Three

EDA

In the grainy dark before dawn, Caroline woke to the pull of her stomach drawing itseff taut. Before opening her eyes she resigned herself to it; better to let her muscles express her dread of this day than give voice to it.

Already the room had changed. Neither Chartes's clothes nor his nightshirt hung on the nail beside her own, though the usual sounds of him putting on his boots and taking up the water pail came from the back door. She lay still a moment more after the and the bedroom turned gaunt—stripped and scoured down to the last bare inch. Vinegar still stung the air, sharpened by the cold. It crowded out the familiar traces of Charles's shaving lather and rosemaryscented bear grease. Caroline washed her face, then with her damp palms smoothed the length of her braid before pinning it carbity up. Last of all she dipped the comb into the basin of cold water and slicked down the loose strands between her forehead and the nape of her neck.

OverDrive

A fresh pail of half-melted snow already waited beside the cookstove for her. Caroline stoked up the fire and set the draught as defty as Charles tuning his fiddle. She filled the coffeepot and skillet with snow, draped the girls' underthings over the back of the rocker to warm, then went to fetch the last of the salt pork.

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