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Selections from *All the Danger*

Typically for such situations, no one alone possessed sufficient courage, but together they goaded each other to feats of prowess until they were making lewd comments that involved Cady lying on her back with her skirts raised. When one of them touched her, she slapped him with all her strength; shocked, he fell back with a hand on his cheek, then, angry and desperate to restore his standing, attacked her.

At that moment, a stranger approached with an even, somehow unhurried yet rapid stride, appearing suddenly from the side of the tracks by the yard, and planted himself directly in Spencer's path; and there he waited, saying nothing. "Stand aside," barked Spencer, in a voice that combined determination with fear.

"Willingly, if you will let go of the girl. She seems to be under some compulsion."

They talked and talked, but he could see the fatigue on her face and urged her to follow her sister's example; and as soon as he said it, she felt it and suddenly could barely stay awake. "Sleep," he urged gently.

"Will you sleep?"

"I will watch over you. Have no fear."

"But I have no fear, not with you beside me." So moved was he, he exclaimed that he would die where he was, should it come to it, and then it was her turn to smile. "Let us hope it does not come to that." She was asleep in seconds and he was certain he could watch her forever.

So the night passed, until the moon set and a pale streak made the turntable at the open center of the roundhouse barely visible, while the locomotives in their stalls yet lay in darkness. Tommy signaled that it was time to leave to Moody, who then gently awakened the girls, and they, half awake, began to gather their few things... Locke and Hobbes both appeared, and the three had just enough time to exchange nods when a war whoop was heard, loud and close and immediately joined by a tumult of yells and cries, all imitating the imagined way of Indian warriors, that filled the roundhouse for nearly a minute.

"I do appreciate that you remain with us. I feel safe with you. That is why I must ask you something." There was another silence, during which she was amassing the courage to speak, which she did suddenly. "This morning, that awful man said some terrible things about you. Of course I... But later, I think I must have turned unexpectedly, I found you looking at me. Perhaps not just looking. And now I worry that I have let that brute poison my mind. Was that the sum of it, just looking?"

The shooting began with children throwing pebbles from the adjacent hillside, expanded to some teenage boys throwing stones, and then the soldiers were being pelted from all directions. The first 'shots' might have been firecrackers remaining from July Fourth, but soon came real bullets, from both hillside spectators and troops below. Amid general gunfire, one of the soldiers fired into the crowd a few feet away, and someone went down.

All the Danger

a novel

David Vigoda

Collioure Books
Albany, New York

This novel is a work of fiction. Any references to historical events; to real people, living or dead; or to real locales are intended only to give the fiction a setting in historic reality. Other names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and their resemblance, if any, to real life counterparts is entirely coincidental.

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I wrote this book in fear for my country. Yet I am mindful that I was conceived months after the worst self-inflicted calamity in human history. Out of that paradox

I dedicate this novel to my grandchildren,

to whom goes my love, for they are the great and wonderful plot development of the later chapters of my own story. In them, as in children always, goes my hope for a better world.

May they always know love and joy. May they use the intelligence, which God I mean Nature gave us, to obey the three rules: First, do no harm. Second, do good. Third, follow rule number two without violating rule number one.

"As he mused, he became keenly sensible of the deep responsibility they assume who disregard the means to attain their end, and of all the danger of setting in motion an engine which it exceeds human power to control."
—James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (chapter 17), 1826

"The passions are too high at present... You and I have formerly seen warm debates and high political passions. But gentlemen of different politics would then speak to each other... It is not so now. Men who have been intimate all their lives, cross the streets to avoid meeting..."
—Thomas Jefferson, *Letter to Edward Rutledge*, June 24, 1797

"Civil wars strike deepest of all into the manners of the people. They vitiate their politics; they corrupt their morals; they pervert even the natural taste and relish of equity and justice. By teaching us to consider our fellow-citizens in an hostile light, the whole body of our nation becomes gradually less dear to us."
—Edmund Burke, *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, 1777 (regarding the American War of Independence)

"Under the names of the poor and the weak, the negligent, shiftless, inefficient, silly, and imprudent are fastened upon the industrious and prudent as a responsibility and a duty."
—William Graham Sumner (professor, Yale University), *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (chapter 1), 1883

E pluribus unum (From many, one).
—Motto of the Great Seal of the United States.

Chapter One

No one under the age of ten or eleven had ever tried to run away from the orphanage, and everyone over that age had, when apprehended, been sufficiently punished with beatings and deprivation to deter all but the most determined. Cady had enough sense to wait for a moonless night to lower her little sister out the second-story window and then slide down the drainpipe. There were dogs on the grounds, but they had befriended the dogs. Abigail was skinny enough to slip between the bars of the entry gate, but Cady had to grapple up the stone wall and jump down on the freedom side; then they ran as long as they could, huddled panting in the bushes to see if they were pursued, and still panting they ran again. When they could run no farther, they crawled to the edge of a field and fell into an exhausted and triumphant yet nervous sleep in each other's arms.

The distant clanging of a blacksmith frightened them awake, and they arose immediately and started walking, though neither knew which way to go. Cady led them across fields and through woods, avoiding roads, avoiding farmhouses and settlements, endeavoring to proceed in a straight line, alert to every sound, looking backward constantly; and when they didn't encounter railroad tracks after what seemed hours, they tried a different direction.

"Perhaps we should use a road," ventured Abigail. "There would be signs."

"Too dangerous. We shall find it."

"I am hungry."

"As am I."

When at last a train whistle could be dimly heard, they instinctively turned to each other, but no tracks appeared; roads appeared, and once they saw a man driving a wagon, but were afraid to talk to him, so they let him pass before hurriedly crossing. Skirting farms and a hamlet, eventually they heard another train whistle, closer this time, and forgetting hunger their pace quickened; tired and weak from nervousness they continued, and the tracks were almost at hand before they saw them. "Thank God," said Cady.

"Now, what?"

"We walk. Do you wish to rest first?"

"I am too hungry to rest. Which way?" Cady gazed in both directions, but there was nothing to provide a clue, not even the sun, which was already too high to read; so they just started walking, keeping to the edge of the roadbed, and before too long, a mile or two, they approached a station on the edge of a town. First they hastened toward it, to ask which way was west, but stopped when the thought occurred that the orphanage might have alerted the local stationmasters. Not far ahead, before the station, there was a freight train parked on a siding, and they approached gingerly, listening, but when they heard nothing, they climbed aboard an open boxcar, Cady assisting Abigail, and tried to make themselves inconspicuous in a corner.

"How do we know when this is departing?" asked Abigail.

"We do not know."

"How do we know where it is going?"

"We do not know that either, Abigail, we shall just have to wait and see." Then, taking a breath, she added more softly, "I am hungry too, Abby. Try to be patient. We both have to try." The nine-year-old took her older sister's hand and held it as they waited in silence, waited what seemed a long time before they heard voices of the crew returning. Cady turned and put a finger across her lips; Abigail nodded. They heard the brakeman walking across the roof of the car, heard the brake disengaging; later they sighed as the locomotive jolted the train into motion. "It will not be much longer. Once we are away from here, we can look for food."

"Where?"

"I do not know where. We shall find a place."

"Where they give away food?"

"Of course not, nobody gives away food."

"We have to steal it, right?"

Cady sighed. "Yes, little sister, we have to steal it. It is a sin, but we have no choice. In any case, two girls, how much can we eat?"

"I could eat a lot," affirmed Abigail, with something approaching a smile, the first in some time; then it faded. "Cady? I never stole before."

"Nor I. Well, I guess there is a first time for everything. I think it says that in the Bible somewhere."

"It sounds like the Bible."

When the train picked up speed, they both involuntarily relaxed, if only a little; when it was moving fast, first the younger and then the older crept to the edge of the open doorway and peeked outside to watch the world roll by, a world they had forgotten. Finally they could release the hardening pains of the orphanage, the daily, even hourly, resistance against hostile abuse, and they each felt the constrictions relax, felt the feeling of it, the very muscles relaxing as the mind unclenched. Nothing they saw was particularly exciting or beautiful, just the sweet country of a feverish people, grass, trees, placid cows, the war both forgotten and not forgotten, a war they were too young to know, but knew through their father.

The rocking of the train was somehow reassuring, so they did not mind that whatever flowered vapors might have arisen with the heat of a midsummer day were masked by its oily odors mixed with the vaguely unpleasant smells left by whatever cargo had recently filled the car. They were content just with the sunlight and their freedom, a freedom that the engineer's whistle seemed to announce each time they approached a crossing, all of which were open, without warning lights or barriers. There wasn't much to see—farms, hamlets, wild areas; but once, passing a hamlet, a little child waved at the chugging train and Abigail, thinking she had been seen, waved in reply. Raising her voice above the din, she turned full face to Cady and fairly shouted that she had never been on a train before, but Cady informed her that that was untrue, that they had come east by train, but she was too young then to remember.

"I was not!"

"You forgot, then." She was upset; Cady raised her spirits by saying, "Now you will be on a train all the way to Pittsburgh!"

Soon—too soon—they passed from farm country through

pristine affluent towns with quaint little stations, past elegant houses with perfect lawns, groves of ornamental trees and gardens of blooming flowers, with greenhouses, even grape arbors. The entire landscape, it seemed, was cultivated or at least tended, not a wild shoot anywhere, while elsewhere there were vistas that preserved hints of wilderness, as if to emphasize what was eliminated. Unfortunately for them it was clear that they were approaching a city and when the train slowed it confirmed the fact. "Are we in Pittsburgh?"

"I wish we were."

"We went the wrong way, is that it?"

"I fear it is."

"Oh, well," said Abigail, looking up after a disappointed pause, "at least we can get some food. Then we shall go to Pittsburgh, right?"

Moments later they saw a sign that read, 'Philadelphia City Limits.' Soon after, moving slowly, they caught glimpses of people in carriages and on horseback and promenading through a large park that lay along a river, all elegantly attired, women with parasols, men in top-hats; but as they began to wonder at so much splendor the train curved away into a vast junction of tracks. It was crowded with trains, passenger trains, freight trains, long trains of coal cars laden and unladen, and they could see the smoke of many locomotives, one passing so closely they instinctively retreated and by tacit agreement returned in silence to their corner and drew up their legs.

They felt the train lurch to a stop, then suddenly it started again but moved very slowly, and they heard squeals and clanks as it switched onto another track and then another and then again stopped with what seemed a final huff. Again they heard the brakeman above them, moving from car to car to apply the brakes, then they heard the engine power up again, but it moved off by itself, leaving the cars where they were. "We must be in the yard," whispered Cady.

"What's the yard?"

"Our travels are finished for the time being. At least now, however, we can get some food."

They waited till it became quiet around them, then alighted as quickly as they could, and darting around and under trains snaked their way toward the exit of the extensive rail-yard packed with

cars, sheds, machine-shops, a multitude of tracks, and a large roundhouse for the locomotives. There were men everywhere, bustling in every direction, calling to each other amid the din and smoke or silent at their tasks, young and old, grim-faced, smeared with coal and oil and grease, and the girls did not escape unseen. A man called after them, perhaps a foreman, and Abigail started to turn, but Cady pulled her forward; he was nearby, in fact they had practically bumped into him, but he didn't call again and there was no sound of his boots on the heavy gravel. They didn't see, but he stood there watching them—actually it was Cady he was watching, gazing at her with unblinking eyes. A second man jabbed his shoulder, but turning to see what he was observing, he too stared at Cady's retreating form.

Outside the yard was a station, and looking along the track they could plainly see the large passenger terminal that marked the eastern terminus of the great Main Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the largest by far in the United States. A new station, it was built quickly and completed just in time for most of the ten million visitors to the vast Centennial Exposition of the previous year, and it had a size, though not a design, commensurate with its purpose. The passenger terminal was a modest, flat-roofed two-story building with few architectural embellishments, but it was three hundred feet long and a hundred wide; and attached to it was a utilitarian shed where the trains were accessed, with two curved roofs, eight hundred feet by two hundred. Driven by hunger, they hurriedly closed the half mile to this, the largest edifice they had ever seen, and sure enough, adjacent to it was a large loud busy market.

Approaching, they drew close with hands tightly gripped as they passed between knots of poorly dressed men whose hands were rough, some young, some older, who formed an outer ring of boisterous, sometimes contentious conversation—until the girls appeared. Then they fell silent and observed closely, staring frankly and more than a few with an unsavory motive regarding Cady. This gauntlet run, the market itself seemed less forbidding, though not much, for though it was naturally populated with female customers, their very presence drew certain men, many half inebriated, who seemed to have no other employment than to leer and strut, as well as bands of street urchins looking to steal food the moment an eye was turned. The girls wandered among the open-air, covered stalls,

uncertain how to proceed; but in the presence of so much food their stomachs growled and their mouths salivated, and though Abigail said nothing Cady felt the pressure.

Having identified the quarry of her first theft, the bread in a baker's stall whose fresh scent was irresistible, she placed her sister at a discreet distance with careful instructions and proceeded at what she hoped was a casual gait; however, she made the unthinking mistake of smiling at the baker. He smiled back but then, having noticed, watched her; she realized her mistake but, desperate, grabbed a loaf at the edge of the display and ran, or rather tried to run but immediately slammed into an elderly woman who exclaimed in surprised anger. He had almost grabbed her when she scrambled free and escaped, but meeting Abigail at the appointed location, it seemed to take forever for the heaving in her chest to subside, the loaf hanging between them unregarded.

Eventually they had no choice but to direct themselves to the next attempt, for the pressing of hunger was unrelenting. "Eat this," commanded Cady, "I shall return with more," and with that she left but soon returned, exultantly displaying a cucumber, until she noticed that the loaf was gone and her sister was in tears.

The child explained how she had taken all of one bite when some "mean rascals" had snatched the loaf from her hands and were gone before she'd had time to register what had happened. "I am so sorry," she bawled and would not be consoled until Cady finally ordered her to stop crying.

"Your crying will not help us," she insisted. "Stop now. Now smile. I mean it, Abby, I have a plan, but it requires you to smile. There, that is much better."

A short time later they had approached a stall that seemed to combine accessible pickings with a kindly vendor, so they separated, first Cady to nonchalantly situate herself before the display she pretended to be inspecting, then Abigail, as if they were unrelated, to engage the farmer in conversation. To their surprise, though, it was he who engaged her, for he could see at a glance that she was neither a street urchin nor a beggar, could see in fact that she was a child as innocent as she was beautiful. "Child, where is your mother?" he asked gently.

"I do not have a mother. I have a sister."

"And where would she be?" When Abigail didn't answer, he asked, "Have you eaten today, child?"

"No, sir."

"Then let me tell you what we will do. You are looking at the finest produce in Philadelphia County, and nothing would give me more pleasure than to prove it to you. Would you like some?"

"Yes, please, sir."

"Very well, but you will need a sack. By any chance, would that young lady staring at my produce at the other end of the stall be your sister?" At that, Cady approached. "As I see you have already got an open sack, perhaps I may put a few things in it." As he leaned over to place some carrots and radishes and a few early tomatoes, he noticed that the sack already contained clothing and asked if they were traveling. Abigail replied 'yes' at the moment Cady said 'no,' because she was afraid of what might happen if it were learned they were runaways; then she hurriedly explained that they had been living with kindly relatives, who had bought them tickets for Pittsburgh, to visit their father who was gravely wounded in the war, but unfortunately they had gotten on the wrong train and ended up here, and what little money they'd been given had been stolen by ruffians.

The farmer nodded sympathetically and said, "Would you believe half the people in this market cannot afford to buy vegetables? Even if their husbands still have jobs, times being what they are..." He sighed. "It is said people get what they deserve. I wish I could help you. How old are you? I would guess fifteen, if that." Cady brusquely replied that she was sixteen and he nodded. "What I thought. Young lady, this is not a place for either you or your sister. Men come to neighborhoods like this, just to... You keep a good grip on her. As for you..." He hesitated. "Excuse me, but a young woman who looks like you is going to attract attention, unwonted attention. Do not invite any—and remain alert. Please heed my words." Again he sighed, looking at them. "Good luck to you. I hope you get to Pittsburgh—if you really are going there."

Emboldened, they hunted for a loaf of bread, a large loaf, for they were ravenous, and when they identified a stall, they looked for police or criminals who might impede their plan. "When you see me leave," instructed Cady, "say goodbye politely and follow me." Abigail approached another baker to ask if he happened to have seen her mother, from whom she had just been separated by chance, and he turned to look just in time to see Cady drop one of his loaves into her sack; when he shouted, she ran away in a panic,

and Abigail, equally panicked, chased after her. Fortunately for them, he couldn't leave his stall, for there were plenty of other hungry children ready to pick him clean while he was distracted; the girls didn't know this, however, and ran for their lives, hearts pounding.

Adjacent to the market was the poor neighborhood where most of the local railroad men lived, either in shabby little houses with their families or in boarding-houses with other single men. There was garbage and refuse on the street, more in the back alleys, and in mid-July the smells were prevalent; nonetheless, everyone was outside, for more of the stench than the breeze seemed to penetrate stale interiors through open windows. Searching for some nook where they would be unlikely to be disturbed, the girls ended up in back, in an alley surrounded by trash barrels. "It stinks here," complained Abigail, and unable to bear the stench of rot and decay, which included at least one dead cat, they found another place, equally vacant with a bit less odor.

"Take care you do not sit on broken glass," said Cady. "Let us eat. We shall feel better after we eat."

They did not, however, for the city was much rougher than Cady had anticipated, also they were still hungry. "Cady," began Abigail gingerly, "are you scared?" Cady sighed and did not reply, then asked if Abigail was still hungry; tears welled up.

"Do not cry. You cannot cry, neither of us is allowed to cry." Abigail dried her face and they sat in silence; later, she confessed to being thirsty. "I am too," said Cady; but when they had risen to return to the market for a bottle of milk, they heard the loud banter of young men approaching.

"Ho, what is this?" shouted one of them, surprised. He stared at Cady frankly and she stared back, trying to face him down; then, remembering the advice she had received, lowered her gaze and tried to talk her way past him, but there were two more and they cut off any escape as their banter escalated and their interest deepened. Typically for such situations, no one alone possessed sufficient courage, but together they goaded each other to feats of prowess until they were making lewd comments that involved Cady lying on her back with her skirts raised. When one of them touched her, she slapped him with all her strength; shocked, he fell back with a hand on his cheek, then, angry and desperate to restore his standing, attacked her. She fought back with all her rage and

managed to scratch him badly, but with retreat impossible he punched her in the face and threw her to the ground and was on top of her when he was loudly ordered to get off.

The ruffian looked up to see a poorly-dressed man coming toward him up the alley and quickly got to his feet, freeing Cady to rise quickly, grab her sister, and step away. When the man kept coming, the youth, flanked by his accomplices and thus having no way to retreat, pulled out a knife and forced a smile. His gaze never wavering, the man reached out an arm to wave the girls behind him, took two more steps forward, and said, "This is when you fellows turn around and leave."

"And if we do not?"

"Cut him," urged one of his friends. "He is nothing but a tramp anyway."

The two adversaries continued to face off, appraising each other. Seeing no sign of fear, the youth tried bravado, issuing a threat and referring to past deeds as he pointed the knife at the man's face; but the man made no reply and his expression never changed, only one hand crept suggestively toward the opening of his coat. "Aw, I say we go," said the third confederate, "a lousy tramp ain't worth it." That and a hand on his friend's shoulder was sufficient to give the latter an excuse to retreat from his own attack, and with a barrage of insults and threats the three turned and left the alley.

The man watched until they were out of sight before turning to the girls. "Did he hurt you badly?" he asked Cady.

"He wishes," she replied, rubbing her face where she suddenly felt pain.

"You should never have come in here. What are you doing here anyway? Your clothes are a bit smudged, but it seems pretty clear you do not come from this part of town."

"We are on our way to Pittsburgh," said Cady, who then thanked the man for his timely rescue.

"We were eating dinner," said Abigail. "If you can call it dinner. We were just going back for more when they arrived."

The man nodded and said, "I know the feeling. Got some money, have you?"

Abigail looked down, ashamed, and shook her head. "We stole. We know it is a sin, but we ended up here instead of Pittsburgh and we were so hungry. To tell the truth, mister," she

added quietly, "we are still hungry."

"So am I," said the man. "Tell you what. As luck would have it, I happen to have some coin in my pocket today, so suppose I send you two to the market to buy us a savory pie."

"And a bottle of milk?" added the girl.

"And a bottle of milk. Maybe two, if the coin goes far enough." When they reached the market he said, as he gave Cady the money, "Now do not imagine that I will not be watching, so do as agreed and return with the food and we will have ourselves a proper dinner."

"Why do you not just do it yourself?"

He gestured with a quick look down to her feet and back up to her face, then, unpredictably, grinned. "Well, miss, look at me and look at you, and look at that angelic little sister of yours. Now, if you were a copper, who would arouse your suspicions more, me or the two of you?"

"But you have money."

"I do. What is curious about that is that, when I do not have it, I get taken in for vagrancy, and when I do have it, I get taken in for theft."

When the purchases had been made and they were finishing their meal, Abigail asked, "Mister, why were you not afraid earlier?"

The man's head jerked back and he smiled slightly. "Everybody is afraid, child. The trick is not to show it." He glanced at Cady.

"But what if he, you know..."

"In that case, I have an equalizer inside my coat I keep handy." After a silence he added, "No doubt there was a time when that would have scared me more. When you have faced a bayonet charge, though, one tough with a knife..."

He faded off into some nasty memories, until Abigail brought him back. "Did you fight in the Civil War, sir?"

He looked up, startled. "Indeed I did. Forty-eighth Pennsylvania."

"Our father was in the war. He died."

"I am truly sorry to hear that. Many a good man did—and some who were not so good. And some who should have died, did not. Ach! War is a dreadful business, and a Civil War the most dreadful. Well, how did we get here? Wait a minute, did you call me 'sir?' Young lady, if I had known you were going to do that, well,

surely I would have done something differently." He recalled that they had spoken of Pittsburgh and asked if they were really going there.

"Oh, yes," replied Abigail immediately, "tomorrow, first thing." Since they had no money, continued the man, he was curious how they intended to accomplish that feat. Seeing that it was too late to deny their plans, Cady said they might have been there at this very moment if the freight they had boarded had not been going the wrong way.

"You intend to hop it all the way to Pittsburgh?"

"Is it far, sir, I mean mister?"

"Three hundred fifty-one track miles. It is not the distance that concerns me, however."

"What does?"

"Two things. First is the idea of the two of you going all that way by yourselves, through the wilderness."

"Why do you call it 'wilderness?'"

"Because that is what it is. Only two kinds of people inhabit it, savages who naturally belong there, and those who have learned the ways of savages and can survive there. It is a place where the only rule is to prevail, and the only way to do that is to defeat your enemy. Do I frighten you? Maybe you should be frightened. Forewarned is forearmed, they say."

"We shall be fine, Abby, do not worry," said Cady, staring at the man.

"If I were still a praying man, I would pray to God you are right. As it is, I shall hope you take my advice and do not try it unaided."

"Who is there to aid us—sir?" asked Cady.

"That I do not know. I have been to Pittsburgh, but I have no call to return there, certainly not tomorrow. If I could, I would buy you proper tickets, but I have not seen that kind of money since this wretched depression threw half the country out of work, and set the other half to telling us the whole affair is our own damned fault."

The other item that concerned him was the news out of Pittsburgh, for with the railroads slashing wages, tensions were running pretty high up and down the line, he said, and the word had come down that, just yesterday, the superintendent of the Pittsburgh division had ordered freight trains to be doubled. "That

means more men out of work and more danger for the crews left. It starts day after tomorrow, and there be much talk about striking."

"By that time we should be there."

"I hope so. I hope you will be well away from it, because what I hear is that Pittsburgh is a powder keg and this order might be the match."

"You are frightening my sister, sir." Indeed, Abigail was visibly upset.

"Not you?"

"I cannot afford to be frightened. In any case, the trick is not to show it, remember?"

The man nodded, but didn't smile. "You learn quickly. That gives me some comfort."

"You have been kind to us, mister, and for that I thank you. More than kind, you saved me. Still, I find myself wondering what concern it is to you what happens to us."

"Cady, that is not very—"

"Quiet, Abigail."

"You are right, it is no affair of mine and I apologize if I suggested otherwise. I wish you good journey and there is an end to it. Thank you for a pleasant dinner, pleasant company, and good day to you both."

"Are you leaving now, mister?" asked Abigail.

"No reason to stay. Not that I can see."

"Cady, do you not think..."

"Never mind, Abby, we must be off too. It is time we returned to the house."

"What house?"

"The house where we are staying, of course." Against her widened stare, Abigail pleaded with a stare of her own, which caused her to hesitate, but even on second thought she decided she had no choice. "Come, Abigail, it is time we were on our way."

The man offered to accompany them, but Cady politely declined, prompting him to reply that she had a decisive temperament and that went well for a young woman, but he did not think it would be right to leave without informing them that he knew a safe place to spend the night. "Well," he corrected, "as safe as one can expect in the circumstances."

"Then Philadelphia too is in the wilderness you mentioned?"

"Indeed. This part of it, for sure. For the likes of two innocent creatures like yourselves, maybe the whole of it."

"We will be fine, but thank you for your offer."

"As you wish. Good day to you, ladies." He briefly doffed his cap, turned, and left.

As soon as he was out of sight, Cady took her sister firmly by the hand and practically pulled her in the opposite direction as quickly as she could go, then suddenly stopped around a corner to see if the man was following. Abigail asked why she was so nervous, seeing that he had been so nice; Cady replied that they must not trust any man. "Even a nice man? He saved you. You said so yourself."

"Come dark, he might expect a reward."

"What kind of reward?"

"Never mind."

"But where are we going?"

"To Pittsburgh, of course."

"Now?"

"The sooner we leave this place, the better. Do you not think so?"

"Then why did you not let him help us board a freight, as I am sure he would have done?"

"Because we must not trust him, as I just told you. What if he decided to come with us after all?"

"Then he would protect us. What is wrong with that?"

"Maybe he would. I did not like that talk about 'wilderness.' Did you not find that odd?" Abigail admitted she had indeed found it quite odd; still, she said, she would feel better if he were with them. "He scared you and yet you wish him to be here?" Abigail shrugged. "Try not to be scared. All right?" Abigail nodded, but it was a tentative nod.

They regained the rail-line, with the yard works before them, and retraced their earlier steps, Cady explaining that, even if they could not catch a freight till morning, they could at least walk out of the city. "As I see it, even if we end up in a field without supper again, at least we will be away from this... This..." Quickly she added, "And if we do catch a freight, who cares where it stops? Maybe we could spend the night in the car."

"That man said we must walk past Mantua Junction, so we do not end up on a train bound for New York."

"So?"

"Then the freights will be moving, and we cannot hop on a freight that is moving, can we?"

"We shall find one that is not moving, like we did before."

"Where will we get food?"

"We have the food we saved, remember?"

"Not much."

"We will find more."

"Where?"

"Frankly, Abby, at this point I would rather beg at farmhouse doors than return to that market."

For a while they walked in silence, then: "Cady? What did you mean about the reward? I still do not understand."

Cady made no reply, as her mind filled with memories of encounters at the orphanage, which had taught her never to be alone with a man without a means of escape. These unpleasant thoughts were abruptly interrupted when Abigail stopped moving, and in reply to her inquiry pointed, trembling, with a half-raised finger. Following its direction, Cady saw a gang of youths, who had emerged from a side-street in the sad neighborhood that fronted the yard, approaching from the distance of a few city blocks. Their demeanor was obvious, if not their purpose, even from such a distance, and instinctively Cady looked around for shelter or assistance, but they were in the open on the tracks and alone. The gang continued to stride toward them, until when they reached a certain distance Abigail, howling like an animal, turned and fled back toward the city.

Chapter Two

For a moment Cady remained frozen in place as Abigail ran away, but then of course she followed, and when she had caught up with her she pointed to a side-street and they darted into it and kept going, turning into a narrow defile between two houses and then down another street and then between two more houses and then again, until Abigail called desperately for her sister to stop. Hands on knees, both of them were gasping for breath, ears alert for the sounds of approaching pursuers and frequently looked up to confirm that their hearing had not failed them. Even after their breathing had calmed, they remained where they were, oblivious of the weeds and trash and dog droppings, listening, imagining constantly that one of the narrow openings to the street would suddenly fill with the triumphant smirk of hoodlums closing on their prey.

Faces did appear, but not those they feared, for mostly they belonged to children, who stared in silence, as though observing circus curiosities, and disappeared as suddenly as they had appeared; occasionally there was a housewife, curious to see two strangers, females at that, cowering like hunted rabbits. There were no men around, for those who had work were working, and those who were unemployed were in one of the many saloons. The girls remained where they were, still too frightened to return to the tracks, even though Cady had doubts that the hoodlums had actually been after them. She suspected it was just an unfortunate coincidence, but resolved that in future she would not be so careless as to leave themselves openly exposed to danger; on the other hand, she could not be certain that, careful or not, it might

not be too dangerous to try again. It was while she was lost in such questions and uncertainties that a woman interrupted with a call from the street to ask if they required assistance.

When neither replied, the woman studied them until, having made a decision, she invited them to come inside her house, against which they were cowering. They were brought into a dark kitchen, with an old stove and a cracked sink and a baby, bawling from a crude, home-made cradle on the floor. The woman, not much older than Cady, picked up the baby and shook it gently, but the crying did not abate. "She cries a lot," she said by way of explanation. "Are you thirsty? Help yourselves to water, there is a tin cup on the wall." After both had drunk, Abigail asked if she could use the outhouse, and the woman nodded toward the door behind her that opened on a little dirt backyard surrounded by a high plank fence, the outhouse against the side by the alley. Abigail looked outside and returned to ask Cady in a whisper if she would accompany her; when they returned, the young mother said, "You are not from around here." They both shook their heads and she asked what part of Philadelphia they were from.

They looked at each other and Cady replied that they had been going to the terminal to board a passenger train for Pittsburgh, where their father lived, when a gang of hoodlums had fallen upon them. "Our progress blocked, we ran away and ended up here."

"If you do not mind my asking," said the woman, who by this time was nursing the baby, "what are you doing on your own?"

"Oh, we are not on our own." Here she forced a little laugh. "Our uncle took us to the station, but had to leave immediately."

"He was pressed to return to work," added Abigail.

"He is a carpenter," added Cady.

"And that sack on the floor is all your luggage." As it was not quite a question, neither felt obliged to reply, and the woman simply nodded and turned to the baby, who was falling asleep at her breast. Cady noticed that she had the remains of a bruise on her cheek. When she looked up, she told them they were welcome to stay and rest. "Please," she said, indicating two rickety wooden chairs, "sit down." They did, and an awkward silence followed, and as the silence lengthened the awkwardness increased, at least for them. Once the baby suddenly stretched, but its mother seemed oblivious, captured by thoughts over which she possessed no

control, seeming to have forgotten that she had invited two guests into her house. The others, in contrast, felt obliged to offer some polite conversation, so Abigail asked the baby's name and Cady said it was cute, even though it was not; then they exchanged uneasy glances.

"I suppose we had best be getting back to the station," said Cady tentatively.

"Are you sure there is another train today?" asked Abigail with a meaningful look. "Maybe we should wait till tomorrow, when those hoodlums are sure to be gone."

"How can we wait till tomorrow?" replied Cady. "We have no way to reach Uncle George." At this, Abigail only shrugged, glanced nervously at their host and back to Cady.

There was another awkward silence, until the woman seemed to return suddenly to consciousness. "I would let you stay here overnight, but as it is, I cannot. My husband would never... If he came home and found you here... He is out of work."

"Oh," said Cady quickly, "please, no, we were not... We will be on our way, no need for you to... We should go, Abby. We need to eat supper before we get on the train." In reply, Abigail nodded and Cady nodded back, neither certain what their nods were intended to communicate, and neither rose from their chair.

"We barely have enough food for ourselves," said the woman suddenly. "I wish I could put out some coffee and crackers for you, but... My husband says we have to watch every penny. Of course, he is right. You are welcome to stay till you have to leave. Once my husband finds work, we shall be fine. Too bad you did not come then."

It was clear from the reddening of her bruise that she was embarrassed, and Cady, embarrassed herself now for being there, arose and gathered their sack. "Come, Abby, we had best be going."

"'Abby' is a pretty name," said the young woman. "That would be short for 'Abigail,' right? 'Abigail' is a pretty name."

There were more housewives outside and the sisters found themselves lingering in the undeclared hope that someone else would offer to receive them; no one did, however. In fact, they received nothing more than passing glances that barely registered curiousity, and walking slowly up the street to make eye contact and smile at as many faces as possible elicited no further response.

"It is not too late to try again," ventured Cady, uncertain how she herself regarded the proposal.

"It seems late," said Abigail.

Cady assured her she would be more careful this time, remaining alert and staying close to shelter should some danger arise. "Once we are away from this area, we should be fine."

"But it seems late."

"Will it be different in the morning? This way, at least..." The nine-year-old showed a face already full of tears and Cady threw her arms around her. "Oh, Abby, please do not cry." Still tearful, Abigail asked her to promise that they would not try to hop a freight train that evening and Cady agreed; that, however, left her with the problem of determining how they would get through the night and where they would find food, for what little they had in the sack would not suffice. There were still hours of midsummer daylight left, enough time to walk out of this part of the city, perhaps even enough to reach the suburbs, where they could hope to find a charitable housewife or tactful servant. They might even catch a freight, but if they did not, at least they could sleep on grass, maybe in a barn. Anything would be preferable to... to what, where could they sleep here?

She decided that, under the guise of looking for food, she would lead them west, along the tracks but not on them, because she figured the best hope of finding food was at the door of a saloon, and earlier she had noticed several that fronted the railroad. If they found food, so much the better; if not, at least they would be closer to safety, and then, under the guise of looking for a place to sleep, they would keep heading west; but no sooner did Abigail see the tracks than she became terrified and would not take another step. This forced Cady to turn back into the neighborhood, making it impossible to try the saloons and difficult to stay correctly oriented, because with no street parallel to the tracks, they were forced to follow a zigzag pattern.

Their progress was further slowed by Abigail's inability to continue, which was at least half fatigue, the rest reluctance, and this forced Cady to acknowledge that it was getting less and less likely that they were going to escape this... this wilderness before nightfall. Already the light was softening and the sun would soon set, which frightened her, indeed terrified her, as images, more than actual thoughts, began to infiltrate her consciousness, of what

could happen to them in this place, once night fell. How distant their situation was, she thought ruefully, from how she had imagined their glorious escape; however, her very next thought was that she must not betray her feelings. 'The trick is not to show it,' she repeated.

"Where are we going?"

She stopped and looked around, not that there was anything to see, other than narrow, unpleasant streets. There were people outside, but somehow they no longer seemed friendly; certainly no one offered hospitality. 'What do they imagine, these women,' wondered Cady, 'seeing us pass along their streets, that we are out for a stroll? Will no one take us off the street for a night, has no one a little food to share?' The thought that there was nothing to prevent them from walking right into another gang or some other danger of the city at night was a thought she tried hard not to have. Nonetheless, with Abigail walking ever slower, though never complaining, with the light fading, and with her fear of danger ever ready to pounce on her mind, she began to look down every space between houses, and asked Abigail to do the same. "Look for one that is not too... you know... Where we can sleep."

"How can we sleep here?"

Anger rose in Cady's throat, recriminations and complaints, but what emerged was consolation. "It will be fine, you shall see. We can rest, we can eat what remains of the food... Maybe it will not be fine. Then it will be an adventure. Think how we will talk about this, later." When they had chosen a spot that did not smell, was free of excrement and broken glass and even offered a scraggly bed of weeds, they emptied the sack of what remained of the bread and carrots and tried not to consume them quickly; and when the food was gone, they instinctively turned to each other. "I know, dearest, me too." With the approach of night, the houses reclaimed their inhabitants, making the neighborhood quieter; now a shout or bang was distinctive. Abigail had buried her former terror and Cady was struggling to bury hers. A dog wandered near—perhaps it had smelled their presence—and gingerly stole closer and closer until Abigail, seeing it was friendly, called to it.

Cady immediately told her not to do that and tried to shoo it away. "But you can see she will not hurt us," objected Abigail.

"Do not pet it, Abby. Besides, it probably has fleas."

"What do you mean, 'besides?'"

"You cannot afford to befriend a dog. We must not become attached to anyone, not even an animal." To the response of confusion and shock, she added, "We must be strong. You see what life is like here. We must not let down our guard, even for a moment. Besides, you see how hard it is to get food, just for us." Several times she thought of more to say on the subject, thought to assuage the harshness of her outburst, but on careful reflection decided that, like it or not, they must confront the truth of their situation, each of them must; and so there followed a lengthy silence. The dog had not departed, rather it sat at a comfortable distance, watching, waiting to be beckoned; when Abigail finally responded, it was not at all what Cady expected: She asked if she felt like a sinner for having stolen.

"Of course I feel bad. Stealing is wrong."

"It is a sin, right?"

"Well, now that you mention it, is it always a sin? What would Jesus have wanted us to do, remain in the orphanage? They would not let us go freely, we had to escape. Without money, what were we to do?"

"Get money?"

"How? Where? Two girls?"

"It just seems wrong."

"It is wrong."

"Well, then..."

"I do not know, Abby. I know I did wrong, that is why I was so nervous, yet I do not feel like a sinner. Maybe I should. Do you feel like a sinner?"

"I think maybe I do."

"Then you should ask God to forgive you."

Abigail mulled over that proposal and asked, with some hesitation, "What if He will not forgive me?"

"God forgives everybody, Abby."

"No matter what they do?"

"No matter what—so long as they ask properly. You must be... I forget the word."

"Contrite?"

"Yes, you must be contrite."

"You should ask too—and be contrite."

The neighborhood was noticeably quieter now, though an outburst could be heard occasionally, and this, plus the inevitable

fatigue of such an eventful day, induced the sisters to quieter, more calm conversation. At times it was as if they had forgotten the trials they had met, the ones that undoubtedly still lay before them, and the dangers to which their present predicament exposed them. When the twilight darkened, Cady suggested the sack of clothes as a bed for Abigail.

"What about you?"

"I will be fine."

"How?"

"By remembering how happy I am that we are not sleeping in our beds at the orphanage. Never mind a bed. We shall have proper beds when we get to Pittsburgh."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course I am sure."

"I am not sure."

"Well, if truth be told, I am not either—but I know we will be better off in the new place than the old."

"Still, how will you sleep? I am not sure I can sleep."

"Try. I shall try. If I am not fine, then as I said I shall consider it an adventure. Either way, we will survive this night and tomorrow will be a brighter day. We have learned much today, have we not? Come, lie down and use me for a pillow."

When Abigail had done so, she said, "Cads? Do not ever leave me, okay?"

"Of course not, dearest. Why on earth would I do that? Now close your eyes and get on the dream train before it leaves the station."

Abigail did close her eyes and Cady gazed down at her and gently stroked her hair, trying to fend off the fear that again threatened to seize control of her mind. It was the quiet, which was not in the least comforting, rather it made her feel even more isolated, more exposed. When she thought perhaps Abigail was asleep, or nearly so, and she felt her thoughts easing their grip, Abigail said in a wide-awake, if quiet voice, "Cads, are you awake?"

"Yes, dearest."

"Would you like to know what I am thinking about? Apple pie."

"Good heavens, why? There are no apples in July."

"I do not know why, except that I love apple pie. I think it is my favorite."

"More than sour cherry pie?"

"Mm, I love cherry pie too."

"See if you can dream about eating a whole apple pie and then a whole cherry pie."

"How does one try to dream?"

"It was just a silly thing to say. Try to sleep."

Cady tried to sleep too, but thoughts would not allow it, especially one that complained so many times, 'If only that freight had gone the other way...' So many times it was noted how much easier the journey would be if they had money. How much did passenger tickets cost; and if they could somehow earn money, how long would it take to accumulate the sum? She had no idea, but surmised it was probably a long time. Well then, at least enough to buy some meals, for what a difference that would make! Where could she possibly find employment, though? Without references, no one would take her into domestic service, which left mill work—assuming there was a mill in the area that was hiring—but she would not put her sister in a mill and, if she did not, what would she do with her while she was working? Better to go hungry, which left only two alternatives, the first being prostitution, the second to put Abby out to beg. Was that what God wanted? 'And if I do not, am I a sinner for stealing?' It was only for a day or two, till they were safely at their destination. Surely... And yet... How she longed to be free of this.

It was only well into the night, after the saloons closed, that the neighborhood became fully quiet. Before then, the workers who still had jobs had wobbled and hummed their way home to get some sleep before their shift started; those whose jobs had been eliminated, who could not find another and had tried to drink away their troubles, went home last. As Cady sank toward exhaustion, her thoughts lost their focus. If it came to it, she thought, they would walk to Pittsburgh—in fact, that was just what they would do. Should it come to it, they would walk the entire way. Three hundred fifty-one track miles. Through the wilderness.

It felt like she had barely dozed when she was startled awake in daylight by the shriek of a loud whistle and found herself entwined with her sister, as if they had been hugging all night, and it took a moment for them to orient themselves to the strangeness of waking up where they were. Perhaps strangest of all, the dog was still there. "What was that awful noise?" asked Abigail, stretching.

Cady shrugged; but very soon they could hear the sounds of pots and pans, of bustle, the neighborhood awakening; and soon came the disturbing aroma of potatoes frying in lard, which instantly focused them on their immediate task—actually their second immediate task. After a brief, urgent discussion, they decided there was no alternative but to hurry into the back alley before people were about and relieve themselves; and fortunately, no one appeared except the dog.

The plan had been to leave the city and beg for food in the less daunting suburbs, but they were too hungry to endure the wait and the uncertainty, so they returned to the earlier idea to beg at saloons, which were the only public establishments they had seen. Abigail's terror seemed to have passed or at least abated with the coming of a new day and no doubt the press of hunger pains, so after saying goodbye to the dog (and warning it not to follow) they headed back toward the railroad tracks. When they emerged onto the street facing them, they realized with a shock how little distance they had covered the previous evening, all of a few blocks, with the yard—and saloons—just ahead. Not knowing that it was common for children, including girls, to be sent into saloons to have a pail or 'growler' filled for their father, they knocked hesitantly at the side door of the first one and, when nothing happened, did not know what to do.

It was Abigail who suggested they enter, and when they did they found themselves in a dim, shabby little place, with a saloonkeeper and a few early customers staring at them. "And who might you be?" asked the first, and added, when he received no reply, "You do speak, do you?" When Cady still could not bring herself to speak, even with Abigail prodding her with her eyes, the latter mumbled that they were hungry. "What was that?" asked the saloonkeeper. "Speak up, child, I did not hear you. No need for fear here, there is no one to harm a child in this place. You two are not from around here, are you? I know I have not seen you before." The customers agreed they had not, either.

"We are from Pittsburgh," replied Cady at last.

"Pittsburgh!" exclaimed one. "Seems you must have taken a wrong turn."

Cady explained that what she had meant to say was that they were originally from Pittsburgh but had been held in an orphanage, "a dreadful place," and were trying to return to Pittsburgh.

"By yourselves?" asked another. When Cady nodded, he shook his head slowly and said in a throaty half-whisper, "I would not recommend that."

"We have no choice, mister. We will not return to that orphanage."

"In that case," said the saloonkeeper, "we wish you the best of luck. Since you are not here to take home some lubrication for a parched throat, I find myself wondering as to your purpose." Again Cady hesitated and it was Abigail who said they were hungry. "Hungry. And you come in here in hope that I could relieve that problem for you."

This time it was Abigail who hesitated, not sure how to interpret such ambiguous language, and Cady who replied, "We had not much to eat yesterday, mister, nor any breakfast today. It will be many hours in a freight car before we get to Pittsburgh, so we were hoping... Perhaps you could spare some food?"

The customers drew within themselves, silent and motionless, while the saloonkeeper studied the girls, and there was a long uncomfortable silence before he turned his head with an unpropitious gesture and replied, "This is a saloon, miss. We serve drink, not food." Cady stared, either waiting for him to say more or hoping he would, and faced with it he grabbed his towel and wiped the counter. When she realized there would be nothing further, she turned for the exit, gesturing to Abigail to follow, and at the door said, "Thank you, anyway."

"Wish I could help," called the saloonkeeper. "Good luck to you."

The moment they were outside, she said, "Do not worry, there are many more places to try."

Unfortunately, however, the proprietor of the next place, with an expression initially inscrutable but soon clear, said, "Young lady, do you not read the dime novels? Horatio Alger proves that the right kind of boy can rise above even the most hostile conditions. Now, it is true he makes no mention of girls, but should not the same apply? Especially a girl who looks like you do, and so young and fresh. Why, you could have all the work a girl could desire—and well-paid, too. In fact, for a percentage I could be persuaded to facilitate the venture."

A customer agreed, assuring Cady that he would hire her. "Say the word and you can have all the food you want, even ice cream."

"Clothes, too. As for your little sister here, you know child labor is a fact of life..." These words were spoken to their backs, as they were already heading for the door.

Before there was time for fear to rise again in Abigail, and anger in Cady, she had pulled her by the hand down the street and into the next place, where she met with this: "Young lady," snorted the saloonkeeper, still looking her up and down, "you should be ashamed of yourself. This is a respectable establishment. How dare you come in here and offer yourself for a meal. Disgraceful!" A customer, staring at her the same way, asked if he should fetch a constable.

Outside, Abigail confided in a sheepish whisper, "I think I know what those men are talking about."

"Pay it no mind," snapped Cady.

Still she persevered, but the next saloonkeeper shook his head sadly, and the one after him grabbed a truncheon and chased them away. Discouraged, Abigail expressed the view that to be hungry was not so bad, and Cady that she had not expected it to be so difficult to find a charitable soul; she still preferred charity to theft, however, and though at this point they were almost back to the market, there were more saloons to try. At the next place, the smell of fried cured ham immediately made their mouths water, but the proprietor said, "Sorry, miss, we had our breakfast, and be assured, with three brats upstairs, there was nothing left, not even the grease in the pan." Cady offered to sweep the floor and wash dishes in return for a meal. "I would do that, miss, if I could afford to hire you. These days, though, half the drink I sell is on credit." One of the customers said there was a 'soup house' somewhere where children could get a free cooked lunch, and Cady, momentarily hopeful, asked where it was, but he said he had no idea; the customers agreed, after some discussion, that there was one somewhere in the city, but far away.

"Wait a minute," said one, "I think, yes, I heard of one in Griscom Street. It is on the other side of Philly, though, miss. Take some time to get there. You had best hurry, because it only serves lunch."

"How could they get there?" said another. "Even if they could find the way, which I would think highly unlikely, it would take hours. They would never get there in time. Besides, two girls?"

Finally it was recommended that they try nearby at the hotel

restaurant. "At least you know they serve food."

When they asked humbly at the back door of the kitchen, however, they were told, "If I fed every child who was hungry..."

Near despair, they returned to the sidewalk in front of the building and stared long at the market; then, seeing no alternative, they started toward it, Cady trying to persuade Abigail that, having learned from their mistakes, this time they would become successful thieves. Between their dreaded destination and them, however, an evangelist was perched on a soap box outside a saloon across from the railroad yard and, as they approached, to Cady's surprise and Abigail's delight, he began to sing; immediately she dragged Cady forward into a run.

Instantly she was captivated, her hunger forgotten, her fear as well, for she had always loved music, loved singing. At the orphanage it had been her great pleasure, almost the only one, and what made the evangelist's singing so especially pleasurable was that she knew the hymn and could participate with unrestrained enthusiasm. Shyness being foreign to her, she joined what there was of a crowd, not really a number to justify such a term, and opened her throat wide; and as she was heard by those who constituted the crowd, they made way for her to stand before them. Thus did she quickly make her way to the front, beaming at the preacher, who himself sang without the slightest inhibition, though his voice was not as enjoyable as hers, and who did not take long to notice her.

Some of the crowd were men he had lured out of the saloon, more were women who had come from the nearby market, and the rest were boys and girls, many of whom had jobs, some legal, none of whom attended school (the law requiring attendance rarely enforced). They paused out of curiosity but did not linger; only Abigail lingered, for she knew all the verses to the hymn, every word; that is, she could repeat it all, but did not know what it all meant. "After the burden, the blissful mead," for example, had at best a hazy meaning for her (Cady had told her what 'blissful' meant, but could not say what 'mead' was); on the other hand, there were attractive phrases like "silver stars" and "quiet woods" (she loved stars and woods), while "after our weeping, sweet repose" she could understand well and it comforted her. As soon as it was over, she asked the evangelist if he knew "Awake and Watch," and he smiled with delight, asking, "The one that goes,

'Awake and watch, the light is dawning?'"

"I love that one."

"Then shall we sing it? Yes? Well then, suppose I get off this soap box and put you on it, so everyone can hear that wondrous voice of yours and see your shining face." When she had mounted it, she flashed a smile at her sister, who was waiting and watching only a few feet away but in the outer ring of the modest assembly, and the preacher asked if she would start the congregation. That congregation, such as it was—most of the men were at work in the yard across the tracks—was significantly greater at the end of the singing than it had been at the beginning, a fact not lost to the evangelist. Also noticed was the heightened participation of those present, practically everyone singing the lyrics they knew, humming the tune when they didn't, or simply swaying to the music. When it was over, the evangelist proposed a third hymn, this one to be sung as loud as everyone together could make it, "so the voices of righteousness shall sound in the market and the rail-yard, the urban fields of the Shepherd."

By the time the singing had concluded, the crowd had become a proper crowd; and though the evangelist would have been every bit as dedicated before three as thirty, he drew energy from numbers, so when he launched himself again into his sermonizing there was no one within hearing who did not feel its pull. They might resist that pull, but they could feel it; Abigail, of course, did not resist at all, rather she gave herself to it body and soul, her face radiant with joy, and the preacher had the preacher's sense to keep her on that soap box. For Cady it was not the same, because at sixteen she was old enough to distrust sugared appeals and those who made them, and as a natural beauty, old enough to have learned never to trust a man by his words or his look; yet she was not unaffected by the spectacle, especially with her sister at the center of it, nor unresponsive to the message of human improvement. If she was cynical, it was just sufficient to hope that the preacher would share enough of the eventual offering so that they could buy themselves a proper meal or two; and so it was that she encouraged her sister with her smiles, yet remained at a comfortable distance.

By and by the whistle shrieked again, the same one that had startled them awake, and this time they could tell that it was coming from the railroad works; sure enough, within seconds men

began streaming through the gates, across the tracks, and into the various saloons, which like barnacles awaiting the tide were positioned to efficiently receive them. As they came, the preacher heightened his harangue and more than a few swelled his crowd, including a railroad inspector, who approached, not to hear him but to look at Cady, and he looked at her steadily, with an unblinking leer. When she moved to keep a clear view of her sister, as new arrivals pushed in front of her, he moved to keep a clear view of her. His desire was obvious, if a plan was yet lacking; in any case, he was in no hurry to execute a plan, rather he seemed content for the present to watch. There was nothing casual or relaxed about it; on the contrary, his expression was most unvaryingly serious, intent, focused, his gaze hard and narrow, his lips pursed; and a couple of times, like the stock character in a melodrama, he actually licked his lips.

Chapter Three

There were not many churches where poor people lived, since most were in the nice neighborhoods where 'genteel' people lived; and though those who did the rough work of the nation were not, strictly speaking, excluded from congregations, they were certainly not invited to join them. Should a working family appear for Sunday services, scrubbed clean and dressed in their wedding-and-funeral clothes, they would have met with much more of stunned awkwardess than cordial welcome. Traveling evangelists, then, were their ministers, and the spectacles in large rented halls that required tickets but charged no admission were their occasional services. For a man of Dwight Moody's calling to appear in a humble neighborhood, even more outside a saloon by a rail-yard and an open-air market, was by any standard an exceptional occurrence; but then Reverend Moody was an exceptional man. Once he had been a shoe salesman, and he was good at it, sold a lot of shoes, but then it had come to him—as he liked to tell it—that he should be more concerned with people's *souls* than their *soles*.

From somewhere, someone had produced a second soap box so he could stand beside Abigail, and when the railroad men from the yard had had time to assemble around him he declared, before mounting it, "As you can all see—or should I say as you cannot see—my physical stature is unequal to my claim to moral stature." Then, mounting it, he added with a broad smile, "Now, perhaps, the two may be considered more equal," and everyone laughed. Among the men, especially, such a self-deprecating remark provoked affection, and this of course he had known would happen. He immediately followed the first joke with a second,

adding, "Furthermore, as you can all now observe, what I lack in vertical stature I fulfill in the horizontal direction," and he gestured with his arms to exaggerate his actual girth, at which the laughter was heartier and more sustained. Then, changing his tone, he made a third observation about his appearance.

"You will notice, my friends, that I am dressed as a prosperous merchant. Am I in fact a prosperous merchant? I will give you two answers. Answer number one: No, I am not. I am but a poor sinner, like everyone else, though one who has been called to help others. Answer number two: Yes, I am, for I have made a great bargain with the One who governs all wealth, and that bargain has brought me riches beyond the imagination. Now I ask you, friends, have you made your own bargain yet?" Having his audience now under his control, he wasted not a second, knowing the lunch whistle would soon recall the men to work, and so launched immediately into the appeal he had reserved for just this time.

"When I sold shoes, I offered my customers a bargain. It was a good bargain, maybe even a great bargain—but how much greater is the bargain I myself made with the Lord. And now I stand before you today a happy man, a successful man. I do not stand beside the great, the captains of industry, no, I stand beside you. I stand beside you to ask this simple question: Why do you yourself not make a great bargain with God? He is waiting, His hand is outstretched. What are you waiting for?" Here he suddenly paused, indeed he seemed to have completely stopped, as though he were truly perplexed by the inactivity of his listeners. He even threw up his arms and shrugged elaborately, and opened his eyes wide in disbelief as he caught and held the gaze of one after another, and not just those directly in front of him, no, he reached outward with his eyes. Then, he seemed to withdraw, as though depressed by the lack of response, or disappointed, or grieving.

A profound silence reigned. It continued. Moody's head was down and he brought a hand to his forehead, and everyone waited to see what he would do next. Suddenly he looked up, smiling, his face filled with energy, and he cried, "Say 'yes' to the Lord! Not next year, not tomorrow, do it now, do it now! Yes, Lord! Yes!" As he shouted 'yes,' he clapped his hands hard and immediately shot them upward, as if reaching for God. "Do it now, friends! Yes, Lord, yes! Only accept Him, only trust Him, put your faith in Him

now, and you will have peace in your heart. Are you a slave to drink? Help me, Jesus! Do you raise a hand against your wife? Help me, Jesus! Take but one step, one step toward the Light, and feel how the power of the Almighty will lift you up. Yes! Yes!" Immediately he began to sing again, and there were those who sang with him and, as he swayed to the music, so did they.

In this, none was more forthright, none so uninhibited, none more transported than little Abigail, who all this time had been standing beside him, transfixed. When she turned to Cady, singing for all she was worth, there was a beatific smile on her face, a smile of pure joy; and Cady responded to the smile, as how could one not, as she wondered whether this man somehow were sent to them to lift their spirits, especially to her sister, for whom she had suffered so much anxiety.

Unbeknownst to her, the railroad inspector who had been leering at her was still there, still leering. She had not noticed him, because when she had occasion to briefly turn away from the evangelist to survey the scene, he quickly dropped his gaze and became another nondescript person over whom a scanning eye would pass without pause. He did it in a practiced manner, as if this way of making himself uninteresting to another were part of his craft; and just as practiced was his way of casually returning to his former stare, so that nothing should escape his observation.

Moody, catching sight of something passing that was useful to his message, changed its focus by asking first, "Do you yearn to better your lot in life? Then take the hand of Jesus that is extended toward you. For how can a man succeed on his own? You have heard the expression, 'God helps those who help themselves.' Help yourself, friend. Put your trust in Him who gives us our daily bread." It was then he pointed to the elegant carriage with a splendid team of horses arriving at the station, and when everyone had turned to look, he asked to their backs, "Why could that not be you? Go ahead, look upon it. What do they know that you do not? What do they have that you do not? If you will turn back to me, I will tell you what it is." When everyone had done so, he repeated, "'God helps those who help themselves.'"

