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**HESPER**  
...BY...  
**HAMLIN GARLAND**  
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**CHAPTER XIII.**  
THE little room to which Mrs. Kelly conducted Ann was hardly larger than a steamer state-room and was very primitive as regards its furnishings.  
"It's a small place and a rough place for such as you, but it's the best we have," said Mrs. Kelly.  
Ann responded to the humility which shaded the hearty voice of her hostess, and, though she shivered in the chill air, answered cheerily: "I'm sure this is very nice. The bed is tempting."  
Hesitatingly, with many misgivings, Mrs. Kelly withdrew, and Ann hurriedly disrobed and leaped into the bed, which was white as snow and almost as cold. It was like a plunge into the breakers at Magnolia; it fairly took her breath away, and there was no escape from this icy contact, for the air was as bitter as the sheets.

But the joy of the meeting with Louis and the unexpected glow of confidence and pleasure with which she met Raymond's anxious, piercing eyes came back to warm her heart.  
How changed Raymond was! How deeply brown! He looked as vigorous as she saw him first at the ranch, and yet different—years older; and with his strength, his resolution, something new was mingled—something graver and sweeter. He was handsomer in the miner's heavy boots than in the cowboy's spurs and kerchief.  
Her mind took up again the singularity of her position, lying there in a frosty bed in a miner's cabin. She laughed. "Am I to meet my death by freezing?" But at last a glow of comfort began to steal over her, a delicious languor, and then—she was awakened by a grinding sound and by the shouting of cheerful children, and a few minutes later the gentle voice of Mrs. Kelly sounded at the door.  
"Are you awake?" Ann threw back the coverlet to find the room full of sunshine. "May I come in?" asked Mrs. Kelly.  
"Certainly," said Ann, and the pale and pretty little housewife entered with a pitcher of warm water.  
"Good morning. How did you sleep the night?"  
"I don't know. I haven't the slightest idea where the night went to."  
After her hostess left her Ann lay staring at the rough walls and the still more primitive ceiling in wonder. "It must be real," she thought, "for I couldn't possibly dream it." With a realization of her own sloth, she sprang out upon the cold floor and began to dress with a vigor and celerity she did not know she possessed.

During breakfast she studied Mrs. Kelly and began to understand at last that the little mother had not merely washed and dressed the boys and cooked the breakfast, but had served as waitress and maid of all work, and now, calm and sweet and self-contained, was presiding over the table. If any dish needed replenishing, she sprang up to get it, and this put the robust daughter of wealth to shame.  
"Don't you feel tired some mornings and lie abed?" she asked.  
Mrs. Kelly smiled. "Indeed I do, but I can't afford to lie abed. When Matt makes his next strike, sure I'm going to hire a maid and sleep till I'm weary of it, if it takes a week."  
"You must let me do something while I am here," said Ann. "Let me provide a maid for you."  
"Oh, no; I was only jokin'. Sure, you couldn't hire a girl on the hill to do housework. Besides, the best of them are not fit company for you, and in a small hut like this you're cheek by jowl with your help."  
Ann had not thought of them as company, but she gravely replied: "I might bring a maid from my cousin's house. At any rate, you must let me help this morning. I can sweep and dust—indeed I can."  
"Mighty little dusting the shack needs in this air," said Mrs. Kelly. "Good luck to me, it's tiny."  
"I must help or I will not stay," insisted Ann. "At least I can amuse the children."  
Louis shot through the door like a stone from a sling. His eyes were dancing. "Good morning, everybody!" he shouted. "Haven't you breakfasted yet? Why, we've been done ten minutes. Isn't this bully—this life up here? How do you feel this morning?"  
Ann laughed to see him so elate, so vigorous. "What a child you are!" she exclaimed in wonder.  
Raymond followed at a little distance. "Good morning, Miss Rupert. Good morning, Nora. Hello, yeunkers," he and gathered a boy under each arm. He looked very capable and entirely self-contained as he put the lads down and addressed himself to Ann. "I suppose your baggage went to Bozle, but we will get that today. And, Mrs. Kelly, if you need anything to make Miss Rupert comfortable let us know. To the limit of our resources command us."

Ann, with unaccountable lightness of spirit, quickly protested. "Now, please don't make company of me. I am going to earn my living by helping Mrs. Kelly about the house. My bed was very comfortable and my breakfast delicious. What else do I require? One needn't ask how you are. You look to be perfectly well again."

