Jose went to bed after midnight.

He checked the windows and doors and turned to walk through the formal dining room to the kitchen to his room.

When he turned and walked in the formal dining room.

He saw the candles.

He said, “Oh God.”

He placed the candles in the centerpiece as his mother showed him.

He ran to the foyer console table and placed the candles in that center and the arrangement in the parlor.

He saw the box with Gen’s dishes she gave Shirley.

Jose went into the kitchen and saw Thomas making the dressing.

He was not going to ask Thomas for help.

Jose went into the storage room and got the cart and ran through the hallway and kept saying, “God give me the strength to pick up this box and carry it back to the storage room and take it off the cart.”

Jose went into the parlor and he was able to lift the cart and put it on the cart and pull it through the house into the storage room.

He took the box off the cart and put it on the floor.

He walked out the room and closed the door.

He was walking to his room and saw the lights going out in the kitchen and knew Thomas was leaving.

Jose was too tired to run to his room to avoid Thomas.

Thomas walked to the kitchen door and was standing looking back over the kitchen.

Thomas did not look back but said, “Good night Jose.”

Jose could not think of how he knew he was in the hall.

Jose said, “Good night Thomas and thank you.”

Thomas was still looking over the kitchen.

Jose went into his room and pulled off his boots and coat.

He sat on the bed.

He woke when he heard the rooster.

Jose was still sleepy.

He slowly opened his eyes and cut his eyes around the room.

Jose said, “Rooster.”

He jumped up straight on the bed.

He ran out his room.

Stephen was looking out his door.

Monica was on the way to take a bath and stopped.

Ruth opened her door.

They all looked at each other.

Brenda got her poultry and eggs from the shop during the winter.

Jose said, “Too early in the morning.”

He went to his room and got his bath and shave items and went and bathed and shaved.

He came to his room, passing Stephen, Ruth and the rest of the workers going to wash and shave.

Patrick and Brenda required their workers to bathe and shave daily.

The outside workers most of them did not come in the house and did not stay on the grounds so that rule did not apply to them.

Thomas had everything prepared from last night.

He lit the stove and oven.

Ruth and the workers set the family room for a buffet breakfast.

They told Monica how great a job she did on the flowers.

Monica was proud of her floral arrangements work.

She learned most of how to grow and cut flowers from a child. She would work in the gardens before school, then her parents sent her to the gardens after school and they worked her.

Monica was angry as a child.

She was bitter and worked herself down to the ground.

She left home at fourteen and lived on a plantation working side by side with the slaves.

Monica saved every penny and for six months and left.

She met her husband and married him when she was fourteen.

She had three sons.

Her husband was older and he owned a horseshoe repair and making business.

Her husband spoiled the three sons, because he was old and did not know that he could have children.

Monica grew to hate her husband and son.

After fifteen years she left.

For seventeen years she wondered the south and lived on the streets.

During the Civil war she left the south and moved up north.

She vowed never to return to the south and to her family.

Brenda saw her in town sitting by the sheriff’s office when she was going to work in the railroad office.

Brenda went to lunch and saw Monica still sitting by the sheriff’s office.

She invited Monica to have lunch with her.

Monica told Brenda her life story.

Brenda hired Monica that day.

Monica has been faithful to Brenda and Patrick. For over two years.

She has had a place to sleep and food to eat.

She was not a racist and enjoyed gardening.

The two months and a half she was with Patrick and Brenda, taking care of their clothes, she saved every penny. But she did splurge and buy her two really nice outfits, coat, gloves and boots.

Thomas made a quick breakfast for the workers and the family.

Jose wrapped up and went and brought coal in the house.

The workers in the stables, barn and supply shed were getting their coal.

Gary helped Jose take coal in the house and heat the water.

The hot water system Eleanor had placed in the house was good and the workers liked it.

Gary sat and ate oatmeal and drank coffee.

Jose sat down with Gary and ate some eggs and toast.

They talked about life.

Gary told Jose, he would finish his remedial work and he would go to the college at the state capitol.

Jose congratulated Gary.

Gary teared up.

He told Jose his father pulled him out of school at the age of eight to work for Joseph’s parents.

Gary looked up at Jose and said, “I really love school and learning. It was like my parents wanted to destroy me. I felt like a slave. I never knew about American slavery. I understand Denise, that’ why for two years I thought we could be together. Denise wanted out of that slave mind. I thought it was ok as long as I had someone to be with.”

Mike and John were in the kitchen listening to Gary.

Thomas was working but listening to Gary.

Gary said, “I would hurt everyday and could not sleep at night because of the pain. My father would beat me if I breathe too heavy of drop some water out the horses pail or talk to the horses too much. I thought that was life. Joseph would try to play with me His mother was hateful and would talk nice to Joseph but would roll her eyes at me and tell my father to beat. I still have scars from his beatings, like Denise and Mabel.”

Gary looked at Jose, “Their has healed mine’s haven’t. I’m glad she and Nathan found each other. Nathan is adventurous. They are suitable for each other. They can have fun together and grow.”

Jose said, “Gary GOD sent you to America so you cannot be beaten. So you could see what freedom is and what this nation’s greatest strength is. That in all the hate and difference it was united again in oneness. You should have a good Thanksgiving today. Not an American day of thanks but a day you can reflect that all the evil the devil did to stop your life, that GOD helped you to hold on until today. You are a new person, you have a new opportunity to go to school and become whatever you want to be. “

Mike and John listened.

Jose said, “Gary give thanks to a real GOD that delivers and delivers. You never thought beyond the day you were living. You did not have a vision of what freedom was. Denise and Mabel saw freedom and fought for that vision. Now you fight for whatever you want. There is no limit for what you want as long as it is good.”

Jose stood and walked to Gary and placed his hand on Gary’s shoulder.

Jose brought his plate in the kitchen and gave it to Mike.

Mike said, “Jose you hear more than what you want to hear.”

Jose said, “GOD has a reason for it all. I just don’t know HIS reasons.”

The three men watched Gary walk across the yard to the re-modeled supply shed.

Patrick was standing back with the coffee pot to request more coffee.

Patrick could see Gary walk with his head slightly down.

Jose turned and saw Patrick.

John jumped.

Mike turned and saw Patrick.

Thomas saw Patrick and knew he heard some of what Gary was saying.

The house was quiet and still.

Jose said, “Patrick.”

Thomas looked at Patrick.

Patrick exhaled and reached the coffee pot to Jose.

Jose said, “I’ll bring it to you.”

Patrick said, “Parlor. We are in the parlor.”

Jose nodded his head.

Thomas looked at Patrick as he walked out.

Mike said, “You think he heard Gary?”

Thomas said, “Yeap.”

He continued to put the food in the oven and on the stove. He was ahead of schedule.

They heard Eleanor walking through the formal dining room.

She said, “But daddy I think I have to go and get that coal. I don’t know anybody that will go.”

Patrick was saying something to Eleanor.

They could not hear Patrick.

Eleanor walked in the kitchen with a slight frown on her face and said, “Morning.”

Everybody looked at Eleanor and said, “Good morning.”

Eleanor looked up and saw Jose sitting at his desk with his elbow on the desk and his hand on his head looking at Eleanor under eyed.

She said, “I see you Jose.”

She had a silver coffee pot in her hand.

She said, “I don’t want to use this coffee pot.”

Jose said, “Why?”

Eleanor said, “I want something plain. This holiday should be about giving thanks for the simple things in life.”

Jose said, “Stephen!”

Stephen was sitting on his bed and tossing a ball in the air.

Stephen walked in the kitchen.

He saw Eleanor and put the ball behind his back.

Jose pointed at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Jose.

Stephen walked over to Eleanor and said, “Ma am.”

Eleanor said, “Get the plain silver coffee and tea set for dinner. And put that ball in your room.”

Mike and Thomas were trying to tell him.

Eleanor gave Stephen the coffee pot.

Stephen said, “There are ten sets in there. Which one. She’s leaving it upto me after I cleaned and polished this set?”

Eleanor yelled and said, “I said the plain set!!!”

Stephen jumped and said, “She heard me?”

Jose said, “Her heart is bad but she can hear.”

Jose kept looking over his schedules and petty cash.

Eleanor walked back to the kitchen.

Jose looked at her and kept counting the petty cash.

She looked at him and said, “I heard you.”

Jose said, “I know. Did you pay your workers at the jewelry shop, coal shop and dress shop?”

Eleanor said, “Jose I have been sick.”

Jose said, “I paid them Monday for this week.”

Eleanor was stunned.

Mike peeped around the cabinets to Jose.

John was trying to peep from his sitting position.

Eleanor said, “Jose why did you start a problem with me?”

Jose said, “You started a problem with me about that damn coffee pot.”

Eleanor looked at Stephen and said, “There is a set that has Stith engraved on it. Use that set. Thank you.”

Mike said, “Mrs…”

Eleanor turned with anger.

Thomas shook his head for no.

Mike said, “Stith.”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Mike, “Do you need someone to ride and bring the coal here?”

Eleanor said, “Yes. You know someone?”

They all laughed at her.

Eleanor looked at the workers and Stephen who was walking out.

He stopped and looked at Jose counting the petty cash.

Jose said, “Move.”

Mike said, “Me. I just got out of the military from the civil war. I served ten years from sixteen up to the summer. I can shoot, spot and organized.”

Eleanor said, “We will talk tomorrow.”

She looked around at the workers and said, “Thank you.”

John said, “Thank you Mr. Mike. I needed that coal, because I sure did not buy any.”

Stephen was walking back with the coffee set and heard them talking.

He said, “What does it pay to go and get the coal?”

Jose looked at Stephen and said. “I don’t know. Ask Eleanor.”

Jose was writing receipts.

He said, Thomas you are leaving in the morning?”

Thomas said, “Ye.”

Jose said, “You are making breakfast?”

Thomas said., “Yes.”

Jose said, “You want your overtime pay now?”

Thomas looked around at the food that was cooking and said, “Yes.”

Jose counted the money out and said, “Thomas.”

Thomas walked to Jose.

Jose said, “Count it out and sign this receipt.”

Thomas signed the receipt.

He walked out the kitchen and went to his room and put the money up.

Stephen was cleaning the silver ware in the kitchen and said, “Jose, how is Steven and his siter doing?”

Jose sat for a minute and remembered Stephen took a loan from Patrick and Brenda to pay for Steven to continue to go to school.

Jose said, “Brenda employed him. He has been working for her for several months. They are coming to dinner.”

Steven smiled.

Jose looked at Stephen and said, “You never told them.”

Stephen said, “Nall. They don’t need to know.”

John watched Jose put up the petty cash.

He said, “Jose asked Mrs. Stith how much she will pay for the escort of the coal.”

Jose said, “I have too much to do to get involved with that. You ask her tomorrow when she talk to Mike.”

Jose was going through his book and was checking off all the people that were paid.

Jose said, “Really the only overtime person was Thomas. Good that made everything simple.”

They heard the boys running through the house.

John huff he thought about him and his four brothers running through their house at Thanksgiving.

He loved Thanksgiving.

He said, “I’ll go.”

Mike looked at him.

Stephen said, “I need some money. I’ll go too.”

Jose wondered about Stephen.

Why was he living in a rooming house?”

He has been there for years.

He has worked part time at the house cleaning and polishing the silverware.

He seemed to enjoy it.

Jose cut his eye at Stephen and thought, “Is he wanted for murder, or bank robbing or has he ran away from the crazy house.”

Jose walked through the house and saw Patrick and Brenda walking to the family dining room for breakfast.

They had been up drinking coffee with Gen and Ben.

Jose looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Jose.”

Brenda was looking at Jose waiting for the shoe drop.

Jose looked around and said, “Stephen got a personal loan from you this year. The loan was to send Nadine’s nephew and niece to go to college. Steven and his sister…”

Brenda said, “Alicia.”

Jose said, “I want to pay that loan off.”

Patrick said, “Why?”

Jose said, “I don’t want Stephen struggling to pay that loan every pay day.”

Patrick stared at Jose.

Jose looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Tomorrow Jose. I want to enjoy a simple day and think about nothing but food, liquor and friends and family.”

Jose said, “Fine.”

Jose walked through the hall and checked on the rooms.

Brenda looked back at Jose and said, “Europe for a year.”

Patrick said, “Yeap.”

Brenda said, “He is really good.”

Patrick said, “Yeap.”

Brenda said, “The loan.”

Patrick said, “I’ll close it as full paid.”

Brenda said, “Why has Jose ran away from home?”

Patrick said, “I don’t know. But I will ask around about his family’s construction company.”

Brenda said, “I’m excited about getting in my new dress for today.”

They rounded the corner to go to the family dining room.

Patrick said, “You dress me for thirty five years, but I am excited about that suit I had made in Italy.”

They smiled and entered the family dining room.

Everyone was there and made their plates.

Everyone got a little food.

They were excited about dinner.

They could smell the food that was cooking.

Thomas was finished cooking all the food.

He went to his room and slept to noon.

Jose knew he could not drink.

But his partner was there. He would get Gen to get him a shot of scotch.

Jose thought and said, “No.”

He pulled off his boots and went to sleep.

He was finished until two pm.

Lorraine was the first to arrive.

She looked like Eleanor.

She pulled her carriage to the back.

The stable men took her carriage and when she got out the basket and her clothes.

She walked in the house and spoke to everyone.

Monica said, “Hey. They wanted you to come. I’ll show you to the room.”

Monica reached for the gift basket and set it in the parlor.

Lorraine put her finger to her mouth to surprise them.

Monica took her to the suite next to Gen and Ben.

Lorraine closed and locked the door.

Hutch was in his room standing and thinking.

He just came from Percy.

He frowned and walked to his open door and looked.

He saw the door closed next to Gen and Ben and wondered who was in the room.

He went into the library and read his book. For a short time.

He heard carriages and horses.

He went to his room and spruced up.

Gen and Ben were walking out their room.

Lorraine opened her door.

Gen hollered and grabbed Lorraine.

Lorraine, “I want to surprise them.”

Hutch peeped out his door and smiled.

Lorraine looked back and said, “Mr. Hutch.”

Hutch shook his head and said, “GOD you and Eleanor look so much alike.”

Gen and Ben smiled and kept walking.

Gen said, “I want to see how everyone is dressed.”

Lorraine laughed.

Gen said, “Lorraine you look good. I just hate there are no single men here.”

Lorraine smiled.

She heard Patrick and Brenda’s door opened.

She ducked in another room and peeped.

They walked out and walked to the parlor with Ben and Gen.

Patrick said, “Gen what about the Caldwell’s construction company? Can they build my hospital?”

Gen said, “Yes. But it is a reason why Jose left home. I don’t know what it is. Let me find out before you say anything to Jose.”

Ben said, “You’re back to your old self. In other folks’ business.”

Patrick said, “Fine.”

They heard a little knock on the door.

Brenda nearly went into a fit and said, “No grandchildren.”

Jose had awaken.

He walked through the formal dining room and looked over the table and lit the candles.

Eleanor looked spectacular.

She was standing looking over the table and said, “Jose the candles added an unf to the centerpiece and the table setting.”

Jose said, “Thank you.”

They heard the little hand beating on the door.

Eleanor and Jose knew it was a child.

They rushed out the formal dining room and were peeping out the window to see who it was.

They saw Patrick, Brenda, Gen and Ben standing in the hallway.

Jose went to the door and removed the bar and unlocked the door.

Emilou jumped inside wrapped in her blanket.

Brenda laughed.

Jose looked at Alicia and Steven and said, “Come in.”

They walked in the foyer.

Emilou was walking to Brenda dragging her blanket on the floor.

She said, “Happy Thanksgiving.”

They smiled and said, “Happy Thanksgiving Emilou.”

Patrick said, “Let me have your blanket so it won’t get dirty.”

Steven and Alicia walked to them and greeted everyone by saying, “Happy Thanksgiving.”

Alicia pulled off Emilou’s coat, gloves and scarf.

Monica walked up and took the blanket and Emilou’s clothes.

Brenda said, “Emilou you look outstanding.”

Emilou said, “Thank you. What does that mean?”

Gen hollered and said, “A girl Michael.”

Monica took Alicia coat and Steven’s.

Brenda said, “You are dressed very nice.”

Steven said, “Thank you.”

Ruth walked and asked for drinks.

Emilou said, “Hot chocolate and whipped cream.”

Ruth said, “Ok.”

Alicia and Steven said, “No.”

Emilou looked back at them and stomps away to the parlor.

Jose closed the door and was waiting for the next guests.

He opened the door and the boisterous brother Stephen and Bryce entered the house.

Patrick and Brenda laughed.

Bryce pointed and looked at Jose.

Jose grinned.

They kissed Eleanor.

Eleanor laughed.

They walked to Patrick and was pulling off their coats and hats, gloves and scarves.

Monica rushed and took their coats.

Stephen looked at Monica.

Gen looked at Stephen.

Patrick walked to the liquor table with them.

Brenda made a face and said, “I completely forgot about them.”

Gen looked back and said, “The slim one liked at Monica.”

Alicia giggled.

Brenda said, “Mrs. Olsen love romance.”

Emilou walked to the door and saw the men at the liquor table.

She started to walk over there.

Alicia caught her.

Steven looked at her.

Gen laughed and said, “Another Michael.”

Emilou said, “I am thirsty. What am I suppose to do. Swallow my…”

Alicia covered her mouth.

Brenda said, “Can she have some juice?”

Alicia said, “Water. The last time she was up to the next day.”

Selma and her husband arrived next.

Jose said, “Who is this?”

Eleanor said, “Gen’s guests.”

Jose stared at Eleanor.

Eleanor stared at Jose and was thinking.

She said, “Selma. The manager of Shirley’s dress shop.”

Jose opened the door and they walked in the house.

Their mouths dropped opened.

Eleanor love when people walk in the foyer and see the grandeur of the house.

Jose saw Stanley go to the back and wonder why.

Eleanor escorted them to Brenda and Patrick.

The men had drinks in their hands.

Elma’s husband was looking at the glass of whiskey.

Patrick said, “Sir come.”

Ben turned and walked with them to the liquor table.

Monica was taken their coats.

Selma and her husband looked nice.

Another carriage came to the house and Sarah, Peggy and Joe jumped out.

They ran to the door because it was cold.

Peggy did not have a coat and was wrapped in a blanket.

Jose laughed.

He was about to close and lock the door when Stanley flew back around the front.

Patrick was so happy to see Joe and Peggy.

Brenda said, “This was your good surprise.”

Patrick kissed Brenda.

The boys were running down the staircase.

Ruth brought Emilou a glass of water.

She folded her arms and twisted from side to side.

Alicia took the glass and said, “I guess you have to swallow you know what.”

Gen was grinning.

She was having a good time.

Hutch walked around the corner as Stanley and Alice walked in.

Alice stood in the door and her mouth fell opened.

Stanley said, “Don’t act like that Alice.”

Jose grinned.

Alice tried to get her composure.

They walked to Brenda and Patrick.

Alice said, “You worked here?”

Stanley said, “Alice!”

Alice said, “How old is Eleanor eldest?”

Shirley saw Alicia and ran back in her room and wrote a personal invitation to her holiday tea.

Shirley made sure she was the only attraction.

She descended the staircase.

Everyone turned and watched her come down the staircase.

She grinned and greeted everyone.

She looked around for Lorraine.

Gen said, “Who are you looking for Shirley?”

Jose locked the door and put the bar behind.

Mike and John took the carriages around the back and lit the lanterns.

They figured out how to light the lanterns that would for sixteen hours.

The guests washed their hands.

Shirley greeted Alicia and Sarah.

She handed Alicia the invitation to her holiday tea.

Sarah peeped at the invitation and said, “I am coming. I am already working on my skirt.”

Shirley said, “The skirts are great.”

Sarah said, “Are the girls coming?”

Alicia was grinning waiting to hear who were the girls.

Shirley said, “Yes Ginger and Alice will be here.”

Steven walked away.

Brenda and Patrick looked at Steven.

Steven went to wash his hands and reached for Emilou and said, “Come on and let’s wash our hands.”

Emilou said, “Why?”

Steven said, “You know to wash your hands before you go to the table to eat.”

Emilou said, “I washed my hands before I put on my gloves and had my gloves on all the time.”

Gen turned around to watch Steven.

Alicia said, “Thank you Shirley, but I won’t be able to attend.”

Brenda heart ached.

Gen turned around and heard the words Alicia spoke and looked at Brenda with a puzzle look on her face.

Sarah ran to wash her hands.

Everyone walked into the formal dining room.

Everyone found their names on the name cards.

Stanley pulled the chair out for Alice.

Alice was stunned at the table setting and the chandeliers.

Selma’s husband sat between Stephen and Ben.

The men were having a hearty conversation.

Stanley looked around and said, “Where is Lorraine?”

Everyone looked around.

Shirley was about to sit and she stopped and looked for Lorraine.

Lorraine had come through the kitchen and slapped Stanley on his head.

He said, “Ow.”

She said, “You spoiled my surprise.”

Hutch stared at Eleanor and Lorraine standing side by stand.

Gen looked at Hutch.

Patrick and Brenda shook their heads.

Everyone sit down.

Patrick said the grace.

Bryce sat next to Patrick.

Stephen sat next to Gen.

They hollered and talk all day.

Emilou stared at Gen and Stephen.

Monica walked in the room and Stephen watched her.

Michael was eating his lamb chop and said, “Lorraine you said no. Why you changed your mind?”

Lorraine said, “Your grandma threaten me.”

Michael said, “A good grandma.”

Brenda winked at Michael.

They were enjoying the food.

There was a hard knock on the front door.

Hutch was seated next to Lorraine.

Eleanor was across from Lorraine.

Lorraine looked and said, “Where is Percy?”

Eleanor huff and looked at Hutch.

Hutch looked at Eleanor and turned his attention to the front door.

Stanley was sitting at the head of the table.

Bruce was sitting on one of Stanley’s side and Alice was sitting on the other side.

Steven was sitting next to her and then Peggy.

Stanley thought it was an uniform he saw at the front door.

Jose walked in the formal dining room and bent to Patrick.

Patrick turned and looked back in the hall.

He looked at Shirley and wiped his mouth.

He said, “Shirley you have a message.”

Eleanor looked at Patrick.

Hutch looked at Shirley.

Eleanor looked at Hutch.

Shirley just sat and looked at Alicia.

Alicia was sitting in front of Shirley and peeped and saw the uniform.

Alicia looked at Shirley.

Sarah was sitting next to Thomas.

Patrick said, “Shirley, get up and come and get the message.”

Shirley said, “Grandpa you get it.”

Hutch looked at Shirley.

Eleanor was getting her information from Hutch’s face.

Patrick said, “They won’t give it to me.”

Shirley stood and walked out the dining room.

The soldier handed the envelope to Shirley.

Jose locked and barred the front door.

Shirley threw the envelope to Patrick.

Patrick was about to holler at her.

Brenda grabbed his arm.

She said, “She wants you to read it. Is it from Skip?”

Bryce laughed and said, “Patrick, give her a break. It is her first love.”

Brenda said, “It better be her only love.”

Hutch said, “Shirley not all messages are bad news.”

Shirley stared straight.

Sarah was scared because Jake was in the same troop.

Steven watched Shirley and then he was watching Alicia.

Alicia was about to hyperventilate.

Hutch looked at Alicia and said, “Are you alright?”

Alicia said, “Yes sir.”

Patrick said, “Shirley read this note.”

Shirley was looking straight.

Brenda tapped Patrick’s arm.

Peggy and Joe were looking.

Patrick said, “My lovely Shirley.”

Everybody started laughing.

Shirley got up and walked to Patrick and reached for the note.

She ran to the parlor and sat by the fire and ran the note.

Michael said, “I wonder if Skip said ‘hello’ to us. Heifer.”

Eleanor and Lorraine said, “Michael.”

Brenda said, “They are getting on my nerves.”

Bryce said, “Eleanor and Lorraine?”

He hollered.

Patrick said, “Brenda, they don’t know.”

Patrick stared at Bryce.

Bryce was putting down his wine glass and looked at Patrick and said, “What?”

Patrick said, “You knew all of my brothers.”

Bryce and Gen looked at Lorraine.

Stephen could not see.

Bryce stared at Lorraine for a while and turned back around and thought.

He said, “Gerald was sneaky. I would say Ethan.”

Gen looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Gen don’t look at me like that. I am not John. I need. We need to help her.”

Stephen said, “I can’t see.”

Brenda said, “Out of eighteen years I just saw the resemblance a few months ago.”

Stephen watched Monica and said, “Sometime it is not the right time.”

Eleanor said, “Alicia and Sarah did you get Thanksgiving notes.”

Alicia stared at Eleanor and said, “I don’t think I can take this.”

Steven looked at her.

Alicia took her handkerchief and wiped her eyes.

Emilou looked up at Alicia and said, “I like Ben.”

Sarah looked solemnly at Peggy and then at Alicia and said, “Jake better not send me no message but that he is back in town.”

Shirley returned to the dining room.

She walked to Patrick and kissed him.

Everybody said, “Ah.”

Shirley walked to her chair and sat.

She said, “Skip said, happy thanksgiving. “

Thomas said, “Did he say anything to us?”

Shirley said, “Hello and do good in school.”

Eleanor and Lorraine looked at Michael.

Brenda looked at Michael.

Gen leaned back and peeped down at Michael and snickered.

Shirley tried to smile.

She was shaken.

She looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Shirley, it is a hard life. I can’t tell you what to do.”

Brenda said, “I will. Marry Skip.”

Sarah and Alicia picked up their water glasses and drank a sip of water.

Emilou said, “Miss Shirley can I be your flower girl?”

Gen laughed.

Shirley looked at Brenda.

Emilou said, “Get another pretty dress to wear and have my hair do.”

Gen laughed and said, “I love this baby. She loves my passion besides Ben, to dress up.”

Everybody smiled and snickered.

Steven leaned forward and looked at Emilou.

Emilou put her hands up to say what.

Gen said, “Brenda wouldn’t it be funny if she and Michael got married?”

Patrick said, “I don’t think I could take both of them.”

Bryce hollered.

Brenda stared at Emilou and said, “She is a match for him. She is a pretty girl.”

Brenda looked at Gen’s bracelet and said, “Gen that? Is that?”

Gen said, “Yeap.”

Brenda was laughing so hard so hit the table.

Gen said, “Where is Michael?”

Michael looked up at Gen and stood and walked to Gen.

Gen said, “Such a gentleman.”

Eleanor was proud of Michael.

They leaned over the table to see what he was doing.

Gen said, “What is that word?”

Before she could finish her sentence and twisting the bracelet Michael looked at the bracelet and figured it was about a woman and said, “Heifer.”

Brenda passed out.

Gen was laughing so hard she was on Stephen.

Patrick tried not to laugh.

Selma’s husband was rolling over the table.

Eleanor said, “I heard a word from Michael. Michael come and sit down.”

Michael bowed to Gen and leaned back and kissed Brenda on her cheeks.

Michael knew how to be charming.

She turned and looked at Sarah who turned and talked to Thomas.

Alicia said, “I may not be fit for this.”

Shirley’s mouth was opened.

She tried to smile at Emilou.

Hutch looked at Shirley.

Lorraine said, “Percy?”

Eleanor looked at Hutch and said, “He has a cold and was not allowed to come.”

Lorraine said, “You sent him a plate upstairs?”

Michael said, “Nope.”

Eleanor looked at Michael.

Monica walked in the formal dining room.

Bryce saw Stephen watching her and said, “Ask her out.”

Eleanor said, “Monica can you take Percy a plate?”

Monica said, “I did. He has thrown up everything. I cleaned it up and changed the bed linens and put them in the wash.”

Eleanor said, “Thank you.”

Hutch looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor was embarrassed and turned her head.

Stanley said, “I don’t need to hear that.”

Michael laughed.

Alice looked at Michael and said, “I want my baby to have hair like that. I want hair like that.”

Thomas looked at Alice and then Michael.

Michael said, “Thank you. You are a kind soul.”

Stanley shook his head at Michael.

He said, “Eleanor what are you going to do?”

Eleanor looked at Michael.

Eleanor had on a fall orange dress, the necklace Dr. Woodson gave her and the pearl earrings that Joseph gave her.

She was well dress and looked spectacular.

Shirley kept looking at Eleanor’s necklace.

Eleanor felt Shirley looking at her necklace.

She did not look at Shirley but pointed and said, “No Shirley.”

Alicia was in deep thought.

Sarah was in deep thought.

Patrick and Brenda were watching the three young women.

Stephen started laughing.

Bryce said, “What?”

Stephen could hardly talk and leaned back in his chair so Shirley, Alicia and Sarah could not see him and said, “They are torn up.”

Hutch looked at the three young women.

He said, “I was in the military for ten years. It is not bad.”

Joe looked for Jose,

Joe said, “More whiskey please.”

Jose took the near empty bottle to the kitchen and said to the workers, “Don’t touch.”

John and Mike snickered. They had ordered their own whiskey and had it in the re-modeled barn.

Jose went to the liquor table and got a new bottle of whiskey and walked back to the formal dining room.

Sarah held out her glass.

Jose put a swallow of whiskey in her glass and kept going to each adult.

Sarah looked at Joe.

Joe was drinking his whiskey.

He shrugged his shoulder and kept drinking his whiskey.

Alice leaned and said, “Alicia I know I am not suppose to lean down the table and talk…”

Stanley was drinking his wine and said, “Don’t then.”

Everyone looked at Stanley.

Alice slowly looked at Stanley.

She said, “Alicia I will talk to you later.”

She looked at Stanley.

Emilou ate a little turkey and dressing.

She looked at Michael’s plate and looked at other plates.

Gen was watching Emilou and said to Patrick watch her.

Patrick and Brenda looked.

Emilou pulled on Alicia’s dress.

Alicia came out her daze and looked at Emilou.

Emilou pointed and said, “What’s that that boy is eating?”

Alicia sweetly said, “I don’t know Emilou. It is not polite to point.”

Eleanor was tickle at Emilou.

Hutch saw Emilou was pleasing to Eleanor.

Steven was talking to Alice and Lorraine and Eleanor.

Eleanor was about to answer Emilou when Emilou said, “Boy what is that you are eating?”

Steven frowned up and leaned up and said, “Emilou. No.”

Emilou looked at Steven.

Stanley was laughing so hard.

Lorraine was shocked at Emilou.

Gen hit Stephen and fell back in her chair.

Eleanor stared at Emilou.

Alicia was off in her thoughts about Ben.

She teared up.

Hutch looked at her and Sarah.

Jose was passing by Sarah with the whiskey bottle that was near empty.

Sarah reached for Jose and he kept walking.

Joe looked at Sarah.

Sarah wanted something to drink.

He looked at Patrick and Brenda and said, “This is without whiskey.”

Peggy grinned.

Sarah said, “Who are you talking to Uncle Joe?”

Joe waved his little finger.

Sarah turned and saw the entire table watching her but Shirley and Alicia.

Bryce said, “Young lady if you are drinking now and you are not married to your fellow what will happen when you are married?”

Sarah held her head down.

Emilou said, “Huh boy.”

Gen and Stephen hollered again.

Michael looked at Emilou.

Eleanor said, “Emilou his name is Michael.”

Emilou looked at Eleanor.

Peggy tried not to laughed.

Brenda said, “The food is really good.”

Emilou said, “Michael what kind of meat is that?”

Michael said, “Emilou…”

Eleanor frowned up.

Hutch looked at Eleanor.

Patrick saw that Michael called himself telling Emilou how to address someone by their name.

Eleanor looked at Patrick.

Patrick watched Michael.

Eleanor looked at Michael.

Michael said, “It is lamb chop. It is delicious.”

Emilou said, “Can I have a bite? I’ll come to you.”

Emilou was trying to get out of her chair.

Michael jerked his head and looked at Emilou in shock.

He looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Michael and grinned.

Thomas and Bruce laughed at Michael.

Alicia was looking off in space.

Steven caught Emilou as she was behind him walking to Michael.

He whispered, “No Emilou. You cannot bite someone else’s food. We will get you a lamb chop to eat at home. Ok.”

Emilou held her head down and walked back to Alicia.

Lorraine looked at Emilou from head to toe.

She looked at Steven from head to toe.

Steven said, “Hello Miss Lorraine.”

Lorraine said, “Hello.”

Eleanor said to Lorraine, “You are nasty.”

Lorraine said, “The best way.”

Steven looked at Eleanor.

Hutch knew Eleanor’s comment meant something.

Brenda threw her fork in her plate.

Eleanor and Lorraine looked at Brenda.

Brenda folded her arms.

Jose walked in the room.

Eleanor said, “Jose do we have…”

Jose said, “No.”

Emilou started crying.

Alicia looked at Emilou and said, “Sit Emilou. Don’t cry. What are you crying about?”

Alicia wiped Emilou’s tears with her handkerchief.

Hutch watched Alicia and said, “Are you a nurse?”

Alicia said, “No sir. I am in school. I graduate next year.”

Hutch was drinking water and saw Ben.

He said, “Congratulations.”

Eleanor said, “Hun. Hun.”

Hutch looked at Eleanor and said, “You need something?”

Lorraine hollered.

Steven looked at Lorraine.

Eleanor frowned and looked at Hutch.

Brenda said, “There are children sitting at the table.”

Bruce said, “It’s alright grandma. Lorraine and daddy would fight all the time about her men.”

Michael said, “Right Jose?”

Jose walked out the dining room to the kitchen.

Lorraine sat and looked at Bruce.

Bryce and Stephen both said at the same time, “Owen.”

Brenda said, “You’re right.”

Gen was peeping and said, “What am I peeping for. I don’t know what I am looking?”

Patrick whispered, “The nose bridge and the high cheek bones.”

Bryce looked at Patrick and said, “What are you going to do?”

Patrick said, “I’m thinking.”

Brenda looked at Patrick. Owen was the brother that hated Patrick the most.

Gen looked at Brenda and said, “What?”

Brenda said, “We’ll talk later.”

Ben said, “Patrick.”

Patrick looked over at Ben and said, “Tell Hutch to leave me along. I have had only three whiskeys.”

Patrick looked at Ben.

Gen said, “Three!”

Brenda thought, “I was wondering why that whiskey was going so fast.”

Gen said, “Why weren’t drinking wine with your dinner?’

Ben said, “I wanted whiskey.”

Selma’s husband looked at Hutch.

Hutch was sitting staring at Ben.

Bruce grinned at Lorraine.

Lorraine stood and walked out the dining room and was standing looking out the door.

She saw a carriage coming into the yard.

She walked back in the formal and said, Brenda are all of your guests here?”

Brenda was pushing her chair back and said, “Get my shotgun.”

Stanley thought he heard Brenda.

Hutch said, “What?”

Patrick said, “I don’t care. This is a mess.”

Gen said, “It better not be John Jr and Betty.”

Eleanor said, “What?”

She stood and was walking behind Brenda.

Jose was walking back to the dining room with a new bottle of whiskey.

He looked and saw Patrick pushing his chair from the table, Brenda stomping out and Eleanor behind her and Gen slowly getting up.

He knew it was going to be a fight.

He left the bottle of whiskey and was rushing to the door.

He thought and ran and grabbed the bottled of whiskey as Sarah reached for it.

Alice said, “Should we go to see?”

Stanley turned his head and looked at Alice and said with an attitude, “No.”

Alice leaned over and said, “You don’t have another chance to speak to me like that sir.”

She pinched him hard on his thigh.

Stanley said, “Stop!”

And hit at Alice to make her stop.

Peggy looked at them.

Steven looked at Stanley and Alice.

He turned to Peggy and said, “Uninvited guests?”

Peggy said, “I don’t know.”

Joe was drinking his glass of whiskey.

Hutch was looking at Joe.

Peggy said, “How many glasses of whiskey?”

Hutch said, “Four.”

Peggy was baffled and said, “Four. I am not pulling that carriage with you in it tonight.”

She looked at Sarah.

Joe said, “You sir is not my doctor.”

Ben said, “Tell him again.”

Emilou was trying to feed Alicia.

Alicia smiled at Emilou.

Steven was watching Hutch and his attraction to Alicia.

Selma was talking to Thomas and Bruce.

Everyone was laughing and talking.

Lorraine and Jose walked back in the dining laughing and falling into each other.

Bryce and Stephen said, “Owen.”

Shirley looked at them.

Lorraine returned to her seat.

Jose walked around pouring whiskey.

Sarah reached her glass again.

Jose filled her glass.

Hutch frowned up.

Joe took Sarah’s glass and drank the whiskey.

Hutch said, “Don’t drink anymore of nothing.”

Joe turned sideways and drink Sarah’s whiskey.

Stanley and Alice looked at him.

Michael looked at Joe and said, “Miss Lorraine who was at the door?”

Lorraine was putting her napkin back in her lap and said, “I believe your no good daddy.”

Gen was walking back in the dining room.

Michael said, “Let’s go boys.”

Gen was startled and shook her head.

Bruce and Thomas stood from the table.

Stanley saw Michael when he stood.

Stanley raised his eyebrow and put down his wine glass and said, “Where are you three going?”

Michael did not say anything.

Gen looked at Bruce and Thomas and said, “Babies sit. That was my no good son.”

Jose said, “Shotgun Annie was going to her study.”

Lorraine laughed.

Michael said, “Lorraine why did you say it was our no good daddy.”

Lorraine said, “I said I believe it is your no good daddy. I did not stay to see who was in the carriage, because your grandma was coming down the hall with her shotgun.”

Michael was looking at Lorraine and said, “I like that shotgun.”

Bruce said, “I’m going to keep that shotgun.”

Thomas was looking at Gen.

Michael said, “Bruce you are going to get the house and all the furniture. You are not getting grandma’s shotgun. I am.”

Bruce said, “It’s part of the furniture.”

Michael said, “It’s not.”

Jose stood and was mimicking Brenda putting a bullet in her shotgun.

Lorraine laughed.

Hutch looked at Lorraine.

Hutch leaned forward and said, “Sarah you need to eat something.”

He looked back at Jose and said, “Jose is any of that soup left from dinner last night?”

Jose sarcastically said, “I don’t know.”

Lorraine was laughing.

Hutch said, “Take some soup and juice to Percy.”

Brenda walked back in the dining room with the shotgun.

Everybody yelled, “Brenda!”

Brenda grabbed the shotgun and walked back to her study and locked it up.

She thought, “That little girl may get it.”

Patrick was seated and looking between Eleanor, Gen and Brenda.

Brenda returned to the table and looked at Eleanor who was returning to her seat.

Gen looked at Ben and said, “He actually came. I know he wanted to get food for her and her family.”

Salma looked at Stanley and said, “That’s what happened.”

Stanley looked at a dazed Gen.

Thomas said, “Aunt Gen are you alright?”

Gen leaned back and looked at Thomas and said, “Yes baby.”

Lorraine said, “Eleanor what is Gen talking about?”

Eleanor leaned forward and said, “Gen went Tuesday to her house to get ready for Thanksgiving.”

Michael was eating his dressing and said, “Her son sold everything.”

Stanley blinked and looked at Michael.

Eleanor said, “Shut up Michael.”

Michael looked at Eleanor.

Lorraine was appalled.

Selma and Peggy were listening.

Joe was drunk, sleep and snoring.

Peggy said, “Sarah wake him.”

Sarah turned her head. She was upset he took her whiskey.

Peggy said, “Sarah you cannot drink. You will get sick. I am not having a sick you and a drunk him. You have to decide Sarah. If you want Jake, this is his life. If you decide to marry him, you have to get tougher.”

Hutch looked at Sarah.

Jose walked back in the dining room and said, “Ruth is taking him the soup.”

Eleanor said, “And crackers.”

Hutch said, “No crackers.”

Jose walked through the dining room with brandy.

He poured him two full glasses of whiskey and took them to his room.

He put a glass on the kitchen counter to start his second liquor.

Eleanor said, “He sold all her wine. He sold the dishes my parents gave them for their twenty fifth anniversary. They invited all of her family and their friends. They wanted my mother to send her workers to their house to clean up and bring our tables, chairs and tablecloths and food.”

Michael said, “Like that was going to happen.”

Bruce and Thomas were laughing.

Thomas said, “where that shotgun grandma.”

The boys started laughing.

Lorraine was stunned.

Michael said, “I offered to go with grandpa.”

Lorraine could not formulate words.

She thought and turned to Michael and said, “What did you just say?”

Michael was finishing his beets and green beans and said, “Never mind.”

Bruce and Thomas laughed.

Lorraine said, “He can’t sell the wine. He can go…”

Joe was leaned back in the chair with his arms folded and said, “Prison.”

Lorraine said, “Yes.”

Michael said, “Maybe we can get daddy to sell some wines.”

Bruce and Thomas hollered.

Stanley and Alice were shocked.

Patrick said, “I hear you three.”

Peggy said, “That is something.”

Selma said, “Maybe we invite her and Ben over during the holidays.”

Eleanor looked at Selma.

Eleanor said, “Boys Bruce is still your daddy.”

Loraine said, “Eleanor I hear something in your voice towards Bruce.”

Thomas said, “She has a cold.”

Hutch watched the three boys.

Stanley shook his head and looked at Eleanor and tried to whisper and said, ”I thought he was well off. What does he do?”

Gen said, “If you are talking about my no good son?”

Michael said, “They are talking about my no good daddy.”

Eleanor said, “Michael.”

Bruce said, “What? My daddy is Joseph.”

Thomas said, “Mine’s too.”

Hutch thought, “This is trouble. They will never accept Bruce as their father again.”

Alice said, “Who is Joseph?”

Stanley looked at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor you look lovely.”

O change the subject.

Shirley came out of her daze and said, “He was the count momma was to marry the morning he died. I was to become a countess.”

Hutch said, “Shirley is that all you can think about. You becoming a countess?”

Shirley looked at Hutch and Eleanor.

Eleanor had become sad.

Shirley went back to staring in space.

Patrick said, “You better go back and stare in space.”

Joe woke again and laughed at Shirley.

Hutch said, “Eleanor?’

Eleanor smiled and said, “I’m alright.”

Stanley said, “What about Gen’ stuff?”

Gen said, “Shirley here went yesterday and found the most important pieces.”

Shirley grinned.

Michael said, “Heifer.”

Shirley said, “Michael, Skip told me to get your love back. Is that possible?”

Michael threw his fork in his plate and did not look at Shirley and said, “No. Nall. Nope. Finished. Over. Never. Nay. Naw. Nah. Nae...”

Eleanor said, “Michael stop it.”

Shirley looked at Michael.

Hutch looked at Michael and saw whatever Shirley did tore him away from her forever.

He looked at Shirley.

She saw it also.

Lorraine did not want Shirley to ask her about forgiveness.

Michael excused himself and walked through the kitchen.

Lorraine excused herself and followed Michael.

Thomas looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine spoke and followed Michael.

Shirley said, “I guess Lorraine did not want to talk to me.”

Hutch looked at Shirley.

Eleanor was staring ahead at Lorraine’s empty chair.

Thomas started talking to Selma.

Selma started laughing.

Bruce joined the conversation.

They laughed and talked.

Emilou joined the conversation as Alicia allowed her to feed her.

Dinner continued and they enjoyed the food.

The workers were full and sitting around waiting for the guests to leave.

The female workers were trying on makeup.

Some of the male workers were playing cards.

Lorraine caught Michael and they went into the billiards room and play billiards and talked.

Michael said, “I want desert. “

Lorraine was about to shot.

Michael said, “What kind of pie?”

Lorraine said, “it doesn’t matter Michael but a small piece.”

Michael went into the kitchen and said, “Mr. Thomas can I have pie for me and Lorraine?”

Michael started showing the workers more respect by calling them Mr. or Miss because they fought for them.

Patrick and Brenda told Eleanor how Michael had changed and was more respectful to the staff and Thomas.

Thomas looked at Michael and said, “What kind?”

Michael saw all the pies laid out and the big bowl of whipped cream.

He said, “To start a big slice of apple pie with whipped cream for me and a small slice of pecan for Miss Lorraine with a lot of whipped cream.”

Thomas was sitting on his stool reading.

He stood and walked to the desert plates and cut the pes and gave to Michael.

Michael took the plates and said, “Thank you.”

He walked back to Lorraine.

Mike peeped and said to Thomas, “Is that the one that said the dealer was cheating?”

Thomas looked at Mike.

Michael yelled, “He was cheating.”

John and Mike fell out laughing.

John said, “Like he knows what cheating was.”

Mike said, “He’s at a boys’ school. They teach themselves all sorts of things.”

Mike said, “Like you?”

Thomas looked at John.

John said, “My parents thought I would do something different with my life. I spent ten years in the military and retired with honors. This is a break from that so I can think.”

He and Mike continued to play cards.

Sarah started talking to Hutch and asked him what type of medicine he practiced.

Ben said, “The noisy kind.”

Hutch said, “Ben I am leaving tomorrow.”

Brenda said, “Tomorrow?”

Patrick looked at Hutch.

Bruce said, “We have another week before we go back to school.”

Hutch said, “I have to be back for Monday. Do you have a train to get you there by Tuesday?”

Brenda did not answer.

Gen looked and said, “Bren?”

Patrick said, “Saturday.”

Hutch looked at Brenda and said, “Fine.”

He turned and continued to talk to Sarah.

Hutch said, “In a few years I will return here and work at the hospital that the children are building.”

Bruce was excited and Thomas.

They said, “Thank you sir.”

Hutch said, “You are welcome.”

Eleanor said. “I need you all to decide today the design of the hospital so Steven can get to work on it.”

Steven grinned.

Alicia leaned and looked at a grinning Steven.

Alice said, “I am getting into this conversation.”

She looked at Stanley.

He stood and walked into the kitchen and returned with a pecan pie and whipped cream.

Everybody looked at him.

He said, “I forgot.”

He sat and ate his pie.

Jose looked at Stanley.

Stanley cut his eyes at Jose and said, “I said I forgot.”

Joe said, “Jose.”

Jose looked at Joe.

Joe said, “Can I…”

Jose said, “No.”

Alice said, “I’m going to school to teach. I love teaching, but my heart is going towards being a nurse.”

Shirley said, “We will need plenty of nurses also. I know a little about how to run a hospital, since I have been in many.”

Alicia said, “I have to spend a year in the capitol.”

She leaned and looked at Steven.

Steven leaned and looked at her.

She said, “I forgot to tell you.”

Steven said, “We will talk at home.”

Eleanor looked at Emilou. She knew they had to find a place for Emilou.

Eleanor thought, “Not with that Nadine.” I wish she was working today. So she had to serve her nieces and nephew and see how well they look.”

Gen said, “I’m going with you Bren.”

Brenda said, “No. I need you here to help Eleanor. I want to get this over with and be back home for Christmas and New Years.”

Brenda and everyone continued to talk and have a good time.

Brenda said, “I only hoped Nadine would have to work today so she could her nieces and nephew.”

Patrick said, “I’m going to break protocol.”

Everyone looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Steven you could have brought Alice.”

Alicia was looking at Patrick and when he said that she turned her head.

Steven grinned and said, “She was spending the Thanksgiving with her family.”

Patrick looked at Steven.

Bryce said, “Is that Lance and Hilary?”

Stephen said, “Huh.”

Brenda looked at Stephen. Her heart sank.

Eleanor looked at Steven. She was still thinking about Michael’s heart towards Shirley.

While Shirley was talking, Eleanor smiled at her.

Jose, Monica and Ruth and the other workers started taking up the dinner dishes.

Stephen started bringing in the desserts.

Mike and John had washed all the preparation pots and bowls. They washed all the cooking dishes.

They started washing all the dinner dishes.

Lorraine and Michael were having a good time playing billiards and talking.

Lorraine said, “Michael. You have to stop hating Shirley. She is your sister. She was very sick mall of her life. What she said and did to you were unthinkable. But you have to look at this that GOD forgive her for being mean to you so HE could heal her so she can help many people like her. Let GOD use you. HE only uses you if you are willing to let bad things go that people did to you.”

Michael said, “Like you Lorraine?”

Michael was sitting on the stool holding the billiards stick in one hand and his dessert in the other.

Lorraine was bent over the billiards table about ready to shoot and said, “How astute you are Michael. You have watched me and figured out I was hiding these bad things people did to me.”

Patrick stood from the table and went through the kitchen to get Lorraine and Michael.

He walked the kitchen and down the hall.

He heard Michael and Lorraine talking in the billiards room.

Lorraine said, “Michael the world is cruel for mixed race people like me. Both my parents died and I was alone at the age of five. No relative wanted me. I was sent to the orphanage and stayed there until a lady adopted me just so I could clean her house and do her laundry. The state changed their polices where we had to go to school. The woman did not have any use for me anymore. I left the orphanage at the age of fourteen and looked for work. Your momma hired me when she just had Shirley. I love Shirley, but I understand she feels she was cheated in life and she is bad with everybody.”

Michael said, “I am the baby in the family. I did not have anything to do with her hate. But she hated me and treated me very bad Lorraine. She abused me.”

Lorraine said, “I know Michael. I was there. I saw you when you were enduring her abuse and I was there that bad day that you ran out the hospital. GOD was on your side. Because Dr. Woodson ran behind you and caught you and I was not due to come back to the hospital until five pm, but I came back earlier. GOD sent me back to help you and to get your mind back. No child should have gone through that.”

Michael said, “No person should have to go through that.”

Lorraine said, “Michael you have been brave and I love you for it. You give me strength to be courageous.”

Michael said, “Me?”

Patrick smiled.

Lorraine said, “Your momma, grandpa and grandma are getting older. They have been through a lot. The mob. You and Thomas. Shirley. Them coming here to kill and destroy. The betrayals. Patrick Jr and Christopher and John being evil…”

Michael said, “They were from a good family.”

Patrick grinned.

Lorraine looked at Michael and said, “I --- Know. I don’t know what caused them to be evil.”

Michael said, ”I don’t know either.”

Patrick smirked.

Patrick began to eat his pie and lean against the wall and listened.

Lorraine said, “Your family has been through a lot over the pass few years. I want you to be the person GOD called you to be, let go of the hate you have for Shirley. Let GOD use you and let GOD use Shirley to make the world a better place for GOD’s children.”

Michael sat on the stool and was thinking.

Lorraine waited for Michael.

Patrick waited to peep in Michael’s face and see his facial expression.

He saw Michael’s facial expression in the mirrors.

Michael said, “How do I stop hating Shirley for she is a bad person. Lorraine she really is.”

Lorraine said, “I know Michael. I saw her change. Let’s forgive her so we can live free.”

Michael said, “How do I forgive Shirley.”

Lorraine said, “Just walk to her and tell her I forgive you.”

Michael said, “I’m brave. Let’s go.”

Patrick was about to put a big fork of pecan pie in his mouth.

He looked confused.

He was trying to figure out what to do.

He ran towards the kitchen but turned back around and started walking up the hall towards the billiards room .

Jose was coming back from the toilet.

He saw Patrick run down the hall and turned around and ran back down the hall eating pie.

Jose stared at Patrick.

Jose did not move but stood and watched Patrick.

Patrick ran into Lorraine and Michael and said, “Pie. Dessert is being served. Where have you two been?”

Michael said, “Playing billiards.”

Patrick looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine nervously laughed.

Michael looked up at Lorraine and said, “You don’t work here anymore.”

Lorraine said, “You are right Michael. I told you, you give me strength.”

Patrick said, “Come and have dessert.”

They walked back to the formal dining room.

Shirley was eating a sliver of pumpkin pie.

Hutch watched Shirley to make sure she was ok eating the pie.

Brenda thought, “GOD, Hutch is a really good doctor. He said he will come back here. Help us and send the workers to the hospital. In JESUS’ name. Please don’t let anything be wrong with me and Patrick. But if so let them find it.”

Michael, Lorraine and Patrick walked back into the dining room.

Michael walked to Shirley.

She was talking to Alicia,

Stanley saw Michael and Lorraine.

He was eating another pie.

Alice looked at his plate and looked at him.

Stanley turned his attention back to Michael.

Michael said, “Excuse me.”

He looked at Alicia.

Patrick winked his eye at Brenda.

Bryce and Gen looked at Patrick.

Gen looked down the table and saw Michael and Lorraine standing by Shirley.

Eleanor looked and was about to say something to Michael.

Patrick shook his head for no.

Bruce and Thomas looked at Michael.

Thomas leaned back in his chair and stared at Shirley.

Shirley cut a piece of her pie and did not look at Michael but said, “What Michael?”

Michael said, “I forgive you Shirley for the evil you did against when I loved you.”

Shirley teared up and reached for Michael.

Michael stepped back.

Michael said, “I said I forgive you not that I love you.”

Michael took Lorraine‘s hand and escorted her out the formal dining room.

Shirley smiled.

She turned around and talked bubbly and lively to Alicia and Sarah.

They started giggling and talking.

Everyone continued to eat and enjoy the dinner.

They went to the parlor for coffee, tea and liquor.

Peggy had to wake Joe.

Gen left Ben.

Selma left her husband.

They followed a few minutes later.

Emilou said, “I want to play.”

Eleanor ran into her office and brought two of the hospital’s designs and everyone voted for the one they wanted.

Eleanor reached the design to Steven.

Bruce said, Percy did not vote.

Eleanor turned and walked upstairs and woke Percy and said, “Percy which hospital design do you like?”

Percy kept looking at the designs over and over.

Eleanor was getting impatience.

She said, “Softly, which one do you like?”

Percy said, “Can this be put over on this building?”

Eleanor looked and said, “Why Percy?”

Eleanor rubbed Percy’s head and said, “Good Percy. Let’s see what Steven says.”

Eleanor ran to the stairway and saw Emilou and said, “Emilou can you go and tell Steven to come here.”

Emilou said, “Yes ma am.”

She turned and ran into the parlor and Steven walked back out holding Emilou’s hand.

Alicia and Sarah were sitting on the stairs waiting for Shirley.

Patrick, Bryce and Stephen were at the liquor table.

Eleanor was standing at the top balcony and waited for Steven.

Emilou came also.

Hutch said, “Percy is sick and can still be contagious. Bring her back.”

Steven said, “Me too.”

Steven sent Emilou back downstairs.

Steven stood in Percy’s door and when Percy started explaining the design.

Steven walked in the room and took the designs and started studying what Percy.

He turned and walked out the room.

Percy looked at Steven and then Eleanor.

Eleanor shrugged her shoulders and smiled.

She saw Percy’s Thanksgiving soup on his dresser.

She sat on his bed and said, “Steven can only think about his work. He is not rude.”

Steven sat on the top stair and was going over the design in his head.

Ben, Gen, Selma and her husband were playing cards.

Brenda, Peggy, Joe were playing billiards.

Stanley, Alice, and Hutch were trying to play a guessing game.

Emilou said, “I know how to play that game.”

Alicia said, “She is good. I want to play.”

Patrick, Stephen and Bryce were drinking.

Jose was watching Patrick and walked to Patrick and said, “Sir, are you alright?”

Patrick looked at Jose and said, “Why you ask?”

Jose said, “You ran and double back through the hallway.”

Patrick said, “I’m fine. I did not want Lorraine and Michael to know I was listening to them in the billiards room.”

Jose walked from Patrick and thought, “Oh GOD I thought he was figuring out how we run through the house.”

Steven pulled a pencil out of his coat pocket and re-design the third design.

He walked back upstairs and gave the third design to Percy.

Percy looked at the design and said, “This one. Momma.”

Eleanor looked at the new design and loved it.

She hugged Percy and tucked him in bed and closed his door.

Eleanor and Steven walked downstairs and presented the new design to the family.

They all agreed with the design.

Eleanor said, “The ground breaking will be the next day after everyone is back in December.”

Stanley, Steven, Alice and Bryce played cards.

Lorraine, Bruce, Thomas, Emilou, Eleanor, and Alice played the guessing game with Hutch.

Sarah and Shirley played old maids.

Everyone enjoyed themselves.

Stanley said, “We have to go.”

Monica ran and got their coats and told Mike and John to bring the carriages round.

They went home and laughed and talked all the way home.

Stanley stopped at Lorraine and lit her front and back torches.

He walked around Lorraine’s house and went and go into the carriage and went home.

Stanley had taken four torches and he put two on the back porch and two on the front porch.

Selma and her husband left.

They laughed and talked all the way home.

Bruce, Thomas and Michael said, “Good night” and ran upstairs to their bedrooms.

They talked to Percy and played in the hall.

Joe, Peggy and Sarah left after Stanley and Alice.

Peggy had to take them home.

Sarah was feeling a little better.

She sat and stared at Peggy.

Peggy was wrapped in a blanket.

She said, “I should have brought three blankets. It is cold. They say it is going to be this cold and worst all winter. I hope we got enough oil and coal. Because if it is as cold as they say, everything will be closed. People won’t be moving. I heard Eleanor found some coal from Canada. She is looking to see how to get it here.”

Sarah said, “I didn’t know it was going to be as cold as they think.”

Joe snored. They looked back at him.

Peggy was riding fast home because of how cold it was.

Sarah said, “Aunt Peggy I like Jake. I am going to give it a try with him.”

Peggy said, “Sarah he is good looking.”

Sarah shocked and said, “I’m not?”

Peggy said, “Sarah don’t try to be the underdog. You know what I mean. I mean Jake is very good looking and women will be throwing themselves at him and he is a soldier with a paycheck. You have to be ready to fight for him.”

Joe was sleep in the back and heard them in his sleep.

He said, “Sarah stay in school. Keep sewing your skirts and making your money and keep separate from Jake. Don’t have a bunch of chilems.”

Joe went back to sleep until they got home.

They rode down the dark street.

Sarah said, “We need light, like the Stiths.”

Peggy said, “Yeah. If we gonna be at home we might not need them.”

Joe was sitting up in the back seat and he exhaled.

He said, “You two go in the house and start the fire and I will put the horses and buggy up. Peggy did you get any food?”

Sarah said, “Did she?”

Peggy said, “Shush.”

Sarah laughed and said, “Momma.”

Peggy and Joe stop for a brief minute.

Sarah said, Aunt Peggy didn’t we look like them? Every body was talking about how good we look. And Mrs. Olsen showed them her skirts and Alicia wants two for the holiday. I like feeling this way today. I decided to surround myself with good people who love life.”

Peggy reached over and touched Sarah’s face.

Joe said, “Go!”

Sarah and Peggy jumped out the carriage and ran to the house and unlocked the back door.

Joe unhitched the horses and feed them and gave them water and put them in the stalls.

He ran into the house and locked the back door. He sat by the fire and ate pie with Sarah and Peggy and reminisce over that Thanksgiving day.

Patrick’s stable men gave all the horses feed and water.

Stanley was happy because he did not have to be out in the cold for long.

He had to make Alice go in the house.

He walked to the carriage and picked her up and carried her to the door and she unlocked the door.

Stanley put her on the sofa.

He lit the candle they had by the door.

Stanley went to the main fireplace and started the fire.

He ran to their bedroom and started a fire in their fireplace and he was about to go back outside and then he ran into the kitchen and started that fire.

Alice was laughing.

Stanley said, “I’m going.”

He lit two torches and put them on the back.

He could see most of his yard.

He could see Lorraine’s back yard. He looked and saw there was some light on her front.

He said, “Thank YOU GOD. This community was too dark.”

Stanley looked around and ran around the front.

He put a torch light on the front porch.

He stood for a minute and said, “It’s dark by the horses stall.”

He put the torch far away from the stall to keep it from being knocked over.

Alice was peeping out the window watching Stanley and grinning.

She had on a blanket.

She had Jose to give her some turkey and pie for a late snack.

Stanley looked at Alice.

Jose said, “Bring the dishes back Stanley.”

Stanley looked at Jose and said, “I will.” As he looked at Alice.

The chill was knocked off the house and Alice dressed for bed and wrapped in a blanket and ate pie while Stanley ran around in the cold.

He ran in the house and stood against the door for several minutes.

He looked at the fire.

At first Alice giggled and she saw how cold Stanley was and she was about to bite a fork full of pie and stopped and watched Stanley.

Stanley locked his door and ran to the fireplace.

He stood there for a long time and warmed up.

Alice watched him.

She started slowly eating again. But watching Stanley.

Stanley slowly pulled off his coat, hat, scarf and gloves.

He turned and put his coat on the coat rack and walked over to Alice and looked at her pie.

She nodded towards the kitchen.

Stanley looked at her and said, “You could not bring the pie in here?”

Alice said, “Stanley, I put it on the stove to warm it up. If I would have brought it in here it would still be cold.”

Stanley walked in the kitchen.

He got his apple from the stove and it was good and hot.

He put a lot of whipped cream on the pie.

He ran back to the sitting room.

He leaned and kissed Alice and said, “I am sorry. I jumped to the bad. But you did the good. Thank you for being the beautiful woman I married.”

He kissed Alice again and sat next to her and said, “What kind of pie is that?”

Alice said, “Rhubarb.”

She watched Stanley.

Stanley said, “That little bit taste good. Why didn’t you get me a slice?”

Alice said, “This was the last piece. I haven’t had this sine I was a little girl with my aunts.”

Alice burst out crying.

Stanley sat and ate his apple pie.

Alice said, “Stanley, I miss them so much.”

Stanley said, “I know. I have some that I miss too. I was lonely, not I have you and our son.”

Alice started eating her pie again.

Stanley said, “You know where your family is buried?”

Alice said, “Yes fifty miles from here in a small church yard. They all are on the same row.”

Stanley said, “One day we will and visit.”

Alice did not look up from her pie and said, “Really Stanley?”

Stanley was looking straight in front of him and said, “Yes.”

They sat in sad silence for a minute.

Stanley said, “Maybe you can cook a rhubarb pie in their memory.”

Alice stood and walked to the kitchen and put her plate and fork in the dish tub.

She walked to their bedroom and closed the door.

Stanley laughed.

He said, “And you closed the door.”

Alice grinned.

Stanley took his plate and fork to the kitchen.

He looked at the plate Jose made them.

Stanley though, “That is being greedy.”

He ran out the kitchen and looked at the front door.

He ran to the door and put all the locks on it.

He ran tipped toe across the floor so Alice could not hear him.

Stanley grabbed the doorknob and it was locked.

He pulled on the doorknob.

Alice grinned.

Stanley said, “Woman. Woman.”

Alice grinned.

Stanley said, “Ok. I can go without.”

Stanley turned to go to the sofa.

Alice ran to the door and unlocked the door.

Stanley’s back was to their bedroom.

He grinned.

Alice opened the door and put her hand on one hip and said, “Man. Come back here.”

Stanley grinned and ran and grabbed Alice and they closed their bedroom door.

Stanley woke later.

He thought, “That’s funny. Why did I wake up like that?”

Alice was sleep.

Stanley thought, “Ray always told me when I wake suddenly to pray. He said GOD what is this? Why am I awake? Whatever it is destroy it because it is not from YOU in JESUS’ name.”

Stanley turned on his back and laid and thought about the day. He laughed at Michael and Thomas and were glad they were coming out of the attack. He loved how GOD helped Michael and Shirley. The doctors told Stanley how Shirley caused Michael to lose his mind, but Lorraine brought him back.

Stanley was thinking, “How many more children GOD.”

He saw a shadow on his wall reflected from the torch outside.

Stanley was surprise.

He reached and picked up his gun.

He looked at his clock and said, “Eleven forty five pm.”

He looked at Alice and eased out of bed.

Stanley was trying to think what they were trying to do.

He tipped over to the window and looked and saw another shadow.

Alice slipped out of bed on the floor.

Stanley already told her to get on the floor and there was a shotgun under the bed.

Stanley heard a dog barking further down in the neighborhood.

He said, “GOD who is that running through here when everybody is in the bed? And what are they trying to do? I’ll check on Lorraine’s house at daylight.”

Stanley went into the sitting room and looked out the windows.

He thought, “These people need to have some light around their homes.”

Eleanor and Brenda were talking to Steven.

They were happy with the new design.

Brenda said, “Steven I need you to go to the clerk’s office tomorrow when they opened and get the building and all the permits. Do not let no one hinder you. It may take up to noon. But don’t let them discourage you.”

Eleanor said, “I’ll be at the office. I have to take Hutch to the train that leaves at ten am. I will stop at the furniture shop. Then to the office. I need to meet that coal.”

Brenda said, “I’ll write out the invitations for the ground breaking. Let’s have a reception tent set up and serve hot drinks. The photographer?” Eleanor did he come back?”

Eleanor said, “He has a small shop in town. He lives upstairs. I will drop by and leave a note for him to be available that day.”

Brenda said, “That’s good.”

Eleanor said, “All we are going to do is cut the ribbon and tossed some dirt and take some pictures and run to the buggies. I have to see about taking the boys back to school next Thursday. Go to Philadelphia and check on you and daddy and Shirley. Especially Shirley to see if she made up with the handicap students.”

Shirley was sitting on the stairs and looked at Eleanor.

Brenda said, “Yes Shirley.”

Eleanor said, “Hutch, how long is momma and daddy will be in the hospital?”

Shirley looked surprised.

Hutch said, “It depends.”

Eleanor said, “Please Hutch.”

Hutch said, “Maybe a week to a week and a half.”

Shirley looked worried and said, “Why? What are you looking for?”

Hutch looked at Shirley and said, “Shirley I want to make sure they are in good health.”

Hutch said, “Good night.”

He went to his room and packed.

He came back and went to check on Percy.

Steven, Emilou and Alicia were bundled up and were leaving.

Eleanor and Brenda walked them to the door.

They got in their carriage.

Mike ran all the way back to the re-modeled barn.

Steven laughed.

Emilou got on the back seat and Alicia double her blanket.

Brenda said, “Jose go and get them some more blankets before they leave.”

Jose ran through the house to the linen closet and got three blankets and ran back and went outside and put one on Emilou and gave one to Alicia and Steven.

Jose ran into the house.

Steven rode off.

Emilou said, “Hurry Steven.”

Eleanor and Brenda laughed.

They closed the door.

Jose locked the door.

Patrick, Bryce and Stephen were sitting with Gen and Ben in the parlor talking.

Eleanor walked to the parlor with Brenda and said, “Good night.”

Shirley was sitting on the stairs writing Skip a note.

Eleanor looked at Shirley and said, “Good night Shirley. You looked enchanting today.”

Shirley’s eyes went to Eleanor’s necklace.

Eleanor said, “You are not getting this necklace.”

Eleanor went and checked on her sons.

Thomas and Michael were sitting in the hallway talking to Percy and Bruce.

Bruce was laying on his stomach with his elbow on the bed and his legs in the air reading.

Eleanor kissed each one of them and put them in their bed.

She went to her room and dressed for bed.

She fell on her knees and was there. She did not say anything but stood and got in the bed and slept until around eight.

She woke when Mike and John were bringing her hot bath water.

Eleanor looked at time.

The house was quiet.

She ran and opened the door and said, “Good morning.”

Mike and John said, “Good morning.”

Eleanor said, “Is anyone up?”

Mike said, “Jose.”

Eleanor said, “You asked about going to get the coal?”

Mike said, “Yes.”

Eleanor said, “You have to be on the train tomorrow at ten. That train you will change in Philadelphia and go to New York. The train with the coal should be in New York or arriving in New York, because of the weather. We bought the cargo cars. That we it is easy. Just hook up the engine to the cars and come straight back here.”

John said, “Can I go? How many people you need?”

Eleanor said, “I need about four to watch and make sure everything is hooked up.”

Mike was thinking and said, “Your worker with the silver ware asked about going.”

Eleanor said, “I’ll be down in a n hour, tell him to see me. I might go with three men.”

Bryce and Stephen rode fast back to their rooms wrapped in their blankets.

Stephen rode to his rooming house.

He tied his horse and took his saddle off the horse and put the blanket on the horse and went into the rooming house and into his room.

His room was at the back of the house and he put coal on his fire and undressed and went to be.

He laid on his back and thought about the good time he had that day.

He thought about Monica.

He took some of Shirley’ paper and wrote Monica a note to join him for lunch on Monday at the restaurant in town.

He gave the note to Jose.

Jose looked at the note and walked into the kitchen and gave it to Monica.

Monica was shocked and kept working.

Stephen laid on his bed and thought about the rooming house. He eventually bought it from the owner who was dying. Over the years he re-modeled it and keep it full with roomers. He thought Monica could move in there with him.

A thought came to him that she might be a Christian woman and he could not do that to.

Stephen thought, “I hope Eleanor get that coal.”

He went to sleep.

Bryce was drinking in his room.

When he finished drinking he dressed and went to bed.

He slept into the morning.

Lorraine went to her room and dressed for bed and slept around eight.

She heard Mike and John and asked for water.

They saw Hutch walked out his suite and Gen and Ben.

Patrick and Brenda were still sleep.

Mike and John were talking.

John said, “This is easy work. They won’t have to bothered with water for downstairs because all these guests will be gone today.”

Mike said, “Yeah.”

Steven was on his way to the clerk’s office.

He was wrapped in two blankets and had the three blankets to return to Eleanor.

He was thinking about all the things he had to request.

When he left home he started the fire and check on the horses and feed them and gave them water.

He took old blankets and put them on the two horses he had hitched to his carriage.

He started the hot water and started a fire in the stove.

Alicia, Emilou and Steven preferred the house to be a little cold and not have fires burning.

Hutch bathed and shaved.

He checked his room for everything.

He picked up bag and walked up the hall.

He went and checked on Percy.

Shirley was going to breakfast when Hutch was coming out of Percy’s room.

Shirley cut her eyes at Hutch.

She did not know what to do.

Hutch was looking at Shirley,

He said, “Good morning Shirley.”

Eleanor heard Hutch was waiting to open her door so he could go downstairs. Even though she felt better. It took a few days to get that pain and soreness out.

Hutch told Eleanor she would not need therapy often if she moved more.

Eleanor thought, “She can walk more and drink once per day.”

Shirley said, “Good morning Hutch.”

She tried to rush downstairs.

Hutch was walking to go downstairs and stopped at the balcony and said, “Come on Eleanor. Stop hiding.”

Eleanor started stomping her feet and she tried to get her composure back and opened her door and said, “Good morning Hutch.”

Hutch said, “You are worst than Shirley.”

He and Eleanor walked downstairs to breakfast.

They saw Shirley hurry into the dining room.

Eleanor and Hutch snickered at the same time.

The boys ran passed Eleanor and Hutch to the dining room.

Thomas was thinking.

He turned to Jose and said, “Jose how many men did Eleanor need to get the coal?”

Jose was looking over the breakfast trays and gave one to Monica and one to Ruth.

He picked up the juice tray.

Jose looked at Thomas and said, “I don’t know. You can ask her this morning.”

John looked at Mike and raised his eyebrow.

Jose walked out the kitchen with the juice tray and looked at Mike and John.

Thomas did not see Mike and John’s facial expressions.

Thomas was thinking he need to start saving money. He could live off his part time work status but he had nothing else.

He heard that Robert and Bethany started a restaurant that was doing well. Especially being by the new military headquarters. That side of town was becoming popular because of the military headquarters and now the children are building a hospital on that side of town.

Jose had Eleanor’s carriage to be brought around the front of the house.

Brenda, Patrick, Gen and Ben rushed to breakfast to tell Hutch bye.

Everyone made their plates.

Monica gave Michael his plate with the lamb chop.

Hutch said, “May I say the grace?”

Patrick felt guilty that he was still drunk and could not pray to GOD .

He said, “Of course.”

They all stood and held hands.

Hutch said, “FATHER GOD good morning. I thank YOU for the assignment to come here to help your children and for me to learn from them also. I ask that YOU bestow on them a special blessing they could not dream of. I pray for more wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Open our hearts and give us more of YOUR love so we can be YOUR children in JESUS’ name.”

Gen said, “Amen.”

Michael and Thomas said, “Amen and Amen.”

Everyone sat.

Brenda watched Jose.

She said, “Jose come here.”

Jose walked to Brenda.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Can your family construction company build my hospital?”

Hutch, Eleanor and Bruce were listening.

Jose said, “They can build it.”

Brenda was searching Jose’s face and heart.

She said, “Why they should not build it?”

Hutch thought, “Oh. Wisdom.”

Jose said, “They would not hire Steven.”

Gen was listening.

Shirley looked at her grandma.

Brenda said, “Can you give me fifty men that can work with Steven and build my hospital?”

Jose said, “I can.”

Brenda said, “Have the list ready and give to Eleanor so she can write them.”

Jose said, “Yes ma am.”

Brenda said, “Your family construction company is located in the capital. Steven went to school in the state capitol. He tried to find a job but no one hired him. Did he go to your family’s company?”

Jose said, “Probably.”

Eleanor turned red.

Hutch looked at Eleanor.

Bruce was looking at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Jose is that why you left home?”

Jose said, “Yes ma a.”

Brenda said, “You know all the things we discussed for you to do while I am a way. Do you have any questions?”

Jose said, “No ma am.”

Hutch thought and turned his head and talked to Bruce and Shirley.

Gen was in deep thought.

She said, “I had a good time with Bryce and Stephen.”

Patrick said, “they are my best friends. I only see once or twice a year.”

Gen said, “That Bryce can put away some whiskey.”

Patrick was laughing and said, I can’t keep up.”

Ben said, “Nobody could.”

Hutch said, “You tried.”

Ben laughed.

He said, “No hard feelings doc.”

Hutch said, “I don’t hold bad feelings. I am like Michael.”

Michael was enjoying his lamb chop and did not hear Hutch.

Everybody laughed.

Eleanor leaned down and kissed him on his head.

Thomas leaned on Eleanor’s arm.

Eleanor kissed Thomas on his forehead.

Bruce said, “Momma can I go to the office with you today?”

Eleanor said, “Bruce it is cold. Why.”

Bruce said, “I need to start learning the business.”

Eleanor stared at Bruce.

She said, “Ok. Bruce, finish your breakfast. Put on two pairs of long johns two pairs of socks and a shirt pants and a vest.”

Eleanor was trying to think why he wanted to go to the office.

Bruce ran upstairs to dress.

Gen said, “Why?”

Eleanor was still puzzled.

Hutch said, ”Brenda I can see why GOD blesses you and Patrick. You hold nothing in your hearts against people.”

Patrick said, “But Bruce.”

Hutch said, “But Bruce.”

He looked at Gen and Ben.

Gen tried to hold her head down.

Ben was holding his head.

Shirley was looking off in space.

Hutch said, “I know you three are ignoring me so you won’t have therapy. You better get it before the holidays. We will be in Philadelphia until the spring.”

Ben pushed his chair bac and said, “I’m not scared.”

Gen kept her head in her oatmeal and said, “Yes you is.”

Ben leaned and kissed Gen on her head and said, “At least I will be able to dance during the holidays.”

Brenda laughed.

Ben walked to the door and stood and said, “Doctor.”

Hutch stood and walked to Ben.

He and Ben went to the parlor.

Shirley nearly fainted.

Gen was stirring her oatmeal and mumbled, He better go.”

Eleanor laughed.

Shirley was not laughing.

Michael said, “Grandma and grandpa why Dr. Hutch did not help your backs?”

Patrick said, “Probably because we will be in the hospital for one or two weeks.”

Michael opened his mouth and squalled.

Gen looked up from her oatmeal and watched Michael.

Monica and Ruth looked at Michael.

Eleanor jumped and looked at Michael.

Brenda stared at Michael who was crying hard.

Patrick was shock he could not move.

Ben and Hutch rushed back to the dining room.

Hutch looked around and saw everyone looking at Michael.

Shirley said, “Grandpa told Michael he and grandma would be in the hospital for one to two weeks. I don’t know why he is crying.”

Michael did not move his eyes off Patrick and Brenda.

Eleanor said, “Michael.”

She began to shake him.

Eleanor started crying and said, “I don’t know what to do.”

Hutch stood and stared.

Monica walked up a little and looked at Michael.

She said, “He thinks you are going to die and leave him.”

Lorraine stared at Michael.

She stood and walked to him and bent down in his face and turned his face to hers.

She took his napkin and wiped his face.

Percy and Bruce ran downstairs.

They said, “What’s wrong with Michael?”

Bruce said, “We heard him all upstairs.”

Hutch said, “He is in shock. He is very grieved.”

Lorraine was looking in Michael’s eyes.

She said, “Michael why are you crying?”

Michael cut his eyes back and Brenda and Patrick.

Eleanor was crying.

Thomas was seated and leaned around Eleanor and peeped at Michael.

Thomas begin to cry.

Brenda and Patrick cut their eyes at Thomas.

Lorraine grabbed Michael and hugged him.

She looked at Shirley.

Hutch was thinking and he said, ‘That boy has gone through so bad emotional things. He has to be healed by GOD.”

Lorraine said, “Michael. Your grandma and grandpa are going for check ups. They are not going to die.

They are not going to leave you. When your hospital is built they can go to that hospital. But your grandpa and Grandma will not die and leave you.”

Michael said, “Shirley told me they hated me and will die and leave me.”

Brenda and Patrick were crying and slowly looked at Shirley.

Eleanor was still crying.

Michael said, “She said my grandpa and my grandpa hated me. They wanted to die instead of being around me.”

Lorraine rocked Michael and said, “No Michael. Shirley was being mean to you. Your grandparents love you. They show you everyday they love you.”

Percy and Bruce sat at the table and looked at Michael.

They looked at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “Shirley, you told my seven year old that evil lie. When he went with you so you would not feel alone and rejected. I never knew you said that. Michael has kept that in him and a child has to be healed from that.”

Shirley cried and said, “I’m sorry.”

Hutch said, “Eleanor.”

Eleanor said, “I will delay the train until noon.”

Michael held onto Lorraine and cried.

Patrick pushed back from the table and said, “Come to me Michael.”

Michael looked at him.

Lorraine helped Michael out of his chair and took him to Patrick.

Patrick and Brenda patted Michael and told him they love him and they were not going to die.

Brenda said, “Michael can you feel our love for you?”

Michael stopped crying and looked in Patrick’s eyes.

He looked in Brenda’s eyes and said, “Yes.”

Brenda said, “Don’t you let nobody tell you we hate you. Understand Michael?”

Patrick said, “Shirley was sick and mad that she was sick. She said that out of being mean. She thought about the thing that would hurt you the most. That was to tell you we hated you. You knew in your heart that was not turn. That is what caused you not to completely lose your mind.”

Michael said, “Grandpa you and grandma didn’t come to get me.”

Patrick said, “Because your daddy told us not to. Dirty bastard.”

Michael said, “You would have come for me?”

Brenda was shaking Michael’s leg.

Patrick was holding him tight.

Patrick kissed Michael and said, “Yes Michael. Me and your grandma hated that we did not come to see you and get you. We are sorry for this happening to you. Forgive us Michael.”

Michael said, “Never let that happen again.”

Brenda said, “No.”

Patrick said, “Never.”

Jose said, “Dirty bastard.”

Hutch looked at Jose.

Lorraine and Eleanor were looking at Michael.

Lorraine shook her head.

Eleanor was looking at her baby.

Percy and Bruce looked at Shirley.

Gen was sitting back and looking.

She said, “Hutch how far do you think he has to go to be healed?”

Hutch said, “I do not know. I don’t know how far he was damaged.”

Shirley stood and walked to her room.

She began to pack and cried.

Eleanor stood and walked out the dining room.

Hutch grabbed Eleanor by her arm.

Eleanor said, “Shirley is my daughter and she was sick and in much pain. She wanted someone else to be in horrible pain like her and she said those evil things to Michael. She is my child and I understand why she said those things. I don’t like it especially because her words made my son lose his mind. I will not hurt Shirley.”

Lorraine said, “You have to remember at that time Shirley was a kid also.”

Hutch let Eleanor go.

Hutch and Ben went back to the parlor.

Michael said, “Heifer.”

Gen sat and watched Brenda and Patrick love Michael.

Eleanor walked up stairs to Shirley’s room.

Lorraine walked out the family dining’s room to watch Eleanor.

Monica and Ruth eased out the family dining room behind Lorraine.

Lorraine looked back and saw them and she eased down the hall to the staircase.

Hutch and Ben saw Lorraine but they did not say anything.

Lorraine was dressed nice.

She slowly walked up the staircase to give Eleanor enough time to talk to Shirley.

Lorraine did not hear any loud voices and screaming and hollering.

She reached the top of the staircase and turned to tip to Shirley’s room.

Monica and Ruth were standing by the parlor watching Lorraine.

Lorraine put her ear to the door.

She heard Shirley crying.

Eleanor said, “Shirley, you are packing where are you going?”

Shirley has trying to catch her breath and said, “Philadelphia.”

Eleanor looked across the bed at Shirley’s clothes she was packing.

She sat at the middle of the bed.

Shirley was standing and crying.

Eleanor said, “Why Shirley?”

Shirley was still trying to catch her breath and said, “Everybody hates me for what I did to Michael.”

Eleanor said, “Shirley what you did to Michael was a terrible thing. How could one child go into that type of evil to think about what could hurt a loving child to no return. That is the problem Shirley. It is not just what you did to Michael, bt why was your heart full of evil that you could think about what could hurt another child that they would lose their mind. I did not know that was the exact thing you said, My heart ache Shirley.”

Shirley said, “You hate me.”

Eleanor was touching her heart and said, “Shirley I will never hate you. I want you to go to God and JESUS and ask them to fix your heart and remove that evil part. Shirley I am not evil and your grandma Brenda and your grandpa Patrick are not evil. They love you. I love you. That evil mind you have is not from us. You think it is alright to treat people evil. That is what is blocking Skip from committing to you. He is waiting to see if you truly want that evil part of you to be removed. No one wants to be destroyed by you like you did Michael. We all have to work to get Michael’s mind back right. I am telling you I better see that you have asked God and JESUS to fix you and remove that evil part of you Shirley. If I don’t see it, then you can leave and never return.”

Shirley said, “Momma?”

Eleanor said, “Shirley you what is in your heart and mind.”

Shirley said, “I don’t know how.”

Eleanor stood and said, “Shirley you open your mouth and ask for whatever you want. You have a part of you that is a beautiful person, but the evil part has destroyed that beautiful garden with briers and thorns. Let God and JESUS remove them. No one can ask God and JESUS but you. You tried to blame me for your deformity. But Shirley I told the doctor to abort you.”

Shirley stopped crying and looked at Eleanor.

Lorraine turned and when she turned around and she saw Hutch, Ben, Monica and Ruth staring up at her.

She put her head back to the door.

Eleanor said, “Your grandpa Patrick said ‘no’. I knew you would hate me for bringing you into this world to die and for being damaged and you would torment me forever. Your grandpa Patrick saw your being as a blessing from GOD and that we had to grow and become the people GOD wanted us to be that could be here and help you. He alone thought you were a gift from GOD. Shirley go to that GOD and ask HIM to take that evilness out of you because you were born deformed, but the man of light healed you and gave you life. “

Eleanor stood and said, “Shirley, I am starting my day. You decide your day and the rest of your life will go.”

Eleanor hugged Shirley.

Lorraine turned to run down the staircase and realized she would not make it.

Monica and Ruth said turn around.

Lorraine turned around and saw Eleanor looking at her.

Monica and Ruth ran into the billiards room and ran through the kitchen into the formal dining room.

