

ANIMAL ENGINE PRESENTS

Henrietta
Solway



INSPIRED BY THE WORKS OF WILLA CATHER

**CREATED AND PERFORMED BY
CARRIE BROWN KATIE HARTMAN AND KARIM MUASHER**

**DIRECTED BY
MELINDA JEAN FERRARACCIO**

**ARTS
ACROSS
NEBRASKA**



LIED CENTER
FOR PERFORMING ARTS

The Lied Center's Arts Across Nebraska Program
is generously supported by:

Friends of Lied
The Nebraska Arts Council
& Nebraska Cultural Endowment
The Richard P. Kimmel and Laurine
Kimmel Charitable Foundation



Willa Cather
RED CLOUD OPERA HOUSE
20th Season

*with
additional support from
Patricia & Marion Arneson*



MERRYMAN
Performing Arts
CENTER

*Performances at the
Merryman Performing Arts Center and
the Red Cloud Opera House are supported by:*

Henrietta Solway was developed with support from:



ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

ANIMAL ENGINE is the collaboration between Karim Muasher and Carrie Brown, two movement-based theatre artists who met while training at the London International School of Performing Arts. We create original plays that re-imagine works of literature. Working from a place of serious playfulness, we create our plays using research, improvisation, movement, and music. Fascinated with the simple act of storytelling, our plays have just a few performers and simple design elements. We believe in creating community through live performance, so our plays are written with multi-generational audiences in mind. Our work has been called “hard to beat” by the *Washington Post* and “remarkably clever” by *CityBeat Cincinnati*. We perform and teach in New York City, across the United States, and internationally at theatres, festivals, and schools. www.animalengine.com

CARRIE BROWN (Writer, Performer) is a deviser, clown, and teacher interested in how playfulness can be used to tell meaningful stories. A Co-Artistic Director of Animal Engine Theatre Company, she has devised and performed in every production. She has studied with master clown teachers Giovanni Fusetti and the NY Goofs, collaborated with clown Mark Gindick (Big Apple Circus, Ringling Bros, Cirque Du Soleil) and performed as a clown at Cirque Off, tinydangerousfun, New York Downtown Clown Revue, and the New York Clown Theater Festival. Carrie has also performed as a therapeutic clown with Lev Leytzan, working with dementia patients. She has taught theatre and clowning with the International Thespian Festival and Wingspan Arts. Carrie has a BA in Acting from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a MFA in Lecoq Based Actor Created Theater from Naropa University at the London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA).

MELINDA JEAN FERRARACCIO (Director) is a theatre artist, expressive arts facilitator, and yoga practitioner. She uses intermodal arts therapy intervention approaches to performance, facilitation, and community outreach and has worked in a range of educational, therapeutic, and artistic settings. She holds a BFA in Physical Theater from Niagara University and an MA in Expressive Arts from the European Graduate School in Switzerland where she studied with the founding members of the Pan Theatre. She has attended intensives at the School of Physical Theater in London and the New York Goofs Ultimate Clown School. She was a founding member and artistic director of the award-winning Brass Tacks Theatre Company in New York City. Her performance credits include: Shakespeare in the Park(ing) Lot (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Here Arts Center (*In the Belly of the Beast with Two Backs*), and La Mama (*Clowns Ex Machina*). With Animal Engine, she has directed: *Petunia and Chicken*, *Darlings*, and *Henrietta Solway*.

KATIE HARTMAN (Dramaturg, Composer, Performer) is a New York-based theatre maker whose original work has been seen Off-Broadway and on stages across the United States and Canada. She is co-artistic director of the Coldharts, a touring theatre company that creates ensemble-devised, new music theatre inspired by the American Gothic. Since 2012, the Coldharts have created and toured five original musicals spanning the genres of folk, pop, punk and rock, with over 300 performances on the neo-vaudevillian circuit. In

cont'd next page

addition to composing for the Coldharts' work, Katie has created music for NYC theatre companies Animal Engine (*Darlings, Rabbit, Henrietta Solway*) and Bread Arts Collective (*Candide*.) Recent New York credits include *The Unrepentant Necrophile* at HERE Arts Center and *Edgar Allan* at Soho Playhouse. Katie received her B.A. in Theatre Arts from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, is a founding producer of the Twin Cities Horror Festival, and the producer of the Cincinnati Fringe Festival.

