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Fritz Afloat, or a Jaunt in a Motor Boat

By Bonnycastle Dale

WELL the catalogue says you can
run for a cent a mile, and she
will do seven of them in an hour,
and if it rains any more this spring we
need not stick to the rivers and lakes,
we can just run anywhere, the air is
just full of water. Thoughts like these
crossed the lad's mind as he splashed
his way over to the boat builders to see
the 18-foot hull stored there. It looked
good to him with its white glistening
paint, its gilt "Mowich" (Chinook for
Deer), on the bow. Varnished combing,
blue ensign astern, and a white and red
name pennant on the bow. The engine
looked simple too. So simple that the
salesman showed him all the ways to
do it in about four minutes—Fritz found
other ways for four hours later. The

turned, again the wheel flew around be-
fore Fritz's impulse, and "Put, put, put,
put," off she went right merrily. "Guess
I'd better fill the oil cup, and the two
grease cups." "Put, put, put," sang the
engine. "Fine as silk," sang the lad.
"Now, where's that smoke coming from;
this is no coal burner! Phew! where's
the old rags, guess the ship's a-fire." It
certainly looked like it for a small cloud
of black smoke was coming out from un-
der the aft deck. "Well, my cushions
are cork-filled anyhow," thought Fritz.
Just then he saw a drop of solder fall
from the muffler, "Golly, she's melting;
something wrong!" Another dense cloud
of smoke made the lad turn off the
spark. Not a moment too soon. The
pump had been returning all the water
to the river, instead of sending part
through to keep the pipes and the
muffler cool. It took a good half hour
to get things cold enough to resume the
trip, and the lad's heart went mouth-
wards every time he smelt burning oil,
or grease on any joint.

Right ahead, was the dam, to the
right, the locks. Out of the swift water
in the calm of the "dead," the Mowich
darted. The boat was all right, but Fritz
pulled the side steering gear, and sent
her straight for the overflowed log guard
that protected the left side. Instantly
reversing he threw the gear right across
and went "BUMP" into the good old
solid limestone wall. It was only the
big brass anchor line eye on the dead-
wood of the bow that saved her. She
bounced back like a ball and, urged by
Mr. Put-put-put attacked it again.
Fritz at this instant threw off the spark
and standing up put the oars in place
and manhandled her into the lock.
All this was done to the loud plaudits
and hearty laughter of the locksiders.
Fritz only pursed up his lips and ignoring
the flood of advice, wiped and cooled, and
attended strictly to business, with the
result that the moment the lock gate
opened. "Put-put-put-put" went the
merry little engine, and off darted the
Mowich in true deerlike style. All went
merry as the proverbial marriage bell for
several miles, every time she was hungry
Fritz gave her oil, every time she seemed
thirsty he gave her more water. "Keep
her at 4½ and about 2," said the man,
and you have a good mixture. I wonder
what a mixture means thought the boy.
Just then a passing motor boat man
called out, "Poor mixture, sonny."
Fritz looked at his exhaust, quite blue
looking, while the passing boat sent out
a purring cloud of steam-white
moisture. "I have it," joyfully cried
Fritz after many mysterious, and
anxious moments. "Put-puff-put-puff
p-a—" "Too much water," laughed the
boy. New movement, "Put, put, put"
as regular as clockwork, and for miles
too, then suddenly she stopped dead, and
no art the boy possessed would move
her. "Row a mile," he laughed, and out
came the "ash breeze." "I'll bet she's
flooded," called a passing semisped man,
"turn her over twenty times and she'll
go."

"Thanks," yelled Fritz. Ten times!
twenty times! thirty times! forty
times! that shining nickle handle spun.
Drops of perspiration stood out on
Fritz's noble brow. "Put." "Hurrah!"
"put-put." "Hurrah! hurrah!" "Put-
put-put" and off the little whiff went for
home, and all the way too, as if she
had never given the boy a moment's
trouble, all the day long.

"Old lady, I'm going to take you out
fishing," said the boy to his boat. She
curled the water from her bow in a
laugh as she started, and off they went
to where the wild rice, beds hid the
mighty maskalounge, the tiger of the
fresh water lakes. Now, his lady did
not like to travel at reduced speed, but
with infinite care the lad soothed and
coaxed her and finally got her running
at a sweet little two and a half miles,
just the gait to whirl the bait to interest
the fish. Along many an island shore,

A Fine Maskalounge

one and a half horse power engine cer-
tainly looked simple enough, although
it promptly threw its starter whizzing
for Fritz's head the first time he whirled
it. "Bite me, would you, I'll tame you,"
the lad ejaculated between closed teeth,
(he was thinking of his Natural History
pets no doubt). The trial spin, with
the maker at the bow, was a huge
success, never a kick out of time did
the little engine give. It just sat down
and attended to business.

"It's as easy as running a sewing
machine," quoth the man.

"I'd do well with the sewing machine,
I don't think," said Fritz.

The carefully saved roll of bills was
handed over, receipt pocketed, stern line
thrown off, and out into the current of
the river slipped the Mowich. One swift
turn with the crank and "put, put, put,"
went the little engine, singing away like
a teakettle.

"She's a duck," sang Fritz—Put—put—
put—put—put—sang the engine, and died
gently away.

"She's a lame duck," sighed the boy,
as he seized the crank and slipped it on
and whirled the wheel and drew it off—
all in one swift motion—"Put-p—" sighed
the engine.

"I'll put put-putter you, old girl, if
you don't do better," cried Fritz as he
cranked and cranked with little result.
"Oh! I forgot to turn the spark on
again." "Put-put-put-put-p—" "Well,
that's better. Oh! bother, the
gasoline is off too." Another tap was

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