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sented, as all mothers do. But she bade Jake over and over again not to play any of his jokes on the working men engaged on his uncle's farm. "Now don't be mischievous, darling," she urged as her warm-hearted but mischievous son, gave her a bear hug and a loud, echoing kiss in farewell.

"I'll be goody-good," promised Jake. And he meant it, too. "I shan't play a single joke on a person on the farm—not even Al." Hereupon Jake grinned at his cousin, and together the two went swinging off to the gate, where stood Al's fine horse hitched to a neat top-buggy, a gift from his father on his last birthday.

The boys drove off, waving farewells to Mrs. White, who stood beside the gate till they were out of sight. They had six miles to drive before supper time, and it was almost that now. So Al touched up his horse with the lines, the obedient animal started off in a fast trot and the buggy rolled along the highway like a big black bug. The boys enjoyed the brisk ride very much.

Reaching the farm, they hurriedly washed, combed and made themselves neat for the appetizing supper Al's mother, with the help of a maid-servant, was placing on the table. She greeted the boys affectionately, welcoming Jake, as was always her cordial way. Jake's uncle came swinging up from the cattle sheds, crying out: "Hello, kids! Back to the land, eh, Al?" Then he had a loving scuffle with his nephew, who was named in his honor, and all hands went into supper.

"Say, has Al told you of our new colt?" asked Mr. White at supper. "He's yet unbroken, though several of the hands have tried putting a bridle and saddle on him. He's to be Al's, if he's ever conquered. I got him from a greaser who went past

here 'tother day—got him for a song, and sang it myself, as the old saying goes."

"No, Al hasn't told me about his new possession," said Jake. "I'll lasso him for you, Uncle—if you want me to. I'll throw him and then one of the men can bridle and saddle him while he's down."

Mr. White shook his head. "I reckon you'd like trying that little caper, Nephey, but—it takes a cooler and older head than yours, a stronger arm and a more practiced eye to lasso a wild animal. I know you and Al have lassoed the gentle horses—till I put a stop to it, but lassoing a wild Texas pony—that's only out of the colt age—isn't so easy. That colt—or pony—is a caution. He's got the pasture to himself." Mr. White laughed.

"Yes, and he's as trim and pretty as he can be," put in Al, his cheeks bulging with good things to eat, for which his mother gently reproved him by whispering to him that because he had been away from home for a week he should not take advantage of his parent's joy at his homecoming to display bad table manners.

"Well, I don't care how wild he is," declared Jake, "I'll bet my hat I can lasso him." Then everybody talked about lassoing and the proper way to do it, and the meal progressed pleasantly.

The following morning Al and Jake made a survey of the farm, loving as they did every nook and corner of it. They went to the horse pasture to see the new Texas pony, and found it looking very mild and gentle. "I could lasso him in a jiffy," bragged Jake. "May I try him?"

Al was undecided. "Say, if you'd try it and he'd fool you a trip the laugh would be on you," he explained to Jake. "But—if only we could get him in some close quarters and you could get a try at him—some place where no one but us could see—" And Jake looked at his cousin questioningly.

"Say, Al, you've hit on the very thing," exclaimed Jake. "Suppose we drive him into the cow lot—round on the off-side the barn from the house. There's that pile of hay under the barn window on which I might throw him. Once I succeed, I'll call to Uncle to come and see me do it a second time, and to bring his men to put on the saddle."

But as Jake's enthusiasm grew, Al's cooled. "You might break the colt's neck," he ventured. "Besides, I don't think Daddy wanted you to fool with the colt. Maybe we'd best not try it."

"Ah, let's have some fun," said Jake. "I promised Mamma not to play any jokes on a single person on the farm, so I've got to play 'em on the animals and chickens. I'll take the risk, Al, and the consequences, too. Come, let's scare the pony down to the gate yonder, and on through into the cow lot. I'll run and unfasten the gate. I'll also get a lariat from the harness shed. Come on. What's the good of having the name, 'Mischievous Jake' unless I make good?"

Al reluctantly consented and together the boys got the colt from the big pasture into the smaller cow lot,



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and shut him in. He showed some signs of rebellion, and his eyes shot sly gleams of defiance. But nothing daunted Mischievous Jake. The more spirit the pony showed, the better Jake liked it. It gave promise of excitement.

"Now," said Jake, "I have decided to perch myself well above the pony. I'll climb into the loft of the barn and sit in the window, just there—over that pile of hay. I'll hold my lasso all ready, and when I give the signal, you chase Mr. Pony round in front of me and I'll have him floundering on his bed of hay. It'll be nice and soft for him to fall on. Then, we'll tie him and call to Uncle to come and bear witness to the fact that I can lasso a wild animal just the same as a Texas ranger, or a Mexican cowboy."

Then Jake climbed to his perch, the window ledge outside the loft of the barn. His long legs dangled down. He had the lasso all in readiness, the loop held in his hand as he had seen cowboys hold it when preparing to throw an unbroken pony.

"Now, scare out your animal!" he called to Al. "See that he runs round the right-hand corner as I can throw the lasso better in that direction. I'm ready for him!"

"All right!" And Al went round the lot after the pony that had taken himself off as far from his enemies as he could. He stood, head down, in a corner near the fence, a good deal of white showing in his wild eyes. Instinctively he seemed to know that something was going to happen to him—something unpleasant, and he was meditating as to what sort of move he should make. He had not long to think over his plans, however, for round the corner of the cow house came his new owner—not master as yet.

"Whoa!" began Al. The pony pawed the ground and looked sideways at him. Then he frisked out of the corner and kicked up his hind hoofs, tossing some bits of loose dirt into Al's face. Al started towards him, waving both hands wildly, frightening him and sending him in the desired direction. Round the cow house he went, just as Jake desired him to do and when he came to the pile of hay he paused. Jake saw his opportunity and bent forward, throwing the lasso. The other end of the rope he had wound round and round his shoulder so as to have a firm hold on Mr. Colt. The loop went home, getting the unsuspecting pony round the neck. He gave a lunge, threw up his hoofs and went off like a flash of lightning. In vain had Jake tried to hold himself in his seat. With the pony's first lunge he had toppled, lost his balance and went to the bed of hay which he had intended for the pony's repose. He was wise and quickly loosened the rope from about his shoulders, otherwise, he would

have been dragged about the lot at the pony's mercy. Al had come round the corner just in time to see his brave and venturesome cousin throw the lasso and had been a witness of the whole affair. As Jake lifted himself from the hay and looked at Al the latter had to scream with laughter in spite of himself.

"Say, never kick a man when he's down," said Jake, sitting up and feeling of his legs and arms to see if there were any bones broken or dislocated. Finding himself sound, but feeling a bit shaken up, he got to his feet. "Consarn that pony!" he said with some show of feeling. "If he was mine I'd—I'd disown him. I'd give him to a tramp."

"He's too much for you, isn't he, Jakey?" grinned Al, having recovered from his first rebellious laughter. "Say, I think he's a little crackerjack. But—we'll not try lassoing him again. Wonder how we'll get the rope from around his neck?"

"Let some of the hired men disentangle the brute," suggested Jake. "Say, my hip feels as though it had hit my neck, and my stomach seems to have been dented in by my knees. Let's go to the house and ask Aunt Nellie for something good to eat. I believe that will set me up again. Gee! It's fun lassoing Texas ponies!"

And together the boys went towards the house, and the pony, the rope hanging loosely about his neck, stood gazing after them, and no one will ever know what his feelings were regarding his throwing the young chap who had tried to "get" him.

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