



OIL
MONEY
MURDER

INTO THE
MAELSTROM
A NOVEL

DOUGLAS CORNELL

AUTHOR OF
THE LYNCHING OF BILLY SULLIVAN

Into the Maelstrom

A Novel

DOUGLAS CORNELL

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This book contains language and racial epithets that may be offensive to some. The dialog and thoughts contained strive to be historically accurate and represent the attitudes and beliefs of the American people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Please note that the word “negro” was not capitalized until the late 1960s and was considered to be the proper English-language term for people of black African origin.

The use of the word “black” was not used to describe Negroes until the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

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Also by Douglas Cornell

Plastipocalypse: A Novel

Greg and Trixie Bowman are having a bad day. The dashboard in their car is dissolving... their clothes are shredding... they can't see through their eyeglasses.

With the grim realization that their lives have changed forever, the Bowmans do whatever it takes to keep their family safe in a world that is suddenly without plastics or other synthetic compounds. And the plastic just doesn't disappear - it changes into something deadly and terrifying.

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One year after all plastic unexpectedly destabilized, the survivors struggle to live without even the most basic possessions of modern daily life. The search for food, clothing, and shelter is complicated by the powerful fire and ice storms that sweep across the landscape.

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As a boy, Jeremy Stick watched a man hang, strung up by a lawless mob.

Years later, U.S. Army Sergeant Stick struggles to understand what drives normally decent men to defy law and order. He encounters racial hatred on the dusty streets of Nogales, Mexico, and the burning of an entire community known as "The Black Wall Street" in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

After finally meeting the woman who may be the love of his life, their future together is threatened by an evil force that is beyond their wildest imaginations.

"Cornell's characters are full of intrigue and mystery, keeping a reader engrossed in the story from start to finish. It's as if you're transformed to the late nineteenth century." - Elizabeth Wehman, Author of "The Year the Stars Fell."

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For Carol and Everyone Who Fights for Justice and Truth

Characters:

Captain James Clarke, U.S. Marshal

Jefferson "Rosie" Rose, Deputy U.S. Marshal

Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Commander of The Rough Riders

Jacob Scott, F.B.I. Agent

Tom Anderson, Chicago F.B.I. Supervisor

J. Edgar Hoover, Deputy Director, F.B.I.

Emma Larson, Survivor of Tulsa Massacre and Author

Bobby Wright, Negro Felon

Henry Tallchief, Osage Tribal Constable

Andrew Wilkes, Tulsa Massacre Participant

Anna Winters, Wealthy Osage Tribal Member

May Winters, Wealthy Osage Tribal Member

Charley White Horse, Osage Tribal Member, Brother of Anna and May Winters

Robert Winters, Husband of Anna Winters

Ralph Winters, Husband of May Winters

Frank Macklin, Rancher

Genevieve Gray, Dancer and Singer

Dr. Gavin Reynolds

Harry Black and Thomas Smith, Ex-Pinkerton's

Lorraine Gathers, Bank Teller

Richard Lloyd Jones, Editor of the Tulsa Tribune

Fred and Margaret Pike, Farmers

Clara Cross, Wealthy Osage Tribal Member

Sammy, the Old-Timer, and his mule, Sadie

Jimmy, Son of the Ferryman



PROLOGUE – INTO THE FIRE

Las Guásimas de Sevilla, Cuba

June 24, 1892

Mauser bullets cut through the dense jungle growth, shredding huge leaves and finding the occasional American. Somewhere to the west, probably less than 40 or 50 yards distant, the Spanish Army crouched behind improvised stone walls, firing rounds as quickly as their weapons allowed. The heat that had been so unbearable just a moment ago was forgotten now that staying alive and gaining ground had become the priority.

Seeing that most of E Troop remained intact, the young officer ran in front of his men, unconcerned for his own safety. Bullets whizzed past, one cutting a small furrow through the top of his scalp. "Sergeant Kendall," he yelled as he fired rounds from his revolver towards the enemy. "Take our men around to the north and flank 'em!"

"Yes sir!"

Kendall, who was one of the most capable and hard-working people the Captain had ever known, soon had his men working their way north as ordered. The Captain continued to fire at the enemy, hoping to distract the Spaniards from the American's attempt to gain their position. Less than 30 feet behind the skirmish line, a crew of two men from the Vitagraph Company worked the crank on a moving picture machine. Two Spanish bullets struck the camera's wooden cabinet, causing the cameramen to grab their equipment and beat a hasty retreat to safety.

From somewhere to his left, several American 1896 Krag-Jorgensen carbines harassed the enemy. Not wanting to miss the excitement, the Captain sprinted through the jungle, quickly rejoining his men. The firing between the two sides came to an abrupt stop as the enemy searched through the long jungle grass and trees for their opponents.

Speaking quietly to Kendall, the Captain said, "Get ready to follow me. Pass it along."

Seeing blood run down the Captain's face, Kendall replied, "But sir, you're wounded!"

"No matter. We attack at once."

Kendall repeated his Captain's orders to one man, who told another, then another, until the 30 or so men were poised for action.

"Now!"

Captain James Clarke, commander of Company C of the Rough Riders, made his way through the thick undergrowth as quickly as possible. Dressed in the unique khaki of the Rough Riders, Clarke felt less exposed than his counterparts in the Regular Army who wore the traditional blue and gray. This was his first engagement in this new war. Despite his men's lack of decent food and sleep, he was determined to perform his duty. Somewhere near, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt was fighting also, inspiring his Rough Riders to show the regular army that a bunch of cow-punchers, lawmen, trappers, and Indian fighters could whip the Spanish Army, secure freedom for the Cuban *insurrectos*, and punish Spain for the sinking of the U.S. battleship, *Maine*.

With little warning, Clarke and his men emerged from the jungle to find themselves just behind the Spaniards.

"FIRE!" Clarke yelled as he fired at the enemy. His first shot hit a startled Spaniard in the neck. Firing his revolver as quickly as possible, he either

killed or wounded three more men. An American private on his right died instantly as a bullet struck the center of his forehead. Another man further down the line yelled, "I'm killed!" and fell face-first into the wet grass. A nearby Buffalo Soldier took a hit to his shoulder, brushed it off as if it were little more than a bee sting, and continued firing on the enemy. The Americans were determined not to be beaten and within minutes had either killed or captured over 100 Spanish soldiers.

As quickly as it had started, the firing stopped. Looking at his pocket watch, Clarke was surprised to find that the entire battle had taken more than two hours – yet it had seemed like it had taken only a few minutes.

Sergeant Kendall reported to Clarke. "We lost eight men, Captain. Another twenty are wounded, but I suspect most will want to stay in the game."

"That's good news, Sergeant." The loss of only one man bothered Clarke, but he knew that it would be pointless to expect perfection when faced with the chaos and uncertainty of war.

"Lieutenant Green reports that he's holding about thirty of the enemy as prisoners, Captain. Do you have orders for him?"

Thinking that he barely had enough men to hold their position, Clarke replied, "Tell the Lieutenant to turn his captives over to the Cubans. They can deal with them better than we can. Then tell the men to grab a bit of water and rest. I imagine that Colonel Roosevelt will have us on the move soon enough."

It turned out that Roosevelt had been ordered to stay put until more troops from the rear could reach the front. Clarke and his men were directed to pitch their tents and spend the night camped in a swampy bog that sat near a clear-running creek. Vultures appeared as if by magic and pecked at the dead while burial details scrambled to retrieve their fallen comrades.

Sitting on a mossy deadfall, Clarke took out his handkerchief and splashed water on the cotton cloth. He was washing the blood from his face when he heard the unmistakable voice from his commander.

"There you are, Clarke! Bully, Captain, Bully! You did a remarkable job taking the right flank. It turns out that the stories I've heard about you are true after all!" Roosevelt held out his hand to the Captain.

Clarke stood and accepted the handshake. "Just doing my duty, Sir."

Seeing the Captain's wound, Roosevelt asked, "Are you injured?"

"Just a minor cut, Sir. Guess I was grazed by a bullet during the gunfight." Clarke continued wiping the gash.

"Let's sit for a moment, Clarke. We could both use a bit of rest."

The two men sat, Roosevelt as calm and relaxed as if he were on the porch back home. Clarke was amazed to be in the company of such a great man.

"They tell me that you're the fella who captured that scoundrel Red Feather."

Clarke nodded. "Yes, Sir. I didn't do it alone though. My rangers were instrumental in that affair."

"Still, it was an outstanding thing. Was it true that you managed to chase Red Feather and his renegades into a box canyon? That was a bit of cunning on your part."

"More like luck, Sir."

"Don't leave me hanging! Tell me the story, man!"

Clarke reluctantly recalled the events of the day that he brought in one of the most notorious Comanche warriors in the southwest. "We were struck by a sandstorm. Red Feather must've been confused. I had my men hunkered down at the mouth of the canyon... when the dust finally settled, we realized that we had the renegades trapped. There was some fighting at first, but it seemed smarter to wait Red Feather out. There wasn't any water in the canyon where Red Feather was hiding, but me and my men were just a stone's throw from a spring. The renegades held out for nearly a week, but eventually, Red Feather decided to give himself up."

"How many did you capture?"

"Fifteen desperate, dangerous men. We tied 'em up and took 'em to Galveston, where they were hung."

Roosevelt grunted. "Do you ever wonder that it would have been easier to just kill them yourself?"

"No, Sir. That wasn't my job once they surrendered."

Nodding, Roosevelt replied, "Of course, you are right."

The Colonel stood and looked around at the troops making their camps nearby. "These are the finest men our country has, Clarke. They didn't get more than three weeks of training. They endured a miserable journey here, crammed in a sweaty, stinking ship. They haven't eaten anything except

hardtack and bacon for a month. But here we are in a foreign country, fighting a well-equipped army and we whipped 'em!" Roosevelt slapped his hand on his pants. "We whipped 'em! Bully!"

Later that morning, Clarke sat by his campfire attempting to dry his soaked socks.

"Mind if I join you, Sir?" It was Lieutenant Green, Clarke's 2nd in command. "I have coffee."

"Coffee? How'd you manage to find beans, Lieutenant?" He handed Green his coffee pot.

Smiling, Green replied, "These might be the last coffee beans in the entire regiment, Sir. You can thank Kendall for his resourcefulness."

"Kendall. That's a good man. Have a seat, Lieutenant."

Green filled the pot from the nearby stream and put it on the fire. "Hope this water isn't too contaminated," he said. "There's no clean water available for miles in any direction."

The two men relished the rare quiet moment. If it weren't for the mosquitoes, heat, and the lingering stench of death, it might have been enjoyable.

"You are to be commended for your action today, Green. I'll see that you are mentioned in my report."

Blushing, Green replied, "Thank you, Sir. Only doing my duty."

"Tell me, Green. How'd you find yourself to come to be in this outfit?"

"There's not much to tell, Captain. I'm no different than the other men. I was the foreman on a ranch near Laredo and when the chance came to join up, I couldn't sign the papers fast enough."

"Come now, Green. I suspect there's more to it than that."

Green filled the two men's cups. They each took a sip and sighed.

"Damn fine coffee," Green said. After a moment of silence, he finally said, "When I was thirteen years old I was sent east to go to school. When the recruiters found out that I could read and write, they offered me this commission."

"You're a lucky man, Green. You got an education and now you are leading good men in a war to free the Cuban people from their imperial

masters.”

“I suppose,” Green said. “How about you, Sir? If you don’t mind my asking, how’d you get here?”

