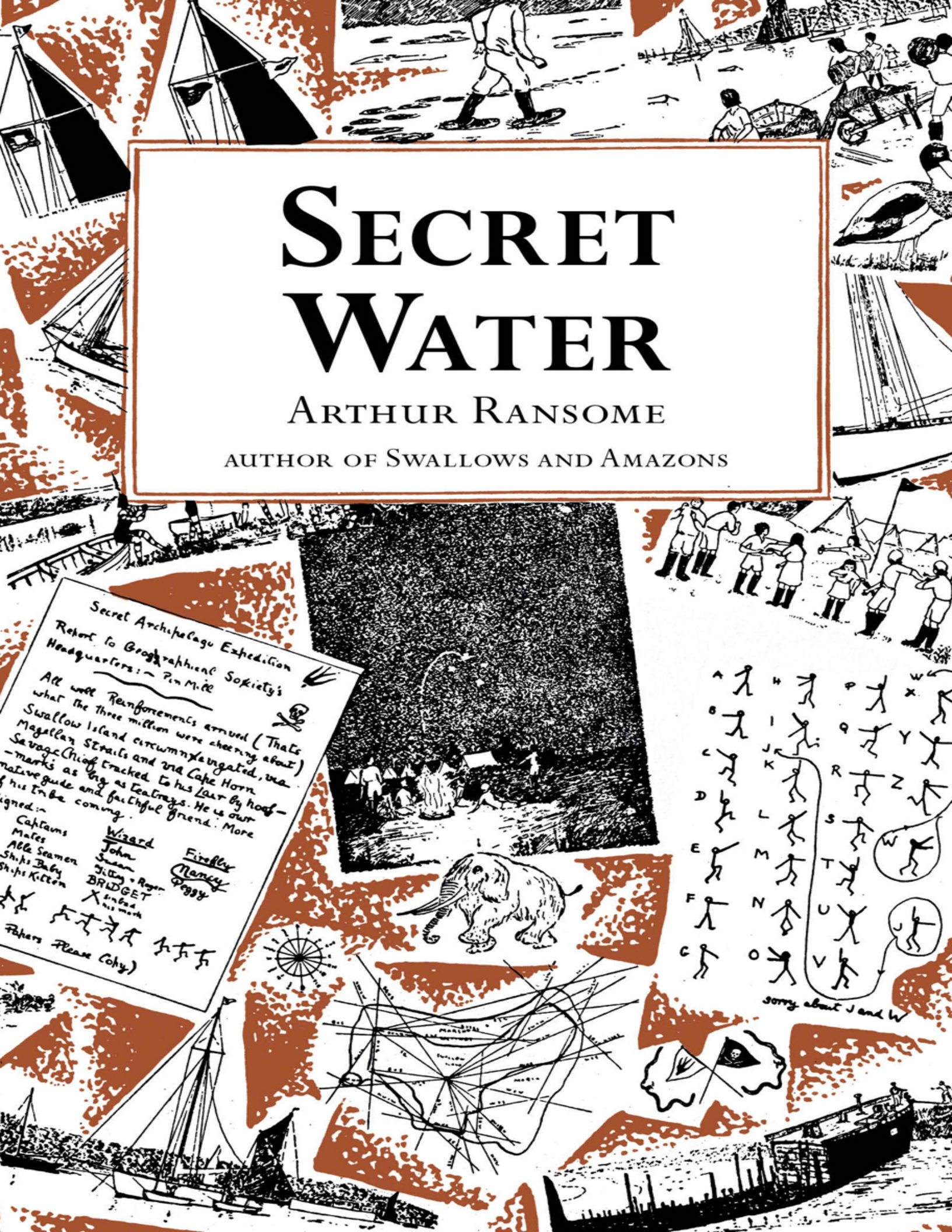


# SECRET WATER

ARTHUR RANSOME

AUTHOR OF SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS



Secret Archipelago Expedition  
Report to Geographical Society's  
Headquarters: - Pin Mill

All well. Reinforcements arrived (That's what the three million were cheering about) Swallow Island circumnavigated, via Magellan Straits and via Cape Horn. Savage Chief tracked to his lair by hoof - marks as big as teatraps. He is our native guide and faithful friend. More of his tribe coming.

signed in  
Captains  
Mates  
Able Seamen  
Ships' Boys  
Ships' Kitten

Wizard  
John  
Susan  
Fitzroy - Roger  
BRIDGET  
X  
his mark

Firefly  
Nancy  
Peggy

Fishers Please Copy)

