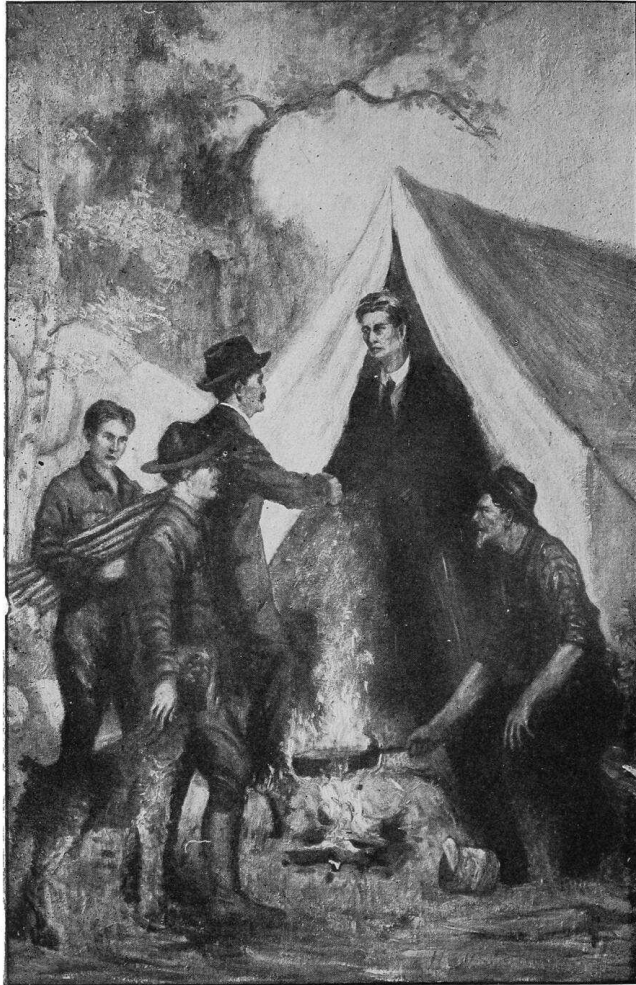


THE RANGER BOYS AND THEIR REWARD

By CLAUDE A. LABELLE

Table of Contents

- I. THE PLEA FOR HELP
- II. BAD NEWS IN HOBART
- III. LAFE COMES BACK
- IV. THE GUM HUNTER'S CLUE
- V. AN INDIAN TRICK
- VI. GARRY'S CHASE
- VII. WHAT THE ENGINE CAB REVEALED
- VIII. DICK'S FOOTBALL TACKLE
- IX. SAVED BY A JAP TRICK
- X. THE CABIN IN THE RAVINE
- XI. GARRY FINDS RUTH
- XII. NATE WEBSTER CALLS ON THE BOYS
- XIII. DICK'S FOREST STUNT
- XIV. THE GREAT SECRET
- XV. CONCLUSION



Finally Mr. Boone turned to him, and stretching out his hand, advanced and said: "Don't you know me, Richard?"

THE RANGER BOYS AND THEIR REWARD

CHAPTER I

THE PLEA FOR HELP

“Well, now that everything is going all right at the camp here, I suppose we might as well say goodbye to our friends and get ready for the return to the West Branch and resume our duties on the forest fire patrol,” remarked Garfield Boone to his chums as they sat in the crude office of the lumber camp.

“Yes, this seems to be the best thing to do, but I almost dislike the thought of going back. After all the excitement that we’ve had lately, it will be dead slow on the hill. Nothing to do but walk the patrol and take our turns in the Tin Can,” agreed Phil Durant.

The third member of the trio of friends, tried and true, merely yawned and said nothing. This was Dick Wallace, rather a heavy chap. Some people would have called him fat, but he always referred to himself as merely plump.

“Come, say something, Dick. You’ve been sitting here for an hour and the most you’ve said is yes or no, sometimes you didn’t even say that. What’s the trouble?” inquired Garry.

“Gosh, can’t you fellows see that I’m just resting? You want me to say something? All right. I wonder what we’ll have for dinner today?”

His friends broke into hearty laughter. Dick’s appetite was a standing joke with them, likewise his weight; for he always took the easiest way of doing things when speed was not required. This does not mean that the fat youth was a shirker or naturally lazy. When occasion demanded it, he was all speed and as quick as a

flash of lightning. Like many heavy people, he could move with the utmost celerity if need be, but his attitude was why hurry when you didn't have to. Time enough for that when something arose that demanded action.

"I say, boys, there's old Lawrence with a mail bag. You know he went to town at daybreak to get the mail. Wonder if there's anything for us?" remarked Phil, as he spied the old lumberjack coming towards them.

"Shouldn't wonder if there was a letter from home for some of us," answered Garry, as he stuck his head out of the door and called to the man to bring them what mail there was.

