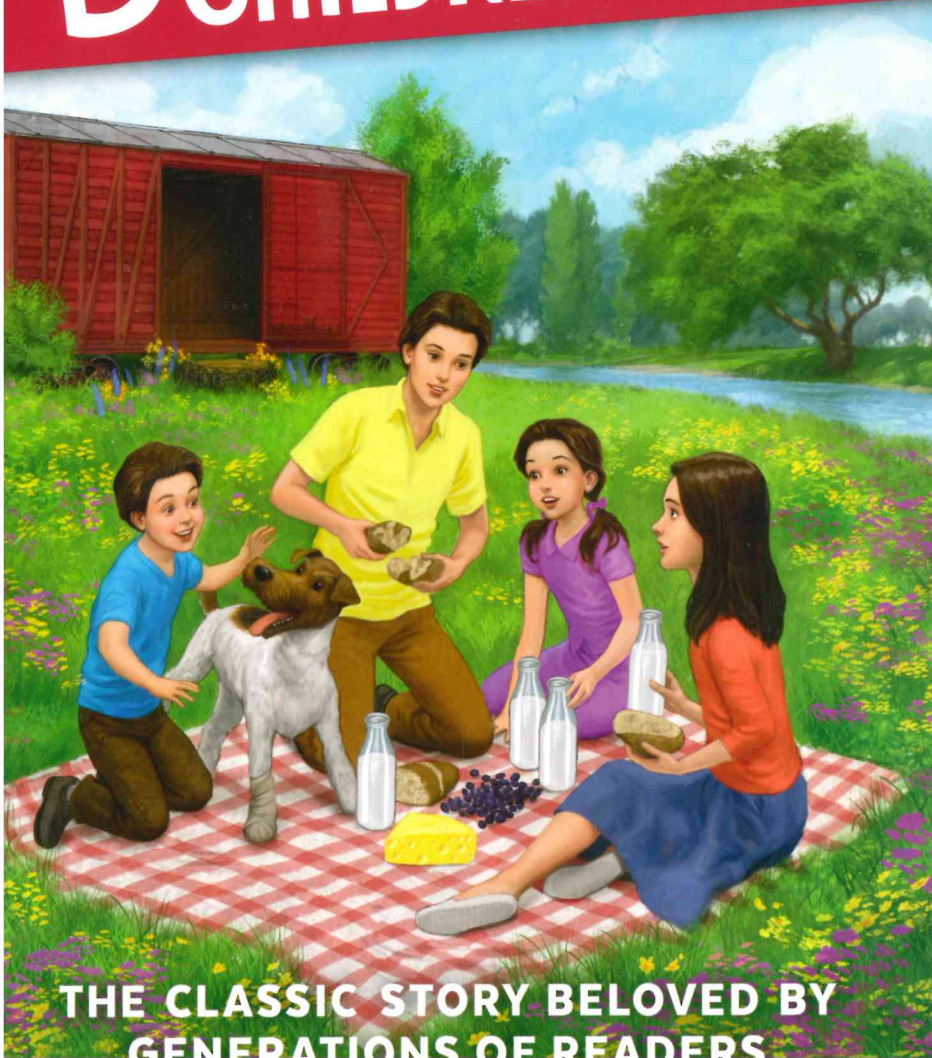


THE BOXCAR[®] CHILDREN



BY
GERTRUDE
CHANDLER
WARNER



THE CLASSIC STORY BELOVED BY
GENERATIONS OF READERS

THE BOXCAR[®] CHILDREN

BY
GERTRUDE CHANDLER WARNER

BOOK



THE BOXCAR CHILDREN

ILLUSTRATED BY
L. KATE DEAL

ALBERT WHITMAN & COMPANY
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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THE BOXCAR CHILDREN





I—The Four Hungry Children

ONE WARM NIGHT four children stood in front of a bakery. No one knew them. No one knew where they had come from.

The baker's wife saw them first, as they stood looking in at the window of her store. The little boy was looking at the cakes, the big boy was looking at the loaves of bread, and the two girls were looking at the cookies.

Now the baker's wife did not like children. She did not like boys at all. So she came to the front of the bakery and listened, looking very cross.

"The cake is good, Jessie," the little boy said. He was about five years old.

"Yes, Benny," said the big girl. "But bread is better for you. Isn't it, Henry?"

"Oh, yes," said Henry. "We must have some bread, and cake is not good for Benny and Violet."

"I like bread best, anyway," said Violet. She was about ten years old, and she had pretty brown hair and brown eyes.

"That is just like you, Violet," said Henry, smiling at her. "Let's go into the bakery.

Maybe they will let us stay here for the night."

The baker's wife looked at them as they came in.

"I want three loaves of bread, please," said Jessie.

She smiled politely at the woman, but the woman did not smile. She looked at Henry as he put his hand in his pocket for the money. She looked cross, but she sold him the bread.

Jessie was looking around, too, and she saw a long red bench under each window of the bakery. The benches had flat red pillows on them.

"Will you let us stay here for the night?" Jessie asked. "We could sleep on those benches, and tomorrow we would help you wash the dishes and do things for you."

Now the woman liked this. She did not like to wash dishes very well. She would

like to have a big boy to help her with her work.

"Where are your father and mother?" she asked.

"They are dead," said Henry.

"We have a grandfather in Greenfield, but we don't like him," said Benny.

Jessie put her hand over the little boy's mouth before he could say more.

"Oh, Benny, keep still!" she said.

"Why don't you like your grandfather?" asked the woman.

"He is our father's father, and he didn't like our mother," said Henry. "So we don't think he would like us. We are afraid he would be mean to us."

"Did you ever see him?" asked the woman.

"No," answered Henry.

"Then why do you think he would be mean to you?" asked the woman.

"Well, he never came to see us," said Henry. "He doesn't like us at all."

"Where did you live before you came here?" asked the woman.