KARIM MUASHER (Writer, Performer) is an Arab American theatre maker, intimacy director, and educator. He is the Co-Artistic Director of Animal Engine Theatre Company, where he creates original plays that re-imagine works of literature. Recent projects include writing and performing *Henrietta Solway*, a new play commissioned by the National Willa Cather Center, and directing *Specially Processed American Me*, Jaime Sunwoo's surreal exploration of SPAM and the Korean War. As an intimacy director, Karim specializes in new works, classics, and student productions. He was part of the first intimacy directing certification cohort with Intimacy Directors and Coordinators, where he trained under Broadway intimacy directors Claire Warden (*Slave Play*) and Cha Ramos (*Company*). Karim has taught theatre and devising at the Guthrie Theater, Roundabout Theatre Company, and International Thespian Festival, and is a lecturer at Pace University. Karim studied acting and dance at Ithaca College, the Lecoq pedagogy at the London International School of Performing Arts, and is a current student of the Alexander Technique at Balance Arts Center. Find me: @karimmuasher (IG) and intimacydirector.nyc

JAIME RODERICK (Lighting Designer) Off-Broadway: *Stranger Sings!*, *Americano!*, *Disney's Winnie The Pooh*, *EmojiLand*, *Midnight at the Never Get*, *Caesar & Cleopatra*, *Accidentally Brave*, *Red Roses Green Gold*, *The Woodsman*, *Afterglow*. London: *It Happened in Key West*. Regional: Denis DeYoung's *Hunchback Of Notre Dame*, *The Bikinis!*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Midsummer*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*. JamieRoderick.com

NICK RYAN (Stage Manager) is a theatre artist based in New York State. Selected play-writing credits include Long Wharf Theatre, The Guthrie Theater, Children's Theatre Company, Shakespeare & Company and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. He is co-artistic director of The Coldharts, a touring theater company inspired by the American gothic. Their show *Edgar Allan* has toured since 2013 with performances Off-Broadway, at the International Edgar Allan Poe Festival in Baltimore, and the Poe Museum in Richmond. The audio play was featured on 'Poe Theater on the Air' on National Public Radio. Nick is a company member of the Brooklyn-based Bread Arts Collective and co-founder of Four Humors Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

JEN VARBALOW (Set Design Consultant, Scenic Artist) is a freelance set designer and scenic artist based in NYC. Past credits include designs for Bryant Park, Drilling Company/Shakespeare in the Parking Lot, Bindlestiff Family Circkus, MultiStages, JACK, NYMF, Broadway Bound Festival, New York Deaf Theatre, Resonance Ensemble, The Artful Conspirators, The Workshop Theater, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Theatre Garden, City Lights Youth Theater, Pulse Ensemble Theatre, DR2 Theatre, Queens Theatre in the Park. Jennifer is a Master Teaching Artist with the Roundabout Theatre Company and Adjunct Professor at CUNY. She has an MFA from Brandeis and a BFA from Rutgers University. Member of USA local-829. So happy to be collaborating with Animal Engine on this project. Love to Hana and Delaney, my muses and support.

Creating Henrietta Solway

By Karim Muasher

Adaptation is tricky. How can a book become performance? How can something meant to be read become something meant to be seen and heard? How can a play retain the essence of the text it was based on? Over the past thirteen years, in collaboration with my wife and creative partner Carrie Brown, our theatre company Animal Engine has been re-imagining works of literature for the stage. Through the creation of eight original plays, we've developed our own unique approach to answering these fundamental questions. Here are some of the lessons we've learned over the years.

Do Your Research.

Read. Read. Read. You've got to read anything you can get your hands on that might inform your understanding of the author and their work. In developing *Henrietta Solway*, Carrie and I, in collaboration with our co-creator Katie Hartman, worked together to read all of Willa Cather's short stories and serialized novels, and even some of her personal letters! Over time, themes began to emerge: **urban vs rural life, gender roles, growing up and returning home**. We also got a really good sense of Cather's voice: her dry sense of humor, use of nature and loving, and her in-depth character descriptions. We kept all of these discoveries close to use throughout the entire creative process, so that we could preserve the feeling of Cather's writing and personality in our play.

Embrace the Remix.

In his video series "Everything Is A Remix," documentarian Kirby Ferguson argues that the process of creating music remixes, which is sometimes characterized as theft or inherently uncreative, is key to all art making. Simply put, by putting two or more different things together, you are able to make something new. You can see this in any major work of art, from the **Mona Lisa** to **Star Wars**, and even major scientific breakthroughs. When you let go of the need to be original and embrace remixing, it unlocks a whole new kind of creativity. For example, we combined several characters from Cather's short stories, including **Tommy** in "Tommy, the Unsentimental," **Eden Bower** in "Coming, Eden Bower!" and **Nils Ericson** in "The Bohemian Girl" to create the title character of *Henrietta Solway*: a headstrong young tomboy from rural Nebraska with a restless passion, who grows up to leave home, become a famous artist and search for her place in the world. Similarly, all of the locations in the play, such as **Empire City, Coney Island**, and the **Mesa**, come from Cather's writing, but they've been repurposed to create a new story.

Make It Active.