A H P W  
B I J K Q Y  
C L M R Z  
D N S T  
E O U V  
F  
G

W  
J

sorry about J and W

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About the Author

Also by Arthur Ransome

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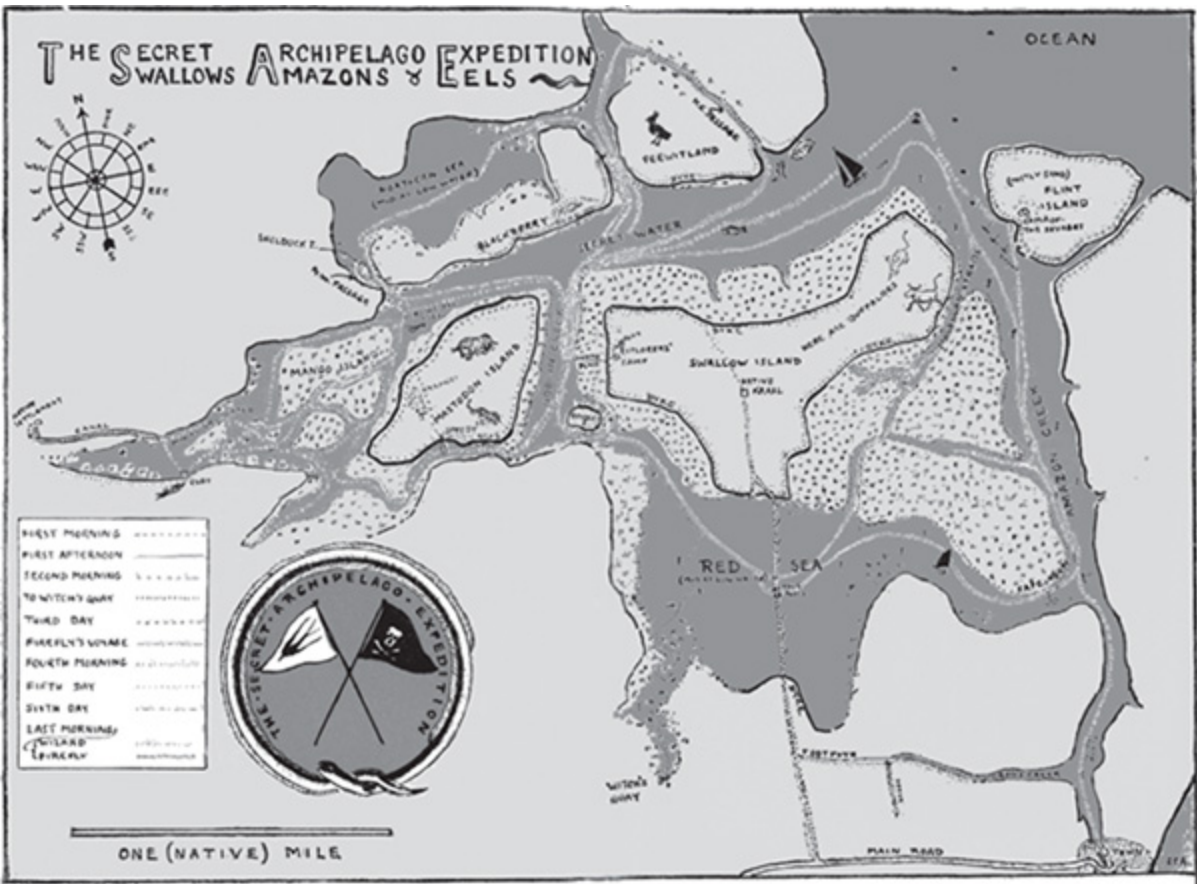
ARTHUR RANSOME

# Secret Water

Illustrated by the Author



RHCP DIGITAL



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WHAT SUSAN FOUND IN THE CAMP





To  
THE BUSK FAMILY

## CHAPTER I

### FAREWELL TO ADVENTURE

THE FIRST LORD of the Admiralty was unpopular at Pin Mill.

"I hate him," said Roger, sitting on the foredeck of the *Goblin*, with his legs dangling over the side.

"Who?" said Titty.

"The first of those lords," said Roger.

"We all hate him," said Titty.

John and Susan, perhaps, did not hate the First Lord in particular, but their thoughts about the Admiralty were as bitter as Roger's.

"I don't see the good of Daddy's coming home," said Bridget.

That was it. Daddy had come home and had been looking forward to a week or so of freedom before settling down to work at Shotley. The last thing Jim Brading had done before being whisked off home by an aunt (who had said that a young man with concussion would be better there than in a yacht, even if it had been turned into a hospital ship), had been to lend Daddy the *Goblin*. More: he had given Daddy a chart of a place, quite near by, where there were inland seas and dozens of islands. Everything had been fixed. The whole family of the Walkers were to sail round in the *Goblin*, to land at the place where Jim had marked a cross on the chart. Daddy and Mummy were to sleep afloat in the *Goblin*. The five Swallows and Sinbad the kitten were to camp ashore. They were going to do real exploring and make their own maps of those secret waters and unknown islands. Daddy, who had been looking forward to exploring as much as if he had not spent half his life at sea, had made a blank map on which their

discoveries were to be put down. He had sent to the north for their camping things. He had got them bamboos for surveying poles. He and Mother had laid in stores as if they were planning an expedition into the desert. The little inner room at Alma Cottage was crammed with tents and sleeping bags and packages of all sorts. Everything was ready, and then, that morning, the postman had handed over the letters, and Daddy, who had been ragging John about taking a compass bearing of the coffeepot from the cruet, saw the O.H.M.S. on one of them, tore it open, and said one "Damn" as if he really meant it.

