

The Free Press Short Story

THE GRADUATED POWDER PUFF

By NAN TODD

"HURRY up, Barbara," called Eugene Sheldon. "Well, do it, slow poke," urged Roland Grey, the young brother.

The girl splashed with deliberate slowness, she climbed into the launch where Eugene and Roland sat impatiently waiting for her. Scarcely had her feet touched the boat before it swung out from the wharf with no gentle motion. "We're late," growled Eugene. "Froak his better early in the morning, you know."

The launch by this time was well out into the lake. The quiet waters and hills echoed to the noise of its powerful engine. It was a beautiful summer morning. "Oh, isn't everything lovely!" exclaimed the girl.

Neither boy answered, for one was busy with the rebellious engine of the launch, while the other was tinkering with an old fishing rod. "Don't you fellows want me to go? Because if you don't, I wouldn't be afraid to jump from here and swim ashore. I like blue-green deep water."

"You jump from here!" mocked Eugene Sheldon, looking up from a bulky sputtering engine, to the dainty girl sitting in the bow of the boat. "That's a joke."

"It isn't," yelled Roland. "She—she used to—"

"Hush, Roland," cautioned his sister. "Well," the boy mumbled something under his breath.

"Of course I want you to go, or I wouldn't have asked you," cut in Eugene. "Thank you."

Immediately Barbara began to powder her nose. If the self-appointed engineer had been more observant, he would have seen that she was also slyly watching his awkward handling of the launch.

"Sure, it isn't going so good to-day as it usually does. Showing off I guess. This is some boat, though, fastest on the lake, you know. A girl couldn't run it."

Roland glanced quickly at his pretty sister. As she was not looking at him, he said, "You ought to have seen—"

"Ah, shoot!" Eugene was oblivious of their remarks for he continued in the same irritated voice. "The girls around here think they are the cleverest ever, the way they drive their dad's motor boats. A girl just couldn't run this one."

"They run boats just as large. For instance that Rose Foster, and Peggy Green, and—"

"I'm glad you're not like them," added Eugene.

"But she—"

"Rol!" snapped Barbara.

If for a second the older boy's curiosity was aroused as to the small brother's unfinished sentences, he soon forgot it in the sputtering engine. He had to acknowledge, to himself of course, that he was not so clever as he thought he was. To-day of all times for the engine to sputter and bark!

An hour later and the launch reached Foster beach, near the spot where Black river, famous for its trout, tumbled through deep underbrush and over old green logs. Eugene snuffed as he pulled the bobbing dory alongside the big launch, and held it as Barbara and Roland climbed into it. He had an uneasy feeling that he did not know this dainty girl who claimed no distinction like the others of the beach and hotels in all phases of outdoor sports. In the last hour, however, she had mentioned casually motors, aeroplanes, golf, and most intelligently, too. He had been awkward with the launch, and he knew he did not understand its engine as he had bragged that he did. Still she had only smiled and powdered her nose when the other girls would have told him everlastingly what to do, and yet—

"Oh, what fine woods!" exclaimed Barbara as the dory drew nearer and nearer the shore.

"My uncle's going to buy them. The deal's on now," declared Eugene, a glowing note in his voice. "He will sometime own them all around this lake."

There was a startled, hurt expression in the girl's eyes. "What does he want them for?"

"Oh, to cut down for lumber. He will make a lot of money from it, though he doesn't need it. Oh, hah, let me help you."

Hardly had the dory grated on the sandy beach when Barbara jumped gracefully ashore, followed by a sputtering Roland. "Pretty good for a girl," called Eugene.

"Listen. He's coming," she whispered something in the boy's ear.

"I got you, anyhow he thinks you can't fish. That uncle of his makes me tired—don't you let them have them—"

"Froak, Rol!" Eugene stood within a few paces. "I guess I won't go with you boys," Barbara said graciously.

"I thought you'd like to try to catch a trout. Think how you could tell the other girls."

"Try to catch a trout," repeated Roland. "Why in Canada—she—"

"Rol!" The boy subsided with many growls and mumbles. "Guess I won't go though. You don't mind, I know. The mosquitoes will be thick. I should not like to be all eaten up." Slowly she began to powder her nose.

