Eleanor and Patrick meet with the railroad engineers.

They decided they would go to the city after the holidays.

The engineers said they would be able to say if a railroad is possible and the building and what it would take to maintain it.

Eleanor received a letter from Ryan that he and his father’s hospitals would treat her workers.

Dr. Woodson sent a letter that the bone hospital would treat her workers.

Dr. Woodson asked would Lorraine be returning with Shirley because Dr. Ralph was miserable.

Eleanor told Lorraine what Dr. Woodson asked.

Lorraine walked away and found Brenda.

Brenda was sitting in her study making the holiday plans.

Lorraine knocked on Brenda’s door.

Brenda looked at Lorraine and said, “Come in.”

Eleanor ran down the hall because she wanted to know what Lorraine wanted with Brenda since Brenda was not her employer but her.

Lorraine walked in the study and was about to close the door until Eleanor caught the doorknob as Lorraine was closing it.

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Lorraine said, “Eleanor I came to talk to Brenda not you.”

Eleanor walked in the study and sat and looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine stared at Eleanor.

Eleanor stared at Lorraine, because she was not going to move until she found out what Lorraine was up to.

Brenda looked between Eleanor and Lorraine and could only think it had to do with Shirley and that Dr. Ralph she had not met. Brenda thought, “Eleanor and Shirley are going to have a hard time to replace Lorraine.”

Lorraine closed the door and looked at Eleanor.

Lorraine turned to Brenda and said, “Mrs. Stith I stole some of your furniture and furnishings. I ask you to forgive me and let me pay back overtime.”

Brenda looked at Lorraine.

Eleanor looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine said, “I’m sorry.”

She started crying all over again.

William was lurking outside the door to figure out what was going on.

Lorraine was not his employee but he wanted to know.

Eleanor heard him and turned and looked at the door.

Brenda said, “It has been three years since you stole my two sofas, two bedroom suites, the kitchen table, benches and the porch swing set and the curtains, rugs and blankets you just decided today to ask forgiveness. And me six vases.”

Lorraine started crying again.

Brenda said, “Lorraine get out of here.”

Brenda learned from a hard life to forgive and walk away from things. She liked Lorraine and the furniture and stuff were just stuff.

She thought Lorraine just felt it was okay to steal her furniture because it was sitting in that storage area and the mansion was furnished.

Brenda knew Lorraine’s conscious came back yesterday while they were in the storage area and when Shirley said she wanted to see Brenda’s house.

Brenda said, “I forgive you Lorraine. How can I teach my grandchildren to respect other people property and ask for what they want even if the answer is no if my workers are not showing me any respect and not asking for what they want.”

Lorraine mumbled, “I’m sorry.”

Brenda said, “You can go.”

Lorraine humbly turned around to walk out the study.

Brenda said, “You need to make up your mind about that doctor.”

Lorraine began to boo hoo and ran out Brenda’s study.

Patrick was coming out of his office and stopped when Lorraine burst out Brenda’s office crying.

Eleanor was sitting on the arm of the chair peeping out the door.

She saw Patrick.

Patrick looked at a crying Lorraine.

He walked to Brenda’s office and said, “Trouble with Lorraine?”
Brenda was looking over her Christmas dinner list and looked at her husband and said, “No. She confused to stealing my furniture and stuff.”

Patrick said, “That was before she left to go to Philadelphia. She just got a conscious?”

Eleanor started laughing.

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Brenda said, “She offered a payment plan.”

Eleanor laughing even more.

Eleanor said, “Daddy I got it!”

Patrick and Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Brenda said, “I told Lorraine to make her mind up about that doctor. That’s when she screamed and ran out of here.”

Patrick turned from Brenda and looked at Eleanor and sat in the chair next to Brenda’s desk.

He said, “At least she confessed the rest just stole and thought it was okay because we would not miss anything. How can you not miss things you had to pay money for.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor what?”

Eleanor did not know Patrick and Eleanor plan to go to Europe with her and the children if the count ask her to marry him.

She said, “I should have my response from Bruce as yes for the divorce. As a condition of divorce, because he is not ever going to get a penny. Have him as manage for the railroad and the shipping business, like he is doing now until I return from Austria.”

Patrick stared at Eleanor.

Eleanor shrunk back in her chair.

She said, “Daddy I believe Bruce wants a job. He doesn’t know how to do anything but manage our railroad and shipping. Like he sold the hospital to a child.”

Patrick and Brenda laughed.