A book's medium is language. Writers create something that is meant to be read. But a play's medium is the body. Theatre artists create something that is meant to be seen. For *Henrietta Solway*, that

meant jettisoning most of Cather's beautiful descriptive language, and finding ways to make it more active. We used our bodies to express the visuals Cather writes about, like when we **become a train** or the people of Washington Square Park with our bodies. We used **physical actions** to express the **inner life** of the characters, like when our main character screams at the top of a windmill as a way to express her frustration. Of course, plays also use language, but in a very different way. When we do use narration in *Henrietta Solway*, it's spoken by a character with a clear perspective on what they're talking about, versus the somewhat neutral narration often found in narrative fiction.

Use Time and Rhythm.

A play is not static; it is a living thing that is experienced through time. In general, time moves at a **faster pace** in a play than a book. A Cather description that takes fifteen minutes to read may only take one minute to watch in our play! **Rhythm** is also more important in a play. A reader can vary the rhythm of their experience, speeding through some pages and slowing down for others, but an audience member has no such control over the rhythm of the play they're watching. The theatre artist has to vary the rhythm for their

audience to keep things engaging. For *Henrietta Solway*, this meant sometimes speeding things up by creating a **montage**, or slowing things down with a **monologue**.

Make It Your Own.

This may be the most important lesson of all. Every artist has their own **ideas, creativity, aesthetic** and **perspective**. They have to be used in creating any work, even an adaptation. Some of the most boring adaptations are ones that completely mimic the source text: word for word, image for image. So make changes, make it your own! We imbued *Henrietta Solway* with moments of **stupid humor, melodrama** and **magic** because those are the kinds of works of art that we love.

The play focuses on a young person from a small town who leaves for a big city so that they can fully express their artistry and identity. At the same time, they make art about where they came from and they're ultimately drawn back home to reckon with their past.

Why is that the story of the play? Because, in many ways, it's our story, the story of the artists who made *Henrietta Solway*. By bringing yourself fully to your work, you will always love what you've made.

The creative team of *Henrietta Solway* acknowledges that the state of Nebraska is the traditional land of many different Native people. For generations, these Native Americans have lived, worked, and created art here. We pay respect to them as we're about to have a communal experience on their land, and encourage our audiences to learn more at <https://diversity.unl.edu/recognizing-land>

TOMMY

the unsentimental

Willa Cather

"Your father says he has no business tact at all, and of course that's dreadfully unfortunate."

"Business," replied Tommy, "he's a baby in business; he's good for nothing on earth but to keep his hair parted straight and wear that white carnation in his buttonhole. He has 'em sent down from Hastings twice a week as regularly as the mail comes, but the drafts he cashes lie in his safe until they are lost, or somebody finds them. I go up occasionally and send a package away for him myself. He'll answer your notes promptly enough, but his business letters—I believe he destroys them unopened to shake the responsibility of answering them."

"I am at a loss to see how you can have such patience with him, Tommy, in so many ways he is thoroughly reprehensible."

"Well, a man's likeableness don't depend at all on his virtues or acquirements, nor a woman's either, unfortunately. You like them or you don't like them, and that's all there is to it. For the why of it you must appeal to a higher oracle than I. Jay is a likeable fellow, and that's his only and sole acquirement, but after all it's a rather happy one."

"Yes, he certainly is that," replied Miss Jessica, as she deliberately turned off the gas jet and proceeded to arrange her toilet articles. Tommy watched her closely and then turned away with a baffled expression.

Needless to say, Tommy was not a boy, although her keen gray eyes and wide forehead were scarcely girlish, and she had the lank figure of an active half grown lad. Her real name was Theodosia, but during Thomas Shirley's frequent absences from the bank she had attended to his business and correspondence signing herself "T. Shirley," until everyone in Southdown called her "Tommy." That blunt sort of familiarity is not unfrequent in the West, and is meant well enough. People rather expect some business



ability in a girl there, and they respect it immensely. That, Tommy undoubtedly had, and if she had not, things would have gone at sixes and sevens in the Southdown National. For Thomas Shirley had big land interests in Wyoming that called him constantly away from home, and his cashier, little Jay Ellington Harper, was, in the local phrase, a weak brother in the bank. He was the son of a friend of old Shirley's, whose papa had sent him West, because he had

made a sad mess of his college career, and had spent too much money and gone at too giddy a pace down East. Conditions changed the young gentleman's life, for it was simply impossible to live either prodigally or rapidly in Southdown, but they could not materially affect his mental habits or inclinations. He was made cashier of Shirley's bank because his father bought in half the stock, but Tommy did his work for him.



