

For Every Boy and Girl

IN THE TOILS OF FATE

By VIRGINIA MITCHELL WHEAT

ELIZABETH! Elizabeth! Race you to the cross-roads," called a laughing youth from the back of a beautiful bay horse that pawed the ground restlessly as his master curbed him.

"What! you on Billy and I on Bess? I think not? You take Bess and give me Billy and I'll race you."

"Oh, no," laughed the boy, teasingly. "Billy's too heady for you. He'd pull your hands off."

"Huh," ejaculated Elizabeth disdainfully; she could handle a horse better than her older brother could, and scorned argument.

"Well, we can't stand here all day, wasting time with folk who are afraid to take up our challenge, can we, Billy? Come, get along!"

"Wait a minute," cried Elizabeth, "I'll race you, but not on Bess."

Running up to her room she slipped on a riding skirt, caught up a short whip, and was out of doors and across to the stables before her perplexed brother could think what she was "up to."

Then, an idea striking him, he wheeled about and rode Billy to the stable door just as Elizabeth came out leading a new black hunter, that had only arrived the day before.

His rolling eye, trembling nostrils, and nervously restless head were far from reassuring.

"Elizabeth!" exclaimed Ted, aghast. "What are you thinking of? You cannot ride him. Father would not let you."

"Father would let me if I asked him," said the spoiled Elizabeth, with a toss of her pretty head.

Even if you please to break your neck? Here, Elizabeth," coaxingly, "you take Billy and I'll take Bess."

"Bess! In a race? Why, it would be a race to see who would come in last. There'd be no fun in that. No, I shall ride Terry, and I'll beat you to the cross-roads, Master Ted, and back again, too."

"Elizabeth, don't be foolish," pleaded Ted. "Here, you take Billy, and I'll take Terry, and we'll have the race."

"Ho, ho," laughed Elizabeth, derisively, "you must be a bad loser when you would take my very horse from under me because you know he can just leave you out of sight. No, no, Teddy, you keep your pretty Billy, and when Terry and I get to the cross-roads we'll wait for you; that is, if you are not too far behind."

With a taunting laugh she put one foot on the railed fence beside her, vaulted lightly into the saddle, and before she could give the word Terry was off like an arrow from the bow.

The swift loping stride did not disturb Elizabeth in the least. She had been used to horses all her life, and so far had never had her confidence in them betrayed.

Lifting her face to the cool rushing air, she breathed it in deep exhilarating draughts for a bit, then turned half-way in her saddle to wave her hand to Teddy.

She realized then how fast she was going. Billy was coming on, urged beyond his usual speed by Ted's unspurring whip, and yet as she looked she could see the distance increasing between them.

Turning round she pulled sharply to slacken her horse's pace, but the effort seemed to have the opposite effect.

Sitting well back and catching a turn of the reins around her hands, she pulled again with long steady grip, but without avail. His mouth was as hard as nails.

A short time before she had sprained her wrist, and now the unusual strain began to tell on it.

"Oh, phaw!" she muttered. "He's just obstinate. The run can't do him any harm, and I'd better let him have his own way rather than cripple my wrist again. He'll soon tire out at this rate."

She looked back again, but Billy was not in sight. She loosed the reins from her cramped fingers, when, like lightning, Terry threw his head into the air, then down to his chest, dragging the slack of the reins from her, then, with the bit between his teeth, he dashed on with increasing speed.

For a few moments Elizabeth looked grave. She was not really alarmed, but the situation was altogether a novel one. Never in all her experience had she been run away with before. Every other horse in her father's stable knew her voice and loved it; but this one was a stranger, and if he was accustomed to being handled by men only, the sound of her voice might result in exciting him further.

He continued to run straight, with barely a swerve from the course he had set himself when he left the stable yard. The cross-roads had been left far behind. (She hadn't waited for Teddy, and Elizabeth wondered with a smile if he would wait for her, and how long.)

On and on and on swept the horse. Would his pace never break! Well, it was useless to borrow trouble.

If you're bidden to a party in the Land of Morning Calm, You may proudly bear the missive in your hat of braided palm.

Thus your status in society is settled once for all, And you're sure to be invited if Dame Grundy gives a ball.

Hats may also serve as bill-boards, and upon them you may post Such a bit of news or gossip as may interest you most.

Should the morning be uncertain and the wind a wavering one, With a mass of gathering shadows and capricious gleams of sun, From the hats of certain persons skirts of paper may depend, For to serve them as umbrellas, should a sudden storm descend. The Korean Weather Bureau thus is organized, you see, And may be by all consulted, safe from any form of fee.

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She could keep her saddle under almost any condition, so that, unless he should stumble or fall, there wasn't much to worry about. She had known horses after a wild run like this to come to their senses after a while and stand trembling and subdued from reaction.

Steadily, steadily, the great muscles moved beneath her, not with wild erratic action, yet with no suggestion of abating speed; then somehow, with the sort of sixth sense that came of being so thoroughly in sympathy with her father's horses, the belief came to her that there was method in his madness.