"All right. Just as you say. I'm sorry though. What will you do until we get back?"

"Oh, go up to the Posters."

"Do you know them? Uncle says they are the limit. Right as the bark on the old trees. They're driving a hard bargain with him, I guess."

"No, I don't know them; but I'm sure I'd like to."

Eugene and Roland watched Barbara until she had passed out of sight. When they started towards the Black river, the older boy was thinking seriously and the younger one was mulling something about a graduated powder puff. Eugene realized that this newcomer at Sandy Beach was a delightful mystery. Though it had been circulated up and down the beach that she was not fond of outdoor sports of any kind, she had not contradicted the report, for Barbara Grey had come to the northern Michigan resort in poor health. Until she was able to show her friends what she could do, she had maintained a silence, much to her younger brother's chagrin. Still everybody liked her. Their parents were dead, and the two Barbara and Roland, were living with their grandmother in Detroit, who had rented for the summer a pleasant cottage, not far from the Sheldon big one. Poor Eugene submerged with his uncle's wealth and ideas, his parents' dead also, was more or less as Roland expressed it, "A brassy nice sump."

"We don't care if your sister didn't come to-day, do we? I never saw a girl who new how to cast a line," insisted Eugene.

"Oh, Bab, she," a moment's hesitation. "Oh, have you heard about my brother Tony? His real name's Anthony. He was an ace during the war, signed up with the French. He's a real guy."

All the time Roland was telling about his brother, Eugene was thinking of Barbara and certain rumors that Roland had started of a big camp in Canada that the Greys had once owned, a sudden loss of property, the death of their people. In the midst of the boy's narrative and Eugene's pondering, they reached Black river. Barbara was forgotten, for the trout were leaping in the sunlight.

Meantime, the girl had nearly reached the Foster house, situated not far from the lake, in the seclusion of the protecting trees. She saw Rose Foster, crying softly to herself and wringing her hands. As the girl's back was towards the newcomer, Rose was unconscious of the other's approach, until Barbara spoke: "Oh, please what's the matter? Can't I help you?"

Rose turned suddenly. "Oh, you rich people from Sandy Beach—you—"

"You what?" Barbara's cheeks were scarlet, but her eyes were calm.

"You know what I mean. I can tell that you know by your eyes and voice."

"Oh, please don't say it!" pleaded Barbara, drawing near the trembling girl. "Please, I know what you mean, and I'm sorry, too. Once some men made my father sell a big wood lot. He was sick and so was my mother. Tony had gone to war, and it was all so unfair the way they did—and so—"

Rose gave the slim girl standing before her a long, searching look, and whispered, "I believe you."

"Then let me help you."

"But what can we do—two girls—against Mr. Sheldon and his crowd?"

"Tell me what's happened."

"You see granddad's sorry he said he'd buy the woods. He did it, so I could go to the university this fall; but I won't go at the expense of the woods."

"Nor would I," declared Barbara. "But what's to be done? You see Mr. Sheldon, as soon as he gained granddad's half-hearted consent this morning, started for town to see Mr. Harris at the bank, who has a small interest, as sort of protection to granddad. People from Sandy Beach and other landings have been after him to sell, they know he wants the money for my education. Of course Mr. Harris will sign up if he hears the particulars from Mr. Sheldon, who talks like a sly dog."

