

MA -n- PA

~~NARRATOR: As the East prepared for war, Charles Ingalls set his sights on another horizon...~~

~~PA: Look at this Caroline! They've done it!~~

~~NARRATOR: Any talk of the frontier fired his blood...~~

~~(NARRATOR exits.)~~

MA: *(Taking paper from PA.)* The pony express! Eleven days to the Pacific.

PA: Ha-ha! They've made it! It's what I've been waiting for. At last a Connection!

MA: To California? It might as well be the other side of the moon, Charles!

PA: If a pony can make it in eleven days just think what a man can do! And look Caroline, look here! *(Poking at paper.)*

MA: Three territories have opened up in the west. Colorado, Nevada, Dakota...

PA: They've made Kansas a state!

MA: Oh, no, Charles. You don't mean to leave our little home?

PA: Haven't you heard the cry? Go west young man!

MA: And do you do everything you're told? What about the Indians? Have you thought of that? It says right here - "Settlers Attacked!"

PA: Where's that Scottish sense of adventure, eh? It took you this far to Wisconsin didn't it? If you were a timid lass do you think I'd have married you?

MA: Of course! Not another girl from miles around would have you! Ma said, Caroline, that boy's got the wandering itch. Find yourself another.

PA: *(Grabs her at the waist.)* But you took me. Wandering itch and all.

MA: There's still time to remedy that.

PA: Caroline. It's not an itch. It's my soul. Every man in this newspaper's got one like it! What do you think the boys are fighting for? Look at this, Caroline. *(Waving newspaper.)* What do you see?

START →

→ STOP

MA, PA, LAURA, DOCTOR

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~~watched as Pa and Ma and the neighbor gave up. Anybody could see... Pa's heart was broken. (*Touching a window pane.*) So much for glass windows.~~

~~(*MUSIC CUE: We hear poignant music as NARRATOR makes up a bed of the log pieces. PA looks over his fields. MA works in kitchen warming a teakettle. LAURA addresses audience.*)~~

START

MARY: The grasses were gone, the trees were bare. There was nothing but emptiness everywhere...

(MARY turns upstage and get in "bed". LAURA turns and moves toward MA. Ma puts her finger to her lips "shh" and hands LAURA a teacup.)

MA: Take this to Mary.

(NARRATOR enters.)

NARRATOR: They had all been sick before...

(DOCTOR enters with bag and stethoscope.)

MA: *(To DOCTOR.)* Once we all had "fever 'n' ague". And two of the girls had measles.

DOCTOR: More than likely, this is scarlet fever. It's goin' around.

PA: Don't worry, Caroline, she'll pull through like the other times.

(They embrace and MA moves upstage to get in bed and become MARY. DOCTOR puts stethoscope to her chest.)

LAURA: *(Putting a hand to MARY's head.)* Don't be scared, Mary. Remember what Pa said? As long as we're all together we're safe. We're safe...

(MARY calls out in pain! PA brings water and a rag for her head.)

Oh, can't you do anything, Doctor?

DOCTOR: By devil, I'm stumped. That fever will not come down.

LAURA: She can't die, Pa! Can she? She just can't!

DOCTOR: Mary? Can you give me a smile?

STOP

(MARY gives a feeble smile. DOCTOR pulls PA aside.)

LAURA , MARY

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START
LAURA: I mean *really*. You know what Pa has taught us. Anything can happen!

MARY: Not for me.

LAURA: Oh, Mary, don't say that! Let me close my eyes and we will see the same thing!

(She closes eyes, MARY is blind with open eyes.)

What do you see?

MARY: Not the North star... but a smaller one, the sparkle is weaker...

LAURA: But it's a star.. A *star* just the same!

MARY: Yes! You're right! Of course!

LAURA: That's you, Mary. A spark of light! Living in the darkness. But listen, it's twilight now.

MARY: Yes, I can feel the earth is cooling...

LAURA: The sky is streaked with orange and pink light. At the horizon is a fringe of lavender...

MARY: Oh, I'd forgotten lavender.

LAURA: The swallows are cascading in the clouds.

MARY: Ah! Yes! How well you tell it, Laura. You will be a great painter someday!

LAURA: Oh! Of course not! I'll be a pioneer girl just like you.

MARY: Maybe. But you will be an artist, nonetheless. Because you paint everything.

LAURA: No not really...

MARY: With words. It's like you're seeing it out loud.

(MUSIC CUE: We hear music, suggested: "Wandering", allowing time for transition. MARY exits, PA enters and looks out at the horizon.)

