Meredith woke early and drove a carriage to her former rooming house.

Felipe woke and was smiling.

He turned over and Meredith was gone.

He thought.

He heard Dr. Greene and Debra leaving their suite and Barry running down the hall.

Barry stopped.

Then Felipe heard Brenda and Patrick speaking to Barry.

Felipe smiled.

He said, “God I thank You they are good people.”

He said, “Where is Meredith?”

There was a knock on his door.

He jumped up and ran to the door thinking it was Meredith.

Then he thought, “Why would Meredith knock?”

Felipe opened the door and saw Vivienne.

He was disappointed and said, “Good morning.”

Vivienne said, “Morning. Meredith left this note.”

She reached Felipe the note.

She said, “They are bringing your bath water. Breakfast is served.”

She looked at him and walked away.

Felipe looked down at his nightgown.

Dr. Woodson opened his door.

He was bathed and shaven and fully dressed.

Bradley looked at Felipe and said, “Good morning.”

Vivienne looked at Felipe and walked away.

Felipe said, “She doesn’t like me.”

Dr. Woodson laughed. And said, “I don’t think so. I think everybody is watching to see if you deserve Meredith.”

Dr. Woodson looked in the room and said, “Where is Meredith?”

Felipe said, “I don’t know?”

He read Meredith’s note.

She said, “I should be back when you read this note.”

Felipe said, “She said should be back when I read this note.”

Dr. Charles and his wife were fully dress and on their way to breakfast.

Felipe said, “Did I over sleep?”

Everybody laughed.

Dr. Charles and his wife continued to breakfast. They were walking behind Vivienne.

Dr. Woodson said, “Felipe God has given you a wife and a child don’t drive her away nor make her unhappy.”

Felipe could not argue with Bradley because he had been thinking about his first wife and child a lot and him failing them.

Meredith was walking fast down the hall to Felipe.

She smiled and spoke to Dr. Charles and his wife.

She ran to Felipe and was happy.

Felipe looked at Dr. Woodson and then he saw the smiling Meredith running to him.

She extended her arms to embrace him and he grabbed her and hugged her.

Dr. Woodson grinned and walked down the hall to breakfast.

Felipe kissed Meredith.

She kissed him back.

She said, “You must hurry and get dressed. I have people I want you to meet.”

Gary and Louis were bringing Felipe his bath water.

Felipe looked and said, “Am I late? Did I oversleep?”

Meredith laughed and said, “Yes.”

Meredith was rubbing her stomach.

Felipe was about to ask Meredith if she was sick or in pain.

He decided not to say anything to Meredith sat in the settee and asked Gary and Louis what happen with Jose.

Gary took the tubs back to the spare room.

Felipe said, “Meredith.”

Meredith ignored Felipe.

Gary looked back at Felipe.

Louis looked at Felipe.

Felipe realized he was being dominating.

Felipe looked at Meredith who did not look at him.

Felipe said, “Meredith I am sorry.”

Meredith did not say anything.

Louis slightly stuck out his tongue at Felipe.

Felipe was so shocked and looked at Louis.

Louis said, “Felipe Meredith needs to eat. Why don’t you wash your face and shave and dress and walk to breakfast with her, then come back and bath. Your water will still be hot.”

Felipe looked at Meredith who was not looking at him.

Felipe closed the door and washed his face and shaved and put on some clothes.

Louis watched until Felipe closed the door and leaned to Meredith and said, “Someone has been stealing.”

Meredith, “More than usual? Do they know who?”

Louis laughed.

Felipe was standing with his forehead on the door.

He was thinking that he did not want to hold Meredith so tight that he squeeze her out of his hand.

He wants to love the gift God gave him and treat her well. He was punished before but he did not want Meredith’s and his baby’s lives to be taken because of his wayward behavior and heart.

He heard Louis and Meredith laughed.

He turned and quickly wash his face and shave.

Felipe was shaving and heard Louis laughing.

He thought, “Did that punk? God I am sorry. I have to nice these are good people. Even him. Forgive me please. Help me above all things to be the person and husband and father you want me to be to represent YOU.”

Louis said, “last week Patrick told Jose to have trout the next day for dinner. They went out to the trout pond only three trout were out there.”

Meredith jerked and looked at Louis in unbelief.

Louis said, “For nearly a year and a half nobody went out there to see about the pond. Peter and Nadine said just the week before the pond was full of trout. Percy saw the pond was empty last week and telegrammed for a trout delivery.”

Felipe opened their bedroom door.

Louis stood and held his hand out for Meredith.

Felipe was reaching his hand to Meredith.

He frowned at Louis.

Meredith reached her hand to Felipe also.

She saw Felipe frowned at Louis.

Meredith said, “Felipe.”

Louis was standing to Meredith’s back and he stuck his tongue out at Felipe.

Felipe was shocked and stuck his tongue out at Louis.

Meredith said, “Oh Felipe.”

Felipe said, “He did it to me.”

Monica said, “My God.”

Meredith said, “Good morning Monica.”

Meredith said, “To Louis I’ll talk to you later.”

She grabbed Felipe by his arm and rushed down the hall to the family dining room for breakfast.

Monica and Louis burst out laughing.

Felipe looked back at them and said, “You are not going to say anything to them?”

Meredith said, “bout what? My older surgeon husband is sticking out his tongue at the workers. Especially Monica. You want the staff to like you.”

Felipe said, “We know Louis don’t and that woman there.”

Meredith said, “Vivienne.”

Meredith and Felipe walked into the family dining room.

Everyone was in the family dining room and Dr. Charles was the last to sit.

He was getting his wife, Adeline her food.

When Felipe was slung in the dining room by Meredith.

Felipe was so embarrassed.

Dr. Charles stood for a minute to think about what Meredith did.

Patrick and Brenda snickered.

Percy saw Felipe slide in the room.

Bruce saw Felipe slide into the room. He was looking at Felipe’s boots.

Bruce and Percy were excited.

Bruce said, “How he do that?”

Dr. Charles was stunned.

He turned and sat next to Patrick he just looked at Felipe then Meredith.

Patrick and Brenda were still snickering.

Percy looked at his grandparents.

Percy said, “Did yall see him? How he do that?”

Patrick could hardly eat for snickering.

Dr. Charles looked at Percy.

Patrick wiped his mouth but he still could not answer Percy but looked at Percy and smiled.

Michael was trying to move his plate so he could sit next to Meredith.

Eleanor was trying to take Michael’s plate and tell him there were no more seats.

Michael said, “But momma She will be gone tomorrow. I won’t she her again.”

Meredith heard Michael and started crying.

Michael said, “See momma you made Meredith cry.”

Eleanor turned and looked at Meredith.

Dr. Greene looked at Debra and said, “I’ll move so Michael can sit by Meredith.”

Debra grinned.

Dr. Greene said, “Michael you can have my seat next to Meredith.”

Dr. Greene looked at a crying Meredith.

Felipe was still stunned.

Dr. Greene looked at him and chuckled.

Michael walked around the table and sat next to Meredith.

Meredith and Michael hugged each other.

Michael was eating his lamb chop.

He and Meredith were talking between themselves like secret pals.

Patrick sat and watched them.

Brenda sat and watched Meredith and Michael.

They had their heads on each other.

Ruth walked into the dining room.

Michael said, “Meredith,”

Dr. Charles stopped eating and talking to Patrick and looked at Michael to hear what else he was going to say. Because he got over on Eleanor.”

 He said, “…you know you can give me an extra lamb chop as your going away present for me.”

Ruth placed the lamb chop on Michael’s plate.

Michael’s mouth dropped open and he looked around the table at everyone.

He leaned over and kissed Meredith on the cheek.

Eleanor looked at Meredith.

Dr. Woodson looked at Michael and them at Eleanor and laughed.

Dr. Greene peeped down the table at Michael and laughed.

He looked at Eleanor.

Michael was so happy.

Felipe sat down to the table with a plate.

Meredith looked at his plate. He looked back for a toast and stood.

Meredith pulled his plate to her and used Michael’s fork and begin to eat.

Felipe turned around to sit back at his chair.

He said, “Meredith that was my plate.”

Michael said, “She’s Meredith until tomorrow.”

Dr. Charles laughed so hard at Michael.

Vivienne whispered something to Ruth and they stared at Felipe.

Ruth walked to Felipe and said, “Sir what do you want?”

Felipe said, “What I had on that plate.”

Meredith did not turn around to look at Felipe.

Debra was laughing so hard, she drowned out Barry and Thomas playing at the table.

Ruth brought Felipe a plate with what Meredith had on her plate.

Felipe just stared at Meredith.

Dr. Charles was laughing.

Patrick said, “Felipe welcome to married life.”

Dr. Greene was laughing and said, “Yours is no longer yours.”

Meredith still did not say anything nor look at Felipe.

Brenda thought, “Wait till I tell Gen about Miss Prissy.”

Meredith and Michael continued to talk and whisper among themselves.

Debra was talking to Shirley about the pretty dresses Alice showed them at the hospital.

Shirley’s mouth dropped open.

Debra said, “What?”

Then Debra felt something on her face.

Barry had taken her blueberry syrup and pancake and mushed it up in his hand and spread it on her new blouse.

Debra was so shocked she sat there for a minute.

Dr. Greene was talking to Brenda and Eleanor.

Vivienne said, “You need to go and soak that in cold water so it won’t stain.”

Dr. Greene heard someone leaving the table and saw Debra leaving.

Vivienne took Debra’s plate from the table.

Dr. Greene peeped and said, “Barry come here.”

Vivienne helped Barry out of his chair.

Barry walked to Dr. Greene.

Dr. Greene was very patient and said, “Son what happened.”

Barry was standing with his head down and his fingers clasped.

Brenda thought he was cute.

Patrick looked over at Barry and his little head was barely at the table.

Barry had blueberry over his shirt.

He said, “Played with mommie.”

Dr. Greene said, “With blueberry.”

He begin to wiped the blueberry off Barry’s hand.

There was a knock on the front door.

Vivienne and Ruth looked.

Jose was about to walk down to the guests’ rooms when he heard the knock.

He reached for his gun he started carrying in the back of his trousers.

He thought, “I will go to jail today. I am sick of these murderers and thieves.

He started walking to the front door.

He opened the door and they heard a male voice.

Patrick said, “That better not be Bruce.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Patrick then Eleanor.

Dr. Greene was wiping Barry’s hands and he looked at Patrick and said, “Patrick we have resolved that.”

Jose told the person to stay outside.

Vivienne frowned up.

Dr. Greene looked at Vivienne’s face.

Jose walked in the family dining’s room and said, “A man is here and said he wants to see Barry.”

Debra was coming back to the family dining room.

Dr, Greene said, “Barry who?”

Dr. Charles looked at Dr. Greene.

Debra said, “What about Barry?”

Jose said, “A man is outside and want to see Barry.”

Debra grabbed a knife from the table and ran to the front door.

Vivienne and Ruth rushed behind Debra.

Dr. Greene maneuvered around Barry and ran behind Debra.

Meredith and Michael were peeping to see what was happening.

Felipe was so disturbed he barely looked back at the door to see the drama.

Patrick said, “Wait until Dr. Greene back here.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Patrick.

Brenda had primped her mouth.

Dr. Woodson grinned.

He knew Patrick and Brenda were ready to tell Tony off for scolding them yesterday about how to treat Bruce.

Felipe was still looking at Meredith.

Meredith had her hair down.

Dr. Charles got a very good look at Meredith.

He thought she was soiled, arrogant and prissy and pretentious.

He thought, “She is perfect for Felipe. And she is attractive but a bit thin.”

Dr. Charles wanted to see what she was eating.

Thomas was holding his stomach and he leaned on Eleanor.

Barry was trying to get pass Eleanor.

Eleanor said no.

Dr. Woodson said, “Come here Barry.”

Barry walked around to Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson was talking to Barry.

He saw Thomas holding his stomach.

He knew it was the stack pancakes with all that whipped cream and syrup.

Dr. Woodson said, “Thomas no more pancakes this week.”

Thomas looked at Dr. Woodson and laid on Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Come on Thomas.”

Eleanor stood and walked Thomas upstairs to his bedroom.

Patrick and Brenda were waiting for Dr. Greene to come back.

Bruce laid back in his chair and holding his stomach.

Dr. Charles looked at Bruce.

Meredith looked at Bruce and said, “Bruce is your stomach hurting?”

Bruce could hardly talk and nodded his head and said, “Yeah.”

Meredith said, “Go upstairs to your momma.”

Felipe looked at Bruce as he fell out his chair and went upstairs.

Michael said, “They should have had lamb chops.”

Bruce yelled, “Shut up Michael,” as he ran upstairs to Eleanor.”

Michael said, “I thought he was gone.”

He and Meredith continued to talk.

Felipe said, “Meredith and Michael I did not see you all doing this talking on the ship.”

Meredith was hugging Michael.

She turned and looked at Felipe.

Dr. Greene walked back into the family din9ng room and looked for Barry.

He had the knife in his hand was thinking.

Dr. Greene said, “Barry.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Greene.

He figured it was Barry’s father.

Vivienne walked to Dr. Greene and took the knife out of his hands.

She turned to Ruth and held up the knife and said, “A butter knife. She could have used this all it was going to do is scratch him.”

Ruth covered her mouth and laughed.

Brenda was so shocked and said, “Vivienne.”

Vivienne said, “Look at all this food.”

Patrick was looking at Dr. Greene.

Brenda was concerned about Vivienne.

Felipe was about to say something about Vivienne.

Meredith touched Felipe’s arm.

Felipe looked at Meredith, she slightly smile for him to be quiet.

He said, “We have to talk.”

Meredith smiled.

Felipe’s heart melted.

Dr. Charles thought, “They will be ok. But me and Adeline. I may take her home to divorce her. What is it she has against these good people?”

Dr. Greene saw Barry and reached his hand to him and said, “Come to me Barry.”

Dr. Woodson put Barry on the floor.

Dr. Greene stoop down and said, “Someone is here and wants to see you for the last time.”

He took Barry by the hand and led him to the front door.

Debra was standing in the front door and not saying anything to Barry Sr.

Dr. Greene touched Debra and she slightly moved.

Dr. Greene looked at Debra and said, “Barry say hello to the man.”

Barry Sr. got mad.

Jose was looking at the food and started getting the food up and put it on the cart.

Jose pushed the cart to the kitchen and in the area with the field hands.

The field hands ate all the food.

The three new dishes washed all the dishes and put them up.

The new dish washers started helping prepare the food for the next day celebration.

Percy leaned over his plate.

Patrick looked at Percy and said, “Percy go to your momma.”

Dr. Charles looked at the pancake he had.

Brenda looked at him and smiled.

Dr. Charles said, “It looks delicious.”

Percy was passing the table and started running up the stairs.

Vivienne said, “You better run. I’m not cleaning up that up this morning.”

Patrick said, “Vivienne you are out of character. Are you alright? Ruth take Vivienne home and please stay with her for a view days. I ‘ll pay you.”

Jose said, “I notice she was different.”

Dr. Charles, “For how long?”

Ruth said, “It was not Sunday. It was yesterday.”

Felipe started thinking.

Meredith said, “I’ll take them home, because I wanted Felipe to meet Mr. and Mrs. Carrington and take them a token of friendship. And get all of my stuff.”

Brenda said, “Meredith as a token of my friendship you sleep upstairs tonight next to Michael.”

Felipe and Meredith stared at Brenda.

Patrick was trying to keep up with the conversation at his front door, but he was watching Felipe and Meredith.

Dr. Charles and r. Woodson looked at Felipe and Meredith.

Patrick said, “My God it is only one night.”

Felipe said, “Vivienne should not be by herself. It sounds like a stroke or aneurysm. I would like to examine her.”

Vivienne looked at Ruth and said, “Who are they talking about?”
Meredith bowed her head and snickered.

Felipe said, “Meredith this serious.”

Dr. Charles said, “I will help.”

Debra was holding Barry and he was sick.”

Dr. Greene was at the door with Barry and he looked back at Debra and closed the door and said to Barry , “How did you know they were here?”

Barry said, “I saw them yesterday coming back from somewhere. I decided to start here today.”

Dr. Greene said, “Take care Barry. This is the last time you will see Barry.”

Barry said, “You can’t tell me when I can see my son.”

Dr. Woodson sit up in his chair to hear what was going on.

Patrick stood and was walking to the front door.

Dr. Charles said, “Adeline come to the room and let me get my medical bag and come and help Felipe with Vivienne.”

Vivienne said to Ruth, “Why are they calling my name?”

Felipe looked back at Vivienne.

Meredith snickered.

Michael reached his hand towards Vivienne and said, “God please heal Miss Vivienne she is a good person. In JESUS’ name.”

Meredith said, “Thank you for thinking Michael.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Amen.”

Dr. Greene said, “Barry I have signed court papers that I adopted Barry and I have given him my name. Your role of fathering him is over. My role of his daddy will be forever.”

Patrick was taking the doctors golfing later that day.

Ben, the mayor, governor and the former governor were to meet them later.

Eleanor yelled, “Bicarbonate of soda or ginger ale I brought back from Ireland.”

Everyone yelled, “Bicarbonate of soda.”

Debra said, “I need some too.”

Dr. Woodson said, “No more pancakes and all that syrup.”

Ruth ran into the kitchen and went into the cabinet and did not see the bicarbonate of soda.

Dr. Greene stepped back in the door and closed and locked the front door.

She ran into the storage area where they put the cases of ginger ale from Ireland.

Eleanor was standing on the top of the stairs waiting for bicarbonate of soda or ginger ale.

Dr. Greene walked to Debra and put his arm on her shoulder.

Debra was swinging with Barry.

She saw Ruth run to the stairs and yelled, “I don’t see anything.”

Patrick was walking back to his chair.

Jose was clearing the everything and jumped up and nearly walked into Patrick who turned and both of them ran out of the family dining room.

Patrick yelled, “Ruth are you sure?”

Shirley said, “I saw those ten cases of ginger ale.”

Meredith was stunned and looked at Shirley.

Meredith said, “I need some of that ginger ale or bicarbonate of soda.”

Felipe ate his last bite of food and looked at Meredith.

He stood from the table and walked into the grand hall which he liked.

Dr. Woodson stood and was walking out.

Eleanor yelled, “I need something!”

All the doctors yelled, “Water.”

Jose said, “I’m going back to the storage area Ruth. I can’t believe that all those cases of ginger ale are gone. Who can walk out here with that stuff.”

Felipe and Dr. Charles walked with Vivienne to her room and they examined her over and over.

Ruth and Jose did not find any ale.

Jose went and told Leon who was eating in the workers area.

One of the security men said, “I remembered that stuff. It was about ten boxes of that mess. I helped to bring it in the house. All of it is gone?”

He was leaning back in the chair with his arms folded.

Jessie sent exactly one hundred ears of corn and made Jose count them and sign a paper he got the one hundred ears of corn.

Dr. Charles walked to Adeline and raised her up and they were walking out the dining room.

Michael stood and moved his chair so Dr. Charles could get to Adeline.

Michael reached and touched Adeline’s hand and she snatched her hand from Michael’s hand.

Meredith saw her and said, “Michael come to me.”

Dr. Woodson was smiling until he saw Adeline’s reaction to Michael.

He stopped smiling and stared at Adeline.

Dr. Charles said, “Adeline.”

Michael said, “I was just trying to be a gentleman.”

Dr. Charles smiled at Michael and said, “You are a gentleman. Keep it up and stop.”

Michael said, “Why she does not like me? I did not make her blind.”

Dr. Charles said, “I know. I will talk to her.”

Dr. Woodson stood and watched Dr. Charles. He looked at Brenda.

He thought, “If Eleanor was in here she would have kicked Adeline’s butt.”

Brenda sat back and stared at Adeline.

Dr. Charles looked at Brenda and shook his head.

He was so ashamed.

Debra was holding a sick Barry and heard Meredith.

Dr. Greene was considered the sick children.

Debra walked Barry to their room.

Monica had just finished making the bed.

Dr. Greene and Dr. Woodson were talking.

Shirley stood to walk out the family dining room.

Dr. Woodson looked at Shirley and said, “Shirley.”

Shirley froze.

Michael said, “Get her Dr. Woodson. Get her good.”

Brenda said, “I think I need some help when you finish Shirley. I have to go in the flower garden and get the flowers for this woman’s wedding and the decorations for tomorrow.”

Meredith was grinning and shaking in her seat.

Michael looked at Meredith and said, “Meredith are you happy? Does he make you happy?”

Meredith grinned and looked at Michael.

Michael said, “Let me know if he makes you sad. I don’t want anyone to be married to someone and they don’t make them happy.”

Dr. Greene smiled at Michael.

Michael said, “My grandpa and grandma are really old and have fun.”

Meredith said, “Michael, I believe in having fun because this life is already hard. You make sure you marry a woman that like to have fun.”

Meredith looked at Michael and said, “Promise me Michael.”

Michael said, “Meredith I promise to marry a wife that likes to have fun.”

Meredith grabbed Michael by his chin and rubbed his nose.

Brenda thought.” Eleanor did a good job picking her children’s nurses. I have no complaints. Thank You GOD.”

Patrick was walking back.

Dr. Greene said, “What’s wrong Patrick?”

Patrick said, “Somebody is stealing my stuff. I have a hundred workers. Will less. I have never had this type of thievery.”

Meredith said, “We were all in Philadelphia when the boxes and crates were delivered here. Is there anything else missing?”

Patrick said, “I don’t know. We have not had the time to unpack. I know none of my books better not be missing.”

Brenda said, “I bought dishes.”

Michael said, “where are my suckers?”

Patrick said, “Michael I don’t know.”

Michael started shaking and whining.

Meredith put her napkin down and said, “Lets go and look in the storage area.”

Michael reached Meredith his hand and she took his hand.

Shirley was still frozen in the doorway.

Dr. Woodson looked at Shirley.

Patrick said, “Shirley why are you standing there?”

Dr. Woodson laughed.

Patrick said, “Oh.”

Brenda got up and started putting the rest of the dishes on the buffet.

Dr. Charles was walking down the hall with his medical bag when Barry started hollering.

Dr. Greene said, “Oatmeal from now on.”

Dr. Woodson laughed.

Patrick was getting pissed.

He said, “If they stole Michael’s suckers I am going to kick their ass. Michael fighting for his life and they are stealing from him.”

They heard Michael screaming.

The security men jumped and followed the screaming boy.

Michael ran up the stairs to Eleanor.

Eleanor ran to the top of the stairs and grabbed Michael.

He told her, “Somebody stole my suckers.”

She grabbed him and held him until somebody else started yelling< Momma!!!”

Shirley peeped out the dining room.

The men who wash the windows, once per week and the men who kept the yard manicured were in the kitchen for Jose to pay them.

Jose paid them.

He told them the Stiths had Fourth of July Celebrations bags for everyone.

Jose pointed at the ten people in the kitchen and said, “We stayed up all night to make these bags. Each bag has bread, two ribs and two chickens. You can get a watermelon Collins and some corn.“

The men said, “Where?”

Jose said, “What you mean where?”

Nadine and Peter laughed.

Thomas stood and walked out on the porch.

Leon sat and stared.

Thomas yelled, “All of the bags are gone.”

The security men stood up and searched the barns, yards and the whole property.

Nadine said, “Who could be stealing this stuff? I am tired from all of that week. I was going to cook our stuff next week.”

Louis said, “Max.”

Nadine said, “Don’t Louis unless you can prove it.”

Louis said, “He is the least.”

Nadine said, “Michael is screaming his suckers are gone. Who could be stealing from a dying child?”

Louis said, “Somebody who has children.”

Jose said, “I got to tell Patrick his gift to his workers have been stolen,”

The window washers and the grounds people were running with the security men trying to find something.

Jose went looking for Patrick.

Patrick saw Jose and called him.

Brenda walked out the family dining room.

Jose was walking to Patrick when Meredith was walking upstairs to check on Michael.

She knew he love his suckers and he bought large containers from each country they traveled to.

She just could not believe it.

Meredith said, “It has to be more than one person.”

Patrick said, “Jose.”

Jose said, “I paid the window washers and the ground men and told them to get one bags we made last night.”

Brenda said, “No bags?”

Jose said, “No bags and the security men are searching the grounds.”

Meredith said, “It has to be more than one.”

Patrick said, “Jose call a meeting with the staff and tell them I said. No call a meeting with the staff now.”

Patrick said, “Doctors we are still golfing. I just have to take care of this and stop by the sheriff on the way to golf.”

Shirley said, “Dr. Woodson please give me the therapy so I can hear this.”

Shirley and Dr. Woodson went to the sitting room.

He closed the door.

Shirley hollered.

Dr. Woodson said, “Shirley what have you done that you are so out of posture?”

Dr. Woodson said, “Everyday I am here.”

Brenda, Monica, Harriet, Mellissa, Joanna, Wanda, Betty and Stella picked the flowers and got the decorations from the last Fourth and made twenty center pieces to go on the twenty picnic tables they had.

Brenda made Meredith’s flowers for her wedding and they flooded the formal dining room, the parlor, the main hall.

Brenda was proud of herself.

She learned a lot from Mabel.

Brenda was excited when she saw the bellflowers, hydrangea and wisteria. She made beautiful floral arrangements for Meredith’s wedding.

She put Meredith’s bouquet in cold water.

She said she would put the ribbon on it in the morning.

Eleanor jumped up and ran downstairs to look for the champagne.

She saw her champagne.

Lorraine was arriving to work. She worked late night putting that meat in the bags.

Lorraine was working on her hair for Meredith’s wedding.

She arrived and saw everyone gathered on the back porch.

Patrick said, “Good morning. Me and Family went to Europe for a year and a half. You have kept my house up while we have been gone. We thank you. Since we have been back, you know someone kidnap two of my grandchildren and beat Michael to the point of death and Thomas to the point of drowning him. On top of that we have been home nearly three weeks and somebody is stealing my stuff. When you took jobs here I told you what the wages were, if you did not agree with the wages you could have left. But somebody has been stealing. This morning my family wanted to celebrate the Fourth with you and ten or twelve of your fellow workers put together nearly a hundred meat bags. Each bag had two chickens and two ribs. And Jessie and his son’s brought a hundred watermelons here. Someone stole all the bags…”

Patrick pointed to the porch and continued, “ I don’t understand. My home is open and you come in and out when you want. I never have separated you from my family. Someone came into my house and stole ten cases of ginger ale we brought back from Ireland. And stole boxes of my grandson’s suckers. Someone or ones emptied my trout pond…”

Jose said, “And been stealing the eggs. I had to go and buy eggs to for Peter to make Meredith’s wedding cake.”

Patrick looked at Jose.

Jose looked at Patrick and step back and said, “Sorry.”

Leon snickered at Jose.

Patrick said, “When I find out who you are I will not only fire you and sure you spend the next twenty-five years of your life in prison and have your family ran out of town.”

Peter and Nadine and Jose and Leon looked at Patrick.

Patrick has never been that angry.

Patrick said, “Collins.”

Everyone looked to see if Collins was the thief.

Collins step forward and said, “Sir.”

Patrick said, “Can you set up the picnic tables for tomorrow and see Jose when you are finished?”

Gary and Louis looked at Jose.

Gary and Louis asked Jose to set up the picnic tables.

Jessie said, “Mr. Stith we brought some more corn and peas and tomatoes for tomorrow but it might be enough to make bags for the workers.”

Lorraine yelled, “Whose gonna make the bags. I was up…”

Patrick yelled, “Lorraine, in the house!!”

Lorraine stomped on the porch and not looked at Patrick.

Leon was giggling.

Nadine and Peter walked in the house behind along with the three dish washers.

Jose looked because he wanted to go in the house too.

Jose was angry.

Cooley said, “Mr. Stith.”

Patrick said, “Yes James.”

Cooley said, “I don’t think we can kill that many chickens by tomorrow.”

His son whispered in his daddy’s ear.

Leon watched them.

Patrick watched them and said, “James Jr. what is it?”

Leon was impressed that Patrick knew his workers and their children.

Cooley said, “I don’t understand.”

Jose yelled, “What? I aint gonna kill no chickens!”

One of Leon’s security men said, “Amen.”

Leon turned to see which one of his security men who said that and it was the one that was leaving to be a minister.

Leon thought “Jose is lazy. He is about to have a heart attack.”

Leon said, “Jose has been screaming for the past several days.”

The second security man said, “Jose is lazy and don’t want to do any additional work. The lady is right they were up late last night and finished the bags this morning. I was drinking coffee in the break area. Jose had a glass full of something. He would come back and drink some and go back and work on the bags. The lady left around ten pm. I was concerned for her…”

Leon said, “Lorraine.”

The other security man said, “The bun woman.”

Leon snickered.

Patrick said, “Jose stop now.”

James said, “Only seventy chickens are left. That’s not going to be enough for the picnic tomorrow.”

Patrick said, “How many chickens do you think we may need?”

James said, “about another hundred.”

Jose exhaled and held his hand up like he had a liquor glass in it.

Patrick did not look at Jose but pointed to the back door and said, “Send Eleanor out here.”

Leon and his security men shook their heads at Jose.

Jose walked into the backdoor and went up the back stairs and saw Eleanor cleaning up Percy.

Jose frowned up and said, “Your daddy wants you now.”

Eleanor looked up at Jose and said. “Now.”

Jose said, “Now.”

Eleanor was about to tell him to help Percy.

Jose ran down the front stairs.

Eleanor ran through the backstairs to cut Jose off and make him see about Percy.

Dr. Charles, Felipe, Dr. Woodson and Dr. parker stopped talking and looked at Jose and Eleanor.

They heard Eleanor yelled at Jose to come back and help and bring her some ginger.

Jose knew Eleanor was running down the backstairs to cut him off.

Jose ran to the formal dining room and stood until he heard Eleanor run through the kitchen looking for him.

Lorraine was attending to Shirley.

She rushed out of Shirley’s door and stood and listened to Jose and Eleanor.

Lorraine saw them running through the house.

Lorraine walked to the balcony and said, “Jose where is Michael?”

Jose said nothing.

Michael was in the room with Thomas.

Michael heard Lorraine calling him.

Lorraine said, “Michael are you sick?”

Michael said, “No.”