But not one of the four children would tell her.

"We'll get along all right," said Jessie. "We want to stay here for only one night."

"You may stay here tonight," said the woman at last. "And tomorrow we'll see what we can do."

Henry thanked her politely.

"We are all pretty tired and hungry," he said.

The children sat down on the floor. Henry cut one of the loaves of bread into four pieces with his knife, and the children began to eat.

"Delicious!" said Henry.

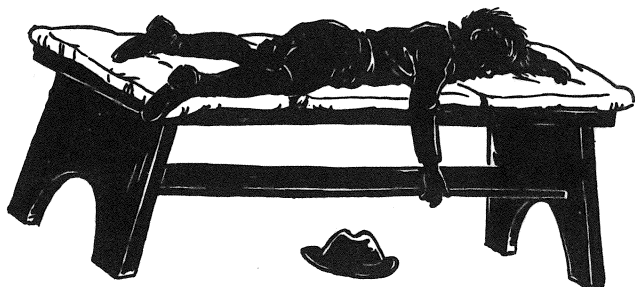
"Well, I never!" said the woman.

She went into the next room and shut the door.

"I'm glad she is gone," remarked Benny, eating. "She doesn't like us."

"Sh, Benny!" said Jessie. "She is good to let us sleep here."

After supper the children lay down on their red benches, and Violet and Benny soon went to sleep.



But Jessie and Henry could hear the woman talking to the baker.

She said, "I'll keep the three older children. They can help me. But the little boy must go to the Children's Home. He is too little. I cannot take care of him."

The baker answered, "Very well. Tomorrow I'll take the little boy to the Children's

Home. We'll keep the others for awhile, but we must make them tell us who their grandfather is."

Jessie and Henry waited until the baker and his wife had gone to bed. Then they sat up in the dark.

"Oh, Henry!" whispered Jessie. "Let's run away from here!"

"Yes, indeed," said Henry. "We'll never let Benny go to a Children's Home. Never, never! We must be far away by morning, or they will find us. But we must not leave any of our things here."

Jessie sat still, thinking.

"Our clothes and a cake of soap and towels are in the big laundry bag," she said. "Violet has her little workbag. And we have two loaves of bread left. Have you your knife and the money?"

"Yes," said Henry. "I have almost four dollars."

"You must carry Benny," said Jessie. "He will cry if we wake him up. But I'll wake Violet.

"Sh, Violet! Come! We are going to run away again. If we don't run away, the baker will take Benny to a Children's Home in the morning."

The little girl woke up at once. She sat up and rolled off the bench. She did not make any noise.

"What shall I do?" she whispered softly.

"Carry this," said Jessie. She gave her the workbag.

Jessie put the two loaves of bread into the laundry bag, and then she looked around the room.

"All right," she said to Henry. "Take Benny now."

Henry took Benny in his arms and carried him to the door of the bakery. Jessie took the laundry bag and opened the door very

softly. All the children went out quietly. They did not say a word. Jessie shut the door, and then they all listened. Everything was very quiet. So the four children went down the street.





II—Night Is Turned into Day

SOON THE CHILDREN left the town and came to a road. The big yellow moon was out, and they could see the road very well.

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"We must walk fast," said Henry. "I hope the baker and his wife don't wake up and find us gone."

They walked down the road as fast as they could.

"How far can you carry Benny?" asked Violet.

"Oh, I can carry him a long way," replied Henry.

But Jessie said, "I think we could go faster if we woke him up now. We could take his hands and help him along."

Henry stopped and put Benny down.

"Come, Benny," he said. "You must wake up and walk now."

"Go away!" said Benny.

"Let me try," said Violet. "Now, Benny, you can play that you are a little brown bear and are running away to find a nice warm bed. Henry and Jessie will help you, and we'll find a bed."

Benny liked being a little brown bear, and so he woke up and opened his eyes. Henry and Jessie took his hands, and they all went on again.

They passed some farmhouses, but the houses were dark and quiet. The children did not see anyone. They walked and walked for a long time. Then the red sun began to come up.

"We must find a place to sleep," said Jessie. "I am so tired."

Little Benny was asleep, and Henry was carrying him again. The other children began to look for a place.

At last Violet said, "Look over there." She was pointing at a big haystack in a field near a farmhouse.

"A fine place, Violet," said Henry. "See what a big haystack it is!"

They ran across the field toward the farmhouse. They jumped over a brook, and then

they came to the haystack. Henry was still carrying Benny.

Jessie began to make a nest in the haystack for Benny, and when they put him into it, he went to sleep again at once. The other children also made nests.

“Good night!” said Henry, laughing.

“It is ‘Good morning,’ I should think,” replied Jessie. “We sleep in the day, and we walk all night. When it is night again, we’ll wake up and walk some more.”

The children were so tired that they went right to sleep. They slept all day, and it was night again when they woke up.

Benny said at once, “Oh, Jessie, I’m hungry. I want something to eat.”

“Good old Benny,” said Henry. “We’ll have supper.”

Jessie took out a loaf of bread and cut it into four pieces. It was soon gone.

“I want some water,” begged Benny.

"Not now," said Henry. "You may have some water when it gets dark. There is a pump near the farmhouse. But if we leave the haystack now, someone will see us."

When it was dark, the children came out of the haystack and went quietly toward the farmhouse, which was dark and still. Nearby was a pump, and Henry pumped water as quietly as he could. He did not even wake up the hens and chickens.

"I want a cup," said Benny.

"No, Benny," whispered Henry. "You will have to put your mouth right in the water. You can play you are a horse."