He asserted that, since God had plainly established the laws which governed economic life, one must not tamper with them; and furthermore, they were not just natural, they were just and good. "I know of no better proof of the divine origin of

Christianity than this, that her laws are laws of nature, and that includes political economy." How could that be, he asked rhetorically, when there was such a divide between the comfortable and the miserable? "My friends, I am here to tell you that there is no contradiction between individualism—let us frankly call it selfish individualism—and Christian love. That is because each produces the other. When I better myself, I better others—my wife and children, my neighbors and friends, my community, my nation... The more I better myself, the more I do for others, and if this is not Christian love, then I need to put down the Good Book and go back to selling shoes."

When the inspector heard someone mutter that that was exactly what he should do, and another reply in the same fashion that, better than selling shoes would be to try to make them, he turned in his characteristic casual way to spot two men standing at the edge of hearing distance with hostile expressions. As he worked his way closer, he heard the following sarcastic exchange:

"I believe in self-improvement. I am going to restore my wages."

"I believe in it too. I am going to give me my job back."

The inspector nodded sympathetically and closed the remaining distance to say, "Do you know what I thank the Lord for? I thank the Lord that there are at least two men in this crowd who still have their heads screwed securely in place." That was more than enough to ingratiate himself with the pair, and after he had promptly introduced himself, they did the same. He continued to chat until he had obtained their full names and job positions and then, with a gesture, returned to his former location, where he discreetly removed a little notebook from a pocket and inscribed the information. That done, he returned his attention to Moody's entreaty, not for a moment during the episode having lost sight of Cady.

Knowing the remaining time was short, the evangelist was now perorating at a high pitch, visibly sweating as he made large gestures to dramatize his words. "My friends, the plain truth is that poverty, like sin, is part of the structure of the universe. Does this mean, however, that you or you or you must be poor? No, my friends, it does not. 'Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.' Does not the Bible say that? Yes, it does, Romans nine, twenty-seven; but who is

of this remnant? You, or you, or you? 'For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,' Romans ten, thirteen. Therefore have I come before you today, in this place, to say with you, 'Help me, Jesus!' If you truly believe in Christ, then you are saved! Do you truly believe? Help me, Jesus! Take that step, take His hand, do it now! Help me, Jesus!" There were those who were heard to repeat the phrase, and Moody seconded them, and then more said it, and he encouraged them to say it loudly with conviction and raise their arms and many did.

There was just enough time for him to thank everyone for the offering they were about to make and let it be known he would be back for the afternoon portion after lunch than, sure enough, the whistle blew. As most of the men returned to the yard, he lifted Abigail off her soap box and asked, "Now who, young lady, might you be?" When she shyly mumbled her name, he leaned in with his ear for a second hearing. "Abigail. What a pretty name. But where on earth could you have originated, for I dare say you might as well have descended from heaven." Cady by this time had worked her way forward and now stood beside her sister. "Ah. I believe I have before me two sisters. I noticed you earlier and wondered that you seemed to be alone. Am I correct that I have before me sisters who are alone together? For I will guess that you do not make your home in this neighborhood."

Not for the first time was Cady deciding how much of their story to reveal when Abigail started to blurt out the entire thing, but she quickly interrupted her. The preacher kept his alarm private and merely asked if they were hungry; and when one hesitated to answer and the other looked uncertainly for guidance, he continued gently, "Well, children, as I noted it is time I had my lunch, and as it happens, all this helping people to get right with the Lord gives me an appetite—but then you know from looking at me that I am a man who enjoys a hearty meal. Now, as I prefer not to dine alone, it would be my pleasure to host the two of you to the best meal this neighborhood can provide. What do you say?" As he could see their mouths already watering, he immediately beckoned them to set off for the restaurant at his hotel, which was nearby and which in fact was the very one where earlier they had unsuccessfully begged a meal. "Come along, girls. Is something wrong?"

They shook their heads and haltingly continued, and as it

happened no one from the kitchen recognized or even noticed them. After ordering for all three, Moody turned to Abigail to express his astonishment and pleasure that, not only was it obvious how thoroughly she enjoyed the hymns, but she even knew the words. How was this to be explained? He learned from Cady (who quickly replied before Abigail could) that practically the only time they got to leave the house where they were living was to go to church on Sunday. In truth, it was not very enjoyable—the minister mostly told them they were bound for hell—but they did sing hymns and Abigail found that she loved to sing.

"I did, I do," she interjected. "Never, though, did I so enjoy myself as this morning."

"Whatever gifts I may claim," said Moody, "I am confident that a good singing voice is not among them." She assured him that it was not so bad and added that she thought he was a much better preacher than that other; and smiling boyishly, despite his forty-one years, he thanked her.

Then her face dropped, as in a low voice weighted with solemnity she said, "Reverend, yesterday I sinned. I did ask God for forgiveness, though, and I was contrite. At least I think I was contrite. How do I know if He forgave me?"

"You feel it in your heart."

"Then He forgave me. What about begging? Is it a sin to beg?"

"It is a sin to beg from another what one could provide for oneself."

After mulling over that statement, her face brightened. "Well, then, Cads, I guess we were okay."

Cady thought to reply but then thought again and refrained. Moody drew his own conclusions and delicately brought the conversation to a point where they could explain their circumstances. She concocted a tale, mixing truth and conjecture with deception, about how, after their mother died, they were consigned to the care of a relative near Philadelphia. At first the situation was not too bad, but after their father died...

"He died from war," interrupted Abigail.

Cady nodded and said that after that it got worse, because their father had been sending money while he was far away with the army, but when he died the money stopped, and after that they had to work all the time as scullery maids and barely got enough to

eat—often they were sent to bed hungry. At first they hoped the situation would be temporary, but it only got worse, until the time came when they could no longer endure it. "I suppose I could have," said Cady, "but I could not bear to see Abby—Abigail—reduced to servitude. So we ran away." Hearing this, Abigail at first had a confused look on her face, then an embarrassed one, which induced her to look down at her plate, while Moody was shaking his head in commiseration, and Cady quickly concluded by revealing that they had spent the previous night in an alley by the railroad yard.

He practically gasped. "You were lucky in more ways than you know. Had a policeman seen you, you could have been arrested and sent to reform school. Believe me, if you think it was bad at the place you left..." He looked at them with amazement and sympathy, as if they had miraculously survived a dangerous trial. "'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,'" he muttered and continued shaking his head, staring at them, first one, then the other. With that he became still and silent, looking downward with a hand at his forehead in a gesture both girls recognized from earlier; when he raised his head, he invited them to join him for his afternoon session. Cady's immediate response was anxiety to start for Pittsburgh, Abigail's was enchantment, and she turned to Cady to implore her to agree.

He specified that, if they would postpone their departure for a day, he would provide supper, a room for the night, and a proper breakfast, plus some money to ease their journey. In fact, he added, if they would take up the collections (in a way he would teach them), he was confident there would be sufficient funds to purchase passenger tickets—and if Cady would agree to join her sister in the chorus, he was almost certain. Again Cady wondered if this man had been sent to them, for it was not even a day since she had been wracking her brain to discover a means to honest employment, and now here it was, solved in a most extraordinary way. When she realized she was staring, she explained and he replied, "The Lord provides, child, the Lord provides. Only trust in Him, accept Jesus as your savior, and the seas will part before you." On their way out of the hotel, he stopped at the registration counter to reserve a room for them.

When the evangelist began his afternoon portion, having attracted a new crowd, there were three soap boxes instead of two

and he introduced his 'chorus,' much to the pleasure of the railroad inspector, who was again there, having forsaken, if not forgotten, whatever work he should have been doing. He had followed the three to the restaurant, had stood watch outside the whole time, forgoing his own lunch, had followed them back, and now, a man in his thirties, anticipated an entire afternoon to gaze upon the sixteen-year-old girl he could not get out of his mind.

He made no attempt to hide either his person or his feelings, which led Moody to assume he was responding to him, and at the end of the afternoon the inspector pretended that that had been the case, when after ostentatiously placing a large contribution in Cady's basket, he approached to shake hands. 'Preacher,' he called him, instead of 'reverend.' "Preacher, I must tell you how enraptured your presentation today has made me. Initially, I will confess, I was reticent to advance, being no better than the next man and just as much a sinner, but was simply overcome by the power of the word and the glory of the music. I should have returned to work with the whistle, but I could not bring myself to do so, for fortunately as an inspector I may exercise some degree of latitude with my schedule." He kept talking and would not have let loose his grip on Moody, except that many wanted to speak with him and he was adept at managing difficult people; nevertheless, the inspector stayed close and constantly smiled at strangers as if he were part of the entourage, perhaps a trusted assistant. When the girls returned with the collection baskets and themselves stayed close to Moody (and received many accolades from strangers), he turned his smiles on them, especially, of course, Cady.

Thus it was that, as one after another went their way and Moody prepared to go to dinner with his two assistants, the inspector was still there and still attaching himself and managed, with an oddly awkward deftness, to persuade them to let him take them all to dinner. "I know a place, not far from here, where the fare is as tasty as it is honest. My name is Spencer, Herbert Spencer, and as an inspector in the employ of the railroad, I have occasion to know the area quite well. Further, if I may say so, I know the places one would do well to avoid, especially in the company of such lovely young ladies." He then led them to his hotel through back streets whose squalor, both physical and moral, was on full display. They saw a man beat and rob another, children empty a drunk's pockets, and prostitutes (some of them girls)

solicit customers; they picked their way through garbage, some of it disgusting, and passed angry arguments, as well as a homeless one-armed war veteran, dressed in what remained of his uniform, selling shoe-laces.

Whenever possible, he fussed over Cady with admonitions like, "Watch your step there, miss. Do not want to step in that, do we?" More than once he managed to brush against her, as if accidentally, and always without Moody's notice. All this and in the end the restaurant was not nearly as nice as he had implied, with more than one shifty character lounging near the entrance. Many of the guests were railroad crews, forced to stay in a hotel (at their own expense) till they could drive their trains back to their origins—not the place Moody would have picked, but his own, he acknowledged, was not much better.

Spencer said that, as a line inspector, he was familiar with the entire Main Line, from Market Street in Philadelphia to Liberty Street in Pittsburgh, and described it as "a wilderness, preacher, a dark wilderness, filled with dark people. Not all of them, to be sure. Many good men work on the railroad. Unfortunately, some are deluded or misled. Some, if truth be told, are little better than savages. I dare say they are savages." Moody, startled by the darkness of this vision, said it was his mission to evangelize these men, as well as their families, and even the tramps who had given up on their Savior and lived in squalid makeshift camps.

As if to illustrate the futility of such a mission, Spencer falsely quoted the two men who had belittled Moody's extolling of self-improvement, whereby one said that what was needed was not individual effort but communism, and the other that, to accomplish it, the sole requisite was the continued influx of foreigners. He maintained an odd, indeterminate expression that hinted of both pleasure and displeasure and asked if he did not agree with the view among Christians that social failure was the mark of sin.

"Well, Mister Spencer, I prefer to leave theology to the theologians. One might say that that is indeed the view prevailing among Christian thinkers. Others, looking through the lens of nature, see it as a process of evolution, whereby the unfit perish, leaving the stronger to advance the human race and civilization. For myself, I look to the uplift of the poor."

"When you say 'uplift,' you mean...?"

"Moral uplift, of course. You cannot give a man prosperity."

Spencer said the two hecklers found many targets for their failure except themselves: political corruption, a fraudulent presidential election, economic depression, the bank collapse, so-called 'robber barons...'

"These are in fact hard times..."

"Yes or no, preacher, is it not perverse to believe that a man bound for heaven would appear in life as one bound for hell?"

"As I said, I leave theology—"

"They said the way that gentleman in the carriage had made his money would no doubt turn God's stomach."

"What is a line inspector?" asked Abigail.

Startled, both men turned, and Moody, suddenly smiling, asked the girls if they were happily anticipating their arrival in Pittsburgh. "Pittsburgh," interjected Spencer, "I am from Pittsburgh. What takes you there?"

Replying quickly, Cady said only, "Family."

Said Moody, "Ah, I did not realize you still have family there." Abigail glanced at Cady, who did not answer.

"When is your departure?" asked Spencer.

"Tomorrow."

"Alone?"

When Cady made no reply, Moody said, "I can assure you, Mister Spencer, these two are quite resourceful."

"Alone, then. I do not hold with that. Apart from the rest, too dangerous." He paused only the briefest moment before abruptly announcing that he would accompany them.

"I assure you that that is not—"

"Not? Two girls, without chaperone?"

"While a chaperone would be preferred—"

"Thank God you agree. A preacher, after all."

"We shall be quite safe," said Cady.

Spencer turned to stare, again with that weird, undefinable expression; but as he stared, there seemed to be more pleasure than displeasure. "It is settled, then," he said suddenly, speaking to Moody but still staring at Cady, "I will take them myself. I live there. I am going there."

"What about your employment responsibilities?"

"Your concern is unnecessary. The matter is well in hand."

Impulsively, Moody replied, "I cannot allow you to jeopardize your position on my behalf. It is clear I must deliver these two

myself. You may rely on me, Mister Spencer." Then he had an idea. "In fact... I too am on my way to Pittsburgh..." Turning to the girls, he asked, "What would you say to the proposal to accompany me as I continue my work? We would indeed go to Pittsburgh together, in comfort, but evangelize along the way."

"Unthinkable," snorted Spencer. "Expose these delicate creatures to the wilderness?"

"I assure you they will be quite safe with me."

"Impossible."

"What do you say?" he repeated. The expression on Abigail's face provided her answer; as to Cady, before she had a chance to object, he added that all expenses would be paid, plus a generous salary. "As you rightly said at lunch, there are few attractive employment opportunities for females. I am offering you one. And you would be doing the Lord's work. Successful work, judging by this afternoon."

"You surprise me, preacher. Your proposal is irresponsible, if not improper."

"Trust in the Lord, Mister Spencer, and the seas will part before you." To Cady he said, "You would reach Pittsburgh with pockets full, not empty. Further, what is to prevent us from continuing our partnership after we arrive?"

Abigail turned to Cady, excitement written all over her. "Only think of it, Cads! Please say 'yes.'"

Spencer had an idea of his own. "I see a happy resolution. Your idea, preacher, is not so outlandish after all—providing, that is, that I join your party. Consider, I know every inch of the line, where to go and where not to go. In that way I can ensure your safety, all the while fulfilling my 'employment responsibilities,' as you put it."

"I must say I do not see how that could be possible."

"If necessary, I can suspend my job. I have the authority to do that." In fact, of course, he had no such authority, nor could his work be postponed, but the man who considered his work at least as much a holy mission as Moody did his was prepared to drop it like a hot coal, faced with... that face.

"Forgive me, but—"

"You speak of tramp camps like they are an exhibit from the Centennial Exposition. Believe me when I assure you they are nothing like that."

"I shall amend my plan to accommodate the new circumstances."

"That is not the only danger. Railroad men are a dangerous lot, prone to sudden violence, especially when there has been drinking—and there has almost always been drinking. Further, of late there have been disturbing indications. I insist that you let me be your guide—and, if necessary, protector."

Moody tried to persuade him that his presence was unnecessary, using various stratagems: That he could not impose on him, that it could cost him his job, that he himself was not inexperienced in proselytizing to the lower classes... Spencer would hear none of it.

"Mister Moody, America is engaged in a great struggle, as brutal as the Civil War. Like the other, it is a war of principles, of attitudes. As the defenders of American civilization have been engaged to subdue the red savages of the plains, others fight the same war in the heartland. In this war, only one side can prevail, the side of light or the side of darkness. It is thus a war of survival, a war, let us say frankly, of extinction. If there is a battlefield, it is the very place you propose to take two helpless and, may I say, innocent creatures."

"I think you exaggerate, Mister Spencer."

"You are about to discover that I do not. I beg you not to put these two in mortal danger while you make that discovery. Look at them, Moody, they are but children. You can see the fear on their faces."

"Not so, Mister Spencer," said Cady. "You may have frightened my sister, who is indeed a child. You have not frightened me, who is not."

"My apologies, miss, if I exaggerate. I seek only to protect you."

"Thank you, but I can protect myself."

"I salute your courage, miss, but would never forgive myself if I saluted your ignorance. Courage alone will not be sufficient, where you are headed. Knowledge and skill are also required. To make you see this, one need only speak the name of George Armstrong Custer, God rest his soul." A silence then descended, one which Spencer concluded with the quiet assurance that he would not interfere with their plans. "I know the railroad, I know the men, how to deal with them. I can protect you. And since we

will all be on the same train, why not join forces?"

The meal concluded, Moody indicated it was time he return to his hotel with his two charges when Spencer reacted in shock. "Surely, reverend, you do not propose to subject them to these streets again, and at night, when there are perfectly good rooms right here?" Moody replied that he had already reserved a room for them at his hotel. "You saw the streets. They are only worse at night."

"There is a good hour of daylight left, and this time we shall keep to the main thoroughfare."

"Do you really mean to have two females stay with you? My God, think of your reputation, preacher."

"They will not stay with me, only in the same hotel."

"Who will make such distinctions? 'Girls share lodging with evangelist.' Think of it."

"That is simply preposterous."

"Is it? If someone were to wonder why you are so determined for them to stay with you?"

"Are you suggesting..."

"I am saying, here are two females, one a mere child, the other a young woman—of, let us admit, considerable charms—who need a room for the night. I can get them one here. It is close, it is convenient—but you, for reasons of your own, seem determined to make them traverse dangerous streets after dark. Why?"

"That is outrageous!"

"Perhaps. I need not tell you, however, how willing, even eager, people are to believe the worst of others—especially when those others are expected to demonstrate a high moral standard. I even heard you offer to pay her."

Cady was free to choose, but she barely knew either man, and this one had successfully planted doubts about the other. Uncomfortable with either, might it not be best to have both with her, to control each other?

As he left, Moody instructed the girls not to leave the hotel for any reason, but to wait for him in the morning. Spencer offered to meet at the station, which would save him the walk back and forth, but he insisted.

Spencer purchased a room and led them upstairs. When Cady noted the absence of a lock on the door, he assured her that the hotel was quite respectable and that, should there be any problem,

his room was next door and all she need do was shout. With a smile, he bid them good night and they went to bed; later, he sneaked into their room and drew close to Cady, carefully lowering the light coverlet. To his shock and delight, the top buttons of her blouse had been undone and the sides were far enough apart to reveal a bit of bare flesh between her breasts. As he stared at the two delicious mounds, nothing sheltering them but one thin fabric, his eyes grew wide and his tongue protruded.

Chapter Four

If Spencer had contented himself with observation and fantasy, he would have been able to exit the scene with pleasure intact; instead, he put a hand on Cady, and with completely unexpected fury, exploding from the apparent depths of sleep, she slashed at him with a steak knife taken from the supper table. He was so stunned, he made no cry; rather, falling back, he instinctively grabbed his arm, then gingerly moved a finger to see how bad it was. Blood ran to his fingers, which he gaped at momentarily, then at Cady who leaped out of bed to confront him, knife unwavering, pointed at his face. He tried to explain his presence, to claim he was there merely to confirm their security, but produced only incoherent muttering, until suddenly he turned for the door and escaped, his hand still gripping the wound, leaving a trail of blood.

As this occurred, Abigail miraculously remained asleep, though she was beside Cady in the bed; perhaps, however, not miraculous, given her exhaustion. What finally woke her were the squeaking sounds of a large wardrobe being pushed across the door, Cady saying she could not sleep and decided she would feel more secure this way. "Help me move this thing." Back in bed, she resolved to remain vigilant, despite the barricade, which she knew would not long restrain a determined intruder, especially one driven to fury after his initial shock had abated; but in her exhaustion, having not slept much the previous two nights, and that poorly, she was soon fast asleep. It was Abigail who remained awake and then slept only fitfully, with nightmares.

It was Abigail too who awoke with the first light of dawn.

Though she whispered in her sister's ear, Cady awoke as if Spencer were again leaning over her and she could feel his hot breath. They quickly packed their few things and were out the door within minutes; nonetheless, he was waiting for them downstairs in the lobby. He had recovered his composure, apologized profusely and with apparent sincerity for having frightened Cady, repeated his claim that he had only sought to confirm their security, and said he did not blame her for what she had done. The dining room was empty, since it was too early to serve breakfast, though there would be activity in the kitchen—but that was downstairs, so with the exception of the night clerk, dozing at the counter, they were alone. Seeing that the knife was not on her person, Spencer with a disarming smile suddenly grabbed her sack and quickly found it wrapped in clothes.

Placing it beneath a chair cushion, he said he had one of his own, one designed for hunting, not eating, and would not hesitate to use it against Abigail, should either attempt to raise an alarm. "I warn you, miss, I am a determined man. Raise your voice and your sister... Well, you have seen these streets. The mutilated corpse of a child heaped in an alley will neither surprise nor shock anyone." To call his bluff, test his resolve, or try to outrun him were possibilities Cady could not even begin to consider, especially with Abigail in a state of trembling terror. Now that they had an understanding, he said, everyone could calm themselves and proceed to the station to board a train for Pittsburgh, as discussed. Cady tried to think of a way to remain where they were until Moody arrived, which she hoped and imagined would not be long, so she asked if they could have breakfast first, but Spencer said they would have breakfast on the train and nodded toward the exit. Again he took them through the worst back streets until they reached the rear of the station.

He knew he could not keep Cady by fear alone, that he must get her to like him; and he wanted her to like him—oh, how he wanted it!—so he made a considerable effort to be pleasant as they were walking. He confessed that his threat earlier had been foolish, that he had just been upset by her recalcitrance and would never have acted on it, that he could never harm either of them, that they had become precious to him. All he desired, he said, was to protect them, insisted that he was in fact a gentle man and that he would be good to them, and said more in this vein, speaking haltingly, with pauses or silences or just emptiness between sentences, as

though thoughts came to him in small parcels. Cady pretended to be receptive, if for no other reason than to reduce the threat of violence, and no doubt hoping that Moody would appear at every moment; and so eager was Spencer to believe her, he did believe her.

They sat, mostly in discomfited silence, Spencer having exhausted his conversational sallies, Cady with a complete lack of desire to speak to him, and with a lack of will as well. As they waited for the ticket window to open, the station gradually quickened with the arrival of janitors and porters and other attendants, including the ticket master. Though there had been little speech, both had tried to be ingratiating, Spencer sincerely, Cady not, and this had reduced the tension, for Spencer much, for Cady little; so when people rose to approach the ticket window, she asked if she could have money to buy pretzels (for a pretzel vendor had also appeared).

So desperate was he to believe she had come to like him, he not only trusted her, he said something that seemed gentle to him, that in fact coming from someone else would have sounded sweet, and he asked her to buy one for him too. As he was waiting for the ticket master to open his schedule book and arrange his ink stamps and other paraphernalia, and then as he waited for him to prepare the tickets, he turned to look around the station and failed to see them. Retrieving his money, he ran outside in time to see them running up the tracks toward Moody's hotel, and screaming he went after them.

Moody, meanwhile, had gone to their hotel, for he too, in fear that Spencer would attempt something nefarious, had awakened at dawn, actually before dawn, and had dressed quickly and left immediately without even shaving around his beard. Going on the main street, however, he had missed them coming the other way; and when they were not waiting for him, he immediately assumed the worst and had the night clerk, whom he startled awake, quickly take him to their rooms, then he raced for the station. As he was coming around to the front—the adjacent market was just opening and was still quiet—he heard Spencer yelling; and by following his voice, he saw him chasing the girls up the tracks toward his hotel and instantly deduced much that had occurred and that they assumed he must still be there. Shouting, he hurried after them as fast as he could, but that was never fast and he was already winded.

He saw Spencer grab Cady and try to drag her back toward the station, but as she resisted with surprising fortitude he made little progress. By their gaping mouths, contorted faces, and flailing movements, it was obvious even to a distant observer that both girls were screaming, one at her abductor, the other in hysteria; he, however, enveloped in his own fever, paid no attention. So enveloped was he, in fact, that he seemed surprised to see Moody suddenly approaching; he came quickly to his senses, though, for when Moody could be seen to ask, in a loud gruff voice, if he was out of his mind, he pulled a long revolver from his coat.

Desperately, Moody looked for help; finding none, he turned back to Spencer, and in what followed it was clear, even to someone out of earshot, that one was trying to reason with the other. It was also clear that that same one was not as intimidated as would normally have been assumed, given that the gun remained aimed at his heart (assumed, that is, by one who could not recognize a fellow veteran of Civil War battles). The girls, meanwhile, were as if frozen in place, for Spencer maintained an iron grip on Cady, and of course Abigail would not leave her sister, even had she been able to take a step.

This tableau endured, unchanging, but not for long, as it suddenly evolved into a related one in which Spencer, frustrated that, even armed, he was unable to intimidate Moody, began to taunt him with a sneering expression, as if to dare him to try to impede his way. When Moody still refused to retreat, Spencer shoved him aside and brutally knocked him to the ground with the barrel of the gun; then, returning it inside his coat, he began again to drag Cady, his grip on her never having loosened. At that moment, a stranger approached with an even, somehow unhurried yet rapid stride, appearing suddenly from the side of the tracks by the yard, and planted himself directly in Spencer's path; and there he waited, saying nothing. "Stand aside," barked Spencer, in a voice that combined determination with fear.

"Willingly, if you will let go of the girl. She seems to be under some compulsion." Spencer told him the girl was not his concern, that he was an official with the railroad and was conducting railroad business. The stranger wondered what sort of business the railroad was conducting, to drag a young woman by brute force down the track. He was about Spencer's age, tall and lanky, the kind of body that did not express physical strength, yet there was

something in the eye and the bearing that strongly suggested it would be a mistake to rely on that in a confrontation.

"The railroad does not take kindly to thieves, not that that is your concern, so I ask you again to stand aside and not question or interfere with an official matter."

"Please, mister, help us," cried Cady.

"Shut your mouth," hissed Spencer.

"What about the child?" asked the stranger. "She a thief too?"

"It takes one to know one. You look to me like a worthless tramp. When was the last time you did an honest day's labor?"

"Is the railroad hiring?"

"I am offering you your last chance to stand aside."

"Well, before you try to pull that Colt back out, you want to look behind you, both sides, because there are two guns aimed right at your head."

By this time, Moody had recovered from the initial daze of the blow and had worked his way to his feet, gingerly rubbing his head as he steadied himself, his eyes fixed on Spencer. The latter did not move, but the others turned in the indicated direction and were pleasantly shocked to find that the stranger had told the truth, for somehow two other men had approached undetected and stood no more than twenty feet from Spencer, one on each side, each with an arm raised toward him, each holding a handgun aimed at his head. Hearing the sounds of relief, Spencer was unable to withstand his urge any longer and took a quick glance behind him.

"They do not often miss, and I have never seen it from this range." Spencer instinctively let go of Cady, who jumped away and shook herself, as Abigail clutched her, sobbing uncontrollably. "The next thing you are going to do is remain very still while I relieve you of your revolver." This he did, reaching inside his coat, where he also found a knife. "Were you Blue or Gray, mister? Because these Bowies were very popular with the rebels. Now, my friends and I, we fought for the Union, so I recommend that, once you leave us, you should not give a thought to ever meeting us again. You all right, miss?" he called. "He take anything of yours? What about you, mister? All right, then." He stood aside and motioned for Spencer to proceed on his way.

"Look sharp, mister, for when I return, I will not be alone. Night or day, makes no difference."

"You have been warned."

"So have you." Turning to Moody, he hissed, "You think I do not see how you look at her? You think to have her for yourself. Why would a young woman that beautiful want a fat dwarf like you? And old enough to be her father. I promise you, preacher, I am going to have that girl. Wherever you take her, I will find her."

"This is when you leave, mister. Just walk away."

Everyone watched until he reached the station and disappeared around the corner; only then did Moody and the girls show any sign of relief, and only then did they turn to their rescuers and offer thanks, which was when they got their first real look at the stranger's two companions. One looked about forty, the other not much older than Cady, and anything more than a cursory inspection would have detected a clear resemblance, for they were in fact father and son. Neither was as tall as Tommy, but of the two the father had the larger and heavier physique, though both looked like men used to hard physical labor, mostly outdoors, with typically large and calloused hands. He being closer to Abigail, it was to him that she naturally turned first. "Are you an Indian?" He looked down at her, paused a moment, and nodded slowly. "A real one?"

"Never met a fake one."

"My name is Abigail. What is yours?"

"Hobbes."

"Hobbes? Indian names are funny. Excuse me, that was not polite. I meant to thank you for saving us. May I ask why you do not wear a head-dress?"

"You do not like my cap?"

"I mean one with feathers."

"Do you think I would look better with feathers?"

"Well, you would look more like an Indian."

"Believe me, child, people do not find it difficult to identify me as an Indian."

Cady, meanwhile, found herself face to face with the son, and the encounter embarrassed both of them to silence—in fact, it embarrassed them to blushing, each struck by the other's beauty. With all the awkwardness thus implied, they managed formal introductions, the exchange of names, and a heartfelt thanks for the recent service of one to the other. So it was that the name of the son was found to be Locke; and as for the stranger who had faced Spencer, he was not an Indian and his name was Tommy, as

Moody learned when he thanked him. Both girls naturally then went to Moody to learn how badly he had been hurt, and the others quickly divined that the man was not their father, or close to them in a familial relationship, but clearly there was genuine concern for his well-being. He had a noticeable bruise, but fortunately the skin had not been broken.

Tommy told him to walk around a bit and asked if he felt dizzy; when Moody shook his head, he declared that it would be tender for a while, but would heal itself in time. "Time is a commodity we lack at this moment," replied Moody. "I have undertaken to see these girls to Pittsburgh and Mister Spencer has demonstrated that it must be done with alacrity."

"Did he just say 'alacrity,'" asked Hobbes.

"Hush, friend, this is no time for your jokes," said Tommy with an affectionate shake of the head. "Who is this Mister Spencer?"

"He said he is a railroad inspector."

"That he is not, not with these," replied Tommy, indicating the weapons. "Even railroad police do not carry knives, at least not to my knowledge."

"Nor mine," added Hobbes, while Locke respectfully remained silent.

"Then," asked Moody perplexed, "why would he say he was?" Quickly suppressing a smile, Tommy informed him that he wished to hide his identity because he was a Pinkerton. "Excuse me, but what is a Pinkerton?"

"You have not heard of them? They are clandestine operatives hired by the railroads—mines too, but your Mister Spencer is obviously working for the railroad—to spy on the men and hunt down labor agitators."

"You mean union organizers?"

"I mean anyone who speaks up for better wages or conditions. How is it that he...?"

Believing that the sooner they quit their present exposed location, the better for their safety, Moody deflected the question with an incomplete answer and asked Tommy if he and his friends would be so kind as to accompany them to the station. "Just till we can board a train. I would, of course..."

"I gather you did not take the man seriously."

"When he said he would pursue us? Frankly, no."

"That is not just a mistake, it is likely to be a costly one."

"You believe..."

Tommy was nodding before Moody could complete the question, and leaning closer so as to lower his voice he said, "Plainly, he is obsessed with the girl. It is easy enough to see how one so beautiful could make a man's head spin. Most men would enjoy the spinning and that would be that. Not this one. Have you never before seen obsession?"

"I have," confessed Moody. "In my line of work, obsession is encountered."

"If I may ask, what is your line of work?"

"Redemption. I preach the good word."

"Then you will have seen obsession over women." Moody confessed he had, and Tommy said he would wager Spencer was watching them this very moment; in fact, he considered it nearly a certainty. "And do not think he will be disarmed for long. It is easy enough to buy a gun, even another Fifty-one Navy like this. And a Bowie knife? He might already have another."

This assessment of their circumstances threw Moody into confusion. "I need to return to my hotel," he said distractedly. "My things... I need to pay..."

As if by some silent signal, the three strangers drew apart to confer in whispers, which caused the other three to exchange anxious glances and for their anxiety to increase with each passing moment. The girls said nothing, but their visual supplications augmented Moody's already increasing fear that, unassisted, their situation really was perilous, for there was no longer any doubt in his mind that Tommy was right about Spencer. He not only needed to get the girls away from this place as quickly as possible, they needed protection beyond what he alone could offer (as had just been amply demonstrated); and the assistance of these three, who evidently had experience in this type of activity, which first he would have appreciated, was quickly felt to be essential. "Please do not desert us," he called out. "Help me defend these girls and name your price." Suddenly he felt so exposed, standing right on the tracks, surrounded by more tracks.

The three paid no attention, but continued their earnest discussion in the same low voices. Moody, unable to stand the suspense, or perhaps with complete unconsciousness, drew near enough to overhear their conversation and discovered to his utter

surprise that they were not speaking English. Though he had never before heard an Indian language, he surmised that this must be one of them. Obviously he could not comprehend a word; all he could detect was that the tenor of the young man's statements was more insistent, more hurried and even passionate, than those of the others. He was certain they were debating measures that concerned the welfare of the girls and him, as indeed they were.

Anxiety, hence impatience, increasing by the second, he drew closer, intending to make more definite his offer of compensation, but at that moment Tommy turned away from his companions with a large gesture, saying (in English), "Locke is right, we cannot leave two harmless innocents and their well-meaning caretaker to their fate." Finding Moody right before him, he added, "If you would save these precious creatures from a crazed and frustrated prisoner of desire, reverend, we have no time to lose, nor resolve neither."

"Can you doubt me?" cried Moody. "Have I not offered payment?"

"That was generous of you, but unnecessary. On the other hand, we have little money and face considerable uncertainty as to what may be required. Are you in a position..."

"Yes, yes, of course, I will pay for everyone."

"Much may be needed, to outwit a Pinkerton. Have you sufficient funds?"

"Let us hope so. Whatever I have shall be expended as you think best. We are in your hands, sir."

"Please do not call me 'sir.' The man who calls me 'sir' is about to ask something of me I do not wish to give. Nor 'mister,' neither. 'Tommy' will do, just 'Tommy.'"

"Very well, Tommy, let us shake on it." Turning to his companions, he added, "And thank you to Mister Hobbes and Mister Locke—or is it just 'Hobbes' and 'Locke?'"

"Well, reverend," said Hobbes, "you have us for free. Call us 'mister' and we will have to double our price."

Moody felt so relieved, it did not bother him that all his plans had been dashed. Not only was his mission to evangelize along the railroad suspended; the idea he was convinced was marvelous, to incorporate the girls into his preaching, was all but certainly defunct, for Spencer would have a far easier time finding Cady if she were with him than if she were to disappear into private life.

To keep them beside him would be to subject them to continuing danger, so not only must he get them to Pittsburgh, he must deliver them safely to their guardian (whoever that might be). As he reflected on this, he began to wonder if his idea had been too self-serving and God had so worked events as to make that apparent, a consideration that oddly caused him to chuckle. When Cady looked at him, he shook his head, for he was not prepared to share that he had just asked God, "To make me realize my first duty is to get these girls to safety, did you have to give me such a knock on the head?"

"Reverend." Moody was startled to find Tommy close to him with a serious expression. "We three will do our utmost to get you safely through this wilderness, but in return we make a single demand."

"Name it."

"Be guided by us. This is our home. It is the natural home of my two Lenapé friends and, following the trail of life, I joined them. We know its ways."

"Fear not. We shall be commanded by you, as a good soldier obeys an officer."

"Sometimes a good soldier disobeys an officer, but never mind that now."

"As you say. Your demand is granted with my thanks. I shall impress this upon the girls."

Tommy nodded. "Now let us move, for we are losing precious time."

"I must visit my hotel."

"Let us be quick about it."

Moody quickly summarized the arrangement to the girls and closed the short distance to his hotel, where he hastily threw his belongings into his carpet bags and, for a modest sum, persuaded the manager to store them against his speedy return; then they headed, not to the station, but back to the tracks, where they started walking. "As part of our bargain, Tommy, am I allowed to ask your reasons?"

"I do not know about your bargain," answered Locke, who walked behind him alongside the girls, "but Tommy being a man of few words—unless you get him started on his favorite topic—it is generally wise to purchase them with consideration." Hobbes, who in other circumstances would have joined such repartee (calling

himself a man of even fewer words), was fully engaged to protect the party's rear, which position he occupied at some distance.

Tommy explained that, as Spencer would certainly be expecting them at the station, it was an easy decision to buy tickets elsewhere. "I doubt the little ruse I have planned will long confuse him, but it might prove of some benefit."

When they had cleared the railroad yard, Tommy pivoted and pointed to his eyes with two fingers; when Hobbes shook his head, he continued forward. They were still in the wide-open railroad corridor of west Philadelphia, with good visibility in all directions, so if Spencer were following, it was very likely he would be visible. Moody understood the communication and took little comfort from it, as did the others. "Mister Tommy?" began Cady.

Without stopping or even turning, Tommy replied, "Young lady, that is twice wrong. If you insist on calling me 'mister,' it must be 'Mister Jefferson.' As I have tried to impress on the reverend, however, I truly prefer 'Tommy,' even in your case, for I judge you are no longer a child, though you may not yet be entirely a woman. Now, as to your question..."

"Do you think we are quit of that man?"

"I hope so, miss."

"But do you think so?"

Tommy turned to examine her expression. "No," he said quietly.

"Nonetheless, you have pledged to keep harm away from her," said Moody pointedly.

"Indeed we have. Thanks to young Locke, who happens to be walking at her side."

They had walked a good half hour in silence, at a pace of necessity determined by Abigail, but which, driven by an obvious desire, was almost equal to an adult's, when a brief whistling sound could be heard. Immediately, Tommy turned, as did Locke, to see Hobbes, some hundred yards in their rear, casually bring two fingers to his eyes, as if to brush away a cinder that had flown up in a gust from the track bed. With a slight gesture of a finger, Tommy returned to walking, an exchange so quick and seemingly casual that neither Moody nor the girls detected it, but had they scrutinized him they would have seen him ruminating.

They were approaching a large intersection of tracks known as Mantua Junction, where the Connecting Railroad north to New

York City branched off the Main Line west to Pittsburgh, and they would soon reach the small station. Moody started to speak, but Tommy gestured him to stop and immediately returned to his rumination, only later, when he was ready, turning to give instructions. When they reached the branch line, he led everyone onto it and jerked his head at Hobbes, who arrived at a trot to hear the plan; this he heard in silence, with an inscrutable face, and when asked for his assent offered a quick, slight nod, more with eyes than head. While this was occurring, Moody instructed the girls to stay by him and do what he said, without question or hesitation; and immediately, Abigail's face, which had been calmer for a while, displayed agitation. "That man is here, is he not?"

"Do not fret, Abby," said Cady, putting an arm around her, "these men are protecting us."

Moody led the girls forward to the little station beside the branch line, which traced the western side of Fairmount Park, where the gigantic Centennial Exposition had been staged the previous summer. The three men remained below as the others mounted the porch, where Moody informed the stationmaster, who had been relaxing there, that they required three tickets to New York City. With a slow nod, he took them inside and went behind his grill, where he began to fuss with his papers. "New York City, inbound, next train nine-twelve, which you can see from the station clock on the wall behind you is in thirty-eight minutes." Moody thanked the man, pocketed the tickets, and led the girls outside to the porch, where they waited.

The other three were no longer in sight. Not trusting himself, Moody consulted his pocket watch to make sure they waited the full five minutes, then he led the girls back inside and nodded to the stationmaster. "Hot out there," he said.

"Going to get hotter," was the lazy reply.

He nodded again and, with a nod to the girls, headed for a side exit, opposite the direction from which they had come and where Locke and Tommy were waiting. At their appearance, the latter called like a bird, told everyone to follow, and trotted up the line, which curved a short distance ahead of him, not stopping till he had rounded it, so as to be out of sight from the station. Abigail and Moody struggled to keep up, but urged by Cady, they did, which pleased Tommy, who called out again and, immediately hearing a single sound, led them quickly across the tracks, Locke

guarding the rear, and into an adjacent street, where Hobbes soon appeared.

From there, in their usual formation, Tommy in front, Moody just behind him, Locke with Cady and Abigail, and Hobbes in the rear, they made their way through streets toward the Main Line as quickly as possible. Hearing Abigail's strained breathing, Cady urged her forward and Locke pointedly told Cady she must be very proud of her sister; and thus they traversed six long blocks to face the Main Line, where they rested while Tommy and Hobbes reconnoitered. "Good for you," said Locke with a smile, and Abigail managed to smile in return; then he smiled at Cady and she too smiled; then Moody said they were about to race across the tracks.

Chapter Five

Moody and the girls raced across the Main Line tracks and darted into a side-street, with Tommy, Locke, and Hobbes (as usual in front, middle, and rear respectively) looking for any sign of Spencer. Though they knew their ruse was likely to fail, they hoped it had succeeded; and in fact there was no sign of him. "Quickly, Abby," urged Cady, as Tommy led them at a brisk pace through the neighborhood. "I know it is hard, but soon you will have a chance to rest."

Since the streets were all oriented at angles to the line, Tommy led them in the same zigzag pattern Cady had followed, the inhabitants—those who noticed them—staring unabashedly at this odd procession, and especially at two native Americans, who seemed to have appeared in their midst from the Great Plains, about whose brutal wars they read so much in the newspapers. Hobbes especially drew attention, not only because of his size, but because he exuded fearlessness, a trait that normally elicited admiration, but given his particular features, drew the opposite and worse. At best he was a curiosity, as if he belonged in P. T. Barnum's new traveling 'museum of freaks.'

When they returned to the tracks about a mile west of the junction (just past the little station at Hestonville), Tommy turned to Abigail. "Rest now, child. You have done well, very well." The line being straight for a good distance in both directions, Locke and he separated to scan the area methodically, while Hobbes still guarded any approach from the rear. "What now?" asked Moody when Tommy returned.

"We wait. If he is still here, and if he is good at this, he will

wait too. If he does not appear, we may hope to have escaped." From his sack he pulled out a bottle of water and some dried bread, which he gave to Abigail. "Later, there should be better, but for now make the best of this, for you may yet have much walking to do."

"Thank you, um..."

He smiled. "You, young lady, may enjoy the rare privilege of calling me 'Mister Jefferson.' If you were to call me 'Tommy,' however, I should answer, for I consider myself superior to no man."

"But I am not a man."

He stared at her. "I beg your pardon. Superior to no woman, either—or girl."

"Men do act superior, though," said Cady.

"Well now, if I have not before me two of the brightest females I have ever encountered, then..." He smiled and shook his head admiringly, then returned to the lookout. After two hours, he deemed it time to hazard the track again, for though he knew an experienced scout would wait two days, if necessary, he judged the Pinkerton impatient and poorly disciplined and knew there was only so long Abigail's endurance could be tried. With a quick, sharp whistle, Locke and Hobbes rejoined the group and they emerged onto the track and continued; they hadn't gone far when Hobbes whistled, and this time it wasn't necessary for him to point to his eyes, because Spencer was in plain view coming up the track.

He followed at a calibrated distance, close enough for everyone to see the studied smirk on his face, far enough to make it highly unlikely a pistol shot would find its mark—also far enough that, if they decided to run at him, he had a sufficient lead to escape. At the sight of him, Abigail again burst into sobs and would not be comforted, and everyone stopped, including Spencer, who knew he could not approach on open track with no one else around. After a brief but intense consideration, Tommy motioned everyone to continue and, without turning, said to Moody, "To answer the question you are about to ask, my plan remains intact. On open track he cannot threaten us, even with a gun, should he now possess one, for Hobbes would surely deal with him."

"But, if I may ask, what is our plan?"

"If it works, you shall soon learn it. If it fails, why waste breath? Let us continue, while that sweet girl still has strength."

Cady, clumsily urging Abigail forward while trying to hug her, seemed deep in thought herself, until she asked Locke why they hadn't used the tickets to New York.

"Do you know anyone in New York? Then to go there would be to strand yourself."

"Perhaps, but away from him."

"You presume he would not have taken the same train."

"How could he, when he was nowhere in sight?"

"He was close enough, I am sure—and watching. We hoped to keep him watching. He is jealous of the minister, terribly jealous. He might have thought he would take you far away from Pittsburgh, install you in a hotel..."

"That is disgusting."

"Of course it is," he quickly replied. "In any case, the ruse failed. Had he believed the three of you were really waiting for the train inside the station, we might have escaped. Suppose, however, you actually boarded the train. Well, all he had to do was run to the station and board himself. That would not have been difficult. He would have heard and seen the train coming, it would have approached slowly, and would have stayed at the station at least a minute or two. Worse, he might have used his position to have you thrown off the train and placed in his custody."

"On what basis?" When Locke remained silent, she asked again, more insistently.

Haltingly he replied, "He could have made a false charge against you."

"What kind of false charge? I am traveling with my little sister."

"You are also traveling with a man, with whom you have no demonstrable relationship."

"Are you suggesting...?"

"Please, miss," replied Locke urgently, "I suggest nothing, I merely show you the risk you would have run, had you taken that train. I beg you not to imagine that I..."

At that suggestion, Cady could not repress a shudder and fell silent as they continued walking, she musing, the youth looking at her; when she returned, she said, "So now we walk and he follows in plain view. So long as he stays far enough behind us, he is safe—but so long as he is there, we are not safe, and he knows it."

"Try not to let him frighten you. I have been in worse

situations than this, many times. Tommy and my father will get us to safety. They always do."

"Really? You do not say that just to comfort me?"

"Would it be wrong if I wanted to comfort you?" Their eyes locked momentarily before glancing away; after an awkward pause, Cady asked if he had really been in worse situations, and he nodded. "My father and I are 'injuns,' 'redskins,' 'wild savages.' We have lost our country and live among those who took it. Few there are who believe we belong here."

"Your father and Tommy are obviously friends. How did they meet?"

"Oh, that is quite a story, and one better told by them. They both fought for the Union."

"Yes, I gathered that earlier."

"Does it surprise you that my father fought to preserve a nation from which we are excluded?"

"Come to think of it, it does."

"Some things are simply right, and others just wrong. That is what he said when I asked."

After a pause, Cady admitted that she kept thinking about Spencer.

"I see that and wish it were not so."

"I keep wondering why he is the way he is."

"He cannot abide the fact that something he believes is his has been taken from him."

"How could he imagine I belong to him?"

Now it was Locke who fell silent, not because he had no reply, but because so many flooded his thoughts; and while he thought, Cady watched and waited and was surprised to see him suddenly smile, as he asked, "Do you believe that all men are created equal?"

"I cannot claim I ever gave it serious thought. Does it even apply to people like me?"

"Does it apply to people like me? I think our Mister Spencer is allied with the half of this nation that believes it does not apply to anyone. They hold that life is a struggle for existence in which only the fittest survive. They also believe that only the fittest should survive. The progress of civilization is a natural process, in which the fittest are those who prosper. Guess which half of the nation believes this. The irony is that Mister Spencer is despised by the

very men who use him. He may know this, though he would never admit it. He sees men grabbing whatever they can, and he would do the same."

Cady looked extremely dubious. "I have never heard anything like that."

"Reverend Moody there does not preach it? Most ministers do."

"I only met him yesterday."

"Really? I..."

"I believe you would not invent something like that, but..."

"That is economic theory. There is also racial theory. There are whites, reds, and blacks. Whites are naturally superior and will prevail. Reds are destined for extinction. Blacks are suited for menial labor, if properly supervised by whites. Then there is sub-racial theory, by which Nordic whites are superior to all others."

"Where did you learn this? If indeed you did learn it."

"Oh, I learned it, all right. Did you not learn it in school?"

"I have not had much schooling."

"Nor I. But there was a missionary who came through for a time."

"And that is what he taught?"

"Oh yes. He said it has all been proven by modern science and he could show me where it is written."

While this conversation was engaging the two youths, Spencer conducted his own internal dialogue, which centered on his considerable pleasure at having perceived their ruse, and the anxiety if not distress his sudden reappearance must have caused Moody and those three 'savages' he had hired. "I am safe, but they are not—and they know it," he gloated. There was also his satisfaction in proving, both to them and himself, his professional skills, his acumen, his dogged determination, even when outnumbered four to one. "I am superior and they now know it." As soon as they had followed the branch line, he had suspected a trick, because he knew full well their destination must be Pittsburgh. Still, that they might actually have boarded that train was a possibility he could not dismiss, because he could not dismiss the possibility that Moody, 'that lecher,' had hatched a plan to abduct Cady (whom he called 'the beauty'), and make her his mistress. "How disgusting," he thought. "And he supposedly a man of God."

The thought enraged him. In his mind he saw her as he leaned over her in bed, saw her blouse opened at the neck and partway down, saw her bare skin; in his mind he felt how soft it was, how it invited him to go lower... Therefore he had had to position himself to confirm that they did not board that train; meanwhile, given the greater likelihood that they would try to sneak back to the Main Line, he also had to position himself to cover the main tracks, all while keeping himself hidden. "Their ruse was facile, if not dishonorable, while my covert was cleverly selected—as the outcome proved." No matter what they did, even had they tried to sneak back to the terminal, he would have seen them, a fact he attributed to his expertise, rather than that the Main Line near the junction was straight and the view unimpeded in both directions for a considerable distance.

When 'the tramp,' that is Tommy, had led his band of fugitives across the Main Line into the neighborhood, he waited, knowing they had to return to the tracks, because they could not walk to Pittsburgh. What he could not know for certain was which way they would go, or whether they might double back and board a train for New York after all, in which case he would have raced after them and boarded as well, for no matter what, he must stay with them—once separated, they were lost to him. It helped to know that they could not travel faster than 'the little girl' could go, for example should they try to run for a train, he could overtake them; so he kept to his covert and waited and watched. He waited two hours, until no longer able to resist the nagging fear that they had eluded him, he was about to race west up the tracks—hoping that that most logical choice was the one they had made—when they appeared.

Enormous relief quickly transforming into another validation of his skill, he followed, covertly at first, then openly, once he'd confirmed they were committed to the direction; but the pleasure of surprise faded quickly before the return of frustration: How long might this continue? He saw again the condemnation and humiliation he would face, were he discovered to be derelict in his duty to the railroad, which had not sent him to Philadelphia to stalk a pretty girl.

They were still within the city of Philadelphia, but in a mile arrived at the station that marked its limit. Built just a few years earlier, Overbrook looked more like a suburban dwelling than a

train station, a small two-story house, with a white picket fence enclosing a small yard, with only the proximity of the four tracks, telegraph poles, and a signal tower to mark it for what it was. Tommy led the group behind it, whereas Hobbes and Spencer stayed right on the track (leaving it only to allow a passenger train to pass), because neither could risk losing sight of the other. They were now in the suburb of Merion, whose tiny station was only a half mile ahead; before it, parked on a siding just outside the city limit, was a freight train, with a small crowd around it.

Mostly it consisted of men, some plainly railroad men, others not, but there were women and children too, in sum the train crew with friends and family, who milled about the train and stared unabashedly as the strange party approached. When they caught sight of Locke, they were especially interested, Hobbes being out of sight, for he had stopped well away to prevent Spencer from approaching. Tommy approached alone, with a friendly smile and a little wave, and after greetings were exchanged he quickly got to the point, which was to summarize the predicament of the girls and ask the engineer for permission to hop a ride. "We need to get them to Pittsburgh. If you could see your way to letting us board..."

The engineer looked at his fireman and the brakeman who joined them and they shook their heads. "Wish we could help you, brother, but the thing is that this freight will not be moving till further notice. Take it you have not yet heard of the strike action in Pittsburgh." Shocked, Tommy learned that, only a few hours earlier, men in the yard, joined by crews bringing in freights, had prevented any freights from leaving. The news, literally electrifying, had spread at the speed of telegraph all along the line.

Disappointed but sympathetic, he nodded. "Any reports of trouble?"

"Not yet. Suppose you heard federal troops were called out on the B&O this morning. Four hundred US regulars, Baltimore to Martinsburg."

"US regulars. You are certain of this."

"Governor telegraphed the president last night. Dispatched this morning from Fort McHenry."

"There is no chance this could be rumor?" The engineer shook his head, his gaze unwavering. "If true, this has never before happened."

"So they say."

"Never before. Is passenger service affected?"

"Normal. Our grievance is with the railroad barons, not the public."

"Plus," added the fireman, "we must not risk preventing the mail from getting through." Mail cars were attached to passenger trains, not freights, and impeding the mail was a federal offense.

The men repeated that they wished they could help, and Tommy nodded and scanned the small crowd. This news certainly explained their presence—and their tense expressions, for this was no party, they were guarding the train in case the company sent in another crew. An awkward silence descended while he considered what to do, for convincing a crew to let them hop a freight—and refuse to let Spencer board—had indeed been his plan. The crowd turned its attention back to the disparate group standing a short distance behind him, and as before found their greatest interest in Locke. "He what I think he is?" asked one.

"Sure looks like it," replied another.

"If you will direct your gaze down the track, you will see his father. I met him one evening during the war, when I was scouting behind enemy lines. I heard a shot from my rear and turned to see him crawl from a covert to where a rebel sharpshooter was slumped over his rifle. Single shot Whitworth, aimed right at me and favored for its accuracy, which probably put me a trigger pull from death. His name is Hobbes, and right now he is protecting us from the man you might notice farther down the line. If you are on strike, you will want to know about him."

"What is his story?" asked the brakeman.

"His story is that he is a railroad inspector. The truth is that he is a Pinkerton. My guess is that he was sent to find men just like you. The news from Pittsburgh tends to confirm it. That is where he is from."

"Blame the conditions, brother, that and the wages. If you only knew—"

"I do know. I have worked in the yard myself, so has Hobbes, so has Locke. We are with you. Frankly, what took you so long? As for him, we disarmed him a few hours ago, but I would still advise caution. We do not know if he has had a chance to rearm yet." The men boasted that no Pinkerton was going to scare them. "On the other hand," he added, "at this point he is more interested in us than you, so maybe he will not trouble you."

At that, one man scratching his head asked, "Say, brother, if he is after us, why is he after you?"

"He is not after me, he is after her." This was when it was Cady who came under their scrutiny. "She and her sister are homeless, trying to get to Pittsburgh, seems they have people there." Everyone stared, the women mostly at Abigail, the men mostly at Cady.

Asked one, pointing to Moody, "And his story?"

"An evangelist, apparently preaching near the market when they found him, or he found them, I am not sure, but he offered to help."

"If I had found that one, I would offer to help too," muttered a man in the crowd.

Just then a second train crew appeared, and the six men, who knew each other, nodded grimly but boldly in silent confrontation while the crowd waited, until the engineer asked what they wanted. One of them took a step forward and, thrusting out his chest, replied, "I think you know what we want, Jim. We want all of you to clear a path, so we can board that freight and take her out."

"Company orders, Jim," said another. "You know how it is. We all have to eat."

"That freight is not moving," shouted someone behind the engineer. "Not till the company agrees to hear us. Think about it, Dick, it is what we all need."

"Well, gentlemen, as to that freight not moving, I have got something that says it is." As he pulled out a revolver, his swagger stance got wider.

"Going to shoot me?" asked the engineer.

"No need," replied the other, "because you are going to get out of my way."

"The hell I am."

Even before he fired, Tommy had turned toward the girls, and Locke was already shielding them as best he could, while getting them away from what quickly turned into a melee; and at the sound of the shot, Hobbes ran toward them and Moody was not idle. Though he had not fought in the war, he had ministered to the troops and thus was experienced with battles far larger and vastly more grim than this one; for the man with the gun had not shot to kill and the wound inflicted was not serious, though the profusion of blood initially suggested otherwise. Seeing that Tommy and

Locke were quickly moving the girls away from danger, he went to aid the engineer.

It was over quickly, for three men against so many could not last long, and as the final imprecations were hurled and bruises were tenderly assessed, Hobbes discovered that Spencer had disappeared. With a call to his son, the two sprinted off the tracks in opposite directions but returned shaking their heads, Hobbes visibly disgusted. "How could I let him get away?"

