

green and blue
she asked him

making that
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three blue his hab-
You'd better
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to room.

in her father's
rest man? I'm

But Pansy was
of the coral
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critical eye she
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out her hand

ride that big
ran among us,
out Big Jim's
was ever per-
much less ride

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uff voice, and
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hands. "Oh,
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boss, "Pansy
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ite to her."
He's gentle
to be. If

ne some time
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ny stole from
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ht her how to

ed the reins,
Trojan, and
horse on the

a single-foot
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driving rider,
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that stood

the memory
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the calves, for
eeking in the
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the air was

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ornes were
the hitching
the children
and kept Gotch

evil reputa-
retelling and
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up. She
m, some of
we never

like her, her
must have
evil nature.
it was what
repe from
saddle.

bound Gotch changed his mind about
bucking and had started in a furious
gallop down the road. Treacherous
as he was in most things, Gotch held
first place on the ranch when it came
to speed, and now with that little
wisp of a child clinging to his back
he shot out of sight over the hill just
as Big Jim hit Trojan's back.

Then the rest of us started—any-
thing was better than waiting. Be-
sides, with Gotch on one of his run-
ning sprees it would take more than
one horse to tire him out. But we
didn't reckon on Trojan, nor on his
rider. It seemed that they had but
one notion between them—to ride
down Gotch.

We followed their trail. Once they
circled by us, and we saw Trojan had
gained a little. Then a hill cut off
the view, and when we reached the
top neither horse was in sight.

Perhaps we prayed. What do men
do when powerless before danger? Ask
those who sit at home and read. I
only know we dug our spurs into our
reeling horses and plunged on. Some
of us whimpered. Don't ask who;
it's a wonder we didn't bawl.

Suddenly Gotch was coming toward
us again, faster than ever it seemed;
but Trojan, his sides braced and
bleeding from Big Jim's urging spurs,
was closing in. Big Jim, standing
straight in his stirrups, was swinging
his lariat high over his head. They
passed us. We saw the little ashen-
faced child clinging piteously to her
saddle bow, and heard Big Jim say,
"Steady, Pansy. Sit tight. Steady,
steady." Then his rope sailed out
and with a whizzing sound settled
down over Gotch's wicked head. The
horses were pulled together, and Big
Jim's arm closed swiftly around the
fainting child and lifted her over to
Trojan's back.

The time for Pansy and her mother
to go back to Missouri came all too
soon.

"I am going to have a big dinner
party the day before I leave," said
the child. "I want you all to come.
It's somebody's birthday," she added,
with a sly little nod.

We came—every last one of us.
'Twas a queer gathering for a child's
party. Browsers, rough-looking cow-
boys, some with gay silk handker-
chiefs knotted around their necks, all
with clanging spurs and high-heeled
boots, polished and slicked, gathered
around the table.

The talk wasn't as natural and free
as usual—the occasion was too mo-
mentous. A real dinner party wasn't
to be treated lightly. If anyone talk-
ed too loud the rest of us scowled,
and he immediately sank below the
surface of things, as it were. How-
ever, the dinner was on the whole a
success.

At the end, Pansy went over to a
cupboard and struck a match. Then
she came toward the table carrying
a tiny white cake abrad with candies.
She walked gingerly and set the cake
down before Big Jim. "There," she
pointed in relief, "it's for you 'cause
you're the prettiest, bestest man in
the world." I guess, "You needn't
smile," the child frowned at the rest
of us, for she didn't know the differ-
ence between a smile and a certain
grim seriousness. "I like you all. But
Big Jim was born in Missouri, like
me. And just listen," her voice was
trembling, "you think he did a big
thing when he caught Gotch the other
day, but back in Missouri he did a
finer thing than that." The glum-
looking man started up as if to stop
her, then settled back and folded his
great brown hands into one another
as the child, her eyes big with emo-
tion and admiration, hurried on.
"Back there he stopped a runaway
horse that was going to kill a beauti-
ful lady. That makes Big Jim a man,
and 'cause he loved the beautiful lady,
he came away and never saw her
again."

She looked at the cake. "It wasn't
sure how old he was, so I put on nine-
teen candles to be sure and have en-
ough." Not a man snickered, but

as she started to cut it Big Jim found
his tongue.

"No, no," he gulped, "don't cut it."
"Don't cut it," stammered the child.
"Why, that's what it's for. It's to
eat."

Big Jim struggled to his feet, lifted
up the tiny cake reverently and set it
beyond the child's reach.

"No, honey, it's to keep."
For a moment Pansy half frowned,
puzzled.

"Oh, I know." She clapped her
hands and her face brightened with
understanding. "You want to keep it
because I gave it to you, just like you
kept the picture she gave you."

"And I'm going to tell her, too."
The child danced around toward him
in teasing delight. "I know who she
is. I know her that first time you
showed me the picture. And I'm go-
ing to tell her how—how splendid
you are!"

With sudden impulse, Big Jim gath-
ered the child in his arms—Farm
and Fireisle.

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WHAT is the first thing the ma-
jority of us think of when
unexpected company drops
in? Something like this, isn't it?
"What am I going to give them to
eat?" I am not one of those women
who believe that anything is good
enough for the family and that at-
tractive dishes are to be served when
company comes only. I like to have
good meals served attractively for
the home folks as well as for the
occasional visitor. Even where this
plan is practiced, however, sometimes
it seems necessary to resort to a pick-
up meal. And that, of course, is sure
to be the very day a visitor drops
in. Here is the way I get around this
difficulty, to some extent at least.

In my cellar-ware are three or four
shelves. One of these I have dubbed
my "emergency shelf." On it I try
to keep a supply of canned goods of
all kinds, such as salmon and other
kinds of fish, corn, beans, to-
matoes, soups of various kinds, salad



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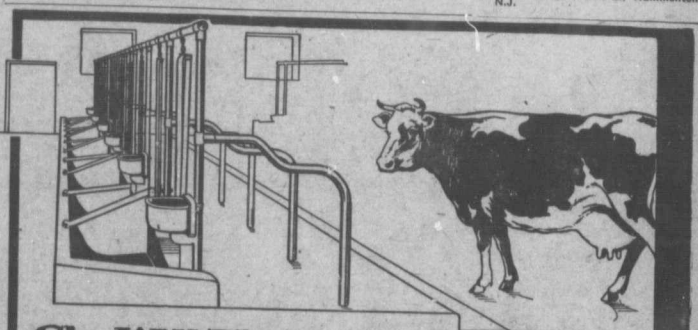
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