

**THE  
CASTAWAYS  
OF  
PETE'S PATCH**

*by  
Carroll Watson Rankin*

# THE CASTAWAYS OF PETE'S PATCH

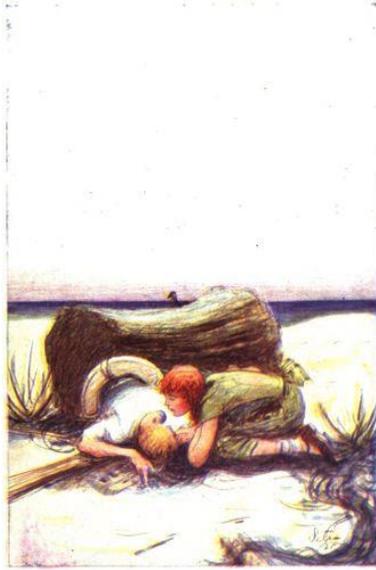
*by*  
*Carroll Watson Rankin*

*Illustrated by*  
*ADA C. WILLIAMSON*

*Frontispiece and jacket illustrations*  
*by MIRIAM SELSS*

How many girls have wished to spend a summer in a real camp on the shores of a lake, with soft grass, kind to bare feet, comfortable camp beds of fragrant balsam tips and plenty of real adventure.

Here are our friends of the Dandelion Cottage marooned on a point of land. Indian boys, a castaway sailor lad, and many other happenings fill this book full of delight for the girls, who, having read the earlier volumes of the series, will be glad to meet again these cheery little lassies of the justly famous Dandelion Cottage Series.



**IT SEEMED TO MABEL THAT SHE COULD DETECT A SOUND OF BREATHING**

Dandelion Series

# THE CASTAWAYS OF PETE'S PATCH

*(A Sequel to The Adopting of Rosa Marie)*

BY

CARROLL WATSON RANKIN

Author of "Dandelion Cottage," "The Girls of  
Gardenville," etc.

*With Illustrations by*  
ADA C. WILLIAMSON



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TO  
ERNEST AND BERWICK  
AND ALL OTHER GOOD CAMPERS

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## THE PERSONS OF THE STORY

BETTIE TUCKER

JEANIE MAPES

MARJORY VALE

MABEL BENNETT

Once of Dandelion Cottage, now of  
Pete's Patch.

HENRIETTA BEDFORD: THEIR CHUM.

MR. BLACK: A Childless but  
Fatherly Man.

MRS. CRANE: His Warm-hearted  
Sister.

DAVE GURNEAU: A Good and Bad  
Half-breed.

MAHJIGEEZIGOQUA: An Old  
Acquaintance.

MR. WILLIAM SAUNDERS: Mr.  
Black's Right-hand.

MISS BLOSSOM: A Timely Visitor.

ROSA MARIE: A Very Young Old  
Friend.

TERRIBLE TIM: Always to the Point.

BILLY BLUE-EYES: The Most Cast-away of all the Cast-aways.

A Number of Parents and Other Necessary Grown-ups.

# ILLUSTRATIONS

IT SEEMED TO MABEL THAT SHE COULD  
DETECT A SOUND OF BREATHING

THE SPACE BEHIND THE LOG WAS  
ALREADY OCCUPIED

SEATED ON THE DRY END WAS A STOUT,  
PLACID MAN

"MOTHER!" HE CRIED. "MOTHER! IT'S MY  
MOTHER!"

## INTRODUCTION

WHEN the biggest lake there is chooses to go on one of her very best rampages, even the bravest of mariners make as speedily as possible for safe harbors. At midnight, therefore, following a certain blustery day in early summer, it was not strange that the huge, storm-tossed lake appeared, for as far as eye could reach, absolutely deserted.

Somewhere, however, on that fearfully tumultuous sea, one direly threatened craft was still abroad, and, what is a greater marvel, still afloat. At best, the ancient yawl was but a poor excuse for a ship; now, at her worst, she was little more than a raft. Driven before the wind, tossed here and there by the buffeting waves, she carried a solitary passenger and only a little one at that.

Indeed, he wasn't at all the kind of sailor that one would *expect* to find sailing dangerous seas all alone at midnight, for the solitary mariner, adrift in all that wilderness of tumbling water, was a twelve-year-old boy.

There was no sail to the little boat—that had been torn away in the furious gale—but a short, stumpy mast remained. To that the boy, happily unconscious of his plight, was firmly but rather clumsily bound by means of many folds of stout fish-net wrapped tightly about his slender body. Also about his waist hung a battered life-preserver.

The lad had been fastened there by other hands than his own, for most of the knots were out of his reach. The little chap's head hung forward; his eyes were closed; he no longer heard the roar of the sea or felt the cold or suffered from hunger; but in spite of this merciful oblivion, he still had a life to lose—and was in very grave danger of losing it.

It isn't fair, of course, to leave a really attractive little lad in a plight like this; with darkness and an angry sea all about him; with, seemingly no possible help at hand, since the nearest coast was still many miles distant and supposedly uninhabited.

Yet, in this truly terrible predicament, this poor boy—strange little hero of a girls' story—must remain until you've learned just how a certain "Whale" (you must admit that it isn't usual to find whales near fresh water) contributed to his rescue.

To discover exactly how it all happened we must go way back to the very beginning; and the beginning of it all was Bettie.



# **THE CASTAWAYS OF PETE'S PATCH**

# CHAPTER I

## An Innocent Plan

"THIS," said Bettie Tucker, one morning, with approving glances at the offerings heaped about her, "is certainly a pretty fine world. I'm glad I stayed in it, even if I haven't feet enough for eleven pairs of pink bed socks."