"What is it?" Mummy had asked.

"We can't go. It's all off. The First Lord's chucked a spanner in the works."

"Not really?"

He had passed the letter to her.

"There it is. They want this and they want that. It means going up to London the day after tomorrow. And they want me to start in at Shotley as soon as I get back. You'll have to come to London with me, Mary, if you're to get all you want in time. I'm awfully sorry, you people. It just can't be helped. Orders is orders. The expedition's off. No exploring for us till next year."

It was as if the curtain had been rung down at the very beginning of the first act of the pantomime.

\*

Breakfast was hardly over before a young man in naval uniform had stopped his little car at the foot of the lane, run up the steps to the cottage, saluted, given a message, and taken Daddy and Mummy away. John, Susan, Titty, Roger, Bridget and Sinbad, the kitten, had rowed off to the *Goblin*, to keep their promise to her owner and, even if they were not going to sail in her, keep his little ship clean for him.

\*

Titty was sitting on the cabin top.

“The Admiralty just likes spoiling everything,” she said. “The lieutenant who came and took them off to Shotley was fairly gloating. I saw his horrid grin.”

“And everything planned,” said Susan. “And Daddy and Mother were just as keen on it as us.”

“By the time they let him go, we’ll be getting ready to go back to school,” said John. “Well, it’s no good sitting about. Let’s get to work and tidy her up.”

“If it wasn’t for that beastly Admiralty we’d be stowing cargo instead,” said Roger.

“Keep Sinbad out of the way,” said John. “We don’t want to sweep him o.b.”

Work made everybody feel a little better, though not much. John dipped the big mop over the side and sent the water shooting along the decks and pouring out of the scuppers in the low rail. Susan had found that the *Goblin’s* saucepans, though clean enough inside, had smoky patches outside that took a lot of rubbing off. Roger and Titty with a tin of metal polish between them settled down to smarten up portholes and cleats. Sinbad walked about on the cabin roof and on the decks, lifting first one paw and then another and giving it a shake after treading in the damper places left by John’s sluicing. Bridget told Sinbad he ought to be wearing sea-boots. There was not much talking among the others. They all knew that this tidying up of the *Goblin* instead of being a beginning was like the words “THE END” on the last page of a book.

Work went steadily on all morning. Decks grew spotless. Coils of ropes were re-coiled so beautifully that they looked like carved ornaments. John and Susan joined the polishers and porthole after porthole that had been dull with salt and verdigris glittered in the sun. Even Bridget did her bit and rubbed at a porthole till she could see her face in it.

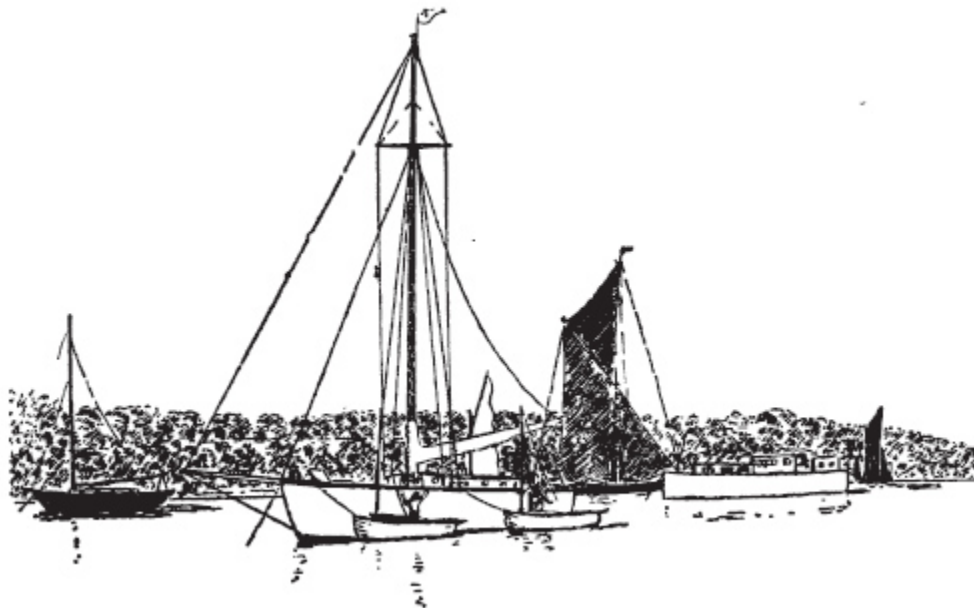
Now and then barges with the tall sails towered past, going up to Ipswich with the tide. Yachts came in from the sea, and the workers on the *Goblin* watched each in turn round up into the wind, with someone on the foredeck dropping the staysail and reaching with a boathook for a mooring buoy.

“Gosh,” said Roger at last, “isn’t it awful not to be going anywhere after all.”

“Hullo,” said Titty. “Look at that little boat, just like *Swallow* only with a white sail.”

