"Love Comes Softly"

An Honors Thesis

by

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I fondly remember reading books as an integral part of my childhood. My favorite book was *Mother Goose*. I always requested the entire book be read to me each night before bed. My parents tried to skip pages and even rhymes, but I knew each one by heart.

Besides *Mother Goose*, one other book stands out in my mind- *Love Comes Softly*. I first read the book in junior high. My parents gave me the book for Christmas. (Yes, these were the same mean parents that made me eat vegetables.) I read the first book and then read through the entire series.

Upon reading Janette Oke's book a second time, I discovered themes I hadn't noticed before. Perhaps the most prominent theme was the women's struggles- both emotionally and physically- during the move west.

Janette Oke describes her book as "the story of Marty, a young, vibrant and independent girl of nineteen who travels West with her new husband seeking adventure and fortune. You will ache with Marty when, in the same way as many of her pioneer sisters, the venture turns to tragedy and Marty is left alone to learn firsthand the lessons of pain, heartache, frustration and anger... (This is the story of) a tragic accident, a grief-stricken young widow, a lonely father and child- a tender story of two hearts broken by despair finding wholeness through patience, loyalty and faith in God."

Although many tales are told of cowboys and heroes, this woman's approach to life in a barren land borders on true heroism. She presents a unique insight into a period in history when women were forced into silence.

Nothing can make these emotions more real than bringing them to life on the screen. I know in reading this you, too, will be touched by the rich characters as they make their own wagon trails through the early west.

Much thanks goes to Dr. Mathis-Eddy, for her mentorship throughout this project. This is the culmination of what all my professors, family and friends have taught me.
1. EARLY WEST (Opening/Credits)

Covered wagons move along. People cook breakfast over a fire at dawn. Children chase each other across an early October countryside. Dust flies up as horses stamp their feet and neigh. The sun shines brightly. A rooster crows.

2. INSIDE COVERED WAGON

A woman (Marty) sits up from under a quilt. Her eyes are heavy. She falls back on the pillow and sobs quietly. Her body shakes. Another woman (Ann) crawls into the wagon.

ANN:
How you doin' this mornin', Marty?

Marty blows her nose on a delicately crafted handkerchief.

MARTY:
I just can't believe my Clem is gone! It happened so quickly.

3. FLASHBACK- BOSTON CHURCH SANCTUARY

Marty is in a simple wedding gown. Clem is in a suit. A small crowd looks on touched. The voice of the minister is barely audible.

CLEM:
(In almost a whisper at the altar)
You look perttier 'en I 'member.

MARTY:
(Giggles, obviously charmed)
Shh, Clem. They'll hear us!

4. PRESENT- INSIDE COVERED WAGON

MARTY:
(To Ann, who nods sympathetically and grasps Marty's tiny hand)
Then we decided to come west to make us a better life.

5. FLASHBACK- OUTSIDE A MODEST CABIN IN BOSTON

Marty and Clem pack a covered wagon with their few belongings.

CLEM:
We'll find everythin' we want there in thet new country, Marty. (He grabs her hand to help her into the wagon) The land's there fer the takin.
MARTY:
(They start up the team of horses)
What 'bout the wild animals- an' the Injuns?

CLEM:
(Chuckles)

MARTY:
And what 'bout a house? It'll be most winter when we git there. We're espectin' a baby, you know.

CLEM:
The neighbors will help us build one. I've heered all 'bout it. They all one another out there. (In the distance, a group of fellow travelers is assembled.) We'll make out jest fine. Don't ya worry ya none.

6. PRESENT- INSIDE COVERED WAGON

MARTY:
(Begins to sob again)
We was gonna' have us a big family an'... (Her voice trails off)

ANN:
I know, I know. (She hugs Marty) How'd it happen?

MARTY:
He just collapsed. Maybe a problem with his heart. Don' know. Oh Clem, Clem! What am I gonna' do now?

The loud noise of shovel hitting rock startles the women. They peer out from the wagon and see four men with grim faces silently and soberly digging beneath a large oak tree. They hear the scraping of shovels.

ANN:
(Pulls her back in the wagon)
Now, we've got to get you dressed. Clem wouldn't want this fer ye.

The two women grab a dark blue cotton frock for Marty, a towel and a brush for her hair. Marty slips out of the wagon and walks toward a small spring.

7. AT THE GRAVESITE

Soft, somber music is heard underneath as the camera pans to the countryside. Families stand around the oak tree some with heads bowed. Marty makes her way to the front and the minister begins.
MINISTER:
We are gathered here today to mourn the loss of our dear friend and
brother...

Marty sobs. Ann stands next to her. The minister's voice continues as soft music plays
and Marty's voice is heard over all.

MARTY (VO):
It hardly seemed real that my Clem could be gone. But with a baby on the
way, I knew this was not the time for pity.

People walk away from the site. Marty walks slowly back toward her wagon. A blond
woman in her early twenties wearing a dark dress walks up and touches Marty's shoulder.

WANDA:
I'm Wanda Marshall. I'm sorry that we don't have any more than one
room, but you'd be welcome to share it for a few days until you sort things
out.

MARTY:
(In almost a whisper, still grasping the handkerchief tightly)
Much obliged. But I wouldn't wanta impose 'pon ya. Sides, I think I'll jest
stay on here fer awhile. I need me time to think.

WANDA:
I understand.

Wanda moves on. Marty dabs at her eyes and continues to walk slowly. This time an
older woman reaches for Marty's hand.

MA:
This ain't an easy time fer ya, I know. I buried my first husband many
years ago an' I know the feelin'. (She pauses a moment then goes on.) I
don't 'spose you've had ya time to plan. (Marty shakes her head.) I can't
offer ya a place to stay; we're full up at our place. But, I can offer ya
somethin' to eat, and iffen you'd like to move yer wagon to our yard, we'd
be happy to help ya pack yer things, and my Ben, Ben Graham, will be
more'n glad to help ya git to town whenever yer ready to go.

MARTY:
Thank ya, but I think I'll stay me on here fer awhile. (Marty smiles
graciously as Ma Graham walks away. Then, under her breath...) How
could I stay in town? I ain't got no money and I ain't got no hope of gettin'
any neither!
By this point she is standing outside the wagon. She plops down on the grass in the shade and sighs. Footsteps approach as Marty plays with the handkerchief.

CLARK:

Ma'am.

Marty jumps- startled. She looks way up. Clark stands before her, cap in hand, fingering it determinedly as he clears his throat. He has broad shoulders and a thick beard.

CLARK:

Ma'am I know thet this be untimely- ya jest havin' burried yer husband an' all- but I'm afraid the matter can't wait none fer a proper-like time an' place. (He clears his throat.) My name be Clark Davis, an' it peers to me thet you an' me be in need of one another.

Marty shrieks and jumps to her feet, pointing a finger at Clark.

CLARK:

Now hold on a minute. It jest be a matter of common sense. Ya lost yer man an' are here alone. (He glances at the broken wagon wheel.) I reckon ya got no money to go to yer folks, iff'n ya have folks to go back to. An' even if thet could be, ain't no wagon train fer the East will go through her 'til next spring. me, now, I got me a need, too.

His eyes drop.

MARTY:

(With hands on hips)
Now listen, Mister, I don't know what yer up to, but...

CLARK:

(Holds up his hand and silences Marty)
I have a little 'un, not much more'n a mite, an' she be needin' a mama. (He leans against the wagon.) Now as I see it, if we marries you an' me (He squats down to look directly into her eyes) we could solve both of those problems. I would have waited but the preacher's only here fer today an' won't be back through again 'til next April or May, so's it has to be today.

MARTY:

(With a look of sheer horror)
I can't believe my ears!

She turns abruptly and begins to march away. Clark grabs her shoulder and she turns slowly.

CLARK:
(Stammering)
I know, I know. It don't seem likely, but what else be there?

MARTY:
I don't know...This is jest all so sudden.

CLARK:
I've been strugglin' along tryin' to be pa an' ma both fer Missie, an' not doin' much of a job of it either with tryin' to work the land an' all. I've got me a good piece of land an' a cabin that's right comfortable like, even if it be small- an' I could even offer ya all the things that a woman be a needin' in exchange fer ya takin' care of my Missie.

MARTY:
I jest don't know what to say...

CLARK:
(Pleading)
I be sure that ya could learn to love her. She be a right pert little thing. (He pauses and then continues in a tender voice) But she do be a needin' a woman's hand, my Missie. That's all I be askin' ya, Ma'am. Jest to be Missie's mama. Nothin' more. You an' Missie can share the bedroom. When the next wagon train goes through headin' East, where ya can catch ya a stagecoach, iffen ya ain't happy here, I'll see to yer fare back home- one condition: that ya take my Missie along with ya. It jest don't be fair to the little mite not to have a mama.

Ann walks up as Clark turns abruptly and walks away.

MARTY:
(In rage, yet at a loss for words)
I...Oh...My...

ANN:
Why what ever did he want?

