

"ANNIE YOUNG'S JOURNEY"

An original screenplay

by

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FADE IN

1. EXT. LATE - NEAR CRAWFORD COUNTY KANSAS - WALNUT CREEK 1877

Thomas and Charley are camped in a wooded area surrounded by huge Red Oak and Pecan trees. They warm themselves at a campfire near a quiet clear blue creek. Two horses are tied to a tree branch. Their loaded wagon is unhitched in a nearby open field. The cool March winds blows in from the south.

THOMAS

Nine miles left, and this trip is over and done with.

CHARLEY

Can't wait. Thomas I got something I want to say; and I hope you understand.

THOMAS

What is it? Is Sara okay?

CHARLEY

Sara's fine. This is my last trip.

THOMAS

Why? What happened?

CHARLEY

Didn't you see Mr. Frank give those Insurance policies to the white boys' worth a thousand dollars; and when they change their minds, he just tore them up, just like we don't even exist. Like we don't have family that we could leave behind. I'm tired of them making twice the money, while we do twice the work! I'm just tire of it. I think it's time for me to do something else.

THOMAS

Don't think I don't know how you feel cause I do. Especially when I heard him offer them white boys \$100 when we only get \$50. How long have we been doing this?

CHARLEY

About 15 years.

THOMAS

That's a long time we've been hauling blasting oil. If you want to stop, it's okay with me, It's time I got into another line of work.

CHARLEY

I didn't mean for you to quit.

THOMAS

I won't work with anybody else.

CHARLEY

And plus Sara's ready to settle down and have a family, she don't want me gone all the time.

THOMAS

I know what you mean. Me and Annie, we ready to settle down in a place of our own too.

CHARLEY

Sara got a letter from her brother. He's out there in the west, a place called Buffalo Creek Colorado.

THOMAS

I didn't know they had Coloreds living out west. I heard some of us headed out to Texas to work the cattle drives and ranch hand for a spell, but I didn't know any of us settled up there.

CHARLEY

Sam said they got good land there. I was thinking about starting up a cattle ranch.

THOMAS

What do we know about raising cattle?

CHARLEY

Can't be no harder than working the fields. Probably easier.

THOMAS

Well, why don't we; let's do it. We don't have nothing to lose.

CHARLEY

Are you sure?

THOMAS

Yeah. Why don't we do it? We don't have nothing keeping us here.

CHARLEY

Yes we do, we got this good money we make for hauling.

THOMAS

I know what you mean.

CHARLEY

You think the women will go for it?

THOMAS

Let's not tell them, just in case things don't work out. I'll check with the land office when we get to Crawford County. Let's get some sleep.

CHARLEY

Good night.

2. EXT. SUNRISE - CRAWFORD COUNTY KANSAS - IN TOWN - NEXT DAY

Thomas and Charley drive their wagon very slowly through this highly industrial coal mining town to deliver their sensitive cargo. MR. DUFF'S General Store is opened very early. He's sweeping away the dust from the porch.

Several Coal Miners, some already cover in coal dust, trample through town. They head in the direction of the local coal Manufacturing Production Plant that can be seen in the distance.

MR. DUFF

Morning Thomas, morning Charley; I see y'all got another load.

THOMAS

Morning Mr. Duff, you up early.

MR. DUFF

Yep, I'm going out to my sister's place, thought I'd get an early start.

CHARLEY

Mr. Duff is the land office open this morning?

MR. DUFF

Be about another hour. Why, y'all planning on buying some land out here?

THOMAS

No Mr. Duff, I just had some questions.

MR. DUFF

About what?

THOMAS

How to buy land from out in Colorado?

MR. DUFF

They ain't gone tell you.

CHARLEY

Why not?

MR. DUFF

Cause y'all Negroes, that's why. But if you want, I know a little about land buying, I'll help you.

THOMAS

That's very kind of you Mr. Duff. Let us drop off this load and we'll stop back by.

MR. DUFF

Don't be too long, I'm going out to my sister's, remember.

THOMAS

It'll take us about an hour. Is that okay?

MR. DUFF

That'll be fine.

3. INT. MR. DUFF'S GENERAL STORE - AN HOUR LATER

Mr. Duff's General Store is grand. It is large, clean and filled

with everything imaginable. The more expensive items toward the front of the store, while the cheaper merchandise is at the back. There are two male clerks dressed in identical suits wearing white aprons, helping customers. There is a woman at the counter accepting money for goods and placing it a cash register. There is another woman in a corner preparing a dress for a figurine display.

Just as Thomas and Charles enter the store, Charles notices the small button that reads 'Greenback Movement' pinned on the shirts of the men standing outside talking.

CHARLES

What's that all about?

MR. DUFF

What?

CHARLES

The buttons?

MR. DUFF

Oh that's a new movement; been around a year now. Farmers say it's gonna help ease their farm prices.

THOMAS

How?

MR. DUFF

Don't really know. Suppose to help make voters more aware of some of changes in our politics. But I don't much more than that.

CHARLES

Oh.

MR. DUFF

So boys what do y'all want to know?

THOMAS

Well the truth is, we want to buy land, we don't know the first thing about how to do it.

MR. DUFF

It's gonna be hard. White folks don't sell to Colored folks, y'all know this.

CHARLEY

My wife, Sara's got a brother who lives in Buffalo Creek, he said they got good land up there...

THOMAS

...And we want to settle up there. Maybe raise some cattle.

MR. DUFF

What do you two know about raising cattle?

THOMAS

Nothing, but it can't be no harder than delivering blasting oil for Mr. Frank.

MR. DUFF

Probably live longer, that's for sure.

CHARLEY

Can you help us?

MR. DUFF

I been knowing you boys for 15 years now, I don't see why not. Now I know they not gone sell nothing to you...

Mr. Duff gives them a funny look.

THOMAS

But they will sell it to you.

MR. DUFF

That's what I was thinking. I'll buy your land for you, in your names of course.

THOMAS

Thank you so much Mr. Duff, I don't know how we can ever repay you.

MR. DUFF

Just have your money, that's all.

CHARLEY

Yes sir, we got a bank draft for \$100 cash.

MR. DUFF

Well you gonna need more than that. Let me find out what it's gone cost you. I'll go talk to Luke next door. Where'd you say this place was?

THOMAS & CHARLEY
Buffalo Creek Colorado.

MR. DUFF

Okay, y'all wait here, I'll be right back.

Mr. Duff returns a short time later. Charley is looking at the new Winchesters.

THOMAS

Charley he's back. Well what did he say?

MR. DUFF

The price is pretty high. He said it would be \$800 for 160 acres.

Thomas rubs the back of his neck.

THOMAS

That is high. Under the Homestead Act of 62, President Lincoln says folks can buy up to 160 acres for \$1.25 an acre. So if my math is correct \$200 is what it should cost.

CHARLEY

I didn't know land cost that much.

THOMAS

It's not. I think Luke is trying to get over. Mr. Duff can you tell him that we'll give him \$300...\$200 for the land and \$100 for him.

MR. DUFF

You learn something new every day. I had no idea about no such law. Okay, I'll be right back.

Mr. Duff leaves and a few minutes later he returns.

MR. DUFF

I told Luke about that new law, and it seems you right. You got a deal.

THOMAS

Mr. Duff will you take him the money?

MR. DUFF

Sure.

THOMAS

We got this bank note for \$100. Do you think he'll take that? Here's \$200 in cash.

MR. DUFF

It's as good as money. Where did you get all that money?

CHARLEY

We haven't been home in over a year. This is from our last trip.

MR. DUFF

I think I'm in the wrong business.

THOMAS

So will you do it?

MR. DUFF

Said I would, didn't I? Give me the money. What name should I put it under?

CHARLEY

Put it in Thomas Young.

THOMAS

Wait a minute.

CHARLEY

Go on Mr. Duff.

Mr. Duff leaves.

CHARLEY

If we put it in one of our names, they won't ask Mr. Duff no questions.

THOMAS

Why my name, why not yours?

CHARLEY

You been holding on to our money for all these years, I don't see why you shouldn't hold on to the land.

THOMAS

You a good man. We split everything down the middle. Land, money, and all.

Mr. Duff returns holding a deed in his hand.

MR. DUFF

Well here you go boys. 160 acres of prime land waiting in Buffalo Creek Colorado. Luke thought I was plum out of my mine for buying land in Indian Territory. Told me my scalp would be hanging on one them arrows within a week.

CHARLEY

Indians? Sam didn't say nothing about Indians.

THOMAS

Too late now, we bought the land. Mr. Duff you got to let us do something for you, for doing this for us.

MR. DUFF

Naw boys, it was my pleasure.

THOMAS

No we have to do something for you. You know what, we got some furs on the wagon; they're worth about \$100. Why don't you take them?

MR. DUFF

No, now I didn't mind helping.

CHARLEY

I'll go and get them.

Charley leaves. Seconds later he returns carrying a bundle of rabbit furs.

CHARLEY

Here you go, you sell them for whatever you can get and keep it all. That's our thanks.

MR. DUFF

Alright, I will.

THOMAS

We're going to be getting back on the road in about an hour. Miss Mary serving breakfast?

MR. DUFF

Mary went back home to Texas, her pa died.

THOMAS

We didn't know.

MR. DUFF

Yeah, she left. I say it's been a week now.

CHARLEY

When you see her again, let her know how sorry we are. Thomas we better get going.

4. EXT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

They walk out of the general store, followed by Mr. Duff, who watches them climb into their wagon.

THOMAS

Thanks again, Mr. Duff. We'll see ya.

MR. DUFF

Y'all have a safe trip back.

They drive away. Mr. Duff goes back into his general store.

5. EXT. ST. JOSEPH MISSOURI - STOCK YARD - 12 DAYS LATER - LATE EVENING

This place is a modern wonder; a city of nearly 60,000 people, many railroads, passenger trains, over 100 factories, some of the best paved streets, the largest stockyards west of Chicago, and a wholesale trade as large as that of Kansas City and Omaha combined. Its mansions and traditions play a huge part of the city's new found wealth and prosperity.

Charley and Thomas meet with the boss, FRANK, to give him some unexpected news.

THOMAS

Mr. Frank, Charley and I wanted you to know we quit.

FRANK

Can I ask why?

THOMAS

We want to make a life for us and our wives.

FRANK

Why, you don't have to leave, you can make a good life right here.

THOMAS

Well the truth of it is; me and Charley bought some land in Colorado, and we gone take a chance out there.

FRANK

You know you're the best team I got. I'm sure gonna miss you.

THOMAS

Thank your sir. I'm gonna miss you too.

FRANK

Hey I got one last hauled. It's way more dangerous. Y'all be hauling double the load. It pays double the money. I can honestly say, I wouldn't do it and I know no one else wants it. I'm willing to give you the money up front.

CHARLEY

That's \$200 up front.

THOMAS

I'm willing if you are?

FRANK

I wish I could offer you boys insurance policies like we do the other drivers but I can't, that's why I'm willing to pay you double the money. Will you do it?

THOMAS

We'll do it, but only if the job pay us \$200 a piece, just like the white boys.

FRANK

Now wait a minute, I don't have that kind of authority.

THOMAS

You might not, but the railroad do, and if they want the job done, well it's \$200 a piece or they got to find somebody else willing to do it.

Frank takes a long pause, rubbing the back of his neck.

FRANK

Well, I got no choice. The job's got to be done.

Takes \$400 out of his money pouch and gives it to Thomas. Thomas takes the money.

THOMAS

When do we leave, Mr. Frank?

FRANK

In a week.

THOMAS

Good that gives us time to get our wives met up with the wagon train.

FRANK

Okay, I'll see you in a week.

Thomas and Charley walk back to their own wagons with two large grins on their faces.

6. EXT. WEEKS LATER - WAGON TRAIN - SOMEWHERE IN OKAHOMA - SPRING

The covered wagons made of strong hickory travels in a straight single line. Each wagon is filled with furnishings, cloth and sewing supplies, milk cans, dry goods, and anything there is room to carry. The travel conditions are good, but it dry and dusty and they move slowly.

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"It's been a long trip. There've been too many to count. Sara and I had to join another caravan. The last one was headed to Texas and we on our way to Buffalo Creek Colorado. Conditions aren't too bad, just a lot of dust and wind."

7. EXT. WEEKS LATER - ON THE WAGON TRAIN - NEAR NEW MEXICO - LATE SPRING

The covered wagons continue to travel in a straight single line. The travel conditions are changing as it beginning to rain. The men rub down the canvas with oil to keep the rain out.

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"We got the news of my Thomas and Charlie's death just as we left Kansas. I stopped to wire Mr. Frank I finally got word while we were waiting for some of the wagons to be repaired and folk wanted to pick up supplies. 'Dear Mrs. Thomas Young, I'm sorry to have to inform you that your husband Thomas Young and his partner Charles Dewey were killed in a horrible accident...'"

FADE OUT

FADE IN TO FLASH BACK

8. EXT. RAIL ROAD WORK SITE - FLASH BACK

Thomas and Charley are talking near their cargo, waiting for orders to unload the last of their cargo. A stick of dynamite with a very short fuse and lit; is seen rolling on the ground.

Men scatter in every direction.

The explosion is huge.

Dead bodies are everywhere. Thomas and Charley lay side by side bloodied and dead.

O.S MR. FRANK

"...While waiting to unload their sensitive cargo, someone accidentally dropped a live explosive too close their cargo. Several lives were lost along with Thomas Young and Charles Dewey..."

FADE OUT

FADE IN TO PRESENT DAY

O.S. ANNIE

"...I have enclosed a bank draft for two hundred dollars and hope that it will help to ease your burden. Yours truly; Mr. Paul Robert Frank."

9. EXT. WEEKS LATER - ON THE WAGON TRAIN HEADED FOR BUFFALO CREEK
COLORADO - FALL

The covered wagons continue to travel in a straight single line. The travel conditions are poor. It's been raining for the weeks and the mud is too thick to travel in, but caravan keeps moving, slowly but surely.

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"The winds howl loudly, especially at night. It's been raining for days now and the mud is so thick and so high, the men can hardly get the wagons through. We've stopped so often; we're lucky if we make less than five miles every day. I don't believe we'll ever make it."

10. EXT. MONTHS LATER - ON THE WAGON TRAIN HEADED FOR BUFFALO CREEK
COLORADO - WINTER

The covered wagons continue to travel in a straight single line. The conditions are intensely cold. Snow falls hard and continuously.

Several hastily scratched-out holes host the dead. Some graves are marked, but others have been disguised to keep wild animals from digging up the body.

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S ANNIE

"The snow is as thick as the mud was. Many of the folks have died. I miss my Thomas. He was a good man. I'm trying to be strong for Sara, but the truth is, I don't know what to do. I'm sorry for Sara cause Charles will never know about their baby."

11. EXT. MONTHS LATER - ON THE WAGON TRAIN HEADED FOR BUFFALO CREEK COLORADO - WINTER

The covered wagons continue to travel in a straight single line. The conditions are severely colder now. People in the camp are bundled in as many clothes as they can stand to wear.

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"It's nearing Christmas, and Colorado seems farther away than when we join this train. The last train we was with told us it should take no more than ten days. But the Captain of this one told us it was going to take about two weeks. I know we're lost, but no one's saying anything. All I can do is pray and ask God to keep us all safe. Sara's time has come, and it seems like she has been giving birth to the same baby for as long as we've been on the trail. She's having a real time of it."

12. EXT. CAMPFIRES - ON THE WAGON TRAIN

The wagons form a circle to keep out hidden dangers. The horses are restless as neigh sounds can be heard from a distant make-shift corral. The ground is covered with snow. The men have cleared away several areas near their fires for sleeping. The children in the camp play and babies cry in the distance.

Everyone sits around their various campfires waiting for the birth of the new baby.

Annie walks over to the covered wagon and opens the canvas.

13. INT. SARA'S WAGON - CONTINUOUS

Sara's screams from inside her covered wagon can be heard throughout the entire camp.

ANNIE

Can I help?

BEATRICE CONNER

Yeah! You see where the doc is; she needs a doctor. Where is Henry? He's supposed to be raid captain.

ANNIE

What can I do?

BEATRICE CONNER

Find Henry!

14. EXT WAGON TRAIN CAMPFIRE - CONTINUOUS

Annie frantically rushes throughout the snow filled camp looking for the raid captain or the doctor.

ANNIE

Mr. Henry? Mr. Henry? Where is Mr. Henry?
Miss Beatrice needs him.

ARTHUR CONNER

He ain't back yet.

ANNIE

Do you know when he's coming back?

ARTHUR CONNER

Told me, he wouldn't be back till morning.

ANNIE

Where's the Doc?

ARTHUR CONNER

I ain't seen him all day.

MAN 1

Probably somewhere drunk and passed out.

15. INT. SARA'S COVERED WAGON - CONTINUOUS

Annie climbs inside the wagon.

ANNIE

Nobody's seen the doc and Mr. Henry won't be back until morning.

BEATRICE CONNER

They may not make it till morning.

ANNIE

What can I do?

BEATRICE CONNER

Just hold her hand.

ANNIE

Sara, I'm here. You'll be alright, Sara.

Sara looks at Annie with so much pain in her eyes.

She speaks in a whispered voice.

Tears stream down Annie's face.

SARA

Annie, should the good Lord call me to glory, you promise me that you gone take care of my baby; that you'll raise this baby like they was your own.

ANNIE

Sara, don't talk like that, you gonna be fine.

SARA

Annie you make that promise just as sure as you're here looking at me.

Sara reacts to a very sharp pain.

SARA

Find my brother; tell him we tried.

Sara reacts again to another sharp pain.

ANNIE

Sara you can find your brother yourself; time you back on your feet. And you'll raise up your own baby.

SARA

Promise me Annie.

ANNIE

I promise Sara; I promise

At the very same moment the new born baby girl is born, Sara takes her last breath.

