Michael talked with Thomas about the military academy.

He said, “It won’t be long because we will be going to Europe to live.”

Thomas said, “Bruce is not going to get any of our money. I am not going to be poor. He will not start giving our money to his girlfriend and then they have children and more of our money goes to them.”

Michael said, “Momma will fight him.”

Thomas belted out a laugh and said, “Did you see momma fight Bruce’s girlfriend?”

Eleanor was standing in the hall between Michael and Thomas’ rooms listening.

She was thinking about that fight, but she felt like Thomas that Bruce will not get one red cent.

The more Eleanor think about she was pushed out of Shirley’s life and for three years Bruce had access to her family’s wealth.

Bruce’s family did not have money.

His grandfather, Bruce, had just arrived in America.

He worked at the coal mine for two years.

Percy, Patrick’ father, worked at the coal mine for five years and married Shirley, who was Patrick’s mother.

Shirley’s father owned the local coal mine.

She would drive the coal wagon to the neighborhoods to buy coal.

Percy saw her one day and wanted to date her.

He was sixteen and she was eighteen.

He did not know her daddy owned the coal mine.

Percy would never be off nor late for work because he wanted to see Shirley.

Bruce knew Shirley was the owner’s daughter.

He could not go with her to get to her father, because he was married with children.

Shirley’s father would watch Percy everyday watch his daughter.

Shirley’s father had Percy to start to help fill her coal wagon.

Bruce ran everyday and told Shirley’s father he would help load her wagon.

Shirley’s father knew what Bruce was up to.

The rumor was he was sick and may die because he worked in the coal mines all his life.

He had six children.

Five boys that worked in the coal mines and his only daughter Shirley, who was the baby in the family. He wanted her home knitting with her mother and cooking their dinner or in school.

But Shirley loved her father and wanted to be with him at all time.

Percy and Shirley finally met when Percy loaded her wagon one day.

Shirley’s father was standing in the window watching.

Percy was lanky.

Shirley was petite and strong.

She knew how to fight and defend herself because her brothers taught her.

Percy finished loading Shirley’s wagon and was looking back at the coal mine so he could go back to work.

Shirley was looking over the names of their customers and their orders.

Percy’s back was hurting from loading the wagon.

He slipped and fell.

Shirley’s father saw him and laughed.

Shirley was walking with her had down.

Her father braced himself.

Shirley fell over Percy who was struggling to get up.

Shirley was embarrassed.

Percy was struggling to get up and he was embarrassed.

Shirley’s father was laughing.

He said, “You two fools get up.”

He and his clerk ran out the office and helped them p from the ground.

Percy was so embarrassed that he stumbled back to the coal mine.

Bruce was watching all of the event.

He looked at Shirley’s daddy and walked into the coal mine.

Shirley’s daddy saw Bruce.

He did not like him, but he worked hard everyday.

He was not the only person with wife and kids.

Shirley’s father did not want Bruce near him and hoped he would go and find other work.

Shirley’s father, Thomas, became very sick.

He was not at work for nearly a month.

The workers were wondering where he was.

Percy would clean out Shirley’s wagon every evening before he left work.

Shirley would go to her wagon and found it cleaned.

The first two times she ran into the office and shut the door behind her. And leaned on the door scared.

Thomas and his clerk jumped and looked at Shirley and ran to her.

She looked around.

Thomas said, “Shirley you are pale what is it?”

Shirley said, “My coal wagon is clean.”

Thomas and his clerk stood and looked at Shirley.

They thought about what she said.

The clerk walked back to his desk and books.

Thomas handed Shirley her orders and said, “You nearly gave me a heart attack child. I thought something terrible was wrong.”

Shirley opened the door and Bruce was standing outside eaves dropping.

Thomas, his clerk and Shirley saw him.

Shirley was confused and did not speak to Bruce.

Thomas bitterly said, ”What do you want Bruce?”

Bruce pointed and said, “Did she like her wagon?”

The clerk looked at Bruce.

Thomas looked at Bruce and said, “You cleaned Shirley’s wagon?”

Bruce grinned.

Thomas saw Percy walking to the mine and called him.

Bruce turned and looked and said, “Good morning.”

Thomas said, “No don’t move.”

The clerk was watching Bruce and knew then he was a liar and trying to get favor from Thomas.

The clerk was not going to let anybody take his job away.

Percy ran to Thomas and spoke to everyone.

He looked at sly Bruce.

Thomas said, “You scared Shirley this morning.”

Percy looked at Thomas and said, “Sir. What did I do and I won’t do it again?”

The clerk smirked at Bruce.

Thomas said, “You cleaned out her wagon.”

Percy said, “I wanted it to be clean for her. I am sorry sir.”

Bruce looked very sheepish.

Thomas said, “Percy come to dinner Sunday after church.”

Percy said, “Sir?”

Thomas said, “You heard me. Don’t you have a momma and no daddy and brothers and sisters. Just you and your momma?”

Percy was shocked.

Thomas said, “Ricky give Percy my address.”

He looked back at Percy and said, “Two o’clock on the dot.”

Ricky walked over and gave Percy a note paper with Thomas’ address on it.

Bruce was embarrassed but still wanted the coal mine he walked away and thought about his lie all day.

Percy sat and waited for Shirley to return.

He was thinking and looking at the coal mine.

Percy missed going to school and wanted to go back for his mother only had his wages to live off.

Percy’s mother made pillows for the neighbors.

Percy waited for Shirley to return and he helped her out the wagon and cleaned it out and gave her horses water and hay.

He walked home.

Thomas and Shirley got in the other wagon and went home.

Ricky walked out the office.

Percy said, “Good evening.”

He turned and walked away from the coal mine and Ricky watched Percy and saw he walked to the coal mine.

Ricky rode by Percy and said, “You need a horse. How are you and your momma gonna get to Thomas for dinner Sunday?”

Percy looked around and pulled out the address.

Ricky looked at Percy and rode away.

Percy had watched Shirley for two years.

He was now eighteen and she was twenty.

Her mother was trying to find suitors for her.

Thomas was not in a rush.

He gave each son a coal mine.

Whether they increased their business or not was left up to them.

Thomas told them he would do nothing else for them.

Thomas watched Percy over the five years he worked at the mine.

