Brenda woke and was kicking in the bed from excitement of seeing Shirley and Michael that day.

Patrick was awake and lying in the dark thinking about all the mess they were in. Brenda did not want their sons to come to Thanksgiving dinner and bring their leeching in-laws. He did not like the fact the mob was trying to get a strong hold on their town. The next thing if they take out the smaller and healthier businesses then they will try me. I need to start going back to town and see for myself. Then that damn Bruce thinks he is going to bring those dogs into my house. I am going to let Eleanor take care of that filth. Gen and Ben said they will come to dinner and send them to her house.

Brenda reached over to Patrick.

Patrick said, “Good morning.”

Brenda said, “I slept good. You did not because you were thinking about all of this ‘mess’. You weren’t thinking about ‘This is the day the LORD has made I will rejoice and be glad in it.’ HE has given us the victory over all of this Patrick.”

They enjoyed themselves that morning.

William brought their hot water and knocked on the door.

They did not answer.

William held his ear to the door and grinned.

He put the water basins on the cart and ran down the hall.

He could hear the count snoring.

Earle was barely awake.

He and Gary were learning their ways around.

Earle met with Margaret.

She told him she was dating Stanley.

Earle said, “I remember Stanley.”

Margaret laughed.

She carried him to her secret place in the mansion.

They stayed there for hours.

Steve knew they had disappeared.

Earle was free because the count was gone with Eleanor.

Stanley was with Mr. and Mrs. Stith for hours.

Gary had won so much money playing poker, that Sue and Glenda jumped on him.

They could hit Gary because he knew how to duck and run.

He ran out from them and ran into the remodeled supply shed.

He scared Denise and Mable.

He turned and said, “I’m hiding. Please let me stay here for the night.”

Mable reached her hand out.

Gary said, “What?”

He heard Wallace, Sue and Glenda running around looking for him.

Sue said, “Why is there no light here?”

Gary, Denise and Mable stood in the dark and were quiet.

Gary had his ear to the door.

Wallace said, “I ain’t doing nothing for them.”

Glenda said, “We can’t see Gary and we ain’t taking this to the house. You know that damn Brenda act like she is so righteous.”

Gary looked at the door.

Glenda, Sue and Wallace went back to the barn.

Gary stood there and was appalled at the three.

Denise said, “Those three are always talking about Mrs. Stith.”

Mabel held out her hand again.

Gary said, “You are smarter than the rest of us.”

They stood in the back by the candle and he counted out his winnings and divided equally between the three of them.

He slept in one of the rooms overnight.

He woke when he heard Denise and Mable walking to the servants’ bath area.

Gary pointed and said, “Why are you going there when you have two baths here?”

Mable said, “They don’t give us water.”

Gary stood and eased out of the re-modeled supply shed.

Patrick and Brenda had finished praying and Patrick was looking out the window when he saw Gary easing out the remodeled supply shed.

Gary was peeping and when he did not see anyone he ran across the yard to the stables.

He was at the stable doors and feeling for the doorknobs and he looked up around and saw Patrick staring at him.

Gary tried to smile and rolled his eyes and slipped inside the stables.

He started his chores for the boys’ horses.

He was watching out for Wallace.

Nathan and Stanley walked into the stables.

The stablemen gave Nathan and Stanley two horses for the wagons.

The stablemen hitched the horses to the wagons.

Eleanor was nervous.

She took a hot bath and dressed.

She went into her office and looked over the paper she placed on her desk.

She was thinking.

Eleanor walked down the backstairs.

William was leaving out his room talking to Wyonna.

Wyonna and William were scheduled off for Thanksgiving along with Alice.

Alice went to William and asked could she work on Thanksgiving.

William was going into the kitchen to check on breakfast with Peter.

William looked at Alice and could not understand her request.

He told her, “Let me think about that and get back with you.”

Alice watched William disappear into the kitchen and she knocked on the Wyonna’s door.

Wyonna was getting dressed for work and ran to the door and peeped out.

Alice said, “I need you to persuade William to let me work on Thanksgiving.”

Wyonna said, “Why? All that hell you raised to have Thanksgiving and Christmas off this year.”

Alice blew her breathe and said, “Bruce is on the train and will be here tomorrow morning.”

Wyonna said, “What does that have to do with you?”

Alice said, “You are not getting it. All hell is going to break loose. He is bring his woman and her family to stay in this house with Eleanor and the count.”

Alice looked back and saw Eleanor walking down the backstairs and she flew into the kitchen and passed William who was looking over the staffing schedule.

William looked at Alice as she flew through the kitchen into the formal dining room and begin helping Mellissa and Tracey.

They were setting the table for fifty people.

Wyonna looked at Alice as she ran from her door.

Wyonna looked and saw Eleanor and said, “Damn! That heifer could have told me. Nall William is not going to let her off so she can be nosey. But I am going to be here.”

Wyonna started rubbing her hands together laughing out and said, “This is gonna be good. I don’t want to hear anything from someone else, because they will leave something out. I want to hear it all.”

Eleanor walked to the kitchen.

William looked back at Eleanor and said, “Mrs. Simons, what can I help you with?”
Eleanor said, “William, I live here and can walk into my own kitchen.”

Dan snickered and laughed.

Denise and Mable were entering the house and went to the bath area.

Eleanor said, “Denise? Mable? Where are you going?”

They held their heads down.

William leaned back to the door and looked at Denise and Mable.

He looked at Dan and Nadine they held their heads down.

William thought, “What kind of filth is this?”

Eleanor saw something was wrong and said, “Go on I’ll talk to you at a later time. I want to introduce my daughter and other son to you.”

Denise and Mable smiled and went onto the servants’ bath area.

Eleanor looked at William.

William was trying to figure out what was going on.

Eleanor walked to the backdoor and looked at the three men that were keeping the hot water going.

William said, “I will talk to Robert, Evan and Louis.”

Eleanor was angry and had turned color.

She knew she had to be kind towards the staff, especially around her food.

She thought, “At least that damn Jose will be back. Wait he did not say he was coming back to work here. Oh God this is a mess.”

Eleanor looked at William and said, “Talk to them about what?”

She looked at William and said, “Contact Mr. Wilson and tell him to meet me Friday in town at ten thirty sharp.”

William said, “Yes ma am.”

Eleanor spoke to the staff and walked through the kitchen and saw the changes she made.

The staff liked the changes she made.

The kitchen looked very updated.

Eleanor turned and said, “William I don’t remember do we give the servants their poultry and they cook them or do we cook them?”

The cooks answered for William.

The cooks said, “They cook their own food.”

William rolled his eyes at the cooks.

Eleanor turned and looked at the cooks.

Nadine, Ruth, Danielle and Betty were admiring the outfit Eleanor was wearing.

Eleanor knew they liked her outfit.

She had on the expensive pearl earrings the count bought her.

Eleanor continued her walk.

She saw Alice helping Mellissa and Tracey set the formal dining room for Thanksgiving.

The three maids turned and were looking around.

Eleanor was standing in the doorway and she started looking around and said, “Alice what are you looking for?”

Alice said, “There’s no flowers or centerpiece. Mrs. Stith always have it a day before.”

Eleanor looked around and said, “We can’t make one, well at least three?”

Alice said, “We don’t have flowers or anything. You mother is not a garden person. She likes everything green.”

Mellissa said, “Mable is good with flowers and things maybe she can help.”

Tracey and lice looked at Mellissa.

Eleanor was getting annoyed.

After her experience yesterday with former slaves she did not want that to take control of her house and her life.

Eleanor said, “Alice and you. What is your name?”

Tracey said, “Tracey.”

Eleanor said, “Why are you two looking at Mellissa like that? Because they are black or former slaves?”

Tracey shook her head for no vehemently because Mrs. Stith was black and hired her when she could not find a job anywhere.

Alice said, “No.”

Eleanor was beginning to loose her patience first thing in the morning at her home. Not even the businesses.

Tracey said, “No ma am is no color thing. Mable is slow.”

Mellissa said, “Yes but she tries.”

Eleanor said, “You three get with Mable and help her to find some type of table decorations for tomorrow. If you are off I am cancelling it so this table will be presentable.”

Alice was laughing inside. She did not have to wait for William to tell her no because of his precious schedule.

Tracey said, “Good. I did not want to be there with all those bad behind children.”

Mellissa thought, “I hope she catches all of these folks around here who hates her momma because she is color.”

Eleanor walked through the house to the family dining room.

She did not see the count.

The count was drunk and slobbering in his room.

Earle looked at the count and went back to servants’ quarters and looked around.

He did not want anyone to see him looking around for Margaret.

He held his head down and went into his room.

Margaret was in his room waiting for him.

Earle laughed and grinned and locked his door and put the chair behind it.

Earle knew the count would be sleep for another hour and he saw Stanley leave about twenty minutes

ago.

He and Margaret enjoyed their morning.

Eleanor saw no count.

She said, “Good morning family.”

She sat and looked back the count’s chair.

Patrick said, “Hangover.”

Thomas looked up at Eleanor.

Brenda said, “Eleanor you look lovely this morning.”

Eleanor smiled and looked at Brenda and so do you and father.”

William walked in the dining and looked.

Dan liked cooking the small breakfast. They did not throw away a lot of food.

Percy ate what was left over at the table.

Eleanor looked and saw William she said, “William?”

Patrick looked at William.

William looked at Eleanor and said, “Yes ma am.”

Eleanor said, “There are no center pieces for tomorrow dining table nor anywhere in the house.”

Brenda patted her chest and said, “I forgot to order them. That is my fault and not William.”

Eleanor said, “No momma that is alright, what I did was to tell Alice, Tracey and Mellissa to help Mable do something for centerpieces. They said she is good with flowers.”

Brenda said, “Yes she is.”

Eleanor turned to William and said, “I am relieving them of whatever their duties were to help get the centerpieces together and I cancelled their day off for tomorrow if they were cancelled off.”

William seethed at Alice and thought, “Heifer.”

William said, “Very well ma am. Tracey and Mellissa have finished their chores. The last chore was to set the formal dining room. I will get someone to cover Mable this morning.”

Patrick looked around the table and said, “Me and your mother are off to get Shirley and Michael.”

Brenda started grinning and clapping her hands.

The boys were laughing.

There was a knock on the door. The clocked showed eight thirty am.

William walked to the door and looked out and it was the man delivering the balloons.

Bruce saw the man with the hundred balloons and he dropped his mouth in surprise.

His eyes got big and he said, “Whoa.”

He jumped from the table and ran to the hallway.

Bruce was so excited and reached for the balloons and caused them to become untied and the balloons floated all through the house.

Percy could see in the hallway and saw what Bruce did.

He turned his head quick and cut his eyes at Thomas.

Patrick knew something happened.

Patrick saw the maids looking upward.

William stepped around the corner and said, “These are the balloons that are left ma am. Where do you want to put them.”

Brenda said, “Left?”

Bruce walked in the family dining room ashamed and with his hands in front of him.

Patrick looked at Bruce.

He sipped his coffee and whispered to Benda, “He did something.”

Eleanor heard Patrick and turned to see.

Eleanor looked at Bruce who walked to his seat and sat in silence and held his head down.

Thomas said, “Bruce what did you do?”

Eleanor looked at Bruce.

William said, “Bruce reached for the balloons and caused them to become untied and the balloons are floating through the house.”

Percy leaned over to Bruce and said, “You are the one that is going to daddy.”

Brenda got stood from the table and Eleanor behind her and Thomas behind Eleanor.

