Shirley woke early that Saturday morning.

She knew not to lift the water pails to empty her hot bath water in the bathtub.

Her thoughts were on Lorraine.

Shirley began to take her hair down and comb and brush it.

She said, “God we all are going home and leaving Lorraine here by herself. I know she, Meredith and Vivienne were to spend the holidays together. Now Monica is on her way down south to dissolve her marriage. Bless her God and don’t let her have any more breakdowns nor Eleanor. I can’t take too much more. Meredith has had her baby and can’t do anything. Vivienne is emotional disturbed. Amen.”

There was a knock on the door.

Shirley was about to run to the door but stopped and looked at the time.

She said, “It’s too early for Aunt Bev.”

She eased herself to the front door and then tipped to the window.

Shirley eased the curtain back and saw Aunt Bev.

Aunt Bev looked at Shirley with a mean look.

Shirley ran to the door and unlock the door and removed the bar behind the door.

She opened the door and looked at Aunt Bev.

Aunt Bev said, “Good morning. I know it is early.”

Shirley stepped back and Aunt Bev walked in.

Shirley peeped at the carriage and said, “Where is Mabel?”

Aunt Bev said, “I don’t know.”

Shirley looked at Aunt Bev.

Aunt Bev took off her coat, scarf, hat and gloves.

Shirley was looking at Aunt Bev.

Beverly looked at Shirley and said, “I am going with yall today to help decorate the house and then I will return after the ground breaking ceremony. I got to wear that red outfit of course.”

Shirley said, “Of course. I am not the only one who loves to dress and look good.”

Beverly was walking to the kitchen and said, “Where do you think you get it from? Definitely not your momma and grand momma.”

Shirly laughed.

Beverly was pouring the hot water into the bathtub.

Shirley walked in her bedroom and got her bath oils.

She laughed and walked to the kitchen and said, “Aunt Bev. Look this is the last of my bath oils from Lorraine. It lasted until today.”

Shirley began to boohoo and cry.

She said, “We’re leaving her by herself.”

Beverly said, “You better get all that crying out your system. We got a lot to do this morning.”

Shirley was still crying.

Beverly looked at Shirley and said, “Come and get in this tub. So you can dress and we can leave. Al will pick up the carriage and horses from the train station. Tell your head man to let my carriage and horses stay…”

Shirley looked at Aunt Bev.

Beverly said, “I checked Mabel room. It is completely empty. I checked her secret hiding place for her money. The money is gone. The hundred dollars you paid her the decorations and the hundred dollars from your grandma were gone. Now I have to replace your grandma’s money today when I go to the florist and get the flowers...”

Beverly was feeling the water to make sure it was warm.

Shirley stepped in the bathtub.

Beverly said, “I think I recall what type of decorations Mabel she will do. If not I can make up something along the way.”

Shirley was sniffing.

Aunt Bev walked out the kitchen.

She unlocked the front door and carried Shirley’s bags to the carriage.

Beverly smiled at the bag that held her red dress.

Beverly walked back to Shirley’s apartment and sat on the sofa.

She thought about all the things they had to do that morning.

When Al woke her at the crack of dawn he put his finger to his lips and said, “Shush.”

Beverly looked at him and sat up.

Al eased to their bedroom door and opened it.

Beverly slipped out of bed behind Al.

The two older boys and Mark were standing on the stairs.

Al saw the boys and said, “Stay still.”

He and Beverly tipped to the kitchen area so they could see well.

Curtis had taken two of the new horses and hooked them to the new wagon and placed he and Mabel’s clothes in the wagon and pulled off laughing.

Beverly yelled, “Our new horses and wagon.”

She was trying to run to the door.

Al caught her and said, “He has one of my guns. Let them have that. They are never welcomed here again. Let them use that hundred or two hundred dollars it will not get them anywhere in life being thieves. Mabel will see that after he use all of her money and talents to get money he will threw her away.”

Beverly turned and ran upstairs and went into Curtis room.

He had taken the sheets, pillows, blankets and quilts.

The clothes she bought for him were gone.

Beverly went into Mabel’s room.

She had taken all of her bed linen.

Beverly was angry about the quilts.

The two older boys ran into their rooms and opened the armoire.

The new suits, shirts, ties, shoes and socks Beverly bought them were stolen.

The boys started to cry.

Al ran to the boy’s room.

One of the boys was laid on the floor crying.

The other boy was sitting on the foot of the bed and silent cried.

Al ran in the room and looked at the boys.

Mark ran behind Al.

He looked at the two older boys and then he turned and saw their clothes were gone.

Al turned and saw the armoire was empty.

Mark yelled, “Aunt Bev!!”

Beverly ran down the stairs and into the older boys’ room.

She saw the armoire and their boots stand were empty.

The boys were devasted.

Beverly was also very angry with Al.

He told the boys he would get them something next year.

Beverly sat next to Harold on the bed and said, “Harold you and Bennette. I will buy you new clothes and boots. If I can do it today. I will, if not we will go shopping when I return.”

Al looked at Beverly and said. “Where are you going?”

Beverly said, “Where do you think Al.”

Al was confounded and said, “I don’t know.”

Beverly said, “I have to go in Mabel’s place to help Brenda.”

Al said, “Brenda has a hundred workers that can help her. I don’t have anyone.”

Bennette, sat up from the floor and said, “I’ll help you Uncle Al.”

Harold said, “Me too.”

All the children were standing in the door.

They said, “Me too.”

Little Shirley walked in the room to Beverly.

Beverly picked Little Shirley up and sat her in her lap.

Little Shirley said, “Me too.”

Mark said, “No Little Shirley. You tear things up and we have to clean up after you.”

Little Shirley leaned forward in Beverly’s lap and said, “Ug huh.”

Mark said, “Ug huh.”

Beverly was rubbing Harold’s back.

She stood and said, “I’ll be gone a week. Help Uncle Al and don’t get in his way. I’ll put in an order at Ruth’s foe her to do dinner today and Sunday and have it delivered. Don’t do the wash. Don’t go near the fires.”

The children yell, “We won’t.”

Beverly went into their bedroom and washed and dressed.

Al looked at Beverly.

Beverly put on her green dress from the Saturday before and packed her reed dress, holiday outfit and blue dress. She packed her two work dresses and new boots and underwear.

Beverly felt good she had new clothes that were decent for her to wear.

Al took her bags to the carriage.

Beverly hugged and kissed the children.

Al walked Beverly to the carriage and helped her in.

Beverly sped to Shirley’s apartment and did not look back at Al nor the children.

Shirley looked around her room and made sure the candles were out and walked to the sitting area.

She said, “Aunt Bev.”

Beverly turned and looked at Shirley and grinned.

She said, “I told you Shirley you got your style from me.”

Shirley laughed.

They looked around the apartment.

Beverly pulled Shirley’s bathtub outside and dispose of her bath water.

Beverly locked the door and put the bar behind the door.

Shirley had on her coat, hat and gloves.

Beverly was looking around and put on her scarf, hat and coat.

She walked out the door and Shirley locked the door.

Beverly put on her gloves and said, “Lets go and get the flowers delivered to the train for Cedartown.”

Beverly told Shirley how Curtis and Mabel stole the boys clothes and boots.

Beverly stopped at the florist and paid for Brenda’s order and paid the additional fee to have someone take the flowers to the train station then.

The florist started loading the flowers in boxes to take to the train station.

The owner saw Shirley and figured she was the boss.

Beverly snickered to herself, when she walked out and saw the delivery man leaving with the flowers.

Beverly ran to Ruth’s and ordered a fried chicken dinner for Sunday with potato salad and green beans. She ordered a sausage. Rice and beans dinner for Saturday.

Beverly paid for the two orders.

She rode to grocery and bought eggs, milk, cheese, butter and bread and had it delivered to Al.

She and Shirley rode to the clothing store.

Beverly got both boys two pairs of boots, socks, two suits, two shirts and two ties.

Shirley was smiling and greeting people as they stared at this impeccable dressed young lady.

Beverly saw Shirley and muttered, “Get your so and so over here and help me.”

Shirley tried to grin but turned red from embarrassment.

Beverly said, “I don’t remember seeing the boys’ coats and gloves.”

Shirley said, “Aunt Bev. You are not going to have them arrested.”

Beverly was looking at the coats and said, “The sheriff rather shoot them than to arrest them.”

Beverly found two dress coats, scarves, hats and gloves.

She put the clothes on the account and had everything delivered to Al.

Beverly said, “Oh God.”

The salesclerks looked at Beverly.

Shirley looked at Beverly.

Beverly said, “The children at the hospital.”

She and Shirley looked around and went to the toys.

They bought Betty a colored ragged doll and Charles Jr. a ship.

Shirley had the store salesclerks wrapped the toys.

She and Beverly looked at the time and sped to the train station.

Mike was at the headquarters and saw Shirley step out the carriage.

He saw an attractive black woman step out the carriage.

Mike walked out the office and over to Shirley.

He introduced himself to Shirley and said, “Your mother said, the train will be here for four hours and for you all to be on the train when it pull out. She said, to buy Barry and Ryan a Christmas gift from the family.”

Shirley stood and stared at Mike.

Beverly said, “Who does she think she’s telling what to do? We don’t have time for that.”

Mike looked at Beverly.

He said, “Where is your bags Miss Stith?”

Beverly was huffed.

Shirley was dazed and turned and said, “In the carriage.”

Mike beckon for two workers.

The workers walked over and got the bags out the carriage.

Beverly said, “Shirley, the carriage.”

Shirley said, “Mike, we are leaving the carriage for my Uncle to pick it up later. Especially now since I have to go somewhere and buy some toy.”

Mike said, “There is a general store right there at the corner. They have toys.”

Beverly and Shirley turned and looked back.

Mike said, “There was a large floral order that arrived for your grandmother about two hours ago. We have loaded the packages already.”

Shirley was still trying to see the general store.

She turned around to Mike and said, “Thank you. When will my brothers’ arrive?”

Beverly was watching the workers carry the bags.

The train whistle blew.

Shirley grinned.

Beverly jerked around and out of fear said, “Is that them?”

Mike said, “The train will be here in five minutes.”

Beverly said, “Are there rocks around here?”

Mike said, “Ma am?”

Shirley grabbed Beverly’s hand and said, “She was kidding.”

Beverly said, “The hell I was.”

Mike looked at Beverly.

He saw she was the height and color of Brenda.

He wondered if she and Brenda were kin.

Shirley and Beverly stood and saw the train pull in.

They saw the workers coming back from taking their bags to the train.

Beverly was slyly looking around for sticks, rocks, bones anything she could use on the boys.

Shirley looked at her and said, “Aunt Bev stop. They are not going to attack you.”

Beverly looked at Shirley and made a face like they better not and blew her lips.

Shirley looked at Beverly and grinned.

They heard the boys yelling out the train windows.

Michael yelled, “Hey yall there is that heifer.”

Shirley slowly turned from Beverly and looked at the train until she saw Michael pointing at her.

She began to sniff.

Beverly said, “You better get you a rock.”

Shirley began to cry and said, “I can’t throw.”

Beverly said, “Just throw it. You will hit one of them.”

Shirley started looking around for a rock.

Sam prepared the train for people to depart.

Michael was the first person to leave the train.

He jumped off the train and did not use the steps.

Sam’s heart skipped a beat.

Bruce followed and jumped off the train.

The patrons looked at the boys.

Thomas ran off the train and jumped over the rails.

Mike was standing and looking he thought, “Those are Eleanor’s boys. Bad as hell.”

Percy jumped off the train and ran stood on the rails.

Mike ran out the office and yelled, “Percy get your a\*\* off that rail.”

The workers were standing and staring at the rambunctious boys.

Percy jumped off the rail and fell onto the ground.

Sam jerked.

All he could see was Eleanor in his face fussing about how he didn’t stop her boy from getting hurt.

He laughed and stood and ran to Aunt Bev.

She hugged them.

Shirley tried to hug the boys, but they snatched away from her.

Sam yelled, “Your bags!”

Mike said, “Let them go!”

He looked at the two workers that took Shirley’s bags to the train and said, “Take those bags with hers.”

Mike thought, “In two years he will be my boss.”

The two workers walked over to Sam and picked up the small bags and carried them to the train for Cedartown.

Sam looked at the boys run to the carriage as he helped the patrons off the train.

He said, “I see why Eleanor drink.”

Beverly said, “Pile in. We have stops to make.”

Michael said, “What kind of stops?”

Beverly looked and saw Shirley walking with her head down and picking things off the ground.

Thomas was looking at Shirley and said, “What is she doing?”  
Beverly cut her eyes at Thomas.

Shirley walked to the carriage and got in.

Beverly whispered, “Shirley not necessary. Use your belt.”

Shirley sniffed and looked at Beverly.

Beverly said, “First stop, your mother said, to buy Barry and Ryan Jr a toy as a gift from your family to them. The man at the train station said, a general store is around here. I have lived here all of my life and I have never seen…”

Michael said, “There Aunt Bev.”

Beverly pulled to the general the boys jumped out the carriage.

Beverly walked over and helped Shirley out the carriage.

The boys ran in the store and found the toys.

They got a ship and a train for the boys.

Beverly said, “Take them to the counter to be wrapped.

Bruce took the toys to the counter to be wrapped.

Percy was looking at some periodicals and said, “Is Leon and Spencer still in the hospital?”

Beverly said, “Spencer is well and went home to his family last week. Leon is not well but he is still in the hospital.”

Percy got a stack of periodicals for Leon to read.

Thomas looked and saw books.

He selected books for the six doctors and took them to the counter to be wrapped.

Bruce found a rag doll for Sally.

The boys agreed on the color of hair and Percy took it to be wrapped.

Michael found a jar of suckers for Dr. Ralph.

The salesclerk said, “Ten dollars.”

The boys looked at Beverly.

Beverly said, “Shirley.”

Shirley was about to sit by Beverly but stood and walked to the counter.

Michael yelled, “Wait! Meredith and Lorraine.”

The boys started turning around looking at what they could buy as gifts.

Shirley said, “Oh Meredith had her baby this week.”

The boys stopped and looked at Shirley.

Bruce said, “Had boy or girl.”

Shirley grinned and said, “Boy.”

Percy threw his arms in the air and said, “Boys rule.”

The manager of the store looked at Shirley.

Shirley walked to the counter and paid the ten dollars.

Beverly jumped up.

The manager and salesclerk looked at Beverly.

Shirley looked at Beverly.

Beverly said, “I did not pack a nightgown nor underwear.”

The manager and the salesclerk pointed to an area of the store.

Beverly walked over and got three gowns and four underwear.

She walked back to the counter and placed them on the counter and went and sat.

Shirley looked at Beverly and said, “I’m suppose to pay for these?’

Beverly muttered and turned her head and said, “Yes you do.”

The boys said, “We have to get the baby a gift.”

Michael said, “Gifts.”

Beverly said, “We got the baby many gifts from you.”

Michael looked at Beverly and said, “Alright.”

The manager looked at Beverly.

Beverly turned and looked at Shirley.

Shirley shook her head.

Beverly was thinking, “I know that boy just didn’t say that. I have to be on a train with them for three days. I see why Lorraine and all the staff drink and Brenda try to pretend they ain’t bad.”

Beverly sat and folded her arms and huffed.

The salesclerk giggled.

Shirley looked at Beverly and then she looked at her brothers running through the store.

Beverly saw a packaged cake.

She went and got the cake and put it on the counter.

Shirley looked at Beverly.

Beverly said, “Leon.”

The boys walked to Beverly and said, “What to get for Lorraine and Meredith?”

Lorraine said, “Perfume.”

The manager reached behind him and got two expensive fragrances.

Shirley looked at the manager.

He grinned at Shirley.

The salesclerk smiled at Shirley wrapped the fragrances.

The manager said, “Ten dollars.”

Shirley paid the ten dollars.

The boys were about to run out the store and left all the packages on the counter.

The manager looked at the boys.

The salesclerk looked at the boys.

Beverly was looking at the door and not the boys.

Shirley yelled, “Get back here and get these damn packages!!!”

Beverly jumped in her chair and nearly fell out the chair.

She never heard that deep hard voice from Shirley.

The boys stopped and looked back at Shirley.

They were so shocked at Shirley.

They turned and slowly walked back to the counter.

Percy picked up an armful of packages.

Bruce picked up an armful of packages and Thomas picked up arm an armful of packages.

Michael picked up his sucker jar he bought for Dr. Ralph.

They looked at Shirley and marched out the store.

The store manager looked at Shirley and said, “Sometimes you have to raise your voice.”

Beverly watched the silent boys march to the carriage and pile in.

Shirley tried to get her composure back but could not.

She was nearly in tears and thought, “I have only been with them an hour.”

Beverly stood and looked back at Shirley and said, “Dry it up. We have a long way to go.”

Beverly nodded at the store manager and the salesclerks.

They rode to Stith first and unloaded the packages.

The boys jumped out the carriage.

Beverly said, “Hey!”

Percy and Bruce ran back to the carriage.

Bruce helped a crying Shirley out the carriage.

She muttered, “Thank You.”

Bruce looked at her and said, “I’m sorry Shirley.”

Thomas sat in the middle in the back and watched Shirley’s face.

He jumped out the carriage and said, “I’m sorry too Shirley.”

Michael was looking out the carriage and said, “I’m not apologizing to the heifer for nothing.”

Beverly and Percy heard Michael.

Beverly loaded Percy’s arms with gifts.

Thomas ran to Beverly to help. Beverly gave Thomas the rest of the gifts.

Bruce was trying to comfort the crying Shirley.

Dr. Woodson and Hutch stood in the room with Nurse Lillian and saw the drama.

Michael jumped out the back seat and rolled his eyes at Shirley and carried his only gift.

Dr. Woodson shook his head.

Hutch whispered, “Could have been yours.”

Dr. Woodson smiled and said, “I would have loved it.”

Hutch smiled.

Nurse Simons was helping Nurse Lillian put on a fastener on her back.

Nurse Lillian said, “Oh my God this feels great.”

Hutch and Dr. Woodson turned to Nurse Lillian.

Dr. Woodson said, “Excuse me.”

Hutch stood and watched Nurse Simons help Nurse Lillian.

Hutch walked out the door behind Dr. Woodson.

Percy and Thomas were standing at the hospital’s door looking in.

Michael was walking up with his gift in his hand.

Dr. Woodson stood for a minute to see if Michael was going to open the door for Percy and Thomas.

Beverly was standing back and watching everything.

Hutch watched Beverly watching the kids.

Bruce was walking with a sad Shirley.

Michael opened the door and walked in.

Dr. Woodson said, “Michael.”

Michael said, “They don’t need help. We have been taught how to do.”

Hutch looked and saw Percy caught the door with his foot and Thomas caught the door with his back.

Thomas let Percy in and Thomas walked in.

Michael was walking to Dr. Woodson and he looked and saw Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked and saw Michael.

Michael ran to Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph caught Michael and they hugged each other.

Dr. Woodson laughed.

Hutch laughed.

Michael reached the jar to Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph took the jar and said, “Open it?”

Michael said, “Yes.”

Dr. Ralph said, “What can this be?’

Michael was waiting with excitement to see Dr. Ralph’s facial expression.

Dr. Ralph unwrapped the gift and saw the large jar of suckers.

He and Michael shook hands.

Dr. Charles laughed.

Percy and Thomas walked to Dr. Woodson.

The boys were excited to see Hutch and Dr. Woodson.

Shirley walked to Dr. Woodson and said, “Momma said to give Barry and Ryan Jr a Christmas toy from the family. Can we leave Barry’s gift here for Dr. Greene to give it to him?”

Hutch blinked.

Dr. Woodson said, “I’ll give it to Dr. Greene.”

Shirley walked to Percy and found Barry’s gift and gave it to Dr. Woodson.

Felipe walked over to the small gathering and said, “Hello. Let me go and see if Meredith and Felipe Jr. are awake.”

Dr. Felipe walked down the hall.

Michael walked to the end of the hall and watched Dr. Felipe.

Thomas eased behind Percy and watched Felipe.

Dr. Woodson chuckle he thought, “Michael and Thomas still think Meredith belongs to them.”

Hutch watched Michael and Thomas.

He thought they look distinguish in their military academy uniform.

He looked at Percy and said, “Percy why is trousers torn?”

Shirley was going through the gifts and said, “He jumped on the train rail and jumped off and fell to the ground.”

Dr. Woodson stared at Percy.

Hutch stared at Percy.

Hutch whispered to Dr. Woodson, “Regrets?’

Dr. Woodson stood for a minute and shook his head for no.

Thomas nearly dropped his bags.

Bruce rushed to Thomas.

Thomas said, “That’s Hutch.”

Hutch looked and Bruce reached him a wrapped gift.

Thomas said, “Dr. Woodson.”

Bruce reached the wrapped gift to Dr. Woodson.

Hutch said, “Thank you.”

Thomas and Bruce said, “Thank you.”

Percy said, “Hurry Shirley I want to see the baby and Leon.”

Leon heard them and said, “I’m not going anywhere.”

Hutch exhaled.

Dr. Woodson slightly looked at Hutch.

Beverly walked in the hospital and was standing and watching the children.

She smiled at Hutch and Dr. Woodson.

Bruce said, “Thomas whose gift is this?”

Thomas said, “Dr. Greene.”

Dr. Woodson reached for it.

Bruce gave the gift to Dr. Woodson.

Thomas said, “Take this one to Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Ralph heard his name and walked over to the boys.

He rubbed Michael’s head.

He shook his head and said, “Michael has not moved but has been looking at Felipe.”

Dr. Woodson said, “They still think she is theirs.”

Beverly grinned.

Bruce reached Dr. Ralph his gift.

Dr. Ralph knew the gift was a book and said, “Can I open it?”

Bruce looked at Thomas.

Thomas said, “It’s yours I guess so.”

Dr. Woodson grinned.

Dr. Ralph unwrapped the book.

Hutch and Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Ralph’s book.

Dr. Ralph said, “God. The pictures are wonderful.”

He looked at the Thomas and said, “I thank all of you. But Thomas I know you picked out this book, because of my love of this type of horse.”

Dr. Ralph hugged Thomas and then Bruce and Percy.

Michael saw betty and jumped.

Beverly watched Michael and was tickle.

Michael said, “Hey yall there is a black girl.”

Everyone walked to the hall to look.

Betty stopped walking on her cane.

She looked at everyone looking at her.

Beverly walked to her and said, “Good morning Betty. These are my nephews. They are on their way home for the Christmas break. They won’t hurt you. I promise you.”

Betty looked at Bruce, Thomas and Percy staring at her.

She leaned to Beverly.

Beverly patted her on the head.

Dr. Woodson and Hutch were looking.

Beverly said, “Betty I am sorry I should have been combing and plaiting your hair every day I was here. Who has been combing your hair?”

Betty said, “Charles Jr.”

Beverly said, “What!”

Michael walked to Beverly.

Dr. Woodson and Hutch watched Michael.

Dr. Ralph stopped and watched Michael walk to Betty.

Michael reached out his hand and said, “Hi, I am Michael Simmons. You know my aunt Beverly. Do you know my sister Shirley?”

Betty peeped around at Shirley, who was still going through the gifts Percy was holding.

Shirley said, “Hey Betty.”

Betty said, “Hey.”

Dr. Ralph walked to Dr. Charles to finish rounds.

Thomas walked to Betty and said, “Hi I am Thomas.”

Betty looked at Thomas and said, “Hi.”

Charles Jr. yelled, “Betty who you talking to?”

Betty said, “Some boys.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Quiet.”

Beverly turned to Dr. Woodson and said, “Quiet. After they yall be breaking people bones amidst their screaming.”

Leon heard Beverly and started laughing.

Hutch flinched but did not say anything.

Dr. Woodson nodded at Beverly.

Beverly turned and saw Betty had pocked out her lips and began to cry.

Beverly bent down and said, “Not you Betty.”

Thomas said, “We got you a Christmas gift Betty.”

Shirley said, “Thomas why you tell her that when I am still trying to go through these gifts.”

Betty looked at Shirley.

Bruce walked to Betty and said, “Hi I am Bruce. I will be an United States ambassador when I am grown.”

Betty said, “Why you telling me?”

Dr. Woodson never shows his emotions he nearly hit the floor at Betty.

Hutch smiled and said, “Kids.”

Beverly saw Dr. Woodson joy she smiled.

She said, “Boys go and finish giving out the gifts. I am going to visit with Betty and Charles Jr and Vivienne and Sally.”

Shirley said, “I can take them to see Lorraine.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

He continued to work on his patient’s chart.

Shirley said, “Betty you want your gift now or you want it under the tree?”

Betty said, “I’m a kid. I want it now.”

Dr. Woodson and Hutch turned their backs and laughed.

Shirley saw Charles Jr. gift and got it from Percy.

Shirley walked to Betty and bent down and said, “Merry Christmas Betty.”

Betty grabbed the gift and tore the paper off and cried loudly at the doll.

Dr. Ralph walked around the corner and picked her up and carried her to her room.

Shirley followed them.

Charles Jr. looked at Betty and said, “Betty you alright?”

Betty nodded for yes.

She held up her rag doll and showed it to Charles Jr.

Charles Jr. said, “That made you cry?”

Betty nodded her head for yes.

The boys walked in the room.

Charles looked at the boys and said, “Betty was talking to yall?”

Beverly said, “Charles Jr these are my nephews.”

Charles Jr. looked at Beverly and said, “They’re white.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Charles Jr.

Beverly raised her eyebrows and said, “Their father is white.”

Charles jr. said, “Oh.”

Michael said, “And our grandpa is white too.”

Dr. Ralph was looking at Charles Jr.

Shirley said, “Charles Jr. this is your Christmas gift do you want it now?”

Charles Jr. looked at Betty and said, “Will it make me cry?”

Shirley said, “I don’t know.”

Charles Jr. opened his gift and it was drawing paper and colors.

He started crying.

Laura said, “It’s ok sweet babies.”

Shirley looked through the gifts that Percy had and got the gift for Laura.

She walked to Laura and reached her her Christmas gift from her family.

Laura looked at Shirley and said, “You look beautiful Shirley but why are you sad?”

Dr. Ralph leaned his ear so he could hear.

Shirley said, “My brothers don’t like me.”

Laura looked at Shirley and said, “I’m sorry.”

Shirley said, “Have a wonderful Christmas Laura.”

Laura said, “I’m a big kid. I’m opening my gift now.”

Laura unwrapped her gift and saw the beautiful case with bows.

She cried and fell back on her pillow.

The boys were in the room talking to Charles Jr. and Betty.

Thomas walked to Dr. Charles and gave him his book.

Dr. Charles said, “Thank you very kindly.”

Thomas walked in Sally’s room and gave her her Christmas gift.

Dr. Charles walked to the end of the nurses’ desk and looked in the room at Sally.

He was waiting for Sally to cuss or be rude.

She said, “Thank you Bruce.”

Bruce said, “You are welcome Sally. Have a merry Christmas.”

Bruce said, “Miss Vivienne have a Merry Christmas.”

Vivienne said, “Oh thank you Bruce you also.”

Charles loved Vivienne’s genuine nature of greeting people and being pleasant.

The nurses looked at Dr. Charles as he threw his hands in the air and on top of his head.

Bruce was walking out of Sally’s room and stood and looked at Dr. Charles.

Dr. Charles said, “This is not at you Bruce. Thank you. Thank all of you for my Christmas gift. Have a Merry Christmas.”

Bruce looked at Dr. Charles and the giggling nurses and said, “All of you have a Merry Christmas.”

Bruce walked away and met Dr. Ralph who rubbed Bruce on the top of his head.

Felipe walked out Meredith’s room with the baby.

He saw the boys in Betty and Charles Jr.’s room and he walked to the door and said, “You have to be quiet. This is Meredith and my son Felipe Jr.”

Bruce saw Felipe and ran to him.

The boys jumped up and was peeping at Felipe Jr.

Michael said, “He’s a baby.”

Felipe was startled and said, “Yes he is new.”

Charles Jr. was sitting up in his bed peeping at Felipe Jr.

Beverly watched Betty and Charles Jr.

Beverly sat on Betty’s bed and combed and brushed her hair.

Beverly said, “Betty you have beautiful thick hair.

Beverly made Betty two thick plaits and tied yellow ribbon to the tips.

Thomas said, “I want to see Meredith.”

Dr. Woodson and Hutch turned and looked at the demanding Thomas.

Felipe looked at Beverly and she shrugged her shoulders.

Felipe said, ”She wants to see you also. But for a minute.”

Shirley went into the armful of gifts and gave Thomas Meredith’s gift.

She put it on top of Felipe’s book.

The only gifts left were Leon’s and Ryan Jr.

The boys went to Meredith.

She could barely keep her eyes opened.

Michael looked at Felipe.

Felipe looked up from Felipe Jr and saw the boys looking at him.

Michael said, “What is wrong with her?”

Felipe looked at Michael and turned his head to the side.

He thought, “I know these children don’t think I have hurt Meredith. GOD help me.”

Dr. Woodson heard Michael.

Hutch heard Michael.

Felipe gently said, “I have not hurt Meredith. I love her. She is my wife. She is a little sick from having our baby.”

Beverly was listening.

Felipe saw when the boys’ eyes went to Felipe Jr.

Felipe grabbed Felipe Jr and covered him with his arms.

The boys laughed

Felipe said, “I love Meredith and I will never, never hurt her. She is getting better every day.”

Shirley said, “Thomas put their gifts on the dresser and let’s go. We can only spend a minute with Lorraine.”

Felipe looked and said, “Lorraine. Should you be going to see Lorraine?’

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

Dr. Woodson and Hutch were listening.

Felipe said, “Michael, you are a child. How old are you?”

Michael did not answer.

Hutch walked down the hall to Meredith’s room.

He said, “You have but a minute to see Leon.”

Thomas and Michael were holding Meredith’s hands.

Thomas and Michael said, “Merry Christmas Meredith.”

They kissed her hands and put them on the bed.

The boys looked at Felipe.

Felipe looked at the boys.

Bruce said, “Merry Christmas Dr. Felipe.”

Felipe said, “No Felipe but Doctor. Are you all mad with me because you think I have hurt your wonderful Meredith. I did not hurt her. You all have hurt my feelings.”

Percy said, “How old are you?”

Felipe’s mouth fell opened.

Meredith laughed.

Everyone looked back at Meredith.

Thomas and Michael ran to Meredith.

She could barely talked.

She said, “I love all of you. Don’t fight Felipe. He did not hurt me.”

Bruce and Percy looked at Felipe.

Hutch watched all of them.

Meredith went back to sleep.

Thomas and Michael left the room and looked at Felipe and said, “Merry Christmas Felipe.”

Felipe nodded his head for approval.

He said, “Merry Christmas Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael.”

The boys ran to Leon’s room.

They quietly walked in the room.

Felipe peeped out the door and said, “Those little spoiled rascals. They acted like they wanted to fight me for hurting Meredith. I don’t know who is spoiled her or them.”

Meredith laughed.

Hutch looked at Meredith.

Felipe put the baby next to Meredith and walked out the room with Hutch.

Felipe said, “I believe those boys have spoiled her.”

Hutch laughed and walked to Leon.

Shirley was at the nurses’ desk talking to the nurses.

Beverly was talking to Betty and Charles Jr.

The boys were talking to Leon about their training.

They gave Leon his Christmas gift.

He said, “He wanted to open it.

Thomas and Michael helped him to unwrap the periodicals.

Leon was looking at the periodicals and said, “Thank you.”

He looked at all the boys and said, “Thank you all very much. I won’t be isolated. This is a very thoughtful gift.”

The boys talked to Leon for a few more minutes.

Hutch said, “You have to leave.”

The boys said, “Merry Christmas Leon and Happy New year.”

Leon teared up and said, “Merry Christmas to you all.”

Hutch stood in the doorway and made sure the boys left.

Shirley saw the boys walking from Leon.

Percy walked to Dr. Woodson and said, “Is Leon going to die?”

Dr. Woodson said, “Percy I can’t answer that only GOD can.”

Leon heard Percy.

Leon laid in his bed and cried.

He fell asleep.

Beverly went to visit Vivienne and Sally.

She saw Sally was playing with her rag doll.

Beverly and Vivienne sat and talked for a long time until Shirley and the boys returned.

Beverly walked over to Leon’s room and left his packaged cake.

Dr. Woodson said, “Beverly.”

Beverly said, “Pleas let him keep it. Even for decoration.”

Leon said, “The hell. I want this lemon cake.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Beverly.

Beverly walked back to Leon and said, “Hi Leon. You weren’t suppose to say anything…”

Leon laughed.

Beverly said, “I have to go to Cedartown with Shirley and the boys today to help Brenda out. I’ll be back in a week.”

Leon said, “Brenda has a hundred servants, but you have to go to Cedartown.”

Beverly said, “Yes.”

Leon said, “Close the door I have something to say.”

Beverly closed the door and sat by Leon.

Dr. Woodson and Hutch looked at Leon’s door.

Leon was talking low.

No one could hear him but Beverly.

Leon finished talking to Beverly.

She said, “I understand.”

Beverly opened Leon’s door.

She walked pass the nurses’ desk and sat in the lobby for a few minutes.

Dr. Woodson was waking out a patient’s room and watched Beverly.

He saw she was dazed.

He wondered what Leon said.

Dr. Woodson did not like Leon’s condition. He could not understand what happened to him.

Everyday Dr. Woodson prayed hard for Leon.

Dr. Woodson is waiting on GOFD’s answer.

He watched as an angry Shirley pulled up in front of the hospital with the boys.

He chuckled.

Hutch saw the carriage full of children pulled up.

Beverly put on her coat, scarf, hat and gloves and said, “Have a good day.”

She walked out the hospital.

Beverly was in a dazed.

Shirley jumped out the wagon and ran pass Beverly into the hospital.

Dr. Woodson’s mouth dropped open.

Dr. Ralph was walking to go to the kitchen for lunch.

He stopped and looked at Shirley.

Shirley’s fists were balled and she was stomping.

Dr. Ralph knew it had to do with Lorraine.

Dr. Felipe was still fussing that the boys acted like they wanted to jump on him because they thought he hurt Meredith.

Dr. Felipe said, “I see now that it is Meredith that is spoiled not the boys she spoiled but the boys have spoiled her.”

Dr. Charles and Dr. Woodson laughed all morning at a pouting Felipe.

Hutch said, “Felipe what are you going to do to Meredith or the boys?”

Felipe reached his hand into Dr. Ralph’s sucker jar and got a grape sucker and unwrapped it and threw it in his mouth.

The nurses laughed.

Dr. Ralph grinned at Felipe.

Felipe said, “Not a damn thing.”

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Charles hollered.

Felipe went and sat by Sally’s room.

Sally looked at Dr. Felipe and said, “Dr. Felipe.”

Every one paused.

Felipe turned and looked at Sally and said, “Yes Sally.”

Vivienne was looking out the window and she turned to see what Sally was about to say to Dr. Felipe.

Sally said, “May I have a sucker please.”

Dr. Charles stomped and started cursing.

Dr. Felipe stood and looked at Dr. Charles and said, “It’s not funny now.”

Dr. Ralph was laughing.

Nurses were giggling.

Dr. Ralph said, “She has to brush and gargle immediately.”

Dr. Felipe walked into Sally’s room with a red sucker.

She reached for the sucker.

Dr. Charles was standing and peeping in the room at Sally.

Sally said, “Thank you.”

Dr. Charles nearly passed out.

The nurses hollered.

Dr. Felipe said, “You are welcome Sally.”

Dr. Felipe walked out Sally’s room and looked at Dr. Charles.

He smirked and sat down and suck his lollipop and read over the patient’s chart.

Vivienne walked out the room and went to the wash area and got hot warm, washcloth and peroxide.

She was walking back to Sally’s room when she saw Beverly sitting in a daze.

She saw Shirley storming into the hospital.

Dr. Ralph stood for a second and watched Shirley.

He walked to the hospital’s door and looked at Michael stomping into the hospital.

Dr. Ralph opened the door for cute Michael as he stomped behind Shirley.

Shirley walked into the hospital’s administrator’s office and Michael followed her.

He closed the door and locked the door and started screaming at Shirley.

Nurse Simons said, “At least he knows how to close the door for privacy.”

Dr. Woodson stood for a minute and he saw Dr. Ralph walking to the hospital’s administrator’s office.

Dr. Woodson said, “He used to own this hospital until he sold it to Shirley.”

The nurses just sat and looked at Dr. Woodson.

Hutch looked at the nurses.

He did not want them to know too much about the children.

He thought about how Ryan have a fit anytime they are around and he wears his holster with two guns.

Hutch first thought Ryan was over-reacting.

Then he began to see the Stiths relationship with the President of the country and how the president’s enemies would go after his friends. The diplomats and business people.

He thought about that bad little Michael and slick Thomas.

Hutch chuckle.

Dr. Woodson looked at Hutch and over at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph turned reached to Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “Key.”

Hutch laughed out.

The nurses turned and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Woodson said, “What?”

He reached in his pants pocket and gave Dr. Ralph the key.

Dr. Ralph said, “I know they have done something about Lorraine. I’ll talk to Ryan this evening.”

Hutch stopped laughing and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Woodson walked behind Dr. Ralph.

Nurse White said, “And he locked the door. How old is he? I got two nieces about his age.”

Dr. Woodson peeped out the door at the carriage.

The boys were standing outside the carriage.

Beverly was talking with them.

Hutch thought, “I know those rascals did not go and release Lorraine from the hospital.”

He stopped and tried to concentrate on his patient.

But he could not.

He sat near the hospital administrator’s door and tried to listen.

Leon said, “No fun when someone close the door on you.”

Hutch turned and looked in the room at Leon.

He stood and walked in Leon’s room and sat.

He stayed in Leon’s room nearly an hour and talked.

Leon asked Hutch to pray for him.

Leon remembered the times Hutch said the LORD said something it happened just the way Hutch said.

Shirley went to the telegram machine and sent Eleanor a long telegram while Michael was screaming at her.

Dr. Ralph and Dr. Woodson stood and listened to Michael.

Shirley finished her telegram to Eleanor.

She stood and looked and saw Dr. Ralph and Dr. Woodson looking at her.

Michael looked at Dr. Woodson and Dr. Ralph and said, “Ryan said, Lorraine was just laying in bed. She can lay in bed at our house. Don’t you think.”

Dr. Ralph was watching Shirley and he looked back at Michael.

He said, “Michael, what did you do?”

Michael walked over and sat in the chair.

Dr. Woodson looked at the pouting spoiled Michael.

Michael put his left elbow on the chair.

He said, “Nothing because Ryan put us out.”

Dr. Woodson’s mouth dropped open.

Michael used his left hand and moved them as he was thinking.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I’m going to lunch. Michael come and get in the carriage so you all can go home to your momma.”

Michael said, “She may whip me.”

Dr. Woodson shook his head to get rid of the confusion from Michael and blew his breathe and said, “She should. You don’t rule no hospital and you are not a doctor. You are not staying here. I will have to take you to your daddy.”

Michael jumped up and ran out the door.

Dr. Ralph ran to the door to see where Michael was.

He saw Michael jumping in the back of the carriage.

Shirley was crying.

She said, “They all were hollering at me to shut up and it was my fault that Lorraine was attacked in Ne York. Ryan put us all out of the hospital. I picked up a few rocks and started throwing at them. I hit Thomas in the eye. The rest ducked.”

Dr. Woodson said, “You hit Thomas in the eye.”

Shirley was crying.

Dr. Woodson said, “Come on Shirley.”

Shirley walked to Dr. Woodson.

He looked around to see if they left anything in the office. He walked out and took the key out the door and put it in his trouser pocket.

He walked her to the carriage and put her in it.

Dr. Ralph was examining Thomas’ eye.

Dr. Woodson walked around and looked at Thomas’ eye.

Dr. Ralph said, “It’s a bruise. I don’t see any other damage.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Why didn’t you move Thomas?”  
Thomas said, “I didn’t think she could throw.”

Shirley yelled and pulled the horses out.

Dr. Ralph caught the carriage.

He said, “Shirley stop it.”

Dr. Ralph stared at Shirley.

He reached for Thomas and said, “Come and get in this wagon and you all behave until you get him.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Your mother always said for you to mind the oldest. Shirley is the oldest.”

Dr. Woodson saw a carriage turning the corner.

He yelled, “Bruce!”

Bruce peeped out the carriage and said, “I’m in the carriage.”

Dr. Woodson said, “No your daddy.”

Thomas jumped on Bruce and Shirley sped around the other corner and Dr. Ralph and Dr. Woodson ran into the hospital.

Dr. Woodson locked the hospital door.

He looked at the nurses and said, “Don’t say a word.”

Dr. Ralph rushed into the kitchen.

Dr. Woodson was preparing to go to his next set of patients, Betty and Charles Jr.

He could hear them laughing and talking as he reviewed their charts.

He saw Bruce pulled in front of the hospital.

Dr. Woodson looked at Bruce and wondered why he stood on the porch of the hospital instead of knocking on the door.

Bruce stood and looked in the direction Shirley sped through.

Shirley was speeding through town.

Beverly was holding her hat and rocking and reeling all the way to the train station.

Thomas was still headlong between Bruce and Michael.

He could not catch his balance and had his rear end on Beverly’s back.

Shirley made the hour ride in less than forty five minutes.

Beverly was the first to jump out the carriage and turned to cuss Shirley out, but the boys jumped out the carriage and ran to the train to Cedartown.

Beverly saw the boys running.

Then she saw Shirley running from the carriage.

Beverly said, “I don’t have anyone to cuss.”

She turned and ran a step.

She stopped and turned and looked in the carriage and got their bags.

She walked the horses to the rail and tied them.

She heard the train whistle blow.

Beverly ran pass Mike and the two workers and yelled back, “Thanks Mike!”

Mike saluted Beverly.

Beverly ran and jumped on the train and stood.

She looked up and down the hall and did not see anyone.

She thought, “I should at least see Shirley.”

She looked back and saw Thomas popping up from the floor.

The train conductor was walking to the door.

Beverly started following Thomas running through the cars.

She was running through the cars behind him.

She looked up and saw his coat tail disappearing behind a door.

Beverly ran to the door and was banging on the door.

She yelled, “If you sons of b\*\*\*h...”

Beverly looked up and saw Joe the train conductor standing on her left side.

He had patrons with him showing them to their suites.

Beverly rolled her eyes at Joe.

Michael unlocked the door and cracked it.

He saw Beverly’s head that was turned.

Beverly had turned her head to watch Joe walk the patrons to their suites.

Joe looked back at Beverly.

He thought about that night he and Beverly had to run for their lives when Al was running through the train station looking for them.

Joe thought, “She can still run. I wonder who was it this time.”

The patrons said, “Who was that cursing the children?”

Joe said, “The nanny.”

The patrons looked at him.

Michael was peeping through the crack of the door at Beverly.

Beverly slowly turned and looked at the little eye that was looking at her.

Beverly pushed the door open.

All of them were sitting behind the sofas and on the floor by the windows.

Beverly said, “You bad a\*\*es. Mention your daddy you are cowards.”

Michael locked the door back and passed Beverly and rolled his eyes at her.

Beverly said, “Boy! Don’t play with me. You have gotten everybody in trouble. Lorraine, Ryan and me.”

Michael walked pass Beverly and sat in the chair at the dining table.

Michael said, “Who told you to run. He was our daddy not yours.”

Thomas popped up on his knees and looked at Beverly and said, “That’s right.”

Beverly exhaled and closed her eyes.

She said, “Who are you talking to?”

Thomas looked at Beverly and sat back behind the sofa arm.

Beverly said, “Where is Shirley?”

No one said anything.

Beverly looked around and said, “Don’t tell me yall knocked her down somewhere? I didn’t see her. I thought I could catch up with yall if I saw her.”

Beverly looked at the sulking boys.

She saw the top of Thomas’ head.

Beverly said, “Thomas, I saw you pop up off the floor. You slipped and fell on what?”

Thomas said, ”Guess.”

Beverly stared at Thomas.

Bruce and Percy were saying nothing.

They were embarrassed that they broke and ran off and left her.

Beverly said, “Get up and lets go and find Shirley!”

Bruce looked at Beverly and said, “How do you think we got in the suite?”

Beverly was about to cuss.

Then she thought.

Beverly said, “Where is Shirley?”

Michael nodded his head and said, “That coward is over there. Heifer.”

Beverly said, “What?”

The bags begin to move.

Beverly jumped.

Shirley hands appeared.

Percy and Bruce stared at the bags.

Thomas looked over at the bags.

Michael looked backwards at the bags.

Shirley eased the bags off her.

Beverly stood and stared at Shirley.

She stared at Thomas and said, “Thomas.”

Thomas looked at Beverly.

She said, “You have experienced the wrath of Shirley today. She knocked you down and ran pass you?”

Thomas looked at his back and said, “I wear her footprints.”

Beverly walked out the suite and walked the moving train to get to the car with the bar.

She had two drinks and Joe was walking through the train and saw Beverly at the bar.

Joe walked to her and said, “How many?”

Beverly said, “Not enough.”

Joe looked at Tim and said, “No more.”

Beverly rolled her eyes at Joe.

Joe said, “The kids got to you. Good evening my Beverly. Go to the kids and take care of them.”

He looked at Tim.

Tim put the scotch on the shelf.

Joe walked out the car.

Tim washed and dried the glasses and placed them on the shelves.

Beverly stood to walk out and looked at Tim and opened her bag.

Tim saw she had two bags and a Christmas gift bag.

Tim shook his head for no.

He said, “Mr. Joe said your drinks were on the house, but no more liquor on this trip.”

Beverly said, “Thank you.”

She passed the patrons, on her way out of the bar, that were with Joe when she was cursing and knocking and banging on the suite door.

They stood and watched the well dressed Beverly.

One of the men said, “A well dressed ‘nanny’.”

The other man said, “I need that job.”

They all laughed and went into the car and sat at a table.

Beverly found her ay back to the suite.

She knocked on the door.

Shirley went to the door and cracked it open.

Beverly step one foot inside of the suite and stop.

Michael got nervous and turned his feet from underneath the table to jump and run if he had to.

Shirley poked her head out the door and looked up and down the hall.

She started closing the door.

Beverly said, “Wait…”

Michael said, “Heifer.”

Beverly said, “You were going to close the door on me.”

Michael said, “Heifer.”

Thomas was still on the floor and said, “At least you will have the door mark on your dress. Not footprints.”

Percy and Bruce cut their eyes at Beverly.

Beverly said, “Cowards.”

Percy said, “Why did you run?”

Beverly looked at Percy and said, “I know you are calling me a coward too. But I am not. You all started running for your lives and that made me run. Even you Shirley. A grown woman with a handicap outran your military brothers and knocked one down…”

Thomas said, “And stepped on.”

Beverly said, “Shirley apologized to Thomas.”

Shirley stared at Beverly.

Bruce stared at Shirley.

Thomas stared at Shirley.

Percy stared at Shirley.

Shirley said, “I am not apologizing Aunt Bev. You told me to throw rocks at them.”

The boys looked at Beverly.

Beverly said, “Shirley you never threw at anyone head.”

Michael said, “That heifer don’t know that.”

Beverly shook her head and looked at Michael and said, “Did you just call Shirley out of her name?”

Bruce said, “He always does.”

Beverly stared at Michael.

Shirley turned to walk into her grandparents.

Beverly looked and said, “I’m sleeping in there.”

Michael said, “Why?”  
Beverly looked at Michael and said, “I deserve luxury tonight. I deserve a hot bath and to sleep stretched out.”

Michael stared at Beverly.

Beverly thought and said, “Oh no you didn’t Michael. You don’t want me to sleep in your grandparents’ room because you don’t think I am good enough.”

Bruce said, “We don’t think anyone is good enough to take our grandparents place.”

Shirley walked to the next room and closed the door and locked it.

Beverly rolled her eyes and said, “H…”

Michael said, “Heifer.”

Beverly said, “This is crazy. All you jumped out the carriage and ran or your lives. You knocked each other down to get to the suite.”

Thomas said, “Shirley.”

Beverly said, “I don’t know what you all did at the hospital for Ryan to kick you out. You all were involved in a brawl in front of the hospital.”

Percy and Bruce were cutting their eyes at Beverly.

Thomas was still sitting on the floor looking out the window.

Michael was staring at Beverly with a so what look.

Beverly said, “I have seventeen former slave children rather twelve and they don’t act like you all.”

Michael said, “Of course they don’t.”

Thomas said, “They are scared you would take back to the slave masters.”

Beverly said, “Thomas that was terrible. Lorraine was right, you are the mastermind behind all of your capers.”

Percy and Bruce looked at Beverly.

Thomas said, “I’m hungry.”

Percy and Bruce were not saying anything they were watching Beverly.

Beverly said, “Percy order hot water for me and whoever else wants to bathe. Bruce order our dinners.”

Bruce said, “What?”  
Beverly looked at Bruce ad said, “Why you ask me that Bruce?”

Bruce said, “I need to know what to tell them to cook.”

Beverly said, “I ythought you were being smart by demonstrating that I was stupid.”

Percy and Bruce did not blink.

Beverly knew that was what Bruce was saying.

She said, “I want fried pork chops, potatoes and gravy with a biscuit and hot tea.”

She looked at Michael.

Michael thought, “She doesn’t know about the one lamb chop.”

Michael said, “Lamb chops, green beans and carrots.”

Beverly said, “Michael, the cook knows one lamb chop.”

Michael turned around in his chair and folded his arms and pouted.

Beverly looked at him and thought, “He is too cute. Wait until Eleanor get a hold of him.”

Bruce and Percy looked at Michael.

Percy said, “I have the same as Aunt Bev.”

Thomas said, “I want fried chicken, two legs, mashed potatoes and gravy and two biscuits. I need my strength back so I can take momma’s licks.”

Beverly said, “Huh.”

The boys looked at Beverly.

Bruce said, “I will have fried chicken.”

Beverly walked over to Shirley’s door and knocked and said, “Shirley what do you want for dinner?”

Shirley did not say anything.

Beverly raised her fist in the air to hit the door.

Percy and Bruce held their breaths.

Thomas was thinking about licks from Eleanor.

He jumped off the floor and put his hands over his head.

Everybody looked at Thomas.

Beverly rolled her eyes and turned her head back to knock on the door where Shirley was.

Percy whispered to Bruce.

Beverly watched Percy and Bruce.

Michael turned and looked at Thomas as he ran pass him.

Michael stared at Thomas.

Beverly said, “Not yet Thomas.”

Percy and Bruce looked at Beverly.

Beverly was getting ready to bang on Shirley’s door when Shirley said, “Spaghetti and a meatball.”

Michael said, “Heifer.”

Beverly said, “Michael don’t say that again. I don’t need to know all the problems you all have. I learned one thing about all of you todays…”

Thomas said, “We are cowards.”

Beverly said, “No you are cowards concerning that skinny white man that is your father.”

Thomas said, “My father is dead.”

Beverly turned and looked at Thomas and said, “What are you talking about Thomas? Bruce is not dead.”

Thomas said, “My father is Joseph the count.”

Beverly looked at Thomas and said, “Bruce and Percy you have your assignments.”

Bruce and Percy stood to walk out the suite.

Beverly said, “Have an apple pie delivered with the dinner.”

Bruce said, “Yes ma am.”

Beverly said, “Thank you.”

Beverly said, “Michael and Thomas take you boys bags to your room. I see bunk beds O I assumed that is your room.”

Shirley was still in the room.

Beverly said, “Shirley are you alright?”

Shirley said, “My legs hurt some.”

Beverly said, “Put on your nightgown and I’ll rub your legs and feet with the ligament ointment.”

Shirley rollover on the bed and said, “Aunt Bev you will do that for me?”  
Beverly shook her head and said, “Yes Shirley.”

Beverly picked up Shirley bags and carried then m to her door.

Shirley was opening the door and got the bags from Beverly.

Beverly helped with the bags and she helped Shirley undress and hung her clothes on the armoire.

Beverly looked around at the room and thought it was beautiful.

Michael walked to Shirley’s door and said, “Aunt Bev, you can take my bed. I’ll sleep out here n yje sofa.”

Beverly looked at Shirley’s door and said, “Ni Michael you sleep in your own bed. I was still going to sleep in your grandparents’ bedroom, but I am going to sleep on the sofa tonight so you won’t go and gamble and the others can’t go and get drunk.”

Bruce and Percy were returning from their assignments.

Percy picked up the key to he suite from the table as they left.

He unlocked the door and heard Aunt Bev say she will sleep on the sofa to keep them in the suite so they won’t gamble and go and get drunk.

Percy was embarrassed.

Michael looked at Beverly and stomp to the table and sat.

Beverly went into Patrick and Brenda’s bedroom and sat on the foot of the bed and looked in awe at the beautiful bedroom.

Michael looked back and saw Beverly sitting in awe.

He walked in the bedroom and sat on the foot of the bed with Beverly.

Beverly said, “They have a suite on each train?”

Michael said, “Yes.”

Beverly laughed.

Beverly loved the oak armoires.

Michael said, “I miss them. I am glad we are going home.”

Beverly cut her eyes at Michael.

There was a knocked on the suite door.

Beverly said, “Percy get the door.”

Percy said, “Suppose it is Bruce?”

Beverly said, “What.”

Bruce said, “He is talking about our second father.”

Beverly said, “Percy, open the door for my hot water and our dinner.”

Michael stood and walked to the doorway and watched.

Percy went to the door and cracked it open.

It was the porter bringing the hot water.

Michael said, “In here.”

Beverly stood and looked around.

The porter knew where the hidden bathtub was.

He walked in and spoke to Beverly.

He poured hot water in the bathtub and walked out the bedroom door.

Beverly pulled off her expensive dress and hung it on the armoire.

She decided to wear it again the next day as an uniform.

The next day and the day after she would wear her festive holiday skirt and blouse.

The boys were sitting at the table laughing and talking.

Beverly was thinking, “Whatever they did, they left Ryan Jr’s Christmas gift in the carriage. Now I have to carry the gift to Ryan. That’s fine because I have to see Lorraine.”

Beverly was getting in the bathtub.

There was another knock on the door.

She thought, “Food.”

She listened.

Percy went to door and opened it.

He said, “In here.”

Beverly listened as the boys were quiet.

Thomas and Michael were eagerly watching the clerk as he placed the plates on the tables.

Michael had his one lamb chop.

Thomas had his two pieces of fried chicken legs.

Percy and Beverly had two large fried pork chops.

Percy started laughing and rubbing his hands together.

Beverly said, “I better get out there.”

The clerk put Shirley’s plate at the last seat with one meatball.

Thomas said, “That looks good.”

Percy was about to sit and said, “Yes it does.”

The clerk put the sliced apple pie and dessert plates on the buffet along with the hot tea and milk.

Shirley was waiting in her bedroom for the worker to leave.

Percy was standing at the door.

The worker pushed his cart to the door and Percy opened the door.

Shirley walked out her bedroom with her nightgown and had her ligament ointment in her hand.

She walked to the sofa and put it on the table.

Shirley turned and saw the boys eating and enjoying their food. She knew they did not give God thanks for the food.

Beverly could hear the forks and spoons but did not hear grace.

Shirley sat at the plate of spaghetti and one meatball.

She bowed her head and folded her hands.

Thomas looked at Shirley.

Percy bit his biscuit and watched Shirley.

Bruce looked up from his mashed potatoes and gravy.

Michael rolled his eyes at Shirley and ate his lamb chop.

Shirley said, “God bless my food. That You bless me to have. Nothing I earned. All is a gift from You. Bless my brothers’ food and let them bless their own food in the future at home or at school. Help us today. Don’t let momma be angry with us and beat us all because of Michael and Percy. And don’t let Ryan hate us anymore because of them. Amen.”

Shirley lifted her head up and began to hum.

The boys sat and stared at her.

Michael was eating his lamb chop and rolled his eyes at Shirley and said, “Heifer.”

Thomas was seated next to Shirley and he stared at her through his black eye.

Percy rolled his eyes at Shirley with his biscuit in his hand and to his mouth.

Bruce stared at Shirley and turned his head and said, “Well.”

Beverly listened and covered her mouth and hollered.

She said, “I can just imagine how they are looking at her!”

Beverly laughed and began to sing.

Michael turned and looked at the bedroom door.

Bruce said, “I didn’t know Aunt Bev could sing.”

Percy looked at Beverly plate and said, “I want that pork chop.”

Shirley had cut her spaghetti and pushed most of it to the end of her plate.

She looked at Thomas and said, “Thomas I am sorry for hitting your eye with the rock.”

Thomas said, “But you are not sorry for throwing the rock nor for hitting any part of me.”

Shirley looked at Thomas in his eyes and said, “No. Forgive me.”

Michael said, “No Thomas!”

Beverly said, “Damn! Now I have to get out of this tub.”

Beverly jumped out the bathtub and dried off.

Thomas looked Shirley in her eyes and said, “I forgive you.”

Michael looked at Thomas.

Shirley said, “Thomas, do you care for any of this spaghetti? It looks good.”

Thomas pushed his plate to Shirley.

She put half of what she cut onto Thomas’ plate.

Michael said, “For food Thomas.”

Bruce looked at Thomas.

Percy drank water and cut his eyes at Beverly’s large fried pork chops.

Beverly rushed and put on her nightgown and opened the door and caught Percy staring at her pork chops.

She stood in the door and stared at all of them.

Beverly walked to the table and sat next to Percy and looked at his near empty plate.

Percy looked at Beverly and then at her full plate.

Beverly looked at Percy and bowed head and folded her hands.

Shirley said, “Aunt Bev, I already blessed the food.”

Michael rolled his eyes at Shirley.

He was about to call her ‘heifer’.

Beverly put her hand over Michael’s mouth.

Shirley looked at Beverly and then at Michael.

Beverly said, “Thank you Shirley. I wanted your brothers to see me bow my head and fold my hands in prayer to give thanks to the only true and living GOD for providing us with food.”

Beverly looked at each of the boys.

Michael stared at Beverly.

She squeezed Michael’s chin.

Michael smirked.

Percy looked at Beverly and said, “I’m next to you and you did not squeeze my chin.”

Beverly reached over and kissed Percy on his cheek.

Percy blushed and grinned and turned around and looked at Thomas and Shirley.

Shirley and Thomas looked at Percy.

Shirley thought, “He really needed that. Until Eleanor get him.”

Shirley shrugged her shoulders and continued to eat.

Beverly flinched at Shirley.

She thought, “That little so and so is up to something to.”

Thomas looked at Shirley and at her halved meatball.

Shirley felt Thomas looking at her meatball and said, “Thomas you can have the meatball if you want.”

Thomas said, “No. I’ll order that for lunch tomorrow.”

Beverly loved how quiet and calm slick Thomas was.

He was very calculating.

He knew how to get what he wanted.

Thomas knew how to wait and go another route.

Beverly thought, “Eleanor was right about Thomas. I bet he is her favorite.”

Beverly, Shirley and the boys sat and had a wonderful evening.

Bruce walked back to the porch of the hospital.

Vivienne saw Bruce and recognized him from the fight last Thanksgiving.

She was startled.

She wanted to know why he was there.

She walked out Sally’s room and stood in the door.

Charles saw her and did not know why she was staying in the doorway.

Felipe looked at Vivienne and thought she was breaking down again.

Bruce pulled the door handle and saw the door was locked.

He knocked on the door.

Charles and Felipe looked up from their charts to the door and saw Dr. Woodson walking to the door.

Charles looked at Vivienne to see if it was something relating to Sally.

The nurses watched Vivienne.

Felipe looked at Dr. Woodson and slowly started walking to go to Meredith and Felipe Jr.

Dr. Charles and the nurses looked at Felipe.

They heard Dr. Woodson say, “Hello Bruce.”

Vivienne held onto the wall.

Charles watched Vivienne.

Bruce said, “Hello Dr. Woodson.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Come in Bruce.”

Bruce walked in the hospital and stood as Dr. Woodson locked the door back.

The nurses were busy but managed to look at Bruce and greet him.

Dr. Woodson said, “Bruce why are you here?”

Bruce looked at the nurses and said, “Can we go in there? I only want a few minutes of your time.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Bruce and at the nurses.

Bruce said, “Only a few minutes.”

Dr. Woodson pointed towards the hospital administrator’s office.

They walked to the office and Dr. Woodson unlocked the door.

He stepped aside for Bruce to enter first.

Bruce entered then Dr. Woodson entered.

Dr. Woodson stood and looked at Bruce and said, “Bruce.”

Bruce pointed and said, “I swear that was Shirley and my sons in that carriage a moment again.”

Bruce watched Dr. Woodson to see if he was going to tell him the truth.

Dr. Woodson said, “Yes it was.”

Bruce said, “May I ask why they were here?”

Dr. Woodson said, “May I ask why you are here?”

Bruce was shocked that the aloof Dr. Woodson hit the nail on the head and his question was exact.

Bruce said, “I haven’t seen my children in three Christmases. I miss them and want to spend Christmas with them. Eleanor does not respond to my letters. I was told she burned the letters without opening.”

Dr. Woodson frowned up and said, “Bruce, why are you here?”

Bruce saw he could not outsmart the aloof Dr. Woodson and said, “I thought after three years Shirley may have come here for treatment and if she was here then I could talk to her.”

Dr. Woodson was still frown up looking at Bruce.

Bruce realized Dr. Woodson thought he was stupid.

Bruce said, “But that was my children in the carriage?”

Dr. Woodson said, “Yes.”

He was staring at Bruce.

Bruce said, “What were they doing here?”

Dr. Woodson said, “They came to drop off Christmas gifts and immediately left to catch a train.”

Hutch walked out Leon’s room and was passing the hospital administrator’s office and saw Bruce.

He wondered who Bruce was.

Nurse Williams said, “We don’t know, but Dr. Woodson locked the door to keep him out.”

Hutch looked over at Charles.

Charles threw up his shoulders and hands and looked Vivienne.

Charles said, “Vivienne do you know who the man is with Dr. Woodson?”

Vivienne nodded for yes.

Hutch rushed across to Vivienne.

Vivienne said, “That’s Eleanor’s ex-husband.”

Hutch said, “He just missed the children.”

Vivienne said, “Thank GOD.”

Sally yelled, “Tell them about the fight!”

Vivienne rushed and closed Sally’s door.

Charles said, “A fight. I want to hear about that.”

Mr. Wallace yelled, “Me too.”

The nurses laughed.

Vivienne said, ”Last Thanksgiving Eleanor and the count and the children returned from Europe and they came here and got Michael and Shirley and went home for the holidays. Bruce was going with Miss Gen’s niece who turned out to her deceased husband’s child by her sister.”

Charles shook his head.

The nurses hollered.

Hutch looked at Charles.

Charles said, “Somebody else is having worst problems than me?”

Vivienne said, “Bruce’s young girlfriend, who was a nurse here and had bruise Shirley up.”

Hutch said, “What?”

Dr. Ralph was walking back and peeping around for Dr. Woodson.

Nurse Simons pointed to the hospital administrator’s office.

Dr. Ralph walked over to his charts.

He heard Vivienne say, “Lorraine, Jose and Meredith rushed a few minutes before Bruce got to the house with Sharon and her mother and father.”

Dr. Ralph shook his head and said, “That was a mess.”

Hutch said, “Jason, you knew about this?”

Dr. Ralph continued to look at Mr. Wallace’s chart and said, “Yes.”

One of the nurses said, “I remembered Sharon forcing herself on him. Yes, she did pinch Shirley badly.”

Charles looked at the nurse.

He did not believe in touching a child.

He looked back at Vivienne.

Vivienne said, Lorraine and Jose were in one set of windows and the rest of us were in the other set.

Dr. Charles said, “Vivienne I can’t believe you were watching a fight.”

Vivienne looked at Charles.

The nurse said, “Continued.”

Vivienne said, Mr. Stith told Bruce to leave, but Bruce said he and his girlfriend, and her family would spend Thanksgiving in the suites. Brenda yelled and told Jose to get her famous shotgun. Eleanor beat Sharon. Shirley pulled up her sleeve and showed Elanor the bruise.”

Dr. Ralph said, “And she raised hell with me, Dr. Greene and Dr. Woodson about the bruise. That’s why she check the patients daily for bruises.”

Hutch said, “What did Brenda do with her shotgun.”

Vivienne said, “She cocked it to shoot Sharon’s mother who was standing and not leaving, but Jose did not put the bullets. She took by the barrel and knocked Sharon’s mother and father out cold. The boys jumped on Bruce and they stomped and kicked him.”

The hospital administrator’s office door and Vivienne opened Sally’s door and ran in.

Vivienne said, “Sally how you know about the fight?”

Sally said, “Momma told me. She was crying and prayed all night. I couldn’t sleep.”

Dr. Charles smirked his lips at Sally.

The nurses laughed.

Dr. Ralph rushed to Mr. Wallace’s room and closed the door.

Dr. Woodson walked the well dressed Bruce to the door and unlocked it and Bruce stepped out the door.

Hutch rushed to Sally’s window and stood by Vivienne and watched Bruce walk to his carriage.

Dr. Woodson stood and watch Bruce pull away.

Dr. Ralph walked out Mr. Wallace’s room to get his stethoscope and saw Bradly.

Bradley walked to Jason and Charles.

Hutch looked back at Bradley and watched Bruce ride away.

Dr. Woodson said, “Bruce came here because he thought Shirley maybe he and he wanted to talk her because he has not spent Christmas with his children in three years. I told him they came today and gave us Christmas gifts. Ad went to the train. He said, the next was tomorrow. He’ll catch the train tomorrow, because Eleanor does not read his letters but throw them in the fire.”

Vivienne turned and looked at Dr. Woodson.

Hutch walked out Sally’s room and said, “She has a two faced worker in her house.”

He walked to the other side and went to his next patient.

Dr. Woodson went into the hospital’s administrator’s office and sent Eleanor a long telegram about Bruce and her worker who communicated with Brue. That Bruce will catch the next train and probably told him that so he could tell Eleanor.  
Eleanor was reading the long telegram from Shirley.

She was getting mad at each word.

Then the telegram came in later that night from Dr. Woodson.

Eleanor sat and thought about the possible worker that was spying on her in her house and whether this behavior had anything to do with Lorraine being left for dead.

She thought, Patrick and Brenda would be back on Monday at the time of the children’s train. She had to send an answer for the children.

Eleanor stood and walked out Patrick’s office and locked the door.

She was reading Dr. Woodson’s telegram a gain.

She heard the telegram machine.

Eleanor closed her eyes and took a very deep breath.

She turned and unlocked Patrick’s office door and went to his desk and sat

She waited for the telegram to stop.

She sat and read it over and over again.

Ryan sent her a detail telegram about Michael and Percy’s behavior and how all of her children including Shirley were fighting in the front of the hospital and that Shirley threw and hit Thomas in his eye. Ryan said, “What to do about Lorraine? She is extremely upset.”

Eleanor started pounding her head on Patrick’s desk.

Jose was standing outside Patrick’s office and watched her.

Eleanor tried to cry and then said, “God why are those children mines?”

Jose whispered, “Nobody else wanted them.”

He turned and started back to the kitchen.

Jose wondered what was going on that upset Eleanor that bad.

Then he stopped in the billiards room and said, “God they will be back in a day.”

Jose thought, “I’m glad I have Christmas Eve and Christmas off and away unless my family cuts up worst than those boys.”

Jose was upset and said, “God.”

He walked in the kitchen and looked over the schedule.

He understood now why William was always looking over the schedule.

Jose liked the job as butler it required you to organized and ready to move.

Eleanor held her head up rom Patrick’s desk and sent a telegram to Patrick and Brenda and told them what Ryan said. She wanted to know what to do about Lorraine.

She sent a telegram to Shirley on the train home.

She was pleasant and said, she look forward to spending the holidays with them. She did not want them to jump off the train before she could put her hands on all of them including Shirley.

Eleanor sent a thank you telegram to Dr. Woodson and said, “Tell Leon I’m praying for him to recover every day.”

Dr. Woodson received Eleanor’s telegram just before he left work for the night. He told Dr. Ralph he would late on Sunday because he was going to church and then to Dr. Greene.

He took Barry’s and Dr. Greene’s gifts.

He stepped to Leon’s room and said, “Leon Eleanor said, “hello’ and she prays for you every day.”

Leon said, “She got time for me.”

Dr. Woodson laughed and said, “Good night Leon. I’ll be here after church tomorrow.”

Leon said, “You deserve time off.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Thank you.”

Dr. Woodson walked out Leon’s room and said good night to the nurses.

He walked out the hospital with the gifts and mounted his horse and went home.

Hutch rode to the south hospital with Dr. Ralph.

Hutch said, “Something is not right at the north and south hospital.”

Dr. Ralph was listening.

Hutch said, “My confidence was shaken in Ryan.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Betty and Charles Jr?”

Hutch said, “And Meredith.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Hutch.

Hutch said, “I think I am going to unwrapped my book when I get back. I can’t think of what it will be about.”

They were wrapped in blankets and rode to the hospital.

They saw Ryan walking out the hospital with his holster on.

Hutch said, “I hope that’s not for the kids.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Ryan.

Ryan stood on the porch and waited for Hutch and Jason.

Hutch said, “Good evening Ryan.”

He nodded at his holster.

Ryan said, “I keep this at the hospital during the week. I am off tomorrow and taking it home.”

Dr. Ralph said, “We know something happened here today. What?”

Ryan turned his head and said, “Those damn kids. They come in fine and spoke and went to Lorraine. I thought and walked in behind them. Lorraine was sleep. I guess she felt them and woke. She scared Percy and he just started jumping up in the air. That scared Lorraine. That Thomas tells me...”

Ryan points to himself, “…that I ‘upsetted’ Lorraine and he wanted her out from my control.”

Hutch was staring at Ryan.

Dr. Ralph started laughing.

Ryan looked at Jason.

Dr. Ralph said, “But it’s funny.”

Hutch looked at Jason.

Ryan said, “Shirley was standing back crying like she could not function. Bruce said, ‘How much does this hospital cost?”

Dr. Ralph laughed.

Ryan looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “He’s going to buy the hospital and fire me and do what he wants about Lorraine.”

Hutch looked at Ryan.

Ryan said, “A couple of weeks ago I would have taken that offer.”

Hutch said, “What happened a couple of weeks ago, Ryan?”  
Ryan said, “No patients were doing good. I didn’t know if I could help Lorraine and Myriah. I nearly left my father here with all of this and went back to the military with Ryan Jr. not Alice. That is a whole weird kind of story.

Rebecca and her sister were walking out the hospital.

Rebecca looked at Hutch and grinned.

Hutch spoke and said, “Good evening.”

Ryan looked at the young women.

Dr. Ralph saw the young women and said, “Ryan, Shirley stomped in the hospital and went into the hospital administrator’s office followed by Michael. He shut and locked the door and began screaming at Shirley.”

Ryan threw up his hands and stomped.

Ryan shook his head and said, “The gambler.”

Hutch laughed.

Ryan said, “He tells me that he release me from my duty over Lorraine and for me to discharge her from the hospital and send a nurse with her on their train to Cedartown. Because they have a hundred employees that can do a better job than me and all of my staff.”

Ryan hissed.

He said, “I put them all out of the hospital. Lorraine was crying and she could not talk above a whisper. I didn’t care I put them out the hospital. I had to carry Thomas and Michael out. Percy and Bruce were looking for a wheelchair to put Lorraine in. Shirley walking towards the door behind me. Thomas and Michael started yelling at her it was her fault because she sent Lorraine to buy dresses for her boutique.

Shirley started crying even more.

Ryan said, “I threw Thomas and Michael out on the porch and looked back in time to see Percy and Bruce with a wheelchair pushing it to Lorraine’s room. I yelled at them they dropped it and ran around me out the door.

The boys started yelling at Shirley it was her fault that Lorraine was like the way she is. Shirley ran off the porch and nearly fell. I thought she nearly fell but she was looking for rocks. She couldn’t threw a lick.”

Hutch said, “A lick.”

Ryan said, “Nall. It was pitiful. Nurse Solomon said, ‘she can’t even throw’ and shook her head and walked from the door. But Shirley managed to hit Thomas in his eye.”

Ryan said, “I sent Eleanor a detail telegram. I need to know what to about Lorraine.”

Dr. Ryan said, “Patrick and Brenda are Lorraine’ power of attorney. I know they want her there with them but they know they cannot provide the medical attention she needs.”

Ryan said, “Lorraine has been crying all day.”

Hutch said, “Ryan you had a busy day.”

Ryan said, “I love them but if I could get a switch I would have torn them up. Like I am incompetent.”

Dr. Ralph laughed.

Ryan said, “Good night.”

They watched Ryan mount his horse.

Rebecca and her sister passed them.

Hutch smiled at Rebecca and waved.

Ryan said, “Hutch check the age.”

Hutch grinned.

He and Dr. Ralph walked into the hospital.

They spoke to Lora.

Lora spoke.

Dr. ralph said, “This is going to touchy.”

Dr. Hutch and dr. Ralph spoke to the nurses.

They walked to Lorraine’s room.

Hutch whispered, “I told you.’

Dr. Ralph put his hand on the doorknob and said, “We’ll talk.”

He opened the door and the nurses were wiping Lorraine’s tears.

Dr. Ralph and Hutch spoke to the nurses.

Hutch said, “Lorraine why are you crying?”

Lorraine looked at Dr. Ralph and whispered, “Home.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Loraine and said, “We have a date for Christmas you can’t stand me up Lorraine.”

Hutch reached for Lorraine’s chart.

One of the nurses handed him her chart.

Hutch went and sat and was reviewing Lorraine’s chart.

Dr. Ralph walked to Lorraine and held her hand.

He said, “I knew it was not a good idea for the boys to come and see you. They wanted to take you home?”

Lorraine whispered, “Yes.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I knew they were going to try that. They didn’t know we had a date for Christmas and I will not let them break my date.”

Dr. Ralph was leaning over Lorraine grinning at her.

Lorraine looked at Dr. Ralph and continued to cry.

Hutch said, “Jason.”

Jason turned and looked at Hutch.

Hutch stood and walked out Lorraine’s room with her chart.

Jason knew it was serious.

He kissed Lorraine on her forehead and walked out behind Hutch.

Hutch opened the door and said, “One of you nurses come here.”

One of Marvin’s girlfriends walked out to Hutch.

Dr. Hutch pointed to the page.

The nurse and Dr. Ralph read the page over and over.

Hutch exhaled.

The nurse looked around and turned her head.

Dr. Ralph said, “Dr. Hutch you and the nurse go and send a telegram to Ryan at home. He is off tomorrow and will be here Monday. Ask him what he wants us to do for Lorraine until Monday when he returns.

Hutch saw Dr. Ralph was angry.

Hutch and the nurse walked up to the second floor.

They were peeping at Dr. Ralph as they walked up the stairs.

Dr. Hutch walked to the head nurse with the chart in his hand and said, “We need to send Dr. Ryan Wade a message and wait for his response or you can bring it to us in Room Seven.

The head nurse unlocked the office and gave the telegram information for Ryan.

Dr. Ralph sat on the other sofa and thought.

Lora looked at Dr. Ralph, she knew something was wrong.

She wondered about Myriah.

She walked over to Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked up at Lora.

Lora quickly sat next to him.

Dr. Ralph looked at her.

She said, “Sir. I am a stupid person but can you check on my husband’s daughter and make sure she is well?”

Dr. Ralph looked at Lora.

Hutch and the nurse were walking down the stairs.

Dr. Ralph looked and said, “Nurse.”

The nurse looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. ralph said, “Can you bring us this lady’s child’s chart.”

The nurse was quiet.

She looked at Lora.

Dr. Ralph said, “What is your husband’s daughter’s name?”

Lora said, “Myriah.”

Dr. Hutch stood and looked at Lora.

The nurse said, “Come on Lora.”

Lora walked with the nurse.

They went into Myriah’s room and the nurse got her chart and walked to Dr. Hutch and Dr. Ralph.

The two doctors sat and reviewed Myriah’s chart.

Lora walked out Myriah’s room.

She walked over and watched Dr. Hutch and Dr. Ralph go over and over Myriah’s chart.

She saw Dr. Hutch and Dr. Ralph looked talk amongst themselves.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lora and said, “We don’t see anything wrong. Myriah is getting the right treatment.”

Lora exhaled and held her hands together.

She walked away and sat on the sofa near the door.

Hutch watched her and said, “She has been sitting on that sofa for a month.”

Dr. Ralph said, “She walked over and said she was a stupid person but she wanted to know that her husband’s daughter was ell.”

Hutch looked at Dr. Ralph.

The head nurse walked down the stairs.

Hutch and Dr. Ralph saw her. They stood.

She said, “Hello.”

The head nurse reached the telegram to Dr. Hutch from Ryan.

Dr. Hutch and Dr. Ralph read the telegram.

They looked at the head nurse.

She stood and waited.

Hutch said, Get the required medicine together.”

The nurse said, “Yes sir.”

Lora looked at the head nurse working to get the medicine for the doctors.

Marvin walked in and sat next to Lora and waited for his girlfriend in the room with Lorraine.

Lora said, “I need to go and buy Myriah her Christmas things tomorrow.”

Marvin saw his girlfriend walk out of Lorraine’s room.

He rubbed his thighs and stood.

Lora said, “She can’t go now. They are working on that lady. Those doctors are doing it.”

Marvin looked at Lora and then back at his girlfriend.

She cut her eyes at Marvin and he sat down.

Lora said, “I told you.”

Marvin said, “I think the toy stores in the capitol are opened tomorrow.”

Lora said, “I have to be here tomorrow.”

Marvin said, “Why?”

Lora said, “Myriah wakes up tomorrow.”

The nurses look at Lora.

Marvin looked at Lora.

He smirked and sat on the sofa and looked around.

The head nurse finished all the medicine and she and Marvin’s girlfriend walked to Dr. Ralph and Dr. Hutch.

Lorraine was shivering from crying.

The other nurse looked at the tray full of medicine.

Dr. Ralph walked to Lorraine and said, “Lorraine, we are going to give you a lot of medicine now that will help you. It will hurt very badly.”

Lorraine started crying.

Dr. Ralph said, “I am here. I will be giving you most of it. It will help you get better quickly. If does what it suppose to do. Then you can break our Christmas date.”

Lorraine whispered, “Jason.”

Jason kissed her on her forehead.

He looked at the head nurse.

She brought a slightly damp washcloth and put it on Lorraine’s face to keep her from seeing all the medication and shots.

Dr. Ralph and Dr. Hutch work quickly.

Marvin’s girlfriend held Lorraine’s hand.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

He told the other nurse to bring a wash basin and place some water in it.

Dr. Ralph looked at the medicine and said., “I need two IVs”.

The head nurse walked to Dr. Ralph and he whispered what he needed.

The head nurse nodded for yes and walked out the room.

Dr. Hutch kept working and putting the medicine in the needles.

Dr. Ralph looked at all the medicine and he bowed his head and prayed silently.

Marvin’s girlfriend and the head nurse were still and waited until he finished praying.

Dr. Ralph rubbed Lorraine’s rm with the alcohol.

He began to give Lorraine the shots.

Lorraine screamed.

Marvin and Lora jumped up and ran out the hospital.

They ran pass horses that stared at them.

Dr. Ralph continued.

Dr. Hutch did not stop until they had finished.

The head nurse was nervous and prepared the IVs and inserted them into Lorraine’s arms.

Dr. Hutch put the medicine in the IVs.

Lorraine was shaking and screaming.

She began to throw up.

The head nurse was cleaning it up.

Marvin’s girlfriend hurried and took all the medicines, needles and trash and put it on the tray and ran out the room.

She disposed of the trash and.

The nurses at the desk said, “Are you alright?”

She grabbed her coat and ran out the door behind Lora and Marvin who were at the end of the carriages and wagons.

Marvin bent over and was trying to catch his breath.

Lora looked and said, “Where the carriage?”

Marvin’s girlfriend had reached them.

Marvin pointed and said, “By the door.”

Lora and Marvin’s girlfriend began to hit him.

He turned and ran to the horses and carriage.

The horses looked at him again.

Lora hopped in first in the carriage and sat in the back.

Marvin’s girlfriend jumped up front with Marvin.

Marvin sped away.

Marvin’s girlfriend was shaking.

He looked at her.

He held her hand.

He took Lora home.

Lora hopped out and looked at Marvin’s girlfriend and said, “Thank you for being a nurse.”

Marvin’s girlfriend tried to grin and nod her head.

Marvin took her to eat and have a beer.

He took her to her room.

It was late.

Marvin said, “What time do you go to work tomorrow?’

She didn’t say anything.

Marvin got out the carriage and helped her down.

He was watching her.

Before they made it to the porch she began to throw up.

Marvin jumped back.

He thought, “I don’t want that on me.”

He looked around to see if anyone saw him and thought, “What kind of boyfriend am I?”

Marvin kicked dirt over the vomit and helped Stephanie in the house and to her room.

He went and got her warm water and water to drink.

He sat downstairs until she felt better and dressed for bed.

The lady of the house came downstairs and told Marvin that Stephanie was in the bed and trying to sleep. She would not go to work tomorrow.

Marvin was startled and said, “Yes ma am”.

He walked out the door to his carriage and went home.

Marvin thought about Stephanie all the way home.

He said, “She deserves so much more. She is a good nurse.”

Marvin got home and put the horses in the stables and fed them and gave them water.

He petted all the horses. And locked the stables.

He put the coal bucket and water pail out in the stables so he would not have to go back and forth to get them.

He filled both the pail and bucket and had his guns on and walked to the house.

He unlocked the front door and walked in the house and locked the door back and put the coal bucket by the fireplace and lit the large candle.

He wondered where did Morgan find that candle.

He took the water to the kitchen and filled the water pail on the stove.

Marvin always put a few pieces in the stove he won’t have to make a fire in the morning to heat his water.

Marvin put the bar behind the door.

He walked upstairs.

He checked the second floor and the rooms were secured.

Marvin walked to the third floor.

He looked out the four windows.

He saw everything in the neighborhood.

Marvin straightened out his pallet.

He undressed and went to bed.

He laid down and slept.

Hutch and Dr. Ralph spent the night in Lorraine’s room.

They emptied the pails of vomit.

They kept changing her sweat soaked washcloths.

She was in great pain.

The head nurse could barely take it.

She stepped out the room and walked outside and smoked.

The other nurse would leave out and walk around the hospital.

The room was empty.

Dr. Ralph was sitting in one of the chairs he pulled from the foot of Lorraine’s bed.

Hutch was standing at the foot of Lorraine’s bed and shaking her foot so she would know that someone was there.

Hutch said, “I told you something was not right. Dr. Woodson thought so also.”

The door opened and the head nurse returned smelling like smoke.

Dr. Ralph and Hutch looked at her.

Lorraine started coughing.

Hutch looked at the head nurse.

She stared at Hitch.

Hutch said, “I understand you needed something. Excuse yourself until the smoke is off you.”

The head nurse lifted her arm and smelled the smoke.

She looked at Hutch in shame and nodded her head and said, “I’m sorry sir.”

Hutch nodded his head.

As she walked out Lorraine’s room Hutch said, “Open the door.”

The head nurse put the extra chair behind the door to keep it open.

Hutch looked at her because he did not have a chair to sit in.

She walked away and came back with a heavy rock the nurses use to prop the doors opened.

She replaced the chair with the rock.

Hutch went and got the chair and put it by Lorraine’s bed.

He sat there the whole night and watched Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph watched the clock.

The nurses were changing their tours.

The head nurse was talking to the daytime head nurse.

The daytime head nurse and her staff stared at the nighttime head nurse and her staff.

The nurses did not know what to do.

Dr. Ralph walked out of Lorraine’s room.

He saw the large gathering of nurses who looked confused.

Dr. Ralph walked to them and said, “Good morning.”

The nurses turned and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Jim walked in the hospital and saw the nurses having their morning meeting.

He saw Dr. Ralph and walked over to him.

Dr. Jim said, “Jason what is wrong?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Good morning Dr. Jim give me a minute.”

Dr. Ralph looked at the nighttime head nurse and said, “I need all of those test done this morning in an hour. But first I need you to go and get Miss Wright’s chart.”

The head nurse lifted it up.

Dr. Ralph did not know she had taken it from Lorraine’s room.

Dr. Ralph said, “Come with us.”

The head nurse and the nurse that was with Lorraine through out the night.

The nurses followed Dr. Ralph and Dr. Jim.

Dr. Ralph held Dr. Jim on the shoulders.

They waked outside Lorraine’s room and sat on the sofa.

Several of the doctors were coming to work and saw the gathering and saw Dr. Jim looking over a patient’s chart.

They knew it was a problem.

They walked over to Dr. Jim.

Hutch saw them gathering and he kept his eyes on Lorraine.

He walked to Lorraine’s door stood and listened.

Dr. Jim did not see anything in Lorraine’s chart.

He handed the chart to the other doctors who were standing there.

The doctors read Lorraine’s chart and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Hutch turned and looked at the doctors.

The last doctor for the day walked over and watched the doctors. He reached for the patent’s chart.

He read the chart and began to ask questions.

Dr. Ralph said to the head nurse, “Show the telegram from Dr. Wade.”

The head nurse looked in the chart and said, “I put it in here.”

She handed the chart back to the doctor and walked to the nurses’ desk and searched for the telegram.

The daytime head nurse said, “What are you looking for?”

The nighttime head nurse said, “The telegram from Dr. Wade with instructions on what to do for Miss Wright.”

The daytime nurse looked around and said, “We put it back in her chart.”

The nighttime head nurse said, “It’s not there.”

The daytime head nurse said, “It has to be. We just had it and I put it back in the chart.”

The daytime head nurse was huffed and stomped over to the doctors.

The nurses followed her with the nighttime head nurse.

The daytime head nurse said, “Doctors excuse me. May I see Miss Wright’s chart. We all stood over and I put the telegram from Dr. Wade with his instructions in Miss Wright’s chart.”

Dr. Jim was baffled.

He said, “The telegram isn’t there.”

The daytime head nurse was annoyed with the doctors and they were becoming annoyed with her.

Hutch stood in the door and listened to them as he kept his eyes on Lorraine.

The last doctor began to ask Dr. Ralph and Hutch questions about Lorraine’s treatment plan and why some medications.

The head supervisor nurse of all Medication walked in the hospital.

She had a date the other day with Marvin and felt great.

She was smiling when she walked in.

All the nurses turned and looked at her.

The one nurse sitting at the desk turned around in her chair and looked at the supervisor.

The supervisor saw the nurse at the desk look at her.

She did not stop at the nurses’ desk but continued to the doctors and the head nurses.

Hutch was answering the doctor’s questions.

Dr. Jim looked at the head nurses and said, “Part of your nursing responsibility is to keep the records straight, accurate and correct.”

The head daytime and head nighttime nurse lifted their heads up and stared at Dr. Jim.

Dr. Hutch looked at the women and said, “Ma am, who did you hand the chart to.”

The nighttime head nurse said, “I handed it to her.”

She pointed to the daytime head nurse.

The daytime nurse said, “I put the telegram in the chart.”

Hutch said, “What did you do with the chart?”

Dr. Jim grew tired of the questions and exhaled.

All the nurses stared at him.

Hutch looked at him and said, “Doctor I know this maybe tiring but a patient’s health and life is at stake and we have to know the basic facts.”

The daytime head nurse said, “I gave it to Nurse Graham.”

Hutch said, “Nurse Graham, what did you do with the chart?”

There was no answer.

The head nurse turned and looked at the nurses.

The nighttime head nurse turned and was looking at the nurses.

The head supervisor medication nurse.

Turned and pointed towards the door and said, “I ran into Regina when I was walking in the hospital.”

Dr. Ralph jumped up and said, “How does she look?

The supervisor medication nurse said, “Tall, slim and with red curly hair.”

Dr. Ralph ran out the door and ran around the yard.

He saw a wagon on the street.

He ran to his horse and jumped on it.

Dr. Ralph pulled out his gun and ran the buggy down.

The man with Nurse Regina Graham turned and looked at Dr. Ralph with the gun pointed at him.

The man could not reach for his gun that quick.

Dr. Ralph cocked his gun and said very angrily said, “Get back!!!”

The man turned the buggy around.

Dr. Ralph was riding next to the buggy and had his gun on the man and the nurse.

The nurse was scared and nervous.

At first the nurse was trying to get to over talk Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph could only see his dead Lorraine and he put the gun to the nurse said.

She jumped and inhaled and said to the man, “Go back.”

The man out of fear bucked his eyes.

The woman turned her head slightly and said, “Go back.

The man turned the buggy around.

They rode back to the hospital with Dr. Ralph’s gun to the nurse’ head.

Dr. Ralph saw the man only transported the woman.

She was the boss.

He did not allow himself to think.

He made himself keep his eyes on the woman.

People were about on the streets going to work and church.

Everyone was staring at the man and the woman.

The whole city was on the alert for the mob.

People started following the buggy.

The woman looked around at the people following them.

One man yelled, “I’m going for the sheriff…”

The woman jumped and looked at the man.

The man said, “Where are you taking them?”

Dr. Ralph said, “South hospital.”

The man sped away in the direction of the city center.

Dr. Hutch walked back to Lorraine who was crying and patted her arm.

The daytime head nurse and the supervisor of medication walked in Lorraine’s room after Hutch.

They spoke to Lorraine and patted her hands.

They emptied her vomit basins and cleaned up her room.

The nurses, from both the day and night shifts were standing around waiting to see what was going on.

Dr. Jim stood and said, “You nurses can go back to work.”

The head nighttime nurse did not move.

The nurse that was with the nighttime head nurse with Lorraine all night did not move.

She walked over to Lorraine’s room and leaned on the wall.

The head daytime nurse whispered to the supervisor of medication, “Dr. Jim is making me angry.”

The supervisor of medication said, “Shush.”

Hutch looked from Lorraine to the nurses and said, “I understand.”

Dr. Solomon, who was asking all the questions about the chart, started putting together what was wrong with Lorraine and the few things he knew that would help her.

Dr. Hutch and Dr. Ryan had already agreed on what would help Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph was upset that Lorraine had to have that amount of medication for days to get her organs back to functioning.

While they were getting the shots and the medication ready, Hutch said to Dr. Ralph, “Jason pray.”

Dr. Ralph nearly cried.

Hutch looked at Dr. Ralph who was always calm and said, “Comfort her.”

Dr. Ralph walked to Lorraine and told her he would give her most of the medication and if it works like it should she would break their Christmas date.

Lorraine began to cry.

Hutch did not flinch but continued to get the medication together.

Dr. Solomon walked in Lorraine’s room and saw they had a washcloth over her face.

He said, “Why is the washcloth over her face?”

Hutch turned and looked at Dr. Solomon.

The supervisor of medication walked to Dr. Solomon and walked him out of Lorraine’s room.

She walked him to the nurses’ desk and explained that was part of the way for the patient not to be afraid and create more anxiety.

While she was speaking to Dr. Solomon he said, “Date me.”

The supervisor over medication stopped in the middle of her sentence.

The nurse that was sitting at the nurses’ desk nearly jumped up and screamed.

The supervisor of medication saw the buggy.

She said, “They are back!”

Dr. Solomon jumped and looked back.

He saw Dr. Ralph on the horse with his gun at the head of the nurse.

Everyone ran to the front door.

The supervisor of medication was walking to the door and she and the nurse that was sitting at the nurses’ desk began to grin and hollered but tried to keep their composure.

In her thoughts, the supervisor over medication, she saw herself waving at Marvin and walking down the aisle in a June wedding to Dr. Solomon.

She grinned and the nurse at the desk grinned.

The other nurses looked at them.

The supervisor over medication nodded at Dr. Solomon.

The nurses looked at her because the situation whatever it was, was serious.

They were not going to entertain her first thing that morning.

The other nurse continued to grin.

Dr. Solomon walked out the door and stood and watched the two people.

Dr. Jim and the other doctors walked to the door.

The doctors were not understanding what was going on.

Laura was dropping Rebecca off at work when they saw the nurses and doctors on the porch and at the door and Dr. Ralph had his gun to the nurse’s head.

They were afraid to move.

Hutch and the daytime head nurse heard the nurses outside.

He looked at the daytime head nurse and said, “We need those kits to test her.”

Lorraine heard Hutch and started moaning.

Hutch looked at her.

The head daytime nurse looked at Lorraine.

The nurse that was with Lorraine during the night was exhausted and was leaning her back against the wall to rest.

The daytime head nurse walked to Lorraine’s door and was peeping towards the front door.

Hutch looked at her and walked to the foot of Lorraine’s bed and picked up her chart.

He flipped several time s and began to write.

He looked at the head daytime nurse and said, “Nurse.”

She jumped and walked to Hutch.

Hutch looked at her and said, “I don’t ever care what is going on outside a patient’s room. You you’re your mind on the patient.”

The head daytime supervisor smirked and said, “Yes sir.”

Hutch looked at her.

She knew he was right.

Hutch circled the tests he needed.

The head daytime nurse walked out of Lorraine’s room and went to the medicine room and got the tests.

She yelled at the supervisor of medication.

She turned and looked at the head daytime nurse.

The head daytime nurse stood and stared at the supervisor of medication.

The supervisor of medication looked at the kits the daytime supervisor had on the tray and walked over to her.

They reviewed Hutch’s orders.

The two only looked up as Nurse Graham and the man walked in the hospital with their hands on their heads.

Everyone stepped back.

Dr. Ralph pointed to the sofa near Lorraine’s room.

The supervisor of medication and the head daytime nurse continued to check off the tests and both signed Lorraine’s chart.

The head daytime nurse and the supervisor of medication walked to Lorraine’s room and looked at the nurse and the man.

The nurse and the man rolled their eyes at them.

Dr. Ralph walked backwards to Lorraine’s door and said, “Doctor you need help.”

Hutch saw the two nurses and said, “These two nurses are here.”

The supervisor of medication stopped in her tracks.

The head daytime nurse stood still with the tray in her hands and stared at Hutch.

Hutch looked at them and said, “Come here and help me with these tests.”

Dr. Solomon was watching the supervisor of medication and saw that she and the head daytime nurse were scared.

He walked in and said, “Doctor I will help you. The nurses can assist us.”

Hutch looked at the nurses.

The head daytime nurse said, “Who told you to get involve in this case?”

Hutch walked to the head daytime nurse and took the tray from her.

He, she and the supervisor of medication went through each test and kit.

Dr. Solomon walked to them and was touching the test and the kits.

The supervisor of medication watched him.

She did not want to say anything because that might mess up her fantasy.

The head daytime nurse, who everyone was afraid of, said, “Dr. Solomon -what -are -you-doing?”

Dr. Solomon looked at her and then he looked at Hutch who was looking at him.

Then he looked at the supervisor of medication.

He said, “I just wanted to see the type of tests you are doing and ask why.”

He looked at Hutch.

Hutch was getting tired and he knew he had to rest to be with Lorraine throughout the night.

Dr. Solomon walked back to Lorraine’s bed to get out of their way.

The supervisor of medication snickered.

Hutch looked at her and continue to prepare the test.

The head daytime nurse kept watching Dr. Solomon he gotten on her nerves along with Dr. Jim.

Dr. Ralph was standing with his back to Lorraine’s door so he could look sideways as Hutch was performing the test.

He still had the gun on the nurse and the man.

The sheriff and six of his deputies stormed the hospital and scared the nurses.

The man who rode and got the sheriff and his deputies was the patient at the smallest hospital who told Dennis about the men that were coming in the hospital after hours.

The sheriff said, “I apologize for scaring you nurses.”

Dr. Jim said, “What about me?’

The sheriff looked at Dr. Jim.

The sheriff looked around.

The nurses said, “What are you looking for?”

The daytime head nurse did not look up and said, “Me. His wife.”

The sheriff saw Dr. Ralph with the gun on the suspects.

He looked at Dr. Ralph and pushed his gun down and said, “I’ll take over from here.”

The sheriff walked in Lorraine’s room and said, “Helen are going to bake that apple pie today?”

Hutch said, “Excuse yourself.”

The head daytime nurse said, “Yeah. Just start the fire.”

The sheriff ran over to her and kissed her on her lips.

The head daytime nurse kept her eyes on what she was doing.

The sheriff ran back out the room and began to yell at the suspects.

Hutch said, “I like him. He keeps his mind on his job.”

He looked up at Helen.

She rolled her eyes at Hutch.

Myriah screamed.

Hutch looked up.

Dr. Ralph and Dr. Jim ran to Myriah’s room.

She was scared when she heard the sheriff yelled and no one was in the room with her.

Dr. Jim patted her.

Myriah went back to sleep.

A nurse stayed in the room with her.

The other nurse rolled her eyes at the sheriff.

He said, “I’m sorry.”

The head daytime nurse heard her husband and kept working.

Dr. Ralph did nothing until he read the patient’s chart.

He said to Dr. Jim, “She is suppose to be waken this morning. Ryan wants her mother here.”

Dr. Jim said, “Alright.”

They walked out of Myriah’s room.

They saw the sheriff and his deputies had surround Nurse Graham and the man.

Dr. Ralph walked in Lorraine’s room.

He looked at Dr. Solomon and the tests that Lorraine had to have after eight hours of the medication in her body.

Dr. Ralph had an attitude and pulled off his gun.

He walked to Lorraine’s bed and rolled up his sleeves and looked for the alcohol.

The head daytime nurse pointed to the ash basin and Dr. Ralph walked over and she followed him and poured the alcohol over his hands.

He washed his hand and stared in front of him.

The head daytime nurse looked at Dr. Ralph and saw his pain.

She said, “Is she a special friend of yours?”

Dr. Ralph looked at the head daytime nurse and said, “Yes.”

The head daytime nurse said, “She needs you to have your mind totally on her.”

Dr. Ralph turned and looked at the head daytime nurse.

She handed him the towel and picked up the basin to pour out the alcohol.

Dr. Ralph walked to the Lorraine bed and looked at Dr. Solomon and said, “You can give leave now.”

Dr. Solomon looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “I’m staying.”

The supervisor of medication and Hutch looked at Dr. Solomon.

Dr. Solomon saw how the head daytime nurse rolled her eyes at him as she walked out the room.

Dr. Solomon said, “I want to know what I missed in treating this patient. You cannot make me leave for learning.”

Dr. Ralph stared at him.

The supervisor of medication watched Dr. Ralph.

Dr. ralph walked to Lorraine and patted her head.

Lorraine was moaning and groaning.

Dr. Ralph began the tests.

Lorraine screamed in pain.

The sheriff and his deputies began to run.

The head daytime nurse yelled, “Junior!!”

The man began to run with the deputies.

The sheriff ran back and grabbed the nurse and the man who was running by him.

He threw them out the hospital.

The head daytime nurse yelled, “I want one of those dresses from Smith’s.”

The head daytime nurse took a deep breathe and straighten her uniform and walked in Lorraine’s room.

Dr. Solomon looked at Her.

Hutch looked at her.

The supervisor of medication looked at her.

The head daytime nurse was embarrassed and turned red and turned her head.

Dr. Solomon said, “Is Smith’s a store I would a woman a dress to impress her?”

The supervisor of medication quickly said, “Yes doctor.”

Hutch was handing Dr. Ralph the tests.”

He looked at Dr. Solomon.

Dr. Solomon said, “I’m keeping up.”

The head daytime nurse looked at Dr. Solomon.

The supervisor of medication said, “Blue, purple or green.”

The head daytime nurse looked at the supervisor of medication and said, “Dr. Solomon was talking to you.”

The supervisor of medication grinned.

Dr. Solomon looked at the head daytime nurse.

Dr. Ralph did not blink.

His heart and mind were on Lorraine and getting her through the terrible tests.

He was trying not to scar her because he knew how she felt about her beautiful skin.

He did not trust anyone else to do the tests.

Hutch was watching Dr. Ralph intensely and handing hm tests after tests.

Dr. Solomon saw Dr. ralph and Dr. Hutch did not wave about their dedication and duty to the patients.

Dr. Solomon was impressed with them.

He wondered about them.

Dr. Ralph got to the last test and he looked at the quaking and shivering Lorraine.

He said, “Hutch hold Lorraine. I don’t want to leave a scar.”

The head daytime nurse heard scar and watched Dr. Ralph.

She thought, He’s concerned about her appearance.”

She and the supervisor of medication walked to Lorraine’s bed.

They held Lorraine down until Dr. Ralph finished all the three parts of the test.

Hutch changed Lorraine’s IVs and put different medicine in them.

The nurses changed her sheets.

They washed Lorraine and put her on a clean gown.

Dr. Ralph sat and stared at Lorraine.

Hutch stepped away from the bed and watched the nurses attend Lorraine.

Hutch said, “Dr. Ralph we have to let them know we will not be there today.”

Dr. Solomon looked at Hutch.

He looked at Dr. Ralph.

Rebecca walked to Lorraine’s door with a tray and had two cups of coffee.

The head daytime nurse and the supervisor of medication looked at Rebecca and then at Hutch.

Hutch turned and saw Rebecca and smiled and said, “No thank you.”

Dr. Solomon passed Hutch and went and got the cup of coffee.

The head daytime nurse said, “Dr. Hutch you can use the telegram machine in Dr. Ryan’s office.”

Hutch thought and said, “No one has the key to the office.”

He looked at Dr. ralph and said, I’ll spend the night here with Lorraine. I can go and work this morning at the hospital. I am concern about Leon. I know Dr. Woodson would be coming late today and he has to stay there tonight and Monday night.”

Dr. Solomon was standing in the hall and watched these dedicated doctors.

He walked away and started his rounds with Dr. Jim and the other doctors.

He started reading the patients charts more.

He saw a few conditions in his patients he had not seen before. He changed their treatment plans to include those conditions.

He felt good.

Dr. Solomon spent more time with the patients and left that afternoon and invited the supervisor of medication to early dinner.

She saw Marvin and waved at him as she walked away with Dr. Solomon.

Marvin was standing in the yard near his horses and carriage and said, “I guess I won’t have to buy her a Christmas gift.”

He thought about their date last week and breathe heavily and said, “I can buy me another pair of boots and a shirt. Now Morgan. I have three pair of boots, six shirts and five pairs of pants and a new coat, scarf, hat and gloves. I have done well in a month sir.”

He walked in the hospital and brought Lora a meal that Mrs. West cooked.

Lora had not eaten in days and she devoured the meal.

The nurses looked at her.

Marvin said, “Lora eat like a human. You will make yourself sick and can’t see Myriah.”

Lora was looking at Marvin and swallowed the food.

The nurses watched Lora and turned their noses at her.

She saw the nurses.

Her feelings were hurt.

Marvin saw the nurses turned their noses up at Lora.

He looked at them.

Dr. Ralph decided to leave the hospital and Hutch would stay until he returned that evening.

Then Hutch would go home and go to the Stith on Monday.

Dr. Ralph walked to the dining room and asked for two scrambled eggs, toast and orange juice.

He ate.

Dr. Ralph checked on Lorraine again and was leaving when he saw Dr. Solomon and the supervisor of medication nurse leave the hospital in front of him.

He saw how Lora was eating and how the nurses were acting.

He remembered Myriah.

He stopped and walked to the nurses’ desk and asked for Myriah’s chart.

The head daytime nurse said, “It’s in her room.”

She walked to Myriah’ s room and Dr. Ralph waited.

He stared at Lora.

Lora swallowed and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Marvin was sitting next to Lora and he looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph was thinking about Myriah not Lora’s bad eating habit.

The head daytime nurse walked out of Myriah’s room with her chart and handed it to Dr. Ralph.

Lora watched the nurse and Dr. Ralph.

She sat and was silent.

Dr. Ralph read Myriah’s chart.

He thought about Lora who told him she was stupid.

He looked at Lora and she swallowed.

Marvin was bent over and seated next to Lora.

He cut his eyes at Lora.

Dr. Ralph walked over to Lora.

Marvin looked up at Dr. Ralph.

Lora stopped and sat and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “Lora, Dr. Ryan is not here today. The other doctors are on rounds. I can wake Myriah before I leave. Are you ready for her to be waken?”

The nurses were looking at Lora.

Lora whispered, “Yes sir. I want to see her. Can I take her home today?”  
Dr. Ralph said, “No. Dr. Ryan said in his notes in Myriah’s chart she can go home in two weeks. Are you going to try to take Myriah from the hospital before the two weeks?”

Marvin watched the tough Dr. Ralph.

Marvin could not understand how Dr. Ralph could torture the woman yesterday and stay at the hospital all night and day and attend to the woman.

Marvin turned his head and looked at Lora.

Lora was staring at Dr. Ralph.

The head daytime nurse waked over and stood by Dr. Ralph to listen to what was being said.

The head daytime nurse looked at the food Lora was eating.

Lora was scared and stuttered, “I won’t take Myriah from the hospital doctor.”

She looked at Marvin.

Marvin said, “Why are you looking at me Lora. I have nothing to do with what you are doing. I am just your carriage driver and Mrs. West asked me to bring you that food.”

The head daytime nurse pointed backwards and said, “When you get ready to eat walk over there to the dining room.”

Lora primped her mouth.

The head daytime nurse said, “Why are you primping your mouth to cry? We have bent over backwards for you this past thirty days. Especially Dr. Ryan. I am not asking you. I am telling you to walk twenty five feet and sit in the dining room to eat. I am not saying don’t eat. You need to eat. You have improved tremendously since you have been here. Continue.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Lora you are not stupid and don’t repeat something someone else said about you.”

Marvin looked at Lora.

Dr. Ralph was tough.

He and Hutch talked briefly standing outside Lorraine’s room.

Hutch said, “Thomas and Michael were right.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Spoiled rats.”

Hutch snickered.

Dr. Ralph told Hutch he would the night with Lorraine and for him to stay with Lorraine until he return that evening.

Dr. Charles and arrived at the hospital and saw no other doctor was there but Felipe.

He was busy attending to Meredith and Felipe Jr.

Dr. Felipe put Felipe Jr. in the bed with Meredith,

He cleaned up the room and put everything in the waste.

Dr. Felipe walked to Dr. Charles.

He said, “We haven’t heard from Drs. Hutch and Ralph. Something must have happened with Lorraine.”

Vivienne started shaking.

Dr. Charles looked at Vivienne and said, “Vivienne go to Sally’s room and lay down until we find out what is going on.”

Vivienne slowly walked to Sally’s room.

Hutch sent a telegram to the Stith.

The nurses heard the telegram machine but could not open the door.

Dr. Charles walked and put his face to the door.

The nurses snickered, because they knew he was waiting for something from France.

Nurse Simons and the nurses began to attend to the patients.

Leon was doing better than he had in the past week.

Nurse Simons said, “Leon I thought you had given up. I thought I would never meet my mother-in-law and sisters and brothers.”

Leon looked at Nurse Simons.

She smiled and walked out his room.

She attended to Betty and Charles Jr. and Laura.

Laura asked her father to buy Betty and Charles Jr a Christmas gift.

He told Laura he would.

Nurse Simons returned to the nurses’ desk.

Leon called her.

She walked to Leon’s door and said, “Yes sir.”

Leon said, “How do you know you don’t have a father-in-law?”

Nurse Simons said, “You never once said, father. You always called out for your mother.”

Dr. Charles was working that side of the hospital that day.

He listened to Leon and Nurse Simons.

He smiled at Nurse Simons response to Leon.

Dr. Felipe was tired.

The nurses looked at him.

He sat in the chair.

The nurses giggled.

Dr. Felipe said, “I did not think it was going to be this much work. Meredith is in the hospital and we have help. What am I going to do at home by myself? I need to hire help.”

He looked at the nurses and said, “Do you know anyone?”

The nurses looked at Dr. Felipe and said, “No.”

Dr. Felipe nearly fell over in the chair.

Vivienne was standing in Sally’s room thinking about Lorraine.

She wanted to go to the hospital to see Lorraine but she did not have a horse and buggy.

The nurses took turns to help Meredith feed Felipe Jr. and change her bandages.

Dr. Felipe said, “I don’t want any more soup. Ever.”

Vivienne said, “I agree Dr. Felipe. I now hate soup and want meat.”

The nurses were laughing.

Dr. Ralph said, “Lora come and let us wake Myriah.”

Lora stood and ran and took her plate to the dining room and put it on a table and ran back to Dr. Ralph.

Marvin thought, “He is patient.”

The head daytime nurse stood and watched Lora.

Dr. Ralph, Lora and the head daytime nurse walked to Lora’s room.

Dr. Ralph waked Myriah.

Myriah woke and started stretching.

Dr. Ralph picked up the stethoscope and started checking Myriah’s vital signs.

Myriah stopped yawning and stretching and squinted her eyes and saw Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “Hello Myriah.”

Myriah looked at Dr. Ralph and then she turned her head and saw Lora.

She jumped with her arms stretched out for Lora.

Lora ran to Myriah and they held each other and cried,

The head daytime nurse smiled.

The nurse that was in Myriah’s room smiled.

Dr. Ralph stood and write great details in Myriah’s chart.

He looked at them and said, “Good afternoon.”

Dr. ralph left the hospital and stopped by the Stith.

He told them the treatment they did for Lorraine.

The doctors said, “Oh God.”

He told of the nurse and the man were arrested.

Dr. Ralph rode home and put water on for him to take a bath later that day.

Dr. Ralph crawled to his bed and went to sleep.

Dr. Hutch told the head daytime nurse to wait him before she leaves so he can go through Lorraine’s chart with her and the head nighttime nurse.

Dr. Hutch went to the second floor and found an empty room.

The nurses watched the good looking surgeon.

He pulled off his boots and went to bed.

Myriah and Lora hugged all afternoon.

The nurses read her chart like Dr. Ralph and Dr. Hutch showed them.

The nurses changed the medicine in her IVs.

The nurses brought Myriah some broth to drink.

Lora sat in a chair and watched Myriah and cried.

She never had a thought about God during the past year.

The head daytime nurse looked at Lora, whom they all thought was ignorant and stupid.

The head daytime nurse said, “You need to thank GOD that HE healed your child. The doctors gave her enough medicine to stop the infection from spreading throughout her body.”

The head daytime nurse pointed to the IVs and said, “Those other two doctors prescribed those medicines that will go in her body and make her body heal.”

Lora was still looking at Myriah.

The other nurses stared at Lora.

The head daytime nurse said, “Lora you need to pray and get your life together. You have not been a good mother to Myriah. That’s why Dr. Ryan was going to have the state take her away from you. But we all have been praying for her to get better. Now you have to do better as a mother.”

Lora never had a thought about God for the past year.

Mrs. West tried to talk to her about God.

Lora told Mrs. West to show her God in her life.

Mrs. West never said, anything else to Lora about God.

The nurses attended to Myriah and fed her and walked out the room with the head daytime nurse.

The head daytime nurse continued to work on the first floor.

She was wondering about Nurse Graham and who was the man.

She heard Lorraine moaning and screaming her entire tour.

The other nurses were in the room with Lorraine.

Dr. Woodson went to church that morning.

He knew he had to go.

Dr. Woodson knew he had to make decisions about his life, his career, the hospital and his friends.

He walked in the church and walked half way down the aisle and slipped in a pew next to a middle aged man.

The middle age man had a toddler sitting next to him.

The man looked at Dr. Woodson.

The toddler said, “Hey Brad.”

Dr. Woodson grinned and sat next to the toddler.

Dr. Woodson felt in his heart that he just got an answer about one of the decisions he had to make.

Dr. Woodson sat and leaned forward and looked at the man looking at him.

He said, “Good morning Tony.”

Dr. Greene said, “Good morning Bradley.”

The choir began to sing.

The choir sang three songs.

The preacher immediately stood and said, “We only take up one offering and no more.”

Dr. Greene handed Barry a nickel.

Barry looked at the nickel and then at Dr. Greene.

He put the nickel in his pocket.

Dr. Woodson grinned.

Dr. Greene grinned.

He said, “Barry this is another nickel, you have to put it in this tray to GOD.”

Barry said, “To God.”

Dr. Greene said, “Yes.”

The deacons took the offering trays to the side and began to count the money.

Barry stood and watched them.

Dr. Greene said, “Barry they have to count the money so they can buy coal and water for the church.

Barry looked at Dr. Greene and continued to watch the men until he saw his nickel and said, “They gave nickel to God daddy.”

Dr. Woodson grinned at Barry and thought, “That’s the way to bring a child up in JESUS.”

Dr. Greene smiled at Barry and said, “Yes son.”

The preacher immediately stood and preached on getting weary in well doing.

He told the congregation that the church would be full when everybody was barely making ends meet.

But now since the bad weather has come the people rarely come to God’s house.

The preacher said, “This is when we need to come to GOD’s House when we can’t make it. We are all in the same boat or ship.”

The people laughed.

The preacher said, “I believe this bad weather is still part of GOD’s judgement on us as a nation for slavery and the ills of it. I do believe that if we pray through this winter like we did the past two summers that GOD will be merciful. Remember II Chronicles 7:14. Pick up the bible on the pew and open it to that scripture.”

The preacher stood and held onto the podium and looked straight at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Greene had turned to the scripture.

He held his head up and saw the preacher staring.

He swallowed and thought, “Me.”

Then Dr. Greene stared at the preacher and realized he was staring at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson had just found II Chronicles 7:14.

Dr. Greene cleared his throat.

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Greene.

Some of the people started looking around to see who the preacher was looking at.

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Greene.

Dr. Greene nodded at the preacher.

Dr. Woodson turned and looked at the preacher.

Dr. Woodson sat straight and stared at the preacher and looked at Dr. Greene.

Dr. Woodson looked at back at the preacher.

The preacher returned his attention to the bible and said, “Better yet everyone stand, and lets read this scripture together.”

Dr. Greene and D. Woodson looked at each other.

Barry stood on the pew and looked at the preacher.

Dr. Greene tried to smile at Barry, but he was perplexed at the preacher.

The preacher lead the reading of the scripture of II Chronicles 7:14. “If my people, who are called by name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

Everyone said, “Amen.”

Barry said, “Amen.”

Dr. Greene and Dr. Woodson slowly smiled at Barry and they sat.

Barry continued to stand.

The preacher said, “We need one another now. We are not to turn our backs on another brethren now. When we think we don’t have anything to help then we cast them aside. Many times it is not financial. It could be about being an ear when they need to talk or an intercessor when they need prayer or a teammate for what they are going through.”

Barry said, “Amen!”

Everyone turned and looked at this baby standing in the pew and listening and agreeing with the Word of GOD as the preacher was preaching.

Everyone clapped at Barry.

Barry had a serious look on his face.

Dr. Woodson looked at Barry and cut his eyes at Dr. Greene.

Dr. Greene stared at Barry.

The pastor said, “JESUS never turned anyone away because how else would the people be healed.”

Barry said, Amen!!”

The people looked at Barry.

The preacher said, “How else would the people get light in their souls and spirits if they weren’t in the presence of the true light of GOD who made them the light of the world.”

Everyone including the preacher looked at Barry.

Barry said, “Thank you JESUS!”

Dr. Woodson started looking around for the closest aisle so he could run.

Dr. Greene stared at Barry and tried to say ‘sit’.

Barry did not move but continued to stand and listen to the preacher.

People started standing and watching Barry.

Some children ran to Barry’s pew and stood in aisle and looked at Barry.

Dr. Greene did not know what to do.

He squirmed.

Dr. Woodson was easing down the pew so he could run.

The preacher said, “JESUS was the salt of the earth. Being in HIS presence makes us the salt of the earth. We are to take the things that have no worth to man but offer these gifts of GOD to man. HIS kindness. HIS love, HIS gentleness, HIS grace. HIS strength.”

Barry clapped loud.

The preacher looked at Dr. Woodson when he jumped up to run.

The preacher said, “Sir be seated.”

Dr. Greene looked around to see who the preacher was talking to.

He saw Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Greene was mad and rolled his eyes at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson tried to walk back and sit next to Dr. Greene.

Dr. Greene leaned forward and said, “Don’t sit with me. I know you ran because of Barry.”

Barry said, “Hey Brad.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Barry and nervously smiled and sat down.

The preacher said, “Share GOD’s gifts one to another. Smile, nod, greet one another and utter prayers for those people who look like they are perfect because there is something that is not perfect in their lives and the only one that can heal them is JESUS.”

Barry said, “Amen.”

The preacher said, “Thank you Barry.”

Dr. Greene jerked his head and looked at the preacher because he never told the preacher Barry’s name.

The preacher said, “Sir.”

Dr. Woodson ignored the preacher because he was mad and did not want to hear anything he had to say.

The preacher said, “You’re mad with me now, but I know GOD want you to pray and that will close our Sunday service today.”

Dr. Woodson was sitting with his arms folded staring at the preacher.

Dr. Greene was sitting back in his seat with his mouth open.

He thought, “This can’t get any worst. Who is he talking to now?”

Dr. Greene followed the eyes of the preacher to a mad Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Greene slowly turned his head to the pulpit and the preacher.

The preacher said, “Sir. You with your arms folded sitting next to Pastor Barry.”

Dr. Greene was stunned and just looked at the preacher.

Barry walked the pew to Dr. Woodson and got his hand.

Dr. Woodson realized he was the person the preacher was talking to.

He stared at the preacher.

Everyone stared at Dr. Woodson.

Barry jumped from the pew.

Dr. Greene tried to catch Barry to stop him from jumping off the pew.

Barry held Dr. Woodson’s hand.

The preacher said, “That’s right Barry bring him to GOD’s alter.’

Dr. Greene stood so Barry and Dr. Woodson could pass by him.

Barry laughed.

Dr. Woodson stood and walked to the front with Barry holding his hand.

Dr. Greene was perplexed and watched Barry and Dr. Woodson walk to the pulpit

A man behind Dr. Greene hit him on the shoulder and said, “GOD bless you sir.”

The people on the pew behind him smiled and grinned and clapped their hands.

They nodded at Dr. Greene.

Dr. Greene tried to smile but he was perplexed.

Dr. Woodson and Barry walked to the pulpit.

The preacher shook Dr. Woodson’s hand.

Barry stepped and held his hand to the preacher to shake his hand.

Everybody was laughing at Barry.

Dr. Greene watched with his mouth opened.

He could not pretend to smile anymore.

The preacher waved to the pulpit for Dr. Woodson to step to it.

Dr. Woodson and Barry stepped to the pulpit.

Dr. Woodson was stunned.

He Said, “Dear LORD GOD Almighty. I come before YOU in JESUS’ name. YOUR word says, “What soever I ask in JESUS’ name I shall receive it. I ask YOU this day to touch each baby, toddler and child in this service and those who should be in service somewhere and can’t go. Let our prayers reach them and touch their hearts that they will have parents like Barry to teach him to grow up in the admonition of JESUS.  
The man patted Dr. Greene shoulder again.

Dr. Greene grinned.

Dr. Woodson said, “LORD GOD Almighty show us the direction YOU created for us to take. Give us peace about OUR decisions. YOU have not put one person on this earth that YOU cannot feed, heal, clothed or deliver even if you do it through us small people. Let not our hearts become weary in well doing. Help us to do YOUR will our Great GOD and SAVIOR JESUS.”

Barry yelled, “Amen!!!”

Dr. Greene began to cry uncontrollably.

He fell into his seat and cried after service.

People was leaving and patting him on his shoulders.

Dr. Woodson was detained by the preacher and his wife.

Dr. Greene covered his face with both hands and bent over and cried for a long time.

He felt people hitting him on his back.

He cried.

Dr. Woodson, Barry, the preacher and his wife were the last ones in the church.

Dr. Greene was still crying.

Barry ran to Dr. Greene and stood in front of him.

The preacher, his wife, Dr. Woodson stood in the aisle and watched the grieving Dr. Greene.

Barry ran to his daddy and tried to pull his hands down from his face.

Barry could not move Dr. Greene’s hands.

Barry looked at Dr. Woodson.

He stood between Dr. Greene’s legs and laid his head on his daddy’s stomach.

The preacher, his wife and Dr. Woodson sat across from Dr. Greene and waited for him.

An hour later Dr. Greene took his hands down.

He felt Barry laying on him.

He picked Barry up and held him.

They both continued to cry.

Dr. Woodson felt sad for his best friend.

The preacher, his wife and Dr. Woodson sat and watched Dr. Greene and Barry.

Dr. Greene raised Barry from his chest and looked him in his face.

Dr. Woodson stood and went into his pocket and walked to Dr. Greene and gave him his handkerchief.

Dr. Greene started not to take the handkerchief.

Then he thought about what the preacher said lean on the kindness of people and be thankful.

Dr. Woodson waved the handkerchief to Dr. Greene and nodded for him to take the handkerchief.

Dr. Greene wiped Barry and his face with the handkerchief.

He sat with Barry in his lap and stared at the pulpit.

The preacher stood and walked and checked the furnace.

He walked back towards the altar and checked the fireplace.

He walked back to Dr. Woodson and looked at Dr. Greene and Barry.

Dr. Greene faked a smiled at Dr. Woodson and the preacher and his wife.

Dr. Greene leaned to Barry and whispered in his ears and said, “Always remember to go to church and always remember JESUS. Please remember me.”

Dr. Woodson turned his head and cried for his best friend.

The preacher and his wife watched Dr. Greene and Barry.

Dr. Greene turned and picked up Barry’s coat and put on his scarf and hat and gloves.

Barry jumped out Dr. Greene’s lap and stood in the aisle and stared at the pulpit.

The preacher touched Barry’s head and said, “Barry this is your pulpit when you are older.”

Dr. Greene stood and was putting on his scarf, hat and coat and gloves.

He looked at the preacher.

The preacher’s wife looked at Dr. Greene with tears in her eyes.

Dr. Woodson said, “I invite you all to dinner.”

The preacher said, “I invite you all to our house for dinner.”

His wife nodded her head at Dr. Greene.

Dr. Greene bowed his head.

They all walked out the church.

Barry was walking and looking back at the pulpit.

Dr. Woodson gave Barry his Christmas gifts.

Dr. Greene put the Christmas gifts in the carriage with them.

They ate Sunday dinner with the preacher and his wife.

The preacher’s Sunday cook had finished dinner and set the table for two.

The preacher’s wife added three more plates.

They held hands and said grace.

They sat and ate Sunday’s dinner and tried to grin through the hurt.

The preacher said, “What I do know that Barry will come back and preach the gospel of Salvation of our LORD and SAVIOR JESUSU the CHRIST from our church.”

The preacher looked at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson nodded his head.

The preacher’s wife grinned.

Dr. Greene looked at her.

The preacher said, “Dr. Woodson has agreed to become a part time preacher at our church.”

Dr. Greene was shocked.

The preacher said, “That will give us an opportunity to start a small church where we come from. It is at the bottom of the state out in the country. We will come back in the city during the wintertime. I know the schedule has to be worked out. We won’t have church service here but once a month until all is worked out.”

They stood to leave the preacher and his wife for the day was over.

Dr. Greene watched the preacher’s wife put on Barry’s coat and hat.

The preacher and Dr. Woodson were standing with a grieving Dr. Greene.

Dr. Greene said, “I know what I must do. I was fighting against it. Debra never stop saying when Barry when she could. He would come here to Philadelphia and stay at the hotel at the hospital. When Debra would disappear for hours at a time she was over in the hotel having relations with Barry. Shirley and Eleanor saw that she was stealing Hutch money to buy Barry’s train tickets to here and paying for his hotel stays.”

Bradley looked at his hurt friend.

The preacher said, “I went through that six years ago. I was married to my sweetheart sixteen years and for sixteen years she was still having more relations with her sweetheart than with me. I divorced her and it took over three years to get over it. I started church here and meet my current wife Judy and we have been here for three years. I am old as you, but it is worth being married.”

Dr. Greene looked at Barry and said, “He is what I was holding onto. I did not want him to grow up with Barry, but I see Debra is just as wicked as Barry. I will see a lawyer tomorrow. I was walking around town center one day and I saw his office. I did not want to go in because it would seem as if I was a failure after two marriages.”

The preacher said, “I know what you are saying after you have been married and had relations often it is hard to let that go.”

Dr. Greene thought about how Debra gave him delight.

He now knew it was all fake.

Barry ran to Dr. Greene.

Dr. Greene picked Barry up and they ran to the carriage.

Dr. Greene belted Barry in the carriage and covered him with some blankets.

He said, “Dr. Woodson give me until the new year. I’ll be back.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Very well Tony.”

Barry yelled, “Bye Brad” and waved.

Dr. Woodson laughed and waved bye at Barry and said, “Bye Barry.”

Dr. Greene and Barry rode away singing songs all the way home.

Dr. Woodson turned and shook the preacher’s hand and his wife.

Dr. Woodson said, “I maybe able to come to Christmas service. I don’t now who will be at the hospital. I will message you.”

The preacher said, “Very well.”

Dr. Woodson put on his gloves and walked to his mounted horse and rode to the Stith.

He already had two change of clothes with him so he passed his house and rode to the hospital.

He never told anyone.

Eleanor bought the house for him as a gift of friendship because she and he could never be more than friends.

The owner lives in the house and take care of the house.

Eleanor had Mabel to plant flowers around the house.

Eleanor added lanterns and two furnaces.

The house was now really nice.

Dr. Woodson had two college students living there and Dr. Hutch.

Dr. Woodson refused for Eleanor to buy the house.

Eleanor told Dr. Woodson if he did not accept the house as a gift, she would fire him from the bone hospital and ruin his reputation.

Dr. Woodson accepted the house as a gift and signed the deed.

Eleanor grinned at him and invited him to lunch with her and Patrick and Brenda.

Brenda looked at Bradley and said, “We’re glad you accepted Eleanor’s gift of friendship.”

Bradley looked at Patrick and Brenda and grinned.

They had a wonderful lunch.

Dr. Woodson arrived at the hospital and rode his horse around back.

He feed his horse and gave the horse water.

He saw the horses and carriages of the other night workers.

He locked the shed doors.

They had the door modified to have the top half of the door opened for the horses to see and breath.

The cooks and dish washers were leaving for the day and they were running out the backdoor.

Dr. Woodson ran to the backdoor and locked the door and put the bar behind it.

He stopped and looked in the kitchen. It was clean.

He looked at the last room by the door which was the doctor’s room to sleep.

Dr. Woodson put his bag in the room and took off his coat, scarf, hat and gloves.

He walked out the room and checked the furnaces and the wash area and the workers’ area.

Dr. Woodson stopped at Laura and spoke to she and her father and mother.

He asked how she was feeling.

Laura said, “Dr. Woodson I really feel good.”

Dr. Woodson grinned.

He stopped at Betty and Charles Jr.

He asked them about their day and what they had to eat and if they were washed that day.

Laura and her father listened to Dr. Woodson well stated questions.

Dr. Woodson stopped and checked on Meredith and Felipe Jr.

Betty said, “Dr. Woodson.”

Dr. Woodson walked back to Betty and said, “Yes.”

Betty said, “I know the baby doesn’t know but can you tell him to be ‘quiet’.”

Dr. Woodson and Laura laughed because that is what he told them.

Dr. Woodson said, “That is the way the baby talks. Good evening Betty.”

President Strafford laughed and said, “Delightful children.”

His wife said, “Don’t bring home any more strays.”

She looked at Laura.

Laura looked at her mother.

Dr. Woodson was walking out Betty and Charles Jr.’s room and heard the conversation.

He did not like it.

Laura’s father looked at Laura and stared at the wall.

He had his hands on his thighs and he began to rub his thighs.

He stood and walked to Laura and bent and kissed her on her forehead.

Laura did not like what her mother said.

Her mother stood and put on her wrap and gloves.

President Strafford put on his scarf, coat, hat and gloves.

He had his back to Laura and thinking.

Dr. Woodson walked to Laura’s room.

He saw Laura’s father demeanor.

Laura’s walked over to her to kiss her on her forehead.

Laura turned her head.

Dr. Woodson saw Laura moved her head.

Laura’s father saw Laura move her head.

His wife walked out the door and did not say anything to Dr. Woodson.

President Strafford said, “Good night darling.”

Laura looked at her father.

Dr. Woodson was standing out the door.

President Stafford knew Dr. Woodson wanted to say something about what his wife said.

President Strafford to Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson looked at the president’s wife at the door of the hospital.

Dr. Woodson said, “Sir I heard your wife’s comment. We are Christians and don’t mistreat anyone who come here.”

President Strafford said, “I know. I have nothing but high praise for all of you.”

Dr. Woodson caught President Strafford by his arm and walked from Laura’s door and from Betty and Charles Jr.’s door.

President Strafford said, “Good evening you cherry little ones.”

Dr. Woodson grinned.

Charles Jr. and Betty said, “Good evening.”

They were becoming better communicators.

Dr. Woodson said, “She’s not Laura’s mother is she?”

President Strafford stopped walking and looked at Dr. Woodson and said, “What?”

Dr. Woodson said, “The comment about ‘strays’.”

President Strafford looked at Dr. Woodson and said, “No she is not. I made a mistake nearly two decades ago. The mother died from complications from childbirth. They were putting the deformed baby in an orphanage. I heard about it. I went to my wife, confessed my sins and asked her to forgive me and since we could not have any child for me to bring Laura to our home. She told me yes. We went to get Laura. Laura has been with us ever since she was three months old. I have had it with my wife. She says evil things every day. Today was the end. I got her out of the garbage dumped one Sunday where she was trying to get something to eat and I raised her up to be a president’s wife and everyday she thinks I don’t remember her past. It ends today.”

Dr. Woodson nodded and they walked to the lobby.

The president said, “I love this Christmas tree.”

Dr. Woodson looked around and he did not see Dr. Hutch and Dr. Ralph.

He looked at Nurse Simons who was getting ready to leave for the day.

Dr. Woodson walked President Strafford and his wife to the door.

He turned and rushed back to Nurse Simons and said, “Where are Dr. Hutch and Dr. Ralph?”

The nurses looked at Dr. Woodson.

Nurse Simons said, “There was a serious problem with Lorraine and they stayed at the hospital last night and today to help her. Dr. Ralph came by to tell us that and that Dr. Hutch will remain at the hospital today and come here in the morning. He will stay the night with Lorraine and see Dr. Ryan in the morning. He will come to work sometime in the morning. Dr. Felipe and Dr. Charles saw all the patients today. I washed Betty, Charles, Jr…”

Leon yelled, “And me.”

Nurse Simons said, “and Leon today all the patients have been bath and all medications have been given.”

She pointed at the hospital administrator’s office and said, “That telegram machine has been going all day.”

Leon said, “Can’t you leave the key with me?”

The nurses laughed.

Dr. Woodson said, “Good evening Leon.”

Dr. Woodson walked Nurse Simon’s outside and around the hospital to her horse.

She mounted her horse and sped home.

Dr. Woodson laughed.

He walked around the hospital and thought about Shirley and Eleanor.

Eleanor told the groundskeeper if he steals anymore coal she would fire him and jail him.

He said, “GOD I need help. I can’t do all of this work by myself. And I want a wife. I know I sinned in Europe, but I believe YOU forgave me. Help me to contain and not to burn. I understand what Dr. Greene and the preacher are saying.”

Dr. Woodson made back to the hospital and walked inside.

He walked to Dr. Charles and Dr. Felipe.

They told Dr. Woodson what all happened today with the patients and they were going to get food to eat.

Vivienne was putting on her scarf, coat, hat and gloves.

She picked up her bag.

Dr. Woodson said, “I saw soup that was left.”

Everybody started fussing.

Even the patients.

Dr. Felipe said, “I don’t ever want any more soup. Ever.”

Dr. Woodson said, “But it is French onion.”

Dr. Felipe started cursing.

The nurses laughed.

Felipe said, “I am going home to get clean clothes and leave the clothes for the laundry service.”

The nurses said, “No!”

Dr. Felipe said, “I’m not doing washing.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Someone will steal them. Can you go home in the morning and come back at noon?”

Dr. Charles and Vivienne were walking out the door.

Dr. Felipe looked at them and said, “Wait. I’m going with you too to get food. I have lost weight eating nothing but soup.”

The nurses laughed.

Dr. Felipe put on his hat and gloves and ran out the door with Dr. Charles and Vivienne.

They hurried to the restaurant which was full.

Dr. Felipe stood in line while Charles and Vivienne took their coats to their rooms.

When they returned.

Felipe was sitting at a table.

He ordered him fried chicken, mashed potatoes and plenty of gravy and biscuits and honey.

The cook was bringing out his plate when Charles and Vivienne returned.

Vivienne sat and looked at Felipe plate and said, “I want that?”

The cook said, “Everybody wanted fried chicken. Today is Sunday. I have to see if anymore is left.”

Charles looked at Vivienne.

The cook said, “Sir.”

Charles looked at the cook.

Felipe looked at Charles.

Vivienne looked at Charles.

She said, “Order. You are not getting any of my food.”

The cook walked to another table.

Felipe said was eating a chicken wing and said, “What is wrong Charles?”

Dr. Charles was embarrassed.

Vivienne said, “I have money.”

Felipe knew money was not the problem with Charles.

Charles whispered, ”Do you hear chickens being killed?”

Vivienne said, “They better.”

Felipe had the chicken leg in his mouth devouring the meat and turned all the way around from Charles and continued to eat.

He was not going to let Charles stop him from eating his meat.

The walked back with two fried chicken plates.

The cook put one plate in front of Vivienne with a large chicken breast.

He put a chicken plate in front of Charles with a thigh and a wing.

Dr. Charles said, “Who told you to give me fried chicken?”

Felipe looked at Charles.

Vivienne was saying her grace.

When she finished her grace she raised her head and looked at Charles.

The cook said, “Those were the last two pieces of meat we had. You come in here all the time. I thought I was doing you a favor.”

Vivienne said, “You were. Thank you.”

She and Felipe at the same time reached and got a piece of chicken.

Vivienne go the chicken wing and Felipe got the thigh.

They ate and was full.

Felipe was leaning nearly on the seat of the booth.

He was about to fall asleep.

Charles looked at Felipe.

Charles had a large amount of potatoes and gravy, green beans and corn.

He was satisfied.

He kept watching Vivienne as she cut her fried chicken with the knife as a lady.

Vivienne looked at Charles.

Charles stared at Vivienne.

Felipe was watching Charles.

Felipe had put his head on the seat to go to sleep.

He said, “Let me get up and walked these twenty minutes to the hospital and check on Meredith and Jr, so I can go to sleep.”

Vivienne said, “It’s cold can you walk faster tonight?’

Felipe thought for a minute and shook his head for no.

Felipe was going in his pocket to pay for his meal.

Vivienne said, “I’ll pay Felipe.”

Charles said, “No I will pay.”

Felipe looked at Charles and wondered when he will tell Vivienne he is rich.

Felipe said, Until tomorrow.”

He rushed to the door and tried to walk fast to the hospital.

He knew Vivienne was saying that in case someone tried to rob him.

Felipe began to pray.

He prayed all the way to the hospital.

Dr. Woodson was in the hospital administrator’s office going through the telegrams.

He received several telegrams about Sally.

The sheriff said, “They could not come and get Sally until the spring of the year.”

He saw the telegram from the hotel for times Barry spent there.

Dr. Woodson became angry.

He kept going through the telegrams.

He saw several with Leon’s name.

He turned them over and did not read them.

He received a ‘thank you’ telegram from Eleanor.

He thought about Eleanor for a minute and shook himself.

He wondered how GOD was going to bring someone to help him with running the hospital and where was his wife. He wanted his wife by the spring.”

Dr. Woodson saw Felipe rushing to the hospital.

The hospital’s door was unlocked.

Dr. Woodson put all the telegrams in separate folders and stacked them on the desk.

He walked out the office and took Leon his telegrams.

Leon looked in shock and said, “What?”

Dr. Woodson said, “Leon you know I did not read them. I saw your name.”

Dr. Woodson walked out Leon’s room and walked through the hospital.

He went into the kitchen and got a bowl of French onion soup.

He walked to the workers area and sat and blessed his food and ate the soup.

Dr. Woodson said, “I don’t know why they hate soup.”

Felipe heard Dr. Woodson talking to himself.

Felipe was holding Felipe Jr.

He walked to the worker’s area and said, “We want meat. I just had three pieces of fried chicken and I ate all three and I ate a ton of potatoes and gravy.”

Dr. Woodson sat back in the chair and looked at Felipe.

Dr. Woodson looked at the baby.

He said, “If you had nothing on your stomach but soap, then you ate that greasy fried chicken and all that gravy you are going to be sick in the morning.”

Felipe was happy and smiling at Felipe Jr.

He said, “I won’t get sick.”

Dr. Woodson stared at Felipe and continued to eat his French onion soup.

Felipe walked out and took Felipe Jr. back to Meredith.

He sat in there for a while and watched them.

Dr. Woodson walked to each patient’s room and put out the lanterns.

He loved the lanterns that Eleanor put in the hospital they burned for hours and have enough fuel to last for days.

He thought about the workers from Europe that will spend two years in America putting up the new lights around the train stations and shipping docks.

He asked Eleanor if they could put the lights around the hospital and in the hospital.

Eleanor told him no.

Leon was quiet.

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

Leon waved his hand to be left alone.

Dr. Woodson said, “I need to put out the lantern.”

Leon said, “Fine. And close the door.”

Dr. Woodson knew Leon like to have the door opened so he could hear and be nosey.

Dr. Woodson said, “Good night Leon.”

Leon said, “Nothing.”

Dr. Woodson checked on Sally who was coloring.

He took her coloring book from her and put her in bed and closed her door.

He locked the front door to the hospital and walked to the back.

He stood and watched Betty and Charles Jr. sleep.

Dr. Woodson exhaled and said, “GOD why their parents had to die?”  
Dr. Woodson peeped at Laura who had her back turned to the door.

Dr. Woodson let out her light and closed her door.

Laura said, “Thank you.”

Dr. Woodson said, “You are welcome.”

He walked to his room and got his bible.

Dr. Woodson hung his clothes for the next two days.

He picked up his bible and walked to the workers’ area and sat and read his bible for a n hour.

He stood and went to his room.

Dr. Woodson bowed on his knees and prayed for the hospital and Leon and the black children, Sally and Laura and all the patients. He prayed for all the workers and Dr. Greene.

He realized how tired he was.

He pulled off his boots and jacket and crawled in bed.

Dr. Woodson slept through the night.

He thought he heard noise at the back door.

He woke the second time and sat up.

The back of the hospital was dark.

Dr. Woodson sat on the bed and listened.

He heard the noise again.

He stood and walked to the chair and put on his holster and walked through the hall.

Dr. Felipe startled Dr. Woodson.

He ran into the hall and over to the workers area to throw up and use the pot.

Dr. Woodson did not think about Felipe but kept his mind on the noise.

He closed the door to the workers’ area.

Leon was laying in his bed thinking.

He looked at his window and though he was looking at a shadow.

He tried to move but could not.

Leon said, “I can’t scream or yell that would let them become aware and flee. The nurses won’t be in until six am to give me pain medication.”

Leon watched the shadow at his window,

He breathed a sigh of relief because the shadow moved from his window.

Leon was still quiet and listened.

Dr. Woodson eased to the front door with the gun drawn.

The nurses were laughing and talking.

Some were reading, needlepointing and sewing.

They looked and saw Dr. Woodson easing with his gun pointed.

The nurses were shocked.

They became quiet.

Dr. Woodson said, “Eleanor said to cover this window at night. I’ll do it in the morning.”

He told the nurses put out your lights and go to Sally.”

The nurses put out the lights.

The front of the hospital was dark.

Several of the nurses had guns and pulled them out of their bags.

The lanterns were lit outside the hospital and gave some light so the workers could see any movement.

Gr. Woodson stood with his back on the wall and waited.

Dr. Felipe was still in the workers’ area.

The nurses started complaining about the smell.

Dr. Woodson stood and said nothing.

Leon saw several shadows running outside and finally bit his tongue and fell out of bed.

Everyone heard the noise.

Dr. Woodson was thinking, “Who is that?”

Leon made it to his door and knocked on it.

The nurses ran to his door and barely opened it because he was behind the door.

He said, “Men outside.”.

Leon was shaking in pain.

Dr. Woodson heard Leon but did not move.

The nurses picked Leon up and put him in his bed.

They had to put a covering over his mouth because the pain he was in.

One of the nurses ran to Dr. Woodson and held onto the corner and said, “Dr. Woodson, Leon fell out the bed to warn us. He is in much pain.”

Dr. Woodson kept his eyes on the door and said, “Give him a full shot.”

The nurse looked at Dr. Woodson and looked at the other nurses that were hiding behind the desk.

The nurse went to the medicine cabinet and got the medicines out.

She walked to another nurse who lit a candle.

They saw the medicine and filled the needle.

They put the medicine back and ran into Leon’s room.

Leon was shaking.

The nurses gave him the shot.

He shook more.

They stood and watched him.

They saw the figures outside Leon’s window.

One of the nurses in Leon’s room knew how to shoot.

The other nurse took the needle and bottle and put it in the trash.

Dr. Felipe stumbled out the workers’ area and laid on the cold floor to be refreshed.

The nurses were mad and said, “Close the door.”

Felipe did not hear the nurses because he laid on the cold floor and fell asleep.

Leon shook for close to an hour.

The nurse was standing in Leon with her gun pointed out the window.

Another nurse was in Sally’s room with her gun.

The nurse who gave Leon the shot could not take the stench anymore.

She jumped up followed by another nurse and they ran to the workers’ area.

They saw Felipe on the floor and jumped over him.

They opened the windows and stood in the area with their guns.

The small candle in the workers’ area was at the bottom and the nurses had a little light. To see where not to step.

They picked up the pot and the pails and eased them to the back door.

Laura smelled the stench and was smelling herself until she realized it was in the hallway.

Dr. Woodson saw the nurses at the backdoor with pots and pails.

He thought, “Now that stench is back there with me. I told him this would happen.”

The nurses eased the rod from behind the back door and unlocked it.

They put their ears to the door.

Laura could not sleep because of the stench.

She sat up in the bed.

She knew something was wrong.

She could usually hear the nurses laughing and talking.

She was feeling pretty good and Dr. Ralph and Hutch had her hips unlocked and this is the first time in her life she could move her waist and her lips. She had some feelings in her toes.

Her father cried.

Her mother looked.

Laura was happy that now she could use crutches sometime and the wheelchair some time.

Dr. Ralph told her she was taller because they were able to straighten out the muscles and ligaments.

Laura felt normal.

She understood how Shirley felt and did not want to be called handicapped.

Laura looked up and she stared at her window and saw some shadows.

She eased out of her and hung onto the covering until she made it to the floor.

She crawled out of her room and saw a body on the floor.

She jumped and then she heard the snoring.

She smelled the stench down the hall and looked and saw the nurses.

Laura said, “Help.”

One of the nurses ran to her.

Laura said, “Men at the window.”

The nurse said lay flat on the floor.

Laura laid flat on the floor.

The men were trying to get in through Laura’s window.

They opened the window.

One put his leg through the window and was trying to crawl in.

The nurse shot.

He screamed and fell out the window.

The rest of the men started running.

They ran to the stables to steal the horses.

The horses started bucking.

The nurse ran out of Laura and eased the backdoor open.

She shot several times at the men.

The men left the horses and started running.

The man who was shot in the leg ran passed the nurses screaming.

The nurses said, “What?”

The nurses took the pails out to the outhouse.

One nurse took out the pails while the other one watched.

They took out all the pails and rinse them out.

The other nurse who stood with her gun and watched pout for the nurse got a pail and water and mopped the workers’ area.

Laura loved the excitement.

She crawled back into her room and drawled into her bed.

Dr. Woodson was checking on Leon.

He checked his vital signs.

He got Leon’s chart and put great detail in his chart.

Dr. Woodson said, “Please something up to cover the windows and the door.”

The nurses went and got a sheet and put it up to the door.

Dr. Woodson walked through the hospital and realized most of the patients were sleep.

He saw Laura crawling to her room.

He checked on Betty and Charles Jr who were sleep.

He walked to Laura and closed her window and said, “Sorry.”

Laura said, “Thank you for protecting us.”

The nurses were cleaning up the area and had the windows opened.

Gr. Woodson tried to walk Felipe.

He left Felipe and walked to the nurses.

Dr. Woodson said, “Did you recognized anyone?”

The nurse said, “Yeah the one I shot in the leg.”

Dr. Woodson looked at her.

She said, “One of the cooks.”

Dr. Woodson said, “He’s fired. Thank you for cleaning this up.”

The nurses said, “That’s all. He’s fired.”

Dr. Woodson said, “That’s all we can do now. At least you won’t have soup for a while.”

The nurse said, “It’s worth shooting him.”

Dr. Woodson saw they hated the soup idea.

He walked to the back door and opened it.

Dr. Woodson stood in the backdoor to air out the hospital and to think.

He heard the nurses walking back to their desks.

He closed and locked the backdoor and put the bar behind it.

He saw Felipe sleep on the floor he walked to his room and put down his guns and went back to sleep.

He slept until daybreak.

He got on his knees and said, “LORD GOD Almighty YOU have to help me through this day. I am tired and sleepy and Dr. Felipe is no help today.”

Dr. Woodson put on his boots and went out the backdoor and used the out house and came back into the hospital.

He brought pails of water to heat water for the wash area.

Dr. Woodson put more coal in the furnace, and he put coal in the kitchen stove.

Dr. Felipe was still sleep on the floor.

Dr. Woodson stood and looked at him.

The nurses passed them and went to Meredith and helped her nurse Felipe Jr.

The nurses came out and went to the washroom and got a sterilized pail for Felipe Jr. and Meredith.

They filed the pails with warm water and washed both Meredith and Felipe Jr.

Dr. Woodson got a water basin and filled it with hot water and washed and changed clothes.

He shaved.

The nurses were finished with Meredith and Felipe Jr.

They disposed of the water and cleaned the water basins.

Meredith was awake and holding Felipe Jr.

Dr. Woodson was passing her room and stepped over Felipe.

Meredith saw Dr. Woodson and said, “Hey Dr. Woodson.”

Dr. Woodson stopped and walked back and saw Meredith holding Felipe Jr for the first time since he was born.

Dr. Woodson smiled.’

Meredith looked at Dr. Woodson and wondered why he did not speak.

She saw he was overcome with happiness.

She grinned and said, “You want to hold your god son?”

Dr. Woodson said, “I better since you and Felipe Jr will be going back to live in Paris.”

Meredith looked at Dr. Woodson.

He walked to the bed and picked up Felipe Jr.

He sat in the chair Felipe normally sat in.

Meredith glanced something in the floor.

She peeped.

She sat up in the bed and leaned over and peeped out the room into the hall.

The nurses stepped over Felipe and walked in the room.

One of the nurses said, “Dr. Woodson, take out Meredith’s IVs?”

Dr. Woodson was holding a yawning Felipe Jr.

He looked and said, “Yes.”

Meredith held out her arm and the nurses were removing the IVs.

Meredith said, “Oh GOD that hurts.”

Meredith was wiggling.

Dr. Woodson said, “Give her oatmeal and orange juice and then give her a pain pill.”

Meredith said, “Yes pain pill.”

She was peeping and said, “Is that…”

Dr. Woodson and the two nurses said at the same time, “Yes.”

Meredith said, “What’s wrong with him. Is he alive? He is not moving.”

Dr. Woodson said, “He ate three pieces of fried chicken.”

Meredith looked at Dr. Woodson and said, “Not one or two.”

Dr. Woodson said, “No.”

The nurses went into the kitchen.

One nurse quickly made the oatmeal.

The other one squeezed the orange juice.

The nurse ho squeezed the orange juice walked up front to the nurses’ desk and went into the medicine cabinet and got the pain pills.

She did not remember what Dr. Woodson said.

She brought the pain pills back and walked in Meredith’s room and said, “Dr. Woodson did you say two pain pills?’

Meredith said, “Three.”

The nurse looked at Meredith and laughed and said, “Right’”

The nurse looked at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson stared at Meredith and said, “I said, two but only give her one.”

The other nurse walked from the kitchen with a small amount of oatmeal in a bowl.

The nurses knew Meredith ate little amounts of food.

Meredith reached for the pain pill.

The nurse pulled it back.

Dr. Woodson looked at Meredith and thought, “Felipe is right. Eleanor’s boys have spoiled her.”

Meredith swallowed the oatmeal and reached for the pain pill.

The nurse gave her the pain pill and the orange juice.

She drank the orange juice and swallowed the pain pill.

Meredith looked in the hall and said, “Felipe.”

Felipe was snoring.

She said, “Felipe!”

Felipe did a push up off the floor and scooted back to Meredith’s door.

He was waking up.

He sat on the floor for a few minutes.

The nurse took the pills back to the head nurse and the head nurse counted the pills and locked them up.

They peeped in on Leon.

He was in a deep sleep.

Dr. Woodson gave Felipe Jr to the nurse and walked out the room.

He walked to his room and made the bed and straighten out the dresser.

He closed the door and walked out and started his day.

Betty was awake looking at a sleep Charles Jr.

Dr. Woodson said, “Good morning Betty.”

Betty looked Dr. Woodson and said, “Good morning.”

Dr. Woodson walked to the nurses’ desk.

He thought about Betty and Charles Jr and if Beverly and Al would take them.

Felipe heard Felipe Jr. and turned and got on his knees and looked in the room.

Meredith was holding Felipe Jr and watching Felipe.

Felipe walked on his knees to the bed and looked at Meredith and Felipe Jr.

Meredith smiled at Felipe and went to sleep.

Felipe stood and picked up Felipe Jr.

He sat in the chair and held his son for a long time.

Felipe was so happy to see his son and his wife were whole.

He put Felipe Jr. back in Meredith’s arm.

He stood and walked out the room and closed the door.

Felipe went to the wash area and washed and changed clothes.

He took his soiled things to his room next to Dr. Woodson.

Felipe put everything in his bag and went out the back door.

He went to the stables and got his two horses and feed them and gave them water.

He hooked them to his carriage and rode them to the front of the hospital.

He tied the horses to the rail and ran into the hospital and went and locked the backdoor and put the bar across the back door.

Dr. Woodson asked the two nurses that shoot out the windows last night to go to the sheriff and tell him what happened and if he could come to the hospital today.

The nurses were putting on the wraps and said they would.

They left the hospital and rode into the city center and went to the sheriff’s office.

The sheriff was not at work because he dropped his wife off at work forever.

The nurses said, “We worked all night last night and want to go home and sleep before we have to be back this evening.”

The deputies took their statements and Dr. Woodson’s request.

The nurses left and rode home.

They lived in separate areas of the city.

Dr. Woodson unlocked the hospital administrator’s office and checked for messages and telegrams, there were none.

He was about to close and lock the door.

He went back in and locked the room with the telegram machine and opened the door to the office.

He walked and saw the room that Nurse Lillian was clean.

He walked to Leon and looked at him.

Dr. Woodson checked Leon’s vital.

He would have Leon to be the last person to attend to that day.

Dr. Felipe cleared the room out he was using.

He was walking up the hall with his blankets in his arms.

Dr. Woodson walked out of Leon’s arms.

He heard the nurses fussing at Dr. Felipe.

Felipe was puzzle and said, “Are you all fussing at me?”

Dr. Woodson looked at Felipe and said, “I told you, you were going to be sick.”

Felipe was thinking and said, “Is that why I was on the cold floor?”

The nurses said, “We had to clean up your mess. You had the entire stinking.”

Felipe was embarrassed and turned his head.

He said, “I’m sorry. You all are my American family. I don’t want to offend you.”

The nurses were still fussing but told him ok.

Dr. Woodson laughed.

Felipe looked at Dr. Woodson and realized it was over. The nurses were just fussing.

Felipe said, “I need a nurse to take care of Meredith and a housekeeper for my house chores. Do you all know any trustworthy people?”

One of the nurses said, “When do you need them to work?”

Felipe said, “Today.”

The nurse jumped off the desk and said, “My brother and his wife just moved here from Iowa…”

Dr. Woodson looked at the nurse. He did not hear her ever say where she was from.

She said, “… I need them out of my house soon.”

Felipe said, “Not to live with me.”

The nurse said, “No. There is a rooming house mid-way the city that they can stay until they get on their feet.”

Felipe said, “Can you have them to meet me here around one pm?”

The nurse jumped and put on her coat and hat and grabbed her bag and ran out the door.

She ran around back and grabbed her horse and shoot around the hospital to go home.

The nurses started laughing.

Dr. Felipe stood and looked at the nurse and thought, “I don’t know if I need them.”

Dr. Woodson was looking over the patients they had.

He thought twenty- six.

Most of the patients could not pay.

He thought about the older patient they put out of the hospital last week because she was racist and voiced it.

He knew there were other racist patients, but they were not bold enough to speak it.

Dr. Woodson was counting the rooms. They had thirty rooms and the only vacant room was across from Leon and Leon would not tolerate her racist mind set. Especially since he was trampled by horses trying to save Brenda and her black family.

Dr. Woodson believed GOD was telling him to go and bring the old woman back to the hospital.

Dr. Woodson said, “GOD, YOU have to help me. I nearly hate that woman because she hates my friends and nearly my wife and children. I am just as racist against her as she is against black people. I thank YOU for bringing this terrible feeling to the front. How can I help anyone being as racist as they are?”

Dr. Woodson reviewed the patients’ charts.

Felipe reluctantly walked out the hospital and went home.

He checked the horses feed and water and the amount of coal and fuel.

He had notes on the door from the suppliers of the water, laundry and fuel to pay.

Felipe went to his secret place in the house and got the money he put it on the desk.

He walked through the house and got all the dirty linens and clothes and bundled them and placed the by the door.

He loved al and Beverly quaint house. It was special with charm.

There was a knock on the door.

Felipe hoped it was the ones he owed money.

He walked to the door and it was the laundry man.

He ran to the table and got the money and paid and gave him a dollar tip.

The laundry man picked up the bundles of clothes and took them with him.

Felipe loved the house.

He was standing by the door and thought he wanted a Christmas tree and wreath for Meredith and Felipe Jr.

He thought, “Felipe Jr. Does not need any clothes for a year.”

Felipe yelled, “GOD!!!”

He turned and opened the door the fuel and water men were running.

Felipe saw them and waved at them and said, “Stop! I forgot something I was not yelling at you.”

The men looked at Felipe.

Felipe went in the house and walked out with the money and paid them and gave them a two dollar tip.

Felipe said, “Sirs, do you know where the clothing store is and where I can buy a Christmas tree and wreath for my wife and newborn son.”

The men grinned.

One man said, “That’s why you haven’t been here?”

Felipe grinned.

The man told him how to get to the clothing store.

The other man said, “Many people are out selling Christmas trees and garlands and all the fixins. You can have the Christmas tree delivered.”

Felipe looked at the time. He knew he had to leave the house at noon to go and get Meredith and his son.

He put a little coal in the furnace and a little coal in the fireplace and a little coal in the stove.

He had to buy grocery.

Felipe was standing and thinking.

The men looked at each other and knew Felipe did not know where to start.

The mand delivered the water for the week.

Felipe looked up the storage area.

The fuel man said, “Go ahead sir. I’ll fill your lanterns and leave your fuel hidden over here. That’s where I would hide the Williamson’s fuel.”

Felipe turned around and said, “Thank you.”

Felipe said, “Where is the grocery and diners?”

The fuel man had gotten off his horse and said, “Rosie’s is not far from here and they will deliver you a meal once per day. You have to pay up front and give them a tip.”

The fuel and water man laughed.

He said, “Rosie’s is on the way to the clothing store. You need to leave before it gets crowded.”

Felipe ran into the house and got the money from the desk and put it in his pocket and ran outside.

The men were gone.

He thought, “GOD they are fast.

He saw the fuel.

He grabbed the fuel and took it to the shed and unlocked it.

He placed the fuel where Al showed him.

Felipe locked the shed back.

He ran and jumped into the carriage.

Then he got out the carriage and untied the horses and he sped all the way to the clothing store.

When he got to the clothing store.

He saw the furniture that spoiled Meredith’s children bought for their son Felipe.

Felipe cried.

The salesclerks looked at Felipe.

Felipe was overcome.

He sat in a padded rocking chair.

The salesclerk was looking over the sales paper and said, “That is Meredith’s chair.”

Felipe jumped up.

The whole store laughed.

The manager was laughing and said, “Sir you ready to take this home? Where is your help?”

The manager was looking around.

Felipe said, “Sir. I have no help but a carriage.”

The manager and the salesclerks looked at Felipe.  
Felipe said, “I am a doctor and I have been with my wife for the past week. I don’t know how to do these things. She does all of these.”

The women in the store said, “Help him.”

The manager turned and looked at the customers.

He said, “I can have this delivered to you.”

Felipe said, “Oh my GOD thank you.”

The manager reached for Felipe and they walked to the counter and the manager called for his workers to deliver baby Felipe’s furniture.

The manager said, “They will be at your house in the hour.”

Felipe cried all the way out of the store.

The customers were laughing.

One man said, “He’s done for.”

The man’s wife hit him on his arm and said, “Shush.”

She tried to smile but was embarrassed by her husband holding his arm as though she hurt him.

Felipe looked up in time to see the Christmas trees he pulled over and bought a nice tree, garland and a wreath and ribbon.

He knew one of Meredith’s favorite colors after blue was red.

He bought a lot of red ribbon.

The man told Felipe he would expeditiously have his workers deliver his tree for a little extra.

Felipe did not know what a little extra was.

The man took three dollars out of Felipe’s hands.

The workers snickered.

The man gave each worker a dollar and he took a dollar.

The workers immediately loaded Felipe’s Christmas tree, wreath, garland and ribbon in the wagon and took off.

Felipe jumped in his wagon and was looking for Rosie’s he could smell it and he was turning around and riding slow.

He saw Rosie’s.

He rushed to the restaurant and put in a dinner order for the week.

He paid for delivery and gave the manager a tip.

The manager took Felipe’s information and asked him what he wanted.

Felipe said, “Everything smells great, but pork chops the only pork.”

The manager nodded.

Felipe rushed to his carriage and sped home.

He arrived as the men were leaving the Christmas tree on his porch.

Felipe saw a few men lurking around.

He rushed to the house and unlocked the door.

The workers brought the tree, garland, wreath into the house.

Felipe looked at the time.

He had about an hour before he had to leave and get to the hospital and meet the nurse’s brother and his wife.

Felipe and Meredith had decided where the baby’s room would be.

She kept the area mopped and cleaned.

Felipe went and got the mop and mopped the area.

He stood and cried.

There was a knock on the door.

Felipe slowly turned and looked,

He walked to the door with his mop in his hand.

The workers were delivering his baby’s furniture.

Felipe showed the men where to put the furniture.

The workers quickly brought the furniture into the house.

Felipe reached in his shirt pocket and handed the men a five dollar bill.

The grin and walked out the house and closed the door.

One of the men said, “He is still crying.”

They laughed and went back to the store.

Felipe went in the room and wiped down the furniture and made up the baby’s bed and put some of the many blue blankets that the Stith’s bought.

Felipe folded the baby’s clothes and put them in the dresser drawers.

He put the blankets in the armoire.

He threw a blanket over Meredith’s ‘chair’.

He saw Meredith was loved and that GOD had to cont9nue to heal her heart and mind

Felipe looked back at the room and smiled.

He walked and looked at his family’s first Christmas.

He grinned.

He looked at the time.

Felipe slowly turned and walked out the house.

He left the house at twelve thirty and he knew he would be late for his one o’clock appointment.

Felipe did not care, because he did accomplish a lot that day without anyone helping him.

Felipe loved the fact that after fifteen years he now has a family.

He wanted their first Christmas to be great.

Felipe remembered he had to cook the two dishes for Dr. Barnes Christmas Eve dinner party.

He was thinking about the ingredients.

He wanted to invite Dr. Woodson to Christmas with he and Meredith and Felipe Jr.

Felipe wanted Dr. Ralph, Hutch to come along with Charles and Vivienne.

He knew the nurses could run the hospital until the doctors returned from dinner.

Felipe said, “I need to have an early lunch and they spend three hours here and a hour to get back to the hospital. I think Hutch and Charles will be working at the north hospital. Dr. Ralph will be with Lorraine. I know Dr. Greene and his wife and son will be spending Christmas at home.”

Dr. Ralph washed and shaved.

He gave Lorraine the loaded medicines and started another set of IVs.

She was devasted.

Dr. Ralph meet Ryan and they stepped outside and discussed Lorraine’s case.

Dr. Ralph said, “Ryan you are an excellent doctor. I don’t know what has happened. But Lorraine is not a mistake you can make.”

Ryan said, “Jason thank you. I don’t know what is wrong with me.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I am thankful that Albert examined Betty and Charles Jr before their schedule surgeries.”

Ryan shook his head.

He said, “Maybe I need to slow down and stop thinking that the diagnosis is the same.”

Dr. Ralph said, “We need to have a conference and help to get to the bottom of this. You and your father have too much potential and excellence for a mistake to be made.”

Ryan reached for Dr. Ralph’s hand.

They shook hands.

The sheriff rode up with his wife.

She said, “Am I late?”

The sheriff said, “No.”

She said, “That man is a great doctor.”

The sheriff said, “Which one.”

The head daytime nurse said, “Ryan is good but that other doctor. Outstanding he can run every hospital in this city. But it would be too much on him.”

The sheriff said, “Just remember him if we ever need him.”

The head daytime nurse said, “Oh God I hope we never need him.”

She jumped out her buggy and went into the hospital.

The sheriff nodded at Ryan and Dr. Ralph.

He stopped and said, “The nurse was working with the mob. The man was hired by her to bring her to and from to the work. She said her assignment was to kill Lorraine over time…”

Ryan grabbed Dr. Ralph.

The sheriff looked and said, “Lorraine your woman?”

Ryan said, “Yes.”

The sheriff said, “The reason was so she would not be able to tell who attacked her in New York.”

The sheriff looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “I want to know who knew where she was.”

Ryan said, “I was off Yesterday.”

The sheriff said, “My wife will tell you.”

Dr. Ralph walked to his horse and rode kind of fast to the Stith.

He rode his horse around to the back of the hospital and put the horse in the shed and feed him and gave him water.

Dr. Ralph was walking around the front of the hospital.

He saw the sheet up to the door.

He took it down.

Dr. Woodson looked at him.

He said, “The sheet was up there for a reason.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Why was the sheet up to the door?”

Vivienne and Charles walked in the hospital and saw Dr. Ralph with the sheet in his hands.

Dr. Woodson said, “Good morning Vivienne and Charles I am having a meeting with the nurses and staff. I want you two to be in this meeting.”

Hutch arrived and rode his horse to the back of the hospital.

The cooks, dishwashers, housekeeper and outdoors ground keeper.

Dr. Woodson waited for Hutch.

Dr. Woodson watched an angry Dr. Ralph he said, “Dr. Ralph how is Lorraine?’

Hutch was walking in the hospital.

The nurses were swooning over Hutch.

Vivienne smiled.

She wanted to know who was going to get Hutch.

Dr. Charles said, “No one. He believes Hutch is going to be a hundred percent dedicated to being a doctor. He will not have a wife distract him.”

Hutch walked up and said, “Good morning.”

Everyone spoke to Hutch.

Dr. Ralph said, “Lorraine in the dark woods. The sheriff said, the mob assigned a nurse to slowly kill her over time so she would not identify her attacker in New York.”

The cooks and the grounds keeper swallowed.

Nurse Jewell said, “This is too much. We just want to live and help people heal.”

Dr. Woodson looked at the nurse.

He felt she was breaking down.

Dr. Ralph said, “I’m sorry I should not have spoken out of angry. I did not know how that type of evil news would affect you. Forgive me.”

Leon said, “Kept that to yourself from now on. I need Lorraine to twist and sashay round here. Dr. Woodson doesn’t do a good job.”

Everyone hollered at Leon.

Dr. Woodson laughed.

Hutch walked towards Leon’s door.

Dr. Woodson said, “No Hutch.”

Leon said, “That’s right. I know he was coming to close my door.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Last night. Several men tried to come into the hospital One tried to come in through Laura’s room. He was shot in the leg. Probably just a braze. No damage.”

Hutch and Charles caught on to what Dr. Woodson was saying.

They heard Leon snoring.

Dr. Woodson said, “Leon fell out of bed to warn the nurses.

He is in much. Much pain. We need to pray for him”

Nurse Simons said, “Dr. Woodson go on.”

Dr. Woodson said, “The men ran to the stables and tried to steal the horses and carriages, but they were being shot at and fled on foot.”

Nurse Simons frowned up and shook her head.

She said, “Why? This is a hospital and a poor hospital at that. We don’t have the drugs that the big hospitals have. And to break in on invalids. I don’t understand.”

Nurse Wilkes said, “I understand. They are evil and who was shooting that they could not kill them?”

Nurse Simons quickly jerked her head and looked at Nurse Wilkes.

Nurse Simons said, “God we are suppose to be compassionate.”

Nurse Wilkes said, “Not when you are trying to kill, steal and destroy me. I bet it was someone we all know.”

Vivienne said, “I got a child over there at the front of the hospital. There are two more back there. What kind of people are these?”

Dr. Charles was saying nothing.

Hutch started quickly looking at the workers.

Vivienne said, “Laura is basically a child too. The evil ones did not think they could have caused heart attacks and deaths. What were they looking for!!!”

Dr. Charles turned and looked at Vivienne.

She was having a flashback.

Dr. Charles grabbed her.

Vivienne screamed, “Why this hospital?!!”

Sally yelled, “Momma!!”

Dr. Charles grabbed Vivienne and rushed her to the back of the hospital.

Nurse Wilkes ran to Sally and opened her door.

Nurse Wilkes said, “Good morning Sally.”

Sally yelled, “Vivienne. I want momma Vivienne!”

Dr. Woodson said to Nurse Simons, ”Give Sally a sedative.”

Nurse Jewell said, “Me too.”

Hutch looked at Nurse Jewell.

She reminded Hutch of Meredith slim and mixed race, But a love for people.

Dr. Woodson said, “Shot.”

Nurse Jewell said, “Never mind.”

The other nurses snickered.

Hutch watched the workers and said, “There’s a mother and newborn back there.”

Dr. Woodson had not thought about Meredith and his god son.

Dr. Woodson said, “I want everyone to be cautious. If they tried it last night they will not give up but try it again.”

Dr. Ralph was upset with himself for upsetting Nurse Jewell.

He knew she was a good person but being mixed race had taken it toll on her.

Dr. Woodson said, “Nurse Jewell do you want to take today off?”

Nurse Jewell said, “No. I live in a rooming house with retire people. They would want me to nurse them. I miss Lorraine too. She would bring me all the bath items and we would go to the pier or shopping.”

She held her head down.

Dr. Ralph felt very sorry and grieved for Nurse Jewell.

Hutch thought, “Lorraine was her only friend. That’s why she lives in a rooming house. I am going to pray for her. I wonder if she has family or did they give her up?”

Nurse Simons got the shot ready and Dr. Woodson signed off on the order.

Nurse Simons ran to Sally’s room.

They heard Sally yelled, “Bi\*\*h!!! That hurt.”

Leon hollered and instantly went back to sleep.

Charles left Vivienne in the workers’ area.

He heard Sally.

He started dancing in the hall and said, “Welcome back Sally.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Charles.”

Dr. Charles was happy and said, “I was waiting for a telegram.”

Dr. Woodson said, “In the office in the folder with your name on it.”

Nurse Simons and Nurse Wilkes were walking out of Sally’s room.

Dr. Woodson turned to look at them and he glanced the time.

He thought of his best friend Dr. Greene.

Dr. Woodson said, “Everyone have a good day.”

The workers started their day.

Dr. Charles went into the office and picked up the folder with his name on it.

The telegrams were from the sale of one of his buildings and the wire transfer of the money to his bank account in America.

Dr. Charles grinned.

He wanted to get Vivienne an engagement ring for her Christmas gift and Sally a hair bow.

He walked out the office and said, “Dr. Woodson I want a sedative for Vivienne.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Pill or shot?”

Dr. Charles was reading the details of the sale of the building and said, “Pill Sally is the only one I want to get rid of.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Charles.

Hutch was going over a chart with Nurse Jewell.

He never noticed her before.

She was smart, witty and quick to catch on.

The oatmeal and grits were completely cook from the hot water and milk.

The cooks brought the breakfast cart around to the patients.

Dr. Woodson unlocked the medicine cabinet and gave Dr. Charles a sedative in the paper cup for Vivienne.”

Dr. Charles was reading the folders and walked down the hall.

They heard Vivienne yelled, “What the hell!!”

Hutch nearly hit the floor laughing.

Dr. Woodson looked from his chart as Charles and Vivienne pass.

He thought, “Sally. I want to see what is going to happen.”

Dr. Charles walked Vivienne to Sally’s room and helped her out of her coat and outer clothes.

He said, “Vivienne, I need you to calm down. I cannot work knowing you are this upset. I told you I will not choose between you and my patients.”

Vivienne looked at Sally.

Dr. Charles looked at sally and was glad they had given her a shot.

Vivienne held her hand out and said, “Charles this is the last time I take a sedative.”

Charles said, “Thank you.”

He quickly kissed Vivienne on her lips.

He turned and looked back at the nurses and Dr. Ralph.

They acted like they did not see Dr. Charles.

Vivienne swallowed the pill and laid on the bed with Sally.

She said very haughtily, “Close the door.”

Dr. Charles closed the door and sat in the chair and calculated when he will get the money.

He stood and walked to Sally’s room and put the folders on the dresser.

He looked at Vivienne and walked out and closed the door.

Dr. Ralph watched Dr. Charles.

Dr. Hutch stopped at the butcher on his way to work and got fifteen pounds of beef stew.

He went through the back and out to his horse and got the bag and brought it to the cooks.

He noticed one of them was grimacing.

Hutch said, “I know you know how to make a stew.”

Dr. Felipe made it back to the hospital and the nurse’s brother and sister were sitting out in the wagon.

Felipe walked in the hospital and said, “Is that the nurse’s brother and sister-in-law sitting in the cold?”

Dr. Woodson leaned back and said, “I guess.”

Hutch told Felipe what happened the night before.

Felipe said nothing.

He told them about the furniture that Eleanor’s boys bought their son.

Dr. Felipe said, “I see she is the one that is spoiled. I love it.”

They laughed.

Felipe said, “Doctors I invite you to spend my first Christmas with my family.”

Nurse Jewell heard Dr. Felipe but did not pay him any attention.

Dr. Felipe said, “I want to share it with my American family.”

The nurse’s brother and sister -in-law walked in the hospital.

Dr. Felipe walked to them and introduced himself to them.

They sat in the hall and talked.

Felipe said, “Let’s do a week.”

Dr. Woodson went into the hospital administrator’s office and retrieve the telegrams.

He read the telegrams from the sheriff in Iowa.

He looked at the name of the city.

Dr. Woodson came out the office and watched Nurse Johnson’s brother and sister-in-law.

Felipe told Nurse Johnson’s brother and sister-in-law the duties he needed them to do.

He told them he needed coal, water to brought into the house. And hot water for their baths. The lanterns fueled. The laundry to be gathered for pick up, for the horses to be feed and given water. Grocery shopping once per week and a cooked meal once per day preferably dinner.

The couple looked at Dr. Felipe and said, “That’s all.”

Dr. Felipe said, “Yes.”

The sister-in-law said, “We can be finished in two hours per day.”

Felipe said, “What is wrong with that?”

The husband and wife laughed.

Dr. Woodson watched them.

The husband said, “That is light work. We thought you wanted a lot of heavy duty things.”

Dr. Felipe watched the young couple and said, “No.”

The husband said, “My wife does not have to attend to your wife and newborn does she.”

Dr. Felipe looked at the man.

The husband said, “My wife is a certified nurse…”

Dr. Woodson and Hutch and Nurse Simons looked over at the group.

The husband said, “She specializes in respiratory problems of babies.”

Hutch said, “Bradley.”

Nurse Simons looked at Hutch.

Bradley said, “I’m listening.”

Dr. Ralph was walking across the hall to see who Felipe was talking to.

He heard the man say his wife was a nurse and her specialty.

Dr. Ralph looked at the couple and spoke.

He stopped and stared at the man.

The man looked at Dr. Ralph.

Hutch said, “Damn. A fight.”

Dr. Woodson looked.

The man stood and walked to Dr. Ralph and they hugged.

Hutch said, “Whoa. Thank YOU, JESUS.”

Dr. Ralph grabbed the young man and held him by his chin and they stared at each other.

Dr. Woodson watched.

Nurse Simons walked over to them.

Dr. Woodson eyes followed her.

Hutch eyes followed Nurse Simons.

Nurse Simons walked and stood and looked at Dr. Ralph.

The young nurse looked at Nurse Simons.

The young nurse was smiling at her husband.

Nurse Simons looked at the young nurse and reached her hand out to shake her hand.

The young nurse saw Nurse Simon’ hand and walked over and shook her hand.

Nurse Simons asked her name and her husband and how they got to the hospital.

The young nurse said, “I am Joyce and that is my husband…”

Dr. Ralph said, “Jeffery Johnson.”

The young nurse looked at Dr. Ralph and smiled.

The young nurse said, “Jeff’s sister works here at night and told us a doctor needed help at his house.”

Nurse Simons were trying to think what nurse.

Dr. Woodson said, “Nurse Simons. Nurse Ashley Johnson.”

Nurse Simons looked at Dr. Woodson and grinned.

She turned back to the young nurse and said, “She is a very good nurse. What do you do?”

Dr. Felipe looked at Nurse Simons and said, “What you mean? She is my housekeeper.”

Nurse Simons looked back at Dr. Woodson.

She said, “We are two nurses short.”

Dr. Woodson chuckled and continued to review the patients’ charts with Hutch.

Dr. Felipe said, “Nurse go back to your duties.”

Nurse Simons looked at Dr. Felipe.

The young nurse shook her head at Nurse Simons.

Hutch exhaled.

He said, “That Nurse Simon is hell. Watch how she is going to go after Felipe.”

Dr. Woodson looked at the red face Nurse Simon as she walked from Dr. Felipe.

The nurses watched her.

Dr. Felipe peeped around the corner at Nurse Simons.

Hutch said, “Felipe knows. He did something one day and Meredith was here. Nurse Simons took him to the shed.”

Dr. Woodson said, “What?”

Hutch looked at Dr. Woodson and said, “She fussed at him.”

Dr. Woodson said, “What did Meredith do?”

Hutch stared at Dr. Woodson.

Hutch said, “With all of that hell Nurse Simons unrolled on Felipe. Meredith stood over in the corner by Leon’s room and said nothing to Nurse Simons like everybody else.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Hutch what did you do?”

Hutch smacked his lips and said, I went down the back hall. Shucks I have a mother and five sisters and a house full of aunts. I was the only male in the house. I know to hide. I hid in the back.”

Dr. Woodson hollered.

He fell backwards on the nurses’ desk and nearly went to his knees.

Dr. Ralph pointed and said, “That is our esteemed Dr. Woodson.”

Felipe turned from peeping at Nurse Simons and looked at Dr. Woodson.

Felipe turned to Joyce and said, “I will introduce you to my wife.”

Hutch cut his eyes at Felipe.

Then he turned and cut his eyes at Nurse Simons.

She was standing back watching Dr. Felipe.

Dr. Ralph said, “Dr. Felipe wait a minute.”

Dr. Felipe stopped.

Dr. Ralph walked the young man over to Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Ralph said, “Dr. Woodson, Dr. Hutch, Nurse Simons this is my youngest brother on my father’s side.”

Nurse Joyce’s mouth dropped and exclaimed in joy, “My God. Jeff has been looking for you for years.”

She started crying tears of joy and clapping her hands.

Hutch stared at Dr. Ralph.

Jason never told them anything about himself.

They just found out the esteemed Dr. Jerome was Dr. Ralph’s mentor.

Dr. Woodson shook the young man’s hand.

Hutch shook his hand.

Nurse Simons shook his hand and said, “What do you do?”  
Dr. Felipe looked at Nurse Simons and said, “Why are you asking him that? He is my housekeeper.”

The young man said, “I am a soldier. I went home to Iowa to get Joyce and bring her closer to where I am going to be stationed.”

Hutch said, “Where is that?”

Jeffrey said, “A small town call Cedartown.”

They all looked at him.

Dr. Woodson said, “We have good friends who live there.”

The young man said, “Is it a good place for my wife to live?”

Leon yelled, “Yeah!”

Then he yelled in pain.

Hutch turned and went to the medicine cabinet.

Hutch got the shot medicine to give to Leon.

He walked to Leon’s room.

The young nurse turned and walked behind Hutch.

Nurse Simons watched the young nurse.

Dr. Felipe stepped back and watched the young nurse.

Dr. Woodson grinned.

He thought, “She is a true nurse. Felipe you have to find someone else.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Jeffrey how much time did you get off?”

Jeffrey said, “I got a whole year. It took me two months to get home. We got married. Helped our families out at their farms and businesses. We left Iowa in September and we just got here last week.”

Dr. Woodson said, “How did you get here? There are no trains, right?”

Jeffrey said, “It was terrible. We filled a wagon with all types of goods. We had to travel without anyone around us for months. We had to stop and buy horses every month. We wanted to spend our first Christmas and New Year’s together. I have to report to Cedartown on the fifth of January.”

Felipe said, “So I and my wife and our newborn son. Let me introduce you to them.”

Dr. Woodson laughed.

Dr. Ralph walked with Felipe and Jeffrey to see Meredith.

Nurse Simons ran around the nurses’ desk and peeped at Dr. Felipe.

She jumped and ran to Leon’s room.

The nurses were falling out laughing.

Dr. Woodson shook his head.

He missed Dr. Charles.

He stepped and looked across the hall and did not see him.

One of the nurses pointed and said, “Dr. Charles.”

Dr. Woodson looked and walked to the hospital’s administrator’s office.

Dr. Charles was upset and sprawled out in one of the chairs.

Dr. Woodson walked in the office and looked at the time.

He closed the door and said, “Charles.”

Dr. Charles said, “She wants to fight me in court for our divorce. If she does she can find out about my money. That is my money and Vivienne. I will not deny Vivienne anything.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Is your marriage civil or church?”

Dr. Charles stared for a minute.

He slowly looked at Dr. Woodson and walked to the office with the telegram machine.

Dr. Woodson stood and walked behind and sent Dr. Charles message to his attorney.

Dr. Charles said, “I will not allow anyone or anything to stop me from making Vivienne my wife and I hope to have a child by the end of next year.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Charles.”

Charles said, “I know she has to overcome her family and children been massacred. I don’t know medically how to heal her. I need you good Christians to pray for her. I believe she is a Christian woman because she always wear the cross.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Sally?”

Dr. Charles waved his hand and nearly spit.

Dr. Woodson said, “Charles, our GOD is fair. If you are not treating a child right HE will judge you and not allow YOU to have what you want.”

Charles looked at Dr. Woodson and fell on his knees in the office and said, “God I want Vivienne. I don’t want that bad Sally. Help me to get rid of her and my wife.”

Dr. Woodson sat and stared at Charles he could not believe what he heard.

He stood and walked pass him and out the office.

He saw Nurse Simons talking to Nurse Joyce.

He heard Felipe laughing and talking to Dr. Ralph walking up the hall.

Dr. Woodson thought and jerked the office door opened and stepped over Charles and went to the telegram machine to retrieve a few telegrams.

Charles was on his knees and opened one eye and looked at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson looked at Charles and said, “What?”

Charles didn’t say anything but got up from the floor.

He walked out the office and saw Nurse Simons and the young woman talking.

Charles saw Hutch looking at him.

He saw Felipe, the young man and Dr. Ralph walking and talking.

The young woman was smiling and talking to Nurse Simons.

Dr. Felipe and snatched his head and kept talking to the young man.

Dr. Ralph said, “Jeff where have you been sleeping?”

Jeff said, “In our wagon at my sister’s rooming house.”

Dr. Ralph said, “What are you doing? Are you going to continue to Cedartown or ride the train?”

Jefferey said, “I don’t know. I know I could not have Joyce six months from me.”

Dr. Ralph said, “First you and Joyce can stay with me until you decide what you are going to do. Second I don’t know what the travel is like by wagon to Cedartown. There is a train that goes from here directly to Cedartown. It takes three days.”

Jeffrey said, “I hope they would build a train system that connects the mid- west to the rest of the country.”

Nurse Simons and Nurse Joyce walked to her husband.

They stood and listened to the conversation.

Dr. Ralph said, “There is no hospital in Cedartown.”

Hutch said, “The hospital in the state capitol. The new military headquarters is about an hour away from the capitol.”

The young nurse looked at Hutch and she began to think.

Jeffrey looked at his wife.

She looked at him.

Dr. Ralph said, “They are building a hospital in Cedartown.”

Hutch said, “It is across the street from the new military headquarters.”

The young woman got excited.

Nurse Simons said, “It won’t be ready for two years. They are having a ground- breaking ceremony Wednesday, a formal reception and a formal dinner.”

Hutch said, “Nurse Simons how do you know that?”

Nurse Simons grinned and said, “Shirley told us. She described what she was wearing to each event.”

The nurses were still working and grinned and said, “Yes.”

The nurses disappeared to the different patients’ rooms.

Hutch shook his head and said, “Clothes.”

Nurse Simons grinned and said, “Fashions.”

She and the young nurse giggled.

Dr. Felipe said, “Joyce you and Jeffrey start tomorrow. I am an hour away from here.”

Nurse Simons said, “Dr. Felipe.”

Hutch looked around for Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Ralph looked at Hutch.

Nurse Simons said, “My mother can be your housekeeper. She doesn’t have anything to do but visit with the neighbors and gossip all day.”

Dr. Felipe said, “No. I don’t want her to gossiping with Meredith all day.”

Nurse Simons said, “She is a retired nurse. My deceased father was a retired doctor at North hospital. She is well off and can’t be still.”

Dr. Woodson walked out the office heard ‘retired nurse’.

He said, “Maybe we should hire whoever you said is a retired nurse.”

Nurse Simons looked at Dr. Woodson and said, “My mother is a retired nurse and needs something to do. She would run you, me and everyone here crazy with her demanding attitude and perfect attitude.”

The nurses giggled.

One nurse said, “You have never met her mother. She throws a beautiful Christmas Eve brunch.”

The young nurse looked at the nurse and said, “I love celebrating Christmas Eve.”

Hutch said, “Clothes.”

He shook his head.

The nurses looked at him.

Dr. Ralph said, “If you are packed I can show you where I live. It’s about twenty minutes from here. When the weather is nice I walk to work.”

The young nurse said, “Yes, we are packed. There’s nothing at your sister’s rooming house.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Dr. Woodson and walked to him and said, “May I be excused for a few hours and be back for the evening rounds?”

Dr. Woodson said, “Sure. You did not know your sister worked here?”

Dr. Ralph said low but angrily, “She is not my sister. She is Jeffrey’s sister.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Ok Jason.”

Hutch cut his eyes at Dr. Ralph.

Charles walked to Hutch and said, “I want to go shopping and I want you to take me.”

Hutch stared at Charles.

The nurses giggled.

Nurse Franklin said, “I’ll go shopping with you if you buy me a dress from Smith’s.”

Charles looked at her and turned his head to Hutch and nodded for them to walk away from the noisy nurses.

They walked to the other hallway.

Charles said, “I want to Vivienne an engagement ring for her Christmas gift.”

Hutch said, “And Sally?”

Charles waved his hand and said, “A hair bow.”

Hutch said, “When do you want to go?”

Charles said, “At the end of this week. I only want to go to the best jewelers.”

Hutch said, “I saw a few in town.”

They walked back to the nurses’ desk.

Charles said, “How is Leon?”

Hutch shook his head.

Nurse Jewell and Nurse Franklin saw Hutch.

Charles saw the nurses faces sadden.

They saw Dr. Ralph had on his coat, scarf and hat.

He was putting on his gloves.

Dr. Ralph walked down the back hall and went out the backdoor.

He went to the temporary stable and got his horse and roe the horse around the front of the hospital.

He rode to Jeffrey and Joyce’s covered wagon and led them to his house.

Dr. Ralph unlocked the front door.

Jeffrey and Joyce walked in the house and said, “Whoa.”

Joyce said, “You did all of this by yourself?”

Dr. Ralph said, “No. My lady friend did the decorating.”

Joyce said, “I need to meet her. She has great taste.”

Dr. Ralph looked around the spacious house.

Lorraine would take the fine fabrics Bruce was using to decorate his house and had the designers to sew curtains and pillows for Dr. Ralph along with comforters.

Jeffrey said, “Can we look around?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

Joyce ran to the huge kitchen and saw how wonderful everything matched and was organized.

Jeffrey and Joyce looked back at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph was pulling off his gloves.

He said, “What?”

Jeffrey said, “You have done well for yourself. Look at this house.”

Joyce said, “And you have a lady that loves you that much that she did all of this.”

Dr. Ralph bit his lips and walked out the house to the back porch and sat for a while.

Jeffrey and Joyce looked at him.

They left him alone and walked through the house and saw the two washrooms.

Dr. Ralph heard Jeffrey say, “Two washrooms Joyce.”

Dr. Ralph heard her running in the house and she said, “Whoa. That is first class. How many people have a washroom in their house but have two. I want to meet her.”

Dr. Ralph thought about how and Lorraine fought terribly about having a washroom in the house and especially two washrooms for his guests.

Jeffrey whispered and said, “Jason is upset with her about something.”

Dr. Ralph heard Jeffrey.

He stood and walked to his large stables that he and Lorraine fussed about.

He only had two horses.

But she had the stables enlarged to accommodate six horses, a buggy and two wagons and all the necessary items and tools.

Lorraine had Bruce’s carpenters to come and do all the work at Dr. Ralph’s house and had them to charge Bruce.

Bruce could not figure out the charges.

Dr. Ralph told Lorraine to stop.

Lorraine had Mabel to come and plant annuals all around Dr. Ralph’s house.

So they could sit and look at the flowers in their free time.

He realized Lorraine was used to living in grandeur and he was homeless and had nothing.

She was a nurse and a certified nurse. They could live a simple life, but Lorraine had a tase for more and Jason was so afraid he could never grow to give her what she deserved.

Now is fighting for a life that may not be hers’ anymore.

He was in pain.

Dr. Ralph petted the horse in the stables.

He fed the horses and gave him water.

He walked out the stables.

Dr. Ralph saw Jeffrey and Joyce standing on the back porch staring at him.

He said, “What are you going to do?”

Jeffrey said, “Well…”

Joyce excitedly exclaimed, “Stay here.”

They all burst out into laughter.

Dr. Ralph said, “You need to let your sister what you are doing and I will show you where Dr. Felipe lives.”

Dr. Ralph locked his house and said, “I only have one key. I will leave the unlocked for you.”

Joyce said, “When can we meet this amazing lady friend of yours?”

Dr. Ralph held his head down and cried a little.

Joyce said, “I’m sorry.”

Jeffrey said, “Maybe we should not be here?”  
Dr. Ralph caught Jeffrey by his shoulder and said, Her name is Lorraine. She is mixed. She is in the hospital fighting for her life.”

Jeffrey and Joyce gasped.

Dr. Ralph said, “When I am not on call at the Stith. I spend the night with her.”

He stared at his brother and said, “They assigned you to Cedartown, because that is the military stronghold to fight the mob. Be careful. Keep your mouth and watch everybody. The mob was trying to take over the railroad and shipping. The past President built that military headquarters and fully staffed it for one purpose. To destroy the mob.”

Joyce was scared.

Jefferey said, “They told me. I accepted the assignment to do my part. And I got a big pay increase.”

Joyce hit Jeffrey on his arm.

Jeffrey grabbed his arm and said, “Ouch!”

Joyce said, “When were you going to tell me?”

Jeffrey said, “Once I got you from that dead state.”

Dr. Ralph went into his bedroom and got two change of clothes and put a little coal on the fireplace and a little coal in the stove.

Jeffrey said, “Oh no Ja we won’t stay in your house. We are going to live in the covered wagon until we leave.”

Dr. Ralph looked at them.

They walked out the house and rode to Dr. Felipe’s house. It was only thirty minutes from Dr. Ralph.

Joyce saw the big hospital as they passed the state’s largest hospital.

Later they saw the north hospital.

She looked at that hospital.

After Dr. Ralph showed them where Felipe and Meredith and Baby Felipe lived they rode back to the hospital.

They arrived as Felipe was leaving the hospital with Meredith and Baby Felipe.

Nurse Simons carried Felipe in the blue picnic basket that Beverly beautifully decorated.

Dr. Felipe picked up Meredith and carried her to the carriage at the front of the hospital.

He laid her in the back of the carriage and baby Felipe next to her.

He saw Jeffrey and Joyce and said, “Eight am. Dr. Ralph showed you where I live?”

Jeffrey said, “Yes sir.”

Dr. Ralph looked at the two horses and wagon that were tied outside.

He, Jeffrey and Joyce walked in the hospital.

Dr. Ralph looked around the lobby and did not see Dr. Woodson.

Jeffrey sat and wrote a note to his sister that they would be working for Dr. Felipe and they had another place to stay until he left for his next post. Thank a bunch.

He gave the note to Nurse Simons.

She and Nurse Jewell were laughing with Joyce.

Jeffrey saw Hutch watching Nurse Jewell.

Joyce said, “Jeffrey looked at this Christmas tree.”

Jeffrey walked and looked at the Christmas.

The cooks cooked the beef stew for dinner and bread.

They passed the patients the stew.

The patients clapped.

Dr. Woodson knew the patients and staff were tired of eating soup.

Dr. ralph placed his coat in the back and said, “Jeffrey and Joyce come and eat in the back with me.”

Jeffrey and Joyce followed Dr. Ralph to the kitchen.

They pass Betty and Charles Jr.

Joyce stopped and said, “Hello babies.”

Betty looked at her and Charles Jr. said, “Hello.”

Jeffrey looked at the casts and shivered.

Dr. Ralph said, “They are getting great care. They will be running and playing by the spring.”

Betty said, “You heard that Charles Jr. We gonna be running and playing in the spring.”

Dr. Ralph, Jeffrey and Joyce got beef stew and bread and sat and ate.

They drank hot tea.

Joyce said, “I love this hospital and the big ones I saw going to Dr. Felipe.”

Jeffrey looked at Joyce and said, “Joyce I want you close to me. I know this is much closer than Iowa. I want you to work so we can buy a house. But lets get through this first year. They said, a new hospital is being built in that town.”

Joyce said, “Jeffrey I have to work. I love being a nurse.”

Dr. Ralph sat and listened.

Joyce said, “We have no money until you report to duty.”

Nurse Simons and Franklin walked in the kitchen and got bowls of stew,

They sat close to the back wall to give the three some privacy.

Joyce turned and said, “Shelia?”

Nurse Simons looked at Joyce.

Joyce said, “Do you know if there are rooms or boarding houses in Cedartown?”

Nurse Simons thought and she and Nurse Franklin yelled, “Vivienne1”

Nurse Simons ran out the kitchen to get Vivienne.

Dr. Ralph said, “That’s right. Vivienne is from Cedartown she worked for the family who is building the hospital there.”

Jeffrey smirked and said, “One family is building a hospital?”

Dr. Ralph blew his stew and said, “Yes.”

Vivienne walked in the kitchen with Nurse Simons.

Nurse Simons said, “Vivienne this is some relations to Dr. Ralph. Jeffrey and Joyce Johnson he is going to be stationed in Cedartown. They want to know about housing.”

Dr. Ralph stood and went and got a chair for Vivienne.

She sat and said, “I love Cedartown It has many problems. You have an oldtown and a new city. The new city is where the new military headquarters is located.

There are many restaurants and shops. It is close to the capitol. Many people go to the capitol to shop, dine and go to social events. The town has a lot of diplomats and statesmen. I am sure they helped influenced the President to build the military headquarters in Cedartown. I live between the old town and the new modern side.

The old town is just that, the sheriff, post, train, Former slaves rest stop.”

Jeffrey said, “What?”

Vivienne, said, “A nice jewelry shop, a dress shop and a few restaurants. There are very nice houses in the old town part with these beautiful features and large yards and fruit trees and pecan and walnut trees. A large amount of the population are professors at the local college and the state college in ole capitol and business owners.”

Joyce said, “Are there any housing for me since Jeffrey will be staying at the headquarters?”

Vivienne was thinking.

Dr. Ralph looked at her.

Vivienne said, “There are a s good amount. I used to live in one with some of the others from the Stith…”

Jeffrey said, “That name again.”

Dr. Ralph looked at him.

Joyce looked at Jeffrey.

Vivienne said, “The family is very nice and helped many of us and don’t want nothing in return.”

She stared at Jeffrey.

Dr. Ralph caught something in Jeffrey he did not know what it was.

He sensed Vivienne caught it also.

Vivienne said, “I was trying to think what was close to the new military headquarters and the capitol. You could live in the capitol because the distance from the capitol to the new military headquarters is about the same as from the old town to the new military headquarters. But there are plenty rooms throughout the town.”