The relation between these two young people was peculiar; Harper was, in his way, very grateful to her for keeping him out of disgrace with her father, and showed it by a hundred little attentions which were new to her and much more agreeable than the work she did for him was irksome. Tommy knew that she was immensely fond of him, and she knew at the same time that she was thoroughly foolish for being so. As she expressed it, she was not of his sort, and never would be. She did not often take pains to think, but when she did she saw matters pretty clearly, and she was of a peculiarly unfeminine mind that could not escape meeting and acknowledging a logical conclusion. But she went on liking Jay Ellington Harper, just the same. Now Harper was the only foolish man of Tommy's acquaintance. She knew plenty of active young business men and sturdy ranchers, such as one meets about

live Western towns, and took no particular interest in them, probably just because they were practical and sensible and thoroughly of her own kind. She knew almost no women, because in those days there were few women in Southdown who were in any sense interesting, or interested in anything but babies and salads. Her best friends were her father's old business friends, elderly men who had seen a good deal of the world, and who were very proud and fond of Tommy. They recognized a sort of squareness and honesty of spirit in the girl that Jay Ellington Harper never discovered, or, if he did, knew too little of its rareness to value highly. Those old speculators and men of business had always felt a sort of responsibility for Tom Shirley's little girl, and had rather taken her mother's place, and been her advisers on many points upon which men seldom feel at liberty to address a girl.



She was just one of them; she played whist and billiards with them, and made their cocktails for them, not scorning to take one herself occasionally. Indeed, Tommy's cocktails were things of fame in Southdown, and the professional compounders of drinks always bowed respectfully to her as though acknowledging a powerful rival.

Now all these things displeased and puzzled Jay Ellington Harper, and Tommy knew it full well, but clung to her old manner of living with a stubborn pertinacity, feeling somehow that to change would be both foolish and disloyal to the Old Boys. And as things went on, the seven Old Boys made greater demands upon her

time than ever, for they were shrewd men, most of them, and had not lived fifty years in this world without learning a few things and unlearning many more. And while Tommy lived on in the blissful delusion that her role of indifference was perfectly played and without a flaw, they suspected how things were going and were perplexed as to the outcome. Still, their confidence was by no means shaken, and as Joe Elsworth said to Joe Sawyer one evening at billiards, "I think we can pretty nearly depend on Tommy's good sense."

They were too wise to say anything to Tommy, but they said just a word or two to Thomas Shirley, Sr., and combined to make things very



The Ordinary

Before the invention of safety bicycles, the high-wheeled bicycle was popular because it was light and fast. And dangerous! Because

the rider sat above the large front wheel, he often "took a header," or flew over the handlebars. Did we mention there were no brakes?? The safety bicycle was lower, with same-sized wheels.

MARY MINER, WILLA CATHER, AND
DOUGLASS CATHER ON THEIR "WHEELS"



unpleasant for Jay Ellington Harper.

At length their relations with Harper became so strained that the young man felt it would be better for him to leave town, so his father started him in a little bank of his own up in Red Willow. Red Willow, however, was scarcely a safe distance, being only some twenty-five miles north, upon the Divide, and Tommy occasionally found excuse to run upon her wheel to straighten out the young man's business for him. So when she suddenly decided to go East to school for a year, Thomas, Sr., drew a sigh of great relief. But the seven Old Boys shook their heads; they did not like to see her gravitating toward the East; it was a sign of weakening, they said, and showed an inclination to experiment with another kind of life, Jay Ellington Harper's kind.

But to school Tommy went, and from all reports conducted herself in a

most seemly manner; made no more cocktails, played no more billiards. She took rather her own way with the curriculum, but she distinguished herself in athletics, which in Southdown counted for vastly more than erudition.

Her evident joy on getting back to Southdown was appreciated by everyone. She went about shaking hands with everybody, her shrewd face, that was so like a clever wholesome boy's, held high with happiness. As she said to old Joe Elsworth one morning, when they were driving behind his stud through a little thicket of cottonwood scattered along the sun-parched bluffs, "It's all very fine down East there, and the hills are great, but one gets mighty homesick for this sky, the old intense blue of it, you know. Down there the skies are all pale and smoky. And this wind, this hateful, dear, old everlasting wind that comes down

like the sweep of cavalry and is never tamed or broken, O Joe, I used to get hungry for this wind! I couldn't sleep in that lifeless stillness down there."

"How about the people, Tom?"

"O, they are fine enough folk, but we're not their sort, Joe, and never can be."

"You realize that, do you, fully?"

"Quite fully enough, thank you, Joe." She laughed rather dismally, and Joe cut his horse with the whip.

The only unsatisfactory thing about Tommy's return was that she brought with her a girl she had grown fond of at school, a dainty, white languid bit of a thing, who used violet perfumes and carried a sunshade. The Old Boys said it was a bad sign when a rebellious girl like Tommy took to being sweet and gentle to one of her own sex, the worst sign in the world.

