

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF J. RUFUS WALLINGFORD

By GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER, Creator of "Wallingford," and CHARLES W. GODDARD

Read the story and then see the moving pictures

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A Transaction In Summer Boarders

“S TUNG, ladies,” observed J. Rufus Wallingford as he looked at the dilapidated stage which was to carry them from the forlorn and lonesome little station at Birchwood to the Pine Lake Health Resort. “It takes a couple of wise lasses like you and me, Blackie, to get the prong good when we do get it,” and he glanced at the discouraged looking Violet and Fannie Warden. Aunt Patty Warden was smiling cheerfully. “Don’t ring me in on this, J. Rufus,” protested Blackie Daw, twirling his black mustache with complacency. “I didn’t want any health, remember. I’ve got too much now, in spite of all I can do to ruin it.” “Perhaps that isn’t our stage,” said Fannie Warden hopefully. What faint hopes Fannie had entertained, however, were dashed by the driver himself, as he stopped his horses at the platform. “Are you Mr. Wallingford and party?” he inquired in a voice which was a startling reproduction of the tone of the rear of wheel, and he surveyed them with the mournfulness of the grave. Wallingford looked at Blackie with stern accusation, and then his jovial pink face broke into a smile, which, while infectious to behold, was not all mirth. “I never had a stronger hunch than right now to slip anybody the wrong name,” he confessed, “but the train’s gone and we might as well be game. If our party can stand this, though, here’s a piker. I suppose you’re from Pine Lake?” “Yes, I’m from Ruggs’ place,” admitted the driver. “I reckon you’d better get near in the middle of the middle seat as you kin,” he continued, eyeing the huge Wallingford with more or less of dismay, and he winced quite painfully when Wallingford, having seated all the others, gravely trimmed ship and forced all the stragglers down tightly and firmly upon the running gear, where they only served to accentuate the ensuing jolts. “What do you want for the outfit?” Wallingford asked Ruggs after they had arrived at the place, not because he had the remotest idea of purchase, but merely from commercial habit. “Five thousand,” returned Ruggs, though without hope. “Forty rooms, sixty acres, fine supply of pure spring water, splendid air! Want to buy?” “No,” returned Wallingford, with the peculiar chuckle in which his big shoulders always assisted. “I did once think of having my own private cemetery, but I’ve given it up. Is Charles Algonon Swivel here?” “Never heard of him,” declared Ruggs wheezily, and the party groaned. Charles Algonon Swivel was somewhere in this county of health resorts, and they had to find him. Breezy Point was a regular place; freshly dressed old women crocheting on the wide verandas and keeping a sharp eye about for possible scandal; young couples in tennis flannels sauntering about on well kept lawns between prim flowerbeds and delivering themselves of conversation which would bore them to tears if they could hear it in a phonograph ten years later; strikingly dressed married women taking the first steps toward divorce while waiting for their husband’s week end visits; boats with couples of contentment drifting lazily on the quiet bay; smart riding parties on handsome horses, glancing in cold disdain at the pedestrians and automobiles; women changing gowns three times a day and men dressing at least twice; prices beyond the reach of honest folks and all the rest of it that goes to make a really exclusive fashionable resort for the middle classes. In this place the Wallingford party fitted like a glove, and J. Rufus was the life of the party. Wherever he went light followed him. He was so big, so impressive and without so genial that the women had all noted him with eager questioning, and half the men were his friends and admirers before he had been there a day. Especially Charles Algonon Swivel. That youth, found on the first evening and promptly annexed, trailed Wallingford about, laughed at his stories, drank in his good natured philosophy and emulated him in every respect. Charles Algonon was a most immature young man of not over good breeding, nor over good looks, nor apparently over good