DO YOU KNOW

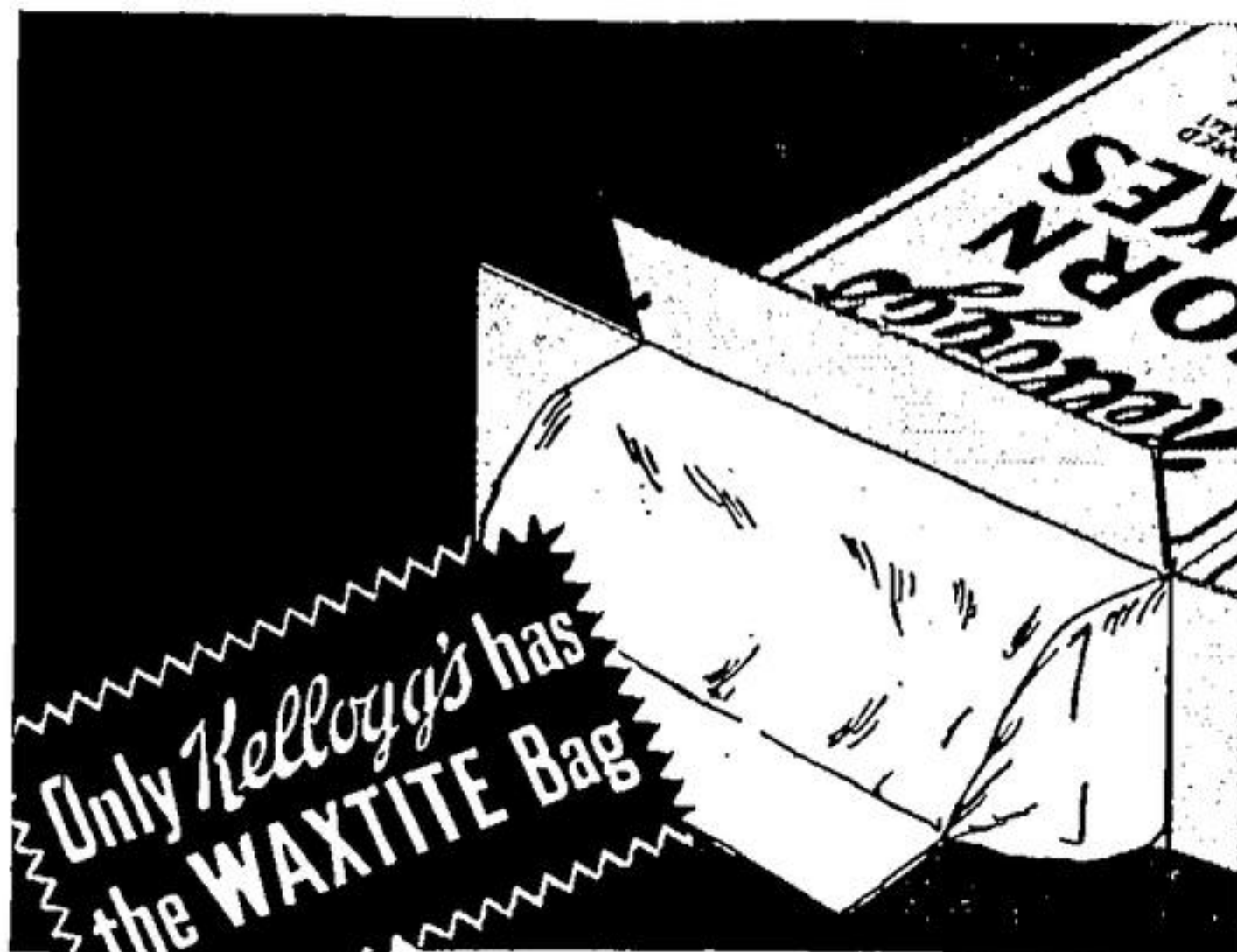
- ... that Kellogg's Corn Flakes have a special package that is different from all others?
... a WAXTITE, inside bag perfected and patented by Kellogg?
... a WAXTITE bag that is actually SEALED against odors, moisture and contamination?
... that brings Kellogg's Corn Flakes OVEN-FRESH and FLAVOR-PERFECT to your table?

Just another reason why it pays to specify the name Kellogg's when buying corn flakes. One of the most economical and convenient of foods.

Delicious with milk or cream for breakfast; extra welcome for lunch with fruits or honey; fine for children's suppers or a late snack.

Easy to digest. Always ready to serve. No trouble. No work. With a "wonder" flavor that can't be equaled.

Look for the red-and-green package at your grocer's. It means genuine Kellogg's—the original Corn Flakes—the world's most popular ready-to-eat cereal!



Kellogg's CORN FLAKES

STOP OFF AT Minaki ON YOUR WESTERN TRIP

Minaki, in the Lake of the Woods District, is one of the most charming beauty spots between Toronto and the Prairies. Surrounded by cool forests and clear lakes, it offers the finest of outdoor sports and recreations, coupled with the luxurious comforts of a modern metropolitan hotel.