Joyce grinned and looked at Jeffrey.

Dr. Ralph looked at Jeffrey.

Nurses Franklin and Simons were enjoying their stew.

Nurse Franklin said, “I don’t have to stop for dinner or cook dinner tonight which would have been scrambled eggs.”

They laughed.

Dr. Charles walked to the door and looked at Vivienne.

Vivienne looked at Charles and began to stand.

Charles walked over and pulled out her chair.

Nurse Simons and Franklin looked at Dr. Charles and smiled.

Nurse Simons said, “My mother has been working at the church for the past few weeks to get the Christmas Pageant ready.”

Joyce heard the word Christmas pageant.

Nurse Simons said, “I am glad she has someone else to boss. The children at the church are complaining. The pastor called mother aside to talk to her about being bossy.”

Nurse Franklin said, “Really.”

Nurse Simons said, “Little Alice is the most bossiest child you ever want to see. She took my mother to the pastor and stood with her arms folded and dared my mother to defend herself.”

Nurse Franklin hollered and nearly hit the floor.

Dr. Ralph smiled at Nurse Franklin giddiness.

Dr, Charles looked at the nurses.

Nurse Jewell walked in and got a small amount of beef stew and sat with them.

Nurse Simons continued to talk.

Joyce grinned.

Vivienne said, “If you want I can contact the workers at the Stith, which your husband does not like for some reason…”

Dr. Ralph looked tensely at Jeffrey.

Dr. Charles turned and looked at Jeffrey.

Vivienne said, “I will ask them o provide you with some rooms. I know they may not be familiar with the capitol that much.”

Joyce turned and grabbed Vivienne’s hand and said, “Would you please.”

Vivienne said, “Give me a week or less and I will give the information to Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Charles held Vivienne around her waist and he walked her out the kitchen.

Dr. Ralph looked at Jeffrey said, “What’s wrong Jeffrey.”

The nurses were eating and talking amongst themselves but were listening to Dr. Ralph.

Nurse Jewell said, “I am going to treat myself this holiday. Shelia, can I come to your church Christmas pageant?”

Nurse Simons looked at Jewell and said, You are my friend. Wherever I am you are more than welcomed.”

Jewell said, “I live in a rooming house with three guys who have some many women coming in and out all the time. I lock my door and push the dresser behind the door. I had a lot of bath oils that Lorraine made for me…”

Nurse Simons touched Jewell’s hand and said, “Shush.”

Jewell said, “What?”

Nurse Franklin and Nurse Simons looked at Dr. Ralph.

Jewell turned and saw Dr. Ralph looking at her.

Jewell said, “Sorry Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Ralph smiled and nodded his head.

Jewell turned back around and made a facial expression of a stretched face.

She said, “I want us to go out and eat this holiday.”

Nurse Franklin said, “I heard they may open the pier for a News Years fireworks display.”

Jewell said, “That’s five hours away. We have to be back for work the next morning.”

Nurse Jewell finished her beef stew and said, “We’ll figure it out.”

They all stood and put their bowls and utensils in the sink and walked out.

Dr. Woodson, the sheriff and his deputies walked in the kitchen.

Dr. Ralph and Joyce stood.

Dr. Woodson said, “I’ll take care of those.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Jeffrey and he stood.

The three walked out the kitchen.

Dr. Woodson walked to their table and put their bowls in the sink.

He said, “Gentlemen the sheriff wants to talk to you.”

Dr. Woodson walked out the kitchen.

Dr. Ralph stood in the hall and waited for Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson closed the kitchen door and walked to Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph and Dr. Woodson stood outside Betty and Charles Jr.’s room and watched Jeffrey and Joyce leave the hospital.

Dr. Ralph said, “what is going on?”

Dr. Woodson whispered and said, “The sheriff came out to investigate the attempted break in last night. He talked to the groundskeeper and the security man. Then he talked to the housekeeper. Now he is talking to the kitchen help.”

Dr. Woodson nodded and said, “How you feel about your family being here for the holidays?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I have them at my place. I believe Jeffrey has the same spirit of evilness that my stepfather has. Out of nowhere Vivienne was nice and came and telling Joyce about Cedartown and the Stith’s Former Rest stop and he became bitter.”

Dr. Woodson looked and said, “Why?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I don’t know. I believe it is racist. They have no need to be at this hospital again.”

Dr. Woodson said, “What about Joyce?”

Dr. Ralph said, “She is married to him. I don’t want her here either.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Fine.”

Laura laid in her room and was needlepointing and heard Dr. Ralph and Dr. Woodson talk.

She said, “They don’t like prejudice and racism.”

She smiled and continued to needle point.

She was in much pain earlier that day and took a pain pill.

She woke when the cooks brought her dinner.

Laura ate and started needlepointing to keep her mind off her mother and father and their Christmas dinner for the staff that evening.

She wondered if her daddy sent her mother away last night or if he will send her away after the staff Christmas dinner tonight.

Dr. Ralph said, “I was very surprise at Vivienne she instantly address Jeffrey’s dislike for the Stiths for whatever his reason was.”

Dr. Woodson said, “I think Vivienne has been suppressing that hellish massacre of her family and all their slaves. I don’t know what will happen to her.”

Laura heard and cried, “JRESUS.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “I didn’t think she could hear me.”

He walked to Laura and said, “I’m sorry Laura.”

Laura was crying so hard for Vivienne.

Dr. Woodson said, “You need a sedative?”

Laura nodded her head for yes.

Dr. Ralph looked back at Betty and Charles Jr. who were talking and coloring.

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Ralph walked to the medicine cabinet.

Hutch looked at them.

Dr. Woodson picked up Laura’s chart and wrote the one time sedative in it.

He gave the sedative to Nurse Jewell to give to Laura.

He locked the medicine cabinet back.

Dr. Woodson said, “Eleanor said, the children made it home in one piece. Her parents want to know Lorraine’s condition. They need someone to send them a telegram or they will be returning Sunday.”

Everyone looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “They should have made that decision before they left.”

Hutch said, “I believe they were looking at Thomas and Michael and trusting us.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Ryan.”

Dr. Woodson said, “We all missed that. Eleanor said, she doesn’t know what type of punishment to give to them.”

Hutch said, “Nothing. The boys knew instantly something was wrong and that Lorraine should be released to them.”

Dr. Ralph said, “We need to have a talk with Ryan and his father. I want Dr. Albert be in on it.”

Hutch said, “I really respect him. I don’t care how much Beverly fuss.”

Dr. Woodson said, “I might as well tell all of you.”

Everyone looked at Dr. Woodson.

He said, “I have accepted...”

Nurse Jewell walked back from Laura and heard Dr. Woodson.

She started crying and said, “Another job?”

Hutch looked at Nurse Jewell and thought, “Fragile and weak.”

Dr. Woodson said, “No. I have accepted being the pastor at a local church.”

Nurse Wilkes said, “How is that going to work?”

Dr. Woodson grinned and said, “I don’t know. I know it was something I had to accept in order to grow in GOD.”

Nurse Jewell exhaled and walked back to the nurses’ desk.

She was tired of running.

She has run her entire life.

Her mother was white and her father black.

They lived in a covered wagon and if one place did not accept them they packed up the covered wagon and kept moving.

She and her two brothers were sick of moving and running.

Her two brothers ran away to Canada.

She longed for them.

Their family loved Christmas and would always celebrate Christmas even with only biscuit bread and butter.

They would sit around the fire and sing Christmas songs and listen as their father would read the Holy Bible, Especially Matthew 1:21 and Luke 1:38.

Some years she and her brothers would put on the Christmas pageant.

Her father taught them to go to school and pick a career that people needed.

Her beloved father died of a heart attack.

Her mother married a white man a year after her black father died.

He was mean to her happy children.

They told her but she did not want to let go of the money.

He started to beat them and scare them on purpose. To show everyone he hated the black children and to keep his businesses from suffering’

He scarred her younger brother face up and their mother did not say a word.

Jewell went and watched the white husband and found out where he hid all of his money.

She went and stole all of his money and gave it to her brothers.

A black family was leaving Oklahoma and her brothers rode with them to Canada.

Her youngest brother never spoke after the day they showed their mother how her husband purposely scarred her baby son and she did nothing.

Jewell cried as her two brothers left at night with the black family to Canada.

She ran behind the wagon until she fell in the street.

The oldest brother was thirteen and the youngest brother was ten.

Jewell prayed everyday that god would remove the terrible scars off her brother’s face.

She wondered about her brothers.

She prayed for their hearts and minds daily.

She prayed for her life and the beatings she took from him so her mother can have a house and clothes.

Jewell walked away from the house with the clothes on her whipped up back and bare feet.

She carried the scars of hate and racism.

She hoped her mother was enjoying her life prosperity as the white man’ house burned down to the ground.

Each step Jewell took she felt the pain of the whip and the lashes sting and pain disappear.

She heard her mother frantically run and screamed for her.

She did stop for a moment to hear the voice because she sounded like the mother she once loved.

Jewell slightly turned her head to hear her mother’s voice for the very last time.

Jewell heard her mother screamed, “Jewell!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

Jewell grinned and said, “Now you know the pain I feel daily over my brothers.”

The last Jewell heard was the horses and the other animals.

She grinned as she walked.

Then she thought about her beloved brothers.

She continued to walk until she made it to a colored girls’ home she heard about.

It took her a week of walking off the road to get there.

They took care of her wounds and scars.

They made her clothes to ear and bought her a pair of boots.

Jewell remained there three years.

She left and went to Philadelphia to nursing school.

She has lived in Philadelphia for seven years.

After she graduated from nursing school she worked from one hospital to the next.

The hospitals always found a reason to fire her.

The Stith was the first place where she had been for nearly a year.

She had peace there. She did her job.

She was learning and was getting to let her hatred for white people to leave her.

She stored every penny in the bank.

She planned to go to Canada one day to search for her brothers.

She knew if she paid someone to go and search for them they would steal her money and pretend they were searching for them to keep stealing her money.

She stayed in contact with the family of the ones who her brothers rode with to Canada.

They said they did not know what happened to her small brothers.

She made sure their money was well hid and not to trust anyone.

Jewell felt in her heart they were not dead.

She hoped that they stuck together.

She worried after her brothers and did not eat.

She fasted and prayed for them to be well and the scars healed from her baby brother’s face.

She decided she would go to Canada that summer to the area they may should have made it to with the black family.

Dr. Ralph said, “I can’t say anything. Patrick and Brenda are Lorraine’s guardians.”

He walked away.

Hutch said, “I know they have a lot planned this week. We should see something in improvement in Lorraine. I know it is a lot of medicine in her weak body.”

Dr. Woodson listened.

Nurse Jewell was in her world thinking about her brothers.

Dr. Woodson said, “Send her home. They do not need to come here. Lets give Lorraine a full week for the medicine to be in her body and tell Patrick and Brenda to send the release form so Lorraine can come home.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Dr. Greene will return at the beginning of the year.”

Vivienne walked across the hall to Dr. Woodson and said, “Excuse me I told Dr. Ralph’s relations I would ask the workers at the Stith about housing for them. Can I send a telegram to them?’

Dr. Woodson said, “Yes.”

He walked in the office with Vivienne.

Dr. Charles watched.

Vivienne sent a telegram for Eleanor to ask about rooming houses and send a telegram back for the ones that had rooms available.

Dr. Woodson sent a telegram to Patrick and Brenda they need not come but send a signed release form by telegram. They have tried a special treatment for Lorraine they would release Lorraine and send her home.

Dr. Felipe and Meredith arrived home.

Felipe carried the baby on first and ran back to the carriage and carried Meredith in the house.

Meredith looked around and grinned at the Christmas tree.

Felipe took Baby Felipe out the basket and they walked into his room.

Meredith was shocked and overcome.

Felipe said, “This is from your boys.”

Meredith cried at how beautiful the furniture was.

She kissed Felipe.

There was a knock on the door.

Felipe handed Meredith the baby and went to the door.

He opened the door and the delivery man from Rosie’s was delivering meatloaf and mashed potatoes.

Felipe took the meals and tipped the man and closed the door.

Felipe sat Meredith and Baby Felipe down in the sunken living room.

He added coal to the furnace, stove and fireplace.

He heated their food in the fireplace.

While the food heated.

Felipe ran outside and took the horses to the stable and feed them and gave them water. He unhooked them from the carriage.

He went back in the house and he and Meredith had a very pleasant evening.

Meredith Nursed Baby Felipe, while Felipe made red bows to put on the tree.

Felipe was praying that nothing goes wrong with Meredith and Felipe Jr.

He had no peace.

He could not fully enjoy his time with them.

Monica saw Patrick and Brenda on the train.

They shared dinner in the dining car.

Patrick and Brenda were impressed with Dr. Jerome.

Brenda asked him to consider coming out of retirement to help them establish the hospital and get it operating.

Dr. Jerome was intrigued and said, “I will think on that proposal. Because I love to travel.”

Patrick and Brenda talked to Peter about the position of the train station manager, about the small city about the slow people of the small city and their children.

Peter agreed to do well.

Patrick looked at Peter hard.

Peter said, “I swear I will not cause trouble.”

Brenda said, “And your wife.”

Peter said, “That is one of the reasons I am moving out the big city so she can have some balance.”

The next morning the train rolled into the south.

Brenda was nervous.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

They meet Monica and Dr. Jerome that morning for breakfast.

They left the train and caught the train going into the deep south. It would take two more days to get to her city and state.

Monica told Dr. Jerome she wanted to go to the city clerk’s office and see if any death certificates or marriage certificates or divorce certificates were on file.

When they arrived in Monica’s hometown that Monday morning they immediately went and found the clerk’s office.

Monica told the clerk who she was and what she wanted to do.

He told her he was very busy and he could not do the research.

Monica was upset.

Dr. Jerome gave the clerk a twenty dollar bill and the clerk looked around and gave Monica the books to look through.

Monica exhaled and held her hand over her heart she said, “My mother and father died twenty years ago. Good.”

Dr. Jerome looked at Monica.

He thought, “One down.”

The clerk was busy but stopped to make Monica a certificate of death for her parents.

They stayed in the clerk’s office all day.

Dr. Jerome found the death certificate of her older husband.

He passed two years before of a heart attack.

Monica had the clerk to make her a certificate of death as proof she was free.

She searched for her sons and did not see them in the death books.

She and Dr. Jerome searched in the marriage records and found out her three sons were married.

Monica wrote down the names of her three sons’ wives and their addresses.

She and Dr. Jerome searched birth records and saw her three sons had five children.

She was happy.

She had peace.

She did not need to drank a bottle of whiskey everyday, but once weekly.

Monica wanted to leave that day, but the train left that evening and the next trin would be in two days.

Monica was upset.

She and Dr. Jerome got the last available room.

They went and ate dinner and walked back to the rooming house.

They talked all through the night.

Monica thought and said, “Why would my parents death certificates be here. They did not live here.”

Dr. Jerome said, “They had to move here.”

Monica waved her hands out of confusion and said, “It does not matter. They are dead and gone.”

They undressed and went to bed.

Dr. Jerome slept on the floor by the door so he could hear.

Monica paid for additional coal.

She put the extra coal in the fireplace so Dr. Jerome could be warm since he was sleeping by the cold door.

The next morning they dressed and ate breakfast.

Dr. Jerome rented a horse and buggy and they drove through the town.

Monica did not remember a lot of things because the civil war had destroyed much of the town.

She hit Dr. Jerome’s arm and pointed.

It was her late husband’s horseshoe shop.

They slowed and looked at it.

Dr. Jerome said, “They could not destroy that because they needed it.”

Monica and Dr. Jerome rode to her little house.

As they passed a tall and brawny man walked out the house.

Monica was peeping.

The man scared her and she nearly fell into the buggy on Dr. Jerome.

She was thinking which one of her sons could the man have been.

They rode passed the town’s cemetery.

Monica aid, “Stop Dr. Jerome.”

He stopped and they walked in the cemetery and she found her husband’s marker.

She was so happy he was dead.

She and Dr. Jerome got in the buggy and rode back in town and returned the buggy.

They went and had dinner and got prepared to catch the train at ten am the next morning.

Monica told Dr. Jerome she hated that long trip back.

He smiled and said, “You would really hate the long ride to Europe, which I love. I can read, I study. I write poems, which are bad.”

Monica said, “Bad?”

Dr. Jerome sighed and said, “Yes ma am. As bad as you can get.”

Monica said, “Benda said, Meredith had her baby. I don’t know what we are going to do about Christmas holiday.”

Dr. Jerome said, “I have several invitations to Christmas dinner. I guess you can come if you show you can ate right.”

Monica looked at Dr. Jerome and said, “I need you mean what you said. I have to see. I may have Christmas dinner at Shirley’s for me, Vivienne and her Dr. Charles. Dr. Ralph will probably be at the hospital with Lorraine and Dr. Felipe probably will be a nervous wreck with Meredith and the newborn. I know Beverly is going to have her hands and Albert’s hands full.”

Dr. Jerome said, “That’s who I was talking about. I got an invitation from Al, I got an invitation from Bev and I got an invitation from the twelve children.”

Monica laughed at Dr. Jerome.

They went to sleep for the night.

Monica was up at the crack of dawn.

She sat at the desk and wrote a letter to her three sons.

She and Dr. Jerome went to breakfast.

She and Dr. Jerome were on their way to the train she stopped at the post and mailed the letters.

She was happy to be leaving the deep south.

She and Dr. Jerome caught the train and the train rolled out of her town.

She looked out the window and said, “Never to return again.

Dr. Jerome looked out the window and saw the same young man that followed them while they were in the town.

He figured he had to be one of Monica’s sons.

Dr. Jerome watched as the young man stood at the post and the young man in the post walked out and handed him a letter.

Monica turned in time to see them.

She gasped.

Dr. Jerome looked at Monica.

She stared at the two young men staring at the train.

She sat and was quiet.

They had to change trains the next morning.

They made it back to the point they would catch the train to get on the Stith’s train.

Monica was happy.

Dr. Jerome was happy.

It took a full day to get out of the south.

The next stop was Cedartown.

Mag and Natalie got on the trin with some boxes.

Dr. Jerome helped them.

They sat and talked to Monica and Dr. Jerome.

They told Monica they were going to take toys to the children in the small city. They would turn around the next morning and come back.

They told Monica they attended the ground breaking ceremony for the new hospital and al the dignitaries that were there.

They attended the reception and the formal dinner.

They asked about Lorraine, Meredith and Vivienne.

Mag said, “Beverly left yesterday. She has a day start on us. She helped to decorate the house.”

Natalie said, “The house is beautiful and Christmassy.”

The train pulled into the small city.

Dr. Jerome helped Natalie off the train.

Mattie was waiting.

She ran to them and Mag gave her the box.

Mag went not the box and grinned at the toys.

Morgan took Natalie to the Thompsons.

She and Mag left them toys for their seven children.

They went to the browns and left five gifts for their children,

They went to the Wilsons and left toys for their six children.

Mag and Natalie stayed in the shed with Morgan.

They talked the night away.

Morgan said, “Peter is being assigned here. I have packed and am waiting for him to return with his wife.”

Natalie looked at Morgan.

Mag said, “Morgan what are you going to do?”

Morgan said, “I will be traveling for about a week to get to Vermont to my place I bought up there and remain until the spring.”

Natalie said, “You will be traveling through Christmas?”

Morgan said, “Yes ma am Miss Natalie.”

Mag said, “Morgan you know that some trains won’t run on Christmas. You can’t be at ata freezing train station without warmth and food on the holidays.”

Morgan thought, “Well I could go home and stay there until New Years and leave and go to Vermont and come bac in the spring. You should that beautiful GOD’s country.”

Natalie said, “Morgan spend the holidays with us. At least Christmas.”

Mag sat quietly.

Morgan was thinking and looked at Mag.

He said, “Only if Mag say so.”

Mag said, “Mag say so.”

Natalie grinned.

Morgan said, “I’ll put you two on the train in the morning and I’ll wait for Peter and show him and his wife around. I’ll catch the train the next day to come to Cedartown. Get me a room. I will not stay in your house.”

Mag said, “Town is crowded for the holidays. I’ll see what we can do if not you stay at our house.”

Morgan said, “Alright.”

The next morning Mag, Natalie and Morgan were walking through the neighborhood and saw beautiful pine trees the people could use for Christmas trees.

Mattie pulled her wagon and loaded her six children in the wagon to follow Mag and Natalie and Morgan to see what they were doing.

Mag said, “Mattie you have a Christmas tree for you and your children?”  
Mattie said, “No ma am.”

Mag said, “Why not? Look at all of these beautiful trees.”

Mattie said, “The man told us not to come back here anymore.”

Mag and Natalie and Morgan turned from looking at the trees and stared at Mattie and said, “What man?”

Mattie said, “That white man that work on the train.”

Mag said, “Whoever he is does not own the governor’s land.”  
Morgan walked back to the train station office and hooked the wagon and the horses and got the saws and axes and sped back to Mag, Mattie and Natalie.

Other city people rode down to see what was going on.

They told Mag, Natalie and Morgan of the white men that dared them to come down into that area.

One older white man said, “They told us not to fish nor hunt nor to get the water from over there anymore. I said, we always have what are we suppose to do for water?

They pointed their guns at me and said, “They don’t give a damn.”

Mag said, “What!!”

The older white man said, “Then the one from your train said, “Get the water from the creek by the train station. Don’t ever come back here again.”

Natalie said, “When was this?”

The older white man pointed at Morgan and said, “The day after he got here.”

Morgan was thinking.

Mag said, “There were no trains until the next day.”

Natalie had a flash in her mind and she knew it was GOD.

She said, “They got off the train the day we left and hid out here in the woods and when Peter was on the train again he had the train stop somewhere so they could get on and go back to the city.”

Morgan began to have a fit.

He began to jump in the air and stomp.

Mag yelled, “Stop Morgan. It will be alright. They will not take over.”

Morgan said, “The train did stop about a half mile down the track. I ran to the track to look. Peter waved at me. I stood and looked at him. He yelled everything was fine.”

Mag said, “That is the Peter that beg us to talk to Patrick and Brenda to let him be the station manager.”

Natalie said, “It is our fault that the mob is here.”

Mag said, “The hell.”

Natalie said, “This place is special.”

Morgan said, “That day I came down by the lake to fish and hunt I thought it was a bear it was them.”

Morgan cut down Christmas for thirty six families that lived there.

The men went hunting and fishing.

The residents made the children stay close to their houses.

Natalie and Mag went to the train station office and sent a detail telegram to Patrick and Eleanor and asked them to have the governor send troops in because the mob was there and taking over the area and his lot. The stakes had been moved even for their homestead. Mag said, “She and Natalie will be on the next train to Cedartown because they could not stay there anymore. Morgan would catch the train the next morning to Cedartown to spend Christmas with them.”

Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor were sitting in Patrick’s office and they were happy. They were still talking about how the whole town was abuzz about the ground breaking ceremony.

The children were upstairs in their rooms.

Percy was standing at the top of the stairs.

Jose walked through the billiards room and saw him.

He thought, “He’s standing up there but he is up to something.”

Eleanor said, “But daddy.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

She said, “I did not know Robert and Bethany could sing and play the piano.”

Brenda was laughing and said, “I did not know either. And they danced. They put on a full show at the reception and they did extremely well at the dinner. They were so good that the governor and the diplomats want them for their spring events.”

Ruth and Jose were working on that side of the house and heard Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor laughing and having a great time.

Ruth was laughing and said, “it was a fun time around here.”

Jose said, “Yes it was.”

Ruth and Jose walked through each site and bathroom and it was perfect.

They stood in the hall and perused the suite area.

Ruth said, “Beverly did an outstanding job on the flowers throughout the house.”

Jose said, “You all have to keep them alive. In two days I will be on Christmas vacation and Nadine will be over everything and you know she will not tolerate any mistakes.”

Ruth said, “Like she is perfect.”

Jose said, “No fighting until I get back.”

Ruth laughed.

Jose realized that it did not come out the way he expected.”

Ruth said, “I was pleasantly surprised at the new maids uniforms that Eleanor order for us and the new suits for you male workers. We looked good and rich.”

Jose said, “We looked above first class.”

Jose and Ruth could hear Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor laughing.

They started to laugh at them.

They heard Patrick screamed and yelled, “I’m going to kill him!”

All the workers in the house started running to Patrick’s office.

Ruth and Patrick were scared.

They have never heard Patrick screamed like that and then said, he was going to kill someone.

They eventually ran to Patrick’s office.

Percy stood still on the balcony.

Michael, Thomas and Shirley ran down the stairs to Patrick and ran into his office.

Shirley had just walked up the backstairs from meeting with Nadine about her tea party later that day with her Ginger, Alice, Mary, Mary, Sarah and maybe Alicia.

Percy and Bruce stood at the top of the stairs and looked towards the hall.

Nadine ran back to see what was wrong.

John, Mike and Dan ran behind Nadine.

The workers were standing in the hall.

Brenda and Eleanor jumped up from the sofa.

Brenda yelled, “Patrick!”

Thomas ran and grabbed the telegram and read it.

Eleanor was concerned about her daddy who was bent over.

Michael ran to Thomas and they were reading the telegram.

Shirley ran and stood over Thomas and Michael and read the telegram.

Shirley went to the telegram machine and Thomas and Michael ran and stood behind her.

Brenda and Eleanor grabbed Patrick to help him to their bedroom.

Brenda said, “Dan help me with Patrick. John go and get the doctor.”

John turned to get the doctor.

He turned to Mike and said, “What doctor?”

Mike said, “Go and get the horses I’ll ride with you, but I want to know what is this about.”

Jose stepped in Patrick’s office.

Percy and Bruce finally ran to the hall.

Shirley sent a telegram back to Mag and said, “This is Shirley. Grandpa received your telegram and is working on it. You and Natalie and Morgan stay on your original plans.

Eleanor walked to her father’s desk and reached for the telegram.

Thomas gave Eleanor the telegram.

Michael ran to Eleanor and was hugging her waist.

Shirley sent a telegram to the governor and attached the telegram that Mag sent Patrick.

She asked for his immediate help.

Eleanor read the telegram again.

She looked at Shirley and said, “What you just do?”

Shirley was scared and said, “I re-sent the telegram from Mag to the governor. I asked for his help and I need for you to sign it momma.

Eleanor walked to the telegram with Michael holding her waist.

She read the telegram and signed it.

Shirley sent it to the governor.

Eleanor said, “What time is it the governor will leave the capitol for Christmas vacation at noon.”

Jose looked at the time.

He thought, “  
Let e send a message to my father. They are having Christmas breakfast with the governor and Gen is there.”

Shirley and Eleanor moved.

Jose said, “Dad get the governor to read his telegram from Patrick and Eleanor.”

Eleanor read the telegram and patted Jose on his back.

Everyone stared at Eleanor.

Percy and Bruce were trying to look at Brenda and Patrick’s bedroom.

Percy said, “Momma what is wrong with grandpa?”

Bruce looked at Percy and then turned his head and looked at Eleanor.

Jose saw the telegram on Patrick’s desk and started to read it.

Jose frowned up.

Eleanor saw him and slapped him on the back of his head.

Jose rubbed his head and continued to read the telegram.

The telegram came in from Vivienne asking for available rooms in Cedartown.

The telegram came in from Dr. Woodson to sign the release form for Lorraine.

Eleanor and Jose read both of the telegrams.

Eleanor teared up at the one about Lorraine.

Jose looked at Eleanor and said, “What are you going to do?”

Michael and Thomas ran and read the telegrams.

Michael and Thomas looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor bit her lips and looked at her children.

She cried, “Get Lorraine.”

Nadine went into a fit.

She said, “What the hell you mean get Lorraine. Is she dead or alive?”

Eleanor said, “I believe she is alive. But the only persons who signed for her to be release is Patrick and Brenda.”

Mike said, “What caused Patrick to scream?”

Another telegram started to come in.

Jose and Eleanor and it was from Bruce asking could he join them for the Christmas holidays.

Michael and Thomas read the telegram and ignored it.

Shirley leaned over and read it.

Percy said, “What does that one say?”

Thomas said, “Bruce wants to spend Christmas Holidays here.”

Bruce said, “Hell no.”

Everyone looked at Bruce.

Bruce said, “I don’t have time for Bruce. I want to know what my grandpa is hurt about and I want to go and get Lorraine. I said, we should have brought her home when I saw her. They were just killing her.”

Eleanor cried.

Jose said, “Eleanor stop this and tell us what is wrong?”

Nadine said, “That’s right so the rest of us can cry.”

Thomas looked at Nadine.

Eleanor said, “Ok. The telegram my daddy got was from Mag. The mob is taking over the small city and bound the residents up in their houses.”

Dan just walked out Patrick and Brenda’s bedroom.

He said, “What the hell are you talking about Eleanor. That beautiful land that I want my vacation home at?”

Eleanor said, “Yes. And the person that is helping them is the man that daddy just hired to run that train station. We just re-sent that telegram to the governor. I hope he gets it before he leaves the capitol.”

Michael said, ”He has to come here momma to catch the train. Lets go to the train station. The train leaves at three pm this afternoon.”

Eleanor looked down at Michael and thought.

She said, “Michael how do you know that?”

Michael held his head down.

Jose stood from the chair and moved out of Eleanor’s arm reach.

Michael said, “In case you beat me for acting up with Lorraine’ doctor I was going to run away.”

Eleanor looked at Michael and the rest of her children and said, “I’m not through with that all of you go and sit on the sofa.”

The boys hurried and sat and blocked Shirley from sitting.

Mike and Dan snickered.

Shirley looked at her brothers and went and stood next to Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Shirley said, “And you too.”

Shirley was scared but tried to grin at Eleanor.

Jose said, “That don’t work for how yall cut up at that hospital. Outside fighting like cats and dogs. Shirley who told you you can throw? Hit Thomas in his eye.”

Mike was thinking, “That’s that land me and John heard about that we were going to buy some land there.”

The workers looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Jose these are my children. I know you think you are their daddy. But if anyone is going to fuss and cuss at them it is me.”

Everybody laughed.

Thomas said, “Momma he better not show up here at all. I know where the key is to the guns and you can’t re-hide it.”

Eleanor was shocked at Thomas.

She could not think.

Ruth said, “Oh hell. The quiet one knows everything.”

Brenda walked up and heard Thomas and heard Ruth.

She stood back by Dan and listened.

Patrick told Brenda what Mag said.

Patrick said, “I have a bad headache. I hope it is not a stroke.”

Brenda said, “No it is just a bad headache. Take one of these pills for Shirley’s pain.”

Brenda gave Patrick a pill and he sat on the bed for a few minutes.

Mike and Dan were still thinking.

They did not know what the other person was thinking.

Dan thought, “The governor said, he would let me have as many acres as I wanted for a penny an acre. The hell if that mob think they gonna stop me from vacationing with the governor and mayors.”

Mike was thinking the state has not put that land up for sale yet. That means you can stake out the land, and get what you want for nothing. I am going to be sick this Christmas and go and get me about two hundred acres of land.”

Eleanor said, “I need momma and daddy to sign the release for Lorraine.”

Brenda said, “What Eleanor?”

Eleanor looked and Brenda was walking into Patrick’s office.

Brenda said, “D. Woodson said, he needs the release form to be signed for Lorraine to be sent home.”

Brenda stood and looked at Eleanor and started mumbling.

That is why the workers thought Brenda was stupid.

Jose knew better.

Mike just started working there and he knew better.

Mike knew Brenda was calculating. She looked at all the different answers. But for Bruce.

Brenda thought and said, “Is Lorraine better, the same or worst?”

Eleanor looked Brenda in the eyes and said, “I don’t know.”

Brenda said, “She will be here. We need twenty four hours nurses. Shirley you get the nurses.”

Shirley was standing next to Eleanor looking at her fingernail polished fingernails and smiling.

She and Eleanor had been fighting for the past week about Shirley thinking about nothing but her clothes and hair.

Jose shook his head.

Dan looked at Shirley and thought, “Damn.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley up and down.

Nadine thought, “Here comes a fight.”

Sabrina said, “I love the red color Shirley.”

Shirley was grinning and looked up and saw everyone staring at her.

She realized her grandma said something to her.

She jumped and looked at Eleanor and then Brenda.

Michael said, “Heifer.”

Brenda looked at Shirley and said, “This is the only time ever I will repeat myself. “

Shirley was breathing heavy out of fear.

She looked t her four brothers who were bent over with their hands under their chins staring at Shirley.

Ruth turned sideways because she did not want to see what was next.

Shirley would not look at Eleanor who was ready to jump on her.

Shirley stared at Brenda and tried to grin and said, “Yes grandma can you repeat that for me?”  
Brenda said, “We will sign the release papers for Lorraine.”

Shirley said, “You want me to go and get her?”

Eleanor was rolling her eyes at Shirley.

Shirley pretended not to see Eleanor and kept looking at Brenda.

Brenda was thinking, “All this girl thinks about is how good she looks.”

Brenda said, “I will have Lorraine sent here. We do not know her condition. You, Shirley go and get certified nurses that will be here twenty four hours a day with Lorraine.”

Shirley said, “Where am I going to find certified nurses?”

Percy said, “Alicia.”

Shirley looked at her brothers who were angry with her for sending Lorraine to buy clothes.

Shirley met their angry.

Jose moved closer to see what was going to happen.

Shirley said, “Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael. I know you hate me and blame me for Lorraine getting hurt. Lorraine was excited and happy to be going to New York to shop. I did not know that this terrible thing would happen to her. I can’t change it. I asked God to forgive me. I don’t care about you four…”

Michael jumped in Shirley’s face and started screaming at her.

The other three boys sat on the sofa like it was normal behavior.

Eleanor jumped and turned and looked at Michael in Shirley’s face and thought, “This is what Ryan talked about.”

Shirley hit Michael in his head.

He stumble.

The other boys did not move and they did not blink.

Eleanor calmly said, “Stop. This is what Dr. Ryan said you all did.”

Jose hollered and fell into the wall.

Brenda was calm and said, “Shirley, you Nadine and Sabrina go and finish your tea party.”

Everyone was standing still.

Eleanor said, “Momma we sent the telegram to the governor and asked for help.”

Brenda nodded her head for yes.

Eleanor said, “A copy of the release papers are in the safe.”

Brenda said, “Fine.”

Brenda looked and said, “Where is peter?”

Nadine looked and figured he was in the kitchen drunk.

Nadine said, “Mrs. Stith I believe in the kitchen.”

Brenda said, “Does he have everything ready for Denise wedding on Sunday?”

Mike thought, “This woman got all these problems and she is thinking about a worker’s reception.”

Nadine said, “Yes ma am. I will double check.”

Brenda said, “I heard the telegram machine, what else came through?”

Eleanor said, “Vivienne asked about the available rooms to rent for a soldier and his wife.”

Brenda said, “Ruth take care of that. Nadine will have her hands full over the next week. Go to the different rooming houses you all use and see if there is availability for January I believe that is when the soldiers report to work. Give the list to Nadine. Nadine you telegram the information to Dr. Woodson, He knows what to do from there.”

Brenda looked and said, “Has John gone for the doctor?”

Mike lied and said, “Yes ma am.”

Brenda looked at Mike like she knew he was lying to her.

Mike said, “Damn. She acts like my momma.”

Mike said, “Jose can I see you about my holiday work schedule?”

Dan said, “Me too.”

Nadine said, “Me too?”  
Jose stood and looked at them.

Them the sound of the telegram reigned in his ear.

Eleanor looked back and tore off the telegram.

She grinned.

Mellissa said, “Good news?”

The boys stared at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Meredith, Felipe and baby Felipe say thank you for all the wonderful gifts. They say baby Felipe has enough things to last him until he starts walking. They hope to come and visit before they sail to France next spring.”

Everybody clapped.

Jose was thinking.

Another telegram was coming through.

Eleanor leaned back and tore it off.

She said, “Jose your father said, he caught the governor and told hin he had an urgent telegram and the governor ran to his office.”

Everybody clapped.

Jose thought for a minute.

He said, “That’s why all of you want to change your holiday work schedules.”

No body said anything.

Brenda looked at the workers.

Eleanor looked at Jose and said, “Why?”

Jose did not say anything.

Eleanor said, ”I think that is all this morning.”

Nadine said, “That’s enough.”

Brenda said, “I want to thank all of you for such outstanding service you provided us and our guests last week. I only had to curse two of you out about drinking up all of my gin from our guests…”

Theresa said, “I didn’t think I drank that much.”

Mike looked at her.

Jose ran to the telegram and sent an urgent telegram to the liquor store.

Brenda looked and said, “Jose I hope that is not about the gin supply?”

Jose did not respond

He sat in Patrick’s chair and waited.

Brenda was staring at Jose.

Jose did not look up.

Mellissa said, “I apologize Mrs. Stith for drinking all that gin.”

Jose stared at Mellissa.

Mellissa said, “Why yall looking at me?”

Brenda said, “They are looking at you because they do not want you to apologize for drinking so they would not have to apologize for drinking.”

Jose smirked and twisted his lips.

Eleanor watched Jose.

She knew Jose and Nadine drank any bottle of open alcohol and didn’t care if they knew about it or not.

Atelegram came throw.

Jose tore it off and gave to Eleanor.

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Shirley Monica is back in Philadelphia and said all is well at the hospital and the apartment.”

Ruth said, “Maybe she can bring Lorraine back?”

Eleanor said, “Let us all calm down and see. A nurse or a doctor has to travel with Lorraine.”

Brenda was listening.

Eleanor looked at the telegram and said, “Momma Monica said all is well.”

Brenda nodded her head.

She looked at Mellissa and said, “Mellissa I know Gen helped you and Theresa drank all that Gen. I knew she would enjoy herself with the gin I could not see how all of that gin was gone.”

Bruce said, “Aunt Beverly.”

Brenda was looking at Theresa and slowly turned and looked at Bruce.

She thought and said, “Bruce you are right.”

The telegram came back from the liquor store.

Jose stood and said, “I’m going into town to get the last six bottles they have until January. I quess you lushes have to sip sassafras tea.”

Theresa said, “I like the hot buttered rum Shirley showed us how to make.

Shirley grinned.

Brenda and Eleanor slowly looked at Shirley.

Shirley stood and grinned.

Dan said, “Well Jose?”

Jose stood in the door and looked at Dan.

He said, “Dan we have to figure all of this stuff out. It might not be the best time to go there. That is the mob. You know what they can do.”

Jose looked back at the four boys looking at him.

Ruth said, “Jose will there be any more guests for Christmas?”

Thomas said, “Momma can we have that mulled cider today?”

Eleanor said, “Thomas be quiet.”

Brenda said, “It is just the seven of us. I think Genevia is dining with Mag, Natalie and Josiah and Morgan. The governor, mayor, diplomats are out of town.”

Eleanor said, “But for Claressa and Alvin. If Claressa comes she would want to cook.”

Brenda looked at Eleanor and said, “No hell is she going into my kitchen. She can’t cook and she doesn’t like to wash dishes.”

Michael said, “Momma why don’t you cook. We can help.”

Eleanor went into a fit.

Michael and Thomas jumped and ran in the corner.

Percy and Bruce jumped and ran into the hall.

Shirley ran through the hall upstairs to her room.

Nadine and Sabrina went to complete the tea party.

Eleanor exhaled and calmly said, “Michael, I cannot cook and I don’t like washing dishes.”

Jose said, “It took all of that?”

Brenda said, “I know. What is wrong with you Eleanor?”

Michael said, “at least it got that heifer Shirley out of here.”

Mike walked back to the kitchen.

He saw someone on the porch.

He yelled, “Somebody at the front door!”

Thomas and Michael ran and looked out the window.

Eleanor said, “Thomas can you and Michael see who it is?”

Thomas turned and Michael after him.

Thomas said, “I’ll take care of this.”

Eleanor watched Michael and Thomas as they pass her.

Brenda watched them.

Jose watched the,

Jose began to think.

Dan saw when Thomas and Michael walked to Percy and Bruce and said something.

Dan thought.

Brenda walked to the window and looked.

She said, “Jose go and get my shotgun.”

The workers went running through the house t the kitchen.

Thomas leading them.

Jose and Dan said at the same time, Bruce.”

Eleanor jumped and ran to the window she saw him peeping and leaning backwards to see the windows.

Eleanor said, “Where are my boys?”

Shirley was standing at the top of the stairs thinking it was her guests an hour early.

She saw Thomas and the other workers running through the house she did not know what to think.

She saw Michael and the boys run through the kitchen.

Eleanor said, “Momma no. I am strong enough to shot Bruce myself. I have only one true love and he is dead. I will never love Bruce. Ever.”

Jose looked at Brenda and Brenda stared at him.

She said, “Jose when I tell you to do something I mean for you to do it.”

Dan stood and looked at Brenda.

Jose said, “Not when it means I can go to jail.”

Eleanor had patted her down and said, “Excuse me to Jose and her mother.”

John was sitting on his horse all that time waiting for Mike.

He saw the boys run out the house and went to the stables.

He grinned.

John thought, “They are going riding this morning. It is cold.”

Mike ran out and jumped on his horse.

John said, “Why you had me out in this cold for all that time?”

Mike aid, “I wanted to know why Patrick screamed.”

John said, “And.”

Mike said, “Mod has moved into the small city and made the people stay in their homes and the train onductor is a part of it.”

John said, “You think he is the one that treied to kill Lorraine?”

Mike said, “Maybe. Lets go before Brenda finds out we haven’t gone.”

John said, “Not we. Me.”

Mike said, “The land is not claimed. We don’t have to pay for it if we stake a claim. I want to build me a house and a hunting lodge since everyone is coming to fish and hunt. They contacted the governor for help.”

John said, “When I thought this holiday was going to be boring.”

Mike said, “I found out who drank all the gin.”

John said, “That’s who I want to know about. Spoiled my gin fizz.”

Mike said, “Mellissa, Theresa and the old bird Gen.”

John said, “I got to keep a look out for them.”

Mike said, “Jose is going into town to get the last six bottles of gin for the holidays.”

John said, “What!”

They rode around the front of the house and looked on the porch and saw Bruce.

They stopped.

Bruce smirked at them.

John said, “Lets go the boys are going to take care of him.”

Mike said, “What?”

John said, “The boys went to the stables before you came out. I thought they wanted to go riding.”

Mike said, “They will. Lets go to the doctor in the capital. You can try to find some gin and rum.”

John said, “I don’t want rum.”

Mike said, “One of the workers said she liked the hot buttered rum Shirley made for them.”

John said, “You’re dirty.”

They laughed.

John said, “Which maid?”

Mike said, “I’m not telling you.”

They sped to the capitol.

They nearly ran over the doctor on the way to the capitol.

The doctor was startled.

Mike saw the black bag and said, “Ae you the doctor?”

The doctor said, “Depends.”

John looked at him.

Mike said, “Mrs. Stith sent us to ask you if you can come and see about Mr. Stith?”

John looked and saw several carriages exiting the capitol.

He saw the seal on the carriages and said, “The governor is leaving for the holidays.”

The doctor looked and said, “Alright I’ll go and see about Mr. Stith. You two slow down.”

John and Mike looked at the doctor.

They turned and thundered into the capitol.

The doctor stopped and looked back at them.

The doctor continued to the Stiths.

He looked at the time and thought he should be back home in the capitol around three pm. He wondered where the governor was Christmasing.

The governor neared the new military headquarters a commander and two hundred soldiers followed him.

Steven, Alicia and Emilou saw the great sight and got scared.

Steven wanted to drop the blue prints off to Eleanor,

They decided to ride through the other part of the town.

Steven sped through the town and caught up with the doctor and sped by him.

The doctor looked at Steven.

Alicia recognized the doctor and yelled, “Sorry doctor.”

Steven and Emilou did not care.

Emilou was covered up in blankets and said, “Faster Steven.”

They reached the Stiths house and parked in the front.

They saw the boys on their horses.

Emilou said, “I like Thomas.”

Alicia and Steven looked back at Emilou and said, “No!!!”

Emilou was sitting in the back seat leaning towards the front seat with her arms on the seat looking at Thomas.

She said, “What are they doing?”

Alicia looked and said, “I don’t know.”

They saw Ginger and Alice ride into the yard.

Alicia said, “Steven, Alice and Ginger. I forgot Shirley was having her Christmas Tea today.”

Emilou said, “Lets go.”

Alicia said, “We are not invited.”

Emilou still looking at Thomas said, “Why not. I like Thomas.”

Steven said, “You two stay in the carriage I will be right back. Then we can go and have holiday lunch somewhere.”

He looked at them rolled his forehead.

They laughed.

Alicia was angry and did not speak to Ginger and Alice.

They looked at Alicia and Emilou.

Emilou stoke out her tongue at them.

They looked at Emilou and Alicia.

Alicia stared at them.

Emilou said, “I want to play with the boys.”

Alicia said, “No.”

Emilou said, “I can play jump rope.”

Alicia looked back at Emilou.

She said, “Emilou you want people to see your new clothes.”

Emilou said, “Yes. I look really nice.”

Alicia said, “I know. I did your hair and you look great. Steven said he will take us to lunch. Lets think of a fancy place in the capitol.”

Sarah arrived and had on a holiday skirt she made.

Alicia stepped pout the carriage and stood and talked to Sarah.

Sarah peeped in the carriage and waved and said, “Hello and Christmas greetings Emilou.”

Alicia told Sarah as they were by the military headquarters the governor pulled up and at least two hundred soldiers rode with him.

Emilou said, “They scared us.”

Alicia tried to cough for Emilou to be quiet.

Sarah looked at Alicia and said, “That was serious. Have you heard from your friend?”

Alicia said, “No. Have you heard from Jake?”

Sarah said, “No.”

Alicia said, “I wonder if Shirley heard from Skip?”

The rode up and saw the boys outside on their horses and saw the young ladies talking.

Alicia tried to smile at the doctor.

The doctor looked at the young ladies.

He said, “Your driver nearly ran over me.”

Emilou said, “The soldiers came out and surrounded the governor and we were scared and ran.”

The doctor thought and said, “Huh.”

Sarah said, “Is someone sick?”

Alicia said, “I don’t know.”

Steven was standing at the door waiting for Eleanor.

Jose was standing at the front door from Bruce.

Eleanor and Jose and Dan and Brenda walked through the house to the foyer.

Jose opened the door.

Eleanor stepped on the threshold of the door to block Bruce from stepping on the threshold and gaining a foothold to get in the house.

Shirley stood at the top of the stairs and watched.

Bruce was shocked at Eleanor nasty but polite response.

Joseph taught her how to tell an enemy to leave without saying a word.

Jose looked at Eleanor’s feet.

He looked at Bruce.

Bruce was shocked and looked at Jose and said, I’m here to see Mrs. Simmons and not you.”

Jose stared at Bruce and did not move.

Brenda was standing behind Eleanor.

Eleanor stared directly in Bruce’s eyes and felt nothing.

She had met her one and only true love and no one could ever be in that place but Joseph.

Bruce looked at a cold and unforgiving Eleanor.

He said, “I sent messages and telegrams that you ignored.”

Eleanor did not respond nor blink.

She is one of the most powerful women in the world and he thinks he is going to talk to her any kind of way and dominant her.

Brenda was touching Eleanor by the waist for her to keep her mind on what she was doing.

Dan was standing behind Brenda.

Bruce saw he had lost his power over Eleanor.

His crazy Eleanor.

The one he ruled and dominated.

He stood and stared at Eleanor.

Brenda started closing the front door.

Bruce looked at the door and wondered how it was closing and put his hand up to stop it.

Bruce said, “I have not spent the past three Christmases and holidays with my kids. I want to spend time with them.”

The four boys had mounted their horses and thundered around to the front of the house.

They sat on their horses.

Jose looked out the front door to see who was out there.

He saw the four boys.

Bruce looked back and saw his sons.

He tried to smile at them.

Percy said, “What are you doing here Bruce?”

Eleanor realized then she could not discard Percy to Bruce.

Brenda and Dan were standing back to hear.

Bruce yelled, “Dad!!”

Eleanor was about to hit Bruce.

Jose grabbed her hands.

Thomas said, “You are who we say you are.”

Bruce stood on the porch and tried to understand what Thomas just said.

They all stood still.

Bruce said nothing.

The boys said nothing.

Eleanor shut and locked the door.

Bruce turned slightly to look back.

Eleanor and Brenda ran to one side of the hall to the windows to hear.

Dan and Jose ran to the other set of windows

Shirley turned and went into her room to finish dressing.

She decided to wear her thick blonde hair done.

It had more waves in it than normal because she had it pinned up all the time.

She sat at her vanity and brushed her hair.

She cried for Lorraine.

Nadine walked upstairs to go into Shirley’s room.

She saw the person at the door and realized it was Bruce.

Nadine said, “Bruce.”

Shirley with quivering lips said, “Yes.”

Nadine walked in the room with the dress Shirley wanted to wear to her holiday tea.

Shirley was crying.

She said, “Thank you for finding my great grandmother tea set. It really means a lot to me. She helped me through the rough times.”

Nadine thought, “All of your life has been rough.”

Nadine was shaking out Shirley’s dress and said, “This is such a pretty dress. You had them to put your initials in the buttons that was really nice.”

Shirley was crying and said, “Momma Lorraine told them to do that for my clothes. I miss her so much.”

Shirley cried.

Nadine could not think about Lorraine because her heart would break.

Nadine said, “Why is Bruce here?”

Shirley was still brushing her long thick blonde hair and said, “He wants to spend Christmas with us.”

Nadine stopped and was thinking and said, “After that fight last Thanksgiving. I should have put some money on that one.”

Shirley looked up at Nadine.

Nadine looked at Shirley and opened the bottom of her dress for her to step in the dress.

She said, “Shirley, whatever happened to his girlfriend do you know?”

Shirley was stepping into the dress and said, “I don’t want to now.”

Nadine said, “I wondered if Miss Gen knows. She probably go where they are and beat them again.”

Shirley was trying to decide on the earrings while Nadine was buttoning her dress.

Nadine was looking at the earrings and said, “Not any of those. Do you have any green earrings?”

Shirley said, “Momma doesn’t let me wear those.”

Nadine said, “Right. Simple, plain earrings Shirley to show off the colors in the dress and the collar.”

Shirley reached in her jewelry box and pulled out a solid green pair od earring her brother bought while they were in Europe for her birthday.

Nadine took the earrings out of Shirley’s hand and put them on her ears.

She said, “See Shirley how the green brings out the different greens in the dress and some kind of way it brings even more the deep blue of your eyes.”

Shirley said, “I don’t want my brothers to think I’m trying to make up with them.”

Nadine continued to look around the room for anything that was out of place. She had no intentions of walking up those stairs again that day.

Nadine picked up Shirley’s nightgown off the floor and said, “Who cares they are men.”

Shirley looked at Nadine.

She remembered what Dr. Woodson and Hutch said, about the nurses talking around Shirley about men.

Nadine said, “Throw some cold water over your face and pat it dry and wait for guests. It is nearly time for them to come. I set the whole six piece tea set out and have the petit fours and tea cakes and finger sandwiches available.”

Shirley thought, “Nadine is good at her job.”

Nadine went down the front stairs because she wanted to know what was going on with Bruce.

She walked behind Brenda as Eleanor closed and locked the door.

When Eleanor and Brenda ran to one window and Jose and Dan ran to another Nadine ran behind Brenda and Eleanor.

She got a good look at Bruce.

He was staring at his sons.

Thomas pulled out a rope.

Eleanor stood up straight from the window and stared in the hall.

She thought, “My sons are going to hang their daddy. At Christmas.”

Bruce looked at Thomas and said, “What are you going to do with that?”

Thomas said, “What do you want Bruce?”

Bruce chuckled until he saw his sons meant what they were about to do.

Bruce said, “I want you all to come to my family house and spend the holidays with me there.”

Thomas started whipping the rope around.

Bruce laughed at Thomas.

Jose looked at a stunned Eleanor.

Thomas said, “Bruce you should have thought about that when you told us that Thanksgiving you did not want us at your new home which is only a tenth of the size of our house. You deeply hurt us and I will never forgive you. I don’t want to ever see your face again.”

Bruce said, “I’m your father.”

Thomas threw the rope around Bruce’s neck.

Nadine jumped and said, “Damn.”

Dan was shocked.

Jose unlocked the door and Eleanor ran out the door.

Brenda calmly said, “Let Thomas tighten the rope some and give him rope burns to remember everyday.

Jose looked at Brenda and pointed at her to stay in the house.

Brenda and Nadine were peeping out the windows.

Bruce was shocked at his sons.

Eleanor, Jose and Dan ran out the house.

Dan ran and got the rope from Thomas.

Jose took the rope from Bruce’s neck.

Brenda peeping out the window at Bruce’s neck.

She said, “No rope burns.”

Nadine looked at Brenda and walked through the formal dining room into the kitchen.

Nadine stopped and thought about how eloquent the dinner was and they all had on their formal uniforms.

Brenda looked back at Nadine reminiscing over the dinner room.

Brenda thought, “I don’t want to think about those happy thoughts now. I want to think about these happy thoughts in front of me.”

Brenda turned back and watched Bruce’s shocked beet red face.

Bruce looked in Eleanor’s face.

Bruce said, “Eleanor I am sorry.”

Eleanor said, “Leave my property and never return.”  
Brenda stood in the window and gave Bruce a stare that sent chills throw him.

He walked off the porch and down towards his son.

He held his head down and said, “I have enough enemies without making my family another enemy…”

He lifted his head up and looked into the eyes of his sons.

He looked at Percy who stared at him.

He saw Bruce who was always the one that loved him the most.

He looked at Thomas and then Michael.

He said, “I apologize to all of you for mistreating you and not giving you the love I have in my heart for you.”

Patrick had woke and walked into his office and saw that the house was quiet.

He started walking through the hall when he saw Nadine running down the stairs with clothes in her hands.

Patrick sped up a little and walked to the stairs and looked up the stairs and did not see nor hear anything.

He turned and saw Eleanor and Brenda closing the front door and locking it and Jose and Dan running to the other window and Nadine stepping from side to side then running behind Brenda and Eleanor.

Patrick thought, “Bruce.”

He ran up the hall.

When he got to the door Eleanor, Jose and Dan ran out the door.

Patrick walked out the door behind them.

Brenda did not see Patrick standing outside until Bruce passed the window and was talking to the boys.

Brenda walked outside and stood next to Patrick.

Patrick listened and said nothing.

Bruce said, “I ask that one day you forgive and allow me to come back into your lives a better person and a father.”

The boys said nothing.

They stared at Bruce as he passed them and walked to his carriage.

He wanted to carry them back to his parents’ house for the holidays.

Shirley finally walked downstairs and saw her grandparents standing in the door.

She opened the door and walked out behind Patrick and Brenda.

She watched her father walk away with his head down.

Shirley said, “I’m glad this is over before my guests arrive.”

Patrick and Brenda looked at each other.

Shirley turned and walked back in the house.

Patrick and Brenda walked in the house.

Shirley started practicing how she was going to greet her guests.

Patrick and Brenda looked in the parlor and how nice Nadine and Sabrina set up the parlor for Shirley’s tea.

Patrick picked up the teacup and said, “Grandma would pull this out every Christmas for all the holiday. I’m glad Shirley remembered it and is using it.”

Brenda said, “I sent for the doctor. Do you want to go to our bedroom or sit in the sitting room?”

Patrick said, “I want to look at the Christmas tree. I want to sit in the sitting room.”

Brenda and Patrick walked to the sitting room.

Patrick laid on the couch and Brenda put a blanket on him.

Dan felt sorry for Bruce, because he did not care about anything but to make himself appear as right.

Bruce left the house and went to his parent’s house.

Bruce’s mother was sitting in their parlor with his father.

She was talking about Shirley, Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael as if she knew the children.

She was speaking nastily about Shirley and her being deformed and running loose in school.

Bruce’s mother did not know what school Shirley was attending.

She did not know the boys were off in the military academy.

Bruce’s mother said, “I did not want to attend that ground- breaking for that hospital if they did not put our name on it.”

Her husband said, “That’s right. We worked just as hard as they did.”

The young man said, “You work to do what about the hospital?”

Bruce’s father cut his eyes at the young man and did not respond.

Bruce’s mother held her breathe for a minute.

The neighbors were as base as Bruce’s father and mother and knew they were lying on Eleanor and her children.

The neighbor whose nephew asked the question smirked at her nephew.

She brought him to get next to Shirley.

The young man was sitting in the parlor waiting to see this deformed girl who should be happy for anyone to speak to her.

Bruce walked in the house with his head down.

He saw the horses and carriages outside and did not know who was in the house.

Bruce’s mother said, “Bruce we are in the parlor bring the children in here and have them speak to our guests.”

Bruce walked to the parlor and stood in the door.

The mid was standing in the room because she wanted to see these terrible children that Bruce and his family were putting on the straight and narrow.

Bruce looked at the neighbors and knew his mother and father sent for the neighbors to show off his children like they had control over Eleanor’s children.

He knew she had been speaking bad words against his children the way the maid was looking at him and trying to peep to see these terrible children.

His mother said, “Bruce where are my grandchildren? I haven’t seen them in some time. I told them to be quiet and respect my house when they enter.”

Bruce’s father was in full agreement with his wife.

He nodded his head.

The neighbors nodded.

The young man, the nasty neighbors, brought for Shirley stood and peeped in the hallway.

Bruce said, “The children decided they wanted nothing to do with us. Me. They stayed at the house with their hundred servants. And their diplomats’ friends.”

His mother was speechless.

Bruce said, “Father I will be leaving this afternoon. Please take me to the train station. I’ll be down in a minute.”

Bruce walked back downstairs and said, “Happy holidays everyone.”

He and his father rode to the train station in silence.

Bruce boarded the train back to Philadelphia.

The young man that was there to meet Shirley waited for Bruce to leave.

He looked at his aunt and said, “I’m going to meet me friends. I have a good looking girlfriend. No money is worth this.”

Bruce’s mother looked at the young man.

The other neighbors looked at the young man.

His aunt and uncle jumped up and ran out the house behind him.

They continued home and the young man jumped on his horse and rode away.

The boys were on their horses around the front of the house when Shirley’s guests began to arrive.

Steven parked and jumped out the carriage and spoke to the boys and ran into the house.

Steven saw Ginger and Alicia arrive and stood in the entry way.

Jose watched Steven and said, “You don’t date Alice anymore?’

Steven said, “No sir.”

Sabrina went to tell Eleanor Steven was waiting to see her.

Nadine walked through the formal dining room and saw Steven.

She said, “Hi Steven.”

Steven smiled and nodded at Nadine.

She continued to the parlor.

Jose thought, “Damn this boy is brilliant and she is acting like that.”

Eleanor rushed from her office to the foyer.

She greeted Steven.

Steven reached her the blueprints for the hospital.

She grinned at the blueprints and said, “I’ll put these away in safekeeping.”

Jose opened the door for Ginger and Alice.

Ginger and Alice looked at Steven.

Eleanor looked at Ginger and Alice. She knew what her momma and daddy said about their grandparents.

Eleanor smiled and was warm and inviting to them.

Eleanor spoke to the young ladies.

She wanted Shirley to have friends.

Steven smiled and nodded at Ginger and Alice.

Shirley rushed out the parlor.

She greeted Ginger and Alice and they started screaming.

Jose walked out the door.

Eleanor closed her eyes.

Steven saw Patrick and Brenda in the sitting room.

He told Eleanor, “Tell your parents I said hello. Thank you for the opportunities you all have given me.”

Eleanor looked back and saw her parents in the sitting room.

Eleanor said, “Momma sent for the doctor for daddy. I’ll be glad when you finish medical school.”

Steven grinned.

Then the door open and the doctor walked in.

He looked at Eleanor and Steven and said, “I’m here to see Mr. Stith.”

Eleanor said, “Yes doctor. You made it quickly.”

The doctor said, “I was nearly ran off the road twice.”

Steven said, “Sir I do apologize but the soldiers rode out the headquarters and surrounded the governor. I have never been that scared and I sped up.”

The doctor looked at Steven and turned to Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Steven and said, “Thank you.”

Steven bowed and walked out the house.

The boys were riding out the yard.

They told Jose to tell their mother they were going riding and would be back by dinner.

Jose immediately stepped in the house.

He saw Eleanor walking with the doctor to the sitting room.

Dan walked around the house and entered through the kitchen.

Emilou watched Thomas as the boys rode out the yard.

Sarah said to Alicia, “Look at Emilou.”

Alicia smiled and shook her head.

Emilou said, “I like Thomas.”

Sarah and Alicia were watching the boys as they thundered out the yard.

Sarah said, “Which one is Thomas.”

Steven heard Sarah talk about Thomas and he ran off the porch.

Jose said the four rode out the yard.

He breathed and said, “God. They gonna tell me what they are going to do.”

Steven said, “No. She is only eight.”

They all laughed.

Sarah said, “Come on Alicia.”

Alicia shook her head for no.

Sarah said, “But you look so pretty and festive.”

Emilou said, “Well I’ll come.”

Steven said, “You stay.”

Jose was watching the young ladies and that Emilou.

A carriage pulled up and Mary’s father and mother jumped out and walked Mary to the house.

John Jr sat in the carriage and watched the Stith boys ride wild out the yard.

He was impressed with the boys.

Mary’s father married during the summer.

He married a local school teacher who attended their church.

They greeted Steven and Alicia and Sarah.

They all spoke.

Mary turned thirteen and considered herself a big girl.

She looked at Alicia and Sarah and how pretty they looked and said, “Come on.”

Her parents laughed.

They wanted to speak to Eleanor.

They had not seen her since Joseph passed.

Jose opened the door and greeted them.

Alice rode up.

She rode in her carriage.

She saw Alicia and Sarah and jumped out the carriage and they screamed.

Jose stepped back in the house.

Mary’s father and mother looked at Jose and laughed.

Mary’s father really like Joseph.

He thought he, Joseph and the Gibson’s son-in-law could be friends.

Eleanor walked out the sitting room and saw company standing in the entry way.

Shirley ran out in front of her mother and saw Mary.

Shirley screamed.

Mary screamed.

Mary’s Father and mother looked at Jose.

Jose did not show any feelings.

They smiled at Jose.

Eleanor closed her eyes.

She stopped and spoke to Mary.

Eleanor said, “My god you have grown.”

Shirley said, “Where is Sarah and Alicia?”

Eleanor knew Alicia would not be coming.

She said, “Jose is there anyone else outside?”

Jose did not look at Eleanor and said, “Yes.”

Eleanor walked to the entrance.

She greeted Mary’s father and his new wife.

Eleanor was pleasant with them.

The new wife looked and said, “I heard this place was palatial. Words cannot describe it.”

Her husband said, “We had Christmas brunch here last year.”

His wife said, “Oh my God.”

He said, “Not this year?”

Jose said, “No.”

Everyone turned and looked at Jose.

Eleanor said, “We have been busy this month and had not chosen a brunch for this year.”

They looked at Jose.

Jose continued to stare outside at Steven, who was sitting in the carriage and Emilou behind him.

John said, “I wanted to see you Eleanor, I don’t know how to say it.”

Eleanor knew what he wanted to say.

Brenda was in the sitting room with Patrick and the doctor and they heard the screaming teenagers.

Brenda walked out the sitting room to go to the parlor and saw people standing in the foyer.

John said, “That’s the grand dame herself, Mrs. Stith. I believe the teenagers screams have caused her to come out.”

Eleanor laughed.

She said, “Momma.”

Brenda knew that meant not to go into the parlor and not to say anything to the teen guests.

John said, “Eleanor I am sorry for the lost of Joseph. He was a bird. I liked him. I did want us to be friends along with the Gibson’s-son-in- law.”

Brenda walked up and heard John.

She looked at he and his wife.

Brenda touched Eleanor’s back.

Eleanor said, “John Joseph helped me to live through his untimely death. I found a letter he hid for me for Christmas yesterday. It made me laugh.”

Brenda grinned.

John said, “Mrs. Stith, this is my new wife. Lorretta. She is a local schoolteacher and attend the same church with us.”

Brenda reached and shook her hands.

Lorretta said, “I am so please to meet you.”

She looked around and said, “Your home is beautiful.”

Brenda work hard on the house and she smiled.

Brenda looked at John and said, “We were not here, but your mother and father told us of your good news.”

John said, “It was a long, hard and cold road.”

He was quiet for a moment.

His new wife looked at him.

John said, “No disrespect to you Lorretta. The last time me and my wife were out for the holidays were here for Christmas brunch.”

John held his head down and cried.

Lorretta did not know what to do.

Eleanor touched John’s arm.

Brenda said, “John.”

She hugged him.

Jose looked at the new wife.

She was shocked and her mouth had dropped opened.

He and Brenda stepped in the formal dining room.

Eleanor watched them step away.

Jose watched them step away.

Lorretta said, “What do I do?’

Eleanor said, “I don’t know.”

Loretta looked at Jose.

Jose looked at Lorretta.

They heard Alicia, Sarah and Mary scream.

Eleanor said, “Jose tell them to come in the house.”

Jose said, “Why?”

Eleanor turned and looked at Jose.

Loretta laughed.

She said, “Was that proper. When my husband is grieving over his wife and mother of his children.”

Jose did not move.

Eleanor was staring at Jose.

Eleanor said, “One thing I have learned over the past year is Life happens. We just have to love those who are with us while they are here.”

Lorretta peeped in the formal dining and pointed and said, “Well said. Can I peek?”

Eleanor looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Lorraine.”

Loretta said, “No Lorretta.”

Eleanor said, “Come.”

They walked in the formal dining room and saw Brenda and John sitting towards the end of the table and Brenda had her back to the door.

Eleanor knew that meant not to disrupt her.

John hand his hands in his lap and was crying.

Lorretta yelled, “God almighty!”

Brenda looked back.

John said, “Excuse her Mrs. Stith she is kind of ignorant. She has never seen anything like this.”

Brenda said, “I take great pride in this dining room.”

Eleanor grabbed Lorretta by her hand and pulled her out of the dining room.

Lorretta said, “That was better than a man.”

Jose shook his head and said, “Damn another Lorraine.”

Eleanor was shocked and said, “Jose.”

Jose walked out the front door and stood on the porch and stared at the young women.

Brenda and John were waking out the formal dining room.

She saw Sarah and Mary walking to the house and Alicia getting into the carriage.

She and John walked into the foyer.

Brenda walked outside and waved Steven down.

Steven stopped.

Jose stood to hear what Brenda was going to say.

Brenda said, “You three come in the house.”

They looked at Brenda and jumped out the carriage.

Brenda was standing in the foyer talking to John and Loretta.

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Steven, Alicia and Emilou walked in the house.

Brenda was facing the door when they walked in.

Brenda taught Eleanor to face the door.

Brenda said, “My God you three look very nice.”

Emilou said, “Thank you. Can I go to the tea? I want everyone to see my holiday outfit.”

Steven and Alicia said, “No Emilou.”

Eleanor and Brenda said, “Shirley.”

Jose said, “Ug Huh.”

Eleanor said, “Shirley thinks, eat and sleep her hair, her nails, her shoes and dresses.”

Emilou said, “I like her.”

Brenda and Eleanor laughed.

Emilou said, “You know what else I like?”

Alicia and Steven looked nervously at Emilou.

Steven said, “Nothing.”

Emilou looked at Steven.

Alicia was shaking her head for Emilou to be quiet.

Eleanor looked at them.

Brenda watched Emilou and said, “What dear?”

Emilou leaned towards Brenda and said, “Thomas.”

Brenda looked at Emilou to understand what she said.

Steven turned his back in embarrassment.

Alicia was so ashamed she turned red.

Eleanor looked at Steven and Alicia.

Jose turned around to see what was going to happen.

Brenda hollered out in laughter.

Eleanor grinned.

Alicia had her face covered.

John and Lorretta were grinning.

Eleanor leaned to Emilou and said, “When did start liking Thomas?’

Emilou said, “At the wedding I was in here and when they had the fireworks outside. He gave a sparkle.”

Alicia turned all the way around and had her back to Emilou.

Brenda said, “Steven and Alicia don’t do that to her.”

Jose said, “The gangster.”

John and Lorretta looked at Jose.

Eleanor cut her eyes at Jose and said, “Jose, I told you about talking about my children.”

Jose looked at Eleanor and turned his head.

Eleanor looked at Jose and wanted to jump him but forgot they had company.

Eleanor said, “Mother have you re-considered a Christmas Eve brunch?”

Jose jerked his head a round and looked at Eleanor.

Brenda was still enthused by Emilou.”

John and Lorretta watched Jose.

Brenda said, “Eleanor that would be too much, too quickly for the staff.”

Jose sly way stuck his tongue out at Eleanor.

John and Lorretta saw Jose and chuckled.

John said, “We have to go. John Jr is out in the carriage. We have to go to the capitol and get a Christmas tree. I know we are late.”

Jose said, “There are plenty of trees in the back near the Gibson’s line.”

John looked and said, “You’re serious?”

Jose turned his head.

Brenda was still laughing at the going on nine Emilou.

John looked at Brenda and said, “Ma am.”

Brenda looked at John and said, “You can have a tree if you want.”

John was giddy.

He said, “I use to go into the woods with dad at Christmas time and cut down our tree. I’m going to take them home and change and come back. When I finish cutting down the tree then the tea party should be over.”

Lorretta said, “I want to stay.”

Jose opened the door.

Everyone looked at Jose.

Steven and Alicia were their first persons out.

Steven was calling Emilou while they were running to the carriage.

Lorretta and John looked at Jose and slowly walked to the door.

Emilou stood in the door with her mouth poked out.

Shirley ran out the parlor to see who else was there.

She saw Alicia running to the carriage and Emilou in the doorway.

Shirley was grinning and having a great time with her friends.

She grabbed Emilou by her shoulders and peeped in her face and said, “Thank you for coming Emilou.”

Shirley said, “Where is Alicia going?”

Emilou said, “I made her and Steven upset when I told Miss Brenda I like Thomas.”

Shirley stared at Emilou and walked outside to the carriage.

Eleanor and Brenda quietly walked to the front porch.

Shirley yelled, “Alicia, get out of this carriage and come in here. You don’t let people run you away. You look too pretty for that.”

Eleanor said, “I knew it had to do with clothes.”

Shirley grabbed Alicia by the hand and she and Emilou pulled her in the house.

Steven said, “I’ll go and but the Christmas tree.”

John yelled, “I’m going in the back and cut our tree down.”

Steven looked at John.

He turned and looked at Brenda and Eleanor they waved and went into the house.

John pulled out the yard and sped home.

Steven was happy.

He and his father would go into the woods every Christmas and cut down their Christmas tree.

Steven hurried home and changed his clothes and got his wagon.

Brenda whispered to Eleanor, “Walk up. I want to see Nadine’s face.”

They sped up to the parlor.

Jose said, “Look at them. They want to see something.”

He waited for the doctor in the family dining room.

The doctor opened the sitting room door.

Brenda and Eleanor were standing in the parlor door laughing at the teenage girls.

Nadine went to get two more teacups.

Ginger and Alice looked at Alicia and Emilou and tried to smile.

Emilou turned her head.

Brenda looked at Emilou and said to Eleanor, “Your daughter-in-law.”

Eleanor was about to say something as she looked back and saw the doctor and Patrick walking by the parlor.

Brenda turned and looked at Patrick and walked behind the doctor.

Eleanor closed the parlor door just in time before they started screaming again.

The doctor shook his head and walked on to the door.

Jose stood and waited.

The doctor walked to the door.

Jose opened the door.

Jose closed the door back.

He looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked around and said, “Where are my boys?”

Jose said, “They told me to tell you they are gone riding and will be back for dinner.”

Patrick said, “Who is with them?”

Nobody said anything.

Patrick said, “So they fell grown now since they stood up to Bruce.”

Brenda said, “John and his new wife stopped by and brought Mary to Shirley’s tea party.”

Patrick looked at Brenda and said, “Yes.”

Jose turned and looked at Patrick.

Patrick looked at Jose.

Brenda said, “He had a moment because the last holiday he had with Sue was when they were here for Christmas brunch.”

Patrick said, “No Christmas brunch this year.”

Jose exhaled.

Eleanor said, “Guess what?”

Brenda and Patrick looked at Eleanor.

She said, “Steven said, a lot of soldiers surrounded the governor from the headquarters.”

Patrick thought and looked at Brenda,

He said, “The soldiers have another way to get to the small city. They will not catch the train.”

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Remember. When we were looking for Thomas and Michael the soldiers were in the back of the small city.”

Eleanor looked and said, “Right.”

Patrick said, “If they ride all day and night. They will be there sometime tomorrow.”

Eleanor said, “Where is the governor going to vacation?”

Jose said, “There.”

They turned and looked at Jose.

Brenda said, “How do you know that?”

Jose said, “When he was here. He told my mother he did not need a Christmas tree nor lights because he will be staring at stars all night long.”

Patrick nodded his head.

Jose said, “Thank you for inviting my parents to the reception and the dinner. I should have told you they love dressing up and going out. That’s why they attended both functions.”

Patrick said, “It was good to get to know your parents.”

Brenda said, “EEH.”

Jose looked at Brenda.

Eleanor looked at Brenda and cut her eyes at Jose.

Jose said, “That’s going to be something if the mob beat the governor and the military there.”

Eleanor said, “The mob won’t win. Why don’t God do something?”

Jose nodded his head in agreement with Eleanor.”

Patrick said, “HE has. HE sent the governor and the military there.”

Eleanor said, “I’m talking about getting rid of them forever. I have boys that I don’t want to grow up scared momma and daddy.”

Brenda said, “Then don’t teach them fear.”

Brenda tuned and looked at Jose, “The liquor store.”

Eleanor said, “The train leaves at three pm. I can go and see how the governor is packed and see how many soldiers are with him.”

She looked at Jose and said, “Come on Jose.”

Jose smirked his lips and said, “Mr. Patrick are you alright? Do you need something?”

Patrick said, “I’m ok. I won’t die anytime soon. I felt bad because I was betrayed not by the one I thought.”

Eleanor said, “I’ll fire him daddy.”

Patrick said, “Hold on Eleanor. We have to let the governor use him to get to the head of the mob or near head of the mob. You see how quickly they organized after that man died in Washington DC.”

Brenda said, “I want to know who in y house has been telling Bruce that Eleanor doesn’t read his letters and messages.”

Eleanor said, “What?”

Jose said, “What?”

Brenda said, “That is what Dr. Woodson said, in the telegram I retrieved when I put Patrick in the sitting room.”

Eleanor said, “Momma and daddy I need you to sign Lorraine’s release papers and send them to Ryan. We can put them on the train tomorrow and Courier them to Ryan by Friday. We have to get a nurse to ride with her home.”

Brenda said, “Monica wants to be in Philadelphia with her new beau. Meredith has just had her baby and the French do Christmas big. I know they will be celebrating big.”

Patrick said, “I like that for Felipe. He waited fifteen years to the month his first wife and baby died and then GOD turned around and gave him another wife and another baby. That is why we pray Eleanor.”

Jose nodded his head in agreement.

Brenda said, “Vivienne is there with that bad Sally. Leon is there and Beverly and Al. We have a big group there. Jose has all the workers claimed their Holiday meats?”

Jose said, “Yeap. I believe Mike and John want to sneak to the small city along with Da to stake out territory. I can get a better count when I get back here. Why?”

Brenda said, “Since Mabel disappeared. Beverly has no help. Maybe we can send them some meats.”

Eleanor said, “And the soldiers out there during Christmas.”

Jose said, “They may want sweets.”

Patrick said, “Lets get this busy week started by going to the liquor store and you being nosey Eleanor.”

Patrick said “We have nearly a week. What about Christmas dinner? Who is coming? Is Gen coming?”

Brenda grinned and said, “I was happy to see Joe and Peggy at the ground- breaking ceremony and at the reception.”

Patrick laughed.

Brenda said, “They looked good.”

Patrick said, “I want to see Bryce and Stephen this holiday. They were here for the Fourth and Thanksgiving. We are getting old and should see each other as often as we can. We all are retired and in the same town.”

Eleanor said, “While I am being nosey, we can go by and checked on both of them and extend your invitation to Christmas dinner.”

Brenda said, “Come Patrick and write them an invite while Eleanor and Jose are getting ready to leave.”

Patrick and Brenda walked pass the parlor.

Jose looked at the parlor.

Eleanor looked at him.

Jose opened the parlor door and particularly looked at Nadine.

Ginger and Alice were talking to Alicia.

Emilou was talking to Shirley.

Eleanor said, “You know momma. Wouldn’t that be funny if Emilou marries Thomas.”

Jose said, “Huh.”

Eleanor hit at Jose and he ducked and walked through the billiards room to his room.

He picked up his scarf, two hats, coat and gloves.

Brenda said, “I thought about she and Michael.”

Patrick said, “Who are yall talking about those children?”

Brenda laughed.

Patrick said, “I’m still praying over Shirley and Skip.”

Eleanor said, “Huh.”

Brenda and Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Brenda said, “Eleanor I know Skip is a soldier with no money and no savings and what we know no family but his son. Shirley has money to take care of herself. She has a house she has to re-model and she will love doing that. She has heirloom furniture and dishes. She has two business and a third with her brothers. Why do you think GOD blessed her. Because HE prepared a man that was honest and decent who maybe a hard worker and do what HE wants him to do and for Shirley to still have a nice life. Think on that Eleanor.”

Patrick went into the writing room and sat.

Brenda sat next to him.

He wrote an invitation to Stephen and Bryce.

He sealed them and walked out the room as Eleanor had her scarf, hat, coat and gloves on.

Eleanor saw her parents standing in the hall and her daddy with the invitations in his hand.

She thought, “That was quick.”

She walked and took the invitations.

She and Jose walked out the back door.

Brenda looked around the kitchen.

Brenda looked at Thomas and said, “Thomas what are you cooking for dinner?

Thomas said, A lot of lamb was left. So I ground it up and mixed it with the little ground beef and made meatballs and spaghetti and garlic bread for dinner.”

Patrick was standing with his back against the wall and said, “That smells great.”

Thomas grinned.

He said, “How would the ground lab tase by itself in a meatball?

Thomas said, “Very mild.”

Patrick said, “Do you have any lamb left?”

Thomas opened the drawer and said, a fistful.

Patrick said, “Ground that up and make meatballs and put them to the side with the tomato sauce.

Thomas looked and thought he said, “Yes sir.”

Thomas started looking at his spices.

Brenda was watching Thomas select the spices.

Brenda did not interfere with the cooks and their recipes.

Brenda said, “How many cakes will serve a hundred people?”

Patrick looked at Brenda and he thought, “Oh she is asking for the soldiers.”

Thomas said, ”About ten cakes.”

Brenda said, “How long will it take to bake those number of cakes?”

Thomas said, “About three days.”

Jose and Eleanor made it to town.

Eleanor went to the office and there was no letters nor telegram.

She stopped and spoke with sheriff about his marriage in a few days.

They laughed.

She went by the jewelry shop and nearly everything was sold.

She stopped by Shirley’s dress shop and there were only a few pieces left.

Eleanor told the workers, Selma and Wendy, when the last item is sold to close the shop for the season and go home and celebrate the holidays.

They will figure out everything else.

Jose put the liquor in the carriage.

They rode to Bryce’s rooming house and visited him for a minute.

Bryce read Patrick’s invite and hollered.

Eleanor said, “What? Mr. Bryce?”

Bryce turned the invitation around to show Eleanor and Jose.

Patrick wrote ‘Christmas dinner?’.

Eleanor tried to grin.

Bryce said, “I don’t know Miss Eleanor. Just tell him to have an extra plate in case I come.”

Eleanor said, “Ok.”

Jose went to Stephen and gave him his invitation.

Stephen laughed.

He said, “I don’t think so. Is Monica back?”

Jose looked at Stephen.

Eleanor said, “No sir. She is still in Philadelphia.”

Jose and Eleanor left Stephen and Jose said, “Is that funny that they don’t want to come to Christmas dinner. Neither one said, they would be visiting the other one or they will be dining somewhere else.”

Eleanor said, “Jose so much is going on.”

Jose said, “There’s the governor and his party.”

Eleanor waved at the governor and kept going.

Jose said, “Didn’t I tell you.”

Eleanor was peeping and trying to count at the same time.

She said, “He has a lot of tents.”

They saw Steven in front of them with his wagon.

Jose said, “I know Steven does not know how to cut down a Christmas tree and trim it and the base. Look at him.”

Eleanor said, “I want to see Denise and Robert and how things are going especially for Sunday.”

Jose pulled into the Stith’s Rest stop.

They visited Robert and Denise for about a half of hour and left and went home.

Jose was speeding.

He wanted to help Steven.

Eleanor saw some riders to her left.

She smiled and said, “They are having a good time. Where are they going?”

Jose said, “They are following Percy there is no telling.”

Eleanor said, “What?’

She started looking hard and said, “Are those my boys?”

Jose said, “Whose else?”

Jose kept speeding and let Eleanor out the carriage around the back and caught John and Steven.

He went into the woods with them and they found perfect trees.

Jose helped them cut the trees and trim them.

They came out the woods with the trees and put them in the wagons.

Steven was so happy.

He drove around the front of the house and waited for Emilou and Alicia.

Shirley said, “Alicia do you know any certified nurses?”

Alicia said, “I know a few that live in the capitol.”

Shirley said, “I need to hire about six to be here around the clock for Lorraine next week. How do I contact them?”

Alicia said, “I can go into the capitol tomorrow and ask them.”

Shirley said, “I want to go with you to cut down on the time. What time do you want to leave?”

Alicia said, “Nine am.”

Emilou said, “That’s good. We can have lunch at the restaurant I like.”

Shirley and Alicia laughed.

Shirley said, “meet me by the new military headquarters.”

Eleanor walked in the house and went to her office.

She started going over her schedule for the next month.

She was glad that her schedule showed some slow days.

She thought about John and his new wife.

She thought, “I need to aske momma and daddy.”

She walked through the house and saw Shirley standing in the door telling her guess bye.

Eleanor heard the loud Emilou playing and running to the wagon with Steven.

Eleanor thought, “I am glad God made a way for them instead of Nadine.”

Mary ran to the wagon with John.

They pulled out and sped home to decorate their tree.

Emilou kept looking at the Christmas tree.

Steven was watching Emilou and looked back at her.

He said, “What is it Emilou?’

Emilou said, “Where is that going? On the porch?”

Steven looked at her. He did not understand what she was saying.

Steven said, “Alicia, how did it go with Alice and Ginger?”

Alicia told Steven everything that was said.

Ginger and Alice were standing and talking to Sarah and Mary.

Shirley was standing with her arms folded for warmth.

Jose said, “Move Shirley and go inside the house. You get sick, nobody is going to ride during the holidays to take you to Dr. Woodson.”

Shirley looked at Jose and walked in the sitting room with Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor.

She looked at the parlor and Nadine and Sabrina were cleaning it up.

Shirley said, “Alicia is going with us tomorrow morning in the capitol to talk to some nurses about being here with Lorraine, beginning next week.”

Eleanor said, “We who?”

Shirley was grinning and sat in the sofa chair,

Jose was walking down the hall.

Shirley said, “Jose, the girls are gone?”

Jose looked at her.

Eleanor looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Yes Shirley. The girls are gone. I walked from the door and locked the door and barred it.”

Patrick and Brenda looked at Jose.

Shirley said, “Thank you Jose. I know you are being smart.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley and said, Shirley?”

Shirley said, “Momma, grandma told me to hire nurses for twenty four hours care for Lorraine.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley and said, ”Shirley, momma told you to hire the nurses. Momma, trust you. She trust your opinion…”

Shirley turned and looked in the face of her loving grandma.

Brenda looked in Shirley’s eyes.

Eleanor continued, “She knows you have been around medical staff and nurses all of your life. You are the best person to judge whether a nurse is right for Lorraine. We are not telling you to be perfect. We all make mistakes every day. We are telling you not to let fear paralyze you. Fear causes you not to trust your own decisions. You saw today. Daddy had a problem, we stepped in and took over. Even Michael and Thomas. Don’t be afraid of fear. Don’t let fear rule over your life. You will never live if fear rule over you.”

Shirley stared at Brenda.

Patrick looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “Grandma, you trust me?”

Brenda said, “Yes.”

Shirley sat in the sofa chair cried.

She boohooed.

Nadine and Jose had slipped on the other side of the Christmas tree.

They listened to the family conversations and heard Shirley cry.

Nadine and Jose filled their teacups with scotch.

They tipped back down the hall and through the formal dining room.

They were about to go into the kitchen when they heard hard knocking on the front door.

Nadine stopped and put her teacup on the table.

Jose frowned and he walked through the formal dining room and put his full teacup on the formal table.

He peeped out the window and walked to the door.

Nadine walked up to hear what was being said.

The messenger said, “Royal pouch for Eleanor Stith Simmons.”

Jose stood for a minute and wondered.

He said, “Come in.”

The messenger stepped in the door and Jose closed the door.

The messenger looked and saw Nadine watching him.

Nadine was wondering what was going on.

Jose walked down the hall to the sitting room.

The messenger was turning around in the middle of the floor looking at the tree and all the decorations.

The boys were riding into the yard, screaming and yelling.

Nadine stepped back and peeped and saw the boys.

She turned and looked at messenger.

The messenger looked at Nadine and pointed.

Nadine nodded her head.

The messenger walked to the plate of decorated cookies that Peter bake every day and place in the hallway.

Eleanor walked through the hallway and take the cookies back to the kitchen.

She said, “My daddy and boys will get sick from eating sugar every day.”

Jose walked in the sitting room and looked at Shirley boohooing.

He said, “There is a diplomatic messenger here for Shirley.”

Everybody looked at Jose.

Patrick looked at Shirley and said, “Shirley clean your face and walked to the door. There is a diplomatic messenger for you.”

Eleanor was thinking and said, “It might be something from Claressa and Alvin.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor and said, “Not a diplomatic pouch Eleanor. That is for government business only.”

The boys were running and playing in the house.

They ran into the sitting room.

Jose turned up his nose and said, “I’ll have your bath water ready in a few minutes.”

Eleanor said, “Thank you Jose.”

Patrick looked at Shirley and walked over to her and raised her up.

Brenda gave her a handkerchief to clean her face.

They walked with her to the front door.

The messenger was on his second cookie.

When he turned around he saw Patrick, Shirley, Eleanor and Brenda looking at him.

The boys ran through the hall up to the door.

They grabbed a cookie and stood and looked at the young man.

Bruce walked to him and said, “Hello. Who are you?’

Eleanor peeped around at Bruce.

The messenger said, “I am Erick Johnson. I worked for the embassy in New York.”

He said, “Who Is Eleanor Stith Simmons?”

Eleanor said, “I am. I thought you wanted Shirley.”

The messenger said, “I have something for her also.”

Michael said, “What are you doing?”

The messenger said, “You all have to sign what I am taking out this pouch.”

Thomas said, “Which is?”

The messenger did not respond.

He took out a lot of papers.

Patrick said, “Sir come to the parlor.”

Patrick waved to the parlor.

Everyone walked to the parlor.

Nadine looked back at her teacup.

She decided to follow them to the parlor.

Jose followed Nadine.

Jose and Nadine stood at the door.

The messenger stood and read the letter from his ambassador to Shirley and the one to Eleanor.

He reached the letters to Shirley and Eleanor.

Patrick was listening.

Brenda was baffled and confused.

Jose looked at Nadine.

Nadine shrugged her shoulders with a question mark at Jose.

Bruce reached for Eleanor’s letter and said, “May I see that letter mother. I am going to be an ambassador.”

Bruce read the letter and looked at the messenger.

The messenger looked at Bruce.

He said, “You understand what you read?”

Bruce swallowed and said, “Yes.”

Eleanor looked at Bruce.

She said, “Bruce.”

Bruce turned and looked at Eleanor and fell on her neck and hugged her and cried.

Eleanor hugged Bruce and wiped his face.

Bruce fell into Eleanor’s lap.

Bruce was breathing hard.

Jose and Nadine looked.

Bruce said, “Joseph adopted all of us last year. We are his children.”

Thomas said, “We always had Joseph as our daddy.”

Brenda slyly touched Patrick’s hand.

Shirley was frozen and she read her letter again.

Shirley looked at them messenger and said, “Is that true what Bruce just said.”

The messenger said, “What who said?”

Shirley looked at the messenger and pointed at Bruce.

The messenger said, “Yes. Shirley, Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael were legally adopted by Joseph the Count last year. He started the papers In New York and finished the papers in his country with a Dr. Bradley Woodson as his witness.”

Patrick said, “He kept that secret.”

Eleanor looked at Patrick.

Shirley was nervous and shaking and pointed her letter and said, “Are you telling me I am royal?”

Nadine said, “What the hell! We can’t handle her now.”

Jose looked at Nadine and was shocked.

They both turned and looked back at Shirley.

Shirley jumped up and yelled at the messenger, “I am a countess.”

The messenger looked at Shirley and said, “Yes. And the boys are counts.”

Shirley could hardly breathe

The messenger said, “You my dear lady is not only a countess but a high countess.”

Shirley was about to pop.

Michael was laying on the back of the sofa behind Patrick and Brenda with his face in his right hand eating his cookie and said, “So what? She is still a heifer.”

Thomas said, “We are in America.”

The messenger said, “But wherever you go in the world you get priority.”

Michael said, “We get priority anyway because of our money.”

The messenger said, “You can go places where money can’t buy.”

Nadine was watching Shirley.

Shirley said, “Sir.”

The messenger said, “Because you are the only female child the count paid extra money for you to have an additional title.”

Eleanor watched Shirley, as she swelled from what Joseph with his last bit of money.

Shirley said, “Which is?”

Brenda and Patrick were looking at the spoiled Shirley.

The messenger said, “He paid dearly. You are a high countess. You could not be a princess because he was not on that level. Because of Count Joseph you are on the level of a royal princess.”

Michael said, “And?”

The messenger said, “She gets the respect of a bow from the other royals whenever she enters any place they are.”

Shirley ran out the parlor screaming.

Jose yelled, “Ain’t nobody taking you to Dr. Woodson!!!”

The messenger turned and looked at Jose like he was a heathen.

Jose looked at the messenger like he was a heathen.

Then Jose looked at Nadine like who is he looking at.

Nadine was watching the messenger and said to Jose, “I can beat him.”

The messenger said, “She is a high countess. Sir. Show her your respect.”

Michael was biting his cookie and said, “Not her.”

Jose stared at the messenger and said, “Those sound like fighting words.”

Patrick and Brenda were shocked at Joseph.

The workers were running through the house to find out what was wrong with Shirley.

Mellissa ran into the parlor and said, “What is wrong with Shirley?”

Nadine said, “She is a royal countess.”

Mellissa said, “What?”

The messenger said, “She is a high countess.”

Melissa said, “Damn. We almost have to beat her ass to get her to do stuff. Now we won’t be able to get her to do anything.”

Mellissa was turning to walk away from the door.

The messenger gasped.

Mellissa stopped and looked at the messenger and said, “You need your ass beat too.”

Jose said, “I’m going to do that.”

Patrick said, “Jose.”

He gave Jose a hard look.

Jose looked at Patrick.

Jose said, “Is he finished? I need to show him.”

The messenger said, “Show me what?”

Jose said, “The door.”

Nadine said, “The way it is done in America.”

The messenger turned and looked at Eleanor and pulled out his diplomatic pen.

He had everyone signed their declaration and adoption papers.

He looked at Nadine and said, “Go and tell the Countess she has to sign the papers if she doesn’t she will not be legal.”

Nadine turned and shrugged and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor nodded.

Nadine walked out the parlor.

Peter was standing and looking at the Christmas tree.

Nadine did not want a Christmas tree.

Pete saw the scotch filled teacups in the formal dining room and knew one of them was Nadine’s.

He told her to stop drinking so much.

Nadine walked down the hall and yelled and pointed.

She said, “Shirley that man said, if you don’t sign the papers you won’t be a countess.”

Nadine moved back.

Shirley came running up the hall into the foyer.

She ran into the parlor and was trying to catch her breath.

She signed the papers.

The messenger put the papers in his bag.

Shirley said, “I need a copy of my papers.”

The messenger said, “You will receive the official papers with the seal and certificate, usually in six months.”

Shirley yelled, “Six months!”

The messenger jumped.

Michael said, “I told you she was a heifer. Now she is a high countess heifer.”

The messenger said, “Countess be patient. You are royal now and must show patience.”

Shirley took a deep breathe.

Eleanor was rolling her eyes at Shirley.

The messenger was putting everything in his bags.

He said, “There is a big ceremony planned in New York either this spring or the beginning of the summer to introduce you to the other royals in America. It really is a big ball.”

Patrick and Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor was listening to the messenger.

The messenger said, “Dear sir. You who want to be an ambassador you will meet other young ones that being trained to be ambassadors.”

Bruce sat up.

Eleanor looked at Bruce.

The messenger was putting everything up and said, “The ball maybe delayed until the summer. There are rumors that most of Europe young royals will be coming to the ball. I can’t wait. I can’t believe the security they have to have.”

The messenger was looking around for his pen.

Thomas had the pen.

The messenger reached for the pen.

Thomas said, “No. I am a count and out rule you.”

Patrick said, “Thomas!”

Patrick said, “One more thing. I will whip you all asses and tear up those damn papers and you will be here with no royal titles and sore asses.”

Shirley sat in the chair by the door.

Thomas quickly gave the messenger the pen.

Eleanor looked at Thomas.

She said, “Thomas I never would have believed you would act this way.”

Thomas looked at Eleanor in her eyes.

He said, “I’m sorry momma.”

Brenda said, “Dr. Woodson kept this a secret.”

Eleanor said, “I knew Joseph started the process. I thought it would be completed when we married.”

The messenger reached in his coat pocket and gave each a letter from Joseph.

The messenger reached, Eleanor, Patrick, Brenda, Percy, Bruce, Thomas, Michael and Shirley a letter.

Percy said, “Momma can we open it.”

Eleanor smiled and said, “Yes.”

The messenger said, “I have to leave. I have to catch the train that will leave in the morning. For some reason the train got here today after one. So I could not do this business. At this time of evening.”

Brenda said, “Sir I don’t believe there are no rooms in town.”

Jose smirked his mouth and looked at Nadine.

The messenger said, “Will I have to stay at the train station.”

Jose nodded his head for yes.

Patrick said, “Sir, you will not stay at the train station. You will stay here. We have more than thirty bedrooms.”

Jose looked at Nadine and said, “All of this because there was no room in the inn.”

Nadine nearly hollered.

She turned her head and held her stomach.

Brenda rolled her eyes at Jose.

Patrick looked at Jose.

He said, “Jose see to our guess.”

Patrick looked at the messenger and said, “Your transportation sir?”

The messenger looked back and pointed.

He said, “I used the transport from the train station.”

Patrick and Brenda looked at the messenger.

Eleanor put Bruce on the sofa and walked to the front door.

She saw the man she told to leave the coal distribution.

The man looked at Eleanor.

Patrick and the messenger walked to the door.

Patrick said, “Sir do you have any bags?

The messenger said, “One sir.”

Patrick said, “Get and check before he leaves and pay him. I will reimburse you.”

The messenger said, “Problem sir.”

Patrick said, “We own the trains and we have not allowed anyone on our property.”

The messenger walked to the wagon and got his bag and checked it.

He paid the man.

The man turned the wagon around and rode away.

Eleanor said, “Mob.”

The messenger, Eleanor and Patrick walked in the house.

The messenger looked at the Christmas decorations and smiled.

He said, “Count Joseph had his valet Earle and his stableman Gary. Have you heard from either of them.”

Jose pointed and said, “Gary is out in the barn.”

Patrick stopped by Jose and slowly looked at him in his face.

Jose said, “Excuse me.”

Patrick said, “Jose see if Gary is at home if he is invite him to dinner in a hour if he wants for William.”

Jose said, “You four go upstairs to the bathroom. I’ll be up there to put the hot water in your tubs.”

Nadine looked around the parlor.

She and Sabrina cleaned the parlor immediately after the tea party.

She smiled when she thought about Emilou and Alicia were dressed and acted.

Jose ran into the kitchen and said, “Thomas, two more for dinner.”

Jose put on his scarf and coat and ran to Gary and knocked on the door.

Gary ran and opened the door.

and said, “Do you know a William from yall embassy.?”

Gary stood for a minute and thought.

He said, “Yes. He helped Joseph with some kind of papers that took a lot of time. Why?”

Jose said, “He is here and Patrick invited him to spend the night and for you to come to dinner in a hour to talk with the man.”

Gary said, “Alright.”

Jose said, was freezing and said, “What’s wrong with you? What are you doing.”

Jose started peeping tin the re-modeled shed.

Gary said, “I saw you and the others pass with trees. I went out and chopped down a small tree and was making the paper rings like Denise has on the tree at the Rest stop.”

Jose said, “Let me see.”

Gary opened the screen door.

Jose walked in and he could smell the pine scent.

He looked at the tree and saw the paper decorations.

He said, “Jose that is a very nice tree.”

Jose turned and walked out the re-modeled shed.

He ran to the house and upstairs.

He poured warm bath water for the four tubs.

The boys ran in the bathroom and took baths.

Eleanor was getting their clothes together for the evening.

Jose went downstairs and took the gin out of the carriage and brought it into the house.

He place it in the liquor cabinet.

H walked through the house.

And went to the front door and locked the door and put the bar across it.

He walked through the formal dining room and picked up his scotch teacup and he stood and dark the scotch.

He eased in the kitchen.

He saw Maureen with her coat on and hat.

Thomas looked at her.

Jose said, “Maureen where are you going? You are late. Where is your ride? Who are you riding home with?”

Maureen said, “I guess they forgot.”

Jose said, “Where were you Maureen that everybody left you?’

Maureen said, “I had a bad headache and when I woke everybody was gone.”

Thomas turned his head.

Dan said, “I’ll take her home. This week Jose if I can be off some days this Christmas.”

Jose said, “Dan, I’ll take Maureen home. I’ll talk to you when I get back.”

Jose said, “Maureen, Steven and Alicia were here. They could have taken you home.”

Maureen did not say anything.

Mike peeped around the corner at Maureen.

John ran into the kitchen.

He said, “Jose why didn’t you tell us that Blaine and the other guy are gone.”

Jose said, “I didn’t know they were gone. Patrick asked them to let him know when they leave. Are you sure they are gone?”

John said, “It is clean.”

Jose looked at Dan and Thomas.

Jose said, “Maureen do you have food at home and coal?”

Maureen did not say anything.

Mike said, “She needs help.”

John said, “Oh Allen and Veronica are getting married on January first.”

Jose said, “Write it on the board John.

John stepped back and wrote the note.

Dan was pulling Maureen some food together.

Maureen said, “Dan can I eat that now. I am really hungry.”

Dan looked at Maureen.

Thomas stared at Maureen.

Jose said, “Maureen why are you hungry?”

Maureen said, “He won’t let me eat until he and our son has eaten. Most of the time there is nothing left.”

Thomas was so mad he said, “Maureen you are here all day with all of this food. The Stiths want us to eat while we are at work. You don’t see anyone bringing a lunch because the food is here.”

Thomas walked out the kitchen.

Maureen said, “Thomas why are you mad at me?”

Thomas stopped and bit his lips and walked back and said, “Maureen I am not mad at you. The food is here. Please eat from now on. Did you get your meat for Christmas?”

Maureen said, “Yes. He sold it to get coal.”

Dan said, “Maureen sit and eat this.”

Maureen was getting antsy and said, “I have to go. I better bring him food or he’ll get mad.”

Jose could not say anything.

He looked at Dan and said, “Put what you have in a bag. She can eat out the plate on the way home. I will bring the plate and fork back.”

Mike stood and look.

Jose handed Maureen the plate and the bag of food.

Jose sped and took Maureen home.

He found the quickest way was go through town and down the street by the jail.

He sped and got Maureen home in thirty minutes.

Jose took the plate from her and the fork.

Maureen said, “I was not finished.”

Jose said, “Yes you are. Maureen, tomorrow is Tuesday. Stay home Tuesday and Wednesday.”

Maureen started crying.

Jose said, “I’ll bring you food Tuesday and Wednesday. Ok.”

Maureen said, “Ok and coal.”

Jose said, “Yes. Go int the house Maureen, it is freezing out here.”

Maureen looked at the house and walked in the house with the bag.

Jose heard her husband as Maureen walked in the house yell and said, “Give me that bag.”

Jose said, “God thank You for scotch.”

Jose sped back to the Stith house.

He was so upset.

Nadine gave the messenger a suite at the end of the hall.

She told him breakfast was at eight am and the train left at ten am.

When Jose returned.

He stood and said nothing.

Mike and John looked at Jose.

Dan, Thomas and Peter looked at Jose.

Thomas and Peter had just returned from setting the buffet and serving the family.

Mike and John were sitting and playing cards.

Jose sat and kept rubbing his head.

Jose said, “I believe Maureen has a serious head injury.”

Mike said, “I guess so.”

He looked at Jose.

Jose said, “I give her Tuesday and Wednesday off so I can think about what to do. Brenda doesn’t have Maureen stay overnight because she has a child and husband.”

Jose stood and walked through the house.

He walked down the back hall and stood for a long time and looked out the window.

He checked all the windows and doors.

Jose walked back down the hall and he continued to the family dining room.

He walked in and Nadine and Theresa were in the dining room.

Nadine walked and whispered and told Jose where she put the messenger.

Jose said, “I saw the door. That was fine.”

Jose looked around and said, “Nadine I am retiring for today.”

Nadine looked at Jose.

Theresa looked at Jose.

Brenda and Patrick looked at Jose.

William and Gary were laughing and having a good time with the boys.

Patrick was having a lively dinner.

He was enjoying all of it.

Patrick said, “Brenda, will Nathan and Denise have a reception at the church, the Rest stop or here?”

Brenda said, “I don’t know.”

She looked at Nadine and said, “Nadine.”

Nadine heard Patrick.

Nadine walked to Brenda and said, “Ma am?”

Brenda said, “Where did Denise and Nathan tell Peter to set up the cake and punch?”

Nadine stood up and said, “I don’t recall they told him. I believe he thinks it is suppose to be at the church immediately after the ceremony.”

Brenda said, “Find out for me.”

Nadine said, “Yes ma am.”

She walked out the family dining room to the kitchen.

She said, “I have two questions. What is wrong with Jose that it has sent him to bed? And Peter Patrick and Brenda wants to know where did Nathan and Denise tell you to set up their reception?”

Mike said, “I can answer the first question. Maureen.”

Nadine looked at Mike.

Mike looked at Nadine.

Peter said, “You know they did not tell me where. I just assumed at the church.”

Nadine turned and walked out the kitchen.

Bruce spent the entire holidays at the hotel.

He spent the whole holiday asking God to help him.

He went to the Stith and asked Dr. Woodson what church he attended.

Dr. Woodson thought, “What have you done?”

Dr. Woodson told him the church and gave Bruce the address.

Dr. Ralph would be cordial with Bruce, but he did not like the way he treated Lorraine and the other workers.

Lorraine said she and the other workers came to Philadelphia to help Shirley and Michael because Eleanor had lost her mind.

Beverly was visiting Vivienne and Sally.

She looked out the window and saw Bruce.

She ran out Sally’s room to Betty and Charles Jr.’s room.

Vivienne ran and closed Sally’s door.

Dr. Ralph and Dr. Charles looked at the women.

Dr. Woodson walked Bruce to the hospital administrator’s office.

Beverly washed, greased and plaited Betty’s hair.

Betty started crying for her mother and father.

Charles Jr. started crying.

Hutch heard the children.

He walked to their room.

Laura was in her room and she was able to crawl.

She pushed her pillows on the floor and slid out of her bed.

She crawled out of her room on the pillows.

Dr. Ralph and Dr. Hutch watched her as she crawled to Betty and Charles, Jr.’s room.

Dr. Hutch looked at Laura and said, “Why don’t you walk?”

Laura stared at Dr. Hutch.

Dr. Ralph walked over in the supply room.

He walked out with a pair of clutches.

Beverly was sitting on Betty’s bed holding her and holding Charles Jr.’s hand.

They were looking at Laura.

Dr. Hutch and Dr. Ralph picked Laura from the floor.

Laura’s father was walking in the lobby with Betty, Charles Jr. and Sally a Christmas gift.

He knew Laura told him to get Betty and Charles Jr. a gift, but because only three children were in the hospital he wanted to get Sally a gift even though she will have a lot of presents at Christmas.

Laura’s father’s heart began to swell.

Dr. Woodson walked out the hospital administrator’s office with Bruce.

He looked at Laura’s father and walked to the hall.

He saw Hutch and Dr. Ralph lifting Laura from the floor.

They put the clutches underneath her arms.

Laura was standing on her own.

Hutch and Dr. Ralph walked with her.

She saw her father.

Nurse Jewell was walking from Leon’s room and saw them standing in the hall she walked to see what was going on.

Laura started walking to her father.

Her father cried.

Laura cried.

Laura’s father fell on his knees with the kids’ Christmas gifts and raised his hands up to God and looked up to the ceiling and said, “Thank You God, now she has a life.”

Beverly picked up Betty and helped Charles Jr out of bed and they watched Laura walk for the first time in her life.

Nurse Simons and Nurse Wilkes were having lunch and walked out and saw Laura walking.

Nurse Simons began to cry.

Nurse Wilkes held her hands under her chin.

Dr. Woodson thought, “I wish Dr. Greene was here to see Laura’s miracle.”

Dr. Woodson walked Bruce to the door and said, “I’ll see you at church on Sunday.”

Dr. Woodson said, “I want Dr. Greene to be there. I have to arrange for someone to be here while I am at church. I am on call Christmas Eve and Christmas night, which is fine. Charles and Hutch are the north hospital Christmas Eve and Christmas day. That is fine. But it is Christmas day I will need some help here.”

He walked to President Strafford and offered to help him up.

President Strafford wanted to stay on his knees.

He raised his arms up to praise God for Laura’s miracles.

Nurse Jewell picked up the gifts off the floor and walked behind Laura, Hutch and Dr. Ralph and placed the gifts in Laura’s room.

Betty and Charles Jr. watched the gifts Nurse Jewell had.

The one cook walked out the kitchen and watched this miracle.

Laura felt good and she was not tired and in pain.

Dr. Hutch told her, “We believe you can walk, like Shirley, without the wheelchair and clutches. You have to be willing to endure the tremendous pain.

Laura sat on her bed and cried.

Hutch and Dr. Ralph walked to Betty and carried her to her bed.

Dr. Ralph helped Charles Jr. hopped to his bed.

Dr. Ralph helped him in his bed.

Beverly kissed Betty and Charles Jr.

She said, “I have to get home and help my husband with our other kids.”

Beverly left the hospital and rode home.

She was thinking about Mabel leaving her,

She thought it was not right and them stealing the children clothes.

Beverly started to get angry and she thought, “I didn’t get a chance to talk to Leon.”

She started to beat herself up and then she remembered she saw a miracle.

Laura walked for the first time in her life and her father who had been with her saw it as it was happening.

Beverly cried all the way home.

She got home and rode into the stables and unhooked the horses.

She fed the horses and gave them water.

She petted all the horses.

She refused to let Mabel and Curtis enter into her thoughts ever.

She turned and walked out the stables.

Beverly locked the stable’s door and walked to the house.

She poured the fuel in the two lanterns.

She wrapped up in her two blankets and sat on the porch for a while.

She made a large meatloaf before she started her day.

She could smell it.

Al put it in the stove on time.

She grinned.

She put the butter beans on when she left.

All had to do was to make the cornbread.

Beverly thought, “Al is a good cornbread maker.”

She grinned.

Beverly sat on the porch and swung her feet and thought about the day.

She lit the lanterns and walked in the house and lock the door and put the bar behind the door.

Beverly and Al set the table.

They sat down to dinner and had a lovely dinner with the twelve children.

The two oldest boys washed and dried all the dishes.

Al was reading one of his books.

Beverly was reading the Christmas scriptures to the children.

Everyone prepared for bed and went to bed early.

Beverly was sitting in her bed thinking.

Al walked in and said, “You have been thinking a lot lately Beverly.”

Beverly said, “I’m trying to think about Christmas dinner. Christmas day. The Sunday before Christmas, Christmas Eve.”

Al undressed for bed and said, “Good night. Think for me too.”

Beverly said, “Was it a hard day?”

Al said, “You know Beverly it was not. The only thing we did was feed the horses and give them water, bring in the water and coal for today and wash and dry dishes.”

Beverly said, “Whoa.”

Al laughed.

Beverly said, “Bruce came to the hospital today.”

Al said, “Is that why you came home early?”  
Beverly said, “Yes. I did not get a chance to see Leon. I want to see him every time I go. But I actually saw a miracle today.”

Beverly was silent.

Al looked over at Beverly and waited.

Beverly said, “Betty and Charles Jr. were crying because they missed their mother and father. I was trying to comfort them. Hutch heard them and Dr. Ralph heard them they walked to their room. Laura who is in the room next to them she crawled out of her room on a pillow. Hutch asked her why she was not walking. I thought he was hard. Laura was on her knees on the pillow coming to Betty and Charles Jr. Hutch did not say anything but stand and look at Laura.”

Al listened.

Beverly said, “Dr. Ralph went and came back with a pair of clutches. He and Hutch lifted Laura from the floor and put the clutches under her arm and walked with her up the hall. Me, Betty and Charles Jr. ran to the door and into the hall and saw Laura’s father who walked into the hospital as his daughter began to walk with the clutches. He never seen her walk in her life. He said, “He was told she would never walk. He fell on his knees and raised his arms up to God.”

Al said, “Who would not?”

Beverly said, “So I was overcome with that sight. Betty and Charles Jr. were watching Nurse Jewell who picked up President Strafford Christmas gifts and carried them to Laura’s room.”

Al laughed and said, “Kids.”

Beverly turned over and went to sleep.

Al sat in bed and thought about the miracle Beverly witnessed.

He said, “God I miss being a practicing a doctor.”

Beverly was not sleep but pretending to be sleep so they would not have a married couple conversation.

Beverly nearly cried for her husband.

She prayed, “God You made him to be a doctor. He has a few good years left or as many as you say. I don’t want to hold him back. If he is to go back to work, open the door up and send some God fearing people to help me here. I saw Dr. Woodson really need help at the hospital. I can help out there two times a week or whatever time You say. I hate Mabel and Curtis for deceiving us and stealing from us and the children. Help my heart that my hatred won’t block what you are doing in my spirit.”

Beverly cried.

Al laid and listened to Beverly cry.

He thought, “God is that about me?”

Monica was back and had a great time with Jerome.

They talked about a lot of her emotional problems.

Monica told him you are great at helping with mind problems.

Jerome said, “Monica, the hell I have been through GOD brought me through with much prayer from good people like Al and Bev. I can see some of the things I had to face in other people’s problems. I have not studied branch of medicine. But for whoever will listen I will share my life teaching.”

Monica said, “Life is a teacher.”

Jerome looked at Monica and said, “A true butt beater.”

Monica laughed.

Jerome grinned.

Jerome was at his house thinking about Monica.

He wanted to go with her back home. He wanted to see what environment and background she came from. He wanted to see if she could really walk away from the hate the deep south breed into people and to see people as people.

He goes all over the world and don’t want anyone with him that would mistreat GOD’s children.

He refused to stand before GOD and give HIM account of someone in his life with hatred that hurt one of HIS sheep.

Jerome decided to go on a fast to seek GOD about Monica. He wanted to know if she was the woman he waited for all of his life, If she is not for him to go his way and for her to go her way.

Jerome worked at the neighborhood clinic.

He made sure he did not see Monica everyday like he wanted.

Jerome went to see Al and Beverly the next day after Laura’s miracle.

Beverly was so excited and she shared the miracle with Jerome.

Jerome sat silently.

Beverly said, “Jerome I am not lying. Ask the doctors.”

Jerome reached over and touched Beverly’s hand and said, “My love Beverly, I know you are telling the truth. I have no doubt. I was wondering how great a miracle that was and even greater miracle for her father who had nothing to hold on to. That twice the doctors said ‘no’, but GOD said yes. I wonder what great deed GOD has prepared for this young woman.”

Jerome said, “I was coming to tell you I will accept your Christmas dinner invitation. I will bring something. You have too much to do for so many. I think I am not sure that I may bring Monica. I am praying about her.”

Al looked at Jerome.

Jerome said, “Beverly and Al have you a menu for Christmas dinner?”

Beverly waved her hands and shrugged her shoulders.

Jerome looked at Beverly.

Al looked at Beverly and said, “Jerome that means she still thinks she is at the Stith with a hundred servants that take care of every detail.”

Jerome said, “A hundred servants. Whoa.”

Al stood and went into the kitchen and came back with a pencil and a writing pad.

He said, “Let’s do the menu.”

Jerome said, “Let me suggest. I will go to Rosie’s and have them bake the meat. I can go to Sarah and get a cake or pie. You two set the table and do the rest of the meal.”

Al looked at Jerome he turned his head and looked at Beverly.

Beverly was still shrugging her shoulders.

Al said, “Beverly is not living in reality. She has not been back a week yet. I love buttered rum and mulled cider.”

Jerome looked at Beverly and said, “I do too.”

Jerome and Al continued to talk and laugh.

Jerome left after two hours of visiting with them.

Little Shirley was ready for Jerome to go so Beverly could hold her.

Jerome watched Little Shirley he looked at Al.

Al looked at Little Shirley.

Jerome said, “She wants me to go so she could get all the attention.”

Al grinned at Little Shirley and looked at Jerome.

Jerome said, “I am busy at the neighborhood clinic. I am planning on going to church services the Sunday before Christmas and on Christmas day. I have not decided what I am going to do Christmas Eve.”

Al said, “That sounds great. We can’t go to church services because we don’t have anyone to help with the children who are left. Unless we split up into groups.”

Jerome looked at Al and said, “This is an important season. You all don’t need to be in the house. Split up into groups. Maybe you can take the boys to a church service and Beverly can take the girls. GOD will show you what to do. Go and visit at the hospitals and take a cake or something. GOD will help.”  
Al did not know.

Beverly was hugging Little Shirley.

She looked at Al and Jerome and said, “Thank you Jerome I will do that.”

Jerome looked at Beverly.

He knew what Beverly said she did not like what Al was saying.

Al walked Jerome to the door.

Beverly thought, “Shirley you want to go with me tomorrow. Mark was behind the sofa and popped up and said, “I want to go.”

Beverly said, “Ok. You two are the youngest. I’ll take you with me tomorrow Dr. Jerome is right this is a beautiful time of the year and we need to celebrate it.”

Beverly said, “Let’s bake some cookies to take with us tomorrow.

Mark stayed in the sitting room.

Little Shirley went into the kitchen with Beverly.

They bake cookies for hours.

Beverly put dinner on that morning after breakfast.

The four oldest boys walked in the neighborhood to their friends’ houses.

Beverly was so afraid they would be beaten or lynched.

Al said, “Beverly they are males. You cannot hold them here or allow them to go to school and functions there and back home. We have to believe GOD will protect them.”

Dinner was ready.

The dozens of cookies that Beverly and Little Shirley baked were ready.

They separated the cookies into two baskets.

Beverly said, “We need to bake Meredith some cookies. She is at homme with her new baby.”

Little Shirley did not want to bake anymore cookies.

Beverly grinned and covered the cookies.

Beverly had prepared neckbones, pinto beans and cornbread for dinner.

She heard the four big boys returning from their friends’ houses.

Beverly exhaled.

They sat for dinner and had a wonderful dinner.

The two older girls helped Beverly wash and dry the dishes.

Beverly prepared her honey cake for Meredith.

She and the five girls were excited about Christmas.

Beverly had gotten each girl three Sunday dresses, stockings and boots, along with a coat, scarf, hat and gloves.

Beverly thought.

She and the girls joined the boys and Al in the sitting room.

Al was talking to Brandon.

He was one of the thirteen year old.

He would be fourteen on his birthday.

Al had never sit and had a detail conversation with Brandon.

Al jumped up and ran to his books.

Everyone looked at Al.

Beverly was looking at Al under eyes in embarrassment.

Al ran back to the sitting room and gave the book to Brandon.

Brandon began reading the book.

Al stood in complete shock.

Beverly looked at Al and then at Brandon.

Al ran back to the bookshelf and looked through his books.

He grabbed another book and ran t the sitting area and flipped to a page and reached it to Brandon.

Brandon read the page and explained what the page was about and thumbed through the book and explained what the book was about.

Beverly said, “Al?”

Al fell to his knees.

All the children looked at Al.

Al began to cry.

Beverly looked at the children.

The children watched Al.

Al said, “Brandon. You are considered a genius. Only a few people in the entire world could do what you have done. I have to let someone know. You don’t need to be here. You need to be with the geniuses of the world.”

Brandon said, “I don’t want to go anywhere but here. I love you and Aunt Bev and all of my sisters and brothers.”

Beverly was speechless.

Al and Beverly put the children to bed and went downstairs.

Beverly walked to the Christmas and stood.

Al walked in the sitting room and saw Beverly looking at the Christmas tree.

Al smiled and walked over and put his arm around Beverly’s shoulder and said, “It is a wonderful tree.”

Beverly stooped down on her knees and started going through the bags.

They were empty.

Al stood.

He saw the bags with the kids knitted gifts were empty.

He said, “It is better that we know now than on Christmas day.”

Beverly was angry and could barely get up.

Al looked at Beverly and said, “Bev are you alright?”

Beverly walked to the sofa and laid down.

Al sat across from her.

Beverly said, “Al how could I make such a horrible mistake about letting my guard down and letting someone come into y life that would completely destroy it?”

Al stood.

Beverly stared at him.

Al exhaled and tried to look around.

He pointed to the Christmas tree and said you are talking about Mabel and Curtis.”

Beverly stared at Al.

Al said, “I thought you were talking about me.”

Beverly stared at Al.

She was thinking about his stingy self too.

She could not go back in their marriage and found out where he was stingy.

She was talking to Brenda and Patrick about how stingy Al was and when he became stingy.

Patrick was sitting next to Brenda with his arms folded.

Patrick unfolded his arms and said, “What?”  
Brenda was frowned up looking at Beverly.

Beverly looked at Patrick.

Beverly looked at Brenda and said, “What? Why are you two looking at me like that?”

Brenda still did not say anything.

Patrick said, “Beverly where have you been?”

Beverly looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Albert Williamson has always been stingy as hell. He is the stingiest man on the earth.”

Brenda was still sitting frowned up staring at Beverly.

Beverly started crying.

Eleanor was sitting in the chair next to Beverly.

Eleanor said, “Stick with Shirley she’ll show you how to spend some else into bankruptcy.”

Shirley was standing back and heard Eleanor.

Shirley smirked.

Beverly looked at Eleanor and continued to cry.

Brenda was still shocked.

She told Patrick later, “Where has Beverly been for these twenty five years that she did not know how stingy Albert is?”

Patrick said, “I don’t know.”

Beverly told them the blow by blow of the boys and Shirley running and leaving her at the carriage.

Patrick and Brenda were hollering.

The children knew Beverly was talking about them.

They all tipped downstairs and went into the sitting room.

Nadine looked at Ruth and said, “You know they have done something. Like at them sneaking down here.”

Ruth looked at the kids.

She and Nadine continued to put the floral boxes on the family dining table for Beverly to work on the next day. Then Wednesday will be the ground- breaking and formal reception then the next day would be the formal dinner.

Beverly would be leaving on Friday to return to Philadelphia.

Beverly said, “I am too old to be running and jumping over rail tracks. I was not running from one of my situations. I was running because your children Eleanor was scared of their daddy.”

Thomas walked in and leaned in Eleanor’s lap.

Michael went and sat between Patrick and Brenda.

Percy and Bruce walked in the room and stood.

Shirley slowly walked in the room and stood by the door. they were scared of Bruce and thought he was behind us.

Beverly said, “I did not know where I was running to. The tall one Percy. Had one hand holding his hat and was running with his feet touching his butt. These two little ones all I saw was hair flying everywhere. I was disturbed by what Leon told me before I left the hospital I was not thinking. I finally made it to the train. I was tired and out of breathe. I jumped on the train and the white people looking at me like she belongs in the servants’ car. I was already ready to fight. I did not know which direction to run. I thought I should at least catch Shirley.”

Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor pointed to the right.

Beverly said, “Now I know. I took a chance and ran down that way. I ran through two cars.”

Eleanor said, “Aunt Bev, why were you running?”

Beverly said, “The hell if I know. I told you I were not thinking. All I know I was trying to catch my breathe. The people staring at me. I stopped at one booth. The man leaning all the way over on the woman liked I was trying to do something to him. I stared at him and when I turned around that one there popped up off the floor…”

Beverly was pointing at Thomas.

She said, “And there I go running after him.”

Patrick and Brenda were hollering.

Eleanor was trying to grin, but she was not understanding why her children running from their father.

Eleanor looked at Thomas and pushed his hair back and said, “You fell?”

Beverly stood and said, “No one talk but me.”

Nadine and Jose laughed.

Brenda was still laughing.

Patrick was trying to stop so he could hear what Beverly was saying.

Beverly said, “I followed him through two train cars and I was gasping for air and coughing like old man Wilson used to do Brenda. Remember him.”

Brenda was nodding her head for yes.

Beverly demonstrated how she was gasping and breathing.

Beverly said, “I kept my eyes on that one there. I did not see the rest of them. I saw him knocking and kicking on a door. The door cracked and he fought to slip in that thin crack. The crack was about this big Brenda.”

Patrick and Brenda were hollering when Beverly showed them how big the crack was.

Eleanor was thinking.

Jose and Nadine were laughing.

Beverly said, “I finally made it to the door. It has nothing on it.”

Patrick said, “Right.”

Beverly said, “I was standing at the door coughing like this.”

Beverly demonstrated how she was coughing.

Eleanor tried to smile.

Shirley was watching Eleanor.

Jose looked at Shirley and said, “Look at her. She did something.”

Nadine looked at Shirley.

Beverly said, “Brenda guess who was standing by me looking at me with those snooty customers?”

Brenda was trying to think.

Patrick said, “Joe?’

Beverly leaned all the way back and said, “Yes.”

Brenda jumped up from the sofa and was hollering.

Beverly said, “I rolled my eyes at him. He had the nerves to exhale like I was a heathen and walked the patrons around me to their suite. I watched them pass. I knocked on that door and I was about to tear it off the hinges. I said, “You better.” Then that little one there came and cracked the door open like this.”

Beverly showed them the crack amount.

Beverly said, “I pushed the door opened. That one there was over on the floor hiding by the arm of the sofa. The two oldest were seating on the sofa.”

Brenda said, “Where was Shirley?”

Beverly raised her hands up and said, “Please wait.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

Patrick looked at Shirley.

Beverly said, “I was still gasping for air. I thought Al starving me to death I would be able to run. I asked them what they were running about? They did answer. I looked around the room and said, “oh my God. Shirley. We have to go back and get Shirley.’ I was panicking at this time.”

Patrick and Brenda stopped laughing and was looking at Beverly.

Eleanor knew Shirley had done something.

She looked at Shirley.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Shirley.

Thomas was leaning on Eleanor’s lap shaking his head.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Thomas.

Beverly said, “they did not move nor act like they were concerned about finding Shirley. I was upset for everybody.”

Beverly flung her arms wide open.

Beverly pointed at Michael and said, “That little one there locked the door. I turned around after I heard the lock. He rolled his eyes at me and walked to the dining table and sat. “

Eleanor rolled her eyes at Michael and said, “You were disrespectful.

Michael looked at Eleanor and said, “You just wait until Aunt Bev finish.”

Patrick and Brenda looked at Michael.

Beverly said, “That Thomas was hiding on the floor. He said to me. He was not going to look for Shirley.”

Patrick and Brenda looked at Thomas.

Beverly said, “I was about ready to snatch all of them. I said ‘what’. He turned his back and said, ‘don’t you see her footprint on my jacket.’

Jose was wondering where Shirley was.

Jose hit the floor.

Nadine nearly fell on him.

Patrick and Brenda saw Jose and Nadine, but they were not catching what Beverly was saying.

Beverly said, “I did not what the boy was saying.”

Eleanor knew what Thomas was saying she turned and looked at a nervous Shirley.

Beverly said, “The little one and rolled his eyes at me. Then Bruce said, ‘how you think we got in here. Shirley was the only one with the key.”

Patrick and Brenda were not thinking.

Beverly said, “I stood in the room and said, ‘where is Shirley’?”

Beverly said, “They all looked towards the bedroom. I said, ‘Shirley’. She did not come out. I said it a second time.

Jose was sitting on the floor.

Patrick and Brenda were looking at Beverly.

They looked at the boys and wondered.

Brenda said, “Beverly.”

Beverly said, ” I saw the bags moved. I jumped. Shirley was under the luggage.”

Jose fell out on the floor.

Nadine fell into the door.

Shirley was not laughing.

Patrick and Brenda were dumbfounded.

Beverly pointed at all the boys and said, “They all sitting looking at her. I thought she was hurt somewhere. She out ran all of them and knocked Thomas down because he was running to slow and stepped on him to reach the suite door and unlocked the door threw the key on the table and was small enough to hide under luggage yall.”

Jose was on the floor hollering.

Brenda and Patrick laughed.

Eleanor tried to smile.

Beverly said, “I was so out done. That’s that fear that caused her fly through the train and jumped over people to make to the suit and hide.

Nadine and Jose were hollering.

Eleanor smiled.

Patrick and Brenda were hollering.

Brenda said, “Beverly what did you do?”

Beverly said, “I turned my head and said, ‘damn.’ I told them for all of them to stay in that car and not to move. I found the alcohol car and had two drinks. Then you know who wandered in the car and said, “had enough to drink. I was ready to fight him. He saw me running like a fool through the rail station and said, “I haven’t seen you run like that in a while.”

Patrick fell back on the sofa and hollered.

Brenda said, “I haven’t even thought about Joe for twenty years.”

Beverly said, “I was not at the hospital. So I cannot tell you what happened at the hospital. I went back to the suite. Oh, I want to tell yall this. I told them to get their bags and put them in their rooms. Miss Shirley had her bags in yall bedroom. I said, ‘hell no, if yall think I am going to first class after I saw the suite. I never been in one before beautiful. This little one rolled his eyes at me. I said, ‘you don’t want me in your grandma and grandpa bedroom’. They all but Shirley, she went int the other bedroom and slammed and locked the door. They all told me that no one is good enough to sleep in their grandpa and grandma’s bedroom.”

Eleanor said, “Boys.”

Beverly held up her hands and said, “I love that they love you Brenda and Patrick.”

Beverly bent over in Brenda’s face and said, “But I deserved to sleep in that gorgeous room that night.”

Brenda grabbed Beverly around her neck and hugged her.

Patrick looked around the room at his grandchildren,

They all looked at him.

Patrick looked at Shirley.

He said, “Shirley why were you running from Bruce?’

Shirley yelled out, “I hate him.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley and said, “You ran out of fear of him?”

Shirley was huffing and said, “Yes.”

Thomas said, “We were all running away from him Shirley. That did not mean for you to throw us down and run over us to get to the suite.”

Brenda turned her head towards the fireplace to keep Shirley from seeing her laughed.

Brenda could not contain herself and burst out laughing.

Patrick burst out laughing.

Eleanor merely smiled at her children.

She said, “You could have walked to the train and waited for Aunt Bev. The train could not leave without you and Bruce had to have a ticket to board. Even though he knows where the suite is he did not have a key to get in. You all were not thinking.”

Thomas said, “It’s hard to think when someone is knocking you down and running over you.”

Brenda turned her head and hollered.

Jose was on the floor rolling.

Shirley was still huffing.

Michael said, “Heifer.”

Eleanor said, “Michael I am going to whip you. You better not say that again.”

Beverly said, “Thomas said he had to eat to have strength for taking your licks Eleanor. So he ate for three full days.”

Brenda could not take anymore.

Eleanor said, “Ryan sent us a full report of all of your behavior at the hospital. You called him incompetent and dumb. He put all of you out the hospital.”

Eleanor looked up at Shirley and said, “He said you were out running around the yard picking up rocks throwing at your brothers and threw and hit Thomas in the eye.”

Thomas held his head back so Eleanor could see the bruise.

Eleanor said, “What do each of you have to say to Aunt Bev and to each other.”

Jose had to stand to look at them.

They all just stood and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at her children and said, “You don’t know to apologize for being disrespectful to Aunt Bev and to one another?”

Percy said, “We’re family. Even Aunt Bev.”

Eleanor said, Percy you have a different type of mind and thinking. Just because you are related you still have to show one another respect.”

Thomas, said, “I’m sorry Aunt Bev.”

He looked at his brothers and said, “I’m sorry. Percy, Bruce and Michael.”

They just looked at Thomas.

Eleanor looked at her boys and said, “Why are you all looking at Thomas like that?”

Michael said, “I’ll apologize when he apologizes to Shirley for hitting him in his eye with a rock. With her no throwing self.”

Eleanor said, “Can you excuse us?”

Shirley walked out the door, followed by Bruce and Percy.”

Patrick said, “Let them go. I don’t even want to hear any more.”

He and Brenda laughed all evening.

Beverly went and got she and Eleanor a shot of scotch.

They all sat in the sitting room and laughed and talk.

Beverly said, “I’m too old for a man to want me. But I am telling yall I am sick of Al.”

Thomas was sitting in a chair reading.

Beverly left Cedartown on that Friday and was placed in first class.

Beverly smirked that she was not placed in the owners’ suite.

Al was at the train station with Little Shirley and Mark waiting when her train pulled in.

Mark and Little Shirley were excited to see trains and all the people, black and white.

Al was watching the facial expressions of both the black and white people.

He was thinking, “It has been three years. This racism needs to be stopped.”

Brenda paid, Beverly for coming and decorating the house.

Brenda was so excited.

Beverly did a great job decorating the house and the outside.

Jose followed Beverly’s instructions.

The house went from nice to spectacular.

Brenda told Beverly some kind of way things will be better.

Beverly said, “I don’t want to be a vegetarian anymore.”

Eleanor looked at Beverly.

Beverly would not talk around the children.

She told them Al’s pension was stopped at both hospitals. Dennis Wade told Al he would check into it. But he is a doctor.

Beverly said, “Something is going on with he and Ryan. Apparently, they are mis-diagnosing patients.”

She told them of Betty and Charles Jr. and that Al went just before they broke the children bones and examined them and told them what was wrong.

She said, “No one knows what is going on with them, So the boys were right about Lorraine.”

Brenda said, “Beverly I am going to pay you for the beautiful job you did here.”

Beverly said, “And I am going to take it. I might need it to run behind Joe. He still looks good.”

Brenda said, “Beverly!”

Beverly said, “And I am going to eat meat all the way back to Philadelphia. Dr. Woodson needs help at the hospital. So Shirley needs to be thinking what she is going to do. I think Dr. Greene has quit, because of that wife of his. Dr. Woodson and the hospital is short handed and they fired two nurses. The head nurse for pinching Betty’s arm and leaving this huge mark on her and daring her not to tell covered the baby’s mouth while she twisted her meat. Her brother crying.”

Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor were quiet.

Beverly exhaled and bowed her head a little.

She said, “Sometimes I wonder if it will end or when it will end.”

Beverly said, “I can’t take care of the children like I thought, now since Al’s pensions have been stopped.”

Eleanor said, “Aunt Bev I had my lawyers send a letter demanding to know why the pensions were stop and if they did not start the pensions back and give Uncle Al his back money then they will be sued. DO you have enough money to last through the holidays?

Beverly said, “Yes. Shirley gave the hundred dollars back from Monica’s personal loan and the two hundred dollars from the dress shop. I put that money up. Al doesn’t know where it is. It is more than enough to buy food, coal, water and fuel, until the spring. I’m not going to talk about Al and when Mabel and Curtis stole the oldest boys’ clothes. I told you they stole two of the new horses and the new wagon. I don’t know how they got so smart as being slaves to know that stealing from others and using the little money they had will take them far.”

Beverly held her head down.

She said, “I just hate them.”  
Brenda said, “We had workers stealing from us all summer.”

Beverly’s head was down and said, “You have money to replace what was stolen. We don’t. It seems the devil planned this attack.”

Patrick said, “The devil may have planned this attack, but GOD has stepped in. I believe some more good things are going to happen.”

Eleanor walked upstairs to check on her children.

Thomas was in his bed reading.

Michael was in his bed reading.

Bruce was sleep.

Percy was playing with his train.

Eleanor went to Shirley’s room and Shirley was sleep and grinning.

Eleanor stood and looked at Shirley.

Beverly was quiet.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Beverly.

Patrick thought, “She stood with Al for nearly thirty years when the hospitals and doctors kept paying him nearly nothing because he was married to a black woman.”

Brenda thought, “She’s tired. She thought the kids would help her.”

Eleanor came back and sat with them, because the next few days would be busy.

Eleanor said, “All of them are in their oms. Shirley is sleep and grinning.”

Brenda and Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Beverly snickered and said, “The day I went to pick up Shirley from the hospital. Because I was anger over the last paper she should have finished. Shirley got her mind on that boy at that school.”

Brenda jerked her head from looking at Eleanor to Beverly.

Patrick was looking at Beverly.

Eleanor was looking at Beverly.

Eleanor said, “What?”  
Beverly said, “He is cute. He is in a wheelchair. He‘s going to become a lawyer. He has thick curly blond hair like your babies. His father has been taking care of Betty and Charles Jr. Which was not good. But any way. The nurses said, Shirley had fallen across the bed and was sleep. Hutch went in and got her paper and was reading it. The doctors walked in to start their rounds. The nurses said, Shirley yelled ‘those rubies and diamonds belong to me’. They all jumped and looked round…”

Brenda hollered.

Beverly said, “You haven’t heard anything yet.”

Patrick was looking.

Beverly said, “One of the nurses said, Hutch just stood and looked at Shirley. Shirley said, “Bruce I told you this is my house get out.”

Brenda giggled.

Beverly said, “This is it are you ready?”

Eleanor threw down her handkerchief and said, “I don’t know.”

Beverly looked at Eleanor.

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Brenda was ready to laugh some more.

Beverly said, “The nurses said Shirley yelled Percy those emeralds and diamonds are mines. Your girlfriend ain’t getting them.”

Brenda was leaning forward to hear Beverly.

Beverly said, “The nurses said Shirley was laying on the bed moving like she was tussling over the diamonds and emeralds. The nurses said, Shirley started kicking and moving her legs like she was kicking somebody. The nurses said Hutch was standing by Shirley with her paper in his hands. He looked down at Shirley’s legs going to town. He put down her paper and was walking out the room. They all worked out the room and they heard Shirley laugh and said, “Ha ha.’”

Brenda hollered and fell into Patrick.

Beverly said, “The nurse said, ‘Shirley got them emeralds.”

Patrick was laughing.

Brenda couldn’t catch her breath from laughing so hard.

Eleanor said, “That’s what she is grinning about now. We gave her valuable stuff because we wanted her to know she was not thrown away. Now she is up and walking about. She is knocking people down, running over people…”

Beverly said, “Don’t forget throwing rocks.”

Brenda said, “Wait Beverly Shirley said, you told her to throw rocks at them.”

Eleanor looked at Beverly.

Patrick looked at Beverly.

Beverly said, “I told her to throw at them. Not to hit them. I figured she didn’t know to throw that the rocks might fall behind her or go off in the bushes or hit a horse. I had no idea that she was going to hit somebody.”

Eleanor said, “Momma told me how you and her would be throwing at people. My kids can’t throw like that. I told Shirley never to do that again.”

Beverly said, “I’m sorry. I am not that prideful that I can’t say it.”

They all laughed.

Eleanor said, “I don’t believe they were put out of a hospital.”

Beverly said, “Not just put out, Thomas said ‘Ryan put him under one arm and Michael under the other arm and walked to the door and dropped them on the porch. That Thomas is something else. He is gonna tell Ryan he would buy the hospital and fire him.”

Patrick and Brenda laughed.

Beverly said, “You know would not hurt them, especially after he healed them.”

They continued to talk until late.

They all went to bed and was up early the next morning.

The children were up and getting dressed to go to the ground -breaking ceremony.

They were excited the hospital was getting build.

Beverly wore her travel dress since she would be wearing a coat.

Jose ordered a simple breakfast of scrambled eggs, biscuits, orange juice, coffee and tea.

Dan was packing the cookies and sweet biscuits he made that morning.

He packed the hot chocolate, tea, coffee and mulled cider that morning and John and Mike took it to the tent.

Jose and Dan went to the tent last night and made sure it was stable.

The vendor was to bring the dessert plates, glasses, cups and saucers, utensils, chairs and portable stoves for heat.

Mike and John were to make sure the vendor brought everything.

Shirley ordered red, green and red balloons.

Eleanor did not want the balloons in the tents.

Shirley told the vendor to tie the balloons around the ground and people could take the balloons if they wanted to.

Shirley was well dressed,

Elanor looked at Shirley and grinned.

She walked to Shirley and hugged her.

The boys had their full military outfits on including the hats, scarf and gloves.

They were walking down the stairs.

Eleanor, Brenda and Patrick stopped and looked at the four handsome young men descending the staircase.

Patrick swelled in pride.

Eleanor and Brenda were shock.

Beverly turned and grinned at the four troubles.

The boys knew they looked distinguished.

Jose looked at them.

He thought, “Bout time they did something right.”

There was knocking on the front door.

Jose and Beverly were working on the center piece on the hallway table.

Jose and Brenda looked.

Eleanor and Brenda and Patrick were watching her sons.

The photographer walked in the hallway in time to take a picture of the military academy students descending the stairs in their finery.

The photographer took a family photograph.

Everyone called for Beverly to come.

Beverly ran to them and stood in the back with Patrick and Brenda because they were taller than everyone else.

Jose opened the door and Gen walked in.

Gen was dressed in her best fur coat.

Brenda peeped and waved and said, “Come on Gen.”

Gen ran and took a picture with the family.

Jose was standing at the door and watching the family take pictures.

There was a knock on the door.

Jose thought, “I know that knock.”

He opened the door and Former governor and Gail jumped n the house along with his sister Lillian and her husband Nathaniel.

They brought Caleb and Stewart who were dressed in their military attire.

The boys saw Caleb and Stewart.

They yelled for them to come to take a picture.

The boys screaming scared Lillian for a moment.

Claressa and Alvin came to the house. They would leave out on Thursday for their new assignment.

Claressa said, “Who is that we heard their screaming outside?”

Jose nodded his head and said, “Them.”

Alvin looked at Jose.

Jose closed the door.

Claressa grabbed Alvin and ran to take a picture with Eleanor and Shirley.

Claressa and Alvin stared at Shirley.

Shirley knew she was pretty.

Eleanor looked at Claressa and Alvin.

Claressa looked at Eleanor.

She smiled at Shirley.

The other United States Ambassadors knocked on the door and Jose stepped back and looked at them through the window.

He opened the door and greeted them.

The governor was walking up with his wife.

Everyone was excited that a hospital was actually going to be built in their town.

The governor was happy that the hospital had been funded from the children’s trust fund for twenty years.

He told his wife the state can add a little each year and the hospital should be financially secure for at least twenty five years.

She was pleased.

Patrick peeped around the Christmas tree and said, “Brenda the ambassadors and the governor. We did not get security.”

Alvin looked at Patrick and said, “That’s alright Mr. Stith we have our drivers who are trained.”

Patrick looked at Alvin.

Alvin turned around.

Claressa and Eleanor snickered and grinned.

It was the same look Patrick would give Alvin all the time when they were growing up.

Brenda looked at Claressa and Eleanor and thought, “Heifers then and heifers now.”

The photographer said, “Mr. Stith I am retired military. I can help if any trouble.”  
Shirley turned and stared at the photographer.

Eleanor peeped in Shirley’s face and grabbed her by the waist.

The photographer snickered at Shirley.

Eleanor looked at the photographer.

Claressa waved for the ambassadors and the governor and his wife to join in the pictures.

The last person to arrive was the United States senator.

Jose saw him and opened the door.

He greeted Jose.

Jose bowed his head.

They waved for the United States senator to join the pictures.

He told them he would be leaving Thursday to stay in the capitol for the holidays.

Claressa and Alvin said, they and the other United States ambassadors will be on the train also on tomorrow.

Eleanor whined.

Claressa grabbed Eleanor and hugged her.

Brenda thought, “Good, so she won’t destroy my kitchen. Talking about letting her cook. With her no cooking self.”

Jose let everyone out the front door.

He locked the front door and put the bar across it.

Everyone was going to their carriages.

Percy, Caleb, Stewart, Bruce, Michael and Thomas started running around the yard and yelling.

Claressa looked at Eleanor.

Lillian yelled and ran and grabbed Stewart and Caleb.

Gary was driving one carriage.

Patrick and Brenda were in their carriage.

Eleanor said, “Hey, my sons get in the carriage with Gary.”

Gary looked at the boys and said, “You look nice.”

Gary swallowed and cried.

Eleanor knew what he was thinking.

The boys stopped and looked at Gary.

Michael sat in the front seat with Gary and held his hand.

Eleanor looked at her sons.

Jose drove the other carriage from the back and Eleanor and Shirley and Gen rode in that carriage.

Gen sat in front with Jose.

She was so excited.

Shirley was happy at Gen’s happiness.

Gen said, “This is a big event Shirley. Trust me.”

Eleanor was quiet and her boys were quiet all the way to the ceremony.

The boys were quiet during the ceremony.

Eleanor looked at them and exhaled.

She turned her back quickly for a moment and closed her eyes.

When she opened her eyes she was looking in the eyes of Claressa, Alvin, Jose and Gary.

She could not fake a smile.

She was aching in her heart for Joseph.

Shirley looked back and saw Eleanor.

She walked to Eleanor and put her head on Eleanor’s shoulder and Eleanor leaned her head on Shirley’s head.

The photographer walked up and said, “That’s lovely. Let me take…”

Before he finished, Shirley jumped from Eleanor’s shoulder and stood tall and pressed her clothes. And looked directly into the camera.

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

Claressa and Alvin laughed.

The commanders from the new military headquarters walked across the street,

Percy, Stewart, Caleb, Michael, Thomas and Bruce stood and watched every movement of the commanders.

Lillian watched the boys and said, “GOD I hope they don’t start that screaming with the commanders here.”

Bryson and Nathaniel looked at the commanders.

Steven, Emilou and Alicia were there at the ground breaking ceremony.

They were well dressed.

Eleanor looked at Alicia and Emilou and said, “You look so pretty.

Alicia said, “Miss Lorraine picked these out for us. Is she at the house? I want to thank her.”

Eleanor did not say anything she stood and looked at Alicia.

Steven turned and looked at Eleanor.

Brenda walked over and said, “I’m sorry no one told you. Lorraine is in the hospital in Philadelphia. She has been in the hospital since the week after Thanksgiving.”

Steven’s mouth dropped open.

Alicia was stuttering.

Brenda said, “It’s fine. Just pray for Lorraine.”

Emilou reached and held Eleanor’s hand.

Brenda smiled.

Shirley reached for Alicia and they walked to the tent and sat.

Brenda said, “Steven, I expect to see you this evening at the reception and tomorrow at the dinner.”

Patrick heard them talking about Lorraine.

Emilou said, “Miss Eleanor come out the cold and lets get some hot chocolate.”

Steven turned and said, “No Emilou.”

Brenda hollered.

Patrick reached for Steven as he stared at Emilou.

He said, “Come Steven and let me introduce you to the headquarters commanders.”

Steven was still looking at Emilou and said, “I met them before,”

Patrick said, “Come.”

Steven turned and looked at Patrick.

He saw the commanders looking at him.

Steven turned his head.

Brenda was tickle.

She wondered what Steven did for the commanders to be looking at him. h

Percy walked behind Patrick and Steven.

He wanted to see the commanders’ patches.

Patrick introduced Steven to the commanders.

Bruce and Caleb walked to Percy and they were looking at all the patches and insignias of the commanders and whispering.

Eleanor walked out the tent with Claressa.

She saw her sons interested in the commanders and said, ‘Thank God they are quiet. She told Claressa what Beverly told them last night.

Claressa and Alvin were laughing so hard.

Claressa said, “Where is Aunt Bev?”

Eleanor looked around and said, “I don’t see her. I have to watch her and Nadine. They can drink some scotch.”

Alvin looked and did not see her.

He walked to the other ambassadors.

Eleanor said, “Claressa you and Alvin can’t leave until the spring why are you leaving after fourteen years?”

Claressa said, “Really I don’t want to be here for the holidays. This is great to be dressed and out and about in our hometown. But I haven’t gotten over mother and especially father. I miss them so badly.”

Eleanor touched Claressa gloved hand and said, “I can’t imagine. I don’t ever want to imagine that.”

Gail and Gen were standing and looking at the commanders and trying to figure out who was married and who was not.

Mike and John were by the wagon watching Gen and Gail.

Mike said, “I told you she is a bird. She is an old bird, but a bird.”

John snickered.

The commanders were watching Gen and Gail.

Bryson and Nathaniel turned around to see who the commanders had taken interest in.

Bryson turned back around and said, “They can have Gail.”

Nathaniel hollered.

Mike and John looked at Nathaniel.

Mike said, “That governor don’t care. He will say anything to anybody. And he is right most of the time.”

John said, “And what about the other times.”

Mike said, “Who is going to miss with him.”

Commander Tyler said, ”We remember Steven when he was working up his measurements.”

Brenda was listening.

She saw the commanders snickered.

She knew Steven did something clumsy.

Brenda saw her grandsons looking at the patches on the commanders.

She saw Michael, Stewart and Thomas run up and watch the commanders.

The commanders looked at them and walked into the refreshment tent.

Dan and Sabrina were eager to serve the guests.

One of the commanders looked at Sabrina and said, “Will you be at the reception tonight?”

Sabrina cut her eyes at the commander and said, “Yes sir.”

He said, “I’ll see you then.”

Sabrina nodded her head.

The commander got a cop of mulled cider and walked to the other commanders.

He looked back at Sabrina.

Sabrina looked at the commander under eyed.

The commander gave her a sly grin.

Dan said, “You better make sure he is not married. I saw you looking at his finger. A lot of married men don’t wear their rings.”

Sabrina looked back at the commander and grinned.

Dan looked and said, “If you miss up Eleanor and Brenda will fire you.”

Commander Tyler was talking to the governor and his wife.

He said, “What are you two drinking?”  
The governor looked around and said, “Hot buttered rum. You have to ask for it from the man.”

The commander looked at Dan.

Dan knew what the commander wanted.

He started heating up the rum.

The commander walked over and said, “Just a little.”

Dan said, “Yes sir.”

Dan made the commander the hot butter rum.

The commander tasted it and looked at Dan.

He slightly nodded and was about to walk away and he said, “Will this be served at the reception this evening?”

Dan said, “Yes sir.”

Commander Tyler said, “Very good.”

The boys walked in.

Commander Tyler looked at them.

Percy ran to the hot beverages and said, “Do I smell rum?”

Sabrina handed him hot chocolate with whip cream.

Percy looked around and looked at Sabrina.

She stared at him.

Eleanor stepped back so she can look in the tent at her children.

The photographer walked in the tent and looked at Dan.

Dan poured the remaining hot buttered rum in a cup and gave it to him.

Denise and Nathan were at the ground- breaking ceremony.

They walked in the tent and hot chocolate.

Denise wanted to try the mulled cider.

She loved it.

Jose was sitting against the wall.

He saw Nathan and Denise and walked to them and spoke.

Jose said, “Nathan and Denise, where are you going to have your reception Sunday? Patrick wants to know.”

Nathan looked at Jose then he looked at Denise.

He said, “We never thought about it.”

Jose said, “It is Wednesday. Peter has to know where to take the cake and punch.”

Nathan said, “I don’t know.”

Denise was standing there quiet.

Jose said, Patrick wanted to know if it was going to be at the church, the Rest stop or the house.”

Nathan said, “I don’t know.”

Jose said, “You need to know and tell Peter.”

Nathan turned to Denise and said, “Where honey?”

Denise said, “The Rest stop.”

Nathan said, “Are you sure? Because the other workers won’t be able to make it.”

Dan was listening to them.

Denise said, “I want the former slaves to see there is hope for life and for a better life.”

Nathan said, “So is it.”

He looked around and saw Jose was about to sit with a half cup of hot chocolate with whip cream.

Nathan took Denise’s hand and they walked to Jose and were talking to him.

The governor’s wife turned and looked at Denise.

Everybody looked at the governor’s wife.

Nathan saw the governor’s wife.

He saw she was looking at Denise’s outfit.

Stanley and Alice walked in the tent.

Everybody greeted Stanley and Alice.

Shirley and Alicia walked to them and were.

The boys ran to Stanley.

He hugged them.

Stanley told them how great they looked in their uniforms.

Brenda walked in the refreshment tent and walked to Stanley and Alice.

They talked for a few minutes.

Brenda saw Nathan and Denise and walked them.

She greeted them.

Jose said, “They decided to have their wedding reception at the rest stop.”

Brenda was trying to think of the reason.

Denise smiled at Brenda and said, “I want the former slaves that are there to see hope of live and a better life.”

Brenda grinned and walked away.

Brenda said, “Has anyone seen Aunt Bev? I am ready to go.”

No one said anything.

Brenda walked to the hot beverage table and said, “Dan have you are Sabrina seen Beverly?”

They looked at Brenda and said, “No.”

Brenda said, “You can start shutting down now.”

Dan and Sabrina started boxing up the cupcakes and cookies.

Dan said, I over baked cookies and cupcakes.”

Sabrina smiled.

Brenda walked outside and started walking around the tent looking for Beverly.

Gen and Gail looked at Brenda.

They started looking around for Beverly.

Mag and Natalie had come and were leaving.

They were attending the reception and wanted to go home and take a nap and rest.

Mag told Brenda they would dress and attend the reception until first dark.

Patrick was talking to the commanders.

The commanders left and walked across the street.

One commander said, “Can you believe that five children had enough money to build a hospital and the governor said, it can run off their money for at least twenty years.”

Another commander said, “And the people can go for free.”

Commander Tyler said, “All things work out. The president built this headquarters to stop the mob. The mob was trying to take over the railroad which would have ended the children’s money. Because they could not take over the railroad the children had money to build a hospital that can help people for free and the government does not have to build nor support a hospital.”

They all laughed and entered the headquarters.

Brenda saw Steven, Alicia and Emilou leave.

Brenda walked to Patrick and said, “I want to know what Steven did, that made the commanders snicker.”

Patrick said, “I’ll tell you.”

Brenda said, “I don’t see Beverly.”

Patrick looked around and said, “Did she come?” Who did she ride with?”

Gary was walking out the tent with the boys.

They were talking about Joseph would have been proud of them.

Brenda and Patrick heard them.

Patrick said, “Gary who rode with you?”

Eleanor was coming out the refreshment tent.

She looked at Patrick.

Eleanor said, “Daddy, what’s wrong?”

Patrick said, “We can’t find Beverly. Did she come?”

Eleanor looked around and said, “She did not ride with us. Oh my God. We left her at the house.”

Brenda stomped her feet.

Gail said, “No Beverly was with us until we got here. I don’t know where she went.”

Mike and John said, “She’s here.”

Patrick and Brenda and Eleanor ran to the wagon.

Beverly was drunk and sleep.

Brenda said, “She was about to give me a scare.”

Patrick said, “She can ride back with us Brenda.”

Brenda said, “She’s drunk and sleep. How are we going to make it back?”

Robert and Bethany were leaving with Baby Robert.

They walked across the street to their carriage and rode down the street to home.

Stanley and Robert were talking inside the tent about building a hotel near the hospital.

The ambassadors left and the United States senator.

The governor and his wife were talking to a couple.

Gen looked and said, “I would be damn. Come on Gail.”

She grabbed Gail by the arm and pulled her to the couple.

The governor and his wife left.

Geb said, “Hello. I did not see you. Were you here all the time?”

They said, “Yes.”

Gail grinned and spoke, “She remembered them from the capitol.

Brenda, Patrick and Eleanor were walking back to their carriages.

Mike and John said they would take Beverly home and inside the house.

Gen said, “Patrick and Brenda.”

Eleanor looked and walked with her parents to Gen.

Jose was walking out the refreshment tent and saw Gen.

He stood still for a minute.

Gen saw Jose and said, “Come Jose.”

Gail snickered.

Brenda looked at Gail.

Jose rolled his eyes at Gen and slowly walked over.

The man and woman looked at Jose.

Gen grinned at Jose and said, “Patrick and Brenda Stith I want to introduce you to state senator Wallace Caldwell and his wife Jennifer. They are Jose’s parents.”

Brenda and Patrick were shocked.

Eleanor chuckled.

She knew Gen did it for a reason.

Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor greeted Senator Wallace and his wife.

Mrs. Jennifer said, “A beautiful ground- breaking ceremony. And an important one.”

She was looking around the area.

Patrick said are you coming to the reception tonight?”

Jennifer said, “Reception tonight?”

Jose said, “Mother, it would be too much for you and father to go back to the capitol and dress and come back.”

Eleanor said, “Jose we have plenty of room at the house.”

Patrick said, “You two can stay at our house after the reception and don’t take that long ride home.”

Brenda said, “We are having a formal dinner tomorrow in case you want to attend.”

Senator Wallace looked at Patrick and Brenda and then the grinning Eleanor.

He said, “We would love to. It will give us a chance to see Jose.”

Patrick said the reception starts at five pm.”

Senator Wallace said, “We must go home and pack and return to change clothes.”

Jose’s mother grinned and blew a kiss at him.

She and her husband walked to their carriage.

Jose stood seething at Gen.

They looked back at the senator and his wife.

Patrick and Brenda were smiling.

Mike and John were passing Patrick and Brenda.

Brenda said, “How much is left?”

Mike said, “A lot ma am.”

Brenda said, “Do you know where the orphanage is?”

John said, “A block from where Mike lives.”

Gail was laughing and watching the argument between Gen, Jose and Eleanor.

Brenda said, “Take Beverly home and to her room and you can leave early and take the leftovers to the orphanage.”

Mike said, “Yes ma am.”

Bryson and Nathaniel had pulled the carriage around for Gail and the boys to get in.

He saw Gen moving her head and Gail laughing and he knew somebody was fussing.

Patrick and Brenda turned from seeing Beverly in the wagon to staring at Gen, Jose and Eleanor shaking their heads and pointing their fingers at each other.

Gail saw Brenda and Patrick and tried to straighten her face.

The boys and Gary left.

Stanley and Alice were walking to their carriage.

Nathan and Denise were talking to Stanley and Alice and they walked around the corner to their carriage.

Brenda cut her eyes around to see who was left that could see the three of them cutting up on the corner.

Gail was standing to listen.

Bryson said, “Gail bring your tail on.”

Gail hugged a stunned Patrick and Brenda and went to the carriage.

Bryson said, “Gail we have to finish packing and get the maid paid today before we leave. You were being nosey.”

Gail said, “I am going to that reception this evening.”

Eleanor caught two figures and she knew it was Brenda and Patrick.

She started walking to the carriage.

Shirley was sitting in the back of the carriage peeping out at Eleanor and Gen.

She wondered what they were fussing about.

Gen said, “Now Jose when I say give me gin. You give me gin.”

Jose saw Patrick and Brenda looking at them.

He quickly turned and caught up with Eleanor.

He said, “You heifer. You didn’t let nobody now your momma and daddy were standing there. They are going to call me in the office when we get back.”

Eleanor said, “Owe.”

Jose looked at Eleanor.

Gen turned to walk with Eleanor and Jose.

Patrick caught Gen by the hand and said, “No ma am you ride with us.”

Gen smirked.

Patrick held Gen by one hand and Brenda by the other hand.

Dan walked out the refreshment and watched them.

Dan grinned, because he knew Gen had done something that Patrick and Brenda wanted to talk to her about.

He and Sabrina stayed until the vendor came and took the tent, chairs, stoves, dishes.

Sabrina was handing the children the balloons.

The commander was watching Sabrina from the headquarters.

Dan was standing outside the covered wagon.

Sabrina was seated in the covered wagon with two blankets.

Head Commander Tyler walked up and watched Dan and Sabrina.

Commander Tyler, “A little young for you.”

The commander said, “I deserve it.”

Commander Tyler walked away.

Patrick seated Gen in the back seat of their custom buggy.

Then he seated Brenda.

Patrick walked around the buggy and stepped in the buggy.

He nodded at Dan because he was staring at Gen with a smirk on his face.

Patrick pulled around and sped behind Jose.

Dan burst out laughing.

Sabrina peeped around the covered wagon to see what Dan was laughing about.

She said, “What Dan?”

Dan said, “Gen got caught by Patrick and Brenda doing something. I don’t need to know what it was. I know it must be funny.”

Dan saw the commanders standing on the balcony looking at them.

Dan became nervous.

He hopped in the wagon and said, “Those commanders are standing over on the balcony watching us.”

Sabrina said, “If it is the one with the black jacket on he is watching me.”

Dan said, “Sabrina be careful. Those men will not allow anyone to mess over them.”

Sabrina giggled.

Dan looked at her.

He sped behind Patrick and Brenda.

Brenda turned around to Gen and said, “What was that Gen?”

Patrick looked back at Gen.

Gen said, “I told Jose to give me some gin one night and he would not. So I knew he did not want his parents to ever meet you and Patrick…”

Gen began to flick lint from her fur coat and said, “When his parents showed up today…”

Patrick said, “You decided to get him back?”

Gen looked at Patrick and said, “Of course.”

Brenda laughed and said, “Gen. You need to stop.”

Gen said, “If I stop who else would make you and Patrick laugh.”

Patrick said, “Beverly is moving up.”

They laughed.

Brenda told Gen what Beverly said the night before.

They all laughed.

Brenda said, “Gen why Jose did not want us to meet his parents.”

Gen said, “They are racist.”

Brenda stared at Gen.

Patrick swallowed.

Brenda said, “We invited them to stay under our roof.”

Patrick said, “I’ll make it up to Brenda.”

Brenda reached over and touched Patrick’s arm and, “Jose told us his parents were racists.”

Patrick said, “That’s right. I am still sorry Brenda.”

Brenda said, “We will get through this.”

Gen turned her head and said, “You can put them by my suite. I’ll keep tabs on them.”

Brenda looked t Gen and said, “You plan on staying tonight Gen?”

Gen was looking out the buggy and said, “I’m that friend that always stay.”  
Patrick said, “Ok Gen. You can stay also.”

Gen said, “Thank you Patrick and Brenda. You know I love parties. I did not want to be living you all late. Hardly no one is on my street. They are all gone out of town for Christmas.”

Brenda said, “Where is the governor going for the holidays?”

Gen said, “I don’t know. I hope Shirley will be moved in for next Christmas. I can have someone close to me.”

Patrick laughed out.

Gen looked at Patrick.

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Do you really think Shirley will live in that big house with her and a maid. Especially at Christmas?”

Brenda laughed and said, “She will probably decorate it and have every room decorated and have her tea party and a Christmas Eve brunch. But when evening start she’ll be at the house.”

Patrick said, “We may have to spend a or two over there with her.”

Patrick turned down the street after Jose.

Gen looked around and said, “Jose bought the house in front of Abigail.”

Brenda said, “Where?”

Gen said, “You see Jose is slowing up. I know he wished it was opened to put his parents.”

Gen and Brenda hollered.

Patrick said, “It’s a nice house.”

Brenda looked across the street and said, “Abigail has movers.”

Gen said, Huh.”

Jose jumped out the carriage and ran to the house.

Shirley jumped out the carriage and walked to the Jose.

Jose ran into the house and looked around.

Shirley was walking around the side of the side when Jose came out the house and locked the door.

Eleanor called Shirley but she did not hear.

Eleanor pointed and yelled at Jose, “Go and get her.”

Jose walked around the side and yelled, “Shirley come on her.”

Jose walked to Patrick and said, “Can Eleanor ride back with you?”

Brenda and Gen were snickering.

Patrick was calm and said, “Why?”

Shirley walked to the buggy.

Jose said, “I promised Maureen that I would her a meal every day until she return to work and Robert and Bethany’s restaurant is not far.”

Jose looked at Shirley and said, “That’s alright. Let me take them two home.”  
Gen was about to burst.

She started slapping her thigh.

Patrick was calm and said, “Alright Jose.”

Brenda said, “Shirley go and get in the carriage.”

Eleanor was half- way out the carriage watching Jose and Shirley.

Jose helped Shirley in the carriage.

Patrick and Brenda said, “Listen.”

Gen said, “I wonder if Abigail and that fat husband of hers will be at the reception tonight?”

Brenda said, “What are they fussing about? We can hear them all the way back here.”

Gen was sitting up to hear.

Brenda said, “Gen what was Eleanor and Jose fussing about. I don’t know.”

Patrick said, “You don’t know? You were standing right there.”

Gen said, “I am old I was trying to stay on what I was fussing about. It was a three way fight.”

Brenda laughed the whole way home.

Patrick shook his head.

He said, “Gen how is your divorce going?”

Gen said, “it is complete and have to signed off by the judge when he gets back at the new year.”

Brenda looked at Gen and said, “How do you feel?”

Gen turned her head and said, “Like a failure. My true love is dead. The one I thought I could have fun with betrayed me and my only child my son is a drug dealer and addict. How I feel Brenda? Like I need a glass of gin that Jose thinks he control.”

Brenda said, “Gen, Jose was looking out for your best interest.”

Gen said, “I want to be drunk like Beverly.”

Brenda said, Mabel and Curtis stole the money I sent for the flowers, they stole the big boys brand new suits and shoes Beverly bought, the brand new carriage and the two new horses.”

Gen stared and said, “Why?”

Patrick said, “Who knows.”

Gen said, “I thought Mabel and Skip’s son was involved.”

Patrick said, “He is in his year of medical school and he does not need Mabel.”

Brenda said, “Beverly rushed and came here to help with the Christmas decorations and put finish touches throughout the house.”

Gen said, “The house is beautiful, Especially the bows on the lanterns outside and the candles in the windows. I want to come outside tonight and walk and see how the house looks with the lights.”

Patrick, Brenda and Gen turned and looked at Gen beautiful cottage style house and Shirley’s estate.

Brenda smiled at Shirley’s estate.

She said, “Gen you are right no one is on the street.”

Gen said, “I’ll come back in the morning and check on my house and the horses. Those horses are strange.”

Patrick said, “Where did you get them from?”

Gen said, “Jessie.”

Patrick said, “Those horses were the mob horses. Specially trained.”

Gen said, “Damn. Ghost horses.”

Brenda was about to say something and Gen’s comment threw her off.

Brenda said, “I have told you and Mag about talking about ghosts. All you do is make yourself scared.”

Gen said, “I’ve been sleeping downstairs on the couch. Last night I slept in my bed. I have to get use to sleeping in the house alone again. I had not planned on that.”

Gen looked out the buggy.

Brenda started back laughing and said, “Three way fight Gen.”

Gen said, ”Yes.”

Gen said, “I think I am going to take a nap, at your house like it is mine.”

Brenda and Patrick listened.

Gen said, “You are not doing dinner for the family?”

Brenda said, “No. The reception is going to be food. We thought about the fact that is early for dinner. Peter is cooking some new dishes that we tried and loved. Along with mini meatballs and spaghetti and different fried vegetables and beef on a stick. I am excited. Peter is good about making the food look appetizing. We are not using dinner plates but party plates from the vendor. They should be at the house with the plates and forks and napkins.”

Gen said, “Brenda, why didn’t you use your china and utensils?”

Brenda said, “To be honest Gen, I did not want those people to use my fine china.”

Gen said, “Alright. I understand Abigail and the Caldwells.”

Brenda said, “Some friends we had to let go after all of these years.”

They rode to their house.

Gen was turning around and said, “See the lanterns?”

Brenda screamed.

Patrick jumped.

Brenda said, “They are beautiful. Look at the windows Patrick.”

Patrick said, “You are right the house is beautiful and I did not notice the decorations when we left today. I am coming outside tonight also to get a better look at the house at night with the lights.”

Brenda said, “Gen, don’t drink before the reception and put food on your stomach. Peter and Thomas have baked all kind of breads. Peter bake breads with different cheeses and butter. Put something on your stomach before you start drinking.”

Gen said, “I am hungry. I did not have breakfast and I didn’t eat those sweets in the refreshment tent. I know I am taking a nap.”

Patrick pulled to the front of the house.

Mike and John ran in the house and carried Beverly into her suite and put her on the bed.

Nadine looked at them as they tossed her on the bed.

Nadine had Gen’s bags brought in the house and put in the last suite of the hall.

She had them to take Gen’s buggy and horse around to the stables.

Gen looked around and said, “I guess my horse is in the stables.”

Jose pulled around the front and jumped out the carriage and helped Eleanor and Shirley out.

He sped around the back of the house.

He took the carriage and horses to the stables.

Jose ran in the house and went to the suites.

Brenda and Patrick and Gen saw Jose.

Brenda said, “Jose, give your parents the last room on the hall across from Gen so they can be comfortable.”

Jose primped his mouth.

Mike left for the day.

He carried the two large boxes to the orphanage.

Gary rod the carriage and horses to the stables.

The boys ran in the house and changed clothes.

Gen went to her suite and undressed and slept until an hour before the reception.

Brenda walked down the hall to Beverly and heard her snoring before she got to her room.

Brenda opened the door and saw the sleeping Beverly on her side and fully dressed.

Brenda closed the door and walked to Patrick in his office checking on messages and telegrams.

Brenda walked in the office and Patrick said, “Nothing. We have a couple hours to relax before this reception.”

Patrick twisted his mouth and grinned.

Brenda grinned.

They sat for a few minutes and were happy.

Brenda was staring off in space and grinning.

Patrick was staring at his desk and grinning.

Brenda finally turned to Patrick and he looked at Brenda and they continued to grin in silence.

Jose was walking through the house and checking all the fine details for the evening reception.

The maids had changed into their sophisticated uniforms that Eleanor ordered for the evening and special events at the house.

Stephen changed into his black suit, white shirt and black tie Eleanor ordered for him, Jose and Steven.

The workers were going through the house double checking on the hot bath water.

Peter, Thomas and Dan were finishing the dishes for the reception.

They prepared the main dishes and mini sandwiches, vegetables and fruits.

Peter made several celebratory cakes.

Eleanor ordered the cakes.

The cakes were carried into the foyer and Peter perfectly displayed the cakes.

Jose and Eleanor were trying to locate the other bottles of champagne that should have been in the house.

They only located seventy three bottles.

Eleanor said, “We just have to serve the champagne when we cut the cakes.”

Steven changed into his uniform.

He and Jose brought the bottles of champagne into the foyer next to the cakes.

The photographer was taking pictures of the cakes and the workers.

The boys had changed into their formal military academy uniforms.

Eleanor was walking up the steps to change clothes.

The photographers started taking the photographs with the boys.

Eleanor’s heart was full.

She looked downstairs and saw her sons, whom she was about to give up on and remove out of her life.

She watched them happy that their money was building a hospital that would help children and people in their town.

She was especially happy they did not complain about giving up half of their inheritance.

Shirley finally opened her door and walked out.

Eleanor heard Shirley’s door, but she was still watching her sons.

Shirley looked at Eleanor and wanted her to looked at her and give her approval for how she looked.

Shirley walked to Eleanor and stood next to her.

Eleanor slowly turned and looked at Shirley and smiled through her tears.

She said, “Shirley you are a beautiful young lady inside and outside.

Shirley smiled and turned around.

She straighten her back.

Held her shoulders back and lifted her head and smiled.

Shirley began to descend the grand staircase.

Eleanor gave Shirley the diamond earrings to wear.

Shirley made sure her hair style was back off her face and neck to show the earrings.

Ruth had curled Shirley’s hair back.

Shirley was so pleased with the hair style Ruth gave her.

Ruth straighten up Shirley’s room and took her linens and clothes downstairs to the laundry.

But Ruth and watched Shirley descend the grand staircase.

Eleanor looked back to see who was standing back.

Eleanor saw Ruth watching Shirley.

Ruth looked at Eleanor and nodded towards Shirley.

Eleanor knew that meant that Ruth was proud of Shirley and she was worth everything the family and the workers did for her.

Eleanor saw Patrick and Brenda walk to the end of the hallway and watched Shirley.

Gen was coming out of her suite and was running up the hall.

Then she saw Shirley descend the grand staircase.

Gen stopped and looked at Shirley and began to cry.

Beverly was coming out her suite with her red dress on.

She looked at Gen’s formal dress.

They stood and watched Shirley.

Gen and Beverly walked to the end of the hall.

Gen continued to cry until they reached Patrick and Brenda.

Brenda looked back at Gen and Beverly.

Patrick and Brenda were walking out their suite and saw the boys and the photographer busy taking their photographs.

Patrick and Brenda Saw Eleanor and Shirley on the top of the stairs.

They saw Shirley as she started her descent down the grand staircase.

The photographer had his head down.

Jose and Steven were walking through the hall and saw Shirley.

They stopped and looked at her.

There was knocking on the front door.

Jose looked back and turned around.

Patrick and Brenda looked back towards the front door.

Gen said, “It’s Jose’s parents. He doesn’t care about them.”

Beverly touched her heart as she watched Shirley.

Steven turned and walked to the door and opened it.

He opened the door and Jose’s parents walked in and saw Shirley descending the staircase.

Jose’s parents told him they were surprised that Eleanor’s children turned out white.

Gen peeped around the Christmas tree to see Jose’s parents faces.

They were stunned at the house.

The men from the stables took their carriage to the stables.

The other workers were lighting the lights.

Shirley looked at her grandpa, grandma, Gen and Beverly and smiled and continued to walk down the stairs.

She reached the bottom of the stairs.

The photographer took a few photographs of her descending the grand staircase.

Jose turned around and saw his father and mother.

He rolled his eyes at Patrick and walked to his parents.

Patrick said, “Did he just roll his eyes at me?”

Gen said, “I believe something bad really happened between Jose and his parents.’

Patrick said, “I am still his boss. He works for me. Brenda plays with him and Eleanor. I never have and will not.”

Brenda was thinking.

She said, “Gen, was Jose’s woman black?”

Gen saw Jose with his parents and said, “Well, good evening.”

Senator Wallace and Jennifer spoke.

Patrick and Brenda greeted them.

Beverly spoke and went to the photographer while he took pictures of the children and their cakes.

Jose stood with his parents’ bags and said, “Excuse me.”

Jose’s parents looked at him.

Jose said, “You really have only twenty five minutes to dress. This way please.”

Jose was speedily walking down the hall.

Gen said, “I want to go outside and see the lights.”

She turned and ran behind Jose.

Jennifer said, “The lights and the house is beautiful.”

Patrick ran to their suite and got his coat and Brenda’s wrap.

Eleanor ran to her room and dressed.

She put on the last dress she bought in Paris.

She did not shop like she and Joseph wanted her to after his death.

The dress was emerald green.

She sat and looked at her hair and took it down.

She wore the earrings Joseph gave her everyday.

Eleanor realized the pearl earrings did not go with her dress.

She sat for a few minutes to decide what to do.

Eleanor felt she was betraying Joseph by taking the pearl earrings off.

Then she heard her children running and playing

Eleanor thought, “Joseph would want me to look great and have fun. I wear these earrings every day for a memorial of him.”

He wants me to live.

Eleanor stood and walked to her safe and opened it.

She took out her emerald earrings and sat at her vanity and put them on.

Patrick walked up the stairs and saw Eleanor putting on the earrings.

She turned and looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “You are beautiful Eleanor.”

The boys ran into her room and yelled, “Come on momma!”

Eleanor looked at her boys as they ran out her room and down the hall.

Patrick said, “We are walking outside to the lights and coming back in. We have about twenty minutes before the guests arrive.”

Eleanor thought for a minute and said, “It is cold outside.”

Patrick said, “Ok.”

The boys were running and putting on their coats and scarves and Percy made sure he put on his hat and gloves.

They all ran downstairs and out the front door.

Shirley was standing downstairs and did not to walk up the stairs.

Gen said, “Shirley you can get under my coat with me. We are only going to be outside for a minute.”

The photographer turned and saw Gen.

Gen posed for several photographs for the photographer.

Patrick saw them as he walked down the hall and he grinned.

Brenda laughed out.

Beverly ran pass Patrick and went into her room and put on her coat and wrap.

She caught them at the front door.

They walked out the house and up the yard to see the lanterns and the driveway.

Brenda and Patrick’s mouths dropped open.

Brenda was leaning her head on Patrick’s chest.

She said Beverly you did a great job.’

Beverly started to grin.

Patrick looked at Beverly.

He thought, ”She needed that.”

Eleanor finally ran out the house with her coat, scarf, gloves and a wrap on.

She ran to everyone and looked back at the house and said, “God.”

Eleanor started walking fast to the house.

Jose changed into his uniform and was walking through the billiards room.

Eleanor ran upstairs and put up her coat, scarf, wrap and gloves.

She sat at her vanity to press her hair down.

Shirley ran in the house behind Eleanor and looked at herself in the mirror walked to the parlor and sat next to the fire.

Jose walked through the house and saw his mother and father had quickly changed and was walking to the foyer.

Jose stood and watched them.

Robert, Bethany and Robert Jr, arrived and walked through the front door.

Robert Jr. ran through the foyer and stopped at the Christmas tree and looked at it.

Bethany was running behind him.

Brenda and Patrick were standing on the front porch and looked in the house and saw Robert Jr. they laughed.

Bryson pulled up.

Patrick and Brenda laughed and walked off the porch to greet their dear friends.

Brenda said, “I thought you all were packing to leave tomorrow,”

Gail said, “I had to come to this reception to see Jose’s parents’ reaction.”

Patrick whispered, “We made a mistake and invited them to overnight here.”

Gail was shocked and leaned towards them and said, “What?’

Bryson stood still.

Patrick said, “My mistake.”

Bryson still did not say anything.

Brenda looked at Bryson.

The current governor and his wife and head of staff pulled up.

The stablemen took their carriage.

They were all standing outside laughing and talking.

Jose said, “Robert you and Bethany knows where the music room is.”

Robert and Bethany started to walk to the music room.

Jose bent down and said, “Hey Robert Jr.”

Bethany laughed and held Robert Jr. by his hand.

Shirley walked to the parlor door and saw Robert, Bethany and Robert Jr, and grinned and spoke.

Bethany shook her head at Shirley and said, “Miracle.”

Eleanor was standing at the top of the stairs watching and listening.

She was especially watching Jose’s parents.

Bethany looked up at Eleanor.

Eleanor smiled and nodded.

Jose said, Bethany, Mellissa will be babysitting.”

Bethany said, “Mellissa curse more than you.”

Jose’s father whispered to his mother.

Eleanor turned her head in embarrassment.

Jose said, “She’s the only one who could.”

Everyone in the house heard the crowd gathering outside.

Eleanor looked at the celebratory cakes and her heart swelled with pride in her.

She said, “Joseph, thank you my love.”

She felt a smile and she knew she could never explain that moment.

Jose looked at his mother and father and said, “You can stay here or go in the parlor.”

Wallace said, “We will take our time and walk to the parlor.”

Jose stated at his father.

Eleanor wondered what was that about.

Steven was standing at the door and peeping outside.

Jose said, “Steven open the door for those who want to come in.”

Emilou ran inside the door and yelled, “It’s cold outside.”

She began to pull off her coat.

Shirley was standing in the parlor doorway.

Emilou ran to Shirley.

She looked at the staircase and said, “Hey Miss Eleanor.”

Jose’s parents jumped and looked at the majestic looking Eleanor standing at the top of the grand staircase.

Jose turned and watched his parents.

Eleanor looked at Emilou and smiled.

Ruth ran and took Emilou’s coat.

Shirley helped her out of her hat, scarf and gloves.

Shirley gave them to Ruth.

Ruth said, “Emilou, are you spending the night or going home?”

Emilou said, “I don’t know.”

She turned to Shirley and said, “Where’s the cakes?”

Eleanor knew she did not want Emilou running through the guests.

Shirley took Emilou’s hand and walked her to the cakes.

Emilou said, “Your names are written in your favorite color?”

Shirley said, “I don’t know.”

Emilou yelled up the stairs and said, “Miss Eleanor are their names in their favorite color?”

Eleanor said, “Yes Emilou. You are very smart to see that.”

Steven and Alicia rushed in the house behind Emilou.

Alicia told Ruth, “No ma am we won’t be staying the night.”

Steven looked at the Caldwells and said, “Good evening.”

Eleanor was watching Jose’s parents reaction to Steven.

Jose stepped back to watch his parents response to Steven.

They were cordial.

Alicia stared at the Caldwells she did not speak.

Ruth was watching Jose’s parents.

She walked up and Steven and Alicia pulled off their coats, scarves, hats and gloves and gave them to Ruth.

The governor and his wife and commander Tyler and his wife walked in the house.

The commander’s wife was impressed with the inside decorations.

Sabrina, Theresa, Rita and seven more maids walked through the house with trays of hors ‘oeuvres and plates and forks.

The commanders walked through the door.

The commander who was flirting with Sabrina walked in.

Sabrina cut her eyes at her and bit her lips with a sly grin.

Alicia and Shirley looked at Sabrina and then they looked at the commanders trying to see who Sabrina was grinning at.

The commander walked straight to Sabrina and stood in front of her and she grinned.

Alicia and Shirley were giggling.

Eleanor was looking at the commander and thought he was bold.

Jose and Steven opened the double doors and Brenda, Patrick, Gail, Bryson, Claressa and Alvin walked in with Mag, Natalie, Josiah, the United States senator, Lee Richardson and the United States ambassadors.

Eleanor began her descent down the grand staircase.

She smiled and warmly welcomed everyone to the house.

Gen walked in with John Jr. and his new wife Lorretta.

Gen saw Eleanor walking down the grand staircase and said, “Joseph, I hope you see her.”

John looked at Gen and smiled.

Eleanor walked to Jennifer and Wallace and spoke.

She walked and reached her hand out to Emilou and said, “Come and get a bite to eat before you eat some sweets.”

Her boys stormed into the house.

Ruth and three maids and Stephen were busy getting the coats and scarves and putting them in the banquet room.

Eleanor walked with Emilou to Sabrina and smiled at the commander.

The commander grinned and stepped back.

Commander Tyler watched his commander.

Eleanor took a plate and put a sandwich on it.

They walked into the formal dining room and saw all the food.

Jose was standing at the door peeping out.

Steven said, “Jose, Dan said serve the rack of lamb now?’

Michael yelled, “Lamb!”

Eleanor was sick of Michael and the lamb.

She stopped and said, “Not tonight Michael.”

The commander and his wife were walking to the formal dining room.

They heard Michael and they heard Eleanor.

Commander Tyler’s wife grinned.

Eleanor and Emilou stepped around the corner to look at Michael.

Eleanor was exacerbated.

Commander Tyler and his wife slightly grinned.

Eleanor walked and looked at Michael as he was about to throw a temper tantrum.

Commander Tyler stood and looked at Michael.

Jose was tickle.

Steven stood and stared at Michael.

Michael was about to explode he did not want the commander to see him lose his temper.

Jose turned his head and looked out the window.

Eleanor stood and stared at Michael.

Emilou looked at Michael.

Commander Tyler’s wife said, “That stops the rest of us from enjoying the rack of lamb?”

Commander Tyler turned and stared at his wife.

Michael straighten up.

Jose turned from the door and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Yes for tonight. I’ll reserve that for dinner tonight.”

She looked back at Michael.

Michael stared at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Mrs. Tyler there is plenty of appealing dishes in here.”

Commander Tyler and his wife pass Eleanor and Emilou and walked into the formal dining room.

Mrs. Tyler said, “Oh God. How wonderful.”

Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell pass Eleanor and went into the formal dining room.

Percy was standing back watching everybody.

He rushed across the hall and went into the formal dining room.

The chairs were lined against the wall.

The boys had on their ceremony military uniforms.

They knew not to dishonor their uniforms.

Bruce walked to Michael and whispered to him.

The other commanders saw Bruce.

Michael walked with Bruce pass Eleanor and Emilou.

Thomas was watching and ran to Emilou and said, “Come Emilou and get some food.”

Eleanor said, “Only a little.”

Jose was peeping.

He and Steven opened the double doors to the house and the state different official walked in with their spouses.

Stephen and Dan were making the beverages.

Dan walked in the formal dining room and was watching the food.

Michael said, “Dan.”

Commander Tyler looked at Michael.

Mrs. Tyler said, “He is determined to get that lamb chop. He is so cute.”

Commander Tyler said, “it seems that his mother is not tolerating it. It does not matter how cute he is.”

Dan walked to Michael and bent down.

Michael said, “Where the rack of lamb?”

Eleanor walked in the dining room and saw Dan bent down talking to Michael.

Eleanor stood and watched Michael.

Commander saw Eleanor.

Claressa walked in and stood next to Eleanor.

Commander Tyler saw Claressa and said, “What a striking woman.”

Mrs. Tyler looked at her husband.

Eleanor said, “Michael is trying to manipulate himself to get a rack of lamb on the table.”

Commander Tyler was talking to Bruce.

Mrs. Tyler wanted to know more about the striking woman.

She walked to Eleanor and spoke to Claressa and said, “Your youngest love lamb chops.”

Eleanor saw Dan shake his head for no.

Michael primped his mouth.

Mrs. Tyler said, “He is so cute.”

Eleanor was hot with Michael and said, “Thank you.”

She walked to Michael.

Emilou looked at her plate and yelled, “Thomas give me food.”

Alicia and Shirley were walking in the door.

Eleanor turned and rushed to Emilou.

Thomas said, “Momma, you said a little.”

Emilou said, “Little not none.”

Commander Tyler turned and looked at the red hair and green eyes little loud girl.

He saw Alicia and Shirley.

He knew Alicia and Emilou were kin because they had the same color red hair and green eyes.

Commander Tyler thought Shirley was pretty with the deformity.

Alicia rushed to Emilou and said, “Miss Eleanor, I will give her something to eat.”

Michael was looking at Eleanor and did not know what she was going to do.

Eleanor got two plates and walked to Michael.

She gave one plate to Michael and they walked the table and got food.

Thomas ran behind Eleanor and Michael and picked up a plate and begin to spin it on his finger.

Commander Tyler looked at Thomas.

Eleanor stopped and looked at Thomas.

Thomas stopped and put food on his plate and went and sat next to Percy.

Eleanor and Michael sat on the back wall.

Emilou and Shirley and Alicia got food and sat next to Eleanor and Michael and continued to talk about school and boys.

Emilou stared at Thomas.

Eleanor watched emilou.

Alicia saw Eleanor staring at Emilou and became sad.

She said, “Miss Eleanor what’s wrong?’

Shirley was looking.

Eleanor said, “Nothing. Emilou reminds me of my aunt. When she wants to eat she wants to eat.”

Shirley was relieved and laughed.

She looked up and Beverly was walking in the door with all the state dignitaries.

Shirley leaned to Alicia and said, “That’s my aunt.”

Shirley and Alicia laughed.

Dan walked back with a plate and a single lamb chop on it.

Michael looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at the lamb chop and said, “Michael, you can have it.”

She said, “You deserve a nice evening.”

Michael jumped up and walked to Dan.

Dan put the lamb chop on Michael’s plate.

Commander Tyler caught Dan’s attention.

Dan stood for a moment and nodded and walked and made two hot buttered rums.

Dan put them on serving tray and walked back in the formal dining room and gave the glasses to Commander Tyler.

Commander Tyler walked to his wife and gave her a glass.

Claressa and Mrs. Tyler laughed at Michael and his lamb chop.

Michael was happy and turned around and was eating and talking to Eleanor.

Alicia was holding Emilou’s plate.

Emilou sat next to Eleanor.

She ate the food Alicia put on her plate.

Gen walked in behind Beverly.

Gen filled her plate and sat next to Percy to hear the conversation Bruce and the commander were having.

The United States senator and one of the commanders were having a lengthy conversation. The United States senator saw the food and said, “Now I am hungry.”

He walked the table and tried different dishes.

He saw Michael had a plate of vegetables.

He said, “Michael you are growing up to be healthy and strong.”

They grinned.

The United States senator looked at Eleanor and said, “You are lovely.”

Eleanor blushed.

Claressa watched Eleanor and the senator.

Beverly sat next to Gen.

They sat and laughed and talked.

Jose’s parents walked in with the other state dignitaries.

They filled their plates and sat on the opposite wall of Gen and Beverly.

Jose watched his parents.

Steven and Jose locked the front door.

They walked and served the guests.

Sabrina’s commander said, “I want that hot buttered rum.”

Sabrina grin and said, “I will get it for you.”

Sabrina walked to Dan and said, “Hot buttered rum for a commander.”

Dan made the hot buttered rum and looked at Sabrina.

She grinned.

Dan put it on her tray.

Sabrina walked out to the commander.

He took the hot buttered rum and drank it.

He loved it.

He went to the dining room and made a plate of mini meat pies, beef on a stick and cod balls.

He sat and enjoyed his food.

Shirley and Alicia were watching him and giggling.

Eleanor looked back at the two young ladies.

There was another knock on the door.

Patrick was walking up the hall with Brenda and the governor and his wife.

Steven opened the door it was Bryce and Stephen.

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Patrick was so very glad to see them.

He saw them last at Thanksgiving dinner.

He was happy they came out for the children’s big day.

Patrick introduced them to the governor and his wife.

Stephen and Bryce kissed Brenda’s cheek.

The governor spoke to his dignitaries and made a plate.

The governor said, “We need to do this.”

One of state officials said, “What?”

The governor said, Have mor hot dishes at our events.”

One of the wives said, “Try the turkey tetrazzini.”

The governor looked at the table and said, “Which one is that?”

The lady stood and walked to the chafing dish and gave the governor a taste.

His wife stopped and looked at her husband.

He put a little on his fork and tasted it.

The governor held his head back in total delight.

His wife laughed and walked to him and put a little on her plate.

She loved it.

She walked to Brenda and said, “This is delicious.”

Brenda was looking trying to see the dish.

The governor’s wife said, “This reception is wonderful. I love the idea of hot dishes instead of finger sandwiches.”

Claressa and Mrs. Tyler made plates and sat at the beginning of the room.

The United States Ambassadors entered the room a little late,

The commanders looked at them.

The governor looked at them and continued to move down the table.

Patrick knew everyone was trying to leave.

He said, “I know some of you will be leaving tomorrow and you have to leave and pack. I want to say thank you for coming and helping us celebrate the building of our town’s hospital.”

Shirley and the boys went into the foyer with Eleanor, Brenda, Patrick and Beverly.

They cut the cake and drank champagne.

The photographer was taking a lot of pictures.

Commander Tyler looked at his wife.

She tried to smile but she was happy and did not move.

He looked around.

Ruth was in the room to start giving the people their coats.

She walked to Commander Tyler.

He described his wife coat.

Ruth went and brought Mrs. Tyler her coat and gloves.

Commander Tyler and his wife left.

The commanders left the reception.

The United States senator ate and left the reception.

Gail and Bryson sat and laughed and talked with the state dignitaries.

They knew most of them from Bryson’s two terms as governor.

The guests could hear the music in the formal dining room.

Gail and Bryson were in the music room listening to Robert and Bethany.

Stephen and Bryce made their plates and went to the music room.

Beverly watched Jose’s parents watching her.

She continued to eat and said, “Gen why are those people watching me?”

Gen acted like she was having a good time and said, “They are Jose’s parents. They are racist. Ignore them.”

Beverly looked at Gen and said, “Didn’t I see them walk down the hall to a suite?”

Gen said, “Patrick invited them by mistake.”

Beverly tried to smile.

Gen said, “I know it is hard.”

Beverly left with the family and took photographs and drank champagne.

She went to the music room and sat and enjoyed the music.

The music room was full of guests.

Brenda decided to walk to the music.

She sat and enjoyed Robert and Bethany performed.

She did not know they could sing and dance.

Shirley went to the formal dining room and made two plates.

One for Patrick and one for Brenda.

Michael walked in the music room and sat at Brenda’s feet and laughed and clapped at Robert and Bethany.

Emilou walked in and sat next to Michael on the floor.

Patrick walked in and stood.

He and Brenda sat and ate.

Stephen said, “Patrick come and sit.”

Patrick looked and said, I’m fine. You are guests.”

Stephen walked to Patrick and stood.

They laughed at Robert and Bethany.

Bethany was playing the piano and called for Emilou to come to the piano.

Alicia and Steven ran to the music room.

Eleanor was behind them.

Emilou walked to Bethany and sang along with Robert.

Everyone hollered.

Shirley said, “Alicia.”

Alicia said, “We try not to put her in a lot of things.”

Eleanor walked in the music room and sat next to Bryce.

She looked at Bryce and said, “You feeling fine Uncle Bryce?”

Bryce smiled and said, “Yes ma am.”

They sat and watched Emilou quickly catch on and sing.

Alicia and Steven were laughing and clapping along with everyone else.

Sarah walked in the music room.

Alicia and Shirley saw her.

Brenda grinned and said, “Is Joe and Peggy here?’

Sarah said, “Yes ma am they went for the food first.”

Sarah walked to Shirley and Alicia.

Alicia said, “The commanders just left.”

Sarah said, “I saw them as we pulled in.”

Shirley said, “Sarah I love your outfit.”

Eleanor looked at the cghatty young ladies.

She liked Sarah’s outfit also.

Sarah and Alicia walked to the dining room.

She joined her aunt and uncle.

Alicia drank mulled cider and sat and talked to Sarah.

After Joe and Peggy finished eating they went to the music room.

Jose looked at Nadine and said, “Did you know Emilou could sang?”

Nadine casually said, “No.”

Steven looked at Nadine.

Jose looked at Nadine.

Brenda saw Joe and Peggy walked in the music room.

Brenda stood and walked to them.

They all hugged.

Patrick hugged them.

Stephen talked to Joe and Peggy.

Peggy sat with Brenda.

Mag, Josiah and many more were in the billiards room and the dart room.

Dan and Thomas started moving the empty chafing dishes and platters out of the formal dining room.

Robert and Bethany took a break and went through the kitchen and made them plates and sat and ate.

The workers were walking through the music room.

They were enjoying Robert and Bethany.

Finally, Stanley, Alice, Nathan and Denise came.

They went into the formal dining room and made plates and ate.

They talked with Robert and Bethany.

Nathan saw the governor’s wife staring at Denise.

The governor’s wife walked over to Denise and told her she loved what she had on and where did she get it.

Denise told her she made them.

The governor’s wife said, “Really.”

She looked at the dressed and smiled.

She stood and walked to the governor and was talking about Denise’s dress.

Ruth walked in the formal dining room to Stanley and Nathan and said, “Are any of you overnighting?”

Stanley and Nathan said, “No.”

Bethany said, “We will be closing down in a hour and pack up and go home. We should be getting home and in the bed at our regular time.”

Gen was standing in the music room door when Jose opened the front door and Abigail and her husband walked in.

Gen continued to stand and laughed.

Abigail and her husband went into the formal dining room and made plates.

They sat and talked to the governor.

Gen and Beverly were having a good time.

Robert and Bethany stood and danced all the way back to the music room.

Stanley and Alice walked through the house and beat the other guests to the remaining seats.

Robert and Bethany were setting up for their next act.

Emilou ran up to Robert and Bethany to perform.

Everyone hollered.

Gen and Beverly were laughing so hard at Emilou.

The music room guests could be heard throughout the house.

The governor said, “They are having a good time.”

Eleanor ran and picked up Emilou and sat her in her lap.

She looked at Bryce as she sat next to him.

Stanley stood next to Stephen and Patrick.

Alice sat and enjoyed the music and singing of Robert and Bethany.

She looked at Eleanor and said, “Where’s their baby?”

Eleanor said, “Upstairs. I hope sleep.”

Alice grinned and said, “I know where to send my child.”

Eleanor said, “When are you going to have your baby?”

Alice said, “I pray soon. Sometime this month. I want to go home where I can get some help. Stanley is great, but he has been going everyday to check on Lorraine’s house.”

Brenda heard Alice.

Alice said, “How is Lorraine?”

Eleanor said, “The same.”

Robert and Bethany started back singing and dancing.

Everyone enjoyed them.

Stanley and Stephen eased out the music room and went to the billiards room.

The billiards room was crowded.

They waited their turn.

The governor and his wife drank champagne and ate cake.

When they finished eating the cake they left the reception.

Dan and Thomas keep clearing the formal dining room of the empty platters and chafing dishes.

Mike had returned to help John with the dishes.

John told Mike that Jose sent him to take food to Maureen, Craig and his son.

John said, “I told Maureen to stay home Thursday and I would bring her food.”