Locke and then Tommy tried to comfort him with the certainty that Spencer was still nearby and would remain so, for the simple and unalterable reason that, while their objective was to escape him, his was to stay nearby to prevent precisely that. "He will show himself in due course, as you well know, my friend," said Tommy. "These men, who yesterday would have been his quarry, have plainly been replaced in his mind—and should I be wrong, if he is now in yonder station telegraphing strike news and requesting railroad police, perhaps we have the opportunity we have been seeking."

"Doubtful," said Moody arriving. "I have seen how he looked at her. All through dinner I saw. That I did not insist on taking them with me last night has become incomprehensible to me, and I shall never forgive myself—especially if something terrible..."

"Calm yourself," urged Tommy. "Those girls will not be harmed, you have our word on that. Now let us move, on the slim chance that his attention has been briefly diverted."

"I have a better idea," said Hobbes. "Why must we continue to play mouse to his cat? Let him now be the mouse." They had moved away from the freight, though it was still in sight, on the off-chance that the company would indeed find a way to move it; for the fact was that, though their sympathy lay with the strikers, their problem would be solved if the freight left with them aboard without Spencer. Hobbes related his idea, then motioned the other two to another conference to develop the details; when they returned, Moody asked why they could not buy tickets to Pittsburgh at the station only a short distance ahead, and keep a watch for Spencer. Tommy replied, "If he is not already in that station, we could certainly try that; but as he cannot let us out of his sight, we must believe he is nearby. Thus we would face the same problem now that we did back at the junction. You might have to forfeit more tickets—six this time. Do you have sufficient

funds for that?"

The tiny Merion station was in sight ahead, in what was practically a rural setting, with several features common to many small stations, including a shed adjacent to a small platform beside the track for the handling of baggage and mail. Unable to risk sitting in place against the slight possibility that the freight would soon move, Tommy led everyone off the tracks and circled behind the station through a blind of trees and shrubs. Hobbes, who stayed close because Spencer's location was unknown, whispered to Locke, who in turn whispered to Cady and sneaked away to the shed, returning shortly with a length of sturdy rope coiled around his shoulder, at which father and son exchanged serious nods. They were far enough past the station to be out of earshot, still more or less hidden, when Hobbes signaled Tommy to stop and Locke showed him the rope. "Anybody see you?" Locke shook his head, and he turned to Hobbes. "Where do you want to do it?"

"This place is as good as any."

"We may have to wait hours again." Hobbes shrugged. "I wish I knew when the last passenger train departs for Pittsburgh."

"Let me find out," suggested Moody. "Even if he is in there, what can he do to me?"

"You could lead him right to us."

"Is that not what we wish?" asked Hobbes.

Moody returned a few minutes later to report that Spencer was not there and they should hear the Pittsburgh express roar past any minute, as it was to leave the Market Street terminal at twelve-twenty; as for regular service, they had a few hours, with more options to Harrisburg and continue in the morning. Sure enough, while Tommy considered the information, the train could be heard to approach at a fantastic speed nearing forty miles per hour; when the din subsided, he turned to Moody and the girls, speaking first to Abigail. "You are the bravest girl I have ever met, and now I would like you to help me play a trick on that Mister Spencer. Do you think you could do that?"

"What is the trick?"

He smiled and, squatting, explained what was going to happen; but when she learned that they were going to be left alone, that look of terror again overtook her face. "Do not worry, Abby," said Cady, "it is just a trick. Then we will be rid of that man and we can go to Pittsburgh as we planned—except now we have these

three nice men to protect us."

"I do not want to be left alone," she wailed.

"You will not really be alone," said Tommy. "We just want to make it look that way. That is the trick. You will not see me, but I will see you, I promise. I will never take my eyes from you."

"Just think how happy we will be when we get away. And we can get some food. It is high time for lunch and we have not had breakfast. My belly is growling, how about you?"

"Will you stay with me?"

"Of course, silly. We can hold hands the whole time. And Reverend Moody will stay with us, too. Am I right, Reverend Moody?"

"Indeed you are." Looking directly at Abigail he added, "Because, at this moment, you are the most important person to me in the whole world. I would never..." He stopped suddenly when his throat caught.

Locke approached and also got down on his knee, saying, "I have something for you. Do you know what a lucky charm is?" Abigail nodded feebly and he handed her a coin. "My father gave this to me when he came home from the war. It is called a Confederate Half Dollar. Whoever holds it, it brings them good luck. It has brought me good luck, and now it will bring it to you. Will you take care of it for me?" Abigail nodded. "Can you say that out loud?"

"Yes."

"Do you think you could give me a smile, maybe just a little tiny one, like this?" He made a funny face and Abigail laughed.

"All right," said Tommy. "Are you ready to hear Mister Moody and me pretend to yell at each other?" When she nodded, he reminded her to hold on to that lucky charm, and the four men briefly conferred, then Tommy and Moody started arguing, in voices that increased in volume, until Moody shouted, "You, sir, are bound for hell, if anyone is! To abandon us, here in this wilderness. How dare you?"

"We will not work for no wages!"

"I gave you everything I have!"

"That you did not, and I can prove it!" Hobbes pinned Moody against him while Tommy rifled his inside pocket and removed his wallet. "Perhaps you can explain all these bills!"

"For God's sake, man, we must eat!"

And so on, until Tommy, pocketing the money, turned to leave, when Moody tried to grab him and Tommy turned on him fiercely and threw him to the ground. "No one puts a hand on me, no one! Go to hell, preacher! I never believed your story, anyway!"

"I beg you, sirs!"

"Go to hell, preacher, and take that whore with you!"

The three men walked back toward the station, then Hobbes said loudly, "Time for lunch, gents. There must be a town near here, and now that we have funds, let us buy a proper meal for a change." They turned toward a road not far from the tracks and then, on the other side of a thicket, dropped low and quickly dispersed.

Chapter Six

Spencer perched on a wooden bench in the narrow hallway outside the office of the great man, still waiting patiently an hour past his appointed time. Though he had rehearsed and rehearsed and continued to rehearse the precise yet deferential manner he believed would ingratiate himself, he was still visibly startled by the sudden opening of the door—and he reproved himself for startling visibly, even as he leaped to his feet. Worse, he had revealed himself to a mere secretary, one who, no doubt adopting the manner of his superior, said nothing, but merely nodded at him with a blank look designed to convey a lack of interest.

The office was spare, even spartan, the kind of office that would belong to a determined and indefatigable titan intent only on successfully completing the dangerous yet delicate tasks entrusted to him by the great captains of industry. As Spencer entered, Allan Pinkerton stared mercilessly, as if to size him up between the door and the chair, his hard eyes well ensconced between lowered eyebrows and a full beard. Spencer perched on the edge of the wooden chair, gripping his hat with both hands and willing himself not to sweat. "You know why you are here." The words were situated somewhere between question and statement, the vestiges of a Scottish brogue easier to locate.

"I do, indeed, Mister Pinkerton, sir, and may I—" Whether he stopped because he was stopped or because he was not stopped, he was not sure, but retreated to his resolution to let the other man do the talking.

"The question I must answer is whether you are the man for the job."

"I am confident I am that, Mister Pinkerton, sir." He called him both 'mister' and 'sir' because, while he knew the head of the nation's greatest (and only) detective agency insisted on the first, indeed claiming with it a kind of workingman's aristocracy, as though it were a title, not a salutation, Spencer was unable to convince himself that it was adequate. "I have reviewed your record. It is uniformly satisfactory."

"If I may say so, Mister Pinkerton, sir, I accept from myself no less than the punctilious performance of my duties." As he heard the job described, he concluded that 'punctilious performance' had been a felicitous phrase. On the other hand, one effect of this review of his oratorical skill, followed by a private celebration of it, was that he realized with a jolt of real fear that he had not been listening.

"...So that is the weighty charge we place upon your shoulders. Can you carry it?"

"Why, I... Of course, Mister Pinkerston, sir, it is an honor that I will..."

"Yes yes, when can you get started?"

"Immediately, if that is your wish, sir."

"It is my wish because it is the wish of no less than the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the biggest corporation and largest employer in the nation. In my view—and I dare say my view is not without influence in certain quarters—the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad is one of the great men of the nation, a man qualified and positioned to lead us through this most dangerous time in our history."

"I could not agree more, sir."

"Try, Mister Spencer."

"Sir?"

"Try to agree more. Can you do that?"

"Yes, sir, Mister Pinkerton, sir."

At this point there was a pause, one most uncomfortable for half the attendees, until at last the other half spoke. "Your first name is Herbert, is that correct?" Spencer nodded. "There is a social philosopher of that name, perhaps you have heard of him, Herbert Spencer?" Spencer remained silent, uncertain whether it were better to have heard or not to have heard. "Normally I do not care much for social philosophy, too much of it is communistic. But this man has swept aside all that rubbish and gotten to the nub

of the thing, which is that society is no more exempt from the laws of nature than animals in the wild. He coined this phrase, 'survival of the fittest,' have you heard it?"

"I believe I may have, yes, sir, Mister—"

"Well have you?"

"Yes, sir."

"It is a telling phrase, is it not?" Spencer was nodding. "Then along came this other fellow, a Mister Darwin, and took it up. Do you understand what I say, Spencer?"

"I do, sir, most certainly, Mister—"

"Then tell me what it means."

"Sir?"

"Speak up, man, time is a-wasting!"

"Well, sir," started Spencer, praying he did not stutter, "I would say it means that, in society, where people compete for scarce resources..."

"Quite right, Spencer, I shall tell you what it means. It means that this business about men being created equal... It is a fine phrase, no doubt, excellent for founding a great republic, but come to find out it is—not to beat about the bush—so much hogwash. No less than science tells us that, as does our Bible, once we learn to read it properly."

From his position down the track, unable to approach because Hobbes blocked the way, Spencer could plainly see Tommy approach the freight train on the siding, where a very suspicious-looking crowd was loitering; for how else to interpret its presence? If the train were sidelined to let a faster one pass, there would be no crowd; and the presence of women and children told him with near certainty that the train was parked where the crew lived, not where it belonged. He did not know what Tommy was learning, that there had been strike action in the yard at Pittsburgh just a few hours earlier, that the news had spread immediately, and that this was an impulsive act of sympathy, that is an act of insurrection against the company that provided these very men respectable jobs. Of course, had he been doing his own job, he would have known, for any stationmaster could have told him, as probably any man on the railroad.

He could see Tommy in conversation, but could not hear a sound, and so drew his own conclusions. The principal one was that these men were precisely the worms he'd been dispatched to

unearth, and he was almost overcome with hatred, for they would destroy the world in which he had placed his faith. In this world, ordinary men fulfilled their duties with respect and obedience, while the great ones, the leaders of industry and government, put them to productive work and governed them as necessity, prudence, and good sense dictated.

When the second crew appeared, it was easy enough to read the confrontation, no matter the distance, and immediately he was suffused with hope, as he saw his claims to understand the men confirmed, for here were the true men of the railroad, the true Americans, who knew their duty and understood how things worked, how they had to work. What labor agitators refused to understand was that the laws of economics were laws of nature, and that therefore the demand for more wages than the market could bear would inevitably throw men out of work. He could not understand why this was not obvious, that by artificially increasing wages here, one inevitably reduced them there.

It was a recipe for disorder, and would cripple the very men who provided employment. Charity was even worse, for to feed a man who did not work was not just a crime, it was a sin. Spencer was not enamored of the pew, but he knew that man was to 'eat his bread in the sweat of his face,' and that salvation was the reward of an industrious life. Theological intricacies notwithstanding, that was the long and the short of it, for why else was prosperity the sign of divine election? Then he heard the gunshot, which at first he assumed had been fired by one of the savages, but when he saw him fall he realized that the fool had brought it on himself.

"Remember, Spencer," said Pinkerton, "you must be diligent, and to be diligent you must be relentless, and to be relentless you must abjure no weapon, for we are engaged in a war of survival. It is only weeks since the last federal troops were discharged from Reconstruction, and what do we find at the end of our Civil War but that we are engaged in a new one. This one to divide the nation in a new way, not to split it in two but exterminate half of it. It is not a war of armies, but of ideas; yet no less brutal for that. And a brutal war is a pitiless war, where compassion and tolerance invite weakness. A savage war, fought in the wilderness. Yet a war of lofty ideals, indeed, nothing less than the defense—rescue, should it come to it—of civilization. Are you listening, Spencer? Good. The instigators of dark deeds must be brought to the punishment

they so richly deserve."

"And so they shall, Mister Pinkerton, so they shall, you may rest assured."

"I do not rest assured, because I do not rest. Thanks to my extensive and perfected detective system, you and I shall eliminate the savages from our midst. You and I, Spencer."

The melee pleased him, for even though his side lost, the three heroes did give as good as they got and, more important, sent a message that right-thinking citizens would not be shoved aside by radicals. The melee was also his opportunity to skirt the scene undetected (for he judged it imprudent to pass along the track beside them), but even as he did so he could not avoid considering that he was failing at his assignment. Rather than skirt the scene, why was he not in the midst of it, taking names? At a minimum, he should head straight for the station just a short distance ahead and telegraph for the railroad police. It wasn't just insubordination, there was potential for damage to railroad property; but either of these actions would cause him to lose sight of 'the beauty' and thus in all likelihood lose any chance of ever possessing her, so instead he took the next-best action, which was to rationalize his dereliction of duty.

Like most rationalizations, he didn't find it difficult; in fact, it was quite simple. All he had to do was magnify the importance of pursuing three violent tramps, two of whom were actual savages and all of whom posed far greater risks to the interests of the railroad than a handful or two of misled, deluded employees—who in all likelihood were foreign-born and thus not even real Americans. Thus, he wasn't even past the melee before his mind was set at ease, images safely buried of Mister Pinkerton apoplectic with rage as he summarily dismissed him for his complete failure to execute his mission.

'Set at ease' is inaccurate; rather, set at ease in one sense, that he was able to push the Pinkerton nightmare out of his mind, but not in another, that were it not for the girl's resistance—and the preacher's interference, and the three savages—he would have her at his side this very moment. Then there could be no Pinkerton nightmare; moreover, at this very moment she could be watching him, admiration suffusing her warm complexion, as he asserted his masculine dominance among an unruly mob of boisterous cowards. Thus not at all at ease, quite the reverse, a simmering rage

of frustration that he knew he must control, but also knew that the knowing made that no easier to accomplish. So it was that, between the freight and the station, as he remained hidden beside the tracks and scanned the scene to locate his prey, who were similarly hidden beside the tracks, he discovered his jaws clenched so tightly that he almost broke a tooth.

Slowly, carefully he advanced, until suddenly he saw Moody appear on the tracks beyond the station and walk to it and enter and then depart a few minutes later, returning to the same spot. 'What fools,' he thought, but then thought, 'not fools,' though not as clever as they believed. He thought, 'Either they want me to know where they are or they do not care.' If it were the first, then perhaps they were setting a trap. Then he heard the escalating argument, the begging, the altercation, saw the three tramps angrily and triumphantly depart, heard the big one call for food, and thought, 'a trap for sure.' Yet he could not resist the possibility, however slight, that the beauty was again defenseless—for what resistance could the fat dwarf assert? The indelible image of her—that image, the one in which, with each recurrence, the décolletage of her blouse increased—again recurred, the image he was powerless to resist.

He drew closer, slowly, carefully. There was no sign of the tramps, which of course did not mean they were not there (he was too wise to conclude that); but if in fact they really had gone to town to feed themselves... He drew closer and again closer, until he saw her sitting on the ground. When he saw that, images again flooded his mind, this time images of felling Moody with a single furious blow, then looking down at her, she looking up at him with a mixture of anticipation, a touch of fear, respect, and he pushing her roughly so she was lying on the ground, her chest heaving, as he took his time with her, and she welcomed him. He approached closer.

It wasn't anything he heard—the three were too skillful for that—nor anything he saw; it just seemed too easy. Yet he advanced, advanced until his desire for it to be easy and his perception of how easy it seemed to be had fully sustained each other, when suddenly he found himself running away, running for his life. Automatically he ran for the station, it wasn't anything he thought or had planned, it just happened. Locke, the fastest of the three, gained on him quickly and was about to pounce when he

bounded up the steps and threw himself through the open doorway. The stationmaster, safely behind his grille in case any of the men from the melee, not least the one who had fired a gun, decided to assault the station, leaped off his chair involuntarily and, fearful surprise yielding immediately to anger, demanded to know what Spencer thought he was doing.

He quickly explained that there had just been a violent uprising against the railroad, that he had been trying to reason with the miscreants, but the attempt had showed itself to be futile when a number of them gave chase up the tracks, to what end he neither knew nor wished to learn. "Were you the cause of the shot?" he was asked.

"If you mean to ask whether I was the target, the answer is affirmative. Just missed me, it is a miracle no one was seriously hurt." Before the startled man could ask more questions, Spencer told him his identity and purpose.

"Then I presume you wish me to call for the railroad police at once," said the man, already starting for his telegraph key.

"Good God, no," cried Spencer, "that would only serve to turn a minor incident into a much larger disturbance. There are women and children there. Rather, let us keep our wits about us and fashion a more appropriate plan. If only I knew what has gotten into the men—that is, into the more violent element."

"Can it be you have not heard?" So it was that Spencer learned the reason for the sided freight and the crowd and the melee. Knowing that every moment he delayed, Cady was surely getting farther and farther away, he quickly fashioned a more or less plausible reason to return to his duties alone, without anyone at the railroad being alerted, and left the station with the stationmaster's jaw hanging. He returned to the tracks in time to see the group in the distance, walking west along the tracks, for it had been instantly acknowledged that the ruse had failed (though narrowly) and further pursuit was impossible, therefore the task was to return to the tracks as quickly as possible. Spencer waved gaily and started after them.

Their first task was to get food and drink, for Abigail was getting desperate. Spencer's reappearances, each time dashing her hopes, hopes she was unable to suppress, that he would disappear forever, were taking a toll, which hunger and thirst were doing nothing to alleviate. Unfortunately, there was no source of

nourishment in sight, unless it be a nearby farm, for the track was now taking them through an area of farms and villages. Tommy considered the options and consulted Locke, walking in silence beside Cady, but unfortunately there was nothing to be done: To get off the track, which provided considerable visibility, would expose them to additional hazard, for it was impossible to know with certainty what a man in the grip of obsession might do, given an opportunity to get close. Locke offered to go alone, practically insisted on it, said he would catch up to them, but Tommy would not allow it, for the risk of being alone was even greater. "Besides," he added with just the hint of a smile, "your constant attentions at the lady's side are essential to her safety."

Locke and Cady both blushed.

Turning to Abigail, Tommy assured her that lunch was now his priority, that eventually they were sure to happen on something along the way, but unfortunately they must keep walking. "Can you do that, child?"

Abigail nodded gamely, adding, "I just want to get away from that man."

"We all do, Abby," said Cady gently.

"And so we shall, I promise you," assured Tommy.

"You know," said Locke, "I forgot to tell you one of the secrets of that charm I gave you. If you press on it with your thumb and first finger as hard as you can and say, 'hunger leave me,' it goes away."

Abigail turned to him with scorn to ask, "Do I look like a little child to you?" and everyone laughed.

Moody quietly asked Tommy what he intended to do. "Find food, as I said," he replied. "First is food for the child—though of course we could all use a meal. Second is to get to Pittsburgh. I have not abandoned the idea of hopping a freight, for there may yet be another one ahead."

"But the strike..."

"...Cannot be total. That is, I would doubt it, especially so soon and so far from its center. Much as one might wish otherwise, it can take a long time for people to see what is right before their eyes."

"I take it you sympathize with strikers."

"I take it you sympathize with injustice."

Moody paused. "It is by industry, not sloth, that a man

prospers—and by trust in God, not in oneself. Prosperity is the reward of virtue, as poverty is of vice."

Tommy paused. "A society constituted to provide nothing more than a theoretical equality of opportunity amid circumstances of great inequality, and to then claim that it owes nothing to the disadvantaged, is a hypocritical one founded on cruel indifference."

"Be patient, my friend. Be content with your wages. Work for what you can get, but work. Deserve more and in the Lord's good time you will get more." When Tommy fell silent, Moody asked what they would do if there were not another freight ahead.

"Try again to encourage him to leave, or devise a plan to board a passenger train without him. You have sufficient funds for that, I hope?"

"The Lord has been generous."

"Generous enough for food as well?"

"Even that."

Everyone continued in silence, beneath the burdens of hunger and thirst and an early afternoon July sun. The track of course stretched before and behind them for distances effectively infinite, and the view either way was monotonous and unattractive; but to their sides lay a jolly countryside of gently rolling fields, punctuated with copses of hardwoods, and nearby were village squares, though mostly out of sight. Tommy asked Locke to change places with him briefly, so he could see how the girls were faring. They had passed a little station, and then another and then another, all too small to offer any kind of refreshment, but if either girl were disheartened, she didn't show it. "You are both stoic," he began.

"What does 'stoic' mean?" asked Abigail.

"Strong and brave."

"I am not brave, I am scared."

"That is bravery, child. To go forward, despite fear."

Said Cady, "May I ask you a question?" He nodded. "I still do not see why we have to keep running from one man."

"You have seen that we have not gotten away, nor have we caught him. We are stuck with him."

"Surely not forever."

"Surely not. Our chance will come. Till then, we must be patient and resolute."

"He will follow us all the way to Pittsburgh. Then what?"

"We will have opportunities before Pittsburgh to deal with

him."

"Even on a train?"

"Especially on a train, because then he will be compelled to be close to us."

"But if it is a passenger train, there will be other people..."

"There are ways, believe me."

"You say 'deal with him...'"

"Have no fear, we are not murderers."

"That relieves one fear, but stokes another. You may get rid of him, but he knows Abigail and I are bound for Pittsburgh. It is a big city, but not so big that a detective could not find us."

"Do not trouble yourself unnecessarily. This kind of obsession passes—or rather, someone else will take your place, for I am confident you are neither the first nor the last."

"Then I fear for the next one, whoever she may be."

"Alas, we cannot protect everyone, for the world can be a nasty place. I have seen this country at war with itself, and that is about as nasty as anything can be. Look at it now, twelve years later, it is still nasty. The nation again split in two, each half terrified by the other and both convinced they are in a war for survival."

Abigail turned from one to the other, but neither spoke, or rather neither spoke out loud, until Cady asked, "Do you believe in an afterlife?"

"Well now. I have always believed that it makes no difference what I believe. We can believe anything, and usually do. No, young lady—"

"You may call me 'Cady.'"

"Well then, Cady, what most interests me is what we can know, not what we can believe." He paused. "Have you ever been to the seashore?"

"Never."

"If you ever go there, mark the waves. Waves have always fascinated me. At the Jersey shore the waves come crashing in. A typical wave, when it strikes the beach, can knock a man right off his feet. In it comes with a crash and a roar and rushes up the beach in a frenzy of effort and determination. But little by little it loses its force and slows down and grows thin, and with a final hiss slides a bit of its former self farther up the sand. Nonetheless, even in this final advance it is sinking, sinking into the sand, disappearing before your eyes until it is gone. Where did it go?

What becomes of it? We cannot tell. But if we look down the beach, where it meets the sea, we see our wave sliding swiftly back out to where it originated, as happy to return, it seems, as it was to arrive. And what happens then? Another wave comes in, crashing and determined and frenzied. Is it the same wave? Who knows? It is the same water, though. That is what we know for certain. It is the same water."

By and by they arrived at the station for Haverford College, as modest as the others, but here at last was a village square adjacent to the station, to which they could safely divert, and as luck would have it (perhaps because the young men of the college required comestibles—or, more likely, certain beverages), there was a grocery store. A short time later, though it didn't seem so to Abigail, she was sitting beside her sister in the shade of a large chestnut behind a church, consuming a picnic, while the men, forming a perimeter, ate and drank standing. Three of them did, that is, while Tommy pretended to loiter outside the grocery store, to keep Spencer from entering; meanwhile, to drive the nail all the way home, he ostentatiously consumed an enormous roast pork sandwich. That finished, however, it was time to return to the serious matter at hand. When he had sauntered away at an exaggeratedly slow pace, Spencer dashed into the store, hastily grabbed a few items, slapped a large bill on the counter, and ran outside in time to see him disappear around the corner of the church.

As there was still time to board a passenger train, the issue was whether Abigail had the endurance to walk any farther, in hopes of catching a freight, which was still Tommy's preferred option. With a freight, he would have more natural rapport with the crew than Spencer, whereas with a passenger train Spencer would have the upper hand with the stationmaster and conductor. A train crew was not unlikely to prevent a Pinkerton from boarding, no matter how he tried to intimidate them, especially now that 'strike' was in the air; a stationmaster or conductor was not unlikely to prevent three tramps from boarding, especially with two of them Indians. The question, therefore, was put to Abigail, who rose immediately and said, "What are we waiting for?"

The others looked at each other and smiled, especially Locke and Cady. "Are you sure, Abby?" she asked. "Because if you are not..."

"Come on, Cads, you can do it, it is only a mile."

As this discussion concluded, a train could be heard huffing into the station and coming to a howling awkward stop. They waited in a discreet location for passengers to embark and disembark, and then, hearing the creaks and strains of the steam locomotive yanking the dragging cars forward, they proceeded onto the track as it accelerated away from them. The stationmaster, who had been talking to the conductor, lingered in the entryway to watch the train recede and saw them, saw them and wondered at the sight, wondered and registered a concern, then saw Spencer, plainly following at a distance.

A veteran, he noticed immediately that Hobbes appeared to be 'bringing up the rear,' as though this were a military formation, and in Spencer's position and attitude he immediately recognized the hostility in the disposition of the forces—and this caused him to wonder about the presence of two girls. He took Moody for their father automatically, therefore a family, therefore a family protected by three men, three men of a most unsavory appearance, therefore perhaps guarded instead of protected—therefore he wondered whether Spencer represented threat or rescue. 'What have we come to,' he thought, 'that we are divided into friend and foe, and that the contending parties cannot be distinguished by anything visible? How do we go forward—and if we do not, how do we survive this?' Whatever the actual state of affairs, the situation looked to him like a police matter, but the village consisted of little more than the tiny college, with a single policeman, lame in one leg and half blind, thanks to Gettysburg. 'What could he do, even if he could arrive before they are long gone?'

Luck was not with them, only Spencer, so when they reached the next station Moody went inside to buy tickets while Tommy and Locke waited with the girls on the platform, with Hobbes down the track to keep Spencer away. The hope—which no one believed amounted to much of a plan—was to keep him away long enough so that at least he would not have enough time to get them ejected from the train, and at best allow them to get away without him. He, however, was not intimidated; rather, he approached until Hobbes gestured at the inside of his coat, then stopped, considered, and suddenly shouted, "Charles! Charles, I was delayed, but have arrived!" When immediately the handful of passengers

waiting on the platform turned toward him, he hastened past Hobbes, saying as he reached the platform, "Oh, forgive me. From a distance, in the sun, I thought you were Charles. Clearly he has not yet arrived. It would be just like him to miss his train." Then he turned grandly toward Tommy and smirked.

Chapter Seven

It was too late in the day to buy tickets through to Pittsburgh, but Tommy would have instructed Moody to buy them for Harrisburg in any case, because the first was too risky. To attempt it would be to make it essential to somehow get Spencer off the train in transit—for they had to assume he would find a way to be on it—whereas so far their efforts against him had failed. While he of course knew where they were headed, if he were not with them when they arrived, it would be much more difficult to find the girls; meanwhile, getting off at the intermediate stop gave them their best chance to deal with him, either to finally elude him or somehow persuade him to discontinue his pursuit.

While Moody purchased tickets at the grille, Abigail was resting in a chair inside the station, next to Cady and Tommy, while Hobbes and Locke waited outside (within hearing). Nearby, against the opposing wall, sat Spencer.

"Do not look at him, Abigail."

"I cannot bear that he keeps staring at me," she complained.

"He is not staring at you, Abigail. He is staring at me."

"Why does he do that?"

"When you are older, you will understand."

"I want to understand now."

Tommy assisted. "He finds your sister very attractive. She is very pretty, do you not think so?"

Abigail looked at Cady with love shooting from her eyes. "I think she is beautiful."

"I think so, too, and unfortunately so does Mister Spencer."

"But why is he so mean?"

"Do you know what frustration is?"

"I think so."

"He is extremely frustrated, and he is a man who cannot bear that. He thinks Cady is mean, that she does not grant him what he wishes."

"Cady is not mean."

"I know that, child, but he believes she is."

"But why?"

"As I said, she will not give him what he desires."

"What does he desire? Can I give it to him?"

"No, child, you cannot, but it is good of you to offer."

"I wish I knew what he desired."

Cady repeated that when she was older, she would know, and Abigail sank deeply into thought, then resurfaced with a totally different face. "Is it about what grown-up people do?" she whispered, and Cady nodded.

All this Spencer heard, and having answered Tommy, who stared right at him as he spoke to Abigail, with more of his smirks, he now turned to Cady, saying, "It pains me greatly that I seem to have conveyed an impression that could not be further from the truth, for I wish only to protect you, miss. In my profession, I am unfortunately exposed—and not infrequently—to the worst elements of our society. Such men are not to be trusted. They are not even to be respected, for they know nothing of respect. It distresses me no end that, in putting your faith in the preacher, you have delivered yourselves—not just yourself, but worse, your sister—to the will and whim of three ragged tramps—two of whom, I need not remind you, are not even Americans."

Cady discovered to her astonishment that she could think of nothing to reply, so it was Tommy who said, "What would it take to convince you that the lady is not interested in your protection?"

"To what lady do you refer? I see no lady here. I see a woman lacking a respectable position who willingly places herself in a condition of submission to no less than four men—three of whom are old enough to be her father."

"Do you truly not understand that you are the reason for that?"

"Do you truly believe that I do not see how you look at her? Was it not you I heard call her beautiful just now?"

"Her beauty is not the issue. Her safety is."

"And I suppose you are self-appointed to protect her virtue—assuming she has any virtue."

At last Cady found words. "He is not self-appointed, as you well know. As for what you may think of me, I could not care less, for it could be nothing compared to what I think of you. You are loathsome, mister, and if you ever so much as touch me, I will kill you or die in the attempt."

"Feisty!" exclaimed Spencer. "I like that in a woman."

Cady rose to her feet and took the few steps across the room. "Do you like it now?" she hissed. "Try something, you turd."

"Cady," said Tommy, "that is not the way."

Her chest heaved several times. "What is the way?"

"We will find it." Eventually she returned to her seat and he could hear her breathing, could see how she suppressed the trembling. "Mister, what would it take to persuade you to let us go our way?"

"You think I take orders from vermin like you?"

"Of course not. You take orders from vermin who smoke fancy cigars in walnut-paneled rooms and carve up the nation as if it were a roasted pig. So I ask you again, because one way or another you will let us go."

"I do not take threats from vermin either."

"It is not a threat. It is what you and I both know must happen."

"A Pinkerton does not fail," he replied finally. "Take heed."

"You have already failed, as that freight back there proves. Why not return to your dirty work before your boss learns you are derelict in your duty? Fired, what would you be but one of us?" A long silence followed, and what Spencer was thinking, Tommy could not tell; Spencer himself could not tell. "Would money help persuade you?"

"Do you think I need your money?" He pulled a roll of bills out of a pocket and riffled it. "Mister Allan Pinkerton takes care of his operatives."

"I have no doubt he does. How does he care for them when he learns that his operative uses his money to harass a girl young enough to be his daughter when he should be working?"

"You are clever with words."

"So I have been told."

"Words count for nothing."

"Do they? I would say nothing counts for more. Would it help persuade you if I took you behind the station and beat you within an inch of your life?"

"You and who else?"

"Me and Hobbes."

"Do it, Mister Jefferson," said Abigail. "Please do it. I hate this man. Make him go away."

Moody had long since completed his purchases, but having heard the conversation behind him, he kept the stationmaster occupied with questions about scheduling and amenities on board the train. The latter, for whatever reason (perhaps he was hard of hearing), seemed to overhear nothing—he had not even appeared to notice Cady's confrontation—but Moody thought it best to impede his view, should Tommy find it necessary to remove Spencer by force. Further, he kept debating whether he should try to persuade the stationmaster to refuse a ticket to Spencer.

If he tried, however, he was pretty sure Spencer would order the stationmaster to call the district office to confirm his purpose—or even simpler, show identification—and that could easily turn a dangerous situation into one even more dangerous. Could Tommy or Hobbes, he wondered, prevent him from boarding the train till it started to move and then hop aboard at the last moment? Probably not, because Spencer was smart enough to stay near the stationmaster. In fact, sure enough, he nonchalantly arose and went to the window, where he asked Moody to step aside if he was done purchasing his tickets; and sure enough, what he produced was not money but identification, and without any noticeable reaction the stationmaster issued him a ticket.

"Did you see how much money he has?" asked Cady. "And he spent freely at his hotel. How is it that he has so much money?"

"As you may have just noticed," replied Tommy, "Pinkertons working for the railroad ride free. As you describe your time with him, though, he does seem well furnished—no doubt by the railroad, for which it is a trivial expense and well worth it, for the stranger in a saloon who buys drinks for the house quickly makes many friends."

"Twenty minutes," said Moody, sitting beside Tommy. "Do we have a plan?"

"If he is in enough of a swaggering mood to venture out of sight of the stationmaster, we have a plan."

"Unless he is myopic and half deaf, the stationmaster appears to be the kind of citizen who neither sees nor hears what he has no wish to see or hear."

"In that case, perhaps we could try something more bold. It will not be possible to surprise him, though, not so long as he remains in that seat against the wall. I must think." That is exactly what he then did, disappearing into thought and re-emerging with a plan—a plan he described to Cady, while assuring her she should feel no compulsion to consent.

"But why would he believe me, after...?"

"He cannot resist his desire. We have seen that already, more than once."

"What if he..."

"All you would have to do is get him out back. Even just onto the platform might be sufficient. You do not have to do this, but you would be in no danger of serious harm."

"I will do it."

"You need not."

"Apparently I do." Tommy nodded reluctantly and fell silent.

She whispered to Abigail, who grasped her hand, and after a few minutes, ignoring Abigail's expression, walked quietly to Spencer. "If I let you touch me till the train comes, will you agree to leave?" Immediately his gaze tightened and his stare changed its meaning. "I know you want to touch me, you have all but said as much—and your actions..."

"I did not fall for that little ploy back there, where the tramps affected to desert you. What makes you think..."

"Do you want me or not—or are you too much of a coward?"

"You have seen that I am no coward."

"Do you want me or not?" She looked right into his eyes, never wavering, and saw him lick his lips.

"This ploy is even sillier than the last."

"Very well. But know that, if you get on that train, you will not get off the way you intend. In the alternative, I give you my word I will order them to leave us in peace—till the train arrives, then I board and you do not." When still he hesitated, she sat beside him and took his hand. His shudder could not be dissembled. Unable to look at Abigail, she looked at Tommy and Moody, who were looking at each other, pretending to be in quiet conversation; then she turned to Spencer in time to see him lick his

lips again, close his eyes tightly, then push her hand away and order her to return to her seat. "Are you sure?"

To her shock, he turned to her with a face she could never have imagined, having never before seen one like it, twisted between a smile and a grimace, combining something resembling affection (though perhaps it was merely need) with the fiercest hatred. Terrified, she leaped to her feet and landed in her chair across the room. Abigail, almost hysterical, threw her arms around her, and she did the same, both sobbing. Tommy hesitated, then gingerly patted each on the shoulder, told them gently not to worry, that whatever it was was over now, that they were two of the bravest people he had ever met, assuring them he had encountered many brave people, as well as many who were not brave. He looked terribly distraught himself and, seeing it, Moody tried to console him. "It was necessary to try, it could not be helped, you did nothing wrong."

"I used her, to do what I should have done myself. Locke will never forgive me."

"Locke?"

"Good God, man, do you not see it?"

"I am sorry, I..."

"He is like a son to me, I will never have one of my own. He will not forgive me and I cannot blame him."

"There was no way you could have known, I will tell him so myself, we have to save the girls somehow, you had to try, I assure you he will understand and will not hold you responsible. The bigger problem is what he will do when he learns what happened, being so young. Can he control justifiable rage?"

The question stopped Tommy cold. "You are right, that is the problem now. I cannot waste another moment on myself. What time is it?" He looked up at the station clock. "Good grief, only minutes. Stay with them, if he tries anything, squeal like a stuck pig," and with that he practically threw himself out the door. Moody took his seat next to the girls and, not for an instant taking his eyes from Spencer, told them it was time to calm themselves, for the train would be arriving in a few minutes; outside, Tommy conferred with his companions, learning quickly that neither knew what had just transpired. Locke immediately proposed that, when Spencer emerged onto the platform to board the train, his father and he grab him and take him behind the station. "To do what?"

asked Tommy, glancing at the smiling Hobbes.

"Tie him up. This is good rope," he said pointing to his sack. "Be a shame to waste it."

"You do not believe the stationmaster has a firearm behind his counter? He knows what Spencer is, he showed his identification."

"My father can hold the Pinkerton while I disarm the stationmaster."

"You have not even seen him. He is bigger than your father."

"He is?"

"He is not," said Tommy smiling, "but I think your father would agree that, when devising a plan, it is generally advisable to know the facts. So, the train is waiting at the platform as two tramps grab the stationmaster and a railroad detective and drag them away. Then what?" Tommy looked at Hobbes again and found him ready to burst out laughing.

"You all board the train."

"And the conductor shouts, 'all aboard,' and the engineer pulls the whistle?"

"Yes."

"And your father and you get away because, being Indians, you are naturally fleet of foot. Then what?"

"You wait for us at our place in Harrisburg."

"Which you reach by train, because no one will be looking for you—or will you be disguised as old women?"

No longer able to restrain himself, Hobbes erupted in such uncontrollable laughter, joined by Tommy, that Locke could not help but join it; when there was not a trace of humor left, he asked about an actual plan. "My son is right about this, that sooner or later we are going to have to tie him up and leave him in a shed. Why not sooner?" When Tommy asked how, he replied, "Is there no way to flush him out of there before the train comes?" Tommy shrugged and noted that the train was due any moment. "Then maybe my boy is right after all. Why does he not keep the stationmaster away from his firearm and his telegraph key while I haul the Pinkerton out back? There must be a back door. And like he said, we will join you in Harrisburg."

"It is desperate."

Hobbes smiled. "Of course it is desperate. We are desperadoes." As he said this, they could hear the faint sounds of a

train, which for some reason caused them all to fall silent briefly as though hypnotized by the growing sounds.

Tommy nodded, but as they approached the door they were met by Moody and the girls. "What?" he asked, startled.

"The train is coming."

"Yes, but Spencer?"

"The girls were anxious to get out of his sight."

Immediately signaling to Locke to stay with the others, Tommy rushed through the door, followed by Hobbes and, seeing the room empty, rushed out the back to find the stationmaster standing by the outhouse. "Get in line," he said.

"The train is coming. Do you not need to tend to travelers?"

"I need to tend to something else first."

"I need to get on that train."

"Then I guess you had best return to the platform. You will have another chance at Coatesville." Tommy had no choice but to return through the back door, where Hobbes was waiting, and after exchanging nods he continued out the front; meanwhile, the stationmaster tapped twice on the outhouse door and Spencer emerged. "It was just like you said."

"These are dangerous characters. Have no fear, though, I shall be tracking them all the way to Pittsburgh. We will deal with them there."

The stationmaster removed his hand from a pocket to reveal a gun he'd been clutching and handed it to Spencer, who assured him he'd be amply compensated as soon as he reported the incident. "Well, as to that, I can do it right now."

"Certainly not. Nothing to disturb a situation that already hangs by a thread. Trust me, I shall see this matter through to its conclusion. The next time I come through, I shall return this to you. It has the look of a fine piece."

"She is. Been with me many a year. I hate to part with her, but what can you do."

"I would not take her, were this not a matter of the greatest importance, and these men not as desperate as they are. I shall see her returned to you, trust me."

"Thank you, sir. Now, I believe the conductor will be impatiently waiting for me to give him the signal."

Hobbes quickly retreated through the front door and, seeing the conductor sure enough pacing an otherwise empty platform,

apologized for the last-minute call of nature and handed him his ticket. This he scrutinized closely, even turned it over for some reason, before wordlessly nodding for him to board. He had just enough time to find Tommy guarding the entrance to the rear carriage and whisper in his ear, then retrace his steps toward the front till he saw Spencer approach. The train immediately lurched forward, and as Spencer made his way slowly down the aisle, Hobbes occupied the whole of it, the two staring at each other. Rather than attempt to push past him, Spencer turned to take a single seat next to a middle-aged woman, but was nudged from behind so he fell against her; embarrassed, he apologized hurriedly and took another seat on an empty bench, Hobbes sitting on the aisle.

Tommy remained at the front of the last carriage, while Moody and Abigail sat near the rear, and the train had barely started before she fell asleep against him. It was well underway before Locke took his seat beside Cady on the bench behind them, and had passed five stations before either spoke, when she asked if he had ever before been on a train. "Many times—but rarely on a passenger train."

"I was on a train only once. That was when Abby—that is, Abigail—and I were sent to live with an aunt."

After a long silence, Locke said, "My father is my only family."

After a long silence, Cady asked, "Do you travel a lot?"

"Not really. We go from job to job. I have never been outside Pennsylvania."

"Nor I. Is it hard to find work?"

"They say it has never been harder. I could not help but overhear your conversation earlier with Tommy." Cady waited for him to say something about it, but he didn't, she had to ask. "I never heard him talk about religion before."

"What did you think?"

"I know not what to think."

There was another silence before she awkwardly reminded him that he had spoken earlier of being taught by a missionary. "Please excuse me if this is impolite: Are you a Christian?" He shrugged. "You need not reply, I was just... I do not rightly know what I intended."

"The question does not disturb me. You may ask me

anything, it is the answer that... Frankly, I sometimes wonder how many of the Christians I encounter are really Christian. I guess I do not know what the question actually asks." (This was a question which, overheard, Moody would normally presume to answer, but like his young charge, he had fallen asleep.)

To Locke's surprise, Cady nodded readily. "Nor I. You should hear Abby, to her it is so clear." Locke smiled and his smile shocked her, so utterly unexpected was it, also because in it she saw that he loved her sister. A silence descended yet again, until she realized that she had been staring at him. "Please excuse me."

"For what? You have no cause..." He gulped and said this: "You may look at me all you wish, if only, for my part, I may do the same."

At first, the ensuing silence was the most troubling of all, but soon became the least; in fact soon it did not weigh on them in the slightest, and after that the conversation flowed freely, and then it seemed that they would never exhaust their common subjects of interest, nor tire of discussing them. It began with Cady's admission (or excuse) that she had stared because she had never before seen an Indian.

"What are we like? Pretty strange, I imagine, what with our red skin."

"But your skin is not red."

Locke pretended to examine himself. "By golly, you are right! I never noticed that."

She nudged him and giggled and grew serious. "You are not at all like the stories we hear."

"What are we like?" he asked, suppressing a smile.

"I guess I would have to say I see little difference between regular people and you."

"Regular people?"

"You know what I mean."

"Do you mean people who have families, love their children...? Feel pain? Bleed when cut?"

"I have offended you. I—"

"You cannot offend me."

"I only meant to say... In fact, I do not know what I meant to say."

"Perhaps you meant to say that we bear an uncanny resemblance to other people."

"But why are you laughing? I see nothing..." But she began to laugh too.

"I get it from my father. He likes to say, 'If you are going to be an Indian in America, you had better have a sense of humor.'"

They talked and talked, but he could see the fatigue on her face and urged her to follow her sister's example; and as soon as he said it, she felt it and suddenly could barely stay awake. "Sleep," he urged gently.

"Will you sleep?"

"I will watch over you. Have no fear."

"But I have no fear, not with you beside me." So moved was he, he exclaimed that he would die where he was, should it come to it, and then it was her turn to smile. "Let us hope it does not come to that." She was asleep in seconds and he was certain he could watch her forever.

Hobbes and Spencer also sat beside each other, but unlike the others, spoke not a word; nor did they even look at each other, though each was constantly alert to what the other might do. After the first station, Tommy tapped Hobbes on the shoulder and beckoned him a few steps down the aisle, where he asked if Spencer had been disarmed. "When I need to, I will, but he would not pull a gun with so many passengers. Why create a stir?"

"A normal man would not. He could pull it right now. We are vulnerable."

"Let me know if he moves." Tommy nodded again and asked what he wanted to do. "As I say, leave him in a shed bound with Locke's rope and gagged. As I see it, we need to be first to Pittsburgh, so we can deliver the girls wherever they need to be delivered before he arrives. If he gets there first, who knows how many days he might prowl around the station, put out alerts, enlist assistants... We could arrive a week later and find someone waiting."

Tommy nodded in agreement. "For that we have to wait till Coatesville."

"How do you know?"

"The stationmaster told me."

"Second best would be to just push him out the back."

"And have him immediately telegraph ahead?"

"Possible, but we have tickets."

"We are tramps."

"Tramps with tickets. Do you prefer I keep him beside me to Harrisburg, while you all hop off at the next stop?"

Tommy considered it. "I agree we should try to reach Pittsburgh first. Let us try to remove him, and think of the other only when our failure makes that necessary. Also, both girls are fast asleep."

Hobbes' eyes narrowed. "Why that face?"

"I just recalled how I assured Cady that, on a passenger train, each station presents an opportunity to put him off."

"Cady? Cady? My friend, please do not say it."

"Say what?"

"That my friend who is practically a brother to me is competing with my son for the affections of a pretty girl."

Tommy smiled. "Thank you for the compliment."

"What compliment? I never compliment."

"You are slipping, my friend, because I believe you just did, by implying that I am not too old for such ideas."

"Of course you are too old. If you had any more hair coming out of your ears, from the rear your head would appear sideways."

Tommy smiled. "Not too old to recognize how beautiful she is—and quite something. If you had seen how she confronted the Pinkerton at the station... But have no fear, I am old enough to have tired of playing the fool in that game. No, I happily leave her to your boy, for whom, you may recall, I have some considerable affection myself. They are cute together and that is how it will be."

"Except that is how it can never be." Tommy immediately knew what he meant and looked away; then he looked at Spencer, who feigned disinterest in their conversation (which in any case he could not hear over the rumbling of the train). "I believe you are of the opinion that it *should* never be."

"I do not know what I believe. As you are my brother, Locke is my son."

"Except that I am not really your brother."

"You are more of a brother than my brother. If you do not yet know that, you will never know it."

"She will break his heart."

"Some girl breaks every boy's heart."

"Do you think, in another world...?"

"In another world, they would make the most marvelous couple that ever was seen."

A child came down the aisle, hawking magazines and 'dime' novels, and they made way for him. They were unaccustomed, to say the least, to travel on a passenger train and considered whether to worry about the railroad police, who harassed free-riding tramps, but were unlikely to put paying customers off a train, though native Americans, like African Americans, were vulnerable. The question was whether they would take an order from Spencer. Mainly, they were charged with preventing theft and breaking strikes, but what if he ordered them in the name of the president of the railroad? To many Americans (excluding those who had actually built the railroads), the men who were said to have 'built the railroads' were national heroes, perfect exemplars of the Christian businessman who, by frugality and hard work, rose to great wealth. Public officials from police to president bent over backwards to accommodate the wishes of these visionaries (even when they bent the law to the breaking point), but Spencer was about as far from them as the fellows he despised.

After they worked out a plan for getting him off the train, including contingencies, such as a rendezvous in Harrisburg if Hobbes could not regain the train, Tommy took his sack to the rear car and soon returned it, taking a seat several benches behind him where he was unseen by Spencer, whose movements Hobbes constrained. Thus, other than to look out the window and hope he spotted them, he had no way to know whether he was being kept on the train in order for the others to disembark at any of the numerous stops. As this could not be done surreptitiously, he made no attempt to hide it; but as it was very uncertain, he had to hope they placed great value on remaining together or reaching Pittsburgh first.

'What would you do if you did see them?' Hobbes wished to ask derisively; but he had to restrain his inclinations, knowing that if Spencer became sufficiently desperate while the conductor happened to walk through the car (which he would do periodically), there would be no way to prevent him from making some sort of appeal. He could find himself ejected from the train, a foolish way to be defeated, therefore he restrained himself; and when the conductor did appear, he countered natural anxiety with a technique he had somehow acquired so long ago he had no memory of it. It had served him since childhood, when the unrelenting assaults of prejudice and fear had begun to shape him.

Certainly it had served him during adolescence, when the constant alternatives were to fight or submit; and certainly it had served him as an army scout, when the alternatives were to survive or die. It had long since become second nature, that the greater the danger, the more he relaxed; that what increased were attention and awareness, which enabled his attitude to become superior to his adversary's.

The remaining time to Coatesville, the better part of an hour, passed without a word between them, and despite the tension was uneventful; only as the train pulled into the station did this change, when Spencer distinctly felt a sharp point against his left side. Gripping Spencer's left arm firmly with his right, his left inside his coat, Hobbes motioned for him to rise and, for good measure, announced that they were disembarking (thereby informing him that the others were still on the train). Around them, everyone was leaving as quickly as possible to make the most of the time, which at fifteen minutes was scarcely enough to use the outhouse, obtain refreshment, and get back on board; only Spencer sought to remain seated.

"This is your own Bowie pressing against your chest. If you give me no choice, it will quickly reach your heart."

"You would not dare."

"Do not forget, I am a savage. Who knows what a savage will do?"

When the knife was pressed a bit more, Spencer allowed himself to be lifted to his feet and conducted onto the platform; unfortunately for Hobbes, however, there were two uniformed policemen standing there, scrutinizing the passengers as they disembarked. What had happened was that the conductor had spotted a pickpocket on the train and, at one of the previous stops, had quietly alerted the stationmaster, who in turn had telegraphed ahead. Hobbes tried to move Spencer away quickly, but the man immediately screamed for help, which left him no choice but to let go and run. Had he hesitated, the situation would have developed differently, for at the same moment the policemen spotted their man and chased him, as he leaped off the platform and sprinted down the track and into the side brush. Hobbes, however, was not trained to hesitate; so there he was, assessing the new circumstances as he berated himself for not having taken Tommy's advice to disarm the man.

Chapter Eight

Spencer's immediate impulse, upon finding himself suddenly free, was to go after Hobbes with his gun; but recalling that Hobbes had a gun of his own induced him to take stock of the unexpected situation and devise a plan. The savage was not his quarry, he reminded himself, the trollop was. If he did manage to kill or capture him, he would have to stay till the police took possession of him, and no doubt give a statement at the station, by which time the train would be long departed and its special passenger disappeared from his life, possibly forever. He realized that he need not pursue the renegade, who would come to him, since he had to return to the platform to board the train. If he could not get him arrested—the two policemen were out of sight, still presumably chasing their pickpocket, while he was left alone to confront a murdering savage—perhaps he could at least keep him off the train and thereby improve his odds. Whatever was going to happen would happen as the last passengers were returning, so he had some time, enough to buy a pretzel and a bottle of sarsaparilla.

When the police returned, making a show of huffing and puffing, which he attributed more to their age and weight than how far they had run, he showed them his identification, briefly described the (desperate) situation, and instructed them to arrest the tramp as soon as he appeared; what they received was 'you are not one of ours,' 'not our job,' and 'armed and dangerous.' One of them thought to ask, "Why would this man board the train, knowing you are on it, if he knows you are pursuing him and he has escaped? What is the real story here, mister?" Spencer explained that, first, the situation was too complicated to explain,

and second was not their business; to which he was given this reply: "As to the first, I have no way to know, and as to the second, you are right, and so good day to you."

He looked for the conductor, but he was in the outhouse and, when he left it, was in such a rush to get straggling passengers back on board that he had no patience to hear Spencer's story; so he went to the engineer in his cabin and interrupted his conference with the fireman about the steam pressure to order him not to leave the station until he, Spencer, gave the signal. The engineer took a cursory look at his identification, sneered, and said, "If I delay this train but a single minute, it could cost me my job. So my thought is that your problem is your problem."

"I am not asking you, I am ordering you in the name of the president of the railroad."

"And I am telling you that I do not take orders from Pinkertons and the president of the railroad can kiss my arse."

He returned to the platform to await the inevitable appearance of Hobbes, but when he didn't appear and the conductor said the train was leaving with or without a Pinkerton on board, he boarded.

Hobbes' immediate impulse, upon discovering that the police were not chasing him after all, was to kick himself for not holding Spencer a moment longer; and not taking his gun when he'd had the chance made him want to kick himself again. Knowing, however, that even if the police would not come after him, Spencer might, induced him to take stock of the situation. He saw immediately that, if he could surprise him, he could disarm him; and if he could disarm him, he could take him prisoner again, but he could not surprise him on the platform; he would have to lure him somehow, but that seemed futile as he watched his attempts to enlist assistance. He waited, hoping for an opportunity to create something, but knew he had little time and watched as that little dwindled, until he was forced to resign himself to the fact that he had failed and must return to the train and, knowing Spencer would do the same, try again.

It was a simple matter, while Spencer was engaged with the engineer, to detour to the rear of the train, where Locke was waiting to open the door; and the moment it was open he muttered, "I failed. Damn me, I failed." Asked with a look what had happened, he replied with a gesture of disgust.

"Then where is he?"

"No doubt about to board the train at the front. I must go." When he reached Tommy at the front of the car (the position he'd assumed the moment Hobbes had ushered Spencer off the train), he passed him with barely a glance—for which, in any case, there was no need, since Tommy could clearly read the situation from the look on his face. In fact, he did meet Spencer, hurrying down the aisle in hopes of reaching the last car, but the look on Hobbes' face told him he would not get there, and as if by arrangement the pair resumed their previous seating arrangement as the train jerked forward.

For a long time they sat in silence, affecting to completely ignore each other while in fact remaining alert to the slightest movement, the latter completely unnecessary for two reasons: First, what could either do at this point? Second, they were both too dejected to even think of what they might do. The train had stopped and started three times before Spencer asked, out of the blue, "Before this is over, is one of us going to have to kill the other?" He said it quietly, not conversationally, more the way parishioners might ask advice of their minister, except that he did not turn toward Hobbes in the slightest, rather he spoke straight ahead, as if into a void; and Hobbes took his time to reply.

"Is she worth killing for?"

"At this point, more than her is at issue."

"Does it have to be?"

"I think it does."

"'Civil dissension is a viperous worm, that gnaws the bowels of the commonwealth.'"

Spencer's eyes fairly bugged out of their sockets. "You quote Scripture to me?"

"Shakespeare. Never learned Scripture."

"You quote Shakespeare?"

"I got it from a traveling troupe, years ago, during the war. It stuck with me. Have you heard of him?"

"What kind of monster are you?"

"Be careful how you address a savage, for once enraged, there is no telling what hellish act he might commit."

"I do not fear you."

"Yet you show every indication of it. For myself, I would claim the same, though I admit I despise you." Spencer sneered

with contempt. "When the war ended, I resolved to put killing behind me. Now here we are in another war, a different kind, but with the nation no less divided and hostile. Therefore, perhaps you are right that one of us will have to kill the other."

"Who are you to speak of a divided nation, when you do not even belong to it?"

Hobbes breathed deeply. "Last year, for once we scored a great victory when the arrogant fool who led a cavalry charge against our women and children allowed his forces to be outflanked. He was mourned as a tragic hero."

"Custer? So?"

"That too is a civil war, one so embedded in the national project that only the victims care about it."

"Why do you people not just forsake your primitive ways and take up farming?"

"Stubborn, I guess."

"Why do you laugh? What is wrong with you?"

Hobbes laughed as long as he could, till inevitably it came to an end and there was Spencer, and Hobbes could not stand the look in his eyes. "When did you become a predator of sixteen-year-old girls?"

Spencer winced, but did not retreat. "Do you think you people are equal to us?"

"Not one bit."

"Truly?"

"I consider it certain."

"I must confess, it is interesting to hear you acknowledge that."

