

THE SECRET PAPERS OF HARRY L. HOPKINS

BY ROBERT E. SHERWOOD



Presidential party arrives at Saki airfield, 90 miles from Yalta, to attend the 1945 conference. Shown are Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., Molotov, Hopkins and F.D.R.

Here begins the story of how Roosevelt prepared to turn his "greatest political liability"—Harry L. Hopkins—into a winning candidate for the Presidency, and how fate made him, instead, a unique and powerful go-between in top-secret negotiations with Churchill and Stalin

PART I. HE WANTED TO BE PRESIDENT

When Franklin D. Roosevelt died there remained only one man—Harry L. Hopkins—who could tell completely the inside story of the New Deal and of America's High Command in World War II. Preparation of The Hopkins Papers had started before Hopkins died. The task was then taken up by the dramatist and author, Robert E. Sherwood, a friend of both Hopkins and Roosevelt. There were forty large crates of these papers. Months were spent in sorting, relating and studying a huge accumulation of stenographic records, personal observations, letters, official documents and scribbled memoranda. Mr. Sherwood had to bridge gaps by interviews with and letters from men at home and abroad with whom Hopkins had dealt. Collier's presents the result with a conviction that this is the most important document of its kind that has been or will be produced. . . . The Editor

DURING the years when Harry Hopkins lived as a guest in the White House, he was generally regarded as a sinister figure, a backstairs intriguer, an Iowan combination of Machiavelli and Rasputin. Hostility toward him was by no means limited to those who hated Franklin Delano Roosevelt. There were many of Roosevelt's most loyal friends and associates, in and out of the Cabinet, who disliked Hopkins intensely and resented the extraordinary position of influence and authority which he held. He was unquestionably a political liability to Roosevelt, a convenient target for all manner of attacks directed at the President, and many people wondered why Roosevelt kept him around.

But the Presidential aide who developed in the war years—and of whom General (later Secretary of State) George C. Marshall said, "He rendered a service to his country which will never even vaguely be appreciated"—was in large measure Roosevelt's own creation. Roosevelt deliberately educated Hopkins in the arts and sciences of politics and of war and then gave him immense powers of decision for no reason other than that he liked him, trusted him and needed him.

A welfare worker from the corn belt, who tended to regard money (his own as well as other people's) as something to be spent as quickly as possible, a studiously unsuave and often intolerant and tactless reformer, Hop-



Harry Hopkins, sitting with his daughter, Diana, talks with Chicago's Mayor Edward J. Kelly at the 1940 convention

kins was widely different from Roosevelt in birth, breeding and manners. But there were qualities in him, including some of the regrettable ones, which Roosevelt admired and enjoyed, perhaps partly because they were so different.

A revealing story of Roosevelt's regard for Hopkins was told by Wendell Willkie, who was not one of the more fervent admirers of either man. After his defeat at the polls in November, 1940, Willkie asked Roosevelt a pointed question: "Why do you keep Hopkins so close to you? You surely must realize that people distrust him and they resent his influence."

Willkie quoted Roosevelt as replying: "I can understand that you wonder why I need that half man around me." (The "half man" was an allusion to Hopkins' extreme physical frailty.) "But—someday you may well

be sitting here where I am now as President of the United States. And when you are, you'll be looking at that door over there and knowing that practically everybody who walks through it wants something out of you.

"You'll learn what a lonely job this is, and you'll discover the need for somebody like Harry Hopkins who asks for nothing except to serve you."

A Contrast in Impressions

I first met Hopkins in September, 1938, when he was WPA administrator. I did not quite like him. He used such phrases as, "We've got to crack down on the bastards." I had the characteristically American suspicion of anyone who appeared to be getting "too big for his breeches." A year or so later, when he was beaten down

and chastened by terrible illness, I came to know him much better and to form a friendship which must color everything I write about him and for which no apologies are offered.

In the year before Pearl Harbor, and the years of war that followed, Hopkins made it his job, he made it his religion, to find out just what it was that Roosevelt really wanted and then to see to it that neither hell nor high water, nor even possible vacillations by Roosevelt himself, blocked its achievement.

