

"What is it you want me to do this happy morning?"

He had arisen from the table and was standing on the hearth, his back to the fire. Stella walked up to him, and placing her hand on his shoulder she replied pleadingly, "Please don't think me foolish, dear, but I thought you might kill a—two chickens for me, as I want to be prepared, in case some person or persons may happen along you know."

"Ah, ha," he exclaimed, with assumed gravity, "and is it the Prince Charming who is coming to take away the star of my heart?"

The little girl blushed hotly, tears again almost showed themselves. Laying her flaxen haired head against his breast, she said, "You shall never see that, grandpa, dear, I love you too well, to ever leave, unless I die, of course," she added.

"No mention of that word please, this happy morning," he faltered. "I will kill the whole lot of them, if that is all," he chuckled. "How many did you say you wanted? Four?"

"Oh, two will do nicely, thank you," she said.

He was not a tall man. Stella was fourteen years old. He kissed the top of her ~~hand~~ *head* and went out. Left alone, Stella actually wept from happiness. The dishes were washed, and put away in a jiffy. Then with a light heart, she began preparing for her expected guests.

In the broad iron oven, above the fire, she could bake a batch of four small pies. She also baked a batch of smooth white biscuits