

Penrose Margaret

**The Campfire Girls on Station
Island: or, The Wireless from
the Steam Yacht**



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Margaret Penrose The Campfire Girls on Station Island; Or, The Wireless from the Steam Yacht

CHAPTER I – “O-BE- JOYFUL” HENRIETTA

Jessie Norwood, gaily excited, came bounding into her sitting room waving a slit envelope over her sunny head, her face alight. She wore a pretty silk slip-on, a sports skirt, and silk hose and oxfords that her chum, Amy Drew, pronounced “the very swellest of the swell.”

Beside Amy in the sitting room was Nell Stanley, busy with sewing in her lap. The two visitors looked up in some surprise at Jessie’s boisterous entrance, for usually she was the demurest of creatures.

“What’s happened to the family now, Jess?” asked Amy, tossing back her hair. “Who has written you a billet-doux?”

“Nobody has written to me,” confessed Jessie. “But just think, girls! Here is another five dollars by mail for the hospital fund.”

Jessie had been acting as her mother’s secretary of late, and

Mrs. Norwood was at the head of the committee that had in charge the raising of the foundation fund for the New Melford Women's and Children's Hospital.

"That radio concert panned out wonderfully," Amy said. "If I'd done it all myself it could have been no better," and she grinned elfishly.

"We did a lot to help," said Nell seriously. "And I think it was just wonderful, our singing into the broadcasting horns."

"This five dollars," said Jessie, soberly, "was contributed by girls who earned the money themselves for the hospital. That is why I am saving the envelope and letter. I am going to write them and congratulate them for mother, when I get time."

"Never was such a success as that radio concert," Amy said proudly. "I have received no public resolution of thanks for suggesting it –"

"I am not sure that you suggested it any more than the rest of us," laughed Jessie.

"I like that!"

"I feel that I had a share in it. The Reverend says it was the most successful money-raising affair he ever had anything to do with," laughed Nell. "And he, as a minister, has had a broad experience." The motherless Nell Stanley, young as she was, was the very efficient head of the household in the parsonage. She always spoke affectionately of her father as "the Reverend."

"Yes. It is a week now, and the money continues to come in," Jessie agreed. "But now that the excitement is over –"

“We should look for more excitement,” said Amy promptly. “Excitement is the breath of Life. Peace is stagnation. The world moves, and all that. If we get into a rut we are soon ready for the Old Lady’s Home over beyond Chester.”

“I’m sure,” returned Jessie, a little hotly, “we are always doing something, Amy. We do not stagnate.”

“Sure!” scoffed her chum, in continued vigor of speech. “We go swizzing along like a snail! ‘Fast’ is the name for us – tied *fast* to a post. Molasses running up hill in January is about our natural pace here in Roselawn.”

Nell burst into gay laughter. “Go on! Keep it up! Your metaphors are wonderfully apt, Miss Drew. Do tell us what we are to do to get into high and show a little speed?”

“Well, now, for instance,” said Amy promptly, her face glowing suddenly with excitement, “I have been waiting for somebody to suggest what we are going to do the rest of the summer. But thus far nobody has said a thing about it.”

“Well, Reverend has his vacation next month. You know that,” said Nell slowly and quite seriously. “It is a problem how we can all go away. And I am not sure that it is right that we should all tag after him. He ought to have a rest from Fred and Bob and Sally and me.”

Jessie smiled at the minister’s daughter appreciatively. “I wonder if *you* ought not to have a rest away from the family, Nell?”

“Hear! Hear!” cried Amy Drew.

“Don’t be foolish,” laughed Nell Stanley. “I should worry my head off if I did not have Sally with me, anyway. I think we’d better go up to the farm where we went last year.”

“‘Farm’ doesn’t spell anything for me,” said Amy, tossing her head. “Cows and crickets, horses and grasshoppers, haystacks and hicks!”

“But we could have our radio along,” Jessie said quietly. “I could disconnect this one” – pointing to her receiving set by the window – “and we might carry it along. It is easy enough to string the antenna.”

“O-oh!” groaned her chum. “She calls it easy! And I pretty nearly strained my back in two distinct places helping fix those wires after Mark Stratford’s old aeroplane tore them down.”

“Well, you want some excitement, you say,” said Jessie composedly. She went to the radio instrument, sat down before it, adjusted a set of the earphones, and opened the switch. “I wonder what is going on at this time,” she murmured.

Amy suddenly cocked her head to listen, although it could not be that she heard what came through the ether.

“Listen!” she cried.

“What under the sun is that?” demanded the clergyman’s daughter, in amazement.

Jessie murmured at the radio receiver:

“Don’t make so much noise, girls. I can’t hear myself think, let alone what might come over the air-waves.”

“Hear that!” shrieked Amy, jumping up. “That is no radio

message, believe me! It comes from no broadcasting station. Listen, girls!”

She raised the screen at a window and leaned out. Jessie, removing the tabs from her ears, likewise gained some understanding of what was going on outside. A shrill voice was shrieking:

“Miss Jessie! Miss Jessie! I got the most wonderful thing to tell you. Oh, Miss Jessie!”

“For pity’s sake!” murmured Jessie.

“Isn’t that little Hen from Dogtown?” asked Nell Stanley.

“That is exactly who it is,” agreed Amy, starting for the door. “Little Hen is one live wire. ‘O-Be-Joyful’ Henrietta is never lukewarm. There is always something doing with that child.”

“Do you suppose she can be in trouble?” asked Jessie, worriedly.

“If she is, I guarantee it will be something funny,” replied Amy, whisking out of the room.

“Miss Jessie! Miss Jessie! I want to tell you!” repeated the shrill voice from the front of the Norwood house.

“Come on, Jessie,” said Nell, dropping her work and starting, too. “The child evidently wants you.”

The others followed Amy Drew down to the porch. The Norwood house where Jessie, an only child, lived with her mother and her father, a lawyer who had his office in New York, was a large dwelling even for Roselawn, which was a district of fine houses forming a part of the town of New Melford.