BEATRICE CONNER

It's a good thing y'all both niggers cause otherwise this baby would go to somebody better than the likes of you.

Annie doesn't respond to the comment. She stares at Beatrice who is handling the new born infant roughly.

ANNIE

Can I have the baby?

BEATRICE CONNER

I need to finish wiping her clean.

ANNIE

I can do that; now let me have the child

BEATRICE CONNER

I said just a minute! My lord you niggers is all alike, so impatient!

Calm voice.

ANNIE

Give the baby to me, I'll wipe her clean.

Beatrice almost tosses the baby to Annie

BEATRICE CONNER

Here, do it yourself!

Beatrice moves aside to let Annie past.

BEATRICE CONNER

You deal with her, too.

Beatrice points to dead body.

BEATRICE CONNER

I don't clean up after nothing dead,
especially dead niggers.

Beatrice climbs out of Sara's wagon.

ANNIE

Now little one.

Annie gently wipes the baby.

ANNIE

What am I supposed to do with you?

Looks at Sara.

ANNIE

Goodbye my dear friend; I Promise Sara.

16. INT. ANNIE WAGON - LATE NIGHT

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"Today Sara died. I don't know what I'm going to
do. The baby made it. I call her Sara Grace."

Annie looks at the baby sleeping in the basket, and then she
lies down to sleep.

17. EXT. NEXT MORNING - SARA'S GRAVE SIGHT

Everyone except Beatrice and her family gather at Sara's grave.

MR. HENRY

Shall we pray? Ashes-to-ashes and dust-to-dust.
We commend our dear sister Sara unto the Lord.
Amen.

Mr. Henry picks up dirt with the shovel and toss dirt into the
grave. Everyone tosses dirt into the grave as they passed by the
gravesite. Annie lingers behind.

ANNIE

We'll be moving on here real soon; I expect this is the last time I'll see you. Please take real good care of each other up there in heaven, and save room for me. Goodbye my dear friend. Give my love to Thomas, tell him I miss him.

Annie walks away from the grave site and never looks back. The Grave diggers throw dirt into the grave.

18. INT. ANNIE WAGON - LATER

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"Sara, I'll miss you my dear friend. I want you to know something I hope you and Charley and my Thomas are having a grand old time up there with the Lord. It's not right, leaving me like this." Sara I named her Sara Grace, after you and your mama. I hope that's alright with you.

19. EXT. WAGON TRAIN BACK ON THE TRAIL - LATER

Annie and the man driving her wagon are followed closely by another man driving Sara's wagon.

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"I'll tell you what, I will be so happy when we get to Colorado. I don't know how much more of this wagon I can take. The snow is thick but the weather is holding. And the baby, she has been so restless; I don't know what else to do for her. Maybe she misses her mama. I don't know, anymore. I just want to get there."

20. EXT. FIFTEEN MILES OUTSIDE OF BUFFALO CREEK COLORADO - TWO DAYS AFTER LEAVING SARA'S GRAVE SIGHT

The wagons are form in a circle. The women in the wagon train unload cookware and other necessities needed for cooking. Some of the men build campfires throughout camp for kettles of coffee, cooking and washing clothes, while other tends to their horses.

TOM

We finally made it to Buffalo Creek Colorado Territory. I believe the town is 'round five miles out.

MR. HENRY

We'll set up camp here for the remainder of today and make our way into town sometime tomorrow.

Annie writes in her journal, but the Audience can hear her.

O.S. ANNIE

"I can't help but feel uneasy. I heard some of the men folks say they're going to ride ahead to see what kind of town was waiting, I've decided to go ahead with them."

Annie walks over to Tom.

ANNIE

Tom I'd like to go into town with y'all.

TOM

It's still awfully dark. No place for women folks.

BEATRICE CONNER

Tom, she's just a nigger; go ahead and take her and that bastard of a child. I'm tired of looking' at em'!

ANNIE

Miss Beatrice I have been nothing but kind to you and your nine children. I have said nothing to you. Slavery's been over a long time now. If you're tire of looking at me and my so-call bastard child, than you and your nine must be tired of eating my food. But that's okay, because I'll be leavin', and you and your nine can find food elsewhere. By the way this child is no more a bastard then yours, she's an orphan.

21. EXT. VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING - WAGON TRAIN CAMP

Tom along with another man from camp hooks up Annie and Sara's

wagons up to their perspective horse teams. Annie places a basket with baby Sara inside at the front of the wagon. Tom extends his hand to help Annie board her wagon. He has agreed to drive her wagon for her. Sara's wagon is being driven by a second man. There are an extra horse, tied to each of the back both wagons

22. EXT. BUFFALO CREEK COLORADO - TOWN - SUNRISE

There's a man standing outside the General Store sweeping. The stage just pulled into town and stopped in front of the man at the General Store. A lady dressed in all black, carrying a gray and black duffle bag, steps off, sees her party; they greet each other with hugs, load onto their wagon and ride off. Another woman runs out of the post office. She hurries over to the stage coach and tosses a mail bag up to the driver; she waves, turns and walks back into the post office. Another man is opening the doors of the livery stable. There is clinking noise coming from the Blacksmith, as if he has been up and busy for quite some time. A couple unlocks and enters a restaurant. They close and lock the doors behind themselves. A preacher scurries over to the coach and hands the driver letters to be mailed, he turns back toward the church, but yells a good morning to the man sweeping in front of the General Store, goes into the church and closes the door behind himself.

23. EXT. RIDING ON HER WAGON - CONTINUOUS

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"We got into town right around Sunup. The town is quietly waking up to its daily routine. It seems to be a quiet, but nice town, a good town. I could call this place home."

24. EXT. TOWN LIVERY - CONTINUOUS

Tom and the other driver pull the wagons to a stop in front of the livery. MR. COBBS is feeding horses. Tom jumps from the wagon, and extends his hand to help Annie down.

TOM

Here we are Miss Annie.

Annie removes baby in basket from the wagon and looks to the livery owner.

ANNIE

Thank you Tom, I'll see you soon.

Annie turns to Mr. Cobbs.

ANNIE

May I leave my wagons here till I can find a place?

MR. COBBS

Yes; it cost a dollar a week for each wagons

ANNIE

That's fine. I'll only need the space until I find a place.

Annie opens her handbag and hands him two coin dollars.

ANNIE

Do you mind if I pay you now?

Mr. Cobbs accepts the coins.

MR. COBBS

No Ma'am. Come we me and I'll get you a receipt.

Annie and Mr. Cobbs walk to the livery doors. Mr. Cobbs goes inside while Annie waits at the door. Mr. Cobbs returns and gives Annie her receipt.

ANNIE

Excuse me, can you tell me where I might find a room?

MR. COBBS

Miss Pritchett, but Mr. Bradow, he owns the General Store, he'd more likely know if she's got any rooms. Mind if I ask where's your husband?

ANNIE

He died. Why do you ask?

MR. COBBS

Oh sorry to hear. I saw the baby; yeah check Mr. Bradow.

Annie acknowledges his empathy with a nod and exit's the livery.

25. EXT. GENERAL STORE

MR. BRADOW General Store is the complete opposite of Mr. Duff's General Store, and it's only store in town. Its wood frame is almost as old as the town itself. A green painted on sign that reads 'General Store' has just been refreshed with a new coat of paint. There are two chain locked doors that lead to an underground storage cellar on the side of the building. The storefront window is dusty from the street.

26. INT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Annie enters the General Store. Off to right of the door a wood stair case leads to the 2nd floor. The short ceiling has wet spots from water leakage. There are several shelves of can goods and dry goods throughout the store. There is a small vegetable stand filled with fresh vegetables in the open space near the back window. The wooden floor is clean and houses oversized barrels of dry goods, such as flour, bean, potatoes, and other items. There are other store good items placed strategically throughout the store. The counter sits center stage surrounded by store merchandise.

MR. BRADOW the general store owner is behind the counter adding up yesterday's receipts. A loud noise from something large falling forces Annie and Mr. Bradow to look up at the back door.

ANNIE

Hello, are you Mr. Bradow?

MR. BRADOW

Yea, how can I help you?

ANNIE

I'm looking for a room.

MR. BRADOW

I don't have any rooms, but Mary Pritchett runs the boarding house, it's about half mile out.

ANNIE

Do you know if she has any rooms?

MR. BRADOW

I'm sure of it; she always does. I'll have Roscoe take you. Roscoe?

Roscoe enters from the back room.

MR. BRADOW

Roscoe I need you to take this young lady over to Miss Pritchett's place.

Roscoe walks over to Annie.

ROSCOE

Hi Ma'am.

ANNIE

Hello Roscoe. Thank you, I'll need to get my wagon.

MR. BRADOW

No, Roscoe can use the wagon out back.

ANNIE

Are you sure?

MR. BRADOW

Yeah.

ROSCOE

Yes ma'am, I'll get the wagon and bring it round front.

ANNIE

Thank you so much. I was wondering Mr. Bradow, is the bank open yet?

MR. BRADOW

Yes, I think so, I saw Mr. Hammond opening the door just a bit ago.

ANNIE

Can you tell Roscoe that I'll be right back; I need to speak to Mr. Hammond first.

27. INT. THE BANK - CONTINUOUS

The red brick with white trim one room building sticks out like

a sore thumb. It's the only brick building in town; it's also the only building that looks to be newly built. Although it's small it is a very modern building for the times. MR. HAMMOND sits behind the larger of the two desks in the bank. A teller is preparing his bank till for the day from behind an open caged area.

ANNIE

Hello, are you Mr. Hammond?

MR. HAMMOND

Yes, how can I help you, young lady?

ANNIE

My late husband has this bill of sale to a piece of land.

MR. HAMMOND

It must be a mistake, we don't sale to women, especially Negro women.

ANNIE

You didn't sell it to me, you sold it to my late husband, but I decided to come anyway, since we paid for the land in full.

MR. HAMMOND

Well the truth is, if I had known he was a Negro, I would have told him no. The bank just won't all me to do business with Negroes.

ANNIE

But the fact is, under the Homestead Act of 62, you don't have no choice. Here's the deed, now all I want to do is move in.

MR. HAMMOND

I'd be happy to give you your money back. The bank just won't sell land to a Negro woman.

ANNIE

I left my home because you sold the land to my late husband. I have a child; now where do you expect we go?

MR. HAMMOND

That's not my problem.

ANNIE

It most certainly is your problem.

MR. HAMMOND

Ma'am I'm sorry I can't help you.

ANNIE

Well thank you Mr. Hammond, I will take my money back; all of it.

MR. HAMMOND

Wait Miss; let me see that deed again Mrs. Young the 160 acres that your husband bought, he paid \$200 for it, but it's now worth twice what your husband paid for it. I'm willing to give it to you if you want to pay the rest of the money.

ANNIE

No Mr. Hammond, I'm not willing to pay more for land that you already sold to my husband.

MR. HAMMOND

Well than I can't help you.

ANNIE

Again, I'll take my money, thank you.

MR. HAMMOND

Well, now wait a minute, there is a small farm on the out skirts of town. The bank's been trying to get rid of it. Mind you it's not in the best shape and not fit for harvesting.

ANNIE

How much?

MR. HAMMOND

Well your husband paid \$200 I can let you have it, and we'll call it an even swap.

ANNIE

Before I say yes, do you mind if I see it?

MR. HAMMOND

No, when would you care to see the place?

ANNIE

Roscoe was taking me over to Miss Mary Pritchett's. If you tell me where the place is, maybe he'd be willing to stop by.

MR. HAMMOND

Roscoe shouldn't have any problems finding the place; just tell him it's the old Jones place, he'll know.

ANNIE

Thank you, Mr. Hammond.

MR. HAMMOND

Don't thank me yet; wait until you see the place.

28. EXT. THE BANK - CONTINUOUS

Roscoe sits patiently in the wagon waiting for Annie. She exits the bank, walks over to the wagon and hands the infant to him. Roscoe nervously takes the baby, and again forgets to extend his hand to help Annie onto the wagon, so she climbs aboard the wagon by herself.

ANNIE

Roscoe, can you stop by the old Jones place before going to Mrs. Pritchett's?

He nervously and hurriedly gives her the baby.

ROSCOE

Yes Ma'am, that won't be no problem.

29. EXT. DRIVING THROUGH THE COUNTRYSIDE - CONTINUOUS

He give the snap of is whip at the reigns and the horse gallop down the road. Annie takes in the scenery and the surrounding snow top mountainous terrain as far as the eye can see. In the distance she sees several Native Americans on horseback.

Annie points at the Native Americans.

ANNIE

Roscoe, look!

Roscoe looks in the direction of the Indians.

ROSCOE

They're harmless.

30. EXT. JONES PLACE - LATER

Roscoe stops in front of the old Jones place. This two room shack is so run down the only thing holding it up is God's grace. The barn and corral aren't fairing much better. The land has not been tended to in such a long time, the dead over growth is now so high, its dead limbs are covering the broken down corral fencing. There is a beautiful deep creek filled with winter ice and a few fish flowing a few yards off the side of the house.

ROSCOE

We're here; this is the old Jones place.

Annie gives him the baby again, and she climbs from the wagon.

ANNIE

I asked for land, but this; I wouldn't sell this to an old dog.

Annie looks at the creek.

ANNIE

Well at least it's by the water. He was right about one thing; it's not fit for growing nothing. Roscoe, how much land is here?

ROSCOE

I don't know, bout 20 acres; but it ain't fit for nothing.

ANNIE

Roscoe, can you take me back to town now?

ROSCOE

Yes Ma'am. You want to see the inside?

ANNIE

No, I've seen enough.

31. EXT. BACK IN TOWN - LATE AFTERNOON

ANNIE

Roscoe watch the baby; I'll be right back.

Annie climbs down off the wagon and goes inside the bank.

32. INT. THE BANK - CONTINUOUS

ANNIE

Mr. Hammond I'll take the place, but I'm only willing to pay 75, which means you owe me \$125.

MR. HAMMOND

I'll tell you what. What if I give it to you for \$100 and I'll give you rest in a bank note?

ANNIE

Mr. Hammond, that land ain't worth \$50 and you know it. \$75 is my offer, and no, I won't take a note. My husband wired cash and that's what I want back.

MR. HAMMOND

100 and I'll throw in a plow and workhorse.

ANNIE

You have someone fence in my land and we have a deal.

MR. HAMMOND

I'll draw up the papers and have them ready in about an hour.

ANNIE

I don't mean to rush you, but can we take care of everything right away. I'm tired and the baby is just plum worn out, and we just want to get settle in.

MR. HAMMOND

That's fine. I have the paper work right here on my desk; it just needs our signatures.

Annie sits down and Mr. Hammond walks around his desk and sits down.

Mr. Hammond signs the deed and gives it to Annie.

MR. HAMMOND

Sign here; and here.

Mr. Hammond picks up the deed and folds it into a tri-fold.

MR. HAMMOND
Here is your deed.

ANNIE
Thank you so very much.

MR. HAMMOND
I'll need the other deed back.

Annie and Mr. Hammond exchange deeds.

ANNIE
Of course; I'll need the rest of my money. Thank you for doing business with me.

Mr. Hammond gives her some money.

MR. HAMMOND
You're welcome. You can leave that here at the bank.

Annie exits the bank.

33. EXT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

ROSCOE
Ma'am, do you still need to go to Miss Mary's place?

ANNIE
No Roscoe, thank you. But I do need help taking my wagon and thing out to my new place.

ROSCOE
I'll be glad to help you ma'am.

ANNIE
My wagon is over at the livery. I need some things from the General Store.

34. INT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Annie enters.

MR. BRADOW

What's the matter, Mary's all filled up?

ANNIE

Oh, no, I never made it. I just bought the old Jones place.

MR. BRADOW

That old shack; Hammond ought to be ashamed for selling that dump to you.

ANNIE

I know it's got a lot of fixing up to be done, but once I get it in shape it will be a good home.

MR. BRADOW

If you can call it that.

ANNIE

I'll be needing some supplies; some sugar, flour, beans, rice, some salted meat. Where can I get a few chickens?

Roscoe pulls up with her wagon.

ANNIE

I don't know what I'll need to get the house fixed up. Oh, and I'll need some feed for the horses.

MR. BRADOW

Joe can get a cow and some chickens and a pig too; he's the blacksmith. He's real handy with a hammer and nails too. He can probably get your place all fixed up in no time.

ANNIE

How much?

MR. BRADOW

That'll be three dollars and thirty seven cents.

Mr. Bradow places large sacks of flour, sugar, and beans on the floor in front of the counter and the smaller supplies on the counter. He notices the large amount of money as Annie sifts through in her handbag.

MR. BRADOW

You know, you ought to think about putting that in the bank.

ANNIE

I don't like banks, I just don't trust them.

MR. BRADOW

Well you ought to think about it just the same. Now that you have your own place, I'd be happy to start you up with an account here at the store.

Places the money on the counter.

ANNIE

That's good, I would love to. I'll also need lots of baby things too.

Puts money in his till. Pull catalog out from under the counter.

MR. BRADOW

I'll show you what we got here, but we can order from the catalog.

The wagon train that Annie had been a part of pulls into town.

Looks through the store window.

MR. BRADOW

Wow! Will you look at that! I haven't seen a train in a good while. I wonder where they're headed.

ANNIE

Where is the blacksmith?

Preoccupied with the new arrivals.

MR. BRADOW

You mean Joe's. Just up the way, you can't miss it. He always has one or two cows on hand for folks looking to buy them.

ANNIE

And what about the pig and some chickens?

MR. BRADOW

He usually has them too.

ANNIE

Roscoe can you load this stuff onto the wagon for me? And watch the baby for me, I'll be right back.

