
HEROES of AMERICA™

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

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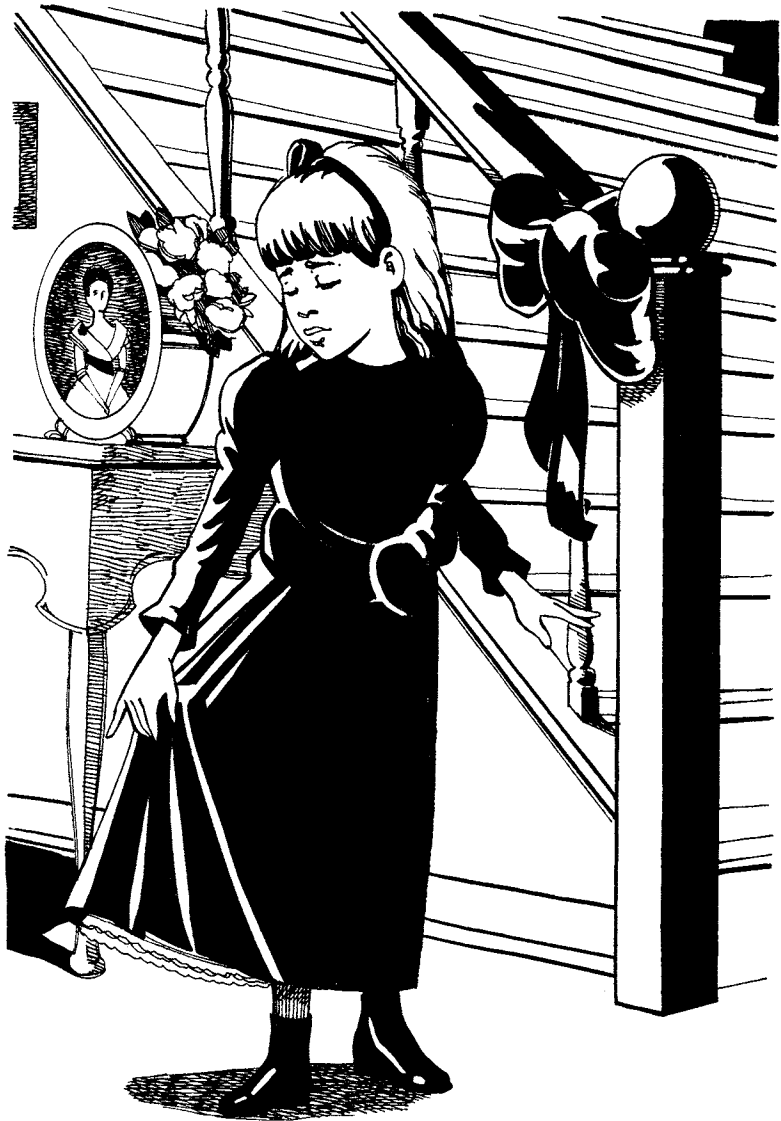
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Chapter One

A Shy and Solemn Child

Eleanor tiptoed down the dark staircase in her grandmother's New York mansion. The sounds of horses and carriages did not pass through the thick velvet curtains and heavy doors. Eleanor did not want to be the one to make any noise. But it was hard for an eight-year-old girl, especially now—now when she wanted to run and cry and say it hadn't happened; not to her, not to her mother.

She glanced at the black ribbons tied to the polished wooden stair rail—black for her mother; black



She Would Never Be as Pretty as Her Mother.

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for the death of Anna Rebecca Livingston Ludlow Hall Roosevelt.

Tugging on her mourning dress, Eleanor tried to make it fit better. She knew she would never be as pretty as her mother. She didn't have wide blue eyes and thick, gold hair and a soft, round face. No, she had eyes not quite blue, not quite gray, dark blond hair that wouldn't stay in a ribbon, and a long face with too wide a mouth. Eleanor wasn't pretty. But she still wanted to look nice for Father.

She only had her father left now...and her brothers.

She crossed the big silent hall, her shoes tapping on the wood floor. At the tall oak doors, she stopped. Her heart beat so fast it made her head spin. Would her father agree to take her with him? She wanted so much to travel with him, as the whole family did before. She breathed deeply and opened the door.

Long brown curtains covered the windows, block-

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ing the dim winter sunlight. Carriage wheels clattered outside, sounding as if they were miles away as they passed by. Her father, Elliott Roosevelt, sat in a high-backed chair beside an unlit fireplace. Everything he wore was black, except for his white shirt. He sat still, his face turned away. He almost disappeared into the gloom.

Looking up, he saw Eleanor and held out his arms. She ran across the room to him. For a very long time, she stood with her face pushed against his chest. The cold of the room pressed against her back.

“Nell . . . my little Nell . . .” he whispered; only he had ever called her Nell. Her mother had called her Granny because she didn’t smile, and wasn’t pretty. Eleanor hugged her father tighter.

He held her close. “Now I only have you and your brothers. Do you remember the photograph of you pointing your finger and scolding me? Scolding



Only He Had Ever Called Her Nell.