

# RALPH BARBOUR

FOUR AFOOT: BEING  
THE ADVENTURES OF  
THE BIG FOUR ON THE  
HIGHWAY

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*Four Afoot: Being the Adventures of the Big Four on the Highway:*

# Содержание

TO THE READER	4
CHAPTER I	6
CHAPTER II	17
CHAPTER III	27
CHAPTER IV	39
CHAPTER V	47
CHAPTER VI	58
CHAPTER VII	67
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	72

# **Four Afoot: Being the Adventures of the Big Four on the Highway**

## **TO THE READER**

Many of you who followed the adventures of Nelson, Dan, Bob, and Tom, as narrated in a previous story, *Four in Camp*, have very kindly professed a willingness to hear more about this quartette of everyday boys, and the author, who has himself grown rather fond of the “Big Four,” was very well pleased to take them again for his heroes. It seems now as though there might even be a third volume to the series – but that will depend altogether on how well you like this one, for, as of course you understand, the author is writing in an effort to please you, and not himself. And if he doesn’t please you, he would be very glad to have you tell him so, and why.

If you go to searching your map of Long Island for the places mentioned in this story you will be disappointed. They are all there, but, with one or two exceptions, under other names. You see, it doesn’t do to be too explicit in a case of this sort. Mr.

William Hooper, for instance, might seriously object were you to stop in front of his house and remark, “Huh! there’s where old Bill Hooper lives, the fellow that wouldn’t give the ‘four’ any supper!” Of course it is different in the case of Sag Harbor – that town has already been immortalized on the stage, and is probably by this time quite hardened to publicity. And as for Jericho – but then they never got there!

*Ralph Henry Barbour.*

Cambridge, Mass.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **IN WHICH THE BIG FOUR SET OUT FOR JERICHO**

“On to Jericho!”

Dan Speede took the car steps at a bound and was out on the station platform looking eagerly about him before the other three boys had struggled through the car door. Swinging his pack to his shoulders, he waved an imaginary sword about his head and struck an attitude in which his right hand pointed determinedly toward the country road.

“Forward, brave comrades!” he shouted.

The brave comrades, tumbling down the steps, cheered enthusiastically, while the occupants of the car in which the quartet had traveled from Long Island City looked wonderingly out upon them. But as the present conduct of the boys was only on a par with what had gone before, the passengers soon settled back into their seats, and the train puffed on its way. Tom Ferris waved gayly to the occupants of the passing windows and then followed the others along the platform. The station was a small one, and save for a farmer who was loading empty milk cans into a wagon far down the track, there was no one in sight.

“Which way do we go?” asked Nelson Tilford.

For answer Bob Hethington produced his “Sectional Road

Map of Long Island, Showing the Good Roads, with Description of Scenery, Routes, etc.," and spread it out against the side of the station.

"Here we are," he said. "Locust Park. And here's our road."

"That's all right," answered Nelson, following the other's finger. "I see the road on your old map, but where is it on the landscape?"

"Why, down there somewhere. It crosses the track just beyond the station."

"Certainly, but you don't happen to see it anywhere, do you?" asked Dan.

Bob had to acknowledge that he didn't.

"Come on; we'll ask Mr. Farmer down here," said Tom.

So they went on down the track to the little platform from which the milk was loaded on to the cars and hailed the farmer.

"Good morning," said Dan. "Which is the road to Jericho, please?"

The farmer paused in his task and looked them over speculatively. Finally,

"Want to go to Jericho, do you?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Dan.

"Are you in a hurry?"

"Why – no, I don't suppose so. Why?"

"Cause there's a train in about an hour that'll take you to Hicksville, and it's about two miles from there by the road."

"But we just got off the train," objected Nelson.

“So I seen,” was the calm response. “Why didn’t you stay on? Didn’t you have no money?”

“Yes, but we wanted to walk,” answered Bob. “Which way do we go?”

“Want to walk, eh? Well, you won’t have no trouble, I guess. Pretty fair walkers, are you?”

“Bully!” answered Dan.

“Fond of exercise, I guess?”

“Love it!”

“That so? Well, there’s lots of good walkin’ around here; the roads is full of it.”

“Oh, come on,” said Tom impatiently. “He’s plumb crazy!”

“Hold on,” interposed the farmer. “I’m tellin’ you just as fast as I know how, ain’t I?”

“Maybe,” answered Dan politely, “but you see we sort of want to get to Jericho before Sunday. And as it’s already Monday morning – ”

“Thought you said you weren’t in no hurry,” objected the farmer.

“Well, if you call that being in a hurry,” Dan replied, “I guess we lied to you. If you happen to have any idea where the Jericho road is – ”

“Well, I’d oughter, seems to me. I live on it. Are you all going?”

“Every last one of us,” answered Nelson.

“Tell him how old we are and the family history and let’s get



on,” suggested Dan *sotto voce*.

“Well, there’s four of you, eh?”

“I think so.” Bob made pretense of counting the assembly with much difficulty. “Stand still, Tom, till I count you. Yes, sir, that’s right; there are four of us.”

“Well, two of you could sit on the seat with me and two of you could kind of hang out behind, I guess.”

“Oh, much obliged,” said Bob. “But really we’d rather walk. We’re taking a walking trip down the island.”

“You don’t say! Well, you go back there about a half a mile and you’ll find a road crossing the track. You take that until you fetch the country road going to your right. Keep along that and it’s about nine miles to Jericho.”

“Thanks,” said Dan.

“You’re welcome. That’s the best way if you’re real fond of walking.”

“Oh,” said Bob suspiciously. “And supposing we aren’t?”

“Then you’d better go the shorter way and save about two miles,” answered the farmer gravely.

“Which way’s that?”

“Right down the track here for a quarter of a mile till you come to a road going to the left. Take that for half a mile and then turn to your right on the country road.”

“Thanks again,” said Bob. “You’ve had a whole lot of fun with us, haven’t you?”

“Well, you’re sort of amusin’,” answered the farmer with a

twinkle in his eye. "But I been more entertained at the circus."

Bob smiled in spite of himself, and the others grinned also; all save Tom.

"B-b-b-blamed old ha-ha-hayseed!" growled Tom. "Hope he ch-ch-ch-chokes!"

The four took their way down the track, Bob highly pleased to find the truthfulness of his map established; although Dan declared that a map that would lie nearly a quarter of a mile couldn't be fairly called truthful. When they had gone a hundred yards or so the farmer hailed them.

"What is it?" shouted Bob.

"Got friends in Jericho, have you?" called the farmer.

"No," answered Bob, adding "confound you" under his breath.

"Going to take dinner there, be you?"

"I guess so. Why?"

"Well, you go to William Hooper's place about a mile t'other side of the village, and say Abner Wade sent you. He'll look after you, William will."

"Thank you," called Bob.

"He seems to be a decent chap after all," said Nelson.

"The only trouble with him is that he's like Dan," answered Bob. "He's got an overdeveloped sense of humor."

They tramped on, and presently found the road that crossed the railway. Turning into this they struck due north; at least that's what Tom declared after consulting the compass which he carried in his pocket. Bob looked at his watch.

“Nine-fifteen,” he announced. “We’ve got lots of time. Seven miles in three hours is too easy.”

“If that old codger told us the right way,” amended Tom.

“He did, because the map shows it,” responded Bob.

“Don’t talk to us about that old map,” said Dan. “It’s an awful liar, Bob.”

And while they are quarreling good-naturedly about it let us have a look at them.

The boy walking ahead, swinging that stick he has cut from a willow tree, is Nelson Tilford. Nelson – sometimes “Nels” to his friends – lives in Boston within sight of the golden dome and is a student at Hillton Academy; and next year he expects, if all goes well, to be a freshman at Erskine College. That apparent slimness is a bit misleading, for the muscles under the gray flannel suit are hard as iron, and what Nelson lacks in breadth and stature is quite made up in strength and agility. In the same way the quiet, thoughtful expression on his face doesn’t tell all the truth. Nelson is a good student, fond of books and inclined to think matters out for himself, but at the same time he is fond of sports and has been known to get into mischief.

Next to him walks Tom – familiarly “Tommy” – Ferris; residence, Chicago; age, fourteen years – almost fifteen now. Tom is inclined toward stoutness, has light hair and gray eyes, is at once good-natured and lazy, and has a positive talent for getting into trouble. Tommy expresses himself clearly until he becomes excited; then he stutters ludicrously. Tommy is also a

Hilton boy, but is one class behind Nelson, a fact which troubles him a good deal, since he wants very much to go up to college with his friend.

The big, broad-shouldered boy with the red hair and rollicking blue eyes is Dan Speede. Dan, who hails from New York, is fifteen years old. Whereas Tom spends a good deal of his time getting into trouble himself, Dan is tireless in his efforts to get others into trouble; and he usually succeeds. For the rest, he is fond of fun, afraid of nothing, and hasn't an ounce of meanness in him. Dan is in his senior year at St. Eustace Academy, and he, too, has his heart set on Erskine College.

The last boy of the four – and the eldest – is Bob Hethington, of Portland, Maine. Bob is sixteen – nearly seventeen – and is big, quiet-appearing, and unexcitable. He has curly black hair and eyes and is distinctly good-looking. Bob, too, is booked for Erskine.