Mike said, “Why did you tell her that?”

John said, “I could not believe how she lived and where. She has to walk to work and walk back.”

Mike said, “Jose is going to curse you out.”

John said, “Jose has been busy these past days where he can’t help her like he said.”

Mike said, “John be careful.”

There was a lot of food left over.

But more people were arriving.

Dan started to count the people.

Some people brough their children.

Percy, Thomas and Bruce started talking to the children.

Jose stood by the originals inventions for no one to touch.

Steven locked the front door and went into the formal dining room and made him a large plate.

He sat near the window so he could see if anyone was coming to the house.

Dan was about to panic.

Thomas and Petr looked at Dan.

Mike and John looked at Dan.

Peter said, “Dan under counted at the grand opening in Harrisburg. He has been paranoid ever since that.”

Mike said, “Is that the reason they had all of those cookies and hot chocolate left?”

Dan was walking back in the kitchen.

Thomas cut his eyes at Dan.

Peter was making French toast for breakfast and continued to work as Dan walked and stood at the counter.

Thomas and Peter knew Dan was calculating and counting because of his eye movement.

John and Mike turned around and started washing all those platters and chafing dishes.

They could hear Robert and Bethany singing in the kitchen.

Thomas made the racks of lamb for the formal dinner for the next night.

Bethany and Robert sang acapella and had everyone up and dancing with them.

The governor and his wife were about to step off the porch.

They ran back into the house to see what all the laughter was about.

They stood in the hall and was peeping at the oldest couples and the young people and the children were all up and dancing.

The governor’s wife touched her husband and nodded at the workers that were in the other door and peeping in the room.

The governor grabbed his wife by her waist and they danced from the music room to the front door.

Jose smiled and nodded.

Steven grinned at the governor and his wife and opened the door and closed it quickly.

Steven locked the door.

The United States ambassadors danced with some of the guests, in the foyer.

The late arrivals ran to the formal dining room door and stood in the foyer and were eating and laughing.

Jose looked at the crowd of people and looked at Steven who was standing behind the people watching the dancing in the foyer.

Jose was not leaving the priceless inventions they had on display in the foyer.

People started leaving around eight pm.

Josiah danced with Natalie and Mag for a long time.

Patrick and Brenda danced.

Eleanor danced with Steven and her four sons.

Patrick danced with Shirley.

Stanley danced with Shirley.

Nathan danced with Denise.

Gary danced with Denise and Shirley.

He did his farewell dance with Eleanor.

They all cried.

Gary told them they were his family.

That they helped him more in two years than his real family all his life.

He said, “Joseph knew what he was doing when he brought me to America with him.”

Percy walked to Gary and shook his hand.

Bruce and Thomas shook Gary’s hand.

Michael hugged Gary.

They walked Gary to the cake and gave him cake.

Stephen poured him a glass of champagne.

Gary sat on the stairs and Stanley gat a piece of cake and a glass of champagne and sat on the stairs with Gary.

Nathan got a piece of cake and a glass of champagne.

He stood by the stairs and talked with Gary and Stanley.

They ate their cake and drank their champagne.

Patrick and Stephen walked out the music room.

Patrick saw all the people in the foyer dancing, singing and eating.

He laughed and stood and talked with Stanley, Nathan and Gary.

Gary was sad and he left and went to the re-modeled shed and locked the building for the night.

He laid on his bed and cried.

Nathan went to Denoise and told everyone good night.

They walked through the back of the house and into the kitchen.

Nathan walked to Peter and said, “Peter we are going to have the reception at the Stith’s rest stop immediately following our wedding at the church.”

Peter said, “Jose told me. Everything will be ready.”

Nathan said, “How much do I owe?”

Peter said, “Nothing. The Stith family is paying for it as your wedding gift.”

Denise grabbed Nathan’s arm and grinned.

Nathan said, “They have already done a lot for me and Denise.”

Pater said, “They paid off Nadine’s mortgage and gave it to us for a wedding gift last year.”

Nathan looked at Denise and said, “We should have bought a house.”

They laughed.

Mike and John laughed.

Nathan and Denise walked out the backdoor and they looked over at the re-modeled shed for Gary for the last time.

They had a good time driving back into town.

They went to the house they were buying and went to bed.

Bruce gave Emilou a piece of cake.

Emilou sat on the stairs and ate her cake.

Eleanor was walking out the music room and saw Emilou eating the cake.

She looked at her sons.

They stared at Eleanor.

Eleanor walked to Brenda and said, “One of those ingrates gave Emilou a big slice of cake.

Brenda turned to peep out the music room but could not see.

Brenda and Patrick looked at the boys.

Eleanor said, “They won’t tell on one another.”

Patrick said, “This is their big night Eleanor.”

Brenda said, “Don’t chastise them.”

Eleanor said, “I won’t say anything tonight, but that is not fair to Steven and Alicia especially this late at night that she can’t war it off.”

Eleanor looked back at her sons, when they heard Steven screamed, “Emilou!”

The boys disappeared.

Alicia ran out in the hallway and saw Emilou devour the last of the cake.

Steven turned his head and kept cutting the cake.

Alicia went to Ruth and got their coats.

Steven and Alicia put Emilou’s coat, scarf and gloves on.

Emilou ran into the music room and hugged Brenda and Eleanor.

She hugged Patrick’s legs.

Steven said, “Good. She wasn’t loud.”

Alicia was tensed.

Emilou yelled, “Bye” to everyone else.

Bryce said, “Sugar.”

The children covered their ears.

The adults looked around and politely smile.

John said, “The parents won’t be getting any sleep tonight.”

The adults laughed.

Stephen stepped out the music room and saw Emilou dancing all through the foyer.

Eleanor went and got a piece of cake for Bryce.

She turned and looked at Emilou dancing all down the hall and messing with the Christmas tree.

She yelled, “Bye Mr. Jose.”

Jose said, “Good night Emilou.”

Alicia and Steven were slowly walking behind Emilou.

One boy was walking in the music room with a piece of cake.

A man grabbed the boy’s plate and said, “No cake for you tonight.”

The boy looked at the man.

The man took a big bite of the cake.

The woman hit her husband’s hand and said, “That’s not your son.”

The man looked in shame looked at his wife then the boy.

The boy was still staring at the man.

Everyone was quiet.

The man’s son was sitting by the fireplace eating his bit of cake.

He said, “Dad I am over here.”

The man looked at the boy and reached the cake to the boy and said, “I am so sorry forgive me please.”

The boy took the plate and looked at the cake.

He walked to his father and mother and reached the plate to his father.

His father said, “Than you son.”

Patrick and Brenda watched.

The other man was so embarrassed.

The boy’s father lifted the fork to the man and said, “Thanks I don’t need to eat a whole slice tonight. I don’t want my wife and son running through the house trying to put me to bed.”

Everyone hollered.

The man who ate the man’s cake bowed.

Patrick and Brenda laughed.

The man and his wife walked to the man and his wife and shook hands and began to talk.

Eleanor looked at her sons and saw Bruce snicker.

She walked to him and pulled him to Patrick and Brenda.

Bruce looked at his grandpa, grandma and at Eleanor.

They looked at him.

Bruce would never admit he did anything.

He said, “I’m sorry. I should have given it to earlier.”

Patrick stared at Bruce.

Bruce held his head down.

Emilou sang loudly all the way home.

Alicia and Steven stared in front of them.

People were passing them and staring at Emilou.

Alicia and Steven tried to smile.

Steven put them out the carriage and drove around back.

He put the horses and carriage up.

He could hear Emilou out in the backyard.

Steven said, “All night.”

He locked the stables and went into the house.

He opened the door and heard Emilou running through the house.

Alicia flopped on the couch and stared.

Steven doubled checked the windows and doors.

He said, “Alicia make some warm milk and give it to Emilou.”

Alicia stared at Steven.

Steven said, “It will work.”

He went to the back and undressed and put on his nightshirt.

Alicia knew it was going to be a long night and morning.

She undressed and put on her nightgown.

She caught Emilou and put her on her nightgown.

Steven heated some milk and gave it to Emilou.

Emilou was running through the house singing and playing.

Steven sat at the table and began to read his medical books.

He always kept his mind on medicine.

Emilou jumped in the chair at the head of the table and made a sound of a lion.

Steven slowly turned his head and looked at Emilou.

Alicia stood and walked in the kitchen and heated some more milk.

Alicia gave Emilou the warm milk.

Steven watched Emilou.

Emilou started back running and jumping on the couch next to Alicia.

Alicia looked at Steven.

Steven looked at Alicia.

Then he would read some more.

Steven kept his eyes on Emilou.

Alicia tried to brush her hair but was tired.

Steven looked at Alicia and said, “Emilou come and brush Alicia’s hair.”

Emilou did not respond.

Steven jumped from the table and burst through the house to the backdoor.

Alicia was frantic and ran behind Steven.

Steven pulled the door and saw it was locked and all the things he put behind the door were still in place.

Alicia looked at the door but could not think because she was tired.

Steven stood still and could not think where Emilou could be.

Then they heard snoring.

Alicia and Steven without turning around stepped backwards to Emilou’s room.

They stood in the doorway and turned and saw her across her bed sleep.

Steven and Alicia were speechless.

Alicia walked in Emilou’s room.

Steven picked up Emilou and Alicia pulled her covers back.

Steven put Emilou in her bed.

Alicia got in Emilou’s bed to make sure she did not get out.

Steven closed the bedroom door.

He walked into the living area and pulled out his bed which already had his blankets and pillows.

Steven put out the light from all the lanterns and laid on his bed.

He said, “Thank you God.”

He went to sleep.

As he drifted off to sleep, he could hear Alicia and Emilou snoring.

Stanley and Alice arrived home but before they went to their house Stanley checked Lorraine’s doors and windows and then he lit the lanterns and drove through her backyard to their backyard.

Alice said, “Stanley.”

Stanley said, “I won’t don that to often.”

Stanley helped Alice out the wagon.

Stanley walked Alice in the house and returned and put the horses and carriage in the stables and he lit the lanterns in his back yard and on his front porch.

The light from Lorraine’s lantern helped li their yards.

Mike always lit his front lantern before he went to work and it would burn most of the evening and early night.

The neighborhood people like the lanterns they had.

Stanley and Alice dressed for bed.

They sat on their couch and talked.

Alice said she enjoyed the evening.

Stanley did not say anything.

Alice looked at Stanley.

Stanley had Alice legs on his lap.

He was messaging her feet.

He looked at Alice.

Alice became scared.

Stanley said, “I was offered to pastor a small church two towns from here. I want to do it.“

Alice said, “What about college. I want to go to college too and become a teacher.”

Stanley said, “I have been so excited about the offer that I have not been able to think about anything else. I know going the other way the state university is not far from the town with the small church. We may have to move to the state capitol and go on week-ends to the church.”

Alice twisted her legs off Stanley’s lap and turned sideways on the couch and poked out her mouth and said, “Stanley I like it here in this town. I like this house. I like this neighborhood.”

Stanley said, “You like being with Eleanor and the Stiths.”

Alice laughed and said, “Yes. I don’t know Stanley. I want to go to college too. I want our son to be proud of his momma too. We both have to pray. I know you were about to say ‘you’ pray, but you have to know you are no longer single but you have two other people in your life. Lets pray Mr. Stanley.”

Stanley was surprised at Alice boldness.

They prayed off and on all night.

Stanley put out the lights in the house and they went to bed.

Rita was staying overnight and her son was home from college and the neighbors were looking out for him.

He had dinner with one neighbor and played games with the other neighbor and went home and locked up the house.

He went to bed and slept.

He knew his mother would be busy that week.

Jose had had twenty five workers at the house for the next few days.

Jose walked behind Patrick and Brenda as they walked Mag, Josiah and Natalie.

They were the last guests.

They heard Gen and Beverly walking down the hall with Jennifer and Wallace.

Eleanor had Shirley, Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael in the sitting room.

Stephen emptied all the champagne bottles into two glasses.

He hid the champagne glasses underneath the cake tables until the other workers were out of sight.

He walked through the music room and back up the back hall to his room and poured the champagne into a large mug he kept in his room.

He walked to the kitchen with the two champagne glasses and gave them to Mike.

Mike looked at the champagne glasses.

John, was sitting on the cabinet, looked at the champagne glasses and continued to read his circular.

Stephen walked through the billiards room and took the tables through the billiards room to the storage area.

He took the tablecloths to the washroom and started them to be washed.

Ruth cut off the washer.

Stephen looked at her.

Ruth turned and pointed and said, “The water flows over our bedrooms and we won’t be able to sleep. I’ll start the tablecloths when we all are up tomorrow.”

Stephen looked at Ruth and walked to his room.

Ruth pass Mike and John in the kitchen.

Mike and John listened to Ruth.

They looked around the kitchen and saw all the pots, pans, platters, chafing dishes were washed and dried.

Sabrina, Angela, Mellissa, Sherry and Sheryl began to wash and dry the vendor’s plates, glasses and utensils.

Ruth and the other maids doubled checked and made sure no coats, wraps, scarves, hats and gloves were left.

They moved through the house clearing every room and cleaning some.

Robert, Bethany and a sleeping baby Robert were running out the door behind Mag, Josiah and Natalie.

Jose helped Robert with their cases.

Patrick said, “Robert you and Bethany sure you don’t want to stay here tonight and leave in the morning going home.”

Robert said, “No sir. We can make home in about thirty minutes and Robert Jr is already sleep. He would take a lot of time to put to bed, that speeds up our night.”

Patrick said, “We have to pay you.”

Robert looked at Brenda and said, “I thought we were coming tomorrow.”

They laughed.

Brenda said, “I know you will be as wonderful tomorrow as you were tonight.”

Robert and Bethany ran to the carriage and she held Robert Jr as they jumped in the carriage and Robert turned and sped home.

Patrick and Brenda could hear Robert and Bethany sing as they rode away.

Patrick and Jose looked around the yard and did not see any extra horses and carriages.

Brenda was standing on the porch wrapped in a blanket.

Patrick, Brenda and Jose waled in the house.

Patrick locked the door.

Jose put the bar behind the door.

Ruth and the workers had cleared the family dining room, the formal dining room, the parlor and swept all the rooms.

Mike and John had washed and dried dishes all night and were finished.

Stephen, Steven, Ruth and ten other workers were walking through the house and cleaning the billiards room, music room, game room and the guests’ room.

They emptied the toilets and dirty water basin and mopped the floor.

The workers were moving fast.

Dan looked around.

All the food was gone.

Dan was happy.

He was off for breakfast but would return to help prepare the dinner.

Mike and John left and would return for dinner.

Nadine restocked the guests’ room with soap and clean towels and freshen the room.

She did not want to remember to do that tomorrow.

Beverly decorated the guests’ washroom.

Some of the guests stood in the room and admired the decorations.

Nadine walked through the guests’ washroom and smiled because she helped Beverly hang most of the flowers.

Peter and Nadine would spend the night at the house and leave on Friday and would be off until Monday.

Peter would come back Saturday only to bake Nathan and Denise’s wedding cakes and make the punch.

Jose walked through the house and saw the workers had completely cleared and cleaned the house.

He and Steven brought more water in the house so they would not have to do it on the next morning and they could sleep a little later.

Peter had prepared most of the breakfast breads and cereal.

Thomas left and rode home earlier that night.

He finished his meat dishes and several vegetable dishes for the formal dinner.

Once the food was gone, he packed up and went home.

Jose cut off the lanterns in the front of the house.

He stood and looked out the windows and thought about how easy the job was, but busy.

He enjoyed himself that evening.

Then Maureen came to his mind.

He said, “Maureen. Maureen. Who are you?”

He turned and walked down the foyer.

Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor and her five children were in the sitting room.

They had the door closed.

Jose walked down the hall and saw Gen and Beverly had changed to their night clothes and they were sitting on the settee playing cards.

Jose walked down the hall and checked the suites and the windows and the balconies.

He walked to his parents’ rooms and rolled his eyes at Gen.

Gen giggled.

Beverly looked at Jose.

Jose knocked on their door.

His father came to the door.

Jose said, “I am turning in. Do you need anything before I do?”

His father looked at Gen and Beverly and said, “No.”

Jennifer said, “I want something to eat.”

Beverly turned her head and looked back at Jennifer.

Jose father turned and said, “All of that food.”

Jennifer said, “I am hungry.”

Jose stared at his mother.

His father stared at her.

He wondered what she was up to.

Jose said, “Mother, what are you doing? You know all the workers are finished for tonight and in their rooms. You can’t wait until the morning?”

Jennifer said, “Jose, I am hungry.”

Jose said, “I will go and get something for you to eat.”

Jose reached for the doorknob and closed the door.

He turned and stood for a minute and walked through the house to the kitchen.

Gen and Beverly continued to play cards.

Wallace opened the door and said, “Gen, where is this fabulous library the governor talked about?”

Gen said, “It’s the third room to the right. Patrick locked that room he has the only key.”

Wallace huffed and said, “Really.”

Jose went into the dark kitchen and scrambled his mother two eggs, buttered toasts and apple butter and a sliced pear and a pot of hot tea. He put two forks on the tray and walked to their room.

He saw his father standing in the hallway talking to Gen.

Jose said, “He is not addressing Beverly.”

Jose pass the sitting room.

He heard the family talking.

He saw his father and wondered what his father and mother were up to in the Stith’s house.

Jose walked to his father and said, “Father.”

His father turned and looked at Jose.

Jose walked to their suite and opened the door.

Wallace gave Jose a hard look and turned to Gen and said, “Good night.”

Beverly looked at him.

Gen said, “Wallace, this is Brenda’s sister and Mr. Stith’s sister-in-law Beverly.”

Jose stood and looked at his father.

Beverly stared at Wallace.

Wallace bowed his head at Beverly.

Beverly did not respond.

Jose set the tray before his parents In their room.

His parents looked at him.

Jose felt them staring at him.

He stood up and said, “Mother, Father breakfast will be at eight am. You can leave your packed bags outside the door and they will be taken to your carriage.”

Jose said, “Good night.”

Gen and Beverly were laughing and playing cards.

Jose walked out his parents’ room and closed the door.

Beverly and Gen watched Jose.

They continued to play cards and laughed.

Gen and Beverly watched until Patrick opened the sitting room door.

Michael and Thomas ran out of the sitting room and up the stairs followed by Shirley.

Percy slowly walked out and went up the stairs.

Patrick closed the door back.

Gen said, “Whose left?”

Beverly said, “That Bruce. I know he has done something they caught him doing.”

Gen laughed.

Gen and Beverly went to their suites and went to bed.

Jose was in the kitchen washing the dishes and drying them.

He cleaned the kitchen and double checked the door and put out the lights.

He was thinking about his parents and what were they up to.

Jose thought, “Our house is a fourth of the size of this house with only ten servants. What are they up to?”

Jose went to his room and went to bed.

Peter and Nadine were in their room and sleep.

Rita was sharing the other wall with Jose.

She was in her bed reading.

Jose was thinking over the entire day.

He thought about the photographer who rode back into town with Bryce and Stephen.

He would be back for the formal dinner party the next night.

Jose stopped and did not think anymore and said, “Is that what they are up to?”

Jose closed his eyes and went to sleep.

Patrick and Brenda and Eleanor talked with Bruce and sent him to bed.

Eleanor walked up the stairs with Bruce and walked and checked on her sons.

She walked to Shirley’s room and saw Shirley sleep and grinning.

Eleanor stood and looked at Shirley.

She knew she was grinning about her clothes, hair and earrings she wore that night.

Eleanor stood and watched Shirley.

She thought about all of Shirley’s life she was just a ball of flesh and in terrible pain every second of every day, because of her.

Eleanor started crying and wiped her nose and said, “You deserve to grin Shirley.”

Patrick and Brenda looked around the sitting room to see if anything was left.

Brenda had her diamonds on for the reception.

Brenda said, “Patrick did you see Shirley watching me all night?”

Patrick stopped and looked at Brenda and said, “No. Why?”

Brenda said, “She was watching these diamonds.”

Patrick frowned and said, “Brenda what are you saying?”

Brenda said, “That spoiled child was watching the diamonds to make sure I did not lose one diamond or not any of these bracelets and earrings drop somewhere.”

Patrick threw his head back and hollered.

Brenda said, “She has told the boys none of their girlfriends and wives will ever get any of this jewelry.”

Patrick was still laughing.

Brenda said, “Shirley and Percy had a big fight over MY jewelry.”

Patrick said, “Percy!”

Brenda said, “Patrick we were all sitting in parlor. Percy like Starr.”

Patrick was thinking to remember Starr.

He nodded his head that he remembered Starr.

Brenda said, “Percy said the wrong thing. He said his girlfriend should get some of MY jewelry. Shirley told him no one was getting my jewelry and her mother’s jewelry but her. And that was it.”

Patrick said, “What was the other boys saying?”

Brenda jumped and looked at Patrick and threw her hands up in the air and said, “Nothing!. I was nearly scared. I never seen Shirley turn into this monster.”

Patrick stopped laughing and looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “The only one that was not scared nor surprised was Michael and Eleanor. Percy held his ground. He asked Eleanor could he have the jewelry. Eleanor told him it will be passed down to Shirley because she is the only female. Then Percy changed into his monster.”

Patrick said, “I remember it now. It was the night of our thirty fifth anniversary ball and you wore all of the ruby and diamond necklace and earrings.”

Brenda said, “Yes. Thomas and Bruce just looked and Michael said...”

Patrick and Brenda said it at the same time, “Heifer.”

Patrick said, “Brenda what can be done about Shirley thinking she deserve it all?”

Brenda said, “Patrick only three years ago she had nothing. She did not have her own body. She is trying to catch up with life. We don’t know how much time she has to be with us. That is why Eleanor decided not to put her away until she died. Eleanor wanted Shirley to live and be happy and know she is loved.”

Patrick was thinking and said, “I remember Bruce said all of this over some earrings?”

Brenda said, “That’s Bruce. He puts it to the bare.”

Patrick and Brenda walked out the sitting room.

Patrick said, “Brenda do you think we will live to see Shirley marry and have children?”  
Brenda said, “I don’t know, but until then I’m keeping my jewelry in the safe.”

Patrick and Brenda laughed and walked to their suite.

Patrick put their prayer pillows on the floor.

They dressed for bed.

Patrick and Brenda kneeled and held hands and prayed.

An hour later they went to bed.

Gen laid on her side and grinned at racist Wallace.

She continued to read her bible.

Beverly sat up in bed and read a bible that was in the room.

She said, “Al, I ate meat for breakfast and I ate meat at the reception. I love you.”

She laughed and put the bible on the dresser and turned over and slept.

The house was quiet.

Eleanor dressed for bed and stood at the top of the grand staircase and thought about that day in their family’s history.

She looked at the Christmas tree and smiled.

Eleanor said, “Thank You God for putting Joseph in our lives for a short time.”

She turned and went to her bedroom and went to bed.

She slept until the morning.

Peter was up early and prepared a nice breakfast.

Nadine set the family dining room the night before.

She slept a little later.

Ruth and Mellissa would serve the family and guests.

Rita left with Steven and went home.

Jose slept sound until he heard the staff up and working.

He thought, “They know to make things easier for them.”

Jose turned over and got up.

He went to the washroom and washed and shaved.

He hung up his uniform in the washer room.

He looked at and was glad it was not dirty.

Jose went to his room and dressed for the day.

He was thinking about Maureen and what to do about her.

Jose sat in his chair and looked at Maureen’s schedule. She would be off Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Jose decided to take her food and coal. Jose thought by Monday everything including Nathan and Denise’ wedding would be over. He wanted more time to figure out how to help Maureen.

He stopped and looked straight ahead.

Nadine finally woke and walked out their room to the wash area.

Peter looked at Nadine.

He did not know how she did it.

But Nadine drank two shots of scotch and went to bed and slept all night.

Peter looked at her and turned over and went to sleep.

Jose walked in the kitchen and looked around and said, “Peter, you need help?”

Peter said, “No. I prepared most of the dishes last night, while Dan had all of us on pins and needles.”

Jose laughed.

He started the coffee and helped squeeze the orange juice.

Peter baked the staff French toasts, sausage and eggs.

Jose put the coffee in the workers’ area.

The workers enjoyed a nice breakfast.

Ruth started washing and drying the dishes.

She put the cake tablecloths in the washer as she told Stephen.

Jose and Nadine put the vendors’ plates, glasses and flatware in the storage area.

Gary came in the house and helped Stephen with the bathwater.

Jose thought, “This is a good group of workers. Everyone will be away from home next year. Brenda and Patrick will only need a handful of workers until the holidays.”

Eleanor woke but wanted to sleep some more.

She kept on her nightgown and washed.

She combed and brushed her beautiful hair.

Eleanor walked pass her sons’ room and went down the back stairs.

She went to her office and checked for telegrams.

She did not receive any.

Eleanor smelled the food cooking and thought about Aunt Bev and Uncle Al fussing about not buying meat.

Eleanor smiled and thought, “Aunt Bev have eaten meat and drank everyday she has been here.”

Eleanor shook her head at her uncle being that stingy and cheap.

Eleanor was walking up the backstairs and saw Michael and Thomas stretching and yawning and walking to the wash area.

She was going to walk pass them, but she thought about the hot water and rushed back and gave them basins of hot water.

The boys washed and put on clothes and ran downstairs to eat.

They went to the family dining room and sat.

Ruth looked at them.

Peter set the breakfast as a buffet.

Jose was preparing the fruit for breakfast and arranged it very nicely on the platters.

He took the juice, coffee, tea and fruit into the family dining room.

He looked at a tired Thomas and Michael.

Jose thought, “Maybe they will be out of my way today.”

Thomas sat and stared in space.

Jose thought, “I am glad they moved the formal dinner party from eight to seven pm. Everyone should be finished eating and out of here by ten pm.”

Jose arranged the food and walked out.

He thought, “I need to talk to Patrick and Brenda.”

He walked down the foyer and stood by the stairs and saw all the doors on the hall were closed.

Jose stood and looked down the hall.

Eleanor stood at the top of the stairs and watched Jose.

Jose looked up at Eleanor and walked through the billiards room to the kitchen.

Beverly rushed out her suite and stared in front of her and it was Gen rushing to breakfast.

Beverly hurried to catch Gen.

Patrick and Brenda were dressed and opened their suite door.

Beverly looked at Patrick and Brenda and decided not to ran after Gen but walk with her hosts.

They slowly walked to the family dining room.

Eleanor stood and watched everyone.

Shirley had bathed and was fully dressed.

She opened her door and looked at Eleanor.

Shirley walked and stood next to Eleanor and said, “Good morning momma.”

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

They descended the staircase and walked behind, Patrick, Brenda and Beverly to the family dining room.

Eleanor saw the boys and Gen running to breakfast, she did not see Jose’ parents.

As she and Shirley descended the staircase, she looked down the hall and did not see Jose’s parents.

Jose was walking through the billiards room.

He saw the family as they were slowly walking to breakfast.

He knew they were excited about the opening of the hospital events.

Shirley said, “Jose, where are your parents? Did you tell them about the time for breakfast?”

Patrick was holding Brenda’s hand and Beverly was walking next to Brenda.

Beverly yelled, “I heard Jose tell his parents what time breakfast is. I don’t care if they come or not.”

Brenda jerked Beverly’s hand.

Eleanor and Shirley saw Brenda.

Beverly snatched her hand from Brenda and put it across her chest.

Ruth was standing at the door of the family dining room so the guests would know where to come.

Beverly said, “Who invited those racist mother\*\*\*\*ers to stay here with such a grand event taking place.”

Brenda said, “Beverly, I am glad no children are around.”

Patrick said, “Still that type of language…”

Beverly cut off Patrick and said, “It fits the type of humans they are.”

Brenda agreed but was not going to say anything in the presence of Patrick.

They neared Ruth, she was trying to figure out what they were talking about.

Patrick talked low and said, “It was me. It was my fault. I will never have those type of people in our home again Brenda. Forgive me.”

Shirley and Eleanor were putting the pieces together.

Shirley said, “But he is not like that.”

Eleanor said, “No.”

Patrick looked at Ruth is see if she heard him.

Ruth was looking at Patrick and Brenda’s hands.

They were holding hands coming to breakfast.

Brenda said, “Patrick, GOD is going to take it and make it for our benefit.”

Beverly walked in behind them and said, “The hell with that Brenda.”

The boys turned and looked at Aunt Bev.

Percy stood and walked to Bev chair and pulled it out.

Bruce looked sadly at Eleanor.

Thomas ran and helped Eleanor to her chair.

Michael was sleepy and had his right elbow on the table with his head in his hand.

He looked at Shirley.

He mumbled, “The heifer.”

Shirley looked at Michael.

Patrick helped Brenda to her chair.

Shirley stopped and Bruce looked at her then at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Bruce, don’t keep looking at me. I am not angry with you. I am disappointed.”

Bruce held his hands from the table and said, “I am a kid. I like doing those kind of things.”

He looked at Patrick and Brenda who were looking at him.

Eleanor said, “You are to apologize to Steven, Alicia and Emilou tonight when they come to dinner.”

Bruce looked at Patrick and Brenda then at Eleanor and leaned over the table and said, “Fine.”

Gen and Beverly were seated and looked at Bruce.

Gen said, “Lets stand and hold hands and say the grace.”

Gen quickly stood and held Bruce’s and Shirley’s hand who was already standing and staring at Michael.

Eleanor saw Shirley and thought, “She better not put her hands on him after the evil she did to him.”

Beverly stood and was looking backwards at the buffet.

She heard Jose’s parents.

Beverly grabbed Percy’s hand and he grabbed Brenda’s hand.

Eleanor heard them walking down the hall.

She jumped up and grabbed Thomas and Michael’s hand.

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

He and Brenda slowly stood.

Gen quickly started saying grace.

Patrick and Brenda were perplexed and Brenda was just starting to stand.

Eleanor started saying, “Yes Lord.”

Michael looked up at Eleanor.

Patrick looked at Michael.

Bruce and Percy looked over the table at Eleanor.

Beverly had one eye opened and looking at Jose’s parents who walked in the dining room with Jose.

Brenda rolled her eyes at Beverly.

Peter stepped in the formal dining room to put down the hot quiche.

Jose looked at the family standing and saying grace.

He looked at Ruth and Mellissa.

Mellissa had her head down.

She was snoring.

Bruce heard her and jumped and looked backwards at Mellissa.

Jose heard Mellissa.

Gen heard Mellissa and giggled.

Eleanor was peeping to see who was snoring.

Beverly could not hold in her laughter anymore and she started laughing out.

Brenda looked and Patrick looked at Beverly.

Michael said, “What’s funny Aunt Bev?”

Eleanor shook Michael’s arm.

Michael looked up at Eleanor.

Jose looked at Michael’s eyes looking at Eleanor.

Jose thought, “He’s going to bed after breakfast, T H A N K Y O U G O D!!!!!”

Gen said, “God bless each person here and the wonderful workers YOU have here.”

Mellissa did a double snore.

Beverly hollered.

Michael jumped and peeped at Mellissa.

Bruce looked at Eleanor who was biting her lips and said, “Momma, I’m not suppose to say nothing about that?”

Patrick and Brenda were peeping around at Mellissa.

Peter was standing at the buffet a few feet from Mellissa he jumped and looked at Mellissa.

Jose thought, “They are standing and saying grace to show my parents that they are rude.”

Jose thought, “That so and so Patrick should not have invited them to overnight. They don’t plan on leaving. They have not packed. I want to see how they are going to throw them out. I am not going to help.”

Jose looked at Ruth.

Ruth looked at Mellissa.

Ruth thought, “We were not playing cards and drinking that late. “

Jose thought, “That’s right I have to see about Maureen today.”

Jose started humming.

Peter looked at Jose.

Gen could not finish her grace because she started laughing out.

Thomas said, “Amen.”

Michael said, “Amen.”

Gen and Beverly fell into their chairs.

Gen was laughing so hard she took her napkin and tried to wipe her tears but put her left elbow on the table and held her head down and hollered.

Mellissa was still snoring.

Eleanor was very proper about the dining tables.

Eleanor stood and everyone else was seated.

Patrick took his napkin and put it in his lap.

Brenda was partially standing looking at Mellissa.

Bruce watched Eleanor.

Thomas looked at Mellissa and said, “She was running after Robert Jr all night. She is tired from that. I am tired too. I was with him for a few minutes.”

Gen hollered again.

Jose directed his parents to the chairs between Shirley and Gen.

Shirley looked back at Mellissa and looked at Eleanor.

Patrick said, “Sit Eleanor and enjoy your breakfast.”

Peter looked at Eleanor.

He touched Mellissa’s arm and said, “Wake up.”

Mellissa stared at Peter.

Jose walked to Mellissa and said, “Go to bed and come back for the formal dinner.”

Mellissa walked out the formal dining room.

Nadine was standing in the door with the grits and oatmeal.

She looked at Mellissa and walked in the family dining room.

Ruth looked at Jose and said, “Me too.”

Jose’s father and mother looked back at him.

Jose said, “It’s buffet. Stand and serve yourself.”

Percy jumped up and ran to the buffet and got three strips of bacon, grits and a biscuit with butter and honey.

Jose’s father looked at Jose to serve him.

Patrick blinked at Wallace and said, “Wallace and Jennifer how are you two this morning?”

Bruce watched Wallace and Jennifer.

Bruce looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Bruce and said, “Baby make your plate.”

Bruce said, “Sir, my grandfather has properly addressed you and your wife as being invited guests in our home. You were to greet everyone when the grace was finish and you did not.”

Wallace and Jennifer were shocked.

Eleanor was not, Bruce wanted to be a United States ambassador. Alvin told Bruce he had to be firm and unwavering unless the other party changed their positions.

Eleanor caught Bruce’s eye.

He looked at Eleanor and she smiled at him.

Bruce turned and looked at Jose’s parents.

Peter looked at Jose’s parents.

Nadine looked at Jose’s parents.

Ruth looked at Jose’s parents.

Jose stood behind his parents and was embarrassed.

Peter looked at Jose’s face and felt sorry for him.

Michael stood and walked behind Patrick and Brenda to the buffet.

He got his lamb chop, grits, one scrambled egg and a biscuit.

Peter looked at Nadine.

He looked at Nadine.

Nadine saw Peter looking at her but she was rushing out because she did not want Jose to tell her to serve in the place of Mellissa.

Nadine looked at Ruth because she knew they were up late drinking and gambling.

Ruth stared at Nadine and thought, “Mellissa better give me my two dollars.”

Jose walked to his father and his mother who were seated.

They were looking at the stern Bruce.

Bruce looked at Eleanor.

Shirley looked at Jose’s father and said, “Representative Caldwell, my grandfather just recognized you and your wife, as his house guests sitting at his table and you have not acknowledge him nor his wife who opened their doors to you. Why?”

Jose stepped back and thought, “Uh!”

Jose’s father looked at Shirley.

Peter looked at Jose’s father.

Nadine slowly back into the family dining room.

Ruth turned and looked at the table and was quiet.

Percy and Michael were at the buffet and walked to their seats and sat and looked at Jose’s parents.

Beverly was mumbling, “Throw them out.”

Nadine heard Beverly.

Nadine wanted to know why Jose’s parents were being rude in someone else’s house.

Gen held her head to one side and looked at Jose’s parents.

Eleanor said, “Jose show your parents to their suite and have a stableman bring their carriage and horses to the front of the house.”

Jose stood and looked at his father and mother.

Nadine wanted a better look in Jose’s father and mother’s face.

She passed Peter.

Peter was trying to catch Nadine.

She maneuvered her arm from Peter and walked to Brenda and bent over and said, “Your breakfast?”

Brenda was staring at Jose’s father and his mother.

Nadine looked up to see Jose’s father’s face and his mother’s face.

Peter frowned and poked out his mouth at Nadine.

Bruce saw Peter.

Nadine was shocked and stood and stared at Jose’s parents.

Shirley looked at them and said, “Your presence is never allowed again in this house.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley and thought, “Good.”

Michael said, “Momma, they don’t like us why are they here?”

Shirley stood and walked out the family dining room.

Jose looked at Shirley and stared at his parents.

Patrick looked at Michael and said, “It was my fault that I invited them to the reception and to spend the night here.”

Michael said, “So you made a mistake like Bruce did with the cake he gave to Emilou.”

Bruce stared at Michael.

Patrick was getting mad with himself.

He looked up at everyone in the room.

Wallace and Jennifer finally stood.

Patrick stood.

He said, “Family, friends and workers who we consider our family. I saw State Representative Wallace Caldwell and his wife at our ground- breaking ceremony on yesterday. I was surprised and delighted they took time if they were not already in the town conducting business to stop by our ceremony. I saw an opportunity and I invited State Representative Wallace and Jennifer Caldwell to our home and to the formal reception last night in our home. I invited them first because they are Jose’s parents, whom we all love. Second, I heard for years they were stanch racist. I wanted them to see us and how we live and that may change their known racist belief. I see that is not possible. I am merely a man that will continue to treat everybody right and let my works speak for myself at the Day of Christ…”

Brenda watched Patrick nodded her head in agreement.

Patrick said, “State representative Wallace Caldwell and Mrs. Jennifer Caldwell…”

Bruce stared at them.

Percy peeped around Bruce at them.

Thomas stood and stared at then.

Gen saw Thomas stand and thought, “He’s the one.”

Michael would look at Patrick and then Jose and then at Jose’s parents.

Patrick continued, “I apologize first to my beloved black wife of thirty -five of bringing enemies under her roof. I apologize to my family that I put you through my selfish thought that I can help change hate out of a person’s heart. I apologize to all of you workers for subjecting you to a very uncomfortable time being around people who believe in racism and practice racist beliefs. I alone am responsible. I take full responsibility for my wanting to do a good deed that may show someone else the light of JESUS Christ. I am not GOD. HE alone knows every man heart and where HE will place them in eternity…”

Brenda was proud of Patrick.

Patrick looked State Representative Wallace Caldwell and his wife Jennifer in their eyes and said, “I apologize to you for thinking I could show you something good that GOD put together. Forgive me. I will never invite you to our home again. I will never invite you to any of our events ever again.”

Bruce stood and stared at State Representative Wallace Caldwell and his wife.

Michael stood and stared at Jose’s parents, even though he loved Jose.

Percy waled and stood next to Patrick and stared at State Representative Wallace Caldwell and his wife Jennifer.

Eleanor stood and looked at Jose’s parents.

Gen stood and looked at them.

Beverley stood and looked at them.

Brenda stood and looked at them.

Jose started crying.

Patrick said, “What you see is my family is in agreement that through the generations we have washed our hands of you. Leave our home immediately.”

Patrick peeped and saw Sabrina and Angela had slipped in the family dining room and standing on each side of the buffet.

Patrick said, “Sabrina and Angela escort the State representative Wallace Caldwell and his wife Jennifer to their suite packed them and put their bags outside their door. Have the stableman bring their carriage around front. They don’t need hot bath water. They can wash at their house.”

Jose slipped out the family dining.

Gen’s heart broke for Jose.

She followed Jose with her eyes out the family dining room.

Everyone looked at Jose.

Jose walked through the formal dining room into the kitchen and out the backdoor.

He cried all the way to the stables and told one of the men to get his father and mother horses and carriage and take it round to the front of the house and go in the house and get their bags and put them in the carriage.

Beverly looked at Patrick she turned and walked to the buffet.

She watched Jose as he walked out the family dining room.

Jose just shook his head as everyone watched him leave.

Beverly got a little grits, ham slices and a biscuit with steak gravy.

She was thinking, “Nah Al.”

Some of the workers heard something was going on with Jose’s parents.

Beverly sat and was about to stand until Sabrina ran to her and said, “Yes ma am.”

Sabrina bent down so she could see Jose’s parents faces.

Beverly said, “May I have a glass of orange juice?”

Sabrina said, “Yes ma am.”

Beverly huffed and twisted her mouth.

Jose’s parents turned from Patrick and the family and walked out the family dining room.

Wallace and Jennifer saw the servants watched them walk out the family dining room.

Wallace and Jennifer looked for Jose.

Jose was a step in front of his parents.

Sabrina and Angela walked out and followed Jose’s parents to their guest suite.

Eleanor watched Jose’s parents walk out the family dining room.

Nadine could not believe what she saw.

Brenda walked to the buffet behind Beverly and got a steak biscuit and gravy.

Ruth brough them orange juice and apple juice.

Brenda said, “I can’t eat.”

Patrick said, “I am going to eat. Right Beverly?”

Beverly said, “Yes sir.”

Gen folded her arms and said, “Well. I never seen anything like this.”

Peter made Thomas and Bruce their strawberry pancakes with whip cream.

Gen took a big sigh and looked at Thomas’ pancakes.

Gen said, “Patrick you made a mistake. You owned up to it. Boys remember this. He is your grandpa and he just showed you how to correct bad decisions you make.”

Gen unfolded her arm and picked up her fork and looked at Thomas.

Thomas looked at Gen and pushed his plate to her and said, “You may have a taste.”

Gen could not eat.

She put her fork down.

Beverly said, “Patrick is that why you had a small buffet made for today?”

Patrick said, “Yes. I did not want them to enjoy anymore of my stuff.”

Gen was still breathing heavy.

Shirley was sitting in the parlor but decided to move to the sitting room so she could close the door when she saw Jose’s parents.

Shirley picked up her needlepoint and was stitching when she looked up and saw figures leaving out the family dining room.

Sabrina looked at Shirley.

Shirly took her time and put down her needlepoint on the table.

She would not have the workers to close the door to the sitting room.

She wanted Jose’s parents to know how vile they were to her.

She slowly walked to the sitting room door and closed it as Wallace and Jennifer were walking in front of the sitting room.

Shirley closed the door.

Wallace tried to smirk at Shirley because she was deformed.

Sabrina looked back at him.

Sabrina and Angela were about to leave and be back on Monday, but one of the workers who was cleaning the formal dining room ran from the formal dining room and told the workers what she heard.

Sabrina and Angela decided to walk into the family dining room to see what was going on.

Sabrina was to be dating the commander all week-end and to go to Nathan and Denise’s wedding on Sunday.

She was looking forward to having a busy week-end.

She sews well and been sewing on the dresses all winter and now she was motivated to finish a dress so she can wear it this week-end.

Angela was coming with Sabrina to be introduced to the commander’s friend.

Sabrina and Angela stood outside Wallace and Jennifer’s suite and waited thirty minutes.

Ruth was walking down the hall to start cleaning the suites.

Briana looked and said, “Jose’s parents are still in the suite after they have been told to leave?”

Ruth looked.

She and Briana went into Patrick and Brenda‘s suite.

They took the bathtub out and made up their bed.

Brenda placed the dress on the armoire that morning that she would be wearing at the formal dinner.

Ruth and Briana looked at the dress Brenda bought in Paris.

Brenda placed two set of jewels on her vanity to determine which one would be better for the dinner.

Briana and Ruth heard knocking on Wallace and Jennifer’s suite door.

Sabrina was ready to leave so she could finish sewing her dress for her date with the commander.

She yelled, “Sir, please open this door and step out!”

Ruth and Briana ran out Brenda and Patrick’s suite and stood and looked.

They saw Wallace and Jennifer exited the suite.

They were fully clothed.

Sabrina and Angela walked in the suite and went over every inch of the room.

The stableman was walking down the hall to get the bags and take them to the carriage.

Jennifer was holding the arm of Wallace.

They pass Ruth and Briana and tried to slightly smile.

Ruth watched them.

Briana thought, “I don’t know Jose. I have to tell mommie and daddy.”

Ruth looked at Sabrina and Angela and turned her head to watch Jose’s parents and primped her mouth and went back in Patrick and Brenda’s suite.

She and Briana continued to clean the suite.

Sabrina and Angel took the linens off the bed in the suite that Wallace and Jennifer slept on.

They turned the bed over.

They checked out the balcony and the glass to the door and underneath the rugs and the fireplace in the room.

They put the linens outside the door.

Angela walked to the linen closet and brought clean sheets to the suite.

She and Sabrina made the bed, swept the floor and polished the furniture.

Sabrina and Angela passed Ruth and Briana.

Ruth said, “Thank you.”

Sabrina and Angela kept walking.

They walked to the end of the hall and looked at the front door and did not see Jose’s parents.

Sabrina and Angela walked through the billiards room and took the bed linens to the washroom.

They came back upstairs and went into the workers’ area.

They left their coats and scarves and gloves in the room.

They put on their coats and they left the Stith house for a very long week-end.

Angela and Sabrina jumped in their ragged buggy and sped to their rooming house.

She and Sabrina got out the buggy.

They feed the horse and put the buggy in the stable.

Sabrina sat by the window and finished sewing her dress for that evening.

She thought, “This is Friday, I need a dress for Nathan and Denise’s wedding. Suppose he ask me out tomorrow. I can’t wear the same dress.”

Sabrina fell back on the bed in frustration.

She was sitting up on her bed and saw her boots.

She took the boots off and polished them.

She thought, “There is no need that I don’t have a new pair of boots to wear with these dresses. I saw the women dresses last night and my dresses look just as good. But my boots. I have to buy me a pair of boots. I have to stop drinking all the time and gambling then I will have something. Look at Alice, married a schoolteacher in a family of school-l teachers and had a set of twins a boy and a girl. Margaret with her flake self. She is married and has a baby and buy clothes for Shirley’s boutique and William and Wyonna are her workers.”

Sabrina fell back on her bed.

She looked at the ceiling.

Sabrina rolled off the bed onto the floor.

She was on her knees and said, “God I am not jealous. But even Denise was a slave and she is getting married in a few days to a man that used to be homeless. She is going to school and he is the sheriff. I don’t want to be jealous. Help me to find the right man. I am lusting behind this commander.”

She cuts her eyes up at the ceiling and in shame held her head down.

She said, “God bless the Stiths. They are not bad people, and I don’t know why Jose’s parents acted the way they did today. I am glad that I am not desiring to be in his family.”

Sabrina sat on her bed and started sewing the dress she will wear to Nathan and Denise’s wedding on Sunday.

She thought that particular dress was going to be difficult to complete sewing.

Sabrina was able to complete it and put the buttons on it that evening.

She was surprised.

Sabrina hung the dress on the armoire and was proud of her dress making skills.

She thought how she would sit on the front porch with her aunts and watch them sew all the time.

When she became bigger her aunts taught her how to make dresses.

Her aunts only sewed for the rich women of their town.

Sabrina thought of how she missed them.

Sabrina said, “I’m coming home soon.”

She looked at the third dress and looked at the time.

Sabrina shampooed her hair and washed up at the Stiths.

She washed her face, combed and brushed her hair.

Sabrina took the green dress down and stepped into the dress.

She looked at the pretty buttons she found from the clothier store.

Sabrina put her hair up in a braid.

And realized she could make hair pins out the buttons.

Sabrina made her four hair pins and stuck them in her hair.

Angela knocked on Sabrina’s door.

Sabrina’s threw on her coat.

She bought a scarf, hat and glove from Denise during the summer.

She did not want Angela to see her dress until they met the commanders at Robert’s.

Sabrina rushed out the room and was excited about the date.

She and Angela rushed outside.

The homeowner had hooked the one horse to their ragged buggy.

They were happy with their one horse and ragged buggy.

They said in the spring they would buy another buggy and horse.

The homeowner looked at them.

He knew the horse nor buggy would last until the spring.

He finally said, “You need to get your boss to finance you a loan to buy another horse and buggy.”

Sabrina and Angela stared at the homeowner.

He said, “Sorry but this horse has had it and the buggy. Whether he can hold on until Christmas I will be surprised.”

Sabrina and Angela stood and looked at the homeowner.

He looked at them and walked in the house and put coal on the fire.

Angela and Sabrina had Jose to give them the same schedule so they could ride together and not wear out the horse. They only gave the workers a ride that lived near them.

Angela was sitting in the passenger’s seat and she was stunned.

She could not think of what to do.

She was not going to walk to work like Maureen and some of the others.

Angela thought, “I will never go home to those animals. I have to do better.”

Sabrina was thinking, “We just got this horse and buggy from that old man. I should have know something was wrong. He probably had it since he was a kid, Damn! I don’t have no money.”

Sabrina was steering the horse through town.

At that moment she and Angela saw some prostitutes running into a bar with some men.

They stared at the women.

Sabrina and Angela both turned around and thought, “No.”

Sabrina began to cry.

Angela began to cry.

They looked at each other and cried all the way to Robert’s restaurant.

They swear they saw Robert and Bethany on their way to the Stiths.

As they were on their way to their restaurant.

Sabrina looked at Angela and said, “We are poor.”

Angela looked at Sabrina and said, “I know.”

They cried all the way to the restaurant.

The commander and his commander friend were standing outside Robert’s waiting for Sabrina and her friend.

They heard women crying.

They turned and started looking up and down the street.

The commanders saw a horse barely moving approaching the restaurant.

The other commander said, “Is that them? What’s wrong with them?’

The other commander said, “I don’t know. They could have gotten here quicker walking.”

He and the other commander fell into each other laughing.

The other commander said, “They are maids.”

They could not stop laughing at the situation.

The other commander said, “I would be crying too.”

They hollered.

The other commander said, “They look young.”

The commander said, “Kind of. The one steering is mine. The other one is her friend.”

The other commander said, “Should we give them a minute to compose themselves?”

The commander said, “They are maids. They used to being tough. Let’s help them out their buggy.”

The commanders could not walk to the buggy without hollering.

Commander Tyler and his wife passed the commanders on the way to the Stith’s for the formal dinner.

He looked at his commanders and nodded his head.

They saluted him.

They waited until he passed and they hollered.

They walked to the buggy.

Commander Washington walked to Angela and tried not to holler but grinned at her.

He nodded his head and said, “I am Commander Washington.”

He reached to help her out the buggy.

Angela was sniffing and said, “I heard you two hollering louder than me and Sabrina were crying.”

Commander Washington bite his mouth to keep from screaming.

He said, “Does that mean you are not coming to eat?”

Angela said, “I work at the Stith’s House, I am use to food.”

Commander Milton was standing by Sabrina’s side and tried to smile like he was innocent.

Sabrina told him, “You are innocent.”

He looked at her and winked.

Sabrina said, “I heard you also laughing as we approach. You said, it would have been better if we walked.”

The commanders stood.

They did not know if they were dating that night.

Sabrina said, “I’m like Angela, food does not impress me. What else do you have?”

Commander Washington leaned over to look at Commander Milton.

He leaned back and said, “Church.”

He tried to smile and wave at Angela.

Commander Milton kept his eyes on Sabrina.

Sabrina said, “Angela. It is your decision. I got us here on a date.”

Angela looked at the horse and said, “I want to go to church for me to pray for the horse.”

Commander Washington stepped back and looked at the horse.

He looked at Commander Milton.

The two stepped away from the buggy and talked.

Commander Washington rode his horse across the street and came back a half hour later with another horse.

The soldier with Commander Washington hooked the new horse to the buggy.

Angela and Sabrina hugged the old horse and cried.

The horse neighed at them.

He was led by the soldier across the street to the military headquarters.

Sabrina turned to the commanders that were standing by their horses.

She pointed to herself and turning around like a windup toy.

The commanders looked at her.

She said, “We can’t pay for this horse. I don’t have any money. Angela do you have any money?”

Angela was still angry at Commander Washington and calmly said, “No.”

The commanders were looking at Sabrina who was more stressed than they even saw prisoners.

Commander Washington leaned to Commander Milton and said, “Too much sugar.”

They hollered.

Angela rolled her eyes at Commander Washington.

The commanders were laughing so hard they could not stop.

Sabrina stopped and looked at the commanders.

Silent tears began to flow down her face.

Angela was standing rolling her eyes at the commanders.

Commander Milton finally got his composure back and looked at Angela and he shook his head at her.

He turned and saw Sabrina was hurt.

He stood for a minute.

Commander Washington looked at Sabrina and Angela.

He laughed at Angela.

He elbowed Commander Milton.

Commander Milton walked to Sabrina and said, “I am sorry for laughing. We have so little to laugh at and make us fell human. You owe us nothing for the horse. But.”

Angela twisted her mouth and rolled her eyes.

Commander Washington looked at Angela.

Commander Milton said, “To join us for church services this evening.”

Sabrina was trying to get her composure back.

Angela looked at Sabrina and said, “It’s late. It’s over.”

Commander Washington said, “NO. It starts late on Thursday.”

Angela said, “Why?”

Commander Washington looked at Angela and said, “I don’t know why.”

Commander Milton reached for Sabrina’s hand and escorted her to the buggy.

He looked at the buggy and said, “Next we work on you a new buggy.”

Commander Washington walked to Angela to help her in the buggy.

He stepped back and looked at the buggy.

He and Commander Milton rode in front of the buggy and sang Christmas songs on the way to the church.

The commanders sped up to make up some of the time they lost.

The church was a good distance from the new military headquarters. It took nearly thirty minutes to get there.

Angela did not like going away from everything, but they were commanders.

Commander Washington jumped off his horse and tied it and ran to the buggy and helped Angela out.

He ran around the dark back.

Commander Milton helped Sabrina out the buggy.

They were standing outside and heard others walk to the church.

Commander Washington ran from the back and lit the lanterns at the church.

He handed the light to Commander Milton and unlocked the church.

He reached for the light and lit the lanterns inside the church and put coal in the fireplace and light the fireplace.

Angela looked around the church and thought, “It’s pretty.”

The people started coming in the church.

Commander Washington rushed outside and light the lanterns at the pathway to the church.

The lanterns burn for two hours.

The parishioners had time to see their way home

Commander Washington ran back to the church and put the light out.

He ran into the church.

A man was standing at the front of the church with a robe in his hand.

Angela turned to Sabrina and said, “Why is he running like that?”

Commander Milton smirked.

The man helped the commander put the robe over the top of his commander uniform.

Angela and Sabrina turned and looked at the back door.

Angela and Sabrina’s plans were to have boys for that holiday and have fun with them.

They did not know they were godly men.

They thought because they were commanders, they were loose and wild.

Several young women were sitting to their side and watching them.

Angela and Sabrina saw the young women.

Angela said, “They can have them. I don’t want a saint this holiday.”

Commander Washington heard Angela.

Sabrina looked at Angela and turned around.

Sabrina looked in the face of Commander Milton.

Sabrina turned around and stared in front of her.

The church was heating up.

Sabrina begin to pull off her coat.

Angela saw Sabrina’s pretty dress and said, “You have to make me one.”

They were talking as if they were outside.

Commander Milton leaned and looked at them and said, “Quiet please. You are in the house of the LORD JESUS the Christ.”

Angela turned up her nose and started mouthing at Commander Milton.

Commander Milton looked at Angela.

Sabrina was staring in space and thinking.

She was thinking about the prostitutes would have a good night.

Sabrina was wondering how long they would be there and why Commander Washington did not know why the service started late on Thursday.

Sabrina bucked her eyes.

Angela looked at her and began to laugh.

Sabrina closed her eyes,

She thought, “God forgive me for thinking that in Your house please.”

The horse came to her mind.

Sabrina said, “Thank You for the horse God.”

Commander Milton looked at Sabrina whose eyes were closed.

Commander Washington gave his thirty-minute sermon.

The parishioners sang two songs.

Commander Washington prayed for the people and dismissed the church.

The man took his robe and put it in the back.

The man covered the coals in the fireplace.

Parishioners walked up to the commander and talked to him.

Angela was sitting sideways with her back on Sabrina’s shoulder.

She was looking at the windows and the ceiling.

She stared at the stained glass windows.

The young women made their way to the front of the church to ask for prayer and counseling from Commander Washington.

Commander Milton watched the young women.

Angela looked at the young women who were younger than she and Sabrina.

She and Sabina looked a little younger than what they were.

Angela thought, “Have at it. I don’t want it especially now since he is a preacher.”

She went into her bag and pulled out the lollipop Michael gave her.

Commander Washington looked at Angela as she unwrapped the lollipop and began to suck it in church.

Three little children stood at the end of her pew and watched Angela.

Commander Milton looked at Angela and then he watched the little children.

Commander Washington watched the three little children and Angela who did not see the children looking at her lollipop.

The mother walked up and looked at Angela sucking and licking her lollipop.

Sabrina elbowed Angela hard.

Angela looked at Sabrina and Commander Milton was peeping at Angela.

Sabrina said, “Stop licking that lollipop like that.”

Angela said, “Like what?’

Commander Milton said, “You are in the house of GOD.”

Angela turned and took her feet off the pew and saw the three little children.

She said, “You have to bothered with them until they are grown.”

Commander Milton was leaning backwards on the pew to see who Angela was talking about.”

Sabrina could not think.

Her thoughts were wrong.

She was trying to keep her thoughts clean.

Commander Milton touched Sabrina’s hand and said, “You can open your eyes.”

Sabrina cracked one eye open.

Commander Milton laughed.

He said, “How was your day?”

Sabrina thought and said, “Huh.”

Angela said, “It was crap.”

Commander Washington looked at Angela.

Angela was sitting and looked around and said, “Where are we. I don’t know this part of town?”

Commander Milton said, “It’s to the west of the headquarters.”

Angela and Sabina stared at him.

He looked at them and said, “It’s the furthest part of the city. There is a good school here, two churches and a grocer. The people are workers. They own a horseshoe shop, flower shop, a few of the teachers who teach at the school live here and some of workers from your boss railroad live here. It is a pretty neighborhood. They go to the capitol to shop and be entertained.”

Angela and Sabrina looked at Commander Milton.

He looked at them.

He said, “You are ready to leave?”

Angela said, “Yeah.”

Sabrina said, “Yes.”

Commander Milton looked at Sabrina and said, “You look pretty tonight. I am sure Commander Washington wanted to see you home.”

Angela said, “For what?”

Sabrina elbowed Angela and tried to keep a straight face.

Sabrina cut her eyes at Commander Milton and tried to smile.

Commander Milton looked at Angela.

He said, “Sabrina what caused your day to be bad?’

Angela chuckled.

Sabrina said, “Two guests that stayed overnight at the Stiths. Would not come to breakfast and when they got to breakfast they would not speak to Mr. and Mrs. Stith. They had to tell them to get out their house and never come back. Then me and Angela had to escort them to their suite to pack their bags. They closed and locked the door and stayed in the suite about forty five minutes, until I begin to beat on the door and told them to open the door and step outside.”

Commander Milton looked at the quiet Sabrina and said, “You got tough. To tell someone to step out.”

Angela was frowned up.

Commander Milton looked at her and said, “Why were they invited to stay?”

Angela said, “We don’t know.”

Sabrina started putting on her coat and scarf.

She said, “Patrick is married to a black woman and many people in town and the capitol doesn’t like it. The butler’s parents hate black people and I guess Patrick, Mr. Stith, thought he could be kind to them because the butler was their son.”

Commander Milton looked and said, “To sit at someone’s else table and don’t speak.”

Angela said, “And they did not want to come out of their bedroom to eat breakfast with the Stiths. They actually thought they were going to stay in the house today and attend the formal dinner tonight. That’s just as crazy as all of those young women up there trying to court Commander Washington.”

Sabrina closed her eyes and put her hat and gloves on.

She said, “Angela come on.”

Angela looked at Sabrina and said, “Hell no. “

Commander Washington looked at Angela.

Angela said, “I don’t know where we are, and I am not going to get lost with you again until four in the morning. We were all out in the baddest sections of this town. I really believe I had heart attacks that night.”

Commander Milton looked at Angela and he saw Sabrina was deep in her thoughts.

Commander Washington told the young ladies that he would see them on Sunday.

Angela and Sabrina put on their coats and were standing in the aisle with Commander Milton.

Commander Washington walked to Commander Milton, Angela and Sabrina.

Commander Washington looked at Angela and said, “The next time bring three lollipops.

They walked outside the church.

The man with Commander Washington’s robe and the woman with the three young children locked up the church and walked the young women outside.

Several young men walked with some of the young women home.

Angela did not hear Commander Washington because she was thinking about the bar the prostitutes were running in with the men.

She was thinking about the men standing outside the bar.

Commander Milton looked at Angela.

He knew where she and Sabrina’s minds were.

Commander Washington said, “I saw a miracle today.”

Sabrina and Angela were standing and waiting to leave.

Commander Washington said, “When you both agreed to come to church, God opened the door for you to get a new horse.”

Sabrina whispered, “Thank you.”

Angela threw the remainder lollipop in her mouth.

The commanders walked them to their buggy.

Angela said, “We have to finance a new buggy.”

Commander Washington knew she was saying she was not coming back to the church.

The light around the back died out.

The man, woman and three little children were walking out the church.

The woman and three little children walked to the carriage.

The man locked the church door.

Commander Milton held Sabrina’s hand and rubbed the inside of her hand.

She grinned.

Commander Washington said, ”Angela, maybe if you are not use to food tomorrow we can go to the capitol for lunch. To one of my favorite restaurants.”

Angela looked at him and then she looked at Sabrina.

Sabrina said, “I’ll be sewing all day tomorrow, you can take the horse and buggy.”

Commander Washington said, “I’ll come and pick you up. Your address?”

Commander Milton snickered.

Angela gave him their address.

Commander Milton said, “I won’t see you anymore Sabrina?”

Sabrina said, “You can come and we can talk while I am sewing. I am going to a wedding Sunday. Do you care to attend?”

Commander Milton grinned and said, “I’ll work all day tomorrow and Saturday so I can attend the wedding with you on Sunday. I’ll get the address and be there Sunday in a carriage for you.”

Sabrina grinned at the commander.

Commander Milton winked at Sabrina.

The commanders mounted their horses and rode in front of the buggy.

The new horse tried to keep up with the military horses.

The commanders looked back at the horse.

Sabrina and Angela were laughing.

They had a good time speeding back to town.

Sabrina and Angela continued to their rooming house.

They put the new horse up and unhook the buggy.

They locked the stables and ran into the house.

They looked at the time and it was nearly nine thirty they laughed and went to their rooms and went to bed.

The next day Angela knocked on Sabrina door and said, “Sabrina help.”

Sabrina was sleep but opened the door.

Angela said, “I only have two dresses I wore one last night and have this one. Suppose he wants to see me Sunday. I don’t want to wear one of these dresses again.”

Sabrina said, “Do you have any fabric.

Angela smirked and looked at Sabrina and said, “You are the sewer.”

Sabrina said, “If you go to town and buy four yards of a fabric you really like and the thread and buttons, I can sew you a dress by Sunday.”

Angela said, “What about you? If the commander comes to take you somewhere today or Saturday. I know he said, he will work all day Saturday so he could spend Sunday with you. What do they do?”

Sabrina reached for the dress Angela had in her hand and said, “I can make this look better with buttons and ribbons. You have to go now into town and come back quickly so I can begin on you a new dress for Sunday. Do not play with me Angela like you did the last time.”

Angela looked at Sabrina and said, “I’m sorry. I won’t.”

Angela turned and ran to her room and put on her coat, scarf, hat and gloves and rushed out the house and got the new horse and rode him into town.

Sabrina looked out the window and stared at Angela.

Sabrina quickly put on new buttons and added velvet ribbon to the collar and cuffs.

She hung the dress on her armoire and went back to bed.

Angela returned and knocked on Sabrina’s door.

Sabrina sat in bed and said, “Come in.”

Angela walked in and saw her old dress that looked updated and stylish.

Sabrina got out of bed and measured the fabric and looked at the thread and buttons.

She measured the fabric on Angela.

Sabrina immediately cut the fabric and began to sew a dress for Angela dress.

Angela helped until it was time for her to wash and dress for Commander Washington.

Sabrina continued to sew even when she saw Commander Washington pull up in a carriage.

She looked out the window and grinned.

She said, “This Christmas is not working out as we expect.”

Sabrina worked on Angela’s dress through the evening until dark.

She was tried and put Angela’s dress on her armoire and went to bed.

Angela came in late that evening and knocked on Sabrina’s door.

Sabrina mumbled.

Angela knew she was sleep and turned and grinned and ran to her room and dressed for bed.

Angela grinned all night and finally went to bed.

She decided she had to look like the women the other commanders were dating.

Sabrina made her old worn dress look good.

Angela was happy that she did not embarrassed Commander Washington.

He told Angela he would go to the wedding with her on Sunday.

Sabrina woke and that Saturday morning and worked on Angela’s dress passed noon.

Sabrina washed her face and went and got on the horse and rode to the Stith House and walked in the house.

Jose looked at Sabrina.

Jose said, “Sabrina why are you here?”

Sabrina said, “To eat. We don’t get paid until next week.”

Thomas looked at Sabrina.

Mike and John were at the sinks.

They stepped back and looked at Sabrina.

Jose stared at Sabrina.

He opened his book up and looked at the legend.

He said, “Sabrina you did not pick up your pay yesterday. We are paid on Fridays. Most workers picked up their pay on Mondays when they come back to work if they are off on the that Friday.”

Thomas and Dan stared at Sabrina.

Dan said, “Sabrina when did you eat last?”

Sabrina stood and was thinking.

Thomas took out a skillet and grilled a lamb chop and cooked her two eggs and cheese bread.

Dan said, “Sabrina, you did not go to dinner with the commander?”

Thomas put her food on a plate and gave her a fork.

Sabrina stood and started eating her food.

She said, “Church.”

Dan said, “You haven’t eaten since Wednesday?”

Sabrina said, “I have been sewing. I know I could not sew anymore. I was hungry and I knew there was food here.”

Jose said, “Here is your pay. I need for you to count this and sign that you received it Ruth said, “You and Angela cleaned the guest suite that is overtime. Mrs. Stith approved it and this is an extra dollar.”

Jose said, “Angela came by yesterday and got her pay, why didn’t you?”

Sabrina was getting her sense back.

Thomas poured her a glass of orange juice.

Sabrina said, “I was sewing her dress. That’s why she did not fuss but went to town and got her fabric and thread I needed to sew her dress. Is there anything I can carry for our meal today?”

Thomas looked in the contains and packed her fried chicken, some biscuits and put soup in a kettle and put honey and butter with the chicken.

Sabrina counted her five dollars and signed the legend.

She said, “I’ll see you all at Nathan and Denise’s wedding tomorrow.”

Everyone looked at Sabrina.

Mike said, “She was delirious.”

Jose nodded his head.

Mike walked to the hall by the back door and saw Sabrina mount her horse and leave.

John was looking out the kitchen window.

Jose was sitting and looking out the backdoor at Sabrina as she left.

Mike said, “She’s riding a new horse with speed. She had a good date the other night.”

Dan looked at Mike.

John snickered.

Sabrina felt good she rode into town and went to the clothing store and with the extra dollar she bought a new pair of boots.

She stood in line to pay for the boots and saw a fancy pair of boots and looked at the clerk.

She walked away and tried on the fancy pair of boots.

She liked the fancy pair of boots better than the plain.

Two young women were in the general store and they were talking and looking at Sabrina.

Sabrina saw them but continued to try on the fancy boots.

She put her old boots back on and picked up the fancy boots.

She was looking at the fancy boots and went to the hair bows and found two nice hairbows she thought would go with her dress that she was wearing to Nathan and Denise Wedding.

She was not concerned about a wedding gift because all the workers contributed fifty cents for Nathan and Denise’s honeymoon.

Sabrina was standing in line.

She saw the two young women looking at her.

She put her fancy boots on the counter and her two fancy hair pins.

The clerk said, “Ma am, do you want these other boots?”

Sabrina was staring at the two young women.

She did not turn to the store clerk and touched the fancy boots and hair pins.

The store clerk turned to see who Sabrina was looking at.

He said, “They are from the neighborhood by the military headquarters. They came in and thought we were country.”

Sabrina thought, “The neighborhood by the headquarters. The church. The young women from Thursday night.”

Sabrina ran to the door and looked at the women.

The clerk said, “Ma am.”

Sabrina ran back to the counter and was looking out the door and pulled out her five dollars and handed the money to the store clerk.

The clerk took two dollars and gave her back three dollars.

Sabrina looked at the three dollars.

She looked at the clerk.

He pointed to the sign.

Sabrina looked and saw a sign that said ’SALE’.

She started to go to the sale.

She wanted to run behind the young women and she wanted to get home and put her outfit together for Sunday.

She looked at the salesclerk and put her money in her pocket and picked up her bag.

She saw fabric and looked and saw a sale sign.

She knew she did not have time because she had to finish Angela’s dress.

She thought about what she had to do next.

She walked out the store.

The clerk and the manager shook their heads at Sabrina.

Sabrina mounted her horse and turned around and sped through town and cut and passed Monica’s house and went through their neighborhood to her rooming house.

Sabrina would go that way to cut her path short.

She ran in the rooming house with her arms full.

The owner was in the yard and told her he would put up the new horse.

He said, “Now what about a buggy?”

Sabrina had the kettle and bags under her chin.

He knew whatever food she had she would share with her and Angela.

Sabrina rushed in the house and put the kettle full of vegetable soup down and the bag of chicken and biscuits down on the table.

She rushed to her room and put her new fancy boots down and the hair pins.

Sabrina pulled off her coat and scarf that she put over her head and her gloves.

She walked back out her room and went and put the kettle full of soap on the hearth and the chicken and biscuits on top of the kettle to get warm.

The homeowner walked in the house and said, “I can smell that soup.”

Sabrina said, “I just put it on. I am going to finish Angela‘s dress for tomorrow. I’ll be back for some chicken and biscuits later.”

Mr. Haynes grinned.

He always loved the food they brought from the Stith’s house.

Sabrina reached in her pocket and said, “Mr. Haynes let me pay you for next week now.”

Mr. Haynes waked in the sitting room and pulled out his receipt book and wrote Sabrina a receipt for the dollar room for the next week.

Sabrina wanted a receipt from the time he said, he did not get her dollar that she put under his door.

She had to borrow the dollar from Nadine and Ruth to pay Mr. Haynes.

Ruth told Sabrina, “Never slip money under his door. Always hand it directly to him.”

Sabrina started doing that from the summer to now.

She ran to her room and closed the door.

She reached in her pocket and smiled when she looked and saw the new fancy boots and fancy hair bows and she paid her room rent a week early.

She put her money in a secret place and sat and sewed on Angela’s dress until dark.

She lit a lantern and sat and continued on Angela’s late that night.

She was hungry.

Sabrina went to Angela’s room and knocked on the door.

Angela walked to the door and opened the door.

She saw her dress and nearly screamed.

Angela begin to jump up and down in excitement.

She got that from Percy.

Mr. Haynes ran out of his bedroom and saw Sabrina and Angela and turned and went back to bed.

Sabrina said, “Try on the dress Angela so I can see if there is something I need to change.

Sabrina said, “I’m hungry. I am going to eat.”

Angela looked at Sabrina and said, “Alright.”

Mr. Haynes heard Angela.

He knew Angela kept going to the kitchen.

He brought the water in the house for their baths on Sunday and told Angela to leave Sabrina something to eat since she went and got the food.

Sabrina walked downstairs in the kitchen.

Mr. Haynes stood at his door and listened.

He heard Angela screamed with delight how beautiful her dress was.

He smiled.

Sabrina looked in the kettle and there was no soup.

He looked around the kitchen and saw no chicken and biscuits, not even the butter and the honey.

Sabrina stood in the floor and thought.

Mr. Haynes eased his bedroom door opened to listen for Sabrina.

Sabrina started thinking.

She was ready to leave.

She went upstairs.

Mr. Haynes quickly shut his door.

Angela was still dancing in the floor with her dress.

Sabrina went into her room which was next to Mr. Haynes.

Mr. Haynes tipped toe to the connecting wall with Sabrina’s wall and tried not to step on the crack that made up the noise.

He stepped on the crack.

Sabrina heard him and turned and looked at the wall.

She thought about her overnight guests.

Sabrina sat on the foot of her bed.

She thought, “I just paid him a dollar for next week room rent. Next week is Christmas. I don’t need to stay at the Stiths.

Angela knocked on Sabrina’s door.

Sabrina did not answer.

Angela tried to open the door, but Sabrina locked it when she came back from the kitchen.

Sabrina did not know if Mr. Haynes stole her dollar and ate up all the food or whether Angela stole the dollar and they bought shared the dollar and the food.

She thought about the times she paid for the bottles of whiskey and the next morning more was drank than she remembered drinking. She knew of times Angela did not work but paid for her room rent.

Sabrina did not know what to think.

She slid on the floor on her knees and said, “Show me how.”

Sabrina slept on her knees and had her head on the bed.

She heard Mr. Haynes walked to the bottom of the stairs and yelled. “Hot bath water.”

Sabrina and Angela paid for hot bath water on Sundays.

They either bathe or wash at the Stith’s the rest of the week.

Sabrina got the last bit of the bath items she bought from Lorraine and went downstairs and bath and shampooed her hair.

Angela was walking down the stairs as Sabrina was walking up the stairs.

Angela watched Sabrina.

Sabrina looked straight ahead.

Mr. Haynes had taken out Sabrina’s bath water and brought in Angela’s.

Angela looked back at Sabrina when she reached the bottom and stood by Mr. Haynes.

Mr. Haynes looked at Sabrina and thought, “Well I got the dollar for next week.”

Sabrina went to her room and packed everything and put everything in her bag.

She went downstairs and washed the kettle Thomas gave her full of soap.

Angela was coming out from her bath and looked at Sabrina and said, “I was going to wash that.”

Sabrina said nothing.

Angela looked at Sabrina.

Mr. Haynes walked in the kitchen and said, “Tell the cooks. No the chefs.”

Angela laughed.

Mr. Haynes said, “I loved the food.”

Sabrina had a thought.

She said, “I’m sure you did and your woman did.”

Angela looked at Sabrina and tried to giggle and said, “Mr. Haynes you got a woman.”

Mr. Haynes looked meanly at Sabrina.

Sabrina said, “You Angela.”

Mr. Haynes said, “Get out Sabrina.”

Sabrina said, “I’m already packed.”

Angela was stunned.

Mr. Haynes was angry.

He moved towards Sabrina and Angela caught him and carried him upstairs to his room.

Sabrina shook her head.

She went outside and hooked up the new horse and feed him and gave him water.

Sabrina ran in the house and went to her room and got her bags and searched the room and picked up her bags and ran down the stairs and picked up the kettle on the way out the door.

Angela and Mr. Haynes were lying in bed watching Sabrina leave.

Sabrina rode to the Stith and talked to Jose and Nadine about what happened.

Jose said, “Sabrina what are you going to do?”  
Sabrina said, “Go home to my aunts. My momma and daddy died when I was four. My momma fell in the well and my daddy jumped in to save her. I have been running from that awful memory for six years. My momma’s sisters raised me and sent me to school. I finished school and have travelled the state and lived in different towns and cities for six years.”

Patrick, Eleanor and Brenda were standing back in the hallway and heard Sabrina.

Sabrina said, “All of my father’s family are teaches in the eastern part of the state.”

She laughed and said, “One cousin escaped and he is a judge.”

Jose and Nadine smiled.

Dan looked at Sabrina and said, “Sabrina what about the commander?”

Sabrina said, “If he wants me he can find me.

I just don’t want Angela to have that Christian preacher commander.”

Jose said, “God will let him know about Angela.”

Patrick nodded his head.

Ruth had walked up and stood still.

She heard some of the conversation.

Brenda touched Ruth’s arm.

Ruth leaned over to hear what Brenda was saying.

Ruth walked pass Patrick, Eleanor and Brenda and stood and looked at Sabrina.

She said, “Sabrina you look so pretty. You are a bit early for the Church service and Nathan and Denise’s wedding.”

She looked at Sabrina’s new fancy boots.

Sabrina said, “I’m not going to the wedding.”

Ruth said, “Why not you are pretty?”

Jose stood to tell Ruth to mind her own business and said, “Ruth.”

When he looked he saw Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor standing on the back wall and Ruth had to pass them.

Eleanor rolled her eyes at Jose.

She was still mad with him from Friday, when they all went to tell Aunt Bev bye.

Jose looked at Eleanor and smirked.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor was mad and rolling her eyes at Jose.

She cut her eyes and saw Patrick and Brenda watching her.

They told her to leave Jose along about his parents.

But Eleanor kept picking at Jose until he finally got her back as they were waiting for Aunt Beverly to board the train and leave.

Jose knew Brenda was a matchmaker and he wanted to see what message she sent Ruth to give Sabrina.

Ruth said, “How far do you have to travel? I heard you say if he wants you he can find you.”

Sabrina looked at the always nosey Ruth and said, “It takes me a day to get to my aunts. They are dress makers for the tows wealthy people. Women come from all over the state for them to make their fancy dresses.”

Brenda was thinking and hit Patrick’s shoulder and nodded her head for yes.

Brenda heard of the famous dress makers but never desired to travel the state to reach them.

Jose saw Brenda when she nodded to Patrick.

He rolled his eyes at Eleanor.

Dan saw Jose and wondered who he was rolling his eyes at.

He thought, “It has to be Eleanor. They have spat for the past several days and is getting on everyone’s nerves.”

Ruth said, “You don’t need to travel in that pretty dress. Where did you get it. I have not seen anything like that around here. Not even at the reception nor dinner a few days ago.”

Eleanor leaned off the wall to look at Sabrina’s dress and she could not see.

Patrick and Brenda stared at Eleanor.

They knew she would do something.

Sabrina said, “I made it.”

Ruth looked at Sabrina and said, “You look so pretty and whatever you are talking about is worth running off scared home instead of seeing whoever he is. Let him see you and let him see how much you are worth.”

Ruth ran out the house screaming.

Patrick and Brenda could not move they stood against the wall in shock.

Eleanor was still leaning trying to see Sabrina’s dress and she was motionless.

Jose was still looking at Sabrina’s dress

Peter was bending down in the stove to take out the wedding cake to start frosting it.

Nadine stood next to Peter and continued to stare at Sabrina.

Sabrina jumped around and ran to the backdoor and out on the porch to see where Ruth was.

Patrick, said, “I guess we better walk into the kitchen now.”

Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor walked in the kitchen.

The boys were standing at the top of the stairs.

They had finished their baths and were dressing when they heard the screaming Ruth.

Gary was partially dressed when he ran out of the re-modeled shed onto his porch to see who ran pass screaming.

He slowly turned and looked at Sabrina standing on the back porch.

The five men from the stables ran out and was looking into the woods.

Jose turned and looked towards the backdoor.

He saw Gary looking towards the woods.

Dan was putting on the rib roast and vegetables.

He stood and looked at Jose.

Jose said, “I am not going out there in the woods looking for Ruth.”

Dan slammed down his towel on the stove.

Peter shook from shock.

He kept getting his cake out the stove that was in there cooling since last night.

Peter and Nadine had a good night.

She finally decided to let Peter get a Christmas tree.

Several workers went out in the woods and chopped down their Christmas trees.

Patrick was standing on the back porch watching them.

He yelled at Mr. Cooley.

Patrick said, “James, you know that tree is too small for you and your family.”

Patrick turned and yelled in the kitchen and said, “Dan bring hot cocoa or something for the people and bring me hot buttered rum.”

Mr. Cooley said, “Me too.”

Dan grinned and made the hot cocoa.

Mike and John were trying to finish the dishes so they could meet some women at the restaurant and then go to the bar.

They looked at Dan.

Dan did not look at them but said, “I’ll wash and dry the dishes.”

Mike and John walked out the house and they saw the tree that Mr. Cooley had cut down.

Mike stopped and said, “Sir, what at are you going to do with that tree.?”

Mr. Cooley and Patrick looked at Mike and John.

Mr. Cooley said, “I was told it was too small for me and my family. I can’t do anything with it.”

Mike said, “Can I have it?”

Mr. Cooley said, “Sure.”

Mike went to his horse and put the blanket across the horse.

John got off his horse to come and help Mike.

Dan walked out the house with the hot buttered rum.

John dropped the tree.

Patrick looked at John.

Mike looked back at Dan and said, “That smell mighty good.”

Dan walked with the tray to Patrick and Mr. Cooley.

Patrick and Mr. Cooley got the large mugs filled with hot buttered rum.

Dan gave hot cocoa to Mr. James Cooley’s sons and his two grandsons.

Percy and Bruce ran to the backdoor.

They saw boys and ran out the backdoor.

They spoke to the boys and Mr. Cooley.

Bruce said, “Hey what are you all doing?”

One of the boys said, “We are here cutting down our Christmas tree. See and he pointed at the one Mike and John were putting on their horse.”

Hs yelled come on so we can get home.”

The two boys jumped off the porch and put the mugs of hot cocoa on the back porch and ran to their uncles.

Bruce said, ”I want so hot cocoa.”

Percy said, “I want what grandpa has.”

Mike turned and looked at Percy.

Patrick said, “You two go in the house and stay.”

Mr. Cooley held his head straight and chuckle.

Mike and John looked at Percy.

Bruce said, “Grandpa we want to go into the woods and cut down a tree.”

Patrick said, “Next year. I promise.”

Patrick turned and looked at the boys.

Percy and Bruce looked at Patrick and walked in the house.

Bruce said, “It’s your fault Percy.”

Percy stopped in the hallway by the kitchen and yelled at Bruce and said, “How is that my fault.”

Patrick and Mr. Cooley were listening to them.

Bruce said, “You wanted liquor instead of drinking the hot cocoa.”

Dan and Thomas looked at the boys.

Percy and Bruce argued so loudly that Eleanor ran out of her office and called them to her.

They told her what happened.

She looked at Percy and said, “Percy you have to stop drinking.”

Percy said, “Momma but I love the taste.”

Eleanor said, “Percy, you are just like your father wanting to drink all the time.”

Percy and Bruce stood and looked at Eleanor.

They never knew that about Bruce.

Percy said, “Momma, how do I stop? I don’t want to be like daddy.”

Eleanor said, “I don’t know Percy. Think about what is more important than yourself and try to do that which please that person or you.”

She said, “That’s what I had to do to stop drinking so much so I can be alive and here with you all and raise you up to be good persons and citizens.”

Bruce said, “You did not want us to grow up and like Uncle Patrick Jr and Uncle Christopher?”

Eleanor said, “Yes. I am the one who gave you life and promised God that I would raise you up in the imagine of His Son JESUS.”

Bruce and Percy looked at Eleanor.

She said, “You two go your ways. Think Percy what you love more than liquor and think about how you can make it better.”

Percy said, “Our railroad.”

Eleanor said, “Go on.”

Bruce and Percy started walking up the hall whispering to each other.

Percy got to the billiards room and cut his eyes at Eleanor.

Eleanor was standing outside her office and saw Percy’s eyes.

She said, “JESUS help.”

Mr. Cooley and Patrick stood on the back porch and laughed and talked.

They talked about the old days they had to go and find the woods and then cut down the tree.

Mike and John listened to these old men talk about how hard life was but they made it for themselves and their families.

Mr. Cooley sons came out the woods with a large tree.

Patrick and Mr. Cooley were walking back from the livestock will be for the spring through the fall.

Mr. Cooley said, “Patrick it has been seventeen years I have and my sons have worked for you.”

Patrick stopped walking and stood still and looked at Mr. Cooley.

He learned over his life when people start talking to stop and give them his attention.

Mr. Cooley said, “Out of my seven sons and two daughters. You and that beautiful woman of yours sent four of my children to college, three finished school and joined the military. Those two grandsons belong to my two daughters.”

Patrick looked at the boys trying to carry the Christmas tree to the wagon.

He smiled.

Mr. Cooley smiled.

Mr. Cooley said, “My two daughters married military men. They have a quiet but nice life. They said they will not have any more children.”

Mr. Cooley laughed.

He said, “My three sons who joined the military married three fine women and live in different states. I was hoping they would move here to the headquarters here to be close to their mother.”

Patrick looked at Mr. Cooley.

Mr. Cooley said, “Come this spring you will need to hire someone else.”

Mr. Cooley began to cry.

Patrick reached over and slapped Mr. Cooley on his back.

Mike saw Mr. Cooley and Patrick.

He said, “John.”

He nodded towards Patrick and Mr. Cooley.

Mike looked back at his sons looking for them.

John turned around and looked at Mr. Cooley’s grandsons and said, “Well we know what that was about.”

Mr. Cooley grandsons saw him and ran to him.

Mr. Cooley caught his breath and he and Patrick walked back to the house.

Mr. Cooley took his handkerchief and wiped his face and nose before they got back to the house.

Patrick and Mr. Cooley looked at the tree and said, “Whoa.”

John and Mike turned to see the tree.

Mike stood and looked at the tree.

Patrick elbowed Mr. Cooley.

Mr. Cooley looked at Mike and John.

His sons stood the tree up for their father to inspect it.

Mr. Cooley said, “That’s a fine tree.”

Patrick said, “Sure is.”

Mr. Cooley told them to load the tree in the wagon.

Dan was looking towards the woods and thinking.

He took the cups of cocoa back in the house.

Patrick went into the house and found Brenda.

Brenda was in her office looking over Christmas greetings.

He told her what Mr. Cooley said.

Brenda’s eyes filled with tears.

She knew Mr. Cooley was special to Patrick and he taught Patrick everything about livestock.

They were friends.

Patrick sat and cried until dinner.

Eleanor was looking for her daddy and saw him in her mother’s office crying.

Brenda told Eleanor about Mr. Cooley.

She sat next to Patrick and held his and put her head on his shoulder.

She looked at Brenda and said, “Tough year.”

Brenda said, “GOD trusted us to come through it.”

Eleanor looked at her mother.

Dan went into the woods with a saw and axe and drove his wagon into the woods.

Peter watched Dan.

Dan came out by night fall with two trees.

He dragged the trees out of the woods and put them on the wagon and drove back to the house.

Dan rushed into the house and washed his face and hands and battered the chicken and put all of the chicken in a deep skillet and cooked them while he peeled and mashed the potatoes as he was taught in Europe.

Peter cooked the breads and apple cake for that evening’s dessert.

Nadine made tea and coffee for the dessert.

Dan took rushed and cooked the brussels sprouts and carrots quickly.

Nadine and Rita set the table.

Rita was rushing to go home to her son.

Peter made her rolls to take home to her son.

Rita’s son has always loved Peter’s rolls.

Rita arrived home thirty minutes later.

She jumped out the wagon and her son helped her put the horse and wagon in the shed.

A man rode up to her house.

She and her son turned and looked at the man.

Rita watched the man dismount his horse.

She recognized his tall slim frame.

She grinned.

Her son looked at his mother.

Marvin walked to the yard and said, “Good evening.”

Rita ran to Marvin.

He caught her and they kissed.

Her son did not know what to do.

Some neighbors walked and were looking.

Rita’s son looked at the neighbors and tried to wave out of embarrassment.

Marvin said, “The spring.”

Rita said, “Now.”

Marvin laughed and they continued to kiss.

Rita’s son went to the house and came out and lit the lanterns Rita got from the Stith’s.

He lit the one on the front porch and the one by the stables.

He went into the house and got a blanket and sat on the porch and watched his mother and this man.

The neighbors were eating dinner and had pulled back their windows to watch Rita.

Rita’s son and stood and walked to his mother and tapped her on her shoulder.

He felt her son’s hand and rested her head on Marvin’s shoulder.

Marvin looked at Wayne and said, “Hi. I am Pastor Marvin. I love your mother and want to marry her.”

Wayne said, “Huh. I love her too and wants the best man to marry her. Mother where are the rolls?”

Rita held her up and looked at Wayne and said, “In my bag.”

Marvin and Rita looked at Wayne.

Marvin said, “I should not have said, ‘pastor.”.

Rita looked at Wayne and turned back to Marvin and looked at him.

He said, “I know. ‘Now’”

Wayne went to the wagon and got the bag of rolls peter sent.

Rita ran to the wagon and got her bag since Wayne was mad and left it in the wagon.

Marvin stood and waited for Rita.

Rita and Marvin followed Wayne into the house.

Marvin, Rita and Wayne talked all night until daybreak.

Peter said, “Dan what are you going to do with two trees?”

Dan said, “I don’t know. I saw the larger tree before I saw the smaller tree.

Peter looked at Nadine.

Nadine was standing and watching Dan and Peter.

She said to Dan, “How would you decorate your tree Dan?”

Dan said, “With popcorn and cranberries.”

Nadine looked at Peter and said, “If you get a tree you have to carry it in the house, set it up, water it and make sure no snakes are on it and decorate and maintain it by yourself.”

Dan was standing and thought, “Snakes.”

Peter thought, “Snakes!!!”

Nadine saw peter flinched.

She smirked, turned and walked out the kitchen and said, “Uh huh.”

Peter and Dan stood in the kitchen for a few minutes.

Dan and Peter walked out to his wagon and Peter pulled his wagon to Dan and Dan said, “Peter you can have the larger tree.”

Peter said, “Why not the smaller tree.”

Dan said, “Because the same snakes will be on either tree.”

Peter started at Dan.

Dan stared at Peter.

Peter looked towards the woods and knew the only person he could get to go with him was Nadine.

All Peter could see was curse words as big as the sky coming out of Nadine’s mouth.

Peter jumped.

Dan stared at him and thought, “She needs to beat you’re a\*\*.”

Peter pulled the big tree off the wagon and Dan helped him to put the tree on his wagon.

Peter said, as they walked back in the house, “Thank you Dan.”

Dan said, “You are welcome Peter.”

They learned that form Jose calling people by their name.

Jose got that from Michael.

Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor run to the backdoor.

Dan said, “Send Nadine.”

Mellissa, Theresa, Briana and Rita ran into the kitchen.

They looked around and saw Jose and peter not moving.

Nadine was staring at Dan.

Shirley ran down the backstairs with her robe on.

Patrick said, “Yall go in the house and get ready.”

He looked at Sabrina standing on the back porch and said, “Sabrina come in the house.”

Sabrina threw her hands up and covered her mouth.

She turned and walked in the house.

Eleanor, Brenda and Shirley looked at the pretty dress Sabrina had on.

Patrick said, “Dan.”

Dan said, “Again send Nadine. I am not going back out in the woods.”

Everyone looked at Dan.

Peter turned and looked at the wall.

He lived in the woods for a long time and never wanted to go back in the woods.

Bruce ran and got Patrick’s coat and hat and gloves and ran pass Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Bruce and smiled.

Bruce knew he had made his momma proud of him.

He ran out the backdoor and handed Patrick his coat, hat and gloves.

Brenda a looked around and said, “That’s for the wedding.”

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

The servants looked at Brenda.

Nadine waked pass Dan and Peter and went and got her coat, hat and gloves and started walking to the backdoor.

She looked in the kitchen at Dan and Peter and said, “You p\*\*\*y.”

Dan said, “You can call me any name you can think of and I know it is a lot. I am not going back out in those woods.”

Eleanor was shocked at Dan.

She stared at him.

Peter kept frosting the cake.

Nadine looked back at Peter and walked out the door.

Mellissa said, “here is the punch Peter?”

Peter walked over and gathered everything together.

He, Mellissa and Theresa carried the punch to the wagon.

They carried the vendor’s punch bowls, cups, plates, forks and napkins to the wagon.

They walked back in the house.

Mellissa said, “There’s only three men in the house and you stayed in the kitchen.”

Jose said, “Mellissa don’t mess with me.”

Mellissa said, “Why, you gonna sic your daddy on me?”

Eleanor hollered and fell back onto the wall.

Jose stared at Mellissa.

Mellissa was half black and half white.

Brenda stepped back and said, “Mellissa, helped with loading the wagons and leave Jose alone.”

She looked at Eleanor who was getting off the floor.

Dan said, “That’s who yall need to discipline.”

Brenda said, “Eleanor, Jose and Lorraine to my office.”

Everyone turned and looked at Brenda.

Shirley was sitting next to Sabrina and looking at every detail of the dress.

Mellissa looked at Shirley and said, “Shirley, you are sitting there looking at every stitch of Sabrina’s pretty dress.”

Shirley flashed that big grinned.

Mellissa turned her head.

She could never do or say anything when Shirley flashed that grin.

Mellissa thought, “Spoiled as hell.”

Brenda knew she said something wrong because everyone stared at her.

Bruce said, “Grandma, Lorraine is not here.”

Brenda said, “I fuss at those three all the time. It just felt like she was here.”

Michael was standing on the back stairs and yelled, “I told yall to get Lorraine.”

They heard Michael stomping in the hall and then a door slammed.

Eleanor stood to go to Michael.

All the workers yelled, “No. Brenda called you and Jose.”

Rita said, “Yall have gotten on my nerves and I should be happy now.”

Rita held up her engagement ring.

The workers ran to Rita.

Eleanor peeped around at Rita.

Brenda was sad over Lorraine.

She looked at Rita and saw the workers running to her.

Eleanor tried to run to Rita.

Brenda grabbed Eleanor by the collar.

Shirley and Sabrina jumped up to run to Rita to see her engagement ring.

They saw how Brenda caught Eleanor by her collar they sat back down.

Bruce looked at how his loving grandma caught his mother by the neck and pushed her into the hall.

Dan and Peter saw Brenda push Eleanor.

Dan said, “Jose your next.”

Jose was peeping around the corner and was still.

Brenda walked back and grabbed Jose by his head.

He got up and walked with her.

Jose said, “I thought since you made the mistake with Lorraine you did not mean me.”

Peter ran to the hallway and peeped at Jose.

Dan shook his head.

Shirley and Sabrina ran into the kitchen and looked at Rita’s engagement ring.

Mellissa said, “Rita, who?”

Dan and peter were looking and listening.

Rita said, “Marvin.”

They all were silent.

Rita said, “He was one of the security people and he left back in the summer to become a preacher.”

They all said, “Yeah. She said, “He came back last night. I had just gotten home. “

Theresa said, “What did Wayne do?”

Rita in a husky voice said, “Where the rolls momma?”

Dan grinned.

Peter smiled and kept frosting his cake.

Shirley was examining Rita’s ring.

Bruce walked to Rita to see her ring.

Rita said, “Shirley you will have a big fine fancy ring.”

Shirley said, “I am not looking at for it’s value. I am looking at because someone thinks another person is worth everything in the world to them that they are not ashamed of that person and know that person will love and honor them as they love and honor that person.”

Rita touched her heart and smiled at Shirley.

Mellissa said, “She still is spoiled as hell.”

Everybody laughed.

Shirley turned to Sabrina and said, “You sewed all those dresses you all wore to my grandparents’ ball?”

Sabrina said, “I did not sew all of them I taught them how to sew their own gowns.”

Shirley said, “They were nice. Can you make me at least one hundred dresses that women can wear from winter to spring?”

Melissa was standing listening to the business woman Shirley.

Briana stood by Rita and listened to Shirley.

Bruce was still trying to see Rita’s ring.

Peter snickered at Bruce trying to see the ring.

Bruce turned and walked back to the door to look for his grandpa.

Gary put on his coat and was running to the woods.

Two stablemen ran into the woods.

Dan finished Sunday’s dinner.

He cleaned up the kitchen.

Brenda, Eleanor and Jose were still in her office.

Briana said, “What happened in here and to who?”

Dan said, “Sabrina came to say goodbye. She is going home. Ruth came and told Sabrina to at least see the man at the wedding. Ruth said, something when a man think you are worth something. She screamed and ran out the door.”

Briana said, “So Ruth has had a heart breaking relationship with a man?”

Peter was still frosting the wedding cake.

Bruce yelled, “Here they are!”

He opened the door.

Gary carried an exasperated Ruth to her room.

Dan said, “I’m not staying her with her.”

Patrick said, “Dan every since you were told you could not be off for Christmas you have been cynical. Stop it. That is not you. You told Mike and John what to do.”

Patrick walked through the hall.

Dan smirked and mouth at Patrick.

Shirley looked at Dan.

She knew Dan was mad but not at her granddaddy.

Gary walked back to the re-modeled shed and finished dressing.

Briana worked that Sunday so she could be off and go with Jose to his parents.

She cancelled after she went home and told her parents what Jose’s parents did.

Her parents were stunned beyond words.

They sat and looked at Briana.

Her mother looked at her father.

Briana said, “No baby. He is not for you. God will send you your husband. And you are too young for him.”

Briana knew what her daddy was saying, but in her mind she was thinking about all the times she had been with Jose and other men.

Briana would spend Christmas Eve with her family and cousins at church for the evening program and then a late dinner.

She would spend Christmas with her parents.

Jose was disappointed that Briana was not going home with him.

Jose would leave the evening of the twenty third and use a Stith carriage to take his bags and Christmas gifts. He had to stop in the capitol and pick up all the orders he placed.

Gen told him he need to go and get them before the twenty third.

Jose did not care if they were ready or not because he was still upset with his parents.

Ruth, Mellissa, Theresa, Veronica, Angela, Sheryl and Sabrina were to stay overnight and work Christmas Eve and Christmas along with Dan, Peter, Ethan and William.

John and Mike caught the train on Saturday and loaded themselves up with guns and shotguns and much ammunition.

Dan told them where he wanted his land to be over next to where the citizens fields end back to the governor’s lake.

Mike and John had the ammunition in boxes with food on top of them to go to the people from Patrick and Brenda.

Patrick sent a telegram to Peter that two of his workers will be getting off the train on Sunday with goods for the people of the small city and to give them a wagon and two horses.

The military arrived through the back of the small city.

The military spread out from the lake up to the creek.

They did not want the people to know they were there.

The governor and his twenty people hurried off the train the thirty minutes before Peter disembarked.

Patrick delayed the train from Philadelphia for special orders.

He telegrammed Dr. Woodson for him to put anything in a box and seal the box and have it carried to the train station and given to Mike immediately.

Dr. Woodson grabbed Dr. Ralph’s last grape sucker and threw it in the box and sealed it and he hurried and took it to the train station and found Mike and gave it to Mike.

Mike held the box and said, “This is light. I bet this is his favorite tie.”

The workers started laughing.

Mike walked and gave the box to Joel.

Joel looked at the box.

Mike said, “I said, his favorite tie.

Joel shook his head.

Patrick, Eleanor and Brenda sent the retiring Peter five hundred dollars in paper by Beverly and a bottle of champagned.

Patrick telegrammed Mike for him to get as many workers as he could to be there for Peter’s send off.

Mike got all employees and stood while Mike gave Peter the paper for five hundred dollars, which he had to cash to show proof they gave him that much money.

Everyone clapped for Peter.

He held up his bottle of champagne.

Beverly stood back and watched and made sure everything was done.

She turned and walked to Al, Mike and Little Shirley in the carriage.

Beverly got angry when she looked at the old carriage she had to ride around in because of that thief Curtis.

Al watched Beverly and knew what she was thinking.

She heard Mark and Little Shirley’s happy voices and it shook her to her heart and she stopped and saw them jump out the carriage and run to her.

She bent down and kissed them and they ran back to the carriage to Al.

Beverly saw the porter had already brought her bags and put them in the carriage.

Beverly said, “My, what a blessing it is to be rich.”

The train was delayed enough for the train with the governor to beat Peter and the mob by thirty minutes.

The military had sent scots before them to get the governor and his group and cover up their tracks.

Morgan was packed and ready to go to Mag.

He helped the military who rode all night to beat the mob from getting there.

The military had just unloaded the governor and all of his party.

They jumped in the many wagons and sped through the small city.

Mattie saw the military.

Morgan said, “Mattie you cannot tell anyone the military is here because the bad people will kill you and your children.”

Mattie said, “I understand Mr. Morgan.”

Morgan smiled at Mattie.

The train whistle blew.

Morgan ran up the street towards the train station.

He thought, “The trin is going to beat me. What can I do, because I know they will be looking at me.”

Morgan looked and went and pulled his bags and coffee pot out the shed.

He stood in the middle of the street and grinned at his friend Joel, while Peter and his wife jumped off the train.

Joel had several men to help bring Peter and his wife bags to the station.

The train immediately pulled off because they were six hours late and there was a two hour and twenty minute rest stop.

The train could not do it that day. And sped on towards Cedartown.

When the train reach Cedartown the crew normally had a five hour break.

They had to re-fuel and re-stock and turn around.

But the train would be leaving and making it back in time with Mike and John and their boxes of ammunition.

Morgan took Peter and his wife to the shed.

Morgan dropped his bags and coffee pot.

Petr said, “That damn coffee pot.”

His wife looked at Morgan and then his coffee pot.

They liked the shed with the modern look.

Morgan said, “I telegram Patrick a list of staples. You can telegram him of whatever you want. I went out this morning and chopped down a Christmas tree and then I did not know whether you celebrate Christmas or not.”

Morgan’s wife was looking around and said, “This lovely country.”

Mattie pulled her wagon up.

Morgan said, “That’s Mattie.”

Peter said, “Patrick and Brenda told me about her.”

Morgan said, “Let me tell her no customers today.”

Morgan walked to Mattie and said, “No customers today.”

The train pulled off.

Mattie was fussing and turned her wagon around.

Peter’s wife said, “She can be our maid.”

Morgan became angry and said, “These people are not your maids. Don’t approach them for nothing.”

He looked at Peter and Peter was looking back towards the tracks.

Morgan figured he is looking for the mobsters.

Morgan said, “Peter didn’t Patrick tell you to keep distance from these citizens?”

Peter jerked around and looked at Morgan and then his wife.

Peter did not hear what was said, because he was watching something.

Peter looked at Morgan and said, “You won’t have any problems out of us.”

Morgan said, “Not me. Patrick.”

Peter’s wife said, “I don’t like this tree. I want another tree.”

Morgan stared at her.

Peter watched Morgan.

He saw Morgan did not like his wife and wondered why.

They had been there about thirty minutes.

Morgan said, “I hunted a wild turkey, two rabbits and cleaned them and put them out around back.”

Peter’s wife shuddered and said, “I can’t eat that.”

Morgan stared at her.

Peter thought, “That’s why he is looking at her like that. She has to shut up.”

Peter hit Morgan’s arm and said, “Where?”

Morgan said, “Around here.”

They walked around to the back.

Morgan had skinned and gutted and cleaned the meat and had the meat soaking in cold salt water.

Peter looked and said, “This is beautiful land.”

Morgan said, “Yeah. I’m trying to think. It was something I was to tell you about. You know to send telegrams to the office in Philadelphia. Eleanor has taken over and want everything to go through Philadelphia.”

Peter’s wife said, “Eleanor need to come here and live.”

Peter turned and looked at his wife.

Morgan was trying to think about what he was to tell Peter.

Peter heard the workers say there was something wrong with Morgan’s head.

Peter said, “Morgan it will come back to you.”

Morgan thought, “He almost sounds humans. But not after what he said to these people.”

Morgan said, “Oh. I remember now. I am going to sleep in the office. That gives you and your wife time to fuss about the furniture and décorations.”

Morgan laughed.

Peter and his wife looked at Morgan.

Morgan saw the evilness of Peter and his wife come out.

He was staying overnight in the office because it had several locks on the door so they would not kill him overnight and put it on a bear.

They heard people running and talking.

They heard the children running and talking.

Peter turned around and looked.

Morgan rolled his eyes at Peter.

Peter’s wife said, “Get them to come and bring our stuff inside.”

Peter nearly caught Morgan rolling his eyes at him which would have given away the secret.

Morgan turned and looked at Peter’s wife.

Peter looked at Morgan and then his wife.

He said, “I can bring in our trunks and bags.”

Morgan said, “I can help with that. I hate the train was late. If you would have gotten here earlier, I could have shown you around.”

Peter’s wife said, “It’s the woods. What can you see?”

Morgan said, “Come on Peter so I can help you and go to bed. I am tired. I want some of this fresh water.”

Peter looked at the creek.

Thomas packed up his items and left. He returns to work Christmas Eve. He works Wednesday through Saturday.

Nadine walked in the backdoor after she finished smoking.

She was ready for them to leave so she could go and drink.

She thought, “I’ll try Michael’s drink. Vodka.”

She took another smoke.

Peter smelled the smoke and knew it was Nadine.

He thought, “Good she is not coming with me.”

Everyone dressed and left the house near ten am to go to Nathan and Denise’s wedding.

Jose changed clothes and looked nice.

Gen rode in her buggy.

Shirley and Sabrina rode in Gen’s buggy.

Gen said, “This holiday has been exciting.”

She grinned.

Sabrina and Shirley looked at Gen.

Sabrina told Gen and Shirley about what happened.

Ruth suggested to let the man know she is going home and if he wants her he can pursue her.

Gen said, “Like I said, this is an exciting holiday. Truths are being revealed. Who is the man Ruth is sick over?”

Shirley said, “We don’t know.”

Gen said, “Nadine got that from Ruth.”

The boys rode with Gary.

Patrick and Brenda rode in their private carriage.

Jose and Eleanor rode in the carriage together.

Shirley looked and said, “Grandma had a meeting with Jose and Eleanor and called Lorraine’s name. I just hope that Jose and Eleanor won’t fight before we get to the church.”

Sabrina said, “Yeah.”

Shirley said, “I want to see it.”

Sabrina looked at Shirley.

Gen laughed and said, “An exciting holiday.”

Brenda and Patrick sent the guardianship papers to release Lorraine from the hospital by special messenger to Ryan.

Ryan received the signed guardianship release papers for Lorraine.

He read them and said, “I’m being fired by a ten and an eleven year old.”

Ryan laughed.

The doctors and nurses looked at Ryan.

Lora sat and looked at Ryan.

She was waiting for Melvin to bring the carriage so she could take Myriah to their new home until she was able to travel with her.

Ryan sat by Lora and thought, “Oh, God thank You for helping me to shake out of whatever this is. You know I want to do good and hurt no one. Jason and Hutch have helped Lorraine so much with all that medication. I don’t believe in all of the medication but has helped her turn around. Also to keep her safe God. Let them get the root of this evil and kill them. You know this type of evil can only be killed not destroyed. Show me how to get Lorraine home. The doctors are few at the Stith. I don’t want any of these doctors to go because they are not trained as Jason and Hutch. Who can I send with Lorraine? I’ll make all the arrangements.”

Ryan sent a telegram to Patrick that Lorraine would be on the Sunday train, but let her use the owners’ suite to keep her from other people to be safe and healthy.

Patrick sent a telegram to Mike to let Lorraine and whoever was with her in the owner suite.

Patrick wanted to surprise everyone and he kept it to himself.

Ryan went to the Stith.

Dr. Woodson and the doctors walked into the hospital administrators’ office.

Ryan told the condition of Lorraine and that Hutch and Dr. Ralph can vouch for the recovery.

Dr. Charles said, “Thank God.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Charles? You said God?”

Charles cut his eyes at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Ralph snickered.

Felipe looked at Dr. Woodson.

Ryan said, “I have been fired by a ten and an eleven year old.”

Dr. Ralph grinned at Michael and Thomas who knew something was wrong.

Dr. Woodson grinned.

Ryan tried to laugh and then he burst out crying.

Dr. Ralph did not flinch.

He looked at Ryan.

Ryan said, “How could I have missed on Lorraine and those little children.”

Throwing his hand and pointing to his side in the direction of the hall.

He said, “Thank God he had somebody to come behind me and say stop. And he allowed me to stop and not push ahead with self and hurt or even kill someone. I am afraid every day that I will misdiagnosis someone. I don’t understand what is wrong with me and my father.”

Hutch said, “That’s why we consult with one another.”

Dr. Charles was still looking at Dr. Woodson for calling him a non -Christian.

Dr. Felipe and Meredith pray every morning before he leaves the house.

She holds Felipe Jr. on her lap to included him in family prayer.

She told Felipe she saw Patrick and Brenda pray together every morning and every night.

She asked Brenda why they pray in the morning and at bedtime.

Meredith said, “I never had a home like I told you. I never saw God in my life at all until I worked as Thomas’ Nurse. Brenda told me they are not bold, fearless and courageous as people think. She and Patrick are like scared little children that are lost in a dark and evil forest and that is that light they see every day to blead them out of that dark and evil forest.”

Felipe nodded his head.

Meredith said, “I was scared of you Felipe.”

Felipe looked at Meredith.

Meredith said, “I wanted a man like Patrick. Not like him, only like him.”

Felipe nodded his head that he understood what she was saying.

Meredith said, “I wanted a man that would to God for me. That would pray for his family to God every day. I wanted to know that I could trust you Felipe to do that.”

Felipe sat and listened to Meredith.

She said, “Then I had a dream that I was lost in a dark, damp and evil forest. I was so afraid. I was so alone and I was so scared and full of fear. I fell down and sat and covered my face. I cried and cried and cried. Then I felt a hand on my shoulder. It was a gentle hand. Then the person sat next to me and said, “I’m lost too. I took my hands from my face and it was you Felipe. We held onto each other and cried. Then we looked up and saw the light peeking through the dark, damp and evil forests and we helped each other up. We held onto each other and followed that bright light out of that evil place. I heard a voice in that dream say you can trust him.”

Felipe primped his mouth to cry.

Meredith said, “Felipe if I did not have that dream that showed me your heart I would not have married you. I would have left never to be seen by you again.

Felipe had turned and was looking at Meredith.

He cried and said, “I knew you would have left. I asked your God what you wanted from me to show you my trust. I knew you knew I love you, but my trust.”

Felipe thought as they sat in the meeting with Ryan.

Ryan said, “Patrick and Brenda have signed the release of Lorraine from my care. I have been fired by a ten and an eleven year old.”

Ryan tried to laugh.

Dr. Woodson grinned at the thought of Michael and Thomas.

Ryan said, “I am putting Lorraine on the train Sunday.”

Dr. Ralph turned to Ryan and angrily said, “What do you mean…”

Before Dr. Ralph could finish Hutch held up his hand to Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Charles turned quickly to see this interchange.

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Ralph and thought, “If you care so much for Lorraine you should have married her.”

Ryan held his hands up to Dr. Ralph and said, Patrick and Brenda are Lorraine’s guardians. They signed these papers…”

Ryan pulled the papers from his coat pocket. I know I suppose to leave the in her chart, but I wanted you all to see them.

Hutched looked at the papers and pass them to Dr. Ralph he shook his head for no.

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Ralph’s bad temper.

Dr. Charles reached for the papers and he and Felipe looked at the papers.

Dr. Charles walked the papers to Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson flipped through the simple papers Lorraine had a lawyer to draw up and signed off by a judge, Patrick and Brenda.

Ryan looked up at Dr. Ralph and said, “Jason you are my friend. This should not stop us from being friends. I have to release Lorraine to Patrick and Brenda. They are my friends but they mean business. I sent Patrick a telegram to open the owners’ suite for Lorraine and whoever comes with her. I don’t want her exposed to potential killers. I don’t want her to be near other people who maybe sick. I do not know how she will do being in a non- hospital environment. But Jason I have to let her go.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr, Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “What have you planned?”

Ryan said, “I know none of you can go. I have transport from the south to the train. I will ride with Lorraine to the train. I will get her on the train and into the owner’s suite. I will hold off and not give Lorraine the medication until she is on the train because that will take her through the next day. She will arrive in whatever that small city will be. She will need the medication that morning t5hat will last until she reaches Cedartown. They need to get her off the train and two the house and give her the medications. I need a medical person on the train and in the suite with her. Whoever I get has to stay in Cedartown during the holidays. Because the train will not run on Christmas day. Patrick said, He will try to find a nurse that would try to meet the train at the small city, but I don’t think they are going to find someone. Patrick said Shirley hired five nurses to be with Lorraine around the clock at their house.”

Dr. Woodson said, “We are short staff with the nurses and doctors here. They won’t be able to find no one to meet the train.”

Ryan said, “I know, because Hutch and Dr. Charles are filling in for me and my father on Christmas evening. We have a skeleton crew at both hospitals on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It’s too risky to openly ask people.”

Hutch said, “Right.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I can’t go. I am on call here Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Ryan I am angry not with you, but Lorraine needed much more medications than what you were giving to her. We started with seventy three medications…”

Dr. Charles held his head down and shook it.

Dr. Ralph said, “Charles it was necessary to stop her organs from dying. After a week she is on twenty three medications.”

Dr. Charles still shook his head.

Ryan said, “She sat up today with the aide of the nurses.”

Dr, Ralph looked at Ryan.

Hutch looked at Ryan.

Dr. Charles was still thinking about the amount of medication in Lorraine.

Felipe peeped over at Ryan.

Dr. Woodson sat up in the chair and said, “What?”

There was a hard knock on the hospital administrator’s door.

Dr. Felipe heard the knock but was thinking about Lorraine. He knew if Baby Felipe was not there Meredith would leave him on Christmas Day and go with Lorraine like she did with the injured security men. He thought about Leon.

He looked back towards Leon’s room.

Felipe said, “Monica, is not one of those nurses just a maid?”

Dr. Woodson was looking at the door.

Hutch said, “Monica is a maid, if she was a nurse we would have her working.”

Dr. Charles laughed.

Dr. Ralph looked back and opened the door.

A courier had a slip and said, “I am looking for a Dr. Felipe.”

Felipe looked at the man and said, “Why?”

Dr. Woodson blinked and looked at the casually seated Dr. Felipe.

Dr. Ralph looked at the twenty something young man.

The courier said, “Who are you? Are you Dr. Felipe?”

Dr. Felipe said, “Why?”

Dr. Charles started chuckling.

Dr. Woodson could not believe Felipe was acting so silly.

The courier said, “I was specifically sent to this hospital for a Dr. Felipe. I will return the merchandise that has been paid for.”

The courier thought, “I won’t return the merchandise.”

The courier said, “I need the head of this place to sign that I tried to deliver something to a Dr. Felipe and he was not here.

Dr. Felipe said, “What merchandise?”

The courier said, “You don’t get to know because you are not Dr. Felipe.”

Dr. Felipe said, “Why you say that?”

Hutch looked at Felipe.

Dr. Ralph looked at Felipe and turned and looked at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Charles was laughing.

He held up his head and looked at a stunned Dr. Woodson.

The courier said, “I have to go.”

Dr. Felipe said, “Why?”

Ryan said, “I need to finish this meeting so I can get back to trying to practice medicine.”

Dr. Woodson said, “I’ll sign that Dr. Felipe would not take delivery of the merchandise.”

The courier walked to Dr. Woodson and reached him the paper.

Dr. Woodson looked from the paper and stared at Dr. Felipe.

Dr. Felipe said, “What? What is it?”

Dr. Woodson said, “Felipe you are being silly.”

Dr. Woodson read the merchandise.

He said, “Hello Meredith and Felipe and Baby Felipe. I know your first Christmas as a family is the happiest. You are not in France but I have been there during Christmas and I know you celebrate with seafood. This is what I was able to locate and send. Caviar, mussels, scallops, foie gras, lobsters, goose, turkey and ham. Love Brenda and Patrick.”

Ryan said, “I am Felipe.”

Felipe stood and walked to the courier.

Dr. Charles hollered.

The courier looked at Felipe and said, “Who are you?”

Felipe said, “I am Felipe.”

The courier said, “How do I know that?”

Felipe said, “Because I told you.”

The courier said, “I have to have proof of who you are.”

Felipe said, “I am telling you who I am. You just want to sell the merchandise.”

The courier said, “Anything I can’t deliver I sell. Why you think I do this type of work. I don’t make the kind of money you doctors’ make.”

Dr. Charles fell off the arm of the chair where Felipe was sitting.

Dr. Ralph, Hutch and Ryan sat and looked at them.

Dr. Woodson said, “Are you Felipe or not?”

Felipe said, “I am Dr. Felipe.”

He took the slip and signed it and said, “Where is the merchandise?”

The courier snatched the paper from Felipe and looked at the signature.

He rolled his eyes at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson said, “I’m sorry.”

The courier said, “I have three girlfriends I have to get Christmas gifts.”

Dr. Felipe said, “Let’s go.”

The courier said, “Where?’

Dr. Charles hollered.

Dr. Woodson looked at Felipe.

Felipe said, “To get the food.”

The courier was made and said, “It’s in cold storage. When you want it you go and get it. Give me my paper so I can go.”

Dr. Felipe said, “You should not have three girlfriends. You can’t afford one.”

The courier marked on the paper.

Felipe said, “What are you scratching off.”

The courier said, “Caviar. I get all three of them a gift.”

Felipe stood wordless and stared at the courier.

The courier walked out the door.

He saw Nurse Simons and said, “Hey ma am. How are you.”

Felipe yelled out the door, “He has three girl friends and he can’t buy Christmas gifts for.”

The courier scratched something off the list.

Dr. Ralph looked at the courier.

Felipe said, “What you scratched off?’

The courier said, “Lobster.”

Felipe stood and stared.

The courier looked at Nurse Simons and said, “I can buy you a Christmas gift now.”

Nurse Simon said, “I rather have a lobster.”

The courier said, “What about his eight giant lobsters.”

Nurse Simons started laughing and flirting.

Felipe said, “You can’t flirt over my lobsters.”

Hutch and Dr. Ralph and Ryan looked at Dr. Woodson.

Leon yelled, “Messenger go. That is my woman, If anybody buys her lobster it is me.”

The courier said, “Can you buy me some lobsters for my girlfriends?”

Leon said, “No.”

The courier looked at Nurse Simons and made the sound of a growling lion.

Nurse Simons and the nurses were giggling.

Dr. Felipe stood and looked out at the nurses.

Leon tried to make the growling sound but sounded like a cat.

The nurses hollered.

Dr. Charles was laughing.

Hutch said, “That was dumbest ten minutes of my time I have ever wasted.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Felipe and said, “Finish?”

Dr. Felipe said,” Dr. Ralph you are angry with Lorraine, you are angry with Ryan and you are angry with yourself. You feel like a looser because the woman you love was taken from under your control. You can’t go with her home. You thought she would be here so you could spend Christmas Eve and Christmas Day with her. For fifteen years I lived that same horrible dream over and over and could not wake up from it until this year. I truly understand Jason. I worked each holiday and every celebration for fifteen years so I won’t feel anything.”

Dr. Charles nodded in agreement.

Hutch looked at Dr. Charles and thought, “We better get to that jeweler today before he close until Monday. He makes the size adjustment.”.

Felipe said, “That was my nerves. I was thinking about Lorraine.”

Dr. Woodson said, “I am glad that was your nerves and not a silly you coming out.”

Leon said, “Me too Dr. Woodson.”

Hutch looked at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Ralph closed the door.

Dr. Felipe said, “Your friend Dr. Jerome would he be available? I know Hutch you will say ‘no’.”

Hutch said, “No.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Hutch.

Hutch said, “He is talking about Nurse Sharon. Let her stay away from us.”

Dr. Ralph said, “If anything he can stay here at the hospital and I travel with Lorraine. I know the medications and have a feeling after this week we can take her off more.

Felipe said, “He left and I don’t know where to go.”

Dr. Woodson said, “I know the owner and where it is located. When you get ready I’ll direct you.”

Dr. Felipe said, “Thank you.”

Dr. Woodson was thinking.

He said, “Jason you know how to contact Dr. Jerome?”

Jason said, “I’m meeting him for dinner tonight. I will ask him.”

Dr. Woodson said, “We are nearly full. The four of us can do the therapy. He just have to substitute for you at night. I think if he says yes we can make it until you come back Jason. Well your brother and his wife be fine?’

Dr. Felipe said, “That was another way for them to accompany Lorraine since the wife is a nurse.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Ryan what time that trin leave?”

Ryan said, “It leaves at ten am. I want to get there around eight and get Lorraine settled and have her pails ready for whoever will be riding with her.”

Dr. Ralph said, “We need to get her medication ready for the next three days, which will make a week.”

Hutch said, “We need to order some medications and picked them up today. If we don’t need them bring them back here.”

Dr. Woodson said, “What medications?”

Hutch started naming the medications and stating why they need it.

Felipe said, “Lorraine come out of this. This is too much medicine.”

Dr. Woodson sent a telegram to the medicine supplier listing the medicines.

Ryan said, “We have not thought about Albert helping out here or at our hospitals. I know he has those seventeen children. But maybe part time.”

Dr. Woodson said, “That is a thought that on a day next week he has a few hours can come.”

Hutch said, “What is Dr. Greene doing again?”

Dr. Woodson looked at Hutch and said, “He will return at the beginning of the year.”

Hutch said, “He needs to return now.”

Dr. Woodson said, “He needs some time.”

Ryan said, “I’m the one who needs some time. Before I kill somebody.”

Dr. Charles looked at Ryan and said, “Ryan you get the charts of those cases and set a time and those of us who are here will help to review the cases. Because I don’t want you to feel that you may kill somebody. You are a good doctor and with time you will become great. The boys, Thomas and Michael are younger than Lorraine and don’t drink. Their dosages would have been less than Lorraine and that is why she needed much more and because she did not receive it timely she may have some internal organ damage. We should know more in another thirty days.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Dr. Charles.

Dr. Charles looked at Dr. Ralph who was staring at him and said, “Dr. Ralph I believe you should with Lorraine and remain with her until you she is improving. A nurse cannot see that. A nurse would not know what to look for.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Charles.

Dr. Felipe was still standing in the floor thinking about his order.

Ryan stared at Dr. Charles and said, “God, Charles you had this type of insight and did not share it with me. With us?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Exactly. Lorraine could have been further along in recovery.”

Dr. Charles said, “I am the respiratory and cardiovascular departments. The internal systems determine the next steps. We can’t force them to bypass their natural functions. Ryan you correct at the beginning to give the medication and monitor, but the medicine should have been much than you started out with.”

Ryan stared at Dr. Charles and turned and looked at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Charles, “I was not involved in Lorraine but at the beginning. I could not overstep Dr. Woodson nor your position. Stop beating yourself up and shake it off and study the internal organs.”

A knock on the door.

Dr. Ralph said, “No.”

Dr. Felipe rushed to the door and opened it.

The cook from the railroad stepped in and said, “I know you doctors are busy, but Miss Stith has ordered Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year’s dinners for the patients and staff. I have to ask if this menu I made is sufficient.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Fine”.

The cook said, “You did not even look.”

Dr. Felipe said, “Is any seafood on the menu?”

The cook looked at the menu and said, “Yeap.”

Nurse Simons stepped back quickly and snatched the menu out the cook’s hand.

The cook turned and looked at Nurse Simons and said, “You are rude and spicy I like that.”

He growled at Nurse Simons.

Dr. Woodson turned his head.

He closed the door with the doctors.

Dr. Felipe was about to walk out and look at the menu.

Dr. Woodson said, “Felipe where are you going?”

Felipe said, “I am going to see what I can take hoe and not to cook.”

Hutch said, “Nurse Simons has the menu go and take it from her.”

The seated Ryan looked up at the standing Hutch then at Dr. Felipe.

Dr. Felipe stopped in his track.

Nurse Simons, Nurse Franklin and Nurse Jewel were looking over the menu.

Nurse Jewel handed the menu back to the cook and said, “We approve.”

The cook gave Nurse Simons a dare look of approval.

Nurse Simons gave the cook a lustful look.

The cook stopped and looked at her up and down.

The nurses giggle.

Leon said, “Cook, keep it moving.”

Nurse Simons closed Leon’s door.

The cook growled again at Nurse Simons.

All the nurses laughed.

Dr. Felipe tried to imitate the growl.

Hutch looked at Felipe and said, “What is that?’

Felipe said, “My growl.”

Dr. Ralph said, “What is going on?”

Hutch said, “I guess that is the new thing for men to do.”

Felipe said, “I’m practicing for Meredith tonight. Growl.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Felipe what is wrong with you.”

Felipe growled again.

Ryan started laughing.

Dr. Felipe said, “Ryan that is what I wanted to hear. This silliness was for you to let go of the weight that so easily beset. Dr. Charles tried to tell you in a professional way. You were still holding to the weight.”

Dr. Charles was smiling.

Dr. Woodson said, “The French.”

Hutch said, “Who sent the food?”

Dr. Woodson said, “Either Eleanor or Shirley.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley.”

They looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “She owns the hospital and likes for people to have a good time and he said ‘Miss’.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Dr. Ralph go home and pack. Leave with Lorraine and stay as long as you want. We can make this work. I don’t want him back, but Dr. Parker asked to come back. He will be back in January. I told him because he is racist he can only work part time.”

Hutch said, “Why at all?”

Dr. Woodson said, “I have to follow my heart. If I am wrong, I want to be like brave Ryan and face the music. Dr. Greene will be back the first of January. We have to get through next week. I am sure we can. We may fall asleep at the tables with all of this food and no soup.”

Hutch and Dr. Felipe started fussing about the soup.

Dr. Woodson looked at them and said, “We had French onion soup.”

Dr. Charles laughed.

Dr. Woodson said, “That cook overcooks. He is just like the Stiths. He overdoes it.”

Nurse Simons had opened Leon’s door.

Leon said, “Enjoy this holiday. You never know how many you got left.”

Nurse Simons held her head down.

Ryan peeped behind Hutch at Leon’s room.

Dr. Ralph said this has been a wasted thirty minutes.

Dr. Hutch said, “No it has not. We saw Felipe did not use medicine but he used silliness to bring people out of depression and self-guilt.”

Ryan raised his hand.

Hutch said, “We see that Dr. Charles knows way more than he has let on and he has accepted Sally as part of his family.”

Dr. Charles raised his hand.

Then he quickly took it down and started cursing.

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Charles and started laughing.

Dr. Woodson grinned at Dr. Charles.

Hutch said, “We saw the owner of this hospital still remembers when this hospital and workers had nothing and want to lavish her thank you on us.”

Dr. Woodson clapped.

Hutch said, “We ordered a lot of medicine that we will eventually need because of the complex cases we are beginning to see.”

Ryan nodded his head.

Hutch said, “We saw we are more resourceful and unselfish and stepped in to fill the space of an absent member of our team.”

Dr. Ralph looked in space.

Hutch said, “Ryan you saw how more senior doctors determined you are worth keeping and will give you guidance and counselling to further your growth in the medical profession.”

Ryan held his head down and shook it with a thank you.

Dr. Woodson looked at Ryan and smiled.

Hutch said, “We see you Dr. Ralph love Lorraine and you will go anywhere with her. Let go of your guilt.”

Dr. Ralph covered his eyes and cried.

Leon said, “Well said, Hutch you son- of- b\*\*\*h.”

Dr. Woodson said, “The rest of you can leave. I need to see you Hutch. Lets go in this inner office.”

Dr. Charles looked at Hutch.

He thought, “We have to go and get my Vivienne her engagement gift and that girl a hair bow. Me and Vivienne can go and get gifts for Betty and Charles Jr.”

He grinned and thought, “They are getting spoiled. They deserve they have no one. I wonder if Beverly and Dr. Albert will take them. I can help out with the finances.”

He walked out the office behind Dr. Felipe.

Dr. Felipe walked to the nurses’ desk and asked to see the menu.

Nurse Simons said, “For what?”

Dr. Charles looked at Nurse Simons as he walked across the hall to work with Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Felipe said, “Nurse Simons you are still mad because the nurse and her husband is helping me and Meredith out for a few weeks. They are moving to the town where the Stiths live and maybe there when Dr. Ralph arrives. I am looking for new housekeepers. You looking for a job?’

The nurses looked at Dr. Felipe.

Hutch was standing in the door and shook Ryan’s hand.

He thought, “That’s the reason she be into you Felipe.”

Dr. Ralph was walking pass Dr. Felipe and stopped and said, “You are right Felipe. I have not thought about them and this holiday. I was going to be working straight through but now I will be gone.”

Dr. Felipe said, “I know they are excited about spending this holiday with you and their other sister.”

Dr. Ralph said, “They have to spend it with their other sister and lock up my house when they leave.”

Nurse Simons sadly said, “Dr. Ralph you leaving us?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Only a short period to care about my friend. Then I will be back.”

Nurse Simons said, “Oh.”

She looked off into space.

Dr. Ralph looked at her.

Dr. Felipe looked at her.

Dr. Felipe reached out his hand and said, “Menu.”

Nurse Simons said, “He kept the menu.”

Ryan said, “Good day. Good doctors.”

Dr. Ralph turned and walked with Ryan to the door.

Dr. Felipe yelled back, “Good day Ryan.”

Dr. Felipe turned around and looked into the eye of Nurse Simons.

He stood from leaning on the nurses’ desk and walked over to Dr. Charles on the other side.

Dr. Felipe reviewed the patients’ charts for that side.

Dr. Ryan talked with Dr. Ralph for a few minutes.

Ryan said, “I value all of you. I thank God He put great doctors near me. I never knew this hospital was here until after the civil war and Bruce hired me as one of his security people.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Ryan I will come to the south in the morning and ride with you and Lorraine in the transport. I will leave my horse at your hotel and ask that someone from here come and get and bring it here.”

Ryan said, “Jason ride your horse here and put it up. We have to pass here to get to the train station. I will be at the south and get Lorraine and be here around seven am.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Lorraine has no clothes here. Shirley and I packed Lorraine’s clothes and shipped them to her house. I have to go and buy her a couple of gowns and a few dresses and stockings. Lorraine fuss about her clothes and especially her shoes.”

Ryan said, “We have her clothes she came in with…”

Dr. Ralph shook his head.

He said, “There is an expensive store Lorraine shopped.”

Ryan shook his head.

Dr. Ralph said, “Let me go into town and find this shop.”

Ryan walked out the door to his horse.

He checked and made sure he had Lorraine’s release papers.

Dr. Ralph ran to Dr. Charles and said, “I have to go into town and buy Lorraine some clothes. I maybe back later.

Dr. Ralph ran to the back and put on his coat, scarf, hat and gloves and was about to run out the back door.

Betty yelled. “Hey!!”

Dr. Ralph laughed and turned and rushed to their room.

Betty was sitting in her bed with her arms stretched out.

Charles Jr. was trying to straighten himself out in his bed.

Dr. Ralph hugged Betty and kissed her on top of her head as he normally does.

He looked at her bruised arm and thought, “This better go away. They escaped from being slaves that b\*\*\*h does this.”

He walked to Charles Jr. and straighten him out in bed and do their secret handshake that Charles Jr. and his father did.

Laura yelled, “Good morning Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I will leave tomorrow and will be gone for a long time. But the other doctors here are your friends and they will love and take care of you.”

Betty said, “You’re giving us our Christmas gifts now?”

Dr. Ralph sat and thought and stood and kissed Betty on her head.

He looked around the room and saw people had given them their Christmas gifts.

Betty and Charles Jr. looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “Laura I’m coming.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Wait to Christmas.”

He walked out their room and Dr. Woodson and Hutch were walking down the hall to start with them.

Dr. Woodson found out where the old racist woman lived and he and grounds keeper went there with a wagon to transport her back to the hospital if she wanted to come back.

Dr. Woodson pointed to the first room and said, “This is the only room she can go in.”

Nurse Simons were walking behind them to see what they were talking about.

Hutch looked at her and said to Dr. Woodson, “She is a good nurse.”

Dr. Ralph saw them and said, “Lorraine has no clothes. I have to go and get her some things. She shops at a store I don’t know the name.”

Nurse Simons was passing Dr. Ralph to get the patients breakfasts started.

She said, “Smith’s on third. That’s the expensive store.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Nurse Simons and said, “Thank you.”

Nurse Simons said, “Blue.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I know.”

Nurse Simons said, “Hair pins and bows.”

Dr. Ralph thought about how he and Lorraine would fuss about the little things.

How she loves for her hair pins and bows to match her clothes.

Dr. Ralph’s eyes filled with tears.

Nurse Simons looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Will Lorraine come back here?”

Dr. Ralph knew she meant whether he will marry Lorraine.

Dr. Hutch and Dr. Woodson knew Nurse Simons meant whether Dr. Ralph will marry Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph had to bite his whole mouth for a minute.

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Ralph and thought, “I have never seen him so broken.”

Betty yelled, “Tell Santa don’t forget us like our mom and dad.”

Betty screamed.

Dr. Ralph rushed back to their room and held Betty.

Nurse Simons ran into the room and sat on Charles Jr.’s bed and held him.

Dr. Ralph began to cry and said, “Betty Santa won’t forget nor did God make a mistake when He took your mother, father and brothers with Him.”

Charles Jr. was crying and said, “I miss school and my friends.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Charles Jr.

Betty said, “Me too.”

Dr. Woodson and Hutch heard Charles Jr.

Dr. Ralph said, “What school?”

Dr. Woodson and Hutch rushed to the children’s room.

Dr. Woodson said, “Jason go. We will find out. I promise you. Don’t come back until Lorraine is fine. Communicate with us through the telegram. The Stiths do it all the time.”

Dr. Woodson laughed.

Dr. Ralph said, “I’m going to leave my horse here to be cared for until I get back. Tell Bill I will pay him for his help.”

Dr. Charles was thinking he ran from the desk around the corner and saw Dr. Hutch and Dr. Woodson and Dr. Ralph talking.

Dr. Charles said, “Hutch I have to go to the bank. Then I will go to the store.”

Dr. Charles ran and got his coat and hat and gloves.

Hutch said, “You can take my horse.”

Dr. Charles said, “Dr. Woodson I don’t mean any disrespect, but I have to do my Christmas shopping.”

Dr. Woodson looked down the hall for Felipe.

He said, “Where is Felipe?”

They laughed.

Dr. Woodson said, “You all take care of your business. Jason I will see you whenever you return.”

Betty yelled, “No Jason!”

Dr. Ralph shook his head and rushed out the back.

Dr. Charles had his hand on Jason’s back and said, “They will be fine. You go to your woman and bring her back to life.”

They walked to the stables and untied the horses.

Jason rode home fast and went into his unlocked front door and went to his secret hiding place and got his Christmas bonus money and he thought about the spoiled Betty. He got a few more dollars. Leon came to his mind.”

Dr. Ralph stopped and sat on his bed and was quiet.

He said, “God are You talking to me?”

He sat for a minute and said, “Please make Lorraine whole even her smart mouth and sharp tongue. That is the way You made her. Help Betty and Charles Jr. Let them find their people and heal their hearts. Whatever was going on with Ryan and his father making bad decision deliver them. Heal Leon. We have done all we can for him. He is a good person whether You take him or not let him receive JESUS as his Savior. I know it is something between him and Hutch. I know there is something about Ryan and his father. I petition You to place a shield of protection around all the hospitals and the workers and their families.”

Jason, “Speak LORD.”

Jason sat there in the quiet of his home.

He stood and went to his secret hiding place that he hid from Lorraine because she would be shopping not for herself but for him and his house. She used her money from selling her bath items to shop and go drinking.

Jason put everything back in place.

He took out his bag and packed all his underwear, toiletries like Lorraine showed him. He packed his hair items.

He smiled and said, “Lorraine will see that I heard her.

Jason packed his clothes.

He looked around his house and everything was in order.

He walked out the front door.

He realized he only had an hour to shop for Lorraine and run to the toy store and get something for the three children and Leon.

Jason rode into town in quietness.

He saw a religious shop.

He stopped and went in and bought Leon a big bible. He asked them to deliver it to Leon at the hospital.

He paid for it and the shop owner asked Jason did he want to sign the bible.

Jason thought for a minute and said, yes.

He took the bible and stepped to the side and wrote a message on the inside flap.

He asked them to wrap it in pretty Christmas paper.

Jason stood and looked around and saw colored bibles.

He bought a pink, blue and brown.

He wrote messages inside each bible and asked them to deliver them also to the same hospital.

He left and was about to pass third street.

He looked at third street and turned.

He saw Smith’s and rode up and tied his horse.

Women on the street, riding in buggies and women coming out of the shops and stores stopped and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph held the door for the women who were leaving and politely nodded at them.

Lora was in the Smith looking for Myriah hair bows to match her pretty dresses.

She saw Dr. Ralph and said, “Hey doctor.”

The women shopping stopped shopping and started walking towards the front of the store to see the doctor.

The manager of the store looked at his women customers and was shocked.

Harry peeped around Lora and said, “I’ll be back.”

He beat the women salesclerks to get to Dr. Ralph.

He said, “Hello I am Harry I can help with your shopping.”

Dr. Ralph rarely get out from the hospitals.

He was surprised at how nice the store was.

He said, “I am looking for women’s clothes.”

Lora turned and said, “Lorraine.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Lora.

The women customers were still milling around the store.

Harry said, “Lorraine. Sassy Lorraine, mixed blood with brown hair and light…”

Dr. Ralph caught Harry by his arm and walked with him.

Harry looked at Dr. Ralph.

He said, “You got to be her man.”

Dr. Ralph walked over to Lora still holding Harry by his arm.

He said, “Lora, how are you? How is Myriah? She comes home today. Take good care of her. Have a Merry Christmas.”

Lora said, “Doctor you all have given me the best Christmas in many years.”

She put her head on Dr. Ralph and cried.

The assistant manager gave Lora a handkerchief.

Lora took the handkerchief and said, “You too.”

Dr. Ralph was hard but caring.

Harry looked at Dr. Ralph as he walked from Lora holding Harry’s arm.

The manager watched Dr. Ralph and wondered if he was the attractive woman’s doctor friend.

Harry said, “Do you want me to show you what Lorraine would buy?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I want you to show me some pretty nightgowns and robes and slippers and underwear. Then you show me a few nice dresses Lorraine would like.”

Harry said, “Ok.”

Dr. Ralph looked around the shop and saw people watching him.

He became paranoid.

Harry said, “They are watching you because you are good looking. They don’t pay me any mind. I like that assistant manager she does not know I live.“

Harry said, “Miss sassy Lorraine. I am going to show you the dresses first because once that group of ladies come up here there will be nothing left. Lorraine was real fussy about her shoes. I let her shop for them.”

Harry shook with fear.

Dr. Ralph looked at Harry and thought, “I thought I was the only one she scared.”

Dr. Ralph heard the women coming up the stairs.

He saw blue a blue section and rushed to the blue dresses.

Harry ran to the section of red dresses.

The manager and the assistant manager watched them.

Dr. Ralph looked at Harry.

Harry said, “Lorraine liked red for her hot dates.”

Dr. Ralph stared at Harry.

Harry swallowed and said, “I hope they were with you.”

One woman walked up and put her hand on top of Dr. Ralph’s hand and said, “Excuse me.”

Dr. Ralph turned and looked at the woman then her hand.

The woman was petite, blond and blue eyes. And very fashionable.

She did not move her hand.

She gave Dr. Ralph a very flirtatious look.

Dr. Ralph picked up all the blue dresses and walked down the stairs to the counter.

The woman gasped.

The other women said, “My word!”

Harry got a red dress and two green dresses and ran downstairs behind Dr. Ralph.

Lora bought Myriah some hair bows and walked out the shop.

The women looked at Harry.

The petite blond woman stood at the balcony and watched Dr. Ralph.

Harry looked back and saw her.

The manager and assistant manager watched her.

Dr. Ralph picked up the whole section of blue dresses.

The manager and the assistant manager watched the women upstairs.

Dr. Ralph looked at the red and two green dresses Harry had and said, “I like those. Put those here and go and get two nightgowns, robes and slippers, underwear and stockings. Then come back and pick out hair pins and bows.

Harry looked back and saw the women coming down the stairs.

He said, “Doctor here they come.”

Dr. Ralph did not blink.

He handed the manager the red dress and the two green dresses.

The assistant manager took a deep breath and said, “Ladies may I help you?”

One woman said, “He took all the dresses.”

The assistant blinked and tried to smile.

The manager said, “We need to help him sort through the sizes of the dresses. Give us a moment.

One woman said, “What about those dresses?”

Dr. Ralph was slowly going through the blue dresses. He put ten over on the counter he did not like.

The assistant store manager got the ten dresses and said, “Ladies let’s go and try these.”

Three women went with her.

Harry was watching the action from upstairs.

The assistant manager cut her eyes at Harry.

Harry looked at her.

He got Lorraine a yellow, and blue nightgown and robe and slippers.

He was working on the underwear and stockings.

He took hi time and walked downstairs to Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at the time.

He had about five minutes.

Harry said, “Doctor.”

Dr. Ralph looked at the items Harry showed him.

Dr. Ralph nodded.

Harry walked behind the counter and gave the items to the manager.

Harry opened the jewelry drawer and pulled out hair pins and bows that matched the red and two green dresses.

Harry held up one green dress and he was smiling.

He turned and saw the store manager, Dr. Ralph and the blonde woman looking at him.

Harry was pleased with the dresses he selected for Lorraine.

He thought, “What that heifer looking at me for.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I have one minute.”

The manager was adding up what was on the counter.

Harry said, “Yes sir.”

He kept looking at the green dress and smiled.

The manager said, “Harry, give me those dresses we see you are pleased with your selections. Help the doctor select a blue dress.”

One woman said, “A dress. He took all those dresses.”

Dr. Ralph picked up a large blue dress and put it on the counter.

The woman knew he was doing for her to shut up.

The woman grabbed the dress and walked up the stairs.

The assistant manager was standing upstairs watching how silly the women were acting over this good looking doctor.

Harry turned to the counter and was looking at the blue dresses.

Dr. Ralph picked up one dresses.

Harry yelled, “No! I won’t have her come in here beating me because I let you get her that dress.”

The store manager looked at Harry.

Harry was having a fright fit.

Dr. Ralph looked at him and said, “It did not take all of that.”

The blonde woman looked at Harry.

The blonde woman said, “I can help you.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Get away from me.”

The manager looked at the woman.

Harry looked at the woman.

Harry picked up a blue dress and smiled.

He turned and went to the hair pin and drawer and found blue crystal hair bows and grinned.

The manager and Dr. Ralph looked at Harry.

Harry held up the dress and hair bows and smiled and twisted his head from side to side.

The manager looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Sir.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

The manager snatched the dress and hair bows out of Harry’s hand.

Harry turned and saw Dr. Ralph, the blonde woman and the assistant manager looking at him.

He was embarrassed.

Harry said, “Doctor are you finished with these dresses?”

Harry was embarrassed.

He gathered the twelve dresses and started to walk upstairs.

The store manager rolled his eyes at Harry.

Harry saw his store manager.

Dr. Ralph said, “Thank you sir for all of your help. I could not have done this without you. Thank you.”

Harry said, “Lorraine has great taste in clothes and people.”

Dr. Ralph stared at Harry and said, “Merry Christmas.”

Harry said, “You to sir.”

Harry looked at the blonde woman and said, “I’m taking all the dresses upstairs if you want to come.”

The blonde woman was still standing at the counter.

The manager watched the woman and said, “I’ll be with you in a moment ma am.”

Dr. Ralph did not look at her.

He was thinking about his business.

The manager said, “Sir seventy dollars.”

The manager looked at the blonde woman.

Dr. Ralph reached in his chest pocket and pulled out his wallet and counted seventy dollars and gave it to the store manager.

Harry and the assistant store manager stood at the top of the stairs and watched the blond woman.

The blonde woman leaned on the counter by Dr. Ralph and held her head back and looked at Dr. Ralph.

The store manager picked up the bags to walk Dr. Ralph outside.

He looked and said, “Sir no carriage?”

Dr. Ralph said, “No. I have to carry the bags.”

The store manager said, “Next time a carriage.”

The stern Dr. Ralph said, “Merry Christmas.”

Dr. Ralph took the bags and walked to his horse.

He rode home and placed the bags near his bags in his bedroom.

He lit the fire.

He went outside and brought in water for hiss bath in the morning.

He lit the back lantern that Lorraine got from Bruce’s new house.

Jason laughed.

He thought about how Lorraine said, “The workers were running around the house looking for the two lanterns and she put them under her skirt and was sitting in the wagon with Michael like they were getting on her nerves.

Jason told her Bruce knew she was getting his things but could not prove it and then he would have to fight with Eleanor.

Michael told Lorraine just order what you want.

Dr. Ralph thought about Michael and he stood in his backyard.

Hutch was at the south hospital with Ryan making up the medications and the IVs Lorraine would need over the next three days.

Lorraine knew something was going on she could not rest.

One nurse went out the room and saw Hutch and Dr. Ryan.

Hutch looked at her.

She said, “Excuse me doctors, but Lorraine thinks something is going on and she is upset. Can you calm her down.”

Ryan looked at the nurse and said, “In a minute.”

Nurse Madeline, the supervisor over medication, and the head daytime nurse were standing and putting all the medicine together as Hutch and Ryan gave it to them.

They supervisors looked at the nurse.

The nurse looked at them and walked back to Lorraine’s room.

Ryan and Hutch finished fifteen minutes later.

The head daytime nurse and Nurse Madeline locked all the medications in the cabinets.

Ryan and Hutch signed off on all the medications.

The head daytime nurse got her bag and said, “Dr. Ryan I will come in the morning to unlock the medication cabinet and give you the medications.”

The doctor walked to Supervisor Madeline so they could leave for dinner.

Ryan looked.

Hutch looked.

Day time head nurse looked.

Nurse Madeline said, “Dr. Ryan I will back at seven am to help with the medication.”

Ryan nodded his head.

The doctor said, “Good evening and walked with Nurse Madeline out the door.

Ryan looked.

Hutch watched them out the door.

Head daytime Nurse watched them and turned and looked at Ryan and said, “You never know.”

Her husband walked in the door.

He spoke to everyone.

Ryan and Hutch spoke and walked to Lorraine’s room.

Lorraine was laying on her side.

Hutch and Ryan walked in her room and she saw them and began to cry.

Ryan walked to her bed and patted her arm.

He said, “Hey Lorraine. I heard you are a little upset. Don’t be.”

Lorraine was looking in Ryan’s eyes.

He smiled.

Lorraine was looking in his eyes.

He said, “Patrick and Brenda signed the release papers to send you home.”

Lorraine was looking and started breathing heavy.

Hutch stepped up to her bed.

Ryan looked at her and said, “Calm down Lorraine. You are not going to die. What we are doing for you here they can do for you at home. Shirley has hired you five full time nurses.”

Lorraine whispered, “How?”

Hutch looked at the fear in her eyes.

Ryan said, “Jason is taking you home.”

Lorraine laid there and cried.

Ryan patted her arm and he and Hutch walked out.

Ryan got his things and looked across at Myriah’s room which was empty.

He thought about Lorraine going home tomorrow.

He walked to his horse and said, “Thank You God. I think I want to go to church tomorrow after I take Lorraine to the train station and then come back here and work to dinner.”

Ryan rode home fast to see Ryan Jr. before they put him to bed.

Dr. Hutch stayed at the south that night.

Hutch started keeping a log of the hours he spend at the hospitals.

Ryan told him they have not located the money problem but Albert’s pension has been stopped and nobody knows how to track it.

Hutch said, “Eleanor.”

Ryan looked at Hutch.

Ryan thought about Eleanor all the way home.

He sent Eleanor a telegram from home and asked her what to look for when the mob is stealing your money.

Ryan did not trust to send that type of telegram from the hospital.

The head daytime nurse did not tell her husband that Lorraine was being released from the hospital on Sunday.

She would go to work as usual but leave and attend church services and go home to spend time with her family.

Dr. Ralph mounted his horse and rode to the restaurant that Dr. Jerome and Monica were waiting for him.

They sat and had a wonderful dinner.

Dr. Ralph reached to pay for the dinner.

Jerome snatched the bill.

Monica laughed.

Jerome said, “Spend Christmas dinner with us at Albert and Beverly.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I won’t be able to.”

Monica thought about Lorraine.

Monica said, “I’ll visit Lorraine tomorrow,”

Dr. Ralph looked and said, “I am taking Lorraine home tomorrow.”

Monica sat and stared at Dr. Ralph.

Jerome looked at Monica.

Dr. Ralph said, “She wants to go home. There are no more treatments we can give her. God has to heal Lorraine. Jerome, Dr. Woodson want to know if you can help out at the Stith anytime.”

Jerome said, “Of course. I am not trained like you all.”

Dr. Ralph was silent.

Monica did not know what to say.

She said, “Jason the owner’s suite, which I know they will put Lorraine in is fabulous.”

Jerome was watching Jason.

Dr. Jerome said, “Can I look over Lorraine and her chart?”

Dr. Ralph looked up and said, “Yes.”

Jerome looked at Monica and said, “I’ll take you home and then go to the south hospital.”

Monica said, “No, that is too much on you. I’ll go with you and stay until you finish. Even if it is tomorrow.”

Dr. Ralph looked at them.

They left and went to the hospital.

Monica walked in and visited with Lorraine.

Jerome and Dr. Ralph were reviewing Lorraine’s chart.

Dr. Ralph saw where Hutch was signed in.

He sent a nurse for him.

Hutch was sleep and woke and walked downstairs.

He sat on the floor and Dr. Ralph and Dr. Jerome went over line of Lorraine’s chart for hours.

Monica went to sleep in the chair in Lorraine’s room.

Hutch had three emergencies.

He stood and cut a bad wound and stitched it.

He had a bad burn, he cut away all the dead skin and dressed it.

He had a broken arm he had to re-set.

Jerome and Jason were finished with Lorraine’s chart when they heard the man screaming in pain.

The nurses looked at Dr. Jerome and saw he did not flinch like Dr. Ralph and hutch.

Hutched back out and his shirt had blood over it.

The nurses looked at him.

The head night nurse said, “You did not bring you a change of shirt?”

Hutch was irritated at them.

He said, “No. And give these patients penicillin and pain pills and release them in the morning once the approving doctor comes in.

Hutch knew Ryan was going to church in the morning.

Hutch walked away from the nurses.

The nurses looked at him.

He went and sat on the floor and started reviewing Lorraine’s chart with Dr. Ralph and Dr. Jerome.

Dr. Jerome looked at Hutch.

Hutch said, “I never had to have another shirt.”

Dr. Jerome looked at him and they came across some things in Lorraine’s chart.

They wrote a report and explained everything in Lorraine’s chart.

They saw Patrick and Brenda’s release form.

They w the sheriff and police reports.

Dr. Ralph thought, ”I got to take both of my guns and ammunition with me and stay in the suite until we get to Cedartown.”

Hutch said, “Thank you Dr. Jerome. Jason., I ‘ll see you when you return. I am going home and bathe and what on clean clothes and get a second set of clothes and keep with me.”

Hutch stood and walked in and looked at Lorraine.

She was sleep and Monica was sleep.

The nurses were sitting in their chairs and stood when the doctors walked in the room.

Jerome examined Lorraine. He pointed things out to Jason and Hutch.

Jerome walked to Monica and tapped her.

He picked her up.

Monica touched Lorraine’s feet and walked out with Dr. Jerome.

Hutch sped home and took a long bath and shampooed his hair and shave.

He made him a second toiletry bag and a second change of clothes and went to his horse and feed the horse and gave it water.

Hutch went to the Stith and worked until that evening.

He went to the south and worked overnight on that Sunday.

Dr. Jerome took Monica home and helped her bring in her bath water for that day.

Dr. Jerome left and went home and slept for a few hours.

He went to sleep thinking about Lorraine.

He woke with her on his mind.

He got up and dressed and went to church.

He left church and went to Rosie’s and made sure they had his order for two turkeys, a goose and a ham.

Dr. Jerome had Lorraine on his mind. He thought about the police report that said the woman was slowly poisoning Lorraine.

He was thinking about the medication and how it was diluting the poison but slowly.

Dr. Jerome rode out to the Stith.

He met with Dr. Woodson, who just arrived at the hospital after delivering his first sermon at the church.

Dr. Woodson saw Dr. Greene who was by himself and sat the whole service and cried.

The other parishioners looked at Dr. Greene.

Dr. Woodson knew Barry was gone.

Dr. Woodson knew Dr. Greene was just getting over Debra and her lying and adultery sins but for Barry to be gone at Christmas.

Dr. Woodson said, “God, everything Tony has is gone. He is a good man. He wanted a wife I know to provide him with that physical need. Heal his heart. Send him Your woman. You selected woman for him. In JESUS’ name. Let Barry remember Tony as his daddy. I know you will not let Barry forget.”

After church service.

Dr. Woodson and the pastor stood up front and talked with the parishioners for over an hour.

When Dr. Woodson looked around the church he did not see Tony.

Dr. Woodson left church and rode a shorter distance to the Stith.

The parishioners showed him how to cut through a neighborhood to get over to the other side where the hospital was.

Dr. Woodson thought and he prayed.

He thought and he prayed.

Dr. Woodson thought and he prayed all the way to the Stith.

He prayed about the racist old woman who should be at the hospital when he arrived.

He knew he could not change any man’s heart. But God had her there at the Stith for a reason.

Dr. Woodson thought, “GOD, are You changing my heart towards her?”

He said, “GOD YOUR will be done in my heart. How can I preach YOUR Word to YOUR children and flawed like this. Help me. I submit to YOUR will on earth as it is done in heaven.”

Dr. Woodson snapped out of his quietness when he heard children.

He did not want them to run out in front of him.

He thought about the school that Charles Jr. told him about.

He saw the mixed community of white and blacks.

He wondered and said, “GOD is this where Charles Jr. and Betty lives. It is a pretty community. The white and black people seem to get along. GOD why am I here? Don’t let me miss what YOU are doing.”

Dr. Woodson slowed up and started looking around as he rode his horse.

He saw a small church and black people standing outside laughing.

He rode to the church and spoke.

He dismounted his horse and walked to the people and reached out his hand and shook the people’s hand.

He said, “I am Dr. Woodson at the Stith Hospital.”

The people looked at him.

He said, “We have two little black children there that has been orphaned.”

A middled aged woman opened the door of the church when she saw the white man rode up.

She was standing back with a shotgun they kept at the church under the last pew.

She heard the white doctor.

She was thinking.

She put the shotgun back under it’s hidden place.

She walked out the church and said, “The names of the two black children.”

Dr. Woodson said, “We don’t have their last names.”

The woman said, “Their names.”

Dr. Woodson thought, “Oh GOD rough. Like Beverly.”

The people looked at Dr. Woodson.

He said, “Betty and Charles Jr.”

The woman fainted.

The men tried to pick her up.

Dr. Woodson thought, “Good with your rude self.”

One older woman said, “You say you are a doctor help. I’ll hold your horse.”

The older woman walked to r. Woodson and whispered, Good for her. B\*\*\*h.”

She winked her eye at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson knew then he had been directed there by GOD.

He gave his horse’ bridle to the older woman.

He walked up the steps to the middle- aged woman and bent over her and brought her to consciousness.

She was mumbling, “Betty. Charles Jr.”

The woman said, “My babies.”

Dr. Woodson was listening to the woman.

She finally shook her head and sat up.

She was looking sideway and said, “Betty and Charles Jr.? Where is the man?”

The preacher said, looked at her and nodded.

She turned and she was sitting next to Dr. Woodson.

She jumped and moved.

The older woman said, “Nothing happen.”

Dr. Woodson looked at the older woman.

He said, “Do you know these little children or some relatives?”

The woman said, “Who are you?”

Dr. Woodson was annoyed because he had to get to the hospital.

He said, “I am the director of the hospital where they are being treated. We know nothing about them but they are orphans.”

The people started crying.

The preacher started crying and they tried to compose themselves.

Dr. Woodson did not care about their grief he was thinking about Betty and Charles Jr were along for nearly two months and no one came looking for them.

The preacher looked at the woman sitting on the church porch.

He said, “That’s Betsy Tate, she is the aunt on the mother’s side. She is one of the schoolteachers at the school over there.”

Dr. Woodson looked and saw a large school and he wondered why he did not see that large school when he rode up.

Dr. Woodson stood and said, “I have to get to work. I’ll contact the sheriff and tell him you all know something about the children.”

The middle age woman said, “We have been to that no good sheriff’s office for nearly two months. He said, he heard nothing. We checked the cemeteries and no one has a records of any burials. We went to the local hospitals but yours and was told no black children. I have all their papers. I will bring the papers to the hospital either today or in the morning.”

Dr. Woodson was thinking but he could not think.

He said, “Fine.”

The middle-aged woman said, “Please don’t say anything to the children until I come.”

Dr. Woodson looked at the people and saw a large crowd gathering.

He walked to his horse and the older woman gave him the reins to his horse and said, “Let me know if you know any Christian people who needs a maid. Some of them are as bad as devils.”

She looked back at the middle age woman sitting on the porch.

The preacher walked to Dr. Woodson and reached his hand to him and said, “Sir thank you. We have been so worried especially with the race riots. I’ll get with Sister Tate and get to the children.”

The preacher looked back at the woman who covered her face and wailed.

Dr. Woodson looked at her.

He thought she needed a sedative.

The preacher said, “Those little children can sing. We got a child choir and they lead the choir.”

The older woman looked around on the large crowd of people, black and white.

She said, “Preacher you have to say something to the neighbors they have been through hell.”

Dr. Woodson saw school age children run to the woman sitting on the porch.

He turned around and rode out the community.

Dr. Woodson heard more crying and screaming as he rode out the neighborhood.

He began to cry.

He picked up his speed.

Dr. Woodson rode fast all the way to the Stith.

He could not think.

Dr. Woodson thought, “Maybe GOD does not want me to think right now. This day has been full. The sermon, Tony, Betty and Charles and the racist woman. I don’t know what is awaiting for me now.”

Dr. Woodson was the doctor on call that Sunday night

He rode his horse around the back and saw Dr. Ralph’s horse.

He feed both his horse and Dr. Ralph’s horse and gave them water.

Dr. Woodson got his bag and saddle and walked to the backdoor.

The backdoor was locked.

He walked around the front of the hospital and looked around and went into the hospital.

He looked around and spoke to everyone.

He had to pass Betty and Charles Jr. and did not want to look at them or say anything because he did not want to build them up and then they are abandoned again.

Dr. Woodson took a deep breathe he saw the old racist woman was there.

He stepped into her room and spoke.

There was a middle- aged man standing in the room talking to her.

Dr. Woodson reached his hand to the man.

The man walked to Dr. Woodson and shook his hand.

Dr. Woodson said, “I am the doctor who put her out and went back and asked her to return if she wanted to.”

The man said, “This is my mother, Arlene Little, I am Eric Michael Little from the railroad. I met you last week.”

Dr. Woodson looked at the man and said, “You are right.”

Dr. Woodson thought, “I have to be careful. The mob is everywhere.”

He said, “I have to start work.”

Dr. Woodson breathe heavy and walked to Betty and Charles Jr. room.

Betty was sleep and her bible was on the floor.

Charles Jr. was laying on his side facing Betty and reading his bible.

Dr. Woodson walked in their room and picked up Betty’s bible off the floor.

He stood and flipped through the bible and saw the section with the pictures.

He looked at Charles Jr. who was examining the pictures.

Dr. Woodson flipped the bible and read the message Dr. Ralph wrote for Betty,

He put her bible on her dresser.

He thought, “I have not opened my gift from the Stith children. Dr. Ralph loved the book on his favorite horses. He wondered where they could find such an extraordinary book.”

Charles Jr. did not look up but continued to read the stories.

Dr. Woodson walked out the room.

Charles Jr. said, “Hey Dr. Woodson.”

Dr. Woodson stopped and turned around and said, “Hello Charles Jr.”

Charles Jr. said, “How was church?”

Dr. Woodson said, “It was good.”

Charles Jr. said. “Did you preach?”

Dr. Woodson was shocked at this child.

He sat at the foot of Charles Jr.’s bed and turned over his bible cover and read the message from Dr. Ralph.

Charles Jr. said, “You like what Dr. Ralph wrote?”

Dr. Woodson said, “I do. And yes I preached today for the first time.”

Charles Jr. yawned and said, “You have to tell me about it later because I am sleepy. I want to be awake for dinner. I think they got chicken and dumplings.”

Charles Jr. Fell asleep.

Dr. Woodson caught his bible and what it next to Betty’s on the dresser.

He sat there for a minute and looked at these two extraordinary children and wondered why GOD brought them into their lives and why they have to live in such an evil world.

Laura started singing, “Dr. Woodson. Dr. Woodson.”

Dr. Woodson stood and walked out Betty and Charles Jr.’s room and pulled their door closed.

Laura said, “Hello. Can I have a pain pill. Dr. Felipe and Dr. Charles worked on my hip and waist. It hurts.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Laura let me put my things down and then I will go and get you a hot pad and a pain pill.”

Laura said, “Thank You!!”

Dr. Woodson looked at her and said, “Do you want some pillows for you back?”

Laura said, “My father said that, but you all are so busy I did not want to ask.”

Dr. Woodson said, “We are doctors here to make you well. All of this is a part.”

Dr. Woodson walked to the last room and smelled what he thought was chicken soup.

He put his saddle in the chair and took out his holster with both of his guns and loaded them.

He put his bible on the top of the dresser and hung his clothes on the armoire.

He liked how the furniture was nice for the hospital.

He heard Laura began to cry.

He ran and washed his hands.

He grabbed her pillows and put them in her bed.

He started messaging her waist and hips.

Nurse Simons was walking down the hall doing her hourly walk through.

Dr. Woodson heard her and said, “Bring me some liniment and two pain pills for Laura and water for her to take the pills.

Laura cried, “Hurry.”

Nurse Simons ran up the hall and got the pain pills and the liniment and ran back down the hall.

Laura’s father was walking in form his day.

He went to church that day.

He attends the same church that Ryan and his family attend.

He had a lovely lunch with some members from his church and then he rode out to see Laura.

He saw Nurse Simons running with the bottle of liniment he stopped because he hated the smell of the liniment he sat in the hall for a moment.

Laura took the pain pills.

Dr. Woodson message Laura’s waist and hips.

He told Nurse Simons to get a hot pad for her.

He was wondering why Felipe and Charles did not finish Laura’s therapy.

Laura stopped crying and was sniffing.

Nurse Simons put a towel in the bed and covered the hot pad.

Laura laid back on it and said, “Awe.”

Dr. Woodson was rubbing the liniment on Laura when her father walked to the door.

He stepped back and stood against the wall in the hall.

Laura was feeling better.

Dr. Woodson finished and said, “Laura your father.”

Laura said, “Hey dad. I was hurting. They did not get to the therapy part. They are short handed.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Amazing how the patients know what is going on.”

Dr. Woodson walked out and went across the hall and washed his hands.

Laura’s father sat and they had a nice visit.

Laura said, “Father, I wanted to come home by Christmas, but I want to be well enough to start school in January. Will you be upset if I stay at the hospital?”

President Strafford said, “Honey. They were going to have you buried and away from me. I would have died this Christmas and holiday if you would not have been here. No, I will be here Christmas Eve and Christmas day.”

Laura said, “Can you have Christmas dinner with me?”

Dr. Woodson was listening. He did not know about the food.

President Strafford said, “I’ll bring my own. I went to lunch with a large number of members of our church to a nice restaurant. It is a block from our church and many of our students work there as waitresses and waiters. I love it.”

Dr. Woodson walked out the wash area with the bottle of liniment.

President leaned back and pinched his nose at the liniment.

Laura laughed and said, “What?”

President Strafford said, “That stuff smells.”

Dr. Woodson said, “It’s the best on the market.”

President Strafford said, “Dr. Woodson, can I have Christmas dinner with Laura?”

Dr. Woodson said, “I think we may have enough. We are filled with patients now.”

President Strafford said, “I went to this really nice restaurant about forty five minutes from here. When you get a minute I want you and Dr. Greene to join me for a meal.”

Dr. Woodson said, “That sounds great.”

Dr. Woodson started walking up the hall he peeped at Betty and Charles Jr. who were still sleep.

He saw Dr. Jerome walk in the door.

He walked to greet Dr. Jerome.

They went into the hospital administrator’s office and talked about thirty minutes.

The nurses looked at them.

Monica was walking in the hospital to visit Vivienne and Sally.

Dr. Jerome said, “Monica.”

She turned and saw him and smiled.

The night nurses were coming on and Nurse Johnson looked at Dr. Jerome.

Hutch’s last patient was Leon.

Dr. Woodson was listening and watching Hutch.

Dr. Jerome watched Dr. Woodson.

Jerome walked to Monica.

They stood in the lobby and talked for a few minutes.

She walked over to see Vivienne and Sally.

Dr. Jerome sat in the hall in the chair.

Dr. Woodson saw telegrams and messages in the office.

He went into the office and read the telegrams and especially about the medicine being delivered that Sunday.

Nurse Johnson was knocking on the door with a big box of medicine.

Dr. Woodson said, “Fine.”

He got another telegram from the sheriff asking could they bring Sally home.

Dr. Woodson started fussing.

Hutch and Leon heard him.

Leon said, “Ouch!!”

Dr. Woodson jumped to run to Leon.

He stared working on Leon with Hutch.

Dr. Woodson carried the bottle of liniment with him.

The patients hated it.

Dr. Jerome turned his head to hear.

He stood and walked back to Leon and stood back and watched Dr. Woodson and Dr. Hutch.

Dr. Woodson started messaging Leon’s hands and was using the liniment and he continued up his arms and his shoulders.

Dr. Jerome walked up and said, “Put his arms in stretched gauze.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Hutch we just got that supply box in the office some should be in that.”

Hutch walked out Leon’s room into the administrator’s office and opened the box.

He got the stretch gauze and brought it back.

Leon said, “Who are you?”

Dr. Jerome said, “A doctor that will be helping out here a few hours for the next week or two.”

Hutch and Dr. Woodson put the stretch gauze on Leon’s hands and in between his fingers and up his arms.

Leon said, “Oh God.”

Hutch rolled his eyes at Leon.

Dr. Woodson stopped.

Leon said, “Continue. This feels good. It feels like all the broken bones and being pulled into place.”

Dr. Woodson shook his head that he did not think about that before.

Leon said, “It’s hurt but not like before.”

Dr. Woodson message Leon’s back and chest and put the liniment on her and wrapped him in the gauze.

Leon was awing that he felt much better.

They continued all the way to his feet and toes.

Leon said, “I am a mummy, but I feel so much better.”

The cooks were bringing around dinner.

Leon said, “No more soup. No more soup. No more soup.”

They propped Leon up in bed and he was able to use his fingers and feed himself.

Dr. Woodson said, smiled.

He looked at Hutch and said, “Come on Ryan.”

Hutch shook his head.

He said, “Different disciplines.”

Dr. Woodson reviewed all the patients’ charts.

Hutch went and ate a bowl of chicken and dumplings.

He looked around and took his bowl to the kitchen.

The dishwashers were washing the last bowls and drying the dishes.

The ground keeper just completed putting coal in the furnace that would carry them through until the morning when he returns. He bought in water for the wash area and the kitchen. He feed the horses and gave them water.

He got on his horse and went home.

He only works a few hours per day.

The grounds were beautiful.

Mabel planted flowers all around the hospital that did not require any maintenance.

The grounds keeper was happy with that job. He worked at the north hospital everyday for a few hours and live in a rooming house.

The security man decided to go back to being a policeman after he found out about the mob and how they were taking over the hospitals.

Felipe and Charles went back and completed h patients’ therapy.

The patients ate dinner.

The dish washers washed dishes.

Hutch walked out the backdoor with the dish washers, the cook and the groundskeeper.

Nurse Johnson closed and locked the door.

She put the bar behind the door.

Nurse Johnson walked from room to room and checked the rooms.

She stopped and spoke to Laura and her father.

Nurse Johnson lit the lantern for the workers area.

She cleaned Betty from her toilet time.

She washed her hands and combed and brushed Betty’s hair.

Betty and Charles Jr. were reading their bibles.

Nurse Johnson pointed and said, “You know what is next. “

Charles Jr. said, “When the light burn out go to bed.”

Nurse Johnson said, “Right.”

Laura and her father laughed.

Nurse Johnson said, “You too Miss Laura.”

Laura said, “Yes ma am.”

Laura and said, “How much oil do I have in my lamp?”

Her father looked and said, “None.”

He stood and put his scarf and coat on and gloves.

Laura said, “I feel so much better dad. I haven’t heard the Halls to see Betty and Charles Jr.”

President Strafford walked to a yawning Laura and said, “Interesting.”

He kissed Laura on her head and closed her door.

He stopped at Betty and Charles Jr.’s room and said, “Good night.”

Betty said, “Good night Laura’s father.”

Charles Jr. said, “Yeah good night.”

President Strafford left the hospital as Jerome, Monica, Vivienne and Charles left to go the hotel’s restaurant to have Sunday evening supper.

President Strafford told them of the restaurant he had ate lunch.

Vivienne told Monica and D. Jerome of how Charles acted about the chicken the last time they ate at the restaurant.

Dr. Jerome looked at Vivienne.

Monica laughed.

Dr. Woodson was still reviewing the patients’ charts.

He finished and went into the office and finished reading the messages and telegrams.

Leon heard someone in the office and said, “I need to see Dr. Woodson.”

Dr. Woodson stood and walked to Leon and said, “Yes Leon.”

Leon said, “I feel good. But I heard you fussing about the sheriff. It doesn’t sound right to me. But you are a doctor you don’t have time for that. Send an inquiry to the state to contact that state to begin adoption procedures for Sally. Then that state has to produce all the documents. That can take up to a year. By that time She should be in France with that French doctor.”

Dr. Woodson said, “I’m not going to respond. We already sent them our response and they did not address it. Good evening Leon.”

Leon said, “I believe I maybe able to sleep some tonight.”

Dr. Woodson went back to the administrator’s office and finished all the messages and telegrams.

He heard Dr. Jerome and Charles leave.

He and Nurse Johnson went through the large box of supplies and put everything up and locked the cabinets on both sides of the hallway.

Dr. Felipe left the hospital right behind Charles.

He sped home to be with Meredith and Baby Felipe.

Dr. Woodson smiled at Felipe.

Dr. Woodson stopped and spoke to Sally.

She was getting sleepy and stared off in space.

Dr. Woodson walked in her room and took her coloring book and colors and put them on her dresser she was sleep before he left the room. He pulled her door up.

He checked on all the patients and talked to some.

He let out the last visitor who was Miss Little son.

He went to the hotel and spent the night.

He asked Dr. Woodson was any chicken and dumplings left.

Dr. Woodson, “I don’t go into the kitchen. I know the restaurant in the hotel people say is good.”

He walked away to his horse.

Dr. Woodson looked around the yard and walked in the hospital and locked the door.

Dr. Jerome, Monica and Vivienne had fried chicken.

Dr. Charles had fried pork chops and cinnamon apples and green beans and biscuits.

Dr. Jerome was tickle at Charles.

They had a pleasant evening.

Monica said, “Lorraine is gone. “

Vivienne nearly had a heart attack.

Monica looked at Vivienne.

Charles said, “She’s gone home.”

Jerome said, “Vivienne neither one of them is talking plain. Maybe because they are full. Lorraine has been released from the hospital to finish recuperating at home. Dr. Ralph accompanied her home to Cedartown.”

Vivienne looked at Charles and said, “Did you know Lorraine was leaving?”

Charles had a biscuit to his mouth and cutting his eyes at Vivienne and said, “Uh, Huh.”

He said, “Are you mad at me Vivienne?”

Vivienne looked at him and said, “I really wanted to see her. We’ll be leaving for France at spring.”

Charles smiled to himself and continued to talk to Jerome.

Monica said, “We need to re-do our Christmas Day plans.”

Charles said, “We are spending Christmas Day with Felipe and Meredith and their new baby.“

Jerome said, “The French really celebrate Christmas. Mostly Christmas Eve after church.”

Charles said, “I be working and never celebrated Christmas Eve nor Christmas. This is the first year I get a chance to have time to celebrate. I am happy I’ll be with Vivienne.”

Vivienne blushed.

Jerome looked at Vivienne.

Jerome smiled and thought, “You better get all you can from him.”

Jerome and Monica left and rode to the other side of town.

Monica had a blanket covering her as she rode in the horse and carriage she rented from the stables of the person that drove for Shirley.

He was having a good time.

President Strafford let him into the college for January.

He was making as much money as he could.

He saw how the college students dressed and wanted to dress like them he wanted to pay his room rental until May.

Monica looked out the carriage at Jerome.

He looked down at her and they talked all the way home.

Monica sped up a bit and pointed at the street for him to go home.

She did not want him to come the long distance to her house and turned and go the long distance to his house.

Especially since he said he will start at the Stith and work a few hours a week to help out until the three doctors return next year.

Jerome said, “Good night Monica.”

Monica said, “Good night Jerome.”

She sped away as he stood and watched her out of sight.

He made it to his house in thirty minutes.

Monica arrived home in forty minutes.

She thought about her surprised date with Jerome. She really like him.

She loved hearing he and Charles talk about Europe.

She and Vivienne would start their own conversation when the doctors start talking about medicine.

Vivienne and Charles spent time in her room for the evening.

Charles sat in the chair and stared in the fireplace Vivienne had in her room.

She looked at him and wondered what he was thinking about.

He pulled the little box out of his coat pocket and held it in his hands.

Vivienne did not see the box but was looking at Charles in his eyes.

He turned and looked in the warm and loving eyes of Vivienne.

He smiled at her.

Vivienne smiled at him.

She wondered why he was not talking then she saw him twirling something in his hands.

Charles slid out of his chair on his knees.

Vivienne watched him.

Charles did not say a word but opened the box and looked at Vivienne.

Vivienne was wondering why Charles was on his knees.

He knew she was looking in his eyes and not looking at what he had in his hands.

He said, “Vivienne please marry me.”

Charles looked down at the ring.

Vivienne followed Charles’ eyes to the ring.

She was so stunned.

She stared at the ring.

Tears formed in her eyes and began to fall down her cheeks.

Charles pushed the ring to Vivienne’s hands.

He wanted her to take the ring. He wanted Vivienne to accept him with all his flaws and human faults.

He closed his eyes because if she did not accept him he would just curled up and die.

She made him whole every day. From their simple fussing to their in depth conversation.

Charles hung on her every word.

He loved her southern class and sophistication.

Charles noticed men watched her hips, even the Christian Dr. Woodson.

He loved to see the nurses and other women admire her delicate hair pins and bows.

Charles had enough money to give Vivienne the world.

That is his intent.

Vivienne gently touched Charles hands and lifted his hands up to her eyes and stared in his eyes for a long time.

Charles was scared.

He knew she must be thinking about her deceased husband and children.

He knew he could never measure up to them, but he wanted to have happiness in this life and felt Vivienne can make him happy.

Charles saw the warmth and love come back in Vivienne’s eyes.

He knew she was back from visiting her dead husband and children.

She quietly nodded her head.

Charles yelled, “I can’t hear you!”

Vivienne yelled, “Yes I will marry you Charles Dubois!”

Charles said, “Doctor. I like when people call me doctor. I worked hard for that title.”

Vivienne yelled, “Doctor!”

Charles looked at her with all his heart.

Vivienne grabbed him around his neck, and they kissed.

Afterwards he looked at Vivienne and struggled to take the ring out the box.

Vivienne laughed and held the box for Charles to take the ring out.

Charles was panting and said, “Oh God I hope that was not a bad sign.”

Vivienne leaned and kissed him on his forehead as she held his neck with one arm and the box with the other.

She reached her hand to an exhausted Vivienne.

Charles put the largest fine diamond on Vivienne’s finger that the jeweler had.

Vivienne nearly fainted.

He thought, “I hope I outdid her husband.”

Charles thought, “What am I saying. God forgive me. Let me marry her and let me help her and let me make her happy and let me provide mental stability to her and let me…”

A thought came to Charles as he slipped the engagement ring on Vivienne’s finger.

Charles said aloud, “God, forgive me. I wanted to take Your place in Vivienne’s life to make her happy…”

Vivienne’s eyes slowly went from Charles placing the ring on her finger to his slightly bowed head.

She listened to what Charles said.

Charles said, “I selfishly wanted to move You out of her life and have only me there doing great things for her and providing for her and giving her my love and showing her my care for her. You God is the only important person in Vivienne and mine life. I step back for the real love, the real truth, the real witness, the real healer and the real mender of broken hearts to come into our relationship and give us a marriage of pure love and You that will last our lifetime. I am nothing but the human You sent into this remarkable woman’s life to hold her hand…”

Charles completed putting the ring on Vivienne’s hand.

She looked at the ring and gasped and put her hand to her mouth.

Charles held her hand.

He looked in her eyes and continued, “Father the only ‘I’ I will say is that I give myself to You that You help me be the person You want me to be with this incredible daughter of Yours. Amen.”

Vivienne’s heart melted.

She felt a breaking in her heart and mind.

She felt the evil chains of the massacre of her family and the thousand slaves started to break from her.

Vivienne knew GOD preserved and kept her alive for this time that all the devil’s evil would be broken off her.

She was having flashes of the slave children surrounding her.

He heard the screams of the slave parents for the lives of their children.

She heard her babies screaming from the mansion.

She heard multiple guns that sounded like the army.

She blacked out as the slave children that formed the shield around her started screaming and falling dead on her.

As Vivienne fell to the ground the thought of her father and mother buying all those slaves to keep them from the evil slave owners.

Vivienne ears were full of the chirping of the winter birds.

The slight light from the morning sun touched her eyelids.

She heard, “Good morning Vivienne.”

She struggled to open her mouth.

Charles was standing at the window and let the shade up so the morning could greet Vivienne and welcome her to a new day.

He stood slightly turned to her.

He walked to Vivienne’s bed and kneeled on the floor.

He took her hand and kissed it.

Vivienne felt warmth on her hand that began to travel up her arm.

She turned her head to the sound, the light and the kiss on her hand.

Charles said, “Vivienne you can open your eyes.”

Vivienne eyes started fluttering.

Charles smiled and said, “Your God has brought you through the night and welcomed His new day into your life. He is telling you He has broken the evil chains off you and He has made you free. Not me Charles. That’s why I was held in this divorce from Adeline and was selfish and did not want Sally. I wanted you all to myself. I believe we can now forth in this new day that Your God has created for us.”

Vivienne opened her eyes and saw the eyes of him who held her hand through her night and welcome the new day with her.

Nurse Johnson checked all the windows and doors.

She was brewing her tea and went into the kitchen and got her tea.

Dr. Woodson was sitting in the workers area reading his bible and eating a bowl of chicken and dumplings.

He was hungry and could not wait until the morning.

He rambled in the kitchen until he found the left over and heated him a large serving.

Dr. Woodson finished eating and drinking his water.

He stood and took his bowl and spoon into the kitchen and washed and dried them.

He went to his room and closed the door and dressed for bed.

He got on his knees and prayed for everyone he came into contact with that day. He prayed for all the patients and their families. He prayed for President Strafford and Laura who will spend this Christmas without her mother.

Dr. Woodson paused for a minute and thought what happened to her.

He prayed for his dear friend Tony and Lorraine and Jason.

Dr. Woodson went back to Leon in his prayer and said, “God I believe a change is in Leon. Only YOU know. Help with the day to day operations of this hospital that YOU will be glorified. In JESUS’ name. Amen.”

Dr. Woodson crawled into the bed and said, “GOD I am tired. Give me sweet sleep.”

As he drifted to sleep he said, “Betty and Charles Jr.”

Nurse Johnson checked the lanterns in the hall as she walked back to the nurses’ desk.

She sat and opened her knitting bag.

She began to knit the last throw of the season.

Nurse Johnson sent her parents, Jeffrey’s father and her mother, twelve throws to give to her three sisters and brothers and her six aunts and uncles.

Dr. Ralph left dinner with Jerome and Monica and went home.

Jeffrey and Joyce were in their wagon.

He shook his head at them.

Dr. Ralph rode his horse around the back and gave him feed and water.

He came back around the house and called Joyce ad Jeffrey.

They came to the opening of the wagon.

Dr. Ralph looked at them.

He said, “I will be leaving in the morning to travel with a friend home. I will be gone the whole Christmas and New Year’s holiday and will return late winter or early spring. Lock up my house. Make sure everything is safe. Give my key to Dr. Woodson at the hospital when you leave. You know where I am. Your sister does not know me. Let’s keep it that way and never tell your father where I am. If he ever asks you can tell him I am a doctor.”

Jeffrey said, “From what I hear a damn good one.”

Joyce looked at her husband and grinned and said, “Yeah.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I will be in Cedartown.”

Jeffrey said, “Where? That’s where the military headquarters is.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

Jeffrey said, “That’s where I have to report on the fifth of January.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I have never been there. The best I can tell you is to catch the train on either the first of January or the second of January. It takes three days to get there by train. If Joyce travels with you with your wagon, you won’t make it by the fifth of January.”

Jeffrey looked at Joyce and said, “What you want to do?”

Joyce said, “I can get a room at the house with your sister and help Meredith for a month with that beautiful baby boy…”

Jeffrey said, “He is a beauty. Have you seen him Jason?”

Jason said, “I have seen him but he looks like a baby to me.”

Joyce laughed.

Jeffrey, “What are we gonna do with all of our stuff?”

Joyce said, “Sell it. We won’t need all of this stuff. Let’s start a new in Cedartown.”

Jason did not trust his brother and said, “Dr. Woodson said the capitol is only an hour away and more cosmopolitan for younger couples. And the hospital is there. Get there Jeffrey and find out where you want to live.”

Joyce said, “Jeffrey you can use the money from Meredith and Dr. Felipe and buy your ticket to Cedartown. I can sell all of this stuff and pay for my room and use the money from Meredith and Dr. Felipe for my train ticket and room when I get to Cedartown.”

Jason did not want them to know he did not want them in his and Lorraine’s house said, “Joyce you can stay in my house until you are ready to leave and save that money to get settled in your new home.”

Joyce sat and thought for a minute and looked at Jason and said., “No Jason. I think it is improper although you won’t be here.”

Jason stared at her because he was trying not to grin.

Jeffrey said, “Jason don’t look like that. We are not rejecting you. We are going to visit since we are this close.”

Jason said, “Alright.”

Jason hurried in the house so Jeffrey and Joyce would not change their minds.

He grinned.

Jason put his three pails of bathwater on the stove and started a fire so the water can be hot the next hour.

Dr. Ralph undressed.

He kneeled and bowed his head and folded his hands in prayer.

He could not think of what to ask God for because that day was perfect and he already prayed for Lorraine, Leon and the children.

Dr. Ralph said, “Thank you.”

He laid on the bed and took a nap until daybreak.

Jason jumped and ran in the kitchen and saw the time.

He had to rush.

He poured his warm water in the bathtub he brought into the kitchen area.

Jason thought Lorraine would be fussing about bathing in the kitchen.

He rushed in his bedroom and made his bed and got his soap and, razor and washcloth and went into the kitchen and took a short bath, shampooed, shaved and dressed in his room.

Jason opened the back door and poured out his water. He locked the backdoor and put the bar behind it.

He heard Jeffrey and Joyce leaving to go and help Meredith.

He was glad he did not have to say good -bye again.

Dr. Ralph hurried out the front door and went and got his horse.

He thought about all the stuff he had and knew he could not load it on the horse.

He went back to the stables and hooked his horse to the carriage and closed the stables and rode the horse to the house and ran in the house and got his saddle, his holster with both guns and ammunition, his clothes, toiletry bag and Lorraine’s things.

Dr. Ralph thought, “Her stuff is already pushing my things over.”

He jumped in the carriage and sped all the way to the Stith hospital.

Dr. Ralph was stopping in the front of the hospital as Ryan and the transport were entering the hospital yard.

Dr. Ralph thought, “That was close. Why is Ryan riding his horse? He’s going to church after the train station. I hope he has all the medicine. I know Dr. Woodson may not have the medicine her ordered but I will get it in Cedartown. How much money do I have on me?”

The grounds keeper yelled, “Good morning Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Ralph looked and said, “Thank God.”

He said, “Junior can you take my horse and carriage around to the stables? And take care of my horse until I get back?”

Junior walked to the Dr. Ralph as Ryan and the transport stopped by Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph pulled out five dollars and gave to Junior.

Junior looked at the five dollars and grinned.

He said, “Yes, Dr. Ralph.”

Ryan sat on the horse and watched Dr. Ralph and Junior load the wagon.

Lorraine was sleep.

The nurses were changing tours.

Nurse Jewell and Nurse Simons always arrive early to work.

They stopped and stared at Dr. Ralph loading the wagon.

Junior was taking Dr. Ralph carriage around the back.

They left their horses tied in front.

Ryan saw the nurses staring and said, “Good morning.”

Dr. Ralph looked back and saw them as he climbed into the carriage.

Nurse Jewell and Nurse Simons slowly said, “Good morning.”

Dr. Ralph looked back at a sleeping Lorraine.

He said, “She is fine but sleep.”

Nurse Simons said, “Can we see Lorraine before you take her home?”

Dr. Ralph jumped out the wagon and pulled back the cover.

They looked at Lorraine and smiled.

Dr. Ralph jumped back in the front seat with the transport driver and they sped to the train station.

Ryan looked back at the nurses.

They were dumbfounded and watched them out of sight.

Nurse Simons and Nurse Jewell turned and walked into the Stith hospital.

They wondered about Lorraine but were quiet.

Nurse Jewell and Nurse Simons agreed to go to church that morning.

They immediately started their day and begin to wash and clean the patients and put clean linen on their beds and make sure their breakfasts were being prepared by the cook.

When it was time for them to leave the Stith and go to church services, they had completed their daytime chores including feeding the patients that could not feed themselves.

Nurse Jewell and Nurse Simons sped to church on the other side of town.

They enjoyed the service.

Nurse Jewell met Nurse Simons’ mother and the bossy little girl.

The little girl said, “Nurse Jewell, I want to be a doctor and not a nurse. Can I be a doctor and not a nurse?”

Nurse Jewell said, “Absolutely.”

The girl smiled at Nurse Jewell and looked at Nurse Simons mother and said, “Would you come to our Christmas Eve program of our Christmas Day program both are nice”

Nurse Jewell said, “I will check the schedule at work. Many of the employees have families and they want to spend those important days with their families.”

The bossy girl said, “So you sacrifice your time so they can be with their families?”

The preacher walked to the bossy girl and caught her by the hand.

The little girl looked at her father and back at Nurse Simons’ mother.

Nurse Simons looked hard at the bossy little girl.

Nurse Jewell said, “I will eventually have my time off. They are fair with the schedule.”

The little bossy girl pulled on her father’s arm and he bent down and she whispered in his ear.

Nurse Jewell looked at the bossy little girl and wondered what she whispered.

Her father said, “We will see. Those are busy days.”

The preacher reached his hand to Nurse Jewell and said, “Thank you for coming.”

Nurse Jewell said, “I enjoyed the service.”

He looked at her and Nurse Simons and said, “I guess you two need to be getting back to work.”

They jumped and turned and looked at each other and said, “Yes.”

The preacher and his daughter laughed and walked away.

The bossy little girl looked back at Nurse Simons’ mother.

Nurse Simon’s kissed her mother on her cheek.’

Nurse Simons said, “Mother.”

Nurse Simons’ mother said, “See what I am talking about?”

Nurse Simons and Nurse Jewell giggled.

Nurse Jewell said, “She is sweet and direct.”

Nurse Simon’s mother said, “Huh.”

Nurse Simons and Nurse Jewell rode back to work.

When they returned to the hospital they started the patients’ therapies.

Felipe, Charles and Hutch were nearly finished attending the patients.

Nurse Simons and Nurse Jewell were reviewing the patients’ chart and began therapy on the patients on their side of the hall. When Dr. Woodson returned to work.

After work Nurse Simons went home to Sunday dinner.

Nurse Jewell ate chicken and dumplings and went home to her rooming house.

Junior had feed and brushed her horse that day.

She always gave him a dollar at the beginning of the week to take care of her horse.

Dr. Woodson told him to take care of the horses as part of his duties.

The workers always gave him a tip.

Junior would count his six to ten dollars a week and put it in the bank.

He wanted a nice house.

When he and Dr. Woodson rode to the old racist woman’s house they passed through a very nice neighborhood and the houses looked like cottages with flowers and trees all around.

He slowed and looked at the fruit trees and the houses.

Dr. Woodson looked at Junior.

Dr. Woodson looked around at the beautiful small neighbor and thought, “This is very nice. He would like it here.”

Dr. Woodson lifted Junior to the Lord in prayer.

Ryan rode next to the transport to the train station.

Mike was at the train station waiting for Patrick’s special guest.

He pointed to a train that just pulled up.

The transport rode to the train.

Joe was the train conductor.

He held up his hand.

He and Mike walked down to another car and they opened it.

Ryan looked and said, “Damn. I never have seen that.”

Mike and Joe walked to the transport and helped to get Lorraine out of the transport.

Lorraine woke with the moving of her stretcher and was about to cry.

Ryan looked at her and winked his eye.

Lorraine kept her eyes on Ryan.

Then she heard Dr. Ralph’s voice as they carried her into the secret entrance to the owner’s suite.

The transport driver and the several workers did not know where Ryan and Dr. Ralph went.

They got the bags and everything out the wagon and walked to the front of the train.

The second person in charge looked around and did not see Joe, the train conductor.

He prepared the train to deboard.

The workers were standing with all the luggage from the transport.

Ryan looked at the owner’ suite.

Dr. Ralph stood in utter shock.

Mike and Joe laughed at Ryan and Jason.

Mike and Joe jumped off the train and hit Ryan so he could get off.

Ryan said, “I have a bag for her.”

Joe said, “Go and get it. We have to close this before anyone else see this.”

Mike said, “That’s why you and Beverly never got caught.”

They laughed.

Ryan nearly hit the ground.

He was shocked to hear them talk so commonly.

Dr. Ralph heard them and he did not care.

He did not know that opulence existed but in palaces.

Mike and Joe were standing and watching Ryan.

Ryan ran to his horse and got the medicine and turned and ran back with the bag.

He wanted to look at the suite again.

Mike and Joe jumped off the train car and sealed it up.

They casual walked around to the deboarding passengers.

Joe and Mike greeted all the passengers and wished them a Merry Christmas.

A passenger pointed and said, “Whose wagon is that?”

The transport driver looked back and said, “Mines. I can help you once I carry these things on board.”

The man yelled, “Let him pass.”

Joe and Mike looked at the man.

The second in charge looked at the bossy passenger.

The passengers stepped aside.

Mike said, “The second car.”

The transport driver and the several workers jumped on the car and ran through to the second car.

The women saw the Smith’s bags and said, “Smith’s.”

Joel and Mike shook their heads.

They continued to help the passengers off the train.

The workers placed the bags at the door of the owners’ suite and knocked on the door.

The workers ran to the second car and jumped off the train.

The transport driver was behind them.

He was having a good time.

He saw Ryan’s horse was still there.

He knew the woman was sick and near dead.

The transport driver walked towards the rain car and whistled at the passenger.

Mike and Joe turned and saw the transport driver and the workers running towards the rail.

Joe said, “They jumped off at the back door I have to check it later.”

Mike shook his head.

He said, “I know they are running back to the gambling table. I know they have it set up. Peter was over there last night. The Stiths’ sent him a five hundred retirement gift and a bottle of champagne. He probably have spent it up.”

The second to Joe nearly dropped a passenger when he heard five hundred dollars.

Joe said, “What? Five hundred dollars? That is a lot for a retirement.”

Mike said, “They may have been saying ‘Good Riddance’.

Mike watched as the workers disappeared behind some train cars.

The passenger and his wife ran to the transportation wagon.

The driver looked in the wagon and everything was out.

He looked for the stretcher and he did not see.

Some other men ran to him and the transportation driver told them if they are there when he gets back then he would carry them to the destination.

The woman was sitting in the carriage her husband ran and got their other bags and brought them and put them in the wagon.

He jumped on the bags and said, “Let’s go.”

The transportation driver looked at the man and woman and thought, “Rude.”

He said, “Sir where?”

The man said, “Turn around and leave then I will tell you. I don’t want them to hear.”

The transportation man turned the wagon around and the man said, “The hotel.”

The transportation man sped to the hotel and took out their bags and walked the bags to the door.

The door man opened the door and took the bags inside the hotel.

The man paid the transportation man.

The transportation man looked at the dollar and ran to his wagon.

He sped back to the train and started taking two set of passengers at a time.

The train was early that morning because they had to have time to put Lorraine on the train and get her settle.

The other carriages had not arrived at the train station.

The carriages usually arrive a half hour after the train arrives.

The transportation man was complaining to his wife about getting at sun up to go to the hospital.

One of the passengers said, “I own the poultry shop. I need to get to my shop. I’ll give you a turkey.

The transportation man said, “Goose.”

The poultry shop owner said, “Goose.”

The other passengers started booing the poultry shop owner.

He and his wife grabbed their bags and ran to the wagon.

Joe and Mike laughed.

Mike got on the train and ran to the owners’ suite and knocked on the door and said, “Mike.”

Dr. Ralph opened the door.

Mike started putting the bags inside the suite.

He took the luggage in one of the bedrooms.

Ryan was preparing Lorraine’s medicine for that day.

Ryan put a washcloth over Lorraine’s face.

Mike ran and put the luggage in the room and he saw Ryan with the needles and wobbled.

Ryan looked at Mike and yelled, “Jason!’”

Dr. Ralph ran in the bedroom and saw Mike had passed out and his neck and head fell on the bed.

Ryan caught the needle just before he put it in Lorraine’s arm.

While the excitement was going on Ryan gave Lorraine the three shots as opposed to the seven.

He did not give her the IVs.

Lorraine was crying.

Dr. Ralph looked at her covered face and wanted it to be over for her.

Dr. Ralph helped Mike up.

Mike sat on the bed and shook his head several times.

Ryan was sitting on the floor rubbing Lorraine’s arm and patting her.

Mike heard a woman crying.

He jumped from the bed and turned and saw Ryan looking at him like he was a girl.

Ryan got all the needles and medicine and put it in the bag to be thrown away.

