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ALEX S. CAMPBELL

The Story of Waitstill Baxter

By KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

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SYNOPSIS

Waitstill Baxter and her sister, Patience (Patty), keep house for their widowed, mean father, Ivory Boynton, whose father disappeared, is interested in Waitstill. He takes care of his daft mother.

Mrs. Boynton expects her husband to return. Rodman, a young boy, is a member of the Boynton household.

Ivory's father abandoned his family to fellow Jacob Cochrane, a mystic. Patience chafes under her father's stern rule.

Patty has two admirers—Mark Wilson, an educated young man, and Cephas Cole, who is unlearned. Mark kisses her.

Waitstill is spending her life in loving care of Patience. Aunt Abby and Uncle Bart Cole are friends of the whole community.

Cephas Cole, tending store for Baxter, proposes to Patty and is rejected. In his agitation he lets the molasses run all over the store floor.

Although they love each other, Waitstill and Ivory suppress their affection because of their household cares.

Patty and Waitstill go to church, although their father is too mean to give them fitting garments. Waitstill sings in the choir.

A strange young woman in the Wilson pew, a visitor from Boston, makes Patty jealous. Haying time arrives.

Waitstill decides to disobey her father by paying a visit to Mrs. Boynton. Uncle Bart discourses to Cephas on woman's ways.

Mrs. Boynton confides in Waitstill, telling her the girl she believes Rodman is not her sister's child, but she cannot be sure.

To punish Waitstill for disobedience Deacon Baxter locks her out all night. She spends the night in the barn. Patience sympathizes.

Patience Baxter is embarrassed amid a multitude of suitors. She thinks Mark is feckle.

Trying to trace his father, Ivory writes to Waitstill a long account of Boynton's following of Cochrane, with which Mrs. Boynton was not in full sympathy.

The village gossips are busy with the names of Waitstill and Ivory, but in a friendly and sympathetic manner.

In Ivory's absence young Rodman ministers to Mrs. Boynton. She is ill and sends Rodman for Ivory.

Ivory receives proof of his father's death and succeeds in convincing his mother of it. Waitstill volunteers her help in the Boynton household.

Despairing of winning Patty, Cephas turns his affections elsewhere. Patty and Mark are now sweethearts.

Patty and Mark know Deacon Baxter will not consent to their marriage, so they plan an elopement to New Hampshire.

Deacon Baxter is more than usually "difficult." Patty runs off with Mark, is married and returns and tells Waitstill.

The deacon turns Patty out into the cold. She finds shelter with Aunt Abby and Uncle Bart.

Waitstill rises against her father and tells him she will marry Ivory as soon as he is ready to have her.

Left by his daughters, the deacon cannot manage his household. Waitstill visits the Boyntons.

Patty is welcomed by the Wilsons. Ivory will wed Waitstill. Mrs. Boynton tells of a summons received years before to go to her husband's side.

Rodman is the son of Boynton and another woman for whom he had left his wife. The woman, who had called for Mrs. Boynton, had left Rodman in her care before dying. Waitstill at a neighbor's.

To spite his daughters Deacon Baxter proposes to a widow and is accepted. Patty and Mark leave for their new home.

Waitstill and Ivory are married before Mrs. Boynton dies. Waitstill and Ivory start a happy home with Rodman.

She took a few steps nearer the gate, near enough now for him to see her rosy face framed in a blue hood and to catch the brightness of her eyes under their lovely lashes. Ordinarily they were cool and limpid and grave, Waitstill's eyes. Now a sunbeam danced in each of them. And her lips, almost always tightly closed, as if she

me your heart first, and now you are searching your mind for bugbears frighten me."

"I am a poor man."

"No girl could be poorer than I am."

"After what you've endured you ought to have rest and comfort."

"I shall have both—in you!" This with eyes, all wet, lifted to Ivory's.

"My mother is a great burden—a very dear and precious but a grievous one."

"She needs a daughter. It is in such things that I shall be your helpmate."

"Will not the boy trouble you and add to your cares?"

"Hush! I love him; he shall be my little brother."

"What if my father were not really



How Glorious to Feel Ivory's Arms About Her.

were holding back her natural speech—her lips were red and parted, and the soul of her, free at last, shone through her face, making it luminous with a new beauty.