The house was set in the middle of large grounds. Roses were everywhere – beds and beds of them. At one side was the boathouse and landing at the head of Lake Mononset. At the foot of the front lawn was Bonwit Boulevard, across which stood the house where Amy Drew lived with her father, Wilbur Drew, also a New York lawyer, and her mother and her brother Darrington.

But it was that which stood directly before the gateway of the Norwood place which attracted the gaze of the three girls. A little old basket phaeton, drawn by a fat and sleepy looking brown-and-white pony, and driven by a grinning boy in overalls and with bare feet, made an object quite odd enough to stare at. The little girl sitting so very straight in the phaeton, and holding a green parasol over her head, was bound to attract the amused attention of any on-looker.

“Oh, look at little Hen!” gasped Amy, who was ahead.

“And Montmorency Shannon,” agreed Jessie. “Don’t laugh, girls! You’ll hurt their feelings.”

“Then I’ll have to shut my eyes,” declared Amy. “That parasol! And those freckles! They look green under it. Dear me, Nell, did you ever see such funny children in your life as those Dogtown kids?”

Jessie ran down the steps and the path to the street. When the freckled child saw her coming she stood up and waved the parasol at the Roselawn girl.

Henrietta Haney was a child in whom the two Roselawn girls had become much interested while she had lived in the

Dogtown district of New Melford with Mrs. Foley and her family. Montmorency Shannon was a red-haired urchin from the same poor quarters, and he and Henrietta were the best of friends.

“Oh, Miss Jessie! Miss Jessie! What d’you think? I’m rich!”

“She certainly is rich,” choked Amy, following her chum with Nell Stanley. “She’s a scream.”

“What do you mean – that you are rich, Henrietta?” Jessie asked, smiling at her little protégé.

“I tell you, I am rich. Or, I am goin’ to be. I own an island and everything. And there’s bungleloos on it, and fishing, and a golf course, and everything. I am rich.”

“What can the child mean?” asked Jessie Norwood, looking back at her friends. “She sounds as though she believed it was actually so.”

CHAPTER II – A PUZZLING QUESTION

Little Henrietta Haney, with her green parasol and her freckles, came stumbling out of the low phaeton, so eager to tell Jessie the news that excited her that she could scarcely make herself understood at all. She fairly stuttered.

“I’m rich! I got an island and everything!” she crowed, over and over again. Then she saw Amy Drew’s delighted countenance and she added: “Don’t you laugh, Miss Amy, or I won’t let you go to my island at all. And there’s radio there.”

“For pity’s sake, Henrietta!” cried Jessie. “Where is this island?”

“Where would it be? Out in the water, of course. There’s water all around it,” declared the freckle-faced child in vigorous language. “Don’t you s’pose I know where an island ought to be?”

At that Amy Drew burst into laughter. In fact, Jessie Norwood’s chum found it very difficult on most occasions to be sober when there was any possibility of seeing an occasion for laughter. She found amusement in almost everything that happened.

But that made her no less helpful to Jessie when the latter had gained her first interest in radio telephony. Whatever these two Roselawn girls did, they did together. If Jessie planned to

establish a radio set, Amy Drew was bound to assist in the actual stringing of the antenna and in the other work connected therewith. They always worked hand in hand.

In the first volume of this series, entitled "The Radio Girls of Roselawn," the chums and their friends fell in with a wealth of adventures, and one of the most interesting of those adventures was connected with little Henrietta Haney, whom Amy had just now called "O-Be-Joyful" Henrietta.

The more fortunate girls had been able to assist Henrietta, and finally had found her cousin, Bertha Blair, with whom little Henrietta now lived. By the aid of radio telephony, too, Jessie and Amy and their friends were able to help in several charitable causes, including that of the building of the new hospital.

In the second volume, "The Radio Girls on the Program," the friends had the chance to speak and sing at the Stratfordtown broadcasting station. It was an opportunity toward which they had long looked forward, and that exciting day they were not likely soon to forget.

A week had passed, and during that time Jessie knew that little Henrietta had been taken to Stratfordtown by her Cousin Bertha, where they were to live with Bertha's uncle, who was the superintendent of the Stratford Electric Company's sending station. The appearance of the wildly excited little girl here in Roselawn on this occasion was, therefore, a surprise.

Jessie Norwood seized hold of Henrietta by the shoulders and halted her wild career of dancing. She looked at Montmorency

Shannon accusingly and asked:

“Do you know what she is talking about?”

“Sure, I do.”

“Well, what does she mean?”

“She’s been talking like that ever since I picked her up. This is Cabbage-head Tony’s pony. You know, he sells vegetables down on the edge of town. Spotted Snake – ”

“Don’t call Henrietta that!” cried Jessie, reprovingly.

“Well, she gave the name to herself when she played being a witch,” declared the Shannon boy defensively. “Anyway, Hen came down to Dogtown last evening and hired me to drive her over here this morning.”

“And when I get some of my money that’s coming to me with that island,” broke in Henrietta, “I’ll buy Montmorency an automobile to drive me around in. This old pony is too slow – a lot too slow!”

“Listen to that!” crowed Amy, in delight.

“But do tell us about the island, child,” urged Nell Stanley, likewise interested.

“A man came to Cousin Bertha’s house, where we live with her uncle. *His* name is Blair, too; it isn’t Haney. Well, this man said: ‘Are you Padriac Haney’s little girl?’ And I told him yes, that I wasn’t grown up yet like Bertha. And so he asked a lot of questions of Mr. Blair. They was questions about my father and where he was married to my mother, and where I was born, and all that.”

“But where does the island come in?” demanded Amy.

“Now, don’t you fuss me all up, Miss Amy,” admonished the child. “Where was I at!”

“You was at the Norwood place. I brought you,” said young Shannon.

“Don’t you think I know *that?*” demanded the little girl scornfully. “Well, it’s about Padriac Haney’s great uncle,” she hastened to say. “Padriac was my father’s name and his great uncle – I suppose that means that he was awful big – p’r’aps like that fat man in the circus we saw. But his name was Padriac too, and he left all his money and islands and golf courses to my father. So it is coming to me.”