“Two of them,” said John.

“Three,” said Roger. “There’s another just leaving the hard. Getting her sail up.”



“PUDDING FACES,” SAID ROGER. “PROBABLY GOING SOMEWHERE AND WE’RE NOT”

The two small white sailed dinghies met the third, and then all three ran together through the fleet of moored yachts. Work stopped aboard the *Goblin*. There was a girl in one of the boats and a boy in each of the other two. They sailed close by.

“Pudding faces,” said Roger, not because of any special likeness to puddings in the faces of the helmsmen, but



"I wish I could take her for a sail," said Daddy. "But I can't. I've got to go back to Shotley this afternoon. That lad's coming for me after lunch."

"That beast?" said Titty. "That gloating beast?"

"Oh come, Titty," said Daddy. "He can't help it. Even sub-lieutenants are God's creatures, though it's hard to believe it sometimes."

They were just following Daddy up the steps to Alma Cottage, when Titty saw a woman coming down the lane and waving to them. She stopped.

"Isn't this for your mother?" said the woman, holding out a letter. "Postman left it at mine by mistake."

Titty looked at the envelope. "Yes," she said, and then, seeing the postmark, she ran up to the cottage calling, "Mother, Mother, here's a letter from Beckfoot."

Mother was already at the round table in the parlour, cutting slices of roast mutton. She took the letter and looked at Daddy. "Oh dear," she said, "I do hope it's to say 'No'."

"No to what?" asked Roger.

"Just something I asked her," said Mother. She opened the envelope, took out the letter, read it through, and passed it across to Daddy. "What on earth am I to say?" she asked.

"Is one of them ill?" said Susan, seeing Mother's face.

"Oh no, it's not that," said Mother. "They're all quite well and Mrs Blackett sends her love to you."

"What about the D's?" said Titty.

"They've gone home."

"Oh well," said Titty. "There's still Timothy and Captain Flint."

Daddy finished reading the letter. "Can't be helped," he said. "Impossible. I can't get out of going to London, and it'll take us all our time anyhow, and I shall be up to the ears after I get back. ..."

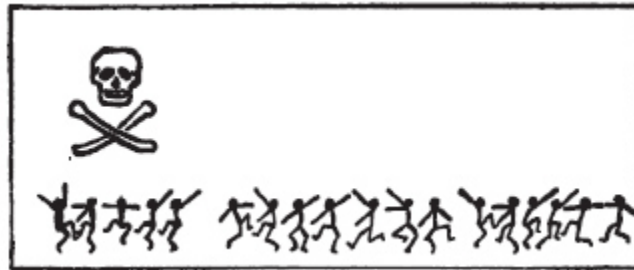
"In water?" said Roger.

“In work,” said Daddy, and then, seriously, looking at Mother. “You’ll just have to tell her the sort of fix we’re in.”

He folded up the letter and passed it across the table. Mother folded it up and put it in its envelope.

As she did so, she found that it would not slip in comfortably. There was something in the way at the bottom of the envelope. She turned the envelope upside down, and shook out a narrow card with a picture on it. There was no writing, not even an address, only a skull and crossbones in one corner and a picture of dancing savages.

“I expect this is for you people,” said Mother, and gave the card to Susan.



NANCY'S MESSAGE<sup>1</sup>

Susan looked at it. “What’s that first one, John?” she said.

“Left arm over his head. Right arm pointing at half-past ten. ... That’s T. ... The next one’s H. ... Both arms straight out. ... That’s R. ... Half a minute. ...”

“Let me see too,” said Titty.

John pulled a pencil out of his pocket and scribbled a letter of the alphabet under each of the dancing figures. “T.H.R.E.E ... M.I.L.L.I.O.N ... C.H.E.E.R.S. ... Three million cheers.”

Commander Walker burst out laughing. “Right under your very nose,” he said. “We ought to have that young woman to teach signalling to naval cadets.”

“Three million cheers,” said Titty. “What for? She must have done something and thinks we know all about it.”



“Captured the houseboat I should think,” said Roger. “Or drowned the Great Aunt. She wouldn’t send three million cheers about nothing at all.”

Nobody at Pin Mill felt like three million cheers. They felt about Nancy’s message almost as Roger had felt about the “pudding faces”. It was not fair. Three million cheers, indeed. Who could be expected to cheer about anything on a day when the best plan ever made had been wiped out by stony-hearted Lords of the Admiralty?

From the round table in the parlour they could see through into that inner room, with the bamboo poles for surveying leaning up in a corner, the bundles of blankets, the cases of provisions, the tent rolls and all the other things they had got ready for the expedition.

Titty got up from her chair and quietly closed the door.

Dinner was hardly finished before Daddy was taken off to Shotley again. And then Mother said she could not come out with them, because of letters to write. Bridget and Sinbad played in the garden. The others had no heart for boats, and went for a walk along the woods above the river. But even there, they could not forget what had happened. Yachts were coming up the river. Yachts were going down. Each one of them was going somewhere, or coming back, and Roger, until the others told him to shut up, kept telling them he was sure this yacht or that was carrying an expedition like the one Daddy had planned, on its way to the very islands they had meant to explore.