She had heard of horses and other animals finding their way back from incredible distances to a dearly loved home. This one had come from Wayville, just in the direction they were travelling, and more than twenty-five miles from her home. He had come all the way on the train, but despite this fact the conviction grew upon Elizabeth that by the aid of that instinct that so greatly compensates for the one human power these creatures lack, Terry was going home.

What should she do? What could she do? The thought of an involuntary and unexpected visit to a strange ranch was anything but a welcome one; still, even if she could accomplish the impossible feat of alighting safely from the back of this flying horse, how much better off would she be out in the midst of a desolate plain, with no means of conveyance back to her home or any town or village.

No, the only thing to do was to stick where she was; the horse would in time carry her to some definite place from which she could return, and, unless she could get control of him again, it was the only thing to do.

Once she leaned over, patted the heaving shoulder softly and spoke a soothing word or two, but Terry threw his head back and increased his speed, so she decided not to try that again. Frequent looks backward as well as all about the horizon, showed that she and Terry were the only actors in the great arena, and the loneliness and long-continued strain began to tell on her nerves. She would have given the world for the opportunity to lean her head on Terry's neck for a good cry, but it wouldn't do. No time for empty hands or tear-dimmed eyes just now. Pulling herself erect in the saddle, she put the weakness away from her. So long as Terry kept on with this long, even pace she was perfectly safe. It was only a question of patience. Her father, fortunately, was away from home, and would probably not be home before the morrow. The thought of poor Ted and his fright weakened her most, so she decided not to think of him again until it was all over.

Suddenly her eyes flashed and the quick color flew to her cheeks. They had reached the top of a gentle slope and away off in the distance, but straight across their path, she could see the long blue thread of a winding river. She laughed exultingly. That would prove Terry's Waterloo in very truth.

It was still five miles, or further, away, and if Terry would just keep up the strain of the last fifteen miles, he would be glad enough to halt and acknowledge himself beaten by the time he reached the river bank and realized he had half a mile or more to swim before he could take up his gay journey again.

Then she began to plan how she would manage him when they reached the river. In all probability he would give up, and then she would have no trouble; but there was, of course, the chance that he would not, and then she would have to make him give up. She had better stay where she was until Terry came to some decision. It wouldn't do to allow him a chance to bolt and leave her there alone. The thing for her to do was to get that bit further back in his mouth—then everything would be easy. She would keep him pacing for a while, that he might not cool too rapidly, then she would let him rest awhile, and then she would ride back triumphantly—meet Teddy, half scared to death, and nonchalantly declare to him that the race to the cross-roads had proved so ridiculously short that she had gone on to the river instead; and she laughed again as she thought of the look that would be on Teddy's face.

The river! Why, they had never been that far before in all their riding, except on the train; and the distance would seem more tremendous to Teddy, who had been away to school for two years, than to her, for she had been riding every day. She hoped some of the river mud would stick to Terry's feet, so Ted could see it.

They were close enough to the river now for Elizabeth to discover, first with concern, and then with satisfaction, that it looked very different from the calm, smiling river that she had liked to see when she had crossed on the trestle above. Now it was tumbling and foaming, tossing angrily the bits of debris with which it was strewn, and altogether seemed so unlike

without an instant's hesitation, plunged into the seething waters.

With a cry of terror Elizabeth reached over and clung frantically to his floating mane, and so together they started.

The horse's muscles were like iron, in spite of the long, continuous gallop and Elizabeth feared that the cold plunge, in his heated state, might produce paralysis; but he swam strongly and confidently, evading with skill the logs and other heavy objects that coursed swiftly on the racing tide. Once Elizabeth, forgetting herself, nearly lost her hold—a little cradle, empty, and still rocking softly in the tumbling waves, swept by, and after that she noted again and again many evidences of desolated homes. Thoroughly unnerved at last she closed her eyes and, clinging closely, trusted to Terry's strength and sagacity.

Presently she realized that he swam more feebly. The strong, propelling motion grew slower and more weary and she ventured to open her eyes for an instant.

The tide had carried them almost to the trestle where logs and debris of all sorts were piled in inextricable confusion. If Terry was caught in that dreadful chaos, there would be no possible chance for either of them. Could he hold his own and keep out of it?

Her eyes closed again, and her lips moved prayerfully. She wondered silently what Ted and her father would do without her. Ted would go back to school in time, of course, and in a way he would forget, but father—! No, she could not think what he would do, or how he would ever get along without her. They had always been so necessary to each other, she and her father. That was why she had never gone away to school like Ted; her father could not spare her, and so he had kept her home and taught her himself, and ever since those happy days when the pretty young mother had gone, she had been sweetheart and tyrant alike to him, as he often said; but now—!

She wondered whether they could manage to get ashore after all. But it seemed hopeless and she closed her eyes in dread.

A sudden tenseness—a new firmness in the muscles beneath her—made her sit up sharply and open her eyes again. Terry was treading bottom!

Her despondency was gone in a flash, and her plan of action instantly decided upon. She had been on Terry's back long enough, and when he reached land again she would slide off.

