

Ivory Hollow

by

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Addy and Electra had lassoed a ride west three years ago, traveling to a new world. When they reached a tiny village nestled in a sloping pass, the women's polished faces brightened, for they had found Ivory Hollow, their new home.

Country living agreed with Addy and Electra, and they immediately prospered on their newfound land. The men of Ivory Hollow, however, were narrow-minded simpletons who grumbled about women owning and working the ground without a man.

No law barred them from being landowners, so they settled in. Their first harvest paid well, and they purchased a small herd of cattle, a few hogs, chickens, and a horse.

They treasured their new home. Electra rode her gray mare along the property line each morning, her raven-black hair bouncing in glossy coils upon her slender back. She couldn't get enough of the morning air mingled with the sweet scent of her horse.

Addy, unlike Electra, was nearly as wide as she was tall with stubby copper bristles rising from her scalp. While she fed and watered the hogs and chickens, she sang gospel hymns. "Oh, Happy Day" and "Ave Maria" soared for miles across the hills.

The women thrived on their beloved land, but there were rumors: "Those kind can't be allowed to work cows and hogs, much less plant fields." "Their brains don't know enough to leave it alone." "They got no business out there."

Even the beak-nosed, gray-haired Reverend LeRoy Sheets hissed at them in the churchyard. "Why don't you go back where you came from?"

"Are we really that different?" Addy asked Electra as their wagon bumped over the dirt-packed road. "On the inside, we're no different than those men."

"On the inside," Electra countered, "we are quite different from men."

"We are all the same."

"They don't believe that." She blinked at Addy, her eyes flashing furiously. "We can't control what they think."

Reverend Sheets continued his agenda, insisting they move.

But neither woman could imagine life without the grazing cows, swelling cornstalks, and the deep sense of peace they never knew in the city.

Electra continued her morning rides while Addy offered her songs of praise.

The men found Addy first.

She had just poured feed for the hogs. Their probing snouts and musky scent masked the approaching danger. Led by the man with the collar, six men invaded the land on foot, their horses left a quarter mile away. These wranglers were ready to fight, torches and pitchforks in their hands, eyes blind to their actions.

Addy turned to face the men and planted steel feet on the ground.

“It’s time for you to leave,” Reverend Sheets sputtered. “We’ve asked you nicely, but still you stay.”

Her dress swished from side to side across her wide frame, as they surrounded her, but before she could do anything, the drumming of a galloping horse filled the air, and Electra pulled up just short of the men.

“Do your wives know what you’re doing?” she shouted from her gray mare. The beast clomped up to the men, making them step back.

“And you.” Her bright eyes flashed upon the reverend. “You are an abomination!”

“You are the abomination!” He lifted his pitchfork, and with the strength of his rage, the old man heaved it at Electra.

A metallic clang echoed through the hills as the pitchfork impaled Electra’s chest. A spark erupted, and she slid off her horse.

“What have you done?” Addy ran to her injured friend.

Violet light flickered within the sensitive glass of Electra’s eyes. The crystals under her milky skin had dimmed, yet a gentle hum arose from her quivering body. She was alive, but Addy would have to take her to the factory for repairs.

An electric sizzle heated the copper wires on the top of Addy’s head. She snatched the pitchfork from Electra’s chest and waved it at the men. “You’re lucky,” she screamed. “For I know Mercy.”

She swung the pitchfork at Reverend Sheets. The man lurched backward to avoid injury. The others ran for their horses when she threw the implement on the ground at the reverend's feet, a cloud of dust covering his shoes.

Addy placed Electra on the horse and hoisted herself up behind her friend. There would be a time of repose at the factory, but not fulfillment.

They would return home for that, on their land in this new world.