorry I let Pee-wee go. All of a sudden there he was. And even in the dark I could see he looked good and scared.

CHAPTER XII

THE REWARD

Pee-wee was so excited he could hardly speak. "We don't have to hurry," he said, "because nobody saw me—I didn't make a sound. Listen, it's bandits! I crept around to the other side of the place and there isn't any canvas there at all. The top is all covered with brush like you said and underneath there's a couple of blankets where people sleep. *Listen*—there are pistols—three of them—one great big one—I saw them. And I saw a mask or something like bandits use—black. Even a shotgun I saw—listen—there's nobody in there now, but you can bet I didn't wait."

"Are you sure you're not dreaming?" I asked him.

"Do you think I don't know a dream when I see one?" he said. "Do you call a shotgun and pistols and a burglar's mask all things like that a dream? And you needn't say that it's somebody hunting because this isn't the hunting season so you needn't say it. And nobody ever goes camping like that—no *sireeee*. I know who's hiding there all right. It's those bandits that robbed the post office in Warnerville and we can get the reward and I'm the one that wanted to sneak up and you said no, so that shows how much you don't know—it's good I didn't do like you said because now you got the proof I didn't get killed. And I bet this cleft is where they came down, too. We'd better get away from here."

"I guess you're right," I said.

"*Oh boy*, that's some discovery!" he said. "It's even almost better than finding that will. And anyway I'm elected leader now because I discovered them so I'm going to be the one to say what we'll do."

I said, "It was a very exciting election, I'll say that. All right, kid, come ahead back. I guess you win to-night. What are we going to do about it?"

He said, all excited, "To-morrow morning early we're going to go to Bagley Center and tell the police—that's the nearest village. *Oh boy*, we'll get the reward because I saw a bulletin in the Catskill Post Office and I think it's a thousand dollars, anyway there were a lot of naughts——"

"Maybe the naughts were upside down," I said. I had to laugh he was so excited.

"There was a five and a lot of naughts," he said, "and now I'm sorry I didn't count them. Then after we get the reward we'll find the will and Mr. Bagley will get his land and he'll sell it to Temple Camp—and do you know what let's do?"

“Break it to me gently,” I said.

“We’ll have about a thousand dollars anyway and we’ll build a troop cabin in that new land, away off in the woods, and we won’t let anybody come there. We’ll be kind of different from everybody at camp, hey? Maybe we’ll let visitors come to see us—because I bet a lot of people will want to see us, hey, especially girls. Even we’ll be *double* heroes.”

Then he came up for air and he didn’t say any more till we got to camp, only trudged along beside me very important. He was starting in being a hero already. When we got to camp he went marching up and started trampling out the little fire. I guess Dub and Sandy thought he was crazy.

“What’s the idea?” Sandy wanted to know.

“I’ll tell you as soon as the fire is out,” Pee-wee said, very mysterious like.

They looked at me and I just said, “Ask the kid, he’s the big hero to-night.”

“I found the place where those bandits are hiding,” Pee-wee said. “We have to be careful and not have any light. To-morrow morning we’re going up to Bagley Center to tell the police.”

I said, “Don’t look at me, you heard what he said.”

I guess none of us slept very much that night, I know *I* didn’t. I kept hearing sounds all the time and once I thought somebody was creeping up to our tent. I was sorry we didn’t go up to the village right away as soon as we found that camp but the other fellows thought every one would be in bed. I just lay there listening for sounds. Once I fell asleep and I had a dream that I found old Mr. Bagley’s last will and I was just going to go and give it to him when one of those bandits pointed a pistol at me and was just going to shoot me when Pee-wee threw a tomato at him and I started to run. Jiminies, when you travel with Pee-wee there’s something doing even when you’re asleep.

He got us up at about five o’clock in the morning, you’d have thought we were going to catch a train. I said, “I’d rather be a bandit, then I wouldn’t have to get up so early.”

He said, “We better have strong coffee on account of what we’re going to do.”

I was so sleepy I hardly knew what I was saying. I staggered up against Dub—he was as bad as I was.

“How much is it—ten thousand dollars?” he stammered.

“You mean the reward?” I said. I didn’t know what I was saying I was so sleepy. “Search me, all I know is it’s got a five and a lot of naughts. I don’t even know if the naughts are in front of the five or after it. It may be one five thousandth of a cent for all I know, we should worry, where’s the coffee-pot? We’re all mixed up with so much money and I haven’t got enough for an ice cream cone when we get to Bagley Center. That’s one thing I don’t like about robbers, they get you up so early in the morning.”

“Suppose the wind shouldn’t be blowing toward Bagley Center?” Sandy said. He was so dopey he couldn’t find the sugar and he handed me the bottle of iodine.

“Then we can’t go,” I said.

“Are you going to start your crazy nonsense?” the kid wanted to know. “Are you going to wake up and have some sense?”

After we had our coffee we got awake and we started being serious. Because I had to admit that robbers are no laughing matter. Anyway Pee-wee wasn’t any laughing matter.

“Do you think it’s a joke getting five thousand dollars maybe?” he said.

“That’s no joke,” I said. “Come on, I’m going to start in being serious. Who’s going to be serious?”

“I am,” Dub said.

“Same here,” Sandy said.

“I’ll even cry if you want me to,” I said to Pee-wee.

If you look at my specially made map you’ll see there’s a dotted line going from Beaver Chasm to Bagley Center, and it’s a dandy dotted line, too. I made it good and slow. But I like to make railroads and brooks better. All through there is woods. That dotted line is a trail. But, believe me, you wouldn’t care anything about Bagley Center. But there’s one good thing about it, I didn’t see any school there. The trail runs right into the village—it’s the only thing in the village that runs. I was wondering where Mr. Bagley lived.

“Maybe he’d be a good one to tell,” Pee-wee said, “because don’t you know how he said he was away a lot and had adventures before he came home to stay?”

I said, “No, I think we better go to the police because they’re the right ones to go to.”

There wasn’t anybody up in the village, anyway we didn’t see anybody. Only one man we saw and he was driving down the street in a wagon with milk cans. He turned around and kept staring at us. Pretty soon we came to a house where there was a girl sweeping off the porch. I guess maybe she was a Girl Scout or something like that because she had a khaki blouse on. She was busy, sweeping good and hard.

Pee-wee said, “Let’s ask her where the police station is, hey?”

“Sure,” I said, “I’ll ask her. Only maybe she’s sweeping in her sleep, it’s so early. I wouldn’t want to wake her up.”

“If she’s asleep she’ll tell you so,” Dub said.

“I never thought of that,” I told him.

“Are you thinking about getting the robbers arrested or are you thinking about being a fool?” Pee-wee wanted to know.

I went up to the girl and I said, “Hey, girl, are you awake because we’d like

to ask you a question?”

“Don’t you pay any attention to him because he’s a fool,” Pee-wee said. “Will you please tell us where the police station is?”

She stopped sweeping and she looked kind of surprised and she said, “It’s on Main Street and it’s right next to the Fire House.”

I said, “Can you get any ice cream cones anywhere around there?”

“Don’t you pay any attention to him,” Pee-wee piped up, “because it’s serious business—so do you think the police are up yet?”

She said, “Goodness me, I don’t know, but if you’re hungry *I* can give you something to eat. I shouldn’t think you’d want ice cream cones so early in the morning. I just bet you’re Boy Scouts and you’re lost. Do you know where you are?”

“We’re here,” I said.

“Oh I just bet you’re lost,” she said. “Because you don’t belong in this town. I bet you belong over at that big camp and I bet you’ve been out all night and don’t know where you are. Last summer two boys that belonged over at that camp, they were such smarties they got lost and they thought this was Snowden Hollow and they had to go to the police station and get something to eat and three girls showed them how to get back to their camp. Oh I just almost *died* laughing! The whole village was laughing about it.”

“That would be only about five people anyway,” I said. “It wouldn’t be enough to make a good laugh. We’ve had as many as thirty or forty people laughing at us,” I said.

“Even fifty,” Pee-wee said, “and besides, you think you’re so smart, we’re not lost at all and if you knew what we came to this town for you’d even be scared. And besides sometimes Boy Scouts get lost on purpose——”

“And they get hungry on purpose, too,” Dub said.

“They get lost so they can find their way,” the kid shouted at her. “That shows how much prowess they’ve got.”

“We carry it around in our pockets,” I told her. “And resources, too, we have plenty of them. How can you find your way if you don’t get lost? Anybody that knows short division can do that.”

The girl just sat down on the steps and kept on laughing and laughing and laughing. She said, “That’s just too funny! They get lost so they can find their way! *Oh dear!*”

I said, “I know even funnier things than that.”

“That’s all girls can do—*giggle*,” the kid said. “When they get in a boat they scream, and when they see a mouse they scream, and when they see a spider they scream, and they’re scared of snakes and caterpillars, especially toads, and all they can do is giggle. Anyway just to show you how smart you’re not with your giggling and laughing at Scouts, now I’ll tell you what we

came to this village for and it wasn't to get something to eat—you're so smart! It's because we know where some robbers are camped, and if they're the ones we think they are we'll get a reward, I don't know how much it is. But anyway did you ever hear of girls getting a reward for scouting, I mean doing big things? Stopping trains and finding lost people and saving lives and all that? So now you know why we want to go to the police station—you're so crazy all you can do is to sit there and giggle! Sweep with brooms, that's all girls can do."

She stood up all of a sudden, very brave—you know how they throw their heads back—girls. She stamped her foot at Pee-wee and looked straight in his eyes as if she was trying to scare him and she put her face right close up in front of him.

I said, "Don't you dare to kiss him."

"I wouldn't kiss such a dunce," she said. "But I'll tell you what my pal and I did yesterday afternoon. There's a crazy man named Saul Bagley in this village and he escaped from his home and wandered away three days ago and there was a reward of a hundred dollars offered by his cousins where he lives to anybody that would find him. And we two girls traced him to Dale's Corners and he was telling everybody there that Charlie Chaplin gave him a million dollars and the Boy Scouts got it away from him. And last night Miss Ella Bagley gave us a check for one hundred dollars. So *there*, Mr. Smarty."

CHAPTER XIII

IT IS TO LAUGH

Dub and Sandy and Pee-wee and I all just stared at each other.

“Did—didn’t his—Mr. Bagley—didn’t his father leave him a lot of money and everything in a will?” the kid blurted out.

The girl said, “Oh goodness me, no. He’s been telling everybody that for years. Oh he’s perfectly harmless, only he wanders off.”

I said, “Will you please excuse me while I drop dead? We met him over at Bagley’s Green and he told us his father got killed in Beaver Chasm and that his last will got lost there.”

“That’s just like him,” the girl said. “His father did lose his life there but there wasn’t any *will*. Oh goodness me, did he tell you that?”

“Haven’t we been hunting for the will?” Sandy blurted right out.

The girl just looked at us and then, *goodnight*, she started laughing. Boy, I never saw anybody laugh so hard. She said, “Oh it’s just too *excruciating!*”

“You think you’re big using hard words,” the kid said. “What do we care about wills? Do you say robbers aren’t more important than wills? If you saw what I saw last night you wouldn’t be standing there laughing like a—like a hyena. *A regular robber’s den.*”

The girl said, “Well, if that’s what you saw you’d better run and tell the police. But I bet all you saw was the camp of the moving picture people who have a regular robber’s cave over in the chasm and they’re making part of a picture there. We’ve been over there three or four times to watch them. And, oh I think you’re just too funny for *anything!*”

Oh boy, I wish you could have seen Pee-wee! He just stared at her.

She said, “Don’t tell me it was a little rush-covered lean-to that you saw! Why that’s the place where the kidnapped child is taken to—and kept there by the robbers. Mr. Hartley, he’s one of the robbers, and he’s a perfectly lovely man. He comes up here to town lots and lots.”

“I guess he was here last night,” I said.

Even still, Pee-wee just stared.

I said, “Well there’s only one thing for us to do now and that is to rescue that child from the moving picture robbers. Anyway I feel the need of an ice cream cone to keep me from laughing to death.”

Even after we started away the girl was sitting there on the porch steps laughing at us. I was glad when we got around the corner. Pee-wee didn’t say a single word.

"Two strikes out," I said. "There goes the will, also the robbers. I blame it all to Pee-wee's windmeter. Those were the two most thrilling adventures I ever didn't have. But anyway I've got a new idea——"

"If it's crazy we're not going to do it," the kid shouted.

"I don't blame you," I said. "Don't ever mention the word crazy to me again. And the next time you wake me up at five o'clock in the morning I'll kill you. What are we going to do now?"

"One thing, we're not going to make any solemn pledge," the kid said.

Sandy said, "The more we don't make, the better I'll like it. Anyway we can camp in the chasm to-night, can't we? I say let's go back and get acquainted with those movie people."

Dub said, "Sure, maybe we can get them to take pictures of us hunting for old man Bagley's will."

"Well, anyway," I said, "there's one thing that's real and that's ice cream cones. What do you say we go and get some and then start back?"

Dub said, "Let's not bother."

"Do you call ice cream cones a bother?" the kid shouted.

"Maybe they're a bother, but I don't mind a little bother," Sandy said. "If I was coaxed I might even eat two."

"I don't believe we'll find any stores open yet," Dub said.

"I can eat seven even without being coaxed," Pee-wee said.

"You have to coax him to stop," I told Sandy.

I had to laugh, we started out to hunt for a lost will, then we got started after a reward for finding some bandits, and there we were in Bagley Center on the trail of ice cream cones.

I said to them, "This is just the kind of a hike I like, it's full of adventures that we don't have—it's safe and insane."

The kid said, "That's a good name for it. Why don't you call it *Roy Blakeley's Safe and Insane Hike*?"

"Wait till it's finished," I said. "Now if we could only save somebody's life and then find that it wasn't anybody after all."

"Every hike you have you get crazier," Pee-wee said.

"Life, liberty and the pursuit of snappiness," I told him. "The most interesting things you do are the things you don't do, I'll leave it to Sandy. You take adventures; you don't know what to do with them after you get them. If you could keep them it would be all right. I should worry about having adventures. *I'm* out for fun, that's what I'm out for. Now you take young Scout Harris. It's different with him."

"I've got some sense," Pee-wee said. "Do you mean to tell me that place didn't look like a robber's den?"

"I don't know, I never saw a robber's den," I told him.

“But if there was a robber’s den it would look like that, wouldn’t it?” he shouted at me. “Didn’t we get all excited? Wasn’t that an adventure? It’s better than a lot of nonsense like you usually have in your crazy hike stories.”

All the time we were going down the main street of Bagley Center and Dub and Sandy were laughing at us. Pretty soon we came to a candy store and we went in and got some cones. Sandy said he would pay for them out of the reward we didn’t get. We all sat along the counter eating them. The man—gee, he was a nice man—he stood there talking to us. Dub asked him if he knew the moving picture people over at the chasm.

He said, “You mean the folks that was doing that Cumberland Mountain stuff? Yes, they often come over here. Guess they’re pretty near finished, ain’t they? I heard they was finishing up. That’s a pretty clever youngster they got with them, so I hear. You boys seen him? Dresses up like one of you Scout fellers. What’s his name—Bunko Bravado, is it? He’s only ’bout sixteen or so. He was in here after some candy one day. Yes, they’re a great lot. I see a picture down to Peekskill last winter had that kid in it. Why they threw him off a big cliff and the next you see he was swimming in the water. Gave me the shivers. He’s escaping from a band of kidnappers, or something or other like that, over in the chasm, so I hear.”

Dub said, “I bet it’s hard candy he eats.”

“Sure, rock candy,” Sandy said.

The man said, “I think it was marshmallows.”

Pee-wee didn’t bother saying anything till he finished his cone—he was too busy. Then, all of a sudden he opened up.

“That shows how much you don’t know,” he said to the man, “because boys in moving pictures are a lot of bluffs. That was just a dummy they threw off the cliff. They don’t do real things like Scouts do. Some of them do like Douglas Fairbanks, but most of them, I can do better things myself—thrilling and all that.”