The new girl was no sooner in town than a new complication came about. There was no doubt of the impression she made on Jay Ellington Harper. She indisputably had all those little evidences of good breeding that were about the only things which could touch the timid, harrassed young man who was so much out of his element. It was a very plain case on his part, and the souls of the seven were troubled within them. Said Joe Elsworth to the other Joe, "The heart of the cad is gone out to the little muff, as is right and proper and in accordance with the eternal fitness of things. But there's the other girl who has the blindness that may not be cured, and she gets all the rub of it.

It's no use, I can't help her, and I am going to run down to Kansas City for awhile. I can't stay here and see the abominable suffering of it." He didn't go, however.

There was just one other person who understood the hopelessness of the situation quite as well as Joe, and that was Tommy. That is, she understood Harper's attitude. As to Miss Jessica she was not quite so certain, for Miss Jessica, though pale and languid and addicted to sunshades, was a maiden most discreet. Conversations on the subject usually ended without any further information as to Miss Jessica's feelings, and Tommy sometimes wondered if she were capable of having any at all.

At last the calamity which Tommy had long foretold descended upon Jay Ellington Harper. One morning she received a telegram from him begging her to intercede with her father; there was a run on his bank and he must have help before noon. It was then ten thirty, and the one sleepy little train that ran up to Red Willow daily had crawled out of the station an hour before. Thomas Shirley, Sr., was not at home.

"And it's a good thing for Jay Ellington he's not, he might be more stony hearted than I," remarked Tommy, as she closed the ledger and turned to the terrified Miss Jessica. "Of course we're his only chance, no one else would turn their hand over to help him. The train went an hour ago and he says it must be there by noon. It's the only bank in the town, so nothing can be done by telegraph. There is nothing left but to wheel for it. I may make it, and I may not. Jess, you

Why was Willa Cather writing about bikes anyway?

Cather was becoming a New Woman. In the 1890s, bicycles were seen by many American and European women as tools of feminism: they gave women mobility and started to redefine Victorian ideas about how women were to behave. Women quickly became active in the suffrage movement. Bikes spurred dress reform movements, and women began to wear clothes and undergarments that allowed them to engage in physical activities, like cycling.

As a result, many men warned against bicycling. They said that it would give women headaches, heart palpitations, depression, and . . . **bicycle face**.

bicycle face

/bī' sīk əl fās/

n. 1890s medical terms for a woman characterized by exhaustion, bulging eyes, and clenched jaw, caused by overexertion and unconscious mental effort of maintaining balance. Discovered by Dr. A. Shadwell, L.

NOT BICYCLE FACE



FACTORY BL
AND CHERRY

Imperial Wheels

The go-lightly kind.



man's facial expression char-
eyes, flushed skin, drawn lips,
-exertion and the conscious or
maintaining balance on a bicycle.
London.

ACKHAWK ST
AVENUE."

1897

SALESROOM-325
WABASH AVENUE.

scamper up to the house and get my wheel out, the tire may need a little attention. I will be along in a minute.”
“O, Theodosia, can’t I go with you? I must go!”

“You go! O, yes, of course, if you want to. You know what you are getting into, though. It’s twenty-five miles upish grade and hilly, and only an hour and a quarter to do it in.”

“O, Theodosia, I can do anything now!” cried Miss Jessica, as she put up her sunshade and fled precipitately. Tommy smiled as she began cramming bank notes into a canvas bag. “May be you can, my dear, and may be you can’t.”

The road from Southdown to Red Willow is not by any means a favorite bicycle road; it is rough, hilly and climbs from the river bottoms up to the big Divide by a steady up grade, running white and hot through the scorched corn fields and grazing lands where the long-horned Texan cattle browse about in the old buffalo wallows. Miss Jessica soon found that with the pedaling that had to be done there was little time left for emotion of any sort, or little sensibility for anything but the throbbing, dazzling heat that had to be endured. Down there in the valley the distant bluffs were vibrating and dancing with the heat, the cattle, completely overcome by it, had hidden under the shelving banks of the “draws,” and the prairie dogs had fled to the bottom of their holes that are said to reach to water. The whirr of the seventeen-year locust was the only thing that spoke of animation, and that ground on as if only animated and enlivened by the sickening, destroying heat. The sun

was like hot brass, and the wind that blew up from the south was hotter still. But Tommy knew that wind was their only chance. Miss Jessica began to feel that unless she could stop and get some water she was not much longer for this vale of tears. She suggested this possibility to Tommy, but Tommy only shook her head, “Take too much time,” and bent over her handle bars, never lifting her eyes from the road in front of her. It flashed upon Miss Jessica that Tommy was not only very unkind, but that she sat very badly on her wheel and looked aggressively masculine and professional when she bent her shoulders and pumped like that. But just then Miss Jessica found it harder than ever to breathe, and the bluffs across the river began doing serpentine and skirt dances, and more important and personal considerations occupied the young lady.

