

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Lichtenberg Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lenz Hambrecht Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Hanrieder Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma Verne Hägele Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil
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**The Outdoor Girls in a Winter
Camp Glorious Days on Skates
and Ice Boats**

Laura Lee Hope

Imprint

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series.

Author: Laura Lee Hope

Cover design: toepferschumann, Berlin (Germany)

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg (Germany)

ISBN: 978-3-8491-7039-4

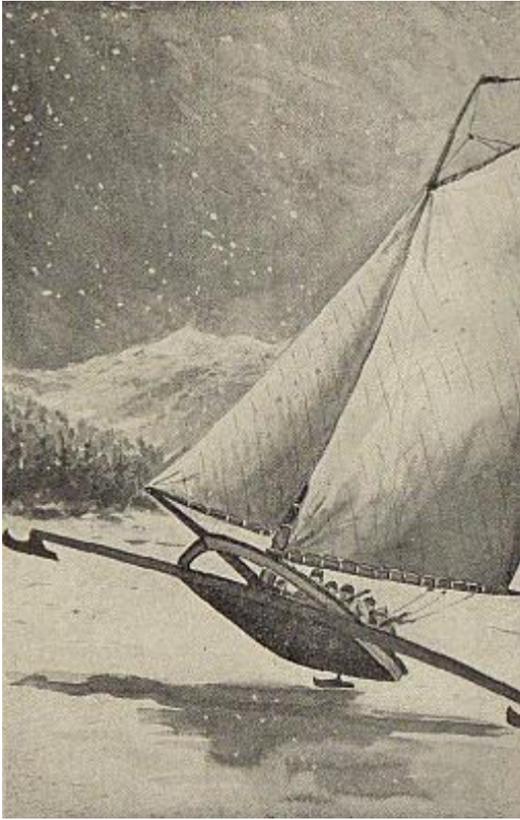
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"SLOW DOWN – DON'T RUN INTO ANYTHING!" BEGGED BETTY.

The Outdoor Girls in a Winter Camp. *Frontispiece (Page 106.)*

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THE OUTDOOR GIRLS IN A WINTER CAMP

CHAPTER I

DANGER

"How cold it is!" exclaimed Grace Ford, wrapping closer about her a fur neck-piece, and plunging her gloved hands deeper into the pockets of her maroon sweater. "I had no idea it was so chilling!"

"Nonsense!" cried Betty Nelson, her cheeks aglow. "Skate about, and you'll soon be warm enough. Isn't it glorious, Mollie?"

"Surely, and the ice is perfect. Come on Grace, and we'll see who'll be first to the bend!" and Mollie, her dark eyes dancing under the spell of the day, circled about the almost shivering Grace, doing a gliding waltz on skates.

"I don't want to race!" protested the tall, slim girl who had complained about the weather.

"Oh, but you must!" insisted Betty. "Come, we'll have a short, sharp one, and then you'll feel so warm you'll wonder you ever said it was chilly."

"I wish I had brought along that vacuum bot [2] tle of hot chocolate, as I intended," murmured Grace, reflectively.

"Nobody stopped you!" exclaimed Mollie, a trifle sharply. Of late she had had less and less patience with the "confectionery-failing" of Grace, as she termed it.

"Yes, you did!" declared the cold one. "You and Bet were in such a rush I didn't have time. I wish I hadn't come skating," and Grace permitted as much of a frown to gather on her pretty face as she ever indulged herself in—for Grace, be it known, was just a trifle vain, and desperately afraid of a wrinkle.

"Oh, well, come on and skate!" invited Betty. "Amy and I will race you and Mollie, Grace. That will—make us all feel better," for the Little Captain, as she was often called, saw just the shadow of a

cloud gathering over the two chums, who seldom, or never, quarreled.

"Does Amy want to?" asked Grace, glancing at a quiet girl who was adjusting her skates. Amy was always quiet, but of late her chums had noted that she was more than usually so. And they guessed, rightly, that it had to do with the mystery surrounding her identity, which mystery Amy had almost given up hope of solving.

"Yes, I'll race," said Amy gently, and she [3] smiled. Amy was always willing to oblige, and she did not often consult her own personal feelings.