Patrick had the cup of coffee to his lips to keep Bruce from seeing him laughing.

He stood and walked out the dining room with his coffee cup and saucer.

Brenda and Eleanor and Thomas and Patrick saw the balloons floating through the house.

They laughed.

Bruce started crying.

Percy stood and walked into the hall and looked at the balloons and said, “Let the balloons stay there so Shirley can them over her head.”

Brenda took the other balloons from William and released them in the hallway.

Bruce was sitting at the table crying.

Percy walked back in and said, “You better be glad I cleaned that up for you. You owe me.”

Bruce, said, “I have learned not to owe anyone anything. I don’t owe you nothing Percy and you are still going back with Bruce.”

Eleanor went and put on her hat, cape and gloves and got all her papers.

The buggy was waiting for them.

Patrick looked out the window and saw the buggy and he thought, “We need a carriage.”

Then he thought, “They are run a ways and have no clothes. Shirley has on that same nightgown for three days.”

He looked at Eleanor walking down the hall with one of Shirley’s blankets.

Patrick said, “Eleanor can think under pressure. She got Shirley a blanket to be covered. But she is limited maybe all of these problems at one time will help her broaden her scope.”

Eleanor said, “Bruce have a good day and all of you bathe and dressed and ready for lunch around one pm.”

She looked at William and said, “That includes you also William.”

Eleanor said, “Percy I will talk to you about ‘owe you’ statement when I get back.

Percy said, “How did she hear that?”

Patrick walked back in the dining room and handed his coffee cup to one of maids.

He looked at Percy who turned his head to the wall in disgust.

Harriet and Elizabeth grinned at Percy.

Patrick laughed and walked out.

William helped Patrick put on his coat.

He handed Patrick his hat, scarf and gloves.

Thomas and Brenda walked Eleanor and Patrick to the door.

Thomas said, “Bring us back good news.”

Patrick looked back at he house filled with balloons and laughed.

Eleanor did not turn around because she knew what Patrick was laughing about.

They laughed to the buggy,

Eleanor was about to drive but Patrick said, “I am still capable so I will.”

He kissed Eleanor on her forehead and helped her in the buggy.

Patrick skipped around the front of the buggy and took the reins and winked his eye at Thomas and Eleanor smiled and they rode away.

William walked to Harriet and Elizabeth and said, “At least we don’t have to get the balloons down.”

They rode into town and talked about the racist workers at the mansion.

Patrick said, “We have to calmly fire them. We do not know if the mob has placed anyone at our home.”

Eleanor turned and looked at Patrick

They stopped at the old motel and walked around the motel and Eleanor showed Patrick the window she went in and that she requested Mr. Wilson to meet her there on Friday at ten thirty am.

The two walked through the hotel and tested the floors and windows.

They walked back out.

Patrick said, “It’s not in bad shape. It should not require a lot of work to get it up and running by the spring.”

Eleanor in shock said, “The spring!”

Patrick looked at Eleanor and said, “Yell like that again.”

Patrick looked at a confused Eleanor.

He said, “This is going into the winter season. They rarely work in the winter. Feel the coldness coming in. Why are you concern?”

Eleanor said, “The slaves daddy. They have no place.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor and begin to think.

He said, “Eleanor you are running the railroad now. I am going to hold onto the shipping to see how you do with the railroad. When you have a goal you want to reach, you do not ignore the opportunities along the way. That building has to be inspected, which maybe done this winter. Supplies have to be ordered, workers have to be hired wo work there and services have to be provided for the former slaves. That is going to take time. This is the holiday season for the next six weeks. You know every business start to slow down or end.”

They saw Nathan and Stanley passing them with the wagons full of meat.

Nathan nodded at them.

Stanley nodded.

Patrick and Eleanor spoke.

Patrick said, “At least we got two problems solved today. Balloons were delivered and the meat going to the house.”

Eleanor said, “Daddy they were out of turkeys and I had to get what they had.”

Patrick said, “Because William did not put in the order?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Patrick did not saw anything.

He stared in front of him.

They had a few minutes before their ten thirty appointment.

Patrick round around the square.

He told Eleanor, “You want shelter for the former slaves now, because your ultimate goal is to have housing for them. In the meantime Eleanor, where are the former slaves going to live until you bring your dream into the real world? That’s where you have to grow in business. I am proud you decided to buy this distribution. We used him for re-stocking our trains here. I do not want to give the mob a dime of my money. You can either buy this company under your name for you and your children or buy it and put it under the railroad business.”

Eleanor looked and saw the mob man in the brown coat.

Eleanor said, “Daddy that’s the man in the brown coat.”

Patrick said, “Don’t point. That’s why I rode around the square to see him. If he is up to no good and has no business then he would have been walking about to see which business he can take over. I saw him.”

Patrick stood out the buggy and went and gave Eleanor a hand out the buggy.

Mr. Guss opened the door for them.

They went into Mr. Guss’s office and he closed the door.

His lawyer was seated and stood up to greet the potential buyers.

The lawyer looked at Eleanor and she said, “I was mistaken.”

Patrick looked at the lawyer.

The lawyer greeted them and said, “Good morning.”

He looked at Eleanor and said, “I only specialize in divorces but Mr. Guss is a dear friend of mine.”

Patrick said, “Sir who are you?’

The lawyer reached his hand to Patrick to shake.

Patrick did not reach his hand out because he wanted to know who was the man.

The lawyer said, “I understand. I am Thomas Raleigh Long. I represent your daughter in her divorce from Bruce.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

She nervously smiled at Patrick.

Patrick looked at Eleanor and back to the lawyer and said, “Is this a conflict of interest?”

The lawyer sighed and said, “Not truly. I drew up the contract papers and would have the buyer take them to their lawyer for review and we all meet on Monday to sign the contract and exchange the money. Unless there is some finance issues and Mrs. Simons already told me there are none.”

Patrick thought, “She likes to flaunt her money. Now she begins to see the evil mob rearing it’s ugly head.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

He wanted to see how she resolves a conflict of interest matter.

Eleanor was looking at the lawyer and said, “Let’s sit and we will begin to look over the contract paper.”

Mr. Guss was so please.

They heard the bell on the door.

Mr. Guss said, “Who could that be?”

Eleanor and Patrick were reading each line of the contract.

The lawyer was standing over against the wall watching father and daughter.

Patrick was pointing out things in the contract.

He told Eleanor, “These are places where specifics would be listed.”

They continued to go through the contract.

Mr. Guss had his ear to the door and listening to the mob in her outer office.

Mr. Guss’s clerk said, “Mr. Guss is in a meeting and will be out in an hour.”

The man in the brown coat said, “Who is he meeting?”

The other clerk looked at him.

Mr. Guss was about to open the door and walk to the man in the brown coat.

The lawyer caught his arm.

Patrick looked up and then Eleanor looked at the men.

Patrick said, “Is there a problem out there?”

Mr. Guss said, “No.”

The lawyer did not say anything.

Patrick looked through the contract and said, “Eleanor this is a simple contract. It does not have any hidden clauses. I have one of my lawyer’s sign off and have it notarized and we can bring it back to Mr. Guss on Monday.”

Mr. Guss said, “Can you make it Friday?”

The lawyer looked at Mr. Guss and said, “Mr. Guss why?”

Mr. Guss said, “That fellow is making me nervous. He is just lingering around my office and trying to intimidate me and my customers. That’s why my business has been suffering. Because he is trying to ruin me to the point that I am forced to sell to him. I believe he will kill me if he think I have sold this business to someone else.”

Eleanor looked at Mr. Guss.

Patrick looked at Mr. Guss.

The lawyer looked at Mr. Guss and was startled.

He looked at Patrick and Eleanor watching Mr. Guss.

Eleanor said, “Mr. Guss if you feel that strong your life would be in danger, I will have Mr. Long notarized the contract now. We can call this done and you give the contract back to Mr. Long so he can keep it safe.”

Patrick did not say anything but stared at Eleanor.

The lawyer saw Patrick and said, “Sir are you in agreement or do you want to wait for your lawyers?”

Patrick looked at Eleanor and said, “It’s your money.”

Eleanor looked at Patrick because she could not tell if he approved or disapproved.

Eleanor and Mr. Guss signed the contract.

The lawyer notarized it and Eleanor wrote the note for the bank.

Mr. Long took the contract to the recorder of the business transactions.

Eleanor said, “Mr. long while you are there recording this can you find out who is selling that motel at the beginning of town?”

Mr. Guss said, “I can tell you that.”

Patrick stood and he and Eleanor looked at Mr. Guss.

Mr. Guss said, “I do. I was not getting any business.”

Eleanor said, “How much?”

Mr. Guss wrote down the amount and handed it to Eleanor.

Patrick looked at the figure and he looked at Eleanor.

The lawyer looked at Eleanor, because the way Patrick looked at her.

Eleanor said, “Fine, draw up the contract and when it is ready let me know so I can sign it.”

The lawyer said, “I can have the contract ready this evening, once I complete this business. I will messenger your signed, notarized and stamped copy.”

The lawyer opened the door.

Patrick and Eleanor walked out the office.

The man with the brown coat on was sitting in the office watching the three people exit Mr. Guss’ office.

Eleanor started grinning and said, “Daddy lets go and get your girl and my boy.

The poultry shop manager saw Eleanor when she first went into the Mr. Guss’s office.

He ran out and stopped Patrick.

He said, “Hello Mr. Stith and Mrs. Simons. We had a problem last night but the sheriff handle it. Some men came into town looking for run away slaves. He described the group you took care of yesterday.”

Eleanor said, “What? Daddy.”

Patrick said. “Where are the men?”

The poultry shop manager said, “I don’t know. I have my color workers staying in the shop.”

The clothing store manager ran out his store to the buggy with Eleanor and Patrick.

He said, “Good morning. We have problems. Some bounty hunters rode into town last night looking for the former slaves. The sheriff has telegrammed for federal troops. It may take them a week to get here. If there was a train in that state they could be here in a few days.”

Eleanor said, “Did you feed them?”

Patrick, the poultry shop owner and the clothing store manager stared at Eleanor like she had no common sense.

Eleanor was thinking.

She said, “Don’t look at me like that. Our train is coming in and if we can get the freed men on our train we can protect them. Daddy, can I use our train to help them get to Philadelphia?”
Patrick and the poultry shop owner and the clothing store manager smiled.

Eleanor said, “The reason I asked if they ate, because there might nit be enough food on the train to get them to Philadelphia.”

Patrick said, “You can use our train. Your momma will be proud of you.”

Patrick said, “Gentlemen, do you have wagons to transport these ‘Freed men’ to safety.”

The poultry shop owner heard his wagons coming back and said, “Yeah.”

He said, “I have a few turkeys and ducks that weren’t picked up today. I can sell you those.”

Eleanor said, “Yes and send them in the wagons with the ‘Freedmen’. Hurry.”

Eleanor said, “Sir did you out fit all the ‘Freedmen?”

He said, “I did and you have change.”

Eleanor said we will talk about that later. Have the sheriff to delay those bounty hunters.”

The poultry owner started closing down his shop.

He ran to Eleanor with the bill.

Eleanor looked at and paid him.

The helpers yelled at the clothing shop owner and said, “We’re ready to go.”

Because they would be off until Friday morning.

The clothing store manager turned and looked at the men.

He ran and got on his horse and they followed him about a mile.

All the twenty two ran and got in the wagon.

They helped the children and teenagers.

The drivers just looked and shook their heads.

