

ANNE FINDS A NEW PLAYMATE

by Irene Finley

Anne was six years old and liked to go out to her Grandfather's farm on the Willamette River for short visits. Those were red-letter days when Grandmother drove up to her house and called out merrily: "Ready to be a country girl, Anne? Or do you still want to be a city girl? Hurry up, let me know. I can't wait long for we have to be back to eat supper with Grandfather, and Oh, my! I forgot to tell you that we have a new child at our house!"

Anne danced about excitedly for she knew that when Grandmother mentioned a new child it meant some little friend of the woods or wild places. Grandmother and Grandfather loved the big forests and rivers and somehow they always had one little stray animal or another as a member of the household. So Anne raced into her bedroom, grabbed her little blue traveling bag and stuffed pajamas and tooth-brush into it. Then as a last thought, she ran to the back porch and got a big carrot, a "s'prise" for the week-end playmate whomever it might be. She had learned that a carrot is a lolly-pop to a lot of little wild folks. There was Peter Rabbit who was always stealing them from Mr. McGregor's garden. And at the city zoo it looked as if every monkey in the cage was holding a carrot in his fingers and nibbling it. So a carrot was a good guess for most any one.

They left the big highway and drove along a winding road with trees on both sides through which the river could be seen. A river boat with a splashing stern wheel and loaded with pulp for a paper mill chugged lazily up stream. Then Anne saw a long boom

of big logs towed by a puffing little boat. A man was walking right on top of the logs as they slid along, and Anne got a little excited for fear they would roll him off into the water.

"No, the logs can't roll him off because they are all chained together," said Grandmother.

"It looks like walking on a floor on top of the water," said Anne. "I wish I could be out there on the logs and watch the water go by under my feet."

"It would be dangerous for you," said Grandmother. "Only men called loggers who are trained to walk log booms are allowed out there. If you happened to slip between two logs or got your foot fast, you might be crushed."

Then a little ~~shoe~~ of a snub-nosed craft sped up the river, splashing white foam as it raced along. Its nose was high in front and its tail low in the rear, and its motor filled the whole river with a high singing sound. It was gone before Anne could get her breath.

a big brown bird "What's that?" she asked in astonishment. "It didn't *look like a boat.*" *and it kicked the water way back.* *looked like*

"That's an out-board racing boat," returned Grandmother, one of the light-weight speeders that annoy all of us who live on the river. Its humming motor keeps us awake at night and wakes us ^{up} in the morning. That neighbor boy of ours has gone crazy on speed and keeps right at it."

"Well, here we are," she said, as they drove down a country lane that ended above the river bank.

There was an English country cottage with wide lawns and

tall spreading maple trees that gave one a peaceful feeling the minute he saw it. It looked down a gentle wooded slope to the big river.

"My, I'm glad to be here," said Anne. "Can I go anywhere that I want to?"

"No, indeed!" answered Grandmother. "You have to stay right here in the yard, and it is plenty big enough."

Two black Scotty pups came running out to greet them, wiggling and squirming their joy at Grandmother's safe arrival home. It happened just so every time she went away and came back.

"Now Heather and Docken, don't eat me alive," she said as she fondled both of them. "Have you taken good care of Foxy?"

Just then a very dignified, slim-legged, spotted deer fawn came around the corner of the house and walked demurely up to them. Her big round eyes were gentle and unafraid. Grandmother bent her head and the little deer rubbed ^a ~~her~~ soft nose on her cheek. It was a greeting of understanding between them.

"Come on in, children," she said as she gathered up a few bundles and went into the kitchen through an arched gate. The pups rushed ahead of her like young hurricanes, but the little deer minced her steps and stopped at the drain-board where some green vegetables were lying. She was just tall enough to nibble at some leaves.

"Now, Foxy," said Maddy, the cook, "those are not for you. You have had your supper of bread and milk and I want you to go out and stay out. If you are still hungry, you can go down in the garden and eat all the lettuce and cabbage you want. Frank, the gardener, will put you to bed."

But Foxy had no intention of hunting up the garden as she didn't want to go to bed.

Pretty soon Anne sat down on the lawn and looked ~~area~~ dreamily up the river with fields along its shores and trees climbing the hillsides. The pups were frisking around as they never got tired of playing at "tug-of-war." Not to be left out Foxy ambled up in her deliberate way and lay down beside Anne, folding up her long legs under her like big tooth-picks. All at once she gave a little hiccough and then began chewing something.

"What have you ~~got~~ in your mouth, Foxy? I didn't see you pick up anything. You look like you were chewing gum," said Anne.