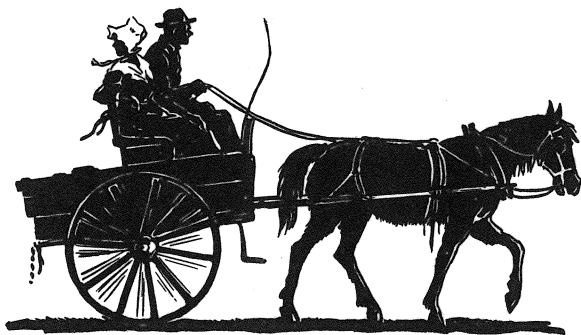
This pleased Benny. Henry pumped and pumped, and at last Benny had all the water he wanted. The water was cold and sweet, and all the children drank. Then they ran across the field toward the road.

"If we hear anyone," said Jessie, "we must hide behind the bushes."

Just as she said this, the children heard a horse and cart coming up the road.

“Keep very still, Benny!” whispered Henry. “Don’t say a word.”

The children got behind the bushes as fast as they could, for they did not have much time to hide. The horse came nearer and



nearer and began to walk up the hill toward them. Then the children could hear a man talking. It was the baker!

“I wonder where those children went,” he said. “I don’t think they could walk as far



as Silver City. If we don't find them in Greenfield, we'll go home."

"Yes," answered his wife. "I do not want to find them, anyway. I don't like children, but we must try a little while longer. We will look for them in Greenfield, and that's all."

The children watched until the horse and cart had gone down the road. Then they came out from behind the bushes and looked at each other.

"My, I am glad those people did not see us!" said Henry. "You were a good boy, Benny, to keep still."

"We'll not go to Greenfield."

"I wonder how far it is to Silver City," said Jessie.

The children were very happy as they walked along the road. They knew that the baker would not find them. They walked until two o'clock in the morning, and then

they came to some signs by the side of the road.

The moon came out from behind the clouds, and Henry could read the signs.



“One sign says that Greenfield is this way,” he said. “The other sign points to Silver City. We don’t want to go to Greenfield. Let’s take this other road to Silver City.”

They walked for a long time, but they did not see anyone.

“Not many people come this way, I guess,” said Henry. “But that is all the better.”

“Listen!” said Benny suddenly. “I hear something.”

“Listen!” said Violet.

The children stood still and listened, and they could hear water running.

"I want a drink of water, Henry!" said Benny.

"Well, let's go on," said Henry, "and see where the water is. I'd like a drink, too."

Soon the children saw a drinking fountain by the side of the road.

"Oh, what a fine fountain this is!" said Henry, running toward it. "See the place for people to drink up high, and a place in the middle for horses, and one for dogs down below."

All the children drank some cold water.

"Now I want to go to bed," said Benny.

Jessie laughed. "You can go to bed very soon."

Henry was looking down a little side road, which had grass growing in the middle of it.

"Come!" he cried. "This road goes into the woods. We can sleep in the woods."

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"This is a good place," said Jessie, as they walked along. "It is far away from people. You can tell that by the grass in the road."

"And it will be near the drinking fountain," said Violet.

"That's right!" cried Henry. "You think of everything, Violet."

"It is almost morning," remarked Jessie. "And how hot it is!"

"I'm glad it is hot," said Henry, "for we must sleep on the ground. Let's find some pine needles for beds."

The children went into the woods and soon made four beds of pine needles.

"I hope it's not going to rain," said Jessie, as she lay down.

Then she looked up at the sky.

"It looks like rain, for the moon has gone behind the clouds."

She shut her eyes and did not open them again for a long time.

More clouds rolled across the sky, and the wind began to blow. There was lightning, also, and thunder, but the children did not hear it. They were all fast asleep.



III—A New Home in the Woods

AT LAST Jessie opened her eyes. It was morning, but the sun was covered by clouds. She sat up and looked all around her, and then she looked at the

sky. It seemed like night, for it was very dark. Suddenly it began to thunder, and she saw that it was really going to rain.

"What shall we do? Where shall we go?" thought Jessie.

The wind was blowing more and more clouds across the sky, and the lightning was very near.

She walked a little way into the woods, looking for a place to go out of the rain.

"Where shall we go?" she thought again.

Then she saw something ahead of her in the woods. It was an old boxcar.

"What a good house that will be in the rain!" she thought.

She ran over to the boxcar. There was no engine, and the track was old and rusty. It was covered with grass and bushes because it had not been used for a long time.

"It *is* a boxcar," Jessie said. "We can get into it and stay until it stops raining."

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She ran back as fast as she could to the other children. The sky was black, and the wind was blowing very hard.

“Hurry! Hurry!” cried Jessie. “I have found a good place! Hurry as fast as you can!”

Henry took Benny’s hand, and they all ran through the woods after Jessie.

“It’s beginning to rain!” cried Henry.

“We’ll soon be there,” Jessie shouted back. “It is not far. When we get there, you must help me open the door. It is heavy.”

The stump of a big tree stood under the door of the boxcar and was just right for a step. Jessie and Henry jumped up on the old dead stump and rolled back the heavy door of the car. Henry looked in.

“There is nothing in here,” he said. “Come, Benny. We’ll help you up.”

Violet went in next, and, last of all, Jessie and Henry climbed in.



They were just in time. How the wind did blow! They rolled the door shut, and then it really began to rain. Oh, how it did rain! It just rained and rained. The children could hear it on the top of the boxcar, but no rain came in.

"What a good place this is!" said Violet. "It is just like a warm little house with one room."

After awhile the rain and lightning and thunder stopped, and the wind did not blow so hard. Then Henry opened the door and looked out. All the children looked out into the woods. The sun was shining, but some water still fell from the trees. In front of the boxcar a pretty little brook ran over the rocks, with a waterfall in it.

"What a beautiful place!" said Violet.

"Henry!" cried Jessie. "Let's live here!"

"Live here?" asked Henry.

"Yes! Why not?" said Jessie. "This box-

car is a fine little house. It is dry and warm in the rain."

"We could wash in the brook," said Violet.

"Please, Henry," begged Jessie. "We could have the nicest little home here, and we could find some dishes, and make four beds and a table, and maybe chairs!"

