

She came back with more breakfast . . . "I'd better put on more for fear they might come early," she went on. "Surely, they will be here before the army people take away the Captain."

Arnold turned to her with a sort of threat. "Nel, they're not coming—Miss Wayne and the other girl."

"Not coming? Why, she promised—"

"They've been here," he retorted, "in the night while you slept. And they went away—for good. After all, some things come right."

She opened her blue eyes more widely still. "You sent them away?" she cried, "*you?* Why, I was planning for you and that Sylvia—I thought this table would be pretty for you after all."

She came to read him shrewdly. "Surely you cared—it's best to have some one to believe in—even if it isn't true. Here's that soldier and his medal—he just kept me from going wild. Yes, it's best for a woman to have some one to believe in somewhere. Sometimes, Hammy, I try to guess at things. It's as if we all sat in the dark wondering about each other: why I should be careless Nel, and you so troubled, and the Captain very brave, and that preacher-woman so serene—and all the children down the block so happy. O, I wonder!"

He looked at her—where, indeed, was there place for this careless soul in the world of the spirit? She of the earth, the life that bred in the sun and passed and was content?

"Nothing that lives and works and gives love—the very least of love—is less than the greatest. Nel, you're great as the greatest—do you understand?"