Aunt Ruth, Ben and Percy arrived in town Wednesday.

They located the bed and breakfast.

Aunt Ruth was looking around for a bed and breakfast for them to start to make money.

Ben wanted to let the Collins know they were in town and would like an acceptable day to visit.

They found the message center and sent the messenger.

Percy looked around the town and became sad about Eleanor.

Aunt Ruth and Ben watched Percy.

They saw a place to eat and went in and sat for a meal.

Ben said, Percy you can see your mother. We would never stop you from seeing her, but you will not move back here until you finish school.”

Aunt Ruth looked at Percy and said, “That’s right.”

Ben said, “You have ben gone for six months. Your mother has not inquired about you or if you were with us. She is not dead but getting by.”

Aunt Ruth said, “Percy you have grown and learned so much.”

A woman walked up and said, “Percy.”

They thought it was the waitress.

Percy did not look up and said, “May I have fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravty.”

Aunt Ruth was staring at the woman.

Ben sat back and watched the woman.

Eleanor said, “That’s all Percy.”

Percy was thinking about so much, he did not catch Eleanor’s voice.

Mr. Jones walked up and looked at everyone and said, “Come on Eleanor.”

Aunt Ruth looked at the man.

Ben looked at the man.

Ben said, “Percy that’s Eleanor your mother.”

Percy looked at Ben then he looked up at the woman and saw his mother and he saw Mr. Jones.

He sat confused for a moment.

Mr. Jones said, “Hello Percy. My you have grown.”

Percy said, “Hello Mr. Jones why are you with Eleanor? Did you bring her into town?”

Mr. Jones grabbed Eleanor by the waist and pulled her to him and said, “She’s my wife.”

Percy looked at them and looked back for the waitress.

Ben and Aunt Ruth looked at them and turned their heads.

Percy said, “I’m hungry.”

Aunt Ruth sat and watched Mr. Jones and Eleanor.

Percy looked back up at the two with a look to tell them to go.

No one said anything.

The waitress walked up and said, “I’ll be back.”

Percy said, “No ma am. We’re ready to eat.”

Ben laughed.

Aunt Ruth looked at Eleanor and how she was dressed.

Aunt Ruth thought, “Cheap. Standing like she is somebody. I’m shocked at Percy. I thought he would be running to her.”

Ben looked at them and nodded his head for good evening.

Mr. Jones did not know what to say. He looked t Eleanor staring at Percy.

Mr. Jones looked at the three people sitting at the table. Percy was not looking at his mother.

Mr. Jones realized Percy was through with Eleanor.

Mr. Jones saw how well dressed and fine looking Percy was.

He was no longer poor, raggedly and bone skinny.

Mr. Jones saw Aunt Ruth and Ben watching Percy and knew they must have been surprised at his nonchalant attitude towards Eleanor.

Mr. Jones noticed the woman and man were very well dressed and they made attempts to speak or introduced themselves.

Ben heard Percy’s order and he looked at the waitress and said, “Ma am I will have that also.”

Aunt Ruth watched them and thought, “Why don’t they leave?”

Aunt Ruth said, “I’ll…”

Eleanor interrupted Aunt Ruth and said, “Percy, I am your mother. You left and I heard nothing from you.”

Percy did not look at Eleanor and looked at Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones did not say anything, because he looked at Ben. Ben gave Mr. Jones a look that showed he would not tolerate anything.

Ben carried a couple of knives and a gun wherever he goes. Since he travel he always have an extra gun in his bag.

He always keep guns and knives on him since the boys in his neighbor would jump on him all the time because he was smaller than Al and Matthew.

By the time Ben got home the boys had scattered.

One day Ben had enough.

He prayed about it and he laid rocks and sticks from the schoolhouse home.

The Johnsons three boys and the Blocksons’ son and two daughters and the Bowman’s two sons saw Ben leaving the schoolhouse.

They waited to jump on him.

Ruth, Al, Matthew and Betsy hid with sticks.

Their father was a preacher and he did not believe in violence. Their mother and father argued all night because Ben was really hurt.

Their father yelled at their mother that he would talk to the children parents that next day.

Al slipped a knife from the dinner table.

Their mother saw him.

Their father looked for the knife and did not see it.

He looked at their mother to go and get him a knife, she sat and stared at him.

She looked at Ben who could not sit at the table to eat.

She looked at their father with hate.

She stood from the table.

Their father looked at Ben and said, “Eat boy.”

Their mother slapped their father nearly out the chair.

She grabbed Ben and put him in their bed.

All the children ran from the table.

Their father was yelling for them to sit down.

Al dropped the knife on the floor.

Their father was shocked and looked at Al.

Al was scared but he was madder about Ben.

They all ran into their parent’s bedroom and closed and locked the door.

 Their father prayed all night.

He saw his family had finally turned against him and he thought he had scared his children enough that they would not rebel against him.

Their mother got up and made breakfast like she usually does.

She got the children up and washed and ready for school.

She made up her mind, that last night was the final stray with their father.

She would leave and travel across the country with her five children after school.

She was trained to be a missionary. She met him in missionary school.

Her grandmother was leery of him and would always slip money to her.

He knew her grandparents had died, but not that they left the house and the fields to her and that her parents were renting the house and fields out so she could have income.

Her parents put aside fifty percent of the profits each year for her.

Her parents did not like her husband, Richard.

They tried to keep Ida from marrying him but she listened to him.

Richard was trained to fix horseshoes, but he never made enough money to take care of their household needs.

Ida would send telegrams to her parents to take a portion of the money and send so she could buy food for her children.

They were always behind on all bills all the time.

Ida could not understand that.

Until a neighbor smirked at her one day.

She began to watch.

When her children continually jumped on Ben Ida had it.

Betsy was the baby and Ben was her knee baby.

That’s why Richard did not want to say anything to the Blocksons.

Ida did not say anything to her husband but put his oatmeal on the table.

The children were raggedy and had worn shoes, while the Blocksons’ children were well dressed and had new shoes.

Richard wanted to say grace and for everyone to hold hands while he said grace.

Ida stood and would not sit and hold his hand.

He looked up at with her arms folded and said, “Sit so we can say grace. A house divided against itself won’t stand.”

Ida said, “Adultery is an abomination and cause death Richard.”

Richard still hand his hand in the air for Ida.

Ida sat and held his hand.

He bellowed out a grace.

All the children looked at him.

Richard had a big bowl of oatmeal and the children had a cup of oatmeal.

Ida was finished with Richard.

She sent the children to school.

Richard left early that morning.

He did not think anything about what Ida said.

He thought she was stuck with him and it would not be Christian for her to leave him.

He had drilled that in her head for twelve years.

He saw his five children walking by the horseshoe shop and yelled at them to hurry to school.

The customers laughed like Richard was a good father.

Al stared at him.

One customer and his wife stopped laughing and looked at Al.

Then they looked at how poorly the children looked and worn boots.

Richard saw the customers looking at his children.

The customers left.

Ben went on to his school that morning.

Betsy was smart and she was the youngest but she went to the same school with Al, Matthew and Ruth.

They planned to leave school a little earlier so they can fight those other kids that day.

Ruth said, “Al did you get the knife?”

Al said, “No he hid it.”

Ruth said, “We need sharp rocks.”

Matthew said, “Right.”

They all started looking around for sharp rocks and hid them in their clothes.

Ben could not think all day because he was hungry, hurting and mad.

The Blocksons taunted him all day at school.

Their mother was nervous all day.

There was a knock on the door.

She went to the door and got a very large package.

Her parents sent her a large package.

She was excited as a child.

They sent each child a pair of boots and stockings., gloves, hat and scarves for the winter.

They sent her some cash that was stuffed inside the scarves.

Ida looked at her children bowls, none of them ate.

They hated oatmeal and that was the only food she could afford.

There was another knock on the door.

She ran to the door and opened it and it was Mrs. Blockson peeping around in the house stepping into her house and said, “I saw you got a big box what was in it?”

Ida excitedly said, “Things for my kids.”

Mrs. Blockson said, “What?”

Ida showed her the children boots, scarves, hats and gloves.

Mrs. Blockson picked them up and said, “I’m going to take these.”

She turned and walked out Ida‘s door.

Ida stood in the floor until the children came home from school.

The children asked her why she was standing in the floor and she told them what Mrs. Blockson did.

Al and Ruth ran out the door with Matthew.

They told Ben and Betsy to stay home.

They ran in the Blocksons’ house and took all of their stuff back.

Mr. Blockson was coming home.

The neighbors wanted to know why the preacher’s children were running out of his house with clothes.

Mr. Blockson grabbed at the clothes.

