

Good Company

By Sylvia Holt

Dad said that you always have to live with yourself and that he wanted good company. Those weren't just pretty words to him.

During the Great Depression, he worked awhile with a fellow who traveled from farm to farm, buying cattle. One day they were told of a farmer whose well had gone dry. The farmer could no longer water his cattle. Knowing he had already sold most of his possessions trying to get by and that he would now be desperate, the cattle buyer told Dad to go and offer the farmer half of what they normally paid the others. Dad drove slowly out to the farm, feeling terrible for what he must do, but not wanting to lose his job in these desperate times. He made the offer to the farmer who hung his head and reluctantly agreed. He had no choice, for the water was nearly gone, but such a low offer would not even pay the bank loan used to buy the cattle, and the bank would soon seize the farm.

Dad sat quietly at the long kitchen table with the farmer and his family. For the first time he was not offered coffee or fresh baking. There was none to offer. He looked at them all and then pulled the already signed contract out of his pocket and tore it up. He would look for a different job. He told the farmer he would bring his truck the next day and help him haul the cattle to the city where he would get far more money for them. And he did.

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