Lorraine said, “Come in Shirley’s room with me.”

Michael said, “No. I don’t like Shirley anymore.”

Dr. Woodson said, “A lot of help we did.”

Shirley started crying.

Lorraine was surprised.

Michael said, “Thomas is sleep. Can I go riding my horse?”

Lorraine said, “I’ll ask your momma.”

Michael said, “I’ll ask her.”

Lorraine said, “Every time you ask Eleanor anything it is always yes.”

Michael said, “Because I am a wonderful boy.”

They heard a faint moaning.

Dr. Greene thought and said, “Is that Barry?”

Barry was screaming.

Dr. Greene walked to the end of the hall and heard it was Barry.

Debra walked out the room with Barry.

Dr. Greene said, “Debra take Barry back to the room. I’ll get something for him.”

Monica was passing them with Meredith’s flowers for her wedding.

Felipe looked at the flowers and smiled.

Dr. Woodson looked at a happy Felipe.

Dr. Greene was returning and Harriet and Mellissa passed him with soiled sheets.

Dr. Greene turned up his nose.

He said, “Where is Ruth?”

Lorraine said, “Where is Meredith?”

Felipe said, “Meredith does not work here anymore.”

Lorraine said, “Tell Patrick. He is still paying her.”

Michael ran back in the house hollering.

He ran upstairs to Lorraine who held him and patted him.

Dr. Woods said, “He ‘s the baby. Every woman pets him.”

Dr. Charles said, “I remember those days. I was the only boy for a decade. Life was good.”

Felipe laughed.

Meredith was walking through the hall.

Felipe said, “Meredith, where were you?”

Meredith saw the flowers they put on the console in the grand hallway for her wedding.

She picked them up and smiled at the flowers and smelled them.

She turned and looked at Felipe and said, “Did you take care of Ruth?”

Felipe reeled his head back in shock.

Meredith was calm and looked at him.

Michael was whining and said, “Meredith.”

Meredith looked at Felipe and walked up the grand stairs to Michel.

Dr. Greene said, “Well. I need something for Barry’s stomach.”

Meredith stopped and said, I found some of the bicarbonate of soda.”

Dr. Greene said, “Where?”

Meredith said, “Michael come and let us show Dr. Greene the storage area and then we can take a walk.”

Michael was walking down the stairs with Meredith and said, “I want to go riding.”

Meredith said, “Michael I can’t go riding.”

Michael jumped up and down the stairs.

Eleanor was standing and listening to Meredith and Michael she was about to tell Meredith to bring her some bicarbonate of the soda.

Meredith was calm and said, “Come on Michael.”

Meredith started humming.

She walked down the grand staircase and turned to walk through the billiards room.

Eleanor had taken her shoe off to throw at Michael.

Meredith said, “Come on Michael. You know better than that.”

Felipe frowned up and said, “I thought she should have said something.”

Dr. Charles laughed.

They could hear Michael screaming and stomping all through the house to the storage area.

Dr. Greene walked behind them.

Felipe walked to the bottom of the grand staircase and watched for Meredith.

Dr. Charles said to Dr. Woodson Felipe has not learned.

Felipe said, “Learned what?”

Dr. Charles, “You have to ease their hand from their mother and father, from a past love or from their children.”

Dr. Woodson laughed.

Patrick walked back in the house and heard Michael hollering.

Felipe looked at Patrick and said, “His hollering does not bother you?”

Patrick said, “He’s a kid. That’s why Eleanor hired all nurses for her children, if they are sick and injured the nurses handled them. When they are hollering and screaming because they want their way Eleanor handle that. I don’t have a part…”

Michael walked to Patrick and hugged him.

He continued, “unless it like this.”

Eleanor started walking down the grand staircase.

Brenda and the maids were coming in through the front door.

Brenda said, “Patrick we found some stuff in my garden.”

Patrick said, “What stuff?”

Leon and two of his men were walking around the front and heard the excited Brenda.

Brenda said, “Some crates of ginger ale.”

Dr. Greene heard Brenda and was shaking up the bicarbonate of soda.

He said, “Where?”

Leon said, “Where?”

The maid jumped and pointed to the garden.

Patrick looked and said, “How’s Vivienne?”

Felipe said, “I think it was a very small stroke. Because she still remember and function.”

Dr. Charles said, “I agree. I just don’t know how bad. Anyone who knew her a year ago until now can help us gauge the damage.

Harriett was walking back with Monica and Mellissa said, “I can tell any difference.”

Patrick said, “Good. I am going outside to see this stuff. Doctors when I get back we are going golfing with the mayor. Where we can beat him. He thinks he is the best golfer.”

Patrick walked by Brenda and kissed a waiting Brenda.

Michael was walking behind Patrick and looked at Brenda and reached for a kiss.

Brenda leaned down and Michael kissed her on her cheek.

Brenda shuttered and grin.

Patrick looked back and said, “Come on boy. You are taking my place.”

Dr. Greene grinned and walked down the hall to Debra.

Brenda said, “A house full of sick boys.”

The maids took the Fourth of July celebration table centerpieces into the kitchen.

Patrick and Michael went outside and saw Leon and his security men walking to Brenda’s garden.

Dr. Woodson walked to helped Brenda with the flowers.

Brenda reached the flowers to Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson was grinning.

He whispered and said, “I can tell Michael is your and Patrick’s favorite.”

Brenda smiled.

Thomas walked to the top of the stairs and cried, “Grandma.”

Brenda rushed to Thomas.

Meredith was walking to the main hallway with a tray of four glasses of bicarbonate of soda.

Felipe looked at Meredith and said, “What are you doing?”

Dr. Charles was passing Felipe and said, “It may not be a wedding tomorrow.”

Meredith looked at Felipe and said, “The children are sick. I am attending to them. You go golfing and be back here at three pm so you can bath and go with me to meet the people, some of us rented a room from. They will be at our wedding tomorrow.”
Felipe said, “If they are going to be at the wedding tomorrow, why do I have to meet them today?”

Meredith stared at Felipe.

Brenda said, “Meredith.”

Meredith turned and walked up the grand stairs.

Felipe said, “Why do you have four glasses only three are sick?”

Meredith said, “The fourth is for me because you have made me sick.”

Dr. Woodson hurried by Felipe.

Lorraine was standing at the balcony and looking down at Felipe and shook her head at him.

She walked back into Shirley’s room and said, “Shirley you are crying over what you have done.”

Shirley said, “It was in the past. Why he hates me?”

Lorraine said, “Because the past hurts.”

Shirley said, “I apologized.”

Lorraine said, “Sometimes an apology even if it’s from your heart is not enough to stop the pain.”

Shirley was crying and said, “What to do Lorraine?”

Lorraine said, “I am not the right person to ask. Ask God.”

Lorraine turned around and walked to Shirley’s armoire and begin to look at her dresses and said, “Tomorrow is a busy day. Meredith’s wedding in the morning. The picnic from noon to six. Fireworks at seven to nine. I am going to stay here tomorrow. What dress are you wearing to the wedding and then to the picnic?”

Shirley said, ”I’m not going.”

Lorraine, “Fine I don’t have to help you tomorrow and like you are going to stop life and someone’s happiness. You just ask me what to do and I told you ask God then you go back to your nasty attitude. I hope that soldier comes and you are stuck up here in your room. I will not come and get you. The security will have the house under their control and they will not let anyone in. Jose has to put all food on the back porch.”

Eleanor walked out Patrick’s study where she sent a telegram to Mr. Hunter, the poultry shop owner and asked did he have prepared chickens and if so, how many.

She sat and waited for his response.

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Charles walked down the hall to get ready to go golfing with Patrick.

Dr. Greene had passed and was in the room with Debra and Barry.

Mr. Hunter sent Eleanor a telegram he had seventy six prepared chickens two sides of beef and two boxes of sausage. And the rest stop have picked up their order and they were happy.

Eleanor sent Mr. Hunter a telegram to give her the meat and she would send two wagons to pick up the order.

She was walking up the hall and heard Lorraine talking to Shirley.

Eleanor stood on the steps and listened.

She turned and walked through the billiards room and caught Jose walking back in the house with Collins and three men.

Jose looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “The poultry shop has seventy-six chickens, two sides of beef and two boxes of sausages. Please send someone to pick it up. If he has anything else that is prepared for him to let me buy it and send me a bill I will be in town this week to pay it.”

Jose said, “Alright.”

Collins said, “I can go into town with them and pick up the order.”

Louis was standing by Thomas.

Jose said, ”Fine. Here is your pay for setting up the tables.”

Jose looked at the money Mr. Hunter said, was the bill total. Jose counted the money and made Collins sign the form that Jose gave him the amount of money.

Collins and the three men ran out the house and ran into the security men.

They looked at the security men and said, “Is that the meat?”

Collins said, “Save four for us when we get back.”

Collins and his three fellows were running to the wagons.

Jose walked to the door and looked at Collins.

Thomas said, “Jose.”

Jose said, “Wait a minute.”

The security men found seventeen bags.

Louis went and checked the bags.

The security men looked at Louis.

The security men said, “We will continue to search the property. We knew they could not get all of this stuff off the property without being seen.”

Jose said, “Have you been in the field yet?”

Jose said, “There’s ten security men out there and Jessie and his sons can you take them those bags.”

The security man that was leaving to become a minister said, “What about Collins and those other three fellows?

Jose said, “I’ll think of something. They like alcohol. I just have to tell Mr. Stith and give them liquor.”

One of the security men said, “Me too.”

Jose said, “Me too what?”

The security man said, “Liquor.”

Jose looked around and said, “Leon.”

The security men walked out the house and put the bags in the wagon and rode to the field.

Jessie said,” Me and my boys don’t eat that much meat. Give us one bag.”

The security men gave them a bag.

Jessie said, “Where you find it?”

The security that was leaving to become a minister said, “About one fifty feet behind the chicken coop.”

Jessie just looked at the security men.

The security men went to the ten security men and offered them a bag of meat each.

Two of the security men said, No. They eat vegetables.”

The security men gave the five men in the stables including Gary, a bag of meat.

Gary said, “Give this to someone else, because I will be working.”

They made it back to the house and gave the four bags to four of the ground keepers.

One of the ground keepers said, “Leon found something.”

The grounds keepers were happy because Eleanor bought three new machines called lawn mowers.

They were the first have them in the town.

Gen and Ben bought one that arrived that week.

The security man that was leaving to be a minister walked off the back porch and drove around to the front of the house.

Leon saw him and waved.

The man stopped and walked to Leon.

Patrick and Michael walked in the house.

Michael wanted to stay and help.

Michael was looking for his suckers.

Patrick walked in the house and went and changed clothes.

Jose was checking off his list of chores.

He was happy with the progress of the staff taking care of the chores.

Monica had to take sheets to the laundry from the boys.

Patrick said, “No Michael you maybe in their way.”

Thomas said, “Jose, Louis and Gary asked to make extra money helping out here.”

Jose looked at Thomas and wanted to say what was totally inappropriate.

He said, “I know that.”

Louis was standing next to Thomas and watched Jose.

Thomas said, “Well?”

Jose thought, F\*\*.”

Jose said, “Let them get paid for the back breaking work. Gary and Louis will be running all day tomorrow setting up and taking down.”

Thomas read Jose’s mind.

He looked at Louis.

Louis shook his head for yes.

Thomas finished working on his bar- b- que spices.

Peter tasted his two different punches samples for Meredith’s wedding.

He jumped up and started dancing.

Jose looked at Peter and smirked.

Louis said, “Let me taste.”

He was walking over to Peter to get a taste and looked back at Thomas and said, “I hope I don’t get sick like all the boys did this morning.”

Jose held his head in his hands.

Dan was walking in the kitchen to make his bar- b-que sauce for tomorrow. He started to turn around.

But he was still.

Nadine and Mellissa were standing in the formal dining room doorway and stopped.

Peter stopped and looked at Louis and said, “You are right boys.”

Thomas heard what Peter said and what he meant.

Dan took a breath and walked in the kitchen.

Jose was uncovering his eyes and peeping through his fingers.

Mellissa exhaled and removed her hand from her chest.

Nadine exhaled.

Peter poured everyone a sample everyone loved it even Dan.

Leon found two cases of the Ginger ale, one box of Michael’s suckers and six bags of meat.

They hauled the find around back and gave the meat to the ground keepers and window washers.

Leon counted everything out and he and Jose figured everything out.

Jose took a box of Eleanor’s ginger ale in the storage area.

Leon carried a box of Eleanor’s ginger ale to the storage area.

Leon looked at the storage area and said, “This is big.”

Jose said, “Brenda’s know everything that is in here. This a grand ball room. Brenda never used it because when was having a Valentine’s ball and sent out invitations to a hundred couples. It was lavished. I helped with decorations. No one came after they confirmed they would attend.”

Leon said, “Because Brenda is black?”

Jose shook his shoulders and said, “That’s what Brenda and Patrick believe. The people you see here now are the few people who attended the ball. Brenda cried for a time. Patrick consoled her.”

Jose took the box with Michael’s suckers and walked into the grand hall.

Patrick, Dr. Greene, Dr. Woodson and Dr. Charles and Felipe were walking out the front door.

Jose yelled and said, “Michael!!”

Patrick stopped and stood back to see why Jose was hollering.

Michael ran to the top of the balcony.

Eleanor walked out her room because she wanted to know why Jose was hollering in the house.

Michael ran to the balcony and looked at Jose.

Jose held up his box.

Michael looked at the box. Then he recognized it was his suckers.

He started jumping on the stairs and screaming.

He jumped on each stair.

Dr. Greene laughed.

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Greene and said, “I don’t want another patient.”

Felipe said, “I don’t want that thought of coming home and have an injured child.”

Patrick laughed at Michael.

Michael ran and grabbed the box from Jose and opened it.

Thomas and Brenda walked to the balcony to see why Jose called Michael.

While Michael was jumping on the stairs Brenda and Eleanor had their hands to up.

Eleanor had her hands over her mouth.

Brenda had one hand over her heart and the other hand over her mouth.

Patrick saw them and did not say anything.

Meredith was standing back watching Michael.

Felipe saw how Meredith watch Michael very closely.

Patrick looked at Felipe and said, “That’s Meredith’s job to watch Michael after nearly ten years she knows him well. She will know your child the same way.”

Dr. Charles looked at Felipe.

Barry and Debra were walking through the hall.

Patrick and the doctors were walking out the door, when Michael said, “Barry want a sucker?”

Dr. Greene rushed back to Michael and grabbed the box and gave it to Jose.

Michael looked at Dr. Greene bent over and said, “Michael you have a good heart. But Barry, Thomas, Percy and Bruce are still sick from that sugar they ate this morning. Let them get better and then give them a sucker in a few days.”

Thomas said, “I feel better.”

Dr. Woodson laughed and walked out the door.

Dr. Charles walked out the door.

Felipe looked back at Meredith.

She watched him and did not smile.

He looked with shame and walked out the door.

He knew he better be back at three pm or before so he could bath and shave and go and meet her friends and be back for dinner.

Felipe liked dinner time and the alcohol and the conversation.

Dr. Greene looked at Thomas. A taller version of Michael and said, ”No.”

Thomas grabbed Brenda and started crying.

Dr. Greene looked at Barry and said, “No sucker Barry.”

Barry was thinking what his daddy said no to.

As Dr. Greene was closing the door he heard Barry screaming.

Dr. Woodson said, “Well Dr. Greene you left everyone screaming and crying.

Dr. Greene said, “The crying one was Debra. She better get there and see about Barry. We only got one child. I do not know what she will do after we get back and she does not have this luxury of cooks and maids.”

Leon saw Patrick and said, “Mrs. Stith found six bags of the meat. Now what happened to the remaining sixty-two bags I don’t know. I am going to the field.”

Patrick was walking to his carriage driven by Gary and said, “Jose won’t be going to any field.”

Leon said, “I know.” He turned his head.

Patrick turned and said, “Two of you doctors can ride with me.”

Patrick and the doctors talked about golf and softball.

Dr. Greene and Dr. Charles rode with Patrick.

Louis was driving the other carriage with Dr. Woodson and Felipe.

Felipe said, “Sir I have to leave here and be back to the house no later than three pm.

Louis was making faces at Felipe and Dr. Woodson saw Louis.

Louis said, “Of course. I will be back at the golf course around two- ish.”

Louis dropped the doctors at the golf course and picked up a lot of stuff for the celebration and took it back to the house.

Gary went to the Stiths rest stop and helped Nathan and Stanley for the next day.

Gary told Robert, Nathan, Stanley, Julius and Tom about the stealing that was going on at the Stiths.

Denise and the rest of the workers looked at Gary in unbelief.

Stanley left the rest stop and rode into town and picked up Alice and carried her home.

He stayed home with Alice, because Gary helped set up everything they needed for the next day.

Thomas prepared the large pot to let the beans simmer over night.

Dan made a huge slaw and placed in a covered bin.

He made the dressing to toss it with.

The maids made a huge salad with all of the fresh tomatoes Jessie brought.

Peter was finished with all the breads and rolls he was making.

He started dancing again in the kitchen.

Nadine laughed.

Thomas told the maids to put a he pot roast on with a lot of vegetables.

He asked Peter once he finished dancing to put on cornbread and other breads.

Brenda and Eleanor walked in the kitchen and saw Peter dancing.

They saw Meredith’s cake pans he was preparing.

Eleanor said, “Peter have you finished Meredith’s cake?”

Peter said, “No.”

Brenda said, “Why the celebration?”

Peter said, “I have made two divine punch.”

Brenda said, “Let’s taste.”

Peter turned and got to cups.

He poured a punch in each cup.

Brenda tasted the first punch and handed it to Eleanor.

Eleanor tasted the second cup.

Brenda said, “Both are truly divine. Can you make these punch for the picnic tomorrow.”

Peter stood and stared at Brenda.

Eleanor looked at Peter.

Peter said, “No. They will have lemonade and water.”

Eleanor took the cup from Brenda and put her hands on Brenda’s shoulders and guided her out the kitchen.

Brenda said, “It was just punch.”

Eleanor said, “I think the punch required a lot of work. For Meredith’s small wedding it was fine. But for one or two hundred people that was a lot.”

Meredith went running passed them to the kitchen.

Eleanor said, “She has forgotten something for tomorrow.”

Meredith ran into the kitchen and looked around and yelled, “Nadine!”

She was standing over by the punch talking to Peter.

Nadine stepped around the corner and said, “What Meredith?”

Meredith said, “Amber?”

Nadine, “I asked her mother and she said she will bring her.”

Meredith turned to walk out the kitchen she looked at Jose.

Jose turned his whole back to Meredith.

Meredith walked to Jose and said, “Sorry.”

Jose did not turn around.

Meredith walked out the kitchen.

Brenda and Eleanor were talking about the flowers that were beautiful.

Meredith was about to go to her room and dressed for the evening. She learned that in Europe.

She would wear her uniform until she went home and then dressed for bed.

She looked up the stairs and heard Michael laughing.

Lorraine was walking out of Shirley’s room.

Debra and Adeline were walking outside with Barry.

Brenda saw them and said to Eleanor, “That woman does not like us.”

Eleanor said, “I notice.”

Meredith said, “Michael.”

Brenda and Eleanor looked at Meredith.

Lorraine said, “Meredith don’t scream or yell in this house again.”

Michael walked to the balcony with Thomas.

Meredith said, “Michael I want you to be in my wedding tomorrow as my ring bearer. Would you do it?”

Michael said, “It’s a short notice.”

Brenda grinned at Michael.

Michael said, “Momma can I be in Meredith’s wedding tomorrow?”

Thomas said, “I want to be in her wedding tomorrow.”

Eleanor said, “Thomas no. You will be throwing up on everybody.”

Brenda said, “Meredith who will give you away. I got Mr. Stith’s suit ready.”

Meredith looked in space and said, “I want Michael to give me away. He has been my friend since he was born. Thomas can be the ringbearer.”

Eleanor would watch Meredith all the town hold Michael as if he were the most precious thing in the world.

Brenda said, “What are they to wear? Your colors are white and purple.”

Lorraine ran to Michael’s room and ran back with his outfit she had previously selected.

Everyone laughed.

She said, “Thomas you will wear your suit like this one.”

Thomas said, “Ok.”

Thomas and Michael went back to Thomas room and played.

Percy and Bruce were still sick.

Meredith said, “I guess that is it?”

Lorraine cleared her throat.

Meredith looked around and said, “My maid of honor Brenda.”

Brenda looked.

Meredith laughed and said, “Shirley do you mind?”

Shirley was laying in her bed.

Eleanor and Brenda stepped back to look upstairs at Shirley.

Shirley raised up on the bed on her hip and said, “You want me?”

Lorraine held her chest.

Meredith was walking up the stairs and said, “You can wear that beautiful dress you had on a year ago.”

Eleanor touched her throat.

Brenda caught Eleanor’s hand and held it.

Shirley looked down the balcony and said, “Meredith, you want me and not Lorraine?”

Meredith said, “I know who I want. I want you.”

Meredith walked to Shirley’s room and sit on her bed and held her.

Meredith said, “Shirley you have not answered me.”

Shirley nodded her head for yes.

Lorraine walked in Shirley’s room and pulled out he dress and unwrapped it and hung it up.

She got all of Shirley’s clothes ready for the next day.

Brenda said, “I want Meredith to walk from the grand staircase.”

Eleanor whispered through her tears, “Why?”

Brenda looked at Eleanor and said, “Since I am not going to be in the wedding heifer…”

Eleanor laughed.

Brenda said, “I want my three grandchildren to be seen.”

Brenda was thinking and said, “I got it. Meredith. Come here.”

Meredith helped Shirley up. They walked to the balcony.

Brenda said, “I want to show my grandchildren off and not me as your matron of honor. You come from there and Michael come from there. He takes your arm and you walk down the staircase, but if you want it in the parlor Felipe and Thomas won’t see you.”

Michael said, “Have it in the hall like Chasity.”

Meredith said, “I love the parlor, but I want Michael to give me that long walk.”

Eleanor heart hit her.

Brenda looked at Eleanor and said, “Are you all right?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Brenda said, “I have not heard from Mag.”

Jose walked in and started his walk through the house.

He walked and checked on the guests’ room and walked back.

Jose said, “What’s going on?”

Brenda said, “I want to showcase my grandchildren and want Meredith to walk down the grand staircase. But Felipe won’t see her.”

Jose said, “Felipe is French.”

Everyone looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Have Felipe outside the parlor and Patrick walk Meredith to him. And Felipe and Meredith walk to the parlor to the minister.

Meredith said, “We’ll do that. Yall help me bring the folding chairs out the storage area.”

Everyone ran to the storage area and grabbed two chairs.

Meredith, Monica and Harriet sat on the hall floor and worked on the flowers.

Monica and Meredith and Harriette made the boutonnieres and chair flowers and the flowers over the mantle and table.

They made the center piece for the hallway table.

They made the flower garland for the grand staircase.

They did not show Meredith the flowers for her bouquet and Shirley’s bouquet.

Meredith had a gift for the homeowners she bought in Paris.

They loved tea. She bought them a porcelain tea set for two.

Louis drove Felipe back.

Louis took all the extra stuff Jose and Thomas had him to pick up and unloaded it in the kitchen.

He said, “Thomas, Jose was right I am tired already.”

Thomas looked at Louis.

He told Jose he had to drive Meredith and Felipe to her rooming house for a visit and have some else go and pick up the doctors.

Jose went downstairs to the laundry and told Max to pick up the guests from the golf course.

Jose turned up his nose because smell from the sheets and towels were soaking from the children’s vomit that day.

Max left and went and got in the carriage and drove away.

Meredith went upstairs and changed clothes.

Meredith would not buy her clothes.

 She did not think she was attractive and did not want to dress up like Lorraine.

Meredith had so much sex growing up she did not care for it until she saw Hutch. She still would not buy anything.

Hutch would talk and pray with Meredith all the time.

Meredith still could not come out the darkness.

Hutch was working with Meredith would wake every Hutch would just hold her.

She would be sleep and could not come out the darkness the sin held her.

Hutch would be attending to the homeowner.

Hutch was attending to the homeowner and his wound.

The homeowner’s wife was sitting in a chair next to his bedside.

The owner said, “She is possessed with evil. Somebody did something evil to her when she was a child. She is a tormented soul.”

Hutch listened he did not know what else to do.

He stopped having sexual relations with Meredith to get out of that sin so his prayers for her would not be hindered.

The homeowner died and his wife sold the house and moved with her son.

Hutch sent Meredith and Felipe’s wedding gift by Dr. Greene.

Dr. Ralph sent a wedding gift by Dr. Greene.

Hutch was puzzled when Meredith came back pregnant and was getting married in a month.

He constantly prayed for Meredith.

He asked God whatever evil gripped her and fighting and holding onto to break and set her free and heal and deliver her.

Hutch asked God to give Meredith a double portion of what was stolen from her by the evil when she was young.

Hutch prayed hard for Meredith every day.

He did not care for Felipe because he was dominating over Meredith and arrogant.

Hutch thought, “God knows what he is doing.”

Hutch made the decision to be celibate and seek God.

He noticed the more he professed his celibacy and fast he was getting more help with his medical treatment of his patients. His understanding was opened of what type of treatment to help them.

He would cry during his intercessory time for Meredith. He did not why. But he asked God to forgive Meredith and deliver her and heal her and let her have the beautiful life He gave to her.

Meredith took all her wedding items and hung the up.

Lorraine walked downstairs with her dress and picked out the flowers to wear as a pin on her dress.

She left her dress in the room at the end of the hall.

Lorraine knocked on Shirley door and went in and got her dress and picked out flowers to make Shirley a halo and bouquet.

Monica and Harriet told Lorraine the flowers she located and put together were beautiful.

Eleanor sat on the floor and help make the garland for the stairwell.

Eleanor walked up the stairs to her bedroom.

She went to the safe and got out the diamond earrings.

She walked to Shirley’s room and gave her the earrings.

Meredith and Felipe were leaving to go to her rooming house.

Meredith had the gift in her hands.

Ruth, Harriett and Vivienne lived there also. That’s why Harriet said she could tell Vivienne’s change.

She said, “Harriet do you need anything?”

Harriett said, “No.”

Meredith said, “Flowers for the flower girl and maybe if anything is left a hair piece of some kind.”

Meredith and Felipe had a good ride to the rooming house.

Meredith introduced Felipe to the homeowners and presented them with her gift.

They loved the gift.

They asked about Vivienne whether she and Harriet and Ruth will be at the mansion all week.

Meredith did not mention Vivienne was sick.

Meredith said, “Our guests will be there t least all week, so they won’t come back until maybe Monday of next week.”

The Mr. homeowner asked Felipe what branch of the military he was in.

Meredith said, “Felipe was not in the military.”

The homeowners looked at Felipe.

Felipe looked at Meredith and said, “I was in the French military, I went into the military after I finished school and stayed ten years and went to medical school during those ten years and became a surgeon.”

The homeowners looked at Meredith.

Louis was laying in the carriage and slept until Meredith and Felipe came to the carriage.

Meredith and Felipe had a very pleasant visit.

Meredith said, “Felipe what else do I need to know?”

Louis leaned back so he could hear.

Felipe said, “I met my first wife in school. We married the day I went into the military. She was pregnant with our first child and she died in childbirth with our first child. Meredith I never got a chance to be a husband nor father. I know Dr. Charles and Dr. Woodson think I am to dominating over you. So does Hutch. I do not want to push you away from me. I can’t bring my wife and son back to me. I know it will be bumpy. Two worlds that are different. But I truly believe you are the person God gave to me and I am the person He gave to you. Imagine that. But be patient with me and don’t throw me away. I know you have something to share with me. I got a telegram last week that you were sick. And I have been sick everyday worrying about you.”

Felipe was holding Meredith around her waist with one hand and holding and kissing her hand with his other hand.

Meredith tried to pull away.

She could not bulge.

She said, “No Felipe.”

Felipe said, “Meredith that pain you have can’t stay in you it must go. Release it to JESUS.”

Meredith said, “It is ugly.”

Louis already knew what Meredith’s evil pain was.

Louis said, “I’m taking you two by the water so you can talk before we get back to the house.”

Louis pulled over and Felipe and Meredith stepped out the carriage.

They walked a good distance from the carriage.

Louis saw Meredith fall to the ground but Felipe caught her.

They sat for an hour and cried.

Felipe sat and held Meredith.

Louis sat and watched Meredith and Felipe.

People were walking the area and looking at Felipe and Meredith.

They stayed another hour on the ground.

Louis was looking at families and children running and playing.

Louis heart started changing the more he looked at Felipe and Meredith.

He was not confused.

He knew exactly what he must do and what he wanted to do.

He thought, “It is going to be hard. I will need help from everything I have in me.”

Louis saw Felipe stand and he bent down and raised Meredith to her feet.

Louis looked and thought, “How symbolic. He set her on her feet and stood her up.”

Felipe and Meredith walked back to the carriage.

Meredith leaned on Felipe.

He held her tightly all the way back to the house.

They got out the carriage and knocked on the front door.

Jose saw Louis when he entered the driveway.

He had just walked in the house from helping Gary light the torches.

Jose unlocked the door and let Felipe and Meredith in the house.

He looked out at Louis and thought, “What’s wrong with him. He still gets paid for the torches.

Jose locked the door back.

Everyone ate dinner and the children were quiet and had no desert.

Eleanor had several bottles ginger ale chilled and gave the children a glass of the chilled ginger ale.

Bruce and Percy did not come down for dinner but slept.

Dr. Woodson went upstairs and checked on a sleeping Percy and Bruce.

Patrick told the doctors Meredith story at the golf course.

Louis rode the carriage to the back and took it to the stables.

He started the water for the next day and slept out in the remodel supply shed.

Denise did not come back that night but stayed at Stith’s rest stop to prepare for the next day.

Louis went to bed.

The security men found three more boxes of Eleanor’s ginger ale. They found the other sixty-two bags of meat.

They gave the workers their bags.

Jose rinsed the sheets and washed them.

While he was pouring out the nasty stinky water, he saw a crack in the wall.

Peter walked in the formal dining room and saw the maids had det the table.

He saw wedding gifts on the floor.

He was picking the flowers he was going to use to decorate Meredith’s wedding cake.