Perhaps you have met these boys before, when, at Camp Chicora, last summer, they gained the title of the Big Four. If so, you are undoubtedly wondering how it happens that we find them on this bright morning in early September swinging along a country road on Long Island. Well, it was all Dan's fault. Dan took it into his head to get sick in early summer. As he had never been sick before to amount to anything, he thought he might as well do the thing right. So he had typhoid fever. That was in June, just after school closed, and he spent the succeeding two months at home. He didn't have a good time, and even when the doctor

declared him well, Dan felt, as he himself expressed it, like a last summer's straw hat. So there was a family council. Dan's mother said Dan ought to stay out of school and go abroad. Dan said, "Nonsense." So the matter was left to the physician. He said what Dan needed was outdoor exercise, plenty of fresh air, and all that.

"Let him get into an old suit of clothes," said the doctor, "and take a walking trip." (You see, the doctor was a bit old-fashioned.) "Nothing like walking; sea trips and sanitariums aren't half as good. He needn't hurry; just let him wander around country for two or three weeks; that'll set him up, you see if it doesn't."

Dan liked the idea, but the thought of wandering around the country alone didn't appeal to him. "If I could only get Nelson or Bob or Tommy to go along," he said.

"Perhaps you can," said his father.

So three letters were written and dispatched and soon three answers came. Nelson was glad to go, Bob was equally willing, and Tom was "tickled to death." Bob and Nelson had been at Camp Chicora most of the summer, while Tom had spent his vacation at one of the Michigan lake resorts. The last week in August there was a jolly gathering of the clans at Dan's house, a happy reunion, and an excited discussion of ways and means. Mr. Speede engineered affairs, and by the fourth day of September all was ready. There had been much discussion as to where they should go. Nelson recommended his own State, Bob thought Pennsylvania about right, and Tom favored the Adirondacks. It

was Dan's father who thought of Long Island.

"In the first place," he pointed out, "it's right at our back door, and you won't have to waste a day in getting there; and as you've got only three weeks at the most before school begins, that's worth considering. Then, too, if anything should happen to you, I could get you here in a few hours. Long Island isn't the biggest stretch of country in the world, but there's over a hundred miles of it as to length, and I guess you can keep busy. Besides, the towns are near together and you'll be able to find good sleeping accommodations; and I'd rather Dan didn't do too much sleeping out of doors just at first."

So the map of Long Island was produced and studied, and the more they studied it the better they liked it. It was unknown territory to them all, for even Dan's knowledge of the place was limited to Coney Island, and the names of places – names which amused Tommy vastly – and the evident abundance of good roads won the day.

"Me for Long Island!" declared Nelson.

"Same here," said Tommy. "I want to go to Jericho."

"And I want to go to Yaphank," declared Bob.

"And Skookwams Neck for mine!" cried Dan.

So they started to lay out a route. They laid out six. The first left out Lake Ronkonkoma, and Tommy declared he just had to see Lake Ronkonkoma. The second omitted Ketcaboneck, and Bob said he couldn't go back home without having seen Ketcaboneck. The third slighted Aquebogue, and Nelson refused

to go unless that charming place was on the route. And so it went, with much laughter, until finally Mr. Speede advised them to settle only on a place to start from, take the map with them, and decide their itinerary as they went along. That pleased even Tommy.

“I shall visit Quogue if I have to go alone,” he said.

What to take with them was a question which occasioned almost as much discussion. Tommy had brought his trunk and wanted to take most of its contents along. In the end Mr. Speede’s counsel prevailed and each boy limited his luggage to the barest necessities. Light rubber ponchos – squares with a hole cut in the middle which could be slipped over the head when it rained – were purchased, and these were to be used as knapsacks, the other articles being rolled up inside. The other articles included a towel, bathing trunks, brush and comb, toothbrush, extra shoe laces, a light-weight flannel shirt, three pairs of stockings, and handkerchiefs. Each boy carried a collapsible drinking cup in his pocket, Bob took charge of the map, and Tom was the proud possessor of a compass. Tom also carried a folding camera, having at length been prevailed upon to leave a choice library of fiction, a single-barreled shotgun, and two suits of clothing behind him.

Old clothes, stout shoes, cloth caps, and light flannel shirts with collars was the general attire. And so clothed, each with his pack in hand, the four said good-by to Mr. and Mrs. Speede on Monday morning, took car to the ferry, crossed the river,

and boarded an early train for Locust Park, at which point their journey on foot was to begin. And so we find them, Dan a trifle pale of face but as merry and happy as any, trudging along the road toward Jericho, each prepared for a good time and eager for adventures.

And adventures were awaiting them.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **IN WHICH TOMMY DELAYS PROGRESS AND THEY LOSE THEIR WAY**

It was a fresh, cool morning, with a southerly breeze blowing up from the ocean and rustling the leaves of the willows and maples along the meadow walls. Big fleecy clouds sailed slowly across a blue September sky, hundreds of birds flitted about the way and made the journey musical, and life was well worth living. Not until they had turned into the country road, a level, well-kept thoroughfare, did they catch a glimpse of any habitation. Then a comfortable-looking farmhouse with its accompanying barns and stables came into view.

“Let’s go in and get a drink of water,” suggested Tom.

No one else, however, was thirsty, and so Tom passed in through the big gate alone while the others made themselves comfortable on the top of the wall. Tom was gone a long time, but finally, just when Dan was starting off to find him, he came into sight.

“What’s he got?” asked Nelson.

“Looks as though he was eating something,” answered Dan.  
“By Jupiter, it’s pie!”

“You fellows missed it,” called Tom, smiling broadly. “She gave me a piece of apple pie and it was great.”

“Doesn’t look like apple,” said Bob.

“Oh, this is squash. The first piece was apple,” was the cheerful reply.

“Well, of all pigs!” said Nelson. “How many pieces did you have?”

“Only two,” was the unruffled response. “And a glass of milk.”

Nelson looked his disgust, but Dan, reaching forward, sent the half-consumed wedge of pastry into the dust.

“Hope you ch-ch-choke!” said Tommy warmly, viewing his prize ruefully. “It was gu-gu-gu-good pie, too!”

But he got no sympathy from his laughing companions. Bob declared that it served him jolly well right.

“He’ll wish he hadn’t eaten any before he gets to the end of the day’s journey,” said Dan. “We’ve got six miles and more to Jericho, and I guess we’d better be doing ’em.”

So they took up the march again. Everyone was in high feather. Side excursions into adjoining fields were made, Dan went a hundred yards out of his way to shy a stone at a noisy frog, and Nelson climbed a cedar tree to its topmost branches merely because Bob hazarded the opinion that cedar trees were hard to shin up. Only Tommy seemed to experience none of the intoxication of the highway and the morning air. Tommy appeared a bit sluggish, and kept dropping back, necessitating

frequent halts.

“Look here, Tommy,” said Dan presently, “we’re awfully fond of you, but we love honor more; also dinner. If you really want to spend the day around here studying nature, why just say so; we’ll wait for you at Jericho.”

Whereupon Tom gave a grunt and moved faster. But at the end of half an hour the truth was out; Tommy didn’t feel just right.

“Where do you hurt?” asked Bob skeptically.

“I – I have a beast of a pain in my chest,” said Tom, leaning against a fence and laying one hand pathetically halfway down the front of his flannel shirt. The others howled gleefully.

“On his chest!” shrieked Dan.

“Sure it isn’t a headache?” laughed Nelson.

Tom looked aggrieved.

“I gu-gu-gu-guess if you fu-fu-fu-fellows had it you wu-wu-wu-wu – ”

“Look here, Tommy,” said Bob, “you haven’t got a pain; you’ve just swallowed an alarm clock!”

“That’s what you get for eating all that pie and making a hog of yourself,” said Dan sternly.

“It’s Tommy’s tummy,” murmured Nelson.

Whatever it was, it undoubtedly hurt, for Tommy was soon doubled up on the grass groaning dolefully. The others, exchanging comical glances, made themselves comfortable alongside.

“Got anything in your medicine chest that will help him,

Dan?" asked Nelson. Dan shook his head. The medicine chest consisted of a two-ounce bottle of camphor liniment and a similar sized flask of witch-hazel.

"How you feeling now, Tommy?" asked Bob gravely.

"Better," muttered Tom. "I'd ju-ju-ju-just like to know what that woman put in her pu-pu-pu-pie!"

"You don't suppose it was poison, do you?" asked Dan, with a wink at the others.

Tom's head came up like a shot and he stared wildly about him.

"I bu-bu-bu-bet it wa-wa-wa-was!" he shrieked. "It fu-fu-feels like it! A-a-a-a-arsenic!"

"That's mean, Dan," said Bob. "He's only fooling, Tommy. You have just got a plain, everyday tummyache. Lie still a bit and you'll be all right."

Tom looked from one to the other in deep mistrust.

"If I du-du-du-die," he wailed, "I – I –"

He broke off to groan and wriggle uneasily.

"What, Tommy?" asked Dan with a grin.

"I – I hope you all ch-ch-ch-ch-choke!"

Tom's pain in his "chest" kept them there the better part of two hours, and it was past eleven when the invalid pronounced himself able to continue the journey. There was still some four miles to go in order to reach Jericho, which hamlet they had settled upon as their dinner stop, and they struck out briskly.

"What was that chap's name?" asked Dan. "The one we were

to get dinner from.”

“Hooper,” answered Bob, “William Hooper. I wish I was there now. I’m as hungry as a bear.”

There was a groan from Tom.

“That’s all right, Tommy, but we haven’t feasted on nice apple and squash pie, you see.”

“Shut up!” begged Tom.

“How big’s this Jericho place?” asked Nelson.

Out came Bob’s road map.

“Seems to be about three houses there according to this,” answered Bob.