Jose was walking through the formal dining room when he heard someone running behind him.

He turned around and saw Monica and Ruth.

Hutch and Ben were standing in the middle of the foyer looking around at Monica and Ruth and Lorraine who was caught ease dropping.

Ruth and Monica were peeping from the doorway to run to the family dining room.

Jose stared at them.

He was continuing his walk to the family dining room.

He looked up and saw Lorraine and Eleanor on the staircase.

He cut his eyes at Monica and Ruth.

Jose watched Hutch and Ben staring up the staircase as he walked back to the family dining room.

Patrick was still holding Michael in his lap.

Brenda was still patting Michael.

Thomas was crying. Percy was shaking.

Jose looked around at the food and started clearing the breakfast food.

Percy looked back and said, “Jose may I have some food?”

Jose nodded and made Percy a plate of oatmeal and fruit and bacon.

Jose placed the food in front of Percy.

Percy grinned.

Brenda said, “Percy.”

Percy said, “Thank you.”

Jose nodded his head and was taking the trays to the kitchen.

He looked up the hall to see Lorraine and Eleanor still on the staircase.

Jose gave the trays to Monica and Ruth.

He turned and went back to the dining room and started cleaning up.

Gen was quiet.

Gen said, “Jose where is Lorraine?”

Jose said, “About to fight Eleanor.”

Brenda thought she heard Jose said Lorraine and Eleanor were fighting.

She slowly looked at Jose.

Thomas and Bruce looked at Jose.

Thomas stood and walked to the dining room door.

Bruce walked to the door and looked and saw Lorraine and Eleanor standing on the staircase talking.

Bruce stepped back in the dining room and said, “Grandma.”

Brenda looked at Bruce and said, “Yes Bruce.”

Bruce said, “Momma and Aunt Lorraine are talking.”

Brenda said, “Where are they?”

Bruce said, “On the stairs.”

Brenda said, “Tell them I said get off the stairs.”

Bruce turned and ran out the dining room and down the hall to the staircase.

He said, “Momma and Aunt Lorraine, grandma said get off the stairs.”

Lorraine and Eleanor looked at Bruce.

Patrick said, “Did Bruce call Lorraine aunt?”

Gen said, “I heard that. Why?”

Brenda said, “I don’t know.”

Hutch walked to the stairs and helped Lorraine down.

Bruce helped Eleanor down.

Eleanor looked at Hutch and said, “I’ll send the telegram to hold the train now.”

Hutch said, “I can stay and catch the train with Brenda and Patrick tomorrow. I need to check on Michael and Percy.”

Eleanor said, “Fine.”

Ben was looking up at Hutch.

Hutch looked at Ben.

Ben said, “I did not have to go through this this morning?”

Lorraine smiled and walked away to the dining.

She walked back and touched Gen on her shoulder.

Gen looked up at Lorraine.

Gen stared at Lorraine.

Lorraine looked at Gen and sat next to her.

Gen hit Lorraine’s thigh.

They sat and watched Michael.

Michael fell asleep in Patrick’s arms.

Hutch walked in the dining room.

Patrick and Brenda looked at him.

Patrick said, “Hutch you need to leave now to catch that noon train.”

Hutch said, “I decided to stay until tomorrow and the three of us can leave…”

He nodded towards Michael and said, “I need to check on him and Percy.”

Percy was eating and said, “Why? I can’t have any cough syrup.”

Gen hollered and fell back in her chair and her arms fell by her side.

Brenda looked at Percy and said, “Apologize. Don’t let it take but a second.”

Percy looked at Hutch and said, “Dr. Hutch I apologize.”

Hutch looked at Percy and drank a sip of his juice and said, “I accept your apology Percy.”

Hutch looked at Michael.

He said, “Patrick you want me to take Michael to his bed?”

Brenda said, “He like to sleep in Patrick’s arm.”

Eleanor and Bruce were in their heavy coats and they stepped in the dining room.

Brenda and Patrick looked at them.

Thomas had stopped crying.

Eleanor walked over to Michael and kissed his forehead.

She was passing Thomas.

Thomas grabbed her by the waist.

Eleanor hugged him and kissed his forehead.

She said, “Bruce and I are leaving and will be back soon.”

Bruce waved at everybody.

Gen said, “I hope you find the furniture Eleanor.”

Jose walked to the door and said, “Dr. Hutch?”

Hutch looked at Jose.

Jose looked towards the parlor.

Hutch stood and walked to the door as Bruce held Eleanor’s hand and escorted her to the buggy.

Jose walked out and gave them three blankets.

Eleanor pulled the flap she had placed on the carriage and turned and sped out the yard.

Bruce was laughing and talking all the way.

They stop at furniture shop.

Eleanor saw Gen’s two bedroom suites and the twenty six chairs.

Eleanor told Linda to ring up the sale.

Bruce was walking and looking through the furniture shop.

Eleanor was watching Bruce.

Linda looked at Bruce and then Eleanor.

They all heard about the mob trying to kill the children to be a warning to others.

Linda watched Bruce and said, “Eleanor you may not remember me...”

Thompson walked up and Linda said, “We all heard about the attack on your children.”

Thompson nodded his head.

Linda said, “But we prayed hard for your children and your family.”

Eleanor teared up and said, “Thank you. We appreciate your prayers and I will tell my mother and father when I return home.”

Linda and Sheryl were smiling and looking at Bruce.

Eleanor looked at Bruce and said, “Linda I do remember, Sheryl and Thompson. You always did the opposite of what I did not want.”

Eleanor looked around the furniture shop and said, “This is nice. I pray you much success.”

Sheryl smiled and said, “Thank you.”

Linda and Thompson nodded.

Eleanor said, “Bruce come on.”

Bruce walked to Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Bruce, they used to work at the house.”

Bruce looked at the people.

Eleanor said, “This is Thompson.”

Bruce reached to shake his hand and said, “Marbles.”

Thompson tried to smile and cut his eyes at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Linda and Sheryl.”

Bruce nodded and said, “It’s good to know you.”

Eleanor said, “I’ll have Jose to work out a delivery of the furniture.”

Thompson grinned.

Bruce opened the door for Eleanor and they walked out the furniture shop.

Bruce escorted Eleanor to the carriage.

She waited for him.

They went to the family’s office.

Bruce went to see Nathan.

Eleanor started a fire and turned on the telegram machine.

She checked the office and made sure everything was secured.

She sat at her desk.

Steven walked in the office.

Eleanor looked up and walked and got her hat, scarf and gloves.

Steven said, “They refused to give me the permits and licenses without one of you.”

Eleanor said, “We figured they would be dirty.”

Eleanor picked up her bag with her documents and walked out with Steven.

She walked to the sheriff’s office.

Steven said, “Miss Eleanor it is too cold to walk.”

Bruce and Nathan saw Eleanor standing outside the door talking to somebody.

Bruce stood and walked to the window and said, “That’s Steven. He is building our hospital.”

Nathan said, “I know Steven.”

Bruce said, “Emilou is his sister. She ate a piece of pie and she was running through the house.”

Bruce was so tickle that the mean Nathan laughed.

Bruce said, “Grandpa’s head was going like this.”

Bruce was demonstrating how Patrick was acting.

He said, “She went to the liquor table behind Grandpa and the men. Steven had to get her and grandma had to move her. She said she was thirsty.”

Eleanor heard Bruce laughing.

She loved his laugh.

She knocked on the door.

The very stern Nathan looked at the door.

Eleanor opened the door and said, “Hello Sheriff Nathan. Bruce the office is cold because I only put a little coal for a fire. You can go with me or to the office.”

Bruce looked at Eleanor and said, “It’s cold momma.”

Nathan grinned.

Steven pulled his carriage to Eleanor.

Bruce looked at Steven all wrapped up and said, “Bye Sheriff Nathan.”

Nathan said, “Bye Bruce. Eleanor do you have riders to go and get the coal?”

Eleanor said, “Yes. I’ll be back.”

Bruce jumped in the carriage and then Eleanor.”

They rode to the clerk’s office just before lunch.

The clerk primped his mouth.

He did not say a word to Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at him and said, “Carl.”

Eleanor reached to Steven to give her all the applications for the licenses and permits and the reception on the grounds.

Steven reached Eleanor the applications.

Eleanor put one application at a time on the clerk’s desk.

Carl stamped the applications one at a time.

Eleanor said, “Thank you Carl.”

Steven stuck out his tongue at Carl.

Bruce giggle.

Eleanor said, “Steven that was very grown up. You have to learn to go around these racist people. They are all over. No part of this country is free of them. So you decide where you want to be and dig in your heels.”

Steven said, “My daddy did that and they killed him and my momma.”

Bruce was sitting in the middle of them and looked at Steven.

Eleanor turned her head and looked at Steven and said, “Sorry Steven.”

Bruce said, “How is Emilou?”

Steven said, “She was sleep when I left. She should be up now.”

Bruce laughed and said, “She like pie.”

Eleanor laughed.

Steven said, “She does.”

Eleanor said, “Steven come in for a minute and let me write you a note for the design.”

Steven, Eleanor and Bruce got out his carriage.

Steven got the three blankets that Jose gave them last night and gave them to Bruce because Eleanor was unlocking the door.

Eleanor looked at the blankets and said, “We don’t have anything in this office. Bruce put the blankets in the closet.”

Eleanor went to her desk and open her bag and wrote the check to Steven.

Eleanor said, “Steven, momma and daddy said to give you thousand dollars for the design and all of your hard work.”

Steven jumped up and began to scream and run around in the office.

Bruce was scared t first.

Nathan heard the scream and ran out his office and saw Steven running around in the office and he saw Eleanor with the check book.

Bruce was standing at the closed closet and grinning.

Bruce saw Nathan and saluted him.

Nathan saluted Bruce and went back to his office.

Eleanor finished writing the check to Steven.

Steven said, “Bye and ran out the office and turned his carriage around and went to the bank.

Nathan was standing in his office the window and saw Steven stop in front of the bank.

Steven jumped out the carriage and ran into the bank.

The manager looked at Steven and tried to smile.

Steven had started to get bitter towards white people.

A thought came to him, that his mother and sisters are white.

Steven gave the note to bank clerk.

She looked at him and took the note to the bank manager.

The bank manager saw the amount of the note and nodded his head.

He walked out with her.

The manager watched her count Steven’s money.

Steven told her to five hundred dollars in Emilou, Alicia and his bank accounts.

He put four hundred in the general bank account for the house and family.

He left the bank with a hundred dollars.

Steven rode to Eleanor’s jewelry shop and saw gold initials of ‘A’ and ‘E”.

He looked at the jewelry and decided to wait.

Steven went to Shirley’s dress shop.

Selma was talking to Wendy about the fantastic house and the great dinner.

Steven spoke to the women.

Selma said, “Steven. I was just telling Wendy about the great dinner yesterday.”

Steven said, “It was a great day.”

Selma said, “How can I help you Steven. I want to get Alicia one of those dresses they had on yesterday.”

Selma said, “We have a few left. But Alicia looked great yesterday.”

She walked with Steven and showed him the dresses they had left.’

Selma showed him the seven dresses left.

Steven chose a green dress.

Selma laughed and touched Steven’s arm and said, “That’s my favorite. I was hoping you selected it. I could not tell you.”

Steven grinned.

He followed Selma to the counter and paid for the dress and left.

He rode passed the sheriff’s office and he saw Eleanor and Bruce were gone.

Eleanor was riding fast home.

Bruce had on five blankets and Eleanor had on one blanket. They made it home in forty- five minutes instead of the hour.

She and Bruce laughed all the way home.

She rode the horses around the back.

Eleanor and Bruce ran into the house.

Jose looked back and said, “Eleanor please talk to the men you selected to go and ride back with the coal.

Bruce was standing in the hall with the five blankets on him.

Jose turned and looked at Bruce.

Bruce looked at Jose.

Eleanor said, “Jose.”

Jose turned around and said, “Thomas, Mike, John and Stephen want to go.”

Eleanor said, “Jose you re-scheduled Thomas and Stephen?”

Jose said, “Yes.”

Eleanor said, “You will be paid your regular salary and a bonus of a hundred dollars each. Is that acceptable?’

Mike said, “Yes.”

Jose looked at him, because he knew Mike and John got a lot of money from the mobster.

Thomas said, “Yes.”

Stephen grinned and said, “Yes ma am.”

John said, “Yes. When do we leave?”

Eleanor said, “You will catch the ten am train in the morning with Mr. and Mrs. Stith. You will get off in Philadelphia and catch the very next express train to New York. You will be the only persons on the car because it is a cargo train. The train from Canada will be there and the cargo cars should be unhitched so our train can back up and hitched the cargo cars to it. Check and make sure coal is in each car and the cars are full. I need one of you to double check the inventory and sign off on it. I will give you extra for being the inventory person.”

Everyone pointed at Mike.

Eleanor said, “I need you to telegram me, when the inventory has been confirmed so I can pay the distributor. Thank you.”

Jose was still looking at Bruce.

Bruce was still looking at Jose.

Eleanor looked at the two and touched Bruce’s by his shoulders and they walked into the billiards room.

Bruce took off the blankets and handed them to Monica.

He helped Eleanor off her blankets.

Jose saw Monica pass by with the blankets.

He grinned.

Dan was preparing dinner for that evening.

He caught fish from his stream and had several chickens prepared for dinner along with a salad, slaw and the French fried potatoes the children enjoyed in France.

Dan was happy they were going to get the coal Eleanor ordered.

He needed a lot of coal.

He was freezing at home since that Wednesday. He was glad he was at work. He saw people picking up tree branches. He thought about the field that was caught on fire and wondered if there was anything that he could use for heat.

Eleanor went and saw her parents.

She and Bruce went to check on Michael.

He was laying in his bed looking at the wall.

Thomas was sitting in the hall watching Michael.

Thomas saw Eleanor and Bruce walking up the hall.

He ran to Eleanor and hugged.

Eleanor held Thomas.

They walked to see Michael.

Eleanor walked to Michael and stood in front of him.

He jerked and looked at her.

He jumped up on his knees in his bed and hugged her.

Eleanor held him.

Thomas was crying.

Bruce walked on the other side of Eleanor and watched Michael.

Bruce said, “Michael why were you staring at the wall.”

Michael said, “I was thinking.”

Bruce said, “About what?”

Hutch walked up and was standing in Michael’s door and listened.

Michael said, “About everything. Why I decided to go with daddy and Shirley. I know daddy didn’t care about Shirley, but he did not want momma to have her. I didn’t want Shirley to think we did not want her.”

Eleanor was kissing Michael’s cheeks.

Thomas was patting Michael’s back.

Michael said, “Shirley was angry and mad because you left her momma. She knew she could not get to you anymore because you were gone all away around the world…”

Michael moved his head for far away.

Shirley was in her room all day crying.

Lorraine went to Shirley’s room and knocked on her door and said she was leaving.

Lorraine said, “Shirley I forgive you and I love you. You just make up with those handicap students.”

Hutch, Ben and Gen were standing downstairs and watched Lorraine.

Lorraine waved at them and went down the backstairs and walked through the back hall and out of the backdoor to her carriage.

She looked around and cried.

Jose, Thomas, Dan were watching her from the backdoor.

Mike and John were watching Lorraine from the kitchen window.”

Lorraine got in her nice carriage and rode away.

Shirley ran out her room and did not see Lorraine leave from the front door.

She ran through the hall and down the backstairs.

Dr. Hutch said, “See Shirley run.”

Gen said, “I love Lorraine. Shirley she is gone.”

Ben looked at Gen.

Shirley ran to the backdoor.

Thomas, Dan and Jose moved from the door.

Shirley saw the end of Lorraine’s carriage leaving.

After an hour Shirley went back upstairs and remained.

She opened he door hours later to tell her grandma and grandpa she was leaving to live by herself until she died.

She saw Hutch standing in Michael’s door.

Her heart fell.

If anything happened to Michael, they would want her out immediately.

She had to face this. This would be the final thing she had to face before she left.

She thought about money, but her mind could not wrap around how to get it.

Shirley slowly walked down the hall to Michael’s room.

Percy peeped out his door and ran down to Michael’s room.

He passed Hutch and walked into Michael’s room.

Shirley stopped and exhaled.

Hutch looked and saw Shirley.

He saw absolute fear on her face.

Hutch did not say anything. He knew Shirley had to decide to face this part of her life on her own. No one could make the decision but her.

Brenda and Patrick finished packing and had Jose to take their bags to the back.

Jose looked up and saw Shirley standing still with one hand on her chest and the other one covering her mouth.

Jose stopped.

Patrick and Brenda were going to the sitting room to visit with Gen and Ben and go over things they wanted them to do.

Patrick and Brenda saw Jose looking up the stairs.

They walked to Jose and looked up and saw Shirley.

Patrick and Brenda’s heart dropped they started walking up the stairs.

Shirley started slowly walking up the stairs.

Michael was holding onto Eleanor.

Eleanor was holding onto Michael.

Shirley finally made it to Hutch,

Patrick and Brenda saw Hutch in Michael’s door and they ran to Michael’s room.

They pressed pass Shirley and Hutch and ran into Michael’s room.

Michael was looking in Eleanor’s eyes.

He looked at his grandpa and grandma.

He did not see Shirley.

Michael turned back to Eleanor and said, “Momma. Shirley hated you because you left her. She knew you did not love daddy anymore and that she could not do anything to grandma and grandpa because they were far away. So, the only thing she knew you loved was me. She fought me every day. She hated me. Instead of you. I tried to be nice to her because you were gone. But she hated me momma.”

Eleanor kissed Michael on his head.

She said, “Michael how do you feel about Shirley hating you?”  
Michael said, “I don’t know momma.”

Eleanor said, “Michael what do you think I should have done?”

Michael said, “Momma.”

He grabbed Eleanor’s face and held it in his hand and said, “Momma you should have beaten daddy. We would have helped.”

Thomas said, “Yeah momma.”

Percy said, “We should have tied him up and put him on the train tracks.”

Hutch turned all the way and looked at Percy.

Eleanor said, “Michael can you forgive me for not fighting Bruce.”

Michael said, “Momma tell me why you did not fight Bruce.”

Eleanor began to cry.

Bruce said, “Don’t cry momma.”

Eleanor was sniffling and said, “I did not know how to fight Brue. He was the only person that was my friend when we grew up.”

Percy said, “Why momma. Because you are black?”

Eleanor said, “Yes. I felt if I fought him I would have no friends. I did not want, not to have at least one friend.”

Brenda was thinking, “I want to kill Bruce. Using her for her money.”

Hutch was watching Percy.

Bruce held Eleanor’s hand and said, “Momma we are your friends. God gave you new friends that love you.”

Gen, Ben and Jose tipped upstairs and were standing behind Hutch and Shirley listening.

Gen thought, “Oh GOD Brenda is going to kill Bruce. Please stop her GOD.”

Ben turned his head and thought, “Nasty bastard.”

Thomas patted Eleanor’s back with his other hand.

Percy had his head and was thinking.

Patrick was watching Percy.

Percy said, “So daddy was your friend so he could get what from you momma?”

Patrick’s knees buckled.

He could not believe how Percy’s mind was calculating. He looked at the tall lanky Percy that looked like his daddy and thought, “I got to keep up with him. How is Eleanor going to answer Percy?”

Eleanor took a dep breath and looked back at Percy and said, “Come here Percy.”

Brenda held her breath.

Eleanor said, “Bruce family always wanted what your grandparents have. They told Bruce to be my friend and have babies by me so they can enter into business with your grandma and grandpa. When your grandma and grandpa found out I was expecting with Shirley from Bruce, they wanted me to go away and give Shirley to be adopted. I could not do that because she was part of me. She was my child. I ran to unlock my door and fell and hurt her in my stomach. Bruce wanted to use that…”

Brenda yelled, “Wanted to!”

Everyone turned and saw her and Patrick and Shirley and Hutch with Gen and Ben peeping over Hutch.

Eleanor held on to Michael and said, “I wanted the doctor to end the pregnancy…”

Bruce said, “To kill Shirley?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Thomas looked at Shirley.

Michael said, “Then she would not have been here to hurt me.”

Shirley turned to run away.

Hutch grabbed her and held her in the doorway.

Gen and Ben stood behind Shirley so she could not run away.

Eleanor said, “Your grandpa told the doctor ‘no’, that Shirley was a gift from GOD. He would not let her die. Your grandpa said we all had to grow in GOD to help Shirley.”

Bruce peeped around Eleanor and to the door to see Shirley.

Hutch wondered why Bruce looked at Shirley.

Jose was standing in the hall listening to everything.

Eleanor said, “For each baby I had by Bruce, his family wanted money. But when Shirley was born I would not have another baby. I wanted her to be healed and if not, I would be with her when she died. Lorraine would be here all day. Your grandma and grandpa were with her all night. We would not leave Shirley.”

Percy said, “Momma?”

Patrick turned because he wanted to see what Percy was about to say.

Hutch tuned because he wanted to see Percy and figure out the type of person he was.

Percy was thinking and stared at Eleanor and said, “Why didn’t you leave daddy after Shirley was born?’

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor held her had down.

Hutch squinted his eyes at Eleanor.

Gen exhaled deeply.

Hutch looked at Gen.

Eleanor said, “Percy, for you to ask that question, you know why.”

Percy said, “Said it.”

Brenda jumped at his sternness.

Percy looked at Brenda and said, “Grandma your shotgun is downstairs.”

Hutch stepped in the room to see what was really going on.

Eleanor stood.

Michael held Eleanor’s face in his hands and said, “Momma.”

Eleanor said, “It still hurts baby.”

Michael said, “Daddy did not like you because you are black.”

Brenda looked at Michael.

Eleanor burst out crying.

Percy said, “Momma you got to let the hurt out so you can be healed…”

Percy pointed at Hutch and said, “That’s what he said. When I was throwing up.”

Hutch stared at Percy.

Patrick whispered to Brenda, “I’ll go and get your shotgun.”

Patrick put one hand around Brenda’s waist and the other hand on her shoulder.

Brenda nodded her head.

Hutch said, “You two will not do anything but get to the hospital.”

Brenda rolled her eyes.

Percy looked at Brenda and Patrick.

Eleanor cried and said, “That’s when grandpa put an end to me having children for Bruce. I was having babies to keep him with me. I was afraid to let him go because being black I could not find another man to love me.”

Shirley said, “He did not love you.”

She looked at Hutch and said, “Turn me loose. I am not going anywhere I have to face all of this.”

Hutch looked at Shirley and turned her loose.

Michael said, “Momma do you love me?”

Eleanor said, “With all of my heart I do love you Michael.”

Michael looked in Eleanor’s eyes and said, “I love you momma with all of my heart. I forgive you for not coming to get me.”

Eleanor squeeze Michael and said, “Thank you Michael. I am sorry.”

Shirley screamed, “Forgive me!!”

Hutch looked at Shirley.

Bruce peeped around Eleanor and Michael and stared at Shirley.

Percy looked at Shirley.

Thomas said, “Shirley you could have told Lorraine or Jose to send a message to momma.”

Shirley said, “I wasn’t thinking about that.”

Michael said, “No. You were thinking about hurting me. Heifer.”

Shirley screamed, “Michael I am sorry.”

Brenda said, “Michael I and your grandpa are sorry we did not come to get you.”

Michael jumped to the end of his bed and grabbed Brenda around her neck and then Patrick.

Thomas was jumping up and down in excitement.

Hutch looked at the excited and happy Thomas.

Eleanor kissed the top of Thomas’ head.

Bruce was looking at Eleanor showing love to Thomas.

Eleanor turned and looked in Bruce’s eyes.

Gen saw there was a connection with Eleanor and Bruce.

Gen smiled.

Hutch watched Bruce and wondered about him.

Shirley said, “What about me?”

Percy looked at Shirley.

He said, “Shirley what you want forgiveness for…”

Bruce said, “Who do you want forgiveness from?”

Eleanor was holding Thomas.

Shirley screamed, “Everybody!!”

Michael had one arm around Brenda’s neck and one arm around Patrick’s neck.

He said, “I don’t like that heifer,”

Brenda kissed Michael.

She said whispered and said, “Michael you want GOD to make you better than before Shirley hurt you. You have to truly forgive her from your heart.”

Michael whispered in Brenda and Patrick’s ears and said, “I don’t want to forgive her. I want her to hurt like she made me hurt.”

Eleanor heard Michael and said, “My baby. God wants you to forgive Shirley from your heart like you did for me and grandpa and grandma. He doesn’t want you nor Shirley to carry this burden around in your hearts. You forgave Shirley in your mind, but now forgive her in your heart. So you and her to go on and be the best people God wants you to be.

Michael turned from Eleanor and looked in Brenda’s eyes.

Brenda was crying and said, “Yes Michael.”

Michael looked at a crying Patrick.

Patrick said, “Michael you know the answer. You have to forgive Shirley from your heart so you can be completely healed by GOD and JESUS.”

Michael said, “I want to go to church Sunday.”

Brenda looked back at Hutch.

Hutch looked at Hutch.

Patrick said, “Michael we may not be able to take you.”

Eleanor said, “Michael I will take you.”

Bruce said, “Me too.”

Thomas was jumping up and said, “Me too.”

Percy said, “Me too.”

Hutch turned and looked at Percy.

Percy started mumbling and turned his head from Hutch.

Gen hollered and said, “Me and Ben will be there to. I need to go.”

Ben said, “Amen!! And Amen!!”

The boys said, “And amen.”

Everybody clapped.

Shirley said, “I don’t understand. Michael have you forgiven me?”

Michael said, “I need GOD’s help Shirley. That is why I am going to church. You need to go for Him to take that evil out of your heart. Heifer.”

Brenda smacked Michael’s thigh.

Michael rubbed his though and looked at Brenda and said, “Ow.”

Brenda kissed him on his cheek and said, “Stop that. It’s suppose to hurt.”

Shirley stood and said, “Wait what about me Michael?”

Michael looked in Brenda’s eyes.

Hutch thought, “Spoiled, bad and cute. Trouble.”

Michael said, “I told you Shirley I need God to help me to forgive you and that you need to go to church for God to remove that evil out of you.”

Shirley stood and looked at Michael.

Michael turned his head from looking at Shirley.

He looked at Brenda and batted his eyes.

Hutch said, “Michael is fine. I smell dinner.”

Ben said, “I do too.”

Jose said, “Dan came to the steps a little while to see where everyone was.”

Brenda looked back at Jose as she was patting Michael on his hips and said, “Jose you stood there and listened to family business?”

Jose said, “I’m family.”

He walked down the backstairs.

Brenda and Patrick looked at Jose.

Bruce said, “Jose is family. He was with Michael and Shirley.”

Brenda hugged Michael.

Thomas said, “Come on Michael and let’s eat. Dr. Hutch said you are fine.”

Percy said, “Yeah. I smell fried fish and fried chicken.”

Hutch said, “No Percy.”

Percy stood and looked at Hutch and screamed, “No Shirley.”

Shirley jumped and looked at Percy.

Gen was twisting and flinging her arms from side to side hollering at Percy.

Hutch said, “Percy I believe you still may be contagious. I don’t want anyone else to get sick.”

Jose was downstairs and yelled, “I know.”

Percy had started sniffing.

Eleanor looked back at Percy.

Hutch said, “Percy I will eat with you, I’m your friend.”

Percy yelled, “What?”

Gen fell backwards and leaned on the wall and nearly went to her knees.

Ben laughed.

Brenda looked at Hutch.

Hutch said, “Brenda I am a doctor. I need to make sure Percy does not get anyone else sick.”

Thomas said, “Percy all the grown ups will be gone tomorrow.”

Hutch looked at Thomas and said, “Thomas, I thought you were the reasonable one. You are sneaky.”

Thomas buried his face in Eleanor’s chest, with one eye on Hutch.

Percy said, “I don’t care! I want that fried fish and fried chicken today!”

They heard a bell ringing downstairs.

Everybody stood still.

Eleanor was thinking.

She said, “Is that my bell that Jose stole?”

She turned Thomas loose and passed Michael and Shirley.

Bruce and Thomas were right behind her.

Michael jumped off the bed and ran out the room.

Patrick and Brenda, Gen and Ben walked out talking.

Shirley stood in the room and looked at Percy then Hutch.

She said, “What about me?”

Percy said, “You can always eat with me Shirley.”

Shirley did not look at Percy and said, “Percy you are just as evil as I am. Wait until they find out, you will be out the door too.”

Hutch stood and listen.

Percy said, “Yeah, but you are going now.”

Percy looked at Shirley and went to his bedroom.

Monica was bringing Percy’s dinner tray.

Hutch and Shirley looked at Percy’s dinner tray and rushed to go downstairs to dinner.

Percy was peeping at the tray Monica had and grinned.

He jumped on his bed.

Monica put the tray across Percy’s lap.

Percy was grinning and started eating.

Monica stood and said, “Percy, your grace.”

Percy looked up at Monica.

He held his head down and folded his hands in prayer and said, “God bless this food in JESUS’ name.”

Monica looked at Percy and walked to the door and put her hand on the doorknob.

She said, “Open or closed.”

Percy said, “Open. Tell Dr. Hutch I am waiting for him to join me for dinner.”

Monica said, “Sure”.

Eleanor stood at the top of the stairs and watch Jose stand in the hall by the family dining room and ring the bell.

She stood and looked at him.

Eleanor started descending the stairs followed by Thomas and Bruce.

Michael was next followed by Brenda, Gen, Ben and Patrick who were talking.

Shirley and Hutch were running down the hall to go to dinner.

Eleanor said, “Jose that better not be my bell that you stole and hid.”

Brenda and Patrick looked.

Gen said, “Fight. Fight.”

Jose said, “And if it is?”

Eleanor walked to Jose and said, I ought to kick you’re a\*\*. You keep it.”

Jose squinted and looked at Eleanor and said, “Why you don’t want it back?”

Brenda, Gen, Ben and Patrick were talking and passing Jose.

Hutch and Shirley were moving down the hall.

Eleanor said, “I’m going to get a whistle.”

Brenda said, “Not in this house.”

Ruth and Theresa looked at Eleanor.

Jose said, “Then I’ll kick you’re a\*\*. You drove all of us crazy with this damn bell. You better not get no whistle.”

Bruce said, “She already got it.”

Eleanor was humming.

Hutch and Shirley ran to the dining room and sat.

Brenda and Patrick looked at Hutch and Shirley.

Hutch said, “We saw Percy’s dinner tray.”

Shirley was grinning.

Gen reached over and touched Shirley’s arm.

Shirley looked at Gen and they laughed.

Gen said, “None of us is perfect but we must try.”

Michael rolled his eyes at Shirley.

Shirley saw him.

Ruth put his plate down with one lamb chop.

Dan walked in with a dinner tray and Mellissa walked in with another tray.

They placed the trays on the table.

Gen said, “Oh my God.”

Ben started laughing.

Hutch rubbed his hands together.

Monica walked in and walked to Hutch and said, “Percy said he is waiting on you to join him for dinner.”

Hutch said, “I did say I would eat with him.”

Dan said, “I can serve you before you go.”

Hutch said, “What type of fish?”

Dan said, “There is a stream in the back of my house. This is carp, catfish and bass.”

Hutch said any of the fish, a chicken leg, what are those?”

Bruce said, “French fries.”

Hutch said, “French fries, corn and slaw.”

Dan made Hutch a big plate.

Hutch took the plate and stood.

Shirley said, “The same thing.”

Hutch stopped and said, “No slaw, no corn and a small fish and a few fries.”

Shirley blew.

Gen reached over and said, “I’ll eat it for you Shirley.”

Everybody laughed.

Ben said, “Dan, I may ask you to let me come and fish.”

Dan said, “You are welcomed.”

Gen said, “Whose going to scale and gut the fish?”

Ben looked at Gen.

Brenda looked at Ben.

Dan turned to Gen and begin her plate and said, “Mrs. Olsen I have missed Olivia. Is she well?”

Gen said, “She is well. I just let her off for Thanksgiving to spend it with her family and friends.”

Gen smiled.

Dan nodded his head.

Ben said, “Brenda tell Gen that it is a partner relation.”

Brenda smirked and kept looking over the dinner platters.

Hutch walked out the dining room and walked upstairs to Percy.

He sat outside Percy’s door.

Percy snickered.

Hutch said, “I knew you were being dirty. You will not stop me from enjoying this meal.”

Hutch said his grace and ate his dinner.

Brenda said, “Catfish and slaw.”

Patrick said, “It all look good. Chicken, bass and fries.”

Dan served everybody.

They placed the platters on the buffest and walked out.

Dan fried fish for the workers. He spent Thanksgiving fishing. He put the fish in a big pail and left them in the pail at the stream.

Emily was out walking on the cold Thanksgiving Day while her turkey cooked and saw Dan in his backyard at the stream.

She spoke to Dan and said, “Hello.”

Dan turned around and saw her and said, “Hello.”

Emily said, “Sir can I join you for a minute?”

Dan said, “What is wrong?”

Emily said, “Nothing is wrong I just wanted to speak.”

Dan said, “Why do you want to speak?”

Emily walked into Dan’s backyard and said, “I wanted to say. Thank you.”

Dan looked at Emily.

Emily started pointing and said, “There they go.”

Dan turned and looked and about three bass were swimming pass.

Dan grabbed the pail and scooped them in pail.

Emily laughed.

She said, “There should be plenty of fish. After the neighbors left no one would come to the property to fish because of Bundy.”

Dan said, “That person should not be here.”

Emily turned and looked at Dan’s house and around his yard.

Dan knew she was looking because there was no coal.

She looked at Dan and said, “You need coal?”

Dan said, “No.”

Emily said, “You will freeze.”

Dan said, “I’m fine. Have a good Thanksgiving.”

Emily looked at Dan and saw movement out of her eye and turned quickly and pointed.

Dan ran and got the horse pail and jumped in the stream and caught five catfish.

Emily laughed and said, “Now you are cold and wet.”

Dan said, “Yeap.”

He rushed in the house and changed clothes.

He placed the cold and wet clothes on the back porch.

He went back to the streamed and continued to use the horse’s water pail to catch fish. He caught and cleaned nearly fifty fish.

He was so happy.

He rinsed the horse’s pail and put water in in.

Dan put the old rugged blanket on the horse and went in the house.

Dan was standing in the backdoor and looked over the beautiful land the LORD gave him.

He looked at the horse and said, “I need a stable and a wagon. Plus coal.”

Dan thought, “I wonder if any of those torch lights are left. I need to but this horse feed. Jose said, “If the weather is bad Brenda require us to stay home. I don’t have but six blankets. The curtains are helping a little bit. I need coal.”

Dan walked upstairs and loved how good his house looked.

He looked out the windows and saw Bundy and his wife in a carriage leaving their house.

Dan looked at the time and said, “Where are you going this time of day?”

Dan was thinking, “I got to do better. I’ll sleep in my clothes and wrapped up with the six blankets. I will sleep in my boots and at daybreak get up and leave and stay at the house this week -end.”

Dan woke at daybreak and jumped and left his blankets in the floor and got the horse up and grabbed the large pail of fish and rode the thirty minutes to the house with the pail on his lap.

Jose was coming from washing and shaving he stared at Dan.

Dan nearly fell off the horse.

Jose unlocked the backdoor and went into his room.

He knew whatever Dan was doing he was not going out in the cold to help.

Dan put the pail on the back porch and ran and took his horse to the stables.

He feed and gave his horse water and took off the saddle and hung it up.

The horse went to sleep.

Dan ran to the house and picked up the hug pail with the fish and brought it into the house.

He went downstairs and washed and shaved and changed clothes.

Dan knew Brenda, Patrick and maybe Eleanor were leaving. He was going to stay at the house until the coal came.

He washed the clothes that got wet and cleaned and dried his pair of boots and put on clean socks.

He was glad he had Denise to make him wool socks.

Dan made breakfast that morning.

Thomas woke and was about to walk in the kitchen and saw Dan. He turned and went back to bed.

Dan thought, “Yeah. He leaves today and I can stay in his room. Where is Jose?”

Jose came to the kitchen an hour later.

Dan said, “Jose is there a vacant room that I can stay in until the coal come?”

Jose said, “Not in the house. Maybe in the re-modeled supply shed. Because you know how Patrick doesn’t want women and men in the same housing. I think you can stay in the re-modeled supply shed. We will know today who will be leaving to go and get the coal.”

Dan said, “I might need to go and get that cold. You know what I did on Thanksgiving Day?”

Jose looked at the big pail and said, “Fish.”

Dan told Jose how he count and cleaned all the fish.

Dan waited until everyone was eating breakfast and he ran to the chicken coop and got three chicken for dinner.

He stayed in the chicken coop and prep the chickens and put them on the back porch. Until dinner.

Everyone enjoyed the fish and chicken dinner.

The boys ran upstairs and played in the hall outside Percy’s room.

Hutch was full and stretched on the floor and talked to the boys.

Shirley and Gen and Ben were in the parlor.

Eleanor, Brenda and Patrick were in the sitting room going the trains’ schedule getting the kids back to school for those three weeks and then home for Christmas.

Brenda said, “Eleanor don’t forget Skip’s signature on that telegram.”

Eleanor went over the hospital design , Steven’s two thousand dollars check, all the licenses and permits for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Eleanor said, “I’ll get Shirley to hand write these fifty invitations…”

Shirley said, “What she said?”

Gen said, “You can hear that Shirley?”

Eleanor said, “…Maybe fifteen people will show up no more than twenty-five. I will have a heated tent set up for hot cider and coco and cookies. I want to have a big dinner here in the formal dining room. I can do the floral arrangements.”

Brenda cut her eyes at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor that is too much for you. Maybe Mabel can do the floral designs that lead into Christmas.”

Eleanor said, “Momma you just want Mabel to do the designs. You have not let her rest since she came out of slavery where she had to the flowers.”

Brenda smiled.

Eleanor said, “All you had to do is say you will ask Mabel. She might not want to travel on the train during this holiday, especially working for Aunt Beverly and Al.”

Brenda said, “I think she works at the hospital once per week.”

Eleanor yelled down the hall and said, “Shirley and Gen come here.”

They stood and walked down the hall to the sitting room.

Eleanor said, “Shirley, we are having the ground breaking service the next day after everyone is home. That should be on the fifteen of December. I have a list of fifty dignitaries I want handwritten invitations to and Shirley I want you to write the invitations and I will sign them. Your grandma has already decided on the paper and color and color of ink and seal. You should be finished by Sunday at the latest.”

Brenda was double checking the list.

She handed the list to Patrick.

Patrick looked over the list and nodded his head in agreement.

Ben walked into the sitting room and sat by the door.

Patrick reached the list to Shirley.

Eleanor said, “I want to have a big dinner here that night. I think the dinner should be at least semi-formal. Not formal. It’s too short a time to pull a formal dinner together.”

Gen said, “I agreement with a semi-formal dinner. I got the perfect dress. I never worn.”

Ben looked at Patrick and smirked.

Patrick said, “We wear what they say.”

Shirley said, “I got seven more dresses. Well after Sunday I will have six. I will leave the three semi-formal dresses here.”

Gen said, “Who are you inviting to the semi-formal dinner?”

Gen looked at Brenda and Eleanor.

Gen said, “Tamara and Abigail because their husbands are over the licensing and hospital certification departments.”

Shirley said, “The family which includes you and Byson and Gail that’s twelve. Steven, Alicia and Emilou, that’s fifteen. Those two couples that nineteen. I don’t want the new mayor and his wife they stared at me too much.”

Eleanor said, “Fine.”

Shirley said, “What about a semi-formal reception that night and a dinner the next night for us?”

Eleanor looked at Brenda and said, “Shirley is right. If the fifty invited guests show up with their spouses that is a hundred people. We can’t accommodate that many for dinner. Because they may skip the groundbreaking and come to the dinner.”

Patrick said, “Fine. Eleanor how much champagne do we have?”

Eleanor laughed and said, “We have plenty that will last for a year.”

Patrick said, “Check. All of this stealing this year and we don’t have a n accurate inventory.”

Brenda said, “We will invite Abigail and Tamara to the semi-formal reception and not to the dinner.”

Patrick looked at Gen.

Gen exhaled.

She said, “I was about to skip these festivities if they were here. Outside I bypass them.”

Shirley said, “Menu for the reception and dinner?”

Eleanor said, “Dinner I want rack of lamb, potatoes, green beans, roast beef, rolls and cake.”

The reception would be cake, punch and champagne and whatever else the cooks add.”

Patrick said, “Eleanor check the champagne.”

Eleanor put her paper down and said, “Daddy let’s go and check the champagne.”

Patrick and Eleanor walked through the house.

They went to the first storage room and saw three cases.

Eleanor said, “Daddy that is only eighteen bottles.”

They went to the next storage room and found twenty six cases of champagne.

Eleanor flopped down on a box.

Patrick sat next to her.

Eleanor said, “Daddy what happen to all the champagne?”

Patrick said, “I don’t know.”

Eleanor said, “I kept a good record of the champagne. For your anniversary ball we opened five hundred bottles that was nearly eighty four cases. Daddy I bought five hundred cases of champagne. All the parties and weddings we did not drink three thousand bottles of champagne. I will get Gary to help search the grounds. He won’t go back to school until after next week.”

Patrick said, “He’s in school huh?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

She sit and looked around the storage area.

They stood and walked out the storage.

They were passing her office and heard the telegram machine.

She unlocked the door and pulled the telegrams.

She read the telegrams and smiled.

Eleanor said, “The coal will be in New York tomorrow. They have cleared customs.”

She looked at Patrick who was sitting in a chair.

Patrick was smiling because Eleanor thought this through.

Eleanor said, “Daddy since they cleared customs that they can bring the coal to Philadelphia and that we have trains in Philadelphia now that can bring the coal here and we don’t have to waste a week of travel?”

Patrick looked at Eleanor and said, “Yes. Send them a telegram.”

Eleanor looked at the information and sent a telegram.

Eleanor was reading the other telegram.

She said, “This is the bill for those twenty- five dresses Margaret sent to Shirley.”

Patrick crossed his legs and were patting his leg and said, “Shirley needs to pay that bill.”

Eleanor put it to the side.

She held up a telegram and said, “The three men that…”

Eleanor broke down and put her head on her desk.

Patrick stood and reached and got the telegram.

He read it and said, “Well this is good news. They will hang the first week of December. Christopher and Patrick Jr are already dead. The forty men that attacked us the last time. They got fifty years in prison. They sent us by mistake the information on the evil mobsters. They got twenty years for the attempted jail break and twenty- five years for mobster crimes. Prayerfully they all will die in prison.”

Eleanor lifted her head up as she heard the telegram coming through.

She read it and smiled.

She said, “They can deliver the coal to Philadelphia. Our trains can be hitched to the coal cars and bring it here by Sunday. You can use that train as an express train and go to Philadelphia. It would get there mid- afternoon on Thursday and you and momma can check in at the hospital that evening and get started on your examine Wednesday. I can take the boys to school on Friday. Meet the other parents and leave on Sunday and be in Philadelphia on Monday and check on you and momma and Shirley. I will like to see Sally’s and Leon’s progress.”

Patrick said, “Good plan. If we are finished we can leave and come home together maybe on that Wednesday and get here Friday and get everything ready for Christmas.”

Eleanor said, “I need to tell Jose to tell the men they won’t need to leave in the morning. I need to catch Thomas so he can go home.”

Eleanor jumped up and ran to the kitchen.

She stopped and walked in the kitchen.

Everyone looked at her.

She looked for Jose and did not see him.

Thomas was walking in the house.

Eleanor did not understand why Thomas was outside.

She said, “Where are the men who volunteer to bring the coal back?”

They all were in the kitchen.

Eleanor said, “You might not need to go. I am attempting to have the coal come directly here which would cut off a week’s delivery time. Thank you very much.”

Dan was grinning and John was happy.

Dan said, “Mrs.---”

Everyone looked at Dan and he said, “Stith, when will the coal be ready to buy?’

John thought, “Good question.” He looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “There’s not enough personnel at the distribution shop. It may take a week.”

Dan said, “What would they do?”

John looked at Dan.

Mike knew where Dan was going.

Eleanor said, “They would haul the coal to the distribution site and distributed it out by weight to the customers. It would be faster if the customers bring their own wagons.”

Dan said, “Can we take our wagons to the train and weigh our coal and load it ourselves?”

Eleanor looked around at the workers.

Patrick walked into the kitchen.

Patrick said, “Dan I enjoyed the dinner.”

Dan said, “Thank you sir.”

Eleanor said, “How many of you do not have coal?”

Several of the workers raised their hand including Monica.

Patrick walked and leaned on the wall and covered his mustache and exhaled.

John thought, “This man thinks we are stupid. We are because we did not order any coal.”

Patrick was thinking and looked at Eleanor and said, “Maybe if we let them get coal while the distributor workers get the biggest orders it can move faster.”

Eleanor said, “We have to see.”

Eleanor said, “We will get with you by Sunday.”

Thomas said, “what about the four of us working for that week and help to unload that coal?’

Eleanor said, “That is something for me to think about and get back with you when the train arrive Sunday.”

Eleanor and Patrick walked back to the sitting room and they saw Jose.

Eleanor said, “Jose about three and seventy- five cases of champagne is missing. Do you know where it is?”

Jose said, “I haven’t drank it.”

He kept walking to the kitchen.

Patrick said, “Make sure you give him the menus for the reception and the formal dinner so he can make the grocery list.”

Eleanor turned and walked back to the kitchen and gave Jose the menus for the reception, groundbreaking and the semi-formal dinner.

Jose looked over the menus.

Jose thought, “Simple but elegant.”

Brenda and Gen decided on the fifty people for the semi-formal dinner party.

Shirley was looking down at her invitation list to the groundbreaking ceremony.

She passed Eleanor and went to the writing room and saw the paper Brenda had on the desk.

Shirley sat and wrote the invitations throughout the night.

She enjoyed writing the invitations and went to bed before daybreak.

She completed half of the handwritten invitations.

Eleanor agreed with the semi-formal dinner party guests list.

Hutch sent a telegram to Dr. Woodson whether he can return on Tuesday with the Stiths.

Dr. Woodson responded yes.

Brenda looked at Hutch as he was reading the telegram from Dr. Woodson.

She looked at how poor this great and handsome doctor looked.

She said, “Hutch how are you paid?”

Hutch looked at Brenda and thought he said, “You know I don’t get any money from the bone hospital.”

Eleanor screamed, “The re-naming of the hospital and the reception.”

She blew out a big breath of air.

Patrick looked and said, “Maybe the day we leave to come home.”

Hutch looked at them.

He said, “I get sporadic pay from Ryan’s hospital.”

Eleanor said, “Hutch that is not right. What I need for you to do is to write down the days and hours per week you work.”

Brenda said, “Hutch you have been about two years and have not been paid?”

Patrick looked at Hutch.

Hutch said, “Mrs. Stith I got a good mind, but I can’t remember hours for the past two years.”

Eleanor said, “I need you to write down as much as you remember for the past two years and a half. You have to be paid. You need a living. I know you stay at the bone hospital. We don‘t mind, but you need your own Hutch.”

Ben, Patrick and Hutch went and played billiards for a few hours.

When the men were walking out.

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Gen said, “Isn’t Debra over the money?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Brenda, Eleanor and Gen finished the guests list, menus and seating arrangements.

They felt good about that.

Brenda said, “I want to have a Christmas brunch again this year.

Eleanor said, “Would you invite Hilary and Lance?”

Gen said, “What?”

Brenda said, “Steven suppose date Alice. Something has happened that they don’t want Steven to date her.”

Gen looked at Brenda.

Gen said, “Is that what happened to Steven and Jose’s family company?”

Brenda said, “I believe so.”

Eleanor said, “Momma I don’t believe Shirley can live at school alone.”

Brenda said, “I don’t either. Lorraine is gone. Meredith is married and taking care of the injured security men.”

Eleanor said, “Oh momma.”

She was rambling through the telegrams.

She said, “Here. Spencer was shot pretty bad and he is still in the hospital. He asked if Samantha can come to visit him.

Gen said, “Is he bad off?”

Eleanor said, “I don’t know. But I am writing this note now and taking it to Jose.”

Eleanor wrote the note and stood and walked into the kitchen and handed the night to Jose.

Jose looked at his schedule and said, “She will be back Monday. I will give it to her.”

Eleanor said, “Thank you,” and walked out the kitchen.

Dan was still trying to figure out his coal requirement.

He knew he had to keep the bottom of his house warmed. He could sleep on the floor downstairs if he had to.

Dan ran out to the re-modeled supply shed and knocked on the door.

Gary was studying and ran to the door and opened it.

Jose was standing in the backdoor.

Dan told Gary Jose said, he stay a few nights in the shed in what use to Meredith’s room.

Gary saw Jose standing in the back door of the house.

He closed the door to the shed as Jose was closing the door to the house.

Jose said, “Mike and John I want to lock the house up. When are you leaving?”  
John said, “Not tomorrow by ten.”

Mike laughed out loud.

John looked at Jose and said, “How are we going to get that coal?”

Jose said, “Eleanor maybe a bi\*\*\* but she is working on getting sooner to the people. You just have to wait and listen.”

John and Mike laughed.

Jose looked at the note for Gary to search for the crates of champagne.

Jose said, “One of you give this note to Gary from Eleanor.”

Mike took the note from Jose and he and John ran out the backdoor to go to the re-modeled barn.

Mike stopped and knocked on the supply shed door.

Gary opened the door and took the note.

He read it and waved at Jose.

Jose locked the backdoor and put the bar across the backdoor.

He put out the kitchen lights and walked through the house to check the windows and doors.

Hutch and Ben were finishing their billiards game when Jose walked back through.

Jose said, “Good night. Dr. Hutch are you leaving in the morning?”

Hutch said, “No Jose. I am leaving with them on Sunday after church.”

Jose looked at Hutch and walked down the hall and checked the windows and doors and walked up the hall to his room.

He dressed for bed and fell on his knees.

Jose said, “GOD I thank YOU for healing Michael and helping Shirley. Amen.”

He sat on his bed for a few minutes.

Jose eventually laid in the bed thinking about Eleanor and that damn whistle.

He fell asleep.

Brenda told Patrick they had to check the money at the bone hospital.

Patrick and Brenda got on their knees and held hands.

They prayed most of the night.

They especially thank GOD and JESUS for healing Michael’s mind.

Brenda asked GOD to heal the other children who lost their minds and had breakdowns and people did not know or care. Especially the ones that are now adults.

Patrick said, “LORD GOD Almighty, send Lorraine a godly husband that love YOU first. We know he would do her right. Let her have children. Send Jose a godly wife. Heal Leon and Spencer and Sally. Let Skip and Shirley marry and let us live to see their children. In JESUS’ name. Amen.”

Brenda laughed and said, “Amen and Amen.”

They got in the bed an held each other tightly and went to sleep.

Eleanor was tossing and turning.

She thought about Hutch not being paid for nearly two and a half years. She thought about offending Gen by inviting two of her enemies. She thought about the food had to be ordered and prepared for the three events and then all the holiday things they had to do. Her champagne that is missing and the 29 cases would not be enough for the reception and the semi-formal dinner. They have to order the orphanage toys. I can order the Christmas and ribbons for the lanterns. I’ll ask momma and daddy what color theme they want for this Christmas. Photographer. Shirley’s holiday tea and how many guests.

Eleanor mumble, “I hate Bruce. I don’t want his help. I have five children.”

She cracked one eye opened and laid on her bed.

She heard everyone running to breakfast.

She jumped and at in the bed.

Michael ran to Eleanor’s door.

She grinned.

She could always tell his footsteps from the rest of the boys.

She giggled and thought, “Hutch put an end to Percy thinking he could sneak and be around everybody.”

Eleanor heard a second set of footsteps.

She said, “Bruce.”

They were at her door listening to see if she was up.

Eleanor said, “Come in my babies.”

Michael turned the doorknob and Bruce pushed the door.

They jumped on her bed.

Thomas turned and ran back up the staircase.

Hutch flinched.

Brenda and Gen saw him and laughed.

Hutch looked at them.

Brenda said, “They are used to it.”

Gen said, “Hutch you would have been nervous if you were here when they were younger.”

Patrick looked at the staircase and saw Thomas running and playing on the staircase.

Patrick and Ben were behind Hutch.

Brenda said, “Poor Dr. Greene. He was always running behind Barry.”

Hutch passing the staircase said, “I see why.”

Shirley was dressed and in the writing room.

She wanted to finish the invitations and take them to town to post by afternoon.

Dan and Jose were walking into the family dining room with the breakfast trays.

They were talking about the hospital reception.

Dan was telling Jose about the chocolate covered fruits and other finger foods he saw in Europe.

Jose said, “Fine. I have to know what you want in grocery and how many workers you need to make this reception exceptional.”

Brenda said, “Amen. Dan I especially liked that caviar we brought back.”

Jose said, “What caviar?”

Brenda froze at her chair.

Patrick pulled her chair out and said, “Honey sit. We will work it out.”

Dan began giving them waffles, eggs and bacon.”

Gen said, “You know what I like is eggs benedict. I saw the chef make them. Why don’t we try them this holiday?”

Hutch heard the boys running and sliding down the staircase.

Brenda looked at Hitch and said, “Hutch you are a surgeon.”

Thomas said, “Mr. Jose Percy said, he wants the banana pancake with a lot of whipped cream.”

Bruce said, “Momma is coming. She is talking to Percy.”

Bruce looked around and said, “Where is Shirley?”

Jose said, “In the writing room.”

Michael said, “Good let her stay there.”

He bit his lamb chop.

Brenda looked at Michael.

Michael looked at Brenda and said, “Grandma I didn’t call her a heifer.”

Hutch looked at Michael.

Michael batted his eyes at Brenda.

Patrick was watching Hutch.

Brenda melted.

Hutch snickered.

Patrick said, “Hutch that’s the way you do to get what you want.”

Hutch grinned and looked at Michael.

Hutch looked at Thomas.

He said, “Thomas.”

Thomas jumped and looked at Hutch.

Brenda thought, “I hope he doesn’t say anything to Thomas about the staircase.”

Hutch said, “Good morning to you and Bruce.”

Bruce said, “Good morning.”

Bruce had a stack of blueberry pancakes and whipped cream.

Gen cut her eyes at Hutch as she cut into her stack of blueberry pancakes and whipped cream.

Patrick said, “I believe the apple caramel pancakes are my favorite.”

Hutch looked at their pancakes.

Patrick saw Hutch.

Ben watched Hutch.

Hutch said, “I haven’t seen this variety of pancakes. I would love to try that egg dish you talked about Gen.”

Patrick said, “Excuse us, but the other doctors criticized us for our eating.”

Hutch looked and said, “Huh.”

Jose looked in the buffet and got a tray and put Percy’s plate and orange juice on it. He put three strips of bacon on another plate.

He reached the tray to Monica.

Monica took the tray and walked out the family dining room down the hall to the staircase.

Eleanor was waiting for the tray and took the tray from Monica and went to Percy’s room.

She sat his tray on his lap.

Percy said, “Three strips of bacon!”

Eleanor said, “Percy it is just food.”

She sat on Percy’s bed while he ate his breakfast.

Shirley walked into the family dining room fully dressed and she looked nice.

She said, “Good morning.”

Everyone greeted her.

Michael was eating his lamb chop and said, “Huh.”

Gen wanted to laugh but she was seated next to Shirley.

Shirley looked at Michael and said, “Grandma I finished thirty-five of the invitations. I want to ride to town and put them in the post. Can you help me?”

Brenda said, “Shirley I am looking for my caviar. Aske Gen.”

Gen was putting down her glass of orange juice.

She looked at Brenda and then Shirley.

Shirley said, “Aunt Gen can you help me handwrite the invitations for the groundbreaking ceremony and reception?”

Gen said, “Sure. Right after breakfast I’ll come and help.”

After breakfast Hutch checked on Percy.

He went to the re-modeled barn and checked on the security men.

Gen went with Shirley to the writing room and helped with the invitations.

They completed the invitations and rode to town to post them.

Shirley was proud of the invitations.

The boys made a list of toys for the orphanage and gave it to Shirley.

Shirley and Gen stop at the general store and placed the order.

Shirley and Gen stopped by the dress shop and it was cold inside.

Gen said, “It’s cold in here.”

Selma said, “I meant to tell you Shirley. You didn’t order us any coal. We had a little left over from last year. I checked the inventory and coal was not on it. We may need to close until the spring.”

Shirley said, “I will get you coal.”

Gen was looking over what was left and said, “Selma what happened to that beautiful green dress?”

Selma grinned and said, “Steven bought it for Alicia.”

Shirley grinned.

Shirley said, “Let’s check the jewelry shop for coal.”

Gen and Shirley ran to the jewelry shop it was cold in the shop.

Shirley said, “Do you have coal?”

The manager said, “No.”

Shirley said, “Miss Stith will get you coal.”

Gen noticed how Shirly spoke to the workers.

When they were in the carriage Gen said, “Shirley you spoke harshly to the workers. Why?”

Shirley said, “They made fun of me.”

Shirley and Gen saw Jose and Dan enter the butcher.

Gen grinned and said, “This is going to be a good holiday.”

They laughed and turned the carriage around.

Shirley rode fast out of town.

Gen held on and they were covered in blankets.

Shirley said, “Momma needs help, since grandma and grandpa won’t be there for a few weeks. I’ll help as much as I can. I have to come back to town Monday to go to the bank and get the dress shop workers their money and make sure Sarah gets her part of the sale. I may have to ride to Sarah’s house with the receipt book.”

Gen grinned how Shirley was taking on the initiative to work and not only dress up.

Gen said, “I love this skirt.”

Shirley said, “It is festive. I am thinking about bringing the ballet here for next Christmas.”

Gen was excited and said, “If you need help let me know. I will gladly assist you.”

Shirley said, “I can arrange the ceremony for the hospital’s name change and the reception. I’ll write the invitations to the dignitaries while I am here. I will leave Thursday and have them hand delivered and have the restaurant at the corner of the street where the hospital is to cater lunch. I will ask momma what is a good day. She has to leave Thursday to take the boys back to school and she will be in Philadelphia by Monday. Maybe grandma and grandpa will be able to make a Wednesday ceremony.”

Gen laughed.

Shirley said, “This is a lot of work.”

Shirley turned the carriage around.

Gen said, “What?”

Shirley said, “The photographer.”

Gen laughed.

They went to town and found the photographer rent space.

Shirley knocked on the door and he came to the door and opened it.

Shirley jumped inside and said, ”You don’t have coal?”

The photographer said, “I was on your boat to Europe and did not order any.”

Shirley said, “Some is coming you just have to go to the distributor for some before it is gone. Are you going to be in town for the holidays?”  
The photographer said, “I should be.”

Shirley said, “We need your assistance. December fifteenth, groundbreaking ceremony for the hospital.”

The photographer said, “So you all are really going to build a hospital?”

Shirley stared at the photographer. She never had anyone question their works before.

She said, “That evening a reception, which began at five pm to seven pm. The next evening at six pm a dinner. In Philadelphia at a hospital re-naming on the next Wednesday at twelve pm.”

The photographer said, “I can catch your train, free of course?”

Shirley said, “Yes.””

She stared at the photographer.

He smiled and said, “I’ll be there.”

Shirley said, “Thank you. The groundbreaking is going to be next to the new military headquarters.”

The photographer said, “That’s the land everybody wanted to know who bought it.”

Shirley was uneasy and walked to the door and said, “Thank you.”

Gen was freezing, but the flap Eleanor put on the carriage helped to keep the cold off their faces.

They rushed back to the house and begin to check off the completed tasks.

Shirley telegram the restaurant and asked if they could cater lunch for the hospital staff. They sent a telegram back that they could.

Shirley and Gen spent the remainder of the day until dinner writing invitations to the re-naming of the hospital in her honor.

Gen said, “Shirley Michael told them the hospital should be re-named after you. Because it showed that people can be helped.”

Shirley looked at Gen.

She paused and thought for a moment.

She continued to handwrite the invitations.

They had a hearty chicken and dumplings for dinner.

Hutch ate dinner with Percy.

Percy said, “Dr. Hutch will I be able to see my grandpa and grandma before they leave tomorrow?”

Hutch said, “I was waiting for you to ask that question. Only for a minute. I don’t want your grandpa and grandma to get sick while they are being examined.”

Percy said, “What are you examining them for?”

Hutch looked at Percy and said, “To make sure they are ok.”

Percy looked at Hutch and said, “We need to hurry and build that hospital, so they won’t be gone this long to make sure they are ‘ok’”

Hutch said, “Very coy Percy.”

Percy said, “Thank you.”

He looked at Hutch.

Hutch watched him as Percy ate his chicken and dumplings.

Everyone was seated for dinner.

Shirley told Eleanor, her grandpa and her grandma of what she completed.

They were happy for her.

Shirley said, “Momma, I saw where you wrote color for the holidays and the Christmas tree. I can order the Christmas tree and the velvet ribbon if you tell me the color.”

Eleanor was surprise at Shirley and said, “Daddy decided on a twelve feet blue spruce and the garland for the wreath and staircase.”

Patrick looked at Shirley’s desire to help out.

Brenda said, “Me and your grandpa were discussing the color scheme. I want to take out the sore area our old stuff and put it on display.”

Eleanor looked at Brenda and said, “What you mean momma?”

Brenda said, “I want to put your original first ship on display in the house. The first metal bicycle. The original train. Things like that.”

Eleanor was sitting and thinking and said, “Momma those things are priceless.”

Brenda said, “I know. But Eleanor I am so proud of you. Your struggles and your genius mind GOD gave to you. I want to show you to the world that you are a brilliant business woman. You are a gift to me and your father. You don’t know how many days and nights just the thought of your smile kept us going through the hard and extremely difficult times.”

Patrick said, “That’s right Eleanor.”

Eleanor threw her napkin on the table and cried.

She stood and walked to Patrick and hugged him.

She walked to Brenda and hugged her.

Monica and Ruth watched Brenda.

Eleanor was crying and went back to her seat.

Thomas patted Eleanor’s arm and keened his head on her arm to comfort her.

Michael watched Eleanor.

Bruce said, “Momma, don’t worry. I will not touch that ship ever again.”

Eleanor tried to laugh through her tears.

Michael reached for Eleanor’s hand.

He held her hand and continued to eat his dinner.

Shirley said, “I want to make you all proud of me one day.”

Michael cut his eyes at Shirley and twisted his mouth and said, “Huh.”

Gen and Ben nearly hit the floor but did not want to show their feelings.

Brenda looked at Shirley.

Patrick said, “Shirley we are.”

Shirley smiled.

She said, “What color ribbons?”

Brenda said, “Red velvet. You need enough to make at least a hundred velvet bows to cover each of the lanterns and place on the wreath and the staircase and the floral arrangements. Order a hundred poinsettia for the workers.”

Ruth grinned.

Shirley was jotting down notes.

Brenda said, “Ask the workers what meat they prefer ham, turkey or goose? And send the order to the butcher.”

Shirley said, “We saw Jose and Dan at the butcher today.”

Brenda said, “They were ordering everything for the reception, groundbreaking and the dinner.”

Shirley said, “All our clothes are ready and we won’t have any guests for the holidays. That should make life a little simple. I will have my holiday tea on that Saturday after the groundbreaking. The girls should be out of school.”

Gen looked at Brenda.

Shirley said, “Grandma.”

Brenda looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “I faintly remember something with a red flower.”

Brenda stared at Shirley.

Patrick was enjoying his chicken and dumplings.

He stopped eating and thought.

He said, “I know what you are talking about.”

Brenda shifted her eyes from Shirley to Patrick.

Patrick said, “Good GOD. My momma tea set her mother gave to her. I don’t know where that is Shirley.”

Shirley said, “I want it.”

Brenda said, “Shirley how do you know about that tea set?”

Shirley said, “Grandma didn’t you use to play with me with that tea set?”

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

Brenda said, “No Shirley.”

Ruth and Monica walked out the dining.

Gen looked back and said, “Wait for me yall.”

Gen pushed her chair from the table and walked to the sitting room.

Ben looked up and said, “Gen you want your turnip greens?”

Bruce turned sideways in his chair to leave also.

Thomas said, “Where they go?”

Eleanor said, “It’s ok Thomas.”

Thomas said, “What?”

He looked at his grandma.

Brenda smiled at Thomas.

Patrick was staring at Shirley.

Smiley said, “It always made me feel better and put me to sleep.”

Michael said, “A tea set?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Thomas said, “Why did they leave about a tea set?”

Eleanor burst out laughing.

Thomas looked at Bruce and said, “Bruce why were you getting ready to run?”

Bruce said, “I thought they were talking weird stuff.”

Thomas said, “I don’t want to know anymore.”

Michael said, “Me neither.”

Shirley said, “Grandma did you find your caviar?”

Brenda face lit up and said, “Yes we did, and we found your momma’s champagne.”

Eleanor starred at Shirley.

Shirley said, “Momma why are you looking at me?”

Eleanor said, “I don’t know how you know about that tea set. My grandmother gave it to me when I was a child and I lost it.”

Shirley said, “But I remember the tea set.”

Eleanor said, “I’m going to join the rest of them.”

Brenda laughed.

Eleanor walked out the dining room.

Bruce ran behind Eleanor.

Thomas and Michael sat and finished eating their dinner.

Michael said, “Nothing interrupts my lamb chop.”

Patrick stared at Shirley and said, “Huh.”

Brenda continued to talk to Shirley about how to finish the ceremony to re-name the hospital.

She asked Shirley how she set up the payroll, because Hutch has not been paid since he started working there.

Shirley stared at Brenda.

Patrick was talking to Michael and Thomas.

Brenda waited for Shirley to respond.

Brenda said, “Shirley.”

Patrick looked at Shirley.

Shirley explained how she had the money going to the account at the bank and that Debra could only withdraw the actual amount for the payroll. The hospital administrator could not withdraw a penny more.

Shirley said, “Grandma I am sure I put Hutch’s name on the payroll as a part time worker. This is a half a year and while we were in Europe that was seventeen months and he first came to work there, that’s nearly two and a half years. How has he been living?”

Brenda said, “He stays at the hospital and eat at the hospital. Ryan ais not paying him also.”

Shirley’s mouth was opened in surprise.

Brenda said, “where are your records?”

Shirley said, “In my apartment.”

Thomas looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “Grandma I know I put Hutch on the payroll. I don’t know why he has not been paid in over two years and he did not say anything.”

Brenda said, “You have a lot to do. What are you going to do about the handicap students?”

Shirley blew and said, “I thought about it. There are some buildings that are about impossible to get to in wheelchairs and the rest area doors are too small for wheelchairs to get in. I am going to ask the administration if I can widen the doors and put a ramp for those of us who need to use wheelchairs to have access to our education.”

Brenda’s lips were quivering with grace.

Patrick looked at Shirley and said, “See Shirley we are proud of you. None of us thought about that. Get Steven to get the workers to do the job. If you need help to get the administration not to oppose you come to me and your grandma and your momma.”

Shirley said, “Yes sir. I see now not asking for help could create problems in the future.”

They finished eating dinner.

Shirley went into Patrick’s office and ordered the Christmas tree, poinsettias, garland and ribbons.

She wrote a note for the workers and put a column for ham, turkey or goose.

She gave the note to Jose.

Jose posted the note and told Shirley all the workers should see it and make a choice by Tuesday.

He was working on his schedule for the next month.

He told Brenda he wanted to spend Christmas Eve and Christmas day with his family.

Brenda said, “Fine.”

He put Nadine and Peter and Thomas to work because they could set the tables and present the food.

He was going to have Mellissa, Theresa, Harriet and Beatrice to stay and keep the house.

John wanted his coal so he could stay in his house.

Jose knew Brenda and Patrick would have to hire new workers in the spring.

He completed the list of fifty construction workers he knew was very good and specialized in different areas.

He walked through the house and found Brenda and Patrick still talking with Ben in the family dining room.

Jose waked to Brenda and said, “These are the fifty construction workers that are very good and don’t need any instruction. They can build the hospital by themselves.”

Brenda reached for the list.

She said, “Thank you.”

Patrick said, “I know tat was a big chore. We appreciate it. Thank you.”

Jose sad, “You are welcome.”

He turned and walked out the dining room.

Gen and Eleanor talked about food and train travel to keep from talking about Shirley’s experience.

Shirley went into the first storage room and started looking for the tea set.

She did not see it nor what it could be in.

Shirley felt her back hurting.

She went and found Hutch.

Hutch gave her therapy and walked her to her bedroom.

Eleanor looked as they pass the sitting room.

Hutch was helping Shirley upstairs for her to go to bed.

Eleanor walked out the sitting room and followed them upstairs.

She helped Shirley dress for bed.

Hutch said, “Shirley what were you doing?”

Shirley, “I was looking for something.”

Eleanor said, “That tea set?”

Shirley was lying on her stomach.

Eleanor said, “Have Ruth to have three workers look for ta set. I am going to bed.”

Eleanor walked out Shirley’s bedroom.

Hutch pushed the screen back to the wall, Eleanor pulled to undress Shirley.

Hutch said, “Good night.”

Hutch went downstairs and went to bed.

The house was quiet and locked and secured.

Everyone was sleep.

Shirley woke when her bed started moving up and down.

She was asleep on her stomach and her long thick blonde pair covered her face.

Then she felt a tap on her right shoulder and she struggled to open her eyes.

Her eyes struggled to open and then focus.

A smell was close to her nose and she opened her eyes.

She saw a cake and lifted her upper body off the bed.

Everyone yelled “Happy Birthday!!!”

Shirley’s eyes went from the cake to her room filled with well dressed family and friends.

She thought they were made with her and wanted her out of the family.

Eleanor was holding the cake.

Patrick and Brenda were grinning and clapping.

Shirley was raised on her left elbow and she cried.

Eleanor kissed Shirley on her forehead and stood up to walk away with the cake.

Shirley said, “Leave the cake.”

Gen and Ben laughed.

Eleanor handed the cake to Theresa.

Shirley said, “What time is it?”

Patrick kissed her on her forehead.

He looked into her beautiful blue eyes and said, “We are going to church with Michael and then to the train we did not want to wake you.”

Shirley was trying to get out of bed.

She said, “ I want to go. Michael said I need to go.”

Everybody laughed.

Brenda kissed Shirley on her forehead and said, “We are going downstairs to breakfast and will be leaving here in thirty minutes.”

Shirley said, “I can be ready.”

Everyone was going downstairs.

Michael was lingering.

Hutch watched Michael.

Patrick and Brenda walked to Shirley’s door and Michael stood in the middle of them and reached for their hands.

Gen was standing outside waiting for Hutch.

Mike and Jose were bringing Shirley’s bath water.

Monica was talking to Gen about Stephen.

Gen said, “I know he and his brother Bryce are Patrick’s best friends. They have known each other for decades. Before he and Brenda got married. They never married.”

Monica said, “Does he work?”

Patrick was listening as they walked out Shirley’s room.

Shirley said, “Thank you Michael.”

Michael said, “You welcome heifer.”

Hutch shook his head.

Gen fell into the wall laughing with her mouth covered.

Brenda jerked Michael’s hand and hit his hand with her other hand.

She said, “That’s why you waited so you can call her that name.”

Michael yelled, “She called me a name.”

Brenda said, “Shirley called you by your name. You know she always call everybody by their name. So you waited to call her out of her name.”

Michael snatched his hands from Patrick and Brenda.

Brenda said, “Michael walk in front of us.”

Michael folded his arms and ran to Eleanor, who was standing at the bottom of the staircase watching.

Michael ran to Eleanor and put his head on her stomach.

She saw Patrick and Brenda fussing.

Eleanor said, “Michael, what did you do?”

Monica said, “He and Shirley will eventually be the best of friends. They are fighting right now.”

Hutch stood at the top of the staircase and watched Michael.

Gen was standing back so Shirley could not see her.

Monica said, “These children have gone through a lifetime pain in a very short period of time. GOD has something HE wants them to do.”

Hutch looked back at Monica.

He said, “What do you mean?”

Monica said, “To have the bad things happen at the beginning of their lives so they can have the lessons to teach them through their lives so they can always make the choice for GOD.”

Patrick and Brenda were listening.

Hutch said, “Well said.”

Gen pointed at Michael.

Monica saw Theresa and Mellissa run into Shirley’s room to help her bathe and dress.

Monica said, “I have to go. Does he work? Does he go to church? Does he know GOD? Does he have children?”

Gen said, “We are leaving after church, I won’t have aa chance to talk to you. He is retired from the coal mines. He never married and he does not have any children. You go to lunch with him tomorrow and follow your heart after that.”

Monica was hesitant.

She ran down the backstairs.

Gen watched Monica.

Michael was standing with his back to the hall and his face in Eleanor’s stomach.

Brenda and Patrick made it to the bottom stair.

They stopped and looked at Michael.

Brenda told Eleanor, “He called Shirley a heifer.”

Eleanor said, “Michael! I thought you were finished with that. What am I to do with you?”

Patrick took Brenda’s hand and they continued to walk down the hall.

Eleanor moved Michael off her stomach and walked behind Brenda and Patrick.

Hutch and Gen were walking down the staircase and were watching Michael.

Michael stood in the hall with his poked out and arms folded.

Michael cut his eyes and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor slightly turned back and looked at Michael.

She saw Gen and Hutch walking down the staircase.

Michael grinned.

Gen and Hutch saw him.

Gen said, “Hot damn!!”

Hutch said, “He knew they would not do anything.”

Gen nodded her head and said, “All of them. He’s not through.”

Michael started dancing in the foyer.

Gen nearly fell down the stairs and Hutch caught her.

Eleanor looked at saw Gen and then she saw Michael dancing.

Eleanor walked to Michael.

He did not see her.

He danced into Eleanor.

Gen said, “Oh GOD.”

She grabbed him and walked him to the sitting room.

Brenda and Patrick saw Michael dancing when Eleanor grabbed him.

Brenda and Patrick walked into the family dining room.

Gen and Hutch walked by the sitting room and heard Eleanor spanking Michael.

Gen mouth was opened and Hutch pulled her to the dining room.

Thomas said, “Where’s momma and Michael?”

Bruce stood to leave.

They heard Michael screaming.

Bruce stopped.

Michael ran into the dining room.

He stood at his chair and stared at Eleanor.

Thomas jumped and stood and stared at Michael.

Eleanor stared at Michael and said, “Sit.”

Monica was watching Michael.

Shirley was washed and Theresa and Mellissa were helping her dress.

She heard Michael screamed and said, “What’s wrong with Michael?”

Gen sat as if Eleanor was talking to her.

Brenda saw Gen.

Patrick looked at a flustered Eleanor.

He sat and touched Brenda’s hand.

Everyone sat.

Shirley’s cake was on the table.

Michael looked at the cake.

Everybody looked at the cake.

Eleanor looked at Michael and said, “You better not touch her cake. S-i-t d-o-w-n!”

Jose walked in the dining room to hear Eleanor.

He looked at Shirley’s cake and at Michael. He thought, “He’s ready to pounch on that cake.”

Jose said, “I was up early baking that cake and decorating it.”

Gen was scared to move. She thought she would miss something.

She slightly turned and looked back at Jose.

Jose was not grinning. He wanted them to eat and leave so he could go back to bed.

Dan was making beef stew for dinner.

Ruth and Monica and Theresa would have the bedrooms cleaned quickly and Mellissa would have the laundry finished before she leaves.

Jose was daydreaming of having his scotch and sleeping until at least two or three pm.

He thought, “That boy better not spoil my day. I am not baking another cake and Eleanor better not ask me. Then I will have to kick her a\*\*.”

Jose turned around and everybody at the table was looking at him.

He said, “God.”

Brenda said, “Well?”

Jose said, “Well?”

Brenda said, “Is this all for breakfast?”

Jose exhaled and turned and looked at the buffet.

Dan and Mellissa were bringing the breakfast trays.

Jose said, “No.”

Brenda rolled her eyes at Jose.

Hutch looked at Mellissa.

Gen caught Hutch’s eyes and grinned.

Brenda looked at Gen and then Hutch.

Hutch turned and saw Brenda.

Brenda said, “You are a great doctor.”

Hutch said, “And a greater man.”

Patrick snickered.

Gen grinned and looked back at the buffet.

She thought, “Hutch is going to have his women.”

Gen looked at Mellissa from head to toe and smiled.

Dan and Mellissa set the buffet and walked out.

Michael stood to go to the buffet.

Thomas stood and waited for Michael.

Eleanor looked at Michael.

Michael stared at Eleanor.

Eleanor jerked and looked at Michael.

Hutch thought, “Boy stop.”

Thomas said, “Come on Michael.”

Michael said, “She won’t move.”

Gen turned her head and looked at the buffet.

Ben stared and thought, “Didn’t she just beat him.”

Eleanor looked at Michael and said, “She who?”

Michael looked at Eleanor and said, “She momma.”

Patrick stood to go to the buffet.

He started shaking his head and mumbling.

Thomas said, “Momma can you let Michael pass?”

Gen looked at Thomas.

She thought, “A taller version of cute Michael. Both of them are handsome. They will give Hutch a run for his money later in life.”

Eleanor moved.

Michael rolled his eyes at her as he passed.

Everybody turned their heads but Hutch.

Hutch wanted to see what Eleanor was going to do.

Thomas waited and let Michael pass in front of him so Eleanor had to go through him.

Hutch blinked.

Gen looked at him and nodded.

He grinned.

Bruce walked in front of Patrick and picked up a plate and leaned to Michael and said, “Did it hurt?”

Thomas was looking at Michael.

Michael said, “A little, but it was worth it.”

The three laughed.

Patrick heard Michael.

Thomas whispered, “All the grown ups are leaving including momma.”

Eleanor was sitting watching them with their backs to the table.

She was trying to read their lips like Joseph taught her.

Eleanor waited to Michael and Thomas returned to their chairs.

Bruce was sitting and said, “No pancakes?”

Eleanor looked at Bruce and said, “You three I am giving you one last talk today.”

Bruce stared at Eleanor.

Hutch looked at Bruce who had a caught look on his face.

Hutch picked up his water glass and sipped water.

Eleanor said, “Mr. Thomas I am not leaving. I will be here and take you four maybe three back to the military academy.”

Thomas looked at Eleanor and then at Bruce.

Bruce hiked his shoulder like he was saying he did not know how Eleanor knew what Thomas said.

She looked at Michael.

Michael looked at Eleanor and turned his head and bit his lamb chop.

Percy walked in the family dining room.

Hutch looked at Percy.

Percy was about to walk to the buffet.

Monica said, “Percy sit. And I’ll make you a plate.”

Everybody was relieved.

Hutch pulled out the chair next to him.

Bruce looked at Hutch.

Gen was giggling.

Eleanor looked at Bruce.

She thought, “That boy is so particular. He doesn’t want no body that smell or is sick around him. Percy is his friend. He does not care.”

Hutch saw Bruce and said, “Bruce, you are alright?”

Bruce moved his plate.

Percy said, “I can sit by grandma.”

Brenda looked at Percy and tried to smile.

Gen was tickled at Brenda.

She knew one thing Brenda hated was to get a cold.

Monica placed a plate of three bacon strips, a small amount of oatmeal, a little eggs and a biscuit.

Jose gave Bruce a glass of orange juice.

Bruce said, “I want orange juice.”

Percy said, “Bruce, you can have mine. I want apple juice.”

Bruce turned his head and looked straight at Eleanor.

Eleanor nearly died when she saw Bruce’s look of death on his face. She knew she could not laugh.

Shirley walked in the dining room.

Michael saw her and he bit his lamb chop.

He said, “Give it to Shirley.”

Hutch stared at Michael.

Gen was walking back to her chair and reached her plate to Jose and walked out in the hall followed by Jose with her plate.

Gen hollered but covered her mouth.

Jose was laughing so hard he bent over and was holding Gen’s plate away from him.

Monica took Percy’s glass of orange juice and put it on the buffet.

She poured him apple juice.

Hutch said, “May I have apple juice?”

Shirley was sitting and said, “Michael, give what to Shirley?”

Michael had his elbows on the table as he ate his lamb chop and he rolled his eyes at Shirley.

Thomas looked at Shirley and when Monica placed his glass of orange juice in front of him.

Thomas stared at it.

Eleanor looked at Thomas.

Patrick was walking back to the table and saw Thomas.

Eleanor did not know what was wrong.

Thomas looked and saw Percy’s glass of juice on the buffet and he jumped and kicked his legs and started drinking the orange juice.

Eleanor sat and followed Thomas actions.

Patrick looked at Eleanor because he saw she was trying to figure out what Thomas was saying.

Patrick said, “Eleanor.”

Eleanor had a small frown on her face.

Patrick said, “Thomas is funny about his food. You have to be super clean around him.”

Thomas looked at Patrick and kept drinking his orange juice.

Eleanor looked at Patrick.

Percy said, “Momma, Thomas did not want my glass of orange juice.”

Eleanor looked at Percy and smiled.

Thomas looked at Percy and kept kicking his legs and enjoying his orange juice.

Eleanor looked at Thomas.

Thomas looked at Eleanor and batted his eyes.

Hutch thought, “These boys.”

Eleanor said, “Percy you look as if you lost weight.”

Percy looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “You have to be well by Thursday or you may not go back but stay here with me.”

Jose did not say anything but walked out the dining room.

He was passing the front door and saw a carriage approaching.

He looked.

Jose walked back into the dining room and said, “Gen.”

Gen turned around and looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Your son and I guess his wife are about to knock on the door.”

Gen said, “Don’t answer.”

Brenda said, “What time of morning is it that they are calling at our home?”

Ben looked at Gen and said, “Gen you have to talk to them at some time.”

Patrick looked at Ben

Hutch stood and went to the buffet.

He made Eleanor a plate of eggs and a biscuit.

He walked it to the table.

Monica took the plate and said, “Who?”

Hutch said, “Eleanor.”

He said, “My Shirley.”

He made a plate of a little oatmeal and a few apple slices and a biscuit.

Monica took the plate and placed it in front of Shirley.

Shirley was so excited her mouth dropped opened.

Everyone was laughing at Shirley’s reaction.

Hutch grinned he said, “Dr, Woodson said “Happy Birthday”.”

Shirley said, “He remembered.”

Hutch said, “You can eat a little solid food once a day.”

Bruce said, “Good Shirley.”

Thomas said, “Happy Birthday Shirley.”

Percy said, “Happy Birthday.”

Michael kept eating his breakfast and he did not look at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “Shirley you look so pretty. That dress help bring out your eyes.”

Brenda said, “Uh huh.”

Shirley was grinning and she looked from Eleanor to Brenda and flashed her beautiful grin.

Gen was walking back to the table.

Jose put her plate in front of her.

Shirley said, “Aunt Gen look at my plate.”

Gen looked at the small plate of food and smiled.

She said, “Shirley, what am I looking at?”

Shirley said, “I can eat solid food. Dr. Woodson said so.”

Gen reached across and put her hand on Shirley’s chair and said, “If Dr. Woodson said so it is.”

Shirley grinned.

She bowed her head and said, her grace.

Everyone said their individual grace.