Brenda walked in the formal dining to check it before she went to the parlor with her guests.

Peter did not look up but walked back to the kitchen.

Meredith walked straight to her assigned room.

Felipe sat in the family dining room and ate a very good beef roast and vegetables.

He thought about Vivienne.

He sat up and said, “Sometimes we doctors need a boost to let us know we are here to help people. I will check on Vivienne when I finish eating”

She did not wake up until seven thirty.

Nadine brought Meredith a sunny side up egg, toast and orange juice.

She knocked on her door and Louis and Gary were behind her with the tub of hot water.

Meredith said, “Come in.”

Nadine opened the door and walked in with Meredith’s tray.

Nadine said, “Meredith did you tell Felipe your evil past?”

Meredith looked at Gary and Louis.

Nadine said, “They know. Gary is the person who caught you and brought you to the house with Lorraine.”

Meredith put her hands to her cover her face.

Nadine said, “We all know. No body blames you. We want you to tell the man and let him make up his mind if he still want you and you two work on each other. Especially with a child in this.”

Meredith took her hands from her face and cried and said, :I hate myself.”

Gary and Louis looked at Meredith.

Nadine said, “Why?”

Meredith said, “Because I am a bad person and God hates me and He let these evil happen to me.”

Brenda walked up the stairs checking on the house when she heard Meredith. She stood against the wall and listened.

She eased down the stairs and continued to inspect the house.

She was up early.

She and Patrick had prayed for everybody. They thank GOD for restoring the workers their gifts.

Brenda loved parties.

She and Patrick walked to the picnic area and inspected the area and put the tablecloths and centerpieces out.

Thomas, Jose, Ben, James and his three sons were out in the picnic area preparing the firepits.

They brought the baked beans, breads, salads and slaw and water and lemonade to the area.

Thomas and Jose put the three sides of beef on one firepit and they put the five boxes of sausages on another firepit and the hundred chickens on one firepit and a hundred ribs on the last firepit.

Dr. Greene was standing on his suite balcony praying until he heard talking.

He stood to see who was up at crack of dawn besides him.

It was Patrick and Brenda holding each other and kissing and walking out to inspect the picnic area and helping to set up.

Dr. Greene grinned and laughed.

He was in his parents’ bed because he was sick. He slept off his sickness all day yesterday.

He was better.

He was up at daybreak.

He did not see his daddy in the bed therefore, he started messing with Debra to wake her. He started flipping her lips and pulling on her hair. Since he did not see his daddy and he was ready to get out of bed.

Debra woke and looked around for Tony.

She saw the patio door was opened.

Dr. Greene left the patio door opened so he could hear them in the bedroom.

Debra leaned up on her elbow and peeped at the patio and saw the door opened.

She kept looking and finally saw Tony’s silhouette.

Barry started grinning.

Debra did not want Tony to hear her and whispered, “Go to your daddy.”

Barry pulled Debra hair hard.

Debra said, “Ouch.”

Dr. Greene looked back at the bedroom.

Debra jumped out the bed and grabbed Barry and walked out on the patio where Tony was standing.

Barry reached for his daddy and looked back at his momma.

Dr. Greene reached for his son and could barely see his face but kissed him.

Debra kissed her husband.

She followed his eyes to see what he was looking at. She saw what he saw.

She saw Patrick and Brenda showing each other love. She saw they had forsaken all for themselves. Their love for each other had grown.

Dr. Charles was sitting on his balcony enjoying the brisk slightly warm air.

He was enjoying the silent morning, until he heard talking and he looked at over the courtyard and saw Patrick and Brenda showing great affection for each other holding onto each other and kissing.

He watched them walk over to the picnic area and inspected the picnic area.

They put their hands to work next to their workers. They took instructions from the workers and submitted to the instructions.

He looked in his bedroom and knew his wife was awake.

He wanted to go to his wife. This was the first time they slept in the same bed since they landed in America.

Dr. Charles knew something was brewing and he did not know what it was.

He could not recall anything on their packing to come to America.

They slept in the same bed and had no relations.

They had very good accommodations on the way to America and paid for nothing then nor now.

They stay at a luxury hotel.

Dr. Charles though, “It has been four months. It cannot be about money or my behavior because I am at the hospitals all the time. I have taken her to New York City and Chicago Now here. She is treating these good people like crap. She does not know them. She only met them when we boarded the ship and we saw them irregularly.”

Dr. Charles sat and thought.

A thought came to him.

He slowly turned his head towards his bedroom.

After an hour Brenda and Patrick were returning to the house.

Dr. Charles saw Gary and Louis working on the water.

Dr. Charles heard Barry yelled, “Hey.”

Dr. Greene said, “Good morning.”

Barry said, “Good morning.”

Patrick and Brenda looked up and saw Dr. Greene, Debra and Barry and said, “Good morning Barry.”

Brenda said, “Barry you are up early.”

Barry said, “You too.”

Patrick and Brenda laughed.

Dr. Charles laughed.

Dr. Greene said, “Good morning Charles. You are quiet this morning.”

Charles said, “Just thinking.”

Adeline was awake and lying on her side listening.

Patrick and Brenda were talking to Dan, Thomas and Jose about breakfast,

Barry heard the word breakfast.

Barry said, “No pancakes.”

Dr. Greene said, “Barry.”

Everyone looked up at Barry and laughed.

Debra was embarrassed and covered her face and tried to ease in their bedroom.

Dr. Greene followed her and grinned.

He said, “This just the beginning.”

Debra went and sat in a chair holding her hands to her face.

There was a knock on the door.

Dr. Greene mumble and said, “It’s early. Who is it?”

Dr. Greene opened the door and it was Monica with fresh sheets and Gary and Louis were bringing the hot water for their baths.

Dr. Greene said, “Monica it is early.”

Monica said, “Tell me. They wanted to make sure all the guests were taken care of first. Because we are attending Meredith’s wedding and then the celebration and fireworks.”

Barry ran to the door and said, “Fireworks!!! Yeah.”

Dr. Greene said, “Fireworks. We have to see about that Barry.”

Barry looked up at his daddy and said, “Why?”

Dr. Greene said, “Sometimes…”

Debra said, “Tony.”

Dr. Greene stopped talking.

Gary and Louis said, “What to do about this water?”

Debra jumped up and said, “Gary and Louis you can bring the hot water in.”

Monica was rolling her eyes at Debra.

Dr. Greene was looking at Monica rolling her eyes at his wife.

Gary and Louis walked out the room.

Dr. Greene was about to address Monica rolling her eyes at his wife.

When Debra pushed Barry out the door and grabbed the sheets out of Monica’s hands and locked the bedroom door.

Monica yelled, “Heifer!”

Dr. Greene was about to unlock the door and say something to Monica.

When Debra grabbed Tony’s hand and pulled him to the bed.

Tony grinned for an hour.

Debra was laying her head on Tony’s chest and, “I know these people. Me and Lorraine would catch the train with Monica and go to Philadelphia’s docks when the ships came in.”

Dr. Greene raised up and looked at Debra and said, “Debra!”

Debra said, “Tony don’t act like you are surprised.”

Dr. Greene said, “I am. But it is a pleasant surprise.”

They laughed.

They bathe and Dr. Greene shaved.

Debra was trying to work on her hair.

Monica had Barry with her while she completed her chores.

Monica bathed Barry and had her steaming hot water ready for her when she finished with Barry and

take him to his parents.

Monica had Barry’s hand and they were walking through the hall.

Barry looked up the stairs and saw Thomas and Michael walking down the stairs.

They started trying to play.

Lorraine was in Shirley’s room.

Dr. Greene stopped shaving and said, “Is that Barry that loud?”

He ran to the door and unlocked it.

Monica grabbed Barry’s hand and said, “Come on. There’s your daddy.”

Dr. Woodson had bathed and shaved and walked out his room to go to breakfast.

He looked at Tony and went and knocked on Felipe’s door.

Dr. Woodson said, “I guess he is at breakfast.”

Dr. Greene was looking at the happy and skipping Barry.

Bradley laughed and said, “Was that Barry?”

Tony said, “Yes. He can’t be screaming when we get on the train and back at home.”

Debra was trying to fix her hair and said, “Why not?”

Bradley turned his head and was walking to breakfast when he passed Barry.

He spoke to Monic and Barry.

Then he heard Felipe’s door open.

Dr. Greene looked over at Felipe’s door.

Dr. Woodson stopped walking and looked back at Felipe.

Monica said, “Damn Now I have to make his room before the wedding.”

Dr. Greene looked at Monica because she cursed around Barry.

Monica reached Barry to his daddy and she was looking at Felipe and said, “You need to bathe and shave. It is late.”

Barry grabbed Monica’s hand with both of his hands, so she would not turn him a loose.

Monica said, “Now I have to go and have them bring your water, because I am taking over for Vivienne I have to make up your room immediately when you step out and then go and get dressed for your wedding.”

Felipe was standing in the door.

Dr. Woodson looked at Felipe.

Dr. Greene was trying to grabbed Barry who was swinging on Monica’s hand.

Debra said, “Monica can you brush my hair?”

Monica said, “Hell no.”

Dr. Greene looked at Monica.

Dr. Woodson laughed at how Dr. Greene looked at Monica.

Monica gently said to Barry, “You saw the other boys are dressed and going to breakfast right?”

Barry nodded his head for yes.

Monica said, “You have to let daddy dressed you and then you come to breakfast. Ok?”

Barry turned Monica’s wrist loose.

Monica saw the sheets on the chair and said, “Debra you better fix that bed.”

Dr. Greene looked at Monica as Barry was swing on his arm and dropped to the floor, because he wanted to go to Monica.

Debra said, “Tony can you put Barry’s clothes on and I’ll make the bed. I don’t want Monica to start cursing.”

Dr. Greene looked at Debra and said, “Start.”

Debra said, “I need to hurry. Vivienne is the best one to go to about my hair. She fuss but she will do it. Monica and the rest will fuss and won’t fix my hair.”

Dr. Greene sat in the chair and was putting on Barry’s clothes.

Debra said, “I didn’t see Vivienne since breakfast yesterday. Why did Monica say was doing Vivienne’s work?”

Debra was making the bed and she was putting the spread on the bed.

Debra was fluffing the pillows she realized Dr. Greene did not answer her.

She stopped and looked at Tony because it was unusual for him not to answer her.

Dr. Greene finished putting on Barry’s clothes and said, “Go to your mother for her to comb and brush your hair.”

Debra said, “If I am having trouble combing and brushing my hair what make you think I can do his hair?”

Dr. Greene said, “Debra you have been here three days. You act like these maids. You reverted back so quickly.”

There were people talking in the hallway.

Debra rushed to the door and saw Harriet and Mellissa.

Mellissa said, “Debra don’t start no s\*\*t.”

Dr. Greene looked up at Debra.

Debra left the door open and grabbed Barry’s brush and pushed him outside with Harriet and Mellissa.

Harriet said, “Oh. Look how cute you are.”

Mellissa walked pass Debra and rolled her eyes.

Dr. Greene saw Mellissa roll her eyes at Debra.

Gary and Louis were bringing Felipe his bath water.

Gary and Louis delivered everyone their bath water and emptied all the tubs.

They were finished that morning but for Felipe.

Gary looked at Debra and pointed.

Debra said, “Tony they are here to get the tub.”

Dr. Greene was finishing shave and said, “Sure. I am finished.”

Dr. Charles was passing Debra and spoke.

Debra looked out the door and then she looked up the hall and did not see Adeline.

Debra looked back at Harriet.

Harriet was sitting in the settee and brushing Barry’s hair.

She looked at Debra and Debra pointed at Dr. Charles door.

Harriett said, “That thang is still in there.”

Gary and Louis walked pass Debra.

Dr. Greene said, “Debra let them out.”

Debra stepped out the room and walked back in her bedroom and went to Tony and said, Charles left his bedroom and Adeline is still in there.”

Dr. Greene looked at Debra and finished his shave.

Debra thought, “He is telling me to mind my business.”

Debra heard Barry at the door.

Harriet had Dr. Woodson’s sheets in her hands and Barry’s comb.

Debra ran to the door and looked down at Barry’s hair and said, “Oh Barry look at your hair.”

She said, “Thanks Miss Harriet. Oh wait.”

She ran to the chair and picked up their sheets and gave them to Harriett.

Harriett said, “We won’t be available until tomorrow morning. Put a note on your door when you want breakfast and hot water.”

Dr. Greene was fully dressed and looked at Barry’s hair and grinned.

He reached for Barry’s hand and said, “Let’s go to breakfast.”

Barry said, “Come on momma.”

Harriet walked away.

Debra said, “Barry go with daddy. I have to finish getting dress. No pancakes.”

Barry said, “No pancakes.”

Debra walked to Tony and kissed him.

He smiled and looked at her.

Debra said, “Vivienne?”

Tony stopped and said, “Felipe and Charles said either a stroke or aneurysm. They don’t think it is death causing.”

Debra stood and was weak.

Dr. Greene said, “I did not want you to be worried.”

Debra said, “These people took me in and helped me to get back on my feet when I thought I had lost you forever. I went looking for men. I drank. I played cards with them and was drunk sitting in church. They helped me when I was alone. Don’t look bad on them and think they are nothing.”

Dr. Greene said, “Debra I never look down on another person and you know that. You are who GOD gave to me. I am who HE gave to you. We are blessed because GOD put us together as gifts from HIM. Let us keep looking at HIM and not at each other.”

Barry said, “Let’s eat and no pancakes.”

He pulled on Tony’s arm and was sliding on the floor.

Debra smiled at Tony.

He reached for her and he kissed her and Barry screamed.

Dr. Greene looked down at Barry and said, “You can’t walk if you are on the floor.”

Dr. Greene looked at Debra’s stomach.

Debra said, “No more children.”

Dr. Greene opened the door and Thomas and Michael were standing at the door to knock they had their pants and shirts on.

Dr. Greene thought something was wrong and he said, “Thomas and Michael? What’s wrong?”

Debra looked around at the boys.

Thomas said, “Grandpa and grandma said come to breakfast they want to pray.”

Dr. Greene looked at Debra and said, “Throw on a top and let’s go. We pray as the hosts requested.”

Debra looked around and grabbed an old sweater and put it on.

She ran to Tony and he closed the door and saw Thomas, Michael and Barry ran up the hall and slipping and falling in the main hallway going to the family dining room for breakfast.

Tony and Debra ran down the hallway and laughed as they entered the dining room.

Alicia and Steve were servers that morning and looked at Debra and Tony.

Debra said, “Steve where have you been?”

Steve said, “I finished college this May. Nadine asked me to come and help out this week.”

Debra hugged Steve.

Patrick said, “Everyone hold hands.

Debra reached back and grabbed Steve’s hand.

Dr. Greene grabbed Steve and Alicia hands.

Patrick said, “LORD GOD Almighty. Once again YOU have blessed us to come together for another couple joining in holy matrimony in YOUR sight.”

They heard someone walking in and it was Felipe and Adeline.

Steve moved and let them join between and Debra.

Dr. Greene looked and did not say anything.

Patrick said, “We thank YOU for keeping us safe and keeping our home while we were away and blessing those who safeguarded what YOU gave us. We want everyday of lives to reflect YOU and YOUR will for those around us that we can reach and help. None of us are perfect as YOU see…”

Everyone snickered and laugh.

Dr. Greene said, “Amen.”

Patrick said, “I just wanted to thank YOU lord GOD Almighty in front of these good people YOU saw fit to bring us together. For the Glory of YOUR Son JESUS the Christ. Amen.”

Michael said, “And bless Meredith with fun all her life.”

Felipe looked at Michael and said, “Amen.”

Everyone sat.

Debra and Tony went to the buffet and she made Barry a plate of a small amount of eggs and toast and orange juice.

She made her a plate of the same thing.

Patrick looked at Charles.

Charles looked t Adeline and turned his head.

Patrick looked at Charles and said, “We just pray.”

Charles exhaled and stood and walked to Adeline.

He passed Debra and Tony and walked to her and sit her and leaned down and said, “What do you want rather to eat?”

Adeline said, “Eggs and toast.”

Alicia walked to Adeline and leaned down and whisper, “Ma am what do you care to drink?”

Dr. Greene was walking back to the table and looked at Patrick and Brenda talking and watching their guests and enjoying each moment they had together.

He could see why Debra did not want to have any more children. She wanted to spend her time with him.

He was roused out his pleasant thoughts by Adeline scolding Alicia.

Alicia jumped back from Adeline.

Steve turned around to see who was scolding his sister.

Felipe and Charles were at the buffet.

Charles frowned up and looked back at Adeline and said, “Adeline!” Why are scolding this delightful child. I heard her and I saw how nice and mannerable she was to you. Nobody here did anything against you! What is your problem? Just because you can’t see does not mean they can’t see. You apologize to this lovely young lady. She looks like your darling niece Darlene.”

Alicia ran to Steve.

Steve hugged Alicia.

Jose walked in the family dining room with Nadine.

Steve and Alicia brought their baby sister, Emilou.

They brought her to be the flower girl for Meredith.

Emilou was sitting between Shirley and Dr. Woodson.

Emilou was in Shirley’s room and Lorraine was fixing her hair and put a wrap on for her to go and eat breakfast.

Emilou started crying.

She was trying to get out the chair and Dr. Woodson helped her out the chair.

She ran to her sister Alicia and held her and cried.

Eleanor and Lorraine and Thomas heard the loud talking and ran down to the family dining room.

Dan and Peter were in the formal dining room and bringing Meredith’s wedding cake.

They were laughing and talking.

Putting the finishing touches on the cakes and the beautiful table that Monica and Harriet and Alicia set early.

Peter made Felipe a chocolate cake and decorated it with the flowers he put on Meredith’s cake.

Adeline yelled, ”Darlene is not my niece. She is my daughter and you have taken me away from her.”

Dr. Charles stood.

Everyone slowly looked at Dr. Charles.

Michael jumped from his seat and said, “I don’t care whether Darlene is your niece or daughter you apologize to Alicia and leave this table and this house and don’t come back ever. You will not ruin my Meredith’s wedding!”

Eleanor and Lorraine with synchronize steps walked into the family dining room.

They looked at Michael.

 Michael stood up and demanded Adeline to apologize and leave his table and his house.

Everyone looked at Michael.

Michael said, “Jose packed her stuff and take her to the railroad and have George put her on the first ship going back to Paris. Amen and Amen.”

Michael remembered the minister said when something is finish and you are not going to change your mind and it agrees with God’s word say amen twice.

Everyone slowly turned and looked at Michael.

Felipe and Charles looked at Michael.

Adeline jumped up from the table.

Michael yelled at Adeline and said, “No one here did anything to you. You have been nasty and rude and disrespectful to my grandpa and grandma since you got here in their house. You are never welcome back here. Evil woman.”

Charles said, “Adeline who is Darlene’s papa.”

Adeline said, “Felipe.”

Everyone looked at Felipe.

Charles pointed at Meredith’s Felipe and said, “Not this Felipe. I assumed you were having an affair with your sister’s man. This morning I started remembering the strange looks people gave you. The many times you and sister were out late. You always wanted for Darlene to come to you. I was so consumed with my job I just did not want to believe what my eyes and ears were telling me. The number of times I smelled another man’s scent in my bed and on my sheets and pillows. The number of years we went without relations. Rather I went without any relations with you.”

Adeline started laughing.

Felipe was standing in shock.

He started eating his bacon.

Charles said, “You have been blind and married to me for thirteen years and you told me Darlene was your niece out of wedlock. Adeline how did you become blind?”

Adeline laughed and said, “Me and Felipe were getting ready to rob you one night you were coming home late from the hospital. I fell and hit my head on the side of the carriage…”

Brenda said, “Good bitch.”

Patrick did not look at Brenda.

Percy jumped and looked at Brenda.

Bruce was still sick.

He was barely sitting in his chair. He slightly looked at his grandma who wanted to do good for everybody.

Bruce whispered to Percy, “Adeline must be bad for grandma to call her a bitch.”

Percy nodded his head for yes.

Dr. Woodson for some strange reason heard Percy and Bruce and looked at them.

Patrick saw Dr. Woodson look at Percy and Bruce and knew they were whispering.

Adeline continued, “Felipe took me to the hospital. The next morning when you came to work I played the innocent young vulnerable victim and when I knew my sight was not coming back Felipe told me to marry you for your money so he would not have to work so hard. I did and enjoyed it. So you have taken care of me and I have used you to take care of Felipe.”

Charles said, “How badly I wanted children. Jose.”

Adeline laughed and said, “I will never have children by you.”

Jose looked at Charles.

Michael said, “Jose, I don’t want her in this house during Meredith’s wedding.”

Everyone looked at Michael.

Jose said, “I am coming to Meredith’s wedding. I will see if the security can take Adeline to the rail station.”

Jose looked at the stunned Charles and said, “Sir, can you pack her stuff?”

Charles reached his plate to Felipe and walked out to the bedroom.

Adeline slowly walked down the hall to the bedroom.

Felipe stood by the buffet and said, “Charles has been paying Adeline’s sister all these years as her care taker. Charles is older and have no heir.”

Patrick said, “Michael I am making you the president over all my businesses.”

Michael eyes showed his delight and said, “Thank you grandpa.”

Brenda looked at Michael and grinned.

Michael ran to Brenda and hugged and kissed her.

He went to Patrick and hugged him.

Lorraine lifted her hand to Michael and yelled, “My boy!!”

Michael ran and shook Lorraine’s hand and said, “You taught me Lorraine. All those times you and daddy were fussing. But I did not curse for that is for grown people.”

Lorraine said, “Yeah!”

Patrick and Brenda were stunned.

Eleanor looked at Lorraine.

Jose was walking back in the family dining room and saw Adeline was gone.

He said, “Two of the security men will pull out front in a few minutes to take Adeline to the railroad. What time does the train leaves?”

Michael was biting his lamb chop and said, “Who cares. Let her sit her…”

Lorraine said, “Ass”

Michael said, “Down there until the train leaves. Think she is going to mess up my big role and Meredith’s wedding. Nall.”

Lorraine said, “Hell.”

Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor looked at the communication between Lorraine and Michael.

Jose said, “This is a mess.”

Felipe said, “I could not stand Adeline and I am glad she is out this country.”

He said, “Good bacon.”

Percy said, “Felipe does not use adverbs.”

Felipe said, “But I speak English.”

Percy looked at Felipe and said, “OK.”

Percy turned his head from Felipe and looked at Patrick.

Bruce sat and watched Felipe.

Everyone looked at Felipe with their mouths opened.

Eleanor said, “Lorraine why were you fussing with Bruce?”

Lorraine looked at Eleanor and said, “It was no romantic thing. No body wants Bruce but you and that other whore.”

Dr. Greene was so shocked about Charles he was not surprised at anything Lorraine was saying .

He was not telling Lorraine to watch her language.

Debra sat straight up in her chair with her mouth opened.

Eleanor said, “Lorraine why were you fussing with Bruce?”

Lorraine turned and looked at Eleanor and said, “Because I could not stand that motherf\*\*\*\*r. None of us could. Right Jose?”

Jose said, “I can’t stand that b\*\*\*h.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Jose who was putting the food together to clear out the family dining room.

Jose said, “Brenda is it ok to put Meredith’s wedding gifts on this table?”

Eleanor yelled, “Lorraine and Jose I don’t understand why you all were fussing with Bruce?”

Jose was bent down putting a chafing dish on the cart and he turned his head and looked at Eleanor.

Jose stood up and said, “How dare you.”

Patrick and Brenda heard the acid in Jose’s tune and watched him.

Michael and Shirley said, “You were in Europe momma.”

Lorraine pushed Eleanor and yelled, “You ran away Eleanor. We had to fight Bruce for you and your children. We did the best we could because you fled Eleanor! We had to deal with that psychopath, while you were running away. You coward!”

Lorraine started crying.

Michael walked to Lorraine and hugged her.

Jose said, “Patrick and Brenda can we get a raise for that?”

Brenda just sat and looked at Jose. She was not comprehending what he was saying.

Dr. Woodson, Shirley and Debra looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Jose for fussing and cursing. Yall do that all the time. So why should you get paid for that?”

Jose looked at Patrick and said, “That’s not what I said.”

Patrick said, “Yes you did.”

Jose said, “No I didn’t.”

Nadine turned to Steve, Alicia and Emilou and said, ”Go upstairs to Shirley’s room so you sweet thing can finish getting dressed.”

Nadine said, “What they are saying and what Robert and the other one that went to jail. Is that they were the help, not the wife nor mother. They had to step into the shoes of you Eleanor because you were gone. And you told no one where you were. And everyone was mad with Brenda and Patrick.”

Brenda said, “Me.”

Dr. Woodson looked at a blank face Brenda.

Nadine said, “Yeah.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Because there was no authority figure in the children’s lives that could overrule Bruce.”

Jose said, “Right.”

Michael said, “Jose I will give you a bonus.”

Jose looked sarcastically and said, “Michael I’m talking about now not in ten years.”

Patrick thought and he looked at Brenda and said, “Brenda, I understand what they are saying.”

Brenda looked at Patrick and he started talking to Brenda.

Michael walked back to his plate and to eat his lamb chop.

Brenda said, “Jose and Lorraine I apologize. Bruce told us not to visit the children.”

Jose started pulling the breakfast cart out of the dining room.

Jose stopped.

He said, “When has that stop you two. I want six months off and I want to go to Paris but not where Adeline lives.”

Lorraine said, “You know how many times I wanted to throw Bruce overboard or on the railroad tracks?”

Patrick looked around at the table and sheepishly grinned and said, “Be quite Lorraine. We will talk after our guests leave. Next week.”

Lorraine said, “Can I beat Eleanor?”

Eleanor looked at Lorraine and said, “Like I am going to let you beat me.”

Shirley said, “Yes.”

Eleanor was stunned by the loyalty of her workers.

Jose stopped pulling the cart and said, “Me too.”

Eleanor turned and looked at Shirley and said, “I can say forgive me a million times to you Shirley. That can’t take out of your heart the hate you have for me for letting your father take you. I tried to make it up to you by buying those earrings. I am not buying you another damn thing to apologize to you for me being weak. You will never use that against me again.”

Lorraine said, “And a coward.”

Jose said, “Runner.”

Jose was pulling the cart out the family dining room and said, “Eleanor could have taught those slaves how to flee and escape.”

Lorraine and Nadine laughed out.

Dr. Woodson looked at Eleanor. She was much more fragile than he thought.

Eleanor looked at Lorraine, Jose and Nadine.

She looked at Patrick and Brenda for help.

Patrick said, “Eleanor you did not come to us for help.”

Eleanor looked Shirley in her eyes to let her know she meant what she just said.

There was a knock on the door.

Jose went to the door and two of the security men were at the door waiting for Adeline.

Jose turned to walk down the hall and saw Charles walking and holding Adeline’s hand.

Felipe ate his bacon and eggs and drank coffee.

He said, “Where is Meredith? Did she eat?”

Nadine said, “Yeah romancer.”

Felipe stood and said, “I need to bathe.”

Lorraine said, “Patrick can you please make that security guard who is to photograph the wedding bathe.”

Jose said, “Please.”

Nadine said, “The one with the beard? Oh Lordy.”

Nadine turned to leave out the dining room.

She looked at Eleanor and Lorraine and said, “You two can fight another day. We have to take care of Meredith and these kids today.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Shirley as her two mommas walked out the dining room fussing.

Shirley exhaled and Patrick and Brenda looked at her.

Alicia walked back in the family dining room to get her bracelet and watched Charles take Adeline to the carriage with her bags.

Adeline had packed all her clothes because she did not want to leave anything in the hotel room.

Charles was going over her documents for France.

He sat her in the carriage and watched as the carriage pulled off.

Alicia was watching out the window,

Dr. Woodson watched her.

Patrick and Brenda watched Alicia as they saw the carriage leave.

Michael said, “I’m sorry Alicia you had to be hurt.”

Alicia turned to Michael and said, “Thank you.”

Michael said, “You are welcome.”

Alicia walked out and went upstairs to Shirley’s room.

Charles walked in the family’s dining and looked for his plate and looked at Felipe.

Felipe said, “I’m sorry I thought you would not be hunger when you came back. If you came back.”

Patrick looked and said, “Barry you are quiet?”

Barry said, “I don’t know when to cuss.”

Brenda’s mouth dropped open.

Dr. Greene heard something.

He turned and looked at Debra then Barry.

Shirley stood from the table and looked back at Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael.

Shirley said, “Come on so we can finish getting dressed.
Bruce was getting up.

Percy said, “You’re listening to her?”

Bruce said, “Ain’t nobody else is saying anything but Michael.”

Dr. Woodson said, “I think I better go and dressed also.”

Everyone stood from the table and went to their rooms.

Several workers came and cleared the family dining room and brought, Denise and Mabel and Lorraine’s gifts and put them on the table.

They decorated the table with the last of the flowers.

The workers tied small bouquets to the chairs and decorated the grand staircase with garland.

Monica made Meredith’s bouquet.

They used all the remaining pieces of flowers for the flower girl’s basket.

Peter put the champagne on the table.

Patrick put all the rifles and guns by the back porch.

The security men and ate breakfast.

Patrick walked through the house and saw the security men and said, “Are you of you to take the pictures today?”

One of the security men said, “I am.”

Patrick beckon for him and put his hand on his back and said, “Bathe and shave and put on clean clothes. If you need clothes ask Jose. You have an hour.”

The security walked down by the laundry and saw there was a lot of hot water and soap.

There were towels.

He put his clothes in the ringers to wash.

Jose came downstairs and looked at the security man standing naked at the washers.

Jose said, “You need clothes, because those clothes won’t be dry in an hour?”

The security man’s hair was over his head.

Jose went back upstairs and brough the security man a uniform, new socks, a new comb and a shaving kit.

The house was beautiful.

Patrick and Brenda bathe and dressed,

Brenda pulled out her casual celebration dress and put it on the bed to change in for the celebration.

They hard knocking on the front door.

Peter went to the door and opened it and let Mag, Josiah and Natalie in.

He locked the door back.

They went and sat down.

Ruth and Vivienne and Monica walked in the hall and sat.

Another knock and it was the homeowners where Meredith stayed.