"No," said Benny. "I don't want to live here, Jessie."

"Oh, dear, why not, Benny?" asked Jessie.

"I'm afraid the engine will come and take us away," answered Benny.

Henry and Jessie laughed. "Oh, no, Benny," said Henry. "The engine will never take this car away. It is an old, old car, and grass and bushes are growing all over the track."

"Then doesn't the engine use this track any more?" asked Benny.

"No, indeed," said Henry. He was beginning to want to live in the boxcar, too.

"We'll stay here today, anyway."

"Then can I have my dinner here?" asked Benny.

"Yes, you shall have dinner now," said Henry.

So Jessie took out the last loaf of bread and cut it into four pieces, but it was very dry. Benny ate the bread, but soon he began to cry.

"I want some milk, too, Jessie," he begged.

"He ought to have milk," said Henry. "I'll go to the next town and get some."

But Henry did not want to start. He looked to see how much money he had. Then he stood thinking.

At last he said, "I don't want to leave you girls alone."

"Oh," said Jessie, "we'll be all right, Henry. We'll have a surprise for you when you come back. You just wait and see!"

"Good-by, Henry," said Benny.

So Henry walked off through the woods.

When he had gone, Jessie said, "Now, children, what do you think we are going to do? What do you think I saw over in the woods? I saw some blueberries!"

"Oh, oh!" cried Benny. "I know what blueberries are. Can we have blueberries and milk, Jessie?"

"Yes," Jessie was beginning. But she suddenly stopped, for she heard a noise. Crack, crack, crack! Something was in the woods.



#### IV—Henry Has Two Surprises

JESSIE WHISPERED, "Keep still!"  
The three children did not say a word. They sat quietly in the boxcar, looking at the bushes.

"I wonder if it's a bear," thought Benny.

Soon something came out. But it wasn't a bear. It was a dog, which hopped along on three legs, crying softly and holding up a front paw.

"It's all right," said Jessie. "It's only a dog, but I think he is hurt."

The dog looked up and saw the children, and then he wagged his tail.

"Poor dog," said Jessie. "Are you lost? Come over here and let me look at your paw."

The dog hopped over to the boxcar, and the children got out.

Jessie looked at the paw and said, "Oh, dear! You poor dog! There is a big thorn in your foot."

The dog stopped crying and looked at Jessie.

"Good dog," said Jessie. "I can help you, but maybe it will hurt."



The dog looked up at Jessie and wagged his tail again.

"Violet," ordered Jessie, "please wet my handkerchief in the brook."

Jessie sat down on the stump and took the dog in her lap. She patted him and gave him a little piece of bread. Then she began to pull out the thorn. It was a long thorn, but the dog did not make any noise. Jessie pulled and pulled, and at last the thorn came out.

Violet had a wet handkerchief ready. Jessie put it around the dog's paw, and he looked up at her and wagged his tail a little.

“He wants to say ‘Thank you,’ Jessie!” cried Violet. “He is a good dog not to cry.”

“Yes, he is,” agreed Jessie. “Now I had better hold him for awhile so that he will lie down and rest his leg.”

“We can surprise Henry,” remarked Benny. “Now we have a dog.”

“So we can,” said Jessie. “But that was not my surprise. I was going to get a lot of blueberries for supper.”

“Can’t we look for blueberries, while you hold the dog?” asked Violet.

“Yes, you can,” said Jessie. “Look over there by the big trees.”

Benny and Violet ran over to look.

“Oh, Jessie!” cried Benny. “Did you ever see so many blueberries? I guess five blueberries! No, I guess ten blueberries!”

Jessie laughed. “I guess there are more than five or ten, Benny,” she said. “Get a clean towel and pick them into it.”



For awhile Jessie watched Benny and Violet picking blueberries.

"Most of Benny's blueberries are going into his mouth," she thought with a laugh. "But maybe that's just as well. He won't get so hungry waiting for Henry to come back with the milk."

She carried the dog over to the children and sat down beside them, the dog on her lap. With her help the towel was soon full of blueberries.

"I wish we had some dishes," Jessie said. "Then we could have blueberries and milk."

"Never mind," said Violet. "When Henry comes, we can eat some blueberries and then take a drink of milk."

When Henry came, he had some heavy bundles. He had four bottles of milk in a bag, a loaf of brown bread, and also some fine yellow cheese.

He looked at the dog.

"Where did you get that fine dog?" he cried.

"He came to us," said Benny. "He is a surprise for you."

Henry went over to the dog, who wagged his tail. Henry patted him and said, "He ought to be a good watchdog. Why is the handkerchief on his foot?"

"He had a big thorn in his foot," answered Violet, "and Jessie took it out and put on the handkerchief. It hurt him, but he did not cry or growl."

"His name is Watch," remarked Benny.

"Oh, is it?" asked Jessie, laughing. "Watch is a good name for a watchdog."

"Did you bring some milk?" asked Benny, looking hungrily at the bottles.

"I should say I did!" replied Henry. "Four bottles!"

"Poor old Benny!" said Jessie. "We'll have dinner now. Or is it supper?"

"It must be supper," said Henry, "for soon we'll have to go to bed."

"Tomorrow we'll eat three times," said Jessie.

Now Jessie liked to have things in order, and so she put the laundry bag on some pine needles for a tablecloth. Then she cut the loaf of brown bread into five big pieces. The cheese was cut into four.

"Dogs don't like cheese," remarked Benny. The poor little boy was glad, too, for he was very hungry.

Violet put the four bottles of milk on the table, and Jessie put some blueberries and cheese at each place.

"Blueberries!" cried Henry. "Jessie, you had *two* surprises for me!"

"I'm sorry we haven't any cups," Jessie said. "We'll have to drink out of the bottles. Now all come and sit down."