John Jr. and Betty stood and knocked on the door.

Mellissa and Monica looked out the window at them.

Betty peeped over at them and pointed at the door as if they were animals.

Mellissa said to Monica, “What she just do?”

Jose was standing in the family dining room with his back to the door.

Patrick threw his napkin on the table.

He said, “The hell with this. The first thing on a Sunday.”

Patrick stood and was walking to the door.

Shirley said, “Grandpa.”

Patrick stopped and looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “Tell them to be out my house by January fifteenth.”

Patrick said, “Ok.”

Patrick was angry and he was stomping to the door.

Eleanor was scared and looked at Brenda and said, “Momma.”

Brenda said, “Eleanor I cannot stop him.”

Eleanor jumped up and ran behind Patrick.

Thomas, Michael, Percy and Bruce ran behind Eleanor.

Hutch was eating and looked at Brenda, Shirley, and Gen.

Ben sat and stared at Gen.

Michael ran back and put his hand on Gen’s shoulder and said, “Aunt Gen you want us to beat him?”

Gen said, “Yes please.”

Brenda was drinking her coffee and nearly strangled.

Michael said, “Ok.”

Ben said, “Gen!”

Brenda jumped from the table and yelled, “Michael! No.”

Michael ran back to the door and looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Don’t you beat nobody.”

Michael said, “Why not? He hurt Aunt Gen.”

Brenda kept rushing to the door.

Patrick took the bar off the door and unlocked the door.

Patrick opened the door.

John made a step to come into the house.

Betty had never been in the house and she was trying to peep around Patrick to see the house.

Eleanor was standing blocking their view in the house.

Patrick put his hand on John Jr’s chest and said, “Boy you are messing with the wrong person this Sunday morning. This is my house and you are never welcomed here. You have no business here.”

Betty was looking at Eleanor.

Eleanor was fabulously dressed.

Percy, Bruce, Thomas were standing around Eleanor and Patrick.

Michael was looking up at Brenda and walked back to the door with her.

Ben said, “Gen, you have to talk to John Jr. You can’t keep this up.”

Hutch looked at Ben but he saw Gen’s face.

Shirley looked at Ben and said, “Mr. Ben what is Aunt Gen suppose to talk to John Jr about?”

Ben said, “Shirley this is between me and Gen.”

Shirley said, “Not in my house and not at my table.”

Brenda and Eleanor heard Shirley and ran back to the family dining room.

Monica and Mellissa turned from the window to the table.

Jose was standing in the hall between Patrick and the dining room.

Ben aid, “Shirley stay in a child’s place.”

Shirley said, “I am in my rightful place. You are out of place. Why would you tell your wife to talk to her thieving son who has stolen and sold half of her fortune? Why do you think that is fine?” You need to answer my question. The question is why does Aunt Gen NEED to talk to John Jr about what?”

Hutch looked at Ben.

Gen was slowly eating.

Gen said, “Ben tell Shirley why you want me to talk to my thieving son.”

Ben said, “Gen don’t bring anyone into our family business.”

Hutch sat and looked.

Mellissa and Monica looked.

Michael ran into the dining room.

Thomas ran into the dining room.

Percy and Bruce stayed by Patrick.

Betty tried to smile at Bruce.

Bruce stared at her.

She looked strangely at Bruce.

Patrick said, “Get your thieving selves off my property and never come back again. Get out of Shirley’s house immediately. And don’t steal nothing else out of the house and sell it.”

John Jr and Betty did not move.

Patrick pushed John Jr from his door and said, “Stand right there.”

Patrick closed the door and walked down the hall.

Percy and Bruce went to the sidelights and looked out at John Jr and Betty who were still standing on the porch.

Betty was trying to fix her clothes like they were getting in the house.

Jose stepped into the hall and yelled, “Brenda!! Patrick is going for a gun.”

Betty said, “John what did the servant say?”

John Jr. said, “I don’t listen to a servant.”

Percy and Bruce looked at Jose.

Brenda and Eleanor ran out the dining room.

Monica ran into the kitchen and told Dan.

Dan, Mike and John ran through the house and saw Patrick running down the hall cocking his rifle.

They fell backwards.

Hutch was running from the dining room table.

Bruce and Percy were hollering.

Brenda said, “Please Patrick!!!!!”

Eleanor was crying.

Shirley was seated and would not leave Gen.

Mellissa was watching Ben.

Monica ran back to the hallway.

Theresa, Ruth and the other workers were in the billiards room peeping out the door.

Hutch hit Patrick in the throat with his elbow and snatched the rifle out of his hand.

Jose looked at Patrick who fell to his knees.

Brenda said, “Patrick please!!!! John Jr and betty are not worth your life. Like at your grandsons. Is this the way you want them to remember you. Do you want them to have mental breakdowns like Michael?”

Hutch gave the rifle to Jose.

Jose looked at the rifle.

Dan looked at Jose and yelled, “Jose he mean to put it up.”

Hutch stood in front of Patrick and would not let him move.

Dan said, “Who is that on the porch?”

Eleanor was crying.

Brenda was standing over Patrick.

Michael said, “Aunt Gen’s son.”

Monica said, “The one that stole and sold her stuff.”

Dan said, “Why is he here?”  
Monica said, “I don’t know. Mr. Stith told them they are not invited and they are not welcome. They are still here.”

John elbowed Mike.

Mike looked at John.

John nodded his head.

Percy and Bruce saw Mike and John.

They ran through the back and out the back door.

They jumped on two saddle horses and rode around the front of the house.

They had their guns drawn on John Jr. and Betty.

Dan opened the door and said, “Leave.”

John Jr. looked at Dan up and down and said, “Patrick told us to stay here until he got back.”

Dan said, “So he could your brains out.”

Betty looked at Dan.

Betty said, “We are waiting for Patrick.”

Brenda was bent over talking to Patrick.

She turned around and looked at the door.

Mike looked at John.

John was frowned up. He never heard of someone so stupid that they would not leave someone house.

Brenda said, “Dan please close and locked the door.”

Dan closed and locked the door.

Jose was coming back from locking the rifle back up.

He and Hutch helped Patrick to stand.

Dan stood by the window and watched John Jr and Betty slowly walked off the porch.

Betty said, “They were dress as if they are going to church. We’ll talk to them at church.”

Mike and John heard John Jr and Betty and watched them get into their carriage and snoot at Mike and John.

They rode behind John Jr and Betty.

Mike said, “I have never seen anyone that stupid they think they can force themselves on someone.”

John said, “I nearly lost it.”

Mike looked at John and said, “You talking about shooting them?”

John said, “That’s all I am going to say.”

Hutch and Jose sat Patrick in the dining room.

Everyone went into the dining room.

Patrick was shaking and Hutch took Patrick’s pulse and checked his throat.

Patrick grabbed Hutch’s hand and said, “Thank you.”

Hutch said, “You are welcomed.”

Brenda said, “Gen and Ben I want some answers now. My husband nearly committed a double killing in front of our grandchildren on my property.”

Gen said, “I don’t know Bren.”

Ben was nodding his head.

Shirley said, “Grandma I asked Mr. Ben why he was pressing Aunt Gen to talk to her thieving son and he told me to stay in a child’s place.”

Ben looked at Shirley and said, “What I said…”

Hutch cut Ben off and said, “You did.”

Mellissa said, “He sure did. That’s why I did not leave I wanted to see what else he was going to say to Miss Shirley.”

Hutch looked at Mellissa.

Gen finished her breakfast and lifted her head up.

She put her gun back in her purse.

Hutch looked at Gen.

Shirley looked.

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Ben was shake and looked at Gen.

He said, “Who was the gun for?”

Gen looked at him.

Ben said, “Gen no.”

Brenda said, “I know my sister. I knew when she did not go to the door what her plan was. So tell us Mr. Ben why you were trying to make Gen talk to John Jr and Betty.”

Ben looked around and everyone was watching him.

Dan and Jose were still looking out the window for John Jr. and Betty.

They saw Mike and John escort them off the property.

Ben saw the unforgiving eyes of everyone.

He said, “I told John Jr to sell the things to get money so he could pay his bills because me and Gen did not have the type of money he need. I did not know he sold all of that stuff and the whole wine cellar. When Gen told them we were going to Europe John Jr. started pressing me to have you Brenda and Patrick to take them and Betty’s family to Europe with us or give them money to live on while we were gone. I told John Jr to sell what he had because they were not going to Europe with us. I am sorry.”

Gen did not look at him.

Ben said, “Gen please. Forgive me.”

He sat up and said, “All of you forgive me.”

Shirley looked at Gen and said, “Aunt Gen when do you want Mr. Ben out of your house?”

Gen said, “Today Shirley.”

Shirley said, “Mr. Ben Aunt Gen said, get out today. Is that what she said?”

Ben said, “Gen we need to talk.”

Shirley said, “Mr. Ben you keep saying you need to talk to Aunt Gen, but you are not saying why.”

Ben said, “Shirley you act like you are her legal guardian.”

Shirley sat there with full authority and said, “I am.”

Shirley stood and reached to Brenda.

Brenda went into her pocket and handed Shirley some keys.

Shirley stood and walked out the room and went to Brenda’s study and got the legal guardianship papers.

She walked back to the dining room.

Shirley walked over to Ben and showed him the papers.

He looked at the papers and said, “This was done the week we married.”

Shirley took the papers out of Ben’s hands and said, “Leave.”

She turned to Jose and said, “Jose who can escort Mr. Ben to Aunt Gen’s house for him to get all of his stuff and escort him to wherever he wants to go.”

Shirley stood and rolled the guardianship papers up.

Ben sat up in his chair.

Patrick nodded his head and said, ”Ben it is time for you to go. I nearly killed two fools today in front of my family because of you, John Jr. and Betty. I was told a long time ago about you. I just didn’t want you to hurt our sister. You have. You must go. “

Shirley said, “Mr. Ben leave an address to be served your divorce papers.”

Jose saw Mike and John returning to the house.

He said, “I can go and I’ll take two more workers with me.”

Ben looked at Patrick and said, “I tried to change Patrick. I really did.”

Shirley said, “I told you Mr. Ben to leave this house.”

He said, “I’m going Miss Shirley.”

Shirley stood and stared at Ben.

Ben pushed his chair back and walked out the family dining room.

Jose put on his coat and scarves and gloves, hats and blankets.

He picked up Ben’s bag and they walked out to a carriage and left.

Everyone was looking at each other.

Shirley took the papers back to Brenda’s office and locked the papers in the safe.

She came back and rubbed Gen on her shoulders.

Shirley reached Brenda’s her keys backed.

Mellissa said, “Well done Miss Shirley. I wondered why you would not leave out. Your job was to take care of Miss Gen.”

Eleanor was shocked.

Brenda looked at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor you were in Europe. Shirley was the next in line.”

Percy said, “Shirley you did good.”

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

Michael and Brue went to Miss Gen and held her hands.

Hutch rubbed her neck.

Gen said, “Now that I am single Mr. Hot Damn.”

Brenda said, “Gen I need you to stay in this house until we get back. Patrick and I should get back in about two weeks.”

Gen said, “Bren I need to attend to my house”

Brenda said, “Jose is gone. But tell Jose to take you to the house every few days.”

Dan was standing watching out the window and he turned and said, “Miss Gen I am sure Olivia would love to stay there to help you out.”

Gen looked back at Dan and said, “Dan she has another.”

Dan said, “I see.”

He walked out the family dining room and walked through the formal dining room to the kitchen.

Dan stood in the kitchen and begin to think.

Mike and John walked in the family dining room.

Mike said, “The woman said they will talk to you at church. You might want to be prepared.”

Brenda said, “Thank you.”

Patrick said, “Let’s go to church yall. Those devils are not going to stop our plans.

Patrick and Brenda were talking to Monica and Ruth because Jose was not there.

Percy put on his coat and two scarves and gloves and a hat.

He got his quilt and wrapped up in the quilt.

Everybody put on their coats and gloves and hats and scarves and went and got in the carriages and covered up with blankets and quilts.

Jose was taking Ben in the opposite direction that Patrick and Brenda were going.

Eleanor, Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael were in carriage.

Shirley, Gen and Hutch were in the other carriage.

Shirley said, “Aunt Gen. I’ll take grandma and grandpa’s buggy back to the house. Are you alright for clothes until tomorrow?”

Gen said, “Yes Miss Shirley.”

Hutch said, “Gen I want you to promise me and yourself you not spend another day grieving over your son and his wife and Ben. Decide how you want to precede.”

Gen said, “I think I want to go back to Europe in the spring.”

Shirley said, “Aunt Gen how much for your house?”

Gen said, “Twenty thousand dollars.”

Shirley said, “We’ll go to the bank in the morning and then to the clerk’s office and get the papers to have John Jr and Betty thrown out of my house this week.”

Hutch was shocked at Shirley’s mind for business.

He thought, “She is in the best business school plus her know how she will go far.”

The family arrived at church.

Eleanor said, “There they are.”

Percy looked.

Bruce was seating in front with Eleanor.

Patrick and Brenda pulled over.

Eleanor pulled next to their buggy and Shirley pulled up on the opposite side of Patrick.

Hutch jumped out the carriage and helped Shirley out and then Gen.

Brenda told Patrick, “They are standing out here to walk in with us like they are in our party.

Patrick said, “I see them Brenda.”

Brenda said, “Patrick leave your guns in the buggy.”

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Brenda turned her head from John Jr and Betty and looked at her true love.

Patrick looked at Brenda and put his holster back on the buggy’s floor.

Brenda said, “Thank you Patrick.”

She leaned and saw Shirley walking to the church.

Brenda said, “I want to see what Shirley is about to do.”

Patrick turned all the way around and watched Shirley.

Bruce said, “Why are they standing out in the cold momma?”

Eleanor said, “To make people think they are a part of our family and walk in with us and sit with us.”

Percy said, “After grandpa told them to get.”

Percy cut his eyes down at the shotgun on the carriage floor.

Eleanor said, “Percy you can’t stop anyone from attending church.”

Thomas sat and looked straight at John Jr, and Betty.

Michael looked at John Jr and Betty.

Hutch said, “Shirley go straight inside the church. I have Gen.”

Shirley looked at Hutch.

Hutch said, “She is fine.”

Shirley turned to walk to the small church.

Hutch said, “Gen give me your gun.”

Gen looked at Hutch and gave him her gun.

He put the gun under the seat.

Patrick and Brenda began to walk.

Bruce looked back at his brothers and said, “Formation boys.”

Eleanor said, “What?”

Percy helped Eleanor out the wagon.

Bruce and Michael were to the left of Brenda and Patrick.

Thomas and Percy were to the right.

They formed a barrier and put their mother and grandparents in it.

Hutch was tickle.

He walked Gen to the boys and he walked behind them.

John Jr. and Betty tried to get in the barrier.

John Jr. reached over Michael and said to Hutch, “Move worker I have my mother.”

Hutch kept walking.

John Jr. said, “Mother.”

Gen did not look at John Jr. and Betty.

They entered the church and found seats.

Shirley walked up to the front of the church.

She wanted everybody to see her beautiful dress and coat.

She saw Steven, Alicia and Emilou.

She sat with them.

Patrick and Brenda saw Joe and Peggy and sat with them.

Sarah saw Shirley and went and sat with she and Alicia,

Patrick and Brenda told Peggy and Joe what happened with Gen.

Peggy leaned around Joe and said, “Damn.”

Joe said, “Where are they?”

Patrick looked back and said, “Standing trying to sit on the same row with Gen.

Lance and Hilary, Ginger and Alice were seated mid-way.

Brenda saw them and stared.

Lance and Hilary smiled.

Brenda turned her head.

Eleanor sat at the end of the pew.

Gen sat next to her.

Bruce sat next to Gen, then Percy, Thomas and Michael and Hutch sat at the end of the pew.

Betty and John Jr. said to Eleanor, “We want to sit.”

Eleanor did not respond but continued to talk to Gen.

Bruce sat back and looked at John Jr and Betty.

Percy leaned forward and watched John Jr and Betty.

Percy said, “This church is cold or am I getting sick again.

Bruce did not turn his head and said, “Percy, you are not getting a cold. It is cold in here.”

Nathan and Denise walked in and sat behind Eleanor.

Bruce saw them and popped up to sit with them.

Nathan looked at John Jr and Betty and they were standing by Eleanor.

Nathan was pulling on his coat and trying to knock the cold off.

She said, “Denise is it cold in this church.”

Eleanor, Gen, Bruce, Percy, Thomas and Michael said, “Yes.”

Nathan looked around.

He said, “That pew has seats.”

Betty turned up her nose.

Denise jerked back.

Nathan cut his eyes at Denise.

The pastor his wife walked out. She went to the piano.

The pastor said, “Good morning. You noticed it is cold in the church. We forgot to order cold. I heard there is no more coal for the winter, and we may have to stop the church services until the spring. So today I am going directly into the sermon.”

The pastor finished his fifteen -minute sermon and his wife played a song and he prayed and said the benediction and dismiss church.

Nathan looked at Denise.

He said, “We might have to get married at the jail. We got coal.”

Gen laughed.

Nathan said, “Hey Miss Gen. I mean Mrs. Olsen.”

Bruce said, “You were right.”

Percy said, “She was about to be a widow.”

Eleanor peeped down at her boys and said, “Shush.”

Patrick walked to the pastor and they talked for a few minutes.

The pastor walked back to the podium and said, “Praise God. We got coal. It will be here tomorrow, but it will take some time to get it unloaded. Go to the distribution office beginning tomorrow.”

The congregation clapped.

The pastor said, “I know where I will be tomorrow wrapped in a quilt. I think the past few days like they had all the winter rolled into them. I told my wife I never seen anything like this. I pray for God’s mercy that He breaks this cold and let it warm up some.”

Joe said, “It’s like this all over the country.”

The pastor said, “I know I won’t move in with any family.”

Everybody laughed.

Lance and Hilary were watching Patrick and Brenda.

Peggy saw them and leaned forward and said, “Brenda why are Lance and Hilary watching you?”

Brenda said, “Because they stopped Alice from dating Steven.”

Peggy said, “An architect with money.”

Brenda said, “Because he is black.”

Joe looked across at them.

People started standing to leave.

Nathan leaned forward and said, “Eleanor what happened today.”

Eleanor exhaled.

Gen said, “I’ll tell him.”

Gen told Nathan everything.

Bruce and Percy were listening.

Denise held her knitted cape around her neck tightly.

Gen was turned sideways talking to Nathan.

She said, “Is that all boys?’

Bruce and Percy nodded their heads for yes.

Percy said, “Momma when does the train leaves?”

Eleanor said, “In two hours.”

Percy said, “Can we take them to the train station and go home. I don’t want to get sick.”

Eleanor said, “Percy I am thinking the same thing. But I don’t want to move and John Jr and Betty come and sat next to Gen.

Nathan looked at John Jr and Betty.

Eleanor said, “Why are you here?”

Nathan said, “Came to talk to the pastor about performing our wedding ceremony before Christmas.”

Gen said, “Oui a Christmas wedding. I love it.”

Denise grinned.

Gen said, “Your dress my dear?”

Denise and Gen started talking about the wedding dress she was knitting.

Eleanor said, “Nathan you have a requisition for coal. You just have to be sure to make them give you your coal. You may need to get a wagon and haul it yourself. I am going to have them put a weight scale at the trains.”

Nathan said, “How did you do it?”

Eleanor said, “I had the company to come to Philadelphia since they cleared customs in New York. I had our trains ready. They made that three day journey in two. They should bey here tomorrow. I applaud them.”

Nathan said, “I applaud them too. We can be in our own house for the holidays.”

Denise said, “I heard some people say at the general store that folks are complaining that they have coal missing.”

Eleanor said, “They have to use their coal sparingly and wear blankets. This maybe it until the spring. We may have to ration it.”

Denise said, “We may have to keep the coal in the house.”

Everybody looked at Denise.

Nathan said, “It can catch on fire and burn the house down. It will be fine outside in the coal shed. I will put enough in the house each day for you.”

Denise said, “No Nathan I can do it.”

Nathan was watching the pastor and jumped up and walked to the pastor.

Nathan shook the pastor’s hand and told him he wanted him to marry he and Denise.

The pastor said, “Where is she?”

Nathan did not want any problems and waved at Denise.

Nathan looked at the pastor who swallowed and he said, “Pastor, you don’t have a problem marrying us do you?”

The pastor said, “I’m learning. No. When?”

Nathan said, “The Sunday before the Christmas after church service.”

The pastor said, “You want me to make an announcement now?”  
Nathan said, “You can. The ones like you may not show up.”

Nathan beckoned for Denise.

Denise stood and walked to Nathan.

The pastor shook Denise’s hand.

The pastor’s wife was looking.

Peggy was going from Denise to the pastor’s wife.

She said, “That prejudice thang.”

Brenda looked at the pastor’s wife.

The pastor said, “I have an announcement. Nathan and Denise will marry at our Sunday service the week of Christmas.

Patrick and Eleanor clapped.

Shirley and Alicia and Sarah clapped.

Hutch and Eleanor and Gen clapped.

Gen and Eleanor were watching Lance and Hilary.

The pastor said, “We should have coal by then. Come up and congratulate the couple. I am leaving to go home in the warmth.”

The pastor and his wife left.

Patrick, Brenda, Joe and Peggy and others walked to Nathan and Denise and congratulated them.

Steven, Alicia, Emilou, Sarah and Shirley walked to Nathan and Denise and congratulated them.

Nathan recognized Emiou and thought about what Bruce and he grinned at her.

They did not look at Ginger and Alice.

Emilou was too busy talking that she did not see Alice and Ginger.

Alicia was glad.

They walked and spoke to Eleanor’s pew and went home.

Emilou was happy.

Shirley and Sarah were still talking to Nathan and Denise.

Sarah had on one of her skirts and so did Peggy.

They looked nice and holiday like.

Shirley and Sarah saw Ginger and Alice and spoke they talked for a little time.

Lance and Hilary stood.

Ginger and Alice stood.

Shirley and Sarah walked out the pew.

Lance said, “Shirley tell your grandparents we said, “Hello.”

Shirley talked to them as usual. She did not know what happened.

Nathan was watching John Jr and Betty.

They stood when Eleanor and Gen stood.

Patrick , Brenda, Joe and Peggy were walking out.

Hutch stood and the boys stood.

The boys squeezed by Gen and Eleanor.

Nathan saw them form the military escort formation.

He laughed.

Denise looked at Nathan.

Hutch waved to Nathan and Denise.

The boys did not say anything to each other.

Eleanor and Gen stood and the boys covered them and they walked out.

John Jr. and Betty tried to pretend they were a part of the family.

Hutch walked out behind them.

Brenda and Patrick walked to their buggy.

Eleanor walked to her carriage.

Shirley walked to her carriage.

The boys stood for Shirley and Gen to get in the carriage.

Hutch walked out the church to the carriage.

John Jr. pointed at Hutch and said, “Get my mother’s bags and put them in my carriage. Make it quick. It is cold out here.”

Hutch helped Gen in the carriage and got in the front seat.

Th boys ran and jumped in the carriage with Eleanor.

They all turned out the church and pulled out the church.

John Jr. said, “We need her to buy us coal.”

Betty said, “I was so embarrassed we did not have heat in the house over Thanksgiving. Get Ben to have Gen buy us enough coal to last until the spring.”

John Jr. said, “Yes. Let’s go. So we can talk to him.”

They made it to the train station.

Hutch got the bags and got on the train.

The boys surrounded Brenda and Patrick and cried.

Shirley walked over and hugged them.

She got in their buggy and looked down at the floor.

Patrick looked at Shirley and said, “Put that up.”

Shirley said, “Where?”

Patrick said, “Give it to Jose.”

Gen was crying and holding onto Brenda.

They whispered.

Patrick walked over and they talked.

Eleanor jumped in the carriage and the boys jumped in with Eleanor.

Eleanor turned the carriage around and she and Shirley rode fast to the house.

Gen showed up at the house an hour later.

Everyone looked at Gen.

Eleanor said, “Gen I was about to send Jose to your house.”

Jose turned his head and looked at Eleanor.

Gen said, “I went to the cemetery to talk to John. Feel better.”

Gen looked at Jose and said, “Jose you made sure he got everything?”

Jose said, “Yes.”

Gen said, “I’ll go back Tuesday and search and make sure all of his stuff is gone.”

They were standing in the hallway by the kitchen.

Mike and John were peeping at Gen.

Jose touched Gen’s elbow and they walked into the billiards room to the sitting room.

Dan wiped his hands on the dish towel.

When he peeped around to see where the other workers were they were looking at him.

Ruth said, “You might as well go and bring the report back.”

Mellissa looked from Dan back at the note Hutch gave her before he left.

Dan looked at the workers.

He wanted to know what was going on and he could not trust Jose to tell him because Jose could keep secrets.

Dan walked out the kitchen through the back hallway.

He went through the billiards room.

He saw the boys going upstairs to their rooms.

He waited a minute and tipped across the hall by the sitting room.

Jose said, “We got to your house. Ben sat in the carriage and stared at the house. I told him to get out and unlock the door. He got out the carriage and unlocked the door. We went in and I stayed with him. He stepped and I stepped. I tried to remember what belonged to you and yall. We went to your bedroom and I stood while he was slowly getting his clothes. He went from room to room. I went from room to room with him. We made three trips to the carriage…”

Gen yelled, “Three!”

Shirley laughed.

Gen looked at Shirley.

Jose said, “We went back in your house to do an once overlook. John Jr and Betty opened the door and walked i. They called Ben he walked out the kitchen and said, “Hello.” John Jr. said, “We need coal. We were embarrassed Thanksgiving and told the guests to leave because we did not have any. Is there coal here. Give us some until mother get us some. Betty said, ‘my family could not believe she treated us this way.”

Shirley started laughing.

Eleanor and Jose looked at Shirley.

Jose said, “Ben said you told him to leave and he was there packing. John Jr. and Betty stood and looked at Ben. They both said, ‘we still need coal.’ Ben said you can’t have her coal. Betty said we went to the church and she would not talk to us. Those boys surround her. Ben said we have to leave. He wanted me to take him to the train station. I took him to the train station. He bought a ticket to New York and I helped him with his bags.”

Eleanor said, “He is on the same train with momma and daddy.”

Shirley said, “Now we can’t get him to sign a divorce paper.”

Jose pulled out a piece of paper out of his chest pocket.

He said, “I told Ben you need him to sign his divorce papers. And he was not going anywhere. He signed a statement to give Gen a divorce but he did not want to stay around.”

Shirley and Eleanor grabbed the paper from Jose.

Gen looked at them and said, “Jose what happened to my coal?”

Shirley and Eleanor looked at Gen then Jose.

Jose said, “We locked the shed.”

Gen said, “They could go back and steal it.”

Shirley said, “Have them arrested. That way they will be out of my house and be warm for the winter.”

Gen said, “Shirley I will probably have to end up doing that.”

Jose said, “I am not family nor close friend, but what is all of this about?”

Dan moved closer to the door.

Gen said, “Ben was a womanizer. I knew that when I married him. I felt he would not hurt me when he sold his house to Dr. Greene. He used that money to live off. I continued to live off my money that I budget. When we went to Europe with the family for over sixteen months I rented my cottage out to that college professor. I used that money to have for us in Europe. Ben got some money from somewhere. I asked him he laughed me off. Now that I think about it, I hope he was not involved in the mob attacked on Bren and Patrick.”

Jose said, “Ben used rich women’s money. But he could not get your money.”

Gen said, “Right. Whatever Patrick knows about Ben I cannot tell you.”

Jose said, “What is wrong with John Jr and Betty?”

Gen said, “They are scoundrels. They do not have a penny between the two of them. He met her at college. John Jr was in college she would sneak on campus and go to classes and activities like she attended. She went with the professors and students. John Jr. married her. He never worked. She never worked. His father supported the two until he died. I did not know that. When his father died he left John Jr enough money to live off for the rest of his life. I do not know how he spent his money years ago. He thinks they will live off me and Brenda.”

Elanor said, “Hell no. He can go to jail for selling that wine that should be twenty to twenty five years in prison. Gen I love you, but I will not have John Jr and his wife ever step on this property again.”

Shirley said, “Momma, Aunt Gen said she will sell me her house for twenty thousand dollars. Grandma said, that was a good price. I want to go tomorrow and draw up the papers with the lawyer grandpa told me to go to.”

Eleanor said, “Gen, Shirley can pay for the house out of her trust fund and you can put the money in your bank account. Or Gen do you want a specific amount released to you once per year?”

Gen said, “I can live off what I have. Release it each year.”

Shirley stared at Gen.

Jose looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “I don’t want any problems Aunt Gen. I will full pay you for the house and have an account set up at the bank that release two thousand dollars to you once per year on January the first.”

Gen said, “Excellent Shirley. You have a business mind like your grandma and your momma.”

Shirley said, “We can do this tomorrow.”

Gen said, “My lawyer is the same lawyer you have Shirley. The papers should go along fine.”

Shirley said, “I talked to Steven at church today about doing work at the school for wheelchairs. Grandpa said, let him know if the school won’t allow me to make it easier for the wheelchairs.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley and said, “You are a gift from God to help so many more. You are forward thinking. Who would have thought of that?”

Jose said, “What is this message Brenda left with Ruth and Monica to find a tea set with a red flower on it?”

Shirley grinned.

Eleanor said, “It is a tea set my grandmother gave to me. I lost it, but it has to be in this house. Please have several workers search for it and do inventory of what they see.”

Jose said, “You remember whether it was just the tea set or did it have other pieces?’

Eleanor said, “Jose I was a little girl. I don’t remember.”

Shirley said, “But for my holiday tea. I want different tea and different sandwiches and petit fours.”

Jose looked at Shirley.

She grinned at him.

Jose said, “Anything else?”

Dan jumped up and ran through the billiards room through the hall into the kitchen.

The workers looked at Dan.

Dan returned in time to take his breads out the oven.

Jose walked in the kitchen and went to his desk and started his schedule for the holidays.

He was looking at the schedule and said, “Dan it would have been a shame for that bread to burn.”

Mike and John peeped around at Jose.

Jose had his head down and did not look up.

Dan stood and had no response.

Mellissa giggled and walked out to finish setting the table.

Monica made the hot apple cider and walked out the kitchen and looked at Mike and John.

Mike said, “Like we were the only ones who wanted to know.”

Jose looked up and said, “Harriet will be here tomorrow.”

He wrote a note tea set and inventory, Harriet, Sue, Rita and Steven.”

He said, “Dan you have two and a half weeks to get those three big events together.”

Dan said, “I know.”

Jose said, “Shirley has added her holiday tea. I think it is going to be four of them. It will be on the Monday of Christmas. Dog.”

Dan said, “What?”

Jose said, “Nathan and Denise are getting married on that Sunday at church.”

Dan said, “what have we to do with that?”  
Jose said, “I don’t know. We have been busy this year.”

Dan looked at Mike and John.

Mike and John snickered.

Dan said, “What is on Shirley’s menu?”

Jose said, “Assorted Teas, sandwiches and petit fours.”

Dan said, “I don’t know if Peter has a recipe for the petit fours. I can give him the one I learned in Europe.”

Jose looked up and said, “Dan you are not off until nine am on that Monday. You can bake them Sunday and decorate them before you leave. It’s only four tiny young ladies.”

Dan stood speechless.

Mike and John snickered.

Jose said, “I won’t be here Christmas. Nadine will be here until that Monday to be supervising the workers. Peter will be the chef. I am giving Thomas Christmas off, but he will be here Monday through Christmas Eve. There is nothing for Christmas Eve and Christmas.”

Dan was still standing in amazement.

Mike and John snickered.

Jose said, “We will help you out Dan.”

Dan looked at Mike and John.

Jose said, “I did not see your names and your choice of Christmas meat. What is wrong?”

Mike said, “We are single and not going home.”

John said, “Wait a minute. Let’s invite our ladies over for Christmas day.”

Jose said, “As long as you have the lanterns lit by dusk.”

Mike said, “You don’t have coal. I don’t want to be cold and hungry. And we have to buy then a gift.”

They looked at the stunned Dan who was working on the dinner tray.

Jose looked at Dan

He said, “Dan and pointed at Mike and John.”

Dan looked at them and said, “What?”

Mike said, “Well you cook our Christmas meat?”

Dan said, “When?”

Mike’s mouth dropped open.

He said, “Christmas day.”

Dan said, “I can cook Christmas Eve and you can re-heat it on Christmas day.”

Mike said, “Fine.”

John said, “What else?”

Dan said, “It depends on what the meat is.”

Dan picked up the dinner tray.

John said, “A ham…”

He looked at Mike.

Mike said, “Goose.”

Dan said, “Potatoes, green beans and carrots.”

John said, “Dessert.”

Dan continued to walk out the kitchen.

Jose looked at Dan.

Mike and John snickered.

Mike said, “We have to tell Allen about the coal.

John said, “He’s coming to pick up Veronica. You can tell him then.”

Mike laughed.

The family and Gen had a delightful dinner.

Dan brought Shirley’s birthday cake into the sitting room and cut everyone a slice.

He cut Shirley’s slice extremely thin.

Eleanor said, “Dan the stew had a different taste.”

Dan said, “I added basil.”

Gen said, “I know it had to be a spice.”

Dan said, “I got it from a cooking class in took up in Europe.”

Eleanor said, “Dan those cooking classes were good. I see your cooking has added very good results.”

Gen laughed and said, “I love your cooking like Jose.”

Dan grinned.

Jose was walking to the sitting room with tea and coffee.

Dan looked at Jose and grin.

Gen looked at her cake.

Eleanor and the children continued to eat their cake.

Dan walked out the sitting room.

Jose put the tray down and walked out and begin to look over the house and close doors.

He walked back to the front of the house.

Theresa and Veronica had cleared the family dining room.

Jose looked out the windows.

He saw Mike and John lighting the lanterns.

He locked the front door and put the bar across the door.

He walked through the formal dining room.

He loved that room like Brenda.

Jose’s family formal dining room only seated twenty-six, which will be filled this Christmas.

He thought, “I better send my mother a note that I will be home for Christmas.”

Jose walked through the kitchen and pass Dan who was putting up his dishes.

Dan looked at Jose and smirked.

Jose went to the writing room and selected the color and grade of paper.

He wrote his parents a note that he would arrive and be there for Christmas Eve and Christmas.

He sat and thought he need to take a Christmas present to his father and mother.

Jose thought, “I can’t ride my horse. It is going to be freezing cold. I need a carriage.”

He looked at the wall and then shook his head.

Jose said, “I can’t ask Brenda to let me use one of her carriage. God has blessed me with more than enough money to buy my own. I have to show my family I made it without them. I’ll go to Jessie and buy me a carriage and two horses and leave them here until the spring.”

Dan was finely free to tell everyone what was taking place with Gen.

Mike laughed.

Monica said, “Mike what’s funny about pain?”

Mike looked at Monica and said, “Monica there is nothing funny about pain. I know you are still being healed from your pain. I laughed because what Gen is going through with her son and his wife and with that thieving husband. Is exactly what my Aunt Priscilla went through. She took all the money and walked away. It has been twenty years and no one has seen her since.”

Monica said, “Thank you Mike. I saw Priscilla on the streets. She has red hair and green eyes and she is my stature.”

Everyone stared at Monica.

They knew Monica did not lie.

Mike looked at Monica and said, “Where?”

Monica said, “About three years ago. I was walking out the south and she was walking to the south. She had a cloth bag that had an eagle and a school house with the letters JJHC.”

Mike got sick and turned around and held onto the cabinet.

Monica said, “She had a picture of a chestnut hair color boy with brown eyes pinned to her blouse.”

Mike fell to the floor.

John looked at Monica.

Jessica looked at Monica.

Veronica and Theresa looked at Monica.

Mellissa ran to help Mike up.

Dan helped Mike up.

Mike tried to push them away and he staggered outside the house and threw up.

Allen rode up in time to see Mike.

He saw people standing in the door watching him.

Veronica saw Allen pull up and ran downstairs and got her clothes and was putting them on while she was running out the door.

John saw Veronica and ran out the door as Allen was looking at Veronica.

John said, “Allen.”

Allen was smiling at Veronica.

He turned and saw John and nodded towards Mike.

John looked over at Mike and said, “One of the workers saw his aunt that disappeared twenty years ago. Allen Eleanor found coal and it should be here tomorrow.”

Allen looked and said, “I saw people going to the train station.”

John said, “What. I need coal.”

Allen said, “I need coal too.”

He looked at Veronica and said, “I’m going to take you home.”

Veronica pouted her mouth and whined.

Allen kissed her mouth.

John was surprise.

Allen looked at Mike and said, “John tell the rest of them what I saw. So if it’s not people waiting for the coal then it will be on me.”

John said, “I’ll make sure I say you said it.”

Veronica started laughing.

Allen winked at John and turned his wagon around and rode fast to take Veronica home.

John looked at Mike and walked into the kitchen.

Jose was looking around and Dan told him what happened.

John walked in the hallway and said, “Allen said, people are at the train station waiting for the coal.”

Dan went into panic mode.

Jose said, “Eleanor said, they may have to start rationing the coal.”

Dan said, “Jose I need a wagon. I nearly froze the other night. I won’t make it this winter. I don’t have a wagon and I am going to the train station.”

John said, “I need a wagon too.”

Monica said, “I’m staying with Harriet at Vivienne and she has no coal. I need a wagon too.”

Jose stood and looked at them and said, “You all want me to say you can take their wagons. I am butler not the business person. That is Eleanor, even if Patrick and Brenda were here.”

Monica said, “Please Jose, go and ask Eleanor to let us borrow her wagons. I’ll miss working in the morning because we can’t survive without the coal. I don’t know why Harriet did not order coal.”

Dan said, “She did not have any money that’s why.”

Jose said, “Monica how are you going to get the coal out of the wagon? And Harriet is due at work in the morning.”

John said, “I’ll help them.”

Dan said, “If that is going to help me get a wagon, I ‘ll help dump her coal too.”

Jose stared at them and walked through the billiards room to Eleanor in the sitting room.

Jose said, “Eleanor.”

Eleanor looked at Jose.

Jose exhaled.

She knew it was a problem.

Jose said, “Allen said there are wagons at the train station waiting for the coal.”

Eleanor’s mouth dropped open.

She sat and looked straight.

Gen looked at Jose.

Shirley looked at Jose and then Eleanor.

She said, “What that means momma.”

Bruce was lying on his stomach and rolled onto his side and looked at Shirley and said, “That means the people who don’t get the coal will fight those that do get the coal.”

Jose said, “Eleanor.”

Eleanor looked at Jose and said, “Yes.”

Jose said, “You have some workers who did not get coal and want to borrow your wagons and go to town and wait with the other people for the coal train to come in.”

Eleanor said, “How many workers?”

She was standing.

Percy said, “I want to go.” he popped up from the floor.

Bruce said, “Momma I want to go.”

Thomas was sitting on the floor looking.

Michael was on his stomach with his legs up in the air and had his chin in his hand and elbow on the floor reading his favorite book.

He said, “Send Shirley.”

Gen smirked and held her head down and continued to sit her tea.

Shirley heard her name and shook herself and looked at Michael.

Eleanor looked at Michael.

Jose said, “At this time three. Dan, John and Monica and Harriet.”

Shirley said, “What about Lorraine?”

Michael looked up.

Gen noticed Michael.

Jose said, “I don’t know! She was in Philadelphia with you. I don’t know if she ordered coal or not. Yall make anybody forget stuff.”

Eleanor was watching Michael.

Shirley’s mouth dropped open.

Eleanor said, “Jose get my carriage and loaded it up with blankets.

The boys jumped.

Michael said, “I’ll go to Lorraine and see if she has coal.”

Gen looked at Michael.

Jose looked at Michael and said, “Whose going to take you in this cold?”

Gen nearly fell over.

Michael looked at her and said, “Aunt Gen.”

Everybody looked at Gen.

Gen was sipping her tea and said, “I knew I should not have laughed.”

Bruce said, “Momma Nathan needs coal. I can run and tell him.”

Jose said, “Wait. I thought I saw a buggy over at the re-modeled supply shed.”

Eleanor said, “See if Denise is out there and tell her to get in line for coal. Get five of our wagons and with four horses each to pull that amount of coal.”

Thomas and Michael yelled, “Don’t get our horses.”

Gen grinned and sipped her tea.

Eleanor said, “Jose just in case some of the workers did not get coal, take the two wagons and load them with coal and store the coal here. The workers still have to pay for the coal, but they will have something. Then we will start rationing the coal until it is gone. I need some help.”

Thomas, Percy and Bruce jumped up.

Michael said, “Me and Aunt Gen is going to Lorraine and then back here.”

He looked at Gen.

Gen said, “Ok Michael. I’m going to put on my wrap and gloves so do you.”

Eleanor said, “Jose go and see if Denise is out there and get Gen a buggy for she and Michael.”

Jose walked out.

She looked at her children who volunteered.

Shirley was sitting and sipping her tea.

Shirley did not volunteer.

Eleanor said, “All of you stay here. I don’t want you all to get sick. Especially you Percy because if you get sick again, you will not return to school until next year.”

They heard Jose yelling out the back door, “Denise!!”

Nathan ran to the re-modeled supply shed door.

Jose beckoned for Nathan.

Nathan ran across the yard.

Eleanor was walking through the back hall with all of her children behind her.

Nathan looked at Jose and then around at everybody and knew something was going on.

He said, “Evening.”

Everybody spoke to Nathan.

Eleanor said, “A train will be here tomorrow form Canada with ten tons of coal. That may not be enough for this town for this winter. I will continue to work to get more coal for this winter. If we have any left over that will be fine. I was told people are at the train station waiting for the coal.”

Nathan said, “That’s what they were doing.”

Eleanor said, “Jose said, three of you need to borrow a wagon to get coal. I told Jose to let you use a wagon with four horses to pull that weight.”

Michael and Thomas jumped around Eleanor and said, “Not our horses.”

Monica smiled.

Michael pointed to himself and said, “I’m going to see if Lorraine has coal.”

John looked at Michael.

Eleanor fanned at Michael and said, “Shush Michael. This is serious.”

Michael held his head up and looked at Eleanor in her face said, “I am serious.”

Ruth and Mellissa grinned at Michael.

John thought, “That little boy is a mess. Where the girl?”

Shirley was sitting in the sitting room at her favorite spot next to Brenda.

She was still eating her cake and drinking tea.

Gen walked by the sitting room and was putting on her wrap and scarf and gloves.

She looked at Shirley and grinned.

Shirley looked at Gen and smiled and sipped her tea.

Gen walked through the billiards room to the hall and saw Eleanor standing with the boys around her and Michael staring at her.

Gen knew Michael had said something she thought, “I missed it.”

Gen walked up.

Michael turned and saw Gen with her coat on he ran and got his coat, scarf, hat and gloves.

Eleanor said, “I need help. I know it is Sunday evening and we only have a few people here, but I need at least two people to take the two wagons to the train station and fill up with coal for those workers who really need coal. Not for those who are trying to get it for free.”

Ruth said, “Eleanor I am off tomorrow. I can take one of the wagons and go and stay overnight in line to bring one of the wagons back here.”

Eleanor was quiet and thinking.

The workers knew she was thinking.

Eleanor turned sideways and was leaning on the wall and looking straight ahead.

She said, “Jose get the five wagons and the twenty horses. Give the wagons to the workers and one to Ruth. Does anybody know if Lorraine has coal?”

Nobody said anything.

Michael ran back putting on his coat and said, “Momma I’m going. I’ll take care of Lorraine.”

Nathan looked over at Michael.

Mike was sitting in the workers area and said, “I’ll take the fifth wagon and bring it back here.”

Eleanor was still thinking.

She said, “I need the measuring scale from the distribution office, which is large and I need the key from the manager.”

Eleanor’s eyes were moving as she was thinking.

Mike said, “Wait I saw those trains they…”

Bruce said it at the same time with Mike, “… have scales.”

Nathan looked at Bruce.

Percy said, “That’s right momma.”

Eleanor said, “How do you and Bruce know the trains have weight scales?”

Bruce looked at Eleanor.

Percy looked straight.

Jose said, “Now they told off on themselves.”

Nathan was standing by Jose.

Eleanor turned around and looked at her sons.

Gen looked at Eleanor.

Bruce shifted his eyes to the cabinets.

Percy inched down the wall.

Eleanor said, “Yall better answer me.”

Percy looked at Eleanor and said, “Momma.”

Eleanor said, “Just tell me.”

Bruce said, “Me and Percy went under the train…”

Nathan turned his head. He could not think about he and Denise children playing under trains.

Bruce said, “The weight scales are attached near the engines.”

Eleanor said, “How do you know they are weight scales.”

Bruce looked at Eleanor and said, “We climbed inside.”

Nathan nearly went through the floor.

Jose said, “Those are Eleanor’s children.”

Gen giggled.

Monica turned to Ruth and said, “I hope she doesn’t kill them.”

John looked at Monica and Ruth.

Eleanor was breathing heavy and said, “Where was Meredith, Stephanie and Erica?”

Eleanor turned and said, “I need to check and see if there are scales on the train.”

Thomas had disappeared and ran back with the train description and said, “Here momma. It shows each train has scales.”

Everybody clapped.

Thomas had a serious look on his face and he bowed.

Eleanor reviewed the train information and reached it back to Thomas and said, “Thomas put this back where you got it from. That cuts off two trips. Those of you who want to leave you can go. Nathan, I don’t know what you are going to do.”

Nathan said, “I am getting in line.”

Eleanor said, “I need four men to help shovel the coal into the weight scale and dump it into the wagons.”

Gary and Denise walked from the re-modeled supply shed to the house to see what was going on.

Gary said, “I can help tomorrow. I don’t go back to school until Wednesday.”

Stephen said, “Since I didn’t get a chance to go to New York. I can help.”

Jose pushed off the wall and looked at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor your parents left a note for you alone to give to Stephen.”

Stephen said, “I’m not fired?”

Jose said, “No.”

Steven said, “Are we getting paid for this back breaking work?”  
Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Steven said, “I’ll do it. I’m off tomorrow.”

Eleanor said, “OK everybody let’s go. Jose see to it that my children have breakfast in the morning. Any telegrams bring to me at the office. And any mail. Get the horses and the wagons ready. I need coffee to get through this night.”

Bruce said, “Momma let me go with you.”

Eleanor rubbed his chin and said, “I need you here. Everybody else will be in town if I need anything. Thank you Bruce.”

Percy looked at Eleanor and said, “Momma we’re not getting a whipping?’

Nathan stared at Percy.

Eleanor said, “No.”

Nathan said, “Huh.”

Jose said, “Let’s go and get that coal.”

Dan and John were the first out the door.

Michael ran to the door watching them as they ran to the stables.

Thomas said, “They are not getting our horses, right?”

Michael said, “I’m watching.”

Nathan looked at Thomas and Michael.

Gen walked to the door and grinned at Thomas and Michael.

She looked at Nathan and said, “I saw you grow pale Nathan.”

Nathan shook his head and looked at the boys.

Thomas was looking at Nathan.

Nathan said, “Thomas you disappeared and went and found the train design to pretend that’s why you knew about the scales. You were also running underneath the trains.

Denise jumped and ran out the backdoor.

Thomas looked at Nathan and said nothing.

Nathan said, “Michael, what about you?”

Michael was leaning on the backdoor flipping his lips and said, “I’m not saying.”

He saw their carriage and yelled, Aunt Gen our carriage.”

Jose walked to the linen room and came back with six blankets for Gen and Michael.

He walked outside to the carriage with Gen and Michael.

Michael and Gen wrapped up in the blankets.

Eleanor ran upstairs to change clothes.

She put on a regular office dress and boots and had several pairs of socks.

Mellissa took the remainder of the coffee Jose made and put it in a tin pot and put a cup in a small box to carry the coffee.

All the workers knew Eleanor did not drink sugar. She drank her tea and lemonade without sugar.

Nathan walked across the yard to the re-modeled supply shed.

The door was unlocked.

He opened the door and called out to Denise, “Denise.”

Denise was standing in her room shaking her head.

Nathan walked to her and held her.

Denise said, “Nathan I am a mess. I can’t even think about children playing and being free. I just remember children in chains and whips coming down on them and the screams. I need help.”

Gary walked in the supply shed and heard Denise.

He sat in his room and listened to Denise horror stories.

Gary thought, “Can I help other children who were slaves even though they were not American slaves?”

Nathan said, “Denise you are my wife and when GOD sees fit HE will give us a child. I know the evil you went through is a part of your life and I can’t make it go away. Let me be your husband and we work through this together. I don’t want you to slip back into that evil mind. GOD has so much more for you in this life. And I am one of those things.”

Denise laughed.

Gary was lying on his bed and giggled.

Dan gave him a big bowl of beef stew and bread, Gary was full.

Nathan and Denise were getting ready to leave and saw Gary’s door and he had his head at the foot of the bed.

They heard Gary snoring.

Denise grinned.

Nathan said, “Gary!”

Gary rolled over and held his head up.

Nathan said, “You are suppose to be helping shovel the coal.”

Gary waved his hand and said, “Tomorrow Nathan.”

Gary put his head on his pillow and went to sleep.

Denise laughed.

Nathan held Denise and kissed her.

Denise looked at Nathan.

He said, “I needed that.”

He opened the door and they left.

Denise looked back towards the house.

Nathan had his hand on the door and closing it and he saw Denise’s face of concern.

Nathan said, “He’ll be alright.”

Denise said, “Nathan you will need some more covering and take this wagon to get our coal. Here is the key to our house.”

Denise started to grin and started crying again and said, “Who ever thought I will have a house.”

Nathan kissed Denise.

They stepped in the wagon.

They saw Dan, Mike, Ruth, John and Monica leave.

Eleanor was walking to her carriage.

Her boys were standing in the door watching her.

Nathan twisted his mouth and said, “Bad boys.”

Denise grinned.

Nathan said, “We would jump in water with water moccasins and climb and jump out of fifty feet trees and race with horses. These boys up the stakes.”

Nathan looked at Denise and saw the terrified look on her face.

He said, “Oh GOD! I am sorry Denise. Our child won’t do that.”

Denise said, “Nathan, our child will be worst than Eleanor boys.”

She laughed.

Nathan did not know whether to laugh or not.

He said, “You I did not think about a reception or dinner. We can have it at the rest stop. And invite the church.”

Denise said, “They weren’t the friendliest bunch.

Nathan said, ”They were cold. Cold can make you act like that.”

Denise laughed.

He said, “I’ll wait for Eleanor to leave.”

They were waiting for Eleanor to leave.

She was putting books in the carriage.

Nathan said, “I sure hope that book shows my order for coal.”

He rode over to Eleanor.

Eleanor looked.

Nathan said, “We’ll wait for you.”

Eleanor said, “This is a mess.”

Nathan said, “You are really doing a good job.”

Eleanor said, “I would run to daddy about business ideas and decisions, but he is not here. Like God is saying come to Me for help.”

Mellissa brough the coffee and cup in a small box to keep it from spilling.

Jose brought six blankets.

Nathan said, “Jose can I borrow a few blankets?”

Jose twisted his mouth and walked back in the house.

Eleanor was wrapping the blankets around her back over her coat and two scarves and her hat and gloves.

She barely could step up in the carriage.

Jose brought three wool blankets out the house.

Nathan said, “Thank you.”

Jose said, “Huh.”

Denise laughed.

Nathan started wrapping up in the blankets.

Denise had on a coat, two of her knitted wraps and a blanket.

Nathan looked at Jose and said, “He is more our than me.”

Denise grinned.

Eleanor pulled the flap down to help knock off some cold.

Nathan and Denise looked at the carriage.

Eleanor sped out the yard and she was speeding to town.

Nathan dropped Denise off at the rest stop.

Eleanor went to the office and used the coal and started a small fir to knock off the coal.

She turned on the telegram machine.

Eleanor ran to the carriage and brought in her books and then she went out and brought in her coffee.

She stood inside and saw the three men run and light the torches around the town.

Eleanor saw the town getting full of wagons.

She could not move.

She stood still and watched the people with her eyes.

Nathan went to the jail and checked the office.

He saw Eleanor watching the people.

He hurried and checked his office and ran and got into his agon and sped to the train station and saw Mike and John.

Monica was ahead of them all.

Nathan thought, “I better get my coal.”

He settled in his wagon for the night, “He though this is not too bad.”

Eleanor was in her office with the shades pulled and door locked.

She sent parents a telegram that people were camping out for the coal. And they probably got it from the pastor and people at church. She was in the office to monitor the disperse of the coal. And Ben was on the train and told Jose he was going to New York. But they had a signed statement from Ben to divorce Gen. Gen’s son and daughter-in-law went to her house to get coal. Michael went to see if Lorraine had coal. He was not concerned about no one but Lorraine. Be safe and be well.

Hutch, Brenda and Patrick were sitting in the dining room having dinner

The conductor brought Patrick the telegram.

Patrick read the telegram.

He said to the conductor, “Raye where is that train with the coal?”

Raye looked at his watch and said, “It should be passing in a few minutes.”

Patrick reached the telegram to Brenda.

Brenda read it.

She looked at Hutch and said, “People are lining up in town to get the coal.”

Hutch raised his eyebrow and said, “Oh.”

Raye said, “Here come the train.”

The train whistle blew.

Brenda and Patrick grinned and clapped their hands.

Raye laughed.

He said, “We are speeding. That train is faster and should get there tonight about eight hours ahead of schedule.”

Patrick looked at Raye and said, “Send Eleanor a telegram that the train passed us and should be arriving at midnight.”

Patrick looked at Brenda and said, “I’ll go and send it. She won’t trust anyone else. Brenda don’t eat my liver.”

Brenda laughed.

Hutch saw Ben turn and looked back.

Hutch said, “Brenda Ben is on the train.”

Brenda said, “That’s what Eleanor said in her telegram. He is in this dining car?”

Hutch said, “Yes. He is getting up to leave. He is looking at me.”

Hutch nodded his head.

Brenda did not look back.

Brenda said, “Eleanor said Ben told Jose he was going to New York.”

The waiters were bringing their dinners.

Hutch had corn beef, cabbage and carrots.

Brenda was peeping at Hutch’s plate.

Then she was peeping at the other two plates.

Hutch watched Brenda.

The waiter looked at Patrick’s seat.

Brenda said, “You can place it there he will be back.”

Hutch said, “Brenda it might get cold.”

Brenda looked at Patrick and said, “I know you don’t want me to eat his food.”

Hutch said, “Enjoy yourself for the next few days.”

Brenda stared at Hutch.

Hutch blessed his food and ate.

Patrick came back as the waiters were leaving.

He looked at Brenda staring at Hutch.

Hutch stared at Brenda and kept eating.

Patrick looked and said, “Brenda was trying to eat my food and you told her no?”

Hutch said, “Yes and Ben left out a few minutes ago.”

Patrick said, “He needs to stay out.”

Brenda was eating her soup.

She said, “We need to send these cooks to Europe to pick up some skills.”

Patrick said, “Dan’s cooking is much better.”

Brenda said, “He is learning to use more fresh herbs to season the food instead of salt and pepper.”

Trevor and John had cleaned up the poultry shop and were leaving late that Sunday evening.

They saw all the people coming into town.

John asked them what was happening.

They told John that a train with coal was coming in the next morning and they were trying to get some before it ran out.

John said, “Why didn’t the people order before now?”

Trevor tapped John on his shoulder and said, “I’ll come to work after I get me some coal.”

Trevor ran home and hitched his horse to the wagon and rode to the train station.

He saw all the people and he rushed and put his buggy in line.

Trevor said, “God I need some coal. I was not going to try anymore to live. But show me your will. I miss my brother and father. I miss my mother too, but I have gotten use to her being good, but not my brother and father.”

Trevor only had one horse.

He jumped out of his wagon and covered it.

He laid in his wagon and covered up with a blanket and slept.

Eleanor was going over her bills and what need to be paid.

She kept thinking about Debra and the bone hospital.

She wondered and hope she and Dr. Greene were not stealing the money.

Eleanor thought, “I told Shirley to go over every inch of the bank account and the payroll books. I will not arrest Debra and Dr. Greene. I will fire both of them. Which means I have to pay those workers once per month. I believe Mabel can do that. But she maybe overcome with working with Aunt Bev…”

A telegram came in.

Eleanor saw it was from Patrick she smiled at her daddy.

She read the telegram.

Her eyes bucked and her smile slipped away.

She sat back in her chair and thought.

She looked at the door.

She put on her blankets and walked to the door and walked out and locked the door.

Eleanor rode to the train station and could not pas all the people who were there.

She left her buggy and begin to walk.

She walked and started looking for her workers.

Mike and John were sitting on the ground playing cards.

Ruth and Monica were sitting in their wagons.

Eleanor looked worried.

Dan jumped out his wagon.

Mike said, “Eleanor. A problem?”

Eleanor was looking for her other workers.

Nathan turned over and woke and saw Eleanor.

He looked at the time.

He said, “Something is wrong.”

He jumped out the wagon.

Ruth and Monica walked over to Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Daddy just sent me a telegram the train passed them.”

Dan said, “What?”

Eleanor said, “The train will be here by mid-night. I told Gary and the rest to be here in the morning.”

Mike said, “You want me to go and get them?”

Eleanor, “Yes Mike. Use my buggy.”

John laughed.

Mike said, “Ma am. I am going to unhitch one of those horses and leave my wagon and haul it to the house and have them to get on their horses and haul it back here. We have about three hours and a half hours.”

Mike walked over to his wagon and unhitched a horse and put a blanket on the horse’s back and rode like thunder from the train station.

Eleanor blinked her eyes.

John laughed.

He said, “He was the best and the fastest rider out of one thousand troops. He’ll make it to your house in about thirty minutes. Deliver the message and be back here in the hour it takes you to get home.”

John stood and went to his wagon and laid down.

Monic and Ruth went to their wagons.

Nathan went to his wagon.

Nathan saw Eleanor’s buggy.

He went and pulled it up in the train’s yard.

Eleanor unlocked the train rest stop and went in.

Everybody looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor was about to freeze. She knew she could not make it that winter. She began to think about her sending all her children off and how hard headed they all were. She did not want sick or dying children. She has been through that all her life now she wants peace. Her children were old enough to understand that.

Michael and Gen returned home and ran in the house.

Jose was sitting and watching the door.

Gen said, “Lorraine is fine.”

Jose looked at Michael and said, Michael since Lorraine was the only person you were concerned about are you satisfied?”

Michael said, “Yes.”  
He walked through the house and went to the sitting room and pulled off his clothes.

Shirley was sitting on the sofa and writing in her accounting books.

She was trying to figure out where Hutch’s pay went and how much they had to pay him.

Michael got his book and laid on his stomach to read.

Gen was walking to her suite.

Shirley looked up and said, “Michael, was Lorraine fine?”

Michael stood up and walked upstairs with his book.

Shirley held her head down.

Gen saw Michael and stepped back to answer Shirley.

Shirley held her head down.

Gen turned a round and walked to her suite.

She hung up all her clothes and took out her holiday festive skirt and a white blouse.

Shirley walked down to Gen’s suite and saw the outfit and said, “That’s pretty.”

Gen jerked around and saw Shirley and grinned.

Shirley said, “Is Lorraine ok with coal? I asked Michael he stood and walked out the room with that book to his face.”

Gen said, “Shirley it is going to take Michael a long time to forgive you. You just have to live with his ways until he is delivered and healed.”

Shirley said, “Aunt Gen I wished none of this happen.”

Gen said, “What your momma and daddy?”

Shirley nodded her head for yes and started crying.

Gen said, “You stop crying Shirley. You think you are the only one who have done evil against sweet soul and need them to forgive you? I have done that more time than night. It hurts you as bad as the person you did it to. It hurts you worst than the person you hurt, because the truth of what you did and the fact it is not God’s will, will convict you and you feel horrible. But the more GOD works on that person to forgive you of your evil deed against them you feel the loosing grip on you because you will not cry as much or lament not hearing form that person. You and Michael have a long way to go.”

Shirley said, “it still hurts so bad,”

Gen said, “Shirley it is suppose to hurt. If your momma and daddy had not split all of this evil and wickedness would never had come out and all of you would have been walking around and not living at all. Look at what has happen. Your mother finally faced what your daddy was doing to her. All that hate you built up in you against your mother would have killed you. You met Skip. Those great doctors untwisted your body and started you walking and running to their disbelief. You bought a hospital to help others. They only pay if they have the money. You are in a prestigious school for the very smart people. Your grandparents finally retired and gave everything to Eleanor. You have been Europe. Your family’s business has double in size.”

Shirley nodded her head.

Gen walked over to Shirley and held her by her shoulder and walked back to the sitting room.

Jose was walking down the hall to check the telegram machine. The company sent the final coal bill to Eleanor.

Jose lit the lamps in the hall and walked back to the kitchen.

He stopped at the liquor table and poured a glass of whiskey.

He took a sip of whiskey and walked through the billiards and went to his room and put the whiskey on his dresser.

He walked out his room and went to the kitchen.

Jose saw Mike walked to the backdoor.

Jose unlocked the backdoor.

Mike said, “Mr. Stith sent Eleanor a telegram the train passed them.”

Jose said, “It’s too early to be pulling the weight. That can only mean they don’t have the full amount of coal.”

Mike said, “Well she wants the three men to come to the train station now.”

Jose said, “Give this to Eleanor.”

Jose walked down the hall and folded the telegram and put it in an envelope and walked back and gave it to Mike.

Mike was looking at the large kitchen.

He liked the kitchen.

He took the envelope from Jose and he and Jose walked out the house.

Joe walked over to the re-modeled supply shed and knocked on the door and woke Gary.

Gary ran to the door.

Jose said, “Eleanor need for you to come now to the train station. The train is getting in tonight.”

Gary looked stunned and said, “What?’

Jose walked away.

Jose walked back to the house and woke Steven and Knocked on Stephen door and he was on his knees praying.

Jose said, “Eleanor needs you now. The train is coming in early.”

Stephen said, “Why?’

Jose said, “I don’t know.”

Steven was passing Jose.

He had on a heavy coat and double socks and scarf and had on two hats and gloves.

He went to the stables and got a horse and rode to town.

Mike arrived back in town and hitched his horse to the wagon.

He walked to John and said. “Where is Eleanor?”

John nodded at the rest stop structure.

Mike said, “She left yall out here in the cold?”

John said, “Yeap.”

Mike walked over to the rest stop and knocked on the door.

Eleanor stood and opened the door.

She had a candle lit and was reading her books.

Mike handed her the envelope from Jose.

She said, “Thank you.”

She opened the envelope and saw the amount of the coal. She wondered. She will wait and see why the train was early is it because it was light of cargo.

Mike walked to John and said, “I think there is a problem with the amount of coal they suppose to have sent.”

John said, “You did not read the note?”

Mike said, “I don’t do that. She is in there writing. What is that?”

John held his head up and listened. He did not hear anything and put his head down.

John said, “I am glad the house I bought have iron stoves in it. Make sure when you buy a house it has iron stoves or furnaces.”

Mike looked at John and walked away.

Steven passed Jose and walked to the stales and got a horse and left.

Gary rode out behind Steven.

Stephen was about twenty minutes behind them.

They arrived in town about an hour before the train.

They rode up and tied their horses and sat on the porch of the rest stop.

Shirley said, “Gen I cannot see where Hutch pay went to for the past two and half years.”

Gen was sipping fresh tea and said, “You know not to make a false move without proof.”

Shirley was shaking her head and said, “I just can’t understand this. I have to go back and pay Hutch for nearly two and a half years.”

Gen said, “We all are going through stuff right now. We just have to believe GOD and trust HIS word.”

Gen said, “I’m going upstairs to check on the boys. I’ll be back.”

She stood and walked upstairs.

Percy was sleep.

Bruce was on his stomach with his legs in the air reading.

Thomas and Michael were talking from their rooms.

Thomas said, “I wonder if momma is ok.”

Gen grinned.

Michael said, “She is in town with her workers.”

Thomas was yawning.

When Gen reached his room, Thomas was sleep.

Gen pulled his cover on him and closed the door.

Gen walked to Michael.

Michael jumped and looked back.

He said, “Is Thomas sleep?”

Gen said, “Yes Mr. Michael. You get under the cover, so I don’t have to climb the stairs and come back and check on you.”

Michael got under the cover and continued to read his book.

Gen closed the door and walked to see the bathrooms Eleanor were working on.

Michael got out of his bed and opened his door and watched Gen.

Gen was looking and said, “This might work. Shirley can convert those smaller bedrooms to baths like in Europe.”

Michael said, “Aunt Gen who are you talking to?”

Gen said, “To myself. That’s what we old people do. I like how Eleanor is working on these rooms. While we were in Europe they were working on electric lights. They believe they will have it a few years. So, Shirley may wait and have all this work done at one time.”

Michael said, “Good night Ant Gen.”

Gen said, “Was looking at the way the water was flowing and said, “Good night Michael.”

Michael went into his room and closed the door and hopped in bed and covered up and thought about all the things they were doing in Europe. He went to sleep with the book under his face.

The book fell on the floor.

Gen heard it and walked to Michael’s room and picked up the book and put it on his dresser and put out the light.

She walked out Michael’s room and thought about the number of times she picked up books her husband and John Jr. would drop.

She teared up because she did not know where she failed. Where did she missed John Jr. changing into a bad person.

She stopped by Bruce and he was sleep on the top of his cover.

Gen tossed and pulled and finally got Bruce under his cover.

Percy and Bruce like their doors to be opened.

She left Bruce’s door open and peeped back at Percy and walked down the stairs.

Gen and Shirley sat and talked until late.

Jose had locked the house and put out the lights.

He was in his bedroom.

He sat on his bed and drank his glass of whiskey and read one of Patrick’s book from the library.

He thought about how Gen bragged about Dan’s cooking.

Jose smirked and went back to his book.

He went to sleep.

Gen said, “Shirley go to bed.”

Shirley put the books down on the table and stood.

She walked upstairs.

Gen walked down the hall and realized she was the only person on that side of the house.

She hurried in the room and changed into her night gown and said, “GOD, I don’t want to pray tonight. I had a bad day.”

She crawled in bed and went to sleep.

Shirley was upstairs dressing for bed when she thought and said, “Debra better not have done that.”

Shirley went to bed and to sleep.

Eleanor was going over her books.

Patrick and Brenda finished dinner with Hutch.

Hutch went to his first class accommodations he loved.

The porter had his bed pulled down and went straight to sleep.

Brenda and Patrick went to their owners’ suite. They read and played card games.

They dressed for bed and got on their knees and prayed.

They finished praying and went to bed.

They held each other as they do most nights.

Patrick said, “I hope that coal is some good because I don’t see why the train is eight hours early.”

Brenda said, “I know. But we see Mag in the morning.”

Patrick said, “I can’t wait to see how the house is holding up.”

Brenda said, “Patrick I feel guilty.”

Patrick said, “About what?”

Brenda said, “Our friends’ houses have not been updated. Eleanor had wiring put in our house so when the electric lights come out we can have them. She had the furnaces put in that’s why we don’t need as much coal, but she ordered the same amount. She had pipes put in that will carry water.”

Patrick said, “What friends?”

Brenda smiled and said, “After decades you find out they were not your friends.”

Patrick said, “I am just glad we were not in the house.”

Brenda laughed and said, “We had to move with John Jr. and Betty.”

Patrick said, “That’s mess.”

Brenda said, “I hope she stay at the house until we get back so John Jr and Betty won’t bother her.”

Patrick said, “While I was sending Eleanor the telegram I looked over the passenger list and saw Ben Olsen in second class. I can’t understand that. As old as he is why go all the way down where you started from.”

Brenda said, “I’m glad I kept that. It would have destroyed Gen.”

Patrick said, “Yes.”

They went to sleep.

The manager of the coal distribution was awaken by a neighbor told him the town’s people were lined up for coal.

The manager dressed and to the train station.

He saw all the people.

Eleanor was standing by the rest stop.

He saw Eleanor and walked to her.

Eleanor said, “Hello. I found some coal in Canada and they got it here before I could tell you.”

The manager said, “The word spread.”

Eleanor said, “I don’t know about that. I was told people were lining up. So I got down here.”

The manager saw Gary, Steven and Stephen sitting on the porch and said, “Who are they?”

Eleanor stared at the manager and said, “They are my workers that I trust.”

Eleanor stared the manager in his eyes.

Gary looked up.

Steven stood.

Nathan said, “What is that?”

Eleanor said, “You can leave because this coal is being sold directly from the train.”

The manager said, “I’m sorry.”

Eleanor said, “Leave.”

The manager walked away.

The train whistle blew.

The manager turned quickly to see the train.

The people started cheering.

The train rolled in.

Eleanor waited and when the conductor stepped off the train.

Eleanor, Steven, Gary and Stephen walked to him.

The train conductor saw Eleanor.

Eleanor greeted him and said, “Why are you early?”

He said, “We had to leave a two cars because they were heavy. We have another engine that will deliver tomorrow night.”

Eleanor said, “Did you examined the coal for quality.”

The train conductor said, “It’s a good grade.”

Eleanor what you saw of the coal are you satisfied with the quality?”

The train conductor said, “Yes ma am.”

Eleanor said, “Do you have a weight scale attached to the train?”

The train conductor said, “Yes ma am.”

Eleanor said, “Can you put it on this side?”

The train conductor said, “Yes ma am.”

Eleanor said, “Go ahead and move it over here. Gary you all get ready. Sam we are going to sell directly from the train. If you want, once you show them how to move everything you can go to sleep.”

The train engineers walked and stood on the outside and stretched.

They looked around at all the people and went on the other side of the train to relieve themselves.

Eleanor said, “Gary announce to the people to have cash when they get up here.”

Gary walked and told the people to have cash.

Eleanor made a sign how much the coal cost.

The people paid cash and Eleanor put the money in the box she had for her coffee.

Monica got the remainder of the coal from the first car.

She pulled over and helped Eleanor write.

John got his coal and went home.

He pulled up in his backyard and released the latch Eleanor had on their wagons.

John was so happy he was dancing in his backyard.

He closed his coal shed and took the horses and wagon back to the house.

He took one horse and rode back into town.

When he was returning to town, he saw Ruth and Mike leaving.

Dan passed John as he entered the train station.

Mike and Ruth took the wagons and the horses back to the house.

Ruth went into the house and slept.

Mike took a horse and rode back to the train station and helped fill the wagons.

Nathan filled his wagon up and rode to his house and quickly unloaded his wagon.

He went to the jail.

Nathan checked on Eleanor’s office.

He went into the jail and put some coal in the iron stove and went to sleep.

He thought that Denise was safe and warm.

Each time a car is emptied they pulled the train up to get the next car.

Nathan could hear the train in his sleep, but his sleep was peaceful since their big problem was solved.

Eleanor, Monica, Mike, John, Steven, Stephen and Gary worked through the night.

The engineers were sleep.

They took turns waking and pulling the train up when a car was emptied.

Monica was writing down the customers’ name, address and how much coal and the cost.

Monica said, “Eleanor I have to go take this to Harriet.”

Monica went through the town at daybreak and went through Woodrow. She hated that side of town.

Allen helped them out for hours he got a wagon full of coal.

He took his time and rode because he did not want to wear his horses down and he did not want to drop any coal.

He passed by Steven and saw the lantern on their porch.

Allen said, “I need one of those. It makes your property look rich.”

Monica make it to Harriet at day breaking.

She ran on the porch and knocked on the door.

Harriet eased the curtain opened and saw Monica and the wagon.

Monica said, “Harriet, Eleanor found some coal and it was delivered last night and I got us some. Come and help me put it in the bin.

Harriet stood and looked around.

Monica left the door and walked to the wagon she drove to the side of the house and dumped the coal in the bin.

She filled a pail of coal and took inside through the backdoor and put it in the fireplace.

She went back outside and filled a pail with water and brought it inside and put on the fireplace.

Monica closed and locked the backdoor.

She stared at Harriet and walked out the front door and brought the horses and wagon to the front of the house.

Monica went back in the house and said, “Harriett you stay at the house for three nights. You have your bags packed. Because I can take you to work and leave Eleanor’s wagon and Horses and wash while I am there and get someone to bring me back here. If that is alright?”

Harriet said, “Yes that’s fine Monica. I am not that stupid.”

Monica washed her few clothes while was staying at the house.

She decided that she would meet Stephen for lunch at noon.

She wanted to get away from Harriet.

Eleanor told Same to leave the half empty car and turn the train around and go back to Philadelphia.

The pastor was pulling in when they were about to unhinge the car.

The pastor said, “Good morning. I thought I was early. I see people are gone and smoke coming up all over the town. How much coal is left in that car?”

Gary told him.

Eleanor was tired but continued to write.

They weigh the coal and gave it to the pastor.

The pastor paid for the coal.

He saw Eleanor and all the workers were tired and cold.

He said, “Thank you Eleanor. Thank all of you. I am going to leave this coal in this wagon. This coal is for the church. Each Sunday I’ll get a pail of coal out when I go into the church.”

The pastor left.

The cars were empty.

The next train would be there that night before ten pm.

They watched the train leave.

Eleanor put out the candle in the rest stop.

She could barely walk to her carriage.

She got in her carriage and was leaning over and stopping.

Mike looked back at Eleanor and said, “John take this horse.”

He stopped Eleanor and took over the reins and flew to the house.

They got to the house Michael was standing in the backdoor waiting for Eleanor.

When her buggy pulled up he saw Mike at the reins.

Michael ran out the door and down the steps.

Jose looked at Eleanor.

Michael threw his blanket on Eleanor and helped her in the house.

Eleanor was worn and said, “Bath.”

Thomas was at the top of the stairs and saw Eleanor and ran down to her and walked her to her room.

Jose went upstairs and made Eleanor a tub of hot bath water.

Mike ran upstairs and helped Jose take it to Eleanor’s room.

Eleanor was sitting on her bed.

Michael untied her boots and he and Thomas took them off.

Eleanor kissed each of them.

Jose said, “Come out and let her bathe.”

Eleanor bathe and dressed for bed.

She slept to noon.

Shirley and Gen rode into town and meet with the lawyers.

Shirley went to the bank and took Hutch’s payroll money out of her personal account.

The lawyer said, the papers for the sale of the house and Gen’s divorce would be ready Wednesday.

They went to Shirley’s dress shop and it was empty. All of her inventory was sold. There were no stockings, scarves, gloves, skirts, dresses and wraps.

Shirley said, “I don’t know what to do. You can leave.”

Gen looked around and thought, “My GOD!”

Shirley said, “I still need to have coal delivered here and the jewelry shop.”

Shirley turned around and looked at the empty dress shop.

Wendy and Selma looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “I’ll pay you for this week. I won’t get back to Philadelphia until Monday and have a lot to do. I will see if I can send Lorraine to New York to shop for dresses that can take us through the holidays. Maybe you can alternate each week so you can get some pay. That’s what we will do. For you two to alternate until I get back from school.”

Wendy smiled and said, “Thank you Shirley. There is no other place to get a job, especially at the holidays.”

Shirley said, “I’ll be back in a few.”

Shirley and Gen left the dress shop and went to the bank.

Shirley went to the dress shop and sat in the manager’s office and wrote out the pay for the dress shop and jewelry shop. She withdrew enough money for four weeks so Jose could pay the dress shop, jewelry shop and the rest stop.

Eleanor allowed the coal distribution shop manage’s itself.

Shirley paid Wendy and Selma their full week’s pay.

She went to the jewelry shop and paid them.

Shirley went to their office and left a note for Eleanor to give coal to the dress shop and the jewelry shop.

Shirley saw where the iron stoves and furnaces Eleanor order were installed.

Eleanor wanted to have more light by the train station and the rest stop.

She was looking to install the lights they had in Europe. Eleanor knew she had to bring a crew over to America for two years to install the lights. She was hoping they would have a hotel up so they could stay at the hotel.

Eleanor started looking at buildings in town that could be re-modeled and used to accommodate the electrical crew.

Gen said, “Shirley I want to go to my house. I need some more clothes. I feel good about the business we were able to complete today. You need to go to Lorraine and ask her for her help.”

Shirley became and started to shake.

Gen looked at Shirley and said, “I can’t help you Shirley. Let’s go to my house first. I know where everything is. Then we leave and cut through Woodrow to Lorraine and she is closer to your house. We can be back by dark and talk to Eleanor.”

Shirley was freezing up.

Gen sat and did not give in to Shirley’s whining.

They rode to Gen’s house.

Gen ran into her house and unlocked the door.

Gen was in her house twenty minutes.

Shirley sat and watched out for John Jr and Betty.

John Jr, and Betty were running across the lawn as Gen was coming out of her house with an arm full of clothes.

John Jr looked at Shirley as he and Betty were running to Gen.

Shirley went in her purse and took out the gun she started to carry after Nathan trained them to shoot.

Shirley called and said, “Aunt Gen.”

Gen turned and saw John Jr and Betty.

She locked her front door and stepped off the porch.

Gen stood and stared at John Jr and Betty.

Betty tried to reach and touch Gen’s arm.

Gen said, “Get your hands off me. And never touch me again.”

She looked at John Jr.

He said, “Mother come home. We need to talk. We can help you.”

Gen said, “You are right John Jr.”

He smiled and cut his eyes at Shirley who was standing outside the carriage with her gun pointed through her bag.

Shirley’s heart sank when Gen said John Jr was right.

Betty grinned and looked at Shirley.

Gen said, “This is my home. This cottage. Shirley over there owns my other house you have stayed in. She is taking possession of the house tomorrow. You have to be out by daybreak.”

John Jr. stood with no life in his face.

Betty stared at Gen.

Betty turned to John Jr and said, “John what is she saying?”

John Jr. gave Shirley a look that caused her to shake, but she did not lose her composure. Eleanor taught her not to blink.

John Jr turned and looked at the cottage and said, “Mother the cottage is too small for the three of us. And where would the servants live?”

Gen said, “You are right. This cottage is too small for three people. It is only going to accommodate one. Me. John Jr. I knew you would here to beg. I wanted to see your face for the last time. I changed my will and left everything to political projects. I sold my dream house to Shirley and that money I will live off. If I die, then it will go to the political projects.”

John Jr. stared at Gen and said, “Mother I need money.”

Betty was nodded her head and turned and looked at Gen.

Gen said, “You have about thirty- five more years to live on this earth. Find a job.”

Gen turned to walk away and John JR, grabbed her arm and made Gen drop her clothes.

Shirley stood still and kept her gun pointed at John Jr and Betty.

John Jr stooped down to pick up Gen’s clothes and said loudly, “Mother look what you have done.”

Gen said, “Now John Jr. You want people to think I have dementia.”

Betty grinned.

John Jr. grinned and as he was standing he was eye to eye with Gen’s gun.

She took the gun out of her bag before she came out the house.

Betty looked at Gen and her mouth dropped open.

Gen snatched her clothes out of John Jr’s hand.

John Jr. stood.

Gen said, “You have to leave by daybreak tomorrow. As of now your name has been removed from every legal document. I have informed my family and friends I have removed you from my life as well. I wanted to see you face to face and tell you as oppose to the sheriff who will be here at daybreak to arrest you for selling all of my wine.”

John Jr was smirking up to that point.

He stared at Gen who turned to walk away.

Gen stopped and turned back to John Jr and looked him in his eyes and said, “With all the different charges, they are looking at a prison term of twenty-five to thirty – five years. So, you might not have to find a job after all you and your wife.”

Gen walked to the carriage.

Shirley watched Gen until she put her clothes in the carriage and stepped into the passenger side.

Shirley stepped into the carriage and put her bag in her lap and wrapped in a blanket.

Gen looked at Shirley and her bag and said, “You have one also?”

Shirley smiled and pulled out the yard.

Gen stared at John Jr until they were out the yard and on the street.

Shirley said, “You wanted to see John Jr in his face while it was daylight. If we went to Lorraine first it may have been dark when we got here.”

Gen said, “Yes.”

Shirley brushed herself and said, “Let’s go to Lorraine’s now.”

Betty stepped up to John Jr and said, “John?”

John Jr. starred behind Gen’s carriage with no feeling.

He said, “For now we pack and be out tomorrow.”

He turned to Betty and held her hands.

They ran back to the house and packed as much of their clothes and other items as they could put in the carriage.

John took the wagon and filled it with as much of Gen’s furniture and ‘what nots’.

Betty looked at John and said, “Can we go to jail for taking those artifacts?”

John Jr shook his head for no and said, “Don’t you worry about that.”

Betty said, “Where are we going?”

John Jr. said, “Only one place, your family. We have to be there through the holidays. Some of this will be sold to carry our weight. I will sue mother and say she is mentally incompetent and take over her financial affairs. Let her go and live with the Stiths since she loves them more than you and me.”

Betty looked at John Jr. and grinned she leaned into him.

She thought and said, “John Jr. you think we can to Philadelphia and spend the holidays with Dennis and Beverly?”

John Jr. said, “I’ll make the arrangements.”

John Jr. held Betty by her chin and kissed her.

Gen looked at Shirley.

They arrived at Lorraine’s house.

Gen said, “Shirley this is Lorraine. It is not John Jr.”

Shirley exhaled and walked to Lorraine’s door and knocked.

Lorraine came to the door and saw Shirley and stood and looked at Shirley.

Shirley looked like a spank child.

She said, “Hey momma Lorraine.”

Lorraine stared at Shirley.

Shirley turned her head sideways like she was going to leave.

Lorraine rolled her eyes and said, “What do you want Shirley?”

Shirley turned back around and looked at Lorraine and said, “First I want to come in your home. You were suppose to let me come and you never did.”

Lorraine jerked the door wide open.

Shirley rushed into the house and loved it.

She saw candles and bath items Lorraine finished.

Shirley walked in the kitchen and smiled.

She walked to the bedrooms and grinned.

She said, “I love your house Lorraine.”

Lorraine was watching Shirley and said, “Thank you.’

Lorraine waited.

Shirley walked to Lorraine and said, “The second thing, I need clothes for my dress shop. The dress shop is empty. There is nothing and we have nearly two to go. Would you go to New York and buy some high end clothes and bring them back here by next week?”

Lorraine said, “Yes.”

She walked to her door and opened it for Shirley to leave.

Shirley said, “The gift basket you brought for Thanksgiving everything is gone. I got the honey and milk bath items. When this week you think you can go?”

Lorraine said, “Wednesday.”

Shirley said, “You transfer in Philadelphia to the train for New York. I’ll make your hotel reservations at the hotel like’s daddy for three nights. You catch the Tuesday train back to Philadelphia and get here Thursday. I’ll pay you when you return.”

Lorraine said, “How am I suppose to pay for the clothes?”

Shirley said, “I’ll go to the bank to morrow and get two thousand five hundred dollars. Buy expensive church and party dresses. That should last until the spring. And accessories you think can match or go well with gloves and scarves.”

Shirley stepped out the door.

Lorraine stepped on the porch and lit her torch.

John was home and had secured his coal.

He had two torches. He put one on the far back and one on the far- right front.

