

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 Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne 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 Strachwitz Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik 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
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus Moltke
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz
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THE GO AHEAD BOYS AND THE RACING MOTOR-BOAT

BY

ROSS KAY

Author of "Dodging the North Sea Mines," "With Joffre on the Battle Line," "Fighting in France," "The Go Ahead Boys on Smugglers' Island," "The Go Ahead Boys and the Treasure Cave," etc. etc.

Preface

Every normal boy loves a motor-boat, but words fail to express his enthusiasm when that boat is also a racer. Behind the events recorded in this story are certain facts, so that the tale is largely true. The author will be glad if the account of life in the open, the adventures and fortunes, good or ill, the contests and exciting experiences interest his readers even partly as much as they did the boys who shared in the actual occurrences. I have tried to write a story filled with action, but devoid of sensationalism and false representations. If my boy friends enjoy the company of the Go Ahead boys I shall feel repaid for my labor.

Ross Kay

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CHAPTER I

THE START

"Here we go!"

"We're off!"

"Look quick, or we'll be out of your sight."

The long, low motor-boat glided smoothly out from the dock to which it had been made fast. Behind it the water boiled as if it had been stirred by some invisible furnace. The graceful lines of the boat, its manifest power and speed, formed a fitting complement to the bright sunshine and clear air which rested over the waters of the Hudson River.

On the dock, which the Black Growler was leaving so rapidly behind her, were assembled various members of the families represented by the four boys on board the motor-boat. Younger brothers and sisters, two uncles, several aunts, not to mention the various fathers and mothers united in a final word of farewell. Handkerchiefs were waved and the sounds of the last faint call came across the intervening waters.

The Black Growler was leaving Yonkers to be gone more than a month. The trip was one to which the Go Ahead boys had looked forward with steadily increasing interest.

In the first place the boat belonged to Fred Button, one of the quartet. Fred now was at the wheel and the expression of pride on his face as he occasionally glanced behind him at his companions was one that indicated something of the feeling in his heart. And indeed there was a substantial basis for Fred's pride. Among the many boats on the river the Black Growler moved as if she belonged in a class of her own. People on board the cat boats or yachts, and even the passengers on a great passing steamer, all stood looking with manifest interest at the dark-colored little boat which was speeding over the waters almost like a thing alive.

Fred Button, the owner and present pilot of the swift motor-boat was the smallest, or at least the shortest, of the four boys. His age was the same as that of his companions, all of whom were about seventeen. His round body and rounder face were evidences that in time what Fred lacked in length he might provide in breadth. Among his companions he was a great favorite and frequently was called by one of the several nicknames which his comrades had bestowed upon him. Peewee or Pygmy, the latter sometimes shortened to Pyg, were names to which he answered almost as readily as to his Christian name.

His most intimate friend of the four was John Clemens, whose nickname, "String," indicated what his physique was. He was six feet three inches in height, although his weight was not much more than that of the more diminutive Fred. "The long and the short of it" the two boys sometimes were called when they were seen together.

Grant was the one member of the Go Ahead boys who easily led in whatever he attempted. His standing in school was high and his time in the hundred yards dash stood now as a school record. His fund of general information was so large that some years before, in a joke he had been dubbed Socrates. That expressive name, however, had recently been shortened to Soc.

George Washington Sanders, one of the most popular boys in his school, frequently was referred to as Pop, by which designation his friends indirectly expressed their admiration for one who, even if he bore the name of the Father of his Country, was laughingly referred to as the Papa of the Land. This nickname in the course of time had been shortened to Pop.

Already the four Go Ahead boys had had several stirring experiences in their summer vacations. One of these had been spent at Mackinac Island where their adventures had been chiefly concerned with Smugglers' Island. Together they had made a voyage to the West Indies where their experiences on a desert island have been already recorded.[1] Together they had investigated the mysteries connected with an old house near George's country home, a place shunned by the country folk because of its reputation of being haunted.[2] Another delightful summer had been spent by the boys

in a camp in the Canadian woods.[3] All these experiences had only prepared the way for the days which now were confronting them.

Every one was confident that the Black Growler would give a good account of herself in the motor-boat races which were to be held on the St. Lawrence River. The grandfather of Fred Button, who was the fortunate owner of an island in the majestic river, had invited the boys to spend a month with him in his cottage. Incidentally he had explained that their visit would be at the time when the boat races occurred, which he had no question they all would greatly enjoy. He was unaware that Mr. Button had already purchased a motor-boat of marvelous speed, although at the time he had no thought that it would be entered in any contest or races.

Yielding to Fred's persuasions at last his father had somewhat reluctantly given his consent for the boat to be entered, as well as for Fred to invite the other three Go Ahead boys to spend the coming weeks together on the island.

All these thoughts were more or less in the minds of the Go Ahead boys when the Black Growler swiftly started on her long voyage.

