The commanders went back to the headquarters.

They were in the meeting room.

They laughed at Greene.

The lead commander said, “That damn Arnold, reached passed me and knocked on the door. “

Commander Hampton over rifle training, “So Arnold knew that Greene was going to do something.”

The lead commander said, “Hell yell he knew Greene was going to take the bait.”

The commanders had a very serious meeting laughing.

Wallace and Porter heard them laughing.

They did not know the commanders laughed.

Commander Wilson, over the hand to hand combat training said, “That’s why they sneaked and ran down the hall.”

Commander Wyatts leaned forward and looked at the lead commander and said, “You remember when you poured that cold water in Bobo’s underwear but it was the major’s underwear.”

They hollered.

The lead commander broke his laughing and said, “I actually almost got kicked out the military. I still shutter until this very day.”

Commander Hudson and a few other commanders did not think Greene’s behavior was funny.

Commander Hudson over the ammunitions and pistols training said, “Are you going to give all three of them disciplinary actions?”

The lead commander said, “No. And when they rotate to you in the training program none of you better not mess with them. Understood.”

Commander Mollinson over the underwater training said, “Do you think they should be told of the consequences of their actions?”

The lead commander looked at the three serious commanders and said, “I will speak to them but I will not discipline them, none of you neither.”

The commanders went through a late meeting.

The commanders were leaving the office and Wallace and Porter decided they needed to know the foes.

They spoke to each commander.

Wallace and Porter were trying to match the voices up with the three foes.

So they spoked to each commander that exited the meeting.

The lead commander knew what they were trying to match the voices of the commanders that wanted disciplinary action against Greene, Harold and Arnold.

The lead stood and watched Wallace and Porter and once they had consulted with one another they looked up in the commander’s face.

The lead commander stared at them and returned to his office.

Wallace and Porter watched close his door.

They looked at each other.

The lead commander came out of his office and said, “Dismiss.”

Wallace and Porter went to the cafeteria and had dinner.

The lead commander got his dinner and went and sat with Commander Mollinson.

Apparently the lead commander told Commander Mollinson about Wallace and Porter’s antics.

Commander Mollinson turned around and looked at Wallace and Porter.

Wallace looked up in time to see Commander Mollinson staring at them.

Commander Mollinson wanted them to see him staring at them.

Wallace had a big fork of mashed potatoes and his mouth wide open when he saw Mollinson.

Porter said, “Bastard.”

Wallace put the mashed potatoes in his mouth and said, “Which one?”

Porter said, “Both.”

Porter and Wallace ate their dinner and rushed out the cafeteria and went to the dorm and got Harold and Arnold and knocked on the door.

Greene pushed the chair up to the door.

He was peeping from one side of the window to the other Porter said, “Stop. I am ready for a hot bath.”

He stepped in front of the window.

Greene saw him and jumped out the chair and pushed it aside and opened the door.

He saw Arnold and Harold and was about to fight.

Porter grabbed Greene’s stick and said, “I’m not here for this.”

Greene said, “What then?”

Wallace said, “The commander defended you three today from the other ten.”

Porter said, “Most thought you were funny.”

Greene shock his head and swaged.

Wallace said, “Three of the commanders thought you three should get disciplinary actions.”

Harold stepped around the end of the door and said, “Who?”

Greene said, “Yeah. Who?”

Wallace said, “For sure Commanders Mollison and Hudson.”

Porter said, “The third commander we did not hear because he did not speak.”

Greene said, “How did know it was three?”

Porter said, “Because the lead commander said, you three.”

Harold was trying to think who was that commander.

Arnold just stood and listened.

Bentley begin to move.

Arnold, Harold, Porter and Wallace looked at Bentley.

Greene looked back at Bentley and turned and pushed the four out of the room.

He ran and stood by Bentley.

Harold looked in the window and Wallace.

Wallace said, “He is really taking this seriously.

Bentley recovered in another two weeks.

The lead commander allowed him to make up the four weeks.

The lead commander called, Greene, Harold and Arnold in his office.

The three could not think of why he called them into his office.

The lead commander had some folders in front of him.

They assumed the folders that had their names were from training.

Arnold knew he did not do well in the water fighting.

Harold was worn out from the hand to hand combat.

Greene felt he was flunking every portion of the training.

The lead commander put Bentley in the simplest portions of the training which were the pistols and ammunition then on to rifle training, and the two weeks off for Christmas. Which would give him time to be strengthen.

