



# For Every Boy and Girl

## A MESSAGE BY FIRE.

By CULLEN BRYANT SNELL.

JOE Murray and Wilbur Howard pushed away from the landing and hoisted their sail to the warm morning breeze.

They exchanged laughing good-bys and good wishes with a little group of friends on the landing, and shouted back a promise to return for the Fourth and share in the big celebration.

Their trim little boat was soon sailing briskly over the bright waters of the lake, one of America's great inland seas, and headed straight for Oak Island.

"Joe, this is simply immense," cried Will, after they had settled themselves comfortably. "We've actually started on our camping trip, after talking of it all winter at school."

"Mighty glad your folks let you come, Will. I'll show you one of the prettiest camping spots you ever saw, and we'll have a bully time these two weeks."

Will had much to tell of scenes in his home state, farther west, especially of Indian life, of wigwams, birch canoes, buckskin clothing and moccasins, and much else that appealed to Joe's imagination.

They proposed to live like Indians during these two weeks; but any real Indian would have been astonished to find his wigwam filled with the stock of choice provisions and modern camp conveniences which Joe had provided for this trip.

Shifting winds delayed them, and it was mid-afternoon when they finally ran the boat on the little sand beach.

"Here we are," cried Joe. "Haul up the boat and let's get out what stuff we need for the night; it's so late the rest will have to wait till morning."

They were soon lugging their first load up the hill. When they broke through a thicket into an open space set with grand trees, Will looked around at the beautiful natural lawn, the little spring of clear water, the distant views toward the mainland and out upon the great lake, and exclaimed, "Well, this is the finest camping place I ever saw." His enthusiasm led him to say much more that was very gratifying to Joe, who was delighted to find that his chosen camping site was appreciated.

By the time they had brought a second load from the boat; had pitched the roomy willed tent, prepared their bunks and cooked supper, they were hungry and tired. That first camp supper did taste good. They lingered long over it and then, leaving the dish-washing till morning, stretched out in their bunks.

Through the open tent flaps they watched the moon. She had been beaming on them from a clear heaven; now she peeked through the flecked sky which conveyed no warning to the happy campers. They were not weather prophets.

For a time they talked. The pauses became longer and numerous; the crackle and flare of the camp fire grew softer and softer; the call of the whip-poor-will and hum of insect voices grew indistinct, and then, two healthy, growing boys breathed deeply and slowly the sweet night air. There is no sleep like that of the camp!

"What was that?" cried Joe and Will the same instant, both sitting bolt upright in the black darkness. Their breath was held as they turned their heads to listen. Moments passed in utter stillness, one, two, then a dazzling blaze, a roaring thunder-crash, and a staggering rush of wind.

"Quick, Joe, light the lantern. Jerk the goods into the tent. It'll pour guns in a minute!"

"Find that ax, Will, hustle! Drive the tent-stakes in farther or she'll never hold up in such a gale. There, I told you. She's pulling loose. Here, quick, grab this line. Pull her down. Don't let the wind get under, we never could hold her. Drive this stake here, drive it, I say—There, now that next rope, I can fasten it. Drive the other stakes. All down, are they? Here, quick, get inside; grab this flap, I can't hold it; pull her over, pull, Howard, pull—there, I've got her fast. Whew!"

The tent was shaking in the blasts of wind and torrents of rain; incessant lightnings and thunders rent the air. The scant clothing on the boys was drenched. They hurried into dry clothes and sought the shelter and comfort of their bunks; but got no more sleep for an hour, when the storm had blown over, and all was again calm and silent, save for the chirping of insects, and the drip, drip, drip of water from the trees.

A few hours later they looked out on a perfect summer morning, but were startled to see a great tree that had stood near-by now a fallen and shattered wreck. It was that lightning stroke that had crashed upon their sleep and roused them from their bunks.

Their fears during the storm for the safety of the goods left in the boat drove them now, before breakfast, down the hillside to the beach. Together they rushed out of the bushes on to the sand and there stopped in sad dismay. The boat itself was gone!

The beach had been swept from end to end by great waves which were cut in two by the southwestern point of the island, and which had then moved past it on opposite sides. Hurriedly the two

campers went along the upper shore in the vain hope of finding the boat, but it was gone, completely gone, and with it their main supply of provisions, some clothing and many parts of their camp equipment. They were left with their tent, sufficient clothing for warm weather, their guns, a little ammunition and a very few articles of food, enough only for two or three days.