“Gee! I hope we don’t get by without seeing it,” said Dan. “Do you suppose there’s a sign on it?”

“I don’t know, but I’ve heard there was a tree opposite it,” Bob replied gravely. “And there’s something else here too,” he continued, still studying the map. “It’s a long, black thing; looks as though it might be a skating rink or a ropewalk.”

“Maybe it’s the poorhouse,” suggested Dan, looking over his shoulder.

“Or a hospital for Tommy,” added Nelson.

“Anyhow, I hope there’s something to eat there,” said Bob.

“Me too,” sighed Nelson. “This is the longest old seven miles I ever saw. And it’s after twelve o’clock. Sure we’re on the right road, Bob?”

“Of course. Look at the map.”

“Oh, hang the map! Let’s ask some one.”

“All right. It does seem a good ways. We’ll ask the next person we see.”

But although they had met half a dozen persons up to that time, it seemed now that the district had suddenly become depopulated. Nelson said he guessed they were all at home eating dinner. After another half hour of steady walking, during which time Tom recovered his spirits, they came into sight of a little village set along the road. There was one store there and some five or six houses.

“Anyhow,” said Dan hopefully, “we can get some crackers and cheese in the store.”

But when they had piled through the door they changed their minds. It was a hardware store! A little old man with a bald head and brass-rimmed spectacles limped down behind the counter to meet them.

“Is this Jericho?” asked Bob.

“Jericho? No, this ain’t Jericho,” was the answer.

“Oh! Er – what is it?”

“Bakerville.”

“Where’s Bakerville?”

“Right here.”

“I know, but – well, where’s Jericho?”

“Bout eight miles from here.”

Four boys groaned in unison. Bob pulled out his map, in spite of the fact that Dan looked as though he was ready to seize upon and destroy it.

“That’s right,” said Bob sadly. “We got too far north.”

“I should say we did!” snorted Dan. “About eight miles!”

“But I don’t see how we managed to get off the right road,” said Bob.

“I do,” answered Nelson. “Don’t you remember when Tom was laid out? There were two roads there just beyond. We must have taken the wrong one.”

“That’s so,” said Tom; “I remember.”

“Lots of good your remembering does now,” grunted Nelson. “If you hadn’t got to fussing with those pies – !”

“Thought you was in Jericho, did yer?” asked the shopkeeper with a chuckle. They nodded soberly. “Well, well, that’s a good joke, ain’t it?”

“Swell!” muttered Dan.

Tom grunted something about choking.

“Is there any place here where we can get something to eat?” asked Bob.

“I guess not, but there’s a hotel about a mile along. I guess you can get something there.”

So they prevailed on him to go to the door with them and point out the way.

“It’s on your way to Jericho,” said the storekeeper, pointing out the road. “You turn down that first road there and then bear to the left until you come to a big white farmhouse. Then you turn to the right and keep on about half a mile, or maybe a mile, and the Center House is just a little beyond. It’s a brown house

with lots of windows and a barn.”

“Can’t help finding it,” muttered Dan sarcastically.

They were rather quiet as they passed through the village and took the turn indicated. From one house came an enticing odor of onions, and Dan leaned up against a telephone pole and pretended to weep. That mile was as long as two, but in the end they came into sight of the “brown house with lots of windows and a barn.” But it didn’t look very hospitable. The windows were closed and shuttered, and the barn appeared to be in the last stages of decay. With sinking hearts they climbed the steps and beat a tattoo on the front door. All was silence.

“Empty!” groaned Nelson.

“Nothing doing!” murmured Dan.

“Hit it again,” counseled Tommy.

They all took a hand at beating on that door, but it didn’t do the least bit of good. The place was empty and closed up. Nelson sat down on the top step and stared sadly across the country road. Tom joined him.

“Wish I had some more of that pie,” he muttered.

Bob produced the map, which was already getting frayed at the corners, and opened it out.

“The best thing to do,” he said, “is to keep on till we find a farmhouse or something, and beg some food.”

“I could eat raw dog,” said Dan. “Any houses in sight on that lying map of yours?”

“Sure.”



“How many miles off?”

“About – er – about two or three, I should say.”

“Can’t be done,” said Dan decidedly. “I couldn’t walk two miles if there was a thousand dollars at the end of it.”

“I could do it if there was a ham sandwich at the end of it,” said Nelson.

“Hunger has driven him daffy,” explained Dan sadly.

“Well, there’s no use staying here,” said Bob impatiently.

“Oh, I don’t know. Might as well die here as anywhere,” answered Nelson.

“Wasn’t it your father, Dan, who said the beauty about Long Island was that the towns were near together and we could get good accommodations easily?” asked Tom.

Dan made no answer.

Suddenly a noise startled them. At the end of the porch stood a boy of sixteen in an old blue shirt and faded overalls. He was plainly surprised to see them, and stood looking at them for several seconds before he spoke. Finally,

“Hello!” he said.

“Greetings,” answered Dan. “Will you kindly send the head waiter to us?”

“Huh?” asked the youth.

“Well, never mind then. Just show us to our rooms. We’ll have a light lunch sent up and keep our appetites for dinner.”

“Is the hotel closed?” interrupted Bob. The youth nodded.

“Yep. They didn’t make no money last summer, so they didn’t

open it this year. Did you knock?"

"Oh, no, we didn't exactly knock," answered Dan. "We only kind of tapped weakly."

"Want anything?"

"Yes, a man at Bakerville said we could get some dinner here. I don't suppose we can, though," added Bob sadly. The other shook his head slowly.

"Guess not," he said. "There's a hotel at Minton Hill, though. There's lots of summer folks there."

"How far's that?"

"Not more'n six miles."

The four groaned in unison.

"We haven't had anything since seven o'clock," said Nelson.

"You ain't?" The youth became instantly sympathetic. "Well, ain't that too bad?"

The question scarcely seemed to demand an answer and so received none. The youth in the overalls frowned deeply.

"Well, now, look here," he said finally. "Me an' dad lives back here in the barn and looks after the farm. We ain't got much, but if some bread and butter and milk will do, why, I guess –"

The four threw themselves upon him as one man.

"Bread!" shouted Dan.

"Butter!" cried Nelson.

"Milk!" gurgled Tommy.

"Lead the way!" said Bob.

# **CHAPTER III**

## **INTRODUCES MR. JERRY HINKLEY AND AN IMPROMPTU DINNER**

That was a strange meal and an enjoyable one. The menu wasn't elaborate, but their appetites were, and not one of the four was inclined to be critical. What had formerly been the carriage house had been fitted up with a couple of cot beds, some chairs, a stove, and a table, into an airy, if not very well-appointed, apartment. The boy in overalls, whose name during the subsequent conversation transpired to be Jerry Hinkley, produced a loaf of bread and a pat of butter from a box, and then disappeared for a minute. When he returned he brought a battered tin can half full of milk. Eating utensils were scarce, and the boys had to take turns with the two knives and the two thick china cups. The table boasted no cloth, and Tom had to sit on an empty box, but those were mere details.

"I looked to see if I could find a few eggs," said Jerry, as he poured out the milk, "but we ain't got but eight hens and they ain't been layin' much lately."

"This will do finely," mumbled Dan, with his mouth full of bread and butter.

"It's swell," said Tom from behind his cup.

The doors were wide open, and the September sunlight streamed in over the dusty floor. A bedraggled rooster, followed cautiously by a trio of dejected-looking hens, approached and observed the banquet from the doorsill, clucking suspiciously. Jerry sat on the edge of one of the cots and watched proceedings with interest. But he seemed uneasy, and once or twice he started up only to change his mind with a troubled frown and return to his seat. Finally he asked awkwardly:

"Say, was you fellows meanin' to pay anything for your food?"

"Of course," Bob assured him. "You don't think we're going to let you feed us for nothing?"

"That's all right, then," said Jerry, looking vastly relieved. "We got some bacon and if you say so I'll fry you some in a jiffy."

The boys howled approval.

"You see," continued Jerry, "I was most skeered to give you bacon 'cause dad would have missed it when he got back. Dad ain't got much money, an' I guess he wouldn't like me to be too free with the victuals. But if you're willin' to pay – "

"Sure, we'll pay," said Bob.

So Jerry set a frying pan on top of the stove, touched a match to the pile of straw and corncobs inside, and produced a strip of bacon from the larder. Even Bob, who prided himself on his culinary abilities, had to pay tribute to Jerry's deftness. In ten minutes the first panful of crisp bacon was ready and a second lot was sizzling on the stove.

“Talk about your reed birds!” said Dan eloquently.

“Never tasted anything better in my life,” said Nelson. “Is there any more milk there?”

Ten minutes later the banquet was a thing of the past, and the four sat back and sighed luxuriously.

“That was sure fine,” said Dan. “My, but I was hungry!”

“Me too,” answered Nelson. “But look here, how about you?” He looked inquiringly at Jerry. “We haven’t left you a thing.”

“Oh, I had my dinner at twelve,” answered their host, as he cleared the table. “You see we have our breakfast about six, dad an’ me.”

“You say your father’s away to-day?” asked Bob.

“Yes, gone over to Roslyn to buy some feed for the horse.”

“And you live here all the year, do you?”

“We only come here last April. We used to have a farm down near Hicksville, but we lost it.”

“That’s too bad. Is there just you and your father?”

Jerry nodded soberly.

“Mother died year ago last May. Me an’ dad’s been kind of helpless since then. Things don’t seem to go just right nowadays.”

“Do you go to school?” asked Nelson.