“Douglas Fairbanks is terribly jealous of him,” I said to the man. “If you should see Douglas Fairbanks, don’t mention the name of Scout Harris, whatever you do—it only makes trouble.”

“They’re a lot of false alarms in the movies,” the kid said. “When it comes to running and trailing and stalking and jumping and showing resources and things Boy Scouts can beat them every time. Scouts, they know how to swim and dive—they don’t have to have rag dummies to do their stunts for them—*geeeee whiz!*”

“They can even do their own eating,” I said.

So then each of us had another cone and after that we started back to Beaver Chasm.

CHAPTER XIV

HONORS AND AWARDS

We took our time hiking back to the chasm. That's the way we always do. We just ambled along kind of kidding each other—you know how. Because anyway we didn't have to get back to Temple Camp till the next day. One reason we took our time was because Dub wanted to take some snapshots in the woods.

After a little while he said, "Now that we had our adventures with bandits and wills, can anybody tell me about the Gold Cross?"

"I can tell you all about it," Pee-wee piped up. "You have to save a life by risking your own life. Then you're a hero. It isn't like winning the life-saving badge, like you have to do to get to be an Eagle. For that you only have to know how to save a life. But to get the Gold Cross you have to save one. See?"

"It's the same, only different," I said. "Some Scouts think that to win the taxidermy badge all you have to do is drive a taxi. Pee-wee thought he could get the plumbing badge by eating plums. But he was mistaken just the same as he was when he thought if he won the astronomy badge he'd be a Star Scout. He thinks a Life Scout is one that has saved a life."

"Will you shut up while I give him information about scouting!" the kid screamed at me.

"Just the same as you can't get the first aid badge till after you get the second aid badge," I said to Dub. "That's where a lot of Scouts fall down. Pee-wee thinks that pioneering means making pie, but you can't get the badge that way because he tried. If you save a life by losing your own you get the Gold Cross. If you save two lives you get the double cross—I'll leave it to Sandy."

"That shows how much you don't know about the rules!" Pee-wee yelled at me, "because they don't have the Gold Cross any more, they have a round medal. They don't have the Silver Cross or the Bronze Cross any more either."

"But the double cross they have," Sandy said.

"Absolutely, positively incorrect the first time," I said. "If a Scout having won the first aid, second aid, and lemonade awards, gets double-crossed, that means he's an Eagle Scout—I'll leave it to Pee-wee. If you want to know all about scouting apply to Roy Blakeley, leader of the Silver Fox Patrol——"

"You mean the Silver Fool Patrol!" the kid said.

"Is there anything else you'd like to know?" I asked Dub.

He said, "Well, I was thinking that maybe if I saved a life, I'd get the life-saving badge and then I'd be an Eagle and I'd get the Gold Medal too."

“You’ve got an appetite like Pee-wee,” I said.

“I thought I might kill two birds with one stone,” he said.

“A Scout is not supposed to kill birds,” I told him, “so there’s where you’re going to get in trouble. What do you want the Gold Medal for?”

“*He’s crazy*, don’t you listen to him!” Pee-wee shouted at Dub. “You win the life-saving badge by rules and you win the Gold Medal by being a hero. And if you get the Gold Medal, that doesn’t give you the life-saving badge.”

“Any more than if you’re chicken-hearted it gives you the poultry badge,” I told him. “That’s where lots of Scouts make mistakes. I never make any.”

“You have them ready made,” Pee-wee shouted.

Dub said—he was trying to be serious—he said, “Well it seems funny to me that if you save a life you don’t get the life-saving badge. If I could only do that, then I could finish my Eagle tests and get the Gold Medal too. You see I’ve got a towering ambition. What I’m thinking about is that Ellen Burnside award of a hundred dollars that goes with the Gold Medal. I thought I might save somebody’s life and get the medal and the hundred dollars, then get my Eagle badge on the strength of the life-saving stunt and then I could live up in Eagle Crag Cabin for the rest of the summer——”

“And have me visit you,” I said.

“Good-night, Napoleon didn’t have anything on you,” Sandy said.

“If you had a bean-shooter up at Eagle Crag Cabin you might conquer Temple Camp,” I said, “and you could send Pee-wee with a large detachment to demand the surrender of the cooking shack.”

Dub said, “Well I guess it can’t be did. First I was crazy enough to be counting on our getting some kind of a reward for finding that will, and then I was thinking maybe we’d get the reward for finding some bandits.”

“All you think about is money,” Sandy said.

“All I’m thinking about is staying till the end of the season with you fellows,” Dub said. “Just us four, I wish we could stick together till camp closes. We’ve had a lot of fun doing nothing. Gee, I like you fellows——” that’s just the way he said. He said, “That’s the way I am, I’d rather get in with just three or four fellows and bang around with them than be in with everybody. I’ve been here a week and I don’t know many Scouts at camp—only you fellows. Christopher, I wish I could stay with you. I’m kind of sorry I came up at all now, because it will be so hard to go back. Crinkums, you sure have kept me laughing.”

After he spoke like that we all just hiked along a little while and nobody said anything. Even Pee-wee didn’t say anything.

Pretty soon Sandy said to me, “How soon do you and Pee-wee have to go home?”

“Not till the camp closes up,” I told him.

“Oh boy!” Dub said.

“Me till August twenty,” Sandy said.

“Me till next Saturday,” Dub said. “Hard luck, hey? After I get home I’ll be thinking about you jollying Pee-wee.”

“Will you think about me answering him back?” Pee-wee piped up. “How I beat him in arguments?”

“Sure,” Dub said. And he just went along, kind of smiling and not saying anything. None of us said anything.

After a while the kid said, “Why do you have to go back?”

“Shut up,” I whispered to him. Sandy looked at the kid, too, and sort of frowned.

“Oh just because,” Dub said. “It’s like having one little sliver of pie—you only want more. I wasn’t thinking about it when we started out. Will you fellows be here next summer?”

Jiminies, but I felt sorry for him. I’ll tell you how it was with Dub, he was an in-and-outer. That’s a Scout that comes to camp alone without any troop or anything, and just stays a couple of weeks or so. Some of them only stay one week. Those fellows have to start home as soon as they get in with anybody. My troop goes up as soon as school closes and we stay till school opens. All of a sudden I could see how it was with Dub. Do you remember how even he kind of didn’t want to go get ice cream cones in Bagley Center? It was because he only had a little bit of money and he had to take care of it.

After the way he talked coming back then I knew that all the while he had really been counting on us getting some kind of a reward. Me, I should worry about those things. I’m out for fun, not money. And now I knew he was thinking of some way so he could stay at Temple Camp and go around with us. That fellow would be an Eagle Scout only for one badge, but that wouldn’t do him any good about staying at camp. If he saved some fellow’s life he’d get the Gold Medal, and besides he’d get a hundred dollars—that’s the Ellen Burnside award for anybody that gets the Gold Medal. But you don’t see fellows risking their lives every day in the week. It isn’t like trying for a badge. I felt sorry for him.

I was walking with him ahead of the others and he said, “I suppose you think I’m crazy. But do they give you that hundred dollars as soon as you win it?”

I said, “Listen Dub, I’ll tell you, no fooling, how it is. There are lots of different awards at camp—donations, sort of. But that’s the only one with money.”

“That’s why I’d like to win it, so I can stay,” he said. “I wonder if you get the money right away?”

I said, “That wouldn’t make any difference, Dub. I think it isn’t given out

till later. But if a Scout wants to stay the camp will give him credit for it—that's easy. Tom Slade—he's chief scout assistant—he could fix that for you. But what's the use counting on that, Dub?"

He said, "I know it."

"Waiting for somebody to get his life in danger! You might be six months waiting."

"And it isn't such a good thing to be waiting for either; is it?" he said.

I said, "No it isn't, if it comes to that—if you want to look at it that way. I never thought about that. Gee, I'd like to see you stay, Dub. I'd try to work you in on the hospitality award if I could. Any Scout that swims all around the lake without landing can ask another fellow to stay at camp all summer. But you see the trouble with all those awards is that they're only given once in the season. Now there's a Scout here named Wyne Corson and he won that award the first week he was here. You know Hervey Willetts, don't you? That fellow with the funny little hat? Well, he's the one that's staying all summer with Corson. Now nobody else can win that award this season, or I'd try for it. If I had done it I'd get one of my patrol to do it. Only, you see, it's only given out once in a season. The award is for just one fellow's board at camp. It's the same with the Ellen Burnside award. You've got to be the first one to save a life or you don't get the hundred dollars. See? The money is only given to one Scout in a season. It's a private award, not a B. S. A. award.

"Every season some fool, or maybe some tenderfoot, gets his life in danger at Temple Camp, and you'd get a chance to win the medal if you stayed long enough. That is, you would if you weren't afraid of risking your own life. Only you want to win a hundred dollars inside the next week, and jiminy crinkums, if you did you'd be mighty lucky, that's all I can say. If you got your Eagle award, even that wouldn't do you any good. Because you couldn't have Eagle Crag Cabin to stay in unless you were staying all summer. I mean you could have it to stay in as long as you're here, but you'd only be here a week."

"Heads or tails I lose, hey?" Dub said. "I guess there's nothing for me to do but go home. Like you say, *united we stand, divided we sprawl*. Well anyway I'm glad I was here while you fellows were here. We had a good time while it lasted, hey?"

Jiminies, I felt awful sorry for him.

CHAPTER XV THE HERO MAKER

All of a sudden I had an idea and I turned around and said, "Hey, Scout Harris, you know so much about scouting, is the Rotary Club award for one hundred dollars?"

He said, "Yes, but it doesn't come till the end of the season in the canoe races."

I said, "Well, then, that settles it, we're out of luck. United we stand, divided one of us goes home."

Dub said, "Never mind, let's go back to the chasm and see those movie people. We can camp in the chasm to-night and when we go back to camp tomorrow, anyway we can say we had a good time. I don't have to go home till next Saturday."

"You make me tired!" Pee-wee shouted. "You don't have to go home at all. That's what Roy Blakeley's all the time saying, united we stand, and it hasn't got any sense to it. All you have to do is to save somebody's life——"

"Just like that," I said.

"Save two or three, then you'll be sure," Sandy said.

"Don't you pay any attention to them," the kid shouted. "Just because they don't keep their eyes open that doesn't mean you can't find a chance to save life and be a hero and get a hundred dollars. You stay with me and I bet you inside of a week you'll see somebody that needs to get his life saved. On the lake, that's where you want to stay. You stick with me and I'll show you. Gee whiz, if you want to stay at Temple Camp and be kind of partners with us you can do it, that's easy."

"Sure," I said, "Scouts risk their lives every evening with matinees on Saturdays and holidays. Just say what kind of a life you'd like to save and the fixer will fix it for you. Did you ever hear the poetry Brent Gaylong made about him?" I said. I guess you fellows that are reading this story never heard it either. Everybody at Temple Camp knows it.

His middle name is Hunter's Stew,

He mixes it.

In mixing he can sure outdo,

All other Scouts he ever knew,

And when a thing goes all askew,

He fixes it.

Pee-wee shouted, "Do you bet I can't show you how to save a life? Do you

bet I can't fix it so you can stay here—do you bet? Even I know some rattlesnakes, where they live——”

“You can't get the reward for saving a rattlesnake's life,” I said.

“Will you shut up!” he hollered at me. “I know where they live—a whole nest of them.”

“Why did you never tell me this?” I asked him.

“Because you're a big fool and will you keep still while I'm talking, doing a good turn to help a brother Scout like it says you've got to do a lot you know about it making fun of the handbook—*will you shut up!*”

“I can't shut up twice at the same time, can I?” I said.

“Will you *keep* shut up till I get through talking to Dub?” he shouted. Oh boy, he was sure started. When he gets started he shouts right along without ever stopping and that's why there aren't any punctuation marks when he talks. “Will you not be a big fool for one minute!” he yelled at me.

“Go ahead,” Dub said. “I'm with you.”

“You stick with me and I'll fix it for you——”

“Now that we've found the bandits,” I said.

“And old man Bagley's will,” Sandy said.

“I know where there are rattlesnakes,” the kid shouted, “and I know some tenderfoots that are going stalking to-morrow right near that tree and—and—you can—you know how to grab a rattlesnake, don't you?”

“Sure I do,” Dub said.

“And if that doesn't work——”

“Then the rattlesnakes will stay all summer and Dub won't. It's the same only different,” I said.

“You take the lake,” Pee-wee started up again.

“Take it yourself, I don't want it,” I said.

“Will you listen to me?” he shouted at Dub.

“Let's have a large chunk of silence and a very little of that,” Sandy said. “Pee-wee has the floor.”

“I think he has the blind staggers,” I said. “He's so highly strung from everybody stringing him. Go on, turn on the loud speaker.”

Pee-wee said, “All right, you can laugh——”

“I'm not laughing,” Dub said.

“But anyway,” Pee-wee went on, “if you really want to stay at Temple Camp I'll find out a way for you to save a life——”

“First you go to the saving bank,” Sandy said.

I said, “Absolutely correct the first time. Then you pick out a Scout that's dying——”

“*Do you deny I did a lot of things?*” Pee-wee screeched at the top of his voice. “Didn't I tell MacElton a branch was rotten on a willow tree that sticks

out over the lake, *didn't I?* And didn't I tell him that tenderfoots were always up in that tree—*didn't I?* And didn't that branch break just like I said it would? He hung around that in a boat and he saved little Skinny Bonner from drowning and he got the Gold Medal. So now, you think you're so fresh with all your crazy Silver Fox nonsensical nonsense! You ought to be named the Jackass Patrol, that's what Councilor Stone said. If Dub sticks to me next week I'll show him how he can win the Gold Medal by saving a life and get the Burnside hundred dollars too, because I know a way, already I know a way, and he can stay till the end of the season and even he'll have some money left for sodas and cones and things."

"So *that's* the idea," I said.

"No it isn't the idea," he screamed at me. "But I know a feller that's going to be reckless, and I know where he's going to do it, and when he's going to do it, and I know how you can save him. Only if you're going to follow Roy Blakeley around for the rest of the season I pity you."

"Those are harsh words, Sprout Harris," I said.

"You stick with me," Pee-wee said to Dub, "and I'll show you how. You just leave it to me. Always I do things when I say I will."

"Even when he fails he succeeds," I said.

Jiminies, it looked as if the kid had Dub started. He put his arm around Pee-wee's shoulder and said, "All right, don't get excited, kid, I'm going to stick to you. I have a nunch things are going to break right for us."

"If I say I'll fix it, I'll fix it," Pee-wee said.

"What's the use laughing? Maybe he can," Dub said. "Anyway I believe something's going to happen, I just have a feeling."

"Oh sure," I said, "something always happens when Pee-wee is on the scene."

The kid just hiked along, very mad, and very important looking. He didn't say a word.

"Heroes made while you wait," I said. Sandy was laughing. I was winking at him. "Harris the hero maker," I said.

Just the same I could see that Dub was kind of in with Pee-wee. That's the way it is with Pee-wee, he shouts so loud and says what he can do, and fellows believe him, especially new fellows. Poor Dub, I felt sorry for him.

CHAPTER XVI

REEL HEROES

We were glad when we got back to the chasm; anyway I was, I know that. Our little tent looked good, standing there. Dub said he wished we could camp there all summer, just us four. “Yes, and what would I be doing?” I said. “Cooking meals for the four of us. Do you think all I came up to Temple Camp for was to cook flapjacks for a human famine?”

“What are we going to have for lunch?” Pee-wee wanted to know.

“I’d make some angel cake if I only had some angels,” I told him. “How about spaghetti and rice pudding? Only we haven’t got any cream.”

Oh boy, it was nice sitting around eating lunch. I know how to make dandy spaghetti. You have to have a can of tomatoes and you pour them over it. Once I flavored it with chocolate but it wasn’t any good, but licorice isn’t so bad. Once I used a lot of long strings of licorice that they call shoe strings—you get them three for a cent—I used them instead of spaghetti. Only tomato sauce doesn’t go good with it. Black spaghetti, that’s what we called it. It was only just an experiment—experiments are all right as long as you don’t eat them.