Mike looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “You all are looking at me like a girl. I am not a girl.”

Dr. Ralph and Ryan finished getting all the medication together and counted all the needles and IVs.

Mike was walking in slow motion to the door and stepping high in the air.

Ryan shook his head at Mike.

Dr. Ralph looked back at Mike and snickered.

Mike said, “I heard one of you snickering. That ain’t normal.”

Mike finally made it to the door.

He could not open the door.

Ryan nodded and said, “Look at him.”

Dr. Ralph snickered.

Mike said, “Come and open this damn door.”

Ryan leaned over the bed and kissed Lorraine on her head and patted her arm.

Dr. Ralph said, “What to do about the stretcher?”

Mike said, “Leave it and come and open this door.”

Ryan and Dr. Ralph shook hands.

Ryan run to the boys’ room and stood and said, “Whoa.”

Dr. Ralph said, “This is why they are used to casual things.”

Ryan said, “But demand me to be fired and lamb chops.”

Dr. Ralph hollered.

He walked to the door.

Ryan caught Mike by his underarm and said, “You are right nothing we do is normal. We are in the business of bringing people back from the dead.”

Dr. Ralph patted Mike on his back and opened the door.

Ryan walked with Mike off the train.

Mike sat on a bench outside for a while.

Ryan held up the bag and said, “This needs to be burned.”

Mike pointed.

Ryan turned and saw workers burning trash.

Ryan ran and threw the bag in the fire and watched it burn.

He turned and walked to his horse.

Ryan said, “Mike you alright?”

Mike turned and threw up.

Some women jumped from the bench.

Ryan turned his head and giggled.

Mike stood and passed Ryan and said, “I ain’t no doctor.”

Ryan held his head back from the stench.

The women looked at Mike and one of them said, “Get back here and cover that up.”

Mike kept walking.

He went to the water pitcher and pour him some water and rinsed his mouth and splashed it on his face.

The train whistle blew.

Ryan mounted his horse.

The train pulled off.

Ryan sat and watched the train leave.

He saw Jason peeping out the balcony window,

He waved at Jason and Jason waved Ryan.

Ryan said, “Bye Lorraine.”

He turned and passed Mike.

Mike carried a shovel of coal to cover his throw up.

The passengers were fussing.

The transportation man returned.

Several passengers were waiting for him.

One man said, “I got to get to my butchery. I’ll give you a ham.”

The transportation man pointed and said, “Get in.”

A man said, “That’s not fair. We have waited over a hour and a half. We got to get to the south hospital.”

Ryan had exited the railroad station and was riding down the street to go to church.

He should arrive at the time his father, mother, wife and son should be getting there.

He felt better than he had for months.

Ryan was happy to Lorraine doing what he believed was better. He read her chart that morning before they put her in the transportation wagon.

He appreciated Dr. Jerome, Hutch, Dr. Ralph for helping him and his father.

Ryan passed the toy shop and grinned that Myriah went home yesterday and should have a good Christmas. He would not see her again for six weeks.

Ryan got happy and started riding faster.

Ryan started singing and thanking God for His goodness.

Ryan had joy in his heart.

His mother and Alice were walking with Ryan up the church stairs when Ryan arrived.

His father had parked the carriage.

His father looked at his son.

Ryan Jr. was dressed in one of Michael’s Christmas outfits which had his name stitched in it.

Ryan’s father stopped and waited for Ryan.

Ryan tied his horse.

They greeted each other.

They saw President Strafford riding to church.

Wade said, “Where’s his wife?”  
Ryan said, “Dad.”

Ryan Jr. said, “Daddy.”

Ryan waved and grinned at Ryan Jr.

Wade said, “That’s one of Eleanor’s boy customer made outfits.”

Ryan hollered.

Wade said, “That’s the most ridiculous thing I ever heard. They are only going to wear it once.”

Ryan laughed hard.

Ryan Jr. was looking at his daddy.

Ryan picked up Ryan Jr.

The parishioners were walking and looking at Ryan Jr.’s clothes and saying, “Oh God where did that outfit come from?”

Wade was about and yelled.

Beverly said, “Wade you better not open your mouth.”

Parishioners said, “Good looking baby.”

Ryan Jr. said, “Thank you.”

Ryan was embarrassed.

President Strafford walked up and shook Wades’ hand.

He walked in the church.

Beverly leaned back and said, “Where’s his wife?”

Wade said, “Beverly you better not start.”

Ryan said, “I was on the Stith’s private train car this morning.”

Beverly said, “That’s where you were? How was it?”

Wade looked at Beverly.

Ryan said, “No words can describe it. I see why money means nothing to anyone but Shirley. I have never seen anything like.”

Alice said, “Why were you there Ryan?”

Ryan said, “To say bye to someone.”

Alice said, “Who?’

Ryan said, “Alice that is not your concern.”

Alice said, “As a wife I need to know certain things.”

Wade looked at Beverly because those were her exact words to Wade all the time.

Beverly turned around and greeted parishioners as she walked in the church from Wade’s rolling eyes.

After church they joined President Strafford for lunch with many of their friends from church.

Beverly had to show off Ryan Jr. and his clothes.

Wade looked at the outfit and shook his head.

The women took Ryan Jr. home but Wade went to the north hospital and Ryan went to the south hospital.

The transportation man arrived back at the train station as the train was nearly out of Philadelphia.

The man who said, “He needed to get to the south hospital jumped on the wagon with his wife and and the baker.

The transportation man dropped off the man and his wife at the south hospital.

The transportation man dropped the bakers off and asked for two cakes that he would pick up with his cooked goose and stuffing and gravy and bake ham.

He only has to do vegetables.

His son was helping his blind mother in the house to dress.

She wanted to go to church.

The transportation man arrived home a few minutes before eleven am and told his wife and son what happened.

He showed them all the money he made that morning. They were excited.

He said, “There’s this hospital I picked up a lady from and got her to the train station. We are going in the morning.”

His son was counting the money.

The transportation man said, “I’ m going to get me a better job. I saw people traveling and having fun. We deserve that to.”

They all walked out the door to church.

They had a good time in church and was invited to dinner by a church member and had a good dinner.

They never were invited by anyone to anything.

They felt their lives were turning around.

Their twelve year old son ran and played with the other children and he had to push the sole of his boots back in.

His father looked and his son was embarrassed and came and sat down.

His mother did not know why her son came and sat down.

She leaned to him and said, “What’s wrong?”

He whispered, “The sole of my boots came out.”

She laughed.

He looked at her and turned his back to her.

She said, “Tomorrow, you get a new pair of boots. Not second hand anymore.”

He turned and looked at his mother.

His father was grinning,

They invited the family to their Christmas dinner after the church service.

She told her husband and son they had to help clean the house.

They spent Monday at the hospital with Ryan and his staff.

The other days they spent buying them new boots, coats, scarves and gloves and vegetables for Christmas dinner.

The transportation man and his son saw a man and some boys running out the woods with a tree.

They turned around and asked to use the man’s saw and ax.

They cut down a tree.

They took the Christmas tree home to his wife.

They spent the night decorating the tree with cranberries and colored paper.

Ryan told them to come back in a week to get their son’s tests result.

Ryan had a newness to practice medicine.

Dr. Jerome looked over the boy’s test results the next week.

He, Ryan, Wade and Albert they came up with a treatment plan for the son.

They sent his blind mother to the state capitol to a special eye surgeon.

He operated on one of her eyes and after a few months she was able to see with glasses.

He operated on her other eye at the beginning of the summer.

She was able to see out of both eyes by the fall of the year with glasses.

Ryan hired the man to transport patients back and forth home.

Their son was well in six months and returned to school in the fall.

That Sunday the transportation man dropped the man and his wife off at the south hospital.

The head daytime nurse and Madeline the supervisor nurse over the medication went over the medication and locked it up.

The head daytime nurse took Lorraine’s chart and walked to the basement put it in the storage room that contained the patients’ charts.

The nurses went into Lorraine’s room and cleaned it.

They mopped and sanitized the room.

They moved to Myriah’s room and mopped and sanitized the room.

They changed the linens and went through the hospital getting all soiled linen and putting it together for the washer service on Monday.

The nurses put clean linen on the empty beds.

The sheriff arrived and was waiting for his wife outside so they could go to church services that morning.

They always had a pre- Christmas brunch at their home for the deputies and their families after the church services.

Several nurses had been invited over the years and have married some of the deputies.

The head daytime nurse was proud of that record.

The head daytime nurse was coming out the basement.

See saw the man and woman enter the hospital and went around the corner.

Nurse Madeline and the doctor were leaving to attend his church and then come to the head nurse’s home for brunch.

The head daytime nurse told them not to bring anything.

She always ordered everything from Rosie’s.

She and her husband go to Rosie’s and load their carriage and rush home to greet their guests now with their children.

The sheriff looked at the well dress man and the plain dress woman.

He thought, “They are out of place at this hospital. Maybe the north hospital.”

The sheriff stepped out his carriage and walked to the hospital as the Madeline and the doctor were leaving.

The doctor slowed and looked at the sheriff.

Madeline looked at the doctor.

He said, “Madeline go to the carriage.”

He came in early and saw the patients on the first floor.

He was sitting in the lobby waiting for Madeline to finish with the daytime head nurse.

Madeline was thinking and walked to the carriage.

The doctor looked at Madeline and walked back in the hospital.

The head daytime nurse saw the man and woman.

She knew they had no new patients, and the man and woman were not familiar to her.

She slowly eased up the next two steps.

She saw the nurses at the nurses’ desk look at them.

The sheriff walked in.

The head daytime nurse took a deep breath.

He noticed they went straight to Lorraine’s room.

The sheriff knew Lorraine was gone.

He wondered how the y knew which room to go to.

Madeline eased out the carriage and tiptoed to the hospital’s front door.

She eased behind the doctor.

The nurses saw her.

The head daytime nurse saw Madeline ease into the hospital.

The head daytime nurse wondered why the doctor followed her husband in the hospital.

Some doctors were upstairs making their rounds.

The sheriff walked to Lorraine but felt not to go in the room.

He leaned against the wall.

His wife ran up the stairs.

The head daytime nurse beckoned for the nurses to move into the shortage room.

She closed the door.

She was scared for the patients.

The doctor tipped behind the sheriff.

The sheriff saw him.

The doctor threw up his hands.

Madeline tipped to the nurses’ desk.

The head daytime nurse did not trust anyone.

She ran to the nurses’ desk and kneeled by Madeline to watch her.

The sheriff took out his second gun and put it on the doctor and the doctor kneeled on the floor and looked at the sheriff.

The sheriff was listening to the man.

The sheriff heard them mumbling.

The man said, “He said Lorraine was here. They have stopped my plans to kill her.”

The woman said, “Maybe she does not remember or know anything.”

The man said, “If he said she was here last night and she is not here this morning.”

The woman said, “The train. Our man on the train can get her.”

The sheriff thought quickly, “Who is the ‘he that watched Lorraine in her hospital bed? Besides this one here. What man is on the train?”

Madeline and the head daytime nurse saw when the sheriff pulled out his other gun and put it on the doctor.

Madeline eased in her bag and pulled out her gun.

The head daytime nurse picked up the hammer the nurses put under the chair to nail up the curtains.

The head daytime nurse eased the hammer and said, “Madeline?”

Madeline said, “I am not one of them shush.”

The head daytime nurse grabbed the hammer and raised it to knock Madeline out.

The man and woman ran out of Lorraine’s room.

The sheriff said, ”Hands up.”

The woman pulled her gun out her bag.

The man kept running out the door.

Madeline ran behind the man and shot him in both of his legs.

He fell and tried to crawl to the doctor’s carriage.

Madeline became angry.

She realized the doctor was only using her to help with his mob cover at the hospital.

The daytime head nurse saw the woman take her gun out her bag.

The head daytime nurse threw the hammer with all of her might and hit the mob woman in her temple.

The doctor saw his wife fall to the floor.

He sat and stared.

The sheriff put the gun to the doctor’s head and said, “Want to join her?”

The doctor leaned back and said, “My wife.”

The sheriff showed no pity.

He threw the doctor on the floor and put the handcuffs on him.

The doctors had the nurses to fall on the floor.

They tipped downstairs and saw the handcuffed doctor on the floor.

They saw the woman dead on the floor.

The doctors saw the sheriff walk to the woman and felt for a pulse.

The sheriff walked to the nurses’ desk and peeped over the desk and saw his wife.

He smiled.

She looked at her husband.

The sheriff said, “She is dead. Does that bother you?”

The head daytime nurse said, “No. I’ll have killed for you before.”

The sheriff smiled and said, “I know.”

Dr. Jim was crouching down on the stairs and he thought and yelled, “You are the reason our patients aren’t getting well. You are a fake. You are not a real doctor. Who hired you?”

The other two doctors stood and looked at the doctor on the floor.

The head daytime nurse peeped over the desk at the doctors.

The sheriff turned and looked at the doctors.

The fake doctor on the floor was crawling trying to get to his wife.

The sheriff went and stood in front of the doctor and put his gun on him.

The sheriff said, “Who is he on what train?”

The fake doctor said, “Let me she here.”

The sheriff said, “You tell me who is on what train to kill Lorraine?”

The doctors stood on the stairs and listened.

The sheriff said, “Won’t ever see her again.”

The sheriff stepped backwards and grabbed the woman to drag her out the hospital.

The fake doctor screamed and said, “Peter. Peter. He is at the small city.”

The sheriff said, “How many more of you at the hospitals?”

The fake doctor said, “No more here, none at the bone hospital.”

The fake doctor put his head on the floor.

The sheriff said, “Doctors you want to carry her body in Lorraine’s room so he can spend five minutes with her.

Dr. Jim yelled, “No!”

The fake doctor crawled to the woman.

The sheriff ran outside and looked and saw Madeline hiding and crying.

He saw the mobster bleeding over the ground.

The mobster nearly reached the carriage.

The sheriff put his gun to the head of the head of the mob.

Th head of the mobster turned over and stared at the sheriff.

The sheriff became weak and nearly dopped his gun.

The sheriff fell to his knees in the dirt.

The head daytime nurse ran to the door to watch her husband.

She saw when the man turned over.

She saw when her husband began to wobble.

The head daytime nurse ran out the door and to Madeline and grabbed her gun and ran to her husband.

The head of the mob pulled out his gun to shoot the sheriff but the sheriff gain consciousness enough to soot the head of the mob.

The head daytime nurse ran and took the mobster’s gun and check for his pulse.

There was no pulse.

She looked at the mobster and then her husband.

The sheriff said, “My younger brother.”

The daytime head nurse said, “He killed my father.”

The sheriff was shaken.

Marvin and his girlfriend were hiding behind the carriage like many other people.

The head daytime nurse helped her husband to stand.

They walked to Madeline.

The head daytime nurse and said, “Make sure he does not move.”

Madeline sat in the dirt and watched the dead head of the mob.

Marvin ran and helped the sheriff walk in the hospital.

Marvin’s girlfriend ran and checked on Madeline and she saw Madeline was shocked like everyone else.

Marvin’s girlfriend ran in the hospital.

Dr. Jim and the doctors ran to the sheriff and put him in a room and examined him.

They said the bullet grazed his side.

People rode to town and got the deputies.

Madeline stood and walked to the carriage and kicked the mobster from the carriage.

She rode to the fake doctor’s house and went from room to room.

Madeline spent the whole day going through every piece of furniture and all the drawers.

She walked outside and sat on the backsteps.

Madeline was thinking.

She looked at the stables.

Madeline walked to the stables and stumbled over the floor.

She stood still for a moment and walked back and kicked the hay out of the way.

There was a trap door.

She lifted it up and slid down the small hole.

Madeline found the organization records and their goal.

She twisted her mouth.

She walked out the stables and said, “If he would run. He had to have money.”

Madeline walked back to the house as it was getting dark and sat on the backsteps which was ragged.

She stood and pulled the middle step off.

She walked and got the hoe that was resting on the back wall.

Madeline walked back to the step and begin to dig.

Madeline found five hundred dollars.

She walked and put the hoe back on the wall and placed the back step down.

She walked in the house and looked around and walked out the front door and got in the fake doctor’s carriage and went to her rooming and took a hot bath and went to bed.

Madeline woke the next morning and went to the sheriff’s office.

The sheriff was in his office early.

Nurse Madeline told him where the fake doctor lives and the information in the stables.

The sheriff and Madeline and two deputies went to the fake doctor’s house and the furniture was gone.

They looked through the house and the fake doctors’ clothes were gone.

Madeline started getting upset and ran out the house to the stables.

The sheriff ran behind her.

They went down in the hole and all the papers were gone.

The sheriff got sick and said, “So there are more.”

Madeline pulled out of her pocket the papers she took that night.

The papers had all of their employees’ names, the bank accounts, the businesses they targeted.

The sheriff said, “The fake doctor is the head of the mob.”

Madeline said, “Where is the money?”

The sheriff looked at Madeline and said, “That’s what you were doing that you could not come to our pre-Christmas brunch?”

Madeline twisted her mouth and said, “Sorry.”

The sheriff said, “How much did you get?”

Madeline said, “A disappointing five hundred dollars.”

The sheriff thought, “That means the big money is near. He had to pay those people. That dead woman was not his wife. He wanted to get to her body for a reason. The doctors said he was trying to get to her hair pins. The hair pins were keys to something.”  
Madeline and the sheriff looked around.

Madeline said, “He knew he was going to jail and be searched what was he going to do with keys?”

The sheriff said, “I don’t know. We have the keys and state police will be here today to take over.”

The sheriff said, “The goose was really good and juicy this year. Most years the goose is dry.”

Madeline stood and looked around.

She pointed to the well.

The sheriff walked to the well and saw something in it.

He called for his deputies.

The deputies came and pulled up two safes.

They took the safes to the sheriff’s office.

The keys fit the safes and the sheriff and the many state police opened the safes and confirmed the fake doctor was the second head of the mob in the country. The first head was arrested by the military and taken to Washington DC to stand trial, but he died.

The safes contained names of all their workers and businesses they owned along with the name of the politicians the mob own.

The state transported the second to a place no one of.

Nurse Madeline requested the fake doctor’s house.

The sheriff gave it to her.

Nurse Madeline went to the work every.

Every day she would go to the fake doctor’s house and knock holes in the walls, floors and steps and kitchen looking for money.

The neighbors went to the sheriff and complained about Madeline.

The sheriff went to the house one day when Nurse Madeline was there.

She had a hammer in her hand and was about to bust a hole in the wall by the steps that lead to the attic.

The sheriff looked at Nurse Madeline.

He looked around the house and saw all the holes in the house.

The sheriff said, “He made you this mad?’

Nurse Madeline swelled up.

The sheriff said, “I killed my younger brother that day. I did not know he was in the mob. I had his body burned up.”

Nurse Madeline said, “Cremated.”

The sheriff looked at her and said, “That’s what you say.”

Nurse Madeline laughed.

The sheriff said, “What is left you have not destroyed?”

Nurse Madeline said, “It’s my house.”

The sheriff said, “Your neighbors came to me to file complaints against you for keeping up this loud grunting sound and cursing most of the evenings.”

Nurse Madeline said, “You are a man and don’t know how it feels to be used.”

The sheriff said, “I don’t. My wife uses me every day and I like it.”

He lifts his eyebrows.

Nurse Madeline laughed.

The sheriff said, “You have destroyed this house. Hit that spot so we can go. Then you either tear this house down and build another or repair this house. From the way it looks you‘ll be better off building a brand new house. Hit that wall.”

Nurse Madeline hit the wall and there were stacks of gold coins.

She and the sheriff stood with their mouths opened.

The sheriff moved closer to the hole and peeped in the hole.

The sheriff wired the state police, and the state treasurer travelled all night to get to Philadelphia.

The sheriff, his wife and Nurse Madeline sat guard at the house and ate Rosie’s meatloaf while the state police took inventory and loaded the gold coins in state wagons.

The neighbors sat in their houses and on their porches and ate lunch and then later dinner.

The state treasurer was there with his full staff to count the money that was going to the state treasury.

The head daytime nurse jumped and said, ”Wait a minute!”

The sheriff looked up at his wife.

Nurse Madeline looked at the head daytime Nurse.

The head daytime nurse said, “That money, some of it belongs to us. We have not received a raise in a year.”

The state treasurer and his staff were shocked.

And she scared them.

The state treasurer drop a gold coin on the scale.

The sheriff looked up at his wife.

Nurse Madeline looked up at the head daytime nurse.

The head daytime nurse said, “There are three hospitals.”

The state treasurer put another gold coin on the scale.

The sheriff looked up at his wife.

Nurse Madeline looked up at the head daytime nurse.

The head daytime nurse said, “Our medicines were stolen and our retired doctors’ pensions were stopped.”

The treasurer said, “I am not paying for that.”

The sheriff looked up at his wife.

Nurse Madeline looked at the head daytime nurse.

The head daytime nurse put her hands on her hips and said, “Put some more gold coins on that scale.”

The state police looked at the head daytime nurse and her bossiness.

The state police looked at the sheriff.

The sheriff was a little embarrassed, because now everyone knows she bosses him.

The sheriff tried to smile, and he turned his head away and whistle.

The head daytime nurse stood with her hands on her hips and stared down the meanest and toughest state treasurer in the history of the state.

The state treasurer added twelve gold coins on the scale.

He stared at the sheriff.

The sheriff began to whistle and turned back around.

The head daytime nurse looked at the scale and turned around and took her hands off her hips and sat on the floor with a shocked Madeline and the sheriff.

She sat and began to eat her meatloaf dinner and talk as if she did not do anything.

The sheriff said, “The poison they were using on Ryan and his father was to kill them but because yall locked up the medicine they had to substitute and the medicine did make them not be rational for them to fail and the mob take over their hospitals”

The head daytime nurse said, “That’s one of the things why the medicine was disappearing. They were stealing the medicine and mixing it. When they locked the medicine that gave them a fighting chance to live.”

Nurse Madeline said, “How was Dr. Ryan today?’

The head daytime nurse said, “Back to his “I’m the only brilliant one self’.”

They all laughed.

The state treasurer and his employees packed up their scales.

He walked to the head daytime nurse and stared at her.

She stared at him.

He said, “You’re not going to give your father a good-bye hug. I taught you better than that.”

The head daytime nurse jumped up and ran to her daddy and hugged him and said, “Daddy I love you.”

She gave him a kiss on the cheeks.

The sheriff sat and waved and said, “Bye dad.”

The state police looked at the sheriff and turned up their noses.

The sheriff tried to smile but was still embarrassed by his wife’s bossiness.

The state treasurer said, to one of his employees, “Come on and don’t say anything to her and get her stirred up. You know she has been like that since you birth her.”

The attractive older woman smiled at the head daytime nurse.

She reached for the state treasurer’s outstretched hand

They held hands and walked to their carriage.

The woman looked at the state treasurer and said, “What happens to him?”

The state treasurer said, “It already has happen. They had a secret trial and he got life. Only a young woman about sixteen came to see him after the trial. She was shot up. We assumed she is going to take over.”

The woman said, “What?”

The state treasurer said, “After she left the jail. She did maneuvers to make sure she was not followed. The state police followed her. They have sent people into her organization to monitor her.”

The state treasurer and his employees and the state police loaded in the wagons and carriages and rode all day to return to the state capitol.

The sheriff and the head daytime nurse rode to the state capitol to vacation with her mother and father.

They noticed new schools in different communities, upgraded hospitals, new roads, more colleges had funding and not closing and more state parks and more state jobs more orphanages with upgrades and more workers state mental hospitals.

The sheriff and his wife looked at each other.

She said, “I should have asked for more gold coins”

They passed the state medical college and saw the building that bared the name of Dr. Jerome.

The head daytime nurse covered her face and cried until they reached her mother and father.

Nurse Madeline tore down the fake doctors’ house and had a modern home built with washrooms, toilets and plumbing.

She started a scholarship fund for nurses and doctors and free ambulance transportation, which Melvin was over.

Nurse Madeline enjoyed traveling in first class accommodations.

She and Marvin eventually married and had three children.

Their children grew up in a medical environment.

Their son and one daughter became doctors.

The other daughter married a doctor and had four children.

Lorraine was on the train to Cedartown.

Dr. Ralph was cleaning up after Lorraine.

He saw she had noting in her stomach.

He pulled the cord.

Joe came to the owner’s suite a half hour later.

Dr. Ralph said, “I need a small serving of mashed potatoes with nothing in them.”

Lorraine was throwing up.

Joe frown up and tried to straighten his face.

Dr. Ralph said, “I need some diced tomatoes.

Joe said, “For you sir?”

Dr. Ralph shook his head for nothing.

Joe said, “You can eat in the dining hall but they eat in the suite. You can have whatever you want. We always have lamb chops. One of them love lamb chops.”

Dr. Ralph grinned because he knew it was that demanding Michael.

Lorraine threw up again.

Dr. Ralph still had his hand on the doorknob and he turned to look in the bedroom at Lorraine

Dr. Ralph turned to tell Joe what to bring him to eat and Joe had ran down the hall.

Dr. Ralph yelled, “My order? And plenty of cold water.”

Joe did not look back but threw his hands up in the air and kept running to the next car.

Dr. Ralph was stunned.

He stood in the door with his foot in the door and was shocked at Joe.

Dr. Ralph said, “What? Grown men acting like this.”

Dr. Ralph went back in the suite and checked on Lorraine and cleaned up in her bedroom.

Mike and Joe put Lorraine in the second bedroom.

They told Ryan and Dr. Ralph no one sleeps in the master bedroom but Mr. and Mrs. Stith not even Eleanor.

Ryan and Dr. Ralph stepped back and looked in Patrick and Brenda’s bedroom.

They were speechless.

Joe and Mike laughed at Ryan and Dr. Ralph.

Ryan said, “I traveled to Europe for two years and went into the palaces and castles and I did not see their kings and queens with suites like this. Dr. Ralph you have to tell me how their house look when you get back. It might be worth a trip to see.”

Dr. Ralph was slow to speak and said, “Lorraine always fussed at the common.”

Ryan said, “I guess so.”

Mike and Joe laughed and ran out the suite through the secret opening.

Ryan turned and ran out the suite to get his medical bag with all the medicine in it.

Ryan returned.

He and Dr. Ralph prepared Lorraine’s medicine.

Dr. Jerome told them to reduce the amount and what to stop giving Lorraine

He said anymore would burn up her organs.

Within several hours they saw Lorraine not shake as much and no hot body heat.

Ryan looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “Thank God for Dr. Jerome.”

Dr. Ralph went to Lorraine and put a wet cloth on her head.

He stood and walked in the boys’ bedroom and laughed.

Dr. Ralph saw they each had armoires and dressers that fit their individual characters.

He knew the whitewashed armoire and dresser with nautical designs was Bruce.

He knew the one with train tracks was Percy.

The ones with bikes and kites and wagons was Thomas.

He got to Mr. Michael with the books and painted African safari scenes.

Dr. Ralph stood and sadness overtook him that evil nearly killed these children because they wanted their money and power to rule over them.

Dr. Ralph said, “God like You save them I am expecting you to save Lorraine. I love her but I can’t marry her. I love being a doctor and working the long hours and studying and being with my patients and working the hard cases.”

Dr. Ralph stood in the boys’ room and ran his hand over the wallpaper which Eleanor had designed to have their faces on the faces of the little boys, tad pole hunting, fishing, climbing tree, playing with sling shots and running with puppies.”

Dr. Ralph grinned and he saw the puppies and said, “Dogs.”

He stared at the wallpaper.

He turned and thought he heard something.

He walked out the boys’ room and stood in the hall.

He heard it again.

He turned and walked into Eleanor and Shirley’s room.

Lorraine whispered, “Jason.”

His heart smote him.

He walked to Lorraine’s bed and sat on the foot and cried.

Dr. Ralph heard a knocking on the door.

He jumped up and rushed to the door and it was Joe with a cart.

Jason opened the door for Joe to bring in the cart.

Joe stepped on the threshold of the door and pushed the cart inside the room and turned to run.

Dr. Ralph yelled, “These pots have to be emptied!”

Joe kept running and said, “I’ll send somebody. What you don’t eat leave it.”

Jason pulled the cart into the dining area and opened the tops.

He thought, “God if these people travel car looks like this how much does their house. Help me not to embarrass Lorraine, Michael and Shirley.”

Dr. Ralph washed his hands in the washroom.

He opened the dish with the mashed potatoes and the dish with tomatoes.

He thought, “How am I going to do this?”

He took the saucer of food to Lorraine and came back and a swallow of water in a glass and walked in her room.

There was a knock on the door.

Jason walked to the door and stood and listen and said, “Who is it.”

A man said, “The porter and room service.”

Jason opened the door.

They smelled the suite and immediately ran to the washroom and retrieved the pails and ran out and said, “We will back in a few minutes.”

Jason heard the porter said, “Mrs. Stith would fire all of us.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Eleanor.”

The porter said, “Brenda.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I have to whisper for him not to hear me.”

Dr. Ralph heard a noise and ran back in the suite and it was Lorraine crying.

He sat on the bed and touched her hand and said, “Lorraine, I am here with you. You won’t get anymore medicine today. I want you to eat something. That’s why everything is so painful. You have nothing in your body.”

There was a knock on the door.

Jason jumped up and ran to the door.

The porter and the room service ran in the suite and the porter opened the balcony door and stood to let in fresh air.

The room service man brought in clean pots.

He started a fire in the fireplace.

He took blankets out the cabinets and put on the sofa, because Brenda likes to stretch out on the couch.

The room service man put clean wash cloths and towels in the washroom.

He set the table and placed the food on the table.

Dr. Ralph was in the room with Lorraine and he was trying to give her some potatoes.

The room service man walked to the door and was watching Dr. Ralph and said, “What are you doing? That is not how you feed somebody.”  
Dr. Ralph turned and looked at the middle-aged man.

The middle-aged man said, “My mother had cancer and was skin and bone. She could not swallow. So we mixed only a spoon of mashed potatoes with a full glass of milk or buttermilk and that helped to coat her stomach.”

The porter was standing in the door listening to the room service man.

Dr. Ralph stood and turned to the middle-aged man.

He reached the man the saucer he had Lorraine’s food on.

The service man put the saucer on the table and walked out the suite and went to the kitchen and came back with a glass of whole milk, a glass of buttermilk and a baked sweet potato.

He room service man returned and knocked on the door.

The porter went to the door and opened it.

Jason walked out the bedroom and stood at the table and watched the room service man.

The room service man mixed the sweet potato with the whole milk.

He told Jason, “Drip a little bit in the lady’s mouth and let it flow down to her throat.”

Jason said, “You do it.”

The room service man walked in the bedroom and said, “Hi…”

Jason said, “Lorraine.”

The room service man said, “Hi Lorraine. I am Hal and work on this train. I want you to try one of my favorite concoctions. Tell me if you like it. It is a little baked sweet potato mixed in sweet milk. Alright.”

The room service man said, “Don’t be afraid. He is standing right here.”

The room service man looked at Jason.

Jason said, “Lorraine, I am here. I need for you to eat something. Try this.”

Lorraine was too weak to open her mouth.

Jason looked at her.

He said, “Lorraine open your mouth.”

The porter closed and locked the balcony door.

Jason stepped back so he could see the porter.

The porter looked at the fire in the fireplace.

He was listening to the room service man.

He turned and looked in the eyes of Jason.

Dr. Ralph did not know what to think about the porter, because he has been there all the time.

The room service man said, “Sir, she is too weak to open her mouth.”

Dr. Ralph said, “How do you know? How is she going to get food in her stomach? I need her to put food in her stomach.”

The room service man said, “First she is laying all curled up. That shows she is too weak to lay straight.“

The room service man got on his knees and moved the washcloth off Lorraine’s face and said, “Hey pretty Lorraine. I am going to let you try my favorite sweet potato and sweet milk.”

He took a spoonful of the sweet potato milk and took his other hand and gently opened Lorraine’s mouth and dropped the milk in her mouth.

Jason watched the room service man for nearly an hour.

The porter pulled back a chair at the table and began to make him a plate.

Jason heard the man and the dishes and forks, but he as watching the room service man patiently feed Lorraine with tenderness.

Jason was embarrassed that he was rude to the man.

Dr. Ralph actually saw Lorraine move her feet.

The room service man saw her feet move and said, “Miss Lorraine you like this. I am glad you do.”

Jason grinned.

The porter said, “You want the fried pork chops or the calf liver?”

Jason was about to answer and the room service man said, “Pork chops.”

Jason stared at the room service man and he walked out to the dining area and stood and looked at the porter.

The porter said, “Don’t be offended Sr. Ralph. We are good people. If not Patrick and that Brenda would have gotten rid of us a long time ago. You weren’t going to eat all of this food. I don’t know why Joe ran down there and grabbed all of these plates.”

Jason stood and looked at the porter.

The porter looked at Dr. Ralph and pulled out the chair he said, “You can do what you want. I am going to eat and then carry all of this stuff back to the kitchen.”

Hal said, “Miss Lorraine finished her supper. She ate the whole glass. I am coming so I can eat.”

Jason walked back in the room and looked at Lorraine.

She actually looked better to him.

Her eyes were closed.

Dr. Ralph looked at the empty milk glass.

He was outdone.

Hal got up from his knees.

He walked into the dining area.

He sat and got the pork chop plate.

Jason heard the men eating and the clanking of the forks on the plates.

He was hungry and turned and walked into the dining area.

Dr. Ralph looked over the table and said, “Where is…”  
Hal said, “There’s a plate under that.”

Dr. Ralph sat and removed the cover and it was pot roast and a lot of vegetables.

Dr. Ralph bowed his head and said his grace.

He stopped before he began to eat and looked at Hal and said, “Thank you very much. I would not know how to feed her like you did. I thank you for your hlp.”

Hal was reaching across the table to get a biscuit.

He said, “You are welcome. I learned all of this from watching my mom die from cancer.”

Dr. Ralph looked back at the room and stood and closed the door.

He walked to the table.

The porter was looking at Jason’s pot roast.”

Hal cut his pork chop and was about to put it in his mouth and said, “Bryant did a good job on that pot roast.”

Jason looked at the men’s plate.

He said, “It does look good.”

The men laughed.

Hal said, “He was not giving us none.”

They heard Lorraine cry.

Dr. Ralph was getting up to see what was wrong with Lorraine.

Hal said, “She has a bad crook in her neck and it goes all the way down to her hips. You need to get her to one of those bones quick. You don’t want her to be wheelchair bound.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Hal and stood.

Jason said, “Don’t touch my pot roast.”

The men laughed.

Dr. Ralph tried to smile.

He was thinking how Lorraine got the crook in her neck.

The murderer was trying to break her neck that’s why she whisper.

Dr. Ralph knew it was going to hurt Lorraine.

He smiled at her and examined her head, and neck and he went to her shoulders, arms and hands.

He slowly turned her on her stomach and saw and felt the knots in her back.

He thought Ryan did not know to attend to these things.

Jason sat on the bed and said, “Lorraine. You know how I treated Shirley. I have to treat you the same way.”

Jason walked out the room and picked up his black doctor’s bag.

Hal watched him.

The porter turned and looked back at Jason and said, “You a doctor?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

The porter said, “What kind?”

Dr. Ralph said, “A bone kind.”

The porter tried to touch the middle of his back and said, “Can you do something for this?”

Jason stood and looked at the porter and said, “Yes. But I have to attend to her, which will take a long time.”

Hal said, “You won’t be eating this roast.”

Jason looked at the slim man and thought, “He can’t eat all of that food.”

Jason walked into the washroom and got a hand towel and a towel.

The porter looked at Hal.

Hal looked at the porter.

Jason closed the bedroom door.

He touched Lorraine’s hand.

Lorraine started sniffing.

Jason put the hand towel over her mouth and he started slowing working on Lorraine’s head,

He wondered what happened to hear thick hair.

Then he thought about the poison that woman was giving her.

Patrick and Brenda and Eleanor finally read the telegram with the full report from the sheriff about the woman poisoning Lorraine.

They were quiet the whole evening.

The children knew it was something bad.

Michael looked at Eleanor all through dinner.

Eleanor tried to smile.

But her heart was heavy that the evil mob followed Lorraine and tried to kill her so they could get a strong hold in their businesses.

Patrick was thinking I am glad we signed the release papers.

Brenda and Eleanor were thinking they sent Lorraine to the Stith.

Eleanor was thinking the hospital was small enough, if anyone showed up the staff would recognize them. She knew Hutch was a former soldier and that all the doctors carried guns including Felipe.

Brenda was quiet.

Shirley looked at her grandpa and grandma.

The children looked from one to the other, but no one said anything.

Jose knew something was bad.

He slipped out the family dining room and ran down the hall to Patrick’s office.

He wiggled the door and popped open.

He eased the door shut and did not touch anything and saw the beginning of the telegram that the sheriff said the mob had a nurse to poison Lorraine.

Jose heard a noise and ran out Patrick’s office all the way to the billiards room into the kitchen and sat at his desk.

He sat there and stared at the pages of the calendar.

He did not read what Lorraine’s condition was.

Jose could not pray.

He had no feelings.

Nadine looked at Jose.

Jose knew Nadine was in the kitchen and he knew she was watching him.

Jose said, “Nadine take over.”

Jose went to his room and undress and went to bed.

Jose apparently went immediately into a deep sleep.

Nadine walked to the family dining room and everyone was quiet.

Nadine thought, “He knows something.”

Dr. Ralph started working on Lorraine’s head and her neck.

Lorraine cried but it was a quiet cry because of her vocal cords.

Dr. Ralph worked on her shoulders and arms.

He looked at her back and got angry, but he could not put all on Ryan and the doctors at the south.

Ryan order Myriah to spend two weeks at the Stith, nut Hutch started working on her before she was released from the south.

Myriah would come to the Stith for two weeks after Christmas.

Dr. Ralph continued to work on Lorraine’s back.

He started getting good results that he was surprised at.

He continued to work on her back.

He had to work on her hips and thighs and then her legs.

He had to keep his mind on what he was doing.

Dr. Ralph worked on Lorraine for a hour.

He was tired and walked out the room and fell on the sofa.

Hal and the Porter were playing cards they looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph was staring off in space.

Dr. Ralph was exhausted.

The porter and Hal cleaned the table and the suite.

Hal said, “Doc. Mrs. Stith always lay on the couch before going to bed. Pull off your boots and relax. I am assigned to this suite. You want something let me know. I am going to dispose of this food. Miss Lorraine should be hungry in about two or three hours and I can come back and feed her again.”

Dr. Ralph could not talk.

Hal looked at the porter.

He pulled off Dr. Ralph’s boot and put his legs on the couch and covered him with blankets.

The porter and the room service man got the cart and left.

Dr. Ralph finally drifted off to sleep.

He woke with a knocking on the door.

Dr. Ralph sat up and was startled.

He heard the knocking again.

Dr. Ralph stood and walked to the door and said, “Who is it?”

Hal said, “Hal. I got Miss Lorraine another sweet potato milk.”

Dr. Ralph let Hal in and he walked in the room and watch Al talk to Lorraine and feed her.

It took Hal less than thirty minutes to feed Lorraine.

Hal said, “Good night Miss Lorraine. You were hungry.”

Dr. Ralph let Hal out and locked the door.

Dr. Ralph dressed for bed and went back to the couch and slept until daybreak.

He was well rested.

He was surprised.

Dr. Ralph got on his knees and said, “GOD I know YOU see and hear and know all. I thank YOU.”

Dr. Ralph stood and walked to the balcony and snow covered mountains and grinned.

He took a chair from the table and put it at the windows and stared at this magnificent beauty.

He was trying to delay giving Lorraine the medicine, but he knew he had to.

Jason wanted Lorraine to be better tomorrow when they arrive in Cedartown.

He did not want people to think that Lorraine was dying. That he brought her home to die.

Jason wondered how Lorraine’s house look.

He said, “Girlie, Girl.”

He heard her whining.

He took a deep breath and said, “GOD help me. Give me strength.”

He went to the washroom and washed his face in cold water.

He washed his hands.

He dried his face and hands slowly.

He was thinking about the different medicines and the different combinations and how much.

Jason took a pail and place water in it.

He thought, “Lorraine did not throw the milk up last night.”

He was thinking.

Dr. Ralph walked in the bedroom and shook Lorraine’s leg and said, “Good morning Lorraine. I am going to open the curtains so you can see this magnificent view.”

Dr. Ralph walked over to the window and opened the curtain and moved back so Lorraine can look.

Dr. Ralph noticed Lorraine continued to whine.

He thought, “I have to bathe or wash her. The nurses did that yesterday.”

Dr. Ralph walked in the washroom and got the pail for her to throw up in.

There was a knock on the door.

He looked at the time and figured it was Hal.

Dr. Ralph walked to the door and said, “Who is it?”

Hal said, “Hal sir.”

Jason opened the door.

Hal was peeping back and ran into the suite.

Dr. Ralph stood and looked at Hal.

Hal had a glass of sweet potato milk for Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph said, “What were you running from?”

Hal said, “Joe. He’s the big boss. I am late getting her. I suppose to be here at seven am. I overslept.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I guess you can give that to her. I have to give her a lot of medicine.”

Hal said, “It’s better to have something on the stomach.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I need to wash her.”

Hal said, “I can do that.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Hal and said, “You will not. You will feed her and go and get hot water. I may bathe her in a tub. She likes baths, but I don’t have anything she likes.”

Hal said, “Sir.”

He pointed to the washroom.

Dr. Ralph followed Hal to the washroom.

Hal opened the cabinet and Dr. Ralph saw all of Lorraine’s products.

He cried.

Hal looked at him and walked out the washroom and went and feed Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph composed himself and sat at the dining table and took out all the medicine and begin to put them together.

Hal only took twenty minutes to feed Lorraine.

He walked out the room and stood and watched Dr. Ralph get the medicine together and put it in the needles.

Hal became sick.

Dr. Ralph knew he was watching him but could not stop getting the medicine together.

Hal swallowed and pointed at the door and said, “I’m going to get hot bath water. It will take three of us to bring it in.”

Dr. Ralph did not say anything.

He put the needles on a tray and stood to walk to Lorraine.

Hal waked out the door and fell to his knees.

Joe was passing Hal and continued to walk.

Dr. ralph went to the washroom and got a damp clean washcloth and walked back in the room and he saw Lorraine looking at the window.

He thought, God, is she really looking out the window?”

Jason came and sat on the bed and hi the tray at her foot.

He said, “Lorraine I need to give you this medicine today and tomorrow and that will be it. I promise you.”  
Lorraine started crying.

Jason covered her face with the washcloth and gave her the shots quickly.

Lorraine hollered.

Jason looked and said, “Lorraine. You are getting stronger.”

He stood and walked out the room.

Hal knocked on the door.

Dr. Ralph walked to the door and said, “Who is it?”

Hal said, “Hal.”

Dr. Ralph opened the door.

Hal and another clerk walked in with two large pails of steaming hot water.

Dr. Ralph said, “Be careful with that boiling water.”

Hal and the clerk nearly filled the bathtub.

There was another knock on the door.

Dr. Ralph sat at the table and was disposing of the needles and medicine.

Hal and the other clerk saw the needles and ran into each other to leave.

They opened the door for the other clerk.

He bought in a huge pail of water and filled the bathtub.

Hal and the other clerk were entering another train car.

They kept running.

The clerk said, “Sir do you want me to fill the washbowl with the remaining water?”

He heard Lorraine crying and peeped around in the bedroom.

Dr. Ralph was checking the medicine and had the needles and medicine on the table.

The clerk turned around and saw the needles and jumped.

Dr. Ralph was counting what he was doing and said, “Yes.”

The clerk filled the water basin with the hot water and ran out the suite.

Dr. Ralph said, “Tell Hal I want hotcakes and coffee for breakfast in an hour.”

The clerk ran out the suite.

Joe was walking back down the hall and saw all three clerks running.

He hurried by the suite and rushed through the car to the next car.

Dr. Ralph disposed of all the needles and waste.

He looked at his doctor’s bag that was near empty.

He closed his eyes and said, “Thank God.”

He put his doctor’s bag in the room with Lorraine.

He sat by the window and said, “Lorraine I have never been on a train ride. You have taken me on my first adventure. Thank you.”

He turned to see Lorraine looking at him.

Jason smiled.

He reached and held her hand and they looked out the window at the scenery.

He stood and opened her bags.

He showed her put he bought her from Smith’s.

Jason said, “A salesman name Harry said, he knew you. I believed him. You put the fear of God in him over your shoes. You put the fear of God in me over your shoes.”

He said, “I hope you like these dresses.”

He hung them on the armoire so she could see them.

Jason took out a nightgown and robe and said, “Lorraine I got two a blue one and a cream one. I believe you will look great in either. Which one you want to put on today?”

He was talking not expecting Lorraine to answer.

She whispered, “Blue.”

Jason heard him and bit his lip and cried.

He nodded his head at her.

He walked to her bed and sat on the foot and breathe.

He looked at Lorraine and said, “Welcome back my lady.”

Jason picked up Lorraine’s hand and kissed it.

Lorraine smiled.

Jason cried uncontrollably.

He stood and walked and checked the bathwater and walked back and said, “I have a surprise for you.”

Lorraine looked at him.

Jason took her nightgown and robe in the washroom.

He walked back and picked her up and carried her to the washroom.

He looked in her eyes and she looked in his eyes.

Jason said, “I haven’t done this in a long time. It maybe for a minute. Tell me if this water is too hot.”

He kneeled by the tub and put Lorraine’s little arm in the water.

She smiled.

Jason said, “I assume it is good.”

He eased her into the tub.

Lorraine closed her eye for enjoyment.

Jason crawled across the floor and pulled out her products.

He said, “Lorraine, honey or strawberry?”

Jason held up honey.

Lorraine smiled.

Jason, shampooed Lorraine’s hair and conditioned it.

He bathed her gently and let her sit in the tub and relax.

He sat on the floor and watched her very intensely.

He heard a knock on the door.

He leaned back with his eyes still on Lorraine and said, “Who is it?”

He heard Hal.

Dr. Ralph said, “You can open the door.”

Hal said, “No.”

Jason looked at Lorraine jumped and rand to the door and opened the door and ran back to Lorraine.

He closed the washroom door.

Lorraine was enjoying the bath.

She started getting sick.

Jason looked and got one of the pails and put water in it and ran to Lorraine.

She was throwing up some fluid.

Jason put it to be disposed.

He wiped her face and dried her hair.

He washed Lorraine very gently and dried her and put on her nightgown and robe.

He picked her up and used his feet to open the washroom door.

He walked to the bedroom and Hal was finishing changing the linen.

He looked and said, “Miss Lorraine you are open and looking wonderful.”

Jason looked at Lorraine.

Hal said, “Did you like the sweet potato milk. I brought you another one.”

Hal looked at Lorraine and said, “You want to sit out there?”

Lorraine mouth yes.

Jason turned around.

Hal walked out and straighten out the blankets and Jason put Lorraine on the couch.

Hal went to the closet and got two pillows and sat Lorraine up to look.

He walked and opened the full balcony windows.

Dr. Ralph did not see that earlier that morning.

Hal said, “Sir, I brought your breakfast. Sit and eat before it gets cold.”

Hal said, “I’ll feed Miss Lorraine.”

Hal took the sweet potato milk and feed Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph watched everything Hal did.

The train whistle blew.

Lorraine jump.

Hal and the clerk were taking out the water.

Dr. Ralph was washing his face again the lukewarm water and he was shaving.

Dr. Ralph was peculiar about his hair.

He told Hal to bring him some more hot water.

Hal said, “This is the small city. “

Dr. Ralph remembered this is the city that the mob, killed Michael and Thomas and GOD brought them back alive.

He looked ta Lorraine and saw she was scared.

He walked and sat on the couch with her and looked out at the city as they rolled in.

Hal ran back with the last batch of hot water.

Dr. Ralph said, “How long are we here?”

Hal said, “Usually two hours but today only fifteen minutes for one passenger to board. I am going to close these curtains until we leave. The Stiths always keep the curtains closed until we leave,”

They heard the train come to a stop.

Jason rushed and shampooed his hair. Nd dried his hair.

He looked so distinguished.

He said, “Hal what time will we arrive in Cedartown tomorrow?”

Hal said, “It’s usually is around noon, but because we only stayed here fifteen minutes…”

The train whistle blew.

The train started pulling off.

Hal said, “We should get there around ten am.”

Hal walked back to the curtain and waited a few minutes and open the curtains back.

Lorraine breathed heavily.

Dr. Ralph looked at her.

He forgot to tell Patrick anything.

Dr. Ralph thought, “It’s his train. He knows everything about these trains. And it was a reason we only stayed in this town fifteen minutes.”

He looked back at the drawer he put his guns in.

Hal and the other clerk took out the water.

Hal rushed back and clean the suite.

He looked around and around and put coal on the fire.

Hal said, “Miss Lorraine you feel like trying some chicken broth and maybe sassafras tea?”

Dr. Ralph said that sounds good. I’m going to give her therapy now.”

Lorraine primped her mouth and began to cry.

Dr. Ralph was not disturbed by Lorraine’s crying.

Dr. ralph looked at the fire and said, “Hal I need heat for her back when I finish.”

Hal walked to the closet next to the linen closet and opened it.

Jason turned and looked and said, “Whoa.”

He got put he wanted.

Hal left.

Jason locked the door and eased his guns out the drawer.

He picked up Lorraine and carried her to the bedroom and put the hand towel in her mouth.

Dr. Ralph worked from Lorraine’s head and neck and shoulders and arms.

She started getting cramps in her feet.

Jason worked on her feet for a long time.

He went to her legs, thighs, hips and then he worked on her back for a long time.

Dr. Ralph felt a difference in her back and continued.

Lorraine was crying.

Dr. Ralph stood and got the heating pads ready and came back and put them on Lorraine’s neck, back and hips and covered her.

Lorraine went to sleep and slept for hours.

Dr. Ralph laid on the couch with a gun in his hand.

He woke when Lorraine woke.

He laid on the couch and thought about Lorraine’s treatment plan for that day and he was happy he shampooed her hair.

He wanted her to look at great as she could tomorrow,

Dr. Ralph was thinking should she hear a nightgown or dress.

Hal came and knocked on the door and brought a small kettle of chicken broth.

Dr. Ralph stood and said, “Who is it?”

Hal said, “Hal.”

He walked in the suite with a large tray.

He put kettle with the broth on a special grill Eleanor had installed in the fireplace to heat food.

Dr. Ralph grinned at Eleanor.

He thought about Eleanor and his good friend Bradley being so busy they probably only have time for one another on the train, in this suite.

He looked back at the boys’ room and thought, “Maybe not.”

Hal poured a swallow of sassafras tea in a cup.

Dr. Ralph said, “I’ll give it to her.”

Dr. Ralph said, Hal I need to bathe in the morning before we arrive in Cedartown. Miss Lorraine I will wash. I have to decide if she is to wear a nightgown or a dress.”

Hal said, “A dress doctor. Never take them somewhere in the state they in. Take them in the state they will be.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Hal and walked in the room with Lorraine and removed the heating pads.

Jason saw Lorraine like the heating pads.

He turned her over and sat her up on the bed and held the tea for her to drink.

She was looking better to him.

He continued to hold Lorraine up with is left arm.

He smiled when she drank all the sassafras tea.

Jason said, “Lorraine, we have an important decision to make concerning tomorrow.”

He looked at Lorraine and Lorraine looked at Dr. Ralph.

He said, “Do you want to wear the red dress, the blue dress o one of the greens?”

He looked back at Lorraine and she was looking at the dresses.

He said, “Harry told me you wear red for your hot dates. Which I don’t remember. You want to wear the blue dress? And keep the red dress for our hot date?”

She stared at the blue dress.

Dr. Ralph was looking at he dresses.

He was wondering what Lorraine was thinking about.

She whispered, “Green.”

Hal knocked on the door.

Dr. Ralph looked at Hal and said, “Yes.”

Hal said, “I brought your lunch which is a new sandwich call a Rueben with roast beef.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Thank you. First Lorraine has decided she wants to wear green tomorrow and has to decide which green dress.”

Hal looked at the dresses.

Dr. Ralph said, “The green dress next to the blue dress or the green dress to the red dress. Say either blue or red.”

Lorraine whispered, “Blue.”

Hal clapped.

He took the cup from Dr. Ralph.

Hal said, “Doc you want me to feed Miss Lorraine while you eat this new sandwich.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I do want a bite.”  
He sat until Hal came back with a cup of chicken broth.

Dr. Ralph looked and said, “I can smell the herbs in that broth.”

Hal smiled and got on his knees and feed Lorraine the chicken broth.

Dr. Ralph left out the room and walked to the table and ate half of the sandwich.

Hal finished feeding Lorraine.

He came out and Dr. Ralph said, “I can’t eat that much meat.”

Hal pointed to the half sandwich.

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

Hal pulled the chair to the balcony window and got the last newspaper and ate his sandwich and read the newspaper.

Lorraine was sleep.

Dr. Ralph stretched out on the couch and went back to sleep until dinner.

Hal was sitting looking out the window.

Dr. Ralph looked at Hal and said, “Hal are you alright?”

Hal said, “Yes sir. I’m hiding out in here. If I go back to my room they will make me do all kinds of chores. Are you sure you want to bathe in the morning? We have to pack you two up and use this stretcher to take her off the train in the cold. Do you want to be first off or the last off?”

Dr. Ralph said, “First off. I need to send a telegram to Mr. Stith to send someone to pick us up.”

Hal said, “I swear to you they will be at the train station before the train get there to get you. He and Eleanor take the trains seriously.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I’ll bathe tonight. Just have hot water for us tomorrow.”

Hal said, “Yes sir.”

Hal put the chair under the table.

Took the additional washcloths and towels out and check the bath items Lorraine used.

He put more coal on the fire.

Dr. Ralph looked at Hal and wondered about him.

Dr. Ralph said, “Hal, did you eat that beef roast on my plate last night?”

Hal looked at Jason as he pushed the chairs under the table.

Hal said, “I sure did. Calvin, your porter, ate all the vegetables. They had so much beef left the cooks tried this sandwich. The guests were thrilled.”

Jason said, “How do you stay so thin?”

Hal said, “I keep busy.”

Jason said, “Doing what?”

Hal laughed.

Lorraine laughed.

Dr. Ralph was shocked that Lorraine laughed.

He sat and bit his lips and cried.

Hal turned his head and said, “Is that you Miss Lorraine?”

Lorraine did not say anything.

Hal said, “Miss Lorraine welcome back. A true miracle from the True and Living GOD. I love HIM.”

He looked and saw Dr. Ralph crying and shaking.

Hal knew this was special.

He stood and looked Dr. Ralph.

They heard a train whistle blowing.

They meet the train going to the small city.

Patrick had Peter and Dan bake as many cakes as they could and box them and send to the troops.

Jose helped bake the cakes.

They baked twenty-five cakes and boxed them.

Patrick said, “Joel, I have two men there to help the people and give them food. They will meet you at the rail station. You help them get these boxes to give to the people. And you don’t wait. They said, bad weather is coming in. You high tail it out of there and telegram me when you make it back to Philadelphia. I want all of you to spend Christmas safe and full.”

Joel laughed and shook Patrick’s hand.

Patrick and Joel watched Jose, Peter and Dan load the boxes on the train.

Everybody clapped their hands.

Brenda walked through the kitchen for the past two days to see the progress of the baking.

Gan said, “Mrs. Stith you need some help?”

Brenda said, “I came to see if you all need any help. I can sift the flour or crack some eggs.”

Peter closed his eggs and went into the shakes.

Nadine looked at Peter and grinned.

Brenda saw Peter shaking.

She walked to Peter and looked him in his face.

Peter looked Brenda and jumped.

Everybody laughed.

Brenda turned and looked at her staff and said, “I can cook. I don’t just get recipes.”

No one said anything.

No one wanted Brenda in the kitchen.

Eleanor walked from her office and heard Brenda offering to help the cooks bake the twenty five cakes.

Eleanor walked into the kitchen and looked around.

Everyone stopped working and looked at Eleanor.

Brenda said, “Eleanor they don’t want us in our own kitchen. Come on.”

Eleanor said, “I don’t want to work in the kitchen anyway. I could taste the crumbs from the cakes.”

Michael and Bruce ran in from the mill where Jose was milling the last of the flour.

Eleanor and Brenda looked at their children helping out with the cakes for the military.

Everyone held their breath as Eleanor turned and looked at the staff.

Brenda turned and saw Percy and Thomas running with some eggs.

Michael put the flour on the cabinet.

Bruce put his flour on the cabinet.

Gary was standing outside with the boys’ horses.

Eleanor looked and said, “Why does Gary have your horses out of the stables?”

Patrick walked through the hall and was reading the telegram from the governor that he told him they were sending cakes to the troops. The governor said, “Thanks. And us too. We forgot cakes.”

Patrick heard Eleanor and said, “I told them Eleanor. They wanted to help with a gift to the troops. You have to remember they are military.”

Percy and Thomas ran in the house with the eggs.

Jose ran into the house with two hats on his head.

Eleanor looked at Jose and then his head.

She turned her head.

Brenda saw Jose and she saw Eleanor.

Jose saw Eleanor and walked pass her to his desk.

Michael and Thomas ran to Brenda and hugged her and Eleanor and ran out the back door.

Percy and Bruce hugged Brenda and Eleanor and ran out the back door.

Patrick walked to the backdoor and watched the boys ride away.

The boys said, Thanks grandpa.”

Patrick waved and walked back to the kitchen.

Patrick said, “Jose, the governor received the telegram about the cakes for the troops. He said they forgot cakes for themselves. Send the governor at least two cakes. Thank You.”

Patrick walked away very somberly.

Eleanor ran to the hall and looked at Patrick.

Brenda rushed to the hall and looked at Patrick.

Nadine and Dan looked at Patrick.

Nadine whispered to Peter and said, “Something is wrong. He loves Christmas time.”

Dan looked at Nadine.

Brenda looked back at Peter and huffed, “Sending me out of my kitchen.”

Peter stood and looked at Brenda.

Eleanor and Brenda heard the workers’ clap.

Eleanor stopped and said, “Are they clapping because we are out our kitchen?’

Brenda grabbed Eleanor by the arm and said, “Yes. They are good people and good workers. Let us leave them alone Eleanor. They have bake sixteen cakes since yesterday. They can finish today and boxed the cakes for the troops and send it to them on the train tomorrow.”

Eleanor looked back and saw Nadine watching them.

Eleanor said, “That Nadine…”

Brenda said, “Shut up and come on and lets find out what wrong with your daddy.”

They walked through the billiards room and heard Patrick’s door slam.

Brenda an Eleanor knew that meant for them to leave him alone. No exceptions, not even Brenda.

Brenda went to the Christmas tree and looked at it.

Eleanor sat in the parlor to figure out what was wrong with her daddy.

Shirley was returning from having breakfast with Sara and Alicia in town.

She was happy and grinning.

She walked to Brenda and hugged her.

She looked and saw Eleanor sitting in the parlor looking gloomed.

Eleanor thought, “It’s not the railroad and the ships they turned a large profit this year.”

She leaned back and kicked her feet and grinned.

Shirley was standing and looking at Eleanor.

Brenda stood to Shirley’s side and watched Eleanor.

Shirley turned and walked upstairs to her room.

Brenda watched Shirley and then she looked at Eleanor and said, “Shirley, what is it?”

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “You be upset when Shirley is grinning over her clothes and jewelry. What are grinning over Eleanor?’

Eleanor looked at her mother.

Brenda stood and stared at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “I was thinking about momma...”

Brenda did not stop her stare.

Eleanor sat up on the sofa and looked at her hard momma and said, “Yes, I was grinning because the railroad tripled its’ profits. The shipping more than doubled its’ profits, just barely miss the triple profit line.”

Brenda wanted to scream but looked at Eleanor and said, “Like I said, Shirley.”

She stared at Eleanor and walked fast from the parlor door so she could run to her office and screamed.

Brenda was rushing to her office when Nadine and Jose walked through the billiards room and saw Brenda grinning.

Brenda raised the hem of her dress and begin to dance the dance Steven taught her at the formal dinner.

Jose and Nadine stood and looked at Brenda.

Brenda dance to the liquor table and hummed and wiggle her hips and poured a tall glass of whiskey.

Nadine and Jose stood and looked at Brenda.

Brenda did not turn around but said, “What do you two want?”

Nadine turned and she nearly beat Jose to the door of the billiards room.

Brenda inhaled her whisky and grinned.

She said, “You are not the only ones that maneuvered objects so you can see. That’s why I keep this silver bowl right here.”

Brenda walked down the long hall to their suite.

She decided to sit at the end of hall on the settee and think about her good GOD.

Brenda about the hard last two years.

She thought about Joseph, Margaret and baby Earle with all of that hair. She would love to see them again.

She thought, “That selfish Shirley wants them to stay in Paris and send her dresses. Margaret may want to come home. I didn’t tell them. Margaret, Earle, Earle Jr. William and Wyonna will be here this summer. My GOD we will be on safari. How are we going to fix this? I know Shirley has oh ither heart set on going to that da bah it royal ball. Wait a minute is she suppose to graduate from college too.”

Brenda jumped from the settee and said, “Patrick.”

Patrick was in his office and thought he heard Brenda call his name.

He turned his head and continued to pray.

He prayed for Lorraine and asked GOD who Lorraine belongs to because she was not his child. He prayed for all of those people whose was in danger and they were at risk because of the evil mob.

Patrick said, “GOD give the military the supremacy and let them crush this type of evil forever. All of those that belong to the mob that is hiding in the military let them be exposed and removed. Break this bad cold weather so those who did not have the money to prepare for it might survive…”

Brenda said, “I am fifty five years old and just to command battles. Now I go and run to my husband for him to figure out a schedule. We won’t know anything until the spring. Then Hutch is going with us. I am glad because he can work on my back.”

Brenda sopped and looked around and said, “Selfish LORD. Forgive me.”

She sat back down and the settee and began about birthdays and holidays and travel time. Then Patrick.

She thought, “My GOD why is Patrick solemn?”

Jose said, “Nadine you get over there and grate all of those coconuts. Let that keep you busy and don’t come to me with your schemes again.”

Mellissa and Theresa laughed.

Peter looked at Nadine then Jose and said, “Who told you to follow her.”

Jose said, “I want to know you.”

Everybody laughed.

Nadine said, “Jose, I am going to need some help with these coconuts.”

Jose said, “No you don’t.”

Nadine became angry and looked at Jose.

She looked at Peter.

Peter turned around.

Peter said, “Oh I am glad it is only going to be them for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.”

Dan said, “Who told you that?”

Peter stood in shock.

Mellissa and Theresa stood still.

Nadine had the hammer and grater in her hands and said, “What Dan?”

Dan burst out laughing.

Everybody slowly turned around and began to cook again.

Peter yelled, “Number twenty.”

The workers clapped.

They would have a day to rest before they start all over again.

Patrick continued to pray for a long time.

He thought about what Dr. Woodson said he prayed for each patient and their families and all the staff.

Eleanor stood and walked to her office.

She saw her mother sitting and drinking at the end of the house.

She thought, “God they are close. That’s just like the boys sitting outside my door waiting for me.”

Then she thought about Joseph and he making her children counts and that Shirley a high countess. Now we have to have some kind of celebration for them. The boys don’t care but that he…”

Someone knocked on the door.

Eleanor turned and looked and yelled, “Jose.”

Everyone in the kitchen heard the door knock and Nadine coconut grinding at the same time.

Jose said, “What…”

He stood and walked through the formal dining.

Peter nearly hit the floor.

Nadine looked at Peter.

Dan snickered.

Peter said, “I have to be here the day they fight.”

Jose walked through the formal dining room and looked down the hall at Eleanor.

Eleanor was standing and looking at the door.

Jose peeped out the door and unlocked the door.

He stepped aside and Claressa and Alvin rushed inside.

Alvin said, “I swear it is getting colder outside.”

Eleanor ran up the hallway.

Claressa ran to meet Eleanor.

Jose locked the door and walked through the formal dining room to the kitchen.

Brenda saw Eleanor running up the hallway she knew it was Claressa.

She continued to drink her whiskey and look out the window.

Then Brenda thought, “They left with Beverly. Why are they back. Not my kitchen. I got everything like I want.”

Brenda stood and began to walk down the hall to see why Claressa was back.

Brenda only could think about that time Claressa set her kitchen on fire and ran home.

She thought about Patrick Jr., Christopher screaming.

Eleanor yelling at them to ‘shut up’ and John trying to steal some liquor.

Brenda shook her head in unbelief at Claressa and Eleanor.

The workers ran and put the fire out.

Patrick, she and Claressa’s parents agreed that Claressa and Eleanor would never set foot in their kitchens again.

Eleanor agreed she will never set foot in any kitchen.

She was terrified and screamed for two days.

John sent and got some whiskey and drank most of it and when he ran into Eleanor’s room with the glass up to his mouth he did not see Brenda and Patrick, until he put the glass from his mouth.

John was scared and said, “She was getting on my nerves. This was to calm her down.”

Patrick grabbed John and took him downstairs and spanked him.

Brenda reached and drank the whiskey.

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Brenda stood and was drinking the whiskey when Patrick walked back in the room and John was running up the stairs behind Patrick holding his butt screaming.

Brenda did not care.

Patrick grabbed Brenda by her arm and threw her out of Eleanor’s room.

Patricks’ parents were at the bottom of the stairs.

He looked and saw them and said, “It’ll be ok. Momma you and dad go to bed.”

His mother said, “How can we sleep with all of these drunks running through this house screaming?”

Brenda was licking her lips and said, “I haven’t been screaming yet.”

Patrick pushed her in their room and closed their door.

Patrick’s mother and father walked back to their room.

His father stopped and got him a glass of sherry.

Eleanor tipped down the stairs and reached for his glass.

He jumped and looked for Patrick or Brenda and gave Eleanor a swallow and put his finger to his mouth for her to be quiet and go back to bed.

Eleanor as happy and licked her tongue and danced up the stairs.

Her grandfather stood and drank his sherry.

Patrick was in his door and had it cracked.

He saw Eleanor skipping up the stairs and licking her tongue.

Patrick closed the door and was seething.

Brenda was sleep.

Patrick’s father turned and looked in the face of his wife.

She grabbed him by his arm and slapped him over and over on his head.

She pushed him in the bedroom and looked around to see if any servants saw her.

She beat him all night.

She said, “We are Christians, what is wrong with you?” GOD is going to hold us accountable for every time we do something that leads those children astray.”

Percy was trying to cover his head and said, “Sorry Shirley.”

She said, “We better pray before I really hurt you.”

Percy said, “What?”

They got on their knees and prayed.

The servants did not sleep all night.

The next morning the servants served the family burnt food.

Percy looked at the food and he was about to start cursing.

Shirley looked and said, “You better not say anything.”

Patrick said, “No father and we won’t have sherry in this house ever.”

Shirley looked at Patrick and in shock.

Percy said, “Son I am so sorry.”  
Patrick said, “I know you are a good man. But as you see I have a young family of drunks.”

Shirley looked ashamed and said, “Patrick I am sorry for saying that.”

Brenda said, “When did you call us drunks Shirley?”

Patrick was ashamed and did not say anything but walked to his chair.

Shirley rolled her eyes at Brenda.

Brenda was walking to the front of the house and was thinking about all those memories.

She stopped and looked at the well stock liquor table. She saw the sherry that Eleanor fell in love with.

Whenever her world was reeling, she turns to Grandma Shirley.

Brenda saw Eleanor and Claressa walking towards the kitchen followed by Alvin and Jose.

Brenda stopped and looked at them.

She turned and flew through the billiards room to get to the kitchen.

Shirley was standing at the top of the stairs and watching everything.

She ran upstairs to the backstairs and waited for Brenda to run into the kitchen and she ran down the stairs to hear what was going on.

Shirley wanted to talk to Claressa about her being a high countess.

Bruce wanted to talk to Claressa and Alvin about being in the diplomatic corps.

Brenda was standing in the hallway with her back against the wall where Jose sits.

Claressa walked in the kitchen and said, “I love this kitchen.”

All the workers turned and looked at her and Alvin.

Jose went and sat.

Peter was still because he was thinking, “Gone. Gone. Why are they back. Two more for dinner.”

Nadine was mad and still cracking coconuts and shredding the coconut.

Nadine looked at them and continued her duty.

Claressa said, “Can we come to Christmas dinner? You know the weather is saying there is suppose to be a blizzard.”

Dan turned and looked at them.

He was thinking about Mike and John and the military and a blizzard everything can’t move.

Eleanor said, “Sure. Where are the others?”

Alvin was looking at the Brenda’s china and porcelain.

He was laughing.

Claressa said, “The hotels are booked up in the capitol and we gave up our hotel rooms and came back home. If I am going to be stuck in a blizzard I rather be at home. The other ambassadors choose to stay in the capitol so they could go to as many functions as they could.”

Peter looked at Dan.

Dan looked at Peter and thought, “Well it is only two.”

Eleanor leaned to the side and said, “I have something to tell you and Alvin.”

Alvin was going through Brenda’s porcelain.

He was laughing and pointing and said, “You all remember when we tried to make up for killing the dogs and went into town and found this cheap tea set at the second- hand store and gave it to your momma and daddy.”

Dan and Jose looked at Alvin.

Peter thought, “Bad ass kids.”

Eleanor and Claressa were laughing.

Alvin was putting it back and they were laughing.

Eleanor said, “My mother loved it.”

Brenda eased into the kitchen,

Jose looked at Brenda as she tipped by him.

Dan looked at Brenda as she unbuckled her belt and wrapped it around her hand.

Patrick heard someone knocking on the front door.

He walked out his office into the hall.

Patrick saw no one coming to the door.

He slowly walked to the door and peeped out of it.

Shirley heard the knocking on the front door but she wanted to see what Brenda was going to say.

Patrick opened the door and he looked and said, “Come in.”

Patrick stood for a minute.

He looked at the names on the envelopes and said, “Wait I’ll go and get them.”

Patrick walked through the formal dining room and pushed the door open in time to see Brenda wrapping her belt around her hand.

He heard Eleanor, Claressa and Alvin laughing about how they killed the dogs and how they tried to make up to him and Brenda by buying those cheap teacups.

Dan looked back and saw Patrick standing in the doorway.

Dan stepped back.

Peter saw Patrick.

He walked to the large stove where he could duck.

Nadine was mad and cussing ad did not see anything.

Mellissa and Theresa stood still.

Alvin and Eleanor and Claressa were laughing so hard.

Claressa said, “I would like to cook Christmas dinner for all of you.”

Dan just looked at Claressa.

Alvin said, “You remember that time you burned their house up and ran home and sat at the dinner table like nothing happen.”

Eleanor, Claressa and Alvin burst out laughing.

Dan thought, “What the h\*\*\*.”

Brenda rolled out her belt like a whip and Peter duck.

Peter was peeping over the cabinet.

Brenda landed on Eleanor’s butt.

Shirley jumped and started turning around in the floor.

She wanted to see but she did not want a lick.

Jose jumped and blinked his eyes.

Jose eased up from the chair.

Eleanor screamed and grabbed her butt.

Claressa and Alvin started running out the house.

They ran pass Patrick and pass the soldiers in the hallway out to their carriage.

Alvin yelled, “Go! Go!”

The carriage started riding out the yard.

Alvin stopped running and looked at the carriage driver.

Claressa did not look back and ran behind the carriage.

The soldiers stood and looked around the house.

They saw the United States seal on the carriage.

Nadine jumped and turned around from the sink.

Mellissa and Theresa were holding onto each of tight.

Eleanor jumped and screamed, “Momma what is wrong? Why did you hit me?”

Brenda was wrapping the belt around her hand again.

Eleanor ran to Patrick.

Patrick said, “Twenty years later she got what was coming to you.”

Patrick said, “Shirley there are some soldiers here with an envelope for you.”

Shirley stared at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Shirley I can’t get that envelope.”

Shirley started jumping like Percy and said, “Grandpa.”

Patrick said, “You remember at Thanksgiving it was a note to have a good Thanksgiving.”

Shirley stopped and patted her chest and started walking there the billiards room to go to the front of the house.

The soldiers saw Shirley walking through the grand hallway.

Patrick said, “Jose, find Sabrina and tell her see has a military envelope and no one can get it but her.”

Brenda walked to her china cabinet and looked at her porcelain.

She put her belt back on and she laughed.

Brenda picked up the teacup and turned to an angry Eleanor and raised it up.

She said, “You bad a\*\* kids thought you were smart. But when we were in Europe I bought the whole set. It was a set the queen gave to a charity auction and I have the only full set. It is priceless.”

Shirley heard the words ‘queen’ and ‘set’.

She yelled from the hallway, “It’s mines!!!”

Patrick stood in the kitchen doorway and looked.

Peter and Dan turned and looked at the walls.

Jose was walking to Sabrina’s room and said, “What?!”

Eleanor balled up her fists.

Brenda looked around and then she looked at Patrick.

Patrick was still somber.

Brenda said, “How could that child hear that?”

Brenda looked at Eleanor and said, “I hope those balled up fists for you to beat your head with.”

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “You get you’re a\*\* in there and see what that note is Shirley got.”

Brenda stomped out the kitchen.

Screaming and cursing.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Brenda was smiling and put the tea set back up.

Patrick said, “Brenda you can’t be beating people up.”

Brenda said, “I was just thinking about them burning up our house when I was walking in the kitchen. And they going to be in here laughing like it was funny. Twenty two years later I got one. I am going to get those other two.”

Patrick looked at the workers hiding from Brenda.

He said, “Brenda, Alvin is a United States Ambassador.”

Brenda said, “So. He wasn’t one when he killed my dogs. You didn’t like those dogs anyway. You did not care.”

Patrick looked when Jose and Sabrina walked into the kitchen.

Angela was walking up from doing the laundry with Ruth and Rita.

Patrick said, “Sabrina you have an envelope from the military.”

Sabrina started panicking.

Patrick said, “What are you panicking about. Go and see what the note say.”

Patrick turned and walked through the formal dining room to the foyer.

Shirley received her note and was grinning.

She looked at Patrick and walked to him and put her head on his chest.

She said, “Grandpa, Skip said Merry Christmas.”

Patrick kissed Shirley on her forehead.

He looked at Sabrina.

She was nervous and fidgety and tearing at the envelope.

Sabrina looked at Shirley and could not think.

She opened her note and saw the word ‘by’.

She gasped.

Shirley held her head off Patrick’s chest and looked at Sabrina.

Patrick looked at Sabrina and said, “Sabrina read the note again.”

The soldiers looked at Sabrina.

Sabrina re-read the note.

The note stated, “I am called to duty. I have left the reason you are receiving this note. Enjoy your family and friends. I will find you. Merry Christmas. Bye. Milton.”

Sabrina looked at the soldiers and said, “Where is he gone?”  
The soldiers looked at Sabrina.

Patrick said, “Sabrina, they cannot tell you.”

Sabrina became angry and walked away cursing.

She passed a cursing Eleanor who was walking through the guest’ room to get to the foyer.

Claressa opened the front door and peeped in.

The soldiers turned and looked at Claressa.

Claressa said, “Mr. Stith can we come to Christmas dinner?”

She looked down the hall and saw Eleanor stomping walking towards the front door.

Patrick saw the angry Eleanor.

Shirley was looking at a stomping cursing Sabrina walking down the hall.

She saw a mad stomping and cursing Eleanor passing Sabrina coming up the hall.

Shirley jumped and ran through the formal dining room.

The soldiers turned to leave, because they received Shirley and Sabrina’s signatures for the notes.

Eleanor was so mad she did not see Claressa util the soldiers walked out the house.

Eleanor heard her boys yelled, “Skip!”

She stomped to the front door.

Claressa stepped in the house and peeped for Brenda.

Patrick rushed to the front door and slammed it in front of Eleanor.

He said, “You will not ruin their Christmas. They are probably coming to get lunch. You go into the kitchen and get them something for lunch. They like to eat in the kitchen around the workers.”

Eleanor was breathing hard.

She looked at Claressa and said, “Come on Claressa.”

Claressa looked at Eleanor’s butt and said, “No. What time is dinner on Christmas Day?”

Patrick said, “Two pm. We may go to church.”

Claressa was still peeping for Brenda.

She saw Brenda at the end of the foyer and opened the door and ran.

Alvin was standing outside the carriage and saw Claressa running.

The soldiers looked at United States ambassador and shook their heads.

Alvin yelled at the soldiers and said, “You have never had her strap.”

The soldiers rode away.

Claressa looked at Alvin and said, “You are an United States ambassador out here yelling about a strap to subordinates. You have never been hit by Brenda.”

Alvin said, “Yes I have. When Eleanor fell out of that tree on top of her uncle. She got me the next day.”

Claressa jumped in the carriage.

Alvin looked back and saw Brenda standing in the door and he jumped in the carriage.

He said to the driver, “Now you may leave.”

The carriage driver snickered.

Brenda smiled and waved at Claressa and Alvin.

The two security men were on their horses and looked at the loving grandmother in the door.

One security man said to the other one, “She might look innocent.”

The other security man did not move his mouth but laughed inside.

Brenda closed the door.

Patrick and Eleanor stood and looked at Brenda.

Brenda closed the front door and looked out the window at Claressa and Alvin.

She turned and looked into the eyes of Eleanor and Patrick.

Patrick said, “Brenda.”

Brenda looked at Patrick.

She hates when he calls her name and stare at her. That means what he is about to say is final.

Patrick said, “Claressa and Alvin are coming to Christmas Dinner. You will not attack them.”

He looked at Brenda.

Brenda was looking at Patrick and swallowed and said, “Yes sir.”

Eleanor looked at her momma and slowly turned and looked up at her daddy and said, “She will not hit me again.”

Brenda yelled, “I will…”

Patrick cut her off and said, “Brenda, you will not hit Eleanor anymore. She is a grown woman with children. You made a decision twenty- two years ago not to whip her and you will not break that decision today.”

Eleanor realized her mother thought she was so precious she was not be touched.

Eleanor never knew that until that moment.

She started thinking when she jumped out the hundred foot tree, setting the kitchen on fire and killing her dogs, drinking all her sherry and putting it on the cooks and the other things she did they never knew about.

Eleanor started thinking about her evil brothers and wondered if her mother touch not my children mind caused her brothers to go to hell.

She took her eyes off her father and looked at her pouting mother.

Brenda was rolling her eyes at Eleanor and said, “Yes sir.”

Patrick said, “Eleanor we have a lot to do. They are expecting heavy snow between Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We need to let our railroad employees to get to safety until the day after Christmas and let our patrons know no travel on Christmas Day. The ships are fine. Moss sent a telegram this morning.”

Brenda was still rolling her eyes at Eleanor.

Eleanor thought, “She is coming up with something.”

The boys ran through the house and passed the Christmas tree to the foyer.

Michael looked at the tree and then stopped.

He pointed and yelled, “This me!!”

The boys stopped running and ran back to the Christmas tree and saw a picture of Michael when he was a baby.

Percy said, “Momma where is me?”  
Eleanor looked at her boys.

She did not decorate the Christmas tree. Beverly decorated the tree with Jose, when she could not reach a point.

Nadine put the ribbon on the tree.

Bruce was looking and said, “Momma where me?”

Thomas said, “There me.”

Eleanor walked to the Christmas tree and Michael pointed to his baby picture.

Eleanor smiled.

Patrick and Brenda were examining the tree.

Patrick said, Percy you are at the top of the tree.”

Benda saw Percy’s baby picture and laughed.

She pointed and said, “Percy there.”

Percy was jumping up and said, “I can’t see.”

Thomas was holding his baby picture and Eleanor said, “Thomas put it back on the tree. Your Aunt Bev decorated the tree. I did not know she put our pictures on the tree.”

Bruce was getting upset and said, “Where is my picture!”

Patrick and Brenda looked at the calm Bruce.

Eleanor said, “Bruce lets walk around the tree and find your baby picture.”

Eleanor saw a picture and said, “Who is this?”

Brenda walked to the tree and looked at the picture and cried.

The boys stopped searching the Christmas tree and stared at Brenda.

Patrick looked at Brenda and turned his head.

He continued to watch Percy.

Patrick said, “Who is that near Percy’s picture?”

Patrick looked closely at the picture and twisted his mouth and walked away.

He said, “Eleanor get these boys lunch.”

Eleanor frowned and looked at Patrick as he walked away to his office.

Eleanor was trying to help Bruce find his baby picture.

She was trying to see the picture that brought Brenda to tears.

She was trying to see the picture next to Percy.

Then she had to tell the cooks to prepare for the additional guests of the ambassador and his wife.

Eleanor thought, “Their servants are off this holiday because they thought they would be in the capitol.”

Brenda walked to the Christmas and began to look over the pictures that Beverly found and put on the tree.

Eleanor stepped back to let Brenda walk up to the tree and take a closer look.

They all were looking at a silent crying Brenda.

Eleanor pointed and exclaimed, “There Bruce!”

Bruce looked and laughed.

Eleanor looked at Brenda and walked around her to see the picture next to his.

Eleanor looked at the picture and said, “Come on boys and eat lunch.

Bruce peeped around the tree at Eleanor.

Thomas looked at Eleanor and walked to the tree and put his picture back on the tree.

Michael looked at Eleanor then he held back his head to see the picture that made his momma mad.

Percy stood and watched Eleanor walked down the foyer and go through the billiards room.

The boys waited until Eleanor disappeared.

Bruce said, “Percy you are the tallest.”

Percy looked around and said, “I’m not tall enough.”

Brenda was holding the picture in her hand that Eleanor wanted to know about, that Patrick did not answer.

Brenda took the picture and walked to the parlor and sat by the fireplace and held the picture in her hands and cried.

The boys looked at Brenda.

When Brenda walked into the parlor Percy ran into the family dining room and pulled one of the chairs out and down the foyer to the Christmas tree.

Peter was walking through the formal dining room with a tray of decorated sugar cookies.

He placed the cookie tray near the front door for guests and staff.

Eleanor loved the idea.

The boys would go and get a cookie and lay on the foyer floor and look at the beautiful tree that Aunt Bev decorated.

Eleanor and Brenda were proud of how the guests loved the tree and wanted to know who decorated the tree.

Brenda told Eleanor, “Maybe this is another job for Beverly.”

Eleanor said, “She has too much to do by herself momma.”

Brenda said, “You’re right Eleanor.”

Peter said, “Percy don’t do that. You can fall into the tree and break everything and especially the priceless originals.”

The boys looked at Peter.

Michael held his head and looked at Peter.

Peter gave the tray of cookies to Thomas.

Michael reached and got a cookie.

Peter said, “Michael you haven’t eaten lunch.”

Thomas looked at Peter.

Peter said, “Percy what are you trying to do?”

Percy pointed and said, “Get that picture next to mines.”

Thomas grabbed a cookie and began to eat it.

Peter looked back at Thomas.

Thomas was biting the cookie and looked up at Peter.

Peter said, “Percy why do you need that picture?”

Bruce said, “We all need that picture.”

Peter looked at Bruce and said, “Why?”

Thomas crunched,

Bruce looked at Thomas.

He turned to Peter and said, “They won’t tell us who it is.”

Peter looked around.

Thomas said, “Momma gone to get lunch. Grandma is crying in the parlor and grandpa went to his office.”

Peter looked at the picture and said, “That is your momma and your daddy when they were young.”

Thomas walked away with the tray in his hands.

Peter reached and got the tray from Thomas.

Michael kept eating his cookie with his head down and ran to the parlor and sat by Brenda until lunch.

Percy took the chair back to the family dining room.

Bruce started walking to the kitchen for lunch and then skipped pass Bruce.

Peter looked at the boys and put the tray of cookies on the table as Percy passed him.

Peter sighed.

He walked through the formal dining room to the kitchen.

Dan prepared soup for lunch.

He took the four bowls in the workers’ area and placed on the table.

He looked and counted and did not see Michael.

Bruce looked and said, “Michael is with grandma in the parlor she is crying about a baby picture. Dan do you know who it is?”

Dan thought, “This boy think I am going to get fired.”

Dan said, “I am sorry Bruce. I don’t know anything about pictures your grandma has.”

Bruce stared at Dan.

Dan walked away and sighed.

Then he heard the clanking of the boys’ spoons against the bowls.

Bruce watched Dan and said to Percy, “He doesn’t care.”

Dan heard Bruce and said, “You’re d\*\*\* right. I need my job. I got to bake cookies and make hot coco for my neighbors tomorrow.”

The boys finished their lunch and ran back outside and mounted their horse and rode away without Gary.

Michael came to the table and put another cookie down by his bowl.

He ate his soup and ran after his brothers.

Nadine looked out the kitchen window and wondered where they were going.

Eleanor walked to the workers’ area and saw the four soup bowls.

She looked out the door and did not see them nor their horses.

She closed her eyes and exhaled.

Eleanor turned and walked into the kitchen and looked at Jose.

Jose raised his head and looked at Eleanor.

She said, “Good afternoon. The telegram has come that heavy snow or a blizzard is expected to hit us Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Those of you who ae traveling make sure you leave in enough time to get to shelter. The train from Cedartown in the morning will be the last train from Cedartown for a few days. So we need those cakes on that train for the troops. The train that will reach Cedartown tomorrow morning is coming in early and leaving out directly behind the train that should dropping off the cakes.”

Eleanor stopped and thought.

She slightly turned.

She said, “I need to reach the commander at the military headquarters. According to this list the military ordered a very large amount of supplies. I want them to have their Christmas items.”

Dan said, “They need to be there and moving those supplies so the rail workers won’t get caught on the tracks and not be home with their families.”

Eleanor said, “I know. I’m thinking.”

She turned and looked at Jose.

Jose was rolling his eyes at her.

Nadine thought, “I can’t wait until that day. God, I got to be at work.”

Dan looked around and said, “Eleanor I can take a note to the commander over the headquarters signed by you or Mr. Stith to have soldiers and wagons at the train station tomorrow.”

Dan was thinking about himself.

He thought, “I could get a head start on baking the cookies for my neighbors and put my horses up and make me a bag to stay at the house for Christmas Eve and Christmas.”

Dan was thinking he has done everything at his house.

He thought about Maureen.

Nadine and Peter were doing good for Maureen.

They gave her food and had her to bathe and eat soup and drink tea.

Dan thought, “Craig has not come looking for her. “I’m glad Mike and John are not here. Nathan and Denise won’t leave until Saturday for their honeymoon maybe the snow would be melted off the tracks.

He thought, “Sabrina made Maureen a dress in two days for Christmas. I’m off tomorrow.”

Eleanor was saying something and looking at Dan.

Dan was embarrassed.

All the workers were looking at him.

Now he has to ask Eleanor what she said.

Dan smiled and said, “Eleanor can you repeat what you said?”

Eleanor said, “What part Dan. You were over there thinking about going home early.”

Jose rolled his eyes at Dan.

Nadine’s mouth fell open and she was shocked at Eleanor’s perception.

Peter was thinking about food.

Eleanor said, “Dan, I will excuse you for the rest of the day. I will sign a note and ask the commander to send us a telegram to confirm he will have someone there.”

Peter said, “Eleanor, maybe this won’t happen. I was caught in a blizzard once in Ohio and we were indoors for two weeks.”

Nadine said, “Peter be quiet.”

Jose looked from Nadine to Peter.

Peter said, “No Nadine. I don’t think it is enough food here for all the people here.”

Eleanor was thinking.

Nadine said, “Peter I think there is enough food here.”

Peter said, “There is not enough liquor.”

Jose sad, “Shush”, and held his head.

Eleanor turned and walked out the kitchen.

Dan wanted to see the fight.

Eleanor wrote a quick note and signed it.

She ran back in the kitchen and saw Nadine was still looking at Peter’s back.

Eleanor reached the note to Dan.

Dan’s bag was in the worker’s area.

He walked to the worker’s area and picked up his bag and ran out the door and mounted his horse and sped all the way to the military headquarters.

He went into the building.

The soldiers escorted Dan to the commander’s office.

The soldier went in the office.

Dan looked around at the hall and was proud of how well the building was constructed.

The commander sent for Dan.

Dan was nervous and looked at the soldier and reached him the note and said, “You give it to him.”

The soldiers stationed up and down the hall looked at Dan.

Dan stood and took a deep breathe.

He tried to walk tall and straight like the soldiers.

The soldiers opened the doors and the commander’s office door.

The commander was sitting at his desk with his head down writing.

Dan was nervous.

The commander was writing and said, “You have a note for me?”

Dan was shaking.

The commander heard the paper and lifted his head and saw the envelope moving violently.

He looked at Dan.

The commander reached for the note.

The soldier who opened the door for Dan shook his head.

The head commander stared at Dan and opened the envelope and read it aloud, “Dear sir, I pray all is well…”

The commander twisted his mouth, “The report is of either heavy snow or a blizzard Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We pray for light snow. You have a very large supply coming in…”

The commander said, “I know.”

He read, “Please have a large number of wagons and personnel to unload the train. We want to turn the train around and try to escape this snow. The train arrives at ten am. Please send me a telegram you received this note and will accommodate us.”

The commander looked at one of the soldiers at his door and reached him the note and said, “Send Miss Stith an affirmative.”

The commander sat in his chair.

Dan said, “Good afternoon.”

Dan turned and jumped.

The commander looked at Dan.

The second soldier at the door waiting for Dan just shook his head at the scared Dan.

The head commander had a full staff meeting.

There were fifty commanders seated in front of the commander’s desk.

They were absolutely quiet and stared at Dan.

Dan reached for the doorknob to pull him up.

The commander was thinking.

The commander said, “Sir.”

Dan was terrified.

He stared at the soldier in front of him.

The soldier nodded at the commander.

Dan slowly turned to the commander and did not look at all of the serious commanders.

The head commander said, “A lot of the supplies go to our troops in another city. How do we get them the supplies off that train and back to them.”

Dan said, “The small city?”

The commander said, “yes.”

Dan said, “The Stiths are sending a large number of cakes tomorrow on the train that leaves at ten am. The other train arrives at ten am. You can ask them to delay the out bound train so the supplies can be unloaded from the inbound train and put on that outbound train. That train will reach the small city on Christmas Eve around ten am.”

The head commander said, “Suppose I don’t want the train to stop in that small city.”  
Dan looked at the commander.

Dan said, “I don’t think there will be passengers that is a supply station. But it has to stop to get the cakes off. And your supplies.”

The commander heard a comment from the commanders and looked at Dan and said, “Thank you.”

Dan turned and reached his hand out for the door.

The soldier looked at the head commander and walked a wobbling Dan downstairs to his horse.

The head commander and the commanders were talking.

The head commander said, “Commander Washington go to the Stith’s house and tell them we want them to delay the outbound train and so we unload the inbound train and we don’t want the train to pull into the train station because we don’t want anyone to know the soldiers are there. If he has passengers, we pray they understand the delays and get home for Christmas Day.”

Commander Washington said, “Would they help?”

The head commander said, “All the help we gave them.”

Commander Washington stood and left.

He rode fast to the Stith’s.

He ran to the house and knocked on the door as the boys were riding wild and yelling and playing and coming back home.

They saw the commander.

The commander looked at the boys.

The boys rode their horses to the stables and jumped off the horses and ran into the house.

Nadine and Peter were leaving and would return on Christmas Eve.

Jose was frosting the last two cakes.

Theresa and Rita were preparing the family table for dinner.

Sabrina just finished Maureen’s Christmas dress.

She walked in the kitchen and got a bowl of soup.

Jose saw her and said, “Sabrina, Eleanor got a report of heavy snow or a blizzard on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. You need to leave at first light in the morning to make it home by dark.”

Sabrina looked at Jose and said, “Ok.”

Angela was standing behind Sabrina and said, “Sabrina, I am taking the horse and buggy.”

Sabrina said, “No you are not. You have taken all you are going to take from me.”

Jose stopped frosting the cake and turned and looked at the two women.

Harriet checked on Maureen and was bring an arm full of linen upstairs.

She stood in the kitchen door to listen.

Briana, Dora and Veronica was about to leave and they stopped to hear the disagreement.

Allen was there to take the women home They all would work on Tuesday and be off on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Jose said, “Allen can you take Angela home and let them resolve this tomorrow?”

Jose heard the knocking on the front door and the boys were running in through the back door.

Jose turned up his nose and yelled, “Stephen!”

The boys knew Jose as calling Stephen to run their bath water.

Jose ran through the formal dining room to the door.

The boys ran through the game room up the foyer to the front door.

Jose looked out the door and saw the commander.

He was trying to think why the commander was there.

Jose unlocked the door.

He turned and saw the boys standing behind him waiting for the commander to step in.

Jose looked at the boys and turned back around to the commander and said, “Good evening sir. How can I help you?”

The commander said, “I am here on military business to see Mr. Stith.”

Jose said, “Come in sir.”

Thomas and Michael ran down the foyer and ran down the hall to Patrick’s office.

They knocked on the door and said, “Grandpa the military is here.”

Patrick looked out his window and saw one horse.

He stood and unlocked the door his office door.

Thomas and Michael were scared and excited.

Brenda was in her office looking at the picture.

Patrick thought, “I have to resolve that with her.”

Patrick walked up the hall with Thomas and Michael flanking him on each of his sides.

Jose started down the hall but stopped when he saw Patrick coming up the hall.

Percy and Bruce were standing and looking at the commander’s patches.

Commander Washington looked at them.

Patrick turned the corner and walked up the foyer to the commander.

He reached out his hand to the commander and shook it.

He said, “Good evening. How are you and how I can help you?”

Patrick reached his hand out and shook the commander’s hand.

The commander said, “I am Commander Washington under the command of Head Commander Tyler. He has sent me here on urgent business.”

Patrick looked at the commander and nodded his head.

He said, “These are my grandsons. They attend the military academy and are on Christmas break. They are interested in your badges and patches.”

Commander Washington stood still.

Patrick smiled and said, “Boys go upstairs and take your bathes.”

Jose looked at the commander.

He looked out the window and saw Allen leaving with a carriage full of workers.

Jose wondered if Angela was in the carriage of still in the kitchen.

Patrick said, “Jose go and get Eleanor and tell her to come to my office.”

Jose locked the front door and went to get Eleanor.

Rita and Theresa were a setting the table.

Commander Washington liked the table setting.

Patrick said, “Commander Washington.”

Commander Washington and Patrick walked down the hall and passed Brenda’s office.

Patrick looked at the crying Brenda and they kept walking.

Eleanor was running from her office through the house.

She saw Patrick and the commander before her.

She heard Brenda and turned and was stopping but continued to run to Patrick’s office.

Patrick unlocked his door and offered the commander a seat.

Commander Washington sat.

Eleanor finally reached the office and out of breath.

She looked at the commander and said, “Good evening sir.”

Patrick waved for Eleanor to sit.

Commander Washington stood and nodded at Eleanor.

Patrick said, “This is my daughter Eleanor she now runs all of our businesses. What can we do for the military? They have truly helped us.”

Commander Washington explained what the military wanted.

Eleanor and Patrick listened.

Patrick said, “Eleanor how many passengers will we have on that train leaving at ten am tomorrow?”

Eleanor said, “Seventeen and twelve workers.”

Commander Washington was impressed with how smart Eleanor was.

Patrick said, “Thirteen workers including the chief cabin steward.”

Commander Washington thought, “That’s why they have all of this.”

Patrick said, “We have to send a telegram to two of our workers there that they get the message to the military. They are staying near the city people during the night and working with the governor during the day. The governor is vacationing there. We did not let our one worker and his wife know the governor was there.”

Eleanor said, “Daddy was Peter in the military as far as you know?”

Patrick said, “No.”

Commander Washington was thinking what does that have to do with this?

Eleanor said, “Commander Washington, our two workers there are former military men. Can you send them a coded message for them to tell the military to be two miles from the small city. We can stop the train two miles down the track and Peter can’t see around that bend. The military can get the supplies off the train. We can move the passengers from the second- class car to the first class car and put them in the breakfast car for a free meal so they would not look out the windows, because of the delay.”

Commander Washington thought, “I like her.”

He said, “Yes I can write it in code that only a military man would know.”

Patrick passed Commander Washington a sheet of paper.

Commander Washington wrote the coded message and gave it to Patrick.

Patrick sent the message while they were seating in the office.

Patrick said, “It will take about an hour. Join us for dinner. Then we should have the confirmation from Peter.”

Commander Washington thought and said, “Yes sir.”

Patrick said, Eleanor that train will not have to stop in the small city for two hours. I wonder who would get off and wander around. Keep the train moving.”

Eleanor said, “I was thinking that Mike and John have to get the cakes off.”

Patrick said, “I forgot.”

Eleanor said, “We can delay the train for only thirty minutes so they can get the cakes. Plus the time the military used for the delay.”

Commander Washington was listening.

He said, “I don’t know how much supplies and how quick we can move the supplies. Hopefully an hour. And as you said, Miss Stith who would get off the train?”

Eleanor was nervous and said, “The train would arrive Christmas Eve morning. I want the passengers and our employees to reach Philadelphia on Christmas Day. Because no trains run on Christmas and if we get snow I don’t know when the passengers will get home. I don’t want anyone to be stuck in the bad weather.”

The commander watched the concerned Eleanor and Patrick.

Jose walked to Patrick’s door and knocked.

Patrick and Commander Washington looked at Jose.

Eleanor was still thinking.

Patrick said, “Yes Jose?”

Jose looked at Commander Washington and said, “One more for dinner?”  
Patrick smiled and said, “Yes.”

Jose said, “Dinner is served.”

They all stood and walked behind Jose.

Jose walked in the family dining room and set another plate.

The boys looked and was happy to see it was the commander.

Brenda and Eleanor walked in first.

Then Patrick and the commander.

The boys stood at attention and saluted the commander.

Eleanor was so proud of her sons.

Shirley was seated at the table.

She looked at her brothers.

Brenda was startled by her grandsons but loved the respect they showed for the commander.

Commander saluted them and sat between Shirley and Eleanor.

Patrick said, “Brenda, Shirley, Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael this is Commander Washington. Welcome him to our table.”

Rita and Theresa walked in with Michael’s one lamb chop, green beans and carrots.

They gave Thomas and Percy fried pork chops with stewed cinnamon apples and green beans and carrots.

Rita said, “Sir, we have fried chicken and fried pork chops.”

Commander Washington looked at Bruce’s plate and Eleanor’s plate.

They had fried chicken, mashed potatoes with plenty of gravy, green beans and carrots.

Shirley had a small piece of calf liver, mashed potatoes and mashed carrots.

Commander Washington looked at the very pleasant Rita and said, “Ma am I want the pork chops and mashed potatoes and plenty of gravy and green beans and no carrots.”

The commander smelled sweet yeast rolls and butter that Theresa sat on the table with honey.

Patrick had a large serving of the calf liver and mashed potatoes with gravy and green beans and carrots.

Brenda had mashed potatoes, green beans, carrots and stewed cinnamon apples.

Rita brought the commander his plate.

Patrick said, “Sir.”

Commander Washington looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “You are our honored guess, would you say the grace and bless our food.”

The boys were watching the commander very intently.

The commander stood and put his hands behind his back and blessed the food.

They all said, “Amen.”

Commander Washington sat and enjoyed his pork chops.

They enjoyed a delightful dinner.

The commander watched Shirley and leaned to Shirley and said, “You have impeccable table manners. You are teaching me some things.”

Shirley blushed and said, “Thank you.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley and looked at Commander Washington.

She was still thinking about the trains on tomorrow.

The commander said, “Who taught you the table etiquette?”

Shirley looked at him and looked at Brenda and said, “My grandmother. I was extremely sick. She would be up with me every night for my whole life. She would arrange a table she brought in my room. We would play all night with table settings.”

Commander Washington was impressed.

Brenda listened.

Shirley asked Commander Washington did he know Skip Costner.

Michael looked at the commander.

Bruce looked at the commander.

Commander Washington grinned and said, “Yes. Soldier Costner is under my command. That is all I can tell you.”

Shirley looked disappointed at Brenda.

Brenda looked at Shirley.

Michael said, “Commander sir, do you Soldier Jake Jameson?”

Eleanor looked at Michael as he was intently watching Commander Washington.

Eleanor turned to look at Commander Washington.

Commander Washington grinned and said, “He is under my command. How do you know two of the best of the best?”

Thomas solemnly said, “They saved us from being killed.”

Commander Washington was putting down his water glass and was thinking.

He looked Thomas in his eyes and said, “I remember. I am sorry.”

Thomas held his head down.

Eleanor touched Thomas and said, “Baby you will get over this.”

Commander Washington looked at Thomas and then Michael.

Patrick looked at Thomas and Michael.

Bruce and Percy looked at Thomas and Michael.

Commander Washington saw the boys were close.

Patrick said, “Commander Washington you said, the grace as a Baptist preacher.”

Commander Washington laughed and said, “I am.”

Brenda looked at him.

Percy and Bruce slowly turned their heads and looked at the commander.

Shirley was eating a bite of bread and was in her own world.

Patrick looked at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “We need a lot of prayer for tomorrow.”

Michael looked up at Eleanor and said, “Momma I can help you.”

Eleanor said, “I was going to let you ride in the morning for an hour. Because we have to put the horses in until the bad weather pass.”

Eleanor was still hugging Thomas.

Commander Washington was watching Thomas.

Eleanor said, “Eat baby.”

Patrick said, “Commander do you have a church here or at home?”

Commander turned from watching Thomas and looked at Brenda and Patrick with concern and said, “I co- pastor a medium size church five miles from the military headquarters.”

Bruce said, “Commander Washington, Sir how does that work?”

Commander Washington knew what Bruce was asking.

Eleanor knew what Bruce was asking.

Patrick knew what Bruce was asking.

Shirley was thinking, “Is that the church Sabrina talked about?”

Commander Washington said, “I am asked that question all the time. I joined the military twenty years ago before I was called by God to preach his word. I was always saved and God lead me in my life. HE never told me to stop being a soldier and to stop doing my job. I do my job. I have no guilt or hesitation. There are a lot of evil in this world and each of us do our part to stop it. GOD will show us how to be loyal to our country and faithful to HIM.”

Theresa and Rita stood and listen.

Rita was looking for a church to attend.

She brought the pound cake and butterscotch sauce and served the table.

She looked at Eleanor.

Brenda saw Rita looking at Eleanor and knew what she wanted.

Patrick looked at Rita.

Brenda said, “Commander Washington, one day I may want to visit your church, what is it’s name and where is it located?”

Commander Washington said, ”The church’s name is Philadelphia and it is located on third avenue.”

Brenda looked at Rita and said, “Thank You.”

They enjoyed their pound cake.

The boys, Brenda and Shirley went to the sitting room.

Patrick, Eleanor and Brenda wet to Patrick’s office.

Patrick unlocked the door and Eleanor and Commander Washington walked in and Patrick followed.

Shirley went to the workers rooms and found Sabrina.

Shirley told Sabrina that a Commander Washington was there and meeting with Patrick.

Sabrina said, “How does he like?”

Shirley said, “Tall and slim and a preacher.”

Sabrina said, ”That’s the one that was on the date with Angela and took us to his church.”

Shirley looked and saw Sabrina’s packed bags.

Sabrina was rolling up her thread.

Shirley said, “Sabrina are you leaving?”

Sabrina said, “I am going home for the holidays and will come back and stay at a rooming house Milton selected.”

Shirley said, “You have to leave at first light because momma received a bad weather report.”

Sabrina hung Maureen’s dress on the armoire.

Shirley said, “That’s pretty.”

Sabrina said, “I had extra cloth I did not want to pack. Maureen has no clothes. I was able to use the extra fabric to sew this dress. It took two days. I will leave first thing in the morning. Angela wants the horse and buggy. She can’t have them.”

Shirley grinned and said, “Have a Merry Christmas.”

Sabrina said, “You too Shirley.”

Shirley went back to the sitting room with Brenda and her brothers.

Shirley and Brenda were talking about the needle pointing Shirley was doing.

Shirley said, “When Alicia and Emilou…”

Bruce was laying on the floor reading a book he turned on his side and looked at Shirley to hear what she was saying about Emilou.

Brenda watched Bruce.

Shirley continued, “…went to meet the nurses that I hired for Lorraine. Whenever she comes. She passed this nice store. We spent hours in there and I bought several of these. The needle pointing helps my eyes. Especially when they hurt.”

Brenda turned from watching Bruce to looking at Shirley.

Brenda said, “Shirley the doctors could not help your eyes?”

Shirley whined and said “Grandma I heard them. They sent for the specialist in the whole state. He came and examined my eyes for an hour. He told them he did not know what to do to straighten out my eyes. He was not going to do any surgery because there is no known help. I cried for a long time that day. The doctors heard me. Dr. Ralph came in and sat on my bed and held my hand until I went to sleep.”

Brenda reached over and held Shirley’s hand.

Shirley said, “The next day when I woke. Dr. Greene was sitting on my bed with a needle point kit. He said, his grandmother had eye damage and she started needlepointing to keep busy. When she needle pointed she told him it hurts for a little while but it strengthen her eyes and she can see longer that day. Dr. Greene gave me the needlepoint kit and he sat with me and taught me how to needle point. It helps my eyes grandma.”

Brenda was already tearing from the picture she saw.

Bruce looked at his grandma’s hand holding Shirley’s hand.

Bruce realized at that moment that Shirley was going to die.

Bruce stood and ran upstairs to his room and fell over his bed and cried for Shirley.

He thought about how mean he was to her.

How he told her she could live in one of the suites downstairs and that she went and bought her own house.

Bruce was in pain.

Eleanor was leaving Patrick’s office to rush to her office and get the logs of both trains.

She saw Bruce burst out the sitting room and ran upstairs to his room.

When Eleanor got to the sitting room.

She stepped in and saw Brenda and Shirley talking.

Percy was laying on the floor reading with his legs in the air.

She saw a book on the floor.

Brenda watched Eleanor.

Shirley was crying.

Eleanor looked at Shirley and saw her mother holding Shirley’s hand.

Eleanor knew it was something painful.

She walked to Shirley and pushed her hair back and held her head.

Eleanor kissed Shirley on her head.

And Held her for a minute.

She kissed Shirley again and said, “I will be back Shirley.”

Eleanor ran out the sitting room through the billiards room down the hall to her office.

She ran in her office and got the logs for both trains.

She closed the door back and ran up the backstairs to Bruce’s room.

Eleanor knocked on Bruce’s door and opened it.

She heard him crying.

Eleanor sat on his bed and rubbed his back.

She said, “Bruce why are you crying?” What happen?”

Bruce turned over and look at Eleanor and between his sniffles and crying he said, “Shirley. She is dying.”  
Eleanor grabbed Bruce and held him and cried with him.

She whispered in his ears and said, “Yes Bruce.”

Bruce said, “We got to fix her momma. We are building the hospital. We can make her not be sick. We can fix her eyes momma.”

Eleanor held Bruce and they both cried together.

Patrick received a telegram from Mike that said, “Will do.”

Patrick tore it off and gave it to Commander Washington.

He rushed out his office to find Eleanor.

Thomas and Michael ran pass Patrick with books and went to the sitting room.

The commander sat and saw Thomas and Michael run pass with books he wondered where they got the books.

He looked around and stood.

He peeped out Patrick’s door and saw Patrick walking up the stairs.

Commander Washington ran down the hall and was looking from side to side.

He loved the suites he saw and the room for the baths.

He said, “Very organized. I know it took years to do.”

Commander Washington turned and saw the library.

He stood in the doorway and said, “Oh GOD.”

Commander Washington stepped in the library.

He saw the book that was face down on the table and picked it up.

Commander Washington loved reading that book when he was growing up and in college.

He put it back down.

Commander Washington saw the ladders Patrick had in the library to reach the top shelves.

Commander Washington walked over and saw books in glass cabinets.

He stooped down and was reading the writings.

He was on his knees and was in shock.

He said, “These simple people got these.”

Patrick had come from upstairs to Bruce room and heard Eleanor and Bruce crying.

Bruce grabbed Patrick’s grabbed Patrick’s hand and said, “Grandpa, Shirley is dying.”

Patrick sat on Bruce’s bed and pulled him onto his lap and said, “We know. We do our best to help her live life and enjoy it.”

Bruce looked in the eyes of his grandfather and said, “Grandpa we have money we can fix her.”

Eleanor fell off the bed crying.

Jose was walking through the house and saw Eleanor when she fell off the bed.

He stood and looked at her.

Patrick kissed Bruce’s forehead.

Patrick said, “Bruce, the doctors have done all they can for Shirley. We used our money to help her. You used your money to help Sally. All of us are using our money to build that hospital and help other people. Our GOD fixed Shirley enough so she can be able to have some days where she enjoy THIS life. The doctors tell us Shirley has between ten and fifteen years to live. So we let her live life her way. Bruce Shirley has her way of living life.”

Patrick grinned at Bruce.

Patrick said, “Bruce how did you find out?”  
Bruce said, “Shirley was telling grandma how her eyes hurt and when she said the best eye doctor said, there was nothing he could do. When Shirley told grandma how she cried all day and Dr. Ralph sat on her bed and held her hand. When grandma held Shirly’s hand I saw how grandma held Shirley’s hand. I knew Shirley was dying.”

Jose walked away from the door and kept walking through the hall.

He thought, “I never heard them talk about Shirley. That’s why Shirley is taking those double classes in college. She wants to accomplish getting her college degree before she dies. Well, she wanted to be a royal. Joseph made her royal. She now has two hospitals that help people. She deserves to get the queen’s tea set with her spoiled a\*\*.”

Patrick held Bruce and said, “Bruce let the boys find out for themselves. I want you to love Shirley and help her like you always have. I am not telling you to let her run over you.”

Bruce said, “Grandpa, Shirley does that a lot.”

Patrick grinned and looked in Bruce’s eyes and said, “I know. You are smart Bruce you will figure out when to say something to Shirley.”

Bruce looked in his grandpa’s eyes and saw Patrick trusted him.

Bruce looked on the floor at Eleanor.

He jumped off Patrick’s lap and walked to Eleanor and stooped down.

He said, “Eleanor, it is not your fault that Shirley is dying. Shirley is helping other sick people. If Shirley was not sick she would not care about poor and sick people. She knows to spend her money now.”

Patrick was shocked at Bruce analysis and sat on Bruce’s bed and shook.

Bruce said, “Eleanor, the rest of us need you. You have to stop Michael from gambling and drinking…”

Patrick jumped and looked.

Bruce said, “You have to help Thomas from being scared to ride his horse and running and laughing and not to hate so he won’t be like Uncle Christopher and Patrick Jr. Percy thinks you don’t love him and he cries all the time momma.”

Bruce reached for Eleanor’s hand and helped pulled her up to sit on the floor.

Bruce and Eleanor sat on the floor and hugged each other.

Bruce said, “Momma, Skip will take good care of Shirley.”

Eleanor cried out.

She did not want Skip to marry Shirley.

Patrick reached for the trains’ logs.

He stood and walked out the room.

He saw Bruce was taking care of Eleanor.

Patrick rubbed Bruce’s head.

Bruce looked in the eyes of his grandpa and knew he was doing right.

Patrick walked downstairs to his office.

He looked in the sitting room and saw the boys on the floor reading and Brenda sitting holding Shirley’s hand as she always did.

Shirley was silently crying.

Patrick kept walking and went to his office and did not see the commander.

Patrick walked from room to room until he got to the library and saw the commander looking at the books behind the glass cases.

Commander Washington thought, “Who is this that has walked upon me?”

The commander stood and turned and looked in the eyes of Patrick with the logs in his hand.

Patrick reached out the logs to the commander.

The commander said, “I am sorry for being nosey and I am sorry for saying you all are simple people.”

Patrick looked at the commander and said, “Commander Washington, you say you are a preacher. I don’t understand why you don’t know that the LORD GOD Almighty and JESUS are Kings and They elevate their children to know the finest things of life and give us the best gifts. JESUS said, ”…If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask HIM!”

Commander Washington bowed his head and waited a minute and said, “Matthew 7:11. Thank you Mr. Stith. I do remember Luke 11:13 JESUS said, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask HIM?”

Patrick stared at the commander.

Commander Washington said, “I thank you Brother Stith you have been used by our GOD and FATHER to teach me I have a lot of self to decrease.”

Patrick said, “Sir, none of these material things you see. The house, furnishings, crystal, first edition books came easily. A lot of people died. We, my family and I have been bound with incredible pain and suffering. Many of our friends have suffered terribly because who we are. But answer each time something bad happens is the same.”

Commander Washington looked at Patrick and waited for an explanation of what Patrick was saying.

Commander Washington saw Patrick was talking.

He said, “brother Stith what are you saying the same answer?”

Patrick said, “Our answer is the same Yes JESUS we will do YOUR will.”

Commander Washington sniffing.

Patrick said, “My oldest daughter got pregnant at thirteen by a boy whom parents told him to get her pregnant so they can wiggle in and have access to our little money at time. He mistreated her all these twenty years saying she needs to be happy he had her because she is mixed. That type of evil brutally that one child puts on another child to try to get something that belongs to them. What was our answer to JESUS. Yes, LORD we will continue to seek YOU and serve YOU. Shirley whom you sat next to was a balled mingled piece of flesh until about three years ago. Her father took her to Philadelphia to a hospital to put her away and forbid me and my wife from seeing her. Her mother and three of the boys sailed to Europe to live.”

Commander Washington said, “Why?”

Patrick said, “So Shirley can hurry and die not having any of the emotional support she had her whole life. Michael the baby was braved. He told his mother that he would stay with Shirley to show her everybody did not leave her. Shirley treated Michael evilly. What did we say to JESUS? Yes, LORD we will follow YOU.”

Commander Washington bowed his head as he listened to the terrible pain Patrick and his family went through.

Patrick said, “This present suffering is not worth the eternal glory that GOD has prepared for those of us who have said to HIM though we be slain we stay with YOU JESUS.”

Commander Washington said, “Well said Brother Stith. Don’t be surprised you get an invitation to preach at my church.”

Patrick laughed and reached for Commander Washington’s shoulder.

They walked to Patrick’s office and worked out the remaining details for the next morning.

Patrick gave Commander Washington the telegram and he signed it.

He walked Commander Washington to the front door.

Commander Washington looked in the sitting room and saw the family and Shirley said, “Good night. Thank you all for a most pleasant evening.:

The boys jumped and saluted the commander.

He saluted them.

Jose was walking through the billiards room and saw the commander leaving.

Jose walked pass them and got the commander’s coat and hat and stood and waited for them.

The commander was putting on his coat and said, “Are those the cakes you are sending to the troops?”

Patrick said, “Yes sir.”

Commander Washington smiled.

Patrick said, “It is extremely cold there. I know they are soldiers and have been trained but the elements don’t care.”

Commander Washington said, “Huh.”

Patrick said maybe they need to cut down trees and keep fires going on all through the night. I don’t if Peter is going to ride away from the train station.”

Commander Washington reached his hand and shook Patrick’s hand.

He reached and shook Jose’s hand.

Jose shook the commander’s hand.

He closed and locked the door and put the bar behind the door.

Jose looked in the family dining room which was clean.

He thought the kitchen is clean.

Jose thought, “Patrick needs to go back to his office so I can get my scotch for tonight.

Dr. Ralph had Joe to send Patrick a telegram they would arrive on the ten am train.

Eleanor came from upstairs and talked with Patrick in the foyer about the trains.

She and Patrick went into the sitting room.

Eleanor sat next to Shirley.

Shirley looked up at Eleanor from her smashed inside of her face.

Eleanor kissed Shirley and held her hand.

Shirley knew she was loved.

Patrick sat across from the boys and watched Shirley and Eleanor.

Patrick decided to go to the train station in the morning.

Sabrina and Commander Milton had a great Sunday.

Dan told her the commander did not know the church and he could not find her.

Dan told Sabrina to go back to the rooming house but do not pull in the yard and wait for the commander and not to ride with Angela.

Sabrina rode back to the rooming house in time to see the commander.

She said, “Commander Milton.”

Commander Milton turned and looked at her.

He wondered why she was in the street in her buggy.

She said, “Ride with me.”

Commander Milton looked at Commander Washington.

Commander Washington said, “We’ll talk later.”

Commander Milton walked to Sabrina and said, “May I?”

Sabrina said, “You don’t know where to go.”

Commander Milton said, “You’re tell me.”

She grinned and moved over.

Commander Milton rode off.

Commander Washington was thinking,

Angela came to the door and was looking at Sabrina in the buggy laughing with Commander Milton.

Commander Washington was thinking, “GOD this is a big mess. What is this? I should have gone to my church.”

He smiled and said, “Good morning Angela.”

He saw how she was watching Sabrina.

She tried to look at him and smile.

Mr. Haynes was standing in the back.

Commander Washington saw Mr. Haynes facial look.

Commander Washington said, “Good morning sir.”

Mr. Haynes tried to speak.

Commander Washington closed the door and said, ”Angela I should have told you I have to be at my church this morning. Do you mind?”

Angela looked at Commander Washington and figured out he figured out that quick she was having an affair with Mr. Haynes.

Commander Washington said, “We can attend the reception.”

Angela looked at Commander Washington and said, “No. You go to church.”

Commander Washington said, “Alright.”

He left Angela and never had any communications with her.

Commander Washington made it to his church in time to preach his ‘Forgiveness Message ‘ for Christmas.

He asked the church if they wanted an early Christmas Eve service or a Christmas Day service.

Some of the people said, they would be working late on Christmas Eve.

Commander Washington said, “Then we will have an eleven am Christmas Day service and leave around one to go to brunch or visiting.”

The people agreed.

Sabrina and Commander Milton laughed and talked all the way to the church.

Sabrina pointed backwards.

Commander Milton said, “Oh sorry.”

Sabrina said, “Are you sure you are a commander?”

They laughed.

The church was crowded.

They were able to sit near Eleanor.

Dan, Jose, Thomas and Peter and most of the men stood along the wall for the service.

Mellissa and Theresa were setting up the reception at the rest stop.

Patrick and Brenda watched Sabrina and the distinguished Commander.

Michael ran up to Eleanor and sat next to her so he could look at the commander’s signals and patches.

Eleanor caught Michael’s hand and said, “No Michael.”

The commander smiled.

Michael looked at Eleanor and said, “I don’t know what that one is momma. I want to ask him what that one is.”

Patrick kept his head straight.

Brenda turned her head.

Eleanor was frustrated and turned her head.

The commander leaned to Michael and said, “Which one?”  
Michael pointed.

Eleanor looked at the commander.

The commander said, “I am really not suppose to tell, but I trust you. It is for water fighting.”

Michael said, “Really? I never heard of that in school.”

He looked back and yelled, “It’s for fighting in the water.”

Percy, Thomas and Bruce said, “OK.”

Eleanor stood and looked back at her three boys.

Percy, Thomas and Bruce fell into their seats.

The commander looked back at the boys.

He looked at the workers like they were use to that type of behavior.

Patrick was watching all of them and but was quiet.

The commander nodded at Brenda.

She smiled and nodded at the commander.

The church enjoyed the Christmas message.

Gen sang in the choir that Sunday.

Brenda was laughing because she knew was moving her mouth and not singing.

The preacher looked back at Gen and continued to smile.

Mag was sitting on the other side towards the back and she and Natalie were laughing.

Shirley sat with Alicia, Emilou, Alice and Ginger and Daniel.

Everyone was looking at the young adults that should carry on the church.

Mary left her father and Lorretta and walked up and sat next to Shirley and she and Emilou played.

Brenda peeped over at Shirley.

Shirley was too busy talking.

Nathan and Denise had a beautiful wedding.

The photographer was taking photographs.

Dan, Peter and Jose rushed down the street and set up the reception afterwards.

Everyone came to the reception.

Percy said, “Commander Milton do you know our friend, Soldier Skip Costner?’

Shirley stopped and walked to the commander.

Percy looked at Shirley.

Commander Milton looked at Shirley.

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor was listening.

Patrick got a piece of cake and a little punch.

He was hungry and ready to eat.

He walked to Dan and said, “Dan, is dinner ready? Who cooked?”

Thomas heard Patrick and said, “I did sir.”

Patrick looked at Thomas.

Thomas said, “Yes sir. I was to be on vacation, but I wanted to come to this lovely wedding and reception.”

Patrick said, “It is.”

They meet some former slaves.

Brenda and Eleanor eased to the commander.

He saw them.

He said, “Yes I know of Skip. He is an outstanding soldier. But he is not under my command.”

Shirley turned her head and walked away.

She walked to Alicia.

Alice and Ginger leaned over to hear.

Shirley was disappointed.

Commander Milton saw she was disappointed.

Sabrina and Commander Milton ate dinner of baked chicken, rice and carrots at the Stith.

Sabrina said, “I am going home tomorrow. Dan is telling to leave in the morning, so I ride while people are on the roads. I should get home at first dark.”

Commander Milton said, “What are we to do?”

Sabrina looked at the commander and said, “I am a day away. Maybe we can meet from time to time in the capitol.”

Commander Milton said, “Go home for Christmas Eve, and Christmas. Come back…”

Sabrina shook her head and said, “Money…”

Commander Milton cut her off and said, “We have to spend some time together and see if we are for each other. I just can’t you leave and for the rest of my life not know if you were my wife.”

Sabrina looked at Commander Milton.

She caught Nadine and Dan listening.

Dan and Nadine shook their heads for yes.

Sabrina said, “I can’t let you pay for me.”

Commander Milton said, “For my future I will pay. You don’t want to go back to that rooming house then go to one near the headquarters I heard soldiers say their wives go in and out of.”

Commander Milton pulled out a piece of paper and wrote the address down.

He said, “Sabrina, you go home and enjoy your family and friends then you come back to me in January and we will work things out. I will leave a month’s rent at the rooming house.”

He looked at the time and said, “You have to take me to the headquarters and then we will stop at the rooming house on the way. I will pay for a month. Then you can tell me what happened with you and Angela.”

Sabrina turned her head.

Commander Milton said, “Maybe not.”

He stood and reached for her hand.

They left and He steered the horse to the headquarters.

The rooming house was across the street by the new hospital.

Sabrina liked the rooming house.

The commander drove to the new headquarters.

He said, “Sabrina go straight back to the house. Don’t stop. There are robbers out.”

Sabrina got scared and looked around and said, “I have nothing.”

Commander Milton said, “You have you. You look very pretty today.”

Sabrina blushed.

The commander leaned forward and kissed Sabrina.

Sabrina grinned.

She turned the buggy around and the horse sped all the way back to the Stith’s house.

Commander Milton said, “Got to get her a new buggy.”

Commander Washington walked up and slapped Commander Milton on his shoulder and said, “We have to talk.”

The Commanders went to their rooms and talked.

Sabrina made it back to the Stith’s house and packed her bags.

Everyone was talking about Nathan and Denise’s nice quiet wedding.

Alicia put a roast in their stove and let it cook while they were at the church and the reception.

Alicia gave Emilou a thin slice of the cake and a half of glass of the punch.

Emilou went and played with the former slave children.

Alice and Ginger talked to Alicia.

Steven was not speaking to them.

Eleanor and Brenda watched them.

Eleanor said, “Steven, how did you get Emilou to sleep last week?”

Steven said, “Warm milk. A quarter of a glass once per hour. I know now to give her a cup when we get home.”

Steven was looking at Emilou and was grinning.

Eleanor said, “Steven, I love the way you all are dressing and showing everyone you belong.”

Steven said, “I didn’t know what to buy. Miss Lorraine picked out everything.”

Eleanor almost turned her back on Steven and walked away.

Steven jumped and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor was scared and nervous.

Patrick saw Eleanor.

Brenda and Mag saw Eleanor and Mag.

Mag said, “Only GOD can help Lorraine.”

Emilou ran to Steven and said, “Can we go home?”

Steven put Emilou coat, scarf, hat and gloves and said, “Get Alicia.”

Emilou ran to Alicia and pulled her away.

Alicia was saying, “Bye.”

Everybody laughed.

Commander Milton looked at Emilou.

Steven ran to the carriage and brought it round to the front.

Emilou and Alicia were running to their carriage.

Jose looked and ran out and yelled, “Steven.”

Alicia and Emilou looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Can Maureen ride home with you?”

Steven said, “I guess so. Alicia? Emilou?”

They said, “Yes.”

Jose ran into the reception and grabbed Maureen and her bag and ran her to the carriage.

Maureen said, “Hello.”

They speed away.

Steven took Maureen home and turned around and went home.

Steven, Alicia and Emilou played games before dinner.

They ate dinner.

Steven read his medical books.

Emilou read her bible.

Alicia did needle pointing.

They had a nice day and dressed for bed.

Maureen ate a full dinner with the former slaves and took some cake for Craig and his son.

Craig yelled at Maureen she is go to back to the house and get them food.

Maureen put her hands to her ears and ran away.

She ran all the way to the Stith house without any covering.

Maureen ran in the backdoor.

The commander and Sabrina saw Maureen as they were leaving.

Jose and Dan grabbed Maureen,

Nadine and Thomas took Maureen downstairs to the spare room by the hot water tank.

Maureen was freezing.

Thomas touched her freezing body.

He and Nadine grabbed blankets and covered Maureen.

They took off her ragged boots.

Maureen held her ears and shook.

Thomas said, “Maureen why are holding your ears?”

Maureen said, “I don’t won’t to hear Craig.”

Maureen pulled the cover over her head.

Nadine said, “He is not here. Look .”

Nadine tried to pull the cover off Maureen to see that Craig was not there.

Maureen stopped rocking for a minute and eased the cover off her head.

She did not see Craig.

She fell asleep.

Commander Milton looked at a concerned Sabrina.

Thomas walked up the stairs shaking his head and got his ham and left.

Commander Milton and Sabrina completed eating their dinner and left.

Gen was running around behind the photographer and getting in all the photographs.

The photographer would yell. “Miss Gen!”

Gen would yell back, “Coming!”

Everyone would laugh.

She had a good time.

She walked to Nathan and Denise and kissed them on their cheeks and reached Nathan an envelope.

Nathan hurried and put the envelope in his pants pocket.

Denise looked and grinned.

Gen walked to different people and said, “Good evening.

She kissed, Mag and Brenda bye and hugged Patrick.

Gen drove home and looked at the empty street.

She drove to the well and filled her buckets and took them in the house.

Gen went to the coal shed and filed her buckets and carried them in the house.

She took the horses back to the stables and feed them and gave them water.

Gen ran back to the house and lit the lantern near the barn.

She lit the lantern on her front and on the other side of her house.

She saw a man running lighting his outside lanterns.

Gen felt better.

She turned and ran in the house.

She searched her house and put fire on the fireplace and in the stove.

Gen undressed and put on her nightgown and ate the pot pie she bake before she went to church.

She sat in front of the large stone fireplace and read a novel until late.

She went upstairs and covered up and slept until Monday morning.

Gen woke with the birds chirping and said, “GOD thank YOU for giving me peace and taking away fear. That I can live in this house by myself and enjoy my life.”

Thomas dropped by the house to pick up his ham for Christmas.

He saw a dozen chickens he had given to the workers.

Dan was angry with Thomas.

Thomas took all the chickens and washed them and put them in the stove to bake.

He made rice and beans and carrots.

He looked at Dan.

Dan said, “Than you.”

Thomas had his holiday figured out.

He went out and drank that Saturday, attended Nathan and Denise’s wedding and reception on Sunday. He went home Sunday evening and stayed until Tuesday. He cooked his family the ham he got and some ducks he hunted. His family had enough food to last Christmas Eve and Christmas.

Thomas had a great time with his family.

He returned to his home late that night.

He thought his lover as he passed by his hometown.

Thomas thought, “I haven’t thought much about him this year. I hope he is doing well.

Thomas arrived at his house. He unpacked his wagon and took his pots and pans in the house. He gathered his laundry together to wash while he was at work.

He checked out his house and the grounds and packed his clothes for the next several days and his books to read.

He loaded his wagon and went to the Stith’s house.

Jose told all of them that stay overnight to get to the house no later than ten pm so they could lock the doors.

Thomas arrived at the house just before Nadine locked the doors and put the bars across them.

Mike, John and Dan wanted to go to the small city to stake out land before the mob moved in.

Jose said, “You three are scheduled to work the whole holiday.”

Dan stood and said, “I’m going to ask Brenda.”

Dan started walking through the house.

Jose followed Dan.

Mike and John followed Jose.

They did not see Brenda in the dining rooms, the parlor nor sitting room.

She was not in her office.

They walked to Patrick’s office.

Patrick, Eleanor and Brenda were in Patrick’s office going over their businesses.

Dan knocked on the door.

Patrick looked and saw the men and said, “Yes.”

Dan said, “We need to talk to Mrs. Stith.”

Eleanor looked at them.

Brenda wondered what they wanted and said, “Speak. I am listening.”

Dan said, “We know the mob is trying to take over the small city. The governor told me he would sell that land to me for a penny an acre. I want to stake out my land. I could not go while all the events took place this week. I want to go and stake out that piece of land me and the governor talked about which may two or three days. I want to ride the train Sunday after Nathan and Denise’s wedding and stake out my claim and be back here Thursday.”

Brenda looked at Dan.

Brenda looked at John and said, “John?”

John was shocked Brenda knew his name.

John said, “The same that Dan is saying, but I want to leave tomorrow and come back Christmas day, if the trains are running.”

Brenda looked at him and she looked at Mike.

Brenda said, “Mike?”

Mike was surprised she knew his name.

Mike said, “Ma am the same thing. But Dan, the land has not been officially offered for sale by the state. It is free land until the state put it on sale.”

Patrick looked at Dan and said, “That’s true Dan. The governor must have been talking about when they put it for sale.”

Dan said, “So I can get land and don’t pay nothing for it?”

Patrick said, “Yes.”

Brenda said, “Jose?”

Jose was standing back and said, “I need to know your answer so I can do the schedule.”

Brenda started thinking.

She said, “We went from a hundred workers to seventy. Seventeen are off for the next two weeks. The window washers and grounds men are off. Six of the livestock workers are off and three of the stablemen are off. Jose you are off. We need to have nine workers stay overnight who are schedule to work. We have nothing big planned for Christmas Eve nor Christmas dinner. Beverly is leaving in the morning. Jose, I need you to see if the workers got all their meat and if there is anything we can send with Beverly. I know the French eat seafood for Christmas, check with the grocer today and see if he has any seafood, we can send it as a gift to Felipe and Meredith and their baby.”

Eleanor leaned back and grinned at the thought of Meredith and Felipe’s baby.

Mike and John knew what Brenda was doing.

She was trying to get rid of as many chores for the next week to free them up.

They were patient.

Patrick looked from the men to Brenda.

Brenda said, “You are talking about five days. Dan who is doing the menus for the next five days?”

Dan said, “Me.”

Brenda said, “Complete temporary menus. I know one day I want those delicious mixed meatballs and spaghetti with cheese bread. One day fried pork chops. If there is any seafood Jose.”

She looked at Mike and John and said, “You two have to find workers that will take your place through Christmas. I know Thomas and Peter uses a lot of utensils. I don’t know if we are doing a Christmas Eve brunch and a late evening snack or a Christmas Eve dinner, but we can manage with at least two dish washers for the next five days. You two can go.”

Mike and John were excited.

Brenda said, “Mike and John you know the mob is deadly. It is extremely cold there and Peter will not let you all share the shed. You have to be quiet. You may go. Dan you have to be here to supervise the food. I will work with the governor for you to get your land. It is free and it is beautiful.”

They all left Brenda and went to the kitchen.

Dan was still trying to think.

Dan saw it was no way around Brenda.

He said, “She knows what she is doing.

He turned to Mike and John and told them where he wanted his stakes.

Mike and John left that Saturday morning and arrived in the small city the next morning.

Mike and John used the wagon and took their weapons, tents and stakes to their land.

They dropped off the hams and turkeys that were left to the residents of that city.

That Tuesday the train Joel was conducting stopped in the small city long enough to drop boxes of cakes so Mike and John could pick them up.

Mike and John loaded the boxes on the railroad wagons and sped towards the lake.

Mike looked up and said, “Cold is in the air.”

John said, “Yes sir.”

They yelled for the governor.

The military soldiers came out with rifles pointed.

Mike said, “Former soldier. The Stiths sent Christmas cakes since you have to be here.”

The sentry let them pass.

The train stopped.

A hundred soldiers were waiting.

They had formed a line and Commander Washington was on the train and helped unload the much needed supplies.

Headquarters sent the soldiers double blankets and larger tents and long john underwear and more gloves and socks.

The soldiers were quickly moving the supplies.

Mike and John helped the soldiers.

They left and sped up the road to the train station with their wagons to wait for the train.

Peter’s wife kept looking at John.

John saw her but did not entertain her.

They heard a shot.

Mike whispered and Said, “They need to stop that.”

Commander took most of the boxes with the cakes and gave to the soldiers to make it appear as the cakes were just for the residents.

Joe stopped the trin at the small city train station.

Joel treated the passengers to breakfast in the dining car because they had to check the tracks quickly.

The passengers were happy and running to the dining car.

Joel grinned but noticed two men trying to peep out the windows.

Joel became concern.

Joel said, “Sirs I have to let you in the dining car.”

A cabin steward came and was mopping up a passenger throw up.

The two men said to Joel, “You should have said you had to clean this car.”

Joel grinned and said, “Pardon me sirs. Breakfast?”

The two men walked in front of Joel to the dining car.

Joel let them in.

The cook was listening.

He said, “The two men was complaining that the train car had to be cleaned because of throw up.”

One woman said, “Why should we stop for that?”

One passenger said, “I don’t care. We get a damn good Christmas Eve breakfast.”

Commander Washington jumped off the train and ran into the woods behind the soldiers.

The soldiers were shocked that a commander was with them for Christmas.

Mike and John sat at the train station for a half hour they stretched out in the wagons and were about to go to sleep.

The train rolled in.

Joel yelled, “Hey Peter. Hurry and get these boxes. Patrick is sending something to these people. It smells like cakes.”

Peter said, “Joel why are you late?”

Joel said, “We had to clean a car because of a passenger. We just told the passengers we had to check out the tracks. I was not going to move this train and then be stuck in this bad weather they are expecting.”

Peter had a question mark look on his face.

Joel looked and his steward waved his hand to go.

Mike and John were running to the wagons with the boxes.

Joel yelled, “Yall have a good Christmas. I hope you have plenty of coal for the fire and food?”

Peter said, “We have plenty.”

The train whistle blew,

Joel was closing and locking the door.

Peter saw Joel running through the cars.

Mike was watching Peter and his wife who had a thinking look on their faces.

John turned his wagon around and yelled and hollered.

It scared Peter who jumped.

Mike yelled and whistled and flew behind John.

Mike and John dropped off the cakes with the governor and went fishing and hunting.

They carried the rabbits to Mattie.

Mattie fried the rabbits and had Mike and John for Christmas Eve dinner.

Patrick found the new insultation paper that was left by a manufacturer that they brought to Cedartown.

Patrick told Commander Washington to put on top of the tents and to give Mike and John some to put on their tents.

Mike and John slept that night in the wagons and covered up with blankets and the insulation from Patrick they were fine.

Mike held his head up because he heard a noise.

He slightly whistled.

John held his head from under the blankets and insulation.

He took both guns out of the holster and placed them in each hand.

Mike pulled up his rifle and laid it across his stomach.

Mike and John saw several figures running from the train station.

The snow was beginning to fall.

The soldiers received the supplies and passed them out and insulated their tents.

Some soldiers cut the trees and cut them into firewood.

The governor and his wife were sitting in their new modern tent with a fur rug and insulation drinking hot cocoa and loving the stars.

They saw the snow beginning to fall.

They grinned.

They had not seen snow for decades.

They thought this is a blessed Christmas.

They hunted and fished they had food for the next several days.

They were loving their Christmas vacation.

The governor’s wife held up head from her husband’s shoulder and listened.

He looked at his wife and reached and cocked his gun.

Their cook and security men were full and was laying in the open enjoying the beauty.

The security men eased up.

The governor saw the security men.

The governor’s wife looked at the security rom the full moon that was reflecting off the lake.

She became angry.

Her husband looked at her and she said, “A perfect Christmas ruined.”

He laughed.

She crawled into the tent and pulled the rug back and got her famous rifle and loaded it.

The sentry that was stationed at the train station saw several men down the track and jump over and whistle.

Peter opened the door and walked out with them.

The sentry sent word the men were armed.

Their captain had formed a plan that if they were attacked that would encircle the attackers, since now a lot of them were women and shoot them down.

John eased around and started counting.

He counted sixteen figures.

Mike was counting and counted seventeen figures.

They saw them running towards the residents’ houses.

They could not let them kill the residents and their children especially on Christmas Eve.

Mike said, “God help us. If I have to die this night forgive me of my sins and receive me into heaven.”

John said, “Me too God. Amen.”

They jumped out the wagons and begin to shoot.

The residents fell on the floor.

Commander Washington was praying in his insulated tent.

He jumped off his knees and grabbed his guns and said, “In JESUS’ name. Amen.”

He ran out his tent to the shooting.

The soldiers started their circling the shooting.

The captain had to catch the commander and try to shield the commander.

The commander said, “I trained you. Move.”

Commander Washington started shooting the figures that tried to run and flee.

The military encircled the mob and shoot them all.

The commander said, “Check on Mike and John and the residents. Arrest Peter and his wife.”

Commander Washington ran to the mobsters and started turning them over and tying their hands.

The commander counted sixteen.

The governor and his wife ran up towards the residents.

But ten of the security men and the cook stayed at their campsite,

John and Mike were mildly wounded.

None of the residents were wounded.

Mike said, “How many?’

The captain said, “We got them.”

The Commander was looking at Mike and John and said, “Captain how many?”

The captain said, “Fifteen.”

Mike and John said, “More.”

The commander looked at the captain and the soldiers spread out and went under the residents’ houses and into the fields all through the night.

The commander heard much gunfire and he looked at the captain and said, “You always count.”

The commander told them to move the fifteen prisoners up to the train station because no trains will be through for two days.

They found two more mobsters who they shot and killed.

There were six women and they all had on the double horseshoe sign.

The commander gave it to the governor.

The governor was looking at it.

His wife was peeping over his shoulder.

She said, “Somebody wears that?’

The governor nodded and said, “Huh.”

He said, “I know whoever wears this I see him often.”

Commander Washington looked at the governor and his wife.

The governor said, “No more hiding. Lets’ light this place up.”

His wife grinned.

The medic moved Mike and John to the shed.

The soldiers put Peter and his wife out by the tracks with the other mobsters.

Mike and John were comfortable in Peter and his wife’s bed.

The commander went into the rail station’s office and sent a telegram to the chief commander and said they killed two mobsters and they wear the double horseshoe symbol.

They cannot care for the mobsters so they will have dead bodies and he refused to bury them where they wanted to take over that beautiful land.

The chief commander received the telegram late that Christmas Eve.

He thought he saw that double horseshoe symbol.

His wife came to stay Christmas Eve with her husband,

She knew he would not come home until he heard something from his soldiers.

The first part of their operation of getting the message to Mike and John and unloading and loading the trains were complete.

His wife said, “Honey GOD will give you success.”

They walked out on the balcony and watched the snow fall.

They had not seen snow in years.

The chief commander walked back in his office and got the blanket and wrapped he and his wife in the blanket and they stood and looked at the falling snow and thank GOD for success.

The chief commander and his wife went to the mess hall and helped cook and serve the soldiers.

The soldiers were shocked and did not know what to think or say.

Junior was in line and the chief commander put two pancakes on his plate.

Junior stopped and looked at the two pancakes.

Commander Tyler was waiting for the next soldier.

Mrs. Tyler looked at Junior and nudge her husband.

Commander Tyler looked at Junior and at his plate.

He put another pancake.

Junior stood still.

Commander Tyler put two more pancakes.

Junior grinned and said, “Merry Christmas Commander Tyler.”

Commander Tyler looked at his name tag and said, “Merry Christmas Junior.”

The next soldier moved up and Commander Tyler gave him two pancakes.

The soldier did not move.

Commander Tyler put another pancake.

The soldier still did not move.

Commander Tyler turned and looked at the cooks.

Mrs. Tyler turned and laughed.

Commander Tyler said, How many pancakes?”

The soldier said, “The number you gave to Junior.”

Commander Tyler turned and looked at the cooks.

Mrs. Tyler turned and laughed and laughed.

Commander Tyler said, “How many want five pancakes?”

All the soldiers raised their hands.

The cooks laughed.

Commander Tyler and his wife sat in the mess hall and drank their Christmas coffee as they do every year.

Mrs. Tyler are we going home to that cold house?”

The commander said, “We can stay here.”

Mrs. Tyler said, “No. Can we make home on the streets?”

They went to his office and received the messages and telegrams.

They looked at the street and said, “We should be alright.

Mrs. Tyler left her blankets in her husband’s office.

They were able to make it home and put a lot of coal in the fireplace and the furnace.

The commander brought in water and they bathed and ate a simple Christmas dinner of ham, green beans, rice, and roasted goose and stuffing.

The soldiers dined on ham and turkey and pies and cake.

Commander Tyler thought about his many troops who were not in the headquarters.

He and His wife held hands and he said grace and she added a special prayer for the troops.

They ate their Christmas dinner.

He asked how she did it to get them a meal.

She said, “I went to the capitol and had them to cook the ham and the goose and stuffing and added a cake for our dessert.

The soldiers at the small city made many fires and cooked over the fires and ate cake that Christmas. They rotated every two hours.

The soldiers were enjoying the snow.

Out of the seventeen mobsters and Peter and his wife.

Six died on Christmas.

The medic attended to them once per day.

Until a mobster female spit in his face.

He put a handkerchief over her mouth and said, “I am going to make sure you live. So you can be sentenced to death. I want to kick the stool from underneath you and see you die and descend to hell.”

She tried to get to the medic.

They gave them Peter and his wife blankets and let them walk once per day.

They gave them only bread and water.

Commander Washington held Christmas Day church service in the open and the residents sat on the porches.

The governor and his wife walked up to the service.

They enjoyed the service.

Commander Washington thought, “This is nice. Preaching to lost sheep.”

The commander ate Christmas Dinner with his men.

They waited two days for the trains.

Patrick received the telegram there was a shoot out but the residents and their children were safe.

Brenda was standing when Patrick read the telegram at Christmas breakfast.

Brenda grabbed Patrick’s arm and turned and said, “Thank God. Thank God.”

Patrick said, “Mike and John were injured but theirs were slight injuries.”

Dan said, “Thank God. Thank God.”

Because he was thinking he was being selfish with his land staking and if they would have been killed he would not get over it.

Dr. Ralph told Hal to bring Lorraine some oatmeal in the sweet milk.

Dr. Ralph told Hal to bring him whatever fish or seafood was available.

Hal left the room and returned an hour later.

There was a knock on the door.

Dr. Ralph was looking at Lorraine’s clothes and tried to fold them.

Lorraine was laying in bed watching Jason.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and walked to the door and said, “Who is it?”

Hal said, “Hal.”

Dr. Ralph opened the door.

Hal walked in the suite with a large tray and put it on the table.

He looked in the bedroom at Lorraine as he walked in the room.

He saw Lorraine’s clothes on the bed.

Hal said, “Dr. Ralph you were packing Miss Lorraine’s clothes?”

Jason looked at Hal and said, “Yes.”

Hal said, “That is my job. I will pack her clothes. That may not be a big thing to you. But Mrs. Stith knows how clothes are to be folded, hung and packed. If she opens Miss Lorraine’s bags and the clothes are thrown in there I can lose my job.”

Dr. Ralph stared at Hal.

He could not believe sweet Brenda would fire anyone.

Hal said, “Dr. Ralph you want me to feed Miss Lorraine or you.”

Dr. Ralph was still staring at Hal in unbelief.

Hal took the glass with a little oatmeal and walked in the bedroom with Lorraine and looked around.

Lorraine was looking at Hal.

Hal turned and looked at Lorraine.

He said, “Why are you on your stomach? Let’s turn you over so you can eat.”

Dr. Ralph walked in and helped Hal turn Lorraine over.

Lorraine cried a little.

Dr. Ralph stood and was looking at Lorraine to see what was causing her to hurt.

Hal looked at Lorraine and said, “Miss Lorraine I see a knot on your neck is that is what is hurting?”

Lorraine tried to say yes.

Dr. Ralph examined her neck and frowned.

He stood and turned his head so Lorraine could not see his face.

Hal saw Dr. Ralph’s face.

Hal swallowed and bent on his knees and fed Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph walked to the window and was looking out and saw the beauty of the coming night gracing the land.

Hal said, “I have to pack your clothes. You may not know Mrs. Stith, she is hard.”

Hal feed Lorraine and watched the knot on her neck.

He said, “Dr. Ralph, do you think that a near hot washcloth may help Miss Lorraine’s neck.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I need to see if it is a blood clot.”

Hal was feeding Lorraine and he smiled at Lorraine.

He looked at her clothes.

He got off his knees and said, “I had a blood clot years ago. I was running across the railroad tracks.”

He looked at Lorraine who was crying and he said, “I won’t tell you why I was running, but I tripped and fell. I thought my knee was broken. I got to where I was going and soak my feet in hot water and I saw that big knot on my knee and I cried and cried. I didn’t know what to do. So I started putting the hot water on that knot and praying to GOD, I did that for hours. That knot went away. I was sore but my I never had a problem out of that knee.”

Dr. Ralph looked back at Lorraine.

Hal looked at Dr. Ralph and pulled out the luggage rack that was inside the armoire.

Dr, Ralph looked at Hal.

Hal slowly put the bags on the luggage rack.

He looked at Dr. Ralph and began to fold Lorraine’s clothes. He slowly packed her bags.

Hal finished packing her bags and put away the luggage rack and took Lorraine’s bags to the door.

Hal was finished working for the night.

He ordered their bathwater.

He said, “Dr. Ralph I got you fried cod, cauliflower, turnips and beets.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Fine. What did you get?”

Hal said, “A porter house steak, an extra large baked potato and plenty of butter.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Hal.

Hal said, “And for dessert I got you apple pie and me a large piece of ginger cake with lemon sauce.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I don’t want dessert.”

Hal flexed his eyebrows and said, “I know. I got it for me.”

Lorraine giggle.

Hal shook Lorraine’s foot and walked out the room.

Dr. Ralph sat on Lorraine’s bed and he looked at Lorraine’s clothes Hal set out, including her underwear and hairpins.

Dr. Ralph started working on Lorraine’s neck.

She cried.

Dr. Ralph did not stop. He was looking for something.

He was concerned if a bone was actually broken that they could not get to.

There was a knock on the door.

Hal said, “Doc.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Get it.”

Hal walked to the door and peeped out, it ws the porter.

The porter got a porter house and baked potato with a lot of butter.

The porter said, “Evening Doc.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Evening.”

Hal and the porter sat and ate the large steaks and baked potatoes.

Dr. Ralph said, “Hal bring me the hot washcloths.”

Hal stood and went to the washroom and walked back in the sitting room and dipped the washcloth in the kettle of hot water and wrung it out and put on a towel and walked in Lorraine’s bedroom.

Dr. Ralph waited until the washcloth was warm and placed it on the knot.

He sat and watched the knot.

Hal had another washcloth available.

He said, “Doc ready for another one?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

Hal had completed his steak dinner and walked into the washroom and washed his hands.

He took another hot washcloth in to Lorraine’s room and said, “Doc your food maybe cold. I can do this. I had to do this for my mother’s stomach. I know not to put anything hot on Miss Lorraine.”

Dr. Ralph stood and Hal sat on Lorraine’s bed and he looked out the window and said, “Looking out the window make you love God more for how he gives you pleasure in the hard times and the bad times.”

Hal stood and walked to the window and closed the curtain.

Dr. Ralph watched Hal.

Hal walked back to Lorraine’s bed and handed Dr. Ralph the washcloth.

Hal said, “Miss Lorraine this should feel good.”

He placed the washcloth on her neck and said, “Doc will be back when he finish his dinner. I had a large steak and potato. Doc has fish and vegetables.”

Hal laughed.

Dr. Ralph heard him.

The porter was eating his steak.

Dr. Ralph looked at the porter and the porter said, “Evening.”

Dr. Ralph did not fuss at his dinner.

He sat to the table and lifted his lid.

The porter laughed.

Dr. Ralph said, “This is healthy.”

The porter kept eating his steak and potato.

Hal got up and walked to the kettle and readied the washcloth he gave to Dr, Ralph.

Jason watched Hal.

The porter finished his steak dinner and ate a large slice of apple pie.

Dr. Ralph looked at him.

Dr. Ralph said, “Did I get a telegram from Mr. Stith?”

The porter was thinking and said, “Not that I know of.”

Jason thought.

He said, “I need help tomorrow getting off the train. I can carry her, but all of our bags someone else has to carry.”

Hal leaned back and said, “Doc, it is our job to get your bags and take them to your carriage.”

The porter said, “If you want, we can use that stretcher over there to carry her to the carriage.”

Hal said, “I did not see Miss Lorraine’s shoes.”

Dr. Ralph quickly said, “I did not get her any because she is very particular about her shoes.”

The porter giggled.

Dr. Ralph looked at the porter.

The porter finished eating his apple pie and gathered the plates and put them on the tray.

He looked t Dr. Ralph who was eating his fried cod and vegetables.

Dr. Ralph looked at the porter.

The porter knew Dr. Ralph was thinking about the lady patient, he pointed to his back.

Dr. Ralph remembered the porter asked him to help attend to his back.

Dr. Ralph was putting down his napkin and was about to stand from the table.

The porter waved his hands at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at the porter.

The porter said, “Sir, pleas eat. I will be on this train until we get to Cedartown in the morning.”

Lorraine smiled.

Hal yelled, “Miss Lorraine smiled at Cedartown.”

Jason turned and looked at the bedroom.

Dr. Ralph said, “Let me finish with my dinner. I will be glad to help you this evening.”

Hal said, “Doc the knot in Miss Lorraine’s neck is going down.”

Dr. Ralph sat back in his chair and looked in the bedroom at Hal.

Dr. Ralph was struck with shock.

Hal looked at Dr. Ralph.

Hal said, “What are you doing Miss Lorraine?”

Dr. Ralph from the table and ran to the bedroom.

The porter ran behind Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

He did not see anything.

Hal said, “Miss Lorraine you show the doc what you did?”

Dr. Ralph did not take his eyes from Lorraine.

Lorraine opened her mouth.

Dr. Ralph stood and stared at Lorraine.

Hal looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph did not move he was trying to figure out what Lorraine was doing.

He did not know what was happening to Lorraine.

The porter looked at Dr. Ralph.

Hal looked up at Dr. Ralph.

He saw Dr. Ralph was looking at a big medical issue.

Hal said, “Doc Miss Lorraine is hungry.”

Dr. Ralph stared Hal.

Then he looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine smiled.

Dr. Ralph stared at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph walked out the bedroom and walked to the table and looked at what was on the table.

Hal leaned back on the bed and peeped at Dr. Ralph.

The porter turned and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Hal said, “Doc, you finish eating. Calvin can go to the kitchen.”

Dr. Ralph was still stunned. He sat in the chair and stared I front of him.

The porter looked at Dr. Ralph and then Hal.

Hal looked at Calvin and said, “You pray to God for answers and when He sends them you are shock.”

Calvin looked back at a shock Dr. Ralph.

Hal took the washcloth from Lorraine’s neck and said, “I’ll be back Miss Lorraine.”

Hal walked to the kettle and exchange the washcloths.

He said, “Doc, Miss Lorraine is hungry. What to give her?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I heard you. I saw Lorraine.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Give her what you gave her earlier. Maybe every two hours until eight pm.”

Hal looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Calvin a glass of sweet milk and two tablespoons of oatmeal and a little honey.”

Calvin walked to the table and picked up all the dishes and walked out the suite.

Hal looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph pushed his plate from him and stood and walked to the balcony window an looked out for a long time.

Hal looked at Dr. Ralph and attended to Lorraine.

Calvin back after forty- five minutes and knocked on the suite door.

Dr. Ralph heard Hal run to the door and opened it.

He slightly turned his head to hear who was coming in the suite.

Calvin gave Hal the tray with the hot sweet milk an oatmeal and honey.

Hal took the glass and mixed the oatmeal and honey.

Calvin looked at Dr. Ralph and gathered his plate and utensils.

Dr. Ralph said, “Calvin thank you and Hal.”

There was a knock on the door.

Dr. Ralph turned around and walked to the door, since Calvin was trying to pretend he was working cl the table.

Dr. Ralph walked to the door and opened it so Calvin could leave.

The clerks brought hot water for Dr. Ralph’s bath.

Dr. Ralph said, “Calvin come back after my bath and I will adjust your back and shoulders.”

Calvin moved his shoulders and said, “My shoulders. Nothing is wrong with my shoulders.”

Hal fed Lorraine.

She ate the food in fifteen minutes.

The clerks made Dr. Ralph’s hot bath and left.

One of the clerks whistled at Hal.

Hal leaned back and nodded his head at the clerk.

Dr. Ralph heard the clerk’s whistle and he knew they were probably talking about gambling.

Hal cut his eyes at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph put his bags in the boys’ room.

He went in his bag and got his toiletries and took out his clean underwear.

Dr. Ralph said, “Hal I am taking my bath. Will you watch Miss Lorraine for me?”

Hal said, “Yes sir. She ate this meal in about fifteen minutes.”

Dr. Ralph looked and did not understand what Hal was saying.

Hal looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Miss Lorraine is becoming stronger.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and walked to the washroom and closed the door.

He enjoyed his bath and shave.

He put on his clean underwear and the clothes he would wear tomorrow.

He came out the washroom and walked to Lorraine and stood at her feet and smiled.

She fluttered her eyes and went to sleep.

Hal said, “Doc why are you shock?”

Dr. Ralph said, “This is a different hard case. There is nothing that is familiar.”

Hal said, “It is a practice.”

Dr. Ralph nodded and said, “Yes.”

There was a knock on the door.

Dr. Ralph walked to the door and opened it and the clerks returned to empty his tub.

Hal said, “No bath tomorrow just hot water.”

The clerks nodded their heads.

Hal rushed to the washroom and cleaned it up.

Another knock on the door and Dr. Ralph opened the door and it was Calvin.

Calvin grinned.

Dr. Ralph said, “Come in and take off your coat.”

Dr. Ralph went and got his liniment.

Hal was cleaning up the suite so he could have more time to play.

He put more coal in the fireplace.

Dr. Ralph said, “Calvin lye on the sofa face back.”

Calvin laid on the sofa face down.

Calvin said, “What is that stench?”

Hal looked at what Dr. Ralph had in his hands.

Dr. Ralph said, “A liniment we use at the hospital. It is very good.”

Lorraine was sleep and turned her nose up from the smell.

Hal finished cleaning the suite.

He re-packed Dr. Ralph’s bags.

Dr. Ralph worked on Calvin’s shoulders and then his back.

Calvin put his head in the sofa and screamed.

Hal jumped out the linen closet and looked at Calvin.

Dr. Ralph continued until he was finished.

Calvin mumbled, “Don’t put that stuff on me.”

Dr. Ralph continued to massage Calvin’s arms, hands and fingers.

Dr. Ralph put the liniment on Calvin’s shoulders.

The heat the liniment generated calm the pain.

Dr. Ralph said, “You need some more therapy.”

Calvin stared at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “Our hospital has been designated to attend to the railroad workers by the Stiths. You don’t pay anything.”

Calvin got his coat and skipped gambling that night and went to his room and drank some scotch and went to bed.

Dr. Ralph looked at Hal.

Hal gathered the dirty linen and said, “Doc. I will see you in the morning at seven am. What do you want me to order for your breakfast?”

Hal was scurrying to the door.

Dr. Ralph said, “Oatmeal and grapefruit.”

Hal opened the suite door and propped his feet in the door and said, “Miss Lorraine?”

Dr. Ralph looked back at Lorraine and said, “oatmeal, sweet milk and honey. She has to have all of those shots and therapy before we leave the train and I have to wash her and dressed her.”

Hal fell out the door and ran down the hall.

Joe was walking down the hall and saw Hal running.

He turned and ran back to the conductor booth for the rest of the night.

Dr. Ralph looked out the door at Hal.

He walked back in the owners’ suite and stood at the door in awe of the opulence.

He locked the door and checked the balcony door and the windows in the bedrooms.

He grinned and shook his head.

He knew Ryan did not see the boys’ wallpaper.

Dr. Ralph put his luggage by the door.

He pulled off his clothes for the next day and left on his long johns and socks.

Hal placed the blankets on the sofa and two pillows.

Dr. Ralph walked in Lorraine’s bedroom and sat on her bed for a while and held her hands.

He sat and stared at her.

Dr. Ralph stood.

He pulled up the cover on Lorraine and kissed her on her forehead.

He looked around the room and decided to let the lantern burn itself.

He went into the sitting room and went on his knees in front of the sofa and prayed.

He said, “God I don’t know about Lorraine’s mind. Whether she can or know to pray to YOU. So I ask YOU to let me stand in prayer for her to YOU.”

Dr. Ralph prayed for a long time that night.

He finished praying and fell onto the sofa and pulled up his blankets and looked at the fire for a minute before he went to sleep.

Hal and the rest of the workers gambled and drank until late.

They all stumbled to their rooms and slept until Joe woke them around six am.

The workers woke and washed, shaved and dressed for the day.

Dr. Ralph could not think whether to give Lorraine the last of the shots or not. Dr. Jerome reduced the medication by fifty medicines. And Lorraine improved.

Dr. Ralph was perplexed and confused.

He was thinking of the different medications and what they do.

He could not look into Lorraine’s body and decide what organ is being healed and which one is not.

He did not want to do any harm to her.

Dr. Ralph was looking at the fireplace and said, “Tell me God.”

Lorraine was wondering in her sleep when the pain would stop.

Her eyes lids fluttered all doing the night.

Dr. Ralph was sleeping on his stomach on the sofa.

He jumped up and sat on the sofa.

He sat on the sofa and leaned over and rubbed his head.

He looked towards the room where Lorraine was sleeping.

He thought, “I didn’t hear crying in the night. Maybe I was too sleep. I never sleep on my stomach. I leaned from Jeffrey’s father never to sleep on my stomach. He would come into my room and beat while I slept on my stomach. My mother tried to protect me and my brother from him.”

Dr. Ralph said, “God I still hate him. I am glad you sent Dr. Jerome in my life to guide me as a father should have done. My dear mother is dead. My brother and I left the day of her burial and never went back to our family home. Over the years I knew he had re-married. Jeffrey would come into town at the horseshoe shop I worked and we became friends. But he has his father’s nasty ways. He is in the military, if he would do evil or wrong remove him from the military and don’t let him advance so he won’t spread his evilness. He hates the Stiths and he is not here. Keep him and his wife from them and from all they have. His father married a woman who had children, that Nurse Johnson’s mother. I never came into contact with her. Debra hired her and that is another story. But if there is any wickedness or evilness in her remove her from the hospital.”

Lorraine began to move her feet and whine.

Dr. Ralph looked towards the room.

He smirked and said, “God only Lorraine can interrupt my prayer time with You with that whining.”

Dr. Ralph said, “God did Jeffrey’s father marry my mixed mother so he could steal our family farm and all of that property that my black grandfather and white grandmother bought and stored up for us. God did he mistreat my dear beloved mother because she was mixed race?”

Dr. Ralph sat on the sofa and thought about his beloved mother.

He thought about her offering him money to leave her white skin boys alone and go away.

He did not want some he wanted all.

Dr. Ralph said, “God I believe he poisoned my mother to death. He quickly married Nurse Sharon’s mother and had Jeffrey.”

Dr. Ralph sat on the sofa with his clasped under his chin.

He listened to Lorraine whining as she normally would do.

Then a thought came to him.

Dr. Ralph sat and was quiet.

He bowed his head and cried.

He got on his knees.

Then he stopped and went to Lorraine.

He opened the curtain in her room.

He walked to Lorraine.

Her eyelids were fluttering from the light and her trying to open her eyes.

Dr. Ralph stared at this mixed- race woman who he loved with all his heart.

She knew he was the only love for her forever.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and could see she and his mother loving each other and driving around the town shopping and going to church and being happy and being spoiled.

Dr. Ralph cried out.

Lorraine stopped her whining when she heard Jason cry out in pain.

She thought, “Me.”

Dr. Ralph sat on Lorraine’s bed and cried.

Lorraine was able to crack her eyes open and saw Jason’s face.

She saw he was crying out in pain.

Lorraine thought, “Me.”

She laid there and slowly began to whine again.

Dr. Ralph began to dry up his crying.

He slowly turned to Lorraine and said, “I wondered how long you would give me to grieve before you demand my attention as always.”

Lorraine continued her low whine.

Hal knocked on the suite door.

Dr. Ralph stood and went to the chair in the sitting room and slipped on his pants.

He walked to the door and cracked it opened and saw Hal and Calvin.

Hal and Calvin saw Dr. Ralph had been crying.

They thought, “Is she dead?”

Then as they walked in the suite they heard Lorraine whining.

Hal put the breakfast tray on the table.

Calvin wheeled the hot bath water in the washroom.

Hal mixed the oatmeal in the sweet milk and added honey.

Hal looked at Dr, Ralph.

Dr. Ralph picked up his black doctor’s bag from beside the sofa and put it on the table.

Hal started slowly mixing Lorraine’s oatmeal looking at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph opened the black bag and stood for a minute.

Hal looked at Dr. Ralph.

Calvin set up the hot water and was walking out the washroom with the barrel he used to bring in the hot water.

He said, “Dr. Ralph I fell like a young man this morning and I will start coming to the hospital…”

Calvin stopped mid-sentence.

He looked at Dr. Ralph.

Hal rushed in the room with Lorraine and closed the door.

Calvin ran out the suite door.

Joe was walking up the hall.

He knew he had to pass the suite to get to the control room.

Joe started running by Calvin and jumped over the hot water barrel and fell and jumped up and ran pass the suite to the conductor’s car.

The engineers in the conductor’s car turned and looked at Joe.

One of the engineers said, “Joe, is a shot that bad?”

Joe was known as a big tough guy and fighter that no one said anything to.

He turned and looked at the engineers.

The engineers turned and looked out the window.

Joe glimpsed the telegram machine.

He saw telegrams.

He said, “When did these telegrams come in?”

The engineers turned and looked.

One of the engineers said, “We did not hear nor see any telegrams Joe.”

Joe thought they were lying to him.

He checked the telegram machine and saw it was skipping telegrams.

He had to get it repaired in Cedartown.

Joe only had less than two hours to tell Eleanor to have someone at the station to repair the telegram machine.

Joe thought he will never ever be caught without a way to communicate with the headquarters.

He pulled the telegrams and began to read them.

He read the one from the sheriff to Dr. Ralph about the mob wanted to kill Lorraine in the small town.

Joe jumped because they only stopped there long enough for Morgan to jump on the train.

He read the telegram from Dr. Ryan not to give Lorraine the last medications.

Joe reached that telegram to the second engineer and said, “Take this to the owners’ suite and give it to Dr. Ralph.  
The engineer smirked and looked at the other engineer.

They snickered.

Joe said to himself, “You won’t be snickering when you come back.”

Joe read the telegram from Patrick to keep it secret.

Joe read the telegram twice.

Joe said, “Did the telegram from Dr. Ralph to Mr. Stith was it sent?”

The engineer walking out the door stopped and said, “I sent it.”

He stepped back in and he looked at the telegram machine.

They saw it was stuck in the machine.

He cut his eyes at Joe.

Joe looked at him and said, “You did not check to see if it went through?”

The engineer looked at Joe.

Joe was mad.

He said, “We have a sick close friend of the owner of this railroad on our train and they are expecting him to pick them up in less than two hours. What is our solution?”

The engineer swallowed and said, “Tell Mr. Stith the machine was not working.”

Joe turned and looked at the engineer.

The engineer ran out the conductor’s car.

The other engineer looked at Joe.

He knew Joe had the reputation there was no problem he could not solve.

The engineer swallowed and continued to look out the window as they began to approach Cedartown.

Joe reached on the cabinet and got the telegrams.

He knew Patrick trusted him to keep the telegram secret.

He read the other telegrams and knew all the other problems he could solve.

He walked out the conductor’s car.

Joe was walking down the hall to go to the owners’ suite when he saw the smart mouth co-engineer falling into the wall.

Joe looked at him and continued to walk to the owner’s suite.

He knocked on the suite door.

Hal answered the door.

Joe did not look in the owner’s suite.

He said, “Have Dr. Ralph to come to the door.”

Hal looked back and said, “He is washing the lady.”

Joe said, “Tell him his telegram to Mr. Stith was not sent. The machine malfunctioned and I did not know until a few minutes ago. I will talk to all of you after we turn around to go back to Philadelphia.”

Hal stared at Joe.

He was thinking, “That was not my fault and you are not adding more duties to my job.”

Joe pushed the door opened and stepped inside the suite.

He said, “Mr. Stith does not know they are coming. He usually get on the trains to see his owners’ suite. Make sure everything is fine. You and Calvin used that stretcher to get her off the train and take her to the rail station. Then you two come back and get their bags.”

Hal thought, “I can do that.”

Hal looked around and saw the suite was nearly perfect.

Joe said, “Dr. Ralph and her have to stay in the rail station until Mr. Stith gets transportation for them.”

Folded the telegram for Dr. Ralph and said, “Hal you better not read this.”

Hal looked at Joe and said, “Sir I am not nosey.”

Joe said, “Yes you are. You go and knock on the washroom door and hand the doctor the telegram while I am standing here.”  
Hal rolled his eyes at Joe.

Joe stared at Hal.

Hal picked up the telegram and walked to the washroom and knocked on the door and looked back at Joe.

Joe was staring at Hal.

Dr. Ralph was washing Lorraine and said, “Yes Hal.”

Hal cracked the door and did not look in.

Hal said, “My boss is standing here and demanded that I give you this urgent telegram and your telegram did not go through to Mr. Stith. But my boss will get you off the train and to Mr. Stith.”

Joe rolled his eyes at Hal.

Dr. Ralph knew the telegram was important.

He stood and walked to the door and took the telegram from Hal.

Joe did not know whether to give Dr. Ralph the next telegram.

Joe said, “Hal come and get this telegram and give it to him.”

Hal walked to the tough Joe and got the telegram and walked back to the washroom and handed it to Dr. Ralph.

Hal walked away from the washroom.

He pulled out the stretcher and took it to the bedroom.

He put out the fire in the owner’s suite fireplace.

Joe said, “The train is crowded for some reason. I never seen it crowded coming to Cedartown in my career. Maybe we need to get them off the train another way.”

Joe walked out the owner’s suite and found Calvin and several clerks and had them ready to unload the train and the passengers.

Joe was thinking.

How to get the passengers off the train quick so they won’t see the military secret operation.

Joe thought, “If I had married Beverly, I would be getting off this train and sending holiday in that mansion I never seen or meeting her and enjoying our Christmas in that townhouse we both loved.”

Calvin and the other men stopped and were looking at Joe.

Joe saw the men and wondered if they heard him.

Calvin said, “Sir.”

Joe looked at Calvin and said, “Sir what?”

Calvin said, “You said wait.”

Joe thought, “Damn Beverly, twenty- five years later you are still messing with my head.”

Joe looked around and said, “Let’s get the passengers off at the kitchen car. Give them cookies and eggnog as our thank you.”

Calvin grinned and said, “Smart.”

Joe thought, “That’s why Patrick pays me well and now that Eleanor., with her stingy self. She will make me retire. But I want another vacation home. I have the one in Maine and my house in Washington Dc and my very nice townhouse in Philadelphia.”

Calvin ran to the kitchen and told the cooks to get the eggnog out and bake cookies quickly.

The other clerks ran and prepared the kitchen car for the passengers to exit.

Joe had to re-fuel and they had to get water.

He had to get all the trash off the train, and he told two clerks to direct the passengers away from the train yard towards the street so they could re-fresh the train quickly.

Joe talked to the employees and said, “We have two options.”

Hal was walking out the owner’s suite and saw everyone standing in the second car from him.

He walked down to the second car.

Joe said, “The trains never run on Christmas Day. I believe Mr. Stith will allow us to turn around and continue back to Philadelphia without picking up any passengers. We won’t get back to Philadelphia until late Christmas Day or the next morning.”

He looked at the men.

One of the clerks said, “What is the other option?”

Joe blew and said, “We can remain on the train and leave on schedule the morning after Christmas and make it back to Philadelphia three days later.”

Everyone was quiet.

Joe said, “I know some of you are married with children or just want to spend Christmas with family and friends.”

One of the clerks said, “Or by yourself.”

A cook walked down the hall and said, “If we stay on the train or go back we don’t have enough food.”

Joe said, “How many of us are on the train?”

Hal said, “Fifteen.”

One of the clerks said, “Sir we need to talk about a full train and only five of us here for rom service.”

Joe frowned up and said, “I don’t know how that opened. For a full train we have at least ten to fifteen room service attendants…”

Joe held up the telegrams.

He said, “I know the telegram machine has been acting up and I just received these telegrams this morning. The ones I received today were urgent but we bypassed somethings.”

Morgan looked at Joe. He knew it had to do with Peter and the mob.

Morgan was standing with the workers and said, “I believe Mr. Stith would let you run the train on Christmas Day to get back to Philadelphia as close to Christmas Day as possible.”

One of the clerks said, “I am a preacher and I need to let them know not to have service or have my sister preach. I should be back Sunday.”

He looked at Joe and said, “Right?”

Joe said, “We have to speed all the way back. Which mean more fuel.”

The preacher said, “I don’t see any other option. We can’t fly back. But if we stand on this train today and Christmas can we leave a little early to make sure I make it to church for the eleven am service.”

Joe breathed and said, “I have to talk to Mr. Stith.”

Morgan said, “I was told all the rooms are taken in Cedartown.”

Joe said, “What is going on in this country town that this train is full?”

Morgan said, “I don’t know.”

The preacher said, “Sir where are you staying?”  
Morgan grinned big.

Hal said, “Never mind.”

Everyone laughed.

The cook ran and took the cookies out the oven and he and the other cook put more in.

They prepared the eggnog.

They hot the large number of glasses for the passengers.

Joe screamed.

Hal and Calvin jumper.

Joe said, “These are the military men families and friends that are coming to spend the holidays with them. That is why there are no rooms.”

Morgan jumped and said, “Don’t do that again Joe.”

Morgan started cursing.

Hal hollered and told Calvin, “I thought I was the only one who jumped.”

One of the cooks yelled out the kitchen and said, “That’s why some of the passengers had us to cook their hams and turkeys.”

Joe said, “What?”

The other cook said, “Shut up.”

Morgan was still cursing.

Calvin turned his back to Morgan and laughed.

Joe said, “Do I need to make the decision of the two options we have?”

Morgan said, “Joe I am going to talk to you and Mr. Stith about your screaming. You made my heart jump.”

Joe heard that Morgan was having medical problems.

He looked at Morgan and said, “Morgan I am sorry. It’s no excuse. I was thinking and when it hit I blurted out.”

Morgan was still cursing.

The preacher was looking at the Morgan.

Hal and Calvin were snickering.

Calvin stopped and turned and looked at Joe.

Joe looked at Calvin and thought he had to fight Calvin.

Calvin said, “Is there a liquor store I have to have my liquor.”

The preached looked at Calvin.

Joe looked at the preacher and said, “Calvin there is a liquor store right in the town square.”

Calvin said, “Let’s vote. All of those who want to turn around and make it home the day after Christmas or the ones who waited it out here and leave early in the morning after Christmas and make it home to Philadelphia Sunday morning so the preacher man can go and preach.”

Joe looked at the preacher.

Morgan was still cursing.

Joe said, “Morgan shut up. I apologized and you are not telling Mr. Stith anything nor that little woman Eleanor.”

All the workers said, “Ug Huh.”

One of the cooks said, “Calvin I need several pints. To satay on this train with some of you. I am not sleeping on the roof anymore.”

Joe stood still.

The cook’s words slowly soaked in Joe’s ears.

Calvin cut his eyes at Joe.

Hal kept his eyes straight.

The preacher’s mouth dropped open.

The other clerks turned and looked out the windows.

Morgan was standing by the window and he stopped cursing and turned to see Joe’s facial expression.

Joe thought, “If I respond to him, I can lose my job. That Eleanor have found out about me and her beloved ‘Aunt Bev’ and she is gunning for me.”

Joe said, “What’s the vote.”

Morgan said, “Damn.”

Joe looked at Morgan.

The preacher said, “I want to drop all of them off and turn around and go back to Philadelphia.”

The other clerks started fussing with the preacher.

One of the clerks that room with the preacher did not like him because he tried to make him not gable in the room and come in the room drunk.

The clerk had gotten rope from the supply room and was going to tie the preacher on top of the roof of the train and give him a few blankets.

Hal told him not to do it.

The clerk said, “You get off and catch the Saturday train and come back. You don’t tell no one else to get off. You sanctified son of a b\*\*\*h.”

One of the female passengers who asked the cooks to cook her turkey.

Cleared her throat to let the workers know she was listening.

Morgan said, “Turn around in your seat.”

The female passenger looked at Morgan and slowly turned around in her seat.

She said to the man sitting in the booth with her, “He’s rude.”

Morgan said, “With your fat self. You don’t need to be eating anything.”

Joe looked at Morgan.

He said, “This quick meeting is getting out of hand, you have gambling, drinking, on leave workers being rude to passengers.”

They heard the female passenger huffed.

She exclaimed and pointed, “Snow!!”

Everyone reached to the windows and looked.

The workers looked at Joe.

Joe said, “Calvin take the liquor orders. Put me down for scotch.”

He said, “Hal lead the telegram machine requests and wait!! for the telegrams to go through. Cooks go grocery shopping. The rest of us get this train re-stocked. Preacher there is enough rooms for you to have your separate room.”

The preacher said, “Joe, can I have the owners’ suite.”

The workers looked at him.

Joe said, “Only if you can survive Eleanor lynching you.”

Morgan laughed.

He knew Eleanor did not want anyone in the owners’ suite, ever.

The clerk who shared the room with the preacher said, “Let her lynch him that will keep me from doing it.”

Joe said, “Shut up.”

Joe looked around at the passengers.

The train whistle blew.

Joe looked at the workers and said, “Do your jobs, you are paid to do.”

Calvin and Hal looked at the preacher.

Joe went in his pocket and gave Calvin a dollar.

Joe ran through the car to the conductor’s car.

Hal pulled out his note pad and pen and said, “Telegrams.”

The preacher was first in line to send a telegram to his sister.

Only a few more workers sent telegrams.

One worker said, “I earned my money back. Now I can buy my sisters and brothers something for Christmas. This is a blessing for me.”

The preacher looked at him.

The clerk stared the preacher down.

Morgan watched the two and thought, “Oh God don’t let them fight.”

Morgan stood and looked out the window and grinned at the light snow falling.

He thought about he and Mag sitting around the fireplace with hot buttered rum.

Morgan thought, “I got to get to the liquor store.”

He looked for Calvin.

Morgan had his bags still packed and picked up his bags and his coffee pot.

The fat female passenger looked at Morgan and huffed.

Morgan walked through the car with his bag and coffee pot.

He looked at the woman and said, “I’m sorry for calling you fat.”

The fat female passenger looked at Morgan and said, “That’s it?”  
Morgan said, “Yeap.”

The fat female passenger stared at him.

Morgan looked at the man sitting in the booth with her and nodded his head.

The man nodded his head at Morgan.

Morgan walked passed them to the door they readied for the passengers to deboard the train.

The fat female passenger said, “Don’t you speak to him. He insulted me.”

The man calmly said, “He did not.”

The fat female passenger said, “Yes he did.”

She tried to get up to get her bag but was stuck.

The man in the booth with her said, “He did not insult me. Now figure out how you are going to get out of this booth without his help.”

Morgan heard them and thought, “I’m going to enjoy this holiday and she needs to lose weight.”

The man seated in the booth with the fat woman saw Morgan and said, “Sir can you help us?”

Morgan did not look around. But thought he did work for the railroad.

He walked back and looked at the fat woman.

He pulled the booth out.

The fat female passenger slid out the booth.

The passengers were getting excited about the snow and this small town.

They were looking out the windows.

They began to see smoke coming up from the chimneys and yelled and pointed.

Morgan looked out the window and grinned.

He looked at the fat female passenger and walked away.

The man stood away from the booth for Morgan to help.

He saw the pile of cookies the cooks brought out for the passengers.

He walked and picked up a cookie and stood and watched Morgan help his wife.

Other passengers saw the cookies and children ran to get a cookie.

The children from the other cars were running to get a cookie.

The cooks were walking out with the eggnog and glasses.

The children were running to the pile of cookies and said, Any more cookies?”

The cooks looked and looked around.

The fat female passenger turned and looked.

One of the children’s mother said, “I just saw that pile of cookies.”

Morgan turned and looked at the children and looked at the fat female passenger and said, “Put every damn cookie back and get off this train.”

Joe walked up to greet the passengers as they de-board.

He stood and watched.

The fat female passenger stood for a minute.

Her shocked husband said, “Did you take all of those cookies?”

Other passengers stood and looked at the fat female passenger.

She looked at her husband.

The mother of three of the boys watched her and said, “Ma am it is Christmas Please share.”

Joe looked at the woman and said, “That was a nice way to say it.”

The fat female walked to the platter and dumped half of the cookies back on the pile.

Joe stared at her with disgust.

The children got a cookie.

The children looked at the fat female passenger.

She tried to smile.

One man stared at her.

He hated fat people and he hated greedy people.

The fat female passenger walked to the cooks to give her a glass of eggnog.

Morgan said, “You don’t deserve none.”

Joe looked at Morgan and said, “I’m the conductor.”

The cooks looked at Joe.

Joe nodded.

The man who hated fat and greedy people stared at the fat female passenger.

One of the cooks gave her a glass and the other cook filed it a third full.

She held the glass to the cook.

He said, “No. Move.”

Joe said, “Ma am, are going to return you may need to find another form of transportation.”

She had the glass of eggnog to her mouth and drank it all in one gulp.

She reached the glass to the cooks.

They put the glass on the tray to be washed.

Her husband said, “She wanted some more.”

The cook said, “It’s curtesy. Have a Merry Christmas.”

The man that hated fat and greedy people said, “Move on to the door so the rest of us can get a swallow of good cheer.”

The fat female husband looked back at the man and the angry passengers because she was being greedy.

The man that hated fat and greedy people said, “She took all of the cookies and put back half. And still standing up there.”

The children started chanting, ”Put the pig off.”

The mothers were trying to make the children stop chanting.

Joe was watching the mother with the three boys.

Morgan looked at Joe and eased around to see who he was looking at.

He said, “Conductor most of these women are going to visit their husbands.”

Joe cut his eyes at Morgan.

The woman looked at Joe.

Joe smiled and nodded.

She blushed and spoke.

Joe looked at Morgan.

Morgan looked at the common dressed woman.

Calvin and Hal ran to open the train door and looked at the children.

Calvin looked at the fat female passenger and her husband standing at the door.

Hal said, “What happened to all the cookies?”

The children pointed and yelled, “She got them.”

Calvin and Hal looked at the fat female passenger.

Hal said, “Sir, the passenger is ready to de-board.”

Joe said, “Fine. We will let them off at the car nearest the train station. Here is the key to the train station. Unlock it and put them in it and their bags and bring me the key back.”

Hal took the key and nodded.

He looked at the fat female passenger who was standing to be the first to de-board.

Calvin grinned as the train pulled into Cedartown.

The people cheered.

The fat female passenger braced herself and said, “Turkey.”

One of the cooks ran into the kitchen and brought her the turkey.

Joe and Calvin jumped off the train and put the steps down.

Patrick was standing at the end of the track with the military commanders.

Joe waved at Patrick.

Patrick saluted Joe.

Joe grinned.

He thought, ”I better let Patrick know how great a job I did.”

Morgan stepped off in front of the fat female passenger.

He looked around and did not see Mag.

Morgan saw Patrick.

He started walking to Patrick.

Joe looked at Morgan and ran and caught him.

Morgan looked at Joe and kept walking.

Patrick thought, “They have done something.”

Patrick did not want the military commanders to hear anything.

Patrick was watching the two trains on the tracks.

Morgan bent and saw the other train.

Joel was walking over the tracks to Patrick.

Morgan yelled, “Hey Joel.”

Joe looked and grinned.

He said, “You two together?”

The stiff commanders looked at Joe and Morgan.

Patrick thought, “Joel needs to be quiet.”

The three men were walking and reaching Patrick at the same time.

Patrick woke early that morning.

He laid still because he knew a little movement from him would wake Brenda.

He was thinking about the plan he and Commander Washington devised and the telegram he received back from Commander Tyler saying, ‘Thank you’.

Patrick was sick over Lorraine.

He waited until all of the children were in their rooms.

He walked to the edge of the stirs and watched Shirley and Percy go to their rooms.

Brenda and Eleanor looked at Patrick.

Patrick walked back in the sitting room.

He told Brenda and Eleanor he did not know to tell them or not.

Brenda stared at him.

Eleanor’s heart was sinking.

Patrick said, “I received a telegram from the sheriff in Philadelphia. His wife is the head daytime nurse at the south hospital where Ryan and Lorraine is.”

They stared at Patrick.

Patrick took a deep breathe.

Eleanor grabbed the cushion of the chair she was sitting.

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Patrick looked at them.

Brenda said, “Patrick tell us.”

Patrick said, “The mob found Lorraine.”

Eleanor could not understand the words Patrick just said.

She started mumbling trying to figure out what Patrick just said.

He said, “They have poisoned Lorraine to keep her from identifying the mob main nan.”

Brenda was tearful and said, “Is Lorraine alive? If she is alive we can care for her.”

Brenda was crying.

Patrick said, “I don’t know. Something is wrong with the telegram machine.”

Eleanor said, “They tried to kill her because she would not betray us daddy?”

Patrick teared up and said, “Yes.”

Brenda said, “Where is Lorraine?”

Patrick said, “I don’t know. Ryan was to send me a telegram. I know they received the release because the sheriff would not send us the telegram. Eleanor checked all the telegram machines. I don’t know if it is the bad weather moving in or what.”

Brenda said, “Patrick, lets pack and go and get Lorraine. We won’t be here with the family that is fine.”  
Patrick said, “But I have to finish this with the military tomorrow.”

Brenda threw her hand and said, “Let Eleanor do it.”

Eleanor turned still in a daze and said, “Momma.”

Brenda said, “We won’t say anything to the children. I’ll pack for us Patrick and come to the train station later and we can take that train with Joel and not stop until we get to Philadelphia.”

Patrick said, “Fine Brenda.’

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Patrick looked at a lost Eleanor. He knew GOD would not take him or Brenda until Eleanor become a little stronger.

He said, “Eleanor, there are more than enough workers here to help you. Only you, Claressa and Alvin don’t go into the kitchen.”

Eleanor knew her father was not changing his mind nor her mother.

She said, “When will you be back?”

Patrick said, “if she is alive whenever if up to the spring.”

Eleanor sat still.

Brenda looked at Eleanor and said, “Send the boys back to the military academy.”

Patrick said, “Yes Eleanor. They are finding themselves there and Thomas. Don’t let Thomas stay here with you.”

Eleanor nodded her head.

Brenda said, “A lot of things we can work on Patrick for those three days going to see about Lorraine.

That pitiful child. Eleanor check the time between the royal ball and Shirley’s graduation from college.”

Eleanor looked at Brenda and said, “What momma?”

Brenda said, “Eleanor make sure the telegram machines are working. Have Peter to make plenty of eggnog. I love eggnog.”

Patrick blew.

He said, “This year has been full of such misery, pain and death.”

Brenda said, “There is always suppose to be peace in the midst of the storm.”

Eleanor looked at Brenda and said, “How can your God do this?”

Brenda turned to Eleanor and said, “My GOD did none of this. This was the devil. What my GOD has done is to give us the path to walk in the midst of this great evil. HIS path is to pray. HE said, ‘Not by power, nor might but by HIS spirit. It takes HIM to give us peace by helping us to keep our minds on Him and thinking on HIS word.”

Eleanor shook her head, because she was not understanding what Brenda said, ”Patrick opened the door and walked out.

Brenda stood and walked behind Patrick.

Eleanor sat by the fireplace and tried to think about what makes a person that loyal to someone even to death.

She felt bad for Lorraine.

Patrick and Brenda dressed for bed.

Brenda always had their toiletries bag.

After every trip she re-fresh their bags.

She hated to not have toiletries.

Brenda took two coats, and scarf sets out and two pair of boots for she and Patrick.

Patrick looked at Brenda and said, “Come on Brenda.”

Patrick was on his knees on their prayer pillows.

They prayed for hours for Lorraine, Leon and those workers that left the re-modeled barn.

Brenda always wondered why they came back.

Brenda said, “GOD expose these evil ones and let the good ones prevail over them.

Patrick put the pillows back on the settee.

He and Brenda got in the bed.

Brenda went to sleep.

Patrick went to sleep but only slept for a short time.

He was thinking about Lorraine’s parentage. That she had no one but them.

Patrick eased out of bed.

He washed and shaved in the bathroom.

Patrick dressed and took his heavy coat, scarf and gloves that Brenda put down.

Jose could not sleep well.

He was thinking about his hellish parents.

He had to go to the train station with all of those cakes and then come back.

He already packed his carriage but had to stop in the capitol and get everything he ordered.

His family’s house was only a few minutes away from the center of town.

They always had Christmas Eve dinner after church service and Christmas Day brunch after church.

They visit friends and family all day and return home late evening and eat a simple Christmas meal.

Jose said, ”Church, church and church. But they came into these people’s house and was put out because of their filthy hearts. God save their souls before they die so they won’t go to hell forever.”

Jose stood and gathered his clothes and went and washed and shaved.

Jose walked back to his room and put on coffee that time of morning.

He went into his room and dressed.

Jose walked out his room and saw a figure in the hallway.

Patrick said, “It’s me Jose.”

Jose turned and walked into the kitchen and lit the lanterns and stirred the fire up in the stove.

Jose walked over to the counter and started checking the cakes.

Patrick said, “Jose is there anything to eat?”

Jose said, “Sir I was going to scramble some eggs and toast.”

Patrick said, “Can I have some?”

Jose said, “It’s all yours.”

Jose turned and walked to the stove and scrambled him two eggs and did Patrick’s sunny side up and gave Patrick cheese board.

Jose knew Patrick needed more protein in the morning according to Ryan.

Patrick got a cup of coffee and sat in the workers’ area.

Jose arranged the food on the plate and took a fork and napkin to Patrick.

Jose ate in the kitchen.

Patrick said, “Jose why are you sitting in the kitchen?”

Jose said, “My job.”

He was looking over the work schedule.

Nadine was in charge until Jose returned.

She woke early that morning and prayed.

Peter lifted his head off his pillows and looked at Nadine and fell back on his pillows.

He was in shock over Nadine praying.

Peter thought, “Maybe I did not marry the wrong woman.”

He said, “Nall. I married the wrong one. The spring I will leave.”

Peter smiled and went back to sleep.

Nadine heard Jose and Patrick in the kitchen area.

She gathered her things and was walking pass the kitchen.

She and Peter decided to come back to work the day before Christmas Eve in case they had to run errands.

Nadine saw Jose and said, “Good morning.”

Jose did not look at Nadine and said, “Good morning.”

Nadine looked at the boxes of cakes.

Nadine saw Patrick sitting and eating.

She said, “Good morning.”

Patrick said, “Good morning Nadine. I will be gone for a long time today. Mrs. Stith and Eleanor will be busy today. See to it that Sabrina leaves this morning.”

Sabrina was walking behind Nadine with her things.

Sabrina said, “Good morning Mr. Stith. I am leaving time I wash and dress.”

Patrick looked at Sabrina and saw she was just a little older than Shirley.

He thought he would want someone to keep an eye out for Shirley.

Patrick said, “Take something for you and your horse to eat and water to drink, so you don’t stop. There are reports of robbers on the roads. Telegram us when you are home.”

Sabrina was shock and felt the genuineness of Patrick.

She looked at Nadine who was looking at her.

Sabrina said, “Thank you sir. You all have a blessed and wonderful Christmas and New Years.”

Jose finished looking over the schedule.

He ate his breakfast of scrambled eggs and bread.

He put his plate and fork in the sink and washed and dried them and put them up.

Patrick said, “Thank you. The same to you and yours.”

Jose passed by with several cake boxes.

Nadine looked to see if he could reach the lock.

Jose unlocked the door and walked on the back porch.

Jose walked to the stables and got the wagon and the horses the stablemen hooked up last night.

He rode the wagon to the back porch.

Jose put several boxes in the wagon.

He came into the house and went to the linen closet and got several blankets.

Patrick looked at Jose.

He was going to ride his horse into town.

He thought, “I have to have my horse brought back when Brenda come in town.”

Patrick said, “Jose I am going to ride with you. Is there room?”

Jose looked and wondered why.

He said, “I have to put the rest of the boxes I the wagon.”

Patrick stood and carry his plate into the kitchen.

Jose walked back in and got several boxes.

Patrick picked up several boxes.

Jose thought, “Damn, suppose he drop the cakes.”

Sabrina dressed and went to the kitchen and cooked her a couple of eggs.

She packed a lunch of fruit and filled her water bottle.

She went to the stable and got her new horse and rode to the house.

Sabrina was packing her buggy while Jose was packing the carriage.

He looked at her and said, “Sabrina go and get several blankets and wrap up in them. It is suppose to be freezing all day today. And feed that horse before you leave.”

Patrick looked at Sabrina.

Sabrina was embarrassed.

Sabrina went and got some feed from the stables and put it in her feed bag.

She came back and feed her new horse.

She gave him some water.

Sabrina ran in the house and went into the linen closet.

She saw Nadine and said, “Nadine I sewed Maureen a Christmas dress. It is hanging up in my room. You need to bring her from down there and let her be up here with the rest of the workers. That is just as bad as her being home. Please give her this dress.”

Nadine said, “I will. And I will bring her from the basement.”

Sabrina got several blankets.

She said, “I’ll bring these backs and have a Merry Christmas.”

She ran out the house to her carriage.

She knew Angela would be coming soon and that Mr. Haynes would bring.

Sabrina jumped in the carriage.

Patrick and Jose were getting in the wagon.

Sabrina looked at Jose and said, “Me and Angela are no longer friends.”

Jose said, “Why are you telling me?”

Sabrina snapped the reigns and said, “Merry Christmas.”

She sped out the yard.

She sped all the way to the capitol no one was on the rode until day beak.

Sabrina let the horse decide how fast he wanted to go.

Patrick and Jose rode to town.

Patrick said, “Jose I don’t want trouble with workers.”

Jose said, “They have to work it out. Sabrina is dating one of those commanders.”

Patrick looked at Jose and said, “You know which one?”

Jose said, “No sir. I satay out their business.”

Patrick thought, “That’s the one she got the note from.”

They rode into town.

Jose said, “Patrick, are those the soldiers?”

Patrick looked back at the quiet troop and said, “I guess.”

They continued and reached town at daybreak.

The train was there.

Patrick said, “Jose we are not going to ask the soldiers for any help. You and me can take these cakes to the train. Joel can help.”

Jose looked at Patrick.

He looked at the troop of at least fifty soldiers that rode up in wagons.

Patrick and Jose got out the wagon.

Jose looked and saw the commanders and said, “Patrick.”

Patrick looked and saw the chief Commander Tyler, Commander Washington and Commander Brown.

Patrick looked and said, “Good morning.”

They spoke.

Jose realized whatever they were doing was extremely important.

He and Patrick started getting the boxes of cakes.

Chief Commander Tyler looked and said, “Soldiers.”

The soldiers jumped over the wagons and rushed to help Patrick and Jose.

Patrick said, “No we are fine.”

The soldiers took the boxes and walked across the tracks.’

Jose was happy.

Jose went back to the wagon to leave.

He looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “I have to wait until the next train come in.”

Jose said, “How are you getting home?”

Patrick stared at Jose.

Patrick was not thinking he was doing one thing at a time that day.

Joel walked to Patrick.

He spoke to the commanders.

Commander Washington dismounted his horse and walked to Joel and Patrick.

He shook Joel’s hand.

The chief Commander Tyler and Commander Brown dismounted their horses and walked to Patrick and Joel.

Commander Tyler looked at Jose.

Jose went back to the wagon and was sitting with his mouth poked out and his elbows on his knees wrapped in blankets.

Patrick followed Chief Commander Tyler’s eyes and saw Jose.

Patrick said, “Joel this is Chief Commander Tyler, Commander Washington and Commander Brown.’

Joel was nervous and spoke, “Good morning.”