“No. I did one year over to Newton. It was a mighty nice school too. There was three teachers. I learnt a whole lot that winter. I been intendin’ to go again, but since mother died – ”

Jerry’s voice dwindled away into silence while he stared out into the sunlit stable yard.

"I see," said Bob sympathetically.

"Mother she taught me a lot at home when I was just a kid," resumed Jerry. "Spellin', 'rithmetic, and all about Scotland. She was born in Scotland, you see. I guess I know more'n most fellers about Scotland," he added proudly.

"I bet you know a heap more about it than I do," said Bob.

"I guess you're through school, ain't you?" asked Jerry.

"I get through this year," answered Bob. "Then I'm going to college."

Jerry's eyes brightened.

"Is that so?" he asked eagerly. "I guess you're pretty smart. What college are you going to?"

"Erskine. Ever hear of it?"

"No." Jerry shook his head apologetically. "You see I don't know much about colleges. I – I'd like to see one. I guess Yale must be pretty fine. I expect it's bigger'n that boardin' school over to Garden City?"

"St. Paul's? Some bigger, yes."

"Is the school you been going to like St. Paul's?"

"Not much, but Nelson and Tommy here go to a school a good deal the same. Hillton. Ever hear of Hillton?"

Again Jerry shook his head.

"What's it like, your school?" he asked.

For the next quarter of an hour Nelson told about Hillton – Tom interpolating explanatory footnotes, as it were – and Jerry listened with shining eyes and open mouth. It was all very

wonderful to him, and he asked question after question. Dan tried to tell him that while Hillton was good enough in a way, the only school worth boasting about was St. Eustace. But Tom tipped him out of his chair, and as it is difficult to uphold the honor of your school with any eloquence from the hard floor of a carriage house, Dan decided to shut up.

“I guess it costs a good deal to go to a school like that,” said Jerry regretfully.

“Not so awful much,” answered Nelson. “A fellow can get through the year on three hundred.”

Jerry nodded gravely.

“I guess that’s kind of reasonable, ain’t it?”

“Yes. Then if a fellow is lucky enough to get a scholarship, it brings it down to about two hundred, maybe.”

“What’s a scholarship like?” asked Jerry interestedly.

Nelson explained.

“I guess it’s pretty hard to get into one of them schools, ain’t it?” pursued Jerry.

“Oh, not so very hard.”

“Think I could do it?”

“Well – I don’t know. I think maybe you could if you had some coaching.”

“What’s that like?” asked Jerry.

Nelson glanced appealingly at Bob, and the latter took up the task. Half an hour later the four decided that it was time for them to be going. Bob broached the matter of payment.

"How much do we owe, Jerry?"

"I guess about a quarter," answered Jerry.

"A quarter!" cried Tom. "Get out! That was worth a dollar! It saved my life."

"It's worth fifty cents, anyhow," said Nelson, "and here's mine."

"Well," said Jerry accepting the coin reluctantly, "but I don't feel just right about it. You see, the milk don't cost nothin', and the butter don't cost nothin', and the bread was only five cents, and –"

"That bread was worth more than five cents to us," laughed Dan. "Here, take the money, and don't be silly." Dan held out his half dollar, and Bob and Tom followed suit. Jerry looked bewildered.

"What's that?" he asked.

"We're going to pay fifty cents," said Dan.

"Yes, but he paid it," replied Jerry, pointing his thumb at Nelson.

"He paid for himself, that's all."

"Gosh! I didn't mean you was to pay fifty cents apiece!" cried Jerry. "Fifty cents is more'n enough for the whole of you!"

They laughed derisively, and tried to get him to accept the rest of the money, but nothing they found to say had any effect.

"I been paid enough," said Jerry doggedly. "I'm much obliged, but I can't take no more. You didn't eat more'n a quarter's worth of victuals."



In the end they had to let him have his own way. As they were fixing their packs on to their shoulders Jerry approached Nelson. He held out a soiled envelope and a stump of pencil.

“Say, would you just write down the name of that school you was tellin’ about?” he asked awkwardly.

“Surely,” answered Nelson.

“Hillton Academy, Hillton, New York,” read Jerry unctuously. “Thanks. I’m goin’ there some day.”

“That’s fine,” answered Nelson heartily. “You’ll like it, I’m sure. Maybe you can get up this year while I’m there. I wish you would. I’d be glad to show you around.”

“This year? No, I couldn’t do that. You see, I’ll have to earn some money first; three hundred dollars, you said, didn’t you?”

“Oh, you mean you’re going to enter?” asked Nelson.

“Yes, I’m goin’ to school there. You see” – Jerry paused and looked thoughtfully out into the afternoon sunlight – “you see, mother always intended me to have an education, an’ – an’ I’m agoin’ to have it!” he added doggedly. “I’m goin’ to get out of here; there ain’t nothin’ here; I’m goin’ to get a place on a farm and earn some money. I guess one year there would help, wouldn’t it?”

“Yes, it would,” answered Nelson earnestly. “And I dare say if you got through one year, you’d find a way to get through the next. Lots of fellows pretty near work their way through school. Look here, Jerry, supposing I wanted to write to you, where could I direct a letter?”

“Dad gets his mail at Bakerville. I guess if you wrote my name and his name and sent it to Bakerville, I’d get it. I – I’d like first rate to get a letter from you. I ain’t never got very many letters.”

“Well, I’ll write you one,” said Nelson cheerfully. “I shall want to know how you’re getting along, so you must answer it. Will you?”

Jerry reddened under his tan.

“I guess so,” he muttered. “But I ain’t much of a writer. You see, I ain’t never seemed to have much time for writin’.”

“Of course not! But don’t let that trouble you. All ready, you fellows? Well, good-by, Jerry. We’re awfully much obliged to you. Hope we’ll see you again. And don’t forget that you’re going to make some money and enter Hillton.”

Jerry shook hands embarrassedly with each of the four and followed them down to the road.

“Good-by,” he called. “I wish you’d all come again. You been good to tell me about them schools. I – I had a mighty good time!”

They walked on in silence for some distance. Then, when the corner of the hotel had disappeared around a turn of the road, Tom broke out explosively.

“It’s a mu-mu-mu-mean sh-shame!” he said.

“What is?” they asked in chorus.

“Why, that fellow bu-bu-back there. He’d give his skin to gu-gu-gu-go to school, and instead of that he’ll have to stay there in that pu-pu-place all his life!”

“That’s so, Tommy,” said Bob. “It is hard luck. And he’s a good fellow, too, Jerry is. Take those overalls off him, and put some decent clothes on him, and he’d be a good-looking chap.”

“Yes, and he’s built well too,” added Dan. “He’d make the varsity eleven first pop.”

“He’s the sort of chap who’d be popular, I think,” said Nelson. “I wish – ”

“What do you wish?” asked Dan.

“I wish we could help him.”

There was an instant’s silence. Then Tommy fell over a stone and began to stutter violently.

“Lu-lu-lu-lu-lu – ” sputtered Tommy.

“Easy there,” cautioned Dan. “You’ll blow up in a minute.”

“Lu-lu-lu-lu-lu-lu – ”

“Shut up, you fellows,” said Dan indignantly, “and hear what he has to say. It’s going to be great!”

“Lu-lu-lu-let’s!”

“Eh?”

“How’s that, Tommy?”

“Once more, please.”

“Lu-lu-lu-let’s!” repeated Tom, very red of face.

“Oh, of course!”

“Twice that, Tommy!”

“Let’s what?”

“Lu-let’s help him!”

“Oh! I’d forgotten what we were talking about,” said Dan.

“Yes, that was about half a mile back,” said Bob.

“Let’s see if we can’t make up enough to send him to Hillton for a year,” went on Tommy. “He’d probably get a scholarship, and then if he found some work there, he’d make out all right the next year.”

“You’ve got a good heart, Tommy,” said Dan. “It’s a shame you don’t go to a decent school.”

Tom took no notice of the insult.

“Couldn’t we, Bob?” he asked.

“I don’t see how we could do it ourselves,” answered the older boy. “But we might get some one interested in him.”

“Three hundred isn’t awfully much,” said Nelson thoughtfully. “If we got our folks to give a fourth – ”

“That’s it!” cried Tom. “My dad will give a fourth. Why, it would be only seventy-five dollars!”

“A mere nothing,” murmured Dan. “One moment, please, and I will draw a check.” He flourished his hand through the air. “Pay to Jerry seventy-five and no one-hundredths dollars. Daniel H. F. Speede.’ There you are. Oh, not a word, I beg of you! It is nothing, nothing at all! A mere trifle!”

“And I think I can promise for my father,” Nelson was saying. “How about you, Bob?”

“I’ll ask. I think he will give it, although I can’t say sure. He’s had hard luck lately.”

“You’re in it, aren’t you, Dan?”

“Not a cent will I allow my father to pay to send a chap to

Hilton,” answered Dan indignantly. “If he wants to go to St. Eustace, now, why – ”

“But you see, Dan,” said Tom sweetly, “he wants an education.”

Dan chased Tom down the road and administered proper punishment. When order was restored the four discussed the matter seriously, and it was decided that Jerry was to go to Hilton.

“Of course,” said Nelson, “he couldn’t pass the entrance exams as he is now, but if he has a year’s schooling this year he ought to make it all right. And if he doesn’t have to work he can go to school. I suppose there’s a decent school around here somewhere?”

“Plenty of them,” answered Dan indignantly.

“If he needs some coaching next summer,” said Tom, “I’ll see that he gets it.”

“You might coach him yourself, Tommy,” suggested Dan.

