

## George Waits for His Chums

by Louis Arundel

“What is it?” Josh exclaimed, as he scrambled to his knees.

“Buster is on the rampage again! That’s what comes of eating too much supper. He’s got a bad case of indigestion, I bet!” declared George, grumblingly; for he had come very near falling over the side of his boat when Josh made that sudden move, and it startled him not a little.

“But he’s got hold of something, I tell you! Look at him grabbing around. Must be a wildcat or something like that,” Josh went on.

“Faith ye’re all wrong,” spoke up Jimmie. “Sure it’s a monkey he’s huggin’ till his breast, so he be.”

“A monkey!” cried Herb, as he appeared behind the fat boy, holding a fryingpan threateningly in his hand.

“Yes, that’s what!” gasped Nick. “Don’t you see, a tame monkey, and with a little red cap, and a coat on. He was going through my pockets, I tell you, when I woke up—that is when I first felt him. Give us a hand here and help me hold the little scratcher. My! but he’s strong, and he tries to bite my nose every time.”

“Because you’re hurting him,” said Herb. “Wait till I get hold of that bit of rope he’s trailing behind. Now let him loose, Buster, but keep him away from your face. He’d scratch your eyes out.”

The queer little visitor seemed to be willing to submit, once Nick stopped squeezing him; for he immediately took off his red cap, and made quite a bow. Then he snatched up a small tin cup that was attached to a belt he wore, with a tiny chain, and held it out to Herb.

“Give him a penny, Herb,” laughed Jack.

“Yes, he recognizes an old acquaintance; help a poor fellow in distress, Herb!” Josh hastened to add.

“Where under the sun d’ye suppose he came from?” asked George, suspiciously.

“Must belong to some Italian organgrinder, I should say, judging from the uniform, and the piece of broken rope. Perhaps he’s run away, and wanted to become a stowaway on board Herb’s boat,” Jack went on.

“All right,” the other remarked, promptly, “anyhow, he knew a good boat when he saw one. Give him credit for that. But did you hear what Buster said about him feeling in his pockets? Now, I’ve heard it said that often these monkeys are taught to steal, going up into second-story windows, and grabbing things. Perhaps he was sent aboard right now to pick up anything he could find.”

“I tell you he knew all about vest pockets, as sure as you live,” announced Nick.

“Looks to me as if he had got something in his pocketbook right now!” declared Herb.

“What’s that? A monkey have a pocketbook? You’re poking fun at us!” cried Josh.

“I am, eh? You observe me,” said Herb, as with a dextrous movement he seized upon the monkey, and by main strength forced him to eject something from his mouth.

“Say, it’s a real watch, fellows!” cried Nick, astonished; “he had it right in his cheek, sure he did.”

“And it’s my little dollar nickel watch,” said Herb. “Shows he searched me before trying Buster. All the same if it’d been a hundred dollar gold repeater. He’s a thief, sure enough. What’ll we do with him, fellows?”

“Tie him up, and if nobody comes after him, we’ll keep Jocko,” suggested Josh.

“Think he’d be lots of fun, I suppose,” grumbled Nick. “But if he stays it’s got to be on another boat than this. The little fiend would have it in for me. He’d worry the life out of me; and I just can’t afford to lose any flesh.”

“Changed your tune, eh?” taunted Josh. “Seems to me I’ve heard you trying all sorts of ways to get thin.”

“That was before I took notice of the horrible example we had along, of the living skeleton,” retorted Nick. “After that I just made up my mind to remain nice and plump. Some people look best when they’re fat, you know.”

“There, he’s thinking of Sallie again,” remarked Josh.

“But we haven’t seen a sign of the *Mermaid*,” remarked George; “and I reckon she’s left here for the Soo region ahead of us. But Herb, find some way to fasten the little rascal up for tonight, so he can’t do any mischief. If his owner comes for him in the morning we’ll give him a scare.”

Herb managed to do this, although Nick declared he would be afraid to take a wink of sleep for fear of being choked, or something else as dreadful. All the same when his time came to give up sentry duty, no one heard so much as a “peep” from Nick again until daylight arrived.

It was arranged on the following morning that they should explore the island, in order to see its wonders and beauties, in two detachments, each consisting of three. Jack learned that bicycles could be hired close by, and mounted on these he and Herb and Josh made the grand rounds, allowing nothing to escape them.