The two gave him good light on the street.

He saw Shirley at Lorraine.

Shirley left as Lorraine walked around the back of the house.

Lorraine lit her torch light and looked up and saw Stanley lighting his.

She waved at Stanley.

Stanley waved at Lorraine.

Lorraine turned and walked around the front and went into the house and locked and secured her house.

Mike liked he ad light on the darkest side of the street.

The light from Lorraine’s torches lit part of the street in the front of Mike’s house.

Stanley’s torches gave light for his street and a little between Lorraine and her neighbor’s yard.

Lorraine went in her house and completed her orders for the bath items.

She packed two outfits for New York and pulled out the brochure of the distributors of the fashion clothes.

She thought and stood and finished packing.

Lorraine did not have food in the house, so she was not concerned about disposing of food.

She wondered about Monica and Harriet and the cold.

She thought she could trust them with her two horses and the carriage.

But she would take the carriage and two horses to the house like she has always done and leave it to Jose’s discretion to let them use the horse and carriage.

Monica took Harriet to work.

Harriet would stay at the house and leave on Thursday morning.

Harriet had her bag pack.

She waited on Monica who was double checking her stuff.

Monica left a few pieces of coal in the fireplace.

She would not have to completely re-start the fire.

They walked out the house.

Harriet locked the door.

Monica went and stepped up into the wagon.

Harriet came and got in the wagon.

They did not stalk to the house.

Monica let Harriet out the wagon.

The stable men were still getting the horses and wagons and cleaning them out.

Monica went downstairs and bathed and shampooed her hair.

He waited until her hair was dry and she dressed.

Monica came upstairs to Jose.

Everyone looked at Monica.

She waited for everyone to go on their assignments.

Jose looked at Monica who looked nice.

He waited to see what she wanted.

Monica said, “Jose I need to go into town for a few hours I am asking you to let me take a wagon and when I finish I will bring it back.”

Jose looked at Monica and said, “The date with Stephen?”

Monica looked shocked at first then nodded her head for yes.

Jose said, “Yes. I’ll go and tell them to give you a carriage and two horses.”

Monica said, “Thank you.”

Jose was putting on his coat and scarf and said, “Did Harriet thank you for the coal?”

Monica said, “No.”

Jose did not look at Monica but finished putting on his coal and scarf and walked out the backdoor and ran to the stables.

Mike, Gary, Steven and Stephen were sleep.

Jose paid them that morning along with John.

Dan did not work but went home and put his coal up and rode to the capitol and saw Jessie and bought him a wagon and carriage and three horses.

Jessie rode the wagon back to Cedartown, because Dan was talked into buying feed for the horses.

Dan saw some rugs that he bought and put in the carriage.

Jessie rode to Dan’s house and dropped off the horses feed and helped put the horses in the stables.

Jessie heard the noise from the stream.

He and Dan walked and saw the fish.

Dan said, “Jessie you want some fish.”

Jessie said, “Nall. Not now. During the spring.”

Jessie shook Dan’s hand and left.

He arrived home before dark.

Dan took the Stith’s wagon and four horses back to the house. He left them at his house for four hours.

He tied his horse to the back of the wagon and thought, “I hope Jose is not angry.”

Dan dropped the wagon and the horses off.

He left and went home and heated his kitchen.

Dan bathed and shave.

He went to sleep early that evening.

Steven, Stephen, Mike and Gary told Eleanor they would go back that night to the train station to help her.

Eleanor said, “Thank You.”

Eleanor sent Patrick and Brenda a telegram the train was light because a second train was bringing the rest of the coal and they were out in the extreme cold until morning. She had workers that will go back with her. She told Patrick she had a bad question about the previous owner of the coal distribution business.

She told them Shirley’s dress shop was wall bare and she asked Lorraine to go to New York to buy enough inventory for the holidays.

She told them Gen put John Jr and Betty out that the sheriff was coming to arrest them the next morning for selling her wine.

Eleanor said, “More than likely they will come to Philadelphia to spend the holidays with Dennis and Beverly.”

She told Patrick she would give him updates until they check into the hospital.

That Shirley should be there Saturday.

She will take the boys to school and return to Philadelphia on that Monday and help Shirley with the books of the bone hospital and be there Tuesday for the re-naming ceremony and be with Shirley as she meets with the school administrators about helping the handicap students. I will leave that night on the train and Lorraine maybe on that train.

Eleanor said, “I will decide if Shirley can continue here in school. I know she cannot do her daily chores, like getting her bath water and emptying the tub and her meals and laundry. Maybe she can hire someone here. I want her to get that degree. She would be the first on our side of the family and would open the doors for the boys.”

Patrick read the telegram to Brenda.

Brenda said, “I trust Lorraine.”

Patrick said, “Brenda.”

Brenda said, “I know. She has to find her own life. Maybe Ryan knows some good helpers. I want her to finish also.”

Patrick said, “I want her to finish. She has double classes which will allow her to graduate this May. She is really smart.”

They had dinner in their suite and looked out from the balcony and enjoyed their time together.

Brenda loves her soups.

Patrick ate veal.

Hutch looked around the dining car and did not see Patrick and Brenda.

He saw Ben and sat at the back of the dining room.

Hutch ordered the beef liver and mashed potatoes and he enjoyed his meal.

He went back to his first class accommodations and continued to read the book Patrick placed in his bag.

Hutch grinned and shock his head at Patrick’s kindness and generosity and that he remembered the book.

Hutch thought about all the test they have to endure and he could see Brenda raising Cain.

He said, Patrick would probably walk out the hospital and go to the train and go home.

Hutch laughed and continued to read his book.

Eleanor ate dinner with the family.

Shirley told Eleanor the dress shop and the jewelry shop need coal.

She said, “She asked Lorraine to go to New York and said yes. And she and Gen will sign the contract for the house.”

Gen said, “John Jr. will fight me for my money. He will not do that until the spring. That means I will enjoy this holiday season.”

Eleanor said, “Gen how will John Jr. try that?”

Gen said, “By proving I am incompetent.”

Eleanor said, “His witnesses?”

Gen said, “My enemies and Betty’s family. He does not want the house. He wants the money. That‘s why I sold it to Shirley. If I would had given it to her, which was my plan then he would have had a stronger case.”

Michael said, “Aunt Gen John Jr. will not win. I will be your lawyer.”

Gen smiled and said, “Thank you Michael.”

Eleanor smiled at Michael.

Gen was walking out the family dining room with Eleanor while all the children were walking to the sitting room.

Gen said, “I don’t know what John Jr. spent his inheritance on. He has no sense about money. He has only lived half of his life and he will either be in jail or on the street. I just can’t think what he has done with his money.”

Eleanor said, “A lot of bad business decisions have been made.”

Gen said, “You are talking about Debra.”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Gen said, “You think Dr. Greene was in on it?”

Eleanor said, “I pray he knows nothing about it. I can’t bare losing Tony.”

Gen said, “Me neither. He is such a Godly man.”

Eleanor sat in the sitting room and said, “Shirley when you go to the bank tomorrow, get the bone hospital’s workers Christmas bonus. It be the first of December and so they can funds to do whatever they want.”

Shirley wrote it down on her pad.

Eleanor stood and walked to her office.

Bruce and Percy followed Eleanor.

They laughed and talked all the way to the office.

Eleanor said, “Percy go and tell Jose to have the four workers ride a wagon into town in case we have to take the remaining coal.

Gen said, “How many employers including the doctors?”

Shirley said, “Twenty.”

Gen said, “You pay the doctors more?”

Shirley said, “It’s Christmas bonuses. Everybody gets the same amount.”

Michael was leaning on his side and listening to Shirley.

He said, “Can we put their bonuses in Christmas gift bags?”

Shirley tried to grin and said, “Yes Michael.”

Gen looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “This is the year all the staff are to get a pay increase. I did not want to do that while we were in Europe.”

Gen said, “You wanted to see if the hospital would make it?”

Shirley said, “Yes.”

Gen said, “Shirley, you had your mind set on becoming royalty.”

Shirley looked at Gen.

Gen said, “It’s alright. We all knew it.”

Thomas said, “I miss Joseph.”

He held his head down and ran out the sitting room looking for Eleanor he ran to her bedroom.

He did not see her and he screamed, “Eleanor!!!”

Eleanor heard Thomas.

She jumped from her desk and Bruce and Percy were running behind her.

Michael ran upstairs and saw Thomas on his knees and his face on the floor.

Jose was in the kitchen and he and Thomas ran behind Eleanor.

Eleanor ran upstairs and saw Thomas on the floor.

She ran to Thomas and grabbed him.

Thomas was sobbing pitifully.

Gen and Shirley walked up the stairs.

Michael was patting Thomas.

Eleanor was sitting on the floor holding and rocking Thomas.

She looked at Gen and Shirley and could not speak because never Thomas never did that.

Gen said, “He said he miss Joseph. He jumped up and ran up here looking for you.”

Percy said, “Thomas I miss daddy too.”

Bruce started crying and ran to his room.

Michael was patting Thomas.

Jose and Thomas went back to the kitchen.

Harriet and Rita and the other workers were at the bottom of the stairs waiting to see what was wrong.

Gary was walking into the house when he heard Thomas screamed.

He knew it was not a hurt cry but a heart cry.

Gary said, “I am going to become a psychiatrist.”

Eleanor said, “Percy go to Bruce.”

Percy said, “For what? I am sad too momma. I want Joseph here with us forever.”

Gary was walking upstairs and heard Percy.

Gary saw Eleanor holding Thomas.

Gary said, “I miss him too.”

Gary held Percy.

Gen walked to Bruce’s room and knocked on his door and walked in.

Bruce was crying and sat on his bed and looked at Gen and then Shirley.

Gen sat in the chair and Shirley sat on Bruce’s bed and they talk.

Bruce was crying badly.

Bruce said, “I want momma.”

Gen said, “She is still on the floor with Thomas.”

Thomas said, “That was bound to happen.”

Harriet said, “What?”

Jose looked at Harriet and blinked.

He said, “The children had accepted Joseph as their father and to live in Europe with him. They tried to be strong for Eleanor. Especially Thomas who is closest to her. To be children have gone through a lot within the past year and a half. Their pain had to spill out.”

Harriet looked at Jose and walked away.

She thought, “They think that I am ignorant and can’t understand anything. Why do they all think that about me?”

Eleanor was holding Thomas.

She and Michael walked to Bruce’s room.

Bruce jumped off the ran and ran to Eleanor.

Eleanor held and Thomas.

Michael leaned his head on Bruce and was patting Thomas.

Shirley sat on Bruce’s bed and watched them.

Gary was holding Percy and they stood in the hall.

Gen sat in the chair and stared at Bruce and Percy.

Gen thought, “These children wanted Joseph as their father. They loved him and he loved them. I saw nothing with Joseph. Why GOD did YOU take him from them? Look at this great pain and sorrow. I gave everything to my son including my being and look how bad a person he has turned out to be. I don’t want to go to court over my mind so he could get that money from and spend it that wife of his. I don’t understand him. I don’t want to understand him. I want him from me forever. GOD, how do I help these babies?”

Eleanor and stood and held Bruce and Thomas for hours.

Gary held Percy for hours.

Mike walked in the house and saw it was quiet.

He looked at Thomas.

Thomas said, “She is upstairs with Thomas. The children broke down this over Joseph.”

Mike said, “What?”

Harriet said, “That’s what I said and everybody looked at me like I am an idiot.”

Thomas did not turn to Harriet.

He said, “Eleanor met a younger man, a count and he came back with her to meet Patrick and Brenda, Michael and Shirley. They all were to move to Europe. AThe children and Brenda and Patrick loved him greatly. He became on the ship on the way back to Europe. A few hours before they married he fell dead.”

Mike’s eyes bucked and he whistle.

Thomas said, “It has now taking effect on the children and the boys were close to him and wanted him to be their father. Shirley was set to become a royal countess and she has been angry every since the count died.”

Mike snickered, “What are we to do? The train will be here in an hour.”

Jose was sitting and listening and doing his schedule.

Everybody looked at Jose.

Jose raised from his schedule and he thought how William was always working on the schedule which ran up a wall.

Jose said, “I am the butler. I run the house not their business. Mike, Gary is here. He is upstairs with Eleanor and her children. He can ride with her to the train. This is a suggestion since I have nothing to do with their business. You, Steven and Stephen leave and meet the train.”

Steven and Stephen were standing and listening.

Jose said, “You can set everything up like last night. See if any people are waiting for coal. And get their wagons ready. I guess this train is suppose to be much shorter.”

Shirley walked in the kitchen and was putting on her gloves. She had on her coat and several scarves.

Gen walked in the kitchen and was putting on her wrap and scarves.

Jose looked back at them and said, “Where are yall going?”

Everybody looked at Gen and Shirley.

Gen and Shirley looked at Jose.

He said, it like they were dumb and could not do the business.

Gen said, “Jose I know you are not us dumb.”

Harriet said, “Yes he is.”

Jose turned to Harriet and said, “Harriet, you and will have an employer and employee meeting.”

Mike, Steven and Stephen looked at Gen and Shirley.

Jose said, “Gen I was not speaking as if you are dumb. You are college educated, travel all around the world, speak five languages and dine with presidents, governors and kings. You are impressive.”

Gen stuck out her chest and lifted up her chin.

Shirley said, “What about me?”

Jose said, “Hey Shirley.”

Mike snickered and lower his head a bit.

Jose said, “I do not know how Eleanor does the business. I know she writes down everything. She gives receipts?”

Gen said, “Jose, I volunteered to help Eleanor. She is in crisis with her children. She needs to stay here with them. They have been through a lot this year and none of us knows how to help them but to hold them. Shirley and I volunteered to step in and help…”

Gen nodded and said, “Those fellows were with her last night…”

Mike smiled at Gen.

Shirley was still looking at Jose.

Gen said, “…They know how to do all the mechanics and run that part of the business. Shirley I will be there to write down all the customers names and how much coal they got and how they paid.”

Since Jose was completely ignoring Shirley.

Shirley said, “Jose, momma said she left the papers, books and receipts in her carriage.”

Jose looked from Gen to Shirley and said, “Fine.”

Shirley said, “We need to have them take a wagon each to town. We need coal for the dress shop and the jewelry shop.”

Jose said, “Shirley, ‘them’ are standing right there. You tell ‘them’.”

Shirley looked at Jose.

Jose stared at her.

Shirley turned and looked at the three men and said, “Hey. I am Shirley, Eleanor’s daughter and this is Miss Gen. We are stepping in for my mother. We don’t know all what to do, but to write down everything. She trusts you to do whatever you did last night. Miss Gen and I will stay out of your way. Momma said, the train should be much shorter and have three cars.”

Mike said, “Ok. Is Gary coming?”

Shirley and Gen looked back towards the stairs.

Shirley said, “I don’t believe Gary is coming.”

Mike said, “I’ll so to the stables and tell them to have three wagons and four horses each like last night. And to give you two Miss Stiths’ carriage with her books and papers in in.”

Shirley said, “Your name.”

Mike kind of shook his head and looked at Shirley with a question mark ‘like what’.

Jose snickered.

Gen hit Jose on his thigh.

He said, “Mike.”

Shirley said, “Thank you Mike. I know Steven and Stephen, they have been here three years and five years I know them. I have not seen you. Thank you for sharing your name.”

Thomas looked at Shirley.

Harriet smirked at Shirley.

The workers did not know Shirley could act like Eleanor.

Harriet turned and finished cleaning the kitchen and wiping down the cabinets.

Mike looked at Jose and walked out the house and ran to the stables.

Shirley walked to the backdoor and watched.

Gen said, “Jose, any soup left?”

Jose gestured towards Thomas and said, “You left some…”

Gen hit Jose.

Jose said, “I don’t know, ask Thomas. He is standing right there.”

Gen looked over at Thomas and said, “Thomas any soup or tea left?”

Thomas had a little left on the stove.

He said, “A little. I did not make a lot because the boys don’t eat much. I put this in something.”

Harriet thought, “Damn. I got to wash that pot.”

Thomas made a pot of tea and put honey and cut a few lemons.

Gen walked closed and watched Thomas work.

She looked back at Jose and said, “He is a chef.”

Jose peeped at Shirley watching the agons and horses.

Jose turned back to his schedule.

He said, “Thomas you are off from Christmas Eve until January the second.”

Thomas grinned.

Thomas said, “Well that stay or will it change.”

Jose said, “As long as we don’t have unexpected guests.”

Gen grabbed a lemon to throw at Jose.

Jose ducked and ran around the corner.

Gen ran to the door and yelled, “Smarty pants.”

Thomas put the soup and tea in a container with spoons and napkin.

He said, “I’ll take this to the carriage.”

Gen looked and saw the two spoons and said, “Why two soup spoons?”

Thomas looked at Gen.

Shirley saw Eleanor’s carriage.

She turned and said, “Aunt Gen here is the carriage.”

Jose walked to the carriage.

Thomas brought the containers with the hot soup and tea.

Jose said, “Where are the blankets that were in this carriage?”

Thomas said nothing but went back in the house.

Harriet was washing the dishes.

Jose walked in the house and went to the linen room and got six blankets.

He could hear the boys upstairs still crying.

He walked out the backdoor to the carriage.

He gave the blankets to Gen and Shirley.

They wrapped in the blankets and got in the carriage.

Shirley let down the flap to keep some of the cold out of their faces.

Gen said, “This is a good idea.”

Shirley took the reins.

Mike, Steven and Stephen were in the supply wagons, which were much larger than the regular wagons.

They turned the wagons around and sped out the yard.

Shirley was determined to stay with them especially since the road to town was dark.

Shirley was speeding with the wagons.

Gen was quiet and had her feet firmly planted on the carriage’s floor.

They all arrived in town and saw a large group of people waiting at the train station.

Some were in the wagons and some had made fires and were standing around the fires.

Mike was able to maneuver pass the crowd.

The crowd was not as large as the crowd last night.

Mike thought, “Maybe we will be finish before midnight.”

Shirley followed the three large supply wagons and stopped at the rest stop.

Shirley grinned and said, “Whoa. This is exciting. Isn’t it Aunt Gen.”

Gen was trying to get out the carriage, but her stomach was turning from Shirley trying to keep up with Mike, Steven and Stephen who all were former soldiers.

Gen mumbled and stepped out the carriage.

She stood against the carriage and deeply exhaled.

Shirley was excited about being out late at night.

She stepped out the carriage and looked around.

She reached in the carriage and got the account books and flipped to a vacant page.

She saw the sign about the cost of the coal.

Shirley said, “Aunt Gen where should I put the sign for the cost of the coal?”

Gen was still mumbling from the ride.

Shirley said, “Aunt Gen what did you say?”

Gen looked around and said, “Shirley put it on the rest stop door.”

Shirley walked and posted it on the door.

The people got out the wagons and read the sign.

Some mumbled about the cost.

Shirley stood and listened.

She did not know the price of coal, but she knew her mother was fair and did not cheat people.

Mike was standing at the end of the rest stop.

He heard the people complaining.

He saw Shirley stopped and watched the people and shook her head and walked away.

Mike smiled and thought, “She is not used to people complaining about cost.”

He leaned on the wall and stretched his back.

Nathan had been to the train station earlier.

He was sleep in the jail.

Steven and Stephen were seated in the supply wagons trying to stay as warm as possible.

The train’s whistle blew.

Shirley was jumping in excitement.

Gen walked over and said, “Shirley, we can sit in the wagon and write. We should have been able to put the sign on the carriage.“

The train rolled into the station.

The train conductor stepped out the train.

Shirley was grinning.

Gen said, “Oh my.”

“

She and Shirley had the blankets on and Gen hurried and dropped her blankets and walked to the train conductor.

Shirley followed as an excited child, not realizing what Gen was doing.

Mike and Steven saw Gen.

Mike laughed and said to Steven, “Old but still a bird.”

Steven nodded his head at how smoothly Gen moved.

Gen reached her gloved hand to the train conductor.

The train conductor reached and shook her hand.

Gen said, “I’m Genevia Olsen. A friend of Eleanor who is helping her out tonight.”

Gen looked at the train conductor.

He looked at Gen and was still holding her hand.

He looked at the grinning Shirley and reached his hand to shake Shirley’s gloved hand.

He said, “You must be Eleanor’s daughter. You are a smaller version of your mother.”

Shirley grinned.

The train conductor said, “What a beautiful smile.”

Steven said, “He needs to come on so we can get back inside.”

Mike grinned.

Stephen walked up and said, “Hey Craig.”

Gen turned and looked at Stephen.

Mike and Steven looked at Stephen.

Shirley looked at Stephen.

The train conductor walked to Stephen and reached out his hand to shake Stephen’s hand.

Gen immediately ran behind the train conductor.

Shirley followed Gen.

Steven looked at the train conductor in anger, he was ready to work and get back to the house.

Stephen reached out his hand and shook Craig’s hand.

The train engineers stepped off the train.

Steven walked to them and asked them where the scale was.

The train engineers showed Steven the weight scale.

They helped him to bring it to the other side of the train.

They train engineers opened the first cargo car.

Mike was grinning.

He watched Steven took control because Gen was running behind the train conductor.

Shirley did not know what was going on she was following Gen.

Steven beckoned for the wagons to start moving up to the train.

Mike looked at the wagons moving but he wanted to know how Stephen knew the train conductor.

Mike pushed himself off the wall and was about to walk off the rest stop porch when Stephen shook Craig’s hand and said, “Dad you are doing ok.”

Stephen looked at Gen.

Gen turned and walked away.

Shirley was smiling at the re\*union.

Gen said, “Shirley, come and write the accounts.”

Mike laughed and looked at Gen and said, “An old bird.”

He shook his head and walked to Mike and helped Mike the whole night.

Shirley and Gen wrote the accounts and collected the money.

Some of the men tried to have Shirley reduce the cost of the coal.

Shirley had grown tired of the men complaining and said, “Sirs you can leave. All you are going to do is sell the coal to the people who could not get their own. Leave.”

The men stopped and looked at Shirley.

Shirley did not blink.

She kept her voice leveled.

Gen looked at the men.

Mike, Steven and the two train engineers looked at Shirley.

The men were very threatening.

The train conductor and Stephen walkedTwo of the men saw the train conductor and Stephen and said, “Ok.”

They walked away.

The third complainer stared at Shirley.

Gen was writing down a customer’s information and slipped her gun out.

Stephen said, “Hello sheriff.”

Nathan was waken by the activity at the train station and woke and put on his clothes and walked to the train station.

He saw people passing in wagons.

He heard the three men and stood back to watch them.

He did not know the men, when two of them walked away from Shirley and the third was standing over her.

Nathan walked over.

Stephen and his father walked to Shirley.

The man turned and saw Nathan.

He jumped.

Nathan said, “Leave.”

Nathan watched the man go to his wagon and pulled away.

The people clapped.

Gen asked the man she was helping, “Who was that?”

The man said. I don’t know his name. He lives in Woodrow.

Another man who was sitting in a wagon said, “I don’t know his first name. But his last name is Wilson.”

Shirley was shaken and angry.

Stephen touched Shirley on her shoulder.

He and his father walked back to the rest stop and sat on the porch and talked.

Mike said, “I guess he ain’t going to help tonight.”

The train engineers were helping weight the coal.

They wanted to get back to Philadelphia so they could go and gamble this overtime pay the whole week-end.

Nathan looked at the people and walked back to the jail.

He went back to bed.

He smiled about Shirley and thought, “She can hold her own ground. She had pulled out her gun. I taught them to shot the leg or arm.”

They emptied the train cars a little after mid-night.

The rest of the coal they put in Mike’s supply wagon.

Shirley and Gen ran to the carriage and put the books and the money in the carriage.

They put their blankets on.

Steven got ibn his wagon and turned the wagon behind Mike.

Shirley turned the carriage behind Steven.

She placed her gun in her lap.

Gen placed her gun on her lap.

Mike was speeding in the supply wagon with the coal.

Steven was behind him and Shirley’s carriage was behind Steven.

They arrived at the house forty minutes later.

Gen was sick.

Every one jumped out the wagons.

Shirley and Gen jumped out the carriage.

Gen got the money.

Shirley got the books.

The house was dark and quiet.

Shirley said, “Aunt Gen I don’t have a key to the house.”

Gen looked at Shirley and looked around.

Mike was running to the house.

Eleanor was standing and watching them.

She unlocked the backdoor.

Mike held the door open and Gen walked in and Shirley after her and then Steven.

Eleanor looked and said, “Where is Stephen?”

Gen said, “The train conductor was his father. They had a reunion. When he will return I don’t know.”

Eleanor said, “I want to lock this door.”

Eleanor had her gown and robe on.

Gen said, “How are the boys?”

Eleanor said, “They are sleep.”

Gen said, “I’m going to dress for bed and sit with you in the kitchen and wait for Stephen.

Gen and Shirley went to change.

Shirley closed her door and went to bed.

Gen dressed for bed.

She walked down the hall and heard Shirley closed her door.

Gen stopped at the liquor table and poured a half full glass of whiskey.

She took a big swallow and said, “Aw.”

She turned and walked through the billiards room.

Gen turned and walked down the hall to the kitchen.

She sat with Eleanor at the table in the workers’ area.

Gen was drinking her whiskey and said, “Eleanor do you something to drink?”

Eleanor said, “I had a large glass of scotch after I put the boys to bed.”

Gen said, “Michael was not with you all and Joseph how did he take it this evening?”

Eleanor looked at Gen ad sighed and said, “After you and Shirley tonight. He fell out on the floor and screamed and hollered.”

Gen was startled and said, “Why?”

Eleanor said, “I asked him why he was taking Joseph’s death so hard. He said, because he did not have enough time with his father before he died.”

Gen sighed and looked at Eleanor.

They heard a knock on the backdoor.

Eleanor leaned back.

Gen peeped around Eleanor and saw Stephen.

She said, “It’s Stephen. I’ll get it.”

Gen picked up the key from Eleanor’s opened hand and walked to the door.

Gen looked at Stephen.

Stephen turned his head.

Eleanor stood and pushed her chair under the table.

Gen unlocked the back door and let him in the house.

Stephen saw Eleanor and spoke.

Eleanor said, “Stephen.”

Gen locked the backdoor and put the bar across the backdoor.

Stephen went to his room.

Gen said, “He has a beautiful father.”

Eleanor smiled.

Gen said, “He’s still married.”

She and Eleanor walked through the hall to the other side of the house.

Eleanor said, “The boys were taking their turns screaming and falling out on the floor over Joseph. I became angry with GOD and Joseph. I had to see my sons had such grief and pain. They do not deserve what they have been through.”

Gen stopped at the billiard table.

Eleanor said, “Gen, you have a busy day tomorrow and the workers can hear. I don’t want them not to have a good night sleep.”

Gen grinned and was rolling the ball in her hand on the table.

Eleanor looked at Gen.

Gen smiled but her mind was so far away.

Eleanor said, “You have been through a lot in a few days. You need time to rest. After you and Shirley finish your business tomorrow you can decide if you want to go home, go with me to take the boys to the military academy or go to Philadelphia.”

Gen and Eleanor were walking out the billiards room into the hallway.

Gen said, “If John Jr. and Betty leave later today. I bet they are going to Philadelphia to stay with Dennis and Beverly. They will not be outdone. Betty’s family is dirt poor and want to flaunt like they are somebody.”

Gen shook her head.

Eleanor walked up the grand staircase to her room.

She left her bedroom door opened.

Gen looked at the liquor table.

Eleanor cut her eye at Gen but continued up the stairs.

Gen looked down at her glass and smirked and walked to her room.

She closed and locked the door because she was the only person on that side of the house.

She sat in the chair and held her whiskey and cried.

Gen said, “I thought it would at least last until I die.”

She sipped her whiskey and cried.

She put her whiskey glass on the table and walked to her bed and laid across the bed.

Jose was up a little earlier.

He knew they had to get the boys underwear washed and packed since they would be leaving on Thursday until the Christmas holiday.

Jose grinned to himself.

He thought, “When they get here, I will be gone for my holiday.”

Everyone was waking that morning.

Mike and Jose brought the hot bath water to Eleanor, Shirley and Gen.

The boys bathed in the room Eleanor set up next to the hot water distribution.

Jose was proud of the room.

The chore of getting hot water through the house was easy.

He knew Eleanor was working on things in her mind.

She had the lanterns to replace the torches and the house looked grand.

Jose thought, “I wonder if my parents are coming to any the hospital ceremonies. Probably not. I am glad Brenda helped Steven to get started. Just the few projects he did, he has made a lot of money.”

Steven was up that morning working on the details of the hospital design the Stiths had chosen.

He thought about the landscaping.

He stared at the paper for a long time as he thought about his father who knew the land and knew what the land should feel like and what could grow.

Alicia walked out her room and watched Steven.

She knew he was thinking about their parents, especially when he dropped his head.

He was sitting in front of the window and the sunlight touched his tears. His tears glistened under the breaking of the day.

Alicia walked into the kitchen.

Alicia cleared her throat and said, “Good morning Steven.”

Steven held his head up and did not turn around and said, “Good morning my dear Alicia.”

She giggled, that’s what her mother would say.

She looked back at Steven and made breakfast.

She scrambled eggs, toasted bread and jam and made watered coffee for Steven.

Alicia was glad, they were no longer poor.

She set the breakfast table.

Emilou was coming out her bedroom yawning.

Steven heard her and was drawing the landscape around the hospital.

Emilou looked at the breakfast and said, “Alicia I am glad we have something else for breakfast beside that oatmeal.”

Steven said, “Emilou oatmeal is healthy for you.”

Emilou ran to Steven.

Alicia giggled.

Steven grabbed Emilou and hugged her.

He was finishing the landscape.

Emilou looked at the drawing and said, “No trees?”

Steven looked at Emilou and back at the drawing and said, “It’s a hospital and we don’t want the trees to grow and fall down on the hospital.”

Emilou said, “Everybody should have trees. Get trees that grow taller than the hospital.”

Alicia giggled and she thought.

Steven looked back at his drawing and put very small trees around the hospital.

He looked at Emilou and said, “Huh.”

Emilou nodded her head at Steven.

Alicia was walking back from the kitchen and said, “Yall come and eat.”

Steven and Emilou went to the table to eat breakfast.

Steven said, “Alicia, I can take Emilou to school and pick her up each day this week. I think the Stiths may have another project for me. I don’t believe it is a big project, but big enough to put a little change in the family’s account.”

Steven looked at Alicia and Emilou.

Alicia and Emilou looked at Steven.

Emilou and Alicia watched Steven and then at each other.

Steven stood and walked to the backroom which was his room, but it was too small to put a bed in it. He kept all of his clothes and books in it.

He said in the spring he would it out to have enough room for a large bed, dresser, table and lamp and a chair. “

He came back to the table and handed Alicia and Emilou their bank account books.

Alicia looked at Steven’s hand and grinned.

Emilou looked at Alicia and said, “Open yours Alicia.”

Steven was standing and looked at Emilou and raised his eyebrow and said, “Huh.”

Emilou started giggling.

Alicia opened her bank book and started screaming.

She jumped up and hugged Steven.

Emilou quickly opened her bank book and looked and said, “I don’t know what this means.”

Alicia told Emilou how much money it was.

Emilou looked at Alicia.

Steven said, “You two never tell anyone you have a bank account.”

Alicia was holding onto her bank account book.

Steven pulled it out of her hand and Emilou reached Steven her bank account book.

He smiled at Emilou and walked back to his room.

Alicia pointed to a bag at the end of the sofa.

Emilou looked back at the bag on the floor.

Steven walked back in the room.

Alicia pointed at the bag.

Steven looked at Alicia and then at the bag on the floor.

He pointed at the bag.

Alicia was nodding her head for yes.

Steven stooped and picked up the bag.

He walked to Alicia and handed the bag to her.

Alicia hysterically opened the bag and saw the dress.

She stood and put the dress to her.

Emilou said, “It’s beautiful.”

Steven grinned at Alicia excitement.

Emilou looked back at the floor.

Steven saw her and said, “Emilou what are you looking for?”

Emilou looked at Steven and said, “Where’s my bag?”

Steven said, “I knew you were going to ask that. The dress shop does not carry girls’ dresses. If  
I go back to Philadelphia I will buy you one more for the rest of the holidays. After this we can’t buy anything else until the spring.”

Emilou said, “Food?”

Alicia lowered her dress and said, “Emilou? Steven did not mean food.”

Alicia looked at Steven and said, “You didn’t right?”

Steven said, “No. Emilou finish so I can take you to school.”

Steven said, ”The Stith’s hospital ground breaking ceremony is in three weeks. Besides that, they are having an after five reception...”

He nodded at Alicia’s dress and said, “That maybe where you can wear that dress. It was the last one green one they had. I bought it last Friday and have been busy and have not given it to you.”

Alicia grinned and was twisting with the dress and said, “That’s ok Steven.”

Emilou blew.

Steven and Alicia looked at Emilou.

Steven said, “Emilou go and get your things so we can go.”

Emilou slowly moved.

Steven said, “The next day they are going to have a semi-formal dinner. I don’t know if we are invited to that.”

Alicia said, “We should be. Be are the builder.”

Steven looked at Alicia and said, “Watch that Alicia. I maybe the builder but the Stiths have the right to invite who they want to their house. They stablish me because the doors were slammed in my face because I am black. They don’t owe me anything and I will not demand to be a part of their lives. I will do their business to the best of my ability. You just make sure you marry someone who can give you a good life. Worry free of racism and financial woes.”

Alicia looked at Steven and tears filled her eyes.

She said, “Steven I am so sorry. I am just so glad we are not poor anymore. You made that possible. You are right we should have a separate life and have our own friends.”

Emilou walked back to the sitting room with all of her outer clothing.

She looked at Alicia and then at Steven.

Steven said, “When I get back we can work on our Christmas Eve, Christmas day menu and News yea Eve and New Years day and all the things we want to do for the net four weeks.”

Emilou said, “We must have games.”

She nodded her head.

Alicia grinned and said, “You are right Steven.”

Steven said, “Emilou, you put your clothes on and stay inside until I come and get you.”

Emilou said, “Ok.”

Alicia said, “I’ll help put your coat on Emilou.”

Steven put on his scarf, hat and gloves and ran outside to get the horses and his carriage.

Emilou preferred Alicia’s carriage because it was girlie. Steven had all of his work things and boots in his carriage.

Emilou was to the point she did not want dirt from Steven’s work things to get on her new clothes.

She was glad they had new clothes.

Alicia and Emilou watched Steven walk out the house.

Emilou turned and looked at Alicia.

Alicia smiled at Emilou and twisted her mouth.

She said, “I was being spoiled. Steven talked to me about that.”

Alicia walked in her room and put up her dress.

Emilou placed her coat on and Alicia put on her scarf and gloves and hat.

Alicia had three blankets to wrap up in while they were in the carriage.

Steven ran into the house and was freezing.

He put on his heavy coat and another scarf.

He looked at Emilou and ran and locked the backdoor.

He reached for Emilou’s hand and Alicia gave him the three wool blankets.

Steven wrapped in one blanket and Emilou wrapped in another and they put the last one across their laps.

Emilou said, “Steven maybe you make something to have heat in the carriage.”

Steven was thinking and said, “Maybe.”

Steven looked at Alicia.

She ducked back in the house and locked the door and watched them from the window.

Steven pulled out the yard and locked the gate after him.

He and Emilou got in line with the other carriages and horses.

Alicia walked from the window and thought, “Thanksgiving break will be over Monday and I will be back out there with all of the other people.”

She cleared the table and washed the dishes.

Her thoughts went to how that ugly side rose up in her. How she was selfish.

She did not like that side of her and said, “God please remove that from me. I want a good husband and a good life. No more than two children. I don’t want to spoil them. I don’t want them to think they deserve to have things. I want them to love You and JESUS. I never thought we could have anything but be poor You sent Steven to the Stiths and look how You used the Stiths to help us. I did not have the right to think I suppose to be with them. Help us to have our own friends. Our relatives think we are beggars. Because we don’t have a mother or father. God show them we are not. And help me with this anatomy class. Amen.”

Steven was thinking as he passed the ground for the hospital.

He looked at the land.

Emilou looked and said, “Steven is that the place for the hospital?”

Steven said, “Yeap.”

Emilou turned around and looked at the land.

Steven looked at her and continued to go to her school.

Emilou looked at Steven.

Steven felt Emilou looking at him.

He looked at Emilou and said, “Yes Miss Emilou?”

Emilou said, “Yeah you need to plant some trees and flowers. Plenty of flowers.”

Steven leaned over towards Emilou and said, “Yes ma am.”

They laughed and talked all the way to her school.

Emilou jumped out the carriage with the blanket.

Steven reached for it and saw other children wrapped in blankets and quilts.

Steven sat and looked and wondered why the children were cold. He knew Emilou did not like cold.

A man and woman passed and looked at Steven slowly turned from watching Emilou and stared at the man.

The woman was peeping around the man.

When she saw how Steven looked at the man she jumped and sat straight in their wagon.

Steven had to calm himself. He thought about the good white men he knew.

He thought Jose, Dan, Allen and Patrick.

Steven turned from the school and rode to the land for the hospital. He spent a good amount of time scaling the land.

The military commanders were having a lot of meetings.

They thought Steven was humorous running around with the wool blanket on him.

As they were watching from the balcony.

The commander received his invitation for the ground breaking for the hospital.

They all laughed.

One commander said, “He is preparing the dirt.”

Steven was working hard to figure out something.

He went and got his pad and pencil.

He put them down grabbed his shovel and went into the tall grass and started digging.

The commanders came back inside to their meetings.

Alicia had cleaned the house.

Especially Emilou’s room.

She put on dinner which was pinto beans, turnips, beets and cornbread.

Alicia sat at the table to do her homework.

She began to daydream and wondered how Ben was doing. She had settled her mind she wanted a doctor. Someone who had status and could give a financially sound life.

She thought about Steven and wanted him to meet that special woman and have his family.

She started thinking Steven going back to medical school in the capitol. He would he there for two years.

She had to be there for her last semester and finished in the capitol. She begin to think about Emilou. They had enough money to send her to a boarding school for two years and a very good one at that.

Alicia thought, “I have to talk to Steven whenever he gets back.”

She pulled out her anatomy book and bowed her head and folded her hands in prayer.

Near noon Steven rode in the yard and left the horses and the carriage in the front yard, because he had to get Emilou.

He unlocked the door and saw a frustrated Alicia.

He pulled of his coat and sat next to Alicia and looked at her anatomy book.

He eased the book from Alicia and said, “May I?’

Alicia could not answer Steven.

Steven looked at her and he read the lesson.

Then he turned to Alicia and explained in great detail what was being said.

He explained the different systems to Alicia.

She sat and looked at Steven.

Steven said, “Alicia you have to know this so you can graduate in May. They will not let you finish nursing school if you have failed one class. I am here and can help you not only pass but excel in anatomy. I don’t want you to work at the restaurant washing dishes or at the Stiths washing sheets.”

Alicia was leaning on the table on her elbow staring at Steven.

When he said, washing dishes or washing sheets she sat up and looked at Steven.

Steven looked at her and said, “Alicia, I am here to help you get your nursing degree and start your life. I start medical school in the fall. I need you to help Emilou.”

Alicia said, “I know. I have to finish in the capitol. What if we put Emilou in that fancy all girls boarding that Julia went to? I have to be in the capitol from January until graduation and do that internship until December in the capitol. Then you start medical school in the fall. We can share an apartment. Then I come back here in January and get Emilou.”

Steven was looking at Alicia and said, “You have been thinking about this. So while I am working on the Stith’s hospital from January to September Emilou is here with me. Then when I go to medical school in September send Emilou to that expensive all girls boarding school for the fall and take he out when you finish your internship at the hospital in the capitol and return here. What are you going to do for work for a year while the hospital is being build. Just sit at home and take care of Emilou and use up your inheritance?”

Alicia said, “Yes.”

Steven opened the anatomy book and said, “Bad plan. We will figure something out. And you get a room in January until May. Because it is safer. There are many good neighborhoods around the schools. You have to remember you will horses and a carriage that you will have to take care before you go to school and at evening time.”

Alicia looked at Steven.

Steven held the book up on the table and looked at Alicia and said, “You did not think about that.”

Alicia said, “No.”

Steven said, “We have the holidays to figure this out. But first let me show you have to study anatomy and understand it.”

He looked at Alicia who was staring at him.

Steven took two hours and explained Alicia’s lessons.

She started to understand it.

She checked on the food.

Steven was putting on his coat to go and picked up Emilou from school.

Steven said, “Alicia, why the children wear blankets at Emilou’s school?”

Alicia held her head up and looked at Steven and said, “I don’t know. I will ask Emilou.”

Steven said, “I can ask Emilou. I thought you might know if it did not coal and fuel.”

Alicia stared back at her anatomy book and started reading the lesson.

She understood the lesson.

She studied it until Steven and Emilou came home.

Steven locked the front gate.

He rode the carriage and horses around back. He feed the horses and gave them water.

He checked their water and brought a pail of water to the house and emptied it in the container.

Steven came in and Alicia had set the dinner table and made Steven a plate of pinto beans, turnip greens, beets and cornbread.

Emilou ate slowly and went to her room.

Alicia walked to Emilou’s room.

She helped her dress for bed.

Alicia said, “Emilou what is wrong?”

Steven was looking back in Alicia’s book and he was listening to Emilou and Alicia.

Emilou said, “Momma. I miss her.”

Steven exhaled and looked out the window.

Alicia laid on Emilou’s bed and held her until she fell asleep.

Alicia walked out Emilou’s room after an hour.

Steven looked at Alicia.

Alicia cleared the table.

She sat and did her homework.

Steven washed the dishes and put up the remaining.

Alicia was thinking and thought she would wear the new green dress to the semi-formal reception. Maybe she can start meeting men of status.

Steven watched Alicia and wondered why she was changing.

He thought, “Mom and dad were plain folks who worked to give us a better life.”

Eleanor went to her office after breakfast.

She talked to her sons in the sitting room.

She told Jose to pay the men from last night and send Stephen to her office.

She walked down the hall to her office.

Eleanor unlocked her desk and took out the envelope Patrick and Brenda gave her to give to Stephen.

While she waited for Stephen she thought about Joseph.

She smiled.

Stephen walked to Eleanor’s door and saw her smiling.

He thought, “She’s going to fuss because I didn’t work.”

He knocked on her door.

Eleanor looked up at the door and said, “Good morning Stephen come in and close the door for me please.”

Stephen closed the door and walked to Eleanor.

She pointed to the chair.

Eleanor said, “I know you did not work last night. I told Jose to pay all of you including you. Mr. and Mrs. Stith gave me this envelope to give to you.”

Eleanor reached the envelope to Stephen.

Stephen said, “What is it?”

Eleanor said, “They did not tell me.”

Stephen took the envelope and opened it.

He read it and looked at the papers.

Eleanor was looking and tried to figure out the papers.

She continued to work to get her day organized.

Stephen stood and said, “Thank you.”

Eleanor said, “Thank you.”

She stood and walked to Patrick’s office and checked for the mail and any telegrams.

She walked to Jose and said, “Have some one bring the wagon of coal for the dress shop and jewelry to town.”

Jose said, “I’ll do it.”

Jose put on his scarves, gloves, and hat.

He got the house mail and the note he was sending to his parents so it post.

Eleanor left the house a few minutes before Jose, and went into town

She went to the bank and wired the coal company the remaining balance.

Jose was leaving the post when Eleanor left the bank.

She looked at him and walked back to the office and stayed there until started getting dark.

Nathan walked and peeped between the shades and saw Eleanor at the desk working.

He knocked on the door.

Eleanor said, “Who is it?”

Nathan said, “Nathan.”

Eleanor pushed her chair back and said, “Coming.”

She walked to the door and peeped out and made sure it was Nathan.

He fussed at Eleanor for not looking out the door but opening it.

Nathan said, “Go home.”

Eleanor looked passed Nathan at the men lighting the lights.

He looked at the men and turned back to Eleanor and said, “You have an idea?”

Eleanor was starring and did not respond.

Nathan was not offended because he knew she was in deep thought.

She blinked and turned and looked at Nathan and said, “I’ll be gone for two weeks. I was trying to finish up as much as I could and put everything in line. I take the boys back to the military academy on Thursday and then to Philadelphia to check on momma and daddy, help Shirley with the re-naming of the hospital after her and talk her school into letting her install wheelchair ramps for the students who need them.

Nathan nodded and said, “Excellent.”

Eleanor said, “It is one piece of business I don’t want to do, but I will.”

Nathan said, “What is that?”

Eleanor said, “Some has taken one of the doctor’s pay for nearly two and a half years.”

Nathan said, “Hutch?”

Eleanor said, “Shirley, two years ago said, everyone would get a pay increase after two years. That would be in January. But she did it like that to see where the hospital was financially weak and give her time to get back here from Europe to give the increase in wages.”

Nathan said, “So it does take at least two years to enjoy Europe?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Nathan said, “Shirley is smart. How are the boys doing?”

Eleanor waved her hand and put one hand on her hip.

Nathan looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “They had a bad yesterday. Thomas, who is the quiet strength broke down and was screaming.”

Nathan looked at Eleanor and frowned up.

Eleanor said, “Thomas said he missed his father Joseph. They all screamed and hollered for hours. Even Michael.”

Nathan said, “I’m sorry Eleanor. They had a breakdown from all of this tragedy. They all wanted Joseph as their father?”

Eleanor nodded her head for yes.

Nathan looked at Eleanor.

She took a deep breath and tried to stand up.

Nathan heard a loud yell.

He turned and looked and it was Sarah trying to get to her street and go home.

Eleanor looked out the door and saw Sarah.

She grinned and said, “Sarah she gets confused on the street.”

Nathan said, “Everyday.”

Eleanor laughed.

Nathan looked at Eleanor and said, “Leave.”

Eleanor nodded her head and locked the door.

She put out the fire and took all the papers and put them in her bag.

She double checked the doors and windows and turned off the telegram machine.

She did not have a torch on.

She put on her scarves, hat, gloves and coat.

She had her blankets and all her bags in her hands.

She could not close the door.

She rushed to her carriage and put all the bags and blankets.

She looked up and saw Shirley and Gen leaving the lawyers.

Eleanor ran to the door and locked the door.

Jose delivered the coal to the jewelry shop and the dress shop.

He passed the office and went another way.

Eleanor looked up and wondered why he was going that way.

She shook her head and thought, “I don’t want to know.”

Jose went to the capitol and bought two horses and carriage from Jessie.

He told Jessie to keep and take care of the horses and carriage until the week of Christmas.

Jessie agreed.

Jessie made so much money for those several months that he made in all of his life.

He felt GOD had forgiven him of the murders he committed and for taking his son along with him as he killed people.

That son was off a few towns over in a ministry college. He and his other brother were going to become ministers.

The baby boy was going to college to become a teacher.

The second oldest decided to stay with Jessie and grow their family business.

Jessie felt bad for being a hired killer and taking his nee baby along with him as he killed people.

He asked GOD to forgive him and changed him into a righteous man and not to let his sins fall on his sons nor on their children and not to let his son remember the killings.

He promised GOD if HE got him out of all that hell, he would raise his sons to Him and he would make it right to them.

He got that chance when they killed all those mobsters.

Jessie bought him and each son a house and furnished them.

Jessie bought the oldest son and the nee baby a house in the college town were attending school.

They liked the college setting and the town.

Jessie paid for his sons to go to college.

He made sure his four sons put their money in the bank to live off.

Jose left from the capitol after he shopped for his family.

On the way back to the Stiths Jose thought about the Christmas gifts he bought for his family.

The gifts were very nice and showed he made it in life without them.

He did not agree with their racist views. Too many died to set free not only the slaves but the nation from the hand that crippled it from growing. The growth that only freedom could produce.

Jose was passing the clothier his family shopped.

He pulled in and spent two hours in the shop.

Jose ordered him two gentlemen’s suits, shirts and ties and a new pair of boots.

He bought plenty of socks, ties and handkerchiefs.

He was being stingy and saw a fabulous coat, scarf and gloves and hat.

He put the pieces together. and the store manager and owner watched Jose because they were going to sell the ensemble if he did not buy it.

The manager remembered Jose as a young man when he and his brothers would come in with their father the congressman.

Jose was paying for the other items and he heard people walking in the shop and asking about the coat ensemble.

Jose stepped back and said, “Excuse me.”

He took the hanger and accessories to the counter and told the manager to add them.

The owner said, “Mr. Caldwell we will be glad to give you an account. Let it be a family affair.”

Jose smiled and said, “No, thank you.”

Jose paid for his clothes and said he would come the Friday before Christmas and picked up the suits he ordered.

He was thinking he would go to Nathan and Denise’s wedding.

Jose thought, “They have over three weeks to get them to me.”

Jose was riding through the neighborhood he was going to buy the house.

He finally decided to stop being stingy and buy him a nice house.

He was thinking about the woman from Philadelphia he wanted to marry, but he found out she was the worst person he ever met.

She wanted to move into a suite and bring all her family down for them to live in Patrick and Brenda’s house and ride them up and down on Patrick and Brenda’s trains. And she was racist to Mabel and Denise.

Jose shook his head. He could not believe he did not pick that up. He wanted to marry her. He thank God, he heard her in time and put her back on a train and sent her home to Philadelphia.

Jose has never asked about her.

He has no regrets.

He removed her out of his life forever.

He thought about Patrick and Brenda trusted him with their great possession and this woman revealed her true self by thinking she had overpowered Jose with his love for her that she could take the thing he was entrusted with to use and destroy it.

Jose shook his head.

He still beat himself up over that terrible decision.

He stopped in front of the two houses.

The owner of the two story house and his wife were looking out the window at Jose when he pulled up.

Jose jumped out the wagon and stood by the two story house and examined the house.

He thought, No landscaping. I can get Mabel to do that.”

The husband and wife were grinning and smiling.

Jose turned and stood in the street and looked at the single story cottage.

He loved the simple but elegant frame of the house.

A person passed him and said, “Hey Jose.”

Jose said, “Hello.”

Jose was still emersed in the house.

The voice hit his memory and he thought, “My name.”

He turned and saw a female walking slowly down the street.

He squinted his eyes and saw a Stith uniform.

Jose could not tell who it was. He stepped towards the end of the wagon and watched the person.

They were not walking towards a house.

He said, “Hello.”

Maureen turned and looked at Jose.

Jose was shocked and stood for a moment.

She said, “Maureen.”

Jose said, “I know who you are what are you doing here?”

She said, “This is how I go home.”

Jose said, “Maureen come and get in the wagon. I’ll take you home.”

Jose looked at her and knew she was tired.

He stood and waited for her to walk back to the wagon.

Maureen walked back to the carriage and Jose helped her in.

He ran to the side to pull away.

He looked at the two story house and stared.

The husband and wife looked out at Jose.

The wife said, “He is interested.”

The husband said, “I want him to buy, so we can be in California by the spring.”

The wife said, “Dear I know. I miss all of our family and friends.”

The husband looked at the wife and said, “I miss the weather.”

Jose got in the seat and looked at a shivering Maureen.

He said, “Maureen where do you live?”

Maureen was shaking so and could hardly speak.

She said, “I’ll show you.”

Jose was becoming angry and looked at his clock and said, “Did you walk all the way from work.”

Maureen was balled up and nodded her head for yes.

Jose said, “Maureen your husband don’t work?”

Maureen said, “No.”

Jose said, “Maureen do you have food to eat?”

Maureen said, “Yes.”

Jose said, “Do you have coal?”

Maureen said a little.”

Jose looked in the back of the cargo wagon and had a little coal left that could not fit in the coal bins for the dress shop and the jewelry shop.

Jose jumped out the wagon and and stood.

He saw Steven’s house up the street.

Steven’s house stood out. It really looked great.

Jose turned and saw a few more houses that had great architectural features.

He shook his head at how over one generation the neighborhood has fallen.

Jose was turning to help Maureen out the wagon.

Craig walked out the house to go and light the town’s torches.

He looked at supply wagon and said, “Take me to town.”

Maureen did not say anything.

Jose never saw Craig before, but for him to come out of the house he knew he was the one.

Jose told Maureen, “I’m going to give you time off from now until the week of Christmas. No one is going to be at the house until the week of Christmas. No one is needed.”

Maureen said, “Jose I need the money.”

Jose said, “I’ll get your pay to you Friday.”

Jose got in the supply wagon.

Maureen turned around looking for Craig.

Craig had jumped in the supply wagon.

He looked at how big the wagon was.

Jose looked at Steven’s house and he turned the supply wagon around.

Maureen saw Craig sitting in the seat and she wondered.

Jose started singing and going the opposite way away from town.

Jose knew if Craig was late or missed a day of lighting the torches they would put him in jail.

Craig yelled, “Back there fool!”

Jose’s temper flared and before Craig could finish his sentence Jose had pulled his gun from the holster and had it pointed at Craig’s head.

Craig was pointing backwards and said, “Please.”

Jose stopped the supply wagon and said, “Get out. I better never see you again. You better not put a finger on Maureen. Better yet get out of town.”

Craig stood and looked at Jose.

Jose stared at Craig.

He pulled off.

Craig began to run back so he could be in town before dusk.

Jose was angry and he was shaking.

He eased his gun back in the holster and he breathed and said, “God I nearly killed that man. He talk and act like an animal. He talks to Maureen like that and he thought he was going to talk to me like that.”

Jose began to calm himself down.

He turned the supply wagon and rode fast through Gen’s neighborhood.

He thought, “I needed to check on Gen’s house. But I have passed it.”

Jose turned to look backwards at Gen’s house and nearly lost the grip on the reins.

He said, “God I need help. Please never let me see that man again. Can you give Maureen sense, she acts like she is mentally retarded.”

Jose was speeding and made it to the house and pulled the supply wagon and horses to the stables.

He got all of his bags and walked to the house.

Everyone looked at Jose and knew he was frazzle.

Jose went to his room and hung his expensive clothes and put his family’s gifts in the armoire.

He pulled off his coat, hats, scarves and gloves.

He took his holster off and he stared at the wall.

Mike and John were about to go and light the lanterns.

Mike said, “I need that change for tonight.”

John looked at Mike.

Peter made Shirley’s favorite dish of spaghetti and meatballs for dinner.

Nadine walked back in the kitchen to start taking the food into the family dining room.

Mike walked to Jose’s room.

Peter was peeping at Mike.

Nadine walked in and saw peter peeping.

Jose said, “Yes.”

Mike said, “I want my pay from last night.”

Jose sat for a moment and said, “Mike you got more money than all of us.”

Mike looked around at the other workers and grinned.

Jose stood and walked to the door and opened it and stared at Mike.

Mike looked around at the other workers and tried to grin.

Jose walked out his room and into the kitchen.

He sat at his desk and stared for a moment.

Jose looked at Nadine.

Nadine bucked and held her head back and wondered at Jose.

Peter looked at Nadine then at Jose.

Jose stared in front of him.

John said, “Jose what is it?”

Jose said, “I saw Maureen...”

Mike looked at Jose and he flipped open Jose’s book.

Jose looked at Mike.

John looked at Mike.

Nadine walked over to Jose and said, “What about Maureen?”

Jose said, “She was walking home. It was freezing. She was shaking from the cold. I did not readily know her because I was looking at a house. Then it hit me that someone knew my name. I took Maureen home. Her husband came out their house and got in the supply wagon and told me to take him to town.”

Mike said, “Did you shoot him?”

Jose looked at Nadine and said, “Nadine didn’t you know Maureen is retarded and introduced her to Craig.”

Nadine yelled, “I told that damn William it was not me it was Ruth that introduced Maureen to her friend Craig.”

Eleanor jumped in her carriage and rushed and caught Shirley and rode fast to the house.

Eleanor, Shirley and Gen were walking in the house when they heard Nadine scream.

Jose sat and stared at Nadine.

Peter was looking between Nadine and Jose.

Peter wanted to know what Jose did.

Mike was tapping on Jose’s book.

Jose sat back and folded his arms.

Peter said, “Jose what you do?”

John looked at Peter.

Eleanor knew something happen.

She walked up to hear.

Shirley and Gen were staying by the backdoor.

Jose held his head in his hand.

Mike looked at Jose.

Jose said, “I nearly shot him.”

Mike tapped harder on Jose’s book and said, “’Nearly’ does not count. Come on Jose I have to go.”

Steven and Stephen stepped forward.

Jose opened his book and flipped to the other duties payment area like Brenda had outlined.

Patrick and Brenda spent two hours with Mag and Natalie before they continued their journey to Philadelphia.

Mattie left a letter to Patrick and a letter to Brenda.

Mag told Patrick and Brenda the lawyer came back before Thanksgiving and got Mattie.

She locked up her house and gave Mag the letters before she boarded the train.

Mag told Patrick and Brenda the lawyer did not look good. He was polite.

Patrick and Brenda took Mattie’s letters and read them silently on the train that evening.

Hutch watched them.

Patrick and Brenda did not look at each other but exchanged the letters.

They both sighed.

Mag said, “I want to spend Christmas in Cedartown.”

Patrick said, “I believe we can work this out Mag.”

They hugged Mag and Natalie and boarded the train.

Patrick and Brenda were quiet at dinner with Hutch.

Hutch knew it was something painful.

They arrived in Philadelphia while they were finishing dinner.

Hutch said, “I’ll wait for you two outside. We are going to Ryan’s second hospital. It has all the current equipment.”

Brenda sighed and waved her napkin towards Patrick.

Hutch said, You two listen to me. I want to make sure you are healthy and are around to see your great grandchildren. Especially Shirley and Skip’s children.”

Brenda looked at Hutch.

She said, “You did say that.”

Hutch said, “I will not leave you. I told Ryan to have me a room near you two. He will be there also. You mean more to me than my employers. Ryan also.”

Patrick said, “Thank you Hutch.”

Hutch said, “Whatever those letters are about I want you to put them aside for the next week.”

Brenda exhaled and waved her napkin again.

Hutch looked at Brenda and said, “Brenda, you are spoiled. I never knew that.”

Patrick said, “You just figured that out.”

Hutch looked in surprise at Patrick.

Brenda said, “Because I was a slave freer you think I should not be spoiled?”

Hutch said, “Yeah.”

He stood and walked to his cabin and double checked his bags and.

He sat on his bed and thought about Patrick and Brenda and the tests ahead of them.

He closed his eyes.

He opened his eyes and looked down at the book that Patrick gave to him.

The train whistled and began to slow down.

Hutch said, “I love them FATHER. Please help them. Help us all. In JESUS’ name. And help whatever those letters were about. Let YOUR will be done.”

Patrick and Brenda were stepping off the train at the same time Eleanor stepped forward and said, “What is going on?”

Nadine was angry and said nothing.

Peter was looking between Nadine, Eleanor and Jose.

Mike looked at Jose.

Eleanor looked around at the workers and said, “This is a worker issue?’

Jose said, “Yes.”

Nobody else said anything.

Eleanor looked and said, “Peter the bread is about to burn.”

Peter jumped and ran to the stove.

Harriet and Nadine walked and took the food to the family dining room.

There was knocking on the front door.

Jose looked up.

Mike tapped the book again.

Jose took the money envelope and paid, Steven, Stephen and Mike and had them to sign the receipts.

Eleanor, Shirley and Gen started walking through the house to the sitting room.

When Eleanor reached the grand foyer.

The boys were at the top of the staircase looking at the front door.

Nadine was at the front door talking to someone.

Harriet was watching from the family dining room.

Nadine looked back and Miss Stith, “Claressa and Alvin Smith.”

Eleanor screamed.

The boys jumped and ran down the stairs.

Gen watched them.

Jose was walking through the formal dining room.

Claressa peeped her head in the door.

She screamed.

Nadine moved out of the door.

The two women were running down the hall with their arms stretched out screaming.

Harriet and Nadine were.

Alvin stepped in the house and Jose looked at him.

Alvin pointed and said, “I’m with her. I am her husband.”

Jose looked outside and said two carriages with the seal of the America.

He nodded at Nadine.

Nadine was still angry with Jose but knew he was her boss and looked outside and saw the footmen.

She was impressed.

She saw Mike and john going to light the lanterns.

Alvin was grinning at his wife and Eleanor.

Both women were crying.

Alvin took out his handkerchief and shook it.

Steven, Stephen, Theresa ran through the billiards room.

Alvin looked at Jose and said, “My I give this to my wife.”

Jose stared at him.

Alvin looked at Jose and walked to his wife.

He grabbed Eleanor and they hugged.

Harriet asked Nadine set two more plates?’

Nadine said, “Look outside at security men.”

Harriet peeped out the window and said, “Who is that?”

Jose said, “I believe he is an ambassador.”

Nadine and Harriet tried to straighten up their backs.

Jose said, “Too late.”

They looked at Jose.

Peter was wondering why Nadine and Harriet had not come for the rest of the food.

Peter had the bread, butter and olive oil with him.

He peeped out the window and saw the security men around the two carriages and nearly dropped the trays.

Jose closed his eyes.

Nadine said, “Peter?”

Peter peeped down the hall and saw the man hugging Eleanor.

Peter said, “Did yall see the carriages? Who is he?”

Harriet said, “An ambassador. Right Jose?”

Jose did not look at Harriet.

Eleanor turned to her family and said, “Alvin, Claressa these are all of mines and this is our dear family friend Genevia Olsen.”

Alvin said, “You are Ambassador John’s wife.”

Genevia said, “Yes.”

Eleanor said, “Children this is my best friend Claressa she has been travelling the world with Alvin my second best friend for ten years. Percy, Bruce, Thomas, Michael and Shirley.”

Claressa and Alvin stared at Shirley.

Shirley flashed that beautiful smile.

Claressa said, “Shirley.”

Alvin stared at Shirley.

Claressa walked to Shirley and held her face in her hand and stared in her eyes.

She hugged Shirley.

Percy said, “I remember you are the girl who went screaming down the street when momma was in the tree.”

Claressa looked at Percy and said, “Oh God that was so terrible.”

She pointed at Alvin and said, “He still has nightmares.”

Everybody laughed.

Eleanor could barely talk and said, “Dinner?”

Claressa said, “Not tonight. We just got off your train. I could not pass you.”

Alvin said, “I was being political and told Claressa to wait until tomorrow. But I wanted to see my best girl too.”

He looked around and said, “Where is Bruce?”

Bruce said, “I am here.”

Alvin looked at Bruce and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor was smiling at Bruce.

Alvin frowned up and said, “We have to go. But we are here waiting my next assignment.”

Claressa, Eleanor and Alvin held each other as they did in school.

They walked to the door.

Gen and Shirley and the boys walked to the door and saw the impressive carriages and the stately security men standing in the yard.

They heard Mike and John yelping riding fast to the backyard.

Jose closed his eyes.

Eleanor looked out the door at Mike and John.

They had completed their task and was off the remainder of the night.

Alvin said, “That bread smell divine. Try it with mozzarella cheese and parmesan cheese.”

Percy looked at the try of bread and then at Peter.

Peter turned and went back in the kitchen and added the cheese.

He placed the bread in the oven until the cheese melted.

Gen watched the carriages and the security men.

She said to Shirley, “GOD I miss those days. The prestige and the danger.”

Michael was looking up at Gen.

She said, “It was exciting.

Bruce looked at Gen and said, “If it dangerous I want to do it.”

Michael said, “Me too.”

Eleanor said, “I leave Thursday and take all of my children to school. The boys to the military academy…”

Alvin turned around and looked at Eleanor, “My school I hope?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Gen said, “See. Get to school and do good.”

Eleanor said, “I will be gone for two weeks. Can you come back tomorrow for tea.”

Claressa said, “I’m sick of tea.”

Alvin chuckled.

Eleanor hollered.

Claressa looked at Alvin and said, “He has a lot of work to do, but I’ll come back tomorrow. What about ten am?”

Eleanor said, “Perfect.”

Claressa, Eleanor and Alvin hugged.

Claressa and Alvin walked off the porch to the carriages and there were people in the carriages.

Percy said, “Who are those people Aunt Gen.”

Gen looked out the door and said, “Those are called secretaries. They are not the same type of secretaries you see. You handle extremely sensitive and dangerous communications from the president of our country. That no one is see or hear but the ambassador.”

Thomas looked up at Gen.

He turned around and looked back at the man and woman who witting down.

Eleanor stood and watched them ride away and the security men stood on steps around the carriages.

Thomas looked at Michael.

Michael watched them out of sight.

Peter was coming back with the cheese bread.

Eleanor stepped inside.

Jose locked and barred the door.

Eleanor, Gen and Shirley gave Harriet their coats and told her to put them in the sitting room.

Eleanor said, “Momma and daddy. Go and eat. I will be back when I send them the telegram before they exit the train.”

Eleanor ran down the hall to Patrick’s office and unlocked the door.

She turned the telegram machine on.

She sent a telegram to Patrick and Brenda that Claressa and Alvin were back.

She grinned and kicked her feet and got up and locked Patrick’s office door and ran back to the family dining room.

Michael looked at a grinning Eleanor.

Thomas said, “Momma I’m glad your friends are back while we are away. So you want be lonely.”

Gen teared up and dabbed her eyes with her napkin.

Eleanor said, “Oh my sensitive Thomas.”

Michael was chewing his lamb chop and said, “I don’t want to be an ambassador.”

Gen said, “I loved it. You had to be brave and sometimes spy and always keep secrets.”

Bruce looked at Gen.

Gen said, “Did you noticed how they walk. You are taught how to walk and sit and stand. It is a whole different life.”

Eleanor said, “I said it has been ten years. They left when Shirley was three years old. They have been gone for fifteen years.”

Percy said, “Momma tell us about that tree again.”

Eleanor laughed and said, “I know we will talk about that tomorrow.”

Gen said, “Oh my, this bread is delicious.”

Peter was standing in the door and grinned.

Eleanor looked at Gen and cut a small piece of bread and looked at Peter.

Eleanor was not a bread eater and she said, “Divine Peter.”

Peter said, “Thank you. It was the man’s suggestion.”

Eleanor said, “I want to know what countries they have been.”

Michael said, “Let me know if they have been to Africa.”

Bruce looked at Gen and said, “I want to be an ambassador. How do I become one.”

Gen said, “It is a small and select group of men. They are highly educated and some have military careers. They are selected by the president and confirmed by congress. The process is very prestigious.”

Shirley said, “Skip can become an ambassador.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley and said, “You are planning Skip’s career Shirley?”

Shirley looked at Eleanor.

Nadine looked from Eleanor to Shirley.

Nadine noticed Eleanor’s word were biting.

She and Harriet were fascinated at Gen’s recounting of the life of an ambassador.

Gen said, “Bruce you have to stay out of trouble. You need to go to a very prestigious college and graduate. Go to the military for a term of one or two years. Start going to political activities, Study the countries you might be interested in representing your country. Learn several foreign languages. Work with the governor or congressmen that can have you hired at an embassy. It is a lot of work, but I can sit with you and give you a plan. Mostly the ambassador is getting trade and business for the country. Sometimes it is much more.”

Eleanor looked at Bruce.

Her strong one.

Bruce looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor grinned at him.

Bruce looked proud.

Gen grinned.

Shirley said, “Do they socials?’

Gen said, “Oh my God. There are parties, luncheons, teas.”

Eleanor grinned.

Gen said, “Sometimes you don’t want to go because it is too much.”

Shirley said, “You have to be fashionable all the time.”

Gen said, “Yes.”

Shirley grinned.

Eleanor looked at Shirley and said, “Shirley life is more than dressing up.”

Shirley looked at Eleanor and said, “There are parties and dinners also momma.”

Gen laughed.

Gen said, “Once the person is nominated by the president. They just have to wait and let congress fight. But the parties, dinners, luncheons…:

Gen looked at Eleanor and said, “…teas.”

She and Eleanor said it at the same time.

Eleanor laughed.

She said, “Nadine.”

Nadine looked at Eleanor and said, “Tell Peter the sauce is delicious.”

Gen looked back and said, “Everything.”

Eleanor said, “I am not going into town tomorrow.”

She looked at Percy and said, “Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael your bags are already packed. You have less than two weeks in school before the holiday break. Get back to school and do your best and stay out of trouble. Don’t dishonor Skip. He put his name out there to get you all back in the military academy.”

Shirley looked around the table at her brothers.

Percy looked back at Shirley.

Thomas looked at Shirley.

They looked at Shirley.

Michael cut his eyes at Shirley and said, “Don’t you look at me.”

Eleanor looked at Michael to make sure he did not call Shirley a heifer.

Percy was whispering to Bruce.

Bruce looked at Shirley then back at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “We have three days journey and we will go over all the people you four need to apologize to.”

Michael jerked his head and looked at Eleanor.

Gen looked at Michael and was waiting for him to say something.

Michael looked at Bruce and Percy.

Shirley said, “I have to get the money to Lorraine in the morning for the holiday dresses. She is bringing her horses and carriage here tomorrow for the week she will be gone. Somebody has to take her to the train station. I’ll ask Jose to have someone take Lorraine to the train station. The train leaves at ten am. We should try to figure out a direct train to New York from here.”

Eleanor said, “I’m working on that and Boston.”

Nadine was happy to hear that.

She wanted to go to New York.

They finished dinner and no cheese bread was left.

Jose walked in the family dining room.

Shirley looked at Jose and said, “Jose can you have someone take Lorraine to the train station. She will be here around eight thirty am.”

Jose said, “I’ll take her.”

Eleanor looked at Jose.

Gen looked back at Hosea.

Shirley said, “Thank you.”

Eleanor said, “Gen you can stay here while we are gone.”

Gen said, “You won’t have any liquor left.”

Jose walked out the door and hollered.

Eleanor looked at Gen.

Gen was looking down and said, “I have to go home. I will tell Olivia to start back coming.”

Shirley said, “I wanted to go to the house and review it before I leave.”

Gen said, “Maybe we can go around two. I want to hear what Miss Claressa got to say about her experience. Because they can message them to be gone within a day they have to go.”

Eleanor was grinning.

Eleanor said, “I’ll invite them to the ground breaking, reception and semi formal dinner.”

Shirley grinned.

She said, “That’s three socials.”

Gen looked at Shirley and dropped her head.

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

Michael looked at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “I need to pack. I need three business outfits. The rest would be everyday outfits.”

Shirley said, “Momma why three?”

Eleanor, “I meet with the school board Sunday…”

Bruce sat and looked at Eleanor.

Percy cut his eyes at Eleanor.

Michael finally said, “Momma I don’t have nothing to did with what they did.”

Eleanor looked at Michael.

She continued and said, “I will be at the re-naming ceremony and I will be with you when you meet with the school administration about making areas wheelchair accessible. You need to find you help for the next three weeks and if you are going back for the spring quarter.”

Shirley said, “I need two holiday dresses. I want to have a reception for the wheelchair students at daddy’s hotel. We have a function at the school I want to attend.”

Shirley said, “I got a telegram today that confirms the reception. I think Aunt Beverly will be at the re-naming ceremony.”

Eleanor said, “I need to pack tonight so I can spend time with Claressa tomorrow.”

Jose was still thinking and standing at the door.

Eleanor looked at Jose.

Everyone looked at Jose.

Jose caught Gen looking at hm and he looked up and everybody was looking at him.

He wondered if they said something to him and he did not hear.

Eleanor said, “Jose no tea, but coffee and teacakes.”

Michael said, “Do the lemons.”

Eleanor did a double take from Jose to Michael.

She said, “I saw the manager of the liquor store and today. He said, our holiday order is in. I want you to pick it up tomorrow when you drop off Lorraine.”

Jose said, “Are you sure you want me to do that.”

Eleanor said, “No.”

She turned her head.

She said, “Jose have someone go with Shirley and Gen to her houses tomorrow.”

Jose said, “I’ll go.”

Gen said two pm, so Shirley can get back.”

Eleanor said, “Dinner at five pm. Thursday breakfast, eggs and biscuits.”

Percy jerked and said, “Bacon momma.”

Michael said, “Lamb chop momma.”

Eleanor turned and looked at Jose and said, “A few strips of bacon and one lamb chop.”

The workers were eating their dinner of spaghetti and meatballs and cheese bread.

They were enjoying their dinner.

Shirley went upstairs and packed.

Eleanor completed packing.

She went to bed giggling and laughing about Claressa and Alvin.

Shirley heard Eleanor laughing.

Shirley was reviewing all the business papers and putting them in individual folders.

She went to Eleanor’s room and knocked on the door.

Eleanor came to the door.

And looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “Momma here are all of the papers from the business transaction. Can you put them in the safe?”

Eleanor took the papers from Shirley and walked downstairs and put the papers in Brenda’s safe.

Personal papers they put in Brenda’s safe all busines papers go in Patrick’s safe.

She took out of the safe the signed telegram from Skip to the school administrators to accept the boys back in school. She took the telegram upstairs and put it in her bag.

Eleanor could not think anymore.

she laid on her bed and went to sleep.

Jose was sitting in the dark in his room.

He wondered how his day went wrong.

He thought about Craig more than he has anyone.

He wanted to know about Maureen’s family. How could they let her loose in the world and she is retarded.

Jose thought, “I must have been drunk all of these years that I never noticed. How can I not notice another human being. I can do that for Craig. Maureen is not a bad person. I should have known something was wrong with her. I may have been too drunk and with my women.”

Jose swore he heard, “YES.”

He thought about how pitiful Maureen looked when he told her to come back the week of Christmas.

He thought of her she was looking around Craig and he was sitting in supply wagon, demanding him to take him into town.

Jose said, “God I am not the best person but I want to help Maureen. Show me how. I will go to the grocer and buy her grocery and take that coal to her tomorrow. But P L E A S E keep that Craig from me. Let me know if that is what You want me to do.”

Jose said, “Ok I will leave my guns here.”

Jose jumped off the bed and turned around in complete fear. He could not explain what just happen. Why did he respond out loud like someone was talking to him.

Jose was so scared he covered his mouth and screamed in his hand.

He opened the door and ran into the dark hallway.

He was looking up and down the hallway and turning his head so fast that his vision was blurred.

He ran into the kitchen and tried to hide behind the cabinets.

He was on his knees peeping around the cabinets.

He woke when he heard Nadine say, “Is he dead?”

Jose said, “You would not be where I am.”

He was on his knees getting off the floor.

Nadine ball both fists up and said, “I can knock him out before he got off the floor and say he bumped his head.”

Peter had to grabbed Nadine and pick her up by her waist and carry her out the kitchen,

Jose yelled, “Craig’s friend!!”

Nadine was out in the hall yelling. “He owe me his a\*\*.”

Harriet, Steven and Stephen were in the hall looking at Nadine.

The other workers ran into the hall from the wash area.

Jose walked out the kitchen.

He passed the workers and said, “Good morning.”

Nadine flipped around and tried to get to Jose.

Peter said, “Stop Nadine.”

Peter was struggling with Nadine they fell onto the hallway floor.

Nadine was crawling to get to Jose.

Jose stood and said, “Nadine get up.”

Nadine said, “I will. Just stand there.”

Peter was laid on the floor.

Nadine stumbled and got up.

She ran pass the backstairs and the billiards room.

Everybody ran out the hallway and was peeping out their rooms.

Michael and Thomas ran down the stairs.

They yelled, “Stop!!”

Nadine heard little voices.

She stopped and looked back and saw the little boys scared and staring.

Eleanor was running down the backstairs.

Followed by Percy and Bruce.

Jose said, “It’s ok.”

Thomas said, “We’re leaving and now you decide to fight.”

Michael said, “Yeah.”

Nadine said, “I’m sorry. I am so very sorry.”

Eleanor ran and stood next to Michael and looked and said, “Boys go back upstairs.”

Michael said, “Why?”

Percy said, “Why momma. I can’t get into trouble. So why I can’t see them fight.”

Harriet looked at Jose.

Jose did not care.

Everyone was scared Nadine would be fired.

Eleanor turned from looking at Nadine and Jose to Percy and Michael and firmly said, “Upstairs.”

The boys ran upstairs but sat in the hallway.

Peter was still laying on the floor.

All he could think, “Damn I wish I knew about that money.”

Nadine could not think.

Harriet said, “God don’t let them get fired.”

John and Mike were walking in the backdoor and saw Nadine running with her fists balled up.

They stood and watched.

Michael was mad and sat on the stairs with his mouth poked out.

Bruce said, “If yall would not have yelled momma would not have heard and we could have seen a fight we weren’t in.”

Everyone was listening to the boys.

Eleanor shook her head to get some sense about what she just heard Bruce say.

She walked back to the stairs and saw Percy and Thomas standing at the top against the walls. She saw Michael sitting on the stairs with his mouth poked out and his face in his hand and Bruce sitting sideways two stairs from the top.

She said, “Bruce.”

Bruce was scared and sat straight up.

Eleanor said, “Have you been in group fights at school?”

Michael said, “Not me momma.”

Eleanor raised her hand and said, “Be quiet Michael.”

Gen and Shirley tipped through the billiards room and were standing and listening.

Gen said, “I have learned if they aren’t breaking stuff, let them work it out among themselves.”

Eleanor said, “Bruce.”

She looked at Thomas and Percy and realized they lied to her.

Eleanor said, “All of you lied to me. You have been in organized fights at school.”

Michael said, “I told you yesterday momma, not me.”

Eleanor stood and finally looked at Michael and said, “If you say something else Michael I am going to beat you.”

Michael was still mad and said, “Why?”

Michael took a long breath and said, “M O M M A.”

Gen was standing behind Shirley.

Eleanor looked at Michael and said, “Michael I understand why you said my name like that. You are in trouble.”

Michael said, “You don’t know the half.”

Bruce said, “Michael be quiet”

Percy said, “Yeah.”

Eleanor said, “What have the four of you been in?”

Michael said, “I owe the men I gamble with a hundred dollars.”

Michael jumped and ran up the stairs.

Eleanor broke and ran up the stairs.

Michael slammed his door and locked it.

Percy and Thomas ran upstairs and slammed and locked their doors.

Bruce waited until Eleanor passed him and he broke and ran into his room and slammed and locked the door.

Nadine was calming down.

Peter was getting off his stomach and sat on the floor.

He said, “Nadine.”

Nadine looked at Peter.

Peter said, “Your temper better stop. This is the last time Nadine. I love you but I will walk away.”

Nadine said, “But he called me a friend of Craig.”

Gen and Shirley ran into the back hallway to look upstairs.

Gen turned and looked at Nadine.

She said, “Nadine.”

Nadine said, “Yall don’t know Craig.”

Mike said, “Tell us about Craig.”

Nadine turned sideways and folded her arms.

They heard Eleanor kicking and bamming on Michael’s door.

Jose thought, “What’s wrong with her? I am not fixing no door. I am enjoying this time they all are away.”

Jose passed Nadine and said, “I apologize for calling you a friend of Craig’s.”

Passing Gen and a scared Shirley he ran upstairs followed by Mike and John.

Gen and Shirley walked upstairs.

Jose caught Eleanor by the waist and carried her down the hall and downstairs to the sitting room.

Mike and John stood in the hall and looked at Jose pick Eleanor up and carried her downstairs.

He took Eleanor in the sitting room.

He took me foot and closed the door.

He stood Eleanor on the floor and locked the door.

Eleanor rushed towards the door Jose raised his hand up for her to stop.

Eleanor was breathing loud and hard.

Michael opened his door and peeped out.

Gen and Shirley stood and looked at Michael.

Mike and John looked at Michael.

Percy opened his door and looked out.

Thomas opened his door and looked out.

Finally, Bruce opened his door and looked out.

Mike and John looked at them.

Gen and Shirley looked at them.

Michael said, “She was about to make me mad. Kicking on my door like that.”

Mike was so shocked he shook his head and begun to laugh.

John stood in disbelief.

Bruce said, “Why you told her Michael.”

Michael said, “She acted like she’s the only one with problems.”

Gen nearly fell to the floor.

Mike and Gen laughed out.

The boys turned and looked at them.

Shirley was scared.

She remembered the time at the hospital Eleanor launched for her throat that Dr. Ralph, Dr. Greene and Dr. Woodson had to pull Eleanor off the bed within a second of grabbing Shirley.

Shirley remembered the eyes and then the claws.

Tears start forming.

Shirley said, “Michael, how were you going to pay those men back?”

Michael said, “Not by you heifer.”

Gen did not believe what she was hearing.

Lorraine arrived early at the house, because she wanted breakfast and did not want to start a fire in the stove.

She stood by the door and heard most of what happened.

She eased to the bottom stairs and stood.

Peter and Nadine looked at Lorraine.

Percy said, “Grandpa always keep emergency money. We were going to borrow it and pay him back when we came home for Christmas.”

Shirley said, “Percy that is stealing. You can’t do that.”

Bruce said, “It is for emergencies and this is an emergency.”

Mike looked at John and said, “I think I better stop gambling. I don’t want my children to grow up thinking it is ok.”

John frowned up and said, “I think we better cancel Christmas with our ladies.”

Mike said, “Why?’

John slowly looked at Mike.

Michael said, “Ain’t nobody talking to you.”

Shirley said, “Michael I haven’t called you out of your name. I have a name.”

Michael looked very meanly at Shirley and said, “Your name is heifer. You called me out of my name eleven hundred and twenty three times…”

Shirley held her head down in shame.

Michael said, “I am just getting started with you heifer. I am working my way up to b…”

Lorraine was running up the stairs and yelled, “Stop Michael.”

Shirley ran to Lorraine and nearly knocked Lorraine down.

Shirley boohooed and said, “Momma Lorraine I am sorry. I can’t show anyone that I am sorry.”

Lorraine held Shirley’s head and said, “I told you it is going to take a long time.”

Thomas was standing in his doorway looking.

Lorraine looked at all of them.

She said, “The gambler, loan shark, enforcer and mastermind.”

Thomas jerked and looked around at Percy and pointed at himself, “Mastermind or loan shark?”

Percy looked at Thomas and said, “I am the mastermind.”

Gen stood and looked at the boys.

Gen said, “Bruce, if any of this gets out in ten years you will not be considered for a job with the diplomats.”

Bruce looked at Gen.

Gen said, “Michael how did you start gambling with grown men?”

Michael said, “The other students wanted my lollipops. I was not going to lose those.”

Gen said, “So Bruce those five boys you wanted to come with you, what was that about?”

Bruce looked around at the other boys and back at Gen.

He said, “I was going to have them pay me twenty dollars apiece so I could pay Michael’s gambling debt.”

Gen stomped her foot and turned sideways on the wall.

Gen said, “Percy, ain’t no telling what you were up to by sides hanging with murderers and robbers.”

Mike and John looked at Percy.

Percy looked at them and then back at Gen.

Gen turned around and said, “I know your momma. She will sign the paper to give Bruce custody over all of you. Including you Shirley. Just because you are eighteen and in college doesn’t mean anything because the state will consider you incompetent and need adult supervision of your disability. Bruce will put you all in public schools and drain every penny your mother and grandparents put in your trust funds. Make no mistake. Eleanor will turn her back on you and forbid you from every coming here or to any of the businesses.”

Shirley was laying on Lorraine.

Lorraine said, “Gen is absolutely right.”