And then, when they had come back for high tea at Miss Powell’s they learnt that something had happened that had made Daddy at least feel quite different. Tea was over before he came in smiling to himself.

“Get out,” he said jovially as if nothing was wrong with the world. “Committee meeting with your Mother.”

They went, and as they went, heard just two sentences.

“Been sending a few telegrams,” said Daddy. “Must have sent half a dozen I should think. One thing after another.”

“Have a look at my letter and see if it’ll do,” said Mother.

“It won’t,” said Daddy. “Not after my telegrams.”

“Oh Ted,” said Mother. “What have you gone and done?”

And then they heard their father’s cheerful laughter. Cheerful and rather mischievous.

“Daddy’s up to something,” said Titty.

“I say,” said Roger. “You don’t think he’s thought of a way of dishing the first of those lords?”

They went back aboard the *Goblin*, watched Roger’s pudding faces racing their three dinghies, gave another rub round to the portholes, and finally, though there was really no need, lit the *Goblin*’s riding light before coming ashore. She lay there, with her light twinkling below her forestay, just as it had twinkled in the evening when they had been at anchor with Jim Brading in command.

“Awful to think we shan’t sail until next year,” said Titty.

“But if Daddy’s squashed that lord ...” said Roger.

“He can’t have done that,” said John.

Daddy was putting away a map as they came in. He and Mother went upstairs together to see Bridget into bed.

“They’ve got a secret,” said Titty.

“They’ve got lots probably,” said Susan.

“Something to do with us,” said Titty. “Didn’t you hear what he was saying?”

“What did he say?”

“He said, ‘Better keep mum about it till the morning’.”



<sup>1</sup> [See here](#) for Semaphore Alphabet.

## CHAPTER II

### ADVENTURE AHEAD

"ALL HANDS!" SAID Daddy, as they sat down to breakfast.

"Wait till they've had their porridge," said Mother.

Daddy laughed.

"Oh do tell us now," said Titty.

"You heard what your Mother said."

"Oh Mother!"

"You get your porridge down," said Mother. "But don't go and eat it too quickly."

"Or too slowly," said Roger, swallowing fast. "Slop it in, Bridget. Bridget doesn't know how to eat porridge. When you've got a mouthful in, don't just wave the spoon about. Get it filled while you're swallowing."

"Don't you hurry, Bridgie," said Daddy. "News'll keep."

"Anybody want any more porridge?" said Mother presently.

"Nobody does," said Titty.

"What about Roger?"

For a minute or two everybody had been watching Bridget, whose eyes wandered from face to face as she worked steadily on, spoonful by spoonful. Roger looked at the porridge still left on her plate. He could have a little more and yet be done as soon as she was.

"Yes, please," said Roger, and passed his plate.

Bridget eyed him balefully and put on speed. It was a very close thing. Roger was still swallowing his last mouthful while Susan was wiping a stray bit off Bridget's chin.

Daddy looked at Mummy. She nodded.

There was a breathless pause.

“Now look here,” said Daddy. “Mummy and I have been talking it over. We can’t come. I’ve got to be in London. Mummy’s got to come with me for part of the time anyhow. It all depends on John and Susan. If John and Susan will guarantee to keep the rest of you out of trouble, how would you like to take on that bit of exploration for yourselves?”

“Gosh!” said Roger.

“We won’t need to be kept out of trouble,” said Titty.

“Well, John?” said Daddy.

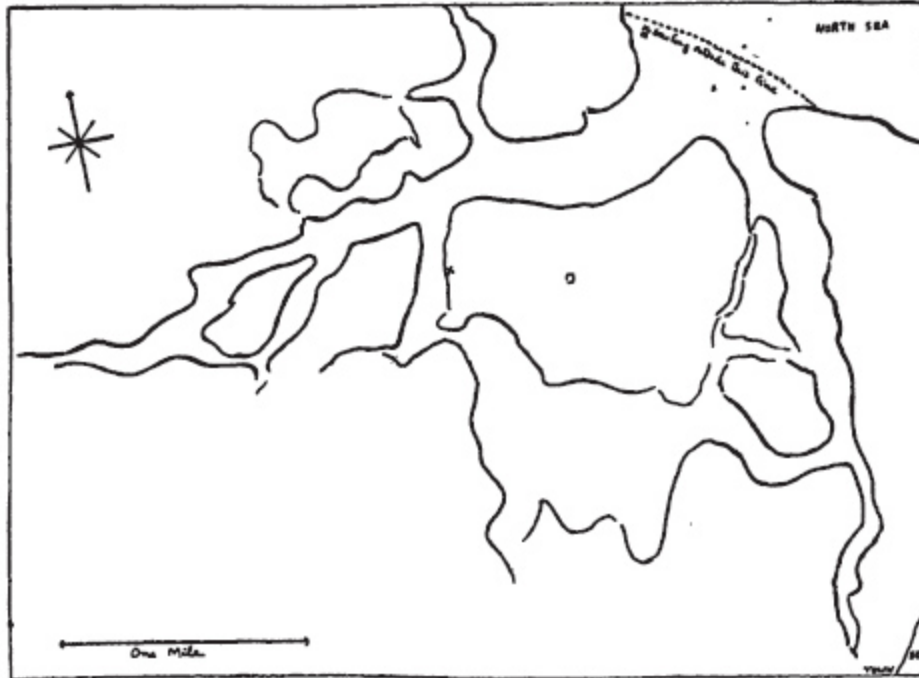
“But would Jim Brading let us have the *Goblin* without you?”