“Like you, I was educated. But as soon as I could, I jumped on a pony and headed west. I started out as a lawman in a backwater town near the border. One day a troop of Texas Rangers rode through my village and I decided right then and there to join ‘em. We rode all over Texas, New Mexico Territory, and Arizona. At some point...,” Clarke paused to reflect. “It seems like a lifetime ago that I became the commander of my company of Rangers. We pretty much cleared all of the scoundrels out of Texas and I was just beginning to wonder what I’d do next when I heard that the Spaniards sunk the *Maine*. It was pretty much the same for me as it was for you. I joined up and was given command of this company.”

“We’re fortunate to have you, Sir,” Green said sincerely.

Just then, a messenger handed an envelope to Clarke. “Compliments from Colonel Roosevelt, Sir.”

After reading the order, Clarke turned to Green and said, “Get your men ready. We’ll leave our tents and blankets here. We’re to make our way to the north bank of the San Juan River and begin the assault on Kettle Hill.”

Twenty minutes later, Clarke and his troops were at the river. Using the river bank for protection, sharpshooters fired at the Spaniards who were dug in on the top of Kettle Hill. American artillery attempted to hit a blockhouse that the Spanish were using for cover, but the shells were unable to find their range. Spanish soldiers fired at Clarke’s troops, but most of the shots were high.

“Good thing the Spaniards can’t shoot!” a trooper laughed. Just then, a bullet hit the same man in the throat.

Clarke desperately wanted to shout, “Keep your heads down!” but he also knew that his men had to fire harassing rounds at the Spaniards. Buffalo soldiers from the 9th and 10th Cavalry, who were supporting Clarke’s company, took losses but continued firing. Far to the left, Roosevelt, riding on top of his pony, “Little Texas,” shouted, “Let’s go men! We can take ‘em!”

The Rough Riders acted as one. The men jumped from cover and began the climb up the hill, firing their weapons as they went. Clarke, oblivious to

the danger, ran at full speed for 30 yards, stopped, then fired at an exposed Spaniard. The man fell, and Clarke and the men near him pushed on. "Come on boys!" he yelled. "We're almost there!"

A sudden explosion rocked the earth beneath Clarke's boots. He was thrown backward several feet, but he was caught by a Buffalo Soldier before impacting the ground.

"Wha.... What happened?" Clarke mumbled.

"Take it easy there, Cap'n. Ol' Rosie has you now."

The Buffalo Soldier, who was dressed in the blue and gray of the cavalry, stood well over six feet tall and possessed a massive frame. He easily lifted the Captain and began to carry him towards the field hospital.

"No... Clarke said. Not to the back. Take me to the top."

Rosie shook his head and said, "You're the boss."

The Spaniards continued shooting, hoping to repel the American invaders from their hilltop. Men to the left and right of Clarke and Rosie were hit, but somehow the two remained unscathed. A sudden burst of fire from his left revealed American Gatling Guns, which had been set up on a ridge-line about 600 yards away. Several Spaniards fell to the machine guns, while others wisely retreated towards the jungle.

With 150 yards to the summit, the Americans sensed that it was time to charge. Almost spontaneously, every man on the hill ran forward. Looking left, Clarke saw Roosevelt, sitting on Little Texas, firing his revolver, unconcerned for his own safety.

Clarke's head began to clear as he and Rosie reached the summit. With no Spaniards to fire at, Clarke and Rosie fell to the ground and sat with their backs against the same stone wall that the Spaniards had used just moments earlier.

"Does anyone have any water?" Rosie asked. "The Cap'n here, he's a bit banged up and a drink would do him good."

Someone passed a canteen, but it held rum instead of water. Clarke spat it out and tried to laugh. "I guess this would clear my head, but then I'd end up hurting worse than I do now." Taking stock of his injuries, Clarke concluded that he most likely had a slight concussion.

"Now that we're here, what are we supposed to do?" asked a nearby trooper.

Clarke croaked, "Sit tight men. I'm sure that someone will bring water and food up to us."

A moment later, troopers came around with canteens. "We found water in the blockhouse. The Spaniards left too quickly to take it with them."

As badly as Clarke needed a drink, he waited until all of the other men drank before taking water himself. Roosevelt, seeing his injured Captain, immediately stopped what he was doing and hurried to check on his health.

"Clarke! How'd you like that little hill climb?" Roosevelt looked as happy as a child on Christmas morning, which quickly lifted Clarke's spirit.

"My troops have taken some casualties, Sir, but we should have enough men left to press on to the next hill."

"Excellent work." Roosevelt pointing, said, "San Juan Hill is over yonder. If we can take it, then we'll be able to bring up the big guns. It will be easy work then, lobbing ten-pounders into Santiago!"

After considering his options, and with no orders to follow, Roosevelt ordered Clarke to hold Kettle Hill. "I know you're a bit banged up, but it looks like you'll live. I'm going to take forty men and see if we can capture the summit."

Rising on unsteady feet, Clarke nodded. "Good luck, Colonel." Then to the men nearby, he said, "Stay ready. If you can find anything to eat, now's the time to do it. But remember, this fight ain't over yet."

They watched as Roosevelt, leading his troops from the saddle of Little Texas, headed down the slope of Kettle Hill and then began the trudge up San Juan Hill. Clarke, looking through binoculars, watched as Roosevelt and his men fought their way to the top. The Spaniards put up a good fight and the Americans took heavy casualties. But Roosevelt and the Rough Riders eventually overwhelmed the enemy, who hastily retreated down the hill towards the city of Santiago. Moments later, a cadre of Americans pulled down the Spanish flag and hung the American "stars and bars."

Back on Kettle Hill, more than one hundred Spaniards were attempting to retake the summit. The Americans, exhausted, thirsty, and starving, had little strength left for the fight.

Clarke, with a splitting headache, did what he could to rally his troops, but the Americans at the summit were low on ammunition and their fire at the Spaniards was having little effect. With the Spaniards just 100 feet

away, a sudden burst from Gatling Guns shredded the Spanish troops. All but thirty of the Spaniards were killed, and Clarke's men quickly finished off the rest.

Looking at the machine guns, Clarke spotted Lieutenant Green, the same man who'd brought him coffee just hours ago, directing the guns. Seeing Clarke, Green removed his hat and waved it at his Captain. Clarke, utterly spent, fell to the ground and fainted before he could wave back at his friend.

Clarke awoke the next day and found himself lying on a cot in the shade of a massive tarp. Taking a moment to gather his wits, he slowly rotated his head upon the pillow and saw that he was in the field hospital. Countless others were recovering in the same space. A man with a recently amputated leg slept next to Clarke. Another man on the far side of the hospital screamed, "No! Not my other leg! You bastards already took one, you can't have 'em both!"

Looking at his feet, Clarke was relieved to see that he was still intact. With some effort, he sat up and placed his feet on the ground. His head hurt, but the world wasn't spinning like it had been immediately after being nearly hit by the artillery round.

"Oh, you're up!" It was the Buffalo Soldier who'd assisted Clarke in the battle for Kettle Hill. "I brung you some water and what grub I could dig up."

Clarke nodded. "Thanks, Sergeant."

"You can just call me Rosie like everyone else does."

Clarke accepted the water and bowl of what looked like beans. Taking a bite, he was surprised to find that he had an appetite.

"It's good to see you eating, Cap'n. That means you're gonna be all right."

Finishing the beans, Clarke replied, "It's been days since I've had anything other than hardtack."

"That goes for most everyone, Cap'n. The boys have been out scroungin' for grub and mostly came up empty. I found a bag of dried beans just sittin' on a wagon, so I appropriated 'em."

Nodding, Clarke said, "Good work. But aren't you supposed to be with your troops?"

"We got separated somewhere durin' the battle. Most of my boys are up on San Juan Hill. I checked on 'em after bringin' you here and they ain't doin' much at the moment."

Clarke, finding his uniform cleaned and hanging near his cot, began to get dressed. "Clean clothes? What a luxury."

"I took the liberty to see that you didn't have to climb back into dirty duds."

"You are a godsend, Rosie." As Clarke put on his shirt, he asked, "Rosie isn't your real name, is it?"

The Buffalo Soldier laughed. "No, Sir. My full name is Jefferson Rose. But folks just call me Rosie."

"Well, Rosie, I am indebted to you."

"Just doin' my duty, Sir."

A doctor, seeing Clarke getting dressed, came over to check on his patient. "It's good to see you up and around. But you don't have to run off so quickly. I'd like to keep you here for observation for another day."

Shaking his head, Clarke replied, "Thanks for looking after me, Doc. But I've gotta get back to my troops."

"I guess there's no sense in arguing with a Rough Rider," the doctor complained. "You take it easy though. Your noggin took quite a pounding yesterday."

"Take me back to the front, Rosie."

The two men left the shade of the hospital and entered the sweltering heat of the Cuban jungle. Many unfortunate men lay on the ground, weak from malaria or the dreaded yellow fever. The sky burned a bright white from a relentless sun.

"Damn, it's hot," Clarke muttered.

"Yeah," Rosie replied. "But it gets real wet too. We're due for our afternoon..."

Before Rosie could finish the sentence, huge drops of rain began to fall. The ground, already saturated, became a muddy quagmire.

"Follow me, Cap'n. I know of a good way to get to the hills without trampin' through a swamp."

True to his word, Rosie led Clarke to Kettle Hill via a little-used animal trail that ran along a slight ridge, keeping them out of the mosquito-infested water nearby.

As they sweated and cursed their way through the underbrush, Clarke complained, "Cuba isn't exactly a pleasant place, is it Rosie?"

"I seen worse. At least it ain't cold."

"Right now, I'd enjoy a bit of a cool breeze."

"I done enough freezin' up in the Dakota territories."

"I've never been that far north. What'd you do there?"

"Oh, lots and lots of ridin' mostly. We wuz lookin' for Injuns, but other than one or two scrapes, I can't say that we had much success."

Clarke imagined that Rosie had seen more action than he let on. It was well known that the Buffalo Soldiers were among the fiercest Indian fighters in the U.S. Army.

They soon reached the river, with Kettle and San Juan Hills sitting almost peacefully in the distance. An occasional cannon fired from San Juan Hill, more than likely firing at the besieged city of Santiago.

"Let's climb up and see if we can find our troops," Clarke suggested.

Rosie led the way, first taking them up Kettle Hill, where they found Rough Riders and Regular Army troops casually on guard. A handful of soldiers were watching the activity on San Juan Hill, while others played cards or napped.

Seeing the Captain, a sergeant yelled, "Attention!"

"As you were, men," Clarke said. He could see no reason to discipline the men for being lax, knowing full well that the Rough Riders were able to jump to action at a moment's notice.

"It's Sergeant Kendall, Right?"

"Yes, Sir," the Sergeant replied, pleased that the Captain remembered his name.

"It looks like you've got everything here under control. Just make sure to keep a sharp watch out for any Spaniards who aim to do harm."

"I will, Sir."

"Good man. I'm going to let Sergeant Rose take me up to the top of that other hill." He pointed at San Juan hill. "Is there anything I need to know?"

Thinking for a moment, Kendall replied, "I think the Colonel's up there. At least he was last time I saw him. He's watching some of our boys fire

their dynamite gun.”

“That should be interesting,” Clarke replied. “Come on Rosie, let’s go see it for ourselves.”

Rosie led the way, and a few minutes later the two were stopped by a private on guard duty who pointed his weapon and shouted, “Identify yourselves!”

Smiling, Clarke replied, “Take it easy there, Private. I’m Captain Clarke from C Company.” Pointing at Rosie, he added, “And this is Sergeant Rose from the 9th.”

“Sorry sir, just following orders.”