"I have left home for good and all," she said. "I'll tell you more of this later on, but I have left my father's house with nothing to my name but the clothes I stand in. I am going to look for work in the mills tomorrow, but I stopped here to say that I'm ready to marry you whenever you want me—if you do want me."

Ivory was bewildered, indeed, but not so much so that he failed to apprehend and instantly, too, the real significance of this speech. He took a couple of long strides, and before Waitstill had any idea of his intentions he vaulted over the bars and gathered her in his arms.

"Never shall you go to the mills. Never shall you leave my sight for a single hour again, my one woman in all the world. Come to me to be loved and treasured all your life long. I've worshiped you ever since I was a boy. I've kept my heart swept and garnished for you and no other, hoping I might win you at last."

How glorious to hear all this delicious poetry of love and to feel Ivory's arms about her, making the dream seem sure!

"Oh, how like you to shorten the time of my waiting!" he went on, his words fairly chasing one another in their eagerness to be spoken. "How like you to count on me, to guess my hunger for your love, to realize the chains that held me back and break them yourself with your own dear, womanly hands! How like you, oh, wonderful Waitstill!"

Ivory went on murmuring phrases that had been lying in his heart unsaid for years, scarcely conscious of what he was saying, realizing only that the miracle of miracles had happened.

Waitstill, for her part, was almost dumb with joy to be lying so close to his heart that she could hear it beating, to feel the passionate tenderness of his embrace and his kiss falling upon her hair.

"I did not know a girl could be so happy!" she whispered. "I've dreamed of it, but it was nothing like this. I am all a-tremble with it."

Ivory held her off at arm's length for a moment, reluctantly, grudgingly. "You took me fairly off my feet, dearest," he said, "and I forgot everything but the one supreme fact you were telling me. Had I been on guard I should have told you that I am no worthy husband for you, Waitstill. I haven't enough to offer such a girl as you."

"You're too late, Ivory! You should have done it long ago!"

"I do not know a girl could be so happy!" she whispered. "I've dreamed of it, but it was nothing like this. I am all a-tremble with it."

"You are going to have me every day now, dear," whispered Waitstill, with a sob in her voice, for she saw a change in the face, a new transparency, a still more ethereal look than had been there before.

"Every day?" she repeated longingly. Waitstill took off her hood and knelt on the floor beside the bed, hiding her face by the counterpane to conceal the tears.

"She is coming to live with us, dear. Come in, Rod, and hear me tell her. Waitstill is coming to live with us. Isn't that a beautiful thing to happen to this little girl?" asked Ivory, smiling to the girl's mother's hand.

"I don't see what you mean, dear mother," and Waitstill lifted her head and looked at Mrs. Boynton with pleading eyes and lips that trembled. "Ivory is making it all come true, and I shall be your daughter!"

Mrs. Boynton sank further back into her pillows and, closing her eyes, gave a long sigh of infinite content. Her voice was so faint that they had to stoop to catch the words, and Ivory, feeling the strange benediction that seemed to be passing from his mother's spirit to theirs, took Rod's hand and knelt beside Waitstill.

The verse of a favorite psalm was running through Lois Boynton's mind, and in a moment the words came clearly as she opened her eyes, lifted her hands and touched the bowed head. "Let the house of Aaron now say that his mercy endureth forever!" she said slowly and reverently. And

that my sister has given me. I must tell you all about Patty now."

"I happen to know more than you, dear—I met her at the bridge when I was coming home from the woods and I saw her safely to Uncle Bart's door. I don't know why we speak of it as Uncle Bart's when it is really Aunt Abby's! I next met Mark, who had fairly flown from Bridgton on the wings of love, arriving hours ahead of time. I managed to keep him from avenging the insults heaped upon his bride, and he has driven to the Mills to confide in his father and mother. By this time Patty is probably the center of the family group, charming them all, as is her custom."

"Oh, I am so glad Mark is at home! Now I must be at rest about Patty. And I must not linger another moment, for I am going to ask Mrs. Mason to keep me overnight!" cried Waitstill, bethinking herself suddenly of time and place.