Eleanor saw two black men peeping out the shop.

Patrick saw them and said, “They are so bound they don’t know they have freedom. Which one is Joe Jr.”

Eleanor looked and said, “The one that is crouching nearest the floor.”

Patrick pulled over to the meat shop.

The train was whistling coming in.

Patrick said, “You want to leave you can get on that train for Philadelphia.”

One of the men nodded his head for yes.

He looked at the poultry shop owner and the owner nodded his head for yes.

The man and got his bag and ran to the buggy.

Patrick said, “Get in. Don’t stand there.”

Then Joe Jr. burst and ran with all he had and jumped in the buggy.

Patrick drove hard to the train.

Eleanor was excited to see Shirley and Michael. She would be excited when she see the twenty two slaves.

Patrick was thinking.

He said, “The conductor and the two porters have weapons. That’s it. I need more armed security on the trains.”

Eleanor said, “I need more armed security on the trains.”

Patrick stopped the buggy at the platform.

The train manager walked to tell Patrick to move the buggy.

Patrick stepped out the train manager saw the man who hired him twenty years ago step towards him.

Patrick held his hand to shake his hand and said, “Roger how are you doing? Did you ever settle down and marry Mag and get that one boy.”

Roger said, “Mr. Stith you remembered?”

Patrick said, “Did you?”

Roger said, “Yes sir. We have one boy. He served in the civil war and can’t find work.”

Roger saw the black men in the buggy with Eleanor.

Patrick said, “I got a situation Roger. I need to get those and some ‘Freed men’ to Philadelphia. Some bounty hunters came into town yesterday looking for run away slaves. Put them on this train. In first class. Have your son ride with them to Philadelphia and back to protect them. I will pay him a hundred dollars.”

Rogers said, “Whoa. Sir.”

Patrick said, “The only bad thing he will miss Thanksgiving with you and Mag.”

Roger said, “We can miss him for a few days.”

Patrick beckoen for the two ‘Freemen”.

Roger said, “I have to go and get him and bring him back.”

Patrick said, “How long will that take?”

Roger said, “About a half hour.”

Patrick said, “Hurry.”

The train manager ran to his horse and rode fast to his house.

He jumped off his horse and ran into his house.

His wife was arguing with their son.

The manager said, “Josiah I got you a part time job at the train to ride security to Philadelphia and back.”

Josiah said, “I’m not interested.”

He sat down to the table.

Mag said, “You get interested and pack a bag and go.”

The manager said, “One hundred dollars.”

Josiah got up and went and grabbed his rifle and ammunition and a coat and hat. And walked out the door and jumped on his horse and rode to the train station with an apple in his mouth.

Roger held his black wife and they kissed.

He said, “You have to take me to the train station so I can ride Josiah’s horse back.”

She grabbed her shawl and walked out with her husband of twenty years.

Patrick saw a young man riding fast to the train station.

He and Eleanor were standing at the platform waiting to see Shirley and Michael’s heads at the windows.

Patrick saw the two wagons fast approaching the train station from the east.

Eleanor screamed and waved.

Patrick said, “I have told you about screaming.”

He looked and saw Michael and Shirley and he screamed.

He said, “Took my babies away for nearly three years.”

Shirley were grinning her big smile.

Michael was so excited he was jumping up and down and he would scream and Patrick would scream.

The train conductor saw Patrick and jumped off the train and ran to Patrick and said, “Sir?”

Patrick turned and looked Mike and said, “Hello Mike, I have not seen you in nearly thirty years. You look good.”

Mike said, “You helped me.”

He looked around and said, “What’s going on?”

Patrick turned from Eleanor and said, “I need to get these ‘Freemen’ To Philadelphia. Bounty hunters are here looking for run away slaves.”

Mike said, “There are no slavery my son died in this war.”

Patrick said, “I need to know Mike you will not hurt or harm these people because of your son.”

Mike said, “I won’t.”

Patrick said, “There are twenty four. Here they come. Put them in the last car. I have hired security for them.”

The porter was standing and listening.

The two wagons pulled up.

The porter stepped up.

Mike looked at the ‘Freedmen.’

Shirley and Michael stopped their grinning and look at the people and knew they were slaves.

They saw Eleanor face.

The little grinning boy with the big grin ran to Eleanor and pulled her dree and she looked down at him.

Elanor bent down and gave him a big hugged.

She hugged all the people.

Roger and Mag drove up.

The people were dis embarking the train and they stopped and looked at the group and knew they were ‘Freedmen.”

The former slaves felt threaten and scared.

The porter said, “All of you follow me.”

Eleanor said, “Give your names to him and if you need a job tell him and he will tell me. I will help all of you.”

Eleanor looked at the young girl that was pregnant and said, “Your baby will be born in freedom.”

She said, “It’s massa’s baby. I will give it away. I can’t live with massa anymore.”

Eleanor became weak.

All the ‘Freedmen’ shook Patrick’s hand and walked with the porter to the back of the train.

Mike stood and watched the people and became weak.

He said, “Patrick I don’t think I am strong enough to carry this load.”

Shirley and Michael heads were out the windows watching the ‘Freedmen’.

Patrick said, “Mike I do understand.”

Mike said, “I thank you and Brenda for burying my boy and giving time with pay to be with my family.”

Eleanor perked up and listen when she heard “Brenda’.

Roger and Mag were standing and talking to Josiah.

One of the men from the poultry shop wagon saw him and yelled, “Josiah!”

He and Josiah walked and shook each other hands.

Patrick said, “I don’t have a relief conductor until Thursday.”

Roger walked up with Mag.

Patrick looked and Roger shook Mike’s hand.

Mag said, “It’s good to meet you Mr. Stith.”

Eleanor turned and saw the woman talking to her daddy was black.

She turned to see the son.

He was a little darker than Eleanor with straight hair.

He had his army coat on and a rifle and two guns.

She looked at the ‘Freedmen’.

They were watching this mixed person with guns.

The porter let them in the back car.

Josiah pointed at his father.

He said, “Pop.”

Roger said, “Huh you see me talking.”

He walked over to him and the other wagon driver had walked up and was listening.

Roger said, “That’s Mr. Stith he owns the railroad and he needs to get the ‘Freedmen’ to Philadelphia from some bounty hunters that have come into town looking for run a way slaves.”

The other driver said, “Slavery was fully abolished. Ain’t no run a way slaves. I don’t have a family anymore. The war killed my daddy and brother. I’ll go if he needs someone else.”

Roger said, “I’ll ask him. Ya’ll just stand here and be quiet. Understand me Josiah.”

Roger pointed his finger at Josiah.

Roger turned around.

Josiah yelled and said, “Pop!”

The three started laughing.

Mag turned around to see what Josiah was up to.

Patrick said, “Roger how many paying passengers do we have?”

Roger said, “I counted this morning twenty seven.”

Patrick was thinking.

He saw several men ride up to the train.

Patrick said, “Don’t sell them three tickets. I am sure those are the bounty hunters.”

Mike turned and looked.

Roger turned and looked.

Josiah kissed his mother and walked to the back of the train.

Mike walked over to the driver and said, “You lost your father and brother in the war?”

The man reached out his hand to shake Mike’s hand and said, “I am Trevor. My mother died giving birth to me. My father was in the army. My older followed dad. They both died in the civil war. I decide I did not want to be in the military but a physician. I spent one year in college and came out to take a break.”

The porter was in the room getting Michael and Shirley had the blanket ready for Shirley.

Mike said, “You don’t hate the slaves?”

Trevor said, “For what? They have done nothing. But God decided enough is enough. My father and brother stood with God. They would serve Him to the end.”

Mike stood and stared at the ground.

Patrick looked at Mike.

Michael ran and screamed.

Patrick screamed at Michael.

Mag was laughing at the display of joy between the two.

The porter was carrying Shirley and Eleanor was grinning and shaking Shirley’s blanket she wrapped Shirley in the blanket.

Shirley reached over and grabbed Patrick collar.

Patrick grabbed Shirley and held her and they cried for a long time.

He kissed Shirley hard on her neck.

Shirley thought,”I’m not going back.”

Mike looked at Patrick and Shirley.

Eleanor hugged Michael.

They walked hand in hand to the car where the ‘Freedmen’ were.

She introduced them to Michael.

She talked to Josiah.

Josiah said, “I am Josiah and I am here to get you to Philadelphia.”

The little boy with a big grin was talking to Michael.

He and Michael and the other talked and laughed.

Mike stood and he said, “Patrick.”

Patrick turned with Shirley in his arms.

Roger walked back watching the three men who was watching the train.

Roger said, “Yeah that’s who they were. They did not know where the train was going. I didn’t tell them.’

Eleanor and Michael were walking and swinging hands and talking.

Patrick looked at them.

He said, “Mike.”

Mike said, “I’ll go back.”

Trevor looked at Mike.

Patrick saw how Trevor looked at Mike.

He said, “What’s your name.”

Trevor said, “Trevor sir.”

Patrick said, “You will miss Thanksgiving dinner.”

Trevor said, “I am a Christian man. I believe in JESUS and HIM alone. I miss nothing with HIM.”

Mag said, “Amen.”

Roger went back to the train and he said, “They said they were looking for two women run a way slaves, before slavery.

Patrick nearly dropped Shirley.

Eleanor hear Roger say the bounty hunters were looking for two women slaves.

John said, “What about me?”

Patrick said, “You too.”

He kissed Shirley on her head and said, “I have to put you in the buggy.

Shirley kicked her legs.

Patrick said, “Baby you moved your legs.”

Trevor and John heard Patrick and looked at Shirley and saw she had on a nightgown.

Patrick said, “You need weapons. And Mr. hunter gave you some meat for the ‘Freedmen’.”

John said, “Yeah.”

Trevor said, “We have to take Mr. Hunter his wagons and horses back.”

John said, “I’ll tell dad I am going on a train ride. My rifle and guns are in the shop. Mother does not like guns in the house.”

Trevor said, “Sir when does the train leave?”

Patrick said, “In a hour after they finish supplying some coal.”

Trevor said, “We will be back and how much are we getting paid?”

Patrick went into his pocket and counted them a hundred dollars each.

Eleanor had reached the buggy and peeped at a crying Shirley who was looking straight.

Michael was hopping in the wagon.

The porter ran from the train with two books he had given Michael.

Eleanor smiled.

Michael held his head down and said, “Give them to the slaves.”

The porter saw pain in Michael’s face.

He looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Can you give it to them.”

Shirley said, “Do they have money momma?’

Eleanor looked and said, “No.”

She looked in her bag and counted her money.

Elanor said, “I have two hundred and fifty dollars and there are twenty four of them. I am going to give each one ten dollars a piece.”

Patrick and Roger were talking and John brought the meat to the porter.

He put it on the cart and said he has five turkeys and three ducks.

Mag was looking.

Patrick saw her and he wondered.

Roger and Mike walked the train.

The men were filling the coal shed.

Patrick walked over and whispered, “George give Mag one of those which ever one she wants and keep your eye on Mike and keep him from the ‘Freedmen’.

Patrick was watching as much as he could.

Eleanor said, “George I will take the books to the children. And give each of them ten dollars.”

Patrick reached the hundred dollars to Eleanor and said, “Give this to Josiah.”

Eleanor counted the hundred dollars.

Patrick looked at Eleanor and grinned.

Eleanor thought about what she did and was embarrassed.

Patrick said, “Baby go on so we can get ready to leave.”

Michael stayed in the buggy with Shirley.

He was quiet.