Al yelled, “These are our clothes our grandparents sent to us! Your wife who goes with our daddy came in our house and stole our things.”

The neighbors said, “She sure did.

The neighbors told Ruth, Al and Matthew to go home.

Mrs. Blocksons did not come out the house.

The neighbors started yelling at Mr. Blockson.

One of the women said, “I wondered how his children begin to dress better when she doesn’t work and he rarely work.”

Another woman said, “I saw her go in those people house right after the man left and walk out with the box.”

A man said, “Stealing from children.”

Another man said, “she let her in her house and let her steal their stuff.”

Ruth heard the man.

Al heard the man.

They ran across the street to their house.

Their mother was still standing in the floor.

The children took their clothes and put them up.

Ruth, Al, Matthew, Ben and Betsy walked to Ida.

Al said, “You are not our mother anymore.”

Ida could not understand what the children were saying.

Ruth said, “Where’s the money?”

Ida looked at Ruth.

Ruth said, “Our grandparents always send you money that you give to daddy and he gives our money to Mr. and Mrs. Blockson.”

Ida went to the mantle and handed Ruth the money.

Ruth, Al and Matthew counted the money and put the money up.

Al said, “Ida give us grandma and grandpa address.”

Ida was mumbling and said, “Mrs. Blockson has the box.”

Ben said, “You go and get the box.
Ida walked out the house and the neighbors looked at her.

Ben and Betsy were standing on the porch watching while Ruth was in the windows.

Al and Matthew wrote a quick letter to their grandparents,

The letter said, “Help!”

Ida was stunned and walked across the street and looked at Mr. Blockson and said, “The box.”

Mr. Blockson yelled, “What box!”

Ida snapped her head and was coming out of her fog and said, “My box that your wife stole.”

Mr. Blockson said, “We’ll see about that.”

Ida said, “Give me my box now. And keep your wife from my husband.”

One of the men said, “Blockson is taking care of her family.”

A man yelled, “Give her the box you thief.”

Mr. Johnson believed Mr. Blockson stole his horses and wagon and sold them.

Mr. Blockson turned to say something to Mr. Johnson, Mr. Johnson pulled his shotgun out from the porch.

Mr. Blockson went in the house and came back with the box and shoved it to Ida.

Ida took the box and was walking across the street to her house.

Ben and Betsy were watching for the children they beat.

The children finally it home.

Ruth and Al beat the Blockson children.

While Matthew {who was fatter than them), Betsy and Ben beat the other children.

They beat the bad children so bad with sticks and sharp rocks and pulled them in the bushes.

Ruth and Al held down all the Blocksons and had Ben to beat them until he was tired.

Matthew beat the three Johnson’s boys and the two Bowman boys along with Ben and Betsy.

The children could not walk home.

Mr. Johnson looked up and saw his three boys bloody and holding their heads and eyes.

He ran to them because he thought it was Mr. Blocksons’ children.

Mr. Johnson boys could only point at Ben and Betsy.

Betsy waved at them and poked her mouth at them.

Ben blew his tongue at them and continued to swing on his porch rail looking at them.

Mr. Blockson laughed out at Mr. Johnson until his children came home with cuts, knots and bruises. They black eyes and strangle marks on their necks.

The neighbors laughed at the Blocksons’ children.

Ben and Betsy were watching the Blocksons’ children.

The Bowman two boys passed the crowd and went home.

They had swollen eyes, black eyes, cuts, scratches, and knots and bruises.

Ben and Betsy saw their father walking home.

Mr. Johnson ran out in the street and was telling their father that his children jumped on his children.

Richard looked at his house and yelled, “Ben and Betsy come here.”

Ben and Betsy walked to their father.

Richard beat his children in front of the neighborhood.

Ben and Betsy ran home and ran in the house crying.

Al and Matthew and Ruth ran out and jumped on their daddy with the bucket, hammer and hoe.

Richard moved to grab Al and slipped and the children beat their daddy.

Ida was in the house fixing oatmeal.

The children ran home and locked the door.

Mr. Johnson grabbed Al by the neck and Matthew hit him in the stomach with the sledge hammer.

Mr. Johnson went to his knees and Ruth started choking him and biting him.

She said, “Your bad boys jumped on Ben everyday. They got it from you.”

Matthew hit Mr. Johnson again in the back with the sledge hammer.

He fell over.

His wife was in the house trying to help her boys and yelled with her hands to her head. And rn from the door.

Mr. Blockson saw his children.

He started coming across the street to jump on Al and Ruth and the other neighbors ran and jumped on him.

Ruth, Al and Matthew ran in the house and locked the door and put the bench behind the door.

Ben and Betsy sat at the table and was doing their homework.

Al and Matthew wrote the letter to their grandparents.

Ruth had all the money and they decided to send a telegram.

Ben went to school by himself.

He looked around and did not see the Bowmans, Johnsons nor Blocksons at school.

They did not return to school.

They moved that week and nobody knew where.

The children locked their father out the house the whole week.

Richard slept on the porch.

Richard tried to get up and go to the church on Sunday.

Everyone heard about what happened.

That he was going with a married neighbor, he beat his children, he took his money and gave it to the married woman and his children jumped on him.

Ida got ready that Sunday and went to church with Richard.

They were trying to make the children go.

The children refused to go.

Richard went through the house trying to find the sledge hammer that Matthew used.

Ida’s parents received the telegram.

They telegrammed their oldest son, Albert, who was out in the missionary field he and his wife.

They were on the way back home for the winter and go back in the field in the spring and summer.

Their six children were grown and married.

Ida’s parents telegrammed him to stop in Philadelphia and bring the children back with him.

It took he and his wife five days to get to Philadelphia.

They stayed with her cousin and his wife.

They all dressed and went to the church that Sunday that Richard was the preacher.

Richard did not see them.

Richard could not preach.

Ida’s brother and wife sat behind some busy bodies who talked and told the whole story.

Albert’s wife looked at him.

Her cousin and his wife looked at Albert.

Albert was about to tell the busy bodies to be quiet, he was glad he did not.

He walked outside, that’s when Richard saw him and said, “Hello Albert. I did not see you.”

Ida was at the piano and stood and grinned when she saw Albert her big brother and her defender.

Albert looked at his baby sister and smiled.

He stood and spoke to the church.

The busy bodies looked at him and realized they were talking and he must have heard what they said.

Albert sat and looked around the church and leaned to his wife and said, “Where are the children?”

His wife looked around and said, “I don’t see them.”

They stayed a week in Philadelphia.

They saw the children and asked them what happened.

Albert looked at the poverty Ida was living in.

Richard said, “We are to live humbly.”

Albert said, “You are supposed to be the light of the world. The salt. You can not help anyone else if you are in poverty. We heard what went on here.”

Albert looked up at Ida and said, “Ida you have been in a dazed every since we have been here. Did you hit your head or have a stroke. Something is wrong.”

Albert said, “Richard you are sitting here acting pious. We heard people saying you committed adultery with a neighbor and gave your money to this married woman. That you took your money and gave it to her and did not feed your children. That’s an infidel.”

He looked up at a dazed Ida and said, “Ida sit down.”

Ruth and the children were sitting on the bench and said, “She’s been acting like that this week.”

Albert’s wife leaned forward to look at Ruth and said, “Why?”

Ruth told of how the children badly beat Ben.

Ben pulled u his shirt and showed the bruises and scars.

Richard said, “We don’t believe in violence and we don’t teach it.”

Albert turned and looked at Richard and then he looked at Ida.

Albert said, “You Richard don’t believe in the bible and the JESUS. You are an adulterer, you did not deny it. You are an infidel, you do not take care of your family. You do not want to work and do better to provide a better life for your family.”

Ruth and Al were listening.

Richard looked at his children and said, “You can’t come in my home and disrespect.

Albert said, “You disrespected your home a long time before I got here.”

Albert said, “Ida needs help. She has either had a stroke or a breakdown. We can either take Ida and the children and take to them to mother and father and there is a good place for Ida in that town. Or we can take them to our home which is mid point between our parents and Philadelphia.”

Richard said, “I take care of my family.”

Ruth said, “No you don’t. You go on over across the street to your married girlfriend.”

Richard jumped up at Ruth.

Albert jumped up and blocked him.

Al said, “He’s like that all the time.

Ida was still standing with her arms folded.

Albert’s wife cousin said, “She needs help.”

Ben and Betsy started crying.

Albert looked at Ida.

He looked at Richard and said, “We are taking all of them. They will not return until they are better.

Matthew, “Never,”

Richard looked and said, “You can take the children but not Ida.”

Albert turned to the children and said, “Get your things.

They pulled out their clothes they were sitting on.

Albert said, “Go and get in the wagon.”

