

Elsie Cowles was daring, but not reckless. She knew how to swim or to handle a cat-boat as well as did her three athletic brothers. Moreover, she knew that the bay was safe, because no sharks could cross the bar which sealed its mouth.

She loved swimming in this radiantly clear, jewel-green, warm yet bracing Cuban water, but she found the straight, open beach at the landing-place below the quinta comparatively commonplace. On a previous sail round the bay, with her father, she had observed a tiny cove, an almost circular basin about a hundred yards across on the western shore of the bay, just within the bar. In this cove the water was of a peculiarly intense and thrilling green, with wonderful coloured shells and weeds scattered over the rocks and hard sand of the bottom.

It was toward this green pool, which had caught her imagination, that she was steering the catboat. It was there that she was going to take her swim.

A luxurious swim, however, was not Elsie's only object in this expedition. On the shore near by she had noticed a grove of young bamboos. The lower joints of these bamboos, about three or four inches in diameter, eighteen inches long, and of a light, pure,