Steven rode the next day to see Jose and Dan.

Jose said, “Dan moved to his new house.”

Jose and Steven rode to Dan’s house.

They helped him around the house and yard all day.

They felt the cold air moving in.

Dan did not have curtains up.

Jose said, “Dan the curtains will help stop the cold wind.”

Dan said, “I was not thinking. I was thinking about the furniture.”

Steven said, “I have to go shopping for my sisters tomorrow.”

Dan said, “I don’t go back to work until next Friday for the week-end. I can go with you Steven.”

Steven said, “Great the train leaves t nine fifty in the morning.”

Jose and Dan looked at Steven.

Jose said, “You catching a train to go shopping?”

Steven said, “Yeah. I just got back yesterday and Miss Eleanor arranged it. The stores were sold out and did not want to go to the capitol, because they said everybody wear the same thing.”

Dan was stunned.

He said, “I may ride to the capitol tomorrow.”

Jose stood and looked and said, “Dan, Steven is right. The stores may not be getting in any more supplies until after Christmas. They should know. You might have to catch that train to Philadelphia with Steven.”

Steven was grinning and nodding his head for yes.

Dan said, “I don’t want to leave my house because of this man here walking looking over here.”

Jose and Steven looked.

Steven said, “He owns the Town restaurant, the ice cream shop and the largest stable in the town.”

Dan said, “That’s how he got his money?”

Steven said, “He hates blacks. I stay out of his way. He was just elected to the city council. The people are upset because he is trying to tell people they can’t move or work in certain areas of the town.”

Jose frowned and said. “I heard something about that one day when I was in town.”

Dan said, “That’s trouble.”

Jose said, “Lorraine is in Philadelphia with Shirley. I know they will be coming home next week. Maybe she can get some curtains for you.”

Steven said, “That’s who Miss Eleanor said,”

Dan said, “That damn Lorraine charge you for everything. I have never seen a person like her in my life.”

Jose laughed.

Dan said, “ was cooking and she was the only person in the kitchen, I said, Lorraine I need some help. She said, “I start at fifty cents. I was so shocked I did not know if she was talking about sex or what. All I wanted her to do was to hand me the platter next to greedy butt.”

Jose started laughing and said, “Sex.”

Dan said, “I don’t even speak to her.”

Jose said, “You’ll were in Europe for over a year.”

Dan said, “I stayed my distance.”

Jose begin to laugh.

Jose said, “Eleanor is getting on my nerves. I want Percy to come back. Everybody thinks Michael have her going in circle. It’s not Michael. It is Percy. He drinks more alcohol than me and her. He waits to everyone is gone to bed and then he sneaks down to the liquor table.”

Dan said, “You know this how?”

Jose said, “Because I have to wait until he leaves and see which bottle he put to his mouth, because I don’t want that.”

Dan was stunned.

Jose said, “I know he has Eleanor going. I was in the billiards room waiting for him to leave. He was really drinking the alcohol that night. I saw Eleanor’s reflection in the mirror she was standing at the top of the staircase watching Percy. She did not say anything. I figured she was not going to do anything or say anything.”

Dan nodded his head.

Jose said, “Then I saw Eleanor run down the stairs as Percy was putting down the last bottle. Eleanor grabbed by boy by his throat, like this and with one hand lifted him off the floor and was choking him to death.”

Dan and Steven looked at Jose.

Dan said, “You did not stop her.”

Jose said, “Hell no. The way she was chocking that boy. I was scared. I fell to my knees and was on the floor. I crawled to the side and eased to the door. She said boy I will kill you. You will not be a drunk and you will not be over any business and I will take your trust fund from you. She was shaking that boy. She said you hear me. I was shaking my head.”

Dan said, “Jose!”

Jose said, “Jose hell.”

Steven started laughing.

Jose said, “I was not going to intervene. I got to fighting with Eleanor before you all came.”

Dan said, “Who won?”

Jose said, “She did and gave me a black eye over a damn prime rib roast that I burnt.”

Dan said, “Expensive piece of meat. A black eye was worth it.”

Jose said, “I thought so.”

Steven said, “Here comes that man.”

Dan looked and saw him walking into his yard.

Dan said, “Two bullets.”

Jose said, “No bullets.”

Dan un- hinged his gun and walked to his door when the man knocked.

He peeped in the window and saw them standing and talking and though his presence was enough to make Dan to come to the door.

Dan waited until he knocked twice.

Dan opened the door and looked at the man very hard in his face.

The man looked at Dan and said, “I saw some people over here and came to see who they were. They been most of the day.”

Jose said, “Damn.”

 Dan stepped outside the door and saw other neighbors watching.

He said, “Who are you?”

He looked at the death in Dan’s eyes and reared up looking around at the gathered neighbors and said, “I am councilman Maximillian Bundy.”

Dan said, “I am a man and I don’t have a fag in my face thinking you can beat me down and control my life. You may have won the election you are not there yet. No body act like you unless they are a witch…”

The people standing around gasped.

Bundy heard his neighbor.

Dan continued, “Or a member of the mob. That is the only type of person who thinks they can make you go in your house or make people leave your house or how long they can stay at your house or when you can have company…”

Dan stepped in Bundy’s face.

Bundy tried to step back out of Dan’s face.

Each time Bundy stepped Bundy Dan stepped on his body.

Bundy was shocked.

Dan’s mouth was on Bundy’s face.

Dan whispered, “You lived your last day.”

Dan said so people could hear him, “We just fought the mob all the way to our nation’s capitol and I am sure you Maximillian Bundy cannot take on our nation’s capitol and win.”

Bundy slipped and fell off Dan’s porch and all the neighbors laughed.

Bundy looked at Dan.

Dan licked his tongue at Bundy and said, “You like that? You know.”

Bundy was laying in Dan’s yard and looking at him.

Dan winked his eye at Bundy.

Emily and Raymond were standing along with other neighbors watching Bundy and Dan.

Dan was walking to his door and yelled and said, “Get your fag a\*\* out of my yard.”

Everyone jumped.

Bundy was on his knees trying to get up.

The people started snickering and laughing.

Dan pointed at his house and said, “You are any of your mobsters come to my house again or if you damage my property at all. You will answer to me. Get up and get out of my yard. I don’t want you’re a\*\*.”

Everybody were laughing.

Bundy tried to stand.

He finally stood and walked out the Dan’s yard.

He pushed a female neighbor with the twins.

She balled her fist and hit him in his head with all of her might.

Everybody clapped.

Bundy was shock.

She yelled at Bundy, “My husband does not put his hands on me. He is ten times the man you are or not.”

Everybody laughed.

He could not understand why Dan was not submitting to him.

Dan stood and watch Bundy walk home.

The neighbors laughed and walked home.

Emily stood and talked to the woman who hit Bundy with her fist.

Emily said, “Elizabeth you are going to tell your husband?”

Elizabeth said, “Yes. It felt good.”

The two laughed.

Elizabeth said, “I was angry all day. I was having a bad day. That lick on his head felt good.”

Emily said, “That was a good one.”

Elizabeth bowed and said, “Thank you.”

Dan watched the women.

Elizabeth walked up the street pass Bundy’s house.

She balled both fists and held them up in the air at Bundy and his wife as she walked home.

Bundy’s wife got him by his arm and said, “Come in the house.”

She said, “You have to stop. That man has called you a fag, witch and mobster. The neighbors are against you. If they find out about the election you go to prison for life.”

Bundy said, “Theresa get me something to drink!”

Theresa ran and got him bourbon and ran back to him.

She said, “She hit you that hard? Here comes her husband.”

Dan stood to watch.

Emily stood and watched Elizabeth home.

She turned and saw Dan and snickered. She began to walk to her house.

Raymond saw Elizabeth’s husband rushing to Bundy’s house and she was right behind him.

Raymond yelled, “Come back. Hurry.”

Jose and Steven rushed out the door and stood on the porch with Dan.

Jose whispered to Dan, “It aint worth lynching.”

Emily ran back and stood and watched.

Mary was running to Raymond along with several neighbors came out their houses.

Earl knocked on Bundy’s door.

His wife said, “Don’t go to the door. Look at the neighbors watching us now.”

Earl and Elizabeth were standing on Bundy’s porch.

Earl was bamming on their door.

Theresa walked to the door and opened it and looked t Elizabeth.

Earl looked at his wife and said, “Don’t look at my wife. I am married to her.”

The neighbors laughed.

Theresa looked around at the neighbors.

Earl said, “Get that man out here now. Or Do I need to cuss you out.”

The neighbors laughed again.

Bundy walked out the door.

Earl grabbed Bundy and they fought.

Bundy threw Earl off his porch.

Theresa looked at Elizabeth and grinned.

Elizabeth looked at her up and down and saw a strange pin of a double horseshoe.

Elizabeth begin to think.

She heard a rumor about a double horseshoe.

Bundy ran off the porch and was diving at Earl.

Earl somersaulted up and kicked Bundy in his face several times and punched him several times in his stomach and as Bundy was falling to the ground Elizabeth looked at Theresa and grinned.

Theresa was upset.

Elizabeth knew her husband knew how to fight.

Earl stomped Bundy in his back over and over and then kicked him in his head.

Elizabeth watched Theresa.

She wondered about her.

Theresa started yelling, “Stop!!”

Elizabeth turned quickly and looked at Theresa and said to her, “The man is right about you. You keep your witchcraft to yourself hank.”

Theresa looked at Elizabeth and hissed.

The neighbors screamed.

Earl looked at Theresa and primped his mouth and said, “Oh the bad little witch got his butt kicked and his daddy is going to give him a whipping.”

Everybody laughed.

Earl said, “My family Christian missionaries all over the world. I knew what you were when you moved into this neighborhood three years ago. Now you get out and wherever you go I pray that God and JESUS never give you peace but have more power questions waiting for you until you die.”

Jose said, “Damn. This was worth not being at work around crazy Eleanor.”

Steven looked at Jose and said, “What happened with Percy?”

Earl and Elizabeth went home.

Theresa picked Bundy off the ground and they went into their house and slammed the door.

One of the neighbors said, “I am glad somebody else knew they were witches besides me. They would cut off all their lights and run around the neighborhood to any body’s house that did not have anything to do with them or submit to them.”

Raymond said, “what are we going to do?”

Elizabeth and Earl walked home.

Earl was boxing going home.

Emily walked home and told her brother.

Her son listened.

Theodore said, “What? Witches? Mobsters yes.”

Emily threw her bag on the kitchen table.

Her brother looked at her.

She said, “Grow up. They did not deny it.”

Theodore said, “I could not have dignified a response to that.”

Emily said, “They wear a strange symbol of a double horseshoe.”

The neighbors went home.

Jose said, “Eleanor told Percy he was not going to destroy the family and he might as well leave that night without a penny and never come back.”

Jose did a slamming motion.

Steven’s mouth dropped opened.

Dan said, “She threw him on the floor?”

Jose said, “I jumped. The boy bounced off the floor. She was standing over him and said, ‘What are you going to do?’ The boy could not talk. He was whispering. Some kind of way Patrick and Brenda ran up the hall while Eleanor was bending over him to pick him up and she was dragging him to the front door. Patrick tried to grabbed her but he was not stopping her. Brenda ran to the door and tried to block Eleanor. They were not saying anything I guess they did not want to wake the house. Then I felt something and there was that damn Nadine peeping.”

Dan said, “Nadine?’

Jose said, “Yes she was coming to get her and Peter a drink for the night. Shirley and all the kids were standing on the balcony looking. Shirley said, please momma. Momma. I guess Eleanor had lost it. She finally stop. Patrick and Brenda were tired. They told the kids to go to bed. When Eleanor turned around I crawled faster than anyone could ever run and I got to my room and locked the door and threw myself on the bed and would not come out til late the next morning.”

Dan said, “It’s good they have grown out of that.”

Jose said, “What are you talking about this was just the week they went away to school.”

Dan looked at Jose.

Steven said, “I have to go.”

Dan shook his hand and said, “Thanks.”

Steven said, “The train leave at nine fifty am.”

Dan said, “This is unsettled business here.”

Jose said, “Then send Lorraine a telegram. She will buy the blankets just have her money ready the moment she steps off the train. It is really suppose to be bad this winter. Patrick and Brenda are anticipating that employees won’t be able to come to work. I think they are going to close the top part of the house since the children will be away at school until the spring.”

Dan said, “Eleanor?”

Jose said, “Eleanor is going to take one of the suites until the spring. As long as they give us coal. What am I talking about. I need to buy me a house.”

Steven laughed and rode away.

Jose got on his horse and said, “You have to be careful.”

Dan said, “I know.”

Dan walked in his door and locked it.

He looked around at his house and thought, “My bedding suppose to be in today. I’ll wait until tomorrow. I have nothing to eat.”

Dan stood and a thought of the stream came to him.

He turned and walked out the back door and watched and he heard something he looked and saw a few fish he grinned.

He ran to his horse and grabbed his favorite pan and ran back to the stream and grabbed two fish and put them in the pan.

He looked at his empty coal shed and said, “How did he not buy coal and oil?”

He shook his head.

He looked a round and was able to build a fire and he opened his pocket knife and killed, scaled and gutted the fish.

He put the fish in the pan.

Dan stood and looked at this piece of beautiful land God created and the devil worshippers want to run people in their houses and control people with fear.

Dan said, “I work too long this house. I meant everything I said.”

He turned and got his fish and put out the fir an sat on his back porch and ate the fish with his pocket knife out of the pan.

He enjoyed his fish and he enjoyed the fall scenery.

As night was falling Dan shook with a chill.

He looked at the empty coal shed.

He still could not believe he did not buy coal and oil.

He went and fed his horse and let the horse walk to the creek for water.

Dan said, “Where is this horse going to stay?”

He raised up and looked around and thought, “Where is the stall. What was I thinking. God.”

Dan walked and washed his pan and took it in the house.

He was watching the horse because he just bought the horse from Jessie and his sons.

Dan said, “What was I thinking that night with a hundred out in field. God.”

Dan got his blanket from the horse and opened it open and it was filled with holes.

He turned and put it on the horse.

He tied the horse to the tree by the stream.

He locked the front and back door.

Dan laid by the fireplace and put one gun by the fireplace.

He got up and walked back outside and got his shotgun and ammunition.

He locked the backdoor and laid on the cold floor.

Nathan was coming back from Eleanor’ coal distribution.

The manager said, “He had enough for the jail and plenty of oil.”

Nathan said, “Give me what you got.”

He saw Jose sitting on his horse in front of the jail.

Nathan said, “What does this snob wants. He doesn’t think nobody knows about him.”

He stopped at the door.

Jose dismounted the horse and walked to the porch and said, “Nathan.”

Nathan said, “Business and not pleasure,”

Jose told Nathan all of what happened that day at Dan and the neighbor said they wear a double horseshoe symbol.

Nathan said, “The evil mob. That is the way the different mobs are being distinguish.”

Jose looked at Nathan and stood and said, “Nathan.”

Nathan stood and walked with Jose out the jail.

He saw Craig, Daniel and Tommy lighting the torches.

Nathan watched the people walking and riding home.

Nathan watched Jose as he rode to the house.

He was surprised Jose sat in the chair.

Nathan thought, “Will he ever go home? I wonder if Patrick and Brenda know about Jose.”

Nathan saw Robert and Denise riding into town he smiled.

Eleanor ordered several hens and had Thomas to ok one for dinner and Denise had Thomas to make Nathan a plate of baked hen and vegetables and rolls.

Nathan walked to the carriage and reached for the plate and said, “Thank you.”

Denise was grinning.

Nathan said, They only had coal for the jail and not for the house. I think Eleanor is trying to get an additional shipment of coal.”

Denise said, “We are getting married before Christmas and we just have to cover up with hundreds of blankets.”

Robert giggled and turned his head.

Nathan thought for a moment and realized what Denise was saying.

He said, “You’ll going back to the rest stop?”

Robert said, “Yes.”

Nathan said, “Good evening.”

Robert turned the carriage around and left.

The citizens walked to Nathan and said they knew he had something to do with the lights and thank him.

Daniel walked pass Nathan and stared at him.

Nathan stared at Daniel.

Tommy did not look at Nathan.

Maureen pretended she was only working part time and was hiding her money.

She looked in the closet and had only one dresses and the shoes she had on.

She cried.

She wanted to wait until Patrick and Brenda returned so she could apologize face to face.

Alicia saw Maureen one day, when she and Emilou were returning from school.

Alicia said, “Ma am. I am sorry for hitting you in your eye. There is a doctor in the capitol that fix your eye.”

Emilou said, “See he fix my eye.”

Maureen said, “I’m glad he fixed your eye. But I am too old.”

Craig ran out of the house and yelled at Maureen, “Maureen get from them.”

Maureen turned and looked at Craig.

Alicia said, “Dr. Carson.”

She pulled off.

Emilou stuck out her tongue at Craig.

Alicia was shaken at hoe he hollered at Maureen.

She said, “Emilou he is a bad person. Don’t ever go out in this neighborhood to play again. Ok?”

Emilou said, “Alright.”

They rode home and Alicia started praying.

Emilou sat down and started saying the Lord’s prayer.

Alicia said, “Thank you Emilou. I needed someone to help me pray.”

They rode the wagon to the back of the house.

They let the horse out and made sure they had enough water for the house.

Steven told Alicia and Emilou to eat out for the next two days and don’t go home to cook.

They stopped at a restaurant.

Emilou’s classmates and their families go to after school.

Alicia liked the restaurant.

They only spent a few minutes out in the yard.

They checked the fence.

They got their bags out the carriage and locked the front gate.

Alicia normally tell Emilou to get out and lock the front gate while she sit and watch her.

But she felt not to that evening.

As they work to lock the gate Craig walked by looking at their horses.

Alicia and Emilou stared him down.

Alicia said, “Emilou run in the house.”

Emilou ran into the house.

Alicia watched Craig out of sight.

She looked at the two women neighbors looking at her.

She knew they wanted to beg for something.

Alicia put the lock on the gate and ran in the house.

She and Emilou locked the door.

They started a small fire in the fireplace.

Alicia brought the bucket in the house the way Steven showed them.

Emilou and Alicia were happy.

Alicia and Emilou sat to their very expensive table and studied.

They dressed and went to bed.

Sttepehn was on the train thinking about them he said, “Dear God I have done the physical things to make them safe and comfortable. I ask You to do Your spiritual things to keep them safe and happy, because You said in Proverbs 21:Yyrwent to be

1, that the horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD. I ask this for their entire lives. And God I also ask that this trip go well and show me things they really like and let me be able to purchase them. In JESUS’ name.”

Steven woke when the train whistle blew as it was entering into the city.

He thought and wondered what time it was.

