

# **LETTERS ON AN ELK HUNT**

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Letters on an Elk Hunt by Elinore Stewart

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**ELINORE STEWART**

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AN ELK HUNT**



**LETTERS ON AN ELK HUNT**

**By a Woman Homesteader**

LETTERS ON AN  
ELK HUNT

By a  
WOMAN HOMESTEADER

*Elinore Pruitt Stewart*



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1931

MAY

TRANSFER FROM C. G.

# LETTERS ON AN ELK HUNT

I

CONNIE WILLIS

BURNT FORK, WYO., July 8, 1914.

DEAR MRS. CONEY, —

Your letter of the 4th just to hand. How glad your letters make me; how glad I am to have you to tell little things to.

I intended to write you as soon as I came back from Green River, to tell you of a girl I saw there; but there was a heap to do and I kept putting it off. I have described the desert so often that I am afraid I will tire you, so I will leave that out and tell you that we arrived in town rather late. The help at the hotel were having their supper in the regular dining-room, as all the guests were out. They cheerfully left their own meal to place ours on the table.

I



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One of them interested me especially. She was a small person ; I could n't decide whether she was a child or a woman. I kept thinking her homely, and then when she spoke I forgot everything but the music of her voice, — it was so restful, so rich and mellow in tone, and she seemed so small for such a splendid voice. Somehow I kept expecting her to squeak like a mouse, but every word she spoke charmed me. Before the meal was over it came out that she was the dish-washer. All the rest of the help had finished their work for the day, but she, of course, had to wash what dishes we had been using.

The rest went their ways ; and as our own tardiness had belated her, I offered to help her to carry out the dishes. It was the work of only a moment to dry them, so I did that. She was so small that she had to stand on a box in order to be comfortable while she washed the cups and plates.

“The sink and drain-board were made for real folks. I have to use this box to stand on,

## CONNIE WILLIS

or else the water runs back down my sleeves," she told me.

My room was upstairs; she helped me up with the children. She said her name was Connie Willis, that she was the only one of her "ma's first man's" children; but ma married again after pa died and there were a lot of the second batch. When the mother died she left a baby only a few hours old. As Connie was older than the other children she took charge of the household and of the tiny little baby.

I just wish you could have seen her face light up when she spoke of little Lennie.

"Lennie is eight years old now, and she is just as smart as the smartest and as pretty as a doll. All the Ford children are pretty, and smart, too. I am the only homely child ma had. It would do you good just to look at any of the rest, 'specially Lennie."

It certainly did me good to listen to Connie, — her brave patience was so inspiring. As long as I was in town she came every day

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when her work was finished to talk to me about Lennie. For herself she had no ambition. Her clothes were clean, but they were odds and ends that had served their day for other possessors; her shoes were not mates, and one was larger than the other. She said: "I thought it was a streak of luck when I found the cook always wore out her right shoe first and the dining-room girl the left, because, you see, I could have their old ones and that would save two dollars toward what I am saving up for. But it was n't so very lucky after all except for the fun, because the cook wears low heels and has a much larger foot than the dining-room girl, who wears high heels. But I chopped the long heel off with the cleaver, and these shoes have saved me enough to buy Lennie a pair of patent-leather slippers to wear on the Fourth of July."

I thought that a foolish ambition, but succeeding conversations made me ashamed of the thought.