“He said he was sixteen now,” pondered Bob. “That would make him seventeen when he entered. Rather old for the junior class, eh?”

“What of it?” asked Nelson. “I’ll see that he knows some good fellows, and I don’t believe any chap’s going to make fun of him when they know about him. Besides, maybe we can get him into the lower middle class.”

“That’s so,” said Tom. “Anyway, I’ll bet he’s the sort that can learn fast and remember things. Wish I could.”

“Here’s a romantic-looking well,” said Dan, “and I’m thirsty. That bacon was a trifle salt. Let’s go in and interview the old oaken bucket.”

The well stood in front of a little white house, and as they went up the walk a woman put her head around the corner of the open door. Dan doffed his cap gallantly.

“May we borrow a drink of water?” he asked politely.

The woman nodded and smiled, and Tom began winding the old-fashioned windlass. When the bucket – which turned out to be tin instead of oak – made its appearance the four dipped their cups.

“Fellow tramps,” declaimed Dan, “let us drink a health to Jerry. May he be a credit to Hillton!”

“May our plans succeed,” added Nelson.

“Here’s to Ju-ju-Jerry!” cried Tom.

“To our *protégé*!” laughed Bob.

“To our *protégé*!” they echoed, and drank merrily.

## **CHAPTER IV INTRODUCES MR. WILLIAM HOOPER AND AN IMPROMPTU SUPPER**

By the time they had regained the Jericho road they had walked nearly twelve miles, and it was close to six o'clock. It had been slow going for the last two hours, for the distance had begun to tell on them, especially on Dan and Tom. Nelson and Bob, who had been at Camp Chicora for ten weeks, were in pretty good training, but even they were tired.

"Now what?" asked Dan, as they paused at the junction of the two roads.

"Well, Jericho's a good mile and a half back, according to the map," answered Bob. "Suppose we find Bill Hooper's place and see if he will give us some supper. After that we can go on to Jericho and find a place to sleep."

"All right, but are you sure there's a hotel at Jericho?" said Nelson.

"No, but Bill will tell us, I guess."

"On to Bill's!" said Dan wearily.

So they turned to the right and made toward the nearest farmhouse, a half mile distant. It proved on nearer acquaintance

to be a prosperous-looking, well-kept place, with acres and acres of land to it and a big white house flanked by a much bigger red barn. They made their way up a lane under the branches of spreading elm trees, and knocked at the front door. Presently footsteps sounded inside and the portal swung open, revealing a thickset elderly man, whose morose, suspicious face was surrounded by a fringe of grizzled beard and whiskers.

“Well?” he demanded.

“Good evening,” said Bob. “Could you let us have something to eat, sir? We would be glad to pay for it.”

“This isn’t a hotel,” said the man.

“Oh, then you aren’t Mr. William Hooper?”

“Yes, that’s me. Some one send you here?”

“Yes, sir. We met a man down at Locust Park who said he was sure you’d – ”

“What was his name?”

“Er – what was it, Dan?”

“Abner Wade,” answered Dan promptly.

The name exerted a remarkable effect on Mr. William Hooper. His face flushed darkly and his hands clinched. Bob fell back from the doorway in alarm.

“Abner Wade, eh?” growled Mr. Hooper. “Abner Wade sent ye, did he? I might have known it was him! Now you make tracks, the whole parcel of ye! If you ain’t outside my grounds in two minutes I’ll set the dog on ye! Here, Brutus! Here, Brutus!”

“*Et tu, Brute!*” muttered Dan as he fled down the path.



At the gate they brought up, laughing, and looked warily back for the dog. Much to their relief he wasn't in sight.

"Don't believe he's got any dog," said Tommy.

"Don't see why he should have," said Dan. "He's ugly enough himself to scare anyone away."

"I'd like to see that Abner Wade just about two minutes," said Nelson. "Nice game he put up on us!"

"Yes. Old Bill hates him like poison, evidently," answered Bob. "He's an awful joker, Abe is!"

"What'll we do?" asked Tom.

"Foot it to Jericho, I guess," said Bob. "It's only about a mile." Tom groaned dismally.

"When I get back," said Dan darkly, "I'll bet I'll tell that doctor of mine what I think of his old walking!"

"Here's some one coming," whispered Nelson. "Let's light out."

"It's a woman," said Bob. "Guess it's the old codger's wife. Let's wait."

She was a stout, kind-faced woman, and her hurried walk from the house had left her somewhat out of breath.

"Boys," she gasped, "I'm real sorry about this. And I guess you didn't mean any harm."

"Harm?" echoed Bob. "No'm, we just wanted some supper and were willing to pay for it. A man down at Locust Park –"

"Yes, I know. That was the trouble. You see, Abner Wade and my husband ain't been on speaking terms for ten years and

more. Abner sold William a horse that wasn't just what he made it out to be; it died less'n a week afterwards; and William went to law about it, and Abner kept appealing or something, and it ain't never come to a settlement, and I guess it never will. If you hadn't mentioned Abner Wade I guess it would have been all right. I'm real sorry."

"Oh, it's all right, ma'am," Bob hastened to assure her. "I dare say we can find something to eat at the hotel in Jericho."

"There isn't any hotel there, far as I know," said Mrs. Hooper, shaking her head.

Dan whistled softly, and even Bob looked discouraged.

"I guess it's the cold, cold ground for us to-night," said Dan. "If I only had a ham sandwich – !"

Mrs. Hooper cast a glance up the lane.

"Maybe you boys wouldn't mind sleeping in the barn," she suggested doubtfully.

"Indeed we wouldn't," said Bob.

"That would be fun," assented Nelson.

"Anyway, I don't see what better you can do," said the woman. "It's a good five miles to Samoset, and I don't know of any hotel nearer than that. You go around here by that wall and cross over to the barn back of the garden. You'll find the little door at the side unlocked. There's plenty of hay there, and I guess you can be right comfortable. As soon as I can I'll bring you out some supper."

Tom let out a subdued whoop of joy, and Dan did a double

shuffle in the grass.

"It's mighty good of you," said Bob warmly.

"Yes'm; we're awfully much obliged," echoed Nelson.

"We'll be mighty glad to pay for it," Dan chimed in.

"Well, I guess there won't be anything to pay," said Mrs. Hooper with a smile. "Now you run along, and I'll come soon as I can. William's kind of worked up, and I guess he'd better not know about it. I want you to promise me one thing, though."

"Yes'm. What is it?" asked Nelson.

"Not to light any matches."

"Yes, we promise."

"All right. Run along now, and keep out of sight." Mrs. Hooper nodded good-naturedly, and turned back toward the house. Dan struck a dramatic attitude.

"Supper!" he cried.

"Shut up, and come along," said Bob.

"Well," said Dan, "I guess here's where we get the laugh on Abe. Only – well, if I ever have a chance to square things with him – !"

Words failed him, and with a sigh he followed the others down the road for a distance, over a fence, and so along a wall that skirted the truck garden. The little door was unlocked, as Mrs. Hooper had said it would be, and they stumbled into the twilight of the big barn. The only sound was the occasional stamping of a horse and the steady *crunch-crunch* of the cattle.

"Fortunate beasts," whispered Nelson.

Overhead the mows were filled with fragrant hay, and near at hand a ladder led up to it. From a window high up at one end of the building a flood of red light entered from the sunset sky.

“Shall we go up there now?” asked Nelson.

“No. Let’s stay here until we get something to eat,” said Bob.

So they made themselves comfortable, Dan and Nelson finding seats on some sacks of grain, and Bob and Tom climbing into the back of a wagon and sprawling out on the floor of it, hands under heads.

“I’ll bet no one will have to sing me asleep to-night,” said Dan with a luxurious sigh. “Just wait until I strike that hay up there!”

Conversation was desultory for the next half hour, for all four of the boys were dead tired. Tommy even dropped off to sleep once, though he denied the fact indignantly. It seemed a long while before Mrs. Hooper appeared, but when she did, her burden more than atoned for the period of waiting. She carried a big tray, and it was piled high. There was cold mutton, a pitcher of hot tea, milk, stacks of bread and plenty of butter, preserved pears, a whole custard pie, and lots of cake. Tom was almost tearful. Mrs. Hooper set the tray down on a box and disappeared into the harness room, to return in a moment with a lighted lantern.

“There,” she said; “now I guess you can see what you’re eating. When you get through, set the tray here by the door, and I’ll get it later. And put out the lantern carefully. Don’t leave any sparks about. In the morning you stay up in the hay until I call you. My

husband will be out in the field by seven and then you can come to the house and have some breakfast. Good night.”

“Good night, ma’am,” they answered with full hearts and fuller mouths. “We’re awfully much obliged to you.”

“Yes’m. You’ve saved our lives,” said Dan.

Mrs. Hooper surveyed them smilingly from the door.

“Well, it’s real nice to see you boys eat,” she said. “I just couldn’t bear to have you go tramping around so late without any supper. And William wouldn’t have wanted it either, only – if it hadn’t been for Abner Wade, you see.”

“Yes’m!”

“Good night, Mrs. Hooper!”

“Thank you very much!”

Then the door closed behind her, and they were left to the enjoyment of their supper. And when I say enjoyment I know what I’m talking about!

“Say, fellows,” said Dan presently, when the edge of his appetite had been dulled by many slices of cold meat and bread and butter, “say, do you suppose we’re always going to eat in barns on this trip?”