He stretched and laid out in his chair.

He had first class accommodations but fell asleep in the dining car.

He looked out the window and saw the rest stop he designed and grinned.

He saw Natalie.

He jumped and ran to the window and opened it and said, “Hey Natalie!”

Natalie knew the voice and turned and grinned and looked at the train and saw a waving Steven.

Patrick, Mag and Brenda were standing on the side of the street.

Steven was excited and said, “Hey!”

Mag looked and said, “Hey Steven.”

Brenda said, “Tell him to get out the window before he fall out of it.”

Mag said, “Stop Bren. Have you all decided on the hotel yet.”

Patrick said, “We are thinking. Mag you are so right about this being a major supply location. We have to fully staff this location. We need a hotel up quickly.”

Mag said, “The governor is planning on letting the state develop it it especially back by the lake.”

Brenda said, “I don’t care.”

Patrick was looking around and said, “Brenda we all understand but this location is doubling our money. You want more trips abroad.”

Brenda and said, “And jewelry.”

She and Mag started laughing.

Brenda said, “I want to develop those thousand acres that connect this city to Cedartown, because the governor is starting a state police force and he is going to use that area and there is nothing there.”

Mag was quiet.

Brenda thought for a minute and she turned to Patrick who was thinking and reached at the sketches of the hotel.

Brenda said, “Patrick.”

Patrick said, “Yeah I thought about that too.”

Mag and Brenda and Patrick were looking at the sketches.

Patrick said, “It would be a chain of Stith’s hotels.”

Mag was looking at the designs and said, “This one here about a mile down the road.”

Brenda passed it to Patrick.

Mag said, “This one in your town Brenda and this one at home in Cedartown.”

Brenda said, “Hallelujah”

She caught Mag by the back of her neck and hugged her.

Steven was still hanging out the window.

The train was not stopping because there was no pick ups.

Steven looked around and saw the train was not stopping and yelled out the window.

He said, “Bye yall. By Nattie, Nattie.”

Brenda said, “Patrick.”

Patrick said, “Get out the window Steven.”

Steven said, “OK.”

Natalie laughed.

She thought, GOD I really want my child to have good friends and good people in his life so he can bare being mix. But I truly love Josiah and Mag. I realize that Josiah is a gift from You and You doubled it with a good woman Mag as an additional gift. Make it easier for our child. But above all let him love YOU and JESUS.”

Natalie finished the work for that day.

It was hard work but she liked it and she liked being paid more than what she earned as a maid.

But that was where she met an unemployed Josiah.

Natalie did not want to spend the holidays there but she knew Patrick and Brenda were depending on them to keep every train on schedule and telegram for help.

She and Mag rode in the wagon back to their campsite.

Brenda and Patrick sat at the rest stop.

Patrick held Brenda’s hand and said, “This is a beautiful place.”

Brenda placed her head on Patrick’s shoulder.

Patrick placed his head on Brenda.

Brenda said, “Patrick Mag and Natalie don’t want to spend the holidays here. It is going to be freezing this winter. Can we make them a shed or some type of housing to help keep the cold off of them and have a stable for the horses?”

Patrick said, “We should do something for them.”

They heard a woman say, “Hey yall dinner is ready.”

Brenda sit and peeped at Miss Lattie.

Brenda said, “Thank you. We’re coming.”

Brenda said, “We have some good cooks.”

Patrick stood.

Brenda said, “Patrick this is our time.”

Patrick said, ”I like her candied yams. I know she cooked turnip greens today.”

He reached his hand to Brenda.

Brenda folded her arms and puffed out her mouth.

Patrick said, “Michael come on.”

Brenda said, “Michael did not get that from me.”

Patrick said, “After thirty-five years I am not going to argue about that.”

Brenda stood an she and Patrick hugged all the way to Miss Lattie.

Miss Lattie had placed a wash basin and soap and a towel in a chair on the front porch.

Brenda and Patrick washed their hands and Patrick put the papers on their bed.

They sat to a unstable of candied yams, turnip greens, fried corn and fried trout.

Miss Lattie had the children to pick her a jar of blackberries and she made a black berry pie for dessert.

Brenda and Patrick sat on the front porch and ate their pie.

Patrick kept saying, “Um. Um this is too good.”

Miss Lattie sat in the ragged chair she had placed the wash basin in.

Brenda is always thinking about business.

She said, “Miss Lattie you have constantly given us good food to eat. What can we do for you?”

Miss Lattie said, “Nothing but enjoy the food.”

Brenda said, “Have you ever thought about baking and selling the goods or opening your house up as a diner?”

Miss Lattie said, “I love for people to enjoy my food. I have not really thought about making money from it.”

Brenda said, “How do make the pies? Pick the fruit and canned it and select what fruit you want to use?”

Miss Lattie said, “Right.”

Brenda said, “I’m trying to help you make money.”

Miss Lattie said, “I know. I don’t want money or be famous.”

Patrick said, “You want to hide in the wilderness.”

Brenda turned and looked at Patrick.

She slowly turned and looked at Miss Lattie.

Miss Lattie was looking straight.

Patrick said, “You need a lawyer. I will get one for you. He is in Philadelphia and I telegrammed him and he will be here tomorrow. I need for you to tell him everything and leave out no details. It does not matter how small the detail is. He is the best he will help you. Then you would not have to hide and don’t run away tonight. Me and Miss Brenda will be working all day tomorrow and we find our own food.”

Brenda stood and said, “What is this?”

Patrick said, “Tomorrow Brenda.”

Brenda said, “Tonight Patrick.”

Miss Lattie walked in the house and closed the windows and the doors.

Brenda was still looking at Patrick.

Patrick said, “It was a hard decision for me.”

Brenda said, “For you. We pray about everything and move when we believe GOD is telling us which direction to go. We miss HIM a lot but HE brings us back on course.”

Patrick sat and looked at Brenda.

She knew he was not going to answer.

The train rolled in the next morning.

Patrick saw the tall lean attorney stepped off the train.

Patrick went to the attorney and talked for a long time to him.

Brenda was angry and did not care what was going on.

Patrick introduced the lawyer to Brenda.

Several workers of the railroad went to the car and brought a table and six chairs, a sofa and two chairs and three mattresses.

They loaded the second wagon Mag and Natalie brought to the rest area.

The train had a two hour delay at the city.

People got off the train and was looking around.

Some of the people were walking and selling fruit and the last of corn and greens.

Many of the train riders bought food.

The train conductor told the people that little city is where the governor comes to vacation several times per year.

The people wanted to see this great fishing lake.

The woman who befriended Eleanor had finally got her a horse and wagon and filled it up and sped to the lake and the people were amazed at it’s beauty.

The workers from the train took the furniture into Miss Lattie’s house and left.

They were running into the black farmer bring people back from the lake.

They all gave the black female a tip.

She made more money from that ride then she made all year.

She grinned.

Several of the men told the other men that the fish was overflowing and jumping at the top of the lake.

One man said, “I got to get me a piece of this beautiful country.”

His wife said, “Dear there is nothing here.”

He said, “That is the best place.”

She became sick.

Natalie laughed.

The train whistle sounded.

The workers jumped back on the train and left.

The black woman told Mag, “My children never had a toy. Just taking those men to the lake they gave me more money that I had all year. My husband took all the rest of the money and bought this broken down horse and this broken down wagon. I told him we could get a new horse and a new wagon. He called me dumb. I will not give him this money. My children will have a toy and a ham for Christmas.”

Mag said, “Lillie I hope you are ready for the winter it is suppose to the worst winter ever.”

Lillie looked at Mag.

Mag realized she was not prepared.

Mag said, “Lillie where have you been? Everything is sold out. No coael is left. No blankets, No quilts, no socks, no underwear.”

Lillie five children ran to her grinning with ragged clothes and no shoes.

Mag looked at Lillie’s children and walked away.

Lillie knew at that moment that Mag thought she was dumb.

Natalie was looking at Lillie and thought, “A fool.”

The winter weather had started coming in.

The workers dropped several boxes.

Brenda was not listening to anybody that day.

She knew Miss Lattie had to be a murderer.

She It had started changing.

Brenda decided she was going to sleep at the rest stop and catch the train the next morning and go home.

Brenda said, “Mag and Natalie come and look.”

Natalie and Mag walked over.

There would be no other train until the next day.

Brenda said, “Mag and Natalie these boxes are for you. Patrick and I feel bad about you being here for the holidays in this bad weather. We had Lorraine to go shopping for you. What is she still doing standing there with five hungry kids?”

Mag said, “I did not know she was a fool. You did not know there was a winter season.”

Brenda said, “You need a locker here. What do you have at your campsite?”

Mag said, “Nothing really. We sleep in the wagon at night. We put all things in one wagon and we both sleep inside the same wagon.

Brenda looked around and said, “That is the shed for the manufacturers and suppliers how full is it?’

Mag said, “Not that full because their goods have been sent. The last wood supplier they said went out of business and the people who ordered the supplies don’t want them.”

Brenda sat up and looked at Mag and said, “What?”

Mag said, “Now I feel dumb like that fool.”

Brenda said, “Let me see the wood.”

Mag, Brenda and Natalie walked to the shed.

Brenda looked at the wood and looked at Mag.

She said, “Mag did the buyers send a refuse delivery?”

Mag said, “Don’t be mad.”

Brenda said, “When?”

Mag said, “Last week.”

Brenda said, “This was suppose to be a visiting friend vacation and it has become a working vacation. Which is fine because it is our business. Mag we could have a crew here and using this wood to build yall a house. Now you and natalie stay in here until we get you a vacation home built here. I know Natalie want to go back to the big town. Where is the telegram machine.”

Mag said, in the office.”

Brenda said, “Send Lorraine and Shirley a telegram to go and buy your furniture, beds and mattresses today. They ain’t doing nothing. And put it on the train for tomorrow. Contact the train and say I said wait. Patrick and I are retied, but I am making these decisions today. Mag write down everything. Lorraine is leaving Philadelphia and won’t be going back with Shirley. Shirley will be busy in school. Towels, soap, wash cloths and blankets are what in those boxes.”

Mag turned around and said, “Anything else.”

Brenda said, “She is still standing out there. I feel sorry for the shoeless children but she and that fake husband are too dumb for words. Mag I don’t want to help her.”

Mag had her measuring tape that she carries in her pocket and said, “A pair of boots and socks?”

Brenda said, “Yes.”

Natalie said, “I want to go and help with that list.”

Mag went and measured the five children feet.

The mother put her feet out for Mag to measure her bare feet.

Mag stood and walked into the office and she and Natalie locked the door.

Brenda ran to the boxes.

The woman ran to the boxes to go in the boxes.

Brenda hit her with her fist and threw her down.

Her children ran home.

Natalie ran out the train station.

Mag looked out the office and made sure sent the telegram.

Natalie said, “Lillie I don’t want the sheriff to come on the next train and put you in jail and your children will not have you nor a toy for Christmas. Go home and you can never come on the train property again. The train property is marked. Go.”

Natalie was rubbing her stomach.

Brenda and Natalie watched Lillie stand and walk away.

Brenda pulled the boxes in to the supply shed.

Natalie was standing and watching for Lillie.

Brenda would tell Natalie what to tell Mag to add to the telegram.

Patrick was in Miss Lattie house putting her furniture in it.

He put the table and chairs, pushed the sofa and the two chairs against the sitting room wall.

He moved the old mattresses and put the new mattresses.

Miss Lattie stood and went to her old mattress and cut opened the mattress.

Patrick looked.

The lawyer looked at the mattress and he did not flinched.

He and Miss Lattie continued to talk.

Patrick knew Brenda was angry and he better stay with Miss Lattie until Brenda worked off some angry.

He was taking the old ragged furniture around back to bur and he heard the kids running and yelling for their daddy and said, “That woman beat momma.”

Patrick eased on the porch and closed the door and continued to move the furniture to a burning pile.

He saw the man running up the road.

He met the woman and she was saying something.

The man yelled, “Why were you going in those folks boxes?”

Patrick stood and listened.

The man waved his arms violently and said, “Get on down to the house.”

The crying children ran to the house.

The man was pulling off his belt.

Patrick said, “Oh God.”

Patrick said, “Sir.”

The man said, “What!”

Patrick said, “Wait a minute. What is wrong?”

Patrick remembered Eleanor said the woman pointed to the stream and she did sell them the drawing of Patrick Jr and Christopher.

Patrick walked to the man and they stood and talked,

Patrick helped calm the man down.

Patrick told the man his wife was going through something they had to take her to the doctors in Philadelphia.

The man told Patrick that his common law wife lost what would be their eighth baby and she was sick and started not thinking right.

He said, “She is a good person but I don’t know what to do.”

Patrick told the man, “She needs to get to a doctor I will pay. My daughter lost a baby and the doctors said, the poison from her body has to get out of her body and it could take years.”

The man said, “I can’t take her. I can’t leave the children.”

Patrick said, “The doctors can pick her up from the train and take her to the hospital and examine her. I did that with my daughter.”

The man looked down and said, “I need some help. I can’t help her anymore.”

Patrick said, “As long as you don’t leave her. I will help you.”

The man was quiet.

Patrick let him be quiet.

Patrick talked to the man for nearly two hours.

Brenda did not care about anything.

Brenda would not let Natalie do anything.

Mag said, “I sent the telegram.”

Brenda said, “Shirley loves to shop. She and Lorraine.”

Natalie said, “I love the furniture they sent for Miss Lattie.”

Mag said, “It’s bad. He’s been there all day with that man.”

Natalie screamed.

Mag turned and looked Natalie was holding up a beautiful holiday dress.

Mag said, “How you know that is not mines?”

Natalie said, “This piece of paper as on it. You look in another box. Thank you Miss Benda.”

Brenda said, “We just feel awful.”

Mag said, “You and Patrick can switch with us.”

Brenda said, “We talked about this Christmas before you took this job.”

Natalie looked at Mag and said, “Really.”

Brenda said, “I may send Patrick back here.”

Mag laughed and said, “You are really angry with him.”

Mag went the box and pulled out her holiday dress and grinned and said, “It is beautiful.”

The three women emptied the boxes.

Natalie said, “I love Lorraine’s bath products. Smell this milk and honey.”

The three of them were hungry.

Brenda said, “I’m making me a pallet and going to sleep.”

Natalie said, “The wagon is warmer.

Mag said, “Yes.”

The lawyer and Miss Lattie talked through the night until daybreak.

The lawyer took a long walk.

Patrick was sitting out on the front porch.

He was thinking about Brenda and her mind, whether he wanted her flesh and her mind is gone or try to get him the whole person and lost the flesh.

The attorney walked back to the house.

Miss Lattie was standing in the door.

He looked at her and he looked at Patrick and said, “It is a very hard case. But I will take and I will win. You have to move to Philadelphia and you cannot leave. If you do I will drop the case.”

Miss Lattie held her head down.

The lawyer said, I have a place for you to stay. It is a rooming house and you will be provided a clean and safe room and three meals per day. Anything extra you will provide or establish an account and use the money out of that account. You will need a decent dress and a decent pair of shoes. This can take two to three years.”

Miss Lattie said, “I’ll do it. I understand.”

Patrick said, ”I’ll send money once per year for Miss Lattie’s housing and account. And I will pay you when I get back home.”

The lawyer said, “Agreed.”

He and Patrick shook hands and they signed the papers.

The lawyer said, “I’ll come and get you Miss Lattie. I don’t know when the judge will have you turn yourself in. But I will take the evidence and lock it away until the trial and I will investigate this first. I will never do anything without informing you every step of the way.”

Miss Lattie exhaled.

The lawyer was looking through his pages and pages of note and the contract he and Patrick signed and the contract he and Miss Lattie signed.

He took all the evidence and put it in a bag he brought.

He and Patrick walked to the train station.

They discussed the case.

Brenda looked terrible.

The train came and the lawyer boarded the train and went to his first class accommodations.

He worked on Miss Lattie’s case.

The worst case of this career.

He was going to win.

Patrick looked at the three tired women.

He knew not to discuss the case with Brenda.

This is a rare occasion they did not share.

Patrick, Mag and Natalie stayed with Miss Lattie.

Brenda locked the shed from the inside.

Lorraine got Mabel to get the men to help load the furniture from the store and the train.

They took all the furniture and put it on the train.

Lorraine sent Eleanor’s box of twenty blankets.

Lorraine sent Eleanor a telegram to pick up the box of twenty blankets.

Eleanor and Nathan went to the train station and picked up the blankets.

They saw some blacks walking in town.

Eleanor said, “They are still leaving the south.”

Nathan said, “This is the first time I have seen any.”

Shirley went to the bone hospital for a therapy.

Dr. Woodson and Dr. Greene wanted to keep her in the hospital.

Shirley was not using her wheelchair and was trying to walk everywhere.

Lorraine received a late request for Dan’s some curtains and blankets.

She and Steven ran to the largest store in Philadelphia and got the last six blankets and ten pair of curtains.

They put them in boxes and dropped them at the train station.

Steven pass a store and saw Christmas dresses Lorraine pulled him away and shook her head for no.

They left from the train and went to another side of town.

Lorraine said, “Steven we don’t have time. You have been invited to the Stiths for Thanksgiving you are to dress. I have already selected dresses for your sisters and a suit for you. But you need two suits since you are coming into money.”

The sales clerk came over and brought the clothes.

Steven picked up the dresses and laughed.

The sales clerks looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine shrugged her shoulders.

Steven said, “I’ll take those ten dresses. I need them shoes and stockings nicer coats, gloves and scarves and hats.”

The sales clerks went scrambling.

Lorraine stared at Steven.

Steven looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine said, “I smell you Steven. Get you outfits to wear.”

Lorraine clapped for a salesclerk.

He walked over.

Lorraine said, “He needs two suits, a black and navy.”

A man said, “And gray.”

Lorraine looked and it was Ryan.

She hugged him.

Lorraine said, “Ryan this is Steven. He is the man the Stiths have designing their buildings.”

Steven shook Ryan’s hand.

Ryan said, “Lorraine you are not coming back?”

Lorraine said, “No. Shirley is at the bone hospital today for therapy.”

Ryan nodded his head and was thinking.

Lorraine said, “What are you doing?”

Ryan said, “I had to buy my honey Christmas gift. They are scarce on everything.”

Steven said, “Oh. Alice. And my sisters.”

Ryan said, “How are my boys? No more adventures?”

Lorraine closed her eyes and motioned with her hands and said, “They should be on the train Wednesday when we get on the train.”

Ryan laughed.

Steven was looking around for gifts.

Ryan looked at Steven and said, “Good meeting you Steven. You have been given a reat opportunity with the Stiths. Make the best of it.”

Steven shook Ryan’s hand and sad, “Yes sir.”