Hopkins was with Roosevelt at the Atlantic Conference, at Casablanca, Quebec, Cairo, Teheran and Yalta, as well as during the four meetings with Churchill in Washington. Also, Roosevelt sent him by himself on various overseas missions of historic importance, the first of these being visits to Churchill and Stalin during the

year of extreme peril before Pearl Harbor when it seemed that nothing could stop Germany and her Axis allies from winning the war. It was these informal, even unofficial and often dangerous trips by a man who held no regular position in the U.S. government which paved the way for Roosevelt's relationships with the leaders of Britain and Russia in the second World War. As Roosevelt said, "Harry is the perfect ambassador for my purposes. He doesn't even know the meaning of the word 'protocol.' When he sees a piece of red tape, he just pulls out those old garden shears of his and snips it. And when he's talking to some foreign dignitary, he knows how to slump back in his chair and put his feet on the conference table and say, 'Oh, yeah?'"

First Meeting with Stalin

When Hopkins first flew to Moscow, in July, 1941, within a month after Hitler's assault on the Soviet Union, Roosevelt sent a message to Joseph Stalin: "I ask you to treat him with the identical confidence you would feel if you were talking directly to me." At that time, Roosevelt had never had any personal contact with Stalin, but Stalin took him at his word and talked to Hopkins with a degree of candor that he had displayed to no previous wartime emissary from the democratic world.

For instance, in the course of conversations which will be detailed later in these articles, Stalin gave Hopkins a frank and full description of the Russian war position and the Red Army needs. Then, according to Hopkins' report to the President:

"Stalin said that the Russian army had been confronted with a surprise attack; he himself believed that Hitler would not strike but he took all precautions possible. . . . Hitler made no demands on Russia. . . ."

"He (Stalin) stated that he wanted to give the President the following personal message: Stalin said Hitler's greatest weakness was found in the vast numbers of oppressed people who hated Hitler and the immoral ways of his government. He believed these people and countless other millions . . . could receive the kind of encouragement and moral strength they needed to resist Hitler from only

Hopkins' notes of private talks with Roosevelt in 1938 reveal F.D.R.'s opinion of Democratic 1940 Presidential aspirants. Harold Ickes, Frank Murphy and Henry Wallace were ruled out, Cordell Hull was eliminated as too old and in poor health, Jim Farley was thought "most dangerous"

considering Ickes - but
too hunting? No - too busy
again.
Hull - fine - but
too old, I state now
Hull - did not well -
he seems to be old
most cabinet officers
must complement
+ a Pres. must be able
to do this
Farley - I fear - I fear
1. I fear he is old
2. Not a great leader
3. Will be over 60
- might be over
+ elected Pres
4. Clearly a weak
candidate

Reviewing Hopkins' handicaps for the Presidential race, his divorce and sickness, Roosevelt still regarded him as the best man for the job and, in a discussion of strategy, told Harry he would be named Secretary of Commerce as the first rung on the ladder to the White House

Put in in Lincoln
John - in 1940
Mr. Hull - fine
- not going to be elected
- but not sure look to
him anything
Belmont would be elected
Hull about President
1940 - 1941 - Hull
- but not sure look to
him anything
Hull about President
1940 - 1941 - Hull
- but not sure look to
him anything

one source, and that was the United States.

"He stated that the world influence of the President and the government of the United States was enormous. . . . He said that the one thing that could defeat Hitler, and perhaps without ever firing a shot, would be the announcement that the United States was going to war with Germany . . . and he wanted me to tell the President that he would welcome the American troops on any part of the Russian front under the complete command of the American Army. . . . He repeatedly said that the President and the United States had more influence with the common people of the world today than any other force."

Hopkins also talked to Foreign Minister Molotov and reported:

"Mr. Molotov stated that . . . the Soviet government is by no means clear as to the policy which the Japanese government intends to pursue. . . . He stated that the one thing he thought would keep Japan from an aggressive move would be for the President to find some appropriate means of giving Japan what Mr. Molotov described as a 'warning' . . . it was perfectly clear that the implication . . . was that the warning would include a statement that the United States would come to the assistance of the Soviet Union in the event of its being attacked by Japan. . . . Mr. Molotov stated repeatedly that Russia did not wish any difficulties with Japan."

It was Hopkins' ability to break all speed records in getting down to brass tacks that endeared him to the heart of Winston Churchill, who has said:

"I have been present at several great conferences where twenty or more of the most important executive personages were gathered together. When the discussion flagged and all seemed baffled, it was on these occasions Harry Hopkins would rap out a deadly question: 'Surely, Mr. President, here is the point we have got to settle. Are we going to face it, or not?' Faced, it always was and, being faced, was conquered."