Despite his intention, Hobbes smiled. "Has no one till now told you that my race is superior to yours?"

"The problem with this country is that we insist on pretending people are equal, when it is a scientific fact—aside from being obvious—that the opposite is the case. It mixes everything up, you see. Before you know it, people are given food they have not earned, just because they are hungry. Why are they hungry? Because they will not work. I say we owe them nothing."

"Even those who cannot work?"

"It is a hard notion, I confess, but science tells us they must perish and make way for the more fit. Therefore the sooner they do it, the better for the rest of us—and them, too."

"And that parchment that declares all men are created equal?"

Spencer recalled what his boss had said. "It is a fine phrase, no doubt, excellent for founding a great republic, but... so much hogwash."

"I will never tolerate your America."

"I will never tolerate yours. I invite you to leave, especially as you are not truly part of it."

Later, Moody appeared and, finding the two silently staring straight ahead, startled them both when he asked Hobbes if he could briefly take his place, and to his quizzical look replied, "I would like to engage our friend in conversation."

Hobbes considered the request, turned to Spencer to whisper, "If you make the slightest move toward your gun, I will shoot you in the head," and vacated his seat.

Moody settled himself, politely greeted Spencer, who replied in the same manner, and said mildly, "Much has occurred since we first met. So far, thank the Lord, no one has been injured, at least not physically, and my hope is that, through earnest discussion, you and I might be able to discover a resolution to what appears to be an irreconcilable difference of opinion. May I continue?" Spencer nodded, or rather half-nodded, half-shrugged. "I am hoping I might induce you to acknowledge the impropriety of your... affection for a certain person."

"I see nothing improper in it."

"She is but sixteen."

"I am but thirty-four."

"Old enough to be her father."

"Young enough to be her husband."

"In another place and time, perhaps. May I ask, do you truly see yourself in that role? Walking with her in public and everyone assuming she is your daughter—or else being scandalized?"

"How old was the Virgin Mary when Joseph married her?"

"Another place and time, as I said. Further, Joseph knew for a certainty that he was not the father of her baby. There is, of course, only one way..."

"You mistake me, Mister Moody, that is you mistake the full import of my mission. I do not chase a girl, I chase three dangerous tramps who present a clear and present danger to the railroad, and that includes the safety of its passengers, the security of their possessions in transit, and its own property. You think I

would undertake this difficult mission, endure this ordeal, in pursuit of some skirt? I dare say, that is all but insulting."

"But surely you do not pretend that these three men are here for any reason other than to protect the children—children who, I might mention, have been terrified by you."

"One child, perhaps, I regret that. I will apologize in due course and make it up to her. The other is no child and is, as you yourself saw back at the station, hardly terrified."

"A soldier who displays courage in battle may be no less terrified for that. Are you a veteran, Mister Spencer? If so, you know I speak truth."

"Are—"

"I myself did not serve under colors, but as minister of the Gospel accompanied the troops."

"Did you see battle?"

"I did, yes, sir. At close hand. I think you will agree, war changes a man. Whatever else war may be—and I do not deny it is many things, nor claim it was wrong to fight for the Union—it is horrifying. There is such glib talk of it. But to my purpose: I am here to offer you my assistance."

"What assistance might I require of you?"

"Assistance in cleansing your soul. I ask you to pray with me."

"Well, now, reverend, I will frankly confess I am not much given to praying."

"I can assure you God is not offended. His grace is available to all."

"I am politely declining your offer."

"I beg you to reconsider. I have helped men die in peace, knowing that Jesus our Savior had taken their hand."

"When I am about to die, I shall be sure to engage your services."

"Do not trifle with your own salvation. It is a marvelous thing to be saved."

"I have no doubt."

"Then join with me. Take my hand, brother, and let us humbly call on Jesus."

"Perhaps another time."

"Time? God is eternal, there is only now. Call on Him now, go to Him now, take my hand, sir, I beg you, in Jesus' name."

Spencer smiled. "Now you are working me, reverend. I am

not easily worked by Bible-thumpers, nor do I take kindly to it." Suddenly he turned to Hobbes, who all this time had been waiting in the aisle just behind them, his eyes never leaving him, and said he could regain his seat; Moody, however, did not rise.

He assessed the situation and changed his tack, as follows: "Mister Spencer, may I ask what you hope to accomplish by riding with us? You claim to protect this train and its contents. How is that, exactly?"

"How do you feel about the election?"

"Excuse me?"

"The presidential election. Contested, then settled by fraud and deception. How do you feel about it?"

"Are you serious?"

"I could not be more serious."

"A most unfortunate outcome. It is perhaps for the best, though, that the Reconstruction of the South is now terminated. We can be one nation again."

"By all means, one nation. Is that what you see, one nation? Let me ask you a question, reverend, what does God want for America?"

"Excuse me, but I fail to see the relevance..."

"It is relevant."

"Then perhaps you should answer the question yourself."

Spencer did so readily. "He wants a government that safeguards liberty. That means a guarantee in law of individual rights. That means freedom to pursue one's well-being. And that means laissez-faire in political economy."

"Yes? Then?"

"Do you agree?"

"Of course I agree, as would any right-thinking American. Again I ask what is the relevance..."

"The relevance, sir, is this: If you agree, then why do you seek to thwart me?"

"My good man, surely you cannot imagine that your presence on this train has anything... I am at a loss for words."

"For a preacher, that is something of a marvel."

"I hardly think this is an appropriate time for levity."

"You and I, we are both men who have risen in the world from humble beginnings."

"Again I ask, what is the relevance?"

"We understand what is what. We are not savages."

"Yes, yes, but what, I ask you again, has this to do with the girl?" He glanced around, uncomfortable at his outburst. "Forgive me, but I come to believe you mean to provoke me."

"Every man his proper place, that is what I mean to say."

"I fail to understand what you mean to say, but I can assure you your proper place is not beside a sixteen-year-old girl, it matters not how comely she may be."

"Ah, at last, so you acknowledge your own infatuation with her."

"I acknowledge nothing of the kind, that is—!"

"Now, now, reverend, once the cat is out of the bag, there is no returning it."

Moody took a deep breath and calmed himself and spoke softly. "Mister Spencer, I have come here to pray with you for the salvation of your soul. Will you take my hand?" He raised it to be taken.

"A fool knows not where his bread is buttered."

"I regret I do not..."

Again Spencer turned to Hobbes to tell him he could take his seat and this time, with a sigh, Moody rose. Before ceding his place, however, he abruptly turned to say this: "I believe, Mister Spencer, that as we are one nation under God, we would do well to behave as one. As we reap what we sow, we earn what we deserve and we deserve what we earn, simple as that. Nonetheless, what is Jesus if not compassion? We must lift up the downtrodden."

"As Hobbes here could no doubt inform you, men are naturally belligerent, not public-spirited as Jefferson naively assumed. Without a power to keep them all in awe, we would have nothing but war, a war of all against all. That is savagery. I am for civilization. Dogs who will not heel must be whipped. Men who will not work, shall not eat, the Bible tells us that, as you well know. And a man who bites the hand that feeds him is no better than a dog and must be treated the same. That is justice."

"That is harsh, Mister Spencer. Justice must always be tempered by mercy. Moderate your extreme views and we would find ourselves in broad agreement. Now, as to the girl..."

"Then why are you with them against me instead of the reverse? Are they not our common enemy?"

"You have left me no alternative but to accept their

protection, whatever they may be. Desist from your indefensible behavior and we could be... as I said."

"Do you not see that we are engaged in a war of extinction? To ally with the enemy is treason."

"The girl, Mister Spencer, my concern is the girl."

"You are a fool, Moody."

Hobbes took his seat and the two resumed their former attitude until Tommy appeared and beckoned him to a conference in the aisle, after which they exchanged places.

"Is it now your turn to talk me off this train?"

"It is my turn to put you off this train. If I could talk you off it, I would. Is that possible?"

"Not on your life."

As had happened earlier with Hobbes, they sat in silence and never so much as glanced in each other's direction, but both remained exquisitely alert to any untoward movement. At the approach to Lancaster, luck seemed to be again with Spencer when the conductor wobbled down the aisle to announce a refreshment stop. "Conductor, a word with you," called Spencer. Tommy had no choice but to let him out to the aisle, where he exchanged whispers with the conductor; but the moment they were concluded, he also requested a word.

"I have two things to say to you," said the conductor when he was done. "The first is that I do not care for that one. I do not favor Pinkertons and I do not like his face. The second is that I do not care for you either. I do not favor tramps, and while your face looks a mite more honest than his, I have no reason to trust it, especially as I do not trust your appearance. I must look to my job, for which I am grateful, for it is what separates me from the legions of homeless and hungry, entire families, that now burden every city in this country."

"I am glad to hear you mention the homeless. As it happens, there are two homeless children on this train. They were rescued from the evil designs of this man, by a minister who now travels with them in hopes of reuniting them with a relative. My mates and I undertook to assist when we happened on a desperate scene that, had we not arrived at that moment, looked fair to turn violent, if not bloody. You need not accept my word. When you reach the rear car, speak to the reverend and satisfy yourself which side is right."

Though he was a man used to waiting hours without moving and in complete silence, he bore the wait impatiently, though it was not more than twenty minutes, and only with difficulty prevented himself from turning frequently to see if the conductor was returning. When at last he appeared, he turned to him avidly; and though the man said nothing, merely nodded, that was sufficient for both Tommy and Spencer, for the one knew he would not be obstructed and the other knew he was on his own.

Minutes later the train pulled into Lancaster and all the passengers rose at once, some because they had reached their destination, others to make the most of the precious minutes to refresh themselves. Tommy had started to push Spencer toward the exit when he cried out for help, saying he was a detective in the employ of the railroad, to which Tommy loudly proclaimed that his brother suffered from delusions. Some didn't hear, others heard and hurried away as best they could in the press for the exit, but one passenger, a large man who looked like he had spent many years behind the plow or in ship's rigging, stopped and turned and scrutinized the pair. One he saw was respectably dressed, the other he saw was not, and finding Spencer's claims credible, pulled his identification from his inside pocket, in doing which he encountered his gun. Studying the first, as though reading was not easy for him, he announced, "This looks authentic to me. His gun looks even more authentic. If my brother were a lunatic, I doubt I would allow him to carry a firearm."

"Nor I, if it were loaded," Tommy quickly replied, and when the man moved to extract the gun to check, added, "For the love of God, man, think what may happen when my poor brother sees a stranger try to take his beloved gun. Since the war, he has never been the same. I beg you to leave him intact with a bit of dignity." All the while, Spencer was arguing his case, that Tommy was a liar and a no-good tramp and telling the stranger what he should do, but the stolid man did not warm to his demanding style any more than the previous ones had; and so he withdrew, though uncertainly. His wife, who looked like her life had not been any easier than his, put a hand on his arm to let him know she agreed, and with sympathetic nods they left the carriage.

Hobbes had discreetly observed this scene from the rear, and as Tommy pushed Spencer out the front door, he exited the rear, then helped to hustle him off the platform toward a shed a short

distance along the track, and after relieving him of his gun they pushed him toward it. Meanwhile the passenger, uneasy with his decision, found the stationmaster and told him what had occurred; but the man shook his head repeatedly, saying the story made no sense. "Pinkertons cannot and do not take prisoners. And how is it there are tramps on board? If they have no tickets, the conductor would have seen them off; therefore, whatever their dress, they are paying customers. And why would an undercover detective reveal his identity? Whatever is happening, neither you nor I understand it, and my advice is to let it go. If he is really a Pinkerton he will take care of himself."

"All I know is what I saw," replied the man, "and what I saw I did not like."

Urged to consider further, the stationmaster consulted the conductor, who told him what he had learned from Moody, to which the first replied aghast, "Are you telling me a railroad detective is on this train in pursuit of a girl?"

"If you saw her," replied the conductor with a telling expression, "it would be easier to comprehend. Wait, there she is."

The stationmaster looked where the conductor was indicating with his eyes and took a good look at Cady, who was heading into the station with Moody and Abigail. "That the minister? How do we know he ain't something else?"

"I tell you this is as strange a tale as I have ever heard. Who knows where the truth lies? But there has been no disturbance on board and that is how I like it, so you do what you like, but I have advised myself not to get involved."

They had gotten Spencer into the shed and Hobbes was pulling the rope out of his sack (where Tommy had earlier transferred it) when they were interrupted by the passenger and a confederate who had met his arrival, similar in build and demeanor and both of them pointing guns. Spencer was quickly released and weapons changed hands, Spencer's to him, Tommy's and Hobbes' to the two men. "Thank you," said Spencer to Tommy, "this is borrowed and must be returned. I imagine mine is in your sack."

"I imagine yours was tossed on the track in west Philly. I imagine you could find it if you care to go look for it."

The two men searched both sacks and shook their heads. "There is a case of bullets. Want it?"

"I have all I need."

"Well, the rest is just tramp trash. What do you want with these two?"

"Tramp trash, as you say. I have no use for them, but I do need to get back on that train," and he thanked the men, called them true citizens, and left. They were considering whether to take the 'injun' and the 'injun-lover' down the track and put bullets in their heads when Locke shot the floor between their feet, and as they leaped and turned in confusion, it was easy enough to subdue them. Again weapons changed hands, and without word or glance the three raced for the station, where they found Moody waiting with the girls, all anxious. "Quick, back on board," said Tommy, but as they entered the rear carriage, Spencer was standing by the door and Abigail screamed.

Her scream was lost in the whistle and snort of the train as it pulled away from the station, so none of the seated passengers turned and none of those still getting settled looked. Locke instantly put himself in front of the girls and went straight for Spencer, when the latter, eyes wild, revealed the gun in his hand; but Locke kept advancing, even when the gun was aimed right at his face, until he was inches from the end of the barrel. "Get off the train," he whispered; in reply, Spencer cocked the trigger. "Shoot, you son-of-a-bitch, it will be the last thing you ever do." His father encircled him with his arms and pulled him away, his gaze holding Spencer's, knowing without thinking that if those eyes returned to his son and he pulled the trigger, he would strangle the Pinkerton with his bare hands and kick the corpse onto the track.

To this, not one passenger reacted, either because they did not notice or did not comprehend or did not wish to notice or comprehend; but when Hobbes pushed his son up the aisle, he brought him to everyone's attention, no less than if he had pushed him onstage. Suddenly they had before them the fascinating spectacle of a 'full-blooded Indian brave' in the magnificence of his physical beauty and wild rage; moreover nothing lay between them and his heaving chest but a few feet of undefended space. In their racing minds were flashes of blood-curdling war-whoops and scalps and unmentionable atrocities perpetrated on white women, and their eyes fell from his face to his waist in search of a tomahawk or scalping knife.

Cady and Abigail broke free of Moody to be with him—Abigail took his hand—and this only deepened the fascination, for

now he was linked to two beauties, one a child, the other no longer a child, poorly dressed yet elegant, commanding. No one had paid much attention earlier, but now the drama was universally irresistible, no matter one's age, gender, or circumstance, for now they were spectators to the classic American tale of the red savage with the white maiden. When Moody at his most polite asked a well-dressed gentleman if he would vacate his seat for a lady, something he would normally have done as a matter of course, he replied indignantly, "I say, this is most irregular, the conductor shall certainly hear of it," for he had been asked to exchange the best seat in the house for a back bench.

The spectators' rapture, in which they felt free to comment to perfect strangers, fingers over lips as though that made prurient gossip polite, distracted attention from Hobbes' return to the rear of the car, where Spencer and he silently confronted each other and with stares came to an understanding that any aggressive move would immediately be countered without regard for the proprieties of public behavior. Tommy meanwhile stood at the front of the car, where he could watch Spencer (and shoot him if necessary), and where his immobility soon induced the passengers to stop staring and reluctantly recognize that the melodrama had concluded.

Moody, who had managed to seat Abigail and himself behind him, leaned toward Locke's ear to ask if there was to be consideration of the idea mentioned earlier to have his father restrain Spencer while the others disembarked at one of the many short stops; Locke, shaking his head, said it had already been decided.

"How do you know?"

"Tommy said so."

"When?"

"A minute ago. My father and he exchanged looks."

"I do not understand."

"I know my father will have urged him to go. I saw Tommy indicate he would not."

"But I thought that was the plan if the other failed?"

"Not after what Spencer just did, in front of everyone. Tommy will not desert my father knowing his chances of besting him would be low. Do you understand? My father has only his wits, while Spencer carries the authority of law and the opinion of

the powerful."

"But that very authority and opinion... I mean to say that, in this case..."

"Reverend, if he had shot me, do you think he would have been arrested—or if arrested, convicted, or if convicted, duly punished?" Moody made no reply. "My father is forever aware that at any moment he can be challenged to defend the fact of his existence, but for others there are different rules."

Abigail and Cady had not missed a word of this, and Abigail said that the situation did not seem fair; Cady gazed at Locke and he returned her gaze until finally she said, "He might have killed you."

"He would not shoot, he is a coward."

"Is not the most frightened the most likely to shoot?" He did not answer and finally shrugged.

Tommy, seeing no alternative, took Locke with him to the rear of the car, where the three made plans within feet of Spencer, that being the only way to avoid the intrusive gazes of the passengers; and they had hardly concluded when the conductor arrived to shout, "Next stop, Harrisburg!" Passing Moody he commented, "I believe your destination is Harrisburg?" Moody nodded and he nodded and he withdrew, and the train slowed for its entry into the station.

Chapter Nine

The Harrisburg station was huge, four hundred feet long, with indoor trains, restaurants and food counters, and a luxury hotel upstairs (that even featured a kind of indoor 'water closet'), and it was crowded with travelers, even at this evening hour. As they exited the train they immediately separated into three pairs, Cady taking Locke's arm, Moody holding Abigail's hand, and Tommy with Hobbes. "Do not try to hold my hand," said Hobbes, "and I promise I will not take your arm."

"They look good together, do they not? As though they belong with each other."

"Come. This is no time for misty eyes."

Moody would have taken Abigail to a restaurant, but there wasn't time for the expansive meals they provided, and as it happened she was actually happier to buy food directly from vendors, because it was quicker and she couldn't wait. Despite the sign that said, 'No food or drink beyond this point,' they took both into the waiting room, a hall with high ceiling, and opened their supper on a bench, while in another part of the station Locke and Cady stood at a counter and ate standing, like other travelers. While the first pair spoke little because they were comfortable with each other, the second spoke little because they were not; even looking at each other was difficult.

"Have you had enough to eat?" asked Moody, when they had both finished.

"Yes, thank you."

"Are you sure? Then we will save the rest for breakfast.

Ready?" The child nodded, and again holding hands they left the waiting room and, after a delay, crossed the large central hall to exit through the main entrance, which was clogged by travelers arriving and departing and carts of luggage pushed by sweating porters, directed by officious well-dressed men in coats and tall hats even in July. The station was built of stone, with a grandiose architecture, part Venetian palace, part medieval cathedral that included two huge clock towers; and beside it the street seemed decidedly modest if not shabby, with many buildings needing paint, and at this hour nearly deserted, for the shops were closed. There were sidewalks on either side, but few people were walking them, and there was a track for a horse-drawn car down the middle of the street, but no car was in sight. For anyone looking, then, Moody and Abigail would have been unusual, walking at an unhurried yet determined pace down the street and around the corner, where the tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad crossed it.

Still in the station, Locke gathered enough courage to speak something of what was on his mind. "I cannot believe I met you just this morning. Does it seem much longer to you too?" Smiling, Cady confessed she was about to say the same thing. "Well," he ventured, "we have traversed a good part of the state together."

"It is not just that. There is something about sharing danger."

"Perhaps it is that." He was aware of men staring at her, and of how they stared at her, and was sure he could see them wondering what someone like her was doing with someone like him.

"Pay them no mind," she advised. "They all imagine I am something I am not." Beset with curiosity, he was at the point of asking her what she was, when she said, "I am a girl who escaped from an untenable situation and is trying to get her sister and herself to safety. It seems as though everyone wishes to frustrate that for their own ends."

"So you are aware of it."

"Is there a way not to be aware of it?"

He wanted to ask whether she enjoyed the attention or was annoyed by it, but swallowed his desire and remained silent; later he said, "So long as I am at your side, you need not worry."

"So long as you are at my side, I do not worry." He struggled to decide whether the slight squeeze of his arm was imaginary or real; later she said it was time to go, and when they exited the

station they turned in the direction opposite to that taken by Moody.

Tommy and Hobbes were at another counter, also eating, calm with that professional calm that defies danger while recognizing it, making small talk that belied their invariant attentiveness—an attentiveness that required them to continually scan the scene, noticing everyone. "I wonder what it is like to be them," said Tommy.

"Whom?"

"Them," he repeated, gesturing broadly.

"You mean like a regular American?" For the large station did seem like a microcosm of the nation. "Would you like to be them?"

He pondered long, then shrugged. "If you had asked me when I was a lad, I would have spat."

"But now you envy it."

"No. To enjoy a bit a comfort now and then, however, would that be a crime? But to forsake my liberty in exchange...?"

"Is that what we enjoy, liberty?"

Again he shrugged. "Surely it is a kind of liberty. Beholden only to ourselves..."

"We are not wage slaves, that much is true—but liberty, I think, is like an eel: Just when you think you have it in your grasp, it slithers through your fingers."

"When I reached a certain age, my father would sometimes talk to me about my namesake—when he talked at all. The same Thomas Jefferson who wrote, 'We were under conviction of the necessity of arousing our people from the lethargy into which they had fallen, as to passing events,' the same one wrote, 'Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should soon lack bread.'"

Hobbes smiled. "And the same Jefferson who predicted, 'Our rulers will become corrupt, our people careless,' also complained, 'If the present Congress errs in too much talking, how can it be otherwise, in a body to which the people send a hundred-fifty lawyers, whose trade it is to question everything, yield nothing, and talk by the hour? That a hundred-fifty lawyers should do business together ought not to be expected.' You see, I do listen to you from time to time."

"So it seems. And listen well. And remember."

"Have you heard this one? A banker, a railroad baron, and a

lawyer all order steaks at Delmonico's. The first sends his back because it is too rare, the second sends his back because it is too well-done, so the lawyer sends his back too. 'What is wrong with your steak?' asks the waiter. 'You see, it is like this,' he says. 'When my banking client complained that his was too rare, I thought to myself, "He is right, they are too rare." Then, when I heard my railroad client complain that his was too well-done, I said to myself, "On the other hand, anyone can see they are too well-done." But since a man of honor argues only one side at a time, I decided I would just send it back to the kitchen and let the cook figure it out.'"

They could see Spencer, as he could see them, for though it was such a large station, there were few if any places to hide, and everyone needing to eat, many were visiting the food counters. At this very moment, Spencer was at his as they were at theirs, and all three noticed immediately when Moody and Abigail emerged from the waiting room. At the same time a newsboy hawking the evening newspaper was crying out the headline, which from their distance Tommy and Hobbes could not hear, given all the chatter that filled the hall, but Spencer nearby clearly heard the cry, "Pittsburgh Strikers Freeze Railroad!" He motioned to the boy and bought a paper, quickly scanned the lead article and, folding the paper under his arm, headed for the stationmaster's office.

Tommy and Hobbes exchanged glances and Tommy set off after him, returning a short while later to blink once at Hobbes, then seemed to meander around the hall till he approached the spot where Moody, still holding Abigail's hand, seemed to be inspecting something. He passed close enough to whisper a brief message and casually returned to Hobbes, while Moody, his inspection concluded, led Abigail out of the station. Some minutes later, Locke and Cady also left, and Tommy continued to watch the door through which Spencer had passed, while Hobbes scanned the hall to make sure he didn't somehow appear from somewhere else. "What do you think?" asked Tommy.

"I think we are lucky that something besides our young lady has at last caught his attention, and at a crucial moment, for I always doubted our little diversion would succeed."

"He could be preparing some kind of trap of his own. I followed him to the railroad offices." Hobbes noted that that had been a risk from the beginning and, a minute later, saying it was

time to go, they exited through the same main doors, turned in opposite directions, and left the station entrance at the fastest pace that could be deemed casual. Around their respective corners, they quickened their paces, alert to every possibility of ambush or interception, as each made his way to the nearby railroad yard. There they expected to find the others, but did not; what they saw and heard was a violent altercation around the main gate, and it took little power of deduction to conclude that it must have something to do with the railroad strike.

Several dozen police, billy clubs swinging, charged the ragtag cluster of men who angrily defied them, some with clubs of their own, scavenged from the yard, most with their fists, and gunshots erupted, and a few men fell. Tommy and Hobbes edged closer, concerned for the others, but were soon relieved to discover them trying to make themselves as inconspicuous as possible within sight of the rendezvous point, one pair in a doorway, the other between two buildings, both hidden mainly by the waning light. Having seen Tommy and Hobbes, it was possible with hand signals for everyone to relocate to a smaller gate at a discreet location away from the main entrance.

Locke went over first, followed by the others, one by one, then Tommy led them deeper into the extensive yard, which he knew well, circumventing the tumult until they came to a large roundhouse, where the locomotives were stored. Rather than enter it immediately, however, they broke into a toolshed and watched from there to see if it was already occupied by strikers intent on preventing trains from leaving in the morning, or if any arrived, for though Tommy did not fear them, he was concerned that their presence would draw police. They could hear the fighting and heard it gradually subside, and they waited a considerable time afterward; then, confident that the police had prevailed and that therefore they need only avoid the night watchman, Tommy quickly led them across the open interval to a door in the roundhouse opposite the locomotive opening.

The yard now seemed to be the quiet place they had expected, and it was well that it was, for angry strikers and tramp sympathizers—their assessment of the brawl being that both had been present—made for a volatile assembly, even without police. Tramps especially, they knew from experience, were a mixed lot, dangerous to be among, especially if one were native American. If

there were still men in the yard and the intent was to loot, they would not be safe anywhere; if the intent was to stop rail traffic, they were not safe in the roundhouse, for occupying that would be the objective, and the roundhouse was the only defensible place in the entire yard where they could spend the night—something they had previously done, more than once.

While the others were escaping, Spencer was in the stationmaster's office to gather information about strike activity and telegraph his office in Pittsburgh; he was doing that when a teenage clerk burst in breathless to say there was a riot at the railyard. Not needing to be told that his assignment had suddenly acquired great urgency, he rushed to the scene to do what he could to frustrate the violators and collect their names. Of course he was still highly reluctant to relinquish Cady, but the moment he had seen that newspaper he knew that the risk to his career (and his personal honor) had suddenly become too great to ignore.

By the time he arrived, the police charge had subdued resistance and the officers were arresting whoever had not escaped, while those seriously hurt, including an officer, were loaded onto stretchers; all that remained to do, then, was collect names, but he quickly learned that the officers were not receptive. The typical response was, "If you have reason to know, apply yourself to the desk sergeant at the precinct," so he told the commander that, as an undercover operative in the employ of the railroad, he was in pursuit of several desperate characters known to be in the area and could not possibly leave without learning the identities of the agitators. After inspecting his credentials, he was told to tell any officer who refused him that the captain would like a word, and soon enough he had collected the names of everyone in custody, except for one who was unconscious and another in too much pain to be responsive—then he hesitated.

Having been briefly liberated from his obsession by the press of events, a chance discovery now provided an opportunity to return, for he had arrived at the yard just in time to discern in the last light the unmistakable figure of Hobbes climbing over a side gate. Assuming that as usual he was protecting the rear of the party, he concluded that they were all in the yard, hence their intent to spend the night there, possibly using strikers for protection (for it did not occur to him that, sympathies aside, the strike might impede rather than support their plans), and further concluded that

the only defensible place to try to hide all night would be the roundhouse. His hesitation was the duration of a brief inner struggle and its content was a remark made by the police captain, that they had been fortunate to contain this outburst. "The state arsenal is but a short walk from here, the city is already seething with strike fever, and there is a large tramp camp by the river. Should a cohort of rioters determine to seize weapons, I do not have the forces to stop them."

Unconsciously he licked his lips, because for the first time during this long day, he had the upper hand; and how odd, fitting in an ironic way, that it was a railroad strike that had given it to him. He had little difficulty finding the tramp camp, and certain that he need not hurry to execute his next move, he observed it from various distant points before entering. Since by this time it was dark, he saw what he could by the light of campfires and a few kerosene lanterns, but mostly he listened; not for content, however, for he was too far away to overhear conversation, rather he listened for indications of anger. Anger was his concern, for these were savages and he was about to enter their midst alone—not defenseless, to be sure, but his six shots would not hold off a raving multitude.

Anger is precisely what he overheard, and its subject was obvious, as the men who had been at the yard and escaped had returned to camp and quickly gotten into angry arguments with those who opposed their views. From what he could discern, it began to emerge that the camp was divided into two factions that had physically separated themselves, and eventually he was able to discern which side comprised those who opposed the strike. He moved closer to that side and waited for the shouting and shoving—there was not more than that—to spend itself in fatuous posturing; and when he was confident his moment had come, he stepped into an open area on the periphery of the camp and waited to be noticed. It did not take long for a knot of men to approach, slowing and spreading; yet he made no move, except to raise a hand in greeting, knowing this initial step would be the most difficult and the most dangerous. "I must let them sniff me, like dogs," he told himself.

He made no attempt to conceal his identity, not least because that would be impossible, and quickly made known his general purpose; and the man who immediately showed himself to be the

leader gestured to another, who then emptied his pockets and delivered his identification, his billfold, and his pistol. The man inspected the pistol first. "Nice piece," he drawled laconically.

"Be nice to it, it is on loan from a colleague."

The pair exchanged steady gazes before the man fixed his on Spencer's identification, then again on Spencer. "I have been up and down the line. I have been around, seen things, heard things. Never knew a railroad copper to come into a tramp camp, especially at night, for any purpose than to make trouble—and when he comes, he brings friends."

Spencer explained that he was not railroad police and had not come to make trouble, rather to enlist the services of some experienced men. "The agency that employs me pays well for its services. You have my billfold, take a look." He had left enough there to impress a tramp; the rest was inside his socks.

"We do not need your money, mister."

"Are you willing to work? I seek certain men who will work for good pay."

"'Certain men, experienced men.' That sounds to me like you think we have an easy way about the law. We are as patriotic as anybody else and do not care for any insinuation..."

The part of Spencer responsible for protecting his life relaxed at this remark, knowing he had crossed the threshold; the part of him that needed to remain mentally focused redoubled that focus. "You mistake me, sir. I require men with military experience, who will not shrink from their patriotic duty."

"So, I am to understand that an operative seeks to hire tramps, in the dead of night, to perform some act of patriotism."

"Not just that," he replied after a pause. "I have spent this long day in pursuit of three communist agitators. They have abducted a good man who tried to thwart their evil project, along with his two daughters. Two of the three are injuns. The daughters are innocent and beautiful, one a mere child, the other barely old enough for womanhood. I tremble when I imagine what two savages might want with them. Now I have them where I want them, but I cannot rescue the girls and bring the miscreants to justice myself. Am I to bid them 'good night' and let them escape because the light has faded and I am sleepy?" Deriving from their silence a tacit willingness to hear more, he told them the men he had cornered sought to foment strikes so as to spark a revolution

that would change America forever. He asked if they had heard what had just occurred at the yard and said that was nothing next to what the morrow might bring, for he himself had overheard plans to ransack the nearby armory of every weapon that could be carried, even for wheeling out cannon.

He was asked what exactly he sought from them, but before he had a chance to reply the men began to argue, and as happens with arguments, voices rose with tempers and this drew others who participated with gusto. As a result, it required only a few moments to shift and splinter and divert and confuse the issue till one had an unruly contest of opinions on the subject of what America was versus what it should be, characterized by a large mound of talking for each grain of listening. He waited, initially hopeful that the dispute would facilitate his purpose, eventually anxious that it would frustrate it, until fearing the situation would spiral out of control, he sought to reimpose his presence by intervening loudly in a hot exchange. "Gentlemen," he shouted, "I did not come here for your sage thoughts on the proper direction of the nation, I came to enlist the aid—for good wages—of sturdy men who possess the intelligence and will to help protect it from its enemies."

"Mister," shouted one of the men, "if the situation were half what you pretend, the police would certainly be after those aliens. Yet you come here..."

"Do you think such men would be free to roam our country if our institutions were adequate to the task?" Shouting erupted instantly that overwhelmed what he said next, until one voice, rising even higher than the rest, supported him with the view that persecuted Americans like them should above all be able to recognize the corruption of American politics, that the nation was in peril and it was high time for real Americans to get what was theirs. This had the odd effect of concluding the fracas, for the simple reason that every participant was convinced that the country was indeed corrupted, they were the real American, and it was high time for them to receive their due.

He was about to close the argument when a strike sympathizer, drawn by the ruckus, appeared long enough to shout, "You forgot to mention the railroad interests that, thanks to the government, create vast wealth for the few by immiserating the many. Look there for your corruption."

This started the bickering anew until, out of all patience, Spencer crossed to the man who perhaps unconsciously still held his billfold and, wresting it from his hands, raised it above his head and shouted, "If there is a man here to do honest work for honest wages in defense of the nation, let him come forward."

In the ensuing moment of confused silence, someone said, "Hold on, you still have not said what the job is."

"If you will listen for a moment, I will tell you. As I said, I have been on the track of three desperate characters. They are now holed up for the night in the roundhouse. Why there of all places? Because obviously their plan is to cause mayhem when the strikers return in the morning."

"What do you want us to do about it?"

"Help me take them into custody."

"How?"

"By whatever means become necessary."

"I believe you mean at gunpoint."

"That is why I need stalwart men, men with military experience." Few if any were convinced that there was a situation requiring their involvement; in addition, the bizarre circumstances of his appearance, combined with the vagueness of his story, fed suspicion to people already amply furnished with it. This he could plainly see, and was at the point of reverting to his normal behavior, which was to invoke the authority of his employer to order men to do his bidding, when he saw an alternative that might be more effective: He told them he was not actually certain that Moody was Cady's father, that that might have been a ruse.

"Are you suggesting he is a pander and the girl is willing?"

"Who could say whether it is the desperate circumstances of the times or a depraved case of easy virtue, for I cannot say for certain whether that innocent look of hers was honest or fake. Either way, it angers me, sir, no, disturbs me, troubles my very soul to think of her willingly giving herself to those... One of the redskins is a great brute of a man, another his son whom he tutors in his barbaric ways." In his mind he saw Cady arm in arm with Locke, smiling at him, flirting... It infuriated him to recall how she had paraded her charms before another man, doubly to know who it was. "Do you think I would have chased them all the way from Philadelphia without good reason? I have had the vision of what could befall these helpless girls constantly before my eyes. And the

worst: The leader of these savages is a white man, a traitor to his race." Seeing the reaction this produced, he was pleased with his performance—he felt inspired—and when the first man came forward, he was at pains not to grin.

Others soon followed, one asking how much he would pay, another when they would leave; he asked for the return of his gun and only then did he smile.

The roundhouse, as the name indicated, was a circular building, the most efficient way to house a multitude of locomotives in a railroad yard, consisting of a large ring, one story, roofed and walled on the outside but open to the interior. The uncovered area inside the ring was occupied by tracks that connected each stall to a massive turntable that made it possible to receive a locomotive from any point on the circle and redirect it to any other point. As noted, there were only two openings in the structure, a large one at the front for the locomotives and a door at the rear for the men. Although there were windows around the exterior, the crash of shattering glass would announce any intruder, thus in effect it was open only on the inside, a unique feature among the many buildings in the yard; and this, plus its circularity, made it easier to defend.

On the other hand, its interior exposure made it wide open, should anyone successfully gain it; but this, as Hobbes and Tommy reasoned, was true of any building, meanwhile there was no place there for an intruder to hide. He would be exposed from practically every angle, while the multitude of tracks made it difficult to run; yet it was also true that, in this building like the others, there were few if any good places to hide. This had not mattered on the prior occasions when the tramps had spent a night there—the yard itself being privacy enough—and they hoped the same would be true this time. In a moment when the girls were out of hearing, Moody asked if Tommy really believed Spencer might have traced their retreat and might arrive with a posse of confederates, and Tommy had only enough time to whisper that, as they could not be certain it would not happen, they must prepare as though it would, adding, "This is a spot that stout courage might hold."

Locke left to guard the rear door, Hobbes to surveil the opening at the front, each with his gun and a box of cartridges (which was emptied into pockets), also a combat knife, also a length of pipe found in the shed where they had waited earlier.

This they had not done before. Abigail said nothing, but was visibly scared, and Cady, hiding her own fear, tried to reassure her, as did Moody (who hid his own), while Tommy, affecting nonchalance, said no one should be concerned about the precautions being taken, which were done as a matter of course. "Some people do not like Indians," he said, "but you will be safe here."

Moody drew him aside to request a gun, which shocked him, and he asked if he knew how to use one. "You forget that I have gone into battle."

"Armed only with a bible, as I understand."

"The Lord helps those who help themselves. Then we were many, now we are few. If you have a gun to spare, I assure you I know how to use it."

"But I do not have a spare. Believe me when I say that." Their relationship, while courteous, was not friendly, for they stood—and each knew that they stood—on opposite sides of the issues of the day.

"Then I will use my own."

"You are armed?" Tommy's surprise was unfeigned.

"More or less," replied Moody, pulling a small Remington-Elliot pistol from an interior pocket. "Ironic," he continued. "I saw no reason to carry one during the war, yet these days I do."

"That is more than irony."

"On that we can agree. It seems you know this place well."

"You could call it something of a hotel for the likes of us."

"Not a tramp camp? Surely there is one nearby."

Tommy stared before replying. "When there are Indians in your party, tramps do not always offer a cordial welcome."

They agreed that Moody would stay with the girls, leaving Tommy free to circulate as need be. It had been decided to position them near the front, partly to be near Hobbes, partly to be near the opening, should there be a need and opportunity to escape. Cady was hoping Abigail, who had to be exhausted despite her nap on the train, would fall asleep so she could furnish herself with a weapon of her own. She had never fired a gun and shuddered at the very idea of using a knife, but a pipe, if need be... As the last of the light disappeared, she arranged a bed of sorts for Abigail. "You should sleep, too," said Moody.

"As should you. Reverend. I cannot thank you enough, for..."

"There is no need to thank me. I go where the Lord sends me.

Besides," he added in a rare moment of attempted, if failed, levity, "I believe you did thank me."

Chapter Ten

Rather than sleep, Abigail asked Moody if she could eat the food he had saved from supper, and wordlessly he gave it to her, then Cady and he watched with suppressed astonishment as she consumed the whole pile. Partway through, she offered to share, but neither could take a bite, and when she had finished, she decided to return Locke's lucky charm. "But why?" asked Cady. "It was a gift."

"And now I want to give it to him." She thought of several replies, but in the end simply turned to Moody, who gently declared he would take it to him. "Return quickly, okay?" He nodded and stroked her cheek, then she dug out the coin and he left.

"No harm will come to us," said Cady.

"I know," she replied.

When he returned, Tommy whispered that, in the event of an attack, he was to rush the girls into the cab of the nearest locomotive, and Moody stared, unable to catch his eyes, and replied, "I have not once seen you anxious all this long day."

"Nor am I now," he snapped, "but such flowers, though so sweet, were never made for the wilderness, and I have promised to keep them from harm."

"Rather than hazard an open fight, why would he not go straight to Pittsburgh, to wait for her there? That, after all, is the result we labored all day to prevent."

"He might do just that or fear losing our trail forever—or his obsession robs him of clarity. We hope to have eluded him, but cannot be certain."

"He could simply watch the station in the morning."

"Which is how he knows we will not return there. We will seek an outgoing freight—in either direction."

"But the strikers..."

"They are a problem for us, an ironic twist, after my mates and I have yearned for precisely this for so long. Sad to say, we must hope it is not entirely successful, that is not yet."

"And if it is?"

"We will have to see. We can always walk again."

When they had been nearing Harrisburg and planning their exit from the station, Locke had wanted to accompany Cady, of course, but his father had insisted that he do it, knowing that, if Spencer came after anyone, it would be her. Tommy, however, noted that his attempt to flee the station with Cady all but certainly would be misinterpreted by a bystander or policeman with dangerous consequences, therefore he, Tommy, must be the one to accompany her; but Locke claimed that that too would look suspicious, and no one could deny it, therefore it must be him. Such was his recollection, repeated over and over as he sat alone in the dark and imagined how he would have defended her against a variety of assaults. Always he saw her face, turned slightly upward toward his, always he wondered if it could be possible for them to... Did she even like him? 'She seems to like me,' he mused. 'She said she feels safe with me. That alone is extraordinary. On the other hand, she is not my kind. She could marry a rich man and live in a mansion on a new street. What kind of life could I provide? Yet she feels safe with me.'

At the same time, Hobbes was sitting alone across the circle and his thoughts ran as follows: 'If, as Thomas Hobbes claimed over two centuries ago, the natural human condition is war of all against all, and the desired social condition is to voluntarily relinquish the "right to all things" on condition that everyone else do the same, thereby to achieve peace and security, then what is incumbent upon us when the social contract disintegrates? The principle of the structure is mutual interdependence, which requires goodwill and trust; when these are fractured, where is a new stability to be sought and what means can be applied? It is plain that my son loves her, loves her with all the mad devotion that only youth can assert. It is equally plain that he loves her sister and vice versa, but what is not plain is what the girl herself feels for my boy.

Further, what would it matter if she did love him, given that their love is illicit and thus impossible? What should a father do, when he sees his son rushing toward heartbreak, like a boat caught in a current that lurches toward a great falls?'

He sighed repeatedly until his thoughts, another kind of boat in a current, continued. 'In that lecture on political economy, I learned that Hobbes found property to be the motivation for society, and liberty to be the rights necessary to hold and enjoy property, and that John Locke subsequently adopted this scheme, followed by Jefferson and the others. I come from a people that does not recognize property; yet, after they killed my wife, I named myself Hobbes and my son Locke and took him on a voyage to discover America. Today, a century from the founding, the rights of property have been settled, but the shift from land ownership and self-employment to rent and industrialism has given rise to a new need and a new right, the need to survive and the right to a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. The debate, however, which now is little short of war, has gone far beyond that to question how we should live and what we should value. I do not fear what I see on men's faces when they look at me; I fear what I see on my son's face when he looks at the girl.'

Cady was reassuring her sister as best she could, and herself at the same time, when Abigail called to Moody to request a hymn, and it was with a touch of sadness he could not dissemble that he replied softly, "Gladly would I comply, but it is best we remain quiet."

"Then let us sing quietly."

As he looked at her, neither could he dissemble his feelings for this brave little girl, whom God had evidently sent to him, though for what purpose he could not yet say, and he nodded with a gentle smile. "Is there one you would prefer?"

"Sing your favorite."

"My favorite, let me see... Here is one you might like. Shall I teach you the refrain?" She nodded.

Silently, peacefully, angels have borne her,
into the beautiful mansions above;
there shall she rest from earth's toiling forever,
safe in the arms of God's infinite love.

In fact the lyrics referred to 'he,' not 'she,' but in the circumstances he spontaneously made the change. They repeated it together, and

the third time Cady joined. When they had added all three verses, Abigail announced that she liked the second the best and asked if they could sing it again.

"The second verse?"

"No, the entire hymn." Not for a moment did she release her grip on her sister's hand. The second verse went as follows:

> Out of the shadowland, weary and changeful,
> out of the valley of sorrow and night,
> into the rest of the life everlasting,
> into the summer of endless delight.

When Tommy overheard them, he moved closer to hear more clearly and watch and then could not leave, as unconsciously he gradually relaxed, as memories of childhood sailed past like clouds, and it was as though raindrops fell from those clouds as tears ran from eyes that had long been dry.

After the silence that followed the last note, Moody whispered, "Now you must try to sleep, dear Abigail. Dawn is many hours away and will no doubt bring another long day. And you too, Cady—may I call you that? You have done all that a sister could and must now seek rest for yourself." To his surprise, her face began to work and tears appeared and she turned to him with an expression of the deepest guilt. "I am so sorry!" she exclaimed, though still whispering.

"Sorry? You have no apology to make to me, I assure you."

"I do, I do! I lied, Reverend Moody. I lied to you and then the others, and all this danger is my fault."

"Calm yourself, child, you—"

"The truth is that we fled an orphanage. It was all my idea, and now I see how completely foolish it was, and..."

"Hush, child, please calm yourself." Hastily he produced a handkerchief for her to dry her tears, and after she did he said, "Had you escaped a cruel aunt, would your situation be any different?"

"I should not have run at all!"

"Even from such a horrid place as an orphanage?"

Abigail, who had only just released her hand, took hold anew. "Please do not cry, Cads, for if it is anyone's fault, it is mine."

"If it is anyone's fault," said Moody, "it is mine. I knew there was something wrong with that man and yet I let you stay in his hotel. But for that, all of this might have been avoided. So I beg

you, say no more about the orphanage, unless it be to praise your courage, both of you. Otherwise, I shall have to punish myself and, well, who knows what penance the Lord might prescribe?" Oddly, Abigail found something amusing in this—perhaps she imagined him mopping floors at the orphanage—and giggled; and Cady, seeing this, smiled, and then Moody, turning from one to the other, nodded with considerable warmth. "Now, you must sleep, both of you. Three good and experienced men watch over you and I have pledged to do the same."

They made themselves as comfortable as possible, in a place and in circumstances that were strangers to comfort, and hours passed. The moon approached its zenith and shed its mild light on the lovely sight of the sisters slumbering peacefully in each other's arms. Of the four vigilant protectors who remained awake and alert, whether to silence or sounds, to darkness or moonglow, three reclined as best they could in concealed positions; only Tommy refused to remain seated, but instead rose at frequent intervals to patrol the circle, a fixed expression of determination on his face and, for a reason best known to himself, guilt.

So the night passed, until the moon set and a pale streak made the turntable at the open center of the roundhouse barely visible, while the locomotives in their stalls yet lay in darkness. Tommy signaled that it was time to leave to Moody, who then gently awakened the girls, and they, half awake, began to gather their few things. Watching them, he was suddenly stricken with doubt about his decision to wait till dawn, whose first hint seemed to illuminate their vulnerability, for he knew that, if Spencer was out there with a posse, that is when he would attack and he had stupidly led his charges into a trap. He could have awakened them an hour earlier, when they could hope to escape in the dark; but then, he reminded himself, they could no more have seen Spencer than he could see them and might have run into him at either exit, or if they had somehow broken a window in complete silence, might have found the entire place surrounded. Then the night watchman rang the first bell to awaken workers, and though it was a good distance away, to Tommy it sounded particularly loud.

Locke and Hobbes both appeared, and the three had just enough time to exchange nods when a war whoop was heard, loud and close and immediately joined by a tumult of yells and cries, all imitating the imagined way of Indian warriors, that filled the

roundhouse for nearly a minute. Less time than that was required for the two to race back to their positions, guns already in their hands, and for Moody to push the girls into the cab of a nearby locomotive and order them to stay down, while Tommy watched from a distance, exposing himself till he had ascertained they were safe.

They had positioned themselves so as to make the most of the defensive capacity of the structure. Locke had spent the night near the rear door, opposite the locomotive entrance, with Hobbes adjacent to it. Not far from him were the girls, positioned to reduce their exposure to the opening, with Moody farther around the circle at the midpoint between the two entries, which gave him good sightlines and the girls protection at close range on both sides. Tommy was across the circle from Moody and patrolled a good portion of that section, which enabled him to watch any approach to the girls and gave him a direct shot across the courtyard. Locke had a good sightline on the girls and the best one on the main entrance, though at longer range, while Hobbes had no shot at all till an assailant penetrated the opening—the defect of the arrangement—but it was deemed best to place him there anyway because no one would take him by surprise.

Spencer's recruits had arrived during the night and, war veterans all, waited for first light. All carried guns and knives as a matter of course and most had clubs of some sort (those who did not found weapons in the yard), and accustomed both to battle and tramp camps, they slept well. Only Spencer, accustomed to neither, slept poorly, but a more serious problem had arisen when the men arrived expecting to hear sounds of debauchery, whereas the roundhouse, indeed the whole yard, was dead quiet, and some wondered out loud if they had been duped. Confronted with a potentially dangerous situation, he fluidly reverted to his alternate tale, that Moody and his daughters were held hostage.

When Moody had deposited the girls and was running to a nearby stall, he drew fire from men too possessed by the hysteria of battle to evaluate the fact that he was not dressed like a tramp and therefore was probably the man supposedly held hostage. More from shock than training, he fell to the raised floor of the building, where he lay briefly stunned; then, finding himself shielded by a nearby locomotive, he collected his wits and fairly leaped into the cab. There he noted that, whereas the bullets kept

flying from the entrance, there was no reply, and so he too held his fire, especially important in his case as his 'Pepperbox' held only five shots and he had no more bullets.

Despite the heavy iron walls of the cabs, the tramps preferred the raised floor, which made a kind of platform where they were partially shielded by locomotives, while affording mobility and better sightlines. Tommy had moved toward Locke, so as to get a better view of the entrance, and though no one ventured to enter, when someone exposed himself to try for a better shot, he fired and the man collapsed with a shriek of agony. At this the assailants withdrew, and the place became as still as before the sudden tumult.

Disgusted by this initial skirmish, Spencer harangued his hirelings to impress them that they had only a limited time to effect their purpose, because soon the yard would fill with men; in reply he was asked if the man they had shot at was supposedly the hostage. "I guess he is with them after all," he replied, and it never occurred to any of them to simply ask Moody, who was within earshot. "Spare any of them at your peril, but the girls are not to be harmed, is that clear?" Soon afterward the corpse was dragged to a nearby shed, and moments later, after more yelling from Spencer, five men charged into the roundhouse and immediately sought cover.

Three were shot, but two managed to reach stalls, one not far from the girls, and Tommy, out of his mind, leaped down from the ledge and raced across the turntable, drawing fire as he went, and miraculously not struck, engaged a man not so much taller as more heavily muscled. His madness, however, equalized their relative menace, as each grabbed the other's knife arm and they grappled for advantage, until served by an incalculable combination of luck and ferocity, Tommy was able to free his knife arm and stab the other in the heart. At the same time, Hobbes was searching with his pistol for the other man, who having turned in the opposite direction, was not far from Tommy's original position and, having gained the platform, was working his way around the circle, checking every locomotive. When he discovered Locke charging him, his eyes as wild as Tommy's, he fired, but the pistol's chamber was empty and he barely had time to pull his knife before the youth was upon him.

Locke soon disarmed him, his knife falling noisily on the

concrete platform, and then commenced a fierce struggle over who should cast the other over the edge, each successive struggle bringing them nearer to the rim until they tottered on it. His throat progressively squeezed, Locke saw the grimace of a man reduced by fury and terror to savagery in that final moment before, losing his footing under the younger man's desperate pressure, he fell backward. It was a fall of only five feet, but his head struck the locomotive, and Locke, jumping after him, saw immediately that he was dead.

The sight of his son hastening back to his position was what informed Hobbes that he was still alive. Moody, meanwhile, had gone to Tommy's aid, but was afraid to fire into what seemed a single writhing mass, and then it was over, and he was staring at the corpse with a long knife in its chest when he was ordered back to his position. Only after the eerie silence inside the roundhouse that effectively reported the results of the assault was there a hail of fire that conveyed more anger than danger; nonetheless, Hobbes' concentration never wavered and even the slightest exposure of flesh brought a bullet from his gun. Eventually even that ended and what followed was an anxious watch that lasted until the bell sounded again to announce the opening of the yard.

During that interval everyone was tense, both inside the roundhouse and out, especially the girls, who were terrified. Instructed to keep their heads down, no matter what happened, and too frightened to raise them in any case, all they knew was what they could determine from sounds, and that was little. Moody hoped that the deadly consequences of the first attack would prevent another, but knowing the ferocity of Spencer's obsession and deprecating the general dedication of tramps to reason, he knew he must expect that it would come. As for Spencer, he was in a state of high agitation.

He knew that, even after losing six men, his forces still outnumbered their adversaries, for he had been generous in his recruitment and in the end many had eagerly enlisted; yet they refused to make another charge, they simply refused, despite his ferocious accusations that they had taken good money. In fact, though they had negotiated for payment in advance, it had been staunchly resisted, so no one had been paid, and uppermost in everyone's mind at this point was that the only ones who would get paid would be the survivors. When the bell sounded, he became

almost berserk with rage that his opportunity had probably been lost; whereas in contrast, Tommy, Hobbes, and Locke greeted it with relief for the same reason, and each began to ponder an escape.

To prevent precisely that, Spencer ordered his men to surround the roundhouse, an order they were willing to execute, as it was far less risky than a direct assault—and sustained the possibility that they would get paid. They were directed to act like workmen and, if challenged, to claim they'd been hired by the railroad to prevent looting. No sooner were they deployed than the yard men began to arrive and disperse to their work sites, but among them were strikers determined to occupy the roundhouse; when they reached it, however, they found three corpses lying on the tracks.

When no one recognized any, they decided they were tramps, maybe ones who had assisted them the previous evening, and suspected the police planted them to blame their deaths on strikers. Not knowing what else to do, they dragged them into stalls and rolled them under locomotives, thereby discovering one of the other bodies, the one Tommy had stabbed. He had retrieved his knife, but the gaping wound and splatter of blood made it pretty certain that this was not the work of the police and it made them very nervous. A corpse in an alley would not have awakened much concern, maybe not even in the yard, but when there were four of them... Tommy was at the point of emerging, to explain what had happened in hopes of enlisting their aid, when shouting was heard at the entrance.

If there were a dozen strikers, there were three dozen counter-strikers, some of them fellow workers, others vigilantes from the community, self-appointed to 'preserve the peace' and 'teach agitators a lesson.' Fighting immediately erupted as they rushed into the roundhouse yelling epithets, several wearing their Civil War uniforms, and one even with his saber. Weighing the decisive difference in numbers against an equality of mutual hatred, there could be no question which side would prevail, and the strikers were soon beaten to the ground and kicked—not too soon, however, for Spencer to seize the opportunity. If he immediately realized it was now impossible for his adversaries to use their guns, he himself could not have said; but what he certainly knew—more accurately, sensed—was that victory was now within his grasp, and

so it was half hysterically that he raced around the roundhouse to gather his force and lead them into the fray.

Reflexively, however, they merely joined the fight, rather than pursue their objective. "Not them, you idiots!" he screamed, but by this point few had any stomach for risking their lives in what had proved to be a far bloodier struggle than they had anticipated. There were two, however, so enraged against 'communists' that they diverted from the fight to penetrate the stalls, and one of them discovered Tommy. With a scream, perhaps pure reflex, perhaps to give himself courage, he charged, club at the ready, a short but heavy, solid iron tie-rod for the 'truck,' the wheel assembly of a locomotive, which had proven its effectiveness on more than one occasion. A single blow to the head would kill a man.

Tommy had seen him approach and readied himself, his own club a length of pipe he had found on his way to the roundhouse, which not being solid was lighter than a tie-rod, but longer. Few men, he knew, in an actual fight to the death fought with much cleverness. Before, they might brag about the techniques they had developed to trick an opponent into opening a vulnerable area; after, they might reconsider what they could have done differently; but at the time, when there was no thought and death rewarded the smallest mistake, they usually went straight forward. Charging with the club raised above his head alerted Tommy that this time would be no exception. For his part, he knew ways to parry a downward strike, but surest was not to rely on precise timing, rather a simple block; and so, as the rod came down, the pipe went up, held by both hands.

The initial attack neutralized, both men stepped back to bring their weapons forward and eyed each other and feinted as each probed for possible weaknesses. The second man, who had run into the stalls at some distance from him, Tommy had not seen, and he silently approached his rear; and he too held a long iron bar, and when he got within range he raised it above his head. At that moment there was the sound of a single shot and he fell dead.

When the falling body struck Tommy, it communicated to his senses that he could not step back in the event of need, which triggered the command to attack. His forward motion instantly caused his adversary to step back and this started a pattern; and that, combined with the psychological impact of a single pistol shot, arriving from an unknown source and lethal in its accuracy,

sapped the man's courage before he even knew it, and he discovered himself running for his life.

