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### Wilkinson Plows

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present misery is a blessing in disguise."

"And Lottie West?" I suggested. She's the sick-abled girl.

"Lottie," he said musingly. "Do you know, Lottie West, well and sound, was a very twopenny kind of young girl. I grant you she's a martyr of the flesh, but she's a crown princess of the spirit. Things have a bright side, you know. Even Springfield Village isn't always muddy. You'll love us when the hills are green with summer."

I wonder if I'll be here in the summer! There was a letter in the post-office for me from Rowan! Just the touch of it made a difference. I suppose my face showed!

"Ah, now you have a better medicine than I can give," Doctor Sheldon said when I came out with it. He seemed very quiet as we drove home. Perhaps he was a little chagrined.

There was nothing special in Rowan's letter.

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Three weeks since I've written in this. Life is so changed for me. Cousin Edwina can't get out yet, so I'm her emissary in the village affairs. I've been in all but two of the cubes!

Everybody knows me now, speaks to me as I go by. I've been to see the Keelers many times—and to see Lottie West, and the Bradleys, and many others. Cousin Edwina calls me her "missionary sprite." She says reports are the village is as much in love with me as with the doctor. By the way, I've been around with him a great deal lately. He improves on acquaintance. He's a Johns Hopkins man and has had a year in Europe! I wonder whether Ada Marsh cares seeing us together. I've met her, but she is lovely to me. He hasn't asked me to see his bungalow yet.

The doctor comes here a great deal in the evening. When he chooses and isn't too tired he can be really attractive. It makes it pleasant, for we are very lively around the fire, and planning all kinds of things for summer. I never feel blue any more, but of course there are Rowan's letters. I've had three, and in the last he says he's coming to see us. It is because of Cousin Edwina that Doctor Sheldon is here so much. Her health does not improve as it should. We may have to go away for a while. I am worried about her. I have grown to be very fond of her.

Rowan is here. No time to write. It's like old times to see him. The same nice, spick-and-span, clean-cut young man. I don't know, though, how I ever fancied I could be anything but his friend.

Doctor Sheldon dined with us to-night. Really I think Rowan ought to read up more. He showed plainly that he felt superior to Doctor Sheldon, but he isn't half as well informed.

It's all over. Rowan left this morning. Last night he asked me to marry him. He was very nice about it, but I saw plainly that he thought he was doing the proper thing. Oh, of course he likes me! And I like him, but I could never love him! I wonder why I'm so sure.

He seemed a little shocked because I refused—I suppose he hadn't thought of that. He didn't see how I was going to stand it here. When I tried to tell him what I've been doing lately, he was only amused. I don't think I could ever be my old unthinking self again!

I made a discovery to-day! Doctor Sheldon and I were driving out to see a patient in the country and we passed Ada Marsh.

"There goes one of the finest girls I know," he said. It seemed a queer way to speak of a fiancée.

"She's going to be married soon," he added, "to a splendid fellow."

"Oh," I said. He can be very teasing, and I thought it was his way of announcing it. "I—I hope you'll be happy," I stammered.

He looked at me a little oddly. "Why," he said, "I think we'll all be happy. He's a nice chap—I've met him once or twice; but I'm sorry he's going to take her away. They'll live in New York."

I felt a little dizzy. "But I thought—" "Of course." He was amused. "We've been engaged ever since I came here. Poor old Springfield Village! It wants to marry off everybody."

Getting out of the carriage I caught

my skirt and would have fallen if he had not taken my hands.

"You don't hate us quite so badly, 'little Elizabeth,' do you?" he asked.

I've always meant to be honest and own up if he asked me, but I couldn't answer now. I could feel the color coming into my face. I must have looked fearfully silly—but with his eyes on mine it was hard to answer! Besides I wasn't sure which he meant—the village or himself. Both perhaps. To tell the truth I've tried to keep on hating both lately, but I haven't been very successful. I think he understood without words. He helped me down silently but he didn't look at all displeased.

I've felt foolishly light-hearted all day. I suppose it's the spring. You can feel it in the air. It's been a week since I've written in my journal. Well, it's all decided. Cousin Edwina is going South and I'm going with her. So I shall fly again—like a "wild goose," only I'll reverse the season.

Well, I think I shall not write in my journal any more. It is only the lonely who have need of journals. I shall not have time to be lonely. So much is going to happen in my life. I went out to walk a while ago. It is Sunday evening, and everything was very peaceful and still.

There are no street lights in the village, but a great many lamps gleamed from the windows and a little sickle moon hung in the western sky and showed through the bare elm boughs. The air was lovely—soft and fragrant, and moist. At the top of our street I met Doctor Sheldon. He turned about and walked with me.

"Sunday night," he said, "is the night of little villages. In the city, Sunday night is a dull affair, with drawn window shades and much boredom. But in a village it's the night of family spirit, of home, of love. We can read it now in the windows of Springfield Village."

It was true. All the shades were up, and we could peep into family sitting-rooms and see all kinds of little, intimate, happy scenes.

We saw the Keelers relaxed and happy around their phonograph; farther on, the Jones family singing joyfully at their dreadful little organ; mothers with their arms full of sleepy, peaceful children; sons and daughters reading around their friendly lamp; the village merchant, a man I've detested, holding his little son in front of the fireplace, and kissing him; an old couple smiling across their table at each other. It was the first time I saw the little village.

"And I'm going to leave it!" I cried, a lump coming into my throat. Then I told him we were going South.

"But you'll come back!"

"Perhaps." I wasn't sure.

He was silent so long I turned and looked at him.

"We'll—we'll miss you," he said. "And someone I know will miss you more than all the rest."

I didn't pretend to misunderstand. "I think I'll like to have you miss me," I returned; "but you'll have so many other things to think of in your work."

"Work," he said. "Yes; but that's not all of life. It's only half. A man wants the rest, someone to care, to make the work worth while—someone to come back to."

There are many people who might care," I suggested.

"Only one," he said, "who is little enough—and sweet enough—and pretty enough—and foolish enough—and dear enough."

He stopped, and my heart beat wildly. "You've found her then,"—it was quite outrageous of me—"this person who's enough of—all these things."

"But she hasn't found me," he said quite sadly.

I could never have said it except for the dark. "Perhaps she has," I faltered. "Why don't you find out?"

He turned to me then—and I could feel him tremble.

"I will," he said; "darling little Elizabeth, I will—"

I can't write any more about it. But we settled it, there under the little moon, with the village lamps shining all about us.

I have learned to think with Cousin Edwina and the doctor that love is the only real thing in the world, so in the autumn I'm coming back to live with Carey in the little house in the "eye of the sun" and find my true place.