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# The Boxcar Children®

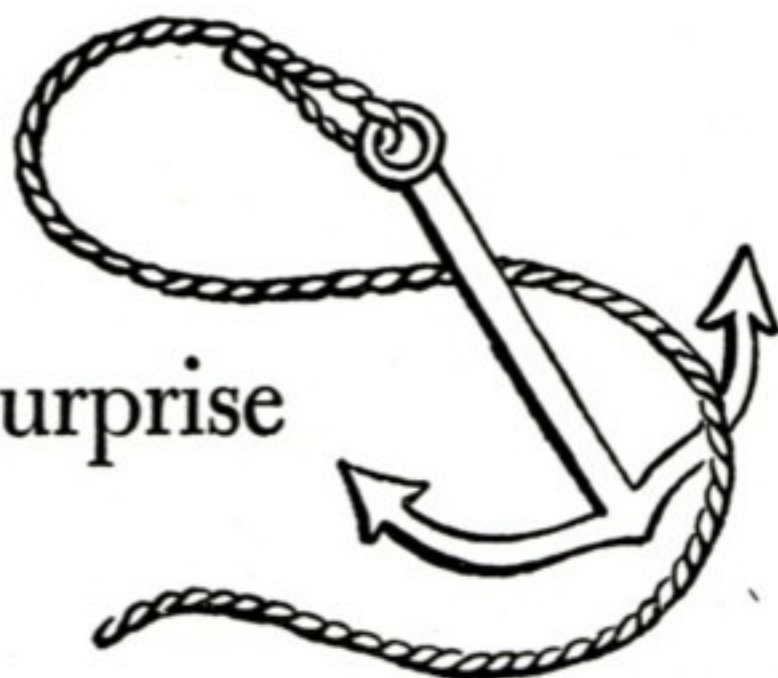


## Surprise Island

GERTRUDE CHANDLER WARNER

## Chapter 1

# The First Surprise



Now, tell us, Grandfather," cried Henry. "We ran all the way home from school."

"Tell us!" shouted Benny, throwing himself down on the grass beside the dog. "School is out for the whole summer, and Watch wants to know."

"Violet and I want to know, too," said Jessie.

Mr. Alden was sitting in the garden reading. He looked at his four grandchildren in surprise.

"Let me see, was this the day I said I'd tell you?" he asked them.

"He's joking, Benny," said Jessie.

"Joking?" cried Mr. Alden. "I mean everything I say!"



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But he was joking, just the same, and enjoying himself, too. In the spring, he had promised his grandchildren a surprise for the summer, and now he had been waiting more than an hour for the children to come home.

"School is out," said Violet.

"We ran all the way home," shouted Benny.

"Yes, so you said," said Mr. Alden slowly.

"You said the surprise was something you liked to do yourself when you were fifteen," Henry told him.

"Yes, or even six," said Mr. Alden, looking at Benny.

"And you said you'd tell us the minute school was out, Grandfather," said Benny.

Mr. Alden laughed. "I certainly did," he replied. "And now I'm going to tell you."

The four children looked at him.

He began, "Once upon a time my father bought an island."

"He *bought* one!" cried Henry.

"Yes," Mr. Alden went on. "The island is small.



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There is nothing much on it except a small house, a barn, and a fisherman's hut. My father wanted a quiet place to keep his best horses. Old Captain Daniel, who runs the motorboat, lives in the fisherman's hut now. Let's all go down to the island and look it over. If you want to stay there all summer, you may."

"Oh, Grandfather!" cried Jessie. "We would like it better than anything in the world. It will be just like the boxcar days!"

"Couldn't Watch go, too?" asked Benny, with his hand on the dog's head.

"Certainly," said Mr. Alden. "He would be lonesome without you."

"Can we have a real stove, and cook?" asked Violet.

"You'll have to cook," replied Mr. Alden, "if you want to eat. I will give you some money for dishes and things. You must tell me how much money you need, but don't make it too much."

All the children laughed a little, because even



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## Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny once lived on their own in a boxcar . . .

The Alden children have a home with their grandfather now—but their adventures are just beginning! Their first surprise comes when they learn they'll be spending the summer on their own private island. The kind stranger who lives there is always happy to help the children out, but does this new friend have a secret?

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Look for more Boxcar Children adventures in this exciting series. Also available in hardcover.

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