He knew Percy had ideas for the business, but he did not feel he could ask him and use them unless Percy sold the ideas to him.

Percy sped up and ran part the way home.

He burst in the house and nearly gave his mother a heart attack.

She held her chest and breathed out several times.

Percy was so excited.

She sat to hear what Percy was going to say.

Percy was so excited he reached the paper to his mother.

She took the paper and read it and stared at it.

She raised her head and looked Percy.

Percy said, “Momma it is Mr. Collins’ my boss address he invited me and you for Sunday supper after church at two o’clock.”

Eleanor said, “We don’t go to church.”

Percy said, “Don’t tell them that.”

Percy stood up to go to his room and get his one good shirt and pair of pants and to shine his shoes.

Eleanor said, “How are we going to get there?”

Percy said, “Walk.”

Eleanor turned sideways in the chair and said, “You are crazy. It’s about that gal. That’s why you want to go.”

Eleanor sat and was thinking.

Percy would bring all his pay to Eleanor every week.

She has spent up all of his money.

Percy started working in the coal mine at thirteen to help her out. She has been selfish all of her life.

Now she is robbing her son of his life. She is not blind.

She sees he looks old for his age of eighteen.

His back hurts.

His hands swell, his feet swell.

She spends all of his money on her.

Neighbors have begun to talk about Eleanor.

They are no longer her friends. When her husband Michael was alive he treated her like a princess.

She got Michael because of her looks.

He promised to take care of her.

She told Michael that she would only give him one child.

He would work two jobs all the time to get her a nice house and furniture and clothes.

Eleanor would not lift a finger to help him.

The day of Michael’s funeral, Eleanor told Percy he had to go and get a job to take care of her.

Michael’s family came to his funeral.

They left the day of Michael’s funeral and his Aunt Ruth, his father’s oldest sister. Leaned down to a thirteen year old Percy and said, “Percy. I want to take you with me and my husband. He is a big lawyer in Philadelphia. We can send you to school and you can have a good life. I can’t because your mother wants you here to work and take care of her. At any time you want to come with me or any of father’s brothers and sisters we would love to have you and help.”

Percy would lay in his bed all the time and think about Aunt and what she told him on that day.

He cried because he felt his daddy put him in that bad place of taking care of his hateful and selfish mother.

Percy opened his drawer and he had no clothes and his bed was too small for him.

He wrote his Aunt Ruth a letter and told her he has worked at the coal mine for five years and his body hurt and his mother takes all of his money.

His Aunt Ruth became angry.

She sent a letter to the coal mine and told them to take thirty percent of his wages and hold them for him.

Aunt Ruth sent messages to her other brothers and sisters and showed them Percy’s letter.

They were angry.

Aunt Betsy was married to a physician said, “We can get him because he is still considered a child.”

Uncle Al said, “We have to think. Let him stay with that woman and help him out.”

Aunt Ruth told them she wrote and asked the coal mine to hold thirty percent of his wages.

The coal mine company agreed.

Uncle Ben and Matthew owned several clothing stores in the state.

They would send Percy clothes, but Eleanor would get the packages and go and sell Percy’s clothes.

His Uncle Ben wrote and said, “You can write and tell us thank you for the clothes we have been sending to you over the years.”

Percy wrote them back and said he never received any clothes and he thought they had forgotten about him.

Uncle Ben and Uncle Matthew wrote Eleanor a very scolding letter.

Eleanor read opened the letter thinking they were sending her money.

When she saw no money was in the letter she read the letter and hated the content of the letter and threw it in the fire as Percy was entering the house.

Percy saw the letter burning and acted like he did not see it.

He figured it was from one of his ants or uncles.

They started sending all of Percy’s letters to the coal mining company.

Thomas understood the way some people believed the children are to take care of them.

He helped out as much as he could.

Uncle Ben and Matthew were traveling to see where they wanted to open another store, they were doing well with their two stores.

They decided to travel to the city Percy and Eleanor lived.

They went to the coal mine and asked about his welfare.

They saw this child in the mine.

They were sickened.

They left and never told Percy they were there.

They all would put money in a jar for Percy and put it in a bank.

Aunt Ruth felt he was eighteen and have lived horribly with Eleanor.

They warned Michael not to marry her, but he thought she was beautiful and if she looked at him he would give her the world.

He died trying to give her the world.

Now his only heir is suffering from his selfishness.

His father died young and he never had a chance to be a father and enjoy anything he worked so hard for.

Aunt Betsy was the hard one of the family she wanted to confront Eleanor.

Uncle Matthew said, “No.”

Aunt Ruth said, “No.”

Uncle Al said, “No. I told him not to marry that snooty woman who had nothing but her face. She worked him to death. He has only one child. It is a good thing he had only one child because that woman would be forcing them to work for her sorry self.”

Aunt Betsy cried and said, “Michael was such a sweet soul. She pulled him away from us so she could treat him this way. I don’t want to desert Percy. He is named after our minister father.”

Uncle Al dropped his money in the jar they had for Percy and walked out Aunt Betsy’s house.

Percy got his clothes together for the next day Sunday’s supper.

He walked out the house and went to a neighbor and asked if he could use his horse and buggy to his boss for Sunday’s supper

Mr. Jones said, “Percy I will let you borrow my horse and wagon tomorrow but when you get paid next week I want you to give me change for letting you use my wagon.”

Percy looked back at his house.

Mr. Jones said, “I know your momma take all of your money. But keep out that amount for me or I will not let you use my horse and wagon.”

Percy looked back at Mr. Jones and held his head down and said, “Yes sir.”

Mr. Jones looked at Percy and said, “Yes sir what?”

Percy smiled and said, “When I get paid Saturday I will give you some change.”

Mr. Jones said, “Bring my horse and wagon like you got them.”

Percy laughed.

Mr. Jones said solemnly, “Your father was my best friend. He wanted more out of life for you than to take care of your mother.”

Percy said, “I’m all so she got.”

Mr. Jones looked at Percy and saw he was stoutly devoted to his mother and said, “You need to buy you a horse and wagon. And another pair of shoes.”

Percy looked down at his shoes.

Mr. Jones said, “Take a bath and brush your teeth and wash your hair. Whenever you go to someone’s home take them something.”