Something like a look of disappointment passed over the countenance of Grace. Seeing it Mollie laughed.

"Grace was hoping Amy would say no, so she could get out of it!" cried vivacious Mollie. "That's the time you didn't say the right thing, Amy."

"Oh, well, if nothing but a race will satisfy you, I suppose I must," and Grace gave in "gracefully." "I'm nearly perished standing still, anyhow, and skating can't make me much worse."

"It will be all the better," insisted Betty. "Now we'll race in this fashion—team work to count. Amy and I in one team, you and Grace in the other, Mollie. Whichever member of the team gets to the bend first will win. You see," Betty explained, "one of a team might fall, or turn her ankle, or get tired, and then the other could keep on. It's like a relay race."

"Oh, well, if I have to—I suppose I have to," and Grace said this with such a doleful sigh that the others laughed heartily, even quiet Amy joining.

"On your marks!" cried Betty. "Let's show [4] that we are worthy of our names—true Outdoor Girls."

"Show who?" asked Grace looking around.

"Well, here comes your brother Will, for one, and I think Allen Washburn and Frank Haley are with him," spoke Betty, shading her eyes with her hands, and gazing off across the sparkling surface of the frozen Argono River.

"Can't you see Percy Falconer?" asked Mollie mischievously, referring to a certain foppish lad, who seemed to have a great fondness for the Little Captain.

"If there was any snow here I'd wash your face!" cried Betty, her cheeks flaming more than before—for, be it known, she did not reciprocate the feeling that "burned in Percy's manly bosom," to quote the rather jeering remarks of Grace.

"I'd rather Allen would do it," murmured Mollie. "That is, if you will let him, Betty."

"Let him? Why shouldn't I?" demanded Betty rather sharply, but she turned her head away, and bit her lips.

"Oh, nothing, only the other night, when you and he went on such a long walk down the road, I thought perhaps you might have come to some understanding— —"

[5]

"Mollie Billette, if you don't stop— —!" began Betty, and then the approach of three young men on their ringing skates forced her to conclude rather quickly.

"Hello, girls," greeted Will Ford, the brother of the willowy Grace, "what's doing?" Will was just the opposite of his sister, being rather short and chunky.

"We're going to have a race," said Betty quickly, perhaps to forestall any resumption of the embarrassing conversation, now that the subject of it was present.

"A race!" exclaimed Allen, a rising young lawyer. "May we join in?"

"This is strictly a ladies' relay race," explained Mollie. "You may be judges, or starters and offer the prizes, though, if you like."

"And the prizes— —?" suggested Frank, who was Will's special chum.

"Hot chocolates when we go back to town," said Betty quickly. "I know Grace will agree."

"Indeed I will," the latter said. "I don't care how much fun you make of me, but I am cold, and — and — —"

"Us 'ikes tandy — don't us!" interrupted Will, mimicking the little twin brother and sister of Mollie, whose penchant for sweets was only equalled by the longing of Grace.

"Easy," said Betty softly. "Well, if we're [6] going to race, let's do it. Boys, you see fair play. It's to be down to the bend and back."

"No, not back!" declared Amy. "I can't do as much as that at top speed."

"Well, then, just to the bend," agreed Betty, indicating a spot where the river made a turn, about a mile away.

"We'll skate along," suggested Allen. "It is a bit chilly, and the exercise will be good for us. Get ready girls. I'm sorry we haven't a pistol to fire."

"This will do!" exclaimed Will, producing a paper bag. "It *had* chocolates in," he added with a sly look at his sister.

"Oh!" she cried.

"Nothing doing!" he added quickly if slangily. "Nothing but crumbs," and he proceeded to empty them into his mouth, and then blew up the bag. "When I burst it — go!" he called.

The sharp report of the exploding bag echoed on the keen, wintry air, and the four girls glided off on their skates. Mollie and Betty, the two best skaters, rather hung back, letting the more unskillful Amy and Grace lead the way. The boys skated together in the rear.

"When are you going to spurt?" called Will, as he saw that the pace was not increasing much. [7]

"Time enough," replied Betty, narrowly watching her rival, Mollie.

"That isn't skating!" declared Frank with a laugh. "You girls are only creeping."