**“Let me tell you
what I think of
bicycling. I think it
has done more to
emancipate women
than anything else
in the world.”**

Susan B. Anthony

When they were fairly over the first half of the road, Tommy took out her watch. "Have to hurry up, Jess, I can't wait for you."

"O, Tommy, I can't," panted Miss Jessica, dismounting and sitting down in a little heap by the roadside. "You go on, Tommy, and tell him,—tell him I hope it won't fail, and I'd do anything to save him."

By this time the discreet Miss Jessica was reduced to tears, and Tommy nodded as she disappeared over the hill laughing to herself. "Poor Jess, anything but the one thing he needs. Well, your kind have the best of it generally, but in little affairs of this sort my kind come out rather strongly. We're rather better at them than at dancing. It's only fair, one side shouldn't have all."

Just at twelve o'clock, when Jay Ellington Harper, his collar crushed and wet about his throat, his eye

glass dimmed with perspiration, his hair hanging damp over his forehead, and even the ends of his moustache dripping with moisture, was attempting to reason with a score of angry Bohemians, Tommy came quietly through the door, grip in hand. She went straight behind the grating, and standing screened by the book-keeper's desk, handed the bag to Harper and turned to the spokesman of the Bohemians. "What's all this business mean, Anton? Do you all come to bank at once nowadays?"

"We want 'a money, want 'a our money, he no got it, no give it," bawled the big beery Bohemian.

"O, don't chaff 'em any longer, give 'em their money and get rid of 'em, I want to see you," said Tommy carelessly, as she went to the consulting room.

When Harper entered half an hour later, after the rush was over, all that



was left of his usual immaculate appearance was his eyeglass and the white flower in his buttonhole.

“This has been terrible!” he gasped. “Miss Theodosia, I can never thank you.”

“No,” interrupted Tommy. “You never can, and I don’t want any thanks. It was rather a tight place, though, wasn’t it? You looked like a ghost when I came in. What started them?”

“How should I know? They just came down like the wolf on the fold. It sounded like the approach of a ghost dance.”

“And of course you had no reserve? O, I always told you this would come, it was inevitable with your charming methods. By the way, Jess sends her regrets and says she would do anything to save you. She started out with me, but she has fallen by the wayside. O, don’t be alarmed, she is not hurt, just winded. I left her all bunched up by the road like a little white rabbit. I think the lack of romance in the escapade did her up about as much as anything; she is essentially romantic. If we had been on fiery steeds bespattered with foam I think she would have made it, but a wheel hurt her dignity. I’ll tend bank; you’d better get your wheel and go and look her up and comfort her. And as soon as it is convenient, Jay, I wish you’d marry her and be done with it, I want to get this thing off my mind.” Jay Ellington Harper dropped into a chair and turned a shade whiter.

“Theodosia, what do you mean? Don’t you remember what I said to you last fall, the night before you went

to school? Don’t you remember what I wrote you—”

Tommy sat down on the table beside him and looked seriously and frankly into his eyes.

“Now, see here, Jay Ellington, we have been playing a nice little game, and now it’s time to quit. One must grow up sometime. You are horribly wrought up over Jess, and why deny it? She’s your kind, and clean daft about you, so there is only one thing to do. That’s all.”

Jay Ellington wiped his brow, and felt unequal to the situation. Perhaps he really came nearer to being moved

Who wants good roads? Bicyclists . . . and farmers!

The “Good Roads” movement was supported by the League of American Wheelmen and associated bicycle clubs, numerous city business promotion committees, and farmers, who hoped that better roads would mean less dust and commotion!



down to his stolid little depths than he ever had before. His voice shook a good deal and was very low as he answered her.

“You have been very good to me, I didn’t believe any woman could be at once so kind and clever. You almost made a man of even me.”

“Well, I certainly didn’t succeed. As to being good to you, that’s rather a break, you know; I am amiable, but I am only flesh and blood after all. Since I have known you I have not been at all good, in any sense of the word, and I suspect I have been anything but clever. Now take mercy upon Jess—and me—and go. Go on, that ride is beginning to tell on me. Such things strain one’s nerve. Thank Heaven he’s gone at last and had sense enough not to say anything more. It was growing rather critical. As I told him I am not at all super-human.”

After Jay Ellington Harper had bowed himself out, when Tommy sat alone in the darkened office, watching the flapping blinds, with the bank books before her, she noticed a white flower on the floor. It was the one Jay Ellington Harper had worn in his coat and had dropped in his nervous agitation. She picked it up and stood holding it a moment, biting her lip. Then she dropped it into the grate and turned away, shrugging her thin shoulders.

“They are awful idiots, half of them, and never think of anything beyond their dinner. But O, how we do like ‘em!”