Lorraine said, “Steven is an engineer and architect.”

Ryan made a face and said, “Oh.”

Lorraine rolled her eyes at Ryan.

Ryan walked out the store.

Steven selected gold crosses for Alicia and Emilou.

He selected a gold heart for Alicia.

He started crying.

He bought Alicia and Emilou a pearl of gold and a pair of pearl earrings.

The sales clerks brough Alicia and Emilou, stockings and several pairs of shoes.

Lorraine looked at them and selected three pair of shoes each.

She selected beautiful coats and matching scarves and gloves and put them in the pile and said, “Hats.”

The sales clerk went and found hats for Alicia and Emilou.

Steven showed Lorraine the earrings.

He said, “Mom and Dad did not get a chance to give them anything.”

He reached a pearl of earrings to Lorraine.

Lorraine said, “These pearl earrings are lovely.”

Steven looked at the sales clerk and said these too.”

Lorraine looked.

The sales clerk wrapped the earrings and gave them to Steven.

Steven said, “Please wrapped the other jewel but the heart shape necklace can you wrap it in a different paper?”

The sales person said, “Yes.”

Steven looked at Lorraine and said, “Thank you.”

Lorraine said, “Thank you.”

The sales clerk came back with three suits and several ties and shirts. The brough a coat and gloves, scarves and hats.

Steven said, “No hats.”

Lorraine said, “It’s going to be freezing this winter Steven.”

Lorraine reached the list of requested boots and socks to a sales clerk and told them separate check.

Steven looked at Lorraine.

Lorraine said, “He needs several pairs of slacks and shirts and vests.”

Steven started trying to add up the costs.

He could not.

Lorraine laughed.

Steven said, “I need shoes and socks.”

The sales clerks brought Steven several of pair of shoes.

Lorraine selected three pair of boots.

Steven sales were counted and he was closing his eyes and the clerk said, three hundred seventy three dollars and seventy two cents.

Steven said, “That’s it.”

He pointed to Lorraine earrings, which she was putting on.

The manager said, “Everything is counted.”

Steven , Lorraine and the salesclerks took the shopping to the carriage and they went back to the train.

They saw the hired loading the last order form Brenda.

Lorraine sent Brenda a telegram that the stores would not be opened until Monday and the items would go out on Monday’s train.

Steven got on the train and told Lorraine, “We have to spend time together Miss Lorraine.”

Lorraine said, “You will be busy building thins.”

He laughed.

She reached him the bag with the shoes Brenda ordered.

Steven was tired, sleepy and hungry.

He saw Lorraine watch the furniture and boxes being loaded.

She turned and went and got in her carriage and left.

She went straight to the bone hospital to see about Shirley.

Dr. Greene was a bit upset.

Shirley was upset because she wanted to go to a function with the snooty group she met at the christening of the Stith.

Lorraine said, “Shirley they don’t like you. They want to see if they can use you some kind of way. Especially that blonde girl with hazel eyes.”

Dr. Greene looked at Shirley.

Lorraine, Dr. Greene and Dr. Woodson were in the room with Shirley.

Lorraine said, “Brenda sent a telegram and wanted to know what are you doing with twenty five dresses.”

Shirley was trying to move her shoulder and said, “Ow.”

Dr. Woodson did not move.

He was disgusted with Shirley.

Shirley said, “I sold them.”

Lorraine said, “To who?”

Shirley said, “I sold three to Alice, two to her mother-in-law, six to Alice’s mother-in-law friend and two to Debra…”

Dr. Greene walked out the room and went to find Debra.

Shirley said, “We just sent a dress to Natalie and a dress to Mag.”

Lorraine said, “Shirley I can’t stop you from being played a fool by those snooty kids. You are killing yourself and when you see Skip you are going to be bent over and curled up and in pain. Where can you go and what type of time will be able to spend with him. These doctors can’t jump on a train and take a week from these patients to see about you when you could help yourself by doing therapy and using your wheelchair. “

Lorraine pointed to the door and said, “Go ahead Shirley.”

Shirley said, “That’s your argument, Skip.”

Lorraine said, “I don’t have an argument for life Shirley.”

Shirley looked at Dr, Woodson and said, “Dr. Woodson I can stay today and tomorrow but I have to leave Wednesday to catch the train.”

Dr. Woodson said, Ok Shirley you can stay in this room for the next two days.”

Lorraine said. “I am going back to the apartment and pack my these.”

Shirley said, “Lorraine you have to pack my things. I did not get a chance to pack anything.”

Lorraine said, “You won’t need underwear because you got plenty at home. You don’t need hair accessories and stockings.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Shirley I need to work on your shoulder.”

Shirley said, “I know.”

Shirley said, “Pack the ten holiday dresses and some of the shoes and none of my coats. And I need for you to go and give my teachers my final work.”

Shirley said, “Dr. Woodson can you reach Lorraine that bag?”

Dr. Woodson turned around and picked up the bag and said, “Shirley this bag is heavy. That’s why your shoulder is messed up. All you had to do was to put it in your lap and roll on your wheelchair.”

Lorraine said, “I counted seven classes.”

Shirley said, “Right.”

Dr. Woodson said, “Seven?”

Lorraine said, “She’s taking all her classed this semester to earn her certificate in December and next semester she will take six classes to get a high degree in business.”

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

Shirley grinned.

Lorraine put everything in the bag and was walking out the door.

Shirley said, “Lorraine no fighting.”

Lorraine closed the door.

She heard Shirley hollering as she walked up the hall she said, “Good.”

Lorraine saw Meredith and asked about the security men.

Meredith said, “Ryan released two this week and they don’t want to go home nor back to the Stiths. I put them over in the Stiths house for their railroad workers. Let Eleanor decide. Leon is slow, We thought his back was broken but it is not. The other two security men will probably go home in early December.”

Lorraine said, “Meredith take care of you and your baby and always have money on you to leave if you have to. I need to see Vivienne.”

Lorraine walked to Vivienne and spoke.

She checked on Sally’s condition.

Lorraine walked to the carriage and had the carriage to take her to the college and wait.

She went to the event Shirley was trying to attend and handed each professor Shirley’s work and left.

Lorraine walked to the carriage and left.

Steven ate and slept until the train’s whistle blew.

He was excited.

When the train rolled in Patrick, Brenda, Mag and Natalie were standing to greet the train.

The first thing they saw was Steven’s head hanging out the window.

He saw Natalie and said, “Hey Nattie, Nattie.”

Natalie laughed and waved.

When the train stopped Steven ran off the train and then ran back on the train and grabbed the package from Lorraine.

Patrick and Brenda stared at this clumsy but brilliant young man who only thought about his work and his sisters.

Steven ran off the train and slightly stumbled.

Steven said, “Hey.”

Patrick, Brenda and Mag waved at him.

Natalie giggled.

Steven said, “Lorraine sent this package. She did not tell me who it goes to.”

He looked at Brenda and handed it to Brenda.

Brenda handed the package to Mag.

Patrick smirked.

The seventeen men jumped off the train to unload the furniture.

Patrick opened the supply shed.

Steven walked to the door of the supply shed and stood and looked.

Patrick looked at Steven.

The seventeen workers looked at Steven and said, “Move.”

Steven walked in the supply shed and looked around.

Brenda watched Steven.

Natalie was grinning.

Mag smiled at Steven.

Patrick watched Steven.

Steven turned and saw the wood and the nails.

Patrick said, “Steven.”

Steven walked out the supply shed.

Brenda said, “Steven can you build Mag, Natalie and Josiah a simple four house for the winter.

Steven turned around in the dirt.

Brenda rolled her eyes.

Steven said, “Where?”

Brenda said, “I want it on this property.”

Steven ran several hundred feet away and stood.

The train conductor walked to Patrick, Brenda, Mag and Natalie who had turned and were watching Steven.

The train conductor turned and watched Steven.

Some people had gotten off the train and the conductor turned and looked at his clock and said, “You have thirty minutes.”

The men were walking.

One man said, “I heard this is the secret vacation of the governor.”

Another man said, “Here.”

Another man said, “He’s a big fisherman and hunter.”

The first man said, “You are right.

Patrick was looking at the men and said to the train conductor, “Peter you could not keep this quiet until we finished.”

Peter was rocking his feet with his hands in his pocket and said, “Nope. I have claimed my twelve acres out by the field. The governor told me fine.”

Patrick laughed.

Peter laughed.

Brenda glared at Peter.

Peter said, “I’ll be retiring in a couple of years and start a small business here. I can make a fortune. Not like yours.”

Patrick laughed.

But he was thinking.

Lillie was at the line with her horse and wagon that Natalie told her not to cross.

Patrick explained what her common law husband said happened to Lillie. Natalie has been sick and wanted to apologize to her.

Mag and Brenda did not say anything.

Lillie said, “I can take you to lake if you want?”

The men looked back at the train conductor he nodded his head.

The men jumped on the wagon and Lillie took off.

Mag said, “I’ll give her the shoes and stocks when she returns,

Brenda said, “She uses correct grammar.”

Patrick said, “And?”

Brenda said, “Proper education. I hope she is not another Eleanor.”

Patrick turned and looked at Brenda.

Steven was stooping down and slightly looked back and stood and had dirt in his hand. He was letting the dirt run through his fingers.

The train conductor said, “What is he doing? What are we looking at?

Patrick said, “We asked him to make a simple four wall house for them for the winter. Let’s see what he is going to do.”

Peter said, “Is he the one that made the rest stops?”

Patrick said, “Yes.”

Brenda was watching Peter.

Steven turned and ran to the supply shed.

He turned and looked and grinned.

Natalie grinned.

Mag looked at Natalie.

She said, “Leave him alone Natalie, he is mine’s.”

Brenda grabbed Mag’s hand and hit her.

Brenda and Mag started laughing.

Mag said, “Look at Nattie, Nattie. I’ll be so glad when Josiah get here. She thinks she is the finest thing around here.”

Natalie, Mag and Brenda were hollering.

Patrick turned and looked at the women.

Peter looked at the women.

Patrick turned and looked at Steven and said, “Yall are married women.”

Natalie was smiling and said, “I wondered when they will see.”

Brenda was nearly on the ground.

Mag was right behind her.

Natalie said, “Not only is he a genius but he…”

Patrick said, “Don’t. I’m glad Lorraine was too busy to ‘see’.”

Mag and Natalie started laughing.

Patrick turned and looked at them.

He said, “Lorraine?”

Mag said, “She sent a telegram.”

Brenda hit the ground.

Steven walked out the supply shed and saw the women laughing.

Natalie turned her head.

Brenda was trying to get up.

Steven ran to help Brenda up.

Patrick said, “She is alright. Don’t help her.”

Steven was looking at Patrick.

Brenda turned her head.

Mag stared.

Steven said, “I got it.

He continued to get Brenda up.

Mag was looking.

Brenda was mouthing at Mag to stop.

Mag said, “I am a widow.”

Natalie walked away to scream.

Mag said, “That Lorraine is a mess.”

Patrick said, “She is.”

Steven was holding Brenda and looking at the area.

Patrick walked and took Brenda’s arm from Steven.

Patrick stared at Brenda.

Peter looked at Steven and turned his head.

Steven did not know they were talking about him.

Steven ran to the area and said, “The stream comes underground here. You don’t have to go and get water. We can dig a trench for the water to come down here and the only thing you have to do is put your bucket in and get the water. This is flat and solid land. We can put up a four wall, roof and floor in less than a week. Because the wood in the shed is pre for building.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Steven.

Natalie was pretending she was looking for Lillie and the men. She heard less thana week.

She turned and ran back.

Steven said, “Those seventeen men Miss Lorraine hired They are good at taking orders. They can nail the walls together and work on the roof and would be the last thing. Miss Lorraine sent some rugs which could help the floors or the walls.”

Patrick turned and looked back at the train and some of the men were sitting and some were hanging over the train’s rail.

Steven said, “Test them. Let them work today and tomorrow when the train gets here Thursday and if they have not completed a task. Send them back.”

Patrick stared at Steven, “You call Lorraine Miss Lorraine. You show her respect. I like that.”

Brenda was laughing and fell into Patrick’s back.

Patrick looked at Peter and they heard the patrons coming back with Lillie.

They gave Lillie tips and she grinned.

Mag walked to Lillie and gave her the shoes and stockings.

Natalie walked to Lillie and said, “Lillie I am a Christian. I had no right to talk to you the way I did the other day. I am sorry.”

Lillie said, “People call me stupid. I can feel this thing in my head and no one can get it out. Pray for me please.”

Natalie and Mag said, “I will.”

Lillie turned and rode home.

The patrons were excited.

One man said, “That was a big catfish that jumped on the top of the lake.”

One of the men said, “I want a piece of land here. “

Peter said, “I’ll be the realtor here in ta year when everything is inspected by the governor’s office.”

Brenda said, “Damn I knew he was up to no good. Watch Steven around him.”

Patrick said, “Steven can you supervise this?”

Steven said, “I can but I want to go home. I told Alicia I would help her with her nursing studies.”

Natalie said, “Like you are a doctor.”

Steven said, “In two more years. I had to pick whether I wanted to get two degrees which I could afford but the medical degree was the cost of the two degrees I got. But I love to be a doctor. I want to finish medical school and working on your hospital got my heart going more towards being a doctor. I can be a great one.”

Patrick and Brenda stared at Steven.

Mag was standing behind Brenda staring at Steven.

Natalie’s mouth was opened.

Natalie started walking towards Steven.

Mag looked and said, “Natalie where are you going?”

Natalie said, “Tell Josiah I love him and he can see the baby whenever he wants.”

Mag said, “Stop.”

Natalie said, “You can have Josiah.”

Mag said, “He is my son. That’s why I can have him.”

Brenda was speechless.

She said, “Shirley. Sorry Skip.”

Peter looked at the women.

Patrick turned and said, “You three…”

The women looked at Patrick and he said, ”Just stop.”

He stared at Brenda and removed her arm.

Patrick walked to Peter and they started to the train.

Peter said, “You leaving him with the pack of wolves?”

Patrick looked at Peter and saw Steven stooping down and looking in the woods.

He said, “Steve.”

Steven looked up and Patrick waved for him to some with him.

Steven ran to Patrick and Peter.

Brenda stuck her tongue out at Patrick.

Patrick stopped and looked at Brenda and shook his head.

Natalie was just looking at Steven as he passed.

Mag said, “My God. That boy is a genius. We are sitting around here calling him dense and clumsy he is probably thinking on all types of stuff we cannot imagine. Let me go and sit down.”

Mag went and sit on the sofa in the supply shed.

Natalie stood for a minute.

Brenda came and sit in one of the chairs.

Brenda rubbed the chair arm and said, “This is the new fabric they are upholstering the chairs with. We saw this in Philadelphia.”

Natalie walked in and sat in the other chair.

Mag said, “You’re talking about Shirley.”

Brenda said, “I could not say me with Patrick standing there. Skip is similar. I just don’t say anything. I believe Eleanor is concerned.”

Mag screamed.

Patrick, Peter and Steven were walking back.

Peter said, “I know that scream.”

Steven was still walking with dirt in his hand and mumbling.

Steven looked at Natalie and said, “Hey Nattie. Nattie. What’s wrong?’

Patrick said, “You all need to be working.”

Brenda said, “I’m retired.”

Mag said, “I’m on break.”

Steven said, “NAttie I can show you how to listen to the baby’s heart beat.”

Mag turned and looked at Brenda.

Patrick said, “Steven, Natalie is alright she can go to Philadelphia to Ryan if she needs to.”

Steven said, “I met him. He a Christmas shopping for his honey. Lorraine introduced us. She told him I was an architect and engineer he was like whoa.”

Brenda smiled.

Mag turned her head from Patrick.

Steven said, “Maybe when I finish medical school that would impress him. I know there is a way to look in the human body and see what is wrong like that lady was saying.”

Patrick said, “Steven you heard her?”

Steven said, “Yeah. I heard all of you.”

Mag nearly fainted.

Brenda sit still.

Patrick said, “Good for all of you. You show him respect. Give me the key to the suite so I can lock Steven’s things in it until the train get to Cedartown tomorrow evening. The men will stay here and work for the next two days.”

Peter said, “Three.”

He turned his head because they were off schedule.

Brenda went in her skirt pocket and handed Patrick the key.

Patrick, Steven and Peter ran to the train and picked up his packages and put them in the owner’s suite.

Patrick had the kitchen to give him the extra food.

The patron’s were looking because they were going into an extra hour at the city.

Brenda and Mag heard a lot of little mouths.

The children were yelling, “Miss Mag.”

Mag said, “What is that?”

She stood and walked out the supply shed.

She saw Lillie’s children had their new boots and socks on.

Brenda was too embarrassed to move.

The children said, “Miss Natalie told us not to cross this line.”

Mag said, “She told your mother that.”

Natalie stood and walked out the shed to the children and said, “I told your mother that the other day.”

The oldest boy was grinning and said, “She can come back?”

Mag was about to say yes.

Natalie said, “No.”

Patrick reached the key to Brenda.

Patrick looked at her and he looked at the workers.

Steven was walking to the supply shed with all the food the cooks gave them.

Patrick looked at Brenda and said, “With your nasty self.”

Brenda said, “You fell for it.”

Patrick looked at her and turned his head and said, “You bought the children boots and socks?”

Brenda said, “Yes.”

Steven told me the land was flat and solid they did not have to move the grass but build on top of it. He showed the men the pieces of wood that were whole.

The seventeen men worked into the dark.

The neighborhood came and watched the workers.

Lillie’s children sat and watched with the other children.

Miss Lattie had made coffee and cinnamon rolls and brought them up to the men.

Brenda saw her coming and went into the supply shed and stayed.

Patrick did not say anything.

He, Mag and Natalie treated her as usual.

Patrick went and was testing the strength of the walls.

He was shocked at the sturdiness of the walls.

Steven was busy with seven men building the roof.

Steven did not move.

Brenda noticed that about Steven when his mind is on something he will not stop until it is finish.

At night fall the men had all four walls up and cut out the front and back doors and windows on each wall.

Steven had four men working on the floor.

The train rolls into Cedartown late because of Patrick having the men help build the house.

Patrick sent Eleanor a telegram to meet the train and go into the owner’s suite and get all of Steven’s packages and give them to his sisters.

Lorraine sent a telegram to Jose and told him to have Dan get his boxes with his name on it.

Dan was already at the train station waiting for the train with the Stiths wagon.

Eleanor rode up in her carriage.

Alicia and Emilou were in the carriage waiting for Steven.

Eleanor saw Dan and she looked at the carriage and she spoke.

Dan nodded.

Eleanor leaned forward and saw Alicia and Emilou.