35. EXT. THE GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Roscoe jumps down from the wagon. He and Mr. Bradow load the wagon with Annie's supplies. Annie puts the basket carrying the baby in the wagon and walks over to the blacksmith shop.

36. INT. BLACKSMITH SHOP - CONTINUOUS

This shop is poorly lit with new and old iron to make any and everything. It is filled with traditional blacksmith tools; bellows, hammers, and a small section of files and tongs. It is built around the forge to keep out the weather. The forge, chimney and hood are all made of stone. The anvil stands about four feet in front of the forge. There is a barn and corral built behind the blacksmith shop that houses farm animals and livestock the black has accepted as payment. He sells them to people looking to buy.

Annie looks around but doesn't see anyone.

ANNIE

Hello, is anyone here?

Joe stands up from behind a horse he's shoeing.

JOE

Yea, I'm here. What can I do for you?

ANNIE

I'm looking to buy a cow, pigs and some chicken, Mr. Bradow sent me.

JOE

How many chickens do you want?

ANNIE

How many do you have?

JOE

I have about seven right now, but I can get you however many you need.

ANNIE

That's just fine. What about a cow and some pigs?

JOE

I have two cows; I'll pick the best one and bring her out to your wagon. Where is it?

ANNIE

Roscoe's loading it up for me. I just bought the old Jones place.

JOE

That place needs a lot of work.

ANNIE

Yes, I know.

JOE

I'll bring the chickens out to your place later today.

ANNIE

That'll be fine. How much do I owe you?

JOE

I'll collect when I bring you the chickens.

ANNIE

Okay. Oh what about the pigs?

JOE

I'll bring over the best I can find.

37. INT. THE GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

People from the wagon train enter.

MR. BRADOW

Welcome, welcome. Come right in folks, what can I help you fine folks with on this fine day?

ARTHUR CONNER

Well right now, we notice that big field out back and wanted to know if it'd be alright to set up camp?

MR. BRADOW

It's fine by me, just as long as it don't interfere with Sunday services.

Point out window at the construction area.

MR. BRADOW

See, that's where we puttin up the new church building; gotta wait til' this snow melts.

ARTHUR CONNER

We don't want to interfere. Why don't you tell us the best place to set up our camps?

MR. BRADOW

You know, there's a big field right behind the livery, it belong to the church; grounds not as muddy. How long you folks plan on being in town?

ARTHUR CONNER

It depends on work.

MR. BRADOW

You'll be able to find some work, the railroad looking for good help.

Beatrice Conner place dry goods on the counter.

MR. BRADOW

That'll be one dollar.

BEATRICE CONNER

Is it alright if we start an account with you?

MR. BRADOW

That'll be fine, once you get settle in, for now you need to pay cash; had too many folks come into town get stuff and leave during the night; leaving me stuck with the bill.

Arthur places the money on the counter.

ARTHUR CONNER

I understand, here you go.

MR. BRADOW

No hard feelings.

38. EXT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Unnoticed by the people from the wagon train, Annie gets into her wagon, and picks up the baby. Joe comes over with the cow and ties it to the wagon.

ROSCO

Ready Ma'am?

They drive off in the direction of her new home.

ANNIE

Yes.

39. EXT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

Annie climbs from the wagon, picks up the baby and enters the very small two room shack cabin. Roscoe unloads her wagon and helps Annie move in. She takes five dollar coins out of her hand bag.

ROSCOE

No ma'am. This is way too much money.

She puts it into his hands.

ANNIE

And you earned every bit of it. Without you Roscoe I could never have gotten settled in here, now take the money.

Shocked by the sight of the money.

ROSCOE

I ain't never had so much money at one time in all my life.

ANNIE

Well Roscoe, you have a good time spending it.

Roscoe boards his wagon and tips his hat.

ROSCOE

Thanks ma'am, I'll see you real soon.

She waves as Roscoe drives away.

ANNIE

I'll see you soon, and thanks again Roscoe.

40. INT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - LATER

Annie has a simple decorating style. Her hand-crafted furnishings set off this humble home. The look is beautiful yet simplistic and natural.

Annie takes as many sack cloths as she can find and covers up all the holes that she can see. She goes outside and gets some firewood from under the canvas on the side of the house. She comes back inside and lights a fire to warm up the house. She works hard and long to get the house clean.

41. INT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - NEAR SUPPER TIME

Annie finds a tin tub out back that she drags into the house so she can take a bath, while the baby is down for a nap. Annie sings a beautiful Christmas spiritual song as she takes her bath.

42. INT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

Annie gets out of the tub and begins to prepare a hot supper. She stops to write in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"I am blessed. Me and Sara Grace are just about settled into my new home. It ain't much, but it's ours. I'm happy. I'm thinking of you Sara. I have no idea how I'm going to find your brother to tell him of your death. I don't know anything about him, except that his name is Samuel. I'll ask in town tomorrow."

43. EXT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

SAMUEL a black woodsman/trapper approaches the homestead; he sees smoke from the fireplace and he hears Annie singing. Unknown to anyone, Samuel has been living at the old Jones' place during the winter time. Annie does not see him, as he

watches her through the window. Samuel walks away back into the bushes.

44. EXT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - EVENING - SUPPER TIME

Blacksmith Joe arrives with ten chickens loaded onto the back of his wagon.

JOE

Hello, is anybody home?

Opens the front door.

ANNIE

Hello, Joe, thank you for bringing the chickens.

JOE

No problem, I brought along a rooster, thought you could use it.

Jumps down from his wagon. Annie takes a long pause to stares at this handsome man. She realizes that she is staring and turns away.

ANNIE

Yes, how much do I owe you?

He unloads the chickens.

JOE

The milking cow, the ten chickens, plus the rooster, and the pigs; that'll be \$20, but if you include supper, I'll take off \$7.

She offers a flirtatious laugh.

ANNIE

How can I turn down a deal like that; Come on in.

JOE

Be in directly, once I unload the wagon.

ANNIE

Supper will be on the table soon.

Turns and walk back into the house.

45. INT. HOMESTEAD - SUPPER TIME - CONTINUOUS

ANNIE

Come on in Joe, the door is open.
He removes his hat and stomps the snow off his boots.

JOE

Thank you.

Annie is embarrassed by the appearance of her home.

ANNIE

Have a seat. It needs some work, I know.

JOE

It's nice, but it could use some fixing up.
What made you buy it?

She gives him his money.

ANNIE

To be quite honest, if I didn't somebody from the
wagon train would have.

JOE

Thank you. You were with the wagon train that
just came into town?

ANNIE

Yes, me and my best friend Sara; she passed away.

Feeling her uneasiness, he changes the subject.

JOE

Why this place?

ANNIE

I know it's got a lot of work, but it's has a
creek right outside, so I won't have to go far
for water. And as long as there's water,
anything's possible.

JOE

Ain't that the truth.

Annie places biscuit on an already set table of chicken, mashed
potatoes and snapped beans. The baby starts to fuss from inside

the other room.

JOE

What's that?

Annie goes and gets the baby.

ANNIE

That's Sara Grace; it's her supper time too.

JOE

She yours?

ANNIE

Well actually she belonged to my best friend, the woman that I was telling you about.

JOE

What happened?

ANNIE

Sara, her mother, died in child birth.

JOE

What about your husbands, where are they?

ANNIE

They were killed in an accident. They worked for the railroad.

JOE

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. How long was y'all on the trail.

ANNIE

A long time; what was supposed to take 10 days, took us nearly seven months,

JOE

Wow! Why?

ANNIE

The truth; we'd never travel by wagon train, and we kept joining up with the wrong party. We had to change trains three times. We almost went to Texas.

JOE

Wow, I'm sorry.

ANNIE

And it didn't help that the raid captain in this train had no idea where we were going and how to get us there. A lot of people left and some died. Sara, if she would've just hung on a little longer she would have made it. Now it's just me and little Sara.

JOE

So you and your husband never had none of your own?

ANNIE

No, me and Thomas we wanted to wait till we got settled and then we were going to start our own family.

JOE

Why here?

ANNIE

Truth is we wanted a different life.

JOE

What about money? Do you have something to get you by?

Thinks about the money belt inside her carpet bag, but chooses not to respond to his question.

ANNIE

I'll make this place work.

JOE

Why didn't you turn back after your family died?

ANNIE

I didn't have anybody to go back too, but I did have land waiting for me.

JOE

What are you gonna do now?

ANNIE

First I'll get this place fixed up, and the rest will work itself out.

JOE

That's good, cause these winter can be really hard on a body.

He looks up.

JOE

You gonna need a new roof.

ANNIE

I'll ask Roscoe.

JOE

Yeah, I'm sure he can, but I'm sure I can do the work much better.

She offers another flirtatious chuckle.

ANNIE

I just bet you can. Now that you know all there is to know about me, what about you? How did you get here?

JOE

Believe it or not, I was born here.

ANNIE

I never heard of such a thing, Negro folks out west?

JOE

My parents were runaway slaves. They hid with the Indians for a long time, I'm sure I was conceived and born with the Shawnee. I grew up with them I know their ways and customs.

ANNIE

How did you end up in town?

JOE

My father rode into town, told the folks that he would be their blacksmith, free for one year if they gave him some land to build a home for his family and a proper shop; and seeing as the nearest good blacksmith was 20 miles from town. And the one they did have was the town drunk; how could they refuse.

ANNIE

Then what happened?

JOE

The town built my father a new home and shop, and for one full year my father and mother work themselves to the bone for free.

ANNIE

How did you all eat and such, if he worked for free. Money had to come from somewhere.

JOE

My momma, she washed clothes and cleaned houses she also sold pies and things like that. Things was hard for the first year, but after that year. The land and the shop and the house was all ours, and it's been that way ever since.

ANNIE

And what about a wife, I mean have you ever been married?

JOE

No not yet.

ANNIE

I'm so sorry.

JOE

Don't be, my prospects just got brighter.

Uncomfortable by the remark she changes the subject.

ANNIE

I see. So do you think you could get started on the roof soon?

He stands and walks over to Annie, places his hand on her shoulder, making her uneasy.

JOE

Miss Annie I will do whatever you want me to, whenever you want me to.

She ignores his advances.

ANNIE

That's good to know Joe; it's like you said, winter is here and the roof needs a good fixing.

He understands her meaning.

JOE

I'll get started first thing. I'll be going; dinner was nice. Hope we can do it again sometime soon.

ANNIE

Good night Joe, I'll see you in the morning.

JOE

What time would you like me to be here?

ANNIE

It's up to you, I don't want to interfere with your day; so whatever works best for you.

JOE

Okay.

He exits, the sound of his wagon driving away can be heard from inside the house.

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"So, what do you think of such a handsome man Annie Young? Truth; he makes me nervous. He is quite handsome though. Thomas don't get your feelings in a knot; it don't hurt to look."

46. INT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - LATE NIGHT

Annie looks around her tiny home as if she has lost something,

but suddenly remembered where she put it. She removes a money belt tosses it onto her bed.

Kneels down beside the bed, bows her head in silent prayer.

She gets up off her knees and sits on the side of the bed. She empties the content of the money bag.

Annie writes in her journal.

O. S. ANNIE

"Sara God is good! Thomas you don't have to worry about me now. I've got close to two thousand dollars. Thank you God, this is going to be a good Christmas."

She remembers what her mother use to do with money she saved. She slightly pushes her bed aside and pulls up a floor board. She picks up the wooden box with her deed inside.

ANNIE

Now I need to find a safe place. Where can I put it? I may need another box; no, I'll put it back in my money belt;

She puts a small amount of money back inside her hand bag and the rest back inside her money belt. She places the money belt inside the box and puts the box underneath the floor board. She replaces the floor board and pushes the bed so that it covers the floor board. She blows out the candle and climbs into bed.

47. INT. HOMESTEAD - EARLY THE NEXT MORNING

Knock at the door. She gets out of bed and puts on her robe.

ANNIE

Who is it?

JOE

It's me Miss Annie.

Opens the door.

ANNIE

Good morning Joe. It's early.

JOE

I know, I wanted to get an early start.

ANNIE

Would you like breakfast?

JOE

Had some coffee

ANNIE

Well I haven't so I'll go ahead and get breakfast on the table. You can join me if you want.

The baby stirs.

ANNIE

The baby's awake.

48. INT. HOMESTEAD - EARLY MORNING - CONTINUOUS

A short time later Annie puts breakfast is on the table, and yells out the window.

ANNIE

Joe breakfast is ready.

SAMUEL is dressed in leather trousers made of deer skin. His shirt resembles a waggoner's frock. He has a broad belt around his waist to hold up his tomahawk. A shot bag and powder-horn, carved with a variety of whimsical figures and devices, hang from his necks over one shoulder. He wear Native American boots made of woolen cloth wrapped loosely, tied with garters on the outside, and come more than half way up his thigh. He wears Native American moccasins on his feet made of strong elk skin. He wears a throw coat made from the hide of a buffalo to keep out he cold.

He enters the house from the back door and startles Annie.

ANNIE

Oh! Who are you?

SAM

Sam.

ANNIE

Can I help you?

SAM

No.

He takes a cup from the cupboard and pours himself a cup of coffee. Annie is annoyed by his rudeness.

ANNIE

Are you sure?

SAM

Yep!

Sam sits at the table and fixes himself a plate of food.

JOE

Oh I, see you've met Sam.

ANNIE

No, we haven't actually met.

JOE

He likes to think of this place as his.

SAM

He is in the room, and this is my place.

ANNIE

I have a deed that states otherwise.

JOE

Mr. Hammond sold it to her yesterday.

Sam is ashamed by his actions. He stands to his feet.

SAM

Oh, I didn't know, I'll leave.

ANNIE

No, you've already made yourself at home; please sit and eat.

He sits back down. The baby cries.

SAM

May I?

Sam picks up the baby before she can finish her sentence.

ANNIE

I don't think she'll let you.

SAM

So little one, what's your name?

She walks over and takes the baby from Sam.

ANNIE

Sara Grace. Joe I have to go into town to get some supplies for the baby and I need to send a wire. Will you hitch up my wagon? I'll dress the baby. I won't be long.

JOE

Sure.

Joe exit's the house to hitch up Annie's wagon.

Sam continues to eat.

49. EXT. HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

ANNIE

Thank you Joe; I won't be in town to long. Please make sure he leaves when he's finished.

JOE

Sure.

She puts the basket with Sara Grace inside the wagon and climbs aboard.

ANNIE

Can I bring you anything?

JOE

No, I have all I need.

Annie rides off.

50. INT. THE GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Annie enters carrying Sara Grace.

ANNIE

Good morning Mr. Bradow. How are you?

MR. BRADOW

Good morning Annie. I have your order for the baby's things. We also got this new contraption they call it a bottle feeder, supposed to make the milk come out much easier, I can't get nobody to buy one. Do you want to try it?

ANNIE

Sure, I'll take two. Mr. Bradow where is the telegraph office?

MR. BRADOW

Sally Jane runs the Post Office right next door.

ANNIE

Thank you, I'll be right back.

Beatrice and Arthur Conner pass by Annie as they enter the General Store.

BEATRICE

What are you doing letting the likes of her come in here?

MR. BRADOW

Ma'am, I don't rightly know what you mean.

Annie re-enters the General Store.

ANNIE

Sally Jane wasn't in, the door was locked.

MR. BRADOW

She'll be back directly. Did you want me to put these things on your account?

ANNIE

Yes, thank you Mr. Bradow.

BEATRICE

What do you mean by letting this nigger put things on credit and you wouldn't even give us white folks one. We your own kind!

MR. BRADOW

For your information lady, Annie here has credit, because I let her have it; and for another thing she owns her own land, that's more than I can say for you.

BEATRICE

What do you mean she owns land, she was on that wagon train with us, she can't be owning nothing, let alone property!

MR. BRADOW

Well she does. We don't take kindly to folks putting others down.

ANNIE

Mr. Bradow, thank you for trying, but there is no need to explain. I doubt very much that she'll understand the concept of me owning land.

MR. BRADOW

The likes of some folks!

ANNIE

I know; I'm going to see if Sally Jane's back, I'll be right back.

She exits.

51. EXT. THE GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Holding Sara Grace, Annie leaves the store followed by Beatrice Conner who makes a threatening statement. Beatrice Conner doesn't realize that Mr. Bradow hears her threaten Annie.

BEATRICE CONNER

I don't know how you did it, but no nigger's gonna own any land near me. Mark my word nigger! You better watch your step before you and that bastard end up like your friend.

52. INT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

This one room, two story Post Office is typical of the times. There's nothing fancy about it. The telegraph sits on a desk facing a window. There a wall to wall wooden cabinet built by Joe against the back wall that has small sectioned off slots

where SALLY JANE puts people's mail for them to pick up. There's long counter with deep shelves to hold parcel too big for the mail slots. There is a second floor that has been turned into a quaint living quarter for Sally Jane.

Annie enters

ANNIE

Hello, are you Sally Jane?

SALLY JANE

Yes. What can I do for you?

ANNIE

Hi I'm Annie Young; Mr. Bradow says you can help me find someone who lives here in Buffalo Creek. I need to tell him that his sister died.

SALLY JANE

Do you know who he is?

ANNIE

I only know his first name.

SALLY JANE

Well, you could put a notice in the Denver Post, in hopes that someone will respond.

ANNIE

Okay, let's do that.

SALLY JANE

What would you like it to say?

ANNIE

To Samuel, your sister Sara Dewey died in child birth, while on the way to Buffalo Creek Colorado. Her husband also died. Sara wanted you to know.

SALLY JANE

Let me read it back. Samuel-STOP-your sister Sara Dewey is passed on-STOP-and so is her husband Charley Dewey-STOP-please reach Annie Young-STOP-at the Buffalo Creek Colorado Post Office-STOP. Is that okay?

ANNIE

Yes that will do just fine. Thank you very much.

Annie gives Sally Jane some money.