“Goodness!” exclaimed Nell Stanley. “Did you ever hear such a jumbled-up affair?”

But Montmorency Shannon nodded solemnly. “Guess it’s so. Mrs. Foley was telling my mother something about it. And Spot – I mean, Hen, must have fallen heiress to money, for she give me a whole half dollar to drive her over here,” and his grin appeared again.

“What I want to know is the name of the island, child?” demanded Amy, recovering from her laughter.

“Well, it’s got a name all right,” said Henrietta. “It is Station Island. And there’s a hotel on it. But that hotel don’t belong to me. And the radio station don’t belong to me.”

“O-oh! A radio station!” repeated Jessie. “That sounds awfully interesting. I wonder where it is!”

“But the golf course belongs to me, and some bungleloos,” added the child, mispronouncing the word with her usual emphasis. “And we are going out to this island to spend the summer – Bertha and me. Mrs. Blair says we can. And she will go, too. The man that knows about it has told the Blairs how to get there and – and – I invite you, Miss Jessie, and you, Miss Amy, to come out on Station Island and visit us. Oh, we’ll have fun!”

“That sounds better than any old farm,” cried Amy, gaily. “I accept, Hen, on the spot. You can count on me.”

“If it is all right so that we can go, I will promise to visit you, dear,” Jessie agreed. “But, you know, we really will have to learn more about it.”

“Cousin Bertha will tell you,” said the freckle-faced child, eagerly. “I run away to come down here to the Foleys, so as to tell you first. You are the very first folks I have ever invited to come to live on my island.”

“Ain’t you going to let me come, Spot – I mean, Hen?” asked Monty Shannon, who sat sidewise on the seat and was paying very little attention to the pony.

As a matter of fact, the pony belonging to the vegetable vender was so old and sedate that one would scarcely think it necessary to watch him. But at this very moment a red car, traveling at a pace much over the legal speed on a public highway, came dashing around the turn just below the Norwood house. It took the turn on two wheels, and as it swerved dangerously toward the

curb where the pony stood, its rear wheels skidded. "Look out!" shrieked Amy. "That car is out of control! Look, Jess!"

Her chum, by looking at it, nor the observation of any other bystander, could scarcely avert the disaster that Amy Drew feared. But she was so excited that she scarcely knew what she shouted. And her mad gestures and actions utterly amazed Jessie.

"Have you got Saint Vitus's dance, Amy Drew?" Jessie demanded.

The red, low-hung car wobbled several times back and forth across the oiled driveway. They saw a hatless young fellow in front behind the wheel. In the narrow tonneau were two girls, and if they were not exactly frightened they did not look happy.

Nell Stanley cried: "It's Bill Brewster's racing car; and he's got Belle and Sally with him."

"Belle and Sally!" shrieked Amy.

Belle Ringold and her follower, Sally Moon, were not much older than Amy and Jessie, but they were overbearing and insolent and had made themselves obnoxious to many of their schoolmates. Wishing to appear grown up, and wishing, above all things, to attract Amy's brother Darry and Darry's chum, Burd Alling, and feeling that in some way the two Roselawn chums interfered in this design, they were especially unpleasant in their behavior toward them. Sometimes Belle and Sally had been able to make the Roselawn girls feel unhappy by their haughty speech and what Amy called their "snippy ways." Just now, however, circumstances forbade the two unpleasant girls

annoying anybody.

The others had identified the reckless driver and his passengers. At least, all had recognized the party save Montmorency Shannon. He just managed to jump out of the phaeton in time. The pony was still asleep when the rear of the skidding red car crashed against the phaeton and crushed it into a wreck across the curbstone.

CHAPTER III – A FLARE-UP

The red car stopped before it completely overturned. Then, when the exhaust was shut off, the screams of the two girls in the back seat could be heard. But nobody shouted any louder than Montmorency Shannon.

The red-haired boy had leaped from the phaeton and had seized the pony by the bit. Otherwise the surprised animal might have set off for home, Amy said, “on a perfectly apoplectic run.”

The little animal stood shaking and pawing, nothing but the shafts and whiffle-tree remaining attached to it by the harness. The rear wheels of the racing car were entangled in the phaeton and it was slewed across the road.

“Now see what you’ve done! Now see what you’ve done!” one of the girls in the car was saying, over and over.

“Well, I couldn’t help it, Belle,” whined the reckless young Brewster. “You and Sally Moon aren’t hurt. And you asked to ride with me, anyway.”

“Oh, I don’t mean you, Bill!” exclaimed the girl behind him. “But that horrid boy with his pony carriage! What business had he to get in the way?”

“Hey! ’Tain’t my carriage, you Ringold girl,” declared Monty Shannon. “It’s Cabbage-head Tony’s. He’ll sue your father for this, Bill Brewster. And you come near killing me and the pony.”

“I don’t see how you came to be standing just there,”

complained the driver of the red car. "You might have been on the other side of the drive."

"He ought to have been!" declared Belle Ringold promptly. "He was headed the wrong way. I'll testify for you, Bill. Of course he was headed wrong."

"Why, you're another!" cried Monty. "If I'd been headed the wrong way you'd have smashed the pony instead of the carriage."

"Never mind what they say, Monty," Jessie Norwood put in quietly. "There are three of us here who saw the collision, and we can testify to the truth."

"And me. I seen it," added Henrietta eagerly. "Don't forget that Spotted Snake, the Witch, seen it all. If you big girls tell stories about Monty and that pony, you'll wish you hadn't – now you see!" and she began making funny gestures with her hands and writhing her features into perfectly frightful contortions.

"Henrietta!" commanded Jessie Norwood, yet having hard work, like Nell and Amy, to keep from laughing at the freckle-faced child. "Henrietta, stop that! Don't you know that is not a polite way – nor a nice way – to act?"

"Why, Miss Jessie, they won't know that," complained little Henrietta. "They are never nice or polite."

At this statement Monty Shannon burst out laughing, too. The red-haired boy could not be long of serious mind.

"Never you mind, Brewster," he said to the unfortunate driver of the red car, who was notorious for getting into trouble. "Never mind; we ain't killed. And your father can pay Cabbage-head

Tony all right. It won't break him."