Alicia and Emilou were talking.

Emilou was loud and giggling and talking to Alicia.

Eleanor knew the train was late.

She looked at her time and stepped out the carriage.

Dan thought, “I hope she does not say anything to me about this wagon.”

Dan stepped out of the wagon and walked to Eleanor.

He said, “Train late.”

Eleanor said, “Only by forty five minutes. I heard you bought a house.”

Dan said, “Yes ma am. It has a stream and fish is in it.”

Eleanor looked at how excited Dan was about the house.

She said, “Dan are you prepared for the winter?”

Dan said, “No ma am.”

Eleanor stared at Dan.

Dan looked at Eleanor and said, “I know she thinks I am stupid.”

Dan said, “Steven and Lorraine were to buy me whatever they found. I brought your wagon so I can put it in. I have to buy me a wagon.”

Nathan went to Eleanor’s office to pick up the twenty blankets that Lorraine sent.

He and Eleanor sat and talked.

He told Eleanor what Jose told him about Dan’s neighborhood.

Eleanor was so shocked and scared.

She sat at her desk with her mouth opened.

Nathan was sitting across from her.

He thought, “Oh God I thought she was stronger than that.”

Eleanor could only think about her children.

She said, “My children.”

Nathan said, “My wife and my future children. That’s why we watch, listen and plan against the, I talked to the military about Maximillian and Theresa Bundy. The military said they are their list but they lost them after the civil war. I gave them the address provided to me. I believe Dan will not take anything from them. Their symbol is a double horseshoe. Stay away from them. They are on the college campuses. I want to become a federal agent like the sheriff and his deputies. I have my eye on someone that can take over as sheriff.”

Nathan said, “I heard how you lost it and beat Percy.”

Eleanor blinked.

Nathan said, “Don’t blink. Don’t do it again. It sound to me that you snapped for a short time. They are boys they will try you. I hope he does not do that again. I did all kind of things from twelve to sixteen. Then I joined the military. I know you love your kids and it is rough by yourself. Maybe one day you will tell me the real issue with Bruce.”

Nathan looked at Eleanor.

He got up and left.

Eleanor looked at Dan as he stood by her waiting for the train.

The train’s whistle blew.

Alicia and Emilou looked at each other and screamed.

Dan said, “They love their brother.”

Eleanor smiled.

She thought about in a few days her whole bunch will be back home.

The rolled in.

Eleanor took the key out her purse.

Dan saw her gun.

Dan said, “You carry a gun?”

Eleanor said, “Have to now. Times have changed. Everybody either want your life or your money.”

Dan said, “I know. I have recently been made aware of that evil.”

Eleanor looked at Dan.

Emilou said, “Steven.”

Eleanor said, “Steven is not on this train. He stayed to help build a house for Mag and Natalie. He will be on the train with my family. I need to tell them.”

Eleanor walked over to an excited Emilou and Alicia.

She said, “Hello. Steven is not on this train. He stayed to help my father and mother.

He will be on the train that will arrive Friday.”

Alicia and Emilou’s faces dropped.

Emilou started crying.

Alicia held her.

She turned to walk away.

Eleanor said, “Steven sent your things. I am here to get them and give them to you.”

The train stopped.

Eleanor walked to the train.

Peter stepped off the train the people were getting off the train.

Dan was looking at the cargo cars.

He walked to the train’s cargo car.

Peter helped Eleanor on the train.

Dan thought, “She really look good. Maybe she can find a man that will appreciate her good looks.”

Eleanor waved at Dan and said, “Dan, come and help me.”

Dan stood and looked at Eleanor because he wanted his boxes.

Alicia and Emilou walked to the train.

The men were talking to Peter about buying land in the city.

Eleanor heard the conversation.

Eleanor saw Alicia and Emilou and said, “You can come on board if you want.”

Alicia and Emilou ran to the train and Dan helped them on.

Eleanor walked to the owner’s suite.

Dan was walking looking back.

Eleanor said, “Dan your boxes aren’t going off this train. Help me with whatever is in here.”

She said, “No body told you not to be prepared. They say this is the last week of this fair weather.”

Dan, Alicia and Emilou stood and waited for Eleanor to unlock the door.

Dan said, “I see why Lorraine and Jose fight with you all the time.”

Eleanor said, “Don’t you start.”

Alicia and Emilou looked at Dan.

They walked into the owner’s suite.

Alicia, Emilou and Dan said, “Whoa.”

Eleanor said, “I love theses suites. Here is your stuff.”

Emilou and Alicia ran to the packages.

Eleanor looked around the suite and said, “Alicia and Emilou you don’t want to wait for Steven and open the packages with him?”

Alicia had a package in her hands ready to rip it open.

Emilou had a pair of stockings in her hands and looked at Eleanor.

Dan said, “That’s the way I feel about my boxes.

Eleanor looked back and said, “Dan there are some boxes over there. See…”

Dan ran to the boxes stooped down and saw his name.

He was grinning and ripped open one box.

Eleanor said, “They did not tell me they put your boxes in here.”

Alicia and Emilou looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Dan is by himself. Your brother bought those things for you.”

Alicia said, “One package.”

Eleanor said, “I can’t tell you what to do.”

Alicia looked at Emilou.

They grabbed the biggest bag and opened it.

It was Steven’s suits.

Eleanor looked at them and then at Dan.

Dan said, “Well they got me six blankets.”

Eleanor said is that enough?”

Dan said, “It’s only me.”

Eleanor, “Only me without coal.”

Dan looked at Eleanor and said, “It’s your fault.”

He jumped excitedly after the floor.

He looked at the disappointed Alicia and Emilou and said, “Only two more days.”

He looked down at the suits and said, “Nice suits.”

Dan had his boxes and were leaving.

Eleanor, Alicia and Emilou said, “Dan!”

He looked and said, “Let me take this to my wagon. Rather your wagon.”

He rolled his eyes because he was on the way home.

Dan put his boxes in the wagon and came back and helped Alicia and Emilou.

Eleanor locked the suite and left and went home.

Dan was happy and he rushed home and put up his curtains downstairs.

He ran upstairs and looked in each bedroom was jumping up and down.

The bedrooms were very nice with the sheets and spreads.

He realized Lorraine got him neutral color curtains that matched every room.

He was sitting on the floor in the hall smiling that his life was finally coming together.

Alicia and Emilou got home and made several trips to the carriage to get their packages.

A few neighbors watched them.

One neighbor said, “Where is mine. I know you got one for me.”

Emilou was about to say something to the woman.

Alicia looked at Emilou and said, “Don’t open your mouth. Get in the house.”

Emilou but the packages.”

Alicia said, “Emilou I will spank you.”

Emilou went in the house.

The women walked over and was leaning on the fence.

Alicia finished taking the packages in the house.

She came out and looked at the women and hollered and said, “Get off my fence.”

The women did not move.

Alicia drove the carriage around back and unhitched the horses and feed the horses and gave them water.

She got the water for the next two days,

She stopped and picked a few apples to try to bake an apple pie for Steven.

She walked to the house and saw the women had their hands on the fence lock, but Steven had a special lock and it could not be picker.

Alicia could not believe what she was seeing.

She eased in the house and closed and looked the door.

She pulled a chair under the doo knob.

Emilou was sitting at the table and said, “Alicia why are you doing that. These are our friends.”

Alicia did not say anything to Emilou.

Alicia pulled out Emilou’s schoolwork and she whispered do your work.”

Alicia went into her bedroom and fell on her knees and prayed.

She said, “Oh God these people are up to something against us. Protect us and make them stop. I am scared and I don’t know what to do.”

Alicia sat on the bed and was shaking.

Her eyes fell on the shotgun and shells under the sitting room sofa. Steven put it under his ragged bed but when the new furniture came she put it under the sofa.

She walked in the sitting room and went and pulled the shotgun out and loaded it.

Emilou said, “We got one of those?’

Alicia said, “Be quiet and do your schoolwork.”

She put the shotgun under her bed.

She thought and double check and locked up the back.

Alicia went and got a chair and put it at the back door.

She was so afraid.

Alicia pulled their clothes out for Thursday and Friday.

She thought about Miss Eleanor how elegant she looked.

Alicia thought she and Emilou don’t look poor like they have in the past.

She noticed the wealthier students started speaking to her.

Alicia still are around her true friends.

She and Emilou saw Sarah one day in town and they went to the restaurant and ate and Alicia paid.

They had a good time talking.

Sarah showed Alicia her skirts. Alicia and Emilou wanted a skirt and day.

Alicia smiled that she found someone she could meet and have a slice of pie with.

She put all the packages on the sitting room sofa.

Alicia lit their lanterns.

She walked to the table and sat.

Alicia walked to the table and sat with Emilou and they did their schoolwork.

Emilou said, “Finished.”

She was yawning.

Alicia said, “Go and dress for bed. I’ll be in and we pray.”

Alicia pulled Emilou’s schoolwork and reviewed it.

She marked somethings on her schoolwork.

Alicia stood and walked to Emilou’s room and sat on her bed and Emilou was sleep.

Alicia said, “God bless us and keep us from evil. In JESUS’ name.”

She sat on Emilou’s bed and thought about the neighborhood women.

She was so hoping Steven would be back.

She looked at Emilou.

Alicia walked back to the table and finished her schoolwork.

She went to her bed and went to sleep.

Steven gave her the room with the door since she was a young lady.

They made Emilou’s room very chic and modern.

Alicia was worried about the neighbor and was tossing and turning.

She was jumping up in her bed at every sound.

The next thing she knew Emilou was standing at her bed and said, “Good morning. Breakfast.”

Alicia looked at a fully dressed Emilou and she was shocked and jumped out of bed and ran to the kitchen and made Emilou some oatmeal.

While Emilou was eating Alicia washed and dressed.

They ran out the house and Alicia hitched the horses to her carriage.

She ran back to the house and made sure there was no fire in the house and put out the lanterns.

She ran out the front door and locked it.

She and Emilou rode fast to get to school on time.

Emilou jumped out at her school.

She was eating an apple.

Alicia said, “Where are all the people?”

Emilou said, “They aren’t up yet.”

Alicia said, “What?”

Emilou said, “I wanted to get to school early to play with my friends.”

Alicia started coming out her seat to grab Emilou.

Some other carriages pulled up and the children jumped out and Emilou ran to them.

Alicia could not believe Emilou.

The other parents said, “They got you too?”

Alicia tried to smile.

She finally saw the time. She had an hour before she need to be at school.

She pulled the wagon to exit onto the road and she stopped and was combing and bushing her hair and was putting a hair band on it when she heard a noise.

Her horses bucked and she had to catch her carriage.

She was startled and looked around.

When she turned back around she saw a military troop coming.

She was so scared but wondered about Ben. She had not heard from him in over three months.

She stood and was looking at the soldiers to see if he was in that group.

People on the street ran over to the sides.

All the wagons and horses on the streets moved over to the side.

Alicia was scanning through the troop.

When she turned around she was looking into the eyes of Ben.

Her big smile turned into a big grin.

The people saw Alicia grinning and said, “That soldier is your man.”

Alicia grinned and a thought came to her, “You were ready to spank Emilou for you getting her to school early. If you would be on time you would not have seen Ben and thought about that other guy.”

Alicia turned around and looked and wondered if that was her thought.

She slowly rode to school. She thought about her schoolwork and she thought about Ben.

Alicia went and got Emilou and they ate a restaurant and rode home.

Alicia said, “Emilou we have to get more organize to get everything done and in the house before dark.

Emilou said, “I can get out and lock the fence.”

Alicia had no peace with that and said, “You get our books and go in the house. When I stop and lock the fence back.”

Emilou said, “Why are we doing this locking?”

Alicia laughed and rubbed Emilou’s face.

They got home and Alicia unlocked the fence and drove the carriage into the yard.

She locked the fenced back.

Craig was walking to go and lit the city lanterns.

He cut his eyes at Alicia’s carriage.

Alicia saw Craig and stared at him.

She thought, “Hold on another day.”

Emilou was still in the carriage. Alicia sat in the carriage an Emilou scared her. She drove around back.

They unhitched the horses and feed the horses and gave them water.

Alicia checked the water.

She and Emilou got their bags out the carriage and walked around to the front of the house.

Alicia unlocked the door and once inside locked it back.

They lit the lanterns and sat at the table and finished their schoolwork.

Alicia forgot and jumped and checked the back of the house and put water in the kitchen for the next day.

They prayed and went to bed.

Shirley was at the bone hospital until Wednesday morning.

Lorraine came to the hospital and checked with Debra for any telegrams.

Shirley was finishing her therapy with Dr. Ralph.

Lorraine heard Shirley. She sat in the hospital’s lobby and was looking out the door.

She had the carriage out the door waiting for them.

Dr. Ralph helped Shirley off the bed and helped her walk to Lorraine.

Lorraine as looking out the door and wondering if she had enough coal and oil.

She thought, “All of this work I did for them, they better give me some coal if I need it.”

She laughed out.

Dr. Greene looked at Lorraine.

Dr. Ralph looked at Lorraine and he missed that laugh after three years.

Shirley said, “Lorraine.”

Lorraine stood and took Shirley’s arm and helped her out the door.

Dr. Ralph helped Shirley to the carriage.

Lorraine was smiling.

Dr. Ralph stood and watched them pull off.

Dr. Greene and Dr. Woodson stared at Dr. Ralph.

Hutch said, “I bet they would have pretty babies.”

Dr. Greene stared at Hutch and looked at his chart.

Dr. Woodson looked at Hutch with a puzzle look.

Dr. Charles said, “I am going to have a good looking son with Vivienne.”

Dr. Greene looked at Dr. Charles and said, “Charles you are not divorce from that boss woman. Vivienne has some horrific scars and you have not spent time with her to see where her mind is and you don’t know how old she is and even if she is willing to be married and have children.”

Dr. Woodson said, “You are free from the boss and putting that mind on Vivienne and she is so vulnerable.”

Dr. Charles got his chart and walked with Dr. Ralph to the other side of the hospital.

Debra walked out the hospital’s administrator’s office with the two dresses she bought from Shirley.

Dr. Greene looked at Debra and said, “Shirley is gone.”

Debra said, “Darn I could not return them.”

Dr. Woodson chuckle.

Dr. Greene was staring at Debra.

She turned and walked back to the office and closed the door.

Dr. Greene said, “Bradley you are getting your chuckle back.”

Bradley looked at Dr. Greene and said, “Thank GOD.”

Dr. Greene said, “Let’s see our patients.”

Debra pulled the dress she was going to wear for Thanksgiving dinner at Ryan’s.

She measured the dress against her and was happy with it.

She tried on the dress for Christmas and loved it.

Shirley and Lorraine’s carriage was pulling in the train station.

The train was pulling in as they were getting out the carriage.

Lorraine loaded Shirley’s wheelchair along with all their bags in the carriage.

Lorraine gave Beverly her key to Shirley’s apartment.

Lorraine double checked the apartment and everything was secured.

The boys were looking out the windows and saw Lorraine and Shirley and yelled at them.

The porters came and got all their bags and took them to the owners’ suite.

The boys ran off the train to Lorraine and Shirley.

Everyone was glad to see each other.

The train whistle blew.

Everyone ran to the train but Shirley.

Bruce was helping Shirley.

Everyone was in the owner’s suite.

Lorraine said, “Where is my first class seat?”

Peter said, “Sorry the train is full you have to ride in the second class car.”

Peter was walking Lorraine through the cars.

Michael walked and looked and when Peter showed Lorraine to a seat.

Michael got Lorraine by the hand.

Thomas got her other hand and they walked her to their suite.

Shirley said, “I need help.”

They were settled in for the day and the night.

Lorraine slept on the sofa.

Michael said, “Why is sleeping on the sofa. Grandma and grandpa bedroom is open?”

Percy said, “To keep us from leaving out.”

The boys were having a good time.

Thursday evening when the train rolled in from Cedartown.

The simple house was complete because of the type of wood that was in the supply shed.

Patrick and Brenda were awe struck.

Mag was jumping up and down on the floors and running into the walls.

Peter got off the train and ran to see the house.

The seventeen men were happy at their work.

Steven was putting in the windows and doors.

Patrick was holding the last window for Steven to adjust in what in place.

He said, “Brenda go and get our stuff from Miss Lattie that other train will be here in thirty minutes.”

Steven said, “I am ready to go home.”

Brenda did not move.

Patrick looked at her and said, “Come and hold this window. I have had it with your attitude.”

Brenda walked over and held the window for Steven.

The seventeen men were standing and waiting for their pay.

Steven saw the men and said, “Mr. Patrick the men. They have to be paid.”

Patrick turned around and went in his pocket and gave each man a hundred dollars.

The men were happy.

They ran and jumped on the train.

Peter walked to Steven and looked in the house and said, “Nice.”

Brenda could not stand Peter.

Peter put the seventeen men in the second class car.

Natalie told Mag, “Peter put the men in the second class car and then the one at the end before the cargo.”

Mag said, “There is plenty of seats in the first class car.”

Brenda listened and did not say anything.

Brenda had the men to put the furniture in the new house.

Steven said, “I hope I find them when I need help in the future.”

Brenda said, “I can find them through Mabel.”

Brenda, Mag and Steven put the rugs down on the floor and pulled the furniture around in the house.

Mag and Natalie were happy.

They did not have time to complete the bedrooms but they put up a wall to divide the bedrooms.

Brenda hugged Steven.

Patrick helped with the boxes.

Mag said, “We have to put up blankets until we get curtains.”

Brenda said, “I am positive I have curtains in the storage area. I will check time I get home and telegram you when I put them on the train.”

Miss Lattie was standing with Patrick.

Brenda knew she was going to come to say bye.

Brenda thought about the times she killed people to set the slaves free.

She asked God to forgive her.

She knew Miss Lattie had killed but did not know who and why. She asked GOD to forgive her now she is asking GOD to forgive her for bad feelings towards Miss Lattie.

Brenda knew the train was about to pull in and she had only a short time to speak with Miss Lattie. She did not know what Miss Lattie has decided to face. Whether prison or execution.

Brenda did not want her to come in Mag and Natalie’s house.

She walked out and saw Miss Lattie and spoke and was very pleasant.

Patrick was nervous. But he knew Brenda was almost always pleasant.

Steven put up the blankets to the windows.

Natalie was so well pleased.

The train whistle.

Patrick ran in the house to take one final look before the train rolled in.

The neighborhood people walked and looked at the house.

One of the men said, “It’s a good thang yall moved. They saw some bears down where yall were. The Lord knew when to move you.”

Natalie mouth flew opened.

Brenda yes widened with fear.

The man had his gun with him and said, “I don’t know what they were looking for they have a whole lake of fish. They should be in for the winter.”