But at that instant Grace, at a signal from Mollie, darted ahead, and then the race began in earnest, for Amy, at a nod from the Little Captain did likewise, and then Mollie and Betty, holding them-

selves in readiness for the burst of speed that would take place at the finish, came after.

"Now they're off!" cried Will. "A pound of chocolates to the winner!"

Three-quarters of the way to the bend Amy showed signs of fatigue. Betty, noting it, called to her:

"I'll take it now."

"So will I!" agreed Mollie, and Grace, gliding to one side, allowed her partner to take the lead.

"Now they're off!" cried Will again.

"Thank goodness, I'm warm, anyhow!" remarked Grace, a rosy glow replacing the former paleness of her cheeks.

Leaving Amy and Grace to follow on more leisurely, the youths rushed up to see the finish of the race. It was close, but by unanimous decision they awarded the contest to Betty. [8]

"Oh, I'm so glad you won, anyhow!" declared Mollie with fine spirit. "You earned it, Betty dear, but I thought I was going to beat you, until the very end."

"Yes, and you might have, only your left skate was loose," said Betty. "I noticed it. Suppose we try it over?"

"Indeed not! My skate did loosen," spoke Mollie, "but I wasn't going to say anything about it. You won fairly Betty, and I'm too exhausted to try again. Now if the boys will — —"

"Oh, we'll fulfill our part of the program!" declared Will promptly. "Come on back to the village whenever you like, and order what you wish. Or we can go on to the store of the poetical Mr. Lagg if you prefer."

"It's too far," protested Grace, who, with Amy, had come up now. "Besides he doesn't serve hot chocolate."

"Then thou shalt have thy hot chocolate, sister mine!" cried Will, rubbing her ears.

"Oh, stop it!" she begged. "You hurt dreadfully, Will!"

"That's the way to make them warm," and he got back out of the way in time to avoid having his own ears soundly boxed.

Slowly the young people skated back. There were a number of others on the ice now, and [9] soon our friends were in the midst of quite a throng.

"Here come Alice Jallow and Kittie Rossmore," murmured Mollie. "I hope they don't tag along after us."

"They're likely to," said Grace. "Though since that last little trouble they haven't been as unpleasant as they used to be."

The boys circled away from Betty and her chums momentarily, and the two girls referred to came skating past. They bowed rather coldly, and then, an acquaintance of theirs joining them, they stopped to chat with the latter. Mollie's skate again becoming loosened, she halted to adjust it, her friends waiting for her. It was thus that they overheard what Alice Jallow was saying to Margaret Black, the girl who had just come up.

"Yes," Alice spoke, "she gives herself as many airs as if she was somebody, instead of a nobody."

"A nobody?" repeated Margaret, wonderingly, "why — —"

"Yes, indeed! She isn't even sure her name is Stonington, and as for Mr. and Mrs. Stonington being her uncle and aunt as she says, why, I heard the other day that there is doubt of that even. She and her chums think themselves high [10] and mighty, but we wouldn't go with anybody that didn't know who they were!"

"But I thought there was something about a flood in the West — —
"

"Oh, yes, that's the story she gave out, but I, for one don't believe it. She's a nobody, and that's all there is to it!"

Then Alice, leaving her bitter words echoing on the wintry air, which carried them clearly to poor Amy, skated off. Perhaps Alice had not meant that she should be overheard, but such was the case. She did not take the trouble to look and see if the one to whom she referred was within hearing distance.

At the first intimation of what was coming Betty had started off, as did the other girls. Mollie seemed to have a notion of rushing over to Alice and the others, but Grace, by a gesture, warned her not to.

Poor Amy's eyes filled with tears. She turned aside and Betty made as though to skate after her, intending to offer words of sympathy, but this time Mollie shook her head.

"Perhaps she had better be alone for a little while," she whispered. "Sometimes that is the best way to pass it off. Oh, but that Alice Jallow is a — cat!"

No one disagreed with Mollie this time. [11]

Tears blinded the eyes of poor Amy. She skated on out of the crowd, toward a part of the frozen river where there were no merry-makers. She did not want to look on pleasure now, for her heart ached from the bitter words she had overheard — words, she realized, that might be but too true.