Then after lunch the others took wheel and carried out the same programme, even to visiting the old blockhouse on the hill, and viewing the charming marine spectacle from the top of the little bluff.

As they gathered around late in the afternoon to compare notes, and discuss the various matters that interested them, Jack noted first of all that the shrewd little monkey, which had been dubbed Jocko, was still aboard the *Comfort*.

Nobody had shown up to inquire about him. Nick was for going ashore and spreading the news of the find far and wide; but the others refused to allow him. They really believed that Jocko had been sent aboard by his master to steal; and that this party was afraid to claim him now.

“If we have to take him along he’ll give us lots of fun,” remarked Jack.

“Yes, Buster is only thinking that there’d be one more mouth to feed, and that might cut his share of the rations down a peg,” asserted Josh.

“Now that’s where you wrong me,” declared the fat boy, solemnly. “If you insist on hearing what I was thinking about, I’ll tell you. Suppose we should get stormbound somewhere up on the twisting St. Mary’s river, or on the biggest fresh water lake in the world—why, you see we could always turn to Jocko, and make a good meal. I remember reading that monkeys were just prime.”

“Oh! you cannibal!” cried the horrified Josh. “Why, that poor little innocent looks just like a baby.”

“Yes,” retorted Nick, “your mother showed me your picture when you were six months old, and there *is* a close resemblance.”

Night came on, and there was no claimant, so Jocko ate supper with the boys. He was already making good friends, and seemed very well satisfied with his new lot. Perhaps he missed the cuffing and beating he was accustomed to; but he could do without that very well; and the eating must have appealed to him strongly.

In the morning they left soon after breakfast. The day opened fair, and they knew there was a long trip before them if they hoped to cross the head of Lake Huron, and follow the winding channel of the St. Mary’s river so as to reach Sault Ste. Marie by night.

Fortunately the breeze, what little there was, chanced to be in the north for a change. This allowed them to keep close to the southern shore of the peninsula for some hours, following its contour and avoiding the pounding that heavy seas always brought in their train.

Finally they entered the narrow strait between the mainland and big Drummond Island. Here the bustling port of Detour was passed. Nick hinted about going ashore and doing a little marketing; but Jack vetoed that proposition.

“Plenty of time to do all that after we get to the Soo tonight,” he observed; and Nick knew there was no appeal from his decision.

“Is that Canada over yonder?” asked Josh, pointing to the island off their lee.

“No, Drummond belongs to Michigan,” Jack replied. “Further on though, we’ll strike St. Joseph’s Island, and that is a part of Canada. So we’ll all step ashore just to say we’ve been outside the U. S. for once.”

“And that Mud Lake you were telling us about is somewhere along there, ain’t it?” Herb asked.

“We’ll find it, I reckon,” replied the commodore, drily.

They did, and had reason to remember it too. Sometimes the waterway bearing the outlet of Lake Superior to the lower lakes was very wide and imposing. Then again it would narrow until Nick expressed his firm conviction that they had taken the wrong channel, and would be stopped, and have to return over their course.

But Jack kept his charts before him as he led, and was positive he had made no mistake of that sort. Occasionally George would be unable to restrain his impetuous nature. At such times he would shoot ahead of the others, to make a little rush of perhaps a mile, and then slow up to await their coming, being always careful not to lose sight of his chums.

But alas, George did this prank just once too often. He heard Jack say some time before that they were passing through Mud Lake, and must be careful; but thought this referred to getting lost in some side passage that looked promising.

“Wait up at the head yonder; you’re too slow for me!” he called out, as the *Wireless* left the bunch, and cut through the water like an arrow shot from an archer’s bow.

“Lookout!” warned Jack; but George who was quite confident concerning his own ability to manage his affairs, just waved a hand back, and continued to speed for all his racing boat was worth.

Jack was sitting there where he could manage the wheel and continue to study the chart spread in front of him, when he heard a wild whoop from Jimmie.

“Look! look yander!”

Jack was just in time to see poor Josh take a flying header into the water, when the speed boat came to an abrupt stop on a concealed mudbank.

The sound of the tremendous splash floated back to the ears of the others, causing Nick to roll over, and make the boat quiver with his riotous laughter; for that Josh should be the victim of this ridiculous accident gave the fat boy exceeding great joy.

Source:

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