The lead commander picked up their folders. He held them up in the air. He turned his head. He bit his lips. He shook his head. He looked out the window.

The three soldiers sat and looked at the lead commander.

Greene was wringing his hands and crossing his feet.

He could not go back to the circus.

He had to show people even thought he was short he was not a freak and he could have a normal job and life.

He wanted to encourage other people who were not born normal not to let people judge them and put them in the category of not being normal.

Greene always thought God knew what He was doing when He made him.

Arnold was sitting there thinking, “I want my pay for this training.”

Harold was thinking about Vivian and said, “I want Vivian’s assss.”

The lead commander, Greene and Arnold turned and looked at Harold.

Harold finally noticed they were looking at him.

He could not think anymore.

He knew he did not say that out loud and said,”So what are they looking at?”

The lead commander dropped their folders on his desk.

Wallace and Porter were out in the office listening, because they planned on going through the sergeant training program.

Greene, Arnold and Harold cut their eyes and looked at the lead commander.

They turned their heads to look at this great soldier face on.

They knew their records were not good.

Greene and his fighting all the time.

Arnold and him skipping work and furloughing himself.

Harold with all his drinking, gambling and women.

The lead commander sat up in his chair and looked each one of them in their eyes.

He said, “I went on record for the four of you to get in this sergeant program. Do you know that each portion of the programs you went through the commanders said you failed?”

Arnold was shocked and sat up and said, “Sir.”

Harold just looked in space.

He was thinking, “Which one of those ‘mf’s said that about me.”

Wallace and Porter looked at each other.

Porter said, “Whoa.”

Greene was shocked and giggled and lifted up his hands and said, “I only had one class that was hand to hand combat. I thought I exceeded in that goal.”

The lead commander said, “The lead instructor said you bite him on his private parts.”

Arnold looked at Greene. He wanted them to throw him out the whole military.

Harold smirked and turned his head.

The lead commander said,”Greene, explain your actions.”

Greene twisted his hands and lifted his hands up and did an embarrassed giggled.

They looked at the lead commander.

He gave Greene his battle stare met for the enemy.

Greene said, “Sir, but he said ’bite me.’”

Wallace and Porter looked at each other.

The sentry stationed across the hall kept watching Wallace and Porter because he knew they were ease dropping.

Arnold had a blank look on his face, because he was not comprehending the problem.

Harold looked from Greene to the lead commander and he was confused.

Harold raised his hand.

The lead commander saw Harold’s hand and he yelled, “Why do you have your raised up, this is not school?”

Harold said, “Sir!”

The lead commander said, “Harold did I tell you to speak?”

Harold sit back in his chair and looked start ahead.

The lead commander said, “I asked you a question.”

Harold calmly looked at the lead commander and pointed to himself and said, “I did not know you wanted me to open my mouth.”

Harold sat back in his chair and looked straight ahead.

The lead commander could not believe Harold.

Arnold turned and looked at Harold and said, “Maybe you need Vivian’s ass.”

Greene hollered.

Wallace could not believe they were acting like that with the lead commander.

Porter used both hands to cover his mouth.

The lead commander looked at Greene.

Arnold stood up.

The lead commander said, “What are you doing?”

Arnold said, “Leaving.”

The lead commander stared at Arnold. He remembered Arnold’s sister and her prominent husband.

Arnold said, “ I love the military but I can make a living on my own.”

Greene hop out of his chair.

The lead commander stood up so he could see Greene.

Greene said, “Sir. I am a damn good soldier. I play and kid around. But I take killing very serious. I do as I am told. Donovan said bite him. So I did. Maybe you can tell him in the future to go by the book. That was not in the book.”

Greene turned and looked at Harold and said, “I also want Vivian’s asss.”

Harold stood up.

The lead commander looked at Harold and said,”Why are you leaving?”

Harold said, “To get a piece of Vivian’s ass.”

Harold held the lead commander’s door opened and Arnold, Greene exited.

He said, “Did I really say that about Vivian’s ass?”

Greene, Arnold and Harold spoke to Wallace and Porter.

Greene said, “How else we knew about Vivian’s ass.”

Arnold, Greene and Harold passed the hall line with sentries.

Harold said, “For the record nobody touch that ass but me.”

Arnold said, “What about our pay?”

Greene said, “Will I sort need my pay.”

