

## JOAN AT HALFWAY

again, all myself, this first night, Uncle Garret. 'And I wanted to ask you just three or four things, so we could start out all fresh and straight in the morning, you know."

"My sins remembered no more against me—is that what you mean, Jo-ann? It surely will be a new day. And I expect those three or four things are duly catalogued and listed, as usual; so what is the very first?"

Joan gave him her look of perfect understanding. "It was about Phoebe. She comes back so unexpectedly always, and might get here before I'm up, even. Will we tell her everything about what has happened, except the will, of course."

"Phoebe will find out everything even if we do not tell her ourselves; and so except about the will, which you two have decreed shall be null and void in effect as well as in existence, we may as well let Phoebe have the story straight through!"

"O, I'm so glad, because she is good as good can be to me, now-a-days. And I thought, Uncle Garret, that we might—all of us be getting on better with her, after this."

"Meaning myself, I assume! Well, Jo-ann, I'll not exactly subscribe to that. Phoebe and I shall have our daily bout, as usual; it has become a habit of our life these late years, neither of us suffering thereby. I've no wings growing yet, Jo-ann, and I rather fancy that the rest of you will fare better if she and I vent our strong wills upon each other. Do you understand? But the old grievance removed, and communication opened up between the two houses, will not leave as much time as formerly, nor so much ground, for disputings and broodings, so you may ease your mind somewhat, along those lines. What was the second on the list?"

Joan uttered a sigh of foreboding in spite of herself, for that way lay danger. "Aunt Orin wants us to go down there, for supper to-morrow, instead of their coming up here, as you planned. She thinks, Uncle Garret, that it's your place to go there, first, since they never really shut you out, she says. And you won't mind, will you? I thought I would