Dr. Woodson was on his knees praying when he heard horses and carriages drive up.

He lifted his head up and looked out at a beautiful day and shook his head at the terrible scene. How Michael stood up and announced his decision. He

Dr. Woodson a little child spoke truth today and did not hide.

He stood and dressed and sat on his bed and held the beautiful bible he bought for Felipe and Meredith’s wedding gift with their engraved names on the inside cover.

He put the bible in the wedding bag he bought with a card praying for their blessings.

Dr. Woodson’s mind went to the woman from the ship bac to the woman he used in college.

He said, “LORD GOD Almighty I want a wife, but one who knows I love my work then her. Maybe that’s not right. You know why I want a wife.”

He stood and put on his coat and walked down the hall.

Dr. Greene and Debra were dressed and walked out their room with Barry.

Dr. Woodson smiled at them as they preceded down the hall.

Patrick and Brenda walked out their room.

Brenda was trying to pin the boutonniere on Patrick.

Brenda said, “We have boutonnieres for everyone at the table.”

They heard loud knocking on the door.

Jose was back and opening the door.

Peter, Dan and Thomas changed into their chefs’ attire until after the wedding.

They heard a loud and a familiar voice.

Dr. Greene grinned and said, “The mayor.”

Jose started walking down the hall with some bags.

Brenda looked and Jose said, “The mayor’s wife insisted her clothes for the celebration be kept in the house. I am putting it in the spare room. We did not think about the quests who needed to change.”

They heard Gen and Ben and the former governor enter.

The current governor was having his own big celebration and fireworks.

Percy and Bruce ran down the stairs and saw Barry.

Barry ran to them and they started to get loud.

Dr. Greene to the boys and told them to be quiet.

He sat with them in the parlor.

Debra said, “Before Tony come back what do you think about Charles and Adeline?”

Brenda said, “I can’t think about it. That is too much.”

Patrick said, “I think it was GOD’s will for it to happen and the way it happened.”

Dr. Woodson said, “I’m like Brenda. That was a lot.”

They heard the telegram machine.

Patrick went into the office and walked back out with the telegrams.

He handed them to Brenda.

Brenda said, “What are these?”

She begin to read the telegrams and smiled.

Jose was passing by and Brenda reached him the telegrams.

Debra reached him the cards form Hutch and Dr. Ralph and from her and Dr. Greene.

Eleanor and Lorraine walked downstairs.

They liked alike.

Debra said, “They look like they could be sisters.”

Patrick thought, “I know I never messed with nobody. Maybe one of brothers did to keep Brenda’s mouth shut.”

They stop at the table and Debra picked a boutonniere for Tony.

She sat and talked to Natalie for a moment.

Dr. Woodson picked a boutonniere.

Brenda looked at Vivienne and then at Ruth.

Brenda said, “Vivienne how do you feel?”

Vivienne said, “My headache is gone and I am not tired like I was.”

Dr. Woodson stood and listen.

Brenda said, “I believe that is a good thing. Just don’t overdo it in the sun today.”

Brenda hugged Mag, Josiah and Natalie.

Vivienne said, “How come Brenda didn’t bring me one of those dresses back from Europe?”

Mag and Josiah started laughing.

Mag said, “Me too.”

Debra was conscious of her hair.

She walked out the parlor when she heard Vivienne and Ruth.

They stopped talking and looked at Debra’s hair.

Vivienne said, “We can’t do nothing about this.”

Vivienne said, “Go and sneak some flowers out of those arrangements.”

Ruth said, “That still won’t help. What were you doing?”

Debra grinned.

Dr. Greene was watching the women complain about Debra’s hair. He knew what Debra’s response was to the complaining women when he saw Debra grin.

Dr. Greene grinned and continued talking to Gen.

They looked at her and they pointed to the flowers.

Debra came back with the flowers and kneeled on the floor.

Vivienne braided the flowers in Debra’s hair.

Brenda looked at Debra’s hair and said, “That’s lovely.”

Gen looked at Debra and said, “Who did that?”

Dr. Woodson looked at Debra’s thick braids with the flower.

Gen looked back at Vivienne and said, “Me next.”

Everybody laughed.

Dr. Woodson was sitting across from Gen and Ben.

Brenda looked around and said, “Where’s the minister?”

Gen threw her hand up to her face and bucked her eyes and said, “I forgot to tell him.”

Brenda looked at Gen.

There was a knock on the door.

Jose was standing and looking over the family dining room and thought everything was plush.

Gary drove the carriage around front with the workers gift in it.

Jose went to the door and it was the minister and his wife.

Brenda did not like the minister’s wife.

Patrick was talking to the mayor and former governor.

He watched the minister’s wife that Brenda did not like.

She looked around the hall and tried to turned up her nose.

Patrick said, “Look at that fool.”

Bryson said, “I saw her.”

They kept on talking.

Patrick said, “Let me greet these fools.”

Gail said, “Huh.”

The mayor was leaning back looking at the liquor table.

Louis was at the piano in the other room.

Eleanor said, “Louis in exactly five minutes.”

Nadine was proud of her deceased niece’s children.

Louis started the piano.

Felipe and Charles had to run down the hall to get to the hall.

They looked distinguished in their French military uniforms.

Brenda quietly pointed where they were to stand.

Everyone stood and Thomas walked down the grand staircase first.

He was so happy and grinning.

The photographer took Thomas picture.

Shirley walked down the grand staircase.

She was radiant and beautiful.

Dr. Greene shook his head and Debra was laying her head on him.

Dr. Greene said, “An amazing GOD.”

Brenda was crying as she watched this beautiful young woman descend the magnificent staircase.

Brenda thought, “Shirley left us a ball of flesh now this lovely young woman has emerged.”

She thought of the death wrenching pain Shirley would live with each second of everyday.

The pain Shirley endured could not be felt nor know by any of them.

She thought how the GOD of Love have used the horror of Shirley’s life to teach the doctors how to treat others born with all sort of birth defects and handicaps.

Brenda’s lips quivering and tears falling on her cheeks almost like her tears were rejoicing.

Brenda thought, “The ball of flesh I held every night that was in so much pain that she was hot and I had to dip her in cold water every hour. I thank YOU Great GOD, YOU know why Shirley was born this way. YOU knew she and Michael…”

Brenda smiled at her little man.

She continued, “…would unselfishly use their own trust fund money to keep that hospital open so YOU could heal people. I can see YOUR divine plan in that. YOU knew YOU raised this family up to have the money to help others according to YOUR will. I humbly accept YOUR will oh LORD GOD Almighty. I see that Shirley is a beacon of light with defects. It gives them hope to trust a truly amazing and incredible GOD. THANK YOU, KING. I ask YOU. HE Who knows how to give good gifts to HIS children to give Shirley good gifts oh Great KING. Let her know YOU above all. I believe part of that terrible life of pain was to bring her near to YOU that she saw the MAN of LIGHT. Help Michael to forgive her.”

Shirley walked and stood next to a crying Brenda.

Brenda leaned her head towards Shirley. Shirley sensed Brenda and she instinctively met Brenda’s head.

Dr. Woodson saw Brenda and Shirley and knew it was a bond forged by the TRUE and LIVING GOD. It was beautiful to watch.

Dr. Woodson was still just shocked at Shirley.

Emilou walked down the grand staircase.

 And she began dropping the flowers on the floor by the chairs into the parlor.

But she and Thomas ran out the parlor to see Meredith.

Felipe saw the children and gave a half nervous smile.

There were several people outside Jose let in.

They walked in and stood behind Patrick and Brenda.

Michael held his arm out for Meredith.

Everyone laughed.

The photographer took two of that picture and how Michael looked at Meredith like he was a true man and saying to Meredith are you ready.

Everybody hollered.

Jose and Dan laughed out.

Meredith nodded her head to Michael.

Michael held his head up as a dignitary and escorted Meredith down the grand staircase.

Michael walked Meredith to the hall.

Brenda touched the minister and his wife to walk into the parlor.

Then she looked at Thomas and Emilou.

Shirley was looking at Meredith wedding dress and the embroidery.

Brenda touched Shirley and she walked in the parlor.

Then Felipe and Charles.

Michael escorted Meredith into the parlor.

Everybody clapped.

Gary, Jose, Peter, Dan and Thomas stood against the wall.

Louis ran from the piano room to the hallway.

Everyone looked back at him.

Percy stared at Louis.

Brenda saw Percy.

Louis looked at Percy.

Nadine, Eleanor and Lorraine were dressed well.

They ran down the staircase.

Nadine just cried.

She walked to Peter and he pushed her away.

She leaned on Jose and cried.

Patrick looked at Peter.

The minister performed the wedding ceremony.

The minister said, “Is there anyone here who oppose this couple from being married.”

Michael turned around and made a step and looked at the audience.

Gen nearly hit the floor and Ben had to catch her.

Felipe tried to grin, but he was also looking around.

Dr. Charles had a plastered smile on his face for the entire ceremony and reception.

Dr. Greene hollered.

Debra was looking around to see if anybody was there to oppose the marriage.

Patrick was sitting next to Brenda.

He tried to grin but was so shock by this little boy’s attitude.

Brenda was grinning and leaning on Patrick.

Dan and Thomas were hollering.

Eleanor was the proud momma.

Lorraine was crying.

She said, “My two babies.”

Eleanor looked around at the nice size crowd.

She saw Skip, Jake and several of the soldiers.

Eleanor whispered, “Lorraine.”

Eleanor nodded.

She said, “Shirley invited the soldiers.”

Lorraine said, “Tell Miss Shirley I said thank you.”

Eleanor said, “Look Lorraine they are not for you. Shirley like that first tall one.”

Lorraine said, “What about the others?”

Eleanor turned her head and said, “I can’t talk to you.”

Lorraine said, “He heard you. Look how he is looking at you.”

Eleanor said, “At us.”

The minister asked. “Who gives this woman away?”

Michael said, “I do.”

Meredith leaned down.

Michael pulled Meredith’s veil back and kissed her on her cheek.

Felipe walked and took Meredith’s hand.

They exchange vows.

The minister pronounced them husband and wife.

Meredith and Felipe kissed.

The photographer was on the floor again and taking a lot of pictures.

Everyone stood and clapped.

The minister reached Patrick the marriage license back.

He told Patrick, “Meredith and Felipe had to register at the town’s clerk.”

Steve and Alicia were standing back by Louis.

The wedding party was taking a lot of pictures.

Patrick said to the minister and his wife, “You are quite welcome to stay for our Fourth of July celebration and fireworks.”

The mayor touched Patrick and said, “We will stay for the celebration, but I have to be at the town’s firework and thanks for the donation.”

Patrick said, “I understand. You are welcome.”

The mayor and his wife walked out the front door.

The mayor heard the billiards the kids were messing with and his eyes cut to the liquor table.

Patrick saw the mayor’s eyes.

Patrick knew the mayor liked that brand of bourbon that was on the liquor table.

The mayor and his wife into the reception and saw the beautiful reception room.

Then they walked across to the gift room.

Jose was standing in the room but was looking out the window.

Patrick looked at Jose and thought, “He is thinking about not going outside.”

The mayor and his wife walked out the front door and walked to their carriage and got a change of clothes and walked back to the house.

The minister’s wife wanted to hang around the mayor and his wife, but she already told her husband for them to leave immediately after the ceremony, even though they had no invitations to any other celebration.

Patrick said to the minister, “I need to pay you sir. Let’s step over here in the reception room.”

Patrick walked the minister and his wife in the formal dining room.

The minister and his wife’s mouths dropped open at the opulence of Brenda’s formal dining room.

Patrick looked at them.

Jose saw Patrick stepped away with the minister and his wife.

He knew that meant to pay them.

Jose took the envelope out of his chest pocket and walked into the formal dining room and saw the stunned minister and his wife.

Patrick reached for the envelope from Jose.

Jose gave the envelope to Patrick.

Patrick reached the envelope to the minister.

The minister opened the envelope and counted the money.

Patrick gave him an extra twenty dollars because Brenda did not like the minister nor his wife, especially the minister’s wife.

Jose looked at the minister and his wife and walked out the formal dining room.

She did not want to take a picture with the couple.

The photographer said, “Ma am, Mr. Minister’s wife it is customary to take a picture with the bride and groom. You don’t have to. You will be missing in the pictures.”

Brenda heard the photographer and knew he meant something.

The photography took pictures with Patrick and Brenda, Gen and Ben, the mayor and the former governor and with the workers.

Shirley walked out the parlor and was looking at the happy people.

Skip watched sad Shirley.

Jake whispered to Skip like Percy and Bruce whisper.

Jake and Skip saw the well hidden guns and rifles in the house.

Percy looked back and saw Skip he touched Bruce.

He pointed to Skip.

Percy and Bruce jumped up and walked back to Skip and spoke.

Skip looked at Shirley.

He walked to Shirley.

Eleanor and Lorraine were taking pictures with Meredith and then with Meredith and Felipe.

Eleanor and Lorraine were watching Skip.

Michael looked out and saw Skip.

Michael, Thomas and Emilou were on their knees in front of the wedding party.

Emilou was in the middle of Thomas and Michael.

Michael jumped off his knees and said, “Thomas.“

Michael pointed to Skip.

He and Thomas ran out the parlor to the hallway and hugged Skip.

Thomas and Michael ran to Jake.

Patrick saw when Michael and Thomas ran out the parlor.

Patrick started watching his grandchildren all the time now.

He saw them run out the parlor and walked out the parlor.

Patrick reached his hand to Skip and said, “Welcome to our home. Are you here for the wedding or for all the celebration?”

Skip said, “Sir?”

Patrick said, “Shirley explained to these two soldiers what we celebrate.”

Patrick reached his hand to Jake and shook his hand.

Patrick put his hand on Thomas head.

Alice, Ginger and Mary were standing against the wall with their grandparents and brothers.

Percy, Bruce and the two teenage boys ran out the front door.

Thomas turn to run behind them.

Patrick took Thomas head and turned him to the formal dining room.

Where Peter and Dan were.

Jake knew the photographer.

The photographer walked out the parlor.

He saw Skip and shook Skip hand and took a picture of him and Shirley.

Steve saw Alice and spoke.

Alice smiled and spoke.

He walked over to Alice and introduced himself to Alice.

Patrick saw Lance and Hilary they laughed.

Hilary said, “The house is beautiful.”

Patrick said, “Brenda does not know you are here.”

He pointed to the parlor they walked to the parlor as the minister and his wife were leaving.

Jose opened the door for them to leave.

They stopped and looked at the decorated carriage.

Gary ran to the window and was watching them.

The festivities continued for an hour.

Everyone went and changed to casual clothes.

Gen’s maid’s sons were running in the yard with Percy, Bruce, Lance and Hilary’s two teenage grandsons.

The party moved from the house to the picnic area.

Jose locked the front of the house.

Gen and Ben snuck a large piece of wedding cake and went out front and sat on the bench and ate before Dr. Woodson could stop them.

They sat and ate and looked back towards the door.

There were barrels all around the house for people to put the plates and forks.

Everyone was enjoying themselves.

A lot of people came to the celebration.

Shirley and the boys changed into casual clothes.

The soldiers stayed for the picnic and the fireworks.

The mayor and his wife were leaving and shook the soldiers’ hand.

Gen had sneak in the house and got a piece of chocolate cake for she and Ben.

She put the cake by Jake and said, “If that doctor come and ask about the cake it is yours.”

Jake looked at Dr. Woodson.

He kept eating his corn and bake beans.

Dr. Woodson said, “Is that your cake?”

Jake said, “Yes sir.”

Dr. Woodson said, “These are my patients and I know they have been eating what they should not. Eat the cake.”

Jake picked the cake up and ate it.

Gen was standing up waiting for Dr. Woodson to leave so she could run and get the cake from Jake.

Ben leaned back and saw Jake eating the chocolate cake.

Dr. Woodson looked at Gen and Ben.

Gen opened her mouth and cried.

She flopped down in the seat next to Ben.

Ben continued to eat his corn.

Everyone was enjoying the day.

The evening fireworks were fantastic.

The security men were rotating to the picnic area.

Felipe was sitting on the ground and Meredith were sitting in his lap.

Barry was running over the whole picnic area.

Debra tried to grin, but Barry was wearing her out.

She and Dr. Greene sat and watched him running from table to table.

He, Thomas and Michael rolled all over the grass.

Eleanor stood up and looked around and walked to Louis and said, “Please when you finish hot water for all of us.”

She walked to Shirley and held her hand out.

Shirley looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor gave Shirley a hard look.

Shirley was standing and talking with Steve, Alicia, Alice and Ginger.

Shirley took off the earrings and handed them to Eleanor.

The group kept on talking.

Patrick watched Skip.

Skip quietly stood and walked the picnic area and towards the house.

Patrick called him and said, “Skip come over here please.”

Skip walked over to Patrick and stooped down.

He said, “Sir?”

Patrick said, “What are you doing? I have sit here and watched you.”

Bryson, Gail the mayor and Brenda watched Skip for hours.

Skip said, “I saw you had guns throughout the house. I saw some former soldiers here providing security. I know how to scout and look at parameters for breaches. I feel confidant no one will try anything tonight and most of the week because they do not believe they can get away with this number of people around.”

Patrick stared at Skip and said, “Thank you.”

Skip stood up and walked back to Jake.

Patrick stared after Skip and Jake and looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Well.”

Gail said, “He scared me.”

Bryson said, “Gail everything scares you.”

Gail looked at Gen and said, “What’s wrong with her?”

Gail yelled to Gen, “What’s wrong with you?”

Gen said, “He ate my cake.”

Gail said, “Who?”

Gen pointed at Jake.

Bryson peeped around Gail and said, “Your better shut up. Look at Ben peeping he did not say nothing, you better not.”

Gail said, “Gen why can’t you go and get another piece of cake?”

Gen looked up and Gail turned and saw Dr. Woodson and Dr. Charles looking at Gen.

Bryson looked and saw Dr. Woodson and Dr. Charles looking at Gen.

Bryson said, “Gail stop. They are trying to help save Gen’s life. You know we nearly lost her last year.”

Gail said, “Bryson a piece of cake?”

Bryson said, “A piece of cake Gail can flip the scale between life and death. I am a doctor. I know what I am talking about. How would you feel if a crumb cost Gen her life. Gail, I am finished talking about it.”

Gail turned and looked at Bryson like he was talking to her as a person with not enough sense to understand what he was saying.

Bryson turned to Patrick and said, “I heard some of your workers said you don’t have all your food for the Celebration. What happen?”

Gail looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Someone has been stealing like mad. They put me and Brenda gifts bags for workers. A hundred meat (which had two chickens and two ribs.) …”

Gail said, “Those were nice gift bags.”

Patrick said, “… They put the bags on the back porch for the workers to get a meat bag, corn and a watermelon. The workers were paid and Jose told them to get a bag, corn and a watermelon. They walked back in the house and said no bags and only a few watermelons and corn.”

Gen and Ben were listening.

Ben said, “Inside job.”

Bryson and Gail sat and looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “They stole Eleanor’s ginger ale from Ireland. They emptied my trout pond. They stole the chickens for today. They stole all of Michael’s suckers.”

Gail jumped up and said, “I’ll kick their a\*\* for stealing that baby suckers that I had to spend all day boxing up.”

Bryson said, “Gail that would be the only reason with your lazy self.”

Brenda hollered.

Gen tipped over and stood and listened.

Ben turned around so he could see Patrick and Bryson.

The mayor said, “Who could do such a thing?”

Patrick said, “Brenda found some of the stuff. Then the security men found some. It was three of the former soldiers that worked out in field with Jessie and his sons and Max. Max worked in the washroom. His wife just finished school to be a teacher. They have three children. Now he is going to prison for twenty years.”

Gail said, “Stole that baby’s suckers while he was fighting for his life.”

Brenda nearly started crying.

Jake and the soldiers heard Patrick when he said, “It was three former soldiers.”

The soldiers still had to report it.

Jessie heard Patrick.

Ben said, “Did you get anything back?”

Gen was puzzled and stood looking blank.

Brenda looked at Gen.

Gail looked at Gen.

Gen said, “I want to know what they did with the live chickens?”

Ben said, “Gen why are you asking about live chickens?”

Gen said, “I want to know why the live chickens did not make noise. That could have told somebody where they were.”

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Charles were watching this scene unfold.

The doctors saw Gen was absolutely baffled.

Ben said, “Gen are you crazy. It did not make a difference to the chickens.”

Gen was baffled.

Gail was baffled.

Gen with a question mark on her face said, “Why?”

Gail said, “Why?”

Bryson said, “Gail I don’t believe you asked that question.”

The mayor was leaning forward listening to the conversation and he looked at Ben for an answer.

Dr. Woodson said, “This is getting stupider and stupider. Even the mayor is in that conversation.”

Lance and Hilary were setting at the table with the doctors.

They smirked but turned to listen.

Patrick sat and looked at Gen.

Ben said, “At the end of today they would have been on somebody grill.”

Gen walked away cussing and eating her chicken leg.

Gail looked at Ben like he was crazy and said, “And you called Gen crazy.”

Gail stood and ran behind Gen.

Ben shook his head and kept talking.

Brenda said, “Ben Gen question made sense.”

Bryson looked at Brenda and said, “You belong to Patrick I can’t say anything.”

Patrick wanted to laugh but he would not.

Brenda said, “Ben and Bryson they found the rest of the live chickens because they were in a box and pecking and clucking. They followed the sound.”

Brenda stood up and made the clocking and pecking sound and ran behind Gen and Gail.

Ben looked at Patrick who was laughing and said, “Patrick is that true?”

Patrick could not talk but nodded his head for yes.

Bryson said, “I be damn. I got to hear this from Gail all night and tomorrow.”

The mayor’s wife stood and walked away.

Patrick looked at her and went into his chest pocket and reached the mayor a pint of his favorite bourbon.

The mayor stood up and ran to Patrick and put the pint bottle in his coat pocket.

He said, “Hot diggity dog. Thank you.”

They all laughed.

Patrick said, “I did not think it was going to be here today. But I got it yesterday.”

The mayor said, “What Brenda said, Michael said this morning Amen and Amen?”

The mayor stopped and said, Last week there were trout fries all through the town.”

Patrick stopped laughing and said, “Don’t say that.”

Bryson turned his head and said, “I bought two of those fish plates for me and Gail.”

Patrick looked at Bryson who had his head turned.

The mayor said, “We did not know last week and you cannot hold us responsible for not telling you because you did not know until this week.”

Patrick said, “I know. I trust everyone around me.”

Bryson said, “You should have that was not a truth thirty years ago.”

Jessie and his sons came for the fireworks.
They stewed tomatoes, crowder peas, spiced corn and watermelon for their celebration. They were full and lying on the ground and eating ice cream.

One of Jessie’s sons grilled the meat and took it to a girlfriend.

Jose had ordered cater of the ice cream months in advance, the manager of the ice cream shop did not know it was Brenda’s celebration he was catering.

Jessie’s sons helped the manager load his wagon.

The manager and his children waited for the fireworks. They watched the fireworks then left and went home.

James Cooley and his family came for the fireworks.

Everyone congratulated Meredith and Felipe.

Felipe held Meredith and wrap his arms around her shoulders.

Meredith held onto Felipe’s arm.

Michael and Thomas had fallen asleep on Meredith’s lap.

Meredith was use to them sleeping on her lap after ten years.

Felipe watched the joy Meredith had from the boys sleeping on her lap.

Eleanor walked across to Meredith and she looked at Michael and Thomas.

Brenda was laughing and watching Eleanor trying to see who she can get to carry her two babies in the house.

Jake was watching Eleanor.

He finished eating his cake and looked at a hurt Gen who was staring at Jake.

He said, “Good cake.”

Gen went into a fit, shaking her legs.

Ben leaned back and peeped at Jake.

Jake walked to the barrel and put his dishes in it under the glare of Gen and Ben.

He snickered and walked to Eleanor and said, “Ma am are you trying to take them in the house?”

Eleanor said, “Yes. I need another person.”

Jake stooped down and picked both boys up and put them on each shoulder.

Meredith said, “This is Jake who saved Michael and Thomas.”

Felipe reached his hand to Jake and said, “I sincerely thank you.”

Jake shook Felipe’s hand and stood and walked to the house with Michael and Thomas.

Eleanor looked at Shirley’s earrings.

She opened the door for Jake.

He walked in the house with the boys on each shoulder.

Jose faked getting up to take the boys upstairs to their bedroom.

Jose, Dan, Peter and Mike were playing card and hid the cards when Eleanor walked in the house.

Jake looked at them and said to Jose, “Don’t bother yourself.”

Eleanor walked up the backstairs and walked to their bedrooms.

She pointed at one door and opened it and said, “Thomas.”

She helped put Thomas in bed.

She sat and looked at a sleeping Thomas.

Jake knew what Eleanor was thinking.

He said, “Michael’s room.”

Eleanor stood and walked to the next room and opened it.

Jake put Michael on the bed.

Eleanor helped put Michael in his bed.

Eleanor said, “Jake thank you very much. For everything.”

Jake looked at Eleanor and said, “You are welcomed.”

Jake turned and walked down the stairs and out the back door.

The photographer was finished for the night.

He stood and talked to Jake for a long time.

Jake away from the photographer.

Patrick watched the two men.

He wondered about Jake and Skip.

The mayor and his wife left right after eating.

They loved the two punch that Peter made.

Brenda said, “Peter better make the punch for our wedding anniversary ball or we will be fighting.”

Patrick knew Brenda was serious and he had to tell Patrick to make big bashes of the punch.

Louis and Gary were heating the water by the pulley system Eleanor put in the house while they were in Europe.

Louis and Gary took a tub of hot water to Eleanor.

Eleanor opened her safe and put Shirley’s earrings in the safe.

Eleanor put her bath milk in the tub she had Lorraine to make.

Eleanor went to the hot water area and got a pail of water and went to Thomas room.

She washed Thomas’ face, neck and ears.

She washed his hair and she washed his body and pulled off his dirty clothes.

Eleanor put Thomas on a clean nightshirt.

She eased the cover on him and stood and walked across the hall to the hot water room and disposal room and emptied the dirty water.

She stood and looked in the room.

She got a pail of clean and washed Michael and put him on a clean night shirt.

Eleanor walked through the house and checked the windows and doors.

She saw most of the house was clean.

She looked at the gifts Meredith and Felipe received.

She walked in the formal dining room.

The cakes and punch were moved to the kitchen.

The formal dining room was cleaned.

All the flowers were moved to the kitchen.

Many of the flowers were taken.

Eleanor took a long soak and put on her night clothes.

She heard Percy and Bruce running in the house.

She had hot baths put in their bedrooms.

Percy and Bruce bathed and put on their nightshirts and went to bed.

Gary and Louis emptied the tubs.

They watched Eleanor’s room.

Gary and Louis ran downstairs to the lower floor and played cards with Ben and Mike until late.

Dr. Greene and Debra stayed out until late and watched all the fireworks.

Barry was asleep across Debra’s lap.

Dr. Greene and Debra enjoyed the fireworks.

They looked around to see what they could help with.

The workers were organized.

There was no food left over.

They pulled the fire pits and the large containers of vegetables to the yard.

The workers cleaned the pots and the firepits so they would not have to do it the next day.

Patrick and Brenda and walked the picnic area and double checked everything with twenty workers.

Jose walked out to the picnic area and was talking to the man with the fireworks and paid him.

Jose had him to sign the contract.

Jose went to the ice cream man and paid him.

He looked around to find the singer and her sons.

He found her and paid her and her sons they were thrilled.

Jose had her to sign the contract.

Emilou was still running around trying to find someone to play with.

Nadine said, “Oh my God I forgot about the children. I have to take them home.

Jessie’s sons helped the singer put the piano and musical instruments on her wagon.

Patrick and Brenda were looking from the singer and her children to Nadine and her children.

Lance and Hilary were watching Alice and Steve.

Hilary stood from the table with Dr. Woodson and Dr. Charles and walked to Brenda.

Hilary said, “Brenda who are those young people.

Brenda said, “It’s sad. Three years ago one of Nadine’s niece and her husband died in a house fire. They had those three children. The oldest Steve was away in school. He is studying to be an engineer and architect.”

Patrick said, “He finished last month.”

Brenda said, “Alicia is going to school to be a nurse. She is really smart and will finish in two years. And you see Emilou. She is ten years old.”

Patrick said, “I think Alicia has been in school for two years and will finish in a year.”

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Hilary said, “I think nursing is only three years.”

Lance was still looking at Steve.

Nadine said, “Come on Emilou.”

Brenda said, “No Nadine. There are twenty bedrooms upstairs, take them inside.”

Nadine looked at Brenda.

Emilou was completely awake and wanted to play.

Dr. Greene said, “She had sugar.”

Shirley, Ginger and Mary sat at a picnic table and laughed.

Shirley was having a great time.

Dr. Woodson looked at Shirley in amazement.

Patrick said, “That’s solved. Where is she going with that piano and musical instruments?”

Jake and Skip stood to leave.

Gen was still pouting.

Jake walked over and kissed Gen’s hand.

Gen grinned and said, “Come to Sunday’s supper.”

Jake said, “I won’t be here. Maybe in a month.”

Gen said, “Where are you going?”

Ben said, “Gen he can’t tell you that.”

Jake walked back to his men.

The piano player said she lived by the new headquarters.

Jake said, “We can escort you home. Lets go.”

Skip walked to Shirley and said “I’m will be gone for a month. I will talk to you when I return.”

Shirley was surprised and invited him to Patrick and Brenda’s anniversary ball.

Skip said, “We will see.”

Gen walked to Shirley and said, “When they leave they leave at day break so they can travel through the day. It is really big to do.”

Shirley said, “I don’t know where the new headquarters is?”

Gen said, “You can ask Patrick or Jose.”

Ben said, “Gen what are you doing? Let’s go home.”

Skip left the house with the other soldiers.

The six soldiers escorted the woman and her sons and helped them take the instruments in the house.

Her sons were thrilled with the soldiers.

Skip, Jake and the four soldiers rode to the new headquarters.

Brenda and Patrick went into the house and Jose locked all the doors.

Felipe and Meredith were in their room.

Dr. Charles laid on his side and looked out the window until he fell asleep.