Louis stared at his sister and was about to make some revealing remark when Raymond intervened. "We are very glad to have you in camp, but you must not suffer inconveniences."  
"I've been thinking perhaps it would do me good to suffer hardships," she answered, with a reflective glance.  
He considered a moment before changing the subject. "Everything seems quiet up street this morning, so our trouble may blow over. I am going up by and by and will report on what is brewing in the saloons. They are the storm centers. I'm sorry Don started to come in, and I hope he will go quietly back and forget the whole incident."  
"Tell me about the camp. What is the trouble all about? I can't understand," she said.  
"It's quite simple," replied Raymond. "The county is about equally divided now between the miners of the peak and the citizens of the plain. The peak's interests are not those of the Springs, and it has resented for a year the domination of the Springs. The owners of the mines are either residents of the plain or of the east and violently opposed to the politics of the county. Barnett's man, Mackay, attempted to reorganize the working hours of the camp and failed. You know of the mishandling he received."  
"What are they going to do now?"  
"I don't know. As the case stands, the camp is hot against any invasion by the sheriff and a mob of hirelings, as they call his deputies, and his attempt to overawe the camp only created more furious resistance. I will be able to tell better what the outcome will be when I learn what the union has decided to do. Thus far it has been a game of bluff on the part of a dozen men who are not strictly miners at all, and the question of wages has had little attention. I am going up now to see what is going on."  
As Raymond entered the street the peace and beauty of the Kelly home and the vision of the two women bent peacefully above their sewing stood away in radiant contrast above the reeking saloons, the reckless crowds and the rows of drink inflamed men lounging along each bar.  
The lover's senses, sharpened by Ann's presence in the camp, detected a more sinister change in the temper of the men. Up to this time all that had taken place had been jocular, at least on the surface, but the sheriff's threatened invasion with a hundred hired thugs stirred the red fires of wrath in men like Hanley, Brock and Collingwood, who had hitherto been but onlookers, and they were now the inciting centers of men talking loudly and with undisguised fury.  
Hanley, perceiving Raymond at the door, approached to say: "One of Munro's vedettes intercepted that kid of yours last night and got word that Don Barnett was on his way up here. You better warn him off."  
Raymond resented his tone, but coldly replied: "The boy was mistaken. Barnett turned back at Grand View."  
Some one plucked him by the arm, and, following his guide, Raymond entered the room used as the office of the union, where he found Carter, the president, and Larned, the organizer, in the midst of a hot argument with Munro, Smith and a group of others of their sort. Larned was shaking with excitement and rage, and Carter, the little president, looked white and scared.  
Munro, with a grin, said: "Come in, Rob. This is a council of war."  
Raymond entered calmly, his head a little bent, his keen eyes studying every face. "What's it all about?"  
Larned explained, his hands quivering, the veins on his forehead bulging, his eyes restless and fevered. "If they do it," he said, "I leave—I get out. I will not countenance lawlessness of this sort. I'm not a fool. I know what the effect will be. If they turn back this posse the state militia will be called out. I came to organize a union to meet the coming question of labor and capital. I did not come here to form mobs. I refuse to sanction it. I will not have a thing to do with it. If you make this raid I leave the camp."  
Raymond spoke. "I'm not involved in the present disagreement, so that my advice is disinterested, but as you've ridden up and asked me I give it as my opinion that Larned is right. You can stand off a sheriff once or twice, and you might even stand off a regiment of militia, but you can't stand off the United States army, and that's what you'll run up against in the end. Jack, you ought to have sense enough to keep out of this."  
Munro snarled. "I'm only the military arm of government. I'm not making laws; I execute them."  
"Why not call a meeting and put it to a vote?" asked Smith.  
"I know why," replied Brock. "Larned is afraid it will carry."  
Larned leaped to his feet. "I admit it! I don't want the word to go out that this raid has been voted on by the union. With the camp boiling with excitement, it might carry. Outsiders must be taught the difference between the action of the mob and the will of the organization."  
Smith was brutally plain. "It isn't your say. You're only an outsider

yourself. It's Carter's place to call the meeting and discuss what we are to do. A half dozen of us have laid ourselves liable by doing duty for the union. Now, the question is whether the union is going to stand by us or sneak and leave us to eat dirt in a valley jail."  
"You had no sanction from the union."  
"I know we didn't—no official sanction—but you know perfectly well that the men were with us then, and they are with us now, every one of them."  
A rap on the door startled them all. It was like the tap of the finger of fate. Munro opened the door, and Dolan, the reporter, entered. "Hello, lads," he called easily. "What's doin'?"  
They all shouted, "Hello, Jim!" and Larned, starting forward, exclaimed: "Any news?"  
"Well, rather. The sheriff, with a hundred men and a special train, is at Trinchera. He means business this time, lads."  
The roomful of men now gathered into groups to discuss the certainty of war. Dolan, gay with excitement, drew round him Carter, Larned and Collingwood. Smith and Denver Dan were the center of another squad, while Raymond took Munro aside and earnestly pleaded: "See here, old man, you must keep out of this. It isn't your funeral, but it will be if you don't vamoose the ranch."  
"I can't go back on the boys now, Rob. They need my military training, and, besides, I am in it. I won't sit back and see the district done up by these thugs who never earned an honest dollar in their lives. And your friend Barnett—that good he is on earth? Just a bloodsucker on the bare back of labor. I'm with the boys, and if my experience can do 'em any good I'm ready."  
"I know how you feel, Jack, but this is desperate business. A fight with the sheriff will set the whole country against the miners."  
Munro smiled contemptuously. "He won't fight. A round of shots in the air will send him botfooting it back to the Springs. It's all a farce."  
"Be careful. The farce may turn into tragedy at a moment's notice. These miners are idle and full of liquor. Men like Kelly who have women to protect!"  
Munro caught at this. "By the way, who was the 'femme'? My word, she's a peach."  
Raymond's tone was coldly indifferent. "Miss Rupert is from New York city, Barnett's cousin. She is here to look after her brother Louis. I was not thinking of her so much as Mrs. Kelly and other women who can't get away."  
Larned's voice, rising high and cutting above the others, interposed. "Then I leave. You are crazy. You can't hold this hill with a million Gatling guns. The national committee will not stand for it. Goodbye!" Clapping his hat on his head, he walked out of the room, his white face set in a furious frown.  
Brock roared out: "Call a meeting, Carter, and we'll carry it our way! To blazes with the national committee!"  
Carter, however, was scared blue by Larned's despairing retreat and refused. "We've got to go slow. We can't walk without help. I won't make the call."  
San Juan Smith, with flaming face, shouted furiously: "Then we'll do it without your sanction. The executive board will act."  
Raymond, on the doorstep, made a last appeal to Munro. "Jack, you can't afford to go into this thing with Smith. Keep out of it. It's bad business all around. It's one thing to strike and another thing to resist authority. See this street!"  
In some way word had already passed along the ridge that the sheriff was actually on the road and that he would reach the end of the railway in mid-afternoon, and a great throng was packed round a man on horseback who was going naturally trying to force his way toward headquarters.  
"That's one of my scouts," said Munro "with news of the invaders." And he pushed off into the crowd, while Raymond, with serious face and slow step, went down the path toward his mine.

