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Opening extract from

Island of Adventure

Written by

Enid Blyton

Illustrated by

Stuart Tresilian

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With a foreword
by Cressida Cowell

The ISLAND of ADVENTURE

Enid Blyton

Illustrated by Stuart Tresilian

MACMILLAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

1

The Beginning of Things

It was really most extraordinary.

There was Philip Mannering, doing his best to puzzle out algebra problems, lying full-length under a tree with nobody near him at all – and yet he could hear a voice speaking to him most distinctly.

'Can't you shut the door, idiot?' said the voice, in a most impatient tone. 'And how many times have I told you to wipe your feet?'



Philip sat up straight and took a good look round for the third time – but the hillside stretched above and below him, completely empty of any boy, girl, man or woman.

'It's so silly,' said Philip to himself. 'Because there is no door to shut, and no mat to wipe my feet on. Whoever is speaking must be perfectly mad. Anyway, I don't like it. A voice without a body is too odd for anything.'

A small brown nose poked up out of Philip's jersey collar. It belonged to a little brown mouse, one of the boy's many pets. Philip put up a gentle hand and rubbed the tiny creature's head. Its nose twitched in delight.

'Shut the door, idiot!' roared the voice from nowhere, 'and don't sniff. Where's your handkerchief?'

This was too much for Philip. He roared back.

'Shut up! I'm not sniffing. Who are you, anyway?'

There was no answer. Philip felt very puzzled. It was uncanny and peculiar. Where did that extraordinary voice with its rude commands come

from, on this bright, sunny but completely empty hillside? He shouted again.

'I'm working. If you want to talk, come out and show yourself.'

'All right, Uncle,' said the voice, speaking unexpectedly in a very different tone, apologetic and quiet.

'Gosh!' said Philip. 'I can't stand this. I'll have to solve the mystery. If I can find out where the voice comes from, I may find its owner.' He shouted again. 'Where are you? Come out and let me see you.'

'If I've told you once I've told you a dozen times not to whistle,' answered the voice fiercely. Philip was silent with astonishment. He hadn't been whistling. Evidently the owner of the voice must be completely mad. Philip suddenly felt that he didn't want to meet this strange person. He would rather go home without seeing him.

He looked carefully round. He had no idea at all where the voice came from, but he rather thought it must be somewhere to the left of him. All right, he would go quietly down the hill to the right, keeping

to the trees if he could, so that they might hide him a little.

He picked up his books, put his pencil into his pocket and stood up cautiously. He almost jumped out of his skin as the voice broke out into cackles of laughter. Philip forgot to be cautious and darted down the hillside to the shelter of a clump of trees. The laughter stopped suddenly.

Philip stood under a big tree and listened. His heart beat fast. He wished he was back at the house with the others. Then, just above his head, the voice spoke again.

'How many times have I told you to wipe your feet?'

Then there came a most unearthly screech that made poor Philip drop his books in terror. He looked up into the tree nearby, and saw a beautiful white parrot, with a yellow crest on its head that it worked up and down. It gazed at Philip with bright black eyes, its head on one side, its curved beak making a grating noise.

Philip stared at the parrot and the parrot stared

back. Then the bird lifted up a clawed foot and scratched its head very thoughtfully, still raising and lowering its crest. Then it spoke.

'Don't sniff,' it said, in a conversational tone. 'Can't you shut the door, idiot? Where are your manners?'

'Golly!' said Philip, in amazement. 'So it was *you* talking and shouting and laughing! Well – you gave me an awful fright.'

The parrot gave a most realistic sneeze. 'Where's your handkerchief?' it said.

Philip laughed. 'You really are a most extraordinary bird,' he said. 'The cleverest I ever saw. Where have you escaped from?'

'Wipe your feet,' answered the parrot sternly. Philip laughed again. Then he heard the sound of a boy's voice, calling loudly from the bottom of the hill.

'Kiki, Kiki, Kiki! Where have you got to?' The parrot spread out its wings, gave a hideous screech, and sailed away down the hillside towards a house set at the foot. Philip watched it go.

'That was a boy calling it,' he thought. 'And he was in the garden of Hillfoot House, where I'm staying. I wonder if he's come there to be crammed too. I jolly well hope he has. It would be fine to have a parrot like that living with us. It's dull enough having to do lessons in the hols – a parrot would liven things up a bit.'

Philip had had scarlet fever the term before, and measles immediately afterwards, so that he had missed most of his school-work. His headmaster had written to his uncle and aunt suggesting that he should go and stay at the home of one of the teachers for a few weeks, to make up a little of what he had missed. And, much to Philip's disgust, his uncle had at once agreed – so there was Philip, in the summer holidays, having to work at algebra and geography and history, instead of having a fine time with his sister Dinah at his home, Craggy-Tops, by the sea.

He liked the master, Mr Roy, but he was bored with the other two boys there, who, also owing to illness, were being crammed or coached by Mr Roy.

One was much older than Philip, and the other was a poor whining creature who was simply terrified of the various insects and animals that Philip always seemed to be collecting or rescuing. The boy was intensely fond of all creatures and had an amazing knack of making them trust him.