LAURA: But Pa could see farther than any of us. Sometimes it seemed he

STOP

ALMANZO, PA

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START

ALMANZO: I can't give it up.

PA: Yes you can. The only question is if you'll do it before folks in this town starve to death or after. It's your time to prove what kind of man you are.

ALMANZO: But...

PA: *(Steadfast, controlled anger.)* But nothing.

(PA exits, crosses to MA, MARY and LAURA. He opens his "door" and goes in. LAURA and MARY are putting hay sticks in the "stove". ALMANZO stands thinking. At last he crosses to the door and knocks. LAURA opens it.)

ALMANZO: *(Suddenly shy.)* Oh! Sorry... I'm looking for Mr. Ingalls...

PA: Almanzo.

ALMANZO: I heard there's a fellow somewhere south of town. He's got a store of seed wheat himself. I was wondering if you'd care to come with me.

PA: Well, son, are you prepared to risk your life? Cause, that's what this'll be.

ALMANZO: I'll do all that I can, sir.

PA: That's good enough for me. Ma, keep the girls by the fire. Laura keep twisting the hay.

MA: No, Charles! It's crazy. You'll be lost out there.

PA: *(To ALMANZO.)* Your horses can handle it?

ALMANZO: If any horse can, they can.

LAURA: Pa! Let me go too!

MA: *(Gasping.)* What on earth? How can you think such a thing?

PA: You're too small, Half-Pint. The wind would knock you down like a feather. Otherwise I'd put you on one those horses myself. *(Gives her a gentle nudge with his fist.)* Your Ma needs you here. Almanzo?

(LAURA, MARY and MA exit the scene, but stay on as narrators as PA and ALMANZO do the action. They come and go from dialogue

STOP

LAURA -w- Almanzo

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START

(Shocked, to no one.) A whole year's worth of work. Gone in twenty minutes.

ALMANZO: I'll take the mowing machine to town, see if they'll waive the mortgage.

LAURA: Mortgage? You mean you haven't paid for the mowing machine?

ALMANZO: I was counting on the crop...

LAURA: You mean we're in debt?

ALMANZO: The house, the barn... even the horses.

LAURA: How much?

ALMANZO: Five hundred dollars.

LAURA: Oh, Manly!

ALMANZO: I had hope...

LAURA: A farmer's hope! Do you see what a farmer's hope turns to?

(ALMANZO hangs his head.)

ALMANZO: Can you forgive me, Laura?

LAURA: Oh, Manly! Of course, I can!

(She rushes to embrace him. Notices something wrong and touches her hand to his forehead.)

(To ALMANZO.) You're burning up!

Ma! Manly's sick!

(MA enters.)

STOP

~~MA: I'll take the child. You stay by his side Laura. Good heavens.~~

~~*(MA feels LAURA'S head.)*~~

~~You've got the fever too! Charles, come quick!~~

~~*(PA enters as MA puts them both to bed.)*~~

ROSE -n- LAURA

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START

(She takes bills from her purse throws them in the air. LAURA enters marveling at a check.)

LAURA: Oh my.

ROSE: To celebrate I took a cruise to Europe. I lived like a queen in Albania. It was a grand time...

(LAURA begins writing a letter. The two women are on opposing sides of the stage as they speak.)

LAURA: Dear Rose, I do hope you will be home for Christmas. Your father and I miss you terribly. I know you don't care for farm life...

ROSE: How could I tell her? I despised it.

LAURA: *(Hurt.)* I had hoped that someday you'd find your way home, that you would see and love the things that I do.

ROSE: I took rooms in Paris, an apartment in New York.

LAURA: Can you blame me for hoping to see you settled down?

ROSE: Marriage? My advice to the modern girl: Marry at eighteen and get it all over with by twenty-five.

LAURA: You are to me what I was to my Pa and Ma. And yet it is not at all the same. I have such fond memories of them.

ROSE: I do remember my time on the farm... the cool spring water, playing in the clean open grass...

LAURA: They taught me how to see, really see -- out loud.

(ALMANZO enters with a letter for LAURA.)

ROSE: But it wasn't enough for me somehow. Perhaps that is the one lesson I never learned. How to see the world through my mother's eyes.

(ROSE exits. LAURA reads letter.)

LAURA: They want me to give a speech at a Book Fair. In Detroit!

ALMANZO: A speech!

LAURA: Oh, Manly! I'll die from nerves!

STOP