

THE PRAIRIE WIFE

ing Nesselrode and Theobald went on pleasantly smoking his cigarette and approvingly inspecting his well-manicured nails.

It was funny, but it made me feel blue and unattached and terribly alone in the world. Now, I can see things more clearly. I know that mood of mine was not the mere child of caprice. Looking back, I can see how Theobald had been more critical, more silently combative, from the moment I stepped off the *Baltic*. I realized, all at once, *that he had secretly been putting me to a strain*. I won't say it was because my *dot* had gone with The Nitrate Mines, or that he had discovered that Duncan had crossed on the same steamer with me, or that he knew I'd soon hear of the L—— episode. But these prophetic bones of mine told me there was trouble ahead. And I felt so forsaken and desolate in spirit that when Duncan whirled me out to Westbury, in a hired motor-car, to see the Great Neck First defeated by the Meadow Brook Hunters, I went with the happy-go-lucky glee of a truant who doesn't give a hang what happens. Dinky-Dunk was in-