Eleanor did not laugh. She wanted to go to Europe with the count. She had never been so free and loved.

She said, “We need help for about five years until Percy and Bruce grew and get their minds straight, to help out with the businesses.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor and said, “Let me and your mother talk about Bruce. We will talk to you later.”

Eleanor looked at Patrick thinking, “Is he calling me slow again.”

Patrick said, “Eleanor we will talk about Bruce and let you know hat we think. I wanted to say you did a very good job with those railroad engineers today. I will go with you in January to look over the land, because we have to buy the land and get workers and supplies to build it. We need security because of the mob’s presence around the tracks.”

Eleanor slowly looked at Brenda.

Brenda turned her head from Patrick to Eleanor.

Eleanor stood and walked out of Brenda’s office and they could hear Lorraine sniffing.

Brenda tried to peep out her study to see who was crying.

She said, “Is that Lorraine? If it is her tell her I said, go to that man and stop bothering us with all of that crying.”

Eleanor looked back at Brenda.

Lorraine heard Brenda and ran outside.

Patrick laughed.

He said, “If they get married, how long will it last?”

Brenda said, “Forever.”

Eleanor started closing the door and begin to think about all the plans they had to do.

She knew Peters was working with Bruce, but she needed men she could trust around the railroad tracks and her supplies.

She wanted Hutch to be either the railroad doctor there are the new city.

She turned and was about to walk upstairs to look for Meredith when she saw nosey William.

Eleanor stopped and said, “William where is Meredith?”

William looked at Eleanor, because Meredith was not an employee of the house, but Eleanor personal nurse for Michael.

Eleanor knew what he was thinking and was about to demand for him to go and find Meredith and send her to her office.

Meredith was walking on the floor with linens in her arms going to Shirley’s room.

William knew Eleanor was about to become angry with him.

He peeped and saw Meredith and said, “Mrs. Simons there is Meredith.”

Meredith heard her name.

She looked down the stairs and saw Eleanor and William and knew there was a problem.

Eleanor turned from William and looked up at Meredith who was standing at the grand balcony looking down at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Meredith when you finish come to my office.”

Meredith said, “Yes ma am.”

Lorraine was walking through the front door sniffing.

Eleanor turned to see who was coming in the front door.

William stepped out the parlor to see who was entering in through the front door.

Patrick opened Brenda’s door so they could hear what was going on.

William was angry that Lorraine came through the front door, but he was not going to say anything to her nor Eleanor since Eleanor was already angry with him.

Patrick was peeping out Brenda’s office and said, “William who is it?”

William turned and looked at Patrick and said, “Lorraine.”

Lorraine passed under William’s glare and walked pass Eleanor and went to Shirley’s room to help put her linens on the bed.

William locked the front door.

Eleanor thought, “God I am glad I am not like that over a man. But Dr. Ralph is something special.”

Brenda said, “I am making sure she goes back with Shirley. She keep crying over that man I have to let her go.”

Patrick laughed and said, “You have to fight Eleanor.”

Brenda said, “Let the fight begin.”

Patrick started laughing.

Eleanor heard him and knew Brenda was talking about them.

She went into her office and started writing down her plan for the new railroad.

Meredith walked downstairs to Eleanor’s office.

Eleanor’s office had maps and papers everywhere.

Meredith looked knocked on the door.

Eleanor looked around and said, “Meredith come in.”

Meredith thought, “I did not steal anything and I have Hutch. I can quit.”

Eleanor said, “Sit Meredith.”

Meredith looked around and continued to stand.

Meredith looked back at Eleanor.

Eleanor smiled and said, “I know it is a mess.”

Meredith looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor knew Meredith not to play with her but get to the point.

She said, “Is Hutch here today?”

Meredith said, “He will be here later today to adjust Shirley.”

Eleanor said, “Can you make sure to tell him to see me.”

Meredith, “Can I answer for him?”

Eleanor said, “No.”

Meredith looked around the office and said, “Eleanor all that space across the hall why don’t you set up a workshop over there and leave this as a nice office?”

Eleanor looked around and knew she needed more space.

She stood and walked out her office to the areas over behind the billiards room.

Meredith followed her.

Eleanor said, “Meredith where are my children?”

Meredith said, “Michael is playing with Tom’s boys Caleb and Stewart. Percy and Brue went riding with the count and Gary.”

Eleanor looked at Meredith and turned and walked to the last room.

She looked around and said, “I think this is it. It is underneath the boys’ rooms. I can hear them.”

