Clark hurries outside. Meanwhile, Marty grabs the parcel off the floor and hurries to her room. She gasps excitedly as she unwraps the brown store paper. She pulls out several pieces of material and holds them up.

**MARTY:**
Why, I'll have the best dressed baby in these parts! Where are ye Clem? I wish ya was sharin' all this with me.

She lays the fabric down on her bed and walk back to the kitchen. She tends to dinner as Clark returns from the cold.

**CLARK:**
Can't believe how much the temperature's dropped. Wind has a great deal to do with it.

Clark hangs his coat in the closet. He walks into the sitting room and lights a fire. Marty begins to put dinner on the table.

**CLARK:**
Guess it's time to be havin' more heat than jest the cook stove. It'll be right cold in yer room from now on. Do ya be a wantin' yer machine moved out to the sittin' room? There be plenty of room there fer it.

Marty looks directly at him. She slowly puts down her fork and answers.

**MARTY:**
Do ya mind seein' it a sittin' there?

**CLARK:**
S'pose I do some. But it's not as hard now as it was at first sight of it, an' twould be only foolhardy not to put it where it can be of use. I'll git used to it.

Marty clears the table and goes into the bedroom. Clark carries Missie into the sitting room. He sits down in a rocking chair with a thick book. Missie sits on the floor dressing a doll. Marty enters the room with her fabric and a pattern. She sits down at the sewing machine and begins to work.

Fade to black.

51. **THE COUNTRYSIDE**

Snow is heavy on the fields. Drifts are easily visible. Marty's voice is heard.

Marty (VO):
November slipped by slowly. The storms came and went. Snow lay heavy on the fields and big drifts rose 'round sheltered spots where the wind had shifted the snow. Activity on the small homestead did not cease 'cause of the weather.

52. IN THE WOODS

Clark walks through the woods surveying the trees.

MARTY (VO):
On the fairer days Clark spent his time with Dan and Charlie up in the wooded back country gatherin' logs for the comin' year. On the more miserable days, more time was spent in chorin' to try to ease the animals through the storms.

53. IN THE KITCHEN

Marty sits at the table kneading dough while Missie plays on the floor.

MARTY (VO):
I kept busy, too. Carin' fer Missie, keepin' the house, bakin' bread, washin' mendin' and ironin'. In the evenin's I gladly went to my sewin'. I already picked out a name fer the baby- Claridge Luke; Claridge after his pa, and Luke after mine.

54. OUTSIDE THE DAVIS HOMESTEAD

Clark rides away in the wagon with two hogs in the back. He fades to almost a speck on the snowy horizon.

MARTY (VO):
Clark's trips to town grew more frequent, some fer three or four days at a time. One day he left with two of the hogs. Each time I welcomed the site of 'im returnin' more an' more. There became a certain 'mount of comfort in the familiar.

Fade to black.

55. AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE

Clark, Marty and Missie sit with heads bowed.

CLARK:
Our God, as we be nearin' the season of yer Son's birth, make our hearts thankful that He came, an' help us to be a lovin' our neighbor with a love like He showed us. Amen.

MARTY:
Talkin' 'bout Christmas already. Oh, my, it be only two weeks away an' I haven't even been a thinkin' on it. I had forgot all 'bout how close Christmas be.

Marty stops to blow on Missie's porridge. Clark looks up from his eating.

CLARK:
I know Christmas be a mite hard to be a thinkin' on this year. Iffen it be too hard fer ya, we can most ferget the day, 'cept fer reading of the Story an' maybe a sock fer young Missie.

MARTY:
No, thet wouldn't be right. Missie needs her Christmas- a proper one like, an' I reckon it may do us good, too. We can't stay back there in the past nursin' our sorrow- not for her sake, nor fer our own. Christmas seems to me, be a right good time to lay aside hurtin' an' look fer somethin' healin'.

Clark's eyes widen. When he recovers, he responds.

CLARK:
Ya be right of course. So what ya be plannin'?

MARTY:
Well, I'll git me to doin' some Christmas bakin'. Maybe Ma has some special recipes she'll share. Then we'll have a tree fer Missie. Christmas Eve we'll put it up after she be tucked in, an' we'll string pop-corn an' make some colored chains, an' have a few candles fer the windows, an' we'll kill a couple of the finest roosters, an' I'll find me somethin' to be a makin' fer Missie...

The excitement shows in Marty's eyes. Clark begins to get caught up in the excitement. Missie looks back and forth across the table.

CLARK:
Roosters nuthin'. I'll go myself an' buy us a turkey from the Vickers. Missus Vickers raises some first-rate 'uns. Maybe there be somethin' we can be a makin' fer Missie together. I'll ride over to Ma today an' git the recipes, or better still, it looks like a decent day. Ya be wantin' me to hitch ole Dan an' Charlie so ya can be a goin' yerself?

MARTY:
(Almost a plea)
Oh, could I? I'd love to see Ma fer a chat iffen yer sure it be all right.

Clark picks Missie up from her chair. He puts on her coat and mittens. He then grabs his own coat and puts it on. When Marty returns she is wearing the long coat Clark bought her. The buttons do not meet because of her protruding stomach. She holds a shawl in her right hand and smirks.

MARTY:
Well, guess I'll jest have to cover up the rest a' me with this.

56. INSIDE THE GRAHAM'S

Marty sits writing down recipes as Ma sorts through the piles of recipes on the table. Marty's voice is heard over all.

MARTY (VO):
The day with Ma was a real treat. We poured over Ma's recipes. I carefully wrote down everythin' - includin' how to stuff and roast a turkey. For the first time in months I began to feel alive again. The day went all too quickly. Before I knew it, Clark was returnin' fer me.

57. IN THE WAGON

Clark, Marty and Missie ride away from the Graham's. Two turkeys squawk intermittently in the back of the wagon.

MARTY:
Do ya spose- I mean, would ya'all mind iffen we had the Grahams come fer Christmas dinner?

CLARK:
(In shock)
All of 'em?

MARTY:
Course all of 'em. I know there be thirteen of 'em an' three of us; thet makes sixteen. The kitchen table, stretched out like, will hold eight. Thet's the four grown-ups an' the four youngest of the Grahams. Missie'll be in her chair. Thet leaves seven Graham young'uns. We'll fix 'em a place in the sittin' room an' Laura an' Sally Anne can look to 'em.

Clark laughs and holds up a hand to stop her chatter.

CLARK:
I don't know... Seems to me it be a pretty big order, gettin' on a Christmas dinner fer sixteen, an' servin' it in our small quarters, an' ya bein' the way ya are an' all.

MARTY:
(Scoffing)
Pawsh! There be nuthin' wrong with the way I be. I feel as pert now as I ever did. As to fixin' the dinner, I'll have as much of that done ahead as I can, afore the house packs jam tight. Then t'won't be sech a problem. When they gits there Ma an' the girls will give a hand- an' with the dishes too. Oh, my- (Squeals)- The dishes! Clark, do we have enough dishes to set so many?

CLARK:
I don't know, but iffen ya don't, Ma'll bring some of hers along.

MARTY:
Good!

Marty smiles to herself victoriously.

MARTY:
It be settled then.

Dissolve to the sitting room.

58. IN THE SITTING ROOM

Clark sits on the floor sanding a piece of wood. Marty sits in a chair stitching by hand on a delicate scrap of fabric. A Christmas tree stands bare in the corner of the room.

MARTY (VO):
Clark an' I set to work on a doll house fer Missie. Clark did the buildin' an' I did the sewin'. Things started to take shape. I even found time to work on a lil' somethin' fer Clark. But we spent most of our time preparin' to have the Grahams over fer Christmas dinner. Clark killed the bird an' I stored up baked goods.

Clark and Marty stand and walk over to the tree. Marty picks up strung popcorn and the two begin to decorate the tree.

MARTY (VO):
On Christmas Eve, we put Missie to bed a little early. We put up the tree an' hung her sock. I even put wild nuts in a basket by the fireplace for roasin'. Everythin' seemed perfect.
Dissolve to Marty's bedroom.

59. IN MARTY'S BEDROOM

Marty sits up in her bed and looks around. It is somewhat dark in the room. She dresses quickly and walks into the kitchen.

MARTY:
I cain't believe this cold!

Marty lights a lamp, then starts fires in the kitchen and sitting room. She rubs her hands for warmth and walk over to the frost-covered window pane. She scratches a small opening with her fingers and presses her face to the pane to look out. Outside, an angry wind swirls heavily falling snow, piling drifts in mountainous proportions.

MARTY:
(Angrily and shaking her fist)
Go ahead! Go ahead an' howl! We have the turkey ready to go in the oven. We have lots of food. We have our tree. We have Missie- we'll- we'll jest still have Christmas!

She wipes her tears on her apron and turns. She jumps when she sees Clark standing there, boots in hand, watching her. He clears his throat and smirks. He then points to numerous jars of pickles and cabbage on the floor.

CLARK:
My word. What we ever gonna be a doin' with all this food? We'll have to spend the whole day a eatin' on it.