Foxy continued chewing methodically with a contented, far-away look. ~~Later Grandfather explained to Anne that Foxy was~~ After a little she kinked her neck with a little jerk and swallowed something.

"You must'nt swallow gum, Foxy," scolded Anne. "Why didn't you spit it out as my mother tells me?"

Later Grandfather laughed heartily at Anne's efforts to bring Foxy up properly. Then he told her that it was proper for all deer to chew their kind of gum which is really a cud. A deer goes foraging for herbs and brush and doesn't stop to chew his ~~so~~ food on the spot but just drops it into one of his stomachs. Later when he is lying down he "ups" this undigested food and finishes ^{stomach.} chewing it, and then drops it back into another ~~compartment~~ ^{stomach.} of his stomach.

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"My, what a funny household," thought Anne. "This little deer is the s'prise child! I wonder where she came from. She didn't grow around here. She isn't a bit afraid of the dogs and they all seem to get along fine together. I never knew a deer was so tame."

Foxy was shoed out of the kitchen and Anne followed her fascinated. She held her carrot in her hand and walked along by the side of the demure little animal. Pretty soon Foxy nuzzled at her dress and finally found the carrot. She took a taste and then began to ~~nibble~~^{eat} eagerly. Anne held on tight till she was afraid her fingers would be eaten, and almost shivered she was so thrilled. Grandmother stood in the door and watched.

"Grandmother, look! Look!" she cried. "She isn't afraid of me and she likes carrots!"

Grandmother laughed and said, "You needn't be afraid. Foxy will tag you all over the place if you feed her something she likes."

John After supper Grandfather said, "Who wants to take a walk with me down to the river bank?"

"I do! I do!" piped Anne, and she took his hand and trotted off down the path under the maples. They soon came into the woods where there were big fir trees and an undergrowth of vine maples bending gracefully, with here and there ^{fluffy} bushes with white blossoms.

"My, don't the woods smell sweet," said Anne. "I don't want to be a city girl any more. May I pick some of the flowers?"

"Yes, you may pick some of the flowers," said Grandfather, "but you must never pick any except on our place. Flowers belong

to the people who own the land, and not just to everybody to pick as they please. And when you are taking a ride into the country, you must not pick flowers that grow by the roadside, because it would spoil the beauty of our wild places and we want them left there for everybody to enjoy. Will you remember?"

"Oh, yes, Grandfather, 'specially as we have a plenty on our own place and you will let me pick some."

Anne heard a slight rustle in the leaves behind her and looked back.

"Grandfather, look who's here!"

The little deer had followed them softly all the way as if it was a natural thing to do. She stopped frequently to nibble a little bark from a tree or pull off a leaf from a bush. But she paid little attention to the lush green grass under her feet.

"Why doesn't she eat the nice grass?" asked Anne.

"I'll tell you about her," said Grandfather. "Deer that live in the big forests eat what we call browse. That is the bark of young trees or limbs and leaves of bushes. Do you want to know where Foxy came from?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. Where did she?"

"Once when Grandmother and I were traveling in the eastern part of the state away over beyond the big mountains from here, we came to a farm in the evening and had supper and staid there for the night. After supper I went down to the corrals and there running about was this deer fawn. She was only a baby then and seemed to be all legs and big ears. The farmer told me to watch her. Soon a cow came around the corner of the barn and the fawn immediately crawled under, knelt down on her knees with her hind

parts sticking up in the air and began to get her dinner of warm milk. It was such an odd performance that I laughed right out loud. The farmer had called her Foxy because she could look out, so well for herself. She had come in from the pasture with the cattle one night, and being an orphan had adopted this gentle cow for a mother."

"The next day Grandmother and I had become so fond of Foxy and her loving ways that we begged the farmer to let us take her home with us for a pet. He agreed readily because he said he wanted the cow's milk himself. So, although we have no cow for a mother for her, Madden feeds her warm bread and milk and she has now become one of our family. She is called a mule deer on account of her large ears and particular markings. She has a bed down in the tool house beside the gardner's cottage, but mostly she sleeps with the dogs and likes to run races with them down the road. But they never catch her."

"Now it is time to go to bed. Up the hill we go," he said."

Through the twilight they climbed the path, Foxy at their heels. It was dim and mysterious under the trees, and a russet-backed thrush was singing her evening song from the deep woods. At the door Anne put her arms around the little deer's neck and felt the soft nose on her cheek.

"Foxy will be here when you come back for more week-ends," said Grandmother as she tucked Anne in bed. "And you can't tell, we may have another little wild child to play with you."