Debra and Dr. Greene put Barry in his bed.

They spent their married time together.

Dr. Woodson got on his knees and prayed.

Patrick and Brenda washed and dressed for bed.

They prayed.

Brenda said, “Dear LORD GOD I thought the devil was going to make this a day of evil. YOU changed it. You made it a glorious day in JESUS. We had a beautiful wedding. A beautiful reception and picnic and fireworks. YOU exposed our enemies. And allowed us to recover some of what we know were stolen. Please help us use wisdom in selecting the people who come into our home. With all of this evil always around us YOU give us joy and peace in JESUS. In giving us joy and peace YOU give us the victory in JESUS’ name. GOD you know YOUR plan. BUT I hate Bruce. I do not want him to ever be a part of this family.”

Brenda heard he has five children here.

Brenda said, “Patrick I am praying. I know Bruce has five children here.”

Brenda said, “Dear GOD thank YOU for showing us that Michael is to be over our companies. Let us grow and expand and give our children and grandchildren and great children to run the businesses YOU gave us in truth, honesty and integrity. If they cannot operate in YOUR principles of truth and righteousness, then close all the businesses and let no sinner have the businesses that you gave us. Let us live our lives in your presence to build to YOUR glory. In JESUS’ name Amen and Amen.”

Patrick and Brenda went to bed.

They held onto each other.

Patrick said, “Brenda I did not say anything when you said You know Bruce had five children here.”

Brenda said, “Patrick there are only two of us in this room.”

There was a knock on their door.

They looked at the clock and it was after ten pm.

Patrick got up and walked to the door.

Steve handed him a note.

Patrick said, “Thank you Steve.”

Brenda peeped into the sitting room.

Patrick closed and locked his door.

Steve ran all down the hall and up the stairs and went to Shirley’s room.

Patrick read the note and turned and looked at the door.

He shook his head and put the note on the credenza and walked back to the bedroom with Brenda.

Brenda was propped on her right elbow and watched Patrick as he laid in the bed.

She said, “Patrick are you going to tell me about that knock and the note?”

Patrick said, “No.”

Brenda jumped out of bed and went and got the note and read it and walked back into the bedroom and said, “Who does she…”

Brenda heard Patrick snoring.

She went and crawled in the bed next to Patrick and slept.

Steve, Alicia and Emilou played cards with Shirley until late.

They all went to bed and slept late.

Steve went to his room.

Alicia and Emilou shared a room.

Shirley got a knocked on her door at four thirty am.

Gary and Louis brought her a tub of hot water and closed her door.

Shirley sat on the edge of her bed.

Michael and Thomas heard Gary and Louis.

Michael was standing in his door peeping down the hall.

When Gary and Louis were dragging by Michael opened his door and said, “Gary why did you take water to Shirley?”

Gary said, “She wants to go to the military headquarters this morning and see the troop off.”

Michael said, “I want hot water too.”

Michael was jumping up in excitement.

Thomas opened his door.

Louis said, “You want water too?”

Thomas said, “What?”

Michael said, “We are going to see the troop leave.”

Thomas said, “We who?”

Michael said, “Shirley is going to see Skip off and I am going with her and she better not say no. I will go to momma.”

Gary was leaning on the wall and nearly fell.

Louis could barely stand up.

Louis ran and filled two tubs half full of hot bath water and said, “Bathe so I can pour that water out so I can go back to sleep.”

Louis dragged one of the half full tub of water to Thomas.

Gary dragged the other half full tub of water to Michael.

Thomas looked at the half full tub of water and then he raised his head and looked at Louis.

Louis looked at Thomas.

Thomas stood and looked at Louis.

Louis could not understand what Thomas look at him meant.

Louis thought, “This boy is calculating. He is deeply thinking about what is going to do.”

Thomas stared at Louis.

Louis walked out Thomas room and closed the door.

Michael looked at Gary and said, “No water?”

Gary said, “Michael bathed. You know how to wash your body. You don’t need a full tub of water. Bathe so I can empty that tub of water.”

Michael said, “So Gary you can back and sleep. That’s why you are telling me I can bath in that small amount of water.”

Gary was walking out Michael’s room and looked back as Michael was staring at him as he closed his door.

Gary laid his head on the wall and slept.

Gay went and sat on the steps next to a laid out Louis.

Louis was sitting on the top stair but had fallen on the floor and was asleep on the floor.

Percy and Bruce woke and ran to their doors.

They looked out their doors and saw Michael and Thomas.

They ran to Thomas and said, “What?”

Thomas said, “Shirley is going to see Skip off and we are going.”

Bruce said, “Suppose she doesn’t want you to go?”

Thomas said, “Then I will make her miss the troop leaving.”

Eleanor was standing at her door listening to her children.

When she heard how devious Thomas said his plan, she shook her head and said, “JESUS.”

Eleanor went back to bed and turned her back to the door to pretend she was sleep.

Lorraine’s voice kept coming back to her while she was trying to go to sleep ‘coward’.

Eleanor said, “I am going to sleep.”

Louis and Gary heard noise and cracked their eyes opened.

They saw Bruce and Percy talking to Thomas and Michael.

Percy said, “We bathed last night. We can wash this morning.”

Gary had one eye opened.

Percy and Bruce saw Louis sleeping on the floor and Gary leaning on the wall.

Percy said, “Gary. Me and Bruce need hot water to wash.”

Louis sat up and looked around, he turned and crawled to Thomas and dragged the tub out of Thomas room to the hot water room.

Thomas was not pleased and was thinking about going to Patrick.

Percy and Bruce stood and watched Gary crawl on the wall to get to the hot water room.

Bruce said, “I never want to drink what they had.”

Percy looked at Bruce and nodded his head for yes.

Louis was emptying Thomas tub of water.

Gary got two pails of water and gave one to Bruce and one to Percy.

Bruce and Percy stood in the hall with the hot water pails looking at Gary and Louis run down the stairs and out the house to the remodeled supply shed and went to sleep.

The boys washed and dressed.

Eleanor could not sleep.

She threw the cover off of her.

She could not force herself to go back to sleep.

She thought it is too early for anyone to be moving.

Eleanor was lying in the bed and saying. “Why am I awake. Why am I not sleepy. I can’t stand this. Hi Joseph. I believe you are with JESUS. I use to say all the time I want to come with you. I could not leave my children back here with Bruce and my old parents. Did you see Michael today. I hope you did. He was a little soldier. I enjoyed him and Thomas. Shirley was beautiful. If Shirley was born normal she would be beautiful and we would have a problem on our hands. I know this is not right, but who are you going to tell.”

Eleanor started laughing then she cried for Joseph.

She said, “I know that was mean. I wanted you to hurt like I hurt every day for you. I am alone and want you every day. I think Michael know that I long for you everyday. He hugs me often and lay on me. I want you to come back and appear to me and be with me. The vow did say to death do us part. Shirley was disappointed she did not become royalty. And speaking of royalty why is your mother trying to steal our money? You know I like money and I will fight her down to ground.”

A knock on Eleanor’s door.

Eleanor turned over and said, “Yes.”

Thomas opened her door and said, “Good morning we are going with Shirley to see Skip off. Can we have breakfast?”

Eleanor said, “Go and tell Lorraine.”

Thomas said, “They all have ‘Do not disturb’ signs on their doors.

Eleanor looked scared.

Thomas said, “You can do it momma.”

Eleanor thought, “No I can’t cook. I can’t cook food for my children. They are going to starve.”

Thomas said, “Momma I can cook. Come and watch me.”

Eleanor was frozen in fear.

Thomas walked in her room and took her arms and pulled her out of bed.

Eleanor looked at Thomas.

Thomas bent down and put her slippers on her feet.

He took her hands and pulled her off the bed.

It almost seemed as she heard Joseph laughed.

Eleanor looked around.

Thomas was pulling Eleanor to her door and said, “Why are you looking around momma. Look at me. I’m going to help you get through this.”

Eleanor followed Thomas downstairs to the kitchen.

Eleanor stood still in the middle of the floor.

Michael ran downstairs into the kitchen and grabbed Eleanor by her hips and hugged her.

Eleanor stood in the kitchen.

Thomas ran to their ice box and was looking in the icebox.

Michael went and tried to light the lights.

Peter said, “What is that noise?”

Nadine was stretching her eyes to wake up.

Peter yelled, Nobody better in my kitchen at this time of morning?”

Peter jumped out of bed and unlocked his door and put on his pants.

Nadine jumped up with her nightgown on and checked her nightgown and ran out the door behind Peter.

Thomas was so drunk he was rolling over his bed and sat up and fell back down.

He finally was able to get to his door.

Jose woke and said, “Are they stealing again.”

He continued hugging his pillow and went to sleep until he heard noise in the kitchen.

He was so drunk he went to bed fully dressed.

He looked at himself and shook his head.

He grabbed his gun from the dresser and ran out his door into the hall and ran into Thomas.

Thomas looked at Jose.

Jose pushed Thomas and said, “Move. Nobody want you.”

Peter and Nadine, Thomas and Jose ran into the kitchen.

A scared Eleanor, Thomas and Michael turned and looked at Jose with the gun.

Peter and Nadine who were angry and a drunk Thomas who fell asleep staying up.

Jose said, “What the hell are you doing?”

Eleanor, Michael and Thomas raised their hands up.

Peter and Nadine looked at them.

Peter said, “What are you doing in my kitchen making up all this noise?”

Bruce and Percy were standing at the top of the backstairs and watched.

Thomas said, “We want breakfast.”

Peter said, “It is not five am. Why are you up?”

Thomas said, “We are going to see the troop off.”

Nadine fell into Peter and had one elbow on his shoulder and covered her eyes with her hand.

She could not believe they were up.

Jose turned and went back to his room and closed and locked his door.

He put his gun back on the dresser and pulled off his shoes and pants and shirt and climbed back in bed.

Percy and Bruce watched Jose.

Then Thomas slide along the wall to get back to his room.

He stumbled across the hall to his room and closed his door and he fell across his bed and slept to late morning.

Jose slept until around eight am.

He got up and bathed and shaved and looked at his gun and wondered how it got on the dresser and not it’s place on his night stand.

Nadine said, “There’s no food, we have to go in the chicken coop to get eggs, we have to go and get the wheat and grind it in the mill to make flour to make biscuits. We have to grind the corn to make grits and we have to go to the smoke house and see if any meat is cured and grind it to make sausages.”

Thomas said, “You are not doing it because?”

Percy and Bruce ran back to their rooms.

Michael peeped around Eleanor and looked at Thomas.

Eleanor looked at Thomas.

Thomas had a stern look on his face.

Eleanor and Michael put their hands down.

Nadine and Peter looked at Thomas.

Eleanor said, “Thomas Nadine is saying it takes them hours to make our breakfasts. We can work on this tomorrow.”

Peter said, “There are two really good diners by the New military headquarters. They were built to accommodate the soldiers.”

Nadine said, “Both are good and they are opened now, because all of these het up early and prepare breakfasts. That all one of the restaurants do. I always get the corn beef hash, grits, eggs and a biscuit.”

Thomas said, “Why do I want to go to a diner…”

Thomas shook as if it were uncleaned and continued, “…when I have all the food here?”

Eleanor and Michael slowly looked at Nadine and Peter.

Nadine said, “If we prepare the food now, you will miss the troop leaving.”

Thomas said, “Why did not you say that?”

Eleanor said, “God help Thomas. He is really mean.”

Shirley was walking down the backstairs and she walked in the kitchen and looked at everybody.

Nadine and Peter walked back to their room and locked their door.

Shirley looked at everybody.

Everybody looked at Shirley.

Patrick walked through the billiards room and saw Shirley standing in the hallway next to the kitchen.

He walked to Shirley and saw her standing and looking.

He looked and saw Eleanor, Thomas and Michael.

He looked at them.

Michael yelled, “Grandpa!”

He ran to Patrick and hugged him.

Patrick hugged Michael and said, “Why are you all up and dressed?”

Thomas said, “We are going to see Skip off…”

He peeped around Patrick and said, “…We wanted breakfast, but they refused to cook us breakfast!”

Patrick said, “It’s too early Thomas. It takes them hours to prepare and cook our breakfast. There are some diners near the military headquarters we can go to one of them to eat or come home to eat.”

Thomas started jumping in the middle of the floor. Because he wanted to eat.

Shirley said, “Who said you are going Thomas and Michael?”

Percy and Bruce ran out of their rooms and down the stairs to the kitchen.

Patrick said, “You two are going to?”

Shirley said, “I don’t want them to go.”

Eleanor said, “How did you know about the troop leaving today Shirley?”

Shirley said, “Skip told me yesterday.”

Eleanor said, “Did he tell you to come and see him off?”

Patrick looked at Shirley.

Shirley was embarrassed and said, “No.”

Eleanor said, “I have had enough. They got me up. They are going with you. There is no food ready. Eat out or wait to lunch. Thomas tomorrow you are going with whoever is cooking breakfast and see what they do.”

Thomas stopped having a fit about breakfast and looked at Eleanor like she had lost her mind and said, “Momma I don’t need to get up with them and go to work with them. I’ll wait until breakfast is cooked.”

Patrick said, “Let’s go.”

Shirley folded her arms and said, “I’m not going.”

Percy said, “Good. I am going to sit up front with you grandpa.”

Patrick said, “You got me up this early. Come on boys.”

Shirley ran to the backdoor.

Gary had the horses and the carriage by the backdoor.

They all loaded in the carriage.

The boys were excited and waved at Eleanor.

She grinned and waved at her family and closed and locked the backdoor.

She turned to walk upstairs and said, “God that is a mess.”

Patrick made it there just as the day was breaking.

Many people were out to start their day.

Some spent the Fourth of July in town with their families before they left on detail.

On the way to the new headquarters they saw one of the diners that was opened and filled with customers.

Thomas shook his head for disgusting.

Patrick saw Thomas and said, “Thomas what’s wrong?”

Thomas said, “It’s not clean.”

The streets were crowded.

The people were talking and being joyful.

Patrick was looking at the people.

Shirley was leaning forward and looking at the people and she was getting excited.

There was a crowd of people on both sides of the street.

A military man walked out of the yard to the edge of the roadway to stop traffic.

Patrick pulled the carriage over to the side of the street.

Shirley sat up straight in her seat and tried to primp.

She looked in her bag and pulled out her mirror and looked at her face and then her side of her flatten face and her eye.

She quickly put her mirror back in her bag.

Patrick watched Shirley.

He knew Shirley longed to be normal.

Patrick thought, “GOD there is nothing I can do. YOU know where she needs help. Only YOU can go into those dark crevices of her soul and let YOUR light shine in her heart and soul.”

There was a sound of a horn.

Michael, Thomas, Percy and Bruce jumped out the carriage and stood at the edge of the street so they see.

The daylight had come and they could see well.

Then they heard thunder.

Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael jumped and became scared and looked at each other.

Michael and Thomas hollered.

Patrick was afraid and was looking around.

Shirley did not know what to do. She jumped and said, “Grandpa?”

Patrick was looking around for how to escape through all those horses.

They looked up and saw the soldiers carrying the flags and blowing the horn.

The crowds of people went wild and cheering the troop on.

Patrick turned and watched.

He and Shirley looked at each other still in fear.

They tried to smile and wave and clap with the people.

Patrick was thinking, “GOD. I was scared. I said I would never be trapped like that time in the coal mine. I was glad when my daddy sold that coal mine.”

The lead soldiers followed.

Then the troop.

The sound of the horses were enough to scare anybody.

Michael and Thomas saw Jake and Skip riding around the bend next to each other.

Michael and Thomas saluted the soldiers.

When they saw Skip and Jake they started shouting their names.

Skip looked and saw them and winked his eye.

He also winked his eye at Shirley.

Patrick saw Skip wink his eye at Shirley.

He continued to clapped with all the other people.

Percy and Bruce were saluting the soldiers until all of them passed.

The supply wagons were the last to exit the headquarters.

The people were waving flags and shouting.

The military man walked out the road back to the headquarters.

Patrick looked at the new building and saw all the commanders standing on the balcony of the building watching the troops leave.

Patrick thought, “Impressive.”

Patrick looked at a grinning Shirley and said, “We never have to do this again.”

Shirley half way grinned because she was happy to see Skip but the sound of the horses were dreadful.

Patrick said, “Can you imagine the noise on the battlefields a few years ago?”

Shirley was still shaking from the sound of thunder.

Patrick looked at Shirley and reached over and touched Shirley’s hand.

Patrick said, “Whoa. Boys get in the carriage and lets go home.”

Percy and Bruce saw the boy from the train.

They ran to him and were talking.

Patrick recognized the boy. He looked around for the woman.

He saw the woman looking straight at him.

He moved his thigh to feel the gun on his thigh.

Shirley whispered and said, “You don’t like them grandpa?”

Patrick said, “No. I don’t Shirley.”

Shirley was looking at the woman and the man and said, “Is it because grandma is black?”

Patrick said, “Yes. Call your brothers.”

Shirley yelled and said, “Percy, Bruce, Michael and Thomas come now.”

Patrick said, “Shirley I could have done that. You got the rest of the people looking at us.”

Michael and Thomas jumped in the wagon.

Thomas said, “Shirley are you alright?”

Shirley was messing with her bag.

She very pleasantly said, “Yes, why Thomas.”

Thomas said, “You better never yelled at us like that again unless somebody is in danger.”

Percy and Bruce climbed in the carriage.

Bruce said, “Shirley!!”

Thomas said, “I already told Shirley never to yell at us again.”

Michael was quiet.

Patrick watched Michael.

Percy said, “Our classmate said they are going across the street to eat breakfast.”

Patrick said, “See that line of people it would be lunch time if we got in.”

Thomas said, “I say let’s go home.”

Patrick said, “Ok.”

Michael said, “Shirley why did you yell for us to come?”

Shirley said, “Grandpa told me to call you.”

Patrick said, “Not like that.”

Michael said, “Why grandpa did you tell Shirley to call us?”

Bruce said, “Because you don’t like that lady grandpa?”

Patrick said, “Yes. How did you know Bruce?”

Bruce said, “I saw her watching grandma on the train.”

Michael said, “We have to come up with a secret way to let the others know there is danger or someone we don’t like.”

Michael said, “Grandpa I am hungry.”

Thomas said, “We are not stopping until we get home.”

Percy and Shirley yelled, “Thomas you don’t tell no one what to do.”

They were about to pass the restaurant and Michael started whining.

Patrick thought, “These boys are in military academy and they all whine.”

Patrick pulled up in front of the diner.

The large crowd of people were gone.

Patrick said, “I’ll go and look around.”

Michael and Thomas jumped out behind Patrick and went inside.

Patrick was looking around and a familiar voice said, “Good morning.”

Thomas and Michael turned and looked and ran and jumped in Robert’s arms.

Patrick said, “This is where you are?”

He hugged Thomas and Michael and said, “I heard you took care of some trouble.”

Thomas and Michael looked sad.

Robert said, “I did not mean to make you sad.”

Bethany walked out the kitchen with a few plates.

She saw Patrick started grinning.

Patrick laughed.

Robert was grinning and said, “Bethany serve our guests.”

Bethany hurried and serve the guests and ran over and kissed Thomas and Michael and was about to cry.

Robert shook his head at Bethany.

She hugged Patrick.

Patrick said, “We came to see the troop off and we did not eat breakfast this morning.”

Robert said, “Come and sit we have a table for three.”

Thomas said, “It’s six.”

Patrick said, “Eleanor’s five children and me.”

Patrick looked around at the nice diner.

He said, “Thomas go to the carriage and tell the others to come in.”

Patrick stood back and watched Thomas.

Robert looked at Patrick and saw Patrick had on his gun.

Robert and Bethany keep up with everyone when Peter and Nadine come in the diner on their off days and talk with them.

Thomas ran back in the diner.

Percy and Bruce helped Shirley out the carriage.

Percy, Bruce and Shirley walked into the diner.

Bethany and Robert saw a miracle before their eyes.

Shirley was grinning and they all hugged Robert and Bethany.

Robert said, “Come and sit. The diner is about to get full.”

Patrick looked and saw all the people crossing the street.

Robert said, “Bethany get Michael two lamb chops, a biscuit, grits and one scramble egg. Three pancakes with peaches and whipped cream and one scramble egg each and three strips of bacon each.”

Robert looked at Patrick and Shirley.

Patrick looked at Shirley and said a scramble egg, grits and a biscuit for Shirley and the same for me.”

Robert hurried them to a big table and they sat and enjoyed the morning hours with Robert and Bethany.

Patrick said, “What did you do? You came from Philadelphia and disappeared.”

Robert said, “We came from Philadelphia and stayed for a few days in the remodeled shed, went and got our marriage license, married. Bethany had our son earlier this year. I put all my savings in buying this place. We live upstairs until we turn a profit and buy our home.”

Bethany said, “Life is good. We only work part day until noon. We clean and mopped and lock up it is near three and prepare everything for the next day it is about five. I go back and forth to check on Robert Jr. He is going to be the only child.”

Patrick said, “Why, he needs a playmate.”

Bethany said, “Robert is an older man and I will need help raising this child.”

They enjoyed their morning with Robert and Bethany.

Bethany went upstairs and brought their son downstairs to meet Patrick.

He was a handsome baby.

Patrick looked at the children playing with Robert Jr.

Robert watched Patrick.

Patrick said, “Robert, was Bruce abusive to the children and to you workers?”

Robert said, “Yes. I needed a job therefore I stayed until it got really bad. I saved every penny. I did not use my money to buy my own shaving cream. I knew I would leave his employment and I need to figure out what I would do and I decided to marry Bethany. I needed to take care of her. I hate Bruce, he was crazy and complained about everything.”

Robert stopped talking when the children came back.

Patrick said, “I will tell everyone I saw you and Bethany and your handsome baby boy. I think they kept tabs on the boys and girls. Brenda tries to keep tabs on the former workers. Take care.”

Patrick and the children rode home after lunch.

They were so excited and talked all the way home.

Michael said, “Grandpa why did you tell Robert to give one lamb chop? He knew momma had started that with him.”

Patrick said, “Michael you have to be discipline if you are going to run my businesses.”

Michael said, “But I love lamb chops.”

They arrived home near one pm.

Gary was still asleep.

Louis was asleep.

Denise slept at the Stith’s rest stop and would not come back until that night.

Everyone in the house was sleep until lunch.

Barry woke and ran through the house to play.

Nadine, took Steve, Emilou and Alicia home.

Nadine checked their house and stayed and helped clean and wash their clothes.

Nadine cooked the chickens from her meat bag and made cabbage, cornbread and steamed corm.

Nadine said, “This should last for two days.”

Peter and Nadine slept until seven am and got up along with most of the staff and started their day.

When Patrick and the children returned from seeing the troops off, Dr. Greene and Debra were walking Barry outside.

Dr. Charles was sending a very long telegram to his cousin about Adeline. That and she was on her way back to Paris and should arrive in six weeks.

Dr. Woodson was visiting Gen and Ben and giving them therapy before he left the next day.

He would give Patrick, Shirley and Brenda their therapy when he returned.

He had packed his clothes and cleared his room.

He enjoyed the train ride. It took three days and that gave him time to read medical books and articles.

He liked the first class accommodations Patrick and Brenda provided them.

Felipe and Meredith were still in their room.

Jose was up and looking in the storage area.

He decided they need to put a tent in the backyard and put everything from the storage area in the tent for that week.

He needed the floor to be waxed.

Jose located pictures of Patrick’s mother and father, Percy and Shirley.

Jose was having everything for Patrick and Brenda’s anniversary ball catered but the punch and the cake.

Mabel would come back and do the decorations in red flowers.

Jose spent two hours in the storage area.

He walked through the house and found Brenda.

Brenda slept late and was in her study working on Joseph’s mother scheme.

Patrick told Bryson and Gen about the letters from Europe.

Bryson did not say anything.

Gen said, “Give me some time and I will get back to you.”

Gen and Patrick looked at Bryson.

Bryson was deep in thought.

Gen looked at Patrick and walked back to the reception and got a large piece of cake for she and Ben.

Mag talked to Patrick and said she, Josiah and Natalie would go to the town and see whether it is a place she wants to live.

When she returns, she would let Patrick know if she would move to the country town to be the manager of his railroad.

Josiah talked to Patrick and said he agreed Mag needed to be busy until she got peace from his father’s death. And he said, the best thing is for to stay busy.

Thomas had prepared a fancy going away dinner.

Jose had four carriages to take the guests to the railroad the next day.

Brenda agreed to work in the office for the next week to give Mag a chance to see the town.

Brenda thought that would give her a chance to get use to not being at home all the time.

She was busy in Europe.

Brenda thought, “It has been a busy month. Then next month is my anniversary ball. Then the next month, my babies go to the military academy and Shirley go to Philadelphia to school. She will be at the hospital if she needs to go.”

Jose knocked on Brenda’s door and said, “I need for you to look at the storage area.”

Brenda was standing behind her desk.

She left everything on her desk and walked with Jose to the storage area.

They decided on the sitting arrangement

All the workers were invited.

Jose asked the security man to do the photographs.

Jose and Brenda completed the menu.

Jose anted a simple menu.

Brenda decided Cornish hens and duck a l’orange, wild rice with pecans and French green beans and carrots and assorted rolls, coffee tea and the Peter’s punch.

Jose sent a telegram to order the liquor to give every guests’ as a gift from Patrick and Brenda.

Jose said, he received the small boxes to put the anniversary cake in.

Brenda told Jose for their overnight guests to use the suites by she and Patrick. She did not want the guests upstairs.

Jose knew Brenda was shaken with the kidnapping and attempted murder of her grandchildren. And she did not want anyone that close to them again.

Jose said, “We have no washroom workers.”

Brenda said, “Pay overtime. I am shaken about hiring people right now. I have to have time to select people to be in my home.”

Jose, “I’ll put a notice up for the workers and the laundry.”

Brenda decided on the china and crystal to be used for the ball.

Jose told her he received some RSVPs.

He said, “Ellen and Captain Moss, her sister Beverly and Dr. Alfred, Mag, The Mc Clendons, both governors and their wives, the mayor and his wife, Gen and Ben.

Brenda said she wanted several musicians and one to the woman and her three sons.

Brenda said, “Arrange for she and her sons to stay here for the night”

Brenda heard her grandchildren run in the house.

They were chattering with excitement.

She heard Shirley laughed.

Peter said, “In a better mood.”

Shirley said, “That was Thomas. “

Thomas looked at Shirley.

Patrick watched Thomas.

Patrick said, “GOD that boy has a bad mean streak. I ask YOU to deliver him from that.”

Michael ran into the kitchen and said, “We saw Robert and Bethany and their baby.”

Thomas looked at Shirley.

Shirley watched Thomas as he walked into the kitchen.

Thomas was awake and had slept over his drunkenness and looked at Thomas.

Patrick watched Shirley and Thomas.

Brenda walked out the storage area too see her grandchildren.

Jose walked behind her and closed the door.

Percy and Bruce saw Brenda and Jose standing in the storage area doorway and they ran to Brenda and said, “Hey grandma.”

Jose said, “Don’t come that early asking for breakfast.”

Brenda said, “What?”

Bruce said, “That wasn’t us that was Thomas.”

Eleanor was finally moving and rolled over and heard the little voices.

She smiled because she knew it was her children returning with their grandpa.

Peter said, “How did you see Robert and Bethany?”

Michael said, “We went to their diner. The food was good.”

Thomas did not say anything.

Nadine said, “Thomas you did not like the food?”

Thomas said, “The food was fine.”

Michael said, “Thomas does not like anything that is not clean.”

Nadine said, “I know the diner is clean. I taught Bethany myself.”

Patrick was listening.

Brenda walked with Bruce and Percy back to the kitchen where Shirley and Patrick were standing.

Brenda started listening.

Brenda listened to the conversation and Jose passed them and went into the kitchen to work on the schedule for the next three weeks.

Jose said, “Mrs. Stith most of the workers won’t be attending the anniversary ball?”

Nadine looked and Ruth looked at Jose.

Brenda said, “Why?”

Dan was staring at Jose.

Jose looked up and saw the twelve people in the kitchen staring at him.

Brenda looked at Jose.

Patrick said, “Ruth why you all don’t want to attend our anniversary ball?”

Eleanor was standing at the top of the stairs listening but getting upset that no one wanted to attend her parents’ anniversary ball.

Everyone looked at Ruth.

Ruth said, “Why is everybody watching me.”

Patrick said firmly, “I want an answer.”

Eleanor walked down the stairs and walked behind Bruce and Percy.

Bruce looked back and saw Eleanor and hugged her and said, “Hi momma.”

Eleanor kissed Bruce o his head and smiled.

Ruth said, “We feel we are out of place. You are to have a fancy ball with your friends and family.”

Patrick said, “You don’t think you are a part of this family?”

Patrick did not wait for her answer he turned and walked out the kitchen.

Michael and Thomas were looking at Ruth.

They heard Patrick walk away.

They looked back and saw Patrick walking away.

They ran behind him.

Eleanor said, “You all were at the picnic celebration yesterday.”

Nadine shook her head and said, “Yeah that was different.”

Brenda said, “How was that different?”

Nadine said, “It was casual. We could eat with a fingers.”

Ruth said, “Or with the wrong fork.”

Brenda said, “You are stupid.”

Brenda walked away.

Eleanor said, “You better get your asses together. Their anniversary ball is in three weeks. If you don’t come to it, don’t come back here to work. How many people you ever heard invited all their workers to their ball as guests and not servants.”

Shirley, Percy and Bruce were watching the employees.

Ruth said, “How are we going to buy such a fancy dress?”

Eleanor was angry.

She said, “You gamble and do whatever you do to come up with money you need. And Nadine you sew masterfully.”

Nadine stood and did not say anything.

Eleanor was angry and said, “I have given all of you my final answer.”

Eleanor looked at them and waked out.

Shirley and Percy and Bruce stood and looked at the workers.

Jose turned and was looking at Eleanor.

Shirley, Percy and Bruce walked out the hallway and followed Eleanor.

The security men were in the worker area going over the inventory of what they recovered.

Thomas said, “Jose I am going to kick your ass.”

Jose said, “You mean kiss it.”