"I will take you there myself and explain everything. And the moment I've lit a fire in Mrs. Mason's best bedroom, and settled you there, what do you think I am going to do? I shall drive to the town clerk's house, and if he is in bed, roust him out and have the notice of our intended marriage posted in a public place, according to law. Perhaps I shall save a day out of the fourteen I've got to wait for my wife."

"Mills, indeed! I wonder at you, Waitstill! As if Mrs. Mason's house was not far enough away, without your speaking of 'mills.'"

"I only suggested mills in case you did not want to marry me," said Waitstill.

"Walk up to the door with me," begged Ivory. "The horse is all harnessed, and Rod will slip him into the sleigh in a jiffy."

"Oh, Ivory, do you realize what this means?"—and Waitstill clung to his arm as they went up the lane together—"that whatever sorrow, whatever hardship comes to us neither of us will ever have to bear it alone again?"

"I believe I do realize it as few men could, for never in my five and twenty years have I had a human creature to whom I could pour myself out, in whom I could really confide, with whom I could take counsel. You can guess what it will be to have a comprehending woman at my side. Shall we tell my mother? Do say 'yes'; I believe she will understand. Rod, Rod, come and see who's stepping in the door this very minute!"

Rodman was up in his bedroom, at- tiring himself elaborately for sentry duty. His delight at seeing Waitstill was perhaps slightly tempered by the thought that flashed at once through his mind—that if she was safe he would not be required to stand guard in the snow for hours as he had hoped. But this grief passed when he fully realized Waitstill's presence at the farm at this unaccustomed hour really meant. After he had been told he hung about her like the child that he was—though he had a bit of the hero in him, at bottom, too—embracing her waist fondly and bristling with wondering questions.

"Is she really going to stay with us for always, Ivory?" he asked.

"Every day and all the days, every night and all the nights. 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow!'" said Ivory, taking off his fur cap and opening the door of the living room. "But we've got to wait for her a whole fortnight, Rod. Isn't that a ridiculous snail of a law?"

"Patty didn't wait a fortnight."

"Patty never waited for anything," Ivory responded, with a smile. "But she had a good reason, and, alas, we haven't, or they'll say that we haven't. And I am very grateful to the same dear little Patty, for when she got herself a husband she found me a wife!"

Rodman did not wholly understand this, but felt that there were many mysteries attending the love affairs of grownup people that were too complicated for him to grasp, and it did not seem to be just the right moment for questions.

Waitstill and Ivory went into Mrs. Boynton's room quietly, hand in hand and when she saw Waitstill she raised herself from her pillow and held out her arms with a soft cry of delight.

"I haven't had you for so long, so long!" she said, touching the girl's cheek with her frail hand.

"You are going to have me every day now, dear," whispered Waitstill, with a sob in her voice, for she saw a change in the face, a new transparency, a still more ethereal look than had been there before.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

Aaron's Rod.

"IVORY! Ivory!"

Ivory stirred in a sleep that had been troubled by too great happiness. To travel a dreary path alone, a path leading seemingly nowhere, and then suddenly to have a companion by one's side, the very sight of whom enchanted the eye, the very touch of whom delighted the senses—what joy unspeakable! Who could sleep soundly when wakefulness brought a train of such blissful thoughts?

"Ivory! Ivory!"

He was fully awake now, for he knew his mother's voice. In all the years, ever thoughtful of his comfort and of the constant strain upon his strength, Lois had never wakened her son at night.

"Coming, mother, coming!" he said, when he realized she was calling him. And, hastily drawing on some clothing, for the night was bitterly cold, he came out of his room and saw his mother standing at the foot of the stairway with a lighted candle in her hand.

"Can you come down, Ivory? It is a strange hour to call you, but I have something to tell you—something I have been piecing together for weeks, something I have just clearly remembered."

"If it's something that won't keep till morning, mother, you creep back into bed and we'll hear it comfortably," he said, coming downstairs and leading her to her room. "I'll smooth the covers, so; beat up the pillows—there!—and throw another log on the sitting room fire. Now, what's the matter? Couldn't you sleep?"

"All summer long I have been trying to remember something—something untrue that you have been believing, some falsehood for which I was responsible. I have pursued and pursued it, but it has always escaped me. Once it was clear as daylight, for Rodman read me from the Bible a plain answer to all the questions that tortured me."

