

BOY SCOUTS ON THE TRAIL

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Boy scouts on the trail by John Garth

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JOHN GARTH

**BOY SCOUTS
ON THE TRAIL**



A hundred yards from shore he hazarded a backward glance, and saw the wind sweeping across the bay, a line of turbulent tossing spray.

(Page 60) Frontispiece.

BOY SCOUTS ON THE TRAIL

BY
JOHN GARTH

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CHAPTER I

THE CAMP ON LONG POINT

STOUT Harry Ritter gave a sudden chortle of glee and looked up from the copy of the "Long Point Snort" he was languidly perusing in the shade of some cedars behind Tent Four.

"Say, fellows, have you seen this stuff about Bull Taggart?" he demanded joyously.

"How could we when you hog the paper the minute it comes out?" inquired Ted Hinckley sarcastically. He had sent in a poem the day before and for ten minutes or so had been waiting with ill-concealed impatience to see whether it had found favor with the editors. "Well, what is it?" he went on impatiently. "Why don't you get it off your chest? What kind of bull has he been throwing now?"

"He's been chased by a shark," chuckled Ritter fatly. "Monster fifteen feet long pursued his

boat for over a mile out in the Sound. Tried to upset him by bumping its nose against the keel. This is rich! Four rows of teeth sharp as razors. . . . Gleaming white belly—stomach would have been more refined, seems to me. Remember Dolly Wade, who called 'em blue-stomach crabs. Where was I? Um-nm. Oh, yes. Monstrous dorsal fin cutting the water like a knife. Gee-whiz! Bull will kill me dead one of these days. I s'pose he's training to be an author when he grows up. You can have it, Ted; I'm through."

He tossed the sheet lazily to Hinckley and lounged indolently against the trunk of the cedar.

"Does he pretend he really saw it?" asked Steve Haddon, linking brown, muscular fingers about an equally brown knee; "or is it meant to be just—cr—fiction?"

"Oh, he saw it, of course," said Ritter with a giggle. "No fiction about that. Recognized it as a regular man-eater, too, by something or other about its expression, didn't he, Ted?"

"Eh?" Hinckley started guiltily and hurriedly shifted his gloating eyes from the five-line verse which, even in crude mimeograph, thrilled him with the pride of authorship. "What's that? Oh! Why, sure! It—its teeth, it was."

"Showed 'em in a glistening smile, I s'pose," chuckled Ritter. "I shouldn't think any self-respecting shark would lick his chops over Bull

Taggart. Even served up on toast, he wouldn't make a good, respectable bite."

There was a responsive chuckle from the half-dozen fellows lounging in the shade; then Haddon glanced questioningly at the tall, striking-looking chap whose handsome head lay pillowed on Billy McBride's knee, while his well-knit body stretched out comfortably on the sand.

"There aren't any—man-eating sharks as far north as this, are there, Cavvy?" he asked.

"Of course not. I should think you'd know better than that." Jim Cavanaugh's tone was positive and a little impatient. "They're only found in the south. The sharks around here are nothing but big dogfish; I don't believe Bull even saw one of those. He's the most unmitigated— Well, Midget, what's your trouble? Don't you know any better than to come in without knocking?"

An exceedingly small boy with snapping blue eyes, a shock of sunburned hair and an amazing self-possession of manner, darted around the tent and paused in their midst, somewhat heated with his haste.

"Trouble?" he repeated, scowling. "There's plenty of trouble, let me tell you. What do you know about their cutting us out of the Sound and making us swim in the *kid's place*?"

"Wa—hat!" came in an incredulous chorus; and then: "Cut out the fancy touches, Midge.