Blindly she skated on, not heeding, and scarcely caring where she went. Her only desire was to get away where she could be by herself, to think it out — to try and devise a way of setting at rest all the rumors about her. For the rumors had grown apace of late, and from a source she could not determine. It might be that what she had just heard was a clue.

Amy had thought of appealing to Mr. and Mrs. Stonington, with whom she lived, and who, for many years she had regarded as father and mother. Then, a few months back, she had learned that they were but uncle and aunt. Now it seemed that she was to lose even this relationship. It was a bitter blow, especially to one so young in years.

To briefly mention the mystery of Amy, I might say that she was picked up when an infant, afloat on a raft in a flood in a western city. Pinned to her baby dress was an envelope containing the name of Mr. Stonington of Deepdale. [12] He had been telegraphed for, and took charge of the infant.

It was supposed that the mother of the baby was a distant relative of Mrs. Stonington, for the latter had a cousin who resided in the

western city. It was believed that, finding herself about to perish, the mother did what she could to insure the salvation of her child, and pinned a note to her dress so that relatives would look after her if the baby was saved.

But only the envelope was found, together with an old and torn diary that gave no tangible clue.

And this was the mystery of Amy's life. As I have said, after living for years in the belief that Mr. and Mrs. Stonington were her parents, they had told her the truth. Now it seemed that there was to be another change.

"Oh, but why must it be so?" mourned poor Amy. "Why can't I be like other girls?"

The tears rushed to her eyes. She could not see, and she skated rapidly on, only wanting to get away.

She heard the ringing of steel runners behind her, but would not turn. Then a voice—a boy's voice—called:

"Look out! Look out where you're going, Amy! The ice is thin up there, and you're go [13] ing right toward an air-hole! There's danger! Look out!"

If Amy heard she gave no sign nor heed. On she skated, and then the voice behind her called in startled tones:

"What do you mean? Amy, turn! Turn back before it is too late! You'll be drowned!"

The skater behind fairly rushed forward, for he had seen what the tear-blinded girl had not—black water showing through a hole in the ice. And Amy was headed directly for this opening. [14]

CHAPTER II

A FINE CHANCE

"That Alice Jallow is certainly the meanest girl in Deepdale!" declared Mollie, with vehemence.

"And Kittie isn't much better," added Grace, with spirit. "I don't see how Margaret can go with them."

"She's a newcomer here, that's the reason," said Betty — bouncing Betty she was now, for she was whirling about and "teetering" on her skates in a dizzying fashion. "When she gets to know those girls she won't have any more to do with them than — we do."

"And there was a time, even after they made those first slurring remarks about Amy, that they seemed real nice," spoke Grace.

"It was too good to last," asserted Mollie. "Oh — the cat!"

Mollie shot out the word as though she would like to exercise some of the proclivities of a feline herself, and scratch. [15]

"What possessed her to stop where she did, and talk loud enough for Amy to hear?" asked Grace.

"It's hard to tell," decided Betty with a sigh. "Shall we go after her?" and she nodded in the direction taken by Amy, who could not now be seen because of the intervening crowds.

"No; best let her cry it out, poor child," said Mollie, softly. "She was crying when she skated away."

"Well, if we can find the boys we'll just mildly hint that those chocolates are about due," observed Grace, and she and the others looked about for Will and his chums, little dreaming of the danger which, at that moment, menaced poor Amy.

Those of you who have read the previous books of this series need no special introduction to my heroines. Others may care for just a brief one. The initial volume, entitled "The Outdoor Girls of Deepdale; Or, Camping and Tramping for Fun and Health," told how Betty, Mollie, Grace and Amy decided to go on a walking tour.

Incidentally they solved the mystery of a five hundred dollar bill, and won the lasting gratitude of a Mr. Henry Blackford, a young business man.

In the second book, "The Outdoor Girls at [16] Rainbow Lake; Or, The Stirring Cruise of the Motor Boat *Gem*," there was a queer ghostly mystery on an island, but the girls were a match for it. As may be guessed from the title, the story has to do with boating, Betty having become the proud possessor of a fine craft.

