TROUBLE AT THE RED MILL

Mercy Curtis, awoke to the sound of girls screaming. She quickly drew back the blind and saw Ruth poised on the wheel-box.

“Don’t you do that, Ruth Fielding!” cried the lame girl, who knew instinctively what her friend’s intention was.

But Ruth paid no more attention to her than she had to the other girls. With nimble fingers she unfastened her heavy skirt and dropped it upon the deck. Then, without an instant’s hesitation, she sprang far out from the steamer, her body shooting straight down into the water.

The *Lanawaxa* swept by and Tom Cameron, having run astern, leaned over and shouted to Ruth. As the water closed over her head she realized that he had thrown one of the lifebuoys.

But deep as the water was, Ruth had no fear for herself. She loved to swim and the instructor at Briarwood had praised her skill. The only anxiety she had as she sank beneath the surface was for Mary Cox, who had already gone down twice.

Once beneath the surface, Ruth opened her eyes and saw the shadow of somebody in the water ahead. Within three strokes she had seized Mary Cox by the hair. Although her school fellow was still sinking, Ruth, with sturdy strokes, drew her up to the surface.

What a blessing it was to obtain a draught of pure air! But The Fox was unconscious, and Ruth strained to bear her weight up, while treading water.. She spotted the lifebuoy not ten yards away. She struck out for it with one hand, while towing Mary with the other. Long before the steamer had been stopped and a boat lowered and manned, Ruth and her burden reached the great ring, and the girls were comparatively safe.

Tom Cameron came in the boat, having forced himself in with the crew, and it was he who hauled Mary Cox over the gunwale, and then aided Ruth into the boat.

“That’s the second time you’ve saved that girl from drowning, Ruth,” he gasped. Tom and Ruth had already rescued Mary when she fell in a hole in the ice on Triton Lake last fall. “She would have gone down and stayed down if you hadn’t dived for her. Now! Don’t you ever do it again!”.

Had Ruth not been so breathless she must have laughed at him; but there really was a serious side to the adventure. Mary Cox did not recover her senses until after they were aboard the steamer. Ruth was taken in hand by a stewardess, undressed and put between blankets, and her clothing dried and made presentable before the steamer docked at the head of the lake.

The other girls ran into the room where Ruth was and reported that Mary had become conscious, and that the doctor had said that she would never have come up to the surface again, she had taken so much water into her lungs, had Ruth not grasped her. They had some difficulty in bringing The Fox to her senses.

her first rescue, aone

“And aren’t you the brave one, Ruthie Fielding!” cried Heavy. “Why, Mary Cox owes her life to you–she actually does *this* time. Before, when you and Tom Cameron helped her out of the water, she acted nasty about it––”

“Hush, Jennie!” commanded Ruth. “Don’t say another word about it. If I had not jumped into the lake after Mary, somebody else would.”

“Pshaw!” cried Heavy, “you can’t get out of it that way. And I’m glad it happened. Now we *shall* have a nice time at Lighthouse Point, for Mary can’t be anything but fond of you, child!”