"Three for Garry, one apiece for the rest of you," said Lawrence, as he handed them the small bundle of envelopes.

The boys made a dive for the mail and soon each was busily engaged in perusing the letter or letters sent him.

As they are reading their letters, let us get acquainted with the heroes of this coming volume. Those of our readers who have read the preceding four volumes in this series, "THE RANGER BOYS TO THE RESCUE," "THE RANGER BOYS FIND THE HERMIT," "THE RANGER BOYS AND THE BORDER SMUGGLERS," and "THE RANGER BOYS OUTWIT THE TIMBER THIEVES," are already acquainted with the trio and the stirring adventures they have had. For the benefit of others, however, we will give a slight history of what they have done.

The three boys, whose names we already know, have just finished their junior year in high school, and while wondering what to do for their last vacation together, are told by Garry's father, a

wealthy timberland owner, that he will get them places in the Maine Forest Ranger Service.

The duty of the men on this service is to patrol the forests constantly on the lookout for forest fires, and if any are discovered, to report them promptly, as well as trying to do what they can to put out the blaze.

A short way up the river near their home the boys have a shack, and one afternoon they go there to find it occupied by three tramps who seize Phil and Garry. Dick makes his escape and brings help from town.

It is discovered that the three are badly wanted for robbing postoffices, and the chums receive a sizable reward for their capture.

This money they use, or rather a part of it, to outfit themselves for the forest. On the way to their work they make friends with one Nate Webster, an old Maine guide who later does them many a good turn. They also incur the enmity of a French Canadian halfbreed named Jean LeBlanc, who finds out that one is the son of Mr. Boone, a man he has hated for years.

While on their patrol they meet a party of New York campers, and are instrumental in saving the little daughter of Mr. Graham, head of the party. A day or two later LeBlanc captures the child and intends to hold it for ransom.

A queer, unknown individual writes them constant notes informing them of what is going on. This man they call the Hermit. Garry finally rescues little Patty, and LeBlanc is captured only to break out of jail later on.

The halfbreed continually crosses their trail, causing them all kinds of trouble, and several times endangering their lives. He sets fire to the forest, and almost causes the death of the boys and a party of motion picture people who are taking a forest picture. Having checkmated him, they set out to find the Hermit, following a clue given them in a cipher note, and Dick succeeds in finding the old man, who is evidently a gentleman, yet seems to be a trifle unbalanced mentally.

So well do they succeed at their work in the forest, that when a gang of fur smugglers start operations on the Canadian border, the Chief Ranger recommends to the Customs authorities that they be sent to help.

They are instrumental in aiding an old man who has been caught in a disused bear trap in the woods, and meet his granddaughter Ruth. They get evidence against the smugglers after some thrilling escapes, and find that part of the contraband of the smugglers includes some wonderful jewels. LeBlanc is mixed up in this, but makes his escape across the border, where the American Customs authorities cannot pursue him.

Coming into possession of a torn map, they work out its solution and discover a rich mine of tourmalines, those gems that are famous in the State of Maine, and are valuable both as jewels and as parts of electrical apparatus.

As they plan to return to their work as Rangers, they are asked by Mr. Boone to aid him in unraveling the mystery of the trouble at his summer logging camp.

Again they find LeBlanc is mixed up in the theft of the timber, and after a half a dozen narrow escapes from disaster, meet with

success. LeBlanc makes a mad dash for freedom and succeeds in swimming to meet a motor boat containing some of his friends, including his brother, Baptiste, who is just as great a villain as Jean.

In several of their adventures they have put to good use a wireless telephone outfit given them by Mr. Graham in gratitude for the double rescue of his little daughter, Patty.

In the preceding volume Dick called for help when the timber thieves had besieged the camp and captured the men loyal to Mr. Boone. Through the machinations of Barrows, the camp manager, much of the timber had been stolen, and enough harm done to seriously hinder Boone from keeping his contracts to deliver a certain supply of lumber at a set date.

Thanks to the boys' work, however, the plot was nipped before it had gotten too far, and so we meet them now in the camp office after order has been restored, and the men are working doubly hard to aid their employer.

Just one more thing must be explained, and that is the mystery that entered Dick's life when he was a mere child. His father, a friend of Garry's father, had been professor of botany at an Eastern university. Dick's mother died when he was a baby. One day Professor Wallace fell from his horse and received an injury that made him lose his memory. Before he could be operated upon he escaped from the hospital, in delirium, and had not been heard of from that day.

Out of sincere friendship for his old schoolmate, Mr. Boone had taken Dick into his home and, after formally adopting him, brought him up as he did his own son, Garry.

Now to return to the boys, who are just finishing their letters.

“Who is all that mail for you from?” quizzed Phil, as he spied Garry finishing his third letter.