She said, “Meredith tell…”

Meredith said, “William?”

Meredith could not stand William because he try to boss her.

She walked by William and said, “Eleanor wants you William.”

William looked at Meredith and thought, “I feel like Brenda. I don’t want that prissy heifer to go to Europe. Maybe she’ll stay here with Hutch.”

William walked to Eleanor and said, “Yes Mrs. Simons.”

Eleanor thought, “None of these servants get along.”

She said, “I need this room to sweep and mopped and I will select some of the furniture out the storage area to brought in here.”

William said, “Yes ma am.”

He turned and walked way and said, “That will stop Thomas from meeting his mystery person from being in here. I am going to tell him myself to see his reaction. It is the last room in the mansion. So he has to choose one of these other rooms that people pass by.”

William walked to look at his schedule.

He looked up and said, “Nadine, Natalie, Ruth and Tracey, Mrs. Simons needs a room swept and mopped and cleaned.

Thomas was reading a book.

William walked over towards Thomas and said, “The last room in the house.”

He looked at Thomas.

He saw Thomas flinch.

William smiled.

He made a sandwich near Thomas and got hot tea and walked to the workers area and sat he grinned.

William sat and grinned and enjoyed his sandwich and drank his hot tea.

Percy and Bruce ran into the house from their hours of riding their horses.

Thomas went to the barn to play with Michael, Caleb and Stewart.

William continued to enjoy his lunch.

He was thinking maybe now I will find out who this man or woman is that Thomas has been with for all of these years. I am not going to say anything to anybody because it could be anybody.

The count was walking from the stables.

William stood and walked in the kitchen he saw Thomas turned sideways on his stool.

He had his book held out in his outstretched arm.

William looked around the kitchen and the only ones in the kitchen were Denise and Mable and he said, said, “Damn.”

He walked over and gave Mable his plate and teacup.

He looked at Thomas and walked out the kitchen.

The count walked in the kitchen and said, “May I have a pot of hot tea?”

Thomas struggle to sit straight.

He stood and got the pot to make the hot tea.

Thomas said, “I’ll have it brought to you.”

William was walking back in the kitchen and saw the count.

The count said, “Thomas are you well?”

William looked at Thomas.

Thomas was making the pot of tea and said, “Yes sir.”

William was mesmerized by Thomas’ reaction.

The count looked at Thomas and then William and walked away.

The count stopped to knock on Earle’s door but he thought he heard something and continued to go through the billiards room.

He saw the servants sweeping and stepping out a room and then he saw Eleanor step out.

He stopped and smiled.

Natalie and Nadine were passing him from the billiards room and saw how he was looking at Eleanor.

Patrick was walking to the parlor with Brenda.

They saw Joseph standing in the hall.

Brenda turned and she and Patrick walked to him and looked at him smiling.

They looked down the hall and saw Eleanor.

Brenda decided to have a Christmas buffet with seventy five people which included their children and grandchildren.

She invited the mayor and his wife, the governor and his wife, Gen and Ben which would be celebrating at home, the Gibsons, the Mc Intyres (who are the engineers for the railroad), Roger, Mag and Josiah and the Mc Clendons.

Brenda hand wrote the invitations and she and Patrick signed them.

She put the invitations in the basket to take to town.

She and Patrick decided on the menu.

Thomas walked up to bring the count his hot tea.

Brenda turned and saw him and said, “Thomas are you well?”

The count turned and saw them standing by him.

He smiled.

Eleanor looked up the people standing in the hall and saw the count and her parents.

She walked away from the servants and went to her family.

The count took the tray from Thomas.

Patrick looked at Thomas.

The count grinned at Eleanor and she slightly smiled at the count.

They saw Lorraine walking down the backstairs with linens in her arm.

Eleanor said, “I am so glad I am crying over s msn like Lorraine.”

The count turned and walked to his suite.

Patrick looked at Eleanor as she was puzzled why the count walked away.

Brenda turned and walked with Thomas back to the kitchen.

She gave him her menu for the Christmas buffet.

She liked a formal dinner table set.

But she and Patrick wanted to invite the Mc Clendons and the Mc Intyres before they went to Europe for a year or two.

Brenda walked in the kitchen and saw William and said, “William, I do not want that trouble with this menu that was over Thanksgiving.”

Thomas and William were shocked and looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “I know a lot of what goes on around here.”

William stood in shock.

Brenda said, “William here is the liquor we have decided on. Go and get it tomorrow, because you know the governor is giving his ball and they are buying up everything.”

