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plied her with a running stream of tears. Suddenly she sat up straight and fierce.

'I'll remember it myself,' she cried, brokenly. 'If nobody else does, I will. I'll do something to celebrate.'

Wild notions of running away and spending the day somewhere in the woods where it was still and cool—of leaving the baby, the dinner, the ironing, behind her—or, better still, of slipping on her best dress and taking the ten o'clock train into the city—surged through her mind. She sat and entertained them excitedly. Yes, the city was better. She could do a little shopping—no, not on her birthday. She would go and see the pictures at the picture shops, and sit a while on the common, beside the lake, and read the magazines at the library. Think of reading a magazine again! And when she was hungry she would go into some splendid place and sit down luxuriously and be waited on. She would hear other people rattling the dishes then! There would be dainty things to eat and ice cream at the end, to sit and sip leisurely. O yes, the city was better than any other way!

But the dream did not last. A little wailing sound from the other room dissipated it. Emily stumbled to her feet and hurried to the baby. His crying drove her own away, and with his wet little cheeks against hers old tender thoughts crept back again to Emily Leonard. She put aside her bitterness and pain.

'But I'll celebrate it,' she said, smiling wistfully down at the baby. 'There's another way I've thought of this minute, baby. I'll tell you—just you. Listen—won't that be a beautiful way, don't you think?'

She put away the unironed clothes neatly, and set all the rooms to rights. That was the first step. The others followed quickly, and she found herself, by and by, humming over her work and smiling to herself at the surprise that was coming out of it. Why hadn't she thought of that way of celebrating her birthday before? What would they all say? Would Thad—kiss her, perhaps?

Down in the meadow the census man was asking questions.

'And your mother's age?' he asked, briskly. 'I saw her up to the house, but I guess she didn't want me to know it! Women don't.'

Thaddeus Leonard drew himself up stiffly. It hurt him unaccountably to have Emily taken for his mother. Did she look as old as that? Why, Emily had been fresh and fair and rosy—it wasn't such a great while ago.

'My mother died ten years ago. My wife is thirty-seven,' Thaddeus said, formally.

'Well, well!—thirty-seven, did you say?—I took her for the old lady, sure. She wasn't real glad to see me—I guess that influenced me! Born what day, did you say?'

'I didn't say. She was born the sixth of June'—

Thaddeus suddenly stopped. His fresh, round face took on an extra flush. He had remembered. It was Emily's birthday. He answered the other questions shortly, his mind on something else—on a fresh, blooming little woman whose sweet, laughing face he had given a birthday kiss fifteen years ago. And the next

year—and the next—for how many years was it he had kissed Emily on her birthday, and slipped a little gift into her hand? Not for a good many years now—Thaddeus Leonard would not let himself count them. He turned back to his work, but all the morning Emily's girl-face, fair and happy, was before him. And that man had taken Emily for his mother. Emily's face was lined and worn and thin now. Thirty-seven was not old—it wasn't right. It ought to be round and happy now. If he should kiss it—if he should slip a little gift—Thaddeus Leonard flung down his scythe and hurried down the hot road toward the village a mile away.

At a little past twelve the little blue sunbonnets bobbed home from school. Emily met them at the gate and hugged them both.

'Mother's sorry she was cross this morning,' she whispered, 'and on her birthday, too! Did you know it was Mother's birthday to-day? Well, it is, and there's going-to-be-a-celebration!'

The little girls gazed up at Mother with shy wonder. She was dressed in her best dress and her hair was curly round her face. Mother looked pretty and happy.

Emily laughed aloud at the wondering little faces. She touched the ribbon at her throat and smoothed out her fresh white apron.

'This is part of the celebration!' she cried, gayly. She caught sight of Thaddeus coming up the road and, with a sudden impulse, waved her hand at him. A laugh and a sob choked in her throat together. It was so good to be celebrating!

The dining-room door was locked, to the children's surprise. But Thaddeus crept secretly in at the window. Then his turn came to be surprised. He stood before the dainty table in absolute amazement. It was spread with a white cloth and the best blue and white dishes were on it. There were flowers, too—a big cluster in the centre and a tiny bunch at each plate. It was laid with exquisite care, and there was something mysterious and napkin-draped beside the vase of flowers. Thaddeus lifted the covering gently.

'Well, of all things!' he breathed, and the sound in the man's throat was like a sob. It was a birthday cake beside the flowers. It was frosted thickly and the letters that strayed across it cornerwise made the word 'Welcome.' It was mother's invitation to her little birthday feast.

Thaddeus Leonard replaced the napkin gently. He slipped a little tissue package from his pocket to Emily's place, and then groped his way back to the window as if he could not see clearly.

Dinner was at half-past twelve promptly, and the pretty table was surrounded with a row of wondering, delighted faces. There was an instant's hush, and then a clatter of sweet, shrill little voices. Emily lifted the small tissue bundle with a low cry of joy, but before she had time to open it Thaddeus was beside her—and he was kissing her!

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