



On the sidewalk in front of Julie Hempel Arnold's great stone house on Prairie avenue. But strangely enough it had been Selma who had done the comforting, patting Julie's plump silken shoulder and saying, over and over, soothingly, as to a child. "There, there! It's all right, Julie. It's all right. Don't cry. What's there to cry for? Sh-sh! It's all right."

Julie lifted her head in its modish black plumed hat, wiped her eyes, blew her nose. "Get along with you, do," she said to Reilly, the policeman, using his very words to Selma. "I'm going to report you to Mr. Arnold, see if I don't. And you know what that means."

"Well, now, Mrs. Arnold, ma'am, I was only doing my duty. How could I know the lady was a friend of yours. Sure, I— He surveyed Selma, cart, jaded horses, wilted vegetables. "And why not?" demanded Julie with superb unreasonableness. "Why not, I'd like to know. Do get along with you."

He got along, a defeated officer of the law, and a bitter. And now it was Julie who surveyed Selma, cart, Dirk, jaded horses, wilted left-over vegetables. "Selma, whatever in the world! What are you doing with—?" She caught sight of Selma's absurd boots then and she began to cry again. At that Selma's overwrought nerves snapped and she began to laugh, hysterically. It frightened Julie, that laughter. "Selma, don't! Come in the house with me. What are you laughing at! Selma!"

With shaking finger Selma was pointing at the vegetables that lay tumbled at her feet. "Do you see that cabbage, Julie? Do you remember how I used to despise Mrs. Tebbitt's because she used to have boiled cabbage on Monday nights?" "That's nothing to laugh at, is it? Stop laughing this minute, Selma Peake!"

"I'll stop. I've stopped now. I was just laughing at my ignorance. Bread and blood and health and youth go into every cabbage. Did you know that, Julie? One doesn't despise them as food, knowing that. . . . Come, climb down, Dirk. Here's a lady mother used to know—oh, years and years ago, when she was a girl. Thousands of years ago."

Chapter IX The best thing for Dirk. The best thing for Dirk. It was the phrase that repeated itself over and over in Selma's speech during the days that followed. In this period of bewilderment and fatigue Julie had attempted to take charge of Selma much as she had done a dozen years before at the time of Simeon Peake's dramatic death. And now, as then, she pressed into service her wonder-working father and bound-on slave, August Hempel.

Of the DeJong team and the DeJong dog Pom, and the DeJong vegetable wagon there was absolutely no sign. High Prairie was rendered unfit for work throughout the next twenty-four hours. In the twelve years' transition from butcher to packer, Aug Hempel had taken on a certain authority and distinction. Now, at fifty-five, his hair was gray, relieving the too-ruddy color of his face. In the last few years he had grown very deaf in one ear, so that when you spoke to him he looked at you intently. This had given him a reputation for keenness and great character insight, when it was merely the protective trick of a man who does not want to confess that he is hard of hearing.

Selma's domain he surveyed with a keen and comprehensive eye. "You want to sell?" "No." "That's good. Few years from now this land will be worth money." He had spent a bare fifteen minutes taking shrewd valuation of the property from fields to barn, from barn to house. "Well, what do you want to do, heh, Selma?"

They were seated in the cool and unexpectedly pleasing little parlor with its old Dutch luster set gleaming softly in the cabinet, its three rows of books, its air of comfort and usage. Selma clasped her hands tightly in her lap—those hands that, from much grubbing in the soil, had taken on something of the look of the gnarled things they tended. The nails were short, discolored, broken. The palms rough, calloused. The whole story of the last twelve years of Selma's life was written in her two hands.