The Ben and Betsy hugged their mother and ran out the door with the other children and jumped in the wagon.

Albert’s wife said, “You are not going to leave her here?”

Albert turned to his wife and said, ”Run to the wagon.”

Richard said, “Why you tell her that?”

Albert knocked Richard out and tied his feet and hands.

He and his grabbed Ida and put her in the wagon and left Philadelphia and told her cousin to send a telegram to his parents to come to his house and get the children.

The children and Ida were gone for two years.

Ida had a nervous breakdown and was recovering on her farm with helpers.

Her parents were missionaries and retired so they could be with Ida and the children.

Albert’s wife cousin and wife saw Richard a year later at his horseshoe shop and walked passed him and went to their event and several hours later they passed Richard again.

Richard stepped out his shop with a tool in his hand.

He said, “I want to know where my wife and children are?”

The cousin said, “First you don’t dare walk out your shop threatening me with a weapon.”

He opened his coat and showed Richard his gun.

He said, “I did not shoot you because it is a crowded area. You wait a year later and ask about them. I don’t know where they are. I haven’t heard anything for a year. Why don’t you do better…”

He looked at Richard’s shop and turned up his nose.

He said, “ Don’t cross me again Richard.”

He walked away.

He and his wife looked back at Richard and kept walking.

After two years, Richard found Ida’s brother and asked about Ida and his children.

Albert said, “They are not here. I’ll send a letter to see if they want to see you. I’ll send you reply when I receive Ida’s response.”

Richard spent six months waiting for a reply.

He left and rode for five days to get to Albert’s home.

The house keeper told Richard that Albert and his wife left to be gone six months in the missionary field.

Richard demanded to know where his wife and children were.

The housekeeper said, “Sir we do not get in folks’ business. If he said he will send you a response he would have done so.”

Richard yelled and said, “I need to see him. Where did he go?”

The housekeeper said, “South America. “

Richard stood and looked at the housekeeper and turned and stomped out Albert’s house.

Albert had a nice house.

He and Linda work six months at home teaching, then six months in the missionary field.

They enjoyed their life.

Their six grown children were all teachers.

They married teachers and were doing well.

Three live in the town with their grandparents.

Three lived in the town that was mid-point between Albert and their grandparents.

Ida was better and left during the summer and returned to Philadelphia with her five older and wiser children.

Ida was carried back to Philadelphia by Andrew and his wife.

They helped out on the farm.

They went to the old neighbor which looked poor and deprived.

Ida got out the wagon and walked and peeped in her house and opened the door and saw it was empty.

Richard rode up on a horse and the children saw him.

Andrew’s wife saw him.

She was easing her hand in her bag.

She said, “Kids who is that?”

Matthew said, “Daddy.”

Ida saw Richard and he said, “Hello.”

He saw the children and none of them moved towards him.

He said, “I moved. You might like this place better.”

They followed Richard.

They came to another cottage style home that had three bedrooms and two wash closets and a good back yard and red roses in the front yard.

Richard opened the door and let Ida in and Andrew in.

Ida was not impressed.

Andrew drove their supply wagon, while Ida and his wife drove the children, when they arrived in Philadelphia Matthew and Betsy got in the wagon with the other children.

Ida decided to stay with Richard.

The children were not happy.

Richard saw they had not forgiven him.

He said that room is Ruth’s and Betsy’s that room with corner windows is for Al, Matthew and Ben.

The children slowly helped unpack their wagon.

Ida brought kitchen items, dishes and glasses and a lot of quilts.

The children stayed at the house.

Andrew and his wife spent the whole summer visiting friends and made it home in a week to start school.

The children stayed in the house.

They did not attend the church with Richard.

They helped keep the house clean.

Ruth was smart and stayed at home for a year and left and went to the state college to become a teacher.

Al went off to the military.

Ruth told Al to finish school first because he could not stand being in the house with his daddy. Ruth told him to hold on for two years. When finished school and joined the military. He saved up every penny and when he left the military he begin his businesses.

After three years Matthew left home and went to the same school with Ruth.

Ruth Jerry and they married that summer after graduation.

Their wedding was simple.

Jerry went to the state’s law school.

Ruth worked as a teacher.

Ruth invited the entire family to the graduation and wedding.

She had Uncle Albert to perform their wedding ceremony.

Betsy was very good at sewing.

She took Ruth simple wedding dress and veil and worked on them all night and changed it into splendid.

Ruth was pleased with her wedding dress.

Many of Ruth’s friends contacted Betsy to decorate their wedding dresses over the years after five years Betsy and Ben left home.

Ben was not as smart as the rest of them and he did not want to go into the military.

Ruth got him in the college she went to.

He studied business.

Betsy went to a high society college where she met Herbert.

He was older than she and was going to the college medical school.

They married after Betsy graduated.

Betsy’s wedding dress was the talk of the town.

Herbert’s high class parents paid for their wedding.

They had to make sure all high society people attended.

Betsy did not want her father to walk her down the aisle.

Herbert begged her.

Betsy said, “If I let him walk me down the aisle only one child.”

Herbert kissed Betsy and said agreed.

They had their daughter Deborah who married the mayor.

She taught school in that town until Herbert finished his medical training.

They moved back to Philadelphia but to the high society part.

Herbert was a doctor like his father and his brothers.

Percy said to Eleanor, “I know you are my mother. I assume you live in your house with Mr. Jones.”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Ruth looked at Ben.

The waitress looked at the people.

Aunt Ruth said, “I want some greens, candied yams and greens and beets.”

Uncle Ben looked at the waitress and said can you add green beans to my order.”

Percy said, “Me too.”

Eleanor said, “Percy why didn’t you tell me where you were?”

Percy said, “I did not want to give you another dime of my money. Good day Eleanor.”

Aunt Ruth stared at Eleanor.

Mr. Jones grabbed Eleanor and walked out the restaurant.

Everyone looked to make sure they were gone.

The waitress came back and was peeping out the door.

She brought Aunt Ruth’s vegetables and the owner brought Be and Percy’s plates.

They enjoyed their meals.

They walked through the town.

Percy saw several men who worked in the coal mine with him.

One of the men told Percy that Mr. Collins’ wife and second oldest son that’s a preacher came and took him home.

The sons and Shirley would rotate and come to the coal mine and help Ricky.

He said, “It looks like he won’t be coming back. Some say he has lung cancer.”

Percy said, “Bye.”

He, Ben and Aunt Ruth stopped at the message center.

Betsy sent them a message about the beautiful Poconos. Ben was standing and smile.

Ruth said, “Betsy said she ran into Callie Blockson at the retreat.”

Ben stop smiling.

Aunt Ruth stared at Ben and said, “Is it her Ben?”

Ben blinked his eyes and quietly said, “Yes.”

Percy said, “Who is what?”

Ben slapped Percy on his head.

Percy laughed.

Aunt Ruth could not speak.

She reached the other messages to Ben.

Ben looked at Ruth and knew she was disturbed.

He looked down and said, “Eleven am at the Collins address.”

Aunt Ruth walked out the message and telegram office.

Percy was standing in the office with Ben.

Percy said, “What Uncle Ben you and Callie had a past?”

Ben knew life was changing just like Percy had enough courage to leave and travel to them to get a new life.

He knew he had to confess about Callie Blockson.

He looked at Percy and he was hesitant.

He a few feet in front of them and saw Aunt Ruth.

Percy waved his hand and said, “She’ll be ok.”

Ben looked at Percy and said, “When I was nine…”

Percy said, “Nine what?”

Ben said, “Are you going to let me tell the story?”

Percy said, “Sorry Uncle Ben.”

Ben looked at this striking boy that was the exact image of his father. He could not blame Eleanor for that.

Ben said, “When I was nine…”

He stopped and looked at Percy.

Percy covered his mouth.

Ben thought, “How did he know to do that. That was what Michael did all the time. Weird.”

Ben shook himself and said, “When I was nine years of age. The Blockson, one boy and two girls and some others would jump on me for about a month. They were bigger than me. Their mother was going with our daddy and he was taking our money and giving it to their mother. Their mother. Our mother had a nervous breakdown and went to live with grandma and grandpa on the farm.”

Percy said, “Was it good?”

Ben leaned backwards and gave an Indian yell.

Aunt Ruth smiled at the people passing by and looking at Ben.

Percy said, “You’ll had a good time?”

Ben said, “We had a great three years with our grandpa and grandma.”

Aunt Ruth begin to remember the beautiful farm and the fields of flowers and vegetables.

That’s why she loved vegetables.

Ben saw Aunt Ruth hand like she was running over the fields of flowers.

Ben said to Percy, “Look at Ruth like she is seeing the farm.”