The shot had had an equally dramatic effect on the fifty or more men who were beating each other with all their strength and will, until they suddenly stopped to look for the hidden gunman. They knew his general direction, but no one took a step toward him, because none of the counter-strikers knew whose side he was on, meanwhile he was nearby and no doubt had more bullets; and Spencer's recruits had had enough from Hobbes' pistol. The strikers, bloodied and bruised, seized the opportunity, whether from thought or sense, to run away, and the others, whether from thought or sense, let them go.

The counter-strikers now knew there were men hiding in the stalls, men whose number, loyalty, and purpose were uncertain. It seemed likely that they were 'good' workers who had hidden when the strikers arrived, for if they were strikers, why had they not joined the fight on their side—but then, why were they still hiding? That thought shifted attention to Spencer's men, for there had been two of them, it was now noted, who had charged the stalls, who therefore had known there were men there, and no doubt who they were and what their purpose was; and they asked what was going on and Spencer quickly found everyone staring at him. He was too stunned to reply, though, which left no doubt that something odd, if not suspicious, was occurring, and again gazes surveyed the stalls.

"Who are you?" called one, not loudly, but loud enough in the prevailing quiet; but there was no reply, and everyone began to feel distinctly vulnerable, and it was at least half spontaneously that they decided to consider the situation outside of gun range. For Spencer's men too, the last killing had eliminated any remaining will to fight, and they followed, leaving Spencer acutely aware that he was alone in the middle of the roundhouse, with Hobbes no doubt aiming at him.

Outside, the mass naturally resolved into its three groups of railroad men, vigilantes from town, and tramps, each debating how they could attack the roundhouse without getting killed; but eventually the first two rejoined to address the third. Whereas little attention had been paid to this scruffy band when they joined the fight, now the counter-strikers wanted to know who they were and why they had enemies in the stalls—and who was this officious

commander who was frantically, yet imperiously, ordering them to reverse their 'tactical retreat?' Spencer did not shrink from this scrutiny; on the contrary, he saw his destiny in becoming the general commander, thus he enlarged his exhortation to include everyone by emphasizing their common interests in suppressing the strike, dispersing agitators, and rescuing hostages, especially innocent girls caught in crossfire.

The moment the attackers retreated, Tommy, Locke, and Hobbes saw the opportunity it offered, and each signaling to the others, they ran around the circle to the locomotive where the girls were still cowering. Moody, signaled to release them, also saw the near certainty that the men outside would attack again, that they were far too numerous to resist and unlikely to grant safe passage, especially with Spencer present, and that therefore they must flee. While the girls were greatly relieved to find no one hurt, a relief Moody shared, the others were bitter about their defeat, and the irony was not lost on them that it was a strike that defeated them. They were also bitter that the strikers had been routed, by their own fellows who could not find their self-interest even when it was right before them, and by tradesmen who found collective action so threatening that they preferred to see children go hungry.

The girls' relief turned to distress, however, when told they must run, especially Abigail, and Moody's relief, too, quickly faded. "Let me try to reason with him," he suggested.

"You already have," replied Tommy. "We have seen with what success."

"Let me try again. Given the risk... Men have been killed over this."

"Did you not tell us he said this was not just about a girl? You have seen proof of that."

"Still, it seems terribly risky to run. With a nine-year-old girl?"

"It seems more risky to stay."

"Do you really think...?"

"After we have killed half their number, what do you think? As for the girls..." Knowing Cady was not missing a word, Tommy substituted the rest of the sentence with a meaningful look, which he hoped only Moody would notice.

"You are right, we must flee, and at once. Girls!"

Cady, however, shook her head. "No, Mister Moody, take my sister."

"I shall."

"I mean only her. You have all done more already than I could ever... You say the issue has become larger than me. Nonetheless if I stay... Please, save my sister and save yourselves."

Locke shook his head. "I will die to keep you safe."

Tommy added, "It is better for a man to die at peace with himself than to live haunted by an evil conscience."

It was Hobbes who saw the possibility of a rescue. "The girls are safe for now. If we stay, we can do nothing; but if we leave, we can come for them."

"Wherever they are, you mean."

Moody agreed. "Have no fear," he told the girls, "I will be at your side the whole time." Tommy thought briefly, then nodded, and even Cady failed to notice that Abigail was close to hysteria.

"Stay sharp for a sign from us," counseled Hobbes, and to Moody added, "Watch over them, they are precious."

"Do not despair," said Tommy, "we will come. Of that, never doubt," but Locke hesitated.

"Come, son, there is not a second to waste. You will see her soon, I swear," but still he hesitated.

"Locke will stay," he announced calmly.

"To increase the horror of our capture and to diminish the chances of our release! Go, generous young man." Cady lowered her eyes before his desperate gaze, as the settled, calm look of the youth changed to gloom and uncertainty.

"Have no fear, Locke," said an unknown voice, "I will stand beside Cady and Abigail through their trial, or like you, give my life to the effort." Before anyone had time to register more than astonishment, a man appeared from a neighboring stall, of middle age and dressed in the uniform of an army major, calm but with hands raised as a precaution. "My name is Burke, Major Burke, regimental staff officer to Colonel Smith, father to these girls, whom I have been desperately tracking since they left the orphanage the evening before I arrived to bring them home." There was so much to digest from this sentence that everyone remained stunned, yet on the other hand it was immediately obvious that the man must be legitimate; and seeing this, Burke slowly lowered his hands. "A full explanation must attend a more appropriate time. Right now you need know only that I made a solemn promise to their father, before his death, to protect these

girls, a promise I have so far failed to keep but now shall fulfill. Therefore I will stay with them and protect them with my life."

The look on both girls' faces confirmed that the facts concerning them were true, and Abigail had already lost that hysterical fear, whereas Cady, with her experience of men, could not banish all doubt. Moody reassured her that, if he was any judge of character, she could trust this man, and reminded her that he too would stay with them, come what may.

"I picked up the girls' trail in Philadelphia and have been tracking you ever since," said Burke, automatically addressing himself primarily to Tommy. "The lucky chance of vigilantes in uniform enabled me to infiltrate the group and then use the confusion of battle to slip unseen into a stall."

Tommy, who like the others, could not comprehend how all three could have failed to detect him, replied, "Between there and there, much occurred."

"The telling of which, as noted, must wait till we are reunited. Do not berate yourselves that your attentions were appropriately concentrated on all the dangers."

"Yet I must ask how a man like you, who would be expected to naturally assume we were the villains, not he who pursues us, came to the correct conclusion."

"Indeed, it was not easy and did not come quickly—else I would have proffered assistance earlier. Certainty came only when I saw you take the crazy risk of running across the open center, taking fire from every hostile gun, to intercept a man in close combat who was about to assault my charges."

"You—"

"I watched through a window. Now I beg you to make haste, for..."

"Then it was your bullet that saved Tommy's life." Burke nodded at Hobbes.

"I just assumed it was yours, brother, and was planning to thank you—again."

"I had no shot."

"Then," said Tommy to Burke, "I not only owe you my gratitude for helping us see these girls to safety, but my life as well. I am in your debt, sir. Trust that you will see us again before this day is through."

"Please," said Cady, "go while you still can." Hobbes and

Tommy, to minimize its significance, departed quickly for the rear door, but Locke was unable to leave Cady, who had been staring at him when she spoke and was still staring, her expression a cipher to him. "Go," she repeated.

Those who remained listened for the sound of the door, but of course there was none, and turning to Burke, Moody introduced himself: "Major Burke, I am Reverend Moody."

"That may prove useful."

"Not with Mister Spencer, nor, I imagine, his hirelings. Others, perhaps. How shall we prepare?"

"If you have a weapon, lay it down." So saying, Burke disarmed himself, laying his service revolver where it could be seen on the floor. "We shall remain where we are, but with the girls between us. Come, girls. We are strangers, but that is about to change."

Those outside who were employed in the roundhouse had decided that they intended to work as usual, and if that entailed removing armed agitators, then so be it; while the vigilantes had decided that, if agitators still remained in the roundhouse, that meant their work was not yet done. Though they did not like or trust Spencer's posse and were not fond of their worker allies, the combined numbers were reassuring; on the other hand, Spencer's men had voiced many grievances and decided nothing. Spencer's achievement was to unite these groups with the message that there were only three men inside, who could not possibly withstand a force this size, moreover he knew them and would negotiate their surrender.

The first two groups naturally seized on this offer, and in the end, despite the uncertainties, the dissatisfaction, and the fears—plus the matter of getting paid—Spencer's hirelings followed. Standing out of sight beside the opening, he shouted, "Jefferson! I now have near a hundred armed men ready and determined to seize the roundhouse by whatever means necessary. For the sake of the girls' safety and security, as well as your own, will you peacefully submit to my authority?"

Chapter Eleven

When, the morning after the girls 'disappeared' from the orphanage, Edmund Burke received a telegram to that effect, delivered to his home in a Pittsburgh suburb where he had returned from active military service, he left immediately. Reaching the main station with just enough time to buy a ticket, he boarded the daily express to Philadelphia and a mere twelve hours later arrived at the Market Street terminal, in whose vicinity at that very moment the girls were at the adjacent market. He transferred to a local train and then hired a carriage that got him to the orphanage late in the evening, where he was assured the girls would "no doubt be apprehended in the morning, wandering in the neighborhood, hungry for breakfast like the others."

"Then there have been others?"

The headmaster, taking umbrage at the implication in the question, stiffened to reply, "This is an orphanage, sir, not a prison. If a few, a very few of our children prefer a shiftless life to the discipline of a trade—by which I mean an honorable trade..."

Burke was conveyed back to the local station, where there was a little hotel and, as he discovered, a cold supper that could be hastily assembled in deference to his rank, with the understanding that the headmaster would send a courier in the morning to let him know that the girls had been found. "Do you have any idea where they might be headed?"

"I doubt they have so much as a settled plan."

"Could they have food with them?"

"I do not see how."

"What about money?" The man shook his head. "You have

alerted the police, of course."

"Of course. As you might imagine, however, their resources are not extensive. You will want to stop by the station in the morning, as it is no distance at all from the hotel."

This he did, rising early and presenting himself before breakfast, and when the captain arrived, a man in his sixties who lowered himself into a chair with considerable effort and arose the same way, they had a brief exchange of views that left Burke with the clear impression that, if the girls were to be discovered, his men (of whom there were only a couple) would not likely be the ones to find them. He returned to the hotel for breakfast and wasted the morning waiting to hear from the orphanage that their own immediate search and interrogation of the children had produced nothing. Deciding he must find the girls himself, he skipped lunch, not willing to lose another hour.

All he knew of them was what a loving but absent father proclaimed and an unloving but custodial aunt insisted; and that, combined with what he had just learned, that Cady was sufficiently determined to act decisively and sufficiently clever to escape where all others had failed, led him to conclude that they had left the vicinity, despite the headmaster's insistence that "they all stayed close." Why would anyone do that? If there was any truth to the claim, he reasoned, it must be that the others had been caught before they could get far. He could waste a day sitting in the hotel in hopes of news, or he could begin his search; and from the very fact that they had not been found, he believed that they were already in Philadelphia.

Why there? First, because they needed food. Had they gotten caught trying to steal at one of the nearby farms, or if they presented themselves openly, they knew they would be back in the orphanage in no time; in a big city, in contrast, they ran little or no risk, because even if caught, how could anyone link them to the orphanage? In fact, getting caught might not be bad, because they would have food and shelter, as thousands, he knew, hundreds of thousands, in fact millions across the country had found at police stations, even if it was a bit of bread and a concrete floor for a night. Also, if they were going to escape, they needed to go somewhere; for he put no confidence in the claim that they had run away without any notion of a place to go—and Philadelphia was the nearest haven. He could not say if they intended to stay there,

but if they had any place in mind, the most likely was surely their home, and that of course was Pittsburgh; and the only way to get there was by train.

When he arrived back at the terminal, the girls were in front of a crowd almost within sight of it, singing with Moody on soap boxes; he, however, began his search inside, questioning the stationmaster, porters, policemen, food vendors. Everyone respected his uniform and deferred to his rank, but no one could help him, and finally he asked where two girls without money might go to find food. "In a city of three quarters of a million souls?"

"Is there a soup house where girls can get a meal?"

He was referred to the local mission, and not knowing how dreadful it was he went to the main street of the worst neighborhood in the city. "Be advised, sir, a man in uniform will not be welcome there." Tramps and drunks spent their days in its filthy gutters and their nights in its filthy alleys, homeless waifs moved in packs to survive, and there was no sign of a policeman. "Not a place for proper girls. For that matter, not for any girls." Yet, for many immigrants, also former slaves, it was the first abode of their new life in America. Closing his nose as much as possible, but keeping his eyes wide open, he found the mission and intrepidly picked his way around and over bodies blocking the entrance, found his man, and was informed that children were served from a soup house in another street.

The street was so far away, the directions so complicated, and it would have taken so long to reach, especially without benefit of any conveyance—and furthermore, free meal tickets were available for only two hours at mid-day—he felt certain the girls would not try to get there. What they might do, though he hoped they had not, was wander this neighborhood in search of meeting their needs, so he set out to wander it; on the way out of the mission, however, he was threatened by two men. Before they could create the necessary intimidation, though, he shoved one against the wall, hard, then turned on the other, knife already in hand, let him fall back a step, and strode through the exit, where others quickly got out of his way. 'They despise authority because they fear it so greatly,' he repeated from something the colonel had said.

He picked his way through the neighborhood, ever mindful of those around him and careful to project the certainty that anyone

who menaced him would dearly regret it; but besides the danger, the area was so repulsive in sight and smell that he could not imagine the girls could abide it any better than him, no matter how hungry they were. Had they come there, they would have sought a different place, one where the protection of the public constabulary and the presence of functioning neighborhoods, even if poor, would provide some limits on the danger, and not unlikely would be fairly open to transients. Such an area could be adjacent to a terminal and rail-yard, and where better than the city's main terminal and rail-yard, where he believed they had arrived; therefore he returned and began to ask people on the street if they had seen two unaccompanied girls, one a young woman, the other a child.

This of course was where Cady and Abigail had spent most of the day, evangelizing with Moody, but by the time he arrived, they had left to have supper at Spencer's hotel; in fact he missed them by a matter of minutes. The consequence, however, was that he soon happened on a woman who had seen two girls roughly matching that description. "They were with the evangelist."

"An evangelist? No, the girls I seek would be on their own."

"In that case I cannot help you." She was continuing on her way when she turned suddenly. "Your two, are they beautiful?"

Startled, Burke turned. "Beautiful? Why do you..."

"The girls I saw—one a young lady, as you say... Well, sir, what struck me, seeing them up there before the crowd, each in her own way more beautiful than the other... Like the sun and moon is my way to think of it. The sun on a bright day, the moon when it is full and the sky is clear. Except I could not say which was which. They yours?"

"In truth I could not say," replied Burke, shaken.

"I thought... Did you not say..."

"I am responsible for them. I served with their father, but never met them. Would you know where they went?"

"I would guess they went to supper with Reverend Moody."

"This Reverend Moody, could you describe him? And where, exactly, was he... preaching?"

Furnished with that information, he set about discovering the restaurant where he believed the girls probably were at that very moment; and this he deemed likely to be in the hotel where the evangelist was staying, because the terminal lacked a restaurant and

he doubted there would be another place nearby for a decent man to get a decent meal in decent company. The hotel, he further reasoned, was likely to be nearby, for he assumed a man who would try to save souls in a place like this lacked funds for anything better; therefore, deferring his own supper as he had skipped lunch, he commenced a methodical search of the local hotels and boarding-houses. "If you ask me, you are on the wrong side of the park," said a man he stopped to question. "Do you not know the Centennial Exposition was staged just over the tracks there in Fairmount Park?"

"Where is that?"

"Right there. But of all the genteel folks who visited last summer, with their top-hats and silk dresses, if you ask me, not a one of them would stay here."

"But a soapbox evangelist..."

"Soapbox or carved walnut pulpit, no minister would stay around here once night falls. You are on the wrong side of Market Street, sir. You want to look across the river on the north side." Discouraged, Burke reconsidered, then asked if the man had seen many evangelists in the area. "Well, let me see." He pretended to count on his fingers, then said, "That would be exactly one." Burke thanked him and continued his search.

Until someone told him otherwise, he assumed that, however many places to stay there were, they would mostly be on the main street, so even if that meant walking miles, he could hope to find the one he wanted in a few hours. That in fact was what happened; Moody, however, was still at supper in Spencer's hotel. "Do you happen to know if he is in the company of two females?" he asked the proprietor.

"What kind of place do you think this is?" was the testy reply. Burke dispelled the misunderstanding and asked if he could wait a while; still offended, the man indicated a chair and he occupied it in hopes that Moody was on some errand and would soon return for supper. After a half hour, though—by this time it was eight o'clock—he had to conclude that he must be eating elsewhere; meanwhile his own stomach was growling insistently. He was a fastidious man, despite having lived in the field for so many years—indeed, it was because of that experience—and apparently like the Reverend Moody, he was not drawn to penitential self-denial, which to him reeked of Catholicism. Furthermore, he still

didn't know if the man could tell him anything; nonetheless, he left a note to say he was searching for two girls and would return in the morning for any information Moody might have, then set out to find a meal and a room in a more agreeable part of town, across the river on the north side of Market Street.

When he returned in the morning, he found Moody gone again, despite the early hour, for both had risen before dawn and skipped breakfast, Moody to be sure the girls were still at their hotel, Burke to be sure Moody was still at his. He had had trouble finding a carriage and had had to walk part of the way, but still he expected to find him just coming down to breakfast, or at worst just starting. The desk clerk said he must still be in his room and Burke insisted that, his cause being urgent, the man go check; this he did and returned with a confused expression. "You did not see him. You did not see him because you were asleep. Never mind. What about my note?" It was still in Moody's mail slot. "Does he often leave this early, without breakfast? Will he return?"

The situation suggested a man with a preoccupation or concern—but what kind? He wouldn't have left to evangelize, not without breakfast. An errand, then, from which he would return for breakfast—but what kind of errand at such an early hour? Could there be some foul play at work concerning the girls? As was so often the case, the nefarious possibility seemed the most likely; and in fact there was something nefarious occurring, it just was not anything Burke in his ignorance could have imagined. What he saw was a minister in a place where he would not have expected a minister to be, which suggested that perhaps the man was not really a minister. How had the girls come under his control, and what could he possibly intend for them? One heard of horrendous crimes, everyone had.

"Tell me about the man."

"What is there to say?"

"Start with how he dresses, how he speaks. Did he ever mention meeting someone, does he have a confederate, did he ever mention two girls?" Outside he calmed himself, noting that there was a simple and benign explanation of events, that he had narrowly missed the man twice and he was an especially early riser. Nonetheless, there was another simple explanation that was not benign, and this he knew for certain, that the girls had been seen beside him, singing on soapboxes. "What in blazes is happening

here?" he wondered.

At that moment, the girls were sitting with Spencer in the station, frightened and desperate to escape or for Moody to appear. Burke, his trail having gone cold at the hotel, considered that, if the girls were not with the so-called evangelist, then they were still in the vicinity, on their own and probably desperate for food. With no place to sleep, they would have slept in an alley; surely someone had seen them, because two unaccompanied girls were not a common sight in any but the most desperate neighborhoods, especially if they were respectably dressed, as he assumed. With at least an hour before he needed to check back at the hotel, he plunged into the neighborhood, questioning everyone he encountered, thereby unable to see the girls run up the tracks and witness the events that followed.

When Moody had returned to his hotel from Spencer's the previous evening, he had been lost in thought—and anxiety—and it would not have occurred to him that there might be a message, so he had gone straight to his room; meanwhile the desk clerk was snoozing and had not heard him. Similarly preoccupied in the morning, he had left directly and again the clerk was asleep; it was, then, only when he rushed back to his hotel to settle his bill (the girls and the tramps waiting discretely out of sight) that he received the note. Further, he learned that he had had a caller, for the clerk was anxious to tell him all about Burke's visits. "But did he say who he was?" asked Moody, confused and frankly anxious.

All he learned was that he was 'a man in uniform' and immediately assumed that that referred to a policeman; and the note in his hand doing nothing to clarify the matter, he imagined a bumbling though well intentioned officer seeking to return the girls to a situation he did not know had been abusive. When the clerk told him the man would soon return, he worried that he might be a confederate of Spencer's, which made him all the more anxious to depart as quickly as possible.

Had Burke returned to the hotel in an hour as intended, he would have found the girls anxiously waiting for Moody, but he was delayed nearby by a woman who was pretty sure she had spotted them in the neighborhood, though that had been the evening before last. "We take note of strangers, because you can usually assume they are up to no good, even girls, though it pains me to say it. I guarantee that a lot of folks are watching you right

now."

"But you are certain you saw them. How did they appear? Properly dressed, clean?"

"Seemed clean enough. I cannot say I got a good look at them. They did not beg, though they did have an air about them. Distressed, you know? But then, these days everyone looks distressed."

When he did reach the hotel, he had not taken a step inside before the clerk loudly told him he had missed him again.

"When was he here?"

"Not more than a half hour ago. Settled his bill and left."

"Was he alone? Where did he go?" The clerk nodded and shrugged. "You have no idea where he might be going."

"He asked us to hold his things. All he took was a carpet bag."

"Did he look like he was pressed for time?"

"Come to think of it, he did seem pressed. In a hurry, you know? My guess is he went to the station, because where else would he go? He did say he would return soon. I suppose he could be moving to another part of the city. You might find him at the station."

Burke raced to the station, but of course Moody was not there, he was walking up the track to Mantua Junction. For the first time, Burke did not know his next move and rested, dejected, in the waiting area, and felt the empty place where breakfast would have gone. To boost his spirits, he reminded himself that, though the trail had gone cold, he had established for a certainty that the girls had spent the last two days in the immediate vicinity. He also knew they had been enlisted by a sidewalk evangelist, or a man posing as one, though he would never have guessed that Moody, self-seeking or not, had legitimately hired the girls to work with him and in return had committed himself to be their chaperone until he could get them safely to Pittsburgh. Not in a million years would he have guessed that, but rather found it much easier to assume he was a confidence man working some kind of reprehensible if not disgusting scheme on two innocent children.

He rose and questioned people who worked in the station, on the off-chance that Moody had been there and been noticed; on an even slimmer chance, he also asked about the girls, with or without a man matching Moody's description. Everyone shook his head, even the vendor who had sold pretzels to Cady not two hours

earlier and remembered her clearly. That was because he saw neither two unaccompanied girls nor two girls with a man matching Moody's description, and did not heed the fact that she'd bought two pretzels (not three as Spencer had requested).

He went to the market, because without money, and if they truly were not begging, they would have to steal food, and an open-air market was the obvious place to do that; but after two hours he could not find a vendor who recalled seeing them recently. There was one who remembered them clearly, because in response to their attempt to rob him, he had fed them; but that had been two days ago. "Nice kids," he said. "Fallen on hard times, like so many. They your kin?"

"I made a promise to their father. My wife and I have no children."

He went to the yard, because without money, the only way they could have reached Philadelphia was to hop a freight, and though that would have been two days ago, he didn't know what else to do. The place was very large and very busy; he wandered around and asked his question, and the first hour was fruitless; and then suddenly, against all expectation, he found someone who had not only seen the girls a few hours earlier, he had witnessed the altercation on the tracks. Two men, he said, were fighting over them. "Fighting," interrupted Burke. He gave a description of Moody, but the man couldn't say if one of them matched it, the distance was too great, and then three tramps arrived to chase away one of them. "Three tramps, you say? How do you know they were tramps?" He was inclined to dismiss the man's story when a second man arrived to confirm it. He made them repeat it, interrupting constantly to ascertain each detail; he asked them to describe the girls.

"Easy enough to describe the older one. You her father? Well, then, she was the kind of young woman who sets a man's heart to racing, just by looking at her. I worry about a girl like that, alone with a man, never mind four men."

"And three of them tramps," added the other one.

"You did not care to intervene? There are enough men here..."

"The tramps pulled guns, and looked like they were well acquainted with their use—and one of them, maybe two, did not look normal."

"Normal?"

"Call me crazy, I have never been face to face with an injun, but one or two of those tramps looked like injuns."

"Injuns."

"Yes, sir. I could not say for sure, but that is how they looked."

"Did they wear face paint, feathered head-dresses? Hear any war whoops?"

"Say, major, we are just trying to be helpful, on account of the girls."

"And I appreciate it. As it happens, I have been face to face with Indians many times, having only recently returned from the Great Plains, so I can assure you it is hard to mistake an Indian warrior."

"Been fighting, have you? Say, by any chance were you with Custer?"

"I did not have that honor," he replied curtly.

Breaking a brief silence, the second man said, "Maybe they were niggers or greasers, I cannot say. All we know is that they did not look American. And pretty tough characters. Not my fight."

"Nor mine. But I guess you have done a lot of fighting. Been pacifying the savages, have you?"

"Yes I have."

To break the silence again, the other man said, "One war to put the country back together was enough for me. But I guess you would be a career officer."

"Even a career officer gets sick of war. Especially if he should be among those called to fight them."

By this time, a third man had approached to say, "Those were three tramps I would not let within a mile of my daughter, if I had a daughter."

"They were tramps, you are certain of that?"

"As certain as certain can be, I saw the whole thing. How do you mistake a tramp? There was some kind of altercation between the man you call an evangelist and a railroad inspector, and it was getting pretty ugly when these three tramps come up to intervene."

"Intervene, how? Why would a railroad inspector...?"

"I have no idea, but it did not go well for him, I can tell you that, not after he pulled a gun."

"What did you say? What kind of railroad inspector carries a

gun?"

"This kind, I reckon. The kind that is not really a railroad inspector, but one of those Pinkertons gone undercover. Anyway, the tramps ran him off in short order, gun or no gun. Not the kind to scare easily, no sir. I would be careful if I were you."

"And these are the men with whom the two girls left?"

"And the evangelist, yes, sir."

"Where did they go?"

The man shook his head and put up his hands.

"I know where they went," said a fourth man, who had been following the conversation. "They went up the tracks. It was maybe a half hour after the events just described. I happened to notice when I looked up from my labor."

"You are sure you saw—"

"You keep asking about being sure. Yes, sure. Three tramps, one man, not the inspector, and two girls, one a child, the other more like a woman. Walking west toward Mantua Junction, which is one point five miles from Powelton, which is where we are. And I can tell you the big man—and I stand with those who say he was injun, as sure as day—was taking up the rear, military style, as though they were expecting trouble."

Burke nodded. "Do any of you have any idea what the altercation was about?"

"I would say it was about the girls."

"And this man whom I believe is an evangelist left willingly with tramps?"

"Relieved, I should say."

"Walking to Mantua Junction."

"Change for New York and Jersey points. After that is your Hestonville, another mile."

"But they could continue west."

"All the way to Pittsburgh. Hell, all the way to San Francisco Bay, if they have such a mind."

"Any chance they are looking for a freight to hop?"

"With a little girl? Six of them at once, and one of them an evangelist who, between you and me, does not look like the freight-hopping type? If it was just the tramps, sure."

Another man confirmed the story. "Now there is an odd party, as I see it."

"First time my eyes have seen anything like this, I can tell

you," said another.

Burke asked when this occurred, and the men argued over the precise time, but he understood the girls had about a four-hour lead and left quickly.

As he walked up the track, banishing fatigue and hunger and pressing forward as though that could reduce the gap he had to close, he kept reviewing an image, still hazy but beginning to emerge, of two grown men fighting—literally fighting, to the point of pulling guns—over two children. What the devil was going on? Perhaps not both children. Cady would be, what, sixteen? How many times had people, men and women both, including the men he'd just interviewed, mentioned her beauty? Two men fighting over a woman did not surprise him, though he found it tawdry, nor unfortunately did the fact that one of them might be a minister, though he found it repugnant. Perhaps most disturbing, though, was the specter of a Pinkerton, charged to infiltrate unions, forgetting his duty to the extent—if true—of chasing a girl up the tracks because he took a shine to her! "What has become of this country?" he thought. "What have I been fighting for?"

And there, right beside him, was the site of the great Centennial Exposition, where the previous summer ten million Americans had celebrated the nation's magnificent achievements and sparkling possibilities. Its problems, its shortcomings did not concern him, because great nations were not perfect nations; but he could not abide the fact that President Hayes had been elected by fraud, or means indistinguishable from it. This stain on American democracy troubled him more than the massive corruption that characterized the eight years of the preceding Grant administration, because he accepted that war was a filthy business, and that Grant was a soldier, not a politician.

Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer, by his pluck and dash, had seemed to embody the nation's heroic mission to bring liberty, Christianity, and commerce to the dark and backward places; and his death a year earlier at the Little Bighorn seemed incomprehensible, for how to explain a total rout by a band of savages encumbered with women, children, and elders, and he a soldier's soldier? If there was tragedy in America, this surely was it; and in his 'Last Stand,' he saw a rebuke, if not divine then at least historical, for the corruption and moral failure of society.

Chapter Twelve

When Burke arrived at the little station at Mantua Junction, which the others had reached four hours earlier, the stationmaster was no longer lounging on the porch, not in the mid-July, mid-day heat; instead, he was lounging inside, where Burke's entrance startled him. "Yes, sir," he said, rushing to his feet as though his commanding officer had just caught him napping on watch. "Hot, is it not?" Burke quickly explained his purpose and asked if the man had seen the party he sought. "Oh, yes," he replied earnestly. "We get little traffic here, so close to the terminal. A gentleman bought three tickets for the nine-twelve."

"For..."

"New York." That answer startled Burke. "Yes, sir, I am certain of it. I am as certain of that as I am that the tickets were not used."

"You mean..."

"Never boarded her, sir. Did not even wait. I know that, because this party of six included three individuals whose looks did not please me one bit, no sir, not one bit, so I kept an eye on things, if you understand me. An odd party that way, if I may say so, sir. A man with two girls, presumably their father, but if so, why attired better than them—especially as they were beautiful girls, if truth be told—and why arriving on foot, rather than by carriage, especially coming up the track, which is difficult to explain—and why somehow allied with three vagabonds of unruly appearance?"

"Did any of these vagabonds... Anything unusual about their appearance?"

"Aside from two of them being Indians, you mean?"

Burke described Moody and the stationmaster nodded. "You are certain."

"As certain as one can be of anything in this life. Your man took his daughters out the side door and rejoined two of the suspicious three, and they started up the track till out of sight, then the third one came up."

"So you saw them head up the track toward New York."

"No, sir, I saw them head up the track toward New York and then cross that track. They thought they were out of sight around the bend, but I kept them in view. Now, why would they do that, I ask myself? And why buy tickets you have no intention to use?"

"Any ideas?" The stationmaster studied Burke's face then and, for whatever reason, just shook his head. "By any chance, did a railroad inspector arrive a short time later?" Still with that studious look, the man shook his head again. "You seem discomfited. May I ask if you are telling me all you know?"

"You may ask and I will tell you. As I said, we get few customers here, and this party, well, you need not be one of those new detectives to find something off center here. Where there be trouble, I have no urge to go, if you take my meaning. And now you appear." Burke asked if there was any indication that the man who purchased the tickets was being held or controlled involuntarily, and the man shook his head, but added that of course he could not be certain. Did he see any indication that the girls were with the man involuntarily? He shook his head again. Was there any sign of a man who might have followed at a distance, perhaps a railroad inspector? "Now I have answered all your questions honestly and politely, even though I have no idea what in God's creation is happening here, though it is increasingly apparent that it is something of which I wish to know nothing... Why would a railroad inspector come here?"

"I have reason to believe this party is being pursued by one. But you saw no one fitting that description."

"No, sir, I did not."

"Why do you think they crossed the track?"

"You just said, they have a pursuer, obviously they wish to evade him. They pretend to be headed to New York..."

"You think they are really headed west."

"I do."

"Thank you, I will trouble your nap no further."

The next station was Hestonville and it troubled Burke that the stationmaster at that little stop had not seen anything like what he described, even though he knew he couldn't expect everyone to have seen them pass. He could return to Mantua Junction to try to find someone who had actually seen them walk west, but that would lose precious time, so he continued to Overbrook and there found the same ignorance, which was troubling though again perfectly understandable. At Merion he got his reward for perseverance, because there were a half-dozen men still guarding the locomotive two hours after the girls had passed, and they seemed positively eager to tell him all about their earlier meeting.

"Two hours, not four?" Two hours, he was assured and wondered what had induced a party trying to escape a pursuer to pause for two hours—or be delayed. Concern for the girls was immediately allayed, however, because the report was that they seemed to be fine, with no indication of duress; in fact, it was quite the contrary, as they seemed to be in safe hands under Tommy's protection. That his two partners were Indians was mentioned as a curiosity. "Did you see them up close?"

"As close as you are," said one. "One was a scout in the war for the Union."

"An Indian was a scout in the Civil War?"

"So it seems. The one who said so was also a scout, swore the Indian saved his life."

"In the Civil War."

"Like I said, general. Seemed strange to me too, but there it is. And hear this, the man's name is Hobbes."

"Hobbes? What kind of Indian name is that?"

"His son's name is Locke."

"Hobbes and Locke. Very strange." Burke was assured that the railroad inspector was an undercover Pinkerton infatuated with Cady and that the three tramps had agreed to protect her sister and her, and also the minister, and accompany them to Pittsburgh, where the girls had relations. "What sort of relations?"

"They did not say."

"Tell me about the minister."

"An evangelist who was apparently preaching near the market when they found him—the girls, that is—or he found them, I am not sure, but he offered to help."

"Everyone tells me the girls are beauties. Think that might be

a factor in the type of help he wishes to offer?"

"No, sir, this one is not like that," said another man. "I do not hold with ministers, who will not spare a kind word for hard-pressed working people, but this one rushed to the aid of our fallen."

"What fallen?" snapped Burke. "What happened here?"

"Nothing that concerns you or those you seek," said the man who exchanged stares with Burke.

"How do we know what type of help you wish to offer?" said another.

"What can you tell me about the Pinkerton?" he asked at last.

"No more than what you just heard."

"Did you notice if he followed them up the track?" All Burke learned was that Spencer had disappeared from sight at a moment when no one was paying attention. "Disappeared. Just like that." The men nodded in silence. "But the girls and their chaperones, you saw them continue up the line." The men again nodded. "Unharmed. Do you know their plans?"

"To board a freight to Pittsburgh. They asked to board this one, but she is not moving. I suppose they continued up the line in search of another, though I hope to God the whole line is shut down."

This remark confused Burke. "Why would you hope... Wait a minute, does this have something to do with the insurrection in West Virginia?" He had suddenly made the connection with the newspaper headlines from the previous night and the morning that reported federal troops sent there to crush all strike activity and realized why this locomotive was not moving and why these men were standing around it aimlessly. What he couldn't know was that, after the melee, the strikers had decided that their women and children should leave; and following that, it was decided that, since the counter-strikers had departed with the intent (or at least the threat) to return with reinforcements, they decided they needed reinforcements as well, and several men had gone off to recruit friends and relatives.

"You may call it insurrection, we call it demanding a fair day's pay for a fair day's work."

"I do call it 'insurrection.' So do the governor and the president." At this, he took a step backward as the men took a step forward, and the two sides glared at each other. "The leader of the

tramps," he said finally, "he white?"

"White as you. A railroad man, down on his luck. All three of them are, though how redskins came to work for the railroad is a mystery. Are you really what you say you are?"

"I am."

"For the sake of those girls, I hope so. There will not be any love lost between you and the others."

"If they are truly protectors, there will be no trouble. If they are not..."

"On your way, mister."

He left willingly, in fact eagerly, impelled by the knowledge that the girls were now only two hours ahead of him and the belief that they were likely in serious danger, because not only did he doubt everything these 'savages' had said, he strongly suspected that the truth of the situation was the opposite. The very fact that they had such a favorable view of Tommy aroused his suspicions; and then there were the names 'Hobbes' and 'Locke,' obviously fake, suggesting that the pair were criminals on the run. He doubted they were Indian, because if Hobbes were Indian, he would not have been a scout in the Civil War. If he was an Indian scout, it would have been in the wars on the Plains—and depending on which side he had served, he was either a traitor to his kind or an enemy of the United States.

That Moody had provided succor to a wounded striker cast doubt in Burke's mind that he was really an evangelist, for as the man himself had said, ministers were not sympathetic toward savages, whether on the Plains or in an industrial wilderness. He had no trouble imagining that Moody was in league with the tramps to abduct the girls for some unmentionable purpose; nor did he fail to notice the clear implication that, to the extent any of this was true, the Pinkerton's reputation benefited. Indeed, it made far more sense to Burke that Spencer was a selfless hero trying to rescue the girls than a sexual obsessive who had abandoned his duties; that he had seemingly not enlisted help might only indicate his concern that that could jeopardize the safety of the girls.

With such thoughts driving him, what was his shock to burst into the station—a surprise that caused the stationmaster to fairly leap straight up from his perch as he had when Spencer arrived—only to learn that the man had seen nothing. "You mean to tell me that three tramps, two of them apparently Indians, in the company

of a well-dressed man and two girls—two girls reputed for their beauty, one of them in particular, a young woman who has been turning heads all the way from Philadelphia—that a party as strange as this passed right before this station no more than two hours ago, and you have nothing to tell me?" The man, young, thin, and sickly-looking, assured him that he had seen nothing, as he considered it prudent to remain away from the door and windows, behind his grill at the rear of the room, in the event that the revolutionaries outside decided to assault the station. "So you were aware of trouble."

"I heard the gunshot. That would be your indication that some kind of altercation was in process."

"Gunfire, that explains the 'fallen.' Did you report it?"

"I most certainly did not, given that the railroad inspector ordered me to do no such thing." So the inspector had been here; but why give such an order? "He insisted that calling the police could just make matters worse, given that he had nearly been shot."

"Where is he now?"

"Who knows? Left as suddenly as he arrived, and he burst in here much like you did, but more so, positively threw himself across the floor."

"That suggests he was being pursued."

"He was, by radical agitators."

"You saw them?"

"Not exactly."

"What does 'not exactly' mean?"

"That I did not see them."

"So we have only his word. You did not inquire further?"

"I did not. Your railroad detective generally prefers asking questions to answering them."

"So you knew he was a detective."

"I did when he showed me his identification."

Burke got his name and a description, but nothing beyond that in response to his peppered questions, even when the stationmaster realized that the well-dressed man who had inquired about trains to Harrisburg and Pittsburgh, minutes before Spencer appeared, was the well-dressed man of the 'strange party.' "You are certain you did not sell him any tickets, or see anyone else. When did he leave?" That fact the man could state right to the minute, since the Pittsburgh express had roared past minutes later, and he

was proud to do so. Burke, then, knew for sure that he was now only an hour and three-quarters behind them, and this urged him to the door, but something else urged him to turn and say, "I have fought for this country too long and too hard and at too great cost to give license to savages who need to be taught respect for authority. They are still out there and I suggest you do something about it."

"What would you have me do?" Burke shook his head and left.

It was not lost on him that one of the strikers had clearly indicated a gunfire casualty on his side, yet Spencer claimed he had almost been hit, while the stationmaster referred to just one shot. Conceivably it could have missed the one and hit the other, but that seemed unlikely, and that bothered him considerably. It also bothered him considerably that there was no indication that Spencer had engaged the strikers and his duties, rather he was apparently still pursuing Cady, which all but confirmed that she was in danger, without confirming whether he was its cause or the agent of its resolution. His growing anxiety was not alleviated at any of the next three stops, where the stationmasters could tell him only that they had not sold tickets to anyone he described; indeed, his anxiety was only increased by the time lost.

It was this, no doubt, that exacerbated his sense of fatigue and hunger, but this changed when the stationmaster at Haverford College gave him an earful, that is a small quantity of information dispersed among a large quantity of digressions, reflections, and opinions. It was he who had spotted them walking up the track after the train had left and immediately discerned a hostile situation necessitating military tactics, yet could not see where his sympathies should lie. "What is this nation coming to, when one cannot tell friend from foe?" he asked rhetorically, reprising his earlier thought.

Burke nodded meaninglessly, reflecting that the information provided—Hobbes, supposedly an Indian, guarding the rear, Spencer, supposedly an inspector, following at a prudent distance—offered nothing to answer the basic question: Who the hero, who the villain? "I presume, then," he said almost sadly, "that you did not alert the authorities."

"I certainly would have, if the so-called 'authorities' did not consist of a single policeman who is practically an invalid."

"Well, at least you have confirmed that I am still on the right track."

No sooner had he declared himself to the officious stationmaster at the next stop, wiping sweat from his face, than he was informed that all seven of them had boarded the two-fifty-nine for Harrisburg. "All seven." The man nodded in solemn silence, and as Burke confirmed the situation by describing all seven individuals, the man was still deciding whether, uniform notwithstanding, he was friend or foe. "Were all seven together?"

"They were not."

"My charge is to retrieve the two girls. What can you tell me about them?"

"Nothing."

"For instance, anything about their appearance or behavior. Well, did they seem distressed, anxious?"

"Major, my charge is to manage this station, not concern myself with the inner workings of passengers who board my trains." Burke wondered at the man's hostility and, to give himself time, inquired about the next train to Harrisburg, bought a ticket, and asked if there was any news of a strike. "There is no strike," replied the man, "just some foreigners, communists no doubt, trying to stir up trouble." Burke pretended to agree, though in fact he believed the problem was far worse than a few isolated agitators, but it made no difference to the stationmaster.

"It concerns me that the girls are in the company of a man who appears to be allied with three tramps. Anything you can say to help me understand that?"

"It would concern me too. I did not like the looks of them at all, especially the big one, the savage. I would have denied him a ticket if he had so much as expectorated."

"Do you have any concerns about the railroad inspector?"

"Why would I?"

"Perhaps because he is not a railroad inspector."

"You know that, do you? Well, he told me what the situation was, and I began to fear for the girls myself."

With all the earnestness he could muster, Burke said, "To learn the truth of the situation is of the utmost importance to me, good sir. I appeal to you as father, brother, uncle or whatever, for surely some female is or has been dear to you, to sympathize with my distress and enlighten me as best you can. For I am legally

responsible for those girls. What, exactly, was said to you by Mister Herbert Spencer, detective in the employ of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency on behalf of the Pennsylvania Railroad?"

The stationmaster stared at the man opposite him, a man whose face was a study in parental anxiety, remembering how he had stood opposite another man, this one buying tickets for Harrisburg for a party of six, and his face a study in nonchalance. Yet right behind him could plainly be overhead an altercation of a sexual nature between a man whose desire was so strong one could almost smell it and a young woman with whom the customer enjoyed some sort of alliance, whose beauty exceeded anything the stationmaster had ever seen. It had required all his will to feign, if not deafness, then at least indifference to a scene of the utmost titillation. "How well do you know these girls?" he replied after a considerable pause. "Would you know them to see them?" Straining to control his impatience, Burke tersely related how he had accepted the guardianship of the pair when his commanding officer, a man who had become a close friend in the course of service, was on his deathbed due to wounds sustained in battle. "I have yet to see them in person and have only the description furnished by the orphanage."

Was it possible, the stationmaster had wondered while he processed Moody's tickets, that two seemingly respectable men were fighting for the sexual favor of a public woman? Even more prurient, yet more consistent with the apparent fact that the nonchalant one was plainly the father of the girls, as proven by the fact that after pretending to ignore the drama, he took a seat beside them: was he negotiating the price for his daughter? Other readings had occurred to him since the event, each in succession the more salacious, yet the final result of his mental process (if it could be called that) was that he accepted Spencer's version of the truth and accordingly took his side—he even loaned him his prized pistol.

Did he believe Spencer's version? He was persuaded that Spencer believed it. 'It was true for him,' he told himself, and as he was manifestly the only respectable one of the five who surrounded the girls, his duty was to assist in any way he could. That the detective might harbor certain fantasies concerning the girl was finally irrelevant to her parlous circumstances; in any case, they were nothing any healthy man might not have experienced in his place. How then to explain the girl's obvious disgust with him,

moreover her desperate plea to leave her alone? A performance, evidently coerced. The stationmaster was so angered by her awful predicament, he had more than half a mind to confront the major—if he really was a major and not another confidence man; in fact, he would have confronted him, if he hadn't given Spencer his gun. "What the detective told me, sir, was that these two innocent girls were suffering the coercion of four desperadoes, two of them savages, one an injun lover, and the fourth a disgusting character pretending to be a minister in order to seduce young females, both for personal gain and, shall we say, a more personal form of personal gain."

On the train, Burke spent the first half hour mentally reeling over this encounter, unable to control his rage at what he considered the stationmaster's triumphant stupidity. 'Had he not been rescued by the speedy arrival of this train, I swear I would have grabbed him by the collar and hauled him out back.' Overtaken by exhaustion, his head slumped into fitful sleep until abruptly awakened when the train slowed for Coatesville, the whistle screamed, and passengers started rising clumsily for the doors. As he joined them, shaking off sleep and now beset with a growling stomach, he consoled himself that, despite the ludicrous encounter, he had gained some valuable information: First, all seven had taken the same train to Harrisburg; and given that they would arrive too late to continue, that meant they would be spending the night there and would undoubtedly return to the station in the morning. Second, because he had had less of a wait for his train than they had for theirs, he was now only ninety minutes behind them, which meant that if any of them lingered in or near the station, he could hope to find them; if not, daylight would surely bring discovery.

Much as he would have loved to join the line for food, already long and quickly getting longer, he headed for the stationmaster, who it turned out could tell him nothing. "I wish I could help you, sir, but unfortunately I have no recollection of any of these folks you describe." In fact he had not seen Spencer, who had applied himself to two policemen, then to the train conductor, and finally the engineer (all of whom rebuffed him), and had not had time to approach the stationmaster (who, if he had, would also have rebuffed him). Hobbes, meanwhile, had hidden after running off the platform, and the others stayed on the train. As there was no

possibility to interview anyone behind the food counter, all of whom were working frantically to sell as much as possible during the brief stop, and no one else to question, Burke reluctantly added himself to the end of the line, but he was back in his seat without having reached the front.

Again fatigue overtook him and he managed to stay more or less asleep, despite the frequent stops, the lurching and screeching, the jostling of passengers, and the complaints of an empty stomach, until the next refreshment stop at Lancaster. That was where Tommy and Hobbes had attempted to leave Spencer in a shed, bound with a rope, and again Burke bypassed the food line for the stationmaster, who excitedly recounted how a passenger had approached him to report a disturbing incident on the train. "It concerned your man, no doubt about it, a Pinkerton with a tramp, etcetera etcetera."

"What happened?"

"It was a strange report, very strange, well, to be frank it made no sense to me, so I advised the man to concern himself with it no further—but after he left, doubts gnawed, so I consulted with the conductor, who had more or less witnessed the incident in question."

"What does 'more or less' mean?"

"My understanding is that he was not a direct witness to events, which is one reason why I still saw nothing in the report, and he agreed with me. He did, however, contribute one detail that should be of interest to you."

"Oh? What was that?"

"That, according to him, the detective was on the train in pursuit of your girl—the older one, obviously."

Burke forced himself to take a breath. "Could you elaborate?"

The stationmaster paused briefly, then gingerly asked, "Is she your daughter?"

"I am her guardian."

"Then let us frankly acknowledge as one gentleman to another that obviously she is exceedingly attractive." As he said these words, he recalled perfectly how she had looked, passing nearby on the platform while the conductor and he examined her. "The suggestion is that the man in question has been overwhelmed by this feature, etcetera etcetera."

To Burke it was all but inconceivable that a railroad detective

on the job could act as this one was accused of acting, for as he put it, 'For that to be true, Colonel Smith's daughter would have to be impossibly alluring or this Mister Spencer unconscionably weak.' Recognizing, however, that his responsibilities required him to seek, not the comforting conclusion, but the truth of the matter, he had to admit that his political convictions and social attitudes naturally aligned him on Spencer's side against the tramps. Setting that aside, was he now to be forced to concede that the safety of his two charges was in the hands of white trash and two Indians? So it seemed, because even if the man's behavior could somehow be credibly explained to him in some abstract or general way, the fact that it was occurring while a labor insurrection emerged before his very eyes—activity he was undoubtedly charged to frustrate—eliminated even that remote possibility. "What is the latest news concerning strike activity?" he asked quietly.

At the stationmaster's surprise, he said he had personally encountered it a few hours earlier, while walking the line near Philadelphia, but still the man hesitated to reply. "I hope you will agree," he added almost wearily, "that my intimate relationship with a man certain to be drawn into events, should they unfold as now seems possible, gives me a right to know what dangers my girls may be running."

Speaking under his breath, the stationmaster informed him that, "On the B & O, there is trouble up and down the line, serious trouble, and I fear what tomorrow might bring, for example Baltimore sounds like a powder-keg with the fuse set, just waiting for a spark. Compared to that, it is still quiet on the Pennsy, but I just got word that... You may or may not know that several hundred freight conductors and brakemen struck at noon in Pittsburgh. Now the engineers and firemen have joined, that is the entire crew. I for one believe there is much more to come, much more."

Burke nodded grimly. "May I ask if you filed any kind of report..."

"No, sir, I did not, for one simple reason: I would have no idea what to say."

"Is there not a dereliction of duty?"

"It appears so, but I cannot say for sure."

"We cannot say for sure what the man's motives are, or his state of mind; but that he is derelict in his duty seems beyond

question, does it not?"

"I cannot say that. It is not impossible that he is not chasing your girl at all, but the men who surround her. We must admit that explanation is at least as plausible, in fact more plausible, and infinitely more satisfying. You agree?"

Burke thought long and finally nodded. "I do. The truth must wait for Harrisburg."

When he arrived there, night had fallen and the food vendors in the station had closed, so he headed for the hotel restaurant against the slim hope of a quick supper, then left in frustration when the headwaiter admitted (reluctantly) that that was impossible. He must either find a nearby tavern to cook him a meal, a prospect he did not relish, as much for the company as the food, or be satisfied with the pretzels he had gobbled on the train after Lancaster (which the stationmaster had procured for him, a large doughy form he said was a specialty of the region). With his disappointment that none of the seven were at the station (unlikely as that was, ninety minutes after arrival) and anxiety to remain active in pursuit, rather than waste time looking for a meal, he ignored the objections of his stomach and found a homeless man on the street to direct him to the nearest tramp camp.

This was hardly a subtle deduction, and he had had plenty of time to make it. He assumed that, the goal being Pittsburgh, everyone would return to the station in the morning, since delay would serve no purpose and a strike, which he knew they had discovered just as he had, would only make travel more uncertain. They would spend the night nearby, as close as possible, for how much farther could a nine-year-old walk, and at bedtime, having already covered at least nine miles? Further, he knew that even if they had money, no hotel or boarding-house would rent a room to three tramps, certainly not to Indians. They could be in an alley somewhere, but an alley provided little or no security, therefore experienced vagabonds, as these surely were, would not choose it if there were a better alternative, the obvious one being the tramp camp that every city of size had; there was, however, a problem with this choice.

The only risk greater than being colored in a tramp camp was being female, especially an attractive young female, with children a close second. Whether the men he was pursuing were friend or foe to Cady and Abigail, they would not relish a fight to protect or

keep them; nonetheless, a tramp camp might be their least-bad option, and if they could enlist support, then it would be worth trying—and support they might find, for vagabonds came in many varieties. The largest cohort was surely the unemployed, and this one, given that an economic depression did not discriminate, tended to represent the nation. Add to that wayward ex-slaves, alcoholics, the insane, prostitutes, widows and orphans, unassimilated immigrants, bankrupts, outlaws, the disgraced and ashamed, those who preferred the wandering life to their next-worse alternative, and even, if rarely, dispossessed Indians—a volatile and unpredictable collection. It was not a half mile from the station to the river, and the waste area beneath the bridge afforded a natural location for the homeless, where no respectable person had any reason to go.

Chapter Thirteen

The tramps were camped along the riverbank below the street, centered under the bridge, but splayed on both sides due to the considerable number of tenants, as well, no doubt, to the need to maintain sufficient distances between hostile groups. As Spencer had done, Burke reconnoitered the camp from points along the street and the bridge, but though he spotted several children, it was obvious even from a distance by their ragged appearance, if nothing else, that none of them were Cady or Abigail. To be certain, however, he must descend into the camp, a prospect that almost made him retch, but from which he did not shrink, telling himself that, if Adam Smith's daughters could be there, then he could be there. As he descended toward one end of the camp, however, he spotted something that stopped him cold.

Another man preceded him, like him in a uniform, like him obviously out of place, and he watched from behind a bush as the man was encircled by a hostile group and submitted to having his gun taken and his pockets emptied. The uniform of a railroad inspector and the man's physique immediately told him his identity; for it so happened that Spencer had concluded his reconnoitering from above and descended into the camp only minutes before Burke had arrived at the same high ground. Thus did he witness the other's entire recruitment performance, though with so much ambient noise from other parts of the camp, as well as traffic above and on the river, he could not get close enough to hear with any clarity; instead he watched every gesture and expression visible in the lamplight.

When Spencer marched out of camp at the head of his posse,

Burke followed; when they climbed over the fence of the rail-yard, so did he; and when they proceeded to the roundhouse, he did too, except that, to remain unseen, he diverted to a toolshed, the same one Tommy and the others had vacated only a half hour earlier. There he quietly tried to provide himself a modicum of comfort, knowing it would be a long vigil**,** because although he didn't expect Spencer to attack before dawn, he could not rule out a night raid—and with tramps for a posse, it would not be prudent to assume disciplined restraint would prevail.

In fact, he could not be certain that one of them might not decide to duck into the shed for a snooze, and with the padlock broken there was no way to keep anyone out; therefore the little window smeared with grease and a pair of sharp ears were his best defense. The roundhouse, in contrast, was far more secure, and he had no doubt it was not chosen randomly. 'I believe my adversary or ally, whichever he is, has military experience, for the roundhouse is the best fortress in the yard, though it takes a military man to recognize that the safest covert is not the one where you are least likely to be discovered, but where you are best able to defend your position.'

It was for that reason that he abandoned all efforts to devise a plan to penetrate the roundhouse in the dark to extract Cady and Abigail, either with or without announcing his presence to the others; for the odds of failure seemed awfully high, and the potential consequences of failure higher still. Nonetheless, he fretted mightily over the possibilities for the battle he considered inevitable, given the disposition of forces and the antagonistic goals of the adversaries. Not for the first time during this long day—far from it—did he chastise his former inability to assume his proper duty and take the girls under direct guardianship, as he had promised. 'Inability' he called it, for in the circumstances he could not bring himself to declare it mere unwillingness; in any case, if anything were to happen to either of them, he would never forgive himself, and whatever was about to occur was going to be his fault entirely.

He left the shed to reconnoiter the roundhouse and discovered that the posse had not surrounded it, as it obviously should have done; so he returned for a ladder and quietly erected it at numerous windows to confirm that he could not see anything. Then, determining that the safest place to locate the girls would be

at either midpoint between the front and rear openings, and that between them the preferred location would be the one nearer sunrise (so that first light would leave it in shade), he positioned the ladder there. He was leaving when he returned to move it a bit closer to the front, reasoning that they would reduce the girls' exposure to fire from the opening, even if that put them a bit closer to a direct assault; then he returned to the shed, determined to remain on his feet at the window the entire night.

When the first bell broke night's pause and the war whoop announced the presence of Chief Spencer and his war party, Burke was already at his battle station on the ladder; when it was met with silence, followed by a single shot that elicited the tell-tale scream, his assessment of the defenders was confirmed. After the corpse was dragged to the shed he had vacated minutes earlier and five men charged into the roundhouse, he saw Tommy race across the open center to protect the girls. That was the moment he knew for certain who was truly protecting them, for no one would have risked his life with such recklessness without a powerful motive, and the will to protect would always rise against the will to harm.