SALLY JANE

You're welcome.

53. EXT. THE POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Annie leaves the Post Office, she startles MAGGIE MITCHELL, who drops the packages she's carrying.

ANNIE

Oh my goodness. I'm so sorry. Are you okay?

MAGGIE

That's okay, no harm done. Thank you

They bend down to pick up Maggie's fallen parcel.

ANNIE

Is anything damaged, you think?

MAGGIE

No, I didn't have anything breakable. I'm Maggie Mitchell; I'm married to the town doctor.

They shake hands.

ANNIE

It was nice to meet you Maggie, I'm Annie Young.

MAGGIE

And who is this?

Gently tugs at baby's hand.

ANNIE

This is Sara Grace.

MAGGIE

Are you new in town?

ANNIE

Yes, we just bought the old Jones place.

MAGGIE

Needs a lot of work.

ANNIE

Yes it does, but Joe says he can do it.

MAGGIE

Joe's a good man. Well I'd better go, Steven will be waiting. It was nice to meet you Annie.

ANNIE

And you Maggie.

Maggie walks toward the doctors' office

54. INT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

ANNIE

I'm back, Mr. Bradow. Mr. Bradow, Joe will be coming into the store to pick up some things for my place. I'd like to put money on my account for him.

Gives him some money.

MR. BRADOW

Are you sure you want to put that much money on your account.

ANNIE

Yes. I don't know what all Joe has to do to the place.

MR. BRADOW

I understand. But you should think about putting some of your money in the bank. Annie can I ask you something?

ANNIE

Sure you can.

MR. BRADOW

Where'd you get all that money?

She looks around to see if anyone is listening.

ANNIE

If I tell you, will you promise never to tell anyone?

MR. BRADOW

I swear I won't tell a living soul.

ANNIE

Me and Sara worked and saved every single penny, for seven long years. Plus Mr. Hammond had to give me some of the money my late husband paid him for land that he wouldn't sale to me; says his bank won't do business with Negroes.

MR. BRADOW

That's ain't right, I'm going to have to have a talk with Hammond. Why wouldn't you want anybody to know?

ANNIE

It's not that; people like Beatrice Conner, they don't think people like me should have this kind of money.

MR. BRADOW

I see what you mean.

MR. BRADOW

Well I'm glad to have you here. Roscoe can you come out here and load Miss Annie's wagon for me?

ROSCOE

Yes sir. Morning Miss Annie

Roscoe picks up a crate of supplies and walks out the door.

ANNIE

Morning Roscoe. Thank you, Mr. Bradow. I'd better be getting back. I need to see how Joe's getting along. Oh, I was wondering if you'd mind if Roscoe brought my other wagon out to my place?

MR. BRADOW

Sure, I'll tell him.

People enter the store as Annie leave.

ANNIE

Thank you.

MR. BRADOW

I'll see you soon.

55. EXT. THE GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Annie climbs onto her wagon after loading the baby into her basket and drives away

56. EXT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

Annie drives up. Joe is on top the roof putting the last of the sod down.

ANNIE

Hi Joe, we're back.

JOE

Hey.

ANNIE

I put some money on my account so that you don't have to worry buying supplies.

JOE

That's fine.

ANNIE

Will you be staying for lunch?

JOE

No, I need to get some chores done at my place.

Climbs off roof.

JOE

Roof's all done for now; I'll finish up tomorrow.

ANNIE

It looks real nice. I know one thing; it'll sure keep out the cold.

JOE

I should be able to finish it tomorrow. I'll get started on the house. You know this place is so small, it wouldn't take much more to add on another room or two.

ANNIE

It's got a separate bedroom.

JOE

If I had some help, we could probably get the job done in two weeks maybe even less.

Annie and Joe don't realize that Sam is listening to their conversation from behind some bushes.

ANNIE

Yes, go ahead and do it.

JOE

I'll be going now. I'd stay but I really do have a lot of work to be done. I'll see you tomorrow then?

ANNIE

Thank you for all of your hard work.

Joe boards his wagon and drives off. Annie watches him leave. She walks towards the house; she hears Sam in the bushes.

ANNIE

Who's there? Is anyone there?

Sam doesn't answer he just watches her.

She turns and walks into the house.

57. EXT. SUPPER TIME

Sam makes camp behind the bushes where he can't be seen, but close enough to hear Annie if she needs help. Sam watches the silhouette of Annie, as she cuddles the baby before putting her in the cradle.

Knock at the door.

58. INT. HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

ANNIE

Yes, who is it?

SAM

It's me, Sam.

She opens the door.

ANNIE

Yes?

SAM

Mr. Hammond told me you needed some fencing done?

She opens the door.

ANNIE

Yes I do. I was just about to fix some supper, would you like to stay?

SAM

If it's okay with you?

ANNIE

Come on in.

He enters. She walks over to the stove

ANNIE

It'll take me a little while to fix supper. I just put the baby down; if you could try not to wake her.

He shakes his head and sits down at the table.

SAM

I saw Joe leave, the roof looks real nice.

ANNIE

Yes, I think so.

SAM

I'll get started on the fence.

ANNIE

Sure. Supper will be ready in about an hour.

SAM

Okay.

He leaves.

She turns to the stove and prepares supper.

59. INT. HOMESTEAD - LATER

SAM

What brought you out to these part? It's not safe for a lady, not by herself.

ANNIE

Like I told Joe and Mr. Bradow, I wasn't alone when I started this journey. I had my best friends Sara. Our husbands Thomas, he was mine. And Charles Dewey, that was Sara's; they were gonna meet us later, but unfortunately they were killed in some kind of accident with the railroad. And Sara, she died on the trip here.

She doesn't see his saddened expression about the news of his sister Sara's death.

SAM

What happened to her?

ANNIE

Sara? She died while having that precious little baby over there.

SAM

So, why didn't you turn and go back where you came from?

ANNIE

The truth is; I don't have anyone to go back to. Sara made me promise to find her brother and tell him what happened. I sent a wire to the Denver Post; I hope it'll help. Anyway, Thomas had already bought land, so I decided to come.

SAM

These winters can be rough on a body.

ANNIE

I'm sure they can, but I've been through worse.

SAM

Not like the winters here, I'm sure.

She places a plate of fried chicken and biscuit in front of him and sits down.

ANNIE

Shall we pray? Lord we thank you for this food and all of your bountiful blessings. Amen.

SAM

Amen.

ANNIE

How did you end up here?

SAM

I ran away, joined the army, quit when my time was up, and settled here.

ANNIE

What about family?

SAM

As far as I know they're all dead now.

ANNIE

I'm sorry. What do you mean, as far as you know?

SAM

I don't really like to talk about my past.

ANNIE

I didn't mean to pry.

SAM

It's not safe for a woman, especially a single woman with a baby, to be out here by herself.

ANNIE

You've already told me that at least three times.

SAM

It's not safe. I have a hard enough time trying to make it on my own; to think of you and the baby out here.

ANNIE

Well, I'll tell you what, you can make all the repairs on the fence. You can also repair the barn and the shed and move in.

SAM

What do you mean?

ANNIE

It'll be your job to take care of the homestead. And my job will be to take care of you, me and the baby.

SAM

Are you serious?

ANNIE

You keep telling me how dangerous it is, well with you around, that won't be a concern, will it?

SAM

What will people say?

ANNIE

I don't know these people well enough to care. Now I'll need someone to take care of the livestock and the land. I sure can't to do it, and you; well you need a place to stay.

SAM

What about Joe?

ANNIE

What about Joe? I'm paying him to fix up the place, that's all. Besides I feel really bad that I've forced you out of your home. Do we have a deal?

SAM

Should I tell him?

ANNIE

If you want to. When do you plan to move in?

SAM

Right away.

ANNIE

Alright, that's fine with me.

SAM

I'll get my things right now.

He leaves.

60. INT. ANNIE BEDROOM - LATER

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"What have I just done? I am letting a man move in with me and I don't even know him. What was I thinking? I can't let him live here, especially me with a baby. This is wrong. Oh what have I done? Well there's not much that I can do about it now."

She puts the two plates next to the wash bowl to be cleaned.

61. INT. BARN LOFT - LATE

Sam lays on his bedroll in the loft of the barn.

62. INT. ANNIE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Annie lay on her bed wide awake.

Sits on the side of the bed and peaks over at the baby.

ANNIE

You're sleeping so peacefully, I wish it was me.

Look at the window and wonders what Sam is doing.

63. INT. BARN LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Sam tosses and turns trying to find a comfortable spot. He stares at the sky through the holes in the roof of the badly

rundown barn.

He looks toward the house and wonders what Annie is doing.

SAM

I'm in for a long night.

64. INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

ANNIE

This is going to be a long night.

65. INT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - EARLY MORNING

Annie and Sam are uncomfortably polite as she puts breakfast on the table.

ANNIE

I'm going into town this morning.

SAM

Me too, I gotta pick up your plow and horse from Mr. Hammond this morning.

ANNIE

That's why I was going into town.

SAM

Don't worry I'll get them for you.

They both reach for the same biscuit.

SAM

I'm sorry.

ANNIE

No, you go ahead, there's plenty more.

SAM

Thank you. Listen maybe we shouldn't tell anyone about this arrangement.

ANNIE

Maybe you're right. We can barely understand it. I don't think anybody else would. Oh, but what about Joe, he's bound to find out. I mean, with him fixing on the place and all.

SAM

No he won't. I'll make sure to be gone before he comes, or you can tell him that I'll be helping him instead of Roscoe.

ANNIE

That's a good idea, when he gets here this morning, you can tell him that you decided to help him, Yeah, that's a really good idea.

SAM

What do you mean, I can tell him?

ANNIE

Hey our arraignment was that you would fix up the place to stay in the barn; so well.

SAM

Well, what? That don't explain me telling Joe that I'm helping him.

Annie lowers her head into her breakfast plates to keep from responding.

66. EXT. HOMESTEAD - LATER

Roscoe delivers Annie's other wagon to the homestead.

ANNIE

Hello Roscoe.

ROSCOE

Hello Miss Annie, here is your wagon.

ANNIE

Thank you so much Roscoe. I have some hot coffee; can I get you a cup?

ROSCOE

No thank you Miss Annie, Mr. Bradow told me to hurry back, I have a delivery out to Miss Pritchett.

Roscoe rides away as Joe pulls up in his own wagon.

ANNIE

Okay. I'll see you later than. Sam, Joe's here.

Sam comes out of the house.

SAM

Morning Joe.

Wonders why Sam has just come out of the house.

JOE

Morning Sam. What's going on here?

Suspiciously looks from Annie than back to Sam.

SAM

Well, I'm that extra help you need to fix up the place.

ANNIE

Yes, you said you needed some help, so Sam offered.

JOE

That's good, than we can get the work done twice as fast.

ANNIE

Yes, you can.

Both she and Sam feel a little bit guilty.

JOE

Let's get to work.

SAM

Yeah, lets.

67. INT. BLACKSMITH SHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

Mrs. Beatrice Conner spreads the word about Annie living with Sam, after Joe makes a comment about him being at Annie's very early this morning.

JOE

Afternoon, what can I do for you?

BEATRICE CONNER

Put a shoe on this horse.

JOE

Yes ma'am, will that be all.

BEATRICE CONNER

Yeah?

JOE

Miss Annie had Sam waiting out to her place early this morning; helping me fix up her place.

BEATRICE CONNER

What do you mean? She had a man in her home?

JOE

Sure both Sam and me, we been out there fixing up the place. Well the truth is I've been out there lots of time, Sam he only just started.

BEATRICE CONNER

Is he there now?

JOE

I believe so, I left them there. I had some work to do here, but I'm going over there later on, should I tell her you was asking about her?

BEATRICE CONNER

No, I'll just pay her visit. May I use one of your other horses?

JOE

Sure, by the time you get back, I'll have your horse shod.

Beatrice Conner hurries out as Joe continues to work.

68. EXT. HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

Beatrice Conner sneaks out to Annie's home to spy. She sees Sam sitting at the table playing with the baby, and Annie standing at the stove. She eases away before being seen by Annie or Sam.

69. INT. GENERAL STORE - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

ANNIE

Good morning Mr. Bradow?

MR. BRADOW

Is it true?

ANNIE

Is what true?

MR. BRADOW

Is Sam living with you?

ANNIE

What? What are you talking about?

MR. BRADOW

That Beatrice woman says she saw Sam at your place. Says y'all living together.

ANNIE

It's true, he live at the homestead, but only as my hired hand. He stays in the barn.

MR. BRADOW

That's not the way she's telling it. She's got folks thinking there's more to it than that.

ANNIE

What do you mean? Just what has she been saying?

Beatrice Conner and the town's women enter the General store.

MAGGIE

What is going on? Everyone's saying that you are living with a man?

ANNIE

Let's nip this in the bud right now. Ladies it is true, I have a man living at my place. Sam, I don't even know his last name. He lives in my barn and he's going to continue to live there because he has agreed to take care of my place if I provide him with a roof over his head and a home cooked meal every night. Ladies before you gossip about things you know nothing about, it's best if we get everything out in the open right now; wouldn't you say Mrs. Conner?

BEATRICE CONNER

Yes, but...

ANNIE

...Mrs. Conner, keep spreading lies about me and I'm liable to air your dirty laundry.

BEATRICE CONNER

How dare you! What could you possibly know about me?

ANNIE

Lest you forget, we were both on that wagon train, and I got to know you real good; wouldn't you say Mrs. Conner?

Beatrice Conner storms out of the store. The other ladies rush over to Annie.

MRS. COBBS

Annie, I'd do the same thing.

MRS. HAMMOND

It's wonderful to have you in our town.

ANNIE

Thank you.

MRS. PRITCHETT

Annie looks to me, like Beatrice's got her facts all wrong. Welcome. I hope to have you and that little baby over to my place for supper real soon.

ANNIE

We'd love to.

SALLY JANE

Annie thought you'd like to know there's still no word from Denver yet, but I'll keep my eye out.

ANNIE

Thank you Sally Jane.

All the women, except for Maggie, leave the General Store.

MAGGIE

I have never seen those women leave with their tails between their legs before.

ANNIE

Maggie, I don't have time for that kind of gossip, and speaking of gossip, I need to take care of something. I'll be right back.

70. INT. BLACKSMITH SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Annie goes over to the Blacksmith shop.

ANNIE

Joe, are you in here?

JOE

Yes.

He steps from behind a horse that he is shoeing.

ANNIE

What kind of person are you?

JOE

I hope a good one, why?

ANNIE

It's bad enough, there's only three Negroes here, you, me and Sam. Do you have any idea what you have done!

Joe tries to answer, but she continues talking.

ANNIE

I have never in my life known such a man as you. You, gossiping like an old hen...!

JOE

...Annie I don't mean to interrupt, but what are you talking about?

ANNIE

Did you tell Beatrice Conner that I live with a man? What right do you have spreading something like that!

JOE

I don't and I didn't. Mrs. Conner was in here ranting on and on about people and their ways, and I was agreeing with her out of politeness, and I happened to mention that Sam was helping me fix up your place.

ANNIE

Well that's not the way she's telling it!

JOE

I'm really sorry, I didn't know.

She calms down and offers a smile.

ANNIE

That's okay, are you coming out today?

JOE

Yes, why?

ANNIE

Well, there something you should know and I think you should hear it from me. Sam does live with me; I mean he is living at my place.

JOE

What? Why?

ANNIE

I feel bad that I took his home, so I told him he could live in my barn if he agreed to take care of the place. He agreed.

JOE

I don't know what to say.

ANNIE

Don't say anything; he's only helping me.

JOE

Is there anything to be concerned about?

ANNIE

No not at all.

He walks over and takes her hand.

JOE

Miss Annie, I'd like to call on you if it's appropriate.

ANNIE

It is, and you may.

She leaves.

71. INT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

MAGGIE

Are you okay?

ANNIE

I'm fine.

MR. BRADOW

He shouldn't ought to have done that to you.

MAGGIE

I'm sure he didn't mean any harm.

ANNIE

No, it was Mrs. Conner who jumped to conclusions, not Joe, he's a good man.

MAGGIE

Yes he is. He's also single and looking for a good woman. Know anyone?

ANNIE

Maggie he's only fixing up the place, that's all.

MAGGIE

I'm sure that's not all he wants to fix up.

She ignores the statement and changes the conversation.

ANNIE

Maggie, when I get my place all fixed up, I expect you and Doctor Mitchell to come to supper.

MAGGIE

We'd love to, but I should be inviting you, since you're new in town.

ANNIE

That's precisely why I'm inviting you.

MAGGIE

Soon then?

ANNIE

Very soon.

Places a basket of supplies on the counter.

ANNIE

Mr. Bradow Sam will pick these things up later.

She cuffs Maggie's by the arm. The two women leave the store.

72. EXT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

They walk over to Annie's wagon.

Annie places the sleeping baby in the basket in the wagon.

ANNIE

You know, why don't you and Doctor Mitchell come to dinner tonight instead?

MAGGIE

I thought you wanted to fix up the place first.

ANNIE

I changed my mind. Around six, okay?

MAGGIE

That'll be fine. We'll see you at six.

Annie gives her team of horses a snap of the whip and they trot off in the direction of her home.

73. EXT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - LATE EVENING

Roscoe arrives as Annie brings in the last of the laundry.

ROSCOE

Hello Miss Annie, Mr. Bradow told me to see if you need help unloading yoe other wagon?

ANNIE

Yes, thank you. I hadn't got around to asking Sam.

74. EXT. SIDE OF BARN - CONTINUOUS

ROSCOE

There's some baby furniture inside, should I take it in the house?

Annie walks over and looks inside the wagon.

ANNIE

You can take it inside the house. Roscoe there's a lot of stuff to be unloaded?

ROSCOE

Not too much, most of this, I can put in the barn somewhere or down in the cellar.