Gen said, “I cannot understand why you all are turning out like this?”

Bruce said, “We want to do bad things because they won’t let us.”

Percy said, “But this is it.”

Michael said, “Aunt Lorraine, can you give me the hundred dollars until Christmas?”

Lorraine said, “Michael listen to you. You are ten years old and begging and trying to borrow money to pay off a gambling debt. That’s not right. You don’t know that’s not right?”

Michael looked at Lorraine with a questioning look on his face.

Eleanor and Jose were standing on the staircase listening.

Lorraine said, “Shirley I need the money to so I can go.”

Shirley looked at Michael and said, “Michael I will give you the money if you stop calling me a heifer.”

Bruce stared at Shirley.

Michael said, “No heifer.”

Bruce said, ‘You are just as bad as Bruce.”

Shirley stared at Bruce and said, “What?”

John looked at Bruce.

Bruce said, “You have to give but you what conditions on it. From love and grief to money.”

Mike frowned up.

Shirley said, “I don’t understand.”

Shirley was walking away when Eleanor and Jose were walking up the stairs.

Gen was disgusted and stood and looked at each of them.

Gen said, “You saw your uncles tried to kill you so they could hurt your momma, grandma and grandpa and make them give all of your money. They were killed and no one was at their burials but your grandma and grandpa, Not even their children. Do you all have that evil seed in you? Stop now before somebody kill you.”

Eleanor looked at Gen.

She did not want Gen to bring up her brothers and compare her sons to them.

But she noticed her sons were quiet.

Shirley went in her room and passed Eleanor and Jose with an envelope with Lorraine’s name.

She stopped at Michael and reached him the hundred dollars.

Michael looked at Shirley’s hand with the hundred dollars.

He would not take it.

Percy reached his hand out.

Shirley kept walking to Lorraine and handed her an envelope with two thousand dollars.

Lorraine and Shirley counted the money.

Thomas whispered to Michael, “You should have taken the money.”

Michael said, “I have my dignity.”

Mike snickered.

He and John looked and saw Eleanor standing watching her children.

John thought, “She has a lot to do, but she is handling things alright.”

Lorraine sealed the envelope and put it in her purse.

She and Shirley looked up and saw Eleanor and Jose.

Eleanor said, “I will take you five to school tomorrow. I will try to get you four back in school. If I can’t get you back in school. I will stop in Philadelphia and take you four to your daddy…”

Bruce became sick.

He fell to his knees and started jerking like he was about to throw up.

Lorraine looked at Bruce and turned and said, “Nadine.”

Nadine was in the kitchen with Peter.

She heard Lorraine and was about to start cursing.

Peter looked at her.

She said, “Sorry.”

She walked to the stairs and yelled at Lorraine, “What?”

Lorraine said, “Get a bucket and mop.”

Nadine said, “Damn.”

Lorraine said, “Bitch.”

Michael jumped and looked at Lorraine and said, “You told me not to call Shirley that name.”

Lorraine looked at Michael and said, “I am grown.”

Michael looked at Lorraine.

Eleanor said, “If you four don’t go to school and stay out of trouble from now until Christmas break I will pull you out of school and take you to Bruce.”

Thomas started jumping and said, “No momma. I hate him. I rather go to my daddy Joseph.”

Percy said, “Me too.”

Lorraine turned and walked down the stairs.

Gary was sitting on third stair from the bottom listening.

Nadine was coming up the stairs with a bucket of water.

Lorraine turned sideways to get passed her.

Lorraine didn’t look at Nadine, who use to be a friend.

Nadine looked at Lorraine.

Eleanor said, “Michael I am going to give you the hundred dollars to pay the grown men you owe. I don’t won’t to get a telegram telling me you are beaten or dead over money. You don’t know how I felt for a whole month when Ryan and Hutch brought you and Thomas back to life and gave you and Thomas back to me. You don’t know how much pain and torture I was in every minute…”

Lorraine was listening to Eleanor and crying as she walked down the stairs. She was remembering her own pain and torture.

Eleanor said, “If you four mess up this time I will send you to Joseph.”

Gary held his head down.

Nadine stood and looked around at the four boys and did not know which one they all looked sick.

Jose slowly looked at Eleanor.

Mike and John looked at the four boys.

They did not recognize Joseph’s name.

Shirley looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “You to Shirley.”

Michael looked at Shirley.

He looked at Gen.

Michael looked at Eleanor and said, “Momma for the record I did not say I want to go with Joseph.”

Eleanor looked at Michael and said, “Michael for the record it is noted, but you are included. You get me a receipt from those men Sunday before I leave if I can get you all in school.”

Michael looked at Eleanor with confusion and said, “Momma Get you a receipt from me paying my gambling debt?”

Eleanor made a step towards Michael and said, “You better get me something or bring the men to me Sunday because you better not take you’re a\*\* ever to another gambling anything. You should have been studying. You know it takes you a long time to get your work.”

Michael teared up.

Mike thought, “Finally she is getting through to him.”

Michael said, “Momma are you calling me dumb?’

Eleanor looked at Michael and said, “You caught that!”

Jose blinked, because his family called him dub. He ran away from home at graduation.

Michael ran to his room and slammed and locked the door.

Thomas ran into his room and locked and slammed his door.

Eleanor looked at Percy and Bruce and said, “Go to your rooms and don’t come out until nine am so I can take you to the train station.”

Percy said, “What about food?”

Eleanor said, “The workers will bring you something to eat.”

Percy went into his room.

Nadine looked at Bruce.

He was pitiful to her.

She thought, “I have been cussing and fussing about Craig who is not a part of my life.”

Nadine took the bucket and mop in the room they had for the hot water.

Nadine thought, “I did not have to bring that heavy bucket up here. I could have used this water.”

She took the mop and put it by the sink.

Eleanor looked at Bruce and walked to her room.

She said, “Jose send me hot bath water.”

Shirley said, “Me too.”

She waited until was in her room and she tipped down the hall to her room.

Jose looked at Mike and John.

They were looking from one person to another.

Eleanor yelled, “I don’t want breakfast.”

Michael yelled, “I want my lamb chop.”

Lorraine said, “Harriet who is to take me to the train station?”

Harriet walked and looked at the Schedule and said, “Jose.”

Lorraine walked in the hallway and yelled, “Jose come on!”

Jose said, “Heathen.”

Nadine laughed.

Jose looked at her.

Mike and John looked at Jose and Nadine.

Jose said, “Come and ride with me Nadine so we can talk.”

Nadine said, “I’m married.”

Mike and John looked at Nadine then they looked at Jose.

Jose was bending over Bruce and helped him up and in his room.

Bruce laid balled up in his bed.

Jose passed Nadine and did not look at her.

Jose went to his room and got his scarves, two hats and gloves and his coat.

Gen walked downstairs and sat in the hall on the settee and looked out the window.

Mike and John looked at Gen and went into the spare room and got her a hot tb of water and took it to her suite.

John said, “What’s wrong with her?’

Mike said, “Really John?”

John said, “Yes.”

Mike said, “I think she is thinking about her son turning out bad.”

Gen tried to smile as she walked to her suite.

Jose told Peter, “I requested Nadine to ride with me so we can talk. She told me she was married.”

Peter said, “I’m sorry. I can’t make her talk to you. What did Eleanor say.”

Jose said, “Eleanor has her own problems. Everybody has been sent to their rooms until in the morning. Give Michael his lamb chop, the rest bacon and eggs and biscuits and orange juice. Shirley her omelet. No breakfast for Eleanor.”

Peter said, “What about Mrs. Olsen, the same?”

Jose said, “Use the rest of the vegetables and make vegetable soup for dinner.”

Peter was preparing the skillets and looked up and saw Nadine walk into the kitchen.

She had on her hat, scarf and coat and a blanket thrown across her arm.

Peter wondered at Nadine.

Lorraine was sitting at Jose’s work desk.

Staring into space.

Peter looked at Lorraine and thought, “Oh God don’t let those three fight.”

Jose looked at Lorraine and Nadine and said, “Let me get the carriage. Lorraine are these your bags?”

Lorraine was still staring into space and said, “Yes.”

She said, “Peter do you have anything cooked?”

Peter looked at Lorraine and said, “No. I’ll have an egg ready by the time Jose gets back.”

Lorraine looked at Peter and said, “An egg?”

Peter said, “That’s all you have time for.”

Lorraine said, “Make it two eggs Peter and add plenty of cheese and a biscuit. I smell biscuits. Are they ready or will one be ready when Jose gets back?”

Peter looked at Lorraine and pull out the biscuits.

He started her eggs and cheese.

He put the eggs on the plate with two biscuits and strawberry jam.

He reached the plate to Nadine and said, “Give her a fork and napkin.”

Nadine stood and looked at Peter.

Peter stared at Nadine.

He put the plate down and turned to go into the cabinet.

Harriet reached him a napkin and fork.

Peter walked over to Lorraine with the plate.

Lorraine reached for the plate and said, “Thank you.”

Peter said, “You are welcome.”

He looked at Nadine and walked back to the stove and started the bacon.

He put Michael’s lamb chop in the skillet.

Harriet said, I need to talk to Jose.”

Peter looked at Harriet.

Jose went to the stable and got a carriage and had two horses hitched to it.

He told the stable men to have a carriage available later that morning for Gen and Shirley. And to have three ready for the next morning to take everybody to the train station.

Jose rode the carriage to the supply wagon and got the remaining coal and put it in two large buckets and placed it in the back of the carriage.

He rode to the house and got Lorraine’s bags and put them in the carriage.

He walked in the house and said, “Ladies lets’ go.”

Harriet was making the boys their trays and turned and said, “Jose I need to talk to you.”

Jose said, “Is it an emergency Harriet?”

Harriet said, “What do you mean?”

Jose said, “You are not dying.”

Harriet said, “No.”

Jose said, “I will see you when I get back.”

He looked at Lorraine eating her breakfast.

Lorraine stood and walked to the door.

Nadine stared at Peter.

Peter said, “Oh God help. Please don’t let them kill each other. Jose did not have his guns on.”

Jose opened the door and they walked out the house to the carriage.

Lorraine ran to the second seat, so Nadine could sit in front and block the cold air.

Nadine rolled her eyes at Lorraine.

Lorraine did not care.

She ate her breakfast and was not that cold.

She looked back and saw the two large buckets of coal.

She moved her bags.

Jose got in the carriage and said, “Lorraine the coal won’t get on your bags. I am taking the coal to Maureen. I…”

Nadine said, “Fired her.”

Jose said, “No. I took her home yesterday. She walked two hours to get to work yesterday and two hours home. It was freezing yesterday. She was shaking and quivering.”

Lorraine was eating and said, “Why? No one could drop her off?”

Jose said, “Apparently not. I dropped her off and ran to help her out the wagon. Her husband comes out the door…”

Nadine pointed at herself and said, “My friend.”

Jose did not stop he said, “Lorraine we have to speed a little to get you there in time to get on and find your accommodations.”

Lorraine waved her paper and said, “Shirley got me a suite going and coming.”

Jose said, “Nice. Have you ever been in one before?”

Lorraine said, “Not officially.”

Jose paused for a second.

He said, “Maureen’s husband walked out the house and did not speak. He did not look at Maureen but walked off the porch and said to me not looking at me and not helping Maureen out the wagon, ‘take me to town’.”

Lorraine stopped eating and was listening.

Nadine was fuming that Jose would associate her with Craig.

Jose said, “I told Maureen not to come back to work until the week of Christmas. She said she had to work. I can not have her walking two hours in the dark to work and two hours in the dark to get home in this freezing cold. I hope God would change His mind and make it warmer. I asked Maureen did she have any coal. She said a little….”

Jose nodded backwards and said, “That coal was left over from Shirley’s dress and the jewelry shop. I am going to give it to Maureen. I told Eleanor while I was trying to calm her down. I don’t know what she is going to do about her children. They are really not bad but determined to get in trouble.”

Lorraine said, “After you got Eleanor from kicking Michael’s door he opened the door and said ‘she was about to make him mad, kicking his door.”

Nadine said, “Jose. Maureen.”

Jose said, “I asked her if she food. She said no. I am going to the grocer and get her something to have for the next couple of weeks.”

Nadine said, “You requested me to come for you to go grocery shopping?”

Lorraine at Nadine.

Then she continued to eat.

Jose said, “I requested you to come alone with me to assess Maureen’s condition since you are the senior housekeeper.”

Nadine puff out her chest in pride.

Lorraine said, “Nadine how did you get to be Maureen’s husband’s friend?”

Nadine yelled and said, “I am not his friend.”

Lorraine said, “Why did you say that earlier?”

Nadine pointed and said, “That’s what Jose lying self said.”

Jose said, “Nadine, don’t you call me a liar. I am a drunk, gambler and a connoisseur of women…”

Lorraine burst out laughing.

Jose said, “I am not a liar and don’t call me that again.”

Nadine said, “If I do what are you going to do about it?’

Jose said, “I will Peter who you spent the whole night with the night before your wedding.”

Jose looked at Nadine’s pale face.

Lorraine tried to peep around at Nadine’s face.

Nadine said, “How can you prove anything?”

Jose said, “I creeped out to the re-modeled barn and took several convincing pictures.”

Nadine said, “You’re lying. Where the pictures?”

Jose said, “I had the security man developed them. He laughed but I put them up for safe keeping.”

Jose stared at Nadine.

Lorraine was quiet and thought, “Does he have any on me? Nall he would have run out of film.”

Lorraine kept looking at Nadine.

Jose said, “I can tell you where he stopped and rubbed your scar.”

They were entering into the town square.

Nadine yelled, “Damn! Damn!”

She started hitting Jose in his head.

Jose was dunking his head.

Lorraine yelled, “Nadine stop before you cause an accident.”

Nadine stopped and yelled, “Jose give them to me.”

Jose said, “Peter still will have my live testimony.”

The three argued all the way into town.

Nathan was walking from breakfast at the restaurant and heard loud arguing.

He turned back and saw the Stith carriage.

Nathan looked hard and saw Jose and Nadine and heard Lorraine.

He stood and watched.

Nathan thought, “I don’t want to know what they are arguing about.”

He knew the way they were going was to the train station.

He knew Nadine and Jose were not going anywhere.

Nathan became cold and turned and walked to the jail and put a little coal in the stove.

Jose said, “Ok Nadine. You have shown you are not Craig’s friend. Do you know anything about him, besides he is crazy?”

Nadine ais, “Jose give me the photographs!”

Jose said, “I have to think about that Nadine.”

Jose gave Nadine a bad look.

He said, “What about Craig?”

Nadine said, “No. Now we know I had nothing to do with Maureen marrying Craig. He doesn’t work but uses her part time salary to live on. I tried to talk to Maureen to tell her how to manage her money.”

Lorraine said, “Jose something happened yesterday between you and Maureen’s husband.”

Jose pulled in the train station yard.

The train was not there.

The three sat in the carriage.

Jose said, “I saw when he jumped in the wagon. Maureen standing out in the front yard like a kid looking for him and moving her mouth like she was saying where is he. He had seated himself in the wagon. Like I had to take him to town. I drove the opposite from Woodrow. He yells and tell me to turn around. I pulled out my gun and point it in his face. He did not have sense to get out the wagon. I had to tell him to get out of my wagon. I told him he better never see me again.”

Lorraine sat and was quiet.

Nadine did not say anything.

Jose said, “I thought about it. Thomas said Maureen had her bag on the cabinet and stood in the icebox door to steal Brenda’s food. He said, Maureen was shaking her head and mumbling to herself. She closed the door and picked up her bag and left. Brenda was standing in the formal dining room and saw her and him. Brenda turned and left.”

Nadine said, “That’s why Brenda decreased Maureen’s hours and made her part time and have her assigned to me and Monica to keep her from being alone and from stealing.”

Lorraine said, “Brenda is smarter than yall think.”

Nadine looked at Jose and said, “Please.”

Jose said, “No.”

Nadine said, “I don’t understand why not.”

Jose said, “To keep Nadine. I know your dirty self you will try to pull one over on me.”

Nadine whined.

Jose said, “Besides that was before you and Peter married last Christmas.”

Nadine saw Stephen walking from the direction of the furniture shop.

He passed their carriage.

Nadine said, “He went on a lunch date with Monica Monday.”

Jose said, “I know.”

Nadine was in her world of a tortured soul.

Jose looked around at the people beginning to gather.

He said, “The train is late.”

Lorraine said, “Nadine, the plate, fork and napkin are back here on the floor.”

Nadine said, “Jose is sitting here.”

Lorraine said, “Jose, the plate, fork and napkin are back here on the floor.”

Jose said, “I was going to take them back in the house anyway.”

Lorraine said, “Thank you.”

She thought, “Nadine is stupid.”

Jose was looking around he saw Peter one of the managers Brenda hired to take the tickets and sell the tickets.

He stepped from the rest stop and looked at his pocket watch.

He took the steps from the corner and put them near the tracks.

There was only one train coming and one train leaving each day.

Patrick thought that was easiest until they hired more workers.

Eleanor was proud that once the train came in for a few hours it would continue south.

It took another day to arrive in the south.

They did not have passengers. It was a cargo train from the city where Mag was with all the manufacturers and suppliers would load their wares on the cargo train and ship it to the south.

Everyone was making money in the rebuilding of the south and the nation.

Brenda never want the trains to carry passengers to and from the south.

Eleanor could understand why.

Their workers were beginning to show racist attitudes towards the blacks that travel on the trains.

Patrick was firing them.

Ty and Skip’s son would send Patrick notes about some of the workers.

Patrick would watch the workers when he was on the trains.

Then he would fire them once he replacement workers.

He and Eleanor wrote procedures for the training of train workers and selected one of their best workers from engineering, ticketing, kitchen, loading, conducting, repair services and housekeeping to teach their workers classes.

Mag taught a two week class in Philadelphia in September about customer service and ticketing and record keeping.

Josiah came from the capitol to help Natalie.

Patrick and Eleanor were gaining national recognition for being innovators in the industry and great employers.

The governor told Patrick his name was being tossed a round in Washington DC for some top position but he did not know what it was.

Jose was watching Peter.

He saw two carriages pull up.

Jose looked at the carriages and saw it was the governor and his wife.

Jose said, “Lorraine you are going to have company on the rain.”

Lorraine sat up and peeped out the carriage.

Lorraine looked at the people in the two carriages and their luggage.

She said, “It looks like…”

The train whistle blew.

Everybody clapped.

Jose hopped out the carriage.

The governor looked and saw the Stith name.

Jose greeted the governor and thought, “I look a mess. With two hats on my head.”

He got the bags out the carriage and then he helped Lorraine out the carriage.

Lorraine tried to be dignified and nearly fell.

She burst out laughing.

The governor and his wife looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine spoke to the governor and his wife.

They spoke to Lorraine.

One of the governor‘s aide stepped to the governor and whispered something about Lorraine.

Lorraine was well dressed.

She had on one of the three dresses she bought while she was in Europe.

Lorraine was going to sell her bath items all during the winter and send the money to Margaret for her to buy her some dresses and shipped them to her on the first ship coming back.

Patrick and Eleanor left a ship in France for the winter.

The crew wanted their families to go with them because they would be gone for four months or five months.

Most of the crew family did not want to go.

Patrick and Eleanor paid them for four months’ pay.

The crew stayed on the ship and protected.

The captain telegrammed Patrick and told him of all the businesses that were trying to send their cargo on the first ship in March.

Eleanor was in Patrick’s office early that morning.

She was reading all the mail she had not read.

The telegram from the captain came in overnight.

She was reading the telegram and stood to go to Brenda’s study to the telegram for Ryan so she coud send Patrick a telegram.

She heard Thomas and Michael scream ‘no’.

Eleanor’s heart stopped.

Her mind flooded with the images of her dead children.

The same two.

She flew up the stairs and ran to their rooms and saw their doors opened.

She heard noise downstairs.

Bruce and Percy were running behind Eleanor.

She made it to the stairs she saw Thomas and Michael.

Eleanor knew it was something about the workers.

She ran downstairs into the hallway.

Percy and Bruce were behind her.

After their problem that morning.

Eleanor turned her attention back to the captain’s question she had to think what to do.

She was relaxing in her hot tub of water and fell asleep while, Jose, Nadine and Lorraine were on their way to town.

Lorraine knew her high style dress was why the governor’s wife was staring at her from head to toe.

Lorraine planned to buy her another dress in New York.

She was determined to go to something at the Stith House during the holidays.

She was walking with Jose towards the train.

Nadine was seated in the carriage and still steaming.

Lorraine said, “Jose what parties do they have planned for this holiday?’

Jose said, “You mean Brenda and Patrick?”

Lorraine said, “Yes.”

Jose looked at Lorraine.

He said, “They are having the ground breaking ceremony for the hospital on the fifteenth along with a semi formal reception that evening from five pm to seven pm. The next day they are having a semi\*formal dinner of fifty.”

Jose looked at Lorraine. He thought, “She is lonely.”

Lorraine said, “I don’t want to be outside at the ground breaking for the hospital. I think I want to attend the dinner. Have they sent out all the invitations to the dinner?”

Jose frowned up and said, “I don’t know. Why you want to attend?”

Lorraine said, “I never thought retirement would be this lonely. I am sick of making my bath items. I will make them through the winter and send Margaret money to buy me a few dresses before she comes back next year.”

Jose turned and looked at Lorraine and said, “She and Earle are coming back? I thought they were going to live there.”

Lorraine said, “I think they are coming back to live here. You know Steven is in prisoner for twenty- five years for his role in the plot to kidnap Shirley.”

Jose was watching Peter.

He picked up Lorraine’s bags.

Jose said, “It’s crazy to me how he went to Europe and got involved with such evil. Especially after Patrick and Brenda helped him and Margaret.”

Lorraine said, “Money. It causes people to do evil.”

Jose said, “You have to have evil in you for the evil to come to you.”

Lorraine whispered, because the governor and his wife walked up.

Peter walked with them to the train.

Lorraine and Jose waited until Peter came back.

Lorraine said, “Hello Peter.”

Peter said, “Good morning Lorraine. How are you?”

Lorraine said, “Well thank you for asking.”

Peter went to the other members of the governor’s staff and walked them to the train.

Lorraine waved her papers from Shirley.

Peter grinned and took the papers.

He read the papers and made a face and said, “You are taking care of important business for them.”

Lorraine laughed.

Jose noticed a tall and dark haired man watching Lorraine.

He said, “Lorraine.”

Lorraine said, “I see him. The one with the full mustache.”

Jose said, “Lorraine every man don’t want to do you. Some want to kill you or harm you. You just stepped out the Stith House carriage and dressed fine and have a suite.”

Lorraine was smiling at the man.

Jose said, “Don’t forget the mob and their near success of killing Thomas and Michael.”

Lorraine grinned at the man.

Jose looked at the man.

He felt sick in his stomach over Lorraine.

He thought, “She is such a fool about having a man. None of them wanted her because she is black, but Dr. Ralph.”

Jose looked at Lorraine and for the first time he despised her for being a fool and running behind white men that used her body and threw her aside.

Lorraine said, “Jose what is that face about?”  
Jose said, “The way you feel about Shirley is the way you just made me feel about you. Good bye Lorraine.”

Jose handed her bags to Peter and walked to the carriage and jumped in.

Lorraine looked at Jose.

The man watched Jose.

Nadine said, “Who is that man?”

Jose said, “More than likely a killer or trin robber or mobster and that fool Lorraine thinks he want to have her.”

Nadine said, “What are you going to do?”

Jose said, “If God doesn’t help her with her bad mind set then what can I do?”

Nadine stared at Jose.

Jose looked at Nadine as he pulled away and did not look at Lorraine.

Lorraine looked at Jose and then Nadine.

Jose said, “No.”

Nadine looked at Jose and said, “Give me those photographs.”

Jose said, “I told you no. And that is it.”

Nadine started cursing at Jose.

Jose stopped the carriage in front of the grocer.

He looked at Nadine and said, “Have you lost your mind?”

Nadine looked around to see what Jose was talking about.

He said, “I am your boss. I can fire you Nadine. Explain that to Peter.”

Nadine sat and looked at Jose then stared in front of her and said, “I’m sorry.”

Jose said, “No you are not.”

He pointed and said, “You are so use to that alley type of life and talking you think it is common for everyone. I see now why William and Wyonna did not have anything good to say about you.”

Nadine made a shush sound and waved her hand.

Jose said, “Nadine a lot of the workers complain about you all the time. You are too old for you not to get rid of that street mind. The Stiths keep you because they know you can work. But like at the major functions you are not at work.”

Nadine jerked her head and looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Nadine, you do - not- want- to – let- your - prior – life- go. You need to ask God to help get rid of that trash out of you. Peter is a good man, but I don’t believe he is going to take too much more. When he leaves you then you can find that man in the photographs.”

Jose walked in the grocer.

The man walked to Lorraine and held out his arm.

Lorraine smiled at the man and Peter looked at Lorraine.

The man escorted Lorraine onto the train.

The man was in first class.

Lorraine followed Peter to her suite.

He unlocked the door and gave her the key.

He said, “Lorraine be careful.”

Lorraine laughed and said, “I am always careful.”

Peter looked at her and walked out the suite.

Lorraine looked around at the suite and screamed.

She said, “Brenda and Eleanor yall did a good job on this suite.”

Peter passed the tall man with the dark hair as he was peeping trying to see where Lorraine was.

He pulled his coat and said, “Where’s the woman?”

Peter notice he did not call Lorraine a lady.

Peter said, “The lady is on another car. I cannot tell you anything else.”

Peter jerked from the man and looked at the cabin clerks and said, “Watch him.”

The cabin clerks kept walking and greeting the patrons.

Lorraine walked to her door and peeped outlooking for the man.

She did not see him. Because the clerks were walking through the cars.

They greeted her and said, “We’re leaving in a few minutes.’’

Lorraine said, “Pardon me there is a tall man with dark hair and mustache in the first class car.”

One of the clerks had towels in his hand and said, “Ma am. We can’t tell you anything about another patron. You need to stay in your suite.”

The other clerk said, “He looks like a killer to me. Nobody is going to risk their life to save you when you can just stay in your suite.”

Lorraine said, “I work for the Stiths.”

The older clerk said, “We know who you work for and don’t care when our lives are at risk ma am.”

The other clerk said, “The way he looks he will do you harm.”

Lorraine jerked from the clerks and said, “You don’t know what you are talking about.”

The other clerk said to the older clerk, “Let’s go.”

The older clerk was walking behind him and said, “Should we leave more towels to soak up her blood when they find her.”

The other clerk said, “I don’t give a damn. Ignorant nigger. She thinks because she is mixed the white men want her. Let him show her.”

Lorraine fell onto the door and held her chest.

She did not know how those men could look at her and sum her up in a few sentences.

The governor and his wife were passing her.

Lorraine tried to smile at the governor and his wife.

She closed the door to the suite and locked it.

She could not move.

Her back was to the door and she cried.

The train whistle blew.

The train begin to move.

Jose had completed his grocery shopping and was walking out the grocer when he heard the train whistle.

Jose thought, “Lorraine. Just a fool.”

He felt something leading him to pray.

Jose stood on the front of the grocer and said, “God I am not a religious man, but help Lorraine. All she thinks about is having sex with white men that they can free her and make her accepted. You know her mind and all the rejection by white people she must have endured. That is the only thing that can explain her behavior. Help her God. I can’t, she has too many problems. Amen and Amen.”

He thought as Michael and Thomas say.

He turned to walk back in the grocer.

Nadine leaned over and yelled, “Jose come on. It’s cold out here.”

Jose said, “To help you let off some of that steam.”

He walked back in the grocer.

Nadine said, “You bas\*\*\*d.”

Jose said, “Can I start a bill for one of my workers and I come in once a week and pay it?”

The manager looked at Jose and the Stith House carriage.

Jose said, “This has nothing to do with them. I just want to help this worker out.”

The manager looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Can I give you some money and let her buy up to that amount.”

The manager said, “You don’t trust your worker?”

Jose said, “I don’t trust her husband.”

The manager walked away and went to his desk and got a book and pen and walked back to Jose.

He said, “Write your name and her name and the amount of money you have for her.

Nadine stomped in the grocer.

She walked to Jose and saw him writing.

She looked at the manager and said, “Hello Jim.”

Jim, the manager looked at Nadine and said, “Hello Nadine.”

Jose put the pen down and pulled the money out of his pocket.

He stood for a few minutes.

There were customers behind Jose.

The store manager looked at the customers and asked them to step around Jose.

Jose was counting his money.

He heard, “Hello Jose and Nadine.”

Nadine peeped around Jose and said, “Hello Briana you’re back from your holiday?”

Briana said, “Yes ma am.”

Briana looked at Jose.

Jose looked up from his money and said, “Good morning Briana. You had a good holiday?”

Briana said, “Yes sir.”

Nadine said, “When you come back to work?”

Jose said, “Tomorrow.”

At the same tome Briana said, “Tomorrow.”

The store manager and the owner looked at Jose.

They saw he knew his workers schedules.

Jose knew Briana’s schedule because he wanted to get a chance to date her.

Jose reached the owner ten dollars.

Nadine looked and walked and looked in the book and saw Maureen’s name.

She said, “You might as well put Craig’s name there.”

Briana said, “I’ll see you two tomorrow.”

Jose said, “You will see me tomorrow. I am not sure about Nadine.”

Nadine turned and looked at Jose.

Jim looked at Jose.

They saw Jose was not smiling.

Nadine said, “Why are you in town Briana?”

Briana said, “We just came back from our grandparents and took my baby sister to the train so she can get back to New York.”

Nadine said, “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Briana kind gave a half smile and looked at Jose.

Jose did not turn around and said, “Huh.”

The manager and the owner looked at Jose.

Jose signed the book and gave the owner the pen.

Jose thought, as he walked out the grocer followed by Nadine, “ I need to keep a pen on me like my father and Patrick. I have to order some.”

Jose put the bag of food in the back of the carriage.

Nadine hopped in the carriage and they rode by the jail.

Nathan was standing in the wIndow watching the people.

He just woke from his nap.

He was stretching and saw Jose and Nadine pass him.

Nadine was not saying anything.

Because she saw Jose was serious about firing her.

She knew peter would be angry.

But they could live off his salary since the house was paid, and they had two horses and carriage and a wagon.

She was trying to think she did not have any skills to get another job.

Brenda and Patrick hired her when Eugene was retiring.

Eugene saw her wondering the streets, after Jim put her out.

He felt sorry for her and asked her did she have any skills.

Nadine told him no.

Eugene went to Patrick and Brenda and told them about Nadine and if they could hire her part time or seasonal that he would personally train her.

Brenda was hesitant.

She did not want a street woman to be around her family.

Patrick said, “Eugene based on your word. Hire her part time. Get her history. You train her and put her under Robert. One thing Eugene she is back on the street.”

Eugene said, “Thank you Mr. Stith. Mrs. Stith I will keep her from the family. I will find out more about her.”

Eugene went back in town and found Nadine and brought her to the house and introduced her to Robert.

Robert was told by Patrick and Brenda about Nadine.

Patrick said, “Fire her at the first incidence.”

Brenda said, “She is homeless. Find a room for her. I don’t want her in my house.”

Robert said, “Nadine this is a test period. You are being hired on a part time basis. Put your name, address and previous jobs on this paper. Eugene will show you your duties. You are assigned to the laundry and dishwashing duties.”

Nadine was in awe of the house.

Robert looked at “Eugene and said Mr. Stith said for you to go and find Nadine a room in town and pick her up and in the mornings and bring her to work and come and pick her up from work and take her home.”

Eugene said, “Fine.”

He knew Patrick and Brenda did not want Nadine, but because he asked them to hire they did.

They made him responsible for her.

Nadine wrote her name and her prior address with Jim.

She handed the paper to Robert.

Robert looked at the paper and looked at Nadine.

He said, “You never worked?”

Nadine said, “No.”

Robert said, “How do you live?”

Nadine said, “Well I stay with my boyfriend.”

Robert looked at Eugene.

Nadine worked with the Stiths for twelve years.

She stayed in the rooming house for two years and then decide on a house which Patrick and Brenda helped her finance.

They gave her the deed to the house as a wedding gift to she and peter last year.

Nadine turned her back to Jose and cried.

Jose did not care about Nadine’s feelings.

He was thinking about that fool Lorraine and this fool Maureen.

He was thinking of what he bought her, fat back, pinto, navy and black eye peas, cabbage, beets, shorten, butter, dry milk, eggs, flour, meal and sugar.

He did not want to buy meat because he believed Craig would sell it.

He passed Steven, Alicia and Emilou.

He pulled in front of Maureen’s house.

Nadine’s mouth dropped open and she looked.

She jumped out the carriage and ran behind Jose to the front door.

She ran to the side of the house and looked around that side.

She was about to run to the other side of the house when Maureen opened the door.

Nadine was shocked at Maureen.

Maureen had a big raggedy dress on and her hair was over her head and not comb and brushed.

Nadine ran on the porch so she could see in the house.

Maureen looked and said, “Hey Nadine.”

Maureen sounded like a child greeting her playground friend.

Nadine’s heart smote her.

Jose cut his eyes at Nadine.

Jose said, “Maureen, since you want be coming back to work until the week of Christmas I stopped and brought you some grocery.”

Maureen was looking at Nadine and was wondering why her friend did not speak.

Craig yelled from inside the house, “Whose that at my door?”

Maureen was looking at Nadine.

Nadine stared at this bolstering man stomping to the front door.

Jose said, “Nadine Maureen spoke to you and you have not spoken.”

Nadine was looking at Jose.

She turned and looked at Maureen and said, “Hi Maureen.”

Maureen said, “Hi Nadine.”

Nadine was falling to her knees when Craig came to the door.

Jose stood and looked at Craig.

Maureen said, “Nadine you alright? Did you fall?”

Nadine said, “I had to tie my boot.”

Maureen said, “Ok.”

Jose said, “Maureen here are some groceries. I f you need any more groceries next week go in town to the grocer and ask him. He will give you some grocery and let me know. Understand?”

Maureen said, “Yes Jose.”

Jose said, I Brought you some coal. Where do you want me to put it.”

Craig pushed Maureen aside and walked out the door.

Nadine stood up and thought she had to help Jose beat Craig.

Craig said, “Bring that coal and put it on the porch.”

Maureen stood and looked at Jose.

Jose did not move.

He said, “Maureen I did not see smoke from your chimney nor do I smell coal.”

Craig belted out why you talking to her. She doesn’t have no sense. You talk to me.”

Pointing at his chest.

Nadine grabbed Jose’s coat.

Jose stood and looked at Craig,

Ruth was leaving the sheriff’s office.

Nathan sat and watched her leave.

Ruth walked out and stumbled off the porch.

Nathan sat and watched her out of sight.

He sat and wrote a lot of information down and completed some forms.

He stood and put on his coat and scarf and gloves.

Nathan locked the jail and walked to the telegram office.

The clerk looked at Nathan’s face and knew it was bad news for somebody.

Nathan gave the telegram clerk the paper.

The telegram clerk read the message.

Nathan looked at the clerk.

The clerk looked at Nathan and jumped.

Nathan said, “Not a word.”

The clerk shook his head.

Jose said, “Nadine stop. I did not bring it.”

Maureen said, “Nadine you’re cold. “

She ran from the door and came back with her gloves.

Maureen shook her gloves and blew them and said, “Here Nadine. They will help in the cold.”

Nadine got sick and ran off the porch.

She went to the other side of the house and looked. She walked around the back of the house and looked.

She came back around to the front porch.

Maureen was standing on the porch looking for Nadine.

Jose went to the carriage and brought on pail of coal.

Craig said, “Bring that other pail of coal and leave both of them right here.”

Jose did not say anything.

When he returned with the other large pail of coal.

Craig’s neighbor was standing nd watching.

He said, “Craig how much you selling the coal for?”

Maureen said, “That’s our coal Danny.”

Craig and Danny both yelled at Maureen and said, “Shut up.”

Jose became furious and said, “Not only that damn fool abusing Maureen even the worthless neighbors.”

Jose stopped walking and stood in the yard.

Danny looked at Jose and said, “Bring that coal up here and put it on the porched like he told you.”

Danny’s wife was in the door.

Nadine took a piece of coal and threw it and hit Danny in his mouth.

Danny said, “What?’

He broke and ran to Nadine.

Danny’s wife ran out on the porch and into the yard to grab Danny.

Nadine threw her coat and gloves off before Danny got to her.

Craig looked on the porch at Nadine’s coat and hat.

Nadine kicked Danny in his crouch over and over again.

His wife was shocked.

Danny was bending over.

Nadine ran and grabbed two coals.

Craig yelled, ”Bring my coal back here!”

Nadine hit Danny in his eyes with the coal over and over.

Danny’s wife yelled, “Stop beating my husband!”

Danny fell to the ground.

Nadine got on top of him and beat his head over and over.

Maureen stood on the porch and watched.

Craig sat next to the coal and yelled to the neighbors he had coal to sell.

Jose left the other pail in the yard.

Craig stood up and said, “I told you to bring that pail on this porch.”

Jose was going to get Nadine.

Danny’s wife was trying to beat Nadine off Danny.

Jose grabbed Danny’s wife and threw her like nothing out in the yard.

The neighbors were laughing.

Craig laughed.

Jose got the pail of coal from the porch.

Craig yelled, “Bring that back!”

Jose walked to the carriage and put it in and walked and picked up the other pail out the yard.

Steven and Alicia were returning from taking Emilou to school.

They went to the capitol for Steven to get some tools he needed.

They saw the crowd of neighbors.

They stopped and saw Nadine on top of Danny beating a man.

Alicia said, “Oh my God that’s Aunt Nadine.”

She covered her mouth.

They saw Jose picking up the other pail of coal and struggling to carry it back to the carriage.

Steven saw Jose and jumped out the carriage and Alicia jumped out the carriage.

They ran to Jose.

Jose looked at them.

Alicia was standing in the front of the wagon looking at Aunt Nadine beat the man.

Jose told Steven what happened.

Jose walked back to the porch to get Nadine’s coat and gloves.

Jose turned and looked at Craig.

He said, “She is not tired.”

Craig ran to the side of the house and got Nadine’s coat and gloves he tossed over the porch so he could get them later and sell them.

Steven walked and stood next to Alicia.

Jose put Nadine’s coat and gloves in the carriage.

Alicia said, “Auntie.”

Nadine looked up and saw Steven and Alicia and said, “Hey. Wait a minute.”

Jose shook his head in disbelief.

Danny’s wife stood up from the ground holding her elbow.

Alicia ran to her to see if it was broken.

Alicia said, “It’s not broken. Go to the doctor.”

Nadine finally stood up from Danny.

She kicked him in his face.

Danny rolled over on the grass and spit up blood.

His nose was bleeding and his face had knots and scratches and plenty of bruises.

Nadine kneeled by Danny and whispered in his ear.

Danny nodded his head for yes.

Steven said, “What did she say to him?”

Jose looked at Steven.

Steven looked at Jose and he thought.

Steven’s face had a scared looked and said, “Oh.”

Jose looked at Steven.

Nadine was walking to Alicia and pinning her long her back up in the bun.

Maureen said, “Thank you Nadine.”

Nadine turned and said, “You are welcome Maureen.”

Craig yelled to Maureen, “Get in that house and cook my dinner.”

Nadine turned to run into Craig.

Craig ran into the house and slammed and locked the door.

The people started laughing.

Nadine was not out of breathe.

She said, “Hey Steven and Alicia. I did not work Thanksgiving. I heard you all were at dinner.”

Steven was shocked and said, “Nadine you were in a public brawl with a man and got up. Kicked him and threaten him…”

Nadine said, “You could not hear me over here.”

Steven said, “Alicia lets go.”

Alicia waved and said, “Bye.”

Nadine said, “I heard yall looked very nice and that Emilou did not have much sugar.

Alicia said, “Thank you.”

Nadine watched Steven and Alicia ride away.

She finished pinning up her hair.

She looked at the porch for her coat and gloves.

Jose stood and looked at Nadine.

He pointed to the carriage.

Nadine saw her coat and picked it up and put it on and then her gloves.

Nadine exhaled out of excitement.

Jose watched her.

She hoped in the carriage.

Craig opened the door and yelled, “What about my coal?”

Jose was walking to the carriage and stopped.

Nadine jumped out the carriage.

Craig slammed and locked the door.

She got back in the carriage.

Nadine said, “He better get those three pieces of coal and make a stove fire.”

Jose stared at Nadine.

Nadine stared at Jose.

Jose pulled off and went through the modern side of the town and passed Robert and Bethany’s restaurant.

Jose stared at Nadine again.

Nadine said, “Yes, I would have shot Craig, if you had on your gun.”

Jose stared at her.

She looked at Jose and said, “I have shot men before. I know how to shot and hurt them and not damage them.”

Jose said, “Jim was one of your men from the past?”

Nadine blew and said, “Yes.”

Jose said, “Did you shoot him?”

Nadine said, “A little.”

She held up her two fingers to show a little.

Jose said, “How can you shoot someone a little.”

Nadine said, “The wall blocked the buckshot.”

Jose turned and looked at Nadine and said, “Are you crazy?”

Nadine said, “That’s how I got off. When I nursed Jim back to health. He put me out. Eugene was a very good worker with Patrick and Brenda. He got me on and found me a room and I have been there for twelve years.”

Jose yelled, “What would have happened if I had my gun and you grabbed and shot him. I would have gone to jail.”

Nadine said, “You would have been ok in jail.”

Jose said, “I don’t want to talk to you anymore. How old were you when you start living with men?”

Nadine said, Momma put me out at fourteen because I would not finish school. I like having sex all day.”

Jose looked at Nadine.

Nadine said, “I have been twenty years with men. Peter changed all of that.”

Jose said, “I’m telling him everything.”

Nadine said, “Are you scared of me now?”

Jose said, “Nadine I am not scared of you. I knew the way you act that you were street and lived with men from a young age. I saw that this morning when you tried to fight me. I would wing you with one shot.”

Nadine turned her head and was thinking.

Jose said, “Nadine you are a few years older than me. Find something else to do. You are good at the house. But find something you do to help people who really need help.”

Nadine said, “I can be the sheriff.”

Jose turned his head and sped to the house.

He thought, “Out the three Maureen is retarded and Lorraine and Nadine are crazy. I have to get back and get all of that luggage in the carriages and wagon for tomorrow and see if Peter needs help with the vegetable soup and what else is going on and whether Ruth and the rest have found that tea set.”

Nadine said, “Ruth is not at work.”

Jose looked at Nadine and said, “What?”

Nadine said, “You were talking to yourself about what you had to do and said, you wanted to know if Ruth and the rest found the tea set.”

Jose said, “That scar your friend was rubbing…”

Nadine sighed and threw up her hands.

She said, “Yes it was a bullet wound from one of my boyfriends.”

Jose did not say anything else to Nadine but sped up to go to the house.

Eleanor and Claressa and Alvin were having great laughs in the parlor.

Claressa and Alvin arrived at exactly ten am.

Eleanor ran to the door.

She took the bar off and unlocked the front door.

Peter was walking up the hall with the tea tray.

The tray was very nice.

Peter was very proud of himself.

He may not have gone to Europe and attended cooking classes like Dan, but he was improving his skills as a pastry chef.

Gen and Shirley were standing with Eleanor and greeted Ambassador Alvin and Claressa.

Alvin and Claressa were shocked at Shirley.

Shirley was dressed well and sat across from Eleanor, who flanked Eleanor.

Shirley and Gen stayed for a few minutes and excused themselves.

Eleanor told her best friends about she and Bruce divorced and why.

Eleanor slowed talking and became quiet and she held the tea cup in her hands and looked in the tea cup.

Claressa looked at Alvin.

Alvin knew whatever it was it was painful to Eleanor.

Finally, Eleanor raised her head a little and told them about Joseph. He died a few hours before their wedding. The boys yesterday said they wanted to go to their daddy Joseph. She was concerned about them being away at the military academy because they are acting out their feelings.

Eleanor said, “I really, really hate Bruce. I know Joseph was my real husband. The boys feel he is their real father. Shirley did not care, she wanted to become a royal countess. She was set and the young royal males were already swooning her. They were asking me and Joseph for permission to date her.”

Shirley was standing outside the parlor door listening.

Gen was walking to the parlor to say good bye to Claress and Ambassador Alvin.

She looked at Shirley, who was upset.

Claressa grabbed her chest and touched Eleanor’s hand and said, “Alvin and I were in Switzerland and we heard about a count who passed the morning of his wedding.”

Alvin said, “We sure did. We had no idea it was you Eleanor.”

Eleanor started crying and stood and rushed out the parlor.

She passed Gen and Shirley in the hallway.

Alvin and Claressa stood and rushed to the hallway after Eleanor.

They saw Gen and Shirley looking at Eleanor.

Claressa and Alvin stopped and looked at Gen and Shirley staring at Eleanor.

Shirley was upset because she did not know the royals wanted to date her.

Claressa saw Shirley and walked to her and hugged her.

She said, “Shirley your mother will be fine. It truly takes time to get over a husband.”

Gen said, “Even if they ain’t dead.”

Alvin looked at Gen as she sashayed over to the liquor table and poured her a big glass of whiskey.

Alvin looked at Gen.

Shirley said, “Momma said the royals wanted to date me. Why they asked her and Joseph.”

Alvin said, “Protocol.”

Claressa started to laugh and saw Shirley was upset.

Alvin said, “Royals just don’t date. They have to present their request to the parents or guardians. They have an interview.”

Claressa , “Alvin!”

Alvin said, “It’s similar to an interview and the parents or guardians give permission or not. Then the official date is arranged.”

Alvin put his finger up to his mouth and said, “Hush, you are not suppose to know that.”

Claresa laughed.

Shirley said, “How come momma did not tell me?”

Alvin said, “She did not have time. These arrangements take months.”

Claressa looked at Shirley.

Gen was turned and listening.

Gen said, “I won’t tell you who, but it take a year for her to start dating.”

Claressa said, “We know who that was. Don’t we Alvin?”

The three started laughing.

Shirley looked at each one of them.

Alvin said, “Shirley don’t feel bad about not getting a chance to date any of the royals. You haven’t missed much.”

Gen started laughing and took the whiskey glass from her mouth and held it away from her and said, “Boring.”

Claressa said, “I know. Everybody talks about how boring the royals are.”

Eleanor returned from the guests’ suites.

She saw Gen at the liquor table.

Gen looked at Eleanor and Eleanor looked at Gen and took her glass.

Gen said, “Give it back.”

Eleanor began to drank Gen’s whiskey.

Gen looked at the liquor table.

Alvin ran and grabbed Gen and walked her to the parlor.

Eleanor was slowly walking up the hallway drinking the whiskey.

She was enjoying the whiskey.

Claressa was still holding Shirley but watching Eleanor.

The five walked into the parlor and sat.

Shirley had her coat and gloves on.

She looked very pretty.

Eleanor finished the whiskey.

Gen said, “And drank it all.”

Eleanor looked at Gen and put the glass down and said, “I need it. I did not know I had those feelings in me.”

Alvin said, “It’s too early for that.”

Gen said, “The fussing?”

Alvin said, ”The whiskey.”

Gen started laughing.

Alvin said, “Gen your husband had a distinguish career. Turkey, India, Great Britain, China.”

Gen said, “I loved every minute…”

Claressa nodded her head in agreement.

Gen said, “My husband was fifteen years older than me. He married me out of finishing school. We came back for about seven years while he worked in Washington, Dc and had one son. After those seven years we went back to Europe to Great Britain. That was his last diplomatic post overseas. We came back and he worked in Washington DC until he retired. We sent our son to the local college.”

Alvin said, “Great life.”

Gen said, “The best.”

Gen said, “Shirley and I are leaving now to go to my home. It was great meeting fellow diplomats.”

Alvin said, “It was a pleasure my dear.”

He stood and held out his hand to help Gen up.

Gen took Alvin’s hand and stood.

Claresa was watching Shirley.

Alvin turned and walked to Shirley and kissed her hand.

He stared at Shirley and said, “You are a delight and a miracle of GOD. HE loves you and HE has planned a wonderful life for you. You would have been bored with the royals.”

He winked at Shirley.

Shirley tried to smile.

Gen and Shirley were walking down the hall.

Jose was walking up the hall and pointed to the front door.

Gen and Shirley turned around and walked up the hall and pass the parlor.

Shirley said, “Aunt Gen do we speak again?”

Gen said, “No.”

They walked to the front door.

Jose open the front door.

The security man looked at them.

Jose nodded at the security man.

Gen spoke and Shirley greeted the man.

They walked down the front steps and walked to the carriage.

They spoke to the security man at the carriage.

Jose rushed to the carriage and helped Gen and then Shirley into the carriage.

Gen and Shirley both were sitting in the back of the carriage.

Gen said, “Very good Jose.”

Shirley grinned.

Jose pulled away from the house and out of the yard.

He said, “We are country but have some class.”

He looked at the yard and saw the lawn was well taken care of.

Jose said, “I think the lanterns would look good with either giant peppermint sticks or bells.”

Eleanor continued, “ And told of the plot France to kidnap Shirley…”

Claressa said, “They are working hard to stop that criminal element.”

Eleanor told of the plot against them at the new train stop. About Michael and Thomas beaten to death. And how they were on the train to get Shirley at the new rail station. That her brothers used their money to finance the civil war with the south and how the mob was growing in the country.

Eleanor invited them to the children’s ground breaking ceremony, reception and dinner, in two weeks.

They told her if they were still in town they would attend.

Claressa laughed when Eleanor said the children decided to use their trust fund money to establish a hospital in their town.

Claressa laughed and said, “Children with that kind of money.”

Eleanor said, “After Michael and Thomas were beaten to die There was no hospital here. We had to back the train up and speed back to Philadelphia to the hospital. The children decided a hospital was needed here.”

Claressa said, “I hate travelling through the holidays.”

Earlier when Jose and Nadine rode in the yard, they saw the ambassador’s carriage.

They saw the security man on the porch and another at the carriage.

Nadine said, “It’s exciting.”

Jose said, “Nadine you stay in the kitchen. Tell Peter everything. Even about the night before you married, I feel you better beat your enemy to the punch.”

Nadine looked at Jose and said, “You?”

Jose said, “You are not that important Nadine.”

They got out the buggy.

Jose went to the stables and readied the wagon and carriages for the next day.

He went into the house and checked on the hot water and coal for the furnaces and stoves.

Jose felt bad about taking the coal back from Maureen, but he knew Craig was trying to sell the coal.

Jose came from the basement and pulled off his coat and hats.

He said, “Peter you need any help?”

Peter said, “No. I see you all are not dead and apparently Nadine is not fired.”

Jose said, “Very close.”

Peter looked at Jose and thought he looked stupid with those two hats on.

Jose was still thinking about Craig and thought, “If he wants to eat he’ll go and find something to put fire in the fireplace.”

Jose went to his room and hung his coat.

He took his pail of toiletries and went and washed and shaved.

He went back to his room and dressed.

Jose was walking through the house.

He could smell freedom from Eleanor and her children.

He was thinking about his next two weeks dating Briana.

Jose thought, “Does she have any education? What does she want to do? Does she have a boyfriend? How old is she? Does she want to date? Does she go to church? Does she believe in God?”

Jose was thinking as he was checking the house.

He passed Gen’s suite and saw she was packed and ready to go.

Jose knocked on her opened door and said, “I can take your bags to the carriage.”

Gen said, “Yes thank you.”

Jose wondered how she would be on that big estate by herself.

Jose stopped at his room and put on two scarves and two hats and a pair of gloves.

He went to the carriage and put Gen’s bag near the coal.

Jose was trying to think about where to put the coal.

He took the coal pails out the carriage and put them on the back porch.

He knew not to ride the ambassador’s wife around with coal.

Jose went back in the house and took off his clothes and walked to the parlor and spoke to Claressa and the ambassador.

Jose went through the house grinning that he was going to be free tomorrow after he dropped everybody off at the train station.

He was standing and looking out the front window when he started thinking about all the things Brenda and Eleanor required him to do.

His grin faded away.

Jose said, “I think I will pick up that cache of liquor tomorrow. I need to check that telegram machine this evening.”

He rode to Gen’s house.

He loved that area of the town.

The old money.

Gen’s riding path to the house was a spectator’s delight.

Jose could see why Gen wanted to entertain that holiday season.

Shirley was grinning and Gen looked at Shirley.

Shirley grabbed Gen’s arm and nestled her head on Gen.

Gen looked in Shirley’s eyes and saw she loved the estate like she did.

Jose stopped at the grand house first.

He helped Gen and Shirley out the carriage and up the few stairs to the door.

Gen took the key out of her bag and was about to put it in the lock.

She stopped and turned to Shirley.

Shirley was grinning and looking at Gen.

Gen said, “Here Shirley this is your house now.”

Jose put his holster in the carriage before he brought it to the front of the house.

He did not want the security men to shot him.

The security men ask no questions.

Shirley eyes grew big and she looked at Gen.

Gen grinned and said, “I love you. I know you love this house and will take great care of it.”

Shirley started crying.

Gen started crying.

Jose was standing the two of them wanting to go in the house.

He has not been in the house before.

He looked back at the carriage and thought, “I don’t hear John Jr. Should I go and get my guns?”

Shirley was shaking and Gen helped her put the key in the lock.

They both walked in.

The three stood in the marble foyer.

Jose said, “Whoa.”

Gen nodded her head.

Jose walked away from the women and started walking through the house.

He could hear Shirley and Gen talking.

He said, “Not that many rooms but large rooms.”

He looked at the hardwood floors and thought, “What were they doing to scuff up all of these floors like this?”

Jose walked into the kitchen and storage areas.

He looked at the cabinets and the cabinets hinges were missing.

He stood and wondered why the hinges were missing.

Gen and Shirley walked into the kitchen, they looked at Jose and wondered what he was thinking about.

Gen said, “Jose?”

Jose said, “Why are the hinges missing?”

Gen looked around and walked from cabinet to cabinet.

Shirley followed Gen from cabinet to cabinet.

Shirley stumbled and looked down and there were weird scuff marks on the floor.

Jose said, “You should see the floors on the other side.”

Shirley looked at Jose.

Gen said, “All my dishes are gone.”

She looked in the cabinet. The cabinets were bare.”

Gen was out done.

She stood and looked around.

Gen pointed and said, “No curtains and shades. What were they doing?”

Jose was moving his feet back and forth over the place Shirley stumbled.

He kneeled down and took out his pocket knife and went around the square tile.

Shirley walked over and bent down and watched Jose.

Gen walked over and was thinking.

Jose loosen the tile and it was a compartment with drugs.

Gen cut her eyes at the square.

She looked around.

And began to walk through her house and a wall tile was not in line with the rest of the tile.

Gen said, “Jose.”

Jose looked at Gen and Gen pointed at the tile.

Jose walked over with his knife.

Shirley followed him.

Jose worked on the tile and it popped loose.

He pulled it off and another hole with drugs.

Jose stopped and said, “Gen I am going to get the sheriff. I would be gone for a half of hour going and a half hour coming back. You and Shirley stay here and keep away from the windows and doors. Don’t touch anything.”

Gen stood still.

Jose looked at Gen and put up his pocket knife.

He rushed out the house and jumped in the carriage.

Shirley locked the front door.

Gen went downstairs to the basement area, which she used as a storage area and wine cellar.

Gen saw a rat and turned nearly knocking Shirley down.

Gen said, “Rat!”

Shirley was scooting down to the basement on her new coat and said, “My house!!”

Gen was standing in the kitchen.

Shirley scooted to the last step.

She stood and looked around and grinned.

She thought it could be a large play room for her boys that Hutch told her GOD would give her.

Shirley saw a few rats, but she did not care. She kept thinking about the large space that she would paint a sea blue and the ceiling white to show white clouds and a bright yellow sun.

She looked down at the floor and wondered what she would do for that floor.

She needed rugs because she did not want her boys to fall and hurt themselves.

She walked over to the backdoor and peeped out.

She grinned.

Gen sat on the floor at the beginning of the stairs.

She heard someone knocking on the door.

She frowned and thought, “Jose?”

She was walking to the door and stepped to the side and saw two men on horses.

Gen stepped back and begin to breathe heavy.

She watched the two men.

One nodded at the other.

They walked off the porch and started around the house.

Gen ran through the house and stooped down at the steps and said, “Hide Shirley.”

Shirley was grinning and looking at the back.

She heard voices and knew it could not be Jose.

Shirley saw shadows.

She ducked down.

Gen stepped to the side of the doorway and was peeping down the stairs.

She was scared for Shirley.

Shirley said, “Jose.”

Then she thought,

Shirley pulled out her gun.

Gen saw Shirley pull out her gun.

Gen saw her bag in front of the steps where she was sitting.

She eased her leg cross the floor and pulled her bag to her.

She reached in her bag and pulled her gun out.

She was shaken and scared.

Jose ran into the sheriff’s office and opened the door.

Nathan looked up at Jose who was out of breathe.

He stood and got his shot gun and a second set of guns.

He walked to the door.

Jose said, “Drugs at Gen’s house.”

Nathan untied his horse.

He saw Denise and Robert standing by Jose.

He said, “Go back to the rest stop.”

He jumped on his horse and sped through the new town.

The judge lived across from Gen.

He saw the men and ran into his house and got his shot gun.

He was tipping across the street when Nathan rode up.

Nathan motioned for the judge to go.

The judge’s wife who was the governor’s sister had her shotgun pointed across the street.

Nathan saw the two horses in the yard.

Jose pulled up a few minutes later.

Nathan went to the house.

Gen looked and saw Jose peeping in the house.

Gen was on her knees and rushed on her knees to the front door and unlocked.

Jose said. “Shirley?”

Gen said, “Downstairs.”

Jose said, “Get to the judge. I’ll get Shirley.”

Gen nodded.

Jose looked out for Gen and said, “Go.”

The judge was waiting for Gen.

Gen ran across the street.

The judge and his wife took Gen into their house.

The dentist who lived down the street was on his way home and saw Gen run across the street to the judge and his wife who had shotguns.

He pulled up in his yard and reached for his shotgun under his seat.

He jumped out his wagon.

His wife and son saw him pulled up as she was finishing his piano lesson.

They were about to run to the door and greet him.

When his wife saw him jump out his wagon with the shotgun.

She did not look at her son but instinctively knew his distance from her.

She calmly grabbed their son and went to the corner of the room and squatted down.

She was the United States Congressman’s daughter and grew up running and ducking from violence.

She was a small child when she went to the dentist.

She fell in love with the man who was twenty years older than she.

Her father and mother loved the dentist also.

She married the dentist five years earlier and have a five year old son.

The dentist stayed outside and ducked down besides his wagon.

Jose eased to the back of the house and stooped down and saw the two men entering the house.

Shirley was on the side of the door that opened inward.

Jose saw Shirley and he saw she was squatting down and had her gun in her hand.

Nathan yelled, “Sheriff come out with your hands up.”

The broke and ran upstairs.

Jose did not know what to do.

He knocked the first man down the stairs.

Shirley ran outside,

Nathan said, “Go.”

Shirley was running around the house.

The judge was watching he ran to Shirley and grabbed her.

The dentist had his shotgun pointed at the door of the house.

The other man tried to rush Jose and run out the house.

Nathan ran in the house and caught the man falling down the steps.

He hurried and put the cuffs on him on the stairs.

Nathan ran upstairs and saw Jose and the man struggling.

The man was trying to get to the front door.

Jose fell backwards when the other man ran upstairs and pushed pass him.

As Jose was falling backwards he caught the man by the waist.

The man was falling but maintained himself and Jose was determined not to let the man go.

The man was dragging Jose to door.

Jose was clawing himself off the floor to get on the man’s back.

Nathan looked back at the man on the steps and pulled the shotgun on the man trying to get to the front door.

Nathan yelled, “Stop!”

The man stopped.

Jose was still clawing up the man’s back.

Nathan said, “Hands up.”

The man threw his hands up.

Nathan looked back at the other man on the stairs.

The man was holding his head up and looked at Nathan.

Nathan looked at the man.

He ran to the man with his hands in the air and threw him on the floor.

Jose was getting his breath back.

He saw the man moving on the stairs and said, “

Jose said, “Sheriff.”

Nathan looked back and ran to the man on the stairs and said, “It’s easier to bury you.”

The man stopped.

Jose was watching the man on the floor by him.

Nathan walked back to the living room area and grabbed the man by his collar and said, “Get up.”

Th man stood and said, “Hello Nathan.”

Jose was bent over trying to catch his breath.

Nathan looked at the man.

The man on the stairs began to laugh.

Nathan looked at the man in front of him and said, “Sheriff?’

Sheriff Sherman said, “You remember my deputy Tim Wilson.”

Jose looked back at the man handcuffed on the stairs as he uncuffed himself and flipped backwards off the stairs.

Nathan said, “Jose tell them it is ok.”

Jose said, “I’m not moving.”

Nathan walked to the door with his shotgun up and waved to the judge.

Everyone ran to Gen’s house.

The dentist saw them running to Gen’s house.

He jumped up and ran behind them to Gen’s house.

The judge ran in the house.

The man turned around and looked at the judge.

The judge had a question mark facial expression.

The judge said, “Sherman.”

The other man was walking into the living area.

Shirley looked at the man and said, “Did you lock my backdoor?”

The man said, “No ma am, but I will.”

The dentist said, “What the hell is this. You all had me scared out of mind.”

He looked around at everybody and said, “Young lady how did this get to be your house? Where did you get this type of money to buy this grand house?”

Shirley stepped so the man could see her and said, “I am a Stith. Whatever I want I can buy.”

Jose said, “Damn.”

He thought, “This girl is wild.”

Gen heard Jose and said, “Me too. Damn.”

The dentist said, “What is a Stith?”

The judge’s wife said, “The house. The railroad and shipping magnates.”

Dentist said, “I don’t care. All of yall have scared me to death. And now you are standing around like this is a social club meeting.”

The judge said, “Nathan what is going on?”

Nathan said, “I don’t know. Jose came and got me and said ’drugs at Gen’. I came and caught these two.”

Sherman said, “I can explain from here. Me and Tim went to DC and were trained under the federal program. This is our first assignment to find out who was the mobster handling illegal drugs in this town. Since Tim and I are from here. They sent us.”

Gen said, “My son?”

Sherman looked at Gen and said, “I am sorry…”

Gen closed her eyes and took a deep breathe.

Nathan looked at Gen.

Sherman said, “Illegal drugs have started to become a problem in America. The government wants to put a big dent in it if possible.

The dentist’s wife and son walked and stood on the porch.

Shirley looked out at the young woman and the little boy and walked to the door and said, “Hey I am Shirley. I am the new owner of this house.”

The dentist looked at Shirley then he looked at the judge.

The judge shrugged his shoulders.

The lady said, “I am Shirley also.”

Shirley laughed and said, “A well fitted name.”

Shirley the dentist’s wife said, “This is our son Luke. He‘s five.”

Shirley bent down and said, “Hello Luke, I am glad to meet you.

Luke said, “Hello.”

Shirley said, “Would you like to be my sons’ playmate.”

Luke said, “Yes ma am.”

Jose said, “Shirley.”

Gen said, “Get your ass back over here. You don’t have any children. You are not even married. I am concerned about my son.”

The judge looked at a dejected Shirley as she passed them and stood by Gen.

The dentist looked at his wife and she looked at him.

He said, “I don’t know a ‘Stith.”

Sherman said, “We traced the activity to this house. We were going to come in on Thanksgiving Day to make arrests, but we did not have all the transportation worked out. We need just a little proof that John Perkins, Jr. was the mastermind behind all the drugs that came from the south up to the north.”

Jose said, “Here.”

He went to the tile and pulled out his pocket knife and lifted up the tile.

Sherman pulled out the drugs.

The dentist held his hand for his wife to stay back.

She tried to see.

The judge and his wife stepped forward to see.

Jose stood and walked to the kitchen wall tile and lifted it out.

Tim got the drugs out.

Sherman was on one knee and watched Tim.

He began to look around and said, ”This will take a few days.”

Shirley said, “What?”

Sherman said, “To go from room to room and take things loose.”

Shirley said, “Judge can they do that?’

The judge looked at Shirley and said, “Yes.”

Shirley started screaming and said, “Eleanor!!”

Nathan said, “Shirley stop.”

Gen screamed, “Eleanor!”

Tim and Sherman looked at the screaming women.

Nathan said, “Shirley bought this house and does not want it damage. Gen does not want her son to be involved.”

The judge looked at the screaming Shirley and then at the screaming Gen.

Shirley ran out the front door.

Luke said, “Shirley don’t cry.”

Shirley touched her heart and said, “Luke you are a wonderful child.”

Shirley sat on the steps of the front porch.

Luke sat next to Shirley and laid his head on her.

The dentist watched his son and his wife take to the Stith.

Tim peeped around the kitchen at Shirley as she stomped out.

Sherman said, “What is an Eleanor?”

Nathan said, “The one that makes things right.”

Jose said, “How were they getting rid of the drugs?”

Gen boohooed and said, “My wine.”

The judge and his wife patted Gen on her shoulders.

Nathan said, “Sherman I thought the training was for a year.”

Sherman said, “It is. They are going to count this assignment, because they had to move fast as part of our taining.”

He looked at Gen.

The judge looked at him.

Sherman said, “Ma am I am sorry, but the wine you are talking about did you keep a log. Maybe your son put the name of the drug buyers by the name of the wine.”

Nathan said, “Good idea.”

The dentist said, “That doesn’t prove nothing, unless you show the address and the amount of money. I want my dinner.”

The judge looked at the dentist.

The dentist walked out the house.

He said, “Shirley, not the Stith, and Luke lets go home and eat.”

He reached his hand to his wife.

She took his hand and stood.

Luke looked at his mother and father and jumped and ran to his father.

He looked at Shirley and said, “Stith.”

Shirley smiled and said, “Bye Luke.”

His mother said, “Bye Shirley. I hope they don’t do much damage to your new home.”

Shirley tried to smile.

The judge waited to the dentist left and said, “He is sour. He is married to that much younger woman and was able to have a son and he still fuss.”

The judge’s wife snickered.

The judge looked at his wife.

He said, “You think the Stith can get us upgrades on our tickets tomorrow.”

His wife looked back at Shirley and said, “No.”

Jose said, “You are the governor’s brother -in-law. I saw he and his wife get on the train this morning.”

Tim popped another tile.

Shirley was sitting outside and started hollering again.

Nathan stepped and looked.

He said, “I know she didn’t hear that outside.”

Gen said, “Yes. I got to go. I can’t stand this.”

Sherman said, “I may need to speak with that girl. Where’s her parents?”

Jose said, “Her father is in Philadelphia and her mother is at home entertaining her best friend Ambassador Alvin.”

The judge said, “Guy doggy I heard he was back home. I wanted to see him.”

He turned to his wife and said, “I really wanted to see him.”

Looked at Jose.

Jose shook his head for no.

The judge looked back at Shirley.

The judge’s wife looked back at Shirley.

The judge looked at his wife and said, “You think the Stith can introduce us to the ambassador?”

Shirley yelled, “No this Stith can’t.”

The judge and his wife laughed.

The judge’s wife said, “Do you think my brother has gone hunting and fishing and did not tell us?”

The judge looked at Jose.

Jose said, “I did not see anything but bags.”

The judge looked off and was thinking.

The judge’s wife looked off and was thinking.

Tim popped another tile and found more drugs.

Jose jumped up and waved his hands.

He said, “Wait a minute.”

He looked at Gen and said, “John Jr. spent his entire inheritance in about ten years. He sold your furniture and furnishings. He was selling drugs. But he did not have money for basic living. Whenever I saw him, he and his wife were well dressed, with fine clothes, but not the finest…”

The judge looked at his wife and said, “But not the Stiths.”

His wife laughed.

Jose said, “Enough. She meant what she said. She has been sick all of her life and she is just now beginning to enjoy life. How come John Jr and his wife never had money to meet their basic living needs?”

Nathan began to think.

Tim began to think.

Sherman said, “I don’t know.”

The judge and his wife said, “I don’t know.”

Gen said, “I don’t know.”

Shirley yelled, “Because he was using more of the drugs and had to pay for the drugs.”

Nathan said, “Sherman you want to hire Shirley?”

Sherman said, “We might.”

Gen said, “Is that why John Jr. and Betty acted like fools?”

Jose turned his head and said, “Ok.”

Nathan looked at Jose and bit his lips to keep from laughing out.

Shirley yelled back in the house, “Jose, let’s take Aunt Gen home and take me to Eleanor.”

Gen was looking around the house.

Sherman said, “Ma am, what are you looking for?’

Gen said, “Whiskey.”

Nathan looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Gen are you sure you don’t want to go with everybody tomorrow. You can spend time with Patrick and Brenda.”

Gen said, “No. I have to go into town tomorrow. Jose where are my horses? You were the last person here. Ben doesn’t count.”

The judge wife looked at him.

Jose ran to the parlor room and looked out.

Jose started cursing and stomping.

Gen said, “No horses. Do I have a buggy or carriage left?”

Shirley ran in the house and looked at Jose.

Nathan looked at Shirley.

He said, “Shirley you have been running a lot today. You need to see Hutch when you go back to school.”

Shirley stared at Nathan.

Nathan looked at Shirley and turned his head to keep from hollering.

Hutch worked on his shoulder wound from the civil war.

He knew it was extremely painful but after a few days he felt great.

Nathan could not talk.

He walked away from Shirley to keep his composure.

Jose put his hands on his hips and started calming down.

Jose said, “I’m sorry Gen. I was not thinking. I was thinking about getting Ben out the house and locking up everything.”

Gen looked at Sherman and said, “Can you get him for horse theft.”

Sherman whipped out his pocket notepad and pen and begin to write.

Nathan said, “John Jr. has to know he left these drugs here. Is he coming back or is he sending someone to pick up the drugs for him?”

Gen said, “I think he may have gone to his wife people until he gets a chance to flee to Philadelphia.

If you don’t catch him and that wife of his now. Then he plan on taking me to court to get the money from the sale of this house.”

Gen looked around and said, “I need something.”

Jose walked to Gen and said, “Come on Gen. Lets go to your house. We can check and see if your carriage and buggy and wagon are out here. If not we can go to Jessie and buy them from him.”

The judge and his wife walked out with Gen, Jose and Shirley.

Sherman yelled and said, “Miss Gen we may need to stay here or out in the yard and hide to see if your son come back.”

Gen nodded her head and kept waking.

Shirley was walking and crying and looking at her floor.

Nathan looked at Shirley very firmly.

Sherman said, “This is a nice house.”

Nathan said, “Yeah it is.”

Sherman said, “How did she buy it?”

Nathan said, “Either her trust fund or her momma, Eleanor. That’s the one you will have problems with.”

Sherman said, “I have to get the kits that are in my saddle.”

He walked out the house and brought his saddle in.

He saw Jose stop the carriage at Gen.

He watched as Jose helped Gen and Shirley out the carriage.

They walked around to the stables.

Gen hollered.

Nathan was looking out the parlor window,

Sherman said, “I guess I will be adding horses and buggies.”

He walked back in the house and replaced the few tiles they removed out the kitchen.

Nathan sat on the window sill and watched Tim and Sherman worked.

They heard something crack.

Tim and Sherman looked at Nathan.

Nathan eased up from the windowsill.

Nathan said, “This grand house is cracking?”

Sherman said, “Examine that sill.”

Nathan looked at Sherman.

He rubbed his hand over the sill and pressed down on it. It fell.

Sherman and Tim walked over to the windowsill.

They saw papers that were rolled up and placed in the windowsill.

They started reading the papers. The papers listed every major drug dealer in the south.

Nathan felt good.

He wanted to do the work that Tim and Sherman were doing.

The dentist was home enjoying his early dinner with his wife and son.

He was playing with his son.

The judge and his wife sat in their window and played cards until their dinner was ready.

Jose and Shirley walked with Gen through her house.

She hid her jewelry.

She looked and the jewelry was there.

They counted the little crystal, china and flatware Gen brought to the cottage to make it feel homely.

Jose started a fire in the stoves.

Gen said she would not be sleeping upstairs because she needed to hear.

Jose went upstairs and got pillows, sheets and blankets and made up the couch in the sitting room for Gen.

He checked all the windows and doors and closed all the curtains.

Gen said, “I can’t stand to be too hot. I’ll make a small fire in the fireplace.”

Jose went in the back and got a pail of coal and put it in the kitchen and started a fire in the fireplace.

Gen put her gun on the table.

Jose felt bad about Gen’s horses and buggies.

He said, “Who helped them?”

Gen said, “No telling.”

Shirley looked around and saw gen’s bible laying flat on the bookcase.

She walked over and picked it up and walked over and place it next to Gen’s gun.

Gen looked at the bible and glanced at the gun.

She said, “Thank you Shirley.”

Jose found some pieces and ham and smelled them.

He cooked Gen, eggs and ham and squeezed the only orange in the house and made her orange juice.

Jose went out to the well and brought her two pails of water.

One for the kitchen and one for her bath.

He brought Gen a large glass of water.

Gen went upstairs and changed into her night gown and robe.

Jose said, “Gen. I will bring you food tomorrow and then we will go and try to buy you at least one horse and a buggy for the holidays.”

Gen said, “A horse.”

Jose said, “There is not that many horses. People are buying them up.”

Jose said, “I’m taking them to the train at nine am. Then I can come and get you and we can go to the capitol.”

Gen said, “Why can’t you send someone to get me at eight and I come to the house and go to the train station because I have to go to the bank and buy some grocery while I am in town. We have to come by here on the way to the capitol. Let me drop the grocery off and then go to the capitol. Hopefully I can get a horse or two and a buggy until the beginning of the year.”

Jose said, “Ok.”

He and Shirley walked to the door.

Shirley hugged Aunt Gen.

Jose helped Shirley in the carriage.

Gen closed and locked the door.

Nathan was leaving the grand house.

He waved at a spoiled Shirley.

Shirley’s mouth was still puffed out and she folded her arms as she passed her house and looked at it.

Nathan went around through the new town.

He passed Robert and Bethany’s restaurant and thought about Denise.

He thought, “I’ll bring her here this week-end for dinner. She’ll like that. What will she say, when I tell her I am applying for that federal job. I liked how Tim knew to get out the handcuffs and flip backwards up the stairs.”

Nathan thought about Tim who was to leave and go to the new military headquarters to send a telegram for help.

The judge and his wife watched everybody leave.

Sherman suggested to Tim that they put back the tiles but take the drugs and put them up.

He looked around and saw Gen’s empty stable.

Then he looked at the coal shed.

Tim looked at the stables and said, “Coal shed because it is closer to the house.

Sherman said, “Can you get us something to eat?”

Tim looked at Gen’s well and said, “Get us some water and ask her if we can hide in her coal shed?”

Sherman said, “Sure. What are we going to do about our horses?”

Tim said, “Take everything from the horses and put the horses in the stable and feed the horses and give them water.”

Tim got on his horse and roe to the new military headquarters.

Sherman rode to Gen’s cottage and knocked on her door.

He heard her crying.

Gen walked to the door and said, “Who is it?”

He said, “Sherman.”

Sherman heard Gen unlocking the door.

Sherman looked at gen and said, “Ma am we are not staying at the house tonight. We want to know if we can put our horses in your stables and hide in your coal shed.”

Gen said nodded her head and said, “Yes.”

She closed and locked her door.

Sherman rode to the well and filled his canteen and Tim’s canteen.

He thought, “Who would ever thought that would be my boss. And he is taking his job very seriously.”

Sherman went to the barn and settled his horse and gave it feed and went back to the well and took the pail in the stable and filled it with water.

He brought the water back and brushed his horse down.

He closed the stable’s door and walked with his saddle to the coal shed.

Gen unlocked her door and walked out to the coal shed and said, “Sherman.”

Sherman opened the coal shed door.

Gen reached him two blankets. She did not see them with blankets.

Sherman said, “Thank you.”

Gen walked back to the house and locked her door and tried to read her bible and pray.

She could not.

She said, “One day GOD. But not today.”

She put the bible down and put out her candle.

She heard Tim ride pass and went to the stables.

He finished taking care of his horse and walked back to the coal shed.

He smelled coal.

Tim walked in the coal shed.

Sherman dug a hole in the ground and started a small fire.

Tim looked.

Sherman said, “I know, but it is quite cold and we did not bring any blankets. She came out and brought two blankets.”

Tim said, “We don’t want the criminals to smell anything. When those coals burn out snuff out the fire.”

Sherman said, “Ok.”

Tim handed Sherman a bag with food.

Sherman said, “You didn’t get any food?”

Tim said, I ate it on the way.”

Sherman tossed him a blanket.

Tim wrapped in the blanket.

Gen laid awake on the couch until the morning light was breaking through.

She woke when she heard a lot of noise outside.

She stayed inside and ran to the kitchen and put more coal under the pail of water for her bath.

Gen peeped out the kitchen window and saw someone on the ground.

She could not see who.

She folded up the linens and took them upstairs with her pillows.

She pulled out one the festive skirts and a pretty sweater.

She found matching earrings.

Gen went and took her hot water around to the wash room.

She made a cup of coffee.

That was all the coffee she had.

She started trying to remember the grocery she needed.

It was getting lighter.

She peeped out the kitchen window again.

She stared at the man that was on the ground.

She turned and walked around to the wash room and washed.

She liked Lorraine’s soaps and oil.

She washed and comber and brushed her hair.

Gen dressed and looked very pretty.

She looked at herself in the mirror and said, “You dirty ba\*\*\*\*d you helped my son lose his life.

Jose sent Gary to pick up Gen.

Gen went to the and opened it.

Gary was looking.

The judge and his wife thought they saw someone on the ground.

They continued to dress and went out to their carriage and their workers took them to the train station.

When Gary and Gen got back to the house everyone were in the carriages.

Gary turned around and lead them to the train station.

Shirley told Eleanor everything that happened at Gen’s.

Eleanor was scared for Gen.

When they arrived at the train station Gen told them they caught Betty’s daddy coming to get the drugs.

Eleanor, Shirley, the boys were on the train.

The judge and his wife boarded the train.

Shirley looked at them.

Eleanor looked at the judge and his wife.

The judge and his wife greeted Shirley and Eleanor.

He told Eleanor he was the town’s judge, brother-in-law to the governor.

His wife grinned and nodded.

The judge said, he was a neighbor to Mrs. Perkins.

He said, “I meet this Stith yesterday…”

Eleanor looked at Shirley because she did not use her name of Simmons.

He continued, “A neighbor wanted to know about the house, she said she bought it. The neighbor said, how could a child buy it. She said, she was a Stith and whatever she wants she buy.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

The judge said, “There is an evil lurking about town. It could be on this train…”

Michael looked at the judge.

Thomas bumped into Eleanor.

Eleanor did not move.

The judge said, “I believe we are getting it under control..”

He looked at Shirley and pointed his finger and said, “… but stop flaunting your name and your money.”

Eleanor cut her eyes at Shirley.

The judge said, “We are spending the holidays with our sons and their families in New York. We will be back the first week of January.”

Eleanor said, “Thank you sir.”

She and the judge’s wife nodded to each other.

The judge lifted his hat to Eleanor and Shirley.

He and his wife passed them to get to their seats.

Jose, John, Mike, Gary and Gen watched the train roll out and waved at them.

Eleanor was worried if the boys would be accepted back in school.

She was concerned that Shirley needed a helper and may not be able to get one.

Eleanor told Shirley if she cannot help the first few days to go to her father’s hotel until Christmas break.

She told her she could have a hot bath, meals and laundry everyday.

Shirley stared at Eleanor and looked out the window of the suite.

Eleanor did not know why Shirley looked at her like that.

Eleanor said, “Shirley, why did you look at me like that?”

Shirley looked at Eleanor and said, “I don’t want daddy anymore. I don’t want to be around him. All he is going to do is to find out what you and grandpa are doing to make money. It is torture.”

Eleanor said, “Then go to Aunt Beverly until I get there and get you help. Don’t flaunt your money and your jewelry.”

Shirley nodded her head for yes.

Gary rode his carriage back to the house.

Jose helped Gen into the carriage he rode.

Mike took the wagon back to the house.

John rode behind them in the carriage.

Gen went to the bank.

Jose went to the liquor store and got the very large holiday liquor order.

He wondered did they really mean to get that much liquor.

He could not see Mike to put the liquor in his wagon because he was probably at the house.

Jose thought Gen had to hold her grocery in her lap until he drop the liquor off at the house.

Jose sat in the carriage.

Gen looked in the carriage and swish her hands and said, “Hot damn.”

Jose did a sarcastic smile and said, “You have to put your grocery in your lap until I get that liquor out of here.  
He rode to the grocery.

He helped Gen out the carriage

Gen rushed in the store and bought milk, oranges, apples, coffee, several dozens of eggs, flour, meal, shortening, butter, beans, rice, potatoes, pork chops, ground beef, steaks, mutton and veal.

She came out the grocer with arms full of bags.

Jose jumped out the carriage and ran to help Gen.

She was frowning up and looking back in the store.

Jose looked at Gen and was getting her bags.

Jose heard Craig’s voice.

He was cursing because the grocer would not let him have the meat he came to get.

Jose rushed Gen and said, “Let’s go. Now.”

Gen looked at Jose and ran behind him to the carriage.

They were pulling out when the manager yelled and said, “Get out!”

Gen said, “What?”

Jose said, “Retarded Maureen’s husband. I put money on the grocer book for her. I knew he would come and steal the money.”

Gen said, “My God. She lives with that?”

Jose said, “She is really retarded.”

Gen said, “Where is her family?”

Jose said, “That’s what I want to know. No one seems to now.”

Gen said, “Maureen. Maureen. Is that the one with the damaged eye?”

Jose said, “Yes.”

Gen said, “I heard her say when she was little a boy threw and hit her in the eye with a rock and knocked her out.”

Jose thought.

Gen thought.

Jose said, “You might not be retarded but have brain damage.”

Gen said, “Either one is bad.”

Jose was counting his money he had left in his head.

He was thinking he really had not spent any until that week.

He was determined to buy one of those houses before the new year.

Then he could help Maureen.

He went to the house and had Mike and John take the liquor to the billiards room.

Jose said, “Wait a minute Mike. This box has your name on it.”

Gen peeped at Mike.

Mike grinned.

He left that box on the back porch.

Gen yelled and said, “Come on over Mike.”

Mike laughed and said, “A bird.”

John and he carried his box to the re-modeled barn.

Mike said, “Miss Gen and my aunt would be great friends. They both are old birds.”

Mike teared up.

John said, “Mike I pray you see her and bring her home. If just to your home.”

Mike said, “it’s a terrible feeling not to know if someone is dead, enslaved, injured or damaged. Whether they are being treated well or if they are dead, whether you can bury them. I hate this. I don’t want anyone to live with a missing relative.”

They put the box of liquor under Mike’s bed.

They left out and went to the house.

Mike and John were playing card.

They liked at each other.

John said, “Blaine.”

Mike cut his eyes at John.