Percy said, “Like what?”

Mr. Jones was thinking because it was late evening.

He saw his wife flowers.

He looked back at his house and said, “Is there a young woman you like?”

Percy grinned.

Mr. Jones said, “I’ll put something in the wagon for you to give to them.”

Percy said, “Thank you.”

Percy ran home and got the water for the bath and wood to heat it up.

His mother went the next day and used his water to take a very long bath.

They were running close to the time they had to leave.

Percy kept hearing Mr. Jones voice to take a bath and wash his hair.

Percy smelled himself and knew he stunk.

Percy lit the tub and ran and filled up his bath and washed real good and did not have a towel because his mother used his towel.

He ran in the house naked and grabbed his sheet from his bed and dried off.

He was about to get upset.

His mother was standing at the door calling him.

Percy did not want to give a bad impression to the Collins.

He took his time and put his clothes on and combed his hair.

Percy looked at himself in the mirror.

He nearly cried.

He walked into the big room.

His mother looked at him and said, “You are just like your father.”

Percy opened the door and sad, “I am to be like him. Is that a bad thing?”

Eleanor looked at Percy.

Percy cut his eyes at her and she walked out the door.

Mr. Jones was standing outside with his horse and wagon.

Eleanor walked out the house and barley spoke to Mr. Jones.

Percy saw his mother.

Percy walked to Mr. Jones who was rolling his eyes at Eleanor.

Percy grinned at Mr. Jones and said, “Thank you sir. I’ll bring them back in good shape.”

Eleanor picked up the flowers Mr. Jones placed on the seat for the Collins.

Mr. Jones saw Eleanor and said, “Eleanor I put those flowers in the wagon for your host.”

Eleanor said, “They won’t miss them.”

Mr. Jones walked around the wagon and snatched the flowers out of Eleanor’s hand.

Percy watched the exchange between Eleanor and Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones stepped back from the wagon with the flowers.

Percy said, “Mr. Jones can I have the flowers?”

Mr. Jones was angry with Eleanor and walked to Percy and said, “You better give them the flowers and you better not let Eleanor get one.”

Percy said, “Yes sir.”

Eleanor looked at Percy.

Percy pulled off.

Eleanor looked back at Mr. Jones.

Neighbors were returning from church.

Eleanor spoke to the neighbors by slightly tilting her head.

Eleanor said to Percy, “Give me those flowers Percy.”

Percy did not respond to her and he did not look at her.

Eleanor reached for the flowers and Percy did not give it to her.

Eleanor said, “Percy give me those flowers.”

Percy said, “Why mother?”

Eleanor noticed he did not call her momma.

Percy said, “Answer me mother.”

Eleanor was shocked and said, “I am your momma. I don’t have to answer you.”

Percy continued to drive to the Collins.

Eleanor said, “Turn this wagon around and take me home.”

Percy was seething.

He stopped the wagon and said, “You get out and walk home. It’s not far. I walk everyday because I don’t have a horse to ride.”

Eleanor was out done.

Percy nodded and said, “There’s the Johnsons’ walk home with them.”

Eleanor could not say anything she was shocked.

Percy said, “I am not your husband Michael. You will not kill me.”

Eleanor jumped out the wagon and Percy pulled off.

Percy sped up and he arrived at the nice house and saw several wagons.

He looked up at the house and said, “One day.”

He was walking to the house.

Thomas was in his window watching Percy.

Thomas walked to the door and when he opened the door.

Percy jumped off the porch and ran to the wagon.

Percy remembered the flowers when he saw the beautiful roses around the Collins house.

Percy grabbed the flowers.

Mrs. Collins was standing and looking at the tall, slim young lad.

She thought he had a pleasant face, but he was skinny.

Shirley was not comfortable with a worker coming to Sunday’s supper.

Her brothers were there with their wives and children.

Shirley was nervous.

She saw her mother watching Percy.

Shirley brother Gary walked behind her and said, “Daddy have found you a husband.”

Their mother heard them.

She turned and said, “Shush you two.”

Her mother walked to the door with her husband.

They greeted Percy.

Shirley’s mother said, “Where is your mother? She was invited.”

Percy said, “She had to go home.”

Thomas snickered.

Percy saw Shirley and smiled.

Percy had the flowers in his hand.

Shirley’s mother reached for the beautiful flowers.

Percy reached them to Shirley.

Shirley’s brothers laughed and pointed at their mother.

Percy did not know what they were laughing at.

Shirley’s mother shook her head.

Percy said, “I am sorry. Here Mrs. Collins.”

Mrs. Collins took the flowers and went into the kitchen.

They all sat to the table.

Mrs. Collins moved Percy’s seat and put him next to her.

She begin to ask about his mother and father.

Percy said, “His father was dead. His mother was at home. He had aunts and uncles in Philadelphia.”

Mr. Collins said, “They are doctors and lawyers and two of them own clothing stores. I tried to get them to open one here.”

Percy turned from staring at Shirley to listen to Mr. Collins.

Percy said, “Mr. Collins how did you know about my family?”

Shirley’s older brother snickered and looked at their father.

Mr. Collins said, “I can’t hide it anymore. Your Aunt Ruth wrote to my coal company to hold thirty percent of wages for you. I have been doing that for the past three years.”

Percy said, “How did you know about their occupations?”

A maid was serving bread.

Percy shook his head for no and said, very politely, “No thanks.”

Mrs. Collins noticed that in a hot situation Percy was still polite.

She started back eating and looked at Shirley.

Shirley’s brothers started giggling.

Shirley’s mother had settled it in her heart that Percy was Shirley’s husband. But she did not know about that mother.

Mr. Collins looked at his snickering and giggling sons and then Shirley who was still looking at Percy.

He bit his beef roast and looked at Percy and said, “Your Uncles, Ben and Matthew came to the coal mine to see you about three years ago. They saw you a child in the coal mine and was hurt and left.”

Percy looked dumbfounded.

Mr. Collins said, “Why don’t you take some time off and go to Philadelphia to see them?”

Percy said, “Sir I work.”

Mr. Collins said, “And a very good worker and a hard worker.”

Percy said, “Thank you.”

Percy was perplexed.

He never thought about visiting them.