“And doing a fine job,” Clarke said as he and Rosie continued on. Soon they were behind the stone barricade, where they found a perch to look over the wall so they could get a view of the land below. The sprawling city of Santiago sat before a large bay. The Spanish fleet sat in the water, blockaded from reaching the ocean by the U.S. Navy.

A sudden “WHOOSH” was followed by a massive “BOOM” as a pneumatic dynamite gun lobbed a shell at Santiago. It exploded near a large building and caused quite a bit of damage. “Rosie, would you believe that just one of those shells costs thirty-five dollars?”

Rosie whistled. “That’s a whole lot of money.”

“It surely is. It’s the only gun of its type. We brought it with us on our ship.”

They watched and waited, but it took nearly an hour before the next shell was fired. “I guess the army is saving money by not using too many of them shells,” Rosie muttered.

Tiring of watching, the two made their way to a group of officers, one of which was Colonel Roosevelt.

“Clarke!” Roosevelt yelled up seeing the Captain. He stopped what he was doing and immediately went to Clarke, where he grabbed his hand and said, “I can’t tell you how glad I am to see you back among the living.”

Shrugging, Clarke said, “I just got my bell rung a bit, Sir.”

“Did you say “bell rung?” That’s a good one!”

Looking at Rosie, Clarke said, “This is Sergeant Rose from the 9th. He saved my life and hasn’t left my side since.”

“Bully!” Roosevelt took Rosie’s hand in his own and said, “Thank you for looking after this man. Do not hesitate to let me know if you ever need anything from me.”

Rosie, surprised at being treated so well by the leader of the Rough Riders, was barely able to speak. “It weren’t no problem, Colonel.”

Roosevelt told Clarke about the capture of the hill and that the negotiations with Spain were going well. “I expect them to surrender any day now. In fact, some of your men are already on a troopship back near where we landed. Can’t believe that was just three days ago!”

“Did you say troopship, sir? Are we going home already?”

“Your part in this little war is almost done, Captain. We’ve got some new boys coming in to take your place, but I doubt they’ll see action.” Almost wistfully, he added, “This whole affair will be over soon.”

“What are my orders, Sir?”

“When the replacements get to Kettle Hill, take your men and go home. Get yourself some R & R, then get ahold of me. I’ve been thinking about a special job for a man of your caliber.”

With that, Roosevelt turned and walked away.

Huh, Clarke thought. Colonel Roosevelt is certainly a force to be reckoned with.

“Well, Rosie, I guess I’m done here. I’ll make my way back to Kettle Hill and wait for replacements.” Finding a piece of paper, Clarke dashed out a message and handed it to Rosie. “Take this to your commanding officer. It says that I ordered you to stay with me and that you are to be commended for your duty.”

Rosie took the letter and said, “Thank you, Sir.”

“I’ll probably end up somewhere out west after I get back to the States. I don’t know what the Colonel has in mind for me, but if you end up in Texas or Oklahoma, that’s where I’ll be. Hopefully, we’ll cross paths again someday.”

“I’d like that sir.”

The two men shook hands, then Clarke spun around and began the long walk back to Kettle Hill.

CHAPTER 1 – THE CAPTURE

Oklahoma

May 15, 1922

The gray stallion didn't care for the sound of the internal combustion engine any more than the man sitting upon the saddle. Nicker and shaking his head, the usually reliable beast threatened to pitch its rider to the dry, rocky ground.

"Easy there, Honcho. That dern machine isn't gonna cause us any harm."

The farmer piloted his massive tractor over the small rise, dragging a heavy contraption that tilled the scrubby land into soil that with luck, might yield a bit of wheat or corn.

"Probably just grow more rocks," the rider mused. He looked at the barren landscape and added, "Only a fool would plant crops in these parts."

To call the north-central region of Oklahoma "barren" was an understatement. The land, which was 99% prairie, had remained the last place in the state to be settled due to the poor soil. Formerly only inhabited by Native Americans and buffalo, the country was primarily occupied by those who earn their fortunes by sucking oil from the earth. But unlike Texas or other oil-producing areas in Oklahoma, the oil tycoons in Osage County were mostly Native Americans. In fact, scores of people of the Osage Tribe were among the wealthiest people in the United States.

There were farmers too, but there were signs that the topsoil would be blown away by the winds in the not-to-distant future. Prairie grass, with roots that ran up to six feet deep, kept the soil in place for thousands of years. Now the land was being used for other purposes and the soil was already beginning to turn to dust.

As the tractor and plow disappeared into the distance, Captain Jim Clarke, U.S. Marshal, returned to tracking the killer he was after. Clarke found the remains of a campfire early that morning, the embers still smoldering. Bobby Wright, a young negro who formerly resided in Tulsa,

had escaped his captors while being transferred from the jail in Muskogee to the Tulsa County Jail. Clarke, who at 60 years old was in his last years as a lawman, had been tasked with capturing the man.

Wright's left bootprint, with the unique missing heel, was imprinted in the dirt. Clarke thought, *there you are, Bobby. It won't be long before I have you back in jail where you belong.*

Clarke had known the young man before the massacre. Bobby ran with a rough bunch, and once or twice Clarke had used him as a source of information about people the government was after. Now Bobby was the one being hunted, and Clarke wasn't enjoying the task. *I don't blame you for killing that man, Bobby. After what happened to your ma and all those little ones, you were justified in murdering him. But you admitted to the killing and now it's my job to bring you back in.*

It was just the previous spring when a raging mob burned down the entire Greenwood district of Tulsa. The mob called the inhabitants of the neighborhood "uppity niggers," and it only took a small spark to ignite the flames that destroyed the homes and livelihoods of more than three thousand people. Bobby Wright was attempting to save his family's home, fighting off the gangs of whites who burned and looted as if it was their God-given right. But the modest house burned to the ground, and Bobby's ma and five brothers and sisters ran for their lives as Bobby was beaten to a pulp in the middle of the street. A few days later, as Bobby recovered in a make-shift hospital in the basement of a partially burned-out church, he heard that several people had been killed while hiding on the banks of the Arkansas River. Bobby limped to the yard where the bodies were awaiting burial and found that all of his brothers and sisters, of which Bobby was the eldest, had all been brutally murdered. His mother, who survived the attack and was clinging to life in a makeshift hospital, said to Bobby, "Find the men who did this - and kill 'em."

Clarke had no idea if the men Bobby had killed were the same ones that burned his home and butchered his family. But few whites in Tulsa were totally innocent, so Clarke figured that for the most part, Bobby had evened the score. Unfortunately for Bobby, the law said otherwise and there were folks in Tulsa who wouldn't be satisfied until the man swung from a rope.

Far in the distance, Clarke thought he could make out a line of scrubby bushes that grew on the banks of Bird Creek. *Eyes aren't worth a dang these days*, he thought. He reached into his saddlebag and brought out a pair of binoculars. He scanned the creek from right to left slowly, knowing that this would be the most likely place to catch an escapee. *It wasn't that long ago that I caught the Morse brothers right about here. What year was it? '12? '13? Of course, back then I was younger and didn't need binoculars to see further than a half-mile.*

He kicked Honcho in the ribs and got the animal into a fast lope to the right of where he thought Bobby would be. *If the boy has a gun, I'll play it safe and try to sneak up on him from the side instead of making a foolish frontal assault.*

Reaching the shrubbery, Clarke dismounted and tied Honcho to a small but stout cottonwood. He pulled his Colt revolver from his holster and checked to make sure all six bullets were loaded. He also grabbed his Remington rifle and headed up the creek bed as quietly as possible.

With thorny, overgrown bushes and stubby trees virtually growing over the narrow creek, making progress was a step-by-step affair. He had to stoop for nearly the entire walk, which put a strain on his aging knees and back. Sweat dripped down from his thinning white hair and ran into his eyes. He was just beginning to think, *the hell with this! I'm too old...* when he reached a small glade where the brush wasn't so thick. Bobby Wright was sound asleep under a large scrub oak, oblivious to the world. Without making a sound, Clarke crept silently towards Bobby and tapped the young man on the shoulder with his rifle.

"Wake up, son. I'm here to take you back to Tulsa."

"Huh? Wha?" Bobby slowly awoke with a yawn and saw that his escape had not succeeded. "Dang it all to hell," he muttered. "I never figured you to put so much effort into bringin' me back in."

After seeing that Wright was unarmed, Clarke shook his head slowly and grimaced. "You could've made it harder for me. After all, I'm an old man and they might've let this one slide until they could get someone younger to do the job."

"Shoot, Captain. Those white men in Tulsa would never let me be. They won't be happy until they kill the last of us Wright's."

"Your ma isn't doing so bad," the Captain replied. "Last I heard, she was expected to make a full recovery."

"Maybe," Wright replied. "But after they hang me she won't last long. The woman's got nothin' left to live for."

Clarke threw down a pair of handcuffs. "Put those on and let's get goin'. We'll make it most of the way back to Tulsa before we have to make camp."

Bobby did as he was told and the two men returned to Honcho, walking in the tall grass instead of the much more difficult creek bed.

"You only got one horse?" Wright asked. "There's no way I'm walkin' back to Tulsa to get hanged."

"Sorry I didn't arrange a luxury carriage, your highness."

With Clarke on Honcho, he led Wright by a short rope at a slow walking pace. After about two miles, they reached a dirt road where a truck and horse trailer sat. After loading Honcho in the trailer, he said to Wright, "Climb on into the passenger seat and sit still. I know you don't want to give me any trouble, but I also know you value your freedom. I'll tell you what – if you make this easy on both of us, I'll do my best to put in a good word for you at the trial."

"Like that'll do any good," Bobby complained. "I'm gonna hang and that's all there is to it."

"You'll get a fair trial. Maybe some on the jury will believe that what you did was for a worthy reason."

"The hell they will! I'm just another stupid nigger that they wish had never been born."

"Just sit still while I start this machine."

It took Clarke two tries, but he was able to crank the old Model-T truck's motor to life. At first, black smoke blasted from the exhaust, threatening to asphyxiate Honcho, but eventually, the smoke cleared and the motor purred with only the occasional sputter. The vehicle belonged to the mayor of the City of Tulsa who frequently loaned it to Clarke when he had to travel more than 30 miles for his work. "Anything I can do to help enforce the law!" the mayor said every time Clarke showed up to borrow the truck.

Clarke ground the gears on each shift as he reached a speed of nearly 20 miles per hour, which was fast considering how poor the two-track road surface was. Huge mud pits were scattered every 50 feet or so, forcing

Clarke to try to keep at least the tires on one side of the truck on dry ground.

"You want me to drive?" Bobby asked, smirking.

"I didn't know you knew how."

"I did a bit of driving for that rich white attorney before the fire."

"You mean Boggs?"

"That's right, Mr. Boggs. 'Cept I called him Mr. Big since he thought he was so important."

"I didn't know that he used a colored driver."

"Sure he did. Shoot, most of the white folks, at least them with money, can't be bothered to drive their fancy automobiles. I not only drove his car, but I washed it and did most of the maintenance myself."

Clarke was certain that he was going to get hopelessly bogged down in the mud, but fortunately, they turned onto a gravel road that was used by the oil drilling crews. It was beginning to get dark, and Clarke didn't trust his eyesight well enough to drive at night, so he pulled the truck to the side of the road. "Let's stop here. Go ahead and take a piss if you need to. I'll make us dinner and then you can sleep here in the front of the truck. I'll lay down in the back."

Bobby, who'd resigned himself to his situation, did as he was told. After an uninspiring yet filling meal of canned beans and bacon, Clarke locked bobby's cuffs to the steering wheel. "You grab some shuteye now."

Clarke climbed into the open back of the pickup and laid down on a blanket and was soon sound asleep.