William reached and for the liquor list.

He looked over it and said, “Mrs. Stith can I send a telegram now to have all of this ready tomorrow?”

Brenda said, “Fine. Send a telegram to the butcher and Mr. Hunter. Ask the servants what they want for Christmas, ham goose or duck. But Thomas have ham, turkey, goose and duck for the servants that will be here. I don’t want them to lack anything for their Christmas meal.”

Thomas had trembling lips and said, “Yes ma am.”

William tough, “I got to find out who this is.”

Brenda said, “Come on William and do your job.”

William looked at Brenda and followed her and said, “Bitch.”

Eleanor was standing in the hall talking to Patrick and said, “Daddy how can we shorten the ocean voyage to Europe from six weeks down to maybe four weeks even if we get it down to five weeks?”

Patrick said, “We can ask the ship builders and engineers. Let’s send them a telegram.”

Patrick and Eleanor walked to his office, which was very neat as compared to Eleanor’s.

Brenda and William was sending the telegrams to the liquor store, poultry ship and the butcher.

They walked out the office and Patrick and Eleanor walked in and sent telegrams to the ship builders and engineers.

Patrick saw a telegram from Dr. Ralph who said, Shirley’s room was available but Nurse Alice was pregnant and had retired.

Eleanor laughed.

She said, “Daddy you should see Ryan. He is handsome. Gen tried to get Ryan to date Sharon, He seemed to be interested.”

Patrick said, “She was not because she had her eyes on Bruce.”

Eleanor turned her nose up and said, “She can have broke Bruce.”

Patrick said, “Eleanor it has been two weeks and we have not talked about that Thanksgiving fight.”

Eleanor said, “What about daddy. The only one not fighting was you daddy.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor and yelled for Brenda.

Brenda was standing in the hall telling William to order all the punch, cookies, cakes and candies for the orphanage.

She was reading the telegram from the orphanage that stated they would love for a Christmas party to be given for the children.

Brenda heard Patrick and she knew it was his angry yelled.

She was talking to William and turned to walk to Patrick.

Brenda said, “Order them three turkeys, goose and hams.“

She turned to walk to Patrick and stopped and said, “William I mean to order the orphanage three turkeys, three whole hams and three goose.”

William held his head down and thought, “She will never let that go,”

He looked at Brenda and said, “Ma am I am sorry. I will order enough food this time.”

Brenda begin to mumble and said, “You better.”

William understood what she said.

The servants said Brenda would be talking to herself, William realized that day she does not talk to herself but be talking about them. He thought I better straighten up.

Brenda walked fast to Patrick and closed the door.

The count had a cup of tea and tipped to the wall and put his ear to the wall and listened.

Patrick was staring at Eleanor.

Brenda walked in and looked at Patrick then Eleanor.

Patrick said, “I told this heifer we need to talk about that Thanksgiving fight, you know what she said?”

Brenda stared at Patrick and said, “No.”

Patrick said, “That I was the only person not fighting.”

Brenda broke out in laughter.

The count was sipping tea and began to laugh.

Brenda and Patrick turned to look at the wall.

Patrick said, “We should have put him in another room.”

The count stop giggling and turned his head to make sure he heard Patrick correctly.

Patrick took his stare from Eleanor to Brenda.

Brenda said, “Well Patrick you were not fighting.”

Patrick said, “Brenda, she did not say it like that. She said, I was not helping the family out.”

Brenda looked at Eleanor and said, “Is that what you meant Eleanor?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Brenda was still tickle and said, “Eleanor apologize to your father.”

Eleanor said, “Daddy just called me a heifer. I don’t understand what to talk about. Momma you knocked Sharon’s momma out.”

Eleanor started laughing.

The count was sipping his tea and he was laughing.

Brenda said, “I tried to knock her out.”

Patrick said, “Brenda you are no better than Eleanor.”

Brenda was mumbling and said, “Coming to my house like I am a slave and she rule over me. I am glad Sharon is not Richard’s daughter.”

Patrick said, “See what I am talking about. I want to talk about Eleanor’s mind set that I did not help the family out.”

Brenda said, “With his fat ass. I had to put all my strength in that swing to bring him to his knees.”

The count got choked from his tea.

Eleanor was not laughing.

They heard the count.

Brenda said, “If your daddy would have tried to fight, we would have lost the fight.”

The count hit the floor laughing.

Patrick said, “Our house guests is having a good laugh. Both of you get out of my office.”