“Well, you chaps were pining for more excitement, and dreading to go back to the humdrum patrolling of the forest, and it looks as though your desire for action was to be gratified,” answered Garry. “One of these letters is from Mother. The other two are from Augusta; that is, one is from the Chief Ranger and the other is enclosed in his message. That one is from a young lady.”

“What young lady would write to you, anyway, and why should she send it through the Ranger?” scoffed Phil.

“It’s from a young lady who lives on the Canadian border. Does that tell you anything?” replied Garry.

“Aha,” shouted Dick, as light broke on him. “Phil, it’s a love letter!”

“Nothing of the sort,” retorted Garry, though he flushed up a bit. “It’s a plea for help.”

This made the others stop their good-natured chaffing of their leader, for it was Garry who was the elected chief of the trio, and they importuned him to hurry up and read the messages.

“First, then, is the one from Ruth, who says that she and her grandfather have received several threatening letters, claiming that all kinds of misfortune will follow them unless they leave their home and get out of that section of the country. Along with her letter is the one from the Chief Ranger, who says that in addition to the threatening letters that have been sent, there are some peculiar

doings in the postal way at Hobart, and as we had such success in helping the Customs man, he has recommended that we be sent to Hobart to aid the postal inspector, who is on his way there now. So that's the story in a nutshell."

Dick jumped to his feet, all his "resting" forgotten. He seized Phil by the shoulders and did a regular war dance, dragging the protesting Phil, who was of a quieter disposition, around the floor of the office.

"Whe-e-e—, that means a trip back to the border, and all kinds of things may happen there again. Let's get going; we can pack in a few minutes and get to town in time to catch a late train for Bangor."

"All right; see how quick we can get packed up. Also, I wish one of you boys would pack up for me; some of my stuff is scattered around the shack; and be sure and pack the radio carefully. I had it out overhauling it this morning. I want to arrange about leaving, and see Art Howells, the new manager, and tell him to try and get some trace of Sandy before we go."

The mention of Sandy brought sadness to the boys. He was a big Airedale that they all loved, and had been stolen or wandered away a short time after they had reached the logging camp.

Away went the chums to pack, and Garry sought out Howells. The new manager assured Garry that he would do his best to find some track of the dog.

Howells also sent a man to get Mr. Boone, who was still at the camp helping reorganize the men after the trouble of the preceding days. When Garry returned to the office, he found his chums,

awaiting him. They had packed in a hurry, for Dick was still stuffing down the contents of his knapsack as Garry entered the shack.

“We’ll be all set in a few minutes,” declared Dick. “Have you sent for Dad Boone, Garry?”

“Yes, he’ll be here in a few minutes; he is only at the sawmill. Sure you have everything packed? Haven’t you forgotten anything?” asked Garry.

“Everything is as right as a trivet,” answered Phil. “Wonder if we can get the old Ford that was brought here yesterday to ride into town on; it will save us a long hike and will get us there quicker.”

“Guess we can have it all right; we’ll see as soon as Father comes,” answered Garry.

At this moment Mr. Boone entered the office, and noticing the excited air of the boys, and the packed knapsacks, asked in some surprise if they were not in an awful hurry to get back to work.

It took only a few hasty words to acquaint him with the new situation that had just arisen, and as Garry concluded the explanation he asked for the use of the old auto to carry them to town.

This request was readily granted by Mr. Boone, and he wished the boys good luck on their venture.

“I had hoped that you would go back to the mountain for the rest of the summer,” he said, “where there is some peace and quietness. It seems that you have stepped into trouble at almost every turn, and there is only one thing that I worry about. That is LeBlanc. He is a

most vindictive rascal, and I will not feel confident of your security until you are off to school this fall or until he is safely under lock and key in some prison, where he belongs. I hope you boys have no wild times on this, yet I would be the last one to ask you to shirk your duty; and since the Chief Ranger has such a high regard for you, who are yet boys, to send you on such an errand, I can only say I'm proud that you have done so well, and deserve all the praise that can be accorded to you. Also, I wish that you would postpone your departure for a few minutes, as I want to write a note to Nate Webster for you to mail when you get to Bangor. It will go quicker then, for the train that you will take this afternoon does not carry mail."

Naturally they agreed to this, and went outside while Mr. Boone wrote his note. In some way it had been noised about the camp that the boys were to leave, and soon several of the men had gathered in front of the office. Mr. Boone finished his letter, and gave it to Garry and they got into the flivver. The man called Tom, who had taken them on the coon hunt some nights before, started several times to speak, and then decided not to.

Just as they were about to start, Garry called to Art Howells to be sure and keep an eye out for news of Sandy's fate. There was a gulp in his throat as he said this. His chums, too, were silent, for they missed their faithful, four-footed friend sorely.

