

THE HUNDREDTH CHANCE

"He'll be thrown if he isn't careful," she said, half to herself and half to Bunny, who was watching with the keenest interest.

"Hope he'll tumble into the water," said Bunny, who enjoyed dramatic situations.

The pair had passed them, and were continuing their sidling progress along the beach. The man still appeared preoccupied, the horse still half frightened, half mischievous. Some fifty yards they covered thus; then the figure in the saddle slowly stiffened. Aware of an impending change of treatment, the animal began to jib with his head in the air. An odd little thrill went through Maud, a feeling as of electricity in the air. It was almost a sensation of foreboding. And then, clean and grim as a pistol-shot, she heard the crack of a whip on the creature's quivering flank.

It was a well-earned correction, deliberately administered, one stinging cut, delivered with a calculation that knew exactly where to strike. But the horse, a young animal, leapt into the air as if he had been shot indeed, and landing again almost on the same spot, began forthwith to buck-jump in frenzied efforts to free himself of the taskmaster whose lash was so unerring.

The whip descended again with absolute precision. It looked almost like a feat of jugglery to Maud's fascinated eyes. The horse uttered a furious squeal. He was being forced, literally forced, into the hated water, and he knew it, set himself with all the fiery unreason of youth to resist, and incidentally to receive a punishment none the less painful on account of its extreme deliberation.

As for his rider, he kept his seat without apparent effort. He kept his temper also to all outward appearance. He even in the thick of the struggle abandoned force and tried coaxing again. It was only when this failed that it seemed to the watching girl that a certain quality of implacability began to manifest itself. His movements were no less studied, but they seemed to her to become relentless. From that moment she knew with absolute certainty that there could be but one end to the struggle.

Some dim suspicion of the same thing must have penetrated the animal's intelligence also, for almost from the same moment he seemed to lose heart. He still bucked away