Mr. Collins said, “Take a month off.”

Mrs. Collins was watching Percy.

Percy said, “I don’t have any money.”

Mr. Collins said, “The coal mine has held your money for three years.”

She realized Percy had did not have a relationship with them.

She and Mr. Collins believed in family.

They built their house to have a large dining room for the family’s Sunday supper.

It was special to them.

Mr. Collins said, “Why do you think you get your mail at the coal mine?”

Mr. Collins had talked with his four sons to buy the coal mine from him.

They said they did not have the money because of their families and their houses.

One of Mr. Collins sons nodded his head at Percy.

Percy looked and the son ducked his head in his pudding.

Mr. Collins stopped eating and put his elbows on the dinner table and looked at his third son.

Percy was still dazed.

Mr. Collins said, “Percy not to seem that we are talking behind your back, but we are.”

The third son said, “But we really are.”

They all laughed.

Percy looked around at them.

Mr. Collins said, “I am going to sell my coal mine. My sons wanted me to ask you if you are interested.”

Percy said, “Sir?”

Mr. Collins said, “Do you want to buy my coal mine? I don’t want that Bruce to get it.”

Shirley looked at her mother and was mad.

Shirley jumped from the table and ran into the kitchen with the maids, that come on Sunday to help with the supper. They leave on Monday.

Percy stood to follow Shirley.

Shirley’s mother elbows were on the table as she watched Percy.

She said, “Shirley is fine. Sit down Percy and talk to Mr. Collins. I’ll go and check on Shirley and bring out dessert.”

The second oldest son was holding his head backwards and said, “Hurry.”

Mrs. Collins touched his face and said, “Quiet.”

Percy did not eat any dessert he sat on the with Shirley’s brothers for a while and then he went home.

He left before dark and took the hour ride and thought about getting his life together to marry Shirley.

Percy rode from that side of town and went to his side of town.

He went to Mr. Jones and returned his horse.

Mr. Jones said, “I saw your momma come back home. You put her out?”

Percy did not say anything.

Mr. Jones said, “Be careful she is your momma.”

Percy walked across the street and saw his clothes in the yard.

Percy stood and looked down at his few raggedy pieces of clothes.

Mr. Jones saw Percy was standing in the yard.

He walked over to see what was wrong.

Mr. Jones looked at Percy’s clothes.

Eleanor sat in the house by the fireplace and waited for Percy to knock on the door she had locked.

Percy stretched out on the porch with his legs hanging over the edge and went to sleep.

It was more comfortable than his bed.

Eleanor sat for several hours to wait for Percy to knock on the door and beg her to let him in.

After two hours she stood and went and looked out the window and door,

She could not see Percy because where he was laying.

When the birds started chirping.

Percy sat on the porch and saw his raggedy clothes and picked them up and walked to work.

Mr. Collins and Ricky were at work.

Percy knocked on the door.

Mr. Thomas opened the door and saw Percy’s clothes in his hand.

Mr. Thomas went to the locked room and got the container with Percy’s money and showed him the ledger.

Mr. Collins gave Percy the pen.

Percy signed and received his money.

Mr. Collins wrote down Aunt Ruth and Aunt Betsy addresses.

Mr. Collins said, “These are the addresses of your aunts. You need to telegram them and go and get on the train to go to Philadelphia. That will give you and your mother time to be apart.”

Shirley walked in the office.

Percy knew it was Shirley and he slightly turned his head to look at her.

Mr. Collins said, “she’ll be here until you get back.”

Bruce knocked on the office and walked in.

Ricky stared at Bruce and said, “Yes Bruce.”

Bruce said, “I want a word with Thomas.”

Mr. Collins looked at Bruce.

He turned back to Percy and said, “Buy this coal mine. Talk with your aunts and uncles.”

Mr. Collins stood and shook Percy’s hand.

Percy walked to Shirley with his head down and smiled.

Shirley was confused.

She turned and followed Percy out the office.

Ricky was trying to keep up with Bruce.

Bruce walked over to Mr. Collins and said, “Thomas the word is that you are trying to sell your mine. I want to buy it.”

Mr. Collins said, “You work here how can you afford to buy it. Get out of my office.”

Ricky was peeping at Shirley and Percy.

Percy went to the fire and threw his clothes on the fire.

Shirley stood and looked at Percy.

Bruce walked to the door.

Ricky looked around and saw Bruce, he opened the door so he could walk out.

Bruce walked out the office and saw Shirley and Percy talking.

Thomas walked over and was looking out the window.

Percy said, “I’m leaving.”

Shirley said, “Why because of me?”

Percy said, “Yes.”

Shirley cried to Percy for peace and said, “What did I do? Because I wasn’t friendly at supper?”

Percy said, “Yes.”

Shirley put her hands to her face to cry.

Percy grabbed her hands and pulled them from her face.

He smiled and said, “I am playing with you.”

Shirley hit Percy.

Thomas kind of smile.

Percy said, “I am going away to visit my relatives. I want to do better Shirley. I want to give you a house like your parents. I don’t want you to work as hard as you do. I want you to stay home and raise children like your mother. I want you to have an educated man.“

He took Shirley’s hands and held them in his hand and said, “I have pursued you. You never accepted it. Give me a reason to come back.”

Shirley said, “Can I think?”

Percy said, “Your father knows how to contact me.”

Percy walked away with his head down.

Ricky and Thomas were watching out the window.

Ricky said, “Go after him!”

Percy walked by the office.

Thomas and Ricky turned their heads to look at Shirley.

Shirley was still at the fire.

Thomas and Ricky looked to see where Percy was.

They looked at Shirley.

Shirley turned,

Thomas and Ricky cheered.

Shirley ran they were along with her to catch Percy.

Shirley ran into the office to her daddy.

Thomas stood and looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “He asked me to give him a reason to come back.”

Thomas looked at his daughter.

Ricky said, “What did you say?”

Thomas slightly turned to Ricky.

Shirley said, “Nothing.”

She ran to her father.

Thomas could not wait to get home to tell his wife, Mary, what her daughter did not do.

Mary sat at the kitchen table and listened to Shirley.

Thomas was rolling his eyes and making faces.

Mary looked at Thomas and said, “Stop Thomas.”

Shirley looked at her father.