This evidently decided Tom, for he came to the flivver, and said to Garry:

"If you can get me time off enough to go to town with you, I promise you that you will have your dog a half an hour after we reach there!"

CHAPTER II

BAD NEWS IN HOBART

On hearing this, the boys gave a shout of joy, and in a minute had arranged for Tom to come with them as far as town.

With the cheers of the lumberjacks sounding in their ears, and with a wave of Mr. Boone and Art Howells, the boys were off. The flivver coughed, and gathering speed, rattled down the bumpy road.

As soon as they had started, they hurled a number of questions at Tom about Sandy.

“I wasn’t goin’ to say anything about the dog, because you fellows might take it out on us. My brother came to see me in camp the day after the coon hunt, and stayed around for awhile and made half sort of friends with the dog, and then later he was gone. I found out that he had taken him with him. ’Course I know it was stealing, but he was my brother and I was afraid he would get into bad trouble. You fellows know how I felt. First place I was ashamed to tell you I had a brother that would do that, and second place I was afraid you’d have him taken up for it. But I was going to see that you got him back somehow. When you got ready to go today, I knew how you felt about the pup, and so I couldn’t hold in any longer. All I wish is that you won’t have anything done to my brother, bad as he is.”

The boys were so overjoyed with the thought of regaining Sandy that they immediately promised Tom that the matter would be forgotten.

Speeding up the machine as soon as they struck better road, they made excellent time and reached the village ahead of their schedule. They went direct to the station to get their tickets, while Tom departed for his brother's house to bring Sandy to them. After buying their tickets, they were on tenterhooks waiting the return of their animal friend.

True to his word, Tom was at the station in half an hour. But Sandy beat him by several seconds, for no sooner did he get his first sight of the boys than he broke from the leash by which Tom was leading him and made a mad dash for the chums. He nearly knocked Garry over as he leaped on him, then he jumped from one boy to another in frantic glee, giving vent to sharp barks of delight as the boys mauled him in their joy at seeing him again.

“Sorry we’ll have to put you in the baggage car on the trip, old timer,” said Garry, “but the railroads have a rule against big fellows like you being in the car.”

At last the train came in and they were on their way. Sandy voiced unqualified disapproval at being tied up in the crowded baggage car, and occasionally one or another of the boys went ahead and petted him a few minutes.

The train was a slow one, and it was nearly eight o'clock when they reached the Penobscot River city. For once they were quite ready to follow Dick's lead and get “eats,” then they went to the hotel and reserved rooms. They found that their train was to leave fairly early in the morning, but as not one of them was tired, they took a walk down through the business center of the town.

As they passed a brightly lighted drug store, Dick noticed something in the window.

“There, I knew there was something we ought to have had on our other trips,” he announced to the others.

“Hold him, Phil, he’s going to buy something again. Remember how he wouldn’t go on without that knife last time he was here?” said Garry.

“Gosh, that reminds me I left that knife in the cabin at the little lake,” he ejaculated. “I wonder if that chap is still around here selling ’em?”

“Hardly; he was just one of those sidewalk merchants that are here today and gone tomorrow” answered Garry. “But what is it that you want to buy now?”

“Look at that display in the window, and see if you don’t think we ought to have an outfit” answered Dick as he waved his hand toward the indicated window.

“Well, for once you see something sensible. We might have a lot of use for them the remainder of the summer, and it will give us some nice souvenirs.”

What Dick had seen was a display of cameras, and followed by his chums he entered the store and soon had purchased a good camera and a sufficient quantity of films to take a number of pictures. As an afterthought, he bought material to develop a limited amount of the pictures, explaining that they might be able to print some in spare moments.

“Go ahead and buy whatever you want,” laughed Garry, “only remember that this stuff all goes in your pack, and you will have to carry the extra weight.”

This, however, failed to bother Dick, and he bought such articles as he needed.

They were about to return to the hotel, when Garry noticed a policeman coming down the street. This called to mind the night they had been near arrest and had received the torn map that eventually led them to the secret tourmaline mine.

“Let’s drop around to the station and see if the Chief of Police might be in. I’d like to say howdy to him, even if he once did have an idea that we were a crew of runaways,” he suggested to his companions.

The idea was instantly approved, and they changed their direction and headed for the station. They were just in time, for the Chief was preparing to leave for home. He recognized the boys immediately and invited them into his office for a chat. The few minutes lengthened into an hour, for the Chief made them tell him about the smuggling band and how they had aided in the capture.

“I happen to know something about it, for some of them were brought here for a hearing before the United States Commissioner, and I attended the hearing. It’s natural in you boys, I suppose, to be modest about it, but I wish that I had a son, or three of them like you, that could get out and do such a creditable bit of work as you did. If you ever want a job, apply to me,” he concluded with a laugh in which the boys joined.

The visit over, they hustled back to the hotel and to sleep, as they were booked for early rising.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