He looked at Patrick and shrugged his shoulders, “What am I to say to such distinguish military elite?”

Patrick looked at Joel.

Patrick said, “Joel, the military is going to load supplies on your train. You stop two and a half miles down the track. Peter won’t be able to see you around the bend. Cut the engines and coast to that two and a half mark. The military should step out so you can see them.

You unlock the last two cars and let them get their supplies. Make sure the cars are empty and locked them and speed to the small city and stop. No one is getting on and let Mike and John get the boxes of cakes. You haul it out of there.”

Joel said, “Yes sir.”

Patrick said, “I want the passengers to make it to Philadelphia for Christmas morning. You will need extra coal. Get your men and…”

He turned and looked at Jose.

Jose stopped shaking and looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Commander Washington there is a lot of insulation material around back of the train station office. Your soldiers can cut it and cover their tents and that can help them be shielded from some of the cold.”

Chief Commander Tyler and Commander Brown watched the bratty Jose.

Jose turned his head.

Patrick said, “Jose! Come here.”

Joel looked at Jose.

Patrick said, “I like to do that to him.”

Joel snickered.

Patrick gave Jose the key to the train station office and said, “Peter is not here yet. He won’t be here until around ten. Start a fire in the stove. Help Joel get some extra coal and show Commander Washington the insulation material around back.”

Jose looked at Commander Washington and said, “You want me to show him something that is out back?”

Patrick stared at Jose.

Jose walked away wrapped in blankets that covered his two hats to the rail station.

He unlocked the rail station door.

Commander Washington stood and looked at Jose.

Jose pointed and said, “That stuff there.”

The Chief Commander Tyler and Commander Brown walked over to the train station office.

Patrick and Joel went to get more coal.

The soldiers were watching.

Commander Washington examined the insulation.

He stooped down and wondered how much was there.

The Chief Commander Tyler examined the insulation said, “This will work. They can cut it and throw it over their tents and maybe only need a nail or two to hold it on the tents.

Jose walked around back to look for the coal.

He saw them looking at him.

He did not care he was cold.

He put coal in the bucket and went back in the office and started a fire in the office.

Commander Brown stood and yelled for the soldiers.

The soldiers ran to the commander.

Jose closed the door to heat the office.

The soldiers picked up the heavy insulation and carried it to the train.

Commander Brown said, “Men load the extra coal on the train.”

Patrick and Joel were checking the train.

They moved the passengers up from the last two cars up front, so they could not see anything.

back three cars towards the center of the train.

The passengers were on the train from daybreak.

Commander Washington and the Chief Commander Tyler were talking.

Commander Brown were watching the soldiers.

He walked to Patrick and Joel and said, “Where the extra coal should go.”

Joel walked Commander Brown to the chute.

Jose was bundled up in the office.

Commander Tyler saw the door to the office closed.

Commander Washington continued to talk to Chief Commander Tyler.

It was fully day.

Peter rode to the train station.

He saw the military and the commanders.

He dis mounted his horse and said, “Good morning sirs, can I help you?”

Commander Washington said, “Mr. Stith is helping us.”

Peter looked and saw smoke from the chimney.

He nodded his head at the commanders and walked in the office.

He stood for a minute in the door and looked at the wrapped up person.

Peter said, “Mr. Stith.”

Jose said, “Outside.”

Peter looked and said, “Jose.”

Jose said, “Yeap.”

Peter said, “What is wrong with you are you cold?”

Jose sarcastically said, “Yes.”

Peter said, “Nice and warm. Let me go and find Mr. Stith so he will know I am at work. Jose, I did not get my Christmas meat. When I came Nadine said, there was no more meat.”

Jose said, You and I go to the butcher before we go back to the house, because I am off.”

Peter was about to walk out the door and stopped and closed the door back and said, “Jose what is the military doing here?”  
Jose said, “They got a lot of supplies coming in. You can go to the butcher and see what they have left. Nall just wait for me. Mr. Stith is riding with me.”

Peter walked out the door and went looking for Patrick.

The townspeople thought the train would come in at noon as usual.

Patrick did not inform them any differently because they had to unload the trains.

Joel pulled into the train station.

Patrick walked across the tracks and stood near the commanders.

The train stopped and Calvin and Joe jumped off and prepped the stairs.

Morgan jumped off and was looking for Mag.

He saw Patrick and started walking to him.

He saw the soldiers hurrying and getting supplies off one train and putting some on the other train and then some in their wagons.

Joe walked next to Morgan.

Patrick was thinking, “GOD don’t let them show out in front of these commanders.”

Patrick watched both of them.

Patrick saw Hal and another clerk run out another car with someone on a stretcher.

Patrick saw a man with them with a black doctor’s bag.

Hal ran to the office.

And knocked on the door.

Jose said, “Come in.”

He did not move or look back.

Hal rushed in and looked and said, “Sir, we got a sick person on a stretcher. I need for you to move so we can bring these two chairs together to put the stretcher on.”

Jose stood and butt pushed the chair to them.

Hal looked at Jose.

Hal and the clerk pulled the chairs together and put the stretcher on top of the chairs.

The man with the medical bag walked in the office and stood and looked.

Hal and the clerk, the preacher’s former roommate, ran out the office and back on the train and got the bags out the owners’ suite.

They rushed back to the office and shook Dr. Ralph’s hand.

Dr. Ralph was standing and watching the man that was covered up in the office and Lorraine who was sleep.

He thought Lorraine looked especially nice.

Hal complemented how nice Lorraine looked.

Hal said, “Merry Christmas doc.”

Dr, Ralph shook his hand and the clerk’s hand and said Merry Christmas.

Hal and the clerk were running back out the office when they saw Calvin having a hard time helping the fat female passenger out the train car door.

Patrick saw the men go back and forth out the office.

He saw when the women mis-stepped and fell on top of Calvin.

Patrick saw Calvin hit the ground.

The chief Commander Tyler and Commander Washington mouths dropped.

Joel, Morgan and Joe turned to see what the men were looking at and saw Calvin splattered on the ground.

Joe ran back.

Morgan nearly dropped to his knees hollering and holding his knees.

Hal and the clerk laughed out.

They saw Joe running back to help Calvin.

They ran to the train car and jumped on it and closed the door.

Dr. Ralph stood and looked at Calvin on the ground, but he could not leave Lorraine in the office with that strange man.

Peter ran to help get Calvin up.

Hal and the clerk locked the door and ran through the cars to come out the kitchen door to help Calvin.

One of the mothers of the children said, “Is he alright?”

The man who hated fat people and greedy people said, “I hope all of those cookies are crushed.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Calvin and saw he was not moving.

The fat female passenger just sat on Calvin and did not try to get up.

Hal and the clerk tried to move her.

She refused to help get off Calvin.

Joe hollered and told her to move.

He said, “Peter go and get the sheriff hurry.”

Then she tried to get up.

Her husband was standing on the train and said, “You getting the sheriff. Why?”

Joe said, “Because she is hurting him. A month in jail she’ll lose some weight and have respect for other people.”

The people started yelling.

Jose jumped up and ran to the window to peep out.

Patrick looked at the Chief Commander Tyler and Commander Washington.

Chief Commander Tyler said, “She is not trying to move.”

Pater ran pass them to go to the sheriff.

Commander Brown was over the military supplies and inventory.

He was checking everything off his list and marking what they were sending to the troops.

Joel was looking back at Commander Brown.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

He looked back at the man looking out the window.

He stared at the man.

The man felt someone staring at him he slowly turned and looked at the man.

Both men were standing and staring at each other.

Hal and the clerks pushed the fat female passenger off Calvin.

She splattered on her stomach.

Her husband rushed off the train with their bags.

The man that hated fat people and greedy people said, “He can’t even carry the bags. I bet that is her lunch.:

The turkey was wrapped in a bag and on the ground.

The man rushed to his wife and said, “Let’s. They sent for the sheriff to arrest you.”

The man helped his wife up.

She said, “Turkey.”

He handed her a bag and ran and got their turkey.

They tried to run out the yard.

Jose was looking out the window and he recognized the fat female passenger.

He was tolling with whether he was going home for the Christmas holiday.

He wanted to go home and visit his family.

But when he saw his aunt and her husband and how she did not try to move off the man.

He realized he does not want to have anything to do with those type of people.

Hal ran to the office and opened the door.

Dr. Ralph kept his eyes on the man in the office.

Hal opened the door and peed in and said, “Doc Calvin needs help.”

Jose heard the word ‘doc’.

He stared at the man and then he looked at the woman on the stretcher.

Dr. Ralph was getting ready to pull out his gun.

He looked back at Lorraine.

Jose said, “Doctor?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

Jose said, “Are you from Philadelphia?’

Dr. Ralph was thinking.

Jose said, “Do you work at the Stith.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Jose.

Dr. Ralph said, “Take off those hats.”

Jose took off the hats.

Dr. Ralph looked and said, “Jose.”

Hal was making sure he stood on the outside.

Jose looked around Dr. Ralph and said, “Is that my Lorraine?’

Jose started crying.

He said, “Can I see her?”

Dr. Ralph said, “She is not dead Jose. She is alive and well. We need to get to the house since Patrick did not get my telegram.”

Hal said, “I sent the telegram Joe just did not follow up. Come on Dr. Ralph since you know him. This means I have to go and get the liquor.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Don’t touch Jose.”

Jose walked to Lorraine and cried more.

Dr. Ralph ran out the office and ran to Calvin.

He brought Calvin to and checked his head and shoulders.

The women were grinning and smiling at Dr. Ralph.

Patrick was looking at the man and he thought he knew the man.

Commander walked back with the soldiers and looked.

The three boys were peeping off the train.

They saw the military soldiers and jumped off the train and started running to the soldiers.

The boys stopped and looked back at the train.

They pointed and said, “Mom. it’s dad?”

The mother peeped out the train and looked at the man the boys were pointing to.

She jumped off the train and ran down the track.

She ran to her sons and stood and looked at Commander Brown.

Patrick and Joel looked at Commander Brown.

The soldiers turned and looked at Commander Brown.

Chief Commander Tyler and Commander Washington looked at the woman and boys.

Commander Brown was shocked.

His mouth dropped open.

Joe was looking at the woman to see what was going on.

Joe stepped to the train and helped the people down.

Morgan saw Peter running back with Nathan.

Patrick was watching several things.

Patrick said, “Commander Brown the train got to go.”

Commander Brown looked at Patrick.

Commander Brown looked at Chief Commander Tyler and saluted and said, “Everything is loaded sir.”

Commander brown ran to the woman and the three boys he kissed the woman and held the boys.

He said, “Why are you here?”

The woman said, “We are spending the holidays here with your sister and her family.”

Commander Brown said, “My sister?”

The woman shook her head and said “She moved her to teach. She wanted me to move her and teach also.”

Commander Washington ran and grabbed his large bag.

Patrick looked at him.

Commander Washington ran to Patrick and said, “I’m going to the troops. I left a note with the co-pastor I asked him to let you preach Christmas Day.”

Commander Washington handed Patrick a note and shook his hand.

Patrick teared up and was shocked.

Joel and Commander Washington ran to the train.

Joel put Commander Washington in the last car by himself because there was no heat in the cargo cars.

The soldiers turned the wagons around and sped to the headquarters.

A soldier rode Commander Washington’s horse back to the headquarters.

The whistle blew and Joel took off.

They sped all the way to the small city.

Commander Brown stooped down was talking to his sons.

Chief Commander Tyler said, “Commander.”

Commander Brown stood and looked at the chief Commander Tyler.

Chief Commander Tyler said, “Settled your family in and return to the headquarters.”

Commander Brown said, “Yes sir.”

He saluted the Chief Commander Tyler.

Chief Commander Tyler said, “Find out how much we owe for the insulation.”

Patrick said, “It is free. A supplier lost his buyer and left in our warehouse.”

Chief Commander Tyler said, “Thank you Mr. Stith.”

Chief Commander Tyler rode away.

Brenda was rushing to catch the train and heard the train whistle blew.

Gary looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Why did Patrick let the train go?”

Commander Brown was holding his wife and his sons.

She was happy.

Joe was watching her.

He thought, “Nope.”

Nathan walked to Patrick and said, “Peter told me what happened. I don’t see her.”

Patrick said, “She left.”

Nathan said, “How did she leave?”

Patrick said, “Several workers pushed her off Calvin onto the ground. Her average size husband came and lifted her up and she told him to get their turkey, that apparently my cooks cooked for her. And they left.”

Nathan said, “Dirty people. I’ll walk around the front and see if I see her and give her a citation.”

Patrick said, “Peter walked with the sheriff and get their names and tell them they cannot ride my trains anymore.”

Peter said, “Yes sir.”

Patrick looked at Commander Brown and his family and saw the love.

A woman pulled up in a wagon and three boys jumped out and a woman and a man.

They ran to Commander Brown and his family.

They had a joyous reunion.

Patrick smiled.

He started walking to Calvin.

He looked at the office and knew Jose was hiding out.

That Jose did not work for the railroad.

Jose was letting the fire die out because no trains would be coming nor going until after Christmas.’

Dr. Ralph said, “Hal you all get him to the Stith hospital when you get back. I’ll telegram them he is coming.”

Joe said, “Thank you doc.”

Dr. Ralph said, “You are welcome.

He walked back to the office and opened the door.

Jose was still covered and he was still crying and still standing looking at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph walked in the office and saw the fire was going out.

Brenda rode up and looked at Patrick.

Patrick turned around and saw Brenda.

Many people were riding into the train station.

Joe walked to Patrick.

Patrick and Joe walked to Brenda’s carriage.

Patrick said, “The train was full, Joe?”  
Joe said, “Yes sir. We did not know it was full. Something is wrong with the telegram machines. They are spending their holidays with their military families.”

Patrick looked at Commander Brown and saw all the other people riding up.

He said, “I see.”

Brenda said, “What’s wrong with Calvin? Why are those workers taking him inside?”

Joe looked back and said, “A fat woman fell on him and hurt him. Boss, the problem is we won’t be able to make home by Christmas. You shut down on Christmas day. I asked the crew if you allow it whether we can go to Philadelphia and get there after Christmas or wait here and pick up the passengers the day after Christmas from here and push it back to Philadelphia so we can attend church services and some to preach on Sunday.”

Brenda and Patrick were listening.

Patrick said, “What have you decide?”

Joe said, “To stay here and leave after midnight Christmas Day and don’t stop in the small city and sped to Philadelphia. We can get there in time to de-board and get transportation for the preacher to go and preach.”

Brenda said, “If you leave now we can get back late Christmas Day. But it will still be Christmas.”

Patrick felt the note in his hand and he looked at Brenda.

He said, “Brenda.”

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “We are going to stay and leave the day after Christmas.”

Brenda said, “Why. We have to go and see about her and be with her.”

Joe thought they were talking about Beverly.

He said, “Beverly?”

Brenda forgot about him and Beverly and said, “No.”

Patrick said, “Commander Washington left to see about his troops. He asked me to preach at his church for Christmas Day.”

Brenda was mad.

Patrick looked at Brenda and said, “I’m going to do it.”

Joe looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Gary take me home.”

Joe whispered to Patrick, “She’s mad.”

Patrick and Joe stood back and Gary turned around and drove Brenda back home.

Patrick said, “You and your crew planning on staying on the train?”  
Joe said, “Yes sir.”

Patrick said, “Why”

Joe said, “We want to drink and gamble. And there is no room in the inn.”

Patrick said, “How many are you?”

Joe said, “Fifteen.”

Patrick said, “Fifteen workers on a full train.”

Joe said, “I did not know until we came into Cedartown. I need for Miss Eleanor to have the telegram machines repaired.”

Patrick said, “What about supplies?”

People were having great reunions.

Children were running and playing.

Joe said, “The cooks have to go grocery shopping. I see they have to shop for a train full. We have to stock up on water and coal and fuel.”

Patrick said, “The weather is to be bad.”

Joe said, “That’s funny just before we got here it was snowing. And not a flake of snow here.”

Patrick said, “That gives you time to get settle.”

They stood and watch as more and more people were leaving.

Patrick said, “Joe you and the crew can stay at my house.”

Joe said, “I would like to see your house. But you have had enough people being in your house. We can have a very Merry Christmas on this train. We can all be in one car and have separate accommodations. The cooks can cook for only fifteen people. I do want to re-stock before it snows. You know snow makes everything heavy.”

Patrick said, “Yes. I need to go in the office and send this telegram to the telegram repair man. I don’t feel right that yall will be here Christmas Eve and Christmas day and not having dinner with me.”

Joe said, “We are grown men.”

Hal and one of the clerk were walking towards the town square.

Joe said, “You got my order?”

Hal said, “Hello Mr. Stith. Yes Joe. Mr. Stith we took good care of Miss Lorraine.”

Hal and the clerk kept walking and talking.

Patrick was watching the people leaving the train.

He saw the cooks leaving the train.

Nathan walked back with Peter and said, “We did not see them.”

Patrick said, “Thank you sheriff. I am going to preach on Christmas Day at the Philadelphia church on third avenue on the other side of the military headquarters.”

Nathan said, “Really Patrick? I am going to try to come me and Denise. You always supported me.”

Nathan stood and looked at Patrick.

Patrick looked at Nathan.

Nathan said, “Is that your calling?”  
Patrick said, “I don’t know. I am excited. Brenda is not.”

The cooks passed Patrick and said, “Hello Mr. Stith.”

Patrick said, “Hello. Merry Christmas. Wait a minute Bryon are you going grocery shopping?”

Byron said, “Yes sir.”

Patrick said, “You need transportation.

He looked at Peter and said,” Peter go to the stables and get one of the wagons that have a cover and take it to the grocer.”

Joe said, “Byron you can go and shop and Peter will bring the wagon to the grocer.”

Peter said, “Mr. Stith I went to get my Christmas meat and Nadine told me there was no meat left.”

Patrick said, “You need your meat. Tell Byron to get it for you.”

Peter said, “Yes sir.”

Peter ran to the stables.

Patrick was paralyzed.

Nathan saw Patrick’s face said, “Patrick what is wrong.”

Joe looked at Patrick.

Joe looked for Brenda.

Patrick mouth was moving but he was not saying anything.

Joe stared at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Did Hal said he took care of Miss Lorraine?’

Joe looked at Patrick and said, “Yes. You said to put her in the owner’s suite.”

Patrick said, “Is she alive?”

Joe said, “Yes.”

Patrick nearly dropped to his knees.

Nathan and Joe caught Patrick.

Patrick said, “Where is she?”

Joe said, “She is in the office with that doctor.”

Patrick said, “A doctor is with her?”

Joe and Nathan lifted Patrick up.

Patrick said, “I have to see her.”

Joe said, “You and Brenda was about to get on the train to go to Philadelphia to see Lorraine and she is here?”

They walked Patrick to the office.

Nathan opened the door.

Dr. Ralph turned and saw them carrying Patrick into the office.

Dr. Ralph said, “Patrick?”

Patrick saw Lorraine sleep on the stretcher.

He saw Jose standing up with the blankets covering him.

Patrick fell to his knees.

Nathan looked at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph ran to Patrick.

Patrick was on his elbows and he was praising GOD and rocking.

Dr. Ralph looked at Patrick and stood and let him prayed.

Nathan smiled at Loraine.

Jose said, “We have to get her home. I am going to pull the wagon here. I need some help. She lost some weight. That was all that alcohol she drank.”

Dr. Ralph smiled and held her hand.

Joe looked down at Patrick.

Jose ran to the wagon and rode it to the office.

He and Nathan carried Lorraine to the wagon.

Nathan looked at Jose.

Jose looked at Nathan.

Nathan said, “Jose give her the blankets.”

Jose looked at Nathan.

Joe brought the bags to the wagons and placed them behind Lorraine’s head.

Lorraine moved.

Nathan and Jose looked at her.

Nathan snatched the blankets from Jose and double them and put them over Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph and Patrick were waking out the office.

Jose ran into the office and got his two hats and put out the fire.

He closed the office up and hut the hats on his head.

Nathan helped Patrick in the wagon.

Dr. Ralph crawled in the back with Lorraine.

Patrick turned and looked back at a sleeping Lorraine.

Nathan waved and walked back to his office.

Joe went to the train and got the workers to re-fuel, fill the water barrel and get all the fuel they needed.

Peter got a ham for his meat.

Byron said he would cook it.

Byron stayed on the train for several days with the train crew.

He took the cooked ham to his mother Christmas Day. He and several workers including the preacher went to the church to her Patrick.

Joe went to hear Patrick.

Patrick was staring at Lorraine.

He said, “Brenda and I were to be on the train with Joel going to Philadelphia to spend Christmas with Lorraine.”

Dr. Ralph and Jose looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Our telegram machines have been malfunctioning. We did not know Lorraine was on the way here. We got the telegram from the sheriff the nurse poisoned Lorraine.”

Jose yelled, “What!”

Lorraine whispered, “Jose” and went back to sleep.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

Patrick said, “We sent the release papers to Ryan. I sent a telegram for Joe to put her and whoever was with her in the owners’ suite. But the Commander Washington went with his troop and wanted me to preach in his place on Christmas Day.”

Dr. Ralph said, “That was the way God did to keep you from leaving to go to Philadelphia.”

Patrick said, “Brenda is mad.”

Jose said, “We have to surprise everybody. You want Lorraine and Dr. Ralph by the library and bathroom.”

Dr. Ralph said, Patrick I must see this library that Dr. Greene and Dr. Woodson love.”

Jose said, “I have been speeding and we are just about home. I forgot to get Peter his Christmas meat.”

Patrick said, “I told the cooks from the train to get it for him.”

Jose said, “I’m freezing.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Patrick, I will ride up to the house.

I’ll run in the house and get the family together and gathered and I think the boys were trying to go riding today. Is that alright with you or do you have another idea?”

Patrick said, “That’s fine Jose.”

Dr. Ralph said, “It is cold out here.”

Jose pulled up in front of the house and knocked on the door.

Nadine ran to the door and unlocked it and removed the bar.

Nadine was peeping at the wagon.

Jose thought she can spoil this surprise.

He said, “Where are the boys?”

Nadine said, “Upstairs in their rooms.

Jose ran up the stairs and yelled, “Surprise!!”

The boys ran out their rooms and was looking.

Shirley ran out her room.

Bruce looked at Shirley.

Jose said, “Where is Eleanor?”

Percy said, “In her office.”

Jose said, “This is big. Go and get her Percy and run her to the bottom of the stairs.”

Percy and Thomas ran to get Eleanor.

Nadine was still trying to look out in the wagon.

Jose said, “Nadine get away from there and if you open your mouth you and I will fight you.”

Brenda heard all the talk.

She was walking from her bedroom and walked to the hall.

Jose said, “Where is Brenda?”

Brenda looked up the stairs and said, “I’m here?”

Jose was so excited.

He said, “No one moves.”

Percy and Eleanor were running from her office.

Jose ran pass Nadine and opened the door.

Nadine stood and stared at Jose.

Jose motioned for Patrick and Dr. Ralph.

Patrick was out of the wagon and was helping Dr. Ralph to get Lorraine out the wagon.

Patrick was trying to cover Lorraine with the blankets.

Lorraine woke and glimpsed the house.

She smiled.

Dr. Ralph kissed her forehead.

Lorraine said, “Dress.”

Patrick looked at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph said, “She doesn’t want her dress covered.”

Jose was blocking Nadine’s view.

Peter and Dan walked from the kitchen.

Mellissa was in the billiards room and ran out.

Peter walked to Nadine.

Dan was looking out the formal dining room window.

Nadine stared at Jose.

Patrick walked in front of them and entered the house.

Jose said, “No body say anything.”

Jose looked at Nadine.

Nadine looked at the door and saw Patrick and a man.

Then she saw the man carrying a woman.

She passed out.

Dr. Ralph looked down at Nadine and stopped.

Peter peeped at the woman and realized it was Lorraine.

He bent down to help Nadine.

Dan looked and saw it was Lorraine.

He stood still.

Patrick stepped aside.

Michael saw Dr. Ralph and he screamed.

Brenda jumped and looked at Michael.

Michael jumped the stairs and ran as fast as he could to Dr. Ralph.

Shirley screamed and said, “Dr. Ralph!”

She skipped stairs and ran fast behind Michael.

Dr. Ralph was so thrilled to see them.

He saw Shirley run.

A miracle that GOD gave her bones, and muscles and removed the scar tissue that other doctors did to make money.

Dr. Greene and Dr. Woodson saw Shirley run.

Hutch saw Shirley run.

Now Dr. Ralph see Shirley run.

Dr. Ralph looked at them and grinned.

He was very happy to see them.

The closer Michael got to Dr. Ralph he stopped.

Patrick looked at Michael.

Then Shirley stopped.

Eleanor saw Dr. Ralph carrying someone.

She recognized the brown hair.

Eleanor ran pass Shirley and Michael to Dr. Ralph.

Percy ran behind Eleanor.

Thomas and Bruce ran down the stairs behind Eleanor.

Lorraine was smiling with tears in her eyes.

Eleanor hugged Lorraine.

Percy and Bruce were happy to see Lorraine.

Eleanor could not talk and pointed to the parlor.

Brenda stood still.

Then she realized it was Lorraine.

She walked to the parlor.

Patrick walked to the parlor with Thomas, Percy and Bruce.

Patrick waited for Brenda and kissed Brenda on her head.

Brenda walked into the parlor and took the blankets from Patrick and covered Lorraine.

Lorraine looked at Brenda.

Brenda was crying and patted Lorraine’s face.

The children gathered around Lorraine.

Lorraine recognized them and smile.

Michael said, “Thank you Dr. Ralph for bringing Lorraine home.”

Dr. Ralph smiled and he looked in the gentle eyes of Michael and said, “You are welcome Michael.”

Michael looked in the eyes of Dr. Ralph and then he turned and looked back at Lorraine.

Jose walked back to help Nadine up.

Dan and Peter helped pick Nadine up and carried her to she and Peter’s room.

Mellissa knew something was going on when Percy was screaming for Eleanor to run and pushing her to the foyer.

Mellissa ran to the billiards.

Other servants began to gather in the billiards room to wait.

Mellissa could not see and she walked out to the foyer and saw a thinner Lorraine.

She recognized her by her smile.

She ran behind Percy who ran behind Eleanor.

Mellissa ran to the parlor and walked in.

She looked in the eyes of Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph looked at the overweight mixed woman.

He saw her heart was full of happiness for Lorraine.

He smiled.

Mellissa looked at Lorraine and smiled.

She walked back to the billiards room and cleaned it.

Jose stood back and watched Lorraine.

Lorraine yawned.

Jose ran to get their suites ready.

Michael looked back and said, “Jose.”

Michael stood and looked for Jose.

Brenda said, “I think he is gone to get their rooms ready.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Michael and thought, “Sir Michael he makes sure things are done. Lorraine is fine.”

His mind went to them sneaking off the boat to go gambling, cussing, coming up with schemes.

Dr. Ralph’s eyes filled with tears.

He knew he could leave Lorraine there and she would be cared for.

Patrick and Brenda watched Dr. Ralph.

They saw he loved Lorraine deeply.

The servants ran into the foyer.

Patrick and Brenda heard the workers.

Glenda walked pass Patrick and Brenda and stood and looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine looked at the white woman in front of her and lifted her hand.

Glenda swelled and teared up.

She wiped her eyes.

Dr. Ralph watched the woman.

Glenda walked to Lorraine and kneeled down.

She took Lorraine’s hand and held it in hers.

Dr. Ralph watched the love in Lorraine’s eyes for this woman.

Gary ran into the parlor and looked at Lorraine.

He wept out.

Dr. Ralph looked at Gary.

Gary covered his mouth and walked out the parlor.

Elizabeth looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Hot damn Lorraine.”

Dora said, “Thank you for my Christmas gift Lorraine.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Dora.

Lorraine was turning her head to see the faces.

Brenda said, “I have told you so and so’s to leave other women men alone and go and get your own.”

Patrick closed his eyes and shook his head.

Bridgette said, “Au Miss Brenda you know we are just playing.”

Brenda turned and looked at them and said, “I know all of you.”

Patrick said, “Dr. Ralph, excuse us. Sometimes we don’t know how to act with company.”

Roger said, “If he brought Lorraine back, then he is family.”

He, Ben, Travis, Scott and Wallace walked out behind Gary.

Dr. Ralph looked at the men.

Michael walked out the parlor and down the foyer to the hall.

He saw Jose going from one suite to the next.

Michael stood in the hall and watched Jose.

Jose ran up the hallway and said, “Michael, do you know where Shirley’s wheelchair is?”

Michael said, “Yeah.”

He turned and Jose followed Michael.

They walked through the billiards room.

Mellissa was grinning.

Michael and Jose went into the storage room and got Shirley’s wheelchair and took it to the parlor.

Lorraine opened her mouth.

Dr. Ralph said, “She’s hungry.”

Shirley was on her knees in front of Lorraine.

Eleanor sat next to Lorraine the boys were sitting on the other sofas and chairs.

Patrick said, “Brenda we had no communications for several days. If we would have caught that ten am train we would have missed Lorraine.”

Brenda held Patrick’s hand around her shoulder.

Brenda said, “Can we put together a Christmas Eve brunch to celebrate GOD sending Lorraine home?”

Dora said, “When?”

Patrick shook his head.

Dr. Ralph had to look to make sure Dora was joking.

He looked at Patrick and saw Patrick was sick of them.

Brenda said, “Dr. Ralph they are the reason Ryan had me and Patrick in the hospital testing us.”

Dr. Ralph smile.

Shirley stood.

Brenda said, “Shirley where are you going?”

Shirley said, “To the kitchen to get Lorraine some food.”

Brenda said, “How do you know what to get?”

Shirley said, “It has to be what they fed me.”

She said, “Sweet milk and oatmeal.”

Dr. Ralph said, “That’s right Shirley with a little honey for energy.”

Shirley looked back at Dr. Ralph.

Brenda said, “Tell one of the cooks to come here.”

Brenda said, “Jose, how many workers will be here tomorrow?”

Harriet said, “Too many to have it in the formal dining room.”

Brenda said, “Harriet, it will be in the formal dining room.”

Glenda kissed Lorraine’s hand and patted it.

She stood and walked out the parlor.

Patrick said, “I have a stuck railroad crew I want here. Plus Peter, Mag. Brenda, Morgan is here.”

Brenda looked with her mouth opened and said, “What!”

Patrick said, “Nathan and Denise and Gen.”

Brenda said, “Bryce and Stephen, Joe and Peggy.”

Patrick said, “I have to send telegrams. Eleanor.”

Eleanor looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “I’ll send messages.”

He turned and looked at the workers who were disbursing and laughing and talking.”

Patrick stepped back in the foyer and said, “Who wants to leave early today?”

Roger yelled, “What we have to do?”

Patrick said, “Go and invite people to the brunch?”

Roger yelled, “So anybody we see on the street?”

Dr. Ralph held his head down.

Eleanor smiled.

Patrick said, “Roger you would pulled that crap. You go back to work. Anybody else?’

Roger said, “Au Mr. Patrick you know I was playing.”

Patrick said, “Roger you go to my best friends Bryce, Stephen and the Mc Clendons and invite them to Christmas Eve brunch along with Sara.”

Patrick said, “Wallace, you live near Peter. Tell him and Mag and all their guests.”

Brenda said, “Patrick…”

Patrick turned and looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Harriet is going to jump you for inviting all of those people.”

Patrick did not respond and turned back and said, “Who lives near Brad and Cynthia?”

Dan was walking up from the billiards room.

He said, “I do.”

Patrick said, “You want to leave early today?”

Dan said, “I’m off today. I just came in to do inventory. I see we will need much more food.”

Patrick said, “we are doing a welcome home Christmas Eve brunch for Lorraine. I want to invite Brad and Cynthia, Timothy and Laura and Gen. Claressa and Alvin.”

Dan looked at the time and said, “Mr. Stith the food is not right.”

Eleanor and Brenda looked at Dan who walked to the parlor.

Patrick said, “Dan we just went through this.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Dan and Patrick.

He saw the concern on Brenda and Eleanor’s face.

Percy looked at Patrick.

Bruce walked to Patrick.

Patrick patted Bruce on his back.

Thomas did not move but sat and watched Lorraine.

Patrick said, “Dan what are we low on?”

Dan said, “A lot. We bake those twenty-five cakes, but that should not have exhausted our supplies.”

Patrick said, “Dan you go into town and double buy everything. Take a covered wagon. I’ll get someone to go and tell the others I want to invite.”

Brenda said, “Dan the meat might be in short supply. Do your best.”

Patrick said, “That’s what peter said, He came here and Nadine said no meat was left.”

Brenda said, “Dan you know I want a ha Christmas Ham and a goose. If they don’t have them whatever you can get.”

Eleanor said, “I can go and invite Claressa and Alvin.”

Thomas jumped up and said, “Momma, Can I go with you?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Thomas said, “I can ride my horse.”

Dr, Ralph smiled.

He thought that was what they would do with their mother, ride along side her carriage.

He thought, “God why am I thinking about my beloved mother.”

Eleanor said, “No. We are riding in my carriage and get several blankets.”

Patrick said, “I may need to write a check.”

Dan said, “Then I can see, “Mr. Brad at the bank and tell him.”

Patrick said, “That’s right. So we only have Timothy and Laura and Gen.”

Shirley waited while Peter cooked the oatmeal.

He heated the milk.

Shirley asked for some honey.

She said, “Peter how is Nadine?”

Peter said, “She is ok.”

Shirley was surprised the way Peter responded, like he did not care about Nadine.

She was thinking about Peter’s attitude as she walked through the formal dining room and down to the parlor.

Eleanor saw Shirley’s face.

Brenda saw Shirley’s face.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley?”

Shirley looked at Dr. Ralph.

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

Brenda was concerned and looked at Shirley.

Shirley looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “I asked the cook how was his wife and he said ’she’s ok.”

Eleanor said, “Shirley…”

Shirley looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Don’t be concerned they have to work through that. Thomas and I are going to invite Claressa and Alvin to brunch tomorrow.”

Eleanor looked at Brenda and said, “Momma isn’t Timothy and Laura the next neighbor from Gen?”

Brenda said, “Yes.”

Eleanor said, “We can invite them and we can make Gen our last stop. We should be back by dinner.”

Jose took the wheelchair into the parlor.

Dr. Ralph said, “Lorraine should be more comfortable sitting up in bed.

Jose went outside and brought their bags in the house.

Eleanor saw Jose and said, “Jose tell the stablemen to bring my carriage around and hook two horses to it.”

Jose walked down the hall and placed the bags in Lorraine and Dr. Ralph rooms.

Brittany and Louise were assigned by Jose to attend to Lorraine and Dr. Ralph suites.

Harriet was always assigned to Brenda and Patrick’s suite

Ruth was off and would return on Christmas Eve and spend the holiday at the house.

Brenda said, “Patrick, I don’t know about all these unbalance people.”

Patrick said, “Brenda, GOD put them here for a reason.”

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Jose told Brittany and Louise to see what else Lorraine and Dr. Ralph needed.

He ran up the hall and went outside.

He rode the wagon to the stables.

Jose told the stablemen that Eleanor wanted her carriage and hook two horses to the carriage and take it around to the front of the house.

The stablemen put the Jose’s horses and wagon up for the day and closed the stable doors.

Jose shook his head.

He thought, “The smell.”

Dan was running to the stables when Jose was running out. Dan said, “Joe give me a covered wagon and four horses.”

Jose stopped and looked at Dan and said, “Four horses?”

Dan said, “Jose a lot of the food is gone. Patrick told me to buy double.”

Jose stood and looked at Dan.

He turned and ran back in the house and went to his room.

He hung up his coat and put up his hats and gloves.

Dr. Ralph picked Lorraine up and walked out the parlor.

Patrick said, “Your rooms are closest to the hall.”

He and Brenda walked them to their rooms.

Dr. Ralph looked at Patrick and Brenda and yelled, “Michael, Bring me the wheelchair!”

Michael ran out the parlor with the wheelchair.

Thomas and Michael ran and played.

Dr. Ralph turned and looked at the house.

He put Lorraine in the wheelchair.

He said, “Michael remember what I taught you.”

Michael said, “Yeah.”

He and Thomas ran down the hall with Lorraine in the wheelchair.

Brittany stood outside Lorraine’s door and said, “Hello Lorraine.”

Dr. Ralph looked at the house as he, Patrick and Brenda walked down the hall.

Louise was grinning.

Patrick said, “Dr. Ralph this is Louise she is to take care of your suite. Whatever you need or want she will get it for you. The men will bring heavy items to you. I have to see who we have to take care of Lorraine until the nurses start.”

Louise said, “Hello Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Hello Louise.”

Shirley was walking behind them with Lorraine’s food, spoon and napkin.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

Shirley looked at Dr. Ralph and then he looked at the food.

Patrick and Brenda watched Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph stood in the doorway and looked in Lorraine’s suite.

Lorraine, Michael and Thomas were looking out the balcony window.

Shirley squeezed by Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley and moved he said, “Excuse me Shirley.”

Shirley smiled.

Shirley walked to Lorraine and said, “Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “Lorraine does not have on any shoes.”

Dr. Ralph said, “We sent all her clothes here.”

Michael said, “Lorraine does not like anyone to pick out her shoes but her.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Right. I figured her being covered up and immediately getting in the carriage would stop some fashion minded young lady for questioning me about her dress.”

Patrick laughed.

Thomas laughed.

Eleanor was standing at the hall yelling, “Thomas.”

Patrick looked back at Eleanor and said, “Thomas your mother is calling you.”

Thomas jumped from his knees and kissed Lorraine on her cheek and ran out her room.

Dr. Ralph stepped back and watched Thomas.

Brenda thought, “A GOD sent doctor. I want him and Lorraine to be together. I did not want that before. He, Hutch and Bradley have the right to marry and have families. GOD, I ask YOU to forgive me for blocking these people. In JESUS’ name.”

Dr. Ralph walked in the suite and picked Lorraine out the wheelchair.

Michael pulled back the cover.

Dr. Ralph put Lorraine in the bed.

Michael covered her up.

He sat on her bed.

Shirley sat in the wheelchair and fed Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph looked at them.

Brenda shrugged her shoulders.

Dr. Ralph was thinking Shirley should sit on the bed and Michael in the wheelchair.

He walked out the room.

Brittany was standing and looking.

Dr, Ralph looked t her and walked out.

Dr. Ralph said, “Patrick would you show me your library?’

Patrick grinned and they walked down the hall and stopped.

Dr. Ralph looked and grinned.

He said, “Bradly, Hutch and Tony were in awe at this library. I see why.”

They heard Eleanor fussing about covering up.

Percy, Bruce and Thomas were leaving with her.

They walked out the front door and piled in the carriage and covered up with blankets.

Eleanor sped out of their tard and went to Claressa and Alvin.

She sent Percy to invite them to Christmas Eve brunch for Lorraine.

Claressa clasped her hands and nodded yes.

Percy ran back to the carriage and Eleanor sped to Timothy and Laura.

Bruce jumped out and ran and knocked on the door.

Laura answered the door.

Daniel was standing in the room looking out.

Eleanor leaned forward and waved.

Laura looked back in the room and smiled.

She nodded yes.

Bruce ran off the porch.

Laura closed the door.

Daniel opened the door and ran off the porch and said, “Hello Miss Eleanor grandmother said what time?”

Laura was standing in the door.

Eleanor said, “No later than noon.”

Daniel said, “Grandmother no later than noon.”

He turned back and said, “Miss Eleanor, pancakes?”

Bruce and Thomas said, “Yeap.”

Eleanor looked at them and said, “Daniel we have to see they got really sick from eating pancakes.”

Daniel said, “I know when to stop.”

Daniel stood and watched them pulled off.

He turned and walked back in the house.

Laura closed the door.

Bruce started singing Christmas carols.

They all jumped in and sang and greeted people on the streets.

Eleanor pulled to Gen’s house.

She started to get out but turned to Thomas and said, “Thomas you go and invite Aunt Gen to the Christmas Eve brunch tomorrow. Tell her no later than noon. Tell her Lorraine is back.”

Gen opened the door and greeted Thomas.

She grinned big and looked at Eleanor and nodded her head.

Percy said, “Lets invite Robert and Bethany and baby Robert.”

Eleanor sat for a minute and thought and said, “Percy that is a good idea, but they have their own restaurant and will be busy.”

Bruce said, “Mother.”

Eleanor looked back at Bruce and sped to Robert and Bethany.

Percy and Bruce jumped out the carriage.

Robert saw the expensive carriage pull up and looked at the horses and knew it was one of the Stith’s.

He saw tall slim Percy jump out the carriage followed by the shorter good looking Bruce.

Robert wondered what they wanted.

Bethany saw them walking and talking.

She said, “Robert.”

Robert walked to the door and looked at the carriage.

Percy said, “We are having a Christmas Eve brunch tomorrow.”

Bruce said, “Lorraine came home today. We are welcoming her back.”

Percy said, “Momma said, you are busy but we are inviting you. She said no later than noon.”

Robert was proud of Percy and Bruce’s manners.

He thought they are growing up.

Robert said, “Thank you. Tell your family thanks, but we are very busy tomorrow and part of Christmas. Tell Lorraine we send our well wishes.”

Bruce said, “Thank you.”

The boys turned and was walking out.

Percy yelled, “Merry Christmas.”

Bethany and Robert said, “Merry Christmas.”

Robert two men that were seated near the windows watched the boys.

His heart dropped.

He thought, “They cannot enjoy this life because somebody is watching to steal something.”

The men stood to rush out.

Percy and Bruce jumped in the carriage and Eleanor sped away.

Robert watched the two men walk away.

Bethany looked at the two men and then she looked at Robert.

Robert said, “I remember when those boys gave me hell.”

Bethany laughed.

Patrick and Brenda stood and watched their grandchildren help Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph said, “Do you mind if I walk and look?”

Brenda looked up the hall and said, “That Harriet.

Brenda said, “You are welcomed to tour our home Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Ryan bragged about the times he has been with you but he has not seen anything like this.”

Dr. Ralph looked at the settee in front of the window and said, “That remind me of my childhood.”

Brenda looked at Patrick because no one knew anything about Dr. Ralph.

Brenda said, “Let me guess. New England townhouse.”

Dr. Ralph said, “No. My family had much cattle. We hand a ranch house.”

He looked at their house and said, “It was about a third this size. They had cattle drives. I lost my father on one of those cattle drives. They did bring his body back to be buried at the family burial ground. He would always catch a wild horse for me and my younger brother and bring them back. The boys gave me a Christmas gift with the exact type of horses my father would catch. I just don’t know how they did it.”

Dr. Ralph walked away and looked at the other suites.

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Patrick whispered, “Money family.”

Brenda said, “Good girl Lorraine.”

Patrick got mad and walked away from Brenda to Dr. Ralph.

Brenda turned and walked to Harriet.

Brenda followed them to the formal dining room.

Glenda and Harriet were trying to decide on the china set to use.

Brenda said, “Use the porcelain with the Christmas tree and for Christmas dinner use the red poinsettia. We will be hosting Lorraine and an ambassador and his wife.”

Peter had made a brunch menu.

He walked through the house and saw Brenda.

Peter said, “Ma am here is the menu I made based on what we have.”

Brenda looked over the menu and frowned.

Glena and Peter looked at her.

Brenda said, “Peter there is no meat on this menu. Everything is fine, but where is the meat?”

Harriet stopped and looked at Peter.

Glenda turned around and looked at Peter.

Peter was embarrassed and said, “I don’t know the meat is gone.”

Harriet said, “I haven’t gotten my Christmas ham.”

Glenda said, “Nor me.”

Benda stood and looked at them and said, “You supposed to have gotten your meat last week. Who told you there was no meat?”

Glenda said, “Nadine.”

Harriet said, “Nadine.”

Peter stood and looked at them.

Brenda said, “Harriet find out who else has not received their meat.”

She turned to Peter and said, “Peter go into town to the butcher and buy whatever type of meat especially breakfast meat. I know you are not to work until tomorrow, put it down for overtime.”

Peter said, “Yes ma am.”

He ran through the house to the kitchen.

He went to the stables and got a wagon and ran two horses and sped to town.

Peter made it just in time to buy the rest of the bacon, sausage, mackerel and salmon.

He sped back to the house.

Brenda told Harriet to go and get Jose.

Jose was dressing to leave to go to the capitol. He had the horses and the carriage outside by the kitchen.

He did not want the horses to be in the cold for long since he had a long ride to and from.

Jose ran through the house to see what Brenda wanted.

Brenda was walking down.

Harriet was running behind Jose.

Glenda was putting the finishing decorations in the formal dining room.

Brenda said, “Glenda it is beautiful. Thank you.”

Glenda smiled.

Brenda did not know Glenda and Lorraine were close until that day.

She wondered if Glenda knew anything of Lorraine’s people.

She dared not ask her because Patrick will get mad.

Jose saw Brenda and he and Harriet ran to Brenda.

Brenda looked at Jose and said, “Jose, you are not off until tomorrow.”

Harriet looked at Jose.

Jose stared at Brenda.

Brenda said, “What is going on with the meat in this house? Harriet and Glenda said they did not get their Christmas hams.”

Jose said, “Peter said, that today that Nadine told him there was no meat. But Thomas and Dan moved all the meat to the smokehouse to be kept fresh. They should have told Nadine. So she would not be telling people there was no meat.”

Brenda said, “Well me and Patrick sent Dan and peter into town to buy meat. I do want the brunch for Lorraine to be nice. I hope people will come. Peter did wonderful brunch menu with his now famous pancakes.”

Jose looked at Brenda and smirked.

Harriet laughed.

Glenda said, “I am off Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, but I want to come to the brunch and can I get the ham cooked here so I can take it when I leave on Christmas Eve?”

Harriet said, “Me too.”

Brenda looked at them and wondered about their food.

She said, “Yes. Tell Dan.”

Glenda and Harriet were happy.

Jose looked at them and said, “How are you going to get the hams home?”  
Brenda looked at them and walked away.

Harriet and Glenda looked at Jose.

Jose turned and ran back to his room and put on his boots, two coats, two hats and took the three blankets he had earlier.

He ran out his room and closed the door and ran to the carriage.

Jose looked at the time and thought, “I should be able to go and do all of this and be back tonight.”

He touched his thigh.

He turned around and sped back to the house.

Jose ran into the house and grabbed his guns and put the holster on and ran back out the door while Patrick and Dr. Ralph stood out of his way.

Jose ran back to the carriage and sped out the yard.

He sped all the way to the state capitol.

Jose went from shop to shop.

He had his orders gift wrap.

He was coming out the last shop and saw his fat female aunt from the train that day.

She was walking down the street with his mother and father and her husband, eating cookies.

Jose started to stand and speak to them.

He looked at them and turned and went and put the gifts in the carriage.

He sped to his parents’ house.

Jose pulled up in front of the house and gathered as many gifts as he could and took them in the house.

He made a second trip.

He sat in the sitting room just to say he sat and waited for them.

Jose heard horses.

He jumped and ran out the house and jumped in the carriage and sped away.

Jose sped through town and saw his parents and his aunt and uncle going to dinner.

Jose thought, “Thank you God.”

He sped back to the house.

He thought, “What are they going to do with all of that meat.”

Jose was covered up and he thought about Sabrina as it was getting dark.

He was glad he was not there when Angela left work.

Jose thought, “That is mess with that man. I’m glad Sabrina is gone and that commander will not tolerate Angela’s mess.”

He continued back to the house.

He stopped by is house and thought, “I will be so glad when those people give me the clear deed. I want to move in at first spring.”

Jose walked around the house and saw where he would continue the flower garden, so he can sit out in his back yard and read.

Jose got in the carriage and rode back to the Stith’s house.

He passed Gen and thought her house was nice with the three lanterns burning.

He saw one of Gen’s neighbors across from her lighting his lamps.

He said, “Good, there is someone else in this neighborhood.”

Jose passed Shirley’s house and he said, “She will have something to do and get out of my hair.”

Jose enjoyed his ride to the capitol.

He arrived back as George and Willie were lighting the lanterns.

Patrick, Brenda and Dr. Ralph were standing and watching how nice the house looked with the lights.

Eleanor was behind Jose.

Patrick, Brenda and Dr. Ralph looked at Jose and Eleanor and the boys.

Eleanor stopped and the boys jumped out and walked with Patrick, Brenda and Dr. Ralph.

They all walked to the house.

Nadine stood at the door and gathered their coats.

Shirley was walking down the hall to the family dining room with Lorraine’s meal tray.

Dr. Ralph looked at her and was proud of her.

Brenda and Patrick looked at Dr. Ralph and smiled.

Shirley said, “Me and Brittany changed Lorraine into her cream colored nightgown and robe. I fed her and she went to sleep. Can I go to her house tomorrow and get some of her clothes?”

They walked into the family dining.

Dr. Ralph looked at the family dining room and smiled.

It reminded him of his family dining room at the ranch house.

Brenda smiled at Dr. Ralph.

Michael was running from upstairs.

He left Lorraine when Shirley and Brittany were changing her clothes.

He saw Percy and Bruce walking into the family dining room.

Eleanor rode around the back and got out her carriage.

Jose rode his carriage into the stables.

One of the stablemen ran out the stables and rode Eleanor carriage into the stables.

He closed the door.

Jose shook his head.

He knew the stablemen were gambling and drinking all night every night.

He thought, “I was drinking all through the day, gambling but I had a lot of women. They don’t have women. I don’t understand that.”

Jose thought of his fiancé from Bruce’s hotel in Philadelphia.

How she wanted him to run through Patrick and Brenda’s house for her and her family.

Jose knew they could never pay for any damage items. He did not know that she was wicked. He put her back on the train the next left and never had anything to do with her. He thought, “She was just like my mother.”

Jose said, “God don’t let me be attracted to those type of women.”

Brianna was working late on the brunch.

She was leaving and her father was in the yard waiting for her.

Jose waved at her parents and talked to Briana for a few minutes.

He reached in his coat pocket and gave her her Christmas gift.

She was excited and looked around and said, “Can I open it?”

Jose was grinning and nodded.

Briana opened the box and it was a porcelain blue jay.”

She nearly cried,

She kissed Jose and said, “Thank you. I did not get you anything.”

Jose knew she could not afford anything.

He said, “Briana that is alright. Have a merry Christmas.”

She laughed and ran out the door.

Jose stood and grinned at her.

Eleanor was in her office.

She pulled off her hat, scarf, coat and gloves and checked the telegram machine.

There were no telegrams.

She walked up the back hall to the guests’ room and washed her hands.

Brittany emptied the water and ran and rode home with Dora and Stephen.

Eleanor walked to the family dining room.

She saw Michael running into the family dining room.

Everyone was seated.

Eleanor said, “Where’s Lorraine?”

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor in amazement.

Brenda and Patrick looked at Dr. Ralph.

Shirley looked at Eleanor.

Shirley said, “Momma Lorraine is weak. She can’t sit up or feed herself and she can only eat my soft food.”

Eleanor said, “Shirley, my question was where is Lorraine?”

Shirley said, “Sleep,” and looked away from Eleanor towards Bruce.

Bruce looked at Shirley.

He was sad.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley and smiled.

Nadine put hot rolls and butter and honey on the table.

Eleanor said, “Dr. Ralph I went from the buffet at every meal to a plate. It was wasteful. If you want more anyone can bring more.”

Dr. Ralph smiled and said, “Eleanor you are so much like mother. She served us plate meals that she cooked.”

Eleanor was moving her fork and knife and mumbled, “That’s where we differ.”

Thomas said, “Momma not an egg?”

Eleanor said, “Thomas not an egg.”

Dr. Ralph smiled.

He looked over at Michael who was leaning on the table with his right elbow and looking at him.

Dr. Ralph said, “Michael are doing good?”

Michael said, “Yes sir.”

Mellissa walked in with Michael’s lambchop.

He jumped and waited for his plate to be placed in front of him.

Dr. Ralph looked and said, “Your lamb chop?”

Michael said, “Yes sir.”

Dr. Ralph said, “The military academy.”

Michael said, “Yes sir.”

Peter cooked a beef stew and served it in bowls.

Dr. Ralph watched Shirley.

Shirley cut her chunks of beef very small and mashed her potatoes, carrots and peas.

They enjoyed their dinner.

Dr. Ralph said, “This is good beef.”

Patrick said, “From a cattle baron.”

Eleanor looked at Patrick then Brenda.

Brenda looked at Eleanor and grinned and then started talking to Percy.

Bruce looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Dr. Ralph.

Eleanor had only half of bowl of beef stew.

Dr. Ralph was watching everyone and what they ate.

Shirley was laughing and talking to Dr. Ralph.

Bruce watched Shirley.

Dr. Ralph watched Bruce watching Shirley.

He saw the sadness in Bruce’s eyes.

Jose changed clothes and put his uniform on.

He walked in the family dining room and looked around.

Brenda said, “Eleanor Shirley wants to go to Lorraine’s house to get some things. Do you have her key?”

Eleanor said, “No, but we have her bags in the storage room.”

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Shirley stopped talking to Dr. Ralph and looked at Eleanor.

Brenda said, “Where is Lorraine’s key?”

Patrick looked.

Jose said, “I have it. Stanley and I take turns going and checking on her house. This is my week. Did anybody tell Stanley Lorraine is back?”

Patrick twisted his mouth and smacked.

Bruce and Percy laughed.

Patrick said, “No.”

Jose said, “What time is the brunch?”

Eleanor said, “No later than noon.”

Jose said, “Eleven am. I can go to Stanley and Alice before I go to Lorraine around eight am.”

Patrick was sitting a little sideways and said, “That’s good Jose.”

Shirley said, “I can go with you Jose since Lorraine is sleep.”

Dr. Ralph grinned and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor gave Shirley a stared.

Jose said, “Why?”

Shirley said, “Loraine only has a few things. She will need some more delicate.”

Jose said, “For what? She is not going anywhere.”

Nadine nearly hit the floor.

Dr. Ralph picked up his water and sipped a little and looked at Nadine.

Michael said, “We have to take care of Lorraine. If she needs something we have to get it.”

Dr. Ralph smiled and looked at Michael and put his glass down.

Jose stood and looked at Michael and shook his head.

Dr. Ralph said, “If you go I would like to go and see Lorraine’s house.”

Eleanor said, “Why Jason?”

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Dr. Ralph said, “I’m interested.”

He picked up his glass of water and sipped it and looked at Eleanor.

Patrick looked at Dr. Ralph.

Patrick said, “Jason, I believe what Eleanor is saying Lorraine might not want you to see her delicates.”

Jose said, “Too late.”

Nadine walked out the family dining room and hollered.

Bruce leaned backwards to peep out the door at Nadine.

Brenda said, “Shirley after dinner, you and I will go in the storage and go through Lorraine’s clothes and see what is here. They all should be clean, but whatever has to be washed and clean we will do.”

Shirley stared at Brenda and said, “We...do…what?”

Dr. Ralph looked at a panicking Shirley.

Brenda yelled, “Girl stop! I did not say for you to wash anything…”

Dr. Ralph grinned.

Patrick looked in unbelief at Shirley.

Bruce stared at Shirley.

Percy was looking at Brenda.

Brenda continued, “I said for us to see if her clothes need to be washed. There are a hundred workers here that can do that. Shut up. You and Michael.”

Michael had his right elbow on the table and turned from looking at Shirley to a frustrated Brenda.

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley are you alright?”

Michael turned from Brenda and said, “Since she is a high countess now she really thinks she is not to do anything. I am surprise she is feeding Lorraine.”

Eleanor looked at Michael and said, “Shush Michael.”

Dr. Ralph watched Shirley as she calmed down.

Dr. Ralph looked at Michael and said, “All of you should have the same title. Right Eleanor?”

Michael said, “The boys are just counts. Joseph paid more money for Shirley to be with the princess.”

Dr, Ralph sat and looked at Michael.

His eyes filled with tears.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Dr. Ralph.

Jose looked at Dr. Ralph.

Eleanor saw Jose and looked at Dr. Ralph.

She said, “Jason what is wrong?”

Thomas looked at Dr. ralph.

Thomas was watching Percy and Bruce.

Dr. Ralph held Shirley’s hand and looked at her and said, “Each night when Shirley was in the hospital. She asked me if she could become a princess. Each night I told her yes.”

Brenda cried.

Patrick was dumbfounded.

Eleanor just looked. She did not care she told Patrick and Brenda that Shirley’s attitude had gotten bad with the title.

Mellissa said, “Jose.”

Jose did not turn to look at Mellissa.

Eleanor looked at Mellissa.

Patrick looked at Mellissa.

Brenda was still staring at Shirley.

Jose knew what Mellissa wanted and finally he looked at her.

Mellissa nodded towards Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Mellissa and said, “You and I will talk later. I know what you want.”

Mellissa perked her mouth and stood by the window.

She thought, “How can I get some money and buy a little cottage and retire?”

Nadine walked in with a pound cake and sauces.

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley you are making your dreams come true. You are attending college and you wanted to be a princess.”

Jose said,

Turned his head and said, “What is that?”

Nadine stepped in the foyer and said, “It sounds like a bell.”  
Eleanor sat still and did not move.

Jose said, “What?”

Shirley got up and said, “I gave Lorraine momma’s bell for help.”

Jose was stunned.

He looked at Shirley as she was walking out the family dining room.

Michael and Thomas jumped up and ran out the family dining room.

They ran pass Shirley.

Dr. Ralph was about to get up.

Patrick said, “Jason, sit. Those three can take care of Lorraine.”

Jose said, “We have to do something. You all know Lorraine is going to wear that bell out. Who gave it to her?”

No one said nothing.

Jose looked around the table at the family and then at the workers.

Dr. Ralph smiled.

He knew they would take care of Lorraine.

Brenda said, “I’m happy. I love parties. Even though the brunch is not a party, but people will get a chance to see or know that Lorraine is back.”

Everyone looked at Brenda.

Jose ignored Brenda and said, “We are on the other end of the house. She is on the hall with you and Patrick.”

Patrick sat for a moment and said, “We will think of something.”

Dr. Ralph smiled.

Dr. Ralph said, ‘The boys are upstairs.”

Eleanor smirked.

Brenda said, “Everyone will be gone back to school and that will leave Eleanor.”

Eleanor could not think.

Jose looked at Eleanor and walked out the family dining room with an arm full of dishes.

Eleanor said, “When will the nurses start?”

Brenda said, “Shirley sent messages to them today for those who can, to start Monday?”

Patrick said, “That was smart.”

Peter was in the kitchen preparing the food for the brunch.

Nadine walked in the formal dining room and was impressed with the job Glenda and Harriet did.

Dan told Brenda and Nadine, he and Thomas moved the meat to a cooler place to be stored.

Dan went and got Harriet and Glenda’s hams and brought them in the house and prepared for the next day.

Nadine went downstairs and got Maureen and brought her upstairs to Sabrina’s room.

Maureen saw the pretty dress.

Nadine said, “Maureen, Sabrina made this dress for you for Christmas.”

Nadine said, “You are not schedule here, but you will get paid.”  
Maureen as a child said, “Ok.”

Nadine rushed out the room to keep from having a breakdown.

She was angry with Craig and his son.

There was a knock on the backdoor before the family finished dinner.

Nadine and Dan went to the door and it was Mike’s and John’s girlfriends.

Their girlfriends came for Mike’s ham and John’s turkey.

Dan had Mike and John to write notes and signed them that their girlfriends were to get their Christmas meat.

Dan went outside and got the meat and carried it to Mike’s wagon and put it in the wagon.

The women got in the wagon and left.

Veronica, Briana, Rita and Dora were scheduled off but would come to the Christmas Eve brunch to see Lorraine and have Peter bake their meat while they were there.

Jose said to Dora, “How are you coming and going tomorrow?”

Dora said, “A neighbor will bring me.”

Jose said, “Ask him to take Harriet and Glenda home and I will pay him.”

Dora said, “Ok.”

Jose just looked.

Dora looked at Jose and frowned up her forehead and walked away.

Jose said, “Dan, Peter I will not be going on Christmas vacation. I will be here.”

Peter said, “Damn.”

Dan hollered.

Peter said, “When you think things can’t get any worst.”

Dan was hollering and hitting on the kitchen cabinets.

Jose looked at Peter and looked down the hall and said, “It’s just got even worstier.”

Jose walked through the kitchen to the formal dining room.

He stood and looked at the decorations.

He put out the lights and walked to the front door and doubled checked the lock and put the bar behind the door.

Jose stood and looked at the Christmas which he love. He wondered if Brenda will ever tell who that picture was.

Nadine was walking in the hallway with the last bit of rum drinking it out the bottle.

Dan stared at Nadine.

Peter was leaning against the cabinet with his arms folded.

He said, “Spring come on.”

Dan looked at Peter and said, “Peter no.”

Peter turned around to prepare his breads for the brunch and said, “Two and a half months.”

Nadine walked over with the rum bottle and said, “Two and a half months what?”

Dan was shocked and turned around and started basting the workers turkeys.

Dan baked his ginger cookies and made his hot coco for his neighbors.

He asked Emily and her son, Bryant to sit on his porch and give the neighbors gingerbread cookies and hot coco.

She agreed and would meet him at his house around eleven am.

Dan knew he had to leave the house around ten thirty to get to his house and drop the cookies and hot coco off and sped back to work for the brunch.

Dan was excited.

His first Christmas in a real house and he is building his own traditions.

Jose passed the sitting room, where the family was playing games and reading.

Shirley had fed Lorraine and changed her clothes.

Michael was sitting next to Dr. Ralph and ran and got their adoption papers and their count papers.

Eleanor did not fuss.

Brenda was in the storage area with Mellissa going through Lorraine’s clothes.

Everything was cleaned.

Brenda and Mellissa hung the dresses that were to be pressed.

Brenda folded the delicates and nightgowns and walked through the billiards room to the foyer.

She passed the full sitting with laughter and chatter.

She saw Shirley leaving Lorraine’s suite.

Brenda thought, “Shirley looks tired. She needs to go to bed.”

Brenda stopped and said, “Shirley.”

Shirley stopped with the feeding tray in her hands.

Brenda said, “Lorraine has five delicates and several dresses and stockings which Mellissa is taking take care of. You look tired go to bed.”

Shirley said, “Good night grandma.”

Brenda reached and kissed Shirley on her forehead and said, “Good night Shirley.”

Brenda stood and watched Shirley slowly walk down the hall to the foyer.

Shirley handed the tray to Mellissa and stepped in the sitting room and said, “I’m tired and I am going to bed. I will see you all at brunch.”

Everyone said, “Good night Shirley.”

Michael was sucking a lollipop he and Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph was reading the adoption papers and their count and countess papers.

He shook his head and grinned.

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley I will see you in the morning.

Shirley slowly walked up the stairs.

Bruce eased from the floor and walked up the stairs behind Shirley.

Shirley saw Bruce and said, “I’m alright Bruce. I am just tired.”

Bruce walked Shirley to her room.

Jose was walking up stairs to do his check.

He patted Bruce on his head as he passed him.

Dr. Ralph looked at Bruce as he walked back in the sitting room.

Eleanor looked at Bruce and smiled.

Bruce loved the attention and the approval Eleanor gives him.

He blushed and sat next to Thomas.

Patrick rubbed Bruce’s hair.

Bruce turned and looked at Patrick.

Patrick winked his eye.

Eleanor grinned.

Bruce blushed and looked at Eleanor.

He and Thomas read and then went upstairs to bed.

Dr. Ralph stood and said, “Good night. And thank you for accommodating me.”

Michael was lying on his side and said, “You are welcoming and again thank you for bringing Lorraine home.”

Dr. Ralph grinned at Michael and said, “Again it was my great pleasure. I never rode a train until then. Lorraine gave me my first adventure.”

Eleanor smiled.

Patrick said, “I’m going to bed too.”

He looked at Eleanor and said, “I pray the troops are fine.”

Eleanor looked at Patrick.

Dr. Ralph said, “Your porter Calvin needs to immediately go to the Stith.”

Patrick grinned at the name.

Eleanor smiled at the name.

Dr. Ralph said, “He needs therapy.”

Eleanor said, “Daddy you all did not find them?”  
Patrick said, “Nathan and Peter did not see them, but they were told they could not ride the train again.”

Patrick looked at Michael and Percy and said, “We have a busy day tomorrow. Go to bed.”

Eleanor stood and said, “Come on Michael and my Percy.”

Patrick put out the light in the sitting room.

He stumbled over some puzzles and books.

Patrick looked down on the floor at the toys.

Dr. Ralph laughed.

Patrick and Dr. Ralph walked to the suites.

Eleanor, Percy and Michael ran upstairs.

Jose was in the bed sleep.

Peter was finishing preparing his menu and went to bed.

Nadine was undressed and on her knees.

He knew she was at a lost with Peter.

She knew her house was paid off and it was her house, and she was not going to give it to Peter nor sale it and give him any amount from the sale of the house.

Nadine wanted to do a better job with Brenda and Patrick.

But she wanted to become the sheriff to help people like Maureen.

She thought about what Gary said that Denise said they would be moving to the capitol.

Peter looked at Nadine.

He undressed and went to bed and smiled as he went to sleep.

Nadine was on her knees for a long time.

She got in the bed and kept her back to Peter as he had his hack to her.

Nadine laid in bed and went to sleep.

Peter was sleep but smiling.

Dan picked up his bags and went downstairs to the room Maureen had.

Dan never knew that room was down there.

It was close to the hot water barrel and Dan could have his bath first.

He did not need the additional blankets but kept them just in case.

Dan dressed for bed and slept until daybreak.

Brenda took Lorraine’s clean delicates to her suite and put them in the dresser drawers.

She stood there and looked at Lorraine and wept.

Patrick and Dr. Ralph walked down the hall from the sitting room to Lorraine’s suite.

They saw Brenda standing and looking at Lorraine and weeping.

Patrick walked to Brenda and put his arms around her shoulders and looked at Lorraine.

He kissed Brenda’s forehead and walked her out the suite.

Patrick looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Good night.”

Brenda was overcome and could not speak.

Dr. Ralph looked at Brenda and felt she genuinely cared for Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and walked across the hall to his suite.

He picked up his black doctor bag and walked back to Lorraine’s suite and closed her door.

He opened his bag and took his stethoscope and checked Lorraine’s vitals.

Dr. Ralph checked her temperature, and it was still high.

He sat on her bed and looked at her.

Dr. Ralph could not think any more.

The trip was not bad traveling with Lorraine.

He thought about Hal and Calvin helping him all the way there.

He hated they were trapped in Cedartown, but he would get a little look tomorrow with Jose.

Dr. Ralph thought some of the female workers and grinned.

He saw they were as hot as Lorraine and keeping Brenda busy.

Dr. Ralph laughed at Patrick and said, “Oh Patrick.”

He thought about Eleanor and said, “Maybe one day Eleanor will come out of her unreality to enjoy what GOD has given her.”

Lorraine moved.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and continued to sit on the bed and look around the suite.

He smiled.

He stood and put his stethoscope back in his doctor’s bag.

Dr. Ralph walked to Lorraine and kissed her on her forehead.

He lingered for a minute looking at her and turned and walked out the door.

Dr. Ralph left her door opened.

He walked across the hall and dressed for bed.

Dr. Ralph left his door opened to hear Lorraine.

He thought about Jose’s reaction to the bell and laughed.

He snuggled under his covers and said, “Get use to the bell. Because she will be using it.”

He grinned and went to sleep.

Patrick and Brenda were up praying.

They were full of praise and worship to the LORD GOD Almighty and JESUS for helping Lorraine and could not pray but were on their knees with heads bowed and hands folded in worship.

Patrick said, “LORD GOD Almighty show me what YOU want to say to YOUR people on Christmas Day in JESUS’ name.”

Brenda smiled and thought about her husband being a preacher.

She thought, “GOD he is a good man. I thank YOU for him. Would YOU give him a special blessing that only YOU can give to show how much he is loved by YOU and JESUS and me. Help me to be a better person and wife for him and mother, grandmother and friend.”

Brenda stayed on her knees until she felt Patrick’s hand touch her hand to let her know he was finished.

They stood and got in the bed and slept until the daybreak.

Patrick laid in bed and thought about Commander Washington and Mattie and her six children.

Brenda woke and knew Patrick was awake and held his hand.

Patrick looked over at Brenda and turned to her and kissed her.

Brenda grinned.

Brenda said, “What is it Patrick?”

Patrick learned over nearly four decades never to hide anything from Brenda since they are one.

He said, “I’m worried about the troops and Commander Washington, the governor and his wife and above all Mattie and her children and the other children and people.”

Brenda breathed and said, “We have prayed about all of them. GOD heard our prayers and HE has answered. We have to be still and see. HE answered us about Lorraine. We have seen part of the answer.”

Patrick said, “The children are unlearned. They need to be in school. Josiah has taken that big and prestigious job with the state board of education. He will not be going to teach there. Brenda the children need help.”

Brenda rolled over onto her back and thought.

They got up and embraced each other.

Patrick got their pillows and place them on the floor and he and Brenda spent a good hour praying.

They finished just as Mike and George were bring their bath water.

Patrick and Brenda bathed and dressed for the day.

The house was quiet.

Dr. Ralph stood and walked to his door and looked out.

George and Mike looked at Dr. Ralph.

Mike said, “Are you ready for your hot water?”

Dr. Ralph smiled and said, “Yes.”

Dr. Ralph bathed and dressed for the day.

Michael ran downstairs with Thomas to check on Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph was standing in his suite watching them.

Michael and Thomas stood in Lorraine’s door and watched her.

Dr. Ralph walked out his suite and said, “Good morning Michael and Thomas.”

They jumped and ran to Dr. Ralph and hugged him.

Brenda and Patrick were walking out of their suite when they saw Michael and Thomas run and hug Dr. Ralph.

They smiled.

Patrick said, “Good morning.”

Thomas yelled, “Grandpa. Grandma.”

Dr. Ralph because Thomas sounded like he had not seen them in a while.

Brenda grinned as he ran and threw his arms around both of them and said, “Good morning.”

Michael ran to them and threw his arms around Patrick and Brenda and gave them a big hug.

Dr. ralph said, “Good morning.”

Patrick and Brenda grinned and said, “Good Morning Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Ralph walked across to Lorraine’s suite and closed the door.

Michael and Thomas were about to run to Larraine’s suite.

Brenda and Patrick caught them.

Patrick said, “Michael and Thomas, Dr. Ralph has to examine Lorraine.”

Patrick and Brenda walked to Patrick’s office.

Thomas and Michael went to the office for a few minutes.

They got up and back to their rooms.

Brenda thought and looked at Patrick.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

He and Brenda were sitting waiting for Joel to send them a confirmation that the troops were there.

Brenda thought, “I’m going upstairs to pull out their clothes for today. Especially Percy. He’ll put on anything as long as it is a shirt and a pair of pants.”

Patrick grinned.

Brenda stood and walked upstairs.

She stood at the top of the stairs and looked down at the decorated foyer and her lovely tree that Beverly did a great job on.

Brenda wondered what happened to Mable that she would turn against Beverly and betray her.

Because Mable agreed to the arrangement to have a place to sleep.

Brenda was sad for Beverly and thought someday Mable may return to tell Beverly what happened.

Then Brenda thought the day before with the joyful return of Lorraine.

She shook off Mable and Curtis and grinned and turned to go to the boys’ room and looked at Shirley and Eleanor’s doors still closed.

Brenda turned and walked to the boys’ room.

She thought about how Eleanor took three bedrooms as and made her a super luxurious suite with her own bath area and one for her clothes.

Brenda grinned, when thought about the European workers that would come in the spring and stay for two years to bring the electrical lighting to their house and their railroads.

Brenda was excited.

She lifted up her skirt hem and skipped to the boys’ rooms.

Michael and Thomas were sitting in the hallway playing.

They looked at Brenda and laughed.

Brenda bowed to them.

Eleanor heard some noise and woke.

She ran to her door and saw Brenda bowing to Michael and Thomas.

Eleanor quickly closed her door and went back to bed and woke an hour later.

Shirley did not wake until ten am.

Eleanor woke around nine and walked to the hot water room and sent the barrel down for her hot water.

Eleanor walked and checked on her boys.

Michael and Thomas had gone back to bed.

She saw Brenda had selected Michael and Thomas an outfit for the day.

Eleanor twisted her mouth and went and changed Thomas and Michael’s outfit.

She thought, “What did she do for Percy my God. And Bruce.”

Eleanor tipped in Bruce’s room and looked at the outfit that Brenda selected for him and she nodded her head it was fine.

Percy was awake and sitting on his bed looking into his opened armoire at the outfit Brenda selected for him to wear for that day.

Eleanor thought Percy looked funny.

She walked in his room and sat next to him and looked at the outfit.

Percy said, “Good morning momma.”

Eleanor said, “Good morning Percy.”

Percy said, “I know you think I can’t dress, but I could have picked out a better outfit than that.”

Eleanor burst out laughing and said, “Your grandmother selected the outfit.”

Percy smirked.

Eleanor said, “What’s wrong with it? I kind of like navy blue on you Percy.”

Percy just stared.

Eleanor laughed at Percy and laid her head on his shoulders while she continued to laugh.

Mike and George passed Eleanor and Percy and took her hot water to her bedroom.

Eleanor said, “Percy, I like the outfit. Wear it. I love you.”

She kissed Percy on his forehead.

Percy said, “Huh.”

Eleanor looked back at Percy and laughed.

Nadine had Susan and Georgette assigned to Lorraine’s personal care.

Peter made Lorraine, oatmeal, sweet milk and honey.

He put another tablespoon of oatmeal in the sweet milk.

Nadine looked at Peter.

Dan looked at Peter.

All the food was prepared.

Dan and Peter put the food in the stoves at ten am.

Nadine walked through the house and saw everything was clean and orderly.

He stood in the formal dining room and silently went over the table.

Brenda walked in the formal dining room and saw Nadine.

She said, “Nadine this looks great. How is the food coming along?”

Nadine turned from looking at the table to Brenda and said, “Peter and Dan have placed everything in the stoves.”

Nadine walked out the formal dining and checked on the guests’ room and made sure there were more soap, towels and toilet paper.

Brenda was getting happy.

Jose and Dr. Ralph left he house around eight am.

Jose went to Stanley and Alice and told them Lorraine was back.

He introduced Dr. Ralph to them as Lorraine’s friend and the doctor who accompanied her back home.

Stanley reached and shook Dr. Ralph’s hand.

Alice shook Dr. Ralph’s hand.

He looked at Alice.

Stanley said, “That is the reason we may not come. We were expecting him in January.”

Jose said, “You know Meredith had her baby the first.”

Alice and Stanley were elated.

Jose said, “I need to check on Lorraine’s house and bring the key back to you.”

Jose was about to leave and said, “Can I walk through your back?”

Stanley said, “That’s what Alice just said, Sure.”

Stanley was closing the door.

Jose and Dr. Ralph heard Alice whine and said, “I want to go to the Christmas Eve brunch.”

Stanley said, “Alice…”

They snickered.

Jose said, “We will see Alice later.”

Jose said, “This is Lorraine’s house.

Dr. Ralph stood and smile.

Lorraine’s house looked like an English country garden from the back.

Dr. Ralph walked around the house.

They walked to Lorraine’s front porch.

Jose looked back and pointed and said, “Mike, one of the dishwashers live there. He is away for Christmas.”

Dr. Ralph turned and looked over the neighborhood.

He felt better that a decent man and woman was behind Lorraine and a co-worker was in front of her.

Jose unlocked and opened the door.

He waited a minute for Dr. Ralph to turn around.

Jose waited a few minutes.

He knew Dr. ralph was trying to keep his composure.

Dr. Ralph turned around and looked at Jose.

Jose watched Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph stepped inside the cottage style house.

He whelped and started crying.

Jose looked at him and begin to check the fireplaces and stoves and candles.

Dr. Ralph looked at the ladylike sitting room and the dining room.

He walked to her china cabinet and cried.

Jose frowned at the strict Dr. Ralph.

Jose said, “What is wrong with you?”

Dr. Ralph said, “These are the same dishes my mother had.”

Jose said, “You better not say that around Brenda.”

Dr. Ralph turned and looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Those are Brenda’s dishes that Lorraine sneak.”

Dr. Ralph laughed.

He walked in the kitchen and looked out the back and saw a beautiful springtime and summertime garden,

He loved her small kitchen and her workshop over to the side.

Jose was standing at the front door waiting for Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph stood in the doorway and rubbed his hand over the wood of the doorframe.

Jose rolled his yes.

Dr. Ralph walked in the smaller bedroom that was very neat and said, “Guess bedroom.”

Jose said, “Hurry.”

Dr. Ralph walked to the door of Lorraine’s bedroom and smiled.

He stepped inside the room.

Jose said, “Michael said don’t look at Lorraine’s delicates.”

Dr. Ralph walked and looked around in the room and could see the beautiful springtime and summertime gardens that Lorraine planted all around her house.

She planted flowers that would grow by themselves since she would not be able to take care of them.

Dr. Ralph walked out Lorraine’s bedroom and pointed to the back of the house.

Jose looked at him.

Dr. Ralph said, “Lorraine’s table is full of candles and bath items wrapped with people’s names on them. Should we take them and give them out?”  
Jose stared at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at Jose and said, “I’m taking them. If it is a problem Lorraine will tell me.”

Jose folded his arms and leaned on the front door.

Dr. Ralph looked back and said, “Jose come and help.”

Jose stared at Dr. Ralph.

Jose slowly walked to the back of Lorraine’s house and helped Dr. Ralph take all the items they saw.

Jose said, “I can’t lock the door with all of this stuff.

Dr. Ralph said, “To keep from going and coming back. Put all the items on the porch and lock the door and pick them up again.

Jose said, “If we weren’t taking them I would not have to do this.”

Dr. Ralph stared at Jose and thought about what Bruce said, “All they did were drink and have sex,”

Then Dr, Ralph thought about Lorraine and smiled and said, “Her too.”

When Jose put the key in his pocket and picked up all of his items from the porch he turned and looked into the faces of some of Lorraine’s neighbors.

He and Dr. Ralph stared at the neighbors and spoke.

One of the women said, “who are you and what are you doing with Lorraine’s things.”

Jose said, “Damn.”

He said, “I’m Jose. I work with Lorraine. She has been sick…”

He nodded his head at Dr Ralph and said, “… Lorraine has been very sick and this doctor brought her home yesterday. She is at her employers’ house. I come here all the time and Stanley to check on her house.”

One of the men said, “Stanley is our good neighbor. We know him.”

Jose said, “Merry Christmas.”

The woman said, “Where are you taking her stuff?”

Jose said, “To Lorraine. She probably want her friends to have these.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Jose because Jose was mad and getting ugly with Loraine’s neighbors.

The woman said, “I see me and my husband’s name on that gift right there.”

The man looked and said, “It sure is.”

The woman said, “Mr. Smarty give me my gift as one of Lorraine’s friends.”

Jose looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at the woman and man.

Jose said, “Come and get it. What is your names?”

The woman told Jose their names and walked in the yard and got the candles.

She walked to her husband and they smelled the candles and grinned.

The woman looked back at Jose and said, “Merry Christmas to you too smarty pants.”

The older couple looked at Dr. Ralph’s arms.

The older woman pointed and said, “That’s our names.”

Dr. Ralph walked to them and gave them their gift.

Dr. Ralph said, “I’m sure Lorraine would say Merry Christmas.”

The older woman was inhaling smelling her candle and loving it.

She let the other woman smell it.

The older mand said, “Thank you for being kind to us. A lot of the neighbors aren’t.”

Jose got un-agitated and said, “Why?”

The older man said, “We had some neighbors and probably still got some that belonged to the mob.”

Dr. Ralph started listening.

Jose perked up.

The older man said, “The neighborhood started to become dark and dreary.“

The older man pointed and said, “The ones there Lorraine had to look after her place and the man there that works for the governor in the capitol belong to that mob. A younger fellow has moved into that house. Thanksgiving Day was the last day we saw Lorraine. She went there and took them their candles and nearly broke her neck running out the house.”

Jose listened.

The older saw Jose and Dr. Ralph were listening to him and the other woman’s husband.

The other woman’s husband said, “Me and my wife were not against you. We something was wrong but could not pinpoint it.”

The older man said, “That fellow that own the restaurant in town and the stables came over there late Thanksgiving Day. The next day the ones that lived there were gone. All of their stuff is in the house.”

Jose said, “How do you know that?”

His wife turned and looked at Jose and said, “he peeped in the windows.”

The older man looked at his wife.

Dr. Ralph was getting angry.

The older man said, “The governor should know who he has working for him. They will know his every move.”

The other woman said, “The governor is a praying man. He likes to have a good time. But he believes in God. God will help him. We need to do our part by praying.”

The middle- aged woman look at the gifts in Jose’s arm.

Jose held the gifts close to his chest.

The older couple walked home holding hands.

The middle- aged woman said, “Suppose we have another gift from Lorraine?”

Jose said, “You will get it when Lorraine comes back.”

Dr. Ralph yelled behind the older couple, “Merry Christmas.”

The older man and the older woman turned around and waved and bowed.

Dr. Ralph thought they need a friend.

He wondered what the Stith was doing.

He and Jose walked through Lorraine’s backyard to Stanley’s backyard.

Stanley had carried coal and water in the house.

He was feeding their four horses and giving the horses water.

Stanley heard what the older man was saying.

He was thinking.

That the mob followed her to the train the next day and travelled to New York to see what Lorraine knew and tried to kill her.

Stanley saw Jose and Dr. Ralph’s arms full and said, “Need help?”

Jose said, “No.”

They waked to the carriage and put the gifts in the carriage.

Alice was taking her bath and pulled her dress out to wear.

Stanley put a little coal on the fire so the house won’t catch on fire and they could easily start it up again.

Stanley looked and said, “Those gifts Lorraine had in the house?”

Jose said, “Yes, that Dr. Ralph wanted to get.”

Dr. Ralph said, “if we had not gotten the gifts we never would have gotten that bit of information.”

Stanley said, “I heard that older neighbor. He is not the person running through the neighborhood at midnight. As I think about it we have not had someone running through for the past month, since he said those neighbors left.”

Jose jumped in the carriage and said, “See you and Alice in an hour.”

Stanley looked back at the house and shook his head.

Dr. Ralph said, “The temperature is dropping be sure you cover up well.”

Jose pulled the carriage out the yard and sped back to the Stith’s house.

Dr. Ralph was silent all the way back.

Jose was thinking.

They saw Dan speeding on another street.

Jose pulled the carriage to the back porch.

He and Dr. Ralph got the gifts out and took them to the parlor.

Shirley was walking down the stairs.

She was pretty.

Dr. Ralph looked and said, “Shirley. You look so pretty.”

Michael was sitting on the one of the stairs and Thomas was sitting on the other end of the stairs.

Dr. Ralph was a little concern over the grand staircase and them falling.

He saw Percy and Bruce running down the grand staircase and jumping off it and running to Patrick’s office.

Dr. Ralph stood still.

Jose looked at Dr. Ralph’s shock look and said, “They are use to it. They have been jumping down the stairs and running up and down the stairs since they were babies. Eleanor use to have fits. But when you start at something earlier you get use to it and it does not pos a threat to you.”

Dr. Ralph stared and looked at Jose.

Eleanor ran up the backstairs looking for Percy and Bruce.

She did not see them in their bedrooms.

She ran to the staircase and saw three of her children and said, “Where’s Percy and Bruce?”  
Thomas and Michael pointed down the hall.

Jose said, “They have done something.”

Eleanor flew down the grand stairs and ran down the hall after Percy and Bruce.

Shirley said, “Are those mines?’

Dr. Ralph shook himself and looked at a grinning Shirley.

Jose said, “Nall. Where are you going?”

Shirley looked at Jose and said, “Countess Shirley.”

Dr. Ralph smiled at Shirley.

She said, “I’m going to make Lorraine looks good. Put those gifts I the sitting room.”

Jose said, “I was going to put them around the Christmas tree.”

Shirley looked at Jose and walked away down the hall to check on Lorraine.

Jose said, “She’s right. Lorraine may not have a gift for everyone.”

Jose and Dr. Ralph saw Eleanor standing in Patrick’s door and pointing her finger.

Jose arranged the gifts around the fireplace.

Brenda was in her office going through their Christmas greetings and messages.

Thomas jumped and said, “What’s that?”

Michael uncaring and mad said, “My stomach.”

Dr. Ralph looked at the solemn Michael and the starving Thomas.

He smiled.

Jose looked and said, “I know they had fruit and buttered bread this morning.

Brenda heard Jose.

She walked out her office and peeped at the mad Michael and agitated Thomas.

Dr. Ralph said, “I need to check on Lorraine.”

Michael jumped and said, “Can I come?”

Thomas said, “Me too?”

Dr. Ralph did not want to see no to them.

He waved to them.

They jumped off the staircase to the foyer floor and sped to Lorraine’s room.

Dr. Ralph stood and slowly turned to Brenda.

Brenda smiled at Dr. Ralph.

She said, “They have been doing that since they were babies.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I thought Jose was lying.”

Jose said, “I lie to my women. No one else.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Jose and said, “I’m sorry.”

Brenda said, “The first time I saw Thomas come down the staircase he was about six months old. Eleanor and the rest of the children were sleep. Patrick and I were walking up the hall and saw this movement. It was Thomas crawling down the staircase by crawling in the steps of the stairs. I was use to Percy and Bruce. Meredith was laying in his room and fell asleep and Stephanie walked in to check on them and left the door cracked. Meredith and Stephanie were running through the house screaming like fools. Patrick told them to shut up. Thomas was in the stairs looking at them grinning then he started going down the stairs backwards. At point Eleanor woke from her nap and saw Thomas scooting backwards down the stairs grinning at her. She turned and went back to her nap. Patrick and I got Thomas and went to the sitting room and had a wonderful lunch. Those two screaming fools were sitting on the staircase with their hands to their chins and still crying.”

Dr. Ralph looked.

Jose said, “These are Eleanor’s children.”

He looked at Brenda and said, “Dr. ralph wanted us to get the gifts Lorraine had made.”

Brenda said, “Did she do my vanilla bean oil?”

Jose said, “How do I know?”

Dr. Ralph looked at Jose.

Brenda looked at Jose.

Jose said, “One of Lorraine’s neighbor gave some information that some of their neighbors were in the mob and one the governor has hired to work for him. Mike bought that one’s house.”

Brenda said, “That’s easy to find out. Why are you here Jose?”

Jose said, “I hate my family and don’t ever want to look at them again in life. My fat aunt came in town yesterday on the train.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Is that the one who sat on Calvin and would not get up.”

Jose said, “If Calvin is black yes.”

Brenda was stunned and looked at Jose.

Jose was walking to the billiards yard.

Brenda said, “I’m not paying you overtime.”

Jose said, “I already put down.”

He kept going to the kitchen.

Dr. Ralph stood and looked at Jose.

He looked at Brenda and turned and went down the hall to see about Lorraine.

He pulled off his coat, hat and gloves and cleaned his hands with alcohol.

He picked up his black doctor’s bag and walked across the hall.

Lorraine was sitting with her blue dress on and fully clothes.

Dr. Ralph walked in and said, “Hello. I need to attend to Lorraine. I need you all to leave.”

Lorraine tried to kick her feet to leave.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

Shirley, Michael and Thomas laughed at Lorraine.

Susan and Georgette left the room.

Brittany was cleaning the room and walked out with Lorraine’s nightgown to be washed.

Shirley, Michael and Thomas stood in the hall.

Thomas saw Brenda standing at the foyer and yelled “Grandmother I am hungry!!!”

Brenda looked down the hall at Thomas.

She thought, “You should have eaten the snack. Hollering at me Between him and Percy. I can’t tell who is the worst about food.”

Eleanor was in Patrick’s office with the door close talking to Percy and Bruce.

She jumped up.

Patrick said, “Eleanor they are children leave them along.”

Bruce was frowned up.

Patrick looked at Percy who was sitting on his hands.

Patrick looked at Bruce and Percy and said, “What do you to say?”

Bruce said, “We did it.”

Percy folded his arms and turned and looked at Bruce.

Patrick bit his lips to keep from hollering with laughter.

Eleanor looked at them.

Dr. Ralph opened Lorraine’s door.

Patrick saw his crew arriving in two wagons.

He grinned.

Eleanor unfolded her arms and peeped over Patrick and said, “Who is that?”

Patrick said, “Joe and the crew.”

Eleanor unfolded her arms and made a step towards the door.

Patrick said, “You better not make another step.”

Percy and Bruce were whispering to each other and they stopped and looked at their mother.

Patrick said, “Percy you and Bruce are the oldest boys, and you get in more trouble than Michael and Thomas combined.”

Patrick leaned forward on his desk and looked at them.

He stared at them.

They could hear the train crew knocking on the door.

Hal said, “Stop you heathens. You’ll act like you are not use to nothing.”

Bruce and Percy were trying to peep out the window.

They cut their eyes at Patrick.

Patrick was happy his crew was there.

He said, “I’m going to let you go. It is the holidays. I don’t want this to happy again.”

Bruce stood and stopped and looked down towards the floor and said, “Thank you for grace grandpa.”

Patrick nearly fell out his chair.

Percy stood and said, “Thank you grandpa.”

Patrick stretched his arm out on his desk and thought, “That’s GOD’s word tomorrow to HIS church. It was HIS grace that saved us.”

Eleanor looked at Patrick.

Patrick stood and kissed Eleanor on her forehead.

Bruce had his hand on the doorknob.

Patrick said, “Open it Bruce.”

Patrick’s heart was full with glory to God for answering his prayer of what HE wanted HIS people to know.

Patrick though, “HE wants us to know it is HIS grace every day. Thank, YOU JESUS.”

Dr. Ralph pushed the wheelchair with Lorraine out in the hall.

Michael and Thomas ran to help.

Dr. Ralph was confused about Lorraine.

He stepped back and let Michael and Thomas push the wheelchair with Lorraine.

Shirley looked in Dr. Ralph’s face and knew it was not good.

Lorraine had concern on her face.

Bruce, Percy, Eleanor and Patrick looked back and saw them walking up the hall.

Eleanor looked at Shirley who was scared.

Patrick saw Shirley’s face.

Patrick and Eleanor said, “Lorraine you look great.”

Lorraine tried to smile.

She was sad.

Eleanor looked at Dr. Ralph who was very stern faced.

Patrick tapped Eleanor on her shoulder to walk with Lorraine.

Eleanor held Eleanor’s hand.

She and Shirley walked on both sides of the wheelchair.

Patrick heard his telegram machine.

He said, “Dr. Ralph I want to walk with you.”

Dr. Ralph stopped walking but kept his eyes on Lorraine.

Patrick unlocked his office door and rushed inside.

He received the telegram from Joel that everything was well.

As Patrick smiled and was about to leave the old telegrams that were stuck started to roll out.

His eyes fell on the telegram from Ryan that the sheriff killed the mobster that attempted to kill Lorraine and they had the second mobster in their authority.

Patrick fell on his desk.

Dr. Ralph looked at Patrick and ran to him.

Dr. Ralph grabbed Patrick.

Patrick reached the telegram to Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “God I thank you for this but I need you to heal Lorraine.”

Patrick said, “Nothing is bigger than GOD and JESUS.”

Patrick heard more carriages.

He said, “I’m fine. GOD has overwhelmed me today with HIS goodness.”

Dr. Ralph was holding the telegram and reached it to Patrick.

Patrick said, “Lets go and feed our guests and Thomas.”

Dr. Ralph was so concerned about Lorraine.

They rushed to catch up with Lorraine.

The family entered the foyer with Patrick and Dr. Ralph behind them.

Lorraine looked good.

Servants were lined up against the wall.

They looked impressive.

Gen was rushing to the house.

Jose was standing at the door and opened the door for Gen.

Gen looked around at the men in the foyer.

Claressa and Alvin was about to knock on the door and Jose opened the door.

Hal said, “Hey Miss Lorraine.”

Lorraine smiled.

Hal said, “You look real good.”

Lorraine smiled.

Dr. Ralph saw Calvin and he needed to attend to Calvin.

Patrick walked from behind Lorraine and walked to Joe and shook his hand.

Patrick said, “Good morning fellows. This is my family and welcome to our home.”

Calvin grinned.

Daniel and his grandparents arrived.

Daniel rushed In the foyer to see if Ginger was there.

Jose said, “Ginger is not here.”

Claressa looked at Daniel and grabbed Gen’s arm.

Gen looked back and said, “Look at Lorraine’s doctor.”

Alvin looked at Claressa.

She looked hard at Dr. Ralph and gasped.

Gen grinned and said, “You need to see Hutch.”

Claressa said, “Where is he?”

Gen looked and said, “Probably in Philadelphia.”

Patrick said, “Nadine.”

Nadine looked at Patrick and said, “This way to the buffet.”

Patrick said, “No Nadine can you say grace and bless the food?”

Nadine was stunned and looked at Patrick.

Jose opened the door for Daniel’s grandparents, Timothy and Laura in the house.

Jose heard Emilou riding up.

He was about to close the door then he thought they need to see Nadine.

Steven pulled up and stopped in the front of the house.

Alicia jumped out the carriage.

Emilou was kicking and screaming she was hungry.

Thomas was peeping at the door to see Emilou.

Brenda looked at Thomas.

Steven and Alicia rushed in the house behind Emilou.

Steven and Alicia spoke to everyone.

Daniel and Steven shook hands.

Brenda thought, “Good. Old heifer.”

Nadine said, “Please bow your heads.”

The kitchen help was bringing out the food and everyone smelled it.

Peter and Dan were standing at the formal dining room doors to greet everyone.

Nadine said, “LORD GOD first I ask YOU to forgive each of us our sins…”

Hal choked.

Calvin grinned.

Nadine said, “Bless each person here and their families and those who could not attend. Bless the food YOU created for us to eat and enjoy this day with our families and new and old friends. In JESUS’ name. Amen.”

Emilou yelled, “Amen.”

She ran to be first at the dining room door.

Dan looked at Peter.

Peter looked confused for a minute and started back smiling.

They stepped in the formal dining room and Emilou ran in and was pulling off her coat and hat and gloves.

Mellissa said, “Emilou what do you want to eat.”

Emilou said, “Everything.”

Thomas and Michael were running behind Emilou.

Steven saw Lorraine.

Mellissa gave Emilou bacon, egg a scrambled egg and a biscuit.

Emilou ran and sat down and began to eat.

Alicia said, “Emilou don’t eat fast.”

Michael looked around.

Mellissa gave him his plate with one lamb chop, egg, biscuit and potatoes.

Michael ran and sat next to Emilou.

Thomas looked at Michael and Emilou.

Mellissa said, “Thomas?”

Thomas said, “Everything.”

Joe and Patrick were talking.

Patrick was watching what Thomas was getting.

Thomas said, “Salmon, grits, eggs and strawberry pancakes and whipped creamed.”

Calvin said, “I want the pancakes too.”

Mellissa said, “Anything else sir?”  
Calvin said, “Your name and where I can write you.”

Dan grinned at Mellissa.

Thomas ran and sat next to Emilou and Michael.

Mellissa blushed.

Dan said, “I can give you pancakes, but I baked a pastry with pecans and topped with whipped.”

Patrick was at the end of the table and said to Joe, “I remember that from Europe. I love that thing. I wonder why he has never cooked that before.”

Joe giggled.

Patrick said, “Dan, I want one.”

Percy walked in the formal dining room and said, “One what?”

Bruce followed Percy and was trying to see what they were talking about.

Patrick said, “Percy, I don’t know the name of the pastry, but it has pecans and whipped cream on top or thick sweet milk and sometimes raisins and apples on top.”

Bruce looked at Patrick and said, “I know what you are talking about Grandpa. I want some too.”

Dan walked in the kitchen.

Percy and Bruce walked and sat with Emilou, Thomas and Michael on the opposite side of the table so they could talk back and forth.

Eleanor. Shirley, Gen, Claressa and Alvin were standing outside the formal dining room talking with Lorraine.

Mellissa gave Calvin four strips of bacon and scrambled eggs.

Calvin grinned at Mellissa and batted his eyes at her.

Percy, Bruce and Emilou hollered.

Brenda and Eleanor stepped into the formal dining room to see what the ruckus was about.

Hal and the crew members were laughing.

Patrick and Joe were trying to figure out what everyone was laughing about.

Glenda and Harriet arrived and walked through the kitchen and held the doors for Dan.

Dan stepped out the kitchen with the pastry.

Bruce jumped up.

Percy started jumping up in excitement.

Calvin blushed and looked at Mellissa and said, “Thank you. That is exactly what I wanted.”

Thomas, Emilou and Michael screamed.

The adults still could not understand what was being said.

Joe looked and said, “That’s Calvin.”

Patrick said, “Yeah that’s the pastry.”

Brenda looked at the pastry and looked at Patrick.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Eleanor walked down to see the pastry.

She said, “No Dan.”

The children began to scream.

Steven and Daniel stopped.

They were walking down to that end with their plates to get some pastry.

Patrick said, “Eleanor don’t do that.”

Eleanor said, “Daddy I do not plan on being up all night with sick children.”

Brenda walked pass Eleanor and picked up two plates and said, “Dan cut me and Mr. Stith a piece.”

Dan cut the pieces and placed in their plates.

Daniel looked at Brenda and said, “Miss Brenda was she talking to us too?”

Brenda said, “She was talking to herself.”

She looked at Mellissa and said, “Mellissa, scramble eggs, sausage and bacon.”

Calvin said, “Yes Mrs. Stith, you know how to feed a man. Like Miss sweet cakes here.”

Mellissa blushed.

Brenda said, “Mellissa I heard he can cook. Don’t let him push that on you.”

Calvin was eating his pastry,

He leaned his head on the chair and said, “Mellissa, if this pastry was a woman I would have to let you go.”

The children hollered.

Brenda said, “I told you Mellissa. Calvin thinks about nothing but his stomach.”

The train crew hollered.

Patrick was still trying to make out what Brenda and Calvin were talking about.

Brenda walked to Patrick and passed Eleanor with their plates.

She said, “Eleanor, Dan can cut the pastry into pieces.”

Claressa looked at Brenda and said, “I love that.”

She looked back at Alvin and said, “Excuse me.”

Alvin, John and Dr. Ralph were having a good conversation.

Alvin looked at Claressa.

Claressa pointed to Brenda’s plate.

Alvin said, “Excuse me gentlemen.”

Patrick received his plate from Brenda.

The cook looked at Joe and said, “I know if I learn how to make that you will pay me a little extra.”

Eleanor stepped back and looked at the cook and said, “No.”

The cook said, “Miss Eleanor is that your answer to everything?”

Michael was mad and yelled, “Yes.”

He turned his back to Eleanor.

Dr. Ralph looked at Michael.

Steven and Daniel got a piece of the pastry and had cream poured over it.

Claressa said, “Alvin, have cream poured over my piece.”

Alvin turned and said, “You did not ask me to get you a plate.”

Claressa said, “Please.”

They continued to stand by Lorraine and comfort her.

John looked back at his parents and his new wife Loretta who was talking to Mag.

He said, “That’s a cinnamon roll.”

His children looked at him and walked pass them and got in the line to get the pastry.

John tried to smile.

He was embarrassed.

Claressa looked at John and laughed.

She said, “We don’t eat that like they do. They are used to eating that for breakfast every morning.”

Dr. Ralph was standing and looking at all the food.

The people were eating and enjoying themselves.

Gen was patting Lorraine’s shoulder and looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Jason, don’t begrudge the food. Dr. Greene complained about the food all the time. Brenda and Patrick never have gone without. But many of us around them have gone without food. They share their food to be friendly and show their appreciation of your friendship.”

Lorraine nodded he head.

Dr. Ralph saw Lorraine nod her head.

Gen saw Lorraine nod her head.

Dr. Ralph smiled.

Brad and D

Alicia and Cynthia were talking to Timothy and Laura and Natalie.

Dr. Ralph was the last person to enter the formal dining room.

Jose opened the front door and Stephen and Bryce ran in the door.

Nadine rushed and took their coats, scarves and gloves.

Stephen looked at the people and leaned to Jose, “No Monica?”

Jose said, “No. She is spending Christmas in Philadelphia. But Lorraine is home.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Stephen.

Stephen said, “Wonderful.”

He saw Dr. Ralph looking at him.

He patted Dr. Ralph on his back and nodded.

Stephen leaned to Lorraine and said, “Hey fireball.”

Lorraine grinned.

Dr. Ralph thought, “He is dress nice.”

John saw his children’s plates and said, “My God. They are going to be sick.”

Eleanor said, “That’s why I said ‘no’.

She looked at the cook.

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

He saw the cream that Alvin had on his and Claressa’s pastry.

Patrick looked at Dan.

Dan saw Patrick looking at him.

Dan brought the sauces to Patrick.

Joe sat next to Patrick.

He saw Bryce and Stephen walk in.

He had not seen them in years.

He wiped his mouth and jumped from his seat.

Patrick looked to see who Joe was jumping up for.

Patrick stood with his napkin in his hand.

Bryce stood by Lorraine and bent down and said, “I’m happy you are home.”

He kissed her on her forehead.

He stood and walked in the formal dining room with Stephen.

Stephen and Bryce greeted everyone.

Patrick shook their hands.

Joe and Stephen and Bryce hugged.

They stood and talk for a minute.

Brenda was grinning and said, “We have some kind of fish.”

Bryce said, “I’m on my way.”

Brenda laughed.

Alicia was talking to Natalie.

Alicia walked to Lorraine and said, “Miss Lorraine, I am glad you are home. This is one of the dresses you picked out for me. Emilou has on one of the dresses you selected for her.”

Thomas moved so Mary could sit next to Emilou.

Emilou and Mary were laughing and talking.

Patrick had several telegrams coming through in his office.

Jose was about to lock the front door.

There was a knock on the front door.

Jose peeped out the window and opened the door, Stanley and Alice walked in.

Jose pushed the door open and waited for Nathan and Denise.

He greeted them and closed and locked the door.

Peter rode around the back with his mother.

They walked in through the kitchen and greeted everyone.

Brenda saw Peter and his mother enter the forma dining room.

She stood and greeted them.

Patrick and Joe greeted peter and his mother.

Brenda said, “Mr. Stith and I never met you. But we are glad you came to our Christmas Eve brunch and our special guest is Lorraine.

Peter ran to Lorraine and hugged her and kissed her.

Dr. Ralph looked at Peter.

Eleanor and Claressa watched Dr. Ralph.

He looked at Eleanor and Claressa.

Nadine woke Maureen and had her to bath, shampoo and dressed.

Stephen shined Maureen’s ragged boots.

Ruth came to the brunch and had Dan to bake her turkey.

Dan made a very large amount of dressing and gravy and told the workers to bring their own dishes.

Ruth brought her containers.

Jose gave Ruth until the first week of January off with pay.

Ruth planned to share her Christmas Eve dinner with the other people in the rooming house.

Nadine asked Ruth to give Maureen a hairstyle.

Ruth combed and brushed Maureen’s hair and gave her pretty braids she put in a ball.

Ruth and Maureen entered the formal dining from the kitchen.

Ruth and Maureen did not know Lorraine was back.

They were excited and ran to Lorraine.

Maureen said, “Hey Lorraine. I miss you.”

Dr. Ralph watched Maureen very intensely.

Joe watched Dr. Ralph.

He turned to Patrick and said, “That Dr. Ralph is tough.”

Patrick said, “That’s who you get if ever you get sick or injured.”

Brenda looked at Maureen.

Maureen was passing Brenda to get something to eat.

Brenda looked at Maureen and said, “Patrick I liked the dress Maureen has on but why is she here?”

Patrick did not say anything.

Shirley and Alicia were looking at Maureen’s pretty hair style.

Eleanor looked at Maureen’s dress and said, “Maureen you look nice.”

Maureen said, “Thank you Miss Eleanor.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Eleanor who is that lady?”

Eleanor said, “Maureen one of the bedroom maids.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Maureen.

Brenda was listening and watching Maureen.

Patrick heard Dr. Ralph and cut his eyes at him.

He did not want to look to hard so Brenda would not catch him.

Dora told her neighbor Jose would pay for him to take Harriet and Glenda home.

Nadine said, “There are additional seats in the family dining room.

Nathan got a large piece of the pastry, sausages and eggs.

He had Dan to put cream on his pastry.

He turned and saw all the children staring at him.

Dan looked at the children.

Calvin said, “Like little lions.”

Nathan said, “I am not a child. I can eat this.”

Patrick stood and walked to Nathan and walked him to Dr. Ralph and introduced him.

Denise got grits, salmon croquet, fried fish and biscuits.

Several railroad crew members watched Denise.

Nathan saw them looking at Denise and was glad he had someone that other men found attractive.

Denise and Nathan went to the family dining room.

Brenda looked at Alice and said, “Alice you are not going to make it to January.”

Alice wobbled and was talking to Lorraine.

Lorraine fell asleep.

Alice and Stanley went to the family dining room.

Jose locked the door and walked into the formal dining room.

Hal looked at Lorraine and said, “Miss Lorraine is sleep. When she wakes she is going to be hungry.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Hal.

Eleanor said, “Take her to her room or let her stay here?’

Dr. Ralph said, Let her stay.”

Brenda said, “Bring her here.”

Dr. Ralph pushed Lorraine to the table.

Shirley was watching Lorraine’s every move.

She ate her omelet and a half of biscuit which she shared with Alicia.

Alicia got potatoes and sausages.

She and Shirley sat close to Lorraine and talked.

Eleanor, Claressa and Dr. Ralph were the last to eat.

Dr. Ralph and Eleanor got an omelet, sausages and grilled tomatoes.

Dr. Ralph sat next to Lorraine.

Claressa and Eleanor sat opposite the table next to Alvin and John and Loretta.

Some of the workers got their plates and went into the worker’s area to eat.

Maureen followed the workers.

Dr. Ralph watched Maureen.

He turned and looked at Patrick.

Joe, Patrick and Brenda were watching Dr. Ralph.

He looked at them and exhaled and bowed his head and said his grace.

Thomas said, “Momma.”

Eleanor did not look at Thomas and said, “No.”

Thomas said, “Why?”

The cook leaned back in his chair to get a good look at Eleanor.

Patrick looked at the cook.

Eleanor shook her head in disbelief at Thomas.

Michael still had his back to Eleanor.

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “All of you got sick…”

Shirley said, “Not me.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

Patrick looked at Shirley for her to be quiet.

Eleanor said, “All of you and Barry got sick. And it was a mess running behind all of you and cleaning up.”

Michael looked at Thomas and said, “Like she ever used a mop.”

Eleanor raised up in her seat.

Alvin and Claressa looked at Michael.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “You four in the kitchen.”

Patrick and Brenda watched the four boys follow Eleanor to the kitchen.

Hal said, “How many rounds you give Eleanor.”

Calvin said, “Them four don’t stand a chance.”

Everybody laughed.

Patrick and Brenda laughed.

Claressa said, “But they are so cute.”

Brenda whispered to Patrick, “She better not tough them.”

Gen heard Brenda and said, “I think she is shock they are mad at her.”

Patrick said, “I love that pastry. I only got a piece of it. Nathan and Stanley got a whole pastry with plenty of cream on top. I know they are going to be sick.”

Joe and Patrick laughed.

Stephen started talking to Patrick and Joe.

Gen was talking to Bryce, Timothy and Laura.

Ruth and Jose were standing at the formal dining room door.

Ruth said low, “What is going to happen to Maureen?”

Dr. Ralph looked back at Ruth.

Jose said, “Ruth I don’t know.”

Ruth said, “Craig came by my room yesterday screaming at me that Maureen was not home and they had no food.”

Nathan walked up behind Ruth and heard her.

Ruth and Jose did not say anything else.

Ruth went and got corn beef hash, scramble eggs, grits and biscuits.

Gen looked at Ruth’s plate as she pass them.

Gen said, “Ruth what is that?”

Ruth held her plate down.

Gen said, “I didn’t see that?”

Patrick said, “I didn’t either…”

He turned and watched Ruth out the door.

Patrick and Gen jumped up and rushed to the food.

Brenda and Bryce laughed.

Stephen and Joe laughed and continued to talk.

They watched Lorraine.

Benda looked at them and then she looked at Lorraine.

Patrick and Gen walked back with corn beef hash, grits and eggs.

Bryce looked at Gen’s plate and said, “That almost looks as good as my fish and grits.”

Patrick lifted his head up and said, “Bryce what kind of fish is that?”

Bryce said, “Trout and carp.”

Stephen said, “Good eating.”

Bryce said, “I am savoring every bite.”

Brenda was looking at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph looked at Brenda and then he looked at a sleeping Lorraine.

He felt bad about their relationship.

Eleanor walked in the dining room.

Brenda shifted her eyes to see the boys.

Patrick kept eating and put a forkful of corn beef hash in his mouth.

Mellissa made her a plate and was walking towards the kitchen.

Calvin was leaning back with his arms folded.

He watched Eleanor as she walked in the door.

Claressa leaned back to watch Eleanor and look for the boys.

Emilou and Mary looked at the boys when they entered the dining room.

Percy was whispering to Bruce.

Patrick watched them and kept eating.

Michael walked to Dan and asked for a piece of the pastry.

Dan cut Michael a piece of the pastry and put cream on top.

Emilou jumped up from the table and ran to Dan.

Dr. Ralph sat back and looked at the children.

Thomas pass Dan.

Damn looked at Thomas.

Loretta looked at John.

John looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “What do you suggest for a sick stomach?”

Everyone laughed.

Alvin excused himself from the table.

Claressa leaned back and looked at Alvin as he hurried out the room.

Patrick and Brenda watched Alvin.

Patrick started thinking he hadn’t eaten that sweet stuff since last year. Hy did he get the sweet cream on top. He has to deliver the Christmas Day service message and he can’t be sick.”

He looked at Dr. Ralph for the answer to John’s question.

Hal sat with his arms folded and watched Lorraine.

Hal said, “Doc, you want to give Miss Lorraine mashed potatoes when she wakes?”

Shirley looked at Hal and she turned to Dr. Ralph and said, “The cooks are boiling potatoes now for tomorrow.”

Calvin slipped out the formal dining room and followed Mellissa.

Mellissa and Calvin laughed and talked.

Peter looked at them and Jose looked at them.

They seemed to have known each other.

Nathan was watching for Ruth to return to the dining room.

He walked to Dan and got the last piece of the pastry.

Percy and Bruce sat and whispered between themselves.

Thomas and Emilou and Mary were talking.

Michael was eating his piece of pastry with a frown on his face.

Eleanor sat and watched him.

Nadine carried three plates to Alvin and Claressa’s out to the security men and the drive.

Dora was preparing to leave.

Harriet and Glenda walked in the formal dining room to say good night to Lorraine and saw she was sleep.

They said, “Merry Christmas to everyone else and went to the kitchen.

Glenda got her ham from Peter.

Harriet got her turkey and dressing from Dan.

Dora walked to Jose and said, “I’m leaving and I am taking Harriet and Glenda and their food.”

Jose stared at Dora.

Dora said, “Jos!”

Jose said, “I have already paid that man out their with the blue plaid scarf and gave him something to eat.”

Dora walked out on the back porch and saw her neighbor eating.

She stared at him.

He rushed and ate and jumped from his carriage and ran and gave Dora the plate and fork.

Dora rolled her eyes and carried the plate and fork in the house.

She looked for Harriet and Glenda and told them they were riding with her.

Glenda and Harriet were happy and said, “Merry Christmas.”

All the workers said, “Merry Christmas.”

Briana, Nora, Veronica and Ruth were leaving.

Allen came and to take them home.

Everyone was happy.

Allen was to spend Christmas Eve night and Christmas Day with Veronica and her family.

Allen bought several liquors for Veronica’s family.

Veronica said, “They will love it Allen.”

Allen grinned.

Dan began to clean up the formal dining room.

He brought only a little food into the kitchen.

Maureen said, “Can I take that food home Dan?”  
Dan stood and looked at Maureen.

Jose was looking over the schedule and said, “Maureen how are you going to get home?”

Maureen turned and looked at Jose and said, “Walk, like I did to get here.”

Dan saw Jose was not nice with Maureen.

He said, “Maureen, I’ll take you home. I ‘ll put this food in a bag for you to have.”  
Maureen said, “Thank you Dan.”

Maureen’s sweetness touched Dan’s heart.

Dan packed up all the food and put it in a large bag and gave it to Maureen.

Jose said, “Dan, Steven lives across the street from Maureen. Ask him if they would drop Maureen off and give her, her uniform and a few blankets to wrap up in until she gets home.”

Dan said, “Ok. Steven is still n the dining room.”

Dan walked into the formal dining and heard the hollering and laughing coming from the family dining room.

Patrick said, “They are having a good time over there.”

Brenda laughed.

Gen and Bryson were hollering and laughing themselves.

Brenda thought, “That would be funny if gen and Bryce date.”

Dan said, “Steven can you take Maureen home.”

Brenda looked at Dan.

Steven said, “Sure.”

Steven looked around the room.

Daniel looked around the room.

Steven said, “Where is Maureen?”

Dan said, “In the kitchen.”

Steven said, “Is she ready to go. I want to stay a little longer.”

Dan thought and said, “She is ready to go home to Craig and his son.”

Steven said, “How did Maureen get here?”

Dan said, “She walked.”

Steven yelled, “Walked!”

Eleanor leaned back and looked at Steven and Dan.

Daniel was sitting looking at Dan.

Laura said, “Daniel who walked?”

Daniel turned to his grandmother and said, “A worker.”

Patrick sat and listened.

Shirley said, “Dan,

Dan nodded at Shirley.

Eleanor leaned forward and said, “What is it Steven?”

Steven said, “I wanted to play billiards with Daniel. Can we?”

Eleanor said, “Sure. Why you ask me that?”

Steven said, “I’ll take Maureen home, but I wanted to extend my Christmas Eve and play billiards for a moment.”

Eleanor looked at Dan and said, “Dan who is leaving now that can take Maureen home?”

Dan said, “I’ll check.”

Eleanor said, “Is Peter busy?”

Dan walked to Eleanor and said, “He is preparing Christmas dinner.”

Claressa looked down the table at Brenda and Patrick who were silent and listening.

She said, “What time is dinner?”

Brenda solemn said, “The same time it has always been. Two pm.”

Claressa said, “What can I cook and bring?”

Brenda said, “Nothing.”

Patrick said, “Nothing.”

Dan said, “Nothing.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Patrick, Brenda and Dan. Then he looked at Claressa.

Claressa said, “Mrs. Brenda and Mr. Patrick, I am grown now. I will not burn up your house like I did when I was younger.”

Michael frowned and jerked around to look at Aunt Claressa.

Percy leaned back to look at Aunt Claressa.

Bruce sat still.

Thomas was shock and sat and stared at Claressa.

Bruce said, “Did you get a whipping?”

Claressa said, “It really was your momma’s fault.”

Bryce looked at Brenda and said, “The truth twenty years later.”

Hal snickered.

Dr. Ralph looked at Hal.

Dan walked to Shirley and said, “Yes Shirley.”

Shirley said, “Dan, Mash one white potato and bring it and a glass of sweet milk. So I can feed Lorraine.”

Brenda looked at Shirley and said, “You don’t make requests like that.”

Dr. Ralph looked at a mean Brenda.

Patrick was looking at Shirley.

Dr. Ralph was trying to think of what Shirley said.

He looked up and saw Eleanor ease from the table with her wine glass.

Claressa said, “Eleanor where are you going?”

Eleanor held up her glass.

Claressa said, “Bring me one and check on Alvin.”

Eleanor eased out the dining room.

Bryce and Stephen laughed.

Joe said, “Do I have something to hang over her head for her to leave me alone?”

Patrick said, “I don’t know yet.”

Michael yelled to Percy and Bruce, “Why did momma leave?”

Bruce said, “She doesn’t want Aunt Claressa to tell grandma and grandpa what she did.”

Thomas looked at Bruce and said, “We haven’t burned down nothing and we get this treatment.”

Percy leaned over the table and began to whisper to Thomas and Bruce.

Thomas leaned towards Percy and Bruce.

Michael kept eating his sweet pastry.

Claressa turned and looked at Brenda and Patrick.

Hal looked at Patrick.

Patrick looked at Percy and said, “Eat your food. Percy.”

Percy cut his eyes at Patrick and sat straight in his chair.

Michael said, “I am tired of her.”

Claressa’s mouth dropped open.

Patrick and Brenda’s mouth dropped opened.

Alicia looked at the boys.

John Jr. went back and got another pastry.

John leaned and saw John Jr. and threw his napkin on the table.

Brad looked at John and looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “I don’t know what to tell you.”

Cynthia said, “John let him enjoy himself. Loretta doesn’t cook like this.”

Loretta started turning to get out of her chair and she was chewing.

She said, “Your right. Where did Eleanor go?”

Hal and the cook pointed to the kitchen.

John looked at Loretta and said, “Where are you going?”

Thomas tapped Brad’s shoulder.

Brad leaned over.

John said, “What was that?”

Thomas said, “A long and happy marriage is compromise.”

John said, “Mrs. Brenda do we have the pleasure of your famous eggnog?”

Brenda grinned and sat up in her chair and said, “Yes you do John.”

Dan turned and said, “I will send it in.”

Brenda said, “Dan, what is wrong with Maureen?”

Dr. Ralph was listening.

Bryce and Stephen were listening.

Gen watched the boys.

Gen leaned down towards Patrick and Brenda and said, “Yall got a problem.”

Brenda and Patrick looked at the boys.

Alicia and Shirley kept talking.

Alicia said, “Why Sarah did not come?”

Shirley said, “I think her uncle is sick.”

Patrick, Bryce and Stephen looked at Shirley.

Brenda stopped talking to Dan and looked at Shirley.

Patrick said, “Shirley why did you say that?”  
Shirley looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “You think Sarah’s uncle was sick?”  
Shirley saw Bryce and Stephen looking at her.

She looked at Dr. Ralph for security.

Dr. Ralph smiled at her.

Shirley said, “I saw Sarah at Nathan and Denise’ wedding.”

Patrick said, “I saw Joe and Peggy and they were fine. Shirley.”

Shirley said, “Grandpa they looked fine.”

Shirley continued to eat.

Brenda said, “Dan, Maureen.”

Dan held his head down.

Dr Ralph looked at Dan.

The cook was watching Dan.

Dan said, “Sunday after Nathan and Denise’s wedding. Steven took Maureen home.”

Brenda said, “I remember.”

Patrick was looking at Dan.

Bryce and Gen were listening.

Stephen and Joe were talking and listening to Dan.

Dan said, “Craig was fussing at Maureen because she only brought cake and punch from the wedding. Maureen ran out the house with no coat on and screamed all the way here. She has been here since Sunday and Craig has not come to get her.”

Patrick said, “He better not.”

The cook was listening.

Dr. Ralph was listening.

Shirley was talking to Alicia about the title of high countess.

Alicia and Shirley screamed.

Bryce and Gen looked at them.

Then turned back to Dan and listened.

Dan said, “Ruth told Jose today that Craig came to her rooming house hollering at her to tell Maureen there was no food and to bring them food.”

Patrick said, “Any food left?”

Dan said, “I have packed it up for her to take.”

Patrick held his head down to eat the last of his grits.

He said, “What Christmas meat did she chose?”

Dan said, “Ham.”

Patrick said, “What vegetables have you cooked that you can give her?”

Dan said, “Sir.”

Patrick looked at Dan.

Dan said, “Craig sold the ham.”

Brenda did not move.

Patrick ate his grits.

Stephen and Joe looked at Dan.

Bryce started laughing and turned his head from Dan and Patrick and pulled on his ear.

The cook said, “That sound like my daddy. Where’s he at?’

Joe leaned back and said, “George, stop it. He ain’t your daddy. You have done well without your daddy.”

Michael said, “That’s what I say.”

Patrick and Brenda were leaning looking down the table at Michael.

Michael said, “Eggnog Dan with rum.”

Shirley stopped talking and looked down the table at Michael.

Alicia was shocked and slightly turned and looked down the table at Michael.

Thomas said, “Michael shut up.”

Percy said, “You are going to give us away.”

Eleanor was standing in the dining room door with a tray of alcohol for the adults.

Thomas said, “Hi momma.”

Percy looked at Eleanor.

Bruce was leaning across the table.

Michael ate his last bite of the pastry and yawn.

Percy said, “Thank you.”

The railroad crew laughed.

Loretta was standing behind Eleanor and drinking a tall glass of whiskey.

John leaned over the table to look at Loretta,

Thomas and Brad looked at John.

John said, “Loretta what you got?”

Loretta turned the glass up and licked her lips and said, “Nothing.”

Then she burped.

The children, including John Jr and Mary burst out laughing.

Thomas and Brad looked at John.

Dr. Ralph snickered.

Michael said, “That’s a girl.”

Eleanor moved towards Michael.

Hal laughed.

Patrick yelled, “Eleanor.”

Patrick said, “Dan what are you preparing for tomorrow?”

Dan said, “Goose, dressing and gravy.”

Patrick said, “Take Maureen home and give her whatever is cooked. Take a bucket of coal.”

Dan whispered and said, “He sells their coal.”

Brenda saw Nathan standing by the door listening.

She did not know why Nathan was standing and listening.

Nathan said, “I can take Maureen home and drop off the food and coal.”

Patrick looked at Nathan.

Dan said, “She is in the kitchen. I’ll tell her to out the front and give her a few blankets to wrap up in since she doesn’t have a coat.

Thomas was watching Eleanor.

Eleanor was trying to listen to her mother.

She turned and looked at Michael.

Who turned his head from Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Thomas.

He sat straight and showed all his teeth grinning at Eleanor.

Eleanor did not look at Percy and Bruce.

Eleanor walked to Claressa and reached the tray to her.

Claressa took the two glasses of sherry and put one at Eleanor plate and she began to sip the other.

Eleanor said, “Alvin is sitting in the billiards room.”

Claressa looked at Eleanor and said, “The pastry?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

John was listening.

Loretta was stepping lightly behind Eleanor.

John said, “Look at her.”

Cynthia looked at John.

Brad said, “Stop it son.”

John said, “She acts like she has no religion.”

Nathan and Dan went into the kitchen.

Patrick said,   
Brenda why you did not tell me the sheriff was standing there listening to us?”

Bryce said, “The sheriff.”

Hal looked at the cook and said, “We know how he looks now.”

Joe said, “He will be on the train Friday. Be on your best behavior.”

Hal said, “Doc.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Hal.

Hal said, “Never mind.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Sage or mint tea or blackberries for upset stomachs. That will help.”

Patrick was still looking at Brenda.

Stephen and Joe, Bryce and Gen looked at Brenda.

Brenda twisted her mouth and said, “I just didn’t think much about him standing there.”

Bryce said, “You didn’t think much about a sheriff standing in the corner.”

He and Gen burst out laughing.

Patrick got quiet when Nathan walked back in the room with Maureen’s bags.

Brenda looked at Dan and said, “I want my blankets back.

Dan looked at Brenda and kept walking.

Shirley looked at Dan.

Patrick said, “Shirley, you have let your title go to your head.”

Eleanor was walking to Gen and Bryce with the liquor.

Gen said, “It’s too early in the day. But scotch.”

She and Bryce hollered.

Bryce said, “Me too.”

Stephen and Joe looked at Bryce and Gen and grinned.

Eleanor walked to Stephen and Joe.

Stephen said, “Sherry I love that sherry.”

Joe said, “None for me and my crew.”

The men started whining like babies.

Thomas fell out laughing.

Eleanor looked at Thomas.

Joe said, “Where’s Calvin?”

Dr. Ralph looked.

Hal said, “Half- way to the wedding altar.”

All the crew members hollered.

Gen said, “With who. I’m still sitting here.”

Mag was walking in from the family dining room and hollered.

Brenda and Patrick laughed.

Dr. Ralph looked at Gen and smiled.

He looked at the sleeping Lorraine.

The workers brough the eggnog in with the elegant punch bowls and trays and cups.

Brenda sat and smiled.

She was famous for her eggnog and the serving of the eggnog.

She grinned with pride.

Patrick looked at Brenda and smiled.

Dr. Ralph watched them.

Brenda said, “Shirley you can’t talk to these workers or anyone else like they are less than you.”

Eleanor was walking the table and pouring the liquor.

She said, “What happened?”

Patrick said, “Shirley did not address Dan properly. She told him what to do.”

Shirley looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Shirley I am disappointed in you.”

Claressa said, “You know the titles are not official yet.”

Shirley went into breathing hard.

Alicia looked from Claressa to Shirley.

Alicia said, “Shirley.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley calm down and slowly breathe. You know better than that.”

Shirley slowed down and said, “I can’t have a ball or reception here while the ambassadors are still in the America?”

Claressa put her class of sherry on the table and said, “No.”

Shirley was about to cry and said, “Why?”

Claressa said, ”You have to be properly introduced. If not the royals will reject you forever.”

Michael yelled, “Let her go ahead.”

Dr. Ralph looked at a pouting Michael.

Eleanor was passing him but being offered Dr. Ralph liquor.

Dr. Ralph said, “No. Thank.”

He looked at Hal and said, “We need you at the hospital in Philadelphia.”

Brenda looked at Hal.

Brad and Cynthia drank scotch.

Thomas and Laura had brandy.

The children were eggnog.

Eleanor put a drop of rum in her boys four cups.

Michael tilted his cup and stared at the drop of rum Eleanor put in his cup.

Gen and Bryce were watching Michael and hollered.

Patrick watched Michael.

Maureen walked through the formal dining room with the blankets over her arms and said, “Merry Christmas everyone. Tell Lorraine Merry Christmas from me.”

Everyone said, “Merry Christmas Maureen.

The cook watched Maureen out the room.

Patrick was watching the cook and Michael.

He was tickle at Thomas he was licking his lips.

Bruce would drank some eggnog and thump the cup back on the table.

He was disgusted.

He Alvin walked in the dining room.

Bruce leaned from the table and sat straight and tall in his chair.

He looked at Alvin.

Eleanor offered him liquor.

Alvin whispered tea.

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor and said, “Sassafras tea, Eleanor.”

Hal pointed and said, “For Miss Lorraine too.”

Eleanor and Dan walked into the kitchen.

Hal said, “Can we play a game of billiards before we leave?”

Patrick said, “Yes you can after Steven and Daniel.”

Steven said, “We are going.”

Cynthia said, “Brenda how does Dan cook his goose?”

Brenda said, “On low heat and he uses a dry rub of herbs on the goose.”

Cynthia put her liquor glass and was thinking.

Laura, Brenda and Cynthia were talking about the spices.

Mag got eggnog and walked back to the family dining room.

Claressa told Alvin what Shirley said about a ball or reception.

Alvin looked at Shirley and said, “Wait Shirley. Once you have been lawfully introduced. You then can have a reception or dinner. Later you can host a ball. Become famous for a ball. The ball must be for a charity event. “

Claressa said, “Charity is big with the royals.”

Alvin said, “Try to go to an event that is hosted by the royal as often as you can but then become selective.”

Bruce was listening intently.

Brenda watched her ambassador.

Eleanor watched Bruce.

Percy yelled, “How did momma start the fire that burned down grandma and grandpa’s house?’

Eleanor said, “Percy you only had a drop of rum and that did not make you drunk. You better shut up.”

Thomas was sitting across from Percy with a plastered grin on his face.

Percy looked at Thomas.

Bruce looked at Thomas and turned back to Alvin and Claressa to hear what all they were saying.

Claressa was talking to Cynthia.

Cynthia said, “Is Paris as exciting and wonderful as people say?”

Claressa said, “Oh yes.”

Brenda grinned.

Laura said, “Brenda what was your favorite country?”

Brenda looked at Laura and said, “All of them. Go. It is worth a year from home.”

Thomas looked at Brenda.

He said, “Brenda the look on your face says it all. We will try to go. We are getting older each year. I want to be able to walk around and see the how people live.’

Brenda said, “We have a new ship.”

Thomas jumped up and Percy and Bruce yelled, “It is huge.”

Claressa said, “That’s the ship we are leaving on the first of March.”

Thomas was thinking.

Patrick looked at Thomas.

Thomas looked at Patrick and smiled.

Dr. Ralph looked at Thomas and then he looked at Patrick.

Mellissa and Calvin walked back in the formal dining room.

The children and the railroad crew said, “UH.”

Calvin and Mellissa were grinning from ear to ear.

Dr. Ralph looked at Calvin.

He looked at Patrick.

Joe looked at Dr. Ralph.

Joe said, “What is it doctor?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I need to see Calvin. He needs to get to the Stith as soon as you all return to Philadelphia, but I need to attend to him now.”

Patrick stared at Dr. Ralph.

Brenda looked at Dr. Ralph.

Eleanor looked at Dr. Ralph and saw how concern he was for Calvin.

Hal and the cook looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph was speaking low but they were listening.

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley you are next.”

Shirley sat at the table and started crying and said, “Eleanor.”

Michael turned to look at Shirley.

Bruce looked at Shirley and said, “Shirley they have extended your life and made you better to live. They have not maltreated you. Let Dr. Ralph attend to you so you can enjoy the holidays with your family and friends.”

Eleanor nearly fainted.

Claressa had to catch Eleanor.

Brenda stood from her chair.

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Dr. Ralph pushed his chair back to go to Eleanor.

Cynthia picked up her brandy and drank a swallow and laughed.

She said, “The ones you don’t expect surprise you.”

Laura smiled.

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

He and Brenda saw she was alright and they sat down.

Steven and Daniel took their eggnog and went to play billiards.

Alicia whispered to Shirley.

Shirley looked at Daniel and whispered to Alicia.

Gen looked at the two young women.

Patrick said, “Joe, you and crew are welcome here. I need to go to my office and check for telegrams.”

Patrick looked at Brenda and said, “Are you coming?”

Brenda said, “No. I want to cherish this rare time with our friends.”

Brad said, “It is too rare. Isn’t it Brenda.”

Thomas said, “As I get older I see what matters the most in my life is JESUS, family and friend. The other ‘F’ finances come in last.”

They all nodded and agreed.

Cynthia looked at Brenda and listened to her and Claressa talk about the sights, sounds and the smells of the different countries.

Brad looked at Cynthia.

Gen looked at Brad.

She whispered to Bryce, “Watch he is going to figure out how to take her to Europe.”

Bryce said, “Tell me lady. That is what life is about. Love. Simply love.”

Gen started crying.

She had to dap her eyes with her handkerchief.

Brenda saw Gen.

Shirley said, “Aunt Gen you are alright.”

Gen waved her handkerchief and nodded her head.”

Gen turned and walked out the dining room to the kitchen.

Bryce turned and had his mouth opened.

Stephen and Joe leaned back and watched Gen walk out.

Gen knew how to make a quiet sophisticated exit.

Dr. Ralph looked at Gen.

Shirley whispered to Dr. Ralph and said, “Gen and Mr. Olsen are divorced. He was a man after women money. And her only child spent up all of his inheritance and started selling drugs.”

Patrick and Brenda were listening to Shirley.

Shirley started crying.

Brenda was thinking, “She better not let come out of her something about herself.”

Eleanor looked at Gen and quietly stood and walked out the room.

Patrick was wondering why Shirley was crying.

Dr. Ralph reached and touched Shirley’s shoulder.

Alicia was looking at Shirley with compassion.

Shirley said, “The federal agents destroyed my house looking for John Jr. Drugs.”

Brenda stood and walked behind Gen and Eleanor.

Eleanor heard Shirley but kept walking.

She did not know what to do to get the selfishness out of Shirley.

Patrick walked out the formal dining room to his office.

Joe looked at Patrick and Brenda leave.

He looked at Shirley.

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley, that only gives you a chance to re-model the house to your liking.”

Shirley stopped crying and looked into Dr. Ralph’s eyes.

She thought for a moment and wiped her eyes with the napkins.

Shirley took a deep breath and turned to Alicia and continued to talk.

Joe shook his head.

Stephen said, “Women and shopping.”

Bryce said, “Should I go after her?”

Thomas said, “I don’t think so.”

Brad said, “It was not what you said. You are fine.”

Bryce looked around and drank his last swallow of liquor.

He stood and walked to the tray Eleanor brought into the dining room.

Mag walked in the room with Morgan.

Morgan walked to Joe and they talked.

Mag said, “Where did Gen go?”

Michael said, “She was crying and ran into the kitchen.”

Mag said, “What?”  
She looked around and did not see Brenda nor Eleanor.

She walked into the kitchen.

Dan and Peter pointed at the door.

Mag slowly walked to the hall and stood by Jose’s desk and watched Gen.

Hal stood and walked to Dr. Ralph and took the white potato and mashed it.

Hal kneeled by Lorraine and said, “Wake up Miss Lorraine and eat.”

Lorraine woke.

Dr. Ralph sat and watched.

Shirley turned and said, “I was going to feed her.”

Hal said, “It is not a problem for me to help her.”

Shirley said, “But…”

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley and she sat and watched Hal.

Michael and Thomas got up and walked down to Lorraine and got on their knees.

Hal looked at Michael and Thomas and said, “You are good boys don’t give your momma a hard time. She is raising you by herself.”

Michael said, “I’ll think about that.“

Thomas said, “Why Lorraine can’t feed herself?”

Hal said, “I don’t know.”

Lorraine said, “Because I want to be waited on.”

Michael jumped off the floor and hugged Lorraine.

Thomas peeped over in Lorraine’s face.

Dr. Ralph was overcome and wept.

Shirley ran to Lorraine and hugged her neck.

Everybody clapped and yelled.

Brenda and Eleanor heard the noise.

Mag walked to the dining room.

She said, “Percy, what happened?”

Percy said, “Lorraine is talking.”

Mag looked at Lorraine and grinned and walked back to the kitchen.

She said, “Lorraine is talking. And what I could see she is feeding herself.”

Eleanor ran into the formal dining room.

Dan and Peter and Nadine had walked into the room.

Eleanor ran pass them and ran to Lorraine.

Fell down and hugged Lorraine.

Brenda and Gen and Mag talked for a while at the backdoor.

Gen stood in the backdoor and looked out over the backyard.

Nadine peeped at her.

Peter peeped at Gen.

Jose was sitting at his desk and turned and watched Gen.

He waited.

He walked to Gen and said, “It is suppose to snow today and tomorrow. You have enough coal in the house?”

Gen stared out the backdoor and was crying.

She nodded her head for yes.

Jose said, “Are you going to be alone tomorrow?”

Gen whispered and said, “Mag, Josiah and Natalie will come for the day.”

Jose said, “Gen, you pack a bag for several days. If they cancel or don’t show up you, you hook your three horses to your carriage and put out all fires and come here.”

Gen was crying.

Jose turned and looked into the staring faces of Eleanor and Brenda.

He walked away and went into the billiards room and saw Steven and Daniel playing billiards.

Thomas and Brad joined them.

Jose saw Patrick walking down to his office.

Jose heard all the yelling and clapping from the formal dining room.

He rushed to the formal dining room and saw Eleanor running to Lorraine and falling on her knees.

Eleanor hugged Lorraine.

Jose knew Lorraine was coming back.

The family dining room guests ran over to the formal dining room.

Peter and his mother ran to the liquor tray got their liquor.

Joe looked at peter.

Peter shrugged his shoulders.

Peter and his mother stood and watched Lorraine surrounded by everyone.

Dr. Ralph thought about Felipe who said he first thought Meredith spoiled the boys. Then he thought he did not know who spoiled who. Then when baby Felipe was born Felipe saw the boys had spoiled Meredith. Dr. Woodson asked Felipe what he was going to do about the boys having spoiled Meredith. Felipe answered, ‘not a damn thing’.

Dr. Ralph thought, “Not a damn thing, Lorraine.”

Everybody cheered Lorraine on.

Lorraine took the bowl from Hal.

She said, “Thank you for helping me.”

Dr. Ralph wept.

Hal said, “You are welcomed Miss Lorraine.”

Hal stood and walked away so the boys could get to Lorraine.

Percy and Bruce ran and stood by Lorraine.

Brenda and Gen walked back in the formal dining room.

Brenda was holding Gen by the waist.

Bryce looked at Brenda and Gen.

Stephen and Joe looked at Gen and Brenda.

Brenda and Gen walked to Lorraine.

They bent down and kissed her on her cheeks.

Mag, Brenda and Gen stood back and whispered amongst themselves.

Bryce watched Gen.

The railroad crew went to the billiards room.

The workers that wee off Christmas Day went to Dan and Peter and received baked hams, goose and turkeys.

Nathan and Denise took Maureen home.

Maureen got out the carriage and was carrying a bag of apples to the door.

Nathan said, “Denise watch.”

Denise said, “Watch what?”

Nathan was purposefully bent down by the carriage so he could how Craig acted.

Nathan, “Watch to see if Craig is abusive to Maureen.”

Denise said, “Nathan I told you something is wrong with Maureen.”

Nathan said, “It could be because of a head lick.”

Denise turned slightly in the carriage to watch Maureen.

Maureen was walking on the porch.

Craig Jr yelled, “Dad she’s back.”

Craig yelled, “She better have food.”

Craig Jr yelled, “Yeah.”

Craig Jr. ran out the door and pushed Maureen and grabbed an apple and began to eat it.

Denise gasped.

Nathan was watching form the backside of the carriage.

Nathan put a bucket of coal on the side of the carriage so Craig could see it.

Craig walked to the door and said, “You better have more than these apples!”

Denise was listening.

Nathan put the bags of food that Dan packed by the side of carriage with Denise.

Craig looked and saw Denise.

He frowned up Denise.

Denise gasped again and shook.

Nathan was mad.

Craig yelled and said, “Go and get the rest of that stuff and bring in the house.”

Maureen looked at Craig.

Craig said, “Don’t look at me.”

He pointed to the carriage.

He said, “Get the food and tell that…”

Nathan had pulled his gun and ran around the carriage.

Craig saw Nathan run with his gun pulled out.

Craig tried to run in the house.

Denise jumped out the carriage and ran behind Nathan.

The neighbors ran in the house.

Craig Jr. kept eating his apple.

He reached and grabbed another apple and threw the core of the apple at Maureen.

Denise knocked the core from Maureen.

Maureen leaned her head back.

Denise ran to take the apple from Craig Jr.

Craig Jr. and Denise tussle over the apple.

Nathan had knocked Craig and had his gun pointed at Craig.

Nathan said, “Tell that what? Tell that what? What? What?”

Craig saw the hate in Nathan’s eyes.

He knew Nathan would kill him over that woman.

Denise final grabbed the apple from Craig Jr.

Craig Jr. was falling to the porch and still trying to bite the apple.

Denise the grabbed the apple and held it up in the air.

The neighbors were peeping out of their windows and doors.

Nathan realized what he was about to do.

He looked into Craig’s eyes and knew Craig knew what he was about do.

Nathan stood off Craig and threw Craig off the porch and grabbed Craig jr. and threw him off the porch.

Denise stood with the apple in her hand and turned her head to the side and took a long bite of the apple.

Nathan saw Craig Jr. kicking his feet in the dirt and hollering.

Nathan looked at Denise and said, “That’s the best revenge you can do? Eat the apple.”

Nathan said, “Craig, you and son better get off this property and never return.”

Craig laying on the ground yelled, “We have no place to go.”

His sister yelled and said, “Come over here.”

Nathan said, “Who are you?”

The woman said, “His sister.”

Nathan said, “I will be seeing you.”

The woman stared at Nathan.

Nathan gave her a stare that she and her husband ran out the window and close the curtain.

Denise was still eating the apple and Nathan grabbed her by the waist.

Denise laughed and they kissed.

Nathan said, “Maureen, “Make up your mind now. You can stay here, go to the Stiths…”

Denise said, “Or have my old room at the rest stop.”

Maureen said, “I have nothing here but my coat, scarf and gloves. Everything I bought is gone.”

Maureen and went into the house to get her coat, scarf and gloves.

Nathan was holding Denise by her waist and kissing her.

But he had his eyes on Craig.

He saw Craig try to get off the ground and thought, “He sold her coat.”

Maureen walked back to the porch with her comb and brush in her hand.

She looked at Craig and said, “Where is my coat, scarf and gloves.”

Craig looked at Maureen.

Craig’s sister walked out her house with Maureen’s coat.

Nathan peeped around Denise and looked at the nervous woman.

Denise turned and looked at the woman.

The woman had Maureen’s coat in her shaking hands.

Denise said, “Where is her scarf, hat and gloves?”

The woman’s shaking voice said, “I don’t know about that. I got the coat.”

Denise and Nathan looked at Craig.

Maureen looked at Craig and said, “Where are my things?”

Craig, “Where do you think?”

Nathan looked at the woman.

He husband was peeping out the door.

Nathan thought, “That’s the one Nadine beat.”

Nathan said, “I tell you what. I am arresting all of you.”

The woman dropped to her knees and said, “Please don’t sir.”

Nathan said, “Craig I am arresting you.”

He turned to the woman and said, “You take that boy. You better not try to leave the city.”

The woman was shaking.

Her husband had fallen into the door and was breathing heavily.

He was thinking, “I can’t go back to prison.”

Maureen walked down the steps to the ground.

The woman reached her, her coat.

Maureen took the coat and said, “Thank you.”

She looked at the woman.

The woman dropped her head in shame.

Maureen walked to Craig Jr. and looked down at him and said, “Merry Christmas.”

Maureen looked at Craig and said, “You deserve all the bad this life can give you.”

She walked to the carriage.

Nathan said, “You take Maureen to the rest stop and get her settle in and come by the sheriff’s office and pick me up.”

Denise looked in Nathan’s face and said, “It’s freezing Nathan.”

Nathan said, “I am a soldier. I have been taught to endure freezing condition.”

He hit Denise behind.

She yelled and grabbed her behind and laughed.

Denise laughed all the way off the porch to the carriage.

She said, “Maureen help me put the food and coal in the carriage.”

Maureen helped to put the packed bags of food in the carriage.

They jumped in the carriage and turned around and rode fast to the rest stop,

Nathan rushed Craig to the jail.

Trevor was in the jail and started a fire.

He saw Nathan running a man to the jail.

Trevor unlocked the jail door and opened it,

Nathan said, “This is Craig. He will be spending the next thirty days here until the judge gets back. The judge told him not to violate his orders.”

Craig yelled and said, “You just got me on one thing.”

Trevor slowly turned from Nathan and stared at Craig because he was very nasty and rude.

Nathan said, “He get’s one meal per day and no visitors.”

Trevor was still looking at Craig.

Craig said, “Tomorrow is Christmas. I can’t see my boy.”

Nathan said, “In thirty days in court.”

Trevor was still staring at Craig.

Nathan said, “Deputy Trevor.”

Trevor looked at Nathan.

Nathan said, “Where do you want him to go?”

Trevor said, “The cell by the backdoor.”

Nathan looked at Trevor.

Trevor was standing and looking at the cell in front of him.

Nathan walked out and Denise was pulling up in front of the jail.

Nathan said, “I’ll check on you tomorrow. Then you will be on your own for a month.”

Trevor said, “Merry Christmas.”

Craig yelled, “Where is my meal?”

Nathan said, “I am to have a prisoner when I get back.”

Trevor looked at Nathan and said, “Yes sir.”

Nathan said, “The town has a bill with both restaurants. Get your plate and his and put it on the town. It is allowed. You can get three meals. I just did not eat three meals per day.”

Nathan looked at Trevor and walked out the door.

Denise was happy and moved over to the passenger seat.

Nathan jumped in the carriage and kissed Denise and they laughed and rode away.

Trevor locked the door.

He walked to the file cabinet and pulled out the arrest paper.

He began to fill the papers.

When he finished he placed the papers in a folder.

He walked back to the cabinet and put the folder in the cabinet and locked the file cabinet.

Craig had been screaming for food for nearly two hours.

Trevor stood and looked at the fire.

He looked at the time.

The restaurant would be closing in an hour.

He put a few pieces of coal on the fire.

Trevor put on his coat and walked and unlocked the door and locked it back.

He began to walk to the first restaurant.

Trevor noticed several men riding into town.

He stopped and watched them.

The men continue to ride like they were riding out of town.

Trevor said, “Liars.”

He went into the restaurant and saw the people in the restaurant were watching the men also.

Trevor said, “I need two plates and put it on the town’s bill.”

The manager laughed and said, “You caught us just before we close. We are not open tomorrow. Nor the restaurant next door there. You can get two meals and put one up.”

Trevor said, “That sounds great.”

The customers began to leave for the evening.

The restaurant manager baked several turkeys for customers for a personal fee.

The customers were coming to pick up their orders.

The manager smiled and looked at Trevor and turned to his personal customers and lifted up his eye brows.

The manager looked at the food that was left and walked to Trevor and said, “Trevor it is not enough.”

Trevor said, “Make it as nice as possible.”

The manager filled a bowl with vegetable soup.

Trevor nodded.

The manager had meatloaf, mashed potatoes and carrots.

Trevor nodded his head.

Two young women blushed and looked at Trevor.

Trevor nodded his head at the two young women and smiled.

The manager had three fried drumsticks, rice and gravy.

Trevor nodded his head for yes.

The manager had calf liver, rice and carrots.

Trevor nodded yes.

He was smiling at the two young women.

The manager was packing the food.

He yelled, “Sheriff you get four desserts.”

Trevor said, “Thank you.”

The two young women started blushing at Trevor when they heard ‘sheriff’.

Trevor said, “I don’t recall seeing you two before. What are your names?”

One of the young women said, “I am Briana, and this is my sister Jackie. She studies dance in New York.”

Jackie waved at Trevor.

Trevor made a surprise look.

Jackie and Briana giggled.

The manager grinned.

Trevor said, “Oh, that’s why I haven’t seen you. What about you?”

Briana grinned and said, “Because I live on the other side of town.”

Trevor said, “Maybe you can start coming on this side more.”

The manager handed Trevor his packed meals.

Trevor walked to the door and stared at Briana and said, “Briana, Jackie and everyone have a Merry Christmas.

Everyone said, “Merry Christmas.”

Trevor walked out the restaurant and stood and looked in the window at Briana.

Briana was twisting and excited at this rough young man.

Trevor heard horses he turned and saw the six men riding back out of town.

Trevor thought, “I need to get back to the office.”

He rushed back to the office.

He unlocked the door and walked in.

There were no lights on in the sheriff’s office.

Trevor said, “The men were probably ridding to see if there was a sheriff”.

Trevor thought, “Craig is suppose to light the lanterns. I’ll ride my horse and go and light the lanterns while he eats in the back. Then when I come back I’ll eat.”

Trevor said, “Meatloaf. And pound cake.”

Trevor gave Craig the food and locked his cell.

Trevor locked the front of the office and pulled the shades down.

He walked out the back and got the fuel and matches.

He saw Briana and her sister Jackie running to their wagon.

He said, “Let me light these lanterns around here and go to the midway point.”

Trevor started lighting the lanterns.

He liked doing it. It was a simple task that was quick.

He rode fast to the midway point and stood.

He saw the railway crew and more people coming to town from the Stith’s Christmas Eve brunch.

Trevor wondered why Nathan came back so soon.

Nathan and Denise were at home by a hot fire and enjoying each other company.

They talked about the great time they had.

Nathan walked about the pregnant Natalie and Alice.

He and Denise laughed.

Trevor saw Daniel Colby and the other man rushing to the mid-point to light the lanterns.

They ran to Trevor.

They looked at him.

Daniel said, “You’re the substitute sheriff?”

He and the other man laughed.

Trevor said, “I am. Do what you suppose to do and we will be just fine.”

Trevor turned.

Daniel and the other man looked at each other and pointed and said, “Did he just threaten us.”

Trevor rode back to town and entered the back gate to the jail.

He tied his horse for the night and gave him feed and water.

Trevor took his saddle off the horse and unlocked the back door and put his saddle in the back.

Craig yelled, “Somebody being snooping around here.:’

Trevor went back out to check on his horse and he locked the back gate.

Trevor walked back in the jail with a bucket of water.

He locked the back door and eased the shotgun above the door.

Craig said, “You heard me!”

Trevor said, “Give me those plates.”

Craig looked at Trevor and bent down and got the plates and Trevor unlocked his cell and took the plates and locked the cell back.

Craig yelled and said, “It’s cold back here.”

Trevor walked and put the plates on the desk.

He went to the first cell and got the two blankets.

He walked back to the cell and unlocked the cell and reached the two blankets to Craig.

Craig yelled, “I want some heat.”

Trevor pulled out his gun and hand his finger on the trigger before he knew it.

Craig fell back on his bed and balled up and looked at Trevor.

Trevor said, “You are the most despicable person I have ever seen. You better hope you make it to morning.”

Craig was shaking.

Trevor kept his gun on Craig for a long minute.

Trevor said, “You better not say a damn thing anymore to me forever. I’ll take you out in the morning to wash, if you do that and to use the outhouse. You will be fed once a day at five pm.”

Trevor pointed his gun at Craig and said, “Don’t say anything to me.”

Trevor walked to the office area of the jail and placed more coal on the fire.

He left the kettle of soup by the fireplace.

Trevor pulled off his coat, hat and gloves and checked the front door.

He peeped out the windows and saw the towns folk laughing and having a good time.

He pulled the desk over to block the door.

He waked to the fireplace to get his hot vegetable soup.

Craig said, “Sir can I have some water?”

Trevor said, “I forgot about that.”

He turned and got the glass Nathan had for the prisoners and dipped it in the bucket of water and carried it to Craig.

Craig moved back from the cell door.

Trevor reached the glass of water to Craig through the bars.

Craig eased to the bars and took the glass of water.

Trevor turned around and walked back to the office.

Craig sipped the water and put it under his bed.

He knew Trevor was not going to tolerate him.

Craig pulled off his ragged boots and covered up with the two blankets, since Trevor was not going to give him heat.

Trevor went to the fireplace and looked back at the closed door that housed Craig.

He said, “I will not open the door for him to get heat. I have to see about these men.”

Trevor got the kettle of soup and sat on the desk and ate and looked out the window at the people rushing home.

He saw the manager of the restaurant lock the restaurant.

He was surprised he could see all the way down the walkway to the restaurant.

He ate his soup and watched the last set of people leave from the shops.

Trevor ate his pound cake but sat in the chair he pulled by the window.

He drank some water.

He pulled off his holster with the two guns and ran outside to the outhouse.

He ran back inside and grabbed his horse’s blanket and covered him with the huge blanket.

Trevor ran back inside the jail and locked the back door.

He passed Craig’s cell and closed the door to the office.

Trevor took off his boots and got the two blankets from the other cell and laid on the floor by the fireplace.

He could the door and window and any shadows or movement.

Trevor looked around at the places he placed his guns.

He preferred his shotguns.

Trevor pulled the one from the fireplace and laid it on his stomach.

He looked across at the window and saw the one he put by the window at the floor.

Trevor said, “I have to get some sleep before mid-night. Especially if they will come back into town.

Trevor went to sleep.

Craig was scared and shaking.

He finally went to sleep.

The town square was clear.

The people who lived above their shops were in their dwellings.

The railway crew was in the locked train first class car.

They had a hot fire in the furnace.

Hal and Calvin talked about Mellissa.

Calvin said, “That Dr. Ralph know this treatment hurts bad.”

Hal said, “He said to use warm to hot heat throughout the night.”

The crew settled in the first- class car and went to sleep.

One of the crew member went outside after mid-night to use the bushes because he was not going to clean up the toilets.

He heard some slight noise.

He saw shadows on the ground.

He did not move.

Men were moving to the train quickly.

The crew member’s heart failed him.

He finished using the outside and covered it up.

He picked up his gun that he brought for the animals.

The train was locked.

The crew member came out of the secret compartment so he would not have to disturb anyone.

Joe was lying facing the window with a small crack so he could see outside.

He had his guns on the bed in arm’s reach.

The cooks were sleep.

One cook had his gun across his stomach and the other cook had his guns in the holster and had his holster on.

The engineers slept in the engine car.

They were on the floor with plenty of blankets.

One of them had his shotgun on the floor by his chair.

The other one had his shotgun under the cover with him.

The preacher was fast asleep.

No one was awake but the preacher’s former roommate who was out using the outside.

He looked both ways and did not see anymore shadows.

He went under the rain and had his gun in his hand.

He began to crawl on his stomach to get to the secret compartment.

The former roommate began to count the pairs of legs he saw.

He counted twelve and said, “Six of them.”

He waited to the men ran towards the first car, he jumped into the secret compartment and locked it.

He turned and crawled on his stomach fast.

The former roommate whispered, ”Joe.”

Joe said, “We are here.”

The former roommate teeth were chattering and said, “Six.”

One of the cooks said, “That’s here.”

Joe said, “They are trying to get in the train. They are going to the first car.”

The cook said, “I go with Joe.

Joe said, “Several members are sleep. Watch out for them.”

The former roommate said, “They better not move.”

Hal and Calvin and the preacher were sleep.

Calvin could not move and took some pain pills.

The eight crew members that were awake sat on the floor and got on their knees and crawled and looked out the windows.

Trevor woke near mid-night and put on his boots and his coat.

He sat near the fireplace and looked at the door and the window.

Trevor tried to listen out back.

He could not hear out back because the door to the area Craig was in was heavy.

Trevor went and opened the door that led to Craig’s cell.

He leaned his head against the door and dropped on his belly and looked out from under neath the door.

He saw several shadows.

He stood and looked at the sleeping Craig.

There was a soft kick at the back door.

Trevor said, “JESUS.”

He moved from the door and cocked his shotgun.

Trevor quickly moved to the main office and peeped out the window.

He saw six figures on horses riding towards the town square.

He looked to see if he could see how many horses were standing on the street then he would know the number that was at the jail.

Trevor did not see any horses.

He said, “JESUS please Craig safe if it is YOUR will. I don’t like him, but YOU created him for a reason more than likely to teach me not to be annoyed and irritated with people, but more about YOU and JESUS.”

The back door was knocked open.

Craig laid still and was trembling and shaking.

The five men rushed into the jail.

Trevor waited until the first man entered the main office.

Trevor heard, ‘Third’.

He shook his head to shake the voice out of his head.

He waited.

Trevor squat by the desk.

He waited for the third man to enter in his sight.

Trevor saw the men and counted to the third man.

When Trevor saw him, he shot the third man.

The third man fell back and shot the man behind him.

Then Trevor shot the first man and then the second man.

The last man was stumbling over the four dead men bodies.

Trevor ran to the fourth man and put his shotgun, both barrels, on him.

Trevor heard, ‘No.’

He bust the man on the side of his head and looked behind him and ran outside the door and saw a figure waiting by the backyard gate.

The person jumped on the horse and was speeding away.

Trevor jumped the back gate and as he was jumping the back gate he shot.

He kept running.

He shot again.

Trevor had one bullet left and said, “JESUS! YOU told me not to use up my bullets. Let this one count!”

He was running and shot his last bullet.

The person fell off the horse.

Nathan was at home celebrating his first Christmas with his wife Denise.

Nathan jumped up in bed and said, “What was that?”

Denise was grinning.

Nathan jumped out of bed and quickly put on his clothes and boots.

Denise stopped grinning and realized something was wrong.

Some neighbors were running out their houses yelling for Nathan.

Nathan yelled, “I’m coming!”

He grabbed his holster with the two guns and ran to Denise and said, “I love you woman.”

Denise jumped out of bed and dressed and put on her boots and ran to the door.

Nathan was on his horse, which he kept saddle by the front door.

Nathan was riding up the street.

The neighbors had their rifles and guns.

Some men behind Nathan.

Some of the neighbors ran and got on their horses and flew behind Nathan.

The preacher who performed Nathan and Denise’s wedding ceremony.

The preacher, who lived a few streets over, heard all the noise and ran out his house.

His wife was calling for him to come back.

He ran around back and grabbed his saddle and put on his horse and grabbed his shotgun he kept in the stables.

He mounted his horse and rode towards the town.

The preacher was yelling and fussing, “Not on this day. You evil murderers. Not on JESUS’ Birth Date. I’ll send you to hell.”

The preacher was yelling and fussing.

He rode fast to the town square and passed Nathan by a horse’s nose.

Nathan looked at the preacher and heard him fuss and say ‘Not on Christmas Day! Not on the day that my JESUS came to give me salvation.”

Nathan saw Trevor standing over a body.

He and the preacher slid off their horses.

The preacher kept running and looking around the town square.

The town had a lot of visitors coming to visit their family in the military.

An elderly man could barely walk made it to the door of the hotel where he was staying with his daughter and her husband.

He made it down the steps into the yard.

He was determined to see his only grandson on Christmas morning.

He lived for so long to see him and he was going to see his grandson at the military headquarters.

He had his old service gun and was ready to kill anyone that would try to stop him.

His daughter and her husband ran out and grabbed the elderly man, but he refused to move.

They saw the military scouts.

The one that stayed in town was the grandson the elderly man never saw.

The mother stared at the scout.

She started trembling and stumbling towards the soldier.

Her husband looked at her with her nightgown on and said, “Where are you going?”

The soldier saw a figure walking towards him.

He saw the person stumbling and thought it was a drunk person.

He said, “Stay back. Don’t come any further towards me.”

The husband turned and stared at the soldier on the horse.

The woman said, “Lamont.”

The scout looked at the woman and said, “Momma?”

She could not talk but began to cry and nodded her head.

Her husband recognized his only son and ran off from his father-in-law and ran back and got his father-in-law and rushed him to his wife.

The scout slid off his horse and walked to the crying and shaking woman.

She fell into him.

The people clapped.

He always would let her fall into him and he would kiss the top of her head.

He kissed her in the top of her head.

His father gave them a minute and said, “Hey son.”

The scout looked at his father and was full of tears.

His father looked on the love of his life.

He said, “This is your grandpa. Your mother’s father.”

His mother was trying to smile and gasping and weeping and nodded for yes.

The scout looked at her.

He slowly turned his head and looked at one of the most famous living American soldier of all times.

The scout never met him.

He only met his grandmother and would visit her each summer.

The scout slowly turned and saluted his legendary grandfather.

His grandfather stood and received his grandson salute.

The scout said, “Mother why are you here?”

His mother was quivering and said, “Ten years. We have not seen you. Your grandfather wanted to lay his eyes on his only grandchild.”

The gunfire started again.

The scout looked down towards the tracks.

His father said, “Go. We will see you today.”

The scout mounted his horse and rode a little further down the road.

The other scout joined him and they rode a little further towards the other side of the town square.

Many people were running out their houses.

Nathan and Trevor were standing over the body of a young woman.

She was dead and lying in her own blood.

Nathan said, “Briana.”

Trevor said, “I meet her this evening at the restaurant.”

They heard massive gunfire.

Trevor and Nathan jumped up instantaneously.

Nathan jumped on his horse.

Trevor jumped on the preacher’s horse and sped with Nathan to the sound of the gunfire.

The preacher turned and saw Trevor speeding by him on his horse.

The preacher stood with his mouth opened.

Then he heard some more gunfire.

He started running backwards and turned around and ran to the sound of the gunfire.

The neighbors and the shop owners that lived in the town square started patrolling the streets around the town square.

The person Trevor bashed in the head was crawling to get to the door.

Craig turned and saw the person was hurt and slowly crawling on the floor.

He thought, “They can get the key and let me out.”

Craig tried to get out of the cot.

He tripped over the blankets and tried to crawl to the person.

His pants were wet and stinky.

He said to the person, “Go and get the key and come and unlock this cell.”

The person shot at Craig but missed.

Craig started screaming.

Some of the neighbors heard the shot and ran to the jail.

The person aimed again at Craig and was about to shoot again, when one of the neighbors busted them again in the head with his rifle butte. The person fell on the floor.

The men ran into the jail and saw the other three bodies.

They lit the lanterns and added much coal to the fireplace.

They saw the handcuffs.

They grabbed the person who was another woman.

They undressed her and searched her and found several guns on her.

The guns were heavy and that’s what slowed her down and caused her to stumble over the bodies in the floor.

They threw the unconscious woman in the cell with her hands cuffed behind her back and her feet tied and a gag in her mouth.

One of the neighbors said, “On Christmas Day.”

Then they heard a large amount of gunfire.

Craig was still shaking and crawling in his cell.

He crawled under the cot.

The cot was low to the floor and Craig was a big man and raised the cot off the floor.

Several men moved the sheriff’s desk from the front door.

One neighbor said, “We should cover them up.”

One neighbor said, “Hell no.”

People were standing on their porches and in their yards.

Some started their fires and started their Christmas Day.

Some people were hiding in their houses.

Some people were on their knees praying.

Mag, Josiah and Natalie did not live far the train station.

They jumped up in their beds.

Josiah put on his clothes and boots.

Mag woke and jumped out of bed.

She put on an old dress and her boots.

She ran to her door and grabbed the shotgun as she ran to the front of her house.

Josiah kissed Natalie and grabbed his rifle and ran out behind Mag to the sitting room.

Morgan was in the sitting room.

He was up and dressed and had his gun in his hand.

Mag said, “Morgan?”

Morgan said, “They are at the train. I’m sorry Mag. I have to go.”

Josiah said, “Wait Morgan I’m going with you.”

Mag looked at Josiah.

Josiah kissed Mag hard on her forehead.

Morgan said, “I’ll get mines when I get back.”

Josiah opened their door.

Neighbors were out in the street.

Some of them ran with Morgan and Josiah.

Morgan said, “Anything that moves.”

Josiah said, “Amen.”

Josiah’s mind was on Natalie and their soon to be born baby.

Mag was sitting on her front porch with her famous rifle.

It started snowing.  
mag looked at the sky and grinned and said, “Thank YOU LORD.”

Natalie finally made it to the door and heard Mag and said, “What? This is bad.”

Mag said, “This is a blessing from GOD.”

Natalie stared at Mag

Josiah said, “What! This is the worst timing.”

Morgan said, “No. It gives us the advantage.”

A neighbor said, “We can track them by their footprints in the snow.”

Morgan said, “Right.”

Josiah shrugged his shoulders.

The neighbor said, “Who we shooting?”

Morgan said, “Anybody that is not on the train.”

Josiah was out of breath and said, “What?”

Morgan said, “Patrick’s protocol. That we stay on the trains at all time.”

Josiah stopped running and was bent over with his hands on his thighs.

A neighbor shot.

The person ducked and tried to get under the train.

The neighbors started shooting at the man running around the train.

Chief Commander Tyler sent scouts out to the town and in neighboring neighbors to watch out for anything unusual.

People saw the military scouts and told them there were a lot of shooting in the town and stay back.

One scout returned to the military headquarters and told the sentries.

They sent word to Chief Commander Tyler.

His wife was sleep on his couch.

He looked at her and went downstairs and outside to hear the report from the scout.

Another scout rode in and Chief Commander Tyler heard his report.

He said, “Stay back. Watch and use deadly fire if necessary. More than likely it is the mob. They are merciless.”

The other captains, generals and commanders that were at the base ran out behind Chief commander Tyler.

One of the captains said, “Sir, I hear a very faint sound of gunfire.”

Chief Commander Tyler, “On Christmas Day. It is the mob.”

A general said, “What are they going after?”

Chief Commander Tyler said, “They are training to get the train. For what I don’t know. The tracks are monitored, and no train can run on those tracks.”

The captain said, “It is snowing. That should slow them down a little.”

The chief commander said, “A little.”

The military officers stood in the downfall of snow.

They went back in the building to their meeting room.

Chief Commander Tyler kept the telegram machine running.

He was concerned about the two hundred soldiers and Commander Washington.

His wife woke on the couch and looked at her worried husband and said, “Merry Christmas.”

He grinned and said, “Merry Christmas.”

Over their twenty five year marriage this was the second time they were together for Christmas.

They meet one year when she was working Boston as a dressmaker.

Betty lived with her mother and her aunt.

They were teachers and their husbands died and left them widows.

Her mother and her aunt began to age and she was taking care of them.

Her mother kept saying, “Get married. Have your own family.”

They kept trying to push her away.’

Betty would not leave them.

Tyler walked into the dressmaking shop with his sister who was to marry one of the up and coming politicians.

She needed a wedding dress made quickly.

His soon to be wife, Betty, was laughing and telling the other dress makers the scheme her mother and her aunt came up with to get her married.

Tyler sister cleared her throat and the dress makers turned and saw her.

Tyler saw the deepest blue eyes and said, “When do I meet my mother-in-law and my aunt?”

The owner of the dressmaking shop was walking over to greet Tyler and his sister.

She stopped and stared at him.

The other three dressmakers looked at Tyler

His sister chuckle like it was a joke.

Betty looked at the woman like she was making fun of her.

Betty felt she was a joke to this man in uniform.

Tyler did not change his look.

He stared into Betty’s eyes.

His sister stared at her brother and saw it in his eyes.

He said, “Will you marry me?”

Betty looked deep in his eyes and saw love and said, “Yes.”

Tyler went home with her that evening and met her mother and aunt.

They loved him.

She and Tyler married within thirty days and had an elaborate wedding that her mother and aunt were planning for years.

The mother was fussing because the prices were going up every year.

Tyler’s sister married a week after her brother.

Tyler’s parents tried to get them to have a double wedding to cut the expense.

But Betty’s mother and aunt said, “No.”

Her mother said, “I have wanted this and planned for this for my whole life.”

Tyler’s parents agreed.

Chief Commander Tyler’s parents, his wife, her mother and aunt would always spend the holidays together.

Tyler would never be home.

His wife’s mother died a few years after they were married.

Her aunt died ten years after her sister.

His wife spent her time designing and making dresses.

Betty went to school and became a teacher.

She did it to honor her mother and aunt and to keep busy since her husband was away and her family was now dead.

He loved her forever and she loved him forever.

Nathan, Trevor and the preacher began to shoot at the figures on the outside of the train.

The engineers and Joe and the cook were peeping out the first car and shooting.

Morgan, Josiah and the neighbors were shooting.

The figures outside the train began to fall in the snow.

Nathan yelled, “Guns down!”

Morgan yelled, “Who are you?”

Nathan yelled, “Nathan the sheriff.”

Morgan, Josiah and the neighbors did not put down their guns but stopped shooting.

The train crew eased out the train.

They saw blood in the snow that led into the woods.

Joe peeped out the train and yelled, “Nathan!”

Nathan yelled, “Yes.”

Joe said, “There’s blood here that leads into the woods.”

Morgan yelled, “This is Morgan. Who are you?”

Joe yelled, “Joe. Go and tell that.”

Trevor and Nathan split and ran on each side of the train.

The preacher stood at the back of the train and watched out for them.

Nathan and Trevor were peeping under the train as they went.

They only saw the bodies at the front of the train.

Nathan and Trevor reached the front at the same time and saw four bodies.

Nathan yelled, “Four dead. How many did you count?”

Joe yelled, “Six.”

Morgan, Josiah and the neighbors walked to the train and looked at the four dead bodies.

Morgan pointed and said, “Thomas a retired train conductor. He could have driven this train.”

Josiah said, “This man looks familiar.”

Nathan and Trevor were stooping low and looking around.

Nathan looked at the man and said, “He is the man Eleanor said to stay from the railroad.

Morgan said, “He was checking things out.”

Nathan said, “We have at least two more to find.”

The neighbors started re-loading their shotguns, rifles and guns.

Nathan said, “I need for you all to stay here and watch your backs. It is dark and we have two more hours before day. There is blood in the snow we can track them down. If we did not have the snow it would have been difficult.”

Morgan looked at Josiah.

Nathan said, “Cover them.”

The neighbors started mumbling.

Nathan and Trevor stood and was looking around.

Nathan said, “What’s wrong?”

One of the men said, “We aint using our stuff to cover these unchristian evil beings.”

Peter ran from his house and said, “There is something at the back yard I believe we can use to cover them.

One of the neighbors said, “Let them stay out here.”

Nathan looked at the man.

Peter said, “This is a holy day. Do you want your wives and children to see the work of evil on our most holy day?”

The neighbors stood for a minute and walked with Peter to the train station office.

They looked and saw blood.

The men looked around and saw the track of blood and footprints walked out the backyard of the train station.

Peter ran and got Nathan and said, “Blood and footprints.”

Nathan and Trevor turned to run.

The men were about to run after them.

Nathan said, “Go home and start your Christmas.”

Nathan and Trevor ran to the train station office backyard and saw the footprints and the blood in the snow.

Nathan whispered, “Stay here.”

Peter nodded his head vigorously for yes.

Nathan and Trevor ran in the direction of the footprints and blood.

Peter and the men found the trap the builder left and carried it to the dead bodies.

Morgan and Josiah and several men stood watch.

Denise sat on their front porch for a long time.

Two female neighbors saw her.

And walked over and said, “You’re the sheriff’s wife, right?”

Denise was tearful and shook her head.

One woman said, “Get use to this. My husband was the sheriff before Nathan. He is in the capitol working now. My husband was Sherman. Now he is a federal agent. Hi I am Wanda.”

The other woman said, “My husband is in the military. Not at that headquarters here but in South Carolina. You learn that they are in GOD’s hands and your house is in your hands.”

Denise was nervous and sniffing.

Wanda said, “May I make a suggestion to you.?’

Denise looked at the woman and thought, “Suggestion. May husband maybe dead or shot.”

Wanda said, “This is Christmas Day. God determined everything that has happened and will happen. Go inside your house…”

The woman pointed backwards.

She said, “Put coal in your stove and in your fireplace. Do you know how to cook?”

Denise turned up her nose.

The woman laughed.

The other woman said, “You have that nice kettle outside to use for warm weather. We can help you bring water in the house to heat for your baths. Wanda makes the best biscuits in the neighborhood with her honey.”

Wanda smiled and said, “Thank you.”

Denise did not know what to do.

Wanda said, “Do you have anything in your house to cook or eat?”

Denise said, “We leave tomorrow for our honeymoon and did not buy anything.”

The women said, “Oh.”

Wanda stood and said, “I have to cook for the church’s Christmas Day breakfast we have every year in the back of the church. I’ll just get an early start and bring you and Nathan a plate.”

Denise said, “Thank you.”

Wanda left and walked home.

The other woman said, “You need me to help you with anything? If you continue to sit out here, you will get sick and won’t have a honeymoon. You know what I am saying?”

Denise looked up at the grinning woman and grinned.

She stood and walked in the house and put a lot of coal in the oven and the fireplace.

She brought in water and heated the water.

Denise fell across the bed wept for her husband.

She went to sleep.

Denise woke when Nathan came into their bedroom and sat on their bed and looked into the air.

He kissed Denise on her cheek.

In her sleep she felt her husband love on her face.

Her eyes fluttered.

Nathan leaned back on their bed with his elbow.

He looked in the eyes of his beloved.

Denise grinned at Nathan.

Nathan leaned and kissed Denise.

He said, “I need a bath. And we are suppose to be going to hear Patrick preached his first sermon. I want to hear it.”

Denise laughed out.

Nathan stood from the bed and was about to walk out their bedroom.

Denise said, “Nathan, I put water on for you to bathe.”

Nathan stood and was quiet.

Denise turned over and looked at Nathan.

He held his head down.

He looked at her and said, “Thank you Denise. You think about me. You care for me. Thank you.”

Denise was so touched by Nathan, she was not going to tell him it was the neighbors suggestion.

She laid her head down on the bed and smiled at Nathan.

Nathan walked out their bedroom and went into the kitchen and smiled at all the water pails Denise had on the stove.

Nathan filled the tub with the hot water.

Denise walked into the kitchen with Nathan’s shaving lotion and razor.

Nathan poured hot water in the wash basin.

Denise grinned.

Nathan leaned over the hot water basin and kissed Denise.

There was a knock on their door.

Nathan frowned and walked to the door and it was Wanda, she introduced herself to Nathan and told him she was the former sheriff’s wife.

She made breakfast for he and Denise.

Wanda said, “Denise said you two will be going on your honeymoon tomorrow.”

Wanda peeped and grinned at Denise.

Nathan looked back and grinned at Denise.

Denise was grinning.

Wanda said, “Don’t worry about the dishes I’ll get them when you get back.”

Nathan took the plates.

He said, “Thank you.”

Wanda said, “I had to cook some food for my church. You should come if you have the time.”

Nathan blushed.

Nathan looked at Denise.

Denise was grinning.

Wanda walked off the porch and said, “Merry Christmas”

Nathan and Denise yelled, “Merry Christmas.”

Nathan watched Wanda off the porch and into her carriage.

He could smell breakfast from her carriage.

He locked the door and ran into the room they use as their bath and washroom, because it was across from the kitchen.

Nathan looked at the plates and then the bathtub.

He said, “Which one first?”

Denise said both and held up the forks.

She slid in the bathtub.

Nathan stared at her.

He joined her.

They shared their first Christmas Day meal.

Nathan said, “Denise I know you don’t know how to cook. But get Wanda to teach you how to make these biscuits and the flavor of this honey.”

They enjoyed their Christmas Morning meal of biscuits and clove honey, scrambled eggs, grits and sausage.

Nathan was shaving and staring in the mirror in deep thought.

Denise was dressed and stood in the door and watched Nathan.

She knew all that shooting bothered him and she knew he killed somebody that day.

She would never judge his decisions on life and death.

Denise said, “God help me to comfort my husband You gave me.”

Nathan caught a glimpsed of Denise in the mirror moving to him.

He watched her.

She embraced him by his shoulders and laid her head on his back and kissed his back.

Nathan finished shaving.

He emptied all the water and hooked their two horses to their carriage.

He feed the three horses and gave them water.

Denise washed the neighbor’s dishes as she looked out at Nathan.

He was looking distance.

Denise finished drying the dishes.

She had another beautiful dress she knitted.

She knitted Nathan scarves and gloves and some ties.

Nathan did not like the knitted ties, but he wore one for the Christmas Day service.

They got into the carriage and Denise put one of her covering over Nathan and her laps.

Nathan twisted his mouth and looked at Denise.

Denise laughed at Nathan all the way to church.

People were all over the streets.

Children playing with their wagons.

Puppies and dogs running in the snow.

It was the start of a beautiful Christmas Day.

People were riding and walking and going to different directions.

Some to visit.

Some to church service.

Some to pick up their Christmas meal.

Nathan had not that much joy in the town.

He wondered if God had broken the darkness off the town.

Denise pointed at the carolers.

She and Nathan grinned.

Denise looked into the eyes of her husband and said, “I love you Nathan. I am your half.”

Nathan looked around the neighborhood and said, “I know Denise. I had to kill some people today and I will do it again and again to keep you safe and our child whenever we have one.”

Denise said, “One.”

Nathan turned his head and said, “Yeah one.”

Denise hit his arm and they laughed.

He said, “Did you see Percy and Bruce sliding down that staircase. Brenda passed them like it was nothing.”

Denise was laughing and said, “It wasn’t nothing. You should see them during the summer.”

Nathan shook his body.

He said, “I was a tough boy growing up, but at the ball when Bruce asked where the hundred foot tree was I knew he was not joking. We would have to dynamite the tree down to keep the children safe.”

Denise was laughing hard at Nathan.

Patrick and Brenda were standing outside the church.

They heard Denise laughing and had to see who it was.

Nathan said. “That’s the church over there. There is Brenda and Patrick staring at us. Like heathens be quiet at church.”

Denise hollered even more and fell into Nathan laughing.

Everyone was dressed nice and walking to the church.

Nathan nodded at the people.

He said, “Denise you know I am the sheriff over here and have never been over here.”

Denise was still giggling.

She said, “Yes.”

Nathan said, “You were laughing too hard to look at the neighborhood.”

She started all over again.

Shirley pulled up with Gen in her carriage.

Gen was stumbling almost falling out the carriage.

She stood and stared at Shirley.

Shirley said, “That’s how I ride.”

Gen was trying to fix her clothes on her.

Nathan and Denise burst out laughing.

Gen was mumbling and trying to fix her hat.

Mag, Josiah and Natalie pulled in.

They were pointing and laughing at Shirley and Gen.

Nathan looked at Mag and Josiah and said, “We are not the only heathens here today.”

Nathan tried to stop his laughter but Denise burst out again.

Gary pulled in with Percy, Bruce and Thomas.

Nathan was peeping and wondered where the gambler was.

He turned again and saw another Stith carriage.

He saw Eleanor driving the carriage and Michael sitting up front with her.

Michael was turned facing Eleanor with his arms folded.

Nathan said, “Oh God she has made him mad first thing this morning about something.”

Denise peeped around Nathan and saw Michael and said, “But he is so cute with that hair.”

Denise flipped Nathan’s hair and said, “You think our son will have thick hair like that?”  
Nathan said, “The more I see these boys around town. I think I want a girl.”

Michael jumped out the carriage and folded his arms again.

When Michael jumped out the carriage Nathan saw Lorraine and Dr. Ralph in the back seat.

Eleanor got out the wagon she was talking to Michael in a low voice.

Michael stomped around to the back of the carriage to help Eleanor with the wheelchair.

Dr. Ralph got out the carriage.

Nathan said, “Come on Denise and lets help them so Patrick and Brenda won’t think we are heathens.”

Denise burst out laughing again.

Brenda was watching them watching Michael.

Most of the crew from the train arrived.

Nathan whispered, “We have been replaced.”

Denise looked at the crew and burst out laughing again.

Nathan walked over to help Eleanor and Michael with the wheelchair.

Nathan reached his hand to Dr. Ralph and said, “Merry Christmas.”

Dr. Ralph was watching Lorraine and shook Nathan’s hand and said, “Merry Christmas.”

Nathan peeped at Lorraine and said, “Merry Christmas Lorraine.”

Lorraine grinned.

Michael grabbed the wheelchair from Eleanor and pushed it to the side of the carriage.

Eleanor looked at Michael and turned her head for a minute.

Nathan looked at Eleanor.

He looked back at Patrick and Brenda who were watching them.

More people were arriving to church.

Many of them were walking in the snow and laughing.

It had not snowed in town about a decade.

Dr. Ralph patted Michael on his back and said, “Michael please give Lorraine more time to get better. Please?”

Nathan knew it was a problem with Lorraine.

He looked at Michael who wanted his Lorraine. His gambler. His partner in crime.

Michael stood and held the wheelchair.

Eleanor walked from behind the carriage and tried to dry her eyes.

Alvin and Claressa pulled up with their security.

Nathan said, “Merry Christmas Michael. Merry Christmas Eleanor.”

Eleanor tried to be cheery and said, “Thank you Nathan. Merry Christmas to you and Denise.”

Eleanor looked at Denise and nodded.

Nathan thought, “Wow look at Eleanor and Shirley. They look royal.:

He looked at Claressa and said, “Her too. Brenda and Gen look rich.”

Patrick and a good number of people were waiting for the church to open.

Nathan walked to Denise and said, “You good baby.”

Denise smiled and whispered not her baby.

Gen said, “Look at Nathan. He is about to pop.”

Mag and Brenda laughed.

Patrick grinned.

The co- pastor arrived and said, “Merry Christmas. Merry Christmas. I was having too much fun with the snow. My children don’t like it. So I had to go and get the horses and wagon.”

Everyone laughed.

The children were not smiling.

The co- pastor said, “The church is open. They are preparing Christmas breakfast for us down in the back.”

Gen said, “I knew I smelled something. I thought it was my nostrils malfunctioning.”

Mag turned her head and laughed.

Shirley looked at Gen and said, “I’m sorry Aunt Gen.”

Brenda and Patrick looked at Gen then Shirley.

Gen reached over to Shirley who was standing next to Brenda. And hugged her.

The people were looking at Shirley.

Shirley was hoping they were looking at her clothes and not at her face.

Patrick walked to the co-pastor and said, “We were standing out here taking in this snowy beauty and waiting for others to arrive. I am Patrick Stith. Commander Washington asked me to come and preach today.”

The co-pastor’s wife was peeping around at Patrick.

Then she stared at Brenda and the large group of people Patrick brought with him.

The other parishioners said, “We thought the church was locked and stood out here with them.”

One man said, “In the cold.”

Mag whispered, “You did not know to walk to the door and pull the handle?”

Gen snickered.

The co-pastor said, “Yes Troy came by my house late the other night and asked me to let you preach todays’ sermon. I told him I would love for you to do so. When we are not selfish but allow another to use the temporary pulpit God gave to us, God causes us to grow in grace.”

Patrick said, “Sir I believe that.”

The co-pastor said, “My children are at the door. Lets’ go inside.”

Patrick looked around.

The co-pastor was reaching for Patrick shoulder.

The co-pastor looked at Patrick and said, “Someone missing?”

Patrick said, “Jose who was to bring his lady friend to the service.”

Nathan heard Patrick ask for Jose.

Nathan looked at Patrick.

Patrick caught Nathan’s eyes and wondered what Nathan knew.

Patrick received the telegram from Commander Washington, Mike and the governor.

But Patrick did not know what happened last night.

Patrick reached for Brenda’s hand.

Brenda walked up and took Patrick’s hand.

Stephen and Bryce pulled up in a carriage.

Patrick looked at his best friends and grinned.

Morgan rode in the wagon with the crew because Natalie was uncomfortable.

Dr. Ralph pushed Lorraine in the wheelchair.

Michael and Eleanor walked on the sides of the wheelchair.

Lorraine was nicely dressed with her red dress.

Shirley was standing and looking at Lorraine’s clothes, because she dressed her.

Shirley walked down the stairs and was fixing one of Lorraine’s hair bow.

Josiah was helping Natalie up the stairs.

Dr. Ralph was looking at Natalie.

Claressa and Alvin walked behind Lorraine and Eleanor.

Brenda looked back at Michael and wondered what was wrong.

The co-pastor and was entering into the church.

He said, “I am William Walker. I meet Commander Washington years ago when we were at the military academy.”

Percy and Bruce heard him and watched the co -pastor.

He said, “This is my wife Selma, and our three children, Jeremiah, Joseph and Sarah.”

The children said, “Hello.”

His wife looked shyly at Patrick and said, “Hello.”

They heard Emilou yelled, “Steven, I want to play in the snow.”

Patrick snickered.

Brenda held her head down and snickered.

Everybody looked back at Emilou.

Steven and Alicia were trying to Emilou to be quiet.

Gen said, “Let that baby play in the snow.”

Mag said, “Did you all know what happened last night and this morning.”

Co-pastor Walker looked back at Mag.

Morgan walked up and caught Mag by her arm.

Nathan said, “Please Miss Mag. I’ll tell them later.”

The co-pastor said, “Sounds quite interesting.”

Nathan helped Dr. Ralph pick Lorraine’s wheelchair up and carry her into the church.

Shirley was watching every movement with or about Lorraine.

Claressa and Eleanor said, “Denise your outfit is lovely.”

Denise was surprise and said, “Thank you.”

Shirley was peeping at Denise outfit and said, “Denise you think you can make a few pieces for me to try out in my dress shop?”

Eleanor and Claressa looked back at Denise.

Denise said, “Sure, I guess. Nathan.”

Nathan was walking back to Denise and shrugged his shoulders.

Shirley waited for Alicia.

She reached her hand to Emilou.

Emilou said, “Merry Christmas everyone. Look at my necklace that Miss Lorraine picked out for me for Christmas.”

Shirley said, “That is pretty Emilou.”

Emilou said, “Thank you.”

Eleanor looked back.

Brenda heard Emilou and looked back.

The co -pastor walked Patrick up to the podium with him.

Selma and the children sat on the first pew and she invited Brenda to sit on the first pew with them.

Brenda smiled and pulled off her coat, hat, scarf and gloves,

She smiled at the people and sat with her hands on top of her bag for the whole service.

Their guests filled the back pews of the church.

Wanda walked upstairs and saw Nathan and Denise and hugged them and said, “You found your way here.”

Wanda said, “We have plenty of food left and I want to know if anyone want s something to eat.”

She was peeping around and said, “Wow it is more people than I thought.”

Nathan said, “I am with the group that is here to Patrick Stith sermon. I do believe they all have had breakfast.”

Nathan looked back at them and quickly turned his head.

Nathan thought, “They all were drunk except for the preacher.”

Calvin was in a lot of pain therefore he did not come to the service.

The other cook was roasting their goose and baking their ham for Christmas Day dinner.

The two engineers were checking the train for damage.

The former roommate and two other clerks were cleaning the train and re-fueling the train for the Friday departure.

Dr. Ralph kept watching Natalie.

Lorraine went to sleep.

Eleanor, Claressa and Alvin sat together.

Eleanor pulled Michael to sit with her.

He went to sit with Lorraine.

Eleanor held her head down.

Dr. Ralph was talking to Michael.

Michael did not want to talk to Dr. Ralph.

He stood and walked to Brenda and sat next to her.

Patrick was watching everybody.

He knew something was wrong but he had to wait for God to show him.

Michael leaned his head on Brenda’s shoulder.

Thomas walked to Brenda and leaned his head on her other shoulder.

Patrick was watching Joe.

He knew Joe had a funny look on his face and what was it that Mag knew and Nathan told her to be quiet.

Patrick looked at a sad Eleanor.

Then he looked at Brenda and Michael and Thomas sitting next to her.

He smiled at Brenda.

Benda smiled back at Patrick.

The co-pastor introduced Patrick and asked the people to stand and sing “O Holy Night.”

Everyone stood and sang “’O holy night.”

Gen sang the song loud.

Mag and Morgan were laughing hard at Gen.

Brenda turned and looked back at Gen and smiled.

The co-pastor stood at first with his mouth open looking at Gen.

Patrick looked at the co-pastor and grinned.

The co-pastor’s children turn all the way around and looked at Gen.

The co-pastor’s wife and other parishioners stared at Gen.

Gen did not care.

She was singing the bad things out of her heart.

Stephen looked at Bryce and said, “You’re sure you want to date her?”

Bryce grinned and said, “She’s fun.”

He and Stephen started singing in their baritone and bass voices.

Patrick looked at them and grinned.

The co-pastor shook himself and turned to Bryce and Stephen.

He listened to their beautiful voices.

When the church finished the song and sat.

Gen looked at Bryce and said, “Show off.”

Bryce hollered.

Stephen smiled.

The co-pastor said, “Pastor Washington is not in town this wonderful Christmas Day. He came to me and ask if I would let our guest deliver this Christmas Day message. I agreed. Welcome Brother Stith.”

The parishioners clapped.

Patrick shook the hand of the co-pastor.

The co-pastor sat and was peeping at Gen.

Mag and Morgan laughed.

Gen said, “I don’t care. I sounded beautiful.”

Brenda heard Gen up front.

Michael and Thomas turned and looked back at Gen.

Gen waved at them.

Michael and Thomas leaned back on Brenda’s shoulders.

Co-pastor Walker watched everyone.

He thought, “I need to ask those gentlemen to join our church and our choir.”

Patrick said, “Merry Christmas everyone.”

Michael and Thomas said, “Merry Christmas.”

They heard Emilou said, “Merry Christmas.”

Everyone smiled.

Emilou was sitting between Shirley and Alicia.

Steven was sitting by Nathan.

Steven said, “Nathan the neighbors came to our house and asked if we knew about the big shoot out last night. You know anything about it?”

Nathan looked at Steven and said, “I do. But not here.”

Patrick said, “I am truly humble and honored to stand before God’s children and share HIS word with you. I asked HIM what HE wanted to share with you. And HE showed to me on yesterday ‘grace’.”

Patrick began to explain grace and how it affects each of our lives.

Patrick said, “Our births are grace. Our daily living is grace…”

Co-pastor Walker turned from looking at Gen and stared at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Our daily movement, many don’t have the ability to move or restricted movement. But God has given us His grace. Our minds. Our thoughts we control our decisions. Many people we see on the streets or locked away because they cannot control their thoughts. God has given us grace…”

A lady yelled out in pain.

The co-pastor jumped up to see who it was.

His wife looked back to see who it was crying out in such pain.

The co-pastor’s children ran to the aisle to see who was screaming.

Lorraine woke.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

The co-pastor continued to stand.

Patrick said, “Our feelings are the grace of God. Everything we are and we have is the grace of God. Our human feelings of love, trust…”

Gen was swelling up and tearing up. Her heart was breaking.

She wanted to be free.

She wanted to die.

She was willing to take Lorraine’s place.

Gen did not want this life anymore.

She could no longer drink her mind to sleep.

She could no longer silence the woes of her past.

Patrick said, “Our deceit, betrayal, lies and all the hurt we caused and even deaths God’s grace is here in abundance to heal and deliverance.”

Brenda was thinking about that one bad mission.

Her eyes filled with tears for all the people who died.

Gen screamed out in pain.

Brenda jumped and threw up her hands and her feet.

Michael looked back at Gen and he and Thomas ran to Gen.

Stephen and Bryce jumped up.

Patrick looked at them and they stood still.

Brenda rushed to Gen. And grabbed her.

Gen was saying, “I am sorry. I am sorry.”

Mag thought, “For what?”

Morgan would not move.

Mag said to Morgan, “Excuse me.”

Morgan moved to the other side for Mag to pass him and get to Gen.

Mag pulled Michael up and put him in her lap and hugged Gen and said, “Gen what is wrong?”

Patrick stood at the podium and cried.

Nathan was peeping and wondering what was happening.

Hal and Joe and the cook were peeping and watching everybody.

Denise saw some of the railroad crew was sleep and whispered to Nathan and said, “They are drunk.”

Nathan looked over at the crew members and said, “They killed men last night. You would be drunk too.”

Denise gasped and fell back in her pew with a scared look on her face.

Nathan looked at Denise and turned his head and looked in front of him.

Steven turned his head and looked at the railroad worker.

Wanda was sitting a few pews in front of Nathan and Denise, so she can run to the food. She was watching the people in the church crying.

She did not know what to do.

She began to pray.

Stephen and Bryce did not know what to do.

They quietly began to humm, “O little Town of Bethlehem.”

The co-pastor looked at them.

He realized the burdens the parishioners were loaded down with.

He looked down at his Selma.

She was shaking with pain.

He looked at her.

His children looked at their mother crying and railing in pain.

Walker stood and wondered, “What is causing Selma all of this pain?”

Shirley stood and was looking for Brenda.

Patrick looked at Shirley, who wanted to show off her clothes, and motioned for her to sit down.

Shirley looked at Patrick and sat.

She looked back at Eleanor who was fallen down in the pew crying.

Claressa was crying and kept saying, “Momma forgive me for lying to you that I was coming home and didn’t come.”

Alvin put his arm around Claressa.

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor and saw the pain she had been carrying ease from her.

Dr. Ralph looked at the grief stricken Claressa pleading to her apparent deceased mother for forgiveness of lying to her.

Patrick heard the sweet song of Stephen and Bryce humming ‘O Little town of Bethlehem’.

Gen grabbed Mag’s arm and said, “It was me. It was me.”

Mag said, “You what Gen?”

Brenda was sitting on the floor holding Gen’s hand.

Gen was wailing in pain and said, “I told the last mission.”

Mag thought.

Gen said, “I promised Roger I would bring you back.”

Mag sat for a moment and leaned to Gen and said, “Gen I always have known. I always have loved you and never will stop loving you.”

Gen wailed out.

Brenda was crying and whispered, “I forgive you too Gen. I have held that guilt for a failed mission in my heart all of these years.”

Mag said, “It failed because we did our part and would not stop and go on with our lives. God wanted to live our lives He gave us, but we were used to doing what we were doing. That’s why it failed. But God caused even greater successful for the ones who picked up where we failed but was really our success. It prospered the way God wanted it to go.”

Brenda said, “Baby, all of these years you and I have carried this great burden in our hearts and minds. We have drank our bodies drunk and they can’t take it anymore. We have doomed ourselves to an early death. For what. God knew what He wanted us to do. We prayed to Him for the missions but we did seek Him when we were to stop and let others come to do His will also. We can’t stop His plan. Let us give up this self-inflicted pain.”

Gen said, “I don’t know how.”

Mag held onto Gen and said, “If you didn’t do that Gen I would not have loved Roger the way I did and I would not have had Josiah and I would not have a grand baby that will soon come into this world that you helped to be bearable.”

Co-pastor Walker walked off the podium and went to his wife and sat next to her and took her hands and said, “Selma?”

She looked at him and turned her head in pain.

He looked at her.

Their children were looking at her.

Patrick was looking at co-pastor Walker.

Then he saw Claressa sobbing.

He did not see Eleanor.

He moved from the podium.

Dr. Ralph knew he was looking for Eleanor.

Dr. Ralph pointed to the pew.

Patrick walked back to the podium.

He was crying at Gen who was trying to release herself from the pain of betrayal.

Roger told Patrick decades before, Gen promised him she would bring Mag back to him.

Patrick knew then Gen betrayed the mission to get the barely alive and tortured mag back to Roger where it took him six months to nourish her back to life. Then he took her to a hospital in New York, where she stayed three months and a year later they had Josiah. Who fought in the Civil War.

Patrick thought about Shirley and cried even more.