For an alarming number of weeks, Bettie's friends had feared that this most lovable of little girls might *not* remain in it; but now that all danger was past, she was able to sit for long hours by the window that afforded the best view of the Tuckers' front gate.

Ordinarily it was not much of a gate. So many little Tuckers had climbed upon it and tumbled off that it had grown shaky as to hinges and bald as to paint; though, if one used rope enough, it was still useful as a barrier between the world and the adventuresome Tucker babies.

But now this gate—or rather this gateway—had become a most interesting spot. Through it, at delightfully frequent intervals, came baskets, boxes, and bundles. Most of them contained offerings, more or less enjoyable, for convalescent Bettie; for all the members of Doctor Tucker's church loved the gentle, kindly, absent-minded clergyman. Now that a member of his household was recovering from a serious illness, it seemed, as Doctor Bennett, the family physician said, as if the parish were bent on making her ill again by sending her more things to eat than any one small Bettie-girl could possibly hold. Everything from soup to dessert flowed in at that gate, for Lakeville was a kindly town and everybody knew that overworked Mrs. Tucker had quite enough to do without the extra work of preparing dainty food.

Moreover, to add very seriously to Bettie's danger from promiscuous donations, Doctor Bennett's own warm-hearted but decidedly inexperienced young daughter Mabel was laboriously cooking things out of a large number of cook-books to carry triumphantly or despondently, according to her degree of success, to her very dearest friend Bettie.

"This," explained Mabel, one morning, displaying a dull purple, most uninviting object that quivered uncannily when one shook the bowl, "is 'Ambrosial Delight.'"

"Where—where did you get it?" asked Bettie, eying the strange mixture distrustfully.

"Out of an advertising cook-book that somebody left on our doorstep. It said 'Ambrosial Delight' under the picture, but somehow the pudding looks—different."

"What makes it such a very queer color?" demanded interested Bettie.

"Grape juice and eggs," explained Mabel, tenderly clasping her handiwork to her breast. "You see, according to the picture, it ought to be in even purple and yellow stripes and standing up in a stiff para—parachute—those things in Egypt——"

"Pyramid. Go on," assisted Bettie, accustomed to Mabel's difficulties of speech.

"Pyramid, but somehow the custard part and the jelly part all ran together and sat down. But it tastes a lot better than it looks."

"Bettie mustn't eat anything more for two hours," interposed Mrs. Tucker. "She's just had a big piece of strawberry shortcake. I'll set this pudding in the ice-box—that'll harden the jelly."

"I'm ever so much obliged," beamed Bettie, suspecting that Mabel would have enjoyed seeing her eat the "Ambrosial Delight." "It's nice of you to cook things for me."

"Even if they do turn out wrong most every time," supplemented Mabel. "Yes, I think it is nice, because I sort of hate to cook anyway, and everybody in our house just hates to have me. I'm so untidy, they say. I always have to do it when Bridget isn't looking and it makes me nervous to have to hurry. Can you think of anything else you'd like me to make?" continued this martyr. "Because I'd *do* it, if I had to get up before daylight."

"I don't know of anything unless somebody invents a dish that will go right straight to my knees. They wobble. I feel as if I'd like to run a mile, but by the time I've tottered to the gate I'm glad it isn't more than a dozen steps. There's your father coming—I'm going to ask him why my knees wobble so awfully."

Impulsive Mabel, at this news, instinctively scrambled under the bed. Then, remembering that she had really been pretty good all day, she sheepishly crawled out, to Bettie's amusement, to greet her surprised father.

"I'm on my way home," said she.

"So I notice," returned Doctor Bennett, his mouth stern, his eyes twinkling. "Don't let me detain you."

"I want to know," demanded Bettie, "why I haven't any knees?"

"I think," replied Doctor Bennett, "that we ought to get you outdoors a great deal more than we do. You're not getting air enough. Where's your jacket? I'll take you for a drive this minute—I'm going to South Lakeville by the shore road to see a patient. Think you're good for a buggy ride?"

"I'm sure of it," laughed Bettie, "but I'm afraid my bones will scratch all the varnish off your nice bright buggy. I've twice as many ribs as I used to have—perhaps my knees have turned into ribs!"

Bettie returned an hour later; none the worse for her drive and hungry enough to eat even Mabel's unsightly pudding, after finishing a large bowl of broth.

"It tastes fine," she confided to Doctor Bennett, who had insisted on carrying the slender invalid upstairs, "if you eat it with your eyes shut. My! I'm hungry as a bear—wasn't it lucky that mother had my lunch ready?"

"I guess you'll have to have another ride to-morrow," laughed the pleased doctor. "Fresh air is all the medicine you need—you ought to *live* outdoors."

There was danger, however, of Bettie's getting more fresh air than any one little maid could ever hope to breathe, for, the next morning, there was an item in Lakeville's daily paper that brought curious and almost instantaneous results. The paragraph read:

"Miss Bettie Tucker, who has been seriously ill for several weeks, enjoyed her first outing yesterday."

It wasn't a very big item, Bettie thought, for so momentous an event, but it was quite large enough for kind-hearted Lakeville. Immediately, everybody with anything one *could* ride in wanted to take Bettie driving. Mr. Black placed his automobile at her disposal. Henrietta Bedford's grandmother, Mrs. Slater, laid her horses, the grandest of her carriages, and her only coachman at Bettie's bedroom-slippered feet; Jean and Marjory laboriously collected sufficient money to hire a sad old horse, more or less attached to a dilapidated cab, from the very cheapest livery stable for a whole expensive hour. Nearly all the members of Doctor Tucker's

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