Percy said, “Maybe you can take me there.”

Ben looked at Percy.

Percy said, “It is part of my heritage.”

Ben look at Percy.

Ruth said, “He got you Ben.”

Percy said, “One day we all got into this big fight after school.”

Percy said, “My dad?”

Ben said, “We all. We beat the Bowmans, Blocksons…”

Ben said, “Ruth?”

Aunt Ruth said, “Johnsons.”

Ben said, “The Johnsons so bad that they moved out the neighborhood. Years later in high school I ran into Callie. She told me her mother had passed and her father re-married in months. The lady had five children and she, her sister and brother ran away from home. Guess where moved to?”

Aunt Ruth stopped walking and turned around to hear.

Ben saw her and pushed passed her and kept talking to Percy.

Percy looked back at Aunt Ruth.

Aunt Ruth rolled her eyes at Ben and ran to hear his story.

Ben said, “They moved into our old house. It was not occupied.

They stayed there for free.”

Aunt Ruth said, “That’s what I am talking about. We can’t make them py us.”

Ben said, “It was not ours. Daddy was renting it.”

Aunt Ruth mouth flew open.

Aunt Ruth said, “I never knew that.”

Ben continued, “We started dating. But she married a military man. Because she was desperate to stop being poor.”

Percy said, “Uncle Ben, you are dating a married woman.”

Aunt Ruth ran to look in Ben’s face.

Ben said, “Percy you don’t know what love is.”

Percy said, “Uncle Ben how old are you? I know enough that if someone chose a bowl of oatmeal over me, that I would leave her alone and go and find someone who wants to enjoy my life with me.”

Aunt Ruth grabbed Percy’s arm and said, “So right Percy.”

They left Ben standing in the street.

They went to the rooming house.

Percy and Ben stayed on the front porch and sat for a while.

Aunt Ruth went in and requested hot baths for them.

She went to her room and wrote a telegram for Betsy, Matthew and Al about Ben and Callie Blockson.

Ben said, “I know Ruth she is sending all of them a telegram about me and Callie.”

Aunt Ruth walked and sat on the front porch with Percy and Ben until it was getting dark.

They went into the house and Ruth prepared the gift she was taking to the Collins.

Ben was sitting in the room he shared with Percy and was going over paper work.

Percy was sleep and snoring.

Ben looked at him as he thought.

His thoughts went to all the secret times with Callie. The times they got caught. The years he could have children. Someone to fight with like Percy.

He thought, “I was truly in love.”

Ben said, “Dear God forgive me for committing adultery. Callie had a chance to marry one but she chose her husband. I will see her again to tell her it is over. No that’s not a good idea we may. I cannot show up. Since Ruth knows God can I send Ruth with a letter from me to tell Callie after twenty years it is over. Will You please send me a wife into my life. I would like to have one child of my own seed. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

They dressed and left the rooming house.

Ruth peeped out the door and left the messages to be telegram.

She paid the front desk and walked out with her beautiful gift basket and Ben saw her reached the letters to the clerk.

Ben said, “Ruth we could have waited inside while you gave the clerk the letters.

Aunt Ruth was embarrassed and said, “Come on Percy.”

They got into the carriage and went to the Collins.

Ruth wanted to see better.

They were greeted by Mary Collins.

They visited with Thomas and Timothy and Shirley were there.

Aunt Ruth gave them the beautiful basket of teas, cookies, biscuits and jams and cheese.”

They had a beautiful time with the Collins.

Percy, Timothy, Thomas and Ben stayed in the bedroom and discussed the business.

Mary looked back at a closed door.

Aunt Ruth looked at Mary and Shirley.

Aunt Ruth gave them some of Percy’s family history.

Shirley told of how Eleanor came to the coal mine for a month looking for Percy.

Shirley said, “I told her try his family.

The men meeting was over.

Timothy called the women in.

The other boys were arriving from work.

They all walked into their parents’ bedroom.

Thomas said, “I have sold the coal mine to Percy.”

He was breathing hard and closed his eyes.

The boys watched him.

Thomas said, “Percy wants to finish school in the spring. Let him finish. Continue to watch and take care of Percy’s coal mine until he returns. He wants Shirley to go back to school in the fall.”

Her brothers and mother looked at Shirley.

Shirley was absorbed in her father dying that it took her a few minutes to grasped what he said.

Aunt Ruth and Ben looked at Shirley.

Shirley mouth flew open and she had a shocked looked on her face.

Her brothers laughed.

Her daddy struggled out a laugh.

Mary held Shirley by her shoulders.

Thomas said, “Baby that’s all Percy ask of you. Take it.”

Shirley was still not understanding.

Mary whispered in Shirley’s ear and Aunt Ruth was listening.

Mary said, “To marry you. Percy wants you to finish school.”

Shirley said, “Who says I want to marry him or anybody.”

Thomas said, “Baby daddy is dying. I believe God chose Percy for you. I did not have anything to do with His decision. If it does not work out see me in an hundred years.”

Everyone laughed.

Percy did not laugh because Shirley did not want him.

Shirley did not laugh because she was fine with her mother and father.

The oldest brother Thomas said, “Shirley daddy is saying bye to you and he is doing his best to put all the right pieces together. Daddy whatever you and Percy have arranged for the coal mine I agree and accept.”

All the sons said the same thing.

Ben and Mary sat with Thomas and talked for a while.

Thomas said, “Ben put one of those stores here we need fine clothes. Look how you and Percy look.”

They laughed.

Thomas started coughing bad.

Ben stood and left.

Thomas was entering the room to help his mother.

Timothy was watching Percy and Shirley and Ben stood and watched them when he exited the house.

Timothy smiled.

Ben said, “Your father asked if I would put one of stores here.”

Timothy said, “Please do. I saw how you and Percy are dressed.”

Ben grinned and said, “It takes a lot to put up a shop.”

Ben, Percy and Ruth and went to the rooming house.

Ben said, “They were good people.”

Aunt Ruth said, “They are. Percy don’t be upset with Shirley, her world is dying before her eyes. And she does not want to let go.”

Percy said, “I know. You forgot I went through that also.”

Ruth thought and said, “That’s right.”

She held onto Percy’s neck and pinched him.

Percy said “Ouh.”

Percy looked ahead at the rod before him and looked at Aunt Ruth and said, “This road is long and dark. I have to travel it alone. You and Ben shine light on it from the roadside, so I can see a little better. I thank you.”

Ben started crying.

Ruth teared up.

Percy said, “But I won’t wait twenty years for Shirley, only a year. I have seen what Philadelphia has to offer.”

They all laughed and went to the rooming house.

Percy said, “I want to see Eleanor before we leave in the morning.”

Ben and ruth stood still.

Percy said, “Aunt Ruth can you fix her something for a gift?”

Percy elbowed Ruth.

She stumbled.

Ben said, “Wherever she is Percy we have a very short time to get there and back to the train station.”

Percy said, “Well you and Aunt Ruth can go to the train station and I’ll go and see Eleanor.”

Aunt Ruth said, “Hell no. We all go together.”

Ruth saw the rooming house was selling honey she got a couple of jars of honey and added their snacks to it and wrapped it in a handkerchief and gave to Percy to give to Eleanor the next morning.

Ruth packed and prayed and said, “God please don’t let me kill this woman tomorrow and let us have time to catch the train. In JESUS’ name.”

Ruth sat in her window and looked out at the dark streets.

She thought they had a good meeting with Shirley’s family’

Sher laughed when she thought about Percy putting demands out for Shirley.

Aunt Ruth laughed and covered her mouth and looked at her door to keep from being heard by Ben and Percy.

Ben looked at his door and smirked.

He thought, “She is going to meet Callie and give her my note. She won’t be laughing then.”

Ben was thinking since this trip was pleasant and all business things worked out he maybe able to take Percy to their farm.

The trains are out there now but they still have to get a wagon for a day’s trip from the train. Instead of it being a ten day trip from Philadelphia it is seven days. Ben thought it would be better if the train ran further out there.

The next morning Aunt Ruth drank tea. She ate no food to settle her stomach.

Ben looked at her while he and Percy ate breakfast.

Percy was nervous.

Ben looked at Percy and said, “Why are you nervous?”

Aunt Ruth was about to respond.

Ben looked at her.

Percy said, “I know you are talking to me. I left and did not say bye to Eleanor. This time I can say bye to her.”

Ben looked at Percy and he looked outside and saw some wagons.

Percy looked up and saw the wagons and he hurried and put his napkin down and scurried outside and Uncle Ben and Aunt Ruth watched him asked for a wagon.

Ben said, “Hurry and tell me why you are nervous Ruth, before Percy gets back.”