ANNIE

I don't need two wagons. Roscoe do you need a wagon? You can have it, if you need it.

ROSCOE

I live in town, so I don't really need one. Hey you that wagon train you was with, they pulled out this morning.

ANNIE

Is that right? Well it makes no sense to have two wagons. I'll ask Sam.

Roscoe unhitches the horses and lead them into the corral.

75. EXT. SIDE OF BARN - CONTINUOUS

Roscoe noticed the differences between the two wagons.

ROSCOE

Miss Annie, can you come over here.

Annie approaches Roscoe.

ANNIE

What is it?

ROSCOE

Look at this it looks like your wagon has a false bottom.

ANNIE

What do you mean?

ROSCOE

Look at this wagon's bottom and then look at yours.

ANNIE

Can you open it?

ROSCOE

I think so.

Roscoe opens the false bottom to reveal a secret compartment. Inside is a homemade black wooden strong box. The strong box is longer than the ones Annie has hidden under the floor board. This one has four letters carved on the cover. 'TACS'

ANNIE

T-A-C-S

ROSCOE

What does it mean?

ANNIE

I'm not sure.

Annie and Roscoe both assume love letters are in the box.

ROSCOE

Looks like one of them love letter boxes I've seen over at Mrs. Pritchett's place. It has a lock on it; do you want me to open it for you?

ANNIE

No, I'll do it later. Maggie will be here any minute for supper.

76. EXT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - LATER

Roscoe unloads the last of the contents of the wagon, and mounts his horse.

ROSCOE

Okay, Miss Annie, I'm all finished.

Annie opens her handbag to give Roscoe some money, but he stops her.

ROSCOE

No thank you Ma'am; didn't for money. I'll see you soon.

ANNIE

Thanks again, Roscoe.

Roscoe rides off on his horse he had tied to the back of the wagon.

77. INT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - SUPPER TIME

Annie takes the strong box inside and place on the mantle over the fire place. She goes in her room to dress for supper.

The table is set for four. Maggie arrives alone.

Knock on the door, and Annie opens it.

ANNIE

Where's Doctor Mitchell?

MAGGIE

He couldn't come, Mrs. Marsh is expecting any minute now.

ANNIE

That's okay, come on in.

Maggie notices the other place setting.

MAGGIE

Are you expecting company?

ANNIE

No, but Sam will probably stop in to get his supper. He said he wanted to check his traps.

MAGGIE

Sam is it?

ANNIE

No, it's not like that. Sam does work around the place and I provide him with a place to sleep and a hot meal.

MAGGIE

Why?

ANNIE

I feel bad, I bought this place right from under him, I had no idea that he was living here.

MAGGIE

The truth is; no one knew where Sam was living; we all thought he was dead.

Annie places a bowl of peas on the table and sits down. The women help themselves to the food.

ANNIE

Why? What do you really know about Sam?

MAGGIE

Not much, he's very secretive. I don't think anyone really knows much about him.

ANNIE

He told me that the soldiers came in and killed the Indians that he lived with.

MAGGIE

I heard about that.

ANNIE

Is that all there is? Where's he from?

MAGGIE

I don't know. Are you interested in him?
...You are interested in him?

ANNIE

Of course not, I'm curious to know who's living in my barn, that's all; and besides Joe has asked me to go courting, and I said yes.

MAGGIE

Joe's a really nice man, but so is Sam, I believe.

ANNIE

Here I am going on and on about men and sorts...

Baby Sara stirs.

MAGGIE

Oh let me get her; I need the practice.

ANNIE

Are you (pregnant)?

MAGGIE

No, not yet, but I can't wait until we are.

Annie has cleared the dinner table. She and Maggie are drinking coffee and eating apple pie.

ANNIE

Thomas and I wanted to start our family here.

MAGGIE

Tell me about him.

ANNIE

He was such a good man, a kind man. He would do anything for me. That's why we moved out here. He worked for the railroad hauling supplies for about 15 or 16 years.

MAGGIE

So he wasn't a slave?

ANNIE

No, none of us were. Sara and I were born up North, near Illinois; we went to school together. Thomas and Charley were born near Nicodemus, Kansas. I know Thomas' father was a slave, but he ran away to Kansas, that's where he met and married Thomas' mother. Charley and Thomas grew up together, after Charley lost his mother.

MAGGIE

What about his father?

ANNIE

He never knew his father. Sara and I graduated college, we met them at a Social, Sara and Charley feel for each other right away. I, on the hand, had to be convinced that Thomas was right for me.

MAGGIE

Why?

ANNIE

Don't get me wrong, he was very handsome, but oh my, could he talk. He never stopped talking long enough for me to say two words. I later found out he was so nervous, that's all he could do to keep from running away.

MAGGIE

So how long were you all married?

ANNIE

Sara and Charley were married about six years, and Thomas and I were married about five years. But our men were gone most of the time, so Sara and I lived together until they came home; that's how we were able to save most of our money.

MAGGIE

Why Colorado?

ANNIE

Sara has a brother out here somewhere, and Thomas and Charley bought land for us.

MAGGIE

Where's the land now? Is this it?

ANNIE

Mr. Hammond wouldn't let me have it, said the bank couldn't sell the land to Negroes, because it was against their rules. I'm lucky to get this place.

MAGGIE

He can't do that!

ANNIE

Apparently he can; it's funny, we knew our men did dangerous work for the railroad, even though they never said a word, but we knew. And they ended up dying for it.

MAGGIE

Sometimes I hate this world.

ANNIE

Sometimes I do too. I'm glad I'm here, I really like it, and everyone seems so nice.

MAGGIE

You haven't met everyone yet. Tomorrow night there's a Saturday Social, why don't you come.

ANNIE

I don't know that I can, there's no one to watch Sara Grace.

MAGGIE

There's always someone to watch the children, usually it's Mrs. Pritchett, bring her. I want you to meet the rest of the town.

ANNIE

I hope the rest of the town wants to meet me. Alright, we'll be there. Your turn; tell me about you?

MAGGIE

Not much to tell. I was born here, I went to school here, I met and married Steven here, and I'm still here.

ANNIE

What about your family?

MAGGIE

My parents were both Abolitionists. I learned as a child, that God created all men equal. He did not put Negro people on this earth to be ruled over.

ANNIE

Amen.

MAGGIE

My father wouldn't hear of his children treating Negro people any differently than we treated family members. In fact my younger brother got his hide tanned for asking if he could sale Hattie, our maid, to our neighbors because she wouldn't allow him to spoil his supper with candy.

ANNIE

So how did you meet Doctor Mitchell?

MAGGIE

Our parents arranged it.

ANNIE

How long have you been married?

MAGGIE

Going on three years; this Christmas Eve.

ANNIE

Are your parents still alive?

MAGGIE

My dad is still living, but mom died about a year and a half ago. What time is it?

Annie walks over to looks at a time piece on the mantle.

ANNIE

Nearly half past eight.

MAGGIE

I'd better be getting home, it's getting late. I'll see you tomorrow.

78. EXT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

Annie walks Maggie outside to her buckboard, watches her climb aboard and drives away. Annie goes back inside. Sam knocks on the door.

ANNIE

Did you forget something?

Opens the door.

SAM

No, I don't think so.

ANNIE

I thought you were Maggie.

SAM

Maggie Mitchell was here?

ANNIE

She came over to dinner; speaking of which, I was expecting you. Can I get you your supper now?

SAM

Yes, thank you.

She fixes him a plate and he sits it down, she sits at the table opposite him.

ANNIE

Sam, can I ask you something?

SAM

Go ahead?

ANNIE

Did you know your family?

SAM

Yes.

Waits for him to say more, but he doesn't.

ANNIE

Yes, and?

SAM

And what? I knew my family, that's all you need to know.

ANNIE

Where are they? Are they still alive?

SAM

If it will keep you quiet; I believe my mother and father are buried on a plantation somewhere in Tennessee. My brothers and sisters were all sold off. I have no idea where they are. I did have one sister who was born free; she was from my father's second marriage. Her mother escaped as far as I know.

ANNIE

Why didn't your father leave?

SAM

He wouldn't leave my mother, his first wife behind.

ANNIE

But what about his second wife?

SAM

The truth is, my mother was his wife; he was picked to breed. So when she left, he just let her go.

ANNIE

Sam, do you know your sister's name?

SAM

Yes; her name was Sara.

ANNIE

Oh my god, you're Samuel. You're Sara's brother, the one I've been looking for. Then you know she died.

SAM

I know.

ANNIE

Sam, why didn't you say something?

SAM

No need, I can't bring her back.

ANNIE

How did you get away?

SAM

When Sara's mother ran away up North, I ran with her. I think I was around seven years old. Mama Grace had Sara some months later. When I turned 13 Mama Grace got married again. He and I didn't get along, so I left, and I never went back.

ANNIE

How did you end up here?

SAM

When I turned 16 I joined up. It was like going back into slavery. Everything the white boys didn't want to do, we did it. Picking up after horses; picking up after the dead. We barely got to fight. I got tired of it, so I left after two years. I came up here with a friend. I stayed and he went on to California, looking for gold. And plus this is where my horse finally died.

ANNIE

Did he find any?

SAM

I don't know, I never heard from him again.

ANNIE

I heard you lived with the Indians.

SAM

Yeah I did for a spell; the Shawnee. They saved my life when I got shot by some blue coats.

ANNIE

What happened?

SAM

A Negro soldier accidentally killed a white soldier in a fight, they thought I did it. When they found out I wasn't him, well it was too late; they had already shot me. They left me for dead, the Shawnee found me, took me in, kept me alive.

ANNIE

Is that why you became a scout?

SAM

I only scout part time; helps keep the soldiers away from them; so far it's been working.

ANNIE

What if they find out?

SAM

What they don't know won't hurt me.

ANNIE

Sam, there's something you should know, or rather there's something I need to give you.

The wooden strong box sits dusty on the fireplace mantle.

79. INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM

She goes into her bedroom, kneels down beside her bed and pushes it to the side, pulls up a wooden floor board, and takes the box with her deed and money belt inside.

80. INT. SUPPER TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Walks back into the room and over to the table, sits back down and places it on the table.

SAM

What's that?

Annie places the money belt and box on the table.

ANNIE

Well, Sara and I, we lived together for a long time. We worked and saved all the money we earned. I feel it's only right, since she died and all, that I give her share to you.

SAM

No, that wouldn't be right.

ANNIE

But she was your sister.

SAM

No, you give her share to the baby. Maybe put it up for her education.

ANNIE

That's what I'd plan to do.

SAM

Then do that. That'll be alright with me. Thank you for dinner. It was nice talking to you, next time you do the talking.

ANNIE

Good night Sam, I'll see you in the morning. Sam can I ask you something?

SAM

Sure, go ahead?

ANNIE

Joe told me a similar story about living with the Shawnee Indians. He told me that his parents were runaways and hid with them. He says he was born there. Is that true?

SAM

If he says it is.

ANNIE

What's that supposed to mean?

SAM

I don't know Joe well enough to think otherwise. I keep to myself and he does the same. Joe has a good life, and he gets along with the folks in town. I don't.

ANNIE

You don't what, have a good life or get along with the folks in town?

He chuckles.

SAM

Both.

ANNIE

He asked me to go courting, I said yes.

SAM

That's your right. I'm tire and I have a very long day ahead. I'll see you in the morning.

ANNIE

Sam, can I ask you something else?

SAM

Yes.

ANNIE

Am I making a mistake?

SAM

It's not my call. Good night.

ANNIE

Good night.

Sam exits.

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"I'm not so sure I made the right decision about courting Joe. Well if you had to ask the question Annie, then you already know the answer. We'll see where it leads."

Blows lanterns out and goes into her bedroom.

81. INT. HOMESTEAD - VERY EARLY MORNING

Annie is awakened by the banging coming from outside.

ANNIE

What is that noise? Oh looks like the men are getting an early start.

Annie stirs around the house fixing breakfast before going outside to greet the men. Baby Sara Grace is awake happily playing with a chew toy in her cradle. Early morning sounds are heard, along with the cutting of wood planks and the hammering of nails.

An hour later Annie is dressed and breakfast is on the table.

ANNIE

Breakfast is ready.

The men enter the house and sit down.

ANNIE

Good morning Sam? Good morning Joe?

SAM/JOE

Morning.

Annie can feel the tension between Sam and Joe, and attempts to make civil conversation.

ANNIE

Is everything alright?

SAM/JOE

Fine.

ANNIE

Joe I was wondering if you would care to have lunch together this afternoon, before the Social?

JOE

That'll be fine. I got some work to do for Mr. Cobbs over at the livery, but I should be done by this afternoon.

ANNIE

Around two then?

JOE

Two is fine.

ANNIE

Sam, are you going to the Social this evening?

SAM

What Social?

ANNIE

Maggie Mitchell says there'll be a Social on this evening. She thinks it's a good idea for me to go so that I can meet everybody.

SAM

That's fine.

ANNIE

That's fine what? There's a Social or you'll be going?

SAM

That's fine, there's a Social, no I won't be going.

ANNIE

Joe you will be taking me, won't you?

JOE

I already said I would.

ANNIE

Sam why aren't you going?

JOE

Leave the man alone, he said he's not going to Socials, let it be.

ANNIE

Joe?

JOE

Yeah?

Annie remains soft spoken.

ANNIE

Don't ever assume you have the right to tell me who or when I can talk. I haven't nor will I ever give you that liberty.

JOE

I'll be back later today.

ANNIE

Okay Joe, I'll see you this afternoon for our lunch.

Joe doesn't respond, he exits.

The sound of a horse galloping off is heard from inside the

house.

ANNIE

Do you want to tell me what all that was about?

SAM

What?

ANNIE

What's going on with you and Joe? The tension so thick, I could cut it with this knife. Now what happened between you two?

SAM

Don't you think you should be asking Joe that question?

ANNIE

I'm asking you. Now what happened?

SAM

Joe made it clear that I should leave.

ANNIE

He what? What did you say?

SAM

I told him the decision wasn't his make.

ANNIE

I'll make something clear right here and now, if I want you to go, I will be the one to tell you.

82. INT. BLACKSMITH SHOP - LUNCH TIME

ANNIE

Joe?

No answer.

ANNIE

Joe, are you here?

Still no answer.

83. EXT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Annie walks over to the General store.

84. INT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

She enters.

ANNIE

Mr. Bradow?

Come from the back room.

MR. BRADOW

Hello Annie.

ANNIE

How are you? I was looking for Joe; we were supposed to have lunch.

MR. BRADOW

I saw him ride off with Doc Mitchell about an hour ago.

Maggie enters.

MR. BRADOW

Speak of the devil. Hello Maggie, how are you getting along?

MAGGIE

Hi, Mr. Bradow, I'm good.

ANNIE

Maggie, Mr. Bradow says Joe and your husband left about an hour ago.

MAGGIE

Yes, Steven was taking some medical supplies to the Reservation; Joe must have went with him, why?

ANNIE

We were supposed to have lunch.

MAGGIE

Maybe he forgot?

ANNIE

I don't think so.

MAGGIE

Well listen, Steven is usually gone all day, when he goes out to the Reservation, why don't we have lunch. You already have the picnic basket, Mr. Bradow would you care come too?

MR. BRADOW

No, you two go ahead, have fun.

85. EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

Annie and Maggie walk over to a small park area just a few yards out of town. There are several benches, checkers table and chair sets set up for public use. A large gazebo with a pit fire blazing is the center attraction.

ANNIE

Are you sure you want to eat out in this cold?

MAGGIE

Sure, why not. Let's eat in the gazebo; there's a fire going.

Annie and Maggie walk over to the gazebo and sits close the fire to keep warm and eat their lunch.

ANNIE

I don't understand how he could have forgotten.

MAGGIE

Maybe he really did forget.

ANNIE

Unless he absent minded he couldn't have. I reminded him this morning, before he left. He and Sam had some kind of argument.

MAGGIE

Over what?

ANNIE

Sam says Joe asked him to leave the homestead.

MAGGIE

What did Sam say?

ANNIE

He said no. It's not his right to ask Sam to leave.

MAGGIE

So you want Sam to stay?

ANNIE

I don't see anything wrong with it.

MAGGIE

But maybe Joe does.

ANNIE

Maybe, but for now things stay as they are; I don't understand why this is a big deal.

MAGGIE

Let me spell it out for you then, *you're* the big deal.

ANNIE

Me, why me? I haven't done anything.

MAGGIE

You moved the Buffalo Creek.

ANNIE

What! What does me coming to Buffalo Creek have to do with anything.

MAGGIE

In case you haven't noticed, you are the only Negro woman within 20 miles.

ANNIE

That's not fair, don't make this about me.

MAGGIE

Too late, it's all about you.

ANNIE

Let's change the conversation. By the way Sam is Sara's brother.

MAGGIE

What? When did you find this out?

ANNIE

After you left, Sam came over and we talked.

MAGGIE

Wow. I don't even know what to say to that. Is that why you don't want him to leave?

ANNIE

Partly. I don't know. I should go and check on the baby.

MAGGIE

Where is she?

ANNIE

Mrs. Pritchett's keeping her for me.

MAGGIE

Don't mess up what you could have with Joe, for something you're holding on to from your past.

ANNIE

It's not like that.

MAGGIE

I don't want to see you get hurt.

ANNIE

I know. Thank you.

MAGGIE

Come on let's lighten the mood and go for a nice long ride.

ANNIE

What about the baby?

MAGGIE

Mrs. Pritchett has her; you'll be lucky if she doesn't spoil her rotten.

ANNIE

Okay, let's do it.

Walk back towards the general store.

MAGGIE

I'll have Roscoe hitch up the wagon.

ANNIE

Why, my wagon's right here.

The two women board the wagon Sally Jane rushes over to them.

SALLY JANE

Annie you need to come quickly.