Stop off at Minaki on your way West—or stay for the whole Summer. Great fishing—sporty golf—tennis—swimming—motor boating—picnic cruises—and a very enjoyable social life in and about the Bungalow Lodge.

Full information from the nearest Agent of Canadian National Railways.



"Let's telephone," insisted Barbara, her lip trembling.

"The wires are down from the storm of two nights ago. The men are working on them. Mr. Sheldon left by auto half an hour ago, our launch is rented to a renter, and our car has a flat tire."

"I know what we'll do," cried Barbara. "Could we beat Mr. Sheldon to town if we had a fast launch?"

"If it was fast enough, maybe, for there's a detour in the road. By the lake I know a short cut—"

"Come on, I know where the launch is. It's any kind of an engine, I'll win." At the expression of her companion's face, Barbara added, "I know you're thinking like all the rest, that I'm just a silly powder puff, but oh, well—come on!"

The two excited girls a few minutes later climbed into the big Sheldon launch. If Rose had questioned her friend's skill at handling a launch, she no longer doubted. There was no baby engine, no awkward turning of a sensitive wheel. The race had begun. Both girls looked back at the forest crowding so close to the shore as if bidding them hurry.

A half hour passed. The girls had taken a short cut to the north of Big English Island. They had to go through a treacherous channel, but Rose was familiar with it, because she had always lived in the old house by the lake. In the rush of the boat and the noise of the engine, the girls talked. It seemed as though they had been friends always.

When the two reached the town, idlers standing around the dock, watched them with much curiosity as they hurried up the narrow plank walk, never stopping until they had reached the bank. A big car swung down the dusty main street, but it was too late. Rose had reached the banker first. Though she had only time to say a few words, they were sufficient to stop the deal. The old Foster woods were saved.

"I'm glad!" sighed Mr. Harris wiping his shiny forehead. "I did not want to give my consent, but Steve was so set on helping you, Rose, and Sheldon took advantage of his sickness and didn't play square with us." The two girls and the banker smiled at one another. "Say, girls, come up to the hotel and have dinner with me. It's nearly time for the first serving. An important business deal is always closed this way." The girls accepted.

When three hours later, the big launch anchored opposite the Foster docks the family were there to meet them. Their expressions were varied. Barbara laughed as she saw them. "You're a great one!" growled Eugene.

"Am I?" retorted Barbara powdering her sunburnt nose.

"Now, you quit that!" snorted Roland. "You've showed them what you can do—do it—don't be always powdering—graduate. The others have had a great time wondering about you. It's been fun for all of us—except him." The boy pointed at Eugene. "He's been madder than a hornet!"

"I haven't either!"

"You have too. You're too." A torrent of praises followed, regarding the slim Barbara, who for days had been bottled up in the boy's heart.

"And that isn't all," added Rose. She stood with her arms locked in her grandfather's trembling one. "She saved our woods."

"You mean my uncle's lost out?" "Exactly," replied Rose. Roland, not satisfied with the two (Concluded on Page Six)

No premium but quality has ever been given with Salada

"SALADA" TEA

'Fresh from the gardens'

Acton Flour and Feed Mills PRICES FOR THIS WEEK

Table with 2 columns: Item and Price. Items include HLAN per Cwt., SHORTS per Cwt., and BREAD FLOUR per cwt.

D. H. LINDSAY, Prop.



WE think a lot of this tire—the Pathfinder Tread Goodyear. We know all that it does to lead its class by miles—thousands of miles. The tread means safety—the carcass long mileage—and the name quality that no other tire of its kind can equal.

H. A. COXE

ACTON TELEPHONE 66 ONTARIO

Use a new Pathfinder Tube for tire insurance



Jimmy had been using for a couple of days... but she didn't think it was serious—till this afternoon... she called the doctor... hospital tomorrow... just a minor operation, but it couldn't wait.

Whatever would she do? She must be with Jimmy... but there was the baby too. If mother were only there... but a letter couldn't reach mother till late tomorrow.

Then she thought of the telephone. In two minutes she was speaking to her mother. Yes, she could catch the evening train—would be there at 8 in the morning.

What a relief! Now she could go about her preparations for the morning. The telephone had made everything easy. And the cost of the call had been less than a dollar.