

were the kind who had it worst; and the will is four. So now we're clear of them all and can go on and be happy. Uncle Amsey said you ought to know yourself that it couldn't be what he called 'proved,' because you had been in possession so long, and he said you wouldn't be blamed a bit either for holding on to it. But you didn't, and O, it was splendid to give it all up like you did!"

"I did only what was required of me by right and justice, and do not choose now to stay my hand," said he. "The text of the will shall be my law, even if unbound by the instrument itself. I abide by it still. Halfway is yours."

"O, but you can't, you can't!" cried Joan, with a flash of her defiance, yet tender and sweet withal, sitting upon his chair arm and leaning her warm young cheek for a moment against his own. "It's on account of our name, too, that we did it, the dear lovely name that Lisbeth and I are so proud to have. For all the people around to know you didn't own Halfway any more, would make such a story for them to tell! And we wouldn't want to live here without you; it's because you are the head of it, you know, that makes it seem so grand and lovely to us both," and Joan smiled the flower smile upon him from her place of vantage.

But it brought her no reward, and he made her no response.

"It's almost time for supper," said she, "and I ought to go see what Amanda is getting ready, for Pelig is coming and he'll just only have time to eat and that's all, before he has to get away again. But I'm not going to stir a step, to do anything, until you tell us you'll let things go on just the same way. You can take care of us both, and give us lots of dollars to spend, and each of us a horse to ride, and lots of other things we've always wanted—but we want *you* to give them to us, don't you see, Uncle Garret, because neither of us has ever had a mother or father to do it for us. We're never going to tell a single soul about the will, or what we did with it, except of course, Aunt Orin and Uncle Amsey.