John said, “You can stay with me through the holidays. I have coal and nothing else.

Mike said, “I’ll move tonight. I’ll get a wagon and two horses.”

John said, “Fine. I sleep on the floor.”

John cut his eyes at John.

John looked at Mike.

Gen and Jose took the bags into her cottage.

They saw the door to Gen’s house opened.

Jose said, “Once we put up the grocery lets go ad see what is going on.”

Gen said, “I can’t. You can go now, while I put the grocery up.”

Jose looked around and said, “Gen it is freezing in here.”

He started her fire in the stove and a small fire in the parlor and he took her candles and put them by the door in case it is dark when they returned.

Jose went out the door and drove to the estate house.

He knocked on the door.

Tim and Sherman looked up.

Jose stepped inside the house and closed his eyes.

Sherman said, “We will try to fix it up some.”

Tim said, “Some. We will be here for a few more days. We will look out for Mrs. Perkins.”

Jose said, “Good day.”

He looked at the bottom of the house and thought, “What will they do to the upstairs.”

He rode back to Gen and nocked on her door.

She rushed out the door and locked it.

She said, “It’s going to be quiet around here. We saw the judge at the train station. He and his wife always holiday in upstate New York with their sons and their families. The dentist and his wife spend the holidays with her parents, the congressman.”

As Jose passed through the neighborhood Gen told him who the neighbors were.

They passed Robert and Bethany’s restaurant.

Gen said, “Can we stop?”

Jose looked at Gen.

Gen primped her mouth.

Jose sped to the capitol. They reached Jessie about two pm.

Gen saw a carriage she loved.

Jessie selected two strong horses for Gen.

He and his son, put the bridles on the horses.

Gen loved the horses and the carriage.

She looked around and said, “I need a buggy for Sundays.

Jose was thinking how they were going to get a buggy to Gen’s house.

Jessie was grinning with excitement and said, “My son going to be a teacher got me two brand new lady’s buggies. They are outside come and look.”

Jose was getting tired.

He sat in Gen’s new carriage and waited.

He heard Gen laughing.

He said, “He likes it.”

Jose stood as they walked in the shop.

Several customers were walking in the shop.

Gen paid for the two horses, the carriage and the buggy.

Jose tried to pay for them and would not have it.

Jessie hitched the buggy to the back of the carriage and Gen laughed.

They rode home.

Jose was behind Gen in case something went wrong.

They made it to Gen’s house just at dark.

Gen rode the carriage and buggy to her stables.

Jose gave her new horses feed and water and brushed for the night.

He and Gen put the carriage and buggy in the stable and closed the door.

Gen said, “I haven’t eaten today.”

Jose said, “Neither have I. I’ll take you to your house and then leave, I am tired and sleepy.”

They rushed back to Gen.

Gen unlocked the door.

They felt just a little heat in the house.

Jose put coal in the fireplace.

He put some coal in the stove.

He wondered about his house that looked like Gen’s. He decided on the old English style house with all the flowers.

He said he would get a good night’s sleep and get up early the next morning and go into the capitol to the realtor and put a contract on the house or just buy it.

He was impressed with Shirley, how she decided on what she wanted and buy it.

Gen came downstairs with her bedding.

Jose said, “Good night.”

Gen said, “Jose…”

Jose said, “No. You have to get used to being here by yourself. Tim and Sherman will be on the grounds for a few more days. That should be a comfort.”

Gen primped.

Jose aid, “Get out and go to Robert and Bethany’s restaurant for lunch. Ride over to the capitol and have lunch or to an event. Get your clothes ready for the holidays. Go to church on Sundays. Think, there are a number of things you can do. Go to the orphanage and work.”

Gen waved her finger and said, “I will not go to the orphanage. I can’t help raise those babies to turn out like my own blood.”

Jose looked at Gen and walked to the door.

He said, ”I’m going to be busy for these two weeks. If you need something you can come and tell me. I’ll check on you once a week.”

Gen said, “Once per week!”

Jose said, “Gen, you have to learn to be alone and enjoy yourself.”

Gen said, “You are saying that because you got a stash of liquor today.”

Jose laughed and walked out the door.

Gen looked out the door and watched Jose leave.

She saw the candle light from her house.

She started to go to her estate, but decided she was not going to walk nor was she going to hook the horses to her buggy.

She stood in her door and looked around at the neighborhood and stepped back into her house and locked the door and put the bolt behind.

Gen made her bed on the couch.

She went upstairs and changed into her nightgown.

She walked downstairs and thought, “I can join the choir, I can’t sing nor can they.”

Gen sat on her couch and stared at the fire in the fireplace.

She cut her eyes and looked at the bible and turned her eyes back to the fire in the fireplace.

He laid on the couch and fell asleep.

She went to image of the flames of the fire from the fireplace.

The flames continued in her mind all through the night.

Gen’s eyes were fluttering through the night.

The flames held her life.

The good and the painful.

In the flames it answered her heart wrenching question where she failed John Jr.

The flame showed her John Jr. decided to force out of him the sound Christian principles she instilled in him.

When he made the decision to remove himself from his upbringing to JESUS and turned his back on JESUS, he sold himself to do evil and get as much money as he could. He would not stop at anything to get the results he desired.

She saw the many freeing slaves missions she went on.

When Gen was waking out of the dream of flames she heard a voice out of the flames.

The voice told her she raised John Jr in the fear of the LORD. Which she was required to do.

The voice said, “It has been counted to you as an act of righteousness.”

Gen opened her eyes and looked at the fireplace.

No flames.

She smiled and said, “LORD I needed peace in my heart. YOU gave me peace. YOU showed me all the impossible death situations YOU got me, George, Brenda and Mag out when we did YOUR will. I did YOUR will to raise my son in YOUR House. YOU will do for me and him what YOU always do. D E L I V E R A N C E. Thank YOU.”

She laid on her couch and her eyes fell on the bible on her table.

She felt the bonds that held her back from reading GOD’s Word were removed off her.

She thought, “The Flames of GOD burned the chains and bondage away in HIS Truth.”

Gen sat up and reached for the bible.

She read her bible.

She read some of her favorite stories.

She Laughed.

Some of the stories touched her heart.

Gen saw a different side of GOD she had not seen.

She thought, “That’s why the flames of GOD do, burn away the untruth so you can the truth.

Gen was awe struck by this amazing and unlimited GOD.

WHO showed her mercy after mercy and grace upon grace.

Gen sat for a long tome and stared into the fireplace where the flames burned out.

A thought came to her about food.

She did not want to cook.

Jose brought Gen plenty of water in the house.

She put some water on the stove and heated it.

She was about to wipe her eyes from tears over Ben because he used to bring the water and coal into the house.

The flame flickered in her mind and said, “GOD will give you strength to do what others did for you.”

Gen went upstairs and matched the last holiday skirt and blouse.

She went to the kitchen and took the hot water and carried the large pail around the corner to the downstairs washroom.

She washed and combed and brushed her beautiful long and thick hair.

Gen emptied the wash water out the back window of the washroom.

She and Ben devised how to make the washroom fit for them and any guests.

Gen had to carry the water upstairs for her upstairs washroom.

She’s working on how to have the water pumped upstairs.

Gen finished dressing.

She put on her hat and coat.

She grinned at herself in the mirror as she was putting on her gloves and said, “You still look good.”

Gen looked around and thought, “Damn! I got to go and hook the horses to the buggy and feed the horses and give them water. I got to get use to that. No one is in the neighborhood for the holidays, but a few servants. I only have two horses. I got enough feed for a couple of months. I will not bother Brenda and Patrick. I will not be a needy friend. Even though they will not mind. I don’t believe in that.”

Gen walked out her kitchen door.

She walked to the stables and patted the four horses.

She walked to the well and walked back with a small bucket of water and gave each horse water and feed.

Gen was freezing.

She walked back to the well and filled the small bucket with water and put it at the end of her stables.

She took the harness from the wall where Jose put it the day before and hooked both horses to the buggy and walked the horses out the stables.

She rode to the hose and ran in the kitchen door.

Gen reached for her bag she felt the cold in the house.

She put a few coals in the stove in the kitchen.

She ran into the parlor and put some coal in the fireplace.

She stared at the flames for a minute and turned and walked back to the kitchen and put down the coal pail.

Gen got her bag and looked around.

She walked out the front door and locked it.

She stepped in her buggy.

Gen loved her new buggy.

It was a buggy for a very rich lady.

She thought, “I could have used one horse. When I go to church Sunday, I’ll take one horse.”

Gen rode through the neighborhood Jose would buy his house.

She saw people begin to put up their Christmas decorations.

She sighed. And kept riding to the modern part of town and turned right and went up the street to Robert and Bethany’s restaurant.

They were surprised when Gen rode up and was getting out her buggy.

Robert walked and stood next to Bethany and said, “Is that Mrs. Perkin?”

Bethany said, “Yes.”

Robert said, “Is she coming here?”

Bethany said, “Why not Patrick has been here.”

Robert looked at Bethany.

Bethany said, “Robert go and help her to come in.”

Robert said, “Suppose she is not coming here?”

Bethany did not say anything to Robert but walked away from him and went to the bar with their worker.

Robert looked at Bethany and knew she was angry.

He turned back and saw Gen looking.

He wondered, “Is she looking for us?”

Gen looked at the restaurant and started walking to the restaurant.

Bethany looked at Robert.

Robert ran to the door and opened It for Gen.

Gen was startled and said, “Robert.”

Robert said, “Mrs. Perkins, are you coming to dine with us?”

Gen said, “Yes Robert.”

Bethany walked from behind the counter and walked to Gen as she walked into the restaurant.

Gen looked around the restaurant and smiled.

Robert and Bethany smiled at Gen’s apparent approval of their small but nice restaurant.

Gen looked back at her lady’s buggy.

Robert said, “Mrs. Perkins your horse and buggy are fine. Come and have this seat.”

Robert and Bethany sat her by the window.

Robert took her coat.

Bethany loved Gen’s festive holiday outfit.

Gen told her that Sarah made them by hand and sold them at Shirley’s shop.

Bethany was asking if there were anymore.

Gen told Bethany that the mayor’s wife bought four and she bought three.

She told Bethany Shirley’s dress was completely bare and Shirley was not expecting any more inventory until the spring from Margaret.

Bethany sat and said, “How is Margaret?”

Robert said, “Bethany can you take Mrs. Perkins’ order first so we can start cooking it.”

Gen giggle and looked at the handwritten menu for Friday.

She said, “Robert I have not had calf liver. I love vegetables. Add whatever type of vegetables you want, no starch.”

Robert looked back at the bar and said, “Anything to drink?”

Gen looked at the bar and said, “No. Water. Thank you.”

Gen thought, “Everybody knows I love whiskey.”

She looked at Bethany as Robert walked and said, “I believe Margaret and Earl will be back in the spring. You should see Earle Jr? he should be a year old. He and your baby could be playmates.”

They laughed.

Gen said, “I’m serious. You have to be careful who you let your children play with.”

Bethany said, “Robert and I have started going to church. We don’t know nothing about God. We just want our son to know God.”

Gen said, “That’s a good way to bring up a child, in the house of GOD. But GOD wants you to. You are a child to HIM. HE wants to love you, strengthen you and heal your boo boos in this life. And when this life ends, HE will come and take you home with HIM forever.”

Robert was standing with a plate of calf liver, turnips and root vegetables.

Gen looked and said, “That smells delicious.”

Robert placed her plate in front of her.

Gen said, “A beautiful presentation Robert.”

Robert placed the napkin in Gen’s lap.

Gen looked at Bethany and said, “I love it.”

Gen, Bethany and Robert sat and talked about their European vacation.

Gen said, “It is a two year trip, because it takes a lot of time going from one country to another. Bit the transportation is getting better and faster.”

Robert said “I want to go to Africa and see all the exotic animals.”

Gen laughed and said, “You are only the second person I ever heard say that.”

Bethany said, “Me and Robert Jr. will wait in France for him.”

Gen laughed.

Robert said, “Who was the second person, if I might ask?”

Gen said, “Michael. Eleanor’s baby boy.”

They laughed.

Gen said, “He reads books all day about those exotic animals. Patrick and Brenda bought so many books with the photographs of the animals. When he is quiet they run to the library and make sure he is in there. I believe they are going to take him.”

Robert said, “Really. When?”

Bethany looked at Robert.

Gen said, “I am not for sure, you know they don’t say anything until they have worked things out.”

Robert grinned he worked for them five years and knew how secretive they were.

Gen said, “It would be a shorter trip. I believe in the spring and come back in the fall for school. You have to be quiet and not say anything.”

Robert said, “I really want to go.”

He turned and looked at Bethany.

Bethany said, “It could eat up all of our money.”

Robert looked at Bethany.

Bethany smirked and looked back at Gen.

Gen said, “Robert start planning now you have about five months. It takes a month to get to Africa and about two weeks to get to the first major country. You can visit about three countries and sail back in a month. I found out this coming year a lot of big game hunters are going on Patrick and Brenda’s ship.”

Robert said, “I don’t want to kill anything. I want to see these different animals that God created and put on the earth.”

Gen said, “Have you see that new ship Eleanor designed and had build? It is gigantic and beautiful. I wonder will she used that ship to take us to Africa?”

They all hollered.

Gen said, “I sold my house and put money aside to take that trip with them, if they go.”

Robert said, “I thought Shirley would get your house?”

Gen said, “She did. She bought it this week. I wanted to give it to her.”

Gen stopped and teared up.

She held the water glass and looked in.

Robert and Bethany looked at Gen.

The worker brought Robert Jr. downstairs to Robert and Bethany.

The worker turned and walked to the counter and worked behind the counter with her husband.

Robert did not take his eyes off Gen and passed Robert Jr. to Bethany.

Bethany was noisy and said, ”Gen.”

Gen took a deep breathe and looked at Robert Jr. and smiled.

She said, “Raise him up in church. You go with him to hear what is being taught him. You and Bethany come home and read that bible and teach Robert Jr. out of the bible. My son has used up all of his inheritance.”

Robert frowned up.

Gen said, “He married a non-Christian woman. I can’t blame her. He stole my wine collection. He sold my dining room suite and that expensive china Patrick and Brenda gave me and the ambassador for our twenty fifth wedding anniversary.”

Robert said, “Mrs. Perkins the red priceless dishes.”

Gen cried and nodded her head.

She took a sip of water.

Gen said, “I was going to put my house on the market at the beginning of the year and spend the holidays entertaining in my house. I went last week to set up the dining room and see about what all I had to do to prepare for the holidays. They dining room was empty. My wine was gone. He sold two bedroom suites Eleanor gave me for our twenty fifth wedding anniversary. I was devasted. Shirley fell out her chair onto the floor and hollered worst than me.”

Gen looked at Robert and said, “You know she is spoiled.”

Robert laughed.

Gen said, “Once I told them who John Jr. sold the furniture to. Shirley stopped hollering and sat in her chair and ate her breakfast. Everyone was puzzled. Brenda asked Shirley what she was doing. Shirley told them most people in town could not afford my furniture and especially the dishes. So after breakfast she would go in town to the furniture shop to see if they had them. Brenda went with her.”

Robert said, “Did they?”

Gen said, “Yes.”

Robert and Bethany exhaled.

Gen said, “I put my husband out last week because he was a womanized and used widows’ money. He told my son he could sell my stuff. Shirley had him to sign a paper requesting a divorce from me.”

Bethany in surprise said, “Did he?”

Robert looked at Bethany.

Gen said, “Yes. When I returned home Wednesday, the federal government agents came to the estate house and found drugs. A large amount that they had to send for help. I beat myself over where I fail to cause such a terrible person to be born and lived.”

Bethany looked at Gen she knew Gen had changed.

Gen said, “GOD gave me peace this day. HE let me know because I raised my son in HIS house I did right. It was my son’s lust and greed for more money that caused him to lose all his inheritance and his soul. Only GOD can help.”

Bethany looked at Robert Jr.mn

Gen said, “They tried to force me through my husband to have Patrick and Brenda take them and her family on the European vacation. It has been a terrible holiday. My son came to Patrick and Brenda on Thanksgiving Day for food. Nobody opened the door. His wife tells me to get Brenda’s workers to come and clean up that filthy house and bring the furniture, tablecloths and dishes. They had no consciousness of their evil deeds. She had invited her family and friends so the rift raft could access to Eleanor and her children for money. The following Sunday John Jr and Betty came to Patrick’s house and demanded to see me. Patrick told them to leave they would not. Patrick got his shotgun, they grabbed him. John Jr and Betty would not leave the house. Dan made them leave. They beat us to church and waited until we got there and tried to walk in with us.”

Gen begin to laugh.

Robert and Bethany looked at Gen because they did not see anything funny.

Gen said, “Eleanor’s four boys go to the military academy they formed the military protection format and blocked John Jr. and Betty from being near me. I put them out of Shirley’s house. Everyone is gone. Eleanor took her children back to school yesterday. Lorraine went to New York to buy more expensive dresses for Shirley’s dress shop.”

Bethany said, “Where is John Jr. and his wife?”

Gen said, “I don’t know. They took my horses and carriages and wagons. I had to start building my stable.”

Bethany said, “I saw the buggy. New?”

Gen grinned and said, “I bought it yesterday. Maybe it was a good thing they stole my stuff. I had an opportunity to get a modern lady’s buggy.

They laughed and talked to late afternoon.

Gen looked around and said, “Robert and Bethany this is a wonderful restaurant. Enjoyed myself. I will come back.”

Robert walked and retrieved Gen’s coat.

Gen put on her hat, scarf and gloves.

She stood and Robert helped her with her coat.

Gen was talking to their baby.

The baby was laughing.

The female worker was laughing.

Robert walked Gen outside to her buggy.

Gen got in the buggy and put the blanket over her lap and turned around and sped home.

It would be dark soon and she had to put the horses in the stables and get ready for the night.

Gen was riding home and thought about the great afternoon she had with Robert and Bethany.

She said, “I would go back.”

Gen rode to the stables.

She saw several horses at her house.

She continued to the stables and rode in and unhooked the horses and patted them and the other two horses and gave them feed and water.

She closed the stables door to help keep the horses warm.

Gen rushed to her house and went to the front door and unlocked it.

She put her bag down and locked the front door.

The house was cold.

She looked in the coal pail and had only a few pieces of coal.

Gen walked to the kitchen door.

She reached and took the coal shed’s key off the wall and thought, “Tim and Sherman are out there. I hope those other federal agents have their blankets. I don’t mind but I have to wash them.”

She walked out the kitchen door and went to the coal shed and knocked and no answer.

Gen opened the door and walked in and filled the pail.

She closed the door back and struggled with the pail of coal, but remembered GOD said HE would give her strength to do the chores.

Gen made it in the house and put coal in the stove to keep it burning.

She took coal out the pail and put it in the coal scuttle and carried it into the parlor.

She re-started the fire.

She sat for a few minutes and the thought came she needed water.

Gen took a water bucket and walked to the well.

She thought, “I should have taken the buggy to the well first.”

She filled the water bucket with water.

Gen made three trips to the well.

She laughed because that will never happen again.

She filled the bucket for wash water.

Gen had to wash her hair for church for Sunday.

She loved was dressing for bed and thought about Lorraine.

She said, “Lorraine should be in New York city tomorrow. I love this strawberry hair shampoo and conditioner.”

Gen mind went to Lorraine travelling by herself.

She took her blankets and pillows down to the couch and made her bed.

Gen sat on the couch and looked into the fireplace at the flames and her mind was on Lorraine.

Gen said, “GOD help Lorraine. I like her. She is a lost child with so much hurt and rejection please deliver her from any and all hurt, harm and danger. In JESUS’ name. Amen.”

Gen looked at the books she kept and brought to the cottage.

She walked over and took a book from the shelf and begin to read it.

Jose had a busy day.

He went into town and to the general store and picked up the large order for the orphanage.

Brenda and Eleanor said, for him to take it to the orphanage.

Jose dropped the order at the orphanage.

Jose went to the grocer and the meat shop.

Most of the workers wanted a ham.

Jose placed the orders.

He would go back in the morning and get the Christmas decorations Brenda ordered.

The Christmas tree would not arrive until two weeks in time for the hospital’s groundbreaking, reception and dinner.

Jose started addressing the Stith’s many Christmas cards.

He went to his room and was tired and fully clothed.

He laid on his back with his feet on the floor.

Jose was turning to think about all the work Brenda and Eleanor assigned to him.

He said, “Heifers. They knew I was going to be drinking and gambling and running behind women. They left a thousand and one things for me to do to keep me busy while they were gone. Heifers.”

His thoughts drifted to Lorraine.

Jose said, “How did she come into my thoughts. That’s another dumb heifer. I can’t call her a wh\*\*e because I am one.”

Jose tried to close his eyes and rest, but Lorraine’s name kept filling his mind.

He covered his eyes to force her name out of his mind.

It did not work.

He stood and undressed and changed into his nightgown.

He flopped down on his knees and stared at his bed.

Jose said, “God I don’t want to be responsible for Lorraine. She is crazy. She thinks every white man wants her. I don’t know how to help her. There is a hundred workers here with all kinds of problems. I am one of them. I don’t want to take on Lorraine’s problems.”

Jose waited for a few minutes and saw God did not release him from the assignment.

He said, “I see that she will be on me. God whatever she is doing or whatever the devil planned against her please stop it and give her common sense. Amen.”

Jose stood and walked to the candle and put it out.

He fell into his bed and went to sleep.

Eleanor was tossing and turning all night she could not sleep.

She did not know why she was not sleepy.

She opened the children’s bedroom doors and looked at them.

They were all asleep.

She looked at Shirley who was laying on her back and smiling.

Eleanor looked at Shirley and nearly slammed the door.

She knew Shirley was dreaming about her clothes and what she could wear to the different holiday events.

Eleanor walked to the sitting room in the suite and sat on the sofa and thought, ”How to get Shirley out of always wanting to be dressed and attending events.”

A thought came to Eleanor, “She is making up for the lost years.”

Eleanor heard that thought. She cut her eyes around the room. She scooted to the end of the sofa and ran into her room and locked the door.

She thought, “I got children.”

She unlocked the door and stood and peeped out the door.

She eased the door closed and laid her back on the door and closed her eyes.

Eleanor exhaled heavily.

She thought, “What is this? I don’t know how to pray. God tell my parents what is wrong so they can pray. I don’t know what to say. But bless everyone and keep us all safe from hurt, harm and danger. Depend on someone else God and not me.”

Eleanor ran and jumped in the bed and covered her head.

She fell asleep.

Patrick and Brenda were exhausted and sick from all the tests.

Ryan arranged separate rooms for Patrick and Brenda next to each other.

When Patrick, Brenda and Hutch arrived at the hospital that evening, Ryan and his father greeted them

Ryan was still reviewing the type of tests that were ordered.

He was looking down at their charts when he told Patrick and Brenda they would be in separate rooms.

Patrick was already set to run back to the train.

Brenda stood and stared at Ryan.

Ryan’s father looked at Ryan whose head was down in the charts.

Dennis coughed.

Ryan knew that meant to pay attention.

Ryan raised his head and looked at his father.

His father looked at Brenda.

Ryan turned his head and looked at Brenda.

He jumped.

His father turned his head.

Hutch stared at Brenda and thought.

He said, “Your rooms are next to each other.”

Brenda did not change her facial expression.

Ryan said, “It is procedure…”

Dennis cut Ryan off and said, “Son forgo the procedures. They have been together thirty five years. Put them in the same room but separate beds.”

Hutch stood and listened.

The nurses were glad to see Hutch.

Ryan said, “Like you and mother?’

Dennis said, “No you can put her in another hospital.”

Dennis turned his head.

Ryan looked at his daddy.

He walked away to the two rooms.

He began to move one of the beds into the other room.

Hutch walked over and helped Ryan move the bed.

Brenda stepped up to watch them move the bed.

Ryan said, “Look at her. I told her ok. She is making sure I move the bed.”

Hutch looked back at Brenda and said, “You know she is the boss and will make sure she gets what she said.”

Dennis looked at Ryan and he turned to Brenda and Patrick and said, “He has only been married for three years. He does not know that you can’t separate a husband and wife, but me and his mother.”

Brenda was standing with her arms folded and watching.

She looked at the nurses gushing over Hutch and said, “He’s taken.”

Brenda walked to the room and peeped in and thought, “Our rooms have to be larger.”

Dennis turned and watched Brenda.

Patrick said, “Thank you Dr. Wade.”

Ryan looked at Brenda and said, “Is this ok?”

Brenda said, “I hear sarcasm.”

Hutch said, “Brenda I am not taken. Why did you tell the nurses that?”

Brenda was peeping behind the door and looking at the ceiling and said, “You are.”

Hutch said, “I am not Bradly I may want to get married and have children. You don’t limit me to practicing medicine alone.”

Brenda looked at Hutch and continued to examine the room.

The driver brought in their bags from the train.

Ryan said, ”What are in those bags?”

Patrick walked to the door with Dennis.

Brenda stared at Ryan and back at the porter.

The porter stared at Ryan.

Brenda said, “Our nightgowns, underwear and toiletries.”

A nurse walked in the room with the hospital gowns.

Ryan said, “That’s what you will wear for the next two weeks.”

Patrick was shocked and mumbled, “Two weeks.”

Brenda looked at the hospital gowns and turned her back to Ryan and looked at Patrick.

Hutch snickered with a straight face.

Dennis rolled his eyes at Ryan.

He knew Ryan was being mean because Brenda had him move the bed.

Dennis said, “I work at the main hospital. This hospital is fully equipped with everything. It is not as crowded as the other hospital. Ryan ad Hutch will be here most days with you.”

Ryan said, “Dad can Hutch use this room?”

Dennis looed and said, “Yes. It goes from dad to doctor.”

Brenda said, “Thank you.”

Hutch walked to the room and got his bags from the porter.

The porter was still staying.

Patrick said, “Ethan leave the bags.”

Ethan left the bags and walked out the room.

Patrick and Brenda would pray each morning and each night.

Hutch was used to them praying.

He would lay in his bed and have his knee up and read their charts and test results.

Brenda was laying across her bed and Patrick was staring ahead at the wall.

The day of tests were bad.

Ryan told Hutch and his father he knew Brenda and Patrick would leave after two days, therefore they had to do the difficult tests the first two days.

The third day Eleanor and the children boarded the train to come to Philadelphia.

Ryan had completed the difficult tests. He would get the results next Wednesday.

Hutch was sitting in his bed with his door open reviewing Patrick and Brenda’s charts.

He heard Brenda said, “Patrick.”

Hutch listened and Patrick did not respond.

A nurse was passing his room.

Hutch said, “Nurse.”

The nurse smiled at Hutch.

Hutch was looking over the charts and he looked at the smiling nurse.

He wanted to say something cute, but Brenda’s bossy face came up in his face.

Hutch said, “Nurse can you check on Mr. and Mrs. Stith?”

The nurse looked at Hutch and said, “Yes doctor.”

The nurse gave Hutch an eye.

Hutch looked at the nurse and tried not to grin.

The nurse saw Hutch slight grin.

She thought, “I got him if that bossy go.”

The nurse walked to Brenda and Patrick’s door and saw Brenda looking at Patrick and Patrick staring straight ahead.

Brenda said, “Let’s go home.”

Patrick nodded his head for yes.

Brenda said, “Eleanor will be here… What’s today?”

Hutch slipped off the bed and was putting on his boots when the nurse stepped back to his room.

The nurse said, “Doctor.”

Hutch said, “I heard. I am going.”

The nurse stood in Hutch’s door so he could get a good look at her looks.

All the nurses in the hospitals wanted Hutch.

Hutch looked at the nurse and said, “Thank you.”

He picked up Patrick and Brenda’s charts and walked to their room.

He was about to knock on their door when he saw Brenda laid out across her bed and Patrick staring at the wall.

Hutch said, “Mr. and Mrs. Stith.”

Brenda turned her face to the wall and said, “I don’t know that person.”

Hutch feelings were hurt.

The nurse looked at Hutch.

The nurse said, “Doctor I will be right back.”

Brenda yelled, “Don’t!”

The nurse stopped and looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Hutch is taken!”

Patrick looked at Brenda and said, “Stop Brenda.”

The nurse stopped and looked at Patrick.

Hutch said, “Brenda you hurt my feelings.”

Brenda said, “Hutch you hurt me.”

Patrick yelled, “Brenda!!”

Ryan was walking down the hall ready to leave for the day.

He heard Brenda and shook his head.

The nurse standing by Hutch in the doorway saw Ryan shake his head.

She realized they all were friends.

She looked at Brenda and thought, “She’s a big baby that is spoil and gets her way. She does not want anyone to have Hutch.”

Ryan walked to the door.

The nurse stepped back.

She looked at Brenda and said, “Hello mother-in-law.”

The nurse walked away.

Brenda was watching the nurse and said, “Don’t come back.”

Ryan closed the door and Hutch moved inside the room.

Ryan said, “Mr. and Mrs. Stith the bad tests are over. It takes a week to get those tests back.”

Brenda turned her face to the wall.

Patrick looked at Ryan.

Ryan nearly burst out laughing.

Hutch looked at Ryan.

Ryan said, “I’m sorry. I knew you and Brenda would leave after two days of testing. So we did all the bad test first.”

Patrick said, “So we did one better. Huh. Huh.”

Ryan started laughing.

Hutch looked at Ryan.

Brenda said, “Ryan go home to that baby boy.”

Ryan opened the door and hollered.

Patrick, Hutch and Brenda heard Ryan laughing all the down.

Brenda said, “Hutch I am sorry. I was mad with you. You are my son. Tell that heifer she can’t have you.”

The nurse walked back in the door and heard Brenda.

Hutch looked at the nurse.

Patrick looked at the nurse.

Hutch said, “She is in pain.”

The nurse looked at Brenda with her mouth opened and looked at Hutch and slowly walked out the room looking back at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Hutch you did not say you forgive me.”

Patrick looked at Hutch.

Hutch said, “Brenda you hurt my feeling.”

Brenda turned to face Hutch and said, “I said, I’m sorry. What more can I say?”

Patrick was watching.

Hutch said, “You can pay for me and that nurse to go to dinner.”

Patrick looked at Hutch.

Brenda said, “I rather you take that fat one…”

The fat nurse was passing by the door and grinned and ran to the nurses’ desk.

Patrick and Hutch saw the nurse.

Brenda said, “You know you will always be fed.”

Hutch closed the door and said, “Brenda stop.”

Brenda said, “I don’t have any money. Do you Patrick?”

Patrick looked over at Brenda and said, “This is your mess.”

Brenda said, “Hutch you can go to the train or go to the hotel.”

Hutch said, “I need to be paid.”

Patrick jerked from Brenda to Hutch and said, “What Hutch?”

Brenda said, “Some kind of way Hutch has not been paid for nearly two and a half years.”

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Shirley is working on it.”

Patrick said, “She will have the answer when she gets here Saturday.”

Brenda said, “I don’t want to believe it.”

Hutch looked at Brenda and then Patrick.

Patrick looked at Hutch and tried to smile but turned his head.

Hutch said, “Friday and Saturday will be your last tests. We don’t test on Sundays. The tests results from Friday and Saturday will be back on Monday. The rests of the test results will be back no later than Wednesday.”

Brenda said, “We have to leave Tuesday. The hospital is being re-named Wednesday mid-morning.”

Hutch said, “That’s right. I want to be there.”

Hutch walked out and closed the door.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Don’t. Continue to stare at the wall. You did not do what we plan so we could get out of here.”

Hutch heard them and rolled his eyes.

Brenda went to sleep.

Patrick was reading a book.

Hutch was reading the book that Patrick gave him.

Hutch enjoyed the book and put it aside.

He wondered what book Patrick was reading.

Hutch stood and walked to Patrick and Brenda’s room.

Patrick looked over his eye glasses at Hutch.

Hutch said, “I’m finished with the book you gave me. What are you reading?”

Patrick said, “One of Michael’s books on African animals. He is fascinated with the animals.”

Hutch said, “I would like to go there someday.”

Patrick said, “Well me, Brenda and Eleanor are trying to plan a six month trip there for the spring. After this year we all will be on a very strict schedule We have another ship that is being built. Ten train cars and cities and towns of new train stations and the hospital.”

Hutch said, “What type of time?”  
Patrick said, “A month going, a month coming back a month in each in one of the three countries with all of the animals.”

Hutch said, “I want to go.”

Patrick said, “We are still working on it. Michael wants to go terribly. I can stay at the hotels.”

Brenda said, “I don’t want to go to Africa at all but I can stay at the hotels.”

Patrick said, “Hutch you can not breathe a word of this. I don’t want anyone to know until we have finalized all the details.”

Hutch said, “Sure. I will not say a word.”

He stood and walked out.

He was excited.

Brenda and Patrick were restless that night.

Hutch was reading a medical article in his room next to them.

Brenda said, “Patrick let us pray. I don’t know what else to do.”

Hutch listen and thought, “Are they sick?”

Patrick and Brenda got out of their beds.

Patrick closed the door.

Brenda put their pillows on the floor and went down on her knees.

Patrick walked to Brenda and bent down at the bed and slid onto his knees.

Brenda stared at Patrick.

Patrick looked at Brenda and said, “What?”

Hutch listened.

He thought, “There is no telling what they be up to. Eleanor will strangle me if anything happen to her parents.”

He sat up in the bed and turned to the side of the bed and put on his boots and tied them.

He stood and walked out his room and he saw their door was closed.

He knocked and opened the door.

He saw they were holding hands and praying.

The nurse was passing and peeped through the crack and saw Patrick and Brenda praying.

She grinned.

Hutch looked at her and closed the Stiths’ door and went to his room and went to bed.

The nurse watched Hutch.

Patrick and Brenda prayed most of the night.

They continued to pray for each person individually.

They reached Lorraine’s name.

Brenda began to cry.

Patrick opened his eyes and looked at Brenda.

Patrick started saying, “Mercy GOD. Mercy. Spare Lorraine. She is suffering so in her mind and heart. What danger is she in? We are not with her and cannot help her. YOU know LORD GOD Almighty what is wrong. Please help her and deliver. Don’t let evil come upon her nor prevail over her. Keep her safe and deliver her from the torment of rejection. Let this bad thing be turned into a good testimony of JESUS the CHRIST. Help Lorraine. In JESUS’ name.”

Benda started to say, “Yes LORD. Yes LORD.”

Hutch was awaken by Brenda’s crying.

He laid and listened to Patrick and Brenda interceding for Lorraine.

Hutch turned from his side to his back.

He laid there and heard this couple calling out everyone they knew and some they did not know to the LORD GOD Almighty.

He thought about Lorraine.

Going from white man to white man and they all used her body.

Hutch knew that was why Dr. Ralph did not want to marry her.

He knew Dr. Ralph truly loved Lorraine.

Hutch said, “LORD GOD Almighty I would like to pray for Lorraine. I do not know what she is in. I do not know the danger she is in. YOU know the TRUTH. Please deliver her and set her free in spirit, soul and flesh. Send her help LORD GOD Almighty and rescue her from the apparent danger. If we or if I am to help her medically show me YOUR way and bring forth her complete healing especially in her mind. In JESUS’ name I pray. And LORD GOD Almighty help Eleanor’s four boys to come out of the attacks on their minds and set them where YOU want them in business to help others.”

Hutch laid on the bed and listened to Patrick and Brenda and smirked at selfish Brenda who wants him, Dr. Woodson and Dr. Ralph to not marry but just be doctors.

Hutch said, “LORD GOD Almighty I pray that we all become exceptional doctors and we all three marry and have our families and children. Just like she and Patrick are united as one and prayer, let her know we need that also. In JESUS’ name Amen.”

Hutch went to sleep thinking he wanted to marry.

Patrick and Brenda just got off their knees when the nurses came in to begin their day long tests.

Hutch usually would be up.

He did not know why he overslept.

He gathered his toiletries and clothes and to go wash and shave.

He stopped by Patrick and Brenda and realized they had just got off their knees praying.

Hutch said, “Good morning. Today and tomorrow should be much easier than the beginning of the week.”

Hutch walked out and went and washed and shaved.

He dressed and passed Patrick and Brenda and went to his room.

He put up all of his clothing and toiletries.

He passed by Patrick and Brenda’s room and went downstairs to eat breakfast.

He ordered an egg, oatmeal and toast and black coffee and orange juice.

The waitress leaned back and looked in the kitchen.

She did not see the cook.

Hutch waited so he could pay her.

She tried to smile at Hutch and said, “Sir, I don’t see the cook. Please have a seat and let me see what I can cook for you.”

Hutch was surprised.

He looked at the time he had at least a half of hour before he would officially start his day.

Several nurses walked in the dining room.

The waitress looked at them and greeted them with a smile.

Hutch watched them.

The waitress said, “Good morning. How can I help you?”

One of the nurses grinned and said, “Food.”

One nurse said, “It is cold in here.”

The waitress said, “The cook is not in. I will try to cook something simple for you and the gentleman over there. If you have time to wait. Please sit over there.”

The nurses turned and saw Hutch watching them.

The nurses grinned and said, “Good morning Dr. Hutch.”

The waitress did not know Hutch was a doctor but that he was kind and polite.

Hutch smiled and said, “Good morning.”

The nurses passed him and sat in the back of the room and giggled.

The waitress looked at the nurses and grinned and went in the kitchen.

She started a fire in the stove and went outside and brought in a pail of water to start coffee.

The nurses laughed and said, “Smell coffee.”

Hutch smiled.

He was thinking about Lorraine.

The waitress was squeezing oranges and making orange juice.

She waked to the door and looked out at the customers.

Hutch saw her.

She poured the orange in six glasses and put the glasses on a tray.

She stopped at Hutch first and then the three nurses and gave them orange juice.

She went back in the kitchen and put on oatmeal and made biscuits.

The waitress put the remaining bacon on the stove.

One of the nurses said, “Oh bacon.”

The other two laughed.

The cook walked in the dining room and went into the kitchen.

He washed his hands and went and brought in more water.

He started correcting the food the waitress put on. He could not do anything about the biscuits.

The cook fussed at the waitress and told her she should have waited until he came and turned the customers away.

The waitress said, “They were hungry.”

The waitress walked out the kitchen with the coffee, cream and sugar.

Hutch and the nurses looked at her

The waitress stood for a minute and sniffed and put a smile on her face and turned to the dining room.

She walked to Hutch and said, “Coffee black. Right sir?”

Hutch smiled and said, “Yes.”

The waitress took the cup and put it in front of Hutch.

She was shaken.

Hutch took the coffee pot and poured his coffee.

The waitress nodded at Hutch.

Hutch looked at her and started drinking her coffee.

She walked to the three nurses and set their cups in front of them,

The nurses looked at her and they poured their own coffee.

The cook walked to the kitchen door at the waitress as she turned around to take the coffee to the kitchen.

Two more customers walked them.

She smiled and said, “Good morning.”

The man and woman said, “We just want coffee.”

The waitress laughed.

Hutch looked at her tray and she had two cups left.

He giggled and continued to sip his coffee.

The waitress said, “Here sir and madame.”

The waitress walked them to a table by Hutch.

She put the cups in front of them and poured the coffee.

She left the cream and sugar.

She walked to the cook.

The cook said, “Whose bacon you are burning?”

The waitress said, “The three nurses have bacon, eggs and biscuits. The doctor has eggs, biscuits and oatmeal.”

The cook said, “Come and get their food.”

The waitress walked in the kitchen and made Hutch plate of two eggs, a biscuit and oatmeal.

Hutch really wanted to go and start his day. But he wanted to see what was going to happen with the waitress.

The waitress put Hutch plate in front of him and smiled.

She looked at the nurses.

The nurses were ready to go but were hungry.

The waitress went back in the kitchen and made the nurses plates of eggs, biscuits and bacon.

She walked and place their plates in front of them.

She took the tray back in the kitchen.

She came out the kitchen and put on her scarf.

Hutch looked at her and could not move at first because he was shocked.

He thought, “If she leaves, I will never see her again.”

Hutch watched the waitress.

She put on her coat.

The nurses watched her.

The waitress put on her hat and picked up her bag and put on her gloves and smiled at Hutch and the three nurses and walked out the dining room.

She smiled as she passed Ryan.

Ryan walked in the dining room.

He knew Hutch would be there for breakfast.

Hutch was trying to think about Lorraine and the waitress and the test for Patrick and Brenda.

Ryan pulled the chair out to sit with Hutch.

Hutch said, “The waitress just left. If you want orange juice or coffee you better get it from that tray.”

Hutch jumped up from the table and rushed out the door.

The nurses were giggling.

One of them rushed to the dining room and watched Hutch.

Ryan looked at the nurses and he turned to watch the nurse standing and peeping out the door.

The cook walked out the kitchen and looked for the waitress.

Ryan looked at the cook.

He stood and walked to the tray and said to the cook, “Where is the orange juice and coffee?”

The cook looked around for the waitress and walked back in the kitchen.

Ryan stood at the counter.

The cook walked out with a glass of orange juice and a hot cup of coffee.

Ryan was putting the pieces of this scene together.

The nurse standing in the door jumped and turned and ran to the table with the other two nurses.

Ryan looked back at the nurses.

He had his elbow on the counter and was leaning on the counter.

Hutch walked back in the dining room.

The nurses were peeping at Hutch.

The man and woman at the other table were watching the nurses and when Hutch walked back they smiled at him.

Hutch looked at Ryan and saw the orange juice.

He walked to the table and sat.

Ryan picked up his cup of coffee and sat at the table with Hutch.

The three nurses were peeping at Hutch.

Ryan looked at the three nurses and said, “Your shift has started.”

The nurses looked at Ryan.

Ryan stared at them.

Hutch said, “We just got our breakfast.”

Ryan watched the nurses stand and gather their things and walk out the dining room.

Ryan said, “Is that who you ran after. If they were eating their breakfast as opposed to being noisy they could have been finished.”

Hutch said, “She was sweet. I asked her name and how I could reach her.”

Ryan said, “She told you?”

Hutch said, “Yes.”

Hutch was thinking.

He said, “Ryan do you know anything about Lorraine?”

Ryan sipped his orange juice and said, “Lorraine who. Does she have a last name.”

Hutch said, “The Stith’s Lorraine.”

Ryan shook his head and said, “A hot momma. No man gets passed her.”

He sipped his orange juice and watched Hutch and said, “Why?”

Hutch said, “I have a strange feeling about her.”

Ryan said, “A strange feeling?”

Hutch said, “I prayed for her, when I heard Patrick and Brenda pray for her. They prayed all night and until dawn.”

Ryan said, “How are those two this morning?”

Hutch looked at Ryan.

Ryan started laughing and said, “I know. I am glad you are sleeping next to them and not me. I would not be able to sleep being on pins and needles about what they could be planning.”

Ryan and Hutch laughed.

Ryan said, “You got their charts?”

Hutch looked around as he wiped his mouth and put a dollar on the table.

Hutch stood.

Ryan stood.

They looked at the middle age couple and nodded.

Hutch and Ryan walked upstairs and passed Patrick and Brenda’s room to the nurses’ desk.

They stood and went over the charts.

Ryan said, “Hutch, Patrick and Brenda will be busy until noon come and go on rounds with me. I want to be free this evening and spend some time with my son.”

Hutch said, “I want to go to the hospital and check on Bradley and the rest.”

Ryan said, “Help this morning.”

Hutch said, “Fine.”

Ryan started going through the patients’ charts reviewing them with Hutch.

Hutch and Ryan made the morning rounds.

They saw the middle age couple from the dining room sitting in the lobby.

The couple were patiently waiting.

Hutch was interested and walked over to them and said, “Good morning how can I help you?”

The woman was holding the arm of the man and slightly turned to him.

The man smiled at Hutch and said, “We are waiting for our daughter Lorraine. They said they are bringing her body to this hospital.”

Ryan walked over and stared at the white man and the white woman.”

Hutch began to reel.

Ryan put his hand in Hutch’s back to keep him from falling.

The three nurses from that morning were watching Hutch and Ryan.

Ryan looked at Hutch and back to the couple.

Ryan said, “Who contacted you?”

The woman said, “The railroad people. They sent a telegram and a message.”

The man’s eyes were filled with tears and turned his head to look out at the door.

Ryan said, “Do you know what happened?”

The woman looked at the man and said, “All we know is from the railroad telegram.”

The woman opened her bag and started digging for the telegram and message.

The nurses were watching.

The woman reached the telegram and message to Ryan.

Hutch was in shock.

He was not saying anything and he was not moving.

The nurses were wondering if he knew the woman the man and woman were waiting for.

Ryan took the telegram and the message and read them twice.

He said, “They did not say she was dead. They said they are transporting her body back to Philadelphia to this hospital. There are three hospitals. They do not tell you which hospital they are bringing her body to. Give me some time. I’ll find out more. What is her last name?’

The white middle age woman said, “Wright.”

Hutch reached for the telegram and message.

He read both over and over.

He held the telegram and messages up.

The man looked at Hutch and nodded his head.

Hutch walked over to Ryan.

Ryan was giving instructions to the nurses and said, “The moment a transport pull up, you go outside and see if it is a woman and if she is dead, alive or barely alive. If she is barely alive we can bring her back. One of you three come up to room two hundred and one and get us fast. Set up room seven and have everything in that room. Now.”

The nurses started running.

Ryan hit Hutch shoulder and they ran up to Patrick and Brenda’s room.

Patrick was looking at Brenda trying to get off the bed and put on her slippers.

Dennis just walked in their room.

Dennis stepped around to see who was running in his patients’ room.

He saw Ryan and Hutch.

Brenda slowly looked at the door and saw Hutch and Ryan.

They looked sick.

Patrick looked at Hutch and Ryan and got sick.

He sat up and was getting off his bed.

Dennis looked at Patrick and held out his hand and said, Patrick you and Brenda wait a minute.”

Patrick shook his head for no and stood by his bed.

Brenda knew it was terrible news and saw the telegram.

She stood.

Dennis bucked his eyes and looked at Ryan.

Ryan said, “What is Lorraine’s last name?”

Brenda did not say anything.

Patrick said, “Wright.”

Hutch turned his head.

Dennis looked at Hutch.

Ryan said a middle age couple is downstairs they have been here all morning. Hutch asked them if he could help. They said they were waiting for their daughter’s body to arrival.”

Patrick was baffled.

Brenda was about to scream.

Dennis looked at Brenda who was biting her fists.

Patrick said, “How in the hell they showed up. Be quiet Brenda and wait a minute. Lorraine did not know her parents because they died when she was a little girl and put in an orphanage. She was there until she turned fourteen and Eleanor hired her and she has been with us for eighteen years.”

Brenda was crying.

Dennis looked at Brenda.

Hutch stepped from behind Ryan and looked at Patrick.

Patrick was angry.

Dennis looked at Ryan and said, “Ryan how did they know to come to this hospital with Patrick and Brenda.

Hutch looked at Dennis.

Dennis reached for the telegram and message.

Patrick looked at Dennis.

He looked at Brenda and said, “Brenda be quiet.”

Brenda tried to stop crying.

Ryan and Hutch looked at Brenda.

Dennis said, “Patrick it is ten fifteen am what time is your next train due in Philadelphia? Do you now?”

Patrick angrily said, “Yes I know. It is ten am. This is a hub. All trains from New York, Washington DC, Chicago and St Louis come here. They all pull in at ten am.”

Hutch said, “Where was Lorraine?”

Patrick said, “She supposed to have been in New York buying clothes for Shirley’s dress shop. She had a few thousand dollars on her.”

Brenda finally said, “Lorraine’s parents are dead. How old are the people here?”

Hutch said, “They look around their late forties or early fifties.”

Dennis said, “Patrick you feel like walking with me? I want you to send a telegram to your train that Lorraine should have been on. I’ll send a telegram to my other two hospitals to be on the look out for a Lorraine Wright.”

Patrick had his hands on his hips and said, “If Lorraine has picked up a man and he got information from her about us. I’m going to kick her ass. If she is alright.”

Brenda looked at Patrick and back at the doctors and tried to clean up Patrick’s angry and said, “Lorraine likes men.”

Dennis said, “I know what he meant.”

Dennis said, “Ryan who is at the police station I can telegram.”

Ryan said, “Richie his telegram is in the office.”

Dennis reached for Patrick.

Patrick and Dennis walked down the hall to the administrator’s office.

Brenda tried to smirk off Patrick’s anger.

Hutch and Ryan stepped out the room and watched Patrick and Dennis.

They walked back in the room and looked at a worried Brenda.

Brenda said, “What color is this couple?’

Hutch said, “White.”

Brenda said, “I should not say anything until we are sure. We think Lorraine’s father is one of Patrick’s brothers. One of Patrick’s brothers is dead, that leaves three. I know them by sight. Can I go and look and see if I recognize the man.”

Hutch looked at Brenda and said, “No fighting Brenda.”

Brenda said, “If it is our Lorraine you save her. You saved Michael and Thomas. I know GOD works through you two and the others.”

Brenda put on her robe and walked with Hutch and Ryan.

Ryan showed Brenda where to stand to get a good look at the man and the woman.

Patrick sent a telegram to the manager of the whole train station.

He asked Greg, “Was Lorraine his nanny on the train from New York? And what was her condition and if she is hurt or harm. Dead or alive to bring her to the south hospital.”

Greg immediately responded and said, “The train from New York arrive fifteen minutes early. That train conductor sent him a telegram back that a woman’s body was pulled out the river in New York by workers of the railroad. They recognized her as a Stith employee and brought her back to the train and the train conductor turned the train around and rushed back to Philadelphia, because he knew Patrick and Brenda were in Philadelphia. Don’t know her condition but will expedite them getting her to the hospital.”

Patrick was sick.

Dennis looked at Patrick and said, “It’s her?”

Patrick said, “They pulled her out a river in New York.”

Dennis said, “Drowning.”

He jumped up and walked to Patrick’s and Brenda’s room.

He did not see them.

The nurses said, “They went downstairs.”

Dennis thought, “What are they up to?”

Patrick walked to Dennis. They walked downstairs and saw Hutch and Brenda.

Brenda looked at Patrick.

He walked to Brenda and held her.

Brenda was looking at Patrick.

Hutch looked at Patrick.

Dennis said, “Why are you here?”

Brenda said, “To see if I recognize the man Ryan is talking to.”

Patrick looked and said, “I recognize the woman.”

Dennis and Hutch looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “She worked for us about fifteen years ago as an upstairs maid.”

Brenda started looking at the woman.

She jumped to run to the woman.

Hutch grabbed Brenda and put his hand over her mouth.

Patrick said, “She is liar and a flimflam artist. She worked for us a few months and told the staff that I raped her and she wanted to be paid. I went to the sheriff and had her arrested. She got out jail in six months and disappeared.”

Hutch was still holding Brenda.

Patrick said, “Hutch continue to hold Brenda and keep her mouth covered.”

Brenda looked at Patrick and got sick.

Patrick said, “It is Lorraine. The railroad workers found her in the river. They don’t know if she is alive or dead. The train from New York was early and they are rushing her to the hospital.”

Brenda raised her hand.

Hutch looked at her and lifted his hand a little.

Brenda said, “Is it Lorraine.”

Patrick said, “I believe so.”

Brenda said, “If it is not we still want her to have the best chance to live.”

Dennis said, “Hutch set up room seven for a drowning victim.”

Hutch was looking at Dennis and said, “Yes sir.”

Brenda shook her head and said, “How did anyone know we were at this hospital for them to send a telegram and message that Lorraine was being transported here. Who at our train knew to telegram those people and not Eleanor. Eleanor is the next of kin on all of Lorraine’s paper work.”

Patrick said, “We can’t tell Eleanor nor the children about Lorraine. That would be a mess.”

Dennis said, “I sent a telegram to Richie at the police station about the little we know. I know he will come sometime today. I need to go to the north hospital. I have a lot of work to do. You need Felipe to help you with the lungs and breathing.”

Hutch said, “And Charles.”

Dennis said, “I’ll go and send a telegram for those two to come here as soon as possible.”

Brenda said, “I don’t know if you should tell them it was Lorraine. She and Dr. Ralph dated and she and Meredith and Vivienne are close.”

Dennis exhaled and turned and walked upstairs to send the telegram.

Hutch looked at Dennis and then back at Ryan.

Ryan turned and walked away from the couple.

They all walked upstairs.

They went into Patrick and Brenda’s room and closed the door.

Hutch said, “The railroad telegram believes it is Lorraine. The railroad workers pulled her out of a New York river and brought her back to Philadelphia. Whether she is alive they did not know but will bring her here.”

Ryan said, “Freezing water. That may help us. Let’s go and set up the room for a drowning case.”

Hutch said, “Your father is telegramming for Felipe and Charles to come here as soon as they can.”

Ryan said, “Great. But I don’t understand how the railroad knew to telegram and message this couple.”

Patrick said, “Once I am out of here I will find out.”

Brenda said, “You are retired.”

She looked at Hutch and Ryan and said, “We have a next of kin section on the tickets.”

Ryan said, “Oh. That’s what they did. They changed her next of kin info. Was her ticket on her? “

Patrick said, “It is the mob. I will get to the bottom of this.”

Brenda started walking the floor.

Dennis was leaving and passed the room and knocked on the door and walked in.

He said, “I sent the telegram for Felipe and Charles to come here immediately because of a drowning victim. I did not tell who.”

He looked at Ryan and said, “Your mother and I were spending the night at the shore. They are closing for the winter this week-end. I have to get some fresh seafood until the spring.”

Brenda said, “I would love some.”

Hutch looked at Brenda and said, “You are always plotting and planning things.”

Hutch was confused.

Brenda pointed at Patrick and said, “Him too.”

Ryan said, “Hutch my mom and dad also. Didn’t hear him just announce to me that he and my mother are going away for this week-end. They did not say anything to me or Alice.”

Dennis said firmly, “It was none of your business. You got a wife and child.”

Patrick said, “That’s right we can plan things.”

Dennis said, “Yes. But because of this case we might not go.“

Ryan said, “Then send mom and Alice.”

Hutch looked at Ryan.

Dennis said, “See how you quickly plotted that.”

There was a knock on the door.

They all turned and looked at the door Ryan opened the door.

The nurse was out of breath and said, “They just pulled up.”

Hutch and Ryan and the nurse ran out the room.

Brenda was behind them. Dennis did not believe how fast Brenda moved.

He looked at Patrick who was running pass him.

The railroad workers were getting the lifeless body out of the wagon.

The nurses had the bed and running to the door.

The man and woman stood and holding each other.

Dennis and Patrick stood and watched from their peeping place.

Ryan and Hutch grabbed the bed from the bed and went out the door.

Brenda was at the door.

The man and woman looked at Brenda.

Patrick said, “The man was stable man I let go six years ago.”

Dennis looked and saw Police Officer Ritchie standing outside with two detectives waiting for Ryan and Hutch to move so they could come in.

Dennis said, “There is the police officer there. I need to speak to him. I am going to find out who told them to bring her to this hospital.”

Dennis walked out the corner.

The man and woman saw Dennis walking with his hat, coat and gloves.

Brenda was holding the door as Ryan grabbed Lorraine and put her on the bed that Hutch was holding.

Brenda was looking at Lorraine in her face and started screaming, “Lorraine!!!!! Lorraine!!!!! Lorraine!!!!”

The nurses were trying to get Brenda out the door.

The man and woman were trying to walk out the door.

Dennis looked at the police and pointed at the man and woman.

Dennis saw Lorraine’s eyelid move.

He yelled, “She is alive.”

Ryan and Hutch and the nurses ran to room seven.

Brenda was a step behind.

She was yelling, “Lorraine get back here!!!! Lorraine!!!!”

One of Lorraine’s eyelid fluttered.

Ryan was looking over Lorraine’s body and saw her eyelids move.

He said, “Brenda go! We can bring her back!”

Dennis was standing behind Brenda and grabbed her and walked out the room.

Brenda saw the woman and man standing like they were so distraught.

Patrick saw Brenda run pass him.

He did not move.

With one fist Brenda hit the woman and knocked her over the sofa.

The other fist she hit the man on his jaw and he fell to the floor.

The police looked at Brenda.

Brenda got on top of the man and began to beat him with her fists.

Police Officer Richie looked at Brenda and slowly walked to her and pulled her up.

Dennis ran and grabbed Brenda.

The nurses were standing with their mouths opened.

The secretary ran downstairs and said, “Dr. Wade.!”

She was waving a telegram.

Dennis looked at a panting Brenda.

He looked at a clam Patrick.

Patrick said, “Come on over here Brenda.”

Dennis looked at Patrick and said, “Whoa that was demanding.”

Brenda slowly walked to Patrick.

The police were looking at her.

Dennis turned to the secretary.

She was out of breath.

Dennis said, “Why are you all out of breathe?”

He looked back at the nurse who ran and told them Lorraine was downstairs.

She rolled her eyes at Dennis.

Dennis said, “I got a wife. You, rolling your eyes at me does not bother me. Ask her.”

He turned and looked at the secretary.

He read the telegram and walked and reached it to Patrick.

Brenda was standing in front of Patrick leaning on him and staring at the man and woman.

A nurse walked over to attend to the man and woman.

Dennis said, “They aren’t paying go back to the desk.”

Patrick somberly said, “Brenda.”

Brenda was leaning on Patrick’s body, as she does when she needs his strength to hold her up.”

She felt his heart and said, “What?”

Patrick said, “Eleanor read all the telegrams that came through to the company. She and the children will be here tonight. She has the train speeding.”

Brenda began to cry and slid down Patrick’s legs to the floor.

Dennis looked at Brenda.

He said, “I have to go and check on my other hospital. Hutch and Ryan can take care of Lorraine.”

He looked over at the Nurse who went to attend to the criminals and said, “You come over here and help them back to their rooms. They are paying patients.”

The nurse walked over to help Brenda up.

Dennis looked at the secretary and said, “We are going to have one of the richest women in the world here tonight and throughout the next week. Keep your mouth shut. You hear me. Come with me.”

The secretary and Dennis walked around the first floor.

Dennis said, “Close the dining room until Tuesday. Locked this backdoor and have coal and plenty of water brought in here and have a few sofas put in here and…”

He waved his hands and said, “Flowers and fruits. Make it nice.”

The secretary said, “Yes sir.”

Her sister was the waitress that quit at breakfast.

They lived together in a rooming house.

She told her sister that if the cook continued to be abusive to quit.

She could pay her portion of rent for a few weeks until she found another job or until her money came through for school.

Dennis was walking into the lobby to speak with the police officers with the secretary when Felipe and Charles rushed into the lobby.

Dennis pointed and greeted them.

He said, “Thank you. Room seven.”

Felipe and Charles ran to room seven.

The nurses ran out of room seven to the supply closet.

Dennis looked and watched the nurses.

He walked to Police Officer Ritchie. And shook his hand.

Police Officer Ritchie said, “The man already gave us his verbal statement. We are arresting them and taking them to the police precinct. You have to get a hold on your patients privacy information.”

Dennis was angry and said, “Yes sir. I know. I just don’t know where to start. But I will put an end to this.”

He shook the Police Officer Richie’s hand and walked to the door as they police carried out the man and woman.

Police officer Richie and Dennis saw a nurse watching their every move.

Police Officer Richie said, “Start with her.”

The secretary had the cook help her to move two couches from the storage area.

The nurse said, “Where are you taking those sofas Laura?”

Laura saw Dennis and the Police officer standing in the doorway listening.

Laura nor the cook said, “Anything.’

The nurse stood to follow them.

Dennis stepped inside and said, “Nurse where are you going?”

Nurse turned and was looking after Laura and turned and looked at Dennis and Police Officer Richie.

Police officer Richie walked to her and said, “Your coat and let’s go.”

The nurse tried to twist her arm from Police Officer Richie.

One of the nurses grabbed her coat and bag and gave it to Police Officer Richie as he dragged the nurse out the building.

All the workers were standing and watching.

Dennis left and sped to his north hospital.

He was at the smallest hospital early that morning from six am to nine am.

He rode the forty- five minutes to the south hospital to check on Patrick and Brenda before he and Beverly went away for the week-end.

Dennis sped to the north hospital.

When he got to the hospital after one pm. He told his secretary to send Beverly a telegram at his home and tell Beverly had to cancel, but she, Alice and baby Ryan can go.”

Beverly received the telegram and stood and thought.

Alice was sitting on the parlor floor playing with Ryan Jr.

Alice looked at Beverly.

Beverly was thinking.

Alice said, “Is something wrong?”

Beverly said, “Dennis and I were to spend this last week-end at the shore.”

Alice said, “I love it there.”

Beverly said, “But Dennis has cancelled. That means something bad has happened at one of the hospitals. He said, we three can go.”

Alice was playing with Ryan and said, “He wants us out of town this week-end.”

Beverly and Alice both said, Eleanor.”

Beverly said, “I won’t be going to the shore this week-end.”

Alice said, “Nothing me.”

Beverly went and sat on the sofa with her most prestigious high society posture.

Alice grinned.

Beverly said, “I found out Patrick and Brenda are at the south hospital under a different name.”

Alice frowned up and said, “How did you find out that?”

Beverly said, “I am a detective and I find out information. I looked over the north hospital patient’s register and did not see a middle age woman and older male check in. I knew the small hospital is for non- serious cases and that Patrick and Brenda had to have major tests and the only other hospital was the south hospital.”

Alice said,   
When do we go and visit Patrick and Brenda?”

Beverly sat with her high society posture and said, “In the morning dear. We will put baby Ryan on his outfit I ordered from Eleanor’s place.”

Alice said, “I have to see if he can still wear it. Eleanor said, she would bring me some of her boys’ things.”

Beverly sat up and was delighted and said, “Whoa.”

The butler was passing.

Beverly said, “Robert. We will dine at home tonight. What was planned for dinner?”

Robert said, “Veal.”

Beverly sighed.

Alice looked at Beverly and said, “Can we have seafood?”

Robert said, “We have none. None will be available to the spring. Dr. Wade hates salted fish during the winter.”

Beverly said, “I think I will wear that blue dress with the navy blue velvet trim.”

Beverly said, “I have to take something…”

Beverly waved her hands and said, “Robert can you pull together a big flower bouquet and fruit bowl?”

Robert looked at Beverly and knew she was up to something.

Dennis would give Robert a tip when he tells Dennis of Beverly’s plots.

Robert said, “I’ll try.”

Beverly looked at the sarcastic Robert.

Alice snickered at his sour disposition.

Beverly watched their good looking grandson crawl through the parlor.

She said, “Oh Ryan Jr will be such a delight this Christmas pulling down all the Christmas ornaments and decorations.”

Alice looked at Beverly and stared in the space.

Robert was pouring himself a drink when he heard Beverly.

He saw Alice’s face completely change.

He stared at Alice.

Beverly was looking at the adorable Ryan Jr.

She turned and said, “Alice I want to do red, green and white for Christmas. I was going with blue and white.”

Beverly looked at Alice and said, “Alice.”

Ryan Jr. was going towards the fireplace.

Beverly jumped and ran to the fireplace and caught Ryan Jr.

She held Ryan Jr. up and waked to Alice and yelled, “Alice!”

Robert and a few maids ran into the parlor.

They looked at Alice.

Then Alice snapped and shook her head and batted her eyes.

Beverly said, “Alice go and take a nap.”

Beverly said, “Madeline take Alice to her room.”

They all watched Alice and turned and looked at Beverly.

She walked to Virginia and said, “Change Ryan Jr, and feed him. Take him to his room until he falls to sleep for the night.”

Virginia said, “Yes ma am.”

Beverly sat and thought.

Robert was holding the whiskey glass behind his back.

Beverly was staring in the fireplace and said, “Robert give me that.”

Robert twisted his mouth and walked in the parlor and handed Beverly his whiskey.

He went back to the table and poured a glass of scotch.

Beverly sat and stared in the fireplace.

She sat and thought for hours.

He heard Dennis pull into the yard and walk not the kitchen.

All the workers looked at Dennis.

He saw the workers had them glasses of liquor.

He knew something was wrong.

Dennis stepped forward and looked down the hall into the parlor.

He said, “Robert what is for dinner?”  
Robert knew what Dennis meant and said, “Mrs. Wade said to Alice that baby Ryan Jr will have a good time this Christmas pulling down the ornaments and decorations.”

Dennis looked at Robert because that was not anything.

Robert said, “Alice…”

Dennis stood straight and looked at Robert.

Robert said, “She...”

Beverly said, “She had a breakdown.”

Dennis frowned and stared at Beverly.

Dennis reached for Beverly’s whiskey glass.

Beverly pulled her glass and reached him a full glass of scotch.

They walked to the dinner table.

Dennis said, “Where is Alice?”

Beverly said, “I had Madeline put her to bed. And Virginia to put Ryan Jr. to bed.”

Dennis pulled out Beverly’s chair.

He went to his chair and sat.

He said, “Ryan will not be home tonight nor tomorrow. He has an extreme case. So I will not discuss this with him until he is ok.”

Robert walked in and set plates in front of them.

Dennis said, “Eleanor’s influence I see.”

Beverly said, “IT is wasteful.”

Robert placed Beverly’s plate in front of her and said, “Ma am I found a few flowers and we have plenty of fruit for a fruit basket.”

Dennis looked at Beverly and sighed.

He cut his eyes at Robert.

Beverly stared at Robert.

Robert walked back in the kitchen and made his plate of veal and vegetables.

He enjoyed the meal.

Dennis ate a fork full of veal and vegetables and nodded his head in approval.

Beverly said, “This is one of Eleanor’s recipes she had one of her chefs send.

Dennis said, “Beverly.”

Beverly looked at Dennis with her wide eyes.

He looked at her and thought, “God she does not have a clue we are not rich but just making it. All of my money goes back in the hospitals to keep them open.”

He said, “It is a good tasting meal.”

Beverly smiled and said, “Why are we not going to the shore?”

She was looking at Dennis in his face.

Dennis said, “I told you Ryan has a critical case. I want to be here for him. Let’s talk about Alice and why she had a breakdown today about Ryan Jr. pulling down Christmas ornaments and decorations.”

Alice walked to the table with her nightgown on and Robert brought her a small amount of veal and vegetables.

She sat and Robert placed the plate before her.

Alice bowed her head and said grace.

Dennis and Beverly stared at Alice.

Alice sighed and looked straight ahead.

Dennis and Beverly turned their heads to see what she was looking at.

Alice looked at Dennis and said, “Where is Ryan?”

Dennis said, “He has a critical case and they are working through tonight and tomorrow. He won’t be home unto Sunday or Monday. The other doctors have come to help him.”

Beverly was shocked and said, “My GOD Dennis. You left him by himself?”

Dennis stopped eating and stared at Beverly and said, “Look you twit. Ryan is a brilliant doctor and knows his work. I cannot and will not stand over him to spoon feed him. He knows to call me if he needs help. He has a number of doctors working with him.”

Beverly said, “Call me a twit again.”

Dennis said, “I am sorry Beverly.”

She looked at him and then at Alice.

She said, “Alice explain yourself. What happened to you this afternoon?”

Beverly and Dennis stopped eating and stared at Alice.

Alice started kicking her legs.

Beverly firmly said, “Stop kicking your legs and talk.”

Alice twisted her mouth and said, “I don’t ever want to repeat this again. So you tell Ryan.”

Beverly said, “Talk and we decide.”

Dennis did not look at Beverly but heard her harsh tone towards Alice.

Robert was standing at the hallway closet listening.

Alice said, “My stepfather would always rape me and my sister during the Christmas holidays and lock us in the wine cellar. Until my brother killed him one Christmas. We told the sheriff my mother killed him for raping us. The sheriff did not arrest her. Me, my sister and three brothers ran away and never looked back. We all kept running. I settled here. My sister went to New York. My three brothers ran to the military and live in different states. I refused to wear my mother’s wedding dress and to have my wedding on her farm. I hope the next time I hear from her they tell me she is dead, so I can sell that farm and split the money with my sister and brothers.”

Beverly stared at Alice for a long time.

Dennis stared at Alice and said, “What a mess. Patrick and Brenda think they have a mess with Lorraine. Ryan is hard. I don’t know how he is going to take this.”

Beverly turned and looked at Dennis.

Dennis looked at Beverly.

Dennis said, “Alice have you ever blank out before?”

Alice said, “I don’t know.”

Dennis said, “Of course you would not know.”

Alice looked at Dennis.

Dennis looked at Beverly and back to Alice.

He reached for Alice’s hand and said, “That was painful to share. I don’t believe in covering up ones feeling. I believe the road to recovery is to open up and share. I can only say you and Ryan have to talk. And I will have the servants be more watchful with you and Ryan Jr.”

Two maids were standing behind Robert.

Robert threw his hands up in the air and drank all of his scotch.

She stomped back to the kitchen.

Dennis heard Robert and thought, “That’s why I said that. Give you something to do with your noisy self.”

Alice held her head down and said, “Thank you.”

Dennis said we are family.

He turned Alice’s hand loose and looked at Beverly.

Beverly was cutting her eyes at Alice and said, “Dennis are you going to the hospital tomorrow?’

Dennis said, “Yes. I will go to all three tomorrow and Sunday.”

There was a knock on the front door.

Dennis said, “Who is that?”

Robert went to the door and opened it.

A messenger was at the door and handed Robert a note.

Robert put the message on a tray and brought it to Dennis.

Dennis took the note and looked at it.

Beverly like to get messages.

She was getting excited.

Dennis kind of smile.

He looked at Beverly.

Robert said, “The messenger is waiting for a response.”

Dennis said, “Tell the messenger we will send a response later.”

Beverly looked at Dennis and then Robert.

Robert closed the front door and locked it so he did not have to do it later.

Beverly looked at Dennis.

Dennis exhaled and said, “John Jr and Betty want to holiday with us until next year.”

Beverly said, “that would be nice to have a house full for the holiday.”

Robert passed the family dining room and lifted his eyebrow up.

Dennis said, “No Beverly. A week or two but not six weeks. That would be a burden and a strain on our wallet.”

Beverly said, “Wallet. What do you mean wallet?”

Dennis said, “We are barely meeting our needs.”

Beverly looked at Alice and said, “Why?”

Dennis shrugged his shoulders.

Alice looked at him.

Dennis said, “I don’t know why.”

Beverly said, “I’ll start reviewing the books.”

Dennis knew if there was any improprieties Beverly would find it.”

Eleanor was up early that Friday morning.

She could not sleep.

She was going over the accounting books for the railroad and shipping businesses.

They appeared to be in order to her.

She started her review of Shirley’s accounting books for the hospital and dress shop.

The dress shop was fine.

She looked at her jewelry shop books.

Eleanor picked the accounting books back up for the bone hospital.

It was difficult for her to review them.

But she began to review the books and tears began to fall.

She saw Shirley has reviewed each of the hospital’s money.

Shirley had broken down each month to the each week.

Tears fell on Eleanor’s face.

She put the books up and began to review her schedule for the upcoming week.

Eleanor never believed in scheduling a lot of appointments in a short window of time, in case she could not make the appointments and people call her a liar or unreliable.

The daily railroad reports started coming in around six am.

Eleanor pulled the telegrams off the machine.

She was reading each one and from each train.

She put them in their separate binders.

Thomas and Bruce woke and went into the sitting room with Eleanor.

They kissed her on her face.

Eleanor grinned and said, “Good morning.”

Michael, Percy and Shirley woke an hour later.

Eleanor order pancakes, eggs and bacon and Michael’s lamb chop.

They enjoyed their breakfast.

Eleanor ordered their hot baths for nine am.

They all bathed and dressed.

Eleanor was brushing her hair when Thomas stormed into her room with a telegram.

Bruce was standing behind Thomas.

Thomas was shaking and reaching the telegram to Eleanor.

She looked at Thomas.

The only thing she could think about was Patrick and Brenda.

She looked at the shaken Thomas and reached for the telegram.

Shirley was walking out of her room.

Michael and Percy were sitting on the sofa watching Thomas and Bruce.

Eleanor read the telegram.

It was Patrick’s telegram to the hub manager.

Eleanor held her chest and said, “Oh God.”

Michael jumped off the sofa and Percy they ran to Eleanor’s door.

Shirley ran to Eleanor’s door.

Shirley said, “What is it momma.”

Eleanor said, “They believe Lorraine is dead.”

Shirley said, “Who?”

Michael said, “She better not be going to get some dresses.”

Everyone looked at Michael.

Shirley looked at Michael and reached for the telegram.

Eleanor gave Shirley the telegram.

Shirley read the telegram and fell against the wall.

Another telegram was coming through.

Percy ran and pulled it off and read it.

Michael snatched the telegram from Percy.

He threw the telegram down and stomped it.

Eleanor looked at Michael and said, “Bruce go and bring the telegram to me.”

Michael folded his arms and went and jumped on the sofa sideways with his mouth poked out.

Eleanor was becoming hysterical.

Thomas held her around her stomach.

Bruce picked up the telegram and read it as he was taking it to Eleanor.

Bruce began to cry.

Eleanor read the telegram and sat on her bed for a long time.

Eleanor said, “Percy.”

Percy stood and walked to Eleanor’s door.

She said, “Send a telegram to momma and daddy that I will be there tonight.”

Percy turned and walked to the telegram machine.

Eleanor stood and said, “All of you stay here.”

She walked to the engineer and train conductor and said, “I need you to speed up and get us to Philadelphia much faster.”

The train conductor said, “Is there a problem in Philadelphia?”  
Eleanor said, “I believe so. Have a carriage waiting when we arrive to take us to the location I will tell the man. Leave all of our things but Shirley’s. Have a separate carriage for her.”

The train conductor was walking down the hall with Eleanor.

Eleanor knocked on the door.

Percy opened the door.

Shirley was still crying.

Michael was still sitting sideways and angry.

Eleanor sat next to him and said, “Whatever is going on let’s pray.”

She said, Percy pray.”

Percy did not asked Eleanor no questions. He did not state he did not want to pray or he did not know how to pray.

He said, “LORD GOD Almighty save our friend Lorraine. Don’t let anyone get away. If it is the mob, cut off the head so people can be free to live and not be afraid. Let us back in the military academy. Fix the trains so we can see Lorraine and continue to school. And have momma send us daily telegrams about Lorraine. Lorraine would want us to get back to school and not be with her. In JESUS’ name.”

Bruce and Thomas said, “Amen and Amen.”

Eleanor said, “When we get to Philadelphia we will go straight to the hospital.”

Shirley said, “Which one?”

Eleanor said, “The one where momma and daddy are.”

Percy said, “How did Lorraine end up there?”

Bruce said, “The mob.”

Eleanor said, “Shirley you go with your luggage and come to the hospital. After we check on Lorraine and overnight here. You can go to your apartment and stay home or come back to the hospital. The boys will stay with me. I will have all of our bags moved to the owners’ suite of the train we will be travelling on to the school. I need to send a telegram to Jose to have Nadine come to Philadelphia immediately.”

Michael said, “Not Nadine.”

Eleanor said, “Right. Alice is no longer with us.”

Percy said, “Monica, she went with grandma and grandpa.”

Eleanor said, “Good Percy. Send this telegram to Jose.”

Percy prepared the telegram machine.

Eleanor took a deep breath and said, “Jose. Don’t know if Lorraine is alive or dead. Send Monica tomorrow to help momma and daddy. Make sure you help her pack and get on the train. If Monica does not want to come send someone reliable. I will have a ticket at the train for whoever comes. They will stay at Bruce’s hotel until I drop the boys off.”

Shirley said, “Me.”

Eleanor felt Michael turning to look at Shirley.

Jose was walking through the house and enjoying the quiet.

He and the workers were having drinks at night. Mike and John were playing billiards.

Allen would play billiards when had to pick up Veronica.

Allen was busy repairing his house.

He had his coal.

He bought two stoves before the cold weather and received them.

He placed one in the kitchen and the other in the back room of the house.

Allen went to the capitol and bought a dozen of blankets and put them up to each window.

Veronica laughed.

Allen saw her shoes and coat.

He surprised her and bout her two new pairs of boots, a hat, scarf, gloves and a coat.

Veronica was so thankful to Allen that she cried.

She said to Allen, “Now you buy you the same.”

They spent a full day in the capitol.

Allen bought him a coat and scarf and gloves.

Veronica looked at him and he bought two pairs of boots.

Veronica laughed.

They were waking back to Allen’s horse and wagon.

They saw a house goods shop.

Veronica said, “Come on Allen. You have to get this stuff.”

Allen primped his mouth and veronica kissed his lips and he smacked and grinned.

They ran to the house goods store.

Veronica helped Allen pick out wash cloths, towels, curtains, curtain rods, sheets, pots and pans and dishes and glasses.

She told Allen he need a bath tub, a few wash pails.

She was so excited for Allen.

They came from the capitol and spent the whole night taking down blankets and putting up curtains.

They put the bathtub in the back room of the house by the stove.

Veronica put the curtains in the room and the washcloths and towels.

Allen’s house was coming together.

They would not freeze that winter.

The kitchen was the only room that was complete and the backroom with the tin bathtub.

Allen was walking on the floor and his feet were freezing.

He ran to the kitchen and put some coal in the stove and ran back to Veronica.

They laughed all night.

Jose was sitting in the bedroom suites hall enjoying the view.

He stood and walked down the hall and opened Patrick and Brenda’s door and checked the windows and doors.

He walked out and down the hall. He heard the telegram machine.

He unlocked Patrick’s office and went in.

Jose was sitting at Patrick’s desk swirling around in his chair until the telegram machine stopped.

Jose looked at the telegram.

He stood and snatched the telegram off the machine.

He read it over and over.

He remained calm.

He walked out Patrick’s office and locked the door.

He walked through the billiards room and found Monica in the laundry room.

He said, “Monica Eleanor wants you to come to Philadelphia and helped Patrick and Brenda.”

Monica had an arm full of sheets.

She said, “When?”

Jose said, “Tomorrow.”

Ruth, Theresa and Mellissa were looking.

Mellissa looked at the telegram Jose had in his hand.

Monica was trying to think.

Harriet was at the house and she had only a few dresses and underwear.

She looked at Jose and said, “Why do they want me to come? Are they in the hospital?”

Jose said, “They think Lorraine is dead.”

Everyone looked at Jose.

Ruth was trying to read the telegram in Jose’s hand.

Monica was calm and said, “I’ll go. Can I wear my uniform? I don’t have any clothes.”

Jose said, “Fine. Let me take you home and you go and get your things and put them in a bag and I’ll bring you back here. You stay overnight and I’ll take you to the train station in the morning. It takes three days to get to Philadelphia. You will still be paid plus any overtime.”

Ruth said, “I want to go.”

Jose looked at Ruth and said, “Eleanor requested only one person.”

Monica went upstairs to the linen room and placed the linens.

Jose was looking at the workers bulletin he put up.

He saw Samantha’s note still on the bulletin board.

He knew she had been at work.

He turned around and looked in the kitchen.

He walked through the formal dining room.

Jose heard voices from the family dining room.

He walked over and saw Samantha, Briana and Sue making big red velvet bows to put on the lanterns.

Jose said, “Samantha come with me.”

Samantha stood and walked out the family dining room into the kitchen with Jose.

Jose pointed at the workers bulletin board and pointed to her name.

Samantha looked at the note.

Jose took it down and gave it to Samantha.

Samantha read the note and her mouth opened in surprise.

She looked at Jose.

She looked at the date of the note.

She said, “My God. This is from the security man that was badly injured, he wants me to come and see him. This note is two months old.”

Thomas overheard the conversation and was angry because Samantha walked around playing like she is hard to comprehend.

Thomas said, “It is no one’s fault Samantha that you did not check the bulletin board.”

Samantha looked at Thomas.

Jose walked away.

Monica was walking out the linen room.

Jose saw her and said, “Monica get your coat and wait for me in the workers’ area. I am coming now.”

Monica looked at Jose because she did not like the way he talks to her and some of the others.

She knew he was mad about something but she did not make him mad.

She walked down the hall and saw him exiting the billiards room.

Mike and John looked at Jose.

Monica was peeping at Jose.

Mike and John looked at one another and they saw Monica peeping at Jose.

Monica said, “I can’t say.”

Samantha walked to Monica with the note.

Monica looked at Samantha and then the note.

Samantha said, “Jose just told me about this note from the injured security man.”

Monica said, “That note has been up on the bulletin forever.”

Samantha said, “Jose should have brought it to me.”

Monica turned her head and looked at Mike and John.

She walked out the doorway and went and put on her coat, hat, scarf and gloves and walked to the workers’ area and sat.

She thought, “That’s why Jose is mad and talking down to me like that. I am going to tell him I can’t take his rudeness anymore. I have to be careful because I have no money. I need to live in a room and not be bound. Stephen! Maybe I can get a room in the house he lives. I need a job, so I can leave here.”

Jose went to Patrick’s office and checked for telegrams.

He sent Eleanor a telegram that Monica will be on the ten am train from Cedartown. He has worked out all things for her and will give her three days of pay and overtime for the travel.”

Jose sent the telegram and stood and sighed and walked out Patrick’s office and locked the door.

He walked through the billiards room and into the kitchen.

Ruth walked out the kitchen from telling Thomas and the others about Lorraine.

Jose looked around the kitchen and walked to his room and got his two hats, coat, two scarves and gloves.

He put them on and walked out the house.

Monica was sitting in the workers are and looked at Jose pass by.

Monica stood and was about to go out the house to the carriage.

Thomas and some other workers walked in the workers’ area and looked after Jose.

Monica said, “He passed right by me and did not say for me to come so we can leave.”

Thomas said, “For what? He had to go and get the horse and carriage and hook them up and then comeback to get you.”

Theresa and Mellissa looked at Monica.

Monica walked to the door and saw Jose walking to the stables.

Monica said, “I’m sorry. I don’t know what is going on with me.”

Samantha walked to the small group of workers with her note.

Thomas turned and looked at Samantha.

Monica looked at Samantha and walked out the backdoor and sat on the back porch.

Thomas shook his head at Monica and said, “She rather freeze than to be bothered with Samantha.”

Samantha said, “Where is Jose?”

Theresa said, “In the stables.”

Samantha said, “He just told me about this note from the injured security man who wants me to come and visit him.”

Mellissa looked at Samantha.

Theresa said, “What does Jose have to do with note. We all saw the note it has been up there for months. Your name is on it in big writing. Who are you blaming for not giving you something?”

Samantha looked at Theresa and Mellissa.

They walked away from her.

They went back to the storage rooms to look for the tea set.

Ruth was walking through the billiards room.

Mike could not stand Ruth.

John looked at Ruth and said, “Ruth what is wrong with Jose?”

Ruth turned around and looked at John and Mike.

She said, ”Eleanor sent a telegram that Lorraine maybe dead.”

John said, “Ok,” and bent over the billiards table and took a shot.

Mike stared at Ruth.

Ruth looked at Mike and walked to the storage rooms to look for the tea set.

Mike said, “Mob.”

John said, “uh huh.”

Mike said, “That means they have marked all of us.”

John said, “Uh Huh.”

John takes his shot.

Then Mike who said, “We can’t sit around to wait for them.”