"Are you going to keep her going like this all the time?" demanded John as the swift little boat steadily continued on her way.

"She doesn't like to slow up," replied Fred glancing behind him as he spoke.

"She had better slow up than blow up," retorted John.

"No danger of that," laughed Fred. "The first thing you know we'll be in the canal."

"I hope not," laughed Grant. "It will be a great day when the Go Ahead boys learn how to use the English language. You don't mean 'in' the canal, you mean 'on' the canal."

"Perhaps he means what my grandfather used to call the 'ragin' canaw!'," suggested Grant.

"Maybe we'll be both IN it and ON it," laughed Fred. "If we should happen to strike a rock or bump into another boat it wouldn't be very hard to understand what would follow."

"That makes me think," said Grant solemnly. "Are you sure that you know how to steer? If we were traveling on the Erie Canal as they used to go soon after it was opened--"

"When was that?" broke in George.

"1825. The Erie Canal extended from Albany to Lake Erie and was constructed chiefly because DeWitt Clinton worked for it with might and main from 1817 to 1825."

"Good for you!" laughed George, "It's pretty hard to trip up old Soc when it comes to figures. Now, I myself happen to know how long the canal is and so I shall be able to tell whether you reeled off your figures, depending upon our ignorance or whether you gave them because you knew what they are. How long is the Erie Canal?" he added slowly.

"Three hundred and fifty and one-half miles, though I find some authorities give it as three hundred and fifty-two miles," laughed Grant.

"Splendid! Splendid!" retorted George solemnly. "I suppose you know all about all the other great canals too."

"I have looked them up," replied Grant simply. "I don't believe in starting off on a trip like ours without finding out some of the facts connected with it."

"Don't ask me! Don't ask me!" protested John quickly. "I haven't been looking them up, so I don't know."

"I didn't say I was going to ask you," retorted Grant. "I told you I was going to inform you. I looked them up for the benefit of my benighted companions. Now there's the Cape Cod Canal," he added. "I don't believe there's one of you that knows anything about it."

"If we don't stop you, there won't be one of us that doesn't know ALL about it," said John, pretending to be discouraged by the attitude of his friend. "I suppose we'll have to have it," he added solemnly, "so the sooner we get it out of the way the better. Tell us and have it over with."

"The Cape Cod Canal," said Grant as he looked sternly at John, "is eight miles long, it is twenty-five feet deep and one hundred feet wide."

"My, now I am almost ready to go back home!" said George solemnly. "I cannot imagine finding out anything more important than that. Have you noticed these Palisades we have been passing? Did you ever see anything more beautiful than the river? Pretty soon we'll come to the Highlands and to West Point and I want to say to you right now, Soc, that I would rather know about these things than I would to hear about a ditch that is one hundred feet wide and twenty-five feet deep and eight miles long. What's the good of knowing that anyway?"

"I shall try to improve your mind before we come back home," said Grant, shaking his head.

"You don't expect to accomplish much in just a month, do you?" interposed George.

"Not much more than to get ready to prepare to begin to start to commence on the contract."

"My, what a fluent talker my friend is!" said George. "He never is at a loss for a word. It doesn't make any difference to him whether he knows what it means or not."

"Never mind your old facts and figures," spoke up Fred. "I want you to notice that big! black yacht yonder. Isn't she a beauty?"

"She is that," replied Grant with enthusiasm. "I can almost make out her name," he added as he looked through the field-glasses. "There it is C-a-l-e-Caledonia," he added quickly.

"They have got quite a good many people on board," suggested George as he noticed a group of boys and girls near the rail, who apparently were as deeply interested in the motor-boat as the Go Ahead boys were in the big, black yacht.

"Let's have a race with her," suggested George. "Start her up, Fred, and see if the yacht will try to keep up with us."

Fred laughingly complied with the request, although neither of his companions had any suspicion of the many experiences they were to have with the passengers and crew of the Caledonia before either vessel returned to New York.

[1] See "The Go Ahead Boys and The Treasure Cave."

[2] "The Go Ahead Boys and the Mysterious Old House."

[3] See "The Go Ahead Boys and the Island Camp."

CHAPTER II

ON THE WAY

The proposed race, however, did not take place. The graceful Caledonia steadily continued on her way without increasing her speed. There were calls from the deck where the boys noticed several young people standing near the rail. It was plain that there was great admiration on each boat for the beauty and speed of the other. There were calls and cheers, and waving of handkerchiefs to express their feelings. Perhaps it was in part due to this fact that the Black Growler soon began to pull away from the larger boat and not long afterward the Caledonia was left far behind.

"That's the kind of a boat I'm going to have when I get rich!" said George enthusiastically. "I should like to spend about four months a year on board a craft like that."

"That's all right," spoke up Grant, "but I think after about two months of it you would want something else. You see I know you better than you know yourself."