MARTY:

8. DISSOLVE- MARTY, CLARK AND MISSIE IN WAGON
Marty rides in a wagon next to Clark. She looks like a robot—distant. The wagon approaches a small homestead. She lifts a hand to push breeze-tossed hair back from her face. Clark glances at her with obvious concern.

**CLARK:**

Won't be too long now. It's powerful hot in the sun. Ya be a needin' a bonnet to shade yer head.

**MARTY:**

(Under her breath)
What do ye care about the hot sun on my head?

The horses trudge on. The wagon moves over the track of ruts in the road and approach a small homestead at the base of a cluster of small hills. Clark hops down from the wagon and lifts Marty down from the wagon easily. Clark ties up the horses as Marty proceeds to the house.

9. **INSIDE THE GRAHAM HOUSE**

Marty and Clark are in a room full of people including Mrs. Graham, the visiting minister, Ben Graham and numerous children. The room is loud. Marty looks dazed.

**CLARK:**

(Stammering in his explanation to the adults in the room)
We has decided...

**MARTY:**

(Angered)
We? Ya mean you!

**CLARK:**

(Unphased)
We has decided to marry up while the preacher be still here to do the honors. It will mean a home fer Missus Claridge here an' a mama fer my Missie.

**MAGRAHAM:**

(Startled)
Well, it's the only sensible thing to be a doin'...

**VISITING MINISTER:**

Yes, yes, of course. Let's step over here.

Clark and Marty stand hand in hand on the other side of the room with the minister.

**VISITING MINISTER:**
(Quietly)
I now pronounce you man and wife.

Ma Graham noisily sets extra places at the table.

MA:
Why don't ye set up an' eat with us afore ya go on?

Children run to the table. Marty is caught up in a flurry of sounds—children moving, plates banging, feet shuffling—and moves mechanically. Conversation grows louder, then Mrs. Graham interrupts.

MA:
Sally Anne, ya go an' git young Missie up from her nap an' ready to go.
Laura, you an' Nellie clear up the table an' do up these dishes.

People begin to clear the table. Clark and Ben walk outside. Missie walks sleepily down the stairs rubbing her eyes. Marty walks over and grabs her small hand as Ma watches.

MARTY:
Let's go, Missie. Yer father be a waitin'.

Ma follows Marty and Missie outside. As Missie walks toward her father at the wagon, Ma touches Marty's hand and speaks to her softly.

MA:
(With tears in her eyes)
I'll 'llow ya a few days to be settlin' in an' then I'll be over. It'll be right nice to have another woman so close to hand to visit now an' then.

Marty nods and walks toward the wagon. They ride off into the orange sun, and dust flies up behind the wagon wheels. A moment later Clark points.

CLARK:
There it be- right over there.

Marty's eyes follow his extended finger to small homestead sheltered by trees. A small but tidy cabin stands apart with a well out front and a garden spot to one side. A few small bushes with colorful fall blossoms line the path to the door. Off to one side is a sturdy log barn. A pig lot stands farther back among a grove of trees. A chicken house stands between the barn and the house and various other small, scattered buildings.

MARTY:
(Lacking enthusiasm)
It' nice, Clark. Real nice.
A dog runs out to greet them at the wagon, barking excitedly. Clark helps Missie down from the wagon, and she begins to pet the dog. Clark then helps Marty down and looks deep into her eyes.

CLARK:
(Gently)
Ya best git ya in out of the sun and lay ya down a spell. Ya'll find the bedroom off'en the sittin' room. I'll take charge a Missie an' anythin' else thet be a needin' carin' fer. It's too late to field work today anyway.

The three walk into the home. Missie talks animatedly with Clark. Marty walks through the kitchen to the door off the sitting room that leads to the bedroom. She takes off her shoes, falls on the bed and sobs.

Fade to black.

10. IN THE BEDROOM

Marty wakes up and looks out the window. It is dusk. She gazes around the room and sees her trunk and personal belongings sitting next to a chest of drawers. She stretches. Missie's chatter and Clark's laughter are heard in the background. She reaches over and opens the trunk, taking out a brush and hair ribbon. She brushes her hair back and ties the ribbon in it. She smooths her dress and wanders, dazed into the kitchen.

From the stove, Clark motions Marty to a chair at the table next to Missie. Marty sits down and brings her a plate of pancakes and bacon.

MARTY:
Smells good, Clark.

He walks back to the stove and picks up a pot of steaming coffee. He sits down and begins to pray.

CLARK:
Father, thank ya fer this food ya provide by yer goodness. Be with this, yer child, as Comforter in this hour, an' bless this house an' makin' it a home to each one as dwells here. Amen.

Missie begins to chatter again while Marty gazes wide-eyed at Clark.

CLARK:
Aint ya hungry?

Marty jumps.

MARTY:
Oh yeah, yeah. I'm hungry.

Marty begins to eat quickly as Missie talks quietly to herself.

MARTY:
I'll take care of the dishes...

Marty stands from her chair and begins to clear the table.

CLARK:
(To Missie)
An, Missie, it's yer bedtime. Let's go.

Clark and Missie walk off toward the bedroom. Marty opens doors and drawers searching for supplies.

MARTY:
(To herself)
How did I end up here? Oh, Clem. Clem, why did ye go an' leave me like this?

Clark re-enters the kitchen and clears his throat. He pulls up a chair to the table. He talks aloud but Marty refuses to look at him.

CLARK:
She be asleep already.

Clark begins to hum as Marty carries the dishwater outside. She shuts the door and tidies up the rest of the kitchen. Clark continues his thoughts.

CLARK:
The drawers in the chest all be empty. I moved my things to the lean-to. Ya can unpack an' make yerself more comfortable like. Feel free to be a usin' anythin' in the house, an' if there be anythin' thet ya be a needin', make a list. I go to town most Saturdays fer supplies, an' I can be a pickin' it up then. When ya feel more yerself like, ya might want to come along an' do yer own choosin'.

Marty sits down and gazes at Clark blankly. He continues, concerned.

CLARK:
I think thet ya better git ya some sleep. It's been a tryin' day. I know thet it's gonna take ya some time to stop a hurtin'- fer ya to feel at home here. We'll try to not to rush ya.
Marty rises from the table, her expression unchanged, and begins to walk toward the bedroom. Clark raises his voice slightly, causing her to stop and stare at him.

CLARK:
I married ya only to have Missie a mama. I'd be much obliged if ya 'llow her to so call ya.

Without answering, she walks into the bedroom. Quietly, she makes her way to Missie's bed. A soft glow illuminates the child's face and brown curly hair.

MARTY:
(In a whisper)
All right, Missie, let's us make a deal. ya be a good kid an' I'll do my best to be a carin' fer ya.

Marty reaches down and rubs her stomach tenderly.

MARTY:
I'll have one of my own soon, too.

Marty walks over and lies down on the bed.

Fade to black.

11. DAWN IN MARTY'S BEDROOM

A rooster crows. Marty rises and dresses quietly, thinking aloud.

MARTY:
So now I'm a Davis. It's jest thet simple. No more Missus Claridge, but Martha Davis.

She rubs her stomach and sits down on the bed again. Tears begin to fall, and she wipes them gently from her face.

MARTY:
Oh, no! Oh, no please. I want my baby to have Clem's name.

She stomps angrily into the kitchen and checks the fire in the big black cookstove.

MARTY:
Well, thet's the first step. Now what?

She bangs clumsily around the kitchen, opening tins and cabinets. She begins to stir batter for pancakes in rage.
MARTY:
(Muttering)
I can name my baby Claridge iffen I want to. He can't take that from me!

She reaches for a pot and begins to search for the coffee. Her anger and frustration intensify.

MARTY:
(Explosively)
Dad-blame! What's a body to do?

She finds the coffee and puts it on the stove to boil.

MARTY:
Now, fer some eggs. Eggs... eggs... where do we keep the dad-blame things?

She walks outside and wanders into the shed next to the house. She notices a strange contraption in one corner connected to a pulley arrangement. Following the rope down to the floor, she notices a square cut in the floor boards with a handle attached.

MARTY:
(Confused)
Well, what ever...?

Marty begins to manipulate the ropes and a box begins to move upward. The box slowly comes into view. The front of the box is fitted with a door, mostly comprised of mesh. Inside, several food items are visible. Marty gasps.

MARTY:
(Pulling out the food items- stunned)
Eggs...cream...milk... (She picks up a jar and sniffs its contents.) And fresh wild honey!

Marty grabs a few eggs, milk and honey and then replaces the trap door. She walks back into the house, obviously pleased. She begins to hum a happy tune and mixes the pancakes again. She hears Missie's wimper coming from the bedroom. She walks in and Missie stares at her with surprise.

MARTY:
Now I wonder where yer clothes be? Let's see here...

Marty looks walks over to a small chest sitting beneath the room's one window. Marty lays the clothes on the bed and picks Missie up. Missie begins to shriek wildly.

MARTY:
Now Missie, stop that.

MISSIE:
I wan' Pa.

MARTY:
Hush, hush, hush.