Eleanor sat and looked at her father.

Patrick looked at his child.

Eleanor said, “Daddy I apologize for saying you would not fight with us. But it was no need for you to fight. The boys jumped on Bruce and beat him.”

Brenda said, “That Thomas was really kicking Bruce. Michael was yelling two lamb chops.”

The count was on the floor and could not get up.

Patrick looked back at the wall.

Eleanor said, “Momma how could you see and heard all of that while you were fighting?”

Brenda said, “I learned to watch fights and see what was happening as a conductor of the underground railroad.”

Eleanor stood up and hugged Brenda and said, “Momma I love you and daddy even more. I love you because you are truly wonderful parents and it seemed you two always know what to do what is right.”

Eleanor turned and went and hugged and kissed Patrick.

The count was still sitting on the floor and shook his head in agreement with Patrick and Brenda bravery for them being slavery abolitionists.

Eleanor sat in Patrick’s lap and hugged him.

Patrick said, “Still get out Eleanor you and your momma.”

Eleanor kissed Patrick and walked out the office.

Brenda closed and locked the door.

Patrick looked at her and said, “I meant you too.”

Brenda went and sat in Patrick’s lap and hugged and kissed her husband.

She said, “This is what I wanted to do all day. But we both were busy.”

Eleanor put her ears to the office door and tipped to the count room.

She did not knock on the door but opened it.

She opened the door and saw the count sitting on the floor.

He turned to see who dared to come in without knocking.

Eleanor beckoned for him.

He jumped up and put the teacup down and closed the door.

Eleanor looked around and grabbed the count’s hand and ran down the hall to another bedroom.

Patrick said to Brenda, “You heard them?”

Brenda said, “I heard them, but I want all of you now.”

William was walking through the billiards room to give Brenda her lists and saw Eleanor and the count run down the hall to another bedroom.

He wondered where Thomas was going to go for his rendezvous, but he was still going to be watching out to see this mystery person.

Eleanor and the count stayed in the other bedroom until dinner.

They sneaked out the room and ran into Nadine.

Nadine rolled her eyes at them and went into the room to clean it up.

The count went into his suite to bathe and change for dinner.

Eleanor ran upstairs to bathe and change clothes for dinner.

She hurried and bathe and went to dinner.

Everyone was sitting and waiting for her.

She walked in the family dining room.

She touched the count’s shoulder as she entered.

He smiled and looked up at her.

Patrick and Brenda stared at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked around the table and spoke to her children.

She looked at Shirley and said, “You feel better Shirley?”

Shirley said, “A little better.”

The count sat and watched Eleanor.

Brenda and Patrick watched the count.

Eleanor said, “Shirley when do you want to have your tea party?”

Shirley said excitedly, “Next week!”

Eleanor laughed.

Patrick said, “Bruce bless the food.”

Bruce said, “I bless this food.”

Everyone sat and looked at Bruce.

Ruth and Natalie and William looked at Bruce.

Michael stared at Bruce.

Patrick said, “What was that?”

Michael looked at his grandpa.

The count looked at Bruce.

Eleanor said, “Bruce was that your blessing of our food?”

Bruce said, “Grandpa said Bruce bless this food.”

Brenda said, “So you bless the food.”

Bruce said, “Yeah.”

Brenda and Eleanor laughed.

Brenda looked at a stunned Patrick and said, “You see now you have to definite with that one.”

Patrick was still looking at Bruce.

Nadine walked to the hallway and beckoned for William.

William walked out the family dining room and Nadine said, “The count and Eleanor messed up another guest’s suite.”

Ruth and Natalie heard Nadine.

William walked back in the dining room.

William beckoned to Natalie and she followed him out the dining room.

William said, “I saw the Stiths Christmas dinner buffet and your name is on the guest’s list.”

Natalie stood and looked at William.

He said, “You are Josiah’s guest.”

Natalie said, “That’s right.”

William said, “Don’t embarrass us. I hope you have a good dress to wear?”

Natalie balled her mouth up at William and stomped back in the family dining room.

Ruth was watching them.

Brenda was watching Ruth when Natalie stomped back in.

Michael was still looking at Bruce.

Patrick was watching Michael.

Michael said, “Grandpa.”

Percy and Bruce looked at Michael.

Thomas said, “What are yall looking at Michael for. He said grandpa. Neither one of you are grandpa.”

Bruce and Percy looked at Thomas.

Shirley was quiet.

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “Shirley you need a few dresses until the spring.”