Marty moves toward the cupboard and begins to prepare the turkey for roasting. Clark sits down and begins to lace his boots.

MARTY:
I do hope thet the Grahams haven't been caught short-fixed fer Christmas. Us a sittin' here with so few an' all this food, an' them sittin' there with so many...

Clark sits open-mouthed. He then begins to speak persuasively.

CLARK:
Ma's too smart to be took off guard like. She knows this country's mean streak. I don't think they be a wantin' at all.

MARTY:
(Relieved)
I be right glad to hear thet. The storm had me a worryin'.
Clark sits quietly for a moment, then hurries toward the turkey.

CLARK:
Best ya let me be a liftin' thet bird. He's right heavy.

Marty nods and Clark puts the turkey in the oven. Marty sits down at the table.

MARTY:
Seems the storm nearly won...but it can't win unless you let it, can it?

Clark reaches over and touches her hand. His voice is gentle.

CLARK:
I'm right proud of ya.

Marty blushes, then speaks quickly to cover her reaction to the contact.

MARTY:
We'll have to cook the whole turkey, but we can freeze what we can't eat. I'll put the vegetables in smaller pots an' cook only what we be a needin'. The rest will keep fer a while in the cold pit. The bakin'-

She lifts her hand toward the baking and begins to laugh.

MARTY:
-we be eatin' thet till spring iffen we don't git some help.

CLARK:
Thet's one thing thet I don't be complaining 'bout. Here I was a worryin' 'bout all those Graham young 'uns with their hefty appetites a comin' an' not leavin' anythin' fer me, an' now look at me, blessed with it all.

MARTY:
(In mocked shock)
Clark, did you go an' pray this storm?

Clark laughs heartily as does Marty. She turns to the coffee pot and pours two steaming cups. Clark gets the cream.

MARTY:
Well, we may as well have some bakin' to go with it. Gotta git started on it sometime. What ya be fancyin'?

CLARK:
Hmm...how 'bout one of 'em spicy tarts?
Marty grabs a spicy tart for Clark and a shortbread cookie for herself. She sits down at the table and they begin to eat together.

**CLARK:**
We used to play a game when I was a kid. Haven't played a game fer years, but it might be fun. It was drawed out on a piece a paper or a board an' ya used pegs or buttons. While ya be busyin' about, I'll make us up one.

Missie cries and the conversation stops abruptly. Clark walks in and picks up Missie. The three go into the sitting room where Missie immediately spies her sock and the doll house.

**MISSIE:**
Oh, Chris'as bootiful!

Missie runs back and forth between the sock and the doll house. Clark and Marty laugh. After a moment, Clark gets up to go outside. After the door slams, Marty goes into the kitchen to check on the meal. Missie begins to coo.

**MARTY:**
If only my Clem were here, the day'd be perfect.

Clark returns from the cold, his cheeks red, and Marty begins to set the table. After all the food is on the table, Clark begins to pray.

**CLARK:**
Father, sometimes, Lord, we be puzzlin' 'bout yer ways. Thank ya, Lord, thet the storm came well afore the Grahams be a settin' out. We wouldn't want 'em caught in sech a one. An' Lord, thank ya fer those who share our table, an' bless this day of yourn. May it be one thet we can remember with warm feelin's even if the day be cold. Thank ya, Lord, fer this food thet ya have provided by yer goodness. Amen.

**MISSIE:**
Amen. The house- thanks, house.

**MARTY:**
I believe she be wantin' ya to say thanks fer her doll house.

**CLARK:**
Is thet it? Okay, Missie, we pray again. An' thank ya, Lord, fer Missie's doll house. Amen.

They all begin to eat heartily.
CLARK:
Yer turnin' out to be a right fine cook.

Marty blushes and they continue to eat. As they slow down, Clark comments.

CLARK:
It's time fer the readin' of the Christmas story.

Missie claps her hands. Clark picks her up from the chair and Marty follows absent-mindedly behind the two. They position themselves in the sitting room and Clark begins to read in a passionate voice.

CLARK:
And, there went up a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.

Clark continues to read, but Marty's voice is heard over all.

MARTY (VO):
I realized I'd never heard anythin' so beautiful. I began to think of my own baby- wouldn't be a carin' fer my son to be born in a barn. Don't suppose that God was a wantin' it thet way either, but no one had room fer a wee baby. Still- God did watch over Him, sendin' angels to tell the shepherds an' all. An' the wisemen, too, with their rich gifts. Yes, God was a carin' 'bout his Son.

CLARK:
Well, Missie, it's time fer yer bed. Come on.

Clark picks Missie up and walks out of the room. Marty reaches over and grabs the Bible. She lays it on her lap and begins to thumb through the pages. Clark quickly returns to the room. Marty hands him the Bible.

MARTY:
(Shyly)
That was nice, Clark. Real nice.

Clark smiles and reveals a small package. He hands it to Marty. She looks stunned and slightly embarrassed. She begins to unwrap the package and finds a dresser set with comb, brush and hand mirror. Hand-painted flowers grace the backs in pale golds and oranges. The set is ivory in color. Marty gasps.

MARTY:
Why, Clark...
She turns the mirror over in her hand and notices the initials M.L.C.D. on the handle.

MARTY:
(Overwhelmed)
Martha...Lucinda...Claridge...Davis... (Tears stream down her cheeks.)
My name...you've given me back my name. (In a whisper) It's beautiful, really beautiful an' I- I jest don't know how to thank ya.

Clark nods and then sits down in the chair. Marty leaves the room with the gift and walks into the bedroom. She puts the set down on the chest in the room. She then picks up the scarf she made for Clark.

MARTY:
No. It won't do. It's jest not good enough!

Marty shoves the scarf in a drawer.

Fade to black.

60. IN THE KITCHEN

Marty stands over the stove.

MARTY:
Seems on a new day, of a new year, somethin' good should be happenin'.

Marty looks out the window and sees three deer grazing in the yard. Marty rushes back to the bedroom.

MARTY:
Missie, come see.

Marty picks up Missie and carries her to the window.

MARTY:
Look, Missie.

Marty points toward the deer.

MISSIE:
(Excited)
Oh-h. Doggies.

MARTY:
No, Missie. (Giggles) It's not doggies. It be deer.
MISSIE: Deer?

MARTY: That's right, ain't they pretty, Missie?

MISSIE: Pretty.

Clark opens the door to the house, and the deer begin to run off.

MISSIE: Pa-deer-they jump!

CLARK: So ya saw 'em, eh?

MARTY: (In awe) Weren't they somethin'?

CLARK: They be right nice all right, though they be a nuisance, too. Been noticin' their tracks gettin' in closer an' closer. Wouldn't wonder that one mornin' I be a findin' 'em in the barn with the milk cows.

Marty laughs. She begins to put breakfast on the table and then hears the sound of a team approaching. She rushes to look out the window.

MARTY: Well, my word, it be Ma an' Ben.

The Grahams enter and the two families exchange greetings. Clark and Ben walk into the sitting room. Ma and Marty sit down at the table.

CLARK: We need to start plannin' the crops, Ben. What do ya think?

BEN: Well...(His voice trails off as the two walk away.)

MARTY: Imagine thinkin' of plantin' now with ten-foot drifts standin' on the corn fields!

MA:
We missed bein' with ya at Christmas. But, we couldn't turn down Clark's offer fer today.

MARTY:
So that's it. An' he didn't tell me fer fear it might be ruined agin by 'mean' weather, as he calls it.

Ma picks up her crocheting and Marty gets a sock she is crocheting. They work as they visit.

MA:
Seems most every time I turn around Jason Stern is there. He come Christmas Eve and asked permission fer Sally Anne an him to be 'a marryin' when the preacher comes fer his spring visit. He seems a right good young man an' I should feel proud-like, but somehow it be hard to give up my Sally, her not yet bein' eighteen, though she will be, jest by the marryin' time.

MARTY:
Why I was barely eighteen when Clem asked fer my hand. It seems so long ago.

MA:
That Jason, he already be a cuttin' logs fer to build a cabin. Wants 'em ready fer spring so there can be a cabin raisin' an' a barn raisin' too. Workin' right hard he is, an' his pa's a helpin' him. He's gonna farm the land right next to his pa. Well, we couldn't say no, Ben an' me, but we sure gonna miss her happy ways an' helpin' hands. I think it be troublin' Laura, too. She jest not been herself the last few days. Moody an' far-off like. She always was a quiet one, but now she seems all locked up in herself like. Bothers me, it does.

Ma stops and looks off into the distance for a moment.

MA:
We's all gotta settle in an' add to Sally Anne's marriage things- quilts an' rugs an' sech. Got a heap to do twixt now an' spring.

Ma pauses for a moment, then completely changes topics.

MA:
How be things a comin' with the Doc?

MARTY:
(Puzzled)

What Doc?
MA:
Why the one Clark be a workin' on to git to come to town. The one he be a makin' all the trips fer an' gettin' all the neighbors to sign up fer. He's most anxious like to git him here afore thet young'un of yourn makes his appearance.

