

Two weeks passed before Rebecca forced into being enough courage to face Cam and tell him the truth about her past. She tried to put special touches on everything, from their evening meal to showing off a new dress she and Dora had stitched together while the men worked on farming tools. She smiled a lot and touched him now and then to assure him she was thinking of him as she went about her daily chores, even carrying water from the river to the house rather than waiting for him to do it.

"Dear," she began, after he finished and pushed back to relax, "I've something to tell you that you may or may not believe. Please hear me out if you can. I am having a hard time trying to tell you about where I came from, how I came to be here in this wild country, and in the condition you found me."

"I'm listening," he smiled. "You can hardly tell me anything I would not care for. I am a happy and satisfied man."

Rebecca took a deep breath, looked at him for a second, turned her back, and out rushed the whole story she had told Dora. Once started, she could not find a place to stop. She told him about Old Man Morely hugging her before her father had sold her in a contract for marriage when she was sixteen. She dared not turn and look at him. She could not face the disgust she knew he must feel at her deception and bigamy.

Cam came up out of the chair, twirled Rebecca around and slapped her smartly across the face. He stared at her hard, knowing what this already married woman had caused him to do. Forgotten was his sin.

"I shall be back after a while! I need to ponder this and know what I am feeling before I say another word to you. I told you nothing could bother me, but this is something I could never, ever have expected."

Rebecca ran, sobbing uncontrollably to the bed, fell across it and could not move. Sometime later she felt a hand on her shoulder and rolled over to see Dora standing there.

"You told him, didn't you?" she asked. "I knew from the look on his face as he asked to see Dirk. I hurried over here to see what I could do for you."

"Well, my deception is over now. He slapped me! He'll put me out or turn me over to the man looking for me. I do not have to wonder, it was written all over his shoulders as he slammed out of the cabin. I think I love Cam. I shall be sorry to leave. He has been caring to me, and has not asked questions for which he is entitled to answers since the beginning."

"You don't know that," Dora reassured her. "Look at my past. Dirk has never asked me questions, or condemned me, since we met. He just takes me as I am. Cam will probably take you the same way. That awful man may never come back this way, and we'll never have to face your marriage to that horrible old man. We'll face this together. I'll involve my husband."

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Murder! Had he gotten away with murder, or was it really an accident? Perhaps he should do some confessing of his own now that his wife had told everything. No, that would not do, because he was not ready to reveal how much he desired money, even if the death was an accident. Here, now, he found himself, assured he had enough to properly care for Rebecca, then having to ask himself, is she worth it?

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