Mag pulled their two wagons to the side of the house and took out the shotgun and ammunition.

Patrick said, “I’ll send you something when we get back.”

The train stopped.

Steven heard it.

He looked around the simple house and grinned and the furniture made it pretty.

All the grandchildren were in windows and screaming at Patrick and Brenda.

Brenda hugged Miss Lattie and she hugged Mag and Natalie and said, “Anything Mag telegram.”

Steven was right behind Brenda and hugged Miss Lattie, Mag and Natalie and he ran to the train.

Brenda was grinning and waving at her grandchildren.

She saw Lorraine in the owner’s suite and wondered about the first class accommodations.

Patrick hugged Miss Lattie, Mag and Natalie.

He rushed to the train and saw all his grandchildren.

He saw Thomas and Michael walk from the windows.

Patrick said, “GOD please deliver my grandchildren and any child or family that has gone through this. In JESUS’ name.”

The conductor told Steven he had to go to second class.

Steven said, “Why?”

Brenda looked at Mike and looked through the door at the first class accommodations.

Brenda looked at Steven and touched his elbow and said, “Have a seat Steven.”

Patrick stepped on the train and saw Mike taking Steven to the second class accommodations.

Patrick did not say anything but he and Brenda walked through the first class cars and there were plenty of seats.

The patrons looked at Brenda as if she did not belong on the train and leaned over to keep her from touching them.

Steven knew what Mike was doing.

Mag and Natalie knew what Peter was doing.

Brenda and Patrick went to the suite and they were hugged by everyone.

Thomas and Michael were sitting in the corner.

Patrick and Brenda walked over to them and hugged them.

Patrick said, “Lorraine who are you in here?”

Michael said, “That man put her all the way in the back.”

Thomas said, “We went and got here.”

Brenda was checking the rooms.

She said, “Do you know Steven?”

Thomas said, “The mixed man that got on the train?”

Michael said, “Emilou’s brother.”

Brenda said, “Yes. Go and get him and take him next door and use this key to unlock that door.”

Thomas and Michael ran out the suite and went to the end of the train and found Steven.

They brought Steven back to their suite first.

Thomas knocked on the door.

Patrick opened the door.

Steven looked at the suite and said, “Oh.”

Michael and Thomas laughed.

Steven said, “Thank you.”

Patrick said, “We’ll settled up once we get home.”

Steven said, “Yes sir. Hey Lorraine.”

Lorraine picked up her bag and said, “Wait.”

Michael said, “Lorraine where are you going?’

Lorraine said, “To sleep on a bed.”

Thomas ran to the suite and unlocked the door.

Patrick was standing at the door when he heard say ‘hey’.

Patrick opened the suite door and said, “Mike is there a problem?”

Michael said, “You yelled at us and said, ‘hey’. You are mean to black people.”

Brenda heard the discussion and knew Patrick had to make a decision.

She walked to the door and opened it wide.

Mike looked at Brenda.

Steven and Brenda stood and watched.

Mike looked at Michael and said, “I’ll leave when I return to Philadelphia.”

Patrick said, “Put your papers in my hand.”

Lorraine looked at the clerks and said tub of hot water.”

She looked at Steven.

Thomas and Michael stayed with Lorraine and Steven for most of the evening.

They went to the dining car.

They knocked on the door and Patrick went with them.

Brenda took a hot bath and was playing cards with Shirley.

Bruce and Percy were playing games.

They ordered hot soup.

Patrick and Lorraine were talking and her friend was the cook.

She got up and talked to the cook.

The cook said, “Mr. Stith, your line is full of them.”

Patrick said, “Thank you.”

Thomas said, “Full of what?”

Michael said, “White people who hate black people.”

Thomas said, “Aren’t we black?’

Michael said, “Yes.”

Patrick and Brenda talked about the color problem before they married. They have not regretted one moment of their lives together.

Eleanor was at the train station and Alicia and Emilou were waiting.

They got out the carriage and walked to Eleanor.

Eleanor spoke to them and she looked at Alicia and Emilou and said, “You two are very pretty.”

Alicia and Emilou said thank you.

The train rolled in that evening.

Michael’s mouth was the biggest, yelling out the window.

Eleanor laughed and laughed.

Alicia and Emilou were looking for Steven.

Steven and Lorraine were on the balcony of the suite and yelled and waved at Alicia and Emilou.

They were jumping up and down.

Mike readied the train and Steven was the first person off the train and he ran to Emilou and Alicia.

They hugged each other.

They went to their carriage and went home.

Alicia told Steven she saw Ben coming back with the troop and she was about to start dating another man.

Steven said, “Alicia he is a soldier they be gone all the time.”

Alicia sighed and said, “I know.”

She told Steven about the women in the neighborhood.

Steven started thinking.

Steven got out and unlocked the gate and Alicia pulled the horses and they walked into the gate.

Steven was thinking. He locked the gate back and jumped in the carriage and drove around back.

Alicia and Emilou jumped out the wagon and Steven unhitched the horses, feed them. Gave them water and he groomed all six horses.

Steven checked the fence that was all around the house.

He looked at the back of the house.

They sat on the back porch and talked.

Steven told them about his job building a simple house for Miss Mag and Miss Natalie.

Emilou was sitting in Steven’s lap and jumped up and said can we go in the house and open our packages.

Steven started laughing.

He looked back the door.

Alicia said, “I put a chair behind it.”

Steven goy his bags and picked up Emilou’s bags and carried her to the front porch.

Alicia unlocked the door and opened it.

She said, “Steven.”

Steven looked back he saw several of the neighbors peeping at him.

They walked in the house and he closed and locked the door.

Steven saw his suit package was opened.

Alicia and Emilou said Miss Eleanor told us to wait for you and told us to open only package.

Steven laughed and said, “Oh you did not get the package you want.”

He walked to one bag and said, “What about this package Emilou?”

She opened the package and pulled out a new coat, gloves, scarf and a hat she could not scream but had her mouth opened.

Steven and Alicia laughed.

Steven gave them the earrings and teared up and said, “Because mom and dad did not get a chance to start buying you jewelry.

Steven took the necklaces and put them under his mattress.

Emilou looked and Alicia looked.

Steven said, “Your Christmas’ gifts. Open this Alicia.”

Alicia opened her big bag and it was a brand new coat, gloves, scarf and hat.”

Alicia was happy.

They opened and saw the five dresses for the holidays.

Alicia could not believe and the shoes.

The three put up all the clothes.

Steven thought the house looked good.

Alicia made an apple pie.

Steven smiled.

He pulled out his bag and gave Alicia two jars of Blackberry preserves he got from Miss Lattie.

Steven was sitting at the table and going over the budget.

Emilou was going to bed and came and hugged Steven.

She said, “Good night.”

She kissed him.

Alicia reached for Emilou’s hand and they walked to her bed and they prayed.

Alicia sat down and said, “You are going over the money. You can have my money back.”

Steven looked at Alicia, “Why Alicia you say that?’

Alicia said, “We never had much.”

She put her head on top of her hands on the table

Steven said, “We never had much because people tried to keep us from having anything. Even an apple tree.”

Alicia told Steven of how Emilou got her up an hour early and she could have miss Ben.

She said, “It is a amazing how God used a black woman to give you a job and they have paid you so much and our lives have been changed. We have more now than in the past. One family ha so much money that they are able to help other families and God gives them more.”

Steven said, “Let us do that but not with these people.”

Alicia said, “I agree. I’m going to bed.”

She leaned forward and kissed Steven on his cheek.

She stood sand pushed her chair under the table and went to bed.

Steven sat at the table and read his books and studied.

He fell asleep in the chair.

Steven wanted to see Alice.

They all dressed and went to the capitol and saw Alice and Ginger their grandparents were there to take them home for Thanksgiving.

Ginger looked at Steven.

Alice was trying to talk to Steven as a friend.

Alicia stared at Ginger.

Emilou said, “Good morning we came to take you to eat.”

Alice tried to smile and said, “Thank you, but our grandparents are here to take us home for Thanksgiving.”

Steven was thinking and he turned from Alicia and looked at Ginger.

He turned back to Alicia and said, “Have a good holiday.”

Alice said, “Maybe you can come for Thanksgiving dinner.”

Steven said, “No.”

Alicia was looking at the grandparents. They were smiling but not happy.

Emilou said, “We are going to Miss Eleanor.”

Lance and Hilary eyes bucked in shock and said, “You have a good time also.”

Steven reached for Emilou and Alicia and said, “Come let us not detain them. We have to eat!”

Emilou started laughing.

She and Steven ran to the carriage.

Both the carriages Steven bought were fancy and expensive.

Alicia thought, “Mrs. Stith is all black and Miss Eleanor is half black but the say they are friends.”

Alicia looked back at Ginger and Alice’s grandparents and rolled her eyes.

Lance and Hilary jumped and looked at Alicia.

They exhale.

Ginger took Alice’s hand and helped her in the carriage.

Steven looked at Alicia and said, “I know. My head is not in the pages of a book as before. I am a man now. And I am a man with money and that can make money. I felt she was the one. But that nay have been because I never had one before.”

Steven looked at Alicia who was crying for her brother.

She wiped her nose.

Steven said, “On your brand new coat?”

Alicia started laughing.

They were watching Emillou skipping in front of them.

Steven said, “Here. I see Mr. Patrick always carry a handkerchief in his breast pocket. Miss Brenda and Miss Eleanor carry a lace handkerchief under their sleeves NA they just pull it out like this.”

Steven demonstrated how Miss Brenda and Miss Eleanor pull out the handkerchief.

Alicia started laughing.

Steven bowed to Alicia,

Alicia said, “Let’s have something at our house this holiday?”

Steven said, “No doubt to invite that soldier Ben.”

Alicia said, “No doubt.”

Steven said, “Either Christmas or New Years Eve.”

Alicia said, “You have to help me cook.”

Steven could only see burnt up and half done food.

He said, “We have to have someone cook for us.”

Alicia said, “Sir.”

Emilou stop and said, “Can I invite some of my friends?”

Steven said, “Let us plan out our festival occasion, so we can wear our fancy clothes.”

Alicia and Emilou laughed.

Lance and Hilary pass Steven, Alicia and Emilou.

Ginger and Alice were in the back of the carriage smiling at Steven playing with Alicia and Emilou.

Ginger and Alice and sometimes Daniel would be with them and they would have so much fun with Steven, Alicia and Emilou.

Alicia thought, “That’s why they are friends with Patrick and black Brenda because they are rich. We won’t buy friends.”

They had a late lunch and walked around the capitol.

Steven went to the liquor and bought the whiskey Patrick likes.

Alicia looked at Steven.

Steven said, “Oh no this is what Mr. Patrick drink. We have to take them something as a gift for thanksgiving.”

Alicia and Emilou went to the market and bought preserves and jellies.

They went home.

Emilou looked out the carriage and pointed at the theatre not far from the military headquarters.

Alicia said, “Oh a play. For the holidays.”

Emilou said, “Let’s go.”

Alicia looked at Steven and said, “If it does not interfere with our occasion.”

Emilou said, “Can we go to church?”

Alicia looked at Steven and they grinned.

Alicia said, “No doubt to wear your beautiful dresses.”

Emilou was looking out the carriage and said, “No doubt.”

They all laughed.

Emilou said, “Can we invite that lady that picked out our clothes?”

Steven said, “That is a very good thought Emilou. I will invite her.”

Emilou said, “So I can get to thank her for picking out our clothes.”

They arrived home at dark.

Steven unlocked the fence and Alicia pulled the carriage into the yard.

He walked in the yard and lit the lantern he had on the porch.

The house looked very nice from the glow.

Alicia liked the way the house.

Steven took the carriage around the back and unhitched the horses.

He looked around the house and decided to put another gate so the horses could through the back yard.

He would work on that the next week.

They went in the house and Emilou helped Alicia carry the preserves and jellies in the house.

They sat and laughed.

Emilou was drawing and said, “Can we play games at our occasion?”

Alicia and Stephen looked puzzle and said, “Ok.”

Emilou said, “I like games.”

Eleanor hugged all of her children and they loaded up in their carriage.

They talked all the way home and laughed.

Jose drove Patrick and Brenda’s buggy for them.

Allen and Jose put all the bags and packages in that carriage.

Lorraine rolled her eyes at Jose.

She had to ride with Eleanor and her five children.

Eleanor had Jose and Allen to ride in separate carriages.

Lorraine rode to the house and got her carriage and horses and went home.

She locked her horses up and made a fire and took a hot bath and dressed for bed.

She drank herself to sleep.

Patrick said, “Thank you Allen. Jose.”

Jose said, “Yes sir.”

He paid Allen.

Allen smirked at Jose and went and found Maureen and took her home and stopped at the restaurant and they ate dinner.

Allen took the carriage back to Jose.

Jose was wondering where he was.

He saw Allen unhitched the horses and gave them water.

Jose went outside and looked back in the house and said, “Allen now they are back you cannot use their stuff.”

Allen looked at Jose.

Jose said, “You got money. Go and spend it and buy a buggy and another horse.”

Allen looked at Jose.

Jose walked in the house and locked the door.

The family washed their hands and faces and sat for dinner.

Michael told Eleanor about Mike.

Eleanor looked at Patrick.

Patrick said, “I got his papers. He leaves when the train return to Philadelphia.”

Eleanor grinned and said, “The ship will be back tomorrow. Everything went well.”

They all cheered.

Bruce said, “I was worried.”

Brenda was about to eat a spoonful of soup and stared at Bruce.

Patrick was eating his cornbread and looked at Bruce.

Eleanor stared at Bruce.

Percy saw all the adults watching Bruce and said, “Bruce did not want to lose the goods on the ship and have to pay for them.”

Brenda looked form Percy to Bruce to Eleanor.

Patrick looked at Bruce and continued to chew his cornbread.

Eleanor looked at Bruce and said, “Bruce you need not worry about the goods on a ship, but the lives on the ship. All the ships are fully insured.”

Bruce was not eating.

When Eleanor said they had insurance.

Bruce nodded his head and ate his soup.

Brenda looked at Eleanor who was still staring at Bruce.

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Patrick did not know what to say.

He was thinking, “These kids are not thinking like kids. They are thinking about money like grown people. GOD I don’t know what to think. Is this the way YOU made them so they can carry these businesses on?”

The family went and sat in the sitting room and until late.

Brenda said, “Shirley I want you to invite Steven’s sister to your holiday tea.”

Shirley said, “Sure. How do I contact her?”

Patrick was in his office and came out with a hand full of telegrams.

He looked at Eleanor and shook the telegrams and said, “You did not see all of these?”

Eleanor looked at Patrick and said, “No daddy. I was in town all today and yesterday.”

Patrick said, “Some of these have an earlier date.”

He reached and said, “Here Shirley.”

Shirley took the telegram from Patrick and read it.

She grinned and waved the telegram.

Shirley said, “Margaret found ten more holiday dresses and put them on the ship.”

Brenda said, “Shirley what did you do with twenty-five dresses?”

Michael said, “Lusted them on herself.”

Everyone looked at Michael.

Brenda said, “Sir you are not out of trouble.”

Thomas said, “Shoosh Michael. I don’t want any trouble. We are in enough at school.”

Patrick said, “Yes Eleanor.”

He waved a stack of telegrams.

He stood and walked the telegrams to Eleanor.

Percy nearly fainted.

Bruce was laying on his stomach reading.

He was nervous.

Michael looked at the place he and Thomas hid that night of the attack.

Eleanor looked at her father’s hand full of telegrams.

Brenda had her glass of whiskey to her mouth and could not drink.

He could see Beverly saying, “Tear those a\*\*es up.”

She looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at her four sons.

Shirley snickered and said, “Mm.”

Brenda looked at Shirley.

Patrick looked at Shirley and said, “Passed these four telegrams to your mother.”

Shirley giggled.

Eleanor was reading the telegrams.

Percy was shaking.

Bruce could not move.

Thomas and Michael were quiet and not moving.

Eleanor took the telegrams from Shirley.

Patrick said, “Those are about Shirley.”

Brenda looked at Patrick.

Shirley was laughing at the boys so hard she did not hear those telegrams wee about her.

She started crossing her legs and sat and fan with her one telegram.

Brenda looked at Shirley crossed legs.

Eleanor was amazed at Shirley’s crossed legs.

Patrick looked at Shirley and then Eleanor and said, “Can she do that?”

Brenda smiled and said, “Thank YOU GOD.”

Patrick looked back at Shirley.

Eleanor hit the roof and waved the telegrams and said, “Shirley while you are sitting there laughing at the boys these are about you.”

Shirley was still fanning and grinning from Percy to Bruce to Thomas and Michael.

She saw Eleanor waving the telegrams and everyone looking at here.

Shirley slowed her fanning.

Eleanor said, “Shirley answer while you are sitting laughing at your brothers.”

Brenda was watching Thomas. She felt sorry for him.

He likes sitting on his knees he looks as though he is about to die.

Brenda thought, “What have they done that a military academy sent those telegrams?”

Jose heard Eleanor and he turned and walked to the kitchen through the billiards room.

Eleanor read each telegram.

Shirley looked at an angry Eleanor.

Shirley said, “Momma I was in the hospital until Wednesday morning. I gave Lorraine all my course work to go to the event and give it to Professor Hatcher. She told me she did.”

Eleanor said, “Did you pay your tuition?”

Shirley said, “Yes momma. Lorraine and I went to the school and I have my receipts.”

Elanor said, “The school is trying to kick you out. Do you know why?”

Shirley was shocked and said, “What?”

Brenda said, “This type of attack is usually by someone jealous of you and want to embarrass you. Who have you been with?”

Shirley said, “Lorraine.”

She laughed.

Patrick and Brenda stared at Shirley.

Eleanor stared at Shirley.

Michael said, “Not funny.”

Eleanor smacked Michael on his butt.

Shirley jumped.

Percy and Bruce were looking as if they were going to die.

Michael turned over on his side and hollered.

Thomas jumped up.

Eleanor said, “That is for going to the casino.”

Michael said, “That was over!!”

Eleanor saw Thomas standing.

She said, “Sit down.”

Eleanor said, “Shirley Ryan say you need surgery if you don’t use your wheelchair. Why you haven’t used your wheelchair?”

Shirley held her head down.

Percy said, “Why Shirley?”

He felt his body slid across the floor and he was looking at the floor as he was sliding.

Brenda whispered, “Patrick”.

Percy felt his body go in the air and slammed down on the sofa next to Eleanor.

Percy was looking around to figure out what was going on.

Everyone’s mouths were opened.

Jose could see from the mirror in the billiards room.

Jose’s jumped and bent over and his mouth dropped open.

He wanted to pray but he could not say a word.