“Tommy, the Unsentimental” was originally printed in *The Home Monthly*, August 1897



Gertrude. “My dear Jessie, What on Earth is that Bicycle Suit for!”
Jessie. “Why, to wear of course.”
Gertrude. “But you haven’t got a Bicycle!”
Jessie. “No; but I’ve got a Sewing Machine!”
~ from *Punch Magazine*, 1895

TEACHERS:

Do you need more Cather resources?

Contact

Director of Education & Engagement

RACHEL OLSEN

at the National Willa Cather Center!

ROLSEN@WILLACATHER.ORG

WWW.WILLACATHER.ORG



“Maidens with a disregard for convention” by William Gordan Davis, 1895.

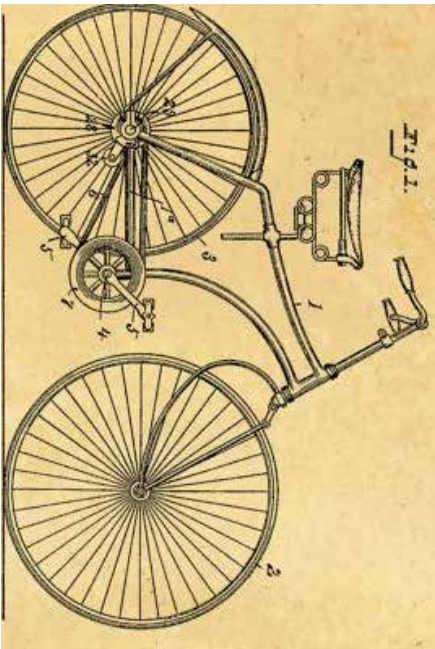
READ ABOUT IT

Women on the Move: Cycling and the Rational Dress Movement
shorturl.at/acu24

Pedaling the Path to Freedom: American Women on Bicycles
shorturl.at/jBOZ6

Common Sense Bicycling for Ladies
shorturl.at/doBY5

How the Bicycle Paved the Way for Women's Rights
shorturl.at/mvB36



THINK ABOUT IT

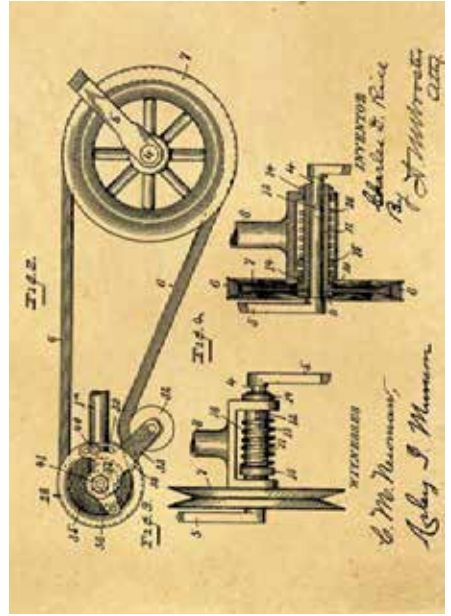
How are technology, fashion, and social reform interconnected?

What technology made bicycling more accessible to women?

Did the bicycle lead to social reform, or was the bicycle just a symbol of more modern values?

What does a bicycle mean to young people today?

Why would Willa Cather feature in her story?



Willa Cather was born in Back Creek Valley, **Virginia**, in 1873. When she was nine years old, her parents moved to Nebraska, joining Willa's grandparents, aunts, and an uncle who had taken homestead claims near Red Cloud. The family lived on a farm for eighteen months, and Willa spent more time visiting neighbors than she spent at school. The neighboring farms were full of immigrant families who were new to Nebraska. They had intriguing customs and foods, and they spoke beautiful languages.

Willa's parents moved to **Red Cloud** so that Willa and her siblings could attend the good schools there. Willa quickly made friends in town. She and her brothers enjoyed riding bicycles, having picnics in the country, and helping in their father's office. She was still fascinated by the lives of other people, and she started to dabble in writing. She loved to see plays and hear music in the Opera House--she even acted in plays!

When she went away to college, Willa planned to become a doctor. In one of her English classes, she wrote a paper about the author Thomas Carlyle; her teacher had it published in the newspaper. When that happened, Cather decided to become a writer. She wrote for newspapers and magazines, and then began writing fiction full time.

Willa wrote about many of the interesting stories she remembered from her teenage years in Red Cloud. She wrote about her family, her friends, and local gossip, changing names and details to make the stories better. Six of her twelve novels were written about Red Cloud, as well as many short stories and several non-fiction pieces. She won the **Pulitzer Prize** for her novel One of Ours in 1923; the story was about the life and death of Willa's cousin, G.P., who was killed in France in **World War 1**.

Though she visited Red Cloud often and wrote about Nebraska a lot, Willa Cather lived in **Pittsburgh** and then **New York** her entire adult life. She visited Red Cloud for the last time in 1931 after her mother died.