Patrick looked in at him and Shirley.

He thought, “I better hurry and get them home, where they can be happy.”

Patrick walked to Mag and said, “Before Roger come out you need some financial help.”

Mag turned her head and said, “I got bad off sick. We had to sell nearly everything to keep the house and we are still behind in the house.”

Patrick said, “I’ll be coming into either Friday or Monday. I’ll look over our accounts and see if there is any money I can give you two not loan to you. And Eleanor is going through our storage are and pulling out a lot of stuff. Get with her and Brenda and see if we have anything you can use.”

Mag started crying and she looked away.

Eleanor watched Patrick.

She knew those people must be in need. And Patrick was not going to have it said, his workers were poor.

George put the smallest turkey in Mag’s wagon.

Roger looked back as he walked to Patrick and Mag.

He pointed at the wagon.

Patrick said, “Yeah left birds from the poultry shop.”

Mag turned and walked away to the wagon and drove away.

Roger watched Mag leave and said to Patrick and said, “I nearly lost her. It was a bad time. Then Josiah was off in the war instead of school or a trade.”

Patrick said, “Put pulled you through?”

Roger said, “Prayer.”

Patrick said, “I never saw where you requested time off.”

Roger said, “I could not take time off I had to get paid. We took our last and sent for Mag’s sister and she stayed with us nearly a year. I want to do something for her to show how we appreciated her.”

Patrick said, “Roger either Friday or Monday we will be talking.”

Roger looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “You close up after this train leave?”

Roger said, “Yes sir.”

Mr. Hunter closed the poultry shop and was cleaning it up.

John put one of the wagons in the back and put both horses on one wagon.

He went into the shop and said, “Dad I won’t be here tomorrow. I will be riding on the train to get the ‘Freedmen’ to Philadelphia. I was a hundred dollars. Can you drop us off at the train it leaves in about thirty minutes?”

Mr. Hunter looked sick and said, “Who?”

John said, “Me and Trevor.”

Mr. Hunter said, “John it has only been a few months.”

John said, “Father God used me and put the most vile and evil system to the end. I fought then and I fight now.”

Mr. Hunter nodded his head.

He got his hat and coat and checked everything.

John went and retrieved his rifle and two guns and ammunition.

He walked and sat in the wagon.

He saw Trevor going to the clothing store.

Mr. Hunter walked out and locked the store and locked the gate where the wagon was.

He got in his wagon and said, “Where is Trevor?”

John pointed at the clothing store.

They saw the man in the brown coat walking the square.

John said, “That man does nothing but walk around and watch people.”

Mr. Hunter looked at him.

Trevor ran home to the modest home he shared with his brother and father.

He locked everything up and closed all the windows.

He grabbed his Bible and put it in his bag and he went to get some socks and saw the socks were no good with holes.

He went to his brother’s room and stopped and looked around and cried.

He lied he was lonely.

Mr. Hunter invited Trevor to Thanksgiving dinner to meet his niece and for John to meet a friend’s daughter.

Trevor nor John wanted to meet any women.

Trevor was trying to resolve he had no love ones and trying to get his money to go back to college to be a physician.

Trevor looked in his brother’s drawer, there was nothing.

He ran all the way back to the town square.

He went to the clothing store and said, “Mr. Scott I need some socks and a coat and gloves.”

Mr. Scott said, “I’m sold out. I sold most of my goods to the ‘Freedmen’. Let me double check in the back.”

Trevor said, “God I am going to freeze.”

Trevor found one scarf.

Mr. Scott came from the back of the store.

He laughed when he saw Trevor standing at the counter with the scarf around his neck.

Mr. Scot said, “Trevor I had no socks but this one pair of wool gloves.”

Trevor said, “how much for the scarf and gloves?”

Mr. Scott said, “A dollar and fifty cents.”

Trevor paid Mr. Scott and turned and saw John and his father waiting. They had twenty minutes to get to the train.

They rode to the train station.

Eleanor walked to the back of the train and counted Josiah’s money to him.

She walked back to the car and told the ‘Freedmen” she would give each ten dollars to have on them.

She said, “Can all of you read?”

Danny said, “I can read. My momma taught me.”

He and Joe Jr. were sitting with the pregnant girl.

Eleanor walked and gave him the two books that Michael had.

She said, “I don’t have time to go and get more books.

She started handing out the ten dollars to the group of twenty four.

The ‘Freedmen’ were happy.

Eleanor looked at the teenage boy and said,”Can you count?”

He said, “Yes.”
Eleanor said, “Tech the ones that don’t know how to count.”

Eleanor gave each person ten dollars and told them to put their money on them.

Three of the small children belonged to the scarred up man.

He went to the other slave plantation and stole them and ran.

Two of the teenagers were cousins.

Eleanor nearly passed out when she knew the children were alone and by themselves and the other children were watching out for them.

Eleanor gave Joe Jr. his money and his daddy yelled and said, “Give me that money,”

Eleanor jumped and stared at Joe.

Danny was about to give Joe the money.

Eleanor stopped him and said, “This is to help you and Joe Jr in your new life. You said your mother told you to stay with the group.”

Joe said, “I’m that papa. Give me that money?”

Josiah stood confused.

He wondered what kind of man was Joe.

Joe was stretched out over a seat and tried to get up and get Joe Jr and Danny’s money.

One of the ‘Freedmen’ said, “That’s tha papa.”

Eleanor said, “You two get off my train. And go back to being slaves. That’s the reason it took so long to free you. Because of your evil mind. Get off my train.”

Joe sat back and stretched out as if he was not moving.

The other slave jumped up and said, “If you want me off put me off.”

The older slave woman said, “Tha right.”

The pregnant girl sly way pointed to the woman.

Eleanor said, “Josiah.”

Josiah raised his rifle to shot them.

Joe ran off the train.

The woman fell over the train trying to run.

The defiant man said, “I’m sorre.”

Eleanor said, “That worked with your masters. Not with me.”

Joe ran back to the barn where he was staying.

Ray, who worked at the poultry shop looked around and said, “Anymore. Thank this lady for what she has done for us. Because there will be no others to help us.”

Josiah threw the man off the train.

He and the older woman started walking along the railroad tracks.

Patrick was sitting in the buggy with Shirley and Michael and the three knew something had happened for Eleanor to put them off the train.

The ‘Freedmen’ were cussing and fussing as they walked down the railroad.

Patrick looked at Joe as he ran down the street.

Mr. Hunter rode up with Trevor and John in the wagon.

They saw the ‘Freedmen’ men leaving.

John grabbed his rifle and guns and said, “Dad see you in a few.”

Trevor said, “Thank you sir.”

Josiah said, “Fellows welcome!”

Eleanor looked at them and said, “Thank You. Make sure you all get blankets to stay warm. John or Trevor can be position yourself inside at this door and the other two at this back door and keep those curtains on that door closed.”

John said, “I’ll be at the inside front door.”

The train whistle blew.
Eleanor ran off the train onto the platform.

She waved at the ‘Freedmen’ as the train rolled out.

Josiah told Trevor and John they had to put off Joe and two others, because of their wicked minds.

The train roared pass Patrick, Shirley and Michael.

They waved.

Eleanor ran back to the buggy.

Patrick pulled the buggy around and they sped back to the mansion.

Patrick was trying his hour record but he only cut off five minutes.

Eleanor passed by the motel and sped home.

They saw the lawyer walking down the street,

They saw the man in the brown coat walking and looking around.

Patrick said, “He’s the feeler. He is not the head man. He does and do the work for the head man. We are not going to give him any work.”

Eleanor looked back at Shirley and Michael.

Eleanor said, “Today was not a bad day. We help some ‘Freedmen’ get to freedom. And we saw people who lost love ones in the civil war start getting rid of pain, anger and hate. Because everyone lost at least one person in the war.”

Roger and Mag were preparing their turkey.

Mr. Hunter told his wife that Trevor and John would not be joining them for Thanksgiving.

Joe was hiding under his bed.

The two ‘Freedmen’ sleep near the tracks in the cold that night.

Mike cried over his son all night.

George was smoking a cigar, drinking his branding and playing solitaire and watching Mike all night.

Mr. Scott closed and took his profits to the banker.

He went home to his wife and son.

They ate dinner and prayed and read their Bible.

Mr. Guss locked his office. Ran to his horse and rode fast home.

His clerks were gone for the day.

They had double dates for dinner.

Patrick entered the mansion’s grounds.

Shirley sat up and she and Michael screamed for joy.

Patrick and Eleanor enjoyed their screaming.

Patrick stopped the wagon in the front of the house.

Patrick helped Shirley out the buggy.

Michael jumped out the buggy.

William opened the door.

Percy, Bruce and Thomas ran out the door.

The count stepped out the house with Brenda.

Michael screamed and ran to Brenda.

Patrick helped Shirley out the buggy.

Shirley whispered to her grandfather, “I want to walk to grandma.”

Patrick looked at Shirley and then Eleanor.

Eleanor said nothing.

Percy told the count, “Shirley was squeezed at birth. She’s not pretty but we love her. “

Thomas said, “She’s our.”

Bruce said, “How dare you two say something that ugly about Shirley. Both of you are moving to Bruce.”

They all turned and looked at the count.

The count woke close to noon and took a hot bath and shave.

He had a bad headache.

Earle made him something for his headache and the count was sitting still until one of the balloons floated down in his face.

He jumped out of his chair.

The boys laughed at the count.

Brenda saw him and laughed.

Bruce said, “You did not see the balloons?”

Thomas pointed and said, “Look.”

The count looked up and saw the ceiling were full of balloons.

Earle laughed.

They heard the buggy pulling to a stop.

Brenda was so excited. Her excitement made the count grin.

Earle wanted to see this deformed daughter of Eleanor.

The count did not know what to expect from Shirley.

Bruce, Percy and Thomas ran out the front door.

William was holding the beautiful front door open.

The boys grabbed Michael.

Eleanor stepped out the buggy.

She loved lovely to the count.

He just grinned at his Eleanor.

Earle watched the count’s reaction to Eleanor.

Brenda stared at this wonderful man who loved her daughter. She saw in his eyes pure love for Eleanor.

She stepped out the door and said, “Welcome countess.”

The count and Earle stepped out behind Brenda.

Michael glimpsed his grandma.

His partner in mischief.

He was denied seeing her for nearly two and a half years.

He stood and looked at Brenda.

Patrick and Eleanor watched Michael.

He pushed his brothers off of him and he walked to Brenda.

Brenda’s eyes were running with tears of pure joy down her cheeks.

Michael looked her in the face.

The count and Earle were watching Michael and Brenda.

Earle thought, “That’s the lamb chops boy. He is a good looking boy.”

Michael rushed for his grandma.

Brenda fell onto her knees on the porch.

The count reached for Brenda to keep her from falling.

Shirley watched her grandma and Michael.

Shirley and Michael discussed on the train that he would go first and she would shock her grandma and grandpa with her walking.

They embraced for a while.

Bruce looked at the buggy.

He ran to the buggy and saw Shirley wiping tears from her eyes.

He said, “You ready?”
Shirley shook her head for yes.

Bruce said, “Grandpa Shirley says she is ready.”

The count looked at Eleanor with love.

Patrick saw him.

He cut his eyes at Eleanor, who did look lovely, but the count’s look was of pure love.

Patrick thought, “Hello son.”

He turned to the buggy and peeped at his other princess.

Patrick picked Shirley up and had her blanket wrapped around her.

Eleanor was breathing hard.

