

a breakfast serials story

The Army of Two

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Chapter 1

Alone at the Lighthouse

It was a fine, sunny day. Abby and her sister Becky were sitting on the high round rocks near the lighthouse when their father came out of the door.

"They have put up a flag at Scituate Harbor," Father said. "Maybe there is news of the war. I must go to find out."

News of the war! Abby knew that British ships were fighting with American ships, far out on the ocean. She did not want the fighting to come closer.

In the first year of the war, two British ships had sailed into Scituate Harbor at night, burned ten fishing boats and sailed away! Then American soldiers had been sent to guard the harbor. The British had not come back while the soldiers were there.

But now the American soldiers had gone to guard another town. Did the British know that they had gone? Would a British ship come here again?

Abby did not like to ask. She put her hand to her eyes and looked out over the water. The ocean was bright under the blue sky. Not a ship was in sight.

"Will the British come to Scituate again?" Becky asked.

Father said, "They surely would not sail into Scituate Harbor in daylight. But I will see if there is news of them in town."

"May we come with you?" Abby asked. It was a long walk to Scituate, over the big rocks and across the marsh. But she did not like to stay here without Father.

"Not today," Father said. "I must go quickly, and I can walk faster alone." He took Abby's hand, and Becky's. "If the British should come back," he said, "they might sail close to the lighthouse, where they could hide behind the cliffs and not be seen by the people in town," he said. "If a ship with guns comes this way," he added, "you must go inside and bolt the door."

"We will, Father," Becky said, in her strong way. "We will be fine." Becky was 15.

Abby, who was 10, was not so sure. Mother was away this week, visiting family. Their little brother was with her. Their big brother had gone off with the Army a year ago. Abby did not want Father to go away, too! What if a British ship came near when she and Becky were alone?

"Be careful, Father," she said. "Come back soon!"

"If you will make a good supper, I will be home in time to eat it," Father said as he started off to town.

Father was the lighthouse keeper, and their home was at the base of the lighthouse. At the end of each day,

Father climbed up the steep steps to the lamp room at the top. He lit the lamp that helped the fishermen of Scituate keep their boats away from the rocky cliffs near the lighthouse and sail safely into Scituate Harbor.

Abby loved to go to the lamp room with Father. Sometimes, after he lit the lamp, he played songs on the fife he kept near it. He was teaching Abby to play "Yankee Doodle," but she was not very good at it yet.

Father kept a spyglass in the lamp room, too. Abby liked to stand by the window with the spyglass and look out at the woods and cliffs and marshes nearby, or at the endless waves of the Atlantic Ocean, which seemed to go on and on, as far as the sky.

The ocean could be wild and dangerous. And in this year of 1814, war made the ocean more dangerous. British warships sometimes sailed near towns and sent sailors to shore in small boats to take food and tools from farms and homes. The ships had guns that could fire at the shore.

Abby knew that a British ship could come near at any time. A ship could come today!

She stood close to her sister and tried to look for Father, but he was already out of sight. Now she and Becky were alone.

"Oh, Becky," Abby said, I am—" She stopped. She did not like to say it out loud. But she was afraid.

Next Week: A Ship!

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