Thomas jumped off his stool.

The security man that was leaving to be a minister was standing in the doorway to the hall by the kitchen.

He ran and stand between Jose and Thomas.

Dan said, ‘Yall we have to do better.”

Nadine and Ruth said, “You just came back from Europe.”

Dan said, “What does that have to do with you being invited to a ball. Do you hear me ball. How many of you go to a function. None of you go to church where you socialize. None of you have social skills.”

Nadine said, “What does that mean.”

Ruth said, “That we are just above animals.”

Dan said, “That is not necessarily true.”

Peter said, “Dan you think that. That’s why you only come around at the last minute before you work.”

Leon and the other security men walked in the kitchen to hear this big brawl with the workers.

Vivienne walked out her room and walked in the kitchen.

The three new dish washers were males and they looked at the other workers.

Vivienne said, “Ruth stop. That takes a lot courage and strength in Patrick and Brenda convictions that their employees are on the same level with them. They opened their homes to us. They trained us how to work here and be a part of their family. They have never mistreated me or talked to me any kind of way. I took the invitation and put it my drawer, not that it was unimportant. It was like a sign to me that God was changing my life’s course. I am going to the ball. I went to a second hand shop and found a simple dress. I will add little things to the dress or I may not. I am going to the ball.”

Ruth said, “All right cinder princess.”

Ruth and Nadine nearly hit the floor laughing.

Lorraine stepped in the kitchen and said, “I don’t understand why none of you did not RSVP. You kept the invitations and acted like you were going to the ball. That was evil Ruth and Nadine you should know better…”

Peter said, “There she goes calling us animals.”

Dr. Charles was sitting at Patrick’s desk writing his long telegram and his letter to his cousin who he left a power of attorney with.

His cousin is the family’s lawyer. He told his cousin all of Adeline’s doing and confessions. He told his cousin to box up all his house and put Adeline’s things separately and keep them until she signs the divorce paper and put her no alimony in the divorce because she got enough from him for Felipe. Put his house up for rent. All his bank accounts are closed. Once she signs her part of the divorce papers then he would come back to Paris to sig his part.

Patrick and Thomas and Michael walked into Patrick’s office.

Dr. Charles stopped writing and said, “Good afternoon. Mrs. Stith said I could sit in here and send a telegram to my lawyer.”

Michael said, “I’m going to be the family’s lawyer.”

Dr. Charles stood to move from Patrick’s desk.

Patrick said, “We have no secrets. You can sit and finish your communication. Do you need me to send it or do you know how?”

Dr. Charles, “I think I do., but I prefer you the expert to. What’s all the chattering about?”

Michael said, “Grandpa and grandma invited the workers to their anniversary ball and the workers said they don’t want to come.”

Dr. Charles was shifting the papers in his hand and shook his head.

He said, “Michael all the doctors at the bone hospital and even Ryan are expecting you to become a doctor.”

Michael frowned and said, “Who told them that? I want to take care of my so I won’t have to trust people like these workers.”

Patrick was upset.

He walked to his desk.

Dr. Charles reached the paper to Patrick.

Dr. Charles said, “Thank you.”

He looked and saw an angry Brenda walked in Patrick’s office and sat on the sofa.

Dr. Charles looked at Brenda and walked out and went through the billiards room to the back hall and then into the kitchen hallway.

He stood on the other side of the hall and listened.

The security men watched him.

Lorraine continued, “… I am not going to say to you what Patrick and Eleanor did for some of you. You hate them that much that you whether let them be here with an empty ball. To hurt them and embarrass them…”

Peter said, “Lorraine nobody hates Brenda and Patrick.”

Lorraine said, “… None of you are better than Max and the former soldiers. At least they stole in the open. I am going to the ball. Not that I can steal as much liquor that I can carry, but I want to celebrate with this couple who was put together by GOD to help you. No it has not been perfect. I want you to point out a perfect person. There is only one that is perfect and HE does not know you. I don’t want to be friends any more with you. You hurt Patrick and Brenda you hurt me.”

Lorraine turned and walked out the kitchen.

Harriet said, “Well you know I received the invitation and I did put it in my drawer and forgot about it. But I will be attending the ball.”

Dr. Charles stepped around to see who was talking.

One of the three dish washers said, “We will be working washing all of the dishes. That’s why we are not coming, but our girlfriends are coming.”

Leon was listening.

He was watching Lorraine stomp up the backstairs and enter a room at the top of the stairs.

Nadine said, “Now everyone thinks we hate Patrick and Brenda.”

She looked around at several more maids who heard it was a big mess.

There were thirty people in the kitchen.

Mellissa said, “How in the hell did you all have the right to tell Patrick and Brenda that the rest of us were not going to their anniversary ball?”

Sharon said, “I have been sewing my dress for weeks and the cape. I worked overtime to buy me a pair of shoes and hair bows.”

Rita said, “You all are always keeping up shit. I love my job. Patrick and Brenda were in town three years ago and in a downpour they saw me and my son sliding under the porch at the meat processing shop they and came and got us and brought us here. I stayed in this house until I was able to get me a little house for me and my son. My son will be going to college in the fall to be a minister. And guess who paid for him to go to college for four years and he doesn’t have to pay a penny…”

Rita was crying.

Michael and Thomas ran behind Dr. Charles and they stood in the hall and heard the employees.

Leon looked at Michael and Thomas and watched Rita.

Rita continued, “… Guess who paid for him to go to college? Guess who Ruth? Guess who Nadine? I know Patrick and Brenda would not let you buy any house. God put the perfect house on the market in a perfect neighborhood and they bought the house for you and gave you the deed for you and Peter’s wedding gift. And you hate them.”

Peter said, “I do not hate them. I don’t have that type of class. I can’t function on that level of society!!”

Brenda was walking through the back hall to curse them out and fire them.

Dr. Charles held his hand out for Brenda to stop and listen.

Leon watched Brenda.

Rodney said, “You act like you were raised by animals. You don’t know how to dress but wear the uniforms. You don’t know how to try to raise yourself up out of being an animal to be a human.”

Steve said, “Nadine I am truly disappointed with you. How can you help Steve, Alicia and Emilou when you have no manners. All you know to do is to sit and pick up a fork and eat. I watch you all the time. You won’t even eat soup or stew because you don’t know how to eat with a spoon.”

Nadine was shocked she was discovered.

Steve continued and said, “You went and got Steve and Alicia to work here for two days to help out. That boy has just finished with two hard as hell degrees and you said nothing to us. Like he did not accomplish nothing. You don’t know how to celebrate. Who paid for that boy to go to school for the past two years when he would come out and work in the fields, because you did not have any sense to save him…”

Steve hit down on the counter and pointed at himself, “… I went to Patrick and Brenda and took out a personal loan for him and Alicia so they could continue to get an education, so they won’t be noboby servants. You know why I did it Nadine?”

Nadine stood and cried.

Steve said, “I did not know your niece but she died in a house fire to save her children so they could live Nadine. And not be under someone’s feet and being homeless and being sexually abused or physically abused…”

Rita yelled and said, “Sleeping in mud under porches next to dogs.”

The security men peeped around at Rita.

Steve said, “Nadine I watched those kids they have more class and manners than you will ever have. I saw Patrick and Brenda hand Steve a gift yesterday, when they found out he finished school with two hard degrees. Damn you Nadine.”

Steve hit the kitchen counter and walked back through the formal dining room.

Rodney said, “Me and my wife will be here. This has been my home for twelve years. I was just released from the state mental hospital and no one not only did not want to have anything to do with me, they did not want to hire me. Patrick saw me one day sitting and playing in some dirt and hired me to work in his stables. I paint pictures and sell them on the side and at museums. I met my wife six years ago. I will be at the ball, to share their anniversary. I want to show them I appreciate that God put them in my life to help me and to help them. No body is perfect but those of us who accepted JESUS as the Christ. And we work daily to be like HIM.”

Rodney walked through the kitchen and out the backdoor as Thomas and Michael’s eyes followed him.

Brenda and listened.

Ruth said, “You all are mad with some of us. You have the right to mad. We all love Patrick and Brenda. But we fear to grow.”

Danielle said, “Ruth that is an ignorant reason not to grow. I am going to Patrick and Brenda’s anniversary ball. Maybe I can find my true love at the ball. Maybe I will be a cinder princess too.”

Danielle said, “Come on yall lets finish our job we are being paid to do.”

Wanda said, “Now yall got Eleanor mad saying if we don’t go to the ball she will fire us. And we were playing on going anyway to look for men.”

Michael raised his hand.

Wanda said, “Not you baby.”

Jose said, “Patrick and Brenda know you don’t have social skills. Brenda arrange everything to be simple. From the food to the seating arrangement to the beverages and the music.”

Jose just shook his head.

Adam said, “Stupid. I would not want them at my ball anyway.”

The other employees waked back through the house to finish their jobs.

Leon looked at Brenda.

The security man who was leaving to go and be a minister said, “Where the lady went that said she and her son slept under the porch in the mud?”

Leon was shocked and looked at him and nodded.

The security man looked and saw Brenda standing.

Jose said, “Rita she gets off at three pm.”

Dr. Charles caught Michael by his head and he caught Thomas by his head and walked them to Brenda.

They walked through the house to Patrick’s office.

They walked in Patrick’s office.

Dr. Charles pointed to the office’s door.

Patrick looked and nodded for yes.

Dr. Charles closed the office door and he looked at Patrick.

Thomas and Michael ran to Patrick and was looking at the telegram machine.

Dr. Charles said, “I stood and listened to your employees.”

Michael said, “Grandpa I did not know what they were saying.”

Patrick looked at Michael and then he looked at Brenda shaking her head.

Dr. Charles said, “What it is some of your workers don’t want to get out of their normal.”

Michael said, “Dan called them animal.”

Thomas said, “He said they were raised by animal.”

Michael said, “What is the difference?”

Dr. Charles said, “They don’t want to overstep that social boundary. The others were saying you all treat them like family. I know you two are angry, but it is only a few that said they won’t come.”

Thomas said, “Those women said they coming to find a man and Michael raised his hand.”

Patrick said, “I would not want you to marry any of them.”

Brenda sat and shook her head.

She said, “You know Steve asked us for that personal loan two years and we gave it to him?”

Dr. Charles said, “Oh yes.”

Brenda looked at Dr. Charles.

Brenda said, “He said he used it to pay for Nadine’s nephew to finish college in architect and engineering and paid for Alicia to go to school.”

Patrick said, “He did not know he graduated from school until he told us yesterday at breakfast.”

Brenda was shaking her head and said, “Just ignorant. I don’t want them at the ball.”

Patrick said, “Some people you just can’t help.”

Brenda said, “I see that now. I still want to invite Robert and Bethany. They will say no. But I want to invite them.”

Patrick said, “That is up to you.”

He looked at the telegram machine and said, “Charles I sent it and nothing is happening.”

Charles said, “I am sure it is taking a little more time. May get a drink?”

Patrick frowned up and said, “Of course.”

Charles said, “May I get you drinks?”

Michael said, “Yes. The one momma drinks all the time when she had a bad day.”

Michael had his elbows on his granddaddy desk looking at the telegram machine to start.

Patrick looked at this ten year boy saying he needed a drink.

Thomas said, “I want the one the mayor like to drink. ‘Hot diggity dog’.”

Brenda’s mouth opened.

Patrick said, ”Whiskey for me and Brenda…”

He looked at Brenda.

She said, “Sherry.”

Michael yelled, “That’s it.”

Brenda stood and hit Michael on his butt.

Michael said, “Oh grandma that hurts.”

Brenda said, “You don’t drink. If you want something to drink I have lemon water through out the house.”

Michael said, “No thanks.”

Thomas said, “No thanks.”

Brenda walked out the door with Dr. Charles.

She said, “You will need an extra hand.”

Thomas said, “Come back grandma so we can tell you about the troop this morning.”

Brenda said, “I’ll be back hold on.”

She walked down the hall with Dr. Charles and they passed some of the workers.

Brenda acted normal.

They walked to the liquor and poured their drinks.

Dr. Charles stood and looked out the front door and said that is really a nice scene.

Brenda poured some sherry and drank a big swallow and poured a lot.

Dr. Charles looked at her.

Brenda said, “Don’t you give me that look. I am not Gen. I am old enough to be your mother. I will hit you like I did Michael.”

Dr. Charles leaned over and kissed Brenda on her cheek.

She had she and Patrick’s drinks in her hands and they walked down the hall to Patrick’s office.

Brenda gave Patrick his drink.

Michael said, “Grandma sit down and let us tell you about the troop.”

Dr. Charles was standing.

Brenda said, “Wait a minute let me sit.”

Michael walked over to help her sit.

Thomas started explaining the thunder of the horses.

Patrick said, “It had me scared.”

Brenda looked at Patrick and saw he was really scared.

Michael said, “Grandpa you were scared?”

Patrick said, “Yeap.”

The telegram started.

Michael ran back to Patrick’s desk and looked at the telegram machine.

Thomas was sitting on Patrick’s desk looking at the telegram machine.

Brenda was thinking.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

He knew she was angry and want revenge.

Patrick said, “We need to pray Brenda. You are letting the devil get a strong hold on your mind.”

Brenda sipped her sherry.

Dr. Charles looked at Brenda and said, “Maybe if I would have prayed it could have saved my marriage.”

Patrick said, “Nall that was doomed. GOD just brought it to an end. To set you free. You are not old that you can find a good Christian woman who could give you an heir.”

Brenda was sipping her sherry and looking at Dr. Charles.

She said, “You found one.”

Patrick said, “Here?”

Patrick reached Dr. Charles the telegram.

Michael took the telegram and reached it to Dr. Charles.

Dr. Charles looked at Patrick and then Brenda.

He was walking out the office.

Patrick said, “I hope it’s not of these.”

Brenda stared at Charles and said, “Dinner is at six pm. Dress sir.”

Steve told Nadine he had to go to a major city to get work.

Nadine was sad and scared.

She new she had to pay his bills, but she was scared for Alicia and Emilou to be there on there by themselves.

Brenda changed the ball time from six hours to four hours and she decided on a brunch for the following day instead of a breakfast and a lunch.

Brenda knew they needed extra security.

Jose said, “The window washers and the grass cutters said they did not want to attend the ball but would park the carriages.”

He said, “You only have twelve security men but you need about fifty.”

Jose said, “The three new dish washers said they will work but their girlfriends will attend the ball.

Brenda and Jose ended their meeting.

Brenda sat and heard Thomas tell of their great day.

Brenda laughed at how dramatic Thomas was in his story telling.

She and Patrick enjoyed them.

Eleanor walked the house looking for her children.

Shirley, Percy and Bruce were in their room.

Eleanor stopped at the liquor table and poured her a large glass of sherry.

She took a big swallow as Dr. Greene, Debra and Barry came in the door.

Dr. Greene saw Eleanor he pretended he did not see her.

They continued to walk down the hall.

Debra said, “Hi Eleanor.”

Eleanor smiled and said, “Hi. You all enjoyed your outing?”

Barry said, “Yes.”

He ran upstairs and ran to the boys room.

Dr. Greene watched up run.

He heard Percy and Bruce speak to Barry.

Debra was looking at Eleanor and said, “Lorraine told us what happened. I can’t believe Ruth nor Nadine.”

Dr. Greene said, “Debra.”

Debra looked at Dr. Greene and back at an angry Eleanor.

Eleanor was about to replenish her sherry.

Dr. Greene put his hand over the bottle.

Eleanor looked at Debra.

Debra did not say anything.

Dr. Greene said, “I am not scared of you any more Eleanor.”

Eleanor walked down the hall looking for her boys and said, “Dinner is at six pm and dress.”

She walked down to Patrick’s office and saw her boys talking to their grandparents.

Eleanor stood in the door and listened.

Lorraine had passed by Patrick’s office when Dr. Charles closed the door.

She knocked on Meredith’s door and called her outside and told her what was going on about the ball.

Meredith was shocked.

She said, “Is that why they never wanted to do anything but work and go and get alcohol?”

Lorraine said, “I have never seen Patrick and Brenda so angry. I believe they are going to fire all of them. Eleanor already said, if they do not show up for the ball she will fire them.”

Meredith said, “I plan on coming. I bought the other gown from the second hand shop in Paris.”

Lorraine sat still.

Meredith said, “Lorraine why are you looking at me like that?”

Lorraine said, “Is Felipe going to be here?”

Meredith said, “No. I am going to stay.”

Felipe was lying in bed listening to Meredith and Lorraine.

Dr. Charles was sitting out on his balcony enjoying the summer afternoon’s sunshine. When his mind drifted to Adeline he would drink some liquor.

Eleanor looked down the hall and saw Meredith and Lorraine talking.

She thought, “I know they are talking about what happened.”

She turned her head back to hear Thomas and Michael tell how enthralled about the troop.

Eleanor heard talking and looked down the hall and saw Lorraine and Meredith fussing.

Felipe was in the door undressed.

Eleanor jumped and turned her head.

She said, “Momma, daddy here comes.”

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Lorraine and Meredith and moved out of their way.

Michael turned and looked at his two loves with a look of concern and said to Meredith and Lorraine, “What’s wrong?”

Brenda wanted to laugh at Michael. He was taking his position as giving Meredith away very seriously.

Patrick looked at Michael and looked at the laughing Brenda,

Eleanor could not take any more from Michael the protector.

Eleanor looked at Michael and said, “Look, you and Thomas come and bathe and take a nap.”

Thomas said, “Why? We heard them fuss and cuss all afternoon?”

Eleanor said, “Please Thomas.”

Patrick looked at Thomas and grinned.

He wanted to holler out in laughter, but he knew Eleanor was doing the best she could.

Dr. Greene and Debra were passing Patrick’s office and they could hear Barry, Percy and Bruce upstairs.

Dr. Greene looked at Debra.

Debra acted like she did not hear anything so she could get into Lorraine and Meredith’s conversation.

Dr. Greene turned and walked back to get Barry.

Eleanor grabbed her two and walked behind Dr. Greene.

Debra stood in the hall.

She looked down the hall and saw Felipe.

She said, “Meredith Felipe is naked and in the door.”

Meredith turned and saw the naked Felipe and she pulled off her shoe and threw and hit him.

She said, “Felipe this is not France get back in the room.”

Felipe jumped and ran in the room.

He did not close the door.

He grabbed a pair of pants off the floor and stumbled nearly falling putting them on.

He grabbed the shirt off the chair he wore to the picnic and walked out the door.

Felipe picked up Meredith’s shoe she threw at him.

He ran up the hall to Meredith and Lorraine.

He looked at Meredith and waved his hands saying he hid on clothes.

He shook her shoe at her.

Meredith grinned.

Felipe looked at Meredith with so much love in his eyes.

Debra was standing back on the wall so she could hear.

Debra smiled at Felipe and Meredith. She knew would make it.

Eleanor looked back the first time and saw the naked Felipe.

She kept walking and going up the stairs.

She saw Felipe run down the hall with clothes on to Patrick’s office.

She wondered what was going.

Eleanor snickered that this serious doctor is in the midst of Meredith and Lorraine fighting.

Debra was looking for Dr. Greene.

Lorraine walked in Patrick’s office ad said, “Did yall tell Meredith she could stay. Here?”

Brenda said, “Yes.”

Lorraine said, “Where?”

Patrick said, “The only comfortable space is in the re-modeled supply shed. Why?”

Lorraine was patting her chest.

Felipe looked at Lorraine.

Meredith said, “I did not know me staying here would cause you grief.”

Lorraine could not answer for a minute.

Meredith looked scare for a minute.

Felipe was standing in the hallway with his shirt partially open and the buttons not correctly button.

Lorraine said, “I thought she was going to be in the house with her vomiting and temper tantrums.”

Felipe said, “It is called morning sickness.”

Lorraine said, “Is he talking? He caused this and he is getting away with her “morning sickness’.”

Patrick snickered.

Lorraine said, “I’m going home.”

Meredith looked at Lorraine and said, “I love you.”

Debra was giggling.

She looked and saw Dr. Greene and pushed off the wall and said, “Shucks.”

She ran down the hall to their room and opened the patio door and jumped on the bed.

Dr. Greene passed the fussing Lorraine and he continued to walk holding Barry’s hand.

Barry said to Lorraine, “Hey.”

Lorraine said, “Hey precious Barry.”

Barry grinned.

Dr. Greene liked Lorraine.

He wanted her and Dr. Ralph to marry.

He prayed that GOD would send the right man to Lorraine before she gets to the age no man would want her. He said she is an attractive woman.

Dr. Greene and Barry were walking pass Patrick’s office.

Barry yelled, “Hey.”

Patrick and Brenda said, “Hey.”

Patrick said, “Who is that?”

Dr. Greene looked at Barry and said, “Tell him Barry.”

Barry ran to the door and looked at Patrick and said, “Barry.”

Patrick and Brenda laughed and they laughed.

Meredith grinned at Barry.

She looked up at Lorraine.

Felipe looked at Meredith and said, “Should you be talking to her?”

Meredith touched Felipe’s face and kissed him.

She said, “She is my best friend. We fuss and fight all the time. She is fine.”

Felipe yelled, “We love you Lorraine.”

Lorraine waved her hand and kept walking.

Dr. Greene looked back at Lorraine and wondered about her.

Dr. Greene was still holding Barry’s hand and said, “I don’t ever recall Lorraine saying anything about her family.”

Meredith said, “The only thing she ever said, was when she was born her parents put he up for adoption.”

Brenda’s mouth dropped open.

Patrick was stunned.

Dr. Greene looked at the shocked Patrick and Brenda and said, “You did not know?”

Patrick shook his head for no.

Meredith and Felipe were snuggling and kissing in Patrick’ door.

Patrick said, “You two can go to your room and comeback for dinner at six pm.”

Meredith and Felipe were walking away.

Patrick yelled, “And we are dressing for dinner.”

Felipe waved his hand, as he held Meredith’s shoe and kissedher.

Dr. Greene grinned. He felt they were going to make it.

Barry was swinging on Dr. Greene’s hand trying to get loose.

Brenda was giggling.

Dr. Greene looked at Brenda and down at Barry and grinned and said, “He needs a nap.
I know six pm. Dressed. Come on Barry.”

Patrick and Brenda continued to talk.

They stood and went to their room and took a nap.

Dr. Greene said, “Debra I saw you.”

Debra said, “I want to go to the ball.”

Dr. Greene turned Barry’s hand loose and stared at Debra.

Debra looked at Dr. Greene.

Barry ran and got his boat that Patrick and Brenda gave him as a gift.

Barry refused to lay on the bed with Debra and Tony and take a nap.

Dr. Greene locked all the doors and put Barry in the bedroom with them and locked the door.

Dr. Greene and Debra took a nap.

Barry fell asleep on top of the sailboat.

Dr. Greene woke and saw him.

He picked Barry up and put him in his bed and he put the boat on the dresser.

Dr. Greene and Debra spent an hour together before their hot bath water was delivered.

Adeline was having a difficult time.

Michael sent her second class back to Philadelphia and second class on the ship.

Dr. Charles sent a very long detail letter to his cousin

He sent the letter on the same ship Adeline would be on.

Patrick gave the letter to George at the train on that Friday.

George said Adeline was on the train in second class per Michael’s instructions and taken to Bruce’s hotel for two days.

A member of the crew would pick her up from the hotel in two days and take her to the ship in second class for her six week sail back to Paris.

George told Patrick that he would retire in November and he saw a nice cottage at the dock when he took their luggage to the ship

He told Patrick he was going to rent it and move in it by Christmas.

Patrick said, “George you have not RSVP to my and Brenda’s Anniversary ball?”

George looked deep into Patrick’s eyes.

Patrick’s eyes swell with tears and he cried out in pain.

George walked away and went to the train.

Eleanor was watching Patrick and George.

She saw George walk away from Patrick.

Patrick bent over on put his hands on his knees and cried out in pain.

Eleanor and Dr. Greene looked at Patrick.

Eleanor ran to Patrick and said, “Daddy! Daddy!”

Patrick would not answer Eleanor.’

Eleanor was looking around for George.

She looked at the train and saw George walking through the train and in her eye sight he disappeared.

Eleanor nearly fainted.

She came to her senses and in her heart the words floating that George was going to die. Console Patrick.”

Eleanor could not believe what had happen.

She looked at the train again, she saw the grinning George greeting his patrons.

Eleanor turned and ran back to Patrick and held him and put her head on his back.

Brenda was laughing and talking to Barry.

Dr. Greene stood and watched Eleanor and Patrick.

Brenda was quiet but she was watching everybody.

She cut her eyes to Dr. Greene and did not see Eleanor.

She looked around and did not see Patrick.

She looked and saw her five children.

She saw Stanley and Leon watching everybody.

Brenda walked to Dr. Greene and when she was about to ask him had he seen Eleanor and Patrick, he turned to her and nodded out in the distance.

Brenda looked and saw a Bent over Patrick who fell to his knees.

Brenda ran to Patrick.

She grabbed Patrick and he grabbed onto her arm.

Brenda knew Patrick was experiencing heart grief and not grief for himself.

Eleanor said, “George. It is George momma.”

Brenda looked at Eleanor and said, “Did Patrick tell you.?”

Eleanor said, “No. God did.”

Dr. Greene watched the sad group.

George started calling everyone to the train.

Brenda purchased everyone’s ticket for first class accommodations.

The happy group boarded the train and gave George’s their tickets.

Eleanor and Brenda picked Patrick off from the ground.

Brenda took her handkerchief and cleaned his face.

They walked to the train and smiled and waved at their friends.

George jumped on the train and waved at his friends.

He would see Patrick and Brenda this last time.

As the train begin to roll away George ran through the train to the back porch.

Patrick and Brenda ran to watch George as he disappeared with the train down the railroad tracks.

Gen and Ben ran to wave at their friends.

They stopped running when they saw Patrick and Brenda on the ground.

Gen and Ben looked back at the train and only saw a faint image of the person on the back of the train.

Gen heart hit her stomach. Another conductor is gone.

Leon looked at Stanley.

Then back to Patrick and Brenda.

Patrick fell into Brenda and they both fell to the ground.

Shirley screamed.

Thomas and Michael ran to Patrick and Brenda.

Percy and Bruce were walking to Eleanor to see why she was crying.

Percy and Bruce turned and saw Brenda and Patrick on the ground.

They were not going to leave Eleanor.

They grabbed her by her hands and begin pulling her to their grandparents.

Shirley ran to Patrick and Brenda.

Leon jumped off his horse and ran to them.

He saw Eleanor and Percy and Bruce and he turned around and went back to his horse.

The day before Charles would get the power of attorney papers notarized the next morning at the clerk’s office, where Meredith and Felipe would register their marriage.

Charles begin to feel bad for Adeline.

He walked in his room and sat on the bed.

He looked around and begin to pack.

He stared in space as he could imagine the trouble Adeline was facing traveling alone under Michael’s mandate.

Charles smiled and took a nap until Gary knocked on his door and brought in his hot water for a hot bath.

Gary and Louis heard about the bad argument.

Thomas was making an elaborate dinner.

Ruth and Nadine were to be in the family dining room for dinner.

Brenda told Gary to have Jose put Harriet and Vivienne, if she was well, in the family dining room.

Jose went and knocked on Vivienne’s door and asked her how she felt and whether she could serve.

Vivienne said, “Yes.”

Lorraine was home and poured a large Bourbon and drank and went to sleep.

Jose found Harriet and told her Brenda wanted her to serve dinner.

Harriet said, “Brenda is angry for her to be changing the servers.”

Jose said, “I am going to tell those clowns to go home and start their week-end. They need to decide if they want to continue to work here.”

Jose waked back to the Kitchen and walked to Ruth and Nadine and said, “You two have been replaced as servers for tonight. You can start your week-end and be back Monday.”

Ruth said, “Or not.”

Jose said, “Right.”

Peter looked at Jose.

He looked around the kitchen and got his personal stuff and went to their room and waited for Nadine.

There was a note on their door.

Lorraine said, “I am not going to the horse races with you two. Lorraine.”

Peter gave the note to Nadine.

Nadine packed her stuff.

They left out the back door and Peter drove their wagon home.

They were quiet all the way home.

Peter said, “We leave at daybreak.”

Nadine said, “Why,”

Peter said, “To go to the horse races.”

Nadine said, “No. Lorraine said she won’t go.”

Peter said, “Nadine that is what they were saying about us. We can’t function outside of this small place.”

Nadine said, “It’s Lorraine’s fault because she is not going.”

Peter said, “No it’s not Lorraine’s fault, it is yours because you are not going.”

Nadine stood and looked at Peter.

Peter said, “Brenda does not want us near her and her family. After all these years.”

Peter stood and walked out on the back porch and smoke and thought.

Ruth had Gary to take her to the rooming house.

Gary dove her to the rooming house.

He said nothing.

He thought about himself and how much he has grown as a person and how he wants to be a better person. He thought about his mother and three sisters who wanted him to be their slave and be deformed and be poor.

He thought one day I will ack home to visit, but not now. I know I have to get rid of the smell of the smoke of oppression and fight my way out of it.

Gary pulled up in front of Ruth rooming house.

Gary said, “Ruth how long have you lived here?”

Ruth said, “Six years.”

Gary stared at Ruth.

She stepped out the wagon.

Gary said, ”Good night.”

Ruth did not say anything but walked to the house and went in.

She sat and looked out the window until night.

Dan did not say anything to Thomas.

He made the dishes for dinner that Thomas asked him to make.

Thomas said nothing.

He was thinking.

Louis heard about the big arguments on the ball.

He did not understand what the big argument was about. He planned on going with Thomas.

He was excited about getting dressed up because he never attended a ball before and for Brenda and Patrick wanted to share their thirty fifth anniversary with their workers was special to him.

Louis was trying to understand how Thomas got into the brawl with Jose.

Thomas looked at Louis.

Louis turned to Dan and said, “Dan can you tell me what happened today?”

Gary walked in the kitchen and heard Louis.

He walked over to Dan.

Jose was looking over the workers schedule.

Dan blew.

He said, “How can I best explain it.”

Dan stood for a minute and looked at Thomas.

Thomas kept his head down.

Gary and Louis looked at Thomas.

The three dish washers stopped to listen because they were standing in the kitchen when the big argument started.