Harold said, “I am going to stay here in the dorm or on the grounds until I find me another job.”

Greene said,”I don’t know what to do?”

Arnold said, “Here comes those damn commanders.”

Greene said, “Harold let me on your back.”
The lead commander was standing in his door and watching Arnold, Harold and Greene.

He saw how his commanders were watching them.

He saw how they were watching his commanders.

Then he saw Greene run and walked on the walked and jumped off the wall and landed on Harold’s back.

Harold said, “Arnold get the door.”

Arnold opened the door.

The commanders looked at Greene.

The sentries looked at Greene.

Wallace and Porter were watching out the window next to the lead commander.

Greene stuck out his tongue and patted his butt to the commanders.

Commanders Hudson and Mollinson were totally shocked at Greene’s ability.

When they walked out the door.

Harold dropped Greene off his back.

Greene yelled and said, “Why you do that?”

Harold and Arnold kept walking.

Harold said,”You proved your point to them.”

Greene said, “Point. I wanted a ride. I stayed up late night playing cards. I am tired.”

Greene said, “That was pretty good. I never did that before.”

Arnold looked at Greene and said, “What if you fell before them.”

Greene said, “I am already a fell before them.”

Greene said, “Lets go and eat and find where we are going to sneak and hide in the dorm or on the grounds.

They walked to the cafeteria.

They all got stew and bread.

Greene was really enjoying his stew and licked the bowl.

Arnold still could not stand Greene and leaned over the table and said, “Stop that. You want some more go and ask them for more.”

Greene said, “That brought out the bad in you?”

Greene was getting up to go and get more stew and asked, “We still get our pension right?”

Harold was sitting with his elbows on the table and looked at Arnold.

Greene went and got more stew.

He looked at the line and saw the commanders walked in and got in line.

Greene kept eating his stew and said, “Don’t look now. All the commanders just walked in.”

Arnold and Harold turned and looked at them.

The commanders looked at Arnold, Harold and Greene.

Harold, Arnold and Greene watched the commanders.

One big soldier saw how Greene, Arnold and Harold were looking at the commanders.

He decided to teach those three a lesson in respect.

He walks over to the table and leaned on the table.

Arnold was sitting thinking about how he was going to get his money from the training program.

Harold was thinking what the handbook said, about being fired or if you quit and if you get your pension.

Greene was watching the big soldier and licking his bowl with the stew.

Greene looked at the big soldier and said, “What’s your problem?”

The big soldier said, “You three disrespectful soldiers.”

Greene said, “What you gonna do. Teach us respect?”

The big soldier said, “Balled up his fist and flexed his muscle.”

His fellow soldiers laughed.

The commanders got their food and were walking to a table.

Commander Mollinson stood and watched.

Harold did not look at the soldier but said, “Move.”

The big soldier looked at Harold and back at his fellows.

Harold got up and walked over to the table with the commanders and said, “Sir, when do I get my pension.”

The lead commander wanted to eat and held up his hands to say go away.”

The big soldier walked over and before he could grabbed Harold.

Harold grabbed him by the neck with one arm, was stumping the big soldier feet with one of his feet and kicking him between his legs with the other feet and beating him in the stomach with the other feet.

The lead commander sat and looked at the big soldier turning beet red.

He looked at Harold and said, “All of this to get Vivian’s asss?”

The other commanders were looking at the big soldier getting totally beat.

Harold said, “Yes sir.”

The lead commander looked at the big soldier who was paralyzed and could not move.

The lead commander said, “Turn him loose.”

Harold said, “Please.”

The lead commander said, “Please.”

Harold dropped the big soldier on the floor.

Harold said, “My pension.”

The lead commander was blowing the stew to cool it off and said, “In the morning and fill out the papers and I will sign the papers.”

Harold said, “And training pay at the sergeant’s pay.”

The lead commander, “In the morning fill out the paper and I will sign them.”

Harold looked at all the commanders and turned to walk away he looked down at the big soldier on the floor he stumped him and then kicked him.

Harold nocked the big soldier out.

The commanders looked at the lead commander.

He said, “How am I going to explain this shit to my wife, that’s her favorite nephew.”

The lead commander sat and looked at Harold.

Harold looked back at him.

Arnold turned around and stood up.

Greene put down his bowl and jumped off the table, where he was watching Harold beat the big soldier.

Green followed Harold and Arnold out the cafeteria.