The home where she grew up in Red Cloud is a **National Landmark**. The wallpaper that Cather purchased from an after school job at Dr. Cook's pharmacy is still there. Once restoration work is finished in late 2023, the house will be open for tours again.



BICYCLING

For LADIES



1. DON'T BE A FRIGHT.
2. DON'T FAINT ON THE ROAD.
3. DON'T WEAR A MAN'S CAP.
4. DON'T WEAR TIGHT GARTERS.
5. DON'T FORGET YOUR TOOLBAG
6. DON'T ATTEMPT A "CENTURY."
7. DON'T COAST. IT IS DANGEROUS.
8. DON'T BOAST OF YOUR LONG RIDES.
9. DON'T CRITICIZE PEOPLE'S "LEGS."
10. DON'T WEAR LOUD HUED LEGGINGS.
11. DON'T CULTIVATE A "BICYCLE FACE."

About the National Willa Cather Center

In 2017, the National Willa Cather Center opened as an arts and cultural center that serves as a living memorial to renowned writer, Willa Cather. Located in Cather's childhood hometown of Red Cloud, Nebraska, the Center provides almost 20,000 square feet of space that includes a public museum, archive, research center, classroom, bookstore, art gallery, and performing arts center. The Center occupies Red Cloud's historic "Moon Block," an 1887 structure that was fully restored and given new life as the National Willa Cather Center.

What you'll experience:

- Explore a new exhibit, *American Bittersweet: The Life & Writing of Willa Cather*
- Conduct research in the Willa Cather Foundation's extensive archive (by appointment)
- Tour Cather's childhood home and six additional historic sites related to her life & writing
- Take in a performance or exhibit at the Red Cloud Opera House
- Hike and picnic, star-gaze our dark skies, or watch the sunrise and sunset at the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie
- Explore scenic country roads or take a Cather "Country Tour" of outlying properties and settings
- Spend a relaxing evening in the home of Willa Cather's parents, now operated as the Cather Second Home Guest House
- Shop the National Willa Cather Center bookstore and gift shop



www.WillaCather.org

That Far Island

Words and Music by Katie Hartman

Did you love me?

Did I know?

Will you go with me to that Far Island?

Cross the distance

To the shore

Will you go with me to that Far Island?

And it's just like riding a bike

Take my hand and hang on tight

Will you love me?

Will I know?

Will you go with me to that Far Island?

Cross the distance

To the shore

Will you go with me to that Far Island?

And it's memories like pearls on a string

They all add up to a beautiful thing

To a life that was earned and not just taken

It's the aria sung and the balloon in flight

To the rising moon on a star filled night

To the heart that learns to love again after breaking

The heart that remembers will never be forsaken

Did you love me?

Did I know?

Will you go with me to that Far Island?

Cross the distance

To the shore

Will you go with me to that Far Island?

Will you go with me to that Far Island?

Will you come along with me to that Far Island?

The Story of Henrietta Solway

Henrietta Solway is inspired by the short stories and serialized novels of famed Nebraska author Willa Cather. A mashup of various characters, plots, settings, and themes from her different works, the play tells a story that is both original and distinctly Cather.

Part 1

The year is 1896, and Henry Solway is a young tomboy growing up in the tiny town of Empire City, Nebraska. A chance encounter with Hildegard Schumann, a glamorous opera singer with tales of art and culture in the big city, gives Henry's restless passion a purpose, and the direction of her life is forever changed.

Inspired by Cather's short stories:

"El Dorado: A Kansas Recessional," "The Way of the World," "Tommy, The Unsentimental," "Nanette," "A Singer's Romance," "Peter," "The Strategy of the Were-Wolf Dog," "The Professor's Commencement"

Inspired by Cather's novels:

The Professor's House, Lucy Gayheart

Part 2

The year is 1905, and Henrietta Solway is an aspiring writer who has just moved to New York City to pursue her literary dreams. As she takes in the wonders of the city, strives to get published, and forms a bond with painter Tom Hedger, she wrestles with what kind of artist and person she truly wants to be.

Inspired by Cather's short stories:

"Coming, Eden Bower!," "The Count of Crow's Nest," "Consequences," "Her Boss," "Eric Hermansson's Soul," "El Dorado: A Kansas Recessional"

Inspired by Cather's novels:

The Professor's House, My Mortal Enemy

Part 3

The year is 1920, and H.T. Solway is a Pulitzer Prize-winning author returning to her hometown of Empire City, Nebraska for the first time in fifteen years. She confronts the ghosts of her past, alive and dead, to try and understand what happened with them. To see if what she remembered was real.

Inspired by Cather's short stories:

"The Treasure of Far Island," "The Bohemian Girl," "The Sculptor's Funeral"

Inspired by Cather's novels:

Lucy Gayheart, My Mortal Enemy