sense, though in his rather watery little eyes was a trace of inherited shrewdness. Moreover, he was very wearing upon the nerves, and his ethics were crude. His father had made his money in oil. Also his father had stolen \$25,000 from the Warden orphan on the death of their father, and this was why Charles Algonon had been hunted and found and studied. “I’d like to make my money more active,” declared young Swivel. “That is, just as soon as I get it. You see, I’ve been on allowance until now, but on the 5th of next month I come of age and I get the rest of it—\$150,000. Of course I’ll only spend the income. I want to invest it in good paying business that will make a good profit and give me plenty of time to spend it in. I’ve been thinking that, for a business which only takes up half the year, the summer resort line ought to be attractive,” and his watery eyes once more followed the progress of a couple of short skirted tennis girls, their flannels draping themselves prettily in the breeze against little young limbs. Wallingford saw and understood and again found himself loathing Swivel quite out of proportion to his deserts. “Finest business in the world,” he agreed. “Pays big, requires small capital and no experience.” Blackie Daw’s head suddenly went back with a laugh. He had been blessed with a happy idea. “Mr. Wallingford knows what he is talking about,” he observed, twirling

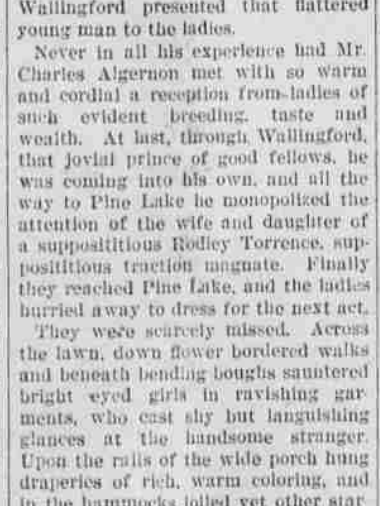
to him. “Patch up that roof,” he ordered. “Prop up that old barn so it will stand for one month and make it look like new. Spice that picket fence and build a million miles of wide porches around the house. Then I’ll tell you what next to do.” To the head painter he said, “Just start in and paint, that’s all.” To the head gardener: “Here’s the place. Fill up the lake and get busy.” “Now comes the hardest part of it,” said Wallingford at this point. “You stay here, Blackie, and doll the place all up like an old man’s bride, while I run in to Chicago and pick up a herd of Class A summer boarders for our friend Charles Algonon.” “The job of “picking” summer boarders by offering free vacations to mail-carriers and the like was not so easy as Wallingford had anticipated, and at the end of the third day he was almost discouraged. He was standing at the bar of his hotel, musing in more or less dejection over his poor luck, when a familiar but long unheeded voice hailed him, and he turned to find a good comedian of his Broadway acquaintance at his elbow. “Hello, Guyer!” said Wallingford heartily. “You’re just in time to save me from going the toboggan route. Only a drunkard drinks alone, you know. What will you have, Daney?” “A sandwich and a glass of milk, with a piece of pie and a demt tasse to follow,” said Mr. Guyer in sepulchral tones. “Sure,” said Wallingford. “Won’t you add a pickle?” “Couldn’t do it in justice to the balance of the company,” returned Guyer. “What’s the matter with the rest of the company?” asked Wallingford. “You haven’t had a divy or you wouldn’t be looking so prosperous.” “A mere trick of the trade, my boy,” said the other. “We have clothes, and to spare, both the men and the women of us, but food—ah, food!” “What are you out with?” asked Wallingford, laughing. “We are out with and on that silly musical piece called ‘A Bird in the Hand.’ The bird, my boy, never flew. It only flopped as far as Tankville, and there, still in the pinfeather stage, it lay down and died a deserved death, leaving forty ladies and gentlemen of parts and appetites stranded, unsatisfied and unful.” “The divine fire of inspiration hit Wallingford at about that moment. “Forty of you, did you say?” he demanded. “What were the costumes you attached?” “Modern, swell afternoon gowns for the women; street and evening clothes for the men, including flannels and outfits for a country club scene. Oh, the ‘Bird’ had scrumptious plumage, Wallingford, but no body!” “Great!” said Wallingford, with eager enthusiasm. “Tonight, Guyer, we have food without fear. In the morning we lift the mortgage at your hotel, and all go on a picnic. How would the members of your company like to take a week’s rest at a nice country resort at my expense, wear those swell costumes all over the lot and then hike back to Broadway, still at my?” “Don’t say any more just yet,” pleaded Mr. Guyer, holding forth his hand, pain outward. “I couldn’t stand it. Where is the family you want married? Let’s get to work.” “The family consists of one stage door Johnnie—one of the kind you think that if he can’t get any of the women of the company to notice him