She did not know what Joseph would think about her Shirley.

Patrick picked Shirley up and brought her out of the buggy.

Shirley said, “Grandpa I want to walk to grandma.”

Patrick turned and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor smiled.

Patrick stood Shirley on the ground.

Shirley was balancing herself.

Bruce said, “Look at Shirley Grandma.”

Earle looked around the count to see this deformed child.

He saw a small figure in a nightgown.

Her head was down.

The count shifted his eyes from a nervous Eleanor to the person he had not seen before.

He looked pass Patrick and saw a petite figure with a nightgown on and beautiful thick hair like Eleanor.

He said, “Miss Shirley.”

Shirley slowly lifted her head up as Brenda lifted her eyes to look at the direction of the buggy. The ray of sunshine directed Brenda’s eyes to this frail figure standing next to the buggy.

Eleanor’s heart was racing.

She wanted to see the count’s face.

She also wanted to see Brenda’s and Patrick’s faces.

Brenda and Shirley’s eyes met at the same time.

Brenda held her heart.

Shirley began to walk to Brenda.

Patrick tears begin to fall.

Brenda sat on her knees and stared at this beautiful young lady that was taking baby steps to her.

She had no feelings.

The count stared at Brenda.

Eleanor was walking by a still Patrick.

She looked up at caught the count’s first look at Shirley.

He smiled at Shirley.

Eleanor felt peace in her heart, because saw a genuine smile from the count.

Bruce ran to Shirley and stood beside her.

Thomas walked to Shirley and stood on the other side of her.

They held their hands out to catch her if she fell.

She walked to the Brenda and looked up at her beloved grandma.

William had not seen Michael nor Shirley in nearly three years.

He cried and stepped back into the house.

Earle and the count watched William.

The count thought, “I ‘ll take him with us.”

Shirley walked all the way to Brenda.

Brenda reached for Shirley.

Shirley reached for Brenda and they sat in quietness.

Brenda would go into Shirley’s nursery and get her out of her bed, while Lorraine watched.

Brenda would hold Shirley all night until the morning.

Brenda would know what was hurting Shirley and what to do to calm her down.

They sat in quiet peace for a long time.

Eleanor leaned her head on her father and held Patrick by his waist.

The count stooped down and looked at Shirley and smiled.

Shirley looked up at the count.

Shirley said, “You’re are good looking.”

The count blushed.

Shirley looked back at Eleanor and said, “Thank you momma.”

William and Earle laughed.

Percy said, “He’s momma’s boyfriend.”

Bruce looked at Eleanor who was laughing with his grandfather.

Thomas whispered something to Michael.

The count said, “What are you two whispering?”

Shirley looked and said, “Nothing.”

The count looked at Shirley and said, “My you have the bluest eyes I have ever seen.”

Shirley grinned.

The count said, “Miss Shirley may I have the honor of carrying you into your beautiful house?”

Shirley said, “Yes.”

She looked back at Brenda.

William was holding the doorknob, he said, “Welcome home Miss Shirley.”

Shirley said, “Thank you.”

Earle and Percy helped Brenda up.

The count stood in the foyer holding Shirley.

Bruce said, “Shirley look up.”

The count looked at Bruce.

Shirley looked up and grinned.

Everyone walked into the house.

The family dining room was set.

Shirley saw the grand dining room being set.

She looked at the count and said, “I want to see the dining room.”

The count said, “Sure.”

He walked back to the dining room and he walked her around the grand room.

She sniffed and looked at the table.

Brenda, Eleanor and Patrick stood in the doorway.

Alice, Mable, Mellissa and Tracey were pulling together the floral arrangements.

Mable was working and making the floral arrangements of mini pumpkins and feathers and bird nests and leaves.

Brenda saw the arrangements and said, “Oh God.”

Shirley turned and looked at Brenda who was leaning over the table.

Shirley said, “I want to see.”

The count carried Shirley to Mable.

Shirley looked at Mable.

The count looked at Shirley to see what Shirley was looking at.

Eleanor and Brenda were fascinated at the beautiful arrangements Mable were making.

Shirley was watching Mable working and making the arrangements.

When Mable finished stitching the last leaf onto the felt of the arrangement.

Mable looked up and the count and Shirley scared her and she jumped back.

The count jumped and he did not know what to say but, “Oh.”

Eleanor rushed over to them.

Shirley said, “Hey.”

Mable did not saw anything.

Alice was standing back with the last arrangement in her hands.

She started at Shirley. Shirley did not look as bad as the monster some of the servants said she was.

Alice saw a frail child with one side of her head was bashed in and her eyes kind of crooked.

Shirley said, “Your arrangements are beautiful and each one different from the other. That is a sign of a genius.”

Eleanor smiled at her child trying to put another out of place person at ease.

The count said, “Shirley that is so true. I have a good friend who people thought …”

Eleanor cleared her throat.

The count looked back at Eleanor.

Eleanor walked to a scared Mable and put her arm around Mable’s shoulder and said, “Mable this is my daughter Shirley. Shirley this is a new servant Mable.”

Shirley said, “Mable is a pretty name.”

Mable held her head down.

Shirley said, “Why you look down?”

The count looked at Shirley, then Mable then Alice and then Eleanor.

All he could think was, “CRAP!!! My head is still reeling from this hangover.”

Patrick and Brenda were listening to Shirley but Brenda were in love with the floral arrangements.

She walked over to Shirley and touch her on her back.

Patrick walked over.

Shirley said, “Mable I was bound up in my body. I hurt so bad every day. I could not walk. The doctors broke my legs twice to make me walk. I nearly died, but grandma prayed for me to God. My stomach was twisted and I could not eat. The doctors said, I could never have children. One day when I wished to die the man of light came in my hospital room…”

Brenda looked at Shirley.

The count slowly looked at this child.

Patrick thought he heard Shirley say a man of light.

Eleanor stared at Shirley.

Alice stared at Shirley.

Tracey was reaching for the arrangement from Alice and stopped. Turned and looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “I woke up a few days later and the doctors were with me. I still had bad pain. But I did not want to die anymore. Each day I think about that man of light. Each time I think about him, especially before my therapy I had go through with it.”

Michael walked in and said, “I help the doctors.”

Shirley said, “I love the doctors and nurses who helped me. The man of light sent me to them for help. And he used me and Michael to help them. Mable just like the man of light came to me to set me free from the chains and terrible pain I was in. He has sent the army to free you from the terrible pain you have been in. The pain does not go away at once, as you think on the man of light each day He heals you and help you bare the pain so you can get better. Why I was born twisted up I do not know, but I love the man of Light who helps me feel better each day. Mable He will help you feel better every day and each day you will not remember the pain the day before because that pain is no longer a part of you because He removed it. The chains, stocks, whips, lynching and beatings of the yesterday can no longer hurt you today because the man of Light have removed them.”

Eleanor felt Mable shaking.

Patrick looked at Shirley.

Michael said, “She gets like that sometimes, when she is talking about the man of light.”

Tracey looked at a shaking Mable.

Alice was standing trying to unravel what Shirley said.

Earle and William said, “Whoa.”

Everyone stood for a minute.

Brenda reached and said, “Come on Shirley.”

Shirley reached to Brenda.

The count kissed Shirley on the head.

Brenda and Patrick walked out with Shirley.

Michael said, “Now let’s get to business momma.”

The count looked at Michael in amazement.

Bruce, Percy and Thomas ran in the dining room to hear what Michael was talking about.

The count looked at the boys.

The boys ran pass William and Earle.

William sighed and walked out the dining room and went into the kitchen for them to bring out lunch.

Earle looked at William and then cut his eyes at the four boys.

Eleanor said, “Thank you Mable.”

Mable turned and went back into the kitchen.

She limped.

The count watched this young former slave that had damage from that life. Not chosen by her.

Eleanor said, “Where are you going to put that one?”

Alice said, “I was thinking on the buffet.”

Eleanor said, “ They are so beautiful, put it the foyer at the console closet to the door.”

Alice said, “Yes ma am.”

Eleanor looked at what was left only small pieces of the leftovers.

Eleanor took the wrap.

She looked at Mellissa and Tracey who were speechless and said, ”Tell Mable I took the rest of these.”

Eleanor said, “Let us go into the parlor.”

Michael looked at the count and said, “When she does not use contractions she is ready to fight.”

The count laughed at Michael.

Eleanor looked at the other three boys and said, “Come on.”

The count looked and followed them to the parlor.

Earle went to the kitchen and said, “Sir can I have something to eat the?”

William was picking up the tray to take to the family dining room.

He looked at Thomas, the chief cook.

Thomas said, “I am busy preparing Thanksgiving dinner.”

Dan walked over to Earle and said, “You have been too busy with Margaret to notice.”

Earle was so shocked his mouth dropped open.

Nadine was sitting on a stool eating an omelet and strawberries.

William walked out the kitchen.

Dan pointed, “You can have whatever you want.”

Dan raised his finger up and said, “But you have to cook it.”

Earle said, “But I don’t know how to cook.”

Nadine said, “Margaret does.”

Everyone started laughing at Earle.

William heard them and kept on walking.

Earle ran out the kitchen to his room. He had to unlock his door. Took his key out his pocket and unlocked the door and locked it back.

He sat on his bed and cried for a minute.

He thought he was discreet.

He tried to think on things that made him happy that day.

He thought about Shirley.

Thomas said, “Nadine you either fix Earle some food or go and tell Margaret to.”

Everyone started laughing.

Peter said,”I was wondering who it was in there with him.”

Dan said, “But did you see how embarrassed he was.”

Thomas tasted his spaghetti sauce and shook his head for good.

He said, “And that grown man cried.”

Gary was walking in the house and slowly walked by the kitchen and knew they were either talking about him or Earle.

Everyone in the kitchen watched Gary.

Nadine said, “That one better watch out Sue and Rebecca. They are looking for him.”

Gary did not like what he was hearing.

He turned and walked back in the kitchen.

Everyone watched him.

He walked and looked at Thomas and tried to peep in the pot.

Thomas looked at Gary.

Gary looked at Thomas.

He walked to Nadine and she stared at him.

Gary said, “I am hungry. I see you all eat and don’t offer food to me and Earle. We don’t cook. The cooks at home cook enough food for everyone. But I guess that is the same as everyone carry their own weight including those damn horses.”

Dan hollered until he saw William standing in the conclave.

William walked in and said, “Gary what is the problem?”

Gary said, “I don’t want to disrupt anything we have been here nearly a week and your works have not once offered me and Earle a morsel to eat nor have they told us to get our own food or cook or own food. And they make fun of us. You treat Denise and Mable like shit. You don’t give them hot water to bath.”

The count and Eleanor heard Gary because he was yelling.

They walked through the billiards room to sneak by the servant’s quarters so they could hear.

The count saw that Thomas and Michael were the two that were always up to something.

The boys tipped behind Eleanor and the count.

Earle was really hungry.

He walked out his room without his boots.

He heard some loud talking but did not pay anything any attention.

Earle walked into the kitchen.

He saw the fruit and got several pieces of fruit and was about leave when he saw Gary.

He stopped and looked at Gary.

Gary said, “I am sick of eating that damn fruit. You don’t light their rooms. Today when the two brought the wagons full of meat. No one tried to help them. You know they don’t know somethings. That big burly Wallace tried to beat Mable and no one tried to help her. You teaching them how to pull their own weight in this great America.”

Michael walked into the kitchen because he wanted to see the other slave.

Michael walked over to the colored women and said, “What are your names?”