Ruth said, “I don’t want to kill her.”

Ben looked up from his breakfast and said, “You go to the train station and wait for us.”

Ben stood from the table and looked at Ruth.

Percy looked at Ruth.

She could not smile at them.

Percy said, “You’re not going to Eleanor’s?”

Ruth shook her head for no.

She said, “I want to go to your father’s grave.”

Ben said, “Ruth we don’t have time today.”

Ruth said, “We can leave tomorrow.”

Ben said, “I want to take Percy to our farm and another day here will make him late starting school.

Percy looked at Ruth and said, “You have feelings about Eleanor?”

Ruth looked up at this young man that looked just like her brother at his age.

She nodded her head for yes.

Ben said, “Percy where is your gift to your mother?”

Percy reached over at the other table and picked up very classy gift Ruth put together.

Percy said, “This is a good looking farewell gift to Eleanor.”

Ben looked at Percy then at Ruth.

He knocked on the table.

Ruth looked up, Ben pointed at their bags and said, “Ruth from here to the train station. We will leave you. We are not abandoning Michael.”

Percy stood at the door and Ben walked to the door and out.

Percy was looking at Ruth.

Ben said, “Come on boy. She’s alright.”

Percy followed Ben to the wagon.

They looked back at Ruth she held her hand up at them.

They left.

Ruth sat there and sipped her tea.

She smiled at the teas she gave to the Collins how delighted she was in the gift wrapping and the presentation. Then her smiled faded when the sons came and started going through the basket and eating the cheese and cookies and shortbreads.

The waitress came to clean the table.

Ruth smile and put the tip down.

She sat and looked out the window and thought, “Potential growth and money.”

The owner walked over and said, “Ma am. If you are going to the train station you need to get one of those wagons because when they are gone there will not be anymore.”

Ruth jumped from the table and said, “Thank you.”

She ran out and got the last wagon and told the man to wait because she had to get the bags.

She got the bags and the owner held them for her and she said, “Thank you.”

The owner said, “You’re welcome.”

The waitress walked up and slapped him on his back.

He ducked.

She looked out at Ruth.

The man said, “I like the way she dress.”

The men that were having breakfast laughed.

The waitress said, “She was nice but a little bit too fancy for you dad.”

The men laughed.

The daughter walked away.

The owner snook another peep at Ruth as she climbed in the wagon.

The men snickered.

The waitress looked up to watch her father.

Ruth went to the train station and waited for Percy and Ben.

As she was riding to the train station she saw a cemetery.

She leaned forward and peep.

She wanted to tell the man to let her out but she knew if anything went wrong she and Ben would be knuckle fighting and be in jail.

She sat at the train station and her thoughts were on Michael and how he had a love for life.

She hated the way his life turned out. She was happy for Percy but to work that hard and never seeing his child and his body gave out. His heart gave out. Ruth was thinking he was only thirty three. He did not tell his family he needed help. They backed off because of Eleanor. She hated herself for not being there for Michael. He finished school but did not go to college to become the teacher and preacher he wanted to become. He admired Uncle Albert and Aunt Janice.

Ben and Percy stepped out the wagon at Eleanor.

Mr. Jones looked out the window.

He looked back at Eleanor.

She was sitting in her chair by the fireplace and said, “Who is it?”

There was a different knock on the front door.

Mr. Jones said, “Percy.”

Eleanor said, “I don’t want to see him now.”

Mr. Jones said, “Eleanor.”

Eleanor said, “No.”

Ben had his ear to the door to listen.

Percy shook his head and said, “I don’t care what they are saying.”

Mr. Jones said, “Lower your voice so they won’t hear you.”

Eleanor sit straight in her chair and said loudly, “I don’t want to see him now.”

Ben shook his head.

Percy was listening.

Mr. Jones said, “We talked about if he ever came back. I told you your attitude was the problem. You spent all of his money and did not buy him a pair of socks. The looks of him he does not need or want anything from you. Eleanor.”

Ben was getting angry.

Percy said, “One last knock.”

Percy knocked on the door.

Mr. Jones ran to the door and opened it.

Ben was still looking at Percy.

Ben saw Percy had all intentions of ending his relationship with Eleanor face to face.

He saw his brother not only in stature but in honesty of heart and being courageous to follow through with his decision.

Ben mumbled and said, “I need some Michael.”

Percy looked at Ben.

Percy said, “Morning Mr. Jones. I came by to see Eleanor.”

Mr. Jones looked at Percy for calling his mother by her name.

Percy stared at Mr. Jones in a dare look.

Percy was saying I dare you to tell me to respect this selfish and disrespectful woman. Who made me feel that it was duty to take care of her and not go to school and she did not have to work.

Mr. Jones looked at Percy and then Ben.

Ben was still looking at Percy and turned his head to look at Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones said, “Eleanor is being Eleanor and does not want to see you.”

Mr. Jones looked at the well dressed Ben and Percy.

He said, “We did not recognize the knock.

Percy said, “You will never recognize me again.”

Mr. Jones looked at Percy.

Percy said, “Tell Eleanor she will never see me anymore. Maybe she can work you to death like she did my father. I see now you was my father’s best friend and now you are married to his wife. Where is your wife?”

Mr. Jones did not like what Percy was insinuating.

Mr. Jones said, “Bernice died a month after you left.”

Percy said, “How?”

Mr. Jones looked at Percy and said, “Heart attack.”

Mr. Jones looked at the pretty gift and reached to take the gift.

Percy looked at the gift.

Ben looked at Percy.

Percy said, “Give this to that woman. Since she did not have courage to come to the door for me to tell her to her face good-bye forever. You give this to your wife maybe she can sell it and buy her something.”

Percy shoved the gift to Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones took the gift.

Mr. Jones looked back at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Close the door.”

Percy said, “No, let me.”

Percy closed the door with a slam.

Percy walked off the porch to the wagon.

Ben stood for a second on the porch then he turned sideways and walked off the porch to watch for Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones turned to Eleanor and said, “Eleanor you know you have lost him forever.”

Eleanor smirked.

Mr. Jones put the gift on the table and went and sat on the back porch.

He rented out his house that’s how he and Eleanor were getting income each month.

He would fish on Friday and when he comes back the people would be waiting to buy whatever he caught.

Eleanor would take the money and buy stuff for herself.

She complained that night of seeing Ruth’s clothes and she wanted clothes like her clothes.

Mr. Jones said, “Eleanor I don’t have that kind of money. My children don’t get anything from me. I have nothing. I will leave tonight if you think you will work me to death like you did Michael.”

Mr. Jones stared at Eleanor.

Eleanor did not say anything.

After Mr. Jones walked out on the back porch to breathe Eleanor called him.

She said, “Mr. Jones.”

Mr. Jones stood and walked in the house.

Eleanor looked up at him and then at the gift and said, “Give me that gift.”

Mr. Jones stood for a minute.

He said, “You called me in here to give you that which you can reach and get. Eleanor how much sense does that make.”

Eleanor said, “Are you going to give it to me or not?”

Mr. Jones reached over to the table with his eyes still on Eleanor and grabbed the gift and gave it to her.

He walked to her bedroom and packed all of his clothes.

He went out the back door and packed his wagon he did not want the neighbors to see he was leaving.

The neighbors talked about him marrying Eleanor right after his wife died.

They said it was suspicious for them to marry so soon.

The neighbors did not like Eleanor because worked Percy like she did Michael.

The neighbors saw Percy.

Percy spoke to them and he saw a couple little boys who told him they wanted to be like him.

Percy said, “No. You go to school and not the coal mine.”

Mr. Jones walked back to Eleanor as she was smirking going through the gift.

Mr. Jones said, “Eleanor I am leaving you. You can have the money from the rental until I sell it. That will provide your monthly needs.”

Eleanor turned and looked up at Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones walked out the back door and pulled his wagon out the yard and saw Percy and Ben a mile ahead of him.

He waited a few minutes and he pulled out the yard, as neighbors watched.

He went the opposite way.

He went to stay at the fishing hole.

 He bought a cabin there and never told Eleanor about it, because she would have commanded him to sell it.

Eleanor turned around and sat at the fireplace and ate snacks all through the night and the next morning.

Eleanor began to wail and cry out.

The neighbors heard her and no one went to see what was wrong.

Percy, Ben and Ruth were laughing and talking on the train to Philadelphia.

Ben said, “It should not take this long to get from here to Philadelphia.”

Ben told Ruth what happen at Eleanor and how Percy handled himself well.

Aunt Ruth looked over at Percy and said, “Good Percy.”

They talked about the family farm.

Then Ben looked at Ruth.

Ruth said, “What?”

Ben took a letter out of his pocket and gave it to Ruth.