Thomas did not say anything.

He and Mary were in their bedroom.

Thomas was still mimicking Shirley and making faces.

Mary hit Thomas with her pillow and knocked him off the bed.

Mary was shocked she knocked him off the bed.

She ran around the bed to see if he was hurt.

Thomas was sitting on the floor and looked at Mary.

She walked back to her side of the bed like she knew he was not hurt and she meant what she said.

She got in bed and turned her back to Thomas and exhaled several times.

Then she said, “If they are to be together they will.”

Percy walked to the railroad station.

He saw the telegram office.

He sent a telegram to Aunt Rut, that he had no place and he was on his way to her.

Aunt Ruth received the telegram the day before Percy arrived.

She and her husband ran and fixed the guest room.

She sent messages to Aunt Betsy, Al, Ben and Matthew.

They were all at the train station the next morning.

Percy stepped off the train.

He did not know how they looked after five years.

Percy was wrinkle and unkept.

He had not slept for three days.

He thought about his mother. He thought about his father.

He cried and kept the hobos awake.

Percy was trying to search every part of him and to see if there was any good in his mother.

He hated his father.

Percy really wanted to go to school.

He was robbed of that by Eleanor.

His aunts and uncles and their wives were waiting at the train.

Aunt Ruth was walking back and forth until she was making everyone anxious.

Aunt Betsy said, “Ruth stop!!”

Aunt Ruth said, “Suppose we don’t recognize him? Suppose he turned out to be a bad person?”

Suppose he doesn’t like?”

Percy saw a small group of people waiting.

He saw three men and two women and then mates. He did not see any children and figured that was his family.

He walked over to them, while Aunt Ruth was walking back and forth with her ‘supposes’.

Everyone was watching Ruth walk back and forth.

Al’s wife Linda put her hand up to her temple and said, “She’s making me dizzy.”

Al said, “Stop looking at her.”

Percy said, “No. No. No.”

Everyone turned and looked up at Michael.

Betsy passed out and her husband tried to catch but let her hit the ground.

Al and Ben looked at Percy.

Matthew said, “You look exactly like your father.”

Percy hugged everyone.

Aunt Ruth and Aunt Betsy, he held onto a little longer.

Aunt Ruth ‘s husband looked at Percy and said, “No bags?”

Percy shook his head and said, “No.”

Ben and Matthew looked at each other.

They left and went to Aunt Ruth’s house.

Percy was welcomed by his family.

He fell asleep while they were talking.

Aunt Ruth showed him his room.

Percy went to his bedroom and slept until late the next morning.

Aunt Ruth’s husband was going out the front door when Ben and Matthew were walking on the porch with packages.

Aunt Ruth’s husband held the door opened for them and was trying to peep in the packages.

He went to work thinking he hoped they remembered his shirts he ordered.

He saw Betsy dropping off Herbert at the hospital.

She passed him and spoke.

He knew she was on the way to his house to see Percy.

Jerry thought, “I hope Ruth put that roast on for dinner.”

Al was a businessman.

He had several successful businesses around the city.

One business he made boots.

He was on his way to Ruth to get Percy’s boot size so he could make him at least one pair of boots.

Betsy and Al would argue all the time why he was so cheap.

Al was married to Lucy for twenty years and they had three boys.

Lucy said she would not have any more children because she enjoyed their money and did not want it to diminish.

Lucy, Ruth and Betsy were schoolteachers.

Ruth and Betsy introduced Lucy to Al and they immediately got married.

Their three boys were away in school to become teachers.

Lucy was relieved.

Ben was not married.

He dated a married woman all his life.

They never knew who.

Ben bought a nice house and had horses and wagons.

He always had Christmas and New Years at his house.

Betsy was happy because she only had to cook Thanksgiving when it was her year.

Al was stinger and did not want to spend any money on Christmas food.

The family believed one of the women Ben invited every year to New Years was the woman.

Matthew’s wife Thomasine had two daughters from her previous marriage.

Matthew could not have children so he helped raise her two daughters.

The two daughters were attending the same school as Al’s son.

Aunt Ruth did not have children.

Aunt Betsy’s daughter was young but married the mayor last year.

Aunt Betsy and Aunt Ruth were always at different engagement.

Their husbands were complaining it was costing them money, but they enjoyed the doors that Deborah’s marriage of her high school sweetheart into a higher class of social group.

Percy woke and Aunt Ruth told him where the washroom was.

Uncle Ben gave Percy the clothes he and Matthew brought to him.

Percy eyes watered and went and took a bath and shaved and put on new and clean underwear and clothes.

Ben turned from Percy and said, “He cries over everything like Michael.”

Al said, “I saw him.”

Matthew said, “You remembered when the Baxter twins went and raided Mrs. Brown’s apple orchard and tried to blame Michael.”

Aunt Ruth leaned back in her chair and said, “I remembered that. Before they could finish accursing Michael he was on the floor crying.”

Matthew said, “Daddy said get up Michael you were in the back sleep.”

They all laughed.

He cleaned up the washroom and had his clothes in his hand.

Aunt Ruth rushed and took his old clothes from him and put them in the fire.

Uncle Al measured his feet and said he would bring him a pair of boots in five days.

Aunt Betsy said, “Al I’ll pay for a second pair of boots for Percy.”

Aunt Ruth prepared a light lunch and put her roast on for dinner.

She and Aunt Betsy talked about a garden party they were invited to on Monday.

They asked Percy what happened.

Percy said, “Shirley.”

Ben said, “What?”

Aunt Ruth and Aunt Betsy looked at Ben.

Percy said, “Her daddy owns the coal mine I work at.”

Ben turned his head.

Al said, “I know in this country children work early.”

Aunt Ruth said, “Percy how much money do you have?”

Percy went in his room to get his money.

Everyone looked at Ruth.

She said, “I want to see how little he was being paid each week and how that cow was taking his little money.”

Aunt Betsy said, “What is she going to do now?”

Al said, “Die.”

Matthew said, “I don’t care.”

Aunt Betsy said, “How much money does Percy have?”

Aunt Ruth stood and went and got Percy’s bank book and passed it around.

Percy had to count the money twice.

They watched him.

Ben got a little upset with Percy.

Betsy held her hand up to Ben.