So supper began. "Look, Benny," said

Henry. "You take some blueberries, then eat some brown bread, then some cheese, then take a drink of milk."

"It's good!" said Benny. He began to put more blueberries into his mouth.

The dog had supper, too. Jessie gave him bread as he lay on the ground beside her, and he drank milk out of her hand.

When supper was over, there was some milk left in each bottle.

"We'll have the rest of the milk for breakfast," said Jessie. "Tonight we are going to sleep on beds. Let's get some pine needles now."

Soon the children had a big pile. Henry jumped into the boxcar, and Jessie gave him the pine needles. He made four beds in one end of the car.

"This side is the bedroom," said Jessie.

"What will the other side be?" asked Benny.

"The other side?" asked Jessie. "Let me think. I guess that will be the sitting-room, and maybe some of the time it will be the kitchen."

Then she said, "Come, now. Come and get washed." She took the cake of soap and went down to the brook.

"That will be fun, Benny," said Violet. "We'll splash our 'paws' in the brook just as Little Brown Bear does." She knew that Benny did not like to be washed.

The children were all very hot, and so they were glad to splash in the cold water. Benny put cold water and soap on his face with the others and dried his hands on a towel.

"We'll have to have a line to dry the towels on," said Jessie.

So she took the string out of the laundry bag and tied one end of it to a tree. The other end of the string she tied to the boxcar. This made a good clothesline. When she had

washed one towel and Violet had washed the other one, they hung both towels on the clothesline.

"It looks like home," said Henry. "See the washing!" He laughed.

Jessie was thinking.

"We ought to get some water to drink before we go to bed," she said. "But what shall we put it in?"

"Let's put all the milk into two bottles," said Henry. "Then we can fill the other two with water."

"Good," said Jessie. "You go alone to the fountain, Henry. You can hide if anyone comes along."

Henry went out very quietly, and soon came back with two bottles full of cold water. Benny drank a little, but he was almost asleep.

The other children helped him into the boxcar. Then they all climbed in, Jessie car-

rying the dog. He lay down at once beside her.

“It is so hot that we’ll leave the door open,” said Henry.

Soon they were fast asleep, dog and all. The moon came up, but they did not see it. This was the first time in four days that they could go to sleep at night, as children should.



## V—The Explorers Find Treasure

**T**HE NEXT MORNING Jessie woke up first, and she got up at once, for she was the housekeeper. The dog sat in the door of the car and looked at her as she



jumped down to get the milk for breakfast. Then he jumped down after her.

Jessie walked down by the little brook and stopped to look at the waterfall. It was beautiful.

"I must look in the refrigerator," she said with a laugh.

It was a funny refrigerator. There was a rock behind the waterfall, and the night before Jessie had put the two bottles of milk in a hole in this rock. Now she took out the bottles and found that the milk was very cold.

"Is it good?" called Benny, who sat in the car door.

"It is delicious!" cried Jessie. "It is cold, too."

She got up into the car with the milk and sat down beside Benny. Then the four children drank the milk for breakfast.

Henry said, "Today I'll go to town and try

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to get some work to do. I can cut grass or work in a garden or something. Then we'll have something besides milk for breakfast."

He washed his hands and face and started out.

"I'm so glad you have a dog, Jessie," he said. "Good-by! I'll be back at noon."

The children looked after Henry, and then they looked at Jessie.

"What are we going to do now, Jessie?" Benny asked his sister.

"Well, Benny," answered Jessie, "we'll go exploring and look for treasures. We'll begin here at the car and look and look until we find a dump."

"What's a dump?" asked Benny.

"Oh, Benny!" said Violet. "You know what a dump is. Old tin cans and old dishes and bottles."

"Are old tin cans and dishes treasures?" Benny wanted to know.

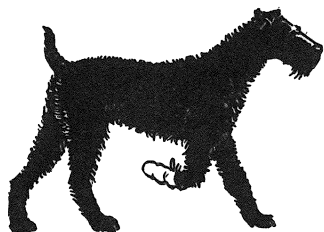
"They will be treasures for us," answered Jessie, laughing.

"And wheels?" asked Benny again. "Will there be any wheels on the dump?"

"Yes, maybe," replied Violet. "But cups, Benny, and plates, and maybe spoons. You like to drink milk out of a cup."

"Oh, yes," agreed Benny politely. But anyone could see that his mind was still on wheels.

The explorers started walking down the old rusty tracks, with Watch hopping along on three legs. The other paw, still tied up with Jessie's handkerchief, was held off the



ground. But the dog looked very happy. He liked these kind children.

They all walked along through the woods, looking this way and that. After awhile the old track came out into the sun, and the explorers found that they were on top of a hill. They could look down and see the town below them.

“Henry is down there,” said Jessie.

Benny was walking along behind his two sisters.

Suddenly he cried happily, “Look, Jessie! There’s a treasure—a wheel!”

The girls looked where he was pointing, and they saw a big dump with many old bottles and tin cans on it. There were also both wheels and cups. Indeed, there were dishes of all kinds.

“Oh, Benny!” cried Jessie. “You saw the treasures first. What should we do without you!”



Violet ran over to the dump. "Here's a white pitcher, Jessie!" she cried.

Jessie looked at it. It was all right, with only one small crack.

"Here's a big white cup, too," she said, happily.

"Can you use a teapot, Jessie?" asked Benny.

"Yes, indeed!" she replied. "We can put water in it. I have found two cups and a bowl. Let's look for spoons, too!"

Violet held up what she had found—five spoons, covered with rust.

"Good!" said Jessie. "Here's a big kettle. Let's pile all the dishes in it. Then we can carry them back to the boxcar."

Benny had found four wheels just alike and laid them to one side. Now he held up a pink cup. There was a big crack in it, but it had a handle.

"This will be my pink cup," said Benny.

"I hope it will hold milk," said Jessie, laughing. "It's a beautiful cup, Benny."