“I can eat experiments or anything,” Pee-wee said.

Sandy said he’d like to be in Italy where the spaghetti grows. You could just go out in the fields and pick it, that’s what he said.

“Do they plant it in grated cheese or just in the earth?” I asked him.

He said, “They plant it in the earth and they call it wop-weed over there.”

I said, “Well, that’s news to me, I never knew where spaghetti came from.”

“Well, anyway, we know where it goes to,” Dub said.

“Sure,” I told him, “but I never knew it grows just the same as macaroni.”

“You’re crazy!” Pee-wee shouted. He was trying to keep some spaghetti from wriggling away from his mouth.

“Hold your mouth up in the air and eat it by the attraction of gravitation,” I told him.

“Spaghettidoesngrow,” he said.

“Explain all that,” I told him. “Here, have some more.”

“Are we going down to the other end of the chasm to see those movie people this afternoon?” Sandy wanted to know.

I said, “Sure, we positively are, and I’ve got an idea. It’s an inspiration, accent on the third syllable. *Look at Pee-wee!*” all of a sudden I said. “He should use sandpaper to hold spaghetti—this is terrible.”

Honest, I wish you could have seen that kid. He was trying to shovel

spaghetti into his mouth and it was slipping every which way.

“Take some salt in your hand so it won’t skid,” I told him.

“Whatsthinspiration?” he managed to get out.

“Go into second and don’t jam your brakes on too hard and you’ll make it,” Sandy told him.

I was laughing so hard I couldn’t speak for a couple of minutes—seeing Pee-wee eat spaghetti. I said, “I’m sorry I couldn’t get any rough spaghetti but it’s very expensive.”

“How about the inspiration?” Dub wanted to know. “This expedition is getting worse and worse.”

“Yes, and even he’ll write it up in a book and expect fellers to read it,” Pee-wee said.

“It will sound all right as long as they don’t read too hard,” I said. “You read a book too hard and you spoil it—I’ll leave it to Sandy. That’s what knocks the back covers off most books.”

“This one will be the worst of any of them,” the kid said.

“Just the same,” I told him, “I’m always getting letters from Scouts who want to join my hikes. I have to refuse them because they’re not crazy enough. One fellow that lives in Nutley, New Jersey, said he could prove he was a nut. Even I wouldn’t let that fellow in.”

“What’s the inspiration?” Dub wanted to know.

I said, “Oh yes, listen. What’s the name of that movie hero up the chasm? Don’t you know, the man in the candy store told us?”

“Bunko Bravado,” Sandy said.

“We’ll go and see him,” I told them, “and we’ll dare him to do something dangerous. And if he does, Pee-wee will save his life. There you are. What could be nicer? Nothing whatever, said our young hero preparing to jump from the cliff.”

So in the afternoon when we were all good and rested, we took a hike to the other end of the chasm to see the movie people. Sandy said if they were using rag dummies we might throw one down from the top of the chasm and have Dub jump down after it and we’d take a picture of him and he’d get the Gold Medal and the Burnside award.

“Is that the way you talk to new fellers at camp?” the kid shouted. “Telling them to be crooked—gee whiz!”

“Didn’t you say that movie actors were crooked?” I said. “Did you say they don’t really do things? Didn’t you say they were not regular heroes?”

“I didn’t say they were crooked,” Pee-wee said, all excited. “I said they’re not real heroes like Scouts, because they double and they use dummies and it’s just kind of acting, the things they do. Do you think they really walk up buildings and drop from telegraph wires and all that?”

“You’d better look out how you talk to them,” Dub said.

“Do you think I’m afraid of them?” the kid asked him. “Gee whiz, they’re only just actors. When they have to do things where you have to have prowesses and things like that—and reckless daring——”

“Goodness me,” I said.

“I bet there isn’t one of them can dive like Hervey Willetts does,” Pee-wee said. “They just do things that kind of make it *look* as if they’re brave. Scouts are real heroes because they no fooling take their lives in their hands——”

“Like spaghetti,” Sandy said.

“Geeeeeee whiz,” the kid went on, “didn’t I see Freddie Fearless in the *Leap of Love* and he gave a good big jump into the ocean where it was all rocks and a lady next to me nearly fainted and people were giving sighs and everything but I didn’t because I had a wild cherry jaw-breaker in my mouth _____”

“That shows how really wild he is,” I said.

“*Will you shut up!*” he yelled at me.

“He wouldn’t eat tame cherries——”

“I wouldn’t eat tame cherries—I mean—will you *shut up!*” the kid just screeched.

“He eats wild animal crackers,” I said. “Yes, yes, go on with your story.”

“He went kerplunk into the water,” the kid said, “and I could see it was only a dummy and they zipped the film quick. Then when he was climbing into a boat it was that feller—Freddie Fearless. Geeeee whiz, he gets thousands and thousands of dollars for bein a ’fraid cat. Do you think I’d be afraid to jump that?”

“What became of the wild cherry jaw-breaker?” Sandy asked him.

“It wasn’t rescued,” I said. “It was never heard of again.”

CHAPTER XVII

TALK IS CHEAP

That time we went, we could see just how the camp was on account of it being daytime. That lean-to thing looked just like I thought it would. But there wasn't any other tent. There was a place where I thought one had been. I said to the other fellows that I guessed some of the movie people had gone away.

Sandy said, "Well, there's four of them here anyway."

Those four were sitting outside the lean-to. There were three kind of young men and a fellow about like us. They were just sitting there like as if they were resting. The three big fellows sat in a row on a board that was laid across a couple of stumps. The boy was sprawled on the ground in front of them. Right near them was a high three-legged thing—you know, like a camera stands on. Jiminies, I'll say that lean-to did look like a robber's den all right. The canvas sides of it weren't there. All the lean-to was that second time we saw it was just a roof sticking out from the side of the chasm, all covered with brush and with brush hanging part way down the three sides of it. As we came near we saw a box standing on a rock—it had pieces of red chalk in it.

Pee-wee whispered to me, he said, "That's what they use to mark their faces with."

I said, "Pee-wee is scared of them, now that we're here."

"I'll show you if I am," the kid said.

With that he marched right up ahead of us and he said, "I bet I know who you are. You're the moving picture people that are *on location* here, and I know what on location means. You're making that play about the Cumberland Mountains."

One of the grown-up fellows said, "That's a pretty good bet. Who wins?"

"Because in Bagley Center they told us about you," the kid said.

"Well *now!*" one of the men said.

"And I bet I know who that boy is too," Pee-wee said. "That's Bunko Bravado only I bet it isn't his real name—I bet you. And if that's a scout shirt he's got he has no right to wear it because there's a law that says so—even President Coolidge says so—you can't wear a regular official scout shirt unless you're a Scout."

The men all looked at each other and they started laughing. One of them winked at the boy and he started laughing too. Jiminy, even Dub and Sandy and I started laughing.

"Can we see you do some acting?" Pee-wee asked them. "I bet one of you

is the director, hey?”

“Every time he hits the mark,” one of the young men said. “Now which one of us is Harold Lloyd? See if you can tell him when he hasn’t got his glasses on.”

First off, Pee-wee was kind of shocked. Then he looked at them very hard and he said, “None of you is Harold Lloyd.”

“Isn’t it wonderful?” one of the men said. “Again he is right.”

“And anyway Harold Lloyd isn’t so smart,” Pee-wee said. “Because anyway he doesn’t really do those things. Do you think I’d be scared of him if he was here? Even Douglas Fairbanks says Scouts are the smartest. But anyway I’d like to see you—how you do things.”

The boy on the ground said, “Go on, talk some more.”

“Sure thing, talk some more,” one of the men said. “We’re taking a rest this afternoon. We got all tired out this morning stopping a bear from jumping on one of our horses.”

“Where’s the bear?” Pee-wee said.

“He’s taking his afternoon nap,” the man said.

“Talk low so you won’t wake him,” the boy said. “The horse has gone to a meeting of the Paramount directors.”

“Yes and you dope bears, that’s the way you do it,” Pee-wee said.

“But don’t tell anybody, will you?” the boy said.

“Will you tell me your real no fooling name?” Pee-wee asked him. “I bet it isn’t Bunko Bravado.”

“It’s Timothy Timid,” one of the young men said. “Only you mustn’t ever let it leak out. We had him swallow a spiral spring so he could make big leaps. Now he goes by leaps and bounds.”

“Did he have to jump across this chasm anywhere?” Pee-wee asked them. “Down there where it’s narrow, I mean.”

One of the men said to him, “You just wait for the sixteen reel picture to be released next fall, *The Daredevil of the Cumberland Hills*. Do you see that place up there? Where there’s a rock sticking out? He leaps with sublime abandon across that——”

“Is she the heroine?” Pee-wee piped up.

“*Good night!*” I said. “Excuse me while I faint.” Dub and Sandy both started laughing. And Bunk what’s-his-name started rolling on the ground, laughing too. *Sublime abandon*. Oh boy!

“You think you’re so smart laughing,” Pee-wee said to the boy hero. “Just because you get a lot of money and have your picture in the papers and all that and you think you can jolly Boy Scouts that find kidnapped children I can prove it by a scoutmaster——”

“Zip goes the fillum,” one of the young men said.

“I bet if you really did jump across there in the picture it was only a rag dummy—I bet it only looked as if you did. Because anyway William S. Hart is so smart with pistols, a bandit took five hundred dollars away from him. And I know a Scout that doubled for a feller like you that has a crazy name and gets a lot of money because people are fools.”

One of the young men kind of winked at young Bravado or whatever his name was, and he said, “Will you take that from a Boy Scout, Dan Daraway? Call his bluff! Show him what’s what in the movies. Don’t let him get away with it that you ever had anybody double for you. Why remember in the *Demon of the Deep* how you dived to the bottom of the ocean? These Scouts are a bunch of false alarms. Give him a call, for the honor of our profession—the second biggest industry in the United States!”

I didn’t know whether to laugh or not. Even Pee-wee was kind of flabbergasted.

One of those young men said, “We’ve had enough knocks about the movies. Now the Boy Scouts are jumping down our throats. Well here’s a good chance to test it out between the Boy Bluffs of America and the second largest industry in the United States. What do you say, Reckless?”

The boy wonder—gee he seemed to have all kinds of names—he got up slowly and brushed some grass off him and he said, “Come ahead, Boy Scout. Put up or shut up. I’ll give you one that will make your hair curl.”

And there we stood gaping at him while he walked off kind of careless like across the chasm.

“Well,” I said, “that’s that.”

“He’s bluffing,” Sandy whispered to me.

“He’s just jollyng the kid,” Dub whispered.

“There he goes,” one of the young men said.

And the next thing we knew Pee-wee was running after him.

“Looks like we’ll have a nice day for finishing to-morrow,” one of those young men said.

“What time is Gloria Swanson going to be here?” another one asked.

The other one said, “Why she’s coming with Milton Sills. I suppose they’ll drive up to the Center.”

“They bringing the Indians with them?” one of the fellows asked.

“That’s the way I understand it,” another one said.

CHAPTER XVIII

WAITING

“Jiminies,” I said to Dub, “I’d like to see those Indians if they’re real, wouldn’t you?”

“Look,” he said.

We all looked where the boy movie hero was going, with Pee-wee alongside him. The three young men just sat where they were, in a row—they didn’t seem so much interested. As long as they didn’t follow those two, we didn’t either. I guess maybe we were afraid they would think it wasn’t fair. Maybe we were so surprised that we didn’t, I don’t know. Anyway we just stood there watching. Dub sat down on a rock, then Sandy and I did, too. The three young men were talking to each other. Jiminies, I didn’t know what to make of it all. But anyway I wasn’t worrying because I knew Pee-wee could do anything that Daredevil Daraway Bravado of the Demon Deep, or whatever his name was, could do. “Don’t worry,” I said to Dub and Sandy. “They’re not going to do anything so very wonderful, he’s just kidding Pee-wee.”

I’ll tell you how it was in that end of the chasm. It was wide where that camp was. But just beyond that it was very narrow with the sides straight up and down. If you’ll look at the map you’ll see how it was. At the east end of the chasm, that’s where you should look. Where the brook comes in do you see where it goes to a point? Well that’s where I mean. Near that point it’s very narrow and high. If you go up on top there and drop a stone it makes a funny sound, a kind of an echo. That’s where they went, those two. It’s easy to go up where the chasm is wide.

We could see the two of them standing up on top right near the edge. I don’t know how wide it is up there—maybe it’s about seven or eight feet wide. Maybe ten, I don’t know. Tom Slade says the higher up you are the narrower a place like that seems. He says you have to be careful with your calculations when you’re high up. I should worry, I guess he knows. Anyway about maybe ten feet below the top of that place, there’s a crazy tree growing out from one side—it’s all crooked like. It looks all bushy. I guess brush and stuff like that fell down on it from the top, maybe. Way up there, even, we could hear Pee-wee shouting away. When he gets excited it always seems as if he’s mad. I heard him say something about Silver-plated Foxes (that’s my patrol) and Sandy thought he was telling that other fellow he was only a silver-plated hero, because that’s the way he talks.

All of a sudden I noticed those three grown up fellows—they were talking

excited together. Just then a couple of them jumped up and came out in the middle of the chasm and one shouted, but the fellows up on the top didn't pay any attention. Pee-wee was waving his hands and talking as loud as he could and all the while the grown up fellow down in the chasm was shouting trying to make the two of them listen. Then the other one jumped up and started running for all he was worth. He ran up where it was wide and not so steep and all the while he was shouting, "*Cut it out, don't let him do that.*"

Anyway it was too late. All of a sudden Pee-wee backed away so he could get a head start and *good night*, if he didn't go running to the edge! It seemed to me as if he tripped. Anyway he jumped and he just missed the other side of the precipice. I felt kind of hollow—sort of cold like when you're in an elevator and it stops short. Then the three of us went running pell-mell into the narrow part of the chasm. The two grown up fellows ran there too. But Pee-wee wasn't on the ground there. I almost stepped on a little bird without any feathers on it that was sprawling around on the rocks. Then I saw another one flopping around.

"Look," Sandy said. He was holding a little branch of a tree with a nest on it. And then I knew that the whole business had broken off from the tree that stuck out away up above us. I could hear a voice up there calling *help, help*, but it didn't sound like Pee-wee. All of a sudden a rotten piece of a branch fell on my head and we heard a crackling sound up there.

One of those big fellows shouted, "Hang on up there. Get hold of two limbs so if one breaks you'll have the other. Hang on and don't get excited."

I knew Pee-wee had caught in the tree, lucky for him, but I knew it was rotten and might break with him any minute.

I said, "Where's that canvas that was around your lean-to last night?"

One of the men said, "What canvas?"

"Don't you know there was a canvas?" I said.

I went running for all I was worth to the lean-to, but I couldn't find any canvas anywhere. Dub came running after me and we pulled all the brush from the roof of the robber's den or whatever it was, and dragged it into the narrow place right under the tree.

"There's a coat of mine in there—hurry up," one of the men said.

Sandy ran and got the coat and came back dragging some more brush. We spread the brush right about under the tree, covering up the rocks and making the ground as soft as we could. Then the two grown up fellows held the coat stretched out between them ready to try and catch Pee-wee if he fell. Dub and Sandy got hold of the other two sides of it. It was a pretty good way and that's what I wanted the canvas for. Only an overcoat isn't big enough. I was wondering what became of the canvas. Because with just an overcoat if Pee-wee should fall all of a sudden it would be too quick for them to get in just the

right place to catch him. Even while they were holding the coat spread out there was a sound like wood splitting up above. Then a kind of a forked shape piece of wood came down, but it didn't land in the coat.

"Let's stand just where that fell," Dub said.

All of a sudden there was a loud crackling sound and I heard a scream. But only some leaves and twigs came down. A couple of them landed in the coat.