Marty picks Missie up along with the pile of clothes and carries her to a corner in the kitchen. Missie continues to cry and pulls her clothes close to her body. Marty turns around in time to grab the coffee pot that is boiling over. She continues to mix the pancake batter as Missie cries. Clark enters.

MARTY:
She wouldn't let me dress her. She jest set up a howlin' fer her pa.

CLARK:
I'm afeared a child's memory is pretty short. She already be a fergettin' what it's like to have a mama.

Clark moves toward the cupboard without even glancing at Missie who is still whimpering.

CLARK:
She'll jest have to learn thot ya be her mama now an' thot ya be boss. Now ya take her on back to the bedroom an' git her dressed an' I'll take over here.

Clark walks over to the stove without glancing at either Marty or Missie again. Marty takes a deep breath and scoops up Missie who reacts immediately with screams. She kicks and lashes out as Marty carries her into the bedroom.

MARTY:
(Through clenched teeth)
Now look you, remember our bargain? I said be ya good, I would be yer mama, an' this ain't bein' good.

Marty puts Missie down on the bed, and she continues to scream.

MISSIE:
(Between screams)
I- wan'- Mama!

MARTY:
(Sympathetically)
Now Missie, stop that.

MISSIE:
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Marty puts Missie down on the bed, and she continues to scream.

MISSIE:
(Between screams)
I- wan'- Mama!

MARTY:
(Sympathetically)
Oh, Missie. I know how ya be feelin'. We'll have to become friends slow-like, but first...first, I somehow has to git ya dressed.

Marty arranges the clothes on the bed, then sits down. She puts Missie on her lap.

**MARTY:**

Now Missie, ya stop it.

Missie continues to cry loudly. Marty spanks the child twice. Missie stops in shock and remains quiet. Marty finally dresses the child.

**MARTY:**

Ya poor mite..

Marty holds the child close for a moment, then reaches for a comb. She combs her hair as well as Missie's, then returns with the child to the kitchen. Clark brings fried eggs, sizzling bacon, pancakes and steaming coffee to the table.

**MARTY:**

Clark, I'm so sorry...

Clark interrupts her by turning pages in his Bible.

**CLARK:**

We read today, Psalm 121. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even for evermore.

He gently lays the book aside on a small shelf close to the table, then bows his head and prays. Marty is caught off guard.

**MARTY:**

(Under her breath)

Dad-burn him...

**CLARK:**

Our God, fer this fine day an' yer blessin's we thank ya. Thank ya, Lord, thet the first hard mile with Missie be travelled, an' help this one who has come to be her new mama...

**12. WITH HEADS BOWED**

As Clark continues to pray, Marty's thoughts are heard.
MARTY (VO):
I wondered why he never called me by my name when a talkin' to his God. If his God was able to be answerin' his prayers, I sure hoped He knew who he's talkin' 'bout. I needed all the help thot I could get.

The rattle of dishes snaps Marty back to the present. She begins to eat as Clark butters Missie's pancake. He takes a few bites, then looks evenly across at her.

CLARK:
S'pose ya be at a loss, not knowin' where to find things an' all. I see ya found the cold pit. Good! There be also a root cellar out back. Most of the garden vegetables are already there. Only a few things still be out in the garden. A shelf with cannin's there too, but ya need a light along to do yer choosin'; it be dark in there. There's also a smoke house out by the root cellar. Not too much in it right now. We plan on doin' our fall killin' and curin' next week. Two of the neighbors and me works together. There be chickens- fer eggs an' fer eatin'. We try not to get the flock down too low, but there's plenty to spare right now. There won't be fresh meat until it turns cold- er, 'ceptin' fer a bit of the pork. When the cold weather comes we try an' get some wild game- it keeps then. Sometimes we kill us a steer if we think we be a needin' it. There be fish in the crik too. When the work is caught up I sometimes try my hand at loafin' an' fishin'. We're not bad off, really.

Marty nods politely and continues to eat.

CLARK:
We has some cash- not much, but enough an' iffen we do be needin' more, we can always sell us a hog. We're better off than a lot of folks, but the neighbors round about here are makin' good too. Seems as how our move to the West been a good one.

Marty gets up and begins to clear the table. Clark continues, oblivious.

CLARK:
Got me some suttin's a few years back from a man over acros't the crik; an' in a couple of years, if all goes well, we should have some fruit on 'em. The apples might even be a settin' next year. I'm a tellin' ya this so's ya be knowin' the lay-o-the-land, so to speak. Ya don't need to apologize fer askin' fer what ya be a needin', both fer yerself an' fer Missie. We've never been fancy but we try an' be proper.

Missie interrupts him.

MISSIE:
All done, Pa.

She pushes her plate back from the table.

CLARK:
Thet's Pa's big girl.

He holds Missie on his lap and resumes his comments to Marty. Marty moves quietly about the kitchen.

CLARK:
There's a good team of horses an' a ridin' horse too, iff'n ever ya want to pay a visit to a neighbors. Ma Graham be the closest, an' she's 'bout as good company as anybody be a wantin'. I think ya'll find her to yer likin' even if she be a lot older than you.

Clark rises from the table and walks over to check the stove.

CLARK:
(Casually)
Today I plan to spend helpin' one o' the neighbors who ain't through with his fall field work yet. He got 'im a slow start. I'll be asked to stay to dinner with 'em so won't be home 'til chore time. Ya can make yerself to home an' you an' Missie git to know one another like, an' maybe we won't have anymore of those early mornin' fusses.

Clark turns to Missie and swings her up easily into his arms.

CLARK:
Ya wanna come with Pa to git ole Dan an' Charlie?

MISSIE:
Ya, Pa. Let's go to the barn!

Clark and Missie walk outside toward the barn.

13. IN THE BEDROOM BY THE CRIB

Marty puts Missie down for a nap. As she talks, we see her washing clothes and hanging them to dry as she gazes toward blue rolling hills. The trees along the hillside are colored in yellows and reds. Many of the leaves are already on the ground. Others are carried southward by a gusty breeze. Then she lies down for a quick nap as well. While she sleeps, Missie climbs out of her crib.

MARTY (VO):
I never had much practice at keepin' a real house. But, I decided Clark was never goin' to be embarrassed about the house long as I was livin' there. Clem stayed on my mind. I would be so happy iffen' I could jest see him one last time. My heart ached somethin' awful. With each day, I could feel our baby alive inside of me. I started thinkin' about the God Clark prayed to every mornin' at breakfast...and wonderin' if He knew my name any better 'en Clark did.

Marty awakes with a start. She looks around frantically and realizes Missie isn't there. She springs up.

MARTY:
Don't panic. She's got to be okay.

She rushes to the corral, but the team is not there. She runs from building to building frantically calling Missie's name. Tears stream down her cheeks. She runs up and down the banks of the creek, then down the dusty road. Over the hill she sees Clark's team coming toward her. Missie is sitting proudly on Clark's knee. Clark stops the wagon and helps Marty in.

CLARK:
Let's git home.

The wagon drives up to the house. Missie and Marty go inside. Clark takes the team to the corral. Marty starts a fire to cook dinner. She makes pancakes again.

MARTY:
(Under her breath)
Iffen I can jest stick it out here 'til that wagon train, then I'll be a goin' out of this wretched place so fast ya won't even find my tracks.

During dinner, Marty slips away into the bedroom and begins to sob. She pulls worn dresses and undergarments from her trunk. She sees a sewing basket in the corner, so she begins to mend her clothes.

MARTY:
(Determined)
Well, Mr. Proper, what do ya do when ya have nothin' to make yerself proper with? I won't ask him for nothin'. I won't...never!

Fade to black.

14. IN THE BEDROOM

Camera pans across a cloudy sky. Marty climbs from her bed and slips into the gingham dress she mended the night before. She glances at Missie who lies motionless still.
sleeping. Marty moves quietly into the kitchen. She puts on the coffee, sets the dishes on the table, then prepares the morning pancakes.

      MARTY:
      Dad-blame it. I'm tired of pancakes myself. So much good food an' I'm makin' pancakes...again.

She hears Missie's cry and goes to the bedroom.

      MARTY:
      Good mornin' there, Missie. Ya' ready for breakfast?

She dresses Missie and carries her to the table. Clark comes in and they sit down. Music plays in the background as Clark goes through the morning ritual of reading the Bible aloud, praying and beginning to eat. As Marty jumps up to pour him a second cup of coffee, he stops her.

      CLARK:
      I'd like to but I'd better not take me a second cup this mornin'. The sky looks more like winter every day an' Jedd still has him some grain out. I'm gonna git on over there as quick as I can...(Hesitating)...but tht's good coffee.

Marty pours herself a second cup of coffee, then sits down at the table again. Clark walks toward the door and speaks over his shoulder.

      CLARK:
      I'll be eatin' my dinner with the Larson's agin.

      MARTY:
      (Under her breath)
      Bet he's tickled pink to be able to have 'im one meal a day to the Larsons. Wouldn't it be a laugh should Missus Larson give 'im pancakes.