"Yes, I see," retorted George sharply. "You make me think of what Josh Billings said that 'it's a good deal better not to know so many things than it is to know so many things that ain't so!'"

"Never you mind, fellows," spoke up Fred. "This boat suits me all right. You wait until you see that cup the Black Growler is going to win."

"I hope we shan't have to wait too long," said John dryly.

"You'll wait until the race comes off," declared Fred. "I'm not taking any cups before I win them, but when the time comes you wait and see me run away from any boat that tries to keep up with us. I have been on the St. Lawrence before and unless there is something a good deal better than I have ever seen there, we shall simply show our heels to any motor-boats on the river. And they say there are more motor-boats between Clayton and Ogdensburg than anywhere else in America."

"How many?" inquired John.

"I have been told that there are more than a thousand."

"Well," said George, "I'm deeply impressed by the modesty of Peewee. He simply thinks this boat will outclass nine hundred and ninety-nine others that will be madly chasing him all summer long, trying to keep pace with him."

"But he hasn't won the cup yet," said Grant quietly.

"That's right. That's right," spoke up Fred, pretending to be annoyed by the bantering of his friends. "There are always some people that try to take the joy out of life. I heard of an old man the other day who was so disgruntled that when he met a friend on the street who saluted him with a hearty 'good morning' this old man looked all over the sky to make sure he couldn't find a cloud somewhere and say that it wasn't a 'good' morning."

"What did he do if he didn't find any?" laughed George.

"Why he put his hand on his stomach as if he had a pain and shook his head and closed his eyes and groaned out, 'Yes, it's a fine day, but I am sure it is a weather-breeder. We'll have rain tomorrow.'"

"Do you know there are a lot of people like that?" said George. "I met an old woman up near our farm one summer who always said when anybody asked her how she was that she 'enjoyed' poor health. And I guess she did. I never knew any one who took such pride in her aches and pains as she did. One day when the doctor had been to see her she had told him all the pains she suffered and the poor old doctor had to sit there and listen to her for almost an hour. Finally, when he left she started out of the house after him calling to him to come back because she had just thought of another ache that she hadn't told him about."

The boys laughed and silence for a time rested upon the little boat. The Black Growler was moving swiftly and still was attracting attention from every boat she met. Following the channel they kept well out in the river, but the towering hills and the attractive shores were all within sight and manifestly did much to impress the Go Ahead boys.

"Tell me, Fred," spoke up John at last. "Do they have these races on the St. Lawrence every summer?"

"They have had for the past few years and they have had water sports too."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, they have swimming, tilting contests, canoe races, diving and I don't know what all."

"Did you ever go in any of them?" inquired John.

A solemn expression came over Fred's face as he said, "Yes, once."

"What did you go into?"

"I tried to walk the greased pole. There was a silver cup on the end of it and the fellow who could walk out and take it could claim it."

"Did you get the cup?"

"I did not," replied Fred shortly.

"I'm surprised, Peewee. I don't know a fellow in all my acquaintance that I think could walk better on a greased pole than you."

"Huh," muttered Fred. "You ought to have seen me. That pole was a part of a telegraph pole. It stuck out from the dock about fifteen feet. It was covered with grease and the grease had been rubbed in."

"How many times were you allowed to try?" asked George.

"Five."

"And you couldn't go in five trials?"

"I didn't go. The first time I stepped on the pole my feet flew out from under me and I sat down on the river about six or seven feet below. I sat down hard too."

"Did you enjoy it?" laughed John.

"I did not," replied Fred slowly, "but the people on the docks and along the banks seemed to have a fine time."

"What did you do next?" laughed George.

"I tied some old sacking on my feet and tried to wipe up the grease as I went along."

"And didn't that work?"

"Nay, verily it didn't work. I took my seat that time on the pole and then when I slipped, I tried to throw my arms around it. But for some good reason I didn't delay very long, before I dropped with a splash into the St. Lawrence."

"I hope they will have those things this summer," spoke up John.

"You would be a good one to walk on a greased pole," said George soberly. "You wouldn't take much space and if you could once get a footing you could reach forward almost to the end and grab the cup."

"If I did," retorted John, "you can rest easy that I wouldn't let go of it."

"How soon do we come to West Point?" inquired Grant.

"In about an hour," answered Fred.

"Do you know, I sometimes think I should like to go there," said George.

"Couldn't be done, my son," spoke up John.

"Why can't it be done?"

"Because a fellow that enters West Point has to pass an examination."

"Don't you think I could pass it?" demanded George as his friends laughed.

"It depends on what it is," answered John.

"If they would examine you about the old Meeker House and running tin tubes from the kitchen into the front room and a few other things like that maybe you would pass." [1]

"That's all right," spoke up George promptly. "I know something about what a fellow has to do before he passes the West Point examinations anyway and that's more than some fellows I know can say."

"What do you know that we don't?" inquired John.