Dan said, “You know Patrick and Brenda has chosen to have a ball to celebrate their thirty fifth anniversary. They made a ball room, which we use as a storage area. They had a Valentine’s ball about twenty five years ago and invited all the towns people and no one came…”

Louis said, “Why not?”

Gary said, “Because they did not like Brenda.”

Louis turned and looked at Gary.

Dan said, “Right.”

Gary said, “Will Denise have that same type of rejection?”

Louis turned all the way around and looked at Gary.

Thomas looked at Gary.

Then he looked at an annoyed Louis.

Thomas knew Louis was annoyed with Gary because all he talked about was Denise and Denise did not know Gary had feelings for her and she was working through being a former slave. She nearly left three times the last year along to go further up north with Mabel. Denise stopped because Brenda was depending on her.

Thomas told Louis he did not know what Gary was thinking that he being white could have a life with a former slave that had to process in her heart and mind all the evil of slavery and know every white person was not evil.

Dan looked at Louis and said, “You asked me to explain what happened. Brenda and Patrick were heart broken and never used the room for what it was intended for. So Patrick decided when they were in Europe to surprise Brenda with a ball. He and Eleanor worked for nearly a year. They sent the invitations out over six months ago and chose only the people that was most important to them and who has been with them through all the hard and bad times.”

Gary said, “The staff.”

Louis turned all the way around and looked at Gary again.

Thomas cut his eyes at Gary and smirked.

Dan saw Thomas.

He continued and said, “Jose and Brenda were in the kitchen and Jose told Brenda most of the staff were not coming.”

Louis looked over at Jose who had his head down writing.

Louis said, “Jose why did you tell Brenda that?”

Jose stopped and looked at Louis.

Thomas looked back at Jose.

Louis swallowed and turned back to Dan.

Gary was watching Thomas.

The three dish washers were standing and listening.

Dan said, “Well it was true, not most but a good number of the workers said they would not attend the ball. They did RSVP…”

Louis was confused and frowned up.

Gary said, “Because they felt they did not fit in.”

Dan said, “Right.”

Louis looked at Gary.

He said, “Brenda made the everything simple not to embarrassed anybody. The workers felt they did not want to be a part of Patrick and Brenda’s lives. Eleanor told them if they did not come to the ball they were fired.”

Gary said, “They should be.”

Louis said, “I agree, but when were the workers going to tell Patrick and Brenda? It’s less than three weeks away.”

Dan said, “They weren’t.”

Louis’ mouth fell opened.

Gary said, “Isn’t that rude?”

Louis said, “Uncaring. I am confused.”

He turned to Thomas and said, “Thomas how did you get into this brawl with Jose that everyone is talking about?”

Thomas stared at Louis and said, “I’ll tell you about that later.”

Gary said, “I want to go to the ball but I don’t have the right clothes to wear and the shoes. I remember the count would go to several balls every year. He would wear the same tuxedo and top hat. Wait!!!”

Louis jumped.

Jose looked at Gary.

Thomas jumped.

One of the men who washed the dishes jumped.

Gary ran to Earle’s room.

Then he ran back to Jose and said, “Who is in Earle’s room?”

Thomas said, “I am.”

Gary was getting a little excited and pointed nervously and said, “Can you go and check and see if Earle left the count’s tuxedo?”

Thomas half way yelled and said, “No. “

Louis said, “And why?”

Thomas looked at Louis and said, “Have you lost your mind? I am cooking. I will check tonight.”

Gary was getting excited.

Jose shook his head and continue to work on his schedule.

Jose was checking on the number of workers that said they would not be attending the anniversary ball.

Jose said, “It’s not that bad. Twenty three workers wont’ be attending and their one guest. That’s forty six people.”

Louis said, “Can we fill the seats with people?”

Jose stared at Louis because all he could see is men like him and Thomas.

Dan chuckle and kept on cooking.

Thomas looked at Dan and knew what he was smirking about.

Gary watched Dan.

Gary thought, “He traveled with them all over Europe. He got a taste of the good life. He would be arguing for Patrick and Brenda. I would do the same for Joseph.”

Monica set a formal dinner table for the dinner and she re-arranged the flowers in the house.

Dan made a key lime pie and a strawberry pie with much whipped cream.

He went to the basement and came back with several bottles of wine for the dinner.

Thomas looked at Dan and he walked over and looked at the wine.

Thomas thought, “Good choices” and nodded his head.

Dan watched Thomas and stared at him when walked away from the wine.

Thomas looked at Dan and said, “I agree with the choices you selected.”

Dan very sarcastically said, “Thank you.”

He rolled his eyes at Thomas.

Thomas looked at Dan because he wanted them to think he had some home training even though he had no upbringing.

Dan walked through the formal dining room across to the family dining room.

Dan saw Monica putting the last few flowers together for the centerpiece and said, “Monica you are talented. The floral arrangement is beautiful.”

Monica was grinning very big and was happy with Dan’s compliment.

Dan placed the wine on the server.

Everyone began to wake and dressed.

Meredith and Felipe were the first to walk out their bedroom.

They were walking and holding hands.

Meredith wore the second dress from the Parisian second hand boutique.

Margaret embellished the dress and made Meredith earrings from the buttons.

Meredith wore her hair down and behind her ears to show the earrings.

Felipe wore a cream shirt and pants and light brown jacket, which complimented Meredith’s mauve color dress.

Barry out Dr. Greene and Debra’s suite and fell on his knees and begin to push the sailboat on the rug.

Dr. Greene ran and took the sailboat out of Barry’s hands.

When Barry jumped up to run behind Dr. Greene to get his sailboat Debra grabbed his hand.

Debra looked and saw the happy couple.

She stood and waited for Tony.

Tony walked out the room and saw Felipe and Meredith.

He grinned at them and they smiled at him and Debra and a stomping Barry.

Meredith bent down to Barry and said, “Good evening Barry. You look good.”

Barry stopped stomping and started looking at Meredith.

He reached his hand to Meredith to walk with her.

Felipe turned Meredith’s hand and Debra walked with them to the family dining room.

Debra wore a white plain skirt and a beautiful white embroidered blouse she found in Philadelphia and her only jewelry of a pair of pearls.

Felipe and Tony walked behind the women and Barry.

Felipe talked low to Tony.

Debra looked back at her husband and smiled, but she made up her mind they will do better.

She did not buy food for a week and they ate at the hospital.

Dr. Greene could not understand what she was doing.

Debra cut some services, water and coal and the yard man for two weeks.

She took the extra money and bought Tony the navy suite, white striped shirt and tie and socks and bought Barry three new suits and a pair of new shoes and socks.

She bought herself the dress for Meredith’s wedding and the outfit she was wearing to the dinner.

Dr. Greene was proud of astute Debra was for planning.

He was thinking he could not take care of her and Barry.

Both of them were working.

They talked earlier that day of not eating out but once per month and start saving money and cutting corners, so as they grow older they can be comfortable and not depend on their rich friends to pay for their way and save money for Barry to go to college.

Felipe whispered to Tony.

Debra tried to hear what Felipe said, she could not get it.

Tony said, “I’m sorry. We will talk when we get back.”

Felipe grinned and said, “But I am still a very happy man.”

Tony grinned.

Debra put Tony’s clothes together for the days they were in the house.

She knew how the rich dress for the different meals.

They heard Charles open his door.

Everyone looked back and spoke to Charles.

Charles spoke and tried to smile.

The group continued to walk to the family dining room.

Patrick and Brenda walked out their room and left the door.

Dr. Woodson would be late for dinner.

He had to fight with Shirley for her therapy earlier.

Patrick and Brenda enjoyed their painful therapy but knew they would feel the benefits for days.

Charles wore white pants, white shirt and navy jacket.

Patrick wore, white pants, navy shirt and white jacket.

Brenda wore a yellow dress and button earrings.

She looked very distinguish.

Charles watched the couple who have been together for a lifetime.

He was talking to himself and said, “How come I was blinded. How I missed her signs.”

Patrick and Brenda heard Charles talking to himself.

They did not know whether to stop and talk to him or continue to the family dining room.

Eleanor waked down the stairs followed by Bruce and Percy,

Barry saw his playmates and ran to them.

Shirley was dressed.

She wore one of the dresses Margaret embroidered for her.

Shirley wore the plain but magnificent pearl earrings Patrick and Brenda bought for every day wear.

Michael and Thomas ran pass Shirley and started playing with Barry.

Dr. Greene grinned.

Patrick saw Shirley holding onto the rail and walking sideways to come down the stairs.

Patrick walked to the staircase and walked up to meet Shirley.

He escorted Shirley down to the foyer.

Brenda was standing and waiting for them.

Dr. Charles reached the foyer and looked at Brenda and then Patrick and Shirley.

He smiled and stood and waited for them but was cutting his eyes at the liquor.

Brenda said, “Charles I believe we are having wine for dinner.”

Charles still looked at the liquor.

He looked at Shirley and held his arm out and said, “May I escort you to dinner.”

Shirley was still mad with Dr. Woodson.

She reached her arm to Dr. Charles and they walked in front of Patrick and Brenda and Dr. Charles was telling Shirley a joke and she laughed out and tried to cover her mouth.

Charles said, “Sometimes Shirley it is better to let out a cry of joy then always letting out a cry of angry.”

Shirley said, “I’m trying.”

Charles said, “I don’t try to do my job. I do my job. You be the smart, good looking passionate young woman God made you to be. Serve HIM first then HE will put your life in order.”

Vivienne was standing at the door and greeting everybody.

Charles stopped and said, “Good evening. How are you?”

Vivienne looked at Chares in surprise.

Patrick and Brenda walked behind Shirley and Charles and looked at Vivienne.

Vivienne spoke and said, “The headache is gone and I feel rested.”

Charles said, “You need to rest.”

Patrick said, “Vivienne you are excused.”

Vivienne said, “sir after dinner. I want to serve this evening.”

Patrick said, “Ok Vivienne.”

Brenda smiled at Vivienne.

They sat to eat dinner.

The salad was delicious.

Dr. Woodson appear and sat next to Shirley and sat and stared at Shirley.

Eleanor knew it was about Shirley’s therapy.

Eleanor talked to Shirley that she would be moving to Philadelphia to go to the business school to have therapy once per month.

Shirley said no and she was finished with it.

Charles looked at Dr. Woodson and knew he was really mad at Shirley.

Dr. Woodson said, “Good evening everyone.”

Barry said, “Hey.”

Everyone laughed.

Vivienne brought Dr. Woodson a salad.

Dr. Charles looked at Vivienne.

Brenda saw how Dr. Charles looked at Vivienne.

Brenda notice Dr. Charles watched Vivienne all evening.

She knew it was just not to see how his patient was doing.

Brenda knew nothing about Vivienne. But she was older than Dr. Charles.

She knew Vivienne was really good with hair and makeup.

Brenda knew was quiet and prayed with Harriett and Monica. She saw them on occasion sitting in the garden reading their bibles.

Brenda liked that there were Christian workers around her and her family.

Patrick said, “This dinner is outstanding.”

Everyone chimed in and said, “Yes.”

Patrick looked up and looked at Harriet and said, “Harriet who cooked this dinner?”

He knew Vivienne would not know.

Harriet said, “Thomas sir.”

Patrick said, “My compliments to the chef.”

Harriet said, “I will tell him sir.”

The dessert was served and children were given fresh fruit.

Thomas lifted his plate to Eleanor.

Dr. Woodson saw Thomas.

Eleanor leaned over and kissed Thomas on his forehead.

She said, “Too much sugar for you at this time of evening.”

Thomas put his plate back on the table and looked around the table with a look that he could not believe this.

Bruce looked at Thomas and cut a strawberry and put it in his mouth.

Thomas watched Bruce and knew what he meant.

Dr. Greene smiled and looked from Bruce to Thomas.

Dr. Woodson watched the calculating Thomas.

Thomas looked at Eleanor and leaned his head on Eleanor’s arm.

Eleanor was talking to Brenda and eating the strawberry pie.

Eleanor kissed Thomas on the top of his head.

Thomas snuggled on Eleanor and looked at Bruce.

Bruce stared at Thomas.

Bruce calmly looked around the table,

The adults watched Bruce unknown to him.

Percy looked at Bruce and then Thomas.

Bruce balled up both his fists and showed them to Thomas.

Eleanor said, “Is there a problem? Cut up your fruit. We will talk later.”

Thomas slightly stuck his tongue at Bruce.

Dr. Woodson giggled and turned his head and talked to Dr. Charles about his dessert.

Dr. Charles was enjoying his wine.

Brenda looked at Dr. Charles.

They went into the parlor and sat.

Patrick and Eleanor had sherry.

Dr. Charles, Brenda and Dr. Woodson had scotch.

Shirley, Debra, Dr. Greene and Meredith had tea.

Felipe had more wine.

They had very good conversation.

Shirley said, “We need a hospital here in our town. When Michael and Thomas were sick. We had to go to Philadelphia which was a day and a half away. But the train made it there in a day. Could you help us with the design of the hospital and give us direction to what type of medicines should be in the hospital?”

Michael and Thomas were on the floor with Barry.

He said, “We all agreed.”

Dr. Greene grinned and said, “This is a major town and for no hospital to be here.”

Patrick said, “Not only there is no hospital, but we have only one doctor. Bryson is another doctor, but he was governor for eight years. He tried to recruit more people to become doctors. The ones he recruited went way out in the farmlands and around the poorer cities and towns.”

Brenda said, “If we get sick we have to go to the next city for the doctor because he is closer.”

Dr. Woodson said, “That is good. Shirley when do purpose to build this hospital?”

Shirley said, “I want to start this year.”

Dr. Greene said, “Have you located a place to build it?”

Shirley said, “Next to the new military headquarters.”

The boys sat up and Michael and Thomas rolled over on their sides and said, “We have not discussed that.”

Dr. Woodson bit his lips to keep from hollering at Thomas and Michael.

Felipe and Charles were sitting in utter surprise at the business skills of Thomas and Michael.

Dr. Woodson especially laughed at Felipe and Charles’s facial expressions.

Patrick saw their facial expressions and chuckled.

Patrick said, “Thomas that is not a bad idea. To build that part of town up. It is away from our houses but we can get to it in less than an hour.”

Meredith said, “I can help. Lorraine and I can tell you different areas you need. Like for the babies.”

Barry said, “Babies.”

They all laughed.

Meredith smiled and said, “For children, for the heart and bones.”

Felipe was sitting and said, “You are actually talking about starting your own hospital?”

Everyone looked at Felipe.

Felipe said, “Where are you going to get that number of doctors?”

Brenda said, “We know of one, Ty. He is going to school to be a surgeon. By the time he finish from school and had his training then the hospital should be operating.”

Dr. Greene said, “Which are you are going to become doctors?”

None of Eleanor’s children said nothing.

Eleanor looked at her children.

Brenda said, “Nadine’s nephew graduated in June from architectural school and engineering school. He maybe able to give us a design.”

Debra looked around at everyone and said, “This may work. I know that area of the town, it needs to be developed and the children can have jobs.”

Felipe looked at Meredith and said, “You don’t need to become too involved.”

Meredith looked at Felipe.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Felipe.

Dr. Charles said, “Buy a lot of land so the hospital can grow.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Start recruiting now at the medical schools.”

Bruce said, “Star can come and work.”

Percy said, “Star is going to become a dentist.”

Dr. Woodson and Greene smiled.

Dr. Woodson saw that Percy liked Star.

Dr. Greene saw Star was a high achiever to go into a field women were just allowed to enter.

They discussed the hospital project.

Shirley said, “The more business we establish for the city the more women can shop at my dress shop.”

Michael and the boys sighed.

They heard snoring and everyone looked around and saw it was Barry.

Debra laughed and covered her face in embarrassment.

Dr. Greene and stood and said, “Good night.”

He looked at Brenda and said, “This will not be the only time Barry will embarrass you and us.”

They all laughed.

Dr. Greene picked up Barry and he and Debra walked to their room. The maids had made up their bed and brought water and clean towels and wash clothes for the next morning and a rose on the pillow.

Dr. Greene closed the door and he looked at the patio door that was open to let in fresh air in the room.

He said, “Debra we can’t live like this.”

Debra was smelling the rose.

They put Barry to bed.

They went to bed and Dr. Greene wanted to talk to Debra.

Debra faked sleep to keep her dream alive of making more money and having a better life.

Felipe and Meredith stood to go to their room.

Patrick said, “Breakfast is at eight am, we have to leave at nine am or earlier so you too can register your marriage with the county’s clerk.”

Felipe and Meredith looked at each other and giggled.

Brenda laughed.

She looked and saw hoe Charles was watching Felipe and Meredith.

Brenda’s heart hit her and she thought, “LORD don’t let Meredith die nor the baby. Please let them live full lives in JESUS’ name. Amen. Please GOD.”

Charles walked out the parlor and Brenda followed him.

He looked at Brenda as Meredith and Felipe were giggling and passed them.

Charles looked at Brenda and frowned and said, “Why you followed me out the parlor to the liquor table you are not monitoring the liquor because you have plenty?”

Brenda said, “Charles is Meredith sick?”

Charles poured a full glass of scotch he said, “Yes.”

He looked at Brenda and motioned to the alcohol.

Brenda looked at Charles and said, “Is it because of the sexual abuse?”

Charles said, “Yes.”

Brenda looked at the liquor table.

Charles said, “What you want?”

Brenda said, “Scotch.”

Charles poured Brenda a fifth of a glass.

Brenda looked at the glass then she slowly looked at Charles who was drinking a full glass.

He looked at Brenda and said, “You have drank enough for today.”

Brenda stared at Charles and said, “You can’t monitor my liquor intake. Now move.”

Charles was the most serious doctor Brenda had ever encountered. She could not understand why he was not successful. She thought he was a very good doctor even by Dr. Greene and Dr. Woodson’s standards. Maybe he should be the doctor over their hospital.

Dr. Charles was guzzling his scotch.

He had a frown on his face and he looked hard at Brenda and reached her the glass with the little scotch.

Brenda was looking hard at Charles she was thinking, “ I don’t take being told what to do from Patrick. That’s why that woman tricked him for all of those years.”

Patrick and Dr. Woodson were walking out the parlor and they saw Charles and Brenda at the liquor table.

Brenda took the glass and looked down at the small amount of liquor.

Dr. Woodson started giggling.

Patrick said, “I want Brenda to be satisfied with that scotch. I don’t want to hear her fussing tonight.”

Dr. Woodson continued to giggle.

Shirley passed them and looked up and saw Brenda and said, “Good night.”

Dr. Charles and Brenda said, “Good night.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Shirley and Patrick looked at Shirley.

Dr. Woodson pointed at Shirley and said, “Shirley walked pass us.”

Patrick was stunned he said, “See you tomorrow Shirley.”

Shirley looked back at Patrick and smiled at Patrick and continued upstairs.

Dr. Woodson said, “You said you did not need therapy.”

Shirley continued to walk up the staircase.

Brenda was surprised and said, “Thank YOU JESUS.”

Dr. Charles turned and looked at Shirley walk up the steps.

He took a big guzzle of scotch.

Brenda looked down at her small amount of scotch.

Dr. Charles felt Brenda staring at the back of his head.

He slowly turned around and saw Brenda looking at him.

He jumped.

Patrick laughed as he and Dr. Woodson approached them.

Patrick looked at Brenda and said, “She does not like for anybody to touch her liquor.”

Dr. Charles said, “I see.”

Patrick said, “Come on Brenda.”

Brenda said, “In a minute.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Brenda and giggled.

Thomas and Michael ran up the hall.

They ran to Brenda and hugged her tightly.

They ran to Patrick and squeezed him.

Patrick said, “That was a big squeeze.

Thomas and Michael laughed and ran up the stairs.

Eleanor walked out the parlor and was trying to wait for all of them to be gone.

Patrick saw Eleanor lingering in the parlor doorway.

Patrick said, “Look at Eleanor lingering the doorway so we can leave and for her to get her another large drink for tonight.”

Brenda looked back at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor go to bed. You had enough to drink today.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Brenda.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Dr. Charles said, “You got nerves.”

Brenda looked at her glass and at Dr. Charles half full glass.

Dr. Woodson laughed.

Eleanor said, “Come on Bruce and Percy.”

Eleanor waited for them and walked pass Patrick, Brenda, Dr. Woodson and Dr. Charles.

Eleanor rolled her eyes at them and continued upstairs.

Bruce and Percy ran pass by Eleanor and were laughing as they went to their rooms.

Every one watched Eleanor as she stomped up the stairs.

Dr. Woodson laughed and said, “Good night.”

Patrick said, “I’ll walk with you.”

Patrick and Dr. Woodson turned and walked down the hall.

Brenda and Dr. Charles heard Patrick when he told Dr. Woodson, “I hope Brenda don’t cuss over the scotch.”

Dr. Woodson laughed.

Brenda sashayed around Dr. Charles and watched Patrick and Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Charles was looking at Brenda with a frown and a raised eyebrow.

Brenda turned quickly and went back to Dr. Charles and she and he was frowning at her.

Brenda looked at Dr. Charles and said, “You know I was a conductor I am not afraid of you. You are going to tell me what I want to know.”

Dr. Charles shook and said, “You scare me Brenda.”

Brenda said, “Enough of your sarcasm.”

Dr, Charles looked at Brenda.

She said, ”Come to my study.”

Charles followed Brenda to her study.

They talked late into the night.

She showed him the letters from the so call female.

Dr. Charles said, “I believe the person who wrote this letter is an impostor. I believe it is a male. I believe if they sent all of these letters to from when you were in Europe, then they have a ring of thieves. He is the head of this ring of thieves and wants to follow you here to America. It is very expensive to travel here. They have to bring the whole ring here to follow through their plan to bank you”

Brenda was thinking and listening to Dr. Charles.

She looked blank when he said, “bank you.”

Dr. Charles said, “I’m sorry the scotch is talking. I believe these thieves will break you. Take every penny of your money and this grand house.”

Brenda was thinking.

Dr. Charles stood and said, “I got to get some sleep.”

He looked at Brenda who was sitting and thinking.

He said, “Brenda as Patrick ‘said come to bed.’”

Dr. Charles reached his hand out to Brenda.

Brenda said, “Oh my Dr. Charles,” and giggle.

Dr. Charles frowned up at Brenda and said, “I did not mean that woman.”

Brenda waved her hand and stood from her desk and said, “I know that Charles. I like to have fun. Out of all the doctors you are the most serious and the most fun.”

Dr. Charles looked at Brenda and smirked and she reached for his hand.

Brenda said, “Anything else about Meredith?”

Dr. Charles said, “I know your ships are not the only ones to America, but you need to see the names on the ships from the next year. If you know anyone in your government tell them about the letters? Let them use their influence with France. Do you know anyone?”

Brenda said, “The President of the United States?”

Charles made a facial expression of ‘oh’ he said, “I should not be scolding you about scotch.”

Brenda was laughing and said, “Right.”

Dr. Charles walked Brenda to her door and waited for her to go in and lock the door.

Dr. Charles was passing the library and said, “Good night Dr. Woodson.”

Bradley looked at the time and said, “I was lost in this book. Good night Charles.”

He jumped and ran out the library to his room.

He looked at how nice the maids made up his room.

They tub was already in his room for the hot water.

He smiled and pulled off his clothes.

He looked and decided to pack his bag.

He went to bed and woke at seven when he heard the knocking on his door and he barely raised his head and said, “What?”

Louis said, “Hot water.”

Bradley said, ‘Yes.”

Gary opened the door and they walked in and gave Bradley his walk.

They closed Bradley’s door.

They went to Felipe and Meredith room and Bradley heard them talking.

Meredith and Felipe went to walk outside for a minute before breakfast.

Meredith was dressed nicely like she belonged in that type of house with a doctor as a husband.

He jumped and sat up in the bed and looked at the time.

He got out the bed and took a bath and shaved and dressed.

He was thinking about Shirley and how she was walking and fast.

He said, “This requires prayer.”

He bowed and folded his hands in prayer and he quietly prayed.

When he finished he said, “Thank YOU JESUS. Amen.”

He stood and looked around the room and he put his two bags outside his room.

He had sorted out his clothes to wear for the three day train ride back to Philadelphia.

He heard Barry running up the hall and screaming, “Hey” to Patrick and Brenda.

Patrick and Brenda stopped and were greeting Barry, then Tony and Debra.

Dr. Charles opened his door and saw Bradley.

Bradley saw him.

Dr. Charles stepped back in his room and put his bags outside his door.

Dr. Charles looked at Bradley and said, “Good morning. I saw your bags.”

He pointed and pointed back at his room.

Bradley smile.

They walked to breakfast behind Debra and Tony and a jumping Barry.

Barry saw the Bruce, Percy run down the stairs followed by Michael and a laughing Thomas.

Bruce looked back at Thomas and then he looked at Patrick and Brenda.

Brenda watched he and Percy run to the family dinng room.

She said, “If we were not home.”

Everybody laughed.

Barry ran to Michael and Thomas.

They caught him by his hands and he jumped all the way to the family dining room.

Gary and Louis walked in the hallway and started emptying the tubs.

They took the luggage to the carriages.

Eleanor looked fashionable as she was walking down the grand staircase putting on her earrings.

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Charles saw Eleanor walking and putting on her earrings.

Dr. Charles said, “I’m glad she is comfortable walking down the staircase.”

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

Everyone spoke.

Shirley ran out of her room down the staircase and said, “Good morning I want an omelet with tomatoes, onions and spinach.”

Eleanor stood still on the staircase and looked at Shirley.

Dr. Greene and Debra stood with their mouths open.

Patrick and Brenda watched Tony and Debra.

Dr. Charles looked at Shirley.

Patrick and Brenda saw his facial expression like he saw something that was strange.

Dr. Woodson stared at Shirley.

They all walked to breakfast in silence.

Bruce told Monica he wanted the pancakes he had at Robert and Bethany.

Monica stood and looked at Bruce.

Everyone came in and was seated.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Bethany and said, “What’s wrong Monica?”

Bruce said, “Grandpa I told her I wanted the pancakes we had at Robert and Bethany.”

Patrick said, “Bruce I saw the pancakes and did not pay attention. I am sorry.”

Thomas said, “Monica the pancakes were not sweet, they had peaches and whipped cream and butter. No syrup.”

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Greene shook their heads for no.

The boys looked at Dr. Woodson.

Bruce and Percy started whispering.

Patrick was about to laugh then he thought these doctors are so serious.

Debra was playing with Barry.

Dr. Charles looked at Brenda who was thinking.

Eleanor said, “Monica who cooked the pancakes the other day that was very sweet and made all the kids but Michael sick?”

Monica said, “That was peter and he is off today.”

Eleanor said, “Have Thomas to make up a batch without sugar and fresh peaches and whipped cream and melted butter.”

Meredith sat with her head down for a few minutes.

Felipe was standing at the buffet and watching Meredith.

Charles looked at Meredith and said, “Good morning Meredith.”

Meredith slowly raised her head up and said, “Good morning.”

Michael walked to Meredith and kissed her on her cheek and walked to the buffet.

Felipe looked at Michael and rolled his eyes at Michael.

Patrick and Eleanor watched Felipe.

Felipe was eating a slice of bacon and watching Michael.

Michael walked to the buffet and looked at Felipe and said, “Good morning. Meredith is sick.”

Eleanor put her head down in shame.

Patrick was laughing.

Brenda looked at Patrick and Eleanor and then looked to see where Michael was. She started watching Michael.

Dr. Charles stood and went to the buffet.

Harriet handed Michael his plate with a lamb chop.

Michael took the plate and looked at Harriet and said, “Thank you.”

He looked at Felipe and said, “You made Meredith sick?”

Felipe looked at Eleanor.

Dr. Woodson looked at Felipe then Michael.

Eleanor said, “Michael come and sit down.”

Dr. Charles git eggs and bacon and a biscuit with butter and honey.

Michael looked at Felipe and walked to Meredith and said, “Meredith what you want to eat?”

Monica said, “Michael I have her plate.”

Michael looked back at Felipe.

Dr. Greene and Debra held their heads down and laughed.

Felipe said, “Michael I will get Meredith her breakfast.

Michael said, “I made sure she got breakfast.”

Dr. Charles nearly hit the floor.

Brenda looked at Michael and said, “Michael do not move nor say anything else. Apologize to Dr. Felipe.”

Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael said, “Why?”

Dr. Charles turned his head to laugh and covered his mouth with his napkin.

Percy was sitting next to Dr. Charles and looked at him.

Dr. Charles was eating some eggs and looked at Percy and said, “Good eggs.”

Percy said, “The same eggs you have been eating all week.”

Dr. Greene walked out the dining room and walked and looked out the door to laughed.

He nearly hollered when Dr. Charles turned and looked at Percy with a look of surprise at Percy’s question.

Patrick could not say anything.

Dr. Woodson liked the sausage and grits and eggs and a biscuit.

Debra was about to stand and make Barry a plate when Mellissa brought a platter in the room.

Debra said, “Oh my that looks delicious.”

Mellissa put the platter in the center of the table.

Bruce and Thomas were excited and sit up in their chairs.

Bruce looked at Dr. Woodson and said, “Wants some?”

Dr. Woodson said, “No.”

Debra walked to the door and said, “Tony give Barry a half of pancake?”

Tony waved his hand as he was trying to get all of his laughed out.

He walked back to the dining room and looked at the platter Mellissa brought and said, “Oh GOD that looks delicious.”

Tony looked at Mellissa who was about to leave and said, “What is the brown stuff?”

Mellissa looked at Tony and said, “Apple. He did not have enough peaches so he added applies.”

Tony said, “Can we try the apples?”

Harriet took a plate from the buffet and put one pancake a little melted butter, sliced apples and poured caramel sauce over it and whipped cream.

Tony was still standing and when Harriet brought his plate he sat.

Debra said, “Don’t give Barry none of that. We have to ride that train today.”

Barry screamed.

Debra gave Barry a little egg and a biscuit and orange juice.

Barry was about to knock his plate from the table.

Debra hit his hand and said, “No.”

Dr. Greene looked at Debra.

Debra looked at Barry looked at Debra trying to comprehend what ‘no’ meant.

When he saw everyone eating a pancake but him he looked back at Debra.

