

A young girl leaves her home to earn money. She decides to join a wagon train ...as a boy... when her first job falls through. Is it a mistake? Will she make it back to her family?

A Girl Named Polly

By Kitty Trock

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First Edition

Polly pressed her face against the warm, golden brown jersey and sniffed. This cow, the hay, and the dust, were the anchors of her heart. The smells of her home. Streams of snowy milk pinged against the side of the silver metal bucket as she squeezed them out. She was concentrating on her task when a shadow fell across Cinnamon's side. Zeb, her second oldest brother, stood in the doorway. "You're blocking the light," Polly said. "I can barely see in this musty old barn as it is."

"You need to come in," he said. "Pa's been bad hurt at the mill."

She jumped up and the cow stepped sideways and spilled the milk. She ran across the grass and took the porch steps two at a time. She stood on tiptoe and peered over the tops of the heads in the packed living room. Doc Haven's red suspenders and white shirt were just visible as he bent over the couch. She caught a glimpse of her father's sparse, blond hair.

Craig, the oldest of the brothers, caught her arm as she pushed into the crowd. "Doc's fixing him up," he said. "Got a bad slice to his leg. Fell into one of the saws."

Polly sucked her breath in and choked.

"Doc thinks he'll make it." Craig said. "It'll take awhile. Be tough on Ma."

Doc smiled when he saw Polly. "Good," he said. "You're all here." He looked around at the silent millworkers, hands at their sides, clothing stained with blood. "You boys go on home, now. You did a fine job getting him here and fetching me quick." The men nodded to Ma and filed out.

"More time," Doc said to no one in particular, "He'd of bled to death."

He looked at the family and wiped his brow on the back of his sleeve. "Move your extra furniture out of the room. Leave the couch and the little table. Push the couch against the far wall and bring one of the boy's beds in for your Pa. We'll lay sheets under him to lift or roll him. He can use a pan for a toilet and you can feed and bathe him with



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