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**MAGIC BAKING POWDER**

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## The Lost Will;

OR,

## LOVE TRIUMPHS AT LAST!

CHAPTER XV.

"And it is such a beautiful place. Everything about it is so old, and has its history. It goes back centuries; all sorts of great people have stayed there, even kings and queens. Lord Ferndale and Lady Blanche took me all over it; some of the rooms are set up, of course; the house is so large. I couldn't help feeling sorry that a large part of it should be disused, and thinking how nice it would be if it were full of people."

"Perhaps it may be some day," said Jack, with an attempt at casualness. "Lord Ferndale is sure to marry, I should think."

"Oh, I should think so," she assented promptly. "He is so very good-looking, and—and—" She laughed. "I can't find the word; I suppose it's 'aristocratic' I want."

"That's it," said Jack, with an emphatic shake of his head. "He's the most lofty-looking individual I've ever seen; looks as if he were a portrait of one of King Arthur's knights stepped out of his frame. 'Pon my word, Ferndale ought to go about in chain armour and carry a lance or a battle-axe."

Nora laughed; then her face grew serious and she glanced at him curiously.

"It's quite true; but you said it as if—as if—you were making fun of him—didn't like him."

"Oh, no, I wasn't," said Jack; "not in the least, though he's a bit out of the fashion. Men don't go about with the kind of air Lord Ferndale wears; and as to not liking him, why, I rather do so. I admire him tremendously; almost as much as you do—you and Mrs. Feitham. I mean," he added hastily, for Nora glanced at him again, with surprise at his tone. "Here we are!" he said, as a groom hurried forward to open one of the principal doors of the stable. "Now let's see what we've got; there's a mare here, rather pretty and a decent goer in harness; she might suit you, but I don't know whether she'd carry a lady."

"Why shouldn't she?" asked Nora. "Any horse will carry a lady, I should think, if the lady knows how to

ride. We don't worry about that in Australia."

"No? All the same, we'll worry about it here, in this instance."

They went up to a stall in which was standing a good-looking bay mare, which turned her head and regarded them with large and curious eyes.

"This is Sarah," said Jack, giving her a slap and taking her nozzie in his hand.

"She's awfully pretty," remarked Nora, going into the stall and stroking the satin neck. The mare sniffed at her and laid back her ears; Jack, who had been examining the animal's back, saw the flattened ears, and shooting out his arm, caught Nora round the waist and drew her out of reach of the teeth which Sarah had bared.

"Beg pardon!" he said. "I was afraid she might bite you."

"Oh, I don't think so," said Nora easily; but her averted face had grown red. "I'm not at all afraid of horses; I've run about their heels ever since I was a child."

"They never kick children," said Jack. "But you're not a child now, and therefore no longer immune."

"What an important sounding word!" laughed Nora.

"A good word—got it out of a brief Mr. Horton sent me," said Jack.

"A brief in one of your law cases?" "Yes, one of 'em," assented Jack dryly.

"How interesting it must be!" Nora mused. "I should like to hear you speak in court. Perhaps I may some day."

"Yes, perhaps you may, some day," said Jack.

"You must feel such a responsibility when you're addressing the jury; you must feel as if so much depended on you. No wonder barristers are so highly paid."

"You are right; no wonder," said Jack. "And now we'll have Sarah out and put her through her paces."

The groom led out the mare and ran her up and down. She was a beautiful thing and moved nicely, but evidently she was somewhat shy and timid.

"That will do, Jackson," said Jack. "Now go and get me a light horse-cloth and a safety-pin."

"What on earth are you going to do?" asked Nora, as Jackson brought the required articles and Jack proceeded to drape the horse-cloth round him.

"I'm going to pin this round my waist and try to persuade Sarah that

it's a riding-habit. Get a side-saddle on her, Jackson—quick!"

"You've run the pin into your hand; I thought you would," said Nora, with an air of superiority. "It's wonderful how clumsy a man can be when he's interfering with things he ought not to! Here, let me!"

Jack stood silent while she pinned the cloth round what he called his "waist," remarking:

"I'm sure it's quite unnecessary. I could ride her barebacked."

The dear old chestnut of a retort, "You might catch cold," rose to Jack's lips, but fortunately he checked it. The mare was saddled, and he mounted her. For a moment she stood quite still; then, as she felt the horse cloth flapping against her, she began to fidget and dance. As Jack rode her out of the stable yard on to the drive, obviously she was not comfortable in her mind, and was irritated by the thing flopping against her sleek side. Jack took her on the grass, and no sooner had she reached it and felt the soft turf under her heels than she tried to get away with him. Failing to release herself from Jack's soft but steel-like grip, she rose almost to the perpendicular; and Jack, who was not accustomed to riding side-saddle, swayed to and fro, and came off on his back.

Nora, who had followed them, uttered a little cry and ran towards him; but Jack, who had not relinquished his hold on the reins, was on his feet in an instant, floundering in his improvised habit, and talking to the mare in a chaffing, but soothing way.

