

 ${\cal H}$  e woke suddenly and completely. It was four o'clock, the hour at which his father had always called him to get up and help with the milking. Strange how the habits of his youth clung to him still! Fifty years ago, and his father had been dead for thirty years, and yet he waked at four o'clock in the morning. He had trained himself to turn over and go to sleep, but this morning it was Christmas, he did not try to sleep.

Why did he feel so awake tonight? He slipped back in time, as he did so easily nowadays. He was fifteen years old and still on his father's farm. He

loved his father. He had not known it until one day a few days before Christmas, when he had overheard what his father was saying to his mother.

"Mary, I hate to call Rob in the mornings. He's growing so fast and he needs his sleep. If you could see how he sleeps when I go in to wake him up! I wish I could manage alone."

"Well, you can't, Adam." His mother's voice was brisk. "Besides, he isn't a child anymore. It's time he toke his turn."

"Yes," his father said slowly. "But I sure do hate to wake him."

When he heard these words, something in him spoke: his father loved him! He had never thought of that before, taking for granted the tie of their blood. Neither his father nor his mother talked about loving their children--they had no time for such things. There was always so much to do on the farm.

Now that he knew his father loved him, there would be no loitering in the mornings and having to be called again. He got up after that, stumbling blindly in his sleep, and pulled on his clothes, his eyes shut, but he got up. (Go to page 3)

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4]— I did it, So can you! —- Will return in January 2015

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6]— 2014 Year in Review — Looking back and planning for the future.

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Christmas Day in the Morning

By Pearl S. Buck (1955)



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