Michael looked up at Eleanor.

The count nodded at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at the count then she turned and looked at Michael.

She leaned down and kissed him on his forehead.

Brenda watched Joseph.

She really liked the count and hope Eleanor does not mess up with him.

Patrick said, “I was watching you Eleanor to see whether you were rude.”

Eleanor said, “Sorry.”

She kissed Michael again.

Michael turned to Patrick and said, “Does that place still bake our favorite cake?”

Patrick said, “I don’t know if it is still there Michael. We can go into town and see.”

Michael said, “Thomas we need to order the orphanage kids their toys.”

Bruce whispered to Percy and they looked at Michael.

Brenda looked at the two.

Eleanor said, “Bruce you and Percy are close, but I want you two to stop whispering at the dinner table.”

Bruce said, “Grandma be whispering to grandpa all the time.”

Eleanor looked and the count looked at a stunned Brenda.

Brenda said, “She’s talking to you two rascals. I am grown I do what I want to do.”

Patrick was drinking wine and said, “Brenda.”

Brenda turned to Patrick and said, “What?”

Eleanor said, “Getting back to you two. Bruce what did you say to Percy?”

Bruce looked at Eleanor and knew he better tell.

He said, “I said, look at Michael trying to pretend he cares for the orphans when he ordered lamb chops for the party.”

Eleanor said, “Percy you better not lie to me. Is that what Bruce said?”

Percy looked at Patrick.

The count was wondering why Percy looked at Patrick.

Percy said, “Yes ma am. That’s the truth. I never want another flying boot.”

Patrick put down his wine glass and stared at Percy.

Bruce whispered, “Me neither.”

Brenda said, “Your mother just told you not to be whispering like that at the table.”

Bruce said, “Momma cut off Michael and Grandpa was angry.”

Shirley said, “Momma how many dresses would I need. I wore one for Thanksgiving and the brown one for the brunch. I need one for the tea party, Christmas dinner. New years. Am I going to the governor’s ball?”

Eleanor said, “I don’t see why not. And Michael you don’t have any business putting an order for lamb chops. I will be back in a few minutes. No body moves.”

Eleanor walked out the family dining room.

She saw Meredith and Lorraine getting ready to leave.

She said, “Meredith I asked to have Hutch see me.”

Meredith said, “You could not be found.”

Eleanor said, “Where is hutch?”

Meredith said, “In the kitchen.”

Eleanor begin to walk in the kitchen.

She saw Hutch and said, “Hutch I have a question for you rather two questions. I am going to start a health program for the railroad workers to see a physician in each city we have a railroad in. Would you be willing to be a physician for either this town or the city we are going to next? And my second question I need security at the new site, do you know any trustworthy former soldiers that won’t mind living there for two years or more?”

Meredith said, “Why not Philadelphia?”

Eleanor and Hutch looked at Meredith.

Eleanor said, “Ryan and his hospitals will take care of the workers there and Dr. Woodson said they can help those who need to come to them.”

Meredith said, “That’s nice.”

Hutch said, “I really wanted to go down south so I can help the ‘Freed men’.”

Meredith stared at Hutch.

Lorraine was making her a dinner plate to take home.

She said, “Remember we are going to Europe. Hutch you don’t want to go to give Shirley her therapy?”

Eleanor walked to the kitchen and looked at Lorraine.

Meredith walked to the kitchen and looked at Lorraine.

Hutch turned around in the hall and looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine was still making her plate and had not seen them.

Thomas and Peter cleared their throats.

Gary looked up at them.

Denise and Mable kept washing dishes.

Nadine, Tracey and Mellissa were leaving at looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine looked up and saw them looking at her.

She finished her plate and was walking out.

Eleanor said, “Be sure to bring the plate back tomorrow.”

Lorraine rolled her eyes at Eleanor and waked out to the carriage and sat down and waited for Meredith and Hutch.

Nadine, Tracey and Mellissa were off until Sunday.

Alice and Monica would be back on tomorrow.

Hutch said, “Eleanor that’s right Shirley would need her therapy while you all are gone. Let me think. I’ll let you know.”

Meredith looked and was thinking Europe.

She and Hutch walked out the house and got in the carriage with Lorraine.

Hutch said, “Thank you Lorraine. I did not think about Shirley would need her therapy. But I could only do so much for her because that is not field. My field is surgery.”

Meredith grinned to herself that she got a surgeon.

She would have beat Gen over Hutch that day.

They took Lorraine home.

Hutch was quiet and thinking.