Marty looks dumbfounded.

MA:
Hasn't he been a tellin' ya?

Marty shakes her head.

MA:
Hope I haven't spilled the beans, but every'one else in the whole west knows 'bout it, seems to me. Thought you'd be a knowin' too. But then maybe he thought it best ya not be gettin' yer hopes up. Might be ya jest not mention my big mouth to him, huh?

Marty shakes her head, dumbly agreeing.

MARTY:
That explains the trips and...

Marty rises to pour coffee.

MARTY:
Let's git lunch together fer everyone.

Ma and Marty set the table and call in Clark and Graham. When they sit down, Ben takes a bite and smiles.

BEN:
You be a right good cook, Marty.

MARTY:
I should be. Yer cook taught me!

After they finish eating, the Grahams rise to leave. They exchange comments, then the Grahams leave. Marty turns to Clark with a twinkle in her eyes.

MARTY:
Thank ya so much fer invitin' them. Ma let it slip, not knowin' thet I didn't know. I noticed though thet ya didn't invite all of those young'uns with the hearty appetites!
The two begin to laugh.

CLARK:
I been thinkin' 'bout where this new baby's gonna sleep. I've set to buildin' Missie a bigger bed so the baby can have the crib.

With that remark, he puts on his coat and leaves. Marty turns to Missie.

MARTY:
Come with Mama, Missie. Mama wants to show ya somethin'.

Missie and Marty walk to the bedroom where Marty pulls tiny garments from the drawer. She shows them to Missie.

MARTY:
Look, Missie. These are fer the new baby. Mama's gonna get a new baby fer Mama and Missie. Jest a tiny little baby, only 'bout so big. Missie can help Mama take care of the baby.

Missie watches Marty's face intently.

MISSIE:
Ba-by. Ba-by, fer Mama an' Missie?

MARTY:
Thet's right. A baby fer Missie. Look, Missie, right now the baby is sleepin' in here.

Marty points to her stomach. She lays Missie's hand on her stomach and Missie's eyes widen.

MARTY:
Thet's the baby, Missie. Soon the baby will sleep in Mama's bed. He'll come to live with Mama an' Missie an' we'll dress 'im in these pretty clothes an' bundle 'im in these soft blankets, an' we can hold him in our arms, 'stead of how Mama be holdin' 'im now.

MISSIE:
Mama's baby.

Marty pulls the little girl to her and laughs with glee.

MARTY:
Oh, Missie, it's gonna be so much fun!
Marty and Missie walk back into the kitchen. Marty hears the team approaching and looks out the window. Clark has a large object in the back of the sleigh.

MARTY:
Well, I'm sure that be no doctor.

Clark walks inside carrying the surprise purchase—a rocking chair.

MARTY:
A new rocking chair?

CLARK:
Right. I vowed long ago that iffen there ever be another baby in this house, there gonna be a rockin' chair to quiet it by.

MARTY:
(Lightly)
Well, best ya sit ya down an' show Missie how it works afore ya go off a chorin'.

Clark pulls Missie onto his lap and snuggles her down. The two begin to rock for a moment.

CLARK:
Well, I best be tendin' to the chorin'.

Clark leaves, and Missie continues to rock in the chair.

MARTY:
It's gonna be so much fun to have. Jest imagine me with my young'un all dressed up fancy like, an' me a sittin' there rockin' 'im. I can jest hardly wait.

Clark returns.

MISSIE:
Daddy, come.

CLARK:
Hold on, Missie, 'til yer pa gits his coat off. (Laughs) I'll come- I'll come.

He hangs up his coat and Missie walks toward him.

MISSIE:
Come see.
She grabs his hand and walks him over to Marty. She points at Marty's stomach.

MISSIE:
Look- ba-by. Ba-by fer Missie.

Marty flushes and Clark grins.

CLARK:
Well, I reckon it be at thet.

He picks Missie up.

CLARK:
So Missie is gonna git a new baby, an' we'll rock 'im in there. We'd better be a gittin' some practice, don't ya s'pose? Let's rock a mite while yer mama gits on the supper.

Clark and Missie walk over to the chair and sit down.

Fade to black.

61. THE SITTING ROOM

Clark and Marty both sit in chairs relaxing.

CLARK:
I've been a thinkin', seems yer time must be gittin' purty close. Seems ya might feel more easy like iffen Ma could come a few days early an' be a stayin' with ya fer a spell.

MARTY:
Do ya really think thet she could?

CLARK:
Don't know why not. Sally Anne an' Laura be right able to care fer the rest. Good practice fer Sally Anne. Hear she be a needin' to know how afore long. I'll ride over an' have a chat with Ma. I hope we won't be a keepin' her fer too long.

MARTY:
(Under her breath)
Oh, me too- me, too.

Marty begins to rub her stomach as Clark gets up to leave.

62. AT THE FRONT DOOR
Ma enters, and Marty greets her. Marty's voice is heard above all.

MARTY (VO):
Ma arrived and I felt much better. A few mornin's later, I awoke in pain.

63. IN MARTY'S BEDROOM

Marty is lying in the bed holding her stomach.

MARTY:
Ma, Ma. Come quick!

Ma enters the room. She walks over and sits down beside Marty on the bed.

MARTY:
I jest feel right miser'ble.

Ma lays a hand on Marty's stomach and waits for another contraction.

MA:
Good. They be nice an' firm. It be on the way.

Ma hurries into the kitchen. Marty continues to moan in the background. Ma puts more wood in the stove and fills a large pot with water and places it on the stove. Clark walks in pale-faced.

MA:
Now ya stop a frettin'. I know thet she be a little thing, but she be carryin' the baby well. I checked a minute ago. He dropped down right good an' he seems to be turned right. It only be a matter of time 'til ya be a holdin' 'im in thet rockin' chair.

A loud cry comes from Marty and Ma hurries off into the room. Clark sinks down in a chair with an even whiter face.

CLARK:
Oh, God. It's up to you an' Ma now. I didn't git the Doc, God. Please help Ma now. She's delivered lotsa babies. Help her now with this 'un.

Clark lays his head down on the table.

64. IN THE BEDROOM

Marty continues to moan. Ma picks Missie up and carries her into the kitchen. The door to the house slams shortly thereafter. Ma returns to the bedroom and holds Marty's hand.
Marty's face and hair are damp. Her lips are white from being clenched. Ma offers encouraging words. Finally, with one big push and scream, the baby cries. Marty lies back in relief.

MA:

He's jest fine. A fine big boy.

Ma turns around toward a tub of hot water and the blankets. She washes off the baby and Marty's heavy breathing is heard. Ma turns around and hands Marty the tiny bundle.

MARTY:

Oh, Ma. He's- he's beautiful.

65. IN THE KITCHEN

Ma calls out for Clark and Missie.

MA:

(Shouting)

He's here, an' he's a dandy!

Clark runs into the kitchen carrying Missie.

CLARK:

She's okay?

MA:

Fit as a fiddle. She done a great job an' she's got a fine boy. Iffen ya slow down a mite an' take yerself in hand, I may even let ya git a small peek at 'im.

Clark takes off his coat as well as Missie's hurriedly.

66. IN THE BEDROOM

Clark looks down at Marty. She looks frail in the bed. Her damp loose hair is lying against the pillow, but she smiles gallantly. She holds up the baby toward Clark. The baby has one small fist clenched against his red cheek.

CLARK:

He's a real dandy. What ya be a callin' 'im?

MARTY:

He be Claridge Luke.

CLARK:
Thet's a fine name. What the Luke be for?

MARTY:

My pa.

CLARK:

He'd be right proud could he see 'im. His pa'd be right proud, too, to have sech a fine son.

Marty nods.

CLARK:

Claridge Luke Davis. Right good soundin' name. Bother ya any iffen I shorten it to Clare sometimes?

MARTY:

Not a'tall.

Missie begins to squirm, then points to the baby.

MISSIE:

Ba-by?

CLARK:

Yah, Missie, baby. That's the baby thet yer mama done got ya. Little Clare, he be.

MISSIE:

Rock- baby?

CLARK:

(Laughs)

Oh no, not yet awhile. First the baby an' yer mama have to have a nice long rest. We'd best be goin' now an' let them be.

Clark and Missie leave the room. Marty smiles slightly.

MARTY:

I do declare, I think thet be the hardest work I ever did in my whole lifetime.

Ma reenters the room with a cup of steaming tea. Marty sits up and takes a sip. She then lies down and shuts her eyes.

67. IN THE SITTING ROOM
Clark sits in the rocking chair holding Missie on his lap. Both have their heads bowed in prayer.

**CLARK:**
Thank ya, Father, thank ya for helping Ma, and fer Marty's safe birthin' an' that fine new boy. Amen.

Dissolve to the kitchen.

**68. AT THE KITCHEN TABLE**

Marty and Ma sit at the table. Marty drinks milk and holds the baby. Ma drinks coffee.