Ruth looked at the envelope and saw Callie.

She handed the letter back to Ben.

Ben said, “If I go then I know this won’t end.”

Ruth picked up the letter and put it in her bag.

They arrived back in Philadelphia and re packed and left to go to the family farm.

Ben, Ruth, Jerry and Percy went to see the family farm.

It was seven days to get there and seven days to get back to Philadelphia.

They could only spend three days at the farm but they loved it.

The caretakers were doing a great job.

They went by the graves of their grandparents and visited Uncle Albert and Aunt Janice children and grandchildren. They spent a day in Uncle Albert’s town and visited his grave and Aunt Janice grave.

They made it back the day before school started.

They had a great time and decided to go back once per year.

They were so excited and told Al and Matthew.

Al said, “That would be a good place to go for Christmas.”

Betsy was back from the Poconos and said, “I loved it during Christmas.”

They were discussing opening a bed and breakfast in the town.

Ben said, “I don’t want to move there to open the store and it would be too much to put on Percy.

Percy sat and listened.

They included him to represent his father.

Al said, he would pay the next installment for Percy’s coal mine, since Ruth and Ben felt it was good for Percy.

Ruth was at the place Callie was to meet Ben.

Ruth sat and was anger.

Ben was standing around the corner watching.

He saw Callie walking down the street and she entered the building.

Ben turned his head and took a deep breath.

He turned back around and saw Callie’s husband walking and went into the building.

Ben turned his head and started thinking.

Ruth saw Callie when she walked in and knew it was her.

Ruth waved to Callie.

Callie stood for a moment.

She knew something was wrong.

She slowly walked to Ruth.

Ruth said, “Sit Callie. Ben gave me an envelope to give to you.”

Callie said, “Ben?”

Ruth said, “He’s fine.”

Ben was nervous he did not know whether to move or stay there.

Ruth had her bag in her lap.

Callie head was down reading the sweet note from Ben.

Tears formed in her eyes.

She smiled and looked up in her husband’s face.

She was shocked and said, “Leroy! What are you doing here?”

Ruth eased her hand into her bag and pulled out her gun.

She always carry that gun.

Leroy looked at Ruth.

Ruth looked at Leroy.

Callie eased the good-bye letter in the menu.

Ruth saw her.

Ruth spoke to Leroy.

He did not speak.

Callie said, “I have not seen Ruth in close to thirty years.”

Ruth reached for the menu and said, “After I stomped your ass that day.”

Leroy looked at Ruth who was looking at the menu.

Leroy looked at Ruth.

Callie looked at Ruth.

Ruth exhaled and was still looking at the menu and said, “Let by gones be by gones.”

Callie looked at Ruth.

Ruth said, “I truly waited to try a desert to see if it is worth ordering for my party.”

Callie was getting up and pushed Leroy so he could move.

Ruth not looking up at the two said, “Good seeing you Callie.”

Callie rolled her eyes at Ruth.

Ben saw them leave and he did not hear any noise.

Ruth got the letter and seriously become interested in the deserts.

Ben stood and waited fifteen minutes.

He paced and spoke to people who passed by.

He decided to walk to the restaurant,

Then he stopped and saw Leroy walk back around the corner and in the restaurant.

Ben hurriedly cross the street.

Ruth ordered three deserts to test for her fake party.

Leroy walked back to Ruth.

Ruth put her hand in her bag. She felt the letter and the envelope were secure in her bag.

She looked up at Leroy.

Leroy said, “Callie is really upset.”

Ruth put down the menu and exhaled.

She looked Leroy in the eyes and said, “I whipped her but when were children. I am over that. She was a very bad little girl. Tell her I am sorry.”

The waitress brought the three desserts.

Leroy at the desserts and said, “You gonna eat all of these?”

Ruth said, “No I want to taste hem for my party.”

Ruth looked and saw Jerry passing and Ben walked into him and they talked.

Ruth started to get and said, “That’s my husband.”

Leroy turned around and saw Jerry.

He did not see who Jerry was talking to.

Leroy said, “The judge is your husband?”

Ruth said, “How did you know that?”

Leroy quietly said, “I’ve seen him around.”

Leroy saw the waitress and pointed.

Ruth turned and looked at the waitress.

The waitress brought another plate and fork.

Ruth and Leroy sat and enjoyed the dessert and coffee.

Ruth said, “Oh God. I loved all three desserts.”

Leroy said, “Me too.”

Ruth stared at him.

He was not attractive but worked and earned a living at horseshoes.

He and Callie had three girls.

Ruth thought, “I hope the girls are not big like you.”

Leroy pointed and said, “You want the rest of yours?”

Ruth shook her head for no.

Leroy said, “What?”

Ruth peeped towards the window for Jerry.

Leroy said, “You did not cook his meal.”

Ruth was frantic.

She looked for the waitress.

Ruth eased from the table.

Leroy said, “Ruth it was good meeting you. Tell Ben I’m glad he ended his relationship with Callie. I came here today to end it.”

Ruth was shock that this dumb acting man caught on.

Leroy looked at Ruth and said, “The chocolate crème is my favorite.”

Ruth hit him.

Leroy laughed.

Ruth looked for the waitress.

The waitress ran.

Ruth payed her for the desserts and a big tip.

The waitress looked at her tip and was happy.

Leroy told the waitress, “I’m not paying you anymore because their affair ended today.”

The waitress stomped away.

Leroy laughed and finished his desserts.

Ruth caught up with Ben and told him Leroy knew about him and Callie and she believed the waitress told him because how nervous she was.

Ruth said, “Leroy said he came to end it today with you.”

Jerry said, “And you sat and ate dessert with him to cover up.?”

Ruth said, “I thought I was very good.”

She looked at Ben and gave him his letter back.

Jerry said, “Now since that foolishness is over. Women did you cook my dinner?”

Ruth walked very fast to get home and said, “Jerry Leroy knew you too.”

Jerry looked Ben.

Ben tilted his hat and ran down the other street.

Jerry walked fast to catch Ruth who was entering their house.

Percy was home from school.

Herbert told Betsy to go away for Christmas, because they had to attend all the balls coming up, since their son-in-law was elected lieutenant governor.

His parents and all of high society was thrilled.

Betsy thought because she wanted to get all the balls and invitations solved.

She said fine.

She ordered ten outfits from Ben and had a rush put on them.

Ben decided to go with them for Christmas on the farm.

They found out they could by pass the train and used wagons and get there in less time.

Ben had a wagon of supplies for him and Percy.

Herbert had a wagon of supplies for him and Betsy.

Al had a wagon of supplies for him and his wife and his sons had a wagon of supplies for them.

The wagon train left and beat the train there by a day, everyone took turns driving.

Percy was thinking.

He sent Shirley a Christmas gift.

His family sent her family a nice gift.

Percy was getting excited he only had a few more months before he finish.

They had a wonderful Christmas and New Years.

They left the next day and returned to Philadelphia.

Everyone was relaxed and excited to start the New Year.

They drove day and night and made it back to Philadelphia in seven days.

They all had a chance to get a good night sleep and start the New Year.

Eleanor was living off Mr. Jones rental property.

Mr. Jones died during the holidays with his children.

They followed his request and told Eleanor in time for her to come to the funeral.

Mr. Jones said, for his children to let her have the horse and buggy and the house.

Eleanor came back from Mr. Jones funeral in his wagon.

She put up a for sale sign in the yard.

The people told her they want to stay, but Eleanor would not listen.

Mr. Jones asked his children to send Percy a letter that he passed.

 When they returned from Christmas vacation.

The next morning Ruth gave Percy the message.

He read it twice and left it on the table.

Percy heard loud talking and knew it was his schoolmates.

He said, “Good-bye.”

He ran out the door and caught up with his schoolmates.

Jerry and Ruth heard their laughter and was glad Percy was growing and making friends.

Ruth and Jerry spent their quiet time together before they started their day.

They were walking out the house together.

Jerry said, “You got my suits ready for this next week?”

Ruth said, “Yes and carriages for all events.”

Jerry said, “I can’t use that excuse that I am too tired to go?”

Ruth said, “That’s right.”

Ruth was wondering why Mr. Jones wanted to tell Percy he passed.

Betsy would bring the beautiful ball dresses to school and work on the embroidery before school and at lunch.

Ruth learned what patterns Betsy would use and help her out.

By Friday Betsy had complete the three dresses for her daughter and the three dresses for herself.

Ruth decided not to buy a new dress but put that money aside for when Percy returns home.

Betsy and Deborah went to a luncheon on Saturday.

She stopped by Ruth and picked up her dress.

Betsy worked on Ruth’s old dress all week-end.