Thomas could not move but stand and shake.

Brenda and Patrick looked at Thomas.

Brenda thought, “What have they done?”

Eleanor looked at Shirley who was shocked and sitting and shivering.

Brenda and Patrick stared at Shirley waiting for her response.

Shirley said, “I wanted friends. I wanted to be as much like them as possible.”

Brenda said, “So you have damaged your body.”

Eleanor said, “Your cursing Dr. Woodson.”

Brenda hit her thigh.

Eleanor said, “I have had it with your disrespect of the very people who are helping you. Not like those skags that are trying to destroy your name and your family’s name like we are poor and pretending we have money and trying to get over on the school. It’s probably that group that was at the casino.”

Patrick said, “Probably. Especially that fat girl with the hazel eyes.”

Shirley said, “That’s what Lorraine said.”

Eleanor was still holding Percy by the back of his collar.

Bruce and Thomas were looking at Percy.

Michael laid back on his stomach and was looking at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “Shirley tell me how you are going to correct these four things because if your resolution does not fit my requirements. I swear I yank you out of that school and close that dress shop.”

Shirley looked at the pitiful Percy and said, “When I return to school in two weeks I will have a statement from Lorraine. I will get my receipt and take it to the finance office. I won’t go out with that group from the casino ever. I will use my wheelchair everyday. I will go to dr. Woodson and apologize to him. Grandma I will write my invitations to my holiday tea and give Alicia an invitation. I sent Natalie and Miss Mag a holiday dress in those boxes. Alice’s Ryan’s wife bought three dresses, her mother -in-law bought two and her mother-in-law friend bought six and Debra, Dr. Greene’s wife bought two.”

Brenda and Patrick looked at a rattled Shirley. They never saw her that way before.

Eleanor said, “Not good enough.”

Shirley looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “You send Dr. Woodson a telegram apologizing for your bad behavior and Shirley let this be the last time. Dr. Woodson is my friend. You hurt him you hurt me. You disrespect him you disrespect me.”

Shirley said, I know momma.”

Michael rolled across the floor by Patrick and Brenda’s feet and said, “I told you momma about Shirley. She is evil. And try to make everybody feel bad because you dropped her.”

Eleanor said, “I did not drop her. I fell on my stomach when she was in my stomach. I am damn tired of apologizing for that.”

Eleanor looked back at a shaking Thomas and a shaking Shirley and said, “You will send a telegram to the school demanding an accounting of your money and that Mr. Hatcher give a written and signed statement he did not receive your courses work from your nurse. He should come up with a better lie next time.”

Patrick said, “Shirley we all know you want to be sociable and mix and have friends. GOD will bring true friends to you. When HE does you are required to treat them as a gift from GOD. You are not to treat them vile. Those doctors are your friends. GOD used them to work on you for nearly two years to get you a body and a life. I will not ever have you be that damn disrespectable to anybody at that hospital. So you hang out with second rate people who wants to destroy you because you have a disability. I will not go through that ever again.”

Shirley sniff and said, “I am beginning to learn that grandpa, don’t hate me. Not you.”

Patrick said, “I will never hate you Shirley. You better not ever disrespect those doctors and staff at that hospital.
Shirley, said, “I won’t.”

Michael was sat up.

He was sitting between Patrick and Brenda feet.

He looked from Patrick to Brenda and said, “Don’t believe her.”

Eleanor was still holding Percy in the air.

Eleanor said, “Percy…”

Percy tried to turn and look at Eleanor.

Eleanor said, “Out of these twelve telegrams from your school ten are about you. Your drinking in the laundry area and playing cards with the workers and other boys.”

Percy said, “Momma I did it.”

Brenda heard a noise and jumped. She thought Eleanor threw Percy into the wall.

Eleanor said, “The school said you and Bruce have been slipping off campus at night and hanging out with killers and robbers.

Percy, said, “We have momma.”

Bruce was shaking.

Brenda frowned up.

Patrick said, “Wait.”

Eleanor said, “You three have been recruiting other classmates to participate in these god awful activities and their families are demanding that you all be thrown out.”

Eleanor looked at Bruce and said, “Bruce,”

Bruce jumped off the floor and started running in place.

Patrick and Brenda looked at Bruce.

Eleanor said, “You wanted to bring five of the boys here to run away from their families that were withdrawing them from the military academy because of you heathens.”

Eleanor turned to Thomas he fainted.

Patrick jumped up and revived Thomas.

Eleanor waited until Thomas was coherent.

She continued, “Thomas you and Bruce had been breaking into the military academy office and sending telegrams to the other children parents for them to stay at the academy.”

Thomas was sitting on the floor.

The workers were standing back listening.

Eleanor said, “How dare you heathens treat me and your grandma and your grandpa like this. You act like you rule not only the school but the world. You have traveled to a small part of the world and you were an ant. Why would you be hanging out with killers and robbers. How did you even find such evil people.”

Percy said, “Momma so I could learn what type of people not to hire. We have had killers all around us and robbers. We missed them. I wanted to know what they think and say so I won’t have them around us. We did not do anything. We didn’t go anywhere with them. I swear momma.”

Patrick and Brenda looked at Eleanor.

Jose shook his head for yeah.

Bruce said, “The five boys’ parents were divorcing or fight all the time. I thought they would stop and search for them as Stewart and Caleb’s parents.”

Eleanor said, “Are you crazy. You are a child and cannot control adults.”

Eleanor said, “Thomas.”

Thomas ran and fell at Eleanor’s feet and said, “Momma. Momma. Momma. Don’t kill me.”

Patrick and Brenda did not say anything.

Briana had to hold her mouth and cried.

Jose looked at Briana.

Nadine and Peter were listening.

Eleanor was angry.

She ignored Thomas.

She said, “Michael.”

Michael was still looking at Percy.

He jerked his head and looked at Eleanor and thought, “You better not come over here.”

He said, “Michael!”

Brenda looked down at her favorite.

Patrick was sitting on the edge of his seat still watching Eleanor holding Percy in the air.

Eleanor said, “You are playing poker with the cooks and demanding they give you two lamb chops.”

Michael sat and looked at Eleanor.

Nadine was hollering and covered her mouth and was stomping.

Jose looked at Nadine for her to stop but she could not.

Eleanor said, “That’s how you knew enough to call that grown man a cheat.”

Michael said, “He did momma.”

Eleanor made a move to throw Percy.

Patrick and Brenda mouths opened.

Shirley just had her eyes closed.

Eleanor said, “Boy don’t make me throw Percy at you.”

Monica was on the floor hollering.

Theresa was holding her chest and covered her mouth.

Michael was frowned up and looked at Percy and said, “What is throwing Percy at me suppose to do? All he is going to do is fall on the floor.”

Patrick and Brenda slowly turned and cut their eyes at Michael.

Michael thought he was safe between his grandparents.

Patrick said, “JESUS help.”

Michael said, “I know.”

Briana fell to the floor.

Jose whispered, “These kids will be dead by the morning.”

Nadine said, “In a few minutes.”

Eleanor said, “Michael, Percy admitted to his sins and gave the reason why. Bruce tried to explain his actions. Thomas fell down for mercy for what he did. But not you Michael. You were arrogant and self righteous you were convinced you wanted to be disobedient to your mandate for one lamb chop per meal and gamble with the cooks and if they lost to give you two lamb chops. You are sitting there and looking at me that your wrongs were right. You did not do what Thomas did since you do not have a reason for your actions. You have not ask for mercy. Why?”

Michael, “Momma, you are going to beat all of us. I was not out doing what they were doing I just wanted a piece of meat.”

Eleanor said, “Michael you just wanted another lamb chop to satisfy yourself. Shirley wanted bad friends to satisfy her need to be accepted by second and third rift raft. Bruce need to feel he was a negotiator to satisfy his need to manipulate and control people’s emotions. Percy felt the need to hand out with the killers and murderers and robbers so he could identify them so they won’t steal his money. All of you go to bed. Not to your rooms but to bed.”

She put Percy down.

Percy stumbled and ran into Thomas who was still at Eleanor’s feet.

He grabbed Thomas and they ran upstairs.

Michael stood and walked out the sitting room and looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor stared at Michael how he was daring her.

She looked around for something to throw.

Michael walked out the sitting room and said, “Percy is gone.”

He ran up the staircase.

Nadine hit the floor.

The workers heard Eleanor run out the sitting room.

Patrick jumped up and said, “Eleanor come back here and let us finish all of the work.”

Eleanor turned around and walked down the stairs.

Jose heard all the doors slamming upstairs.

Eleanor walked back in the sitting room and looked at Shirley.

Brenda looked at Shirley.

Eleanor said, “You too Shirley.”

Shirley said, “I was not sure you were talking to me.”

Shirley walked out the sitting room and walked up stairs and slammed her door.

Eleanor and Patrick ran to the liquor table.

Jose and Nadine were trying to see which liquor they were opening.

Eleanor said, “Daddy did you see him looking at me?”

Patrick said, “Which one?”

Eleanor said, “What. I am talking about that Michael.”

Patrick said, “I did not have a telegram about Michael.”

Eleanor said, “I know. He was too calm. I made it up and he was shocked.”

Eleanor poured a full glass of scotch.

Eleanor looked and said, “What am I doing?” I am not drinking this glass of scotch. I have to stop and find another way to get thought this. Percy trying to con me with why he was hanging out with that evil.”

Patrick was drinking and said, “Yeah like who was buying that.”

Jose and Briana looked at each other because they bought it.

Patrick said, “Eleanor what are you going to do with that full glass of scotch?”

Eleanor said, “Jose will get it.”

Jose said, “Not tonight.”

Briana touched Jose and pointed to herself.

Eleanor said, “Daddy how did you and momma handle us when we were growing up?”

Patrick said, “A lot of prayer. Come on so we can discuss some business.”

Patrick and Eleanor went into the sitting room and discuss busines for hours.

The other workers sneaked and got a bottle of whiskey and ran to Nadine and Peter’s room.

Patrick, Brenda and Eleanor talked about the blatant racism on their trains.

They decided to slowly start training blacks to be conductors and engineers.

Brenda said, “Mr. Gibson told Steven he did not have any work.”

Eleanor said, “I am glad.”

Patrick looked at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor, you know Gibson said that because Steven is black.”

Brenda’s mouth was opened.

Eleanor looked at her momma and daddy and said, “That’s the way your God intended it. He knew He was going to give you, us more business and He wanted to bless Steven. So he could bless his family and take care of them. Your God tested you to see if you would hire Steven and Steven has been very good at what you told him to do. Mr. Gibson has lost out on the money, because it was not his but Steven’s that your God gave you, us to give him.”

Brenda stared at Eleanor.

Patrick stared at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at her parents and said, “Mr. Gibson asked you daddy for five horses. He gave to his workers. You could have given those horses to your workers. We paid for that fence and the labor. It fenced off his back and he did not have to pay a penny. I suggest to you that like Shirley, cut off your financial friends.”

 Brenda said, “I never thought Eleanor you perceived that.”

Patrick said, “I’m glad you have grown. I want to see what you are going to do about Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael. Shirley already let us know she will take her trust fund and leave. The only thing she is waiting on is to see how she can continually get money from the family to put in her trust fund.”

Eleanor laughed.

Brenda said, “All the extra money is not going to any trust fund, but into my city and our hotels.”

Eleanor said, “They have enough money for several lifetimes.”

The workers looked at each other.

Eleanor said, “I ordered the boys clothes for the holidays.”

Patrick reached her a telegram.

Eleanor said, “The package arrived today.”

Eleanor said, “I’ll pick up the clothes tomorrow. I’m sending Percy and Bruce to live with Bruce forever. I’ll give Thomas and Michael one last chance. Shirley can go and live wherever she wants. I am sealing all their trust funds until they reach twenty-one. That way Bruce and his family won’t spend up all their money. I will not allow Percy and Bruce to take over the railroad and shipping business. They have to get jobs and work. I’ll give Shirley the only bare minimum for her to live off and if she does not keep her health up. I will put her away until she dies.”

Monica, Nadine, Jose looked at each other.

Brenda said, “Eleanor I know I have asked you before to re-think sending the children to live with Bruce. You have done that several times. I know it is hard.”

Brenda started sniffing and said, “I know it’s hard to have children you tried to raise right and they chose to become evil and you did not see it coming. I know GOD has HIS reasons. I just can’t think. I have thought over my sons over and over and over. I can’t think of where I went wrong or where Patrick went wrong. I saw when they became nasty like their wives were to come in and move in this house and rule over me. I would not allow that and did not want them to come here. Especially after me and Patrick gave them their equal portion of the money. I don’t want you to look back and say like I do and your father nearly daily where GOD did we go wrong. Re-think Eleanor. Bruce is the worst person to send the children to.”

Jose and Nadine said, “That’s true.”

Nadine said, “That dirty b\*\*\*\*\*d.”

Monica turned her nose up like she was smelling something.

Patrick said, “Maybe send the boys off to one of those boarding schools in Europe.”

Eleanor said, “Daddy it won’t be any different than they being at the military academy.”

Brenda was still crying.

Briana said, “Brenda is pitiful.”

Eleanor looked at Brenda and said, “Momma I will not promise you that I will re-think my decision.”

Patrick was sniffing and said, “I’m sorry Eleanor that it has come to this. I wanted so much more for your life. I’m sorry that Brenda and I did not give you what you needed when you were going.”

Patrick held a crying Brenda and they cried together.

The workers were sitting on the floor and saw their reflections in the mirror.

Monica and Theresa started crying.

Eleanor said, “Momma and daddy stop. Percy act will not work with you two, I have made up my mind. Now lets talk about Thanksgiving. Let me say this. You and daddy did nothing wrong in raising me, Christopher, John and Patrick Jr. We went to the same school, church and were around the same people all of our lives. To be evil and wicked is a matter of choice. They chose to be evil and GOD did not let their evil plan prevail. I never want to see their wives and their children. Because a rotten apple does not fall far the tree. I remember them trying to force you and daddy to let them and their wives and their wives’ families move in here…”

Nadine looked and said, “Then I would have used a knife.”

Jose looked at Nadine.

Eleanor said, “You and daddy have always given me more than what I needed. You always helped me out of very bad situations. You made the decision to let Shirley live when I could not think. And you two have been with me and her every single day. You and daddy have never neglected me nor my children and you have been the candle always in the darkest of night guiding me back to safety. Don’t beat yourselves up any more. The world does enough of that and your financial friends. Your God will take care of my kids.”

Patrick Squeezed Brenda.

Jose, Monica and Briana crawled to their rooms.

Nadine was lusting after the liquor.

They sneaked to their rooms.

Nadine went and got a tray and put a few dinner glasses on it.

The dish washers turned and looked at Nadine. They could not leave with dirty dishes.

They wanted to know what Nadine was doing.

Nadine walked through the house and was checking the family and formal dining room.

Nadine went into the parlor and got a glass that was in the room.

Patrick closed the sitting room door.

Nadine was moving down to the aisle.

There were two bottles of opened whiskey.

Nadine got the glass of scotch and one of the bottles of whiskey.

She walked through the billiards room and nearly ran through the hall.

She knocked on Briana’s door and gave her the glass of scotch.

Nadine took the half bottle of whiskey to Peter.

The other workers ran to the room with their glasses and got a glass of whiskey.

Nadine took the last of the dirty dishes to the dish washers.

Allen decided not to return.

He bought a moderate house not far from Vivienne.

The house had large yards.

He saw the house years before.

He went to Steven that Saturday night when they had returned from the capitol.

Allen said, “Steven, it’s late. I found a house that needs work. Help me out.”

Steven said, “Glad to. Where is it?”

Allen told Steven the address.

He left.

Steven grinned and went back to work.

The next morning the house was quiet.

Jose walked through the house and looked and no one was up.

He wondered about breakfast. He knew Eleanor had requested a Sunday supper of fried chicken, potato salad, green beans, carrots and beets.

Brenda requested a peach pie and gave Thomas the jar of peaches from Miss Lattie.

Shirley was in her room thinking about her life.

She liked going to school.

The students stared at her, but she was probably the smartest person in all her classes and a very good communicator.

Shirley would not speak to the handicap students at the campus.

Her snooty friends would smirk.

Shirley would hurt the handicap students feeling and tell them not to speak to her.

Lorraine saw Shirley one day.

Shirley did not know Lorraine saw her.

Lorraine walked away and cried hard after Shirley’s soul.

She was glad to be leaving Shirley.

Shirley was not the person she hoped she would be.

Lorraine came to the house early that morning to get her bags.

Nadine and Jose told her what happened the night before.

Lorraine put her face in her hands and cried.

No one knew why.

Lorraine turned to go to the storage room and get her bags.

Patrick and Brenda were standing in the hall and listened to Jose and Nadine and they looked at Lorraine as she walked down the hall.

Patrick and Brenda watched a slow moving Lorraine.

Brenda walked behind Lorraine.

Brenda said, “Lorraine what is it?”

Patrick walked behind Brenda.

Nadine, Peter Jose and Monica. who was getting ready to leave and was going to ask Lorraine to take her home, watched Patrick and Brenda.

Eleanor was in her office and heard Brenda.

She stood and walked out her office and saw Lorraine crying.

She walked to them.

Lorraine told them about Shirley’s horrible attitude and how she was mean to the other handicap students because of that snooty group.

Eleanor said, “Lorraine what are you telling us?”

Lorraine said, “I never want to see Shirley again. I’ll love to work at the hospital when it is build. Until the hospital is build I’ll work on my businesses. I can’t help her anymore. She has a nastiness in her heart only GOD can cleanse her heart. I love you all.”

Eleanor hugged Lorraine.

They held onto each other and both cried.

Patrick stepped in the room and picked up Lorraine’s bags.

Lorraine and Eleanor walked through the hall crying.

Michael and Thomas were standing at the top of the stairs and watched Lorraine and Eleanor holding each other and leaving.

Jose and Nadine hugged Lorraine.

Monica said, “Lorraine can I ride with you?”

Lorraine could hardly talk but said, “Yes.”

Michael and Thomas ran downstairs and ran through the hall to Lorraine.

They stood and looked at Lorraine.

Michael grabbed Lorraine.

Thomas grabbed her.

Thomas said, “Are you leaving us Lorraine?”

Patrick was surprised at Thomas quickness.

Patrick handed Lorraine’s bags to Jose.

Jose put the bags down because he wanted to see what was going to happen.

Patrick turned and looked at Jose.

Jose ignored Patrick and looked at Lorraine.

Jose thought, “I have enough money to live off for the rest of my life.”

Lorraine nodded her head for yes.

Michael looked up at the crying Lorraine and said, “Because we have been bad?”

Lorraine shook her head for yes.