The soldiers were stunned at the brutal beating that kind of slim Harold gave to the big soldier.

The lead commander looked at some of his fellows and said, “Take him to the medic.”

It took four soldiers to pick him up and carry him to the medic.

Wallace and Porter saw the fight as they stood in line to get their dinner.

They sat away from the commanders with their backs to them.

They knew something serious was wrong.

Wallace and Porter knew if they gave the lead commander eye contact he would want them to work all night long.

The commanders were quiet.

Arnold, Harold and Greene walked to the dorm.

They told Bentley everything that happened.

Greene showed Bentley how Harold stumped and kicked the big soldier out.

Bentley said, “The lead commander’s nephew.”

Arnold was already packing his bag.

Harold was laying over on the other bed with his boots on.

Harold said, “You don’t know the freedom I feel by just putting my feet on the bed.”

Greene said, “There goes graveling for our jobs back.”
Arnold stopped packing and stood and looked at Greene.

Harold raised up from the bed and looked at Greene.

Greene said, “Sorry.”

Harold said, “You get a pension check. It’s not like you won’t have any money to get you started.”

Bentley had written down Miss Nealie’s address and was handing it to Greene.

Greene took the paper and looked at it and said, “What is this?”

Bentley said, “That’s the address for Miss Nealie. Can you give that to the lead commander he asked for it?”

Arnold was bent over his bed packing and he turned his head and looked backwards at Bentley and said, “That’s not the fever. You are really stupid.”

Harold sat up and looked at Bentley.

Greene was perplexed and stood and held the piece of paper.

Someone knocked on the door.

The stunned Greene turned and walked to the door.

He opened the door.

Arnold turned to see who was at the door. He thought it was the sentries for Harold.

Harold thought it was the sentries to put him in detention.

Harold thought, “They better pay me for the days I’m in detention.”

Wallace stepped in the room and said, “The lead commander wants to see you four now. They like that word now. Now. Now. Now. I started to walk out with you today. Now! Now!”

Greene reached the paper back to Bentley.

He looked at Arnold and Harold.

Harold said, “Let’s go and see what this is about.”

Arnold had his bag over his shoulder.

Greene said, “Arnold that is good for special efforts.”

Arnold just stared at Greene and said, “This no damn special effects I am leaving. You clowns gamble drank and womanized. That’s why you don’t have nothing. I have been in the military for five years and saved most of my salary. I don’t require that much so I can get by until I get my business going.”

Harold was mimicking Arnold.

Greene stopped walking and looked at Harold and pointed at Arnold.

Greene said, “We know why he is a tight ass.”

Bentley said, “Because he hasn’t had any.”

Greene and Harold dropped to their knees laughing.

The commanders were watching them from the windows.

Arnold said, “Bentley you are retarded and you follow along to make a comment about sex. What kind of retardation is that?”

Bentley had a question look on his face and looked at Harold and said, “Is he calling me slow?”

Harold and Greene hit the ground again.

Bentley walked up and caught up with Arnold and just looked at him in his face.

Arnold look Bentley back in the face.

Arnold got tired and said, “Slow. Slow. Slow.”

Greene ran and did a backflip onto Harold’s back as an acrobat.

Harold crawled all the way to headquarters with Greene on his back.

The lead commander walked from the window and went downstairs and stood in the doorway to the building.

He was angry with the four and he looked in the office when he was leaving out and did not see Wallace.

The lead commander stared at Porter.

Porter did not know why he was staring at him.

He was in the window and saw Greene back flipped on Harold’s back.

Porter walked in the file room to holler.

The lead commander was standing in the doorway with other commanders.

Arnold and Bentley stood face to face.

Bentley pushed Arnold and ran away.

Arnold ran behind Bentley.

They were running behind each other in the yard.

Harold and Greene looked up and saw the legs of the lead commander and others.

Harold looked up and Greene looked straight ahead and into the eyes of the lead commander.

Harold stood up and Greene slid off his back to the ground.

The other commanders walked out the doorway and back to the office.

The lead commander never saw such behavior nor seen soldiers that stupid before. They did not care about decorum.

The lead commander was shaking and had his hand up to his head and covered his eyes.

Harold and Greene saw the lead commander’s face and knew something was terribly wrong.

They stood and stared at this great soldier, who was so disturbed.

Harold and Greene saw the other commanders that followed him walked back to the lobby.