Denise said, “Denise…”

And she pointed at Mable and said, “Mable.”

Michael said, “Did Wallace hit you?”

Mable stared at Michael.

Denise said, “No. Because I grabbed her and we ran.”

Michael said, “Do they. These people feed you?”

Mable said, “No.”

Michael stood as if he was thinking.

He looked at William and said, “William do you solve these problems or do I call Eleanor?”

Thomas walked in the kitchen and over to Michael and said, “Call Eleanor.”

William looked at Thomas.

Michael turned and ran out the kitchen.

Thomas looked around at the servants and back at Denise and Mable.

Eleanor and the count walked in the kitchen with Percy and Bruce.

Tracey, Mellissa and Alice were walking into the kitchen.

They looked at Nadine.

Nadine rolled her eyes.

Michael pulled Eleanor’s hand.

Eleanor bent her head down and Michael was whispering in her ear.

Eleanor listened.

She stood up and said, “Mable thank you for the beautiful arrangements. Tracey, Mellissa and Alice thank you for such a lovely table setting. William have Robert, Evan, Louis, Wallace, Jerry and Ben see Mr. Stith this evening before they leave. Have Rebecca and Sue see me before they start work. William we have food and everyone should eat while they are at work. William Jose will be back tomorrow. Develop a rotating schedule where a team each will cook enough food for the workers here daily. They can decide if they want to do breakfast lunch or dinner. Tomorrow we will have a short staff. Take a vote and cook Thanksgiving Dinner for those who are working tomorrow. Thank you.”

The count looked at Earle and Gary.

Eleanor walked over to Thomas and he lifted the top off the pot and she said, “Rosemary?”

Thomas turned his head and said, “Yes.”

Thomas was worst than Jose about his ingredients for his recipes.

Eleanor looked at him and said, “Come boys.”

Thomas looked around at the servants and ran out behind Eleanor.

Nadine said, “All of this because you small britches don’t know how to cook.”

Gary turned and looked at Nadine.

Nadine stood and put her plate to be washed.

Ruth said, “Well we know what that means.”

Gary said, “The great America. If you would do your job, the stinch of hate you are known for through out the world begin to fade. Slavery just ended and you hate the slaves who did not put themselves in slavery but you.”

Ruth said, “That’s not a bad idea. A pot of boiled eggs, bread, cream of wheat, grits or oatmeal and pork and coffee, tea and juice.”

Dan said, “I heard that Jose will be back tomorrow.”

William said, “I heard.”

Thomas said, “What am I to do?”

William said, “Gary is right. All they had to do was light the torches at the supply shed and take Denise and Mable hot water. I only claim responsibility for not telling you Denise and Mable to cook what you want or eat the untouched leftovers from the family meals. Jose may not want to work here anymore. Robert might be coming back to. Which means I go back to being number two. Nobody knows nothing until all of this is sorted out.”

William stood and shook his head.

Wyonna walked in and saw everyone in a disarrayed mood.

She looked at William.

She looked at Alice.

The back door opened and it was Wallace.

William looked and said, “Wallace, tell Jerry and Ben Mr. Stith wants to see you.”

Wallace said, “It better be about a raise.”

Thomas turned back to his pot.

Dan said, “That’s the reason for all of this mess.”

Eleanor walked back in the parlor with her family.

Earle was standing in the corner eating his fruit.

Nadine walked in the kitchen at the same time Margaret.

Everyone turned and looked at Margaret.

Margaret did not see Earle sitting in corner.

Margaret looked at everybody.

No one said anything.

Wyonna did not know what was going on.

She knew she wanted to work Thanksgiving to be there for the explosion of Eleanor over Bruce’s younger woman.

Margaret said, “Who is going to tell me about what is going on?”

No one said anything.

Earle said, “I will tell you what happened.”

Margaret turned and saw Earle and smiled.

Wyonna looked surprised.

Earle said, “I came in here and asked for something to eat and they told me no and for you to cook me some food.”

Margaret said, “Who said something like that?”

Earle pointed and said, “That woman right there.”

Margaret turned and looked at Nadine.

Dan went and sat on a stool in the corner.

Nadine said, “He ran out of here crying instead of him looking in the icebox and making him a sandwich to eat.”

Nadine said, “Then smart ass Gary came in and called all of us haters of the colored people. So apparently we will have the duty of cooking food for the staff that is working.”

Margaret thought for a minute and said, “We are required to provide one daily meal. Me and Steve eat at home, so I never thought about, especially after Lorraine, Jose and Robert left.”

William said, “That’s right. Robert and I would argue nearly everyday about feeding the staff. And that Lorraine wanted to eat in mid-morning and we fuss about that.”

Wyonna said, “Yall got on my nerves with all of that fussing all the time. Some staffers wanted to eat and some did not.”

Betty said, “It eventually got to be after Robert left, you can eat if you want to. I hope he is not coming back.”

Margaret looked at Earle and said, “You are eating something now.”

Earle lifted up an apple.

Margaret said, “Where is Gary?”

Earle said, “In his room.”

Margaret got two bowls and put them by Thomas.

Thomas did not say anything but put noodles in both of the bowls and topped them with the tomato sauce and cheese.

Margaret put the bowls on a tray.

Thomas laid a garlic bread on top.

Earle said, “I don’t want that food. I told them I was hungry…”

He pointed at Nadine and said, “… that one over there said Margaret knows how to cook.”

Steve was standing in the door.

Wyonna looked back at him.

Steve and Nadine had been embroiled in arguments for the past couple of years.

No one knew why.

Margaret said, “I don’t understand what the problem is about food.”

She looked at Earle and said, “Earle do you mind going and get Gary for him to eat something. I don’t think he has eaten in days.”

Wyonna looked shocked and looked at William.

William shook his head.

Eleanor said, “Daddy we heard Gary arguing with our staff.”

Patrick and Brenda looked up from talking to Shirley.

Eleanor said,”The servants aren’t eating. They would cook them food and nobody else. I told them Jose will be back tomorrow and work out a schedule of who cooks for the staff.”

Michael said, “They were doing wrong about the slaves. Right momma?”

Brenda’s angry was flowing into her face.

Eleanor looked at Michael and said, “Michael you spoke out of turn and to get to your business of one lamb chop it remains the same.”

Michael turned and looked at his brothers then back at Eleanor like he could not believe what he heard.

Patrick nearly fell out of his chair.

They were eating in the parlor.

Eleanor said, “Daddy I told William to have Wallace, Jerry and Ben to see you. They are the ones not lighting Denise and Mable’s room. And I told him to Robert, Evan and Louis to see you because they are not giving Denise and Mable hot water. They have to come into the house and go and wash. Rebecca and Sue were gambling and apparently said something about you momma that got to the workers.”

Patrick said, “Fine I will fire them.”

Nichael said, “Can I come grandpa me and Shirley had to fire some people. I fired a woman who did not have a name but was on the payroll without a name. And Shirley fired Bruce’s girlfriend.”

The count looked at Michael and Eleanor then Shirley.

Shirley looked at Eleanor and said, “Grandpa and grandma took care of the problem.”

Michael said, “I check the train records they all will be here tomorrow.”

He was seated at Eleanor’s feet and turned slightly to her and said, “That’s the business I wanted to talk about and my allowance of lamb chops.”

Eleanor looked at Brenda and said, “I thought the servants were coming back and maybe Bruce.”

Patrick said, “Well he is bringing his girlfriend, and her parents. Remember me and your mother went to Gen and Ben yesterday.”

Eleanor shook her head and said, “I thought Bruce was trying to invite those people to dinner.”

Patrick said, “No Eleanor they want to stay in your house.”

Brenda said, “The only one I have not decided on is Bruce.”

Percy said, “I saw Max’s house outside.”

The count said, “Max?”

Patrick said, “Their dead dog.”

The count was surprised and smirked.

Patrick said, “I’ll go and write these workers they final checks and check the telegrams.”

Shirley leaned back and said, “Grandpa can you send a telegram to Dr. Woodson and tell him me and Michael are safe.”

Patrick said, “A great idea. I will do that first.”

Michael said, “I have the key to the office.”

Shirley said, “The nurses be breaking in all the time to sleep on the sofa.”

Shirley said, “I like to take a nap to dinner.”

Brenda put Shirley out her lap and they walked upstairs.

Bruce was the watch out.

The count giggled.

Eleanor said, “Damn.”

The count looked around and said, “What?”

Eleanor said, “I have to change what I plan on wearing.”

The count said, “Not fighting clothes?”

Percy looked at the count.

He said, “Momma did you see Shirley as tall as me?”

Eleanor said, “I did not notice Percy. That’s why I got you and Bruce to watch out.”

Bruce continued to watch Brenda and Shirley walk up the stairs.

Brenda laid on the bed and went to sleep with Shirley.

Earle knocked on Gary’s door and woke him.

Earle said, “Gary it’s me Earle. Come and eat. I watched them.”

William heard Earle and shook his head and said, “Listen to this mess.”

Wyonna saw William was angry.

She knew her husband and turned and went upstairs.

Alice said, “If Wallace, Jerry and Ben are fired who is going out there to light all of those torches?”

Peter and Dan said, “I’ll go.”

Peter said, “You know they get in the wagon and ride up and down and light them and ride in the back and light them. They finish in two hours and you know how much they are paid.”

Dan said, “Shush.”

No one said anything.

Margaret, Earle and Gary were seating in the workers dining area eating.

Margaret went and washed and put their duck in the oven.

She and Steve did not want a turkey, because it is only two of them.

Thomas helped Margaret to season the duck.

Thomas said, “They have fifty people coming for dinner and they have only two turkeys.”

Ben and Jerry stumped out the house and threw the back door opened.

Thomas said, “I have enough turkeys.”

William was sweating bullets.

Thomas said, “Nadine I need you to peel all those potatoes. Ruth and Betty finished with those pole peas.”

Ruth said, “That greedy mayor will be here and Thomas he loves your pole beans.”

Thomas said, “I know. Peter is the bread ready the dressing? And Dan I see the sweet potatoes and pumpkins, You are doing mincemeat pies?”

Dan said, “That greedy first lady loves my mincemeat pies.”

Wallace stopped in the kitchen and said, “I want my meat!”

William said, “What do you want Turkey, capon or duck?”

Wallace did not know what a capon was and said, “A capon.”

Thomas went into the ice box and gave him a capon.

He saw his last pay in his hand.

Danielle, Natalie, Harriet and Chasity started slicing and chopping all the vegetables for the dressing.

Peter started making his dough for the different rolls and breads for the dinner.

William said, “Alright I need three men to light the torches tonight and tomorrow. Maybe we can hire some more men by then.”

Peter said, “Two. Me and Dan.”

The backdoor opened and Robert, Evan and Louis walked in.

Margaret went to the laundry room.

Thomas said, “I need another turkey for the broth and one for the gravy.”

Robert and Evan stomped out the house with their pay.

Louis walked stunned into the kitchen.

Thomas and William looked at him.

Thomas had counted Louis turkey as extra.

He said, “I apologize Denise and Mable, they told me yall said, you would bathe in the house. So I did not bring you hot water. It’s no problem because I give the hot water in the barn and stables. I don’t understand this confusion.”

Thomas said. “Are you fired or not?”

Everyone looked at Thomas.

Thomas was mad and said, “William all of this is your fault.”

Louis said, “Mr. Stith said he would give me another chance. Since I did not know what Robert and Evan were doing. Mr. Stith said now I have to find two people to help me get all of this water.”