"That must have been the night that she fainted," thought Ivory.

"When I awoke next morning from my long sleep the old puzzle had come back a thousand times worse than before, for then I knew that I had held the clew in my own hand and had lost it. Now, praise God, I know the truth, and you, the only one to whom I can tell it, are close at hand!"

Ivory looked at his mother and saw that the veil that had separated them mentally seemed to have vanished in the night that had passed. Often and often it had blown away, as it were, for the fraction of a moment and then blown back again. Now her eyes met his with an altogether new clearness that startled him, while her breath came with ease and she seemed stronger than for many days.

"You remember the winter I was here at the farm alone when you were at the academy?"

"Yes, it was then that I came home and found you so terribly ill. Do you think we need go back to that old time now, mother dear?"

"Yes, I must, I must! One morning I received a strange letter, bearing no signature, in which the writer said that if I wished to see my husband I had only to go to a certain address in Brentville, N. H. The letter went on to say that Mr. Aaron Boynton was ill and longed for nothing so much as to speak with me, but there were reasons why he did not wish to return to Edgewood. Would I come to him without delay?"

Ivory now sat straight in his chair and listened keenly, feeling that this was to be no vague, uncertain and misleading memory, but something true and tangible.

"The letter excited me greatly after your father's long absence and silence. I knew it could mean nothing but sorrow; but, although I was half ill at the time, my plain duty was to go, so I thought to go without making any explanation in the village."

All this was new to Ivory, and he hung upon his mother's words, dreading yet hoping for the light that they might shed upon the past.

"I arrived at Brentville quite exhausted by the journey and weighed down by anxiety and dread. I found the house mentioned in the letter at 7 o'clock in the evening and knocked at the door. A common, hard featured woman answered the knock and, seeming to expect me, ushered me in. I do not remember the room; I remember

only a child leaning patiently against the window sill looking out into the dark and that the place was bare and cheerless.

"I came to call upon Mr. Aaron Boynton," I said, with my heart sinking lower and lower as I spoke. The woman opened a door into the next room, and when I walked in, instead of seeing your father, I confronted a haggard, death-stricken young woman sitting up in bed, her great eyes bright with pain, her lips as white as her hollow cheeks and her long black hair streaming over the pillow. The very sight of her struck a knell to the little hope I had of soothing your father's sick bed and forgiving him if he had done me any wrong.

"Well, you came, as I thought you would," said the girl, looking me over from head to foot in a way that somehow made me burn with shame. "Now, sit down in that chair and hear what I've got to say while I've got the strength to say it. I haven't the time nor the desire to put a gloss on it. Aaron Boynton isn't here, as you plainly see, but that's not my fault, for he belongs here as much as anywhere, though he wouldn't have much interest in a dying woman. If you have suffered on account of him so have I, and you haven't had this pain boring

into you and eating your life away for months, as I have."

"I pitied her, she seemed so distraught, but I was in terror of her all the same and urged her to tell her story calmly and I would do my best to hear it in the same way."

"'Calm,' she exclaimed, 'with this agony tearing me to pieces! Well, to make beginning and end in one, Aaron Boynton was my husband for three years.'

"I caught hold of the chair to keep myself from falling and cried, 'I do not believe it!' 'Believe it or not,' she answered scornfully, 'it makes no difference to me, but I can give you twenty proofs in as many seconds. We met at a Cochrane meeting, and he chose me from all the others as his true wife. For two years we traveled together, but long before they came to an end there was no happiness for either of us. He had a conscience—not much of a one, but just enough to keep him miserable. At last I felt he was not believing the doctrines he preached, and I caught him trying to get news of you and your boy just because you were out of reach, and neglecting my boy and me, who had given up everything to wander with him and live on whatever the brethren and sisters chose to give us.'

"'So there was a child, a boy?' I gasped. 'Did-did he live?' 'He's in the next room,' she answered, 'and it's him I brought you here for. Aaron Boynton has served us both the same. He left you for me and me for heaven knows who. If I could live I wouldn't ask any favors, of you least of all, but I haven't a penny in the world, though I shan't need one very long. My friend that's nursing me hasn't a roof to her head, and she wouldn't share it with the boy if she had—she's a bigoted orthodox.'