When Mollie Billette got her touring car the girls saw no end of good times ahead of them, and their hopes were fully realized. The third volume, named "The Outdoor Girls in a Motor Car; Or, The Haunted Mansion of Shadow Valley," involved the girls from the very start in a series of queer happenings. They could not discover, until the very end, why a certain girl fell out of a tree. And as for the strange manifestations in the mysterious old mansion—but there, it would not be fair to betray the secret in such a fashion.

The beautiful Fall weather gave the girls a chance to make long tours in the car, and they enjoyed every minute spent in the open. And now they were on the edge of winter.

A cold snap had frozen over the Argono River, on the pleasant banks of which was located Deepdale, the thriving town where our friends lived. And they were out enjoying the sport when Amy overheard the cruel words that sent her off crying. [17]

I might add something about the personal lives of the four chums, by saying that Betty was an only child, that Grace had a lovable brother Will, and Mollie a small brother and sister—Paul and Dodo—twins, who were alternately called the "cutest" and the "most mischievous" youngsters in existence. Of Amy's mystery I have already hinted.

When Will Ford saw the danger in which his sister's chum was unconsciously placing herself he fairly raced forward. There was need to act promptly, and Will did so. Skating in a diagonal direction he fairly collided with the girl, and forced her out of her course, and away from the dangerous hole that yawned there just before her.

"Amy!" Will cried. "What is the matter?"

Amy looked up with a start, and Will saw that she had been crying.

"I—I don't know," she stammered. "I guess I wasn't looking where I was going."

"I should say not!" cried Will. "Look there!" and he pointed to the open water that seemed so black and ugly in contrast with the pure ice.

"Oh—oh!" she gasped. "Was—was I skating toward that?"

[18]

"Right toward it!" exclaimed Will. "I couldn't do anything else than shove you to one side. I hope I didn't hurt you."

"Oh, no, Will, it was good of you. I—I didn't know what I was doing. I was thinking—thinking—"

She hesitated, and again tears came into her eyes.

"Can I do anything for you—has anything happened?" he asked, eagerly. "Has anyone—"

"Oh, no, Will. It is—nothing."

"Then let's go back to the others," he proposed. "They may be getting anxious about you."

"No, Will, I'd rather not go back—just now. I'll go on—home." Amy hesitated over the word. "I can take a short cut across the fields."

"Then let me take off your skates," he said, gently. Perhaps he guessed at something that had occurred. "Come over to shore and I'll have them off in a jiffy. Then I'll walk home with you."

"No, Will," said Amy, in a low voice. "I had rather go alone, really I would. Just tell the girls—"

She hesitated again, and seemed unable to speak. [19]

"Tell them I am all right—that I want to be alone. They will understand."

"Very well." He skated with her to the bank, where she sat on a log. Then, with her skates dangling over her shoulder, Amy set off

across the snow-covered fields alone—with bowed head—and into her eyes the tears came again as she thought of what she had heard.

Will watched her, shook his head once or twice, as though puzzled, and then skated back toward his sister and the others.

"Where's Amy?" Grace demanded, anxiously, as he came in sight.

"Gone home."

"Home? Why didn't you go with her?" asked Mollie, quickly.

"She wouldn't let me. Say, she acted mighty funny. She was skating along, looking down, and she came within a few feet of going into an air hole. I had to almost knock her to one side. She seemed dazed. Did anything happen?"

"Yes, there did," said Grace, promptly. "And the less said about it the better. It was that horrid Alice Jallow making slurring remarks about Amy. We won't take any notice of her after this. Oh, how mean she is!" Briefly, she told Will what had happened.

"That accounts for it," he said. "Poor Amy! [20] No wonder she didn't look where she was going. She might have been drowned."

"Don't say that!" cried Betty, sharply.

"Why not, when it's the truth?"

Betty gave the woman's reason.

"Because."

Frank and Allen came skating up.

"Come!" cried Grace, as joyfully as possible under the circumstances. "The prizes—our chocolates, boys!"

"Of course!" added Allen. "But where is Amy?"

"She'll be along later—maybe," and Will winked at his chum as a signal not to be too inquisitive. The young lawyer understood and nodded.

Soon the party of young people were in a drug store, partaking of hot chocolates, and talking of the fun on the ice, while Grace spent some time at the candy counter, selecting a new variety of chocolates.