

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

turb the dead girl's sleep, the two talked on the porch. Brokenly, the old woman told Chad how the girl had sickened and suffered with never a word of complaint. How, all through the war, she had fought his battles so fiercely that no one dared attack him in her hearing. How, sick as she was, she had gone, that night, to save his life. How she had nearly died from the result of cold and exposure and was never the same afterward. How she worked in the house and in the garden to keep their bodies and souls together, after the old hunter was shot down and her boys were gone to the war. How she had learned the story of Chad's mother from old Nathan Cherry's daughter and how, when the old woman forbade her going to the Bluegrass, she had slipped away and gone afoot to clear his name. And then the old woman led Chad to where once had grown the rose-bush he had brought Melissa from the Bluegrass, and pointed silently to a box that seemed to have been pressed a few inches into the soft earth, and when Chad lifted it, he saw under it the imprint of a human foot—his own, made that morning when he held out a rose-leaf to her and she had struck it from his hand and turned him, as an enemy, from her door.

Chad silently went inside and threw open the window to let the last sunlight in: and he sat there, with his face as changeless as the still face