Michael put his head in her waist and cried and said, “I’m sorry. Don’t go.”

Thomas was crying and said, “There’s no one like you. Please don’t leave us.”

Michael quivering said, “I’ll try to be not so bad.”

Lorraine got tickle and said, “Not that you will stop but not to be as bad.”

She leaned and kissed him and Thomas and walked out the door.

Michael yelled, “It was Shirley wasn’t it?”

Lorraine kept walking.

She knew if she looked back she would change her mind.

Michael balled his fists and ran upstairs.

Patrick and Jose ran upstairs behind Michael.

Thomas was standing in the back door boohooing after Lorraine.

Thomas thought, “Oh God they loved her and depend on her.”

Eleanor was sick.

Thomas ran outdoor to Lorraine and said, “Please change your mind. We need you. We can’t be better without you. You make us whole Lorraine.”

Brenda and Eleanor walked out on the back porch with Nadine, Monica and Briana.

Lorraine hugged Thomas and cried more.

Michael had made it to Shirley’s door and opened it.

Shirley raised her head up and saw Michael and his fists.

Jose caught him just before he lounged for Shirley.

Jose carried Michael downstairs.

Patrick looked at the scared Shirly and closed her door.

Shirley eased up and sat on her bed.

Percy and Bruce were peeping out their doors.

Michael was screaming, “Let me have her. Let me go Jose. That is an order.”

Patrick said, “You don’t give orders. Get on downstairs. “I’ll try not to be as bad.”

Jose had Michael over his shoulder.

Michael was looking at Patrick.

Patrick said, “You are the problem too why she is leaving. That’s all right Bruce will take care of you.”

Michael screamed, “Bruce. Send her to Bruce.”

Percy and Bruce tipped out of their rooms and tipped down the hall and stood against the wall to listen.”

Shirley finally walked out her room.

Percy and Bruce looked at her.

She walked pass them and down the stairs.

Percy and Bruce watched Shirley.

They thought and then looked at each other and ran down the stairs.

Shirley saw Jose carrying a screaming Michael out the door.

Patrick followed.

Jose put Michael down and said, “No orders ever Michael.”

Jose stepped back in the house to get the bags.

Shirley looked at the bags and could not think what about the bags.

She looked out the door and saw Thomas and she looked up and saw Thomas crying and holding onto Lorraine.

Brenda and Eleanor were holding Michael.

Percy and Bruce walked pass Shirley and stood in the hall. They braved their fear and opened the back door and stepped on the porch.

Percy and Bruce stared at a uncontrollable Michael.

Percy whispered to Bruce.

Bruce ran off the back porch.

He ran to Lorraine and said, “Lorraine are you leaving?”

Percy was standing on the porch by the steps to listen.

Michael was tussling and wrestling with Eleanor and Brenda yelled, “Yeah because of that heifer Shirley.”

Brenda said, “Michael stop it.”

Jose and Patrick passed Shirley who was standing in the back door.

She looked at a furious Michael.

She looked at a crying Thomas and Lorraine.

She stood sideways with her head down.

Nadine looked back and saw Shirley and elbowed Briana and Theresa.

Eleanor saw them and looked back and saw Shirley.

Michael did not see Shirley.

He was trying to get loose from Brenda and Eleanor.

He said, “Can I get a hug from her.”

Brenda and Eleanor did not opened their mouths but walked him off the porch to Lorraine.

Lorraine reached for him.

He held onto Lorraine.

Shirley turned her head and looked out at her second momma leaving her.

Patrick and Jose put her and Monica bags in the wagon.

Patrick said, “Lorraine and Monica we will give you your pay. Lorraine we will give you your money for sending all that stuff.”

Lorraine said, “It was Shirley.”

Patrick was surprised.

Brenda and Eleanor said, “Shirley.”

Patrick said, “We will pay her.”

Lorraine turned Thomas and Michael loose and pinched Bruce’s handsome chin as she does all the time.

Bruce grin and cut it off because he knew he will never get that again.

Lorraine looked at the porch and waved at Percy and her co-workers.

She saw Shirley standing in the doorway and looking at her.

Lorraine waved and said, “Bye Shirley.”

Michael said, “Where?”

Jose caught Michael.

Shirley was grieving and looked out at Lorraine.

All he life it has been Lorraine.

She was never denied love or care from Lorraine.

She looked out at the four people who cleaned her, washed her held her and comforted her.

She had more love than the handicap people she hurt at the school.

Instead of her showing them the same type of love and care she was shown she turned her back like she was normal and she was only where she is because of these four people.

She’s mouth started quivering.

Nadine and Theresa looked at Shirley.

Shirley pushed the door open.

Eleanor and Brenda looked back at her.

Shirley slowly walked out on the porch and said, “I’m sorry. I’m sorry. This time I see.”

Michael said, “That’s her!”

Michael tried to get loose from Jose.

Patrick looked at Jose holding Michael.

He thought, “I’m glad he is here because I could not fight with Michael.”

Lorraine smiled at Shirley and waved.

She walked to her side of the buggy to leave.

Michael reached for Lorraine.

Shirley was crying.

Monica looked at Shirley.

Jose carried Michael and walked Thomas to Lorraine.

She kissed them and got in the buggy.

Lorraine pulled off and cried all the way home.

Lorraine got out the buggy and left her bags.

Monica sat in the buggy and did not know what to do.

She said, “Lorraine. Lorraine.”

Lorraine walked to her porch and unlocked her door and walked in her house hollering.

Monica sat for a few minutes.

Monica saw Stanley and Alice standing in their backyard.

She got out the buggy and walked and talked to them.

Stanley told her he was going to study to be a minister and Alice was going to be a teacher.

Monica was so glad she was clapping and jumping in excitement.

Stanley and Alice laughed at her genuine happiness for them.

Stanley said, “What brings you over here?”

Monica looked back at Lorraine’s house.

Stanley saw her excitement fade.

He said, “What is it Monica?’

Monica shook her head.

Alice said, “We are friends what is it?”

Monica exhaled and told about everything.

Stanley said, “She has been with Shirley since she was born. The kids depend on her when Eleanor was not right in the mind. This is true prayer time. All of them are good people and the hell that they were kidnapped to be killed and their uncles planned on killing them.”

Stanley was holding Alice

He shook his head.

Alice looked up at Stanley and said, “This is what you are being called to do.”

Stanley looked at Alice and kissed her.

Monica said, “I don’t know what to do.”

Alice said, “We have not been out this week. We will take you home.”

Monica said, “I live in a rooming house and I have been gone for two months with Patrick and Brenda, I may not have a room.”

She looked back at Lorraine and said, “I’m going and talk to Lorraine and ask if I can use her buggy and bring it back.”

Stanley stood and looked at Monica as she walked back to Lorraine’s house and disappeared around the front.

Alice said, “We can’t take her in.”

Stanley said, “I know. Let’s finish looking at this back.”

Monica went and knocked on Lorraine’s door and Lorraine did not answer.

Monica sat on her doorsteps.

A neighbor that watches Lorraine’s house for her walked over and looked at Monica and said, “Ma am?”

Monica looked up and spoke, “Hello.”

The man’s wife walked over and stood by him.

The man said, “You need some help?”

Monica said, “Probably. Lorraine was to take me home but she is …”

The man said, “Crying.”

The wife nodded her head.

The man said, “We saw,”

Monica said, “It was something on our job.”

Stanley and Alice did not see Monica and wanted to know what happened.

They walked through Lorraine’s back yard and saw Joe and Blanche talking to Monica.

Stanley and Alice spoke.

Joe said, “This lady needs help.”

Stanley and Joe began to talk with Monica.

Alice walked to Blanche and looked over at the Johnson’s house and said, “Where are the Johnson’s?”

Stanley turned to see.

Blanche said, “Exciting news. They left last week. Brian got a great job with the governor and they are settling in the capitol.”

Stanley said, “What is George doing for the governor?”

Blanche said, “Training state police,”

Alice jumped and said, “What?”

The women giggled.

Alice said, “I love this neighborhood. I hope someone good buys that house.”

She turned and looked at Monica.

Monica was sitting with her head in her hands thinking.

Stanley and Joe were looking at her.

Alice and Blanche were looking at her.

Monica looked at all of them and turned her head and looked straight.

Joe said, “George left the key to their house with me. You want to see the inside?”

Alice walked out Lorraine yard and she and Blanche turned and was walking to the house.

Stanley could not believe Alice.

Joe looked at the women and shifted the key in his hand and said, “I guess we need to follow the women.”

Stanley walked to Monica and said, “Come on.”

He pulled Monica off the steps and said, “God has not brought you this far to leave you on someone’s doorsteps.”

Monica said, “I was left before.”

Monica walked away from Stanley and Joe.

Who stood in shock.

Joe said, “Did she say?”

Stanley blinked his eyes and said, “Yeah.”

The women were on the porch waiting for the men.

They waked over to the Johnson’s house and Joe looked at Monica as she stood in the yard.

Stanley did not know what to do he touched Monica and he walked on the porch and said, “Monica.”

Joe unlocked the door.

The women rushed in and said, “Oh God.”

Stanley walked back to get Monica.

Alice ran to the door and said, “Stanley come on.”

She looked at Monica and ran behind Stanley and they each grabbed one of Monica’s arms and ran into the house.

Monica looked around at the large and spacious room and the opened kitchen.

They ran to the backdoor.

Joe opened the backdoor.

The backyard was well maintained and many flowers planted around the back and a white fence.

Monica loved flowers. That’s where her peace was.

They ran upstairs and saw three large bedrooms and a wash room and large built in shelves and spaces for closets.

Monica looked out the window and saw on the side of the house a stable and hay and a coal shed full of coal.

She wondered did Lorraine have coal.

Monica walked down the stairs and got a better view of the house and it’s windows and wood.

She saw the well and how convenient everything was to the kitchen.

Stanley told Alice what Monica said.

Alice and Blanche looked at Monica.

Joe said, “Monica we have to get you settled. I need to look up.”

Blanche said, “This is a wonderful house and large. I did not know it was this large.”

They walked out the house and saw Lorraine getting her bags out her buggy.

Monica ran across the street and said, “Lorraine.”

Lorraine stop and look at Monica.

Monica said, “You were to take me home.”

Lorraine said, “Take the buggy.”

Joe and Blanche said, “Remember Lorraine you told her to take the buggy.”

Lorraine was distraught.

She turned and walked in the house.

Monica ran and got in the buggy and pulled out of Lorraine’s yard and the thirty minutes to her rooming house.

She got to the rooming house and the owners told her they were filled.

Monica smiled and said, “I understand.”

She left and saw Harriet across the street getting things together.

Monica rode across the street and said, “Harriet, where are you going?”

Harriet turned and saw Monica and grinned and said, “I have to go to work, but I have to walk because no one is at work today.”

Monica said, “I’ll take you. You are staying the night?”

Harriett said, “No. I stay Thanksgiving night.”

Harriett was struggling with the five quilts and Sally’s yellow quilt.

Monica jumped out the buggy and went to help Harriet.

She looked at the house and thought, “Vivienne hit it big. She had to have a place to live with Sally.”

She and Harriet got in the buggy and went to the house.

Shirley was standing on the back porch.

Everyone walked in the house.

Jose held Michael until they got in the house.

Brenda looked at Shirley and said, “Come on Shirley.”

Shirley said, “Will she be back?”

Patrick looked at the pitiful Shirley and said, “No.”

They walked in the house.

Thomas was standing and looking for instructions.

Patrick saw Thomas and said, “Just eggs, sausage, bacon and biscuits. Nothing fancy.”

Jose was coming back from putting Michael in his room.

Patrick and Brenda saw Eleanor walk into her office and slam and lock the door.

Patrick, Shirley and Brenda walked in the sitting room and talked.

Brenda said, “Shirley, Lorraine told us of your meanness to the other handicap students and how you hurt them. She cannot bare to see that in you. She left and will not return.”

Shirley begin to shake violently.

Patrick looked at her.

Thomas walked in the sitting room and watched Shirley.

Bruce and Percy walked in and saw Shirley shaking.

They looked at Patrick.

Patrick did not know what to do.

Brenda said, “Shirley, why did you treat the other handicap children that way?”

Shirley began to hyperventilate.

Thomas jumped.

Patrick said, “Slow your breathing Shirley. Percy go and get a glass of water.”

Brenda looked and got her throw she leaves in the sitting room and wrapped it around Shirley.

Thomas said, “Is she dying”

Michael ran downstairs and looked at Shirley and walked out.

He was walking to the family dining to eat breakfast.

Percy walked back drinking the glass of water.

Jose followed Percy with a tray and a pitcher of water, so he could see what was going on.

Patrick looked at Percy and said, “Why are you drinking the water? Give it to Shirley.”

Percy said, “You just said get a glass of water.”

Patrick stared at Percy.

Michael was entering the family dining room.

Jose placed the tray with the pitcher on the table.

There was a knock on the door.

Michael looked out the window and saw a horse.

He was still scared of people but he walked out the family dining room and saw Skip.

Jose was walking to the door.

Michael ran to the door.

Jose said, “Stop Michael.”

Patrick was peeping around Jose at the door.

Bruce and Percy turned to look at the door.

Michael stopped and Jose peeped out the door and unlocked it and opened the door.

Michael jumped and said, “Hey Skip.”

The boys heard the name Skip.

Percy and Bruce ran out the sitting room.

Michael said, “Jose you can let him in.”

Jose said, “I told you Michael you don’t give me orders.”

Michael rolled his eyes at Jose.

Jose said, “Come in.”

Skip walked in with a bouquet of flowers.

Jose locked the door.

Skip noticed Jose had on his gun.

Skip looked at Jose and said, “Problems?”

Jose said, “Just him.”

Skip looked at Jose.

Jose said, “Follow me to the parlor.”

Bruce and Percy ran to Skip and spoke.

Jose walked and stood and waited for Skip.

Michael said, “We have to talk.”

Skip looked at Michael.

Skip followed Percy, Bruce and Michael to the parlor.

He noticed they had on their nightshirts.

He said, “Where is Thomas?”

Percy said, “In the sitting room with our grandpa and grandma.”

Skip said, “Is he alright?”

Bruce said, “We all are alright until momma make her decision.”

Skip said, “Her decision on what?”

Bruce said, “To give us away.”

Skip was holding the bouquet of flowers.

Michael said, “Take those flowers back and don’t give them to that heifer.”

Brenda was standing in the door and said, “Michael shut up. I have told you about using that word.”

Jose walked behind Brenda and said, “Breakfast is served.”

Percy and Bruce stood and said, “Skip come to breakfast.”

Brenda said, “Just please. Shirley went upstairs to change. She will be back in a few minutes.”

Skip said, “Mrs. Stith is this a bad time for your family? I really came by to give Shirley these flowers.”

Brenda said, “And what?”

Skip looked at Brenda.

Brenda said, “Men give flowers to say bye.”

Thomas walked to the parlor with Patrick.

Patrick said, “Good morning Skip.”

Skip reached and shook Patrick’s hand.

Thomas was crying.

Brenda said, “All of you go and wash your faces. Go to the guess room.”

Skip was watching everybody.

Patrick said, “Have you been invited to breakfast?’

Skip said. “Yes. I believe I will have breakfast with you.”

Brenda said, “To see what is going on.”

Patrick said, “Come this way. The breakfast won’t be fancy this morning.”

Skip said, “I am use to not fancy.”

Patrick smiled.

Skip looked back at Brenda who was looking at him.

Patrick looked at Brenda.

Skip said, “She is looking me over.”

Patrick said, “So am I.”

Skip said, “I would do the same thing.”

They heard the boys running back from the guests’ room.

Shirley rushed to her room and washed her face and put on a simple dress and comb and brushed her hair.

She was walking down the staircase.

She was walking in the hall to the parlor, when the boys ran in the hall.

They were running to the family dinner room.

Michael said, “Move heifer.”

Skip stopped and stepped back out of the family dining room and looked at the boys.

When Michael reached Brenda she quickly grabbed him and pulled him into the parlor.

Skip and Patrick moved so the boys could run in.

Skip touched Thomas on his head.

Patrick looked at Thomas.

Skip said, “Mrs. Stith has a quick arm.”

Patrick laughed.

Shirley walked by the parlor and looked scared at Brenda and Michael.

Skip stepped out the family dining room.

Patrick wanted to see Shirley’s face.

Shirley was walking dejected and slightly looked up.

Skip was studying her face intensely.

Skip said, “Good morning Shirley.”

Shirley looked at Skip and exhaled and took a deep breathe of release.

Skip walked to her and gave her the bouquet of flowers and said, “You look good in the morning.”

Brenda and Michael pass them going to the dining room.

Shirley looked at Michael.

She said, “Skip thank you for the flowers.”

Skip said, “You are welcome Shirley. I stop by to tell you I will be leaving tomorrow. I wanted to tell you in person.”

Brenda said, “Like I said,”

Skip smiled at Brenda.

They went in the dining room and everyone started making their plates.

Shirley said, “Come in and eat breakfast with us.”

Skip and Shirley walked in the dining room.

Nadine walked in with Shirley’s omelet and placed it in front of her.

Shirley lightly smiled.

Skip watched her.

Michael looked and said, “No lamb chop.”

Thomas walking in with his lamb chop.

Michael sat.

Thomas was so sad.

Skip looked at Thomas and said, “Thomas you are alright?”

Thomas shook his head for no.

Thomas brought in the cinnamon rolls and spiced breads.

Patrick said, “I said simple breakfast.”

Nadine looked.

Thomas said, “Peter had already prepped them. They would not have lasted until tomorrow.”

Bruce said, “I like that spice bread. Try it Skip.”

Skip looked at Thomas and said, “I’ll try it Thomas if you share it with me.”

Thomas did not respond.

Shirley looked at Thomas.

Skip took a piece of the spiced bread and had oatmeal and eggs.

He watched Michael rolling his eyes at Shirley.

Patrick said, “Michael put your eyes in your plate and eat.”

Thomas looked at Michael.

Michael held his head directly over his plate.

Percy whispered to Bruce.

They looked at Michael.

Patrick looked at Michael and thought, “This boy. That is why Eleanor be snatching him all the time.”

Thomas looked at Michael and laughed.

Michael said, “Thomas it will be alright. We will be together wherever we go.”

Skip looked at Michael as he was putting his spoon of oatmeal in his mouth.

He saw Bruce jumped.

Bruce was in shock.

He turned to Percy and shook his head and said, “Where we going?”

Percy leaned over and said, “To Bruce.”

Skip looked at Percy and Bruce.

Bruce said, “Why? Momma just can’t whip us and make up with the military academy?”

Jose went to Eleanor’s office and knocked on the door.

Eleanor did not response.