"You impudent thing!" exclaimed Belle Ringold, who was a very proud and unpleasant girl. "You are always making trouble for people, Montmorency Shannon. It was you who would not finish stringing our radio antenna at the Carter place and so helped spoil our picnic."

"He didn't! He didn't!" ejaculated Henrietta, dancing up and down in her excitement. "It was me – Spotted Snake! I brought down the curse of bad weather on your old picnic – the witch's curse. I'm the one that brought thunder and lightning and rain to spoil your fun. And I'll do it again."

She was so excited that Jessie could not silence her. Sally Moon burst into a scornful laugh, but her chum, Belle, said, fanning herself as she sat in the stalled car:

"Don't give them any attention. These Roselawn girls are just as low as the Dogtown kids. Thank goodness, Sally, we will get away from them all for the rest of the summer."

"Your satisfaction will only be equaled by ours," laughed Amy Drew.

"I don't know whether you will get rid of me or not, Belle," said Nell Stanley composedly. "If you mean to go to Hackle Island –"

"Father has engaged the handsomest suite at the hotel there," Belle broke in. "I fancy Doctor Stanley will not feel like taking you all there, Nellie. It is very expensive."

"Oh, no, if we go we sha'n't be able to live at the hotel,"

confessed the clergyman's daughter. "But the children will get the benefit of the sea air."

"Oh!" murmured Amy. "Hackle Island is a nice place."

"But it ain't as nice as mine!" Henrietta suddenly broke in. "My island is the best. And I wouldn't let those girls on it – not on my part of it."

"What is that ridiculous child talking about?" demanded Belle scornfully, while Bill Brewster continued to crawl about under his car to discover if possible what had happened to it. "What does she mean?"

"I got an island, and everything," announced Henrietta. "I'm going to be just as rich as you are, but I won't be so mean."

"Then you would better begin by not talking meanly," advised Jessie, admonishingly.

"Well," sniffed Henrietta, "I haven't got to let 'em on my island if I don't want to, have I?"

"You needn't fret," laughed Sally Moon. "Your island is like your witch's curse. All in your mind."

"Is that so?" flared out little Henrietta. "Your old picnic was just spoiled by my bad weather, wasn't it? Well, then, wait till you try to get on my island," and she shook a threatening head, and even her green parasol, in her earnestness.

Sally laughed again scornfully. But Belle flounced out of the automobile.

"Come on!" she exclaimed. "Bill will never get this car fixed."

"Oh, yes, I will, Belle," came Bill's muffled voice from under

the car. "I always do."

"Well, who wants to wait all day for you to repair it, and then ride home with a fellow all smeared up with oil and soot? Come on, Sally."

Sally Moon meekly followed. That was how she kept in Belle Ringold's good graces. You had to do everything Belle said, and do just as she did, or you could not be friends with her.

"Well," Monty Shannon drawled, "as far as I think, you both can go. I won't weep none. But Bill's going to weep when he tells his father about this busted carriage."

"All Bill has to do is to deny it," snapped Belle Ringold. "Nobody would believe you against our testimony."

"Nobody but the judge," laughed Amy. "Don't be such a goose, Belle. We will all testify for Mr. Cabbage-head Tony."

Bill crawled out from under his automobile as the two girls who had been passengers walked away. He was just as much smugged as Belle said he would be. But he looked after her and her friend without betraying any dissatisfaction.

"It's all right," he said to Monty. "I guess you couldn't help being in the way. This car does go wrong once in a while. You can jump in the car and I'll take you home and tell the chap that owns the pony how it happened. He can come to my father and get paid."

"Not much," said the Dogtown boy. "I'll have to lead the pony. But you can take Hen back to Dogtown."

"Is it safe?" asked Jessie, for Henrietta had started for the red

car at once. She was crazy about automobiles.

“If it goes bad again I can get out,” said the child importantly. “I won’t wait for it to turn topsy-turvy.”

“She will be all right,” said Bill Brewster gloomily. “Father will make me pay for this carriage out of my own money. I’m rather glad we are going where I can’t use the machine for the rest of the summer. It eats up all my pocket money.”

“Where are your folks going, Billy?” asked Jessie politely.

“Oh, we always go to Hackle Island.”

“Everybody is going to an island,” laughed Amy. “I guess we’ll have to accept Hen’s invitation and go to her island, Jess.”

“It’s a lot better island than that one those girls are going to,” repeated Henrietta, with confidence, climbing into the red car.

When the latter was gone, and Monty Shannon was out of sight, leading the brown and white pony, the three Roselawn girls discussed little Henrietta’s story of her sudden wealth, and particularly of her possession of Station Island, wherever that was.

“Of course, we won’t understand the rights of the matter till we see Bertha,” said Jessie. “She must know all about it.”

“I wonder where Station Island is situated?” Amy observed. “Let’s hunt an atlas – Oh, no, we won’t! Here is something better.”

“Something better than an atlas?” laughed Nell. “A walking geography?”

“You said it,” rejoined Amy. “Papa knows all about such

things. I can't even remember how New Melford is bounded; but you'd think he had been all around the world, and walked every step of the way."

"And you never will know, Amy Drew, if you ask somebody every time you want to know anything and never stop to work the thing out yourself," admonished Jessie.

"Oh, piffle!" exclaimed the careless Amy. "What's the use?"

Mr. Drew was just coming out of his own grounds across the boulevard, and his daughter hailed him.

"Want to ask you an important question, papa," cried Amy, running to meet him and hanging to his arm.

"Ahem! If you expect advice, I expect a retainer," said the lawyer soberly.

"Nothing like that! I know you lawyers. I am going to wait to see if your advice is worth anything," declared his gay daughter. "Now, listen! Did you ever hear of Station Island?"

"I have just heard of it," responded the gentleman promptly.

"Oh! Don't be so dreadfully smart," said Amy. "I know I am telling you –"

"Wrong. I had just heard of it to-day – before you mentioned it," returned her father. "But I have known of it for a good many years, under another name."

