

"Ain't it the little palace?" she inquired, when all was finished. "I wouldn't change my lodge for the great house, grand as it is, not for anything you could offer me! Nor I wouldn't call the queen my cousin now we're all in it together. I'm feelin' that joyful I'd like to have what they calls a house-swarmin', only there ain't, by the looks of it, any neighbors much, to swarm."

"No," said Ma regretfully, "I noticed there ain't no neighbors—to speak of."

"Well, then, we can't speak o' them," returned Martha. "Which will save us from fallin' under God's wrath as gossips. There's never any great loss without some small gain."

"But we must have some sort of jollification," Claire insisted. "Doesn't your wedding-day—the anniversary of it, I mean—come 'round about this time? You said the Fourth, didn't you?"

Martha nodded. "Sam Slawson an' me'll be fifteen years married come Fourth of July," she announced. "We chose that day, because we was so poor we knew we couldn't do nothin' great in the line o' celebration ourselves, so we just kinder managed it, so's without inconveniencin' the nation any or addin' undooly to its expenses, it would do our celebratin' for us. You ain't no notion how grand it makes a body feel to be woke up at the crack o' dawn on one's weddin' mornin' with the noise o' the bombardin' in honor