“Much I’d care if it was always as good as this,” answered Nelson, dividing the pie into four generous quarters with his knife. And the others agreed. When only crumbs remained on the tray they blew out the lantern, set the remains of the feast beside the door, and climbed up into the loft. There, burrowing luxuriously in the sweet-smelling hay, they fell asleep almost

instantly.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DESCRIBES A SECOND ENCOUNTER WITH MR. WADE**

At a little after eight the next morning they were on their way again. Nine hours of sound, refreshing slumber had worked a change. Dan no longer held any grudge against the doctor, while Tom, cheered and comforted by the biggest kind of a breakfast, was once more his optimistic self. They had overwhelmed Mrs. Hooper with their gratitude, had made friends with Brutus, a benevolent and toothless setter, and had left the farmhouse with sentiments of regret. For, as Tom said, who could tell when they would again find such coffee and such corn muffins! Brutus had insisted upon accompanying them as far as the farm limits, and had parted from them with tears in his eyes; at least, we have Dan's word for it. Nelson became philosophic.

"It just shows," he said vaguely, "that you can't always tell at first what you're up against. Some persons are like some dogs, their bark is worse than their bite."

"Sure," agreed Dan. "Some persons haven't any teeth."

It was the jolliest sort of a September morning. Once or twice they imagined they could catch glimpses of the ocean, sparkling and sun-flecked in the distance. Whether they actually saw it or not, they were constantly reminded of it by the fresh, salty breeze

that caressed their faces.

“Why can’t we go along the shore instead of here where we are?” asked Nelson.

“That’s so,” cried Dan.

Bob produced his map, and they sat on the top rail of a fence and studied it.

“After we leave Samoset,” said Bob, “we can turn down here and go to Sisset. There must be a hotel there, and we can spend the night. Then – ”

“Maybe we can find a barn,” suggested Tom.

“Then in the morning we’ll go on to Seaville or some place along there.”

“But, look here,” objected Dan; “we’re a heap nearer the north shore than we are the south.”

“Yes, but what we want is the real ocean,” said Bob. “We can come home by the Sound shore.”

“Just as you say,” answered Dan. “Meanwhile, let’s get to Samoset before dinner time.”

They reached that town at a little after ten o’clock, and found it quite a lively place. There were two hotels, and although Tom held out awhile for a comfortable barn, they finally decided to go to the Fairview House and have dinner. After registering, they left their packs in the office, washed and spruced up, and went out to see the city. The main street was well lined with stores and well filled with vehicles.

“This is the first thing we’ve struck,” declared Dan, “that looks



like a town. Let's buy something."

So they roamed from store to store, looking into every window, and speculating on the desirability of the articles shown. Tom bought a pound of peanut brittle which, on close examination, proved to be much older than supposed. Tom declared disgustedly that it wasn't what it was cracked up to be, a pun that elicited only groans from his companions. Bob purchased six souvenir post cards, and insisted on returning to the hotel to address them. So the others accompanied him, and, while he retired to the writing room, sat themselves down on the top step in the sunlight and attacked Tom's candy.

"Nothing like candy," Dan declared, "to give a fellow an appetite for dinner."

"That may be true of some candy," answered Nelson, "but –"

"Hello!" cried Dan excitedly. "Look there!"

The others followed the direction of his gaze, and saw a tired-looking sorrel horse coming up the street, drawing a battered buggy, in which sat a single occupant. The occupant was Mr. Abner Wade. The boys watched eagerly. Opposite the hotel Mr. Wade drew up to the sidewalk, jumped out, and tied the horse to a post. While doing so, he glanced across and saw them. A smile spread itself over his features, and he waved his hand.

"Howdy do?" he called.

"How are you, sir?" responded Dan cordially. Nelson and Tom glanced about at him in surprise. "A nice morning, Mr. Wade."

"Fine, fine!" agreed the farmer. "Well, you're getting along,

I see.”

“Yes, sir, thank you. And, by the way, we’re much obliged for that tip you gave us. We called on Mr. Hooper, and spent the night there. We were certainly treated well, and we’re very much obliged to you, sir, for sending us there.”

Mr. Wade looked surprised.

“That so? Er – did you tell William I sent you?”

“Yes, indeed, and he couldn’t do too much to us – I mean for us,” answered Dan gravely.

“Humph!” muttered Mr. Wade doubtfully. “Speak of me, did he?”

“Oh, yes, sir! Quite enthusiastically. And we fully agreed with everything he said,” replied Dan genially.

Mr. Wade stared hard for a moment. Then:

“Well, I must be getting on,” he said. “Good luck to you.”

“Thank you, sir; the same to you. Hope you’ll have a pleasant trip home.”

It is doubtful if Mr. Wade heard the latter part of the remark, for he was entering the grocery store in front of which he had hitched. Dan sprang up.

“You fellows stay here,” he said softly, “and watch for him. Don’t let him out of your sight. I’ll be back in a minute.”

He hurried down the street and around a corner on which hung a livery-stable sign. He was soon back.

“Still there?” he asked.

“Yes,” answered Nelson eagerly. “What are you going to do?”

"I'm going to get even with the old codger," answered Dan grimly, as he sat down again on the step.

"Where'd you go?" asked Tom.

"Livery stable. Borrowed a carriage wrench. There he comes!"

Mr. Wade issued from the grocery, cast a glance toward his horse, and then turned up the street. They watched him until he had disappeared into the bank, half a block away. Then Dan arose and, followed by his companions, sauntered across the street. For a moment he glanced carelessly in the grocery-store window. Then, quite as carelessly, he sauntered over to the buggy. There, with Tom and Nelson in front of him and apparently in earnest conversation, he drew the wrench from his pocket and, unobserved, applied it to the nut of the front wheel. Presently the trio sauntered along a few steps until Dan was beside the back wheel. A moment later they walked slowly away down the street, crossed and returned to the hotel. As he walked, from Dan's jacket pocket came a clanking sound as the steel wrench jostled a couple of iron nuts. When they had regained the porch Dan's look of innocence gave place to a grin of delight and satisfaction.

"You watch for him. If he comes call me. I'm going to get Bob and our knapsacks."

"What do you want the knapsacks for?" asked Tom suspiciously.

"Because it's more than likely that we'll want to leave here in a hurry, my son," answered Dan gravely.

“Without our dinner?” cried Tom.

“What is dinner to revenge?” asked Dan sweetly.

“But – but – ” stammered Tom.

“S-sh!” cautioned Dan. “Not a word above a whisker!”

“But look here, Dan,” said Nelson a bit anxiously, “aren’t you afraid the old duffer’ll get hurt? Maybe the horse will run away!”

“Have you seen the horse?” asked Dan. “Now keep a watch up the street and don’t forget to call me if he comes. I wouldn’t miss it for a thousand dollars!”

“Just the same, I don’t quite like it,” said Nelson when Dan had disappeared.

“And no dinner!” moaned Tom. “Why couldn’t we let the old idiot alone until we’d had something to eat?”

Dan returned with the knapsacks and they awaited developments. Presently Bob joined them, his hands bearing eloquent proof of his recent occupation. They didn’t tell Bob what was up for fear he might forbid them to go on with it. Ten minutes passed. The dinner gong rang and Tom looked restlessly and mutinous.

“I’m going to have my dinner,” he muttered.

“All right,” answered Bob; “let’s go in.”

“Oh, just wait a minute,” begged Dan. “We’ll have more appetite if we sit here awhile longer. By the way, we saw our old friend, Mr. Abner Wade, awhile ago, Bob.”

“Yes, you did,” said Bob incredulously.

“Honest! That’s his horse and buggy over there now.”

Bob had to hear about it and ten minutes more passed. Then Tom mutinied openly.

"I'm going to have my dinner," he said doggedly. "I'm starved. You fellows can sit here if you want to, but – "

"Here he comes!" cried Nelson softly.

Tom forgot his hunger, and the expression of rebellious dissatisfaction on his countenance gave way to a look of pleasurable anticipation. Dan and Nelson watched silently the approach of Mr. Abner Wade.

"Look here," demanded Bob suspiciously, "what's up, you chaps?"

There was no answer, for Mr. Wade was untying his sorrel steed. Tom giggled hysterically. In climbed the farmer.

"Get ap," he commanded, and the sorrel horse moved off leisurely. The boys held their breath. Farther and farther away went Mr. Wade – and nothing happened! Dan began to look uneasy. Tom's pale gray eyes opened wider and wider. And then, just when it seemed that the conspirators were doomed to disappointment, Nemesis overtook Mr. Abner Wade.

Suddenly, without warning, the front wheel on the far side of the buggy started off on its own hook and went rolling toward the sidewalk. Reaching the curb, it toppled over and fell on to the foot of a passer-by. The passer-by set up a cry of alarm – possibly of anguish. At the next moment the rear wheel, indignant, perhaps, at the desertion of its mate, lay down flat in the street. And simultaneously over went the buggy and out slid Mr. Abner

Wade. The sorrel horse, evincing no alarm, stopped short in his tracks. And the crowd gathered, hiding the astonished and wrathful face of Mr. Wade and stilling the cries of the gentleman who had come in contact with the front wheel.

Over on the hotel porch four boys, doubled up with laughter, staggered into the office, and, led by Dan, passed hurriedly out of a rear door. And as they went, from the dining room came an appealing odor of cooked viands. Out on the side street Dan dodged into a livery stable and rejoined them quickly.

“Let’s go this way,” he gurgled. “I don’t know where it takes us to, but – ”

“Did you do that?” demanded Bob.

“Yes; wasn’t it rich? We didn’t tell you for fear you wouldn’t let us do it.”

“You chump!” answered Bob. “Why, I’d have helped if you’d told me!”