"Then you do know where Station Island is, Mr. Drew?" cried Jessie, eagerly. "We do so want to know."

"That is the new name they have given the place since the big radio station was established there. It is really Hackle

Island, girls, and has been known by that name since our great-grandparents' days.”

CHAPTER IV – UNCERTAINTIES

“It is lucky Henrietta went away before papa came,” observed Amy, after they had discussed the strange matter at some length. “She certainly would have been mad to learn that Belle and Sally were likely to visit what she calls her island, without any invitation from her.”

“What do you suppose it all means?” asked Jessie.

“She must have heard some mixed-up account of an island that belonged to her family,” Nell said, “and got it twisted. I can’t see it any other way. But I must go home now, girls. The Reverend and the children need looking after by this time. Good-bye.”

Mr. Drew did not explain until evening about his previous knowledge of the island in question. Then he came over to smoke his after-dinner cigar on the Norwood’s porch, and he and Jessie’s father discussed the matter within the hearing of their two very much interested daughters. When their fathers did not object, Jessie and Amy often “listened in” on business conversations, and this one was certainly important to the minds of the two chums.

“Did Blair telephone you to-day again about that matter?” Mr. Norwood asked his neighbor.

“No. It was Mr. Stratford himself. Takes an interest in Blair’s affairs, you know.”

“It really concerns that Bertha Blair who was of so much value to me in the Ellison will case. You remember?” observed Mr.

Norwood.

“And it concerns this little freckle-faced child the girls have had around here so much. Actually, if the thing pans out the way it looks, Norwood, that child has got something coming to her.”

“She has a good deal coming to her if she can prove she is the daughter of Padriac Haney,” said Jessie’s father, with vigor.

“You are inclined to take the matter up?”

“I am. I’ll do all I can. Blair has no money to risk – ”

“He won’t need any,” said Mr. Drew, quite as decisively. “If you can spend your time on it, so can I. It won’t break us, Norwood, to help the child.”

“Not at all,” agreed Mr. Norwood, generously.

“But is it really true, Daddy, that Hackle Island belongs to little Henrietta and Bertha?” asked Jessie.

“A good part of it, apparently. All of the middle of the island,” he returned. “The Government owns Sable Point where the old lighthouse stands and where the radio station is now established. That has been a government reservation for years. At the other end is the Hackle Island Hotel, always popular with a certain class of moneyed people.”

“I have been there,” said Mr. Drew, nodding. “But there is a bunch of bungalows in between – ”

“By the way,” interposed Mr. Norwood, “my wife said something about taking one of those for a month or two. I have the tentative offer of one.”

“O-oh!” gasped Amy, clasping her hands.

Her father laughed outright. "See," he said to the other lawyer. "You are going to have a guest, if you go there. I can see that."

"The bungalow is big enough for the girls and their friends," admitted Jessie's father.

"That beats the farm!" cried Amy to Jessie.

"It will be nice. And we can take Henrietta and Bertha along."

"They are going in any case, I hear from Blair," said Mr. Norwood briskly. "His wife will take them. There is an old farmhouse that belongs to the Haney estate. You see, a part of the bungalow colony and the Club golf course are included in the old Haney place. The real estate men who exploited the island a few years ago did not trouble themselves to get clear title to the land. They made their bit and got out. Now there are two parties laying claim to the middle of the island."

"Oh, dear!" cried Jessie. "Then it isn't sure that little Henrietta will get her island? Too bad!"

"Personally I am pretty sure that she will," said Mr. Norwood, with conviction. "But it will cause a court fight. There is another claimant, as I say."

"You are right," agreed Mr. Drew. "And he is a fighter. Ringold never gives up a thing until he has to."

"Goodness!" breathed Amy. "Not Belle's father?"

"It is the New Melford Ringold," said Mr. Drew. "His claim is based upon an old note that the original Padriac Haney gave some money-lender. Ringold bought the paper along with a lot of other fishy documents. You know, he has always been a note

shaver.”

“I know something about that,” said Mr. Norwood, grimly. “Don’t worry too much about it. Ringold may have a lot of money, but he won’t spend too much to try to make good a bad claim. He doesn’t throw a sprat to catch a herring; he would only risk a sprat for whale bait,” and he laughed.

However, the two girls had heard quite enough to yield food for chatter for some time to come. Jessie had kept close watch of the time by her wrist-watch. She now beckoned her chum, and they ran indoors and up the stairs to Jessie’s sitting-room.

“It is almost time for the concert from Stratfordtown,” Jessie said. “And Bertha telephoned me yesterday that she hoped to sing to-night.”

“Lucky girl!” said Amy, sighing. “It’s nice to have an uncle who bosses a broadcasting station. But, never mind, Jess, we had fun the time we were on the program. Say! the boys will be home to-morrow.”

“No! Do you mean it?”

“Papa got a wireless. The *Marigold* now has a real radio telegraph sending and receiving set. Darry says it is great. But, of course, you and I can’t get anything from them because we do not know Morse.”

“Let’s learn!” exclaimed Jessie, excitedly.

“Sometimes when you get your set tuned wrong you hear some of the code. But the telegraph wave-length is much, much longer than the phone lengths. Guess you’d have a job listening in for

anything Darry and Burd Ailing would send from that old yacht.”

“We can learn the Morse alphabet, just the same, can’t we?” demanded her chum.

“Now, there you go again!” complained Amy. “Always suggesting something that is work. I don’t want to have to learn a single thing until we go back to school in the fall. Believe me!”

Her emphasis only made Jessie laugh. She adjusted the crystal detector, or cat’s whisker, as the girls called it, and then began to tune the coil until, with the tabs at her ears, she could hear a voice rising out of the void, nearer and nearer, until it seemed speaking directly in her ear:

“With which announcement we begin our evening’s entertainment from the Stratfordtown Station. The first number on the program being – ”

“Do you hear that? It is Mr. Blair himself,” whispered Amy eagerly. “And he says – ”

Jessie held up her hand for silence as the superintendent of the broadcasting station at Stratfordtown went on to announce, “Miss Bertha Blair, who will sing ‘Will o’ the Wisp,’ Mr. Angler being at the piano. I thank you.”