Aunt Ruth said, “Percy you had just enough money to get here after three years.”

Al said, “Percy what do you want to do?”

Percy said, “Read and write. I want to go to school and become educated. I want to marry Shirley and provide for her.”

Al said, “You won’t be able to provide off of that at a coal mine.”

Ben walked to the window to look out.

Percy said, “Her daddy wants to sell me his coal business.”

Ben turned around and said, “How much?”

Percy shrugged his shoulders and said, “I don’t know.”

Matthew hit his fist on the table and said, “You better know if you want to marry his daughter.”

Al said, “He is trying to help you so you can marry his daughter.”

Aunt Ruth said, “Percy we will go and send them a telegram that you made it safe and you want to know how much he is selling it for.”

Percy said, “Yes ---ma am.”

Aunt Betsy said, “Yes ma am?”

Percy said, “I want to read and write and go to school.”

Aunt Ruth said, “We are all teachers. We can help you read and write and start a school in the fall after Labor Day.”

Aunt Betsy reached over to Aunt Ruth and said, “Where are we for Labor Day and school starts the day after?”

Aunt Ruth said, “I’ll check.”

Aunt Ruth said, “We have some things to do.”

She started her telegram to Mr. Collins.

Ben said, “When me and Matthew met him he seemed to be a decent man.”

Percy said, “So it is true, you came to the coal mine and left without seeing me?”

Aunt Ruth and Aunt Betsy told them they should have seen Percy.

Ben said just could not look at Percy face to face after he saw him in the coal mine and that Eleanor was at home doing nothing but enslaving Percy.

Ben include a question for him to give Percy an exclusive to raise the money.

Everyone left.

Aunt Ruth and Percy walked the short distance downtown.

They met Deborah and the mayor.

Aunt Ruth introduced her cousin to her.

Aunt Ruth saw the way Deborah was looking at Percy.

They continued to the telegram and the message center.

Then Aunt Ruth remembered she left her roast on the stove.

She and Percy saw her husband Jerry walking on the opposite side of the street.

Aunt Ruth said, we got to beat him home and maybe pretend we are getting ready to go out.

They were able to outrun Jerry.

Percy stood at the window and peeped for Jerry.

Aunt Ruth caught the roast in time.

She took the roast off and acted like she and Percy were about to leave when he walked in the house.

Jerry spoke.

Percy spoke.

Jerry said, “Percy, Ruth has you involved in her games and you have been here for only a day.”

Percy did not say anything.

Aunt Ruth said, “Sir.”

Jerry said, “I saw you two running down Grady trying to outrun me. I slowed up and talk to a few people to give you a chance to make it home. Percy is one of the tallest men in the city. I will always see his head. I hope you did not burn the roast.”

Aunt Ruth took off her hat and put down her gloves and bag.

She put her hands on her hips.

Percy did not know what to do.

Jerry said, “Come here you.”

Aunt Ruth ran to Jerry and they kissed.

Percy did a double look at the kitchen and went outside and sat on their porch until dinner.

Percy sat on the porch and greeted the neighbors passing by.

Aunt Ruth walked to the porch and told Percy to come to dinner.

Their neighbor, a judge saw the tall Percy and wanted to know who he was.

Aunt Ruth heard the judge and quickly opened the door.

He said, “Good evening Ruth.”

Aunt Ruth said, “Hello judge.”

She said, “This my deceased brother’s only child Percy.”

Percy stood and spoke and went into the house.

Percy, Ruth and Jerry had a very good evening.

Percy got their water and laundry together as his daily chore.

Aunt Ruth and Aunt Betsy worked very hard with Percy all summer to get him ready for school in the fall.

Percy sent Shirley a letter once per month.

Ben and Al saw the amount Thomas was selling the coal mine.

They tendered an offer and a down payment.

Thomas accepted.

Bruce found out about the sell to Percy and tried to sabotage it.

Bruce sent a message to Thomas that Percy had withdrawn his offer.

Thomas looked at Ricky.

Ricky said, “Bruce.”

Thomas said, “I hate him.”

Thomas started coughing.

Ricky said, “Mr. Collins.”

Thomas said, “I have black lungs. I will die within the year. I want to settle all loose ends. Shirley is a loose end.

Ricky was scared and saw Shirley out of the window.

Thomas said, “Ricky you are the suspect to have told Bruce about my deal with Percy.

Ricky said, “But I did not.”

Shirley walked into the office.

Thomas turned around to keep Shirley from seeing his face.

Shirley said, “Daddy are you alright?’

Thomas said, “No. Go and get your momma.”

Shirley was confused.

She finally turned and ran out the office.

Thomas fell to his knees.

Ricky went to get him water.

Thomas said, “Pay the men. Get all orders out today. That will carry us through this month. Ricky please get a message to Percy’s family I need them to close this deal soon.”

Ricky shook his head for yes.

He ran and paid the workers and sent out additional orders.

Shirley, Mary and Timothy (the second oldest boy) ran into the office.

Timothy closed the door and peeped out the window.

He did not believe in letting the workers know personal information.

He owned a coal mine but he was training to be a preacher.

He loved the gospel and he loved JESUS.

He kneeled down in front of his daddy and said, “What do you want to ask GOD for?”

Thomas looked at Timothy and said, “First that I have pleased HIM with my life.”

Mary turned her head and begin to cry.

Thomas reached for Mary’s hand and held onto it and said, “Mary, in sickness and in health till death us do part.”

Mary shook her head for yes.

Shirley was crying.

Ricky had just ran back into the office and locked and stood at the door.

Thomas looked at Timothy and continued, “To walk this brat,”

Shirley laughed.

Thomas said, “My beautiful princess down the aisle to her true love and have this business sold to Percy none other. If he doesn’t buy it never to Bruce. Ricky will tell you all the details. I want to walk out this office today for the last time under my own volition.”

Timothy nodded his head at his father and said, “LORD GOD Almighty in JESUS’ name YOU heard my father’s requests before you. I pray for his healing and if not that he does not suffer that help momma in the garden and help plan Shirley’s wedding and walk her down the aisle to the man YOU created and have chosen for her. That daddy will see Shirley’s children. She and her husband will live a long and prosperous life in JESUS. Amen.”