A grey sky hung low and heavy as the pickup truck and trailer drove past countless oil derricks. Neither Clarke nor his prisoner had much to say. Clarke's somber mood was partially influenced by the uninspiring scenery. *Of all the places I could have ended up, why Oklahoma?*

As they turned onto the road that would take them into Tulsa, Bobby finally said, "Why are you here?"

Clarke grunted and kept looking forward as he drove. "I was just wondering about the same thing."

After a moment, Clarke said, "It's my job."

"No, I mean why are you *here*? In Tulsa? Maybe if you'd gone somewhere else I wouldn't be facing my last days."

Clarke spoke with a slow and deliberate cadence. His precise speech was a product of his sharp intellect combined with a love of literature. "Son, I'm truly sorry about your situation. I am. But things would have probably turned out the same for you whether I was here or not."

Bobby nodded. "Maybe that's true. But you ain't like other white people. You ain't mean."

Clarke laughed. "You just haven't managed to get on my bad side yet."

The truck hit a large pothole, causing Bobby to bounce from the seat and hit his head on the truck roof. "Ouch! You're gonna get me killed before the hangman gets his chance."

"I have a question, Captain," Bobby said, still sitting in the passenger seat with his hands in cuffs.

"Go ahead and ask. But be warned, you might not like the answer."

"Why you don't hate us negroes like everyone else does?"

Clarke shrugged. They were now in the heart of Tulsa, where the truck was slowed by human, animal, and machine traffic. There was a lot of hustle and bustle, and because of the oil boom, businesses were thriving. "I guess I just don't see color, Bobby. I judge people by their deeds, not the color of their skin."

Clarke reflected on his long career as a lawman. "I've ridden the trail with men of all colors. I've trusted my life to Mexicans, Indian scouts, and negroes. I even fought side-by-side with Buffalo Soldiers in Cuba. I'm still alive today because of the way those fellas fought."

"I wish there was more folks like you."

They eventually reached the jail. Clarke parked the truck and trailer on the street and led Bobby inside.

The desk sergeant was reading the *Tribune*, a local newspaper sympathetic and even sometimes supportive of Ku Klux Klan activities in the region. He looked up and seeing Bobby in handcuffs, said, "I see you got yer man, Captain."

"I did. I'd like to see that he's locked up safe and sound."

"Just leave him to me and I'll see the nigger gets what he deserves."

Clarke bristled at this. He was just beginning to reply when the Sheriff appeared from his office.

"Captain Clarke! I knew you'd get the darkie and bring him back so we can string him up."

Clarke took a deep breath. "Sounds like you've already found him guilty, Sheriff."

With a smug look on his face, the Sheriff said, "He said he did it. I've got a signed confession."

"He's still entitled to a trial."

"Just a formality, Captain." The Sheriff nodded to one of the other officers who was standing nearby. "Take this boy and lock him up."

"Just one thing, Sheriff. Mind if we talk in private for a moment?"

"Sure, Jim. Come on into my office."

They entered the Sheriff's office together. The brick-walled room was cluttered and claustrophobic, especially for Clarke, who preferred the wide-open spaces of the outdoors. "Take a seat, Jim. Can I get you something to drink? We've got the town's worst coffee, or if you prefer, some perfectly mediocre whiskey. You must be thirsty from your trip."

Clarke *was* thirsty, yet he didn't want to hang around in the jail any longer than necessary. Ignoring the offer to sit *or* drink, Clarke said, "I want you and your men to keep their paws off Bobby."

A startled look came upon the Sheriff's face. "Why do you say that? He won't be treated any differently than any other nigger who's brought here."

"That's what I'm afraid of," Clark answered. "Listen, Bobby Clarke probably killed some men. But he also lost all of his brothers and sisters last June. Massacred, every one of them. Bobby was beaten to a pulp in front of his burning home. He may be guilty. He might hang for what he did. But I plan on testifying on his behalf and I'm going to make sure he's treated like any decent human being should be."

"Human being!" The Sheriff was incredulous. "But he's nothing but a homeless nig..."

Clarke pressed close to the Sheriff and stood nose to nose with the man. "He's homeless because some white sons of bitches burned his house down. What would you do if a bunch of negroes burned down your house

and killed *your* children? Would you just forget about it and let ‘em go? Or would you make sure they got what they deserved – at your own hand.”

“Why, I’d... I’d get ‘em arrested and let the law handle it.”

“Sure you would. But in your case, the law *would* handle it, because you’re white. Bobby Wright will not receive the same justice you or any other white man would get. He’ll hang, there’s no doubt of that. But I’m going to see that he’s treated fairly by this county.”

The Sheriff turned away from Clarke and stared at the floor. “I always knew you had a soft spot for niggers, Jim. But this takes the...”

Clarke shoved the Sheriff into the wall and pressed his face into the rough bricks. “If you or your men touch one hair on Bobby’s head, I’ll come after you. Do you understand?”

The Sheriff tried to push Clarke back, but the Captain only pressed his face into the bricks with more intensity. “DO YOU UNDERSTAND?”

“Okay, okay! I understand!”

With that, the Captain turned and marched out of the jail. It was only a short drive to city hall, where he parked the truck and trailer where the mayor would find it. Knowing he should go in and thank the man for the loan, Clarke sighed and thought, *I just can’t bring myself to talk to any more people today*. Saddling Honcho, the Captain joined the traffic on the street and headed toward home.

Tulsa was a city divided. Honcho carried Clarke north on Detroit Avenue, passing banks, barbershops, restaurants, hotels, and several saloons. He reached a wide boulevard and crossed the Frisco tracks, which used to be the dividing line between the blacks on the north and the whites on the south. For more than 10 years, this side of the tracks mirrored - and in some places - rivaled the south side – except it was entirely owned and operated by negroes.

Right away, a visitor would see that something horrible had recently occurred here. The remnants of burned buildings were all that remained of what used to be the most prosperous black community in the country. They called it Black Wall Street, and in June of 1921, it was totally destroyed.

Clarke's modest two-story house was several blocks north of the Frisco tracks. It sat directly across the street from the carnage. Some days Clarke crossed the street and cleaned up what he could. He piled charred furniture, rugs, and kitchen cabinets in the yards and burned the remains to ashes. Sometimes he found photographs of negroes dressed in their Sunday finest. These he kept in a large box, stored in a spare bedroom to be given back to the owners someday.

With Honcho unsaddled, brushed, fed, and watered, Clarke entered the house to find it just as empty as it was when he left to look for Bobby. He walked from room to room, somehow hoping to find the two Johnson boys, Theodore and Franklin, playing games, reading, or even roughhousing as children are prone to do. At first, it was strange to share the home with a negro family, but after the massacre, they had nowhere to go so the Captain took them in. The previous owner of the house, Emma Larson, was friends with the boy's parents, Abe and Mary Jo Johnson. When her border (*and maybe lover*), was murdered, Emma sold the house to the Captain with the understanding that the Johnsons would live there as long as they wanted. But Abe, who was a skilled telegraph operator, made up his mind to leave Tulsa shortly after Greenwood burned. He relocated the family to Chicago and the Captain hadn't received as much as a letter since their departure.

Clarke, filthy from the long ride on the prairie, entered the bathroom and drew himself a bath. Soon he was relaxing in the steaming water with a glass of whiskey in his hand, trying not to think too hard about what would come next.

CHAPTER 2 - ASSIGNMENTS

May 20, 1922

The Bureau of Investigation officer jerked awake when his telephone rang. He picked up the receiver and doing his best to sound alert said, "Special Investigator Jacob Scott here. How may I help you?"

"Scott? This is Washington. Please hold for the Deputy Director."

Huh? Deputy Director? What the...

"Scott? This is Hoover. I have a job for you."

Scott sat up straight in his chair and ran his hands through his short blonde hair. *Hoover speaking to me! I didn't think anyone in Washington knew I existed.*

"Are you there Scott? Hello!"

Scott looked up and saw the regional director of the Chicago office, Thomas Anderson, standing in his doorway, eavesdropping on the conversation.

"Sorry sir," Scott stammered into the phone. "Bad connection."

"Right. I can hear you now. Listen up. I need you to get to a place called Osage County. It's somewhere in Oklahoma. There's been some murders there. Wealthy folks. You are just a day's train ride away, so you get to be our first boots on the ground there, so to speak."

"Sir? Did you say Oklahoma?"

"Are you hard of hearing, Scott? Oklahoma. The name of the town is, let's see, I have it right here in front of me..."

The telephone connection was crackly and distorted sounding, but Scott could imagine the Director looking through a pile of papers on his desk.

"Here it is. Pawhuska. County seat. Get there now and report back to me immediately."

"Sir," Scott said. "I'll get there as soon as possible. Is there anyone there I should report to?"

"Report to? Scott, are you daft? You report directly to me! You'll be our first man there. Take the bull by the horns and run with it, man!"

"Yes sir, but..."

"Hold on a moment," the Director ordered.

Scott had never met nor spoken to Hoover, but he'd read every article about the man he could get his hands on. Ambitious, intelligent, and unforgiving, Hoover was well known for disrupting the work of radical elements who hoped to undermine the country's young Democracy. Hoover was directly in charge of a score of special agents who were working to expose and arrest foreign agents, particularly Russians. Ever since the Bolsheviks took over, the "Red Scare" had become a frequent headline in the nation's newspapers. Sometimes Scott shook his head and wondered how serious the threat of Communism could really be. Living his entire life in Chicago, he was more inclined to worry about organized crime and the illegal transport and sales of liquor. Just one week earlier, four men were murdered inside a Duluth, Minnesota warehouse where barrels of Canadian bourbon were stored.

"Scott? You still there? I have a name for you. James Clarke. Federal Marshal. You'll find him in Tulsa."

"Does he have any information about the murders, sir?"

"How in the hell should I know? He's familiar with the people there. I'm told he's a good man to have around when things get difficult."

"Yes sir. I'll go to Tulsa and find James Clarke, then head..."

Hoover interrupted. "Tulsa? Who said anything about going to Tulsa? I said *Pashgaw* or *Pawhusk* or whatever the hell that town is called."

"It's *Pawhuska*, sir."

"Right. You're a good man, Scott. I'll have someone send the Captain there to meet you."

"Excuse me, sir. Did you say Clarke was a Captain?"

"Captain James Clarke is a U.S. Marshal. He's no spring chicken, but he'll help you. I'll give you until the end of the month to report back to me. If you need more resources at that time, we'll figure something out."

With that, the Deputy Director hung up, leaving young Jacob Scott with sweaty palms and a throbbing headache. *This will be my first time in the field. Alone. Well, not totally. I'll have this man Clarke assisting me.*

Scott had forgotten that Director Anderson was waiting in his doorway. "Sorry, sir. That call was rather... unexpected."

Anderson was reported to be a back-stabber and sycophant who had risen quickly through the ranks. Many of the senior officers had been victims of Anderson, who never missed a chance to take credit for their

successes. Now in his late 40's, Anderson's career had stalled in Chicago. He'd remained unmarried and hoped to one day be promoted to Washington, D.C., where he could rub elbows with all of the bigwigs.

"What was that about, Scott?"

"That was Deputy Director Hoover, Sir."

"I know! As soon as the call came into our switchboard, we knew it was the man himself. But why did he want to speak directly with you without speaking to me first?"

Scott had an idea. *He knows you're a suck-up, Anderson.*

"Uh, I have no idea, sir. He told me that I'm to lead an investigation into some murders in Oklahoma."

"Hmmm," Anderson mused. "I suppose he must have known how busy we are with the whiskey runners. Right now, you're our most expendable asset."