The piano prelude came to the ears of the Roselawn girls almost instantly. Jessie and Amy smiled at each other. They were proud to think that they had something to do with Bertha’s becoming a favorite on the Stratfordtown programs, and likewise that their interest in the girl first served to call the superintendent’s attention to her. In “The Roselawn Girls on the

Program” is told of Bertha’s first meeting with her uncle who had never before seen her.

They listened to the hour’s program and then tuned the receiver to get what was being broadcasted from a city station – a talk on economics that interested to a degree even the two high-school girls. For frivolous as Amy usually appeared to be, she was a good scholar and, like Jessie, stood well in her classes.

There was not much but a desire for fun in Amy’s mind the next morning, however, when she ran across the boulevard to the Norwood place. It was right after breakfast, and she wore her middy blouse and short skirt, with canvas ties on her feet. She trilled for Jessie under the radio-room windows:

“You-oo! You-oo! ‘Mary Ann! My Mary Ann! I’ll meet you on the corner!’ Come-on-out!”

Jessie appeared from the breakfast room, and Momsy, as Jessie always called her mother, looked out, too.

“What have you girls on your minds for this morning?” she asked.

“Our new canoe, Mrs. Norwood. You know, we gave the old one to those Dogtown youngsters, and our new one has never been christened yet.”

“Shall I bring a hat?” asked Jessie, hesitatingly.

“What for? To bail out the canoe? Bill says it is perfectly sound and safe,” laughed Amy.

“You are getting wee freckles on your nose, Jessie,” said Mrs. Norwood.

“Why worry?” demanded Amy. “You can never get as many as Hen wears – and her nose isn’t as big as yours.”

“It is by good luck, not good management, that you do not freckle, Amy Drew,” declared her chum. “I’ll take the shade hat.”

“Why not a sunbonnet?” scoffed Amy.

But Jessie laughed and ran out with her hat. It floated behind her, held by the two strings, as she raced her chum down to the boat landing. The Norwood boathouse sheltered several different craft, among others a motor-boat that Amy’s brother, Darrington Drew, owned. But Darry and his chum, Burd Alling, had lost their interest in the *Water Thrush* since they had been allowed to put into commission, and navigate themselves, the steam-yacht *Marigold*, which was a legacy to Darry from an uncle now deceased.

The girls got the new canoe out without assistance from the gardener or his helper. They were thoroughly capable out-of-door girls. They had erected the antenna for Jessie’s radio set without any help. Both were good boatmen – “if a girl can be a man,” to quote Amy – and they could handle the *Water Thrush* as well as the canoe.

They launched and paddled out from the shore in perfect form. The sun was scorching, but there was a tempering breeze. It was therefore cooler out toward the middle of the lake than inshore. The glare of the sun on the water troubled even the thoughtless Amy.

“Oh, aren’t you the wise little owl, Jess Norwood!” she cried.

“To think of wearing a sun-hat! And here am I with nothing to shelter me from the torrid rays. I am going to burn and peel and look horrid – I know I shall! I’ll not be fit to go to Hackle Island – if we go.”

“Oh, we’re going, all right!”

“You’re mighty certain, from the way you talk. Has it been really settled? ‘There’s many a slip’ and all that, you know.”

“Father asked Momsy about it at breakfast before he went to town, and she said she had quite made up her mind,” Jessie said. “He will make the arrangements with the owner of the house.”

“Oh, goody! A bungalow?” cried Amy.

“Yes.”

“How big, dear? Can the boys come?”

“Of course. There are fourteen rooms. It is a big place. We will shut up the house here and send down most of the serving people ahead. We shall have at least one good month of salt air.”

“Hooray!” cried Amy, swinging her paddle recklessly. “And I’ve got just the most scrumptious idea, Jess. I’ll tell you – ”

But something unexpected happened just then that quite drove out of Amy Drew’s mind the idea she had to impart to her chum. She brought the paddle she had waved down with an awful smack on the water. The spray splattered all about. Jessie flung herself back to escape some of the inwash, and by so doing her gaze struck upon something on the surface of the lake, far ahead.

“Oh! Oh!” she shrieked. “What is that, Amy? Somebody is drowning!”

CHAPTER V – INTO TROUBLE AND OUT

Amy Drew sat up in the canoe as high as she could and stared ahead. Jessie's observation suggested trouble; but Amy almost immediately burst out laughing.

“Drowning!” she repeated. “Why, Jess Norwood, you know that you couldn't drown those Dogtown kids. And if that isn't some of them – Monty Shannon, and the Costello twins, and the rest of them – I'm much mistaken.”

“But see those barrels and tubs and what-all!” gasped her more serious friend. “Look there! It's Henrietta!”

The fleet of strange barges that Jessie had first spied included, it seemed, almost every sort of craft that could be improvised. A rainwater barrel led the procession of “boats,” and Montmorency Shannon was in that, paddling with some kind of paddle that he wielded with no little skill.

There were two wooden washtubs in which the Costello twins voyaged. One was much lower in the water than the other, giving evidence of having shipped more water than its mate. In a water-trough that had been filched from somebody's barnyard was little Henrietta and Charlie Foley.

“They will be overboard!” exclaimed Jessie, anxiously. “Drive ahead, Amy – do!”

The wind was blowing directly in their faces and from the direction of the Dogtown landing, where the flotilla had evidently embarked. The tubs spun around and around, the half-barrel in which Monty Shannon sat tried to perform the same gyrations, but Henrietta and the Foley boy blundered ahead. It was plain to Jessie's mind that the reckless children could not have sailed in the other direction had they wished to do so.

"What do you come out here for?" she shrieked when the canoe drew near.

"Oh, Miss Jessie, we are going to the Carter place," sang out Henrietta.

"But the Carter place is down the lake, not up!" exclaimed the exasperated Jessie.

"Yes. But the wind shifted," said Henrietta.

"Where is your big canoe?" demanded Amy, who could scarcely paddle from laughter, in spite of the evident danger the children were in.