In the silence that followed, he could see nothing from his perch; then came the useless burst of gunfire from the opening that signaled the failure of the charge, followed by sporadic shots from someone inside, someone not far from his window; but evidently there were no casualties. He could clearly hear Spencer harangue his troops, and from its continuance and shrillness he concluded its ineffectiveness. It was now day and there had been gunfire and shouting to attract attention, and he was exposed; moreover, standing on a ladder, he looked suspicious. The night watchman could appear; more serious was the risk that one of Spencer's men could walk around the roundhouse, perhaps thinking that, given what a direct charge had produced, an attack through windows ought to be considered.

He replaced the ladder on the ground and hid behind a stranded old freight car, from where he could see Spencer's men outside the roundhouse. With a direct view, it was easy for a man experienced from numerous battles to recognize, on one hand, the sullen frustration mixed with fear that followed an unexpected defeat, and on the other, the agitation of a commanding officer. The men refused to make another charge, refused and refused until the clanging of the second bell, at which point Spencer, practically

hysterical with desperation, ordered them to surround the building. Seconds later, hearing men arrive for work, Burke crawled under the car, which enabled him to watch the band of strikers arrive and, after a brief exchange with some of Spencer's men, rush past them through the opening.

Again silence, or at least nothing loud enough to hear; then, from behind him, the sounds of a large boisterous group approaching, and when it got close he was shocked to see a number of men in uniform—and like the others wielding various sorts of clubs. Calculating instantly, the way one does when confronted with danger, he crawled out and leaped to his feet shouting, "At last! What kept you?" Then he immediately placed himself at their head, loudly commanded them to "forward, march!" and followed the rest of the vigilantes to the roundhouse, where they too pushed past Spencer's men and charged inside.

"At them!" he commanded as he headed straight for one of the strikers, then swerved to let others pass and doubled back to where he surmised the girls were hiding, and there hid under a locomotive to watch with grim satisfaction as the strikers got the beating he believed they deserved. A few minutes later, Spencer charged into the roundhouse with his own men, two of whom he saw head into the stalls and immediately disappear from view, so he hastily crawled to a better location, just in time to see Tommy parry a downward blow that would have crushed his skull. He drew his gun and, when the second assailant attacked from behind, took his shot.

As the fighting suddenly ceased and everyone's eyes searched whatever they could see (except for the strikers, who took the opportunity to escape), he remained motionless and silent between two locomotives. Only when everyone left to consider the situation in safety, did he crawl back under one of them, and there he remained, straining his ears toward the sounds of footsteps and whispered exchanges, many of them, he was pretty sure, involving two female voices. Suddenly he clearly heard this: "You are right, we must flee, and at once. Girls!" With that, voices were raised enough for him to hear the conversation clearly.

He heard a girl, obviously Cady, thank "Mister Moody," possibly the evangelist, and beg him to take her sister while leaving her behind. He heard a young man say, "I will die to keep you safe," and an older man join the sentiment. Another male voice,

deeper in pitch, said that to stay meant defeat, whereas to escape would allow a rescue; and a fourth male voice, more sonorous, clearly practiced, hence no doubt the preacher's, agreed and said he would stay with the girls. There were further exchanges to finalize the plan, until the young man was clearly heard to announce, "Locke will stay."

"To increase the horror of our capture, and to diminish the chances of our release!" cried Cady. "Go, generous young man."

"Have no fear, Locke," said Burke emerging, to everyone's astonishment, from a nearby stall. "I will stand beside Cady and Abigail through their trial, or like you, give my life to the effort." Raising his hands as a precaution, he introduced himself and briefly explained his presence; seeing he was believed, he lowered them, and there followed more conversation until Hobbes realized it was his bullet that had saved Tommy. After Tommy thanked him and Cady urged Locke to leave, he instructed Moody how to surrender, but what was on his mind was how Cady had looked at Locke as she told him to go.

As the men prepared to submit themselves, and the girls whom they placed between them, to whatever an obsessed, renegade railroad detective had in store, everything seemed very quiet, though in fact the yard, as it filled with workers, was multiplying the sounds of industry. "Stay calm," counseled Burke. "I shall not allow this man's scheme, whatever it may be, to succeed."

"I am calm," replied Moody, "for I have placed my hand in God's, and besought him to help us."

"I do not believe I am calm," confessed Cady, "but I will not quake before that beast."

"I am calm," announced Abigail. "You should be calm too, Cads. You will see, Locke will return."

"Mister Jefferson!" shouted Spencer from a safe position, "I now have near a hundred armed men ready and determined to seize the roundhouse by whatever means necessary. For the sake of the girls' safety and security, as well as your own, will you peacefully submit to my authority?"

"He has nowhere near a hundred men," whispered Burke, "not even half that. Do not worry, numbers are meaningless in what is to come."

"Mister Jefferson! I know you hear me. Mister Jefferson!

Jefferson, do not be a fool!"

During the minutes of silence that followed, Burke whispered with a half smile, "They are choosing straws to decide who enters first." In fact, something like that was occurring, and the result was that, if Spencer wished to collect prisoners, he must lead; but he knew full well that Hobbes or Tommy could simply shoot him and walk away, so more minutes were required for further negotiation. Moody quietly sang a hymn and Abigail soon joined by humming the tune, but this was interrupted by a repeat of the war whoop that had commenced the proceedings, and Abigail practically threw herself into Cady's arms. "Stay calm," said Burke reassuringly, "that is just to frighten us, because they do not know where we are."

When, during the silence that returned, Abigail asked why Tommy did not go to the police, an unprepared Burke did not reply, so Moody tried to explain why they would not believe him. Silence again and more minutes passed, then, "Jefferson! You know you cannot escape! Come out with your hands in the air and spare the girls any violence!" Moody turned to Burke, who shook his head tersely. "Jefferson!" shouted Spencer a minute later, "you know you cannot win this contest! Surrender now and I give my word no harm will come to you!" Moody hesitated as long as he could, but when his chest swelled to reply, Burke tapped his shoulder and again shook his head, then whispered some instructions, so when Spencer called a third time, Burke nodded and Moody spoke.

"Is that you, Moody?" Spencer laughed for some reason. "Tommy, what do you say, man to man."

"Mister Jefferson has authorized me to speak on his behalf," replied Moody, adding as instructed, "given your implacable hatred for transients down on their luck." During the ensuing pause, Burke put a hand on his arm to warn him to wait for a reply. After further exchanges, Spencer reluctantly accepted Moody as the interlocutor for the group and they proceeded to the terms of surrender. After promising not to harm Cady or take her away against her will, Spencer of course demanded that everyone present themselves, and Moody of course refused.

The first asked how he could be assured his men would not be shot, and the second asked the same question. The first said the other knew full well that, if even one of his men were shot, nothing could stand between them and their revenge; the second said the

same thing. The truth was that Spencer feared that if even one of his men were shot, the others would flee, while Burke feared that, if he shot even one man, the others would seek revenge and his tiny force would be overwhelmed, and God only knew what would happen to the girls. Eventually it was agreed—since neither party had a choice—that the party inside the roundhouse would remain at the location Moody divulged, with their weapons visible on the floor before them, while Spencer would send in ten unarmed men. Any violation would immediately annul the agreement, "with the aftermath in God's hands."

Abigail said she was frightened; Cady assured her that everyone was frightened. This included the ten men who entered, all with a keen memory of what the sharpshooter they proposed to capture could do. Without a single volunteer, the negotiations over selection had been contentious and at times specious, with the first sensible proposal, that as each group shared a common desire to liberate the roundhouse, each should contribute equally, unanimously rejected. In the end, after each group had been nominated to supply all volunteers, and after each had successfully discovered a basis to decline the honor, the only proposal remaining was the initial one; thus three railroad workers, three vigilantes, and three tramps were chosen by lot. Then everyone turned to Spencer, who stared wide-eyed at one and then another, willing himself neither to retreat nor to tremble before their gazes, rather to become the great man he knew himself to be, and who then, clearing his throat, declared himself proud to be their commander. This commander, however, proposed to lead from the rear, but the men pushed him to the front.

He feared his legs would collapse beneath him, but though ashen-faced he found a way to stiffen his resolve and march proudly into battle—actually two ways. The first was to remind himself that he was about to face the test of history, when great leaders emerge to confront great crises, and the test of survival, where the fittest naturally prevail over the weak, the infirm, and the inferior; the second was to replace his fear with disdain, if not hatred. His enemies, he reminded himself, were the dregs of society, who had either turned their backs on America's boundless opportunities or failed to prosper, who in the first case deserved no mercy, and in the second must not be afforded any, lest America be weakened by the lesser of the race. In this, as Mister Pinkerton

himself had graciously informed him, he had the authority of a prominent Yale University professor, who had recently testified before Congress that the only alternative to survival of the fittest was survival of the unfittest. "Nature's remedies against vice are terrible," he told them. "She removes her victims without pity," and the only alternative to this natural inequality was to replace liberty with 'not-liberty.'

When Moody saw Spencer, he was shocked to hear himself whisper to Burke, "God help me, for I cannot help but note that a single bullet now would forever deliver us from the threat this monster poses."

"Except that it might not. Believe me, I have pondered the question and, but for that, would probably concur. The natural desire for revenge can overcome fear as it aligns with hatred, and Spencer is not the only one with a strong motive to gain the roundhouse. No one can predict how this group—and the larger one nearby that awaits the outcome—would react to a cold-blooded murder under what amounts to a flag of truce."

Among the ten slowly approaching was one of those in uniform, a shopkeeper otherwise, who had grown enraged at the unwillingness of customers—wives of working men, or those who had been working men before the Wall Street crash—who had happily taken food on credit and then declined to settle their debts. When to his shock he saw Burke, he immediately assumed he was some kind of labor agitator who had used him to gain entrance to the roundhouse, and hatred gained on fear as he angrily demanded to know if he wore the uniform honestly.

"Honestly and proudly," replied Burke calmly, "for while I have great sympathy for labor, I have absolutely none for those who refuse to work." His presence, he explained, had nothing to do with the strike, which was simply an unfortunate circumstance that had coincided with his desperate quest to recover the two hapless girls who now stood before them. At this, those who were not already staring at Cady did so, for her beauty and defiance combined with Spencer's titillating innuendo to create quite an attraction, and only as the undisguised appraisal was completed did attention return to Burke, whom all but one considered the sharpshooter, and whom they judged the way they would have judged Spencer, had they been able to think properly.

Spencer, his mind reeling, could find no way to explain how

an army major, in uniform no less, could have appeared from nowhere to infiltrate the roundhouse right under his nose; and there was another question he burned to have answered: "Where are the others?"

"Gone, thanks to the delay you were kind enough to provide, and preparing to return at the appropriate moment. Mister Spencer, I presume."

"Who are you? Why are you here? How did you get here?"

Burke provided a brief and courteous though firm account of himself, ending with this: "As for you, you are a Pinkerton detective, hired by the railroad to do a respectable job, yet you have abandoned it to pursue this girl, upon whom you have made clear you intend to force yourself."

"That is a lie!"

"You know it to be the truth. The very force of your denial corroborates it." While Spencer sputtered denials, he continued loudly, "Believe me, gentlemen, I am fully aware of how you look at this young lady, but to me she is like my daughter, and I assure you that whoever lays so much as a finger on her shall pay with his life. Your only alternative is to kill me first. Do any of you have daughters? Then you understand me."

"Take his gun," ordered Spencer, but when one man ventured a step, Burke too took a step.

"Not yet," he said, and the man immediately retreated. "You will take my gun when I surrender. That is how it is done between gentlemen."

"Take his gun! That is an order!"

Burke appealed to the men to let him go free with his charges, but Spencer countered that, if his men wished to be paid, they would not allow that; when he then offered to surrender in return for safe passage out of the roundhouse, Moody nervously asked what he was doing. "Reducing the enemy's forces from some four dozen to less than one. The rest only want to take control of the roundhouse."

"But your appeal might yet bear fruit."

"And it might not. Attempting it in the middle of a violent labor struggle reduces the odds considerably." Therefore, when Spencer demanded that he submit to his custody, he agreed in return for a renewal of the pledge not to harm Cady or force himself upon her; then he nodded for his gun to be taken and, with

Moody and the girls before him, left the roundhouse.

Spencer at last had Cady under his control, which filled him with joy, or would have, if he were capable of it; as it was, it filled him with satisfaction—except that she was still encumbered. Where three vile tramps had been, there now—inexplicably, impossibly—was a serving officer of substantial rank in the United States Army, a man who thereby outranked him by his own social measure, and who bore his rank with pride and prowess. This challenged him in a way he could never have imagined, strained his mental capacity, and threatened to frustrate his victory at the very moment of triumph.

Exiting the rail-yard was not the problem it might have been, for everyone was too preoccupied to be concerned with the odd parade that marched across their view, so Spencer's fear, that Burke would simply refuse to proceed and dare him to attack in full view (or at least within hearing) of hundreds of workmen, was not realized. There remained the thoroughfares through the center of town that were the only way to the river, where they could divert into a shop, hail a constable, or simply cry for succor; but whereas in fact Moody raised just such possibilities, Burke replied that he would not risk the safety of the girls. "Who knows what such a man might try in a fit of rage?"

"Then what?"

"I have not yet taken his full measure and prefer to await a time when I can appeal to his better nature."

"I am not convinced he has one."

"Does it not go with your calling to believe that everyone has one?"

"At issue is what might be required to appeal to it successfully."

"That is what we are about to discover."

Meanwhile Spencer fretted, 'This block is sparsely populated, he will wait for a crowd; this block is crowded, he will wait for a clear path; the camp is near, he will surely make his move any moment.' When at last the camp lay right below him—after a distance not exceeding a half mile—he unconsciously heaved a big sigh of relief, for oddly, even perversely, he felt safe within the camp, because there he need not worry about how he would explain himself to the police. He would, however, need to explain himself to those who occupied the camp, including those in his

employ, who conducted their 'prisoners' with varying degrees of confusion and doubt and even trepidation, as they reflected on the story that had motivated their employment, which no longer seemed to make sense.

That story involved three vicious outlaws working some kind of evil on two defenseless girls, either despite their father's pathetic attempt to resist or with his active connivance, whereas what they had before them was a gentleman, a minister, and two girls who seemed far more frightened of their rescuers than their captors. To this, Spencer had a simple remedy, and to effect it all he need do was convince his hirelings to guard Burke and Moody long enough for him to talk to Cady, for there had always been two aspects to his infatuation with her. One had expressed itself in her bedroom at night, the other he had yet to make known, in which he presented himself as the kind and honest man he knew himself to be, and in response she came to like him, to like him a lot, to like him so much that she agreed to go with him and marry him and be a respectable housewife, and together they would raise Abigail.

This assumed, of course, that three vile renegades had seized the occasion of their escape to disappear forever, which was what he believed, despite Burke's claim, for he believed he knew the nature of such men. He could not convince himself to the point of certainty, however, so there persisted a residue of anxiety, but a man of his mettle would not be undone by that. As for the other possible disturbance, a vigilante raid on the camp by the good citizens of the town, the odds of that were remote in daylight, as darkness was the preferred time for such activity. So it was with confidence, if not complete confidence, that he led his procession to the anti-strike wing of the camp, the area to the right of the bridge where he had found his men, hoping to avoid alerting the pro-strike wing on the left side.

"Major," he began courteously, "my name is Spencer, Herbert Spencer. As a fellow gentleman of authority, I wish you no harm nor bear you any ill will, and I salute your service to the nation. I hereby request the honor of a word with your niece," for such he assumed Cady to be, "whom I hope to persuade of my honorable intentions." Burke repeated his request that the girl, with the rest of her party, be allowed to go in peace, as they had neither desire nor intent to do anything else. "May I know your name, sir?" replied Spencer.

"My name is Edmund Burke, but you may call me 'major.'"

"Major, before we speak of departures, I ask again for a word with the lady."

"And I ask again to be allowed to leave."

"In due course, sir. May I?"

"No harm shall come to her?"

"I have already given my word on that."

"I do not wish to go with you," objected Cady.

"I only wish to speak with you."

"If you recall, you and I have already spoken."

"I regret the events of yesterday."

Burke asked again for assurances and told Cady in full hearing of everyone that there was no harm in wasting time, since "time is on our side, not his." To Spencer he added that, if he harmed Cady in any way, even slightly, he would dearly regret it.

"Please, sir, have no fear on that account. As to the rest, please understand that it is necessary for my men to retain you as our guest while I converse with the lady."

"You forget one item, boss," said the leader of his posse, who now advanced with a clear hint of derision. "Our job being done, it is payday."

"It is done when I say it is done," replied Spencer rashly; then, amending himself, he added, "Just let me talk to the girl, then we can—"

"Sorry, boss, but we had a deal. Speaking as one fellow gentleman of authority to another, it is time to pay."

"Of course, of course, just as soon as I—"

"Now, Spencer Herbert Spencer." He had merely to gesture with his eyes for his men to leave Burke and encircle Spencer, who saw immediately that he was no longer in command. To regain his position, he reached into a pocket for his billfold while thanking the men for their valiant service, then launched into a brief eulogy for the fallen, holding the bills in plain sight, and offered half again in pay if the men would continue their assistance. "Well, boss, I see no reason to refuse good money—but as I am no good with fractions, double pay sounds better than half again. In advance, this time." Having no choice, Spencer started counting when Burke said he would double that if the men would instead work for him.

"Pay no attention to him," said Spencer. "A man who has lied before will more easily lie again."

"True enough," replied Burke, "except the only liar here is you."

While Spencer struggled to retain composure, the tramp leader said, "Fellow gentlemen of authority, here is what shall occur. As I do not care for the looks of one any more than the looks of the other, we shall take the money first offered. Then we shall await the result of the parley that is about to occur, following which, major, we may ask you to renew your offer. At that point, let us hope you really have the means to pay your bills, because in this country, everyone knows what happens to those who cannot pay their bills."

"See that he keeps her in plain view the whole time."

"You have your orders," said the tramp leader, turning to Spencer.

Spencer encouragingly nodded to Cady, Burke grimly nodded to Cady, Moody with a reassuring smile nodded to Cady, and Abigail stared as if she were watching her sister march to the gallows, while Cady walked off a modest distance with Spencer.

Chapter Fourteen

'Tell her you have good steady employment (not to be taken lightly in the midst of a great depression), a respectable job, with plans to settle down, raise a family. Take her to a restaurant, buy her new clothes, nice clothes that ladies wear; buy her trinkets that girls like, and for Abigail, too. Let the three of them go together—if they ask Burke he will have to consent—they will have a fine lunch and then visit the shops, for even if Harrisburg is not Philadelphia, there must be shops for ladies; and when they return to the camp laden with packages and smiling and tell Burke they have changed their minds, he will have to consent.' Once Cady changed her mind, there would no longer be any conflict. 'I will be nice to you, you shall see. You will have money to buy nice things, a home. Abigail will live with us and go to school.' Burke could give her away at their wedding; Moody could perform the service (if he was ordained). 'You see, I am not a bad man.'

But what if she was too stubborn to see the truth? 'For she is stubborn, that one. Her fiery spirit is what I like about her.' If she were too stubborn, there was only one solution, he must take her away, so she could have more time to see reason. Abigail could be left with Burke. Would he agree to this? Why not? 'For surely he is a man of reason, and has already indicated he dislikes tramps as much as I do. We see eye to eye, he respects my profession as I do his, furthermore he knows Cady must soon be married to keep her out of trouble—and if he wants to keep Abigail, I have no objection.' Viewed from that angle, it seemed reasonable to hope that Burke would consent. The four of them could return to Pittsburgh together—get rid of Moody—where he could court her

properly.

But what if Burke rejected him as a suitor, his mind polluted by disgusting and false allegations perpetrated by Moody in furtherance of his own prurient interest in the girl? There had already been time enough for this to happen; in fact that explained why there had been no attempt at escape along the route, for Moody had no doubt—no doubt—been working his deceit the whole time. Well, if Burke would not see reason, he must be eliminated, that should not be difficult to arrange in a wilderness like this, where savages slew each other over a meal or a woman. The body could be dumped in the river, weighted with rocks or allowed to float downstream.

Would he really do that? Obviously it would be better if Burke consented to the union, he was not a cold-blooded killer, especially not of a man like Burke. He respected Burke, as he knew Burke respected him, for though he acknowledged him as his social better, they were both men of a certain consequence. Burke was not a Moody, for example, a former shoe salesman who was at best his social equal, in the class of those who struggled for respectability. Take the girl out of it and Moody and he did not disagree on much when it came to social attitudes and political principles (other than the man's sentimental call for mercy). No, were Moody not a nuisance and his rival for Cady, there would be no antipathy between them.

With these thoughts, Spencer went to his rendezvous, and though no one could overhear a word of his speech, everyone was watching intently and saw what happened when Cady unexpectedly burst into uproarious laughter. He stood stock-still, stunned as if entranced or waiting for it to pass; and when it did, she loudly proclaimed, "The fool just solemnly proposed that he ask the major for my hand in marriage!" Hilarity, though, quickly became bitterness, and her expression turned to hatred, and she stepped into him to hurl a large gob of spittle at his face from close range. There was a moment when there was no reaction, when time seemed suspended, then, suddenly, as if from nowhere, his creepy calm became rage and he swung at her head with all his strength, knocking her unconscious, and she fell to the ground like a sack of potatoes falling off the back of a wagon.

Immediately, he was filled with regret—his kind of regret, and screamed, "Damn you! Why did you make me do that?"

Even those guarding Burke rushed to her, which allowed Moody and he and of course Abigail to do the same, and as the child sobbed in Moody's arms, he knelt beside her sister and gently slapped her back to consciousness. As her eyes opened and focused, he calmed her, saying, "Do not worry, you are safe now. This is my fault, but I make you two promises." His voice had risen on the last words, and he continued, "This shall not happen again, and the malefactor shall pay. He shall pay dearly."

"Cady, are you all right?" Spencer asked with what sounded like real concern, before a sharp look from Burke arrested his approach and made him retreat.

"What is the matter with you?" said Moody. "I offered to help, but you were scornful." As his voice diminished, he shook his head.

"I am truly sorry, Cady. I... You disappointed me so much, I lost my temper. Let me help you to your feet."

Burke hissed, "Get away from her."

He watched, as everyone did, as Burke helped Cady to her feet and assisted with her first tentative steps. "I am all right," she said almost in a whisper, then gingerly moving a finger near her temple, added, "Is it bad?"

"It is not serious and will soon heal. What is serious and shall not heal is what is now between me and the man I thought might be capable of integrity and civility." He did not even glance toward Spencer. "I owe you an apology, reverend. At least now I have the lay of the land."

A silence fell over the group as Spencer's own men faced conflict in their reactions and uncertainty in how to proceed, and one eventually asked, "Am I the only one to doubt that this man is what he says he is?"

There was no reply, at least not out loud or immediately, but eventually another replied, "I think we can say that, if his story were a bucket, it would not hold water."

"What about it, boss?" asked a third, but Spencer, his mind alternately racing and stalled, remained mute, head down, while a fourth surprisingly came to his defense, pointing out that appearances could be deceiving and one should not rush to judgement.

"Any ambiguity in her spittle or his fist?" asked one who rarely spoke.

"Gentlemen," said Burke, "we shall be leaving soon, and we shall leave you to your thoughts, or whatever passes for thoughts in such small heads. We shall be leaving, that is, after a bout of fisticuffs, an event I expect will not require more than a minute or two." At this he rose and confronted Spencer, and the men reflexively stepped back, and Spencer's eyes gradually regained their focus as he looked at the circle forming. "In the circumstances, Spencer, that seems only fitting, does it not—or would you prefer an exchange of pistol fire?" He removed his coat and handed it to the astonished man closest to him. "Be so kind as to keep your hands out of the pockets. If you require payment, I shall provide one when I have finished. Now then, Spencer, what shall it be, my fist or my pistol?"

The men's spirits seemed to rise at the prospect of entertainment, and Spencer quickly found himself urged to accept the challenge, for when he seemed to demur, they began to jeer. "Put them up, boss, surely no harm will come to a man of your mettle."

Said another, "A man who can knock down a defenseless girl can surely handle an old geezer like this bluecoat," and they all began to laugh.

"What do you say, Spencer," asked Burke. "The men have enough brains to notice that you have a good twenty-year advantage on me." He began to roll up his sleeves.

Spencer appeared dazed, then uncertain, before regaining his composure. "Are we to negotiate in a boxing ring like brutes, or shall we converse like honorable men?"

"We shall converse like honorable men—after you have paid the price for dishonorable conduct. Put up your fists, Spencer, for I am about to do to you what you did to the girl."

"Actually, I will do to you what I did to the girl, and for the same reason, you both unreasonably provoke me—or, as suggested, we can discuss the matter as reasonable men."

"I choose to fight."

"Very well. You are welcome to deliver the first punch." With that, he made a show of lowering both arms, stepping forward, and projecting his chin, and the gambit succeeded, for while Burke would not have hesitated to exact justice from a defenseless coward, a man with the pluck to submit to justice by lowering his defenses affected him. Despite his feelings about the crime and the

man, he retrieved his coat and checked the pockets.

Spencer made a show of calmly walking away with his back to Burke, and when he judged they were out of earshot he turned and said, "I believe we share the same attitude toward these idlers." Burke made no reply. "Would you agree that, so long as they remain in our midst, the shiftless are a constant menace?" Still he made no reply. "Is this not the alien menace we have feared, ever since the communist revolt in Paris six years ago?"

After a long pause, Burke replied, "I agree that they present a direct threat to society—but I fail to see what relevance..."

"With no end in sight to this economic depression, they will not disappear of their own accord. Something must be done."

"You could house them."

"I do not believe that is the solution you favor. I believe you know what I mean."

"So what? Again, what possible..."

"We understand each other."

"We do not. I understand that you have no choice but to leave the girl alone."

"I have erred, sir, I admit it. I have hurt her, for which I am deeply regretful."

"Your regret does not interest me. I am taking my charges and leaving."

"I humbly request a second chance. I am certain that if I could just get her to understand..."

"What you need to understand is that the girl has no interest in you, none. Could anything be more clear?"

"No, sir, not from a mere girl, when girls are so changeable by nature."

"Not where you are concerned. This is now obvious to everyone but you."

"Please, one more chance."

"Goodbye, Spencer. You are pathetic and disgraceful."

"If you try to leave, the girl will be harmed."

Burke stopped in his track and turned. "Is there no bottom to your despicable..."

"Oh, it is not me, sir, but these scoundrels, who have taken it into their head that your niece is... Well, I would rather not mention what they think. Spending the night in the company of not one but three of their own—and two of them redskins... As you

know, men of this type are a public menace, and not for nothing do we speak of the tramp evil." Burke turned again and studied the men, all of whom were studying him, or Spencer and him, with what intent or expectation he could not say, for Spencer had correctly surmised that he neither respected nor trusted them. "You see, major, we are in this together, comrades in arms one might say, for they are savages. As you are still in uniform, I presume you have experience with savages."

"I do," he replied unwillingly.

"Much experience?"

"Too much. Far too much."

"They are lazy, incorrigible, cowardly. Utterly depraved. Savages."

"The savages I fought are not cowardly. That is the one charge of which they are not guilty."

"I misspoke there, major, for this lot too, which is why I cannot let you take the risk of trying an escape with the girl. Come to that, I do not like the way they look at you, either."

"They look at me as I look at them." With that he reflexively turned with a scowl to survey the men again. "To think that we inhabit the same country."

"There precisely you have put your finger on the problem. Too many immigrants, if you ask me. And the worst part is that so many are the wrong kind. May I ask, are you Catholic?"

"I should say not."

"Too many Catholics. The damned Irish, trying to turn America into a papal colony."

"That is a step too far for my taste."

"But you agree they are social dynamite, pouring through the open gates."

"We can agree that too many of the wrong kind of people are coming. They threaten freedom itself."

"Some say democracy has failed because of our inability to control immigration."

"That it has failed seems clear. As for why it is has failed... There is a lot wrong with this country." Facing Spencer directly, he said, "Circumstances might force us to ally against a common enemy, but I despise your politics as I despise you. You do not wish to conserve America, but to refashion it according to some radical fantasy that is actually a repudiation of its values."

"And you, major," replied Spencer not at all fazed, "would take us back a century as if our founding were our one and only moment of greatness."

Again Burke turned to the men and repeated his offer to double their pay in return for safe passage and restraint of Spencer, but the latter quickly walked ahead of him and asked how anyone could know Burke was really Cady's uncle. "They do not act affectionately toward each other, no, they observe each other as strangers." Burke started to explain why the girls did not know him, but Spencer interrupted. "Look at her, gentlemen. If she were your niece, would you let her pass the night with three outlaws, and two of them redskins?"

"Hell, no! It is enough to make your skin crawl," replied one, and others quickly joined.

Burke tried to return the men to the indisputable fact that Cady wanted nothing to do with Spencer, but the latter warned them not to let a confidence-man play them for fools and, striding to Cady, demanded to know if he was really her uncle. When she looked flustered, he proclaimed that the major was an impostor and nothing could be more obvious. Much shouting erupted again and Burke, exchanging dismayed looks with Moody, was greatly disheartened about the prospects of a speedy and safe exit. "For God's sake," he cried, "do you not see what kind of man this is?"

"We do, major," said the tramps' leader, "and we do not much like what we see—but we like you even less."

"But you have seen the girl—"

"Indeed we have, and think we might like to prolong her visit with us. Would we not, boys?" This provoked a round of cheers and comments, at the end of which he added, "You, on the other hand, are free to go."

"No, no, you cannot let him go," cried Spencer in alarm. "He will go straight to the police."

"Have no fear, girls," said Burke, "I will not leave without you."

"Nor will I," added Moody.

As Spencer conferred privately with the tramp leader, Burke and Moody further reassured the girls, both of whom seemed almost numb emotionally. They were interrupted when Spencer approached to apologize to Cady for any offense he might have given or harm he might have caused; then he apologized to Burke

for the same, but to Moody he said he did not apologize, as he had not caused him any harm (rather, the preacher had caused it to himself) and, further (given Moody's 'abominable' behavior), did not care whether he had given offense. "Major," he concluded, "are you aware that, on the train here, this man confessed that he was as attracted to your niece as I am?"

"That is a disgraceful distortion of the truth!"

"Save your righteous indignation, preacher. The major can see as well as I do, how you look upon the girl when you think no one will notice."

"That is outrageous. Think, man, what you do."

"Now, major, do you begin to comprehend the complexity of your position?"

"I will never give myself to you, never," said Cady. "If it were not for Mister Moody, God only knows what would have happened to us."

"Please, miss," replied Spencer gently, "you are young and inexperienced and cannot be expected to see through the wily machinations of a man with lust in his heart."

"There is only one man here to fit that description and..."

"Not so!" exclaimed Spencer, before quickly calming himself. "Please, miss. Cady. I swear I will be good to you. I admit to a disposition to anger, but do you not also have it? No, that is not... What I mean to say is that your more pure nature will calm the excesses of my..."

"Enough," said Burke. "Do you not see..." Before he could find the words he sought, he was seized from behind by strong arms, as was Moody, their hands pulled back and bound at the wrists, then they were tethered to a sturdy post.

"Do not be alarmed," said Spencer, "this is merely a simple precaution, while I speak to the lady again." Turning to Abigail he continued, "Do not fear me, child, for no harm will ever come to you from me. If your sister were to consent to marry me, I would like you to live with us. Would you like that?" When she was unable to reply, Cady told him not to terrify her sister any more than he already had, and insisted that any remarks he must utter should be directed only to her. "As you wish, my dear. Please, do not look like that, for I swear to you before these witnesses that you are dear to me. If only I could..." He seemed in the grip of an honest frustration, which he struggled to master. "Listen," he

pleaded, laying his hand firmly upon her arm, a movement she reversed no less firmly, "I was never happy! I have had a hard life, you have no idea."

As a youth, he said, he had had a problem with drink, which had caused him to get into fights and be expelled from school, and he could not hold a job. His mother threw him out of the house, declared she had already endured one drunk and would not abide another, which forced him to leave town and live a wandering life, without friends or purpose. "When war came, though, I answered the call."

"No, you did not. You lie and expect me to..."

"Very well, I could not go, but that was because I had to care for my mother."

"The same mother who threw you out?"

"I had brothers and sisters, I was the eldest, I had to go home," he said, also that he forgave his mother. It could not last, however, he ran afoul of the law, spent time in jail. "The judge publicly humiliated me, as if it was my fault I had bad luck." From his account, it was clear that he nourished an implacable hostility, and where others sought conviviality, he sought vengeance. Eventually he was hired as a policeman and discovered he had a talent for the work, for example he could spot a pickpocket at a distance. He took pleasure in bringing miscreants to justice and was commended for his dedication; then came luck at last, when he was hired by no less than the great Allan Pinkerton himself, for his detective agency, the first of its kind in the nation. He found a reason to return home, let people know how he had risen in the world. "They feigned indifference, but I could see how impressed they were." Nonetheless, he was infuriated.

Seeing that he would stalk her till he had exacted revenge for the injuries he claimed, Cady again offered to go with him on condition that he immediately release the others; but Abigail, sobbing, refused to leave without her, and Burke and Moody both loudly declared the same. Said Spencer, "There is no need for you to martyr yourself. Do you not see how happy we could be? I do not wish to harm you, I wish to marry you."

Cady gulped. "When I marry, it will be for love."

"In time you will learn to love me."

"Do you pretend to love me? I will spare you the effort to reply. You may think you do, but you do not. You confuse love

with something else."

"You are wrong, I am a good man."

"Perhaps you could be, but you are not. You are perverted by hateful ideas that nourish the meanest of impulses."

"Please come with me, I swear I will be good to you."

"Mister Spencer," she replied loudly enough to be overheard (while stepping out of arm range), "there is nothing you can say to change my mind, I will not have you."

"You must marry me."

"To assuage your thirst for vengeance?" Again she gulped. "What pleasure would you find in sharing your house with a wife you do not love?" The Pinkerton made no reply for nearly a minute, but bent his fierce looks on Cady's face, in such wavering glances that her eyes sank with shame that she had encountered an expression no chaste female might endure. "You are a monster," she whispered.

Almost from their arrival, but certainly since Spencer's attack on Cady, his prisoners and the negotiations involving them had drawn the curiosity of others within the camp. Singly or in pairs, the rumors of activity had drawn them to the spectacle, which they had observed as if at some outdoor performance; now, however, at least one of them was moved to comment. "Hank!" he shouted, "what in hell are you doing? Admit it, you were had. Now you have got your pay, why not let the girl go? Do you mean to marry her yourself?" This provoked laughter, which the posse leader did not enjoy, and he approached in a manner that would have intimidated most, but this one did not budge; he did not even stop smiling as those nearby provided additional space.

"I shall do what I damn well please," he replied so that everyone could hear.

"I told you last night it was a fool's errand. But all right, you have jingle in your pocket, while mine are empty, so maybe the fool is me—but how many acts does this melodrama have, and how does it end?"

"How do you think it ends, Mister Carnegie? With us becoming millionaires!"

"There now, Mister Henry Clay Frick, that is right smart of you—but think: To prosper, you can pick a man's pocket, but a millionaire must pick everyone's pocket. Now here is this fellow over there who has offered to pay you twice, and twice have you

refused his money. Why, that is an insult."

"By God, Andy, you are right. My apologies, sir," he called, turning to Burke, "I shall be happy to take your money too."

"As I shall be happy to pay it, if only we can come to terms."

"Here are the terms, major. Your hands are bound, while mine are free, so I shall just have my mates rifle your pockets—which is only just, for that is what we did last night to Mister Ants-in-his-pants." With the merest of gestures, he sent his men, and Burke, seeing no purpose in useless resistance, submitted.

"Hank!" the other called again, "do you want to be a millionaire or not? What about the preacher?"

"You were always the thorough one." With another gesture, Moody's pockets were also emptied.

"Have you no respect for a man of God?" complained Burke, but one of the men replied that they had the same amount of respect for preachers as preachers had for them.

"That is just," said Moody, "but think how it is that I am here."

"Taken by force if I recall."

"No, good man, I am here willingly, most willingly."

"No one comes here willingly," said another with bitterness.

"Ah," said Moody, "but that is precisely my calling, to go where no one goes willingly—or perhaps I should say 'happily.' The Good Book brings light to dark places. To you, if you can open your heart to truth."

"Well, gentlemen," interrupted Spencer, "now that you have matters well in hand and have been more than sufficiently compensated, it is time for me to take my leave. It has been a pleasure and I wish you well." He had spoken in a loud, oratorical voice, addressing everyone, not least himself, and with a flourish he turned and headed up the embankment, but not before grabbing Cady's arm and pulling her with him. As she of course resisted, he pulled harder, while still trying to maintain a facade. "Come, my dear, it is time we were off." Abigail screamed and ran to grab Cady's free arm; Moody and Burke struggled against their ropes, the first shouting warnings, the second obscenities.

It was a woman who blocked his path, a large woman who looked far older than she was. "Why you are no more than a bit of cow dung I used to kick off my shoe in the barn. Take your hand off that girl and be gone with you. Be quick about it, before I lose

my temper."

"Believe me, stranger, you will not like it if she does," called a skinny old man bearing years of malnutrition.

"That be no stranger," said another approaching, "that be the son of a bitch that took Hank and his boys to the yard."

"Get out of my way, all of you!" said Spencer, pulling his gun.

"You pull that trigger, mister, you might as well have shot yourself." This was Frick, the leader, who stood a short distance away, his own gun at the ready.

"Well now," said the woman, "give this fool credit for bringing the two of you together, which I never thought I should live to see."

"You know what they say," he said, "politics makes for strange bedfellows."

"Be careful who you call a bedfellow," replied the other with a half smile, as he took Spencer's gun. "Why, that is a fine piece—too fine for the likes of you," and he put it in his belt.

"He has got the major's gun too," said Frick.

"Not any longer."

Cady was rubbing her arm mechanically while Abigail stood beside her sobbing, until suddenly she took notice and held her tightly. "I am so sorry, Abby, I am so sorry, please stop crying. This is all my fault, if only..."

When Abigail had wiped her tears, she replied, "This is not your fault, Cads, it is the fault of that man."

"Indeed it is, girlie," said the woman, "so do not be troubling yourself over it. If we had to take responsibility for every damn fool thing men do..."

By this time, Spencer was being escorted back down the embankment, where the crowd, already swollen with spectators, was swollen with more. "Major," asked Moody, "may I make a suggestion?" Though he had deferred to him from the beginning, his improbable defeat by Spencer induced the preacher to assert himself.

"For God's sake, preacher, make one, for can you not see that my plan has failed miserably?"

"Surely it is evident to you that no one here likes the Pinkerton. They know he hoodwinked them, meanwhile they have all the money, so there is nothing further to offer them."

"Then why do they not release us?"

"Because they are fascinated by the girls and wish to detain them, especially, we must acknowledge, the older one."

"What would you have me do? I have tried—"

"Tell your story. They have not really heard it, especially those who have only just arrived."

"What story?"

"The story of how you came for the girls, and the trials along the way."

"Why would I...?"

"People respond to stories, major, much more than to reasoned arguments."

"Let me tell you the story of how I came to retrieve the girls!" he began awkwardly, addressing the crowd as he would a regiment; and with a glance at Moody (who answered with a reassuring nod), he continued. "I made a deathbed promise to their father, my commanding officer and best friend, to protect his children. They were cruelly treated in an orphanage, so I came to look for them. I tracked them all the way here from Philadelphia, the whole time uncertain whether this man was their rescuer or their captor."

When he stopped abruptly, Moody whispered, "That certainly summarizes the tale, but perhaps you could add some particulars. People like that."

Nodding abruptly, Burke started again. "Let me tell you how I determined that this Pinkerton was the girls' nemesis."

"Explain 'nemesis,'" whispered Moody.

"Was their enemy, not their friend," continued Burke loudly. "For years I served as regimental staff officer to their father, Colonel Smith."

"Did you fight for the Union, major?" shouted someone.

"That we did. Like many of you, I suspect. We saw action in..." Moody whispered that that might be too much detail. "When it was over, we kept the peace during Reconstruction, until we were transferred to the Plains. It was there, in a campaign against the Kiowa, that Adam—Colonel Smith—met with the injury that turned fatal, God rest his soul. I knew he had two young daughters back home and that his wife had died giving birth to the second one. Initially they were raised by his sister, but when the younger one, Abigail her name, was old enough, the pair were sent to live with one of his wife's cousins near Philadelphia. There they remained till he died, when they were transferred to a nearby

orphanage. Also at that time, I retired from active duty."

With the merest hint of impatience, Moody asked if he could get to the point. "Why did I not take custody of the girls when Adam died, as I had promised? That is the cross I must bear. My wife, you see... After our daughter succumbed to the pox, we never tried again." Turning to face the girls, his voice unconsciously dropping, he added, "I should have taken custody of you. Every day you were in that orphanage, I blamed myself for not taking you into our home, to... to raise you as our own... as I had promised Adam at his deathbed—but you see... My wife and I both, we were so... We just could not bring ourselves to do it."

"But you did do it," said Abigail.

"I did?"

"Abby is right. You did come for us."

"I took my sweet time about it."

Cady smiled for the first time in what seemed forever to her. "You did cut it pretty close."

"Judge for yourselves, good people," said Moody to the crowd, "now that you hear both stories, which holds the truth, and which has none."

"You see," said Burke, joining him, "their aunt could not care for them indefinitely, and as their father's executor I was sending payments to the orphanage—but we all know what becomes of most female orphans, and I could not let that happen to my best friend's children."

"Tell what happens to them," whispered Moody with a nudge.

"They sink into the most desperate poverty in the slums of our cities. If they are lucky, they sweat in some fetid workshop. If not... You all know the slums are filled with brothels."

"What are brothels?" whispered Abigail.

Burke turned back to Cady. "Why did you not seek out your aunt when you left the orphanage?"

"She was not kind to us."

"Did she visit you there?"

"Never."

Moody nudged him again. "It is working, tell about yesterday's adventure." No sooner had Burke begun, however, than Spencer interrupted with his counter-attack.

Chapter Fifteen

For Spencer there was a moment in which it suddenly didn't matter if he won Cady, for what he could not get from her he could get from another; but when that curious moment passed, the full ferocity of desire to win the prize and defeat his adversaries reclaimed its possession and he struck with blunt determination. "Aha! So you are not her uncle! Did I not say so? As you have lied about that, you must prove the other. If you are guardian or executor or whatever lawyer's term you use to confuse us, there must be a legal document. Show us the paper, major." It was a gamble, but ferocity takes gambles, and this one succeeded, for everyone could see at once that Burke had no such paper. "Do you see, men? You know who I am. What do we know about him?"

The discomfort written across Burke's face was not because he could not handle Spencer, but because his lack of respect for those he saw as slackers and ne-er-do-wells made his simple task seem impossible, which was to demonstrate how his story made complete sense, while Spencer's, to the extent it was even coherent, made none. For Moody, in contrast, nothing was easier, so seeing Burke's discomfort, he quickly applied his considerable skill and experience to the task of ingratiation; but Spencer knew he could not allow him to reach his stride and interrupted viciously. "This one is, if anything, even less trustworthy! A man who confesses lust for the woman he pretends to shelter. Look at him, is that the face of an honest man?" As everyone stared, Moody could see that, one after another, they began to regard him as one whose honesty was now in question.

Seizing the advantage, and swollen with confidence, Spencer

asked a question: Having already risked their lives to rescue two hapless girls, and having lost seven brave and good men, were they now to surrender to those responsible for the tragedy, and on the strength of nothing more than what they liked to call their 'word of honor?' "Seven men," he repeated, "seven good men. And you have the vile perpetrators within your grasp, yet you shrink from justice. What are we, if we allow justice to be trampled like so much refuse?"

"Fine," countered Moody, "let us speak of justice, for that is a topic—"

"Major," challenged one from the crowd, interrupting as though Moody had not spoken, "how many of those seven men were your doing?"

"Only the last," he replied without hesitation, "for I had just arrived."

Moody's heart sank, for he immediately realized, as Burke did not, that this refusal or inability to control his temper and focus on the issue at hand had all but sealed the verdict against him, and Spencer shouted, "He killed one of you!" before he could think of how to repair the damage. "Did you hear that? The man just confessed to murder!"

"You are a liar and a scoundrel," shouted Burke. "I saved a man's life. What was I supposed to do, let the brute slay the one who was fighting to protect my charges?"

"Major," whispered Moody in desperation, "I fear such talk is not helpful."

One from the opposing side of the camp, who had been watching the spectacle, shouted, "Hold on a minute! Now we learn you followed that bastard into battle? In fact you are brutes and deserve what you got."

"I say you deserve what you get," threatened one of the accused.

"Try it," said the man, as he stepped forward and began to furl his sleeves.

"We were trying to rescue the girls!" shouted another.

"And a bloody good job you made of it," countered another.

"He is a savage," hissed Cady, "a barbarous and ignorant savage, and knows not what he does."

"Murderer!" shouted Spencer with a kind of transported glee. "That is what he is and you all know it. He is that arrogant bastard

of an incompetent officer who flung his men into a suicide charge while he watched. Remember him?"

"You did not even serve!" shouted Moody, but no one was listening to him.

"Who here knows of what I speak?"

"I do," croaked a man with a shattered voice, a missing eye, and half his face crushed.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

The man unconsciously took a few steps toward Burke, his one eye trained on him, and something about it ended the fighting and the shouting as it gathered everyone's attention. Burke asked if he did not understand that Spencer had hired men to hunt down three of their own kind, men who had nobly taken it upon themselves, at risk to their very lives, to defend two defenseless children. "Their own kind!" sneered Spencer. "Two red savages and an injun-lover! That your own kind, men?"

"Hell no!" his men replied. Those who were not his men did not answer, but also did not disagree. Even those who despised Pinkertons, distrusted every word Spencer said, could not imagine how two girls came to be in the middle of some blood feud, and had no reason to doubt Burke, even they detested his haughtiness, nursed angry memories, and resented being classed with Indians.

"His story is too fantastic to believe," continued Spencer. "How gullible does he think we are? How do we know that uniform is really his? For all we know, he took it off a dead officer."

"Now that we have bound them," asked the man with one eye, "why not hang them?"

The men who had gone with Spencer to the roundhouse, who opposed the strike, were ironically those who would normally have been most deferential to Burke, for they believed ordinary people should leave policy to policy-makers; but his adamant refusal to placate them was too galling to be accepted. Their very antipathy to Burke might have provoked sympathy among their adversaries, those who believed in social improvement and thus supported the strike after all other remedies had failed; but Burke looked to them like the enemy of all that, as indeed he was. As for how the girls were regarded, they had been forgotten. "Yes," agreed Spencer, just loud enough to be heard, "justice has been denied too long. It is time."

As the men, united at last, surged forward, Abigail screamed at them to stop, and they actually did. "He is a bad man," she shouted. "Everything he says is a lie. Why do you not see that?" Her chest heaved and she was sobbing, and unable to speak further she hugged Moody and buried her face against him.

Unable to pet her hair, he gazed at the top of her head, then slowly raised his eyes. "'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make thee free,'" he recited calmly, and added with a smile, "'And a little child shall lead them.' My friends, can there be justice without truth?" He paused to look down at Abigail and gently asked her to raise her chin and, when they were looking at each other, asked her to dry her tears. "Do not fear, child. Justice will indeed be done here."

"And I say the sooner the better," sneered Spencer, but Moody told him the time had come for him to shut his mouth, and such was Abigail's effect that he read on the faces of the crowd that he had better comply.

"Friends, Providence sent these two extraordinary children to me when I was preaching on a sidewalk outside the railroad yard in west Philadelphia. They were hungry, frightened, without shelter or protection—yet so brave. That was all of two days ago, though it seems more like two months." Cady moved to stand beside him and he smiled at her too and then returned to the crowd. "I fed them, and after lunch they joined me, and we sang together, and the crowd swelled and joined in the singing. Then that man appeared. He bamboozled me, just as he did you."

"How did he do it?"

"Easily, just as with you—for, you see, we are made to trust. That is why it is so reprehensible to willfully betray it, especially when folks are desperate—and folks are desperate. In my work, I meet thousands of people, many thousands, all desperate. They are ordinary people, good people just like you, who worry where their next meal is coming from, who worry about their futures and about what is happening in this country, and to this country."

"What would you know about that, preacher?"

"It is true, the one who sees hunger does not know it like the one who is hungry—but who is not hungry in some way? I see hunger every day, wherever I go. Do you think I have never been in a tramp camp before? Would you like me to describe each of them?" Apparently the sudden quiet of the crowd had attracted

more spectators, until the entire camp now listened to Moody and gazed at the girls who flanked him, and he was far too experienced to fail to notice. "Friends, when these girls found me, I saw them as a gift and accepted them as a happy charge. That man also found me, and his eyes were bright too, but not from heaven. Alas, I did not see this until it was too late. We, the girls and I, ran from him all the way from Philadelphia, but in his hunger and despair he pursued us. He trapped us and we fought for our lives. You have been cruelly used and terrible consequences have followed. Let us now seek peace."

The sudden sound of Spencer clapping shattered the mood and transferred attention from Moody to him. "Preachers have glib tongues, but since when do they care about people like us? He speaks of truth, yet refers to two helpless children. Well, look at the older one and ask yourself this: Why would a girl who looks like that be plying the sidewalk—by his own account—across from a rail-yard—and then put herself at the disposal of no less than five men? You want truth? She spent the entire night with them! I shall not discuss how she lured me to her bedroom."

"Liar!" shouted Cady. "It was you! Show them your arm!"

Moody shook his head sadly. "Good God, Spencer, have you no shame?"

Spencer snorted. "You are a fine one to talk. Do you think I forgot your own confession to me? Repeat it here, so all may judge whether it is not you who has unspeakable designs on this girl."

"What in hell is going on here?" cried one of the newer arrivals. "Has it already been forgotten that this is the one who concocted a phony tale to send a bunch of our comrades to a needless death?"

"If that is so," countered another, "why does your mouth water every time you look at her?"

"Who here still believes the Pinkerton's story?" No one raised a hand. "Well then?"

"That he lied does not mean the others speak true. Who can say what is true and what not? All I know is what I see."

"And what do you see?" asked the woman who had earlier come to Cady's assistance. "I see a young woman, barely out of childhood. How old are you, dear? Sixteen. The girl is sixteen. For the love of God, can you men not leave her alone?" She went to Cady and stood beside her; no one else moved. "Sisters, will you

not stand with us?" For there were other women in the crowd, but no one moved.

Moody said, "I will tell you what is true, the truth is true. The truth lies in your heart, you have only to consult it. Now you have before you two helpless creatures who require assistance to reach safety and two men who claim to be offering that assistance. One has lied and paid men to do his dirty work, the other has risked his life—he risks it now—to resist. Men have been killed for this, are more to die?"

"Perhaps he should ask who turned seven men into corpses," objected Spencer. "Are we to find those who perpetrated these vile acts innocent?"

"Major," said Moody, "tell how you finally determined Spencer to be the villain."

He turned to the crowd as if it were a jury. "It was when I saw one of those under attack risk his life to save the girls. All that day I had been trying to be certain..."

"Never mind, major," said the woman, "for it should be as clear to you that you have no friends here as it is to us that you seek none. Never mind, our loyalty is to these innocent girls. Is that not right, sisters? I say, is that not right, sisters?"

"Do not be poking your large nose into a matter that does not concern you, Ernestine Rose. This is an affair among men, and men shall settle it."

"The hell it is."

"Hush, now, before I tan your backside."

"If you mean to try, you had best bring six good men with you. But wait, from a woman's eye there are not six good men in this whole camp." This provoked laughter, especially in sections of the crowd that had thus far been silent, like the youth, and the whole devolved into pockets of heated discussion. Moody took the opportunity to discretely request a word with Spencer, and the latter approached, assuming he was ready to concede, an error of which he was immediately disabused.

"For the sake of heaven, man, think what you do, before it is too late. Only stop to think, she is but a child, though she verges on womanhood."

"Verges? Look at her, preacher. I would say it does more than verge."

Moody shook his head. "And what of Abigail?"

"I have already offered to take her with us."

Trying another tack, he noted that Spencer had given his word not to harm Cady or force her, yet had already harmed her. Would he now force her? He retorted that it was not his fault, for Moody had falsely claimed in the roundhouse to be speaking for Tommy, therefore their agreement was invalid; and even as Moody importuned him, he left and went straight to Frick and told him it was time to end the judicial farce.

Frick shrugged. "It is the judge's role to pronounce sentence."

"As they are guilty of murder, should they not pay the ultimate price?"

Frick stared at him. "Would you have me execute them in cold blood?"

Spencer smiled. "It occurs to me that freak with one eye had the right idea. How about lynching?"

"Lynching. Are you insane?"

"You people have been threatened with it. I read in the newspapers that vigilance committees all over this area have threatened it. After dark you can weight them with rocks and put them in the river."

"Do you have any idea how expensive that suggestion is?"

"I will pay whatever you ask."

"You lack sufficient funds."

Spencer sank into thought and found an idea. "Everything I have, plus tonight the girl is yours."

"What happened to marriage and home sweet home?"

"If I cannot have the one, I shall take the other."

By this time shouting could be heard everywhere, with Ernestine importuning women to join her, factions of tramps angrily disputing, and a gang of young toughs rousing itself to some kind of mayhem. Frick went to Carnegie to complain that Spencer had lost his mind and ask how 'this farce' could be ended. "I think you know how—and the sooner the better, because this place is getting set to explode." Frick nodded, turned, and walked to Burke, caught his eye briefly and drew his pistol; when he raised it a gunshot was heard and he fell dead.

All eyes immediately scanned the road, the bushes, the bridge for the hidden sharpshooter, and everyone with a gun grabbed it while looking for a place to aim; so it was that, incredibly, no one saw Locke race into their midst from a flank until he was upon

Spencer, whom he felled with a single blow. He then pulled his knife and gun and confronted those who turned to face him but were, for the moment, too stunned to act; while at the same time, Hobbes raced to the scene from the opposite flank and Tommy emerged from his covert, both with guns in hand. While this again distracted, indeed fascinated the crowd, Locke quickly cut the ropes binding Burke and Moody, then advanced on Carnegie. "You have guns. Deliver them now."

Carnegie had his own gun aimed at Locke's chest, from point-blank range, but so stunned was he by such carelessness of danger, such foolhardy recklessness with one's own life, that he could not bring himself to pull the trigger. All those in the crowd who wished to watch the pending gunfight rather than be caught in the middle of it, which was everyone not directly involved, hastily withdrew. At the same time, Hobbes and Tommy drew closer, as did Burke, though he was unarmed, while Moody pushed the girls in the opposite direction and ordered them to stand behind him; then he too drew his pistol, though he held it discreetly at his side, for no one had thought to search him for weapons. "The first one who so much as moves a finger will be dead before he can squeeze," said Tommy. "You have all just seen what I can do."

This threat, crazy as it seemed, given the balance of power, was in fact not so crazy because the three confronted Spencer's men from different directions and Moody had now raised his pistol, while Burke, possessed by fury, looked menacing even with empty hands. "The second one is dead, too," said Hobbes, "and you saw in the roundhouse what I can do."

"The third one is dead, too," said Locke.

"And the fourth," said Moody.

"And I swear I shall not fall till I have taken the fifth with me," said Burke.

"Why do you not shoot?" called one of the teenage hoodlums from his spectator's perch. "They cannot get you all."

"Only the first five for sure," said Hobbes. "If I were you, I would be six or better. Who wants to start?"

"Your gun, mister," said Locke to Carnegie, sheathing his knife to free a hand.

"Hell, I have no dog in this fight," he replied, delivering his pistol. Locke quickly shoved it in his belt and motioned for the others, and he produced those as well, which Burke took. There

was a stirring and all eyes watched Spencer as he regained consciousness, struggled to his feet, and clumsily went for a gun which was not there.