Parishioners were going to one another and asking the other ones to forgive them for different aughts they had against them.

Some parishioners did not know they were being hated and despised by other members of the church.

Two people got into an argument.

Co-pastor Walker was talking to his wife and told her, “Selma, I will not have you holding this back anymore from me. I mean for you to tell me what this is about.”

The man and woman arguing got loud that Co-pastor Walker jumped up and said, “I can’t think and talk to my wife because of yall. Be quiet and continued.”

Bryce and Stephen hollered.

Wanda stopped praying and looked at the co-pastor and then at the woman and man arguing.

Then at Bryce and Stephen.

She sat still and did not move.

Hal and the cook hollered.

Joe thought, “I should have married Beverly and moved further north”.

Gary, Bruce and Percy sat and watched everybody.

They were quiet.

Bruce looked for Eleanor and did not see her.

He stood and looked around.

He walked to Alvin, who was holding Claressa.

Alvin looked at Bruce.

Bruce stood and looked at Eleanor and said, “Momma. Gt up now. You are forgiven.”

Alvin stared at Bruce.

Dr. Ralph was watching so many people.

He heard Bruce and turned and looked at Bruce.

Bruce looked at Alvin and said, “Excuse me sir.”

Alvin cotted out his seat and let Bruce by.

Brenda saw Bruce but turned her attention immediately back to Gen.

Bruce got on his knees and said, “Eleanor I need you to get up. Your problems are solved. We need you. Your children need you. Your mother and father need you. Your friends need you. When we marry our children will need you. You show us so much everyday about living. When you are acting like this grandma and grandpa help us. They are old, what will happen if they die and you are acting like this. Stop Eleanor. Help Lorraine. Help Claressa. Help Aunt Bev with all of those slave children.”

Alvin looked at Bruce and listened to him.

Dr. Ralph listened to Bruce and whispered, “Amen.”

Dr. Ralph and Alvin looked at each other.

Patrick was standing at the podium and watching for Bruce.

Bruce stood up and pulled Eleanor up from the seat.

Bruce watched Alvin all the time.

He noticed Alvin always had a handkerchief and Bruce started carrying a handkerchief.

Eleanor noticed it and told Patrick and Brenda.

Bruce went in his coat pocket and handed Eleanor his handkerchief.

Patrick felt they would be fine.

Stephen and Bryce were standing and still humming.

Wanda started crying.

Nathan looked at Wanda and wondered why she was crying.

Nathan saw Bruce disappear on the floor and then he saw Bruce pulled Eleanor up and give her his handkerchief.

Shirley was sitting and watching all the people reconcile.

She walked across the front of the church and passed the co-pastor and his wife and down the aisle to Brenda.

Patrick was looking at Shirley after he told her not to move.

She leaned over and said, “Michael please forgive me.”

Dr. Ralph watched Shirley walked across the front of the church.

He thought how pretty she was even with her deformity.

He thought, “She would be hard to handle if she was born with no deformities.”

Michael yelled, “What?”

Dr. Ralph jumped.

Brenda was trying to hit Michael’s thighs, but he moved back fast out of her hand reach.

Patrick looked at them and thought, “All of this mess is my family.”

Lorraine whispered, “Michael.”

Michael looked at Lorraine and said, “What?”

Dr. Ralph looked at Michael.

He knew Michael knew what Lorraine wanted.

Lorraine said, “Forgive Shirley. JESUS came and forgave all of us.”

Michael began to cry and said, “No.”

Brenda was trying to get to him.

Patrick rushed off the podium and walked to Brenda.

He said, “Brenda stop. You are in church.”

Brenda said, “Patrick move.”

Stephen and Bryce stared at Brenda.

Lorraine started laughing.

Dr. Ralph looked over at Lorraine and thought about all the time he has missed not having her in his life.

Gen said, “Bren.”

Brenda looked at Gen.

Mag looked at Bren and smiled.

Patrick said, “Gen you got that out?’

Gen was still crying and nodded her head for yes.

She said, “Patrick forgive me. I asked George for his forgiveness the last time I saw him.”

Brenda was sitting on her knees on the floor staring at a defiant Michael.

Michael gave Brenda a stare.

Brenda turned to crawl to Michael.

Patrick grabbed her and said, “Please Brenda.”

Brenda looked up at Patrick and said, “You see that boy?”

Patrick looked at Michael and said, “Michael, all of you know better. I am the guess speaker and all of you are acting up.”

Thomas said, “We do this all the time.”

Patrick looked at Thomas.

Stephen and Bryce hollered.

Wanda was still crying.

Nathan started laughing from Stephen and Bryce and how Patrick turned and looked at them.

Denise kept peeping at the railroad crew and said, to Nathan, “When are we leaving?’

Nathan said, “I’m having a good time.”

Steven was leaning with his arms on the pew in front of him.

Nathan looked at Steven and said, “Right Steven?”

Steven said, “Right. I thought I had bad feelings about some people. That woman and man are still fussing. I wonder about what? And the pastor and his wife are fussing.”

Nathan giggled and sat up in his seat to try to glimpse at Brenda on the floor trying to get to Michael.

Nathan said, “Michael is not backing away from Brenda.”

Steven said, “He is taking his stand about whatever it is.”

Patrick said, “Gen I forgive you. I love you. Nothing will cause that to change.”

Gen broke and began to cry all over.

Co-pastor Walker yelled at his wife and stood.

Everyone looked at him.

He was angry.

Steven jumped and batted his eyes and said, “Oh.”

Nathan stared at the co-pastor.

Wanda stopped her self-pity.

Bruce stood facing Eleanor with his back on the pew in front of him.

He jumped and turned around and looked at the angry and exasperated co-pastor.

Percy was leaning over with his left elbow on his left thigh and his head in his left hand.

Percy jumped straight up in his seat.

Gary was confused and looking at Eleanor and the ambassador and his wife and the people that were fussing in the church.

Gary stood.

Nathan looked at Gary.

Steven looked at Gary.

Eleanor peeped around Bruce at the co-pastor.

The railroad crew woke.

Denise eased down in her seat.

Nathan cut his eyes at Denise.

Stephen and Bryce leaned and peeped at the co-pastor.

The man and woman were still fussing and pointing their fingers in each other faces.

They would slap their fingers out of each other face.

Josiah and Natalie were still and quiet.

Gary said, “Pastor Walker.”

Co-pastor Walker was standing by his wife and he looked in Gary’s direction.

Gary said, “Sir, I am confused. Why is all of this angry and fussing.”

Co-pastor Walker said, “Yall brought it. You tell me.”

Patrick said, “Damn.”

Stephen and Bryce whistled.

Wanda stared at the co-pastor.

Steven whistle.

Nathan said, “Steven what does that whistling mean?”

Steven said, “When you can’t cuss.”

Robert, Bethany and Robert Jr. were sitting in the back of the church laughing.

Steven turned and saw them and they stopped laughing.

Steven shrugged his shoulders.

Nathan looked back to see who Steven was talking to.

He saw Robert, Bethany and Robert Jr. and nodded his head.

They all burst out laughing.

Robert said, “I’m glad Bethany made me get up and come. This is the best church service I ever attended.”

Patrick leaned over and kissed Gen.

She said, “I got to see this.”

Mag sat up.

Gen sat up.

Brenda got off the floor and sat on the pew.

Shirley walked behind the co-pastor to her seat.

He looked behind him at Shirley.

Gen pushed Brenda and said, “Go up there with your husband.”

Mag peeped over at Brenda and said, “Yeah you heathen.”

Brenda looked for Michael and saw him and Thomas heads at the first pew.

Brenda squinted her eyes and balled up her fists.

Mag said, “Look at her. She knows she is not going to do anything to those boys.”

Gen grinned.

She looked up and felt someone staring at her.

She turned and saw Stephen and Bryce staring at her.

Bryce said, “Welcome back.”

Stephen nodded at Gen.

Gen cried some more.

Steven was looking from one to the other.

He heard Robert and Bethany hollering in the back seat.

Robert Jr. ran to Steven.

Steven picked him up and put him in his lap.

Nathan looked at Robert Jr. and grinned.

Denise looked at Robert Jr and smiled.

Robert Jr. said, “Hi”.

Everyone spoke to Robert Jr and said, “Merry Christmas.”

Robert jr. looked at the people and said, “Merry Christmas.”

Everyone laughed.

The man and woman were still fussing.

Bethany was laughing hard.

Robert could not enjoy Robert Jr saying ‘Merry Christmas’, for the man and woman fussing and him watching them.

He was hollering in the back pew.

The railroad crew looked startled.

The cook said, “I thought we were coming to a church not the local bar.”

Nathan hollered and fell back in his seat.

Robert Jr. looked at Nathan.

Nathan tried to sit up and be calm.

He couldn’t.

Hal said, “I’m enjoying this.”

Joe turned and looked at Hal and said, “What’s wrong with you?”

Hal sank in his seat with his rolling eyes at Joe.

Dr. Ralph looked back at Hal.

He turned around and bucked his eyes.

He looked at Lorraine and wondered when he could get her out of there.

Patrick walked to the podium.

Shirley did not sit down.

Co-pastor Walker looked at Shirley.

He scared her but she stood her ground.

Eleanor was looking from Shirley to the co\*pastor.

The man and the woman was still fussing and pointing at each other and counting on their hands.

Michael and Thomas was sitting like they were sophisticated.

Brenda was mad and wanted to hit them for making her look like a fool.

Patrick walked pass the co\*pastor.

The co-pastor slightly turned and looked at Patrick.

Shirley said, “I have something to say.”

Lorraine said, “Shirley.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and began to cry.

Co-pastor said, “What? How you all have this church acting up.”

Thomas yelled, “We always act like this.”

Brenda turned and looked at Thomas as she was sitting down.

Lorraine laughed.

Eleanor wanted to know what in the world Shirley was going to say.

Shirley began to cry.

The co-pastor said, “Hurry up so I can cry.”

Nathan slid to the end of his seat to listen.

Robert and Bethany hollered in the last pew.

People started turning around to see who it was.

Eleanor did not turn around because she knew their voices and saw them coming down the street when everyone was entering the church.

Shirley said, “Co-pastor Walker and church and fellow Christians. I am Shirley and that is my grandfather Patrick. We came to your church to support him in delivering the first of many messages.”

Co-pastor Walker said, “Not here.”

Wanda’s mouth dropped open.

Bryce fell into Stephen,

Stephen was standing with his mouth opened,

Robert and Bethany were on the seat of pew hollering.

Patrick said, “Shirley please sit.”

Shirley said, “No grandpa. I came to hear what the word of God was for this day that we celebrate the birth of Christ. People are fusing and crying and repenting. From my limited knowledge of the holy bible. I believe that is why God sent Jesus for us to forgive one another and receive His grace in our lives.”

Bryce said, “Yes child.”

He sat down.

Shirley said, “I was born severely deformed and did not know what a minute of a day was like without terrible pain and misery. But God’s grace sent some of God’s amazing people into my life, and my incredible doctor…”

Shirley pointed to Dr. Ralph.

Co-pastor Walker looked back to see who Shirley was pointing to.

Shirley said, “My father took me to Philadelphia to these wonderful doctors and I was gnarled and balled up and cock-eye and spine curving and my insides were just as bad. Every day of my life I wanted to die. I lay and every minute I was wanting for death to come.”

Eleanor exhaled.

Shirley said, “My love ones were gone. My mother and three of my brothers went to live in Europe. My grandpa and grandma had abandoned me and did not come to see me nor write me. I had no mid-night tea parties with my grandma which kept me alive through mid-night. No more story times with my beloved grandpa at two in the morning. No more of my mother coming and crawling in my bed and holding me until morning. She vowed she would not let me die alone.”

Eleanor burst out crying.

Robert and Bethany sat up and looked at Shirley.

Claressa grabbed Eleanor’s hand and Alvin patted Eleanor on her back.

Shirley said, “I had none of that love and support. It was taken away from me like my life was taken away from me.

Shirley said, “God sent truly wonderful workers to Philadelphia to help me. They thought they were coming along for the ride but I believe they were specially chosen by God to me and all of us. My entire family. God has blessed them in return with husbands and wives and families and businesses.”

Dr. Ralph was amazed at Shirley’s pose and speaking ability.

Robert said, “Amen.”

He grabbed Bethany and hugged her.

Robert jr. looked back at his daddy and got out of Steven’s lap and walked to Robert.

Robert picked up Robert Jr. and put him in his lap.

Shirley said, “I once had all of this love support, then it was taken away.”

Brenda yelled, “It was that son-of\*a-\*\*\*”

Patrick yelled, “Brenda.”

All Nathan could see were the Bryce and Stephen’s shoulders moving up and down and their heads bent down.

Shirley said, “Grandma I know that now. I ask you and grandpa to forgive me for hating you in my heart. For those two years I laid in that hospital bed without your love.”

Patrick said, “Shirley I forgive you. Forgive me for not fighting for you from your daddy.”

Brenda said, “Me too Shirley. Forgive me for not kicking…”

The co-pastor turned and looked at Brenda.

Nathan looked at Bryce and Stephen who were nearly in their seats.

Wanda was sitting in front of Stephen and Bryce and turned sideways so she could see this deformed Shirley.

She thought, “She is not too bad. But still pretty with that thick blond hair.”

Shirley said, “The day my friend died across the hall from me I hated him because he was gone and he did not have to live in this horrible pain. Some other doctors had taken advantage of my desperate mother and broke both my legs twice and each time I nearly died. They removed bones out of my legs that render me forever paralyzed. The other doctors examined me and said, I could have walked if the bones were not removed…”

One of the men used two of his fingers and did a walking in front of the church to Shirley.

The man’s wife looked at him.

Shirley said, “If people knew that the pain I felt is what they will feel in hell they would repent and accept JESUS as their Savior.”

People clapped.

Selma was sitting and listening to every word Shirley spoke.

Co-pastor Walker looked at his wife and turned his head.

Steven said, “Whatever his wife did he is not forgiving her.”

Nathan looked at the co-pastor.

Nathan thought, “I almost liked him until he got rude.”

Steven said, “He is human too. God is working on him like He is working on all of us.”

Nathan looked at Steven and thought, “Wow.”

Shirley said, “There was one person who stood by me all the way. My baby brother seven year old Michael…”

Michael stood and waved at the people.

People smiled.

Shirley said, “He did not leave America to live in Europe with my family. He told our mother that he did not want me…”

Shirley began to cry and point to herself.

Alicia handed her a handkerchief.

Shirley wiped her eyes.

She said, “Michael at seven said, he did not want me to feel that no one loved me.”

The church clapped.

The man clapped and pointed his finger at the woman who was seated.

Shirley said, “He traveled with one to Philadelphia and came to visit me everyday after school. I treated him so horrible that I caused him to have an emotional breakdown. He ran out the hospital and one of the beloved doctors had to run and catch this eight year old child who had lost his mind because I hated him and hated that his love for me was greater than anything I knew from my mother, my grandfather and grandmother. I hated him because he would not let me go. He wanted me to live and I took that out on him and very evilly ill treated him.”

The co-pastor turned and looked at Michael.

Emilou was quiet while the parishioners were acting up.

She and Alicia sat and watched the people.

Emilou was standing in her pew so she could see Shirley.

She looked over at Michael.

Michael was sitting looking at Shirley.

Shirley said, “ I have asked Michael over these two years to forgive. He has said no. He has that right to say no. He was my best friend and the lover of my soul. I tried to kill that part of God out of him. I have hurt his life. I asked God for forgiveness. I know He has because of His grace Pastor Walker. None of what I earned or deserved. I went to Michael today to ask him for his forgiveness and I got his same answer…”

Pastor Walker looked back at Michael.

Michael was sitting on one leg and sucking on a lollipop and swinging his other leg.

Pastor Walker turned around and looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “I know grace is part of God and someday God will let His grace touch Michael’s heart to forgive me. I can’t make it happen when I want it so my flesh could feel good. I know God is helping me to be delivered of my evil ways. I don’t know Him and Jesus like some of you, but today very importantly pointed to forgiveness as being under His grace.”

Pastor Walker exhaled and looked at his wife.

His wife did not look at him.

Shirley said, “Thank you for your time and thank you for listening to one person who got something out of grace this morning.”

Shirley sat down.

Bethany and Robert clapped.

Steven sat back and clapped and said, “Wow.”

Nathan and Denise sat with their mouths opened.

Alicia was crying.

Emilou hugged Shirley.

Stephen and Bryce sat and looked at Shirley.

Patrick said, “Co-pastor Walker I want to apologize to you and your church for being disruptive and disrespectful. I thank you for the only chance to speak at your church. Thank you.”

Co-pastor Walker waved his hand and said, “Stay.”

Patrick stood on the podium.

Stephen and Bryce sat back to listen.

Wanda stood.

Stephen and Bryce looked at Wanda.

Nathan said, “Denise.”

Denise was sitting all the way back in her pew and said, “I see her.”

Joe looked at Wanda and thought she was cute.

He sat and watched her.

The co-pastor was dazed and looked at Wanda and said, “What?”

Wanda said, “I am older. I married Sherman two years ago. I was old when I married him here in this church. I could not give him a child. He was a new job in the nation’s capitol and wants a divorce.”

Joe started booing in the back of the church,

Stephen held his head down again and was laughing.

He turned to see who was booing and it was Joe.

Hal said, “Heathen.”

Nathan turned and looked at Joe and bit his lips to keep from laughing out.

Denise looked at Nathan.

Nathan turned and saw Denise looking at him.

He said, “That will never happen to us. Besides you’re not old.”

Denise stared at Nathan.

Nathan turned his head and cut his eyes at Denise.

Denise was still staring at Nathan.

The co-pastor said, “What you want from us?”

Joe started booing the co-pastor.

Wanda said, “Only your support

The co-pastor said, “Sir, you can get her address after service.”

Joe said, “Ok.”

Bryce hit the floor.

Gen grinned.

Morgan was laughing so much he was sick.

Mag looked at him with her mouth opened.

Morgan said, “This sh\*\* is funny.”

Mag said, “Morgan you’re in church.”

Morgan said, “So is the first of these fools that did not stop them.”

Percy turned and looked at Morgan.

Gary was sitting still with this confused look on his face.

Co-pastor Walker stood and said, “This is the most hellish Christmas Day service I have ever witnessed.”

Michael yelled, “You were fussing at your wife in front of your kids.”

Co-pastor Walker exhaled.

Patrick looked at the nonchalant Leg swinging, lollipop licking Michael.

He looked at Brenda who was ready to fight somebody.

Gen stood.

Mag followed Gen’s body from when she started to rise until she stood tall and correct.

Co -pastor Walker looked at the nonchalant Michael who was staring at him

Thomas said, “You have not apologized to the church for your behavior. My grandfather apologized for our behavior.”

Patrick looked at Thomas and was proud of him.

Bruce sat next to Eleanor and held her hand.

Eleanor leaned over and kissed Bruce on his head.

Dr. Ralph saw the happiness in Bruce’s eyes and smiled.

He looked over at Shirley who was looking at Gen.

Robert and Bethany hollered.

Hal stared.

Joe began booing the co-pastor.

Patrick did not say anything but thought, “This is who we are.”

Co-pastor Walker looked at Gen and said, “Another one.”

Stephen fell back in his seat and said, “Wow.”

Nathan looked at the co-pastor.

The co-pastor saw the man and woman still fussing.

He pointed to Gen and said, “Let some of mines go. Hold on a minute.”

Gen stood.

Patrick looked at Gen and thought, “God don’t let her tell what we were doing.”

The man and woman who argued and fussed stood.

Their story was similiter to Michael and Shirley.

They had an argument since they were children and hated each other since then.

They have not settled no deceased relatives’ estates because of the arguments.

The co-pastor said, “Where do you two live?”

The man said, “Next door to each other.”

The co-pastor walked over the podium and pointed to Gen.

Gen said, “Thank you pastor Walker. I came like Shirley to hear a message from a dear friend, A brother. But I needed forgiveness. I tried to sing out my guilt and remorse.”

Co-pastor said, “I heard.”

Joe began to boo the pastor again.

Nathan saw Stephen’s shoulder moving.

Bryce leaned back so he could see Gen.

Gen said, “But I could not.”

Gen looked around the church at the people and said it again, “I could not get rid of this thirty five year guilt and remorse. I drank heavily and could not get rid of the guilt and remorse. I tried to have a good time and laughed. I could not get rid of this guilt and remorse.”

The co-pastor was leaning on the podium looking at Gen.”

Gen said, “The guilt, remorse and the pain kept building up on me year after year after year. My husband died unexpectantly and after ten years I married a man that made me laughed. But he betrayed me. My only sibling had a child by my husband she betrayed me… ”

Bethany said, “Wow.”

She and Robert sat up at the same time.

Gen said, “My only child betrayed me. But my friends who are not my blood relatives are my brothers and sisters. I betrayed them over thirty five years ago and I have hurt every day. I drank every day and I died every day because I wanted them to know I betrayed them and hurt a lot of innocent people. Today my no singing. Bad singing could not force out me the betrayal I did to my trusting brothers and sisters. No liquor could ever give me forgiveness…”

A man raised his hand in the air.

His wife hit him.

Gen said, “I received genuine forgiveness and love today. It may have taken these years for them to have such good hearts to forgive me. I don’t know. But I can tell you all this…”

Gen shook her finger and said, “… that today I do know it is by God’s grace that He removed this oh so terrible weight from me. I thank you Patrick my brother for bringing the word ‘grace’.

Gen sat down.

The church was touched by her testimony and was quiet.

The co-pastor stood and looked at Gen.

He said nothing.

His wife stood and he did a double look and said, “Selma why are you standing?’

Selma looked at her husband and said, “I have something to say.”

Co-pastor Walker said, “You can say to them and not to me your husband,”

Joe booed the co-pastor again.

The co-pastor turned to see who kept booing him.

Hal sat up so he could hear the co-pastor’s wife.

She looked long at her husband and then she looked at Shirley.

Eleanor looked at the co-pastor’s wife and looked at Shirley trying to see why she was looking at Shirley.

The wife was twisting and wringing her handkerchief nervously.

She said, “I am Selma. The co-pastor’s wife.”

The co-pastor stood and leaned on the podium and watched his wife.

Dr. Ralph looked at the co-pastor and grinned and thought, “He doesn’t have any idea what she is going to say. I need to be ready for this.”

Lorraine reached her hand towards Dr. Ralph.

He knew she wanted him to hold her hand like they used to on his back porch.

He looked at Lorraine and wondered how much does she really remember.

Dr. Ralph took Lorraine’s hand and held it.

Selma said, “I have these three children by William and another child before we were married.”

The church was quiet.

Michael said, “Hold up. You did not have a husband, but you had a child.”

Michael looked at a shock co-pastor.

Eleanor said, “Michael.”

Brenda said, “Leave him along.”

Bryce sat up.

Nathan said, “Damn.”

Denise was looking at Selma’s dress.

Nathan looked at Denise.

Denise stopped leaning on Nathan’s shoulder.

Selma said, “Shirley my child was so severely deformed that the doctors and nurses begged me to let them take her life. I could not take a life that I brought into the world. I gave her up for adoption and I was poor and scared to try to raise her by myself. I left Idaho never to return.”

Dr. Ralph thought, “Idaho.”

Eleanor was thinking about the severely deformed child.

Selma looked at Gen and said, “I am like you. I have been running from my betrayal of Sally for eight years.”

Everybody cried, “Sally.”

Selma jumped back.

The co-pastor stood in shock.

Brenda was putting on her coat and had thrown her hat on top of her head.

Patrick looked at Brenda and stared at her hat that was sitting on top of her head as a drunk man’s hat would sit.

Patrick said, “Brenda please fix your hat.”

Brenda was putting on her coat and said, “I’m ready to leave this fake church.”

Dr. Ralph stood and said, “Selma described Sally.”

Selma said, “I don’t know how she look.”

Dr. Ralph said, “When was she born.”

Selma said, “Over eight years ago.”

Dr. Ralph said, “What state was she born.”

Selma said, “Idaho.”

Dr. Ralph said, “How long did you keep her?”

Selma started crying and said, “Nearly three years.”

Dr. Ralph said, “How did you put her up for adoption?”

Selma said, “A state worker by the name of Sue. She came I gave her all of Sally’s papers.”

Dr. Ralph said, “What is the color of her hair?”

Selma said, “Blond.”

Nathan sat up.

Denise stared at Selma.

Dr, Ralph said, “What is the color of Sally’s eyes?”

Selma said, “Blue.”

Brenda yelled, “That bad ass spit on people.”

Michael yelled, “She sure does.”

Selma was shaking and reached for the pew.

Selma said, “Do you know Sally?”

Thomas said, “She is very rude and curse.”

Everyone looked at Selma.

Nathan was watching the co-pastor.

Denise said, “I like her dress. I had to decide if I like that print.”

Nathan turned and looked at Denise.

Dr. Ralph said, “I am the main doctor assigned to Sally.”

Selma passed out.

The co-pastor stood and looked at his wife.

Patrick broke to run off the podium to go to Selma.

Other people had run to her.

Michael was still seated with his back on Brenda’s shoulder.

Thomas was still sitting straight.

He looked around and put on his hat, scarf and coat.

Mag was stunned.

She looked around at the other parishioners and they looked as stunned as her.

Brenda said, “Michael put on your coat so we can leave this hellish church.

Hal and Joe stood to watch Selma.

Brenda looked behind her and said, “Yall going over to Gen for Christmas dinner?”

They heard a deafening holler.

Everyone in church turned to see who was hollering and about what.

Mag was looking at Brenda and said, “Gen is spending the night with us.”

Dr. Ralph was still standing and he looked at Natalie.

Brenda said, “Alright.”

She turned and looked back at Stephen and Bryce and said, “You all welcome to Christmas dinner time we get out of this hell hole.”

Bryce and Stephen were peeping to see who was keeping up all the screaming.

Dr. Ralph said, “Josiah take Natalie home. I’ll come when I take Lorraine home. The baby should be coming by then.”

Josiah jumped and looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “What?”

Steven burst out laughing.

He said, “Josiah is not ready to be a daddy. He is panicking. Look at him.”

Nathan and Denise stood to look at Natalie.

Josiah was scared and nervous.

Dr. Ralph said, “Is church over?”

Brenda said, “Yeah. Lets go and eat our Christmas meal.”

Eleanor and Bruce were looking at Selma.

Morgan stared at Natalie and stood.

He said, “Come on Mag and let us take Natalie home.

Gen started putting on her scarf and coat.

She said, “I’m going over to Bren to eat. I’ll check on you tomorrow.”

Mag stood and was putting on her coat and scarf.

Morgan said, “I’ll drive. I’ll go and get the carriage and bring it to the front. Josiah you carry Natalie to the door and out to the carriage.”

Josiah said, “I can’t carry Natalie.”

Mag said, “I’ll go and get the carriage and you two carry Natalie. I knew I should have put that goose on before we left.”

Lorraine laughed.

Shirley was still sad.

Everybody stood and began to put on their coats, scarves, hats and gloves.

The co-pastor weakly said, “Please wait a minute.”

Joe, Hal and the cook booed the co-pastor.

The co-pastor lifted up his hands to them.

He said, “Michael you were absolutely right.”

Patrick walked off the podium with his coat and gloves.

Patrick sat next to Brenda and turned and fixed her hat.

Michael sat in Patrick’s lap.

Thomas sat next to Brenda.

The parishioners placed Selma on the pew with her three children.

The co-pastor said, “Thank you.”

He looked out over the people and said, “I apologize for my behavior. I learned a hard lesson today. I learned that everything is not rosey.”

Brenda yelled, “Yeah and what else.”

Patrick did not care he was ready to leave also.

Co-pastor Walker said, “Mrs. Stith I deserve that.”

Brenda had her hands folded over her purse and turned her head from Pastor Walker.

He looked at Brenda and said, “Brother Patrick the message you received from the Lord for His church this morning was timely. I wanted a short sweet message about Christmas and a couple of songs. Two songs. And we leave and go home or wherever we were going to spend the day.”

Natalie screamed.

Mag looked at her and twisted her mouth like Natalie was disturbing her.

Morgan looked at Mag and said, “She is in labor.”

Mag said, “I was too for twenty- three hours. This is just the beginning. Tell Dr. Ralph to eat and take a long nap.”

Morgan was thinking, “I can’t take this for twenty hours.”

Dr. Ralph was looking at Selma.

Then he looked at Natalie.

The co-pastor said, “I am sorry for causing you all to be inconvenient. Pastor Patrick. I mean Brother Patrick heard from the Father and I have to repent for not praying and seeking God for His will to be done. That is the priority. God knew who would be here today and He knew the problems they have. “

Michael said, “You too.”

The co-pastor looked down and said, “You are right Michael. I wanted to live a perfect life.”

Thomas said, “Like making those kids walk in the cold snow.”

Gen snickered.

Brenda was looking off towards Shirley.

The co-pastor said, “That was my perfect world for today. We saw God healed some broken marriages and family relationships. We saw people be open for the need for forgiveness. We saw God’s grace extended to all of us. If Co-pastor Washington had not invited Brother Patrick to preach, we never would have been opened to confessing our faults to one another as the holy bible teaches. We would have never known about Sally and how God put her here in her mother’s reach.”

Brenda shook herself as she thought about bad Sally.

The co-pastor said, “God’s grace was given to us eighteen hundred years ago and He gave his grace again today. He does not stop extending his grace. I will pray for each of you.”

Michael said, “No thank you. You get your prayers answered as much as I do.”

Bryce and Robert hollered.

The co-pastor said, “Bow your heads. Lord God Almighty forgive me for not allowing Your will to be done. Touch each person here and the baby that is coming and always let us seek You to do Your will. In JSUS’ name. Amen.”

Brenda stood and walked straight out the church.

Thomas and Michael stopped at Lorraine and closed her coat and pulled her blankets on her.

Dr. Ralph looked at Thomas and Michael.

He walked to Selma and check on her.

Dr. Ralph hugged Shirley.

She, Alicia and Emilou were walking out.

Shirley said, “Come to dinner?”

Emilou said, “When?”

Shirley said, “Time we get back to the house.”

Alicia said, “I have to ask Steven.”

Emilou ran to Steven and said, “Can we go to Shirley to eat?”

Steven said, “Emilou, you know I don’t like imposing on people. I wanted to invite Nathan and Denise over for Christmas dinner.”

Emilou said, “I am hungry now. Their food is cooked, and Alicia has to cook our food.

Patrick was passing and heard them and said, “All of you come on. Time we get home we are eating. I don’t know what we got. But it will be ready.”

Denise started walking after Patrick.

Nathan looked and said, “That settles it for us. I’m going to help with Lorraine.

Patrick walked out the door and went to the carriage.

Brenda was sitting in the carriage covered up.

Gen walked with Mag to her carriage.

Mag got in the carriage and rode to the front of the church.

Morgan and Josiah were carrying Natalie out of the church.

The second they got into the carriage and Morgan jumped in the front seat Mag pulled off.

Alvin and Claressa walked out the church to their security men.

They got into the carriage and sped away.

Eleanor looked at Claressa and Alvin’s carriage.

She walked to her carriage and pulled it in front of the church.

Dr. Ralph was talking to Joe and said, “I need to see Calvin. And I need to eat. I’m taking Lorraine home then eat something and I want to come and see him and then go to deliver Natalie baby. I have to get someone from the house to bring me.”

Joe looked at the men with him and said, “Can I have a volunteer to drive Dr. Ralph around today and maybe in the morning.”

They stood for a minute and then Hal said, “I’ll doit.”

Hal pointed at two men.

Dr. Ralph said, “Thank you.”

Gary walked out the church with Percy and Bruce.

Eleanor said, “Hal ride with Gary and the boys.”

Nathan and Dr. Ralph rushed Lorraine to the carriage and attached her wheelchair to the rack on Eleanor’s carriage.

Joe and his men ran to their covered wagon and got in.

Hal walked with Gary, Percy, Thomas and Bruce.

Steven. Alicia and Emilou got in their carriage.

Gen was sitting in Shirley’s carriage waiting for her

Patrick and Brenda were sitting watching everyone leave.

Brenda said, “I want to see Shirley. It is snow on the ground. Lets’ ride behind her.”

Michael hopped in front with Eleanor and she rode behind Claressa and Alvin.

Shirley tried to speed on the snow.

Gen hollered at Shirley.

She slowed down.

Patrick was right behind Shirley.

Gen had her clothes in Shirley’s carriage.

She got out in the front of the house and rushed and knocked on the front door.

Brenda got out and walked to the front door with Gen.

Patrick took their carriage to the stables.

Gen was angry.

Brenda said, “Patrick is going to talk to Shirley. She does not know the road conditions and think she can speed.”

Emilou was mad and stomped up the front steps.

Jose opened the door and saw the additional people and said come in. How many more?’

Brenda said, “I don’t know.”

Jose looked at Brenda.

Gen said, “Jose I am staying the night here. Which room?”

Jose said, “Any of them.”

Gen said, “The first one I get to.”

Brenda kept walking.

Gen walked behind Gen and went to the room before Lorraine’s.

Brenda went in their suite and pulled off her coat, hat, scarf and gloves.

Gen pulled off her scarf, coat and gloves and walked out the suite and caught up with Brenda.

They washed their hands in the guests’ room.

Brenda walked to the kitchen and said, “Nadine please set additional place settings at the table.”

Nadine said, “How many?”

Brenda was counting and said, “An additional eight because you already set a place for Caressa and Alvin.”

Nadine forgot about Claressa and Alvin.

She rushed to beat Brenda in the formal dining room.

Nadine quickly grabbed the dishes and chargers.

Peter ran into the formal dining room and helped Nadine set the table.

Dan was bringing in the food.

He brought in a whole ham, turkey and three goose and plenty of breads and butters.

He went back in the kitchen and brought out the large container of dressing and gravy, greens, green beans, carrots, baked sweet potatoes and potato salad.

Nadine stood and counted the place settings she said, “Twenty one. I believe that is right.”

Dan was ready to take a nap.

He was making soup for a late evening light meal.

Everyone was in the house.

Mellissa was taking all their hats and coats.

Brenda and Patrick were standing at the Christmas tree and they welcomed everyone to the house and Bridgett told them to follow her to wash their hands.

Dr. Ralph took Lorraine into the formal dining room.

Lorraine smiled at the decorations.

Nadine and peter looked at Lorraine.

They did not know if Lorraine was blind or had brain damage.

Jose told the workers they brought Lorraine home because a nurse was poisoning her and the doctors did not know how bad the damage was.

Peter said, “I need to make some more eggnog.”

He looked at Lorraine and walked to the kitchen.

Dan cooked the boneless beef tenderloin roast and roasted potatoes for the workers. They had been eating all day and was full.

Peter bake cookies and put in the worker’s area along with hot chocolate.

It was not many workers at the house because there was only to be the ten for dinner and no house guests.

Nathan and Denise were the last guests to arrive.

Patrick saw them and said, “Nathan I received some telegrams today. I believe you should be aware of.”

Nathan said, “I have to talk to all of you. I don’t want you to get rumors.”

Brenda yelled and looked at Denise, “Are you pregnant Denise?”

Everybody laughed.

Nathan said, “I hope not.”

Denise grinned and looked at Nathan.

Nathan held Denise by her waist.

Nadine was walking to get their coats.

Everyone was in the parlor.

Emilou saw Nadine walk passed the parlor door.

Eleanor whispered and was telling Alvin and Claressa about Steven, Alicia and Emilou.

They were looking at Emilou.

Dr. Ralph was listening to Eleanor.

He was sitting next to Lorraine.

She ran to the door and looked and yelled, “Hey Aunt Nadine.”

Brenda said, “Emilou will never be lost.”

Patrick reached for Nathan and Denise and Brenda was a step in front of them.

They were walking to the parlor to gather with everyone else.

They were meeting Nadine.

Jose was locking the front door.

Brenda saw Emilou run out the parlor with her new Christmas dress on and hair in pretty ribbons.

Brenda was about to compliment Emilou on how pretty she looked.

Nadine turned and looked back at Emilou and said, “Merry Christmas Emilou.”

Emilou said, “I want you to see how pretty I look and see the necklace Steven got me for my Christmas.

Peter was walking behind Nadine with a tray of eggnog.

Nadine said, “You look very pretty Emilou.”

Emilou screamed.

Bruce and Thomas jumped up out of their chairs.

Alvin and Eleanor stood.

Brenda stopped and could not move.

Gen and Bryce turned from the fireplace and looked at Emilou.

Emilou said, “You dirty old woman. My momma and my daddy died. You never came by to see how me.

Steven and Alicia had a piece of bread to eat. Steven could not finish college if it weren’t for that man who worked here who borrowed money for my brother to finish school.”

Emilou was screaming and crying.

Peter’s mouth dropped open.

Jose rushed and stood in front of the parlor door and watched Emilou.

Emilou said, “Aunt Nadine you area dirty woman. If it were not for...”

Emilou pointed to Brenda.

She said, “My brother could not get a job because he is black and he had to leave me and Alicia. but she gave my brother a job. He made enough money to buy me Christmas gifts. Miss Lorraine picked out this dress and ribbon and necklace for this Christmas Day…”

Lorraine started crying.

She was waving her hand at Eleanor.

Eleanor was so heartbroken she was crying.

Michael and Bruce were sitting on the floor by Lorraine.

Emilou said, “I am little but I have ears and I have eyes. I wanted to come here today not to eat but for you to see me. So you can see my dead momma and daddy are proud of Steven, Alicia and me.”

The workers ran through the house and stood and looked at Emilou.

Steven ran to Emilou.

Gen said, “Steven, let her get it out.”

Emilou yelled and stomped at Nadine, “We don’t need you, old dirty woman. Steven is going back to school and be a doctor too.”

Emilou started screaming.

Steven grabbed Emilou and picked her up.

He rushed her to the guests’ room and held her and let her scream and holler.

Lorraine said, “Eleanor please.”

Michael and Bruce looked up at Eleanor.

They stood and walked out the parlor and went to the guests’ room and closed the doors.

Nadine just stood still.

Jose and Peter watched Steven run down the hall with Emilou.

Alicia and Shirley were seated on the ottoman talking about Daniel.

Dr. Ralph and Hal were listening to them giggle about him.

Alicia’s heart was broken.

Her eyes were filled with tears.

Gary was stunned.

Jose walked back to Nathan and Denise and took their coats.

Denise was crying.

She was having flashbacks of the slave children she left behind.

Denise turned to run.

Nathan caught her.

Patrick looked at Denise.

Nathan said, “Denise that life is over. Only the memories are left. I can’t and I will not tell you to forget. But I will ask you to let me help you.”

Brenda turned and looked back at Denise.

Alvin heard Nathan and wanted to see what was going on.

He and Hal tipped to the parlor door and looked.

Gary said, “That’s Denise she is a run-away slave. She hates to see a child hurt. It reminds her of the slave children she could not help so she ran away.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Gary.

Alvin and Hal looked at Gary.

Brenda said, “Nadine, you are excuse for the rest of today.”

Jose walked pass Nadine to put Nathan and Denise’s coats up.

Jose said, “They are in that room.”

Nathan said, “Put them anywhere I’ll find them when we get ready to leave.”

Brenda said, “Put them in my office.”

Peter put the cookie plate down and walked to Nadine and walked Nadine through the billiards room to their room.

Dan, Mellissa and some more workers were standing in the back hallway.

They heard everything.

Peter said, “Nadine don’t come out this room until all the guests are gone. If you need to smoke you come to the kitchen and get me and I will go with you but don’t go near those children.”

Dan and Jose heard Peter.

Jose stood in the hallway and looked at Peter and Nadine’s closed room door.

He turned to a stunned Dan and said, “The little one got her good.”

Mellissa and Brittany nodded for yes.

Dan said, “What got me was the baby manipulated Steven to get them invited to dinner so she can show Nadine how good she look.”

Mellissa said, “They have looked nice every time they have come here.”

Jose said, “Now to attend to the muzzled house and their guests.”

Mellissa and Brittany hollered.

Dan walked away still haunted by the pain of Emilou.

Susan said, “Lorraine look good.”

Georgette said, “No wonder she didn’t want come. You saw her man.”

Brittany said, “Jealous.”

Georgette said, “You’re right. I am going to go up there to the hospital and see if I can find me one.”

Susan said, “Meredith found one in Paris and now she has had her baby boy.”

Mellissa said, “And Vivienne got her one from France.”

Georgette said, “I have to make sure he is not a patient like that thing Gen married.”

Brittany said, “You never know who you marry.”

Peter walked out their room down the hall to the kitchen.

The workers still could hear Emilou hollering.

Alicia stood and turned around and sat and stood and sat.

Eleanor and Claressa and Shirley watched Alicia.

Stephen looked up at Bryce.

Gen and Bryce and Stephen sneaked some scotch.

Patrick, Brenda and Nathan and Denise walked in the parlor and it was late for them to hide the liquor.

Brenda looked at Alicia.

Patrick looked at Stephen, Bryce and Gen.

He said, “I would be a bad host if I do not join you.”

Everybody laughed.

Brenda said slightly turned her head and said, “Me too Patrick.”

Patrick touched Brenda’s shoulder and said, “What?”

Brenda said, “Do we have any rum left. I swear the cooks used it all in those rum balls.”

Alvin laughed.

He stood and said something to Claressa.

Eleanor said, “Sherry.”

Nathan exhaled and said, “I’ll walk with you.”

Percy said, “Dr. Ralph what will you have?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Nothing but Thank you Percy.”

Brenda was watching Percy.

Percy said, “Hal and Gary?’

Gary said, “Nothing.”

Hal was thinking about his scotch back at the train and he had to drive Dr. Ralph back and forth and said, “No thank you.”

Percy turned and was about to walk out the parlor door.

Brenda said, “Try me.”

Percy turned and sat in a chair.

Thomas laughed so hard he fell back in the chair.

Dr. Ralph looked at Thomas and smiled.

Brenda said, “Pastor Walker said one thing right today. This has been the most hellish Christmas I have ever seen.”

Claressa sat still.

Bryce laughed.

Stephen said, “He was the worst one.”

Hal said, “Boo.”

Brenda looked at Hal and he shut up.

Brenda said, “Was that you booing back there?’

Hal said, “No ma am.”

Gen grinned.

She said, “I swear I feel a thousand percent better.”

She walked to Brenda and they hugged.

Gen started sniffing again.

Gen said, “That’s the reason I said, let that baby get that out of her.”

Hal said, “She had a lot in her.”

Gary said, “That’s why I am studying to be a psychologist. So is Denise.”

Dr. Ralph looked back at Gary and said, “Let me know how you are coming in your studies.”

Gary said, “I want to be a child psychologist. I was a child with a horrible family and life until Count Joseph brought me here. God used him. I just finished the basic courses to qualify to go to college. I will be leaving at the New Year to go to college in the capitol.”

Dr. Ralph said, “The children need help.”

Thomas said, “Momma what about Sally and the woman that said she was Sally’s momma?’

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

She said, “That is on Shirley.”

Thomas looked at Shirley.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

Shirley was holding a weeping Alicia’s hand.

Shirley stared at Thomas.

Thomas leaned forward in his chair and stared at Shirley.

Eleanor looked at Thomas.

Thomas blinked his eyes at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “Look boy you don’t be threatening no body in this house. That thug mental better stop now or you will not be going back to that military academy. I was scared that it was you all the time Thomas.”

Thomas looked at Eleanor.

Brenda was staring at Thomas.

Dr. Ralph looked at Thomas.

Thomas looked at a mean Eleanor.

He said, “Ok momma I will stop being bad.”

Eleanor said, “Shirley is looking at you trying to think. You see she is trying to console Alicia. I really mean that thug gangster mob mind you better pray and ask JESUS to remove it before it is time for you to go back to the military academy. I prayed to God that out of all of my children it was not you, but I will kick you out at your young age and remove every penny from you forever.”

Percy turned and looked at Eleanor.

He saw a side to Eleanor he never saw before.

That side made him scared.

Dr. Ralph looked at Percy and know from Percy’s face that Eleanor was not to be played with.

Thomas said, “Momma you forgot to say you will send me to daddy.”

Eleanor was giving Thomas a look that made Brenda and Gen cringed.

Eleanor said, “Thomas you are smart. You have been the head of all the trouble my children have gotten in. You are smart and you knew I did not give you the option of going to your daddy. I will put you on the street and shoot you if you come back here.”

Thomas sat and looked at Eleanor.

Dr. Ralph looked up at Eleanor and saw she meant what she was saying.

Eleanor gave Thomas a stare.

Thomas said, “I’m sorry momma.”

Eleanor stared at Thomas.

Shirley looked at Eleanor.

Alicia was sniffing up her crying out of fear of Eleanor.

She turned and looked at Eleanor.

Claressa stared at Thomas.

Percy sat back in the chair.

Hal said, “Damn.”

Gary nodded his head.

They saw Eleanor will not tolerate any thug mentality.

Shirley cleared her throat and said, “Thomas, the fight over Sally is with Selma and the state in the courts. The Stith Hospital has nothing to do with the legal fight.”

The men entered back in the parlor and looked at the shock on everyone’s faces and realize something happened.

Nathan walked to Denise.

She was reaching for his liquor.

He knew something had happened.

Alvin gave Eleanor and Claressa a glass of sherry.

Patrick looked around at everyone and reached Brenda a glass of rum.

Patrick looked at Nathan.

Patrick cleared his throat and said, “I did not hear Emilou, I think Steven got her calm.”

No one said anything.

Patrick said, “Ok what happened?”

Percy said, “I am hungry. I’ll you grandpa. Thomas asked what was going to happen to Sally. Momma said that’s up to Shirley. Before Shirley could answer, Thomas leaned forward and stared at Shirley and gave her a gangster threatening look. Momma told Thomas she would put him out the family and if he comes back she will shoot him.”

Patrick was looking at Thomas.

Thomas was looking at Patrick.

Brenda was looking at Thomas.

Gen was looking at Thomas.

Thomas said, “Remember grace grandpa.”

Patrick exhaled and twisted his glass of whiskey in his hand.

Steven, Michael and Bruce walked back into the parlor.

Steven was carrying Emilou.

Emilou reached for Patrick’s glass and said, “Thank you.”

Patrick was still staring at Thomas and slightly moved his glass.

Everyone burst out laughing.

Steven said, “I’m sorry for Mr. Patrick.”

Steven put Emilou down.

She ran to Alicia.

Alicia hugged her and took her handkerchief and dried her face.

Shirley pushed down Emilou’s hair.

Michael looked around and said, “What bad happen that I didn’t do?”

Percy started whispering to Michael and Bruce.

Nathan was watching Percy and tried to read his lips.

Bruce and Michael looked at Thomas.

Bruce said, “Thomas I told you to stop.”

Michael said, “You know Shirley does not know what that mean. I am surprise momma did.”

Eleanor said, “my brothers did those things and now you see two are dead and in hell and the other will spend his life in prison until he die.”

Thomas said, “Grace, momma.”

Eleanor said, “I turned my head many times Thomas. No more grace. You have seven years. Once. Just once Thomas.”

Michael was staring at Thomas.

Bruce was staring at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “I may have been crazy for the past two years but I remember everything.”

Michael stared at Thomas.

Michael said, “Can we eat. Please.”

Patrick said, “Nathan would you bless the food or this day.”

Gen and Brenda said, “Whatever.”

Nathan said, “Lets put down this liquor.”

Everyone put down their glasses.

Michael said, “My eggnog does not have liquor in it.”

Lorraine laughed.

Michael walked to Lorraine and rubbed his forehead on her forehead.

She laughed.

Nathan said, “Let us hold hands.”

Everyone held hands.

Emilou held Steven and Alicia’s hands.

Nathan said, “Father GOD.”

He stopped and nodded his head and said, “YOU are our FATHER. Help Thomas and deliver him smooth out this behavior to the personality YOU made him to have. Touch Lorraine and make her better. Continue to love Miss Gen…”

Gen sniff.

Emilou looked at Gen.

Brenda looked at Emilou.

Nathan said, “Make life easy for Josiah and Natalie’s baby.”

Dr. Ralph whispered, “Babies.”

Eleanor and Claressa looked at Dr. Ralph.”

Nathan said, “Bless Gary and Denise s they are treading into a new area of study in this country.”

Hal said, “Amen.”

Nathan said, “LORD GOD bless this doctor here and all of the doctors like him. Let them study more, learn more and let people from all of the world come here and seek them to teach them what YOU are teaching these truly wonderful doctors and LORD GOD use them more for YOUR glory.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Amen.”

Nathan said, “LORD GOD Almighty bless that little Emilou…”

Emilou was prancing with her feet.

When Nathan called Emilou’s name she stopped and jerked and looked up at him.

Denise looked at Emilou.

Eleanor and Claressa looked at Emilou.

Brenda looked at Emilou.

Nathan said, “Out of the mouth of babes come truth.”

Everyone said, “Amen.”

Nathan said, “LORD GOD Almighty bless this family and bless the two heads of this family. YOU used them to bless so many people. YOU taught them how to have peace in the midst of the storms they go through in this life. Teach me and my wife that. I thank YOU for giving us an example that we have seen with our eyes. “

Denise said, “Amen.”

Nathan said, “Help us all to become more like JESUS everyday. In JESUS ‘ name.”

Denise whispered, “Bless the food.”

The children yelled, “Yes.”

Dr. Ralph grinned.

Emilou looked around at everyone like he better.

Dr. Ralph laughed at her.

Nathan said, “I’m sorry. LORD GOD Almighty we bless this bounty in JESUS’ name.”

Michael picked up his eggnog and said, “Why you say that Nathan. I mean sheriff.”

Nathan said, “What?”

Michael said, “You said you bless the food not God. Why you say that? Why you put yourself in the place of God?”

Claressa twisted her head and looked at Brenda.

Brenda nodded her head.

Nathan said, “When I was homeless…”

Stephen and Bryce looked at Nathan.

Dr. Ralph remembered being homeless.

Nathan said, “I was sleeping on the streets here a few years ago. I had no one to talk to. I would pray for a life, a job, wife and family. When I would go to sleep I had a dream and in the dream a voice said, “I made you in my image that I did you do. JESUS bless food. So I bless my food.”

Lorraine said, “Amen. Shirley. I want Hal to feed me.”

Shirley looked at Lorraine.

Thomas looked at Shirley.

Shirley walked out the parlor with Patrick and Brenda.

Gen held her arm out.

Bryce looked and ran and said, “You mean me.”

He bowed to Gen and took her arm.

Eleanor looked at Gen and smiled.

Nathan and Denise kissed.

Alvin and Claressa grinned.

Michael handed Lorraine his punch cup of eggnog and he tried to push her wheelchair.

Dr. Ralph took the cup of eggnog from Lorraine’s lap and held it.

Everyone walked out the parlor and walked to the formal dining room.

Stephen took Eleanor’s arm and they were last walking out the parlor.

Stephen whispered and said, “There was a shot out this morning in town with the mob.”

Eleanor yelled, “What?”

Nathan looked back at Stephen.

Eleanor saw Nathan and tried to be quiet.

She said, “Is that what Nathan said he would tell us about?”

Stephen whispered and said, “I don’t know. But rumor has it that it was yall’s workers.”

Eleanor stared at Stephen.

She started thinking about Bruce knowing when she threw his letters away.

She started getting lightheaded.

Stephen caught her.

They stood for a minute and walked to the parlor.

Susan, Brittany and Georgette and Jose were in the formal dining room.

Emilou looked around for Nadine.

Brenda said, “Emilou you can enjoy your Christmas dinner. Nadine will not be in here.”

Emilou looked at Brenda and said, “Ok.”

Gen and Bryce stood by each other.

Gen said, “She was ready to give her some more.”

Patrick twisted his mouth and Brenda said, “Heifer.”

Bryce pointed at Brenda and laughed.

Patrick looked at Bryce.

Bryce said, “That’s where that little one get that from. That’s why you can’t say anything.”

Patrick and Gen laughed.

Brenda blushed.

Brenda leaned to Patrick and whispered.

They looked at Gen and Bryce.

Gen looked at Patrick and Brenda.

Bryce turned to Gen and said, “They are saying we make a striking couple.”

Gen looked at Bryce.

Bryce looked at Patrick and said, “Right Patrick?”

Bryce pointed to Gen and said, “She doesn’t believe me.”

Patrick grinned and said, “Yes.”

Stephen and Eleanor walked into the formal dining room.

Patrick said, “Eleanor are you alright?”

He took a sip of whiskey.

Brenda looked back at Eleanor.

Stephen was carrying her to her seat.

Eleanor said, “I’ll be fine.”

She and Stephen sat down by Bruce and Thomas.

Brittany had a place with a lamb chop.

Michael looked at the lamb chop and said, “Breakfast but ham and a slice of goose and dressing and gravy.”

Brittany said, “Green beans and Carrots.”

Michael looked at Brittany and said, “If you must.”

Eleanor said, “She must.”

Everyone laughed.

Nathan looked and said, “Eleanor I will tell the adults after dinner. Enjoy your Christmas dinner. I have notice you don’t eat that much anymore. Is there a reason for that?”

Eleanor said, “I don’t want food.”

Dr. Ralph looked at her.

Nathan looked at Brittany and said, “Can you give all of us what Michael has?”

Brittany looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor nodded her head.

Brittany smiled.

Jose walked and the room.

Claressa held her glass.

Jose nodded and went to the liquor table and brought back bottles of liquor.

Hal and Gary would not drink.

Brittany walked to Lorraine and placed a plate of dressing gravy and a slice of goose and green beans in front of Lorraine.

Lorraine looked up in the face of Brittany.

Brittany looked in Lorraine’s eyes and started to shake and cry.

Brenda stood and took the plates out of Brittany’s hands.

Dr. Ralph looked up at Brittany.

He looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Lorraine recruited Brittany to work here part time and she helped Brittny to get into nursing school this pass fall.”

Brenda reached a plate to Patrick and put the other plate in front of her.

Patrick looked at Bryce.

Bryce grinned.

Brenda watched Brittany walk away.

Dr. Ralph looked at Brittany.

Brenda spoke low to Dr. Ralph, “We helped to send her out of town because of her father. You understand. She stays here when she is on breaks.”

Dr. Ralph said, “You all will have your hospital staff by the time the hospital is built. May I see the location one day?”

Brenda said, “That would be nice. Sure we can take you there. It’s by the new military headquarters.”

Shirley leaned down and looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “I’ll take you.”

Patrick said, “Shirley I saw that terrible driving you did today. I mean for you to be cautious. I don’t care how other young people drive. You are not the only one on the streets. You can be hurt or killed or hurt and killed someone else.”

Shirley looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

She and Stephen continued to talk.

Nathan looked at Shirley.

Gen and Bryce looked at Shirley.

Patrick cut a piece of goose and was about to put it in his mouth and said, “I have to tell you about that.”

Brenda was happy.

She looked around her table.

She loved her Christmas pattern.

Shirley was admiring the china.

Gen giggled and said, “Bren, here it comes.”

Brenda had her mouth opened.

Patrick was chewing and looked at Gen.

Shirley was looking at the china.

She said, “Grandma, I don’t remember this pattern.”

Brenda said, “Shirley, this is the first Christmas you sat to this table for Christmas Dinner. Last Christmas we were in Europe. It has a special meaning. Don’t you think.”

Shirley began to cry and said, “Thank you grandma.”

Brenda said, “You are welcome Shirley.”

Gen was waiting.

Shirley dabbed her eyes.

Dr. Ralph was watching Lorraine.

He had to cut her meat, but she fed herself.

Shirley said, “It’s mines right?’

Gen and Bryce hollered.

Patrick was about to put a piece of goose in his mouth and he just looked at Shirley.

Percy said, “What’s that? I told Shirley she was not getting everything. Starr is entitled to something.”

Eleanor jumped up and started walking to Percy.

Nathan did not know what to do.

Patrick said, “What that?”

Dr. Ralph looked.

Emilou was sitting next to Dr. Ralph.

She looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at Emilou.

Emilou had her right elbow on the table.

She was looking up at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at Emilou and turned his head.

Emilou was still staring at Dr. Ralph.

Patrick was watching Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “I have told you Percy to leave Starr alone. You can’t claim her as your wife. You can’t be giving our things away to her. You want her to have something you go to work and buy her what you want.”

Gary said, “How old is Starr?”

Percy was leaning all the way over on Thomas.

Eleanor said, ”Two.”

Percy looked at Eleanor and dare not correct her.

Dr. Ralph thought and looked at Eleanor as she walked from Percy.

Percy and Thomas followed Eleanor until she sat. Dr. Ralph looked at Brenda and said, “Starr from the hospital?”

Brenda cut her eyes at Percy and said, “Yes.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Brenda.

Patrick said, “He is fixed on her. She maybe who GOD has for him. Unless Eleanor kill him before we know.”

Dr. Ralph laughed and drank his water.

Lorraine was getting tired and said, “Water.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine’s hands and her face.

Brenda was wondering what he was looking for.

Michael stood and was looking down the table at Lorraine.

He ran to Lorraine and picked up her water glass and put it to her mouth.

Lorraine drank some water.

Brenda said, “Michael I think Dr. Ralph wanted to see something.”

Michael turned back to Lorraine and gave her another swallow of water.

Eleanor and Claressa were talking and looking at Brittany.

Brittany saw them and became nervous.

Emilou was still staring at Dr. Ralph.

Steven said, “Emilou eat since you used us to get you here for your revenge.”

Emilou did not move her eyes from Dr. Ralph and said, “It felt good to get it out. I was sick of her walking over us like we don’t matter.”

Emilou exhaled.

Gen fell into Bryce.

Gen and Bryce hollered.

Brenda was about to eat and stopped and picked up her rum and yelled. “Jose!”

Eleanor was about to eat and looked at Emilou.

Claressa and Alvin looked at Emilou.

Hal started laughing.

Alicia just stared at Emilou and said, “Emilou, will talk when we get home.”

Emilou said, “I’m tired of talking about that drunk woman.”

Jose was pouring Brenda some whiskey.

He turned his head and looked at Emilou.

Brenda held her hand for Jose to stop when Emilou called Nadine a drunk.

Nathan looked at Emilou.

Denise was snickering.

Dr. Ralph was watching Lorraine and he looked back at Emilou.

Emilou said, “Doctor.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Emilou.

Brenda stopped drinking and eating to hear what Emilou was about to say.

Patrick stopped to hear what Emilou was about to say.

Emilou said, “Is Miss Lorraine your girlfriend?”

Dr. Ralph took a sip of water.

Hal and Gary nearly fell out of their chairs.

Gen looked at them.

Bryce was bent over the table chuckling waiting for Emilou’s reasoning.

Patrick looked at her.

Dr. Ralph put down his glass of water.

Steven was peeping down the table at Emilou.

He said, “Emilou stop. You are not to ask grown people their business.”

Emilou did look at Steven and said, “It’s a question. That’s all.”

Gen said, “Smart.”

Bryce nodded his head.

Dr. Ralph said, “Steven it is ok.”

He looked at Emilou and said, “Yes.”

Emilou looked at Dr. Ralph and slightly back at Steven and said, “Are you going to marry her.”

Lorraine laughed.

Emilou jumped and laughed and said, “Miss Lorraine laughed.”

Emilou giggled.

Dr. Ralph said, “Maybe. Why, Emilou?”

Emilou said, “I am eight. If you have a boy…”

She sightly turned to Steven and said, “Question Steven.”

Brenda was waiting for the reason.

Emilou said, “If it is a boy would I be too old to marry him?’

Gen and Bryce was chuckling.

Dr. ralph said, “You sat there and stared at me as opposed to eating your cold dinner to me if you could marry my son with Miss Lorraine?”

Lorraine laughed.

Brenda looked at Lorraine.

Emilou said, “Yes.”

She looked down the table at Thomas.

Thomas jumped and looked at Emilou.

Eleanor looked at Emilou and then Thomas.

Emilou said, “I thought I wanted to marry Thomas.”

Alicia nearly fainted.

Eleanor twirled her glass of sherry and said, “You can have him.”

Percy looked at Eleanor.

Gen started stomping waiting for the good part.

Emilou said, “But he is bad. I don’t want a bad husband.”

Steven stood up to walk to Emilou.

Thomas stood up and leaned over the table and said, “Girl I am just eleven years old and you are just seven.”

Emilou said, “Eight.”

Thomas said, “The point is I don’t care about a girlfriend or getting married and having children.”

Gen was about to explode.

Stephen looked at Thomas.

Eleanor said, “Emilou, you have made a wise decision, because Thomas will either be homeless or dead by then.”

She drank a swallow of sherry and stared at Thomas.

Thomas stood and looked at Eleanor.

She said, “Sit.”

Thomas fell in his chair.

Gen had to get up and walk out.

Jose followed Gen.

Brenda and Patrick heard them out in the hall hollering.

Brenda said, “Emilou you look very pretty today. You have been looking so pretty each time I have seen you.”

Emilou said, “Thank you Miss Brenda.”

Steven stooped down by Emilou and said, “Emilou you are too young to be talking about a husband and babies. Stop. Alright?”

Alicia was looking at Emilou.

Emilou turned and looked at Steven,

Dr. Ralph was looking at Emilou.

Emilou turned around and looked Steven in his eyes.

Patrick told Brenda, “That did it.”

Brenda said, “This goose is really good.”

Claressa was watching Emilou.

Claressa said, “She is planning her future.”

Alicia looked at Claressa.

Eleanor was looking at Emilou.

Emilou looked at Steven and batted her eyes.

Steven shook his head and stood up.

Brittany was walking to see if anyone needed anything.

Dr. Ralph looked at this sweet girl that Lorraine helped.

Alicia was trying to talk to her.

Brittany bent down and said, “I’m at work.”

Alicia stopped and said, “Oh that’s right.”

Brittany looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor smiled.

She said, “Momma this goose is good.”

Patrick said, “I want another piece and a piece of ham.”

Dr. Ralph turned his head.

Brenda said, “Jason you better not say anything.”

Jason grinned.

Gary was about to get up.

Georgette walked to Gary and said, “Sir, what you want?’

Gary stopped and looked at Georgette.

Nathan and Denise looked at Gary.

Gary held his head down.

Eleanor looked at Gary and wandered why he was acting like that.

Eleanor said, “Brittany.”

Brittany thought they were going to fire her and became very nervous.

Stephen looked at Brittany and said, Be calm. You are not going to be fired.”

Eleanor looked at Brittany.

Brittany walked to Eleanor and bent down and said, “Ma am.”

Clarissa looked at Brittany and thought she was a sweet acting child.

Eleanor pointed to Claressa and said, “This is my best friend Claressa, she is married to my other best friend her husband.”

Brittany was nervous.

Claressa said, “Be calm you are not in any trouble.”

Eleanor said, “Miss Claressa said, you are about her size and she has some clothes that she will send to you tomorrow, if you want them.”

Brittany grinned and said, “Thank you.”

Alvin said, “To get in my pockets.”

Claressa and Eleanor laughed.

Brittany walked away with a smile on her face.

She thought, “Not all talk about me is bad.”

Eleanor looked again at Gary.

Nathan looked at Gary.

Gary said, “Georgette. I like some everything.”

Georgette grinned and took Gary’s plate.

Nathan said, “Me too.”

Denise grinned.

She said, “I have to stop eating these rolls.

Michael was returning from giving Lorraine some water.

He reached and got a roll and walked to his chair.

Eleanor looked at Michael.

Michael sat and said, “These are my favorite rolls. They are sweet.”

He pinched the roll and ate it.

Denise said, “Yes they are.”

Denise’s face went blank.

Nathan looked at Denise and knew she was having a flashback of her past.

Gary said, “These people have treated me a s a human being and not as a piece of human. Count Joseph was wise. He knew to bring me here.”

Georgette brought Gary’s loaded plate and set it in front of him.

Gary said, “Thank you Georgette.”

Georgette smiled at Gary and said, “You are welcome”.

She walked to Nathan with a loaded plate.

Nathan looked at Denise.

Denise said, “Nathan you are not going to eat all of that.”

Denise reached her hand to Nathan’s plate and he bit at her hand.

Jose and Gen returned to the formal dining room.

When Nathan looked up everyone was looking at him.

Nathan said, “I was too casual with them.”

Denise looked and saw everyone was looking at them.

Nathan said, “It’s your fault.”

Denise jerked around and said, “No it’s not. You are not going to have any room for dessert.”

Nathan looked at Jose and said, “Jose what kind of dessert?”

Jose named three cakes.

Nathan looked at Denise.

Denise laughed.

Gary said, “This ham is good.”

Hal said, “It is juicy and not dry.”

Eleanor said, “Dan cooked the ham. I think.”

Jose said, “No Peter.”

Jose looked concern.

Eleanor said, “Jose you were to be on vacation. What happened?”

Jose said, “I hate my family. My fat aunt sat on one of the railroad workers and would not get up.”

Hal said, “Your aunt?”

Jose said, “Yes. I’m glad Briana could not go with me.”

Nathan was stunned and sat still.

Denise did not know the details of what happened or who were involved.

Nathan knew he had to tell them before all kind of things are said.

They enjoyed the dinner.

They ate all of the goose and dressing and gravy.

They served the rum balls and coconut cake and vanilla cake.

Michael moved his dessert plate and told Susan, “Rum balls please.  
She gave him a slice of coconut cake.

He held his head down and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor was grinning and said, “Good try Michael.”

Thomas wanted vanilla cake.

Brenda got a rum ball.

She said, “See Patrick you can smell the rum. I wonder what it taste like.”

Brenda bit a piece of the rum ball and said, “Too much rum.”

Steven said, “I love it.”

Brenda said, “Used up all of my rum instead of ordering them some rum.”

She looked up at Jose.

Jose stared at Brenda.

Everyone ate and enjoyed themselves.

Nathan and Gary ate all their food and their dessert.

Nathan looked at Denise and said, “You better eat. We may not eat on our honeymoon.”

Denise leaned on Nathan and they laughed.

Gary looked at Denise.

Hal looked at Gary and thought, “He must have liked her.”

Eleanor looked at Gary then at the happy Denise.

She thought, “A run- away slave going to college to become a psychologist. Only God. I need to know Him especially about my children and that thug Thomas.”

Michael got a cup of eggnog and ran to Lorraine.

He put the eggnog to Lorraine’s mouth.

She drank some eggnog and smiled.

Brittany was watching Lorraine and smiled when Lorraine smiled.

Brenda looked at Brittany and thought, “I wish she was younger and Percy was older I believe they could make it. I believe Bruce is settled on Emilou or that damn Sally. I want Selma to go and get her.”

Patrick touched Brenda’s arm and helped her up.

Patrick said, “Brenda you looked real nice today.”

Brenda said, “Thank you. You too Patrick for your first day preaching. You did give a good message.”

Patrick said, “Thank you Brenda. Then I got home and been drinking ever since.”

Bryce was laughing.

Patrick looked at Michael and said, “Michael, did Dr. Ralph say that Lorraine can have some eggnog?”

Michael said, “He didn’t tell me to stop.”

Lorraine laughed.

Michael said, “She likes eggnog with the rum balls.”

Dr. Ralph said, “You will not give her any dessert.”

Michael said, “Ok. Dr. Ralph. How was Barry and Ryan Jr?”

Brenda said, “That’s right.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I don’t know Michael. I was busy trying to get Lorraine here. I believe they are fine.”

Michael said, “I miss Meredith. How is her baby?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I know she is fine, and their baby is fine.”

Michael said, “I’m glad she is happy.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Michael how tenderly he waited for Lorraine and gave her something to drink.

Eleanor looked at Michael.

Shirley and Alicia talked the whole meal.

Stephen watched Michael.

He said, “Michael knows how to take care of someone.”

Eleanor said, “He learned from how the nurses took care of him.

Everyone went to the parlor and enjoyed time together.

Lorraine started getting sleepy.

Shirley pushed Lorraine to her suite.

Patrick went to his office and retrieved the telegrams.

He received a few new ones.

Patrick saw Susan and Georgette rush pass his office to attend to Lorraine.

Shirley lit her lanterns and pulled her covers back and pulled off Lorraine’s boots.

Shirley put coal in the fireplace and checked the windows.

She kissed Lorraine on the forehead and said, ‘Good night’.

Lorraine said, “Good night.”

Shirley watched as Susan and Georgette undressed Lorraine and put her nightgown and took out her hair bows and comb and brushed her hair.

Shirley walked out Lorraine when Susan hung her dress on the armoire.

She hurriedly rushed back to her Christmas festivities.

Patrick looked at Shirley and wondered at GOD’s grace.

Susan and Georgette were walking behind Shirley to go back to the kitchen.

Brittany cleared the formal dining room of all the dishes and food.

She and Mellissa passed Susan and Georgette and went to the suites and lit the lanterns and put coal in the fireplaces and turned back the bed coverings for Gen, Dr. Ralph and Patrick and Brenda.

They walked pass Patrick.

Patrick took the telegrams and stood and walked out his office and locked the door.

He walked behind Mellissa and Brittany.

Nathan asked Brenda if he could took his deputy a plate of food.

Brenda said, “Sure.”

She said, “Thomas...”

He ran to Brenda.

Brenda looked at cute Thomas that was becoming like Christopher.

She refused to lose another one to evil.

Brenda said, “… go and tell Jose to make a plate of food for Nathan.”

Thomas said, “Yes ma am.”

He ran to the kitchen.

They all were playing games.

Jose walked in the front door.

Thomas turned and looked and stopped and said, “Jose, grandma wants a plate of food for Nathan.”

Eleanor looked and Brenda looked out the door.

Jose had plates and glasses from the security men.

Claressa said, “I’m glad he fed them. Because I did not want to cook.”

Brenda twisted her mouth and turned her head.

Alvin looked at Brenda and grinned.

Jose told Thomas, “Ok.”

Thomas ran back in the parlor.

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

Thomas blushed and held his head down and said, “You are welcome.”

Eleanor said, “Huh.”

Claressa looked at Eleanor.

Shirley and Emilou were playing a card game.

Patrick returned to the parlor and walked to Nathan and handed some telegrams.

Nathan took the telegrams.

Denise was peeping trying to read the telegrams.

Nathan said, “Denise stop.”

Denise looked at Nathan and sat straight in her chair.

Nathan sat and read all the telegrams.

Patrick said, “Bryce and Stephen I am happy joined us today and at my failed message.”

Bryce said, “It was not a failed message. GOD spoke to who wanted to.”

He nodded at Thomas and said, “Now he knows to ask for God’s grace.”

Patrick looked at Thomas who was looking at Bryce.

Patrick said, “Can you lead us in a Christmas song or two.”

Brenda clapped and said, “Yes.”

Stephen said, “We will be happy to.”

Bryce was sipping a fresh glass of scotch.

Bryce said, “Men come on.”

Percy was the first to jump on and run by the fireplace to join Stephen and Bryce.

Everyone looked at each other.

Alvin started singing in his bass voice.

Everyone clapped and laughed.

Jose walked in the room with a loaded plate for Nathan.

Jose said, “I’ll put it by the Christmas tree so you can take it when you leave.”

Nathan said, “Thank you Jose.”

Brenda was whispering to Patrick.

Patrick was sitting on the arm of Brenda’s chair.

He leaned over and listened to Brenda.

Brittany was standing by the door and watched them.

She felt better that people were not talking about her.

Bruce tried to mock Alvin and sing in bass, everyone laughed.

Eleanor clapped and looked at Bruce.

Bruce turned and looked in Eleanor’s eyes for approval.

She grinned and looked at Bruce.

Claressa and Eleanor whispered.

Jose was passing by the parlor room.

Patrick was looking back and said, “Brittany catch Jose.”

Brittany walked out the parlor and said, “Jose.”

Jose stopped and turned and looked at Brittany.

Brittany said, “Mr. Stith wants you.”

Jose turned around and walked back into the parlor.

Patrick and Brenda stood.

Eleanor looked at them and grinned.

Shirley looked at Patrick and Brenda and she looked at Eleanor who was grinning.

Dr. Ralph looked.

Shirley said, “Dr. Ralph, Lorraine is dressed for bed and is asleep.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley and said, “Thank you.”

Eleanor stood.

Patrick said, “Come family and stand with me and Brenda.”

Everyone walked to Patrick and Brenda.

Brittany was watching Patrick and Brenda.

Nathan and Denise whispered to each other.

Gary and Hal looked at them.

Patrick waited for everyone.

Jose looked at Patrick and Brenda and Eleanor he was not thinking too much because his mind was on Briana.

Jose went to his early that morning to take her to church to hear Patrick but there was no answer at her family door.

Patrick said, “Jose you have been a faithful and trusted employee. You watched over our property nearly a year and a half while we in Europe. You fought the mob to keep our property and keep it from being damage. You have been there for Shirley and Michael in Philadelphia…”

Michael raised his hand and said, “Yeap.”

Jose looked at Michael.

Patrick said, “You were our eyes and ears and protector of them and you helped deliver them safe back to us. I, no we all thank you, Lorraine and Robert for all of your help…”

Eleanor was standing behind Michael with both of her hands on his shoulders.

Thomas moved one of Eleanor’s hands from Michael’s shoulder and put one on his shoulder.

He looked straight ahead. He did not want to look in Eleanor’s vengeful face.

Eleanor gave Thomas a look that she meant what she said.

Brenda looked at them and looked back to Jose.

Eleanor teared up and said, “Yes Jose.”

Jose looked at Eleanor.

Jose saw Patrick reach in his coat pocket and bring out an envelope.

Michael and Thomas ran to Patrick to see what was in the envelope.

Patrick said, “Jose, you, Eleanor and Lorraine argue and fight more than these children, but I trust you. You do not have a heart that would harm. You have been better to me than my sons.”

Patrick broke down and held his head down and cried.

Brenda was shocked.

She slowly heard Patrick cry out in pain and turned to look at him.

Michael and Thomas turned and hugged Patrick.

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Dr. Ralph saw that Brenda was shocked.

Shirley did not know what to do.

She peeped around in Patrick’s face and looked at him.

She thought, “I never seen grandpa cry.”

Brenda patted Patrick on his back.

Brittany was standing by the door and she was looking at Patrick and wondered about his sons.

Patrick reached the envelope to Brenda.

Brenda said, “No Patrick. You do it.”

Brenda took his handkerchief out of his breast pocket.

Jose was taking his handkerchief out of his pocket to give to Patrick.

Patrick wiped his face.

He stood for a moment and looked at Jose and said, shaking reached the envelope to Jose.

He said, “This is not only our Christmas gift to you but also our heart felt thank you.”

Emilou was standing by the fireplace where she and Shirley were playing a card game on the table.

She was peeping at the envelope.

Jose took the envelope from the shaking hand of Patrick.

Jose said, “Thank you.”

Emilou waited for a minute.

She yelled, “Open it! I want to know what it is.”

Gen looked across at Emilou and said, “Me too Emilou.”

Emilou looked at Gen.

Jose looked from Patrick to Emilou.

Emilou stared at Jose.

Alicia said, “Emilou be quiet.”

Emilou frowned and looked at Alicia.

Gen said, “Alicia you better leave this lawyer along.”

Steven looked at Gen and then Emilou, whose face was frowned up at Alicia.

Steven wondered about Emilou.

He thought, “This little girl had decided who she wanted to marry and felt he was not good enough for her and she poured out her hate for Nadine and she knew how to argue at Nadine. She is going to be someone great. She is going to need a husband that is going to be strong enough to help her.”

Alicia looked at Emilou and said, “Straighten up your face little missy.”

Emilou burst out with a laugh.

Alicia looked at Emilou sternly and said, Huh.”

Gen laughed.

Steven said, “I have to here for her. I have to be here for both of them. God used these people to bring us out of certain poverty and HE lifted us up and made us somebody. Emilou knows that. I don’t believe she will forget that.”

Jose slowly opened the envelope.

Brittany was trying to peep.

Jose read the piece of paper.

Jose began to weep and shake.

Brenda was hugging Patrick around his neck.

Brittany looked at Jose and wondered what the paper said.

Susan and Georgette walked in and saw Patrick reach the envelope to Jose.

They wondered what the paper said.

Jose grabbed Patrick and hugged him.

Brenda hugged Jose.

Jose looked at Brenda and threw his other arm around her neck.

Thomas and Michael hugged threw their arms around somebody.

Shirley was leaning her head all the way trying to read the paper.

Jose walked over to Eleanor and they hugged and cried.

Everyone was looking and wanted to know what the paper said.

Emilou walked over and was peeping at the paper.

Jose stopped hugging Eleanor.

Nathan was wondering that it was bigger than a hundred dollars.

Jose stood and exhaled.

Alvin and Claressa were interested.

Jose began to read the paper.

He said, “Jose you have been a trusted worker, friend and confidant. You have rescued this family on many occasions and never complained about going above your job duties. You have used wisdom and great business skills in running this household of one hundred workers. You have budgeted this household expenses. You have been here when we in Europe and watched over all the renovations of this house. You respect the workers and work on a personal level to help resolve their problems. We take your personal opinion with great respect and your advise we do take in consideration. Therefore, we offer you a year off work with full pay and round trip transportation for you and a companion to Europe to spend a year overseas…”

Nathan said, “Sweet deal.”

Hal said, “Damn.”

Gen looked at Hal and said, “Hot damn”

Hal looked at Gen and grinned and nodded his head.

Dan had tipped through the billiards to get a drink and saw Brittany and Susan and Georgette standing by the doors.

He walked up to the parlor and stood in the door and listened.

Jose read looked over the paper.

Dan grinned and looked at Jose.

Eleanor said, “There’s more.”

Michael and Bruce were trying to read the paper.

Michael said, “Yeah.”

Bruce nodded.

Jose said, “We could not think of any one more desiring. Upon your return, we offer you the position of Hospital administrator of the Stith General Hospital.”

Gen cried out and rushed to Jose.

Bruce said looked around at everyone and said, “I agree. Brothers and sister?”

Percy stood forward and said, “I agree.”

Thomas said, “I agree.”

Michael said, “I agree.”

They looked at Shirley.

Shirley was standing and looking at them.

Michael said, “Heifer.”

Brenda did not say anything she peeped at Shirley.

Shirley laughed and said, “I’m joking. Yes Jose.”

She ran to Jose and hugged him about his neck.

Jose said, “I accept both offers. The trip to Europe and the position of hospital administrator when I return.”

Everyone clapped.

Shirley said, “Let me be the first to shake your hand and welcome you on.”

Jose was crying.

The boys fell in line.

Percy shook Jose’s hand.

Bruce followed and shook Jose’s hand.

Thomas shook Jose’s hand and then Michael shook Jose’s hand.

Brittany jumped and looked around.

Dr. Ralph looked at Brittany and nodded his head.

He though, “If I had not seen them myself, I would never believe they acted on protocol the way they did. I am shocked. Even Michael, like he rule.”

Jose said, “When can I go?”

Eleanor said, “The first ship is in March.”

Eleanor said, “Momma. Daddy.”

Jose said, “The only person I can think of to take with me is Briana, but I missed her today. I went to her house and there was no one there.”

Nathan stared at Jose.

Stephen looked at Nathan.

Brittany and Susan and Georgette said, “Briana.”

Jose looked at them.

They did not say anything else.

Stephen said, “Nathan.”

Eleanor looked at Stephen and then Nathan.

Patrick said, “Michael, Bruce, Thomas and Percy. Where is Shirley?”

Patrick pretended to be overlooking Shirley.

Shirley knew it was their Christmas gift he was about to announce.

She said, “Grandpa!”  
Everyone laughed.

Patrick said, “I was joking.”

Shirley looked at Patrick and said, “Ha. Ha.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley and laughed.

He did not know she had a sense of humor.

Dan said, “Congratulations Jose.”

Jose said, “Thank you Dan.”

Jose said, “Who will you have to take my place, Nadine?”

Emilou said, “Not that woman.”

Everyone looked at Emilou.

Stephen peeped around Bryce to look at Emilou.

He said, “You still got some bitterness in you.”

Emilou shrugged her shoulders and said, “I’m a little kid.”

Brenda looked at Emilou.

Patrick said, “Robert will come back from the rest stop and takeover as butler. He will train Maureen to run the rest stop. He has complete confidence in her. I should not say anything, but William and Wyonna will return to retire and move to Paris to live. They will rent their house to college professors and come back to visit they say every two years.”

Gen said, “This is wonderful news. We know people in Paris and Philadelphia. When will Meredith and Vivienne leave for France. In the spring?”

Brenda said, “Dr. Charles is counting down. He said the first ship sailing is what they will be on. I wonder, if they are getting married here or wait and marry in France?”

Gen said, “Oh both places. Have fun with it.”

Brenda looked at Patrick and said, “We got a telegram from Meredith, Monica and everyone in Philadelphia...”

Stephen looked at Brenda.

Dr. Ralph looked at Stephen.

Brenda said, “They all went to Meredith and Felipe for Christmas Eve and had a seafood feast plus a roasted goose and dressing. They were stuff and could not move. Meredith said Dr. Woodson was to deliver the Christmas message at his church and then go to work. He won’t be called a heathen.”

Gen said, “They sound like they had fun.”

Brenda said, “Apparently Felipe and Charles must be good cooks because they cooked the French way.”

Patrick mumble and said, “I don’t cook any kind of way.”

Bryce laughed.

Shirley said, “What about Margaret.”

Gen said, “Shopper.”

Brenda looked at Gen.

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “I mean Margaret, Earle and baby Earle.”

Everybody laughed.

Brenda said, “I should not say anything. But Margaret will return in the spring with Earle and baby Earle.”

Gen said, “With all that hair”

She looked at Michael and said, “I’m sorry Michael and Thomas.”

Thomas just looked at Gen.

Michael shook his head.

Everyone laughed.

Brenda said, “Margaret is coming to declare Earle Jr.’s citizenship and register to attend college.”

Shirley was mumbling and said, “I don’t understand.”

Eleanor said, “That means you better put in your last order of Parisian dresses until you start going over there. Or have Margaret to find you trusteed people to shop and send the clothes to you. I need to put in my order for champagne and have Margaret bring that with them.”

Claressa said, “That champagne was wonderful.”

Shirley said, “Well momma what about your jewelry shop?’

Eleanor said, “I may have to make a trip to Europe once a year to buy my jewelry.”

Shirley said, “You can buy my dresses.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley and said, “You better go and buy your own dresses.”

Claressa and Alicia laughed.

Shirley looked at Alicia.

Alicia said, “But she was funny.”

Eleanor said, “The new ships take a week off of travel time.”

Claressa said, “I can’t wait to get on board in March.”

Jose looked at Claressa.

Percy jumped up and said, “Ships!!!!!”

Eleanor looked at Percy.

Patrick looked at Percy.

Brenda laughed.

Eleanor said, “I commissioned another ship three years ago. It will sail to America in the fall. We will decorate it here and it will be ready next year.”

Bruce looked at Eleanor and said, “Momma why didn’t you tell me about this ship? Especially since I will be over the ships.”

Eleanor said, “Because you are a kid. Go and stand over there with the other kids.”

Bruce looked at Eleanor and walked to Percy.

They began to whisper.

Dr. Ralph looked at them and thought, “From the little bit I have seen you better shut up.”

Patrick said, ‘For the last bit of Christmas gifts.”

Brenda said, “You mean we are not heathens.”

Gen hollered.

Brenda said, “That’s what that damn…”

Patrick said, “Brenda. He does not need to come into a Christmas celebration.”

Hal said, “Here. Here.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Hal.

Patrick said, “Family, especially Michael and Thomas we are going to Africa in the spring and go on safaris.”

Michael and Thomas stood and could not move.

Michael said, “They got animals.”

Patrick said, “We are taking the smaller ship that is fast and we can get away.”

Thomas turned and walked in front of Patrick and stared at him.

Patrick said, “Boy you better move. Eleanor.”

Eleanor was looking at Thomas and tried to figure out what he was about to do.

Shirley was mumbling and said, “Wait. I am in school. We all are in school.”

Eleanor said, “We know that. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Because your grandpa and grandma are getting older.”

Denise was looking strange.

Nathan toughed her elbow.

Brenda raised up both hands and said, “I don’t want to go. They might not know slavery is over.”

Patrick pulled Brenda’s hands down.

Thomas said, “That’s what I wanted to know grandpa, whether you are putting grandma so she could be a slave.”

Thomas started crying.

Patrick grabbed Thomas and said, “No Thomas. I will never do that. Your grandma is safe.”

Brenda looked at a disturbed Thomas and said “Thomas I will stay on the ship. And I am carrying my famous shotgun.”

Thomas was shaking.

Dr. Ralph looked at Thomas.

Brenda rubbed Thomas head.

Thomas looked at Eleanor.

Brenda saw him.

Eleanor said, “Thomas, I saw you look at me like they could keep me. You are not that far behind me. One more thing.”

Thomas was holding onto Patrick and turned his head from Eleanor.

Eleanor started fussing.

Jose said, “Africa.”

Hal said, “Africa.”

Gary said, “Go ahead.”

Nathan and Denise said, “Yeah.”

Stephen and Bryce looked at them.

Gen said, “I am going. I am excited.”

Shirley said, “Wait. I have the royal ball in the spring. And my graduation. Are you all leaving me here alone?”

No one said anything.

Shirley said, “Grandma, you leaving your necklace and earrings?”

Gen turned to Bryce and hollered.

Bryce said, “Count me in. If Gen is going.”

Brenda turned and looked at Bryce with her mouth opened.

Gen looked at Bryce.

Stephen said, “I want to go but I can’t speak about Monica.”

Dr. Ralph thought, “Give that one up.”

Shirley said, “Grandma?”

Brenda said, “Shirley.”

Shirley looked at Brenda.

Patrick said, “Robert, Bethany and Robert Jr are going along with Hutch. So we will have our own medical person. We will be gone six months. They have renovated one of the smaller ship with speed. Boy I tell you that ship can go.”

Bruce stared at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Bruce don’t look at me like that. I don’t have to tell you nothing. You are not running anything right now. And you keep it up I’ll make sure you won.t.”

Eleanor said, “Bruce stop. Daddy is not playing with you. He means what he is saying.”

Patrick said, “We are making the staterooms larger with their separate baths. We advertised the safaris. The ship is full. That is our expedition ship. Most of the people are big game hunters.”

Michael shook his head

Dr. Ralph looked at Michael.

Michael yelled, “What they hunting? And what they are putting on the ship with us?’

Everyone looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “The governments of the countries tell them what they can hunt. None of the animals will be alive. They will be stored in the bottom of the ship.”

Shirley said, “That’s not safe. Where will our food be stored?”

Eleanor rolled her eyes at Shirley.

Shirley looked at Claressa and said, “I can’t use my title then?”

Alvin and Claressa shook their heads for no.

Shirley said, “Grandma, what about you and grandpa anniversary ball?”

Brenda said, “We have our celebration on the ship. And our Fourth of July celebration. We will leave Africa the last week of September and get back her the last week of October. I am enjoying this long traveling to fair away places.”

Patrick said, “I want our own personal security.”

Hal raised his hand.

Nathan looked and eased his hand up and cut his eyes at Denise.

Patrick said, ”We will talk before the trip.”

Denise looked at Nathan and saw his hand up.

She said in shock, “Nathan!”

Nathan said, “Baby I am sorry, but I always wanted to go. You will be in college.”

Shirley said, “The photographer.”

Brenda said, “We have to take two workers to do our laundry, because that is something that I just won’t do. We have to find two workers.

Susan and Dan raised their hands.

Patrick looked at them.

Brenda said, “Dan you are a cook not a maid.”

Dan said, “I will be a maid and a cook. You need to know what you are eating too.”

Michael said, “Lamb chops for me. I know them.”

Patrick said, “We got the best cold storage system in the world. I am really excited. We got those life boats everywhere and this new fuel.”

Nathan said, “Dr. Ralph you’re not going?”

Dr. Ralph said, “No. I’ll be in America with Lorraine.”

Michael said, “Dr. Ralph we have to talk about Lorraine. I am not satisfied.”

Eleanor said, “Little boy shut up. We have talked to you about that. There is nothing else we can do for now.”

Brittany peeped at Michael.

Thomas finally turned and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor squinted her eyes at Thomas.

Thomas walked towards Bruce and Percy and then turned and went to Eleanor and hugged her.

Percy said, “Grandpa we have our big May Day celebration at the academy and all the military come out.”

Alvin said, “That’s right. The capitol has made the list of the military that will be attending. It is big. The congressional and military and captains of industries and their families attend for their children and grandchildren. We will be in India.”

Gen screamed and said, “India. That’s where my late husband’s last post was.”

Alvin said, “I know. It is an honor to serve behind him.”

Claressa grinned.

Brenda said, “Some kind of way, you all will miss two months of school.”

Gen said, “Brittany and Georgette you all did not volunteer to go?”

Brittany said, “We will be in nursing school.”

Steven raised his hand and said, “I will be back in medical college in the fall and Alicia will be finishing her nursing degree with her graduation this summer.”

Emilou said, “I will be finishing second grade.”

Thomas stepped around Eleanor and looked at Emilou and said, “How much mouth you got I thought you would be…”

Eleanor said, “Shut up boy.”

Claressa wanted to laugh but bit her lips and held her head down.

Gen looked at Brenda.

Benda lifted up her eyebrows at Gen.

Bryce saw Gen and Brenda.

Patrick said, “We only have five rooms for our staff.”

Brenda said, “I told you six rooms.”

Patrick looked at Brenda and exhaled.

Patrick said, “We have two owners’ suite.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I know they are spectacular.”

There was a knock on the front door.

Dan peeped and said, “I’ll get it.”

Dan walked to the door and opened it.

A messenger handed Dan a note and left.

Dan looked at the Messenger and walked to the parlor.

The envelope was addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Stith.

Patrick looked at Dan.

Dan reached the envelope to Patrick.

Patrick said, “Eleanor and Brenda do all the decorating of the suites.”

Brenda said, “I enjoy it. I have sample of fabrics in my office. That is what I use my office for.”

Eleanor said, “Momma and daddy.”

Patrick was reading the note and stopped and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “I was going to talk to you two later, but I rather say it now so that the children won’t think I am holding anything back from them.”

Patrick was concerned and said, “What is it Eleanor?”

Dr. Ralph saw the concern on Patrick’s face.

Dr. Ralph turned to Eleanor.

Brenda looked at Patrick and then at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “I have started to expand the railroad from Philadelphia to Chicago.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “I made that decision a few months ago and sent engineers there to map out the best route. They came back last week and gave the best route which was flat from Philadelphia to Chicago and we can be a supplier train service with two cars for passengers. I talked to the Senator Richardson while he was here and he said he would help. The tracks can be laid in six months and the extra train cars I ordered will be ready then along with all the fuel and personnel. I just need someone to manage the trains from Chicago back to Philadelphia.”

Hal said, “I can do that. Promote me.”

Eleanor looked at Hal and he shut up.

Eleanor said, “I have contacted business that wants to expand to the east coast. I have gotten numerous positive responses.”

Brenda looked up into the face of Patrick.

Patrick was so thrilled he wanted to jump and screamed.

He looked down at the note and kept reading it.

Percy said, “You should have consulted me momma.”

He jumped and ran out the parlor.

Eleanor only had her sherry glass in her hand and decided not to throw it but continued to sip her sherry.

Alvin and Bryce fell out.

Patrick looked at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor, with all of my heart I am so damn proud of you. You think and take action. You are a wonderful person and an excellent business woman.”

Patrick and Brenda hugged Eleanor.

Emilou clapped and said, “Thank you Miss Eleanor.”

Everyone looked at Emilou.

Eleanor wiped her tears and said, “Foe what Emilou?”

Emilou said, “For showing little girls like me how to become business women.”

Eleanor hugged Emilou.

Patrick said shook the piece of paper and envelope and said, “This note is from Pastor Walker. He wants me to come and preach Sunday, when Commander Washington will be back.”

Bryce, Gen and Stephen hollered.

Brenda said, “Huh. Calling me a heathen.”

Patrick said, “I’m going to do it.”

Brenda turned and looked at Patrick and said, “What you say Patrick?”

Patrick was thinking and hitting the note in his hand.

Nathan said, “I have to tell you all this and it will ruin your Christmas.”

Patrick looked at Nathan.

Brenda said, “Then don’t tell us.”

Patrick said, “Brenda.”

Nathan said, “How many workers are here?”

Jose said, “Seventeen.”

Patrick said, “Nathan you need them?”

Nathan said everyone.

Patrick looked at Jose and said, “Where are they?”

Jose said, “All of them are in the house.”

Patrick said, “Get them and bring them in here.”

Brenda was looking at Nathan and then she cut her eyes at Denise.

Denise turned her head.

Eleanor went and sat.

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Stephen drank his scotch.

Brenda knew something was wrong.

She walked out the parlor and went to the liquor table.

She filled her glass with whiskey.

Stephen walked behind Brenda and brought the scotch bottle back with him.

Brenda looked at Stephen and then the scotch bottle.

Stephen looked at Brenda.

She said, “You know?’

Stephen looked at Brenda and walked back to the parlor.

The workers walked through the hall to the parlor.

Stephen said, “Excuse me.”

He passed them with the scotch bottle.

He walked to his place by the fireplace and poured his glass full.

Patrick looked at Stephen.

Bryce moved his glass to Stephen.

Eleanor said, “Steven I am going to use that other train station design for the new one. I need to give you a check for it or meet me in town tomorrow for the cash.”

Emilou said, “Cash.”

She looked at Eleanor and grinned.

Steven looked at Emilou.

Alicia looked at Steven and then Emilou.

Steven said, “I’ll talk to you Miss Eleanor without Emiou.”

The workers were looking at this little girl who put Nadine to shame.

Peter walked into the hall.

He left Nadine in their room.

Nadine had been going outside to smoke most of the afternoon.

Jose walked and stood by the door.

Nathan was counting and looking at the workers.

He said, “Where is Miss Brenda?’

Brenda said, “Coming.”

She squeezed by the workers and went in the parlor and sat in her chair near the fireplace.

Nathan said, “This is everybody.”

Patrick looked and said, “But Lorraine.”

Nathan said, “That’s alright. Last night beginning at midnight there was a ferocious gunfight in town. It lasted until daybreak.”

Everyone looked at Nathan.

Nathan said, “I wanted to tell you all so you want hear rumors. The mob came to the jail, I don’t know why unless they wanted to kill me or the deputy. Five heavily armed persons and one was at the back gate with their horses. They kicked in the backdoor. There was only one prisoner that was Maureen’s husband.

Nadine eased to the front of the house and stood by Peter to listen.

Peter looked at Nadine.

The workers in the hall looked at Nadine.

Nathan said, “Upon kicking in the backdoor. The deputy shot the third person who fell back and shot the fourth person. Then…”

Nathan said, “I don’t think the children should be in here.’

Alicia said, “I don’t think I should be in here. Come on Emilou.”

Shirley said, “Me neither.”

Brittany said, “Neither me.”

Alicia said, “Come Emilou.”

Emilou said, “No.”

Alicia clawed at Emilou.

Steven was shocked and jumped back.

Emilou jumped back and was scared.

Alicia snatched her.

Emilou looked up at Alicia and said, “Girl I was only playing.”

Gen hit the wall.

Denise looked at Emilou.

Peter said, “Nadine move over there.”

Nadine said, “Why? she already hate me.”

Peter turned his back to Nadine.

Dan looked at Peter then at Nadine.

Shirley, Alicia, Brittany and Emilou walked out the parlor.

Emilou rolled her eyes at Nadine and snatched her head off.

Alicia did not speak to Nadine.

She and Shirley were talking.

The workers looked at Nadine.

The worker, Stephen stood and looked at Emilou and then Nadine.

Peter looked at Emilou and watched she and Alicia walk by and said nothing.

Peter told Nadine to change her attitude towards the children.

Nadine refused to change.

Mellissa looked at Nadine.

No one knew why Nadine hated the children.

Mellissa said, “She hate those children because her niece went back to her first husband who was black. He kept their son. Her niece married a white man a few years later and she had those two girls by him and he died. Her first husband, the black man heard that her husband died, and he went back to her several years ago and they were building a life together when they died. Many people said, they were murdered.”

Jose, Dan and the other workers listened to Mellissa.

Stephen said, “I would not be surprise if it were Nadine.”

No one ever said anything to Nadine.

Shirley, Alicia and Emilou went to the sitting room.

Brittany went to her room.

Nathan said, “Anyone else?”

Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael were quiet and still.

Eleanor yelled, “Get your a\*\*.”

The boys jumped up and ran before Eleanor finished her sentence.

Gary walked out behind the boys.

Nathan said, “The fifth person was knocked out by the deputy. The deputy ran outside and the person waiting with the horses jumped on the horse as an absolute professional. The deputy ran and shot the person. The person eventually fell off the horse. I got there a little after the person fell off the horse…”

Nathan looked at Patrick, “There was a shoot out at your train Patrick.”

Patrick was stunned and mumbled.

Dr. Ralph looked at Patrick.

Brenda touched her chest.

Jose looked at Brenda.

Nathan said, “Me and the deputy mounted our horses and rode to the train. Your preacher ran behind us.”

Brenda said, “Walker?”

Nathan said, “The one who married me and Denise. There were six men at the train…”

Patrick said, “What? Why?’

Nathan said, “Apparently they were trying to steal the train.”

Gen said, “Who was going to steer the train and where were they trying to go?’

Nathan said, “The army has the two survivors. Also, last night…”

Mellissa said, “This Christmas morning.”

Nathan said, “They attacked the people at the small city and to their surprise the governor was there and some military troops. The military caught seventeen mobsters and the two workers, Peter and his wife. Seven mobsters have died from their gunshot wounds. The governor, his wife and their workers are fine. But Mike and John were shot. The military medic attended to them and said, “They would live. They are trying to decide whether to send Mike and John back here to go to the hospital in the capitol or send them to Philadelphia. Patrick, I know the military has to use your train to transport the dead. I believe they are going to take them to the capitol instead of bring them here and then transporting them back to the capitol. How many of them will be dead by Saturday when the train arrives there I don’t know, but I do know the military will be there.”

Dan thought, “I could have been in that gunfight. I pray they be ok.”

Roger said, “Nathan you knew who these people are?”

Nathan said, “Some of them yes. The military has the bodies. One of the men that was killed at the train station was the one Eleanor you told to leave the train station and don’t come back.”

Eleanor nodded her head.

Nathan said, “Out of the six that attacked the train…”

Patrick was stunned and Brenda was drinking.

Dr. Ralph looked at Brenda.

He wanted to go and take her glass of whiskey, but he knew he had to fight her.

Nathan, said, “Dan.”

Everyone looked at Dan.

Dan stepped into the door of the parlor and peeped at Nathan.

Nathan said, “One of the dead at the train was your nasty neighbor. We went to house this morning and told his wife to go and get his body and be out of this town and not to go to the capitol at daybreak.”

Dan said, “So his house is vacant.”

Nathan said, “Whoever wants the house can have it.”

Mellissa had to think for minute and she jumped off the wall and said, “I want it.”

Nathan shook his head and said, “Will you can have it. You just have to the preacher bless it.”

Mellissa said, “Why?”

Nathan said, “This is the mob that has the double horseshoe that are evil.”

Mellissa said, “I’ll bless my own house.”

She looked at Dan and said, “Hello neighbor.”

The workers looked at Dan and Mellissa.

Nathan stood for a minute.

Patrick said, “Nathan continue.”

Nathan said, “The person in the jail that was knocked out was crawling out was heavily armed. Craig hollered for the person to go and get the cell key and come and let him out. The person shot at him twice and missed.”

Susan said, “Shame.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Susan and thought, “She suppose to be one of them that is taking care of Lorraine.”

The towns people ran into the jail and knocked the person out again and tied them up. It was Samantha.

Brenda had the glass to her mouth to drink another swallow.

She got sick and was wasting the whiskey.

Susan ran and got a napkin and took the glass from Brenda.

Gen stood and could not say anything.

Eleanor sat and looked at Nathan.

Nathan said, “It gets worst. The other men killed at the train station were the last two security men that were here. They were a part of the attack on this house. Spencer and Leon saw them. That’s why they tried to be sure to kill Leon and Spencer. But God shared them.”

Mellissa yelled, “That’s it.”

Susan said, “What?”

Mellissa said, “Why Samantha always acted like she could not understand.”

Theresa said, “And she did not want to leave and visit Spencer.”

Mellissa said, “God has ways of revealing the truth. Spencer was too good for her.”

Eleanor was getting sick.

Roger said, “Wait a minute.”

He went into his pocket and pulled a gold pin that was a double horseshoe.

Nathan reached for the pin and walked to Roger and said, “Where did you get this pin?”

Roger said, “When and john left Jose had me to clean out the re-modeled barn and it was in the room that Blaine stayed in.”

Nathan reached the pin back to Roger.

Roger said, “Keep it. I don’t want the devil’s thing.”

Nathan kept the pin and began to walk back to Denise.

Many of the women workers were jealous of Denise, because she one of the better men and got married.

Patrick said, “I paid them for plotting to kill me, my family and my workers. I used my trains to transport them to be treated for their self-inflicted wounds to gain my trust and sympathy and came back here to lay in wait until they had planned the attack on my train and my workers and friends. When they got ready to execute their plan then they disappeared.”

Mellissa said, “Did they leave anything beside that pin?”

Roger said, “I didn’t see anything else.”

Mellissa said, “I’ll go out there in the morning so I can see.

Nathan said, “I could never figure out how the mob knew Lorraine and that she was on the train and on her way to New York. They followed her and threaten her to join them and spy on the Stiths. Lorraine would not. They choke her and threw her in one of the rivers to die.”

Brenda covered her head.

Mellissa stood and look.

Susan said, “So that is how they knew each of us and would follow and kill us.”

Nathan said, “Yes. But what has happened there was a nurse at the hospital that Lorraine was in that was poisoning her. She was arrested. The morning Dr. Ralph got on the train to bring Lorraine home. The man that tried to kill Lorraine arrived at the hospital.

Dr. Ralph was shaking.

Nathan said, “The sheriff killed him. He was the second in command. Dr. Ralph are you ready to know who the head man was?”

Dr. Ralph looked at Nathan.

Nathan said, “The dumb doctor that was dating Nurse Madeline. He was not a doctor but came into the hospital a year ago and everyone thought Dr. Wade hired him. He was arrested and the governor sent a special group of law enforcement agents to go to Philadelphia and get him.”

Theresa yelled, “You mean to tell me that the doctors aren’t real doctors. That is the reason we are sick and dying?”

Nathan looked at a distraught Theresa and said, “Try to go to another doctor.”

Nathan said, “Patrick.”

Patrick looked at Nathan.

Nathan said, “Mobster five worked as an engineer on your trains for two years and faked his death.”

Patrick said, “Wayne Smith.”

Nathan said, “Yes.”

Patrick said, “I couldn’t find no one to pay his death benefits to.”

Georgette said, “Me. I have to pay for nursing school in January.”

Nathan said, “So far five of the men that are dead in the small city worked on your trains for two years and disappeared when Wayne Smith disappeared. Dr. Ralph do remember a Nurse Sharon.”

Eleanor was thinking and said, “She was a nurse at the hospital.”

Nathan said, “Yes. She was in charge of all medical operations. She hung on because she was dating Hutch.”

Dr. Ralph said, “She is extremely racist and tortured one of the black children at the hospital.”

Brenda uncovered her eye and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “She was fired but sat in the office for hours thinking it was ok and she was not fired.”

Nathan said, “Peter and his wife, because her brother was the one acting like a doctor at the hospital.”

Nathan looked around at the workers and said, “I know some of you may not want to hear this. The six person at the train shootout was Bridgette, She is dead.”

Everyone was in a daze.

Nathan said, “Jose I am sorry.”

Jose turned and looked at Nathan.

Brenda looked at Jose.

Patrick was still in a fog.

Dan frowned and looked at Nathan then Jose.

Peter wanted to hear this about Jose, so he walked up some.

Nathan said, “The person that was at the jail and rode the horse as an expert was Briana.”

Theresa said, “I told yall. Nobody wanted to listen to me.”

Mellissa said, “Veronica and Ruth said it to.”

Dan looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Nathan did you shoot Briana?”

Nathan said, “I did not, but if I were there, I would have shot her.”

Jose said, “Thank you. She was not home this morning, because she was already at home in hell.”

Jose turned and walked out.

Peter and Dan stood with their mouths opened.

Steven said, “How can you live, love or trust anybody now?”

Ethan said, “You have to trust JESUS. HE will lead you.”

Nathan said, “Briana’s parents’ house is up. Does anyone need a house? If not, you can rent it out.”

Stephen, the worker said, “I’ll take it. I need to have a place to live instead of that rooming house. I can live in one room and rent the other room out.”

Gen said, “But Nathan what were they going to do?”

Nathan said, “The governor is working on that.”

Eleanor said, “They were living under our roof and spying on us. I want to know how Bruce got involved with them that they were telling him I did not read his messages or letters but burned them. Betrayed by murderers.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor do you want to expand the railroad. It will be more of this.”

Eleanor said, “Daddy after my own brothers tried to kill all of my children to hollow me out and lose my mind to destroy the railroad and shipping businesses that help people build their businesses and employ more people and the railroad that get goods to people and give many people a job. No daddy. I will not quit. I expect your God to help me and the workers to be safe and prosperous.”

Nathan said, “They believe they cut off the legs of the mobster. But they found evidence that the next group is being trained to ride and shoot like Briana. The government raid them and take the land and they move onto another deserted area. They thought they were going to take over the small city. They were going to kill all of those people. They did not know the military was there. The governor will develop that land in the spring. They had water, fish, good hunting. They could stay there for years undetected. So we have to watch out because in the next ten years is when the government is expecting them to re-surface.”

Brenda was thinking, “That is what Leon told Beverly. The ones he knew was involved in the mob that was here. GOD help Leon. Thank YOU for healing Spencer and sending him home to his family. If he is one of them expose him and take his life.”

Patrick said, “All of those security men I brought out of the field to be here to protect us were all the mob?”

Patrick turned and looked at the workers.

He reached for Brenda’s hand.

Eleanor looked at her parents.

Brenda stood next to Patrick and Patrick said, “I am very sorry for putting all of you in danger. I hate that I brought…”

Brenda said, “No. We.”

Patrick said, “We pray for you all everyday.”

Brenda nodded her head.

Patrick said, “If we had any idea that such evil was around us I would have never brought you all here to work.”

Dan said, “Mr. and Mrs. Stith. This life. I never thought I would move into a nice neighborhood and that type of evil was there. We never know. But I do believe that God brings all evil to an end. They executed a plan that God destroyed. God does that in our lives everyday.”

Mellissa said, “Eleanor where is this new train station?’

Eleanor said, “Chicago.”

Mellissa said, “Oh yeah. The mob strong hold, but the government got them bound. If you need to hire someone there. I am from Chicago. I would love to go back home.”

Dan said, “You just got that house.”

Mellissa said, “I’ll rent it out.”

Hal said, “Calvin is from Chicago too.”

Dr. Ralph was numb, he said. “I need to see Calvin.

Hal said, “Mr. Stith I need a carriage.”

Patrick looked and said, “Roger can you get Hal a carriage with two horses. He looked and said Mellissa can you get Hal and Dr. Ralph at least three or four blankets and quilts.”

Mellissa walked to the linen closet and got four quilts and handed them to Roger.

Roger put them in the carriage.

Everyone went back to work.

Nathan said, “Sorry. Merry Christmas.”

Patrick shook Nathan’s hand and said, “Thank you.”

Brenda said, “Theresa can you look in my office and bring Nathan and Denise’s coats?’

Theresa walked and got their coats and walked back.

Nadine turned and walked to the billiards room and kept going to the kitchen.

She joined Jose washing all the dishes.

He washed and she dried the dishes.

Dan and Peter looked at Jose and Nadine.

Patrick walked Nathan and Denise to the door.

Nathan picked up the loaded plate that Jose made.

Patrick said, “Nathan you and Denise have first class accommodations on all our trains. Have a nice honeymoon.”

Nathan looked at Denise and said, “Please consider me for one of those security positions.”

Patrick said, “We will.”

Nathan and Denise left.

Dr. Ralph was escorted by Mellissa.

He went into Lorraine’s suite and checked her vitals and walked out.

Dr. Ralph was passing the sitting room.

He stopped and said, I am going to check on a couple of people. Emilou you were delightful…”

She bowed her head.

Dr. Ralph said, “Have a wonderful holiday. Shirley tell your grandparents I may not be back tonight but keep an eye out for Lorraine.”

Shirley said, “Yes sir.”

Percy and Bruce were on the floor looking at map.

They turned on their side and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Michael and Thomas jumped off the floor and walked Dr. Ralph through the house to the back of the kitchen.

Gen, Bryce, Stephen, Claressa and Alvin were in the parlor.

Dr. Ralph looked in the kitchen and saw all the workers were quiet.

He said, “Thank you Mellissa.”

Mellissa said, “Doctor I know I should not ask…”

She shook her head.

Dr. Ralph looked at her.

Mellissa walked away.

He looked at Thomas and Michael and said, “You two enjoy the rest of your Christmas.”

Michael said, “Is Josiah’s baby coming tonight?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I think so.”

Thomas was looking outside and said, “It’s not snowing. But grandpa say you have to be careful on the roads.

Dr. Ralph looked outside and said, “Good night.”

He walked out the door.

Roger and Hal were talking.

Dr. Ralph thought, “It is cold out here. I was homeless and endured colder weather than this. Strange.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Roger and said, “Good night.”

Roger said, “Good night.”

He turned and ran back to the stables.

Dr. Ralph looked around the backyard. It was well designed and well kept.

He sat in the carriage and covered up with two quilts.

Dr. Ralph put his black doctor’s bag in his lap.

Hal rode fast out the backyard.

They saw Nathan and Denise standing on the porch talking to Patrick and Brenda.

Nathan and Denise ran to the carriage and sped behind Hal.

Hal said, “This is only my second time being here. I don’t want to get lost.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I am watching because I don’t want you to try to get me back tomorrow when you all are leaving.”

Eleanor went to her office and got the two last designs Steven made.

Eleanor said, ”We will have a lodge in the small city and I believe this designed for a one story structure is great. We have to pay you for this design. I love this design you created for the southern train station will work better in Chicago. I have bought the land. This train station has to be much bigger that the rest of the train stations. Meet me at the bank in the morning. We can sign the contracts at the banks.

Steven said, “Yes ma am. I think I need to take Emilou home. I believe she misses momma and daddy a lot today.”

Eleanor said, “Today has been aa unusual holiday.”

Steven said, “I believe I will take them for breakfast at the restaurant. I guess the manager will own it now.”

Eleanor said, “I believe you are right Steven. But I don’t believe he will have the money to keep it open.”

Eleanor looked at Steven.

Steven was thinking and he looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor grinned.

She said, “I really don’t want to go to town in the midst of all of that killing.”

Steven said, “Miss Eleanor the banker knows you. You can write me a check.”

Eleanor grinned and said, “Thank you Steven.”

She wrote Steven a check for twenty- five hundred dollars.

Steven took the check and sat in the chair with the check in his hand.

He cried and said, “This is enough money to pay for the last two years of medical college and pay for the rest of this year for Alicia’s nursing school and for us to live off for the next two years. I am going to move to the capitol next year. Alicia will be here with Emilou. I don’t know where she will work. I think we have to move to the capitol.”

Eleanor was thinking about the small city.

Eleanor said, “Steven the small city has no medical help.”

Steven said, “What about Emilou, she has to be in school.”

Eleanor said, “Josiah was to be the teacher there, but he got a big promotion by the governor and will live in the capitol.”

Steven said, “I’ll talk to Alicia but only if we can get Emilou in school.”

Eleanor said, “Emilou is smart. Have you ever thought about sending her off to an academy until you and Alicia get settled?”

Steven looked at Eleanor and said, “Can you see Emilou at a private academy?”

Eleanor giggled and said, “She would be ruling everybody.”

We have nearly six months to come up with a plan, but housing is the big issue there.”

Eleanor said, “We need that lodge up. Steven will two hundred workers be enough to get that lodge up in by next fall hunting and fishing season.”

Steven said, “I would do Two hundred and fifty. The extra fifty to work on the details of the lodge.”

Eleanor said, “I need to work on that and the workers to build the rail from Philadelphia to Chicago.”

She and Steven walked up the hall and saw Dr. Ralph with his black doctor’s bag leaving with Michael and Thomas.

Steven walked through the billiards room and peeped in the sitting room and said, “Alicia. You and Emilou get our coats so we can leave. I want to get home before it get really dark on the snow covered roads.”

Eleanor said, “That’s right.”

Eleanor and Steven continued to walk to the parlor.

Patrick and Brenda stopped at the Christmas tree and looked at the decorations.

They looked at the hall and the decorations.

Brenda said, “Beverly did a good job decorating the house.”

Patrick said, “She said Leon told her about the ones he knew. I think most people were surprised at Brianna. I feel sorry for Jose.”

Brenda said, “I don’t.”

Patrick was shocked and said, “Brenda.”

Brenda said, “Jose will get over Briana. I like Brittany for him.”

Patrick said, “Stop it and get out his business. We got enough to resolve and live with.”

Brenda said, “Patrick, GOD is working. HE is revealing and uncovering things we did not existed against us. I feel like Eleanor. I am not going to let the evil of this world stop me from doing what GOD called me to do and I am not going to let the evil of this world stop me from enjoying my Christmas dance with my beloved husband of thirty- five years.”

Brenda grabbed Patrick’s hands and they began to dance by the Christmas tree.

Michael and Thomas were running back from the kitchen from escorting Dr. Ralph.

They saw Brenda and Patrick dancing by the Christmas tree.

Eleanor stepped back to see why Michael and Thomas had stopped by the parlor door.

She saw her mother and father dancing by the Christmas tree.

Michael ran pass Thomas and grabbed Eleanor’s hands and pulled her out the parlor and they began to waltz in the foyer.

Thomas ran to Gen and bowed before Gen and took her arm.

Gen looked back at Claressa and grinned.

Thomas led Gen to the foyer and they waltz.

Claressa peeped out the door and saw them dancing.

She hit Alvin’s arm.

Alvin stood and invited her to dance.

They danced out the parlor to the foyer.

Emilou was running in the sitting room and looked in the foyer.

She ran out the foyer and stood in the foyer and looked at them dancing.

She ran to the parlor and saw Steven, Bryce and Stephen watching them from the parlor door.

Emilou grabbed Steven’s hand and said, “Come on Steven and let’s dance.”

Shirley heard Emilou.

She and Alicia were playing cards.

Shirley leaned to the side and looked in the foyer and saw movement.

She stood and walked to the sitting room door.

Alicia looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “Come look.”

Alicia walked to the door and saw everyone dancing.

She giggled at Emilou and Steven.

Percy and Bruce jumped off the floor and walked in the foyer and stood by the parlor door and watched everyone dance.

Bruce looked at Shirley and watched how happy she was.

He walked to Shirley and invited her to dance.

He walked Shirley to the foyer.

Eleanor saw Bruce and began to cry.

Patrick and Brenda saw Bruce.

Patrick sniffed.

Brenda said, “The number of her days we don’t have control over. But to ask GOD to let her live a full life in the number of those days.”

Patrick turned his back to the other dancers and whispered in Brenda’s ears, “I know.”

Dan walked through the formal dining room to go to the parlor to get the eggnog tray and he stopped when he saw everyone dancing.

Theresa was walking to do the once over and make sure everything was in order.

She saw Dan stop.

She eased to Dan and stood behind him and peeped.

Dan looked at her.

She giggled.

Peter was looking around and walked in the formal dining room.

Theresa waved for Peter to come.

Peter saw Theresa and Dan standing in the doorway.

Peter walked up and peeped and saw everyone dancing.

He said, “You have to make yourself merry after this mess.”

Peter walked back to the kitchen.

He looked at Nadine and shook his head and cleaned up his work area.

When everyone finished dancing.

Percy said, “I want to play the piano for you all.”

Eleanor smiled at Percy.

Percy took her hand and walked to the music room.

Percy stood by the piano stool and waited for everyone to come and be seated.

Dan said to Theresa, “Percy can’t play the piano but they let him try. He loves music. Count Joseph worked with him everyday.”

Theresa giggled and said, “Some people can’t get it.”

She looked at Dan and said, “Let’s dance down to the parlor.”

Dan and Theresa danced to the parlor and began to clean it up.

They laughed.

Brenda and Patrick were the last to go to the music room.

Brenda said, “Patrick.”

Patrick and Brenda stopped and saw Dan and Theresa waltz to the parlor.

Patrick was still sad over Shirley.

Dan gathered the punch bowl and the cups and put them on the tray.

He walked down the foyer to go to the back hall into the kitchen.

Theresa was cleaning up the parlor.

Susan and Georgette and Brittany had retired for the day.

They were in the workers area eating rum balls and drinking eggnog.

They all were merry and talking about what happened in town.

Brittany said, “I don’t want to hear bad things on Christmas Day.”

Susan said, “You are right Brittany.”

Georgette said, “Lorraine looked pretty today.”

Jose was sitting down at his desk and heard Georgette talk about how pretty Lorraine looked.

He thought about the last time he saw Briana and how she was rushing away from him.

He shook his head.

Peter looked at Jose and walked pass him and patted him on his shoulder.

Jose came back to his senses.

Nadine was walking behind Peter and turned and walked to the workers’ area and sat at the next table.

Brittany looked at Nadine and said, “Nadine you feel better?”

Jose heard Brittany.

Nadine was still staring off in space.

She said, “I will make it Brittany.”

Brittany, Susan and Georgette turned around to talk.

Peter turned and looked back. He thought Nadine was behind him.

He walked back to the kitchen.

Jose pointed to the worker’s area.

Peter walked to the door of the worker’s area and heard Brittany ask Nadine how was she.

He heard Nadine say, “I’m a bad person. Because I don’t want to change. Not that I can’t but I just don’t want to.”

Peter stepped in the worker’s area and said, “Nadine come on.”

Nadine looked at Peter.

Peter gave Nadine a hard look.

Jose turned his head to look and hear what Peter and Nadine would say.

Peter stood and looked at Nadine.

He wondered how she felt in her heart.

Peter wanted to know she took that type of fussing from a child, that told the truth about her and exposed her to all of the people in the house and they will tell the rest of the workers.

He wondered why Nadine did not want to change and become a better person.

Peter thought, “She wears her hair the same way. She eats the same food. She dresses the same way. Eleanor was set to fire her, Ruth and some others when they did not want to attend Patrick and Brenda’s Anniversary Ball. What makes her think the way she lives is the best and can’t be any better. Lorraine was the only person she would listen to. I don’t know. I can’t live like this. The only thing Nadine does is drink and smoke. I want to add color to the house and she screamed at me. I can’t take anymore. Especially since she won’t talk to me.”

Peter stood and stared at Nadine.

Dan walked through the formal dining room with the eggnog punch bowl.

He saw Jose leaning back and listening.

Dan wondered who Jose was watching.

Dan looked around and saw the dishes were put in place.

He saw Peter’s cook area clean.

He thought, “Nadine.”

Peter thought, “The family will leave in May to be gone for six months. Jose will be in Europe for a year. Robert will be back. I can’t stand him. There is no need for cooks. Robert cooks for himself. Patrick wants to take three workers with him. He and Brenda will decide how many workers to leave at the house. I can save my money up and leave when they leave. I’ll go home and work at the college.”

They heard the piano.

Everyone looked.

Dan walked through the billiards room down to the music room.

Theresa was walking in front of Dan rushing to the music room.

Percy stood at the piano and waited everyone to sit.

Eleanor looked at Percy and sat.

She blinked, because Percy looked so much like Joseph.

Percy had a good presence.

Gen looked at Percy and nodded at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Gen and turned back to look at Percy.

They all knew he could not play the piano but he had a love for classic music.

Patrick and Brenda sat.

Everyone sat.

Emilou, Thomas and Michael sat on the floor.

Bruce, Thomas and Michael knew Percy had been practicing at the academy everyday.

No one wanted to hear him play the piano.

The instructors would eat early and rush out when they saw Percy leave to go down the hall to the music room.

Percy did not care how bad he sounded he love classic music.

Percy sat and looked straight ahead and rested his fingers on the piano.

Gen, Claressa and Alvin whispered among themselves that Percy had a ‘very good’ presence.

Percy closed his eyes and began to feel the music in his heart.

He practiced that song for months at school.

Joseph taught him to perform music that speaks to his heart.

Percy began to play the notes that came into his mind.

Eleanor was so shocked she was lost for words.

Patrick and Brenda were holding each other hands and loving each other when they slowly turned their heads and looked at Percy.

Theresa ran into the music room and stood back.

Dan rushed into the music room and stood.

Jose, Susan, Brittany and Georgette rushed to the music room and heard Percy.

Everyone was stunned.

Percy’s closed eyes were comforting to him.

He just heard the music as it was floating in the air.

He knew how the music should sound and he was fighting to hear how he heard it in his heart.

Percy was feeling the music like Joseph was sitting next to him and guiding him through each key stroke.

Theresa loved that piece of classic music for Christmas.

She walked in the music room.

She sat down to the harp.

Eleanor did not want Percy to be disturb.

Jose looked at Theresa.

Theresa began to play the harp.

It perfectly blended with Percy and was the background for him.

Bruce looked at Theresa.

Gen began to cry again.

The music was heavenly to them.

Claressa leaned her head on Alvin.

They sat and enjoyed this classic piece of music.

When Percy, who was leading, did not Theresa was playing the harp went into the most important part of the classic, everyone stood, including Emilou.

They all joined in and sang the last stanza.

Percy opened his eyes and said, “Thank you Joseph.”

Brenda looked at Percy.

Eleanor was stunned.

Gen started looking around to get out the music room.

Brenda said, “Gen don’t you move.”

Patrick looked at Gen.

Claressa and Alvin looked at Gen.

Mellissa started easing towards the door.

Gen was watching Mellissa.

Percy stood and opened his eyes.

Everyone clapped for him.

Percy saw the room was full.

Shirley was crying and dapping her tears.

She thought, “I may never hear this music again.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley and thought, “I can’t repent anymore. I don’t have anymore to give to her. God hear a mother’s heart and double Shirley’s life and heal her so she can enjoy this life. Hutch said she would marry and have two sons. Please let that happen and let everyday she enjoy it and grow to know You and JESUS.”

Eleanor looked back at Percy as the workers and Stephen, Bryce and Emilou congratulated him.

Percy looked and saw Theresa sitting at the harp and embracing it with all of her heart.

Patrick and Brenda looked at her.

Brenda said, “What is that mess.”

Patrick was getting out his chair and looked at Brenda.

He said, “Brenda, what is wrong with you heathen?”

Brenda hit Patrick in his side.

She said, “I want to know why that classical trained musician is here working as a maid. I hope she has not killed somebody or ran away with someone husband or kidnapped a child or has a brain injury.”

Patrick looked at Brenda and then Theresa and said, “You better not hit me again.”

He held his hand to her so they could walk to Percy and congratulate him on his brilliant playing.

Brenda looked around and saw Dan and said., “Dan, eggnog for everyone.”

Dan was looking at Theresa.

He nodded his head at Brenda.

He turned and was walking to the kitchen and said, “I just wash and put everything up.”

Patrick and Brenda walked to Theresa.

Claressa and Alvin walked to Theresa.

Gen congratulated Theresa first and then Percy.

She saw Mellissa easing to the hall.

Gen congratulated Percy and was easing to the door when she was violently jerked and turned around.

Claressa and Alvin bucked their eyes and jumped.

Brenda grabbed Gen and turned her around.

They walked back to Theresa.

Gen was swelling up inside.

Patrick said, “Theresa why do you play the harp so beautifully?”

Alvin watched Gen as she was looking around.

Claressa said, “Where did you study?”

Theresa said, “In Vienna.”

Claressa touched her chest and said, “Oh my.”

Patrick did not know much about classical music but while they were in Europe he and Brenda traveled with Percy to every music workshop or seminar that was held in Europe.

Alvin had started to get scared watching Gen.

They stay in all type of residencies in different countries and have heard noises and everything.

Claressa knew what Gen was doing.

She grabbed Alvin’s hand because she knew he was getting scared and she was not running no more.

She ran her last run the time in Greece he was running and passing her knocked her last bit of sherry on her favorite dress and caused her to stumbled down the stairs and fall on her stomach and slid down the stairs at the feet of the other diplomats.

Then Alvin run back to help her up like she was drunk.

He walked her back to their bedroom.

They fought upstairs most of the night.

The head security man walked in their bedroom and stopped them from knuckle fighting.

Claressa won the knuckle fight.

The security men looked at Alvin.

He did not go downstairs to see their guests leave.

Claressa had a great time seeing the other diplomats to the door.

She knows when Alvin start getting stiff and quiet he has gotten scared.

Alvin said, “Theresa right?”

Theresa said, “Yes sir.”

Alvin said, “When were you in Vienna?”

Theresa said, “Five years a go. I love it there.”

Brenda said, “Why are you here working as a maid?”

Theresa said, “I am not in the mob. My mother snd father died in a house fire. I got the telegram a month after they were buried and caught the last ship to get to America. I was hit with all type of guilt for not being here. If I was in America it would take about a month to get to Nebraska. They still would have been dead.”

Gen chuckle.

Brenda looked at Gen.

Gen was nervous.

Dan walked in with eggnog and punch.

Dan said, “Jose it is another tray in the kitchen. We are out of eggnog.”

Theresa said, “I turned around and walked out the door and walked back to town and caught the stage coach and was on the way to New York when I ran out of money. I slept on the streets of Philadelphia. The civil war was now over. I got a job cleaning and moping. I sneaked on your train to sleep and the next day. I realized the train was moving. It did not stop until was here. I got off and asked a round for food and a job. Everyone pointed me to you. I came out here and was hired part time by Jose. He told me where to go and get a room. I have lived here for nearly three years. That is my story.”

Brenda was looking at Theresa and trying to figure out how old she was.

Brenda said, “How old are you Theresa and what do you plan to do with your life. I will not allow you to waste your gift here making up beds?”

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Theresa said, “I am thirty. I finished my formal training at the age of fifteen.”

Shirley and Alicia walked up and was listening.

Theresa said, “I went to Europe at sixteen and completed the music conservatory and was primary harpist in Vienna.”

Claressa gasped and touched her chest.

Theresa said, “I guess I have to think now since you are putting me out.”

Brenda said, “Right. You are not going to waste your gift here.”

Shirley looked at Brenda.

Percy walked over and congratulated Theresa and they started talking about music.

Percy said, “Grandpa and grandma, I want to go to that school. They have a program for a year.”

Patrick said, “Percy, you have to talk to your mother.”

Percy looked at Eleanor.

Dan was serving eggnog.

Dan said, “Mrs. Stith we don’t have anymore eggnog. But we have Peter’s Christmas punch.”

Michael tasted the Christmas punch.

Thomas walked to Michael with his punch.

Michael said, “It has no kick.”

Thomas sipped the punch.

Eleanor looked at Michael.

She looked at Patrick and Brenda.

Patrick turned his head back to Theresa.

Alvin said, “You have to go and audition to get in that school.”

Theresa said, “Right.”

Percy said, “I want to go grandma.”

Percy stood and walked to Eleanor.

He was talking to Eleanor.

Eleanor said, Percy, lets talk about this in the morning.”

Percy pointed and at Theresa and told Eleanor about Theresa.

Claressa and Alvin looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor walked over to Theresa.

Dan gave Theresa a cup of Christmas punch and stood and talked with her.

Eleanor said, “Theresa, Percy tells me you graduated from the most prestigious school in the world and he wants to go.”

Theresa looked at Percy and said, “He needs a lot of work. Check, I believe a touring group of instructors will come to America next spring to select students from all over the world for the next school term.”

Eleanor looked at Percy.

Theresa said, “Percy you have to be able to read music. I have not been in the symphony for nearly five years. I believe you have to have three or five pieces of music to play for your recital.”

Brenda said, “It is five pieces. I heard them say that before the recitals and workshops we attended in Europe.”

Eleanor said, “Theresa, I want you to tutor Percy to the best you can until the recital.”

Theresa looked at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor, I cannot work here and then tutor Percy. Percy is in school in another state. I can give him pointers and once you find out when the instructors will be here. I can tutor him the two weeks before his recital. You have to decide what city you want him to do his recital in and when. I do plan on playing for the symphony again.”

Dan looked at Eleanor because it sounded like she was telling Theresa what to do.

Patrick looked at Eleanor and he said, “Theresa, we will pay you each time you tutor Percy.”

Percy said, “I will pay you.”

Brenda rolled her eyes at Eleanor.

Eleanor was thinking of what she did wrong.

Claressa said, “This s long processor. Percy you have a few months to get ready. Some of these kids were born playing musical instructors. Not to scare you, but get fierce and give up other things to concentrate on this.”

Percy nodded his head at Claressa.

Alvin said, “Just to be invited to recite is a great honor. You have to invite people to your recital and have a reception and a dress code.”

Shirley said, “Dess code. Reception.”

Eleanor rolled her eyes at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “Theresa did I offend you a minute ago? I do apologize, I was not thinking. If you are able to tutor Percy, you will be compensated. It is not your duty you can refuse if you want to.”

Percy turned and looked at Eleanor.

Theresa said, “I can teach him the basic in two weeks,”

Patrick said, “Theresa only tutor Percy for two weeks that is your job. We will pay you your salary for those two weeks and the compensation for tutoring. I am country but I learned in Europe something about the steep competition for these musical schools.”

Claressa said, “I think the recitals are in New York, Chicago, Washington, DC and Los Angeles. It makes sense they start in Los Angeles and move back to the east to board the ship.”

Alvin said, “Eleanor you need to find out the information.”

Shirley said, “Aunt Claressa can I have a reception in one of those cities?”

Claressa said, “As long it is after you have been introduced to the royals.”

Shirley was thinking.

Dan love music.

He was talking to Theresa about the music.

Jose was listening to Patrick.

Everyone was in the music room but the workers in the stables.

Jose did not like them to be in the house.

Steven, Alicia and Emilou left and rode home slow.

Eleanor bought Emilou wood puzzles, coloring books and a paint set.

Emilou was so excited about her big gift.

Eleanor said, “Me and Miss Lorraine went shopping for you a gift from the family.”

Emilou said, “Kiss Miss Lorraine for me.”

Patrick and Brenda walked them to the door and they ran and got in their carriage and took their time and rode home.

They were laughing and singing all the way home.

Claressa and Alvin sat with Gen in the parlor and drank brandy.

Eleanor was drinking her beloved sherry.

She said, “Thanks Claressa.”

Claressa said, “You can do it Eleanor.”

Eleanor said, “Suppose he gets accepted?”

Percy was standing outside the parlor door listening.

Patrick and Brenda saw him.

Patrick said, “I hope they don’t say anything bad about him.”

Brenda and Patrick walked to the parlor and stood on the other side of the door and looked at Percy.

Percy was shocked at his grandparents and did not know what to do.

Claressa said, “If Percy gets accepted and the program is for a year, maybe your parents can go an stay with him for that year, since they are retired,”

Percy was grinning with his tongue out.

Brenda stepped around the door into the parlor and said, “Look bossy gal you don’t tell me what to do.”

Gen said, “I love Vienna. I may go for a year.”

Percy nodded his head.

He ran to the sitting room with the rest o the children.

Patrick smiled and walked into the parlor.

Alvin was putting Claressa’s coat on and they were leaving.

Patrick said, “Did Brenda run you away?”

Brenda looked back at Patrick and said, “It wasn’t this heaten this time.”

Eleanor laughed and walked Claressa and Alvin to the door.

The security men were in the carriages covered in blankets and smoking.

Jose feed them all day.

They left the house.

Claressa and Alvin rode to her parents’ house in thirty minutes.

They laughed all the way home about the church service and the good time they had all day.

Claressa said, “I’m glad we did not spend Christmas in the capitol.”

Alvin looked straight ahead and he turned and looked at Claressa.

Claressa looked at Alvin and nodded her head for yes.

The housekeeper had the house warm.

The security man outside went in the house and the driver stayed outside for the night,

The two other security slept around back on the enclosed back porch.

They enjoyed being around back.

They could smoke and drink and Alvin and Claressa did not smell it and they could go into the kitchen and get something to eat or drink, but the neighbors could not see in the house.

Steven, Alicia and Emilou rode through the snowy streets and were joined by many people returning home from their Christmas visits.

They stayed in the carriage with Steven.

He put the horses in the stables.

Steven carried Emilou’s painting set in the house.

He came back outside and locked the front gate and looked around the house and checked the horses gain.

He got a bucket of coal.

He walked back in the house and double locked the door.

Alicia looked at Steven as he stood at the front door and was listening.

She looked at Emilou and said, “Trouble?”

Steven did not say anything.

He slowly walked away from the door and eased to the window and peeped outside.

He walked to the back door and double checked the locked and put the bar across the back door.

He kicked the draft blocker behind the door.

Alicia was taking Emilou’s bows and ribbons out of her hair.

She hugged Emilou and said, “You looked very pretty today Emilou.”

Emilou hugged Alicia’s neck and said, “You made me look pretty today.”

Steven checked Emilou’s bedroom and under her bed and her closed.

He checked Alicia’s room and under her bed.

He stooped down and looked under the couches before he returned to the sitting area.

Alicia was watching Steven and tried to keep Emilou’s attention so she would not see Steven.

Emilou looked and said, “What are you doing Steven?”

Steven did not like to lie Emilou.

He said, “I’m making sure no one has tried to come into our house, because we have been gone all day.”

Emilou said, “Did you check my room?”

Steven saluted Emilou and said, “All clear.”

Steven put a few pieces of coal in the stove and in the fireplace.

They rather for it to be cool than hot, because they did not want a house fire.

Steven undressed and put on his nightclothes.

Emilou said, “Alicia can I sleep with you tonight?’

Alicia said, “Why?”

Emilou was sitting in Alicia’s lap and said, “I want to be close to you and Steven.”

Alicia said, “Alright for tonight only Emilou.”

Steven stopped Emilou from sleeping with him because she would be kicking him in his face and stomach.

People at his school just looked at him.

Steven sat to the table and lit a lantern he said, “We as a family has to make some decisions for next year. I will be working with the hospital until September and then I go to medical college for two years. I will live in the capitol for those two years and get a room.”

Alicia was getting nervous.

Steven said, “Alicia you finish this May.”

Emilou said, “I will be finishing second grade.”

Steven said, “Right.”

Alicia was scared and was listening.

Steven said, “We all will be here until September. Eleanor had a great idea, but it has to be worked out.”

Alicia said, “What is the idea?’

Emilou turned in Alicia’s lap and put her elbows on the table to listen to Steven.

He said, “In the small city the people have no medical attention. She was thinking if you could go there and be the nurse, while I am in medical school and while the hospital is being built.”

Alicia said, “Emilou.”

Emilou looked at Alicia and then Steven and said, “Emilou?”

Steven said, “Emilou would go to boarding school.”

Emilou said, “Next plan.”

Alicia grinned and brushed Emilou’s hair down.

Steven said, “We all move to the state capitol and rent a house. And rent this house out for two years.”

Emilou said, “That’s better. I like that one.”

Alicia said, “I can work at the hospital there and learn and be ready to work at the Stith’s hospital here.”

Steven said, “But?”

Alicia said, “I don’t like that the people are poor and don’t have any one to provide them medical care.”

Emilou said, “They don’t have schools. I am not going away from you and Steven.”

Steven said, “Josiah was to go in January to be the teacher, but he got a big promotion from the governor and he and Natalie will move to the capitol in the spring.”

Alicia said, “Dr. Ralph went to deliver her baby.”

Steven looked at Alicia and said, “In our big town there is only one doctor. He cannot have a happy family. The big cities don’t need me. I want to practice here. I want to go and study with Dr. Ralph. Brenda said, Hutch has agreed to move here in two years and practice at the hospital along with two other medical students. One will graduate from medical college in May. Brenda is excited. What he will be doing for two years until the hospital is built, I don’t know.”

Emilou said, “Maybe he can go to that small city.”

Steven was looking in front of him and he turned and looked at Emilou.

Alicia was blowing on Emilou’s hair she stopped and looked at Steven.

Steven said, “Usually you work under supervising doctors.”

Emilou said, “Will Eleanor pay him.”

Alicia said, “Probably the governor.”

Steven opened his book he put the check in from Eleanor and showed it to Alicia and Emilou.

Emilou and Alicia’s mouth opened wide in surprised.

Steven said, “That is for the design of the train station in Chicago.”

Alicia and Emilou yelled, “Chicago!”

Emilou said, “Can we go?”

Steven said, “I don’t know. I will be working on the hospital here. I may have to go to Chicago to help out but I will be in medical college in September. That check is enough for us to live off of for the two years until I finish. We can pay for your school Alicia. I just don’t want you to be here for two years and not working and learning the skills you need to be a great nurse.”

Alicia said, “I Talked to Natalie, there is no place to live.”

Steven said, “It is so beautiful there. The governor is not going to run for a second term. He is going to retire in the mall city. He is trying to get the state to develop the city as much as possible. The judge, who is his brother is going to retire there. So the small city is going to become a popular place for the rich. The Stiths are building a lodge there. I can’t oversee that because I will be in school.”

Emilou was looking at Steven.

Alicia was thinking.

Emilou said, “What kind of boarding school would you send me to.”

Steven looked at Emilou and said, “Only where the rich girls go.”

Emilou said, “Like Michael and Thomas go?”

Steven said, “Yes.”

Alicia said, “Let’s think about this. I don’t want Emilou to go away.”

Emilou looked at Alicia.

Alicia said, “Let us all sleep on this tonight.”

Emilou said, “Were rich now.”

Alicia said, “We have to be wise and budget the money.”

Emilou said, “If you go to the small city, then we can use your money and put it in our bank accounts and go to Philadelphia to the store Miss Lorraine bought our clothes.”

Alicia said, “Steven how much will go into our individual accounts?”

Steven said, “It has to last for two years. None.”

Alicia and Emilou screamed, “None!”

Steven jumped.

He looked at them and said, “Good night.”

Steven could not believe how his sisters wanted to have money and be rich.

Alicia and Emilou wanted money in their accounts.

Emilou said, “So the choices are, we all move to the capitol and rent this house to someone, you Steven move to the capitol and Alicia and I…”

She pronounced the word ‘I’ and pointed to herself said, “Move to the wilderness with wild animals and save our money or Alicia be here with me and we live in this house and have no money?”

Steven looked at Emilou and her perception centered around money.

He said, “Right?”

Emilou hopped of Alicia’s lap and went to Alicia’s bed and jumped in it.

Alicia was thumping her finger on the table and looked at Steven and yelled to Emilou, “On your knees we have to pray.”

Steven said, “Better yet let us all pray now. Emilou here back so we can pray.”

Emilou ran out Alicia’s back to the table and they bowed their heads and prayed.”

Steven said, “LORD GOD Almighty we need YOUR help. YOU have helped us so much this year YOU took us being dirt poor to having a bank account. Show us what to do for the next two years. In JESUS’ name.”

Emilou picked up her rag doll and skipped to Alicia’s room and said, “I may want to go to school with the rich girls. But whatever gives us money. Right Alicia.”

Alicia cut her eyes at Steven and tried to smile.

She jumped up and ran to her room and closed the door.

Steven exhaled.

He sat and read his medical book for nearly two hours.

He was closing his book and took the check and looked at it and put it back in the book.

Steven checked the front door and put the bar behind the door.

He pulled his pallet from under the couch and laid down and thought until he went to sleep.

He placed his shotgun by the door.

He tossed because he did not know what to do and GOD has shown him in the pass. He thought the simplest solution was for them to move to the state capitol for two years but the people in the small city would not have no medical help.

He will talk to Eleanor later.

Stven went to sleep.

Emilou asked Alicia, “Miss Gen went to a girl’s boarding school and Miss Claressa. They married ambassadors. I want to go to a rich girls’ school so I can marry an ambassador and have parties and travel the world.”

Alicia turned her back to Emilou and rolled her eyes.

Alicia said, “Good night Emilou.”

Emilou said, “No girl talk?”

Alicia said, “Not tonight.”

Emilou sat up in the bed and held her rag doll and thought until she went to sleep.

Alicia fell asleep thinking about the gorgeous Daniel.

She did not care that he dates Ginger.

She did not like Ginger and Alice that well anymore.

Gen, Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor sat I the parlor and drank and laughed most of the night.

The children went to bed.

Patrick, Brenda, Gen and Eleanor checked on Eleanor.

Jose checked all the doors and windows and put the bars behind the front door and the backdoor.

Jose told Patrick he did not think Dr. Ralph was coming back that night.

Jose put out the lights and went to his room.

He fell on his knees and prayed for Briana and her family.

He undressed and went to bed.

Patrick and Brenda put their prayer pillows down on the floor and prayed a short time.

They went to bed.

Gen was laying in her bed reading a book. She went to sleep while reading the book.

Lorraine slept through the night.

Dr. Ralph spent two hours with Calvin.

Morgan was there with the crew.

He left with Dr. Ralph and showed him where Mag’s house was.

They heard Natalie while they were coming down the street.

Mag and Josiah were on the front porch staring into space.

Dr. Ralph looked at them.

He spoke and they barely spoke.

Morgan tied the carriage and the horses.

He took the four quilts and doubled then and crawled in the back of the carriage and went to sleep.

He drank a lot of liquor at the train with the crew.

Mag and Josiah looked at Morgan and continued to stand outside in the cold.

Dr. Ralph examined Natalie and went and put on water.

He saw Mag had towels and wash cloths and other items ready for him.

He doubled his coat and put it under his head.

Dr. Ralph laid on the floor and slept.

Dr. Ralph slept for nearly three hours until he heard Natalie grunt.

He jumped from the floor and examined her and rushed and got the hot water.

Mag and Josiah were on the front porch.

Josiah came in the house and got them blankets and went back outside.

Dr. Ralph worked with Natalie until daybreak.

Mag heard the baby cry.

She did not care.

Josiah was sleep in the chair.

Mag hit him.

Josiah woke and heard the baby.

He grinned.

They heard the baby hollering.

They jumped and ran in the house into the bedroom.

Josiah stopped because of the mess.

Mag looked at him and said, “You’re going to close this mess up.”

Josiah became sick.

He was looking at the baby in Dr. Ralph’s arm and saw the baby‘s mouth not moving but he heard the baby crying.

Josiah started pointing a shaking finger and said, “His mouth.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Josiah.

Mag was over at the bed.

Josiah said, “He’s crying his mouth not moving. What’s wrong with him?”

Dr. Ralph looked at Josiah.

Natalie was very weak and said, “Josiah.”

Josiah said, “Hey Natalie. I want to know about this baby.”

Mag looked and said, “Josiah there is two babies.”

Josiah stood still for a long time.

Dr. Ralph started bathing the baby he held.

Mag ran and held the towel and dried the baby and dressed it.

She took that baby to Natalie and took the baby Natalie held.

Dr. Ralph disposed of the first bathwater and bathed the second baby.

Mag dried the baby and dressed the baby.

Mag put the babies in the cradle.

She helped to clean Natalie and took all the linens and put them in the burn barrel.

She grinned and smiled and said two. But you two will be going to the capitol with your daddy to live.

Mag was humming and grinning to herself.

Dr. Ralph stretched his back and washed his face and hands.

He went through his medical bag.

He took the babies vitals and Natalie’s vitals.

Josiah walked in the room and looked at his babies and he looked at Natalie.

Dr. Ralph said, “Good morning.”

He went to the carriage and saw Morgan sleep in the carriage.

He woke Morgan.

Morgan said, “It’s over?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

Morgan folded the quilts and stepped out the carriage and said, “Thank you.”

Dr. Ralph said, “You are welcome.”

Dr. Ralph stopped by the train to check on Calvin.

He told Hal to get Calvin straight to the hospital.

Dr. Ralph was leaving the train when he saw Nathan and Denise.

He walked to them and said, “Have a good honeymoon.”

Nathan looked at Dr. Ralph.

Denise pointed to Dr. Ralph’s shirt and it was blood stained.

Nathan said, “Nat had her baby?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Babies.”

Denise said, “Wow.”

Nathan said, “Mag is going to be busy.”

Dr. Ralph thought, “Not from what I saw?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I’m going to bathe, shave and get something to eat and sleep late.”

Patrick and Brenda rode up.

They got out their buggy and walked over.

Patrick and Brenda said, “Good morning.”

Brenda saw a tired Dr. Ralph and said, “Is Mag a grandmother?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Twice. I must go and get some sleep.”

Brenda said, “Twice.”

Nathan looked at Patrick and Brenda and said, “Twins.”

Brenda said, “What two boys, girls or one of each?”

Dr. Ralph walked way and went to the carriage and turned around twice.

Patrick said, “Let me show him…”

Then Dr. Ralph sped away.

The military was riding into town in wagons.

Dr. Ralph saw the military ride to town.

But he was concentrating on the way to get back to the Stith’s house.

Dr. Ralph was thinking about Natalie and the fact there was no doctor in the town.

He was glad he was there, and he is glad the children are building a hospital in the town.

He began to cry over Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph said, “GOD I thank YOU for helping me with Calvin and Natalie two boys. Change things Father. I need YOU to show me the way with Lorraine. I love her but I don’t want to marry hr. Forgive me for the sins I committed with her. Forgive her also. I don’t know her mind, whether she can ask for forgiveness of her sins. But I interceded for her. If she has to ask YOU for forgiveness of her sins, help her to get to where she has to be to pray to YOU. I don’t know how long YOU want me here. But I want Lorraine to be able to think, comprehend, bathe and feed herself. I am not limiting YOU LORD GOD Almighty. I want her completely whole. Lorraine, I love but can’t marry her. She would want all my attention. She would not allow me to ride with patients or get them settled into life. She would not allow me to work at the different hospitals to help out other doctors and learn more. I am sorry GOD. I have no one to talk to. YOU can answer all things with right judgement. YOUR decision I am fine with just help me to accept ‘no Lorraine’.”

Commander Brown and Chief Commander Tyler were riding their horses to the train stat

Dr. Ralph cried all the way back to the house.

Gary was attending to the boys’ horses.

He heard Dr. Ralph crying.

Gary turned to see who else was crying that morning.

He saw Dr. Ralph pulling the horses and carriage to the back.

Dr. Ralph sat in the carriage for a minute and put his face in his hands.

Jose and Dan were looking out the window at Dr. Ralph.

Jose said, “We know what that mean.”

Dan looked at Jose and said, “What?”

Jose said, “It means he can’t marry Lorraine.”

Dan said, “Why?”

Jose turned and looked at Dan.

Dan said, “Why?”

Jose said, “Have you ever heard of a doctor leaving his hispotal and traveling with a patient and satying with the patient and taking care of the patient until they are better?”

Dan stared at Jose.

Jose said, “Dan, Lorraine is very selfish. She would not let Dr. Ralph leave her or travel with patients or get the patients home or spend any additional time with patients. She wants all the attention.”

Dan thought and said, “Jose, you are right. What that Dr. Ralph has done is different and Lorraine would not allow him to treat his other patients like he is treating her.”

Jose said, “This has been a bad holiday. But maybe Lorraine will think about what this doctor did for her and want him to treat his other patients like her, even though she is his girlfriend.”

Dan said, “That is a hard lesson for Lorraine, but it should give her something to think about.”

Jose said, “When I was in Philadelphia the nurses always said, that Dr. Ralph could rule all of the hospitals in Philadelphia and I know he can’t do that with selfish Lorraine.”

Dan said, “He was at Natalie all last night. I wonder if she had her baby?”

Jose said, “Dan what are you thinking. He would not be here unless Natalie had her baby. Make him breakfast. I’ll get him hot water for a bath and shave. I bet you he is going to check on Lorraine first.”

Dan and Jose watched Gary.

Gary watched Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph finally stepped out the carriage.

Jose walked to the back door and unlocked it.

Dr. Ralph looked at the when he heard the locks on the door.

Jose opened the door and saw Dr. Ralph blood stained shirt.

Jose said, “Good morning.”

He looked at Gary and said, “Take care of the horse and carriage.”

Gary said, “Alright.”

Jose said, “Thank you Gary.”

Jose closed the door back.

Dr. Ralph began to walk down the hall.

Dan walked to the kitchen door and said, “Dr. Ralph, I am making you breakfast, What do you want?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Oatmeal and fruit and black coffee and a little juice.”

Jose rolled his eyes at Dan.

Dan shrugged his shoulders and turned around and went into the kitchen.

Jose followed Dr. Ralph and said, “I’ll get you hot water to bathe and shave. I’ll have your clothes washed and pressed.”

Fr. Ralph said, “I need to check on Lorraine first and then I’ll take a bath.”

Jose followed Dr. Ralph down the hall.

Jose went into the bathroom and took hot water and carried it twice over to Dr. Ralph suite and filled his bathtub.

Jose took another pail of water and filled the water basin for him to shave.

Jose walked back out the suite and saw Gen carrying her bag to leave and go home.

Dr. Ralph was checking Lorraine and her vitals.

Lorraine woke and smile.

Dr. Ralph kept examining her.

Susan and Georgette were sitting outside the room.

Dr. Ralph waked out and said, “Please bath her and give her a cup of oatmeal mixed with a lot of sweet. I m going to bathe and sleep. But if she has any problems wake me.”

Susan said, “Yes sir.”

Dr. Ralph looked down the hall and saw Gen and Jose leaving.

He walked to his suite and saw the bathtub of hot water and the water basin full of water.

Susan and Georgette looked at each other as Dr. Ralph closed his door.

Georgette said, “You saw that blood?”

Susan shuddered.

Susan and georgette walked in Lorraine’s suite and began to attend to her.

Percy and Theresa were in the music room.

Eleanor sent a telegram to the music school.

She wanted to ask Steven a question but remembered he did not have a telegram machine.

She thought, “He needs a telegram machine. I wonder what that Emilou is doing. She sure did tell Nadine something yesterday. And I am glad they all have been looking nice.”

Eleanor stood and walked to the railroad map and began to write notes.

She could hear Percy and Theresa but knew she had to put up with it for two weeks.

She knew Percy had a heart for music but he would not get in the school.

She sent Margaret a telegram to look out for Shirley a ball gown. She did not know if it need to be white or green.

Eleanor though and said, “I prefer pink.”

Eleanor started working on the budget for the Chicago rail station.

Most of the expenses she paid already.

She thought and stomped her foot and said, “I need another passenger car. The owner’s suite, first class and second class. The other ten cars would be for supplies. The train would leave once every two weeks and turn around in Philadelphia come back to Chicago. That would give the trains time to re-fuel and the manufacturers to get their goods to the train station to load them on the trains. I need the supplies for the hospital. Steven ordered a lot of the supplies. I need him to order the supplies for the Chicago train station. I don’t want to go to his house. I don’t want to go to town.”

Eleanor walked out her office and passed the side of the music room and closed her eyes and rushed pass.

She walked to the kitchen and looked for Jose.

Dan said, “Eleanor?”

Saw Gary outside with the boys’ horses and wondered what he was doing.

Eleanor said, “Where is Jose?”

Dan said, “He is getting Dr. Ralph bath water.”

Eleanor said, “Did Natalie have her baby?”

Dan said, “I believe she had their baby. Dr. ralph had a blood stained clothes when he got back today.”

Eleanor said, “Dan, Josiah may have helped to create the baby, but Natalie had deliver it. IA man does not deliver a baby with that tremendous pain a woman goes through he could not bare it. Get Jose.”

Mellissa and Peter snickered at Dan.

Dan looked at them.

Peter said, “I don’t know why you thought you could pull that over on her.”

Dan shook his head.

Peter looked at Dan and said, “Get Jose.”

Peter and Mellissa fell out.

Dan picked up the tray of hot tea and carried it to the music room.

He knocked on the door and Theresa walked and opened the door.

Dan smiled and stepped in with the hot tea and said, “I thought you two might want some hot tea.”

Percy said, “Hot buttered rum.”

Dan did not acknowledge Percy.

Theresa looked back at Percy.

Dan walked out the music room.

Eleanor was walking back to her office and she looked at Dan.

Dan said, “I’m going to get Jose.”

Jose carried Gen’s clothes and bag to her carriage and helped her in the carriage.

Gen said, “Thank you Jose.”

Jose said, “Dr. Ralph just returned.”

Gen looked and said, “Natalie had her baby. What she had?”

Jose said, “I didn’t ask, because his clothes were blood stained.”

Gen said, “He is probably tired. Tell him I want to invite him to lunch. I like Robert and Bethany’s place. I have to tell them about the trip to Africa. I can’t wait.”

Jose said, “I’m going to Europe. I thought about Africa too and take the trip to Europe next year because the hospital would still being built.”

Gen looked at Jose and said, “That sounds good Jose. If Percy gets into the music school I would love to go with him I love Vienna. But he wants Patrick and Brenda to go with him. This has been a full and exciting Christmas. I can’t wait until New Years.”

Gen pulled off and slowly rode home.

She stopped at her kitchen door and unlocked the door and walked into the freezing house.

Gen walked through each room of the house and started a fire in the fireplace in the master bedroom.

She walked downstairs and started a fire in the sitting room fireplace.

Gen used the last bit of coal in the stove.

She looked at the water and got the pails and walked to the carriage and locked the kitchen door.

Gen rode her horses to the well and filled the three huge pails.

She rode back to her house and carried the water pails into the house and filled her water barrel.

Gen rode to the coal shed and filled her coal buckets.

She rode back to the house and took one coal bucket upstairs to her bedroom.

Gen went outside and brought one coal bucket into the sitting room and the last coal bucket she placed by the stove in the kitchen.

She thought,” I am full from that delicious breakfast this morning. I’ll eat a late dinner.

Gen locked her kitchen door and rode around her house.

She filled the lanterns.

Gen had four lanterns. One by the stables, one on each side of the house and one in front of the house.

She was delighted to see someone on her street.

Then she thought about the mob.

Gen rode the carriage to the stables and unhook the horses and feed the horses and gave them water.

She forgot to get her clothes and bag out the carriage.

She loaded up and kicked the stables closed and locked the door and rushed back to the house she dropped some things but unlocked the kitchen door and threw the items on the couch and turned and ran out the door and picked up the items she dropped.

Gen returned to the house and locked the door and put the bar across the door.

The house was getting a little warm.

Gen walked to her Christmas tree and grinned.

She carried all her things upstairs and began to put them away.

She thought she heard a noise but continued to unpack her items.

Gen put on a casual dress and let down her hair.

Gen walked to her bed and sat down.

She thought, “I have enough water until Monday. I need some coal tomorrow.”

Gen opened her bedside table drawer and pulled out her gun.

She checked for the bullets and looked out her windows.

Gen walked downstairs and checked all the windows.

Gen made tea and got a few cookies she baked and went and sat on the couch and stared reading her book.

She was laughing and crying and having a good time.

Jose walked back in the house as Gen pulled off.

Dan walked through the formal dining room and saw Jose as he was walking down the hall.

Dan said, “Jose.”

Jose turned around.

Dan walked to him and said, “Eleanor wants you.”

Jose continued to walk through the billiards room and down to Eleanor’s office.

Eleanor was writing.

Jose knocked on her door.

Eleanor aid, “Jose come in.”

She did not look up but knew the sound of his footsteps and his knock.

She said, “You did a good job using the leftovers for breakfast this morning used the rest for lunch. If any is left from lunch used it to make a soup or a stew. I need someone to go into town and go to Steven’s house and tell him I need to see him, if not today tomorrow at the office.”

Jose said, “Brenda told you the household workers were not to be used for your personal business.”

Eleanor lifted her head up from her papers and rolled her eyes at Jose.

She said, “You go and tell Gary I said come here. You go and tell Shirley I said come here.”

Jose looked at Eleanor and walked out her office.

Eleanor started cursing.

Jose said, “Good. You see how I feel. ‘You’.”

Patrick and Brenda were spending the day in town.

They were at the train station when the military arrived.

Chief Commander Tyler and Commander Brown dismounted their horse.

They walked to Patrick and Brenda and Joe and spoke.

Chief Commander Tyler said, “I want to transport my horse.”

Patrick looked and said, “That’s fine. We can accommodate you.”

Chief Commander Tyler said, ” I am leaving Commander Brown in charge until Commander Washington returns. I am sending him back once I get there on Saturday morning. Will he have enough time to catch the next train and be back here Sunday?”

Patrick said, “I’ll make sure of that.”

Brenda burst out laughing and turned her back to the commanders and grabbed Patrick’s arms.

Commander Brown and Chief Commander Tyler looked at Brenda.

Chief Commander Tyler said, “Ma am what is funny?”

Patrick was laughing.

Patrick said, “I delivered Christmas message at his church and the other pastor did not like what I said. I will make sure Commander Washington is on that train and for them to speed up so he can go to church Sunday morning.”

Brenda hollered.

Commander Brown said, “Commander Walker?”

Brenda and Patrick stopped laughing.

Brenda turned around.

Patrick was shocked.

Brenda said, “He called us heathens. He is a commander. I hope retired.”

Chief Commander Tyler said, “No. I hope you all work out your differences.”

Chief Commander Tyler and Commander Brown walked away to the train.

Joe shook Patrick and Brenda’s hands.

He said, “Thank you and have a happy New Year.”

Patrick and Brenda stood and watched the commanders walk away and Joe run to catch them.

They saw Commander Brown looked back at them.

The soldiers in the wagons began to get the supplies and fill the train car with the supplies.

Benda said, “Ain’t that some sh\*\*.”

Patrick said, “I should have known better.”

Peter rode to the train station and opened the office and checked around back and he secured the office.

Patrick said, “Peter, go and send a telegram to the train that will arrive in the small city in the morning tell them to hold there until Commander Washington is on board and speed to get here early Sunday morning. Bring me back the confirmation.”

Peter went into the office and sent the telegram.

Patrick and Brenda stood and watch the train fill up with passengers.

The passengers were happy and said, they spent Christmas with military family and friends.

They were saying they would be travelling back because it was a good ride.

Brenda looked back at the passengers and smiled.

Patrick and Brenda saw the old soldier with his daughter and son-in-law.

The family had breakfast with their son at the headquarters. The commanders saluted the old man.

The family felt proud of the old soldier.

They were happy.

Patrick and Brenda stood and waited until the train pulled out the station.

The soldiers waited and turned around and sped back to the military headquarters.

Nathan and Denise waved at Patrick and Brenda.

Brenda said, “Nathan won’t be going with us to Africa.”

Patrick said, “I was settled on him. Why?’

Brenda said, “How Denise is grinning. She is coming back pregnant.”

Patrick turned and looked at Brenda.”

He watched the train leave.

Commander Brown walked to them and watched the train leave.

Patrick said, “Are you all bring all of those prisoners back here. I need to let the train know extra people.”

Commander Brown said, ”I think they are taking them to New York and the dead bodies. Some more of them have died over the pass couple of days. But you did not hear that from me.”

They heard children yelling, “Daddy.”

Commander Brown turned around and his three sons and two nephews ran to him.

He told Patrick, “This is why I did not leave with Chief Commander Tyler. I wanted to spend some more time with my sons that I haven’t seen in five years.”

Brenda said, “Oh my.”

Patrick and Brenda walked away so Commander Brown could play with his sons.

Commander Brown’s wife and sister and her husband walked to him.

Commander Brown decided to have lunch in town with his family and then go tohis sister’s house for afternoon tea and then back to the military headquarters.

Patrick and Brenda went into the train station office.

They reviewed all the records and waited for the telegram confirmation.

Patrick put it in his pocket and he and Brenda went to Mag.

They arrived at Mag’s house and saw Mag sitting on the porch with Morgan.

They were covered in blankets.

They laughed and greeted Patrick and Brenda.

Mag said, “They had twin boys.”

Mag opened the front door and showed them the twins.

Patrick and Brenda sat in the house and talked to Mag and Morgan.

Morgan said, “I stayed at the train station with the crew getting drunk until the doctor left from checking on Calvin. I believe Calvin is really hurt.”

Brenda looked at Morgan.

Morgan said, “I got in the doctor’s carriage and double up on those quilts and slept. We could hear Natalie all the way down the street.

When we arrived Mag and Josiah were on the front porch and she said, they did not go into the house until they heard the baby cry.”

Brenda turned to Mag and said, “What?”

Mag said, “I could not take it. Josiah and I left her in the house by herself. Where was she going.”

Patrick said, “When are yall going to the capitol?

Mag laughed and said, “Yall? I am going with Morgan up to his vacation home and return late spring. I’ll see you all off to Africa. You know the date yet?”

Brenda said, “Mag you are leaving your grandchildren?”

Mag said, “Yes. Natalie has a mother and father and three sisters. They are close to the capitol I’ll send them a message sometime soon for them to help with the twins. I don’t know how much time I have to live on this earth. I plan on enjoying it. Whether it is picking a snowball fight with Morgan or let him row me down a freshly thawed pond or we sit on the porch and look out over the lake with a glass of sherry.”

Patrick and Brenda were silent.

Mag looked straight ahead.

She said, “Yesterday made me realized some truths.”

Brenda said, “Like we are heathens.”

Morgan started laughing.

Patrick looked at Morgan because he still did not see what was funny with Brenda.

Morgan said, “Mag.”

Patrick looked at Morgan.

Brenda looked at Morgan.

Mag said, “I will not live in sin. Morgan and I are getting married before we leave here.”

Patrick said, “Leave the town or leave this life?”

Morgan said, “We are getting married within the next two weeks. Then I will retire on the day I marry Mag.”

Brenda sat with her mouth opened.

Mag said, “Patrick, Morgan wants you to be his best man.”

Patrick turned and looked at Morgan.

Mag said, “I have two sisters I want you Brenda and Gen to be my bride’s maids.”

Morgan looked at Patrick.

Patrick stood and walked to Morgan and shook his hand.

Patrick said, “Roger was like our brother. You have no idea how great a man he was. I guess I did not think of anyone coming to step in Mag’s life after such a great man. But I welcome you s my brother.”

Morgan bowed his head and said, “Thank you Patrick I was scared then that you would reject me and Mag.”

Patrick looked back at Mag and said, “Mag deserved the quality of life she wants.”

Brenda stood and walked to Mag.

Mag stood and she and Brenda hugged.

Brenda said, “What type of wedding?”

Mag said, “Very casual. Afternoon. Reception at one of the restaurants.”

Brenda said, “Do you…”

Mag shook her head and said, “Whatever you were about to say no. We will not accept anything from you two.”

Patrick hugged Mag.

He said, “Josiah?”

Mag said, “We told him, Natalie and the twins this morning.”

Brenda said, “How did they take it?”

Mag said, “Natalie was stunned. She said she thought I was going to move to the capitol with she, Josiah and the boys.”

Brenda looked at Mag and they laughed.

Mag said, “Josiah is still perplexed how he got to children when it was suppose to be one. He just stared at me. They are happy why can’t I have a second chance at happiness?”

Patrick said, “Morgan we are opening a train station in Chicago and wanted you to supervisor it.”

Morgan looked at Mag.

Mag started laughing.

She was crying.

Brenda was holding Mag’s hand and said, “What?”

Mag said, “We talked about visiting Chicago for a month before the fall.”

Patrick said, “We will be in Africa. Eleanor is working to get all the hard things completed before we go/ That may not be until May and we will come back in October. Then you two can leave and go back to Vermont.”

Mag said, “Or spend Christmas here.”

Mag said, “Africa?”

Brenda said, “When Patrick made the announcement at dinner yesterday. You would think Michael would have been jumping up and down in excitement. He did not move. Thomas walked and stood in front of Patrick and had this terrible look on his face.”

Patrick said, “I thought I had to fight him.”

Mag frowned and said, “Why?”

Brenda said, “Thomas thought they would make me a slave.”

Mag fell backwards and said, “Shush.”

Patrick said, “I had to convince Thomas I would never take Brenda there to be enslave.”

Brenda said, “It was painful. I told them I was taking my famous shotgun.”

Morgan said, “Well what was wrong with Michael?”

Patrick said, “Michael said they had animals.”

Mag laughed.

Patrick said, “I told him we would be on the ship.”

Brenda said, “I will be on the ship. Shirley asked if she could use her title. Claressa said only if she has been introduced to the royal circle.”

Mag hollered. She said, “Shirley was going to be safe. They had to know she was royal.”

Patrick said, “I didn’t think that was why she was asking about that.”

They all burst out and laughed.

The babies started crying.

Mag walked to the bedroom and she and Josiah walked out with the twins.

Patrick and Brenda held the twins.

Patrick reached one baby to Morgan and said, “Morgan.”

Morgan stared at Patrick.

Patrick and Brenda looked at the boys and grinned.

Brenda said, “They look just like Natalie. Blond with blue eyes.”

Brenda heart touched her.

She looked at a puzzle looking Josiah and smiled.

Patrick and Brenda gave the twins back to Josiah and Mag.

Brenda and Patrick walked to the bedroom door and congratulated Natalie.

Brenda hugged Josiah.

Patrick shook Josiah’s hand.

Patrick and Brenda walked out the front with Mag and Morgan.

They saw the mid-day sun was melting the snow.

Patrick and Brenda saw Gary rushing to the restaurant.

They saw Steven come out and stand and talk to Gary.

Brenda said, “Eleanor sent Gary to find Steven.”

Patrick and Brenda continued to Joe and Peggy.

Sarah went home to spend Christmas Day with her family.

Patrick and Brenda told of Mag and Morgan’s wedding. And of Mag’s beautiful twin grand boys.

Brenda had Peter to bake a cake and make a nice arrangement out of the food that was left.

Patrick brought Joe and Peggy a bottle of whiskey.

They stayed for hours and had a good time with their good friends.

Patrick said, “Joe you and Peggy tell us the truth. Who is sick and how bad?”

Joe looked at Peggy.

Brenda began to shake.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Peggy said, “I’ll be gone by the spring.”

Brenda whispered, “No.”

Joe put his head on his arms that were on the table and wailed for his wife.

Patrick stood and held Joe by his shoulders.

Brenda could not move.

She stared into the eyes of her good friend.

Peggy reached for Brenda’s hands.

Brenda touched Peggy’s hands.

Brenda tried to hold back her tears.

But they geyser out of her eyes.

Brenda said, “Peggy there is a doctor here…

Peggy shook her head for no and said, “All of those years on the street. It took the toll on my body. We sent Sarah home for Christmas so we could spend this last Christmas together. I’ll tell her when she returns. I am glad she is sewing that will give her something to keep her mind busy and she is leaving next week to go to the capitol to go to school in business. I am so proud of her.”

Peggy looked out the window.

She said, “I wish I could be here for her graduation. She might that good looking soldier and I think he likes her. He sent her a Christmas message that came today. I wish her nothing but the best.”

Joe was still wailing.

Peggy said, “Patrick you and Brenda remember Sarah and Joe.”

Brenda nodded her head.

An hour later Patrick and Brenda left their friends.

Brenda said, “We will be back. I know our friendship has always been on rarely seeing each other, but the love was there. I wish we could have done more for you two.”

Peggy shook her head and grabbed Brenda‘s hand and said, “No. Don’t you start that. We told you two at the beginning of our friendship we did not want your money.”

Joe said, “Only your whiskey.”

Brenda grabbed Joe and hugged him.

Peggy said, “GOD knew HE was calling me home and HE let you all bless us with such nice comfort before I leave. You two are a blessing.”

Patrick and Brenda left at dark and rode home.

They cried all the way home.

Gary had eaten and walked out the house to go back to the re-modeled shed.

He heard someone crying.

He stopped and looked he saw Patrick and Brenda’s carriage entered the backyard.

He looked at them.

Patrick and Brenda sat in their carriage for a long time and cried.

Gary walked on to the re-modeled shed.

Susan and Mellissa were looking out the kitchen windows.

Dan just returned from taking Theresa home and checking on his house.

His neighbor Emily said the neighbors sat on his porch and enjoyed their cookies and hot coco.

Dan was happy.

He finally felt good about himself.

Nadine and peter sat in the worker’s area and were eating dinner.

Peter made a beef stew and ham soup.

He baked a lot of different rolls and breads.

The family and the workers enjoyed the food.

Patrick and Brenda finally stepped out their buggy.

The workers were watching them.

Nadine and peter turned and looked at Patrick and Brenda when they walked in the house.

Patrick and Brenda were holding each other and nodded to the workers.

Eleanor was making her list of things to do.

She stood and walked out her office.

She locked the door and saw her mother and father.

She first grinned.

Then she saw they were in pain.

Percy was practicing his piano.

Eleanor walked fast to her mother and father.

They walked through the billiards room.

Michael was walking to the sitting room with a cookie in his hand.

Eleanor told Peter no more sweets in the house.

Michael looked and saw his grandparents and he saw they were crying and he yelled, “Grandpa and grandma!”

The other children in the sitting room jumped and ran to the foyer.

They saw Michael running and hugging Brenda and Patrick.

Shirley was needlepointing and Thomas and Bruce were reading.

They jumped and ran out the sitting room and walked Patrick and Brenda to the sitting room.

Jose was coming out the family dining room and looked at Patrick and Brenda after Michael yelled.

Jose and Georgette walked down towards the sitting room so they could hear what was going on.

The family walked in the sitting room.

Eleanor walked in behind everybody and closed the door.

Jose mumbled, “Heifer.”

Jose and Georgette turned and walked through the billiards room to the kitchen.

Jose locked the front door and put the bar behind it.

He went to suites and doubled check all windows and doors.

Dr. Ralph woke late afternoon and check on Lorraine.

He ate dinner with the family.

He wheeled Lorraine to the sitting room.

He read his bible, while Shirley needlepointed.

Michael and Thomas were looking at the maps of Africa and Bruce was reading on being accepted to the naval school.

Dr. Ralph watched Bruce as he sat and thought about what he was reading.

They could barely hear Percy in the music room.

Lorraine went to sleep.

Dr. Ralph stood and pushed her to her room.

Susan was sitting in her room.

She undressed Lorraine and walked out and went to the kitchen.

That’s when she saw and heard Patrick and Brenda.

Dr. Ralph was in the library when he heard Michael.

He jumped and ran out the library.

He saw the family walking to the sitting room.

He decided not to go to the family room because it is probably a family problem and not a medical one.

They knew where he was.

Dr. Ralph thought, “I’ll check on Natalie tomorrow and I need to send Dr. Woodson a telegram about Calvin.”

Dr. Ralph sat in the awe- inspiring library and started reading two books.

Patrick told them his and Brenda’s good friend is dying and there is nothing that can be done to help her.

Shirley twisted her face and said, “That’s Sarah’s aunt and uncle. Grandma how did you know to ask me about their health?’

Brenda said, “Shirley sometimes there is just something in your heart and mind.”

Bruce looked at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “I’ll get you something to drink.”

Patrick said, “No. I don’t want to numb the pain this evening and have to look at it tomorrow.”

They all sat in the sitting room and watched Patrick hold Brenda and they were warmed by the fire.

Eleanor sat by Shirley and held her as she needlepointed.

Michael and Thomas sat and watched their grandparents.

Bruce continued to read his naval book.

Eleanor looked at Bruce and thought, “He is just thirteen and mapping out his life already.”

Everyone went to bed later.

Patrick and Brenda walked to their suite.

They saw the light from the library.

They stopped and looked in on Lorraine.

They saw Gen was gone home.

They walked hand in hand to the library and saw Dr. Ralph sitting and reading.

He was reading Joseph’s book.

Dr. Ralph turned his head and saw them.

He stood and said, “Good night. Are you two alright?”

Patrick looked at the book.

Dr. Ralph looked at the book and said, “It was on the table. I have the page marked so I can put it back. I love this book and would read it once a year when I went to college.”

Patrick said, “Not being mean, that is Joseph’s book that he left here on the table on that page. We never touch it. But each time a good man comes here they always read that book.”

Dr. Ralph put the book back.

Brenda said, “He was not saying that for you to put the book back but that good men always reach for that book.”

Dr. Ralph smiled.

Patrick said, “No good doctor. I wish I could change our friend’s health. She is dying and we can’t help her.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I can go and see her.”

Patrick said, “She does not want any help. She went to the capitol and they ran all type of tests and confirmed she only had about six months to live. Now she said she only has about three months.”

Brenda said, “You know we were the best friends who rarely saw each other. Now I regret that. I should have went to visit more often. They said, we have nothing to regret because that is how they wanted it to be.”

Dr. Ralph listened.

Dr. Ralph stood and said, “I understand.”

Brenda looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “You have made your mind up about Lorraine.”

Dr. Ralph teared up and bit his lips.

Patrick looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “I will only love Lorraine forever. But I have to be a doctor. I love being a doctor. Lorraine will not allow me to love anything or anybody more than she. She would not have allowed me to take a patient home and stay with the patient to get them back on their feet. Or to stay at a patient’s bedside all night to deliver a baby.”

Dr. Ralph stopped.

He was in pain over Lorraine.

Brenda touched her heart because she felt Dr. Ralph’s heart and his fighting to put Lorraine in his life but she could not fit.

Dr. Ralph said, “I was prepared to stay until the spring, because we don’t know the internal damage Lorraine’s organs have suffered. We have no medicine for the damage. I have only been here a few days and I see you have people ready to help Lorraine. I do not know how long she will live. She might outlive us all. I do not know her mental and emotional state. I do know GOD can heal and deliver. HE brought her back from the dead for a reason. I will stay long enough to get her in a routine. Please send me weekly reports. Good or bad. Maybe I can come once a year to see her.”

Brenda said, “She is our family. We will take care of her.”

Dr. Ralph said, “While you are gone for six months I will come for a week or two and check on her.”

Dr. Ralph exhaled.

Patrick said, “I will leave word for you, Tony or Bradley to be welcome on our trains to travel and especially to see about Lorraine while we are away.”

Brenda said, “We have a lot to put on paper for the coming year.”

Dr. Ralph nodded.

He put down the second book on the table and Patrick put out the light.

They walked out the library,

Dr. Ralph looked around and said, “You have much.”

Patrick said, “Luke 12:48 states to whom much is given much is required. You heard the treachery, the killing and stealing that goes on all the time around us. Then the theft of our friends’ lives. The money GOD gives us is to only help others. We are rewarded with getting closer to HIM and JESUS.”

Dr. Ralph, Patrick and Brenda stood in the hall and talked.

Dr. Ralph said, “I need to send Dr. Woodson a telegram in the morning about Calvin. I am very concern about him. I need to send a telegram to Meredith to tell my brother to travel by train here. He is being assigned to the new military headquarters.”

Patrick said, “We can give him first class accommodations.”

Dr. Ralph said, “No. He is evil like his father. Have nothing to do with him.”

Dr. Ralph walked in Lorraine’s suite and checked her vitals.

Patrick and Brenda hugged each other and walked to their suite.

They dressed for bed.

Patrick sat on the foot of the bed.

Brenda sat on the foot of the bed next to Patrick.

She held his hand and put her head on his shoulder.

Brenda said, “I don’t want to pray tonight.”

Patrick said, “I don’t want to pray either. I can’t even think with all of this evil going on around us. A real nurse poisoning Lorraine. The doctors don’t know if it destroyed her brain to make her retarded or if she has the internal organs to have life. Peggy dying. Sarah moving to the capitol for college and Joe by himself. Jose hurt over Briana. The only ones who benefited were Mellissa and Stephen.”

Brenda hollered and hit Patrick’s hands.

Patrick said, “I’ll take a beating if I can get some relief from all of this evil.”

Brenda said, “Patrick did you sense anything about Josiah?”

Patrick said, “Like what?”

Brenda said, “Like he dying.”

Patrick turned his head and said, “Damn Brenda.”

Brenda said, “Who else can I share this with. We all are reeling, but Denise.”

Patrick laughed.

He said, “She was grinning.”

Brenda said, “I want to be here for Peggy.”

Patrick said, “Me too. I haven’t said anything yet about that Mabel and Curtis mess with Beverly. Then steal their new horses and wagon with that little money. I pray they never return to Beverly and Al.”

Brenda said, “Who can stop Al’s pension money?”

Patrick said, “The mob. Eleanor sent Ryan a review of the books he sent. I believe he has enough to go to the sheriff and the new police they have formed. Stephen asking about Monica. When he finds out we have to lie like we didn’t know…”

Brenda hollered.

Patrick chuckle and said, “What about Sally’s mother being right here. GOD is behind all of this.”

Brenda mumbled.

Patrick laughed.

Brenda said, ”Patrick do you think if Lorraine lives she can let Dr. Ralph be free enough to work like he does?”

Patrick said, “You are talking about Lorraine?”

Brenda laughed and said, “I don’t want her to be by herself. The kids are going off to different schools. I believe Shirley will marry Skip when he gets back. Lorraine, if she lives will not have anything to do. She may not be able to do work. I hate this Patrick. I hate this.”

Brenda started stomping her feet.

Patrick held Brenda tight.

They looked like two little children scared, alone and lost.

They held onto each other cried for a long time.

They got in the bed and held onto each other.

Patrick said, “We have to think and do something to help Mattie and those children there in the small city.”

Brenda said, “I hate that piece of land. We have to go into our personal funds for a lot of this.”

They went to sleep.

Dr. Ralph sat in Lorraine suite and watched her for about an hour.

He walked across the hall to his room and dressed for bed.

Jose took Dr. Ralph’s blood stained clothes and gave to Mellissa to see if they could be washed.

Dr. Ralph slept until he heard the workers around seven thirty setting the hot water ready.

Dr. Ralph got out bed and was on his knees.

George and Gary knocked on his door and Dr. Ralph said, “Come in.”

George opened the door and saw Dr. Ralph on his knees and Dr. Ralph said, “You can bring in the water.”

Gary and George brought in the water.

They took Patrick and Brenda their water.

Jose got up around seven and went and bathed and shaved.

He went back to his room and dressed,

He could not sleep again.

Eleanor was awake and laid in her room.

She thought, “God I hate Bruce. I want him dead. But somebody needs to go with Percy to Vienna. We have to see if he pass the test. It would be my luck he pass. But I can get rid of Bruce. I know my parents they will not leave when there is trouble. Peggy was one. She is one of their best friends.”

Gary and George knocked on her door.

She said, “Come in.”

They brought her hot water into the room.

Eleanor could hear the light sound of the piano and knew Percy was up and downstairs by her office practicing.

She thought two weeks.

Eleanor got up and dressed and went to her office.

She made a supply list for the Chicago train station. She ordered five additional train cars and sent the telegram to the train car company.

She made the supply lists for the hospital and lodge for Steven to complete when he comes around ten am.

Eleanor sent a telegram to the to the supply companies to send the supplies to Philadelphia.

The companies sent her a telegram they were doubling the price.

Eleanor was furious.

She stomped to breakfast.

Theresa was walking down the hall to go to the music room.

Theresa said, “Good morning Eleanor.”

Eleanor said, “Good morning”, with the telegram in her hand.

Theresa thought, “Wow. First thing this morning.”

Eleanor went to breakfast everyone were seated.

Eleanor said, “Good morning.”

Nadine brought Michael’s plate with one lamb chop, scrambled eggs, biscuits and grits.”

Nadine placed, a bowl of oatmeal and sliced fruit in front of Dr. Ralph.

He said, “Thank you.”

Susan pushed Lorraine to breakfast.

Michael jumped up and went to Lorraine and sat next to her.

Nadine placed a bowl of water oatmeal in front of Lorraine.

Lorraine said, “Egg.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

Michael said, “Lorraine said egg.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I heard her Michael. I am thinking if her body can digest the egg.”

Lorraine looked at Dr. Ralph.

Michael continued to feed Lorraine her oatmeal.

He was eating his lamb chop with his other hand.

Lorraine bit at Michael’s lamb chop.

Eleanor stared at Lorraine.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Lorraine.

Thomas and Bruce stared at Lorraine.

Shirley grinned.

Dr. Ralph stared.

Michael jerked his lamb chop back and said, “Nadine bring Lorraine a scrambled egg.”

Nadine looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said. Make sure it is soft.”

Michael leaned back and ate his lamb chop and continued to feed Lorraine her oatmeal.

Shirley giggled and continued to eat her omelet.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley and at her omelet.

He said, “Shirley what is in your omelet?”

Shirley said, “Spinach, cheese and tomatoes and a little onion.”

Peter walked in with pancakes.

He said, “here is Percy?’

Eleanor said, “In the music room.”

Patrick said, “What do you have?”

Patrick said, “Is that stewed peaches and whipped cream? Give me that plate.”

Bruce looked.

Peter said, “I have a strawberry and blueberry pancakes.”

Thomas said, “I’ll take blueberry.”

Bruce said, “I’ll take the strawberry.”

Brittany and Susan gave Bruce and Thomas the plates of pancakes.

Eleanor stared at the full plates.

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

Nadine brought two plates in.

She sat one in front of Eleanor.

Patrick said, “What is that Eleanor?”

Eleanor said, “Corn beef hash.”

Patrick stopped and look.

He said, “Susan go and get Percy for breakfast.”

Susan went to get Percy.

They said grace.

Everyone was eating.

Percy ran into the family dining room.

Patrick put the plate full of pancakes with peach and cream Percy he was about to devour his pancakes.

Patrick had them to bring him the corn beef hash and grits.

Everyone enjoyed their breakfast.

Dr. Ralph said, “I want to go and check on Natalie and her boys.”

Nadine said, “Boys.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Twins.”

Brenda said, “we can take you and go back the site of the hospital.”

Dr. Ralph became interested and said, “Yes I would love to see the site of the hospital after I check on Natalie and her boys.”

Patrick said, “I’ll send your telegrams once we finish breakfast.”

Jose walked in the family dining room and looked around.

Jose said, “Dr. Ralph, Gen wanted you to join her for lunch today at Robert and Bethany.”

Brenda said, “Can we come?”

Jose looked at Brenda.

Dr. Ralph said, “That’s kind but I don’t know what time Mrs. Olsen is wanting to meet for lunch.”

Brenda said, “The hospital is only a few minutes from the restaurant.”

Dr. Ralph said, “That’s fine. I wish I knew the time.”

Jose said, “I can go by her house and tell her a time you can meet her at the restaurant.”

Patrick said, “Good thought Jose.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I want to spend at least an hour with Natalie and her boys.”

Jose said, “Boys.’

Michael looked up at Jose and raised two fingers.

Patrick said, “Dr. Ralph what about twelve.”

Dr. Ralph looked and said, “That sounds well.”

Jose said, “I’ll leave now and go by Mrs. Gen tell her and see if she needs any help.”

Patrick said, “Thank you Jose.”

Brenda said, “Jose, is all the leftovers over?”

Jose said, “Yes ma am.”

Brenda said, “Thank God.”

Eleanor snickered.

Shirley said, “Can I go with you all. Me, grandpa and grandma can sit at a separate table since Gen invited you.”

Brenda said, “Shirley you don’t tell me where to sit.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Jose, have a carriage pulled around with two horses.”

Jose nodded.

Dr. Ralph watched Michael feed Lorraine.

Nadine brought the soft scramble egg.

Michael fed Lorraine the egg.

She ate and enjoyed the egg.

Nadine gave her a glass of water.

Michael gave her some water to drink.

Dr. Ralph watched Lorraine intensely.

Brittany, Susan, Georgette watched Dr. Ralph.

Eleanor went to her office.

Shirley went upstairs to change clothes.

Patrick and Dr. Ralph went to Patrick’s office and sent Dr. Ralph’s telegrams.

Brenda got she and Patrick’s coats.

Percy ran back to the music room.

Theresa was eating breakfast with the other workers.

Susan pushed Lorraine to the sitting room.

Brenda went in the sitting room and talked with Lorraine with Michael, Thomas and Bruce.

Dr. Ralph picked up his black doctor bag and checked it.

He put on his coat, scarf, hat and gloves.

Shirley dressed and came downstairs and sat and grinned at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph walked in the sitting room.

He looked at Shirley and said, “Shirley you look very nice.”

Shirley grinned and said, “Thank you.”

Brenda got the quilts she and Patrick used the day before.

They left the sitting room and met Patrick in the foyer.

Brittany and Georgette had cleaned Lorraine’s room and were walking to the washroom with her linens.

Patrick was putting on his scarf, hat and coat and put on his gloves.

He looked at Brenda and said, “I see you have the quilts.

He looked and said, “Shirley you and Dr. Ralph needs some quilts and blankets.”

Shirley said, “I’m fine.”

Dr. Ralph said, “It is extremely cold Shirley.”

Brenda saw Susan and said, “Susan, bring us another four to six blankets and quilts.”

Susan turned around and walked to the linen closet and got two blankets and two quilts.

She walked back to the foyer and reached the quilts and blankets to Shirley.

Shirley would not take the blankets.

Dr. Ralph took the blankets and quilts and said, “Thank you Susan. When Lorraine gets tired or sleepy take her to her room and have the boys to help you put her to bed.”

Susan said, “Yes sir.”

Patrick. Brenda, Dr. Ralph and Shirley left the house.

They saw Jose leaving in a carriage.

He did not ride a horse because he was trying to keep the cold from him.

Jose was wrapped up in a several blankets and speeding with the horses.

Brenda got in the back seat with Shirley. Patrick steered the carriage and put Dr. Ralph up front.

Patrick wrapped in his two quilts.

Dr. Ralph wrapped in the blanket first and then the quilt.

He reached the blanket and quilt to Shirley and she said, “No thank you.”

Dr. Ralph looked back at Shirley and said, “Shirley, you are attractive and your clothes are beautiful but you can catch pneumonia or a bad cold that will turn into pneumonia and you could die. Do you not understand that you are not well? That’ is why you have to have continual medical attention. Take this covering.”

Shirley whimpered.

Brenda looked at Shirley.

Shirley looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Shirley even normal people are wrapping up.”

Shirley took the blanket and quilt and wrapped up.

Patrick sped to Mag.

They sat in the sitting room and talked while Dr. Ralph checked Natalie and the twins.

Dr. Ralph and Josiah walked out the bedroom.

Josiah said, “I will go Monday and start the paperwork to record the boys live birth.”

Shirley said, “Can I see them?”

Josiah said, “Sure.”

He walked Shirley to Natalie.

Shirley was saying how beautiful they were.

Brenda said, “What are their names?”

Mag said, “For sure the oldest is Roger and I think Natalie is naming the second one after her father.”

Shirley came out the bedroom with tears in her eyes.

Dr. Ralph looked at her.

Mag said, “Isn’t this weather strangely cold.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

Dr. ralph put on his coat, scarf, hat and gloves and followed everyone out the door.

They all bundled up, including Shirley, and rode through town to the site of the new hospital.

Dr. ralph was so excited.

Patrick said, “We can’t convince you to move here?”

Dr. Ralph said, “No. But I love that a hospital is being built. To help people.”

They all got out of the carriage and were walking around the property.

Commander Brown was standing on the balcony waiting for his troops.

Dr. Ralph started looking around.

Patrick mouth gapped open.

Shirley ran to Brenda.

Commander Brown saw them and grinned.

Then the troops thundered down the street.

Patrick and Dr. Ralph nearly had heart attacks.

Shirley grabbed Brenda and they both were shaking.

Dr. Ralph saw people running off the streets.

The horses were kicking and bucking in the air.

The drivers were trying to get their horses, buggies, carriages and wagons off the street.

Dr. Ralph saw the troops far down the street and he felt the earth moving.

Patrick was looking back at the carriage.

He knew he could not make it to the carriage.

He ran to a screaming Brenda and Shirley.

People were running on the sidewalks to get out of the way.

Dr. Ralph said, “My God. I can’t imagine how the thunderous noise of the Civil War.”

Patrick was trying to act like he was not afraid.

He looked and saw it was the military.

He grabbed Shirley and Brenda and yelled, “It’s the military! It’s the soldiers.”

Commander Brown and the staff were laughing at Patrick and Brenda.

Patrick just looked up before the troop got to him and saw Commander Brown and his staff laughing at him.

Patrick looked again and said, “Brenda that’s the heathen co-pastor Walker over there laughing at us.”

Brenda and Shirley were still holding tightly to one another.

Dr. Ralph looked up and the Commanders pointing and laughing at them.

Dr. Ralph looked and saw the soldiers were nearly to them.

He ran to Patrick and waved at the commanders, who were laughing at them.

Patrick said, “They think this type of noise is normal”.

Dr. Ralph said, “For them. Move the hospital.”

Shirley had her head buried in Brenda’s chest and yelled, “I don’t care!”

Patrick was peeping and he saw Stephanie’s husband leading the troops.

People on the street started cheering and yelling.

Shirley and Brenda did not look.

Patrick saw the balcony snap to attention and saluted the troops.

Patrick peeped and saw Robert.

He yelled Shirley Skip’s troop,

Shirley had her head in Brenda’s chest and said, “I don’t care.”

The people were getting louder as the troops and their battle train horses rounded the corner.

Jake saw Shirley.

He touched Skip and pointed.

Patrick yelled, “Skip Shirley. He’s looking at you.”

Shirley lifted up her head from Brenda and was scared and weak to move.

They were waiting for the other troop to reach the entrance of the headquarters.

Shirley looked and saw Skip.

She grinned but was holding her stomach from fear.

Dr. Ralph got over his fear and started clapping for the soldiers.

Brenda stood and rolled her eyes at him.

Dr. Ralph looked at Brenda and continued to clap.

Skip looked at Shirley and they rode to the beginning of the headquarters.

Dr. Ralph reached for Shirley’s hands and said, “Come on lets’ see them enter into the headquarters.

Shirley ran across the yard with Dr. Ralph and they stood by some more civilians and clapped and applauded the troops returning in victory.

They saw a few wagons with soldiers in them.

Shirley gasped.

Dr. Ralph looked at the wounded soldiers. He saw some covered bodies, but he did not say anything to Shirley.

Brenda and Patrick walked to the carriage and stood.

The troops looked very dignified returning to the headquarters.

Patrick and Brenda stood by the carriage and they slowly turned and looked at each other.

They turned and looked at the troops entering the headquarters.

They saw Shirley and Dr. Ralph waving and clapping at the troops.

Patrick said, “I wonder if Gen was ran over by that other troop?”

Brenda said, “see why Jose and you didn’t want the boys to come.”

Patrick said, “I bet they came to replenish and go back.”

Brenda said, “Go back where?”

Patrick stared at Brenda and she stared at him.

Patrick said, “You didn’t see the wagons with the covered bodies.”

Brenda said, “I was trying not to see anything.”

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Patrick you were scared too.”

Patrick said, “Yeah.”

Brenda burst out laughing. She covered her mouth.

She said, “Patrick we may have to move the hospital further back. We bought all of this land.”

She and Patrick turned their backs to the military headquarters and started pointing farther back.

The troops entered the military headquarters and the commanders went inside.

Commander Walker looked at Patrick and Brenda who were pointing back.

Commander Brown laughed and said, “They are going to move the hospital. We are too noisy for them”

Commander Walker huff and said, “Huh.”

Commander Brown said, “Did you call them heathens at the Christmas service?”

Commander Walker looked and was thinking.

Commander Brown laughed.

Shirley was grinning.

She turned to Dr. Ralph and they walked to Patrick and Brenda.

The people were still clapping and waving.

They saw people who were in town for holiday to visit their love ones.

Shirley look at them and said, “Grandma and grandpa I wish we had a big family style restaurant for the military families to go.”

Patrick said, “We got too much going on right now.”

He and Brenda turned back around and was looking at the land.

Patrick said, “Brenda that might work.”

Dr. Ralph looked and said, “Move the hospital back off the main street?”

Patrick said, “Yes.”

Brenda said, “Let’s go and eat.”

Patrick said, “You want something to drink.”

Brenda laughed.

Brenda said, “Shirley did the family give Natalie and Josiah a baby gift?”

Shirley was thinking and said, “Grandma I don’t think so.”

Brenda said, “I wonder is that shop is still open over here?”

Shirley started grinning.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley delight she has for shopping.

Patrick rode to Robert and Bethany.

Gen was sitting and shaking.

Brenda looked at her and said, “Baby you ran into the troops?’

Gen was quivering and pointing like a big baby out the window.

Patrick said, “I bet that is scotch.”

Dr. Ralph looked.

Patrick and Shirley spoke to Robert and Bethany.

Dr. Ralph sat and they all were shaking.

Robert said, “You know what is strange. Robert Jr. love that noise. He was grinning and clapping.”

Patrick said, “Whiskey for me and Brenda.”

He looked at Dr. Ralph.

Robert looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “You didn’t drink when we were in Philadelphia.”

Brenda said, “That’s right.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Hot coffee with plenty of Robert said, “Shirley, hot tea and cream and sugar.”

Shirley grinned and said, “Yes.”

Patrick looked at everyone and said, “What are we eating?”

Shirley said, “Soup.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Soup.”

Patrick said, “Soup for us all.”