Now he hurried down the hillside, eager to see if another pupil had joined the little holiday collection of boys to be coached. If the new boy owned the parrot, he would be somebody interesting – more interesting than that big lout of a Sam, and better fun than poor whining Oliver.

He opened the garden gate and then stared in surprise. A girl was in the garden, not a very big girl – perhaps about eleven. She had red hair, rather curly, and green eyes, a fair skin and hundreds of freckles. She stared at Philip.

'Hallo,' said Philip, rather liking the look of the girl, who was dressed in shorts and a jersey. 'Have you come here?'

'Looks like it,' said the girl, with a grin. 'But I haven't come to work. Only to be with Jack.'

Who's Jack?' asked Philip.

'My brother,' said the girl. 'He's got to be coached. You should have seen his report last term. He was bottom in everything. He's very clever really, but he just doesn't bother. He says he's going to be an ornithologist, so what's the good of learning dates and capes and poems and things?'

'What's an— an— whatever it was you said?' said Philip, wondering how anyone could possibly have so many freckles on her nose as this girl had.

'Ornithologist? Oh, it's someone who loves and studies birds,' said the girl. 'Didn't you know that? Jack's mad on birds.'

'He ought to come and live where *I* live, then,' said Philip at once. 'I live on a very wild, lonely part of the sea-coast, and there are heaps of rare sea-birds there. I like birds too, but I don't know much about them. I say – does that parrot belong to Jack?'

'Yes,' said the girl. 'He's had her for four years. Her name is Kiki.'

'Did he teach it to say all those things?' said Philip,

thinking that though Jack might be bottom in all school subjects he would certainly get top marks for teaching parrots to talk!

'Oh no,' said the girl, smiling, so that her green eyes twinkled and crinkled. 'Kiki just picked up those sayings of hers – picked them up from our old uncle, who is the crossest old man in the world, I should think. Our mother and father are dead, so Uncle Geoffrey has us in the hols, and doesn't he just hate it! His housekeeper hates us too, so we don't have much of a time, but so long as I have Jack, and so long as Jack has his beloved birds, we are happy enough.'

'I suppose Jack got sent here to learn a few things, like me,' said Philip. 'You'll be lucky – you'll be able to play, go for walks, do what you like, whilst we are stewing in lessons.'

'No, I shan't,' said the girl. 'I shall be with Jack. I don't have him in the school term, so I'm jolly well going to have him in the hols. I think he's marvellous.'

'Well, that's more than *my* sister, Dinah, thinks

of me,' said Philip. 'We're always quarrelling. Hallo – is this Jack?'

A boy came up the path towards Philip. On his left shoulder sat the parrot, Kiki, rubbing her beak softly against Jack's ear, and saying something in a low voice. The boy scratched the parrot's head and gazed at Philip with the same green eyes as his sister had. His hair was even redder, and his face so freckled that it would have been impossible to find a clear space anywhere, for there seemed to be freckles on top of freckles.

'Hallo, Freckles,' said Philip, and grinned.

'Hallo, Tufty,' said Jack, and grinned too. Philip put up his hand and felt his front bit of hair, which always rose up in a sort of tuft. No amount of water and brushing would make it lie down for long.

'Wipe your feet,' said Kiki severely.

'I'm glad you found Kiki all right,' said the girl. 'She didn't like coming to a strange place, and that's why she flew off, I expect.'

'She wasn't far away, Lucy-Ann,' said Jack. 'I bet

old Tufty here got a fright if he heard her up on the hillside.'

'I did,' said Philip, and began telling the two what had happened. They laughed loudly, and Kiki joined in, cackling in a most human manner.

'Golly, I'm glad you and Lucy-Ann have come here,' said Philip, feeling much happier than he had felt for some days. He liked the look of the red-haired, green-eyed brother and sister very much. They would be friends. He would show them the animals he had as pets. They could go for walks together. Jack was some years older than Lucy-Ann, about fourteen, Philip thought, just a little older than he himself was. It was a pity Dinah wasn't there too, then there would be four of them. Dinah was twelve. She would fit in nicely – only, perhaps, with her quick impatience and quarrelsome nature, it might not be peaceful!

'How different Lucy-Ann and Jack are from me and Dinah,' thought Philip. It was quite plain that Lucy-Ann adored Jack, and Philip could not imagine Dinah hanging on to his words, eager to do

his bidding, fetching and carrying for him, as Lucy-Ann did for Jack.

'Oh, well – people are different,' thought the boy. 'Dinah's a good sort, even if we do quarrel and fight. She must be having a pretty awful time at Craggy-Tops without me. I bet Aunt Polly is working her hard.'

It was pleasant at tea-time that day to sit and watch Jack's parrot on his shoulder, making remarks from time to time. It was good to see the glint in Lucy-Ann's green eyes as she teased big, slow Sam, and ticked off the smaller, peevish Oliver. Things would liven up a bit now.

They certainly did. Holiday coaching was *much* more fun with Jack and Lucy-Ann there too.