ANNIE

What is it?

SALLY JANE

Mrs. Pritchets says you need to come, something wrong; it's your baby.

ANNIE

Oh my god!

MAGGIE

I'll drive.

With a flick of the wrist and a snap of the whip the horses gallop at high speed in the direction of Mrs. Pritchett's house.

86. EXT. MRS. PRITCHETTS' HOME - CONTINUOUS

Jumps from the wagon and hurries inside the house.

87. INT. MRS. PRITCHETTS' HOME - CONTINUOUS

Mary Pritchett's single family white Victorian home is where she invites boarders passing through, a home cooked meal and a temporary place to lay their heads. Mrs. Pritchett has the complete opposite decorating style as Annie. Her furnishings are manufactured, with throw rugs, and tassels, and throw pillows everywhere.

MAGGIE

Mrs. Pritchett? Mrs. Pritchett? Where are you?

Mrs. Pritchett enters in a state of shock; staring down at her own bloody hands.

ANNIE

Oh my god! Where is she?

Steps aside and Annie runs in the bedroom.

MRS. PRITCHETT

There was nothing I could do.

MAGGIE

What happened?

Annie comes out holding baby Sara, who is dead.

MAGGIE

Oh my god! What happened?

These two words stab Annie right through her heart as she says them.

ANNIE

She's dead!

Looks over at Mrs. Pritchett with pain and agony in her eyes.

ANNIE

You killed my baby!

Maggie tries to take the baby from Annie.

MAGGIE

Hand her to me Annie, I'll take her.

ANNIE

You killed my little baby!

Mr. Bradow, and several towns-people enter Mrs. Pritchett's home.

MR. BRADOW

Oh my Lord! What happened?

MAGGIE

I don't know.

Mr. Bradow rushes over to Mrs. Pritchett who is still shock by the whole ordeal.

MR. BRADOW

Mary what happened?

She doesn't respond.

MR. BRADOW

Mary, what happened to Annie's baby?

She doesn't respond.

MR. BRADOW

Mary, look at me. What happened to the baby?

Mrs. Pritchett snaps out of her state of shock.

MRS. PRITCHETT

I left her sleeping. She was just sleeping in the bed. I heard somebody at the door. I went to see who it was. It was Beatrice Conner, I let her in; said she was paying me a social call. I went over to the fire to make some coffee. I turned to ask Beatrice a question, but she was gone. So I turned back around to finish making the coffee..

MR. COBBS

...What happened next?

MRS. PRITCHETT

I heard glass breaking coming from my bedroom. I ran in and found the baby.

MR. BRADOW

What did you do next Mary?

MRS. PRITCHETT

By that time Sally Jane came in and I hollered for her to find Annie and the doctor.

MR. BRADOW

Where did Mrs. Conner's go?

MRS. PRITCHETT

I don't know, I thought she went out back, but she never came back.

Doctor Mitchell rushes inside the house.

DOCTOR MITCHELL

Sally Jane came out to the Reservation to get me;
I came as soon as I heard.

He walks over to Annie who is being comforted by Maggie. Annie refuses to let anyone take the baby.

DOCTOR MITCHEL

Annie you have to let me take the baby.

Annie's grip tightens over the baby. Joe comes enters.

MAGGIE

Joe, she won't turn loose the baby.

Sits down besides Annie.

JOE

Annie, let me have her now.

Annie shakes her head.

JOE

Annie, let me hold her for just a little while,
I'll give her back.

Annie now disoriented looks a Joe and back at the dead baby.

ANNIE

No, I think I'll keep her; she's been really
fussy lately.

Maggie tries to convince Annie to give her Baby Sara.

MAGGIE

Annie, Steven needs to look at Sara. Let me take
her so he can fix her up.

Annie looks up from Baby Sara to Maggie.

MAGGIE

Steven's just going to fix her up, he'll bring
her back.

Annie looks at Dr. Mitchell.

ANNIE

You'll bring her right back?

DOCTOR MITCHELL

Yes Annie, I'll bring her back.

Annie gives the dead baby to Maggie.

Annie tries to stand to her feet, but stumbles back down.

ANNIE

I should go with her, she might not let you hold her, she doesn't like everybody holding her.

MAGGIE

No Annie, she'll be alright.

Maggie gently helps Annie up off the floor.

MRS. COBBS

Annie, I'll go with her.

Dr. Mitchell and Mrs. Cobbs take the baby out of the house. Mr. Bradow comes out of Mrs. Pritchett's bedroom holding a large bloody stone and a bloody note.

MR. BRADOW

I found this by under the bed.

Gives it to SHERIFF REYNOLDS who reads it out loud.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

It says 'NIGGER LOVER.'

MR. COBBS

Who would do such a thing? We always been peaceful. Ain't got no time for this kind of mess.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

I don't know, but I aim to find out.

MR. BRADOW

You might want to start with them Conner's. I heard Mrs. Conner threaten Annie, because she bought the Jones place. And she's been giving her a hard time ever since.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS
Anybody know where they live?

ROSCOE
The house up over Gully's Creek.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS
I think I'll pay them a visit.

MR. BRADOW
I'll go with you.

JOE
Me too.

The three men leave Mrs. Pritchett's house.

ANNIE
I want to go to Sara Grace.

MAGGIE
Okay, I'll take you.

MRS. PRITCHETT
Annie ... Annie ... please let me come with you.

Annie looks over to Mrs. Pritchett.

MRS. PRITCHETT
Please, Annie let me come with you.

Annie extends her hand and the three women leave the house, followed by everyone else.

88. INT. DOCTOR STEVEN MITCHELL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The office is located in small single story building that was once used as a printing press. The previous owner sold Doctor Mitchell the building for a more than fair price, and moved to Chicago. Doctor Mitchell has invested a sizable amount of money to make his office as modern as he is able to. His waiting room consist of a few chairs for patients and family to wait is off to the left; while his examination room and three patient stay rooms are on the right. Each room is separated by thick white Chinese blinds to help provide patient privacy. His desk near the back wall is clustered with book, bottles, and papers. There

is table off to the side that holds his diplomas, library, a microscope, and medicine bottles.

Annie sees Sara Grace, rushes to her side. The women watch helpless as Annie grieves for her dead child. Annie's pain is so very deep, that she can no longer stand to her own feet, she just sinks to the floor. Maggie tries to get her to her feet, but is unable to, so they watch her, sharing in her grief.

Sam storms in the doctor's office.

SAM

Where is she?

He sees her before anyone answers. He scoops Annie up into his arms.

SAM

Come on Annie, Doc will tend to little Sara.

DOCTOR MITCHEL

I'll take care of the arraignments.

89. EXT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

Sam pulls Annie's wagon to a stop and jumps down. He rushes around to the other side and takes Annie from the wagon.

90. INT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

He carries Annie inside the house and into her bedroom.

91. INT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - LATER

Sam is stirring around the house, trying not to disturb Annie, but his quiet noise brings Annie out of her bedroom. She collapses into his arms, sobbing.

92. EXT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

Joe starts to knock on the door, but through the window, he watches Sam comforting Annie, and decides to leave.

93. INT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

Annie is very distraught over the Sara Grace's death. Sam comforts her.

ANNIE

Why Sam! She was just a baby, an innocent little baby.

SAM

I know Annie. I promise I'll get whoever done this.

ANNIE

No Sam, you let the law handle it.

SAM

When has the law done anything for colored folks?

ANNIE

Please Sam, promise me, you'll let the law take care of this. I don't need to worry about losing you too.

SAM

I'll wait, but only for a little while; if they don't, then I will.

94. INT. HOMESTEAD - EARLY MORNING - DAYS LATER

Days after the murder of Sara Grace.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

Morning Annie, Morning Sam.

ANNIE

Did you find Beatrice Conner?

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

No, they slipped out of town. I did ask around, but folks that knew them said the Conner's have been gone for weeks.

MRS. PRITCHETT

That's a lie! Like I told the Sheriff Beatrice Conner came over to my house..

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

...Mrs. Pritchett, we know you're telling the truth, you ain't got no cause to lie. I checked out some tracks near where the window that got broke and I followed them. But the trail went cold when I got to the mud bank. It was like they just vanished. I've already wired every county from here to Denver asking them to be on the lookout for the Conner family.

ANNIE

Thank you Sheriff.

SAM

Sheriff, you know as well as I do that it won't do much good, considering they're two upstanding white citizens and Sara's a colored child.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

I know Sam, but all I can do is try.

MAGGIE

Annie, what do you want Sara to wear?

Annie goes into her bedroom and returns carrying a white lace Christening gown.

Tears streaming down her cheek.

ANNIE

I was going to ask the Reverend to Christen Sara on Sunday.

MAGGIE

Sally Jane, will you take this over to Doctor Mitchell for me?

SALLY JANE

Yes, I sure will.

Sally Jane leaves.

MR. BRADOW

Can't we do something?

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

Let's go outside so we can talk.

95. EXT. HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

All the men walk over to the fence to talk.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

Let's be honest here, we all know that the Conner's will have the law on their side. They have folks right here in town that swears they saw the Conners' leave town weeks ago. And we only got Mrs. Pritchett's word. They'd win, hands down.

SAM

Sheriff, Sara was my niece.

MR. BRADOW

What do you mean niece?

SAM

Her mother was my sister. When Annie told me about my sister dying, it hurt, but I was okay cause I knew I still had some family; I had Sara Grace.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

I understand Sam; I'll do what I can.

Sheriff Reynolds and the other town folks leave the homestead.

Sam and Annie are left alone. Annie throws herself in to Sam's arms and he holds her tight.

96. EXT. SARA GRACE'S GRAVE SIGHT - NEXT DAY

PREACHER

Let us pray. Dear God, we give this little angle back to you. You were gracious enough to let us borrow her for just a little while. We ask, now Lord that you would welcome Sara Grace into your kingdom where she is reunited and rejoicing with her parents. We also ask Lord that Annie and Sam's pain and sorrow be lifted, that they accept your will to call Sara Grace home to be with you. Help them as you see fit. These and thy many blessings we pray, Amen. Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust, we commend this spirit unto you.

97. INT. HOMESTEAD - RE-PASS

The town had come over to pay their respect.

98. INT. HOMESTEAD - RE-PASS - LATE EVENING

It's now late in the evening; folks are leaving. Annie and Sam shake hands with the folks as they leave.

ANNIE
Thank you for coming.

Maggie walks over.

MAGGIE
Hey. You okay?

ANNIE
No, but I will be.

MAGGIE
Want me to stay with you tonight.

ANNIE
I could use the company.

MAGGIE
I'll tell Steven.

She walks over to Steven and whisper in his ear. Steven responds with a nod of his head.

99. INT. HOMESTEAD - VERY LATE NIGHT

Maggie is asleep, but Annie can't.

Annie comes out her bedroom and walks over to the fire place; she pulls a chair close to the fire for warmth.

Annie in tears writes in her journal.

O. S. ANNIE

"Oh Sara and Charley, I let you down. I'm so very sorry. Please forgive me I don't know what to do. Thomas, I need you, I'm here alone, and I don't know what to do. You left me. You promised me that you would never leave me, but you did Thomas. What do I do now? I need you. Thomas I really need you right now."

Annie's attention is drawn to that old wooden strong box still sitting on the fireplace mantle. She goes over and gets it, and walks back over to the chair in front of the fireplace and sits down; opens it. It reveals a letter along with a lot of money. She takes the letter out of the box and places the box on the table. She opens and reads the letter aloud.

ANNIE

Annie if you and Sara are reading this letter, it's because something went wrong and me and Charley are no long with you. This is our life saving. You know Charley and me worked for the railroad company for 15 long years. The kind of work we did was very dangerous, so much so, they paid us each \$50, for every trip. And for the most part we'd make about 12 trips each year. So if my calculation is correct I think we might have save somewhere around 18 thousand dollars.

FADE OUT

FADE IN TO FLASH BACK

100. EXT. RAIL ROAD WORK SITE - FLASH BACK

Thomas and Charley are talking near their cargo, waiting for orders to unload the last of their cargo. A stick of dynamite with a very short fuse and lit; is seen rolling on the ground.

Men scatter in every direction.

The explosion is huge.

Dead bodies are everywhere. Thomas and Charley lay side by side bloodied and dead.

O.S. THOMAS

We delivered blasting oil for them. Now don't get mad, we made good money and we saved every bit of it for you and Sara, so we can give y'all a good life. And besides, the railroad wouldn't give us insurance policies because we're colored, so we figured we better put some aside in case you had to bury us.

FADE OUT

FADE IN TO PRESENT DAY

O.S. THOMAS

Charley and me bought land out there where Sara's brother is, but of course you know all this, I mean about the land and all, that's so we can raise us some cattle.

Annie chuckles at the thought of them raising cattle.

Thomas' voice fades out as Annie reads the letter.

ANNIE

But if you're reading this, those plans didn't happen. I want you to know Annette Young that you are the best thing that ever happened to me. So you and Sara take this money and live a good life. Don't mourn for us cause we in God's hands now. We'll save a place for you both. We love you, your husband's Thomas and Charles. By the way I take it you figured out what T-A-C-S means?

Annie leans her head back against the chair, smiles as tears stream down her cheek. She slowly drifts off to sleep, still clinging to the letter.

101. INT. HOMESTEAD - VERY EARLY MORNING

Sam enters the house to see a sleeping Annie sitting in a chair by the fire place.

SAM

Annie?

She opens her eyes to see Sam standing over her.

SAM

Are you okay?

ANNIE

Yeah.

He points to the box.

SAM

What's in the box?

She gives him the letter.

ANNIE

Open it.

Sam pulls the strong box to himself and opens it.

SAM

What is all this? Who's money? Where did it come from?

ANNIE

Read the letter Sam.

While Sam is reading the letter Maggie comes out of the bedroom.

MAGGIE

Good morning.

Sees the money on spilling over.

MAGGIE

What's that?

Sam hands Maggie the letter, she reads it.

MAGGIE

What does he mean the 'letters'?

ANNIE

T-A-C-S; Thomas, Annie, Charley, and Sara

MAGGIE

Oh. I think we should go to the bank

SAM

For what?

MAGGIE

It's obvious Sam, so Annie can put her money somewhere safe.

ANNIE

I hate to do business with Hammond, after the way he treated me.

MAGGIE

Then take it to Denver.

SAM

Why Denver?

MAGGIE

I heard they have banks there that will do business with Negroes.

ANNIE

Maggie, I'm not married and you know banks won't allow a single woman, let alone a colored woman to have a bank account.

MAGGIE

I know. Sam you, could go with her. You could pretend to be married to Annie; otherwise Hammond's your only option.

ANNIE

I could ask Joe.

SAM

No, I'll do it. When do we leave?

MAGGIE

The stage comes in everyday around eleven; you could go today; if you hurry.

ANNIE

What do we say if folks ask questions?

MAGGIE

I'll tell them that you needed to go away for a while.

ANNIE

And Sam, what if they ask about Sam?

MAGGIE

Well, he always disappears; we'll just say he's dealing with the lost in his own way.

Annie begins to cry.

ANNIE

I... my little baby.

MAGGIE

Oh Annie, it will be okay.

ANNIE

Maybe I do need to leave for a while; to get my mind straight. What time did you say the stage leaves?

MAGGIE

Eleven.

ANNIE

Sam?

SAM

I'll go pack.

Annie and Maggie look at his attire with misgivings.

MAGGIE

Sam, no offense, but I think you'd better take some of this money and go shopping.

Annie chuckles.

102. INT. DENVER - LOWER DOWNTOWN - DAYS LATER - EVENING

Annie and Sam arrive in Denver by stagecoach as the transcontinental railroad would not allow Negroes to ride. They step off the coach very well dressed. This was Denver's main street. Traveled by wagon trains and peopled by miners, Indians, soldiers, dance hall girls, ministers and cowboys. This bustling city is dressed with people going somewhere and nowhere at all. There are buildings upon buildings in this, the city's warehouse district.

He extends his hand to help Annie off the Coach.

SAM

Annie.

She takes it and steps down.

ANNIE

I'm tired and I'm hungry.

Yells up to the driver.

SAM

Do you know where we can get a room and some food?

DRIVER

Yeah, there's Miss Clara's Rooming House; she's one of the few places in town where a person can get real good meal and a nice room too; especially for colored folks.

SAM

Thank you.

Sam tosses the driver a gold coin.

DRIVER

Thank you.

The driver tosses Sam their carpet bags.

DRIVER

Hey; tell Miss Clara, Eli sent you; she'll give you a real good deal.

SAM

Thanks, I'll do that.

103. EXT. MISS CLARA'S BOARDING HOUSE

Annie and Sam walk over to Miss Clara's Boarding House and knock on the door.

Opens the door.

MISS CLARA

Yes, can I help you?

Sam swallows hard before speaking, not sure if he's talking to a man or woman. Miss Clara is six feet tall, weighs more than 200 pounds, wares men's clothes, and puffed thick black cigars. A powerful woman made strong by years of heavy slave work, Miss Clara refuses to put up with ill treatment from anyone. After her husband's death Miss Clara became tough enough to make her own way.

SAM

Yes, we're looking for Miss Clara?

MISS CLARA

That's me, how can I help you?

ANNIE

Mr. Eli sent us.

SAM

We need a room.

MISS CLARA

Oh, well come right in. Old Eli, he a good man. Always sendin' business my way.