Harold and Greene looked at each other.

Harold said, “Greene go and get Arnold and Bentley.”

Greene turned around and put his two fingers in his mouth and was about to whistle.

Harold looked at him.

Greene ran to Arnold and Bentley and said, “Something is badly wrong. Stop so we can find out.”

Wallace was walking back to the office.

Greene looked at Wallace and said, “You are suppose to have your ass there and keep us up on what is going on.”

Wallace said, “What I know it is bad. They can’t get the furlough soldiers back. So, the commanders have to go to battle and they probably want to take us along. I went to pray.”

Greene said, “I hope you prayed for all of us.”

Bentley said, “Let’s go.”

Arnold looked at Bentley and thought, “Slow and retarded.”

Harold waited for Arnold, Greene, Wallace and Bentley.

They reached the door and Harold pulled the opened and held it for the four.

The lead commander was walking around in circles.

Harold and the group saluted.

Mollinson said to the lead commander, “This is not going to work. Send them packing.”

Mollinson looked at the five soldiers and the one that was coming come downstairs.

Arnold his bag from his shoulder to show he was packed.

Greene said, “Sir, you sent for us?”

The lead commander said, “Yes. Let’s go upstairs.”

Hudson said, “Not enough room.”

The lead commander looked around and Porter walked and stood with his fellows.

The lead commander looked at this rag tag group and said, “We have been attacked terribly within the past week and have as many casualties as dead.”

The six soldiers stood and watched the commander.

Greene very sternly said, “Sir. What you like for us to do?”

The lead commander looked at the six soldiers and said, “Find the enemy. Go become the enemy line and get our soldiers. Get medical supplies and weapons to the troops. And bring the bodies of as many of our soldiers as possible.”

Harold said, “Done.”

Arnold said, “We are no longer employed sir.”

The lead commander said, “You are re-instated and your pay. I need you to help the troops.”

Bentley said, “We will.”

The lead commander said, “You leave at dawn. We need to load the wagons. WE will drive the wagons so we can bring the bodies back...”

The lead commander broke down.

He said, “I don’t know how we came under this type of attack. There are two soldiers that slightly wounded that’s been holding back the enemy. One rode out to send us the telegram and returned.”

Greene said, “Sir can we ride out tonight and whoever is driving the wagon leave at dawn?”

The commander thought and said, “Yes.”

Wallace and Porter looked at each other.

They had not been in that much battle.

They had to go three days to get to the city the battle was taking place.

The lead commander said, “I will drive the medical wagon and bring two medics and much medical supplies. Mollison you drive the weapons ammunition wagon. Hudson you drive the wagon with their food and necessities. Wyatts you drive a second supply wagon that will used for the dead bodies. Most of the dead are from here, so we need to alert their families and get everything Wilson for immediate burials when their bodies are returned. Manned the telegram machines. Get the furloughed troops back and especially the doctors and the medics. Let us load these wagons and leave.”

Harold said, “Sir, where?”

The lead commander said, “Merryville.”

Bentley was shocked.

Harold looked at Greene that was his friends.

The lead commander dismissed them.

Greene knocked the door open and began to stomp back to the dorm and then he broke out in a ran to get his stuff and help his friends.

The rest ran and packed their bags.

They got their horses.

The six went to the ammunition storage and got many guns and ammunition. They checked all the guns and rifles and ammunition.

They loaded up.

Harold and Greene were flying.

They rode all night and they reached Vivian’s city the next afternoon.

Harold and Greene were at least three hours in front of the other four.

Harold said, “I’ll catch up. I have to see if she is here.”

Greene was mad, but he had to keep going and deal with Harold later.

Harold rushed into the restaurant and the owner remembered him.

Harold looked around.

The owner said, “Her sister married and she moved with her sister to the capitol.”

The owner could tell he was on a mission.

Harold stood for a long minute.

The other four had caught up with he and Greene and was riding through the town.

Harold heard them.

He turned to walk out and said, “Thank You.”

He went and got on his horse and rode and caught up with the four and they were a day out and a half from the Merryville.

Skip and Jake fought the enemy from their troop and their captain told them to pursue the enemy.

They pursued the enemy to the troop that was Captain Percy Gaston.

Jake and Skip used all the ammunition of the troop.

The captain was hurt all he could do was watch the extraordinary bravery of these two men.

The headquarters sent a message out to Shirley because she was listed as the next of kin.

