

FROM: **FOUNDLING**, CHAPTER THREE,
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And then toward the end of the summer, a rainstorm in the high country caught them. And it turned to snow. It wouldn't last. It would melt the next day. But to be safe, they rode to a nearby line shack for shelter.

Jess helped Kristin off the horse. She was soaked to the skin and slippery. She slipped and fell against him. He carried her into the cabin and set her down. Then Jess put the horses in the shed and grained them and rubbed them down.

When he went into the cabin, she had all her clothes off and was drying them by the fire. She had a blanket wrapped around herself to keep warm.

Kristin had coffee on and she had set two places at the table for their picnic lunch. They had planned to eat at a bluff overlooking the valley, but the rain caught them. That was two hours ago.

Kristin ordered Jess to get out of his clothes and put them by the fire to dry. She kept her back to him until he was also wrapped in a blanket. Then they sat down and ate the picnic lunch and drank coffee.

They laughed and joked. They figured that the snow would quit and the sun would come out. Nobody would even know about the incident.

But it kept snowing. It was a wet snow. It was melting as it hit the ground, but it wasn't anything to be out in.

Kristin got up to go to the stove and pour them some more coffee. She had done that several times as they sat and talked. But this time, her blanket was caught under the chair. It came loose and there she was naked. She yelped and tried to cover herself with her hands.

Jess got up, grabbed her blanket, and held it out to her with one hand while keeping his head turned away so he

wouldn't see her.

She took the blanket and wrapped it around herself once more.

Then she said, "Okay, you can look again."

Jess turned his head back in her direction. And she was right there, under his nose, looking up at him with a smile on her face.

"You know, Jess." she said, "You really are a gentleman." She kept looking into his eyes and Jess stood there looking down at her.

She was holding the blanket together in front of her with her left hand. She put her right hand at the back of his neck and pulled his head down and kissed him right on the lips.

Jess grabbed her with both arms. He didn't think about the blanket. He didn't think about anything but kissing her back.

Pretty soon, Kristin had both of her arms around his back and they were two naked people kissing and hugging and fondling each other.

She wouldn't let him fuck her. But they did everything else in the way of exploring each other's bodies. They even came while touching each other.

He marveled at how wet she got when she was excited; she marveled at the way he got hard and then soft after shooting all over her hand. They talked about all the things they'd heard about men and women and were surprised at how much of it wasn't true at all. And they laughed. They laughed a lot.

Jess told her that he loved her.

She said, "I know. But I don't know if I love you, Jess. I like you better than anybody I ever met. And I like touching you and I like the way you touch me. But what is love, anyway, Jess. How will I know when I am in love?"

And Jess didn't know how to answer her. She was the first woman he ever saw naked. But he loved her before he

saw her naked.

Jess offered, "Maybe if we went all the way, you would know if you loved me or not."

Kristin thought about it.

Jess was hopeful.

Kristin said, "But if that's true, how come people get married before they ever do it the first time. Do they know they love each other before they are married or does that happen afterwards too?"

Jess didn't know.

"Then how do you know that you really love me?" she asked.

Jess said, "I just feel it. Every time I look at you. Every time I hear your voice. The first time I touched your foot. The first time I held your hand. And now, just looking into your eyes, I feel it. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I want to marry you and have children with you." He put his hand on her stomach and caressed her there. "I want to feel the child grow inside your belly and I want to watch it come out screaming and kicking."

Kristin pulled him down on top of her and kissed him passionately. They loved each other many times that night, but they never once had intercourse.

In the morning, her father came through the door without knocking and caught them asleep in each other's arms. He poked his head out the door and sent the rest of the men back to work. Then he turned his back on the bed while they got into their dry clothes.

Kristin made coffee and told Jess to get more firewood.

Gus wanted to know if he should kill Jess.

Kristin said, "Nothing happened."

Gus responded, "That looked like a lot of nothing, the two of you naked in the same bed."

"But, poppa," Kristin begged, "We didn't fuck. We just slept together. It was warmer. Our clothes were wet and it

was too bad outside to come on home.”

Gus asked, “What shall I tell your mother?”

Kristin answered, “Tell her that Jess slept on the floor.”