"Clinch your fingers and hang on hard," one of those men said. "Double your fists tight. Something is starting to bust up there."

Just then there were more loud screams and Pee-wee yelled, "*Help, help!*" But kind of it didn't sound like Pee-wee.

One of the men said, "I'm afraid the whole blamed rotten tree is coming down."

Just then, *oh boy wasn't I scared*, I heard a voice shouting, "I'm coming down."

They stretched the coat out tight and kept looking up so they could get into the right spot quick. But nothing happened, only a twig or something fell down on Sandy's face. It hit him plunk in the face because he was looking up.

One of the men said, "Never mind that, keep your eyes peeled up there and when you move, whatever you do don't trip on these blamed rocks." He kicked some of the brush we had laid there out of the way so his feet wouldn't catch in it.

It made me feel kind of cold and kind of funny in my throat, the way the four of them stood there waiting and just looking up.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FIXER

I couldn't just stand there not doing anything so I ran into the wide part and up the side where it was easy to go up. I guess maybe I was kind of kidding myself that I could do something up there. I guess I didn't want to see Pee-wee come falling down. If I could have helped I would have stayed there. But as long as I wasn't doing anything I couldn't keep still.

Up on the edge of the precipice there was only just that one grown up fellow kneeling down and looking over. I had never been up to that place before. Up there it didn't look like a chasm, it was just a wide gap—you'd call it a cleft I guess.

I said kind of frightened like, "Did he say he was going to fall—the kid? Did he say that?" I guess I was trembling all over. "I heard him call he was coming down," I said.

"That wasn't him," the man said. "Keep back."

But a lot I cared what he told me to do. He waved his hand for me to keep back but I didn't pay any attention. *Gee whiz*, he didn't own the place and wasn't Pee-wee my friend. Maybe you'd never think so, the way we were always at it, but just the same he was. I kneeled down and crept up to the edge and looked over. The tree was sticking out maybe about ten feet down. It was all rocky there and the tree was growing out from between rocks.

I called out and said, "Hey kid, they're ready to catch you down there, so don't be scared." But all the while I knew they'd be mighty lucky if they could just catch him.

Just then I saw a head down there in the tree and then that fellow, Daraway Bravado or whatever they called him, crawled out from all that bunch of leaves and branches. There was blood trickling down his face. He was right close in by the precipice—I guess he was standing on the trunk of the tree.

"Is it solid?" the man called down to him.

"Yep, guess so," he answered back.

I asked something but they didn't pay any attention to me. I had to look way over to see that boy. I was lying down flat looking way over. I could hear the fellows down on the bottom calling but the young man up near me didn't seem to hear them—anyway he didn't bother with them. That moving picture boy, the way it seemed to me, he was standing on the trunk close in and his two arms were tight around a crooked rock that stuck out. I didn't see how he could hold on to it, that's the way it looked to me. But anyway he did. I heard

him say, "Come on, and be careful."

Then I saw Pee-wee—jiminies, he looked terrible! He was all blood and his clothes were torn and his face was white.



THEN I SAW PEE-WEE——JIMINIES, HE LOOKED TERRIBLE!

“Get hold of my leg,” the other boy said, and he stuck one leg out.

I didn’t say a word. It seemed to me that if I spoke even, Pee-wee might fall. I didn’t want him to look up at me, I was afraid he’d tumble if he did. He was crawling so careful, and he was so scared, that it seemed as if anything might topple him over. I just held my breath while I was waiting. He grabbed hold of the boy’s leg, then he got hold of him round the waist. I just looked at that fellow’s hands, the way they were clutching hold of the rock. Oh, *did I hope* he wouldn’t let go! Pee-wee climbed up on his shoulders and got hold of another rock and then the man who was reaching over was just able to get hold of one of the kid’s arms. Oh, that was risky work! Then that boy let go one of his hands—gee it gave me the *creeps*—and he reached up and held Pee-wee’s foot on his shoulder. Then he sort of guided the kid’s foot up to a smaller chunk of rock that stuck out. All the while the man had hold of Pee-wee’s arm. The next I knew the poor kid came scrambling up over the edge—he didn’t even see me. Even when I spoke he didn’t notice me. He just fell down flat on the ground—I thought he fainted but he didn’t.

I was just going to shout down that Pee-wee was safe all right when I heard a noise and somebody called, “*Righto.*” I looked over the edge and that other boy wasn’t there.

Somebody called up, “Where’s the kid? Is he all right?”

“Tell ’em yes only my leg’s cut and I had a hair-breadth escape,” the kid said. I had to laugh the way he said it.

“That movie boy fell down I think,” I said to the man.

He went to the edge and shouted, “How about it down there?”

Sandy—I think it was Sandy—called back, “He’s all right—this one’s all right. How about the kid?”

“Did you tell ’em I had a hair-breadth escape from death?” Pee-wee asked me.

I just mussed up his hair with my hand—gee it was bad enough already—and I had to laugh, I just couldn’t help it. “You crazy little rascal,” I said to him. “Don’t ever talk about the Silver Foxes being crazy again. Do you think you can walk?”

“Anyway I showed him Boy Scouts are all right,” the kid said. “Actions speak louder than words, hey?”

“Your words are always loud enough,” I said. “You don’t need to bother about actions. After this stick to words. Come on, see if you can get up and I’ll help you down into the chasm.”

Already the man had gone down in a hurry.

CHAPTER XX

THE FULL SALUTE

Pee-wee had a lot of scratches on him—he looked as if he had crawled through a nutmeg grater. He was kind of lame too. But he was all right. He said it was a mortal peril he was in.

“It wasn’t so terribly mortal,” he said, “because I didn’t get killed, but I almost did so it was kind of mortal.”

“After this when you go out with me I’m going to have you on a leash,” I told him.

When we got down in the chasm things were not so good. That boy had held on up there as long as he could—just till Pee-wee was safe—then he had gone crashing down and lucky for him they caught him in the coat. He was lying on the coat when Pee-wee and I got there, and he smiled at us. He wasn’t hurt bad but I guess he had a good shock. His face was bloody and his hands were cut—I guess from clutching that piece of rock. He was moving his head from one side to the other.

I pulled the kid aside and I spoke good and serious to him. Don’t you think I can’t be serious when I want to. I said, “You listen here Mister Scout Harris. That fellow saved your life. Dub and Sandy and those other two fellows were holding that coat for *you*. If they hadn’t been holding it for *you*, that fellow would be lying there dead—on account of you. I don’t care what he is, movie actor or anything else, you go over and tell him you’ve got to hand it to him for what he did. You tell him he’s *one—real—honest to goodness—hero!* Come on now.”

“Sure I will,” the kid piped up. “Do you think I don’t know heroes when I see them? I know more about them than you do. Didn’t I say how I’m going to show Dub how he can be one—didn’t I?”

“Sure, all right, come on,” I said.

They were all standing around that fellow—he was sitting up kind of feeling around his shoulder. Dub was wiping the blood off his face and we could see then it was only a bad scratch he had.

Pee-wee marched up very brave and honorable like and he said, “No matter who you are, I got to admit you’re a hero and you saved my life and you might even have got killed doing it and you can bet I’m glad you didn’t. And anyway, besides, I take back what I said to you, gee whiz, that’s only fair. If you were a Scout you’d get the Gold Medal, that’s one thing sure.”

The fellow just looked at him and he said, “I am a Scout. Who says I’m

not? I never said I was anything else. I'm a Scout from Temple Camp just like you are."

Pee-wee nearly went down for the second time. One of those men came with some iodine and he kneeled down and wiped the boy's cheek and he put his arm around him and said, "Yes siree, he's the greatest Roman of them all. Do you want to know his name? It's Bobby Easton—hey Bobby? He's a Scout—yep. All wool and thirty-six inches wide. They don't make 'em like him every day. Do you want to shake hands with him?"

"That ain't the way you do," Pee-wee shouted. "You give the full scout salute—that shows how much you all don't know about scouting." So then he gave him the full salute, standing up there like a little tin soldier. I said, "Look, he's posing for animal crackers."

The man said, "Yes, I think the movie people went away late last night and we got here this morning and moved in. We're surveyors working for Uncle Sam and we're going to make a map of all this region. We were doing old Overlook Mountain last week and they told us up there that if we wanted a wide-awake helper to help out in the local field as a stake boy, we could probably get one at Temple Camp. Well, they picked a winner for us, that's all I can say. Hanged if I wouldn't like to take him up to Alaska with us next summer. What do you say, Mac?"

"I could swing it for him," one of the others said.

All of a sudden I spoke up. I said, "As long as one of them was saved and then the other one was saved, will you please excuse me while I drop dead? I could even drop as dead as Bunko Bravado is. And please send word to my fond parents that I died laughing. *The fixer has fixed it.* Scout Bobby Easton, he gets the Gold Medal for saving life by risking his own, and he gets a hundred dollars besides—that's a private award—and that proves that if Dub sticks to Pee-wee he can stay at Temple Camp as long as he wants—*not*—and get a hundred dollars, only watch him get it!

"His middle name is Hunter's Stew,
He mixes it.
In mixing he can sure outdo,
All other Scouts he ever knew,
And when a thing goes all askew,
He fixes it.

"Good night," I said, "please let me die in peace. And don't let Scout Harris come to my funeral because he'll spoil it all."

As soon as I dropped down dead, Sandy he dropped down dead too—I could see him with my dying gaze. Dub just stood where he was. He couldn't die because he was petrified. Everybody started laughing. They even woke me up out of my peaceful death, laughing so hard. I said, "There's only one thing I

have against scouting and that is that there isn't any fixer's badge."

We were all laughing, and all the while Sandy was telling Bobby Easton and those three government surveyors about how Pee-wee was going to fix it for Dub so he'd get the life-saving medal and enough money to stay at camp. Oh boy, didn't they laugh!

Bobby Easton said, "Then I don't take it."

I said, "That's where you're positively absolutely wrong the first time, Bunko Daraway Reckless Bravado, because you have to take it whether you want it or not—you're a hero. You can't help being one any more than Pee-wee can help being a fixer and doing such good turns to his Scout comrades—accent on the good turns. Do you think it worries us not to get a medal? Didn't we *not* find a will? And didn't we *not* find some bandits? If we got what we were after when Pee-wee was along we'd all drop dead from shock and so Dub Smedley couldn't stay anyway, so what do we care? Do you think that was the first time young Harris leaped before he looked?"

"You're the Scouts that started out camping on a three days' leave, aren't you?" Bobby Easton asked me. "I was going to come and ask you if I could go but a Scout told me not to because you fellows were crazy. Now that I know you I think I'd like to stick to you."

"Why not?" Dub said. "I'll be starting home next week."

"Don't be so sure," I told him. "Maybe we'll be able to fix it yet—we should worry."

CHAPTER XXI

THE LAKE TRAIL

That afternoon we stayed and helped those surveyors to get their own tent up, and we built them a scout fireplace out of stones. They were going to cook with an oil-stove—jimony, nix on that. That Bobby Easton was a nice fellow all right. He said he remembered seeing us at camp but he didn't get acquainted with us because he was new at camp. He was helping those surveyors on field assignment, that's what they call it. Lots of Scouts at camp do like that. A couple of fellows I knew went for a week with some men who were stocking the lakes and streams with fishes.

Bobby Easton was going to stay with those surveyors for a week—as long as they camped in the chasm. A stake boy is the one that holds the cord and drives stakes and all like that. Pee-wee thought it was a fellow that ate a lot of steak. At night we all had supper together and those surveyors told us.

The next day we took down our tent and went back to Temple Camp. If you stay over your time you don't get camping leave again, so if you ever go there you better be careful. Those surveyors went back to camp with us—they were telling us how they were going to do surveying for levees down on the Mississippi. Boy, wouldn't I like to go with them! At camp they made up a statement about how Bobby Easton saved Pee-wee's life—it was an affidavit like you have to have—and all of us had to sign it. Then Bobby had to answer a lot of questions by the camp council—that's the same as local council. Then after a while he got the Gold Medal for life-saving from the National Court of Honor. He showed it to me after he got it. He got the Burnside award, too, after about a week, and he bought a canoe to keep on the lake. So I guess he's coming up there every summer. He treated us all to ice cream too, down in Catskill. But all that wasn't until after he got through helping the surveyors over in the chasm.

So then poor Dub only had about a week to stay because Pee-wee didn't find anybody who was dying to have his life saved. I said that maybe there might possibly be an earthquake or something and a lot of people would almost get killed. But there wasn't any earthquake—jiminies there never is at Temple Camp. Pee-wee said over in Japan they have dandy tidal waves. But what good do they do us—that's what I asked him.

Two or three nights before the day Dub had to go home, he said to me, "Are you going to be at camp-fire to-night?"

"Sure, there's nothing else to do," I said.

He said, "Let's take a hike, just us two."

"Sure," I told him, "but watch out for Pee-wee."

"Are you game to walk around the lake?" he asked me. He said he had never done that and he wanted to do it. He wanted to see how it was on the other side of the lake.

"It's all woods," I told him. "The shore comes down steep and those hills are all covered with woods—you can see from camp how it is. There's a trail goes all the way around."

He asked me did I care so much about camp-fire.

"Sure not," I said. "Haven't I got all summer to sprawl around camp-fire?" Then right away I was sorry I said that. Because in a couple of days he had to go home. "Come on in the office," I said, "and I'll get permission."

Dub waited, reading the bulletin-board while I told the councilor that I was going for a hike with another fellow. The councilor (that was Saunders, he's a nice councilor all right) he said, "These night hikes are being discouraged but you boys come home early and I guess it will be all right."

I said, "Believe me, I'll get back by ten because I'll want to get a piece of pie before cooking shack closes up. Chocolate Drop, he's cook, and he goes to bed about ten o'clock."

Dub was waiting for me, looking around Administration Shack. He was looking at the Indian canoe and the elk's head and the stuffed beaver—there are a lot of things like that in Administration Shack. I guess he had never been in there except when he was being registered. He was looking at the big bulletin-board when I went back to him and he said, "We might row across if it wasn't for that." He was pointing at a notice that said—here's just what it said because I copied it:

Attention is called to the rule recently announced forbidding the use of boats or canoes after dark. The mishap of Wednesday evening last emphasizes the importance of a rigorous enforcement of this new regulation. Boats and canoes must not be taken from their mooring places after supper except by special permission. Disregard of this rule will be followed by summary dismissal from the camp community.

"That's on account of tenderfoots," I told Dub. "Some of the Scouts that are up here this season ought to have their nurse girls with them. Anyway I'd rather walk around, wouldn't you?"

"Sure, anything suits me," Dub said. "I'm going home in a couple of days anyway."

I said, "You don't mean you'd take a boat for that reason, do you? If

you're going home you might as well go right."

He said, "No, I only meant I have to go home in a couple of days. Come ahead, I didn't mean anything, let's hike around."

I felt sorry for him because he had to go right when the season was getting started, but how could I help it? You can bet I wouldn't want to be leaving when the Scouts are coming every day. "You might as well go merrily, merrily," I said. "You'll be up next summer."

"I'll be going to work next summer," he said.

"Forget about it," I told him.

We started walking around the lake, going toward the brook—that's west. If you look at the map you'll see how we went. It's about three and a half miles around the lake. If you want to see Pee-wee jump up in the air just tell him it's longer one way around the lake than it is the other way. Just tell him that with a sober face if you want to see some fireworks. When you get past the brook it's all woods, but there's a trail. It's hard to follow it in the dark unless you've been over it in the daytime. I bet I've been over it a hundred times. If you ever come to Temple Camp I'll take you around.

While we were hiking around through the woods I asked Dub how he made out with those pictures he took that day we were on our way from Bagley Center to the chasm. He said they came out pretty good.

I said, "Then all you've got to do to be an Eagle is to take the life saving tests? I should think you would have done that before this."

"What's the use?" he said.