The day was not a cheerful one for them but the gravity of their situation was not fully realized till later. At first they felt that somehow they would get safely off the island but soon it dawned on them that visitors there were very rare indeed and few boats passed within hailing distance.

On the first afternoon they did see a small fishing-boat sail by beyond ear-shot, and made earnest efforts to beckon the occupants to the island; but the three fishermen merely waved their hands in reply and passed on.

On the second day the boys wandered aimlessly about and watched for passing boats but none appeared. On the third day they talked long and solemnly. Their food would not last over two days even with the scant allowance agreed upon for each meal; they must use even less, very much less. They had coffee enough for a month and matches in plenty. The only oil was in the lantern and that must be saved for making night signals if a boat passed close by.

They must hunt for game, though there probably was none on the island; and they must try to catch fish, though all the fishing-tackle was lost with the boat.

On the fourth day they were hungry and irritable, but Will shot a mud-hen swimming near the shore, and no mallard duck or Thanksgiving turkey ever tasted so good.

On the fifth day an excursion boat steamed by, just close enough for the boys to hear the music of the band. They frantically beckoned and shouted and waved a sheet fastened on a pole. They saw a hundred handkerchiefs flutter a laughing response as the steamer moved swiftly on thinking that some jolly campers were "saluting" her.

Their condition on the sixth day was pitiable. They had lost heart, and felt faint from hunger, and could think of no possible source of relief. A

few days more and their danger would be extreme, as it even now was very real. As they ate their tantalizing little supper and drank each an extra cup of black coffee to keep up their nerve, they could scarcely keep from blubbering outright as the weight of homesickness and sense of danger pressed on them anew.

They felt especially discouraged because of the complete failure that day of their attempts to catch fish with bent pins for hooks. There were no fish near enough to the shore, or they might have had better luck.

That night their sleep was very broken. Joe lay awake for hours, thinking desperately. At day-break he suddenly yelled out: "Wake up, Will, wake up. I've got it. I believe I've got it, sure."

"Got what?" cried Will. "Got some grub?"

"No, got an idea. To-morrow is the Fourth; we'll call for help."

"What do you mean, Joe? Are you out of your head?" asked Will in alarm.

Joe assured him he was not out of his head, and soon explained his scheme. It meant a lot of hard work, and it might fail; but it must be tried.

They took their guns at once to hunt in the early morning.

Their plans raised their spirits and gave them new strength, and by great caution and perseverance they succeeded in shooting another mudhen and several small song-birds. They ate all of these as soon as cooked, and felt as if they had eaten almost a full meal, though several times the amount would quickly have disappeared had it been at hand. Then they fell to work.

They were exhausted at nightfall but worked desperately all through the next day, the Fourth, and used the last of their food, only a few mouthfuls to sustain their energy.

As the day passed their steps lagged more and more and they frequently sat down to rest. But the work must be finished before dark, and at sunset they declared it done. There was not a bite to eat, but they drank some cold coffee they had brought from camp and threw themselves down on the hillside to rest. They were tired, oh, so tired; every bone and muscle ached; they could scarcely raise their heads; their plan might not work after all. Nevertheless, they must keep awake, though it cost them a very painful effort to do so, or they would



be unable to carry out their plan. They gazed constantly in the direction of home, watching, watching during what seemed an interminable time. An hour after dark Joe rose up shouting: "There she goes; there's the boys. See that light?" and miles across the water there flared ever larger and brighter the great annual Fourth of July bonfire in which all the boys and young men of the town took such delight.

The bonfire was roaring gloriously on the hilltop behind the town. At least fifty young patriots surrounded it and added to the glory of the fire by a constant discharge of fire-crackers and rockets.

"Henry where's Joe?" called a lusty voice. "Yes, where's Joe? Where's Joe?" repeated a dozen voices.

"Give it up," said Henry. "He said he'd sail back and spend the day with us, sure. He went camping on Oak Island, you know, with that school-chum of his."

Everybody knew this and all eyes turned instinctively toward that far-off bit of land.

"Heigh-ho; what's that? See there; Joe's answering," cried a hoarse chorus.