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At Kelly's invitation, Raymond and Louis took noontime dinner with him. It was a most delicious meal to Raymond and a pleasantly exciting one to Ann, for she confessed to having cooked the eggs and potatoes. All reference to the trouble on the hill was jocular.

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Ann rose and faced him. "Are you the horseman who met us?"  
"The very same, lady. I don't often hear voices like yours, and I wanted to see if the face and voice were of the quality. They are," he added, with a glance of unabashed admiration. "Introduce me, Rob."  
Raymond reluctantly complied. "Miss Rupert, this is Mr. Jack Munro."  
Munro stepped forward and held out a very handsome hand, and Ann could not refuse to take it. He was smaller than Raymond and seemed hardly out of his teens, as he stood there smiling brightly, his bare head lightly poised on shapely shoulders, and some magic in his smile made Raymond and Kelly seem for the moment cold and reserved. His assurance, his frankness, amused her.  
"I came to tell the lady that no harm befell Colonel Barnett, her escort. He was driven back to Grand View early this morning and is at home ere this."  
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Raymond replied: "I will take you down to Bozle tomorrow, if you care to go. The shops are better there and the streets less turbulent."  
"I'd like to go very much," said Ann, on a sudden impulse. "I'd like to go this afternoon. Can we drive? How far is it?"  
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"It is, and it is not. The big mines are all shut down. So far, it is a lock-out. But the men refuse to work shifts

of nine hours for eight hours' pay. To that extent it is a strike."  
"The trouble all springs from a small group of reckless desperadoes," said Raymond. "The main body of the men are ready to submit to law, but men like Smith and Denver Dan and Brock must either fight or flee, and they prefer to fight. But what they do doesn't concern us. We are going right along in our small way. Our men are all outside the union."  
Mrs. Kelly spoke in praise of Ann to Raymond (she had divined his lore). "You should 'a' seen her—working every blessed minute this forenoon, Robert!"  
"You must not compliment me too much," interrupted Ann. "Maid's are sometimes spoiled by too much kindness. Are there shops near? We need a few things to make us comfortable—and my valises, when can I get them?"  
Raymond replied: "I will take you down to Bozle tomorrow, if you care to go. The shops are better there and the streets less turbulent."  
"I'd like to go very much," said Ann, on a sudden impulse. "I'd like to go this afternoon. Can we drive? How far is it?"  
"We will ride, if you are not afraid of our bronchos and steep trails. It will be more comfortable than a wagon. After you've rested an hour or two I'll bring round the horses."  
"Good morning, friends!" A clear voice made them all turn. Jack Munro, booted and spurred, stood in the door. "And how is the lady of the silken voice?"  
Kelly greeted him coldly. "Hello, Jack. Come in and eat."  
"Much obliged, me lord, but I've already eat. I came round to see how the lady stood her ride with me up the hill."  
Ann rose and faced him. "Are you the horseman who met us?"  
"The very same, lady. I don't often hear voices like yours, and I wanted to see if the face and voice were of the quality. They are," he added, with a glance of unabashed admiration. "Introduce me, Rob."  
Raymond reluctantly complied. "Miss Rupert, this is Mr. Jack Munro."  
Munro stepped forward and held out a very handsome hand, and Ann could not refuse to take it. He was smaller than Raymond and seemed hardly out of his teens, as he stood there smiling brightly, his bare head lightly poised on shapely shoulders, and some magic in his smile made Raymond and Kelly seem for the moment cold and reserved. His assurance, his frankness, amused her.  
"I came to tell the lady that no harm befell Colonel Barnett, her escort. He was driven back to Grand View early this morning and is at home ere this."  
"Thank you for your good cheer," said Ann. "I was not so sure of your kindly intentions last night."  
(To be Continued.)

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