You can go ahead and think whatever you want. And thanks for the vote of confidence!

"Yes sir. He said I was to depart right away. He'd have a US Marshal from Tulsa meet me in Osage County."

A strange look came over Anderson's face. "Did you say Osage County?"

"Yes. Pawhuska, to be accurate."

Anderson shrugged. "I've heard there's a lot of oil money there. You be careful. I've heard that in some ways, it's still the wild west out there."

Anderson left the room, scratching his head, muttering, "Osage County? Why Scott?"

Scott dashed around the office making arrangements for his departure.

"Mrs. Landry," he said to the pool secretary. "I'll be away for a few weeks. Someplace in Oklahoma. I'll let you know how to reach me when I figure it out myself."

One of the other agents, a former Chicago Police Department detective, joked, "Take it easy there, college boy. Oklahoma isn't goin' anywhere."

"College boy" was a frequent joke around the office, as Jacob Scott was the first college graduate in the Chicago Bureau. He graduated first in his class with a degree in accounting from Michigan Agricultural College in his

hometown of East Lansing. When the recruiters came to visit during his last month of school, he was surprised to find that the United States Treasury was interested in him.

The recruiter explained, "You're good with numbers, which is important. But better yet, you pay attention to details. The Bureau is looking for young men like yourself – men who will work diligently to make sure our nation is safe and on the correct path."

"Wait," Jacob replied. "Did you say Bureau?"

"Sure. We are phasing out using general lawmen in the Bureau. Deputy Director Hoover only wants college-educated young men from here on out."

"*Hoover?* As in J. Edgar?"

The recruiter laughed. "That's right. You'll be working in our investigative unit. Probably not in D.C., but in one of our field offices."

Jacob graduated in June and was sent to Chicago immediately. Thinking he'd be right in the thick of things because the name "Chicago" was synonymous with "corruption," he was disappointed to find that there was little for him to do. While all of the other agents seemed busy visiting informants, doing stake-outs of suspected bootleggers, and various other field duties, he was left to answer the phone and deal with all of the minor complaints that no one else could be bothered with.

Still, he *was* the only college-educated agent in the department. Something would have to change, otherwise, why would they pay him the salary of \$192.50 every month?

Just as he was leaving to run to his tiny apartment and pack his bags, Director Anderson asked him to step into his office. The walls were lined with plaques and certificates of appreciation from the Rotarians, Kiwanians, Elks, Daughters of the American Revolution, and nearly every other civic group in the Windy City.

Anderson sat behind a massive, spotless desk. Only two things were sitting on the desk – a photo of Mrs. Anderson (she was *not* a handsome woman) and a telephone. The word in the break room was that Anderson

was obsessive about neatness. To stay on his boss's good side, Jake always kept his desk and appearance clean.

Anderson looked Jake over from bottom to top. Finding nothing out of order, he said, "Remember, Scott. You represent the Bureau and our office here in Chicago."

"Yes sir. I'll remember that."

"You are allowed \$10 per diem for food and expenses. Don't go spending the money like it's yours, because it's not. The money is the property of the United States Government."

"Yes sir. I'll be frugal with Uncle Sam's money."

"Uh, good. Get receipts for everything. You are expected to phone in daily to give your report. Do you have a sidearm?"

"No sir." This was the *official* answer since federal agents weren't allowed to carry firearms. But Scott did own a .38 revolver and he intended to take it with him to Oklahoma. After all, he was headed into what everyone knew was some very rough country.

"I suppose that the U.S. Marshal... what was his name again?"

"Clarke, Sir."

"Right. Clarke is sure to be well-armed. I'll have Mrs. Landry get ahold of him and send him on his way to where you're going."

"Pawhuska, Sir."

"Right you are. Pawhuska. Sounds like an Indian name."

"It *is* in Osage County, sir."

Anderson frowned. "See to it you're on the train this afternoon. Check-in with me when you get there."

"Yes sir. I'll be sure to do that."

Jacob couldn't help but smile as he exited the dumpy Chicago Bureau office. *Finally! I get to work in the field! This is my chance to show everyone what I can do.*

While Special Agent Jacob Scott was packing his bags, an attractive young woman was en route to Tulsa. Emma Larson was staring out the window of the express from Detroit to Chicago, her mind lost to the rhythm of the wheels on the tracks and the landscape that sped past. A

lifetime resident of Tulsa, Emma had escaped her hometown immediately after the massacre. Grief over the loss of the man she thought she'd marry drove her to seek out a different life. She was healing, slowly, from the attack by the terrible man who not only killed Jeremy but who had also thrown her to the ground and taken her by force. Now, nearly one year later, she decided it was time for her to return home. She'd spent the last several months working as a proofreader and editor for her friend, Selma Pratt. Pratt, who was a successful suspense author, urged Emma to return to Tulsa and write her own story.

"Once you get back home, the story will pour out of you," Mrs. Pratt said. "It might take a few days for you to get back into the swing of things, but if you are patient, the magic will happen."

"But will anyone want to read it?" Emma asked.

"Certainly. But you don't write for *them*, you write for *yourself*. If you can remember that, then you won't suffer from the lack of confidence that infects so many in our profession."

With a promise that she'd regularly telephone Mrs. Pratt with updates on her progress, Emma packed her bags and headed back to Oklahoma. She had no idea where she'd live once she arrived since she'd sold her family home. She would stop by the house and visit the current owner, Captain Clarke. It had been months since they'd communicated. At first, she mailed letters regularly, and Clarke replied once saying he was still trying to identify her attacker and Jeremy's murderer. One lead involved looking into the acquaintances of a large white man who was found dead on the property directly across from Emma's former home. Badly burned, it took weeks before the man's name was discovered: Frederick Lindquist. Clarke, in his letter to Emma, said that he found a man at a saloon who remembered seeing Lindquist with another man. The person's name wasn't known, but he was small and dangerous looking, which means he may have been the man they were seeking.

Writing in his letter, the Captain said:

Sorry to report that there have been no arrests in any of the June 1 killings. No one seems to think that the deaths of over 100 folks and the burning of their homes are worth the trouble.

The Captain also told Emma that KKK activity in Tulsa was increasing. The editor of the *Tulsa Tribune*, Richard Lloyd Jones, openly boasted that Tulsa would soon have its own Ku Klux Klan and that he would be the Grand Wizard.

This had all been a *lot* for Emma to absorb. More than once, she'd inadvertently stumbled upon Klan activities in her travels. In one small town in Michigan, she watched as over 2,500 members of the local Klan had marched openly through the downtown as the police watched without concern. Emma didn't know if she had the energy to work on her writing *and* fight the KKK, but somehow she suspected that the two activities were somehow going to be connected.

As the locomotive chugged through the edges of St. Louis, Missouri, Emma was very much aware that she was experiencing racial discrimination at that very moment. Her section of the train was exclusively for whites. Colored people sat directly behind the coal car, where they'd experience the worst of the black smoke that poured from the steam engine. Yet some of the waiters were negroes, and the whites were more than happy to allow colored people to cook and serve meals. *It's a crazy, mixed-up world*, she thought. *The hypocrisy has no bounds, and I'm right in the middle of it.*

CHAPTER 3 – OIL AND MONEY

May 22, 1922

Anna Winters was unable to sleep. For the last two weeks, she lay awake at night with a loaded pistol at her side. She was prepared to fire hot lead into her husband, Robert, the next time she saw him. *I'm gonna plug him and that will be the end of it. I know it was him that killed my poor little brother, Charley. He did it for my money. If I'd known that being rich would get me and my brother killed, I'd happily have lived penniless.* Reaching over to her nightstand, Anna grabbed the bottle of brandy and took a swig. She was drinking at least two full bottles daily, and since she already suffered from severe diabetes, she'd die from alcoholism if high blood sugar didn't get her first. Her family doctor was regularly injecting Anna with a treatment for her diabetes, but he told her that she also needed to give up the bottle. Anna told him, "I try, Doctor. I really do. But there's just so much weighing on my mind that it takes a good bit of the spirits to calm me down."

Anna, who was born Anna White Horse, always felt she should have been born 200 years earlier. Her parents were among the last generation of Osage People to live freely on the vast plains of the United States. Standing well over six feet tall, her father had been a fierce and handsome warrior. Anna, who was also tall, had been a beauty until age and alcohol began to take its toll.

It took the near extinction of buffalo by white men to finally get the Osage and other plains tribes to accept the fact that they'd starve if they didn't agree to live on the lands that the white men set aside. Anna's father, who had both killed men under Custer's command *and* scouted for Lt. Colonel Custer himself, eventually found he had no choice but to move his family to reservation land in Oklahoma. They received an annuity from the government, which provided enough cash for them to purchase food and lodging, but more importantly, the Osage were among the only Native Americans to own the mineral rights to the entire reservation. When oil was discovered, the Osage suddenly became enormously wealthy people.

Unable to sleep, Anna crawled out of bed and slipped on a silk night coat over her nearly 250-pound body. Exiting her bedroom, she plodded barefoot down the hallway, passing four more bedrooms (all empty) and two indoor bathrooms. Reaching the grand staircase that led to the foyer of the mansion, she found the light switch and turned on enough lights so she could see. Ignoring the gold-plated lamps, imported rugs, and fine art that decorated the space, she staggered down the stairs, turned right, and made her way into the enormous kitchen. Once there, she turned on more lights. Finally, she left the kitchen, exited the house, and entered her large back patio. Without thinking, she walked barefoot through the dewy grass and squatted. As she did her business, she never considered how she could have used one of the many indoor bathrooms to accomplish the same job.

Returning to her bedroom, Anna barely noticed the framed family photograph that sat upon a hallway table. In the photo, she stood proudly with her four sisters and five brothers. The White Horse family had once been one of the largest on the reservation. Until a few weeks ago, Anna and her twin sister, May, and their brother Charley were among the wealthiest people in Pawhuska. The twins found themselves holding their deceased sibling's oil rights, which were worth more than \$1 million annually. With Charley now dead, his share would add several hundred thousand dollars to their incomes. But even though Anna and May each lived in fine homes, employed an army of servants and gardeners, and were driven the ten blocks to the downtown of Pawhuska in matching Rolls Royce Silver Ghosts, the money meant little to them. The sisters would have been content walking or riding ponies. But the twins had each married brothers who felt it was important to "keep up appearances." Robert Winters, Anna's husband, had been appointed by the federal government to be the guardian of Anna's wealth. This was the case for all Osage, who were not deemed intelligent enough to manage their own affairs.

May Winters' husband, Ralph, was Robert's younger brother and the guardian of his wife's money. A quiet man who suffered from chronic migraines, Ralph allowed his older brother to bully him into spending May's oil money as lavishly as Robert spent Anna's. Both brothers served on the board of the Pawhuska State Bank and were very important men in their community. No one was bothered that the brothers had married into

their wealth or that they did little of value with the money except to purchase lavish gifts for themselves, or in Robert's case, his mistress.

Now back in bed, Anna still had the pistol ready as she fought to stay awake. *I know that Robert had Charley killed. He did it for the money! Poor little Charley, my youngest brother, who never hurt a soul in the world. Left dead and rotting in a gully. If Robert tries to come into this bedroom, I don't care what the law says – I'm gonna kill him.*

But the next morning, Robert Winters sat in his usual place at the dining room table as their negro servant, Tyrone, served coffee. Reading the *Pawhuska Journal*, Robert was pleased to see that there was no new reporting about Charley White Horse's murder. The tribal police were the primary law in the county. There was also a town constable who said that Charle White Horse's death was accidental, claiming, "White Horse was known to drink. He probably just fell into the ditch where he bonked his head and died."