"One to you, old girl," he said. "But give a man another chance."

As he spoke, he felt Nora's hand on his arm.

"Oh, are you hurt?" she asked; and something in her tone went straight to Jack's heart and made it jump.

"Nary bit," he replied cheerfully, and, holding up the cloth in a bunch round him, he got into the saddle again. Then proceeded a perfect circus between horse and rider. Sarah's feelings were sorely hurt, and having dismounted her cavalier, with a flopping thing, once, she, being a female, was fully persuaded she could do so again; but Jack was wary now, and, while humouring her to the top of her bent, kept her well under control.

She jumped, she kicked, she reared, she tried to bolt; but presently Jack had completely mastered her, or, rather, soothed her, and soon she was cantering over the grass with a fearless mind and a completely restored temper.

Meanwhile Nora was watching events with no longer anxious, but admiring eyes. She was qualified to appreciate good riding, and certainly Jack Chalfonte was a good horseman.

In the eyes of most people, Jack in his impromptu habit skirt would have cut a somewhat ridiculous figure; but Nora's eyes were fixed on his face, and she saw nothing ridiculous. What she saw and felt was his desire, at no small inconvenience, to ensure her safety.

"Oh, that will do," she said. "I am sure she will carry me. Come back and let me get up and try."

"What, in that skirt?" asked Jack, as he rode up to her and dismounted.

"Why not?" she said. "I've never ridden in a habit in my life. Don't hold her too tight; she's quite quiet. What are you going to do?" she asked, as Jack offered his knee and hand.

"Put you up," he replied.

"Oh, thanks, but I can manage," she said, and she proved her assertion by laying her hand on the mare's neck and springing into the saddle.

"Don't give her the curb," called out Jack, watching her anxiously.

Nora nodded, put the mare to the trot, then broke into a canter and sailed easily over the meadows. Jack stood and watched her with mingled admiration and sorrow for himself.

She was a perfect horsewoman. Oh, yes, she was perfect altogether. And she was an heiress, a millionairess, and he was just Jack Chalfonte, with his first brief; and a mile or two away was a fellow, Lord Ferndale—Ferndale, with his rank and title, his magnificent Spanish face.

With these feelings working in his heart, Jack trotted after her. She was nearing the hedge which divided the meadow from the lawn, and Jack expected her to turn and ride back to him; but she kept straight on, and with a sudden shock of dread he saw that she intended taking the hedge.

He did not know whether the mare could jump or not, and he tried to call out to Nora warningly; but his voice did not carry. He quickened his pace,

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his heart thumping with fear for her; then he saw the horse rise, saw Nora lean forward and take the hedge as if it were a wayside gully. Fear gave place to anger when, to his amazement, she jumped the horse back again with scarcely any "take-off." They alighted beside him, and he caught the bridle, and looking at her sternly, and after a moment of speechlessness, said:

"I say, look here, you oughtn't to have done that. Da-dash it all, you didn't know whether she could jump or not. You might have hurt yourself, broken your neck. Don't you do such a foolish thing again!"

He was very angry, and when Jack was angry he could be very stern. At first her face had expressed nothing but surprise at his hot, peremptory words, but gradually her eyes drooped, a faint colour rose to her cheeks, and she said, ever so meekly:

"Yes, I'm—I'm sorry. I didn't think there was any danger."

"Danger!" retorted Jack, still rather angry, but with a touch of melting tenderness in his gaze. "Of course there was danger. You can ride well enough; but the best rider can come a cropper on an untamed horse; and that hedge is high, and you didn't know but that there was a hard gravel path on the other side."

"I didn't think," she said meekly. "I'm sorry."

By this time Jack had remembered himself, and his anger was gone.

"I—I beg your pardon, Miss Norton; but you know it was a deuced risky thing, and you might have met with a nasty fall."

She walked the horse back to the stable-yard, and he paced beside her mechanically, with his hand on Sarah's neck, and consequently near the bridle. Arrived at the yard, she was proceeding to slip down, but Jack, half unconsciously, held out his arms, and Nora, without hesitation, and still with the face of a schoolgirl chidden for naughtiness, resigned herself; but the moment her feet had touched the ground she slid from his hold, and murmuring, "My hair's coming down," ran off to the house.

(To be Continued.)

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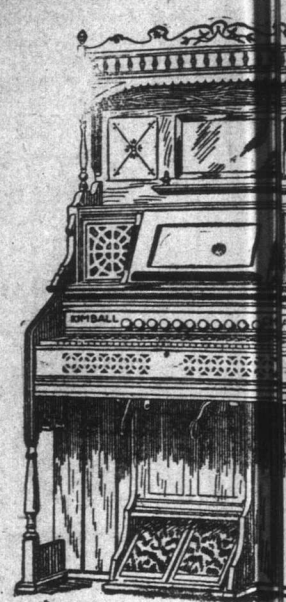
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