"Awh, come out of it, Dub," I told him. "Just because you can't stay all summer, is that any reason for not caring about your tests? Boy, if I had only one test more to be an Eagle you can bet I'd hop over the top all right. There are lots of Scouts here that would change places with you, you can bet."

"Yes—they wouldn't," he said. "And go back to a flat up over a bakery store? I bet you and all your patrol, and Pee-wee, live in nice big houses."

"Believe me," I told him. "Pee-wee would change places with you to live over a bakery store. If he lived over a bakery store you'd never see him up here. Look out where you're stepping, it's marshy near the shore."

He said, "Look at the luck that Easton fellow had—the Gold Medal and a hundred bucks. And he doesn't need it either, his folks are rich."

"That has nothing to do with it," I said. "You win a prize or you don't. Being rich hasn't got anything to do with it."

"Yes, but he would have stayed all summer anyway," Dub said.

"Oh gollies, is that all you're thinking about?" I said. "Gee, you weren't like that when we were at Beaver Chasm."

"I didn't have to go so soon then," he said.

"It wasn't until after Bobby Easton won the Gold Medal that you started

grouching,” I said to him.

He said, “What do I care about the Gold Medal—or being an Eagle Scout either? They don’t get me anything.”

“*Good night!* Don’t get you anything?” I said.

“Sitting home minding the baby while my mother’s out working,” he said. “What good is it being an Eagle Scout when you have to do that? Or the Gold Medal either—what good is it? Now I’m sorry my mother let me come up here at all. Gee, all she could scrape together was two weeks’ board and that isn’t enough up here even just for two weeks. Fellows buy cones and hot dogs and everything and go to the movies over in Catskill. I couldn’t even chip in for the closing events.”

I said, “Well, what of it? You won’t be here anyway.”

“Don’t rub it in,” he said.

“I don’t mean it that way,” I told him. “Only why should you be putting up a half a dollar for something you won’t have anything to do with? Anyway that’s against the rule in this camp, taking up collections like that. Gee, I should think you’d be glad your mother did that—sending you up here like that.”

He said, “Do you live in a big house?”

“Sure,” I told him, “but what’s the difference? They’re all the same size when you get on the outside of them—the outside of every house is the same size. You go outside your house and you’ve got just as much room as I have when I go outside of my house. Let’s hear you deny it.”

“Tell that to Pee-wee,” he said, kind of laughing.

“Look out, you’ll crack your face laughing,” I told him.

He said, “When I go outside my house I just have to sit in the gutter. There used to be a lot but they’re building on it.”

“When I go outside of my house there’s a big lawn I have to mow,” I told him. “Jiminies, you’re lucky—you don’t have to cut the sidewalk.”

He said, “You crazy Indian, you make me laugh.”

“Sure, why not?” I said to him.

CHAPTER XXII

SOUNDS IN THE NIGHT

He was talking like that all the way round to the other side of the lake. Over there the woods are thick. We stood looking across the water at the camp—all we could see were the lights and the camp-fire blazing. We could see it upside down in the water.

I said, "That big light is the cooking shack. Now you just look to the left of that. Do you see a little bit of a light? That's outside my patrol cabin. The three cabins of our troop are there. They're just a little way up the hill from the camp. They're just outside the inside. You never came up there like we asked you to."

Dub said, "You fellows are lucky all right. Those cabins belong to your troop, don't they?"

"Sure they do," I said, "and there's a tent there too, because we have four patrols now. Pee-wee used to be a Raven but he started a declaration of independence and now we've got the Chipmunks. We're more to be pitied than blamed. We keep a lantern out so on very dark nights we can find our way. They're all at camp-fire to-night, my troop."

"I bet you wish you were there," Dub said.

"Believe me, I'm glad to get rid of them," I told him. "There's an old Scout there to-night who's telling yarns about the Northern Pacific Trail. The Atlantic and Pacific Trail is good enough for me—gee, I'm always chasing to that store when I'm home. You think *we're* lucky! Good night, I wish we had an Eagle Scout in my patrol."

Dub said, "You're all right coming away with me alone to-night. I don't know, I just wanted to get away from the crowd."

"The pleasure is mine," I told him. "I should worry about the crowd. But you're a funny kind of a gazzink. You want to get away from the crowd and all the while you want to stay at camp."

He said, "I guess that's just it, it makes me sore to be there and think how I can't stay."

I said, "Well, if I were you, Dub, I'd take that one last test and go home an Eagle Scout. That's what I'd do if you're asking me. I know that wouldn't fix it for you so you could stay, and even the Gold Medal wouldn't, but just the same an Eagle Scout is an Eagle Scout, I don't care where he is. Gee, *I'm* sorry you didn't get the Burnside money. But what's the good crying over spilled milk—there's water enough in it already. *Boy*, if you were in my patrol you'd

be an Eagle in one day. Twenty badges and then you flop! *Good night!*"

"I think I'll flop out of the Scouts altogether," he said, kind of gloomy.

"Sure, and be a quitter," I told him. "Why, look at Will Dawson in my patrol—you know, that tall fellow? He's got eight merit badges—first aid, athletics, both health badges, and pioneering. Those are the five you have to have for Star Scout. You know you don't have to have the life-saving badge on that. He's got the other five picked out—I have to laugh, he picked out easy ones. Angling! Jiminies, he was always doing that—all the fishes call him by his first name. Archery, that's a cinch. And *bugling!* Oh boy, all you have to do is blow on a trumpet. Carpentry and bird study, those are the only ones he has to get. I had to laugh when he was practising hammering a nail. He got a blood blister and he put some iodine on it and he wanted the first aid badge. First aid to himself. Bird study isn't so easy. By the time we have the closing events he'll be a Star Scout and we're going to make a big fuss about it and have a corn-roast and everything. And, gee whiz, that's only half as good as an Eagle Scout."

Dub said, "Yes, but where will he be? And where will I be?"

"Awh, come out of it," I told him.

He didn't say anything, only just walked behind me along through the woods close to the lake. On that opposite side from camp the trail is good and plain because it's a little way up a hill kind of. There aren't any swampy places over there. But you have to go single file till you get where the woods are thinner.

Dub said, "I'd like to be at that corn-roast."

"Maybe you're lucky not to," I said. "Maybe there won't be any. Maybe it will be like old man Bagley's will and the reward for the bandits. Gee, will you ever forget that?"

"Don't be talking about it," he said.

"Maybe Will Dawson won't even get by with bird study—believe me, the birds have got something to say about it."

Dub said, "I guess he'll get it all right."

"He will or I'll jump down his throat," I told him. "Believe me, you've got something to be thankful for that you're not leader of the Silver Foxes. That's the only way you can get them together—with a corn-roast. They haven't got any discipline and it's good they haven't, because if they did have, they'd all be trying to get it away from each other. Councilor Trent says we're more than a patrol, we're an institution, but, *gee*, who wants to be in an institution?"

All of a sudden I looked behind me and Dub wasn't there. He was standing still maybe about twenty feet in back of me. I could just see him beckoning to me. I asked him what was the matter but he only beckoned.

I went back to where he was and he said, "Did you hear a sound?"

“A kind of a rustling up in the trees?” I asked him. “Maybe it was an eagle—you ought to be ashamed to look him in the face.”

“No—*listen*,” he said. “Doesn’t it sound like oar-locks?”

“Jiminies, it does,” I said. “It’s over there, about where the shore turns. Wait a second—listen—let’s make sure.”

“Somebody breaking the rule?” Dub said.

“Sure, that’s likely,” I said. “You know what Hervey Willetts said. ‘What’s the good of having rules if you don’t break them.’ Boy oh boy, I’d just like to know who it is. Shall we shout and tell him the outside of his boat is all wet?”

“No, don’t call,” Dub said.

“It’s oar-locks all right,” I said. “Listen—*shh*. Did you hear a kind of a splash? I’d like to make my voice kind of deep like Councilor Trent and call out and ask what they’re doing here, hey?”

Dub said, “No, don’t. We don’t have to tell on them, do we?”

“Nope,” I said. “That’s one thing Scouts up here are never asked to do. But I’d like to have some fun with them.”

He said, “*Shhh*—listen.”

“I bet it’s that Hervey Willetts,” I said in a whisper. “If it is, bye-bye, Hervey. There’ll be somebody waiting at the float all right.”

Dub grabbed me by the shoulder so I wouldn’t speak too loud. Then he said, “I don’t see why any one goes out like that if they know there’ll be somebody waiting at the float. The management sure knows if there’s a boat out. Why don’t they lock the boats?”

“They don’t believe in that,” I whispered. “They go by rule one—a Scout’s honor is to be trusted—this time it’s going to be busted. Maybe not, at that. Some scoutmasters up here are sheiks—leave it to them. It’s all right for them to take girls out rowing, yes, yes, yes. I bet it’s that one from Ohio with that girl that’s staying at Sunset Farm. Just for the fun of it I’ll stump you to shout *I’m a bear, woof, woof!* and then run.”

“No, wait a second,” Dub said. “If it’s a couple of Scouts it’s just as well for us to not know anything about it.”

I said, “I don’t hear any voices, do you?”

All of a sudden there was a sound like something dropping on wood—like something heavy.

“Would it be robbers, maybe?” Dub asked me.

“Now you’re making a noise like Pee-wee,” I said. “Sure, it’s pirates grappling for buried treasure.”

“Well what was that sound?” Dub asked me.

“Sounded to me like an anchor,” I told him. “Maybe they heard us and pulled it up. It sounded as if they dropped it on the floor of the boat. There are only two boats that have anchors—that’s that big red one, and the one that’s

named Mary Temple. Listen for the oar-locks. I bet they row away.”

Just then we heard a splash, then in a few seconds a louder splash. I just grabbed Dub’s arm and we stood there, neither of us speaking. In about ten seconds there was more splashing and a voice called, “Help!” There was another word, too, but I didn’t know what it was. It sounded like *hope* or *rope*. There was a voice from way up the hill, too, and it called, “*Hel-ope, hlope!*”

It was the echo from up in those woods.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE OTHER FELLOW

The next thing I knew Dub threw off his coat and just ripped his shoe-laces open and tore his shoes off. He didn't wear sneaks like all the Scouts at camp, but regular shoes. It always made him look kind of funny. I didn't have a chance to do anything—before I knew it he was in the water, swimming. He never went in much at camp, he just liked to hike around with us, so I never thought about how he could swim. But, oh boy, did he get through the water! I knew maybe it was his chance for the Gold Medal and I was glad. All I can say is, if that's how a fellow swims that lives over a bakery store, I wouldn't want to go into a race with one that lives over a delicatessen store—he might be even better. I guess Dub was born in a fish market.

He could tell where the trouble was because by that time the splashing was good and loud and the voice kept calling help. I thought it was funny because all the Scouts know how to swim. Maybe it was some crazy tenderfoot, that's what I thought. I said to myself, "I hope he knows how to grab him." Pretty soon I heard him speak—I mean Dub—and I heard the other voice, too. Dub called out, "All right."

Then next I heard sounds of the boat and I called out and asked if everything was all right, but nobody answered. I guess they were too busy or excited or something. In about a minute I could see the boat coming toward me. It looked black and spooky. I called out, "Who is it? Is everything all right?"

"Sure," Dub called out. "You don't think they heard us over at camp, do you?"

"Sure not," I said. Gee, I thought that was a funny thing to ask. He must have thought we had a broadcasting station.

Dub was sitting in the stern of the boat sculling it. The other fellow was sitting on the middle seat. When the boat came close Dub said kind of careless like, "Well, I went and did it, didn't I?"

"Who is it?" I asked. All the while I was pulling up the boat.

Dub said, "Pull her up easy, look out you don't tip her. How do I know who it is? Do you think I can see under water? He's all in, I know that. The anchor rope was all tangled up with his leg. I ought to get the prize for untying knots under water."

"Don't worry, you'll get it," I said.

As soon as I had hauled the boat up far enough I got into it. The fellow on

the middle seat was sitting all hunched over. I grabbed hold of him and said, "Are you all right?"

"Sure, he's all right," Dub said, "except he's wet."

I took hold of the fellow to help him up and then he looked at me and I just stood there gaping at him. It was Will Dawson.

"What—the—" I just started blurting out. "I thought you were at campfire. What are you doing here—for—the—love—of—*Go-o-d night!* And you're one of the best swimmers in the troop!"

He said, "A lot of good that does you when you're all tangled up in a rope. If you want to know what I was doing, I was bobbing for eels. I stood up to throw the anchor out in another spot and my foot got caught in the rope and in I went."

"You're in all right," I said. "You're in bad. Do you know who you saved, Dub? It's Will Dawson—that's the one I was telling you about."

"How's he in bad?" Dub asked.

"Oh no! He's not in bad," I said. "He'll go home to Bridgeboro to-morrow morning, that's how bad he's in. He'll get his all right—and you'll get yours."

"He'll get the Gold Medal I suppose," Will said.

"You *suppose!*" I shot back at him. "You know blamed well he will—he won it with bells on. Didn't he go down under the water after you and untangle a lot of rope? The Gold Medal? It's lucky for you he was here. He's got twenty merits besides and I bet you they'll give him his Eagle badge too without going through the test. Jiminy crinkums, wasn't this test enough? So now you know who you were saved by while you were breaking the rules and getting the whole patrol in Dutch after we made a lot of plans for the end of the season. You were saved by an *Eagle Scout* that gets the *Gold Medal* for risking his life on account of *you*. *You suppose! Go-o-d night!* You ought to be proud to be saved by a Scout like that!"

"Here you go, Dub," I said, "here's one of your shoes. I'll look for the other. Come ahead into the woods and we'll start a fire and get dry." Even while I was holding his shoe I could feel how it was all kind of worn through on the sole. My finger went all the way through it.

CHAPTER XXIV

SAFE

We went up the hill a little ways into the woods and then down into a hollow. I knew about it because I had been there before. It was lucky I had some matches because those two fellows were soaking.

“What’s the idea?” Will Dawson asked me.

“Any fool would know that,” I told him. “It’s so we can start a fire where they can’t see it from camp. Do you think I want the whole camp coming over here?”

“He’ll be found out anyway,” Dub said to me.

“Sure he will, he’s a fool,” I said. “But you fellows have got to get dry, haven’t you?” Will Dawson he didn’t say a word, he just stood there. “A fine kind of a Star Scout you’ll make,” I said to him. “All but two badges and then you have to go spoil it all! After Westy and Dorry and all of us were counting on being a Star Patrol—*good night!* Warde Hollister, he wouldn’t even take a tenderfoot stalking for fear he’d get a black mark, he was so anxious on account of our record. Now look what *you* go and do.”

“A lot you care that I didn’t get drowned,” Will said.

“Sure I care,” I told him. “But if you had got drowned it would have been your own fault.”

“Oh, cut it out,” Dub said. “What’s over is over.”

“Sure,” I said, “our being a Star Patrol is over—you said it. He’s as good as Pee-wee for fixing things.”

“How about you?” Will said. “Didn’t you go off on a three day leave with other Scouts? Do you call that being a patrol leader?”

Gee, but I was good and mad. I said, “Listen here, Will. If I hadn’t gone off like that and got in with those fellows, Dub and I wouldn’t have been here to-night, if it comes to that. And where would *you* be now. I’d like to know?”

Dub said, trying to smooth things over, “That’s what Pee-wee would call a dandy argument.”

“Please don’t talk to me at all,” I said to Will. “As long as you’ll get chased home to-morrow morning what’s the use of scrapping? All you had to get was bird study and carpentry to be a Star Scout, and you know as well as I do that a Star Scout means a Star Patrol. You had to go and throw mud on the parade. Jiminies, nobody ever heard me shouting about the rules—I’ve broken some of them and I’ve bent a few others—but when you know blamed well that you can’t take a boat back at night without being nailed, *jimmy Christmas*, what’s

the idea of doing that?”

Will said, “Oh I could have pulled it up in the bushes before I got to the float, couldn’t I?”

“Couldn’t you?” I shouted at him. “No you *couldn’t* you! Do you want to gather up some sticks or don’t you? It’s all the same to me.”