Unfortunately, a reporter from *Tulsa Star* suspected that Charley White Horse was murdered. The reporter knew that on paper, Charley was incredibly wealthy. The resulting newspaper article had created quite a buzz in the region, as many of the more recent immigrants had no idea that the Osage were worth millions.

After breakfast, Robert was driven to the Cattlemen's Club, where he usually spent his days. Although the closest Robert ever came to cattle involved eating a nice, juicy steak, the club welcomed the Winters brothers into their membership. Seeing Ralph sitting in his usual spot in front of a large window that provided a stunning view of the distant plains, Robert said his "hellos" to the other members present – a judge, an attorney (each ignoring the other), the owner of the *Journal* - and sat down next to Ralph. A servant immediately brought coffee, which Robert laced with a splash of rum. Taking a sip, he sighed. "Now I can get my day started."

"Anna giving you trouble?" Ralph asked.

"Crazy woman won't let up about Charley. She thinks I had something to do with it."

Ralph shrugged. "I agree, she's crazy. So is May. The two of us picked a couple of hum-dingers for wives."

"It's like I told you when we were younger. Marry first for money, marry second for love."

Shaking his head, Ralph replied, "At least you have Genevieve."

Smiling, Robert said, "You wouldn't know what to do with a woman like my Gennie. Your migraines would never let up, trying to keep a purebred like her happy." Genevieve Gray was a young starlet who sang nightly at the Stagecoach Café (before prohibition it was the "Stagecoach Saloon"). Robert promised to take her to Hollywood, far away from the dusty streets of Oklahoma, the rowdy catcalls from the cowboys and oil field workers, and the indifferent stares from the Indians.

"It's hard enough to stay on May's good side. You know how she nearly killed me last week by throwing a hairbrush at my head."

"Good thing I taught you to duck at a young age."

"Hmmmph. A man shouldn't fear his wife."

Robert looked around to see that no one was eavesdropping on their conversation. Whispering, he said, "Maybe we won't be burdened by the twins much longer."

"What do you mean?"

"Now that Charley's gone, Anna and May are two of the richest gals around. There might be a way that we can make it so they don't live much longer."

Ralph cringed and stood up from his chair. Rubbing his temples, he said, "Shut up. I won't hear any more of this sort of talk."

"Oh, does it make your head hurt, Ralphie?"

Robert had long ago learned how to goad and manipulate his younger brother. Ralph didn't have an ounce of intestinal fortitude, and he always ended up doing whatever Robert decided. Even marrying May was Robert's idea. He'd convinced Ralph that they'd be millionaires if they played their cards right. Unfortunately, they hadn't known that the oil money would only trickle into their bank accounts. The government had decided that the Osage would receive quarterly income instead of getting the money in lump sums. Most Osage relied on loans from the banks or wealthy cattlemen to bridge the gaps between payments. The loans had exorbitant interest rates and were packed with added hidden fees that the Osage

simply did not understand or care about. Robert and Ralph, who had influence with the bank, had a steady line of credit. But there were rumors that Charley White Horse had borrowed heavily from Frank Macklin, one of the region's wealthiest cattlemen. Macklin might have been angling to gain control of Charley's oil rights and killing an Indian wasn't anything Macklin would fret over.

Ralph returned to his chair. "Are our wives going to get Charley's share of the oil money?" He wouldn't say it out loud, but he dreamed of a day when May was dead and he had full control of her wealth.

Robert shrugged. "I don't know. I've heard rumors..."

"Are you talking about Macklin?"

Robert nodded. "Do you recall a year or two ago when that young fella who worked breaking Macklin's ponies was found dead in his bunk?"

"Yeah. They said he was drunk and choked on his own vomit while he was asleep."

"That might be what happened. But Macklin somehow got control of that Indian's shares."

Ralph sat in silence and seethed in anger. By any standard, he lived an easy life. He didn't work and had enough money to be comfortable. But it rankled him to think that someone from outside the family would get Charley's money.

"So... do you have a plan?" he asked.

Smiling, Robert answered, "You just sit tight, little brother, and let me take care of things."

While the Winters' brothers were scheming and dreaming at the club, Anna sat with her sister on the patio, sipping tea and gin, not necessarily in that order.

May looked at her twin and said, "You ain't lookin' so good. Have you been sleeping?"

Anna grunted. "Nope," she replied. Then thinking, added, "Maybe I dozed off a bit just before sunrise."

May pointed at Anna's drink. "That stuff's gonna kill you."

"You're one to talk."

"Maybe, but I generally don't start drinkin' 'till the sun is high in the sky."

"But you don't stop until midnight."

There wasn't much May could say to that. Ever since Charley's death, she'd too had been living in an alcoholic fog.

"How'd we get into such a mess?" May asked.

Shaking her head, Anna replied, "It kinda crept up on us."

"My Ralph and your Robert sure seemed like gentlemen when we married them."

"And here we are now," Anna said, taking another drink, "No children. All of our brothers and sisters... gone. All we have are each other now."

Just then, the maid appeared and announced that Dr. Reynolds had arrived.

"Bring him back here," she commanded. Then under her breath, she added, "Like it will do me any good."

The young physician appeared, smiling. "How are my favorite twin sisters?"

"Most likely we're your *only* twin sisters."

Spotting the drink in Anna's hand, Reynolds said, "I hope that's not gin, Anna."

"If you knew what I was going through you'd drink too," she muttered.

Sighing, the doctor answered, "Roll up your sleeve and let me take a look at you. That's if it's okay considering you have company present."

May laughed. "Don't fret about me. I'll just watch while you do your magic."

Reaching into his bag, the doctor pulled out a vial of medicine and a syringe.

Watching, Anna asked, "Is that the same new medicine you've been using on me?"

"Yes, it is. It's called *insulin*. It was just used for the first time on a boy earlier this year and the results were remarkable."

Frowning, Anna replied, "It ain't helped me much."

"I suppose you've got a bit more damage to repair than that boy did, Anna. He was only a teenager. You've got to give it time. And I'm going to remind you again that your drinking will probably kill you before diabetes does."

To demonstrate her stubbornness, Anna took another swig from her glass.

"You *are* a trial, Anna. Here I am, doing my best to keep you alive. Yet you resist. It's as if you want to die."

Grunting, Anna said, "Maybe I wanna die on my own accord."

Taken aback, the doctor said, "Anna! You don't mean..."

"Charley's gone. All that's left of my family are me and May. Maybe I'm livin' in a fancy house and have more money than I need, but this ain't the life I wanted."

Doctor Reynolds had seen plenty of people much worse off than Anna Winters. Several of his clients were addicted to alcohol or opium. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that his clients were all fairly wealthy, which gave them the means to procure their medications.

"Anna," he said seriously. "You could live another 20 years if you take care of yourself. I'm not going to continue treating you if you don't meet me partway. Promise to cut back on the gin and I'll continue your treatments."

Rolling her eyes, Anna answered, "Okay, okay. I'll stop with the gin." *But that don't mean I won't take a sip of brandy or whiskey once in a while.*

As Doctor Reynolds departed from the Winter's home, he smiled inwardly. *That was a good performance if I must say so myself. Anna won't ever give up liquor, and she probably doesn't even have sugar diabetes. But she thinks she's diabetic and that my "medicine" is helping her. Hah! If she only knew...*

"Update me on the progress of the Winters twins."

"One of the sisters, Anna, won't make it to Christmas, Mr. Macklin."

Andrew Wilkes had been keeping close tabs on the Winters family for Frank Macklin, who was the owner of over 2,000 acres of the best grazing land in the county. Most of the land had been acquired through "arrangements" with the original Osage landowners. Osage Reservation

land was unique in that the Osage people had actually purchased the land from the government so that they could live in a place they could call their own and not be moved elsewhere with little or no notice. It was ironic that Macklin and others with no claim to the land ended up owning so much anyway.

“What about Reynolds?” Macklin asked.

“The doctor is on board. He’ll make sure that Anna’s death will look natural.”

Macklin was beginning to become impressed by Wilkes. It was only a short time ago that Wilkes had been recommended to him by his friend from Tulsa, Richard Lloyd Jones. As the editor of the *Tulsa Tribune*, Jones was known for writing incendiary editorials about how negroes, Mexicans, and Indians would eventually “take over” the country. Jones knew that Macklin was angling to own as much Osage property and oil holdings as possible, so Jones sent his favorite henchman, Wilkes, to Pawhuska to see if he could help speed things along.

“At first I wasn’t sure about you,” Macklin said to Wilkes. “But you did an excellent job getting rid of Charley White Horse.”

Wilkes' face lit up with a devilish grin. “It was my pleasure.” For Wilkes, killing Charley White Horse had been easy. He’d bought the man drinks at a speakeasy. After making sure that no one was watching, he offered to drive him home. Instead, he took the drunken White Horse into the country, bashed his head with a crowbar, and pushed the Osage into a deep gully. It was only by luck that White Horse was found by a cowboy who was looking for a stray cow.

Macklin continued, “I have signed documents by Charley White Horse that grant me all of the rights to his property.”

White Horse had borrowed thousands of dollars from Macklin over the last several years. Macklin charged well over 50% in annual interest, which made it impossible to repay the loan when he received his quarterly oil revenue earnings.

“I do have a question, sir. What do you plan on doing once Anne Winters is dead? Won’t her husband get her money?”

There was no reason for Macklin to let Wilkes in on the long-term scheme. “That’s all for now, Wilkes. Sit tight and I’ll let you know if I need you again. See my accountant on your way out and he’ll pay you.”

After Wilkes departed, Macklin sat and planned his next moves. *First, Anna has to die. That will be easy. But I have to see that Robert Winters has an "accident" before Anna dies. That way, her twin sister May will inherit and be the sole holder of the White Horse's wealth. Then I'll find a way to get the other Winters brother, Ralph, to borrow money from me. I'll loan him the money, but get both him and his wife to sign papers that give it all to me if they die.*

Macklin sat back in his chair and smiled from ear to ear. *It won't be long and I'll be the wealthiest man in the county.*

CHAPTER 4 – SETTING UP SHOP

May 23 and 24, 1922

The locomotive ride from Tulsa to Pawhuska was brief. Captain James Clarke remembered when it used to take three days to make the 60-mile ride on horseback. It only took about 3 hours on this trip, which barely gave a man time to think.

Two days earlier, Clarke received a cable from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's office in Chicago, asking for his assistance with a case on the Osage Reservation. This would be the first time anyone from the Bureau asked for his help. As a U.S. Marshal, he felt obliged to assist. *Besides, I ain't got much on my plate now anyways*, he thought.

Looking out the window, Clarke watched the scrubby terrain pass. The noon sun bleached everything white, making it difficult to see where the ground ended and the sky began. Only the wind blowing through the grass indicated the lay of the land here. The train slowed as it entered the town. The few people in the coach with Clarke fidgeted as they prepared to face whatever they were in Pawhuska to do.

Clarke, who'd been asked to keep his identity "confidential" by Chicago, had recently trimmed his beard and sported a dark gray business suit. He still wore his cowboy hat - in Oklahoma, anything else would be considered odd. While he normally wore a sidearm, for this assignment he carried a .38 revolver in a shoulder holster that was well-hidden by his suit jacket. A knife was hidden in his right boot and a blackjack was quickly available in a pocket in case he needed to bang someone's noggin. Lastly, he carried handcuffs in a belt pouch.

Over the years Clarke had visited the reservation many times, and there were people here that would have no trouble recognizing him even with his attempt at a disguise. He hoped that he'd be able to stay incognito long enough to help the Feds with their problems here.