John was standing watching Mike and said, “Uh huh.”

Mike said, “Lorraine was the mixed woman. The children’s nanny, that got mad with them and left?”

John said, “Uh huh. I got a plan.”

John started talking.

Jose rode out the stables and saw Monica sitting in the freezing cold on the back porch.

He pulled up at the back steps.

Monica stood and walked to the carriage and jumped in.

Jose stared at her.

Thomas looked at Monica and Jose and shook his head.

He closed the back door and finished making a vegetable soup with all the left over fresh vegetables.

He knew Eleanor, Patrick and Brenda would not be back until the Sunday after next and the vegetables would be spoiled.

Thomas was glad Peter and Nadine were off until next Friday.

Dan was scheduled to come to work on Saturday.

Dan was enjoying his house and his coal.

He would lay in the middle of the floor and read his bible and different books all day.

He did not have any repairs to make to his house.

He was glad he has two horses, a carriage and a wagon.

He fit into that community.

Dan thought about how the community liked the decorations and hot coco and cookies.

He said, “I’ll be too busy to make them cookies and hot coco.”

Dan’s heart smote him.

He laid on his side and took his writing tablet and pencil and wrote the ingredients for the coco and sugar cookies.

Dan thought, “GOD did this HE changed my life. I wonder how much money Gary and Jose got? If I got enough to buy me this house, furniture, horses and wagons.”

Dan smirked and shook his head.

Dan said, “I can retire now. I have been to Europe. I don’t want to go anywhere else. Or I can work and earn enough money to go to Europe every two years.”

Dan grinned.

He thought about Olivia and exhaled.

He liked her and found out she was engaged to the college professor Gen rented her house to for the year and half they were all gone.

He shook his head in disbelief as he was caught up in Olivia’s scheme to string him along just in case she needed someone.

Dan heart ache.

This was the first time he had time to try to cleanse his heart of debris.

He thought I will be forty soon. I am not attractive, but I am kind and caring and above all I love God.

He has provided my money I never knew I could have.

I have a life that it took twenty-five years to get.

From the beatings from my father and his brothers out in the burning heat in the summer to living in shacks in the freezing cold without food and coal.

Dan looked at the full coal bucket he has by the fireplace.

He cried over his brothers who died in their house fire when he was eight.

He did not die because he was the oldest and was out in the field with his brutal father and his brothers picking whatever had to be harvested, from cotton, to vegetables to fruit.

Dan learned to eat the fruit of the land.

He loved fruit and vegetables.

He would sneak berries and fruits home to his mother and two small brothers.

They would hide and eat the fruit.

He would beat Dan‘s mother for letting the boys eat the fruit and then he would beat Dan for getting the fruit and bringing it home to his mother and brothers.

After Dan‘s mother and brothers died he ran away at eight years old.

His mother always told him if she died for him to run away to St. Louis to her brother and sister.

She told him their names and she pinned a letter to the inside of Dan’s shirt.

He carried it with him every day.

Dan did not know how to get to St. Louis.

He ran and hid in fields he used to work until sun was up and he kept running.

His mother told him to stay out of sight and always get to a church and ask for help.

Dan was running for two days and finally saw a cross down the street.

He looked around and made it to the church.

He laid on the steps to the little church.

When daybreak came he laid on the steps and slept.

He could hear noise but was too exhausted to lift his head.

He felt his body moving.

Dan woke two days later.

He was laying on a wooden pew with blankets and pillows.

Two black boys were sitting on the pew watching Dan.

Time Dan opened his eyes the boys jumped up and ran.

Dan sat up on the hard bed and looked because he never saw black boys before.

He heard people running and saw two men and the two black boys.

He thought that one of boys looked to be his age and the other boy to be Roger’s age of six.

Dan started kicking the cover and crying when he saw the two black men.

They raised their hands up and one said, “We won’t hurt you. I see scars and bruises on you. We didn’t do it.”

Dan started calming down.

The man said, “You want something to eat?”

Dan was faint and weak because he had not eaten in days.

The man waved and said, “Come and get something to eat.”

He and the other man moved from the pew and said to the two black boys, “Move back and help him up and bring him outside to the table.”

Dan looked and saw he did not have his shirt nor pants on, but a large shirt.

He began to scream.

The two black boys covered their eyes.

One of the black men said to the other black man, “He’s screaming because his letter is missing.”

The oldest black boy ran out the place.

The youngest black boy said, “Shut up. You are hurting my ears.”

Dan stopped and looked at the youngest boy.

The youngest boy looked at Dan as if he were foreign and said, “Pa said come and eat. You come and eat.”

Dan looked at the young boy and crawled off the pew.

The young black boy began to walk through the small building looking back at Dan.

He lead Dan outside where the oldest boy, two black women and the two black men were standing around a large tree that was cut and small tree stumps were used to sit on.

The women were looking at Dan.

The older black man said, “Come and sit.”

The youngest boy walked to one of the black women and leaned on her.

They all sat and had supper of fried fish, corn and okra.

They had watermelon later.

The older man said, “Boy what is your name?”

Dan looked around at everybody.

The youngest boy said, “You.”

Dan looked at the older black man and whispered, “Dan.”

The older black man reached in his pocket and pulled out Dan’s letter.

Dan ran and grabbed the letter and it was still sealed.

The youngest black boy said, “Don’t yank!”

Dan looked at the boy.

The women were sewing Dan a new shirt and pants.

The older man said, “Dan, where are you going?”

Dan looked at the older man.

The youngest boy said, “My grandpa asked you where you be going?”

Dan answered the youngest boy and said, “St. Louis.”

The older man said, “That’s bees a long way from here.”

He looked at Dan and said, “Why are you going there?”

Dan started crying.

The black people knew he was not separated from his family.

They knew God sent him to them.

They did not know what to do.

They knew Dan came out of the near south.

Because he was too little from coming far away.

They all sat and watched Dan a long time as he cried.

The youngest boy mother continued to sew Dan a new shirt.

The older woman cleaned up the eating dishes.

The oldest boy ran out and was playing in the yard behind the small building.

The youngest boy sat and stared at Dan until he stopped crying.

Dan was exhausted from hollering and crying and could hardly breathe.

He youngest boy said, “Come on boy and let’s go and play.”

The youngest woman looked at Dan.

They youngest boy stood and looked back at Dan.

Dan heard the youngest boy running and playing.

He picked up the letter and ran behind the youngest boy.

The two men continued to work in the field.

They all went into the small church at dusk.

The older black woman gave everybody a piece of blackberry cobbler.

The adults talked.

The boys sat across from the adults and ate their pie.

The older black woman said, “He has been here three days. You know someone is bound to come looking for him.”

The younger black man said, “GOD will protect us. HE sent him here.”

The older black man said, “Dan.”

The youngest black boy pushed Dan.

Dan looked at the youngest boy.

The youngest boy stood and walked two feet away to his grandfather with Dan.

Dan walked to the older man.

The youngest said, “Say sir.”

Dan did not know what he was saying and he looked at the youngest boy.

Dan said, “Sir.”

The older man said, “Who are your people?”

Dan said, “My mother was Mary Belle and she and my two brothers died when our house was on fire.”

The youngest woman said, “JESUS.”

Dan looked at her.

The older man said, “What’s your pa name?”

Dan yelled, “No!”

The adults knew then Dan’s father was the one who put the scars and bruises on him.

The youngest woman said, “Dan stop and listen.”

The youngest boy shook Dan and turned him to his mother.

The younger black woman said, “Why you came here?”

Dan said, “My momma said get to a church and they will help me.”

The younger black woman said, “You said you want to go to St. Louis who is in St. Louis.?”

Dan said, “My momma’s brother and sister.”

Dan was looking at the letter and patting it on his shirt.

The younger woman said, “Dan may I see the letter?”  
Dan started screaming and running through the church.

The youngest boy ran behind Dan and said, “That’s my momma. She won’t take your letter from your momma. She wants to see what your momma is telling my momma what to do for you.”

The adults looked at the youngest boy in shock.

His mother sat and looked at her youngest son.

She teared up because she knew GOD called him into this life to have a short life.

Dan stopped running and the youngest black boy take Dan by the arm and led him up the aisle to his mother.

The youngest boy nodded to his mother to Dan.

Dan looked at the youngest boy and then to his mother and slowly reached his letter to the younger woman.

He said, “I want it back.”

Everyone grinned.

The younger woman grinned and nodded her head.

She sat on the floor and told her youngest son to give her some paper and pen.

The younger boy ran and got paper and pen from the front of the church.

The oldest boy was still eating his blackberry cobbler.

The younger wanted patted the floor and said, “Dan come and sit next to me and you and I will read this together.”

She looked at Dan and said, “Can you read and write?”

Dan sat next to her on the floor.

He looked at her and shook his head for no.

The youngest boy reached his mother the paper.

He sat next to Dan on the floor.

The younger woman very gently opened the sealed letter.

The letter said, “I am dead. Please get my son to my family in St. Louis. Their names are the Brights at seventeen eleven Broad Street. Please help him.”

The young woman read the letter to Dan.

She wrote a letter and read it to Dan.

She said, “Hello. I am a minister and we found a young boy on our church doorsteps with a letter pinned to his shirt. The letter was from his mother, Mary Belle. She pleaded to get him to her family in St. Louis. If you are her relations please respond and come and get your child. We are close to the deep south and cannot hide him much longer.”

The young er woman looked at Dan and said, “Is that ok?”

Dan nodded his head for yes.

She closed Dan’s letter up and reached it back to him.

The youngest boy said, “See.”

Dan looked at the youngest boy and reached for the letter and held it tight.

The younger stood and got an envelope and wrote it to the Brights.

The younger man said, “It will take forever to get that letter to them. Let’s telegram them from the next town and give the address of the church.”

The older man said, “We will go into Dawson and telegram from there. We will be back for church on Sunday. We are on a mission from GOD.”

The men left early the next morning and travelled fast by wagon and horses to Dawson.

Dawson is usually three days round trip, but GOD was with them. One slept and the other took over they rotated all the way there and all the way back.

They made it time to take a nap and wash and be ready for church service.

The women had worked for those two and a half days to get the berries and fruit.

They met other black women and they bake all types of pies and cobblers.

The older woman finished with Dan’s pants.

The men went to the store in Dawson and bought seed, feed and thermal underwear for everybody.

The younger woman and the older woman were school teachers and they married farmers closed to the south and helped the run away slaves all the time.

There was a secret room they had in the church and no one knew about it for the four adults.

There were plenty of guns and ammunition in the secret room.

Even if the church was burned down the room was safe and the people in the room would be safe.

They taught the children and older people in church every Sunday.

They were being watched all the time from the south spies.

They knew people in the church were spies and never said anything around them.

They would only preach the word of God.

They hid Dan in the room above the church pews.

They did not want people to be nosey and start asking questions that could open up unwanted doors.

The youngest boy was up in the secret loft with Dan.

They slept most of the services.

A fat woman kept asking the younger woman where Vince was.

The younger mother looked around and said, “Somewhere around here.”

Dan and Vince laughed.

His mother heard them and rolled her eyes at them.

Dan and Vince covered their mouths with their hands.

The fat woman heard them and was looking around the sanctuary to see where they were.

The younger woman started her class in the back of the church and the older woman started her class in the front of the church.

The older woman made the fat woman go outside and fry the chicken.

Vince and Dan listened to the older woman teach her class how to read and write.

After church and everyone had eaten and gone home.

Vince and Dan came down and through the secret path and ate fried chicken and peach pie.

Dan, Vince and Troy (Vince’s older brother) ran through out the church and played.

The adults talked they did not like Wanda, the older fat woman.

She just showed up six months earlier and come to church every Sunday.

No one had information of her.

She stayed with the Daniels and work in every day in their fields.

The older woman said, “Spies are the least people you expect.”

Two months passed and a message was sent to the church for the younger woman.

She was excited and held the message and called Dan.

They all sat in the church and prayed.

The younger woman patted for Dan to sit next to her.

Dan sat next to the woman.

She opened the letter.

She read the letter silently.

She had no facial expression and her husband did not know what the letter said.

His heart dropped.

The woman hugged Dan and said, “You can read this Dan.”

Dan took the letter and read out loud, “Hello, I am Allison Bright, the sister to Mary Belle. We received your telegram about our nephew Daniel. We thank GOD HE sent Daniel to you. We know the south is not stable. We are preparing to come to you before the worst winter on record. Be careful. Be safe. In JESUS’ name.”

A week later several wagons pulled up in front of the small church.

Fat Wanda kept watching the church.

Mr. Daniels kept watching Wanda.

Wanda disappeared for most of the day and she returned at night fall.

Mr. Daniel took his shot gun and loaded his bullets up.

His wife looked at him.

They ate their crowder peas, fat back and cornbread.

They sat on the porch until night fall that was their custom.

Mr. and Mrs. Daniels would sit on their porch until dark and would greet their neighbors and friends as they left their fields and were going home.

Mrs. Daniels watched Wanda walked like she was hurt.

Mr. Daniels looked at Wanda.

She walked in the yard and sat on the porch.

The Daniels looked at Wanda.

Mr. Daniels said, “Wanda what you into?”

Wanda said, “They looking for seventeen run away slaves. Twelve are children. They are coming at midnight. To kill this whole community.”

Mr. Daniels said, “What are going to do?”

Wanda was in terrible pain from her whipping.

Wanda said, “I be leaving and run as far away from here.”

Mrs. Daniels said, “You best be going.”

Wanda stood and walked on the porch and stood next to Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels nor Mrs. Daniels looked at Wanda.

Wanda said, “I’m sorry.”

She went in their house and got her bag and walked out the house and left and started her walk down the road.

She finally made it to the church and saw the wagons.

She walked to the church and pulled on the door.

Everyone was in the sanctuary eating the last of the summer pies and cobblers.

The older man went to the door and opened it.

He saw Wanda and said, “Wanda. The pastor is visiting.”

Wanda said, “It’s important. They are coming.”

The older man said, “I don’t know what you be saying. Come on maybe he can understand.”

Wanda walked down the aisle.

The pastor stood and greeted Wanda.

Wanda looked at all the white people and said, “Seventeen slaves ran away two weeks ago and twelve are children. The slave masters are coming tonight around midnight, which means they are come much sooner.”

The white people looked at Wanda.

The older man said, “So you are the spy for the slave masters. What will happen to you?”

Wanda said, “Maybe I can make it further down the road.”

The younger woman said, “Wanda I don’t believe you. I believe you are still working for the slave masters. We don’t know anything about no slaves. You have been here for nearly a year. Would the slave masters let you be gone that long?”

The older black woman said, “Keep going Wanda.”

The older man was standing and said, “Wanda leave.”

Allison said, “Oh GOD what is this?”

Wanda kind of smiled.

The older man watched her out of sight.

Wanda was looking at the supply wagons of blankets and shoes.

She thought, “They brought these supplies for a reason, maybe the Smiths don’t know anything.”

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel were walking to the church and stood next to the older black man and watched Wanda walk down the road.

The three began to walk behind Wanda.

The younger black woman walked to the door and saw the older black man and the Daniels walking behind Wanda.

She closed the door of the church and said, “They are walking behind Wanda.”

The older black woman said, “Let’s go.”

They ran to the aisle of the church and pulled the floor.

The seventeen slaves jumped out the holding room.

Allison, her husband two more men helped the slaves out the room.

Dan, Vince and Troy were shocked.

Vince saw the children and said, “Where they come from?”

Dan said, “I was sleep.”

The rushed the slaves to the wagons.

The slaves hurried and put on the boots and got under the flat part of the wagons which especially built to hide them.

Dan got his blankets and pillows and his aunt Allison rushed him to her wagon.

Everyone rushed out the church.

The pastor and his wife covered the hidden department.

They all prayed.

The three wagons went before Allison and Dan.

Her husband lead the way he had several shotguns and plenty of ammunition with him.

The other two wagons the men had plenty of guns and ammunition. They were caught before in ambushes and the slaves were killed and they vowed never again.

Allison’s sister married and followed her husband into the south to get information and send it back to her family.

The slave owners found out and killed Mary Belle and her two sons.

They burned their house down on them.

Allison vowed to see if any of the children were alive and bring them to her.

The slaves on the plantations were beaten and whipped to the point of death to find out where the slaves were.

Allison had several shotguns and hand guns with plenty of ammunition.

They passed Wanda.

Wanda kept looking back at the Daniels with shotguns and she did not see Willie with a gun.

The woman who brought the seventeen slaves to the church was Mag.

She kept running with Gen and finally made it back to the city where Roger nourished her back to health after she was tortured by the slave owners.

Gen helped Mag to the city.

Gen continued until she made it to Washington D.C.

That was the closest to death they came.

Roger stayed in the wilderness with Mag and helped her to heal.

He knew they would never have children.

For months Mag did not know she was in the world.

Roger and Mag nearly froze and starved.

They knew they were on their own.

Roger loaded a wagon with blankets and as much food as he could find.

When he saw Mag and Gen come through the thick trees he sped to them.

Mag fell onto the ground.

Gen on top of her.

Roger put both of them in the wagon and turned and sped into the wilderness.

It took Gen three days to become conscious enough to leave.

Gen’s husband was worried but he continued to work in Washington D.C. to push for laws to help the break the back of slavery.

He knew he could not contact anyone.

Gen finally made it to Washington, D.C.

Along the way she would stop at safehouses and bathe and change clothes and got rides into the major cities and took trains into the state capitol until she made it to Washington D. C. to spend Christmas with her husband.

She was well enough to pretend she was well.

Her husband looked at her late one night they returned from a Christmas party.

Gen fell out on their bed.

Her husband sat on the bed and looked at her.

He decided they would finance the missions and they would work in the capitol, but he wanted a family.

Gen finally became pregnant the next spring and they had one child.

John and Gen went to India for ten years and then to Ireland for five.

They came back to the America to send their son to the college near Cedartown.

John and Gen worked tirelessly to get slavery abolished.

Her husband did not see the abolishment of slavery.

He told Gen on his death bed his last confession, “Gen, slavery will be over in less than ten years forever. Our hard work paid off.”

Gen was holding his hands.

He breathed his last breathe and died.

Gen held her head down and wept.

Her best friend was gone.

The three wagons in front of Allison and Dan split and went into different directions.

Dan looked and said, “What they doing?’

Allison kept going.

She was listening for gunfire.

She heard in the distance behind them. But only a couple of shots.

Allison thought, “Wanda.”

She sped up and continued to ride all night.

She told Dan to get in the back of the covered wagon and sleep.

Dan got in the covered wagon and covered up with his blankets and pillows from the church and slept to late the next morning.

Allison pulled over and was looking at her location and mumbling.

She jumped out the wagon and made oatmeal for she and Dan.

She slept for a few hours and told Dan not to leave the wagon.

Dan played around the wagon and several times tried to slip away but stopped.

Allison continued to sped through the next town and the next town.

She made it to a big city in their home state but not to St. Louis.

She pulled in front of a small house with a big back yard.

Dan jumped out behind Allison.

He stood and looked around.

Dan said, “Aunt Allison where are we?”

Allison said, “This is our new home.”

Dan said, “Momma said, St’ Louis.”

Allison said, “We can’t go there for a while.”

It took them ten days to get to their new home.

Allison pulled the wagon and two horses around the back of the house out of sight.

She checked the well and looked at the stales and knew her husband had to build new ones.

Allison went to the backdoor and unlocked the back door.

She told Dan to wait.

She walked in the house and looked around.

Before they went to get Dan and the slaves, the four wagons were full of their family memories.

The kitchen was completely finished.

Many boxes were in the house.

Allison was very tired and it was cold in the house.

She knew they brought coal and thought it was out in the stables

She went out and got a bucket of coal.

Allison allowed Dan to run inside the house.

She put up the curtain or the sitting room.

Allison double locked the doors and went upstairs and looked out over the street.

She made a pallet that she and Dan slept on.

She was worried about her husband and his two brothers.

Each one of the wagons went to different free states and they had a family in each of the wagon.

Allison was praying for those ten days asking GOD to keep all of them safe.

She did not know what to think.

She and Dan worked around the house to make it livable.

They went to the stables and brought the dining table into the house and the big chairs for the sitting room and they hung all the pictures on the wall.

Dan saw his mother’s picture and cried.

Allison tried to comfort Dan but she was miserable also.

Allison and Dan went into the woods and found a tree they decorated for Christmas.

Dan liked eating the ginger bread cookies they were putting on the tree.

Aunt Allison looked to cook and was sharing with Dan her love of cooking.

Aunt Allison and Dan spent hat Christmas together.

Allison and Dan went into the woods and found turkeys. They brought the turkeys back and cleaned them and cooked one for Christmas dinner.

They sat at the table to eat Christmas dinner, but were tired and went o sleep on their pallet by the fireplace.

Allison heard noise in her sleep and slightly cracked her eyes.

She saw a shadow on the porch and wondered what time it was.

She looked at Dan who was sleep and sat up and eased her hand to reach for the shot gun.

Then there was a soft tap on the window at the back.

She wondered if that was her husband.

But she heard two voices.

She eased up and slipped to the back door and peeped out the kitchen window and saw her husband of ten years and his two brothers.

They pulled their wagons around the back of the house.

Dan was still sleep.

Allison set the table for five.

They talked while Dan was sleep.

An hour later Allison woke Dan and introduced him to his uncle and his two brothers.

They sat for Christmas dinner.

Allison put Dan to bed and she closed the door.

Her husband and one of his brothers were washing the dishes and putting them up.

Allison and her husband sat in the big chairs and they continued to talk.

Alison said, “I decided that since I have Dan, I won’t go on any more missions, but will support every effort. I will teach here and put Dan in school here.”

Her husband said, “I will continue to do the missions’ work.”

His two brothers decided they would also.

Vince and Troy had a great Christmas with their mother, father, uncle and aunt.

They prayed every day for the people who help the slaves be free.

Vince and Troy did not see Wanda after that night.

Troy and Vince started at fourteen and sixteen helping the slaves to escape.

Their mother ad father were scared for them.

They knew that was the work GOD called their sons to do.

Their sons were betrayed many times, but some how GOD delivered them.

They would constantly move and go to different states to live.

Vince was caught and lynch.

Troy saw it and shot down all the white men and cut his brother’s body down and rode and brought his body home.

Troy joined the military and went to the civil war and remained in the military until that day.

Troy was assigned to the new military headquarters and would arrive in January of the next year.

Dan completed school and went to the military for fifteen years.

He spent two years travelling the country and spent two years in cooking school.

He has worked for the Stiths for five years.

Dan laid on the floor and sobbed.

He was sobbing so hard that his body was jerking off the floor.

He got on his knees and prayed for his mother, his two brothers, Troy, Vince and the Smiths and the Stiths and especially his Aunt Allison, her husband, her brother and his brothers and the great work they did as representatives of JESUS on this earth.

Dan laid on his pallet and went to sleep until the next morning.

He started thinking about Aunt Allison and her husband.

He went to work the next day.

Thomas was leaving for a week.

Everyone was standing around.

Dan knew something was going on and wondered what.

Jose went into Patrick’s office and got the last telegrams.

He locked the door and was walking through the hall reading the telegrams when he looked up and saw the workers standing around.

He thought, “I have to tell them.”

Thomas was standing by the backdoor with his bag and was looking out the door when Dan rode in and took his horse to the sables.

Thomas thought, “I should have brought my horse out the stables so I could jump on him and leave. It will still only a few minutes to go and get him.”

Jose saw all the workers standing around looking at him.

He realized yesterday when he took Monica to Vivienne’s house to get her things the workers looked up to him.

Jose did not know.

Monica said, “Jose, you are mean to me and some of the others. I don’t want nothing from you but to do a very good for Patrick and Brenda. I have never failed to do my job. That little black woman picked me from the street, took me to get food, which I had not for three days. She brought here and hired and I have been here three years. I like it here. I want to pay Brenda back for giving me food and a place to work so I could earn money.”

Jose’s mind was on all the things he had to do.

He heard some of what Monica was saying.

He turned his head and looked at Monica and said, “Monica are you talking to me?”

Monica threw her hands up in the air and yelled, “Who else is in carriage?”

Monica turned around and looked at every corner of the carriage.

Jose put his hand on his gun.

Monica said, “I will take that gun from you and whip your ass with it.”

Jose moved his hand off his gun and said, “What are going crazy about Monica?”

Monica yelled, “I am not crazy. I was talking to you.”

Jose turned his head and looked away from Monica like she was crazy.

The people on the street saw Jose.

Jose tried to greet the people on the street.

Monica peeped Jose and looked at the people.

She said, “Jose you got people looking at me like I am crazy.”

Jose did not say anything.

They rode to Vivienne.

Jose kept his head turned.

Monica looked at Jose and was getting out the carriage and slipped.

She caught herself.

Jose heard her slipped but did not move.

He was thinking, “What other crazy worker can I send to help Eleanor?”

Monica grabbed the carriage and yelled at Jose as she pulled herself up, “Thank you Jose.”

Jose’s head was still turned across the street and said, “You are welcome.”

Monica rolled her eyes at Jose.

She stood and looked at Jose.

Harriet was sitting in the sitting room and looking out the window and while she was quilting.

She saw Monica and Jose and stood and went to the door and unlocked the door.

She saw Monica nearly hit the ground and Jose kept his head straight.

Harriet thought, “I still did not get a chance to talk to Jose.”

She looked around and said, “I should out there and talk to him.”

Monica was entering the house and heard Harriet talking to herself and said, “Don’t say anything to Jose. Fool.”

Harriet looked at Monica and said, “OK.”

Monica said, “Hello Harriet. Jose nearly made me forget my manners.”

Harriet said, “Why?”

Monica said, “I was trying to tell him he was mean to me and some other workers and hew was not even listening to me.”

Harriet said, “Monica Jose does not ig people.”

Monica said, “He ‘ig’ me.”

Harriet looked t Monica.

Monica went into Sally’s room and got all of her things.

Harriet looked at Monica and said, “You moving?”

Monica said, “No.”

Harriet said, “Why are you taking your things?”

Monica thought, “Heifer.”

Monica walked out Sally’s room and turned to Harriet and said, “Eleanor wants me to come to Philadelphia to help Patrick and Brenda.”

Harriet frowned up and said, “Aren’t they in the hospital? Why would they need help?”

Monica said, “They think Lorraine is dead.”

Harriet’s mouth dropped opened and she touched her chest.

Monica looked at Harriet and thought, “I should not have said that like I don’t care. Lorraine has been kind to me. GOD forgive me and take the hate out of my heart for Jose and me calling Harriet stupid.”

Harriet was at a lost for words.

Monica said. “Bye Harriet.”

She walked out the door.

Harriet fell to her knees.

Monica heard Harriet but kept walking because she had no information on Harriet to bury her.

Jose heard Monica and turned to look at her when he saw Harriet struggling to come to the door.

Jose jumped out the carriage and ran to the house.

Monica saw Jose running towards her and thought he might say something to her.

She turned and saw Harriet falling onto the porch.

She turned and ran back to the house.

Jose picked up Harriet and carried her into the house.

He sat her in the chair.

He was on one knee talking to Harriet.

Harriet looked at Jose and said, “Lorraine?”

Jose looked at Monica.

Monica stood inside the door and looked at Jose.

Jose said, “It was my error telling Monica and Ruth. I should not have said anything until They knew for sure if Lorraine is dead or alive.”

Harriet started crying.

Jose said, “Lorraine and I fight all the time. That is our relationship. But we are friends. I had a sick feeling in my stomach when I took her to the train station the other day.”

Harriet said in between sniffs, “Me too.”

Jose said, “I could not sleep the other night and prayed for whoever it was in danger.”

Harriet nearly whispered and said, “Thank you Jose for praying. I love Lorraine. She is hard but she wants to be loved.”

Jose said, “I know. I will keep in touch with Eleanor through Telegrams. I will come and let you know if Lorraine is no longer with us, so you can prepare yourself. If I don’t come back you continue to pray, because God would have given us a fighting chance to save her.”

Harriet said, “Thank you. She just wants to be loved.”

Harriet leaned over in the chair and boohooed.

Monica stood against the door and thought, “Something else I have to repent of.”

Jose stood and patted Harriet on her head.

He breathed hard and looked around the house he helped Steven Dan and Allen repair.

He looked at Monica who was standing and watching he and Harriet.

Jose said, “Monica let’s go.”

Monica walked out the door and Jose closed the door behind them.

They heard Harriet squalling.

Jose exhaled as he walked to the carriage.

Monica stopped in the yard and looked at Jose as he passed her.

Jose said, “Monica, why did you tell Harriet that was Lorraine was dead when we pray she is not. The kids are going to die.”

Monica slowly walked to the carriage with all of her belongings.

Jose was in the carriage ad thought, “Let me show this cow how to treat people you don’t like. She is making me not like her at all.”

He stepped out the carriage and walked to Monica and reached for her belongings and said, “May I?”

Monica knew Jose was trying to teach her etiquette.

She reached him her belongings and stepped in the carriage.

Jose caught her by the elbow.

They rode back to the house in silence.

Jose said, “Monica is that all your belongings?”

Monica was sitting with her arms folded and said. “Yes.”

Jose sighed.

Monica looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Most of you live in rooms and some of you are full time workers. I just don’t understand. The house let most of you use their carriages to get back and forth to work. You eat at least one meal there. You Monica stay at least three nights at the house.”

Jose looked at Monica from head to toe.

Monica said, “Why we look poor.”

Jose said, “Look poor.”

Monica said, “Jose we all know you are rich.”

Jose said, “Monica that is my mother and father’s money. They worked very hard to get that money. I finished the military academy in the capitol ten years ago. I left the capitol and lived all over the state for five years. I went to cooking school and finished and came to Cedartown looking for a coo’s job and was hired by Brenda and Eleanor. Eleanor and I have fist fought. Patrick and Brenda treated me and Eleanor on an equal basis. They chastise me and Eleanor.”

Monica laughed.

Jose looked at Monica.

He said, “Yes Monica my parents have money and I was homeless most of those five years and lived in the woods and fields and rode on the trains. I could have returned home and live lavishly but I refused to live on anybody. When I started working for Brenda and Eleanor I lived in a room. But I took my weekly pay and paid for my room, gave it to my many women and drank. But I always bought me a new pair of shoes and underwear and a shave each month.”

Monica stared at Jose.

Jose looked at Monica.

He said, “I wore a uniform like you. I didn’t have to buy clothes. But I bought me a few shirts and pairs of pants.”

Monica said, “You are calling us stupid.”

Jose said, “No dumb.”

Monica turned red.

Jose said, “You have an opportunity to put a dollar aside each pay and buy you a pair of boots once per month…”

He looked down at Monica’s boots.

Monica was thinking.

She thought, He is right. I buy food. I don’t need to buy food I can eat there. I buy lwhiskey that no one knows I do. I drink heavily on the way home. But now it is too cold to walk home and drink”

Jose said, “Monica are you mad enough with me to do something about your state?’

Monica sighed and rolled her arms because of the cold.

Jose reached behind him and handed her the blanket.

She said, “Thank you.”

She unfolded the blanket and wrapped it around her.”

Monica said, “I’ll think on that three day train ride.”

Jose said, “They were able to cut a few hours off with those larger and wider tracks Steven told them to put down.”

Monica said, “I know Nadine has to be proud of that boy.”

Jose turned his head because he still has not decided whether to fire Nadine of not. She was off for a week and that was suppose to give him time to think about her not Lorraine. And truly not a funeral.

Jose said, “Monica, Eleanor requested you. Lorraine nor Meredith is available. The Stiths don’t trust Ruth and Nadine anymore because of how they acted about the anniversary ball. Brenda won’t say anything, but Eleanor will.”

Monica looked at Jose.

Jose looked at Monica and said, “Monica you look poor. You work for one of the richest families in this country and look at your boots. They are all worn and torn. Why did you bring all of your belongings from Harriet?”

Monica said, “I don’t want to go back.”

Jose looked at her and said, “Why?”

Monica said, “Because I call Harriet stupid.”

Jose said, “Really?’

Monica hit at Jose.

Jose said, “You can leave your belongings in the spatre room next to me. Take your uniform nd undies and wear your best casual outfit.”

Monica said, “No. I have two outfits. One is a very good casual outfit and the other is a very nice church suit.”

Jose said, “You went on the date with Stephen did it go well?”

Monica half smiled.

Jose looked at her.

He said, “I don’t know anything about Stephen and Bryce, but they are Patrick’s best friends. They are well dressed and like to go out.”

Monica looked at Jose and said, “I don’t fit?”

Jose said, “Look Monica I did not say that. I said exactly what I meant. Don’t try that back woods mind set with me.”

Monica saw Jose was mean because he felt they should use the opportunity to do better.

Jose said, “Suppose Stephen comes to Christmas dinner and you are his date?”

Monica’s mouth dropped open in surprise.

Jose said, “We don’t know what this holiday is going to be.”

Monica said, “I do have a new pair of boots that I wore once this week to lunch with Stephen.”

Jose said, “Your right Monica, don’t wear your best outfit. Because I believe that man was at the train station to pick up rich looking women.”

Monica said, “We all know Lorraine love her men.”

Jose was quiet.

Monica looked at Jose’s worried face and said, “Jose, I will do my job. I will do it well. I will buy me another pair of boots because I don’t want Eleanor to fuss at me.”

Jose said, “I have to figure out how to pay you. You will be in first class and your food and board are included. There will be a carriage to take you straight to the hospital. When you get to the hospital Brenda and Patrick will tell you what to do.”

They pulled in the backyard of the house.

Ruth, Theresa, Mellissa and Rita were leaving with Stephen.

Jose let Monica out and she got her things and spoke to the workers and went in the house to the room that Jose told her to put her belongings in.

Veronica, Samantha and Briana were leaving and Allen was taking those three home.

Jose looked around the house.

He saw Gary riding his horse into the yard.

Jose said, “Monica can move out there, but she was not paying anything with Harriet. I wonder how Saly and Vivienne are doing.”

Eleanor and the children arrived in Philadelphia around six thirty pm. There were two carriages wating for them.

They stood and waited for Shirley’s bags to be placed in her carriage.

Shirley got in her carriage.

Her heart was hurting.

Eleanor and the four boys got in one carriage.

Jose did not know the telegram for the hospital, so he sent a telegram to the bone hospital and asked Debra to give the telegram to Eleanor. They wanted her to send Lorraine’s state and Monica would be on the next train.

Debra was at the bank that afternoon.

She returned and to the hospital and paid all the workers.

The grounds keepers and cooks were finishing work for the day.

The cooks made soup and cornbread for dinner and fresh fruit.

The dishwashers had to collect the dishes and wash them.

Debra paid the security men.

Dr. Greene looked up from his charts.

He and Dr. Woodson continued their rounds.

Meredith was taking care of Leon.

She was pleased with his progress.

Leon said, “Will I be home for Christmas?”

Meredith said, “No. Maybe by Easter.”

Leon said, “Resurrection. New Life.”

Meredith grinned.

She finished attending to Leon and was leaving his room.

Debra ran out of the administrator’s office with the telegram in her hand.

Meredith saw Debra and said, “Debra! What is wrong?”

The doctors were on the other side of the hall getting ready to check on Sally.

Ryan had performed the surgery to correct her eyes and ears.

Vivienne was with her every step of the way.

The dentist was working on Sally’s mouth.

He pulled most of her teeth at the top of her mouth.

She was healing slow to the dentist.

He needed to pull the very bad teeth at the bottom of her mouth.

Vivienne saw a great difference in Sally’s appearance.

The nurses showed Vivienne how to give Sally’s massages.

Vivienne gave Sally a massage twice a day.

Debra was upset and Meredith ran behind her.

Dr. Greene looked at Debra.

Dr. Woodson looked at Debra and reached for the telegram.

Debra said, “Lorraine.”

Vivienne heard a crying Debra.

She patted Sally and walked outside the room.

Dr. Ralph looked at Debra.

He looked at Dr. Woodson who was reading the telegram.

Meredith ran to the other side and stood to hear about her friend Lorraine.

Dr. Greene watched his wife Debra.

He slowly turned to look at r. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson held his head down.

Dr. Ralph’s heart sunk.

Dr. Greene took the telegram from Bradley and read it over and over.

He said, “Where did Felipe and Charles rush to this morning?”

Meredith said, “To the south hospital for a critical care patient they did not know was alive or dead.”

Dr. Ralph stood.

Dr. Greene looked at Dr. Ralph.

Meredith said, “I have attended to Leon all afternoon. I attended Spencer this morning. I am going to Felipe. He may need my help.”

Vivienne said, “I am going to Lorraine.”

She stepped in and kissed Sally on the forehead and said, “Baby I have to go and see about a friend. I will be back.”

Sally nodded her head for yes.

She trusted Vivienne.

Vivienne grabbed her hat and coat and ran behind Meredith.

Dr. Ralph ran behind Meredith and Vivienne.

He jumped in the back of the carriage.

Meredith sped to the hospital. The hospital was forty-five minutes from the bone hospital but Meredith was speeding in the horse and carriage.

She pulled up at the hospital in thirty minutes.

Brenda and Patrick were sitting in the lobby when they saw a very pregnant Meredith rush into the hospital with a distraught Vivienne.

Finally, Dr. Ralph slowly walked in the lobby.

The nurses looked at Dr. Ralph.

Hutch walked out the room when Meredith and Vivienne were rushing to it.

He saw Dr. Ralph and grabbed Meredith and Vivienne and said, “Jason you three come over here.”

Dr. Ralph had his doctor’s coat on and the nurses were looking at this extremely built doctor they had not seen before.

Patrick and Brenda stood.

Hutch said, “Felipe and Charles are trying to get Lorraine to breathe. We got out a lot of water from her lungs.”

Vivienne’s lips were quivering and said, “Lungs? What happened to her?’

Hutch looked at Jason and said, “We don’t know exactly but some railroad workers pulled her out a freezing river in New York and took her to the train and the conductor brought her here today.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Too much time. Why didn’t they take her to a hospital in New York. They have some good hospitals.”

Patrick said, “The workers said she was dead and brought her here because someone knew me and Brenda were at this hospital.”

Vivienne went and sat.

She was mumbling to herself.

Jason said, “Lorraine. Why?”

Meredith went and sat next to Vivienne.

Brenda looked at Meredith and walked over to her and Vivienne.

Patrick stood with the doctors and talked.

Hutch went and sat in the lounge area that Dennis made for Eleanor.

Dr. Ralph went int the room with Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph was grieved and stood and watched Ryan and the nurses work on Lorraine.

Felipe and Charles stood and watch they would work on Lorraine every thirty minutes.

They looked and saw Jason and walked to him.

He said, “I want to stay here.”

Ryan and the nurses were working on Lorraine.

He saw Lorraine’s fluttered.

Ryan said, “Jason. Come and talk to Lorraine.”

Felipe and Charles looked back at Ryan.

Jason shook his head for no.

Ryan became angry and said, “She fluttered her eyes at your voice.”

The two nurses were exhausted and weak.

Ryan told the nurses to leave and go and rest and send him two more nurses that can perform the therapy on Lorraine.

He told Jason, “If you are going to be selfish leave.”

Felipe and Charles walked out for the thirty minutes break.

Felipe looked in the lobby and saw Meredith.

Meredith ran to Felipe.

Charles saw Vivienne.

She walked to Charles.

Meredith was being held by Felipe when her baby kicked hard.

Felipe felt the baby kick.

He looked at Meredith and said, “Meredith?’

Meredith said, “How is Lorraine?”

Felipe said, “I think she can come back. She recognized Jason’s voice. Ryan told him to talk to her and he would not. Ryan told him to leave.”

Meredith walked into the room.

The nurses were coming out.

Meredith walked to Lorraine’s bed and held her hand and said, “Doctor what you want me to do?”

Ryan told Meredith what the procedure he was about to perform on Lorraine.

Meredith looked at Ryan and looked down at Lorraine.

She did not look at Jason standing at the back of the room.

Meredith said, “Lorraine, this is Meredith. You need to open your eyes and let us help you. My baby is coming soon and you are suppose to be his godmother. You will miss his birth and Christening…”

Ryan looked at Meredith and said, “Where is Felipe?”

Meredith said, “In the lobby.”

Two nurses walked in the room.

Ryan told them what to do.

The nurses walked to the bed and began to help Meredith.

Ryan stepped back and stretched his back and arms.

He looked at Dr. Ralph and walked out the door.

Ryan was tired.

He kneeled on the floor and did push ups to give him energy.

Dr. Greene and Dr. Woodson completed their rounds at the regular time.

Sally was the last patient they saw for the day.

They gave her therapy and told the nurses to give her a warm bath and total body massage.

Sally was mad, but she liked the massages and the warm bath.

Vivienne always put the bath oil Lorraine made in her tub.

The nurse looked at the dresser by the window and said, “Sally which one you want to smell like tonight?”

Sally yelled, “I don’t care.”

Dr. Greene said, “Ok Shirley. Apologize to Miss Dilliard. She did not do anything wrong to you.”

Sally cried and said, “Miss Dilliard I am sorry, but I hurt.”

Dr. Woodson said, “It may hurt Sally, but you are really doing well.”

Sally cried.

Miss Dilliard said, “I think milk and honey tonight.”

She walked out Sally’s room and went and had the dish washers to heat a tub of water for Sally.

The dish washers always heat more water for the nurses to use throughout the night.

Dr. Greene shook Sally’s foot and he and Dr. Woodson walked out her room and wrote notes in her chart.

Dr. Greene stretched and gave Dr. Woodson Sally’s chart.

Debra left early and went and picked up Barry and stopped and got food and took it home.

She feed Barry and put him to sleep while Tony was walking in the door.

Debra looked at Dr. green end closed Barry’s door.

Dr. Greene smiled.

Debra walked to Tony and kissed him and hugged him.

He knew she was grieved over Lorraine.

Tony put away his coat, hat, scarf and gloves and washed.

He walked to the table and kissed Debra on her head.

She smiled and made him a plate and he sat and ate dinner.

Dinner tried to smile at Tony.

He said, “I did not hear anything about her condition when I left the hospital.”

Debra said, “Is Bradley going to see what happened?”

Dr. Greene said, “I did not ask him. But he is on call tonight. He will not leave the hospital.”

Dr. Greene looked at Debra.

He was hesitant but said, “Is there something wrong at the hospital?”

Debra shook her head and said, “No.”

Dr. Greene giggled and ate his vegetables.

Debra looked at him.

He looked at her and said, “Sally is another Shirley.”

Debra said, “How so?”

Dr. Greene said, ”She is mean after therapy and rude. I might need to move her from Shirley’s room and put her somewhere else.”

Debra laughed.

She looked around the house.

She had folded her arms and placed them on the table.

Dr. Greene looked at her arms and her strange behavior.

Miss Dilliard made Sally’s bath and she and another nurse put Sally in the tub of warm water.

Miss Dilliard put the bath oil in the tub.

Sally bathed herself and lingered a little longer in the tub.

Nurse Dilliard and the other nurse took Sally out the tub and dried her off and put her on a clean nightgown.

Sally was able to start brushing her hair.

Nurse Dilliard watched her as she and the other nurse took the tub of water and emptied it.

Dr. Woodson was sitting on the other side next to the hospital administrator’s office.

He sat there in case any telegrams came in.

Dr. Woodson stood and walked to the front door and locked it.

The nurses would unlock the door and let out visitors.

Dr. Woodson turned and walked from the door.

Eleanor and children passed and they looked at the bone hospital.

They reached the south hospital in an hour after they left the train station.

Dr. Felipe and Dr. Charles returned to the room and started their procedures on Lorraine.

They looked at Jason, standing in the back of the room.

Meredith stepped back.

Felipe looked at Meredith and continue his work.

Meredith stood in the back and watched Felipe and Charles.

Hutch and Ryan took a brief nap.

Vivienne and Brenda and Patrick were sitting together.

They saw two carriages pull up.

Michael and Thomas jumped out the carriage and ran into the lobby.

Brenda and Patrick stood.

Michael and Thomas were jumping they wanted to go to Lorraine.

Ryan cracked his eye and said, “No.”

Eleanor and Percy ran in the lobby.

Bruce waited for Shirley and they rushed into the lobby.

Ryan and Hutch were exhausted.

They could not move but were out cold on the sofa.

Patrick and Brenda walked to their daughter and her children.

Patrick said, “Lorraine was dead when they brought her in. But GOD is reviving her. Her eyes are fluttering. Dr. Ralph is in there but he won’t talk to her. Felipe and Charles are working on her heart, lungs and brain.”

Thomas was nervous.

He said, “I remembered what happened to me.”

Ryan lifted up his head.

Hutch was too tired to raise himself up.

Bruce saw Vivienne looking at them.

He walked over to her and said, “Hello Miss Vivienne. How are you doing?

Vivienne smiled and said, “Better.”

Bruce said, “How is Sally?”

Vivienne said, “Much better and she be taking her bath now.”

Thomas eased away from Eleanor and walked to Vivienne and Bruce.

Brenda saw Bruce talking to Vivienne.

She remembered that Bruce paid for Sally to go to the bone hospital.

She wanted to ask Vivienne how was Sally doing but was trying to comfort Shirley and Eleanor.

Ryan was trying to get up.

Hutch was exhausted.

Michael saw Thomas’ hand signal.

He eased to Vivienne.

He and Thomas ran to the room with Lorraine and ran straight to her bed.

Dr. Felipe and Dr. Charles did not stop to tell them to leave.

Dr. Ralph was standing on the back wall with Meredith.

Meredith blinked but did not tell them to leave.

Ryan finally sat up and said, “Eleanor get them.”

Eleanor looked at Ryan and walked in the room with Michael and Thomas.

Ryan looked at Eleanor as the door closed.

He said, “Damn.”

Ryan said, “All of you go and sit down.”

Shirley looked at Ryan.

Ryan said, “Don’t look at me. I can outrun you.”

Shirley said, “Let’s see.”

Shirley ran to the room.

Ryan fell on his knees.

Patrick and Brenda ran to him and helped him up.

Bruce and Percy stayed with Vivienne.

Eleanor and Shirley were standing behind Michael and Thomas.

Ryan walked in and looked around the room.

Dr. Charles saw Thomas and remembered him. That he went through the same thing.

Patrick and Brenda stood in the back with Meredith and Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Charles said, “Come Thomas and speak to Lorraine. I believe she can hear.”

Michael rushed passed Thomas.

He grabbed Lorraine’s arm and said, “Pal I told you I will be with you to the end. You told me you would be with me until the end. If you leave now you will not be with me until the end.”

Dr. Charles looked at Michael.

Thomas eased up behind Michael and softly touched Lorraine’s hand.

Lorraine squeezed his hand.

Dr. Felipe jumped for excitement.

Dr. Charles looked at Thomas and back at Lorraine and grinned.

Eleanor was crying.

Shirley was crying.

Patrick could see Lorraine’s face but not what just happened.

Meredith was looking and saw Thomas touch Lorraine’s hand but not what Felipe jump.

Lorraine’s eyes fluttered.

Ryan walked up beside Felipe to watch Lorraine.

Hutch walked in the room.

He said, “All of you out. Dr. Wade set up the dining room for you tonight. The nurse outside will show you where it is.”

Dr. Ralph, Brenda, Patrick walked out.

Bruce, Percy and Vivienne walked to the dining room.

Thomas bent down and kissed Lorraine’s hand.

Michael said, “Pal I’ll be right outside. Like you did me.”

Lorraine smiled.

Ryan and Hutch saw her.

Eleanor and Shirley saw her.

Thomas and Michael smiled back at Lorraine.

They turned to walk out for Ryan and Hutch to work on Lorraine.

Meredith walked to them.

Michael and Thomas hugged Meredith.

Felipe wanted to tell them no, but he knew Meredith would get angry.

Michael and Thomas pulled two chairs by the door.

Eleanor and Shirley sat across the lobby on the sofa.

Meredith walked to the dining room.

She and Vivienne looked for food and found none.

Patrick said, “Meredith you have not eaten all day?”

Meredith said, “I had a toast for breakfast, so I had something to eat.”

Brenda said, “I want something to eat.”

Bruce said, “Grandma, momma told the cook on the train to cook and bring food here tonight and tomorrow morning.”

The cook and his assistant walked in the hospital with two large picnic baskets apiece.

Michael was getting settled in his chair.

He raised up and said, “I smell lamb chops.”

Eleanor thought Michael was crazy.

She said, “If you smell anything, it better be one lamb chop. I’ll talk to you later about that hand signal.”

Thomas looked at Eleanor and made no response.

Michael looked at the cook.

The walked to Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “No I am not hungry.”

Shirley was leaning on Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Shirley you need to eat.”

Shirley sat up and reached for a plate.

The cook said, “Ma am, how is Lorraine?”

Eleanor looked at the cook.

He said, “She is just a good time friend. I met her when she was coming back from when the boys were in the hospital here. She and Nadine.”

Eleanor said, “We should know something more in the morning.”

The cook said, “I cooked what was left on the train, because that train is out of service to be cleaned for the holidays.”

Eleanor raised her head and turned it from side to side as she was thinking.

Shirley looked at her.

Patrick was walking out the dining room.

The nurses were looking at the cook.

They knew not to say anything to the people that were in the lobby.

Shirley said, “What do you have?”

The cook lifted up a plate and said, “This is liver and mashed potatoes and gravy.”

Patrick walked over and said, “Give me that.”

Shirley said, “Grandpa? How do you know I didn’t want that?’

Michael rolled his eyes at Shirley.

Eleanor saw him.

Patrick plopped down between Eleanor and Shirley.

The cook gave Patrick a fork and napkin.

He said, “Lamb chop and green beans.

Michael jumped and walked over to the cook and reached for the plate.

The cook gave Michael a fork and napkin.

He looked at Thomas and said, “I have two fried chickens and mashed potatoes and gravy.”

Shirley said, “Sir I was next.”

The cook said, “I have something soft for you.”

Patrick looked at the cook.

He took a mouthful of the liver and gravy and looked at Eleanor and said, “I saw you turning your head when he said, the train would be out of service. It is usually out of service for a week.”

Eleanor said, “Why can’t we stand in the owner’s suite? I don’t want to stay in Bruce’s hotel.”

Patrick ate the mashed potatoes and gravy and said, “This is good.”

He said to the cook, “You have to give the recipe for this gravy to my chef.”

Brenda walked out the dining room to talk to Patrick about food.

She smelled the food and saw Patrick eating.

She walked over to the cook and said, “I see my selfish husband is eating.”

The cook said, “These are two fried chicken dinners with rice and gravy.”

Brenda said, “Give me those. I’ll be back.”

The cook and his assistant look backwards to see how many people.

Eleanor said, “Thomas I need you to eat.”

Benda walked in the dining room and gave Vivienne and Meredith the fried chicken.

The assistant put down his basket.

The cook opened it up and reached Shirley a cup of tomato soup and a piece of cornbread.

Shirley grinned.

Eleanor and Brenda loved soups.

Eleanor said, “You have some more soups?”

The cook said, “This is chicken and vegetables and this is beef and vegetables.”

Brenda was walking out the dining room and heard soups.

She said, “Give me the beef. Give Eleanor the chicken.”

Eleanor reached for the soup.

He gave her a spoon and napkin.

The cook reached Brenda the beef soup.

Brenda said, “I have to serve everyone else. What do you have?”

The cook said, “Three chicken pies.”

Patrick stopped eating his beef liver and drooled over the chicken pies.

Shirley looked at the pies.

Thomas walked over and reached for a chicken pie.

Eleanor smiled at him.

The cook reached Thomas a chicken pie with green beans.

Thomas whispered, “Thank you.”

Brenda hugged Thomas.

He had his head down.

He walked back to Michael who was enjoying his lamb chop and green beans.

Michael did not like starches, but for French fried potatoes.

They serve him double portions of vegetables.

Brenda said, “Give me those other two chicken pies.

She took them in the dining room and gave them to Bruce and Percy.

They looked at the chicken pies first and then at Brenda and said, “What is this?”

Brenda said, “It’s chicken and vegetables in a pie?’

Percy said, “What not chicken and vegetables and a biscuit.:

Dr. Ralph was in his thoughts about Lorraine.

He snickered.

Bruce and Percy looked at Dr. Ralph.

Percy handed his plate back to Brenda.

Brenda handed the plate to Dr. Ralph.

He took the plate, fork and napkin.

The cook said, “I have two fried pork chops with potatoes.”

Bruce hesitantly taste the chicken pie and turned to Percy and said, “It’s good Percy.”

Percy looked back at Dr. Ralph.

Meredith ate half of her food and was saving the other half for Felipe.

Brenda walked in and had two fried pork chop dinners.

She gave one to Percy who was delighted.

The cook stood and walked in the dining room.

He saw everyone was eating and said, “I have three spaghetti and meatballs dinner and blue berry pies.”

He took out all the food and placed on the table by Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph took a slice of pie.

He slowly ate.

He liked the chicken pie with all the vegetables.

Brenda counted and said, “That should be it. There are four doctors and four plates.”

Brenda sat and talked with Meredith and Vivienne.

She left and walked upstairs to their room and went to bed.

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

The cook and his assistant carried back to the train a lot of the dishes.

Eleanor looked at the nurses and told the cook, “Bring a bigger breakfast tomorrow.”

The cook said, “I noticed the nurses.”

Charles and Felipe walked out Lorraine’s room and went to the dining room.

Meredith showed them the food.

They both took the spaghetti and meatballs.

They sat with Dr. Ralph and ate.

They did not say anything about Lorraine.

Felipe and Charles rested for another thirty minutes.

Felipe walked to Meredith and said, “Meredith, please go home. I can’t worry about you. Go home and get in the bed and get a good night’s sleep. I’ll sleep on this sofa. I will take care of Lorraine.”

Dr. Charles said, “Vivienne, leave with Meredith and take her back to the hospital.”

Vivienne looked at Dr. Charles.

She left with Meredith.

Meredith dropped Vivienne at the hospital.

Vivienne went to Sally and pulled out the mattress and made her bed.

She kneeled and prayed.

Sally listened. She was pretending to be sleep because she was mad.

Vivienne kissed Sally on the head and went to bed.

Meredith went home.

She unhooked the horses and gave them feed and water.

She ran inside and put coal on the fireplace.

Meredith changed into her nightgown and got on her knees and prayed.

Percy walked out the dining room.

He was looking for Brenda.

Patrick saw him and said, “Percy what you want?”

Percy said, “Grandma?”

Patrick said, “She is in room two o one.”

Percy went upstairs and saw Brenda sleep.

He pulled off his boots and got in the bed with a sleeping Brenda.

Michael and Thomas heard Meredith leaving.

They ran and hugged her.

Felipe walked Meredith to the door.

Felipe walked Vivienne and Meredith to the carriage and helped Meredith in the seat.

Michael and Thomas did not leave the door to Lorraine’s room.

Eleanor was falling asleep on the sofa.

Shirley was leaning on Patrick’s shoulder sleeping.

Bruce walked out the dining room looking for Percy.

Patrick was watching Thomas and Michael. He saw Bruce looking around.

Bruce looked at Michael and Thomas.

Thomas and Michael looked at him.

Patrick said, “Bruce, Percy is upstairs with your grandma. They are in room two o one.”

Bruce looked at his momma and Shirley and said, to Patrick, “Thank you.”

Patrick was shocked that Bruce said, ‘thank you.’

Patrick watched Bruce slowly walk up the stairs.

Michael and Thomas watched Bruce walk up the stairs.

Patrick looked at Thomas and Michael.

He said, “Let’s pray.”

Michael looked at Patrick.

Thomas said, “Go ahead grandpa.”

Patrick begin to pray and said, “Lord GOD Almighty help Lorraine. YOU brought her back to us today, let her continue to want to come back not only to us but so she can learn more about YOU and serve YOU and work out her soul salvation with fear and trembling. Let her repent of all sins she committed and dedicate her spirit and life to YOU. In JESUS’ name.”

Michael was sleepy and said, “Grandpa pray they let us back in school. We are worried.”

Eleanor heard Michael but she did not move.

Patrick said, “Michael you are big enough to pray for yourself. You and Thomas.”

Thomas said, “HE does not know us.”

Patrick was stunned and said, “Good GOD.”

One of the nurses walked through the lobby and looked at Thomas.

Patrick said, “You are right Thomas. You have to know GOD for yourself. HE helps you to know HIM and JESUS, so you want to be with THEM and be good and do what is right. The LORD GOD Almighty and JESUS the Christ, HIS Son will help you every day of your life to be more like THEM and especially JESUS our Savior.”

Eleanor begin to stir.

Michael and Thomas looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor sat up straight.

Shirley was twisting on the sofa.

Michael said, “Can HE make me smart?”

Patrick said, “Yes.”

Thomas said, “Me too?”

Patrick said, Absolutely.”

Michael said, “What about Lorraine?”

Patrick said, “What about Lorraine?”

Michael said, “She prays all the time but bad things always happen to her.”

Patrick said, “She has to pray harder and we have to pray harder.”

Thomas looked at Eleanor and said, “Grandpa how do we get to know GOD so HE can hear us.”

Patrick shook Shirley and woke her.

He took her hand.

Shirley sat up and looked at Patrick and around, she thought they had bad news about Lorraine.

Patrick looked at Eleanor and said, “Get Shirley’s hand.”

He looked at Thomas and Michael and said, “Come here.”

Thomas and Michael swerve a little and said, “We can’t.”

The nurse looked at Thomas.

Michael said, “We told Lorraine we would be by her door.”

Eleanor stood and was holding Shirley’s hand walked to Thomas and Michael.

Patrick stood and walked to Thomas and Michael.

Patrick said, ”Repeat after me. LORD GOD Almighty forgive me of my sins.”

Eleanor, Shirley, Michael and Thomas repeated after Patrick.

Patrick said, “YOU sent YOUR only son into the earth to redeem us.”

They all repeated.

Patrick said, “JESUS died for my sins.”

They all repeated.

Patrick said, “JESUS shed all of HIS holy blood to wash away our sins and to redeem us.”

They all repeated.

Patrick said, “I accept JESUS YOUR son as the CHRIST our SAVIOR and REDEEMER.”

They all repeated.

Patrick said, “Thank YOU LORD GOD Almighty. Help me every day to be YOUR child.”

Brenda, Percy and Bruce were standing near the stairway and repeated after Patrick.

The nurses clapped.

Patrick looked over at the nurses.

Dr. Ralph walked out the dining room and stood and repeated the sinner’s prayer along with them.

Shirley said, “I don’t feel any different.”

Michael said, “Grandpa S A I D it is growing every day.”

Brenda said, “Now Michael apologize to Shirley. You have to work everyday to forgive Shirley. So GOD and JESUS can forgive you of bad things and sins you committed.”

Thomas said, “GOD forgives us when we forgive people for the bad things they do against us?”

Brenda said, “Yes Thomas.”

Ryan walked out Lorraine’s room and looked at everybody standing around.

He did not see any one missing or on the floor.

He went to the sofa in the lobby and laid down.

Hutch walked out of Lorraine’s room and saw Ryan laid out on the sofa.

He walked into the dining room and laid on one of the sofas.

The nurses were hushing over Dr. Ralph.

Brenda saw the nurses and thought, “Heifers.”

Bruce and Percy went in the dining room and laid on the other sofa.

Brenda, Patrick, Eleanor and Shirley sat on the other sofa in the lobby.

Michael said, “Momma.”

Eleanor looked at Michael and said, “What Michael?”

Shirley looked at Michael.

Brenda thought, “GOD I hope that boy don’t say anything about Shirley.”

Michael said, “Can I chose who I want to forgive for bad things they did to me?”

Eleanor looked at Michael.

Ryan was laying on his stomach and looked at Michael.

Patrick knew he was talking about Shirley.

Eleanor said, “Like what Michael.?”

Michael said, “Do I have to pay my gambling debt to the men at my school or just forgive them for cheating me?”

Eleanor’s mouth dropped open.

Patrick did not know how to respond to Michael.

Brenda thought, “I need to whip him.”

Shirley thought, “I’m glad he wasn’t talking about me.”

Thomas looked at everyone’s facial expressions and did not say anything.”

Hutch heard Michael as he was falling asleep.

Ryan flipped on his back and put his left arm over his eyes to block the light.

Ryan hollered and turned over and looked at Michael and said, “Stop Michael! You are a child and you are gambling with grown men. How much do you owe them?”  
Michael said, “A hundred dollars plus interest.”

Ryan’s mouth dropped open.

He said, “They actually expect you to pay them the money?”

Michael said, “Yes sir.”

Ryan was on his elbow and looked at Michael.

He laid down and stared at Michael until he went to sleep.

Eleanor sat and looked at Michael.

Thomas whispered to Michael and said, “You should not have asked momma that? Look at her looking at you.”

Michael whispered to Thomas, “It was either that or do I go to hell for hating Shirley.”

Thomas nodded his head at Michael.

Brenda frowned up because she could not hear all what Thomas and Michael were saying.

Eleanor was reading their lips like Joseph taught her.

He told Eleanor it was impolite and improper to ask someone to repeat what they said, so they read lips.

Eleanor said, “Michael you don’t air our dirty laundry before people.”

Michael said, “It’s Ryan. He’s family.”

Ryan turned his back to the lobby.

Ryan said, “Not for a hundred dollars and interest.”

Brenda laughed.

Patrick said, “Michael you have a gambling problem.”

Ryan said, “Really?”

Michael said, “I know. I love it like I love lamb chops.”

Ryan fell off the sofa laughing.

He looked at Michael and stood.

He passed Michael and said, “Lorraine better get better soon. Nobody is going to be taking you to gambling quitting classes but her.”

Michael looked up at Ryan and poked out his bottom lip and cried.

Thomas reached over and grabbed Michael and hugged him.

Ryan walked in the room to Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph walked and patted Michael on his back and walked in the room to Lorraine.

Ryan looked at Lorraine.

Felipe and Charles were finishing their therapy and decided they would repeat it in an hour instead of thirty minutes.

Dr. Ralph looked at a still Lorraine.

He said, “Lorraine. What were you doing?”

He touched her foot. Which had started to bend down.

Dr. Ralph looked at her feet.

Charles said, “Don’t look at what you see but at what it is suppose to be.”

Dr. Ralph looked at him and back to Lorraine.

Hutch was sleep.

Felipe walked out and went to the lobby sofa and saw Michael crying.

He laid down and went to sleep.

Dr. Ralph said, “Ryan. Michael had a nervous breakdown…”

Ryan was leaned over Lorraine and turned his head and frowned up and could not formulate his words.

Dr. Ralph said, “He is using gambling as a behavior from that nervous breakdown.”

Ryan said, “Bruce?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley.”

Ryan shook his head and said, “I did not know. I thought it was spoiled rich kids trying to find something to do.”

Charles walked out the room and saw Felipe laid out on one sofa.

He turned and walked in the dining room and laid on the sofa Hutch was getting up from.

The four doctors rotated treatments for Lorraine throughout the night.

Michael and Thomas fell asleep holding each other.

Eleanor cried.

Patrick and Brenda looked at them.

Shirley laid her head in Patrick’s lap and went to sleep.

Ryan walked out Lorraine’s room with Hutch.

They stared at Michael and Thomas holding each other and sleep.

Ryan looked at Eleanor and said, “Did they do that as babies?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Ryan said, “I don’t want anymore.”

He looked at Shirley.

He and Hutch found them a separate sofas to sleep on.

Brenda was awake all through the night.

She and Patrick.

They were use to not sleeping and being still.

The day shift nurses were coming to work. The night shift nurses were packing up to leave for the week-end.

Monica was at the train station early because Jose had to go to the bank and get her money.

He did not know how much to give her.

Jose decided to give her daily salary and overtime.

He thought, “Me and Eleanor have to fight later.”

Monica sat in the rest stop from the cold to stay warm until Jose returned.

The cook and his two assistants brought in several picnic baskets.

Brenda watched the men.

Michael smelled his lamb chop.

He muttered, “Lamb chop.”

Eleanor rolled her eyes at Michael.

Brenda and Patrick looked at Michael in amazement.

Michael begin to stretch and yawn.

Brenda looked at the nurse and said, “Ma am can we have hot water and wash clothes?”

The nurse said, “Yes.”

She went down the hall and returned with a cart and five wash basins and washcloths.

Ryan woke to the smell of bacon.

He and Michael were the first up and rushing to the wash basins.

Thomas, Bruce and Brenda were next.

The cook made several quiche, eggs benedicts, bacon, sausage and fruit.

Eleanor said, “You are invited to breakfast.”

Ryan got quiche, bacon, a biscuit and orange juice.

Michael had lamb chop and grits and a biscuit and orange juice.

One of the nurses looked at Michael and said, “I love lamb chops.”

Michael rolled his eyes at the nurse and went back to his chair.

Ryan was tickle at Michael’s attitude about his food.

Thomas was waking and looked at Michael and then the people.

Eleanor walked over and hugged Thomas and Michael.

She said, “We leave at noon to go to the train. Thomas eat. Let’s go and wash our faces.”

Thomas shook his head for no.

Eleanor bent down and said, “Thomas you will eat something this morning.”

She reached for his hand and he took Eleanor’s hand and they walked to the wash basins.

Percy and Bruce were walking from the wash basins.

Eleanor went and got hot water for the rest of them.

Brenda was eating sausages, grits and quiche.

She had a cup of black coffee.

Hutch had fruit, a biscuit and grits.

Patrick said, “I want quiche, fruit and bacon.”

Percy walked to the cook and said, “Quiche, bacon and two biscuits and strawberry jam.”

The cook made Percy’s plate and put two slices of bacon on his plate.

Percy stared at the two pieces of bacon.

Ryan was enjoying his plate of food.

He watched Percy.

The cook placed another strip of bacon on Percy’s plate.

Percy stared at the cook.

Patrick was eating his biscuit and said, “Percy, three for now.”

Percy walked away from the cook.

Patrick said, “You have to be broken up from four slices of bacon like Michael and his lamb chop.”

Percy said, “I am not like Michael.”

Michael looked at Patrick and Percy.

Hutch watched Michael.

Percy said, “Grandpa Michael is addicted to lamb chops. I am not addicted to bacon.”

Ryan snickered and looked at Percy.

Michael said, “You are too Percy.”

Percy looked at Michael and said, “I can have three pieces of bacon.”

Bruce walked pass Percy with three slices of bacon.

Percy stopped talking and looked at Bruce’s three slices of bacon.

Patrick shook his head.

Ryan looked at Patrick and Brenda.

Brenda saw Ryan staring at her and Patrick.

Brenda started to eat fast.

Ryan put his plate down and rushed to Brenda and Patrick and took their plates.

Brenda was tussling with Ryan over her plate.

Eleanor and Thomas were walking to the lobby and stood and looked at Ryan.

Patrick stopped eating to look at Ryan and Brenda.

Then he thought before he could eat another fork of quiche Ryan had taken his plate.

Shirley was shocked and leaned up on Patrick’s lap and watched Ryan.

Patrick said, “I should have kept eating.”

Brenda folded her arms and poked out her mouth.

Michael was holding onto his lamb chops and looked at Ryan taking hos grandpa and grandma food.

Michael said, “Grandma?”

Brenda knew it looked bad.

She looked at Michael and tried to smile.

Michael said, “Why did cousin Ryan…”

Ryan was eating and said, “This little boy is slick.”

Hutch laughed.

Michael continued, “Take you and grandpa food? Was something wrong with the food that could make you sick?”

Eleanor smirked.

She thought, “That’s why he is going to be a lawyer.”

Brenda said, “No Michael. Me and your grandpa was to have the last of our tests this morning and we were not to eat anything.”

Michael said, “So you and grandpa knew you were to have the tests and were not to eat?”

Ryan and Hutch watched Michael.

Brenda was irritated with Michael but answered him.

She said, “That’s right Michael.”

Michael bit his lamb chop and said, “So by you and grandpa eating that fed your tests too.”

Brenda frowned up and said, “What?”

Ryan and Hutch said, “Yes.”

Everyone enjoyed their breakfast, but Brenda and Patrick.

Eleanor smiled at her parents pouting.

Thomas stood and looked at Patrick and Brenda and he did not want to eat in front of them.

Michael said, “Thomas you can sit here. Grandpa and grandma are ok because their tummies got some food in them.”

Brenda sat and stared at Michael.

Eleanor put her head down and grinned.

Ryan looked at Eleanor.

He looked at Brenda and lifted up her plate and ate her quiche.

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Patrick shook his head.

He looked back at Ryan.

Ryan stared at Patrick.

Hutch looked at Patrick and Brenda.

He ate his fruit.

Shirley was enjoying her omelet and half of a biscuit.

Dr. Ralph walked out of Lorraine’s room.

He stood and looked straight.

Ryan was finishing his breakfast.

He looked at Dr. Ralph.

The nurses were giggling and looking at Dr. Ralph.

Shirley continued to eat her omelet with a smile on her face.

Ryan looked at Shirley and at her small omelet and shook his head.

Brenda looked at the nurses who were giggling at Dr. Ralph.

Brenda opened her mouth to holler at the nurses.

Eleanor saw Brenda and walked in front of her and said, “Momma don’t.”

Patrick said, “Brenda don’t you say N O T H I N G! leave those nurses along. It was because of you running back and forth that Ryan caught on and came and took our food.”

Thomas looked at his grandpa and turned slightly to Patrick and looked at Ryan.

Eleanor slightly saw Thomas move and said, “Thomas?”

Thomas was about to cry and said, “I don’t want my grandpa to be hunger. I don’t care about those tests.”

He stood and walked to Patrick with his plate.

Hutch and Ryan looked at Thomas.

Eleanor said, “Thomas baby. Momma and daddy are not hungry. They are fine. They just have to wait until they finish their teats. Then they can have what they like.”

Eleanor reached and patted Thomas on his face.

Thomas was looking at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Thomas me and your grandma are fine.”

Dr. Ralph looked at them.

He saw Shirley not saying anything but eating her breakfast.

He smiled.

Hutch saw Dr. Ralph smiling at Shirley eating.

Ryan was still watching Thomas.

He started thinking about how they treated Thomas.

He looked at Hutch.

Hutch looked at Ryan.

Patrick peeped at Thomas’ plate and said, “What you got?”

Eleanor huffed and looked at Patrick.

Thomas reached his plate to Patrick and said, “Salmon croquets, grits, eggs and a biscuit.

Patrick looked back at the cook.

Ryan looked at the cook and said, “I did not see the salmon croquets.”

The cook said, “That nurse got the last one.”

Ryan saw the fat nurse and knew he could not ask for the salmon croquet.

Hutch looked at the nurse who was already biting the salmon croquet.

Hutch snickered and said, “Ryan were you about to say something?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley I see you are enjoying your breakfast. You can a slice of an apple if you want.”

Shirley ran to the table the cook brought out to the lobby.

Dr. Ralph never saw Shirley run.

He started crying.

Brenda looked at Dr. Ralph.

Michael said, “Heifer.”

Dr. Ralph reached and rubbed Michael’s head.

Eleanor turned from watching Shirley to looked at Michael.

Then she saw Dr. Ralph crying.

Eleanor walked to Dr. Ralph.

She stood in his face.

The nurses looked at Eleanor.

Brenda and Patrick watched Dr. Ralph.

Ryan and Hutch watched Eleanor.

Felipe and Charles were leaving out Lorraine’s room.

The nurses followed and they were weak.

Michael said, “Ma am you can have our seats.”

Thomas was about to sit but stood and moved for the nurses.

Thomas reached his plate to the nurse.

The nurse looked at Thomas and reached for the untouched plate.

She said, “Sir are you sure you haven’t touched this food.”

Thomas said, “I can go and get another plate.”

The nurse said, “Thank you.”

Eleanor was watching Thomas.

Thomas boweed to the nurse.

He turned and walked to the cook.

Shirley was walking back with a peeled slice of apple.

She grinned and said, “Grandma you said one day I will eat.”

Brenda begin to cry hard.

Ryan was looking at everybody.

He saw Michael stand and gave the other nurse his seat.

He did not offer her his food.

Hutch snickered.

Michael looked at the nurse and said, “I’ll go and get you food.”

The nurse said, “I am a picky eater. Save my seat.”

Michael sat down.

Eleanor looked at Brenda breaking down over her words she said to Shirley when she was a little toddler.

Shirley walked over to Brenda and offer Brenda a bite.

Brenda took a little bite.

Shirley put her arms around Brenda and they leaned their heads onto each cried.

Felipe and Charles knew it was something tremendous about Shirley that made Dr. Ralph cry.

They walked to the cook.

Eleanor said, “Dr. Jason Ralph. You made my daughter a miracle. A light to those who are in darkness. Hope to those who don’t know hope. Your patience and dedication made her and my son persons and you were brave and fought to the end that you desired and saw it happened. Now do that for Lorraine.”

Brenda and Shirley applauded.

Patrick stood and walked to Dr. Ralph and shook his hand.

Eleanor said, “Now do the same for Lorraine. Take the impossible and make it possible.”

Bruce and Percy and Thomas saluted Dr. Ralph.

Michael raised his pinky finger and continued to eat.

Thomas returned with pancakes, caramel and apples.

Patrick went upstairs to his room.

Ryan said, “Thomas don’t follow him. He is alright.”

Felipe got the apple caramel pancakes.

The nurses saw Eleanor was not Dr. Ralph’s girlfriend and they went back to their gushing over him.

The other nurse was returning to her seat.

Michael stood and bowed to her.

Eleanor was teary eye but smiled.

She sat next to Shirley.

Michael yelled, “Momma what is that in your plate?’

Eleanor said, “A lamb chop.”

Michael put his plate on the floor and folded his arms across his chest and puffed out his mouth.

Elanor looked up at Michael and said, “Get that plate off the floor and give it to the cook so they can pack it.”

The nurse sat and looked at Michael and said, “Ma am I got a lamb chop too he can have mines.”

Eleanor said, “No. We are trying to break him out of eating lamb chops for each meal. “

Bruce said, “He use to have two lamb chops at each meal and momma and daddy took it to one at each meal.”

The nurse looked at the pouting Michael and said, “Me too. My parents made me become a vegetarian until I only ate the lamb chops whenever they cooked them.”

Eleanor thought and looked at Brenda.

Michael stood and looked at the nurse and said, “I did not need for you to give her that bit of information.”

The nurse said, “I’m sorry.”

She bowed her head and said grace.

Eleanor said, “Michael! I am not going to repeat to you to get that plate off the floor and give it to the cook.”

Shirley said, “Please Michael.”

Michael picked up the plate from the floor and walked behind Dr. Ralph.

He said, “Heifer!”

Ryan was about to eat his last bite of the Patrick’s quiche and looked at Michael.

The cook quickly turned to Michael.

Michael quickly handed his plate to the cook.

Eleanor stood and grabbed Brenda’s slipper.

Michael was walking back towards his chair.

Eleanor said, “Michael apologize to Shirley.”

Brenda said, “Until he stops calling her names, stop them from serving him lamb chops at school.”

Ryan and Hutch were standing.

They looked at Michael.

Michael had no words for Brenda.

He looked at Eleanor.

Thomas sat next to Brenda.

He enjoyed his apple caramel pancakes.

Michael turned and walked int the room with Lorraine.

The nurses jumped up.

Ryan held his hand up.

The nurses looked at Ryan and sat down.

Brenda stood and walked to Eleanor and reached for her slipper.

Eleanor pushed it to Brenda.

Brenda turned and walked in Lorraine’s room.

Ryan, Hutch, Felipe and Charles were standing talking.

Dr. Ralph was sitting and listening.

He said, “I needed to see Shirley. The bad doctors removed some bones from her legs that would have made her incapable of every moving her legs. I saw her run across this room. I believe in miracles. Lorraine is a miracle waiting for you doctors.”

Hutch looked at Dr. Ralph, her felt Dr. Ralph’s heart.

Ryan was thinking and he heard Dr. Ralph.

Charles looked at Shirley.

She was taking small bites of her thin slice of apple.

She was so happy with her new treasure.

Felipe peeped around Ryan and looked at Shirley.

Eleanor saw them looking at Shirley.

Eleanor looked at Shirley who was so happy to be eating a thin slice of apple.

Ryan was thinking.

He looked back and saw a crying Eleanor.

He knew God was doing something and he looked at Thomas and was thinking about what they did for Thomas.

He told a nurse to go and pull Thomas files from the summer.

Eleanor began to eat her cold breakfast of corn beef hash, grits and eggs.

Meredith walked in the hospital she spoke to everyone.

She saw the doctors huddle together and looked at Eleanor and everyone eating.

She kept walking to Lorraine’s room.

Brenda and Michael were standing at Lorraine’s bed.

Meredith looked around and put her coat and gloves down and walked to Michael and rubbed his hair.

Brenda looked at Michael.

He kept his eyes on Lorraine and held her hand.

Meredith touched Lorraine’s shoulder.

Meredith said, “Hello Lorraine. This is Meredith. I told you I would be back today. I pray you decide to come back and live with us. And enjoy this amazing gift of life GOD has given us. You stood by me and helped me when everyone moved back from me.”

Felipe was standing back by the door.

Meredith did not see him.

Meredith continue, “You were quiet, but your actions were of strength and courage. I need for those attributes GOD gave you for this hour to be used by you Lorraine and fight your way out of this bondage. You told me that you do not allow anyone to bind you. Fight.”

Michael said, “Fight Lorraine.”

Brenda was holding Lorraine’s other hand and had her hand on Lorraine’s shoulder.

Brenda said, “FATHER in JESUS’ name I bind every demon that is attacking Lorraine and command it to leave her and out of this room now. In JESUS’ name.”

Michael said, “We bind you demon in JESUS’ name.”

Felipe smiled at Michael repeating everything.

The nurse came back with Thomas’ file from the summer.

Thomas looked at the doctors looking through his file.

Eleanor watched them.

Felipe walked to Meredith and put his hands on both her shoulders and kissed her on her neck and whispered, “Come and eat something.”

Brenda looked at them and said, “Michael and I will stay.”

Meredith looked at Lorraine and patted her on her shoulder.

She walked out with Felipe.

Dennis was walking in the lobby of the hospital.

Left home a little earlier and did not eat.

Dennis spoke to his employees and saw the doctors standing and looking over a chart.

Ryan was flipping through Thomas’ chart.

Dennis saw the cook with all the picnic baskets.

He said to the cook, “Any food left.”

Dennis looked at Thomas and said, “What is he eating?”

The cook looked at Thomas and said, “Caramel apple pancakes.”

Dennis looked with his mouth opened.

Ryan looked at his father and laughed.

Dennis could not grasp anyone eating that type of sweet in the morning.

Meredith walked out Lorraine’s room with Felipe.

They spoke to Dennis.

Dennis looked at Eleanor and nodded.

Eleanor looked at Dennis nodded.

Dennis looked at her plate and said to the cook, “What is she eating?”

The cook looked back and said, “A piece of apple.”

Ryan said, “Daddy I am trying to think and you asking what everybody is eating is not helping. Tell the cook to give you food.”

Dennis looked at Ryan whose head was in the charts.

Ryan kept flipping between Lorraine’s chart and Thomas’ chart.

Eleanor was looking at Ryan and said, “God help Ryan.”

Shirley was chipper and said, “HE will. HE showed them how to help me.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley and said, “Why do you say that Shirley?”

Shirley said, “I believe as the person is alive there is hope.”

Eleanor stared at her and remembered how Shirley was on the floor over dishes and furniture.

She smirked about Patrick was about to hit the floor over those extremely expensive dishes also he and Brenda bought Gen and John for their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary.

Eleanor thought, “When she found out there was a possibility the things could be recovered she was fine. She had to work to get them.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley and turned her head back to Ryan.

Meredith asked for the corn beef and grits and a half of biscuit.

The cook shook his head and gave her a whole biscuit.

Meredith picked up a glass of orange juice and put it up to Felipe’s mouth.

Felipe took a sip and looked at her and walked her to a seat on the sofa.

He stood and listened to Ryan.

Hutch was looking over the charts.

He said, “Here.”

Ryan, Felipe and Charles looked at Thomas’ chart.

Dennis was sitting next to Dr. Ralph and they stopped and looked at Ryan.

Ryan nodded.

Eleanor was looking and said, “Thank You God.”

Thomas said, “Momma did I give them Lorraine’s cure?”

Shirley smiled at Thomas.

Eleanor smiled at Thomas and said, “I hope so.”

Shirley was biting her half of biscuit.

Dennis looked at Meredith’s plate and said to the cook, “May I have grits, eggs, corn beef and two biscuits.”

The cook gave Dennis the last of that food.

Meredith walked to the cook.

Felipe looked but put his eyes back to Ryan.

Meredith said, “Sir, do you have anything left for me to take a plate to a friend?”

The cook went through the picnic baskets and said, “I have one pancake and strawberry and whip cream and a half of quiche and fresh fruit.

The cook made a very nice plate for Meredith.

Meredith ate and took the plate.

She looked at Felipe.

She walked in Lorraine’s room and put on her coat and gloves.

She walked out and picked up the plate and left the hospital and drove very fast to the bone hospital.

She ran into the hospital with the plate.

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Greene were getting their day started.

Meredith ran to Sally’s room.

Sally looked at Meredith.

Meredith said, “Good morning sweetheart. I brought you and Vivienne’s breakfast. I got to go.”

Meredith turned and ran out the room and out of the hospital.

Dr. Woodson was coming out the hospital administrator’s office with some telegrams for Eleanor and Patrick.

He saw Meredith run out the hospital.

He ran behind and called her.

Dr. Greene looked at Dr. Woodson and laughed.

He reached Meredith the telegrams and said, “Meredith give these telegrams to Eleanor. They are important.”

Meredith looked at Dr. Woodson and said, “I will.”

She knew they all thought she was simple but a good nurse.

Meredith went back to the hospital.

Ryan and the doctors went to Lorraine’s room and put Brenda and Michael out.

Ryan said, “Mrs. Stith go to your room so you can have your tests.”

Brenda and Michael were walking out the room.

Michael said, “I want to see her eyes before we leave for school.”

Brenda patted Michael on his back.

She went upstairs to her room.

Patrick was laying on his bed and they just completed with his blood.

Brenda exhaled and sat for them to take her blood.

They told Brenda to lay down.

Brenda did not like to lay down, but she wanted the test to be over.

Brenda closed the door and laid on the bed and took off her robe.

She went to sleep.

Patrick watched them take Brenda’s blood and went to sleep.

They ran to the laboratory with their blood.

Dennis finished his food.

He thought, “This food was simple but good.”

Dr. Ralph finished his food.

Dennis was watching his employees.

The two nurses finished eating and left work for the day.

The two nurses from last night went into Lorraine’s room.

Michael was sitting with his head down and twiddling his thumbs.

Eleanor watched at Michael.

Thomas walked and gave the cook his plate and fork.

Shirley stood and carried her plate and fork and napkin to the cook.

Thomas walked to Eleanor and reached for Eleanor’s plate and said, “Momma. I can take your plate to the cook?”

Eleanor reached her half- eaten plate to the cook.

Eleanor smiled at Thomas and said, “Thank you.”

Thomas said, “You are welcome.”

