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THE RUNAWAYS.

The same year that Lady Jane Magnus presented her beautiful daughter Adela, Lord Glencore was the match of the season. Just of age, of an old family, with vast possessions and a heavy rent roll, swelled by a long minority, the instant the hawk like eye of Lady Jane fell on the young peer a thrill of joy assured her that there stood the husband Providence had provided for Adela.

"You think it is all right, mother, do you?" Adela ventured to say, growing a little uneasy when the end of the season drew near, and Lord Glencore had never addressed a single remark to her which could by any possibility be construed into love.

"Perfectly right, dear. The society papers have coupled your names together. An approaching marriage has more than once been hinted at, and, as a matter of course, now wherever people ask us he is asked."

"Well, but—"
"Dear child, you may leave it to me. Don't you think so?" And an expression of mild reproach was shot from the maternal eye. "Do you fancy that if I saw the slightest shadow of uncertainty I should accept Sir Jocelyn's invitation for Goodwood, knowing that Glencore won't be there?"

"Won't he? Why, where is he going?"
"Nowhere; I ascertained that, you may be sure. He is obliged to remain in town. There'll not be a soul left for him to speak to. Some business with his lawyer, he said—and said it in a very pointed way, too."

"Stammering and getting fiery red," said the would-be fiancée disdainfully.
Lady Jane shook her head. "Never mind the manner; it is the meaning we are concerned in. He joins us immediately after at Thorndon. There you will see that everything will be satisfactorily arranged. Lady Somerton has such a happy way of letting young people be thrown together, and from the first I have seemed to be very much guided by her."

Adela embraced her mother with grateful effusion.
"How clever you are!" she said admiringly; "you have managed beautifully, for I did want to enjoy Goodwood free. When I am a countess, mamma, it shall be very nice for you."

II.
Certainly Goodwood week had left London wonderfully empty. You did not meet a soul you knew.
Lord Glencore repeated this fact to himself most cheerily as he walked along Piccadilly with a heart and step as light as a bird's.

It seems an impossible circumstance that a stalwart young giant, standing over six feet in his stockings, his own master, able to do what he liked and go where he chose, should be in abject thrall to a plain little middle aged woman who was bent on compelling him to marry her daughter. "And I feel as if I should be made to do it, too," poor Glencore had said of late, driven into his last corner by the congratulations of all Lady Jane's friends, to say nothing of those horrid paragraphs in those horrid papers, some of which had gone so far as to mention an early date being fixed "for the marriage of a lovely debutante of this season and a young earl recently of age, whose ancestors came over with the Conqueror."

If he could but pluck up courage to say he did not mean anything, never had meant anything, never meant to mean anything—that he was quite happy as he was—that he never intended to marry any one—what would he not give!

Full of a wild scheme which had lately come to him, that he would run off to some far distant country, he was mapping out the details as he walked along, so occupied that he forgot how far he had come, until within a sudden start he pulled himself up. He was passing the Albert Hall, close to that pleasant row of houses in one of which lived Lady Jane.

The knowledge that he could walk boldly by and fling a look of defiance at the papered windows and closed shutters, as he had done the day before, sent a thrill of satisfaction through the young man. He drew himself up and turned his head to—when, oh, agony! exactly as he was opposite to it the door opened and a voice called out "Glencore!"

"Freddy! Is it you?" Lord Glencore managed to say, seeing he was addressed by a weasel faced young gentleman between 18 and 17. "Why, how came you here? Is—a your mother—Lady Jane—with you?"

Freddy's eyes were apparently so educated that in order to give full expression to one he was forced to shut the other, and regarding Lord Glencore through his single optic he said, "You bet if she was, I shouldn't be here."

Glencore's heart seemed restored to its native position. "I'm very glad to see you," he said, closing his hand over the little fin Freddy had extended to him: "it's quite a surprise to me."

"Here, I say," said the astute Freddy significantly, "what's up? How is it you ain't down there with them?"

"Well, I couldn't—I have—that is—there is some business for me."

Freddy's eyelid went down like a cover of a box.
"Exactly; just so," he said, airily, "putting his thumbs into his armbands. My case is all over. I'm at my tutor's, you see, so please to remember that it isn't possible for you to have seen me."

Glencore laughed cheerily. "All right," he said; "you are quite safe with me—but what on earth are you up to?"

This question seemed prompted by the sight of a nondescript dog cart just led up to the door. "Are you all by yourself here?"

"There's Harris, my old nurse, and Jim, her husband—our butler he used to be—and Peggy. You know Peg, don't you?"