104. INT. MISS CLARA'S BOARDING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

When they enter, to the right is a small but quaint sitting room with a fireplace center back wall, a two-seater sofa facing the fire place but separated by a very beautiful and very old hand carved wooden table. There is a checkers game set ready to be played sitting on top of the table. There is also a rocker sitting next to the fireplace and three chairs place around the room, for easy access. To the left is a large dining room with a hand carved not very elegant, wooden long table that looks as if it seats about 12 people, (five on either side and one per end). There are two long benches on either side of the table and two matching chairs on either end of it. There is a large dish cabinet, used for storing the plates, bowls, and silverware. Directly in front as they entered the front door are the stairs that lead upstairs to four separate bedrooms and an indoor water closet (down the hall to the right). In the dining area there is a door that leads to a pretty small kitchen, which has the newest potbellied stove, a small table and a corner shelve, holding lard, salt, flour and sacks of other kitchen items.

The light reveals Annie and Sam's attire.

MISS CLARA

Y'all all fancied up. Goin' to a weddin'?

SAM

No Ma'am, we just came into town. We just got off the stagecoach.

She assumes Annie and Sam are recently married.

MISS CLARA

Oh I see, y'all just got married, on ya honeymoon, I s'pose.

Annie and Sam are uncomfortable with the conversation.

MISS CLARA

That's okay, no need to be nervous, we got newlyweds in here all the time. I'll let y'all have my best room. I s'pose y'all hungry. Supper be ready directly.

105. INT. MISS CLARA'S BOARDING HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

She leads them upstairs to their bedroom.

MISS CLARA

Why don't y'all get settled and come down. That's if'n y'all don't get yourselves too busy, as newlyweds sometimes do.

Sam and Annie look at one another, embarrassed by Miss Clara's statement.

106. INT. MISS CLARA'S BOARDING HOUSE - SAM AND ANNIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is very nicely decorated. A large bed on the back wall and to the right, greets the door as it is opened. There is a round table with two wooden chairs sitting up front but to the left with an oil lantern center piece, sitting on top of a white laced doily. To the front right is a clothes closet and next to it, on the left, separating the bed from the clothes closet, is a Chinese divider used for dressing. The room is very cozy, and very clean. Annie and Sam are extremely agitated about their

sleeping arrangements.

ANNIE

What are we going to do? We can't go downstairs and tell her we need two rooms, we're supposed to be married, but you can't stay here.

SAM

Where am I supposed to stay then?

ANNIE

I don't know, but you can't stay in this room alone with me.

SAM

I can't go anywhere else. Look it's only for a few nights. I'll sleep on the floor and you can have the bed.

ANNIE

We can talk about this later, for now I'm very hungry and I smell fried chicken.

Sam tugs on his fancy suit coat.

SAM

Don't you think we should change out of these?

ANNIE

Yes. Can you step outside please, while I change?

SAM

Sure.

He steps out into the hall.

107. INT. MISS CLARA'S BOARDING HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALL

Now dressed in much more suitable clothes, Annie and Sam head down to dinner.

Sam looks at her ring finger.

SAM

You forgot the ring.

ANNIE

What ring?

SAM

The wedding ring

ANNIE

I left it on the table.

SAM

Wait here, I'll go get it.

Sam goes back in the room and returns with her ring.

SAM

Here you go.

As Sam slips the ring on her finger, they share a tender gaze.

ANNIE

Thank you.

108. INT. MISS CLARA'S BOARDING HOUSE - DINING AREA - CONTINUOUS

NAT LOVE and NICKELBOY are two of the best African American cowboys in the West. They ride hard, shoot straight, can rope the toughest bull, and tame the roughest bronco.

MISS CLARA

Hi, I thought y'all wasn't gonna make it.

SAM

No Ma'am, we're pretty hungry, and your chicken smells so good.

Annie and Sam sit down.

MISS CLARA

So y'all on ya honeymoon?

Annie and Sam offer a nervous smile.

MISS CLARA

I remember them days. I was married for nearly 30 years. Couldn't find a better man. So what's y'all names.

SAM

Samuel and this is Annie; my wife.

MISS CLARA

Y'all know I'm Miss Clara; that's Nickelboy and that's Na; they cowhands.

SAM

Nat? Would you be Nat Love?

NAT

One in the same.

SAM

I heard of you.

NAT

Don't that beat all! I'm famous.

SAM

Where y'all headed?

NICKELBOY

We on our way to Texas; hear they need cowhands. Me and Nat, we pretty good.

SAM

The way I heard it; you're better than pretty good; they call you the champion roper of the western cattle country

NICKEL BOY

Ain't that the truth!

Annie thinks of Thomas' letter.

ANNIE

My husband wanted to raise cattle.

Recovers from Annie's mistake.

SAM

Yeah, I was thinking about it.

NAT

What's to think about? All you need is good land; the cattle, they'll do the rest. I joined the outfit right after the war.

SAM

You were in the war?

NAT

Yeah, me and Nickelboy, we served with the 54th.

SAM

I was sorry to hear bout Fort Wagner.

NICKELBOY

Lost a lot of good men that day. We was lucky to get out. Who you serve with?

SAM

I served with the F.N.C.C. (First North Carolina Colored)

NAT

How long you do?

SAM

Two years. I couldn't do much more.

NICKELBOY

A lot of boys got out early; couldn't take it.

MISS CLARA

That's enough. No more talk about war. Over and done with.

NICKELBOY

Ah, Miss Clara, It's good to talk about them days.

ANNIE

How did you get the name Nickelboy?

NICKELBOY

When I was about ten, and one day I after I shined this white man's shoes he gave me a nickel. The other boys got mad and tried to take my money. I didn't take to kindly to it, so I taught them all a right nice lesson.

He punches his fist to the palm of his other hand.

NICKELBOY

They started calling' me Nickelboy, and I guess it stuck.

MISS CLARA

So how'd you two meet?

ANNIE

We met in Buffalo Creek; and here we are.

MISS CLARA

Good for you.

Goes into the kitchen and brings out a chocolate cake.

MISS CLARA

Any room for desert?

NAT

I wouldn't pass on yoe chocolate cake for nothin' in the world.

NICKELBOY

Long as I don't have to stop at one piece.

SAM

That goes for me too.

MISS CLARA

What about you Annie?

ANNIE

I don't think I can. I ate too much; everything was wonderful.

MISS CLARA

Well, let me get to these dishes.

ANNIE

Oh let me help.

MISS CLARA

No, you on ya honeymoon. And sides, I got help; don't I boys?

Reluctant.

NAT/NICKLEBOY

Yes Ma'am.

ANNIE

We'll say goodnight then.

MISS CLARA

Night.

109. INT. BREAKFAST TABLE - NEXT MORNING

Miss Clara has set out a huge breakfast.

SAM

Good morning everybody. Miss Clara I could stay with you forever.

ANNIE

Me too.

MISS CLARA

What's wrong child, don't you know how to cook.

ANNIE

Yes Ma'am, but it's so good when someone else is doing the cooking for a change.

MISS CLARA

Not in my house. I am the only one allowed in my kitchen, cause I am the only one who knows how it works.

She lets out a huge boisterous laugh.

MISS CLARA

Annie if you wanna keep him happy, know where his glory lies, and it ain't in his head.

ANNIE

Sam's a really fine eater; I don't have any trouble at my dinner table.

NAT

Sam, hope you don't have no trouble nowhere else.

MISS CLARA

Alright Nat, that was uncalled for, you apologize to Annie; she don't need that kind of talk.

NAT

Sorry Ma'am.

ANNIE

No harm done. Miss Clara why do you wear men clothes?

MISS CLARA

A old trick my late husband taught me. He says it hard to take advantage of something helpless, if it don't look helpless.

ANNIE

I'm not sure what you mean.

MISS CLARA

When we first come; the folks out here wasn't worried about sleeping or eating. All they wanted was gold, women, and whiskey. My old man took his last dollar and bought two chickens and some flour. I fried them two chickens up and made some biscuits. Next thing I knew the folks was fighting at my door. I been here ever since.

ANNIE

What happened to your husband?

MISS CLARA

Age.

SAM

Annie we got a long day. We better get started.

ANNIE

That's right. We want to do some shopping.
Christmas is only a week away.

MISS CLARA

You know what I'll do for y'all. Why don't y'all
go ahead and, come back around noon, and I'll
have a nice lunch waiting for you.

ANNIE

That sounds wonderful. Thank you.

110. EXT. MAIN STREET

For hours, Annie and Sam walk the street of Denver looking for
any bank that will do business with them. Unfortunately every
bank window, displays a sign which read "NO DOGS, NO NIGGERS,
AND NO INDIANS ALLOWED."

ANNIE

Sam I'm tired. We've been to every bank in
Denver, and they all say the same thing. Can't we
go back to Miss Clara's?

Defeated.

SAM

I suppose so.

Annie sees Arthur Conner on the other side of the street.

ANNIE

Oh my god, that's Arthur Conner.

SAM

Where?

She points him out.

ANNIE

Right there, walking, see him?

SAM

Yeah. Wait here.

Sam starts in Arthur's direction, but Annie grabs his arm.

ANNIE

No Sam! Get the law; Sheriff Reynolds says he wired every county from Buffalo Creek to Denver, so I'm sure they know.

They look around to see where the sheriff's office is located.

SAM

There it is. Come on.

111. INT. DENVER SHERIFF OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

This quaint one room office houses one large caged area and two desks. A riffle cage hangs on the wall, next to several wanted posters. There is a potbellied stove in middle of the room to keep the place warm. SHERIFF COOK and his DEPUTY are sitting at their desks doing paper work.

Sam and Annie rush in to plead their case.

SAM

Sheriff Cook?

SHERIFF COOK

Who's asking?

ANNIE

Sheriff Cook, my name is Annie Young, I don't suppose you got a wire from Sheriff Reynolds in Buffalo Creek about the death of my child?

SHERIFF COOK

I did; so what of it? And just how do you know my name?

SAM

It's on your sign outside. Sheriff, we saw Arthur Conner's walking down the street.

SHERIFF COOK

Yeah so what of it?

ANNIE

Well aren't you going to do something?

Agitated by Sam and Annie.

SHERIFF COOK

Let me tell y'all something! I've been knowin' the Conner family since they come to town. They are very upstanding, Christian people, who ain't never did no harm to nobody. So be on y'all's way.

ANNIE

Those so called upstanding Christian people; killed my baby!

SHERIFF COOK

Watch your tone missy, or I'll throw you behind bars so fast, it'll make your head spin. Now like I said before, be on y'all's way.

ANNIE

Is there a Judge here in town?

SHERIFF COOK

He don't need the likes of you bothering him.

SAM

Deputy would be so kind as to tell us where the Judge's office is.

The Sheriff gives the Deputy the evil eye, but he ignores him.

DEPUTY

Yes. It's just east of town, on Capitol Hill. You can't miss it. The judges' office is in it's our new State Capitol Building.

SAM

Thank you.

Sam takes one of the flyers from the Sheriff's desk, and he and Annie leaves.

SHERIFF COOK

And what do you think you're doing?

DEPUTY

What the people pay me to.

He leaves.

112. EXT. THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

ANNIE

Sam I'm tired and hungry. Let's go back to Miss Clara's get something to eat.

SAM

Okay we'll go to the court house tomorrow.

113. INT. ANNIE AND SAM'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT

The night is quiet, except for the occasional dog barking. Annie and Sam lay awake but very still, pretending to be asleep, trying not to disturb the other.

114. INT. ANNIE AND SAM'S ROOM - LATER

Restless, and thinking Annie is asleep, Sam gets up, puts his trousers on and goes downstairs.

115. INT. PARLOR - A SHORT TIME LATER

Annie, dressed in her night gown and robe, peaks her head around the corner to see Sam is standing at the fire place staring into it, deep in thought.

ANNIE

A penny for your thoughts?

Walk over and sit on the sofa.

Turns to face Annie.

SAM

What?

ANNIE

I said; a penny for your thoughts.

SAM

I was thinking.

He walks over and sits next to Annie.

ANNIE

About what?

SAM

To be honest, I was thinking about Joe. Tell me why you said yes.

ANNIE

Does it matter? I haven't seen or heard from Joe since it happened. I don't think he's coming back.

SAM

Why?

ANNIE

Do we need to talk about this?

SAM

Yes. When we get back, he's sure to think y'all still; courting.

ANNIE

Then he'd be wrong.

SAM

Are you sure?

ANNIE

Yes, I'm sure.

Sam leans and tenderly kisses Annie. After a moment she pulls away.

SAM

What's wrong?

ANNIE

I don't think we should. Technically I am still courting Joe.

SAM

But you're married to me.

He leans in and kisses Annie again.

ANNIE

Okay, stop it Sam. Come on, we should get some sleep. We have a long day ahead of us.

They both get up and go upstairs to their room.

116. INT. ANNIE AND SAM BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Annie climbs into bed and Sam lies on the floor and cover himself with the extra blanket.

SAM

And just so you know, you didn't answer my question.

ANNIE

What question?

SAM

Why did you say yes?

Sticks her food in her mouth.

ANNIE

Because he asked me.

He knows she didn't mean what she just said, but decides not to let her off the hook.

SAM

So all a man has to do is ask?

ANNIE

Goodnight Sam.

SAM

Night.

117. INT. STATE CAPITOL BUILDING - WAITING AREA - NEXT DAY

Located in the newly hatched high society area, with large mansions befitting the wealthy. Here everyone looked down on people from Lower Downtown, and anyone else who wasn't like them, especially JUDGE MOODY. The new capitol building was under major construction, so office space was limited and the Judges' chambers were nowhere near complete, but his vanity prevented him from practicing elsewhere.

Annie and Sam have to take a buggy to get to the Capitol.

Annie and Sam try to plead their case to Judge Moody without

success.

ANNIE

We're looking for the Judge, is he in?

SECRETARY

Yes, but he's in a meeting right now.

ANNIE

Look, my little baby was killed about three weeks ago, while she was asleep in bed. While she lay there (holds up the wanted poster) these people threw a stone in her bedroom window and killed her. All I want is a little help. And since the Sheriff wouldn't help us, we came to see the Judge.

SECRETARY

Look, I'm not supposed to disturb him when he's in a meeting, but if you wait over there; it usually only takes about 30 minutes.

Annie and Sam sit for hours waiting on the Judge. The Judge appears.

SECRETARY

Judge Moody these nice folks have been waiting to see you.

Looks at his pocket watch.

JUDGE

Well it's almost lunch time. Why don't you all come back after lunch, and I'll be glad to talk you then.

ANNIE

Well sir, we'd be happy to, but we thought you'd like to know that you have murders running loose in your town.

JUDGE

Murders running around my town? What do you mean?

Takes the flyer from Annie's hand.

SAM

These people are running free in your town, but they are wanted for a murder back in Buffalo Creek.

ANNIE

Yes, they killed my little baby.

JUDGE

Here, come into my office, where we can talk things out.

118. INT. OFFICE OF JUDGE MOODY - CONTINUOUS

Sam and Annie try to convince Judge Moody of Mr. & Mrs. Connors' guilt, but all Judge Moody can see is the color of their skin. He is unwilling to help them.

JUDGE MOODY

Come right in and sit down.

Sam and Annie sit down; the Judge walks behind his desk and sits in his big chair.

JUDGE MOODY

Now why don't y'all tell me what happened.

She chooses her words carefully.

ANNIE

Well Maggie, she's the wife of the town doctor, well you see, she and I was having lunch, when Sally Jane, she works in the post office, ran over to tell me that something was wrong with my baby.

JUDGE MOODY

Where was the baby?

ANNIE

Mrs. Pritchett was keeping her for the day.

JUDGE MOODY

And where were you?

SAM

I was doing some repair work on the homestead.

JUDGE MOODY

Going on, what happened next?

ANNIE

Maggie and I hurried over to Mrs. Pritchett's as quickly as we could. When we got there Mrs. Pritchett came out of her bedroom; she had blood on her hands. I ran in the room where my baby was, and she lay there, like a little baby doll.

JUDGE MOODY

What happened next?

SAM

When I got there the Sheriff told me that Mr. Bradow, he owns the General Store, found the stone that was tossed in the window. It had blood on it, and note that read "Nigga Lover".

JUDGE MOODY

Why do you think that Mr. and Mrs. Conner had something to do with the death of your child?

ANNIE

Because Mrs. Pritchett said that Mrs. Conner came by her place right before it happened. She said that Mrs. Conner came in and told her that she was stopping by to pay her a visit. Mrs. Pritchett said she went over to her stove to make some coffee, when she turned around Mrs. Conner was gone, and right after that she heard glass break from her bedroom. When she went inside that's when she found my baby.

JUDGE MOODY

Are most of the folks where y'all from Negroes?

SAM

No, it's only me, Annie, and the blacksmith Joe.

JUDGE MOODY

And where was this blacksmith, at the time y'all say all of this took place?

SAM

I don't know.

ANNIE

He had gone to the Reservation with Doctor Mitchell to help deliver supplies.

JUDGE MOODY

How do you know this?

ANNIE

Because Mr. Bradow told me and Maggie when we asked after him.

JUDGE MOODY

Is Maggie a Negro?

ANNIE

No.

Annie and Sam become agitated with the Judges line of questions.

JUDGE MOODY

Then why do you call her by her first name. You might need to know your place.

SAM

What?

JUDGE MOODY

Watch your tone, with me. Now I have listened to what you have had to say, and I'll look into the matter.

SAM

Mr. and Mrs. Conner lives right here. I saw Mr. Conner walking down the street. When we went to Sheriff Cook, he told us to get out of his office and not to accuse two upstanding, Christians of such a crime. Is that what you're doing?

JUDGE MOODY

I don't answer to the likes of you. Now I told you I'd look into the matter, and that's all you need to know.

SAM

I'm sure you will! Come on Annie.

JUDGE MOODY

Mine yourself boy, you do anything stupid, and I'll have you locked up so fast, it'll make your head spin.

SAM

I don't know what you mean, Judge.

JUDGE MOODY

Don't try me boy. I'll be watching you, and if you step one foot out of line boy; why it's no telling what Sheriff Cook might have to do to protect himself.

Sam gets ready to respond, but Annie stops him.

