

## THE PRAIRIE WIFE

when I'm fat and forty, or, what's more likely, when Duncan has me chained to a corral-post or finally shut up in a padded cell. For you were the one who was closest to me in the old days, Matilda Anne, and when I was in trouble you were always the staff on which I leaned, the calm-eyed Tillie-on-the-spot who never seemed to fail me! And I think you will understand.

But there's so much to talk about I scarcely know where to begin. The funny part of it all is, I've gone and married the *Other Man*. And you won't understand that a bit, unless I start at the beginning. But when I look back, there doesn't seem to be any beginning, for it's only in books that things really begin and end in a single lifetime.

Howsomever, as Chinkie used to say, when I left you and Scheming Jack in that funny little stone house of yours in Corfu, and got to Palermo, I found Lady Agatha and Chinkie there at the Hotel des Palmes and the yacht being coaled from a tramp steamer's bunkers in the harbor. So I went on with them to Monte Carlo. We had a terrible trip