“It was simply gu-gu-great!” stammered Tom. “Only – say, did you fellows smell that dinner?”

“Yes, my son,” answered Dan, “but there’s no dinner for us just now. Us for the broad highway!”

A few minutes later they had left the village behind and were passing between rolling meadows. Dan took two small articles from his pocket and shied them, one after another, into a cornfield.

“What were those?” asked Bob.

“Nuts,” answered Dan. “Nuts from the hubs of Abe’s chariot.”

"I suppose he can get more," said Nelson regretfully.

"Yes, but it'll take him some time, and they'll charge him for them. And I'll bet that'll nearly break his heart. Oh, he's a great joker, is Abe, but there are others!"

"Where's this road taking us to?" asked Tom.

"I don't know, but not toward Sisset, I'll bet," said Dan. "Pull out that lying map of yours, Bob."

But the map didn't help much, since they didn't know which of the numerous roads they were traveling.

"Let's see that old compass of yours, Tommy," demanded Dan. "What's the matter with it? Say, it's gone crazy!"

"Get out! You don't know how to use it," said Tom. "Give it here." He tapped it smartly on his knee, observed it gravely a moment, studied the position of the sun, and then announced, "There! That's north!"

"Then we're going back home," said Nelson discouragedly, "straight back toward New York!"

"Pshaw! We can't be," said Bob. "Here, let's see. Get out, you idiots, you're looking at the wrong end of the needle. There's north and we're going northeast by east."

"Ship ahoy!" murmured Dan. "Sail off the weather bow, sir."

"Then if we keep on we'll strike Barrington?" asked Tom.

"Yes, and that means a good hotel, Tommy, and a good dinner. It's rather a joke on us, though," continued Bob. "We had decided to go to the south shore, and here we are only three or four miles from the Sound!"

"We're not that far from water," said Nelson, pointing to the map. "Here's Old Spring Harbor right forninst us here."

"That's right. Well, say, then we must be on this road here," said Bob, pointing. "If we are, we ought to strike a bridge pretty soon where we cross this creek, or whatever it is."

But their doubt was set at rest a moment later when a man in a dogcart slowed down at their hail and gave them all the information they desired.

"This is the Barrington road," he said, "and Barrington station is about two miles. The town is three miles from here, straight ahead. There are several hotels there and lots of boarding houses."

"That man's a regular cyclopedia," said Dan when the dogcart was out of sight.

"He's a bearer of good tidings," said Tom thoughtfully.

A mile farther on hunger overcame Tom's discretion and he partook of some half-ripe apples, against the advice of the others. But although the others viewed him apprehensively all the rest of the way, Tom showed no ill effects, although he had to own up to an uneasiness. The last two miles of the distance was in sight of the water, and once they crossed a broad creek which farther inland widened into a small lake. They rested there awhile and it was close on to four o'clock when, tired and hungry and warm, they tramped into the town of Barrington and sought the nearest hotel. Ten minutes later, after they had washed up, Dan proposed going for a swim. Nelson and Bob consented, but Tom was not to



be persuaded. He sank into an armchair in the lobby in full sight of a pair of folding doors which opened into the dining room.

“You fellows go ahead,” he said grimly. “I’m going to stay right here.”

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **WITNESSES A RESCUE AND AN ADDITION TO THE PARTY**

After supper Dan reminded the others that they hadn't written to their folks about Jerry and they all sought the writing room. Those were the first letters home, and, of course, there was a good deal to write. None of them had any trouble in filling eight pages except Tom. Tom wasn't much of a letter writer, anyway, and then, besides, he had eaten a great deal of dinner and was inclined toward slumber. But he managed to make a strong plea for Jerry Hinkley and to assure his folks that he was having "a dandy time." After that he went fast asleep with his head on the blotting pad.

"Now, look here, you fellows," said Nelson, the next morning, "of course this thing of running around the island and not knowing where you're going to fetch up is very exciting and all that, but it's risky. First thing we know we'll find ourselves back in Long Island City. I move that we fix on some definite place and go there."

"That's what I think," said Bob. "Let's do it."

So they studied the map again and decided to keep along the north shore for a while and then strike across the island for the ocean side. Meanwhile the town of Kingston was settled on as

their immediate destination. Kingston was some eighteen miles distant and they thought they could reach it that evening. They were on their way again at eight o'clock, for the day promised to be hot toward noon and they hoped to be able to reach Meadowville in time for luncheon and lay off there for a couple of hours.

The Sound, blue and calm in the morning sunlight, was on their left and remained in sight most of the time. Once or twice their way led along the very edge of it. They had put some five or six miles behind them at a quarter to ten and were approaching a place where the road crossed a bridge. On the right a river wound back through a salt marsh. To the left, after running under the bridge, it emptied itself into a little bay. Near the bridge were a number of boat and bath houses, one or two cottages, and some floats and landings. On one of the landings a number of boys and men were congregated, and as the four drew near, their curiosity was aroused. Half the occupants of the float were lying on their stomachs, apparently trying to see under it, while the rest were walking excitedly about.

"Come on," said Dan. "Let's see what's up."

So they quickened their pace, turned off from the road, and made their way to the float.

"What's the matter?" asked Dan.

"There's a dog under here," explained a youth. "We were throwing pieces of wood for him and he was fetchin' them out. Then, first thing we knew, the current took him somehow and

sucked him under the float. He's there now. Hear him?"

They listened and presently there came a faint, smothered yelp from under the planks almost at their feet. By that time half the inhabitants of the float had joined them, eager to tell all about it.

"How long has he been under there?" asked Bob.

"Ten minutes."

"Five minutes."

"Three minutes."

The answers were varied. The boys hurried over to the side. The tide was running out hard and the river, flowing through the narrow culvert under the bridge, made a strong current which swirled against the float until it tugged at its moorings.

"Here's where he went under," explained one of their informants. "We were throwing sticks for him out there and he was having a bully time. He was a plucky little chap. Then the current took him and he went down. And next thing he was yelping like thunder underneath here."

The float, inch-thick boards spiked to big logs, rested in the water so that the floor was some six inches above the surface. The dog had apparently come up underneath, was penned in by the logs, and was managing to keep his head out of water by hard swimming.

"What kind of a dog is it?" asked Nelson.

"Fox terrier, I guess."

"Wire-haired terrier."

"Irish terrier."

“Well, he’s small, is he?” asked Bob impatiently.

“Yes.” They all agreed as to that. Bob turned to the others.

“Who’s going under?” he asked.

“Let me go,” said Tom. But Dan had already thrown off his coat and kicked off his shoes.

“Dan’s a better diver than you, Tom,” said Bob. “Let him try it first. I guess there’s plenty of breathing space under there, Dan.”

“Sure,” answered Dan, struggling out of his shirt. “Anyone heard the poor little chap lately?”

No one had, but at that moment, as though in answer to Dan’s inquiry, a faint, gurgling sound came from under the floor.

“There he is,” said Nelson. “I’ll stand here and call to you, Dan. You want to go under about twelve feet.”

“All right,” said Dan. “If I don’t show up inside of half a minute and you don’t hear from me, one of you chaps had better come in.”

“All right,” answered Bob; “I’ll be ready.”

Then Dan dropped feet foremost over the edge of the float and went down out of sight in the rushing green water. A moment after those leaning over the edge caught a glimpse of a kicking leg. Then several seconds passed. The crowd on the float listened breathlessly. At last, from under the boards and a few feet away, came Dan’s voice.

“All right, Nel! Where are you?”

“Here!” called Nelson, his mouth at one of the cracks.

“Must be the next section,” answered Dan’s muffled voice.

“Wait a minute.”

There was a faint splashing sound, silence, and again came Dan’s voice.

“I’ve got him!” he called. “I’m coming out the other side.”

A moment later Dan’s wet head and a half-drowned wire-haired terrier appeared at the same moment. The dog was held out at arm’s length and Bob seized him. Others gave their hands to Dan and he was quickly pulled out on to the float.

“Gee, that water’s cold!” he gasped. “How’s the dog? He was just about gone when I got to him. He had managed to get one paw into a crevice in a log, but his head was under water half the time, I guess. Who’s got him?”

“Here he is,” said Bob. “He’s all right. About scared to death, I guess, and pretty well soaked.”

“Maybe he’s swallowed some water,” suggested Tom. “Hold him upside down a minute.”

Bob obeyed and nearly half a pint of salt water streamed out of the dog’s mouth. After that he seemed much better, but was content for the moment to lie in Bob’s arms and gasp and shiver, looking up the while into Bob’s face with an expression which surely meant gratitude. He was a forlorn little thing when they finally set him down and he feebly shook himself. The hair was plastered close to his body, and his inch of tail wagged feebly.

“Who’s dog is he?” asked Nelson.

“I don’t know,” said one of the throng. “He’s been around here for a couple of days. Don’t believe he belongs to anyone. There

isn't anything on the collar; I looked."

Some one brought Dan a couple of towels from one of the bath houses and he dried himself as best he could. Afterwards he trotted about the float a minute and along the edge of the little beach.

"Say, he's a plucky one, he is," said one of the youths to Nelson.

"Who's that?" asked Nelson.

"Why, that friend of yours; him that got the dog out."

"Oh, yes, Dan's plucky," answered Nelson. "But that wasn't any stunt for Dan. That's one of the easiest things he does." And he turned away, leaving the youth staring hard.

"Well, let's get on," said Dan, tying the last shoe lace.