**MARTY:**
Feels good to be gettin' up agin. I sure am thankful fer all yer help.

**MA:**
Yeah, things do be a goin' fine. Ya take care o' yerself an' things be jest okay. I'll have Clark drive me on home tomorrow.

**MARTY:**
How's things with Sally Anne?

**MA:**
Ya know, she seems so young yet. But ya know ya can't say no once a young 'un has the notion.

**MARTY:**
(Protesting)
But she's not jest bein' a strong-willed girl, she jest be in love. Don'cha remember, Ma, what it was like to be so young an' so in love that yer heart missed beatin' at the sight o' him an' yer face flushed when ya wasn't wantin' it to? 'Member the wild feelin' that love has?

**MA:**
(Slowly)
Yeah, I reckon. Though 'twas so long ago. When I met Thornton, guess I didn't behave myself much better than Sally Anne be a doin'.

**MARTY:**
What was it like, Ma, when ya lost Thornton?

**MA:**
When I lost Thornton? Well, it be a long time ago now. But I 'member it still, though it don't pain me sharp like it used to. Myself- way down it wanted to die, too; but I couldn't let it, me havin' three little ones to look...
to. I kept fightin' on, yet all the time I only felt part there. The rest of me seemed to be missin' or numb or somethin'.

MARTY:
I know what ya mean. Then ya met Ben.

MA:
Yeah, then I met Ben. I could see he be a good man an' one ya could count on.

MARTY:
An' ya fell in love with 'im.

MA:
No, Marty, there was no face-flushin' an' fast-heart skippin'. No, it be different with Ben. I needed 'im, an' he needed me. I married 'im not fer love, Marty, but fer my young 'uns- an' his.

Ma stops and studies her coffee. She turns it around and around in her hand.

MA:
Fact be, Marty...fact be, at first I felt- well, guilty like. I felt like I be a- a loose woman, a sleepin' with a man I didn't feel love fer.

MARTY:
(In a whisper)
I never knewed. I never woulda' guessed thet ya didn't love Ben.

MA:
Lan' sake, girl! Thet were then. Why I love my Ben now, ya can jest bet I do. Fact is, he's been a right good man to me an' I 'spect I love 'im more'n love myself.

MARTY:
When- when an' how did it happen? The head spinnin' an' the heart flutterin' an' all?

MA:
No, there never been thet. See- I learnt me a lesson. There's more than one way thet love comes. Oh, sure sometimes it comes wild-like, makin' creatures into wallerin' simpletons. I've see'd 'im, I've been there myself; but it doesn't have to be thet way, an' it's no less real an' meanin'ful iffen it comes another way. Ya see, Marty, sometimes love comes sorta stealin' up on ya gradual like, not shoutin' bold words or wavin' bright flags. Ya ain't even aware it's a growin' an' growin' an' gettin' stronger until- I don't
know. All the sudden it takes ya by surprise like, an' ya think, 'How long I been a feelin' like this an' why didn't I notice if afore?'

Marty stirs then shivers. She gets up to pour more coffee.

MA:

No, Marty. I best be gettin'. I'll go down an' see if I can get that Clark to take me home.

Marty hugs Ma and thanks her. Ma picks up a small bag and walk outside. Marty glances down at her baby. She hums a soft tune and walks to her bedroom to put the baby in the crib. When she returns to the kitchen, she has paper and a writing utensil. She sits down and begins to write, reading her letter aloud.

MARTY (VO):

Dear Ma and Pa, I done had the baby and named him Claridge Luke. Little Clare, as Clark calls 'im, is a happy young fella. Ma Graham stayed on fer a few days and helped me out. Clark is choppin' extra logs this winter. He told me the cabin was too small, an' come spring he plans to tear off the lean-to an' add a few bedrooms. I don't know yet if I'll be comin' back East. Clark ain't said much 'bout it lately. I wonder if he might have forgot. Love to you both. Marty.

Dissolve to the kitchen.

69. IN THE KITCHEN

Marty sits in a chair in the kitchen churning butter. She hears a knock on the door and gets up. When she opens the door, Wanda Marshall stands there holding a small gift. Marty looks surprised.

MARTY:

Wanda, so glad thet ya dropped by!

Wanda walks inside and Marty offers her a chair. The two sit down and Wanda hands Marty the small package.

MARTY:

Wanda, ya didn't have'ta do this.

Wanda looks down shyly. Marty opens the gift quickly and pulls out a small baby bib, carefully embroidered.

MARTY:

(In admiration)

This is beautiful!
WANDA:
I have nothing else to do.

MARTY:
Lan' sake, seems I never find time fer nuthin' since young Clare came along. Even my evenin's don't give me much time fer jest relaxin'.

Wanda's eyes wander as she searches the house.

WANDA:
Could I see the baby?

MARTY:
(Heartily)
My, yes. He be havin' a sleep right now- he an' Missie- but iffen we tippy-toe in, we can have us a peek. Maybe we'll be able to have us coffee afore he wakes up wantin' his dinner.

Marty leads the way to the bedroom. Wanda looks to Missie with her mussed up curls and sleep-flushed cheeks.

WANDA:
She's a pretty child, isn't she?

MARTY:
Missie? Yeah, she be a dollie tht 'un.

They turn toward Clare's crib. His dark hair shows above the blanket. His small hands are free and one tiny fists holds the corner of the blanket. When Marty turns around, Wanda is rushing from the room. Marty bends over and kisses Clare on the head. When she walks into the kitchen Wanda is looking out the window. She turns slowly. Her cheeks are stained with tears.

WANDA:
I'm sorry. He's- he's a beautiful baby, just perfect.

The women sit down at the table. Wanda puts her hand in her lap and keeps her eyes low for a moment. She looks up and makes an effort to smile.

WANDA:
I'm sorry. I really am. I didn't know that it would be so hard. I mean, I had no idea that I'd react so foolishly. I'd- I'd love to have a baby. My own, you know. Well, I did. I mean- that is, I have had babies of my own- three in fact, but they've not lived- not any of them, two boys and one girl, and all of them-
Her voice trails off. When she speaks again her voice is filled with anger.

WANDA:
It's this wretched country! If I'd stayed back East where I belong, things would have been different. I would have my family - my Jodi and Esther and Kyle. It's this horrible place. Look - look what it did to you, too. Losing your husband and having to marry a - a stranger in order to survive. It's hateful that's what - just hateful!

The woman breaks into heart-rending sobs. Marty reaches over and lays a hand on her shoulder.

MARTY:
Lan' sakes..I'm so sorry. So sorry. Why iffen I'd lost young Clare, I don' know, I jest don' know iffen I could of stood it. I jest can't know how ya must feel, a loosin' three babies an' all, but I know ya must hurt awful.

Marty moves closer and places her arms around the woman whose shoulders are shaking.

MARTY:
It's hard, it's truly hard to be a losin' somethin' thet ya want so much, but I know this, too: ya mustn't be a blamin' the West fer it all. It could happen anywhere - anywhere. Womenfolk back East sometimes loose their young'uns too. Ya mustn't hate this land. It's a beautiful land. An' you. Yer young an' pretty too, an' ya mustn't let it bitter ya so. Don't do a lick a good to be a fightin' the way things be, when there be nuthin' a body can do to change 'em.

Wanda stops sobbing and looks into Marty's eyes.

MARTY:
Life be what ya make it, to be sure. No woman could find good in buryin' three of her babies, but you is young yet, maybe- maybe the time thet lays ahead will still give ya babies to hold an' love. Ya jest hold on an' keep a havin' faith an'...

Marty's voice trails off for a moment.

MARTY:
An' sides, we're gonna have a doc in town now, an' maybe with his help...

Wanda sighs then straightens up.

WANDA:
I'm sorry. I'm very foolish, I know. You're so kind and so brave, and you're right too- I'll, I'll be fine. I'm glad- about the doctor.

Marty hears the coffee starting to boil over and she leaps from her chair. She pours two cups of coffee and slices two pieces of cake. She returned to the table, silent for a moment. The baby cries and Marty leaves the room to get him. She brings the baby back and sits down at the table.

WANDA:
I need to fill more of my time. I love to read, but I have read all my books. I can't seem to get more.

MARTY:
Well, I could teach ya to quilt, knit or crochet, if ya be a carin' to lam.

WANDA:
Oh, would you? I'd so much love to learn.

MARTY:
(Cheerily)
Be glad to. Anytime ya care to drop in ya jest come right ahead.

Wanda looks at the baby and giggles softly.

WANDA:
Would you mind if I held him for a minute?

MARTY:
Not a 'tall. Why don't ya jest sit ya there in the rockin' chair a minute. he's already spoiled by rockin', I'm a thinkin', so a little more won't make no difference.

Marty hands the baby to Wanda. She holds him gingerly and walks to the rocking chair. She begins to rock the baby with a far-off look in her eyes when Missie begins to cry. As Marty leaves the room, she comments under her breath.

MARTY:
Poor thing. Poor thing. I be jest so lucky.

Dissolve to the kitchen.