The train brakes screeched and the locomotive stopped with a sudden lurch. Clarke waited until his coach was empty, picked up his duffle, and stepped down to the city sidewalk. For all of the wealth in the area, the streets were a dusty, pot-holed mess. An Oldsmobile convertible, driven by

a negro, stopped near where Clarke was waiting to cross the street. He watched as a finely-dressed woman, an Osage by appearance, emerged from a clothing store. The Oldsmobile's driver hurried to help with the woman's packages and open the rear passenger door. Then the car pulled back into traffic and performed a u-turn, where the process was repeated in reverse, except this time the woman went into a specialty hat shop.

Clarke was no stranger to this unique display of prosperity, but coming from the more blue-collar city of Tulsa, Pawhuska felt like another country. He walked three blocks and found the hotel his contact would be using. He had not been told how to reach the agent, but he figured that the Bureau had his description and the man would find *him*.

The Prairie Castle was a "castle" in name only. The hotel provided few frills and was frequented by the sort of folks who didn't have a lot of money to spend or wanted to avoid a lot of contact with others – which made it perfect for what Clarke was in town to do. A sullen clerk gave him the key to his room, and Clarke soon found himself looking out the second-floor window at the street below. The room had little in the way of creature comforts: there was a bed with a lumpy mattress, a small desk, and a wash basin. A single electric light hung from the ceiling. There was no running water in the room, but a pitcher of water was provided. Two bathrooms on each floor featured flush toilets with bathtubs and sinks.

With little to do, Clarke returned to the city sidewalk and looked for a place to eat. Spotting a diner, he went inside and found the place to be nearly empty.

"Just sit anywhere you like," the waiter said.

He found a table by the window and sat where he could watch people as they passed outside. The Osage and other Indians made up a fair amount of the population, but there were also whites and blacks doing their shopping and milling about. He saw men dressed in suits walking next to cowpunchers, chatting as if they were best of friends. But he didn't see anyone who looked like a Federal officer from Chicago, not that he had any idea what to look for.

"What can I get ya?" The waiter asked as he approached Clarke's table.

Startled from his thoughts, Clarke looked up and saw his friend Rosie. Shaking the cobwebs from his head, Clarke said, "Is that you? Jefferson Rose?"

The large negro waiter laughed. "I don't know who you think I am, but my name ain't Rose. I'm Clarence Cook."

Embarrassed, Clarke apologized. "Sorry, I thought you were my friend from Tulsa. We also fought together way back when."

"We mighta been in the army together. I served with the Buffalo Soldiers for more 'n ten years."

"You did?" Clarke asked. "My friend was also a Buffalo Soldier."

"There was a lot of us ridin' for the Army back then. To be honest, there wasn't much else for us. The white folks didn't want nothin' to do with us darkies after the war."

Clarke knew that the man was referring to the war between the states. "I agree. It wasn't easy for your people."

"And we made it a livin' hell for the injuns. I guess no matter how bad it gets for one sort of folk, there's always someone lower on the ladder to beat up on."

Clarke nodded. "Is this your restaurant?"

"Yes sir, it is. I married an Osage gal a while back and used some of her money to buy this place. It ain't much, but it's mine."

"My friend, Jefferson, had a diner like this."

"Where'd he go? Or don't you know?"

Staring at the floor, Clarke said, "After the massacre at Tulsa, he disappeared."

"Same thing happened to a lot of the colored folks in Tulsa. Who would do that to people? Burn their houses down... all them killings too."

There was a pause as the two men reflected upon what had happened just a little more than a year ago, just 60 miles away. "I'll have a steak and potatoes if you have 'em," Clarke said.

"Sure do, Mister. Won't be but a minute."

While he waited for his food, Clarke thought it was time he found Rosie. After Cuba, they went their separate ways but reunited just a few years later. As Clarke's deputy, Rosie had been instrumental in the capture of many of the felons they sought. In 1919, Rosie left the Marshal's service and opened his own diner in Tulsa, where the two friends saw each other nearly every day. *I can't put my finger on it, but I think I might need your help on this job, Rosie.*

After finishing his lunch – an excellent cut of sirloin cooked to perfection along with boiled potatoes covered in butter – Clarke purchased a newspaper and found a seat on a city bench where he could watch people without being overly obvious. *The Osage Register* featured generally unfavorable articles about the native population. The editorial of the day suggested that it was only luck that the Osage controlled the county's oil rights. It ignored the fact that the tribe had been forcibly moved from their homeland in Missouri to Indian Territory. Clarke had heard stories of how the U.S. Government failed to make promised payments to the tribe. It was also common knowledge that many whites profited by skimming supplies meant for the Indians during the early days of native resettlement. *Funny how some things never change*, Clarke thought.

After sitting for what seemed like hours, Clarke decided to return to his hotel. Upon entering his room he found a handwritten note sitting next to his washbasin: 303 – 11.

Scratching his head, Clarke eventually realized that the note meant for him to go to room 303 at 11 PM. *Must be the feds found me.*

With nothing to do, Clarke lay on his bed and took a nap. He'd been finding that the older he got, the more he needed a daily *siesta*. The flip side was that he rarely got a decent night's sleep. After waking, he took another meal at Cook's Diner, which was much busier than it had been at lunch. Clarence Cook barely had time to say "hello" as he scurried from table to table.

Back in his room, Clarke settled down with *The Count of Monte Cristo*, a book that he'd read many times before. He never tired of reading about Edmond Dantès' wrongful imprisonment and eventual escape from a French island fortress. Just as Dantès' was beginning his new secret life outside of prison, it was time for his appointment with the federal officer.

Clarke gave the door to room 303 three quick knocks. The door opened a crack, revealing a tall, blonde-haired young man. "You must be Clarke? Come in, quickly."

The room was not much different than Clarke's. "Not the best accommodations, I'm afraid," the man said, extending his hand to the U.S. Marshal. "Jacob Scott, Federal Bureau of Investigation."

Taking the younger man's hand, Clarke replied, "Jim Clarke. Glad to meet you."

Pointing to a chair, Scott said, "Take a seat, Captain. May I get you something to drink? I've got water and uh... water."

Clarke laughed. "Water's fine, Mr. Scott."

"Please, call me Jake." He poured a glass of water and handed it to Clarke. "How long have you been in town?"

"I arrived earlier today."

"Good. I just got here myself. Let's get acquainted and then I'll fill you in on our mission. First, I want to know how familiar you are with this part of Oklahoma."

Nodding, Clarke answered, "I've been up in these parts plenty of times. Mostly I come 'round to catch escaped felons and bring 'em back to jail."

"Are you well known here?"

"Some know me. Mostly just the lawmen though. You know, the tribal sheriff - his name's Henry Tallchief. He's a good man. There are a few folks in the courthouse who would probably recognize me on the street."

Agent Scott thought about this for a moment. "It's not optimum. I was hoping to keep our operation a secret as long as possible. For the time being, we're just gathering intelligence. If the people here become aware of what we're doing, they'll become guarded and we'll be less likely to have satisfactory results."

"Uh, what exactly are we here for, Jake? I mean, ain't most things that involve the Osage best left to the tribe and Sheriff Tallchief?"

"Normally, I'd agree with you. The Indians are generally allowed to manage their own affairs. But this case is different. You see, Captain, thousands of dollars in Osage royalty payments have ended up in the hands of folks who are charged with handling the money for the Indian's benefit. I'll say this bluntly: white men are stealing from the Osage."

Clarke appreciated the young investigator's plain way of speaking but felt that Scott lacked a deeper understanding of the way things worked in this part of the country. "Jake, whites have been stealing from the Indians for more than a hundred years. What makes it different now?"

"Nearly a year ago, an Osage by the name of Clara Cross was believed to be murdered. Her house was burned to the ground. We suspected arson but weren't able to prove it. It wasn't in the news much, so you might not have heard about it."

"Can't say that I did."

"Mrs. Cross was married to a man, John Cross, who was away somewhere on business. When Mrs. Cross died, John inherited nearly a quarter of a million dollars. We at the Bureau feel that John Cross colluded with bankers and others in Pawhuska to get the money. The bank involved may have transferred funds to out-of-state banks. This is where my organization gets involved. I work for the Department of Justice, and one of the main things we investigate are financial crimes."

"So, we're here to dig into the Cross's money?" Clarke asked.

"Sure, we'll do that. Unfortunately, John Cross is also dead. I was told that he was stabbed through the back of the throat two weeks after he buried the bones of his wife. We believe that there will be other murders for money in this community. My boss, Deputy Director Hoover, has given me the job of putting an end to the killing and stealing of Osage funds."

Clarke had heard about Hoover. There were stories that the man was ambitious. It did seem odd that this young Agent, who looked barely old enough to shave, would be in charge of an important operation.

"Do you mind if I'm blunt, Jake?"

Smiling, Scott nodded. "If we're going to work together, I believe it would be best to speak plainly."

"Why you?"

Scott was taken aback. "Why me? What do you mean?"

"No offense, but you're a bit wet behind the ears."

Standing, Scott walked to the window and looked down at the street. "To be honest, I don't know why I was selected for this job. I've been riding a desk in Chicago for three years. But I was at the top of my class back in Michigan. The Bureau is changing, Captain. The older lawmen are being phased out in favor of men with college degrees." Scott turned and faced Captain Clarke. "Whatever the Director's reason is for sending me here, I'm going to do my best to see that our mission is accomplished."

Clarke was impressed with Scott's candor and attitude and it took a lot of effort to resist pushing back on the idea that a college degree was more valuable than first-hand experience. But the world was changing at a ridiculous pace, and Clarke knew that the era of the lone-wolf lawman like himself was nearly over. He decided that this young agent deserved a fair chance to see what he could accomplish.

"Jake," Clarke said. "Tell me what you want me to do and I'll see that it gets done."

The two men talked for another hour, with Clarke explaining what he knew about tribal politics and who might most benefit from the deaths of wealthy Osage.

"The problem, Jake, is that a whole lot of white folks in this town are wealthy because of the Osage. Someone gets their hands on a wad of cash, and the next thing you know, they're buyin' a new automobile. The guy that sold the car makes money. The guy who fixes the car makes money. The same goes for all the other stuff rich folks think they need. Houses, jewelry, expensive vacations. People get rich all the way down the line. But I'll give you one guess who stands to make the most money?"

With a straight face, Scott answered. "Bankers."

"Right. Look at the bankers and you'll find out who's behind the killings."

The next day Agent Scott sat on a public bench where he had views of two of Pawhuska's busiest financial institutions. One of the banks, the Cattlemen's First National, didn't seem to attract a lot of business. But the other, the Pawhuska State Bank, saw a steady flow of white and Osage customers throughout the humid morning hours. Wiping sweat from his brow with a handkerchief, Scott thought, *this Oklahoma heat might be miserable, but at least I'm not sitting at a desk.*

Around 11 A.M. Scott entered the Pawhuska State Bank and asked to use the restroom. As he walked through the lobby, he saw that there were two tellers at work. One was a middle-aged man, the other a somewhat dowdy-looking female.

Back outside, Scott waited and watched. At noon, the female teller exited the building on what Scott assumed was her lunch break. The woman walked briskly to a park that rested on the bank of a small river. Once there, Scott observed her as she nibbled at a sandwich and read a book.

Perfect, Scott thought. I'll bet that she does this every day. I'll wait until her work day is over and see where she lives.

At 4 P.M. the woman left the bank and walked towards what Scott hoped would be her home. It was easy following her on the bustling city streets, but after several blocks, the sidewalk traffic thinned. Scott hung well back and hoped he wouldn't be spotted. Finally, the woman climbed the stairs and entered a large home.