They waited for a minute.

Helped Thomas off the floor.

Thomas straighten his clothes. He bent over his desk and then stood up and Timothy opened the door.

Thomas looked up and several boys peeping and others from the mine.

Thomas said, “Timothy find another job for the boys.”

Timothy looked at the boys and said, “Yes dad.”

He looked around and saw his daddy‘s horse.

Thomas walked to the wagon and got the reins.

Timothy helped Mary and Shirley into the wagon and he went to his father’s horse and mounted his horse.

Several of the section bosses walked to the wagon.

Thomas looked at them and grinned.

They knew.

They stepped back and watched as Thomas pulled out of the coal mine yard.

Timothy rode behind the wagon.

He nodded at his daddy’s best friends.

Ricky looked around the office and locked the office up and left.

He mounted his horse and saw Bruce and others running to block him from leaving and demanded he tell them what was going on.

Ricky pulled out his gun and said, “This is America. It is not one of those pig countries you came from. I have all power and authority you six are fired. You get your stuff and leave here now. Or I will go and get the sheriff.”

Thomas’ friends who were the bosses over sections of the coal mine walked out the mine and walked over to Bruce and the other five men.

Frank said, “Get yall stuff. Leave now and don’t come back.”

Bruce yelled in Frank’s face, “We are not going no where. We got families to feed.”

Frank said, “You should have thought about that when you came to my country.”

Frank pulled out his concealed gun and pointed it between Bruce’s eyes.

The other five men ran out the coal yard.

Bruce was scared that he could not move.

Frank was mad about Thomas and he kicked Bruce hard in his stomach.

He drugged Bruce to the coal mine property line and held his gun on Bruce.

Frank said, “You are evil and I expect to see you around here again. But next time you leave in the death wagon.”

Bruce was on his knees and stared at Frank and the other coal mine bosses as they stood and looked at him with hate and disdain.

He crawled away.

They stood and watched him crawl away.

Ricky left and rode into town and sent several telegrams.

He sent one to Aunt Ruth, Uncle Ben and to Percy.

Ricky was upset.

He went back to the coal mine to make sure all things were taken care for the week-end.

Frank was securing the coal mine, he and Ralph.

They saw Ricky.

Ricky would always have the door open when Mr. Collins was not there.

Frank and Ralph walked over to the office and said, “We’re leaving. See you Monday.”

Ricky said, “Who has been in this office?”

Ralph and Frank jumped on the porch and looked around the office.

They both said, “Bruce.”

Ricky said, “I have to straighten all of this mess out.”

Frank said, “I did not see anything because I was in the mine.”

Ralph said, “I didn’t see anything but I know it was Bruce. If not we are going to put it on him.”

Ricky said, “I’ll do a little at a time over the next week. We got the important things done today.”

Ricky picked all the papers from the floor and locked the door.

Frank, Ralph and Ricky mounted their horses and rode out the coal mine at the together.

They parted and went three separate ways.

Bruce was bending down in the brushes across the street.

He was still trying to see how he was going to get the coal mine.

Aunt Ruth received her telegram while she and Aunt Betsy were helping Percy with his school work.

Aunt Ruth heard the knocked on her door and stood up and walked to the door.

Aunt Betsy was peeping at the door and then at Percy’s paper.

The telegram asked if Percy was at that address.

Aunt Ruth said, “Yes.”

Aunt Betsy heard the telegram and tapped Percy’s hand and pointed at the door.

Percy looked at the door.

He did not like anything to stop him from his time he was being taught by his aunts.

Percy sat.

Aunt Ruth looked back and said, “Percy you have a telegram.”

Percy looked.

Aunt Betsy said, “Go and get the telegram boy.”

Percy stood and walked to the door and reached for the telegram.

Jerry heard the knocking on the door and opened his office door.

He was working on a case that could help him get a judgeship. He did not want to mess up with the case, but to keep his mind on it.

He opened the door and sat for a minute.

Aunt Ruth said, “My god.”

Jerry walked out of his office and into the living room.

He stood.

Betsy looked back at him and said, “I thought all of you were at the club today?”

Jerry looked at her and said, “No. You have been here all the time and did not know I was here?”

Betsy looked at Jerry because he was always trying to call her airy.

Percy read his telegram.

Aunt Ruth was peeping over at Percy’s telegram.

Percy reached her his telegram.

Aunt Ruth reached Percy her telegram.

They exchanged telegram.

Aunt Ruth took the telegram and waved it in the air.

Jerry and Betsy stood and walked to them.

Jerry took the telegram from Ruth.

Betsy took the telegram from Percy and they read the telegram.

Jerry said, “I think you need to go Percy.”

Ruth said exclaimed, “Percy. Where is Ben?”

Betsy said, “We have three weeks before school start and Percy will be in school.”

Aunt Ruth said, “I need to go so I can kick Eleanor’s…”

Jerry yelled, “Stop!!”

He looked out the door and closed and locked the door.

He said, “I am up for a judge. You are not going anywhere, kicking nothing.”

Aunt Ruth said, “I am going.”

Jerry looked at Percy and said, “I agree somebody has to go with Percy to take care of business.”

Betsy said, “I’ll go with Percy Ruth.”

Jerry and Ruth both said, “You!”

Jerry said, “Just wait. Percy go and start packing.”

Percy stood still.

Jerry looked at him and said, “You will be back in time for school. I promise. But these two violent aunts can’t go.”

Betsy and Ruth started cursing Jerry.

Jerry turned and walked back to his office and slammed the door.

Betsy and Ruth and looked at each other.

Ruth started to go to Jerry’s office.

Jerry anticipated Ruth and Betsy storming his office, he leaned back and locked his door.

Betsy and Ruth heard the locked.

They rolled their eyes at Jerry.

Betsy said, “A woman has to go to properly assess the situation and see what type of people these are and whether the coal mine is feasible.”

Jerry hollered, “It is feasible.”

Ruth said, “Percy does not have enough money to buy that coal mine. We all of that we saved for him as the down payment. Unless?”

Betsy said, “Unless what?”

They started pretending like they were talking.

Jerry hollered, “I can’t hear.”

Betsy and Ruth snickered because Jerry was extremely nosey.