Marty smiles as she sits down to finish her second cup of coffee. Marty begins to wash the dishes as Missie plays on the floor. Marty then scrubs the cupboard and walls and rearranges the cabinets. She finds new supplies, then makes lunch for herself and Missie. As they share a fried ham sandwich and a glass of milk, Marty confides in Missie.

      MARTY:
      I won't be here much longer, ya' know. Iffen thet wagon train comes back through, I'm goin' back where I belong. Then, I can raise Clem's baby.

She sighs, then puts Missie down for her nap. She washes the curtains and hangs them in the breeze to dry. While the curtains dry, she continues to scrub the kitchen walls. She fills the bucket several times, but finally finishes the task.
MARTY (VO):
After hours of scrubbin', the walls were finally clean. But, they looked different somehow.

Marty walks over and pokes a finger at the chinking holding the logs together.

MARTY:
(Stunned)
It's muddy now! What have I done? Maybe it'll dry 'fore Clark gits home.

Marty makes biscuits. She also slices and fries potatoes and ham. She begins to peel carrots and puts on a pot of coffee to boil as she hears Clark's team approaching.

MARTY:
I want to make a special dinner. I'm so tired of pancakes, but I don't know how to make much else.

Marty pulls obviously burned biscuits from the stove. She puts them in her apron, carries them to the garden and burries them.

MARTY:
I can't even make biscuits!

Clark sits down to slightly burned slices of ham and Missie plays in the mushy potatoes.

MARTY:
What a mess! I'm so...

Clark takes a sip of his coffee then comments.

CLARK:
Well, that's right good coffee.

Fade to black.

15. OUTSIDE- BEDROOM

Camera pans outside to a cloudless sky. Marty puts on a plain dress, combs her hair and walks to the kitchen. Clumps of chinking are lying on the floor and running down the walls. Marty gasps upon seeing them. Nevertheless, she turns abruptly and puts logs in the stove. She begins to mix pancake batter once again.

MARTY:
I'll jest have to tell Clark...oh, what'll he say?
She hears Missie's wimpers and puts down her bowl. She walks into the bedroom.

MARTY:

Come to Mama.

Missie smiles and reaches out her arms gladly.

16. IN THE KITCHEN

CLARK:

Father, be with the one who works so hard to be a proper mama for Missie, an' a proper keeper of this home. Amen.

MISSIE:

Amen.

Missie begins to eat in the uncomfortable silence and throws her pancake on the floor.

CLARK:

Don't ya be a throwin' pancake on the floor. Thet's a naughty girl an' makes more work fer yer mama.

Another piece of chinking clatters down. Marty takes a deep breath and bursts forth.

MARTY:

I'm afeared I made a dreadful mistake yesterday. I took on to clean the kitchen-

CLARK:

I'd seen me it was all fresh and clean lookin' an' smellin'.

MARTY:

But I didn't know what scrub water would be a doin' to the chinkin'. I mean, I didn't know thet it would all soak up like, an' then not dry right agin.

Clark says nothing.

MARTY:

Well, it's fallin' apart like. I mean- well, look at it. It's crumblin' up an' fallin' out-

CLARK:

(Without lifting his eyes)

Yeah.
MARTY:
Well, it not be stayin' in place. Whatever can we do?

He looks up and answers slowly.

CLARK:
Well, when I go to town on Saturday, I'll pick me up some more chinkin'. It's a special kind like. Made to look whiter an' cleaner, but no good at all fer holdin' out the weather- the outside chinkin' has to do that job. There still be time to re-do it 'fore winter sets in. Water don't hurt the outer layer none, so it's holdin' firm like. Don't ya worry yerself none 'bout it. I'm sure that the bats won't be a flyin' through the cracks afore I git to 'em.

Clark smirks. Marty's expression drops.

CLARK:
I reckon ya been pushin' yerself pretty hard though, an' it might be well if you'd not try to lick the whole place in a week like. There's more days ahead an' ya be lookin' kinda tired. (He hesitates.) Iffen ya should decide to do more cleanin', jest brush down the walls with a dry brush. Okay?

Clark stands and walks outside. Marty brushes off the walls then hears a team approaching and rushes to the window. Outside, Ma Graham ties up her horses. The dog lies in the grass chewing on one of Marty's biscuits he dug up. Marty whisks Ma inside quickly.

MA:
The floor looks right nice. I see ya been busy as a bee, fall cleanin'.

Marty pours them both a cup of coffee.

MARTY:
Yeah, I wanted it done before the winter.

MA:
Nice to have things all cleaned up for the long days an' nights ahead when a body can't be out much. Them's quiltin' an' knittin' days. Do ya have plenty of rugs fer comfort?

MARTY:
Yes, but thanks...

MA:
What 'bout quilts? Ya be needin' any of those?

MARTY:
No, I don't think so.

They slowly sip their coffee. Then, Ma's warm brown eyes gaze into Marty's.

MA:
(Tenderly)
How air things goin', Marty?

MARTY:
(Sighs)
All I knows how to cook is pancakes, an' 'en Missie had her a cryin' fit, then she runned off. We ain't got us no bread, and I ain't got any idea of how to make it. Last night, I buried my biscuits in the garden 'cause I were so ashamed. An' I burned the ham, the potatoes was mushy an', oh...

She trails off in sobs.

MA:
(Touching her hand)
Come, my dear. You air a gonna have ya a lesson in bread makin'. Then I'll sit me down an' write ya out every recipe that I can think of. It's a shame what ya've been a goin' through the past few days, bein' as young as ya are an' still sorrowin' an' all, an' if I don't miss my guess (points to Marty's stomach), ya be in the family way too, ain't ya, child?

Marty nods silently.

MARTY:
An' I lost my Clem, Ma. What'll I do? I ain't had me no trainin' in cookin' jist in sewin'. Why did I ever think I could make it in the west? What'll I do?

MA:
First, let's bake us some bread. Iffen ya'd like, I'll write down my recipes for ye. An' we can even get an early start on dinner. Come now, my dear, it will all work out.

The two women make dough together and scurry around the kitchen as Missie plays contentedly in her chair.

MARTY (VO):
I breathed a short prayer of thanks for the blessin' of Ma Graham. Maybe Clark's God had finally larned my name.

Fade to black.
17. AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE

The family sits eating porridge and corn muffins.

MARTY:
Ma Graham helped make me a list of things to git in town.

She hands him the list. He nods as he looks over it.

CLARK:
Mmm...yes. In the winter months it be sometimes three or four weeks between the trips we be a takin' to town because of winter storms, an' ya never know ahead which Saturdays ya be a missin' so ya al'ays has to be stocked up. Good job, Marty.

Marty blushes and looks away. Clark rises from the table, tucks the list in his shirt pocket and bends to kiss Missie good-bye.

CLARK:
Now you be good today, ya hear? Iffen ya are, I'll have you a treat from town.

MISSIE:
(Squealing with delight)
Okay, Pa!

He then turns to Marty and looks tenderly into her eyes.

CLARK:
Now, you take it easy, ya hear? I'm afeared you're overdoin' for a woman in yer state.

Marty nods slowly and Clark walks out the kitchen door. He then turns around.

CLARK:
I'll be back in time fer dinner.

Clark continues to walk out the kitchen door. Marty stands and clears the table and makes small talk with Missie. After Missie finishes eating, Marty clears the table and heats up a pot of water. As Missie plays, Marty sits down to write a letter and reads it aloud.

MARTY:
Dear Ma...Iffen I would've known 'bout life in the West, I would never have come. Things has been hard without Clem, but Clark been real nice. I larned a powerful lot over the last few days. Ma Graham, a neighbor
lady, been real nice to me. She teaches me to cook and quilt an' care fer the house. I don't know what I will do on the 'mornings to come. They's just gonna' have to take care'n themselves.

Marty folds the letter as she hears the team pull up. Clark walks into the kitchen, his shoulders saggin. The three sit down to the dinner of vegetable stew and biscuits. Marty blows on Missie's stew to cool it. Clark begins to speak in a weary voice.

CLARK:
"'Fraid the totin' in of all of the supplies will sort of mess up yer well-ordered house fer the moment."

MARTY:
"Thet's okay. We'll git them in their proper place soon enough."

CLARK:
"A lot of the stock supplies will go up in the loft over the kitchen. Ya reach it by a ladder on the outside of the house."

MARTY:
(Eyes widened with surprise)
"I didn't know there be a loft up there."

CLARK:
"It's nigh empty right now, so there wan't much use in a knowin.' We stock it up in the fall, so's we won't run out of sech things as flour an' salt come the winter storms. I'll carry the stock supplies directly up, so's I won't have to clutter yer house with 'em. The smaller things though, I'll have to bring in here, so's ya can put 'em all away in the place where ya want 'em. Do ya be a wantin' 'em in the kitchen or in the shed?"

Marty rises to begin clearing the table.

MARTY:
The shed'll do, I guess.

CLARK:
"Missie, ya been a good girl fer yer mama today?"

MISSIE:
(Excitedly)
"Yes, pa, yes."

Clark reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small bag of sweets and offers one to Missie.
Yummy. Thank ya pa!