They all ate soup and drank their tea.

Brenda told Gen Natalie had a set of twin boys that Dr. Ralph delivered.

Bethany walked over to the table with Robert Jr.

Brenda asked her if the baby shop was opened.

Bethany said, “Yes.”

Brenda told her that Natalie had a set of twin boys on Christmas Day.

Bethany was happy.

She said, “We are getting more boys than girls. I know we are not adding any more to the talley.”

She and Robert Jr. walked upstairs.

Shirley and Brenda saw the baby shop and got in the carriage and rode across the street to it.

They bought two of everything.

They bought different sizes of blankets.

They bought clothes the twins can grow into.

They told the shop manager to wrap the items.

Brenda and Shirley carried the items to the carriage and put them in.

Patrick and Gen were looking out the window.

Patrick said, “Look at that…”

Dr. Ralph turned and looked.

Patrick said, “Any reason to shop.”

Gen talked to Dr. Ralph about how long he would be there.

Dr. Ralph said, “I’ll probably stay through the new year.”

Patrick said, “I know Eleanor ids going to be extremely busy for the next several months. She is having a meeting with Steven today.”

Brenda and Shirley pulled up in front of Robert and Bethany’s shop.

They got out of the wagon.

Gen laughed and said, “I forgot Bren knew how to steer horses.”

She and Patrick burst out laughing.

Dr. Ralph looked at how Gen and Patrick laughed that was a joke and Brenda had to be an expert horseman.

Patrick said, “We have about an hour before dark. Gen you are staying at home tonight?”

Gen said, “Yes. I am getting use to it.”

Patrick said, “Co-pastor Walker asked me to deliver Sunday’s message.”  
gen looked at Patrick and said., “You are going to do it?”

Patrick said, “Yes. I’m going to take this heathen with me.”

Brenda looked at Patrick and said, “Gen and that heathen was one of the commanders standing on the balcony.”

Gen was shocked and said, “What!”

Gen said, “so you all are going back to tomorrow. I believe I’ll go to our church tomorrow.”

Brenda said, Patrick once we heathens leave Sally’s family church lets stop by and give Natalie and Josiah the things we got as a gift.”

Shirley was slightly smiling and looking out the window towards the headquarters.

Gen sipped her tea and looked at Shirley and said, “Shirley you use to be excited about Skip. Is there somebody in Philadelphia that has knocked Skip off your mantel?”

Brenda looked at Shirley.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

Patrick looked at Dr. Ralph then at Shirley.

Shirley could not think of a response and stared at Gen.

Shirley said, “Grandma, in case Skip shows up tomorrow. Is there anything for a nice dinner.”

Brenda said, “He’s a soldier anything is a nice dinner.”

Gen laughed and turned her head.

Patrick and D. Ralph looked at Brenda.

Shirley looked at her grandma and looked back out the window.

Brenda said, “Maybe Patrick, Eleanor and Shirley can take the gift to Natalie and Josiah. I have gotten cold.”

Gen looked at Brenda and said, “Bren you look well dressed.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Brenda and said, “Let us get you home and keep you warm throughout the night.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Gen and said, “Gen how are you feeling?’

Gen looked at Patrick and said, “I’m nice and toasty.”

Patrick looked at Dr. Ralph.

Brenda said, “Gen, what did Jose do when he came by this morning?’

Gen thought and said, “I brought in my water and coal from yesterday.”

Shirley jumped from the table and ran outside the restaurant.

She ran out and spoke to Stephanie and her parents.

She pointed at the restaurant.

Stephanie and her parents waved at Patrick and Brenda.

Gen said, “She nearly gave me a heart attack.”

Dr, Ralph said, “That’s what I am afraid of.”

Gen and Brenda looked at Dr. Ralph.

Shirley was pointing at the headquarters.

Stephanie touched her heart.

He mother grabbed her by the shoulders.

Brenda said, “That is one of the nurses Shirley hired to take care of Lorraine. She married the first soldier you saw leading the troop…”

Dr. Ralph nodded his head.

Brenda said, “His father is a commander. I believe in the nation’s capitol.”

Gen said, “Stephanie is a nurse and she married up in the military family.”

Patrick said, “Is that what you women think about all the time marrying up?’

Brenda said, “Gen guess what Miss Emilou sent word to Eleanor and said?’

Gen put down her teacup and said, “I can’t imagine.”

Brenda said, “She saw Gary yesterday and told him to ask Miss Eleanor to ask you and Claressa which all girls’ boarding school you went to. Because you married ambassadors and she want to marry an ambassador to go to parties and travel.”

Gen looked at Brenda and said, “I have to say…”

Looking at Patrick and said, “She’s just eight and has a mind to improve her lot in life. In the day and times we live that is just about the only way a woman can move up in life and status. Some kind of way she knows what to do to look out for her future.”

Brenda said, “You heard her ask Dr. Ralph if he and Lorraine would have a son and would she be too old for him because Thomas was too bad.”

Dr. Ralph laughed.

He said, “Speaking of Lorraine. We do need to be getting back.”

Gen said, “She does not know Bruce wants to be an ambassador. Nathan whispered to me that he thinks Bruce likes Emilou and he believes Bruce and Emilou will marry later in life.”

Brenda said, “We know she is from a good family. I want to be alive to see that.”

Gen said, “Emilou will need recommendations to get in those schools. I can write one, you, Eleanor and maybe Claressa. That should be enough to get her into a couple.”

Robert walked over with the whiskey bottle and said, “Gen you want some more whiskey in your tea?’

Gen held her head down and giggle.

Robert said, “Oh.”

He walked away.

Patrick said, “Nice and toasty.”

Brenda was looking at Shirley and said, “I believe Shirley just invited them to Sunday dinner.”

Patrick said, “I hope she didn’t. Gen we are stopping by your house and you pack a bag for a few days.”

Gen said, “No. No. No. I have to get use to being in the house by myself.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I want to check your heart. I am not going back and forth over this rather town. I thought this was a small town. It is rather large.”

Brenda said, “Gen what did Jose do?”

Gen said, “He really did not have anything to do, but he feed the horses and gave them water. He filled my coal buckets and set up my furnace and filled it but he did not start a fire. He left. But I felt he wanted time at home by himself.”

Brenda said, “This is terrible. I pray for happy times.”

Gen looked at Brenda and said, “Nearly all of our lives we have lived in danger, treachery and desperate times. That’s why heart trouble would be the simple problem for me. We will overcome this to as in our past.”

Patrick looked at Gen like he was thinking.

Dr. Ralph believe they were talking about their lives rescuing the slaves.

Shirley was laughing and talking to Stephanie and her parents.

It was getting dark.

Patrick paid the bill.

He stood and helped Gen up.

Dr. Ralph stood and helped Brenda up.

Dr. Ralph said, “Do you all have heated stones?”

Patrick said, “What?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Hutch came back and said one of your workers brought him heated rocks he used on Shirley’s back.”

Patrick thought and said, “That is Gary.”

Brenda said, “I saw those stone the other day in the storage area by Eleanor’s office.”

They were walking out the restaurant and stopped and talked to Robert.

Shirley ran back in the restaurant and got her bag and said ‘good evening’ to Robert, Bethany and Robert Jr.

Shirley said, “Grandma I invited Stephanie and her parents to Sunday dinner they might like soldiers’ food too.”

Patrick said, “Shirley we have to talk.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley in shocked.

Shirley rode with Gen.

They got to Gen’s cottage.

Dr. Ralph got out and went to the stables and hook the other horse and closed and locked the stables.

He and Patrick walked around Gen’s house.

Brenda and Shirley rushed in Gen’s house and double checked all the windows.

Gen got several outfits and another coat and two pairs of boots.

She, Shirley and Brenda rushed out the house.

Gen lit the light on the front of the house.

Dr. Ralph jumped in Gen’s driver seat.

Shirley looked and walked over to Patrick and Brenda and got in the back of the carriage.

Dr. Ralph and said, “Gen me and you need to talk.”

Gen said, “About me and my heart?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

Dr. Ralph followed Patrick.

Most of the snow had disappeared.

Dr. Ralph and Gen talked all the way to the house.

He drove the carriage around back and helped Gen out.

He helped her with her bags and got his doctor bag out of the carriage with Brenda.

Gen said, “Brenda, the horses will stink up the babies’ clothes.

Jose opened the door and heard Gen.

He walked to the carriage and took out the large gift and carried it to the parlor.

Brenda was walking down to the storage area and said, “Gen any room you want.”

Gen thought, “The one closest to the liquor.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Gen.

Gen thought “He could not have perceived that thought. I have to be careful. He is kind of religious.”

Patrick stopped in the kitchen and sniffed.

He said, “Dan is that what I want to eat?”

Dan laughed and said, “I went home and was looking around and put the bucket out there. They filled it up.”

Patrick grinned and said, “When?’

Dan said, “About fifteen minutes.

Patrick walked through the billiards room.

Everyone heard Percy playing all day.

Eleanor was annoyed and snapping.

Dan said, “She has a long way to go.”

Peter said, “You didn’t mention to Patrick that you took Theresa home and was checking on your property.”

Dan said, “They will be gone for six months next year. I will be having fish fries and getting rich.”

Everyone went their rooms and washed their hands.

Dr. Ralph checked on Lorraine and talked with her.

Brenda got the stones and rocks and put them in the fireplace in the sitting room.

Shirley stared at the rocks.

Brenda looked at Shirley and she pulled off her coat, scarf, hat and gloves and took them to her bedroom.

Patrick rushed to their bedroom and then to his office.

He checked for telegrams.

Eleanor was rushing from her office and stopped by the music room and told Percy to come to dinner.

Everyone sat at the table.

Dr. Ralph wheeled Lorraine to the table.

Dan brought the large tray with a lot of fish.

He was frying the workers’ fish.

The boys were as happy as Patrick to eat the fish, French fried potatoes coleslaw and Boston baked beans.

Dr. Ralph was enjoying his fish.

Patrick winked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Aren’t you glad you had soup for lunch?”

Michael jumped from his seat and ran to Lorraine.

He helped Lorraine lift her fork to her mouth.

Michael ate his lamb chop and a small fish.

Dan walked into the kitchen and took out the fish from the skillet he was frying for the workers.

The y all sat and ate and enjoyed their food.

Gary and the four workers ran to the house and ate their fish and played cards.

Jose sat at his desk and ate his fish in loneness and quietness.

Everyone watched Jose and felt sorry for him.

Jose thought, “All the women that I chose were terrible people. Only one I could trust. I will never see her again. If I do, she is probably married and with a bunch of children and maybe grandchildren.”

Patrick said, “Dr. Ralph if you are not tired can you adjust my back and Brenda’s hip.”

Brenda was laughing and talking to Bruce and Percy.

She stopped and looked at Patrick.

Shirley held her head down and was cutting her fish.

Dan gave her and Lorraine mashed Vegetables.

Dr. Ralph looked for Susan and Georgette to ask about Lorraine’s day.

Nadine looked at him and walked to Dr. Ralph and said, “Doctor you need something?”  
Dr. Ralph said, “The two young women who attended to Lorraine. Are they gone for the day?’

Nadine side, “They are at dinner. I will get them.”

Dr. Ralph said, “No. Let them enjoy dinner afterwards Thank you.”

He was watching Lorraine.

Lorraine choked on the fish.

Dr. Ralph said, “No fish.”

Michael moved the fish and said, “No lamb chop.”

Lorraine ate the mashed carrots, beets and baked potato.

Dr. Ralph watched her to see if she was having a reaction and she did not.

He stared at Lorraine.

He turned to Shirley and looked at her plate.

Shirley did not eat butter or milk products.

Eleanor looked at Dr. Ralph.

He smiled at Shirley’s plate.

He said, “Shirley I need to adjust you tonight. I don’t want it to go another day.”

Shirley was tearful and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor thought, “For the rest of her life.”

Jose finished eating and walked in the family dining room and was looking around.

Brenda said, “Jake and Skip are back in town.”

The boys jumped out of their chairs in excitement.

Michael grinned and continued to feed Lorraine.

Brenda said, “Nearly scared me and Gen to death.”

Percy was so excited.

Eleanor looked at him and said, “Two weeks.”

Gen and Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

Thomas looked at Eleanor.

Michael said, “Grandma I told you. The horses sounded like thunder.”

Brenda said, “The only person not scared was Shirley.”

The boys looked at Shirley.

Shirley smirked and continued to eat her fish.

She said, “Grandpa this fish is sweet.”

Patrick said, “Because of the cold water.”

Brenda said, “Jose, make dinner a little fancy tomorrow, because Shirley invited Stephanie and her family to Sunday’s dinner.”

Shirley looked at Jose.

Jose looked at Shirley and said, “Huh.”

He walked out to the kitchen and left a note for Thomas.

Jose looked at the food storage.

Eleanor looked at Lorraine and she looked at Jose as he walked out the room.

Jose seemed sad to Eleanor.

Eleanor was thinking out loud and said, “The only way to is to have them brought by wagons to Philadelphia.”

Eleanor was staring off into space.

Everyone watched her.

Nadine and Mellissa watched Eleanor.

Brenda said, “Eleanor…”

Eleanor was in deep thought and slowly turned and looked at her mother.

Brenda said, “I want you and Shirley to take Natalie and Josiah their babies’ gift from us to them.”

Eleanor said, “Momma I am thinking about some problems and I need time to think. Send Shirley and the boys. If you and daddy don’t want to go.”

Gen said, “Let Gary take them.”

Shirley looked at Gen.

Eleanor said, “Shirley I sent for you today, so I could send another telegram to Margaret about your ball gown for the royal ball. I told her pink or yellow and the standard white. Can you think of another color.”

Shirley grinned and said, “No.”

Shirley said, “Momma I love lavender. Not for the ball but for a dinner or reception.”

Eleanor said, “I’ll send Margaret a telegram tomorrow or tonight that she won’t get until around Tuesday.”

Patrick looked up from his plate and said, “Eleanor what are you working on?”

Eleanor said, “Several things. I need to go to Chicago. Steven said he would go with me.”

Patrick said, “Why?”

Eleanor said, “I just need to see what the logistics are. The land is bought. It has been surveyed. The engineers have designed the layout. Of the track. We have two hundred and fifty men that can lay the track.”

Patrick said, “With that number the tracks can be laid in six months.”

Eleanor said, “Yes sir.”

Patrick said, “What is the problem?”

Eleanor kind of twisted her head and said, “It’s just something.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

Gen looked at Eleanor.

They enjoyed their dinner and wet to the sitting room.

Dr. Ralph pushed Lorraine to the sitting room.

He said, “Patrick, Brenda, Shirley and Eleanor.”

Eleanor heard her name and looked up.

Dr. Ralph said, “Brenda I need the hot rocks.”

Shirley did not say anything.

Shirley said, “I wanted to needlepoint tonight.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

Patrick laid on the couch in the sitting room.

Percy ran to the music room.

Shirley went upstairs and changed in her bedclothes.

Dr. Ralph adjusted Patrick’s back.

Patrick nearly up from the couch.

Brenda sat and watched and said, “You gonna tell him about my hip.”

Patrick got up and went to the liquor table.

Gen was trying to play cards with Lorraine and Michael.

She was watching Patrick and said, “If that is your consolation prize. I want an adjustment.”

Lorraine laughed.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine as he attended to Brenda.

He said, “Brenda, I want to put these hot rocks on your hip and your feet to get you warm. I don’t like that you are cold.”

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Brenda walked down the hall to their bedroom and dressed for bed.

Dr. Ralph looked at the hot rocks and said, I need plenty of towels.

Elanor went to the bathroom down the suite hall.

Dr. Ralph carried the bucket of hot coals to Brenda’s suite.

Patrick was in his office.

Eleanor met Dr. Ralph and knocked on Brenda’s door.

Brenda walked to the door and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “Brenda, you do not scare me. Lye in bed.”

Eleanor rolled her eyes at Brenda. Dr. Ralph was not one of those doctors that played with people. He was cordial but very firm. Michael and Shirley loved him.

Eleanor loved him because he loved her children and took care of them when they had no one.

Brenda laid on her stomach and went instantly to sleep.

Brenda was snoring.

Eleanor stood in ae and was embarrassed.

Dr. Ralph peeped in Brenda’s face and she was sleep.

He thought.

Eleanor tried to smile through her embarrassment.

Dr. Ralph looked and said, “Eleanor I need some type of oil to put on her feet for the hot coals.

Eleanor looked around and went and got some oil Lorraine made for Brenda.

Eleanor would smell the oil and take back to their bathroom.

Patrick walked in and looked at Brenda who was sleep.

Eleanor went into the bedroom and brought out another and smelled it and took it back to the bathroom.

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

Patrick looked at Dr. Ralph.

He said, “Eleanor what are you doing?’

Eleanor was smelling a bottle of lemon oil and was about to turn and put it back.

Dr. Ralph said, “Eleanor, give me the oil.”

Patrick looked at a frustrated Dr. Ralph.

Eleanor looked at Dr. Ralph.

He reached for the oil.

Eleanor said, “Momma is funny about her bath items.”

Patrick said, “That is true. She doesn’t allow me to touch them.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I used the items in the owners’ suite on the train.”

He smelled the oil.

He looked at it and he looked at Eleanor and said, “Did Lorraine make this?”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Dr. Ralph sat on the foot of the bed and rubbed Brenda’s feet with the oil.

Brenda started laughing.

Patrick and Eleanor started laughing.

Dr. Ralph continued with his attending her feet.

He said, “I need one of you to put a few hot rocks in the towels.

Patrick walked over and used a spoon and put the hot rocks in towels and gave them to Dr. Ralph.

Dr. ralph place the hot rocks on the bottom of Brenda’s feet and placed some in a towel and put it under her hip.

Patrick looked at Brenda and smiled.

He turned to Eleanor and said, “Look how she is smiling.”

Eleanor grinned.

Dr. Ralph covered Brenda with the quilts and said, “I’m concern that she is this cold. Please keep the fire burning through the night.”

Patrick looked at Dr. Ralph.

Eleanor tilted her head sideways and was smiling at Brenda.

Dr. Ralph said, “Come Eleanor so I can adjust your spine and shoulders, that is what is causing you to walk and run to your left.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor and said, “Run.”

Eleanor said, “Christmas Eve brunch.”

Patrick nodded his head, “Oh.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Patrick as them running through the house and jumping down the grand staircase was normal.

Dr. Ralph thought about what Dr. Greene said he loved them but had to get Barry Jr. from the boys because they were tough.

Dr. Greene finally admitted that Barry Jr. was as tough as Eleanor’s boys who looked out for him.

Dr. Ralph thought about how Dr. Bradley laughed at Dr. Greene.

He wondered how Dr. Greene and Debra were doing this holiday with loud Barry Jr.

Dr. Ralph reached for Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Dr. Ralph.

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said,   
Do Shirley and let me be last.”

Dr. Ralph said, “No, you now. Let Shirley relax for a few minutes. I have to attend to Lorraine and Gen.”

Eleanor said, “Do one of the kids.”

Patrick was shock and said, “Eleanor you want one of the kids to hurt as opposed to you?”

Eleanor looked at her daddy and said, “Yes.”

Patrick said, “Get out.”

Dr. Ralph stood and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Dr. Ralph and was walking out the door and said, “Why couldn’t you be one of the fun ones.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Dr. Ralph and back at Patrick.

Patrick shrugged his shoulders.

Dr. Ralph closed their bedroom door,

Patrick grinned and ran to the bucket and saw a few rocks left.

He dressed for bed.

Double checked the windows and doors.

He put coal in the fireplace.

Patrick put the few rocks in the towels and used the lemon oil and rubbed his feet down and put the hot towels on his feet he loved it.

He crawled in bed and sat in the bed and read his bible and another book and went to sleep.

Patrick and Brenda slept through the night.

Eleanor went to bed and slept with hot towels on her back and hip.

Shirley was angry and went to bed and slept to late morning.

Percy ran down to the music room and did not see Theresa.

He ran to the kitchen and was looking at the workers.

Jose saw Percy and said, “Theresa is off today and tomorrow. You are on your own. Practice what she showed you.”

Percy screamed and ran up the backstairs and yelled, “Eleanor!”

Jose looked at Dan and said, “Eleanor will not hear Percy. After her back treatment she put a hot towel on her back and drank a glass of sherry.”

Jose looked around and saw Nadine, Susan, Georgette, Mellissa, Stephen. Roger, Peter, Dan and the other workers who were leaving. The other workers were coming into the house to check in.

Jose said, “I need to talk to you all before you come in and before you leave.”

Jose told them of Briana, Samantha and Bridgette, Blaine, Roger and others.

Veronica shook her head.

Rita said, “These people we worked with and trusted.

Ruth looked into space.

Betty said, “We have to pray for their souls.”

Jose said, “They chose for their souls. They are in hell forever.”

The workers looked at Jose because they knew he and Briana were dating.

Thomas was stunned.

His friend kept telling him some of those workers were not right but he could not tell Thomas what it was.

Jose said, “The Stiths will be leaving next year in the summer and will return in the fall. You can decide if you want to furlough during that time or work part time.”

Mellissa said, “Can we draw straws to see who can stay and who have to leave?”

Jose stared at Mellissa.”

Mellissa said, “Tell them of your promotion.”

Jose turned from Mellissa and looked at the workers and said, “I will be the hospital administrator at the new hospital.”  
He turned and rushed out the kitchen and went to his room.

Mellissa said, “He is upset over that murdered Briana.”

Veronica said, “Who else amongst us. Is that what happened to Lorraine?”

Georgette said, “What?”

Everyone looked at Georgette.

Georgette said, “What?”

Thomas said, “Georgette, I know you are going to school to be a nurse but listen to what was being said. Jose said, Lorraine was followed to New York and the mob tried to kill her to get her to be under their control? Who knew Lorraine was going to be on that train? Who knew she was going to New York? and who knew how she looked?”

Ruth said, “Thank God a lot of them are dead.”

Georgette stood against the wall and looked at Thomas.

Thomas shook his head at Georgette and walked to the bulletin board.

He picked the note with his name on it.

Jose said, “Possible Stephanie and parents for Sunday Supper. Brenda said, make it kind of fancy. Possible beef tenderloin. The soldiers are back in town there may be more supper guests.”

Thomas went to the food storage area and started making a menu for thirteen people.

Mellissa and Susan told them of Dr. Ralph, who was Lorraine’s boyfriend.

The female workers started giggling and snickering.

Mellissa told them Patrick had his railroad crew for Christmas Eve brunch and how wonderful the men were.

Natalie said, “Were they married?”

Susan said, “Not a one.”

Virginia said, “Maybe they would get stuck on New Year’ Eve and be over here to celebrate.”

The women workers said, “OH.”

Thomas shook his head and continued to look for the ingredients.

The workers were still standing around laughing and talking.

Nadine and Peter pass them and said, “Bye.”

Susan and Georgette pointed at Peter and Nadine.

Thomas saw them.

Everybody waited they left.

Stephen looked out the door.

Thomas walked to the kitchen doorway to hear.

They told of Emilou tricking her brother and sister to come to the house for Christmas Supper and laid into Nadine.

Nadine has not said two words since Christmas and Brenda gave her the rest of Christmas day off. The little girl said, she had her brother to bring her to the house so Nadine could see how good they looked without her. That her brother is going back to school to be a doctor.”

Georgette screamed and raised her hand and said, “He’s mine.”

Brittany said, “Stop.”

Thomas shook his head.

Mellissa said, “Emilou said some man paid for her brother to finish school. When Nathan was telling what happened…”

Thomas said, “Nathan?”

Mellissa said, “Yeah. The little girl passed Nadine and rolled her eyes at her and snatched her head away and her hair went everywhere.”

Nadine told Peter. “You know they are talking about us.”

Peter looked at Nadine and thought, “You.”

They rode home in quietness.

Brittany said, “Mellissa, tell them about Jose’s Christmas gift.”

Mellissa waved at the workers to be quiet.

Everyone got quiet.

Thomas walked back to the door to listen.

Mellissa said, “The Stiths are sending Jose to Europe for a year with a companion. We know who that was. When he get back he will start working at the hospital.”

Rita said, “Who will be the butler?’

Mellissa said, “Robert is coming from the rest stop. And guess who is going to run the rest stop?”

Everyone was trying to think.

Mellissa said, “Maureen.”

The workers yelled in excitement.

Mellissa said, “Robert is to train Maureen. He said he is confident in her.”

Thomas thought, “I need to find me another job since that ba\*\*\*rd Robert will be returning. Snob. Nothing is never good enough or season right or too much of one seasoning that does not balance the flavor. Or serve a different bread.”

Thomas was slamming the oven doors and throwing skillets on the stove.

Everyone looked back at Thomas.

Thomas about to get the eggs for breakfast and he saw all the workers looking at him and Jose who just walked back.

Jose heard Mellissa telling the workers that Robert wa scomning back.

Jose knew Thomas and Robert hated each other.

Robert thought Thomas was a cook and not a chief and he did not know how to cook other dishes.

Thomas thought Robert complained about his cooking too much.

Jose, Peter and Dan said nothing but they did agree with Robert.

Jose and Dan tried to get Thomas to spruce up his dishes or do different dishes.

Then Brenda started saying what particular foods she wanted on specific days.

Then Thomas had to learn to cook them.

Jose stood and looked at Thomas with the other workers.

Thomas did not know what to say.

Jose said, “Robert?”

Thomas nodded his head.

Jose said, “Apologize to all of us.”

Thomas exhaled and said, “I am sorry.”

The workers turned around and continued to talk.

Jose said, “This is a onetime offer. Who all needs a rode home this morning?”

Six workers raised their hands and two of the stablemen.”

Jose could not stand the stablemen because they never bathe or shaved.

Jose looked at Thomas.

Thomas snickered to himself.

Robert said, “I want to bathe and shave before I leave.”

Ethan said, “Me too.”

Mellissa said, “I want to eat. I haven’t any food. I have eaten here this Christmas and Peter and Dan made it merry.”

The workers laughed.

Thomas said, “Peter made the dough for biscuits. I need some help for a quick breakfast. I see ham, eggs, grits, biscuits.”

Mellissa said, “No fish from dinner last night?’

Susan said, “It was good. I didn’t get any seconds because me and Georgette had to go and see Lorraine’s doctor.”

The women workers said, “Ug.”

Jose turned to listen.

Susan said, “He was very hard but thorough. He wanted to know everything she did, you know what I mean to put she did not do.”

Susan said, “When I came back there was no fish left.”

Jose said, “Dr. Ralph is the best doctor in Philadelphia. If anyone can find out what is wrong and help you it is him. I heard nurses and other doctors say he could run all the hospitals in Philadelphia by himself. He was Shirley’s main doctor. You all knew Shirley and you see her now.”

Mellissa started crying.

She said, “They found Sally’s real mother.”

Harriet and Ruth were walking in the kitchen to help Thomas they turned and ran back to Mellissa.

Mellissa said, “Patrick delivered the Christmas message at a church. The pastor was married to Sally’s mother.”

Harriet said, “What?”

Mellissa said, “They are going back to the church today and Patrick is going to deliver the sermon this morning.”

Ruth said, “He is already up and in his office. I passed him to check on Lorraine.”

Jose said, “That’s right. Susan you and Georgette are off. I need two more workers to attend to Lorraine. To bath her, comb and brush her hair and dress her and undress.”

Susan rolled her eyes and said, “That doctor notice every little thing. I don’t see how he and Lorraine date.”

Melissa said, “She curse him out.”

They all laughed.

Jose said, “He is one of the best. Just remember if every you need him he is at Shirley’s hospital in Philadelphia. We will have of them here in two years.”

The workers clapped.

Jose said, “I need two workers. Whoever work with Lorraine get double pay.”

Brittany said, “I’m off today and tomorrow can I do it?”

Jose said, “Yes. Is there anyone else?”

Harriet said, “I’ll do it. I’m staying here overnight until Tuesday.”

Jose said, “Natalie had a set of twin boys Christmas Day.”

The workers clapped.

Jose said, “I need to see when Brenda wants Natalie and Josiah’s gift to be delivered. Do we need to send them a gift now or later?”

Mellissa said, “Later. Let us get through this holiday.”

Everyone clapped.

Thomas said, “Breakfast will be ready in fifteen minutes.”

Jose said, “Thomas do you need help?”

Thomas said, “No.”

Harriet took her bag to a room.

She and Brittany walked to Lorraine’s suite.

Dr. Ralph was there examining Lorraine.

They went and made her bath water.

Gary and George took everyone hot bath water.

Dr. Ralph bathe and shaved and dressed.

He immediately went to Lorraine.

He sat and was writing in her chart when Harriet and Brittany came back with her bath water.

He attended to her last night and she was not happy.

They turned and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph was sitting and staring at Lorraine.

He looked at them.

Harriet said, “Doctor we need to bathe Lorraine and dress her.”

Dr. Ralph looked at them.

Brittany started laughing.

Dr. Ralph stood and walked to his room.

Harriet and Brittany look at him.

Harriet slowly closed the door.

Brittany laughed.

Harriet shook her head.

Brittany and Harriet helped Lorraine out of bed to the bathtub.

The house was quiet.

Dr. Ralph finished noting Lorraine’s chart.

He heard Lorraine and Brittany and Harriet laughing and talking all during her bath time.

Patrick got up bathe and shaved. He dressed for church.

Brenda was still sleep,’

Patrick went to his office and stared on his sermon.

He thought, “I would love to travel the country and preach GOD’s word. To HIS people.”

Patrick down his sermon and the scriptures.

He received a telegram Commander Washington was on the train and the train would arrive in Cedartown around eight thirty am.

Patrick laughed.

He thought, “They must have slowed down enough for him to do a back flip on the train.”

He looked at his window and saw some of the workers leaving.

He said, “The rest must be having breakfast. I wonder about Brenda. I want a simple breakfast but a large supper. Do they have any chicken?”

Patrick heard Gen opening her door.

She had bathe and dressed.

She was going to their church that morning. She had enough of that Commander Walker.

Patrick heard Percy call Eleanor.

He started to get up.

Then he said, “I can’t let anyone distract me from what I am writing.

Later he heard Dr. Ralph knock on their bedroom door.

Patrick had finished his sermon and closed his bible.

He pushed his chair back to go to Dr. Ralph when he heard his door open and Brenda said, “Good morning.”

Patrick sat for a moment of quiet and prayed.

Percy ran to Eleanor and knocked on her door and opened it.

He saw she was sleep and ran to her bed to shake her.

Percy decided to wait.

He sat in her room and looked around.

He thought he and Starr would love that room.

Percy laid on Eleanor’s bed and slept until she woke.

Eleanor’s door was opened and Gary and George peeped down the hall and made her hot bath water and carried it to her room.

When they got to Eleanor’s room they saw she was sleep and Percy was sleep next to her.

They filled her bathtub and left.

Gary would be leaving Saturday going to the capitol to start college.

He could not dream that big.

He told Count Joseph he wanted to get an education.

Count Joseph dreamed. He dreamed big for Gary and put him where he could be taken care until he could stand on his own two feet.

Gary stopped and sat in the workers’ area and ate breakfast with some workers.

He thought that he will not see some of them anymore.

The workers were laughing and having a good time with Gary.

Gary was telling Roger and Ethan how to take care of the boys’ horses.

Roger and Ethan said, “They’re horses right?’

Jose looked back at them because he checked and found out the horses were very rare.

Gary face fell.

Roger saw Jose looking at them and he said, “Go ahead Gary.”

Ethan looked at Roger.

Gary was explaining how to care for the horses.

Gary said, “I started training the boys how to take care of the horses.

Brenda and Dr. Ralph walked out her bedroom.

She was fully dressed and told Dr. Ralph she felt much better.

Brittany opened Lorraine’s door.

Lorraine had the other green dress on and Brittany let down Lorraine’s hair.

Lorraine and Brittany were fussing about her hair.

Dr. Ralph and Brenda stopped in the hallway to listen.

Lorraine said, “Brittany put my hair up. I am too old to wear it down.”

Brittany said, “No Lorraine.”

Lorraine started cursing Brittany.

Dr. Ralph walked towards the door.

Brittany started crying.

Lorraine said, “Baby I am sorry.”

Brittany said, “I’m going to tell that man not to marry you heifer?’

Lorraine said, “Which man? The one who is here will not marry me.”

Brittany opened the door and Dr. Ralph was standing at the door.

Brenda touched her heart.

Patrick heard Brittany crying and walked out his office.

He was standing by Brenda when Brittany opened the door.

Brittany gasped.

Harriet leaned and peeped backwards and saw Dr. Ralph standing in front of the door staring at Lorraine.

Harriet saw, Patrick and Brenda standing back with a shock look on their faces.

Brittany was turning around in the floor with the dirty linen.

Patrick said, “Brittany you and Harriet come out. You’re fine.”

Brittany and Harriet scooted by Dr. Ralph.

Who stood and looked at Lorraine.

He said, “My love Lorraine, I will not marry you. I will never marry another. I am married to my practice. I will take a mistress.”

Lorraine started crying and hitting in the air at Dr. Ralph.

Gen was walking out her room when she heard all the noise and peeped down the hall.

Harriet nodded backwards.

Gen tipped toed fast to Lorraine’s room and stood by Patrick and peeped in room at Lorraine.

Gen started crying.

Lorraine said, “I hate you Jason.”

Dr. Ralph turned his head and cried.

Patrick grabbed Brenda and Gen walked them to the family dining room.

They looked back and saw Dr. Ralph on his knees holding a crying Lorraine.

Michael and Thomas were running down the stairs to go to Lorraine.

Patrick said, “No. Come to breakfast. They will be alone in a little.”

Thomas said, “Grandpa, where are you and grandma going?”

Michael was standing on the second stair peeping down the hall at Dr. Ralph.

Patrick said, “Michael come on.”

Michael jumped off the stair and ran to his grandpa who rubbed his head.

Michael looked up at Patrick and said, “What’s wrong with Lorraine? She was crying. Is she going to die?”

Patrick said, “No.”

Michael said, “Well what?”

Patrick looked at Michael and Thomas and said, “I will tell you. Dr. Ralph will not marry Lorraine. He will Michael said, “Grandpa what are you saying?’

Patrick looked at Brenda and Gen and back at Thomas and Michael.

He said, “You don’t remember. But when you and Thomas were in the hospital. Ryan a, Hutch and Dr. Ralph were at the hospital all day and all night with you. Ryan would go home to his wife and baby. Hutch and Dr. Ralph stayed with you two every day all day. They got you two well. If he marries Lorraine he cannot marry another because he loves Lorraine.”

Patrick said, “He stay with his patients to make them better. He does not trust anyone else to make his patients better but him. If he marries Lorraine, the only woman he will ever love…”

Thomas said, “He has to go home to his wife and the son that Emilou wants to marry.”

Michael looked at Thomas.

Michael said, “Grandpa, you got a wife and children and grandchildren. Dr. Ralph would give all of that up to make people better?”

Gen grabbed Brenda’s arm.

Brenda covered her mouth at how astute her grandsons were.

Eleanor, Percy and Bruce were standing on the top of the staircase listening.

Eleanor started walking down the stairs so she could look down the hall.

She saw Dr. Ralph on his knees.

Percy said, “Momma what is Dr. Ralph doing?”

Eleanor was putting the pieces together and said, “I don’t know Percy.”

Bruce stopped walking and ran to the beginning of the hall and stood and looked at Dr. Ralph.

He looked at Brenda and said, “Grandma you look pretty.”

Michael was peeping around to see Brenda and said, “You and Aunt Gen.”

Patrick said, “Both Lorraine and Dr. Ralph are hurt.”

Michael said, “We have to be happy for them.”

Patrick said, “Right.”

Patrick looked back at Thomas.

Thomas shook his head because he did not understand what they meant.

He turned and skipped to the family dining room.

Michael ran behind Thomas.

Eleanor looked back and said, “Bruce.”

Bruce waited another minute and turned and ran to the family dining room.

Percy held Eleanor’s hand and walked with her to the family dining room.

Eleanor looked at Brenda and Gen and said, “You two look pretty this morning.”

Shirley was at the top of stairs and walking down.

She did a double take down the hall to the suite.

She stood and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Brittany and Harriet were going back to clean Lorraine’s room.

Harriet peeped and saw Dr. Ralph on his knees.

Harriet covered her face and cried for Lorraine.

Brittany was peeping down the hall.

There was a knock on the front door.

Jose was walking through the billiards room and saw dr. Ralph on his knees,

He stood and looked.

Patrick walked to the door and peeped out.

He said, “Claressa and Alvin.”

Eleanor started trying to fix herself up.

Brenda looked at Eleanor and said, “Stop.”

Patrick unlocked the door and removed the bar and said, “Good morning. Come in.”

Alvin had a large bag with him.

Claressa and Alvin walked in and spoke to everyone.

Claressa peeped around Eleanor and Brenda and saw people at the bottom of the stairs looking down the hall.

Claressa said, “We came to bring these clothes I told her about.”

She looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Claressa and Alvin.

Patrick said, “Come and have breakfast with us.”

Alvin said, “sir, we are not going to impose. We were going to the capitol for the day and look around.”

Patrick looked at Alvin and said, “Are you thinking about moving there?”  
Alvin grinned and said, “Yes sir.”

Patrick said, “Congratulations.”

Claressa was grinning.

Eleanor looked at her friends.

Brenda mouth opened.

Gen grinned.

Eleanor said, “Claressa that is Brittany there. Let’s give those clothes to her.”

Eleanor touched Claressa’s arm and walked between Alvin and Claressa.

Patrick said, “I’ll vote for him. You Brenda?”

Brenda’s mouth was quivering with pride for Alvin.

She knew his parents would be proud of him.

Gen stood and straighten her back and grinned with pride.

She thought, “I know another governor, who become President.”

They turned and watched Alvin, Eleanor and Claressa walk down the foyer.

Thomas screamed, “I’m hungry!!”

Eleanor heard Thomas.

But she was quickly telling them that apparently Dr. Ralph was telling Lorraine he could not marry her.

Eleanor said, “Brittany.”

Was sitting on the last stair.

She jumped up and said, “Good morning.”

Claressa like Brittany’s manners.

Jose saw Dr. Ralph getting off his knees.

Jose ran up the hall to the family dining room.

Shirley ran behind Jose.

Harriet jumped and ran into the billiards room.

Alvin reached Brittany the clothes bag.

Claressa said, “Don’t worry about the bag. Keep it.”

Brittany was overcome with joy and began to cry.

Dr. Ralph was pushing Lorraine up the hall.

Alvin looked at the couple.

Brittany was thanking Claressa.

Alvin said, “Good morning.”

Claressa looked back and said, “Good morning.”

Lorraine was mad and crying and said, “Good morning.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Good morning.”

Alvin turned and walked with Dr. Ralph to the dining room.

Brittany ran and carried the bag to her room.

Eleanor and Claressa stood for a moment and tried to analyze what was between Lorraine and Dr. Ralph.

Harriet waited for Brittany.

Harriet and Brittany walked down the hall with clean linen to clean Lorraine’s room and empty the tub of water.

Jose was standing in the family room door watching everybody.

He looked at Dr. Ralph and Lorraine and nodded his head to them.

Jose looked at Alvin and pointed in the dining room.

Patrick grinned at Alvin and said, “Have a seat.”

Brenda and Gen were sitting.

Percy and Bruce, Thomas and Michael had on their nightshirts and pants.

Alvin said, “Good morning.”

Thomas yelled, “I’m hungry!!”

Alvin was sitting and looked at Thomas.

Eleanor hollered from down the hall, “Shut up Thomas!!”

Shirley giggled and kept her head down.

Michael looked at Shirley.

Michael started bending over the table and said, “Grandma.”

Patrick looked at a wailing Michael and said, “Jose.”

Eleanor and Claressa were entering the family dining room.

Eleanor looked at Thomas.

Thomas said, “I don’t care. I am hungry. Why don’t you feed me?”

Jose stepped back into the family dining room.

Ruth entered with two hot quiches.

Virginia walked in with a large tray of ham slices, sausages and bacon.

Veronica walked in with a tray of assorted hot fresh breads, butter, jams and honey.

Ruth went out and came back with Michael’s plate and one lamb chop.

Virginian returned with the beverage cart and set the beverages on the buffet.

Brenda was glad they gave a nice presentation to the next governor.

Veronica rushed back with a large tray of fresh fruit.

Alvin said, “There is nothing like American food.”

Claressa said, “Yes.”

She was looking around.

Jose walked to her and said, “Ma am?”

Claressa said, “Is there any grits?”

Michael said, “I want some grits too.”

Thomas was mad and said, “You’ll get them tomorrow.”

Dr. Ralph looked at the anger the little boy had about food.

Patrick said, “Alvin can you say grace?’

Alvin said, “Yes sir.”

Alvin said grace and blessed the food.

Jose walked out the family dining room and ran to the kitchen to get some grits.

He was rushing so he could get back to hear what Dr. Ralph said to Lorraine.

The workers knew something was going on.

Jose said, “Thomas soft scramble one egg for Lorraine.”

Jose took the grits from the workers’ pot and put them in a large bowl and ran through the formal dining room and stopped and walked to the family dining room.

He served Lorraine a tablespoon of grits.

Michael ran to feed Lorraine.

Thomas got a slice of quiche, orange slices and three sausages and two biscuits.

Dr. Ralph watched Thomas.

Thomas said, “I’ll feed Lorraine when I finish eating Michael so you can eat.”

Michael said, “I got my lamb chop.”

Dr. Ralph smiled.

Brenda was eating a large slice of quiche with fruit and tea.

She said, “Thomas, you and Michael act like you haven’t eaten in days.”

Michael looked back at Brenda and bit his lamb chop.

Eleanor hit at him and missed him.

Michael jumped up from the chair in time to escape Eleanor’s hand.

Lorraine smiled.

Thomas stared at Brenda.

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “You two will not disrespect your grandmother. Especially over food.”

Dr. Ralph was watching Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley’s plate.

Shirley stopped eating and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “You made a good selection Shirley.”

Shirley smiled.

Jose said, “Veronica bring Lorraine’s scramble egg.”

Veronica walked out the family dining room and ran through the formal dining and sped to the kitchen.

The workers in the kitchen jumped when she burst in the doors.

Thomas just placed the egg on a plate.

He reached the plate to Veronica.

Veronica grabbed the plate and ran out the kitchen.

The workers wanted to know what was happening in the family dining that morning that had Jose and Veronica running through the house.

Ruth and Virginia looked at Dr. Ralph and winked their eyes at each other.

Brenda saw them and looked at Lorraine who lost a lot of weight.

She thought, “We need to get some more of her clothes.”

Shirley said, “You all look so nice. Where are you all going?”

Patrick said, “Jose any more grits?’

Jose walked to Patrick and served him some grits.

Patrick said, “Shirley, me and your grandmother are going to church.”

Brenda said, “The heathens are returning to church.”

Patrick said, “Aunt Gen is going to our regular church and Ambassador Alvin and Aunt Claressa are going to the capitol.”

Shirley looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Dr. Ralph where are you and Lorraine going?’

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley and was about to answer when Lorraine said, “To church and to my house. I want to go home.”

Jose thought, “Now we getting some place.”

Dr. Ralph turned and looked at Lorraine.

He said, “Lorraine you can’t go home.”

Jose was standing in the door and saw Veronica who ran out the formal dining room to the family dining room.

Jose stared at her.

She walked in the family dining room and placed Lorraine’s egg in her plate.

Veronica heard some of what Dr. Ralph said.

Ruth turned her back and was looking out the window.

She thought about the workers who were dead.

She felt they deserved to be dead.

Ruth thought about that good looking doctor seated next to Lorraine and how she wanted her life to change.

Ruth thought about her Christmas Eve there at the house with her co-workers and how she wanted to entertain in her own house. How spent her Christmas with the people in the rooming house eating and playing cards all day. For two days she did nothing but sat around.

She thought about Harriet who taught herself to quilt and made nice money before the winter.

She smiled when she thought about Sally was going to be reunited with her mother and Vivienne can move to France with that doctor.

Ruth thought, “Everybody got a doctor. I am not a bad person. I am getting old. I am average looking and I don’t hurt nobody. I don’t know why people hate me. I did not tell Maureen to marry Craig. She’s a grown woman who decided that.

Ruth was becoming full with self pity.

Alvin and Claressa’s security men were outside watching Ruth.

Dr. Ralph said, “Lorraine, for you to move to your home is too big of a burden to put on me. I know what you are doing.”

Jose eased closer to the table.

Brenda was watching Ruth, why she was turned looking out the window.

Gen looked back and saw Ruth.

Ruth began to cry and ran out the family dining room.

Jose turned around as Ruth was running out the family dining room.

Shirley was holding her glass for some juice.

She put it back on the table.

Bruce said, “Why did Miss Ruth cry and run out?”

Thomas said, “She was hungry.”

Bruce was looking at Brenda and turned and looked at Thomas.

Gen hollered.

She was trying to be sophisticated around Claressa and Alvin.

Eleanor leaned over told Thomas, “Don’t forget what I said. Shut up.”

Virginia looked at Ruth.

Veronica looked at Ruth.

Alvin looked at Thomas.

Claressa looked at Thomas.

She ate her grits and bacon.

Alvin ate fresh fruit and quiche.

Dr. Ralph ate a mall slice of quiche, two strips of bacon and a biscuit.

He gave Lorraine the other half of Shirley’s biscuit.

Thomas stood and rolled his eyes and walked to Michael and said, “Michael you can go and eat.”

Thomas walked to the beverages and said, “Shirley what kind of juice do you want?”

Shirley said, “Apple.”

Jose stepped back and said, “Thomas have a seat I’ll serve.”

Jose took the pitcher with the apple juice and poured everyone apple juice.

He looked at Veronica to take over.

Jose left and went to Ruth’s room.

She decided to stay in the room downstairs away from everyone.

Jose knocked on her door.

Ruth was curled up on the bed.

Ruth said, “I’ll be out in a minute.”

Jose looked at the workers who were doing the laundry.

He went back upstairs.

They finished the laundry an hour later and Ruth had not come out of the room.

Th workers walked up stairs and looked at Jose.

Jose leaned back and looked towards the back of the house.

He did not see Ruth. Eleanor looked at Patrick.

Claressa said, “Is the lady alright?”

Eleanor was shocked and could not answer.

Shirley said, “You all look so pretty. I want to go to church.”

Patrick said, “Shirley we will be leaving in less than thirty minutes.”

Shirley said, “I have clothes ready. Excuse me.”

Bruce helped Shirley out of her chair.

Eleanor looked at Bruce.

Bruce looked into his adoring mother’s eyes.

He blushed.

Claressa said, “Who has clothes ready.”

Everybody said, “Shirley.”

Claressa shook her head to get understanding.

She looked at Alvin.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Claressa.

Gen was swelling with pride.

Dr. Ralph looked at Gen then he looked at Patrick and Brenda.

He knew they would make some type of announcement.

Lorraine tried to pinch Dr. Ralph.

Virginia and Veronica laughed at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and moved his arm.

Thomas was eating the last of his biscuit and sausage mf her

Shirley heard them but ran to her room and washed and dressed.

She could not do her hair.

She stood at the top of the stairs.

Jose was standing in the family dining room door to find out what was going on.

Jose said, “Excuse me. Shirley is standing at the top of the stairs with her brush in her hand.”

Eleanor said, “Go brush her hair.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

Lorraine laughed.

Veronica looked at Eleanor.

Virginia laughed.

Thomas said, “She can brush her own hair if she can raise her fork.”

Eleanor turned from looking at Patrick and balled her fist.

Patrick said, “Eleanor.”

Virginia stood and went down the hall to the stairs and walked up the grand staircase.

She went into Shirley’s room and helped her with her hair.

Shirley like Ruth to do her hair.

She said, “Virginia where ids Ruth?”

Virginia said, “I don’t know.”

Virginia kept working with Shirley’s hair until it was very pretty.

Shirley looked at her hair and said, “It’s pretty. Thank you.”

Virginia said, “Ruth is not the only person who can do hair.”

Shirley smiled.

Virginia said, “I can put bows in your hair that will bring your dress out, but you can’t wear those

Earrings.”

Shirley looked at her emerald earrings and took them out.

Virginia put pretty ribbons and bows in Shirley’s hair that brought out the blue in her eyes.

Shirley looked at herself in the mirror.

Shirley thought, “I am pretty even with this face.”

Virginia patted her on her back and started cleaning up her room.

Shirley walked to her coat armoire, because Eleanor had re-arranged all her children’s armoires and clothes.

She pulled out a pretty coat and mink muff, a hat and gloves.

Virginia was standing and looking at what Shirley picked out.

Virginia said, “Shirley, you are sickly like my niece. You need a scarf around your neck. You can tuck it in so it won’t be seen.”

Virginia showed Shirley how.

Shirley said, “But I want everyone to see me.”

Virginia took it loose.

Shirley said, “Virginia can you work at my dress shop. You will make a little more than working here. You know how to make women look better.”

Virginia looked at Shirley and said, “Yes.”

They heard loud clapping from the family dining room.

Shirley knew they made an announcement without her.

She turned and ran down the staircase.

Jose was grinning and standing in the doorway.

Thomas and several workers ran through the formal dining room and were peeping at Jose.

Jose waved his hand to them.

Shirley was at the door and stopped running and slowly walked into the family dining room.

She looked around.

Veronica said, “Oh Shirley.”

Everyone turned and looked at Shirley.

She was very pretty.

Eleanor looked at Shirley and smiled.

Everyone was standing and clapping.

Shirley said, “I weas down the hall you all could not see me there.”

Lorraine laughed.

Dr. Ralph laughed.

Michael said, “It’s not you heifer.”

Eleanor’s mouth dropped and she grabbed Michael’s arm and bent down and was fussing ssilently.

Brenda looked at Michael.

Patrick said, “Shirley you look beautiful.”

Lorraine tried to reach for Shirley’s hand.

Shirley rushed to Lorraine and they held hands.

Patrick said, “Ambassador Alvin, your godfather has decided he will run for the governorship of our great state.”

Shirley was stunned, because she planned on travelling to where Alvin was stationed and vacation for a year or two.

Shirley said, “You are an ambassador.”

Claressa said, “He is only going to do a short term and come back home and start campaigning.”

Eleanor turned and looked at Shirley and said, “Shirley, Alvin will always have his title as ambassador.”

Shirley exhaled and said, “Oh.”

Dr. Ralph stared at Shirley.

He did not know Shirley was that selfish.

Claressa held her head down and chuckle.

Gen said, “That’s our girl.”

Brenda looked at Gen and blew.

Patrick said, “Whatever we can do Alvin, we will do.”

Alvin said, “Thank you.”

Bruce stared at Alvin.

Alvin saw Bruce staring at him.

Alvin said, “Bruce whatever I can do to get you into the foreign diplomat program I will do. The thing you need to concentrate on is to finish college. That is what everyone looks at.”

Gen said, “That is true Bruce.”

Bruce looked at Aunt Gen.

Brenda said, “Percy, you and Veronica go and bring Lorraine’s coat and hat and gloves, mines and your grandfather.”

Gen said, “And mines.”

Veronica and Percy walked out the family dining room and walked down the hall.

Dr. Ralph shook Alvin’s hand and they stood and talk.

Bruce was looking up at Alvin.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Bruce.

Claressa looked at Bruce and then Eleanor.

Eleanor leaned to Claressa and said, “After he saw Alvin and heard Gen talk. He wants to be an ambassador.”

Claressa giggled and looked at Bruce who was looking at her and he turned his attention back to Alvin.

Claress said, “Oh.”

Eleanor looked at Bruce and then Claressa who was sipping her tea.

Gen starred at Bruce.

Eleanor looked at Gen.

Brenda and Patrick looked at Gen.

Gen thought.

Patrick said, “Gen, that look mean something.”

Gen did not say anything but sipped her tea and look at Bruce.

Patrick said, “Jose, have our carriage brought around front with two horses.”

He looked at Gen and “Mrs. Olsen’s carriage with her three horses.”

Claressa was looking at Bruce and sipping her tea.

Dr. Ralph looked at these two diplomats and knew they saw something in Bruce.

Dr. Ralph thought, “I want to know.”

Jose looked at Gen.

Gary was returning to the house.

Gary took Melissa, Roger, Ethan and several other worker’s home.

Jose heard Gary ride into the yard.

He ran through the house and caught Gary in the back and said, “Gary, carry the wagon around the front.”

Jose ran out the back door and into the stables and saw Mark and told him to bring Mrs. Olsen’s carriage and her three horses around to the front of the house.

Jose ran back in the house.

Veronica told the workers that Ambassador Alvin is going to stop being an ambassador and run for governor.

The workers were laughing because they got information the rest of the people did not know.

Jose saw them and Veronica and said, “So I can’t tell you all to keep it to yourselves?”

The workers all shook their heads for no.

Veronica looked for Jose and said, “They are on their way to the capitol.”

Thomas said, “To find a house. The governor’s mansion is not that good.”

George said, “I guess from time to time some of us will be in the state capitol.”

Thomas thought, “He was glad he made quiche for breakfast and arranged it nicely. He needs another job before Robert gets there. He needs to study about the spices.”

He turned around and looked through Brenda’s recipe box.

Jose walked through the billiards room to the family dining room.

He saw Percy and Bruce bringing the coats to the front of the house.

He thought, “Veronica was to have done that. She was busy gossiping.”

Jose was excited that someone from their town that he knew was running. Gail and Bryson have been in Massachusetts for months with Lillian and Nathaniel.

Jose said, “Would Bryson help Alvin to get elected. Bryson want to work at the hospital when it is built.”

Jose grinned with pride and thought, “I will be over the hospital. I better start studying now.”

He took the coats from Bruce and Percy and preceded to the family dining room.

Jose was sad but he his life was changing.

He thought, “God has blessed me with money and a nice home and now a nice job. I can go to school for a year to learn the business side of hospital administration. Then Alvin would be campaigning for governor. I am tired of the mob. I have to be careful who I hire at the hospital. I think I will do what Dr. Woodson say he does every night to get on my knees and ask God to keep all the bad people away.”

Jose stood in the foyer.

Percy and Bruce stood by him.

Alvin and Dr. Ralph were talking.

Jose looked and went to the parlor and came back with Claressa and Alvin’s coats.

Everyone was standing by the front door.

Bruce walked to the front door and stared at the security men.

Gen looked at Bruce.

Brenda looked at Gen.

Jose walked back from the parlor and said, “Miss Gen are leaving for the day or returning after church?”

Gen was thinking.

She said, “I will return.”

Jose said, “Mrs. Stith what about the gift to Natalie and Josiah, will you take it to them today?”

Brenda said, “No, because Shirley invited Stephanie and parents to Sunday supper after church.”

Shirley said, “Grandma it is the holidays.”

Lorraine, “Not Stephanie.”

Dr. Ralph remembered Stephanie was one of the nurses Shirley hired.

Dr. Ralph said, “Excuse me Mr. Ambassador.”

Bruce heard the way Dr. Ralph greeted Alvin.

He turned from the window and watched Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph went to Lorraine and bent down and said, “You don’t want that nurse Lorraine?’

Lorraine shock her head for no.

Everyone looked at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and said, “Lorraine she is a nurse that Shirley trusted and hired for you. She is coming as the Stith’s guests for dinner. Do not act rude.”

Michael and Thomas were standing in front of Lorraine.

Lorraine did not say anything.

Bruce said, “Stephanie is my nurse.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Bruce and stood and smile.

Dr. Ralph said, “Mr. Stith do you mind if Lorraine and I go with you to church today?”

Patrick said, “We would love for you to come.”

Michael said, “I’ll go too.”

Brenda said, “Not today Michael. We are running late. I don’t want to be called a heathen for being late.”

Gen laughed.

Claressa said, “I felt good afterwards.”

Alvin said, “Mr. Patrick, your message helped me to make a decision that was in my heart.”

Claressa looked at Alvin and smiled.

Patrick said, “I never thought you two would marry but be best friends for life.”

Patrick looked at Brenda and said, “You Brenda?”

Brenda looked at Claressa and said, “Yes. She was bossy and ruled Alvin. Alvin was just as bad but laughed at their mischief. He enjoyed getting into trouble and would pull those two into his devious ways and they all would sit around and figure out how to get out of it. I told Alvin’s mother and father they would marry and be together until the end.”

Claressa said, “You are right Mrs. Stith. I love Alvin and I will be with him forever.”

Alvin started laughing.

Everybody looked at Alvin and laughed.

Dr. Ralph liked Alvin and he laughed.

Shirley started putting on Lorraine’s scarf and coat and Michael and Thomas put a glove on each of Lorraine’s hands.

Brenda put her scarf on and then her hat and coat and gloves.

Brenda was standing in front of the mirror by the Christmas tree.

Dr. Ralph said, “We need blankets.”

Veronica heard Dr. Ralph request for blankets.

Jose saw Veronica.

She turned around and walked back through the formal dining room to the linen room.

She got six quilts and returned.

Dr. Ralph picked Lorraine up from the wheelchair.

He looked at Lorraine in her eyes.

Virginia and Harriet touched their hearts.

Brenda knew that one would never happen.

Jose carried the wheelchair outside and attach it to the carriage.

Dr. Ralph stayed at the carriage with Lorraine.

Veronica walked to the front door with the quilts.

Jose reached for the quilts and took them to Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph wrapped Lorraine in the quilts.

Alvin and Claressa walked out and said, “Good- bye to Alvin and Lorraine.

They walked to their carriage.

They rode out the yard with the security men in the second wagon.

Alvin and Claressa would spend the day in the capitol.

Bruce stood in the window and watched Alvin and Claressa leave.

Eleanor watched Bruce.

Bruce stood with his hands behind his back.

Patrick looked at Bruce.

Brenda said, “Shirley you will ride with us.”

Shirley said, “I was going to ride in a separate carriage.”

Patrick said, “Go and get in that carriage.”

Veronica snickered.

Michael was looking out the window at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph turned and saw Michael watching them from the window.

Dr. Ralph looked and saw Thomas watching them from the other window.

He thought, “Felipe was right.”

Dr. Ralph chuckle.

Shirley walked out the door to the carriage and got on the side behind Patrick.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

Shirley looked at Dr. Ralph and covered up with one of the quilts.

Lorraine laughed.

Dr. Ralph looked back at Lorraine and he was wondering about Lorraine’s internal organ. He was wondering if she needed some more medicine or let her be until they know for sure the type of internal damage she has.

Dr. Ralph looked back in the carriage and walked to the house.

Gen was walking out the front door to her carriage.

She walked to her carriage with her fur coat on and covered up with two blankets.

She rode to town to sing in their choir.

Dr. Ralph looked at Gen and saw how sassy Gen was.

He laughed and thought about his mother that act liked Gen.

Dr. Ralph said, “I would be sending her down here to spend time with Gen and Brenda.”

Michael was looking at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph turned and looked in the faces of Michael and Bruce.

He grinned and walked in the house.

He walked to Eleanor and said, “Can I speak to you Eleanor?”

Patrick and Brenda were walking out the door and looked back at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at them and said, “I’ll be right out. Patrick can I steer. I want to learn this wonderful town.”

Patrick said, “Sure.”

Bruce turned and watched Dr. Ralph and Eleanor.

Michael winked at Brenda.

Patrick was shocked and when Brenda turned she was looking in Patrick’s stared.

She was caught off guard and tried to walk out the house without showing he scared her.

Patrick looked at Michael and said, “Mind your business.”

Thomas was standing and listening.

Patrick looked at Thomas and said, “See you all after church.”

He walked out the door.

Michael said, “You are my business.”

Patrick stopped.

He swore he heard Michael say he was his business.

Eleanor heard everything.

Dr. Ralph looked at Michael and was shock and snickered a little.

Dr. Ralph said, “Eleanor, will Stephanie be a problem to Lorraine?”

Eleanor said, “No. Stephanie was Bruce’s nurse. She and Lorraine were dating the same men. Until one afternoon they both saw the same man within an hour of each other and they fought.”

Eleanor shook her head and rolled her eyes.

Dr. Ralph looked in surprise.

Eleanor said, “You’re not surprise, are you?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I want to believe in innocence.”

Eleanor looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Hurry are you will be late for church.”

Dr. Ralph said, “So Stephanie is a good nurse?’

Bruce step forward and said, “Yes. Stephanie is a good nurse.”

Eleanor looked at Bruce and said, “You are not an ambassador yet.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I need my doctor’s bag.”

He turned and ran down the hall and into his suite.

He turned and ran all the way back up the hall.

Michael turned and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph was passing Eleanor and she said, “I don’t think Lorraine wants Stephanie to see her body.”

Dr. Ralph said, “No baths and pots.”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

Dr. Ralph was thinking.

He ran out the door and jumped in the carriage.

Patrick said, “Jason, we have less than thirty minutes and the church is nearly an hour away.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Which way? Down by the military headquarters?”

Patrick said, “Yes.”

Dr. Ralph whipped the carriage around.

Michael and Bruce were standing in the windows and said, “Wow.”

Thomas was jumping in excitement.

Percy ran to the window.

Eleanor was standing behind Bruce looking out the windows.

She said, “That’s my momma and daddy. He better not hurt them. They are not cattle.

The boys looked at Eleanor.

Percy said, “Who called grandpa and grandma cows?’

Michael was frowned up looking at Eleanor.

Thomas was looking at Eleanor like she had a problem.

Eleanor looked at her sons and walked away.

She said, “Sunday supper at two pm. Dress decent.”

She went upstairs and bathe in lukewarm water and dressed for the day.

She went to her office and worked until she heard Patrick and Brenda in the back by the kitchen.

Gen rode to town thinking about Bruce.

She thought about Percy and his pursuit of classical music.

She laughed at the thought of the tall and thin Percy in those tails.

She laughed at those two little ones that Eleanor is about to hurt.

Claressa and Alvin met old friends in the capitol.

They walked around and enjoyed the holiday scenery.

Robert and Bethany’s restaurant was closed on Sunday’s.

Alvin and Claressa had supper in the capitol.

They were used to the extreme cold.

They were in the Alps for years.

Alvin and Claressa knew how to dress.

Gen pulled up at church and went inside and pulled off her coat and put it and her gloves and hat on the seat next to Sarah.

Gen looked around and saw Sarah looked sad.

She said, “Where is your aunt and uncle?”

Sarah whimpered and said, “At home.”

Gen looked at Sarah.

the piano started playing.

Gen looked at the piano player and said to Sarah, “You know Jake’s troop came back yesterday. I was hoping they would come by before they left again.”

Sarah looked at Gen with a slight smile.

Gen walked up to the choir stand and got in her position and held her hymn book in front of her and moved her mouth for the first two songs.

She saw Jake and Skip walk into the church.

They were looking around.

Gen looked at Sarah and pointed.

Sarah finally caught on to Gen and she turned around and saw Jake and Skip walk up to the front and they sat on each side of her.

Jake held Sarah’s hand.

Jake and Skip went by Sarah’s house before coming to the church.

Joe and Peggy told them she was dying and wanted Jake to treat Sarah well.

Jake asked where Sarah was.

Peggy told Jake Sarah was at church.

Sarah needed help to get through her dying.

Jake and Skip rode to church so he could see Sarah before he left on Monday.

After church Gen ran down to them and greeted them.

She said, “mr. Mysterious Skip. Have you seen Shirley?”  
Skip said, “I saw her yesterday when we rode in. She was standing across the street with her grandparents and another man.”

Gen laughed.

She said, “The land is the new hospital the children are building. The man is her doctor that brought her nurse Lorraine home. He is probably the best doctor in this country. He was the one that worked on Shirley day and night. No need to be jealous.”

Jake smiled as he held Sarah’s hand.

Gen said, “You all come to dinner. I know Stephanie and her parents are coming.”

Jake said, “Robert maybe there because he went home to visit Stephanie.”

Gen said, “You all know the way.”

Gen put on her coat.

Skip helped her.

Gen put on her hat and gloves and ran to her carriage and sped to the house.

Sarah was slow and still.

Patrick and Brenda were riding in the yard at the same time Skip and Jake were entering the yard.

Brenda turned around and said, “Shirley there is Skip.”

Shirley was holding Lorraine’s hand and talking.

Shirley started peeping and then she started grinning.

Patrick said, “I’ll stop in the front and let someone take the carriage around back.

Dr. Ralph said, “Patrick you said you had less than thirty minutes to get to church to deliver your sermon. I got you there in thirty minutes.”

Brenda was laughing and clapping her hands.

Commander Washington attended the church service.

He sat on the podium with Commander Walker and watch the congregants.

Patrick’s sermon was short and clear.

Many of the married couples went to the altar for prayer.

Commander Washington watched.

Commander Walker looked at Commander Washington.

Patrick walked of the podium and sat with Brenda.

Shirley, Dr. Ralph and Lorraine were seated a few pews back.

Commander Walker was whispering to Commander Washington.

Patrick and Brenda were use to Percy and Bruce whispering but they could not understand the two commanders.

Dr. Ralph and Shirley watched the two commanders.

Shirley watched Brenda, because the moment Brenda stood to leave she was going to run behind her.

Commander Washington and Commander Walker stood and walked off the podium.

Commander Walker went to his wife and reached out his hand.

She sat for a minute and took her husband’s hand and they walked to the altar and kneeled by the other married couples.

Commander Washington walked to Patrick and Brenda and bent down.

Brenda was ready to leave.

Commander Washington saw Benda pick up her coat, hat, scarf and gloves.

Shirley sat up and stood a little bit so she could see Brenda.

Dr. Ralph stared at Shirley for her to sit down.

Commander Washington saw Brenda and he wave his hand at her and said, “No, Mrs. Stith I do not want you to leave. I want you and Mr. Stith to come to the podium and pray for these married couples.”

Brenda looked at Commander Washington and twisted her lips and turned her head.

Patrick said, “Commander Washington, pray for what?”

Patrick looked at Commander Walker and his wife. He thought, they are going to have to forgive Brenda who Dr. Woodson banned from seeing Sally. Because she was about to beat Sally.”

Commander Washington said, “What GOD tells you two as a couple to pray for the people.”

Patrick looked at the couples and he looked t Brenda.

Brenda’s head was still turned.

She saw Nathan’s neighbor, Wanda walk by herself to the podium. Brenda remembered Nathan said Sherman, the last sheriff, was her husband and he wanted a divorce.

Patrick looked at the married couples and grabbed Brenda’s hand.

He knew if he reached for her hand, she would not give him her hand as her agreement with him.

Patrick knew he had to take Brenda’s hand to agree with him in prayer.

Commander Washington watched the older couple.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Brenda knew Patrick was looking at her.

She turned her head and looked at her Patrick and said, “Heathen.”

She put her coat down and stood in synch with Patrick.

Commander Washington watched Patrick shift his authority from being a co-laborer with Brenda to the head of the family and how Brenda accepted his authority as the head of the family.

Commander Washington thought about how Patrick and Brenda were successful in their marriage and in business.

He and Commander Walker had tried for several years to start some type of business that would generate money for them so they could be wealthy.

Commander Washington thought, “This unforgiveness maybe the key in all of our relations. Even on the job in the military.”

Commander Washington said, “Commander Walker and I talked about you believing he called you heathens. He said, he did not mean for his frustration to carry over to you as it was your behavior.”

Brenda said, “Huh.”

Commander Washington looked at Brenda and said, “Forgiveness.”

Brenda said, “Patrick.”

Patrick squeezed Brenda’s hand.

Commander Washington looked at Brenda and turned and walked to the podium.

Patrick and Brenda waked behind Commander Washington to the podium.

Shirley sat down sideways and watched Brenda and Patrick.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

Shirley cut her eyes at Dr. Ralph and cut her eyes back to Patrick and Brenda on the podium.

Commander Washington said, ”Good morning my friends. We have asked for brother Patrick and sister Brenda to pray for everybody but especially these married couples and those who are facing separation and divorce.”

Commander Washington stood behind Patrick and Brenda to their sides.

Patrick prayed a prayer asking GOD to touch each person’s heart to forgive those who have trespassed against them, whether it was husbands, wives or children.

They heard a lot of the children say amen.

Dr. Ralph leaned over to Lorraine and said, “Forgive me Lorraine.”

Shirley cut her eyes at Dr. Ralph to see what he was talking about.

She looked at Lorraine who was looking in front of her.

Lorraine did not say anything.

Shirley thought, “I got to talk to Eleanor.”

After the prayer

Commander Washington dismissed church.

Brenda grabbed Patrick’s hand and rushed from the podium.

Dr. Ralph was looking at them.

He put on Lorraine’s coat, scarf, hat and gloves.

Shirley was slowly putting on her coat and gloves so she could be seen.

The young women in the church watched Shirley’ and looked at her clothes.

Dr. Ralph stood and put on his coat, scarf, hat and gloves.

He looked at Shirley and said, “When you finish modelling push Lorraine outside. I am going to bring the carriage around.”

Shirley rolled her eyes at Dr. Ralph who was looking at Patrick and Brenda.

He turned around and Shirley quickly straighten her face up.

Lorraine laughed.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

Shirley was pretending she was looking around the church.

Patrick saw Dr. Ralph walking out the church.

Shirley stood and turned Lorraine’s wheelchair around and began to push her towards the door.

Brenda started walking to the aisle.

Patrick was talking to a married couple and looked at Brenda.

He said, “Brenda.”

Brenda exhaled and turned around and looked at Patrick.

Commander Washington watched Brenda.

He excused himself from the couple he was talking to and walked to Patrick and Brenda.

Patrick looked at Commander Washington.

Commander Washington said, ”I ask you two to forgive me and my church for any bad feelings we caused. It was not intended. I like to invite you all to supper with us.”

Brenda said, “Thank you sir. We have friends for supper.”

Patrick looked at Brenda and heard her words she used.

Patrick looked back at Commander Washington was disturbed at Brenda.

Patrick said, “Maybe you can join us for supper today.”

Commander Washington looked at Brenda.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Brenda blinked her eyes at Patrick.

Commander Washington said, “Is that your private communication?”

Patrick stared at Brenda.

Commander Washington said, “It’s more than me.”

He quickly looked at Brenda.

Brenda blinked twice.

Patrick said, “How many?”

Commander Washington looked and counted and said, “A total of six.”

Patrick looked at Brenda.

She blinked six times.

Commander Washington said, “It is Commander Walker and his family of five.”

Brenda said, “Hell no.”

She walked out the church and followed Shirley to the carriage.

Patrick looked at Commander Washington who watched Brenda flounce out of church.

Patrick said, “She has made up her mind about Commander Walker and his family. She will never mistreat anyone under our roof or at our table. You are still invited. We dine promptly at two pm.”

Patrick rushed out the church.

Commander Washington walked to Commander Walker and told him they were invited to the Stith’s for Sunday supper. They have friends that will be there. And to be prompt. “

Commander Walker’s wife turned up her nose.

Commander Walker and Commander Washington looked at her.

Commander Walker said, “They have taken care of your illegitimate child and paid all her medical expenses. You are turning your nose up at them. I picked you up from the streets from a life of prostitution and now you think you are better than everybody. You need to take these three children and go back to the only life you ever had. You lied to me about for these six years.”

Commander Washington looked at Commander Walker and then Selma and then he looked at the other married couples who were waiting to talk to them.

Commander Washington thought, “Oh GOD I am glad they did not hear that.”

He turned and smiled at the people and talked with them.

He told some he would stop by homes later that day. Because he would be leaving on assignment on the next morning.

Commander Walker bundled his three children up and put on his coat and scarf and hat.

He went outside to get their wagon.

Commander Washington hurried and put out the fires and locked the church.

He ran out the door and talked to the parishioners who late leaving.

Wanda was the last person.

She cooked breakfast that morning for the church and was struggling to carry all the pots and pans to her wagon.

Co-pastor Washington helped her with the pots and pans.

He said, “Wanda I am sorry to hear about you and Sherman.”

Wanda could not say anything.

Co-pastor Walker saw Co-pastor Washington.

He saw Selma slowly walking to their carriage.

Selma saw Co-pastor Walker jumped out the wagon and rushing to the church.

Selma turned up her nose and waited for her husband to come and get her and walk her to their wagon.

He rushed pass her and locked the church’s door.

He walked pass her and went and got in the wagon.

He looked back at the three children, who he questioned were his, he covered them again with the blankets.

He told them not to remove the cover and they were going to eat somewhere else and not to be bad.

His wife walked to the wagon and waited for her husband to help her in the wagon.

Church members were watching her.

She saw the church members and tried to be sophisticated and turned her head with her nose turned up.

Commander Walker jumped in the wagon and started backing up to turn around to follow Commander Washington to the Stith’s house for Sunday supper.

Selma quickly jumped in the wagon.

Commander Washington acted like he did not see her.

Selma said, “You saw me. You saw how your church members were looking at me. I don’t like it. You need to tell them next Sunday to mind their business.”

Commander did not say anything to his wife but sped up to keep pace with Commander Washington.

Patrick’s sermon was about unforgiveness as a rock of offence and impediment to a Christian’s growth in their walk to grow into JESUS on the earth, especially married couples who are one.

Patrick said, “Jason you ride like Shirley.”

Dr. Ralph said, “But I am cautious.”

Shirley said, “Ha. Ha.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley and smile.

Brenda said, “We are going to have a house full of people I don’t want. That Commander Walker and Sally’s mother and those three other poor acting children.”

Patrick said, “Brenda are we going to have enough food?”

Brenda said, “Why are you asking me. I didn’t want Stephanie and her parents because we have to do inventory for the new year’s.”

Patrick said, “Brenda, do we have enough food?”

Brenda said, “I’ll tell Jose to kill some chickens and fry them. They are used to that...”

Shirley started crying laughing.

Brenda said, “Calling us heathens. I bet it is something about his wife he is trying to hide.”

Shirley said, “What grandma?”

Brenda said, “I don’t know. You keep those children away from my stuff. I might put them in the family dining room.”

Lorraine said, “Kitchen.”

Shirley hollered.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

Patrick turned and looked at Lorraine.

Brenda turned around and looked at Lorraine.

Benda said, “Dr. Ralph?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I don’t know.”

He looked at Lorraine with concern.

Brenda looked and said, “Shirley. Skip.”

Brenda said, “Patrick speed up before Eleanor see them.”

Patrick said, “I know. I’ll stop in front and let them take the carriage around back”.

Brenda said, “We have to get organized really quick.”

Shirley was grinning.

Brenda said, “That’s Gen. ho is that?”

Shirley said, “Sarah.”

Brenda looked at Patrick.

She said, “Patrick I don’t know if I can eat with Sarah here. She reminds me so much of a young Peggy.”

Shirley said, “Grandma, Gen probably invited them to dinner.”

Brenda said, “Put Gen in the kitchen with Commander Walker’s children. I don’t think are his.”

Lorraine and Shirley laughed.

Patrick pulled in the front yard.

Jake and Skip looked at the carriage.

They dismounted their horses.

Jake and Skip spoke to Patrick and Brenda.

Jake walked and helped Sarah out the carriage.

He helped Gen out the carriage.

Brenda said, “Patrick how many people?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Twenty three.”

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Brenda looked back at Dr. Ralph.

Patrick stepped out the carriage and shook Skip’s hand.

Dr. Ralph stepped out the carriage.

Skip looked at Dr. Ralph.

Patrick quickly introduced Skip to Dr. Ralph.

Brenda said, “Wow.”

Shirley giggled.

She was peeping at Skip grinning.

Skip shook Dr. Ralph’s hand.

Skip said, “You re Shirley’s doctor. I thank you so much for happening her and attending to her. It is a pleasure Dr. Ralph to meet you.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I am glad to meet you also.:

Patrick said, “Skip Dr. Ralph brought Lorraine home last to be here for the holidays.”

Skip stared at Patrick.

Brenda said, “Patrick!”

Shirley grinned at her grandma.”

Skip rushed to the carriage and helped Shirley out.

He looked at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph walked to the other side of the carriage and moved all the quilts that Shirley kicked off to show her dressed.

Dr. Ralph picked up Lorraine.

Michael and Thomas and Bruce ran out the front door and yelling, “Skip!!!”

Skip stood next to Shirley and greeted the boys.

Dr. Ralph laughed and rushed in the house with Lorraine.

Eleanor was walking through the house when she heard her boys screaming outside the house.

She stopped to listen to what type of screaming it was.

Gen saw Eleanor and said, “Eleanor I invited additional people to dinner.”

Eleanor started walking up in the foyer and saw Sarah and Skip and knew Skip was outside.

She was peeping out the door.

Eleanor walked to Jake and hugged him and Sarah.

Eleanor looked at Jose and said, “Jose take their coats and lets’ move dinner from the family dining room to the formal dinner room. Tell Thomas to increase what he was serving. And add a few desserts.”

Jose was taking Jake and Sarah’s coats.

Gen had rushed to her room and taking off her coat, scarf, hat and gloves while she was rushing to her suite.

Eleanor said, “Come in and go to the parlor and warm yourselves.”

Jake took Sarah’s hand and they walked to the parlor and sat.

Sarah nearly cried and Jake held her hand.

Dr. Ralph rushed in the house carrying Lorraine.

He said, “Lorraine I am going to put you to bed for a nap.”

Lorraine screamed, “No.”

Eleanor looked at Lorraine and said, “Dr. Ralph go to the parlor.

Patrick and Brenda were trying to tell Skip quickly what happened to Lorraine.

Brenda said, “Michael and Thomas.”

Thomas said, “We know to get Lorraine’s wheelchair and rush in the house to keep from getting a cold.”

Brenda said, “Put on jackets. We are having some military commanders for dinner in a few minutes.”

Bruce looked at Skip and said, “Skip is that fine with you?”

Skip said, “I don’t control who comes to your house to eat that your grandma and grandpa invite.  
Patrick said, “Do you know a Commander Washington and Commander Walker?”

Skip said, “Commander Washington is Jakes and mine commander. I don’t know Commander Walker.”

Brenda was twirling Shirley’s lock.

Shirley loved being pampered.

Patrick looked at Shirley and said, “Brenda you are just as bad as Shirley. Let’s go in the house before we freeze to death.”

Skip said, “Shirley We will be leaving in the morning with Commander Washington. They have not told us where nor how long.”

The boys ran in the house and put Lorraine’s wheelchair by the parlor door.

They ran upstairs to put on jackets.

Gen was running around the corner and stopped at the liquor table.

Brenda and Patrick saw her.

Patrick said, “Gen we are having those two pastors for dinner and their families.”

Gen said, “What two b\*\*\*\*\*\*s.”

Brenda hollered.

She was taking off her coat, scarf, hat and gloves.

Brenda reached for Patrick’s coat.

Skip took off Shirley’s coat and reached it to Jose and then pulled off his coat and gave it to Jose.

Patrick said, “That’s not what I said.”

Gen continued to pour her a glass of whiskey.

Eleanor looked at Patrick and said, “How many more daddy?”

Jose stopped to listen.

Skip looked at Jose.

Patrick said, “Six more.”

He looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor stood for a moment.

She looked at Brenda.

Brenda looked at Eleanor and said, “I blinked six times at your father, and he did it anyway.”

Eleanor walked with Jose down the hall and through the billiards room.

Bruce ran and told Percy that Skip and Jake were there for dinner and some more commanders were on their way to dinner and their grand momma said to put on jackets.

Percy jumped from the piano and ran up the backstairs to his room.

He found a navy jacket and put it on in a hurry.

Gen and Brenda were standing at the liquor table.

Harriet, Brittany, Rebecca walked through the formal dining room to the family dining room.

They spoke to Shirley and Skip and put the dishes and crystal away.

Shirley told Skip the doctors were giving Lorraine over eighty medicines in shots because the mob nurse was poisoning her and the doctors that were working on her.

She said, “Dr. Ralph brought Lorraine home because they did not know if she will live or die. She is not herself. The doctors want to see if she has brain damage.”

Skip and Shirley were standing by the front door.

Ruth walked through the formal dining room and set the formal dining room with a casual Sunday supper look.

Brenda and Gen were walking back to the foyer with their drinks in their hands.

Brenda walked to the formal dining room.

Ruth was finishing the silverware.

Brenda said, “Ruth I love the way you organize this formal dining room. You are organized. This is lovely. It is not fancy but well fitted for a Sunday holiday supper. Thank you.”

Jose walked back through the formal dining room.

He said, “Ruth it is twenty four people I know I was told twenty three.”

Brenda started counting, “Eleven plus three, plus six and four…”

Jose looked at Skip and said, “If Robert is here, he is spending the day with Stephanie.”

Brenda said, “Ruth set the table for twenty -six, just in case anyone else shows up.”

Jose said, “Ruth the table is very nice.”

Jose turned and put coal in the fireplace which connected with the fireplace in in the parlor.

He walked to the storage room and got candles and walked back to the formal dining room and placed the candles on the table and in the centerpieces on the buffet and lit them.

Brenda liked the dining room.

She and Eleanor stood and looked.

Brenda said, “Let’s see what us heathen has for twenty some people to eat.”

Eleanor followed Brenda to the kitchen.

Harriet, Brittany and Rebecca brought out the water in crystal pitchers.

Brenda loved her dining room.

Brenda walked in the kitchen.

The workers stopped working.

Brenda said, “We have doubled the number people for dinner. Some I want to see how we do a casual Sunday holiday supper. The rest are family. I want Ruth, Harriet and Brittany to serve in the formal dining room.

Ruth, Harriet and Brittany were in the kitchen listening.

Brenda said, “Peter made a divine holiday punch last week.”

Jose said, “Dan made the punch. Peter made the eggnog.”

Thomas cooked both beef tender loins. One for the family and one for the workers.

Thomas said, “We have two beef tender loins. I just have to add some more vegetables.”

Jose walked over to the storage area and said, “We can do some fried chicken and have a few hens boiling in a minute and the chicken and hens could be ready in about an hour.”

Brenda said, “Whatever you prepared will be fine.”

Jose said, “I can make the punch and eggnog and start some type of dessert.”

Shirley and Skip stood in the foyer and laughed and talked.

Brenda and Eleanor walked through the formal dinner and looked at the table.

Brenda said, “I love to see the candlelight flicker off the crystal.”

Eleanor said, “I know Thomas was cooking that other tender loin for the workers. I don’t know what they are going to eat today.”

Brenda said, “How many”

Eleanor said, “Seventeen and Gary.”

Brenda said, “I’m proud of Gary.”

Eleanor nodded her head.

She felt sorry for a minute.

Brenda was holding Eleanor by the waist and they leaned their heads on each other.

Shirley said, “I love to see the tables when they are set.”

They walked to the door of the formal dining room and saw Brenda and Eleanor holding each other.

Shirley stood and looked at the tender moment between her two women.

Skip touched Shirley’s arm and they walked out the formal dining room.

Patrick was walking to Shirley and Skip.

The boys were running in the house and down the grand staircase.

Dr. Ralph stood and rushed to the parlor door and saw the boys jumping down the stairs and running down the hall.

Patrick just moved for them to run by him.

Jake and Gen looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph turned and walked back to the parlor with a frown on his face.

Jake looked at Dr. Ralph.

Gen was drinking her glass of whiskey and said, “Dr. Ralph they do that all the time. Everyone is use to them. Even the workers.”

Dr. Ralph sat next to Lorraine.

Lorraine raised her hand and said, “Gen.”

Gen turned and leaned from the ottoman she was sitting on by the fireplace to give Lorraine the whiskey.

Dr. Ralph looked at Gen.

Gen sat up and looked scared at Dr. Ralph.

Jake snickered.

Sarah just looked.

Jose had Rebecca and Rita to cut bread and make two trays of sandwiches out of the ham and goose and turkey that were leftovers.

Jose told them to cut cheese and put crackers and grapes on a tray.

He was making the eggnog and finished it.

Jose started on the holiday punch.

He put a pot of tea and coffee on and put lemons, cream and honey on a tray.

Jose ran to the storage area and got four bottles of wines for dinner.

Jose learned the types of wine to serve with the meat from Bruce’s wine keeper at the hotel.

They heard a knock on the front door.

Jose ran through the formal dining room and placed the wine in the wine holders.

Patrick and Brenda were standing in the foyer talking to Shirley and Skip.

Patrick looked and was walking to the door.

Jose ran pass Patrick.

Patrick peeped and turned and walked back to Brenda.

Skip chuckle at Jose.

The boys were running down the hall.

Jose opened the door.

Stephanie’s parents peeped in and saw the boys jumping off the grand staircase.

Robert peeped and saw them.

Stephanie walked in and said, “Good afternoon.”

Bruce ran to Stephanie and hugged her.

Percy ran to Skip.

Michael and Thomas ran to Stephanie.

Robert walked in the house and laughed.

He looked at Stephanie and said, “You’re use to this?”

Skip exhaled.

Brenda and Patrick saw Skip.

Shirley looked up at Skip.

Stephanie’s parents were standing at the door with their mouths opened.

Jose jerked his head and looked at them.

They stepped inside the house.

Patrick and Brenda laughed and said, “Welcome.”

Robert walked and shook Patrick’s hand and shook Brenda’s hand.

He spoke to Skip and Shirley.

Jake eased to the parlor door and saw Robert.

Robert saw Jake.

Jake walked and sat next to Sarah.

Gen said, “Who is that?”

Jake said, “My boss.”

Gen said, “Trouble.”

Jake said, “I was in a water fight and he was telling me not to shoot the enemy.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Jake.

Sarah was still looking straight in front of her.

Gen said, “A real fight?”

Jake said, “Yes.”

Gen said, “What you do.”

Jake shook his head and huh.

Gen said, “Was Skip there?”

Jake said, “Yes. We stood back to back and shot the enemy down.”

Robert walked to the parlor and to see who was in the parlor and to make sure Jake did not say anything.

Robert walked in the parlor and looked at Jake and looked around at everyone and said, “Good afternoon.”

Jake turned and looked at Robert and turned back to Sarah.

Skip was peeping down the hall at the parlor door.

Brenda looked at Skip’s face.

Stephanie spoke to everybody.

Brenda hugged Stephanie.

Patrick shook her father’s hand and welcome them to the house.

Stephanie’s father saw Brenda’s hand and pointed to her glass.

Patrick turned and laughed.

Stephanie’s mother followed Patrick and her father.

Stephanie said, “Momma and daddy that was not that bad,”

Her father shook his head and kept walking with Patrick.

Brenda laughed.

She and Stephanie were hugging and Michael and Thomas were running behind Stephanie hugging her from the back.

Bruce was holding Stephanie’s hand.

Robert heard them walking in the parlor.

Dr. Ralph stood and shook Robert’s hand.

He introduced himself as Shirley’s doctor.

Stephanie heard him and peeped in the parlor and saw Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph she was Stephanie.

Robert looked at the boys hanging over Stephanie.

Robert said, “If I weren’t married to her I would be jealous.”

Bruce walked Stephanie to a chair and looked at Robert.

Jake looked.

Robert turned his head and looked at Bruce.

He said, “You sat Stephanie there in a chair so I would not sit with my wife?”

Bruce looked at Robert and walked out the room.

Brenda was standing in the doorway and watched.

Bruce walked pass Brenda out the room.

Robert watched Bruce walk out the room.

Brenda took a swallow of whiskey and turned her head.

Lorraine laughed.

Percy, Thomas and Michael sat on the floor by Stephanie.

Stephanie said, “Robert they are children.”

Robert looked at Stephanie and said, “How long will you be working here?”

Stephanie looked at Lorraine and said, “Hey Lorraine.”

Dr. Ralph walked and shook Stephanie’s hand and said, “I’m Dr. Ralph.”

Michael said, “He is Lorraine’s boyfriend.”

Brenda said, “Michael come here.”

Michael looked at Brenda and stood and walked to her.

Michael took her hand.

They walked down to the billiards room.

The workers were bringing the trays of appetizers and Stephen was pushing the cart with the eggnog and punch.

Shirley and Skip were walking to the parlor.

They watched Michael holding Brenda’s hand and walk down the hall.

Shirley shook her head and whimpered.

Skip stop and looked at Shirley.

Shirley said, “I feel that is the way it is going to be when she leaves.”

Skip said, “Shirley be happy each day. When something makes you unhappy if you can fix it. Fix it. If it can’t be fix. Pray and ask GOD for forgiveness.”

Shirley and Skip stood outside the parlor by the Christmas tree and watched Brenda and Michael.

Patrick looked at Brenda and Michael. It touched his heart.

He looked and saw Shirley staring at them.

He kept pouring his guests’ liquor.

Patrick said, “We are having a couple of preachers for supper.”

Stephanie father said, “Where you want us to hide our liquor?”

Patrick said the best place is in that room on the table in the corner.”

Stephanie mother said, “If anything is left.”

There was a knock on the door.

Skip looked at the door.

Shirley said, “My grandpa sermon today was that unforgiveness will stop a married couple from reaching their goals.”

Robert was looking at Skip and Shirley.

Brenda said, “Michael what Dr. Ralph ask your momma?”

Michael was walking holding Brenda’s hand.

Michael said, “Dr. Ralph asked momma if Stephanie was a good nurse.”

Brenda said, “What did your momma say?”

Michael said, “She said yes. Then he asked her why Lorraine did not want Stephanie.”

Brenda said, “What did your momma say?”

Michael said, “Momma said Lorraine and Stephanie fought over the same man or men. I think she said man.”

Brenda took a swallow of whiskey and said, “Men.”

Michael said, “That was it.”

Bruce was upstairs with Eleanor.

Brenda and Michael stopped at the liquor table.

Michael reached for a glass.

Patrick said, “You better move.”

Stephanie’s parents laughed at Michael.

Eleanor heard the knocking on the front door.

She changed her dress and re-combed her hair and put on Joseph’s pearl earrings and Dr. Woodson’s necklace.

Bruce said, “You look pretty momma. Before you look plain.”

Eleanor grinned t Bruce,

They walked out her room and were standing on the top stair.

Jose walked to the door and opened the door.

The workers were walking through the billiards room with the trays.

Thomas had the beef platters ready.

He had two bowls of mashed potatoes, several bread baskets and butter.

Ruth and Rebecca finished the sweet peas, carrots, cream pearl onions, steamed spinach and tomatoes.

Thomas said that was enough vegetables.

He was seasoning the hens to finish the chicken and dumplings.

He put the hens in the oven to bake a little and brown.

Thomas started frying the chicken.

Jose showed the commanders to the parlor.

Skip looked at the commanders and said, “Jake.”

Jake started to get up.

But Sarah held his hand.

Gen looked at scared Sarah.

Robert was looking at Thomas and Percy and pointed at them and said, “You all spoiled Stephanie, didn’t you?”

Thomas said, “Isn’t that what you suppose to do for the woman you love?”

Dr. Ralph sat and listened to the Thomas.

He looked at Robert.

Robert looked at Lorraine and said, “Doctor how long will Stephanie be here?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I can’t tell you that.”

Stephanie looked at Lorraine.

Gen was watching Stephanie looking at Lorraine.

Skip saluted.

Jake said, “Who?”

Then Robert looked back and saluted.

Dr. Ralph looked.

Jake turned his head and was talking to Sarah.

Gen had her whiskey glass to her mouth and watched jake.

She wanted to laugh.

Then she saw Commander Washington how he looked at Jake.

Commander Walker looked at Jake.

Then his wife and children entered the parlor.

Robert whispered, “Jake.”

Jake rolled his eyes and turned and looked at Robert.

Jake pretended he just saw the commanders and he stood and saluted.

Jake did not want to be in the same room with them.

The commanders saw Eleanor and Bruce descending the grand staircase.

Selma stared at Eleanor.

Jose watched her.

Shirley said, “Jose we believe that is Sally’s mother.”

Jose looked at Selma and said, “Huh.”

And walked away.

Skip wanted to laugh out but tried to suppress it.

He looked down the hall and saw Eleanor and Bruce walking down the grand staircase.

Eleanor had changed her clothes and spruce up.

She thought about Joseph and that he wanted her to look her best even at home. But especially during the holidays.

Brenda looked at the Commanders and continued to her office and she put her glass own and walked back with Michael, behind the servers with the trays of food.

Stephanie’s parents took swallows of their liquors and put their glasses in the billiards room.

They walked with Patrick, Brenda, Michael to the parlor.

Eleanor and Bruce walked behind them to the parlor.

Patrick walked in and shook the commanders’ hands and offered them seats.

Brenda said, “The washroom is down the hall.”

Brenda looked at Stephen.

Stephen said, “This way.”

They all followed Stephen down to the washroom.”

Selma stared at Shirley.

Shirley looked at her.

Skip frowned and looked at Selma.

Eleanor stopped and looked at Selma.

Bruce turned around and followed them to the guests’ room.

Stephen watched Bruce.

Eleanor knew Bruce was protecting Shirley.

Skip did not say anything.

Robert looked at Stephanie and said, “Damn.”

Gen said, “Hot damn.”

Robert laughed and said, “My grandmother used to say that all the time.”

He looked at Percy and Thomas and said, “You all are not afraid of much are you?”

Eleanor walked in the parlor.

Robert turned and smiled at Eleanor.

Eleanor smiled and greeted everyone.

Stephen was bringing the commanders back.

The workers were passing out napkins and serving the sandwiches on the napkins.

Stephen wheeled the cart to the parlor and passed out eggnog and punch.

Brenda looked at Gen.

Gen turned her head.

Jake gave Gen a half grin.

Brenda walked over and sat next to Sarah and across from Gen.

There was a sofa that Selma and her children sat.

Robert watched Bruce who entered the parlor.

Bruce eyed Robert.

Gen told Brenda what was happening.

Robert looked at Bruce.

Stephanie smiled at Robert.

Dr. Ralph stood and looked at Shirley.

He said, “Shirley come and sit.”

Shirley said, “I’m ok.”

Dr. Ralph gave her a mean look.

Skip looked at Dr. Ralph.

Shirley walked in the parlor and sat next to Lorraine.

Michael got a napkin and got a ham sandwich.

He fed Lorraine.

Thomas went and got punch from Stephen.

Thomas tried to give Lorraine punch.

Lorraine said, “Gin.”

Gen turned and looked at Lorraine and said, “Yes Lorraine.”

Dr. Ralph knew what Lorraine was saying.

He looked at Lorraine.

Eleanor was about to sit on the sofa with Selma and her children.

She looked at Lorraine.

Thomas reached the punch cup to Lorraine.

Lorraine clasped her lips.

Gen looked at Lorraine.

She told Brenda, “She wants gin.”

Brenda rolled her eyes and said, “Then we will be heathens getting a sick lady drunk.”

Gen hollered.

Sarah looked at Gen.

Jake tried not to laugh.

Jose walked to the door and said, “Supper is served.”

Everyone stood and walked to the dining room.

Patrick stood and waited for Brenda.

Jose walked back to the formal dining room and stood.

Patrick and Brenda went to their seats.

Jose put Commander Walker and his family to Patrick’s side.

He was watching Brenda.

He put Commander Washington to Brenda’s side.

Gen was passing Jose.

Jose grabbed Gen’s arm and sat her next to Commander Washington.

Gen looked at Jose.

Patrick was watching everybody.

He saw when Gen turned and rolled her eyes at Jose.

Brenda snickered.

Jose put Lorraine and Dr. Ralph next to Gen

He put Shirley and Skip.

Michael, Thomas.

Jose pointed to Eleanor and point Eleanor next to Commander Walker’s son.

Eleanor rolled her eyes at Jose.

Brenda snickered.

Patrick thought, “God don’t let them start.”

Bruce sat next to Eleanor and Stephanie and Robert.

Her parents sat next to Thomas.

Percy sat next to Robert.

Jake then Sarah.

Lorraine said, “Jose, Gin.”

Jose said, “No.”

Eleanor said, “Don’t tell her no.”

Jose said, “No. Sherry.”

Patrick said, “God help.”

Stephanie said, “I would like sherry.”

Robert turned and looked at Stephanie and whispered, “My commanders.”

Stephanie turned and looked at the commanders and smiled.

She looked at Jose and said, “Rum.”

Jose stopped and he and Stephanie started arguing.

Brenda and Patrick sat.

The commanders were slow about sitting.

Robert was embarrassed and said, “Stephanie.”

The workers brought the food in.

Their presentation of the food was excellent.

Brenda stuck out her chest.

Jose, Stephanie, Eleanor were arguing. Lorraine said, “Me too.”

Jose turned and looked at Lorraine and said, “You too what?”

Michael said, “She wants rum.”

Eleanor looked at Michael and said, “You will not interpret her liquor requests.”

Dr. Ralph sat and looked at the argument.

Patrick exhaled.

Brenda looked at Commander Washington and said, “We just be your heathens.”

Everyone turned and looked at Brenda.

Stephanie’s father said, “Honey what is wrong?”

Stephanie said, “Jose always think he can tell the rest of us what to do.”

Stephanie’s mother said, “Us. You don’t work here. Is that the reason you loved coming to work here? You have someone to fuss with, because me and your father won’t argue with you.”

Bruce laid his head on Stephanie’s arm.

Robert peeped around at Bruce and said, “Scotch.”

Jose said, “No. Your commander has already called you all heathens.”

Commander Washington looked down at Robert.

Commander Walker was trying to decide what he wanted to eat.

Everyone turned and looked at Patrick and Brenda.

Patrick said, “We are use to them. They argue all the time. You see the children aren’t saying anything. And Michael you stop talking about liquor.”

Patrick said, “Jose passed a bowl of bread and butter down here.”

Patrick said, “No liquor today.”

Brenda said, “Brittany a small bowl of dumplings and a small piece of hen. Thank you.”

Commander Washington said, “That sounds good.”

Stephanie said, “The fried chicken smells good. Thomas?”

Ruth said, “Yes.”

Stephanie said, “A leg and mashed potatoes and gravy.”

Stephanie’s parents ate the beef tenderloin.

Patrick looked at Stephanie’s parents enjoying the beef.

Dr. Ralph was enjoying his beef.

Patrick said, “Dr. Ralph it meets your approval?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

Jose disappeared in the kitchen.

He was finishing the desserts, the apple pie, Boston Crème Pie and cherry tarts.

The workers brought the trays of sandwiches and cheese back to the workers area.

They workers ate the sandwiches.

Jose put the cookies and gingerbread with lemon sauce in the workers area.

He told them Thomas baked it for them and not the guests.

Jose felt a little better.

He thought, “Arguing with Eleanor and Stephanie did me good.”

Jose placed the desserts on the serving plates.

Everyone enjoyed their dinner.

Selma kept watching Shirley eat.

Gen watched Selma.

Skip watched Selma.

Eleanor was watching Shirley’s face and leaned back to see who Shirley was looking at.

Michael was eating his lambchop and walked to feed Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph looked and took Lorraine’s fork and put it in her hand.

He leaned over and whispered, “Try Lorraine.”

Michael was standing next to Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph said, “Michael, go and eat. I can take care of Lorraine.”

Stephanie was looking.

Eleanor was watching.

Michael turned and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Michael. It is alright. Dr. Ralph knows what he is doing. Come here.”

Michael ran to Eleanor and cried.

She put him in her lap.

Stephanie reached over and patted Michael’s head.

Michael was gasping and said, “I want to help her.”

Eleanor held Michael tight.

She kissed his head and said, “Michael, Lorraine knows you love her. Dr. Ralph knows you love Lorraine. He needs to see what he can do on her own.”

Robert was fine with Stephanie and the boys.

Jose walked back in the formal dining room before he finished the desserts and gave Robert a cup full scotch.

Everyone thought it was eggnog.

Robert was happy.

Stephanie’s parents knew Robert was drinking liquor.

They looked at Jose.

Jose kept walking.

Commander Washington looked at Jose and though, “He is one of the most smart aleck persons I have ever seen.”

But enjoyed his hen and dumplings.

Commander Washington said, “Mrs. Stith, the hen and dumplings were seasoned perfectly.”

Brenda said, “Thank you. I will tell the chef.”

Thomas walked to the formal dining room.

He saw Michael sitting in Eleanor’s lap and wondered what was wrong with him.

Thomas took the beef tender loin that was almost gone to the kitchen and sit it in the workers area.

He scraped the mashed potatoes and gravy onto the beef tenderloin plate and the workers enjoyed it.

Patrick saw Thomas take the food and did not say anything because he did not know if the workers had food for dinner.

Gary walked in the house and made him a plate of beef, potatoes and gravy and biscuit.

Jose was washing the dishes.

He saw Gary and wondered what will become of him.

He said, he wanted to be a psychologist.

Jose thought, “Maybe the hospital will need one by then. I know Denise said she wanted to do that for the former slaves.”

Rebecca was helping Jose with the dishes.

She said, “Jose I don’t have a way home. Me and Virginia.”

Jose said, “Wash as many dishes as you can. I’ll take you and Virginia home. Anyone else?”

The guests moved from the formal dining room to the parlor.

Stephanie’s parents continued to the billiard room and sat and drank their liquor.

Shirley and Skip stood in the hall and talked.

Brittany, Ruth and Rebecca cleared the formal dining room.

Rebecca said, “Jose can I take some food home. I was to cook today for my elderly parents but I could not shop and cook.”

Jose turned and walked to the left overs and gave her the chicken and dumplings and sweet peas and carrots.”

Rebecca got some cookies and gingerbread with lemon sauce.

Thomas did not say anything but continued to clean his area and write a grocer list for the week.

Ruth and Brittany cleaned the front of the house and walked through the billiards room and saw Stephanie’s parents drinking.

They watched Ruth and Brittany walk through with the linens.

George and Mike lit the lanterns and Christmas lights around the house.

They took the horses and carriages to the stables.

They brought in a great amount of water and left and went to the stables and drank and played cards all night.

Jose did not say anything because they had completed their work.

Jose went to all the workers and said, “Who else need a ride home?”

There were six workers.

They made plates and left with Jose.

Jose said, “Thomas you have to serve them dessert. They should be gone when I return. I’ll finish the dishes.”

Thomas said, “Ok.”

Jose carried all the workers home.

It took him two hours.

Jose cried all the way back to the house.

He rode the carriage to the stables and George put the horses and the carriage up.

Jose walked through the house and checked all the windows and doors.

Skip and Jake were the last to leave.

They escorted Sarah home.

Commander Washington stay at the military headquarters he rode his horse to the headquarters and saw Commander Walker go down the street home.

Commander Washington groomed his horse.

He went to his room and paced his bag for his next assignment. He packed several pairs of thermals and many socks.

He went and bathe and shaved and went to bed.

Stephanie and her parents rode with Robert to the headquarters.

They waited for Stephanie to tell him bye.

Robert put his horse in the stable and attended the horse.

He re-packed his bag.

He went to sleep and sleep all night.

Stephanie and her parents went home.

Stephanie cried all night long.

Robert introduced Curtis to Stephanie and her parents earlier that day.

Skip and Jake made it back to the military headquarters and they attended their horses and packed their bags.

Skip was thinking about Shirley.

He told Jake, “I believe Shirley is dying.”

Jake looked at Skip.

Skip said, “I want to ask her mother. But she does not care for me because she thinks I want Shirley for her money.”

Jake said, “Send her grandfather a letter before we leave.”

There was a bell that sounded.

Jake was on his bed thinking about Sarah and he hated not to be there with her and her uncle when her aunt pass.

Skip was sitting at the desk in the hall and was about to write Patrick a letter.

Everyone woke and looked around.

Commander Brown was standing in the hall and said, “All the supplies are not here. They will not be here until tomorrow evening. Which mean we will not leave until Tuesday.”

Jake said, “We.”

Skip went to his bed and laid down.

Jake was laying on his bed.

Skip said, “I’m going to see Shirley’s grandfather tomorrow.”

Jake said, “You think Shirley is dying because that doctor is there?’

Skip said, “I saw how Michael reacted to his nurse like, ”Oh another one.”

Jake said, “I nearly froze. I am going to get me some thermals and more socks. I don’t care what they say.”

Skip said, “I need to check on my pay.”

Jake laughed and said, “Like Shirley needs it.”

They laughed.

Brenda and Eleanor walked through the house and it was clean.

Thomas fed the workers.

Brittany was sitting and knitting her a hat and scarf set with mittens.

Ruth was sitting reading the paper.

Thomas was in his room with the door locked reading.

Gary was the only person in the re-modeled shed.

Stephen was sitting and reading a book.

Jose was in the kitchen at his desk looking over his schedule.

He thought, “In a few months I will not be doing this schedule again.”

Harriet was sitting with Brittany and Ruth and she was quilting.

Brenda and Eleanor walked pass them to the downstairs.

Jose looked at them and continued.

Ruth looked at Brenda and Eleanor. And said, “Harriet.”

Harriet did not look up but said, “It’s their house. After all this thieving and the mob. I would walk through me house too.”

Brenda and Eleanor walked back and checked the backdoor.

Gen was in the sitting room with the boys, but Percy and Lorraine and Dr. Ralph.

Gen went to bed.

Thomas and Bruce went to bed.

Dr. Ralph put Lorraine to bed.

Shirley undressed Lorraine and combed and brushed her hair.

Dr. Ralph went to the library to read.

Patrick was going through his telegrams.

Shirley went to Patrick’s office and sat and was talking to him.

Brenda and Eleanor stopped at Patrick’s office.

Patrick said, “I received a telegram today from Mike in Philadelphia that Mabel and Curtis tried to board a train to New York as our workers. Curtis demanded first class accommodations. They called the sheriff. Curtis and Mabel left the trains.”

Shirley said, “What did they do with Aunt Bev’s horses and wagon?”

Eleanor said, “Very good Shirley. They probably sold them.”

Patrick said, “Eleanor you did good too by sending out they were no longer our workers and had to pay to ride.

Brenda said, “I’m going to bed.”

Eleanor sa9id, “Good night momma.”

Shirley said, “We need to go to Lorraine and get her some more clothes.”

Brenda said, “Fine. Tell Jose to take you and one of the boys tomorrow. Go in there and see if she has any bath oils there. My lemon oil is half full.”

Eleanor said, “I’ll go too because the boys may get there and be disobedient to Shirley and create problems. Percy will be practicing all day. I will not disturb him. I’ll take Michael. He feels like he cannot do anything to help Lorraine feel better.”

Brenda said, “I think I’ll take Natalie and Josiah’s baby gifts to town. I’ll see if Gen wants to ride with me and I’ll take Bruce and Thomas.”

Eleanor said, “Good. Daddy you and Percy, Dr. Ralph and Lorraine will be here.”

Patrick said, “That’s fine.”

Brenda went to bed.

Eleanor went upstairs and went to each boys’ room.

Thomas and Bruce were sleep.

Michael was nearly sleep with a book on his chest.

Eleanor learned not to touch what her sons fall asleep with but for pencils.

Thomas was laying on his stomach with his feet in the air.

He was looking at the maps of Africa.

Eleanor opened his door and peeped in.

Thomas did not look at the door but said, “Good night momma.”

Eleanor had been ready to kill her favorite child for days.

She smiled and said, “Good night Thomas.”

Eleanor went to her room and dressed for bed.

She fell on her knees and said nothing.

She stood and sat on her bed and took off her pearl earrings and the necklace Dr. Woodson bought her.

Eleanor sat and looked at the necklace.

Then she looked at Joseph’s pearl earrings.

She thought, “Joseph, I cannot betray you. I know with Dr. Woodson I would have feelings. I know with United States Senator Lee Richardson I would have feelings. I refuse to have feelings for any man. I will not commit adultery with no man. I want those two good men to marry and have their families. I will be very busy this year and I don’t want to neglect the children. But I hate him and his family. I can’t pray to your God yet.”

Eleanor sat on her bed and swung her right leg.

She was not thinking about anything, but she needed to get about seven of Lorraine’s dresses and her under garments a few pair of shoes.”

Eleanor closed her eyes and batted them, she thought about Brenda wanted some bath oil.

Eleanor thought, “Daddy sat there and did not tell momma he has used her oil. Lorraine is the only person who knows how to make that stuff.”

Eleanor put her feet in the bed and covered up.

She slept until the morning.

George and Gary knocked on her door and brought her hot water in the room and filled her bathtub.

They had taken Shirley’s hot bath water.

Patrick and Brenda were bathed and dressed.

Gen was bathed and dressed.

Percy was up and down stairs in the music room practicing.

Eleanor thought, “It sounds like he is getting better.”

She shook her head and was trying to get out of her thought about Percy playing the piano because he could not compete with the babies born with the pianos, violins and harps in their hands.

Eleanor smiled.

Eleanor started her bath and was happy.

She began to hum and enjoy her bath.

She thought, “I’m out of the strawberry oil, my favorite. I have to take my time and search Lorraine’s house today…”

Eleanor stopped in the middle of her thought and turned her full body sideways to hear.

She turned back around and started back humming and said, “That can’t be Percy. Percy will be in the military academy with those others…”

Eleanor rolled her eyes and said, “If they don’t kick them out…”

She rolled her eyes.

Eleanor enjoyed her bath and dressed.

She selected her coat, scarf, hat and gloves.

She opened her bedroom door and was walking down the backstairs to her office.

She heard Patrick, Brenda, Gen, Dr. Ralph and Lorraine going to breakfast.

Eleanor was happy.

Thomas ran out his room confused like he does all the time.

Eleanor was pressing her scarf with her hands and said, “Good morning Thomas.”

Thomas was leaning against the wall.

Michael opened his bedroom door and stood with his hand on the doorknob and stared at a confused Thomas.

Eleanor was walking down the backstairs and said, “Good morning Michael.”

Michael peeped down the hall and only saw the top of Eleanor’s head as she disappeared down the stairs.

Michael looked at Thomas and walked to the washroom and poured him hot water in the face basin and washed his face.

He emptied the basin.

Thomas walked in the washroom.

He slowly poured hot water in his water basin.

Michael stood outside the washroom and leaned on the wall.

He was watching the way Eleanor walked.

He started walking down the hall and went down the stairs.

Michael reached the bottom stair.

He turned his head and looked towards the kitchen he did not see her.

He was in the process of turning his head to the left to look down the hall to Eleanor’s office.

Eleanor screamed and runn9ing pass Michael.

Ruth, Brittany, Jose, Stephen and Thomas ran to the hallway and looked at Eleanor screaming through the house.

Michael jumped.

Thomas and Bruce stood at the top of the stairs and watched Eleanor running through the billiards room.

Shirley was at the top of the stairs.

She stopped and saw Eleanor running through the hall to Patrick and Brenda.

Patrick frowned up.

Brenda said, “It better be something.”

Gen stopped and looked at Patrick and Brenda.

Dr. Ralph turned and looked at a frantic Eleanor.

He looked around to see the children.

He saw Shirley at the top of the staircase.

Then he saw Bruce and Thomas stand at the top of the staircase and watch Eleanor.

Dr. Ralph looked and saw the top of Michael’s head and turn one way and then another way.

Then Dr. Ralph saw Michael’s eyes.

Dr. Ralph turned and looked at a frantic Eleanor.

Jose, Ruth and Brittany ran through the formal dining room to hear what was wrong with Eleanor.

Patrick said, “Eleanor, it better not be any of your s\*\*\* first thing this morning.”

Jose, Ruth and Brittany slowed and walked out the formal dining room to the family dining room.

Eleanor was bent over trying to catch her breath.

She said, “Daddy, Percy can play the piano.”

Patrick, Brenda, Gen walked in the family dining room.

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

He was perplexed at Eleanor’s behavior.

Lorraine started laughing.

Jose started laughing.

Dr. Ralph looked at them.

Ruth grinned.

Brittany smiled and said., “Good morning.”

Everyone walked in the family dining room and left Eleanor in the hall trying to catch her breath.

Dr. Ralph looked back at the children and saw Michael still peeping out the billiards room door.

Bruce walked down the staircase.

Thomas walked down the staircase.

Shirley finally started walking down the staircase.

Dr. Ralph pushed a laughing Lorraine to Eleanor.

He said, “Eleanor I need for you to calm down and come and sip some water.”

Dr. Ralph caught Eleanor by her hand and walked her to the family dining.

He looked at Patrick, Brenda and Gen they were talking and acting like nothing was wrong.

Jose said, “Excuse me and walked out the family dining room laughing.

Dr. Ralph needed an explanation.

He pushed Lorraine next to Gen and he looked at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor I need you to explain what happened to you.”

Eleanor sat.

Patrick and Brenda were still talking and quietly sat.

Eleanor said, “I didn’t know Percy can play the piano. Joseph worked hard with Percy. When we were in Europe, we took him to all classical performances he loved it. But it was something he could not understand.”

Bruce walked in the family dining room and watched Eleanor.

Thomas walked and sat next to Eleanor and watched Eleanor.

Ruth was walking back to the family dining room with a lamb chop on a plate.

Michael smelled the lamb chop and yelled. “Here I come!”

He ran all the way to the family dining room and ran behind Eleanor and jumped in his chair and bowed his head and said his grace.

Patrick said, “Now wait.”

Michael threw his elbow on the table and turned his head and poked out his mouth.

Gen turned her head.

Lorraine looked at Michael.

Brenda was watching Lorraine’s eyes.

Eleanor looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “I was sure Percy could never play the piano. That he and these others would be at the military academy until they graduate.”

Dr. Ralph said, “So now you may have to accommodate Percy.”

Eleanor was shaking.

She said, “He will be in Europe by himself. I can’t let him go. I hate Bruce…”

She looked at Bruce and said, “Not you baby.”

Bruce sat up and said, “I know you are talking about that man.”

Patrick and Brenda looked at Bruce.

Gen looked at a calm Bruce.

Dr. Ralph said, “I understand that when you heard Percy play this morning you knew that was another problem you did not anticipate would happen.”

Eleanor was tearful.

Dr. Ralph said, ‘You will not deny any of your children their dreams.”

Michael looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Not true.”

Patrick looked at Michael and said, “I said ‘wait.’”

Michael turned his head from Patrick and poked out his mouth.

Lorraine looked at Michael with eyes of love.

Brenda could not tell and tilted her head to look in Lorraine’s eyes.

Dr. Ralph saw Brenda and he sat next to Brenda and looked at her.

Percy was walking in the room.

Brenda looked at Percy and said, “Percy you smelled breakfast all the way back there?”

Percy said, “No, Jose came and told me to hurry and come to breakfast.”

Eleanor looked at a grinning Jose when he walked in the family dining door.

Lorraine started laughing.

Gen started laughing.

Dr. Ralph turned and looked at Jose.

He began to realize they treat each other like that. They were big kids getting on Patrick and Brenda’s nerves. And seeing how much trouble they can get each other in.

Dr. Ralph did not like it, but he understood them.

Eleanor dabbed her eyes.

Brittany brought in plates of waffles.

Percy sat and looked at Eleanor.

He said, “Eleanor, I will be alright in Europe by myself.”

Everyone looked at Percy.

Percy said, “I am not a psychic. Jose told me you did not want me to go to Europe by myself.”

Eleanor looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Percy you weren’t suppose to tell her I said that.”

Percy jumped and threw his hands up in the air and said, “How was I suppose to know that. You did not tell me that.”

Jose stared at Percy.

Brittany stood with two plates of waffles.

Dr. Ralph saw Eleanor’s heart that morning.

He thought, “Dr. Woodson would have to quit being a doctor to be here with her to help her out. They made the right choice.”

He looked at Lorraine.

Patrick and Brenda watched Dr. Ralph looking at Lorraine.

Percy raised his hand for waffles.

Bruce said, “me too.”

Ruth walked in with Shirley’s omelet and a half of biscuit.

She gave Lorraine grits and a soft fried egg.

Michael said, “Lorraine, I’ll be there to feed you once they feed me.”

Gen hollered.

Eleanor looked at Michael.

Brittany put the whipped butter and nuts on the waffles.

Percy and Bruce looked at each other in awe.

Dr. Ralph smiled at them.

His eyes were full of tears for Lorraine.

He stood and walked out the family dining room.

Jose watched Dr. Ralph who walked to the front door and looked out the window.

Dr. Ralph wondered if his brother was alive, if he was well, where he was and did he have a life. Did he have children to raise up for his mother and father.

Jose walked to Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at Jose.

Jose looked out the window and leaned a little bit to Dr. Ralph and said, “Sometimes we don’t get all of what we want. But sometimes. Just sometimes we get enough to carry us over the bad times.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Jose and thought.

Jose said, “Breakfast is served.”

Jose walked away.

Dr. Ralph looked back at Jose and turned and looked out the window.

Ruth gave Michael a scramble egg and a biscuit.

Thomas said, “No waffles, sausage, grits and eggs.”

Eleanor said. “Me too”.

Gen said, “Me too.”

Ruth brought Patrick and Brenda waffles and fish.

Patrick was happy,

Because he was looking at Percy and Bruce’s plates of waffles.

Gen looked at Brenda.

Eleanor looked at Gen.

Shirley was eating her omelet.

Michael said, “Heifer.”

Patrick looked at Michael.

Eleanor did not look at Michael.

Shirley saw Eleanor when she rolled her eyes to the top of her head.

Dr. Ralph walked back in the family dining room.

Patrick said, “Sit Dr. Ralph and say grace. We are ready to eat.”

Dr. Ralph sat and held Shirley’s hand and Lorraine’s hand and said, “Father GOD I ask YOU to bless these good people. Show us all what to do from day to day to honor YOUR name. Touch each one and give them more of the gifts YOU placed in them. Percy with his music…”

Percy said, “Yes Lord.”

Dr. Ralph said, “…Thomas with his lawful skills. Help Lorraine to become whole.”

Gen said, “Amen.”

Dr. Ralph said, “In JESUS’s name. Amen.”

Lorraine was trying to pick up her fork.

Dr. Ralph said, “I’ll get it for you Lorraine.”

Lorraine said, “No. I am going with Percy.”

Percy looked at Lorraine.

Gen thought and said, “I thought I was going.”

Percy laughed.

Dr. Ralph looked at Ruth and said, “Ma am may I have fish and grits.”

Ruth said, “I have to see if there is any more fish.”

Brenda said, “I want all the stored food to be eaten. To start all over next week.”

Michael said, “Lorraine, I’m coming.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Michael who had turned to jump out of his chair.

Dr. Ralph said, “Michael please sit. Lorraine is going through a process where her brain and eyes and hands are talking to each other. They are trying to start agreeing together again.”

Thomas looked at Lorraine.

Bruce looked at Lorraine.

Percy peeped around Bruce and stared at Lorraine.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Lorraine.

Eleanor was thinking she had problems.

Gen and Shirley looked at Lorraine.

Ruth and Brittany watched Lorraine.

Lorraine was getting frustrated.

Thomas watched Lorraine and he looked at Dr. Ralph.

Thomas said, “Dr. Ralph please feed Lorraine. I don’t like her wanting to eat and have food, like here…”

He looked at Patrick and Eleanor.

Thomas said, “… and not able to eat. It is torment.”

Gen cut her eyes at Patrick and Eleanor.

Patrick looked at Thomas and back to Lorraine.

Eleanor kept looking at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph was watching Lorraine very closely.

He put the fork in Lorraine’s hand.

Dr. Ralph closed the fork in Lorraine’s hand.

He whispered to Lorraine. “Remember.”

Ruth walked out to go to the kitchen and see if they prepared Dr. Ralph’s plate.

Lorraine closed her eyes.

Her eyes started fluttering.

Dr. Ralph was very patient.

Brittany was watching Dr. Ralph very intently.

Lorraine held the fork.

She grinned.

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes Lorraine, continue to remember.”

She lifted the fork and put some egg in her mouth and began to chew.

Michael was peeping around Eleanor and said, “Good Lorraine.”

Lorraine picked up some egg and put it in her mouth.

Thomas started eating his sausages and grits.

Eleanor and Gen started eating.

They heard Lorraine’s fork drop.

But Shirley was watching Lorraine.

Lorraine started crying.

Dr. Ralph started feeding Lorraine.

Michael said, “What? Her hand was being hard head with her brains and eyes.”

Gen covered her mouth to keep from hollering.

Eleanor looked at Gen.

Brenda said, “Michael.”

Michael looked at Brenda and said, “That’s what you say when we don’t agree with you, momma and grandpa.”

Gen started hitting the table.

Jose snickered.

Brenda just looked at Michael and did not say anything else.

Brenda said, “Gen, you’re going home today.”

Gen was laughing with her mouth covered and said, “Yes ma am. After we come back from seeing Natalie and Josiah.”

Patrick looked at Gen and snickered.

Bruce said, “Dr. Ralph is what Michael said, is right?”

Dr. Ralph looked at Bruce and said, “Basically yes. We have to see what is calling them to be disobedient and if we can get them to obey again. It can a small amount of time or a lot of time.”

Michael said, “Or until she dies.”

He held his head down.

Thomas started crying.

Eleanor rubbed her boys’ heads and patted them on their backs.

Dr. Ralph grinned and said, “I can’t stay that long Michael.”

Dr. Ralph was feeding Lorraine.

Ruth walked in with a plate full of fish and grits.

She placed it in front of Dr. Ralph.

Brittany walked to the table and said, “Sir. I can help Lorraine.”

Dr. Ralph looked at the sweet manner Brittany and gave her Lorraine’s fork.

Brittany got on her knees and feed Lorraine.

She put the fork in Lorraine’s hands and held the fork.

Lorraine continued to eat.

Dr. Ralph was watching every movement.

He looked at Lorraine’s hands.

Ruth looked at Jose.

Jose nodded his head at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph turned and cut his fish.

Lorraine said, “Fish.”

And opened her mouth towards Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and cut a small piece of fish and put it on her plate.

Lorraine looked at the fish.

Dr. Ralph watched Lorraine’s eyes.

Brittany picked up the fish and allowed Lorraine to feed herself.

Dr. Ralph watched Brittany and Lorraine very closely.

Dr. Ralph looked at Brittany and saw how dedicated she was to the duty of feeding Lorraine.

He said, “Young lady are you in school?”

Brittany smiled.

Dr. Ralph did not like he did not get a verbal answer from Brittany.

Dr. ralph continued to eat he said, “When do you return to school?”

Brittany said, “School starts next Monday.”

Patrick and Brenda continued to eat their breakfast.

They were enjoying their food.

Eleanor looked at Dr. Ralph and was trying to think about what he was doing. Why was he asking Brittany about school.

Gen was sitting and watching Michael how he was staring at Patrick and Brenda.

Dr. Ralph said, “Young lady I asked you when are you returning to school?”

Jose looked at Brittany.

Ruth looked at Brittany.

Shirley knew what the stern voice of Dr. Ralph meant.

She looked at Patrick and Brenda.

Brittany was quiet.

Lorraine looked at Brittany.

Brittany looked at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph looked at Brittany then at Lorraine.

Brittany said, “I won’t be going back. If I can I’ll stay and help Lorraine.”

Lorraine said, “No.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and said to Brittany, “Why you won’t be going back to school? To see about Lorraine is an excuse.”

Brittany said, “Lorraine pays for my nursing school.”

Lorraine began to cry.

Brittany smiled at Lorraine and said, “It’s ok Lorraine.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Lorraine is sick. She is going to get better. You go back to school next week. I will pay for you to go to school next semester. If Lorraine is not better…

Lorraine said, “Africa.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

He saw she was forcing her brain to react. To have a movement as one does with their bowels.

He felt sorry for her. He wondered how bad her brain was.

Dr. Ralph said, “… then I will pay you to take care of her. If she is better then you come to Philadelphia to work at the Stith’s hospital. You can stay at Shirley’s apartment…”

Shirley looked at Dr. Ralph then Eleanor.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Shirley.

He said, “She will be in Africa.”

Brittany bowed her head and cried.

Dr. Ralph said, “Brittany, you are worth more than what you know. Lorraine knows that. I trust her.”

Lorraine said, “Africa.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine puzzled.

Gen looked at Lorraine and said, “She recognizes certain things.”

Jose exhaled and said, “That’s what I want to ask about.”

Patrick and Brenda looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Since Lorraine is going to Africa you need someone to go and help her around.”

Dr. Ralph turned and looked at Jose.

Jose looked at Dr. Ralph.

He said, “I can go to school in the fall and take business classes. Then leave in March for Europe and come back the next spring.”

Patrick said, “Jose shut up.”

Jose stood and looked at Patrick.

Ruth cut her eyes at Jose.

Jose stomped out the family dining room.

Thomas and Michael jumped and looked at Patrick.

Patrick looked at them.

Michael said, “What are you going to say to him.”

Patrick yelled, “Jose!!”

Jose stomped back in the family dining room.

He said, “Yes sir.”

Eleanor looked at Jose.

Patrick said, “Get a two horse buggy ready for Mrs. Stith, Mrs. Olsen, Bruce and Thomas and put the gifts for Natalie and Josiah’s twins in the carriage and put blankets and quilts for them. Have another two horse carriage ready for Eleanor, Shirley and Michael to go to Lorraine’s house and check on it and get her some clothes and put quilts and blankets in it.”

Lorraine said, “Clothes.”

Gen stared at Lorraine.

Gen said, “My grandmother had a stroke and she understood what we were talking about but could not make full sentences so she would be able to say a word sometimes two to let us know what she was thinking.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and breathed.

Everyone ate their breakfasts and got up to start their day.

The boys ran to the washroom to wash and get dressed.

Shirley went to her room and got her coat and hat and gloves.

Thomas was going over his grocer list.

He sent the list by Jose to Brenda.

Ruth and Brittany cleaned up the family dining room and the rest of the front of the house.

Dr. Ralph was pushing Lorraine and leaned down and said, “I need for you to start moving your legs. Remember how.”

Patrick and Brenda looked back.

Dr. Ralph pushed Lorraine to the sitting room.

Gen went and put on her scarf, hat, fur coat and gloves.

She was packed and her bags were ready so when she came back from visiting Mag she could leave.

Dr. Ralph was sitting in front of Lorraine.

He was thinking about how much her nursing school was for the semester.

Lorraine was looking at Dr. Ralph.

Gen was walking to the sitting room to wait for Brenda.

Lorraine was looking at Dr. Ralph.

Gen saw them and saw how Lorraine was looking at Dr. Ralph and she wanted them to be together.

Lorraine said, “Hundred.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

Gen walked in the sitting room and said, “I think that is the amount for Brittany nursing school.”

Lorraine said, “Yes.”

Dr. Ralph smiled at Lorraine.

Gen sat.

Dr. Ralph said, “How do I pay it. I will not give her the money to pay it.”

Gen said, I can go with you next week to pay it. I know the college is closed to next Monday.”

Dr. Ralph was looking at Lorraine.

Lorraine was looking at Dr. Ralph.

Gen looked at them.

Patrick and Brenda were talking and walked to the sitting room and saw Dr. Ralph looking at Lorraine and she was looking at him.

Gen’s heart was breaking.

Gen said, “Bren Dr. Ralph want to pay for Brittany’s school. I said the school was closed until next Monday.”

Brenda said, “I don’t know. Ask Gary. I know he is leaving Saturday because he has a room down there where he can walk to college.”

Gen said, “if the college office is open maybe we can go tomorrow and show Dr. Ralph our capitol and have lunch there in the Capitol Club.”

Brenda said, “We are not members.”

Gen leaned over and said, “I am.”

Patrick looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Dr. Ralph is that ok with you?”

Dr. Ralph looked from Lorraine and said, “Yes.”

Patrick said, “I’ll go and ask Gary.”

Jose walked in the sitting and said, “Mrs. Stith this is the grocery list Thomas made for the next couple of weeks.”

Brenda took the grocery list and was looking over it.

Jose turned to walk away.

Patrick said, “Jose.”

Jose stopped and looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “Tell Gary to come and see me. I want to know if the business office is opened at the college.”

Jose said, “Yes sir.”

Patrick looked at Jose and said, “Yes sir what?”

Jose said, “I’m riding with Gary in an hour for him to pay for his upcoming semester. I want to see if I can register for a business class.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Can I ride with you to the college.”

Jose said, “I guess so.”

Gen said, “What about lunch?”

Dr. Ralph looked at a pouting Gen.

He said, “This is business. We can tour your capitol on another day and have lunch in the Capitol Club.”

Jose said, “Dr. Ralph you can come out by the kitchen.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I know how to get there.”

They heard the faint music of Percy on the piano.

Dr. Ralph walked out the sitting room and went to his suite.

He smiled as he counted out the hundred dollars for Brittny.

He said, “GOD YOU had me to get my Christmas Bonus money that Shirley gave. YOU need that child would need the money for college. Thank YOU. I’ll take an extra twenty for her books.”

Dr. Ralph got his scarf, hat, coat and gloves.

Gen and Brenda and Patrick were walking through the billiards room.

Bruce and Thomas ran down the front stairs and saw Brenda walking through the billiards room.

They ran behind them.

Shirley walked down the backstairs and saw Eleanor and Michael standing in the back hall.

Jose walked out his room and handed Eleanor the key to Lorraine’s house.

He said, “Eleanor the neighbors are strange. Some of them I believe are involved with the evil mob. Stanley is right in the back if you think you need help.”

Eleanor pulled out her gun.

Michael looked at Eleanor.

Shirley pulled out her gun.

Michael looked at Shirley.

He said, “You can’t throw straight. What make you think you can shoot straight?’

Jose’s mouth dropped open.

Shirley looked at Michael and said, “I’m not in the military academy but Nathan taught me.”

Michael looked at Eleanor and said, “I want to steer the carriage if she can carry a gun.”

Patrick, Brenda and Gen looked back at Michael from the backdoor.

Gen whispered, “Bren.”

Brenda said, “Eleanor been shoot both of them.”

Patrick looked back and saw Bruce and Thomas running through the hall.

They said bye and kept running.

Patrick opened the door and they all walked outside.

Jose was carrying the big gift bag to the carriage.

Patrick put Brenda and Gen in the carriage after the Jose put the bag in the back and Bruce and Thomas jumped in the back.

Brenda pulled off.

Eleanor let Michael pulled out the backyard.

Bruce and Thomas saw Michael steering the carriage.

Brenda looked and did not say anything.

She went one direction.

Eleanor put her hand on Michael’s hand.

She let him ride all the way to Lorraine.

Michael pulled in Lorraine’s yard.

Eleanor said, “Good job Michael.”

They got out the carriage.

Michael ran and helped her and Shirley out the carriage.

Stanley was in his backyard and saw the Stith carriage pulled in the yard.

He thought it was Jose until he saw Michael jumped out the steering seat.

He grinned.

He walked to the end of his yard and saw Eleanor get out and Shirley.

Stanley yelled, “Hello.”

They looked back and saw Stanley and waved.

Michael said, “Momma.”

Eleanor said, “No Michael. Jose said possible evil mob. I can’t lose you again. Come on.”

Shirley looked at Michael.

Stanley took his coal and wood in the house and re-fueled his lanterns and fed his horses and gave them water.

He thought about Lorraine’s lanterns.

He had not lit them since Christmas.

He told Alice he was going to Lorraine to re-fuel her lanterns and he would be back.

Eleanor unlocked Lorraine’s door.

She, Shirley and Michael entered Lorraine’s house.

Michael walked through the house and walked back and peeped out the window.

Eleanor twisted her mouth.

She was proud of Michael.

He was learning how to security property from the military academy.

She was happy she saw him do that because it sealed her mind that they could go back to the military academy.

Eleanor pulled off her coat, hat scarf and gloves.

Shirley looked at Eleanor and said, “We are going to be here that long?”

Michael turned and looked back at Shirley.

He looked at the fireplace and said, “We are not going to be here long enough to light the fireplace. So hurry up.”

Eleanor looked at Michael trying to take control.

Eleanor and Shirley walked into Lorraine’s bedroom and opened her armoire.

Shirley pulled out five dresses.

She realized Lorraine did not have as much as she thought. Because she wore her uniform all the time.

Shirley said, “Momma, where are the dresses Lorraine bought in Paris?”

Eleanor looked around and saw a bag.

She looked in the bag the three dresses were safely stored in the bag.

Eleanor gave the bag to Shirley.

Shirley put the five dresses in the bag.

She looked and that was loo of Lorraine’s dresses.

She looked under Lorraine’s bed.

Lorraine had plenty of shoes and boots.

Eleanor looked and said, “Shirley, get Lorraine two pairs of everyday shoes and two dressy pairs.”

Eleanor closed the armoires back.

They straighten Lorraine’s bedroom.

Shirley walked to the door with Lorraine’s dresses and shoes.

Michael opened the door and walked Shirley to the carriage.

Shirley was putting the bag and shoes in the carriage.

Stanley yelled, ”Hello.”

He walked through the backyard.

Eleanor was watching Stanley from the second bedroom window.

She had started to get cold.  
She straighten out the room which was clean.

She thought and walked back to Lorraine’s room and got several nightgown and slippers and her under garments.

Eleanor said, “She got all of these items but a total of fifteen dresses.”

Stanley was walking in the door with Shirley and Michael.

Eleanor reached the items to Shirley she had tied in a bundle and said, “Shirley you and Michael put this in the carriage.”

Shirley took the bundle and she and Michael walked out the house.

Eleanor stood and watched them.

She looked at Stanley.

Eleanor said, “Stanley, it looks like you should be with Alice every minute. Natalie and Josiah had a set of twin boys Christmas Day.”

Stanley said, “What?”

Eleanor said, “Dr. Ralph stayed the night with Natalie until he delivered the boys.”

Stanley said, “I have another month of this. I want this baby here now.”

Eleanor laughed.

Stanley said, “I haven’t lit Lorraine’s lanterns since Christmas. I came to put fuel in them and come back at night fall and light them.”

Eleanor said, “I am cold. We came to get some more of Lorraine’s clothes.”

Stanley said, “How is she?”

Shirley and Michael walked back in the house.

Eleanor nodded and walked in the well- organized kitchen.

She walked in Lorraine’s work room.

She looked around and found two bottles of oil.

Eleanor said, “Momma told me to bring back bath items. I don’t know how much Lorraine charged for these.”

Shirley was looking through Lorraine’s books.

She said, “Strawberry two dollars. Coconut three dollars. Lemon two dollars.”

Shirley started going through every drawer to see if there was any more.

She did not saw any.

Shirley whined.

Eleanor said, “The strawberry oil is mine and I’ll give momma the coconut oil. We can put Lorraine money in her jewelry box.:

Shirley said, “That’s right. It is in her bedroom on the table.”

Shirley stepped out the kitchen.

Eleanor said, “Stanley not good. Her mind is not fully comprehending and if she understands what is being said, she uses one word or two.”

Stanley said, “All of that came from the poison?”

Eleanor looked and saw Michael had turned and was listening to her and Stanley.

Eleanor stared at Michael.

Stanley turned and saw Michael heard their conversation.

Eleanor said, “I’m sorry Michael. Lorraine may not get better.”

Michael became sad.

Eleanor said, “I know she was and still is your friend.”

Michael turned his back to Eleanor and looked out the window.

Stanley said, “He doesn’t want to hear what you are saying.”

Elanor said, “I know.”

She walked to the large and cozy sitting room and looked around and put on her scarf, hat, coat and gloves.

Shirley was standing by the door.

She heard Eleanor also.

Stanley said, “I’m going to re-fuel the lanterns. Have a Happy New Year’s.”

He walked out the house.

Eleanor, Shirley and Michael walked out of Lorraine’s house.

Stanley filled the lantern on the front and he was walking from the back, where he filled the lantern on the back.

He checked her stables and her well.

He walked home.

He was in deep thought about Lorraine.

Michael helped Lorraine to her backseat.

He helped Eleanor to her seat.

Eleanor let Michael steer home.

Michael was in deep thought.

Eleanor watched him.

He was slowly trotting home.

Eleanor did not get upset because she did not have anything to do for that day.

She turned slightly and said, “Shirley I wish I knew how to make Lorraine’s bath item.”

Shirley said, “It’s written down in her books.”

Eleanor said, “Really!”

Michael said, “That’s Lorraine stuff.”

Eleanor said, “We would buy it under her name and sell it under her name.”

They rode home.

Eleanor said, “Stanley said Alice has another month before she has the baby.”

Shirley said, “Momma isn’t she big?’

Eleanor said, “I try not to think about that. I knew that Natalie was extremely big That’s why we need a hospital and doctors here.”

Michael rode them home and into the backyard.

They were at Lorraine’s house for two hours.

Brenda and Gen were standing on the back porch when Michael stopped in the backyard.

Jose was bringing Gen’s bags out the back door to place them in her carriage.

George brought Gen’s carriage and her horses.

Gen looked at her carriage and horses.

Jose, Gary and Dr. Ralph just returned from the college.

Dr. Ralph gave Brittany her receipt for full paid tuition, room and board and books credit.

Lorraine grinned.

Brittany ran to her room and cried.

Gary passed the rooming house he would be staying and pointed it out to Jose and Dr. Ralph.

The rooming house was down the street from the college.

Jose said, “Gary you are leaving Saturday. Do you mind if Brittany ride with you?”

Dr. Ralph thought about what Brenda and Patrick said about Jose helping out.

Gary said, “Oh sure she can ride. They gave her a room in the nursing dormitory right there.”

Gary pointed.

Gary said, “That’s where the nursing students live.”

He grinned.

Jose said, “Gary stay in your books.”

Gary said, “Jose so you won’t be taking the businesses classes here but in town?”

Jose said, “Yes. One is an hour away and the other forty -five minutes away. But I am excited about taking that one class for now.”

The ride was an hour to the capitol and back and an hour in the business office.

Jose put Gen’s bags in her carriage and helped her in.

Gen waved and sped home.

Gen did not have to bring anything in the house.

Gen unlocked her kitchen door and checked her house.

She lit the fireplace downstairs and the fireplace in her bedroom.

Gen walked back downstairs and put coal in the huge pot belly stove.

She walked out the kitchen and rode the carriage to the stables.

Geb put her horses and carriage in for the next few days.

She locked the stables.

Gen thought about what Brenda told her of Male and Curtis.

Gen was rushing back to the house and thought, “They just got of slavery and trying to play slick.”

She unlocked her kitchen door and locked it back and put the bar behind it.

She said, “I’ll go back out before dark and light the lantern on the side of the house.

Gen went upstairs and unpacked and changed into an everyday dress.

She got her blanket and walked downstairs and laid on her couch and read until it was time for her to light the lantern.

She looked out the window towards Shirley’s house and decided to light the lantern on the back near the stables.

She ran out the house and lit the lantern on the side of her house.

She saw the man lighting his torches.

Gen ran towards the stables and lit the lantern and ran back to her house and looked in the back and the lantern gave light almost to Shirley’s property.

She was pleased.

Gen ran in the house and put the light out and locked the kitchen door and put the bar across it.

Gen cooked her two eggs and with cheese and a slice of bread.

She sat on the couch and enjoyed her dinner.

Gen laid on her couch and fell asleep until the next day.

Jose told Brittany that she can ride with Gary to college on Saturday.

Brittany thanked Jose.

She tried on the clothes that Claressa gave her and she could wear them.

She needed a pair of shoes.

Brittany asked Jose could she use a carriage and go into town of Tuesday to buy her a pair pf shoes.

Jose said, “Thomas has to go and get grocery for the week and you could ride with him. I have to sort out your pay. You get paid for your maid work and you get paid for the times you help Lorraine.”

Brittany smiled and got a plate of food and went into the workers’ area and finished knitting her scarf, Gat and gloves.

Shirley went to her room and took a nap.

Bruce, Thomas and Michael were upstairs playing in the hallway.

Percy was practicing the piano.

Eleanor went to her office.

Jose carried Lorraine’s clothes to her suite.

Ruth hung up and put up all her clothes and shoes.

Jose left the bath oils in Lorraine’s suite.

Eleanor thought about the oils.

She ran out of her office and passed the sitting room and went into Lorraine’s room and got the bath oils.

She put the coconut one in Brenda’s bathroom.

Eleanor heard Patrick and Brenda talking in his office.

She walked back to Patrick’s office and said, “Momma Lorraine only had two bath oils left. I put the coconut in your bathroom, and I am keeping my favorite the strawberry bath oil.”

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Patrick said, “Eleanor, come in and shut the door.”

Patrick said, “Time you all left Skip came.”

Brenda and Eleanor said, “Skip?’

Patrick said, “I was standing at the front door watching you all leave and don’t let Michael steer again. He thinks he is bigger than he is…”

Eleanor said, “He was the gentleman. He helped Shirley out and escorted her to the carriage and looked out for her and he secured Lorraine’s house when we first arrive. He went to the window and watched out.”

Brenda said, “Praise God”

Patrick said, “I opened the door for Skip. He had a concerned looked. He came in the house. He said he wanted to ask about Shirley’s health.”

Eleanor said, “What?”

Patrick said, “I told him to come with me and we walked to the sitting room, where Dr. Ralph was about to leave with Jose. I asked Dr. Ralph to walk with us to my office. We came in here.”

Brenda was stunned.

Patrick said, “Eleanor get mad. I made the decision to talk with Skip about Shirley’s health. Dr. Ralph stood and said nothing.”

Eleanor was getting angry.

Patrick said, “Skip asked pointedly whether Shirley was going to die. I said someday and Why he asked. He said the way Michael reacted to Lorraine like another is dying. I told him Shirley was born with massive and extreme deformities and was a literal round piece of flesh but that Dr. Ralph worked on her for over a year to get her as heathy as possible. I told him we do not know how long she will live but she is living her life the way that only Shirley could live.”

Brenda said, “That was not bad. But why he wanted to know that. I thought the troop was to have left this morning?’

Patrick said, “Skip said the supply wagon was not in and they are leaving in the morning.”

Patrick looked at Brenda and said, “It’s only one reason why a man wants to know about a woman’s health.”

Brenda grinned.

Eleanor opened Patrick’s office door and walked out.

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Brenda was looking at Patrick grinning.

Patrick said, “Dr. Ralph said nothing but turned and walked out and went through the kitchen to meet Jose.”

Jose figured out Brittany’s money and gave her five dollars.

Brittany was happy.

She went into town with Thomas and bought two pairs of everyday boots.

Eleanor ran pass the sitting room and upstairs and put the strawberry bath oil in her bathroom.

She walked back downstairs and went to her office and worked until dinner.

Eleanor could hear Percy practicing his piano.

Eleanor thought, “I’ll send Shirley to Europe for that year with Percy.”

Thomas had Jose to telegram the grocer the grocery list.

Thomas and Brittany arrived in town.

He told Brittany not to tell anyone who she worked for nor that she was in school and what school.

Thomas said, “I’m going across the street to the grocer who has the grocery ready. I have to double check everything. It won’t take long. If you don’t see the wagon in front of this general store look right there.”

Brittany said, “Yes sir.”

Thomas helped her out the covered wagon.

Brittany went into the general store and looked for boots.

She found two pairs that would help her. She bought her a cheap coat on sale.

She spent her five dollars but happy she had it.

People looked at Brittany she finally saw people looking at her.

She became scared about what happened to Lorraine.

Brittany started peeping out the door to see Thomas.

She saw clerks taking out the bags of food and putting them in the wagon.

Brittany looked at the coat and saw it was on sale and grinned.

She looked at the two pairs of boots and smiled.

She put her hand in her pocket to get her money and she had her uniform on and realized people were watching her because of her Stith uniform.

Brittany was thinking, “Mr. Thomas come on”.

Brittany knew that Brenda and Patrick always told them to be polite to people when they are wearing the uniform.

She did not want to be polite but wanted to go.

Finally, she was next.

She saw Thomas pull in front of the general store she felt safe.

She paid for her coat and put it on.

The store manager looked at her.

She paid for her boots and walked out the store.

The clerk was trying to give her a nickle.

Brittany was putting on her coat as she walked out the general store.

Thomas had a shot gun on the floor under his feet and he wore his double holster.

He was a very good shot.

Especially a moving target. He was expert huntsman.

He looked at Brittany as she hopped up in the covered wagon.

Thomas looked back at the store and saw people looking at Brittany.

Thomas said, “Any problems?’

Brittany said, “No I was just scared. Everyone was looking at me.”

Thomas said, “They were looking at your uniform not you.”

Brittany sat back.

Thomas hurried out of town.

He and Brittany talked all the way to the house.

Thomas wished Brittany all the success to become a nurse.

Brittany said, “I may leave town and move to Philadelphia when I finish nursing school. There is no one here for me.”

Thomas had heard that Brittany’s father sexually abused her for years with her mother’s approval until Lorraine stepped in and delivered her and put Brittany with a Christian family for the year she was in Europe. The Christian family gave Brittany her own bedroom and sent her to school for her diploma. Brittany would help the wife around the house with cooking and washing.

Brittany started being delivered from all of the evils of sexually abuse.

Lorraine gave the Christian family to house and feed Brittany.

Lorraine told Brittany in the presence of the Christian family if ever she wanted to leave or needed to leave them to go to the Stith house and Jose will help her. She had spoken to Mr. and Mrs. Stith about her coming to stay with them.

Thomas and Brittany were talking when she heard her name.

Thomas looked and Brittany was looking.

Thomas said, “There. The man and woman in the wagon.”

Brittany looked and it was the Christian family who took her in.

Brittany stood in wagon and waved and grinned at the family.

The boys were peeping out the back of the wagon waving at Brittany.

Brittany stood and waved at them until they were out of sight.

Brittany sat and thought she should have visited them during the Christmas, but now she will be going back to school in a few days.

The man that was steering the wagon said to his wife, “I would love to see her.”

The wife was grinning and said, “God answered our prayer to know how she was doing.”

The three boys were leaning towards the front of the wagon and listening.

The husband said, “Well HE answered that prayer. We see she is happy and safe. You heard from Lorraine?”

The wife said, “No I haven’t heard from Lorraine in a few months. She came by the house over two months ago and brought me that big basket of bath items, that I love.”

The husband looked at his wife and grinned and said, “I know you love those things. Me too.”

The wife laughed.

The boys said, “We like you to smell good momma.”

The husband said, “Brittany did send us a letter when she got to nursing school.”

The wife laughed and said, “I hope she doesn’t forget us.”

The boy Brittany was close to said, “I miss her.”

The husband and his wife looked back at their ten year old son.

The husband said, “Brittany is older than you to be your wife.”

The mother rubbed the ten year old hair.

The other boys laughed.

The husband leaned back a little and said, “Mary Sue is about ten and would make you a fine wife.”

His wife shook her head and smiled at her husband.

Their three boys said, “Yuck.”

The family laughed all the way to town.

Thomas pulled in the yard.

Gary, Jose and George went to the covered wagon and helped Brittany out and helped Thomas take the food inside.

Jose and Thomas started inventory the food and putting it in the storage area.

Thomas said, “They have enough dry goods to last them until they go to Africa. What are they going to do about a garden since Jessie and his sons have moved?”

Jose stopped and thought and shook his head and said, “I don’t know. I don’t think they have thought that far in advance because of the trouble this year.”

Thomas said, “Brittany saw the family that helped her when Lorraine was away.”

Jose was putting up a bag of flour.

Thomas looked at Jose and said, “What!”

Jose said, “The Straffords?”

Thomas said, “I don’t know. “

Jose said, “Lorraine made a big basket of her bath stuff for their Christmas gift.”

Thomas continued to put the food up.

Jose said, “Where did you see them?’

Thomas said, “They were headed to town.”  
Jose said, “It’s too late to go to their house. I’ll take it to them tomorrow, I’ll ask Brittany to confirm it’s the right people.”

Brittany was seated on her bed and looked at her new coat and new two pairs of boots.

She looked across in the chair and saw the very expensive dresses that the ambassador’s wife gave her.

She thought about the Straffords.

She left out of her room and went looking for Lorraine.

She saw Lorraine in the sitting room with Dr. Ralph.

Brittany spoke.

She kneeled in front of Lorraine and grinned and told her she saw the Straffords headed towards town.

Lorraine smiled and then the smile went away.

Dr. Ralph said, “Lorraine what is wrong?”

Brittany leaned back on her shoes and looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine said, “Gift.”

Dr. Ralph said, “A Christmas gift?”

Brittany was getting off her knees and said, “I’ll find Jose.”

Brittany went through the house until she found Jose.

Jose and Thomas were walking from the food storage area.

Brittany said, “Mr. Jose Lorraine is asking about a gift. I think it is for the Straffords.”

Thomas walked pass them and went to the kitchen and put on dinner.

It had to be a quick dinner.

He looked at the pork roast he got that morning, baked sweet potatoes, black eye peas and turnip greens, beets and cornbread.

Thomas was trying to spruce up his meals so he could get a job with the governor.

Brittany stood in the hall and looked at Jose.

Jose walked to the storage area and walked back with a big gift basket.

Eleanor was coming out her office and saw the big gift basket and said, “Jose.”

She looked back at the storage area.

Jose said, “These are Christmas gifts that Lorraine had in her house for people. Eleanor do not mess with any of those gifts.”

Eleanor and Jose started arguing up the hall Veronica, Virginia and Ruth continued to clean up and getting ready to leave.

Thomas continued to prepare dinner.

Brittany was appalled and stood back and let Jose and Eleanor argue all the way through the billiards room to the sitting room.

Brenda heard them and walked out her office and down to the sitting room.

Thomas was on his stomach reading a book.

Michael turned over on his side to see what Jose and Eleanor were arguing about.

Dr. Ralph was concerned about them arguing over the children.

Thomas did not stop reading his book.

Michael turned over and continued to read his book.

Shirley did not look up from her needlepointing.

Dorothy continued to polish and dust.

Dr. Ralph looked concerned.

Brenda waked in the door and said, “I have told you two about arguing all the time about nothing.”

Jose leaned and showed Lorraine the big gift.

Lorraine grinned.

Brittany finally made it back to the sitting room.

Lorraine saw Brittany and she tried very hard to say Straffords.

Lorraine started crying.

Michael and Thomas sat up and looked at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph said, “Lorraine it is alright we are working on getting you better.”

Brittany teared up.

Dr. Ralph looked at Brittany and said, “You have to have a loving heart but be tough. Ask Lorraine is this gift for the Straffords.”

Brittany wiped her eyes and leaned in front of Lorraine and pointed she said, “Is this for the Straffords?”

Lorraine was sniffing and stared at Brittany and said, “Yes.”

Michael and Thomas both jumped up and ran and hugged Lorraine.

Brenda rolled her eyes at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Momma I was just asking Jose about that gift basket. I believe there are some more.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Lorraine I will make sure they get their gift from you.”

Brittany said, “I want to go. I can show you where they live.”

Shirley said, “I can ride with you.”

Patrick heard Jose and Eleanor and finished working in his office and walked to the sitting room.

He saw Brenda standing outside the sitting room.

He walked up and heard them and then he looked at Lorraine.

Patrick said, “Shirley I told you, you are not steering another carriage until you learn to be cautious.”

Shirley exclaimed, “Grandpa!”

Patrick heard some people talking walking through the billiard room.

He and Brenda stepped back and looked.

Stanley was frantic and upset.

Brenda said, “Stanley what is wrong?’

Stanley said, “I don’t know what is wrong with Alice. Is the doctor here? Maybe he can come and look at Alice. I didn’t want to take her to the capitol yet if she didn’t have to go.”

Patrick said, “Stanley where is Alice in the wagon?”

Stanley exhaled and said, “No at home.”

Brenda looked at Stanley and turned her head.

Dorothy looked at Stanley and said, “Stanley who is at home with Alice?”

Stanley said, “No body she’s not going anywhere.”

Eleanor looked at Stanley.

Shirley was sitting with her needlepoint in her lap.

She said, “Was he suppose to have left her?’

Stanley stepped and peeped in the sitting room at Shirley and said, “Miss smarty pants how else was I suppose to come and get the doctor?”

Eleanor pushed Stanley and said, “Leave Shirley along because you didn’t know what to do. Not apologize.”

Stanley said, “Alice needs to apologize. She’s the one cursing and calling me all kinds of names that I don’t know what they mean.”

Stanley looked at Lorraine and said, “I was counting on Lorraine to be at home. So she could deliver this baby. I’m tired of this s\*\*\*.”

Brenda yelled, “Stanley! Children!”

Stanley looked at the kids and pointed and was looking off in space and said, “Them. Sush. I heard that Thomas. He is worst than Alice.”

Stanley was standing with his hands on his hips.

Michael was sitting next to Thomas he looked at his mother, grandpa and grandma faces.

Eleanor, Patrick and Brenda turned and stared at Thomas who was sitting back on the floor on his knees.

Thomas eased his eyes and looked at Patrick, Eleanor and Brenda.

Dr. Ralph stood and said, “I’ll come with you. I need a carriage.”

Patrick said, “No. You might get lost and I don’t want you out late. Stay with Stanley and Alice tonight. We will come in the morning and check on you.”

Dr. Ralph said, “What about that big gift?”

Eleanor said, “We will get it to them.”

Lorraine said, “No.”

Dr. Ralph laughed at Lorraine.

Patrick said, “We will get it to them tomorrow.”

Jose stood up and took the big gift and passed Brenda and Eleanor.

Their eyes followed the gift basket.

Dr. Ralph walked to his suite and picked up his doctor’s bag and opened it and checked inside and gathered his coat, scarf, hat and gloves and was walking back to the sitting room.

Patrick was staring at an angry Stanley.

Patrick looked at Stanley with his gun on.

Patrick said, “Stanley is there a reason you got on you gun?’

Brenda looked at Stanley.

Stanley was so far away in his thoughts he only heard Patrick but did not respond.

Dr. Ralph walked back to the sitting room and said, “Brittany please feed Lorraine like you have been doing. Rubbed her feet and hands down in oil if there is any.”

Eleanor said, huffy, “We don’t know.”

Brenda said, “Shut up.”

Dr. Ralph said, put warm socks on her feet and cover her up.”

Dr. Ralph bent down and said, “Lorraine I am going to see about Alice and Stanley baby.”

Lorraine looked up into Dr, Ralph’s eyes and said, “Baby.”

Dr. Ralph kissed Lorraine on her forehead and rushed out the sitting room.

Everybody looked at Dr. Ralph.

Stanley said, “Was that the doctor?”

Brenda said, “You better go and catch him.”

Stanley turned and ran out the sitting room.

Patrick stepped back and waited to Stanley ran through the billiards room.

He, Brenda and Eleanor burst out laughing.

Shirley looked at them.

Michael looked at them.

Thomas cut his eyes at them.

Brittany was holding Lorraine’s hands.

Dorothy was shaking her head and said, “Left Alice at home by herself. He could have gotten any of church members to come and sit with her.”

Dorothy finished cleaning up and got on her horse and rode home.

Thomas was still cutting his eyes at Brenda, Eleanor and Patrick.

Brenda said, “Eleanor.”

Patrick looked at them and said, “Don’t start with Jose.”

Brenda said, “I’m going to see.”

Patrick looked at the two and he walked in the sitting room and talked with Lorraine and Brittany.

Brenda and Eleanor walked out the sitting room to the back hallway.

Jose was standing up in the kitchen and he heard them snickering he walked to the hallway and looked down the hall and saw Brenda and Eleanor.

He walked behind them.

Brenda and Eleanor opened the door to the storage area and saw the gift baskets.

They started grinning.

Jose stood outside the door.

Brenda said, “This is for ‘G. Olsen’.”

Brenda smiled the scented candles and said, “Evergreens. Ben loved that fragrance.”

Eleanor said, “You know he did not go to New York but got in Philadelphia.”

Brenda said, “That figures.”

Eleanor said, “Do we have to give these gifts away.”

Brenda said, “Eleanor I don’t believe you ask me that.”

Eleanor said, “Momma, you know Aunt Gen is going to through these beautiful candles away.”

Brenda said, “They belong to her.”

Brenda said, “This has ‘Brittany’ on it. Take it and go and give it to Brittany while she is in there with Lorraine.”

Eleanor said, “What fragrance is that?”

Brenda said, “Pineapples. Even the candles. Very nice. We tried to get Lorraine to go business on these beautiful items.”

Jose said, “They are coming out he ran up the hall and turned around and walked back down the hall.

Brenda said, “Jose?”

Eleanor said, “Yeap. The kids do that all the time.”

Brenda said, “You used to do that all the time too.”

Eleanor laughed.

Eleanor took Brittany nice gift basket and passed Jose and said, “Eavesdropper.”

Jose looked at Eleanor and walked to the storage area and looked.

He said, “If Mrs. Gen doesn’t want Mr. Ben’s candles can I have them?’

Brenda said, “You have to ask her with your nosey self.”

Brenda said, “This basket of oils have ‘JC’.”

Jose reached for the basket.

Brenda said, “Are we assuming this is yours?”

Jose said, “Yes ma am.”

Jose opened the scented candles and the bath oils. He inhaled and reached for Brenda to inhale.”

Brenda said, “Lovely.

Jose walked out the storage area and went to the sitting room and showed Lorraine his gift basket and said, “Thank you.”

Shirley was getting jealous.

Brittany loved her pineapple scented oils and bath items.

She told Lorraine she was taking it to her room and would be back.

Jose saw Shirley’s face and said, “Straighten your face Shirley. She didn’t have time to complete all her gifts.”

Michael turned and looked at Shirley.

Eleanor was standing in the door and looked back at Shirley.

She was surprise that Shirley was jealous.

Jose walked out the sitting room.

Eleanor was staring at Thomas.

Thomas knew she was looking at him.

Eleanor turned and walked behind Jose.

Jose took his gift to his room.

He walked out his room and started back down to the storage room.

Brittany was in front of him walking back to the sitting room.

Brenda sat the other three gifts in the hall.

Ne of the big gift baskets had, “Mr. P and Mrs. B.”

Brenda grinned and saw Jose and said, “That’s me and Mr. Stith. Take that to the sitting room.”

Brenda giggled and said, “I believe this belongs to that Sally child.”

Jose looked at the yellow candle with jacks in it.

He and Brenda laughed.

Brenda put the pretty yellow candle on her and Patrick’s gift basket.

Eleanor said, “What is the yellow?”

Brenda said, “I assume it is a gift for Sally.”

Eleanor said, “Shirley is jealous momma.”

Brenda said, “You know Shirley think’s Lorraine is her momma.”

Brenda looked around the storage area.

She closed the door.

Eleanor looked and said, “I didn’t have a gift?”

Brenda looked at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor she was not expecting to be killed and brought back to a part of a life.”

Brenda started to cry.

Jose looked back and stood for a minute.

He saw Brenda go into her skirt pocket and take her handkerchief and wipe her eyes.

She said, “I asked Patrick what have we done to our employees? We have caused some of them pain and even death. You and Shirley need to stop and spend time helping Lorraine to function again.”

Brenda walked away.

Eleanor stood and looked at Brenda.

She walked behind her grieving mother.

They walked to the sitting room.

Lorraine looked at the gifts Jose brought in.

Patrick looked at the gifts and laughed.

Brenda rushed and walked in the sitting room.

She sat next to Patrick and pointed at the big gift Jose had and said, “Lorraine is that for me and Mr. Patrick.”

Lorraine grinned.

Eleanor looked at Lorraine.

A person closer than a natural sister and never wanted anything from her.

Eleanor sat next to Lorraine.

Brenda and Patrick grabbed the gift basket.

Brenda ripped it open.

Patrick shook his head.

Lorraine made Brenda lemon, coconut, pineapple, mint, apple strawberry and cinnamon bath oils.

She made Patrick candles.”

Patrick and Brenda were smelling and enjoying the scents.

Brenda said, “What is this?’

She opened the top and smelled jasmine.

Lorraine tried to rub her hands.

Lorraine became frustrated.

Brittany touched Lorraine’s hands.

Brenda looked at Lorraine.

Eleanor looked at Lorraine.

Thomas said, “Hand oil.”

Brenda said, “Yes. Lorraine. Thank you. I’ll put this on my desk.”

Lorraine breathed out.

Patrick looked at the pitiful Lorraine.

Brenda tried not to look at Lorraine.

Eleanor looked at a sad Brenda as she took the gift basket out to their bedroom suite.

Lorraine looked at Brenda.

Eleanor looked at Lorraine.

Eleanor looked at Patrick.

Patrick looked at Eleanor and nodded and mouth and said, “I know.”

Shirley said, “I wish Lorraine made more of her bath things.”

Eleanor said, “I do too.”

Brittany said, “Lorraine had me helping her. She taught me how to make some of her most favorite oils.”

Eleanor sat up and said, “What? You can make me strawberry?”

Shirley said, “I want milk and honey bath oil.”

Brittany was on her knees and looked at Shirley said, “Yes I can make both of those.”

Lorraine smiled.

Patrick looked at Lorraine and thought about Brenda.

Brenda did not want Lorraine in the house.

She could not bare the pain of Lorraine’s hurt.

Patrick saw then that Lorraine recognize Brenda did not care for her.

Patrick thought he could send Jose to stay with Lorraine at her house, to bring in wood, coal and water and keep her house up and cook. They would have five nurses with her at all time. They wanted Mable to plant Lorraine’s garden and come once per month to see about.

Patrick told Brenda they had to talk to Dr. Ralph.

Brittany worked with Lorraine until dinner.

Brittany said, “Lorraine Eleanor and Shirley want the strawberry bath oil and the milk and honey bath oil. Can I make it for the?”

Lorraine grinned.

Patrick watched Brittany.

Brittany helped Lorraine formed the word ‘Yes’.

Eleanor was sitting by Lorraine and said, “Thank you Lorraine.”

Lorraine looked at Brittany.

Brittany showed Lorraine how to say, ‘You welcome.”

Thomas and Michael jumped up and danced.

Lorraine grin.

She knew she had accomplished something big.

Jose walked to the sitting room and said, “Dinner is served.”

Patrick said, “Jose Brittany is going to be busy tomorrow. She is leaving Saturday with Gary for school right?”

Eleanor was pushing Lorraine in the wheelchair.

Patrick looked at Brittany and said, “Brittany how long does it take to make that bath oil?”

Brittany said, “It takes a day to put everything together and another day to strain it and put it in bottles and jars.”

Patrick said, “Jose Brittany is going to be busy making Eleanor and Shirley some bath oil at Lorraine’s house. I need for someone to be with her and get all of the stuff she needs. She is to help Lorraine when she is here. So Brittany is relieved of all duties but to care for Lorraine when she is here.”

Jose said, “Dr. Ralph is not going to be happy.”

Patrick said, “Stanley got him busy.”

They entered the family dining room and they sat for a nice family dinner.

Brenda came in and enjoyed her food.

Lorraine stared at Brenda.

Eleanor looked at Brenda.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Percy said, “Grandma what’s wrong?”

Brenda said, “Nothing.”

Bruce stared at Lorraine.

Brittany was patient and on her knees feeding Lorraine.

Jose said, “Brittany in the morning I will take you to drop off the gift at the Straffords. Then we leave from there and go to Lorraine’s house and you write down everything you need to make that bath oil.”

Eleanor rolled her eyes at Jose.

Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Jose said, “I’ll check on Dr. Ralph. If he is ready to leave. I will bring him back and take you in town to buy all the supplies. We go back to Lorraine and you make the oil and we can stay there overnight or leave and come back here and go back the next day.”

Brenda said, “Drop off Gen’s gift.”

Jose looked at Brenda.

Brittany said, “Ok.”

She took Lorraine to her suite and undressed her and got her ready for bed.

Brittany massage Lorraine’s legs and feet with grease and put socks on her.

She sat and read the bible to Lorraine until she went to sleep.

Brittany closed Lorraine’s door and went to her room. And slept.

The next day Brittany washed and dressed and went and helped Susan and Georgette with Lorraine.

Jose looked for Brittany and they took Lorraine to breakfast.

Brittany helped Lorraine for breakfast.

She and Jose went to Lorraine’s house first and Jose went to check on Dr. Ralph.

He was not ready to leave.

He said Alice should deliver her baby later that day.

Brittany had a list of what she needed based on Lorraine’s recipes.

She put the bowls and pots on the table and stove.

She and Jose went into town.

They went to the grocer.

Jose said, “Make enough bath oil that Eleanor and Shirley don’t ask for months.”

Brittany laughed.

Jose and Brittany left town and went pass the jail to get to the Straffords.

Jose carried the big gift.

Brittany ran and knocked on the door.

The husband came to the door and opened it.

He called his wife and said, “Look your prayer has been answered.”

Brittany smiled.

They asked about Lorraine.

Brittany looked at Jose.

The husband and the wife looked at Brittany then Jose.

Jose gave the husband and the wife the short version of the story.

The husband and the wife stared at Jose.

Jose and Brittany left.

She played with the boys for a few minutes.

They went back to Lorraine and Jose brought in water and coal to heat the house and stove.

Jose said, “We can’t leave this house with fire lit. We have to stay overnight. I’m going to get something to eat. I don’t think Dr. Ralph and Stanley have eaten since yesterday.”

Brittany said, “Alright.”

She pulled off her coat, scarf and gloves.

Brittany started peeling the ingredients and mixing them.

Jose went to Stanley and asked if they had eaten.

Stanley said, “No”.

Jose rode to the restaurants near the military headquarters and he got them food.

He carried three plates and juice to Stanley and Dr. Ralph.

Jose had to come all the way around the street and take feed the horses and water them for the day.

He took Brittany a plate of food and he had a plate of food.

Jose could smell the fragrances outside Lorraine’s house.

Brittany put two large pots on the stove and put the strawberry in one and the milk and honey in another and she washed and dried all the dishes and put them in their proper place.

Jose watched Brittany.

It started to get dark.

Jose went outside and put the horses in the stables and he lit the lanterns on the side, back and front of Lorraine’s house.

Brittany was eating her food when Jose returned.

Brittany and Jose sat and talked for a long time.

She would walk in the kitchen and check on the bath oils.

She told Jose the oils had to boil all night.

Brittany went to the guest’s bedroom and pulled off her uniform, stockings and boots.

She pulled the cover over her head and slept until the morning.

Jose smiled as he thought about the conversation he and Brittany had that evening.

He put more coal on in the fireplace and pulled off his coat, two hats, scarf, gloves and boots.

He put a blanket over him and slept om the sofa until morning.

Jose walked out to the well and thought he heard a baby.

He looked towards Stanley and Alice.

He didn’t hear anything else.

He got water and gave it to the horses and gave them feed that was in Lorraine’s stables.

Jose took a pail of water inside and put it over the fireplace.

He did not want to go in the kitchen and mess anything up.

Because he and Eleanor would be fighting.

Jose peeped out the kitchen window at Stanley.

He did not hear anything.

He walked to Brittany’s room and knocked on her door and said, “Brittany can you check on the oils?”

Brittany jumped out of bed and threw her uniform, stockings and boots on.

She walked out the guest bedroom and went into the kitchen and checked on the oils.

She moved them from the stove to the huge wooden table Lorraine use.

Brittany started washing the pots and other containers.

Jose said, “I brought water to wash our faces. I have already washed my face.”

Brittany said, “Thank you.”

She looked under the guest’s bed and pulled out the water basin Lorraine left.

Michael and Thomas helped Lorraine and helped her eat.

They read to her yesterday and Bruce showed her the maps of Africa.

Lorraine said, “Brittany.”

Eleanor said, “Lorraine, she is at your house making me and Shirley some oils.”

Lorraine smiled.

Jose had gotten a half dozen of eggs, sausage and bread and he cooked breakfast and made Brittany a plate.

He covered used Lorraine’s neatly stacked plates and carried a plate to Dr, Ralph and Stanley.

Dorothy had gone home and told other church members about Stanley and that he and Alice need help.

Jose was taking plates over to Stanley when he heard the baby crying.

Jose started grinning.

He knocked on the door.

Dr. Ralph answered the door.

Jose brought the plates in and he sat and looked at the baby.

Two church members knocked on the door.

Jose walked to the answer the door.

They came in and started cleaning the house.

Dr. Ralph showed the two women what to throw away and burn.

Jose helped clean the house.

The two women brought in water and coal and wood and kept the house hot for the baby.

Stanley said, “It’s too hot in here.”

Dr. Ralph said, “No Stanley. The baby is out the womb and he needs plenty of heat.”

The two women held the baby so Alice could sleep.

They cooked Stanley and Alice some vegetable soup and cornbread.

Dr. Ralph checked on Alice and said, “Stanley I am leaving. I need to get some sleep. I will come back tomorrow and check on Alice and the baby.”

Stanley said, “Doctor thank you.”

Stanley went and took a hot bath and shaved.

Jose took Lorraine’s dishes and napkins and forks back with him.

He and Dr. Ralph walked through Stanley’s back yard to Lorraine’s house.

They could smell the fragrances as they approached the house.

Brittany was pouring the oils into large bottles.

Jose put out the fires.

He went outside and hooked the two horses to the carriage and brought it around the front.

Brittany went into Lorraine’s guest’s room and made the bed and poured out her water and put the water basin under the bed.

Brittany made Eleanor a large bottle of strawberry bath oil and a large bottle of rose bath oil.

She made Shirley a large bottle of milk and honey and jasmine.

Jose walked in and saw the bottles and said, “Brittany all that work and this is it?”

Brittany grinned.

She was leaving Lorraine’ s books on the table.

Dr. Ralph said, “What are those books?”

Brittany said, “Lorraine’s recipes for the bath oils.”

Dr. Ralph said, “No. Let’s take them with us. People around here know Lorraine is not here and anyone can break in and steal them or a fire break out and burn everything.”

Brittany picked up the books and the book under the counter.

Jose double check the stove and fireplace.

Jose put more oil in the lanterns and left them burning.

Jose said, “Stanley is tired. He needs to rest.”

Dr. Ralph said, “They need to reconcile after this.”

Jose and Brittany looked at Dr. Ralph.

Jose locked Lorraine’s front door.

Brittany carried the box with the oils and Lorraine’s books to the carriage.

She got in the back.

Jose and Dr. Ralph got in the front of the carriage.

Jose rode to the house at noon in time for lunch.

Dr. Ralph said, “Jose can I get hot water for a bath and shave. I need a good nap and then I should alright by dinner.”

Jose said, “Yes sir.”

After lunch, Brittany wheeled Lorraine down to the sitting room and gave her the oils for Shirley and Eleanor.

Eleanor and Shirley smelled their oils and loved them.

Eleanor wanted Shirley’s jasmine.

Shirley held them away from Eleanor.

Lorraine smiled.

Shirley went upstairs and packed her oils.

Shirley was to meet Sarah and Alicia in town for lunch.

Shirley wanted to check on her dress shop.

Eleanor wanted to check on her jewelry shop.

Shirley eased upstairs and hide her oils from Eleanor.

Patrick told Shirley Skip came by to see her but she was gone to Lorraine.

Shirley smiled and said, “I will see him whenever he comes back.”

Shirley thought she has had a good holiday.

Dr. Ralph said, “Lorraine I had Brittany to bring your instructions books to you for safe keeping.”

Lorraine smiled.

Dr. Ralph wheeled Lorraine to her room and examined her.

He told Brittany to let Lorraine rest or sleep.

He went to his suite and took a hot bathe and shaved.

He went to bed and slept for four hours.

Jose left and went to Gen and carried her the gift from Lorraine.

Gen said, “I don’t want it. You can have it Jose.”

Jose took the gift back to the carriage and brought Gen some water and coal in the house.

He told her Stanley and Alice had a baby boy that morning.

Jose said, “Dr. Ralph said he hope they reconcile after the birth.”

Gen looked at Jose and said, “That’s doesn’t sound good.”

Jose left from Gen and went to house.

He walked around the house and he went in the house.

Jose left and went to the lawyers and demanded they resolve the title issue.

The lawyers said they were waiting for responses and everything should be ready in thirty days.

Jose was thinking he would be leaving for Europe in March and want that house and the title.

Gen told him to wait and not to pay any more money until they give him a clear title to the house, if they don’t he got the house for the amount of money he paid at first.

Jose went to the bank on checked on his balance.

Then he rode back to the house.

He was exhausted.

He made it back to the house and went to his room and pulled off his clothes and went to bed.

Jose slept until the next morning.

Patrick woke Dr. Ralph up for dinner.

Patrick told dr. Ralph they were having his favorite root vegetable for dinner, rutabagas.

Thomas and Michael were pushing Lorraine to the family dining room.

Patrick and Dr. Ralph were walking behind Lorraine.

Patrick lowered his voice and said, “Dr. Ralph. Brenda doesn’t want Lorraine in the house anymore.”

Dr. Ralph stopped walking and said, “What?”

Patrick looked at their suite and said, “Brenda said it is our fault that Lorraine is in the condition she is in and each time she sees Lorraine it eats at her.”

Dr. Ralph exhaled and said, “What do you propose to do. You want me to Lorraine back to Philadelphia and get twenty four nurses for her. Which I can’t afford.”

Patrick saw Brenda coming out their suite walking to the family dining room.

Patrick said, “Let me think. I think I can send Jose to her house and Shirley has hired five nurses to be with Lorraine around the clock. Jose is good at scheduling. I will provide all the money for Lorraine’s life style. If you want to take her away to Philadelphia. I will pay for the private nurse. I feel bad for Lorraine and some more workers who have died. I hate this but I won’t push her away so I won’t be reminded of what happened to her and why.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Fine. I want her in her house for at least two weeks before I go back to Philadelphia. I will leave in three weeks. I want a telegram weekly of Lorraine’s state. Let the nurses send it with medical information I would need. Then I will decide where Lorraine should be.”

Patrick saw Dr. Ralph was angry.

Patrick said, “That is good.”

They walked in quietness to the family dining room.

Dr. Ralph looked at Brenda.

Shirley looked at Dr. Ralph and then at Brenda.

Eleanor knew what was wrong.

They had a very pleasant dinner.

Brittany helped Lorraine to eat.

Lorraine moved the fork herself.

Michael and Bruce clapped.

Eleanor grinned.

Brenda barely looked up.

Patrick watched Dr. Ralph who was angry.

Rebecca and Shelia watched Brenda.

They looked at each.

Eleanor watched the workers and knew they saw Brenda’s attitude against Lorraine.

Patrick Rebecca and Shelia and knew they did not like what they saw.

Eleanor did not want to see their workers turn against Brenda.

Eleanor did not know what to do.

She thought, “I’ll go and see Gen and Mag tomorrow because daddy won’t do anything but what momma say. This is not right.”

Percy went back to the music room.

Michael and Thomas wheeled Lorraine to the music room.

They disappeared.

They went through the billiards room.

Bruce saw them run through the billiards room.

He ran pass Eleanor and Dr. Ralph and followed them.

Shirley saw them and went to the sitting.

She and Eleanor sat in the sitting room and talked with Lorraine.

Shirley was sitting by Lorraine and with her needlepoint.

Shirley missed a stitch. Lorraine pointed.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

Shirley looked at Lorraine and grinned.

She said, “I did that on purpose. I know you knew what was done wrong.”

Lorraine grinned.

Dr. Ralph was frowning up and Eleanor looked at him.

Eleanor said, “Dr. Ralph I want to show you something I am working on.”

Lorraine looked at Eleanor.

Shirley said, “Oops Lorraine.”

Lorraine turned and looked as Shirley, as Eleanor and Dr. Ralph stood.

Eleanor said, “I got to think this through. I need fresh eyes to look at this.”

Eleanor looked at Lorraine and said, “We will be back Lorraine and Shirley.”

Dr. Ralph followed Eleanor out the sitting room. They walked down the hall to the music room.

Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael were fussing in the music room.

Eleanor and Dr. Ralph stood against the wall to hear.

They heard Bruce yelled at Percy and said, “Percy you think you are going to Vienna for a year and everything will be good when you return.”

Thomas yelled and said, “It won’t be.”

Michael screamed in pain and said, “Why grandma and grandpa hate Lorraine. They used to love her. She was my momma when Eleanor took you’ll and ran from daddy and left me and Shirley here.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor and she covered her mouth and turned to run.

Dr. Ralph grabbed Eleanor by the hand and made her stand. And listen.

Percy yelled, “Get out of here. You’ll messing up my practice.”

Whack!!!!

Percy yelled, ”Thomas I am going to kick you’re a\*\*. You had no business hitting me.”

Whack!!!

Chairs falling and crashing sounds.

Eleanor stood in horror.

The door flung open.

Dr. Ralph and Eleanor stood against the wall.

Michael yelled, “That’s for telling momma I gamble.”

Michael ran pass Dr. Ralph and Eleanor.

Percy yelled, “Thomas thug get off my back. You better not kick me again.”

Bam!!!

Thomas ran out the music and stopped.

Bruce ran out the music and stood in front of the door.

Percy dived out the music room and grabbed Bruce and knocked him on the floor and started beating him.

Dr. Ralph walked to Percy and pulled him off Bruce.

Percy was confused of how he was getting pulled off Bruce.

He looked back and saw Dr. Ralph.

Thomas started to run.

Bruce jumped up and started to run.

Eleanor yelled, “Sitting room now. Get Michael.”

Dr. Ralph looked at the knots on Percy’s head and turned him loose.

Percy was shame and was cutting his eyes at Eleanor.

Percy started walking pass Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Sitting room.”

Percy snapped, “That’s where I am going.”

Eleanor balled her fist and turned.

Dr. Ralph caught her fist in time.

Percy ran through the hall and got to the hall and almost fall.

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor and said, “You knew they were up to something.”

Eleanor said, “Not this time. I wanted to show you the Chicago rail station I am working on. I did think they all were together.”

Dr. Ralph, “They fought over Lorraine?”

Eleanor said, “We all love Lorraine.”

She sniffed and said, “I don’t know what is wrong with my momma and daddy. Daddy will not go against momma. I don’t know why. I am like Michael.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Your father said your mother feel guilty about Lorraine.”

Eleanor said, “It should be Shirley. With her selfish self.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I love Shirley. She nor Lorraine knew this sinister evil would happen.”

As Dr. Ralph and Eleanor approached the end of the hall they heard Bruce at the bottom stairs yell for Michael.

As they got to the staircase.

Michael was stooping through the rails of the balcony.

Dr. Ralph and Eleanor stopped and looked at Michael.

Bruce turned and saw Eleanor and Dr. Ralph.

He walked to the sitting room.

Dr. Ralph and Eleanor stood and waited Michael.

Michael slowly stood still peeping through the rails at Eleanor and Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph had been angry for hours but that scene made him laughed.

Eleanor said, “Look at him. Like he is innocent. He saw us standing outside the room.”

Michael looked at Eleanor and Dr. Ralph and walked to the sitting room.

Patrick and Brenda were in Patrick’s office and started walking to the sitting room.

Eleanor said, “Now them, I don’t want in here.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I’m angry with them now. I still love them because they used to love Lorraine.”

Patrick looked at Dr. Ralph and Eleanor and said, “What’s wrong?”

Dr. Ralph did not say but walked in the sitting room and sat next to Lorraine.

Thomas and Michael were sitting on each side of her wheelchair.

Shirley looked at her brothers who were bruised and bloody and had knots on their heads.

She was perplexed and her mouth dropped out.

Lorraine looked at the boys and started laughing.

Thomas and Michael jumped off the floor and looked at Lorraine.

Brenda looked at Lorraine and she looked around at her grandsons and saw bruises and blood and knots.

Brenda said, “Bruce why are you holding your stomach?”  
Percy started laughing and fell back in the chair with his knees to his chest.

Dr. Ralph looked at Percy.

Eleanor said, “Percy, one more laugh. I ‘ll put you on the train in the morning to that worthless daddy of yours and take your inheritance and divide it between these other four.”

Bruce was bent over and yelled, “Laugh.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Bruce.

Percy looked at Eleanor.

He saw she was waiting for another laugh.

Thomas was on the floor and got on his hands and knees and yelled at Percy, “A giggle!!”

Percy saw Eleanor was serious.

Brenda said, “Eleanor.”

Eleanor looked at Brenda and said, “This is a meeting with my family. You and daddy raised your family. You helped me to raise my family when my mind was gone. I thank you. Now I will finish raising them my way.”

Eleanor saw the shock on Brenda and Patrick’s faces.

Shirley mouth dropped out.

Percy slowly turned from looking at his shocked grandparents to his mother.

Eleanor stepped backwards and closed the sitting room door.

She said, “We have money. That does not give any of you the right to think the money can buy another person or make another person to do what we want.”

Michael raised his hand.

Eleanor looked at Michael.

He said, “Does this have anything to do with Lorraine?”

Eleanor, “Sit and shut up.”

Michael jerked and looked away from Eleanor.”

Eleanor said, “Bruce how did that fight start in the music room?’

Patrick looked at Bruce and said, “Flight?”

Eleanor turned and looked at Patrick and said, “Daddy no interference.”

Brenda and Patrick looked at Eleanor.

Bruce said, “I followed Michael and Thomas. Thomas said, Grandma don’t like Aunt Lorraine. We have to get Lorraine out of this house. I said, we all can chip in and pay for Lorraine’s expenses until she gets better. Percy said, he will be in Vienna and not to touch his money until he comes back. Michael said, why does grandma and grandpa hates Lorraine they use to love her. Then Percy yelled get out. Thomas swung first and hit Percy on the side of his head, then Michael and then me. We knocked Percy down and started kicking him and beating him. Michael opened the door and ran out. Then Thomas and when I was running out I stood and Percy ran out the music room and grabbed me and knocked me down. Dr. Ralph pulled him off me. You said, to go to the sitting room and get Michael.”

Shirley’s mouth was opened and she was touching her chest and gasped.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley and saw she was fine.

Patrick said, “Fellows…”

Eleanor said, “Daddy this is my meeting and I am the only one that will make decisions from now on. The children want to know why you and momma’s hearts have changed from love of Lorraine to hate. Answer that question momma and daddy. I can’t answer that.”

Patrick stared at Eleanor.

Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Shirley said, “What?”

Thomas looked back at Shirley and said, “Shut up.”

Michael slightly turned and said, “Heifer.”

Eleanor made a move to Michael.

Michael slide closer to Lorraine’s wheelchair.

Dr. Ralph looked in Lorraine’s eyes. That had started tearing up.

Patrick looked at Lorraine.

He turned his head to Brenda.

Brenda looked at Lorraine and said, “Every I look at Lorraine. I see failure. I see that me and Patrick failed to keep her safe. We failed to look at all the evil that was around us. We faied to se what the evil ones saw. That was Lorraine and a few more are not only our workers but also members of our family. I failed to keep Lorraine safe. Each time I look at her…”

Brenda looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine was looking at Brenda.

Brenda said, “I see failure. Mines and Patrick’s.”

Brenda covered her face and cried.

Dr. Ralph did not respond.

Patrick said, “That’s why Brenda said, “Lorraine has to go.”

Bruce said, “So you failed to keep her safe. Now that she is sick and needs help you want to throw her out so you don’t see your failure.”

Dr. ralph thought, “Wow.”

He looked at Lorraine who had tears in her eyes.

Shirley was sitting and looking around the room.

Eleanor said, “Momma and daddy I am shame of you.”

She looked at her children and said, “This is my plan for the next year. If any of you violate it. I will send you to your daddy and take your inheritance and split between anyone that is left.”

Lorraine raised her hand.

Dr. Ralph grinned.

Eleanor said, “Lorraine you are not my child. Put you hand down.”

Eleanor said, “Bruce, write this down. I will post it in this room so if anyone lose sight where they are suppose to be or what they are suppose to be doing. This year is going to be very busy. We all need to work to help Lorraine get better, I plan on taking her and Jose with us to Africa.”

Dr. Ralph looked at the grinning Lorraine.

Eleanor turned and looked at Lorraine and said, “Lorraine you better get better. I am not carrying you, pushing you in a wheelchair nor wiping your a\*\*.”

Thomas fell out on the floor laughing.

Dr. Ralph looked at Thomas.

He looked in Lorraine’s eyes.

Eleanor said, “Percy we will celebrate New years here in this house. I received the response by telegram from the music school. They have only one slot left. That is for Chicago the first week of February. I asked Theresa and she will meet you in Philadelphia you have to travel by stage coach for a week to get to Chicago. You will have one day to practice before your rehearsal. I will be in Chicago with Steven working on the railroad and getting the supplies for the hospital. The day your rehearsal id over you will get back on the stage coach with Theresa and travel to Philadelphia and get back on the train and go to the military academy. You understand me Percy.”

Percy was scared and said, “Yes ma am.”

Eleanor said, “If Percy you are selected to the music program. You will leave when we return from Africa on the last ship for the winter. Gen and Lorraine will go with you.”

Dr. Ralph looked at the grinning Lorraine.

Eleanor said, “Jose will be on the ship with you all. But he will be on vacation for a year do not bother him. Margaret, Earle and Wyonna and William will be going back on that ship also.”

Shirley jumped up and ran to the table and got pen and paper.

Eleanor frown and said, “What are you doing?’

Shirley was embarrassed and said, “Writing down my dresses.”

Eleanor frowned and looked at Shirley.

She said, “Shirley maybe going to Vienne for a year with Gen and Lorraine.”

Shirley looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

Lorraine looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine said, “Baby.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Another word Lorraine. What baby?”

Lorraine looked at Dr. Ralph.

Thomas and Michael turned and looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine’s temples were puffing up and the veins in her neck.

Eleanor wanted her to stop.

Shirley started crying.

Lorraine started turning red.

Dr. Ralph watched Lorraine.

Lorraine said, “Alice.”

Michael grabbed his heart and fell on the floor knocked out.

Dr. Ralph scooted to the end of his chair and looked at Michael.

He turned his head to Lorraine and said, “Very good Lorraine> Alice and Stanley had a fat baby boy early this morning. I am glad I was there to help them out.”

Lorraine grinned and leaned towards Dr. Ralph.

She put her head on his shoulder.

Dr. Ralph held Lorraine’s hand.

Michael sat on the floor and looked at Lorraine.

Eleanor said, “Thank you Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “All four of you will be on the train the third to go back to school. I don’t want any trouble from you. And you better not be there fighting, especially each other.”

Bruce looked sick.

Percy stared at Eleanor.

Thomas cut his eyes at Eleanor.

Michael stared at Eleanor.

Dr. Ralph looked at them and thought they have done something.

Eleanor said, “I mean I will send you all to Bruce.”

Shirley clapped her hands and said, “That means it all will be mines.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

The boys all slowly turned and looked at a laughing Shirley.

Eleanor said, “Shut up Shirley.:

Shirley was so happy.

Percy said, “Momma why she has to go to Vienna. Aunt Gen and Lorraine will be enough. I can stay in the rooms the school has.”

Eleanor said, “Steven and I and twelve engineers will be leaving on the fifth for Chicago. We will transfer to stagecoaches I have rented to drive us directly to Chicago. Percy. You and Theresa will have a private stagecoach with only one stop per day to get you to Chicago in a week and back. You understand what I am saying?”

Percy sat up in the chair and said, “Yes momma. You have reached the end of your rope with me. I thought I will get my inheritance even you kick me out of the family. You said, “I lose everything. Everything will be taken away from me.”

Eleanor said, “Absolutely.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Percy and he slowly turned his head and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Shirley you leave on Friday of that week to go to Philadelphia. Monica will pick you up from the train station Sunday morning You will be telegramming the dress makers in France and Italy about your royal ball dress and a reception dress. We are not going to have a ball but a reception in New York for you and the boys. The boys will wear their military outfits to the reception and tuxedos to the royal ball. I have ordered the tuxedos and they will be fitted the week of the ball.”

Shirley shrilled with excitement.

Eleanor said, “We may have to split our time the third week of May. The week after the ball. Skip said he may not be able to get to his stepson’s graduation from medical college. I think someone needs to be with him. Then if Shirley…”

Eleanor turned and pointed at Shirley and said, “If she passes all of her classes, she will get her degree in business and accounting the same week that Skip’s son graduates from medical college. That is the only detail I have not worked out. Then we have three days to be in Philadelphia at the ship to sail to Africa.”

Michael sat and looked at Shirley.

Dr. Ralph looked at Michael.

Then he looked at Shirley.

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

Michael said, “I’ll go to Shirley’s graduation.”

Shirley said, “Thank you Michael.”

Dr. Ralph felt good for Michael.

Michael turned around and said, “Heifer.”

Eleanor said, “Dr. Ralph I can settle Lorraine in her house and put Jose and another worker at her house to help her plus the nurses that will be there. I will move Lorraine to her house on the second of January.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I want to see how she functions. The hospital will have two additional doctors.”

Dr. Ralph was thinking and said, “I’ll leave with you Eleanor on the fifth. I will come back in six weeks to check on Lorraine if I don’t see her improving. I will permanently move her to Philadelphia with me.”

Eleanor was sad and said, “Fine. I understand.”

Eleanor said, “I received a telegram from Ryan that Mike, John and Calvin are at the south hospital.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Calvin?”

Eleanor looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Ryan said, Dr. Woodson sent Calvin to him.”

Eleanor said, “I am sending as much supplies for the hospital back. Commanders Brown, Walker and seventeen of their soldiers are furloughed. They will ride in the private stage couches from Philadelphia to Chicago and picked up the wagons and fill them with supplies and go to Philadelphia and load the trains with the supplies and ride from Philadelphia here with the supply wagons and take the loaded wagons and ride them to the hospital site where the other soldiers will guard the supplies.”

The boys were excited.

The boys looked at each other.

Bruce mouth was opened.

Thomas yelled, “Real stagecoaches!”

Percy said, “A wagon train.”

Eleanor said, “To load the heavy supply wagons on the train and getting them off the train is the problem. I have ordered the rental of one hundred and twenty horses to meet the train and get the wagons to the hospital.”

Lorraine said, “Brittany.”

Eleanor looked at Lorraine and said, “No. Brittany is in school let her stay in school Lorraine. She will not be coming to Africa to help you. You better start leaning to move your feet in case we have to run.”

Lorraine looked at Eleanor and said, “Oil.”

Eleanor said, “Put it in a sentence.”

Everyone looked at Eleanor.

Lorraine sat up from Dr. Ralph’s shoulder and said, “Brittany oil.”

Eleanor stared at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

Lorraine said, “Brittany make oil.”

Eleanor said, “Lorraine you want Brittany to make you oil. What to sell it for your money to take to Africa?”

Lorraine looked at Eleanor and said, “Yes.”

Eleanor said, “Lorraine I know you. You said, Brittany so she could go to Africa to help you and when I said no you tried to change what you were saying.”

Lorraine tried to laugh.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine.

Eleanor said, “I am giving you twenty dollars for the strawberry bath oil and rose bath oil Brittany made.”

Eleanor looked at Shirley.

She said, “Shirley give Lorraine twenty dollars for the bath oil she made for you.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Can we move Lorraine this week-end. I want to be in her house with her. I can be close to Stanley and Alice. I need to get back and see what is wrong with Calvin.”

Patrick and Brenda saw Dr. Ralph was finished with them.

Eleanor said, “I am taking Mellissa with me to Chicago. So she is currently putting everything in order. Brittany will be leaving Saturday with Gary for school, where she will remain.”

Eleanor looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine grinned.

Shirley said, “Momma, when I go into tomorrow to meet Sarah and Alicia and Emilou for lunch. I need to wire Margaret money for our spring collection.”

Eleanor said, “I need to wire William and Wyonna money to buy jewelry for my shop that will last until they go back to France. I think I am going to find a jeweler I trust and have them buy from company. I have reserved fifteen rooms in New York and contacted the caterer for the reception. We won’t e here, but I have telegrammed a large order of champagne from France for next year.”

Michael said, “Momma that is a lot.”

Thomas looked at Michael and said, “If we don’t get in trouble. Momma can take care of it and daddy does not have to come back into our lives.”

Eleanor started reeling.

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor.

He was thinking Eleanor had a lot to do.

He looked at Shirley.

All Shirley thought about was her party dresses.

Bruce said, “Momma.”

Eleanor was looking and thinking she looked in Bruce’s direction when he said, “Momma.”

Bruce said, “I never want daddy back. So if all we have to do is stay out of trouble so you can get the Chicago rail station working and the hospital I will stay out of trouble.”

Eleanor said, “Thank you Bruce.”

Eleanor looked at Michael and Thomas.

They did not say anything.

Percy said, “I’m done. I know I am out of this family if I do anything else.”

Patrick said, “Percy…”

Eleanor turned and looked at Patrick.

Patrick looked at Eleanor and saw she was angry with them for how they treated Lorraine.

He looked at Lorraine and at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked at Patrick.

Eleanor said, “We can move Lorraine this week-end. I need to see how much of her is here and get food and supplies there. Stephanie and the other nurses won’t start until Monday. I have to get through the next few days.”

Dr. Ralph said, “New years Eve is tomorrow and New Years the day after. You decide Eleanor whether we can move this week-end because you know your workers schedule.”

Lorraine said, “Home.”

Eleanor looked at Lorraine and said, “A sentence Lorraine.”

Lorraine got mad and sat up in the wheelchair and yelled, “Go my house! Go my house!”

Eleanor laughed at Lorraine.

Michael and Thomas turned and looked at Lorraine.

Shirley jumped and the note paper fell out of her hands.

Bruce looked at Lorraine.

He said, “Momma why don’t you send daddy to Europe with Percy for a year that will gives a chance to do the things we need to do without him being a problem.”

Percy jumped up and walked to the sitting room and opened it.

