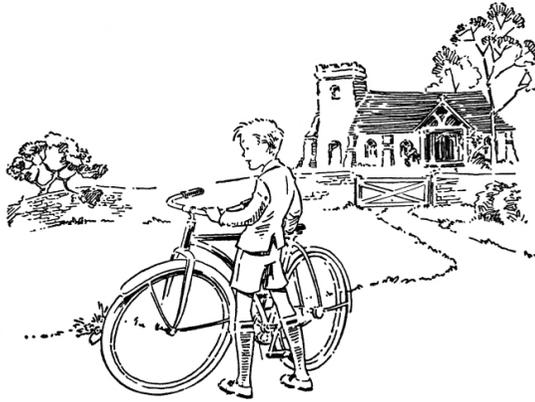


BRIAN'S VICTORY

ETHEL CALVERT PHILLIPS



THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY



Chapter One

Brian's Motto

It was spring, and Brian and Mother were alone at Happy-Go-Lucky.

The house seemed strange with only two of them there and not three. Father had always been with them other summers. What fun they had had together, boating on the river and riding and taking long tramps across the moors.

No one could pack a picnic basket quite like Mother. Brian was sure of that. He had learned to

row only last summer. Best of all, Brian liked to ride Rob Roy, the brown pony. Rob Roy belonged to Mr. Duff in the village. But Brian was as fond of the shaggy little Shetland as if the pony were his own.

Brian loved it at Happy-Go-Lucky. The very name of the house told you what a carefree, merry life they all led there. You might know that Father



was always thinking of something lively and exciting to do. Mother, her curls tied up with a ribbon, was happy and smiling and full of fun.

But now it was very different. It was wartime in England. Father was far away in Africa with the Army. The village was quiet enough in the daytime, but at night no one except the Home Guard stirred out of doors. Almost every man in the village belonged to the Home Guard. They watched for enemy airplanes and guarded the railway and the bridge. It was so dark you couldn't see where you were going. That was because of the blackout. Every window at Happy-Go-Lucky was covered with black paper. Not a ray of light, not even the flame of a match, must be seen.

There were no more rides on Rob Roy. He was not to be found in Mr. Duff's pasture or stable. Indeed, Mr. Duff himself was gone. He had joined the Royal Air Force. His dogs, too, had vanished. Brian didn't know where.

There was no fuel for the car, so Brian and Mother rode about on bicycles. They rode to the

village and into the nearest town. Mother still laughed and made jokes, but somehow it was not the same, and Brian thought he knew why.

“It is because we are listening for the air raid warning,” he said to himself. “You never know when it will come. Then, no matter where we are, we have to hurry into the nearest shelter and wait for the All Clear.”

Almost everyone had built a shelter behind their house or sometimes in the barn. The shelter at Happy-Go-Lucky was partly in the ground, outside the kitchen door. It was a comfortable shelter with electric lights and shelves and a long wide seat.

The enemy airplanes were bombing the village almost every night. So Mother fixed two beds on the long seat, and there she and Brian slept.

Brian hated the air raids. So did everyone else, for that matter. It was not so much because he was frightened. It was because an air raid always made Mother talk about sending Brian to the United States.

“I started once for America,” Brian would say,

“and the ship was torpedoed. I'd much rather stay here with you.”

Months before, with a shipload of British evacuated boys and girls, he had sailed for Canada. As he said, their ship had been torpedoed. After four days at sea in a crowded lifeboat, Brian and his companions had been picked up by an English vessel. They had been taken back to port, and Brian had at last reached home.

“You could fly across the ocean this time,” Mother always answered. “It would be very different from going on a ship. I should feel much happier if I knew you were safe. Father thinks you ought to go, too.”

Brian didn't know how to answer this. He could only hope that the bombings would stop.

But, instead of stopping, the raids came more and more often.

Then, one dreadful night, a bomb fell in a field near Happy-Go-Lucky. Even in the shelter, Brian and Mother could hear terrific noises and one

great Boo-o-om! when the bomb exploded. Mother held Brian very close.

In the morning, they went to look at the great hole that the bomb had made. The fence was knocked down, too.

It was then that Mother told Brian he was to go to America. She had made up her mind in the night.

“Your papers are ready,” said Mother, “and I shall cable Uncle George and Aunt Jane that you are coming.”

Uncle George and Aunt Jane Bliss were Father and Mother's friends in the United States. They had written many times asking that Brian come and stay with them until the war was ended.

“I can't go with you,” went on Mother, “because Grandpa and Granny are coming here, and they can't manage alone. I shall miss you frightfully. But you will be safe, and perhaps it won't be for long.”

Brian meant to be brave about this, but he had to swallow hard before he could speak.

“Perhaps it won't be long,” he answered. He even managed to smile back at Mother as he spoke.

“When the war is over, Father and I will come for you, if we can,” promised Mother, with a pat on Brian’s arm. “Then you can show us all the sights. Now we must both go to work. I want you to start as soon as you can.”

In a week, it was all settled. Brian was to fly to Lisbon in Portugal. There he would board a seaplane, the Yankee Clipper, that would carry him over the ocean. Mrs. Russell was going, too, with her baby. She was a neighbor in London where Brian lived in the winter. She would look after Brian, she said.

Now, the day before he was to leave home and England, Brian was riding down the road on his bicycle, his gas mask slung over his shoulder. He was on his way to say goodbye to Mrs. Budge.

Mrs. Budge kept the sweet shop in the village, and she and Brian were good friends.

Past Mr. Duff’s house, closed up tight, and past the old gray church, Brian sped.

Here was the Village Green.

The breeze made little ripples chase one another

across the duck pond. But of ducks, white or black, there was not a sign.

“Good! The ducks are hidden away in a safe place,” thought Brian.

Mrs. Budge's sweet shop stood on the Green. Brian jumped to the ground before the door.

This was a place he loved to go. He felt at home with Mrs. Budge. He liked the dark little shop that smelled of sweet buns and peppermint.

The shop was really the front room of Mrs. Budge's cottage. It had one large window that held a few jars of sweets. Besides the sweets, Mrs. Budge sold buns and packages of biscuits and vegetables. She had aprons and pins and reels of cotton and stockings for sale, too.

The shop was empty, but Mrs. Budge heard Brian and called to him from the back room.

“Come in, and bring your bicycle,” she said. “We will sit down to tea at once, too, just in case.”

“In case” meant “in case of an air raid.” Brian understood that very well.

The back room was small and crowded with

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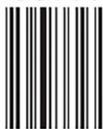
For all of his life, Brian has lived at Happy-Go-Lucky, a lovely rural estate in England, but the Blitz of World War II suddenly makes his home country a very unsafe place to be. Like many other young British children, Brian is forced to leave home for the duration of the war.

Arriving in New York with his new kitten, Victory, in his arms, Brian resolves to be brave and to act with honor. There he forms new friendships and learns how life in the United States works. His heartfelt sacrifice and honorable actions, along with his innocent faith in his country during its time of need, touch the hearts of many and earn Brian the respect of those around him.




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