"'But what do you expect me to do?' I asked angrily, for she was stabbing me with every word.

"'The boy is your husband's child, and he always represented you as a saint upon earth. I expect you to take him home and provide for him. He doesn't mean very much to me—just enough so that I don't relish his going to the poorhouse, that's all.'

"'He'll go to something very like that if he comes to mine,' I said.

"'Don't worry me with talk, for I can't stand it,' she wailed, clutching at her nightgown and flinging back her hair. 'Either you take the child or I send somebody to Edgewood with him, somebody to tell the whole story.'

"'My poor, poor Rod!'"

Some of the Cochrans could support him if you won't, or, at the worst, Aaron Boynton's town can take care of his son. The doctor has given me two days to live. If it's a minute longer I've warned him and I warn you that I'll end it myself, and if you don't take the boy I'll do the same for him. He's a good sight better off dead than knocking about the world alone. He's innocent, and there's no sense in his being punished for the sins of other folks."

"I see it all. Why did I never think of it before, my poor, poor Rod?" said Ivory, clenching his hands and burying his head in them.

"Don't grieve, Ivory. It has all turned out so much better than we could

(To be continued.)

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SUMMONS.

STATE OF MINNESOTA.

County of Mower—ss.

In District Court, Tenth Judicial District.

A. E. Rector, B. R. Summy and Leonard Hopfo, Plaintiffs,

vs.

James McLaughlin, James W. McLaughlin and McLaughlin his wife, A. J. Burbank, Hepzibeth Vaughn, E. Daniels (same person as Edward Daniels) and Ione G. Daniels his wife, Dwight Weller and Weller his wife, John F. Jones and Jones his wife, John Pettibone and Pettibone his wife, D. M. V. Stuart and Stuart his wife, Alanson B. Vaughn and Vaughn his wife, Deborah Jones, Orlando C. LaBar and Mary LaBar his wife. The unknown heirs of the following named deceased persons: James W. McLaughlin, Hepzibeth Vaughn, E. Daniels, Dwight Weller, John F. Jones, John Pettibone, D. M. V. Stuart, Alanson B. Vaughn. Also all other persons unknown claiming any right, title, estate, interest or lien in the real estate described in the complaint herein and the unknown heirs. Defendants.

The State of Minnesota to the above named defendants: You and each of you are hereby summoned and required to answer the complaint of the plaintiffs in the above entitled action, which is filed in the office of the Clerk of the District Court, in the City of Austin, County of Mower, state of Minnesota, and to serve a copy of your answer to the said complaint on the undersigned at his office in the City of Austin, in said county within twenty days after the service of this summons upon you, exclusive of the day of such service, and if you fail to answer the said complaint within the time so fixed, the plaintiffs in this action will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in the complaint.

Dated Austin, Minnesota, this 15th day of February, 1915.

ARTHUR W. WRIGHT, Attorney for Plaintiffs, Austin, Minn.

Notice of Lis Pendens.

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vs.

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Notice of Lis Pendens. Notice is hereby given that an action has been commenced in this court by the above named plaintiffs the object of which is to obtain a judgment that the plaintiffs are the owners in fee and in severalty as alleged in the complaint, of the following described real property, situate in the County of Mower and state of Minnesota, to-wit:

A parcel of land containing 1.06 acres more or less, situate in the South half of the North-west quarter of Section No. Eleven (11) in Township No. One hundred and three (103) North, Range No. Eighteen (18) West described as follows: Commencing on the West line of said Section, Eighteen rods North of the North-west corner of said quarter, thence North Sixteen rods, along said Section line, thence East Eighteen rods, thence South Sixteen rods, thence West Eighteen rods to beginning; and of the North-east quarter of Section No. Ten (10) in said Township and Range. That the defendant and each of them have no estate or interest therein or lien thereon, and to quiet the title in the plaintiffs of the several parts of said premises.

Dated Austin, Minn., this 15th day of February, 1915.

ARTHUR W. WRIGHT, Attorney for Plaintiffs, Austin, Minn.

Chicago, Great Western. Arrive