He stormed out the sitting room.

Thomas looked at the door and back at Bruce and said, “You didn’t do it right.”

Eleanor said, “Look Thomas I know you did that so Percy could have jumped up to fight yall so I would send him to Bruce. Whatever you ingrates have planned for school you better cancel it. Or I will send all of you to your daddy.”

Shirley laughed.

Thomas looked back at Shirley.

Shirley stared at Thomas.

Eleanor said, “This is going to be an adventure this year.”

Percy walked back in the sitting room.

Eleanor looked at him and said, “That’s it Percy.”

Percy stood and stared at Eleanor and pointed at the door and said, “Because I walked out.”

Eleanor said, “No Percy. That was all I had to say about my plans for this year.”

Percy relaxed.

Eleanor said, “You have anything to say?”

Percy said, “I’ll go to Vienna by myself than to have Bruce go with me. He will be on campus telling everyone how he paid for me to come there and how hard he worked with me to get me there and how important he is in America. I don’t want that momma. If I am selected I want to go. If I am not selected I want to go to the music school in New York and then to Army college.”

Eleanor nodded and said, “I accept your plans Percy.”

Percy was full of pride and happy with Eleanor.

He wanted to hug Eleanor but was afraid.

Eleanor hugged Percy and kissed him on his head and said, “Go and practice.”

Percy grinned and walked out the room and went to practice.

Eleanor walked out the sitting room she saw Stephen and said, “Where is Jose?”

Stephen said, “He went to bed. Can I help?’

Dorothy was standing with Stephen looking at The Christmas tree.

Eleanor looked at the Christmas tree she loved it.

She said, “We are moving Lorraine to her house. I need a couple of workers to wash her clothes and packed them and unpack them at her house. I need for someone to go to town tomorrow and stock her house with food she eats. We have private nurses for her that will start Monday. I will send Jose to stay with Lorraine and I need a maid. Tell Jose what I want and to see me if he has any problems.”

Stephen looked at Dorothy.

Dorothy said, “Miss Eleanor can I go to Lorraine. I don’t live far from her and I can check on Alice and Stanley.”

Eleanor said, “I want someone who could cook and clean to go.”

Stephen said, “What will Jose be doing?”

Eleanor said, “Butler duties. Bring in water, coal, wood and re-fuel the lanterns and keep them burning, see about the horses, keep the outside maintained and run errands.”

Stephen and Dorothy stood and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at the tree and said, “Start taking down the ornaments. The pictures put in a box and sat them in the family sitting room.”

Eleanor said, “I’ll talk to Jose first. But selected the workers tonight that will be here so they can start washing her clothes and taking care of her clothes. Tell Mellissa to come and see me.”

Stephen said, “She’s off.”

Eleanor said, “See the difference between you and Jose. Jose would say she is off, but he would leave her a note to come and see me.”

Eleanor walked to her office and stayed in there until midnight.

She heard Percy.

She went to the music room and knocked on the door.

Percy turned and said, “Come in.”  
Eleanor walked in and Percy nodded his head to let her know he was nearly finished.

Eleanor sat and listened to Percy play the piano.

Percy finished his practice session and practiced his bow.

Eleanor grinned and clapped.

They walked out the music room and went upstairs to their bedrooms.

Percy and Eleanor went to bed.

Eleanor opened the doors and looked at her children.

Shirley was in her bed and sleep.

She was mumbling.

Eleanor stood to listen to Shirley.

Shirley was giggling and turned over and said, “Now.”

Eleanor rolled her eyes at Shirley and walked out the doorway and closed it.

Eleanor dressed for bed.

She sat and was thinking about all the plans she made and how if one goes wrong they all would fall.

She thought about the looks on Patrick and Brenda’s faces when she expelled them out of their lives for what they did against Lorraine.

Eleanor was thinking, “They are retired. Daddy signed all the papers over to me. I bought this house from them and told momma she still could rule. He is preaching now, maybe that is how they are to spend the last of their days. I have to get them to sign off Lorraine’s guardian ship papers to me the only other way is for Dr. Ralph to marry Lorraine on paper.”

Eleanor put her feet up in bed and said, “Too much for tonight.”

She woke the next morning and bathed and dressed.”

She did not eat breakfast but was rushing to the bank.

Jose was standing and reading the note from Stephen.

He saw Eleanor and held the note to Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Momma had a problem with Lorraine being here. I am moving Lorraine to there this week-end. I need you to go and be the butler, because no one will be here but momma and daddy. I will be gone until the spring. The nurses start Monday. I need a maid to go and clean and cook. I need Lorraine’s clothes to be washed and packed and everything loaded on the wagon to be taken to her house today. If she and Dr. Ralph feel they can make it then they can move tomorrow. I want Mellissa to go with me to Chicago. I’ll leave on the fifth.”

Jose stood and looked in space.

Eleanor said, “Can you tell them to bring two horses and a carriage now. And I am taking you and Lorraine to Africa in May.”

Jose put his two hats on his head and his scarf and ran out the door.

Jose put his hats and scarf on the chair to his desk at the start of each day in case he has to run out he house.

Jose hooked the horses up himself and brushed them and gave them feed and water.

Eleanor was standing in the hallway thinking.

Jose brought the carriage to the house about thirty minutes later.

The workers were up and starting their new year’s eve day.

Eleanor found twelve bottles of her champagne when she and Brenda were in the storage area looking at Lorraine’s gifts.

She walked back to the storage area and got two bottles of champagne.

Jose saw Eleanor with the champagne.

She said, “Jose there are ten bottles of champagne left. Leave two for the family and I guess that is it. The workers can have the other eight. No give me one for the rest stop. Made a soup for dinner and nice appetizers for a late night snack to welcome in the new year. We will go to church in the morning and a heavy brunch when we return.”

Thomas was listening.

Eleanor walked out to the carriage and put the bottles of champagne and her accounting books in the carriage.

Jose brought the other bottle of champagne to the carriage.

Eleanor was thinking and reached for the bottle of champagne.

Jose placed it on the floor of the carriage.

Eleanor said, “Jose I need a bottle of champagne for Alvin and Claressa.”

Jose looked at Eleanor.

He turned and ran in the house and all the way to the storage area and ran pass Thomas and Veronica and said, “There are six bottles left for us. Veronica wash up Lorraine’s clothes and pack them today.”

Veronica said, “That’s all I have to do?”

Jose said, “Yes.”

Veronica ran to Lorraine’s room and knocked on her door.

Brittany and Ruth were bathing Lorraine and getting her dressed for the day.

Veronica started grabbing Lorraine’s clothes and sorting the dirty from the clean and she packed all the clean item and ran to the washroom with all the dirty clothes.

Eleanor left the house.

She rode to the Stith Rest stop and left the bottle of champagne for Robert and Maureen.

She was talking to Robert about Maureen.

Robert said, “She is calmer and listening more. She is good with people.”

Eleanor left and went to Mag and gave she and Morgan a bottle of champagne.

They decided to marry on New year’s day at the church.

The pastor said yes.

Eleanor and Mag stepped on the front porch.

Eleanor told Mag about Brenda and Patrick’s attitude towards Lorraine.

Mag said, “Huh.”

Mag was thinking.

She said, “Eleanor I don’t know what to think about that. I think you have made the best decision possible to keep things moving until May. I have to go and tell Gen about tomorrow morning.”

Eleanor said, “I am going by to see Gen on my way home. I’ll tell her about your ceremony in the morning at the church at eleven am.”

Mag said, “Thank you.”

Eleanor said, “What are you going to wear?”

Mag said, “I have been working on an old dress of mine. I will carry the cross since I have no flowers. We will have cake and punch at the church. Then we will come home with our growing family and spend that day with family.”

Eleanor said, “That sounds wonderful. I’ll tell momma and daddy when I get home.”

Mag said, “Thank you.”

Eleanor stopped at the train station and went into the office and Peter stood and gave her a big bag that came in on the train for her.

Elanor said, “Thank you. Happy new year’s.”

Eleanor left and went to the bank.

She wired William and Wyonna a thousand dollars to buy her that topaz collection she saw last year.

Eleanor transferred her personal money to account build the Chicago train station.

Steven, Alicia and Emilou came to the bank.

Emilou saw Eleanor and walked to Eleanor and hugged her.

Lance smiled at Emilou.

Eleanor said, “Emilou I’ll talk to you later. Let me finish this.”

Alicia was watching what Steven was doing with the money.

Stephen put five hundred dollars in each of their accounts.

Alicia and Emilou were dancing with excitement.

Eleanor looked in her book and saw motion and turned and saw Alicia and Emilou dancing.

Steven gave them their bank books.

Eleanor grinned.

She finished transferring the money.

She walked out the manager’s Lance office and Shirley was walking in.

Lance walked to the door with Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Hello Steven and Alicia. Today is new year’s eve. Don’t be in town at dark. The same thing for you Shirley.”

Shirley went with Lance and transferred money to her account in Philadelphia. She sent twenty five hundred dollars to Margaret for her to go to exclusive shops in France and send dresses for the spring.

Shirley transferred the money to the hospital bank account for the year. She was thinking she would be very busy for the year and she was going to the royal ball and Africa.

Shirley had not decided if she would stay in Philadelphia or come back home after Africa.

She was thinking she had to manage the hospital’s budget and see about her dress shop.

Shirley was glad to finish all of her banking.

Alicia saw Ginger and Alice’s father Lance, the manager of the bank.

She spoke and sat Emilou in her lap.

They waited for Shirley.

Shirley finished and they left their carriages at the bank.

They ran across the street to the restaurant.

They were laughing and having a good time.

Sarah felt sad.

She told them she would be going to the capitol on Saturday.

Shirley said, “Gary and Brittany would be leaving on Saturday too.

Emilou was playing and said, “Shirley can Miss Lorraine go to the store and buy me pretty dresses for the spring and summer?”

Alicia said, “Sush Emilou.”

Alicia was embarrassed and covered her red face.

Emilou said, “Why can’t I ask that. Miss Lorraine picked me out these pretty dresses and shoes and hair ribbons and coats.”

Shirley and Sarah laughed.

The manager walked over and said, “You all need to be going home. I know the deputy has been walking all afternoon. Go home and don’t stop.”

They all put their coats and scarves and gloves on and Emilou.

They all put their hats on and went to their carriages.

Sarah parked in front of the restaurant.

She sat and watched Emilou and Alicia run and jumped in their carriage.

Shirley went to her carriage and jumped in her carriage.

The restaurant manager watched them get in their carriages.

He looked down and saw Shirley gave him five dollars.

He giggled and looked around and slipped the five dollars in his pocket.

Shirley was on her way home.

She was grinning to herself about her lunch with Sarah and Alicia. How Emilou was embarrassing Alicia.

Shirley thought, “Lorraine bought them nice things and they looked good, Thanksgiving up to today.”

Shirley thought about why her wonderful grandparents were mistreating Lorraine. Who died and Ryan brought back to life to protect them. Shirley said, “God thank You for this money. I love it. I love dressing up and looking as pretty as I can, but it is not worth Lorraine’s life. I don’t want to say I would give it all up for Lorraine to be whole. I say I will give more money to help heal people God. Because You know I love my money. Help me with these feelings I have about my grandparents. I love them dearly God. Help Sarah. I don’t know what to ask. I want her aunt to live and not to die. Let Gary, Brittany and Sarah and Alicia do well in school and accomplish their goals. I don’t think Alicia want Robert anymore, because he doesn’t have money. I have never been poor. I know how it is to have money but can’t use it. Help him to become wealthy if that is the thing that would stop him and Alicia from being married.”

The sun started to set.

Shirley looked at the horizon and cried.

It seemed as someone tapped her on her shoulder.

When she held her head straight she saw two men riding cautiously towards her.

Shirley said, “Too much death God.”

She was only a few minutes from their community.

She pulled out her gun out of her bag and pointed it at the men.

Other people were travelling.

They started yelling at the men.

The men still tried to come close to Shirley.

Shirley thought about Lorraine.

She started shooting at the men.

The men fell off their horses.

The other travelers rode over towards the men.

Others yelled they were going to get the sheriff.

Shirley turned around and sped home.

Eleanor had finished business activities and left.

She went to Joe and Peggy and took them a bottle of champagne.

She asked Peggy to let the doctor at the house examined her.

Joe looked at Eleanor.

He said, “He did a miracle on Shirley. I don’t want our hope up and it doesn’t work out.”

Joe said, “Ok.”

Peggy looked at Joe.

Eleanor left and went around the other way and stopped at Gen and told her that Mag and Morgan were getting married at the church’s New Year’s service.

Eleanor told Gen what Patrick and Brenda did about Lorraine.

Gen blinked and looked at Eleanor.

She exhaled and said, “I don’t know why they believe like that. They know we do our best to protect our love ones but God is the final authority and the only one that can protect us. Proverbs 21:31 says…the horse is prepared against the day of battle but safety is of the Lord. God brought Lorraine back to life for a reason. I can’t say anything else because I don’t know.”

Eleanor said, “We are having New Year’s brunch tomorrow. Immediately after Mag and Morgan’s wedding ceremony. You are invited and you can stay overnight if you want.

Gen was quiet and thinking and said, “Thank you Eleanor. Why are you having a brunch instead of dinner?”

Eleanor said, “I am taking over more of the house acitivites. I told the workers to take down the tree today. I will be taking Jose and Lorraine to Africa with us in May.”

Gen stared at Eleanor and said, “You are taking control over the house and all the businesses.”

Eleanor said, “Yes.”

She walked out Gen’s house and went to Claressa and Alvin and visited for an hour and told them of Mag and Morgan’s wedding and invited them to brunch.

She apologized that she did not have a bottle of champagne for them for the night.

They all laughed.

Eleanor rode home.

She was thinking about the supply wagons she was renting in Philadelphia. She saw them when they were building the railroad to the capitol.

She thought, “I need eight horses instead six horses.”

She was pulling in the yard when Shirley speed by her.

Eleanor bit her tongue and rushed behind Shirley.

Shirley was screaming.

Eleanor heard Shirley.

Shirley jumped out of the carriage and was running in the house.

Gary, Jose and George were in the worker’s area.

Veronica was walking up from the basement with Lorraine’s clothes.

She stopped and looked at Shirley.

Eleanor jumped out of her carriage and ran in the house behind Shirley.

Dr. Ralph was getting ready to go and see Alice, Stanley and the baby.

He was putting on his coat.

He heard Shirley screaming.

Percy and Theresa ran from the music room.

Dan was in the kitchen to take Theresa home.

Michael and Thomas were standing behind Dr. Ralph peeping at Shirley.

Bruce was in his room. He ran to the back top stairs and looked.

Jose caught Shirley and said, “What?’

Eleanor was in the house.

Shirley said, “I shot them.”

Dan and Thomas ran to the kitchen door.

Jose and Eleanor yelled. “Who?”

Shirley, “The men. The people were yelling at them but they kept coming. I was not going to be killed like Lorraine. I shot and they fell. The people surrounded them and I ran.”

Shirley leaned on Eleanor and said, “Momma. I couldn’t let them kill me. They keep coming. The people told them to leave me alone.”

Eleanor held Shirley.

Shirley cried.

Veronica was standing with Lorraine’s clothes.

She stared at Jose.

Jose looked at Veronica and said, “Veronica finish packing Lorraine’s clothes. I’m taking Dr. Ralph to see Stanley and Alicia. I will take Lorraine’s clothes to her house. We can unpack them later.”

Veronica said, “Jose it is dark. Everyone is gone home.”

Lorraine was rolling through the billiards room.

She yelled, “Shirley.”

Thomas and Michael jumped and looked back and saw Lorraine moving the wheels.

Dr. Ralph teared up and slowly turned and saw Lorraine.

Bruce stood at the top of the stairs.

Someone was bamming on the front door.

Bruce ran to the Front staircase.

Jose grabbed his holster and rushed to the front door.

Shirley was shaking and Eleanor was holding her.

Dr. Ralph went to Lorraine.

Michael and Thomas stood and looked at Lorraine and then Shirley.

Patrick and Brenda were walking out his office and saw Jose rushing through the billiards room putting on his holster.

Patrick said, “Jose.”

Jose kept walking.

Dan and Thomas walked through the formal dining room.

Dan and Thomas peeped out the windows and saw the deputy and some wagons.

Dr. Ralph bent down and said, “Lorraine stay here.”

He looked around to tell Michael and Thomas to stay with Lorraine.

He saw them running up the backstairs to the front stairs with Bruce.

Dan and Thomas peeped out the windows and saw the deputy and several wagons.

Jose ran to the door and looked out the door and opened it.

Patrick and Brenda rushed to the front door.

Dr. Ralph was walking through the billiards room.

Jose unlocked the front door and opened it.

Patrick and Brenda saw Dan and Thomas in the windows to the formal dining room.

Jose said at the men and heard moaning and said, “Good evening deputy How can I help you?”

The deputy said, “Is the young lady here that shot them? She is not in any trouble. I just need her to tell me what happened.”

Dr. Ralph passed Patrick and Brenda and walked to Jose.

He heard the men moaning.

The deputy looked at Dr. Joseph with the black doctor’s bag.

He said, “Sir are you a doctor?’

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

The deputy said, “Can you look at these two robbers?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Where were you taking them?”

The deputy said, “To the military headquarters there is a medic there.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Why you want me to look at them then. I am not going to help them.”

Dr. Ralph walked out the door.

Eleanor told Shirley to stay in the kitchen.

Shirley said, “No momma. They meant to hurt me. I will face jail.”

Eleanor and Shirley passed Lorraine.

Lorraine held Shirley’s hand.

Eleanor and Shirley walked u the hall and passed Brenda and Patrick.

Patrick and Brenda saw Eleanor was finished with them.

She was not running to them to resolve her problems.

Patrick’s mouth flew open when he saw a shaking Shirley.

Dr. Ralph walked out to the wagon and looked at the robbers and checked their wounds.

Dr. Ralph turned and looked at the deputy and said, “These are flesh wounds. The bullets can nearly pop out by themselves. Now you brought the thieves to her house.”

Dr. Ralph walked to the house and looked at the deputy and said, “Well done.”

The deputy rolled his eyes at Dr. Ralph.

He saw a shaking Shirley.

One of the men driving the wagon peeped and said, “That’s here.”

The deputy looked at Shirley and said, “Ma am I am deputy Trevor. What happen. You are not in any trouble.”

One of the robbers yelled, “Why not she shot me.”

Thomas walked out the formal dining to the door.

The deputy held up his hand and said, “Sir stand back. He’s been talking every since they picked him up.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Learn he was not seriously shot.”

Jose was staring at the deputy.

Trevor said, “Ma am you can give me a verbal statement I will accept that. There is over a dozen witnesses that said the same thing, including these four men.”

Shirley was crying and shaking.

She said, “I looked up and they were near me and riding towards me. I pulled out my gun and just started shooting. They fell off their horses and I kept riding home.”

Deputy Trevor said, “That’s what everyone else said. I’m taking them to the military medic since the bullets have not popped out yet.”

Jose held his head down and laughed.

Dr. Ralph looked at Trevor.

Deputy Trevor said, “I believe these are the two men the military has been looking for. Happy New year’s.”

Jose was laughing.

He said, “You all too.”

Jose locked the front door and put the bar across it.

Thomas was looking out the window,

Dan was looking out the window.

Jose walked through the formal dining room with Dan, and Thomas.

Dan did not see anything funny.

He said, “Jose what is funny?’

Jose said, “You don’t think Deputy Trevor was coy?”

Thomas said, “no.”

Dan said, “No.”

Jose said, “He told Dr. Ralph the bullets weren’t popped out yet.”

Thomas said, “The one robber want to press charges against his victim.”

The workers were standing around in the kitchen waiting to see what happen.

Jose said, “Where is Lorraine?”

Veronica said, “In here.”

Brittany ran to Lorraine with Veronica.

Jose said, “Veronica please pack Lorraine’s clothes and I will ride with you home. You are taking too long.”

Veronica looked at Jose and rushed through the billiards room.

She saw Shirley leaning on Patrick and Brenda standing by her.

Eleanor was rushing through the hall and ran out to her carriage and had Gary to help her with the big bag.

She got her books out of her carriage.

She searched Shirley’s carriage.

Eleanor told George to take Shirley’s carriage to the stables.

Eleanor told Thomas the stuff in the bag was what she ordered from Philadelphia as appetizers for that night and to make the family a tray and the rest go to the workers.

Jose and Dan were walking to the storage area.

Theresa looked at Dan.

She and Percy walked back to the music room neither one could concentrate.

But Percy thought about he wanted that spot.

He blocked out everything and started playing.

Jose gave Dan and Thomas a bottle of the champagne.

Jose brought the four bottles of champagne in the workers area.

He was looking at the big bag of snack type food.

Dan said, “Can I have some pretzels?”

Thomas gave Dan a few pretzels.

Dan shook his head.

Jose reached Thomas a bottle of champagne.

Thomas was very coy he took the bottle of champagne and eased out the kitchen and walked down the hall and put it in his room and walked back.

Brittany was in the billiards room with Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph walked in and sat with Lorraine and smiled.

He said, “Shirley is your little girl. She shot the robbers. The bullets grazed their flesh. The deputy wanted to know what happened he said he had twelve witnesses that said the same thing.”

Dr. Ralph looked at a worried Lorraine.

He said, “Shirley is just shaken she had to shot someone.”

Veronica ran through the billiards room with arm full of bags.

Jose was looking in the big bag of snacks and saw Veronica.

He grabbed the bags from Veronica and walked out the house and put them in the carriage.

He walked to the stables and got Veronica horse which did not want to leave the warm stables.

Jose rushed in the house and saw Veronica running and said, “Where is Dr. Ralph?”

Veronica yelled, “Doctor come on!”

Lorraine smiled.

Dr. Ralph stood and walked behind Veronica outside.

Veronica had wrapped up and jumped on her horse.

The horse took off.

Jose hollered.

He was bent over and holding his knees.

Dr. Ralph looked at the horse and Veronica.

Dan ran out the backdoor to give Veronica a bag of goodies and she was gone.

Dan looked at Jose and said, “Jose what happen?”

Jose caught his breath and said, I had to drag the horse out the stables. He did not like the cold. Time Veronica jumped on the horse the horse took off. She is at home by now.”

Jose was on his knees.

Dan reached the bag to Dr. Ralph and said, “Can you give that to Stanley and Alice for their new year’s eve snack.”

Dr. Ralph took the bag and said, “Yes.”

He walked to the carriage.

Jose searched his pocket and had Lorraine’s house key.

He jumped in the carriage and said, “Let me see if I see Veronica.”

Jose hollered.

He turned the carriage around and flew out the yard he did not see Veronica.

He laughed all the way to Lorraine’s.

He pulled into Lorraine’s yard.

He saw the lanterns were still lit.

Dr. Ralph walked through the backyard with his black doctor’s bag and the snack bag Dan gave him for them.

Jose walked around Lorraine’s house.

He went to the front door and unlocked the front door.

He walked in and lit the candle by the door.

Jose put it on the table.

He went out to the carriage and brought in Lorraine’s bags of clothes.

He closed the door behind him.

He started hanging up her clothes and putting her nightgowns in the drawers and her underwear.

Jose put her boots under her bed.

He emptied the bags.

Jose blew out the candle and locked the front door.

He walked over to Stanley and Alice and knocked on the front door.

Stanley walked to the door and opened.

Stanley looked better than earlier that morning.

Dr. Ralph was examining the baby and Alice.

Stanley was holding the snack bag Dan sent.

Stanley said, “Jose, want dinner?”

Jose said, “I want liquor after this evening?”

Stanley looked and said, “What happened?”

Jose started laughing again.

Dr. Ralph was trying to take Alice vitals.

Jose said, “Shirley was coming from town at dusk and shot two robbers.”

Jose was sitting at Stanley’s table.

Stanley pulled back his chair and stopped and stared at Jose.

Jose said, “The deputy sheriff Trevor came to the house and asked Dr. Ralph to look at the robbers. Dr. Ralph said they were flesh wounds and the bullets could pop out. Then the deputy Trevor said, he was taking the robbers to the military headquarters for the medics to see the robbers since the bullets had not popped out yet.”

Jose hollered.

Lice was holding the baby on her stomach and said, “Dr. Ralph I don’t think that is funny.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Alice.

Alice said, “I like Shirley. How is she?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley is fine. I believe she was screaming because she never shot a gun nor a person before.”

Alice said, “I’ll be praying for her.”

Jose said, “Then one of the robbers wanted to have Shirley locked up for shooting him. Thomas was on his way out the door until Deputy Trevor stopped him.”

Stanley said, “This happened this evening?”

Jose was hollering.

Jose said, “What topped this off I was to ride with Veronica to her home.”

Stanley said, “Veronica Smith?”

Jose said, “Yeah. I went and got her horse and feed him and gave him water and tried to bring him out of the warm stables. The horse fought me. I finally got the horse out the stables to the back porch.

Veronica comes out bundled up with blankets on and jumped on the horse and the horse took off.”

Jose hollered.

He was hanging out the chair.

Stanley said, “The robbers were bold when people are going back and forth and going home or to dinner. Our church is going to have service from dusk to dawn and breakfast at dawn. I worry about them.”

Jose said, “Shirley got two with pop out bullets.”

Jose hollered.

Stanley tried to smile.

Alice looked at her baby boy.

Dr. Ralph cleaned up everything and said, “Rest you and your baby. I will be by tomorrow and check on you.”

Alice said, “Thank you. Lorraine has a good man.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Alice and walked out the bedroom.

Dr. Ralph walked in the sitting area and put on his scarf, coat, hat and gloves.

He said, “Stanley.”

Stanley stood from the table and walked to Dr. Ralph.

Jose stood and walked to the living door.

Dr. Ralph continued, “I will come by tomorrow and check on Alice and your son.”

Stanley said, “Thank you doctor. “

Stanley said, “We have to be a bit more cautious now.”

Jose said, “All of those people travelling on the street. They decided to pick at Shirley and she was the most dangerous.”

Jose hollered and fell into the door.

Alice was in the bedroom and she laughed.

Dr. Ralph said, “Jose let’s go. I want to get some sleep tonight.”

They walked out the door and walked through the backyard to get to Lorraine’s house.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine’s house and thought they will be there tomorrow for nearly a week.

Jose was trying to catch his composure.

Jose and Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine’s house and got in the carriage.

Jose pulled the carriage around and sped to the house.

Jose said, “Little Shirley. She let out a life of pain and anguish out on those robbers. She shot them and looked back and kept riding. Eleanor’s daughter.”

Dr. Ralph was glad it was dark he did not want Jose to see he was grinning.

Dr. Ralph could see Shirley snatch her head around with all of that blonde hair flying in the wind.

Jose sped up and they got to the house in twenty minutes’

Jose rode the carriage into the stables and unhooked the horses.

Dr. Ralph looked around the stables.

He and Jose walked to the house.

Jose unlocked the back door and put the bar across the back.

He went downstairs and checked.

Jose checked the clean kitchen.

He walked down the long hall and checked the windows and doors.

He saw where Dan had made a very nice snack tray for the workers and left the champagne on the table.

Dr. Ralph stood and waited for Jose,

Jose saw Dr. Ralph standing in the hall.

He walked to him.

Dr. Jose said, “Jose I am hungry.

Jose walked in the kitchen and took off his hats, scarf, coat and gloves.

He looked around and saw the small kettle of soup and cornbread.

Jose said, “Dan left soup and cornbread for you. I ‘ll go and wash my hands and pour you a bowl when I return. I believe they are in the sitting room.”

Dr. Ralph walked through the billiards room and looked at the billiards table and walked through to the hall and saw they were in the sitting room and Lorraine.

Shirley was quiet and drinking sassafras tea.

Dr. Ralph said, “Good evening.”

Everyone looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Good evening.”

Lorraine looked at Dr. Ralph and smiled.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley and said, “Do you need something to help you sleep?”

Shirley was still shaking.

She did not say anything.

Eleanor said, “Dr. Ralph I had Thomas to leave you soup and cornbread in the kitchen.”

Eleanor stood to go to the kitchen.

Dr. Ralph said, “Jose is getting it.”

Dr. Ralph walked to his suite and put his coat and items in the armoire and his black doctor’s bag on the dresser.

He washed his hands and walked back to the sitting room.

He saw Jose bring the soup.

Dr. Ralph took the tray and sat by Lorraine.

Lorraine was looking at Brenda and Patrick.

Eleanor watched Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph saw the nice snack tray and he saw the boys popping popcorn.

Michael was laying on his stomach and he rolled over laughing and said, “popping bullets.”

Jose was walking out the sitting room.

Thomas said, “Pop. Pop.”

Jose nearly hit the floor.

Michael and Thomas were laughing.

Dr. Ralph ate his soup and cornbread.

Jose crawled to the billiards room.

He stood and walked to his room and dressed for bed.

Jose got on his knees and prayed a short prayer.

He went to bed and slept.

The family stayed in the sitting room, laughing, talking and eating snacks until midnight.

Eleanor opened the two bottles of champagne and poured the adults, including a full glass.

She gave Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael a quarter of a glass.

Dr. Ralph and Lorraine drank no champagne.

Brenda tried to talk to Dr. Ralph and Lorraine.

Lorraine stared at Brenda.

Bruce and Michael kept watching Lorraine.

Bruce said, “Momma can we pray at this new year?’

Eleanor was seated next to Patrick.

She said, “Sure Bruce. We always need pray.”

Thomas said, “You pray Bruce. You know why.”

Eleanor listened and kept her eyes on Bruce.

Bruce stared at Thomas.

Bruce said, “Bow your heads and close your eyes. God I need to know how to pray to You. We have so many things that need to be fixed. Fixed the problem we have at the academy…”

Thomas sat and stared at Bruce.

Percy was sitting with his eyes open watching everybody else.

Dr. Ralph’s eyes were opened and watching everybody.

He knew the boys were in trouble at the military academy because they would be whispering all the time.

Eleanor heard ‘fix the problem at the academy, she sat up straight and opened her eyes and looked directly into the eyes of Percy.

She thought, “That so and so has done something.”

Percy looked around at Eleanor and jumped when he saw she was looking at him.

Thomas looked at Eleanor and turned and was looking at Percy.

Bruce said, “God, fix grandma and grandpa so they can love Lorraine again. It is not Lorraine’s fault that evil men attacked her to kill her. But You brought her back to life. That says Lorraine is important. If it is to make us love one another or help the sick or show us what is in our hearts that You don’t like. Fix Shirley even more so she can live long, marry Skip and have her two boys like Hutch said You said. Momma did not get mad with Shirley for shooting those two robbers…”

Michael said, “Pop. Pop. The pop.”

Thomas said, “Take that.”

And snatched his head away and his hair flung from side to side.

Michael hollered.

Thomas held his stomach and laughed.

Patrick looked at Michael and Thomas.

Brenda refused to look at her grandchildren who dislike her and Patrick.

Eleanor sat and stared at Thomas and Michael.

Percy looked at Thomas and Michael.

Lorraine watched Brenda.

Dr. Ralph did not laugh but continued to watch the boys.

Bruce remembered what Ambassador Alvin said, when you are interrupted don’t get mad, stay calm, remember where you were and continued on your topic.

Bruce said, “So I don’t understand why grandpa and grandma is angry with Lorraine for being hurt. Fix Lorraine so she can marry. Fix my school records so I can go to the naval academy. God I don’t know how to pray for You to fix Thomas…”

Thomas stopped laughing and looked at Bruce.

Dr. Ralph thought, “With your bad selves.”

Bruce said, “God fix it so people can be safe on the roads and not be scared that they shoot others.”

Michael said, “Pop. Pop. The pop.”

He rolled over on his stomach and hollered.

Thomas was laughing so hard he was holding his stomach with his mouth opened.

Bruce said, “In JESUS’ name.”

Eleanor sat and looked at them.

Shirley was sitting next to Lorraine and she had fallen back on the sofa with her mouth opened snoring.

Everyone looked at Shirley.

Lorraine smiled.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley and said, “The champagne put her to sleep. She was waiting for the champagne and not one of my sedatives.”

Brittany was in the kitchen with the other workers.

They drank champagne and ate the snacks.

Brittany went to the sitting room and knocked on the door.

Eleanor said, “Come in.”

Brittany opened the door and peeped in.

Dr. Ralph stood and wheeled Lorraine out the sitting room.

He walked back and picked up his tray of soup and cornbread and walked to the kitchen.

Brittany helped Lorraine undress and dress for bed.

Dr. Ralph passed the sitting room and rushed to Lorraine.

He picked Lorraine up and put her in the bed.

They sat and talked.

Brittany folded Lorraine’s dress and walked back to her room.

She went to bed.

Dr. Ralph and Lorraine sat.

Dr. Ralph said, “Alice and Stanley have a big baby. He was a month early. Lorraine tomorrow you move out of here back to your house. Shirley has around the clock nurses for you. I believe Jose is going to be your butler and one or two of the workers will be there to clean, wash, cook.”

Lorraine said, “Oils.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and said, “You want these people to work and make your oil?”

Lorraine grinned.

Dr. Ralph sat and looked at Lorraine.

He sat and watched Lorraine fall asleep.

Dr. Ralph stood and put out her light.

He walked across the hall and dressed for bed.

Dr. Ralph got on his knees and prayed a short prayer and got in the bed and slept until he heard George and Gary bringing the hot bath water,

He got up and prayed.

He thought about Dr. Greene and really wanted to know about his well- being.

George and Gary brought the hot water to Dr. Ralph’s suite.

Dr. Ralph was packing.

George and Gary thought, “Where is he going? We have to take him to the train station.”

Gary said, “Dr. Ralph, are you leaving?”

George said, “Are you going to the train station?”

Dr. Ralph was looking at them and said, “No. II am moving Lorraine to her home today. I will leave next week to go back to Philadelphia.”

Gary frowned up and said, “Lorraine can’t live by herself.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley has around the clock nurses. I believe Jose is moving with Lorraine and one or two workers. I’ll come back and check on Lorraine. If I don’t see any progress I will take her back to Philadelphia to live permanently.”

George and Gary stood perplexed.

Dr. Ralph said, “Thank you for asking and thank you for all you have done for me and Lorraine.”

George and Gary mumbled and walked out the suite.

Gary closed the door.

Dr. Ralph finished packing.

He heard Patrick and Brenda laughing.

Dr. Ralph went into the bathroom of the suite and relaxed in the hot water.

He shaved and dressed for the day.

Dr. Ralph put his bags outside the suite door.

He walked through the suite and double checked the armoires and chest.

Dr. Ralph was leaving nothing.

He heard Brittany and Ruth laughing with Lorraine.

They bathed her, dressed her and Brittany had a good time combing Lorraine’s long reddish brown hair.

Dr. Ralph in the chair and saw Brittany’s carefulness with Lorraine’s hair.

Brittany and ruth was packing the few things Lorraine had left.

Brittany went through every rawer and looked under the bed.

She saw Lorraine’s books of how to make the oils.

She handed the books to Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph saw Gary and George come and get his bags and take the bag from Brittany.

Jose walked down the hall and stepped to Lorraine’s door and said, “Good morning. Are you all ready?’

Dr. Ralph looked at Jose and said, “Yes.”

Lorraine looked at Dr. Ralph with a question mark on her face.

Jose looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Did you tell her?’

Dr. Ralph said, “I did. I will not let her stay another day here.”

Lorraine looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph walked to Lorraine and stooped down and said, “Lorraine I told you I was moving you to your house with the nurses and Jose to take care of you. We move today. We move now.”

Lorraine’s hair was down and Brittany had started to sniffle.

Jose looked down the hall.

Jose said, “Dorothy will work at the house and Lorraine I will move in today with you. Eleanor told Patrick and Brenda yesterday. I will be there most of the time and Dorothy will be there, the nurses will be there. You will never be alone. Stanley and Alice are behind you. Mike is in front of you. I am going to Africa so you better get better. You know Eleanor. She meant you better get better. Let’s go and say bye to everyone.”

Dr. Ralph put Lorraine’s coat over her lap.

Jose stepped in the hall.

Dr. Ralph wheeled Lorraine out the suite.

Lorraine was looking up at him.

Jose was walking behind them and checking their suites that they were leaving nothing.

Lorraine looked straight and saw the family and all the servants gathered in the hallway to say bye.

Michael and Thomas ran to Lorraine and cried and cried.

Eleanor was crying.

Brenda was in Patrick’s arms and crying.

Lorraine started crying.

Shirley Walked to push the wheelchair.

Dr. Ralph stepped aside.

Percy and Bruce were crying and they helped Shirley push Lorraine.

They pushed Lorraine out the house to the carriage.

Dr. Ralph was mad with Patrick and Brenda.

He reached and shock their hands and said, “Thank you.”

He walked out the house.

Eleanor walked with Dr. Ralph out the backdoor.

Jose had packed his belongings in the other carriage.

Gary and George put Lorraine in the carriage and they sped fast to Lorraine’s house.

Michael and Thomas screamed.

Stephen took over for Jose.

Shirley was crying.

She said, “Stop screaming yall.”

Michael and Thomas fell on the back porch and screamed.

Eleanor was no better.

She did not have the strength to pick the boys up.

Jose looked back and saw Michael and Thomas on the floor screaming after Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph and Lorraine looked back and saw Michael and Thomas on the back porch floor screaming.

Dr. Ralph said, “This is your new life. I want you to enjoy it.”

Lorraine cried all the way to her house.

Dan and Theresa were arriving when Lorraine was leaving. They saw Michael and Thomas laid out on the back porch.

Shirley turned to Michael and Thomas who were laid out on the back porch and stoop down.

Shirley said, “Lorraine is only a few miles away. You know how to get to her house. It is just as when you are in school. She is not with yall. But you come home she is her.”

Thomas was looking out the back door.

He thought about Shirley trying to comfort the boys he thought, “Looks who is talking. Shoot them up and leave them for dead Shirley.”

Michael sat up and looked at Shirley and then the stables.

Eleanor thought, “Oh God help. Look at Michael. He is ready to go and get his horse.”

Thomas was crying but he sat up and looked at Shirley.

He and Michael stood.

Eleanor said, “We are going to have a snack and go to church for Mrs. Mag and Mr. Morgan’s wedding and come back here for a big brunch.”

Percy and Bruce were crying.   
the children did not want anything to eat.

Percy was sitting in the windowsill of the front window and was crying.

Bruce was sitting by the front door on the floor crying.

Thomas walked through the house and saw them.

Dan said, “They won’t eat this morning.”

Theresa walked and looked at Percy.

Eleanor and Shirley were standing at the top of the stairs looking at Percy and Bruce.

Patrick and Brenda walked through the billiards room and looked up and saw Bruce and Percy staring out the windows for Lorraine.

They held their heads down and walked to Patrick’s office.

Shirley looked at Eleanor and said, “Momma, what is going to happen to grandpa and grandma?”

Eleanor watched them walk pass the staircase.

She said, “They believe in their God for everything else. They have to seek Him for forgiveness of what they did to Lorraine. I don’t know why they did it. I sent a telegram to Aunt Bev and told her what happened and if she had any insight. I will be in Philadelphia next week for one day. I will go to the south hospital and check on Calvin, Mike and John and the Stith to check on Leon.”

Shirley said, “What about Sally?”

Eleanor said, “I asked Commander Walker and Selma about Sally possibly being her child and what was she going to do to get her. Commander Walker asked me to wait until he comes from furlough. Because they were having martial problems. He decided he would go on the trip to Chicago I believe to have time away from his wife. He said Selma will meet him in Philadelphia when he brings the supply wagons and load the wagons on the trains.”

Shirley looked scared and said, “Momma, suppose Sally is not Selma’s child?”

Eleanor said, “Vivienne is her legal guardian. Aunt Bev said Sally is trying to nice since she heard they were looking for her.”

Shirley laughed and turned to go to her room and dressed for church services.

Eleanor started looking for the youngest two boys.

Theresa said, “Dan can we go to the church and see the wedding?”

Dan said, “I guess so. I hope this year will be a good year. They are acting like this with Lorraine leaving. Guess what it would have been like if she had died.”

Dan shook his head and walked into the kitchen.

Brittany had packed her bags.

She smiled at how much she got for those two weeks she worked and stayed at the house with Lorraine.

She thought, “I know where Lorraine lives. I will always keep in touch with her and Dr. Ralph.”

Stephen, Ruth and Brittany walked through the house and cleaned the suites and checked the locks on the windows and doors.

Eleanor found Michael and Thomas in the storage area.

She told them to go and dress so they could go to church.

Eleanor walked down the hall to Bruce and Percy.

She stood and looked at them.

She said, “You two are older and know, like Shirley said, Lorraine is a few miles away. Go and dress so we can go to Mrs. Mag and Mr. Morgan’s wedding.”

Bruce stood and walked to Eleanor she hugged him.

Percy was walking pass Eleanor and she grabbed him and hugged him.

They walked to the stairs and went upstairs to finish dressing.

Jose rode in the yard first.

He walked around the house and went to the front door.

He unlocked the front door and opened it.

Dr. Ralph stepped out the carriage and picked Lorraine up and carried her into her house.

He kissed Lorraine as he walked into her house.

Jose thought this is a girl’s dream house.

Jose started a fire in the large fireplace and a fire in the pot belly stove.

Dr. Ralph put Lorraine on the sofa and covered her.

He went back to the carriage and got his black doctor’s bag.

George and Gary brought all the bags in the house.

They went and got Jose bags out of the carriage he rode in and brought them in the house and put them in the second bedroom.

Gary and George kissed Lorraine and left.

They arrived back at the house.

Jose told them to leave the horse and carriage for Eleanor and her children.

George went and got Patrick’s and Brenda’s carriage and their horses.

He rode the carriage to the house.

Gen pulled up to the front.

She walked up and knocked on the door.

Stephen ran and opened the door.

Gen walked in the house and as Eleanor was standing at the top stair to see who it was.

Shirley said, “I’ll ride with Aunt Gen because we all are stuck in your carriage.”

Eleanor and Shirley walked down the stairs and greeted Gen.

Eleanor said, “Gen are you riding with us or riding to the church in your carriage?”

Patrick and Brenda were walking to the hall and peeped and saw Gen.

Gen grinned and said, “Happy New Year’s. Can I ride to church with you two?”

Patrick and Brenda said, “yes.”

Shirley turned and said, “Can I ride too. Because all of us in one carriage since momma won’t let me have a carriage.”

Patrick said, “Sure Shirley.”

Eleanor looked at Stephen and said, “Stephen you have to be quickier than that. Lock the front door and put the bar across it. The Ambassador and his wife might come. Direct them to the church or if they are coming for brunch direct them to the parlor. Make mimosas and different teas and hot chocolate.”

Stephen said, “Yes Miss Eleanor.”

Eleanor looked at Stephen and walked down the hall and through the kitchen to the backdoor.

Patrick and Brenda, Gen and Shirley were standing at the backdoor.

The boys stayed upstairs until Eleanor started walking to the kitchen.

They ran down the stairs and followed her.

Patrick, Brenda, Shirley and Gen looked at the boys.

Everyone walked out the house into the carriages.

Ruth and Brittany set up the formal dining room because it was a holiday.

They made it festive and pretty.

They used the last of the fresh flowers filled the room with candles.

Stephen walked in and saw the formal dining room was nice.

He went and got a few bottles of wine.

He knew how to make the mimosa, teas and hot chocolate.

Thomas was thinking how good Dr. Ralph looked and how he and Lorraine made a good looking couple.

Jose told them Dr. Ralph wanted to be married to medicine and not Lorraine.

Thomas thought about how he delivered Natalie and Alice’s babies and were with them for a few days. He knew Lorraine wanted all the attention and would not go for Dr. Ralph being dedicated to medicine and his patients.

Jose told them even the doctors said Dr. Ralph is the top doctor.

Thomas said, “Lorraine give some. God if she gives in a little. She can stay here and he can live there and take care of all of those sick people.”

Thomas heard Eleanor tell Stephen the Ambassador and his wife might come to brunch so she wants it fancy.”

Mellissa got Eleanor’s note.

She was coming up the stairs with laundry.

She saw Eleanor and the boys behind her.

Mellissa said, “Miss Eleanor I will go with you to Chicago.”

Eleanor looked at Mellissa as she was walking out the door and said, “Be prepared to travel by stage coach. We will be gone six to eight weeks.”

Mellissa said, “Yes ma am.”

Eleanor and the boys walked out the house and went and got in the carriage.

Eleanor let Percy drive to the church.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Percy and smiled.

Patrick said, “God help us to fix this relationship with our family.”

Brenda said, “Amen.”

Shirley listened.

Gen listened.

Shirley told Gen what happen last evening.

Gen sat and looked at Shirley.

Gen said, “I’m glad you shot them. They can’t take over because they want to run us out of our town.”

Percy pulled in the church yard.

Claressa and Alvin were entering the church.

Josiah and Natalie were walking in the church with their twins.

Eleanor grinned,

Percy jumped out the carriage and walked to Eleanor with his hand behind his back helped Eleanor out the catrriage.

Bruce, Michael and Thomas jumped out the carriage.

Eleanor walked with her boys in the church.

People noticed the boys had a sophisticated look about Eleanor.

Patrick and Brenda smiled at the people.

Gen and Shirley walked in the church.

Patrick and Brenda saw Joe Peggy sitting up front.

They were happy to see them.

Patrick and Brenda went down front and sat with them.

Sarah saw Shirley and they sat behind Josiah and Natalie with their twin boys.

Eleanor sat with Alvin and Claressa.

Gen saw Dan and Theresa and sat with them.

Gen said, “How did you two beat us here?’

Dan and Theresa laughed.

The pastor walked out and said, “Happy New year. We have a lot to thank God for. And a lot of things to start praying over this new year.”

He looked at Shirley.

Shirley was laughing and talking to Sarah.

Dan said, “Shirley doesn’t know the preacher is talking to her.”

Gen said, “She is talking too.”

Brenda looked over at Shirley.

Josiah saw Brenda.

He leaned back and said, “Shirley the preacher is talking to you.”

Eleanor turned her head.

Alvin and Claressa laughed.

Shirley looked at Josiah then the preacher.

The preacher said, “Thank you Josiah. DO you want to baptize the twins today?”

Josiah sat and looked at the preacher.

The preacher said, “New father syndrome.”

Gen and Dan hollered.

Theresa laughed.

Gen said, “Mag said Josiah has been in shock since the twins were born on Christmas day.

Everyone in church fell out.

The boys were seated together and they were mad about Lorraine.

Eleanor whispered to Alvin and Claressa and told them what happened.

Claressa frowned up and said, “Why?”

Alvin was looking at Eleanor and then back at the boys.

Alvin giggle.

He said, “They all got their mouths poked out.”

The preacher said, “Josiah still has not said nothing.”

Brenda was peeping over at Josiah.

Mag and Morgan were sitting in the back of the church all dressed up.

Gen looked back and saw them and clapped.

Mag was nervous.

She weakly smiled at Gen.

Morgan was sitting and looking straight ahead.

Peter and Nadine walked in the church and carried the punch and cake into the side room.

Dan looked back and saw Nadine and Peter and walked and went outside and helped them bring in the punch and cake and fix the side room up.

The preacher saw Peter and Nadine Dan bringing in the cake and punch.

He delayed the service and said, “I am going to delay the service for a minutes because we have a surprise. But first I need someone to play the piano now at this service. Is there anyone?”

Patrick and Brenda looked back at Percy and then they saw Theresa and Gen.

Theresa was sitting and looking around.

Dan and Peter heard the preacher.

Percy stood and had his hands behind his back.

He walked pass Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “God don’t let this boy embarrass me.”

Alvin and Claressa laugh.

Lance and Cynthia was there with Alice and Ginger.

Shirley did not see them when she walked in.

She looked back and saw Percy walking up the aisle.

She saw Alice and Ginger and waved at them.

The grinned and waved at Shirley.

Shirlely pointed them to Sarah.

Sarah turned around and saw them and grinned and waved.

Alice and Ginger waved back.

The preacher said, “Young man can play the piano. The preacher said, any sound will be great right now. Maybe it will help Josiah decide if he wants to Christen the twins this morning. I never Christen on New Year’s. It will be a challenge and accomplishment for me.

Mag looked up the aisle at Josiah.

Brenda looked around and leaned to Peggy and said, “Did you see Mag and Morgan?”

Joe turned and pointed and said, “They are seated there.”

Brenda and Patrick looked back at a shocked Mag and Morgan.

Peggy looked back at them and laughed.

She said, “Their scared.”

Patrick looked at Percy.

Percy had poised and answered the preacher and said, “I will provide you a selection sir.”

Brenda twisted her mouth and said, “Oh.”

Peggy said, “Oh.”

Percy bowed.

Dan looked over at Theresa.

Theresa was watching Percy every move.

She looked over Bruce, Michael and Thomas and their mouths were poked out.

Dan looked at Theresa and followed her eyes and saw the boys sitting and mad.

Eleanor turned and looked back at her sons.

She saw they were still very angry.

She exhaled and turned back to Percy.

Percy selected, “Go Tell It on the Mountain.”

The church was quiet.

They listened to the song and people begin to stand and sang the song.

Shirley and Darah stood and song the song.

Patrick felt sick in his stomach.

He sat and listened to the song.

He wondered of his salvation because what they did to Lorraine.

He thought, “Maybe this is the way the LORD selected for me and Brenda to get rid of our sins we are still holding onto.”

Peggy smiled.

Mag came out of her dazed and looked up at the altar at Percy.

Josiah looked at the preacher and nodded his head.

Natalie was smiling at the preacher.

Percy played the, “Hallelujah Chorus.”

Theresa was listening and he played it well.

The preacher clapped.

Percy stood and bowed.

Brenda and Patrick clapped.

Percy walked to his seat.

The preacher said, “We need to raise an offering for this young every week.”

Eleanor was looking at Percy.

She saw Michael jerked his head when the preacher said, ‘offering’.

She rolled her eyes and turned back around.

Alvin and Claressa laughed.

The preacher said, “I enjoy the first service of the new year it gives us a chance to say ‘Thank You God for bringing through a rough year and encouraging us to embrace the new year ahead.”

The church clapped.

The preacher said, “I wanted to say to the young lady, the whole town heard about the two highway robbers and you shot them and fled home. You did right.”

Nadine was looking.

Peter said, “Shirley?”

Gen looked back at Peter and nodded yes.

Nadine looked at Gen.

Dan said, “I’ll tell you about it.”

Ginger and Alice clapped.

The church clapped.

The preacher said, “We have a surprise. We have a wedding ceremony to perform.”

People started turning to look.

The preacher said, “Come forward.”

The preacher said, “Young man do you know how the Bridal Chorus?”

Percy looked at Theresa and shook for his head for no.

Theresa stood and walked to the front of the church.

Mag and Morgan walked and stood at the side of the church by Joe, Peggy, Brenda and Patrick.

Mag was nervous.

She was very pretty.

Mag had an old dress she had not worn in years.

She embellished the dress and her pillbox with flowers and pearls.

She had on pearl earrings and a pearl bracelet.

Shirley and Sarah were peeping all over each other to look at Mag’s pretty dress and hat.

Eleanor looked at Shirley and exhaled.

Claressa grinned.

Claressa said, “She is a very pretty bride with that cream.”

Eleanor nodded for yes.

Alvin was looking at Brenda and Patrick and tried to figure out what would cause their guilt to cast Lorraine out.

The preacher said, “Church we have our first wedding of the new yeas.”

Lance and Cynthia and the other parishioners grinned.

The preacher looked at Theresa.

She played the Brides Chorus.

The preacher looked at Mag and Morgan to walk to the front of the church.

The preacher said, “Do you have witnesses?”

Josiah and Natalie stood and walked to Mag and Morgan with the twins.

The preacher performed the ceremony.

Morgan kissed the bride.

Everybody clapped.

Dan was grinning.

Peter did not look at Nadine.

His mind was made up to let Nadine go.

Nadine was smiling.

The preacher said, “Josiah and Natalie have agreed to the Christening of their twin boys.”

Morgan held Mag by her waist.

The preacher said, “IS the god parents here?”

Josiah touched Mag.

The preacher told Theresa to bring hm the bowl of water he brought with him.

Theresa stood by the preacher.

Dan was proud of Theresa.

He especially loved the fact she is a musician.

Dan love music. His mother was a singer and played the piano.

The preacher finished the ceremony of Christening and dedication of the twins.

The preacher asked Patrick to lead the church in the new year prayer and afterward cake and punch.

Patrick stood and prayed a long prayer for the new year and asked God to touch he and Brenda to give up sins they are holding onto because they think they are honorable.

Afterwards congratulated Mag and Morgan and Natalie and Josiah.

They ate cake and drank punch.

Eleanor let Percy steer the carriage home, with Bruce, Michael and Thomas in the back seat.

Patrick, Brenda, Shirley and Gen walked out the church with Claressa and Alvin.

Joe and Peggy and Sarah were going home for their holiday supper.

Dr. Ralph was to examine Peggy on the next day.

Morgan, Mag, Natalie and Josiah left and went home for their holiday supper.

Dan and Theresa went to the house and had brunch with the workers.

Peter and Nadine went home to their holiday supper.

Patrick stood and told Alvin, Claressa and Gen what he and Brenda decided and they did not how to correct because they did not mean for their personal failures to take her away from them.

Alvin and Claressa listened.

They saw Patrick and Brenda were sincere and sincerely hurt and saw the bad decision they made hurt so many people.

They all went to the carriages.

Gen was seated in the back seat with Shirley and she was quiet.

Shirley kept looking at Gen.

Gen finally said, “Mag was pretty.”

Shirley said, “She was.”

Gen said, “Josiah came out of his shock and did a good job with the Christening and the babies dedication.”

Brenda tried to talk but could not.

Shirley was watching Percy and said, “Aunt Gen I don’t steer bad.”

Gen said, “Shirley I rode with you.”

Patrick smiled.

Brenda looked at him.

They arrived home and Thomas had made a splendid holiday brunch.

The family enjoyed the food with Alvin, Claressa and Gen.

Gen did not know whether to spend the night or not.

She left and went home and settled in in her house just before dark.

She brought some of Mag and Morgan’s wedding cake which was lemon.

Gen loved it and made tea and sat in front of her fireplace and read and ate the cake and drank tea until late.

Jose settled into Lorraine’s pretty girl house.

Jose said, “Dr. Ralph I can sleep on the sofa and you can take the guest’ bedroom.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Thank you Jose, but Lorraine is big enough for he two of us. I’ll put pillows between us.”

Jose laughed.

Jose brought food from the house until he get a chance to pick up groceries.

He telegrammed the grocer a list of food he wanted.

Jose started cooking their new year’s dinner.

Dr. Ralph put Lorraine to bed.

He left and walked through the backyard to Stanley.

Stanley was looking out the back window and saw Dr. Ralph walking and he rushed to the front door and opened the door.

Dr. Ralph looked up.

Stanley pointed and said, “I saw you walking through the backyard.”

Dr. Ralph went into Alice and examined her and the baby boy.

He wrote notes and told Stanley and Alice what they need to do to help Alice healed correctly.

The women from their knocked on their door.

Stanley went to the door and let them in.

They made Alice and Stanley plates of food.

Stanley took his plate in the kitchen and sat at the table and ate part of his food.

The two women, Dr. Ralph and Alice looked at him.

He was embarrassed.

He held the baby so Alice could eat.

Stanley offered Dr. Ralph some food.

Dr. Ralph said, “No thank you.”

He left and walked through their backyard to get to Lorraine.

He really liked the houses and especially Lorraine’s house and the neighbors.

Dr. Ralph looked and saw Jose had placed the horses and Lorraine’s carriage in the stables where her wagon was.

He grinned.

Dr. Ralph walked around Lorraine’s house and checked the lanterns.

Jose was in the kitchen cooking but watching Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph walked on the front door and knocked.

Jose was walking to the front door.

He unlocked the door and opened it.

Dr. Ralph walked in and put down his black doctor’s bag.

He pulled off his coat, scarf. Bhat and gloves.

He stood by the large fireplace and warmed himself and thought about the day.

Jose set the table for lunch.

He cooked turnip greens, beets, cornbread, blackeye peas and fried chicken.

Dr. Ralph went into Lorraine’s washroom and washed his hands.

He emptied his water and place hot water in the basin.

He woke Lorraine and helped her out of bed.

Jose ran to get the wheelchair.

Dr. Ralph said, “No.”

Dr. Ralph walked Lorraine to the washroom and he washed her face and hands.

He walked her back to her pretty sitting and dining area.

She was able to sit in the chair.

Dr. Ralph fed her.

They enjoyed a good late lunch that Jose called supper.

Dr. Ralph walked Lorraine to her couch and they sat.

Jose cleared the table and washed the dishes and dried them.

He stored the food.

He baked a pear pie for dessert.

Dr. Ralph said, “I never heard of a pear pie.”

Jose sat in the chair nearest the fireplace and read for several hours.

He got up and put on his scarf and two hats and ran out the backdoor and let the lanterns and ran back in the house.

He locked the front door and put the bar behind the door.

Jose walked into the kitchen and locked the backdoor and put the bar behind the door.

He cut the pear pie and served it with a dollop of whipped cream with cinnamon.

Dr. Ralph enjoyed his pie.

He fed Lorraine her pie.

She loved it.

Dr. Ralph only gave Lorraine a small piece.

Jose said, “Lorraine lost a lot of weight.”

Lorraine looked at Jose.

Dr. Ralph said, “Lorraine did not lose a lot of weight. Because she was not able to drink alcohol, that was flashed out of her body. What you see is her natural size. I like this size better.”

Lorraine looked at Dr. Ralph.

Jose said, “Dorothy is suppose to come around eight am and work until noon. That will give us a chance to run errands. I’ll take you first to Peggy. Sarah will be leaving to go to the same college with Gary and Brittany. I’ll go to the grocer and hopefully he will have my groceries bagged. Then I will come back to the Mc Clendons and pick you up and come back here so Dorothy can leave. She will have to bath Lorraine and dress her.

Jose went to bed.

He left his door cracked so he could get some heat.

Dr. Ralph put Lorraine to bed.

He put pillows between then and he went to bed.

They all slept until late morning.

Jose woke and put coal in the fireplace and the pot belly stove.

He filled the water pots for their baths.

Jose thought, “I should have filled the largest water pot last night and put a little coal in the stove to have it a little warm. I am not at the house anymore.”

Jose was thinking.

He walked out the backdoor and feed the horses and gave them water.

He hooked the horses up and brought them around front.

Dorothy rode her horse through Stanley backyard to the stables.

Jose looked at the at Dorothy’s horse and grin.

Jose and Dorothy walked in through the backdoor.

Dr. Ralph was getting the hot water for his wash and shave.

Dorothy walked in and spoke.

Dr. Ralph spoke.

He looked at Dorothy’s uniform.

Dorothy looked at her uniform and said, “I’m a Stith worker. I Wear the uniform.”

Jose said, “Dorothy you have to clean Lorraine and bath her today and tomorrow until the nurses start Monday.”

Dorothy said, “I’m off every Sunday. I always have been. You have to clean her and bathe her tomorrow.”

Jose said, “I’m not doing that.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I will bathe and clean her tomorrow,”

He walked to the washroom.

Jose made him a pail of hot water and he washed in his room and shaved.

Dorothy looked around and said, “Pretty. And it is clean. I’ll start dinner.”

Jose said, “No, Dorothy I will cook.”

Dorothy stood with her mouth open.

Dr. Ralph looked at Dorothy.

Jose put bacon in a skillet and put another skillet on to heat.

He emptied all the water.

Dr. Ralph walked Lorraine to the washroom.

Dorothy put a chair from the table in the washroom.

Dr. Ralph looked and thought, “That was a good idea.”

Dorothy said, “Lorraine you don’t have day dresses. You have plenty of nightgowns…”

Dr. Ralph and Jose knew why Lorraine had plenty of nightgowns.

Dorothy said, “I’m going and look in your clothes and find the most casual dress you have, which would probably be your uniform. Maybe Shirley or Eleanor can get you some everyday dresses.”

Lorraine sat and smiled.

Dorothy had covered Lorraine up and ran to her room.

Jose pointed to Lorraine’s room.

Dorothy looked briefly and got undies and Lorraine’s uniform.

Dorothy dressed Lorraine and combed and brushed her hair.

Dr. Ralph was dressed and he walked Lorraine to the table.

They all sat and ate breakfast.

Jose cooked bacon, eggs, toasted bread, coffee and apple juice.

Dorothy was happy and said, “Jose you gonna have me gaining weight.”

Jose looked at her.

There was a knock on the door.

Jose stood from the table and walked to the door.

He peeped out the door and opened it.

Dr. Ralph looked.

Dorothy looked and grinned and said, “Hello.”

Brittany and Gary walked in.

Jose offered them breakfast or something to drink.

Brittany said, “No thank you. We are leaving to get to school and get settled in. We came by to say bye to Lorraine.”

Lorraine looked up at the very pleasant Brittany.

Brittany held Lorraine’s hands and smiled.

Gary shook Jose’s hand and Dr. Ralph’s hand.

He waved to Dorothy.

Brittany waved at Jose, Dr. Ralph and Dorothy.

She and Gary left and went to the capitol.

They saw others on the road travelling.

Gary took Brittany to her room and unloaded her bags.

Brittany was happy she had a room to herself.

Gary rode off campus and went to his room.

He unloaded his bags and settled in his room.

Brittany was proud of her expensive dresses that Claressa gave her and she did not want anyone to steal them.

Jose and Dr. Ralph left for the day.

Dorothy and Lorraine took a nap.

Lorraine laid on her couch and went to sleep.

Dorothy got in one of the comfortable chairs and went to sleep.

They slept until they heard Jose and Dr. Ralph walking in the door.

Dorothy jumped up and put on her blankets and ran out the front door and grabbed her horse and sped home.

Jose was getting the groceries out the carriage.

He hollered.

Jose went into the house and prepared a quick dinner and set the table.

Dr. Ralph was thinking about Peggy’s sickness.

He did not want to say anything until Ryan, Hutch and Dr. Greene had examined Peggy.

Sarah was there and Joe had loaded her carriage.

Sarah left when Dr. Ralph and Jose were leaving.

Joe and Peggy agreed to travel to Philadelphia for the tests and examinations.

They would leave with Eleanor and Dr. Ralph the middle of next week.

Eleanor would be sending the boys to school on Monday and Shirley on Tuesday.

Dr. Ralph said he would come back in thirty days to examine Lorraine and decide what he will do.

Eleanor was working the week-end to get the boys prepared to leave on Monday to be at school on Thursday.

Percy took a carriage and took the boys to Lorraine on Saturday.

Percy pulled up in the yard.

The boys jumped out the carriage.

Stanley was looking out the kitchen window and saw the carriage.

He waited to see who was driving.

Percy jumped out.

Stanley stood and looked to see what adult was with them.

Stanley did not see an adult and he thought, “Did they steal the carriage?”

Stanley shook his head.

Alice walked in the kitchen with the baby.

She looked at Stanley and said, “What are you looking at?”

Stanley shook his head again and said, “The boys are over to see Lorraine.”

Alice said, “That’s nice.”

Stanley said, “No adult brought them. Percy brought them.”

Alice said, “Stanley what is wrong with that?”

Stanley said, “Everything.”

Alice said, “Stanley, do you have your baby’s bath water ready?”

Stanley said, “Yes. It’s here.”

Alice said, “Now make my bath water. Our church members may not come today or tomorrow.”

Stanley said, “How many guns they got?”

Alice was smiling at their baby boy. She looked at Stanley and out of the kitchen window at the carriage.

She said, “Stanley stop that. They are in military academy. I’m sure those men are teaching them how to shoot. You and Nathan can’t be with them forever.”

Stanley looked out the window and said, “That’s what I am afraid of.”

Alice said, “I’m glad Shirley sot the robbers. She did not hurt them but the criminals need to know they can’t bring us down with fear.”

Stanley was feeling the water he was making for the baby’s bath and he said, “Jose said Shirley shoot them and snatched her head and sped home with all of that blonde hair blowing in the wind. He said Thomas call Shirley shoot’em up and leave them for dead Shirley.”

Alice laughed and said, “I know Eleanor doesn’t know what the workers are calling Shirley.”

Stanley had his head down looking at the water.

Alice was looking at Michael and Thomas and said, “You think our baby will have thick and long hair?”

Stanley stared at Alice.

Alice looked at Stanley and said, “What?”

Stanley picked up the baby wash basin and looked at Alice and walked to the sitting area and put the water basin on the sitting room table.

Alice said, “What’s wrong with me asking that question?”

Stanley looked at her.

He said, “Alice I want you to thank GOD for a healthy baby. You have become vain. You want us to have a beautiful children.”

Alice was smiling and looking at the baby and said, “He is a pretty baby.”

She slowly looked up at Stanley and said, “I don’t know who you are planning on having children with. As for me this big baby is it with you or any other man.”

Stanley was getting off his knees and started at Alice.

Alice stared at Stanley.

Stanley said, “He is it?”

Alice said, “He is it.”

She stared at Stanley and said, “You can name him Stanley Jr. I don’t care. I nearly died Stanley. Dr. Ralph is worried about me. If he was not here me and your baby would have died. So I feel I can ask GOD to let him have a thick head of hair. Samson had long hair.”

Stanley was on one knee.

Alice said, “Move so I can bath the baby since you can’t do.”

Stanley said, “I think I better stay here and pray. I love you Alice and Stanley Jr. but I know the way I am thinking is not what GOD wants me to think. I’ll be going too school beginning Monday for most of the day. I don’t want to worry about you and the baby. I don’t want something to come up years later like with Brenda and Patrick.”

Alice said, “That’s Brenda and Patrick. Move out of my way so I can bath this big baby.”

Stanley moved over for a few inches.

Alice started bathing the baby and said, “Stanley I don’t see how I could have delivered this baby in another month. God knew I did not have any help and He sent Dr. Ralph.”

Alice stared at Stanley.

Stanley knew Alice was calling him not caring.

He quickly bowed his head in prayer and clasped his hands.

Stanley stayed there for the full time Alice was bathing the baby.

There was a knock on the door.

Alice looked at Stanley as she was putting the baby in a towel.

Stanley looked around.

Alice looked at him and turned her head.

Stanley stood and walked to the middle of the floor and looked over at Lorraine and saw a second Stith’s carriage.

He said, “What?”

Alice was on her knees and looked at Stanley.

Stanley was walking to the door.

He unlocked the door and opened it.

He was looking at Patrick, Brenda, Eleanor and Shirley.

Alice had on her nightgown.

She turned and looked at the door.

Patrick, Brenda, Eleanor and Shirley said, “Good morning.”

Patrick said, “Can we come in for only a minute?”

Stanley was surprised and said, “Come in.”

He moved out the door and they walked in.

Brenda said, “Gen should be pulling up now.”

She stopped by Robert and Bethany.

Alice was still on her knees.

Patrick and Brenda rushed to Alice and helped her up.

Eleanor looked around at the house.

She said, “This is a pretty house.”

Alice grinned and said, “Thank you.”

Shirley said, “Alice where is your baby?”

Eleanor turned and looked at Alice who was sitting on the couch.

He saw Gen pull up in Lorraine’s yard.

Dr. Ralph had his black doctor’s bag and walked to Gen’s carriage.

The boys ran out Lorraine’s house and went to Gen’s carriage and grabbed the basket and bag and they walked through the backyard.

Stanley jumped and turned to the front door.

Alice said, “This is he. He is not a week old.”

Eleanor and Shirley’s mouths dropped open.

Brenda said, “Alice are you ok?’

Stanley thought, “You should be the one to ask anything. Are you ok?”

Patrick was shocked and looked at the baby.

Stanley opened the door and Gen and Dr. Ralph looked up and stepped on the porch.

They said, “Good morning.”

The boys were carrying in the basket and bag from Robert and Bethany.

Alice said, “Good morning. Come on in so you can see my and Stanley’s---Baby”

Stanley looked at Alice.

Patrick looked at Alice.

Dr. Ralph looked at Alice.

Gen said, “Wow. He is big. But beautiful. He took after you Alice not that he won’t change into Stanley later.”

Alice said, “What is in the baskets?”

Gen said, “Robert and Bethany told me to give you and Stanley their gift first.”

Alice was looking.

Gen said, “Michael and Thomas take that to Alice.

Alice looked down at the baby.

She said, “Stanley give me a blanket.”

Stanley walked in the bedroom and got a blanket and walked back and handed it to Alice and sat on the couch.

Alice took the blanket from Stanley and rolled her eyes at him.

Dr. Ralph was looking in his black doctor’s bag and turned and looked at Alice.

He thought, “She is ready for him to leave.”

Thomas and Michael gave the bag to Stanley.

Stanley said, “Thank you.”

He looked in the bag and laughed.

Alice was smiling and looked at Stanley.

Stanley stood and walked away.

He walked to the kitchen and came back.

Everybody was looking at each other.

Stanley came back and sat on the couch.

Gen looked at Alice.

Stanley said, “Percy I saw you drive this morning. You did good pulling the carriage into the path.

Percy grinned and said, “Thank you.”

Stanley said, “Turning it another two inches to your left.”

Alice looked at Eleanor and shook her head.

Dr. Ralph was standing back with his stethoscope.

Thomas saw Dr. Ralph with his stethoscope and ran to him and said, ”Check my heart.”

Michael said, “Me too.”

Brenda and Patrick turned and looked at Michael and Thomas.

Eleanor looked at Alice.

Alice shook her head.

Shirley tried picking up their gift basket.

Patrick took the basket and put it between Alice and Stanley.

Gen said, “Mine’s next.”

Alice said, “Stanley open the basket and put the things on the couch so I can see them.”

Stanley looked at Alice and opened the basket.

He pulled out seven receiving blankets, washcloths, towels, linens and a quilt set.

Alice cried.

She could not say thank you.

Shirley moved the basket.

Dr. Ralph said, “Michael be still.”

Eleanor closed her eyes.

Alice looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor lived in fear that Michael and Thomas would have some scars beside emotional from their ordeal. She prayed they would out grow whatever it would be.

Shirley was walking back from putting the basket near the door.

Gen looked at Eleanor and turned and looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “Come here Thomas.”

Thomas ran and stood in front of Eleanor and held onto Eleanor.

Alice said, “I’m sorry.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I was neglectful. I have checked them when I first got here.”

Eleanor said, “Thomas you know Dr. Ralph is a friend. He won’t hurt. Let him check your heart. It hasn’t been check since we left Philadelphia.”

Michael was walking back from Dr. Ralph and buttoning up his shirt.

He was confused and looking at Thomas.

Thomas turned and looked at Michael.

Eleanor said, “Michael it is ok.”

Michael was in a daze and sat next to Alice.

Shirley was peeping and looking at Michael.

Thomas walked to Dr. Ralph.

Shirley and Gen turned and looked at Thomas.

Eleanor closed her eyes.

Patrick and Brenda looked at a confused Michael.

They looked at Eleanor and peeped at Thomas.

Alice was quiet and looking.

Stanley was going through Gen’s basket.

Gen reached over Shirley and touched the hand of a grieved Eleanor.

Dr. Ralph finished listening to Thomas’s chest.

Thomas walked and stood next to Michael.

Michael and Thomas stared at Dr. Ralph.

Stanley started laughing.

Percy and Bruce stood by the door and were whispering.

Stanley pulled out a Christening outfit and several church outfits for the baby with the matching blankets.

Gen said, “I really got the yellow for Easter. We may not be here. I got the largest sizes they had. I did not know you had such a beautiful baby.”

Alice was looking at Thomas and Michael.

She looked at Gen and said, “Thank you. I want us to take a picture with that photographer in town.”

Stanley said, “We can wait.”

Alice looked at Gen and Brenda.

They looked at Stanley.

Dr. Ralph was going in his black doctor’s bag.

Michael watched Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph looked up and saw Michael and a terrified Thomas and Shirley staring at him.

He looked and saw Percy and Bruce were ready to run.

Dr. Ralph said, “Eleanor.”

Eleanor did not move.

Michael said, “Are we going to die?”

Alice nearly fainted.

Stanley was grinning and looking at the outfits.

Alice whacked Stanley on his arm.

Stanley stared at Alice.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Stanley.

Stanley realized he missed something.

He turned and looked at Alice.

Dr. Ralph looked at Thomas and Michael and said, “Since your mother is ignoring me.”

Thomas said, “If I ignore you will the bad thing go away?”

Dr. Ralph said, “No.”

Gen moved closer to Eleanor.

Shirley stepped back.

Michael looked at Shirley and said, “Do we have a better chance to be shot and killed by that heifer Shirley.”

Shirley screamed.

The baby jumped.

Eleanor and Brenda said, “Sorry.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Michael one day you and Shirley will become the best of friends.”

Michel said, “Momma can I give my inheritance to the hospital so Shirley won’t get my money?”

Eleanor opened her arms and reached her hands to Michael and Thomas.

They ran to her.

She kissed them on their heads.

Stanley bucked his eyes and looked at Alice.

Alice rolled her eyes at Stanley.

Patrick thought, “They got a long way to go.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Since everyone here are friends and family. Thomas and Michael, you will live and not die.”

Michael peeped around at Dr. Ralph.

Thomas did not care what Dr/. Ralph said he buried his head in Eleanor’s chest.

Michael said, “Can I ride my horse?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

Michael said, “Can I run and roll and swim and climb fences and trees.”

Dr. Ralph thought about the wallpaper that was in the owners’ suite.

He smiled and nodded his head for yes.

Thomas had his head buried in Eleanor’s stomach and said, “Am I going to live?”

Dr. Ralph said, “Yes.”

Thomas said, “I can slide down the balcony and jumped off the grand staircase.”

Alice was crying and looking down at her big baby boy.

Dr. Ralph held up his hands and said, “That is one thing I wanted to say something about how you all run and jump off the grand staircase.”

The boys turned and looked at Stanley.

Alice looked at Stanley.

Stanley did not move he cut his eyes at Alice.

Brenda and Patrick looked at Stanley.

Eleanor was holding Michael and Thomas.

She said, “I will speak to them about that.”

Dr. Ralph raised his voice and said, “You too Eleanor.”

Gen hollered and leaned backwards.

Shirley giggled.

Alice stared at Eleanor.

Dr. Ralph said, “If anyone would have told me that you ra down that staircase I would say they were lying on you. But I saw you run down the staircase after Percy and Bruce.”

Eleanor said, “They made me mad.”

Gen and Alice hollered.

Dr. Ralph said, “Made you mad.”

Eleanor slightly snickered.

Shirley was grinning with her pretty self.

Dr. Ralph looked at Shirley.

He said, “Shirley.”

Shirley stopped grinning and looked at Dr. Ralph.

He said, “I am truly proud of you and how you have grown. But try not to kill someone because they hurt Lorraine.”

He looked at Patrick and Brenda and said, “I think you all need counseling or much prayer for deliverance. I liked the way Eleanor handled the shooting. She did not blame Shirley for being in a situation that could have caused hurt to herself or innocent people.”

Thomas said, “Pow. Pow.”

Percy and Bruce laughed.

Michael said, “Heifer.”

Brenda said, “That’s why that pastor called us heathens.”

Michael turned from hugging Eleanor’s stomach and looked at Brenda.

Eleanor said, “Alice and Stanley we all have to go. We don’t know how to act.”

Thomas turned and leaned his back into Eleanor and said, “We always act like this. The pastor called us heathens.”

Stanley said, “What pastor was that?”

Eleanor said, “Co-pastor Walker.”

Stanley thought and said, “Snobby.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I want Michael and Thomas to checked twice per year. When you all come in May. Go and let Ryan examine you all before you leave. Shirley needs to be examined three times a year.”

They all were running to the door.

Percy and Michael were the first ones out the door.

Brenda and Shirley were next.

Alice hollered and said, “Look how you all are running from sweet Dr. Ralph.”

They did not look back.

Stanley stood and saw Percy and Michael running through the backyard.

Eleanor and Thomas and Bruce walked out the house.

Thomas and Bruce started running behind Percy and Michael.

Patrick and Gen walked out the house and tried to smile as they flew off the porch.

Dr. Ralph stood by Stanley and saw them flying through the back yard.

Dr. Ralph said, “I never saw anyone jumped from the top of the staircase to mid- point and jumped to the floor and fall and crawl faster than they ran. Eleanor was no better. Talking about they mad her mad.”

Alice were grinning but she was watching Stanley.

She said, “Stanley did you tell those boys it was ok to jump off that staircase?”

Stanley turned but could not look Alice in her face and looked towards the fireplace and said, “Uh. Uh.”

Alice stared at Stanley.

Dr. Ralph turned and looked at Stanley.

He said, “Alice let me check you and the baby. I need to check someone else today.”

Alice said, “Stanley what did Robert and Bethany send?’

Stanley said, “A bottle of rum and a rum cake. Which you cannot have.”

Dr. Ralph examined Alice and her baby.

Stanley emptied the water and made Alice her bath water.

There was a knock on the door.

Stanley ran to the door.

He was hoping it was the church members with dinner.

Stanley opened the door and it was Jose.

Jose was cooking when he sent the boys outside.

He reached the plate to Stanley.

Stanley said, “Just one plate?”

Jose stopped and said, “Stanley I put double on the plate for you and Alice. Lorraine maybe sick, but she is still mean about her stuff.”

Jose walked off and was fussing as he passed the bedroom window.

Alice laughed.

Dr. Ralph was examining the baby.

Alice said, “Dr. Ralph how is Lorraine? Will she get better?”

Dr. Ralph did not say anything.

Alice touched his hand.

Stanley walked to the door and said, “Hen and dressing.”

Alice looked at Stanley and said, “Stanley you better not eat no more than half. You act like I can’t cook. And be looking for the church members to bring you food.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Stanley.

Stanley walked in the kitchen and sat to the table and ate half of the plate.

Alice watched Stanley from the bedroom.

Dr. Ralph looked at Alice and continued his examination and packed up his black doctor’s bag.

The baby was sleep.

Dr. Ralph looked at the big baby and wondered what would have happen if he was not there.

He looked at Stanley.

Alice went and got in the tub of hot water and relaxed.

She said, “Stanley, ask Dr. Ralph if Lorraine has any bath items left?”

Dr. Ralph heard Alice and said, “No.”

Stanley said, “Thank you Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Good afternoon.”

Stanley locked the door.

He sat and held their son and watched Alice while she bathed.

Gen went home.

She thought she had a full week and she enjoyed herself.

The boys were right behind Gen.

They were ready for lunch.

Lorraine said, “Jose.”

Jose said, “I only cooked one hen.”

Michael leaned in Lorraine’s face and said, “Thomas is cooking our French fries.”

The boys hugged Lorraine and ran out the house.

Eleanor, Shirley, Brenda and Patrick said, “Bye Lorraine.”

Lorraine smiled.

Alice said, “Stanley.”

Stanley looked from his baby boy to Alice.

Alice said, “You know Michael and Thomas’ hearts were damaged from the drowning and beating them to death.”

Stanley said, “It did not come to me until later. Is that what is wrong with Lorraine?”

Alice said, “Dr. Ralph won’t say anything. Instead of you praying about me and my wanting to have a pretty boy. Pray for them.”

Stanley looked at Alice.

Jose walked them outside.

Eleanor reached Jose forty dollars and said, “Tell Lorraine that is for the oil for me and Shirley.”

Jose said, “I think Brittany is going to come once in a while and help make the oil.”

Eleanor said, “If she does put me a bottle aside.”

Shirley was grinning and said, “Me too.”

Eleanor watched Percy as he swung behind Gen.

Patrick and Brenda walked to the carriage.

Shirley and Eleanor walked to the carriage.

Jose walked in the house and made the plate for Stanley and Alice and took it to them.

Lorraine sat in the chair and waited until Jose returned.

Jose walked in the house and set the table for the mid-day meal.

When Dr. Ralph returned from Stanley and Alice they sat for mid-day meal.

Dr. Ralph liked the idea of the mid-day meal to give Lorraine’s body time to digest the food.

Jose would cook a vegetable for dinner.

He liked rutabagas or turnips.

Dr. Ralph was doing his best to understand Lorraine’s body.

He helped massage her body.

When the nurses came on Monday.

Dr. Ralph showed them how he wanted them to attend to Lorraine and make a daily log of her therapy and her reaction.

Jose left and went to the house and rode to the train station with the boys.

He told Eleanor about Lorraine’s clothes.

Eleanor grinned.

Shirley was standing with Eleanor and Jose at the train station as the train pulled away with the boys waving and grinning.

Shirley, Eleanor and Jose were grinning and waving.

When the train pulled out of sight Eleanor said, “I know they are up to something.”

Eleanor turned to Shirley and said, “Shirley when you get to Philadelphia go to that store Lorraine likes and buy her five dresses for daily wear. And send them back on the Saturday train and Jose has to come and pick them up on Monday.”

Shirley was grinning.

Eleanor and Jose looked at Shirley.

She loves shopping.

She did not care who or what she was buying it for.

Patrick and Brenda came to see the boys.

They all were doing better after Patrick and Brenda talked to the family.

They went to see Mag and Morgan.

Eleanor said, “I’m leaving on Wednesday with Dr. Ralph, Mellissa, Steven, Joe and Peggy and twelve engineers.

I will be gone until March.

Jose was thinking, “Good.”

Then he thought, “It does not affect me anymore. I have one person to attend to. Stephen has to take care of Brenda and Patrick and the workers. I wonder what he is going to do with Briana’s family place?”

Eleanor said, “Shirley you transferred enough money to cover your expenses for the next six months?”

Shirley said, “Yes ma am.”

Patrick and Brenda pulled out the train station and rode to Mag and Morgan with their wedding gift which was a week in New York on the family.”

Eleanor was thinking.

Jose was thinking, “When she is thinking like this she is going to come up with something big.”

Eleanor said, “The owners of the horses and wagons in Philadelphia and Chicago wanted to charge me triple the price for rental.”

Shirley said, “What?”

Jose looked at Shirley he knew Shirley was thinking it was cutting into her money.

Eleanor said, “Shirley it does not affect your money.”

Jose laughed.

Shirley was about to have a heart attack.

Eleanor said, “I contacted Aunt Bev. She found me an ex-slave that can take care of supply wagons. Uncle Al found me twenty- five supply wagons and fifty men that can load the wagons with the railroad supplies. Commanders Walker and Brown have twenty five men that can drive the supply wagons. Aunt Bev and Uncle Al are trying to locate me two hundred and fifty horses to pulled the supply wagons. I have three covered wagons for me, Steven, the twelve engineers and food and supplies. I still need two hundred and fifty men to build the tracks. Morgan telegrammed Mike. Mike was seeking men who build tracks and should let me know something when I arrive on Friday.”

Shirley’s mouth dropped open.

Jose said, “Eleanor this is something else. What can I say but this is tremendous. I know you have been thinking you need help with the children. Let God lead you whether to let Bruce come back into your lives.”

Shirley said, “No momma. Not him. I don’t want Bruce around me and my family ever.”

Eleanor was looking straight in front of her.

She turned and looked at Shirley.

Shirley was nearly in tears.

Jose looked at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “Shirley you are not well enough to keep up with your brothers. Momma and daddy are getting old and they are not as strong as they used to be. Lorrain needs her own life and family. Jose is moving. Gen is old too. Aunt Bev and Uncle Al have seventeen former slave children they have to work with each day. Meredith has married well and has her own family. Stephanie is married and will have her own family. I will not allow Bruce to be around you children, he will never have access to any of our accounts nor money. He will never be invited to any functions. He is just to show up when I need someone to be with you kids when I can’t be there.”

Shirley said, “No. Momma no.”

Eleanor said, “Like now. I needed to be travelling with the boys, but I have a lot to do. I could not travel with them or you tomorrow. I telegrammed Monica and told when you are to arrive Thursday and pick you up from the train station.”

Shirley said, “Momma what about Christmas. Have you forgotten?”

Eleanor said, “No Shirley I have not forgotten.”

Jose said, “What?”

Eleanor said, “Bruce told his parents that he was coming to get me children for Christmas to be with him and his family.”

Jose was listening.

Shirley said, “His mother and father told a neighbor to bring their nephew so he can date me because I was deformed and anybody looking at me was good enough.”

Jose exhaled.

He saw Shirley was really hurt.

Jose said, “I’m sorry Shirley. You are grown and living on your own with your worker. Bruce has nothing to do with your life. You have your own life. I think you all need to tell Bruce he is not wanted nor love and he is only to do father duties when necessary.”

Shirley said, “Momma he hurt me.”

Eleanor said, “I know Shirley.”

Shirley said, “I don’t want him near me ever and none of his women nor wives.”

Eleanor said, “Shirley I am not a wise person, but I know Lorraine was sent back to us in the condition she is in for a reason. Maybe it was to let Bruce come back. I don’t know. But we will be busy this year he will not be needed. Theresa is riding with Percy to Chicago. I should be there by then. You can’t help with the books, because you are in school. That is what you concentrate on.”

Shirley was not happy.

Jose said, “I will be coming into town twice a week to take the business class until May. I can stop by the telegram office and see if you have sent me any telegrams.”

Eleanor said, “Good idea. I will remember that. I think after this expansion which will meet the trains from the mid- west. I’ll stop and concentrate on the hospitals, bringing electric lights and the shipping business. We will have enough money to live forever.”

Eleanor reached and pinched Shirley’s chin.

Shirley walked away to the carriage.

Eleanor and Jose looked at Shirley.

Jose said, “Eleanor I’ll see you in March.”

Jose hugged Eleanor and went to Lorraine’s carriage.

He stopped at the grocer and got his weekly food.

Jose said, Eleanor had taken over the house he made sure he got his meat.

He cooked for two days.

They ate the food and that gave him time to go to class and study.

Jose was excited about going to school.

Tuesday Gen came and took Dr. Ralph to the capitol club for lunch.

They met Patrick and Brenda there.

They had a nice lunch.

Dr. Ralph told Patrick and Brenda how he felt about them abandoning Lorraine because of their sins and faults.

Gen sat and listened.

She ordered a glass of sherry.

When they left lunch.

Gen looked at Dr. Ralph and said, “Well you told them.”

Dr. Ralph said, “It is off my chest. Now I can concentrate fully on Lorraine and my other patients. I leave tomorrow with Eleanor. I know Lorraine is going to throw an antic. I need to check on Alice and her baby today and I’ll check on Natalie and her twins on the way to the train station.”

Gen laughed and said, “You worked on this holiday.”

Gen said, “I’ll come and get you tomorrow and take you to the train station. Jose has to go to class. Lorraine has the nurses here.”

The stern Dr. Dr. Ralph looked out the carriage.

Wednesday arrived.

Gen went to Lorraine’s and picked up Dr. Ralph early.

Jose was leaving to go to his business class.

Lorraine cried.

Dr. Ralph was kneeling in front of Lorraine’s wheelchair and said, “I will be back in a month Lorraine. If you are not doing better, I will take you back to Philadelphia permanently.”

Gen, Stephanie and Jose were standing and listening to Dr. Ralph.

Lorraine was looking in Dr. Ralph’s eyes and said, “To die.”

Gen felt herself passing out.

Jose tried to catch her but he could not because he was shock and wanted to see Dr. Ralph’s facial reaction.

Stephanie’s mouth dropped open.

Dr. Ralph looked into Lorraine’s eyes and said, “I will fight for your life Lorraine. I don’t want you to die. God brought you back to us. He brought you back to me for a reason.”

He kissed Lorraine very softly on her lips.

Dr. Ralph looked over at Gen on the floor.

He said, “Jose.”

Jose was scared and nervous.

He and Stephanie picked Gen off the floor and put her on the couch.

Dr. Ralph stood and walked to Gen and brought her to.

Jose walked Gen to the carriage.

Dr. Ralph picked up his two bags and walked to the carriage.

He looked at a dazed Gen and said, “I know the way to Natalie and Josiah. I’ll steer and you regain your composure so you can drive back.”

Gen moved over and Dr. Ralph pulled the carriage out of Lorraine’s yard.

Stanley, Alice and their baby were looking out the kitchen window.

Alice said, “I miss him already.”

Stanley said, “He is a really good doctor.”

Alice said, “Add another real to that. Jose said, the doctors in Philadelphia say Dr. Ralph is the best.”

Stanley said, “I can see that. Brenda was trying to break him up with Lorraine so he could continue to be a great doctor.”

Alice said, “Brenda has to stop. Everybody don’t want to be alone.”

Stanley heard something in Alice’s voice.

He said, “The railroad expansion Eleanor is working on has made all the business papers. This is a real real big project. The ambassadors are talking about it.”

Alice said, “When are you going to tell everybody we are moving?”

Stanley looked out the window into Lorraine’s backyard.

Alice looked at her husband.

After Dr. Ralph examined Natalie and the twins he was walking to the door, Gen, Mag and Morgan were talking.

Josiah had packed his horse and was ready to leave.

He waited for Dr. Ralph.

He shook Dr. Ralph’s hand and thank him for the wonderful job he did in caring for Natalie and his twins.

Gen quickly told Mag and Morgan about Lorraine that morning.

Mag said, “Morgan and I have decided to go to Chicago to help Eleanor.”

Gen clapped her hands and said, “Wonderful.”

Morgan said, “We leave next week.”

Mag said, “I’m not crazy about putting my honeymoon on hold.”

Morgan said, “But she likes those dresses in Philadelphia.”

They all laughed.

Morgan said, “The plan is we will be in Chicago until June. Then we will go to our summer home in Vermont and then come back here for the winter.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Great plans. It is good to have plans and goals.”

Josiah said, “I have to plan to get s teacher to the small city. I still want a vacation home.

Natalie walked out the bedroom with a boy in each arm.

Josiah kissed each boy on his head and softly kissed Natalie.

He tried to pay Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph refused payment.

Josiah walked and mounted his horse and waited.

Gen hugged Mag and Morgan and walked to her carriage.

Dr. Ralph drove the few blocks to the train station.

Josiah rode pass them on his way to the capitol to work on a school for Mattie’s children.

Dr. Ralph helped Gen out the carriage.

Gen hugged Eleanor, Patrick and Brenda.

Dr. Ralph picked his bags out the carriage.

He shook Patrick’s hands and hugged Brenda.

Patrick and Brenda felt so much better that people did not like them anymore.

Steven, Alicia and Emilou arrived at the train station.

Joe, Peggy and Sarah arrived.

The twelve engineers and their families arrived.

Commanders Brown and Walker arrived with thirty-six furloughed soldiers.

Eleanor looked.

Commanders Walker and Brown walked to Eleanor and asked if the extra eleven can be accommodate.

Patrick and Brenda, they were talking with Joe, Peggy and Sarah.

Patrick and Brenda walked over to listen to Commanders Brown and Walkers.

Eleanor said, “We can put them to work.”

Patrick said, “Eleanor if you need financial help you let us know.”

Eleanor said, “Daddy I put my personal money in this. I knew it was going to be a big project. Shirley nearly had a heart attack.”

Everyone laughed.

Gen looked and said, “I almost want to go. But I’ll hold on until May.”

She ran and hugged Dr. Ralph, Eleanor, Joe and Peggy.

They all boarded the train.

Dr. Ralph looked at Eleanor and said, “I don’t go to the owners’ suite?”

Eleanor said.

Patrick and Brenda heard Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph said, “I love the wallpaper you have in the boy’s room. It looks like what they do.”

Elanor said, “I love it too. I painted it.”

Dr. Ralph was shocked and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor rolled her forehead at Dr. Ralph.

Peggy and Joe hugged Sarah.

Peggy said, “We will be back when we get back. Joe is going to be staying at the hotel. You know how to contact Shirley and Dr. Ralph.”

Dr. Ralph heard his name and turned and looked back.

Everyone was running and getting on the train.

Commanders Walker and Brown said, “We have to get in second class because first class is full.”

The soldiers did not mind.

Several soldiers waved and winked their eyes at Sarah.

She grinned.

They all stood and watched the train roll out.

Sarah ran to her carriage and sped to college.

Gen, Patrick and Brenda had lunch at the restaurant.

Mag and Morgan came into the restaurant.

They sat with Gen, Brenda and Patrick and had a good lunch.

Gen rode home and prepared for that night.

Mag and Morgan want to the grocer and got groceries for Natalie and her parents while they would be in Chicago.

Brenda said, “I have never been to Chicago, but I am not going to be doing all that stagecoach riding.”

Patrick said, “Maybe once it is up and running we can take a trip there.”

Brenda looked at Patrick and grinned.

Brenda and Patrick went home to an empty house.

They knew it would be empty until the spring and the children would not be coming back until after their African trip.

Dr. Ralph knew his brother would be on the train that morning arriving into Cedartown.

He did not want to see him.

He did not want his brother to see Patrick and Brenda.

Dr. Ralph told Jose if anyone ask about Lorraine tell them he knows nothing.

Jose agreed.

Jose watched Lorraine for a few days until her sadness lifted.

He saw she work hard to remember things and pronounced words.

Stephanie and the nurses were good with Lorraine.

Jose was counting down the weeks.

He wondered what Dr. Ralph will do since Brenda and Patrick had guardianship over Lorraine.

Jose was enjoying his class.

Stanley and Alice and the baby walked to Lorraine on a sunny but cold day.

Jose had returned from class and was preparing dinner.

Stanley knocked on the Jose.

Jose saw them walking through the back yard as he was preparing the meat for dinner.

He knew Dorothy was busy with Lorraine’s business.

Jose said, “Stephanie, Stanley, Alice and their baby is walking around to the front door, can you open the front door? Because my hands are in this meat.”

Stephanie and Lorraine were fussing.

Stephanie opened the front door and said, “Hello.”

She walked back to Lorraine.

Lorraine was saying no.

Stanley and Alice and the baby walked in.

Alice looked at Lorraine, who was lying on her back on the couch.

Alice said, “Hey Lorraine. We came to see you before we move.”

Lorraine titled her head and looked backwards, as Stanley carried the baby in the pretty sitting room.

Stephanie was frustrated and looked at Alice.

Jose heard Alice and walked in the sitting room when he put the meat in the oven.

He was washing his hands.

He said, “Alice you all are moving?”

Alice looked back at Jose and said, “Yes.”

Stanley said, “I took a position preaching at a small church two towns over. The neighborhood is closer to the capitol where I am getting my divinity.”

Lorraine said, “No.”

Alice said, “We saw a nice house. It is not nice like our house and this neighborhood, but we can fix it up.”

Stanley said, “God, all of you are our family. We don’t want to go but it is something I want to do. We are going to fix up the outer room as a guess bedroom, people can come and spend the night or days. I will get my degree next year then Alice will start to become a teacher.”

Stephanie stood and was folding up a towel she was using to work on Lorraine.

Stephanie said, “What are you going to do with your house?’

Alice whined and said, “We thought about renting it, but decided to sell it.”

Stephanie said, “How many bedrooms?”

Alice said, “Two nice size rooms, we changed one bedroom into the washroom.”

Stephanie said, “How much are you selling it for?”

Jose was looking from Stephanie to Alice each time she asked a question.

Alice said, “We don’t know yet.”

Alice said, “Can I look at it?’ I don’t want to be this close to Lorraine.”

Jose knew they would clash eventually.

Lorraine moved her leg and nearly kicked Stephanie.

Alice bucked her eyes.

Stanley looked at Lorraine.

Dorothy was in the work area and peeped out the room.

Jose bucked his eyes.

Stephanie calmly looked Lorraine and said, “If you want something bad enough you will move. You have two weeks before Dr. Ralph comes back you better start moving every part of your body. Because he will put you in a sanatorium so he can work.”

Lorraine started biting her lips.

Stanley was holding the baby tight.

Stephanie said, “Any woman would love to have Dr. Ralph in their life. But not you. You want him to be with you and you along. Selfish.”

Stanley was looking at Stephanie.

Dorothy was in the work area working on candles.

She was ducking and peeping out the room.

Jose did not know what to do.

He was thinking he could not fire Stephanie. Shirley hired her and Shirley had to fire her. But Eleanor and the boys love Stephanie.

Lorraine pushed her upper body towards Stephanie.

Alice jumped up.

Stephanie said, “Lorraine don’t try to attack me. Use your energy and get off that sofa and stop gaining weight.”

Lorraine jumped off the sofa and fell on the floor.

Stephanie rolled up the towel and was walking to put it in the work area where Dorothy was.

Stephanie picked up her coat and scarf and hat and gloves.

Lorraine was trying to crawl to Stephanie.

Stephanie put on her scarf, her hat and was putting on her cape and gloves.

Stephanie picked up her bags and looked at Lorraine and said, “Tomorrow Lorraine.”

Stephanie looked at Alice and said, “I would love to view your house soon.”

She walked out the door.

Dorothy was standing in the work area with her mouth opened.

Stanley was shocked and could not move.

Jose was shocked.

Alice was puzzled.

She said, “Is anyone going to help Lorraine off the floor?’

Jose looked at Lorraine and said, “She got down there.”

He walked into the kitchen and started preparing his vegetables.

Alice and Stanley looked back at Dorothy.

Dorothy quickly put her head back in the candles she was making.

Alice looked down at Lorraine and walked to Dorothy and said, “Is that peach?”

Dorothy was peeping at Lorraine crawling on the floor and shook her head in shock.

Stanley stood and moved back so Lorraine can crawl pass him and the baby.

Alice said, “I need a bunch of these to take with us.”

Dorothy was still peeping at Lorraine.

Dorothy said, “When are you leaving?”

Alice said, “I want to wait until the spring. I want to be well enough to travel. Even though it was about two hours away. I want the baby to be big enough not to catch a cold and I want him to be Christen here and say bye to Eleanor.”

Dorothy said a month?”

Alice said, “Yeah.”

Lorraine had made it to the door and huffing and puffing.

She sat at the door.

She kept reaching for the doorknob and tried to open the door.

Her arms kept flopping down.

Jose was in the kitchen and he started cooking his cabbage and cornbread.

He set the table.

Jose was watching Lorraine.

Stanley was shock.

He was still holding the baby.

He stepped back to watch Lorraine.

Lorraine was exhausted and sat on the floor with her back to the door.

Stanley turned and looked at Jose.

Jose was watching Lorraine.

He said, “Stanley or you and Alice staying for supper?”

Alice said, “Is it corn beef?”

Jose said, “Yes.”

Alice said, “Yes.”

Jose said, “What made Lorraine mad enough to move when Stephanie called her fat.”

Stanley said, “Every time fat does it.”

Jose said, “As long as she does not go out that door. She might have to be there until Stephanie come back in the morning. They know I don’t like the cold.”

Jose went and got two glasses and poured scotch in them.

Stanley sat at the table and held the baby and cut his eyes at Alice.

Jose and Stanley sat and talked about college.

Both of them were happy.

Alice was helping Dorothy with the different candles she was making.

Alice said, “I didn’t know you can do this at work?”

Dorothy said, “I do what my boss tell me. She said ‘candles’ that is what I did all day. It is time for me to go home. All of these should be ready tomorrow.”

Alice said, “I want all of them.”

Dorothy said, “You have to ask Lorraine.”

Alice said, “I’m not afraid of Lorraine.”

Dorothy said, “Just as long as you don’t call her fat.”

Jose said, “Shirley sent Lorraine five nice dresses, but Lorraine does not want to wear them. I know they are the type of dresses you wear going out. I heard Eleanor tell Shirley to send Lorraine everyday dresses.”

Alice said, “Where the dresses?”

Dorothy and Jose nodded at Lorraine’s room.

Alice walked to Lorraine’s room and saw the dresses and said, “Wow. These are pretty.”

Jose said, “Emilou asked Shirley to send her some spring dresses. Shirley sent them in the package with Lorraine’s dresses. Now I have to go tomorrow and take the dresses to Emilou.”

Alice said, “In this bag?’

Jose said, “Yes.”

Alice pulled the dresses out and said, “Oh pretty. Look the matching ribbons and bows an stockings.

Shirley forgot the shoes.”

Jose said, “I am sure Shirley did not forget. She is probably going to send them in a package with other stuff.”

Jose and Stanley were trying to drink the scotch to keep Alice from seeing it.

Alice put up Emilou’s dresses.

Stanley said, “The pretty dresses don’t make you want another one?”

Alice said, “No. Nor does scotch.”

Stanley and Jose looked at Alice.

Dorothy put on her scarf, hat, gloves and wrap and wrapped in a blanket.

She said, “Stanley and Alice can I ride through your yard?”

Stanley said, “You do it every day why ask today?’

Dorothy said, “So I would not appear to be rude. I am sick of this cold weather. I know is doing something I just don’t know what.”

Jose stood and walked Dorothy to the stables.

Dorothy jumped on the horse with her bags and the horse sped away.

Jose get his thrill from looking at Dorothy’s horse speeding away everyday.

Jose looked at an exhausted Lorraine.

He said, “I still answer to Eleanor. Let me get Lorraine up.”

He walked to Lorraine and stooped down.

Jose remembered how Dr. Ralph would walk Lorraine.

He picked her up and waked her to the table.

Jose went and washed his hands and set the food on the table.

They had a good meal.

Jose feed Lorraine.

She ate and drank water.

Jose said, “Dorothy left here and did not put Lorraine’s nightgown on. I do not change Lorraine. She is going to have that on until the morning. Then Stephanie is going to be mad. And I will be on my way out the door. Then Dorothy has hear it.”

Alice said, “I am not suppose to do anything, but I can pull off her dress. As long as she does not think I and Stephanie and kick me.”

Jose said, “Whew. I thank you. You don’t know Stephanie when she gets mad.”

Stanley said, “I saw a little bit today.”

Jose picked up Lorraine out of her chair and carried her to her bedroom.

Alice walked behind Jose and closed the door.

Stanley looked at the bedroom and said, “Robert and Bethany sent a rum cake and a bottle of rum for the baby’s gift and I think Christmas. I hid the rum and sip off it every night. I tell Stephanie it is the rum cake.”

Jose laughed.

Alice opened the door and she pulled Lorraine’s dress off and put the cover over her.

Alice said, “I looked at those dresses again. They are really nice dresses. I need me some of those before we move.”

Stanley stared at Alice.

Alice stared at Stanley.

Jose did not say anything.

Alice said, “Jose I want five dresses. Do you know about how much the dresses cost?”

Jose said, “I think ten dollars.”

Stanley said, “Whew.”

Alice looked at Stanley.

Alice said, “Tell Shirley I want five dresses for the spring and summer.”

Jose stood and walked to the work area and said, “Write down your size, colors and anything else. When I go into town I will telegram Shirley. She is in school. They gave her the telegrams as they come in.”

Stanley looked at Alice.

Alice said, “Stanley I use to work at the dress shop. Then Shirley bought it and brought in the finest of clothes from Europe which cost three times more. I suggest you let me buy these five dresses.”

Jose said, “Margaret is coming from France in the spring with her husband and baby. She will bring the spring and summer dresses with her. I heard her baby was born with this gorgeous hair.

Stanley was staring at Jose.

Jose looked at Stanley and then thought Stanley used to date Margaret.

Alice was staring at Stanley.

Jose said, “Did I say something wrong?”

Alice said, “No I was talking to Stanley about our son having a thick head of hair.”

Stanley said, “Jose I know it has been a few weeks how are things going?”

Jose said, “To go from a hundred workers to one and five nurses is good. I love having the time to go to school. Dorothy is good. She does the wash once every two weeks. Besides that she does not have anything to do. I cook, take care of the horses a, light the lanterns and bring in water and coal and answer the door.”

Stanley said, “Sounds good.”

Alice said, “Jose loved the corn beef. We need to go home and settled in for the evening. I want to buy all of those candles.”

Jose said, “I’ll send this telegram to Shirley tomorrow.”

Alice looked for a minute.

Stanley started chanting, “No. No. No.”

Jose laughed.

Alice looked at Stanley and said, “Either those five or five from Europe.”

Stanley started chanting, “Shirley. Shirley. Shirley.”

Alice said, “Jose please send that telegram to Shirley. Ask her how she wants me to pay her.”

Alice stood.

Jose stood and let them out the backdoor.

He watched Stanley still chanting, “Shirley. Shirley.”

Jose locked the backdoor.

He walked to the front door and locked it and put the bar across the front door.

Jose cleared the table and washed and dried all the dishes.

It was dusk.

Jose went outside and check on the horses.

He thought he heard something.

He quickly turned and did not see anything.

Some people were coming home from work.

Jose lit the lantern on the back, then he walked to the side of the house and lit that lantern.

He walked around the front of the house and checked the front door and lit the lantern on the front porch.

He saw other people lighting their torches.

Jose walked around to the back of the house and stood back on the porch where he could not be seen.

He stood still.

He remembered what Dr. Ralph said, “Tell no one of Lorraine.”

Jose always wore his guns if he step outside the house just to get water or coal.

He did not have any lights burning in the house except the fireplace and the pot belly stove.

He walked to the backdoor and picked up the two water pails and went to the well and filled them up.

He carried the water to the house and filled the water barrel.

He made the trip twice to the well.

He filled the horses’ trough with water.

Jose filled both coal buckets. The one for the fireplace and the one inn the kitchen.

Jose put a water pail on the stove and put just enough coal to get the water lukewarm until the morning when he will put more coal on the fire to get the water hot.

Jose looked out the back door.

He locked the backdoor and put the bar across the backdoor.

He walked in the sitting room and double checked the door and windows

Jose squatted and looked at the shotgun he put under the sofa.

He was thinking whether he should move the shotgun since Lorraine crawled that day.

Jose put plenty of coal on the fire.

Jose walked in the Lorraine and checked the windows.

He pulled Lorraine’s cover over her and walked out and close her door.

Lorraine did not like to be hot.

Jose checked the work area and saw Dorothy did a good job on the scented candles.

He walked to his room and dressed for bed.

Jose stood in the dark and looked out the window.

He walked out his room and closed the door.

Jose picked up his saddle with his book for the accounting class.

Jose sat at the table and read his assignment and the pages for the class.

He looked at the time and grinned.

Jose went to his bedroom and opened the door and went to bed.

He felt under his mattress and felt the gun he put under the mattress.

Jose went to sleep.

He woke the next morning and put coal in the stove to heat the water.

He put coal in the fireplace.

He washed and shaved and dressed.

Jose cooked oatmeal and sliced fruit.

He woke Lorraine and sat on her bed and fed her.

Jose knew Lorraine would only eat a few spoonfuls of the food.

He did not know why she was gaining weight.

Jose stood to carry her bowl back in the kitchen and as he was washing and drying the dishes he said, “I’ll send a telegram to Dr. Ralph.”

Jose went to class when Stephanie pulled up.

He said, “She went back to sleep and only ate three spoons of oatmeal and some raisins.

Stephanie said, “I’ll let her sleep for an hour so I can take a nap.”

Jose said, “Lock the door and put the bar on it. I will not be back until after noon. Stanley just left to go to college he will not be coming here.

Stephanie looked at Jose and looked around and said, “Trouble?”

She saw Jose had on his holster.

Jose said, “Hopefully not. You know where everything is.”

Jose walked around the back and hook the two horses to the carriage and feed the horses and gave them water.

He stopped by Steven’s house and left a note Shirley sent a package for Emilou. They can pick it up Saturday or he can bring next week when he was in town. If they will come and pick up the package Saturday remove the note. If they wanted hm to bring it next week write a time and day.”

Jose went to class and enjoyed the two hours.

He rode to town and went to the telegram office and sent the two telegrams.

The office clerk gave Jose a few telegrams for him.

Eleanor sent him a telegram to look out for Mike and John and to pick them up that day from the train station and take them to Mike’s house and have one of the nurses go and take care of them for two weeks and to feed.

Jose looked at the time.

He thought that train has been here twenty minutes.

He started reading the other telegrams on the way to the carriage.

He pulled around to the train station and saw Mike and John sitting outside the railstation’s office.

He jumped out the carriage and ran to them and helped them in the carriage.

He said, “Hey guys. I just got this telegram from Eleanor. Let me read the rest of these telegrams and see what they are saying before we leave.”

Jose read the telegrams and said, “I’ll go the other way and stop at the rest stop.

Jose said, “How do you two feel?”

John said, “Much better.”

Jose said, “Why does Eleanor want you to have a nurse for two weeks and for me to feed you for two weeks?”  
Mike said, “We didn’t have enough penicillin at the small city and that nearly set up an infection. The doctors in Philadelphia caught and treated it.”

Jose said, “The doctors in Philadelphia re good. One will come here once the hospital is built.”

Jose sped to the rest stop and gave Robert the telegram from Eleanor.

Robert said, “Thanks. She wants me to start at the house the first of February.”

Jose grinned.

He thought, “I told Stephen he had to be alert. She sis not here and apparently he has not done something and nobody is there but Brenda and Patrick.”

Robert said, “No one is at the house but Brenda and Patrick.

Jose said, “I have to take Mike and John home, but she wants us to look for someone to tend the animals and the field for the summer.”

Robert said, “What happen to Mr. Cooley and his sons?”

Jose said, “I heard Mr. Cooley talking to Patrick while his sons went in the back and cut down their Christmas tree. He is dying. His sons are doing other work. He told Patrick he would not make it to the spring. Patrick was not reconcilable. Brenda couldn’t do anything but hug him.”

Robert said, “I’m sorry to hear that. I have to show Maureen a few more things.”

Jose said, “How is she doing?”  
Robert looked back and said, “She can do this work. I believe someone or something hit her head. I see her sometimes shaking her head or hitting her head. I want her to have a better life. I think she needs to go to the doctor. But, you can’t make her go.”

Jose said, “I’ll let you know if I find someone who can tend the livestock for the summer.”

Robert said, “Thank you. I’ll look for someone who can plant the fields.”

Jose walked out the rest stop and went to the carriage.

Mike and John wanted to go to bed.

Jose said, “Mike do you have any furniture in your house?”

Mike said, “No”.

Jose was speeding and went through another street and pulled up in Mike’s yard.

He helped Mike and John out the carriage and carried their bags in the house.

Mike did not lock the door because he had nothing in the house.

Stephanie was looking out the window and saw Jose.

Jose ran around the house and got a bucket of coal and started a fire in the fireplace.

He went and got a second bucket and started a fire in the pot belly stove.

Jose went and filled the coal bucket up.

He went and brought water from the well Mike had in his backyard.

Jose made three trips to fill up his water barrel.

Jose said, “I’ll bring you two something to eat later.”

Mie and John laid on the floor.

Jose said, “You don’t have a blanket or sheet or quilt?”

Mike said, “No.”

Jose said, “When are you to take your medicine?”

Mike said, “Once a day with food. We ate a big breakfast on the train and took the medicine for today.”

Jose said, “I’m leaving you need to lock the door.”

Mike raised his head off the floor and looked at Jose and said, “Is there a problem?”  
Jose said, “Maybe.”

Jose rode across the street and put the horses and carriage up.

He feed the horses and gave them water and brushed their hair.

He filled the lanterns.

Jose went to the front of the house and knocked on the door.

Dorothy opened the door.

Lorraine was sitting on the couch by herself.

Jose brought his saddle in the house.

He looked at Lorraine and said, “Dorothy did you bathe and combed and brush Lorraine’s hair and dress her?”  
Dorothy said, “Yes.”

Jose said, “Stephanie was your rough therapy effective today?”

Dorothy walked back to the work area.

Stephanie said, “Lorraine was not feeling well today. She has a slight fever and diarrhea.”

Jose looked at Stephanie and said, “I don’t know what to do. I guess I should take up a course since I will be working at the hospital. I sent a telegram to Dr. Ralph about Lorraine’s weight gain. Eleanor wants a nurse to go across the street for the next two weeks to help Mike and John who were shot in the small city. He has no curtains, no blankets no dishes nothing.”

Stephanie said, “I’m concerned about Lorraine. Send Roberta. She does not work on the week-end. I have to go to the general store today. I can buy those men a blanket.”

Jose said, “You can leave now. I have an account at the general store. I will write my authorization. Get them at least two blankets a piece. I think they got some supplies in.”

Stephanie left for the day and went into town to the general store.

She got four blankets and some dishes.

She knew Lorraine did not like for anyone to touch her dishes.

Stephanie was in line and saw a few curtains and bought the curtains.

She left and went home to her parents.

She told them she was concerned about Lorraine and Jose sent a telegram to the doctor.

Dr. Ralph sent a telegram back that he was on his way.

Shirley was at the hospital to do payroll and to have her therapy.

She asked Dr. Ralph could he take a package to Alice.

He said, “Shirley I will be on that train in the morning.”

Shirley finished payroll and she and Vivienne went to Smith’s and selected five very pretty dresses for Alice along with hair bows.

Shirley had Harry to put them in a bag,

They were leaving when Mrs. West and Mrs. Clay entered.

Mrs. West said, “Hey there pretty lady.”

Shirley grinned.

She spoke to Mrs. West and Mrs. Clay.

Mrs. West said, “Do you know the kind of tall trim dark- skinned woman that came in here several times. We were suppose to had tea and never did. I like to have tea with her. I am going to study for the board test to go back to teaching, I know once I start studying I won’t be able to have tea with her.”

Shirley said, “Give me your address where I can tell her to message you.”

Harry walked over.

Mrs. Clay looked at Harry.

Shirley and Vivienne left the store and went to the hospital.

Shirley gave the bags to Dr. Ralph.

He was talking to Dr. Greene, Felipe and Charles about Lorraine.

Shirley went back to the hospital’s administrator’s office and finished payroll.

Shirley paid all the bills in advance and got her receipts.

She locked the office.

She stepped back and talked to Leon for a few minutes.

Dr. Woodson said, “He was improving slowly since they started wrapping him every day. Before he was not doing anything. I can’t see how we miss some of the basics of these cases.”

Monica walked in the hospital with Dr. Jerome.

Dr. Jerome looked and saw the doctors talking.

He walked over to join them.

Monica heard Shirley talking and walked and peeped at Leon and said, “Hey Leon.”

Leon said, “Hey Monica.”

Shirley and Monica were leaving, and Dr. Ralph said, “Shirley.”

Shirley stopped and looked at Dr. Ralph.

He thought, “Lorraine is still like momma to Shirley. I have to be careful.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Can you send a telegram to Jose that I will be on the train in the morning and to pick me up from the train whenever it arrives.”

Shirley froze.

Shirley looked at Dr. Greene who went to the medicine cabinet and pulled out a number of shots.

Monica stared.

Shirley exhaled and said, “The train leaves at ten am. I’ll telegram the train to let you on and in first class.”

Dr. Ralph said, “And Dr. Jerome.”

Monica said, “Jerome. Why?”

Shirley looked at Monica.

Shirley turned and walked to the door and unlocked it.

She started sending the telegrams.

Shirley left the door unlocked.

Dr. Bradley looked at Shirley.

Dr. Jerome walked over the hall to Monica.

He said, “I’m going with Dr. Ralph to see about Lorraine. I will take you and Shirley home. I will go home and pack. I will see you in two weeks.”

Shirley was looking at the medicine and shots Dr. Greene was working on.

She became sick.

She and Monica walked to the door of the hospital.

Dr. Bradley looked at them and started talking to them about what was going on with Lorraine.

Dr. Jerome said, “I believe that poison is re-surfacing in Lorraine’s body. She should not have gained that amount of weight in two weeks that the telegram stated she gained. Her body should be trying to fight the poison by elimination. The telegram did not say whether she had a fever, diarrhea or vomiting.”

Nurse Jewell and Nurse Simmons were looking how the doctors were working to get the medicine right.

Dr. Bradley looked at Nurse Jewell who gets upset about anyone who is hurting.

Dr. Greene said, “I was reading a lot while I was on vacation. That poison was listed and these are the medicines that were used. I’ll bring the book to you tonight Jason.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Thank you.”

Dr. Greene said, “Dr. Ralph is your sister-in-law at your house?”

Dr. Ralph said, “yes. She will be here until the first of February to help Meredith.”

Dr. Felipe was on the other side of the hall and talked over the hall and said, “We need help to the spring.”

Dr. Greene looked at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Ralph was ready for her to leave.

Dr. Jerome said, “Dr. Ralph I will see you at the train station in the morning.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Good evening Dr. Jerome.”

Dr. Jerome looked at how upset Nurse Jewell was.

He looked at Dr. Bradley.

Dr. Bradley looked at Nurse Jewell and continued to work.

Dr. Ralph told them about Sally’s mother.

Dr. Charles stood still and stared at Dr. Ralph and he leaned and looked back in Sally’s room and started dancing.

Dr. Charles was running through the hospital saying, “Thank you JESUS. Thank You JESUS.”

Dr. Bradley laughed.

Hutch said, “Charles, what kind of problem could an eight year old can cause you that removing her from your life would give you that much joy?”

Dr. Charles looked at Hutch.

Dr. Greene and Dr. Bradley laughed out.

Hutch looked at Dr. Charles and figured out he was saying.

Hutch laughed.

Dr. Greene noticed the mild- mannered Nurse Jewell.

He thought, “She has a sweet spirit. Abused person.”

Eleanor had just left Philadelphia.

She had a large caravan of supply wagons and workers.

The city was excited about the new railroad.

Eleanor did not know how the information was out.

The newspapers did articles on Eleanor and Shirley was standing next to Eleanor and grinning.

Dr. Greene showed Dr. Hutch and Dr. Bradley the picture of Shirley and Eleanor.

Dr. Bradley and Hutch laughed.

Hutch said, “Shirley put her deformity out there so the world could see it and for the world to see she is not hiding from it but living and having a great time.”

Dr. Greene looked at Hutch and said, “Hallelujah Brother Hutch.”

The railroad would contact the Midwest to the east.

United States Senator Richardson was in the photograph with Shirley and Eleanor.

Dr. Woodson looked at the photograph of him and tossed the paper.

Dr. Greene and Hutch looked at Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Ralph looked at the paper and said, “One day I was coming back from Lorraine’s house. Because they were having a Christmas Eve Brunch for Lorraine. I was near the grand staircase.”

Dr. Greene said, “I love it.”

Dr. Woodson nodded his head.

Dr. Ralph said, “Jose and I were holding all of these gifts bags from Lorraine…”

He stopped for a minute and continued, “Percy and Bruce were running upstairs and jumped from the top stair all the way to the bottom stair. Bruce fell at the bottom stair and crawled as fast as he was running.”

Hutch laughed.

Dr. Green said, “I have seen them do that.”

Dr. Woodson smiled and looked at Dr. Greene.

Dr. Ralph said, “My heart failed.”

Hutch said, “Where was Eleanor?’

Dr. Ralph said, “Michael and Thomas were sitting on opposite sides of the staircase and did not move. Michael was sucking on a lollipop. Thomas was complaining that he was hungry. Jose and the staff were walking and talking like this was normal behavior.”

Hutch said, “It was for them.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Jose yelled at me to move. I was standing looking down the hall where Percy and Bruce were running.”

Dr. Woodson said, “To Patrick.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Dr. Woodson and said, “I looked at Jose and saw the workers running. I thought there are no dogs in the house. Michael and Thomas were mad and wanted to eat and they did not move, what were these people getting out of the way from.”

Dr. Greene looked.

Dr. Woodson said, “Eleanor.”

Dr. Ralph said, “Eleanor.”

Nurse Jewell and Simmons laughed.

Dr. Ralph said, “Eleanor. Eleanor ran with speed and looking to the right and the left of the hall and did not see Percy and Bruce. Shirley was walking to the staircase and stopped a few stairs up to let Eleanor pass. Eleanor pulled up her fancy dress and ran down the stairs and Michael and Thomas still did not move. Shirley was primping her curls. They acted like nothing was going on. Brenda was standing in her office looking at photographs. I have never seen anything like that. You know what Eleanor said, when I brought back to her?”

Dr. Greene was laughing and turned sideways to look at Dr. Ralph.

Dr. Woodson was still trying to work and said, “What?”

Dr. Ralph said, “She said they made her mad.”

Nurse Jewell and Hutch hollered.

Dr. Ralph patted Dr. Woodson on his shoulder and walked back to his side of the hospital.

Dr. Greene looked at Dr. Woodson and said, “I wish that could have been.”

Dr. Woodson looked at Dr. Greene and nodded.

Hutch looked at Dr. Woodson and said, “What did Bruce want?”

Dr. Greene looked at Hutch.

Dr. Woodson said, “Hutch. I am a pastor and a doctor. I will never tell.”

Hutch said, “Well Bruce will show up again since Eleanor is doing another remarkable job. He and Shirley will go at each other.”

Dr. Greene looked at Hutch and thought, “Bruce better not come here with that nastiness. I will not start this year with anymore wretchedness.”

When Dr. Greene returned to work he called a brief meeting with the staff and said, “He and Debra were divorced. She went to her ex-husband and Barry father. She and he wanted their house and everything and wanted him to move out. But his attorney told him he was not to move nor give her anything because they were stealing from the hospital. Shirley told Debra she would put she and Barry in jail and fight with Dr. Greene for him to keep Barry.

Dr. Greene told them he was doing better and thanks for their prayers. He felt people praying for him.

Nurse Jewell nearly cried.

Hutch looked at her.

Dr. Woodson looked at her.

She turned and went to Leon’s room to help Nurse Simons to wrap him.

Leon was listening to Dr. Greene and said, “I could have told Dr. Greene about her.”

The two black children’s families came to the hospital and took them home.

Dr. Woodson came to love Charles Jr and Betty.

The schoolteacher was their aunt.

The pastor was their cousin.

Dr. Woodson was invited to the church for their Christmas program.

Dr. Woodson and Hutch went to their Christmas program on the way to Felipe and Meredith for their Christmas Eve celebration.

Charles and Vivienne were at Felipe and Meredith.

Charles helped Felipe to cook.

Charles Jr and Betty sang in the children’s choir.

They saw Dr. Woodson and Hutch sitting in the church and grinned.

Hutch and Dr. Woodson grinned back at them.

The church gathered together to help Charles Jr. and Betty.

Dr. Woodson like the community and the church because both were mixed and the people were professionals and tradesmen.

The church had a wonderful buffet.

Hitch and Dr. Woodson drink a cup of eggnog and sat and talked to Betty and Charles Jr.

Their schoolteacher aunt waited until Charles Jr and Betty were wheeled away.

She said, ”The sheriff swear he did not know anything.”

They had their bodies dugged up and given caskets and a proper church service and burial. She said Betty and Charles Jr took it very hard but now they know where their family is buried. She said their father’s brother is in St. Louis and said he will come in the spring and carried them home.

The aunt said, “That side of the family is very snotty ad snobby.”

Hutch and Dr. Woodson looked at her.

She said, “Thank you for coming. Betty and Charles Jr loved seeing you. I need to go and check on them. The children love playing with their casts.”

She went to check on Betty and Charles Jr.

Hutch and Dr. Woodson turned all the way around and looked at the aunt.

Hutch said, “Can anyone be more snotty and snobby than she?”

Dr. Woodson sipped his eggnog and said, “Not possible.”

He sipped his eggnog again and said, “Good eggnog.”

Hutch said, “Good fruitcake.”

The pastor was watching them and he grinned.

He walked over to Hutch and Dr. Woodson and thank them for coming and said, Betty and Charles Jr. are healing over their family and God directed Dr. Woodson there and they all are thankful.

He walked Hutch and Dr. Woodson to the door of the church and waved at them as they left to spend the night celebrating with Felipe, Charles, Meredith and Vivienne.

They enjoyed their Christmas Eve.

Charles went to the south hospital for the night and he dropped off at the Stith.

She spent the night with Sally.

Hutch went to the north hospital and spent the night and worked most of Christmas morning at the north hospital.

He left and spent the remainder working at the Stith.

Felipe, Meredith and baby Felipe went to Christmas Day service at Nurse Simons’ church.

They loved the church and enjoyed the service.

They went home and ate leftovers and opened their Christmas gifts.

Charles stayed at the south hospital all Christmas Eve night and until around noon on Christmas Day.

He left the south hospital and went to the Stith.

He gave Vivienne her Christmas gift.

Sally was ready for her Christmas gift.

Sally was upset when Charles did not give her a gift.

He looked at her and said, “You have gifts Sally.”

Sally started fussing.

Vivienne said, “Sally?”

Dr. Charles grinned.

He took Vivienne’s hands in his hand and held them tight.

He looked around Sally’s room and said, “Sally. What more do you want? Dr. Ralph gave you a bible. Laura and her family gave you a doll. Shirley’s family gave you this nice paint set.”

Vivienne said, “It is a nice paint set. They could have given me one.”

Dr. Charles looked at Vivienne and she turned and looked at him.

He said, “You paint?”

Vivienne said, “I used to paint.”

He said, “Like what?”

Vivienne held her head down and shook her head.

Charles held her hands.

Sally said, “Are you going to give me a gift?”

Vivienne said, “Sally, who are you talking to like that?”

The nurses were listening.

They wanted Dr. Charles to go on rounds so they could see Vivienne’s ring.

Vivienne wanted Dr. Charles to go on rounds too so she could show the nurses her engagement ring.

Dr. Charles looked at Sally.

He stood and walked out in the hall and brought in a big box and tossed it on her bed.

Sally grabbed the box and ripped the paper off.

Vivienne mouth dropped at Dr. Charles.

He looked at Vivienne and said, “She makes me sick.”

Vivienne hit Dr. Charles leg.

He grinned and said, “Do that again.”

Vivienne said, “You are bad.”

Dr. Charles raised his eyebrows at Vivienne and grinned.

Vivienne turned her head.

They sat and watched Sally pulled out a ball, some hair bows and hair ribbons, coloring books and colors and her name on a carved wood.”

The cooks brought the leftovers from Christmas Eve.

Shirley ordered them a feast.

The workers, patients and the patients’ families ate.

The cooks made oatmeal, fruit and juice and tea for breakfast.

Dr. Woodson was preaching the Christmas Day Service.

Hutch went home and bathe and shaved and got a change of clothes and rode to the Stith.

He put his horse in the stables.

He and Charles took a side of the hospital and began to attend to the patients.

The hospital was full.

The cooks and dishwasher wanted to leave.

They prepared the leftovers and feed the patients around three pm.

The patients were finished eating around four pm.

The dishwashers ran and took up all the dishes and the cooks put up the leftovers.

They helped the dishwashers wash and dry the dishes.

Vivienne peeped out the door to see where Charles was.

The nurses signal he was over at the other nurses desk.

Vivienne looked and saw Charles.

She ran out of Sally’s room and to the nurses’ desk and showed them her ring.

The nurses were ouhing and awing.

Charles heard the nurses and he did not look back.

He said to Hutch, “Vivienne is showing the nurses her engagement ring?”

Hutch looked across the hall and saw the nurses looking at Vivienne’s hand and said, “Yeap.”

Dr. Charles laughed.

Vivienne and Charles were to have dinner at the hotel.

Sally ate and played with her Christmas gifts.

Vivienne prepared Sally for bed and left the hospital around five to go and bathed and dress for Dr. Charles.

Dr. Charles was an outstanding doctor.

He treated Sally well with her medical care.

Dr. Woodson arrived at the Stith around four pm.

He rode his horse to the stables and met the dishwashers and cooks running out the backdoor.

Dr. Woodson said, “Merry Christmas.”

The main cook held the door opened for Dr. Woodson and said, “I left you a plate in the stove.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Thank you.”

He walked in the hospital and locked the backdoor and put the bar behind the door.

Hutch stood and watched because the cook asked him to lock the backdoor.

Dr. Woodson saw Hutch.

He saw Hutch’s things in the last room.

When the hospital is full, they put a cot in the worker’s area for the doctor that was staying the night.

Hutch walked back to Dr. Woodson and said, “Betty and Charles Jr’s room is vacant.”

Dr. Woodson said, “That’s right.”

Dr. Woodson and Hutch looked at Laura and her father and said, “Merry Christmas.”

Laura and her father enjoyed the Christmas Eve feast and the leftovers for Christmas supper.

The patients and their families were full and tired.

Dr. Woodson settled into Betty and Charles Jr.’s room.

He lit the lanterns that Eleanor sent.

He washed his hands and went to the kitchen and looked in the stove and got the plate the cook left for him.

He thought, “This is a lot of food.”

He passed Laura and her father and went into the workers’ area and ate part of the food.

He covered his plate and stood and did Laura’s adjustments.

She was in pain when he finished.

Dr. Woodson said, “I’m sorry for ruing your Christmas but I wanted to start from the back and work up.”

He went and got Laura a pain pill and hot rocks and put on her hips and thighs.

She said, “Dad I will be sleep in a little bit.”

He said, “That is fine. I will stay until you fall asleep. I had a great time today and a good supper.”

Dr. Woodson was taking Laura’s vitals and said, Shirley really turned this hospital around. The Stiths love Christmas.”

Dr. Strafford said, “I see. Yesterday I had roast duck.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Duck. I didn’t see that.”

Dr. Strafford said, “They were bringing the plates around today and I had goose and a piece of that standing rib roast and roasted potatoes and carrots.”

Laura began to sleep.

Dr. Woodson looked at her and covered her up with blankets.

He walked to her window and checked to make sure it was locked.

Her father was putting on his scarf, coat, hat and gloves.

Dr. Strafford stood and looked at Laura.

He began to cry.

Dr. Woodson patted him on the back of his neck and said, “Merry Christmas Dr. Strafford.”

Dr. Strafford was overcome with gratitude and hugged Dr. Woodson.

Dr. Woodson put out Laura’s light and closed her door.

He and Dr. Strafford walked up the hall.

Dr. Woodson went to Mrs. Little’s room and said, “Merry Christmas Mrs. Little.”

Her son was leaving out the door with Dr. Strafford.

Vivienne was nearly at the hospital.

Dr. Charles ran out of Sally’s room to tell Vivienne to take the carriage.

He did not see her.

The nurses saw his concern for Vivienne all the time.

Vivienne ordered a hot bath for six pm, because she was to meet Dr. Charles at seven pm for Christmas dinner in the restaurant.

Vivienne took her hot bath and laid across her bed and went to sleep.

Dr. Woodson attended to Mrs. Little and gave her the therapy for that evening and her hot rocks and pain pill.

Mrs. Little did not go to sleep.

She enjoyed the hot rocks and sat in her bed and knitted until late.

Dr. Woodson went to Leon and attended to him and gave him therapy.

Dr. Woodson got the patients’ charts and read them.

He made his notations in the charts.

The nurses changed their tours.

Dr, Charles saw the time and ran across the hall and Dr. Woodson looked up from his notes and looked at Dr. Charles.

Dr. Charles said, “I’m suppose to be meeting Vivienne for Christmas Dinner at seven pm.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Merry Christmas Charles.”

Dr. Charles handed Dr. Woodson the ten charts he did not complete.

Dr. Charles ran out the hospital and jumped in his carriage and rode to the hotel and put the carriage in the stables.

Vivienne was waking up and put on her purple dress and boots.

She looked at the ring on her finger and said, “God is he the one?”

Vivienne combed and brushed her hair.

She put the purple pins in her hair and walked to the restaurant.

The manager looked at Vivienne.

Dr. Charles was sitting in the restaurant flipping the menu and tossing it.

He did not see Vienne walk through the hall.

He looked up to see her walk into the restaurant and he smiled.

Dr. Charles said, “She looks rich. She had a rich life and was treated well by her husband and her family.”

He stood and seated her next to him.

He stared at Vivienne.

She looked at Dr. Charles.

He said, “Vivienne I swear to you I will make this work.”

She looked at him.

She wanted to leave the country and start all over again.

She couldn’t think.

They sat and ordered their first Christmas Dinner together.

The cook said, “We are cleaning up. I can make you plates of whatever is left.”

Vivienne giggled.

Dr. Charles quietly said, “That’s fine.”

Vivienne knew from Dr. Charles quiet tone that he was thinking and wanted to help her.

The cook brought out two plates.

One plate he had turkey and dressing and the other plate had hen and dressing.

Vivienne took the hen and dressing.

Dr. Charles took the turkey and dressing.

Vivienne said, “Nice plates. I got a spring of parsley. See. “

Dr. Charles said, “I didn’t get any parsley.”

Vivienne said, “You can have mines doctor grumpy.”

He leaned over and kissed Vivienne.

Vivienne looked at Dr. Charles.

He looked at Vivienne.

They ate their dinner and ate the last two slices of chocolate cake.

They went to Vivienne’ room and talked until she fell asleep.

Dr. Charles sat and looked at Vivienne.

He said, “Vivienne even if I have to take Sally. I want you my love. I can’t fail you.”

Dr. Charles left and tripped the lock so the door locked behind him.

He thought, “Vivienne has enough coal on her fire to keep her warm through the night.”

He went downstairs to his room and sat on his bed and thought until he could not think anymore.

He thought he would stay in America and marry Vivienne and adopt Sally and travel to France every two years and stay for two years and come back.

He thought about threatening his wife to take her and Felipe’s daughter from her and bring her to America if she did not give him his divorce. He thought about putting his wife in the crazy house.

Charles said, “God I can’t think anymore. You know I am a good man. I want my wife to go on with her life with her family. I am finding myself hating her. I am not a hater. I want something that is wholesome and decent in my life, that is Vivienne. I work hard at being the best doctor so I can help people. I want to share what You have given me to Vivienne. I want Vivienne. She is quiet, smart, a hard worker, has a good heart and she deserves me. I don’t know how to remove this slave and massacre from her. Only You can do that. She believes in You even through what she has been through. I feel like I am losing her. So I come to You, her God and ask for help.”

Dr. Charles laid on his bed and went to sleep.

Dr. Woodson told the evening nurses to help so they can attend all the patients that day.

Three of Dr. Woodson’s patients were sleep.

He attended to the seven that were left.

He and Hutch finished around nine thirty pm.

Hutch went straight to bed.

Dr. Woodson locked the front door.

He went to the hospital administrator’s office and read the telegrams and messages.

He put out the light and looked in on Leon and waked to Betty and Charles Jr.’s room and closed the door.

He said, “My food.”

He opened the door and ran to the worker’s area and got the plate and took it to the kitchen and placed it in the stove.

Dr. Woodson passed Laura and went to his room and closed the door.

He got on his knees and prayed.

He finished praying and got in the bed and slept until the morning.

Beverly and Al had a full holiday with the seventeen former slave children and Monica and Jerome.

Beverly was glad most of the food was ordered and cooked.

She and Monica had a chance to take their time and cook the other food.

Al was a great baker.

He learned to bake when he and Beverly was about to divorce.

He started baking to keep his mind off Beverly when she didn’t come home at night.

He baked several cakes and made eggnog and his favorite tea for Christmas.

Dr. Jerome worked at the neighborhood medical office all Christmas Eve.

He rode to Shirley and picked up Monica.

Monica said, “Jerome you are tired. You go home. I’ll stay here. Bev and Al will understand.”

Jerome looked at Monica and said, “Come on here lady.”

Monica laughed.

She said, “Let me steer.”

Jerome nodded.

Monica knew he was unbelievable tired.

Monica brought the goose, turkey and ham from inside the house that was baked by the bakery.

Jerome had fallen asleep.

She was concerned he would fall out the carriage.

Monica got in the carriage and drove fast to Beverly and Al.

Monica jumped out the carriage and ran and knocked on Beverly and Al’s door.

They opened the door and were all smiles.

Beverly and Al said, “Merry Christmas Monica.”

Monica said, “Jerome is tired and sleep. I tried to get him to cancel.”

Al and looked at the carriage.

They walked out on the porch.

Al went to the carriage and woke Jerome and helped him out.

They walked to the house.

Beverly said, “Put him in Mable’s room.

Beverly helped Monica take the goose, turkey and whole ham out the carriage along with the dressing and gravy.

Monica looked at Beverly.

Beverly said, “Monica that is the way doctors are. They will work until they can’t work anymore.”

Al heard Beverly and walked in the kitchen with Beverly and kissed her.

Beverly looked at Al.

Monica wondered why Beverly acted that way to Al.

Jerome slept for two hours.

Al woke Jerome and they came to Christmas dinner.

They all sat to Christmas dinner.

Al asked Monica to say the Christmas blessings.

Monica raised her bowed head and looked at Al.

Beverly was holding Al’s hand and Little Shirley’s hands.

She grinned at Monica and nodded her head.

Monica said, “God I want to know You and become a better person. You have given me a friendship with three remarkable people…”

Little Shirley said, “Seventeen.”

Beverly grinned and looked at Little Shirley.

Al smiled and looked at Shirley.

Jerome stared at Shirley.

Monica said, “Plus seventeen remarkable children.”

Little Shirley nodded her head.

Beverly shook Little Shirley’s hand and nodded her head for Little Shirley to bow her head.

Jerome stared at Little Shirley.

Al looked at Jerome.

Jerome saw Al looking at him and he continued to stare at Little Shirley.

Al wondered what was Jerome looking at.

Monica said, “God allow these remarkable people do remarkable things for You on your earth. Let us seek Him who was born this day to free us from the law of sin and death. Amen.”

Al and Beverly said, “Amen.”

Jerome watched Shirley through out dinner.

Al looked at Beverly.

Beverly looked around and saw Jerome staring at Shirley.

Her heart sank.

Monica saw Al and Beverly watching Jerome.

Al and Jerome ate light.

Beverly looked at Monica.

They laughed.

Al looked at Beverly and he turned to Jerome and said, “Jerome what are you wondering about?”

Beverly looked at Al.

She turned and looked at Jerome.

Monica looked at Jerome.

Beverly stood and walked into the kitchen.

Jerome looked at Beverly.

Al frowned and wanted to know what was going on.

Monica wanted to know if Beverly and Jerome were having an affair.

Jerome stood and walked in the kitchen.

Monica looked up at Jerome and her head followed Jerome into the kitchen.

Al’s eyes followed in the kitchen.

Monica and Al looked at each other and stood and walked in the kitchen.

Jerome was standing in the floor.

Beverly was pacing and twirling in the floor.

Al looked at Beverly.

Al stood and watched Beverly.

Monica looked at Beverly and became afraid.

She looked at Jerome and said, “You better talk.”

Al turned and looked at Jerome.

Jerome said, ”I saw a vision with Little Shirley.”

Al looked at Jerome and looked back at an unstable Beverly.

Al walked to Beverly and began to call her and shake her.

The children were peeping because they were waiting for dessert.

Monica peeped back at the children and tried to smile.

She learned that from working with Eleanor.

Eleanor told the staff it does not matter what the adults were doing always grin, smile and be pleasant to her children. They are not to be blame what adults are doing.

Monica said, “Jerome what kind of vision?”

Beverly said, “Little Shirley is being taken away from me.”

Al covered Beverly’s mouth and said, “Be quiet. Don’t talk loud.”

Little Shirley thought she heard her name and turned around and said, “Ma am. Aunt Bev.”

Monica heart touched her at the sweetness of Little Shirley.

Monica stepped out the kitchen and put her finger to her mouth and said, “Shush.”

Little Shirley and the rest of the children were grinning and laughing.

They were anticipating their desserts.

Beverly said, “Al I can’t take it if she is taken from me. Why would God do that to me?”

Jerome stood and said, “Beverly I don’t know how she is being taken from you nor why.”

Monica hit Jerome’s arm.

He jumped and looked at Monica.

Monica grabbed the dessert plates and forks and gave them to Jerome.

He and Al looked at Monica.

Monica picked up the pitcher with the tea and walked in the sitting area with Jerome following her.

Al whispered, “Beverly let’s get through dinner being happy for all the children.”

Beverly stood and said nothing.

Al shook Beverly again.

Beverly said, “You shake me again Al you will be going with Little Shirley.”

Al turned Beverly loose and stared at her.

He said, “Get the fruit…cake.”

Beverly knew he was calling her fruity. Crazy.

Beverly rolled her eyes at Al.

He looked at her and walked out the kitchen with two cakes. One in each hand.

Beverly rolled her eyes at Al.

He looked at Beverly and kept walking.

Beverly took her handkerchief and wiped her nose and face.

She stood in the mirror and pressed her hair down.

She picked up the fruit cake and was walking into the sitting area.

Little Shirley looked back and saw Beverly with the fruitcake.

She pointed and said, “I want that cake that Aunt Beverly has.”

Monica smiled.

Jerome was staring.

Monica grabbed his hand.

He looked at the brazen Monica.

Monica looked at Jerome.

There was a knock on their front door.

Everyone turned and looked at the front door.

Beverly was walking pass the door with the fruitcake in her hands.

Al said, “Beverly, I’ll get it.”

Beverly stopped.

Al said, “Put the cake on the table.”

Beverly walked to the table and put the cake on it.

She turned to walk to the door when Al opened it.

The deputy sheriff was at the door.

Al said, “Hello.”

The deputy sheriff said, “Hello. Are you Alfred Williamson?”

Al looked puzzled and said, “Yes.”

The deputy sheriff said, “Is your wife Beverly Williamson?”

Beverly was startled and walked to the door.

Jerome and Monica walked to the door behind Beverly.

They heard someone talking.

Al looked out the door.

Beverly looked out the door.

Little Shirley said, “That’s Bebe!”

She jumped out of her seat with her doll.

Al looked back at Little Shirley who was running to the door.

Beverly became sick and lightheaded.

Jerome held Beverly.

Monica was nosey and walked out on the porch with Little Shirley and Al.

The deputy sheriff looked at Al, the sick Beverly, Monica and the little black girl.

Little Shirley was peeping at the black people talking.

She did not move but stood on the step and looked at them.

The crowd of black people moved and Little Shirley looked at the old fat woman sitting in a wheel chair.

The old fat black woman sitting tin the wheelchair said, “Papa!”

The deputy sheriff looked at Little Shirley.

Al looked at Little Shirley and Monica was looking at the old fat black woman and knew she could not be Little Shirley’s mother.

Monica wondered whose child was Little Shirley.

The rest of the slave children ran out the house and stood on the porch.

Jerome helped Beverly out onto the porch.

The deputy sheriff looked at all the black children and how well dressed they were.

He looked at Beverly who was sick.

Little Shirley was standing and looking at the old fat black woman.

She eased off the porch and slowly walked to the crowd of black people.

Beverly said, “Little Shirley. Come back.”

The crowd of black people turned and looked at the well- dressed Beverly.

The deputy sheriff held out his hand to Beverly and said, “Ma am just wait.”

Al was shocked.

He and Monica stood on the porch and watched.

The deputy sheriff walked next to Al and Monica and watched.

Monica said, “How long has Little Shirley been lost?’

The deputy sheriff looked at Monica.

Al said, “We don’t know. She is about five. We got them earlier this year when the state closed the former slaves housing. I have to look at the papers we got.”

The deputy sheriff said, “Who brought her to the former slave house.”

Al said, “Some adult former slaves who were running with children.

The deputy sheriff looked out at Little Shirley.

She was standing in front of the woman in the wheelchair staring at her.

The deputy sheriff said, “Sir. They seemed to be good people. They came to us first and described the little girl to at and the slave owner’s whip across her back and face. If she is related to them I am going to ask you to release her to them.”

Al looked back at a sick Beverly and said, “I understand sir. Thank God we have been working on that horrible scar and it is much better.”

Beverly covered her mouth.

Jerome held Beverly.

The other former slave children moved closer to the steps and stared at Little Shirley.

Little Steven and Mark jumped off the porch and ran to Little Shirley.

The deputy sheriff looked at the well- dressed former slave children and his heart was smote.

He thought about how he thought they were nothing but animals with human flesh. He saw they were humans with human feelings, Even the children and that the evil they went through did not destroy their God given humanness from them.

The deputy sheriff said, “God forgive me. You had me to come to work today and not go to church so You can show me truth and let me decide whether I will follow you or follow the devil with this evil heart. Thank You for forgiving more of this of this horrible sin. Let me do what you want me to do. Speak God. I am here and am listening.”

The old fat woman in the wheelchair looked at Little Steven and Mark and said to them, “You Papa’s friends?’

Little Steven and Mark looked at the fat black woman.

Little Shirley ran to the old fat black woman in the wheelchair.

Beverly fainted.

Al looked back and Jerome caught her.

Monica looked back and turned around to watch this amazing reunion that took years.

The deputy sheriff looked at this incredible “Prodigal son story.”

The thought came to him that he needs to preach the story of JESUS’s birth, death and resurrection to the lost which include them that was taught wrong about God.

The crowd of black people included sixteen black males, twelve children and three women.

They were overjoyed with Little Shirley recognizing her grandmother.

Jerome brought Beverly to.

The other former slave children ran to Beverly.

Dr. Jerome whispered in Beverly’s ear and said, “God let you know Little Shirley would be leaving you. She is not going to die. She is going to her family. God trusted you and Al to keep her and help her until her family was able to come and get her.“

Al was looking back at Beverly.

He was shaking and his mouth was quivering.

The deputy sheriff looked at Beverly and he looked at Al.

He thought, “These are good people.”

Al walked off the porch to the group of black people.

The two older former slave boys walked behind Al.

The deputy sheriff looked at them.

Al said, “I am Al.”

He looked at Little Shirley and said, “Little Shirley you know her?’

Little Shirley said, “My Bebe.”

The old fat black woman was holding Shirley and said, “I am her grandmother. The only child of my only daughter. These five are my sons and these three are their wives. We have been searching for Papa since slavery was over. We prayed for her every night and we always put per plate at the table.”

The old fat black woman was holding Little Shirley on her lap and held her tight and cried.

The deputy sheriff’s heart was touched.

He watched his re-markable God put together that which was ripped, torn and smashed in a thousand pieces. That no one could have brought together but Him.

Beverly sat on the porch being held by Dr. Jerome and watched.

Al looked at the large crowd of black people and said, “Come in out the cold.”

Beverly jumped up and ran in he house and locked the door.

The deputy sheriff looked back at Beverly.

Dr. Jerome was still stooping on the porch where he held Beverly.

Monica looked back as she heard Beverly locking the doors.

Al said, “Maybe not today.”

Dr. Jerome was shocked and turned and looked in space.

The deputy sheriff looked back at the door.

One of the black men said, “Sir. I am Robert. We are good people. We know that some former slaves are not. But we believe in JESUS and sought HIM through slavery when we were whipped, beaten, stone and starved. HE set us free.”

The deputy sheriff nearly started screaming.

He quietly said, “Hallelujah.”

Dr. Jerome heard the deputy sheriff and stood and walked to the deputy sheriff and put his hand on his shoulder and said, “Sir Hallelujah is the right word for today. No one can do this but God.”

The women were looking at Dr. Jerome and Monica who was standing and watching everything.

She walked off the porch and stood with the two big boys.

Little Shirley said, “This is my Uncle Al and two of my cousins.”

The big boys looked at Little Shirley.

Beverly was inside the house cursing.

The deputy sheriff and Dr. Jerome looked back at the house because they heard Beverly cursing.

Dr. Jerome took his hand off the deputy sheriff’s shoulder and reached his hand to him and said, “I am Dr. Jerome. That is my best friend Dr. Albert Williamson.”

The other slave children stood on the porch and watched Little Shirley.

Al tried to ignore Beverly cursing.

She was loud.

Monica ignored Beverly she wanted to know what God was doing.

Al said, “What are your plans about Little Shirley?”

The old fat black woman said, “Papa.”

She said, “We are taking her with us.”

Little Shirley looked back at the old fat black woman and jumped out her lap.

She walked and stood with Little Steven and Mark.

Robert who was talking to Al looked at Little Shirley and said, “She’s not leaving them.”

Al looked at Little Shirley.

Al said, “It’s getting late. Where are you all staying?’

Robert said on the street.”

Al looked back.

The deputy sheriff and Dr. Jerome looked back.

Al said, “You have twelve wagons. You can’t fit them in my yard. You can fit what you can. The others you have to leave on the street. You are welcome to use our feed for your horses and water and coal. Let us all sleep on this tonight.”

The old fat black lady said, No. I want to get Papa and leave.”

Robert said, “Momma if God has lead us this far. He is going to lead us to do the right thing. This is Christmas and you can see that Papa has been taken care of. That is what we prayed and asked God to do. Put her with people who would love her and care for her and keep her safe. You see that. Let’s celebrate JESUS for the remainder of this day. He is right. We have to come up with a plan now. Our plan for the past three years was to find Papa. God has fulfilled that plan. Let’s wait for His other plan.”

He looked at his mother who was mumbling.

He looked at the people and said, “Let the wagons with the women and children pulled in this yard. We men can sleep in our wagons on the street.”

The old fat black woman was fussing.

Al was stuck with Beverly cursing in the house and the old fat black woman fussing.

He looked back.

Dr. Jerome and the deputy sheriff shrugged their shoulders.

Monica turned and looked back over the yard. And said, “Jerome can you move your carriage so we won’t be blocked in?”

Dr. Jerome turned and looked.

He went to his carriage and pulled the carriage to the beginning of the yard.

The old fat black woman looked at Little Shirley and said, “Papa you sleep with me in the wagon.”

Little Shirley looked at the wagon.

Little Shirley started walking to the porch and said, “I have a room with a bed.”

Al tried to smile.

All the former slaves looked at Al.

Al did not know what to do.

Little Steven and Mark ran behind Little Shirley.

They ran onto the porch.

Little Shirley knocked on the front door and said, “It’s me Aunt Beverly.”

The deputy Sheriff and Jerome heard Beverly running to the door.

Beverly unlocked the door and the children ran in the house.

Shirley said, “No wagon. My bed. Where’s my fruitcake?’

Monica hollered.

She turned and walked on the porch and stood by Jerome.

He kissed her on her forehead and held her by her waist.

Al tried to smile.

He told Little Shirley about being so loud.

Robert said, “When the slave master hit Shirley with the whip he burst her ear drums. That’s why she is loud.”

The deputy sheriff said, “I can’t take too much more of this. I need to leave.”

Jerome and Monica looked at the Deputy sheriff.

Monica said, “Sir have you eaten today?”

The deputy sheriff said, “No. I have been working with them all day.”

Monica said, “Come and I will give you something to eat.”

The deputy sheriff said, “Will she let me in the house?”

Jerome and Monica laughed.

The large crowd of black people looked on the porch at the deputy sheriff, Jerome and Monica.

Robert looked at the other blacks and said, “You see Papa she ran to those two boys. She will not leave them. We have to talk and make a decision.”

He turned to Al.

Al was shaking and said, “A decision about what?”

Robert said, “If we can take the two boys with Papa>’

The deputy sheriff looked at the man.

Jerome said, “Damn.”

Monica’s mouth dropped opened and she said, “I didn’t see that part.”

Monica said, “Sir follow me in the house.”

Al said, “Pull the wagons in the yard.

Al walked back to the house.

One of the big black boys stared at one of the children.

Jerome saw the boy.

Al was thinking.

The large group of blacks watched Al walk away from them.

Al stepped on the bottom step.

Jerome said, “Al.”

Al looked at Jerome.

He turned and looked at the big boy who was standing and staring at one of the girls.

Al stood on the step and called, “James come on. You and Sam. Let them get settled in.”

James turned and Sam put his arm around his neck and walked him to the porch.

Sam and James and the other children walked in the house.

Al was mad and he stood on the porch with Jerome.

They walked in the house.

Al locked the door.

Jerome looked at Al.

Beverly was sitting at the table with Little Shirley, Little Steven and mark and the deputy sheriff and Monica was serving them.

The deputy sheriff was enjoying his goose and dressing and fruitcake and eggnog.

The other children came in and sat at the table and Monica served them cake and Christmas tea.

Little Shirley was sitting next to Little Steven and Mark.

She said, “I don’t sleep in wagons.”

Monica nearly went to her knees laughing.

The deputy sheriff looked at little Shirley.

Al looked at James and said, “James what were you looking at?”

James stared at Al.

Al said, “Did you recognize anyone?”

James looked at Al.

The deputy sheriff looked at James.

He stood and put on his coat and said, “Thank you. It was a pleasure. Today was a pleasure.”

Jerome and Al shook the deputy sheriff’s hand.

Al walked him to the door. And locked the door back.

The deputy sheriff put his hat on and nodded at the large crowd of former slaves.

He mounted his horse and rode back to the sheriff’s office.

The sheriff had Christmas off and was spending it with his wife, head daytime nurse at the south hospital.

They had a full day and church that morning. Visited n elderly couple and the orphanage and entertained a large group of family and friends at their home.

The deputy sheriff said, “I’ll be off New Year’s Day”

He rode to the office and wrote a report.

Beverly sat on the couch and they all sang Christmas songs.

The former slaves pulled their wagons into the yard and made fires.

Jerome and Monica were leaving for the evening.

Jerome said, “Little Shirley come and ley me look at your ear.”

Little Shirley said, “Papa.”

Dr. Jerome and Monica smiled.

Jerome said, “Papa.”

Little Shirley walked to Dr. Jerome.

Dr. Jerome stooped down and looked in Little Shirley’s ears.

He blew into her ears.

She hitched her shoulder up and giggle.

Dr. Jerome said, “That tickles you?’

Papa said, “Yeah.”

Beverly was sitting on the couch looking back towards the door and was watching Papa.

Little Steven said, “Do me?”

Mark said, “Me too.”

Dr. Jerome was thinking.

He turned and examined Little Steven and Mark’s ears.

Little Steven and Mark hitched their shoulders up and giggled.

Monica was giggling.

Dr. Jerome looked at Al and said, “Al you know what that mean.”

Monica looked at Dr. Jerome.

Al said, “Yes. I’ll take care of it.”

Beverly was looking at Al.

Little Shirley ran to the window and was looking out at her Bebe.

Beverly said, “Come from that window and turn that curtain loose.”

Al was shocked at Beverly and jumped and looked at her.

Jerome said, “A rough night.”

Monica grabbed Dr. Jerome’s arm and laid her head on it.

Al said, “I might have to get a blanket and sleep outside tonight.”

Dr. Jerome looked at Al.

Monica was not thinking about Al.

She was thinking about spending the rest of Christmas day with Dr. Jerome.

Jerome said, “Al you and Beverly think about this and pray over it. We didn’t have a chance today for me to question the boy and see if he can be tested as a genius. I’ll try to come back tomorrow.”

Little Shirley, Little Steven and Mark ran from the window and ran and joined Beverly on the couch.

Beverly tickled Little Shirley.

Little Shirley was laughing and playing with Beverly.

Al walked them out the house and watched Jerome and Monica.

The former slaves were watching them.

Al knew they were watching him.

He stooped down on the porch and lit the lantern.

He did not light the other lanterns.

He thought, “I can’t be nasty.”

Al turned to go in the house and waved good night to the people.

They waved back at Al.

Al went into the house and locked the door.

The former slaves heard him lock the door.

At first Al twisted his mouth and then he did not care.

He heard one of the former women slaves say, “We need to get Papa and leave. It is still early.”

Robert said, “No. We have trusted God and Jesus this far. Let us let them led us to the right answer. Papa isn’t going to leave those boys. Mr. Al is not going to let us take the boys. They don’t have to let us have Papa. We have been target and running from one state to another state looking for her.”

George, the oldest son, said, “We have to have money. We need to stop and work. We don’t even know where we are going. Talking about taking children.”

Roger looked around and said, ”It took us three years to find one another and a few on the way. Last one we looked for was Papa. Can we rest for a few days and find out what we want to do and where we want to go.”

Bebe said, “Let’s go out west.”

George said, “Fine momma. How do we get there?”

Bebe said, “The same way we got here with the horses and wagons.”

Roger said, “We stole all of these horses and wagons and supplies. I am not stealing anymore. God has blessed us and got us all together. He let us take these things to get where we needed to go. This is the end of the road for us. I am not going where else. Me and mine’s will stay here in Philadelphia.”

Bebe said, “You saw how they looked at us. They hate us.”

George said, “Momma the world hates us. It doesn’t matter where we go. We are hated.”

Bebe said, “Let’s go out West. Roger can stay here in Philadelphia.”

George said, “I’m staying too.”

George’s wife jumped and said, “I agree with momma Bebe. I said earlier we need to get Papa and leave tonight.”

George was sitting on a stool he stole and looked up at his wife and said, “You can leave Loretta, but leave the kids.”

Lorretta was throwing her arms up and stopped and looked at George.

She said, “What? After all we have been through.”

George said, “The stealing, killing, running has to stop. The kids need to be in school. Look how Papa look. She is just five and know the difference between sleeping in a field, sleeping in a wagon and sleeping in her own bed in a house.”

Bebe said, “Papa is a child. She will go where we take here.”

George laughed and said, “Papa is in a hot house in her room. In her bed. You did not make her come out here and stay with us.”

Roger looked at his mother.

Edward said, “I’m going to stay. I still have a piece of buckshot in me from when I stole those three horses. I am in pain everyday. I don’t want to travel anymore until I am better. I’ll stay until the spring. When the weather breaks.”

Johnny said, “Me and mines will stay until the spring.”

Bebe said, “That’s fine Jonny where are you gonna stay?’

Johnny said, “On the street.”

Bebe said, “You don’t know what you talking bout. You go where I tell you.”

Johnny said, “Momma both my legs have been broken because of you. You go out west. I sleep on the street here. Beginning now.”

Al was standing at the front door and listening.

He peeped out the window and saw the man dragging his legs and got a blanket and dragged by Bebe.

Bebe looked and said, “Loretta get your children and let us go tonight. Roger go and get Papa.”

Roger turned and walked away from Bebe.

George raised up and looked at Roger as he walked and sat by Johnny.

George laughed and said, “That deputy sheriff sa9dthese people had twenty two former slave children. I want to know what happened to the other ones.”

Louis said, “I was wondering about that too.”

Bebe said, “One of you go and get my baby and bring her here.”

Roger looked back at his mother.

Mason started walking and said, “I’ll go and get Papa momma.”

Bebe smiled and said, “You are my best son. You are the youngest.”

Roger and Johnny turned and looked at Mason. They knew he wanted to get in the house and see what he could steal.

Al was listening.

He was angry because of Bebe attitude.

Al whispered, “Beverly.”

Beverly turned and looked at Al.

She frowned up.

There was a knock on the door.

All the children looked.

Al unlocked the door and looked at his shotgun he put by the front door.

He opened the door only a crack.

Mason put his hand on the door and said, “Momma told me to get Papa.”

Little Shirley sat up and looked at Mason.

Al said, “You made a bad ass mistake boy. Get your g\*\* da\*\* hand off my door. You forced yourself on me and you are a slave. That alone shows you are an evil person. You deserve to be a slave. You have no rights. Get off my porch and get out of my yard. You want Papa, go and get the sheriff and tell that white man that you put your hand on my door and tried to force yourself into my house.”

Roger started yelling and said, “Mason what are you doing?”

Mason stepped back from the front door.

Beverly said, “All you children go to your rooms. Now!!”

Al picked up his shotgun and aimed it at Mason.

Bebe started hollering, “Don’t shoot my son.”

Beverly ran and grabbed her gun from the mantle and ran to the front door.

Al said, “All of you get off my property now.”

Mason was looking like he thought he could rush Al.

Mason stomped off the front porch.

The other men stood and watched Mason.

Trevor looked at Al then at Mason.

Johnny looked back at Mason.

Al walked out the front door with his shot gun.

Beverly had her gun pointed at the men standing in the street.

Al yelled, “All of you get off my property now.”

Johnny hit the ground and said, “Dam you Mason.”

Roger yelled at Johnny and said, “We are not on his property we are on the street.”

Johnny said, “Oh.”

He rolled over and laid under the wagon and went to sleep.

Trevor was watching Beverly.

He saw Beverly would shoot to help her white man.

Trevor raised his hands and said, “Sir let us stay until the morning because my momma is kind of old.”

Al cocked his shotgun.

Beverly raised her gun.

Trevor turned and said, “Let’s go.”

Bebe said, “Where?”

Trevor said, “West.”

Bebe said, “Not without my Papa.”

Trevor said, “You know where she is. Leave her.”

Roger was listening to his mother and brother.

George sat up and looked at Mason as he passed him and looked at his wife Loretta who was grinning.

He turned and listen to Trevor.

George said, “Trevor what is wrong with you?

George said, ”Loretta you can leave and take the three kids we rescued but you are not taking my children.”

George hooked his two horses and his wagon and told his children to get in the wagon.

The children got in the wagon and George pulled out Al’s yard and rode down the street.

Loretta was shocked and looked at George.

George and his children slept in the wagon overnight.

Loretta ran out the yard behind the wagon.

The other people began to hook their horses to the wagons.

They were mumbling about what happened.

They rode out of Al’s yard.

Roger got him a blanket and slept under the wagon with Johnny.

Bebe yelled, “Roger you and Johnny come and help Mason and Trevor.”

Roger and Johnny did not move.

Trevor looked out at the street and said, “Momma forget them.”

Roger was laying with his back to the yard and facing the street.

He said, “That’s right. All of that was evil. Mason thought he could scare that man because he was old.”

Johnny mumbled, “Yeap.”

Al stood out on his front porch with the shotgun on the people until they all had cleared out of his yard.

Bebe yelled, “I’ll be back for Papa.”

Beverly yelled, “I don’t have no Papa.”

Bebe stared at Beverly.

Beverly yelled, ”Get from by our house.”

Johnny looked up.

Roger did not move.

The wagons pulled away.

Beverly went to the stables and checked on their horses, carriage and wagon.

Beverly looked around for their tools.

She did not see anything missing.

Beverly felt she should light the lanterns.

She lit the lantern at the stables.

Beverly walked to the back door and lit the lantern there.

Al was standing in his yard and looking at the wagons that were leaving.

He saw the few that stayed on the street.

He told Beverly to come in the house.

They walked in the house and stood with their backs against the front door.

Al locked the front door and put the bar behind it.

He and Beverly took all the dishes into the kitchen.

Beverly looked at the dishes and walked to their bedroom and dressed for bed.

She said, “Al, I’ll wash the dishes in the morning.”

Al said, “Fine.”

He went upstairs and checked on the children and made sure all of them were undressed and dressed for bed.

He sat on the foot of James’ bed and talked with him if he knew any of the people.

James said, “Uncle Al my momma had a little girl. My momma was sold and the mammie took the momma’s daughter and raised her. They were on the other side of the plantation. I never saw the little girl. When the war started, those of us on the other side were freed first and the soldiers ran off the plantation. We ran and we ran. I kept looking back to see if the other slaves were running from the other side of the plantation. I saw nothing. I climb a cypress tree to see if I saw anyone from the direction of the plantation. I stayed in the tree for days. I slept in the tree looking for my sister. The union soldiers saw me in the tree and made me leave. I cried for days, for weeks until I had nothing left to cry about. I had no feelings. I just kept walking. The soldiers escorted us to a line and told us we were on our own. I kept walking. I made it here. I saw some white people on the street. Who welcomed me and they walked me to the building where I stayed for three years until it closed. Now I am here. I will be leaving in the summer and going to college to become a teacher. If my momma and her daughter are alive and maybe if it is God’s will, I can see them before we die. That girl looked similar to my momma’s daughter. The big eyes and High waist.”

Sam laid on his side and looked at James and Al.

Sam said, “I was sold at birth and taken to a plantation and raised by a mammie. Then the war happen and I ran. I never had a family but Sky. He was being raised by the same mammie. This is the closest family I ever knew. Thank you, Uncle Al.

Al was about to burst and he smiled at Sam and said, “You are welcome Sam.”

James sat up in bed and hugged Al.

Al hugged James.

He said, “You are welcome James.

Sam said, “What are you and Aunt Beverly going to do about those people who want Little Shirley?”

Al said, “I’ll take them to court.”

James said, “And they wanted, Little Steven and Mark.”

Al looked into space.

He stood and said, “Good night.”

Al put out the light and walked and closed the door.

Al checked on the younger kids on the second floor and walked downstairs.

He saw Beverly’s reflection from the flames in the fireplace.

She was curled on the couch and sipping a cup of something that Al thought was liquor.

He knew Beverly was thinking of leaving him.

He knew she loved him, but she hated some of his ways.

He walked to the sitting room and stood and stared at the fire in fireplace.

Beverly looked up at her husband.

She sipped again what she had in the cup.

Al said, “James thought one of the girls may have been his sister by his momma.”

Beverly said, “They are gone now.”

Al said, “Beverly how are we going to end this?”

Beverly said, “Our marriage?”

Al said, “Yes.”

Beverly said, “I don’t know.”

James and Sam were on their way downstairs to talk to Al and Beverly and heard them talk about ending their marriage.

Al sat on the other couch and stared at Beverly.

He said, “There is no hope?”

Beverly said, “I don’t know Al.”

Al said, “Is it because of meat?”

Beverly said, “It is what makes you think that it is wrong or that I don’t deserve it. Whatever ‘that’ is Al is what the problem is. After all of these years you thought you have been right and not willing to stop and change. We are old and I can’t enjoy two strips of bacon or an extra chicken leg. Don’t ever talk about a part of the pig.”

James and Sam burst out laughing.

Al jumped and looked back at the stairs.

Beverly looked at the stairs and said, “Boy’s don’t ever be stingy with food or tell your wives that is the way it is and not willing to give her a strip of bacon. Or tell her she can’t even look at a pig.”

The boys hollered.

Al turned and looked at Beverly and said, “Beverly that is not true.”

Beverly said, “You are a lie. Before Shirley gave us our Christmas present I said,to you, we have to get a whole ham for Christmas. What did you say Al?”

The boys were on the stairs snickering.

Al looked back at the stairs.

He turned to Beverly and said, “That’s when I was trying to get a budget together.”

The boys laughed harder.

Beverly stood and passed A .

He looked up at her.

Beverly said, “Good night boys.”

The boys were laughing so hard they could not say anything to Beverly.

She went to their bedroom and went to bed.

Al sat and looked in the fireplace and thought, “I am not that cheap.”

The boys ran back upstairs to their rooms.

Al woke the next morning on the couch.

Beverly was in the kitchen washing and drying the large amount of plates.

Al walked in the kitchen and stood and looked around at the large amount of dishes.

Beverly turned and looked at Al.

Al said, “Good morning Beverly.”

He looked tired and sorry.

Beverly always loved how Al would always say ’good morning ‘ to her.

She stood and looked at him.

She turned around and continued to wash the dishes.

He walked next to her and begin to dry the dishes.

Beverly and Al washed and dried the dishes in silence.

She looked at the food that was left and sorted out the food.

Beverly said, “Al we have enough leftovers for dinner today. That will give us enough time to rest and get those infidels from our house. I can get the kids clothes ready for church Sunday.”

She turned and saw Al starting at her.

She looked at him and realized she called the slaves infidels.

Al did not call anyone out of their names.

Beverly walked next to Al to get the dish clothe to wash the table so she can set it for breakfast.

Al was leaning on the cabinet and said, “Beverly can you work on that?”

Beverly thought, “It’s way too late and we are divorcing what does it matter?”

Beverly looked at Al and said, “Yes.”

Al sighed and tried to smile.

Beverly thought, “For twenty -five years me calling people other names hurt him this badly?”

Al said, “I swear to you Beverly. I prayed last night and asked God to remove every offense I have done to you. I want you to love me again. I want to see my hope in your eyes every morning when I awake and your sweet love in your eyes when I close my eyes in sleep. The world many times crashed around us. But we held onto each other and with our love and hope we came through some fierce battles and storms. I do not want to lose my sail, your love. Your hope which is my breath of life that I can help blow us towards our destiny.”

Beverly was overwhelmed and stared at Al.

She could not think of any smart to say or what she could curse him over.

To keep from crying over Al’s sincere felt words, she said, “Make two dozens of biscuits. I’ll slice the rest of the ham from the bone.”

She leaned her head back and Al kissed her deeply.

Beverly walked out the kitchen with the bowls and spoons.

She said, “What did I just do? I want Joe. He looked good when I saw him this month.”

Al exhaled and grinned.

He started making the biscuits.

The bigger boys brought in a lot of water and they all washed and dressed and ate their breakfast.

Little Shirley walked to the window and looked out and Al and Beverly watched her.

She peeped in the yard at the front and did not see anyone.

She walked to the kitchen window and looked out and did not see Bebe.

Al watched Little Shirley

Beverly looked back and saw Little Shirley was not giving up her ragged doll.

Little Shirley walked back to the dining area and turned sideways and face Beverly.

Beverly looked at Little Shirley.

Al watched Little Shirley.

Little Shirley said, “Aunt Beverly where Bebe?”

Beverly said, “I don’t know. They left last night.”

Little Shirley at Beverly.

She turned back around and looked at James.

She said, “I’m not sleeping in no wagon.”

James started laughing.

Beverly was sort of stunned by Little Shirley’s analysis.

If Little Shirley was going to be uncomfortable she was going nowhere.

Al and three of the bigger boys went to attend the horses and wagons.

Beverly put on her best old dress.

She looked at her armoire she had six new outfits and three pairs of very nice boots.

The girls had three Sunday dresses and coats and boots and hats.

The boys all had two suits and several shirts and two pair of boots.

Beverly was thinking.

She bought Al three new suits, shirts and ties and two pairs of new boots.

Beverly sat on the bed and cried.

She stood and continued to get the laundry the together.

Al walked in the house with the three bigger boys.

They brought coal in for the fireplaces on the third and second floor.

Beverly told the two bigger girls to shampoo and dry their hair.

Beverly had the two middle girls wash and dry the breakfast dishes.

Al and the three older boys walked in the house.

Beverly heard Al talking.

She, Little Shirley, Little Steven and Mark were getting all the linens from the beds and putting on clean linen.

Beverly said, “Mark, go and see what Uncle Al is talking about.”

Mark walked downstairs and ran back upstairs and said, “Aunt Beverly they are fussing.”

Beverly stopped.

Little Shirley stopped.

Little Steven stopped.

They all ran downstairs.

Beverly ran to the kitchen and started slipping.

Al ran and caught her.

Beverly looked around and said, “What?!!!”

The girls were laughing at Beverly.

Beverly stood up and said, “What is this?”

All the children were standing around.

Some of the boys were laughing.

Al and Beverly looked at the boys.

The three older boys and the genius and his roommate were looking at the boys.

Beverly said, “Boys what is funny?”

Beverly looked at the girls and saw they had played and wasted all her shampoo and conditioner and spoiled her laundry, washroom and shampoo area.

The two girls in the kitchen had started braking Beverly dishes and laughing.

The boys helped them to break Beverly dishes.

One of the twelve year old girls said, “I’ll break another dish. You can’t do anything about it.”

Beverly said, “Al open the door.”

Al walked to the door and opened it wide.

Roger and Johnny were looking. They wanted to ask Al for help, but were afraid.

Al and the boys were working out in the stables and around the house and they did not look at the former slaves.

The girl, Billy Sue, grabbed a dish and threw it on the floor and broke it in pieces.

The boys laughed.

Beverly said, “You all should have been left slaves or killed. You don’t deserve nothing. That is why the state wash their hands of you. Because you can never be anything.”

Beverly grabbed Billy Sue very fast and threw her out the house and she fell off the porch onto the cold dirt ground.

She jumped up.

Roger and Johnny jumped and stood still and watched.

Billy Sue ran upon the porch.

Mark ran and locked the front door.

Al slammed and locked the door in her face.

Billy Sue ran to the front door.

Mark had just locked it.

He ran from the door back to James.

Simeon was laughing and walked to the front door and unlocked the door and let Billy Sue in the house.

Billy Sue ran in the kitchen with her fists balled up to hit Beverly.

Al looked at his shotgun.

The other three girls and the boys were laughing.

Beverly pretended and turned her back and got the broom to sweep up the broken plates.

Al watched Beverly.

Billy Sue ran and hit Beverly.

The children laughed.

Beverly broke the broom and began to beat Billy Sue until she fell on the floor.

Simeon ran to jump on Beverly.

Al stood and watched.

Beverly began to beat Simeon badly on his neck and back with the broken broom.

The other girls decided to jump on Beverly.

Beverly beat Mae down to the floor.

She kicked Jean in her stomach over and over.

Theresa ran and hit Beverly.

Beverly was about to start beating Theresa with the broom sticks.

Al yelled, “She’s expecting.”

Theresa shook her head at Beverly and stuck out her tongue.

Beverly threw the broom sticks and hit Theresa hard in the head and on the forehead.

Theresa stumbled and started slowly going to the floor.

Beverly grabbed Theresa by her wet hair and dragged her to the kitchen door and threw her out the house.

Theresa fell against the coal bucket and hurt her back.

She whined.

Roger and Johnny and George and the other former slaves were looking.

Bebe had waited for the sheriff and told him what happened.

The deputy sheriff rode to Al and Beverly that morning with Bebe and her company following.

The sheriff and deputy sheriff saw Beverly threw Theresa out of the house.

They stood still.

George, Roger and Johnny turned slowly and saw the sheriff and the deputy sheriff.

Beverly turned and walked in the house.

Al saw the sheriff and deputy sheriff.

He closed the door and said, “Beverly.”

Beverly said, “I saw them.”

The sheriff and the deputy sheriff waited to see if anyone else was coming out the door.

The sheriff’s wife told him about Dr. Al and Dr. Jerome and how Ryan was trying to get them to work at the hospitals to help out.

The sheriff said, “Well.”

He slowly rode in the yard.

Mason jumped out the wagon and rushed behind the sheriff.

Roger and George yelled, “Mason!”

The sheriff heard how George and Roger called Mason.

He knew Mason was a problem.

The sheriff turned and looked at Mason and said, “Get back to the wagon.”

Mason looked at the house.

The deputy sheriff started at Mason.

The sheriff walked on the porch and knocked on the door.

Al was at the door looking back.

He opened the door and saw the sheriff and the deputy sheriff.

Mason was walking on the porch.

Al yelled, “I told you thief to get off my property and not to come back.”

Mason yelled, I’m with the sheriff.”

The sheriff turned quickly and put his gun in Mason’s face.

Everyone ran.

Bebe was in the wagon and screaming.

The deputy sheriff said, “Sheriff! Let me arrest him. Please.”

The sheriff put down his gun.

The deputy sheriff tied Mason up and attached him to his horse.

George, Roger and Johnny looked at Mason.

The deputy sheriff looked at them and said, “Are you all going to cut him loose?”

George, Roger and Johnny shook their heads for no.

The deputy sheriff wanted to know what was going on.

The sheriff looked back at the deputy sheriff.

The deputy sheriff ran to the house.

The sheriff walked in the house.

The deputy sheriff walked in the house behind the sheriff and kept the door crack to watch Mason.

Theresa ran to the house and wanted the deputy sheriff to let her in the house.

She started yelling, “Sheriff arrest her for hitting me and I am expecting.”

The sheriff turned and looked at the dirty Theresa.

He turned to Al and Beverly walked in the sitting area.

The sheriff said, “What’s going on?”

Al exhaled and said, “These people showed up yesterday and wanted one of our foster child. Then they said, they wanted two of the younger boys that be with her all the time. I told them we had to think about. The older woman told our little girl to come and sleep with her…”

Little Shirley said, “No wagon. I have a bed.”

The sheriff had to shake himself from Al and look at the little girl who was holding a rag doll and leaning on Beverly.

The deputy sheriff said, “All of that is true sheriff. I can vouch for that.”

The sheriff turned to the deputy sheriff and said, “I want to know what is going on now?”

Theresa tried to push the door open.

The deputy sheriff figured part of what was going on.

He would not let Theresa in the house.

Theresa started screaming and hollering that she was expecting.

Beverly said, “Al who is she expecting by? You?”

Al said, “No.”

The sheriff said, “Who?”

Al said, “I don’t know. She was really sick one day. The kids came and got me. I did her vitals and started asking her questions. That is when she told me what she was doing.”

Al turned to Beverly and said, “I should have been more aware.”

Beverly looked down at Little Shirley and said, “Go in the kitchen baby.”

Little Shirley said, “No.”

Beverly shook her head and looked at Little Shirley.

Al peeped at Little Shirley.

Little Shirley looked at the sheriff and said, “I stay here. No wagon.”

The sheriff looked at Little Shirley.

Troy and Baylor tried to slide over with James and Sam.

Dr. Jerome rode in the yard.

He dismounted his horse and tied it up.

Jerome got his doctor’s black bag.

He stood and saw Mason tied to the horse.

Jerome saw all the wagons in the street.

He turned to the house and saw a girl on the porch and the deputy sheriff and the sheriff.

Jerome thought, “What is going on?”

He walked on the porch.

Theresa ran to Jerome and said, “Beverly beat me and I am expecting.”

Jerome did not say anything.

He stood at the door so he could hear.

Al said, “Me and some of the boys were outside working. Beverly told her, Theresa and Mae to wash their hair. And for Jean and Billy Sue to wash breakfast dishes. When came from outside. Theresa and Mae had thrown the shampoo and water all over the walls…”

Theresa yelled, “We were playing.”

The sheriff did not look around at Theresa.

The deputy sheriff stared at Theresa.

Dr. Jerome frowned up.

The deputy sheriff looked at Dr. Jerome and his black doctor’s bag.

The sheriff was waiting for why Beverly jumped on Theresa and threw her out the house, since the baby was not her husband’s baby.

Al said, “Billy Sue told my wife. She and Jean would smash all the plates on the floor and break them. My wife said, no she did. My wife grabbed her threw her out the backdoor. Simeon and the rest of the boys were laughing. He runs in here and opens the door for Billy Sue. Billy Sue runs in the kitchen and hit my wife. My wife broke the broom and beat Billy Sue and Simeon. The rest that jumped on my wife. Theresa ran and was laughing and hit my wife and my wife was about to beat her with the broom and threw her out of the house.”

The sheriff saw Troy and Baylor trying to slide to the other children.

Simeon was staggering out the kitchen holding his head.

He said, “I want her arrested for beating me.”

The sheriff said, “How old are you?”

Simeon said, “Fifteen.”

The sheriff said, “All of you jumped on and attacked a woman.”

The sheriff looked at Al and said, “What do you want to do?’

Al said, “I want all of them out of my house and never come here nor anywhere near me and my wife.”

The sheriff said, “Fine.”

Theresa started screaming, “I’m expecting.”

The deputy sheriff said, “Nobody cares. You thought because you were expecting you could disrespect these people and run over them and they take your mess. Expecting.”

The sheriff said, ‘Sir do you want them to take anything?”

Al said, “Beverly.”

Beverly threw up her hand and said, “Whatever they have they can have it. Good riddens to all of them.”

The sheriff looked at the deputy sheriff and said, “Let the I’m expecting in and escort all of them to their room as and get all of their stuff and bring them downstairs.”

The sheriff said, “Sir can we borrow your wagon to take them to the jail until we file reports. The judge will be there until five pm. We can get him to write orders that they never come here nor near you.”

Jerome nodded his head in agreement.

George turned and looked at Mason.

Roger whispered to George and Johnny, “This sheriff is mean.”

The sheriff said, “What about them two?”

Al turned and saw Troy and Baylor and said, “Them too.”

Troy started crying and begging to stay.

Al looked him in his eyes and said, “What did you think. You will disrespect us and physically beat us and we let you stay. Boy get out of here.”

Troy fell on the floor and begged. To stay.”

The sheriff said, “You had enough sense to try to hide with the other children. How old are you?”

Troy said, “Fourteen.”

The sheriff said, “Former slave you don’t know how you are. You are fifteen.”

Al cut his eyes at the sheriff.

Theresa yelled at the deputy sheriff, “Open the door and let me in.”

The deputy sheriff said, “Yall don’t know how good yall had it.”

Dr. Jerome stepped in the house.

The sheriff looked Dr. Jerome up and down and saw his black doctor’s bag.

Dr. Jerome looked at the sheriff and said, “Afternoon.”

Al said, “James and Sam come and help me hook the horses to the wagon.”

James said, “I want to make sure no one is stealing my stuff.”

Jerome said, “I’ll help.”

Al said, “Fine.”

Beverly, the genius, his friend, Little Shirley, Little Steven, Sky who was Sam’s brother. They called him Sky because he had blue eyes. and Mark sat in the sitting area.

Little Shirley jumped in Beverly’s lap.

Beverly sat with her eyes closed for a minute.

The sheriff walked through the building that they converted to a house. He liked it.

He saw the broken dishes and the washroom and shook his head.

He walked upstairs and saw the bedrooms.

James and Sam were standing and blocking anyone from going to their rooms.

The sheriff saw them and said, “I want to see your rooms. Move.”

James and Same moved out his way.

He looked and said there’s another bedroom here.”

James said, “It just to be Curtis.”

The sheriff said, “What happened to Curtis where is he?”

James said, “Four weeks ago, he and Mable stole all of our clothes, two new horses and the new wagon and ran away.”

The sheriff looked at James.

He walked in their room.

James looked at Sam.

They followed the sheriff in their rooms.

He opened their armoires and saw the nice clothes and boots.

The sheriff turned and passed through James and Sam.

He was thinking and walked down to the second floor. The deputy sheriff was walking from room to room with the crying girls and boys and getting their clothes.

The sheriff stood and watched them.

James was standing up with his arms folded.

Sam was sitting on the stairs.

Al pulled the wagon around the front of the house.

He and Jerome got out the wagon and walked in the house.

Al told Jerome what happened.

Jerome exhaled.

He said, “The one that is expecting. Who is she expecting by?”

Al said, “Surely not me. You should have seen how Beverly looked at me.”

Jerome and Al walked in the house and sat in the sitting area.

Al saw the sheriff looking through the house.

Jerome leaned back and looked at the sheriff.

Everyone was looking at the sheriff.

He turned and saw Jerome. Al, Beverly, Little Shirley, Little Steven, Mark, the genius, his friend and Sky looking at him.

Little Shirley said, “What you looking for?”

The sheriff tried to get out of the situation.

He was embarrassed.

He said, “This is very nice. It is unique and well thought out. My wife would love this type of housing.”

They could hear the children crying and screaming from upstairs.

Little Shirley from the one couch to the other.

Little Steven and Mark ran behind her.

The sheriff thought, “Yeah she rules them.”

Dr. Jerome took out the test for Brandon, the genius.

He told Brandon the test was to see how smart he was. Whether he is one of the smartest people in the world.

Brandon began to grin.

The sheriff stepped over to watch.

Dr. Jerome said, “Brandon, don’t let anything distract you. Understand.”

Dr. Jerome took out his timer.

He started the test.

Brandon said, “Finished.”

Dr. Jerome said, “Go to the next one.”

A few minutes later Brandon said, “Finish.”

Dr. Jerome watched Brandon to make sure he was not cheating.

They continue the test.

The sheriff looked at Brandon and he looked at Dr. Jerome.

He walked over to see the test results.

The sheriff looked and said, “Anybody could have gotten them right.”

Al looked at the sheriff.

Dr. Jerome pulled out the test and handed it to the sheriff.

The sheriff looked at the test and did not blink and gave it back to Dr. Jerome.

Beverly rolled her eyes at him.

Al looked at Beverly to stop it.

Al was waiting for Dr. Jerome to grade the test.

Dr. Jerome did not blink.

He looked at Willie and said, “Brandon how old are you?’

Brandon said, “They say I am thirteen.”

The sheriff looked at Brandon.

Dr. Jerome said, “You all correctly.”

Brandon and Clay jumped up and started dancing.

Dr. Jerome looked at Al and said, “You have a problem.”

The sheriff looked from the mousey little boys to Dr. Jerome.

Al said, “What.”

Dr. Jerome said, “He is too young to get in any college.”

Dr. Jerome turned and looked at the crying children.

The deputy sheriff said, “Sheriff you want me to take them in the wagon?”

Al said, “I can take them, and you follow me. So, I can have my wagon back this evening.”

The sheriff said, “Fine. What that man in the wagon with them.”

Beverly was looking at the children like she wanted to kill them.

The sheriff said, “Sir, you gonna keep Little Shirley?’

Al looked at Little Shirley.

Little Shirley sunk back into Beverly’s chest and held her head down and looked at Al.

Al said, “I better.”

Beverly kissed Little Shirley on her head.

Little Shirley grinned and said, “No wagon for me.”

The sheriff kept a straight face.

He said., “I’ll speak to the judge about having a hearing. He is not going to do that until late next month. Tell me briefly what happened last night…”

He looked at the deputy sheriff and said, “Put them all in the wagon.”

The deputy sheriff wanted to hear also.

Al said, “That man came and knocked on my door and I cracked it open. He put his hand on it with force. I told him to get off my porch. He said he wanted Shirley who they call Papa.”

Little Shirley said, “No Papa. Little Shirley.”

The sheriff said, “Doctor can you give that little bossy girl that intelligence test.”

Dr. Jerome was putting the test back in his black bag.

He turned his head and looked at the sheriff.

The sheriff didn’t know what to think.

He turned his head and Al was staring at him.

The sheriff dropped the five boys off at the military headquarters.

He took the four girls to the state foster care agency.

He took Mason to jail.

The sheriff ran to the judge and told him what was going on.

The judge set the hearing for thirty days.

Bebe yelled at the judge and said, “That’s my Papa. I want her now.”

Everyone was trying to fan Bebe and pat her like this was a fun show.

The judge looked at Bebe and said, “We can have the hearing once you are out of jail.”

All the former slaves stopped grinning.

They looked at the judge.

They saw he was not playing with them.

They all sat down and did not say another word.

Al came back early evening from carrying the kids away.

He drove his wagon into his yard and put it in the stables.

He attended the horses and feed them.

It was getting dusk.

Al lit the lantern near the stables.

He walked to the front porch and lit the lantern.

The former slaves were peeping around their wagons and staring at Al.

They realized he was a medical doctor and they need medical help.

The former slaves realized Al did not like them.

Beverly walked out the house to go around the back of the house in the storage bin.

The former slaves looked at how Beverly was dressed during work.

Lorretta watched Beverly.

The former slaves knew Beverly was old but would fight and shot.

The sheriff went and picked up his wife from work.

He told her he had some things he had to do.

He told her what happened and he wanted the doctor to give the little bossy girl the intelligence test and he stared at the sheriff.

The nurse looked at her husband.

He did a double take at his wife.

He said, “Was I wrong?”

His wife said, “You know you were wrong. I’m surprise you didn’t try to make them give you the test.”

The sheriff cut his eyes at his wife.

She was in shock and exclaimed, with her mouth opened, “No you didn’t.”

The sheriff didn’t say anything.

His wife was about to get out the carriage so she could finish their dinner.

She said, “That had to be Dr. Al and Dr. Jerome. You better not have embarrassed me.”

The sheriff unhooked his horse and closed his gate.

He said, “Oh shut up woman. They will never know you are my wife.”

The head daytime nurse looked at her husband and said, “They better not.”

The sheriff kissed her and mounted his horse and went back to work.

Beverly set the table and was heating the food when Al came in the house.

Beverly had cleaned the rooms and scrubbed them that no glass was on the floor.

Al stood and walked through the room and the kitchen.

Beverly turned and stared at Al.

Al looked at Beverly because he did not know why she was looking at him.

She grabbed Al and cried and cried.

Al first jumped because he thought she was going to hit him.

He held Beverly for long time.

She cried.

Little Shirley, Little Steven and mark heard Beverly they ran to the kitchen and saw Beverly crying. They ran and hugged Beverly.

Al kissed Beverly.

He said, “She’s ok. Go and sit at the table. We will bring the food to you.”

James and Sam walked and looked at Beverly and Al.

They walked to the dining area.

Sky, Willie and Clay ran down the stairs to the table.

Al and Beverly place the food on the table.

Al made the children’s plates.

Beverly looked and half the table was empty.

Al reached for her hand.

Her mind was off in her thoughts.

Al touched caused her to jerk back to the present.

She held Little Shirley’s hand.

Al said grace.

He said, “GOD we just need Your help.”

Al come not go on.

James said, “God You helped us all of our lives and You have not left us to ourselves or to our enemies. Those who are not here at this table made a decision they no longer wanted to be better. They are living the life they wanted. Help us be strong and courageous. Help Uncle Al and Aunt Beverly. Help them to love each other and stay married. Thank You for helping them. We all will be gone in a few months and no one will be here but Little Shirley, Little Steven and Mark. Let them keep little Shirley unless her mother come and get her and the same for the rest of us. God You wanted those who left to leave. They would have caused trouble and problems for Uncle Al and Aunt Beverly. Let Uncle AL and Aunt Beverly travel and enjoy themselves. In JESUS’ name.”

Al looked at James and said, “Thank you.”

Al nodded and said, “Thank you James.”

James nodded his head.

Little Shirley had a room to herself.

Little and Mark were in their room.

Willie, Clay and Sky still were in the same room.

James and Sam were upstairs in the same room.

Beverly said, she was not going to be cleaning up all those rooms.

Dr. Jerome and Al travelled with Willie to the state testing board in the state capitol.

The test was two long days.

After Willie finished the testing.

They travelled back to Philadelphia.

Monica had Dr. Jerome’s horses and carriage.

She picked him, Al and Willie up from the train station.

Al drove home.

He and Willie jumped out the carriage and ran into the hospital.

Monica said, “Shirley is back, and she is at the hospital paying everyone and paying the hospital bills. She wants me to get her.”

Jerome and Monica rode to the hospital.

Dr. Jerome saw the doctors at the Stith in consultation.

He walked over and heard them talking about Lorraine.

Jerome told Dr. Ralph he would go with him to Cedartown.

Dr. Jerome took Shirley and Monica home.

He went home and re-packed.

Dr. Ralph went home and packed.

He went and knocked on his sister-in-law wagon and told her he would be leaving again and would she follow him to the Stith to drop off his horses and carriage and take him to the train station.

Joyce said, “I would love to.”

She told him she was ready to go to the capitol with her husband.

Dr. Ralph said, “I am sorry.”

Joyce looked at Dr. Ralph.

She said, “For what?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I was busy. Taking care of the patient. Then I brought another back here. I delivered a set of twins and another rather large baby. I did not get a chance to aske anyone about housing for you. But I did get a chance to see the new military headquarters and the troops that were coming back. I did not know how fierce they are. I was scared.”

She laughed.

Joyce said, “You were busy. Why did you say the baby was rather large?”

Dr. Ralph said, “I don’t talk about cases. But the baby I believe the delivery date was mis-diagnosed. She was in labor nearly three days. I thought I had to cut her open or break her pelvic.”

She said, “Oh my God.”

Joyce turned her head and started thinking.

Dr. Ralph said, “I will be glad when that hospital is built.”

He said, “Talk to Meredith and Vivienne they are from Cedartown. They can tell you about housing. I went to the capitol one day for lunch. It is where the younger people live. I believe the town is where the older couples live.”

She said, “I’ll talk to Meredith tomorrow,”

Dr. Ralph went in the house to go to bed.

Dr. Greene walked to his house and looked at the wagon in his yard.

He knocked on the door and Dr. Ralph opened the door.

He saw Dr. Greene and said, “Come in.”

Dr. Greene said, “No Jason. I need to go home and sleep. I am up throughout the night. Tell everyone I said hello. I don’t know what that was with Brenda and Patrick. It sounded like they have a dark secret they are hiding from the world. I wouldn’t be surprise if Lorraine is one of their daughter out of an affair.”

Dr. Ralph was flipping through the book and stopped and looked at Dr. Greene.

He said, “What?”

Dr. Greene said, “Lorraine. Lorraine and Eleanor look like sisters.”

Dr. Ralph looked at Dr. Greene.

He began to think.

Dr. Greene said, “Jason, I will see you when you get back. Good night.”

Dr. Greene and walked to his carriage and looked back at the wagon in Dr. Ralph’s yard and sped home.

Dr. Ralph rode his horses and carriage to the Stith.

His sister-in-law followed him and carried him to the train station with the bag of clothes for Alice.

They arrived at the train station.

Dr. Jerome and Monica were sitting in his carriage kissing.

Joyce laughed.

Dr. Ralph said, “Joyce be sure to talk to Meredith about housing.”

Joyce said, “I will. Be safe and have a prosperous trip.”

Dr. Ralph said, “I will.”

Dr. Jerome and Monica heard Dr. Ralph when he waked up and cleared his throat.

Dr. Ralph said, “Good morning.”

Monica was grinning.

She slid over to steer the horse and carriage.

She had to get back to take Shirley to class. Then she wanted to see Vivienne’s engagement ring again.

Dr. Jerome said, “Monica, I will see you when I get back.”

Monica said, “I understand.”

She turned the carriage around and sped out the train station.

Dr. Ralph looked and said, “She is speeding.”

Dr. Jerome said, “She has to take Shirley to class. I don’t know why she is afraid of Shirley. She seems to be a sweet and loving person.”

Dr. Ralph did not respond but pointed to the door of the train they need to go.

Dr. Ralph thought, “That is a small size Eleanor.”

Joyce sat and watched the doctors board the train.

She wondered why Dr. Ralph did not like her.

She went to Meredith and helped Meredith that day.

Meredith was telling Joyce what to look for and where.

They had a good time as usual.

Joyce said, “Why doesn’t Jason like me?”

Meredith thought and said, “Jason?”

Joyce said, “Dr. Ralph.”

Meredith laughed and said, “I don’t know. I have never seen him nor ever heard anyone say something like that.”

Joyce looked at Meredith.

Meredith was thinking.