"Peg! No, I don't think I do."
"I say," exclaimed Freddy, "isn't it a beastly shame the way they always try to shun her? and she's just as good as anybody. Her father was my father's eldest son, only he married his tutor's daughter, and my lady set the governor on to cut up rough about it. So the poor chap got the kick out, and then he died, and so did his wife, and a jolly good thing for me, too, or I would have had to sing small. Only wait till I am master, though, and if they try it on with Peggy then, I'll let them know. She's older than I am, but all the same, I'm her uncle, and—I say you'll be her uncle, too, if you marry Adda, and you're going to, ain't you?"

Lord Glencore blushed furiously, and Freddy, taking silence for consent, added with a snort of supreme contempt, "It's a jolly good thing for her I ain't you. Catch me marrying Adda! Oh yes, rather!"

Not desirous of pursuing this topic further, Lord Glencore put a question.
"You're not going to drive that," he said, nodding toward the horse, a most vicious looking screw, "are you?"

"Why not? He's a real good one to go. Come in and see us start; it's capital fun. We'd a regular crowd round us yesterday. Any one else but Peg would have been frightened to death."

Incited by curiosity Lord Glencore obeyed Freddy's invitation.
"We keep all the front well shut," said Freddy, as he marshaled his way to a den at the far end of the narrow hall. Passing the stairs, he gave vent to a shrill whistle, answered by a similar one which might have been taken as its echo.

"Ain't you ready?" was piped up from below.
"Coming," answered a girl's voice, and at the same instant with the word, down the flight of stairs, flop on the mat, came a figure which, through the cloud of dust sent up, Lord Glencore surmised must be Peggy.

"I'm so sorry. I thought it was only Freddy—I— and then, better able to see who stood there, she gave vent to an agonized, "Oh, Lord Glencore!" and seemed unable to say more.

Freddy, who was enjoying her confusion to the full, here burst in with, "Don't mind him; he's square enough, ain't you?"

"Certainly I am," and then turning to Peggy, he said, "I've never had the pleasure of seeing you here, have I?"

"No."
"But you've seen him, haven't you, Peg? And once don't you remember when the door opened and I scuttled off and your frock caught and you tumbled down? Oh, I say, what a game! It was a shame we weren't caught that time."

Poor Peggy's face was like a beet root.
"There wasn't anything to see," she said to Lord Glencore, reassuringly. "It really wasn't for that we looked, but I—I was so curious to know what you was like, and she gesticulated violently to Freddy behind Lord Glencore's back.

"What's the harm?" responded the young man, expostulatively. "You'd do the same if you were packed off into a cock loft of a garret, wouldn't you? That's what they do with her—stick her anywhere out of the way."

"No, Freddy, no," Lord Glencore from out of the corner of his eyes saw her say, and, hoping to change the conversation, he said:

"I'm afraid I'm making you lose the best of the day. I came in to see you start." Perhaps Peggy fathomed his kind effort, for she looked at him fairly for the first time.

"Yes!" and she gave him a little shy smile; "did you?"

"It's very pleasant, a drive out of town, now. Where are you going?"

"To Richmond park," answered the irrepressible Freddy. "Would you like to go? We'll take you; there's heaps of room behind. Why—why shouldn't he?" This was evidently in answer to more pantomime from Peggy.

"You don't want me—would rather I didn't go?"

Lord Glencore had turned suddenly round and was asking this question of the young girl.
"Oh, no; it isn't that, only I'm afraid—and here Peggy stopped and blushed furiously. For a wonder Glencore did not catch the complaint. Quite persuasively he said: "But do let me; it's what I should so enjoy."

There was an instant's pause, and then they all began laughing; and good fellowship being thus established, some twenty minutes later the three, Lord Glencore behind, Freddy driving and Peggy by his side, were on the road to Richmond.

tain small hostility, "Gent and Compass" name, shown signs of rebellion. Stir from that door he would not, and Lord Glencore, to cut short the difficulty, had proposed that they should leave the brute there to get a feed, while they took a stroll in the park.

Returning from this walk they passed the "Star and Garter."
"I say, a dinner in there wouldn't be half bad fun," said Freddy.

"Oh, I don't think so," said Glencore.
"Why, have you ever been there?"
"Yes, I dined there twice this season with Lady Jane and your sister."

And a chill ran through the young man as he recalled the dreariness of those solemn orisons.
"Oh! I don't think so," said Glencore, "if about to succumb, while Peggy burst out laughing.

A bright inspiration came suddenly to Glencore.
"Why shouldn't we stop here now," he said, have dinner, and go home after?"

Freddy and Peggy came to a standstill, absolutely dumb with the fancy of the proposition.
"That's what we'll do," continued the enthusiastic Glencore; and he made as if to turn in at the door, but Freddy stopped him.

"I don't think we can," as she looked at Freddy significantly.
"No," came the answer a trifle crestfallen. "I expect they wouldn't stand tick in there," was added by way of explanation.

"That isn't of any consequence to you," exclaimed Glencore. "It's as my guests I invite you. Think how many times your mother has entertained me."
"Oh, I am not proud," laughed the delighted Freddy. "Isn't this first rate, Peg. Come on."