Clark offers a piece to Marty as she reaches for Clark's plate. She obliges. Clark rises from the table.

CLARK:
I better go an' unload the supplies.

Marty hears him carrying supplies up to the loft as she washes the dishes. Missie continues to suck on the candy happily. As the sun sets, Marty turns on a lamp. She picks Missie up and carries her to the bedroom.

MISSIE:
No, ma. I don't wanna'...

MARTY:
Yes, my dear, it's time fer ya to go to bed.

Marty prays with Missie and talks with her. She then hears a loud noise in the kitchen and lies Missie down in the bed. She scurries out to the kitchen where Clark is bent over a large crate. He is using a tool to pry it open. He begins to pull out a sewing machine made of shining metal and polished wood. Marty gasps. Clark does not look at her but begins to speak.

CLARK:
I ordered it some months back as a s'prise fer my Ellen. She liked to sew an' was al'ays makin' somethin' fancy-like. It was to be fer her birthday. She would have been twenty-one...tomorrow. (Looking up at Marty) I'd be proud if ya'd consider it yourn now. I'm sure ya can make use of it. I'll move it into yer room under the window iffen it pleases ya.

MARTY:
(Hiding astonishment)
Thank ya. Thank ya. Thet- thet'll be fine, jest fine.

Clark has tears in his eyes. He turns his head to gain control of his own emotions. Marty brushes past him quickly and walks outside into the starlit night.

MARTY:
(Passionately)

She stomps over, sits down on the grass and gazes up at the sky. She pauses in wonder.
It's mean...but it's beautiful. What was it Ma had said?

18. FLASHBACK- IN THE KITCHEN WITH MA

The two women sit at the table conversing earnestly.

MA:
(With wisdom)
Time...it is time that is the healer- time an' God. Iffen we can carry on one day at a time, the day will come when it gets easier an' easier, an' one day we surprise ourselves by even bein' able to laugh an' love agin.

19. PRESENT- ON THE LAWN

Marty rises from the grass and walks back into the kitchen. All traces of the sewing machine and crate are gone. Clark motions toward a large package wrapped with brown paper and tied with store twine sitting on the table.

CLARK:
I'm not sure what might be in there. I asked Missus McDonald at the store to make up whatever a woman be a needin' to pass the winter. She sent thet. I hope it passes.

Marty gasps. Clark continues, weary in tone and in stature.

CLARK:
Would ya like me to be a movin' it in on yer bed so's ya can be a sortin' through it?

Marty nods. He carries it to the bedroom and returns. Marty stands motionless.

CLARK:
It's been a long day. I think I'll be endin' it now.

Clark leaves the kitchen and Marty walks back to the bedroom. She fumbles to light a lamp, then grabs the scissors from the sewing basket in the corner. She anxiously cuts open the thread on the package, then pauses reflectively.

MARTY:
(Muttering)
Ya little fool. Ya can't be a takin' all this. Do ya know thet iffen ya did, ya'd be beholden to thet man fer years to come?

Tears run down Marty's cheeks. She begins to sort the contents of the package- material for undergarments and nighties, three lengths of cloth for dresses, two pieces of material
attached to a bonnet pattern, lace, warm stocking and a pair of shoes. Marty stands up and holds the material against her body.

MARTY:
Well, I'll take it. I won't be an embarrassment to any man.

20. IN THE LEAN-TO

The living quarters are essentially barren. Clark holds a handkerchief with delicate stitching that spells out "Ellen." He is sitting on the bed which is in poor shape. He leans back, and his mind begins to wander.

21. FLASHBACK- IN THE KITCHEN WITH ELLEN

Clark enters the kitchen with a few supplies. Ellen, a petite sophisticated woman, turns from the stove excitedly. Both she and Missie run to greet Clark with a kiss. Clark pulls out a pair of gloves for Ellen and a piece of candy for Missie.

ELLEN:
(Excitedly)
Oh, Clark! They're beautiful. Thank ya!

The excited chatter continues as they sort through the bag together.

22. PRESENT- IN THE LEAN-TO

CLARK:
Oh, Ellen...I miss ya so much. Now there's just a stranger here. A stranger in our house with our baby...

His voice trails off and he tips his head back further.

Fade to black.

23. AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE

Bright sun shines through the window in the kitchen as Clark, Marty and Missie sit at the breakfast table.

MARTY:
Ya goin' back to Jedd's today?

CLARK:
(In surprise)
Jedd has him a bit more to finish off, an' I wouldn't be none surprised iffen he'd work at it today. Me, though, I al'ays take a rest on the Lord's day. I
know it don't seem much like the Lord's Day with no meetin', but I try an' hold it as sech the best that I can.

MARTY:
(In a whisper, avoiding his eyes)
Course. I'd plumb fergot what day it be.

Clark is silent for a moment.

CLARK:
I been thinkin' as how me an' Missie might jest pack us a lunch an' spend the day in the woods. 'Pears like it may be the last chance fer a while. The air is gettin' cooler an' there's a feelin' in the air tht winter may be a mite anxious to be a comin'. We kinda enjoy jest spendin' the day lazyin' an' lookin' fer the last wild flowers, an' smart lookin' leaves an' all. Would tht suit yer plans?

MARTY:
Sure- sure- fine. I'll fix yer lunch right after breakfast.

Good!

Clark jumps up from the table and runs to the shed. Marty begins to clear the table and Missie claps her hands. Clark returns momentarily with a carrier on his back.

CLARK:
Fer Missie. I had to rig this up when I needed to take her to the fields an' a chorin' with me. She even had her naps in it as I tramped along. (He smiles faintly.) Little tyke got right heavy at times, too, fer sech a tiny mite. Reckon I'd better take it along today fer when she tires of walkin'.

Marty puts a lunch together quickly and Clark puts Missy into the carrier.

MISSIE:
Goodbye, mama! Bye-bye! Let's go, Pa!

Clark and Missie walk out the door and Marty waves goodbye to them. She then turns and walks excitedly into the bedroom and pulls out the fabric. She cuts out a pattern, then threads the needle on the sewing machine. She then sits down and begins to sew with zeal.

MARTY:
Wouldn't Clem be proud to see me in this? This is his favorite color.

She reaches over and picks up a piece of lace.
MARTY:
Clem al'ays did poke fun at what he called 'womens' frivols'.

24. IN THE FOREST

Meanwhile Clark and Missie walk through a wooded area. They walk up a hill to a little clearing where a small headstone protrudes from the ground. Clark takes Missie off his back as she begins to chatter. The words on the headstone are visible: Ellen Davis. May she rest in peace.

CLARK:
Alright, Missie. Let's have us some lunch.

MISSIE:
Okay, Pa.

CLARK:
(Bows his head reverently)
Dear Father, we thank ya for all ya done for us. Be with Marty an' help her in gettin' used to us. And, be with my Missie...it's hard without her ma...

Clark's voice trails off and he begins to cry. His shoulders shake gently. When he looks up Missie is already eating food from the basket.

25. AT THE SEWING MACHINE IN THE BEDROOM

Marty stands from the sewing machine.

MARTY:
Now fer dinner... What 'bout pan-fried chicken?

Marty walks outside and past the rose bush that has only one bloom. She walks by the garden that has already been harvested and on to the henhouse. She walks close to the coop, eying the chickens as they squawk and scurry away. She enters the coop and points at her intended victim- a cocky rooster.

MARTY:
That'n 'll do jest fine.. Come here you, come here.

Marty stretches out her hand. The other chickens continue to fly, squawk and whip up dirt like a whirlwind. Marty begins to chase the chicken grabbing for its legs. She falls in the dirt and has only a handful of dirty feathers. She gets up, her dress soiled and her hair out of place, and begins to chase the chicken again. Finally, she grasps a pair of legs. She picks up the chicken like a baby and carries it to the woodshed.
MARTY:
Yes, you oughta' make me a nice pan full...

The chicken squawks loudly and she stretches it across a chopping block. The chicken quiets as she reaches for an axe. The flopping resumes and Marty drops the axe to use both hands on the fowl. The scene is repeated over and over.

MARTY:
Ya dad-blame bird. Hold still!

Marty picks up the axe and swings down with all her strength. The rooster squawks, wrenches free and flies away. Marty screams and looks down at the chopping block where two small pieces of beak remain.

MARTY:
Serves ya right!

She kicks the beak fragments into the dirt and marches angrily toward the coop. She begins chasing the chickens again. As dust flies up, she finally grabs the legs of another chicken.

MARTY:
Let's go, you...

She carries him to the woodshed and stretches him out on the cutting block. He begins to flutter. She runs into the house, grabs two pieces of string from her package and runs back to the woodshed. Marty then carries the chicken out to a tree. She uses the string to tie the chicken's legs together. She then ties the other piece of string around the chicken's neck and to the tree. She puts the chopping block under its neck and picks up the axe.

MARTY:
There now...hold still.

Marty shuts her eyes and chops hard. The headless chicken begins to flop around, squirting blood on Marty's dress as she begins to scream.

