

**RUTH FIELDING DOWN
EAST: OR, THE HERMIT
OF BEACH PLUM POINT**

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Ruth Fielding down East: or, The hermit of Beach Plum Point by Alice B. Emerson

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ALICE B. EMERSON

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EAST: OR, THE HERMIT
OF BEACH PLUM POINT**



TOM CAST ASIDE HIS SWEATER AND PLUNGED INTO
THE TIDE.

Ruth Fielding Down East

Page 113

Ruth Fielding Down East

OR

THE HERMIT OF
BEACH PLUM POINT

BY

ALICE B. EMERSON

AUTHOR OF "RUTH FIELDING OF THE RED MILL," "RUTH
FIELDING AT SUNRISE FARM," "RUTH FIELDING
HOMEWARD BOUND," ETC.

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RUTH FIELDING DOWN EAST

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE WIND STORM	1
II. THE MYSTERY OF IT	7
III. THE DERELICT	14
IV. THE CRYING NEED	22
V. OFF AT LAST	29
VI. "THE NEVERGETOVERS"	35
VII. MOVIE STUNTS	43
VIII. THE AUCTION BLOCK	52
IX. A DISMAYING DISCOVERY	67
X. A WILD AFTERNOON	77
XI. MR. PETERBY PAUL—AND "WHOSIS"	86
XII. ALONGSHORE	95
XIII. THE HERMIT	104
XIV. A QUOTATION	113
XV. AN AMAZING SITUATION	122
XVI. RUTH SOLVES ONE PROBLEM	129
XVII. JOHN, THE HERMIT'S, CONTRIBU- TION	136
XVIII. UNCERTAINTIES	144
XIX. COUNTERCLAIMS	152

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JUL

HANKS FROM G. O.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XX.	THE GRILL	159
XXI.	A HERMIT FOR REVENUE ONLY	171
XXII.	AN ARRIVAL	180
XXIII.	TROUBLE—PLENTY	186
XXIV.	ABOUT "PLAIN MARY"	193
XXV.	LIFTING THE CURTAIN	199

RUTH FIELDING DOWN EAST

CHAPTER I

THE WIND STORM

ACROSS the now placidly flowing Lumano where it widened into almost the proportions of a lake just below the picturesque Red Mill, a bank of tempestuous clouds was shouldering into view above the sky line of the rugged and wooded hills. These slate-colored clouds, edged with pallid light, foredoomed the continuance of the peaceful summer afternoon.

Not a breath of air stirred on the near side of the river. The huge old elms shading the Red Mill and the farmhouse connected with it belonging to Mr. Jabez Potter, the miller, were like painted trees, so still were they. The brooding heat of midday, however, had presaged the coming storm, and it had been prepared for at mill and farmhouse. The tempest was due soon.

The backyard of the farmhouse—a beautiful lawn of short grass—sloped down to the river. On the bank and over the stream itself was set a

summer-house of fair proportions, covered with vines—a cool and shady retreat on the very hottest day of midsummer.

A big robin redbreast had been calling his raucous weather warning from the top of one of the trees near the house; but, with her back to the river and the coming storm, the girl in the pavilion gave little heed to this good-intentioned weather prophet.

She did raise her eyes, however, at the querulous whistle of a striped creeper that was wriggling through the intertwined branches of the trumpet-vine in search of insects. Ruth Fielding was always interested in those busy, helpful little songsters.

"You cute little thing!" she murmured, at last catching sight of the flashing bird between the stems of the old vine. "I wish I could put *you* into my scenario."

On the table at which she was sitting was a packet of typewritten sheets which she had been annotating, and two fat note books. She laid down her gold-mounted fountain pen as she uttered these words, and then sighed and pushed her chair back from the table.

Then she stood up suddenly. A sound had startled her. She looked all about the summer-house—a sharp, suspicious glance. Then she tip-toed to the door and peered out.