Tommy approached, pointing his gun at his still-dazed face, and caught him with a left hook that knocked him unconscious again. "I would say it is not personal, except it is. Ladies and gentlemen, the situation is simple: Remove the Pinkerton and there is no quarrel here. We can all put away our guns and go about our business. You are welcome to whatever cash is still on his person." He approached two men who had their guns nervously pointed at him and said he was going to holster his gun and they would do the same. "Do you see, I have put mine away, now do not make my friends have to kill you, you do the same." This done, he said everyone could now follow suit, asked Hobbes if he agreed, and the latter ostentatiously raised his gun and slowly holstered it, his eyes never leaving two men nearby to see that they did the same.

When everyone had complied—everyone except Moody who, receiving no one's attention, merely returned his to his side—Tommy continued: "Now, let us talk to each other as what we are, which is tramps, for I am a tramp like you. There is not a camp along the line I do not know. Sometimes I am welcome, sometimes I am tolerated, and sometimes they run me off the place, because they do not like my friends." Indicating Hobbes, he said, "This man saved my life. He and I have been through a lot together, and I can tell you there is no man I would rather have beside me. His son there is the finest youngster you ever want to meet. Maybe you find that strange in an Indian. That is your affair and I will not meddle with it. But if anyone meddles in my affair, there will be trouble." Pointing to Burke, who was trying to calm himself, he said, "Now this man has come to take those two girls home," and pointing to Spencer, who was again struggling to regain his feet, said, "and that man has other plans for them, which are too repugnant to describe."

"Say, mister," interrupted a voice from the crowd, "you speak well enough to run for office..."

"Please do not insult me," replied Tommy, and a few smiled.

"The thing is, how do we know anything you say is true? Suppose the one in uniform is an impostor, the preacher his accomplice, both of them in league with you and your two injun friends, and those girls either deluded or coerced."

"We are not deluded," replied Cady. "These men have proven their honesty too many times already, at risk to their lives. The only one deluded is that one there, and anyone who believes him."

A man in the crowd, however, expressed doubt about this version of events, precisely because it sounded so plausible. "It is all very smooth and, to my ears, sounds rehearsed." He was immediately challenged by another, who asked if they were supposed to take the word of a railroad detective over one of their own, to which the first responded, "You sound to me like one of those labor agitators." A third threw up his hands at what he called the absurdity of continuing to accept the story of a man whom they knew for certain was a liar. A fourth voice, raspy from a lifetime of heavy smoking, was heard from the rear, which gradually grew louder as an old man pushed his way to the front and said to Tommy, "I saw you. I saw the three of you, in Altoona."

No one knew how old Big Ears was, only that he looked ancient (and had uncommonly large ears), but it was clear his dilapidated physique was as much the work of a dissipated life as anything else, his hands shaking from palsy, his face veined by hard drinking. Summoning his limited breath, he said he had seen them get run out only minutes before a large mob of vigilantes had arrived to disperse the entire camp. "Ironic, is it not, you suffer hardly a scratch while the rest of us get our heads busted? Some went west, some east, most of us came here, now you appear a few days later."

"That would explain the warm welcome," said Hobbes.

Tommy said they had heard the ruckus and returned to see what was happening, then had watched everybody stanch their bleeding as best they could and head for the yard to hop freights. "We waited till you were gone, then boarded our own. Took us to Philadelphia, where we happened to see a railroad inspector pull a gun on Reverend Moody here, for trying to protect these girls. Ever see a railroad inspector with a gun?" Big Ears said he could not say he had. "What do you think of Pinkertons coming in here?"

"I do not much care for Pinkertons. I do not much care for injuns, either. You know, time was we could ride in boxcars in return for seasonal work."

"That and busting unions."

"Maybe. Now there are too many of us and too little work, so

they crack down—but we were too many for them in Altoona. I reckon they just wanted us out of there, so they let us ride the roofs." To be polite, Tommy asked how long he had been hopping freights, and Big Ears brushed his hair with a hand and looked at the sky, as though he were trying to recollect, but in the end he said, "This camp is a powder-keg and that young lady is the match. One look at her is enough to turn a man's mind to mush."

"What has she got to do with this camp?"

"Nothing, so far as I can tell—but she brought a Pinkerton here, and the army here, and she brought you back with your injuns, and this altercation looks to me like more is at issue than who gets the girl. Now everyone thinks he has something to say about it."

"Do you have something to say about it?"

"I am too old for such tomfoolery. Once upon a time, maybe..." Suddenly he turned on the crowd and croaked, "Every one of you is a damned fool! You want to crack heads—there was not enough in Altoona—go ahead. You think tearing each other apart will fix this country, I will not stand in the way." As if he had given them permission, the men began to separate into the two opposing factions and started the exchange of insults and taunts that are the obligatory prelude to brawling. As the women and children got out of the way, Big Ears started laughing. "Crazy as bats!" he proclaimed with a kind of glee, and he even did a little jig. "Crazy as bats."

There was a sharp little whistle that only Tommy heard, and Hobbes made an unmistakable gesture with his head, then whispered to Burke, "This may be our chance."

"We have got to settle Spencer."

In fact Spencer had been quiet, as if he had become a spectator of his own spectacle, but Tommy knew they could not rely on that, and in fact Spencer's concern became obvious as he saw himself losing control of his followers. He knew he must do something but didn't know what, and was struggling to reach an idea when the hoodlums began to taunt him, charging that there was a strike brewing that would paralyze the entire line, and what was he doing but chasing a girl not half his age who would not have him. This was displaced passion, for what they all fervently wished was to approach Cady, but the intensity of her beauty and self-possession, her defiance of Spencer, intimidated even the

boldest of them; so they turned all their pent-up desire against the one who had made a fool of himself by expressing it.

Ernestine went to Cady to urge her to leave immediately, for Hobbes was not the only one to see the opportunity. "Go now, dear, and take the others with you. Bless you, child, if you are not the splendidest specimen these eyes have ever seen... If I were not situated as I am, I would adopt the pair of you myself." She threw her arms around Cady, held her tightly, then hurriedly kissed Abigail and said, "Now go while you can, I shall find a way to detain the Pinkerton, though at the moment I do not know how. I wish I had a gun..."

"Take this," said Burke, who had approached. "It is fitting to guard him with his own piece. Do you know how to use it?" The woman smiled and said he might as well ask her if she knew how to boil an egg. By this time, fighting had erupted between the factions and Spencer was surrounded by the youths who were still taunting him. Ernestine, putting two fingers in her mouth, whistled loudly, and one of the children, who ran errands for the teenagers in return for toleration, perked up his head and came running, whereupon she quickly gave him a message and sent him back, and moments later the gang leader arrived.

"Jay Cooke, we are going to guard the Pinkerton long enough for these folks to get where they need to go."

"Who is 'we,'" he interrupted.

"Me and this pistol," was the reply, "but I should appreciate the assistance of you and your mates."

"And why would we do that?"

"Because you are going to rescue this lovely girl here, about whom we both know you will be dreaming every night, at least until the next lovely girl comes along." The youth, fearless in a fight, almost worked up enough courage to look at Cady. "Will you help us, boy, we have not much time."

He considered but a moment. "Got any rope?"

"This worked before," said Moody, handing him the lengths that had been used on Burke and him. "Have you got a gun? You might need it."

The boy shrugged, but Hobbes handed him Frick's gun, which he had just taken off his body, when he had retrieved the cash taken earlier from Moody and Burke. "You really are... You a Comanche or something?"

"Something."

"From out west, though."

"West Pennsylvania. That far enough?"

"I never saw one before." He was staring unabashedly and then turned to Locke. "What you did before, that was... Took a lot of guts." He nodded as if to convey his admiration, then awkwardly extended his hand. That concluded, Hobbes motioned to leave.

"My cash," said Burke.

"Right here, yours and Moody's." As Burke quickly counted it, Locke said there was one more thing, and the others watched as he found Carnegie, who was not yet committed to the fight, returned his gun, and left him with a stunned expression.

"Was that foolish?" he asked his father.

"Probably. Now let us go." Still, they all watched as Spencer was surrounded, bound hand and foot, and covered by two guns. Tommy waved, Burke nodded, and Moody told the girls with solemn satisfaction that their ordeal was over.

Chapter Sixteen

Tommy led the escape party back toward the rail-yard until they reached a point where it diverged from the way to the station, and there Burke stopped them with the announcement that the services of Tommy and his friends were no longer required. In the stunned silence, it was Moody, the one most surprised—indeed, shocked—who curtly asked if he was to be discharged as well, receiving in reply Burke's thanks for everyone's service and announcement that he would escort the colonel's daughters by passenger service to Pittsburgh, where this very night they would sleep in safety. Moody said that was reassuring, but asked if the major had considered the possibility that Spencer, likely to be released well before they reached Pittsburgh, would initiate some ruse to have them detained. "Detained?" he asked, truly perplexed. "On what pretext?"

"Pretext? Ask, rather, on what charge. Given his feverish imagination, he could allege almost anything, but since you ask, I would guess he would have you arrested for kidnapping." Burke found that preposterous and Moody agreed, but wondered what basis there was to hope that Spencer would reject an advantageous maneuver merely because it was preposterous. After seeming to consider Moody's words, Burke asked if he might have a private word with him, and the two walked off a short distance.

"You are wasting precious time, major," called Tommy. "Do you think the man will not find a way to escape—or that he will abandon pursuit?"

Although nothing could be overheard and both men kept their faces hidden, the subject of their discussion was obvious, so

obvious that no one felt the need to exchange glances—no one but Abigail, who took Locke's hand and whispered that she did not believe Major Burke liked him. Smiling, he replied that he no doubt found it very trying, maybe even incomprehensible, to find himself in a situation where his natural ally was his enemy, who could not be trusted, and his best course lay with those he despised. "I want to stay with you," she replied, and squeezed his hand.

Cady interrupted what was revealed to be a heated discussion, all in hushed tones that abruptly stopped when she approached to say she believed it would be wise to keep the group together until they were truly safe. She thanked Burke for his brave efforts on their behalf, and further for his kind intention to bring them to Pittsburgh in relative comfort, but said the temporary discomfort of a boxcar was an acceptable price to avoid danger. "I have seen more of that man than you. You are wrong to think... Especially now that he has been publicly humiliated..." Moody quickly agreed, and that seemed to settle the matter, until Tommy challenged Burke to confess whether he had believed the three of them would return as promised to rescue the others. "Or did you think we ran for our lives?"

Burke frankly acknowledged his doubts. "I saw you risk death to protect my charges, therefore I had no reason to question your courage. Beyond that, however, what do I know of you? So how could I know what choice you would make, once free?"

"My courage, but not my commitment? Never mind. It was not just me, major, I am not their commanding officer. In fact, it was the others insisted, Locke especially."

Burke nodded and said, "Now, as to our plan..." Tommy braced himself for an order, but was surprised to hear the officer, whose rank far exceeded the one he had held, acquiesce in his leadership with the candid admission that, "while I am unfortunately well acquainted with the frontier, in this particular wilderness I am a stranger."

As they continued to the yard, Locke kept looking at Cady, an invitation she declined, though she stayed close to him. Before the main entrance was a squad of municipal police, clubs in hand, scrutinizing everyone who approached or left; but before they had had time to develop an active interest in Tommy's odd procession, he diverted into a side-street. At the next corner, where he paused, they could see railroad police patrolling inside the yard, while the

workmen kept their heads down. "What do you think?"

"I agree with you," replied Hobbes with a smile and suggested they move toward the fueling station in hopes of catching a through-freight, for one going all the way from, say, Philadelphia to Pittsburgh would have no need to stop in the yard. Even his unusual patience, however, was rapidly eroding, due to rising concerns about the paucity of freight traffic, when at last a freight approached from the east and gave its last wheeze under the overhead water tank. The fireman was barely out of the cabin when Tommy reached it and greeted the engineer, but he had no sooner removed his cap than the man was shaking his head.

"Sorry, mister, I cannot do it."

"But you do not know why I am here."

"Oh, but I do. Have you not seen the yard? I heard last night the coppers were cracking heads in there, now the place is crawling with them. I wish I could help you, really I do, for these are tough times, but it could be my job."

"I have no wish to put anyone's job at risk, but I do not ask for myself, I ask for two orphan girls." Seeing immediately that he was not believed, he called for Abigail and Cady to step forward from their hiding place. "You see, it is no story, mister—strange as it seems." Seeing them, the man removed his own cap, wiped his hair, shook his head, and then nodded ruefully.

"Go on, do not let me see you."

Tommy quickly waved and everyone converged on one of the boxcars, but when the brakeman saw them he thrust out his arm and exclaimed in panic, "For God's sake, you cost me my job, then who feeds my family?"

Tommy tried to explain how sorry he was, but that he had to get two orphans to Pittsburgh before the line shut down completely. "They say the B&O is already down, or nearly so."

"I have heard the same, and the Pennsy is not far behind. I doubt we shall make Pittsburgh as it is, but I cannot let you board. Strikers there control the yard, there are no freights coming east, and not many going west. What will they accomplish, but get us all fired?" Tommy could see the man was debating with himself and decided—reluctantly, because his whole party was now stranded in the open—that the better course was to let him continue. Eventually—it seemed forever—he had stopped fretting and was staring at them. "Who knows what the true story is," he half

mumbled, "and I have no need for more trouble than I already have."

"I know how strange this looks, but the truth is what I said. These girls are in real danger and must get safely home. We would not ask for ourselves." The brakeman asked why the girls were in danger and Tommy took a chance on the truth. "Yesterday, we rescued them from an undercover Pinkerton who was working the line looking for strikers, but whose attention was diverted."

"Why was it diverted?" asked the brakeman glancing at the girls. "Never mind, I see why. Where is he?"

"We left him with some associates, by the river. We need to get out of Harrisburg." It was clear the man had relented, so Hobbes undid the heavy latch and slid open the door, and as everyone clambered aboard, Tommy and the brakeman stared at each other and then exchanged nods.

With the door shut and advised it was best not to talk, they rearranged some of the cotton bales which filled the interior, fumbling in the dark till they could eke out enough space, plus soft cushioning, which seemed a luxury. Finally there was the command and the whistle and the telltale lurch, and when they were well away Hobbes reopened the door to let in light and exclaimed, "First-class accommodations, who could have hoped? Anyone hungry besides me?" He opened his sack and pulled out the food they had bought on the way, for Tommy, Locke, and he still had their sacks; then, lunch concluded, he again shut the door and suggested that everyone use the opportunities of time, bedding, and darkness to sleep, for they were temporarily safe, yet faced another sleepless night if they did not reach Pittsburgh.

This advice everyone took and was soon asleep, despite the noises, lurches, and inexplicable stops that briefly, but only briefly, awakened one or another. Abigail was on one side of Locke, Cady on the other, each holding a hand, Abigail openly, Cady not, though in the dark it would not be noticed. It was shouting and the screech of brakes that awakened everyone, then more shouting, animated conversation, orders; and soon the train was switching tracks, moving slowly. "Anybody have any idea where we are or what time it is?" asked Moody.

"Better to listen than talk," whispered Hobbes, then as voices approached he warned everyone to keep still. It was stop and go for a while, with more switching, then they could feel the

locomotive uncoupling and knew they were done for the day. Abigail asked quietly if they were in Pittsburgh and Locke shook his head, while Hobbes put his face against the edge of the door and announced that there was still daylight, though not much.

"Altoona?" whispered Tommy, and Hobbes said that was most likely. "Strikers, then." Hobbes nodded. "We have to wait, then."

"How long?" asked Moody.

"Till it feels safe to go out."

"I cannot wait that long," said Abigail. "I have to go now."

As quietly as possible, Hobbes tried to ease the door along its slider, just enough for him to look outside, then enough for a person to get out, for though they were in a railroad yard and sounds of men could occasionally be overheard, the crew was gone and no one was in sight. Locke went first, then Cady (insisting she would accompany her sister), then Abigail, who nodded when he pointed under the car with a questioning look; and while she was underneath, Cady accidentally let her hand brush his and he took it. When they were back inside, he went to reconnoiter and quickly returned to report that this was definitely Altoona—he couldn't fail to recognize the two roundhouses, even in near dark—and there were squads of workmen, no doubt strikers, guarding them—no sign of police, however.

Moody asked what this meant in terms of reaching Pittsburgh the next day, and Hobbes replied that it meant they might not make it. "We know the crew will try to take her out first thing in the morning. Whether they succeed will depend on how effective the strike is."

"Now there is an irony," commented Tommy.

"Not for all of us," said Burke, who had made a point of remaining silent.

"If it comes to it, you will go by passenger train after all, and we will hope for the best," said Hobbes. "At least we have closed half the distance."

"I would have closed the entire distance. At this moment, we would be in a carriage heading to my house, and proper beds, and security, and the loving care of my wife."

"If that is indeed what would have happened," said Moody, "we owe you an apology. We will never know, however, will we? I pray we will unite behind our common interest."

"I pledge myself to it. You have brought my charges safely through many dangers. If their father were still alive, you would have his everlasting gratitude, and so you shall have mine. Thank you all."

"That is well said," commented Moody. "Very well said. Now, I presume we spend the night right where we are? In that case, I shall pay a visit outside myself."

By sound, there seemed to be many men in the yard, though normally no one but night watchmen would be there, and the shouting and movement suggested that strikers had resisted expulsion, while others had been tolerated or even invited to oppose them. Anger, suspicion, and fear filled the air like fireworks; in fact the head watchman had called the railroad police, but they declined to appear, not relishing isolation in the yard at night. Fortunately those hiding in the boxcar were well away from the roundhouses, where the skirmishes were centered, but it became oppressive to remain silent in a dark car. Hobbes announced that he would keep watch on the roof, but voices immediately objected to his bearing the full burden, and Moody insisted he would take the first watch, for if Hobbes were allowed to go first, he declared, "no one else would go second, such being his generosity of character," a statement plainly given for Burke's benefit. Reluctantly, Hobbes agreed, with the instruction that, in case of danger, the signal was three taps.

Predictably, they speculated about Spencer, all in agreement that he had surely escaped or been liberated by now, the question being where he was, for it was deemed certain he could not know where they were. The answer was quickly and unanimously given, for four men experienced in tracking immediately saw that the way to recover their cold trail was to go where it was known to be headed, namely Pittsburgh, there to await their arrival. This prospect distressed Cady and Abigail, though they were assured it would be easy to avoid his detection, and that seemed to exhaust the subject, till Burke suggested that perhaps a public humiliation had been sufficient to return his mind from where it was to where it should have been. Bets were placed, but with no way to determine the winner, conversation smoldered, till reinvigorated from an unexpected quarter.

"There is something I do not understand. Major Burke..."

"You may call me 'Edmund,' Abigail, for to you I am not a

major, and 'Burke' sounds so... Some day, perhaps, you will find it in your heart to call me something more... familiar—but let us begin with 'Edmund.'"

"Very well," she said hesitantly, "but it does sound odd. You said... Well, I do not understand why it is wrong to help people who... who need help."

There was silence in the car, and Burke thought deeply before speaking. "It is a difficult question, child. Perhaps," he continued after another silence, "it would help to know your father's opinion."

"He discussed it?"

"Everyone is discussing it, child, as we are now into the fifth year of this terrible economic depression. One cannot pick up a newspaper... For example, I read that a certain former congressman, man named Roosevelt, Robert Roosevelt I believe, called for massive public works to prevent an uprising by the poor. Would you like to know what your father said?"

"I guess so."

"He said that if laborers will crowd into cities, where they can no longer find employment, then the only remedy is the one which nature brings."

"What does nature bring?"

"Where there is no work, suffering and starvation."

"My father said that? But that does not seem very..."

"That is how it must be, for that is nature's way."

"Did my father say that?"

"Well, I am saying it, to help you understand. We must proceed with considerable caution when innovations are proposed." After a pause, he added, "He said that those who could not accept nature should leave the United States," and Cady broke the ensuing silence by asking if that was really her father's view of the matter. "It was. He considered himself something of a student of economics and had even read a work, rather well-received and, as it happens, by a man of the same name, in which the process called 'the invisible hand' was described."

"And my father, our father, said that anyone who wished to help the needy should leave the United States?"

"Perhaps he did not phrase it in precisely those words."

More silence, until Cady said, "Then I do not believe we may call it 'the United States,' for we are no more united now than we

were during Secession."

"Certainly, what passed for a presidential election did nothing to help," said Locke, coming to her assistance, and Burke said that, on that point, he would not disagree, for it had been a disgraceful display of political malfeasance. "To the point," Locke added forcefully, "where many do not recognize the legitimacy of this president." On that, Burke made no comment, and the tense quiet resumed, broken when Cady asked Hobbes if she could join Moody briefly on the roof, for she wished to discuss a personal matter with him.

"Which cannot wait till he returns?"

"No."

After a pause, he said that if there was trouble, she must lie flat on the car. "Do not move, understood? Do not raise your head to look."

"Perhaps I may go with her?" asked Locke, but his father said he knew better than that, and Cady said it was personal. As she rose to leave, he said to Burke that calling fraud 'malfeasance' did not seem adequate, when the capital had to be fortified against a possible military assault.

Of course Moody was surprised to see her and asked if something was wrong, then became more concerned when she sat beside him in silence, a silence he would honor until she chose to speak, for he could feel her distress. "When I plotted to escape the orphanage," she said eventually, "I had no clear plan. Now that I see what lies ahead... I am frightened, Mister Moody. What do we know of this man, who says he was my father's best friend?"

"Has something happened, child?" He encouraged her to speak by noting that he could tell she was upset, and after some hesitation she related what had just been said. "His views disturbed you." It was not a question.

She nodded curtly. "Especially as they seemed calculated to offend the others—or else they were grossly insensitive—and I have no doubt he frightened Abby." He allowed the silence to resume as he debated with himself over how to respond, and Cady could feel his uncertainty—indeed, she could see it in his characteristic gesture of bringing a hand to his forehead. "Do you... agree with such views?"

"I am certainly familiar with them. I do not know enough of the science to say 'yea' or 'nay,' but I would temper it with

Christian mercy." He thought to say more, but stopped himself; instead he said that Major Burke appeared a stern man, but upright. "I would not fear for you in his custody. You will be comfortable, secure..."

"Still, I..."

"Would it be a comfort if I accompanied you to your new home? I could even visit from time to time." When she did not reply, he asked if he had said something to upset her.

"Why did you call me 'child' just now?" When he shrugged, she asked if he thought of her as a child, and when he did not reply, she asked if she had now said something to upset him, but he shook his head. "May I ask... With Major Burke here, you could have gone your own way when we left the camp. May I ask why you stayed?"

"My dear, I thought I made it perfectly plain that I will stay with you until you reach safety. If I were to do anything less..."

"And now you call me 'dear.'" He tried to smile and asked what he should call her. "Why not call me by my name, as the others do?"

"Of course, that is perfectly reasonable," he said with an awkward chuckle.

"But you do not think of me that way." It was not a question, and a long silence ensued. "I do appreciate that you remain with us. I feel safe with you. That is why I must ask you something." There was another silence, during which she was amassing the courage to speak, which she did suddenly. "This morning, that awful man said some terrible things about you. Of course I... But later, I think I must have turned unexpectedly, I found you looking at me. Perhaps not just looking. And now I worry that I have let that brute poison my mind. Was that the sum of it, just looking?"

"What do you mean?"

After some hesitation, she said that she was asking about his feelings for her, then finding that inadequate, asked frankly but in the merest whisper, "Are you in love with me?"

He was silent for the longest time before he could speak, his hand again at his forehead. "Cady..." He cleared his throat and started again. "Cady, if I look into my heart and do not shrink from what there appears to me, I must acknowledge that I am indeed in love with you. I tell you honestly that I do not entirely know the nature of this love. Is it a father's love—or a lover's love? As you

are young, but yet woman, I believe I must allow that it could be both." They were long silent before she said she hoped it was a father's love, and he said he did too. "It is said that true love is flame without smoke... but even the purest flame will smoke if disturbed."

"And perhaps I am more woman than child?"

He nodded. "That cannot be denied."

The morning whistle didn't merely awaken everyone, it made them suddenly realize how strong the urge was to get outside their dark, cramped, stuffy boxcar, and only Hobbes and Tommy, trained as snipers, could resist the urge; nonetheless, the irrepressible need to find the nearest outhouse swept aside all security concerns. The workers who had remained in the yard overnight, strikers and counter-strikers, having finally been dragged from their conflict by the demands of sleep, had also been roused by the whistle, but they were mostly near the roundhouses, which were easily avoided. When the second whistle blew, however, the boxcar would no longer be out of sight, for it was Saturday, a work-day, and men would swarm over the yard.

Abigail held her nose against the polluted air but, advised it would be even worse in Pittsburgh, insisted she did not care, complaining, "I want to leave this place. When can we leave?" That, replied Moody, would be determined by events. At the second whistle everyone climbed back inside the boxcar, though Hobbes allowed the door to be partly open, pending the return of the crew, who soon appeared, disgruntled over the night's lodging at the local hotel used by railroad employees (whose cost exceeded its amenities). Tommy hopped out to exchange guarded nods and, despite his impatience, let them vent their frustration, but it took little time for the picture to emerge that strikers in the yard were by now a force large enough to exercise substantial control over rail traffic.

Thirty years earlier Altoona had not existed; twenty years earlier, it was a small industrial village of nearly thirty-five hundred employees of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and starting ten years earlier entire locomotives were being built. The yard had thus become extensive, with manufacturing and repair shops and two roundhouses, the newer of them quite large, and lines of freight and passenger cars, along what seemed a massive tangle of intersecting tracks. In fact, as the four men conversed, the sounds

of clanging could be heard coming from the gigantic workshop and foundry, and the air seemed to thicken even more with dust and smoke; for the strikers, not numerous enough to stop all activity, seemed more intent on stopping freights than impeding production.

When the gates opened, there'd been no way to exclude them, simply because, in most cases, no one could—or would—identify them. Furthermore, by massing their forces they became too numerous for the railroad police to control, and given that Altoona was little more than a company town, the railroad police were about all there were. This depressed the crew, not so much because they opposed the strike—they shared the desperation that had caused it—as because they were anxious to deliver their load and return home (and keep their jobs). Their assessment was glum, that there was no hope of leaving, certainly not before the troop trains passed, and maybe not then.

"Troop trains?"

"Bound for Pittsburgh. Called out last night from Philadelphia, six hundred National Guard."

"What is happening in Pittsburgh?"

"Riots, did you not hear?"

"How could I hear, I have been in a boxcar?"

"Well, they say there is rioting and the local militia cannot handle it—or will not. Word is the railroad fears they will not shoot their own people." Tommy fell silent. "I hear they left Philly at 2 a.m. Fast trains, so I expect them here this morning."

"You mean stop here, try to clear out the strikers?"

The engineer said there was little talk of anything else, especially among the strikers, who were furiously throwing up defenses—which was why there was no chance of retrieving his locomotive from the roundhouse. Tempers were raw and fights were common, but he knew for a fact that the troops were going straight to Pittsburgh.

"May I ask how you know this?"

"Ever hear of a gadget called a 'telephone?'" he asked, smiling. "Seems it was an item at the Centennial Expo last year. Well, the company had a line installed between the superintendent's office and the roundhouse only a few weeks ago. I talked to the man myself not a half hour ago, and he is certainly hopping mad, but it seems a decision was made to let the troops do their work in

Pittsburgh, open things there, then take care of Altoona on the way back."

"No chance they could stop here first?"

The engineer shook his head, certain that the company was at least as concerned about vandalism as maintaining freight traffic. When Tommy asked how bad the situation was in the yard, he replied, "As you would imagine. A lot of surly talk, punches thrown, like I said. No killings yet, though I doubt a man here but has some kind of weapon. Tempers were hot in Philly when we pulled out, and that was before Pittsburgh blew up." He advised Tommy to keep everyone inside the boxcar—unless, of course he would simply take his girls to the station, where passenger traffic was proceeding normally. "Tell me again why you cannot do that, is it no money?" Tommy nodded, because that was simpler than trying to explain why that was risky, and the engineer shrugged and left with his co-workers to monitor developments.

No one in the boxcar had failed to catch every word of this conversation, so there was no need to report, and Tommy had no sooner raised the question of what to do when Burke said the answer was obvious. "The man just said it: I take my girls to the station and leave this mess behind. Yesterday I was persuaded against that, but we have seen the result. Come, girls." It was hard to oppose his decision, since everyone agreed that what had before seemed less risky now plainly seemed more; for who knew what might happen with police powerless while angry men prepared for battle, and they stuck in a boxcar that might or might not keep them safe. It was Locke who questioned whether it was best for Burke to take the girls by himself. "You doubt I can handle the situation?"

"No, sir. I have little doubt you learned much by fighting my people, but my father taught me that, no matter how good anyone gets at scouting, they will never grow eyes in the back of their head. Maybe you do not care for me, and maybe I do not care for you, but we both care for those girls."

"The lad does have a point," said Moody. Burke thanked everyone for having safely gotten Cady and Abigail this far, but noted that no one could say if they would be able to leave the yard before the troops returned from Pittsburgh, which could take days; meanwhile, they might as well be camped in the middle of a battlefield. When Abigail announced that she did not want to leave

the train, he noted that she had told the reverend, only minutes earlier, that she wished to leave this place.

"I do wish to leave this place," she replied. "I meant on this train."

"And why do you wish to remain on this train?"

"Well, what I mean to say is that I wish Locke to accompany me." Cady asked Tommy what he thought, and he replied carefully that he could not disagree with the major's assessment, but as to the wisdom of his going alone, he was less sure. She then asked Moody whether he had enough money left to buy more tickets, and when he said he had only enough for himself, she said that, in that case, she agreed with Abigail that they should remain where they were.

"And may I ask why?" asked Burke again.

"Because Locke's father taught me something, too, about loyalty. And," she added with hesitation, "I must tell you frankly... We are truly thankful, Abby and I, that you came to rescue us... at considerable personal risk... but I must say that some of the remarks you made disturbed me." Burke, surprised, asked which ones, and she told him. "If, as you say, you accurately represented my father's views, I can only say how sorry I am that I shall never have the chance to try to soften his heart. As for your heart..." Here she seemed to be at a loss for words; he too, and so, by tacit consent, they stayed in the car and Tommy left to reconnoiter.

When the troop trains arrived, practically everyone rushed to the coaling station where they needed to refuel, those few taking no side in the struggle simply to watch, the counter-strikers in the end simply to watch also, for there was little they could do—or perhaps the sight of the troops angered them as well. The police could not even impede the strikers from pelting the trains with the rocks they had accumulated, for they were fully engaged to guard the rail switches and car couplings (with drawn guns), and of course the strikers were out in force, furious in their despair and unfazed by the sight of rifles protruding through every window. They had left only a few confederates in the large roundhouse to stand guard, who soon saw seven men approach with determined expressions, three railroad men, an army officer, and three tramps, two of them looking for all the world like real, live Indians. The first three went straight to the turntable and announced that the crank had been removed. Tommy asked the strikers where it was, explaining that

he supported the strike completely, but unfortunately it was essential for him to escort two orphan children to Pittsburgh and thus he needed to get a certain locomotive out of the roundhouse.

"Sorry," said one, "no exceptions—even if I believed your story."

"The story is true, strange as it sounds."

"Then where are the orphans?"

"Safe for the moment."

"Why do you not go to the station?"

"Do I look like I could afford tickets? Look at me, I am one of you."

"Like he said," interjected the other, "no exceptions. If we let one out..."

"You did not let one out," said Hobbes. "You resisted like a hero, but were overwhelmed by seven desperate men with guns. They forced you to hand over the crank and restrained you till the engine was out."

"Please believe we are truly on your side," said Locke, "but we have no choice, thanks to a Pinkerton, who stalked us all the way from Philadelphia. It is true, I swear. If you do not help us, we will have to insist."

After the crew ran to the locomotive to fire it up, Hobbes started cranking, but it was arduous and slow to move the turntable with a thirty-ton locomotive on it, so Burke joined him at the handle.

"Praise the Lord," cried Moody, feeling the jolt of the boxcar when the locomotive backed into the train. "Now, if they will only let us out." Burke climbed aboard—the two exchanged nods—followed by Locke, whom Abigail hugged, and as the car lurched forward, he announced that Tommy and his father were in the cabin.

With the engineer and fireman, it was almost too crowded to move, but no one needed to move, as Tommy and Hobbes watched the sides, the engineer looked ahead, and the fireman studied his gauges. Fortunately, it turned out that not everyone had left the yard, for there were still a few supervisors who preferred to stay away from trouble, and they ran to the switches to keep the train on course. As it approached the main track, the troop trains could be seen inching forward, trying not to crush strikers who refused to cede the track till the last possible moment, while

crowds trotted along the sides, shouting through the many broken windows. Everyone was too preoccupied to notice an escaping freight, until a supervisor ran ahead to open the gate strikers had closed. That invited a bunch of them to surge through it, also a bunch of counter-strikers, the first on the track, the second alongside, and as the troop trains began to move away, more men arrived, while the engineer beside Tommy grimly continued forward.

Strikers tried to shut the gate, but counter-strikers kept it open; they tried to board the train, but could not so long as it moved, for the car doors were all latched and there were no platforms at the ends, only couplings, which offered a gruesome death to anyone who tried to leap onto one. The locomotive was the only possible target, but it was hard to breach the cabin, and Tommy and Hobbes were there to prevent that. The big risk was having rocks come through the windows, or even worse, bullets, and in fact a man leaped onto the track long enough to aim a gun at the engineer, but was pushed off by friends before he was run over. Rocks flew with fury but without purpose at the sides of the train, but curiously, not one was thrown into the cabin, which could easily have been done at point-blank range, maiming if not killing the men inside. No doubt this was because the men, however frantic, were not killers, even those who had fought hand to hand in military campaigns—perhaps especially those. They wanted to force the company to negotiate, not commit murder, and thus did Hobbes and Tommy both stare at the face of extremity and find even there a final reticence.

Chapter Seventeen

The tracks took them right through town and the brakeman stayed flat in the coal tender the whole time, not raising his head till he could no longer smell the stink of industry. As they ascended the six-mile-long engineering marvel called Horseshoe Curve, Locke opened the door and Cady and Abigail gazed outside, their trembling gradually diminishing. There was a long tunnel at the summit, and when they emerged the scenery was beautiful and the air sweet, and Abigail commented on how lovely everything was, after all the ugliness and stench. A few miles later, the train slowed as it passed through a gorgeous resort, whose sumptuous buildings and elegant grounds drew soft expressions of wonderment, and Moody informed her that this was the summer refuge of the wealthy industrialists of Pittsburgh. "No less than Andrew Carnegie summers here. He could be here now."

"Who is he?"

"A great captain of industry."

It wasn't long before the air again turned foul, smokestacks replaced trees, and their train was slowed and forced onto a siding. "What the devil is wrong with this country?" complained Burke, while Locke threw the door shut and latched it; and there they waited in the dark while the engineer and Tommy negotiated with strikers.

"The troop trains? Would have killed me if I had not thrown myself out of the way. The bastards never even slowed."

"Well, we did slow," noted the engineer. "I am asking you as a railroad brother to let us pass. I have got to get this freight to Pitt. After that..."

"Would you not do better to wait it out here? Those Philly boys, they are not going to throw a party over there." That was when Tommy brought up the orphans, but the man, clearly sympathetic, said he would have to consult with the strike committee, and they were scattered around the place. After he set off to talk to them, the others forced the fireman to release his steam and let the boiler cool, and it was two hours before the man returned and nodded. "Good luck to you, brother. From what we hear, you shall need it."

The plan was to avoid Pittsburgh entirely, to disembark at a suburban stop six miles before the terminus which was near the town where Burke lived, and as they approached the station he happily told the girls they were home at last. The engineer, however, was too nervous to stop and would have gone all the way, except strikers intercepted the train at the next station, which Burke said was okay**,** because they were still close enough to walk to his house, if he couldn't hire a carriage. "You will love my home," he repeated, and was about to hop off the car when something overheard made him retreat. As the train slowed, crowds had swarmed along its length, men, women, and children, angry yet boisterous, intent upon their work yet easily distracted, and a few men approaching the opening of the boxcar were grousing in a way that did not please him at all.

"God damn the governor or the so-called president who called them out. What I would not give to get my hands on a few of those..."

"And how! Yet, are they not just like us?"

"It makes no difference. Right now, a man in uniform is my enemy, for he means me no good."

Burke took out his gun and held it against his thigh. "I think you realize what would happen if you pulled that trigger," warned Hobbes (who had returned to the car with Tommy), and when Burke neither replied nor moved his gun, Tommy placed himself between him and the opening.

When the men reached it, they found a man grinning at them, who immediately pointed to two girls and a minister right behind him as he quickly explained why they had had to hop a freight even though they completely supported the strike—but he spoke too quickly and had to repeat it and, after adding more, concluded, "We meant to get off up the line, but the engineer thought it better

to meet you folks here, so if it is all right with you, we will get off and walk."

The pair looked at each other, and one of them said, "Mister, that is one hell of a story. I say we split the difference. We will not harm you, and you will stay on board. Let someone else deal with this." With that, he closed the door, adding a warning that there would be trouble if he saw it open, even a little; in the event, though, it made no difference, for at that moment the train started again, having been commandeered by strikers who were driving it to the yard.

When it stopped again in about fifteen minutes, everyone could hear the din made by thousands of shouting protesters and knew they were not safely in the yard. No words could be identified, but the meaning was clear in the sounds, which were taunting, angry, and triumphant—until they all turned to screams. Abigail screamed herself, then cried out to ask what was happening.

"I do not know," said Moody, "but we are safe in here."

"Are we?" snapped Burke. The Philadelphia troops had arrived several hours earlier, and the crowds massed on the tracks had parted to let their trains proceed to the terminal; but the same crowds did not retreat when the troops later marched back up the track. At their head were the sheriff, with warrants to arrest eleven alleged ringleaders, and a railroad superintendent to identify them; behind them were seventeen deputies to perform the arrests, one of whom was Spencer. When no one could be found to arrest, however, the sheriff threw up his hands and moved aside, and the troops marched up to the crowd, then parted to allow two Gatling machine guns to be brought up and aimed into the mass at point-blank range. Still, only when the troops fixed bayonets and slowly advanced did the front of the crowd try to move, but the mass held them fast against the steel points, some of which were thrust aside with the instinct of terror, while others found flesh, and the taunts became screams.

The shooting began with children throwing pebbles from the adjacent hillside, expanded to some teenage boys throwing stones, and then the soldiers were being pelted from all directions. The first 'shots' might have been firecrackers remaining from July Fourth, but soon came real bullets, from both hillside spectators and troops below. Amid general gunfire, one of the soldiers fired

into the crowd a few feet away, and someone went down. Beside the tracks were four loaded coal cars crowded with people throwing coal at the soldiers' heads, and when shooting erupted, it came from there as well. There were dead and wounded everywhere, including young children, carried or dragged away to recover or die. Fifteen soldiers were wounded, none killed.

When, amid the screams, the scrambling on gravel of the crowd frantically trying to disperse could clearly be heard inside the boxcar, Burke summarily announced that everyone was discharged and he would take the girls from the car the moment it was safe enough to open the door. His anger over the near-calamities in Harrisburg and Altoona had become uncontrollable rage that a tramp and his injun had now delivered them to the very center of a communist riot. Barely able to reason any longer and desperate to escape, he saw himself enveloped in a cloud of confusion from the red menace on the plains to another in the cities, from one wilderness to another, and found it incomprehensible that he could ever have thought to make common cause with savages.

Then the shooting started, and the girls were pushed into a hastily arranged cavity surrounded by cotton bales, the men covering them further with their bodies; and Cady tried to calm Abigail, but when a bullet penetrated the car, she became hysterical. When the lull came, Burke threw open the door, hopped down, and commanded them to come, while ordering the men not to follow. "Do you not realize that your uniform makes you a target?" shouted Tommy; but partly helping, partly pulling, first Abigail, then Cady out of the car, he ignored him, then replied that in a riot he would rather look like authority than insurrection. When they were off the car, Hobbes quietly acknowledged that he was not wrong to get them to a safer place. "Of course, but alone?"

"Not alone."

Indeed, Locke was already out of the car, just a few feet behind Cady, who was desperately trying to grasp his hand, while trying to hold on to Burke, who with his other hand held Abigail tightly beside him. The force of surging crosscurrents, as masses crazed by fear pushed against each other in quest of safety, made staying together all but impossible, as if they had been thrown onto a stormy sea. Close behind Locke were the others, but when Burke's grip on Cady, awkward at best, was severed, and they were suddenly separated widely, Hobbes followed his son, while Tommy

and Moody tried to reach Burke. Cady was frantic to be reunited with her sister and launched herself against the bodies she believed separated them, but in fact they were lost to each other and she had no means to withstand the superior force of the mass. Locke, in contrast, though equally caught, was just able with his bulkier physique to force his way after her, blind to those he was thrusting aside, his gaze entirely on her.

When the railroad superintendent was unable to find a single one of the agitators supposedly responsible for the actions of the mob, he and the sheriff left the scene, each to his office, stranding seventeen nervous deputies in the hollow formed by the soldiers. After the gun battle, many of them followed their example, but Spencer successfully recruited a half dozen to continue to 'do their duty,' which was of course to ferret out agitators and bring them to justice—under his leadership; and they would begin by investigating the freight train still stranded a short distance up the track. For a while, they were able to move with the crowds retreating from the troops, but with the cessation of gunfire this soon turned into a counter-attack, and then they found themselves overwhelmed.

There were wounded to be given aid and dead to be removed, mainly on the hillside, while below on the railroad crossing the main activity was the ebb and flow of crowds repulsed by the troops and then surging back. In the absence of gunfire, everyone was invigorated by fury and reinvigorated by large numbers of new arrivals from all over the city, some organized, all armed and ferocious with anger. Six hundred men and boys arrived in parade formation, with full marching band and color guard, while politicians arrived to show support, as did business-owners. By dusk, immense crowds were jamming the street for blocks, completely surrounding the soldiers, who were unable to disperse the crowds long enough to clear the track, much less end or even control the demonstration.

Despite all this, or rather because it engaged a singular strength, Locke never allowed himself to lose sight of Cady, and eventually, borne by a current to the periphery, he reached her and they held each other tightly until their breathing settled. "Have you seen her?" she asked. He shook his head and they immediately—arms interlocked—launched themselves, but it was nearly impossible to move, as even side-streets were jammed with

boisterous people, many inebriated, many brandishing looted firearms, despite the police order for saloons and gun shops to close. An hour later, they had made little progress, and the light was fading. "How do we know they have not left the area? After all, that was the plan."

"They may have, but I doubt the major would leave without you."

"I worry, because Tommy said the uniform could make him a target. Do you think..."

"No," he replied instantly. "He knows how to protect himself, and he would defend Abigail to the death."

"You almost died to defend me." He looked at her questioningly, or believed he had, but once again she saw the look in his eyes he was unable to mask; and for the first time, he saw the same look in hers.

Because the mayor supported the strikers, reflecting the general resentment against the arrogant excesses of the railroad, there were at most a few dozen policemen in the entire area, and with the soldiers more or less impotent, Spencer saw his posse as the sole effective agency of authority and bore himself accordingly. He had dressed for the occasion in his finest clothes—white shirt with stiff collar, dark bow-tie, vest and topcoat (despite the July heat)—and immensely proud of the badge he displayed prominently, despite the danger in which it placed him. At the same time, it could be said that all this was for the benefit of a single young woman, for whom he had been searching unremittingly since reaching Pittsburgh the previous evening.

He had seen the freight train blocked by the mob and had gone to investigate; he had found the door to one of the boxcars wide open, and there before him was Locke's sack. "Gentlemen," he had declared, "we are now in pursuit of three agitators, armed and dangerous. Two are Indians—yes, gentlemen, you heard me correctly." He explained that he had tracked them from Philadelphia, but lost them in Harrisburg—until this moment. They were accompanied by a man (Moody omitted as beneath contempt) masquerading in the uniform of an army officer, with two girls, one nine, the other sixteen and stunningly beautiful. "If you see her, you will know, I promise you that." With that description, the men were anxious to find no one else.

For an hour they searched, till the light waned, from the

hillside, from atop the coal cars and the freight train, anyplace to get above the crowd, until Spencer noticed a large man and knew immediately it was Hobbes. When Locke had reached Cady, he was about to reach them too, but halted when he saw them embrace, unwilling to intrude on their first—and probably last—moment of intimacy. Instead, as they searched for Abigail, he kept them in view, watching his son with the girl who had captured his heart for the first time. Spencer dispatched four men to 'take care' of him, and he didn't even detect their presence, because his son had noticed him and they'd exchanged looks, father beaming, son bashful, and he was thinking it a most inhospitable setting for romance, though perhaps not for an impossible one, when the sudden press of a gun in his back caught him by surprise.

It took but a moment to pull back his arms and apply the handcuffs they'd been furnished, another to take his gun and knife; then he was marched between two buildings in a side-street, where he was knocked unconscious and the handcuffs were removed. Spencer had said to 'finish' him, but when the moment came, no one was willing to commit a cold-blooded murder, even of an Indian; instead, one of them snatched a bottle of whiskey from a drunk and put it beside him. Spencer, meanwhile, had kept two men with him, one of whom crowed, when the others returned, "I spotted her. He was right, when you see her, you know it," a remark Spencer met with cold disapproval. Locke was seized and disarmed the same way as his father, and Cady too was handcuffed; and through it all, people just a few feet away did not notice or care, so distracted were they by the general commotion—or if someone was aroused, it passed out of mind as soon as it was out of sight.

"Did you think I would forget you?" Spencer asked Cady, who saw, as she stared at him, a bizarre mix of gloating and supplication.

When Hobbes regained consciousness, he roused himself and ran back in time to see the pair pushed down the street by Spencer with six men; and he followed them to the police station, where they were shoved inside, and he, unable to enter himself, waited outside as inconspicuously as possible. "Charge," groaned the desk sergeant, not at all happy to have to process two youths, and one a female, when a stone's throw away were thousands of angry rioters, any of whom could probably qualify for arrest—though the

uniqueness of this pair did elevate his interest. The jail was already crowded and the situation chaotic, but one look at Spencer convinced him that letting these two slide was not an option. "Charge," he repeated. "Name."

"His is 'Locke,' just 'Locke,' who knows what the savage's real name is, 'Cunning Beaver,' maybe."

"You know, I thought so," exclaimed the sergeant. "This is quite a pair, these two."

"Incitement to riot, attempted murder. I personally witnessed him fire on the troops." At a nod, a deputy put Locke's pistol and knife on the counter; the sergeant sniffed the barrel and said it had not been fired. "Then he used a different gun. Do you doubt my word? Her name is 'Cady.' Tell him your last name."

"You tell him, Pathetic Weasel."

"Make it just 'Cady' for now. On her, incitement and prostitution. She solicited me in exchange for—"

"Hold on. Am I to believe this girl is a harlot?"

"One who loiters around rail-yards. I found her in Philadelphia. I know both of these characters, sergeant, been tracking them for days. We know him to be a labor agitator, and she his paramour, who assists with... various services. I shall return in the morning to sign a statement."

"His paramour? But he is..."

"Such is the level of debasement we confront here, sergeant."

The moment a policeman had locked them in the holding cell, Spencer told Locke that, minutes before nabbing him, he had killed his father and added that he would now kill Tommy. Curiously, in that moment he realized that he had no urge to exact revenge on Burke; as for Cady, he told her she was safe for the time being, and when he returned they could discuss whether she preferred to go to jail as a prostitute or a house in the suburbs as his wife. She whispered something that made him recoil physically and then he couldn't leave, but must remain and try to produce a convincing smirk and stare at her without wavering. When the door was opened to let out a drunk, Locke pushed him into Spencer, grabbed Cady, and dashed for the rear door that opened into an alley. No one bothered to impede them till Spencer screamed and then it was too late; he picked himself up and went after them, followed by one of the deputies, while Hobbes, who had seen it through the front door, started running around the block.

They were not far down the alley when Spencer shot Locke in the back. He struggled to his feet and turned, and when Spencer closed the distance, he pulled his knife and stabbed him three times. Screaming, Cady knelt over him, as Spencer appealed to her, saying, "I will be good to you, I promise. Does my love mean nothing? I will buy you a nice house, nice clothes... Where is Abigail, I worry about her." Rising, she struck him with all her strength; he staggered backward and, tasting his own blood, dropped the knife, screaming in pain and frustration. She advanced on him, but he parried the blow and pushed her backward, and the other man grabbed her from behind and plunged the retrieved knife into her chest.

Spencer went berserk, screaming, "What have you done? Oh, no, no! What have you done?"

"A woman who looks like that, giving herself to one of them?"

Hobbes appeared on the run, and Spencer, after a moment of confusion, escaped into the station and out the other side, the deputy right behind him, while Hobbes collapsed beside the bodies.

As the light went dark, still he sat, sometimes rocking, wailing. He held their hands, felt them go cold. He knew Tommy and Moody must be waiting at the agreed rendezvous point, but he was unable to move. He had no thought or feeling he could identify, only a memory. It was a burial, men he had known, some who had treated him decently, respecting his sacrifice beside theirs. The chaplain had said he had presided over far too many such burials, and it had gotten only more difficult and he did not know why, until at last he had realized it was because there were no proportions in death.

He carried the bodies to an alcove, set them down gently, arranged them. "Oh, no," said Tommy when he could discern his face. "Oh, no, no." That was the moment Hobbes began to feel. It came at him with enormity. It came in the shape of Tommy's distorted face, in the meek sounds of sobbing.

"Cady, too," he managed to say, before he fell against him, weeping.

Moody closed his eyes, as if that might keep it at bay. He trembled, felt his legs go weak, his chest heave. He struggled to reach the words that, alone, could lift him from the hot tar of

hatred into which he was sinking. Finally he could say them. He looked at the pair before him, sustaining each other even as they were overcome, and gently placed his hands on them. "'The Lord is my shepherd,'" he said quietly, "'I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.'" Around them was the tumult of mayhem, which they could not hear; but for him it got louder and louder, until at last he had to say that they needed to retrieve the bodies. "Where are they?" he asked gently. "Hobbes?"

He had warned them it would be bad, but still they were unnerved by the brutality of the murders. The hatred gashed in red across both bodies deeply disturbed them, despite their considerable experience with battlefield corpses. They would stare unblinkingly at one and then the other, and then turn away, unable to look. Moody forced himself to recite the Lord's Prayer, struggling with the line about forgiveness. For Tommy there was no question of forgiveness.

"They are together at last," said Hobbes.

"Yes, but how could he have found them so quickly?" It was the question Tommy had been dying to ask.

"He found me first. I led him right to them." Eyes welling up immediately, he repeated, "I led him right to them."

Moody whispered to Tommy that he would try to find some kind of wagon, which would not be easy, given the looting they had seen, and might take some time; and he left, not sure if he had even been heard, and returned not long after to say he had met a woman who offered her nearby apartment. "Till we find a wagon, we can lay them there. Do you understand? She is waiting, can you carry them? I can take Cady, if you..."

The woman was not particularly upset by the bodies, though they were covered in blood—her husband had been a brakeman and she had seen what a brakeman looks like after he has slipped between two cars—but recoiled when she got a good look at Hobbes. "Alone in my apartment with one of those? How do I know he won't scalp me?"

"Take a good look and tell me you do not see a grieving father." When that failed to convince, Moody agreed to stay

himself and then, to settle the matter, promised a considerable sum (which in fact he did not currently possess); but even then she insisted that, if anyone came calling, the other must hide, because she could not have anyone wondering what she was doing with an Indian.

"We will find him," said Tommy, a hand on Hobbes' shoulder. He was sitting on the floor, beside the bodies which seemed to fill the tiny room, the woman staring anxiously.

"You said you would stay," she complained to Moody.

"I did, and I apologize, but frankly, woman, at this moment I care more about that Indian than I do about you."

"It may take all night, but we will find him," continued Tommy. "Try to sleep."

After they left, the woman remained in the room, staring at Hobbes, plainly afraid to let him out of her sight, let alone go to sleep, until finally he looked up at her to say, "Since there is nothing I can say to relieve your anxiety, perhaps I should just kill myself. Shall I do that? Right now, I do not much care, one way or the other."

Outside, the pair arranged to separate and rendezvous at a designated time and place. "Dwight," Tommy called after the receding Moody, "thank you."

"Do not thank me. I was a fool to hope we had seen the last of him in that camp. Now see what I have done."

"If I am to blame anyone, it must be myself—but could this have been foreseen?"

Earlier, it had taken them a good hour to find Burke, after losing him in the crowd, because they had guessed wrong about where he would take Abigail. When in the frantic crush his grip on Cady's hand had suddenly broken, he looked over his shoulder and spotted Locke and immediately concluded that she had let go on purpose to join him. Already enraged that he had been inveigled by tramps into this absurd situation, enraged also that he had let himself be used, he was finally enraged that both girls had somehow fashioned an incomprehensible fondness for this Indian boy, a fondness that in Cady's case was not only disgusting, it was dangerous. Now it had fallen to him to rescue her from her own rashness—more, it was insubordination.

She was already out of sight, effectively lost, and he could not possibly try to find her, hampered with a nine-year-old child;

therefore, he must remain where she might look for him, and despite the obvious risk, that place became clear, especially when he was menaced because of his uniform. Thus he reversed course and took Abigail into the beleaguered square of troops, where he was admitted because of his rank, and where Moody eventually found him and, in a few shouted phrases, was apprised of his intent to remain there till Cady was found. He managed to convey to him amidst the tumult that Hobbes was with Locke and thus Cady was probably safe. If so, he would return; if not, all four of them would look for her.

He departed shocked by Burke's anger at Cady and couldn't help but wonder about its cause, while Burke, his frustration only increasing, remained until dusk, hoping she would appear, then had no choice but to retreat with the troops to the roundhouse for the night. It was a journey of all of two blocks, but was hampered and threatened every step of the way, which only increased Abigail's growing despair at the loss of her sister, despite his attempt at reassurance. He told her the others would keep searching for her, all night if need be, if they hadn't yet found her, and added that she was probably with her Indian friend somewhere. When Abigail asked where, he replied, "I imagine they are somewhere safe, where they can enjoy each other's company," and from the way he spoke, she decided not to ask any more questions.

Moody had gone to meet Tommy at the rendezvous point, then both waited for Hobbes; and by the time he could bring the tragic news to Burke and Abigail, it was night and they were inside the roundhouse, which he would soon learn was under attack and impossible to enter.

The entire area, well over a mile along the main tracks beside the rail-yard and on the embankment along the opposite side, was jammed with people of every class, description, and age, from the scruffiest urchin to the best-dressed older gentleman. Many were spectators, many participants; most stayed all night, and any who left were seemingly replaced at once. Given this, the odds of finding Spencer—or being found by him—were obviously quite low; nonetheless, Tommy and Moody were as determined to find him as he, with his deputies, was to find them. Nominally, the deputies sought 'labor agitators,' but it had long since become all but impossible to distinguish whatever that meant from more or less everyone else, for what had started for specific reasons and

engaged specific demands had, when they were summarily dismissed, devolved into generalized mayhem.

At this point many, probably most of those in the street were not striking railroad employees or their families, but all sorts of people from all over the city and even the region. Most had come to support the strike, but increasingly more and more, including teenagers and even children, came for the excitement and other reasons, and a good number were at least half drunk from looted whiskey. Meanwhile, with the troops in the roundhouse and the police in their station, there was no longer any law enforcement of any kind or extent, unless one counted a few policemen who were totally ineffective when they tried at all—and seven deputies.

The roundhouse was surrounded by demonstrators whose anger had not diminished since the troops had first appeared, and it continued to be expressed in the same way, with the hurling of curses and missiles, taunts and surges, and sporadic gunfire. Every window had been smashed and rifles protruded through all of them; bullets flew in both directions, but it was much easier to hit someone by aiming at a mass of people than to fire aimlessly into a dark building. Moody saw immediately the impossibility of getting inside and of course heard the gunfire, but pushed through the crowds nevertheless, because he could not bear to leave knowing that Abigail was inside; and so he was right there, heedless of all the danger, when the efforts began to set it on fire.