ANNIE

No Sam, let's go; right now.

119. EXT. THE JUDGE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Annie and Sam are driven back to town.

120. EXT. DENVER - LOWER DOWNTOWN - LATER

Sam and Annie see Mr. and Mrs. Conner's on the other side of the street, coming out of the bank. Sam starts in their direction, but Annie stops him again.

SAM

I don't believe this, they won't do nothing! He's gonna let them get away with it.

Looks up the see Mr. & Mrs. Conner.

SAM

I can't sit back and let them get away with it! Annie I need to do something.

ANNIE

No Sam you heard the Judge. Let them alone. Come on.

121. INT. THE BOARDING HOUSE - LATER

Miss Clara has prepared a very nice picnic basket for Annie and Sam, but they're too upset.

MISS CLARA

There you two are, I thought I was gonna have send these two out after y'all. I got a picnic basket all ready for you. Thought you might want to be alone.

ANNIE

Oh, thank you so much Miss Clara. We'll take it upstairs to our room.

MISS CLARA

Nice lookin' couple.

NICKELBOY

You got anything left?

She gives Nickelboy a knife.

MISS CLARA

Here you go, cut off a slice that ham.

122. INT. ANNIE AND SAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Annie and Sam share a quite lunch together. Disappointed with their treatment.

ANNIE

Sam I want to go home.

SAM

Me too; but what about the bank, we came to put your money in the bank?

ANNIE

After what we've been through; and besides none of the banks want to do business with us anyway. I just want to go home.

SAM

I'll check to see what time the next stage is leaving after lunch.

ANNIE

I'll pack our things.

They continue to eat.

123. INT. MISS CLARA'S BOARDING HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Annie and Sam say their goodbyes to Mss. Clara, Nickelboy, and Nat with hugs and handshakes, and board the stage.

124. EXT. BUFFALO CREEK COLORADO - DAYS LATER

After a long journey they finally arrive back in Buffalo Creek Colorado. Their spirits are very low after the devastating experience they had in Denver. Without a word to anyone they walk over to the livery. Sam hitches up their wagon and they ride off towards the homestead.

125. INT. HOMESTEAD - LATER

Towns' people come to welcome Annie home. Sam explains what happened.

MR. BRADOW

Here's what I don't understand, why wouldn't he even talk to them Conner people. Ain't there a law against that sort of behavior?

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

No. I'm sorry to say, but Negroes just don't have the same rights as whites. It's a shame, but it's true.

MRS. PRITCHETT

So you mean to tell me they just gone get away with killing that poor baby?

SAM

It looks that way.

Joe knocks on the door.

Sheriff Reynolds is standing closes to the door so he opens it.

ANNIE

Joe?

JOE

I know, I've been away, trying to find a way to help.

ANNIE

So have we. We only just got back from Denver this afternoon.

SAM

Did you find anything out?

JOE

No, everybody I talked to said they couldn't help. Or there's nothing they could do. I wish I had better news.

SAM

We pretty much got those same answers in Denver.

JOE

You went with Annie to Denver?

Not wanting to sound jealous.

JOE

Oh, you all went to Denver with Annie?

MAGGIE

No just Sam. They pretended to be married.

Annie and Maggie see the hurt look on Joe's face.

ANNIE

Yes, I didn't want to go alone, and when Sam offered to go I said yes. We were only there for a short while.

Joe decides leave.

JOE

Well I'll say goodnight. Again, I wish I had better news for you.

ANNIE

Thank you for coming by Joe, I'll see you soon.

JOE

Yeah, sure.

Joe leave, and everyone else decides it's also time for them to leave.

MR. BRADOW

It's getting late. I think we should all be getting home. Come on Miss Pritchett, Maggie, and I'll drive you.

MRS. PRITCHETT

Annie, I know you might not feel like it; but tomorrow is Christmas Eve, and we're having a Social; will you come?

ANNIE

I don't know. I'm tired.

MRS. PRITCHETT

Well just think about it

MAGGIE

Please come.

ANNIE

I'll think about.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

I'll see y'all tomorrow.

Everyone leaves. Annie and Sam are left alone. He pours himself a cup of coffee.

SAM

I saw the way Joe was looking at you tonight.

ANNIE

I'm not sure what you mean.

SAM

Don't give me that. If I wasn't tired, I'd go at it with you. Just know I saw him.

ANNIE

Did I miss something? Have you decided there's something between us without telling me?

He's caught off guard.

SAM

I'm just saying.

ANNIE

Saying what?

SAM

I'm just saying; that's all. I'm going to bed.
See you in the morning.

126. INT. HOMESTEAD - KITCHEN TABLE - LATE NIGHT

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"Just got back from Denver, but I'm afraid I didn't get much accomplished. I didn't think it would be so hard. Thomas, you dear sweet man I miss you with everything in me, but I'm going to let you rest now, as I hope you don't mind but I believe I've found somebody who's going to me happy. Sara, Charley, I hope you know that I'm trying to get justice for Sara Grace's murder. I expect you know, being colored making right hard. I'll keep trying though. The folks here in this town is so nice. Sara, Maggie's real nice too; you'd like her. Good night my dear sweet family."

Annie gets an unexpected caller.

Knock on the door

In her nightgown holding a lantern, Annie goes over to the door.

ANNIE

Who is it?

JOE

It's me, Joe. I'd like to talk to you.

ANNIE

Do you know what time it is?

JOE

Yes, and I'm sorry for coming by at this time of night. There's something I got to know.

She opens the door.

ANNIE

Come on in.

He sits down at the table.

ANNIE

Can I get you some coffee?

JOE

Naw, it's late, and besides, I don't want to keep you.

ANNIE

So what would you like to know?

After a long contemplating pause.

JOE

I need to know if there is something between you and Sam.

She's not at all shocked by the question.

ANNIE

I'm not sure I need to answer that question. Why do you ask?

JOE

I once asked you to go courting with me and you said yes, but now I'm not so sure.

ANNIE

Yes, you did ask me to go courting, and yes I did agree. But I also know that when Sara Grace died you left me, and Sam was there. I have not heard from you until today.

JOE

When Sara Grace died, I came by your place that same night, and when I saw you in Sam's arms; I didn't think you needed me.

ANNIE

You didn't think I needed you. I'm confused, you asked me to go courting, and when the worst thing in my life happens, you decide I don't need you, because of something you think you saw. Joe you should have knocked on the door.

JOE

What would that have accomplished?

ANNIE

Joe, I don't want someone in my life that can't be there for me when I need him most.

JOE

That's the way you want it?

ANNIE

That's the way it is.

JOE

And Sam?

ANNIE

What about Sam?

JOE

Is he taking my place?

ANNIE

That's none of your business. I think it's time for you to be going now. We said all that needs to be said.

JOE

I didn't mean to offend you.

ANNIE

You did, but I'll let it go. It's time for you to be going now.

Annie opens the door and Joe leaves.

127. INT. HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

Minutes later Sam comes back to the house very curious about Joe's visit

Knock on the door.

Opens the door.

ANNIE

I figured you'd be coming.

Sam walks over to the stove and pours a cup of cold old coffee and sits at the table.

SAM

So are you going to tell me what he wanted?

ANNIE

He wanted to know about you and me.

SAM

What about you and me?

ANNIE

He wanted to know if you would be taking his place?

SAM

What did you tell him?

ANNIE

I told him you were. Now get out so that I can go to bed. I'm very tired.

Sam takes a deep breath.

SAM

Oh. Hey wait a minute, you told him what? *I am?* What's that supposed to mean?

Escorts Sam to the door.

ANNIE

Goodnight Sam, I'll see you in the morning.

Gently pushes Sam out the door. Sam's dumbfounded, walks back to the barn, as Annie watches him smiling.

128. EXT. HOMESTEAD - EARLY MORNING

Sam is working on the repairs.

Opens the front door and calls out.

ANNIE

Sam breakfast is ready.

SAM

Coming.

Annie is putting breakfast on the table.

Sam enters carrying wood. He puts more wood on the fire and sits down at the table.

SAM

Are you going to tell me what you meant?

ANNIE

Meant about what?

SAM

Last night, that's what. I didn't sleep because of you.

ANNIE

That's funny, because I slept just fine.

She sits down to join him. They each serve themselves. Sam begins to eat.

ANNIE

Sam?

SAM

Hum?

ANNIE

Grace?

SAM

Oh, sorry

Lays his fork on his plate and he and Annie hold hands.

ANNIE

Dear Lord thank you for this food, and these thy blessing. Amen.

SAM

Amen.

Picks his fork up and begins to eat again.

SAM

So are you going to tell me what you meant?

ANNIE

I was only joking with you Sam.

Knows that if she doesn't give him an answer, she'll never hear the end of it. So she tells him.

ANNIE

I told him that he wasn't there for me and that you were. I also told him that if he couldn't be there whenever I need him, than we shouldn't be together.

SAM

What did he say?

ANNIE

He asked if you're taking his place.

SAM

And what did you say?

ANNIE

I told him that it was none of his business, but if he wanted to know, he should ask you.

SAM

Me?

ANNIE

Yes.

SAM

I'll tell you what, let's not worry about Joe.

Takes Annie by the hands.

SAM

Annie I would be honored if you'd accompany me to the Christmas Social this evening?

ANNIE

I'd love to.

SAM

I'll pick you up around five.

129. INT. LIVERY'S BACK BARN - CHRISTMAS SOCIAL - EVENING

The barn located behind the livery has been clear of all its debris to host the town socials. Everyone is dressed in their Sunday's best. A group of men are gathered in a corner playing music,

Annie enters on Sam's arm.

SAM

Shall we?

ANNIE

I'd love to.

He extends his hand to Annie, who accepts it. They move to the center of the room to dance, along with Maggie and Dr. Mitchell, Mr. Bradow and Mrs. Pritchett and several other couples.

130. INT. LIVERY'S BACK BARN - CHRISTMAS SOCIAL - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Bradow along with others offers a toast Annie.

MR. BRADOW

Annie I'm so glad to have you be a part of our town. Sam you look after her.

SAM

Yes sir.

MR. HAMMOND

When Annie walked into the bank holding her bill of sale and that beautiful baby in her arms, I knew right then and there that she was not going to take no for answer. I'm happy you didn't.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

Annie I just want to say that I'm so glad you live here in Buffalo Creek. And I ain't gonna rest until I find out who took little Sara Grace from us.

MAGGIE

Annie my dear friend. Not many folks can say that about a person. I'm so happy that you bumped into me that day at the post office. I'm so happy that I can call you my dear friend. I look forward to the many days we will share and the many secrets we will keep for each other.

MRS. PRITCHETT

Annie after what happened to your child, you could have hated me for the rest of your life, and I wouldn't blame you if you did. But instead you chose to live life and you let me be a part of that. I know that Sara Grace is sitting in the palm of God's right hand, looking down on us smiling. I'm so very happy to have you be my neighbor and my friend. And if God's sees fit to bless you with a new husband and more babies, I look forward to keeping every single one of them. (runs out of words) Now y'all go on and eat and drink cause there's plenty.

ANNIE

To all you wonderful people. Thank you for embracing me and looking pass the color of my skin. Maggie I do call you dear friend. I'm sure we'll have a lot to talk about in the morning.

She kisses Mr. Bradow on his cheek.

ANNIE

Thank you Mr. Bradow. Mrs. Pritchett you're the only one I'd trust to keep any babies I bring into this world, and Mr. Reynolds your kindness makes me feel safe.

She walks over and cuffs her arm around Mr. Hammond.

ANNIE

Oh, Mr. Hammond, Sam and I will have a large deposit to make in the morning. Merry Christmas everyone.

Jeers and cheers all around, as the party continues.

131. EXT. ANNIE'S HOMESTEAD - VERY LATE - SITTING AT THE FIREPLACE

Sam admits his true feeling for Annie.

SAM

I have something to say; Miss Annie Young I have loved you from the first moment I saw you. I know this ain't the proper way to ask you, but I would be so very proud if you would; if I could have your hand in marriage?

ANNIE

I don't know what to say.

SAM

Well don't say no.

ANNIE

Are you sure?

SAM

I wouldn't ask if I wasn't.

ANNIE

Yes.

Leans in and kisses her passionately.

SAM

I have sort a confession to make.

ANNIE

What is it?

SAM

It's about the very first time I saw you. I had just come back from setting my traps. I was getting ready to go inside and that when I saw you. You was taking a bath. I peeked through the window; I thought you were the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. I decided I had to meet you, but I didn't know how; so that day when Joe came over I took my chance. I pretended that I didn't know that you had move in...

ANNIE

...And you made yourself right at home.

SAM

Yep.

ANNIE

I have a confession of my own. I fell in love with you on that very day. I have no idea why; you were so rude and I should have thrown you out...

SAM

..And I should have kissed you right then and there.

He leans in and gives her a very gentle, very long romantic kiss.

He leaves.

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"Sam has proposed, and I said yes. Sara this makes us sisters. Thomas, I know you'd like Sam. In some ways he reminds me a lot of you. I'm so very happy."

132. EXT. THE WEDDING DAY - THE FRONT LAWN OF THE CHURCH - WEDDING RECEPTION - SUMMER

Annie and Sam are sharing their big day with the rest of the town.

133. EXT. JAIL - SHERIFF REYNOLDS - THE CONNER FAMILY - CONTINUOUS

Mr. & Mrs. Conner and one of their son's climbs down from a wagon being driven by Sheriff Reynolds and walk into the jail.

134. EXT. THE WEDDING RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff Reynolds leaves the jail and walk over to the wedding party.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

I was just coming over to get you two.

SAM

What happened?

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

I've been working with the Deputy in Denver. He got them to tell the truth about Sara Grace's murder.

ANNIE

So it was Mrs. Conner who killed my baby?

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

No, it was two of her sons. Since we can't arrest the boys because their too young, we're going to bring charges against their father.

ANNIE

Can we see them?

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

Yes, they're in the jail.

135. INT. JAIL - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff Reynolds leads Annie and Sam to the jail.

BEATRICE CONNER

Why do they need to be here?

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

Because you need to be the one to tell them what I already know.

MR. CONNER

Yes.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

They've got a right to know.

MR. CONNER

Well it seems that our boy here knows something about what happen to that little baby.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

Go on.

MR. CONNER

It seems, that two of my boys, this one and a younger one, was throwing rocks. They say they was just having a little fun and that they didn't know no baby was inside that room.

Sam is ready to attack Mr. Conner, but Annie grabs his arm.

SAM

What you call fun; had a note attached to it. That note said "Nigger Lover" what's so fun about that.

BEATRICE CONNER

They just kids, they didn't know that baby was inside the room.

ANNIE

Baby! I see you reframe from calling her a bastard! Why did you leave in such a hurry?

BEATRICE CONNER

Because when I heard the glass break I knew the boys was up to no good. But I didn't know that there no baby in the room. I just thought they was breaking windows.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

How old are you boy?

CONNER BOY

Eleven Sir.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

How old is your brother, the one that was with you?

CONNER BOY

Nine Sir.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

I can't arrest the boys because they're too young, but I can arrest their father. How long have you known about this?

MR. CONNER

Judge Moody was at our house on Sunday and he happened to mention that a Negro couple came into town and accused me and my wife of killing their baby. We was shocked when we heard that. We question the boys, they told us what they had done. I told my wife that we had to make things right. And that's why we come back here.

Annie stands to her feet and walks over to Beatrice Conner and slaps her as hard as she possibly can. Beatrice's legs give way and she falls to the floor, holding her cheek.

Tears roll down both their cheeks

ANNIE

Mr. Conner I want to thank you for coming forward, but it won't bring my child back from the grave. I want you to remember something; Mrs. Conner you taught that boy and his brother to hate me because I look different. I fed your family from my pots every single day that we were on the trail because you had nothing to feed them. It didn't matter how you talked down to me, how you called me all kind of names, and how you treated my child, I still fed you and your family without question. Instead of teaching your children to have kind hearts, you taught them to be bigoted and mean spirited. That's something you'll have to live with for the rest of your days.

Looks at the boy.

ANNIE

I forgive you and your brother.

Looks back at Mr. Conner and then to his wife and allows her anger to build.

ANNIE

And because of my faith I will not allow you to be arrested for a crime your children committed. I should hate you, and to be quite honest, I do hate you both, for the way you treated me.

Stops herself.

ANNIE

You know what, this is my wedding day. Sam, Sheriff, let's go back out to the party.

She and Sam walk out together.

Sheriff Reynolds starts toward the door and turns and looks at the Conner family.

SHERIFF REYNOLDS

I'd appreciate it if you and your family never step foot in Buffalo Creek again. Cause unlike Miss Annie there, next time you do, I might not be as kind or forgiving to you.

The Sheriff leaves. After a few minutes Mr. and Mrs. Conner and their son gets back into their wagon and drives away.

Annie watches the Conner family as they drive away.

136. EXT. THE WEDDING PARTY

Annie returns to her wedding celebration.

137. INT. ANNIE AND SAM'S NEW HOMESTEAD - YEARS LATER

Annie writes in her journal.

O.S. ANNIE

"Sam and I got our 160 acres. Sam built our new home. He managed to get the cattle ranch up and running with the help of Nat Love and Nickelboy. We have a family of our own. Samuel junior, he's five; looks just like Sam. Annette Loise; she's three. I haven't told Sam yet, but we're expecting our third child. Maggie and Doctor Mitchell are expecting their third child too. Mrs. Pritchett is still running her boarding house. She and Mr. Bradow are courting now, it's cute. Sheriff Reynolds is still the Sheriff. Mr. Cobbs passed away last year; he'll be missed. Roscoe's running the Livery now, and Mr. Hammond expanded the bank. Joe; he sold the blacksmith shop and moved to Denver. I'm thanking the good Lord for my life, it's been so far."

FADE TO BLACK