Peter and Dan stood up and said, “Me.”

William said, “You know how hard going to that water tower and getting water.”

Dan said, “I’m going home to momma and daddy for Christmas and New Years and I want to pay my house note for December and January.”

Thomas said, “I finally found me a two bedroom house and have nothing to go in it. But least after all of these years I got a place to call my own.”

Wyonna said, “Eleanor is going through all of that stuff in the storage area and giving some away. I am waiting.”

Thomas said, “Like you and William did for the washers?”

William looked up to see if the servants were angry.

Everyone laughed.

Dan looked at Thomas.

William said, “Dan and Peter you light the lights tonight and tomorrow.”

Gary yelled and said, “I thought that was a three man job.”

Dan walked to the door and said, “You can help with the water.”

Earle said, “Gary what are you doing?”

Gary leaned forward and said, “You know how much they get paid.”

Louis said, “Well I need to go and get the water for tomorrow and Friday.”

William was looking over the schedule and said, “Alice you can work a half of day?”

Alice looked and said, “What time?”

William looked at her and said, “Noon to five pm.”

Sue and Rebecca were walking in the back door.

William looked at them and said, “Rebecca and Sue, Mr. Stith wants to see you.”

Everyone looked.

Alice said, “What time?”

William stepped into the hallway and saw Sue and Rebecca stomping through the hall.

William said, “Noon to eight pm.”

Alice smiled.

Ruth said, “Alice you are not slick.”

Wyonna looked and said, “Lorraine will be back tomorrow.”

Alice walked through the kitchen and said, “I do not mind washing dishes.”

Sue stomped in the kitchen and looked at William and said, “I want my turkey.”

Thomas said, “All the turkeys are taken, we have capons and ducks.”

Sue said, “Give me a damn duck.”

Rebecca was shocked she walked in the kitchen and looked around at the servants and stood.

William said, “Rebecca I see your pay slip. Have you been fired?”

Rebecca said, “You know I have.”

Gary moved away from the door and stood behind the door.

Earle looked at Gary.

Sue and Rebecca walked out the kitchen to the back door and got on their horses and rode away.

Thomas said, “I got five turkeys William, a duck and a capon. Is there anyone else to be fired today?”

Elizabeth, Monica, Tracey and Mellissa started working on other vegetables.

Wyonna walked out the kitchen and looked at William.

William was thinking, “They can’t get seconds from five turkeys.”

The fifteen men from the outfields came in to get their turkeys.

Thomas said, “Fellows the poultry shop ran out turkeys. So everyone can’t have a turkey.”

One man said, “It’s ten of us. I really don’t want a turkey.”

Thomas said, “What about a capon and a duck.”

The man said, “Threw in some vegetables I will be satisfied.”

Thomas said, “Nadine some potatoes and Ruth some pole beans.”

Nadine and Ruth reached the worker some bags.

The man grinned and said, “I’ll see you good folks Friday.”

Three of the men said they did not have family and they slept out at the outfield and they could not cook no turkey.

William looked at Thomas.

Thomas said, “Will I’ll cook a turkey dinner and you’ll can come here and have dinner with the rest of us. About three pm.”

William nodded at the three men as they left.

One of the men said, “William you need to have Mr. Stith check his property lines. Some men have been coming by and walking the base line.”

William said, “Did the men see you?”

The other man said , “No. They look rough.”

William said, “There are twenty five of you posted at the end of the property. How many of those men?”

The other man said up to ten.”

William said, “How often has this been going on?”

One of the men said, “This week.”

William said, “The back of this property touches the back of the Gibson’s estate. They are on the Gibson’s property.”

William closed his schedule book.

He said, “Is there anything else. Are you armed?”

The men said, “Yes.”

William said, “I am going to Mr. Stith now. Because that is dangerous.”

William walked to Mr. Stith and saw Patrick coming out of his office.

He received a telegram back from Dr. Woodson they were happy for Shirley and Michael’s safety. Have a happy Thanksgiving.

He would tell Shirley at dinner.

He saw Thomas and Michael running upstairs whispering.

Patrick grinned.

He looked in the worried face of William.

William told Patrick what the men that worked in the fields said.

Patrick said, “There is no easement on that property. No body has the right to be back there. How did they get back there? Who is working out there tomorrow?”

Patrick was thinking.

William said, “There are twenty five men. They sleep in tents and can’t be seen by these intruders. I know Jesse and his four sons are off tomorrow.”

Patrick said, “What about Tom and his two boys?”

William thought and said, “They are off but have no place to go.”

William heard the rowdiness of Jessie and his boys.

Gary and Earle walked in the kitchen because those guys were rowdy.

Patrick walked in the kitchen and saw Jessie and his boys.

Patrick beckoned for Jessie and the two walked outside to talk.

Jessie yelled, “Get three turkeys and two capons.”

Thomas looked at William.

He gave them the turkey’s and capons.

Thomas looked and said, “I need some help. We have thirty workers that need to be fed.”

William said, “Wyonna and I am off.”

Wyonna walked around the corner and got extra napkins.

She knew what Thomas and William were talking about.

William said, “Wyonna can we cancel our plans and work tomorrow and be off Friday?”

That was her plan.

She looked at William and said, “Fine, what time. We are supposing to be taking the turkey and dressing.”

William said, “Noon to eight.”

Wyonna stood and looked at William and was thinking, “Would the fight be over by eight.”

She looked at Thomas who was staring at her and said, “Fine.”

She looked down the hall and said, “Dan why are you coming out the storage area. I am not playing with you.”

Dan walked in the kitchen and did not look at Wyonna.

William and Thomas looked at Dan.

Thomas thought, “I better claim some of that stuff.”

Max came and claimed a turkey.

Phyllis said, she has a room.

She was thinking about reading and sewing all day.

She stood and thought about Thanksgiving.

Thomas said, “Phyllis if you want you can come here tomorrow and eat with those who are working.”

Phyllis said, “I’ll think about it.”

Thomas said, “Phyllis what you have preferred a turkey, capon or duck?”

Phyllis said, “A capon.”

Thomas said, “Ok.”

Gary went into his room and got his boots.

He was walking down the hall and putting on his boots.

Nathan and Stanley were walking to the house.

Patrick and Jessie were on the back porch talking low.

Jessie’s four sons were in the wagon with bags of potatoes, peas, rutabagas and other winter vegetables.

December until March they would be gone until planting season.

Stanley wondered what Patrick and Jessie were talking about.

Nathan said, “I am by myself and I don’t need that type of meat.

Gary looked at Thomas. And walked out the door with Peter.

They waited until Dan walked out and they drove the wagon to get the water.

They loaded the water wagons and took it back to the house and unloaded it.

Louis began to heat most of the water.

Margaret said, “Steve and I rent rooms and will eat our duck meal tomorrow.”

She was about to invite Earle and Gary over and Stanley walked in.

Margaret washed her clothes and linens and were leaving and would be back Friday.

She said, “Steve get our meal.”

He went and got their meal and took it home.

Margaret and Stanley hugged and kissed.

Earle went to his room.

Mable went and brought the bowls back in the kitchen and washed them.

Denise rinsed and dried.

Patrick was worried.

He was concerned about Tom and his two young sons. He did not tell Brenda because she would not hired Tom because his sons should have been in school.

Patrick hired the seventeen field workers from the army.

They were trained and they knew how to shoot.

Jessie slapped Patrick on the back and ran and got in the wagon with his rowdy sons.

They would come back on Monday and help Patrick for two weeks and go home until the spring.

Patrick was worried.

He walked into the parlor and tried to smile.

Eleanor and the count knew something was wrong.

Patrick said, “Eleanor where is your mother?”

Eleanor said, “I think in the bed with Shirley.”

She said, “I’ll go and see.”

Patrick said, “Go and get her and meet me in my office.”

Eleanor ran upstairs.

Patrick walked to his office.

The boys looked around at each other.

The count wanted to go to the meeting but he was not family.

He decided to play the piano.

He said, Percy you want to practice with me for a while or play with your brothers.”

Percy looked as if he was thinking.

Eleanor and Brenda were walking down the staircase and heard the count.

Eleanor and Brenda pass the parlor and walked down the hall and looked into the parlor to see Percy’s reaction.

Percy had a blank look on his face.

Eleanor shook her head.

Brenda put her hand on Eleanor’s neck.

Patrick was sitting in his chair.

Eleanor and Brenda entered.

Patrick stood up and closed the door.

He looked at Brenda and Eleanor and said, “Sit.”

Patrick was about sit when they heard knocking on the front door.

Patrick and Brenda and Eleanor listened.

Patrick said, “Eleanor you bought your first business today. It was a simple contract and I trusted your judgement about that lawyer. Since he is your lawyer how far has he gotten with your divorce with Bruce?”

Eleanor was ashamed and looked at Brenda and said, “I meet with him on Monday and he was sending Bruce a letter of agreement by train and messenger, but Bruce is on the way here.”

Brenda looked at Eleanor and turned back to Patrick.

William walked to the door and opened it.

A messenger handed him a letter for Eleanor.

William looked around and the count pointed down the hall.

William walked down the hall and knocked on the office door.

Patrick said, “Enter.”

William opened the door and said, “A letter for Mrs. Simons.”

Patrick said, “There she is.”

Eleanor was hesitant to take the letter.

Brenda whispered, “You are strong.”

Eleanor took the letter from William and said, “Thank you.”

William walked out the office and to the kitchen.

Thomas wiped his forehead.

He looked at William and said, “Your butt was saved. We have ten turkeys and five ducks and seven capons.”

William said, “And the staff?”

Thomas said, “five turkeys, six ducks.”

William said, “Thank God.”

Dan and Peter were running to get the water in the basins and get ready to light the torches.

William saw them outside and said, “I hope this work out.”

Thomas said, “William do you choose the wine for dinner?”

William slowly turned and looked at Thomas.

Thomas ad everyone in the kitchen turned around and continued to work.

Gary, Dan and Peter walked in the house from getting the water.

William walked to the safe and got the cash envelope and wrote down he paid them and handed them twenty five dollars.

Gary looked at the money.

Peter peeped around Dan at Gary’s face.

Gary walked to his room and sat on the bed.

Dan and Peter were happy.

Dan was on his way to claim some more things in the storage area.

He looked at Dan’s door and stopped and knocked on the door.

Gary said,”Come in.”

Dan opened the door and looked in and said, “Are you alright with the pay?”

Gary said, “Yeah. It was more than what I thought.”

Dan walked out and went to the storage and ran into Wyonna and Alice in the storage area.

He said, “I have marked my stuff and you two better not try to claim none of my stuff.”

He closed the door and was angry.

Alice was looking at a chair.

She stood up and said, “Make sure you don’t touch anything that he has marked. Because he will tell Eleanor.”

The kitchen staff was happy and working together for the family dinner and for the servants’ dinner.

Nadine and Ruth were happy that Lorraine may be coming back.

William and Wyonna were walking through the house and checking everything.

Patrick said, “Eleanor open the letter.”

Eleanor looked at the envelope and had a question mark on her face.

She smiled and said, “It’s my copy of the contract from the sale of the business today.”

Patrick said, “See, good or bad Eleanor you have to face business decisions the same way you deal with the boys or the servants. The principal is the same. Shirley understands that.”

Brenda started grinning and clapped her hands.

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Brenda looked at Eleanor and cleared her throat and stopped clapping and looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Some problems were solved today. New problems came up and you dealt with them. The ‘Freedmen’ s escape and you allowed them to use the train. Security was hired. I saw some old friends Brenda.”