But Peggy still hesitated.
"I don't know whether I ought—whether it's quite right with you," and though her face was turned to both, her eyes were fixed on Glencore.
"And I your uncle that is," exclaimed Freddy, "and he going to be. Shut up, do."

And, considering this speech to be conclusive, Freddy cut short further discussion by at once turning into the hotel.

IV.
Well, if any dinner ever was a success that one was. What they had or how the courses came not one of them knew, but to quote Freddy, everything was A1. Freddy magnanimously insisted that going home he would sit behind and leave the ribbons to be handled by Glencore.

The clock struck 9 before they were fairly off, and then, Peggy exclaiming at the lateness of the hour, Glencore said: "But it won't matter much, will it?"
"No," said Peggy, a trifle bitterly. "Harris knows I'll look after Freddy, and there's no one to bother about what becomes of me."

"You have neither father nor mother, have you?"
Glencore put the question gently, and, not waiting for her answer, went on to tell her that he too had lost his parents when a child and was, like her, lonely, with no one to care for him.

"Yes," she said, "but you're a man with lots of money, and I'm poor and dependent; and then it's horrid to be a girl. Even since I can remember I've heard nothing else but all I owe to everybody, as if it was my fault that I owe anything to them. I can't help having been born. Here I am, and until I die here I must stay. No, dependent, though, I've only waited to be taught something. I've had to owe that much to grandmamma."

Lord Glencore remained silent, and thinking that probably her troubles were of no interest to him, Peggy changed the subject. Directing his attention to Freddy, now silently sleeping, she managed to prop the lad up into a more comfortable position, and assented to Lord Glencore's remark that he did not seem like the rest of the family.

Then silence fell on them, and for a time all was quiet. Suddenly, as if from out of what she was thinking, Peggy said abruptly:
"Are you very much in love with Adda?"

"I'm not in love with her at all."
"But you're going to marry her?"
"Who says I am?"

"Why, everybody; and grandmamma, I know, means you to."
"I see, and that makes you think it quite certain."
Peggy laughed contemptuously. "It wouldn't make it certain with me," she said, "but men seem different; what she chooses, they do. Oh, I haven't patience to think of it," and the great brown eyes she turned on Glencore sparkled indignantly.

"Why, do you think unless I loved somebody dearly, I'd marry him to please grandmamma? Never! She knows that as well as I do. She may ill treat me, but she can't make me do what I won't; I'd die rather. Shall I tell you what I mean to do?—she was speaking very fast and excitedly—"I mean to run away. You'll promise not to tell any one, won't you? I mean to go very soon now—if I can, before they come home. Other girls earn their own livings, so why shouldn't I? I'm not stupid, and I'm awfully strong."

"But where will you go?"
"Oh, I know, but that I don't mean to tell. Perhaps I oughtn't to have said a word about it to you, but it slipped out, and you won't betray me, will you? Most of all, don't breathe a word to Adda; she hates me, and—well, there's no use disguising it—I hate her. When you're married, I'll never—"
"Which I never shall be," interrupted Lord Glencore decidedly. Peggy faced round and looked her surprise at him.

"Don't look like that at me," he said hastily; "I mean what I say."
"You do?" Oh, I am awfully sorry."
"For her? For me?"
"I don't think I was thinking of either of you. It was for myself—there's so few ever care to be kind to me."
"And you think I should be?"
Peggy didn't trust herself to speak, but her head nodded assent.

"Let me tell a secret to you, Peggy"—he quite unconsciously called her by name. "Do you know that I mean to run away to—"
"You!"
"Yes; only I want somebody to run away with me. Can you guess why?"
"No."
"Somebody I've seen today."
"Today?"

The eyes of each looked into the other's questioningly.
"Can't you guess who?"
Lord Glencore's voice came tremulously.
"Oh, you know," he said, "I see you do."
"Me! spoke the word breathlessly.
"Yes, you. You will go, won't you? You've no one to care for, and I've no one to care for me. Why shouldn't we care for each other? I'd try and make

so happy, and I'd certainly be good to you in time you might get to—well, like me, you know."
"In time? Why, I like you now."
"You do? Oh, Peggy!"

"I say! what's up with you two?" It was Freddy speaking—Freddy, whose very existence they had forgotten, but who in common with all sleepers, awoke at the very moment he was not wanted.

"What do you think?" said Glencore in a whisper; "had we better tell him?"
"Yes," said Peggy; "up to now my only friend has been Freddy."
So Freddy, thoroughly wide awake now, was desired to lean forward, and between them the two conveyed what it was their intention to do.

"I say, what a chance for Adda!" cooed Freddy delightedly; "but here, you know, you'll have to marry Peggy."
"Certainly; of course, that's what we mean to do."
"Do we?" said Peggy; "oh, my! why I never thought of that!"

