

Polly Evans' Story Page for Boys and Girls

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Aunt Debby's Heirlooms

In the course of their regular meeting, held soon after Shorty's and Billy's cave adventure, the "Bloody Robbers" came to the conclusion that, since the two adventurers had found the exit to the famous cave, there could be no better meeting place for the band than in its dark chambers. With any sort of precaution they should find here a secret refuge from the prowling and inquisitive "Bloody Pirates." Accordingly, a time was fixed for Saturday morning, when all should assemble, journey to the cave and take formal possession.



"PRESENTED THE CASSET"

well, therefore they had little difficulty in leading their comrades to it. In the midst of a clump of rocks, screened by dead bushes, was the deep hole which led into the cave.

Billy, by virtue of his position as captain of the "gang," descended first. Then, one after another, the "robbers" lowered themselves through the opening and dropped with sundry jolts and grunts.

Through various pretexts, every boy had been able to provide himself with a candle. These were now lit, and, led by Billy, the ghostly procession began to thread its way between the narrow walls.



LEFT BY THE "ROBBERS" OF LONG AGO

"Bet there are ghosts here!" exclaimed Joe Stanton.

For answer Bill Kane prodded him viciously in the back, with the terse command, "Shut up!"

Nevertheless, the rest of the band shivered, and started anew at the echoes of their own footsteps. They were not half sorry when Billy called a halt, while he and Shorty turned aside to inspect a square chamber which branched from the main corridor. "Hello, there's something here!" yelled Billy, bending over a group of objects hardly distinguishable in the dim light. By this time several others had gathered around. By the flare of the candles could now be seen several old, rusty barrels and casks, an old rifle, an ancient pistol and what looked like a little box.

"Robbers must have been in this cave a long time ago," whispered Shorty ex-

Johnny

HE CAN scamper a mile to the baseball field, and he never feels the heat; but, oh, it's so far to the corner store—so far for his aching feet.

He can run to see the circus come in, and stand and watch by the hour; but the postoffice building is so far away.

And there might come up a shower. He can get up at 5 on the Fourth of July—

It's really no trouble at all; but it's too early on all other days, and his mother may call and call.

He can sit up all hours to frolic, and not get sleepy or tired a bit; but if there's a lesson or problem to do, he goes fast asleep over it!

O Johnny, dear Johnny, how funny you are!

And when will grown-ups understand that hard things seem easy, and easy ones hard?

To youngsters all over the land?

Killing Chinamen.

"Pay attention now," said the schoolmaster, addressing his class during the geography lesson. "The population of China is so great that two Chinamen die every time we take a breath."

This information made a deep impression on the juvenile scholars, and the master was particularly struck with the uncomfortable appearance of one small boy at the foot of the class. His face was flushed and he was puffing furiously.

"What is the matter?" inquired the schoolmaster with alarm. "What on earth are you doing, Tommy?"

"Killing Chinamen, please, sir," was the answer. "I don't like them foreigners, so I'm getting rid of just as many as I can!"

citedly. The eyes of some glistened; others looked behind them frightfully, as though expecting to see the ferocious brigands appear.

Meantime, Billy was industriously scraping the mould from the little casket. Presently he announced the result of his endeavors by the remark: "There's writin' here, fellers."

Shorty inspected it closely. "Say, fellers," he cried, "I do believe this is the monogram of Aunt Debby Mortimer's family. We went to her house for dinner not so long ago, and all the silverware was engraved just like this. She said it's been in the family years and years. She calls other old things, too, that she calls 'heirlooms,' or something like that. An' I'll bet this is one of her heirlooms," he concluded triumphantly.

Of course, they were all too excited to hold a meeting just then, so it was postponed. They all tramped their way to the old Mortimer mansion, where Aunt Debby lived alone, except for an old servant.

Shorty, who was better acquainted with Aunt Debby than any of the others, was delighted to present the casket. Billy rang the doorbell.

To say that Aunt Debby was surprised when she was told a mob of boys was outside waiting to see her, would be putting it mildly. But when she saw the casket she just threw up her hands.

"My dear boys!" she exclaimed, "I am quite sure this is the very casket of jewels stolen from my mother nearly fifty years ago. I remember her speaking about it several times. And if I'm not mistaken I have the key to it right here."

She went to a little desk nearby and brought forth a tiny key. This she placed in the rusty lock. Finally, when she had exerted the full strength of her fingers, the lock turned. Raising the lid, there was uncovered a handsome set of jewels, which sparkled in a dazzling brilliance that fairly blinded the eyes of her audience.

Aunt Debby was overjoyed. Right then and there she heartily thanked the boys and invited every one of them to dine with her on the morrow. Of course, this discovery made the

key to it right here."

own a little cottage by the sea, within plain sight of where the shipwreck occurred. The child saved was, of course, Judith. So you see how Judith was adopted by Tommy's father and mother and became Tommy's sister. A right loyal sister she was, too. Tommy loved her just as well as though she had been a real sister. As a matter of fact, the boy had never been told otherwise. He was of about the same age as Judith, and they had grown up together as brother and sister.

Tommy's uncle also dwelt in the little cottage. Both Tommy and Judith thought him a very peculiar man. You see, he was once a professor, and now he was trying to become famous by inventing a flying machine. He seemed to be so very learned that Tommy and Judith could never understand why his machines were always failures. At times the uncle would seem discouraged, but he always persevered and declared he would make still another attempt. And if he hadn't made the effort that brought forth the flying machine our story tells about, why, there wouldn't have been any story. For it was this flying machine that brought about the strange adventure which cleared up the mystery regarding Judith Lee.