“No, he jolly well wouldn’t. Not if he could help it. Once was quite enough for him. What I propose to do is to take you round in her, dump the lot of you at the place he told us about, and come back and take you off as soon as my Lords of the Admiralty give me a chance. What about it, Susan?”

“We’ll be awfully careful,” said Susan.

“You’ll have to be,” said Daddy. “Tidal water. This won’t be like camping in the lakes. Where’s that chart? And the blank map?”

Daddy showed them the chart Jim had lent him, with a cross marking the best place for landing. “That’s where we’ll land,” he said putting his finger on the spot. “And there’s a farm here, where you see that little square.”



THE BLANK MAP

"Native kraal," said Titty.

"Are we going to have the chart?" asked John.

Daddy showed them the blank map he had made for the expedition when he had thought that he and not John would be in charge of it. "No," he said. "You'll have this instead. I've copied it roughly from the chart, but that's all. It's the sort of map people might have of a place that had never been explored. Those round lumps may be islands or they may not. Tide'll make a lot of difference. A lot of it's marsh covered at high water. I've marked just three things on it. Two of them are taken from the chart. That cross is the place where I'm going to put you ashore. The square is the farm, but this dotted line is the most important of all. See it, everybody? Nobody, on any excuse whatever, goes outside that line. No more drifting out to sea in fogs. Agreed?"

"Agreed."

"How can we drift at all without a boat?" said Roger.

"You couldn't explore islands without one, could you?" said Daddy. "I've borrowed a boat for you, and we'll tow

her round.”

“Brown sail?” asked Roger. “Like *Swallow’s*.”

“What’s her name?” asked Titty.

“Where is she?” asked John and began to get up from the table.

“Plenty of time after breakfast,” said Mother. John sat down again and looked out of the window. Close to the boat-builders’ shed two men were cleaning a dinghy, and a brown sail, wrapped round its spars, was propped against the wall beside them.

“Is that her?” asked John.

“Maybe.”

“But no sailing outside the dotted line,” said Mother. “No going out to sea, even without meaning to.”

“It won’t happen again,” said Susan.

“Anyway not in a dinghy,” said John.

“Going to let me finish what I was saying?” asked Daddy.

“Do go on,” said Titty.

“You’ll start with a blank map, that doesn’t do more than show roughly what’s water and what isn’t. You’ll have your tents, stores, everything we’d got ready when we thought we were all going together. You’ll be just a wee bit better off than Columbus. And with all the practice you’ve had at exploring, I think you’ll do pretty well. But you’ll be marooned fair and square. You’ll have to depend on yourselves alone. There’ll be nobody coming along every day to see that you’re all right.”

“Marooned?” said Roger.

“What happened to Ben Gunn,” said Titty. “They gave him a gun and put him on an island and sailed away and never came back.”

“Oh,” said Roger.

“We’ll come back for you all right some day,” said Daddy.

“When?” said Susan.

“Don’t say,” said Titty. “Much better if we don’t know. We’ll grow old and grey watching for a distant sail. ...”

“Not very old,” said Daddy. “And you won’t have time to get very grey before you have to stop being explorers and go back to school.”

“Don’t spoil it,” said Titty.

“Do you really think you’ll be all right there by yourselves?” said Mother.

“We will,” said almost everybody at once.

“Hullo, Bridget,” said Daddy, “what’s the matter?”

“What’s going to happen to me?” said Bridget, who had been growing more and more solemn. “You said you were going to take me when we were all going. Don’t let them leave me behind again. I’m quite old enough to go.”

“Ask Susan if she’ll have you,” said Daddy. “I’ll be glad if she will. May as well maroon the lot while we’re about it.”

“You’ll be a strong expedition,” said Mother, half smiling, and half comforting herself. “A captain and a mate and two able-seamen and a ship’s baby.”

“What about Sinbad?” asked Titty.

“We can’t ask Miss Powell to look after him,” said Mother. “There’ll have to be a ship’s kitten as well.”

“Then I won’t be the youngest,” said Bridget.

“Not by several years,” said Daddy. “Ah, thank you, Miss Powell. ...”

Miss Powell had come in and set a huge dish with a cover on it before Commander Walker. She lifted the cover and the little room was full of the smell of fried bacon. There was a busy minute or two while people were burning their fingers passing round hot loaded plates.

