

A Good Name

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shocked beyond measure to see in the paper an account of the sad accident by which you have lost both father and mother. I wrote at once to the minister of your town to hear what had become of you. He tells me that he thinks that there will not be very much coming to you after your father's business is settled, and that you have a position in your Uncle Silas' store, so perhaps the offer I am about to make to you will come too late.

Your uncle and I have a cattle ranch here, and we would give you a most loving welcome to our home, for your mother's sake, if you would care to come. We have, alas, no children of our own, and if you decide to come you would take the place of a son in our home. Your uncle would be glad of your help on the ranch, or if you find that you do not care for the work we would do our best to get you into something more congenial. Your uncle joins me in this invitation for he knew your mother in the old days, and your father also.

In case you should decide to come I enclose a money order to pay expenses, etc. I do not know exactly how you are left in regard to means, and if you should prefer to remain where you are you must accept it as a little gift from your uncle and aunt. We are much hoping that you will feel that you like to come to us, and if that is the case do not wait to write about it, but come as soon as your uncle can spare you.

Ever Your Loving Aunt Bessie.

Mark could hardly believe his eyes as he read this letter. He had to struggle to keep back the tears at the loving tone of it. At last he laid the letter down and rested his head in his hands. His uncle and aunt stared at him across the breakfast table, and at last his uncle spoke: "Well, what's up now?"

"You can read it, Uncle Silas," said Mark, raising his head and passing the letter to his uncle. His uncle read it in silence and, passing it to his wife, went on with his breakfast. When Aunt Martha had finished it she passed it back to Mark with the words: "Well, I suppose you'll be off to your fine friends?"

"Yes, I shall certainly go," said Mark. "I am no good to you here, and there is no prospect of my getting on."

"You're a nice one," remarked his uncle, after all I have taught you in the store to go off like this just when you are beginning to be useful. But I didn't expect any gratitude."

"I am grateful to you and Aunt Martha for taking me in," said Mark quietly. "But this is the first I have heard of my being any use to you."

"Well, anyhow, you must wait a week or two until I get a new assistant," his uncle remarked.

"As you have so often told me that I am of no use at all, I will not burden you another minute," said Mark, rising from the table. "I shall go to-day."

Mark enjoyed every bit of that long journey. After the hateful drudgery at the store, it was a delightful holiday, and his aunt's liberality made it possible for him to travel with every comfort.

The loving welcome he received in his new home almost overwhelmed him. He delighted in noticing some of Aunt Bessie's little ways that reminded him of his mother. His uncle treated him as a welcome guest, and was pleased to find him interested in the ranch and the work connected with it.

"You will find me an awful duffer, uncle," he said, when the day after his arrival they were talking things over. "You will be calling me a good-for-nothing lout like Uncle Silas did. I am quite unused to country life and have never been on horseback in my life."

"No fear of that my boy," said his uncle kindly. "I had never ridden a horse either when I was your age, but I feel as much at home on one now as I do in my armchair. I only wonder if you will like the life. What did you intend to do if your father had lived?"

"Father and mother—more especially mother—wanted me to be a doctor like grandfather, and I should have liked it, too, but I expect I shall get into this life and enjoy it."

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