

Start here.

My father had always expected that I would marry. Not for love, never for love. But simply because it was the economical decision.

As a woman, if I ~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~married~~ remained unmarried, then I would remain at home, & if I remained at home then I simply represented another mouth to feed, when ~~the~~ ~~we~~ ~~could~~ barely survive on ~~the~~ a farmer's salary after a good harvest let alone the pitiful crops we had been drawing in for the past three or four seasons.

But now that ~~the~~ money was so tight, ~~my~~ my father had drawn me into working as a farmhand aiding him in the maintenance of the farm. And from this, I found my 'calling'. There is something amazing ^{about seeing} ~~as~~ you ~~see~~ the soil you ~~had~~ tilled, now filled with seeds & new life & unimaginable possibilities that ~~made~~ ^{made} me feel alive, & it was this something that kept me on the farm in the outskirts of ~~Sydney~~ Hertfordshire long past my childhood.

~~The~~ However even this was corrupted by my mother's resentment.

"Your irresponsibility amazes me! ~~instead of~~ you

~~going into town~~ making her work why do you not make her leave this should be out there interacting with people finding a nice boy so that you can start building your own life and so on and so forth - ~~made~~ ^{this was} the general gist of her argument, but she had never accepted that I wasn't like other girls.

The others in town were happy bathing their eyelashes & ~~baking their teeth~~ ~~as~~ ~~meant~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~a~~ smiling demurely behind their hands. They were happy to play their little word games, to gossip over who likes who, even as they promptly turned around & said that ^{the girl in question} ~~they~~ would never get him.

But that was never me, & my mother was never able to understand that.

Which was why I was unsurprised at ~~the~~ ^{the money} ~~that~~ ~~was~~ ~~left~~ ~~near~~ ~~my~~ on the kitchen table, & coupled with a ~~couple~~ ~~of~~ ~~notes~~ ^{note} asking that I go into town & buy some basic necessities.

Due to my parents' absence, I was unable to answer in the negative, so I resigned myself to the inevitable stares, glares & ridicule.

Additional writing space on back page.

A short ~~short~~ ^{car+} ride later + I had arrived in the small town, recipient of the expected hostility. The pants I was wearing, my bronzed skin + the calluses on my hands were all that separated me from them, + yet, they were an ~~insurmountable~~ insurmountable barrier.

I proceeded down ~~the~~ Main Street, ignoring the wary glances directed at me. The obvious hostility accelerated my movements, my desire to arrive home ~~in~~ ~~for~~ + enjoy some semblance of security ~~to~~ overriding any concept of delay.

The car ride home was lonelier than the one in, the reaction of the townspeople being so disquieting. Why they react that way to me is a question I have asked myself many times, + I don't think it's one I will ever get a satisfactory answer to. Intellectually, I was aware that they merely feared the unknown. Emotionally, all I desired was some sort of acceptance. But unfortunately, ~~I~~ I can't be both a woman + a farmer, + I had made my choice a long time ago.

You may ask for an extra Writing Booklet if you need more space.