"I want to stay here, and work the farm, and make it pay. I can. I'm not going to grow just the common garden stuff any more—not much, anyway. I'm going to specialize in the fine things—the kind the South Water street commission men want. I want to drain the low land. The it. That land hasn't been used for years. It ought to be rich growing land by now. If once it's properly drained, and I want Dirk to go to school. Good schools. I never want my son to go to the Haymarket. Never, never. "My life doesn't count, except as something for Dirk to use. I'm done



with anything else. Oh, I don't mean that I'm discouraged, or disappointed in life, or anything like that. I mean I started out with the wrong idea. I know better now. I'm here to keep Dirk from making the mistakes I made." Aug Hempel's tone was one of meditation, not of argument. "It don't work out that way, seems. About mistakes it's funny. You got to make your own; and not only that, if you try to keep people from making theirs they get mad." He whistled softly through his teeth following this utterance and tapped the chair seat with his finger.

"It's beauty!" Selma said then, almost passionately. Aug Hempel and Julie plainly could make nothing of this remark, so she went on, eager, explanatory. "I used to think that if you wanted beauty—if you wanted it hard enough and hopefully enough—it came to you. You just waited, and lived your life as best you could, knowing that beauty might be just around the corner. You just waited

and then it came." "Beauty!" exclaimed Julie, weakly. She stared at Selma in the evident belief that this work-worn haggard woman was bemoaning her lack of personal pulchritude. "Yes. All the worth-while things in life. Work that you love. And growth—growth!—and watching people grow. Feeling very strongly about things and then developing that feeling to— to make something fine come of it." She threw out her hands in a futile gesture. "That's what I mean by beauty. I want Dirk to have it."

"For pity's sake!" pleaded Julie, the literal, "let's stop talking and do something. Pa, you've probably got it all fixed in your mind long ago. It's time we heard it. Here Selma was one of the most popular girls in Miss Fister's school, and lots of people thought the prettiest. And now just look at her!" A flicker of the old flame leaped up in Selma. "Flatterer!" she murmured. Aug Hempel stood up. "If you think giving your whole life to raking the boy happy is going to make him happy you ain't so smart as I took you for. You got trying to live somebody else's life for them."

"I'm not going to live his life for him. I want to show him how to live it so that he'll get full value out of it." "Keeping him out of the Haymarket if the Haymarket's the natural place for him won't do that. How can you tell? Monkeying with what's to be. I'm out at the yards every day, in and out of the cattle pens, talking to the drovers and herders, mixing in with the buyers. I can tell the weight of a hog and what he's worth just by a look at him, and a steer, too. My son-in-law, Michael Arnold, sits up in the office all day in our plant, dictating letters. His clothes they never stink of the pens like mine do. . . . Now I ain't saying anything against him, Julie. But I bet my grandson Eugene"—he repeated it, stressing the name so that you sensed his dislike of it—"Eugene, if he comes into the business at all when he grows up, won't go within smelling distance of the yards. His office, I bet, will be in a new office building on, say Madison street, with a view of the lake. Life! You'll be boggin' it all yourself and not know it."

"And I suppose," retorted Selma, spiritfully, "that when your son-in-law, Michael Arnold, is your age he'll be telling Eugene how he roughed it to an office over at the yards in the old days. These will be the old days." August Hempel laughed good-humoredly. "That can be, Selma. That can be." He chewed his cigar and settled to the business at hand.

"You want to drain and tile. Plant high-grade stuff. You got to have a man on the place that knows what's what, not this Rip Van Winkle we saw in the cabbage field. New horses. A wagon. I will get you the horses, a bargain, at the yards." He took out a long flat check book. He began writing in it with a pen that he took from his pocket—some sort of marvelous pen that seemed already filled with ink and that you unscrewed at the top and then screwed at the bottom. He squinted through his cigar smoke, the check book propped on his knee. He tore off the check with a clean rip. "For a starter," he said. He held it out to Selma.