Ruth said, “Mr. Collins want to get his affairs in order. He wants Percy to marry his daughter and buy the coal mine. I want to see their house and stuff and snoop their bills and said how badly they are in need for the money if they are not in bad shape then let Percy work and pay it off. Or get loans from us.”

Jerry yelled, “Work and pay it off.”

Betsy said, “One of us got to go.”

Jerry yelled, “Betsy you stay and let Ruth go. I got important meetings I don’t want her to interrupt.”

Ruth stood and looked down the hall at Jerry’s office.

Betsy looked at her big sister.

Betsy said, “Ruth, I ‘ll will stay. I have to help campaign for the lieutenant governorship for Deborah’s husband over the next three weeks. I’ll go to the Poconos for that week and be back to get ready for school. I ordered ten dresses from Ben and Matthew and three pairs of boots from Al. I have to see about all of that for school. I ordered a lot of school supplies. I have to start planning for Thanksgiving this year.“

Ruth was still looking at Jerry’s office.

Jerry did not hear Ruth saying anything.

He turned and looked at the door.

He thought, “I really shouldn’t have said that. But I want to be a judge.”

He switched his head off and went back to his case.

Aunt Ruth finally turned back to Betsy and she was still red.

She said, “I only ordered five dresses and three pairs of boots from Al. I was holding orders back. We leave Monday. That will give me enough time to submit my orders before we board the train. I know the train leave at noon on Monday. Jerry will have time to go to the bank and get me and Percy’s traveling money.”

Betsy looked at pain to Ruth and said, “You always need to pack one evening dress and one church dress and the rest business dresses. “

Betsy was sitting on the sofa arm and kicked her leg up and said, “Oh my God I have to leave Monday also. I will be gone for nearly three weeks. Where will you stay there?”

Ruth said, “I know there is a bed and breakfast.”

Betsy said, “That will be a smart business to have there.”

Ruth cut her eyes at Betsy.

Ruth said, “Talk to Al.”

Betsy nodded her head.

Jerry thought they said something.

The five of them had different businesses throughout the state and Ben and Al would give them their money at Christmas.

Jerry thought they had money they were not sharing.

But most of the time they would re-invest the money.

None of them had debt.

Ruth said, “I will see that bitch while I am there.”

Jerry was titled in the chair to hear and he fell and hit his head on the door,’

Betsy laughed.

Ruth said, “Serve him right.”

Percy walked back from packing.

Betsy stood and kissed him and patted him on his cheeks and shook her head.

Ruth pushed her toward the door.

Betsy turned and grabbed her bags and books.

Percy said, “Hey.”

Betsy said, “Ruth got plenty of books.”

Betsy looked at Percy and sad, “My God you are your daddy.”

Percy walked Betsy to her carriage.

Betsy pulled off and Ruth was standing in the door and watched Betsy.

Percy stood heard crying.

He ran to the street to see what was wrong.

Aunt Ruth said, “Come Percy.”

Percy was pointing.

Aunt Ruth said, “She’ll be fine.”

Aunt Ruth knew Betsy regretted she did not run over Eleanor when Michael brought her and introduced her to the family.

Aunt Ruth heard the bell and said, “Percy we got to go to the stores. Run.”

They ran in the house.

Jerry said, “I want some cheese and tea.”

Ruth looked back at her husband as he was standing dipping the last tea bag in his cup.

She and Percy ran down the street went to the general store, to get gifts for his friends.

Ruth put in her orders for her school supplies.

She bought Jerry several shortbreads, cheese and teas.

She looked at Percy and said, “That should hold him until we get back.”

Percy laughed.

They walked to the railroad to double check the train schedule.

Aunt Ruth noticed the young women walking by Percy and batting their eyes.

One of Aunt Ruth’s friend walked up to Ruth and said, “I have not seen you all summer. Now it is time to go back to work.”

They laughed.

The teenage girl with Ruth’s friend elbowed the lady who was her aunt.

The aunt looked at Percy.

Aunt Ruth turned and looked at Percy who was standing and politely smiling.

Aunt Ruth looked at her friend.

Her friend cut her eyes at her niece and Ruth smiled and said, “This is my nephew Percy. We leave on Monday for him to go home. Who knows.”

Percy looked at Aunt Ruth and reached and shook the hands of the older lady and her niece.

The older lady grabbed Aunt Ruth by the elbow and said, “He has been here all summer? I see why I haven’t seen you. You been fending off the predators.”

Aunt Ruth laughed and said, “Percy dear.”

Percy knew when she calls him dear it is someone she wanted to run from.

Percy said, “Good bye.”

The aunt and the girl stood and watched Aunt Ruth and Percy.

Percy walked and put his elbow out for Aunt Ruth to hold and they walked all the way home.

The young ladies were watching Percy.

Aunt Ruth cooked dinner and stayed up until dawn and packed and had her bags and Percy bags at the door.

Ben came over Sunday afternoon and had supper with them.

He said, “He would go with them the next morning to see about the business. He said Matthew could take care of the business.

Jerry, Ruth and Percy left the house and Jerry drove the carriage to the bank then to the train station.

They met Ben who was coming out the bank.

He and Matthew were talking.

Jerry walked up to them and said, “Good morning. Have my shirts come back?”

Matthew said, “We got a lot of stuff last week. I’ll check and if so I’ll bring them by.”

Ben and Matthew drove to the train station. They talked all the way to the train station.

Aunt Betsy and Herbert were at the train station to go on vacation.

They had a lot of bags.

They greeted each other.

Betsy and Herbert went to their train.

Ben, Ruth and Percy got on their train.

Matthew and Jerry watched the two trains pulled out going in opposite directions.

Matthew was worried.

He moved into his parents’ home and completely re-modeled it. He was to have Thanksgiving at his house this year, but Lucy did not want to entertain that number people and then her family she did not want to come.

Jerry left and went to court.

Ben was adding numbers and subtracting all that day.

Ruth and Percy looked at him.

Ruth and Percy went over his schoolwork.

Aunt Ruth said, “Percy if you get through this fall. You can finish and get your diploma next spring.”

Percy grinned.

He hugged Ruth.

Ben looked up at them and smirked.

Betsy and Herbert were having a good time on the train with some of their friends who would be vacationing until the fall.