

## **“Lost in the Fog”**

### **Adapted from the story by Irving Bacheller**

I’ve never been able to understand how anyone can like geese. From the day they knocked me down and hissed at me in that mocking way, I have hated geese. I used to think the worst thing about Mother Tipton was her geese. She lived in a shack all by herself. The land that rose to either side of her shack was known as Mother Tipton’s Hollow. Every day flocks of geese covered the green slopes of the Hollow, and a group of them always swam in the black waters of the pond in the center. Sometimes on a summer day I would come to the Hollow and peer over the ridge, trembling with fear. I would be greeted with flapping of the wings and a screech of anger. Mother Tipton was a kind lady who would rescue me whenever I was cornered by the geese.

One morning when I was eight years old, I got permission to go with Mother Tipton in her rowboat as she went to market to sell the geese. That day she had a cargo of 10 geese, legs tied together and stowed at the bow of the boat. It was a mile and a half across the bay and the water was clear and calm. A thin mist hovered over the shore on the far side of the bay, but when we set sail we could clearly see the dock and building that lay just beyond it.

“Oh my! It’s getting foggy!” Mother Tipton cried, after rowing a few minutes. Then she sat for a long time looking over the water at a misty wall that lay not far ahead of us. All of a sudden, she began to vigorously pull on the right oar with an energy she hadn’t had before.

“It’s the tide,” she said, “and we must get back as quick as we can or we’ll be in trouble.”

The fog thickened fast and at the same time the boat seemed to lengthen. I could hardly see the face of Mother Tipton. I could hear her groan and breathe heavily as she put all of her strength into the oars. Suddenly I heard the snap of the oar and the anger from Mother Tipton.

Mother Tipton rose in the boat and shouted a loud hello. We listened for an answer, but heard none. She called “Help!” a dozen times as the top of her lungs. Between her cries we could hear nothing but the tide rippling under the boat. Not understanding the danger we were in, I felt only the thrill of adventure. When Mother Tipton began crying, I grew brave and did my best to comfort her. As we continued to drift in the fog, I lost a bit of my bravery as I realized the hopelessness of the situation we were in.

“Mother Tipton,” I said, “where do you suppose we are?”

“Lord only knows, child,” was her answer. “I’m afraid we’re out in deep water half way to Long Island. But, the tide has turned, and it may take us back before night comes. We’ll just sit still and keep calling.”

I was lying on my back, resting my head on the seat behind me and feeling quite miserable when I heard a great disturbance among the geese. Mother Tipton called me over to help and we began tying fishing line to each of the geese. "I believe these creatures will have sense enough to go toward shore. They know more than we do about many things."

Once we had tied the string to the geese and the other end to the boat, we let them go. It wasn't long until we couldn't see our team as the fog grew thicker and darkness fell. It was not long before we heard the bottom of the boat grind against the sand. Within a moment we were up on land. The firm earth had never felt so good. I felt my way up to the beach and Mother Tipton came after me. It was so dark and foggy we could see nothing. We settled ourselves on the beach for the night, lighting a fire and cooking the clams we found in the sand.

As I awoke the next day to the bellowing sound of a fog horn in the distance I saw an old fisherman standing over us. He insisted on taking us home and as we set off in his boat with the sun shining brightly I made Mother Tipton promise she would never sell one of those ten geese. The adventure resulted in great good for it gave me some great respect for geese. Sometimes things aren't as they seem.