The children laid all their treasures, even the wheels, on a board, and the girls carried the board back to the boxcar between them. They put the dishes down by the brook.

"Now we must wash them," said Jessie.

"All right," agreed Benny. "We'll wash my pink cup."

And never did a little boy hand dishes so carefully to his sisters as Benny did.

The girls washed the dishes with soap, and Jessie used sand to get the rust off the spoons.

"There!" she said, washing the last shining spoon. "How fine they look! But I'm afraid they still aren't clean enough to eat from. When Henry comes, we'll get him to build a fire. Then we can have hot water to rinse them, and they will be *very* clean."

The children sat back and admired the dishes.

Suddenly Violet cried, "Oh, I know where to put them. Come and see what I found in the car last night."

Both girls looked in at the door.

"Look on the door on the other side of the car," said Violet.

All Jessie saw were two pieces of wood nailed to the closed door of the car. But she knew at once what was in Violet's mind. She ran to get the board they had carried from the dump and laid it carefully across the two pieces of wood. It made a fine shelf for the dishes.

"There!" said Jessie.

The children could hardly wait to put the shining dishes on the shelf.

"Let's put them on now," said Violet, "and see how they look, without waiting to rinse them."

When they were on the shelf, Violet picked some white and yellow flowers and put them



in a cup full of water in the middle of the shelf.

"There!" said Jessie, stepping back to look at it.

"You said 'There' three times," remarked Benny happily.

"So I did," replied Jessie, laughing. "And I'm going to say it again."

She pointed into the woods and said, "There!"

Henry was coming through the woods, and he carried many funny-looking bundles in his arms. But he would not open his bundles

or tell what he had been doing until it was time for dinner.

"Where did you get the dishes?" he cried, when he saw the shelf.

"We went exploring," said Violet, "and found a big dump."

The children began telling him about their treasures. Benny told him about the tin cans and his pink cup and his wheels. Jessie took out the big kettle and asked him about building a fire.

"We want to use the dishes to eat from," she told him, "and it's hard to get them clean in cold water."

So Henry made a small fire in an open place where it could not burn anything. He put big stones all around it.

"We ought to have a fireplace," he remarked.

Jessie cleaned the kettle with sand and filled it with water. Then Henry put it on

the fire. Soon the water was boiling, and Jessie rinsed the dishes carefully.

“Now I know they’re clean enough to eat from,” she said happily.



VI—A Queer Noise in the Night

AT LAST IT WAS dinner time, and the children sat down to see what Henry had in his bundles.

"I bought another loaf of brown bread at the store," said Henry, "and some more milk. Then I bought some dried meat, because we can eat it in our hands. And I bought a bone for Watch."

Watch looked hungrily at the bone and lay down at once to eat it.

Jessie got out four cups and bowls and put some milk into each one. Then the children put in little pieces of brown bread and began to eat it with their new spoons.

"What fun!" cried Jessie. "Eating with spoons. Now tell us what you did in town, Henry."

Henry began, "The town below this hill is Silver City. I saw the name on a sign.

"I went into the town and walked along the first street I came to. It was a nice street, with big houses and flowers and trees. I saw a man out cutting his grass. He's a good man, too, I can tell you—a doctor."

“Did you work for him?” asked Jessie.

“Yes,” said Henry. “He was very hot, and just as I came to the house, his bell rang. He started to the house, and I called after him and asked him if I could cut the grass. He said, ‘Yes, yes! I wish you would!’ You see, he wasn’t used to cutting it himself.



“So I cut the grass, and he said, ‘Good for you. Do you want to work every day?’ And he said he had never had a boy who cut it as well as I did.”

“Oh, Henry!” cried Violet and Jessie.

“I told him I did want to work, and he told me to come back this afternoon.

“He has a pretty house and a garage and a big vegetable garden. Then he has a lot of cherry trees behind the house—a cherry orchard. You should see the beautiful big red cherries!

“Well, when I was cutting the grass near the kitchen, the cook came to the kitchen door and watched me.

“She asked me if I liked cookies. I said I did, and she gave me one.”

“What did you do with it?” asked Benny hungrily.

“When she went back into the kitchen, I put it in my pocket,” said Henry laughing.

“Did she see you?” cried Jessie.

“Oh, no,” said Henry. “I played I was eating it. For a long time I carefully ate away on nothing at all.”

Benny began to look at Henry’s pocket. It did look very funny.

Henry went on. "When I came home, the doctor gave me a dollar, and the cook gave me this bag."

Henry laughed at Benny and pulled the bag out of his pocket. In it were ten delicious brown cookies.

"Oh, oh!" cried Benny. "Please, Jessie! Let's have cookies for dinner."

"Yes, indeed," said Jessie.

Then Henry opened his last bundle.

"I thought we ought to have a tablecloth," he said. "So I got one at the store. But it wasn't hemmed."

Violet begged, "Oh, let me hem it."

She took her scissors out of her workbag and cut the two ends even. But before she began to hem the pretty blue tablecloth, she helped Jessie wash and rinse the dishes and put them away. Benny helped, too. When Henry said good-by and went back to town, all the children were working happily.

Watch was trying to make a hole with one paw to bury his bone in.

"I'll help you bury your bone, Watch," said Benny.

"Oh, no, Benny," said Jessie. "Watch wants to bury his bone himself. You come and help me. I'm going to make a broom for the house."

For a little while Benny ran around finding sticks for the broom, but he soon went



to sleep on the ground with the dog for a pillow.

The two girls sat by the brook. Violet was hemming the blue tablecloth, and Jessie was making the broom with a long stick for a handle.

When Henry came back at supper time, the broom with its long handle stood in the kitchen, and the new tablecloth was hemmed. Henry admired the broom and the tablecloth. Then he gave Jessie a small bundle.

"Oh, butter!" cried Jessie, her eyes shining.

