



Golden

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Pretty hair can't be too long, she told him and because she knew such things, he believed her. Every other thing she said was false, but that last bit of news he held to be graven truth. The yellow curls covered his coat collar (like a farmer's) although the rightness of its length in rigid New York came from the woman who lied to him about everything including the question of whether she was his aunt, his mother or a kindly neighbor. Golden

When her father found out, he stood up then sat down and then stood up again. His left hand patting around the air searching for something. A shot of whiskey, his pipe, a whip, a shot gun, the Democratic platform, his heart--she never knew. His rage filled the room, and made it creak. He began to cry just thinking of what had happened to his daughter. He cried until the rage, blooming and filling the room could be squeezed back into human proportions and he could do a proper thing. Her mother, however, had the final cut: her eyebrows were perfectly still but the look she gave Vera Louise was so full of repulsion the daughter could taste the sour saliva gathering under her mother's tongue, soaking the insides of her cheeks. No word, then or ever, passed between them. And the lingerie case full of money that lay on Vera's pillow the following Wednesday was, in