And sure enough, way out across the water an answering flame was seen, then another, another, and yet others. The watchers were all agog. Why so many bonfires? Joe was lavish in his celebration.

But the fires grew and spread and seemed to run together in long thin lines.

"Why, there's a letter E," shouted a voice.

"And there's another letter, and another and another—it spells H-E-L-P," yelled the excited crowd; and then for a moment in astonished silence they gazed across the water at that tragic bonfire, that message written in flaming letters, each many feet in length, which the starving campers had worked so hard to prepare.

"Joe's in trouble," called a leader. "Come on fellows, let's give him a signal." A town caretaker was standing near, holding the great flag he had removed from the hilltop flag-staff. Taking the flag, two of the tallest fellows held it up so as to hide the fire from the view of the boys on the island. It was then dropped and the signal repeated several times. A rush for the town had already begun; Mr. Murray was notified, a small steam-launch was pressed into service, and Joe's anxious father and a number of friends were soon speeding toward the island, wondering what the trouble might be.

It was midnight when the launch returned.

Anxious friends had long been waiting at the landing, and had provided a carriage and even a stretcher, thinking that one of the boys might be seriously injured. They felt greatly relieved when they heard, "All safe; nobody's hurt; we've got them both," called cheerfully across the water by Mr. Murray.

"Hold on, hold on," Joe exclaimed, two minutes after landing. "I can't answer so many questions at once. The storm on that first night carried off our boat with nearly all our provisions and other truck left on board. But tell me first, boys, could you read my printing easily at that distance?"

"Yes, it was plain, Joe. That was a great idea of yours; but how in the world did you do it? Where did you get the stuff for all those fires?"

"I knew that steep, rocky hillside on the island could be seen from our hilltop, here at home," replied Joe, "and that you fellows would be up there after dark at the bonfire, and could probably read our signal if we could only make it large enough. To do it was the biggest day's work we ever did. I don't think we'd have succeeded if we had not found a quantity of hay that Dan McLeod cut on the marsh there for his little logging camp on the island last winter. Luckily for us he didn't use it all. We had to carry it in our blankets quite a distance to the hillside, where we spread it in long windrows to form the letters. The hillside was bare rock, so there was nothing else there to burn and so destroy the shape of the letters when you saw them. Then we cut hemlock boughs, and all the small dead wood within easy reach, and gathered in our blankets all the dry rubbish we could find in the woods and piled it all over the hay to make the letters last longer."

"When we saw your fire we did some hunting to light the big letters in fifty or more places at once. Then we saw you hide your fire a half dozen times; but we didn't feel sure our scheme had succeeded till we saw the lights of the launch approaching. We were happy just then, I tell you."

"But now, good-night, boys. We haven't had a square meal for six days, unless you count a small box of crackers we found on the launch. We are awfully stiff and sore besides, and must get home. Yes, thank you, we'll use the carriage; it was mighty good in you to think of it. I'm thankful we don't need the stretcher. Good-night, fellows, good-night."

## A TRAGEDY

BY DORIS WEBB

This is the short, sweet, sorrowful tale  
Of Jessica Jenkins Jones;  
She planted a packet of seeds with pride  
While her dog looked on with his head on the side  
And thought, "She's burying bones."



When Jessica left, he dug like mad  
In search of the luscious bones,  
So Jessica's garden it does not grow,  
And Jessica's dog is cross, and so  
Is Jessica Jenkins Jones.



## THE GARDEN

BY KATE HUDSON

In sun-kissed islands, leagues and leagues away,  
There lies a garden bright with flowers gay,  
And in the garden grows a stately tree;  
Beneath the tree's green branches widely spread  
And bearing flowers, white, pink and red,  
An arbor stands built of carved ivory;

This matchless table does a basket hold  
Fashioned of rubies set in ruddy gold  
And fastened with a diamond-studded key;  
And if you turn the key, and open wide  
The golden casket, you will find inside  
A parchment scroll, on which these words  
You'll see:

And in the arbor there 's table, made  
Of fragrant sandalwood and all inlaid  
With rings and cuticues of ebony;

"Oh, boy or girl, whate'er your name may be—  
Vincent or Rupert, Maude or Marjorie,  
Be truthful, faithful, helpful full of glee;  
Be kind, be good—and you will happy be."