"Winnie" Suggests a Title

At one time Churchill, during a meeting in the White House, turned on Hopkins and said:

"Harry! When this war is over, His Majesty's government is going to reward you by conferring upon you a noble title. You are to be named 'Lord Root of the Matter.'"

In one of the darkest hours of the war—in February, 1942, when Singapore was falling—Churchill closed a long cable to Roosevelt with a solicitous inquiry about Hopkins' health. Roosevelt replied:

"Harry is much better but I am trying to confine him to barracks until he learns to take care of himself."

On another occasion, when Hopkins and General Marshall were in London arguing for the establishment of the Second Front in France, Roosevelt learned that Hopkins had stayed up all night at Chequers talking to Churchill, and Marshall received the following cabled order from his Commander-in-Chief:

"Will you please put Hopkins to bed and keep him there under day-and-night guard by Army or Marine Corps. Ask His Majesty (King George VI) for additional assistance if required."

Hopkins, the son of a harness-maker in Sioux City, Iowa, never succeeded in becoming sophisticated. Despite his furious devotion to duty,

and his persistent ill health, he had a zest for living which caused him often to revert to the role of a Grinnell College freshman when turned loose in the Big Town. He was pleased and rather proud when the hostile press denounced him as a "playboy." That made him feel glamorous. Roosevelt regarded his mild frivolities with amusement not unmixed with considerable concern.

Following is a handwritten letter, dated May 21, 1939, during one of the many periods when Hopkins was bed-ridden with wasting sickness:

Dear Harry:

Good boy! Teacher says you have gained 2 pounds.

2 Lbs. = 2\$

Keep on gaining, and put the reward into your little Savings Bank. But you must not gain more than 50 lbs. because Popper has not got more than 50\$.

As ever

F. D. R.

Clipped to that letter were two one-dollar bills. They are still clipped to it. There was not a great deal more money left in the Hopkins estate.

Another letter of May 18, 1944, when Hopkins was in the Ashford General Hospital:

Dear Harry:

It is grand to get the reports of how well you are getting on at White Sulphur Springs. . . .

One of the things I get from it . . . is that you have got to lead not the life of an invalid but the life of common or garden sense.

I, too, over one hundred years older than you are, have come to the same realization and I have cut my drinks down to one and a half cocktails per evening and nothing else—not one complementary highball or nightcap. Also, I have cut my cigarettes down from twenty or thirty a day to five or six a day. Luckily they still taste rotten but it can be done.

The main gist of this is to plead with you to stay away until the middle of June at the earliest. I don't want you back until then. If you do come back before then you will be extremely unpopular in Washington, with the exception of Cissy Patterson who wants to kill you off as soon as possible—just as she does me. . . .

I had a really grand time down at Bernie's (Baruch) — slept twelve hours out of the twenty-four, sat in the sun, never lost my temper, and decided to let the world go hang. The interesting thing is the world didn't hang. . . .

Affectionately,

F. D. R.

It is of incidental interest to note that the foregoing letter was written two weeks before the Allied forces were due to land in Normandy, a time when Roosevelt was bearing a formidable weight of responsibility and anxiety. But Roosevelt simply could not be obsessed by fears and apprehensions. He had a faculty—and it was always incomprehensible to me—for sloughing off care and worry, no matter how grave the emergency. It was this quality which enabled him to survive until victory was in sight.

One time when Hopkins, Samuel I. Rosenman and I were working with him, Roosevelt dictated a paragraph for insertion in a speech indicating that the current problems were giving him "sleepless nights." One of us protested: "You may get away with that at the moment, Mr. President, but future historians are bound to find out that every night you go to sleep

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THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

These men helped sway the destiny of nations. These men and many others like them weave the pattern of an unparalleled story . . .

THE SECRET PAPERS OF HARRY L. HOPKINS



Wendell Willkie found out why Hopkins was so close to Roosevelt



Farley felt that Hopkins' utterances embarrassed Roosevelt politically



Stalin gave Hopkins his opinion of Roosevelt's influence in world affairs



Churchill promised Hopkins a noble title, "Lord Root of the Matter"