70. IN THE KITCHEN

Marty welcomes Ma Graham and her kids into the kitchen. Marty sits down and opens a small package. Her voice is heard over the noises of the children talking and the paper coming unwrapped.
MARTY (VO):
It seemed each day that I was gettin' a new visitor. Ma Graham came and brought a beautiful handknit baby shawl. Each one of the youngsters took turns holdin' the baby, but Sally Anne held him the closest.

Dissolve to front door.

71. AT THE FRONT DOOR

MARTY (VO):
One day, I had a strange visitor.

Marty answers a knock on the door. When she opens the door, three ill-clad strangers stand at the door— one woman and two girls.

MARTY:
Won't ya come in?

The three walk in without saying a word. The woman shoves a small package in Marty's hands. Marty begins to unwrap the gift in spite of the awkward silence. She reveals a small bib. The material looks rough and the bib is wrinkled.

MARTY:
Thank ya. I must say, I don't remember meetin' ya afore.

MISSUS LARSON:
I be (Mumble) Larson.

MARTY:
Oh, ya be Missus Larson.

The woman nods and stares at the floor.

MARTY:
An' yer two girls?

MISSUS LARSON:
(Mumbled)
Nandry an' Clae.

Marty hears the coffee boil and looks relieved. She turns to pour four cups.

MARTY:
Please, set down. (Pause) Be nice weather fer first of March.
Marty carries the cups over to the table. She turns and grabs a plate of cookies.

MARTY:
Yer man be a cuttin' wood?

MISSUS LARSON:
He be a bit down.

Missus Larson plays with her hands in her lap. The two girls reach for a cookie.

MARTY:
Oh, I'm right sorry to be a hearin' thet. What's he ailin' from?

Mrs. Larson hunches a shoulder.

MARTY:
(At a loss)
Well...would ya like to see the baby?

The three nod.

MARTY:
He be nappin' now. Come along.

The three stand and follow her. They glance at the baby quickly, then return to the kitchen. Without a word they proceed out the kitchen door. Marty tries to thank them and waves good-bye.

72. AT THE KITCHEN TABLE

Marty sits surveying a small pile of baby gifts on the table. Her thoughts are heard aloud.

MARTY (VO):
I also got visits from Hildi Stern and Mrs. Watley. Hildi brought a handknit sweater fer Clare and Mrs. Watley brought a bib. It nearly seemed like Christmas. Mrs. Vickers was the last to come.

A knock on the door interrupts Marty's thoughts, and she opens the door. A woman begins to chatter excitedly.

MRS. VICKERS:
My, my, some winter we be a havin'. Though I do declare, I see'd me worse- but I see'd me better too- ya can jest count on thet- heerd ya had a new young'un- must be from the first mister, I says, when I hear it- ain't been married to the other one long enough fer thet yet. How it be doin'? Hear he was a healthy'un- an' thet's what counts, I al'ays say. Give me a
healthy 'un any day over a purdy 'un- I al'ays say- take the healthy 'un
ever'time-

She kicks snow from her boots and walks into the kitchen.

MRS. VICKERS:
My, my, ain't ya jest the lucky -un- nice little place here. Sure beats that
covered wagon ya was a livin' in. Not many women here about have a
home nice as this, an' ya jest gettin' it all handed to ya like. Well, let's see
that young 'un.

MARTY:
(Tactfully)
Why don't we have some coffee? He be a nappin' right now.

Marty turns to pour the coffee while Mrs. Vickers makes herself comfortable at the table.
Her tongue begins to slide over her lips like oil through machinery.

MRS. VICKERS:
Jedd Larson be nothin' but one lazy good-fer nothin', al'ays gettin' started
when ever'one else be done- ceptin' when it come to eatin' or raisin'
young'uns- they ben married fer ten years- already had 'em eight
young'uns- only three that lived though- buried five- his Missus- so
ashamed an' mousy-like- wouldn't no one round even bother to go near-

Marty nods her head since she can't get in a single word. Mrs. Vickers takes big gulps of
coffee and huge bites of cake between topics.

MRS. VICKERS:
Thet Graham clan- did ya ever see so many kids in the self-same family?
Almost an insult to humans, that's what is be- bad as cats or mice- havin' a
whole litter like that-

Marty looks down at her coffee.

MRS. VICKERS:
See'd that young Miz Marshall yet? I declare me- that young prissie
would a been better off to stay her back East where she be a belongin'- her an' her
first-class airs- a' not even able to raise her a young 'un- an' confident like-
I think there be somethin' funny there- hard to put yer finger on- but there
all the same- doesn't even give ya a proper welcome when ya call- me, I
called, neighbor-like when each of the young'uns died- told her right out
what she prob'ly be a doin' wrong- well, ya know what- she most turned
her back on me-

Marty's eyes get bigger momentarily.
MRS. VICKERS:
Well, now- if that's the way she be, I says, leave her to it. Have Hildi and Maude been over? I see'd 'em go by t'other day- goin' over to see thet new young'un of the Davis', I says to myself- well, Hildi be a fine neighbor- though she do have some strange quirks- me, I'm not one to be a mentioning 'em. Maude Watley, now- thet be another matter- wouldn't do nothin' that took any effort, thet one- she wasn't always big as the West itself- be there a time afore she catched her man thet she be a dance-hall girl- she wouldn't want one a knowin' it o' course- but it be so- have ya been to town yet?

Marty shakes her head.

MRS. VICKERS:
Well, mind ya, when ya do go, don't ya be a tellin' nuthin' to thet there Miz McDonald thet ya don't want spread round think like. She be a first rate tongue-wagger, thet 'un. Then there Miz Standen- had her a beau- an' the Krafts are expectin' them another young'un- makin' five- Milt Conners, the bachelor- he be gettin' stranger everyday- should get 'im a woman- an' then Clark a bringin' thet doctor- hope he's not here jest to get money on people's woes...

She takes a breath and Marty stands abruptly.

MARTY:
Yer poor son must still be waitin' with the team. It's right cold out there. I'll send a slice a cake an' a cookie for 'im.

Mrs. Vickers takes the hint and walks outside. Marty shuts the door and turns in relief.

MARTY:
All thot, an' she didn't even see the baby!

Dissolve to the sitting room.

73. IN THE SITTING ROOM

Clark sands the headboard for Missie's bed. Marty quilts.

CLARK:
Well, I cut ten more logs today. Yer still a keepin' track fer us, right?

MARTY:
We keep gettin' closer to it ever'day.
They work in silence for a moment.

MARTY:
I enjoyed our Scripture readin' this mornin'. I feel like there's so much more to larn.

CLARK:
I'm glad to hear thet. I was thinkin' more 'bout it, too. Our understandin' of His purpose in comin' to earth was far different then what He came to accomplish. They wanted freedom from Rome: He came to give freedom from self. They wanted to be part of a great earthly kingdom, but His kingdom was a heavenly one.

MARTY:
Do ya really think thet God, who runs the whole world like, be a knowin' you?

CLARK:
I'm right sure thet He do.

MARTY:
An' how ya be so sure?

CLARK:
Cause He answers so many of my prayers.

MARTY:
Ya mean by a givin' ya whate're ya ask fer?

Clark thinks for a moment then shakes his head.

CLARK:
No, not thet. Oft times He jest helps me to git by without what I asked fer.

MARTY:
Thet be strange talk.

CLARK:
I'm a thinkin' not. A lot of times, what folks ask fer, they don't a'tall need.

MARTY:
Like what?

CLARK:
Like good crops, new plows, an extra cow or two.
MARTY:
What about iffen ya lose something tht ya already had an' had sorta set yer mind on?

CLARK:
Ya mean like Clem or Ellen?

Marty nods slowly.

CLARK:
He don't take away the hurt, but He shares it with ya.

MARTY:
Wisht I woulda had me someone to share mine with.

CLARK:
He was there, an' I'm a thinkin' tht He helped ya more than ya knowed.

MARTY:
But I didn' really ask Him to.

CLARK:
I did.

They both return to their work.

Fade to black.

74. AT THE KITCHEN TABLE

Marty sits at the kitchen table. Clark walks in from outside carrying a small package.

CLARK:
Sorry I fergot to bring ya this earlier. When I went into town today, Missus McDonald sent it back fer ya.

Marty quickly opens the package and finds a small bib. She begins to laugh.

MARTY:
I do declare. Thet boy sure be well set up fer bibs. Guess he be well fixed fer droolin'.

Both of them begin to laugh.

CLARK:
How's Missie makin' out in her new bed?
MARTY:
Jest fine. An' Clare likes it in the sittin' room where it's warm.

CLARK:
Guess we not be gettin' that storm tonight after all. We best be gettin' to bed.

Clark walks outside. Marty carries the lamp into the bedroom. She turns it out and lies down under the covers. Moments later Clark is standing over her.

CLARK:
The barn be ablaze. Ya jest stay put. I'm goin' fer the stock.

He turns and is gone. Marty sits up. She stumbles out of bed and walks into the kitchen carrying the light. She peers out the window. She sees the barn roof in flames as black smoke pours into the night sky. Clark swings open the door and rushes inside the barn.