"That is what we started after," said Montmorency Shannon, his red head sticking out of the barrel like a full-blown hollyhock. "It got away in the night, or somebody let it go, and we saw it away down by the Carter place. So – so we thought we'd go after it."

"And I warrant your mothers don't know what you are doing," Jessie said sternly.

"Oh, they will!" cried Henrietta, virtuously.

"When they miss the washtubs," put in Amy, with laughter.

"When we tell 'em," corrected little Henrietta. "And we always

tell 'em everything we do.”

“I see. After it is all over,” Jessie commented.

“We-ell,” said Henrietta, pouting, “we can’t tell 'em what we have done before we do it, can we? For we never know ourselves.”

“You certainly cannot beat that for logic,” declared Amy. She drove the head of the canoe to the tub of the nearest Costello twin. “Get in here carefully, Micky. You are going down.”

“That’s 'cause Aloysius always gets the best tub. *He* ain’t sinking none,” said Michael Costello, scowling at his twin.

“Quick!” commanded Amy, and the disgruntled Costello swarmed over the side of the canoe. “We can take in one more. Who is the nearest drowned?”

“I’m sitting in half a foot of water,” confessed the red-haired Shannon, grinning.

“A little soaking will do *you* good. I can guess who suggested this crazy venture,” Jessie said. “Come, Henrietta.”

“I need her to trim ship!” cried Charlie Foley.

“What do you want to trim your ship with – red, white and blue?” demanded Amy. “If that trough sinks I know you can swim, Charlie.”

The crowd would have had some difficulty in getting back to shore with the wind blowing as freshly as it did if the girls had not come along and, in relays, helped them all back.

“What Mrs. Shannon will say when she sees her two washtubs floating off like that, I don’t know,” sighed Henrietta, after they

were all ashore.

“One of ’em’s sunk, so she can’t see it,” Micky Costello said calmly. “Maybe the other will go down. Don’t you big girls say anything and maybe she won’t find it out.”

Jessie and Amy had headed for Dogtown in the first place without any expectation of playing a life-saving part. Jessie thought they ought to see Mrs. Foley, who was fleshy and easy of disposition, and ask her about Henrietta’s visit. So they accompanied the freckle-faced little girl to the Foley house.

“I ain’t telling ’em all they can come to visit my island, Miss Jessie,” said the little girl. “But of course, the Foleys could come. Mrs. Blair and Bertha wouldn’t mind just them, of course. There’s only Mrs. Foley and Charlie and Billy and the baby and three more boys and – and – well, that’s all, only Mr. Foley. He wouldn’t want to come.”

“You would better be sure of your island, and just how much you own of it, Hen,” advised Amy Drew. “It may not be big enough to hold everybody you want to invite.”

“Why, Miss Amy, it’s a awful big island,” declared little Henrietta. “It’s got a whole golf link on it. I heard Mr. Blair say so.”

The “bulgy” Mrs. Foley welcomed the Roselawn girls with her usual copiousness. Of course, she had the youngest Foley in her lap, and the housework was “at sixes and sevens,” since little Henrietta had been at Stratfordtown for a week.

“How I’m going to git used, young ladies, to havin’ that child

away is more than I can say. 'Tis a great mistake I have all boys for childers. There is nothing like a smart girl around the house."

Jessie, very curious, asked the woman what she knew about Henrietta's wonderful story of wealth.

"Sure, I've always expected it would come to her some day," declared Mrs. Foley. "Her mother, who was a good neighbor of mine before we moved out here to the lake, said Hen's father come of rich folks. They used to drive their own carriage. That was before automobiles come in so plenteous."

"Did Bertha ever say anything about it, Mrs. Foley?"

"Not much. 'Tis Hen will be the rich wan. Oh, yes. And glad I am if the child is about to come into her own. She's no business to be running down here every chance she gets. I had himself telephone to Bertha when he went to town this morning, and it is likely she will be here after the child. Hen's as wild as a hawk."

Bertha Blair, in fact, appeared in a hired car before Jessie and Amy were ready to return in their canoe to Roselawn. She was quite as excited as Henrietta had been about the strange fortune that promised to come into their lives. Bertha could tell the chums from Roselawn many more particulars of the Padriac Haney property.

"If little Henrietta will only be good and not be so wild and learn her lessons and mind what she's told," Bertha said seriously, "maybe she will have money and an island – or part of one, anyway. But she does not behave very well. She is as wild as a March hare."

Little Henrietta looked serious for her; but Mrs. Foley took her part at once.

“Sure don’t be expectin’ too much of the child at wance, Bertha. She’s run as wild as the wind itself here. She’s fought and played with these Dogtown kids since she was able to toddle around. What would ye expect?”

“But she must learn,” declared the older girl. “Mrs. Blair won’t take us to the island this summer if she is not good.”

“Then I’ll go myself,” announced Henrietta. “It’s my island, ain’t it? Who has a better right there?”

Jessie took a hand at this point, shaking her head gravely at the freckled little girl.

“Do you suppose, Henrietta Haney, that your friends – like Mrs. Foley or Mrs. Blair, or even Amy and I – will want to come to your island to see you if you are not a good girl?”

“Say, if I get rich can’t I do like I want to – like other rich folks?”

“You most certainly cannot. Rich people, if they are to be loved, must be even more careful in their conduct than poor folks.”

“We-ell,” confessed the freckled little girl frankly, “I’d rather be rich than be loved. If I can’t be both *easy*, I’ll be rich.”

“Such amazing worldliness!” sighed Amy, raising her hands in mock horror.

But Jessie Norwood truly wished the little girl to be nice. Poor little Henrietta, however, had much to unlearn. She chattered

continually about the island she owned and the riches she was to enjoy. The smaller children of Dogtown followed her – and the green parasol – about as though they were enchanted.

“Tis a witch she certainly is,” declared Mrs. Foley. “She’s bewitched them all, so she has. But I’m lost widout her, meself. When a woman has six – and them all boys – and a man that drinks – ”

This statement of her personal affairs had been so often heard by the three girls that they all tried to sidetrack Mrs. Foley’s complaint. It was Jessie, however, who advanced a really good reason for getting out of the Foley house.