Dr. Greene gave Debra half of his pancake.

Debra looked down at the pancake and said, “Tony!!”

Brenda said, “You might as well try a piece. After years of marriage I just eat a fork not full but a smidgen.”

Dr. Woodson turned and looked at Brenda.

He watched Eleanor leaning down and patting Michael and talking to him.

Dr. Woodson watched how attentive Bruce, Percy and Thomas was to Michael.

Harriet gave Percy and Bruce and Thomas two pancakes and butter and fresh peaches and whipped cream.

Eleanor was whispering to Michael.

Felipe said, “Sir Michael I am still waiting.”

Meredith elbow Felipe.

Michael was sitting sideways in his chair looking into Eleanor’s eyes as she talked to him.

Dr. Woodson thought, “That is such a love between them.”

When Felipe told Michael he was still waiting for his apology Michael peeped around Eleanor and looked at Felipe and said, “Go ahead.”

Eleanor dropped her head.

Shirley continued to eat her ome let.

Harriet dropped Thomas plate on the table and walked out the family dining room.

Thomas was trying to reach his plate in the center of the table.

Patrick was so tickle but he stood and walked and finished Thomas plate and gave it to him.

Thomas looked at his plate and looked at Patrick.

Patrick was standing between Dr. Woodson and Shirley and thought something was very wrong he said, “What Thomas?”

Thomas looked at Patrick and tilted his plate and looked at Patrick.

Patrick looked at Thomas’s plate and then at Thomas.

Thomas looked at Brenda.

Brenda was enjoying her apple pancake.

She looked at Thomas.

Percy and Bruce were looking at Brenda.

Dr. Charles kept his head down so he could eat and not choke.

Brenda said, “I don’t see anything Thomas, what?”

Patrick stood and stared at Thomas.

Harriet was wiping tears from her eyes.

Jose walked through the formal dining room to check on breakfast.

He saw Harriet bent over in the hall and he went to her first.

She told him about Felipe and Michael.

Jose shook his head and walked down the hall to the guests’ rooms and helped Louis and Gary take the tubs out and load the wagons with their bags.

The maids cleared the rooms of the linens.

Jose and Vivienne walked through the house to the washer room.

Harriet walked back in the dining room.

She walked to the table and said, “Excuse me.”

She reached for Thomas’ plate.

Patrick stood back so he could what was wrong.

Harriet put a fresh slice of peach and put crushed pecans on the whipped cream and handed the plate to Thomas.

Patrick said, “Thomas a slice of a peach and some pecans.”

Thomas grinned and scooted in his chair and begin to eat his pancake.

Eleanor looked at the plate and back at a happy Thomas.

Dr. Greene enjoyed his apple pancake.

Eleanor turned and looked at Michael who sat and batted his eyes at Eleanor.

Dr. Woodson giggled and said, “That did it.”

Shirley sat and eat her omelet.

She looked back and Monica walked to Shirley and said, “Yes.”

Shirley said, “Orange juice please.

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Greene said, “No.”

Monica stood up and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor was still talking to Michael and looked at Monica and said, “The doctors said ‘no’”.

Shirley sat and looked at them.

Patrick was sitting down and said, “You all have been ridiculous this morning about food.”

Patrick looked at his empty plate.

He stared at his empty plate.

Eleanor the looked at Patrick when he stopped talking.

Then she saw his empty plate and looked at Brenda who was looking straight.

Eleanor sighed.

Patrick had his head turned sideway and looked at Brenda.

He said, “Brenda there was another pancake there and all the fixins.”

Brenda said, “That’s not what you tell me.”

Eleanor thought for a minute and said, “You two are the oldest people at this table and should not be saying stuff like that.”

Dr. Greene looked up to see what he missed.

He looked at “Debra and smiled.

He said, “You like your pancake?”

Debra said, “It was really good.”

Dr. Greene said, “You can make this once a week at home.”

Debra stopped eating and looked at Dr. Greene.

Felipe tried not to choke.

Dr. Charles laughed at Debra’s non reaction.

Barry hit his plate.

Debra raised her hand again at Barry.

Dr. Greene said, “Don’t spank him.”

Debra whispered and said, “Tony do you know how much that one plate cost?”

Tony sat and shrugged his shoulders.

Debra leaned over and told him.

Dr. Greene looked over at Barry and said, “Barry don’t knock that plate down.”

Barry peeped around Debra and looked at Tony, who usually let him do what he wants to do.

Shirley was sitting still angry.

Dr. Greene said, “What is wrong Shirley?”

Shirley said, “Orange juice.”

Dr. Greene said, “The acid in the orange juice can eat away your stomach lining. We don’t know the condition of your stomach lining.”

Bruce said, “Shirley tell them.”

Shirley tried to pretend she did not hear Bruce.

Eleanor was still talking to Michael.

She leaned over and kissed Michael and hugged him and patted him.

Felipe looked at Eleanor and Michael.

Meredith looked at Michael and Eleanor.

She thought, “How would he act with my baby. I would like for him to their big brother.”

Dr. Charles looked at Michael and thought, “He can do whatever he wants and show Eleanor some love and get away with it. Now what has Shirley done. She’s quiet with her sneakiness.”

Meredith ate part of her toast, drank some orange juice and tea.

Dr. Greene said, “I want to thank you, Patrick and Brenda. You have been so gracious like before. We had a good time and Barry had a chance to meet new friends and develop new social skills.”

Debra knew Dr. Greene was talking about Barry running and screaming throughout the house.

Meredith looked at Dr. Greene and smiled.

She said, “I want to add to that. Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor from the first day you have opened your house to me and your hearts. Eleanor, I thank you for trusting me with the love of my life Michael.”

Everyone looked at Michael who primped his mouth.

Meredith, “When he went away to Philadelphia I was confused. My life was empty. You kept me working and getting a check. Thank you.”

Michael said, “You are welcomed.”

Everybody laughed.

Meredith took her napkin and started wiping the table with it.

Jose had walked in to look around and he stopped to listen to Meredith.

Harriet and Monica were listening.

Mellissa was walking in the dining room with hot water for Shirley’s tea.

Jose was not attentive to Meredith.

He saw her wiping the table.

He just thought she spilled something that he could not see.

Michael said, “It is ok Meredith take your time. We. I understand.”

Patrick looked at Michael and wanted to say, “Shut up.”

Brenda looked at Meredith and her heart went to her.

Dr. Charles and Dr. Woodson looked at Michael.

Bruce whispered to Percy. Percy nodded his head.

Dr. Woodson looked at the two and looked back at a concerned and caring Michael.

Meredith had her head down and said, ”Eleanor thank you for selecting me to come into your life and especially trusting me to care for your beautiful son…”

Meredith was crying and Felipe was sitting and listening.

Eleanor said, “You are welcome.”

Meredith cried and said, “I have been through such hell and pain. Suffering in spirit, soul and flesh. I believed God directed me to you and for you to hire me. You allowed me to be with your children and your family, I believe so I could know what a family is to be. I believe God said, “You are ready to have your family. If I weren’t with you I would never have known Felipe and married the man I know GOD made me for and who HE made for me. Michael You walked with me and gave me away to Felipe. At the end of my life I feel you will take the last walk with me.”

Meredith lead her head on Felipe’s shoulder.

Michael stood up to go to Meredith.

Eleanor said, “Sit down.”

Michael looked at Eleanor and back to Meredith and sat down.

Dr. Greene and Debra were crying.

Dr. Charles was looking at Michael and Eleanor. He did not want to look at Meredith.

Dr. Woodson knew that Meredith’s last sentence meant something.

Jose looked at the pitiful Meredith and he thought about how bad he always treated her.

Monica, Mellissa and Harriet were quiet.

Brenda said, “Meredith you are welcome. I hope you forget the bad parts of this family and hold onto the good part.”

Patrick was wondering why Meredith said to the ‘last walk’.”

Dr. Charles said, “Meredith I can feel what you are saying. I am sorry for the pain you felt at your beginning. I am not a religious man but I believe your god did send you to this family to help you get rid of the emotional scars as well as the physical. Let your god heal all your scars that you can live a long life with Felipe and your children.”

Dr. Charles looked at a crying Brenda and said, “I trust you and Patrick to continue to pray.”

Brenda nodded her head.

Dr. Charles said, “God needs good people that belongs to Him to continue to show His goodness on this earth. Remember me in your prayers.”

Brenda and Patrick nodded their heads.

Thomas said, “We will.”

Eleanor was crying.

Michael was rubbing Eleanor’s arm to comfort her.

Patrick said, “Do yall mind if I pray ?”

Dr. Greene said, “Sure.”

Barry yelled, “Yeah.”

Debra tried to say, “Yes.”

Everyone was laughing.

Some of the table stood and some sat.

Monica, Mellissa, Harriet and Jose turned to walk out.

Patrick said, “Come back yall. Everybody needs prayer. Harriet do you mind praying?”

Harriet joined hands with a seated Shirley.

Jose joined hands with Meredith.

Jose said, “I apologize for mistreating you.”

Meredith said, “When?”

Jose looked at Meredith and turned his head and said, “She thinks that normal behavior.”

Meredith shook Jose hand and said, “We will talk later.”

Jose thought, “About what?”

Felipe looked at Jose.

Jose looked at Felipe and thought, “Now look at this. Maybe I should not have said anything.” Nall that would not have been right when she is trying to get rid of all that hell she went through.”

Harriet said, “LORD GOD Almighty we come before YOUR presence and JESUS presence this morning. We come to YOU and JESUS to do what YOU made us to do, which is to worship YOU…”

Dr. Greene said, “Amen.”

I ask that YOU bless each person here. I ask YOU to prosper them even as their souls prosper…”

Dr. Woodson said, “Amen.”

Bruce looked at Dr. Woodson.

Harriet said, “Grow us into the imagine of our SAVIOR JESUS.”

Bruce looked at Dr. Charles for him to say amen.

Percy whispered to Bruce and said, “He is not God’s.”

Bruce leaned back and looked at Charles and whispered to Percy and said, “Yes he is. He does not remember,”

Dr. Woodson listen to Percy and Bruce and kept it to himself.

Barry was looking around the room and wanted to play with Thomas and Michael.

Debra could not hold him.

Dr. Greene took Barry from Debra and held him firm.

Harriet said, “LORD GOD Almighty bless them in their travels and careers and grow them everyday. The cases that are complicated talk to the doctors, give them dreams and visions…”

Dr. Greene said, “I need YOU LORD.”

Barry looked at Dr. Greene.

Debra was thinking, “God thank You that Tony took Barry.”

Harriet said, “…I am holding the hand of one of YOUR true miracles.”

Shirley grinned and swung Harriet’s hand.

Patrick looked at Shirley.

Brenda looked at Shirley.

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Greene said, “Amen!”

Harriett continued and said, “I know YOU do great things. YOU brought these two little ones back.”

Thomas said, “From where?”

Dr. Woodson looked at Thomas.

Harriet said, “YOU can only do great things and YOU can never fail. We can never fail because we are made in YOUR imagine, after YOUR likeness and after YOUR kind. Let us become more like YOUR Son JESUS the Christ. In JESUS’ name amen.”

Vivienne was standing outside the family dining room with her head bow and her hands clasped in prayer.

Brenda and Dr. Charles were leaving the family dining room.

Brenda had to have a moment to herself.

Dr. Charles had to use the toilet.

He walked out the family dining room and nearly walked into Vivienne.

Brenda looked at Vivienne.

Vivienne took her hands down and opened her eyes.

She walked into the dining room to talk to Jose.

Dr. Charles ran through the billiards room to the toilet.

Everybody was milling around talking.

Harriet and Monica cleaned up the dining room.

Everyone bags were in the carriages.

Patrick saw Brenda rush out the family dining room.

He was glad Harriet prayed.

Vivienne walked to Jose and was talking to him.

Jose leaned slightly to hear Vivienne.

He shook his head for no.

She turned and walked out the dining room.

Dr. Woodson looked at Jose talking to Vivienne and walked over to him and said, Jose is any of the corn beef and cabbage left from last night’s dinner.”

Dr. Greene if so I would like some. If not can you get me the recipe for Debra.

Debra was standing behind Dr. Greene and she was shaking her head at Jose.

Jose said, “Let me check.”

Jose turned and walked through the formal dining room and walked to the kitchen.

He looked in the refrigerator and saw a little corn beef and cabbage.

He told Thomas the doctors wanted the leftovers to carry with them on the train ride. And Dr. Green wanted the recipe for Debra.

They burst out laughing.

Everybody knew Debra could not cook.

Thomas said, “We know why that marriage has lasted this long.”

Thomas split the leftovers and placed them in paper bags.

He wrote the recipe for Dr. Greene.

He looked for Jose and did not see him.

Thomas was trying to leave with Louis for a week- end of fishing.

They never catch anything but the ride and the fishing hole was a good place for them.

Louis kept watching Jose paying out money.

He was standing in the kitchen and looking.

Jose said, “Where is Gary?”

Louis ran over and said, “What do you want with Gary?”

Jose said, “I need him to move Meredith’s stuff to the supply shed.”

Louis said, “The remodeled supply shed?”

Jose stared into space.

Louis walked through the house and got Meredith three bags and walked them to the re-modeled supply shed.

Thomas looked at Louis and walked through the formal dining room to give the doctors the leftover corn beef and cabbage and give Dr. Green the recipe.

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Greene saw Thomas walk into the dining room with the bags and a piece of paper in his hand.

Dr. Greene talked to Thomas how great the dinner was.

Thomas gave him the recipe for Debra.

Dr. Woodson also complimented Thomas on the dinner.

Bruce was listening to them.

He whispered to Percy and said, “I am going to that last piece of strawberry pie.”

Percy laughed.

Eleanor was standing talking to Debra.

She was trying to read Percy and Bruce’s lips. She did not know what they were talking about but will watch from now on.

Eleanor talked to Patrick and Brenda and said she did not want Percy and Bruce to go to the military academy and told them what Percy said.

Brenda said, “We heard Percy.”

Patrick said, “Send them back. I will miss all of them, especially those two little ones. But I love them growing and be sociable people.”

Brenda said, “Shirley would be gone also. At least they all would be close together.”

They left the dining room and went to their rooms and double checked.

The book Dr. Woodson was reading that week Patrick placed tit on Dr. Woodson’s bed.

Dr. Woodson saw it and grinned.

He walked to the bed and sat and opened the book.

Patrick said, “My son loved this book. He was a good person. I know for you to want to read this book shows me you are a good person. Love Patrick.”

Dr. Woodson yawned his face to keep from crying.

He looked around the very nice room and stood and walked out the room.

Louis was running pass him with Meredith’s bags. Meredith and Felipe were walking back to their room

Felipe was trying to give Meredith money.

Meredith said, “Felipe you have to save the money so we can get a place before the winter.”

Dr. Woodson heard Meredith and said, “Is he going to stay in America?”

Dr. Charles was walking out his room and saw Dr. Woodson being noisy and said, “You ready for this long train ride back.”

Dr. Woodson held up the book Patrick gave him.

Dr. Charles was thinking about the note he left on his bed for Vivienne.

Dr. Charles was nervous about the note he left.

He wondered whether anyone would get the note and read it and not give it to Vivienne.

Dr. Woodson said, “Charles what is wrong?”

Dr. Charles said, “I wrote a note to Vivienne to stay in contact. I wondered if anyone will give her the note or deceive me and write in her name.”

Dr. Woodson looked and say two maids. One was Harriet who prayed that morning.

Dr. Woodson said, “Charles go and get that note and hand it to her.”

Dr. Charles said, “I’m afraid.”

Dr. Woodson frowned and said, “Afraid. You are a surgeon.”

Dr. Charles said, “You are in love with Eleanor.”

Dr. Woodson stood and looked at Dr. Charles and said, “How did you come up with that?”

Dr. Charles said, “You never look at her.”

Dr. Woodson said, “She has been through enough. I won’t be a problem to her.”

Gary and Monica were in the spare bedroom.

They heard Dr. Charles and Dr. Woodson.

They tried to be quiet.

Dr. Charles stood and watched Vivienne and Harriet walk and checked the rooms.

Vivienne went into Dr. Charles and saw the note with her name it.

She read it and put it in her pocket.

Dr. Charles and Dr. Woodson watched Vivienne walk out the room.

She had no facial expression.

She passed them with some linens.

She passed them again but with Barry’s sailboat in her and.

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Charles watched Vivienne.

Vivienne met Jose in the hall and reached him Barry’s sailboat.

Jose walked to the front door and went out to the carriage.

Barry was running around the yard with Thomas and Michael.

Jose walked to Dr. Greene and reached him Barry’s sailboat.

Debra looked back at Jose then the sailboat and smiled.

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Charles walked out the house.

Jose watched everyone get in the carriages.

Patrick and Brenda walked out the house.

Jose said, “Stanley is suppose to be at the train station. That is where he is to meet you. You see Leon.”

Jose helped Brenda in the buggy.

Shirley was heading the carriage with the four boys and a nervous Eleanor.

Gary ran out the house to the carriage with Dr. Woodson and Dr. Charles.

Louis went to the carriage with Dr. Greene, Debra and Barry.

The other had quit.

Jose saw him riding pass them.

Harriet ran through the house to Jose to tell him the man quit.

Jose started cursing.

He intended to go and take a long nap for at least three hours.

He was still drunk from the night before.

He got in the last carriage with Meredith and Felipe.

When he saw it was Meredith he said, “Damn.”

Felipe looked at Jose and said, “Why you say that?’

Jose said, “Because Meredith is going to be asking me all sort of questions while we are coming back.”

Felipe looked at Meredith and said, “Is that true Meredith?”

Meredith said, “Yes.”

Meredith said, “Jose stop at the clerk’s office and then take us to the train station.”

Jose said, “You are still bossy. Wait until she moves in with you.”

Jose was mimicking Meredith.

Felipe looked at Jose.

Jose started speeding he passed Gary, then Louis, Shirley and then Patrick.

Brenda looked to see who Jose was taking to the train station and she saw Meredith.

Brenda said to Patrick, “Jose got Meredith and Felipe.”

Patrick and Brenda began to laugh.

Patrick said, “Jose was so drunk this morning he could not stand. He thought he was going and sleeping until this evening’s dinner.”

Brenda was leaning back in the buggy laughing.

Dr. Charles looked at Jose and said, “He’s trying to get them to the clerk’s office.”

Dr. Charles said, “Gary are making good time to get to the clerk’s office?”

Gary said, “I don’t know. I don’t do this type of run to town. And you two should not be in the open talking about who you are in love with.”

Dr. Charles and Dr. Woodson’s mouths dropped opened.

Gary said, “I’m in love with a former slave. I am from Austria I am not aware of the problems. She doesn’t know and nobody is helping me. They all tell me it won’t work. So I am sick of not knowing if she will reject me or not. We are about to pass the Stith’s rest stop for freed men. On the way back I may just stop and see how she feels about me. So you two sitting back there talking about the possibility of a relationship is real to you and not real to me. I am sick for nearly two years. We will get there when we get there.”

Dr. Charles looked over at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson would not look at Dr. Charles.

Dr. Charles turned to Dr. Woodson and said, “Should we offer him money to be quiet.

Dr. Woodson said, “I ain’t got no money for hush money.”

Gary looked back at them and said, “The maids will pay a lot to know who you two were talking about. Keep your money and be quiet so I can think about Denise and what I will ask her.”

Dr. Woodson turned his head and looked out the side of the carriage.

Dr. Charles waited they stopped.

Gary pulled behind Jose and Dr. Charles jumped out the carriage.

He stood and looked at Gary.

Gary was looking straight ahead and mumbling.

Dr. Charles looked at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson turned his head.

Dr. Charles ran behind Meredith and Felipe.

Felipe said, “Charles what is wrong?’

Charles was nervously flipping the papers.

He looked at Felipe and Meredith and exhaled.

He turned and looked back at Gary who was looking away in the distance and said, “He heard me and Dr. Woodson professing our love.”

Felipe said, “Not to one another?”

Dr. Charles stared and said, “What?”

Dr. Charles said, “I want Vivienne and he is in love with Eleanor.”

Meredith stood and stared at Dr. Charles.

Felipe said, “Meredith, Vivienne is one of your friends. You think she and Charles can have a relationship?”

Meredith was dazed and said, “Charles I thought you were going back to Adeline?”

Felipe looked at Charles and said, “Charles is that true?”

Charles said, “When did I say that?”

Meredith said, “Everyone know Dr. Woodson is in love Eleanor. No one is saying anything because it was a year last week that Joseph died.”

Charles said, “Ok Bradley ad
isn’t going to have Eleanor. What about me and Vivienne?”

Meredith said, “Vivienne is from an old Louisiana slave owner family. Her family decided to let their slaves free. It was about five hundred slaves. Her father called a meeting with the family and told them he felt GOD said, release the slaves or HE would judge them. Her father called a meeting with the slaves and told them he set them free.

The clerk was moving fast that morning.

Meredith continued and said, “The overseers left and went and told the other slaves’ owners. They rode most of the day to get to Vivienne’s family. They showed up with white sheets on to make the slaves think they were ghosts. They set Vivienne’s house on fire. Her husband and father, mother all her sisters and brothers, nieces and nephews along with her five children were shot and killed by the other white slave owners.”

Meredith did not say anything else while they were in the clerk’s office.

Felipe was getting very upset and nervous.

Dr. Charles walked out the office to a nervous Felipe and Meredith.

Dr. Charles were walking with them.

Meredith recognized the racist white women walking on the sidewalk with them.

The woman stared at Felipe and Charles and her eyes went to Meredith very small stomach.

Charles and Felipe saw the racist white woman’s eyes.

They followed her eyes to Meredith’s stomach.

Felipe said, “Meredith if that woman or any of them come near you shot them. I’ll take you home.”

Meredith said, ”Look this is Eleanor’s jewel shop.”

They walked and looked in the window at the jewelry.

They walked down to Shirley’s dress shop.

Felipe said, “Charles is she still following us?”

Meredith looked at Felipe.

The sheriff was sitting in his office watching the clerk’s office and saw the people going to register their weddings.

He looked down and then up he saw the racist white women.

He saw how she was looking at Meredith.

The sheriff wondered who she was.

He called his deputies and said, “Yall see that white woman right there. Who is she.?”

The deputies looked and said, “We have never seen her here.”

The sheriff said, “She’s following those folks. Bring her here and the man here.”

Meredith said, “Charles Vivienne was hidden by Mag and Roger at the underground railroad. She does not know. I am the only one who knows, because Vivienne had a nervous breakdown.”

Charles said, “Understandable.”

Felipe said, “The sheriff have them.”

Meredith said, “What?”

She looked around and saw the sheriff deputies walking behind the man and woman and walked them across the street to the sheriff who was standing on his porch.

The sheriff said, “You folks come in and have a seat.”

The racist white woman said, “You have an appointment.”

The sheriff said, “With who and for what?”

The racist white woman tried to smile.

The sheriff said, “Give me your identification information?”

The racist white woman said, “We don’t have any?”

The sheriff said, “You have something. Because otherwise you can be deranged killers loose in the country. Roving about shooting freed men or shooting up freedmen rest stops or shooting at freedmen walking by the train stops. Your names. Your real names. Where do you stay?”

The racist white woman cleared her throat.

The racist white man with her sat forward in the chair and said, “We have not committed any crimes.”

The sheriff said, “What did you just say?”

The white man with the racist white woman that the sheriff was giving them a break.

He sheriff said, “I am not asking you for the information again.”

The looked at one deputy who went and got the keys to the cells. Max was in the other cell. The military sent and got the three former soldiers and put them in the jail at the new headquarters.

The racist white man looked back at the deputy who had the keys.

The man took off his hat and gave him his identification information.

The sheriff took the information and read.

The sheriff read the information and tossed it back to the racist white man.

The sheriff said, “Where do you work?”

The racist white man tried to smile at the sheriff.

The sheriff said, “You are members of the white racist group. You have come all the way up in the north seeking to kill and steal these people back into slavery. Who did you have an appointment with this day?”

They did not answer.

They sheriff said, “You are under arrest until you can prove who you are.”

Max’s wife came to the jail with Mr. Thompson’s to see Max.

The sheriff about the woman, “Put her in the back and take her hat and purse and give it to me.”

She snatched off he hat and gave the deputy her purse.

They examined the purse and found two guns.

The sheriff looked at the racist white woman.

She said, “t’s not against the law.”

The sheriff kept going through her purse lining and found her identification papers and large bank notes.

He said to his deputies, “Put her in the back and this one next to the thief.”

The sheriff looked at Max’s wife and lawyer and said, “What do you want?”

Max’s wife said, “I am a teacher.”

The sheriff cut her off and said, “What the hell do you want.”

Max’s wife was trying to act important.

The sheriff said, “Get the hell out of this jail. Since you do not have any sense to tell me what you want.”

Mr. Thompson said, “Sheriff can she see Max her husband for ten minutes?”

The sheriff sat and stared at her and said, “Ten minutes.”

The sheriff started the paper work on the racist white woman and the racist white man.

He locked their valuables in the safe.

The sheriff said to one deputy said, “I want them out of here before dark. Go to the military and see if they can take them until their trial.”

The sheriff finished one set of papers for the man.

The deputy jumped on his horse and rode away to the military headquarters.

The sheriff looked at his clock.

The other deputy was leaning against the wall and he looked at the clock.

He walked to the Max’s wife and said, “Your ten minutes are up.”

She said, “Wait!”

The sheriff said, “Threw her dumb ass in the next cell.”

Mr. Thompson said, “Please don’t. Please let her leave they have small children.”

The sheriff stood and walked to Max’s wife and said, ”Get out and don’t ever come back. You can visit him for the next twenty years wherever they are going to put him.”

Max was holding onto the bars and had his head on the bars and cried and slid down to the floor and sob.

Max’s wife stomped out the jail and rolled her eyes at the sheriff.

Mr. Thompson said, “Josephine never do that again. These people do not like you. They are here to put people in. I am not going to jail for you nor Max. The case against Max is solid. He stole and stole and stole from his employer. And helped others to steal. He may get more time than the others.”

Josephine said, “Others?”

Mr. Thompson said, “What did you say to Max when you saw all of this he was bringing in your house?’

Josephine said, “I thought he was doing better.”

Mr. Thompson said, “The judge may give you some time for aiding and abetting.”

Josephine said, “Me?”

Mr. Thompson said, “This is a mess. Do you have anyone to raise your children?”

Josephine stood and looked at Mr. Thompson.

Mr. Thompson said, “Max‘s first hearing is in a week. That will give us a better understanding of what is going on. I’ll talk to after the hearing.”

Josephine said, “I will be there.”

Mr. Thompson thought, “They are idiots. Let me do my job.”

Meredith said, “There was a problem with that woman and man for the sheriff to come and get them.
They walked back to the carriages.

Jose was sleep and said, “Everything is ok?”

Meredith said, “Yes.”

She and Felipe got in the carriage and kissed all the way to the train station.

Dr. Charles said, “Meredith gave a lot of information, which I won’t tell but she says every body know you are in love with Eleanor. You are free and clear.”

The carriages passed Josephine as she was walking down the porches.

She looked at the name on the carriages and thought and turned and ran to her wagon and went speeding out to Patrick and Brenda’s house.

Gen and Ben passed her on their way to the train station to tell everyone bye. Especially her Dr. Woodson.

They went to the train station.

Mag, Josiah and Natalie were there.

Brenda was checking all the passengers in.

She gave everyone their tickets.

It was a big party to them.

Felipe and Charles pulled Patrick to the side and told of the racist white woman.

Patrick said, “I remember her but I can’t bring it together.“

Charles said, “Your God will help you.”

Patrick said, “Felipe I will protect and keep Meredith safe.”

Felipe exhaled and said, “I needed to hear that.”

Stanley was standing back watching everything.

Leon was on his horse standing watching everything.

Barry was running and screaming liked usually.

Stanley was thinking about his baby and he wanted his child to be safe. He and his wife will attend the anniversary ball.

Nathan and Robert will not be able to attend but Denise will go.

Stanley was thinking about the rest stop was shot up last year.

He was thinking why it was not shot up this year.

That’s why Robert and Nathan will be working the night of the ball.

Patrick saw George and waved.

George was talking to Mag.

George walked to Patrick.

Patrick reached the letter to George and said, “How many times?”

George said, “I can’t tell. I left off counting.”

George and Patrick stood and talked for a long time.

George told Patrick he saw a cottage at the dock and would rent it when he retire in November and move in by Thanksgiving.

Patrick looked at George and said, “You did not RSVP to our anniversary ball.”

George looked Patrick deep in his eyes.

Patrick looked in George’s eyes.

Dr. Greene was standing watching them and talking to Eleanor.

Dr. Greene wanted to talk to Eleanor privately and said, “Eleanor no one wants to tell you. Your heart is bad.”

Eleanor lips started quivering and said, “How much time do you think I have?”

Dr. Greene said, “I am not a specialist the say about ten to fifteen years.”

Eleanor grabbed Dr. Greene’s arm and exhaled.

Eleanor said, “I can see my babies grow up some.”

Dr. Greene said, “You have been too good of a friend for me not to tell you. Maybe Felipe and Charles can invent something else that can help you. I will be with you at the end Eleanor.”

Eleanor smiled and said, “Tony thank you.”

Dr. Greene said, “What is going on with Patrick and George?”

Eleanor turned and saw George walked away and she heard Patrick cry out in pain.

Dr. Greene looked at George.

His countenance was sad.

Dr. Greene looked at Patrick and knew his best friend was leaving him.

Brenda saw Eleanor and Patrick and ran to them.

Dr. Greene thought, “Brenda may out live them all. Unless there is a bounty on her head for the slaves.”

Dr. Greene said, “Please LORD GOD Almighty help them all. Make George ready to come to YOU and JESUS. Touch Eleanor so she can live a long life of health and enjoy life. And especially that part she has been robbed of. In JESUS ’name.”

George called for everyone to get on the train.

Everyone got on the train and walked to the balcony and waved.

Patrick and Brenda ran behind the train and saw George who ran to the back of the train and stared at his lifetime friends until the turned the bend.

Dr. Greene and Dr. Woodson watched George.

They knew his time had come.