When they went to school on Monday, Betsy gave Ruth a magnificent the dress the entire weekend.

Ruth was truly overcome.

She took the dress home after school and feed Percy.

She went over Percy’s homework.

Ruth sat in the parlor and cried.

Jerry heard Ruth when opened the door.

He looked at a calm Percy and then he looked in the parlor.

Jerry closed and locked the door.

He said, “Ruth?”

Ruth was wiping her nose and pointed to the dress.

Jerry looked over at the dress.

He said, “A dress?”

He looked at Percy who loved his aunt Ruth and continued to eat his dinner.

Jerry put down all his cases in his office and washed and walked in the kitchen.

He looked at Ruth and knew she would not come and serve him.

He made a plate of beef stew and soda bread.

He joined Percy.

They would bite then look at Ruth until they finished dinner.

Percy washed the dishes and put them away.

Ruth stood and went to bed.

Percy went to his room.

After Tuesday, Betsy and Ruth were off they attended luncheons, dinner parties and the grand ball on Saturday and the inauguration on Monday.

Deborah walked a friend over to Ben at the grand ball and introduced her to Ben.

The friend’s parents watched.

Betsy wanted everyone to go to church on Sunday.

Percy went to church and Ben went to church.

They all were tired and rested on Monday.

Ben invited the young woman to dinner later in the week.

Betsy and Herbert took Percy home.

Betsy told Ruth of the young woman Deborah introduced to Ben.

Herbert did not say anything.

Jerry looked at Herbert.

Later Herbert said, “That young lady has been with everyman in Philadelphia.”

Jerry said, “Ben has been with his share of women so they are a good match.”

Ben married Priscilla and had a fall wedding on the farm.

Everyone attended.

They had their first child in July of the following year.

Percy finally finished school.

Ruth gave him a large dinner with desserts from the restaurant.

They had to travel and attended two of Al’s sons’ graduation and both of Matthew adopted daughters graduations.

Herbert and Jerry had to go to work, but the rest went to see the Collins.

They shared all the things that kept the busy in the year.

Ruth and Betsy payed for Percy’s third installment payment.

Percy went to work at the coal mine.

Timothy begin to train Percy about the job.

Percy was getting a bit overwhelmed.

He, Betsy, Ben and Ruth went to his father’s grave and cleaned and placed a marker.

One of Al’s son got a job there as a teacher.

Al and Lucy did not know what to say.

Matthew’s adopted daughters liked the town and got them jobs teaching also.

Matthew looked around and said, “Why? There is nothing here.”

Ruth did not like it.

She looked at Betsy.

Betsy whispered. “They are not blood kin.”

They looked for housing for the girls.

They saw Mr. Jones house.

Matthew hit the ceiling.

He remembered the Michael’s house and grabbed his daughters and took them back to Philadelphia.

Al’s son went back to Philadelphia.

Al wondered about why he left.

Ben and Timothy worked with Percy at the coal mine.

They showed Percy what Ricky does and Shirley finished from school a month later and Percy and the remaining of his family attended her ceremony.

Betsy and Ruth found a pretty house for sale.

They bought the house and worked for two weeks to bring the house up to standard.

Percy moved in the house, which was not a far walk from the coal mine.

Percy knew he wanted a horse to ride because it could be getting cold and wet in a few months.

Ben approved of the bed and breakfast and the lady that would run it.

She and her husband would get hot water for the baths and serve breakfast only.

The husband would take care of the yard.

Ruth and Betsy agreed they could stay in the room by the shelter.

The couple was pleased and fixed up the room, which was large.

They could hear everything in the house from that room.

Shirley told Percy she loved him.

Percy looked at Shirley and said, “Everybody loves me. Are you in love with me. If not let’s stop and go and find our separate loves.”

Timothy heard Percy’s harshness with Shirley.

Shirley was angry and stormed out the office.

Timothy looked at Percy who put his head back in the books.

Shirley stayed away a week.

Shirley mother told her in front of Thomas and Timothy, “We can call off this relationship with you and Percy now. He doesn’t want someone for his entire life that love him. That love will not build a marriage and family. It has to be a deeper love that you are willing to give your life for that person. Percy is young but that is what he is saying. He doesn’t want to marry you just so you can begiven away by your father.”

Thomas walked in the kitchen and said, “I’ll stay around for a few more months for you, but you better make sure whoever it is the real person.”

Thomas and Timothy jumped up and carried their father back and put him to bed.

Mary was sitting at the table with her hands folded.

Thomas came and stood by her and rubbed her shoulders.

Shirley was sitting and looking like she was not understanding.

Eleanor heard Percy was working at the coal mine as manager.

She went to the coal mine and just walked in the office.

Ricky was antsy and pulled his gun.

Percy and Timothy looked up at the intruder.

Eleanor threw her head back and was pulling off her gloves.

Percy thought, “Trying to dress like Aunt Ruth.”

 Etsy and Ruth went to the Collins and said good-bye to them.

They went to the coal mine to tell Percy good-bye until Ben’s wedding at the farm.

They saw Eleanor riding into the coal mine.

Betsy reached over to take the reins from Ruth.

Ruth said, “No.”

Betsy became angry.

Ruth looked at her.

Betsy said, “If you had not stopped me maybe Michael would not be dead or least he would not have had her.”

They bought Percy the horses and wagon as a finishing school gift from all of his uncles and aunts.

They stopped the horses and wagon and tipped out the wagon and was on the steps to the office.

Percy looked at Timothy and they continued to go over the books.

Eleanor coughed.

The men continued to work.

Percy saw Aunt Ruth and Aunt Betsy and told Timothy, “I need to say good-bye- to my loves.”

Percy stood and walked pass Eleanor.

Eleanor was shocked and outdone she stood for a few minutes.

Aunt Ruth said, “Percy, we are leaving now.”

Percy was holding both of them and said,”I know.”

Betsy said, “Be careful about your money. Eat at least once a day.”

Betsy was hitting Percy on his chest with her fist.

Percy kissed her on her forehead.

Ruth said, “You have plenty of clothes and boots and coats and gloves and scarves. We set you up for laundry service every two weeks. Don’t spend your money on no good women.”

Percy laughed.

Betsy looked and nodded and said, “That’s your horses and wagon. We all chipped in because you finished school.”

Percy was so happy.

He said, “I’ll take you to the train station.”

Betsy said, “Bet you will.”

Percy laughed.

He opened the door and said, “Timothy I got horses and a wagon. “

Timothy looked up and smiled.

He saw Percy completely ignored his mother.

Ricky looked at Timothy.

Percy said, grabbed his hat and said, “I’m taking them to the train station.”

Timothy pointed and said. “Percy?”

Percy did not look at Eleanor and said, “There are no women workers here.”

Percy closed the door.

Timothy did not know what to say.

He looked at Ricky.

Ricky put his gun in his drawer but kept the drawer slightly opened.

He continued to work.

Timothy thought, “God?”

Timothy said, “Ma am how can I help you?”

Eleanor tried to be snobby said, “I’m here to see the manager.”

Timothy looked at Ricky.

Ricky started laughing.

Eleanor looked at Ricky.

Timothy was not going to tell her anything.

He said, “Who is that?”

Eleanor threw her head up in the air and said, “My son.”

Timothy was angry and said, “Who?”

Eleanor said, “Percy.”

Timothy said, “He is not here. You saw him leave. Now you leave.”

Ricky looked at Timothy who was his pastor.

Eleanor turned to sit in the chair at the door.

Timothy stood and said, “Get out.”

Ricky looked at Timothy.

Eleanor stood and was embarrassed and walked to the door and stop.

Timothy knew she wanted him to come and open the door for her.

Timothy stood and looked at her and said, “You know how to open a door. You opened it and walked in here. Use the same hand and open it and walk out. Do not come back lady. If your son wants to see you he will contact you. Now leave.”

Eleanor stood and held her down and began to cry.

Timothy stood and felt no pity.

Ricky stood and walked over and opened the door.

Eleanor whispered, “He hates me.”

Ricky held the door.

Eleanor walked out the door.

Ricky closed the door and walked back to his desk.

He shook his head several times to clear it.

Timothy continued to work.

Ricky looked over at Timothy.

Timothy sensed Ricky looking at him and said, “What Ricky?”

He looked up at Ricky.

Ricky said saw Eleanor passed by the office.

Ricky said, “Timothy I have never seen you like this. Why? Why her?”

Timothy said, “I am rarely like this. She has this spirit that people are suppose to do what she wants them to do. That is a controlling spirit of witchcraft. She needs to go and repent and pray to GOD for forgiveness. And don’t you tell her nor anyone that Percy owns this coal mine. He is a young and trying to find his way.”