Onion Jones Dropped Around and Explained to the Old Boarders.

Wallingford then went to the railroad office and bought tickets for the troupe. When Mr. Wallingford brought Mr. Swivel to Pine Lake by way of Chicago two women boarded the train at the city by the stock yards and were no sooner ensconced in their seats than Wallingford hailed them with great joy. “My dear Mrs. Torrence!” he exclaimed to the slightly older of the two. “What a delightful surprise to find you here, for it’s two weeks too early to hope that you are bound for Pine Lake. Howdy, Miss Torrence? Married yet?” “Not yet!” laughed Miss Torrence. “Maybe we can still get rid of her if you have the usual assortment of nice young men at Pine Lake. You may suppose that we’re going to your de-

lightful place just for that purpose if you like,” laughed her mother, stealing an instantly suppressed inquiring glance at Mr. Swivel. Immediately Wallingford presented that flattered young man to the ladies. Never in all his experience had Mr. Charles Algonon met with so warm and cordial a reception from ladies of such evident breeding, taste and wealth. At last, through Wallingford, that jovial prince of good fellows, he was coming into his own, and all the way to Pine Lake he monopolized the attention of the wife and daughter of a supposititious Rodney Torrence, supposititious traction magnate. Finally they reached Pine Lake, and the ladies hurried away to dress for the next act. They were scarcely unseated. Across the lawn, down flower bordered walks and beneath bending boughs sauntered bright eyed girls in ravishing garments, who cast shy but languishing glances at the handsome stranger. Upon the rails of the wide porch hung draperies of rich, warm coloring, and in the hammocks lolled yet other striking beauties, who, though remarkably careless as to ankles, made a succession of living beauty tableaux which were wonderfully appealing to Mr. Swivel. All this was in the very first afternoon. In the evening there were ravishing gowns and ivory shoulders and languorous music, and about an hour after dinner, Charles Algonon found himself blissfully settled down in a dark corner of the porch for a tete-a-tete with a particularly fetching heiress, a Miss Tottie Van Vorhies, daughter of President Van Vorhies of the Amalgamated Lead corporation. An other than Mr. Swivel might have thought that Miss Tottie’s lips were too thin and firm, that her chin was too sharp, her cheek bones too prominent, and the blue of her eyes too cold. But what did Mr. Swivel know or care of these things when he saw the rounded ankles, and the tapering arm, in the display of which Miss Tottie was so generous? (He liked, too, the decided ways in which she had appropriated him and thought her bold possession of him really pretty; also he admired very much the entertaining salve with which she admitted him to immediate good fellowship with her. Wallingford, who never allowed himself to be ignorant for a moment as to the whereabouts of Charles Algonon, passed that way with the temporary Mrs. Torrence in keen delight. At some distant remark which Mrs. Torrence made to him as they paced out of hearing Wallingford chuckled heartily, and the chin of Miss Van Vorhies suddenly gave a sharp upward tilt. “Your friend Wallingford gives me a pang,” she said. A rollicking song from the parlor brought Miss Tottie to her feet at the same moment, and she hurried into the parlor with her protégé. Suddenly an ominous sound smote upon Wallingford’s ears. Back to the parlor they were singing in full chorus “Give My Regards to Broadway,” and there was a sob in the voices. “Great Scott!” said Wallingford. “If that bunch of actors and actresses are getting mushy about Broadway it’s all over.” He hurried back to the house and had the music switched, but the incident had made him thoughtful, and he called Mr. Swivel one side. “Well, old top, how goes it?” he asked. “Great!” said Mr. Swivel. “Great! Never had such a night in my life.” “How would you like to own the place?”