Lorraine said, “Thank you.”

Hutch jumped out the carriage to help Lorraine he said, “I’m sorry Lorraine I was not thinking.”

Lorraine went in her house and lit her candles.

Hutch and Meredith pulled off.

Eleanor went upstairs and came down with arms full.

The count turned to stand to help he.

Eleanor said, “Joseph I can do it thank you.”

He smiled and sit.

She handed ruth the packages.

She took the first package.

Bruce and Percy looked at Brenda.

Brenda and Patrick looked at Bruce and Percy.

Patrick said, “You two know what it is?”

Bruce looked at Percy and said, “Yes.”

Eleanor unwrapped the dress, it was a beautiful ball gown she bought for Brenda from Paris.

She walked to Brenda and gave it to her.

Eleanor said, “This is your Christmas gift from all of us and the count to you.”

Brenda was stunned and looked at the ball gown.

Eleanor said, “I know you want to go to the governor’s ball this year.”

Natalie said, “Beautiful.”

Shirley looked back at Natalie and grinned.

The count loved Shirley’s beautiful smile.

Patrick said, “Brenda take the dress and try it on.”

Eleanor said, “Momma what’s wrong?”

Brenda teared up and said, “For me?”

Eleanor kissed on her cheek.

Natalie said, “Come on Mrs. Stith I’ll help you.”

Eleanor said, “Wait a minute.”

She walked to Natalie and gave her the dress.

Eleanor and Ruth unwrapped the other package and it was another ball gown for Shirley.

Shirley said, “Whose ball gown is that?”

Eleanor leaned down and kissed Shirley and said, “Merry Christmas Shirley from all of us.”

Shirley was so happy.

Shirley was wiggling to get out of her chair.

Eleanor laughed.

Shirley said, “Come on grandma.”

Fruth and Natalie took them to Brenda’s bedroom where they tried on the beautiful ball gowns from Paris.

Patrick looked around at the boys and then Eleanor.

Percy and Bruce looked at Patrick.

The count looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “You know I am jealous. Where is mines.”

Eleanor looked at the boys.

Percy and Bruce looked at her.

She said, “Percy go and get grandpa his Christmas gift.”

Percy looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “What?”

Percy said, “I forgot.”

Patrick looked at Percy.

The count looked at Percy.

Eleanor said, “If you don’t get up and go and get your grandpa his Christmas gift you will be feeling my boot on your head.”

Bruce laughed.

Patrick said, “That’s what he is talking about?”

Percy stood and walked upstairs.

Brenda walked in the family dining.

She looked stunning.

Patrick said, “Oh my. You are lovely.”

William was watching.

Shirley walked in and stood by Brenda she was very beautiful.

The count bowed to Shirley.

Shirley was very happy.

Shirley said, “Momma I need those sapphire earrings.”

The count laughed.

Percy walked in the family dining room and reached the box jewelry box to Eleanor.

He stood and looked at Brenda and Shirley and said, “You both looked very lovely.”

Brenda looked at Percy and said, “Thank you Percy.”

Eleanor gave the box to Patrick.

Patrick looked at them and opened the box.

He was surprised. It was diamond cuff links.

He said, “Thank you.”

Shirley held onto the chairs and walked to Patrick to see.

He showed her the cuff links.

She hugged him.

Michael hugged him.

Eleanor said, “Shirley you have another dress.”

Shirley said, “Besides this beautiful ball gown?”

Brenda had walked and was looking at Patrick’s diamond cuff links.

She kissed him.

Ruth took Shirley to try on the other dress.

Shirley came back to the family dining room.

Shirley was getting tired and she stood and showed and showed everyone her beautiful dress.

Eleanor said, “You can either wear that for Christmas day or New Years day. Then means we have to get you a dress for your tea. That dress should be simple.”

Shirley said, “I don’t ever want a simple dress.”

Everyone looked at Shirley.

Brenda said, “Let’s get out of our beautiful dresses.”

Shirley said, “I am tired.”

The count jumped up and picked Shirley up.

Patrick stood to get Shirley.

Bruce whispered to Percy.

Percy leaned his head to hear Bruce.

Brenda looked at the two and did not say anything.

The count waked out the dining room to take Shirley to her bedroom.

Eleanor said, “Ruth can you help Shirley dressed for bed and put her dresses up?”

Ruth said, “Yes ma am.”

Brenda and Patrick walked out and went to their bedroom and did not come out until breakfast the next morning.

Natalie snickered.