Ricky said, “You know Bruce is still lurking around.”

Timothy took his gun and placed it on the desk.

Aunt Ruth and Aunt Betsy had a lot of talk for Percy.

Betsy said, “We saw your momma back there. She is still your momma. You pray and ask GOD to give you peace. Because you will be in this town by yourself.”

Percy said, “I could have some cousins here, but you two ran them off.”

Aunt Ruth hit Percy and said, “We did not and what do you about that?”

Percy said, “Kissing cousins.”

Betsy nearly fell out the wagon.

Ruth said, “How did you know?”

Percy said, “I saw little things at graduation.”

Ruth said, “Percy, I will write to you once per month. Don’t let anyone know where you stay and put your money in the bank. If you have a question about money write us or send messages.”

Betsy said, “This has been a busy year. Inauguration, engagement, graduation ceremonies. And we have just ended June.”

Aunt Ruth said, “Oh God.”

Percy and Betsy laughed.

Percy said, “Jerry ordered all the food.”

Aunt Ruth said, “Oh God.”

They all laughed.

They got to the train station and Percy unloaded them and walked with them and took their bags to their room.

They hugged and talked and got comfortable.

Percy looked around at the train compartments.

Betsy and Ruth smiled.

Percy had to run off the train.

He waved at them.

He waited until the train was out of sight.

Betsy said, “He is alone.”

Ruth and Betsy held onto to each and burst out crying.

Percy cried and went to his room.

He feed the horses and gave them water.

He removed the wagon and looked through the wagon again to see if anything was in the wagon.

He walked in and spoke to the man and his wife.

He looked out his window and saw the horses and wagon.

Percy was scared and kneeled down and said, “God I am alone. I hate Eleanor. I never want to have anything to do with her. Make her not come near me gain. If Shirley is not the one remove her and send the right one. Amen.”

Percy was scared. He laid on his bed and fell asleep.

He tossed all night.

He had weird dreams and did not remember them when he woke.

He was thirsty and said, “I got to remember to bring water in here at night.”

Ricky looked at the time and said, “Timothy.”

Timothy said, “He’s not coming back today. We are finished. You can go home Ricky I will lock up.”

Ricky said, “How is Mr. Collins?”

Timothy swelled up and did not say anything.

Ricky said, “See you tomorrow.”

Percy got on his knees that morning and said, “God don’t let me be dumb. Show me how to do things and smarter ways of doing things and get the children out the mines and into school. Amen.”

There was a knock on the door.

Percy was on his knees and said, “Come in.”

Mr. Tinsley said, “I can’t. I have your hot water.”

Percy got up and walked to the door and opened it and laughed at Me. Tinsley.

Mr. Tinsley said, “When do you want hot tubs of water?”

Percy was use to taking hot baths everyday.

Percy said, “Every other day.”

Mr. Tinsley was happy and said, “You want breakfast?”

Percy remembered what Aunt Betsy said, “Eat once per day.”
Percy said, “Orange juice, two scramble eggs and two toast.

Mr. Tinsley said, “I’ll bring it to you in about thirty minutes.

Percy are there any other tenants.

Mr. Tinsley said, “Not yet.”

Percy thought he heard somebody in the hall that night.

Percy washed and put on clean clothes.

He was sitting on his bed tying his boots when Mr. Tinsley knocked on his door and said, “Breakfast.”

Percy jumped up and opened the door.

Percy said, “Thanks.”

Mr. Tinsley said, “Percy me and my wife locked the front door and close the curtains at eight pm.

We are in bed and sleep around nine pm. And don’t get up until around six or six thirty. So whatever you heard was not one of us.”

Percy was eating a toast and said, “Thanks.”

Percy put on his boots and finished his breakfast.

He walked to the other two rooms and searched the rooms.

He thought his aunts did a very good job decorating the house.

He saw the attic and walked up in the attic and searched around and there was nothing there.

He forgot about the horses.

Percy was walking down the steps to leave for work and he heard the horses neighing.

He walked around and gave them fed and water.

He hooked up the wagon and drove to work.

Ricky was there.

Timothy was going into the office when Percy drove up in his wagon.

Timothy thought, “Those aunts and uncles spoil him. He is a good kid and deserve it.”

Timothy went into the office and Percy went into the office and spoke and said, “Good morning Ricky. Good morning Timothy.”

Ricky looked at Percy and said, “Good morning.”

Timothy said, “Good morning. I think you just about got it. “

Percy said, “I prayed about it.”

They worked all day.

Percy looked and Timothy looked at him.

Percy said, “I understand.”

Percy begin to explain to Timothy what he understood.

Timothy said, “That’s right. Come to church Sunday.”

Percy grinned.

Eleanor walked in the office.

Timothy stared at her.

Ricky looked at her.

Percy looked at Eleanor.

She stepped in with the same nasty attitude she had the day before.

Percy was calm ad said, “Eleanor you are not welcome here. We don’t owe you any money. Go and find money where ever you can, because you will never bleed me to death and destroy me like you did for five years when I was a child. Just like you told me, you did not want to see me. I told you then good-bye. You think you are going to get some of or all of my money. I do not care for you Eleanor. I do not ever want you around me. Go and find you a job. Get out.”

Timothy thought, “He was harder than me.”

Eleanor said, “You owe me Percy.”

Percy said, “Pathetic.”

He put his head down in the books and closed the books for the day.

He locked up everything.

He looked at Ricky and said, “You can leave when you finish.”

Timothy did not look at Eleanor.

He said, “You want me to go and get the sheriff?”

Percy said, “I’m going.”

Eleanor said, “I’ll be here when he gets here.”

Timothy shook his head at Eleanor.

He and Percy went to the sheriff and the sheriff went to the coal mine and arrested Eleanor.

Eleanor was shocked.

Percy and Timothy went to lunch.

They talked about Mr. Collins.

Timothy said, “Percy I did not like last week when you spoke to Shirley harshly about not being in love with you. Why?’

Percy said, “Thank you Timothy. I believe I was born for extraordinary things. I believe Shirley is born for extraordinary things. I want her to be in love with me. Not merely love me. I saw my aunts and uncles show me what it is like to build a life on being in love. I saw one uncle who did not and settled for love. But now he found someone who is in love with him and they are building a life together. If Shirley was in love with me. I believe we can build an extraordinary life.”

Timothy said, “I believe I understand what you are saying.”

They enjoyed lunch.

Percy went to the bed and breakfast and put up the horses and feed them and gave them water.

He locked up the front of the bed and breakfast.

He went to his room to go to sleep before dark.

He thought about water.

He went and filled two glasses with water and he went to his room and said, “Good night Mr. and Mrs. Tinsley.

They said, “Good night.

Mr. Tinsley said, “A hot bath in the morning and breakfast?”

Percy said, “Right.”

He held the glasses and unlocked the door.

Percy set the water down and closed his door.

He dressed for the bed and it was light outside.

The sheriff unlocked the jail door and told the crying Eleanor if she goes to that coal mine again he would lock her up until the judge comes through and that could in six months and then he will truly give her time.

The whole town was talking about Eleanor.

Her neighborhood was talking about how she kept going telling Percy to give her money.

One neighbor said, “She just sold the Jones house. What she do with that money? Her house is the same. She is the same.”

One neighbor looked and saw Eleanor pulling her horse and wagon down the street.

All the neighbors looked at her and shook their heads.

One woman said, “How can you demand every man to give you money. What does that suppose to do?”

Eleanor went into her house and stayed for two weeks.

The deputy waited until Eleanor got in her wagon, which he drove back to the jail, told the sheriff, “You did not want to go and get her dinner. You wanted to go home and at your wife’s meatloaf.”

The sheriff said, “You’re right.”

There was a knocked on Percy’s door.

He opened the door and Mr. Tinsley brought the tin tub for the next day.

Percy got his clothes ready for the next day.

He went to bed while it was day.

He slept all night.

He tossed back and forth.

When Ruth and Betsy were there he slept all night.

He could hear them while he was slept laughing and playing cards. He would smile.

Percy was sleep and thought he heard someone waking in the hallway.

Every Sunday Percy would pick Shirley up and take her to Timothy’s church.

Percy was thinking about Shirley while he was driving to church.

He had no conversation for Shirley.

Shirley’s heart was changing towards Percy.

Percy’s heart was changing towards Shirley. It was becoming distant.

Percy sat on the back pew.

He looked at the plain and simple Shirley and said, “She does not want to do better.”

Percy was learning the coal mine business.

Matthew and Ben sent his final installment payment for the coal mine.

Percy was shocked.

He sent them telegrams of thank you.

He was anxious to see his family.

He was ready to go to Uncle Ben’s wedding.