The military messenger arrived at early evening.

Shirley was feeling terrible but was so happy to make her wedding plans.

She sat with the family for dinner.

Two of Shirley’s friends and three cousins that were working on the wedding were having dinner with them that night to taste the food from the caterer.

They were tasting each day the food from the different caterers for the wedding.

There was a very hard knock on the door.

The butler walked to the door and looked.

Bruce and Eleanor heard the knock.

They heard a male voice asked for Miss Shirley Simons.

Michael was enjoying his lamb chops and boiled potatoes with parsley.

Shirley loved to see others enjoy themselves.

She was laughing.

Bruce and Eleanor were peeping towards the foyer.

Robert stepped in the dinning room and looked at Bruce and Eleanor and said, “Someone for Miss Shirley Simons.”

Bruce said, “Who.”

Robert looked at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “We’re her parents if a man is calling for our daughter we want to know.”

Robert looked back and the soldier walked to the dining room.

Eleanor and Bruce mouths dropped open.

Bruce stood and Eleanor stood and swallowed hard.

They walked out the dining room.

Shirley turned around to see, Percy walked and stood behind the wall to hear.

Bruce and Eleanor saw the envelope in the soldier’s hand.

Bruce reached for the envelop.

The soldier pulled the envelope back.

Bruce said, “Sir.”

Eleanor walked to the front door and saw two other soldiers and became weak and light headed.

The soldier said, “I have to deliver this to Miss Shirley Simons.”

Eleanor was about to snatch the envelope from the soldier.

Robert’s mouth dropped open

Bruce hit Eleanor hand.

Bruce said, “Eleanor stop. This is the military they have no tolerance for your foolishness. Look.”

The soldier was staring at Eleanor with his hand on his gun.

The look he gave Eleanor scared Bruce and Robert.

Bruce said, “Sir please enter.”

The soldier walked into the dining room.

Shirley was laughing.

Her father said, “Shirley, this soldier is here to see you.”

Shirley looked at her father and she turned her head to see the soldier.

Her brothers and the maids were quiet.

Percy was standing so he could hear.

Shirley looked at the soldier and he said, “Are you Shirley Simons.”

Shirley looked at the soldier and turned her head with tears filled her eyes.

Shirley said, “Daddy please.”

Bruce said, “Sir can I get the envelope?”

The soldier said, “She has to tell me her name and then I can give you the envelope.”

Bruce said, “Shirley.”

Bruce called her again, “Shirley.”

Shirley looked at the soldier and she swallowed and exhaled and said, “I am Shirley Simons. Please hand the envelope to my father he is my power of attorney.”

The soldier handed the envelope to Bruce.

The maid moved close to Eleanor but was eyeing the soldier.

Eleanor moved closed to Shirley.

The soldier looked at the maid.

The maid smiled at the soldier and tried not to be noticeable.

Bruce read the message several times and held his hand out and said, “I don’t understand this.”

He looked at the soldier.

The soldier said, “I just deliver the messages to the next of kin.”

Shirley exhaled and gasped and held her head down.”

Eleanor was holding Shirley’s hands.

The soldier said, “Let me see the message.”

The soldier read the message and said, “Skip Costner is not dead…”

Shirley breathed out.

The soldier said, “… Well I will tell you this, He is being considered a great hero at the headquarters. I don’t know why these messages were sent out. Headquarters is empty. I believe they wanted the next of kin to know it is a very serious matter. Good evening.”

The soldier walked out the dining.

Eleanor said, “Are you Mamie Lancaster’s grandson?”

The soldier said, “Yes ma am.”

Eleanor said, “I’ll see her Sunday and I’ll tell her that I saw you today.”

The soldier walked out the door being escorted by the maid.

Eleanor looked back at the five young women and batted her eyes.

Bruce looked at Eleanor and said, “Your daughter is upset and you are running around trying to arrange marriages.”

Eleanor did not know what to do or say.

Bruce walked over to Shirley and got on his knees and held Shirley’s hands and he looked at her.

Bruce said, “Shirley, this is the life you will have a knock on the door at all times of night. You don’t have to have this type of life.”

Eleanor said, “Bruce.”

Her friends and cousins looked at Shirley.

Percy said, “The soldier said, kip is a hero. He is helping other soldiers. Think Shirley, when he comes back do you want him to be alone?”