It was butter, yellow and sweet. The four children had not had any butter for many days. At last they sat down to their fine supper.

"Now this spoon is a magic spoon," said Henry. "Turn it around and use the handle, and it is a knife!"

He showed Benny how to put the butter

on the brown bread with his magic knife. With dried meat, bread and butter, milk, and cookies, the children could not ask for a better supper.

"What did you do this afternoon, Henry?" asked Jessie.

"Well, I washed the doctor's car," said Henry. "Then I washed the walks and the windows. Tomorrow I'm going to work in the garden."

Then he looked at the brook. "Oh, how I would love to have a swim in that nice cold water!"

Henry was hot and sticky as he looked at the waterfall.

"Maybe we could make a swimming pool," he said. "We could build a dam out of logs."

"Oh, yes, we could," said Jessie. "Violet and I know where to find some logs and some big flat stones."

"You do?" said Henry.

"Yes," said Jessie. "They are not far away. And just a little way below here is a pool now, with sand all around it. But it is not big enough to swim in."

"Is that so!" cried Henry. "Some day I'll stay at home, and we'll try to dam up the brook and make a swimming pool."

"You can have my wheels," said Benny.

"Good!" replied Henry. "I'll make you a little cart with the wheels, Benny, and you can carry stones in it."

"Yes," said Benny. "I will."

"Come now, we must go to bed," said Jessie.

The children were all glad to go to bed. They stood on the stump and climbed into their new house, and they all went to sleep but Henry. He was thinking about the new swimming pool. All at once he saw that Watch was not asleep.

Henry patted the dog and said, "Lie down, Watch."

But Watch did not lie down. He began to growl softly

"Sh!" said Henry to the dog. He sat up. Jessie sat up.

"What is it, Henry?" she whispered.

"I don't know," replied Henry. He was frightened.

"I think Watch hears something in the woods."

"Let's close the door," said Jessie. "I'm afraid."

The two children closed the heavy door softly. Then they sat still and listened, but they did not hear anything.

"Lie down, Watch," said Jessie again. "Go to sleep."

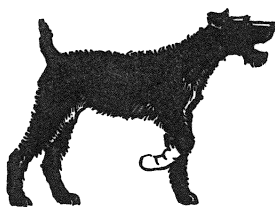
But Watch did not go to sleep. He growled again.

"Maybe someone is in the woods. Maybe

someone wants to hide in this car," whispered Jessie.

"Maybe," said Henry. "There is something out there that the dog doesn't like."

Then they heard a stick crack, and Watch barked.



"Oh, sh!" Jessie put her hand over his mouth.

"If there is someone out in the woods, he knows that there is a dog in this boxcar," said Henry.

He took the new broom in his hand and waited.

But nothing came. Nothing at all. The two

children waited and waited. Violet and Benny slept through it all.

"I'm going to open the door now," said Henry.

They opened the door softly and then listened. The dog sniffed a little. Then he turned around three times and lay down. He put his head on his paws.

"It must be all right now," said Henry. "Watch knows. Maybe it was just a rabbit."

So at last they all went to sleep and slept until morning.



VII—A Big Meal from Little Onions

THE NEXT MORNING Jessie and Henry talked about the queer noise. They did not tell Violet and Benny.

"What do you think it was?" asked Jessie.
"Do you think it was a rabbit?"

"I don't know," said Henry. "But I think someone was in the woods. I am glad we weren't hurt. Someone must have stepped on a stick and made it crack."

"What shall we do?" asked Jessie.

"Nothing," said Henry. "Watch is a good watchdog. He loves us now, and if anyone tried to hurt us, Watch would take care of us. He would do more than growl. But after this, we must not let Benny go into the woods alone."

"I'll keep Benny and Violet with me all the time," said Jessie.

"Good!" said Henry. "And keep Watch with you all the time, too."

"Good morning, Benny. Time to get up. Today you must build something for me out of stones."

"What is it?" asked Benny eagerly.

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"I'm not going to tell you," said Henry, laughing.

"You build it just as Jessie tells you, and you will see."

Henry was so eager to begin work that he ran all the way to town. The doctor came to the door and smilingly looked him over from head to foot.

"My mother will tell you what to do to-day," the doctor said. "She wants you to work in her garden."

Mrs. Moore, the doctor's mother, had a sweet face and looked very kind.

"Good morning, Henry," she said. "Do you know how to thin out vegetables?"

"Oh, yes," said Henry. "I like to work in a vegetable garden."

"I haven't had much time to take care of my garden," Mrs. Moore said. "There! See that?"

She pulled out a carrot. It had to come

out, for it was much too near the other carrots.

"Yes, I see," said Henry.

He began to thin out the carrots. Mrs. Moore watched him as he pulled out some of the little carrots and put them in a pile. He left the other carrots to grow. Then he began on the turnips.

"You are a good worker," said Mrs. Moore. "I can see that." She smiled at Henry. "You may thin out all these vegetables."

Then she went into the house and left Henry alone. He worked all the morning. He thinned out the carrots, turnips, and little onions.

The mill bells rang at noon, but Henry did not hear them. He still worked on in the hot sun. Then he saw Mrs. Moore looking at him.

"You have worked long enough now," she said. "You may come again this afternoon."

“What shall I do with the vegetables I pulled up?” Henry asked.

“Oh, I don’t want them,” said Mrs. Moore. “Just leave them in a pile.”

“Do you mind if I take them?” asked Henry.



“No, indeed. Do you have chickens?” Then, without waiting for an answer, she went right on, “You have done good work. Here is a dollar.”

Henry said, “Thank you,” and was glad he did not have to answer about the chickens.

When Mrs. Moore went into the house, he took some of the little carrots and turnips and onions. If he had looked up, he would have seen Mrs. Moore in the window watching him. But he did not look up. He was

too eager to get to the store and order some meat.