We all started picking up sticks for the fire and none of us spoke to each other—some merry party. Dub was kind of funny the way he went around picking up sticks not saying anything. I guess he was surprised because he never saw me like that before. Once, after we got the fire started, I saw how he winked and made a funny face at Will. A lot I cared, I was so good and mad. The more Dub saw how mad I was, the more he kept kidding me about it, winking at Will and acting—you know how. He said, “As long as you feel so much like roasting I wish we had some potatoes and we’d roast them.”

“Do you blame me?” I said. “You’re all alone up here, so you don’t have to be thinking about your patrol. But if you knew more about Temple Camp you’d know that a scout honor is a patrol honor. And a scout black eye is a patrol black eye—you ask any Scout up here.” Dub said, “As Pee-wee would say, it shows how much I don’t know. All I can say is that if Temple Camp wants to teach me anything it better be quick about it. It will have to do it by Saturday.”

“Temple Camp will take care of him first,” I said, looking at Will.

By that time the two of them were standing close to the fire, turning round and round so as to get dry. I kept putting sticks on it. I couldn’t help it, I had to smile at Dub, the funny way he kept turning around. He wouldn’t let on that he was trying to make me laugh. He said, “When I go home I can tell my mother I went around a lot up at Temple Camp.”

“Yes, and you didn’t have to go breaking the rules to do it,” I said.

“I didn’t see any good enough to break,” he said.

I said, “Well there’s one thing, I’m going to make a report to Slady^[1] about what you did, about the rope and all, and I bet you won’t even have to take your life saving tests on the Eagle award—I bet the Gold Medal will cover that. You’ll have the hero medal and you’ll be an Eagle Scout both.”

“That shows Will Dawson did me a good turn,” Dub said. “I’d treat him to an ice cream soda if I was only going to stay up here, if I only had a dime.”

“Now you’re starting kidding about it,” I said.

Dub said, “All right, if you want me to be serious, listen here. You’re not going to tell Tom Slade anything—you’re going to keep your mouth shut. Nobody has to know anything about this. I did my part, now you have to do yours.”

“*And you not get the Gold Medal?*” I just shouted at him. “And how about—gee, don’t you want to go home an Eagle Scout?”

"I don't want to go home at all," he said.

I said, "If I was an Eagle Scout and had the Gold Medal, I wouldn't mind going home, you can bet."

He said, "Well, are we dry?"

Will said, "Wait till I get my shoes dried out a little."

"Yes, and you row straight across," I told him.

"Are you going to walk?" he asked me.

"Didn't I start walking?" I said. "Dub and I are going to finish the way we began. Do you want to get the whole three of us in Dutch? You better put some more wood on if you want to dry your shoes."

"I'll get a chunk of wood," Dub said. "You keep drying your shoes," he said to Will.

"You don't need a very big piece," I called after him.

Dub went running up out of the hollow and away toward the shore. Will was holding his shoes close to the fire. I just sat there on a rock, waiting. Will didn't say anything to me, and I didn't say anything to him. I guess we waited about ten minutes. Then I called but I didn't get any answer. I got up and walked up out of the hollow but I didn't see Dub anywhere. So I went down to the shore. I could see the camp-fire burning away over at camp.

I kept calling Dub but he didn't answer. It was so dark I took out my flash-light. Because as long as we had gone so far after wood, I thought maybe he remembered seeing a good piece near where I pulled the boat up. But I couldn't even find the boat. All of a sudden I saw something white on a tree. It was a piece of paper. Then I knew that was just where the boat had been. The paper was held to the trunk by a long, thin switch from a tree that was tied around the trunk. I held my flash-light up to the paper and read it. After I read it I took it down and put it in my pocket, so you can tell that the way I write it out now is just the same as it was on that paper. This is what it said, because I'm copying it. It was all sprawly like.

Please you and Will Dawson hike around to camp and don't be scrapping. When you get there you don't need to say you saw me. Nobody knows who started out with you and what they don't know won't hurt them. Tell Will Dawson he better go ahead and get to be a Star Scout. I'd like to see Pee-wee at that corn-roast. Like you said he'll eat two at once. It's no matter if I get pinched for being out in the boat because I'm going home day after to-morrow anyway and I'll only lose one day. You shout so much about badges and things, now see if you can be loyal to a Scout in your own patrol.

Dub Smedley.

P.S. You keep still about me, do you hear.

That's just what he wrote. After I read it I looked out on the lake but I couldn't see anything and I couldn't even hear a sound—not even the oar-locks clinking. I shouted, “*Dub.*” But there wasn't any answer. I didn't shout again because I knew he must have heard me. I was afraid they might hear my voice, far away like, over at camp. So I just stood there on the shore trying to see out on the lake. I couldn't even hear an oar dipping, I thought he must be pretty far out.

I guess he was sculling, because you can hear oar-locks even far off on the water. There was a little kind of a narrow bright path on the water, made by the camp-fire across the lake. Way over there it was wide, but past the middle of the lake, over toward the side where I was, it was just kind of like a bright line—all used up, sort of. I saw something black go across that and I called out again.

But there wasn't any answer. It was good and dark around there.

^[1] Slady. Nickname for Tom Slade, the young camp assistant and leader of camp activities.

CHAPTER XXV BEING A SCOUT

When I got back to the hollow Will was just standing there holding his shoes to the fire. I said, "Dub took the boat and he's gone over to camp—here's a paper he left on a tree. He's going to take the blame. Will you let him do that?" I admit I was all—I don't know, I could hardly speak. I just said over again, "Will you let him do that? You see how he says we shouldn't scrap—and I'm not going to scrap—no more. We never had any scraps in our patrol. But before I say if I'll ever speak to you again you've got to say if you'll let Dub Smedley do that."

All of a sudden Will turned and opened up on me. By the fire I could see his eyes were all shiny like. Up to that time he took all I said. Now he just opened up on me. "Before I ever speak to you again," he said, "you have to say if you really want me to answer that? I took all you said, even in front of him—I did—but now you say—you want me to tell you if I'm a yellow dog—one of your own patrol! Well I'm a Silver Fox, that's what I am if you want to know—if you're talking about animals!"

I just went up to him and I made my fingers into the salute, only I didn't hold my hand up. I just grabbed his hand. I guess I didn't know what I was doing but just the same he could feel how my fingers were.

"Listen Will," I said to him. "Sure we're Silver Foxes—only listen. I was sore—I admit I was sore—but maybe it isn't so bad. Look at Hervey Willetts, the crazy Indian, he's always breaking rules, and everybody likes him. Listen—will you please listen?"

"Do you take it back—that question?" Will said. Jiminies, he could hardly speak either.

"I do, sure I do," I told him, "only yellow, that's one color I don't like except on bananas——"

"Now I know it's you," Will said.

"Listen Will," I said to him. "Listen—we have to be starting back, but listen before we start. Will you cut that out! You're *not yellow*, you're the color of vanilla ice, that's a kind of a silver color—now listen. If I said anything I'm sorry for I'm glad of it. Come on, let's start back. Shall we hike around north, or go back the way Dub and I came—or both?" Will just sort of laughed, he said I sounded like myself—crazy he meant—I should worry.

So then we started for camp around north, because the trail is better that way.

“I was just bobbing for eels,” Will said. “I didn’t want to hear that Arizona Scout. It looks as if you didn’t want to hear him yourself.”

“Right in the eye,” I said. “See if you can hit me again.”

He said, “I suppose I’ll get sent home.”

“That’s the trouble—can’t be helped,” I told him. “Dub, he has to go day after to-morrow. If he got himself blamed for taking the boat, he’d have to go to-morrow morning——”

“Like I will,” Will said.

“Well, don’t you care,” I told him. “Maybe you’ll be in time to go away with your folks, hey? The sea shore—oh boy!”

“Shall I go to the office as soon as we get to camp?” he asked me.

“Sure,” I said, “and I’ll go with you and we’ll report how Dub saved your life. When he goes home day after to-morrow he’ll be an Eagle Scout and he’ll be down for the Gold Medal. Gee, Will, he’s a mighty nice fellow—I saw him a lot.”

“Why doesn’t he stay?” Will asked me.

“Because he’s just an *in-and-outer*,” I said. “He’s only up for two weeks. I think his folks are pretty poor, that’s what I think. If he’s got to go, he’s got to go. But, jiminyes, we don’t want him going with a black eye.”

“I’ll say we don’t,” Will said. “I’ll take the black eye—black’s better than yellow.”

“You said it,” I told him.

When we got to camp, there wasn’t anybody around. We counted the coats and they were all in. Up on Powwow Hill the camp-fire was still going. I guess that old Scout from out west was talking everybody deaf, dumb and blind. We could see dark forms sitting all around. Even Cooking Shack was closed up, so I guess even Chocolate Drop was up there.

I said to Will, “They’re still breadcrusting bedtime stories. I’d like to have a hunk of pie, I know that.”

All of a sudden, there was Dub. I guess he was waiting for us. He just kind of appeared.

I said, “You’re all right, Dub, only you’re not going to get away with it. Whatever you said, we’re going into the office and tell the whole thing, just how it was. We happen to be a couple of solid silver-plated foxes and we congratulate you because you’re an honor hero. I dare you to sneak up to camp-fire and get the key of Cooking Shack from Chocolate Drop. We want to get some pie.”

Dub said, “Listen, you fellows, we’re in luck. Nobody has to go home to-morrow. Even Pee-wee Harris couldn’t have fixed it any better. Nobody saw me come in. The whole blooming outfit is up there listening to yarns—scoutmasters, councilors, everybody.”

“Hurrah for Arizona,” I said.

“You could steal the pavilion and nobody’d know it,” Dub said.

“Let’s steal Cooking Shack,” I especially most hungrily suggested.

“How about your life saving medal?” Will asked Dub.

“Sure, explain all that,” I said. “Do you think we’re yellow just because we eat lemon cake?”

“Have a little sense,” Dub said. “I don’t have to be sent home in disgrace at all, because nobody saw me bring the boat in. And Will doesn’t have to be sent home in disgrace because nobody knows he had the boat out. That leaves the life saving medal. All right, I don’t want it. If I could have been the first to win it and get that hundred dollars too, you can bet I’d have scooped up both awards because I want to stay here. I never said I didn’t. That’s what I wanted most of all, and that’s all I did want. Just because I have to go home day after to-morrow, is that any reason why Will should get sent home and all your plans busted up? I can get my Eagle badge any time I want to. The other one I don’t want. And what I want I can’t get. Listen here, Roy Blakeley, I don’t give you the right to go telling on me—what I did. That’s *my* business and not yours. You take care of your own patrol and you’ll have your hands full.”

“Good night, you said it,” I told him.

He said, “All right. If I was getting sent home in disgrace it might be different. But I’m not. I’d rather do Will Dawson a good turn than get the Gold Medal, and that’s my business, isn’t it? You can be a Scout in your way and I’ll be a Scout in my way. About two thousand, eight million and three-quarter times I heard Pee-wee Harris tell you to keep your mouth shut. That’s what I tell you now. Take Pee-wee’s advice and keep your mouths shut about what happened to-night. Let’s see how much you don’t know about scouting.”

Will just started to laugh. He said, “It’s easy to see Dub has been going around with you and Pee-wee! He talks like the two of you put together.”

“Sure—separated together,” Dub said. “Does that remind you of yourself? Or are you too busy thinking about my business?”

CHAPTER XXVI

THE DAY BEFORE

So now you know why Dub Smedley didn't get the Gold Medal for saving Will Dawson's life. That was twice he didn't get it. And you needn't think Will and I let it go like that just on account of ourselves. If a Scout would rather do a good turn than get the Gold Medal, that's up to him. As long as Dub put it that way, that it wasn't any of our business, we decided to do like he wanted and not say anything. Maybe I was wrong, I don't know. As long as Dub said it was none of our business what he did, we decided to mind our own business. I knew that what he really did want was to stay at camp. And we couldn't help him that way, that was what I said. So Will Dawson stayed all season. If I told you about the corn-roast we had on Labor Day night this would be a Pee-wee Harris story—I wish to the dickens he'd keep out of my stories anyway. He comes into my stories and he eats my patrol's corn, a lot he cares.

The next morning after that hike around the lake I helped Dub pack up his things. He didn't have any duffle bag, he had an old oilcloth suitcase. He bunked in the big dormitory where all the Scouts bunk who don't come with troops or patrols. Gee whiz, I don't often go in there. They're coming and going all the time in there. I felt good and sorry for him because he was going—jimony, the season was only just getting started.

I was sitting on his cot looking over the snapshots he had taken. He was always taking snapshots to take home and show his mother and his little sister. I guess neither of them knew what a scout camp was like. Dub didn't either, before he came to Temple Camp. Oh boy, it was a big thing for him all right.

I said, "Dub, if your mother and your little sister are as interested as all that—that they want to see pictures and all—are you sure you won't let me tell how you saved Will, so you'll get the Gold Medal? It isn't too late," I said. "Will's folks have got lots of money and he can go to the seashore with them. His father's one peach of a father, I'll say that, and he won't be sore because Will gets sent home. Listen Dub, maybe Will wouldn't get sent home, you can't tell."

"That wouldn't fix it for me to stay, would it?" he said. He just gave me a push in the face and he said, "Didn't I tell you I don't want the medal? You go read that bulletin-board. I don't like the sound of that word *summary*. *Summary dismissal from camp*."

"Will you come to Bridgeboro and see me when my troop goes home?" I

asked him.

“Sure I will,” he said.

“Most always Scouts up here in camp don’t see each other when they go home,” I said, “But I want to see you. Will you come, and we’ll go round to Pee-wee’s house. He lives in a great big house. You wouldn’t think so, would you?”

“I’d like to see Will, too,” he said.

“Sure, you’ll see him,” I said. “He lives right near me. I’d have Sandy too, only he lives so far. Rye bread, or Rye Beach, or whatever you call it. But, oh boy, if you came, being an Eagle Scout! And if you had the life saving medal besides! Gee, it would be in the Bridgeboro paper.”

“Maybe I have got it,” he said.

I said, “What do you mean, Dub?”

“If you do a thing, you do it, don’t you?” he said.

“Sure,” I said, “but you want the proof of it, don’t you?”

“If I know I did it why do I want any proof?” he said. “That’s what Pee-wee calls a dandy argument.”

“You’re a funny fellow, Dub,” I said.

He just gave me a shove and he said, “Maybe when I come to see you I *will* be an Eagle Scout. Now let’s talk about something else. You come in here to see my snapshots and all you do is razz me. Where’s Will to-day?” he wanted to know.

“Oh, he’s off after his bird study badge,” I said. “He’s only got that and the carpentry badge to get. Then he’s a Star Scout. Jiminies, he’s pulling shingles off and nailing them on again up at the old burned storehouse. Every time he sees a piece of wood he wants to saw it in half. To-day he’s got a date with a couple of blue jays or something. He’s got his little kodak with him.”

Dub said, “Do you know there is one thing I’d like?”

“Name it,” I said, “and I’ll give it to you twice.”

He said, “Do you remember when I first got in with you fellows, we started out on a hike, didn’t we?”

“Sure, whichever way the wind stopped blowing,” I said. “We went after wills and robbers and everything.”

Dub said, “I’d like you and Pee-wee and Sandy and Will Dawson to hike down to the train with me to-morrow. Catskill isn’t so much of a hike is it?”

“Sure not,” I said, “but it will seem funny coming back without you.”

“Let’s finish up with a hike,” he said. “We had a lot of fun hiking together—I did anyway. I’d kind of like to start home that way. Will you? Just you and Sandy and Pee-wee and Will Dawson and I, hey? I can send this old grip down on the bus, can’t I?”

“Sure you can,” I said. “But, gee, I don’t want you to go, Dub.”

“I’d treat you all to ice cream in Catskill if I wasn’t so blamed hard up,” he said. “But will you fellows hike down with me? We’ll start good and early and just sort of mope along like that day we hiked to Beaver Chasm, and you and Pee-wee can have one of those mortal comebacks. Will you? We’ll make it crazy, hey?”