Brenda said, “Who?”

Patrick said, “Roger and Mag.”

Brenda said, “My God Patrick do they have children?”

Patrick said, “One son Josiah, who is back from the civil war and cannot find a job. I hired him to ride the train with the ‘Freedmen.’”

Patrick said, “They are in a bad way Brenda.”

Patrick said, “I saw how Mag was looking at the turkeys Eleanor bought for the ‘Freedmen’. We talked she said she had been very ill and sold nearly everything to pay the doctors. I told Roger I will come into town Friday or Monday to talk to him. Eleanor any thoughts about helping the railroad workers with the doctors and when they fall on hard times?”

Eleanor sat and thought.

Brenda interjected and said, “Shirley and Michael came up with a plan at the hospital.”

Patrick said, “I am so proud of them.”

Patrick and Brenda were laughing.

Eleanor looked at her parents and jumped up to leave.

Patrick swung his chair in front of the door and pointed and said, “You better sit down and learn. I can’t trust you with all the businesses because when you feel something is not simple and in a given pattern you cannot cope. You want to run away. No more running away Eleanor. As me and your mother are alive, we will guide you into becoming a stronger person so you can make the best decision for as many people as possible.”

Brenda very firmly said, “Sit down!”

She pointed to the chair.

Eleanor was shocked.

She sat and looked at her mother.

Brenda was very fierce.

Brenda said, “You talking about you want to buy this house. This house is our legacy. I don’t trust you with it. The least problem you cry and stomp instead of learning to substitute and get the best answer. Like those people had to be fired today at the holiday. Whether you wanted your sherry or not. You can’t drink your problems away. Me and your father are stepping back and we don’t want to die and leave you ruining our life’s work. You understand Eleanor?” Get some strength quickly.”

Eleanor said, “Are you or father planning on leaving me?”

Brenda did not say anything.

Eleanor turned and looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “That lawyer sent you the copy of your contract to show he is capable. He will get the contract for the motel. What are you going to do with the motel?”

Eleanor swallowed said, “IT is called the Stith House for Freedmen.”

Brenda teared up.

Eleanor said, “I plan to have ‘Freedmen’ run it. I will meet with Mr. Wilson on Friday at ten thirty to see what all most be done. Daddy said it may not be able to the spring.”

Brenda said, “What about the ‘Freedmen’ until then?”

Patrick said, “Brenda we can’t help all of them.”

Brenda was quiet and held her head slightly down for a second.

Patrick said, “Brenda, you worked so very hard for your people. You prayed and asked God to let you live to see them free. You see them free.”

Brenda said, “My God helped you to become wealthy to use your wealth to help free them. HE allowed me to live so we can grow together and see our hard work set my people free from chains of wrists and ankles and your people from guilt and remorse.”

Eleanor began to see she had remarkable parents. That’s why so many people hated her mother and family.

Patrick built this house as a testament to GOD that HE is a good GOD even though we don’t understand why bad things happen.

EIeanor though, “I’m glad daddy built this house and let his brothers have that older house. I will not lose any part of their legacy but add to it and teach my children to add to it.”

Patrick watched Brenda for several minutes.

He slowly shifted his eyes from Brenda back to Eleanor and said, “You are too jealous of Shirley, You just to be our baby until Shirley came along. You need to pray more Eleanor. That’s how me and your mother got through the bad and tough times in our lives. Sometimes you don’t see the lesson until you are out of the fire. You cannot live in this world without prayer. Prayer for you, prayer for your family and prayer for your business and workers. There were times me and your momma were fasting and prayer for our workers and their problems. To this day they don’t know. GOD gave us an answer and showed us what to do to help them. Eleanor you need to think about what to do to help your workers with doctor bills and don’t give them loans. If they are sick or their love one is sick. It will take them forever to pay back. The interest of the world is not what GOD wants us to do.”

Eleanor thought, “Damn that was exactly what I was thinking. Let them go to the bank and back them up. I don’t understand.”

Patrick said, “There were of times we did not have what we wanted. But GOD always pulled us through when we did not do things the world did. It’s like HE rewarded us for believing HE could solve our problems. I pay my workers more than anyone around here. You have seen how Lorraine and others used good judgement and built them lives. That is what GOD wants us to do to help build lives for the Kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of GOD.”

Brenda was sitting and looking at Patrick.

Patrick said, “The mob is coming on our property.”

Brenda said, “For what?”

Patrick said, “I guess to bully us off. Eleanor how would you resolve this problem?”

Eleanor was thinking shoot them all up.

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Is that why you and Mr. Jessie went outside to talk?”

Patrick said, “Yes.”

Eleanor said, “I can’t come up with a split second decision.”

Brenda started yelling, “Shirley!! Shirley!!”

Patrick was surprised at Brenda and said, “Eleanor life is split second decision. Do you know why your momma and I chose you over your brothers?”

Eleanor sat and could not think.

Patrick said, “Because you were faster than them to catch on.”

Brenda started to laugh.

Patrick and Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Eleanor said, “God.”

Eleanor said, “I would barbed wire my property. Whose property is on the sides and back of ours?”

Patrick said, “Mr. Gibson’s is behind us. He and his wife will be here for Thanksgiving dinner. To both sides is only a mile before the net property.”

Eleanor looked hard at Brenda and said, “I would buy that property and barb wire it up to our house. And I would build housing for the workers out in the field. For them to have shelter from the rain and cold.”

Brenda looked at Eleanor, she did not like the way Eleanor looked at her.

Eleanor looked back at Brenda.

Patrick watched Eleanor and Brenda.

Eleanor said, “Before you go running to my daughter. I would check and see if there is a fund for emergencies for the railroad workers and establish one for each city we are in. I would locate a good doctor in each of those cities that would treat the workers and their families. The same thing for the dentist. I also would like to have taken out the workers’ pay their own retirement, money for savings and education can money. If we finance their homes, let that money be paid back from their pay where it would not hurt them.”

Patrick sit and thought.

Brenda was still looking at Eleanor.

Patrick said, “I am not going to have a problem out of you two. We are just about out of the woods. The only problem is the run away children.”

Brenda and Patrick said at the same time. “I dare Bruce.”

Eleanor sat and was thinking about her dress and what Shirley would wear. She already selected the boys’ clothes. She had to give Michael some of Thomas clothes.

Brenda looked at Eleanor and nodded to Patrick.

Brenda said, “See.”

Eleanor heard her mother and looked at her.

Patrick said, “Eleanor take a pad and pen and write down everything Mr. Wilson. Telegram the fence company and have at least a hundred miles of barbed wire shipped to us and get workers to put up the fence. Find out who owns the lands on the sides of us. I don’t want the mob to buy or take possession of the land and bring their filth next to me.”

Brenda said, “That’s all Eleanor.”

Eleanor looked at her daddy.

She stood up and rolled her eyes at Brenda.

Eleanor closed the door.

Brenda said, “Did you see that heifer roll her eyes at me?”

Eleanor went to her study and work on her business plans.

She put her first business sell contract in her safe.

Eleanor worked in her study until dinner.

She put up a map of the America and put up where their trains went.

She stared at the map.

Eleanor washed her hands and went to dinner.

She was thinking.

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Did we fixed up a room for the guests to wash their hands tomorrow?”

Patrick said, “No.”

Brenda said, “The empty room next to the hallway.”

Eleanor said,”I’ll fix it up. What time will the guests arrive?”

The boys helped Shirley walked down the stairs.

Shirley was grinning and happy.

She sat next to the count and Michael sat next to Bruce.

They said grace and had a very good dinner.

Eleanor said, “William a light breakfast in the morning and hot bath water around twelve.”

Eleanor kissed her children and went to the empty room.

She looked around and had a long table brought in.

She took several rugs and put them on the floor and hung a picture on each wall.

She took vases and put on each side of both doors.

She went to the supply area and got plenty of soap and towels.

She had Earle and Gary and Dan to help her.

They placed several mirrors on the walls.

Eleanor saw several chairs that had a ‘d’ on them.

Dan saw her looking at the chairs and looked around and pointed to two similar benches and said, “Ma am would you use these two benches?”

Eleanor looked at Dan and said, “You are claiming those chairs?”

Dan smiled and cut his eyes at Eleanor.

Eleanor went to her study which is now her office and stacked her papers together for Friday.

She went upstairs and dressed for bed.

The count waited and Tipped pass the staircase and he beckoned Earle and Gary.

Earle saw the count tipping through the house and he looked back at Gary and nodded at the count.

The count walked in and closed the door.

Gary looked around and closed the other door.

The count looked at the washroom and laughed.

He said, “Gary and Earle are things getting better or the same or worst?”

Gary said, “I don’t know how to answer that.”

The count said, “Why?”

Gary said, “Some good and some bad. I can’t stand the hurt and pain in see in Denise and Mable’s eyes.”

Earle said, “You are making money off of them.”

The count looked at Gary and said, “Give it back.”

Gary looked at Earle and said, “I can’t.”

The count said, “Why not?”

Gary said, “They were fired by Mr. Stith.”

The count said, “What did you do with the money?”

Gary said, “I gambled and won a lot of money. And when I saw how they treated Mable and Denise I split my winnings with them.”

The count looked at Gary then Earle.

Earle said, “It’s bumpy.”

Gary said, “With Margaret.”

Earle was shocked and his moth dropped opened and he looked at Gary.

The count looked at the two and said, “If any problems you can’t handle tell me immediately.”

The count walked out and left the door and tipped to the liquor and got a large glass of brandy.

The count was enjoying his brandy and went to the library and found a book he recommended to Eleanor. He did not think she was listening to him.

She was walking with her head in the air like she had not one thought in her head.

He thought that was their second date and whether he wanted to continue dating her.

He fell in love.

He grinned.

Now he sees she has brains and thoughts in her head like Percy.

He sat down and looked around the nice library and read the book for several hours.

Patrick was wondering why the count was up so late.

Patrick put his bible on the table and went to sleep.

The count fell asleep but woke and went to his room.

He drank the rest of his brandy and fell across the bed and slept until ten am when Peter and Dan brought his hot bath water.

They were coming out of the count room when Patrick was standing and watching them.

They jumped and said, “Good morning and hurried down the hall to the kitchen.”

William drank a glass of Sherry and overslept until ten am.

He was to start work at noon.

He was going to the servants wash closet, when he saw Wyonna, taking the turkey and dressing to her mother for the family’s dinner.

William was kind of glad they did not have to be around Wyonna’s family. He has been married to her for thirty years. They had six children.

Four girls and two boys.

The girls were nurses and the boys were teachers.

One would be moving down south to teach at a college in the new year.

He and Wyonna had six grandchildren and their children wanted no more.

He and Wyonna would give the son moving to the south and his wife and one child a going away gift.

Peter, Dan and Gary delivered the hot water.

They saw William going to the wash closet.

Gary rose early and went and fed the horses and gave them water.

He helped to heat the water until it was scolding hot.

He and Louis looked at each other.

Therefore, they delivered the water early so it cool down before anyone used it.

Gary knocked on the re-modelled supply shed and he and Louis took Denise and Mable their water.

They supplied all the workers in the yard with hot water.

They heard some of them cussing because the water was still very hot.

Gary and Louis pushed the water wagon to the house and acted like they did not know the water was boiling hot.

Gary said, “You would think they had sense enough to touch the water first.”

Louis laughed.

They ran in the house and peeped out the door.