Chapter Eighteen

More than two thousand railroad cars lay along the entire length of the rail-yard, some filled with oil or coal or other flammables, and in one location after another—including at the roundhouse—these were set on fire and rolled down the grade toward buildings. Like everyone else, Moody saw the red glow against the night sky and soon heard the clanging bells of fire engines, but the firemen were impeded at every turn, so that they couldn't reach the flames or else their hoses were cut, until they surrendered and left everything to burn. He feared seeing the roundhouse burst into flames at any moment, but somehow it wasn't happening.

Many of the cars held valuable cargo, and where Tommy was, away from the roundhouse, vandalism prevailed and looting became widespread, until by one o'clock there were files of people bearing burdens of various sizes, except for the lucky ones (or those who had planned ahead) with wagons. While those careless enough to pass right by the police station might find themselves arrested, the others were unimpeded, and the deputies, though disgusted, knew there was no way they could affect this, so it was simple and logical to accept Spencer's advice to focus on apprehending the most dangerous characters. In preparation for spotting Tommy, he reminded them that mercy would be a dereliction of duty, and compromise treason, asking, "What is the point of hitting a man on the head if he is back on his feet in minutes?" Tommy did not fear being found by this posse; on the contrary, he was intent on finding it (while careful not to be surprised from behind, as Hobbes inexplicably had been), and like

Moody he searched all night without food or rest—or success, and dawn found them weary and frustrated.

A delivery wagon had tried to carry provisions to the roundhouse but had been scuttled by the crowd, so there was neither food nor drink inside, but Abigail didn't seem to mind; nor did she seem to mind sitting in the dark, nor did she seem frightened by the bullets coming through the shattered windows. She did show concern when, very late at night, word spread that a captured artillery piece was trained on them and men were preparing to fire, but even then the response of terror was lacking. What was required to rouse it was the interior filling with smoke and the roof catching fire, which occurred after dawn. There was nothing to be done but evacuate, and the order was given, and the men formed ranks, while Abigail trembled at the sounds of the crowds outside, baying in fearsome jubilation.

By the time she exited, holding Burke's hand as tightly as possible, the roof was engulfed in flames, as was the line of buildings and a lumberyard across the street; yet despite this, and the fact that the triumphant rage of the crowd approached hysteria, she stopped trembling and her face went blank. She walked down the street as if sleep-walking, the file of troops on one side and Burke shielding her on the other, one hand firmly gripping hers, the other firmly gripping his pistol, looking straight ahead as if the danger lay there, not right beside him. To the extent he was aware of her behavior, he misinterpreted it as 'bearing up extraordinarily well,' especially given the palpable fear coming from the nearby soldiers, whose faces were white and drawn.

They seemed to be headed back toward the terminal, where their trains were, even though vandals were inexorably advancing toward the same place, but after one block they turned toward the river and then back along a parallel street, which Burke found exceedingly odd. As they crossed a side-street facing the roundhouse, Abigail saw the flames pouring out of every window, as though the building were a giant incinerator. They made slow progress, advancing at the pace of the Gatling machine-guns, which covered their rear, while a skirmish line guarded the front and squads on both sides watched buildings and alleys; nevertheless, the avenue filled with surly men, pockets bulging, and grim-faced women, some brandishing rolling pins, while more shouted curses from windows. One of them was the woman

voluntarily hosting two cadavers, whom she assumed had been killed by troops, while involuntarily hosting a strange Indian, so exhausted by grief that he displayed not the least curiosity at the arriving commotion.

The first shot came from the rear, from a man apparently indifferent to his safety, who had a rapid-fire breech-loading rifle and a cartridge box strapped to his waist and was firing calmly and deliberately, pausing only to reload. When a soldier fell dead, those around him stopped to return fire; the assailant was wounded, but not seriously, and kept advancing with inexplicable calm, as though he were shooting at squirrels. The soldiers were ordered to cease fire and resume the march, but the shooting quickly became general, from all sides and directions, though mainly focused on the column's rear; and Burke pulled Abigail closer to the front, where the crowds mostly watched until they passed, then attacked behind them. The dead and wounded on both sides were carried into buildings, but then one of the Gatling guns erupted and within seconds there were more dead and wounded to be dragged off the street.

It was in the ensuing counter-attack that Abigail was separated from Burke. A gang of youths, not even noticing her, seeing only an officer's uniform, leaped on him before he had a chance to react and began pummeling him. He managed to pull his gun, his arm was grabbed and the gun discharged, and Abigail screamed as the surging of the crowd quickly bore her out of sight.

At dawn, Tommy and Moody had converged on their designated rendezvous point, each hoping the other would announce that Spencer had been dispatched; dejected, the first prevailed on the second to report to Hobbes and check on him. "And while I do that, where are you going?"

"Where do you think?"

"As to that, I am too."

"Hobbes first, okay? I am worried about him."

"Would it not be better if you went?"

"No, you are better with the woman. I worry she may have done something stupid."

Not long afterward, Tommy realized that flames were coming from the roundhouse and, pretty sure Abigail was inside, frantically forced his way through the mass, but by the time he arrived the troops had left. "Did everyone get out?" he asked, but people were

too distracted to know or give a clear answer. 'They must have,' he reasoned, 'or at least I must believe so.' Suddenly he felt the fatigue of a night of fruitless searching, but thrust it aside as he considered his next move. He was debating where to go, torn between hunting Spencer and looking for Abigail, when he heard gunfire and allowed himself to be carried in the surge, reasoning that, if Spencer was not already there, he too would be heading there, and Burke was likely there with Abigail as well. He was moving carefully along the street, keeping to the side, dodging bullets from troops and demonstrators alike, when he found Spencer.

He appeared to have two men with him, not the six Hobbes had reported, identifiable because, unlike everyone else, they were looking away from the soldiers to scan faces in the crowd. Surrounded by men with guns in their hands, he took out his own and waited for a clean shot; and when it appeared, he immediately raised it and was about to pull the trigger when someone moved into the line of fire. Again he waited, knowing the opportunity would be fleeting and, even then, would be a difficult shot to make. Again the shot was frustrated only a moment after an opportunity arose, and he was forced to conclude that it was too risky to shoot from a distance, even for a sharpshooter, especially with constant movement and jostling; and so he drew closer, forcing people aside.

He was certain now that there were just two men with him, and they of course could not recognize him and in any case seemed to be focused on looking for snipers in windows above the stores and in doorways and between buildings. Little by little, never averting his eyes except twice to avoid his fleeting gaze, he was able to close the distance, till only a few demonstrators stood between them. He released his grip on his pistol and gently closed around his knife; but just as he was about to reach him, Moody appeared from a different direction, placed his pistol against his back, opposite his heart, and fired. As Spencer sagged, Tommy cried, "The bastards, look what they did! This man has been shot!" while at the same time he pulled Moody, who was standing rock-still, away from the body. "Look what the bastards did!" he repeated, and as people pressed forward to see, he turned him and pushed him through the crowd until he regained his senses and continued on his own.

Abigail was buffeted from all directions and at constant risk of

falling and being trampled. She could hear Burke calling and shouted back as he, having regained control of his weapon and thereby forced the youths to retreat, searched frantically for her; but she was effectively invisible among so many adults, and he lost the sound of her cries as she was swept away. When she tripped and started to go down, she was grabbed by someone who pulled her against the crowd to the side of the street, where he angrily admonished her to go home, saying this was no place for children. Without waiting for a response, just a quick check to confirm she was not seriously hurt, he returned to the crowd, leaving her trembling.

Even the side of the street was crowded, and it was from the sides that some of the most recklessly belligerent were launching whatever they could find: lumps of coal, bottles, even garbage. Meanwhile the shopkeepers were all standing in their doorways wielding something menacing to discourage looters; and one, seeing her, ordered her to get off the street immediately and go home. "You think this is a game? Be gone with you!" She moved away far enough for him to forget about her, but was terrified to move farther, especially after a bullet smashed through a nearby window. "We stay with the troops," the major had said. "There lies our best option." The troops, however, were the target of constant harassment and bombardment; some had fallen, others fired wherever snipers were suspected, and Burke did not appear.

Eventually the crowds thinned and the din lessened, as the troops pushed forward relentlessly to escape the city, and she grew terrified of being stranded where no one would find her, so she followed at the rear. After several blocks, when she seemed to have reached the limits of the city, or at least its industry, the crowd stopped advancing and a hubbub arose that caused confusion, then people began to reverse direction. Unable to proceed and again frightened of being overrun, she hurried out of the way into a side-street, where she watched for what seemed a long time as thousands of boisterous demonstrators paraded with a triumphant air back into the city; and when the street was clear, she stepped out and found herself practically alone.

Up the street she could see an expansive green area, the site of a federal arsenal where the troop commander had intended to pause, so his men could replenish depleted supplies of ammunition and receive food and drink (which they had not had in about

twenty hours); but to his shock, both requests were refused—only the wounded would be received—which left no choice but to continue marching. As a result, the demonstrators lost interest in them, as it was now clear that they were indeed leaving the city—running away, as it was generally characterized, both by the people of Pittsburgh and the railroad officials conferring in their offices. Both relieved and concerned, Abigail continued up the road as fast as she could, hoping to catch up to the departed column, and the major.

She couldn't know that the commander, rebuffed at the arsenal, had changed course, and so she optimistically walked, as quickly as her exhausted legs would go, past farms and settlements, expecting to see them at every turn, even imagining that Cady and Locke might be there. In a couple of miles she reached railroad tracks and followed them for a mile more, until she reached a station, the one Burke had said was not far from his home, where the train had been stopped. The troops, however, were not there, nor was he there, nor were Cady and Locke there.

Tommy watched as the two deputies carried away Spencer's body, then left Moody to look for Abigail while he reported to Hobbes, finding him as he had left him the previous evening. "We met our friend," he said (because the woman was present). "It is done." Hobbes, forlorn, said he wished he could have met him, then after a silence, said it again. "Oh, it was not I who greeted him."

"The major greeted him?" When Tommy said who it was, he stared in amazement.

"He told me he spotted him from this window."

"No wonder he ran out of here. I wish he had told me, I might have been able to..."

"It would have proved impossible, I tried myself. The reverend did it the right way."

The woman took Tommy into the other room to confide that Hobbes had refused to eat or drink. "I offered him soup, but he would not touch it."

"You offered him soup?"

"He has barely moved since he got here. I figure he has to eat something."

"That was kind of you."

"Well, do not imagine I am an injun lover."

"Thank you, in any case." He asked for a few minutes alone with his friend and returned to the other room. "You should have some soup." Hobbes made no reply and Tommy stared at the bodies, side by side on the floor. The woman had brought a thin bedspread to cover them, but Hobbes had uncovered their faces. Distressed, Tommy whispered, "You were right. You saw it immediately, while I pretended otherwise. I was in love with her. My God, I was in love with her. Practically a child."

"Not a child."

"Now I have lost both of them, for I loved your boy like he was my own."

"He was your own. He knew that." Tommy began to weep and Hobbes said he had never seen him cry.

"I failed. God help me, I failed. Two treasures lost in the wilderness. Now if we lose Abigail..."

"Go find her."

"Why don't you come with me? The woman has... softened. We can trust her now."

Hobbes had been sitting so long, Tommy had to help him to his feet. He explained to the woman that the dead girl's sister, a child, was lost somewhere in the crowds and they must find her—but not to worry, they would bring a wagon to fetch the bodies and she would be well paid for her services. She said they should have some soup first, and added, "Do not imagine I took the bodies for the money—but even a widow has to pay rent."

Burke away from the troops became a target to one after another, and while he fought desperately to continue, he was forced to abandon the search because, even though he was willing to risk it, what would become of Abigail if he were wounded or worse? He must rely on the knowledge that she was smart and he had clearly told her that their best course was to remain with the troops; therefore he rejoined the formation and proceeded to the armory. There, however, when the departure of the mob, like a receding tide, left the troops in plain sight, it was clear that she was not with them. Close to panic, he returned to the city at the rear of the mass, gun in hand in case anyone still wished to attack, but with the changed mood he drew no more than foul looks.

This made him question his decision, for if he had done the opposite earlier, fight his way to the side of the street to let the mob pass, he might have spotted her, for after all, she had been

there. Was she in front of him now, still swept along, unable to extricate herself; or had she gotten out and was now hiding somewhere, frightened out of her mind? He was almost crazy with fear for her, looking everywhere, oblivious of his own safety, knowing that, with every minute, the odds of finding her diminished. If she had remained on the main street, he would find her; she must have left it, and in that case could be anywhere, possibly hiding. "Please, Lord," he whispered, and it was in that state that Moody discovered him.

"I have lost her," he cried. "Everything I do fails." Moody tried to calm him, saying that now there were two to look, and soon Tommy would join them. "Where is he?"

"He went to tell Hobbes the news that justice has been rendered to Spencer." His eyes indicated what 'justice' meant.

"He got him. Then I am in his debt."

"It was not he."

"Then..." Something in the evangelist's expression made him realize the truth, and he stared at him, aghast.

"An eye for an eye," said Moody finally.

"Meaning?"

That was when he was told about Cady. "Oh, no. Oh, no, no."

"Locke, too. Assuming you care."

Burke stared at him, an inscrutable stare. "How it stinks here. I can scarcely breathe. How do these people stand it? They are not like us."

"Let us look for Abigail. Where did you last see her?"

"Should anything happen to her... I mean for my wife and myself to adopt her and raise her as our own. My wife will love her like the daughter she lost. My God, should anything happen to her..."

"Calm yourself. She is here, she is smart, and she has been on the street before—she was on it when she found me. Where did you last see her?"

The crowds around the station, while unruly, did not intimidate Abigail nearly as much as the ones she had recently escaped, because here the strikers, with their wives and sometimes even children beside them, were firmly in charge; and that no one seemed to notice her was not surprising, because she was coming to believe she must be invisible. She went inside to find the

stationmaster and asked if he knew where Major Burke lived. He stared down at her quizzically, fingering his beard, and asked who he was. "He is my father's friend who came to take care of my sister and me. We are orphans."

"And he is supposed to meet you here?"

"I think so. Cady, too. She is my sister."

"Are you heading east or west?"

"I do not rightly know."

"Well, the next eastbound is due here in... sixteen minutes," he said glancing up at the clock, "though it is even money they will let a passenger through, given events. Westbound, twenty-four minutes. Say, who brought you here?"

"No one."

"No one. Well, where did you come from?"

"Pittsburgh."

"How?"

"I walked. I got separated from Major Burke and then I could not see the troops, so..."

"Wait a minute, what troops? Are you talking about the National Guard that went to Pittsburgh? What in blazes were you doing with them? What commander brings a child? I have to say, I am pretty darned confused."

"I am too."

"All right, tell you what. You take a seat, and we will see if your Major Burke arrives."

She returned outside and sat near the edge of the platform with a view of the tracks from Pittsburgh, chin on hands, elbows on crossed legs, and quickly began to feel the lack of sleep, for she had barely slept in the roundhouse, and the lack of food, for she had last eaten in the boxcar. She sighed a lot without realizing it, and her eyes closed many times, until she lay on the platform and fell asleep immediately; when she awoke, she felt the hunger, and her thoughts turned to the food and rest that surely awaited her at Major Burke's house. She recalled that, though she seemed to have become invisible, she had somehow attracted the attention of two men in the midst of all that fighting, and both of them had yelled at her to go home—and it seemed that, if the major was coming to meet her at the station, he would have arrived by now.

He said he lived nearby, but he had neglected to mention the name of his town, only that it was beautiful and peaceful, with tree-

lined streets and lawns and gardens and white picket fences, and she wondered how many towns like that there could be near this station. Suddenly she couldn't wait to escape the sooty pollution of Pittsburgh, that thickened the air and begrimed the red-brick buildings to a brownish gray, and whose residues seemed to have followed her along the rail-line; and so it was that, almost without volition, she was on her way to Major Burke's house. 'I will be safe there, too,' she reasoned, 'and who knows but that the stationmaster called the police and they are on their way to take me away. Cady would call me a fool for sitting right out in the open.'

Sure enough, she hadn't walked twenty minutes before the air was clean and there was grass, and the houses were farther apart, and then there were white picket fences. There were pedestrians and she asked if they knew where Major Burke lived. Many declined to speak to her, some even avoided her, because of her appearance, but she assumed it was because they could not see her; others, however, did answer her question. "No, I do not," said one and walked away; another said, "Well, what town does he live in?"

"I do not know the name, but it has white picket fences and is peaceful all the time."

"Why do you seek him?"

"He is going to take care of me."

"He is, is he? To my knowledge, we have no facilities for waifs around here. I suggest you apply at the police station. Turn around, go two streets, and turn right."

She came to a street where the houses were especially grand and knocked on an elegant door to ask if this was Major Burke's house; the puzzled servant just shook his head and shut the door. At the next house, she was scolded and threatened, and the terror that had sat in the pit of her stomach began to rise again, and she found herself running; and when she could run no longer, she found a place to hide and sat there trembling, holding her legs against her chest. Then she fell asleep again, and when she awoke the light was dimming.

She went around to the lane behind the elegant houses, where the carriage houses were, and found one that was not locked; and climbed into the hayloft and sat and stared at nothing and tried not to feel hungry. She was no longer trembling, because she had become numb again. 'Invisible people do not need to eat,' she counseled.

When Moody reached the rendezvous point with Burke, Tommy and Hobbes were waiting anxiously, which a terse gesture changed to real fear. Awkward condolences were exchanged by Burke and Hobbes, and partly in service to the task at hand, partly because each of the four was deeply distressed by a self-declared judgement of personal failure, by tacit consent there were no recriminations for decisions made or actions taken; instead, they tried to deduce where to look for Abigail. Would she hide somewhere she deemed more or less safe or instead look for Burke? It occurred to no one that she might have done what she actually did; rather, everyone assumed she must be nearby, and they fanned out to cover the area.

They were impeded every step of the way by the crowds, which if anything had only increased in size and exaltation. Thinking she might have sought refuge in the railroad yard, as had been their practice, Hobbes and Tommy headed there; but what they found was that its entire length was mobbed with looters and vandals, with cars set ablaze once they'd been looted. Both recognized that, if harassment of the troops was in support of the strike, looting and arson were not; and therefore it had to be acknowedged that the strike, with its broad-based support, had been overwhelmed by the opportunistic or the misguided, the desperate or the enraged. "If only someone in power had been sympathetic, or at least respectful," said Tommy. "We have lost again."

"It is especially hard for me, because my people have so rarely experienced loss," replied Hobbes with a fat grin.

After two hours of fruitless searching, the four met as arranged and deliberated their next move. Burke suggested the terminal station, because Abigail had learned that they tended to be safe and knew that passenger traffic had been maintained—or so he claimed. "Also, she might expect us to look there." Since the troops had departed, he had been operating with the utmost difficulty, as looters and vandals, who found his presence even more intimidating than did strikers, challenged him aggressively, and several times he had narrowly escaped injury. The better to search the fifteen intervening blocks, they again separated, but as each saw how dangerous the route was, second thoughts arose; nonetheless, it was possible she had braved it, thinking there was no alternative. Caravans of carts and wheelbarrows arrived empty

and left full, fires arose everywhere, and the vicious mood of crowds swung narrowly between celebration and rage.

When by arrangement they all arrived in an hour, they found the fires close enough to the terminal for the hotel above it to be evacuated, and each, terrified that passengers would also flee the station, rushed inside, but Abigail was not found. When they met, there were no further proposals, as each was seized with panic; and as their hesitant suggestions passed for deliberation, the large four-story building caught fire and the crowds roared with furious glee. Soon it was engulfed, and each stared helplessly, exhausted and frantic, then as if by agreement pushed their way out of the square and conferred again, and it occurred to Moody that, if they were forced to leave, then Abigail too... That was when Burke suggested the preposterous, that she had gone to find his house. They debated it feverishly, it seemed impossible, yet quickly became plausible to those confronted otherwise with hopelessness, and it was quickly agreed that he would go home to alert the police and mount a search.

"Should we not all go?" asked Tommy.

To resolve the awkward silence, Moody asked if he should not return with a wagon. "How long can we expect that poor woman...?" The two wanderers agreed to meet him at the apartment, searching as they went; and the decision made, the pairs immediately separated.

Before Hobbes left Tommy to widen the search, he said with a smile, "You were cute back there. 'Should we not all go?' We both know the major cannot operate here without harasssment, while there we would be arrested on sight for vagrancy."

When Moody arrived with Burke's wagon hours later, he asked the question he could not ask earlier in his presence, and Hobbes replied, "I will take my son home."

"Where is home—if I may ask?"

"Good question. For siding with the colonists in the War of Independence, my people were repaid with the loss of our ancestral lands. We were given new land near the frontier settlement of Pittsburgh, and when we were pushed farther west, a remnant stayed. They died out, leaving my boy and me. Now there is just me."

"Do you... still have a place?" Tommy nodded for Hobbes. "May I ask... If it is not far, I will take you." Hobbes shook his

head, asking only that he find Abigail. "But how will you..."

"Do not worry about us, just find her."

"If necessary, we will carry the boy," said Tommy. "Find the girl. She is..."

"Do not worry, she will be found. I will not rest till she is, neither will the major."

"When you do, perhaps you could send word to us."

"I will do that."

Hobbes said, "All night I kept thinking that they could not be together in life, but could in death. I forgot that, even in death, they cannot be together." Moody would have liked to say that they were together in heaven, but believed that that too could not be.

In the morning Abigail was awakened by a servant readying the horse and carriage for the master of the house to be taken to his office in the city. After they left she heard the sounds of children playing in the backyard and was befriended by them, though she was older, and one of them ran to the kitchen and returned with food, which she ate greedily.

"You eat fast."

"If you have any more bread, and something to drink, I should be most grateful."

"Do you not have a home?"

"I might have a home. I am lost."

All that day she wandered from house to house asking if Major Burke lived there and in the evening sneaked back into the carriage house.

The next morning, when she heard the children, she came outside again in hopes of a meal. "Hello," said the little girl, "what is your name? Mine is Emily. My father is the most famous minister in the whole country. His name is the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher. Have you heard of him?" Abigail shook her head, and Emily seemed to read her thoughts, because she said she could not bring any more food. "My father told me that, in America, no one need be poor. If they are, it is their own fault, because they have sinned. Sin is bad, you know."

"I do know," replied Abigail, remembering her concerns about it.

"That is why I got in trouble for feeding you."

"You got in trouble?"

She nodded. "My father shook his head and said, 'Did I not

just give a sermon on this very topic?' Because of the riots in Pittsburgh. He said a worker with a wife and six children could live on bread and water. Water is free, you know. He said the congregation laughed. Are you very hungry?"

Abigail nodded and the girl was returning with bread and water when her father ordered her to return inside immediately and Abigail, frightened, ran away. "Emily," he said sternly, "did I not tell you...?"

"But, father..."

"Not our business, pumpkin. The great laws of political economy cannot be set at defiance."

Afterword

The novel's genealogy. Those familiar with the 1826 American novel, *The Last of the Mohicans*, by James Fenimore Cooper, may have noticed the parallels between this story and that, most obviously the characters: Tommy is Hawkeye (Natty), Hobbes is Chingachgook, Locke is Uncas, Moody is Gamut, Burke is Heyward, Cady is Cora, Abigail is Alice, Spencer is Magua, and Smith (the girls' dead father) is Munro. Further, the plot here matches the first half of the plot there, where a three-day journey through the primeval forest wilderness from Fort Edward, north of Albany, New York to Fort William Henry at the southern tip of Lake George becomes a three-day journey through an industrial wilderness along the Pennsylvania Railroad. My battle in the roundhouse (in Harrisburg) is his battle at Glen's Falls, my rescue fight in the tramp camp is his on the pyramidal hill, my night hiding in the railroad yard (in Altoona) is his night hiding in a forest hut, and my battle in Pittsburgh is his battle at Lake George.

Those familiar with the 1820 Scottish novel, *Ivanhoe,* by Walter Scott, may have noticed the parallels between that story and *The Last of the Mohicans*, begun in 1825, most obviously the characters: Hawkeye is Robin Hood, Heyward is Wilfrid of Ivanhoe (dashing young warriors), Cora (the dark and sultry mulatto) is Rebecca (the dark and sultry Jew), Alice (the fair) is Rowena (the fair), Magua is de Bois-Guilbert (villains who kidnap the dark and sultry women), Gamut is Friar Tuck (the comic relief), and Munro is Cedric (the proud elderly commanders). Chingachgook and Uncas were probably suggested by two Saxons, a swineherd and a jester, who begin the tale, but they are lowly in social station, so it seems

equally likely that they were inspired by Saxon royalty. Ivanhoe thereby begat Uncas, both sons of a great chief, both great fighters, loyal, constant, and skilled, and both involved with the 'dark' heroines. Ivanhoe's father, Cedric, might have begat Chingachgook (both are unflinching in their heroic defense of their respective ways, but wise enough to know their limits), but I note that Athelstane is *the last of the royal Saxons*. The parallels are highly suggestive, but there are important differences (two being Hawkeye's intimate relationship with them and that Ivanhoe lives while Uncas dies), suggesting that Cooper may have given more thought to his doomed heroes than his victorious ones.

There are also many similarities of plot. Examples: The shooting contests are identical, focusing on the identity of the uncannily accurate sharpshooters, except of course the long bow is replaced with a long rifle. Both novels feature a siege battle around a fort at the center of the plot, near the end a trial before a venerable judge of the women whose alluring but forbidden sexuality threatens the peace (Cooper's trial practically a transcription of Scott's). In both novels, the 'dark' heroine undergoes an ordeal at the hands of the villain, who is also her besotted would-be lover and protector. Both present an oddly anti-climactic ending, with the young heroes, Ivanhoe and Uncas, too weak or injured to win their fights to save the damsels.

Note that, while Saxons are savages to Normans, Jews are savages to both; and the combined portrait of the two Jews, by which the father's usury makes them vile while the wisdom, courage and beauty of the daughter makes them praise-worthy, is roughly equal to Cooper's assessment of Indians, which was that they were savages, yet with noble qualities. Also note that the solution for the Jews' precarious position, caught between battling sides, is to leave the country, that is to disappear, the fate Cooper saw for America's native residents. At the same time, Robin Hood's 'merry band' of Saxon outlaws in the forest easily became the Delawares of New York's forest—Scott even refers to the Saxons as a tribe.

It's interesting that *Ivanhoe* had more than one child, for three years after Cooper's novel came *Les Chouans* by Honoré de Balzac, also with a civilizational struggle, a doomed race (the Bretons), and let us not forget beautiful women, illicit love, dashing young fighters...

Ivanhoe tells the story of the subjugation and *inevitable* (thus sad, but not reprehensible) disappearance of the Saxons by the invading Normans, who have brought their *inherently* superior civilization from across the water; Cooper's parallel is obvious, and the wars of extermination in both cases are fought in the virgin forests across the frontier from civilization. Robin Hood is a Norman noble who has 'crossed over' to the Saxons and fights as their 'natural' leader; likewise Hawkeye, whose *natural* nobility is constantly asserted, and who repeatedly brags of being "a man without a cross," that is, not 'tainted' by a drop of Indian blood, nevertheless one who has crossed the line separating incompatible cultures, not just to help Indians, but live as one.

They do this, knowing their adopted friends are doomed to extinction, because they appreciate their natural nobility of character. The racial aspect of the story, more, an underlying theory of race, is thus fundamental to both novels; and the aspects and theories are the same; but whereas they are minimized in Scott's novel, cast more as a historical struggle, racism (prejudice) and racialism (racial theory) are explicit on almost every page of Cooper's. That is because the authors differed fundamentally in their view of the problem, for where Scott presents a positive solution to the Norman-Saxon conflict—the one that effectively occurred, both 'races' merging in British—Cooper is convinced that the only possible outcome to the irreconcilable differences between Native and European Americans is the extinction of the first. It is not insignificant that this extinction, as claimed in the novel, is not the result of a war of Europeans against natives. On the contrary, the plot centers on an internecine struggle for dominance in North America between the British and the French, with native tribes variously allied on each side; their extinction is thus indirect, not direct. Morally, this is crucial, because it absolves European Americans of any crime. What is at issue is not an avoidable or resolvable conflict, but a natural process, sad (because even savages have redeemable qualities) but necessary.

Despite this, I have formed an attachment to Cooper and his novel. Judged by today's standards, he was a crude racist, in a society where crude racism was practically universal; but he was less racist than most. In his day and afterward, he was vilified as an Indian-lover and his book condemned for its positive depiction of Indians, notably their courage, skill, patience, endurance, self-

control, wisdom, generosity, devotion to family and society, and respect for nature. Further, there was his explicit insistence that there were few if any fundamental differences between their religion and Christianity. Counter-novels appeared, intended to depict Indians as they 'really' were.

I should mention that, to appreciate what is said here, you cannot rely on the movie (1992, Michael Mann directing), amazing as it is, but must read the novel, because the movie does not reproduce the novel.

'Cultural appropriation' and 'objectification.' I was mindful from the beginning of the risks and difficulties in depicting native Americans, as I recognized that, whereas their presence in Cooper's tale was natural, their presence in mine was not. To address this, at least partly, I planned to substitute Native Americans with African Americans, then debated it for months, deciding one way and then the other, finally settling on the latter—until I started writing the story, when Hobbes as is just emerged. If anyone, native Americans included, is offended by this, I would note that my depiction focuses on shared human qualities, without attempting to convey the intricacies and profundities of their culture. Had I tried the latter, however, I would defend that as well, providing I had educated myself and pursued it respectfully; for not only do I believe it is not wrong, I believe it is right and proper—more, it is important and maybe essential. How else are we to try to understand and appreciate each other?

The idea that any attempt to cross a cultural boundary is, in and of itself, reprehensible as 'cultural appropriation' begins with respect and sensitivity, moves quickly into enforced ignorance and segregation, and ends in functional racialism (claims of inherent difference) if not racism (prejudice). The special knowledge and authority that comes from belonging to and living in a culture does not lead to the conclusion that no one else may properly represent that culture. The correct conclusion is that, to understand another culture, one must hear from that culture; that people must get to speak for themselves, and that others must listen with respect and attention—but then what? How does the outsider come to understand, to appreciate, to 'feel' the experience of the insider if not by imagination; and how can one imagine without sampling or trying to sample the experience?

What do I know about the experience of native Americans? On one hand, not much; on the other, a lot. If I do not take a chance and put myself out there and say, "This is my best effort to understand and depict what life looks like through their eyes," then how do people ever get to speak to each other, to understand and appreciate each other? Better to fail, I say, than not try; and if that means some people object angrily, so be it. I believe they are wrong, tragically wrong.

And where does it stop? Can a man represent a woman, can a heterosexual represent a homosexual, can an American represent a foreigner, can a young person represent an old one, a healthy person a sick one, a beautiful one a plain one? Can a non-believer depict a believer? Can anyone write about death? Censorship, including self-censorship, is not the answer. A lot more than artistic expression is at stake.

Another debate, not unrelated, that long troubled me was whether Cady should be beautiful or typical, exceptionally beautiful or just attractive. Without reproducing my lengthy notes, I will simply state my conclusion, which was that she had to be exceptionally beautiful, and not just because Cooper and Scott repeatedly assert the same about their heroines. In the ancient and medieval worlds, and not just in Europe, beauty was considered a sign of virtue, of nobility of character, even of divinity. Fast forward into the last few centuries, where beauty has lost these qualities, yet it persists in art, not just because it is titillating, but because it still personifies aspiration, desire, achievement, mastery, while it provokes a range of responses, not all pleasant. If everyone in my story is not attracted to Cady—as to Abigail, also beautiful in her way—then not only does the story fall apart, it loses its meaning. Beauty is attractive, ideals in physical form, and being attracted, wanting, coveting in pursuit of ideals is the heart of my tale. Those who see only 'objectification' of the female body are invited to notice the metaphorical use of many physical elements in the story, including the other characters.

Why the novel has a model. I chose to model *The Last of the Mohicans* because it was arguably the most influential novel in our history (like *Ivanhoe,* an international bestseller), and remains a canonical statement of the American myth ('myth' as social narrative, not common error). For this discovery, and the

explication of that myth, I wish to acknowledge my intellectual debt to Richard Slotkin, professor of American Studies at Wesleyan University, for his work on what he dubs America's "myth of the frontier," which elucidates, not only our past, but our present. He has given me, not just an over-arching analysis, but many specifics. The "myth of the frontier" assigns to 'America,' that is to its European immigrants and their descendants, a world-historical civilizing mission, which takes the form of a war of extermination, whose violence leads the nation, not to depravity, but moral regeneration.

This war may look like war or, as in Cooper's telling, a natural process, not unlike Darwin's theory of evolution, but it is always a war for survival that can only end in the extinction of inferior races and cultures—and because it is a war for survival, there can be no limitations on its means. The myth, like all authentic myths, has proven adaptable to changing circumstances. Thus, the initial telling in terms of a racial war to exterminate the native Americans who hindered the expansion of European American settlers (the implication of *The Last of the Mohicans*) could be reiterated in terms of a social war as America rapidly industrialized after the Civil War. This was waged against the rapidly expanding class of city-dwelling industrial workers, a great many of them recent immigrants, who were doing the dirty, brutal, and dangerous work on the railroads and in the factories that were making America great.

In my novel I seek to demonstrate a fundamental continuity in American life, and no one, I presume, will miss the overt analogies between the post-Civil War period of my story and today's 'culture war,' nor the attempt to understand our present as the latest iteration of traditional American attitudes. Consider the word 'savage,' repeated constantly in Cooper's five novels of the frontier (the 'Leatherstocking Tales'). As Slotkin convincingly demonstrates, the industrial workers in 1877 (the date of my novel) were understood as savages and often called savages in newspaper accounts. The new industrial zones were understood as a new kind of wilderness, therefore the prescribed remedy for recalcitrant savages in the new wilderness was the same as for those in the old. "A diet of grapeshot" is one memorable phrase.

Similarly today, one need only listen to Fox News Radio commentators to hear the constant demonizing of "libtards," while liberal commentators frequently refer to opposing politicians

offering "red meat to their base," in both cases a claim of savagery that will stop at nothing and therefore must be defeated by any available means. More, it is a struggle—a war, properly speaking, though (so far at least) a 'cold' war—for the very survival of the nation, or rather the form of the nation deemed, not desirable, but absolutely necessary. Significantly, that 'necessary' form is not called that, but rather is universally dubbed the 'real America.' "Make America great again," says one side; "That's not who we are," says the other.

I am not claiming that both sides are right, nor that they are wrong, but that neither side can win this civil war, because there is no final victory. As must be obvious, I too am a partisan in this struggle, and struggling to find a solution. As I see it, there is no alternative in a democracy to tolerance, and none in a humane society to compassion and mercy. That is the essential social compact; but what we have instead are reciprocal claims to cultural and political superiority by both sides to what fits Slotkin's description of savage war, a war of extinction fought without restraint, whose violence is supposed to lead to moral regeneration. As before, it is fought along a frontier where 'civilization' confronts a wilderness of savage social and cultural values, where the issue is the soul of the nation—who we are, what makes us great; not just what America should do, but what it means. Hence the irreconcilability of opposing sides, the reciprocal dehumanization, the rejection and ignorance of the 'other,' the rage and fear, the constant resort to rhetoric, falsehoods, and lies, the fervent belief that compromise is cowardice and that any sort of accommodation is compromise.

Historical accuracy. I first learned of the nationwide railroad strikes of 1877 from a social studies teacher in middle school, then I studied them in college. Forty-six years later the paper I wrote resurfaced when I was cleaning out my mother's apartment after she died, and it became the basis of this novel. I resisted using it as best I could, because these days a novel about a labor strike is about as popular as a tax return; for some reason, though, what happened in 1877 has fascinated me for most of my life and I couldn't resist it. The strikes were by far the largest labor action in the nation up to that time and raised fundamental issues of social policy, the proper role of government, and the content of

American religion. This was also the first time the US Army (not just the National Guard) was deployed to shoot Americans in what the president deemed a "domestic insurrection."

The political commentary is authentic, with many of the phrases and statements made by characters direct quotes of contemporary statements, whether in newspapers, sermons, public testimony, speeches, or writings. The mutually hostile division of workers between supporters and opponents of the strikes is well documented, and the main strike actions—stoning the troop trains in Altoona, rioting in Pittsburgh—really occurred as depicted. What is fictional are the characters and their journey. Everything said about the railroad is accurate, including the descriptions of various stations and yards.

The characters' originals. The characters have been named for historical figures to give them a presence in the thematic content of the story, not to represent them in a biographical way.

To those who know only one bit from Shakespeare, it is probably, "to be, or not to be;" with THOMAS HOBBES it is "nasty, brutish, and short." Actually it is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short," but this is our 'natural' condition, not in the society we create to ameliorate this condition. Still, Hobbes' vision is stern, requiring a strong hand in governance, strict laws, and scrupulous adherence. His big book, *Leviathan* (a biblical metaphor for 'the state' or 'government') is in four parts, only two of which appear in modern editions, the parts we would call political philosophy. The other two, equal in length, we might call political theology. The book was written between 1647 and 1650, a tumultuous time in Britain that included a brutal civil war (the English Civil War), the trial and execution of a king (Charles I), and the inception of a 'commonwealth' in which one man (Oliver Cromwell) as first among equals wielded power sternly in God's name, with bloody invasions of Ireland and Scotland. All this, note, occurred in the context of the Protestant Reformation and 'wars of religion.' Also, he was a stern Protestant himself.

Outside of academia, his interest to us is probably as the 'father' of JOHN LOCKE, who wrote a reply to *Leviathan* forty years later, called the *Second Treatise on Government* (the *First Treatise* doesn't concern us). Locke was gentler than Hobbes and wrote in a period of relative stability and internal peace, after the 'Restoration'

of a king (Charles II, son of Charles I, 1660) and the 'Glorious Revolution' (1688), which Edmund Burke, a century later, would consider the moment when Britain's now and forever modern constitutional parliamentary government was established. Locke, like Hobbes, began with a firm belief in the principles of reformed Christianity and the natural equality of men. His book, much shorter and easier to read (and reliably summarized online), is essential reading to understand the political concepts that drove (and justified) the American Revolution. Without Locke, the Continental Congress, which declared independence, and Thomas Jefferson, who wrote that declaration (with some editorial suggestions from Ben Franklin), would have been inconceivable. Real Hobbes and Locke were as essential to Jefferson as fictional Hobbes and Locke are to Tommy.

If *The Last of the Mohicans* is the child of *Ivanhoe*, the *Declaration of Independence* is the child of the *Second Treatise on Government*, for THOMAS JEFFERSON was plainly a student of Locke, whose *Treatise* preceded the *Declaration* by about 85 years (1776 versus 1689), and his famous phrase, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" is no doubt derived from Locke's "life, liberty, and property."

There is scholarly debate over the meaning of "pursuit of happiness," while to me it seems clear that it must have to do with property. Five years after the *Declaration,* Jefferson wrote that improving property and developing industry "would render [a people] much stronger, much wealthier, and happier." (*Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XXII) Some 45 years later he wrote that 34 years of developing an area (which happened to be around Albany, New York) "shows how soon the labor of men would make a paradise of the whole earth, were it not for misgovernment, and a diversion of all [men's] energies from their proper object—the happiness of man..." (Letter to Ellen W. Coolidge, August 27, 1825) Possibly against this reading is the fact that, while 'pursuit of happiness' appears nowhere in Locke's *Treatise*, this appears in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (book 2, chapter 21, section 51), that "the highest perfection of intellectual nature lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and solid happiness."

Jefferson is crucial to the novel as he was to the political debates after the Civil War, because of another key phrase in the *Declaration*, "that all men are created equal." If that was true, in

what sense was it true, especially in the industrial colossus the United States was becoming? This was explicitly debated. Today we mostly focus on the post-Civil War Fourteenth Amendment version, which bypasses Jefferson, returning to Locke: "...Nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." This legalistic form leaves Jefferson's on the periphery of consideration. In a document in which little was anodyne, was this an anodyne pronouncement, consistent not just with Locke but fundamental Christian doctrine that finds all people equal in 'the eyes of God,' thus of necessity 'naturally' equal—or was it instead a revolutionary challenge, perhaps one not fully intended even by its author?

Jefferson's near contemporary, the British politician EDMUND BURKE, is important in American politics today (hence to my novel) because he is claimed by an educated segment of current self-described conservatives. In my introductory college courses, Burke was assigned, and I returned to re-educate myself about his philosophy of government. Turns out he didn't have one, or not much of one, partly because he was a lifetime practicing politician (like Jefferson), partly because he saw little value in theory (unlike Jefferson). Jefferson saw himself creating a new system of government for a new republic, Burke saw himself maintaining the laws and policies created a century earlier; and as a result, where Jefferson embraced the new, Burke was challenged by it, even troubled by it, if he didn't actively oppose it. He was in this sense literally conservative.

In other ways, however, ways exemplified by fictional Burke and applicable to many if not most self-described conservatives today, he was not literally conservative; rather he held views and attitudes associated with 'conservatives.' He was untroubled by "great masses of accumulation" (his term in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, IV, 1) and great disparities in wealth, and believed that in protecting the wealthy, government was protecting "lesser properties in all their gradations." In practice, he plainly favored the wealthy, whom he directly served, as against everyone else, and was untroubled by inequality and what I shall call 'great masses of poverty.' In fact, he continued, "Some decent, regulated pre-eminence, some preference (not exclusive appropriation) given to birth [that is, inherited wealth] is neither unnatural nor unjust

nor impolitic."

There might be much to say about his insistence on practical proposals to meet actual circumstances, rather than prescriptions from abstract concepts (like 'liberty' and 'sovereignty'), but here I must say that the more I try to grasp this, the less I find to grasp. Moreover, when I look for modern disciples, I see ideologues almost everywhere. Perhaps the few exceptions are the true Burkeans, but if so, he has few followers.

As the girls' father plays only an indirect, though essential role in the story, I will just say about ADAM SMITH that he was the father of capitalism. It was in his 900-page book, *The Wealth of Nations* (which happened to appear in 1776), that were laid out its essential principles, a market economy in which personal self-interest creates public good, and supply and demand regulate prices, the so-called "invisible hand" (bk.4, ch.2). During the time of my novel, both issues were front and center in the public debates concerning working conditions and the price of labor.

HERBERT SPENCER was the English proponent of what came to be called 'Social Darwinism,' though it would probably be more accurate to call Darwinism 'Biological Spencerism,' because Spencer preceded Darwin by at least six or seven years with the crucial concept of 'survival of the fittest.' He applied it to human societies, but crucially as a 'natural' phenomenon, just as Darwin was to apply it (initially) to non-human societies. Spencer was enormously influential and highly respected and was feted when he visited the United States by the likes of the steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie, for his appeal to the wealthy was obvious: He explained *in scientific terms* why they deserved everything they had, why it was inevitable that the very rich should exist beside the very poor, and how this was entirely to the benefit of the human race. (He appears not to have delved into the still-important questions concerning the relative capacities of different 'races.')

He argued strenuously and at considerable length that any attempt to interfere with the natural working of the struggle for survival by trying to ameliorate the conditions of the poor, that is those who were doomed to perish because they lacked sufficient ability to survive, would not just be a waste of valuable scarce resources, it would wreak disaster on humankind by vitiating its overall 'fitness.' One can easily read this 'scientific' discussion as a secular translation of a strict form of Calvinism, and in fact Spencer

was eager to ingratiate himself with the clergy (while denying any philosophical similarity), but received a mixed response. This was due presumably to their reticence to see God's world described without reference to God, because there is little if any discrepancy between how his principle of 'social statics' and their Calvinist doctrine of 'election' applied to the world. Clerical rejection was not, however, unanimous: Alongside Andrew Carnegie at the New York dinner to honor Spencer was America's pre-eminent minister (who makes a cameo appearance in my story), Henry Ward Beecher.

This is important because we are still having the same arguments about what, if anything, should be done for the disadvantaged, how, and by whom, and what the political, moral, and religious content of any given policy is or should be.

Seeking names similar to the Alice and Cora of *The Last of the Mohicans*, I found ABIGAIL and CADY and liked the association with two important figures in US history, Abigail Adams, wife and adviser to John Adams, signer of the *Declaration of Independence*, first vice president and second president, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a courageous pioneering suffragist. Though for most of our history, women have been excluded from direct participation in governance and most professions, here are two who made it onto the pages of history with important contributions—more important, one might say, than a great many men who continue to clutter far too many pages.

Whereas the religious figures in *Ivanhoe* and (hence) *The Last of the Mohicans* are comic, they are not very funny, and in any case I doubted that comedy had much place in my story; nonetheless I was certain that I wanted a religious character in my story. That's because of the prominent role religion, both theology and practice, played in deciding the lot of working people in the US post-Civil War—and less overtly to this day. I knew nothing of the evangelist DWIGHT MOODY before I discovered him, and did not know what kind of character fictional Moody would be until I wrote him. The obvious cliché (unfortunately) would be that his motives regarding Cady would be suspect at best, and I knew I didn't want that, as I also knew he must be attracted to her as much as the others. I didn't know how honestly and deeply he would hold his religion. I only knew that he would be brave, and not just because Tuck and Gamut are brave (despite the humor attempted at their

expense), or even because the real Dwight Moody apparently showed considerable courage during the war, but because, as it turned out, that's how I came to see him. I will admit candidly that I doubt the sincerity of many public evangelists, whose convictions, where they weigh at all, seem to weigh very lightly, but I do not doubt them all and did not want to doubt Moody. His religion was not profound, but I believe he was sincere. (He was also astonishingly popular.)

References. In addition to basing my plot and characters on *The Last of the Mohicans*, I copied or adapted numerous details, with twenty explicit references, including quotes, paraphrases, and allusions. Most are in chapter 10 (referring to chapters 5-8 in the source), with one in 9 (referring to 5) and four in 14 and 15 (referring to 11 and the beginning of 12); but perhaps the most important is in the last chapter of both novels, where the happenstance unity of the disparate group ends as the survivors rejoin their separate worlds. I did this because I am far more interested in demonstrating a particular continuity in our culture and history than concerned about charges of lack of originality. As I see it, originality is never more than partial, usually a pretense, generally over-rated, and often a gimmick; further, it obscures (and thereby makes us ignorant of) our origins, without which originality has no meaning. Two Americas then, two Americas now.

There are references to historical material far too numerous to itemize—the entire novel is based on actual history (as is most of my fiction)—but explicit references deserve acknowledgment. Books cited are:

Michael A. Bellesiles. *1877: America's Year of Living Violently*
Dee Brown. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*
Dee Brown. *The Year of the Century: 1876*
Robert V. Bruce, *1877: Year of Violence*
Philip S. Foner. *The Great Labor Uprising of 1877*
Henry F. May, *Protestant Churches and Industrial America*
Allan Nevins. *The Emergence of Modern America, 1865-1878*
Allan Pinkerton, *Strikers, Communists, Tramps and Detectives*
Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*
Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*

26, After the burden "After," a hymn put to music by Ira D. Sankey, Moody's business partner and musical associate, which he may have written; published in 1888.

26, Awake and Watch "Awake and Watch," lyrics by Lucy Harrington, published 1890 with music by Sankey.

31, 32, He asserted that/ the plain truth The references to political economy, self-betterment, and the natural link between sin and poverty are from May (44, 20, 83 respectively).

37, You cannot give On how to help the poor, see May (69) on Reverend Henry Ward Beecher.

59, I think our Survival of the fittest. See discussion above on Herbert Spencer's naturalistic social theory.

60, racial theory This expresses a view widely held among whites, not just in 1877, the date of the novel, but long before and long after. The conversation amalgamates many voices; two forthright ones were President Thomas Jefferson and President Theodore Roosevelt.

70-71, social philosopher Discussion of Spencerism. Attributing such views to Pinkerton is fiction, though not implausible.

72, labor agitators This primer on then-prevailing economic theory, including 'the wage fund,' is historically accurate, as is its theological link; indeed, economic theory, like social principles of work and charity, developed from theology.

72, must be diligent Pinkerton's formulation of the national struggle in 1877 is my restatement of Slotkin's formulation of the then-current iteration of his 'myth of the frontier,' though the last sentence ("The instigators...") is a quote from Pinkerton (preface).

77, society constituted This fundamental demand of the 'social contract,' the key concept in John Locke's political theory, is my own.

77, Be patient This typical prescription is a quote from an Episcopal minister of the time.

99, The problem The foremost American proponent of Social Darwinism (Spencer being English) was William Graham Sumner, a Yale professor and Presbyterian minister, whose views are adumbrated here. Like Spencer, his views (which differed little, if at all) were widely circulated in receptive circles; indeed, he was called to testify before Congress (the year after this story occurs). The year after that (1879), in a published lecture, he made this

representative statement: "[Many economists] are frightened at liberty, especially under the form of competition... They think it bears harshly on the weak. They do not perceive that here 'the strong' and 'the weak' are terms which admit of no definition unless they are made equivalent to the industrious and the idle, the frugal and the extravagant. They do not perceive, furthermore, that if we do not like the survival of the fittest, we have only one possible alternative, and that is the survival of the unfittest. The former is the law of civilization; the latter is the law of anti-civilization."

101, I myself It is apparently true of the real Dwight Moody, that he accompanied Union soldiers into battle.

102, the election The presidential election of 1876 was probably the most fraudulent in our history. There was widespread vote tampering and other shenanigans at the precinct level, competing electoral college votes at the state level, a congressional filibuster, countless back-room deals, open violence, even threats to the nation (troops were deployed to defend Washington DC), and more. The election was not decided for four months, ending only the day before inauguration (which was then March 4), and many refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the outcome.

103, As Hobbes here Spencer here summarizes the thrust of Thomas Hobbes' political philosophy (from the famous part 1, chapter 13).

112, When I reached The quotes of Thomas Jefferson come from his *Autobiography* (11th paragraph) and *Notes on Virginia* (Query XVII).

124, If, as Thomas Hobbes A little primer on the basic ideas of our founding philosophers, from Hobbes' *Leviathan* (part one) and Locke's *Second Treatise on Government* (see above).

125, Sing your favorite In the year of this story (1877), Ira D. Sankey published *Sacred Songs and Solos: 1200 Hymns*, still in print. Quoted here is "Out of the Shadow-land."

149, Lieutenant Colonel "Liberty, Christianity, and commerce" paraphrases Slotkin (8, 10).

181, alien menace The bloody 1871 uprising called the 'Paris Commune' was widely (and luridly) covered in American newspapers and frequently recalled during the depression that began in 1873, when homeless unemployed seemed to be everywhere and journalists wrote of "infestation," "marauders,"

"reign of terror," and "evil." (See Bellesiles, 115 and Bruce, 225, 113-114.) **182, They are lazy** Adjectives of the day. (See Trachtenberg, 71.)

182, Too many Catholics "Papal colony" and "social dynamite" belong (respectively) to Reverend Josiah Strong and Sumner, mentioned above. Sumner said the "wrong kind of people" were immigrating, and the prominent historian Francis Parkman argued that uncontrolled immigration had caused American democracy to fail. (Bellesiles, 279-280.)

182, 183, You do not wish/ And you, major This exchange summarizes what I consider the two faces of American conservatism.

186, "Hank!" he shouted The posse leader's name is Henry Clay Frick (Hank), and his friend is Andrew Carnegie (Andy), named for prominent figures in the rise of large American corporations triggered by the railroad boom. Carnegie began as a telegraph operator for the Pennsylvania Railroad, rose to a high position and then, with his former bosses as investors, went off to supply the railroad with rails (first iron, later steel), until he became one of America's wealthiest industrialists. Frick, younger, was a major supplier, then close partner, and something of a protege, who became a 'magnate' (or 'robber baron') in his own right. Both men systematically employed sharp, if not vicious business and labor practices.

187, It was a woman See **196, Ernestine Rose**.

189, in a campaign A reference to the Palo Duro Canyon campaign, 1874. (See Brown, *Bury,* ch. 11.)

190, They sink into For more on the fate of working women after the Civil War, see Nevins (325).

196, Ernestine Rose Abolitionist and early suffragist, a most remarkable woman who exhibited great physical and moral courage and is thus undeserving of her near obscurity in our history. (See Wikipedia.)

197, How about lynching The threat of lynching tramps is reported in Bruce (68-69). I do not know if any were actually lynched, but 1877 was when Reconstruction ended and the 'Jim Crow' era began, in which lynching played a prominent part.

202, Jay Cooke As the person who single-handedly triggered the Wall Street Panic of 1873 that immediately caused an economic collapse lasting at least six years, I initially considered giving Jay

Cooke a starring role in my story, but in the end he just makes this cameo appearance as a 'hoodlum' (which, by the way, was a new word in 1877). Using a variety of techniques that later became illegal, including bribery, insider trading, price manipulation, willful misrepresentation of 'material' (important) information, and trading against his own clients, he rose to great wealth and prominence, but his gigantic disastrous bet on a new railroad to rival the Pennsylvania brought down his bank (though not him—funny how that works).

202, You a Comanche For Hobbes' home, see note below to **243, For siding with**.

210, I read that Robert Roosevelt was an uncle of Theodore Roosevelt, who later became president.

210, We must proceed See discussion above of Edmund Burke. An excellent first principle, caution cannot be the only one, because more than caution is frequently required to meet a social challenge. As for Adam Smith and "the invisible hand" (see discussion above), while he assumed the price of labor, like any commodity, would be 'naturally' regulated by the dynamic interaction of supply and demand, it is not entirely clear how he would have responded to the widespread immiseration of a vast industrial class, which he did not live to see—hence the prevarication of fictional Burke when Abigail asks, "My father said that?" The proposal that those who could not accept the rigors of strict *laissez faire* ('let it work,' effectively, 'do not interfere') regarding poverty should leave the United States was made in a *New York Tribune* editorial (Bellesiles, 269).

211, presidential election For an extended narrative of the post-election skullduggery, see Brown, *Year*; for a summary, see Bellesiles, ch.2.

214, Bound for Pittsburgh The description of strike events in Pittsburgh, which begins here, is historically accurate. I relied primarily on the account given in Bruce, though I corroborated his facts from other sources, including Foner and my own college paper (which, despite weaknesses, consulted a variety of sources).

214, Ever hear This tidbit about one of the first telephones is true (see Wikipedia, "Altoona Works").

243, For siding with This is factual, according to a website that appears reliable (http://delawaretribe.org/services-and-programs/historic-preservation/removal-history-of-the-delaware-

tribe/), up to "Now there is just me," which is fiction, an obvious parallel with "the last of the Mohicans."

244, My father is Henry Ward Beecher was arguably the most famous minister to a congregation in his day (in Brooklyn, by the way, not Pittsburgh), and during the depression, a few years before the strikes, he said in a sermon, later published, the line repeated by Emily about poverty being a sin. He said much more in this vein, entire sermons, including a famous one (immediately published) the morning after fighting erupted in Pittsburgh, while Abigail was leaving with the National Guard, which contained the bread-and-water bit, including "the great laws of political economy." The congregation's laughter is noted in the transcript of the oral version.

Finally, aside from the Shakespeare quote ("Civil dissension is a viperous worm" in chapter 8, from *Henry VI, Part One*, Act III, scene i) there are 'homages' to two of my teachers. The unimaginable, terrifying expression on Spencer's face (chapter 6, "To her shock") is an allusion to a scene in Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (book IV, chapter vi), which I have never forgotten. The phrase "there were no proportions in death" (chapter 17) is a reference to "The Fox," a poem by Kenneth Patchen (*Collected Poems*), where the couplet goes: "I don't know what to say of a soldier's dying/ Because there are no proportions in death." Despite early publication by New Directions, Patchen worked in obscurity his entire life, yet he was one of our finest poets, immensely imaginative, intensely emotional, a wizard of both the lyric and the narrative, sometimes an absurdist, sometimes a surrealist, often an experimentalist, a trailblazer of diverse poetic forms, prolific, with a great sense of humor, never pretentious, always honest and direct, never faltering in his passion for love, decency, kindness, peace. Peace, Kenneth. You were a great inspiration.