Now, on the top of the cottage was a level space, surrounded by a balustrade. Tommy's uncle was accustomed to spend several hours each day walking up and down here. The boy and girl rarely paid the roof a visit, so that Judith afterward wondered what it was that made her grieve upon this afternoon that they got up there.

"Cricky! Uncle's made another flyin' machine!" cried Tommy, as soon as his head appeared on a level with the roof. "It looks like a dandy, too. Hope it will fly."

"So do I," responded Judith, coming forward to inspect the apparatus. There was a little basket which interested Tommy immensely.

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Mystery of Judith Lee

IN THE first place, Judith Lee wasn't really Tommy Lee's sister. Indeed, no one was quite sure as to whether her name was originally Judith. But that was the name beautifully embroidered on the handkerchief which had been found tied loosely around the neck of a child saved from the horrible shipwreck.

Tommy's father, you must know,



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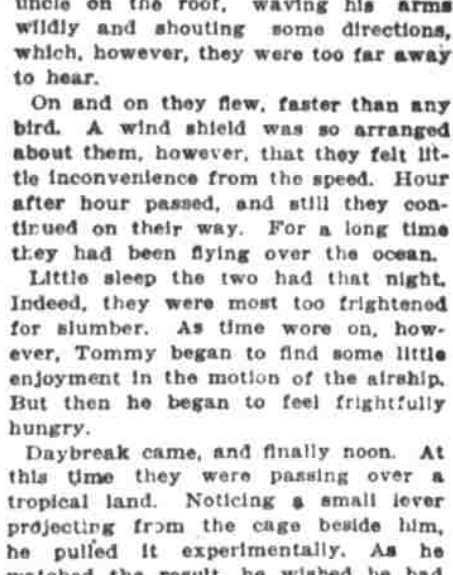
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NOT LIKE OTHER PUSSIES



OTHER pussies scratch and bite, Don't behave at all. Pull their tails and they will fight; And they like to squall.



Kitty, here, knows how I've tried To be good to her; It's only 'cause she's wool inside That she doesn't purr.

NAUGHTY DAY

FOR SIX days of the week Joey was always good. Some days he was very, very good; other days he was just good; while on still others he was just good. At least, during all this time he was never bad. Each week, however, there came a "naughty day"—a time when Joey was downright wicked and unashamed.

If it had not been that Joey's mamma was an invalid, unable to look after him properly, very likely he would not have had a "naughty day." But long ago he had lost fear of nurse, and had learned to take advantage of her good nature, secure in the belief that he would not be punished.

Kind and indulgent as nurse was, there came a time when she could no longer overlook these "naughty days." So Joey's mother was quietly told. It grieved her very much to hear this, for, like some other mothers, she imagined that Joey was always good.

Joey knew he should have been dressed almost half an hour ago. He knew it was after breakfast time when he sat up in his little bed. And he knew it was very wrong to throw savagely across the room the stockings nurse had brought him. Yes, he knew; but he didn't care—because it was a "naughty day." He looked out of the corner of his eye at nurse to see whether she was aware of this.

He thought it funny that nurse should not have come to coax him to dress. And now he thought it funnier still that she didn't pay even the slightest attention to him. He banged a chair and yelled again, more loudly than before. Nurse, calmly left the room. She had never done that before! What could it all mean?

By this time Joey had almost forgotten it was a "naughty day." Dressing himself ever so quickly, he crept down the stairway and then out to the kitchen, where he meekly asked cookie for something to eat.

"If it ain't a purty time to be a-wantin' your breakfast! I can just tell you, Master Joe, that you'll get nothin' from me this mornin'!"

Cook had never snorted or glared at him in that way before. She had always called him her "darlint" and given him the very nicest things. He was sorely puzzled.

At any rate, mother would be sure to kiss him lovingly and treat him kindly. Yes, he would go to mother. But no sooner had he entered mother's room than she said sharply and with a frown, "Go away, child; I don't want to see you now."

"Why, muvver?" Joey was just able to gasp; then, with burning tears in his eyes and a big sob in his throat, he felt his way along the balustrade until he reached the nursery. There, all alone, he flung himself upon the floor and wept as though his heart would break. This was the first time mother had frowned at him, and this was the first unkind word he had ever known from her.

Then Joey began to wonder if it ever hurt other people when he said unkind things and was naughty. Of course, they could never feel so bad as he felt now—never in the world—but perhaps, after all, it did hurt their feelings a little. "Naughty day" wasn't just the nicest sort of a day for those about him, he began to think. And he even began to doubt whether he enjoyed it a very great deal himself.

There was still another blow in store for Joey. When father came

home that evening he didn't notice him. Joey sat down trampling to his meal. Not a word was spoken. After Joey had swallowed a few mouthfuls he went quietly back to his own little room.

That night, when he was all ready to go to bed, mother came, as usual, to hear him say his prayers. For all

his sorrow Joey noticed that mother looked sad, too. He could endure his woes no longer. Flinging his arms around mother's neck, he pleaded tearfully.

"Don't you really love me any longer, muvver—no even a teeny, weeny bit?"

Mother clasped him tightly as she said gently, "Of course, goodie; I was cross only because it was my 'naughty day.' If you have 'naughty days,' we'll have to have them, too, I'm afraid."

"Oh, muvver, 'pose none of us have 'naughty days.' I'll promise never to have one again—never!"

Mother dried his tears as they made the agreement. And Joey has kept his word.

Why Jack Went

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL teacher was on his way to church the other Sunday day when he saw two tiny toddlers coming toward him. One of them said