"Didn't you?" said Freddy, assuming the air of a Mentor, "but I did though. You must be Lady Glencore before I see the last of you."
"But, Freddy, think of grandmamma, you would get into the most awful trouble. No, it would never do."
"Stuff and rubbish!" and Freddy snapped his fingers; "what, I should like to know, can a couple of women do? Besides, I'm not going to blab on myself—never fear. How can I help it, while I am ruralizing with my tutor, you choose to bolt with Glencore?"

V.
Arrived at Thorndon, happy and unsuspecting, Lady Jane and her daughter waited for Lord Glencore in vain. Even to the "dear Lady Somerton" not a line had come from him. As every one said, it was so strange, so incomprehensible, "You don't think anything could have happened to him, Lady Jane?"

With a brave spirit worthy of a better woman, Lady Jane answered that she did not feel anxious in the least. Lord Glencore had spoken to her of having several most important things to settle, and naturally at times such as these—Lady Jane was forced into a little vagueness of speech—a thousand things cropped up, which one had never dreamed of before. Still her heart began to have misgivings, and her courage to sink a little lower, when all was revived by a paragraph in one of the papers informing all whom it did not concern that Messrs. Bullion & Gold had been instructed by the family jewels by Lord Glencore with the view of ascertaining which had best be reset to suit their future lovely owner.

"Adda!" Lady Jane signaled to her daughter to follow her, and in her own room she pointed out the notice.
"Mother! Oh, I am so glad. I kept on thinking of those jewels. Everybody says the diamonds are more than lovely."
"It's more than a fortnight now," said Adda, discontentedly.

Lady Jane sighed. "There seems to be nothing else for me than worry."
"What more?"
"Oh, well, I didn't want to bother you, and if everything else was going right I shouldn't let this trouble me. It's a letter I had from Harris. She says that Peggy, if you please, has chosen to run away from home. Harris hopes I won't worry myself, or blame her, as the young lady has had it in her mind for some time. That's a gratitude, you know—after all I've done for her."

"I'm sure I should let her be. She'll never come to any good end, that girl. Haven't I always said so?"
"My dear," said Lady Jane, "I must go to town. I dare say Lady Somerton will guess why, although I shall invent some reason to tell her. I fear I was indiscreet in losing sight of this young man. But don't despair; nothing beyond remedy. If I can only find out where he is, rest assured this will never happen again."

"I always thought you were too sanguine," said Adda, ready to vent her displeasure on everybody. "I don't believe he ever wanted to marry me, only you would have it he did."
Lady Jane went to London, was absent a week, and then returned a sadder but not a wiser woman. Not a trace could she find of Glencore, not a word had she heard of him.

"And Peggy?" said Adda; "what about her?"
"Not a syllable. She had been gone a week and more before Harris wrote to me. It seems, however, a planned thing. She had had it in her mind at least a year."

"I wonder," said Adda, "will he ever turn up again?" Her thoughts had reverted to Lord Glencore.
"Of course he will," said Lady Jane decidedly; "and we must profit by the lesson we have learned from him. Now, my dear, go off and tell Stevens to come to me. I have a trying ordeal before me to answer all the questions that the people here will put. I heard them in fits of laughter over their afternoon tea. I begged Lady Somerton to excuse me until dinner. I really didn't feel as if I could face them then. Ah, Adda, and Lady Jane nodded her head mournfully, "perhaps some day, when you have daughters of your own, you may know. Talk of martyrs! You have only to look at mothers."

That evening, when Lady Jane joined the guests assembled in the drawing room, she noticed that every one looked at her with an air of inquiry. It had been agreed, at the request of the hostess, that not a word on the subject uppermost in the minds of all of them should be mentioned until after dinner. Poor Lady Jane, sitting in a fool's paradise, actually fancied the object of her absence had lost its interest to everybody. Alas! a mine was about to explode, and Lady Somerton, nettled at the want of confidence shown, was the one to set the match. Advancing to the comfortable armchair in which the ladies having returned to the drawing room, her smiling guest was reclining, she said:

"Of course, dear Lady Jane, you have seen the announcement in the Times of today?"
"No, indeed; I waited until I got here to look at the paper," and she stretched out her hand for it, languidly. Anything of interest to—"
"To you, yes, of great interest, I should say. Listen. On the 12th of September at St. Simon's church, Battersea, Peggy, only child of the late Wynford Magnus, Esq., to Harold William, tenth earl of Glencore."

Adda gave a bound.
"Peggy? she shrieked. "Mother? Oh! But—Lady Jane interrupted her. With a supreme effort the modern martyr rose to the occasion.

"Be calm, dear child," she said. "See what your coldness has driven him to. However, poor fellow, in spite of his disappointment he was determined, it seems, to marry one of the family."—Longman's Magazine.

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