

"But grandpa, it is not ours," remonstrated Ruth.

"Make it ours!" shouted the selfish, avaricious old man. "Finders keepers!"

Ruth joined her sister in a hurried rush the chicken yard. Sure enough, there, huddling down in one corner, was a turkey. The roosters were resenting its intrusion by half-circling the stranger, with spurs set and eyes aslant. It was as Netta had reported, a great, beautiful turkey. Ruth had never seen so royal a bird of its species. It was of unusual size, stately and graceful, and its plumage had the rare iridescence in still blues and glossy blacks as attractive as the hues of a peacock.

"Why," abruptly spoke Ruth, after a cursory inspection of the fowl, "it's foot is injured."

This was plain to the view, for one member was bedabbled with blood. The turkey was weary-eyed and panting, as if it had come quite a distance. Its foot had seemingly caught in some barbwire and was badly lacerated.

"The poor thing!" exclaimed gentle-hearted and pitying Ruth. "It won't do to leave it among the chickens."

"Oh, no, the roosters are ready to peck at it now," joined in Netta.

Finally they decided to carry it up into the barn, where there was a partitioned-off room. As Ruth lifted the turkey it made no demur or resistance. In fact, it seemed to recognize her as a kindly spirit and quite cuddled up in her arms. They got some hay, and in a very brief space of time the gobbler had a comfortable bed, its wounded foot salved and bound up, and a platter of corn and a pan of water within ready reach.

As the days went on it became a regular pet to Ruth. She nursed it, fed it, and the grateful bird seemed to greet her morning and evening visits with pleasure. Every day Grandfather Gardner gloated over the prospective feast, demanding to know

how the coveted fowl was fattening up.

"Next Sunday, Ruth," he suggested, at the end of a few days, and Ruth's heart sank. Somehow the pretty fowl had appealed to her protection. She could not think of having it killed and eaten, but the old man was imperious and obstinate. He would hear of no respite.

It was Saturday afternoon. Ruth was walking slowly home from the store. The turkey was on her mind and she scarcely noticed that a handsome, well-dressed young man had caught up with her, was walking by her side and had lifted his hat courteously, until he spoke the words:

"Excuse me, miss, but am I headed right for Hubbard road?"

"I am going in that direction myself," explained Ruth.

As if he valued the tacit invitation to keep her company, the young man fell into her step, keeping up a chatty, pleasant conversation that made her feel interested. His talk was of the county fair. He had been one of the exhibitors. Ruth was quite reluctant to pause and inform him:

"This is Hubbard road."

"Ah, thanks," he bowed, "and can you further direct me to the Gardner home? It is for there I am bound."

"As Mr. Gardner is my grandfather and I live with him, I think I had better continue to be your guide," explained Ruth with a smile.

"You're Miss Ruth Warren, then?" spoke the young man, in surprise and with pleasure. "Why, then, my business is with you. It is about—a turkey, Rhodame, the prize fowl in its class, which escaped when the county fair broke up, and worth—many hundred dollars for its recovery, and if you still have it, as I learned in the town you did have it—"

"You have come just in time," spoke Ruth, eagerly and gladly, and then she told the story of the bird in its entirety.

Mr. Paul Rivers told his in turn. The lost turkey was a rare fowl of