Two Women Boarded the Train at the City by the Stockyards.

The eyes of Mr. Swivel narrowed a trifle. “Well,” he said, “I might dicker with you.” “What do you say about going to Chicago in the morning, then?” suggested Wallingford. Again Swivel hesitated a moment. “Give me just an hour to think it over,” he said. Wallingford of course gave him the hour, but he looked in anxiety after Mr. Swivel as that young man walked toward the hammock where he had left Miss Van Vorhies. It was after the concert was over that Mr. Swivel came to Wallingford, all smiles and full of even eagerness. “Sure thing,” said he. “We’ll take that Chicago trip. What time does the train go?” “The stage leaves about 8 o’clock. Is that too early for you?” “Well,” Swivel laughed, “7 o’clock is too early to get up and too late to stay up, but I guess I can manage it.” When Wallingford hurried out to the stage he found an unexpected addition to the party in the person of smiling and confident Miss Tottie Van Vorhies. “I have to meet papa in Chicago,” she sweetly observed to Wallingford, “and I am certainly the lucky one to find that I am going to have such good company. I know you boys will all be nice to me.” Wallingford and Daw exchanged glances of wonder, and then, as by common impulse, they cast black looks at the back of the neck of Charles Algonon Swivel. “Why, say, Blackie,” declared Wallingford when they had a moment together in the smoking compartment, “if this unbacked lob tries to put over any trick or hold back any of his own coin I’ll have him pinched. They have strenuous laws in Chicago against robes having money.” “I told you about it,” growled Blackie. “The only way to handle a nut like this is to show him the bait, then take it right away from him until he puts up for it. Even a born idiot like Swivel, if you leave him alone with a gold brick, is going to finally tumble that it would be a cute idea to spill acid on it. Well, that’s what happened. You allowed Charles Algonon to stay over two days, and he tested the brick.” “You’re the original I told you so kid, all right,” declared Wallingford. “But, like all the rest of them, you tell what’s the matter and don’t tell what to do. Go away and let me think.” Before the trip was over, however, he concluded that he had been doing Mr. Swivel an injustice, for Mr. Swivel paid no more attention to Miss Tottie than did either of the others. He was cheerful and chatty all the way and corroborated his intention to purchase Pine Lake by mentioning certain trifling improvements he meant to make in that pleasant health resort. When they arrived in Chicago he bade Miss Tottie a pleasant goodbye and went with the other men to their hotel. He even permitted them to go to his bank with him after lunch and see the transfer of his account. As they