Jose said, “Breakfast is ready and Skip is joining you for breakfast.”

Jose stood at the door with his ear to the door and he could not move as fast as he wanted and Eleanor opened the door as he was moving his ear.

She went flying through the billiards with Jose flying behind.

Briana looked at Jose.

Eleanor had on her gown and robe.

She had been crying all morning.

She was sill crying when she entered the family dining room.

Thomas jumped up and ran to Eleanor.

Skip stood and turned and spoke to Eleanor.

Michael had his head over his plate.

Eleanor hugged and held onto a quivering and shaking Thomas.

Skip was watching intensely.

Patrick thought, “He’s the one she’ll keep.”

He looked at Michael who was leaning over his plate and eating his lamb chop.

He did not care about Eleanor anymore.

Percy leaned back and peeped at Eleanor.

Bruce turned and looked at Eleanor.

Shirley did not say anything.

Skip looked at Shirley.

Shirley was scared to look at Eleanor.

Patrick and Brenda watched everybody.

Briana and Nadine were watching everybody.

Skip said, “Mrs. Simons…”

Eleanor looked at Skip.

He smiled and said, “Miss Stith.”

Eleanor was still holding Thomas.

Patrick looked and thought Thomas and Bruce were pitiful.

Nadine wanted to get a good view of everybody.

Jose walked in and looked over the table.

Skip said, “May I get your breakfast?”

Eleanor said, “No.”

She and Thomas walked over to the buffet.

She got a cinnamon roll and eggs and she and Thomas walked and sat at the table.

Eleanor looked t Michael.

Michael kept his head straight over his plate.

Thomas held onto Eleanor and leaned on her arm.

Eleanor bowed her head and said grace.

Skip watched Eleanor.

Patrick and Brenda watched Skip.

Skip looked at Patrick and Brenda.

He turned and looked at Shirley whose head was straight.

Brenda said, “Shirley give your flowers to Jose.”

Shirley picked the flowers off the table and reached them to Jose.

Jose did not look and reached the flowers to Nadine.

He finished with the buffet.

Nadine went into the kitchen and put the flowers in water and took the flowers to Shirley’s room.

Nadine walked down the staircase.

She looked around and took a glass and poured it fill of brandy and eased it to she and Peter’s room.

Nadine returned to the family dining room.

Jose knew she had done something.

Michael looked at Eleanor.

Eleanor looked at Michael.

Patrick was getting nervous.

Benda was thinking, “Don’t hit him.”

Bruce just stared at Eleanor.

Skip watched Bruce.

He said, “Miss Stith, I came by this morning to tell Shirley we are leaving tomorrow. I don’t know when we will return. We maybe detailed until after New Years.”

Eleanor looked at Skip.

Michael said, “She doesn’t care about anything anymore.”

Skip frowned up and said, “Michael why is that?”

Thomas looked at kip and said, “Because we were really bad at the military academy. They don’t want us to come back.”

Skip said, “That’s strange for a military academy not to be able to resolve problems without putting students out.”

Bruce slowly looked at Skip.

Skip looked at Bruce.

Skip said, “Bruce you look sick. Are you feeling alright?”

Bruce could not talk.

Nadine peeped at Bruce.

Skip looked at the boys and said, “Miss Shirley I came to see you before I leave tomorrow but I think I would like to spend some time with Percy, Bruce, Thomas and Michael if Miss Stith will allow it.”

He turned to Eleanor who was looking at him under eyed.

Skip said, Miss Stith I don’t scare.”

Michael said, “A good soldier.”

Thomas said, “Can we go riding?”

Skip said, “Sure.”

Bruce just sat and stare.

Eleanor sat and ate her cinnamon roll.

Skip realized something was terribly wrong.

Percy said, “Bruce lets go and get dressed.”

Michael jumped up and leaned at Eleanor.

He kissed her on her cheek.

Eleanor did not respond.

Thomas kissed Eleanor on her other cheek, she did not respond.

The boys jumped from the table and went and dressed.

Skip looked around the table and said, “Only adults are here. Can we talk?”

Eleanor stood and walked out.

Skip stood.

He turned and looked at Patrick and Brenda.

He looked at Shirley.

Skip sat next to Shirley and looked at her.

Shirley said, “Is Jake going?”

Skip said, “He is a member of the troop. Yes.”

Shirley said, “I’m having a holiday tea and want to invite Sarah.”

Brenda turned and looked at Patrick.

Skip saw Brenda looking at Patrick.

Skip said, “I’m sure she would like that.”

Patrick looked at Shirley.

Skip said, “All of you are angry, scared and upset. Especially the boys tell me what has happened.”

Patrick said, “Lets go to the parlor.”

Shirley looked at Patrick.

Skip stood and got Shirley.

He allowed Patrick and Brenda to walk out and he and Shirley followed.

Patrick closed the door and told Skip everything.

The boys ran back downstairs and saw the parlor door closed.

Jose saw the boys and said, “Tell Archie to get your horses ready and stay out there until Skip come.”

They looked at Jose and ran through the house to the stables.

The boys’ horses were excited to see them.

The boys were laughing.

Kip looked at Shirley.

Shirley did not want to look in Skip’s eyes.

Skip said, “Miss Stith is not alone. I hear that more often than you know. Let her know I understand all that trash that has been put into her mind has to be removed. GOD has blessed her with five beautiful children. HE trust her with the lives of these five children. She has not failed. The boys were testing themselves to see how far they could go and take the administration. They thought their money would make them safe. If it is the military academy can send a telegram to the head instructor. He is my retired commander. I’ll talk to the boys while we are out.”

Skip looked at Shirley.

She would not look at him.

Skip was sitting on the side of Shirley’s face that was deformed.

He took his hand and lifted her head up and turned her face to him and said, “Shirley we have to talk. You have to make things right with those other students. I cannot tell you what to do but I hope you make the right decisions.”

He looked at Patrick and said, “Sir you have a telegram machine?”

Patrick stood and they walked to Patrick’s office.

Skip sent a telegram to the retired commander.

He rode his horse around the back and he and the boys went riding for hours.

Michael and Thomas said, “Can we come and see you off tomorrow?”

Skip said, “We leave at dawn. You are still sleep.”

Skip rode back with the boys.

Shirley and Eleanor were dressed.

Eleanor had dressed and went to pick up the boys’ holiday clothes.

Eleanor was angry per parents talked about her mental state to Skip.

She went to the office and checked on the office and Nathan stopped and they talked.

Nathan said, “Eleanor what happened?”

Eleanor said, “You gonna put me in jail.”

Nathan sat in the chair.

Eleanor told Nathan everything.

Nathan said, “What?”

Eleanor began to cry again.

Nathan looked at Eleanor and said, “Eleanor you are a remarkable woman. You endure that emotional and mental abuse and oppression and finally found true love for some reason we don’t know GOD decided to take Joseph. You lost your baby girl. Your bore the guilt of a deformed child that your ex-husband used to beat you down and your color to scam your family’s money. That was wicked. I have heard of people that do that, like Skip. Where are you to fault? Stop blaming yourself. You cannot change your color. You did not let the slaves make you feel bad you showed them how to live and built that rest stop that got us national attention from the president himself.”

Eleanor was frustrated.

Nathan said, “I am going to talk to your boys, especially Percy who knew how to find the killers and robbers and Bruce who took money from those kids to hide them.”

Eleanor turned sideways in the chair.

Nathan said, “Eleanor he took money from those boys. Thomas I haven’t figured out but that Michael does what he wants and make no apologies for it. I can’t too much blame him. You are raising them right. I have been around all of you. You are doubling your family’s wealth. I saw the picture of the new ship. I am going. You close up and go home. Stop it. Stop beating yourself. You said the doctors gave you ten to fifteen years. Pray to GOD and HE will give you more. I know.”

Eleanor walked around the desk and kissed Nathan and patted him on his back.

He walked out her office and went to his office.

Eleanor looked around the office and secured everything and was about to turn off the telegram when a telegram came through.

The telegram came from the Canadian coal company.

Eleanor tore the telegram off and cut the machine off.

She locked the door and saw Nathan walking down the side walk.

She jumped in her carriage.

She rode to Nathan and called him.

Nathan walked to Eleanor but he was watching three men.

Eleanor gave Nathan the telegram.

Nathan said, “Whoa. I get my coal.”

Eleanor breathed and said, “You get your coal and a lot more people. I have to send several trains to meet them in New York so our trains can bring the coal here.”

Eleanor was thinking.

Nathan looked at her and said, “Hey!!”

Eleanor jumped and looked at Nathan.

Nathan said, “Cry baby go home and enjoy your family. GOD will help you with your kids.”

Eleanor said, “I love you Nathan.”

Nathan said, “Everybody does.”

Eleanor rode home fast and excited,

The three men Nathan was watching got on their horses and rode out behind Eleanor.

Nathan said, “GOD help Eleanor. I don’t know who they are nor what they want.”

Eleanor was riding fast home.

Nathan sent a telegram to Patrick to meet Eleanor because of strange men.

Patrick was sitting and talking to Brenda when the telegram from Nathan came through.

He stood up and put on his guns.

Brenda looked at him and he reached her the telegram.

Brenda and walked to her office.

Patrick did not pay any attention to Brenda. He continued through the house and out to the stables.

Brenda saw Jose and said, “Get my horse fast.

Brenda had taken her guns out.

Jose looked at her.

He ran and got her horse and her saddle and Patrick was on his horse and out the yard.

Brenda looked and got on her horse and rode fast and caught up with Patrick.

Patrick looked and then he did a double take.

Brenda loved to ride fast and wild.

She took off and Patrick nearly caught up.

Thirty minutes they saw Eleanor.

Eleanor saw her parents racing towards town.

They passed her.

She stopped her carriage and looked at them.

She heard her mother screaming and laughing.

The three men pass Patrick and Brenda.

Brenda and Patrick turned around and rode faster to Eleanor.

Eleanor was getting in her carriage and noticed the three men that were in town.

She sat down and put the shotgun in her lap.

She checked it ammunition.

The men rode close to Eleanor’s carriage.

Eleanor stopped and lifted her shotgun.

The men looked at Eleanor.

Patrick and Brenda turned around and rode fast to Eleanor.

Stanley and Alice were going to town for lunch and they saw the three men surround a Stith’s carriage.

Stanley stopped.

Alice looked and saw Patrick and Brenda riding fast and the men saw Brenda and Patrick and they rode off.

Other people were going to town and saw the men.

They went into town and told Nathan.

Brenda had her holster on and pulled out one gun and had it on the man on her side.

He saw Brenda and they rode off.

Alice was shock.

Patrick nodded at Stanley and Eleanor continued home.

Patrick and Brenda went racing.

Alice looked back at Patrick and Brenda and laughed.

She said, “They have so much fun. I want to be like that when we are old.”

Stanley looked at Alice.

Alice said, “What?”

Stanley said, “Alice do you not know that they cannot enjoy themselves because somebody is always trying to steal and kill them for what GOD gave them. Thomas, Michael and Shirley. The more they work the more the devil tries to steal, kill and destroy from them. I don’t want that type of wealth.”

Alice said, “GOD helps you to bare what HE has for you to do for HIM. They are building a hospital, they establish scholarships, they created more jobs. The threats are a part of the rewards.”

Stanley said, “I don’t know if I agree with you Alice.”

Alice said, “To whom much is given much is required.”

They rode into town and saw Nathan.

Stanley told Nathan about the encounter.

Nathan said, “I got seventeen reports about those three. But I can’t leave town and pursue after them because no one is here. I need at least one deputy. The city council is dragging it’s foot. Then the mob is here.”

Stanley said, “What?!”

Nathan said, “It is an evil mob. Their symbol is a double horseshoe. That’s why the president had a military headquarters put here to spring out into several states. Just be careful.”

Stanley said, “This is the holiday season. Can we get citizens to volunteer and be armed and monitor the roads that lead to town.”

Nathan said, “That is an excellent idea Stanley, I put you over it. Good day.”

Stanley turned around in his buggy and said, “Nathan, Nathan!”

Alice was laughing hard as Nathan walked away.

Stanley looked over at his pregnant wife and grabbed her by her neck and kissed her hard.

Alice grinned and they went to the café and ate.

They walked around town and to the dress shop and Selma told Alice of the extravagant dresses and the first ladies and Gen came in and bout some and the mayor’s wife and the judge’s wife.

Sarah walked in with her skirts.

She stood and talked to Stanley and Alice.

She told them Eleanor told her to place the skirts in Shirley’s shop they had to be upscale.

Alice said, “That’s true. Let me see the skirts.”

Sarah took out the skirts and Alice’s mouth dropped opened.

Sarah said, “You like or don’t like?”

Sarah said, “I love.”

She turned and looked at Stanley.

Stanley was going into his pocket and said, “How much?”

Saras said, “A dollar and a half.”

Stanley reached Sarah a dollar and half.

Alice said, grabbed Stanley’s hand and said, “No.”

Alice said, “No Sarah the skirts should be more. The quality of the fabric is higher. That’s what Eleanor was telling. We saw her leave town.”

Selma said, “Leave the skirts here. They will be back Monday, it is pay day before Thanksgiving.”

Alice said, “Put my name on that skirt.

Gen walked into the dress shop and spoke.

She said, “You don’t have anything?

Selma said, “They are getting twenty-five more dresses that should be here Friday.”

Gen walked over and were looking at the skirts.

Alice reached and got her skirt.

Gen started walking behind Alice.

Stanley was looking.

Gen said, “Bring me that skirt.”

Alice walked to Stanley and turned her back to Gen. She said, “Move Mrs. Gen. You buy up everything. This is my skirt.”

Gen started laughing.

She said, “Where did these cute skirts come from?’’

Alice kept her back to Gen and said, “Sarah”.

Gen said, “Sarah?”

Sarah waved and said, “Me.”

Gen turned around and said, “I know you.”

Sarah said, “I’m Joe and Peggy’s niece.”

Gen said, “Yes. I remember you wore that lovely cream lace dress at Stephanie’s wedding.”

Sarah was shocked and said, “Yes ma am.”

Gen said, “Is this all you have?”

Sarah said, “Yes ma am.”

Alice walked pass Gen holding her skirt and took it in the back.

Gen laughed and turned to Stanley and said, “I don’t man no harm. I’m messing with her.”

Stanley said, “I know.”

Selma said, “Mrs. Olsen we are not selling them yet. Shirley and Eleanor have to tell us how much. What would you pay for that skirt?’

Gen turned and looked at Selma and looked at the skirt and the quality of the material and said, “Five dollars. If a little more embellishments were added then six dollars.”

Nathan said, Sarah you were about to short change yourself.”

Alice returned from the office and looked at Gen.

Stanley smiled.

Selma said, “Alice Mrs. Olsen said she would pay five dollars for the skirt and if it had more embellishments than six dollars.”

Alice said, “I told you Sarah, but the green skirt is mine.”

Gen said, “I like this red. Hold this for me. If I don’t come and get it then I’ll get it from them Thanksgiving. I have just invited myself to their dinner. I better stop and ask. It doesn’t make sense to cook for the two of us.”

Selma said, “I know. We stop cooking big holiday meals decades ago. We have a much smaller dinner.”

Alice looked and she looked at Stanley.

Stanley did not know why Alice was looking at her.

Gen said, “Those other skirts are not my size. If they were I would take all of them.”

Alice said, “See Stanley. She doesn’t leave anything else for anyone else.”

Stanley said, “Alice that is childish.”

Gen stuck out her tongue at Alice.

Stanley said, “You too.”

Gen said, “How long did it take you to make these?”

Sarah said, “Two months.”

Gen said, “Oh no. That’s too long.”

Sarah said, “I was in school. We are out for Thanksgiving and start back Monday. I can sew one per day.”

Gen said, “Make sure they all are different. You will be able to sell them and be sitting pretty,”

Sarah was grinning.

Gen said, “What color fabric do you have? Do you have burgundy?”

Sarah said, “I think so, if not it is a deep red. I do have dark blue.”

Gen said, “Make me oe of the dark blue and dark red or burgundy.”

Sarah said, “If it’s not burgundy you would take the dark red?”

Selma and Alice said, “Yes.”

Gen said, “I thought I was mute for a minute.”

Gen turned to leave.

Stanley said, “Mrs. Gen are you alone?”

Gen said, “Yes.”

Stanley said, “Be careful there are some men on the road.”

Gen pulled out her gun and walked out the door.

She stepped back in the door and said, “Why don’t you all come to Thanksgiving dinner. I am going to sell my house and I would love to spend the holidays in it for the last time.”

Sarah said, “Me?”

Gen said, “Are you all going to the Stiths, if not then yes.”

Selma said, “I will ask my husband. And let you know through Eleanor”.

Gen looked at Alice and said, “What about you two?”

Stanley said, “Alice ?”

Alice tried to hold her head up and said, “Fine.”

Gen walked to Alice and used her finger and tilted her head up properly.

Stanley was so tickle he turned his head.

Gen said, “Two pm. Stanley give them my address.”

Stanley saluted Gen.

She walked out the door to her carriage.

He stood and watch her leave.

Alice said, “She titled my chin.”

Stanley was looking out the window and turned back to Alice and said, “You are around these worldly, sophiscated women and trieed to use something they are born with against them, Alice.”

Alice and Sarah started practicing how to hold their heads up.

Selma sid, “Sarah I hate you missed Eleanor.”

Sarah grinned.

Selma looked at Sarah and said, “Who is he.”

Sarah said, “Jake he is a sildier, They leave tomorrow maybe for the rest of the holidays. He came by and spent this morning aand afternoon with me.

Selma said, “I don’t miss that. Every holiday my husband was gone until the spring.”

Sarah looked at Selma and ran out the dress shop crying.

Stanley ran to the door and looked.

Sarah had jumped in her wagon and was gone.

Stanley ran out the dress shop.

Nathan looked at Sarah.

Selma and Alice ran out the shop.

Selma said, “I did not mean any harm.”

Stanley told Nathan that Selma told Sarah that her soldier may not come back until the spring.

Nathan said, “Every year I was in the military we did not come back until the spring. She is going to have to get use to it.”

Stanley said, “Whoa. Let’s go Alice. Mrs. Selma are you ok?’

Selma was standing outside with one of the skirts.

The mayor’s wife was walking and stopped and looked at the skirt.

She said, “I want that skirt.”

Selman looked at the skirt and said, “This is taken. There are only four left.”

A called the mayor’s wife.

The mayor’s wife looked up and whispered to Selma, “Put the skirts up.”

Selma said, “I can’t do that.”

The mayor’s wife whispered, “I’ll take the four.”

Selma winked her eye at Alice.

Stanley shook his head.

Alice said, “That’s how she sells everything.”