When he arrived at the boxcar, Benny told him, "The building is done. I helped with it."

The "building" was a fireplace, made of flat stones.

"Benny did a lot of the work," said Jessie. "He carried stones and found wood for the fire."

The fireplace was a very good one. The children and Watch had made a hole at the foot of a big rock between two trees. Flat stones were laid on the floor of this hole and around the sides. More big stones were put up to keep out the wind.

Jessie had found a heavy wire in the dump and had put the big kettle on it and tied the ends of the wire to the two trees. The kettle hung over the fireplace, and the fire was laid. Beside the fireplace was a big wood-pile.

"Fine! Fine!" cried Henry. "You have done well. Now see what I have."

The girls were delighted with the meat and the little vegetables. With Henry's knife they cut the meat into little pieces. Then they filled the kettle with water from the fountain and put the meat into it, with a tin plate for a cover. Henry started the fire, and it burned well at once.

Jessie cut the tops off the vegetables and washed them in the brook.

"I'll put them in after the meat has cooked awhile," she said.

Soon the water began to boil, and the stew began to smell good. Watch sat down and looked at it. He sniffed hungrily at it and barked and barked.

The children sat around the fireplace, eating bread and milk. Now and then Jessie stirred the stew with a big spoon.

"It will make a good meal," said Henry. "Keep it boiling and do not leave it. When I come home tonight, I'll bring you some salt. And whatever you do, don't get on fire!"

Violet pointed to the pitcher and teapot that she had filled with water.

"That's to put on Benny or Watch if he should get on fire," she said.

Henry laughed and went happily on his way. He wished he could stay and smell the stew boiling, but he thought he ought to work. So he went back to Dr. Moore's house.

He was very happy when Dr. Moore said, "Do you want to clean up this garage?"

The garage was not in very good order. Dr. Moore laughed when he saw Henry look around for a broom.

"I must go out now," said Dr. Moore. "You just clean this place up."

Henry began at once. First he opened all the boxes. On the biggest box he painted the word **TOOLS** with a long-handled brush and a can of paint he had found. On another box he painted **NAILS**. Then he picked over the things and put the tools in the tool-

box and the nails in the nail-box. This was fun for Henry, because he liked to get things in order.

Henry found a lot of nails that were bent and covered with rust. He put them in his pocket.

"I'll ask the doctor for these bent nails," he said to himself. "They are no good to him, but they are fine for me. I can use every old nail I get."

Then he washed the floor and washed his paint brush.

When Dr. Moore came home, he found Henry putting brushes, paint cans, and other things on the shelf.

"My, my, my!" he cried. He looked at the garage and laughed and laughed. He laughed until his mother came out to see what he was laughing at.

"Look, Mother!" he said. "Look at those tools. Look at the shelf. Look at my hammers.



One, two, three, four hammers. Your hammer, my hammer, and two other hammers. They were all lost. Can you use a hammer, Henry?"



"Yes, indeed I can!" cried Henry.

"Take one," said Dr. Moore. "You found them all."

"Oh, thank you!" said Henry. He showed the doctor the bent nails and was told that he could have those, too. He could hardly wait now to start home, because he was so eager to show Benny and his sisters his new hammer and nails.

"Tomorrow will be Sunday," said Dr. Moore. "Will you come again the next day?"

"Oh, yes," replied Henry, who had lost all track of the days.

"The cherries must be picked," said the doctor. He looked at Henry in a queer way. "We could use any number of cherry pickers if they were all as careful as you."

"Could you?" asked Henry eagerly. "Well, I'll come."

So the three said good-by, and Henry started for home. He had another dollar, a pocket full of old nails, a hammer, and the pile of vegetables that he had left at noon. On the way home he bought some salt.

When he arrived at the boxcar, he began to smell a delicious smell.

"Onions!" he shouted, running up to the kettle. "I do like the smell of onions."

"I like the turnips best," said Violet.

Jessie took off the cover carefully and stirred in the salt, and Henry sniffed the brown stew. It was boiling and boiling.

"A ladle, of all things!" cried Henry "Where did you get it?"

"I found a tin cup in the dump," said Jessie. "We used a long stick for a handle and tied it to the cup with a piece of wire. It makes a fine ladle."

She ladled out the stew into plates and bowls and put a spoon in each one.

"Oh, oh!" said Benny. "I am so hungry. I must eat my supper!"

The meat was well cooked, and the vegetables were delicious. Violet passed her plate for more turnips.

"I'd like some more onions," said Henry.

All the children ate until they could eat no more.

"That was the best meal I ever ate," said Jessie.

"Me, too," said Violet.

"I have time tonight to make Benny's cart," remarked Henry. "We'll want a cart."

"Will you make it with my wheels?" asked Benny.

"Yes, with your wheels," answered Henry. "But you must cart stones in it when I get it done."

"Yes," said Benny. "I will cart stones or rocks or anything."

"Tomorrow will be Sunday, and I can stay at home," Henry went on. "Do you think it's all right, Jessie, to build the dam for a swimming pool on Sunday?"

"Yes, I do," said Jessie. "We are making the swimming pool so that we can keep clean."

Henry began happily to hammer out the bent nails with his new hammer. Soon he had some good nails.

"You and I will go and find some boards, Benny," he said. "Come on."

Soon the boys came back with some boards from the dump. Henry sat down and began to make the cart. He could not see very well, because it was getting dark and there

was no moon. But at last the cart was done, and he gave it to Benny.

"Thank you," said Benny, politely.

After his sisters had admired the cart, Benny pulled it around just for fun. Then Henry put it in the boxcar for the night.

Henry said to Jessie, "I hope we do not hear that queer noise tonight."

"I hope not, too," said Jessie. Then she laughed. "Look at Benny," she said. "He has gone to sleep with his hand on his cart."

Henry laughed, too, but he laughed at himself, because he was going to sleep with his new hammer under his pillow.