MARTY:
Stop thet! Stop thet! Yer s'pose to be dead, ya- ya headless dumb thing!

She takes another swing with the axe, removing the chicken's wing. Marty flops against the shed and shields her face from the squirting blood. Finally, the chicken lies still.

MARTY:
Ya dad-blame bird!
26. BY THE STOVE IN THE KITCHEN

Marty stands over the stove in the kitchen turning the chicken. Clark and Missie return. Clark inhales deeply and his eyes get large.

   CLARK:
   It smells good, Marty...Let me go down to the barn an' milk the cows.

Clark walks outside past the woodshed. The chopping block is still there along with the bloody axe and string. Clark begins to chuckle.

   CLARK:
   Why that crazy woman...

He passes the coops that remains in disarray. Water pans and feeding troughs are overturned. Feathers and dirt are everywhere. Clark then looks up and sees the short-beaked rooster perched on the corral fence clicking in anger.

   CLARK:
   (Overwhelmed)
   Well, I never...

He begins to grin.

Fade to black.

27. AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE IN THE KITCHEN

Marty, Clark and Missie sit eating pancakes and bacon. Clark sips his coffee slowly.

   CLARK:
   I hope you 'member today be the day we go over to the Grahams to do the killin' fer the winter.

   MARTY:
   Yes, I 'member. Did ya kill me that rooster yet?

   CLARK:
   (Chuckles)
   Ya. I'll go an' git' him.

Clark stands up, stretches and walks outside. He returns carrying the beheaded and plucked rooster.

   CLARK:
   Ya might wanna' boil 'im 'stead of fryin' 'im. This'n be much larger.
Marty nods and puts the rooster to boil in her largest pan.

28. THE GRAHAM'S BARN WITH MUSIC UP FULL

The men kill animals and scrape and quarter them while the women make casings for the sausage and cure the other meats. The lard is set aside in large pales.

29. INSIDE THE GRAHAM'S

The group gathers around the table to eat the chicken Marty prepared. As they eat, Marty nervously eyes her bucket of lard in the corner of the room.

\[ \text{MA:} \\
\text{(Quietly)} \]
\[ \text{No use us both gittin' ourselves in a mess makin' soap. Marty, why don't ya leave them crocks here an' come over in the mornin' an' we'll do it all up together-like?} \]

\[ \text{MARTY:} \\
\text{Bless ya, Ma Graham. Ya know very well I'd be downright lost on my own tryin' to make soap fer the first time.} \]

Marty glances at Clark for his reaction.

\[ \text{CLARK:} \\
\text{Good idee.} \]

\[ \text{MARTY:} \\
\text{Thank ya, Ma. I'll be over in the mornin' jest as soon as I can.} \]

Marty and Clark thank their hosts and take Missie to the door. Outside they get into the wagon and ride home.

Fade to black.

30. IN THE KITCHEN

Marty clears dishes from the table. Clark sits finishing his cup of coffee.

\[ \text{MARTY:} \\
\text{I slept well last night. I 'bout wore out standin' all day yesterday.} \]

Marty takes off her apron and walks toward Missie's coat and bonnet.

\[ \text{CLARK:} \]
I've nothin' pressin' to take my time today. Thought I'd be a doin' the caulkin' here in the kitchen. Why don'cha jest leave Missie to home with me an' then ya won't need to worry ya none 'bout her gittin' under foot around those hot kettles.

MARTY:
Well, okay, then. Thank ya.

31. OUTSIDE THE GRAHAM'S HOMESTEAD

Marty walks outside to the wagon Clark has waiting for her. She climbs in and rides to Ma Grahams. Ma greets her outside.

MA:
Come in, Marty. Come in. It's so good to see ya.

Marty walks inside. The two begin to heat up the lard. Children are everywhere making noise, so the conversation is strained at points.

MARTY:
So, Ma, tell me more 'bout ya.

MA:
Well, where to begin... My first husband Thornton Perkins owned 'im a small store in town. He came to an early death and left me the business and three young 'uns to care fer. Why then ol' Ben Graham came along with good farm land an' the need fer a woman. He had four small ones taggin' behind.

MARTY:
(Tenderly)

The two women begin to pour the warm lard into deep barrels.

MA:
Why yes. We decided to join forces. 'Magine that- me a widow with three of my own and him a widower with four. We was quite a site walkin' through the town!

The two women sit down for a cup of coffee and a slice of cake.

MA:
Then we had six of our own. Now then, there's Sally Anne and Laura. They's seventeen- only two months apart. Ben's Laura is the oldest of the
two. Next comes Ben's Thomas, then my Nellie. I have a Ben of my own, then there's Ben's twins, Lem and Claude, and all the others, too.

MARTY:
Do they get 'long?

MA:
Why yes! 'Ceptin fer Sally Anne an' Laura. One's always tryin' to outdo the other'n. 'Specially Laura.

MARTY:
Why does she do it? Can't she see that Sally Anne practically worships her? She has no earthly reason to lord it over her.

Ma laughs.

MA:
When you have a few more o yer own, 'tall make sense then. (Pauses) Well, it be gettin' late.

Marty picks up her coat.

MARTY:
Thanks, Ma. Clark'll pick up the soap in a few days. I'll 'spect another visit from ya 'fore winter.

Ma smiles and gives Marty a hearty hug. She climbs into the wagon and rides toward home.

32. OUTSIDE THE DAVIS HOMESTEAD

Clark and Missie meet her outside. Clark and Missie take the team while Marty walks inside. She walks over to the freshly chinked walls and runs her hand over them.

MARTY:
Hmph. Just like new. And he didn't even leave a mess...

Fade to black.

33. IN THE KITCHEN

Marty hands Clark a list of supplies which he dutifully tucks in his shirt pocket as Marty's voice is heard aloud. Clark traces Missie's foot on a piece of paper which he also tucks in his shirt pocket. He walks outside and Marty carries Missie to the bedroom. Beside her chest stand the black and shiny new shoes. Her new coat and shawl hang on pegs on the wall next to two completed dresses.
MARTY (VO):
As the days passed we formed our routine. On Saturdays, Clark always went to town. I made 'im a list of things to git fer little Missie. When he left, I spent my time sewin'...and thinkin'...thinkin' 'bout Clem's baby growing inside me each day. I grew more an' more tire each day, but I wanted everythin' to go well- not just fer me an' the baby, but fer Clark an' Missie, too.

34. AT THE SEWING MACHINE

Marty works on a dress while Missie plays on the rug next to the bed.

MARTY:
Today, Missie, I'm a gonna finish my sewin'. I'll make ya somethin' pretty.

Marty stops working on the jumper and picks up the gray material Clark gave her. She hold it up to her cheek and rubs her hand across it.

MARTY:
An, Missie, I'm gonna make me a dress. Ya jest wait to see it. It's gonna be so grand, an' maybe- maybe when I be all through, there be enough material left to make ya somethin', too.

Missie stands up, walks over to Marty and begins to pat the material.

MISSIE:
Pretty. Pretty.

Marty begins to sew but stops abruptly after she glances at the clock on the nightstand.

MARTY:
Oh dear! Missie, I'm plumb sorry. It be long past yer dinner time. Ya must be starvin'. I'll git ya somethin' right away.

Marty carries Missie to the other room and holds the child on her lap while she eats a piece of bread. She then carries Missie back to the bedroom and puts her in the crib. Marty returns to her work at the sewing machine humming quietly. She then hears Clark's team coming toward the house.

MARTY:
Dad-burn! I haven't even thought me about supper!
She picks up Missie and runs to the kitchen. She puts Missie on the floor and begins to start a fire in the stove. She sets the table frantically. Clark enters with an armload of purchases.

CLARK:

Hello, little tyke.

Missie runs to him and he picks her up.

CLARK:

Wanna' see what yer pa got ya?

Missie nods her head and Clark presents a new coat, bonnet, long stockings, shoes and material for dresses. Missie screams wildly, hugs the news shoes, jumps up and down and runs in circles holding the long stockings. She then runs to the bedroom and back into the kitchen carrying the jumper Marty had been working on over her head.

MISSIE:


Clark looks at Marty with softened eyes. She pauses from her work and glances at him as well.

CLARK:

Yeah, Missie, very pretty.

He clears his throat.

CLARK:

I have somethin' fer you, Marty. (He hands her a small package.) This should help ya pass the winter months.

She opens the package and pulls out wool, knitting needles and small scraps of fabric.

MARTY:

I love knittin'. I never tried quiltin' before but thank ya.

Clark pulls out a picture book for Missie.

MISSIE:

Oh, Pa!

He pulls her up on his lap and they begin to look through the book as Marty turns back to the stove.
Dissolve to the breakfast table scene.

35. AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE

Clark is finishing his prayer at the breakfast table.

CLARK:

Amen.

MISSIE:

(Loudly)

Amen!

MARTY:

What air we gonna do with this long Lord's day afore us?

CLARK:

On the way to town yesterday, I stopped me at the Grahams to see if there be anythin' that I might be gettin' them in town. Ma asked that we come fer a visit an' dinner today. Who knows how many nice Sundays we be havin' afore winter sets it? I said I'd check with ya on it.