“No more talking,” said Daddy. “Finish your breakfasts. No seaman lets hot bacon and toast get cold if he can help it. And there’s no time to waste. High tide today about a quarter past two. We’ve got to be at the islands before then. All that stuff to be put aboard and we’ll have to be sailing by twelve.”

“Gosh!” said Roger. “Today. ...”

He was too busy to say more, and after that there was silence except for the crunching noise natural to toast when being eaten.

\*

Four men were carrying a sailing dinghy down the hard to put her in the water. Four explorers, who only an hour before had thought that for this summer at least their exploring days were over, raced down the hard in pursuit. Daddy followed in less of a hurry. Bridget had stayed behind to help Mother to turn a thick woollen blanket into an explorer's first sleeping bag.

"She's as big as *Swallow*," said John.

"She's called *Wizard*," said Titty, looking at the name on the boat's stern.

"Because she whizzes, I expect," said Roger.

The men slid her into the water. Daddy had a look at her gear and hoisted her brown sail. John and Daddy went off to try her while the others waited. Then John came ashore and Susan took his place. Then Daddy sailed with Roger and Titty together and watched them handle her in turns. Everybody got full marks, including *Wizard*.

"Now then," said Daddy. "We'd better borrow a wheelbarrow. We've got our work cut out to get all that stuff aboard."

The boatbuilder lent them a wheelbarrow and they took it to the steps below Miss Powell's cottage. Mother was sitting on the wooden seat at the top of the steps, sewing away at Bridget's sleeping bag. Bridget was telling Sinbad he was going to sea. Miss Powell was cutting an enormous pile of sandwiches to be eaten on their way down the river. Daddy had hurried up the hill to buy all the chops in the village so that they could take them ready-cooked to make things easier for their first meals on the island.



"I don't believe you'll ever get all that stuff into the *Goblin*," said Mother.

"There's a lot of room in her," said John, but that inner room at Miss Powell's looked pretty full.

"Come on," said Titty. "Let's everybody carry something."

Journey after journey was made from Alma Cottage to the dinghy floating by the hard. John, or Daddy after he had come back with the chops, pushed the wheelbarrow at the run, while others ran alongside keeping things from falling off. Voyage after voyage was made from the hard to the *Goblin*. Bit by bit that inner room began to look more like a room in somebody's house and less like a general store. It was extraordinary how different everybody felt. Yesterday it had seemed that adventure was over at least for these holidays. Today, adventure was ahead ... just round the corner. Real exploration ... Islands, and islands of a kind they had never seen ... an empty map to be filled with the discoveries they would make themselves. A little way upstream among the other yachts they saw the big yellow cutter with the three sailing dinghies clustered round her, and a boat from the shipwright's lying astern of her. Men were working aboard her. That girl and the two boys dropped into the dinghies and went off for a sail up the river. But today it never occurred even to Roger to call them pudding faces. There was no need to envy them. *They* were not going to sleep that night on an unknown island. *They* were not going to be marooned. *They* would not watch a ship sail away into the distance leaving them to pitch their camp and face the world alone. Roger looked at them with pity. "Those children again," he said.

"I do believe that's all," said Susan, back at the cottage looking round the room. The table had been cleared. Chairs that had been piled high were fit to sit upon once more. Everything left in the room belonged to it and not to an exploring expedition. Susan looked carefully round,

straightened the tablecloth, and put a chair (that had somehow strayed) neatly in its place against the wall. "I don't believe we've forgotten anything."

"*Swallow's* flag," said Titty, and darted upstairs to fetch it.

"Will it be all right to fly it on *Wizard*?" asked Roger, as she came down with it.

"We must fly it over the camp," said Titty.

Mother's voice came from outside. "A glass of milk for everybody," she said. "You've earned it after all that racing up and down."

"Pretty good work," said Captain Walker, pulling at his pipe. "Well done the Able-seamen."

"How soon will I be counted Able-seaman?" asked Bridget.

"Not till you can swim," said John.

"And she mustn't try swimming this time," said Mother, "because of the tides."

"And the mud," said Daddy.

"And the sharks," said Roger.

And then Daddy asked how many of the others had got their life-saving certificates, and handed out half a crown to each of them, on hearing that Roger and Titty had got theirs in the summer term at school, and that John and Susan had got theirs the year before.

"Penny for your thoughts, John," said Mother, after John had been silent for a minute or two.

"No good offering him a penny when I've just made him a rich man," said Daddy. "Out with it John, all the same."

"I was only thinking what a pity it is that Nancy and Peggy can't come too."