So they started back toward the road, leaving the crowd, which had grown steadily for the last five minutes, looking admiringly at Dan's broad back. When they had reached the road, there was a shout from the float and they looked back.

"Hey! There comes the dog!" some one called.

And sure enough, there was the terrier close behind them. He apparently had no doubts as to his welcome. His tiny tail was wagging busily as he went up to Bob, sniffed at his legs, and then turned and made straight for Dan, a few feet away.

"Hello," said Dan; "you remember me, do you?"

For answer the dog placed his front paws on Dan's knee and looked inquiringly up into his face.

"I believe he knows you rescued him," said Bob.

"Of course he does," said Dan. "You've got sense, haven't you, Towser?"

The terrier sneezed and wagged his tail frantically, pawing at Dan's knee.

"Hello; catching cold, are you?" Dan picked him up and snuggled him in his arms. "That won't do. Mustn't catch cold, you know." The dog licked Dan's face and wriggled ecstatically.

"He seems to like you," said Tom. "Dogs are funny creatures."

"He's a nice little dog," said Dan as he dropped him gently to the ground again. "I wouldn't mind having him."

"Wonder if he really is a stray?" said Nelson.

"Well, come on, fellows; it's getting late," said Bob, "and we're only a little more than halfway to Meadowville."

"Now you run along home, Mr. Dog," said Dan, shaking his finger at the terrier. The terrier seemed to understand, for his manner became at once sorrowful and dejected. He watched them go off without a wag of his tail. Presently Dan stole a backward glance. The terrier was stealing along behind them some twenty yards back. Dan said nothing. A few minutes later Bob and Nelson became aware of something trotting along in the rear. They turned. The terrier stopped with one foot in the air. His tail wagged conciliatingly.

"Go home!" said Bob sternly.

The dog dropped his head and began to sniff at the ground as though the last thing in his mind was following them. Nelson and Tom laughed.



“Oh, let him come,” muttered Dan.

“It wouldn’t be fair,” said Bob firmly. “He must belong to some one and they’d probably feel bad if they lost him.”

“All right,” said Dan. “You get along home, doggie.”

But doggie was busy now following an imaginary scent along the side of the road.

“Throw a stone at him,” said Tom.

“You do it if you want to,” said Bob.

But Tom didn’t seem to want to. Finally Bob picked up an imaginary missile and made a motion toward the dog. He didn’t run, but paused and stared at them with an expression of such surprise and sorrow that Bob’s heart failed him.

“Oh, come on,” he muttered. “He won’t follow.”

Five minutes later when they reached a turn in the road they looked back. There stood the terrier where they had left him, still looking after their retreating forms. The next moment he was lost to sight.

“He was a nice little dog,” said Dan regretfully.

They reached Meadowville without further adventure just before noon, having made, in spite of the delay, a very creditable morning record. There was no choice in the matter of hotels, since the village boasted of but one – a small, white-painted, old-fashioned hostelry standing with its front steps flush with the village street. A long porch ran the length of the house, and a dozen armchairs invited to rest. But the proprietor informed them that dinner was ready and so they made at once for the

washroom, removed the dust of the highway, and subsequently were conducted into the dining room, already well filled. They had just finished their soup – all save Tom, who had requested a second helping – when the proprietor appeared before them.

“Say, did any of you boys bring a dog?” he asked.

“No,” and they shook their heads.

“All right. There’s one out here and I can’t get rid of him. I didn’t know but he might belong to some of you. I never saw the cur before.”

“Here! Hold on,” cried Dan, jumping up. “Let’s see him.”

They all trooped out into the office. There, nosing excitedly about, was the wire-haired terrier. When he caught sight of them he stopped, crouched to the floor, and wagged his bit of tail violently. They broke into a laugh; all save Dan.

“It’s all right,” said Dan decisively. “That’s my dog.”

He strode over to him. The terrier rolled over on to his back, stuck all four feet toward the ceiling, and awaited annihilation. But it didn’t come. Instead, Dan took him into his arms and faced the others.

“I guess he can stay with us now, can’t he?” he asked.

“You bet,” said Bob.

## CHAPTER VII

### WHEREIN BARRY DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF

They rested until a little after two o'clock, and then, the intensest heat of a very hot day having passed, they took up their journey again, the party of four now having become a party of five.

The fifth member had remained on the porch while the boys had eaten their dinners. There had been some compulsion about it, as a cord had been tied to his collar and then to the railing. But after the first minute or two, during which he had evidently labored under the impression that his newly found friends were about to escape him again, he had accepted the situation philosophically and had even dozed once or twice there in the sun. He looked very much better after he had been released and, surrounded by the boys, had eaten a hearty dinner. The sun had dried his coat, and the food had apparently restored his self-respect. A man in whipcord, probably a groom or stableman, paused on his way out of the hotel.

"That's a nice-looking dog you've got there," he observed after a silent contemplation of the terrier. "Where'd you get him, if it's no offense, sir?"

Dan hesitated. Then:

“Over near Barrington,” he answered uneasily.

“Thoroughbred, I guess,” said the other questioningly.

Dan nodded carelessly. The man stooped and snapped his fingers.

“Here, boy, come see me. What’s his name, sir?”

“Er – Barry,” stammered Dan.

“Here, Barry!” called the man. But the terrier acted just as though he’d never heard his name before.

“He looks a lot like Forest Lad, the dog that won so many prizes in New York last winter,” continued the man. “But he’s a bit thinner across the breast than him, I guess. A fine-looking dog, though. Want to sell him?”

“No, I don’t think so,” answered Dan.

“Well, I don’t want him myself, but I guess I could tell you where you could find a purchaser, and not very far off.”

“He’s not for sale,” said Dan.

“Well, I don’t know as I’d want to sell him if he was mine,” said the other as he moved off.

“Look here, what did you call him Barry for?” asked Nelson.

“Gee! I had to call him something,” said Dan, “and that’s the first thing I thought of. I didn’t want that fellow to think I’d stolen the dog.”

“Well, but what’s Barry mean? What made you think of that?”

“I don’t know,” answered Dan, puzzled.

“I do,” said Tom. “You’d just told the man you got him at Barrington; see? Barry – Barrington.”

"I guess that was it. Mr. Barry, of Barrington. Well, that isn't such a bad name."

"It's easy to say," responded Bob. "Here, Barry."

But the terrier only wagged his tail in a friendly way.

"He'll learn his name quick enough," said Dan. "I wonder, though, what his real name is."

"Let's see if we can find out," suggested Bob. "We'll call him all the names we can think of and see if he answers to any of them."

So they started in, and the terrier, evidently at a loss to know what it all meant, laid himself down in the sunlight and observed them with puzzled eyes. They tried all the usual names they could think of, and then they started on unusual ones. But when Tom got to Launcelot, Dan interfered.

"Look here, that will do for you," he said. "I'm not going to have my dog called any such names as that. You'll be calling him Reginald next, I suppose!"

"What name was that that fellow got off?" questioned Nelson. "Forest Lad, was it?"

"Yes; maybe that's his name. Let's try it. Here, Forest Lad!"

But the terrier only yawned.

"Not the same," said Nelson. "He doesn't just look like a dog who would win prizes, does he?"

"Why not?" demanded Dan indignantly. "He's a mighty fine-looking dog, I tell you!"

"Even if his name is Barry," laughed Tom.

“Well, we’ve given him plenty of chances to choose a name to suit himself,” said Bob, “and he hasn’t done it. So I guess Barry will have to do.”

“It’s a good name,” said Dan stoutly. “Isn’t it, Barry?”

Barry wagged his tail. That seemed to settle it.

When, presently, they took the road again, Barry remained at Dan’s heels for the first half mile or so, like a well-trained dog. But when, after one or two experimental trips into the bushes, Barry found that his new master was not a strict disciplinarian, he cut loose. After that he was everywhere. Over walls, through fences, into this field and into that, chasing birds, scratching for field mice, and treeing squirrels, Barry had, as Dan put it, the time of his innocent young life. But he always came instantly when called, no matter how far away he might be; came like a small white streak of lightning, tongue out and eyes sparkling merrily. He was a source of constant entertainment, and the seven miles which lay between Meadowville and Kingston passed underfoot almost before they knew it. As they came in sight of the latter town a brisk shower began. For an hour past the clouds had been gathering, big and heavy, overhead, and now the thunder began to crash. Luckily they had but a short distance to go and they covered it in record time, Barry, barking hysterically, leading the flying column by six yards. They found a temporary refuge in a livery stable on the edge of town, and the terrier put in an exciting ten minutes hunting rats in the stalls. The stable keeper, a large, good-natured man, offered Dan \$10 on the spot

for the dog and when that offer was declined raised the price to \$15. Dan was highly pleased at the compliment paid to Barry, but refused to part with him.

Presently the shower held up for a moment and they thanked their host and scampered for the nearest hotel. Here they met with difficulties. The proprietor didn't take dogs. Dan argued and offered to pay extra, but the hotel man was obdurate. There was nothing for it but to try elsewhere, and so out they went again in a pelting rain and hurried down the street to the next hostelry. Here Barry was more welcome; he could sleep in the smoking room or in the stable. Dan decided in favor of the smoking room, borrowed a piece of cord from the clerk, and hitched Barry to the leg of a writing table. After supper, the rain having held up again, they went out and purchased a leather leash. Barry took very kindly to this and was for chewing it up until Dan explained the purpose of it to him. They played cards in the smoking room until bedtime, and then, having made Barry comfortable for the night on a piece of bagging, went to their rooms and, as was becoming after an eighteen-mile tramp, fell promptly asleep.

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