MARTY:

(Obviously relieved and pleased)

I'd be a likin' that.

Marty clears the table. Clark walks out to the lean-to. Marty carries Missie into the other room to get dressed. Clark returns quickly and stands in the kitchen wearing dress clothes. Missie runs from the bedroom wearing her new shoes, stockings, jumper and bonnet.

CLARK:

You look like a real little lady an' I'm right proud of ya, Missie.

MISSIE:

(Smiling)

Thank ya, Pa.

Marty appears in the kitchen wearing her new plain navy dress with lace trim at the throat and sleeves. She has on her new shoes, light bonnet and shawl. They walk outside with Missie chattering and climb into the wagon. Clark and Marty pause for a moment to look at each other but break the glance quickly.

36. AROUND THE KITCHEN TABLE AT THE GRAHAM'S
The men laugh loudly, and the women cut the children's food. Moments later, Jason Stern motions Sally Anne outside.

MA:
Go on. (To Marty) I think they'll be a courtin' soon. What 'bout you?

Marty smiles and begins to clear the dishes. The men walk outside. The children play.

MARTY:
Ma, could ya tell me 'bout Ellen? Seems tht I should be knowin' somethin' 'bout her, takin' over her house an' her baby an' all.

Ma sighs and looks off into space for a moment. When she begins to speak again, her voice is shaky.

MA:
Don't hardly know what words to be a tellin' it with. Ellen was young an' right pretty, too. Darker than you, she be, an' taller too. She was a merry and chattery sort. Loved everythin' an' everybody, seemed to me. She adored Clark an' he 'peared to think her somethin' pretty special, too. When Missie was born, ya should have see'd the two of 'em. Never see'd two people so excited- like a couple of kids they were. I delivered Missie. Fact is, I've delivered most babies here 'bout, but never did I see anyone else git quite tht excited over a newborn, welcome as they be. Well, Ellen, she was soon up an' fussin' over tht new baby. She thought she was jest beautiful, an' Missie be right pretty, too. Anyway the months went by. Clark an' Ellen was a doin' real good. Clark's a hard worker an' tht's what farmin' is all about. Ya git what yer willin' to pay fer in sweat an' achin' back. Well, things was a goin' real good when one day last August Clark came ridin' into the yard. He was real excited like an' I knew tht somethin' was wrong.

37. FLASHBACK- AT THE GRAHAM'S FRONT DOOR

Clark talks to Ma.

CLARK:
(Excitedly)
Ma! Can ya come quick? Ellen is in awful pain!

38. PRESENT- AROUND THE TABLE AT THE GRAHAM'S

MA:
I can hear him yet. So I went, yellin' to the girls what to do while I be gone.
39. FLASHBACK- ELLEN'S BEDROOM

Ellen lies in obvious pain on a large bed. Her body looks frail.

**MA:**
Ellen was in pain all right, tossin' an' rollin' on the bed, holdin' herself an' groanin'. She refused to cry out 'cause she didn't want Missie to hear her. So she jest bit her lip till she had it a bleedin'. Wasn't much that I could do but try to keep her face cooled. There was no doctor to go fer, an' we jest watched, hurtin' all over that we couldn't do anythin' fer her. Clark was torn between stayin' with Ellen an' carin' fer Missie. I never been so sorry fer a man. Well, the night dragged by an' finally 'bout four in the mornin' she stopped thrashin' so. I breathed a prayer of relief, but it wasn't to be long. She kept gettin' hotter an' hotter an' more an' more listless. I bathed her in cool water over an' over again, but it were no use.

40. PRESENT- AT THE GRAHAM'S TABLE

Ma stops for a moment. She takes a deep breath, then continues.

**MA:**
Thet evenin' we lost her, an' Clark...

She brushes away a tear and stands up.

**MA:**
But thet be in the past, child, an' no use goin' over it all again. Anyway, ya be there now to care fer Missie an' thet's what Clark be a needin'. Was awful hard fer him to do all his fall work totin' thet little one round on his back. I said I'd keep her on here, but I reckon Clark wanted her to know thet she be his an' somethin' special, not jest one of a brood. Besides he never did want to be beholden to anybody. There was a childless woman in town who would have gladly took her, but Clark would have none of it. Said she would have growed up so spoiled she would have been unfit fer even herself to stand; that's what Clark said. Anyway, Clark's prayers seem to be gittin' answered and Missie has you now an' a right good mama ya be a makin' too- sewin' that sweet little dress an' all.

Ma pauses and pats Marty's arm, who sits wide-eyed.

**MA:**
Yer doin' jest fine, Marty. Jest fine.

Ma turns her back for a moment and Marty's eyes drop.

**MARTY:**
(In a whisper)
Oh, Clem. Clem, I'm glad that you didn't have to bear pain like that.

Ma turns back toward her.

MA:
What'd ya say?

Marty stands to help Ma.

MARTY:
Oh, nothin', nothin' really...

MA:
Well, then, the menfolk will be looking for coffee, so we better get busy.

Fade to black.

41. AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE

Missie bangs her spoon on her plate.

CLARK:
Thursday be Missie's second birthday. I can hardly believe it.

Marty is silent. Her forehead wrinkles in thought.

CLARK:
Somethin' be a troublin' ya?

MARTY:
No... It's just that I don't know what you would want planned for Missie's birthday. Do ya have company? Have a party? Do somethin' different? (She shrugs) I don't know.

CLARK:
I see.

He gets up to refill their coffee cups. He sits down, pours cream in his cup and pushes his plate away. Missie gets restless and Clark lifts her down. She runs into the sitting room to find her book.

CLARK:
Funny thing, but I don't rightly remember any fixed thing that we be a doin' fer a birthday. Seems in lookin' back that they were all a mite different somehow. Missie now, she only had one afore an' she was a bit
young then to pay it much mind. (He hesitates.) I think though that it would be nice to be a havin' a cake fer her. I got a doo-dad in town last Saturday while I was there. I hope it pleases her. Jest a silly little thing really, but it looks like it would tickle a little 'un. I don't think that we be needin' company's help in celebratin'. She'll enjoy it jest as much on her own.

MARTY:
(Imploringly)
I been thinkin’. Seems that I don’t know much ‘bout Missie an’ seems as tho’ I should be a knowin’ a sight more iffen I be goin’ to raise her an’ all. Ya know how young ‘uns be. They like to hear their folks tell of when they did this an’ when they said that, an’ how cute an’ clever they was, an’ quick in their ways an’ all. Some day soon Missie’s goin’ to be wantin’ to hear sech things, an’ I should be able to tell her. The only thing I know ’bout her is her name.

CLARK:
(Laughing quietly)
I be thinkin’ that ya don’t really even know that! Her real name be Melissa- Melissa Ann Davis.

MARTY:
That’s a pretty name. I don’t be goin’ by my real name either. My real name be Martha, but I don’t much like it. All my family an’ friends call me Marty, ’cept my ma when she was mad. Then it was Martha, real loud like. Martha Lucinda- but tell me ‘bout Missie.

CLARK:
Well, Missie be born on November third, two years ago, ‘bout four o’clock in the mornin’.

Clark reflects for a moment.

42. FLASHBACK- IN THE KITCHEN

Ellen sits holding Missie. Clark looks down at her with pride.

CLARK:
She weren’t much of a bundle, seemed to me, an’ she was rather red an’ wrinkled, an’ had a good head of dark hair. She seemed to grow fast an’ change a lot right from the start, an’ afore ya knewed it she was a cooin’ an’ smilin’. By Christmas time she was most givin’ the orders round here it seemed. She was a good baby as babies go an’ slept through the night by the time she was three months old.
43. PRESENT- AT THE TABLE

CLARK:
I thought I'd picked me a real winner. Then at five months she started to cut her teeth. She turned from a sweet contented, smilin' darlin' into a real bearcat. Lucky fer us, it didn't last fer too long, though at the time it seemed ferever. Anyway, she made it through. So did we, an' things quieted down agin.

44. FLASHBACK- AT THE TABLE

Missie sits in her chair looking at a cake with a "one" drawn on in icing. Ellen and Clark watch her, smiling proudly.

Clark:
When she had her first birthday, she could already say some words. Seemed right bright for a little tyke, an' al'ays from as far back as I can remember she loved pretty things. Guess that's why she took so to the little whatever it be that ya sewed fer her.

45. PRESENT- AT THE TABLE

Clark smiles pleasantly.

'pretty'

CLARK:
Started walkin' 'fore her first birthday an' was soon climbin' to match it. Boy, how she did git around! One day I found her on the corral fence, top rail, when she be jest a wee'un. Got up there an' couldn't git down. Hangin' on fer dear life she was. She was gettin' to be a right good visitor, too. A lot of company she was. Chattered all the time an' more an' more there was gettin' to be some sense to it. One day she came in with a flower. Thrilled to pieces with it she was. Picked it right off the rose bush. The thorns had pricked her tiny fingers an' they was a bleedin'. But she never paid them no mind at all, so determined she be to take the to her mama. Thet flower is pressed in her mama's Bible.