“I promised Monty Shannon I would look at his radio set,” she said, jumping up. “You will excuse us for a little, Mrs. Foley? You are not going back to Stratfordtown at once, Bertha?”

“Before long. I have only hired the car for the forenoon. The man has another job this afternoon. And I must find that Henrietta again,” for the freckle-faced little girl was as lively, so Amy said, as a water-bug – “one of those skimmery things with long legs that dart along the surface of the water.”

The trio went out and across the cinder-covered yard to the Shannon house. The immediate surroundings of Dogtown were squalid, although its site upon the edge of Lake Mononset might have been made very pleasant indeed.

“If these boys like Monty Shannon and some of the girls stay at home when they grow up they surely will improve the looks of the village,” Jessie had said. “For Monty and his kind are altogether

too smart not to want to live as other people do.”

“You’ve said it,” agreed Amy, with enthusiasm. “He is smart. He has a better radio receiver than you have. Wait till you see.”

“How do you know?” asked the surprised Jessie.

“He was telling me about it. You know how often some ‘squeak box,’ or other amateur operator, breaks in on our concerts.”

“We-ell, not so often now,” Jessie said. “I have learned more about tuning and wave-lengths. But, of course, I have only a single circuit crystal receiving set. I have been talking to Dad about getting a better one.”

“Monty will show you,” Amy said with confidence, as they knocked at the Shannon door.

The little cottage was small. Downstairs there were but two rooms. The door gave access to the kitchen, and beyond was the “sitting-room,” of which Monty’s mother was inordinately proud. She was a widow, and helped herself and her children by doing fine laundry work for the wealthy people of New Melford.

From the front room when the girls entered came sounds that they recognized – radio sounds which held their instant attention, although they were merely market reports at that hour in the forenoon.

“Isn’t it wonderful?” Bertha Blair said, clasping her hands. “I never can get over the wonder of it.”

“Same here,” Amy declared. “When Jess and I listened to you singing the ‘Will o’ the Wisp’ last night it seemed almost shivery

that we should recognize the very tones of your voice out of the air.”

“Huh!” exclaimed Montmorency, grinning. “I got so I know the announcers, too. When that Mr. Blair speaks I know him. Of course, I know Mr. Mark Stratford’s voice, for I’ve talked with him. I wouldn’t have such a fine machine here, only he advised me.”

“Tell me,” Jessie said, “what is the difference between my receiving set and yours, Monty?”

“If you want to hear clearly and keep outside radio out of your machine, use a regenerative radio set with an audion detector. The whole business, Miss Jessie, is in the detector, after all. A regenerative set of this kind is selective enough – that’s the expression Mr. Mark used – to enable any one to tune out all but a few commercial stations. And they don’t often butt in to annoy you. For sure, you’ll kill all the amateur squeak-boxes and other transmission stations of that class.

“Now, I’m going to tune in for Stratfordtown. They are sending the Government weather reports and mother wants to know should she water her tomatoes or depend on a thunderstorm,” and he grinned at Mrs. Shannon, who stood, an awkward but smiling figure, in the doorway between the two rooms.

“Tis too wonderful a thing for me to understand, at all, at all,” admitted the widow. “However can they tell you out of that machine there is a thunderstorm coming?”

“Listen!” exclaimed the boy eagerly. There was a horn on the set and no need for earphones. He had tuned the market reports out. From the horn came a different voice. But the words the visitors heard had nothing to do with the report on the weather. “What’s the matter?” demanded Monty Shannon. “Listen to this, will you?”

“... she will come home at once. This is serious – a serious call for Bertha Blair.”

“Do you hear that?” almost shrieked Amy Drew. “Why, it must mean you, Bertha!”

CHAPTER VI – CHANGED PLANS

“How ridiculous!” Jessie cried. “That surely cannot mean you, Bertha.”

“Hush!” begged Amy. “It’s uncanny.”

Again the slow voice enunciated: “Bertha Blair will come home at once. This is serious – a serious call for Bertha Blair.”

“Criminy!” shouted Monty Shannon. “I know who that is. It’s Mr. Mark Stratford.”

“He is calling for you, Bertha,” said Jessie. “Can it be possible?”

“Something has happened!” gasped Bertha, starting for the door of the cottage. “Where is that child?”

“Never mind Henrietta. We will take care of her,” Jessie called after the worried girl, wishing to relieve her anxiety.

Bertha ran out of the house, and the next moment the Roselawn girls heard the car start. Bertha was being whisked away to Stratfordtown. The voice of Mark Stratford continued to repeat the call several times. Then he read the weather report, as expected.

“I can tell you one thing,” Jessie said eagerly to her chum and the Shannons. “Mark Stratford does not usually give out the announcements from that station. Now, does he, Monty?”

“No, ma’am, Miss Jessie. Only once in a while.”

“Then something has happened at the Blair house, or to Mr.

Blair himself. That is why they send out this call, hoping that somebody down here would get it and tell Bertha.”

“Think! How funny it must feel to hear your name called out of the air in that way,” Amy remarked.

“Why, we had that experience ourselves,” Jessie said. “Don’t you remember? Mark thanked us publicly for finding his watch.”

“But that was not just like this,” replied Amy. “Anyway, there is something unsatisfactory about radio – and always will be – until we can ‘talk back’ as well as receive. See! If Monty had a sending set as well as a receiving, he could have answered Mark Stratford, and told him Bertha had heard the call and was starting home without any delay.”

“I am afraid something really serious has happened,” Jessie said. “Let’s go back home and call up Stratfordtown on the telephone.”

“We’ll take Hen along with us,” agreed Amy. “You said we’d take care of her.”

This the Roselawn girls did. When they set out from Dogtown in their canoe, Henrietta sat amidships. She was delighted to visit the Norwoods. She had stayed over night with Jessie before.

They passed the flotilla of tubs and barrels that the Dogtown children had set afloat. Mrs. Shannon would never see her washtubs again. Meanwhile the Costello twins and Charlie Foley had set out to walk around the lake and recover the big canoe from the place where it had drifted ashore on the other side.

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