MARTY:
(Choked up)
No, Clark, no. Don't go in there, please, please-

Horses run wildly out of the barn. The flames grow taller. Clark has not come out of the barn yet.

MARTY:
Oh, Clark, Clark, please, please. God, iffen yer there, please let 'im come out.

The next figure that comes out of the barn is a cow.

MARTY:
(Sobbing)
Oh, God! He'll never make it!

The walls of the barn are engulfed in flames. Then Marty sees him stumble through the entrance dragging harnesses with him, staggering along until he reaches the corral fence, where he leans for support. Marty collapses into a heap on the kitchen floor.

MARTY:
Oh, God!

Teams begin to pull up. Marty can hear men's voices and pails clinging. Several women walk into the kitchen. One helps Marty up as Clare begins to cry.

A VOICE:
He's cryin' to eat. Best ya sit ya down an' nurse 'im.

Marty leaves the room. Outside, the barn lies in smoldering ruins. The men have tired, smoky faces. They stand in a circle in the yard wrapping their hands around coffee cups for warmth. After gulping the coffee, each man leaves with his wife. As the last one pulls away, Jedd Larson pulls up. Marty has returned to the window.

MARTY:
Good ole Jedd. Probl'y be late fer his own buryin'.

Marty watches for a moment.

MARTY:
Poor Clark. He jest be lookin' beat. All ashes an' soot an' half-frozen, an' now Jedd wants to sit an' chaw him to death- no sense a'tall, thet Jedd. Well, I won't 'llow it.

Marty pulls a shawl on her shoulders and marches outside.

MARTY:
Mr. Larson, right good of ya to be comin' over to give us a hand. Guess things be under control like now, thanks to all our fine neighbors. Have ya had coffee? Good! I'm sorry to be interruptin' like, but right now, I'm afeared thet my husband be needed indoors- iffen ya be excusin' 'im.

Clark looks shocked at being referred to as "husband." She motions toward the door. Clark mutters his thanks and walks inside.

MARTY:
Give yer Missus our greetin's. We won't be a keepin' ya any longer, ya havin' chores to home a waitin' on ya an' all. Ya'll be pleased to come agin when ya can sit an' chat a spell. Thank ya agin. One really 'preciates fine neighbors. I'd best be gettin' in to my young 'uns. Good day, Mr. Larson.

When Marty walks inside Clark looks at her puzzled.

CLARK:
Who be needin' me? The babies both be a sleepin'.

Marty stares at him dumbly. She turns toward the wall and her shoulders begin to shake gently. Clark puts his blistered hands on her shoulders and pulls her gently into his arms. He holds her close, stroking her long loose hair. Silently he lets her weep. She looks up for a moment at his cracked lips, then into his eyes.

MARTY:
Oh, Clark, what are we gonna do now?
He pauses for a moment then answers as a man in charge.

CLARK:
Well, we are gonna pray, an' what He sees us to be a needin', He'll give; an' what He see we don' need, He'll make us able to do without.

The two kneel down and begin to pray.

Fade to black.

75. AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE

The four sit quietly at the breakfast table with food untouched.

MARTY:
What ya plannin' to do?

CLARK:
First off, I'm goin' over to Ben's. He said he'd be right glad to take two of the milk cows. He'll feed 'em both in exchange fer the milk from the one thet's still milkin'. When I have me feed again, we'll get 'em back.

MARTY:
An' the rest of the stock?

CLARK:
We'll have to be a sellin' the fifteen head in the grazin' pen.

MARTY:
An' the hogs?

CLARK:
Most of 'em will have to go. I hope to spare me a young sow or two.

MARTY:
How ya be a feedin' 'em?

CLARK:
The seed grain wasn't lost. It's in the bins by the pig lot. I'll have to hold me off plantin' that new land I'd been a countin' on 'til another year, an' use some of the grain to feed a sow through.

MARTY:
An' the horses?
CLARK:
Horses are fair good at grazin' even in the winter. They can paw down through the snow. I'll take me a bit of money from the sellin' of the stock to git me enough feed to look to the one milk cow that we keep.

MARTY:
Ya got it all figured already.

CLARK:
Not quite all, but I been workin' on it. We maybe have to skimp a bit here an' a bit there, but we'll make it. Iffen all goes well, come crop time, we'll be gettin' on our feet agin.

Marty looks at him with more on her mind. Clark looks at her deeply for a moment, then speaks slowly.

CLARK:
When I asked ya to set yerself in here to care fer Missie, I made a promise to ya. I'm not a goin' back on it now. Tell ya the truth, I would be a missin' ya should ya go, you an' the young'uns, but I'll not be a holdin' ya iffen it's what ya be a wantin'.

Marty looks at him tenderly. Her thoughts are heard aloud.

MARTY (VO):
Fer the first time I wasn't even sure I wanted to go. All I wanted was fer spring to come.

Fade to black.

76. ON JASON STERN'S LAND

The men work cutting logs and raising the barn. The women gather lard buckets. Marty narrates.

MARTY (VO):
April was the time fer raisin' barns and houses. The first big event was the house raisin' fer young Jason Stern and Sally Anne. The men shared their labors and the womenfolk share their larders.

Jedd Larson carries a log toward the barn.

MARTY (VO):
Ole Jedd Larson even made it in time to raise a few logs with the rest of 'im.
77. BY THE DAVIS BARN

Men work loudly cutting logs and carrying them to the barn.

    MARTY (VO):
    The most excitin' was the raisin' of our barn. Logs came together piece by piece and the barn began to take on a shape.

Tommy Graham talks to Marty.

    TOMMY GRAHAM:
    Pa said, iffen ya be a movin' the things from the lean-to, we be a tearin' it off an' makin' the bedrooms.

The men continue to work. The women carry them cups of coffee. Marty continues to narrate.

    MARTY (VO):
    I nearly flew!

78. IN THE LEAN-TO

Marty opens the door slowly and surveys the small room. There is a chair, a small trunk and a lumpy, worn bed.

    MARTY (VO):
    I realized it was the first time I'd done been in the lean-to. The bed looked hard and lumpy and the room was practically empty.

79. IN THE SITTING ROOM

Clark lies on the floor sleeping.

    MARTY (VO):
    Clark was bushed after that day, but I felt alive agin.

Marty walks over to Clark who lies sound asleep on the floor in the sitting room. She bends down and takes off his shoes then covers him with a blanket.

Fade to black.

80. AT THE GRAHAM'S KITCHEN TABLE

Ma and Laura sit at the kitchen table talking.
MA:
Laura, I be thinkin' thet somethin' be a troublin' ya. I'd be right glad to be
sharin' it iffen ya'd like to lay it on me.

Laura looks at her with rebellion in her eyes.

LAURA:
(Hotly)
Nothin' the matter with me.

MA:
I think there be. Maybe it be a natural thing- all the fussin' an' fixin' fer
Sally Anne.

Laura's chin goes up.

LAURA:
What care I 'bout Sally Anne?

MA:
She be yer sister-

LAURA:
No, she ain't.

Ma looks fully at the girl. Anger begins to take her.

MA:
Ya listen here, Missie. Sally an' you been close like ever since I be yer
Ma.

LAURA:
Ya ain't my Ma.

Ma stops short, her mouth open.

MA:
(Slowly)
Laura, I'm sorry, really I am. I never knowed ya feeled this way- so
strong like. I've tried to be a ma to ya. I love ya like ya was my own, and yer pa-
he'd do most anythin' fer ya.

LAURA:
Won't need to be a doin' fer me much longer now.
Whatcha meanin'?

I'm a gettin' married too.

Yer gettin' married? But ya ain't even had ya a beau.

Have too.

Well, we never knewed it. Who be-?

Milt Conners.

Ma gasps and leaps from the chair.

Milt Conners- that drinkin', no-good ruffian! Oh, no ya ain't. No one in this house be a takin' themselves up with Milt Conners! Iffen I didn't stop ya, yer pa sure would.

Ya can't stop me!

Oh, yes'm we can.

It be too late.

Whatcha be a meanin'?

I'm- I'm gonna have his baby.

Ma staggers forward a step and steadies herself with her hands on the back of a chair.

Whatcha be a sayin', girl?
LAURA:
I'm gonna have his baby.

Ma steps forward, her face white. Tears show on her cheeks. She pulls Laura gently into her arms and holds her close.

MA:
(Weeping)
Oh, my poor baby, my poor, poor baby.

Laura embraces her for a moment, then turns and walks into her room. Ma sits down at the table. Under her breath, Laura begins to speak as she paces the floor.

LAURA:
So, I told her a lie. Ain't no other way I could'a married 'im.

Dissolve to the outside of the Graham homestead.

81. OUTSIDE THE GRAHAM HOMESTEAD

Clark, Marty, Missie and Clare pull up. There are benches and long tables outside. The sun shines brightly on a few budding flowers and birds chirp. Marty is wearing her gray dress for the first time. Clark helps Marty down from the wagon, and she blushes at his smile.