The cook was walking out the dining room to check no plates were left.

He put all the plates and utensils together and loaded the picnic baskets.

Dennis sat and thought for a few minutes.

Thomas walked and sat next to Michael.

Bruce and Percy sat next to Shirley and whispered.

Dennis stood and said to the cook, “Sir can you move those sofas back into the area over there?”

The cook looked at Eleanor.

Dennis looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor nodded for yes.

The cook and his assistants quickly carried the sofas to the storage area.

Dennis said, “Thank you.”

The cook walked to Eleanor and said, “Mrs. Stith, will you be requiring lunch or dinner?”

Eleanor looked at the time and looked at Lorraine’s room.

She said, “Me and sons will not be requiring lunch. But prepare a mid-day meal of whatever is left and deliver it here. Leave it in the dining room. They can serve themselves. Tell Peter to transfer our belongings to the one thirty pm train.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley and said, “Shirley what do you want to do?”

Shirley just looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Shirley, my mother and father and one worker will reside on the train. Shirley will go back today to the owner’s suite. Mr. and Mrs. Stith’s may return today or tomorrow. That is all.”

The cook sighed and said, “Yes ma am.”

Eleanor knew the workers liked to gamble and drink in Philadelphia especially over the week-ends therefore she told them to prepare a heavy afternoon meal.

Meredith returned to the hotel and saw Eleanor and her children in the lobby.

Thomas saw her and jumped up and walked to her.

Felipe and Charles were leaving Lorraine’s room.

They saw the troubled and sad Michael.

They saw Meredith enter the hospital and Thomas run to her and escort her into the lobby.

Felipe said, “I can’t tell who is spoiled. Meredith or them.”

Charles laughed.

Eleanor was looking at Meredith and Thomas.

Eleanor actually have seen her children grow over the Thanksgiving holiday.

She and Shirley looked at Felipe and Charles.

They shook their head for no.

Meredith walked to Eleanor and reached her a stack of telegrams and said, “Dr. Woodson sent these and instructed me to make sure I give them to you.”

Charles smirked.

He and Felipe went into the dining room and got coffee.

Meredith and Thomas walked into the dining room.

Thomas was holding Meredith’s hand.

Charles looked up and saw Meredith and Thomas walking into the dining room.

Felipe whispered, “See.”

Charles started grinning.

Felipe was watching the two.

He turned to Charles and said, “GOD I hope my boy is not spoiled.”

Charles laughed.

Meredith said, “What are you two talking about?”

Charles and Felipe smiled.

Thomas said, “Us.”

Felipe and Charles stopped smiling.

Meredith looked at Thomas and said, “Really? Huh.”

Felipe and Charles looked at Thomas.

Felipe said, “Yes Thomas. I don’t know who is spoiling who. Whether Meredith spoiled you or whether you and Michael spoiled her.”

Thomas said, “It is mutual.”

Felipe’s mouth dropped open.

Charles started laughing out.

Felipe looked at Meredith.

Meredith was smiling at Thomas.

Charles looked at Meredith and said, “Felipe you have something on your hands.”

Eleanor walked into the dining room and said, “Excuse me. Thomas come with me and let Meredith spend time with her husband.”

Charles was looking over the rim of his cup and grinning at Thomas.”

Felipe said, “A moment Eleanor please.”

Charles took a swallow of coffee and put his cup down and looked at Felipe.

Eleanor stood.

Felipe looked at Thomas and said, ”Thomas. I want to ask you some questions from your drowning accident earlier this year. If it is hurtful to you to think about it then I will not.”

Thomas walked to Eleanor and stood in front of her.

Eleanor put her hands on Thomas shoulders.

Charles looked at Thomas.

He thought, “He is a good looking boy. Michael is a little shorter but good looking too.”

Thomas said, “I can take the hurt if it will help Lorraine.”

Charles and Felipe were stunned by Thomas answer.

Meredith turned and smiled at Thomas.

Eleanor was very proud of Thomas’ answer and his attitude.

She swelled with pride.

Felipe sat up in his chair and looked at Thomas.

Charles looked at Thomas and smiled.

He saw Eleanor’s pride.

Charles wondered if he and Vivienne might have a child.

He has grown in love with her over the past five months.

He wondered about Sally, if she would be able to take that long ocean voyage in March.

Felipe said, “Thomas do you remember anything?”

Thomas said, “Momma.”

Eleanor peeped around in Thomas’ face.

Felipe looked at Thomas and said, “What?”

Thomas said, “I remember her heart was breaking because the soldiers said I was dead. I heard her weep. I was sad, but a man put his hand on my shoulder.”

Charles looked at Thomas.

Felipe and Meredith were mesmerized at what Thomas said.

Felipe said, “Hallelujah.”

Charles could only slightly stop looking at Thomas to look at Felipe.

Meredith look at Thomas with sadness in her eyes.

Eleanor had started to tear up.

Thomas looked up at Eleanor and said, “It’s alright momma.”

Patrick walked in a

sIj.to get coffee and sat and looked at the five people and said, “What?”

Thomas said, “Dr. Felipe asked me what I remembered from drowning. I told him momma’s heart break. Then A man put his hand on my shoulder.”

Patrick was unfazed he asked, “Thomas did you see his hand?”

Thomas said, “No but it felt a little scratched.”

Charles jumped up from his chair.

Felipe said, “JESUS!”

Patrick looked at Felipe and said, “Yes it was.”

Brenda was coming in to be with Patrick and heard Thomas.

She wanted to turn and run but could not move.

Thomas said, “I want to go to Michael. I promised him and Lorraine I would sit at the door.”

Eleanor looked at the door and saw Brenda.

She lifted her hands off Thomas’ shoulders so he could leave.

Felipe said, “Wait Thomas.”

Felipe looked at Eleanor and said, “Please.”

Thomas said, “Yes sir.”

Felipe said, “What was the next thing you remembered.”

Felipe was flipping through Thomas’ chart.

Thomas said, “Ouch!”

Felipe and Charles looked at Thomas.

Brenda peeped in Thomas’s face.

Patrick was sitting with his legs crossed and stared at Thomas.

Eleanor was perplexed.

Thomas said, “Something sharp went into my arm and it hurt.”

Meredith was smiling at Thomas.

Felipe and Charles were flipping through Thomas’ chart and they both jumped up and ran out the room passed Brenda.

Brenda grabbed her chest.

They scared Patrick.

Patrick said, “I have to go to the outhouse.”

Brenda said, “Bed pan.”

Patrick looked behind at the backdoor.

Thomas and Eleanor jumped.

Meredith was scared.

She said, “Lorraine better wake up so I can go home and sleep. Oh God I have to see Spencer and Leon today.”

Brenda said, “Meredith.”

Meredith looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Have you been paid from the bone hospital for attending to Spencer and Leon?”

Patrick was looking behind to get to the outside.

Meredith said, “No.”

Patrick quickly jerked around and looked at Meredith and yelled, “No!”

Shirley, Bruce and Percy ran into the dining room when they heard Patrick yelled.

Dennis was leaving the hospital and getting ready to go to the smallest hospital when he heard Patrick.

He walked to the dining room and saw it was back as usual.

Dennis said, “What is wrong?”

No one said anything.

Dennis looked at everyone.

Brenda said, “Dr. Wade have you had any payroll problems?”

Dennis looked at Brenda and said, “It’s something. I have not had time to look into it. I want my wife to look into it.”

Brenda said, “Have you receive a message from Mrs. Genevia Olsen?”

Dennis looked at Brenda and exhaled and said, “I received a message last night from John Jr.”

The nurses were saying, Ow.”

Percy turned and looked and said, “Hey Ryan Jr.”

Bruce and Thomas walked out the dining room to Alice and Beverly.

Dennis said, “You see that is why I am going to get her to dig into the books. There was no way for her to know you all were here. She snooped.”

Eleanor said, “She snooped good.”

Beverly and Alice saw Eleanor and Brenda.

They walked to the dining room and spoke.

Dennis looked at Alice and Beverly and thought, “These two. I can’t believe they put this together.”

Dennis said, “Why are you two are and don’t lie.”

Patrick thought Dennis was hard on the women.

Shirley reached the telegrams to Eleanor.

Eleanor took the telegrams.

Beverly wrapped her arms through Dennis’ arms and tried to smile at Meredith and Patrick and said, “Dear love I deducted someone important had to be here for them to get both you and Ryan’s attention.”

Ryan had walked out Lorraine’s room to the dining room.

He looked at the sad Michael.

As he passed him he saw Percy, Bruce and Thomas playing with Ryan Jr.

Ryan walked into the dining room and looked at a scared Alice.

Dennis shook his head for no at Ryan.

Ryan said, “We are working. This is a place of work and not a place of social gathering. Take my son home or somewhere else.”

Patrick said, “Damn.”

Meredith looked at Patrick and went and sat next to him.

Eleanor moved and sat in the other chair next to Patrick.

Brenda moved out the door.

Beverly huffed.

Dennis looked at her.

Beverly peeped at Eleanor and said, “Will I get a chance to see you on this visit?”

Eleanor said, “We are re-naming the bone hospital Tuesday with a light reception. Please come you, Alice and Ryan Jr. “

Ryan was angry.

Eleanor looked at Brenda and said, “Alice I did bring the clothing I told you about. I will be back Monday and we can have lunch if you want.”

Alice was shaken at Ryan’s hardness and nodded her head for yes at Eleanor.

Shirley looked at Eleanor and said, “What clothes?”

Eleanor said, “Some of the boys’ baby clothes.”

Shirley stared at Eleanor.

Eleanor lifted her eyebrow and looked at Shirley.

Brenda saw Eleanor and Shirley.

She thought, “GOD don’t let them cut up in front of everybody over the boys baby clothes. I know Shirley want them all. It is no way for her babies to wear all of that stuff.”

Brenda said, Dennis and Beverly somethings have happened with Gen and John Jr. you need to know.”

Shirley said, “And grandma and grandpa more happened that we have to tell you about.”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Brenda said, “Gen better not be hurt.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor and said, “Check and see if Ben got on a train to New York.”

Dr. Ralph was holding Lorraine’s hand.

Felipe, Charles and Hutch were preparing Lorraine for the shots they gave to Thomas.

Ryan was heated.

He said, “I came to tell you we are going to start giving our patient the same type of shots we gave Thomas and see if that will help. We would know within the hour. I heard Thomas said ‘ouch’. He is right it hurts.”

Beverly was peeping around trying to see who the ‘patient’ was.

Dennis said, “Beverly, look at you. Trying to figure out who the patient is.”

Beverly smacked her lips at Dennis and said, “You know me well.”

Dennis said, “Sit down so we can hear this mess and go about our day.”

Beverly and Alice sat.

Ryan went back to Lorraine’s room.

He rubbed a worried Michael’s head and it was a little warm.

Ryan thought and went into the room.

They prepared the shot and gave it to Lorraine.

The nurses were working but playing with the pretty Ryan Jr.

Eleanor told Dennis and Beverly the whole story of John Jr. and Betty.

Shirley finished the story and ran to Brenda about the federal agents tearing up the floors and walls.

Patrick said, “Shirley, you have to wait that is not all they are going to tear up.”

Shirley ran out the dining room to the women’s closet.

Brenda looked at Patrick and said, “Patrick, you know how she feels about that house.”

Patrick waved his hand nonchalantly and said, “She just has to use her money to re-modeled it.”

Patrick said, “Eleanor, all of this mess happened since we left?”

Beverly eyes filled with tears and her opened mouth was quivering.

Eleanor said, “Yes. Monica will be here Monday.”

Peter walked in the hospital and saw Brenda.

He walked into the dining room and greeted everyone.

Beverly touched Dennis’ arm.

She was devasted. She loved John Jr. and Betty.

Dennis looked at Beverly and said, “I will send him a message not this holiday.”

Beverly begin to cry.

Alice sat blank and looked at Beverly.

Brenda and Peter stepped out the dining room.

Peter said, “We disconnected the car with the owners’ suite and put it on the first track. So all you have to do is exit and enter your carriage. The cooks will provide your meals and bring them to the car. The stewards will bring hot bath water twice a day. The trains will be serviced and cleaned and be ready for the holidays by Friday with the first train leaving really on Thursday. You will get home Saturday evening.”

Brenda said, “Thank You”

She peeped at the door and said, “The carriages are still out there?”

Peter said, “Yes.”

Brenda said, “Both of the carriages will leave today. The one with Shirley’s bags will remain in the owners’ suite.”

Peter said, “How is Lorraine?”

Brenda said, “The same.”

Michael was getting really upset and begin to cry out.

Brenda looked back at Michael and reached her hand and said, “Michael come here.”

Michael shook his head for no.

Eleanor heard Brenda and stood and said, “Excuse me.”

Eleanor walked out the dining room to Michael.

She sat next to Michael.

Ryan walked out Lorraine’s room and saw Eleanor sit next to Michael and reached held him.

Ryan rubbed Michael’s head and felt his forehead.

Eleanor looked at Ryan,

Ryan looked straight and said, “Slight fever.”

Michael pushed Ryan’s hand away and said, “See about Lorraine.”

Eleanor twisted her mouth.

Charles and Felipe walked out and heard Michael.

The doctors went and stood by the sofa and were talking.

The two nurses walked out and went into the dining room a d got a cup of coffee and went in the back and sat down and talked.

Dr. Ralph and Hutch were in the room with Lorraine.

Michael was sitting in his chair and on his knees and put his head in Eleanor’s lap on her expensive dress.

The nurses looked.

Ryan Jr. saw his father and ran to Ryan.

Alice jumped up and ran to get Ryan Jr.

Ryan picked his son up and kissed him on his head and said, “Hello son.”

Ryan Jr said, “Hi daddy.”

Ryan said, “That’s my boy. You know I am your daddy.”

Alice ran to Ryan with her arms reached out for Ryan Jr.

Ryan looked at Alice and said, “I’ll bring Ryan Jr to you in a minute Alice.”

Alice looked nervous and worried.

She turned and walked back in the dining room.

Ryan was frowned up.

Felipe looked back at Alice.

Charles said, “Ryan are you ok?’

Ryan said, “My momma and Alice are always up to something.”

Felipe said, “Keep you on your toes.”

Ryan said, “They need to work.”

Charles smiled and looked at Ryan Jr.

He thought about Vivienne and whether she would want a child.

Ryan looked at Charles and figured what he was thinking.

He said, “Charles have you talked to Vivienne about having children?”

Charles was so shocked at Ryan his mouth dropped opened.

Shirley was coming out the women’s closet.

She looked around the lobby.

She saw Eleanor holding Michael.

Thomas, Percy and Bruce were standing at the front door of the lobby.

Brenda was talking to Peter.

Shirley was remembering who did what and their names.

Brenda saw Shirley and beckoned for her.

Shirley walked over and Brenda introduced her to Peter and Shirley politely greeted Peter.

Brenda said, “Peter is over the train operations. He has disconnected the car with the owners’ suite. I told him to put your bags in the suite because we will be staying on the train instead of at Bruce’s hotel.”

Shirley was in a panic.

Brenda looked at Shirley.

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “Shirley all you have to do is lock the door. The other suites will be locked.”

Shirley said, “I will be sleeping on that sofa. When grandpa and grandma is released I will leave with them.”

Eleanor said, “Shirley!”

Shirley turned her head and said, “You forgot momma somebody did try to get in the suite at the same time they attacked Thomas and Michael. And we still don’t know what happened to Lorraine.”

Ryan heard them and walked over with Ryan Jr.

Brenda kissed Ryan Jr’s hand.

Shirley smiled and shook Ryan Jr’s hand.

Ryan said, I should have tried to get some type of security, but time was critical.”

Brenda said, “Ryan did you well. Shirley can sleep on that sofa. Then she can go and have Dr. Woodson to adjust her body.”

Shirley turned her head and looked off in space.

Peter grinned at Shirley.

He saw Shirley did not care what they said she was not going to be in that car alone.

Peter said, “We do have security and a patrolman.”

He pulled his whistle out of his chest pocket and held it out to Shirley and said, “You can blow this whistle.”

Eleanor rolled her eyes at Peter because she knew he was being smart.

Brenda heard him, but she was watching Shirley.

Shirley walked away and sat on the sofa she will sleep on.

She said, “Peter I will leave the hospital with my family today. I want hot bath water in the suite When I get there. Thank You.”

Ryan looked at Peter and said, “Ow.”

Peter smirked and looked at Ryan and said, “Ow.”

Brenda looked at Peter, she and Patrick talked about Peter racist attitude and will let him retire during the holidays.

He will be replaced by the first black train conductor.

Brenda was proud that Shirley picked up on Peter’s racist attitude and made him see he was her worker and nothing more.”

Peter looked at Shirley and said, “Oh I forgot the train to take you to the school will be two and half hours late.”

Eleanor said, “Thank you.”

Ryan Jr. was playing with Brenda’s long plait.

Ryan saw him and moved his hand out of Brenda’s hair.

He said, “Ryan Jr. Mommie and grandma do not let you play with their hair.”

He walked away to the dining room.

Alice was a nervous wreck.

She was standing in the doorway watching for Ryan and Ryan Jr.

The nurses were watching Ryan.

Ryan looked at Alice as he walked to her and reached Ryan Jr. to her.

He kissed Alice on her forehead.

He turned to walk away and saw Beverly crying.

He stopped and turned around and looked at her.

Patrick said, “Oh GOD!”

Meredith looked at Ryan with fear.

Ryan looked at his father and said, “Father what is wrong with mother?”

Dennis shook his head and said, “A mess. We can work through it.”

Dennis thought, “You got a mess too.”

Ryan turned and walked back to Lorraine’s room.

Peter left the hospital.

Brenda sat next to Shirley.

Felipe and Charles went back in Lorraine’s room.

The nurses stood and walked to the counter and put their coffee cups on the counter.

Eleanor said to Brenda, “We can stay until one thirty. I should have told that clown to get all of us hot bath water.”

She looked and said, “Bruce.”

Bruce turned and looked at Eleanor.

She said, “Is Peter still out there?”

Peter was walking to his horse.

Bruce said, “He’s going to his horse.”

Eleanor said, “Tell him I said Come here.”

Ryan peeped at Eleanor.

Felipe and Charles heard Eleanor’s nasty tone.

They looked at Eleanor.

Bruce ran out the door and said, “Sir. Mr. Peter Mrs. Stith wants to see you.”

Bruce ran back in the lobby because it was cold.

Peter walked back in the lobby and walked to Brenda.

Brenda looked at him and said, “Eleanor want to talk to you.”

He turned and walked to Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Peter have them put hot bath water in the owner’s suite when we get there.”

Peter looked at Eleanor and said, “That’s it?”

Felipe and Charles were listening.

They observed Peter and knew it was some sort of racial issue.

Eleanor said, “Thank you Peter.”

Peter looked at Eleanor and smirked.

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Brenda watched Peter walk out the hospital.

Bruce said, “Momma that man is cussing.”

Eleanor said, “Thank you Bruce.”

Morgan told Petr when he returned to the train hub, that Patrick and Brenda planned a very large retirement celebration for him. But some of the workers told Patrick and Brenda Peter wanted money.

Peter smirked and said, “Either one would be good. I can use that money during the holidays.”

Peter stood and thought.

He said, “Morgan tell the owners…”

Morgan heard how Peter said, ‘owners’ and he did not like the way he said it.

Peter said, “Tell them I am retiring December fifteenth and want the money so I can have a great holiday.”

Morgan said, “I’ll get the message to them. How much money do you think they will give you?”

Peter said, “They better give me five hundred dollars.”

Peter grinned.

Morgan tried to grinned but could not stomach Peter any more.

An image of Lorraine’s dead body flashed in Morgan’s mind.

Morgan could not think for a moment.

Peter looked at Morgan and said, “You’re trying to see how to get the message to them?”

Morgan grinned and nodded his head for yes. He did not know what he just saw in his mind, nor why he saw it. He knew enough not to tell no body because people are quick to believe a person is crazy.

Peter said, “Eleanor will be back today. Patrick and B r e n d a will back Monday and staying in that owner’s suite.”

Morgan nearly said something to Peter because of his racism. How Patrick and Brenda hired him from throwing coal in the engine to being a steward then sending him to be trained as an engineer and now a conductor and he hates them. He needs to leave before the fifteen like today. I can’t stand him being here for another two and a half weeks.”

Morgan nodded his head and walked away.

He looked at the car that was sitting on the tracks by itself.

He wondered.

Morgan went back in his office and watched the trains coming and going and checking the time tables for each train and the passengers.

He saw where Eleanor and her four boys will be on the train that will leave at two thirty instead at one thirty. They will arrive at their destination by midnight because the train had to get more coal and be serviced.

Morgan wondered.

He went back to review the week’s train schedules.

He wanted to review the passengers’ list for the train Lorraine travelled on.

He did not see the train schedule.

Morgan panicked.

Morgan was responsible for all schedules and paperwork.

He knew Patrick was very hard about paperwork.

He tried not to panic.

He looked around the office and the trash baskets.

He did not want anyone to be suspicious of anything, because now his eyes were opened and he now know that the mob was everywhere.

He has five more years to work before he retires.

Patrick has been good to this prisoner.

He was able to finish school and start working for Patrick.

Patrick and Brenda believe in education, especially because she was a teacher.

Patrick watched Morgan over the fifteen years and promoted him and moved him about the railroad.

Morgan decided to live in Vermont.

He bought a large piece of land and had a house built.

He told no one but Patrick and Brenda.

He knew the other workers gambled and drunk their money up and had nothing to show for it.

Morgan wanted to be away from his family.

He figured the last year before he retires he will buy four to six horses, several wagons and a couple of carriages.

He currently buys household items and furniture and take it to the house while he is on his month long vacation in the summer.

He has prospered since Patrick hired him.

Patrick expects his workers to do their work and he demands loyalty.

Morgan said, “I have gladly done that for Patrick.”

Morgan was walking out the door with the waste basket and pretend he had trash to put it in the trash bin so he could see if the train schedule was in the bin.

He did not saw any paper.

He turned and ran back in the office because it was cold outside.

When he returned to the office, the drawer he kept the schedules in was slightly opened.

He pretended not to see it and got up and got another cup of hot coffee to glance and see where everybody was.

He only saw Peter stepping over tracks going to the main office.

Morgan continued to look over the rim of his coffee cup to see anymore movement.

He watched Peter enter into the office and ran to his desk and pulled out the schedules and the train schedule was back in the folder, but not in its spot.

Morgan put the schedules back and continued to do his work.

He could not wait until Peter left on the train with Eleanor.

Morgan saw the workers putting a lot of water in the huge caldron and heating it up.

He smirked because he knew Eleanor demanded him to have hot water ready for her.

Brenda was sitting and thinking.

Patrick and Meredith walked out the dining room.

Brenda said, “We have to go to New York and get Lorraine’s things and file a police report.”

Eleanor said, “You’ll miss the re-naming ceremony Tuesday. I have to go with Shirley to the college about her grades and about building wheelchair accessible ramps.”

Brenda said, “I thought about. We can leave tonight and get to New York in the morning and go to the hotel and clear it all and return to the next train from New York and be back here at six pm. We can go to the train on the track and stay.”

Eleanor said, “You can’t leave this hospital.”

Patrick said, “Yes we can.”

Michael raised his head up and said, “Grandpa who will be here with Lorraine?”

Patrick said, “You are right Michael but Dr. Ralph is here.”

Michael said, “He has to go to work.”

All the doctors were walking out Lorraine’s room.

Everyone’s heart stopped and nobody move.

Percy, Bruce and Thomas ran from the front door over to Patrick and looked at the doctors.

Hutch Said, “Lorraine is a iota stronger when we started her shots.”

Michael sat up in the chair and held onto Eleanor.

Ryan said, “I am going home and take a hot bath and spend a little time with my son and get sleep.

Felipe said, “Me too. I am going to spend today with Meredith.”

Charles said, “Hutch and I will remain with Lorraine through out the night. We go home tomorrow morning.”

Michael said, “You did not tell us about Lorraine. You can leave the hospital. What about Lorraine? You did not say she could leave the hospital.”

Eleanor shook Michael and said, “Michael.”

Michael turned and batted his eyes and looked at Eleanor.

Brenda looked at her baby boy.

Patrick looked at Michael.

Shirley was sitting and thinking.

Ryan smirked and said, “Look at that. All he has to do is bat his eyes at Eleanor.”

Ryan looked at Eleanor.

He grinned and said, “Worried Michael. We believe Lorraine is getting better. We can’t do anything else for her until after twenty fours. Then we will continue her shots every twenty four hours.”

Michael looked at Hutch and Charles.

Hutch looked at Michael and said, “Michael you can trust us with Lorraine.”

Ryan said, “Brenda no.”

Brenda looked at Ryan and turned her head.

Patrick looked at Ryan and said, “We have to move fast and get Lorraine’s things and file a police report in New York and get back here tomorrow.”

Ryan said, “Patrick, you and Brenda are weak from this testing.”

Dennis was holding Beverly by the waist and Alice was holding Ryan Jr.

Ryan Jr. said, “Daddy.”

Ryan turned and saw his father holding his mother.

He said, “I’m coming. “

Dennis was about to leave the train’s cook and his assistants walked in the hospital with picnic baskets.

Ryan looked at the cook.

Patrick walked away from Ryan.

Ryan looked at Patrick.

Brenda said, “We got to get to Lorraine’s room at the hotel before anyone realize she is not there.”

Shirley said, “I’ll go.”

Michael said, “You better heifer.”

Eleanor hit him on his leg.

Michael said, “You are why Lorraine is dead.”

He jumped out of his chair.

Shirley started crying.

Michael yelled, “About some damn holiday dresses. Heifer.”

Eleanor jumped and ran to Michael.

Before she got to him Michael ran out the door.

The nurses jumped and turned around and looked at Eleanor run behind Michael.

Patrick ran out the dining room with a bowl to the lobby and saw Michael running out the door and Eleanor behind.

Bruce was running behind Eleanor, then Percy and then Thomas.

Dennis, Alice and Ryan Jr watched them.

Beverly was grieved and did not lift up her head.

Ryan looked at his mother and then his wife who looked pitifully at her mother-in-law.

Ryan looked at Alice and thought, “What is this Alice?’

Hutch ran outside and he caught Eleanor when she caught Michael and was about to spank him.

Hutch held Eleanor and said, “Stop.”

He looked at Michael and said, “Stop Michael.”

Michael was crying.

Hutch said, “We know you and Thomas especially are hurt and worried over Lorraine. I swear we are working hard to bring her back like we did you and Thomas during the summer. Trust us again. Please.”

Thomas said, “I trust you.”

He walked to Michael and grabbed him and walked him back to the hospital.

Meredith ran to the front door and was looking out.

She saw when Hutch grabbed Eleanor.

She was peeping and saw Thomas was holding Michael by the shoulders and talking to him.

Felipe ran behind Meredith because he thought she was going outside behind them.

Felipe said, “Meredith you are not their nanny anymore.”

Meredith said, “I was more than their nanny Felipe.”

She looked at Felipe hard.

Felipe knew that was a hard look and he did not know why.

Felipe opened the door and Thomas and Michael walked in.

Shirley saw Thomas and Michael and said, “I’ll catch the train that leaves for New York this evening and get there tonight. I will stay on the train until ten am. I need you grandma to delay the train until I get back on. I will clean out Lorraine’s room and file a police report. I have my gun and I will use it.”

Ryan turned around from watching Eleanor apparently running and catching Michael.

He said, “I can’t go to be your security and the few men I trust don’t live here anymore.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I will go with you Shirley. I need to go to the hospital and get my coat and gloves.”

The cook saw Michael walking with his head down.

The cook walked to the door and said, “Here’s your lamb chop.”

The fat nurse said, “If he doesn’t want it I’ll take it.”

Everyone turned and looked at her.

The nurse held her head and continued to work.

Hutch held onto Eleanor and said, “You stop Eleanor. Those are children, they have to work out their relationships or non-relationships on their own. Don’t you know Michael was willing to beaten by you for his feelings about Shirley?”

Eleanor exhaled.

Hutch said, “You knew that. You need to think about your own health so you can be here for a few more years.”

Eleanor sighed.

Hutch and Eleanor walked back in the lobby.

Michael and Thomas sat by Lorraine’s door.

Thomas was still talking to Michael.

Brenda looked at the two youngest.

She looked up and said, “Patrick I am hunger. What do they have?”

Patrick said, “The only thing I saw was the beef stew and beef tender loin and mashed potatoes and gravy and biscuits.”

Brenda said, “What the base of the beef stew?”

The cook walked out the dining room with a plate for Michael and Thomas.

Everyone looked at the plates.

The cook gave Michael a lamb chop, green beans and carrots.

He gave Thomas, beef tender loin, mashed potatoes and gravy and biscuits.

Michael said, “Thank you.”

Thomas said, “Thank you.”

The cook said, “You are welcomed.”

The cook looked at Brenda and said, “I used a burgundy sauce for the beef stew.”

Brenda jumped up and ran to the dining room.

Dennis heard the cook say burgundy sauce.

He turned and walked into the dining room.

Ryan said, “Daddy. Let’s go home and deal with our family problems.”

Alice looked at Ryan and wondered who told him they had problems.

Meredith was walking into the dining room.

Felipe was at the front door and saw Meredith.

He said, “Meredith aren’t we going home?”

Meredith said, “After I eat.”

Felipe looked at her.

Charles looked back at Meredith.

Meredith got her beef tenderloin, potatoes and gravy and biscuits.

She whispered to Brenda and said, “Felipe doesn’t realize how hard it is to cook.”

Brenda put some green beans on Meredith’s plate.

Felipe saw Brenda add some green beans to Meredith plate.

He thought Meredith does not like vegetables.

He looked at her swollen belly.

Dennis said to Ryan and said, “I have to go to both hospitals today and tomorrow. I’ll be home at my regular time.”

Ryan walked in the dining room and said, “Daddy you are going to leave me with whatever the problem is with mother and Alice?”

Dennis said, “Yes.”

He looked at the cook and said, “Beef stew.”

The cook gave him stew and a biscuit.

Dennis sat and ate.

Ryan, Beverly, Ryan, Jr. and Alice left and went home.

Bruce walked in the dining room and said, “I smell fried chicken.”

The cook said, “No fried chicken but fried pork chops. We have to get chicken.”

Bruce said, “Give me one pork chop and green beans and a biscuit.”

The cook made Bruce his plate.

Patrick looked at Bruce’s plate.

Bruce sat with him and Brenda.

They said grace and ate their food.

Felipe walked to the cook and said, “Green beans, biscuit and one fried pork chop.”

Patrick looked at Felipe’s plate and said, “Get some fried apples Felipe.

Felipe looked at Patrick and walked back to the cook.

The cook put the apple compote on Felipe’s plate.

Felipe sat with Meredith in the back of the dining room.

They ate quietly.

Meredith said, “Felipe…”

He stopped eating and looked at Meredith.

She said, “You do not realize how hard it is to get coal. Start a fire, get water and cut and wash meat and wash vegetables and put them on the stove to cook for two or three hours. You have been used to going to the dining hall where all the hard work has been done. And to the washroom to bathe and shave, where someone has already gotten the water and coal and heated it. We will see how you feel when you do all of this tonight.”

Meredith smiled at her husband.

Felipe said, “Meredith, you are not going to help me?

Meredith said, “No.”

Felipe looked at her and said, “Meredith, I want you more and more everyday. When you were at the door looking at Eleanor and Michael you gave me a hard look when I said, you were no longer their nanny. Why?’

Felipe bit his biscuit.

Meredith smiled at Felipe and took his hand and whispered, “When everyone rejected me and cast me away from them. The lowest a human being could be. I was that person. Eleanor hired this thin and frail woman to care for her baby. She trusted me to be her for them when she was not there…”

She looked at Felipe who was eating his apple compote and he stared into Meredith’s eyes and saw truth.

She said, “My husband that meant the world to me. All the pain I went through in my life began to peel off me and drop off me a bit by bit. That helped me to began to be a human again. Then I met you and you help me each day to become more of a person. I thank you Felipe.”

Brenda and Patrick were listening to Meredith.

Bruce looked at them and said, “What you doing?”

Brenda and Patrick were leaning back to hear.

Brenda whispered to Bruce, “Shut up.”

Felipe heard Bruce and he turned and looked at Bruce.

Bruce was looking at Brenda and Patrick.

Dennis heard Meredith also.

The cook heard Meredith s

Felipe smiled at Bruce and he and Meredith ate their dinner.

They finished eating their dinner and stood.

Felipe took Meredith’s plate to give back to the cook.

He said, “What about Vivienne and Sally? How does Vivienne eat?”

Meredith said, “The cooks give her food.”

The cook turned and looked at Meredith.

Brenda and Patrick looked at them.

Bruce turned to see what they were talking about Sally.

He said, “Meredith, how is Sally doing?”

Meredith remembered Bruce paid for Sally medical expenses.

She smiled at Bruce and said, “The doctors are working hard on Sally. She had eye surgery to correct her eyes and she can much better. She had surgery on her ears and she can hear perfectly. So you can’t whisper around her.”

Dennis and Felipe laughed.

Meredith said, “The dentist had to pull a lot of her teeth and that is where Sally is now.”

Percy walked in the dining room and heard dentist.

He said, “My girlfriend Star is going to become a dentist.”

Brenda and Patrick looked at Percy.

Brenda turned slightly and yelled, “Eleanor!”

Eleanor and Hutch and Dr. Ralph were talking.

Shirley was sitting and listening.

Dennis hollered.

The cook grinned.

Felipe looked at Percy.

Patrick stared at Percy.

Eleanor said, “Percy just walked in the dining room he has already said something that has made momma mad.”

Eleanor stepped around Hitch and walked into the dining room.

Percy had a plate in his hand and was looking back at the door expecting Eleanor to appear.

Eleanor appeared at the door.

Percy said, “I said, my girlfriend Star is going to be a dentist.”

Eleanor stood numb and looked at Percy.

Bruce looked back at Eleanor.

Patrick stared at the stunned Eleanor.

Hutch and Dr, Ralph walked in the dining room.

Dennis was finishing his beef stew he asked the cook what he put in the beef stew to make it outstanding.

The cook was talking to Dennis.

Meredith said, “Sally is not too happy now.”

Bruce said, “Momma, can we stop for one minute and tell Sally hi. And run back and get in the carriage.”

Eleanor looked at Felipe.

Felipe nodded his head for yes.

Eleanor said, “Only a minute Bruce.”

Bruce said, “Thank you.”

The cook looked at Hutch.

Hutch said, “The food look and smell great.”

Dennis looked over at Patrick and said, “Have you ever thought about opening the dining car up for a meal when the trains are off?”

The cook looked at Patrick.

Patrick was smacking and said, “I haven’t thought about that.”

He looked at Brenda.

Brenda was still looking at Percy and said, “Percy you are too young talking about a girlfriend. How did you and Star even begin dating? Or does she know you are suppose to be dating her?’

Percy said, “She doesn’t know yet.”

Felipe began laughing.

Meredith touched Felipe’s hand.

Eleanor was standing with a hand full of telegrams, that she had not read from Dr. Woodson.

She began to read the telegrams.

Hutch settled for green beans, carrots, apples and a biscuit.

He sat in the back of the dining room.

Meredith said, “Can I have the same and two pork chops and mashed potatoes in case Sally want anything. I’ll bring the plates here Sunday, when I leave from checking on Leon and Spencer.”

Brenda said, “How are they doing?”

Meredith said, “Spencer is not improving. Leon is doing well. He should be able to walk and move about as before in the spring.”

Dennis looked at Meredith and said, “Meredith, why is Spencer not doing well?”

Meredith said, “I don’t know. It is like he is not getting medicine.”

Dennis said, “I have to go there after I leave the other hospital. I will personally check on him. He should be doing well.”

Dennis frowned up.

Patrick was thinking about the mob took the medicine from the bone hospital.

Patrick said, “Dennis please check on Spencer. We are responsible for him. I know when the mob was ruling the bone hospital the nurses were stealing the medicine from the patients.”

Dennis looked at Patrick and said, “I pray not.”

Hutch looked at Patrick.

Charles was walking in the dining room from the washroom.

Charles was peculiar about hygiene. He believed in being clean at all times.

He looked around and walked to the cook and said, “What is that fried?”

The cook said, “Pork chop.”

Patrick said, “Try the fired apples with it.”

The cook said, the apples are not fried but cooked with butter, sugar and cinnamon.”

Dennis looked at Patrick.

He stood and put on his coat, scarf, hat and scarf.

He gave the cook his bowl and spoke to all the people and left.

He rode the thirty minutes to the small hospital.

He spent several hours going around to each patient and attending to the patients.

The patients were complaining about not getting medicine for pain.

Dennis went and got the patients medicine for pain and gave the patients the medicine himself.

He gave the patients the pills to keep with them.

Dennis told the patients the pain would last for twenty four hours and keep the medicine and don’t give it to the nurses.

One patient told Dennis of mean looking men that would come into after dark.

Dennis said, “Stay away from them.”

The man said, “I told my son and his cousin. They have been released from the military and need work, until they find work I told them to come and see about me.”

Dennis said, “I will be back tomorrow have them to see me. I may need someone to look after this hospital. As long as they don’t betray me.”

The man said. “It’s only me and my son and his cousin. I had them up by himself because they mommas were sisters. The mob robbed our business and killed both of them. That was twenty years ago and I hate the mob and they do too. I showed them how to be honest men. I lived a life of honesty before them. I just didn’t say it. They went high military because they were honest and decided to leave to build another life for themselves. I’m sure they can help you about whatever these men are doing here.”

Dennis said, “Thank you for telling about this.”

Eleanor and her children left the hospital in the carriages that came.

They kissed Patrick and Brenda.

Felipe rode his horse home.

He went home and brought the water into the house and he brought the coal in the house and started a fire in the stove.

He put the water in the pails on the stove.

He loved how Beverly and Al organized their house with the furnace outside the house.

Felipe filled the furnace and it started to heat the whole house.

Meredith went to the bone hospital and dropped off the plate of food for Vivienne and Sally.

She talked with them for a little while.

Vivienne gave Sally a little mashed potatoes.

Sally loved them.

Meredith laughed.

Meredith said, “Try a little of the cooked apples. Vivienne mash the apples up and give them to Sally.”

Meredith said, “I have a surprise for you Sally.”

Sally looked at Meredith’s hands.

Meredith’s said, “The surprise is not in my hand’s.”

She left and spent an hour with Spencer.

Meredith heard Bruce and Percy run into the hospital.

She patted Leon, who was sleepy and was walking out his room, when Eleanor walked in.

Eleanor pointed and said, “Is that Leon’s room?”

Meredith was surprised and said, “Yes.”

Meredith saw Michael and Thomas slowly getting out of the carriage.

She hugged them and they walked her to her carriage.

Meredith left and went to the north hospital to check on Spencer.

Spencer was moaning when she arrived and he had a high fever.

Meredith cleaned his wounds.

She gave him pain medication.

Meredith went to the kitchen and got soup and fed Spencer.

Once he ate the soup.

Meredith stayed with him for an hour.

She went and got hot water in a basin and went back and washed Spencer.

Once she finished she gave him medication for the high fever.

She walked and got cold washcloth for him.

Meredith stayed with Spencer for two hours.

She lived a minute from the hospital.

She passed their house to get to the north hospital.

Meredith wanted to go and get Felipe.

Meredith prayed over Spencer.

Spencer could hear Meredith praying for him.

He was too weak to move or say anything.

Meredith cleaned up his room and took all the washcloths and wash basins back to the storage area and took his soup bowl and spoon back to the kitchen.

She patted Spencer’s arm and said, “Spencer, you sleep and rest through the night. I will be back in the morning. You should be doing better.”

Meredith left the hospital and rode home thinking.

She arrived home.

And tied the horses and carriage in the front of the house.

She unlocked the door and saw Felipe relaxing in a tub of hot water.

Meredith smiled and pulled off her wrap, hat and gloves.

She went into the sunken living room and sat.

She pulled off her boots.

Meredith said, “Felipe don’t forget to feed the horses and give them water.”

Felipe turned his head and looked at Meredith.

He said, “Meredith, you did not do that?”

Meredith pressed her dress over her big stomach and walked to their bedroom and pulled off her dress.

She walked and got a wash basin and filled it with water and took back in the bedroom and wash.

She emptied the wash basin and put on her night gown.

When Felipe walked back in the house, he emptied his tub of water.

He looked at Meredith as she stood in front of the mirror and combed and brushed her long hair.

He wondered what color hair their baby would have, since he and Meredith had ash blonde and brunette.

Meredith picked up the book she was reading and walked to her side of the bed, where she placed the bible on the nightstand.

She was sitting on top of the cover.

Felipe doubled check the doors and windows.

He put a little coal in the stove to keep it lit through the night.

He walked by the furnace and he loved the ingenuity of the furnace.

He felt safe that the furnace would not burn the house down.

He saw Meredith and said, “Meredith, get under the cover. You are heavy to be so thin. I had the hardest time putting you under the cover.”

Meredith giggle.

Felipe stood at the bed and titled his head and looked at her.

She said, “Ok sir.”

Meredith got under the cover.

Felipe got under the cover.

He turned to face Meredith.

He looked at her and said, “What’s wrong?”

Meredith told him about Spencer.

Felipe said, “If they got the bullets out, he should be well. That doesn’t sound right. I will go with you tomorrow and check on him. Dennis said, he will be late tomorrow. I think they are having family problems.”

Meredith said, “Felipe I want to have family prayer everyday. You pick whether you want it the morning or in the evening when we go to bed.”

Felipe was snuggling in his bed and said, “In the morning and night. Good night Meredith.”

Meredith leaned over and whispered, “Good night my love.”

Felipe fell asleep.

Meredith could not read her book, but her thoughts kept interrupting her about Spencer.

She prayed for Spencer.

She put down the book and picked up her bible.

Meredith read the twenty third Psalm for protection for Spencer.

She had some peace and fell asleep.

Eleanor went into Leon’s room and talked with him for about twenty minutes and left.

She walked to Vivienne and Sally.

She spoke and saw the yellow quilt Harriet sent.

Eleanor said, “This quilt is lovely.”

She talked to Sally and Vivienne and left.

She gathered all her boys.

Shirley was talking to the nurses.

She said, “Bye., and ran behind Eleanor.

Dr. Greene and Dr. Woodson looked at Shirley walking, standing and running.

Dr. Ralph rode his horse back to the bone hospital and left it there for the grounds keepers to take care of it until he came back.

He picked up his gun and put it on.

Dr. Woodson looked at him.

Dr. Ralph put on his coat, scarf, hat and gloves.

He remembered Lorraine gave him the ensemble for his birthday.

He told Dr. Woodson and Dr. Greene of Lorraine’s condition and he was going to New York to get Lorraine’s things be back the next night.

Dr. Woodson alright.

Shirley was in the carriage waiting for Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph walked to the carriage and got in.

They rode to the train.

Shirley went to their car and took a bath and changed her clothes.

She and Dr. Ralph walked to the depot and sat for a few minutes until the New York train pulled up.

They saw Eleanor and the boys train pulled off.

Shirley was excited and grinned when she saw Percy and Thomas looking out the windows of the owners’ suite wave at her.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley’s beautiful grin and he smiled.

He knew she felt bad about Lorraine.

He saw Michael sitting and looking straight ahead.

Percy was leaning back and saying something.

Eleanor walked to the window and saw Shirley and Dr. Ralph.

She and Bruce waved at them.

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley you feel better? That they don’t hate you.”

Shirley said, “But Michael does.”

Dr. Ralph saw the train for New York pull up.

He turned to Shirley and said, “Be careful and be quiet. We don’t know what happened to Lorraine. You have eaten for today, get in this suite and be quiet.”

Shirley looked puzzled.

Dr. Ralph said, “Keep repenting and ask GOD to help you with Michael.

They boarded the train.

Peter was the conductor that evening.

Shirley went to the owners’ suite.

Dr. Ralph had a first class accommodation.

He went to sleep.

He slept all through the night.

Shirley wanted something to eat and she left the owner’s suite and locked it.

She went looking for Dr. Ralph and saw he was sleep and left him and went to the dining car.

She had an omelet and left and went back to the owners’ suite and locked the door.

She checked under the beds and armoires like Nathan taught them.

She undressed and went to bed.

The train arrived at New York at the crack of dawn.

Shirley woke and had hot water brought to her.

She washed and dressed.

She opened her bag and checked the gun and cash she had.

She made the reservations for Lorraine at the hotel.

Shirley made arrangements for a carriage to be at the train at eight am to take them to the hotel and return them to the train.

She and Dr. Ralph were looking for each other and met in the dining car.

Shirley had an omelet and a slice of apple.

Dr. Ralph had black coffee, the rest of the apple and oatmeal.

Peter watched them.

They left the train to the waiting carriage.

Shirley never been to New York nor Dr. Ralph.

They both were excited at the construction that was taking place.

They arrived at the hotel.

Shirley walked to the front desk and asked for the manager.

She and Dr. Ralph told the manager what happened to Lorraine.

Shirley said, “We need to clear out her room and get her belongings.

The manager walked with them upstairs.

Shirley was very casual and asked questions of the manager.

He answered her carefully positioned questions.

She said, “You have a nice dining room. Lorraine love to eat her breakfast alone.”

The manager said, “The lady did eat her breakfast by herself.”

Shirley said, “Sir I need to pay any outstanding expenses.”

The manager unlocked the door.

Shirley fell to the floor.

Dr. Ralph tried to catch Shirley but stepped over her and walked into the room.

The manager turned and ran downstairs to call for the police.

Dr. Ralph kept his head he hurried and looked for Lorraine’s bag.

He found the money that Shirley gave her to buy the dresses.

Lorraine purchased twenty dresses.

The dresses were thrown over the room.

Dr. Ralph got the thousand dollars and put it in his pocket.

Dr. Ralph was standing and looking around the destroyed room.

The hotel manager and the police ran back to the room.

Shirley was still on the floor.

The hotel manager and the two police stepped over Shirley and looked at Dr. Ralph.

The police said, “Who are you two?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I am her boyfriend. “

He pointed to Shirley and said, “She was her nanny.”

The police realized that the mob maybe involved. If the people were wealthy.

They already sent another police officer to the station to bring the detectives on duty.

The two detectives on duty ran to the hotel and the front desk clerk pointed upstairs.

The hotel manager ran to the balcony.

The police detectives ran upstairs.

They stepped over Shirley and walked into the room.

Dr. Ralph was getting sick.

He walked out the room and tried to pick up Shirley.

Shirley waved him away.

The detectives looked at the hotel manager and said, “You did not hear this?”

The hotel manager said, “No sirs.”

One of the detectives said, “It was a lady patron and she was alone?”

The hotel manager said, “Yes.”

The detective said, “Did she enter the hotel alone and did she dine alone?”

The manager said, “To the best of my memory yes.”

The detectives looked at Shirley on the floor and Dr. Ralph leaning over the balcony.

The hotel manager said, “The patron was her nanny and he her boyfriend.”

One of the detectives looked at Shirley and said, “Nanny? Who are you?”

Shirley tried to get up and said, “Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Ralph walked to Shirley and lifted her up.

Shirley learned if any one is questioning your position or authority to always stand and address them.

Shirley said, “I am Shirley Stith Simmons. Lorraine was my nanny up to Thanksgiving holiday she decided to retire.”

One of the police detective looked around the round and said, “Retire.”

The other police detective said, “What is a Simmons?”

Shirley said, “I am a Stith.”

The police detective said, “What is a Stith?”

Shirley said, “Owners of the railroad and many shipping companies.”

Everyone looked at Shirley.

They looked at her expensive clothes.

They looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. ralph said, “Lorraine put up a big fight and no one heard her. Interesting.”

The police detective said, “What was she doing in New York?”

Shirley said, “I sent her here to buy dresses for my dress shop. She got her Thursday and only partial shopped.”

Shirley was looking around the room at the few dresses.

The police detectives told the police to file a report and bring it to the office.

The police detectives were leaving and passing Shirley.

Shirley said, “Sirs.”

They stopped.

Shirley looked at them and said, “Neither one of you asked if Lorraine was dead or alive. That would decide if it was murder or robbery.”

The police detective said looked at Shirley and said, “You are right. She is alive?”

Shirley said, Barely.”

The detective said, “Please give the police officers your name and address and we will kept in touch.”

Shirley walked in the room and took off her coat and gloves.

She picked up each dress and examined it and put it in the bag.

As she was doing inventorying the dresses she gave the police officers her information.

She handed the dresses to Dr. Ralph he took them to the carriage.

Shirley told the police officers, “Lorraine would not open her door to a stranger.”

Dr. Ralph heard Shirley and he continued down the stairs to the carriage.

He was thinking as he returned.

Shirley was going through each drawer and taking what she found and putting it in Lorraine’s bags.

She got Lorraine’s shoes.

Dr. Ralph stopped and said, “They took her out of this room and out of the hotel without shoes and coat and you did not see nor hear anything?”

The manager walked out Lorraine’s room.

Shirley maintained her calm.

She sorted through everything and packed Lorraine’s bags.

She had cleared the room.

Dr. Ralph took Lorraine’s two bags downstairs and put them in the carriage.

Shirley went through the room with a fine tooth comb.

She asked Dr. Ralph to check the room also.

Dr. Ralph looked under the bed, searched the bed, went through the drawers and armoire and saw nothing left.

Shirley put on her coat and gloves and walked out the room.

She stopped at the front desk and said, “What if the total amount owed.”

The office manager gave Shirley the expenses.

Shirley paid cash.

She stood and waited for her receipt.

She said, “You won’t get a tip because for three days, no one checked and attened to her room. Strange.”

The police officer wrote down Shirley’s comment.

Shirley saw some high society women walked in the hotel lobby and she loved their wraps.

She walked over to them and asked where they purchased their wraps.

They told her down the street.

She and Dr. Ralph to the shops that were opened for a few hours.

Dr. Ralph told the man to follow them.

They walked in the store.

Everyone looked at Shirley.

Shirley loved to have people look at her.

She commands attention.

She picked up several coats, wraps, scarves, gloves and hats.

Dr. Ralph gave her the thousand dollars.

The carriage driver walked to the store door and Dr. Ralph gave him the clothing.

They walked down the same street and saw another accessory store.

Shirley bought expensive accessories of pins and collars and sweaters.

The carriage driver said, “If you want expensive women clothes I will show you this place back to the railroad.

Dr. Ralph had his gun on.

The man brought them to an expensive dress shop.

Shirley spent the remaining money in that shop.

She was satisfied with her shopping.

Dr. Ralph and the carriage driver carried all the clothing onto the train.

Shirley remained at the carriage until the driver came back.

She paid him and took all the other items and walked on the train.

Peter looked at Shirley.

He reached for the clothes.

Shirley saw Dr. Ralph and said, “No thank you.”

She handed the clothes to Dr. Ralph.

Time everyone was on the train.

The train pulled off.

Dr. Ralph was glad he wanted to get back to Lorraine.

He wondered who could have done that to Lorraine. But he was happy that Lorraine was not with a man.

Shirley was in the owners’ suite going through the inventory.

She met Dr. Ralph for dinner.

She had creamed soup and cornbread.

Dr. Ralph ordered a steak, potatoes and green beans.

He enjoyed his dinner.

He walked Shirley back to the owner’s suite.

He stepped in the suite and was awe struck at the largeness and opulent furnished owners’ suite.

Shirley giggled.

Dr. Ralph was able to take his eyes off the suite and its’ furnishings to look at Shirley.

Shirley said, “Come Dr. Ralph let me show the entire suite.”

Shirley showed Dr. Ralph the balcony, Patrick and Brenda’s room, with the bath area, Eleanor’s room and their room.

Dr. Ralph laughed and walked to the door and said, “Good night Shirley. Locked the door and put a chair from that dining room under the doorknob.”

Shirley said, “Good night, Dr. Ralph.”

Shirley heard Dr. Ralph laughing until his laughter became faint.

Shirley stood behind the door and giggle.

She locked the door and went to the dining room and dragged a chair across the floor and put behind the door.

Dr. Ralph went back to his first-class accommodations and went to sleep.

Shirley doubled locked everything.

She fell on her knees and prayed.

Shirley said, “GOD YOU forgive us of all of our sins. I ask you to forgive me of mines and especially against Michael and the handicap students at the school. Let me them forgive them, they saw someone who was handicap and they welcomed me to them. I rejected them because I wanted to be normal and me not associating with them but the group of snooty bluebloods and distancing myself from them I thought that would make me normal and accepted. It did not. I just hurted more people and caused more people to hate me. Please help me GOD to make things right with them. Especially Leslie. She tried so hard to be kind and friendly to me. GOD my heart hurt over her everyday. Don’t let her die without accepting the man of Light as her Savior. Let me have the opportunity to apologize and make up to her and the rest of the students. They, we…”

Shirley cut her eyes around in the room and said, “… need those rails and slops and wider doors to the washroom, use me GOD to build them. YOU gave me the money to help others GOD.”

Shirley broke out in deep crying.

She continued and said, “GOD I am in pain every day, especially when I think about myself all day. Let Michael be healed from the nervous breakdown I caused him to have. Let him forgive me and my other brothers and especially my mother. Let me make up to Michael for the evil I did to him. GOD the evil I did to people don’t let them take it to their hearts and hold it against YOU. Give them freedom and peace. GOD my mistreatment of those handicap students is what drove Lorraine away from me. Please let her live and be whole. Amen. Excuse me GOD I would like to ask YOU to let Lorraine come home in two weeks so she can see the ground breaking ceremony and be around her family for the holidays. I don’t know if that is a selfish prayer or not, but I love her as my momma because she was always, always there with me. Forgive me for hating my daddy. Amen.”

Shirley crawled from the side of the bed onto the bed and covered herself with the blankets.

She cried herself to sleep.

Dr. Ralph ordered a hot bath in the morning as they arrive in Philadelphia.

He was going to sleep and thinking about he had to go home and change his clothes and see about his patients and take a couple changes of clothes.

He smiled as he was falling to sleep that Lorraine got him a housekeeper that brought water and coal in the house and kept his clothes and sheets washed and pressed.

Morgan waited until the train to New York was gone.

Her left work early that day and packed up the office and locked the drawer with the railroad business.

He pulled the shade almost all the way down.

Morgan put on his scarf and hat.

He looked around the office as he was putting of his coat.

He was memorizing every detail of the office so he would know if anything was disturbed.

Morgan pretended he was taking trash to the bin to see what was in there and he took his can back in his office and put both locks on the door.

He walked to his horse and pretended he was putting his coffee cup and pot in his saddle was cutting his eyes around to see if he could catch anyone watching him.

He mounted his horse and rode away.

He cut through several neighborhoods to escape anyone following him.

He made it to the south hospital before dark.

He saw Patrick and Brenda sitting out in the lobby.

Brenda and Patrick’s faces lit up when they saw Morgan.

He has always been their hidden friend.

He would tell them when he definitely knew something was wrong.

He walked passed them and stood in the corner.

Brenda and Patrick stood from the sofa and walked to Morgan.

Morgan looked at them and said, “Hello. I don’t have a lot, but first that damn Peter said to get you and Brenda word that he will retire by the fifteenth of December if you give him five hundred dollars for his retirement and no party.”

Brenda said, “Fine.”

Patrick was anxious because he knew Morgan did not come all the way out there about Peter’s retirement request.

Morgan said, “I don’t know your worker Lorraine. I saw her face yesterday. Today as peter was giving me his request for you. Her face flashed before me. Then when I went to the office. It happened again.”

Brenda was thinking, “That was GOD.”

She listened very intently to Morgan.

Morgan said, “I went to review the train to New York that Lorraine should have been on and it was gone.”

Patrick’s mouth opened.

Brenda was looking up at Morgan and said, “What were you looking for?”

Morgan said, “I don’t know. I felt to look at that train schedule.”

Patrick said, “If you never would had thought to look at the schedule you would never have known it was missing.”

Brenda was thinking.

Morgan said, “Patrick I know how you are about paperwork. I searched everywhere and it was not there. I looked in the trash bucket and then I took my trash bucket outside like I had trash to throw away to look in the bin if I had thrown it away and I saw no paper. I went back in the office and put the trash bucket by my desk and saw the drawer was slightly opened.”

Brenda said, “Did the train schedule re-appear?”

Morgan said, “Yes.”

Patrick said, “Who was there?”

Morgan said, “Me, Peter, Ricky, Chase and Levert.”

Patrick said, “Did you see anyone in the area when you returned to the office and looked around?”

Morgan said, “Only Peter. Someone else could have been around, but he was the only one I saw.”

Patrick said, “Thank you Morgan.”

Brenda said, “Yes Morgan thank you.”

Morgan walked out the hospital and got on his horse and rode a completely different way to get his rooming house.

Patrick helped him to buy a rooming house.

Morgan has the top floor for himself.

He sit and watches the front, the back and both sides of his property from the four windows at the top.

The men at the railroad did not know anything about him but he lives in a rooming house, like them.

They did not know which one he lived in because Morgan moved around a lot to keep from anyone following him.

He paid Patrick and Brenda back over five years for financing his rooming house.

He has the rent from the rooms he put in the bank along with his salary.

Morgan had a very sizeable bank account.

Brenda and Patrick went and sat back on the sofa.

Brenda looked straight ahead.

Patrick leaned towards Brenda.

She said, “Patrick go to bed and lie down and stretch your body.”

She thought and jumped up and walked to Lorraine’s door.

Patrick said, “Don’t you go and get him.”

Hutch heard Patrick as he was checking Lorraine’s vital.

He finished and told the nurses to watch Lorraine.

Charles was laying on the other sofa.

Hutch opened the door and saw Brenda standing at the door.

She did not come in because Patrick told her not to.

Hutch looked at Brenda and then Patrick.

Patrick was leaning further over.

Hutch frowned up.

Brenda saw Hutch frown.

She turned and walked behind him.

Charles was laying on the other sofa with his back to the lobby.

But he was listening.

He had not learn all the things Hutch, Jason, Bradley and Tony knew. So he knew he would not be any help to Brenda and Patrick.

Hutch walked to Patrick and stood and looked at him and said, “Patrick let’s go.”

He helped Patrick up and Brenda got on the other side and they walked Patrick upstairs.

Hutch walked Patrick to his bed and took his vitals and then he completed therapy on Patrick.

He looked at Brenda and she pulled off her robe and stepped out her slippers and got in the bed.

Hutch check her vitals and adjusted her back and hips.

He walked to the nurses’ desk and got their charts.

He walked back to Patrick and Brenda’s room and sat and went through their tests and wrote in their charts.

Brenda and Patrick were like scorned little children looking at the quiet Hutch.

He stood and closed the door.

Hutch walked to their beds and stood in the middle and said, “I don’t like the tests results we received back. I need you two to get under a doctor’s care for the rest of your life. Why? To extend your lives. Ryan will go over these tests also. If you have to come here every month or six months. You are not freeing slaves and fleeing anymore and are in all type of environments. GOD has rewarded you with family, friends and money. You have done your part. I did my part. Now the others are to do their part and so forth all down the line. You need to take care of yourselves so you can enjoy the gifts of family, friends and money GOD has given you. You own the railroad so you can ride and come here until you finish the hospital in Cedartown. I told you I will come back and work there. Until then, you come here and be seen after.”

Brenda nodded her head for yes.

Patrick said, “We will Hutch.”

Hutch walked to the door and looked back at his older friends and said, “Stay in bed tonight. Lorraine will be fine through the night. We will see in the morning if she is responding to the shots.”

Hutch opened the door and walked out.

The nurses were in a big argument amongst themselves.

Dennis left the smallest hospital and was riding back to go to the north hospital when he decided to stop and run to his office and check the telegrams.

Patrick and Brenda sat up in the beds when they heard the nurses screaming and fussing.

Charles flipped over on the sofa and nearly flipped into Dennis.

The nurses downstairs were running to the stairs.

The two nurses in the room with Lorraine ran to the door.

Dennis ran upstairs.

Charles ran upstairs behind Dennis.

Hutch was standing back listening to the arguments.

Dennis stood quietly for a minute and listened.

He stepped forward and said, “You nurses calm down and be quiet.”

Charles and Hutch were staring at the nurses.

Patrick put his hands behind his head and got comfortable and crossed his legs.

He said, “Brenda this is going to be interesting.”

Brenda grinned at Patrick.

Then their door closed.

Patrick looked at the door.

Brenda twisted her mouth and bit her lips.

They looked at each other and said, “Hutch.”

Brenda said, “I guess he is right. We are noisy. We be in everybody’s business. We worry too much.”

Patrick looked at Brenda and said. “That maybe true. But I want to know what is going on outside my room.”

Brenda said, “Let’s think on what Morgan told us this evening. I hope he is safe.”

Morgan was at this room and feed and gave water to his horse and put it in the stables behind the rooming house.

Morgan walked around to the front of the house.

He unlocked the front door.

He saw a flection in the front door glass he turned quickly and saw a young woman.

She said, “Sir do you know if there are any vacant rooms?”

Morgan did not know what to think.

He looked at the window that had the sign for room for rent and said,

The sign is not there?”

The young woman was sad and turned her head and looked up the street.

She picked up her bags to start walking again.

Morgan’s heart stroke him he ran off the porch and said, “Ma am.”

The young crying woman stopped and turned around.

Morgan ran to her and said, “It’s getting to be night. Why are you out late looking for a room?”

The young woman said, “the stagecoach was late. It was to get here this morning but had some type of trouble and we got here late.”

Morgan was trying to size the young woman up. She looked to be sixteen and poor.

Morgan said, “I know there is not a room in that rooming house, but I will ask the owners and see if you can stay overnight in the parlor. Come on.”

The young woman walked back to the rooming house with Morgan.

Morgan opened the door and let her in.

He stepped aside for her to step in.

He locked the front door back and put both locks on it.

He showed the young woman to the parlor.

She sat on the sofa and looked at the cold fireplace.

Morgan went in the back room and knocked on the door and opened it and closed it.

He sat at his desk and went through the mail.

He was used to the cold.

After about ten minutes.

He did not trust the young woman.

He did not know why his heart was telling him to let her in.

He could not understand where she came from and at night.

Morgan said, “God help me.”

Morgan stood and put out the candle.

He waked out his office and locked the door.

He walked up the hall to the parlor.

He said, “You can take my room and I’ll sleep in the parlor or you can leave.”

The young woman sat still and said, “Yes sir.”

Morgan said, “Tomorrow is Sunday. I am off on my job and will take you around tomorrow to find you a place to sleep. The owner said, he will not charge you for tonight, because I have already for my room.”

Morgan said, “Come on.”

The young woman picked up her two bags and followed Morgan upstairs to the second floor to the end of the hallway.

Morgan knew the three men who lived on the second floor will shoot and don’t ask questions later.

He always secured the third floor which looked like an attic.

He showed the woman his room.

Morgan always left things in the room to look like he stayed in the room.

He opened the door and ran and took his clothes out the armoire and the drawers.

The young lady giggled.

Morgan said, “The candle is over there.”

The young woman said, “No window,”

Morgan said, “I don’t need one.”

He walked out the room and said, “Close the door.”

She closed the door.

The three men cracked their doors.

Morgan whispered and said, “Watch.”

The three men closed their doors.

The young woman had her ears to the door to listen, but she did not hear anything.

Morgan went downstairs to the parlor and sat on the sofa and took off his boots and coat, hat, scarf and gloves.

He looked at the cold fireplace.

Morgan put his boots on and went out the front door and locked it back.

He went to the coal shed and filed up his coal bucket and looked at the well.

He put the coal bucket down and walked to the well and picked up his bucket and got water to take to the house.

Morgan picked up the bucket of coal.

He felt someone watching him.

He walked back to the front of the house and put both buckets on the front porch.

He sensed it again.

He unlocked the front door and picked up the buckets and walked in the house and closed the door with his feet.

Morgan put the buckets down and put both locks on the door.

He took the water to the kitchen and dipped a glass in the water.

Morgan stood and enjoyed the cold water.

He put the lid on the water bucket.

Morgan walked out the kitchen and double check the backdoor.

He stood to listen.

He walked into the parlor and picked up the bucket of coal from the front door and put some coal in the fireplace.

He started a fire and sat and looked at the fireplace.

Morgan pulled off his boots and coats.

He laid on the sofa and thought about the young woman.

Ryan spent the day playing with Ryan Jr.

He knew something was wrong.

He caught the butler and told him to tell him what has happened.

The butler told Ryan what happened to Alice.

Robert told Ryan of the message Dennis received from John Jr and that apparently money was missing from the hospitals.

Ryan breathe deeply and walked out the kitchen.

The butler and his wife looked at Ryan and then at each other.

Alice was nervous.

Ryan looked at Alice as they sat to dinner and said, “Alice.”

Alice jumped.

The butler looked at Alice.

Ryan said, “Why did you jump?”

Beverly looked at Alice.

Beverly was in her bedroom all day.

Ryan thought, “Where is dad?”

Hutch walked back from Patrick and Brenda’s room after he closed their door.

Dennis looked at the fat nurse and said, “Madeline, calmly tell me what you are upset about?’

She was taking deep breaths.

She said, “I was going to take Mr. Lawrence his pain medication. I put the shot on his tray and forgot the needle. I went over there not more than two feet and got the needle and came back the tray was empty.”

Mr. Lawrence yelled, “I need that shot!!!”

Dennis said, “Madeline get some medicine and give the shot to Mr. Lawrence.”

Madeline said, “There is no more.”

Dennis stood and stared.

Mr. Lawrence started screaming.

His wife ran to his door and yelled, “Give my husband something for this pain.”

Dennis ran to the nurses’ desk and said, “Yes ma am.”

Dennis ran to the medicine cabinet.

He searched and ran back to the nurses’ station and said, “Where in the hell is all the pain medication?”

The nurses yelled back at Dennis, “We don’t know.”

Dennis stood in disbelief.

Mrs. Lawrence ran to the nurses’ desk and yelled, “Somebody better get my husband something for this pain.”

Hutch looked at Dennis and said, “What did he have done?”  
Dennis was stunned.

Hutch took over and said, “Nurse Madeline give me Mr. Lawrence’s chart.”

Madeline walked Mr. Lawrence’s chart to Hutch.

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Patrick looked at Brenda and they both said, “Mob.”

Patrick said, “The mob has to be stopped.”

Brenda said, “Yes.”

Hutch was reading Mr. Lawrence chart.

Dennis said, “How many patients need pain medication?”

Nurse Madeline said, “This is the surgery ward. All of them.”

Dennis said, “Do we have sleep medication?”

Nurse Madeline said, “No sir.”

Charles ran to the nurse’ desk and said, “When did you find that out?”

Nurse Madeline said, “A few minutes ago when I looked for the pain medication. I would have given the patients sleep medication until the morning.”

Dennis said, “You eight nurses were standing at this desk when the pain medication disappeared. What happened to it?”

The nurses downstairs yelled.

Hutch turned his head but kept reading Mr. Lawrence’s chart.

Patrick looked at Brenda and said, “Watch, that were the nurses downstairs.”

Brenda said, “They better not steal what they need for Lorraine.”

Patrick said, “My GOD.”

Dennis said, “You can put it back and leave. I will not prosecute you. I am going to telegram for the police.”

The nurses downstairs ran into their medicine cabinet and saw their pain medication was gone.

Charles was looking over the balcony at them.

Brenda was yawning and said, “I am glad we ate earlier. This is taking my strength.”

Patrick started snoring.

Dennis went to his office and sent a telegram to his home to Ryan that all the pain and sleep medication has been stolen.”

Dennis looked at the suppliers for their medications and sent telegrams to everyone requesting the medications.

He sat and received a telegram from Ryan.

The butler heard the telegram machine and went and got the telegram and gave it to Ryan.

Ryan shook his head and tossed the telegram on the table.

He continued to look at Alice and then his mother.

Beverly was used to taking the messages and the telegrams from Dennis, but she did not try that with Ryan.

Everyone was leaving for the week-end.

Dennis needed the medication.

Dennis sent the telegram to the police station.

Hutch was reading Mr. Lawrence’s chart.

Mrs. Lawrence was standing next to Hutch.

Hutch looked up from Mr. Lawrence’s chart and smiled at her.

Dennis thought and ran to Patrick and Brenda’s room.

Hutch said, “Dr. Wade when you come back.”

Mr. Lawrence was screaming.

Mrs. Lawrence went from mad to twirling in the floor with panic.

Hutch saw her but was thinking.

Charles ran downstairs in Lorraine’s room and got her chart and looked over the ingredients in her shot and went to the nurses and asked the nurses if any of those ingredients were missing.

The nurses looked and said two of the ingredients were missing.

Hutch was standing and watching Charles.

Charles turned from the nurses’ desk and walked back upstairs.

Dennis knocked on Patrick and Brenda’s door and woke them.

Dennis said, “Mr. and Mrs. Stith I need your help. All of our pain medication and sleep medication from these two hospitals and maybe from the third hospital is gone. I cannot let these patients suffer from pain. Some of them can die.”

Patrick said, “You need a train to go where?’

Dennis, “My brother-in-law at the capitol will stay and get all the medicine I need and send it. If I can get an express train to go and pick up the medication and bring it back.”

Charles walked to the door with a chart.

Brenda stared at the chart.

Dennis turned and looked at Charles and then at his hand with the chart.

Charles said, “Sir we need two additional medicines.”

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “You want to use my train, whose chart is that?”

Dennis said, “Lorraine.”

Patrick was getting out the bed and putting on his slippers.

Hutch said, “Dr. Wade I believe I can manipulate Mr. Lawrence’s shoulder to give him some relief.”

Dennis said, “If his wife agrees then you can try.”

He said, “Dennis write a full list of the medication you are out of. I have to see who we have to conduct just the engine to the capitol. If everyone is gone on other trains I will have to go. One of you doctors get ready and take the list and double check all the medication before we leave the capitol.”

Dennis said, “Thank you both.”

Patrick said, “You are welcome. Lets’ go to your office and I will send a telegram to my railroad to disconnect the engine and send it to the capitol.”

Dennis said, “I will go. It is my hospitals and these are my patients.”

Mrs. Lawrence was about to pass out.

Hutch touched her on her elbow and told her what he does and if she is willing he will try to give Mr. Lawrence some relief.

Mrs. Lawrence said, “Yes!”

The nurses were standing in shock.

Hutch said, “One of you nurses come with me.”

Nurse Madeline said, “I will come. Mr. Lawrence is my patient.”

The other patients were listening and they started complaining about pain.

Dennis and Patrick went to his office.

Patrick sent the telegrams to the railroad and no engineers and conductors until Sunday morning.

Nurse Williams ran to Dennis and said, “The patients are complaining about pain.”

Dennis looked at her and said, “Of course they are. They had surgeries. We can’t do anything.”

Nurse Williams walked to the nurses’ desk and flopped down and put her hands to her head.

Dennis and Patrick went to his office and Patrick sent the telegrams to the railroad and no engineers and conductors until Sunday morning.

Patrick said, “I am going to put on my pants. Let’s go. Dennis tell your brother-in-law to be at the train station with all the medication he has. You have to control all the inventory from now on until you weed out the persons.”

Dennis sent his brother-in-law a telegram to be at the train station with as much medication he had.”

Patrick walked passed the nurse’s station and saw the distraught nurses.

He walked in his room and Brenda was laying down.

He closed their door and put on his pants and boots.

He said, “This robe is warm. I better put on my coat.”

Brenda yawn and said, “I’ll see you in the morning.”

Patrick walked to the bed and kissed Brenda.

She smiled and went to sleep.

Patrick walked out the room and closed the door.

Brenda said, “Open.”

She wanted to see if she could see the person who put the medicine back.

She heard Mr. Lawrence screaming.

She said, “Close.”

Patrick and Dennis were walking down the stairs and did not hear Brenda.

Charles went back downstairs and laid on the sofa.

The nurses were standing in Lorraine’s door listening.

Patrick had to ride for forty five minutes on the back of Dennis’ horse.

He thought, “I hurt but I am glad Hutch adjusted me. I could not make this journey without it.”

When Patrick and Dennis arrived at the trains. Patrick saw two engineers and knew they were gambling with other workers.

Patrick and Dennis dismounted the horse.

They walked to the engine and Patrick immediately pulled off and sped to the capitol. Patrick made the two and a half hour trip in two hours.

Dennis’ brother-in-law was at the train station.

Patrick was proud of the train station and the rest stop Steven designed and build.

Dennis said, “Patrick nice station.”

Patrick said, “Yes. A young man just finished college designed and build it.”

Patrick and Dennis rushed to the brother-in-law.

Dennis looked at the medicine and double check it.’

Dennis, his brother-in-law and Patrick loaded the train with the medication.”

Patrick told his workers to hook the horse to a wagon and have it ready in four hours.

Patrick rushed back to the train.

Dennis sat and went through each box.

Dennis said, “I have to take all of this medication to the two other hospitals.”

Patrick was not talking but concentrating on the train tracks.

Ryan sat in the parlor and talked to his mother and Alice.

Beverly told Ryan about John Jr and Betty.

Ryan looked at his mother and said, “Mother I know it hurt, but you can’t do nothing about the type of people they are. Send them a message not to come. You don’t have to say any more than that.”

Beverly looked at Ryan and nodded her head for yes.

Ryan looked at Alice.

Alice jumped and looked at Ryan.

Ryan took Alice by her hand and held it and looked into her eyes and said, “You tell me what happened to you yesterday. Don’t be sham.”

Alice looked in the eyes of her husband.

She swallowed and slowly told Ryan everything.

Beverly sat and was not listening but staring in the fireplace.

She looked at them and stood and walked to the liquor table and got a glass of scotch and went upstairs.

She saw Dennis was late.

Beverly sat on the foot of her bed and drank the scotch slowly and looked at her fireplace.

Ryan and Alice talked for a long time and walked upstairs to check on Ryan Jr.

They stopped at Beverly’s room and saw her sipping the scotch.

Beverly heard them.

She said, “We were the happy foursome. The good timers, who laughed and dance the night away. Was it all a lie.”

Ryan said, “No mother they just changed.”

Beverly smirked and continued to sit on the foot of her bed.

Ryan walked in and kissed her on her head and walked out and closed her door.

Ryan and Alice walked and checked on a sleeping Ryan Jr.

Ryan thought, “He is a good looking boy. I can’t have him to grow up thinking his looks will get him through life. Like Michael and Thomas.”

Ryan laughed.

Alice looked at Ryan.

He held her and said, “Alice I love you. I just don’t want you to bring Ryan Jr. for visits. We will work this mental, emotional and bad life experiences you had. GOD will help us.”

They walked to their bedroom and closed the door.

Dennis and Patrick arrived back in Philadelphia.

The workers had the horse and wagon ready.

They ran to the train and helped Patrick and Dennis put the medicine boxes in the wagon.

Dennis took over the horses.

He sped back to the smallest hospital.

It was near midnight.

Dennis had sorted through the medicine and put just enough for each patient until Sunday.

He and Patrick saw the mean men leaving the hospital their hands were empty.

Patrick said, “I’ll stay in the wagon.”

Dennis looked at Patrick and got the box of medicine and went into the hospital.

Dennis went to each patient and gave them the exact amount of pain medication they need.

The older patient said, “Dr. Wade those men just left.”

Dennis said. “I saw them.”

He looked at the patient and said, “Hide these pills. I will be late tomorrow because I have to go to the other hospitals.”

Dennis left the hospital and heard Patrick snoring before he got to the wagon.

Dennis sped to the south hospital and walked in with boxes of medication.

He and Patrick heard the screaming patients.

Charles was walking out Lorraine’s room when Patrick and Dennis were walking in with the boxes.

Dennis said, “Charles can you go and bring the box that has south written on it.”

Charles said, “Yes.”

He ran outside and brought the box inside to the second floor.

He locked the door.

Dennis and Patrick walked upstairs.

Dennis took the medication to his office.

He and Charles gave the patients and medication.

Mr. Lawrence was in pain but it was more tolerable after Hutch worked on his bones and muscles.

Dennis and Charles gave all the patients on the second floor their pain medication.

Dennis and Charles went downstairs and gave the patients the pain medications.

Dennis locked the medicine in his office.

Patrick had undressed and went to bed and was sleep.

He closed his and Brenda’s door.

Dennis left the south hospital and took the wagon to the big hospital.

He arrived around one thirty am.

He saw the same men leaving his hospital.

He took one box of pain and sleep medication to the hospital.

He went from floor to floor and gave all the patients their medications.

Dennis went to the wagon and brought the other boxes in the hospital.

He put the boxes in his office.

Dennis nearly fainted from exhaustion.

He pulled off his coat and gloves and scarf.

He locked his office door and went to his desk and got his gun.

Dennis thought, “They have been stealing everything, I better check if the bullets are in this gun.”

He walked to his chair and got the blanket he kept at the hospital.

He pulled the chair to the door.

Dennis pulled off his coat and tie and laid.

He stretched out on his sofa and covered up with the blanket.

He slept from six am until near noon.

Ryan was at the south hospital and checked on Lorraine.

He left and went to the big hospital and knocked on his father’s door.

His father woke and ran to the door and it was Ryan.

Ryan stood and looked at his exhausted father.

Dennis told Ryan as much as he thought he should know.

Dennis said, “Take that box and you and the doctors that are here give the patients their pain medication.”

Dennis could not see he laid back down and slept for another two hours.

He woke and felt much better.

He was able to function and went and washed his face.

He saw Ryan and said, “Come with me and check on Spencer.”

They walked to Spencer, “He was not doing well. They attended to him and gave him medication.”

Meredith was walking to Spencer’s room.

Ryan walked to the nurses’ desk and asked for Spencer’s chart.

The nurse saw Meredith and said, “She has it.”

Meredith had on her coat and hat.

Felipe was putting the wagon in its spot.

Meredith stopped and got a wash basin and put hot water in it and got a washcloth.

She was walking to Spencer.

She and Felipe was with Lorraine for several hours.

Felipe wanted to help out at the bone hospital since Dr. Ralph was gone.

Meredith spent two hours with Leon and a half hour helping Vivienne with Sally.

She and Felipe left the bone hospital and was there at the north hospital to attend to Spencer.

Felipe was walking up when he heard the nurse lie on Meredith.

Meredith stopped and looked at the nurse.

Ryan said, “Go and attend to Spencer.”

Felipe was learning American racism.

He said, “Nurse when did the nurse get the patient’s chart?”

The nurse said, “About an hour ago.”

Ryan said, “Really.”

Felipe stared at the nurse.

She jumped when she saw Felipe stare at her.

One of the other nurses waved the chart to Ryan.

Ryan said, “Nurse what are those charts there.”

The nurse picked up the charts and walked them to Ryan.

Ryan saw Spencer’s chart.

He looked at the nurse and her name tag and lifted up Spencer’s chart and said, “Really.”

The nurse was sitting with her arms folded was shown up and huffed and said, “Really.”

Ryan and Felipe looked at her and walked to Spencer.

They three doctors worked on Spencer for several hours.

Felipe was with Lorraine when Ryan made up the shot and gave to her.

Charles and Hutch left the hospital and would return on Monday.

The other two nurses were with Lorraine.

Patrick and Brenda finally woke around ten am and sat in the lobby after they had washed and eaten.

Shirley and Dr. Ralph had bathe and dressed and met for breakfast.

They enjoyed breakfast.

He helped Shirley with all her shopping they were able to walk to the car with the owners; suite and put all the clothes.

They waked to the waiting carriage and went to the bone hospital.

Shirley continued to the south hospital.

Dr. Ralph worked at the bone hospital until dark.

He went home and went to bed.

Shirley arrived at the south hospital as Ryan and the doctors were giving Lorraine the shot.

She waited in the lobby until Patrick and Brenda came.

Shirley told them of the fight scene in Lorraine’s hotel room. That her boots were in the room and her coat. And the police did not care.

She told Patrick and Brenda about her prayer and asked them if GOD heard her.

Brenda looked at Shirley and said, “What a beautiful prayer Shirley, He heard your prayer how HE decides what to answer we don’t know.”

Patrick sat up and said, “I need to send Jose a telegram.”

He went upstairs to the administrator’s office and sent Jose a telegram.

He told Jose Lorraine was the same. Shirley went to New York and got all of Lorraine’s belongings. Leon was improving. Spencer was not doing well. They should be back by Saturday.

The nurses were staring at Shirley’s clothes.

Beverly and Al rushed to the hospital and walked in the lobby.

Patrick was walking down the stairs and saw Al and Beverly enter the hospital.

They all greeted each other.

Beverly said, “How is Lorraine?”

Brenda said, “No change.”

Shirley told she and Al of what she saw in New York.

Al was talking to Ryan.

Hutch and Charles left the hospital.

Beverly said, “Brenda you should see the design Mable is making for your house.”

Brenda grinned.

Beverly said, “I took her Friday so she could order all the flowers they should here the Tuesday before the ground breaking. I want to come but Al is saying we are too busy. But I could not understand why they would not ship the flowers directly to you. It’s too much for Mabel to take care of.”

Brenda said, “The florist has to pass us to get to Philadelphia.”

Al walked and talked to Ryan.

Al and Ryan were talking.

Patrick said, “I wonder if we can get some seafood from Captain Moss and Ellen.”

Brenda laughed and said, “Ellen is so happy.”

Patrick said, “She is not the only one. Captain Moss is too. Ellen brought her age to the table. Captain Moss is twenty years older than Ellen. He had to offer her some things too.”

Beverly and Brenda laughed.

Shirley looked at Patrick and was trying to think what they were talking about.

Ryan said, “Al you need to come out of retirement. We need a doctor at the smallest hospital.”

Al said, “I enjoy my life now Ryan.”

Ryan looked back at Beverly and said, “You need me to talk to her?”

Al said, “Yes.”

Ryan walked over to Beverly and said, “Hello Beverly.”

Beverly did not turn around to Ryan and said, “No. Al has to help me at the home.”

Ryan looked at Beverly and could not understand how she knew what he wanted.

He said, “Damn.”

Brenda and Patrick looked at Beverly.

Shirley finally came out of her fog.

Ryan said, “Beverly we need help too at the hospital.”

Beverly turned from Brenda and looked at Ryan.

Brenda said, “Beverly you have to hire help. Next year Mabel may leave with Skip’s son once he finish medical school. Then what?”

Patrick said, “Beverly stop being cheap. Hire some help.”

Ryan said, “Who is finishing medical school?”

Shirley grinned and said, “Skip’s adopted son.”

Brenda looked at Shirley’s countenance lit up.

Brenda looked at Shirley and thought, “I wonder is she changed enough for Skip?”

Patrick said, “We already got him and Ty.”

Ryan said, “You all are working hard for that hospital.”

Patrick said, “It is a lot of sick people.”

Ryan walked away and shook his head at Al.

Al looked at Beverly.

Beverly said, “Patrick if you get Ellen and Captain Moss to send you some seafood, include enough for me and Al. He will pay you.”

Al looked at Beverly.

Brenda grinned and thought, “Beverly is too cheap.”