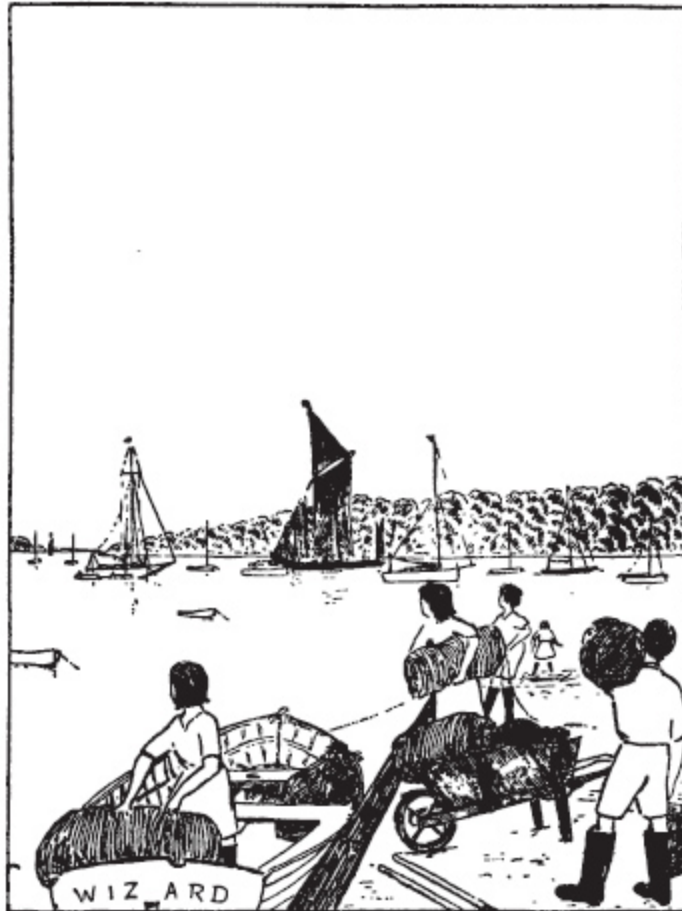
Daddy and Mother looked at each other but said nothing.

"Captain Nancy'd just love being marooned," said Titty. "But I expect they're doing something too. Sure to be. They'll probably write and tell us about it. She wouldn't

have sent three million cheers unless they were up to something pretty larky.”

“They won’t be doing anything as good as this,” said Roger.

Captain Walker looked at his watch.



“NO NEED TO ENVY THEM NOW”

“Are you ready, Mary?” he said. “All aboard. Hurry up and say goodbye to Miss Powell. We’ll have to start at once to make sure of having the tide with us going in.”



PIN MILL

## CHAPTER III

### INTO THE UNKNOWN

THE *GOBLIN* WAS floating well below her usual water line as she left Pin Mill to sail down the river into the unknown. She had never been so laden before. Inside her there was hardly room to move. Stuffed knapsacks, cases of ginger beer, tin boxes and bundles were piled on the cabin floor and in the bunks. Huge rolls of oilskins and ground sheets had been lashed down on the cabin top. A bundle of long bamboos for surveying was made fast on one of the side decks. And beside their gear there were all the members of the expedition. John, Susan, Bridget (on her first sea voyage) and the kitten, Sinbad, were in the cockpit. Titty and Roger were on the foredeck. Down below in the saloon, Commander Walker was ticking things off on a list and telling Mother that everything was really quite all right and that there was nothing about which to worry.

"It isn't as if there wasn't Susan," he said, "and it isn't as if John had no sense. I say, John. You keep straight down the middle of the river. I'm going to turn the engine on to get us quickly down over the tide."

"Aye, aye, sir," said John seriously. He, like Susan, had heard that their father was depending on them.

The engine started chug, chugging beneath them. Roger scrambled aft in a hurry, to be allowed to push the lever forward and put it into gear. The *Goblin's* wake lengthened, and the water creamed under the bows of *Wizard*, the sailing dinghy, towing astern.

In the cockpit, they had to shout to each other to make themselves heard over the noise of the engine, and could no longer hear what was being said by the friendly natives

in the cabin. But there was little need for talk while everybody, even John the steersman, was busy with sandwiches and ginger beer.

They passed boats not in a hurry going slowly down under sail alone. They met boats coming up fast with the tide. They were interested in all of them, but the *Goblin*, they knew, was the only boat that was on her way to maroon a party of explorers on an island. The wooded banks slipped by and were left behind. The river opened into the wide harbour. They looked up the Stour and pointed out to Bridget where they had spent their first night in the *Goblin* anchored off Shotley pier. They drove down past the dock where (how long ago it seemed!) they had seen Jim Brading row in for petrol before the fog had come down on them like a blanket. Ahead of them once more was the Beach End buoy.

“Listen!” said Titty at the top of her voice.

“I can hear it,” shouted Roger.

“Clang! ... Clang! ... Clang. ...”

It was very different, hearing the bell buoy now with Mother and Daddy aboard, and bright sunshine everywhere, from what it had been, hearing that “Clang ... Clang ...” coming blindly nearer in the fog.

“We’re nearly out at sea,” said John.

“John says we’re nearly out,” Bridget called down into the cabin.

Commander Walker put his head out, looked round and went down again. The chug, chug of the engine came to an end.

“We shan’t want that now,” said Daddy, coming on deck again and talking quietly in the sudden silence made by the stopping of the engine.

They made as much room for him as they could and he sat on the after deck looking at Jim’s chart.

“I’ll take over now,” he said. “John, you’ve got the best eyes. Get forward by the mast and keep them skinned. Look