CLARK:
I'll watch the kids, Marty. You go on ahead an' help Ma.

Marty begins to unload several containers of food. She walks toward the house. Outside, Jason and Milt arrive. Gentlemen gather around to congratulate them. Ben quickly calls the women. People begin to take their seats.

BEN:
Welcome to one an' all on this fine spring day. I trust you will all find the Easter service a real blessin'. Thank ya fer all the good food appearin' on the tables. We are priv'leged to have Parson Simmons with us fer the weddin' of my two eldest daughters. How fine it is to have 'im here on Easter Sunday mornin', an' I know we's all lookin' forward to sharin' in the mornin' meetin'.

Parson Simmons stands and walks to the front of the crowd. Ben takes a seat in the front next to Ma. Each person adorns their finest clothing. They are modest people, but enjoyment shows on each face except for Ma's. Her face is stone-like.

PARSON:
This is a beautiful day that the Lord hath made. I am delighted at seeing you all in attendance.

As the Parson continues, Marty's thoughts are heard above all.

MARTY (VO):
People listened intently to the simple story of Eater, beginnin' with Christ's ministry to the people of His day, His arrest and the false accusations that sentenced him to die. The preacher even explained the real purpose for Christ's death.

Gentle tears dot Marty's cheeks. Clark looks at her with concern. Marty reaches over and puts her hand in his. Clark smiles.

PARSON:
But, He lives. And because He is victor over sin and death, we too can be. (Pause) Now will Milt and Laura please come forward.

Milt and Laura walk to the front of the congregation. The two face each other, neither with animated expressions. Marty's thoughts are heard again.

MARTY (VO):
I secretly hoped that maybe with the help of a good woman's love, Milt could indeed change. I hoped they could find happiness together.

PARSON:
You may now kiss the bride.

The two kiss and the congregation claps. They sit down in the back while Laura Anne and Jason make their way to the front. They look eager. Ma even breaks a smile. Marty's thoughts narrate.

MARTY (VO):
It was differ'nt with Laura Anne an' Jason, though. Love showed on their faces an' it was so easy to share their happiness.

PARSON:
You may now kiss the bride.

The couple kisses as the congregation claps wildly. People begin to make their way to the dinner table. Conversations flourish. Sally and Laura Anne are both laden with gifts, then with food. Just then Marty sees the Larsons arriving. Mrs. Larson plops a heavy pan of cornbread on the table. Marty walks over to her. For the first time, Mrs. Larson looks into Marty's eyes.

MARTY:
Ya all be welcome. So glad ya see ya agin. The good Lord 'as done so much fer all of us. Preacher talk'd 'bout it this mornin', how's God can clean up folks hearts and change their ways. Jest sets ya ta bubblin'.

Marty turns to see the two couples hugging Ma and Ben Graham goodbye. The remaining crowd waves as the couples ride away in opposite directions from the house.

Fade to black.

82. AT THE WINDOW IN THE KITCHEN

Marty stands looking out the window. The sun is rising over the new, solid barn. Cows, horses, sows and chickens have reappeared on their property. Marty smiles contentedly and turns to mixing pancakes on the stove. Clark comes in humming.

CLARK:
I wonder if spring plantin' always make a man happy like.

Clark walks into the bedroom and returns with Missie and Clare. He helps Missie into her chair and holds Clare proudly on his lap. Marty puts everything on the table. Clark begins to pray.

CLARK:
Father, you tell us in yer scriptures, 'Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give rest.' I thank ye, Lord, that ye be learnin' me how to rest in you. Ya be a comfortin us an' we be grateful fo' that.

MARTY:
I wonder how the two newlywed couples is doin'.

CLARK:
When Jason and Sally Anne brought over the saddle horse, they seemed right happy, didn't they?

MARTY:
They looked so in love. What 'bout Laura, though?

CLARK:
When I was comin' back from town a few days back, I saw her walkin' down the road. I offered her a ride, but she refused it sayin' walkin' be right good fer her. She had a bruise on her cheek.

Clark continues to eat the pancakes. Marty quickly changes the topic.

MARTY:
Be it about time to plant the garden?
CLARK:
Some of the seeds should go in now. I be thinkin' this mornin' that I best put the plow to work on the turnin' of the ground. Should be ready fer ya in short order. Ya wantin' to plant-it today?

MARTY:
(With enthusiasm)
Oh, yes. Me, I'm right eager to get a goin' on it. Only-

CLARK:
Only what?

MARTY:
(Flushed)
Well-I never planted afore.

Planted what?

CLARK:
Well- planted anythin'.

MARTY:
Didn't yer folks have 'em a garden?

CLARK:
My ma said 'twas a nuisance, that she'd as leave buy off a neighbor or from the store. She didn't care none fer the soil, I reckon.

MARTY:
An' you?

CLARK:
I think I'd love to git into makin' somethin' grow. I can hardly wait to try. Only-

MARTY:
Well, I know that the garden be a woman's work, but I was wonderin', jest this one time, could ya show me how to plant the seeds an' all?
Clark grins.

CLARK:
I reckon I could- this once.

MARTY:
(Relieved)
The best time be right after dinner while the young'uns be havin' their nap. Will the ground be plowed an' ready by then?

Clark nods and gets up to pour them both a second cup of coffee. Marty nearly chokes on her bite of pancake, but Clark seems unperturbed. He pushes back his plate and begins to sip the coffee slowly. He takes one last swallow and reaches for his hat. On his way out the door, he comments.

CLARK:
Thet be good coffee.

Dissolve to the garden.

83. THE GARDEN

Marty stands next to the garden. She bends over and takes off her shoes and stockings as Clark carefully prepares each row of soil. Marty walks onto the soil and smiles grandly.

MARTY:
It's good jest to be livin' on sech a day.

Clark walks over and shows her how to plant the sweet corn. Marty plants a few rows in silence. Then, Clark squats down next to her. Marty takes a quick glance at him, and taps him lightly, sending him sprawling in loose dirt in an undignified position. Clark looks surprised, then amused.

CLARK:
Me thinks there be someone askin' fer sweet-com kernels down her neck!

He reaches for a handful of corn. Marty runs off quickly, but Clark's long strides catch him up to her quickly. Both are laughing uncontrollably like children. Clark wraps both arms around her, halting her escape. Marty writhes and twists against him. They struggle like two teasing children. Marty clings to Clark as he dumps a handful of kernels down the back of her dress. They look deeply into each other's eyes and the laughter ceases. The look changes from teasing to enduring. Marty pulls herself up abruptly.

MARTY:
Thet be Clare?
Marty pushes herself away from his chest and half runs, half stumbles to the house. Once inside she leans against the door, breathing heavily.

MARTY:
(Confused)

What am I doing?

She looks outside and sees Clark putting away the gardening tools.

Fade to black.

84. BY THE WINDOW IN THE KITCHEN

Marty looks out at the barn. The sun is shining brightly. Vegetation abounds.

MARTY:
Well, I must go visit the garden.

She walks outside to the garden and begins to touch the corn stalks and push dirt around the potatoes. She walks over to the apple tree, admiring the blossoms. Clark suddenly appears.

MARTY:
(Eager)

Clark, Clark, come see.

She reaches for his hand to draw him closer.

MARTY:
Look, Clark- apple blossoms. We're gonna have apples. Jest look.

Clark does not answer. Marty can read the sorrow on his face. Her own face goes white. Her lips quiver.

MARTY:
What- what be wrong?

Clark places a hand on each of her shoulders and looks deep into her eyes.

CLARK:
It's Laura. They done found her in the crik over by the Conners' cabin.

MARTY:
Is she- is she-?

CLARK:
She be dead.

MARTY:

An' Ma?

CLARK:

She be needin' ya.

Marty begins to sob and buries her face in Clark's chest. His hands smooth her hair as he hold her close.

MARTY:

Oh, God, ya be the only one to be a helpin' at a time like this. Help us all now. Please God, help us now.

Dissolve to the Grahams.

85. INSIDE THE GRAHAM'S HOMESTEAD

A man in a dark suit hands over Laura's limp body covered by a sheet to the Grahams. Ma sobs uncontrollably.

MA:

My poor baby, my poor little darlin'.

She carries Laura over to the table and lies the body down. She wipes her tears and squares her shoulders. Ben stands with his arm around Ma, his shoulders sagging. His face is lifeless.

Fade to black.

86. THE GRAHAM'S BACKYARD

A somber group stares at the wooden coffin containing Laura's body. Clark steps forward.

CLARK:

Let us begin with prayer.

The group bows their heads. Clark begins to pray as Marty's thoughts narrate.

MARTY (VO):

Clark said the buryin' words in the absence of a preacher. I could sense it was difficult for him.

87. INSIDE MILT'S CABIN
Ben and Clark knock on the door to a small, run-down cabin. When there is no answer, the two kick open the door. The inside is deserted.

MARTY (VO):
When Clark and Ben went to Milt's cabin, 'twas empty. There was no sign of the man responsible for such a tragedy.

Fade to black.