Clark stops and looks at his coffee cup. He swallows, and his lips move without sound.

MARTY:
(Softly)
Ya don't need to tell me anymore. I know enough to be able to tell young Missie somethin' 'bout her young days. (She pauses.) I know how painful it be- to remember, an' anyway when the day comes that young Missie need hear the story of her mama- an' she should hear it, to be sure- but when that day comes, it's her pa that she should be a hearin' it from.
Marty rises from the table. Clark finishes his coffee slowly then goes outside.

46. BENEATH THE KITCHEN WINDOW

Marty sits washing clothes in a bucket. Missie plays on the floor while Marty's voice is heard over all.

MARTY (VO):
The days of the week went by slowly. I was relieved that there was always work to fill 'em. Between washin', cleanin', bread-bakin' and meal gettin', I hardly had time to do Missie's sewin'. The day of Missie's birthday was the best one of my visit so far.

The team rides up and Marty is stands. She sets the bucket and clothes aside as Clark enters the kitchen.

MARTY:
You be lookin' cold alright.

Marty pours him a cup of steaming coffee. She also brings muffins and honey to the table. He watches her closely.

CLARK:
Won't ya be a joinin' me? I hate to be a drinkin' coffee all alone.

MARTY:
(Surprised)
Ya be the one that be a needin' it. Ya be a chillin' yerself fer sure workin' out in that wretched wind an' all. Lucky ya be iffen ya don't be a puttin' yerself down over it. Come, ya'd better be drinkin' this while it be hot.

Clark crosses the room and sits down, smiling all the while.

CLARK:
(Good naturally)
I may be the one a needin' it, but I doubt that a few minutes at the table an' off yer feet be a hurtin' ya much either. Ya fuss too much, I be a thinkin'.

MARTY:
No. No, I don't fuss too much. I jest find that workin' sure beats moanin', that's all. But as ya say, a cup of coffee might be right good. I do declare, hearin' that wind howl makes my blood chill, even though it be warm in here.

She pours herself a cup of coffee and joins him at the table.
CLARK:
I came home early from plowin' 'cause a storm may be on the way. I wanted the rest of the garden things in the root cellar 'fore it struck.

Missie begins to cry, and Marty picks her up off the floor.

MARTY:
Hi there, Missie. Come to Mama.

Missie reaches for Marty. The two sit down for a moment, then Marty begins to put dinner on the table. Halfway through the meal, Marty leaps up and opens the cupboard. She pulls out a birthday cake with Missie's name spelled out in frosting.

MISSIE:
Pretty, pretty!

CLARK:
It's Missie's birthday cake. Missie is havin' a birthday. Missie was one year old. (He holds up one finger.) Now Missie is two years old. (He holds up two fingers.)

Clark reaches over to help Missie hold up two fingers.

CLARK:
See, Missie, two years old. Let me help ya. See, Missie, ya be two years old.

MISSIE:
Two- old.

CLARK:
Thet's right! Two years old, an' now we'll have some of Missie's birthday cake.

Marty cuts the cake and passes it out.

CLARK:
Mmm. Can I have a second piece?

Clark finishes the second piece and picks up a package from under the table. He lifts Missie onto his lap and presents her with the box.

CLARK:
Fer Missie's birthday. Look, Missie, look here in the box. This is fer Missie on her birthday.
He helps the child remove the lid. Clark lifts out the gift out of the box. He pumps it firmly and places it on the floor. It begins to spin and whirls out in many colors of red, blue, yellow and violet.

MISSIE:

Do it agin, pa!

Clark laughs while Marty walks into the bedroom. She returns with a soft blue shawl with pink rosebuds embroidered on it and tassels hanging from the bottom.

MARTY:

Missie, I have somethin' fer ya, too.

She holds out the gift.

CLARK:

(Wide-eyed)

Well, I be.. Missie, jest look what yer mama done made ya.

MISSIE:

Oh! Oh, Mama!

Marty looks away embarrassed and shy. Clark looks down at Marty sitting on the ground next to Missie. Her dress is pinned tightly to the floor under her knees. Clark sees her pregnant stomach protruding from the dress. Marty glances down, embarrassed, and moves her dress quickly.

Fade to black.

47. OUTSIDE THE DAVIS HOMESTEAD

Wind blows from the north. The horses huddle. Very few chickens appear outside the coop.

48. AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE

Marty, Clark and Missie sit at the breakfast table, heads bowed in prayer.

CLARK:

Thank ye, Almighty, fer the warm shelter both fer man an' fer beast. We need not fear the coldness of winter 'cause of yer great mercy. Amen.

They begin to eat slowly.

CLARK:
I be a leavin' fer town right away. Is there anythin' thtat ya be a needin'?

MARTY:

But, it's only Friday.

CLARK:

Yes'm, I know thtat, but I have some business tht I'd like to be a seein' to right away like, an' if a storm comes up we might jest have to sit tight a spell.

Marty leaves the table and begins to check her list. Clark sits mulling over his coffee.

CLARK:

Me bein' a man I didn't notice what I s'pose a woman would have see'd long ago. I had me no idea thtat ya was expectin' a young 'un.

Marty does not look away from her list.

CLARK:

I'm right sorry thtat I didn't know. I might have saved ya some hard things. From now on ya'll do no more totin' of them heavy water pails. When ya be needin' extra water fer washin' an' sech, ya be a lettin' me know.
(Pause) We be blessed with lots of good fresh milk. I hope ya be a takin' advantage of it. If there be anythin' ya need or anythin' I can do, I'd be obliged if ya let me know.

Marty continues to look over the list. She then turns and walks over to Missie, who is waving her pancakes wildly in the air.

CLARK:

Seein' as how I be goin' to town today anyhow, I figured as how maybe Missus McDonald would fix up a bundle of sewing pieces thtat ya be a needin' to sew baby things. If there be anythin' in particular thtat ya be settin' yer mind on, then try to describe it fer her on the list.

Marty stops and looks up, dazed for a moment.

MARTY:

Thank ya. I'm sure Missus McDonald be knowin' better'n me what I be needin'.

She hands him the completed list and looks out the window anxiously. Clark answers as if he has read her mind.

CLARK:
Plenty of time to git to town an' back. Iffen a storm should catch me, there be plenty of neighbors livin' between here an' town, an' I'd be able to take shelter with one of them if I be a needin' to.

MARTY:
(Stammering)
But, but, what 'bout the chores? I don't even know what to do or where to find the feed, or nuthin'.

Clark swings around to face her.

CLARK:
(Sternly)
Iffen a storm be a comin' an' I have to shelter an' don't make it home, ya don't leave this house. Do ya hear? (Pause) Don't ya dare worry ya none 'bout the hens or the hogs or even the milk cows. Nuthin'- I mean nuthin'- out there be so important tht I want ya out there a carin' fer it.

Clark turns from her and puts on a heavy jacket. He buttons it then reaches for his mittens.

CLARK:
Might be a fine day to be a piecin' a quilt. The little feller will be a needin' a warm un.

MARTY:
Yeah, he most likely will.

CLARK:
I'll be back fer chore time. (Quietly) I be right glad tht ya'll have a little 'un to remember 'im by...

Clark turns and is gone.

Dissolve to the Davis driveway.

49. THE DAVIS DRIVEWAY

Snow falls. Clark rides up and stops next to the house.

50. IN THE KITCHEN

Marty hears the team pull up and moves the coffee to the center of the fire box. Missie jumps up from her play area on the floor.

MISSIE:
Daddy comin'!

Marty smiles at Missie. Clark walks in with his arms full of bundles and his face red. At the sight of him, Missie begins to dance a wild jig.

MISSIE:

Clark chuckles. He puts down the parcels and swings the little girl up into his arms where she excitedly pats his cheeks.

MISSIE:
Cold, Daddy. Cold, Daddy.

MARTY:
Best ya be a warmin' up a bit 'fore ya start the chores.

Marty pours him a cup of coffee.

CLARK:
Sounds like a right good idea.

Clark takes off his heavy coat and hangs it by the fire. He stands for a moment warming his hands and then crosses to the table. Marty creams the coffee and places it before him.

CLARK:
Thet there fair-sized bundle be yourn. (He points.) Missus McDonald was right excited bout fixin' it up. Think she was a mite confused. Seemed to think it was my young' un. It bein' none of her business, I didn't bother none to set her straight.

He swallows a few more gulps of hot coffee. Marty faces turns red at the thought of fathering Clark's child.

CLARK:
I got a thinkin' later, though, thet maybe I should have said somethin' so I went back. 'Missus McDonald,' I sez, 'true my Missus be havin' a young 'un and true I'll be a treatin' 'im as one of mine, but also true thet his pa be her first husband an' thet bein' important to her, I wouldn't want folks gettin' things mixed up like.'

Marty looks relieved but says nothing. Clark finishes his coffee and gets his coat.

CLARK:
Well, I best be gettin'.