"There how!" exclaimed Julie, in triumphant satisfaction. That was more like it. Doing something. But Selma did not take the check. She sat very still in her chair, her hands folded. "That isn't the regular way," she said. August Hempel was screwing the top on his fountain pen again. "Regular way?—for what?" "I'm borrowing this money, not taking it. Oh, yes, I am! I couldn't get along without it. I realize that now, after yesterday. Yesterday! But in five years—seven—I'll pay it back." Then, at a half-uttered protest from Julie, "That's the only way I'll take it. It's for Dirk. But I'm going to earn it—and pay it back. I want to—she was being enormously businesslike, and unconsciously enjoying it—"—an I. O. U. A promise to pay you back just as—as soon as I can. That's business, isn't it? And I'll sign it."

"Sure," said Aug Hempel, and unscrewed his fountain pen again. "Sure that's business." Very serious, he scribbled again, busily, on a piece of paper. A year later, when Selma had learned many things, among them that simple and compound interest on money loaned are not mere problems devised to fill Duffy's arithmetic in her school-teaching days, she went to August Hempel between laughter and tears. "You didn't say one word about interest, that day. Not a word. What a little fool you must have thought me." "Between friends," protested August Hempel. "But—" "No," Selma insisted. "Interest."

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mere dress, absurdly old-fashioned; a letter telling about the Infanta Eulalie of Spain and signed Julie Hempel Arnold; a pair of men's old side-boots with mud caked on them; a crude sketch, almost obliterated now, done on a torn scrap of brown paper and showing the Haymarket with the wagons vegetable-laden and the men gathered beneath the street-lures, and the patient farm horses—Roel's childish sketch.

It Tickers Us The way additions to the Enterprise "lucky dollar class" are coming in is pleasing to the publisher, and the following, which accompanied one of them last week, encourages renewed effort to keep the paper improving: "Inclosed you will find a check for one dollar, for which please send us your paper for one year. We decided that a dollar could not be better spent. We certainly like your paper and admire you for always speaking your opinions on things. While occasionally we differ with you on a subject, we know that you are honest in your views and enjoy them just the same. On most things we heartily agree with your opinions." The foregoing was not sent for publication, and, in absence of explicit permission to give the writer's name, we withhold it.

Mother's In and Howard Jenks of Tangent invited the waifs from Mr. and Mrs. Chester Lyons' farm at Lebanon to come over and enjoy a chicken dinner at Tangent on their first Sunday at the farm this year.

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One hand on the seat she prepared to climb up again—did step to the hub. You saw her shabby, absurd side boots that were so much too big for the slim little feet. "If you're just buying my stuff because you're sorry for me—" The Penke pride. "Don't do business that way. Can't afford to, ma'am. My darter she's studying to be a singer. In Italy now, Carline is, and costs like all get-out. Takes all the money I can scrape together, just about."

There was a little color in Selma's face now. "Italy! Oh, Mr. Talcott!" You'd have thought she had seen it, from her face. She began to thank him, gravely. "Now, that's all right, Mr. DeJong. I notice your stuff's bunched kind of



As She Gathered Up the Reins He Stood in His Doorway, Cool, Remote, extra, and all of a size. Fixin' to do that way right along?" "Yes, I thought—they looked prettier that way—of course vegetables aren't supposed to look pretty, I expect—" she stammered, stopped. "You fix 'em pretty like that and bring 'em in to me first thing, or send 'em. My trade, they like their stuff kind of special. Yessir."

As Selma gathered up the reins he stood again in his doorway, cool, remote, unlighted cigar in his mouth, while hand-trucks rattled past him, barrels and boxes thumped to the sidewalk in front of him, wheels and hoofs and shouts made a great clamor all about him. "We going home now?" demanded Dirk. "We going home now? I'm hungry."

"Yes, lamb." Two dollars in her pocket. All yesterday's grim toil, and all today's, and nights of labor behind those two days. Two dollars in the pocket of her black calico petticoat. "We'll get something to eat when we drive out a ways. Some milk and bread and cheese." The sun was very hot. She took the boy's hat off, passed her tender work-cauloused hand over the damp hair that clung to his forehead.

She made up her mind to drive east and then south. Pervus had sometimes achieved a late sale to outlying grocers. Jan's face if she came home with half the load still on the wagon! And what of the unpaid bills? She had, perhaps, thirty dollars, all told. She owed four hundred. More than that.