88. OUTSIDE THE DAVIS HOME- NEAR THE GARDEN

Marty walks past the apple tree. She stops and looks at the tree which has lost its blossoms to make way for fruit.

MARTY:
Beautiful June apples...

She continues to walk past the buildings and down to the stream. She stands leaning back against a tree trunk, watching the clear gurgling water flow.

MARTY:
God, what be it all 'bout? I don't understand much 'bout ya. I know that yer good. I know that ya love'd me 'nough to die for me; but I don't understand all 'bout losin' an' hurtin'. I don't understand at all.

Marty closes her eyes. She hears leaves rustling. A slight breeze ruffles her hair. Then, she hear footsteps and jumps. Clark is there, sitting against a tree, his eyes on her face.

CLARK:
Sorry to be a frightin' ya. I see'd ya a comin' over here an' I thought me you'd maybe not mind me a comin' too.

MARTY:
Course not.

Clark picks up a small branch and breaks off small pieces. He throws them into the stream and watches them be carried away.

CLARK:
Guess life be somethin' like thet stream.

MARTY:
Meanin'?

CLARK:
Things happen. Leaves stomp it up- animals waller in it- spring floods fill it with mud. Bright sunshine makes it like a mirror glass, sparklin' rain makes it grow, but still it moves on- unchangin' like- the same stream even with the changes. It breaks through the leaves, it clears itself of the animal wallerin'- the muddy waters turn clean agin. The sunshine an' the rain it accepts, fer they give life an' strengthen' it like, but it really could 'ave done without 'em. They're extrys like.

Marty shuts her eyes again.

CLARK:
Life's like that- bad things come but life keeps on a flowin', clearing its path gradual like, easin' its own burden. The good times come; we maybe could make do without 'em, but He knows that we need 'em to give meanin'- to strengthen us, to help us reflect the sunshine. Guess one has to expect the good an' the bad, long as we be a livin', an' try one's best to make the bad hurt as little as possible , an' the good- one has to help it grow like, make all the good count.

Clark and Marty continue to watch the stream as Marty's thoughts are heard aloud.

MARTY (VO):
Life is like that stream. It goes on. I draw my strength from the woods. No, I draw my strength from the God who'd made the woods.

Dissolve to the sitting room.

89. THE SITTING ROOM

Marty mends a pair of Clark's overalls. She holds them up and inspects them.

MARTY:
Why, they'd swaller me.

Missie sits on the floor with a scrap of fabric. Marty threads a blunt needle for her. Missie begins to sew excitedly as Clare coos on the rug.

MARTY:
Ya may as well learn how it be done, Missie. Ya'll need to be a knowin' afore we know it.

MISSIE:
See, baby. See big sis'ter. She sewin'. Do ya like it? Look, Mama. He smiles. Clare like it- my sewin'.
Marty smiles and continues to sew on the overall patch. A loud crash makes Missie jump.

MISSIE:
Dad-burn!

MARTY:
Missie, ya mustn't say that.

MISSIE:
You did.

MARTY:
Well, I don't anymore an' I don't want ya a' sayin' it either. Now git ya down an' pick up all of them buttons that ya spilled.

Missie obeys, putting the buttons in the button box and placing the box on the sewing machine. Marty finishes her patch and walks into the kitchen. Missie comes running through the door after her.

MISSIE:
Mama- Mama- Clare sick!

MARTY:
Whatcha meanin'?

Missie grabs her hands, jerking her toward the sitting room.

MISSIE:
(Screaming)
He sick!

Marty picks up the baby who is struggling furiously for breath. His fists flail in the air.

MARTY:
He's chokin! 

She turns him upside down and smacks him on the back, between his shoulder blades. Clare still struggles.

MARTY:
Run fer yer pa, Missie.

Missie runs outside. Marty reverses the baby and carefully pushes a finger down his throat.
I feel somethin'!

MARTY: (Frantic)

Clare gags, but nothing comes up. Clark runs through the door, his eyes wide with concern.

He's chokin'!

MARTY: CLARK:

Slap his back.

MARTY: CLARK:

I did.

MARTY: CLARK:

Put yer finger-

MARTY: CLARK:

I tried!

MARTY: CLARK:

I'll git the doc.

MARTY: CLARK:

There ain't time.

MARTY: CLARK:

Wrap 'im up. I'll git the horses.

The baby struggles, gasping only little breaths.

MARTY:

Oh, God, please help us. Please help us. Jets keep 'im breathin' 'til we reach the doc.

Marty grabs a blanket and wraps it about Clare. Missie stands with eyes wide, frightened.

MARTY:

Missie, git yer coat on, an' bring a blanket from yer bed so thet ya can lay down in the wagon. Obey!

Marty runs toward the wagon with Missie right behind her. They climb into the wagon and race off toward town. The baby coughs, and the horses plunge on, harness creaking,
sweat flecking their necks and haunches. Clark urges them on and on. Marty clings to Clare. When they arrive at the doctor's office, Clark grabs the baby and hops down. Marty grabs Missie and hurries behind them.

Inside, the doctor places the baby on a small table and shines a light on him. Clark and Marty stand motionless.

DOCTOR:
He has a tiny object stuck in his throat. I'm going to have to go after it. We'll have to put him to sleep. Call my Missus, will you? She helps with this- has special training.

Clark raps loudly on the door separating the office from the living quarters. The doctor's wife comes into the room and shows instant concern.

MISSUS:
Oh, my! What's his problem?

DOCTOR:
He has something in his throat. We're going to have to put him to sleep and remove it.

The two begin to work. The doctor glances up suddenly.

DOCTOR:
You folks can just take a chair in our living room. This won't take long, but we work best alone.

The three walk to the living room. Clark paces the floor. Marty sits in a chair holding Missie. When the doctor enters the living room, Clark walks over to Marty and places a hand on her shoulder.

DOCTOR:
Well, Mr. Davis, your boy is going to be jest fine. Had this button lodged in his throat; luckily it was turned sideways or-

CLARK:
It weren't luck.

DOCTOR:
Call it what you may, it's out now. You can see him if you wish.

Marty stands and hugs Clark. The two weep together.

MARTY:
Oh, God, He's all right. Thank Ya. Thank Ya.
The three walk up next to Clare. He breathes softly. Clark and Marty remain embraced.

**DOCTOR:**
He's been through a lot, poor little fellow. He needs a long, restful sleep now. He is still under the effect of the sleeping draught that we gave him. I expect he'll sleep through most of the night without stirring. My wife and I will take turns sitting with him. You folks had best try to get some rest. I'm sure the hotel across the street will have a room.

**MARTY:**
Shouldn't we stay with 'im?

**DOCTOR:**
No need, Ma'am. He'll sleep, and seems to me that you could be using some yourself.

**CLARK:**
He's right. Ya be a needin' some rest an' some supper, too. Come on. Let's get across to the hotel.

Marty takes a last look at the sleeping baby and allows Clark to lead her out of the room. They walk across the street. Clark makes arrangements at the desk while Marty and Missie wait.

**CLARK:**
They'll hustle up some supper an' then show ya to a room.

Marty's eye widen.

**MARTY:**
What 'bout you?

**CLARK:**
I want to care fer the horses. They need a good rubdown an' a bit of special care.

Marty nods.

**MARTY:**
We'll wait fer ya.

**CLARK:**
Be no need-
MARTY:

We want to.

Clark walks outside and Marty turns to Missie.

MARTY:
Missie, ya were a good girl. Yer Mama is real proud. I love you very much.

Missie's eyes fill with tears and sobs take her.

MISSIE:
But- I spill- buttons.

Marty pulls her close, rocking her gently.

MARTY:
Missie, Missie, it weren't yer fault that baby Clare found a button that got missed a pickin' up. It just happened, that's all. Don't ya be a frettin' about it. Yer mama n' yer pa love ya so very much, an' you were a brave girl to be so good. You hush ya now.

Marty calms Missie down. Clark returns. The three walk upstairs to the room. Missie immediately runs to the bed. Clark sits down in a chair facing the window. Marty kisses Missie lightly on the forehead as she drifts off to sleep. Clark rises and reaches for his hat.

MARTY:
Where ya be a headin'?

CLARK:
I'm a thinkin' that I'll spend me the night over at the doc's. Iffen little Clare be a wakin' I'm thinkin' that he should wake to some of his'n stead of strangers.

MARTY:
But doc says he won't wake till morn.

CLARK:
Maybe so. All the same, I'll find comfort jest watchin' him sleep peaceful-like. I'll be over in the mornin' to be sure ya not be a needin' anythin'.

He turns to go, but Marty reaches out and takes his sleeve. He looks down at her searchingly; then he steps closer and his hands go to her shoulders, drawing her toward him.
CLARK:
(Softly)
Ya bein' sure?

Marty nods her head dumbly, looking deep into his eyes. Then she is in his arms.

MARTY:
(Tenderly)
Ain't it amazin' how love comes softly?

Clark smiles. He lifts her chin up tenderly so their lips meet. They begin to kiss passionately.

Fade to black.

THE END!!