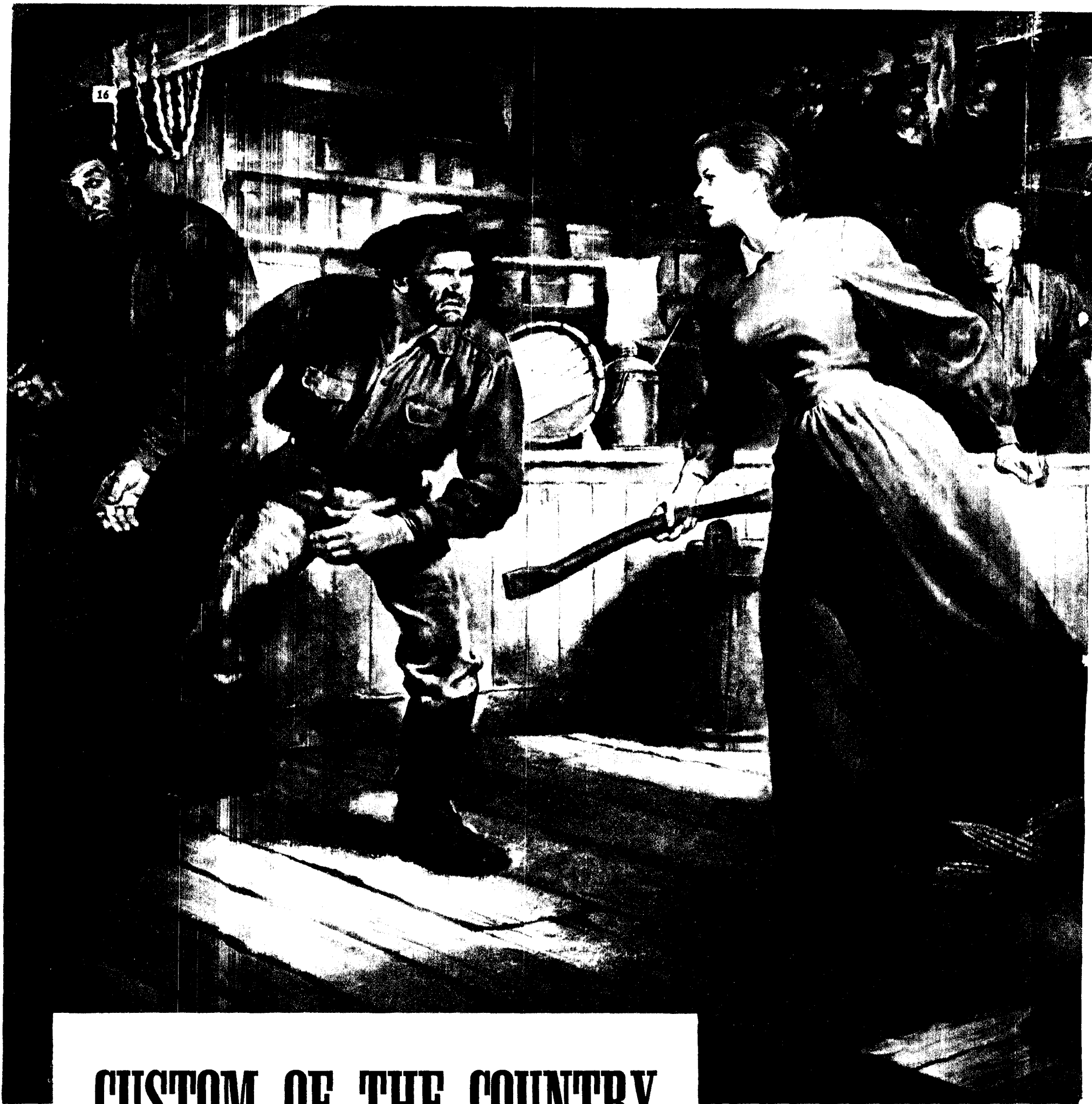
General Eisenhower became a key figure in the Roosevelt-Hopkins plan



Foremost in Hopkins' mind was the early defeat of Adolf Hitler

General Marshall helped to teach Hopkins the military facts of life





CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY

BY ERNEST HAYCOX

Rose Ann dragged MacBride into the quarrel for two reasons: He was the only man who could whip Walling—and the only man she could love

PEOPLE who had lived so closely together during the long crossing of the plains were scarcely the kind to fear their neighbors; and therefore not one of Portland's dozen houses had a lock. Nor was it the custom to knock on a door before entering; the habits of the trail were still strong in these settlers. At the Lord cabin, Rose Ann Talbot simply called out, "Here's your milk, Mrs. Lord," lifted the latch and walked into the cabin's single room.

A fireplace blaze lightened the afternoon grayness of the room and touched Hobart Walling, that bold and strutting little farmer who was here to drive his bargain. He had driven his stock in from the Tualatin, the mud of which was still on his

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