“Sure, Dub,” I said. “You bet we will, only——”

I don’t know, I couldn’t say anything, I just started looking at the snapshots.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE LAST HIKE

So that's the way he did, we all hiked down to Catskill to see Dub off. The Scouts that went were the Big Four and Will Dawson. All my patrol wanted to go but I wouldn't let them because I was going to do just the way Dub wanted. I told Pee-wee we were all going to be good and crazy, so as to make Dub feel good. The kid said, "I knew it before you told me."

I told him, "If you want to stay behind the pleasure is ours. We'll be able to have fifty-two more ice cream cones each."

There are four ways to hike from Temple Camp to Catskill and each one is better than the other. But the best way is through Leeds because you pass Merrill's farm and there's an apple tree that sticks out over the stone wall. But anyway it was too early for apples. You go up the hill in back of the camp till you get to the road, then you turn left and go till you come to a cross-road with a sign that says TEMPLE CAMP COMMUNITY and an arrow pointing toward the camp. That's where you turn left again and you go till you come to a noise—it's a waterfall. At night you have to listen for that noise so as to know where to cut across fields. Then you come to the main road and that takes you to Catskill. If you go to Catskill most always you'll see Scouts from Temple Camp there. If you don't see them anywhere else look in Benny's, that's where you get hot dogs.

Dub was going down on the three-ten train so Chocolate Drop gave us our dinner early because we wanted to have plenty of time to take it easy. The way the Handbook says you should do is to set a nice easy pace. It says about hiking that you should never walk over anything that you can walk around. And you should never step on anything if you can step over it because you have to lift the weight of your body. And besides that, the Silver Fox Patrol has a rule that you must never walk more than one mile at a time, then you don't get tired.

While we were moping along—you know how we go, just kind of fooling and everything—Sandy said, "The Handbook is crazy. If you should never walk over anything that you can walk around how can anybody expect to get anywhere? Suppose we come to a block and start walking around the block. Where would we get to, I'd like to know?"

I said, "That's a dandy argument."

"Do you mean the Handbook doesn't know what it's talking about?" Pee-wee shot out. "I know where it says that."

“Sure, it’s crazy,” I said. “It says about hiking that you shouldn’t step on anything, but over it. How are you going to hike if you can’t step on the ground? I’ll leave it to Dub.”

Dub was just laughing. He said, “This is sure some bunch to hike with.”

“I’m glad you like us,” I told him. “We aim to please. One thing, we have plenty of sense only we don’t take it around with us while hiking. Walk briskly, throw the chest out but look out where you throw it, take deep breaths, also take apples if you can find any.”

Pee-wee said, “We ought to have asked Bobby Easton to come with us because he’s kind of in our crowd on account of me giving him the chance to get the Gold Life Saving Medal. He’s got his hundred dollars too, now, and I bet he’d treat to ice cream. He says he’s going to buy a canoe for the races on Labor Day and I told him I’d fix it for him so he could keep it in one of the lockers.”

“You’ll get killed one of these days fixing something,” Sandy told him.

“Sure, in the end he’ll have to get his jaw fixed,” I said.

Dub said, “I don’t think his jaw will ever need to be fixed, it seems to be in pretty good shape.”

“Did you see Bobby’s Gold Medal?” the kid piped up. “It’s a new kind of a one, it’s got all filigree around it, and it says FOR LIFE SAVING. I had to be a witness to prove I got saved. I had to prove it that I’m alive.”

“You don’t have to prove that,” I said.

Sandy said, “I’m going to get a new kind of award started. It’s going to be made out of fourteen carat gold——”

“Fourteen carrots are nothing for Pee-wee,” I said. “If I was making a medal for him I’d have fourteen carrots, nineteen turnips, a lot of mashed potatoes and three helpings of blackberry pudding. I’d have the medal in the shape of a pancake, hey Dub?”

Sandy said, “My new medal would be all studded with diamonds and it would be given to any Scout who failed to save Pee-wee’s life.”

“That’s a fine idea,” I said.

“If it wasn’t for me Bobby Easton wouldn’t have that medal or the hundred dollars either,” Pee-wee shouted. “He’s going to save fifty dollars of it for when he comes up next summer and the two of us are going to build a cabin and there ain’t going to be any Silver Foxes allowed to come to it.”

“The pleasure is ours,” I told him.

“A Gold Medal Scout has to kind of live by himself kind of away from other fellows,” the kid said.

“I wish you were one then,” I told him. “The further off the better. The North Pole would be a good place, you could get plenty of pineapple ice up there.”

“Did you see the bulletin-board to-day?” the kid piped up.

“No, did you fix that?” I asked him.

He said, “There’s an announcement that I wrote that to-morrow night there’s going to be a show that I’m going to give in the Pavilion, it’s two cents to get in. It’s going to be an exhibition of beetles and caterpillars and special kinds of spiders, and there are going to be some lizards too, and I’m going to give a lecture about them.”

“Now at last I realize how lucky I am,” Dub said.

“Be thankful there’s a place called Jersey City,” I told him.

Maybe I never told you that Pee-wee has a Bronx Park zoo in a cigar box.

I didn’t want him to keep talking about what the Scouts would be doing at camp all summer, because I was thinking about Dub, so I said, “Come on, let’s play *Follow Your Leader*, only we have to keep going in the right direction. The idea is to advance by easy stages, merrily, merrily, toward Catskill Landing. We’ve got to be there by ten-three.”

“You mean three-ten!” Pee-wee shouted.

“It’s the same only different,” I told him.

“We have to be there in time to get sodas before the train comes,” the kid said. “Didn’t you say you were going to treat us all on account of Dub?”

“Come on,” I said, “follow your leader.”

CHAPTER XXVIII FOLLOW YOUR LEADER

That's some crazy game all right, I learned it from Hervey Willetts. I jumped up on the stone wall alongside the road and started along on it with the four of them after me. "Follow your leader wherever he goes," I shouted.

"Don't ask where you're headed for nobody knows,
Just keep your eyes open and follow your nose;
Be careful, don't trip and go stubbing your toes,
And follow your leader wherever he goes."

Oh boy, when we get started on that, *good night!* There's a big sign in the field and it said.

TRESPASSING FORBIDDEN
TRESPASSERS WILL BE PUNISHED TO
THE FULL EXTENT OF THE LAW.
TAKE WARNING.

"You better look out you don't go kerflop down in the field," Pee-wee shouted at me.

"Follow your leader," I said.

Pretty soon I started hopping on one foot and it's pretty hard to do that on a stone wall.

"Have a heart!" one of them shouted at me. A lot I cared.

There was a man with a big straw hat on in the field and he came over toward us. I guess he thought we'd fall down in his cabbages. I kept hopping on one foot and kind of bending over toward the field and once I leaned away over and made believe to lose my balance and so the other fellows had to do the same. We were all kind of staggering on the stone wall.

The man said, "Look out whar yer fall if yer know what's well fer yer. Did yer see that thar sign yonder?"

"If I turn to look at it I'll fall," I said. All the while we were trying to stand still, each of us on one foot. Gee, I bet we looked crazy.

The man said, "I'm givin' yer warning, yer set a foot in this field uv cabbage and I'll hev the law onter yer."

"I can't stand on one leg any longer!" Pee-wee shouted.

I kept hopping on one leg and I said, "Follow your leader whatever he does."

“If we fall in the field we’ll miss the train,” the kid shouted.

“Our solemn honor is more important than a train,” I told him.

All of a sudden I lost my balance almost and I had to stand on both legs and wave my hands to keep from falling down into the field. Dub did the same and he bunked against me, then Sandy went bunking against him and, good night, we all went tumbling down in a bunch outside the stone wall. Lucky for us, hey?

“Follow your leader,” I said.

So then I went hop, skip and jump down the road with that crazy bunch after me. Gee, it was a picture no artist could paint. Anyway I guess Dub was having a good time. He was laughing, I know that. Pretty soon we came to the place where the road goes down to Shady Vale—it’s pretty steep. There was a sign that said.

STEEP HILL USE YOUR EARS

I said to them, “Here’s where we have to be careful—follow your leader. Use your ears so you won’t go down too fast.” I grabbed hold of my two ears and held them out so the wind would catch them and hold us back—that’s what I told the other fellows. They all did just like I did. Some parade!

Down at the foot of the hill were a couple of girls sitting in a Ford and they started laughing at us. One of them said, “What are you holding your ears for? You look too silly!”

“To go slow down the hill,” I said. “There’s a sign up there that says we should use our ears.”

“It means *gears*,” she said. “Somebody scratched out the G. You’re too ridiculous!”

“How did we know that?” Will asked her. “We’re Boy Scouts and we obey the law. When we see a sign we obey it.”

She said, “Well, Mr. Show-off, since you’re so obedient, there’s a sign right across the road there that says STOP.”

“Then we have to stop,” I told her. “Boy Scouts are supposed to obey the law.”

It was one of those things that had STOP and GO printed on it but I guess the cop was never there except on Sundays. Anyway I don’t see why they have that village there on week days. Nobody ever goes through it except on Sundays. If they stood it off the road it would be out of the way.

“Follow your leader,” I said. So then I sat down alongside the road and the other four fellows did just the same. We all sat in a row. We were right opposite the car with the girls.

One of the girls said to the other one, “Did you ever see anything so *absurd*?”

Sandy said, “Go ahead, laugh. We’re not ashamed to obey the law. The sign says stop.”

The girl said, “It isn’t for pedestrians, *silly!*”

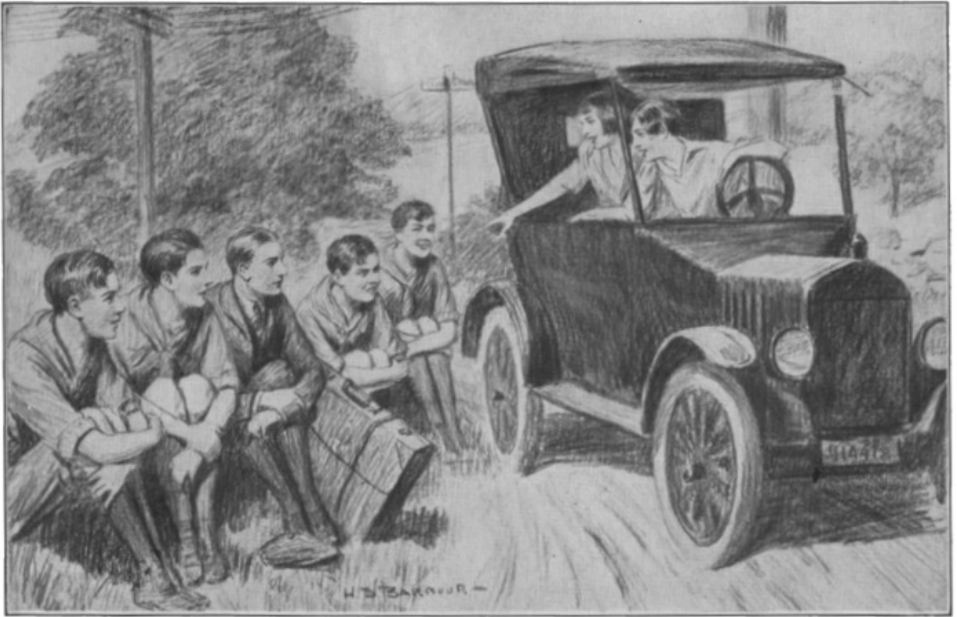
“Will you let her call you that?” I said to Pee-wee.

“Do you call us pedestrians?” he shouted.

“I call you lunatics,” she said.

“Right the first time,” I told her. “And you needn’t make fun of us because we won’t go. I’ve seen lots of Fords that won’t go, and I don’t mean maybe, perhaps.”

“He thinks pedestrian is an epithet,” one of the girls said. “Did you ever know anything so *perfectly crushing*?”



“HE THINKS PEDESTRIAN IS AN EPITHET,” ONE OF THE GIRLS SAID.

“Sure, didn’t you ever see a stone-crusher?” I said.

She said, “I’d just like to know how long you’re going to stay there.”

“We’re going to stay here till it says GO,” I told her.

She said, “You must have *oceans* of time to spare.”

“Sure,” I said, “do you want some of it?”

Sandy called over to them and said, “Will you please tell us how much time we’ve got?”

One of the girls said, “I hope you have more time than you have brains. I don’t even know where you’re going. What town do you want?”

“What ones have you got?” I asked her.

“She’s handing out towns,” Will said.

“And I’ll tell you another thing,” she said, “It was one of the boys from that big camp who mutilated that sign, and he wears a funny hat.”

“Hervey Willetts,” I whispered to Will.

“And he’d better not show himself here again,” she said. “That’s all I’ve got to say.”

I said, “Hey girls, will you please have somebody come and turn this sign around so we can continue on our way? We have to catch a West Shore train at Catskill Landing and it leaves at ten-three.”

“Well then, you’ve missed it already,” one of them said.

“He means three ten,” Pee-wee shouted.

“Well you can just sit there and starve,” one of the girls said. Then they started off in the Ford.

I said, “I think this is serious. Maybe that sign won’t be turned around till next Sunday. By that time the train will probably have gone.”

“We’d better consider what we’re going to do,” Will said.

So then we started making poetry—it wasn’t so good. I said,

“Beyond we cannot roam,
And Dub he can’t go home.”

Sandy said,

“We’d like to hike some maw
But we cannot break the law.”

Will Dawson said,

“The sign up there says STOP,
And we’re waiting for the cop.”

“Let’s start all over again,” I said. “As long as ten-three doesn’t come till night we might as well take it easy. Maybe the cop will come here in his sleep to-night. It’s nice and comfortable sitting here.”

All of a sudden Pee-wee opened up. He said, “You’ll keep saying ten-three so much that you’ll really get to think so and we’ll no fooling miss the train for Dub and we won’t be able to get any ice creams—if we keep fooling like this.”

I said, “That’s quite a good argument.”

Pee-wee said, “You’ll live to regret it with all your fooling and wasting time here like this.” He was thinking about not having time for ice cream.

After we had a good rest I grabbed the apple that Pee-wee was eating and I

threw it at the word STOP and the thing turned around to the word GO. “That shows you how much resourcefulness a Silver Fox has,” I told them. “If I hadn’t thought about that we might have sat here till next Sunday. That was my idea.”

“It was *my* apple!” Pee-wee shouted.

“Follow your leader,” I said.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE DISTANT WHISTLE

So now you know the way we hike. Sometimes even it's worse than that. Tom Slade (he's camp assistant) says it's best to have a destination when you start. But if you have a destination when you start, what's the use of going anywhere? What's the use of going to a destination if you've got one already? I should worry about the Handbook. But anyway you needn't write to me to ask if you can go on one of my special crazy hikes next summer because already nine Scouts want to go. Even now I could tell you what kind of a one it's going to be, only I won't. You just wait.

We got to Catskill half an hour before it was time for the train and we went to the Polar Ice Cream Parlor and had ice cream. I treated them to regular fifteen cent plates of ice cream, not cones. It says in there *Get a Polar cone. It's a bear*. Believe me, the fifteen cent plates are elephants. That ice cream place is a branch of Temple Camp.

While we were in there Will Dawson was kind of funny acting—he didn't say much. I thought maybe he was feeling mean because nobody knew how Dub had saved his life. Will and Dub and I were the only ones that knew anything about it. Nobody knew anything about Will taking the boat that night. Once while we were eating Will went over and spoke to the man that keeps the place.

"What's the matter?" I asked him when he came back.

He said, "Nothing, I was just asking about the train."

"There's plenty of time," Dub said. "It doesn't leave till three-ten."

"I bet you're sorry to go, hey Dub?" I said.

He said, "Sure I'm sorry, I never said I wasn't."

"I bet you'd like to be Bobby Easton, hey?" the kid asked him.

"Never mind about Bobby Easton," I said.