Eleanor walked towards Percy and yelled, “Mister you go and sit down.”

Shirley said, “Father you love me. He loves me. If I was not with him I will still worry about him each day and wonder whether he is well or safe or happy. All of my life he would be in my heart. I could not have a life with anyone else because I would think about him all through my day. Percy is right. Daddy you are my hero. He is a hero for others. I love him and will stay with him until the end.”

Shirley was standing by Percy and rubbing his back.

To comfort her may then him.

Percy said, “Where is the soldier with the gun.”

Everyone snickered.

Eleanor slapped Percy’s head.

Percy held his head and said, “Ou.”

Eleanor said, “That’s for the trouble you got in this week we don’t know about.”

Everyone laughed including Shirley.

Bruce sat on the floor and looked at Shirley.

Eleanor sat down and she started gossiping about Mamie Lancaster.

The maid was listening.

Eleanor said, “She and her husband produced just lovely children and the grandchildren. You saw the one that is a soldier. Just about every man on both sides of the family are doctors. It’s so many males they have their own rugby team.”

The young women were listening and grinning.

Shirley smiled at her daddy.

He was sitting on the floor looking her in the eyes.

Shirley said, “Thank you. I am alright.”

Michael said, “You’re ok Shirley?”

Shirley smile and said, “Yes Michael.”

Thomas moved his plate down next to Shirley.

He held her hand.

They enjoyed dinner.

The maid was listening to Eleanor talk about the Lancasters.

The maid decided she was getting into that family.

She said, “Ma am did you invite the Lancasters to Shirley’s wedding?’

Eleanor said, “What for? You would have to do extra work.”

Bruce said, “The floor is comfortable.”

Michael looked down at his father and said, “Can I have your lamb chops?”

Bruce said, “Michael you will eat lamb chops everyday. Robert hand me my plate and fork.”

Robert picked up Bruce’s plate and brought it back to Bruce.

Bruce leaned on his elbow and ate his dinner and laughed and talked with Thomas and Shirley.

Bruce and Michael were fussing about having lamb chops at the wedding.

Michael was very calm and looked at Shirley and said, “Shirley.”

Bruce said, “Why are you asking Shirley. Mommie and daddy are paying for the wedding.”

Bruce said, “What?”

Michael raised his eyebrows and said, “Shirley can we have these lamb chops at your wedding?”

Eleanor was peeped down the table at Michael and tried to hear Shirley’s response.

Shirley said, “Michael that’s why we are eating their menu.”

Brue said, “Is this the last meal?”

Shirley said, “Yes.”

Bruce said, “Let’s vote.”

He sat up and said, “All in favor of these lamb chops.”

Bruce said, “Not in favor?”
Bruce said, “I don’t want any more lamb chops every.”

Thomas said, “I do not want lamb chops.”

Bruce said, “Lamb chops it is. These lamb chops.”

Michael looked at Bruce and Thomas and said, “Thank you daddy.”

Shirley laughed.

She said, “Robert I want to go to bed.”

Bruce said, “I want to take you upstairs.”

Shirley smiled.

Bruce jumped up and put his plate and fork on the table.

He picked up Shirley and said, “Shirley say good night.”

Shirley waved and said, “Good night.”

Michael and Thomas followed their father upstairs with Shirley.

They walked into Shirley’s bedroom and the maids had her bed clothes laid out and her bath ready.

Michael and Thomas said, “Good night Shirley.”

Shirley said good night.

The maids pulled the screen around her tub so she could bathe.

Bruce went into his bedroom and dressed for bed.

Michael and Thomas played in the hallway.

They could hear the women gossiping about men.

Bruce did not hear Percy and Bruce.

He tipped down stairs and caught them drinking whiskey.

They had been filling the decanters up with water.

Eleanor thought it was Robert and his perverts.

Eleanor said, “I apologize Robert.”

Robert had been filling the alcoholic decanters with water.

Shirley listened as Percy and Bruce were scolded.

Eleanor walked the young women to the buggy.

She had the stable hand to take the young women home.

The maids were laying Shirley nightgown out for the next day.

Shirley said, “I can’t go into this marriage with a mind of being sick everyday. Place a dress and stockings for me.”

Eleanor went into her study and reviewed the guess list.

She knew the maid was trying to meet some member of Mamie’s family.

Eleanor wrote an invitation to the Lancaster’s to attend Shirley’s wedding in a month.