It might be a bit lonely for her for a while, but sooner or later a train would be along and then she would have plenty of company, and, in spite of her being disheveled and penniless, she was confident of a quick trip home.

Terry's feet sloughed through the water that was now just above his fetlocks, and Elizabeth slipped nimbly from his back before he could have the chance to gather himself and resume his run. But Terry had no inclination to run now; whinnying softly, he thrust his quivering muzzle against her shoulder, and stood with legs trembling, thoroughly, completely subdued.

"Yes, Terry," she said softly, patting him soothingly, "like all the boys, you're very sorry for what you've done; but what good does that do now? Over this side of the river may suit you very well, but it doesn't suit me at all, and I don't see what we're going to do about it. Well, let us walk up to the railroad and see if that will help us any; and this time, Terry, we'll both walk. Oh, yes," as the nose touched her shoulder again, "I know you're terribly sorry, but somehow I think you and I will have to know each other a lot better before I'll trust you again."

"You see, Terry," fondling the nose to make the words seem less harsh—"you see; when any one fools me once, I never can get over the notion that he'll do

it again if he gets the chance, and I try never to give him a chance."

There was real comfort in talking and philosophizing to this dumb beast in her loneliness, and, somehow, his entire subjection and evident dependence on her judgment and sympathy girded her up with a sense of responsibility to new courage, so that it was, after all, a very cheerful and confident Elizabeth who stepped up on the track near the point where the long steel trestle began to span the river. Off to the north, she remembered, there had been a little settlement close to the river that afforded cheap and ready transit to its every part, or slow and rare intercourse with the out-

side world. It had vanished; unquestionably, swept entirely away by the flood.

To the west and south were broad rolling lands with only the long shining rails of steel to reclaim them from the primitive state, and to the east the great blue trestle stretched from her very feet toward where her home lay, miles beyond the horizon.

Down where its massive piers met the water, logs and beams, barrels and debris of all sorts, tossed and fought for supremacy like living things. The bridge had proved at first an obstacle to many of the drifting objects, and while they halted at the unyielding bar across their path others had hurried behind them, grappled with and crowded them, until at last a barrier had formed that defied the passage of every moving thing except the tossing, foaming water that rushed over and under it with a total disregard for everything but its own mighty power.

Further up the river great trees had torn loose from their soil and joined the motley crowd on the river. In the center of the stream one fallen monarch, shorn of its magnificent dignity, lay with its roots like great feet kicking ridiculously into the air at every surge of the waters, and its branches laden with strange fruit, for much of the flotsam and jetsam had found lodgment among them. By steady, continued pressure some of the swaying limbs had found a grip in the restlessly moving mass, and one hoary limb by some strange maneuver had thrust itself up between the sleepers of the trestle. There, scarred by its constant fret against the rail, crushed by the tremendous pressure behind it and the unyielding steel before it, a great section had broken off and lay parallel to the shining rail.

Elizabeth's little scarlet-coated figure, still dripping from the river, and Terry at her elbow were the only living things in this scene of desolation. An awful loneliness surged over her soul, and her throat ached with the sobs that she stifled.

She had been trained early to habits of action and courage, and looked about her again for inspiration. With the instinct that guided Terry in his runaway, her eyes clung insistently to the east, and home; and it was as she stood and so gazed, that the sight of the great limb on the track flashed its message of danger to her tired brain. It was directly in the path of the east-bound train and—

She turned about. As she did so a long shrill whistle sounded. The train was so near that the engineer had seen her on the track and blown a warning; the roar of the waters below had drowned the sound of its coming!

There was just an instant for decision. In a flash her jacket was off (that little scarlet jacket that father had insisted upon her wearing when she rode, so that he might see her a long way off) and she was waving it frantically.

The train was coming at high speed. Could, oh, could she stop it in time? In her excitement she ran to meet it, still waving and gesticulating.

The wheels and brakes were screaming and sparking now. It was stopping—it had stopped.

The engineer had jumped down beside her and she was explaining to him what the trouble was, but somehow she felt very vague and indefinite now, and this didn't sound like her voice at all!

Then passengers came crowding out to see what was wrong, and things began to blur before her eyes. Faithful Terry still stood beside her, and she turned against him for support. When, suddenly, from some of the throng of passengers alighting came the sound of the dearest voice in the world—her father's. "Elizabeth!" it said. And with wide, glad eyes, and a low, happy cry, she reached out her hands and sank into her father's arms.

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On the Beach



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Talking Through the Hat

By NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH.

THE not uncommon saying, "You are talking through your hat!" Must have come from old Korea, where they're quite adept in that.

All the head-gear's telescopic in the ancient Hermitland, And may be shot up at pleasure when you meet a noble grand.

For a commoner it's lowered; even then 'tis not so small, For it's three feet in diameter and seven inches tall.



"YOU MAY KNOW HE IS IN MOURNING AND MAY STRAIGHT CONDOLE WITH HIM."

Say you're walking of a morning in an old Korean street, And a grandly hatted gentleman you happen for to