

## Jack Frost's Victory

By  
Annie Salisbury Newell

She was little and sweet and fair! As Jack Frost looked down into the face of his companion, he realized that Victory St. Clair was a beautiful girl. As a little child she had been pretty and lovable, but obstinate and snappy. He remembered her in fits of anger calling him "old Jack Frost."

Those had been in days a decade ago, when Victory had, through the death of her only relative, been left to him as his little ward. He had just turned twenty-one then, and had no desire nor appreciation for little girls, or the honor of being guardian—even though it meant a neat income to him.

She had only been with him two months when relieving school term took her as far as he could possibly put distance between himself and his hated duty. He had placed her in a boarding school, and from there she had gradually crept higher and higher, till her graduation from college a few days ago.

He had not seen Victory since, though he had done his duty by her. He had planned her whole course, surprisingly to her satisfaction, and the credit of so young a guardian. Then the war came along and Jack Frost served his country four years. In all that time he never forgot his duty to his ward, and kept regularly in touch with her instructors.

And now Victory was coming back to him—to live with him and his old housekeeper, which was to be her chaperon.

After a decade Victory was coming back! A changed Victory! Not the little sunny curled, blue eyed, ten year old, but a wonderfully efficient, well poised lady, beautiful and sweet and lovable.

Jack Frost was pleased. He told himself that a man of seventy could not have done better by her. And Victory wasn't spoiled! All her scholarships, wealth, beauty, position and lavish of admiration from her many friends of both sex, had not tended to spoil Victory. She drove there beside him apparently indifferent to her own personal charm; but alive with the eagerness of youth for adventure and a sparkle of mirth in her blue eyes.

Victory was a dream! "And you're still Jack Frost?" she enquired playfully, as she reached out to catch a leaf of the shrubbery grazing the car. "I can remember when I feared you were the real stuff."

He laughed a little as he turned out for a load of hay (it was haying time). "Maybe I'm the real stuff yet."

She eyed him narrowly for a second though not seeming to do so.

She noted though his lips were firm, the glint of his brown eyes belied all severity. Too, that he was young and pleasing to look upon. Then she said "I suppose I was a little prig! I remember trying to make things hot for you the two months I was at your place."

"The fact was you pitied my frozen personality; and I should have been more appreciative of your good intent."

She laughed a little, then after a long pause, "Oh, well, I've learned a little while I was away."

"Considerable by all reports," he said, a little icily. Jack Frost was given to a frosty twang.

Victory found the old house just as it used to be. The wide porches, comfy with wicker rockers, and floating hammocks and awnings. It was the same old white green shuttered, colonial house, with its green sloping shaded lawn, hedged neatly from the highways, and far, far back of the house, stretched the same sparkling, waving, inviting breadth of water, beckoning to one from between the pines. It must have been the same blue sky and fleecy clouds too, and the same birds to chant their morning and evening songs. Was ever a place with a more appropriate name "Heart's Content."

Heart's Content. And think of its owner being Jack Frost.

Victory met her old playfellows. There were several girls among whom were Alice and Edith McKay, and some boy friends one especially a certain Alfred Day home from college now too, and living directly across the hedge. A swell place to chat across! Folks tried at first calling her Miss St. Clair, but it didn't work somehow. Victory hadn't changed—even her wilfulness was there, and after a few vain attempts people just lapsed into the old Victory.

Mrs. Atkins, her chaperon, who loved Victory years ago, loved her yet, and watched her talking to Alfred Day. She was fond of Alfred. Many a cookie she gave him in boyhood, and even yet he wasn't loathe to eat Auntie Atkins' cookies. But she felt uneasy. Victory talked over the hedge far too much. Or maybe they sat in the lawn swing (the hedge couldn't part them long). Perhaps they motored on land or water, or chatted down by the big boulder, where Auntie couldn't see or hear. When they chatted on the porch, they talked of very sensible things, old times, books, art, music, occasional gossip, etc. But how could she tell what under creation they talked about on the road, or water, or sitting on that boulder.

And Jack Frost didn't care! No it was rumored that there was another girl, older and possibly more sensible farther up at the resort that Jack spent his idle time going to visit. Gossip was ready to hurl all kinds of news afloat for others to take up and toss about. There was a lot of talk but they never hit the right

strain. Mr. John Frost whenever he was at home was secretly admiring Victory. He liked the way she tripped all over the house. He became dreamily spell bound when she flew her white fingers over the yellow keys of his mother's piano. He enjoyed the song, the spirit, the very lilt of her—but Jack Frost was shy, older, and more slow at making advances than the young men who trod his lawns, his bowers, his piazzas and his beach, for Victory. His house wouldn't be lonesome now since Victory St. Clair had come back.

Then came a time Alfred Day didn't come across the hedge, and Victory tried to amuse herself picking bouquets or reading, or talking to Auntie. Alfred Day sat stubbornly at home, his fine featured boyish face twisted in a snarl, and if he caught Victory's eye from her position on the Heart's Content piazza, why he suddenly jerked his head the other way.

Auntie noted all this quietly. She was secretly reading Victory. Victory was wilful as of old and didn't care.

Alice and Edith came and they all went to bathe. They splashed and dashed round and had a swell time. Shouts of merriment came up the bank to Alfred Day and Auntie—but he turned deaf ears to their sport. Then dressed in filmy white the girls betook themselves for a row. They would have tea on the lawn at five. They were certainly having a fine time! And poor Alfred sat and sulked.