possession of the best chair in the room, and spreading her skirts picturesquely. “Charlie knows all about it. He knows that I’m a show girl, and he married me under my own name, which was Molly Smith. Also Charles knows all about the plant you put up there at Pine Lake for his special benefit.” “Exactly,” agreed Charles Algonon, speaking in a surprisingly brisk tone. Now, let’s get down to business. We’re here to take Pine Lake off your hands. Now, how much do you want?” Wallingford bent smooth brows upon Mr. and Mrs. Charles Algonon. “Fifty thousand dollars,” said he. Miss Tottie laughed with keen enjoyment. “You got to cancel on that,” she said. “I know you figured on a large chunk of Charlie’s pile, but he’s taken some brains into the company since then.” Charlie smiled delightedly, as if his wife had paid him a compliment, and he patted her upon a plump shoulder. “So I see,” said Wallingford slowly. “Well, how much does the brains of the company propose to pay for Pine Lake?” and he looked pleasantly at the bride. “Just cost,” Charles Algonon told him, the wrinkles around his eyes becoming hard and sharp. “You paid five thousand for the place, and you put in about five thousand on improvements.” Wallingford arose and walked toward the telephone. “But, Petty,” protested Charlie. “Don’t be foolish,” said Petty impatiently, and then she turned to Wallingford. “All right,” she said. “We’ll make it fifteen thousand, and that is the top figure.” Wallingford looked down upon her smiling confidence. Now he was sure of his ground. “Will you please tell me,” he demanded, “why you are willing to pay \$15,000 for sixty acres of land that won’t grow pumpkins and a house that isn’t worth burning up? You know it’s no summer resort.” “Well, you see, I think you’re wrong about it being no good as a summer resort,” explained Mr. Swivel, with a glibness which did not deceive Wallingford. “I’ve always wanted to go into the summer resort business, and I think we can advertise this place in a way that will get us good trade.” Both of them smiled at Wallingford brightly and ingeniously. “You’ll pay me \$40,000 for Pine Lake,” observed that gentleman, smiling in return. Mrs. Swivel laughed uproariously. “You’ll pay me \$40,000 cash for the place,” repeated Wallingford. “You won’t? Fifteen thousand is the limit? All right, Swivel, I’ll make you a proposition. I’ll run down to Pine Lake and look it over. If I decide after that not to keep the place I’ll meet you here at this hour after five tomorrow and take your offer of fifteen thousand.” He went to the telephone. He inquired for the next train to Pine Lake; he ordered two tickets purchased for that place; he ordered his bill sent up, a valet to pack his luggage and a porter to receive it. It was not until the porter came for the luggage that the Swivels gave in. “Can you give us a clear deed?” asked Charles Algonon. “There’ll be no trouble about that,” Wallingford politely assured him. “For I have a lawyer right downstairs.” “So have we,” promptly returned Charles Algonon. When everything had been arranged in shipshape, when Wallingford had put the check in his pocket and Mr. Swivel had put the deed in his, the triumphant moment arrived for which the bridal couple had been waiting. “Now, you big grafter, I’ll tell you the truth,” said Swivel, every little wrinkle in his oily face twisting itself into knots. “You’ve just sold a peach at a lemon price. That peculiar smell at Pine Lake is oil. That land down there is just dripping with it. My father was an oil prospector, and I was raised in the business. When I was a kid I was dragged from one oil field to the other and can smell crude oil farther off than a buzzard can see a dead horse. I was scared stiff you’d get on to it before we got away from there.” “Go to it, Swivel,” replied Wallingford urbanely. “Hope you make a fortune. I had my education in the mining business, from oil to diamonds, years ago, and I want to say to you right now that there isn’t a smell in the universe that I wouldn’t sell for \$30,000 profit.” Later, when the smoke of battle had cleared away, Blackie Daw was thoughtful and silent. “I don’t know about that Pine Lake deal, J. Rufus,” he said. “It’s at least an even break that we got the wrong end of it.” “We got all that Mr. Swivel stole from us,” immediately spoke up Fannie Warden, always ready to defend Wallingford. The Warden were on the spot within twenty minutes after the Swivels had gone. “There’s not much over for the expense fund,” considered Violet. “That isn’t the point,” returned Blackie, unconsciously patting Violet’s hand. “We wanted to sting Charles for reasons of our own.” Wallingford, resting back in a big easy chair, paused in the operation of lighting a long, black cigar to close his eyes and chuckle. “Suppose you had to take the entire Beaumont oil field and Molly Smith with it for life?” he suggested. “No, Blackie. Whatever turns up we stung him!” “But suppose they do find an oil gusher?” protested Blackie, much worried about it. “It can’t gush much,” asserted Wallingford, crossing his legs in perfect satisfaction. “Why, you raw apprentice, don’t you know I invented that smell? Up in that soggy, wet field, back of the woods, I poured two barrels of crude petroleum.” [Another adventure next week.]

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