Her vegetables, canvases covered, were fresher than those in the nearby markets. Why not try to sell some of them here, in these big houses? In an hour she might earn a few dollars this way at retail prices slightly less than those asked by the grocers of the neighborhood.

Agilely she stepped down the wheel, gave the reins to Dirk. She filled a large market basket with the finest and freshest of her stock and with this on her arm looked up a moment at the house in front of which she had stopped. The kitchen entrance, she knew, was by way of the alley at the back, but this she would not take. Across the sidewalk, down a little flight of stone steps, into the vestibule under the porch. She looked at the bell—a brass knob. "Pull it!" said the desperate Selma. "I can't! I can't!" cried all the prim dim Vermont Peakes, in chorus. "All right. Starte to death and let them take the farm and Dirk, then."

At that she pulled the knob hard. Jangle went the bell in the hall. Again. Again. Footsteps up the hall. The door opened to disclose a large woman, high cheek-boned, in a work apron; a cook, apparently. "Good morning," said Selma. "Would you like some fresh country vegetables?"

"No." She half shut the door, opening it again to ask, "Got any fresh eggs or butter?" At Selma's negative she closed the door, bolted it. Well, that was all right. Nothing so terrible about that, Selma told herself. Simply hadn't wanted any vegetables. The next house, and the next, and the next. Up one side of the street, and down the other. Four times she refilled her basket. At one house she sold a quarter's worth. Fifteen at another. Twenty cents here. Almost fifty there. Twenty-first street—Twenty-fifth—Twenty-eighth. She had over four dollars in her purse. Dirk was weary now and hungry to the point of tears. "The last house," Selma promised him, "the very last one. After this one we'll go home."

The last house. She had almost five dollars, earned in the last hour. "Just five minutes," she said to Dirk, trying to make her tone bright, her voice gay. Her arms full of vegetables which she was about to place in the basket at her feet she heard at her elbow: "Now, then, where's your license?" She turned. A policeman at her side. "License?" "Yeh, you heard me. License. Where's your peddler's license? You got one, I s'pose." "Why, no. No." She stared at him, still.

"Well, say, where d'ye think you are, peddlin' without a license! A good mind to run you in. Get along out of here, you and the kid. Leave me ketch you around here again!" "What's the trouble, officer?" said a woman's voice. A smart open carriage of the type known as a victoria, with two chestnut horses whose harness shone with metal. "What's the trouble, Reilly?" The woman stepped out of the victoria. "Woman peddling without a license, Mrs. Arnold. You got to watch 'em like a hawk. . . . Get along with you, then." He put a hand on Selma's shoulder and gave her a gentle push.

There shook Selma from head to foot such a passion, such a storm of outraged sensibilities, as to cause street, victoria, silk-clad woman, horses, and policeman to swim and shiver in a haze before her eyes. The rage of a fastidious woman who had had an alien male hand put upon her. Her face was white. Her eyes glowed black, enormous. She seemed tall, majestic even. "Take your hand off me!" Her speech was clipped, vibrant. "How dare you touch me! How dare you! Take your hand!" The blazing eyes in the white mask. He took his hand from her shoulder. The red surged into her face. A tanned weather-beaten toll-woman, her abundant hair skewered into a knob and held by a long gray-black hairpin, her full skirt grimed with the mud of the wagon wheel, a pair of old side boots on her slim feet, a grotesquely battered old felt hat (her husband's) on her head, her arms full of ears of sweet corn and carrots, and radishes and bunches of beets; a woman with bad teeth, fat breasts—even then Julie had known her by her eyes. And she had stared and then run to her in her silk dress and her plumed hat, crying, "Oh, Selma! My dear! My dear!" with a sob of horror and pity. "My dear!" And had taken Selma, carrots, beets, corn, and radishes in her arms. The vegetables lay scattered all about them.