Jack Frost was coming along the shore leisurely strolling. The day was growing cooler. And would you believe it the sun had gone behind a dark cloud. He had to jump clear of a wave every once in awhile, so he wouldn't get his feet wet—the waves were tossing so high. He hastened his steps around the boulder. He expected to see Victory and Day sitting there. His heart gave just a little pang. "Queer he couldn't like Day this summer! College was spoiling Day," he told himself. "No they weren't there! Probably they'd gone to the house on account of the cold. It was getting real chilly—and those waves certainly were growing rough." A shrill cry drew his attention. He looked in the direction. Three white specks were off on the perilous deep. What fools to venture out so far, and especially near those rocks! Jack Frost drew out his glass and gazed. "Victory! Alice! Edith!" He waved to them. Beckoned them to head the boat for shore. They seemed to have lost control.

Anchored near was a row boat, he got in and shoved away. "Would he reach them." His heart quaked. "Victory! Victory in danger! With her soft little lips and voice, and those carefree laughing ways. Victory so warm and lovable! Where was Alfred Day? Why wasn't he on hand?" He looked towards Day's landing—there he stood, hands clasped behind, witnessing it all. Frost clenched his teeth and rowed harder. Nearer—nearer he came to the helpless girls, their boat bounding, ready to overturn any moment. Horrors, it capsize! He gave a leap from his boat to save the girls. How could he save them all? The upturned boat struck Alice and she went down. He grabbed Victory, who was frightened and beginning to chill, her teeth chattering. "You've got to help me Victory!" he said imploringly. "We've got to get Alice, and here Edith, you seem perfectly helpless." He took hold of Edith as he spoke. "Edith you must help too, you can both swim. You girls hold to this boat till I watch for Alice to come up."

She was tossed over a wave. He grabbed at her. The two girls clinging desperately to the slippery upturned boat, it leaping and bounding on the billows. Jack Frost hung onto Alice with one hand, and with the other threw over the boat, the girls helping. They held it as best they could till he flopped Alice in. Then he steadied it till the girls scrambled over the sides. He hung on a few moments to keep the boat and kept grabbing for the floating oars. He captured one, and Victory, taking it, helped to man the boat. Finally after a few ludicrous and desperate efforts he succeeded in getting the other oar. Then carefully he got in and the four bedraggled, chilled adventurous ones, made for shore. Day stood watching. Victory worked over Alice. Alice sat up directly.

As they landed safely Day came over to sympathize and help the girls out. Victory took Frost's hand instead and never looked at Alfred. Alice and Edith forgot to be polite to him as they ran dripping up the bank to get dried and warmed. Day turned away.

"Coward" scorned Frost, loud enough to be heard. "Stand on dry land and let three helpless girls drown."

Auntie Atkins threw up her hands in astonishment as the four dripping creatures rushed in, raining drops all over the room.

Auntie put the girls to bed and instead of five o'clock tea on the lawn they had each a hot drink, and

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blinds were drawn to let them sleep off their excitement. Jack Frost phoned the girls mothers they had arranged to stay all night, and not to expect them home.

The next day after the girls were better and gone, Victory came out on the porch, a little paler, though as bright and cheerful as ever. Jack Frost arose bowing to greet her. Auntie was out of sight behind the muslin curtains, tating. This is what

she saw and heard, to her satisfaction.

"Victory! Oh, Victory, I'm so glad you're around again! Victory!" he held out his arms to her, his whole attitude an appeal. Victory came to those extended arms, and they clasped closer and closer around her. "Victory, little Victory! Whose Victory are you dear?"

"I'm afraid I'm Jack Frost's Victory," she murmured happily.

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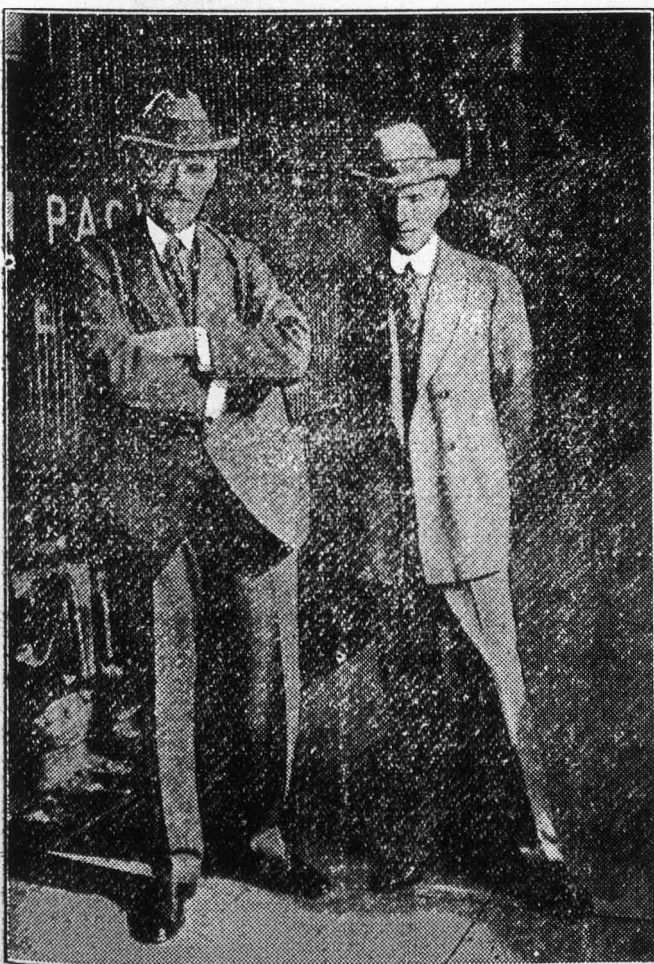
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Mr. Ford is here seen in conversation with Mr. Grant Hall, vice-president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, at Windsor Station, Montreal.