"*You mean never mind about an honor Scout?*" the kid screamed at me.

"Will you please keep your mouth shut about Bobby Easton," I said. "Run over to the post office and ask them how much two cent stamps are to-day."

We started for the station and Pee-wee and Sandy walked ahead. Will and Dub and I walked together.

"Well, we're pretty near at the end of the end," Dub said.

Jiminies, I felt terribly sorry for him, he was so nice about it. He was the kind of a fellow you get to like more and more all the time. Believe me, you see all kinds at Temple Camp. Some of them go up there as if they were going

to wrap up the place and take it home with them. Fresh. Dub didn't even look like a Scout because he didn't have any Scout suit, only the hat, and it made him look funny at camp. And I was thinking how he really had the Gold Medal for life saving, only he didn't have it, like you might say. Gee whiz, he didn't have anything that *showed* he was a Scout. But he was one just the same, you can bet. I guess he was as poor as any fellow that ever went up to Temple Camp. He only had just the money for his board and he didn't have any to spend. He didn't even have a troop or a patrol with him. He didn't butt in much, but the Scouts that knew him liked him. He wouldn't say much when he was out with us, he'd just laugh.

I said, "How do you feel, Dub, now that you're going?"

"I feel full of ice cream," he said.

"Do you feel sore at us, even just a little bit?" I asked him.

He started laughing and he said, "What for, I'd like to know?"

"You know as well as I do," I told him. "Because only for Will and I keeping still you might have had the Gold Medal—even your Eagle badge too, maybe? You're so quiet, I thought maybe after all you were sore. Are you?"

"You have to be quiet when Pee-wee's around," he said. "A fellow doesn't get a chance to say anything."

I said, "Will you let me tell Pee-wee and Sandy so they'll know what you are before you go? They won't let on at camp. Then all the four of us will make you the full salute, Dub. Gee Dub, Will and I feel mean. I know you've got to go and we can't help you that way. But just the same I want everybody at camp to know all about you—what you really are. It makes us feel mean, doesn't it Will?"

Will said, "I've got nothing to say. I don't feel so very mean."

Oh but I was good and mad. You never saw me when I was good and mad. I said, "Well, if you don't feel mean, *I do*. You'd be back in Bridgeboro if it wasn't for him. It's just the same as if Dub gives you a present of staying the rest of the season. It's as good as the Burnside award—what he does for you. *And you don't feel mean!* I'd like to know how you do feel."

"I feel kind of worried," Will said.

"Yes, for fear they'll find out at camp that Dub Smedley went home on account of you. *I'm going to tell the whole camp anyway!*"

"And go back on your promise," Dub said. "I guess I will have to feel sorry for myself if not even my best pals are good scouts."

"I didn't mean it, I'll keep my promise," I said.

"But I'll tell you this, you're a Gold Medal Scout and an Eagle Scout, and the best scout that ever came to Temple Camp. And if you had what was coming to you you'd be wearing the Gold Medal now."

"What, on this jacket?" he said.

“Yes, on that jacket,” I said. “You can put a scout suit on a dummy in a clothing store, can’t you? And does that make him a Scout?”

“Some argument,” Dub said. “I kind of like you when you’re mad.”

“Yes and you make me mad,” I said. “Because I have to feel mean. And Will does too, I bet he does. And another thing, it spoils the whole summer for me, your going home.”

“I wish I was going to have the hike back with you,” he said.

“There won’t be much fun in it,” I told him.

There were a lot of people waiting over at the station. We just sat there on a baggage truck waiting. Will went in the station and came out again. He said he wanted to find out if the train was on time. I was kind of sore at him because he said he didn’t feel mean, but I wasn’t going to be scrapping with him and let Dub see it. He kept looking at his watch all the time. I said, “What’s the idea? Are you in a hurry for Dub to go?”

Pee-wee said, “Let’s tell riddles while we’re waiting.”

I said, “I don’t feel like telling riddles.”

Sandy said, “Shall we play *Follow your leader?*”

“I don’t feel like doing that either,” I said.

So we just sat there on the baggage truck, swinging our legs. Pee-wee was eating some milk chocolate that he bought in the station. All of a sudden we heard a train whistling.

“Here she comes,” I said.

CHAPTER XXX

THE NORTH BOUND

“It’s ahead of time,” Sandy said.

“It’s ten minutes early,” another one of them shouted.

“You’re all wrong the first time as usual,” I said. “It’s a north bound train. Such fine Scouts! You can’t even tell which direction a whistle comes from.”

“I kept still,” Pee-wee said.

“Sure, that was the funniest part of all,” I told him.

Dub said, “Well, I’ll have a few more minutes to stay.”

“Golden minutes with Silver Foxes,” Sandy said.

“Maybe we’ll have time to go and get some sodas,” Pee-wee said.

“Go ahead,” I told him. “I’m going to sit here and see if any Scouts for camp get off this train.”

“Will you go with me?” the kid asked Will.

“You go with him,” Will said to Sandy.

“Come on, I’ll treat you,” the kid said. “I’ll bring back some gumdrops.”

“Don’t come back at all if you don’t want to, the pleasure is ours,” I said.

“We’ll hear the whistle,” Sandy said.

“Go ahead,” I told him.

Sandy’s a nice fellow, he’ll even drink sodas to help a friend. He’s always doing good turns. Just as he and Pee-wee went away I noticed Will wasn’t around anywhere. Then I saw him way up at the end of the platform.

“Mine will be along in a few minutes,” Dub said. Then he said, “I’m glad to be here all alone with you these last few minutes.” He said I was the one he was going to miss most.

“You feel good and sorry now that the time has come, don’t you?” I said. “You can’t fool me, I can see it.”

“Sure I’m sorry,” he said.

“Didn’t you ever go away in the country before, Dub?” I asked him. He said only once when he went to Bronx Park.

“That isn’t country,” I said. “You see, when you get back now, the trolley cars and everything will sound awful loud. When I first get back everything seems funny like. But it isn’t so bad because we go right to school—not saying that isn’t bad enough. Are there fellows around where you live?”

“Yes, but most of them work,” he said. “If I hadn’t delivered groceries on Saturdays I couldn’t have come up here. I tried to make it for three weeks but I could only get money enough for two.”

“How did you hear about Temple Camp, Dub?” I asked him.

He said, “There’s a big house where I deliver groceries, and the fellow that lives there told me about it. He was up here a couple of years ago. Horace Baker, do you know him? His father’s president of a bank or something.”

“I don’t remember him,” I said.

We just sat there on the baggage truck swinging our legs. He said, “What’s Will doing, I wonder?”

I said, “Oh he’s watching to see if any Scouts he knows get off the train. They’re coming up every day now. Not many are going back this time of year.”

“I hold the prize on that,” Dub said.

I said, “Will you please not talk that way, Dub. Don’t you think I feel mean enough already. Gee, I don’t know what I ought to do.”

“Yes you do,” Dub said.

By that time the north bound train had stopped and people were getting on and off and a trainman was calling, “*Train for Albany.*” All of a sudden, *good-night magnolia*, along the platform came Will smiling all over his face and on one side of him was Mr. Dawson and on the other side of him was Mrs. Dawson. And Mabel Dawson (that’s Will’s sister) was trying to get at Will and put her arm through his all the while he was walking between his mother and father.

“*Jiminy, Christopher, crinkums!*” I said. “Look who’s here.” And I just jumped down and ran up to them. Dub stayed where he was. That’s just like him—bashful.

Mrs. Dawson started calling, “Why it’s Roy!”

“Still out of the lunatic asylum,” Mr. Dawson said. He’s an awful nice man, he just grabbed hold of my hand and he put his arm around my shoulder and he said to Mabel, “Look out you don’t kiss the wrong boy by mistake.” Then he said, “Well, tell us the worst, here we are as per orders.”

I could see Mrs. Dawson was kind of anxious but Will didn’t give her a chance to be anxious very long. He said, “Did it scare you, the telegram?”

Mr. Dawson said, “It didn’t scare me but it put me financially in a hole, paying for it collect. I was afraid we wouldn’t have the carfare to come up here. It was as long as a spelling lesson. Your mother has been a little anxious but I told her everything was O. K.”

“What telegram?” I asked him.

Mabel said, “Goodness, gracious—show Roy the telegram, Dad. I never saw such a telegram in my life! Since Dad paid for it, he says I can’t have a fur coat next winter.”

“No new car now,” Mr. Dawson said. Then he gave me a kind of a wink—gee he’s awful nice. He said, “Here Roy, you glance this telegram over

sometime when you have a couple of hours to spare.”

Oh boy, this was the telegram. I hope nobody ever sends me one like that, collect.

Try to come to-morrow instead of next week. Important but don't worry am all right. Need you to help me but tell Mom don't worry. Train gets here two fifty-eight. Be sure don't fail. Will explain. Am well. Will expect you sure.

Will.

Mr. Dawson said, “Do you see how he could be well after sending a wire like that? I should think he'd be suffering from exhaustion.”

“And think of the cost of the ink,” I said. “Anyway it was good exercise for his wrist.”

Mr. Dawson slapped me on the shoulder and he said, “Same old Roy.” Then he said, “Well, Billy, what's the matter?”

I looked up the platform to where Dub was sitting all alone swinging his legs from the baggage truck. He didn't look like a Scout at all.

CHAPTER XXXI

HELD

Will just put his arms around his father's waist and stood in front of him to prevent him from walking. He was all excited, he said, "Listen, Dad, quick, because in a couple of minutes the south bound train will be here and then it will be too late. You keep still, Roy." *Jiminy crinkums*, people are always telling me to keep still. Anyway Mr. Dawson winked at me.

Will just said—gee, but he was anxious and excited—"Listen Dad, I broke the rule and took a boat out at night, and—do you see that fellow up there? The one sitting on the truck? He's a Scout——"

Mabel Dawson said, "He doesn't look like one."

"Never you mind, he is one," Will said. He kept shaking his father so he'd listen in a hurry. He said, "That Scout saved my life—I'll tell you all about it afterward how I got tangled up with a rope in the water. Listen—*listen quick!* He ought to have the Gold Medal for that. But he wouldn't let us tell because then I would have been sent home for breaking the rule—do you see? I had to promise him I wouldn't tell anybody at camp. But I could tell you because you weren't at camp—that isn't breaking my word. Now he's going home because he hasn't got money enough to stay any longer—his train—*listen*—his train is coming any minute. *Listen*—you said maybe I'd get a big radio on Christmas and I know what you mean when you say *maybe*——"

"He don't mean maybe," I said.

"Will you keep still!" Will shot at me. "Listen Dad," he said. "Instead of getting that radio I want that fel—Scout—I want him to stay up here till the camp closes. So will you do that? You have to answer quick because the train is whistling—I hear it—so will you do that? He saved my life and kept still so I could stay up here. I'll go home if I have to but he's *got* to stay up here—he's got to—listen, there's the train—will you answer me!" Gee, I never saw Will so excited in all his life. He was right about the south bound train, it was whistling up the line. The train the Dawsons came on started off. I could see the smoke of the other one over the trees way up the river.

"It's—it's coming," Will said. He just kept pulling his father's coat. "I don't want a new radio anyway," he said.

Jiminies, you can't hurry Mr. Dawson. He took it easy walking over into the station with Will and I after him. Then he went over to the news stand and bought a cigar and lighted it. I thought maybe he was mad about what Will did—breaking the rule like that, I mean. Then he went over to the ticket window

and asked the man about the down trains next day. I guess Will and I didn't know what to think. Will was terribly excited. When Mr. Dawson came out on the platform again he said,

"That the boy—the one sitting on the jigger? What's his name?"

"His name is Dorin Smedley," I said, "but we call him Dub."

"No khaki huh?" Mr. Dawson said.

Then, all in a hurry, Will told his father all about Dub—all that we knew about him. The train was coming along but that didn't seem to worry Mr. Dawson. It worried Will and me though. Mr. Dawson just kind of strolled over to the baggage truck and he screwed his cigar over into one end of his mouth and he looked awful kind of shrewd like. He held out his hand just like he would to a man and he said, "H'lo Dub."

Dub jumped down because the train was puffing all ready to start but Mr. Dawson kind of smiling didn't let go his hand, he just kept shaking it. Mrs. Dawson and Mabel came up, but Mr. Dawson just kept on shaking Dub's hand. Poor Dub didn't know what to make of it. All of a sudden the bell on the engine rang and the train started to move. A lot Mr. Dawson cared about the train! He travels around a lot and I guess he misses lots of trains—he should worry.

That's the way he is, always fooling, kind of. He just kept hold of Dub's hand and Dub tried to get away, but he couldn't. And so he missed the train! "What's all the hurry about, Dub?" Mr. Dawson asked him.

Jiminy crinkums, that man should worry about trains!

CHAPTER XXXII BETTER THAN GOLD

Gee it was awful funny; Dub didn't get a chance to have his way at all. He didn't know what was happening to him till it was all over. I guess he thought he was being kidnapped. He just kept looking after the train. Poor Dub, I was half laughing and half crying on account of him.

"I didn't break my promise, Dub," Will said. "You ask Roy. I said we wouldn't tell anybody at camp. I could tell my father, couldn't I?"

"It's as clear as mud," I said.

"Well then, you've got to go on keeping your promise," Dub said. "If I go back to camp, you won't tell anybody about your taking the boat or how I went in after you? Hurry up and answer," he said, "because here comes Pee-wee and Sandy."

Mr. Dawson said, "Well, breaking rules is bad business. But breaking promises is bad business too. We can talk about that later. The main thing now is how are we going to get to camp? Dub is going to stay all summer if I have enough money left after that telegram. So there's the principal matter settled. He ought to be able to win his Eagle badge in that time. As for the Gold Medal for saving Will's life——"

"*Shhh!*" I said. "Here's Pee-wee. Nobody knows but just Will and Dub and I."

"And Mabel and Mrs. D.," Mr. Dawson said. "The only girls that know how to keep a secret. How about that?"

So that's how it happened that Dub Smedley stayed at Temple Camp all summer and didn't get the Gold Medal. But he got to be an Eagle Scout that summer. I guess the good turn that Will Dawson did him made up for Will taking the boat. Mr. Dawson was awful funny, he said we ought to tell about that. But he said we ought to keep our promise to Dub. So as long as we couldn't do both we kept our promise to Dub. I guess it didn't almost kill Mr. Dawson to pay for that telegram because he gave a check to Temple Camp so Dub could stay till the end of the season, and besides, he bought a scout suit for him.

When Pee-wee and Sandy saw that Dub hadn't gone on the train, they wanted to know why. A couple of fine Scouts they were—*not*—missing the train themselves like that. On account of drinking sodas! Pee-wee, he even had to wipe his mouth off so Mrs. Dawson could kiss him.

I said, "The reason Dub didn't go was because you two flat tires weren't

here to see him off. He wouldn't go without saying good-bye to you and now he's got to stay all summer."

"Will you tell me the no fooling reason," Pee-wee shouted.

I said, "The no fooling reason is the evil of drink, how you go after sodas just when the train is going to come and Dub is so polite he wouldn't go without saying good-by to you. He's not like me, I'd be glad to say good-by to you any time. Will you please go and find out how soon the next bus goes up to Leeds? All our fine plans for Dub going home are spoiled by ice cream sodas and they'll be the cause of your downfall yet."

"Are you going to talk some sense!" Pee-wee shouted. "What was the honest and truly reason?"

"Why should I talk sense just to please you," I said. "Gee whiz, I wouldn't talk sense to please anybody—I'll leave it to Will."

Oh boy, you should have seen the way Mr. and Mrs. Dawson laughed. Mabel looked at Dub awful nice and friendly, kind of, and she said, "Aren't they perfectly idiotic, Dub?"

"They've been doing just like that for the last two weeks," Dub said, kind of bashful like.

"If you don't like it, you can go my way and I'll go yours," I told him. We should worry.

THE END

[The end of *Roy Blakeley's Roundabout Hike* by Percy Keese Fitzhugh]