She and William cleared the table.

Ruth hung Shirley’s dresses up in the armoire and helped her put on her nightgown and closed her door.

Shirley was thinking why not wear the beautiful dress for Christmas and New Years.

She will be going to Europe herself and pick out her own clothes.

She wear nightgowns at the hospital all the time.

She thought, “I need to give all of these dresses to the orphans. Grandpa did not say what Dr. Ralph said.”

Shirley fell asleep.

And was snoring by the time Ruth was walking from upstairs.

Ruth grinned and walked down the stairs.

Eleanor and the count and the boys walked out the family dining room and were in the sitting room.

They were discussing the orphanage’s Christmas party.

Eleanor said, “No lamb chops. The cakes, cookies, candies and punch has already been ordered today. We need to order these toys that the orphanage sent us. We will buy a few extra toys just in case they get more children.”

Percy said, “How long will it be?”

Eleanor said, “No more than two hours,”

Bruce said, “Can we have it the day before Christmas Eve.”

Eleanor said, “That is amazing Bruce.”

Bruce said, “What?”

Eleanor said, “The orphanage asked if we would give the party on the twenty third. Why did you chose that day?”

Bruce looked at Percy and said, “All of us have been invited to the Gibson’s for a day of games.”

Eleanor said, “I have not heard about that.”

The count said, “That’s right. They said, that when they were here.”

Eleanor said, “I will double check that.”

She looked at her sons and said, “Write down the toys and we will go to the general store and order them tomorrow. Hopefully they will be here by Christmas.”

Thomas said, “When are we suppose to go to Alice and Ginger?”

Eleanor said, “I do remember they said something about coming over in the holidays.”

Eleanor looked at her children and said, “After the holidays the four of you will go off to the military academy.”

They sat and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “I got the approval today. You will stay on site. And you will come home the first of April and we will leave for Europe.”

Bruce said, “You are getting us out of the way while you fight with Bruce about your divorce?”

Eleanor held her head down and then looked at Bruce and smiled.

Michael held her hand and Thomas held her other hand.

Thomas said, “Momma you made a good decision. I’ll go to the military academy.”

Michael said, “Me too. Caleb and Stewart might be back. That’s where they go.”

Eleanor thought, “I’ll contact that school for information about those smart little boys.”

Eleanor said, “You boys have your clothes for the holidays. After the holidays you will be in uniform. Shirley will be in the hospital until April. Grandma and grandpa will be with Shirley and bring her home the last of March so we can pack and go to Europe I have to travel and get another railroad line started. It would be a lot going on.”

Bruce and Percy looked at the count.

Thomas and Michael looked at the count.

The count looked at them.

Thomas said, “Joseph where are you going to be?”

The count said, “I will be in New York visiting friends I had not since we were about your age Thomas. I’ll come to Philadelphia.”

Thomas said, “What about Thunder?”

Eleanor said, “We are going to leave Thunder and the other horses here.”

Thomas slipped in his chair and begin whining.

Bruce and Percy whispered.

Eleanor rolled her eyes at them.

Bruce said, “I said, it would be too much on our horses.”

The count said, “Gary is going to stay in America.”

Eleanor looked and said, “What?”

The count said, “We will talk Eleanor. But Gary will take care of your horses until you come back and forth.”

Thomas said, “Will we go to the school you went to in Europe?”

The count said, “No.”

Eleanor said, “Roderick will have four tutors that will go with us.”

Bruce said, “Why can’t he and Sheryl go like before?”

Eleanor said, “They have a baby and they have to build their lives here. I will interview the different candidates.”

The boys walked up the stairs and dressed and went to bed.

The count said, “Eleanor some of the problems are being solved.”

Eleanor sighed.

The count said, “Gary like Denise.”

Eleanor sat and looked at Joseph.

He shrugged his shoulders at Eleanor.

He said, “Gary said at first it was horrible. The more he talked to her and Mable and showed them he would not hurt them. They don’t cry and run away as they used to.”

Eleanor still did not say anything.

They went to their separate bedrooms.

The count got a small glass of sherry and walked to the library and tipped by Patrick and Brenda ‘s bedroom and put his ear towards their room.

Eleanor was watching him and put her hands on her hips.

Patrick yelled, “Yes count.”

The count turned to run to the library.

Eleanor turned and ran up the staircase and went directly to her bedroom and dressed for bed and jumped in it.

She laid in the bed and said, “I am grown. I did this running and jumping in the bed from them when I was a child.”