Scott turned and walked around the block so he could approach the house from the opposite side. Walking at a normal pace, he passed the building and was pleased to see a sign: *Carmichael Boarding House*.

She's probably not married. That's perfect. Tomorrow I'll find a way to get close to her. It might take a little time, but if I can get her to talk, I'll bet she knows plenty about what's going on inside that bank.

While Scott was surveilling the bank, James Clarke sat at Cook's Diner, sipping coffee and waiting for his contact to arrive. Finally, after four cups of coffee and more than an hour later, Tribal Sheriff Henry Tallchief entered the building. Spotting Clarke, Tallchief smiled and sat down at the same table as the U.S. Marshal.

"Well look at you, Jim. You clean up right smart."

Clarke squirmed in his chair. "Go ahead and make fun, Henry. These durn clothes are scratchy as hell."

"Sorry I'm late," Tallchief said. "I ran into a bit of trouble with a couple of roughnecks who were fighting over a woman."

"Was she one of yours?" Clarke asked, meaning a woman from the Osage Tribe.

"Yup. A pretty young lady, the daughter of a woman from my tribe."

"Is she rich?"

"Her ma is. But those roughnecks weren't after her money if you know what I mean."

Clarke nodded. "You must have your hands full in this town." From experience, Clarke knew that the other lawmen in Pawhuska, a town constable and one deputy, rarely lifted a hand to help the Indians.

"Oh, I have plenty to do. Besides the usual drunks and rowdies, I've got to look out for white folks taking advantage of my people."

"Which is exactly why I called you this morning," Clarke said.

Just then, Clarence Cook arrived and set a cup of coffee down in front of the Sheriff. "Howdy, Henry. You want somethin' to eat?"

"How's it goin', Cookie? If it ain't too much bother, could you pack up a ham sandwich for me to take with me? After I quit jawin' with the Captain, I've gotta drive out to Macklin's."

"No problem, Sheriff. I'll have it for you right quick."

After sipping his coffee, Tallchief asked, "What do you need from me, Jim?"

"I was hopin' you could fill me in on any strange activities regarding your people."

"Whaddya mean, *strange activities*?"

"Specifically, folks being killed for their money."

"That's what I always liked about you, Jim. You cut right to the chase."

Clarke drank his coffee and waited for Tallchief to begin talking. He'd learned a long time ago that by being quiet, people he was questioning usually couldn't stand the silence and ended up spilling their guts.

"Do you know Macklin, Jim?"

"Only by reputation."

Taking a deep breath, the Sheriff said, "I've got a suspicion that Frank Macklin's behind the death of one of his cowboys. Name's Charley White Horse. Brother to a couple of wealthy sisters."

"What's Macklin's angle?"

"The sonofabitch already owns half of the county, but he wants more. I think he had White Horse killed, which means that once he's taken care of the sisters, he'll eventually get their money."

Clarke scratched his head. "Don't the sisters have husbands?"

Tallchief nodded. "Uh-huh. A couple of weasels, if you ask me. Brothers, Robert and Ralph Winters. Robert's the smart one. They don't do no work to speak of. Sit on the bank board, that's about it. Spend their days smoking cigars and sipping brandy at the Cattleman's Club. Word around town is that the brothers are leveraged up to their eyeballs. I'll wager that Macklin will end up loaning them money – at interest rates they won't be able to keep up with."

"Why don't they borrow from the bank? You said they are on the board of directors."

"I guess their credit has plum run out. Macklin's also on the board. He's also on the board of the other bank in town, the Cattleman's First National Bank."

"Isn't that a conflict of interest?"

"Sure is. But no one 'round here seems to care."

With a huge sigh, Clarke replied, "Folks are going to start caring, Henry."

"So, you're going to do something about the white folks pillaging us Injuns?" Tallchief's crossed arms and incredulous look said he'd heard it all before.

"For your own safety, I won't tell you much. But yeah, some important folks think that it's past time that something was done."

"Why now? Excuse me if I have trouble believing you."

"I don't know, Henry. But my orders originated in Washington D.C."

The two men stood and shook hands. "I'll do what I can to keep you filled in on local information, Jim."

Clarke nodded, but then after thinking for a moment said, "How about I go with you? Macklin doesn't know me. You can tell him I'm one of your deputies."

Tallchief lifted his hat and scratched his head. "You don't look like an Indian, Jim."

"If he asks, tell him my father was white. There's plenty of that sort of thing around here so it shouldn't seem too odd."

"Come on then, but I don't think this is a good idea."

"Don't forget your sandwich. Clarence is one hell of a cook. I'll drive so you can eat."

CHAPTER 5 – PULLING STRINGS

May 23, 1922

Frank Macklin, Owner of the MMM Ranch, pulled his brand-new Chevrolet pickup to a stop upon a ridge. Looking towards the southwest, his face lit with joy as he saw this wide-open land. Here and there he could see MMM branded Angus grazing upon the lush grass. He watched contentedly, enjoying the peace and quiet and being at least temporarily removed from the responsibilities of being one of the wealthiest landowners in northern Oklahoma.

Pulling a flask from the inside of his jacket, he took a swig of whiskey, let out a long sigh of contentment, and said, “It’s manifest destiny!”

Maybe one or two prairie dogs heard Macklin’s announcement, but if so they gave no indication. But the prairie dogs could be forgiven because they’d probably heard it all before. Macklin was known for espousing his views on his “God-given right” to own as much land as possible. It was his favorite topic and he never tired of explaining that he used the concept of *manifest destiny* in all of his decisions.

More than 30 years earlier, his father hired a man to live on the ranch and educate Macklin, his younger sisters, and the children of the ranch hands. Young Frank took an immediate liking to Mr. Ziegler. Even though the teacher’s thick Eastern-European accent made English lessons a bit of a farce, Ziegler was quite effective at teaching arithmetic, science, and surprisingly, American History. Macklin’s natural curiosity made learning easy and it wasn’t long before the boy had outpaced Ziegler’s teaching capacity. With the permission of Joseph Macklin, Frank’s father, Ziegler was allowed to order books that would open the boy’s eyes to the ways of the world. Initially, Frank was drawn to adventure tales such as *Treasure Island* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Around his fifteenth birthday, Ziegler handed Frank a collection of books and essays that were his first glimpses into concepts of American exceptionalism. Frank learned of the Homestead Act, which allocated western lands to over a half-million families for next to nothing. Ziegler told Frank about the acquisition of Alaska, telling the boy that it made perfect sense that America would expand to the north. Even as a

teenager, Frank understood that it wasn't merely coincidence that brought his grandfather to Oklahoma in 1842. The patriarch of the Macklin family had been one of the first to join the U.S. Government in the Indian Wars, first as a scout and later as one of the original ranchers to settle in northern Oklahoma. For decades, the Macklin's held their land by force against the persistent raids of the natives.

While not in class, Frank rode the ranch alongside his father, checking on the herd and distributing justice where necessary. The original MMM sat on the northern edge of what was to become the Osage Reservation. When surveyors arrived in late 1870 to plot the reservation, the Macklin's were forced to give up more than fifteen percent of their holdings. People from miles around claimed they could hear the voice of Joseph Macklin, Frank's father, scream "THIS WILL NOT STAND!" when he was served papers by the federal government.

Joseph Macklin continued grazing his cattle on reservation land as if nothing had changed. The tribal leaders lacked the forces necessary to hold the land, and Macklin had his hands deep inside the government authorities' pockets.

On more than one occasion, young Frank watched as his father's men forcibly evicted Indians from reservation land that was formerly the property of the MMM. When the Indians refused to leave, they were killed. Frank learned that with enough firearms and men, a person could take control of as much land as they wanted. But around the turn of the century, there was a recession in the cattle markets and Joseph Macklin found himself near bankruptcy. Marcy Macklin, Frank's mother, had never been a strong woman. She did Joseph Macklin a favor by dying during the brutal winter of 1901. After a brief period of mourning, Joseph Macklin began courting one of the wealthier Osage women who lived in Pawhuska. They soon married, but Frank's new stepmother died before she was able to move out to the ranch house. Joseph Macklin's money problems were solved, and he also inherited land that contained some of the region's earliest oil wells.

Now flush with cash, Joseph sent Frank east to college. It was there that Frank Macklin fully realized the meaning of *manifest destiny*. He studied John Quincy Adams's *Monroe Doctrine*, agreeing with Adams that European powers had no business interfering with American politics.

Surrounded by entitled wealthy young men, many of whom would eventually be leaders in business or in the government, Macklin came to believe that it was up to him - and him alone - to see that the lands of his forefathers remained in his hands. It was *his manifest destiny*.

As Macklin enjoyed this moment of contemplation, his mind wandered back to the years just before he left home for the university. His mother had not been cold in her grave before Joseph Macklin began courting the Osage woman. Frank had been fully prepared to make life a living hell for his soon-to-be stepmother, but his father made Frank promise to “try to get along.” Joseph Macklin explained that the woman was obscenely rich, and that “she might not be around for long anyway.” When the stepmother passed just weeks after the wedding, at first Frank thought that it was just good fortune shining a light on the Macklin clan. But upon hearing whispers of gossip in the village about Macklin’s “luck,” Frank began to believe that his father had murdered his wife for her money. With this realization came a new admiration for the old man, since it was now evident that he would do everything possible to secure the family fortune.

Now, 20 years later, Frank was playing a similar game. Even though the MMM was on sound financial footing, it never hurt to shore up the foundations whenever possible. With the death of Charley White Horse, Macklin now held the deeds to ten high-producing oil wells. All Frank needed to do now was wait for the good Dr. Reynolds to finish his course of “treatment” upon Anna Winters, and then he’d have her wells also. Robert Winters and his brother Ralph had borrowed more than \$60,000 during the last few years. The oil money was good, but at the rate it trickled into the Winters’ hands it did not begin to keep up with the interest Macklin charged. Macklin would see that May Winters was soon dead and then Macklin’s army of attorneys would squeeze the Winters brothers out of their inheritances.

It won’t be long now, Macklin mused. I’ll soon have enough wells and land to set me up as one of the wealthiest ranchers and oilmen in Oklahoma.

“You drive like an old woman.”

Clarke frowned as he drove up the long driveway that led to the MMM ranch house. "Now why would you say a mean thing like that? I was takin' it easy so you could eat your sandwich."

The car eased into the yard in front of the house. Off to the left, men were working in a nearby corral.

Leaving Clarke in the car, Henry went up the house, climbed up the stairs of the large, shady front porch, and knocked on the front door. When no one appeared, he turned and walked over to talk to the cowboys who were busy breaking new ponies.

Clarke watched as the tribal sheriff chatted with one of the MMM men. While the two were talking, Clarke had a chuckle as he saw another MMM man get thrown to the ground by a willful stallion - probably not for the first time that day. Clarke itched to get out of the car and have a look around, but he'd promised Henry that he'd stay in the background as much as possible. After a few minutes of conversation, Tallchief turned away from the cowboy and returned to the car.

"Turns out that Macklin isn't here right now. His hand says he's out on the range."

Looking wistfully at the crisp, blue sky, Clarke replied, "Can't say I blame him. It's a beautiful day."

"I took a chance and asked the cowboy if he'd noticed anything out of place around the time of White Horse's death. At first, the man said no, but when I pressed him, he said that there had been a man from Tulsa staying at the ranch for a few weeks around the time of Charley's death."

"What do you make of that?" Clarke asked.

"I'm not sure. I asked for his name. Have you ever heard of Andrew Wilkes?"

Clarke shook his head. "Can't say that I have."

At that moment, a cloud of dust appeared on the MMM main driveway. A tall, grey-haired man climbed out of the Chevy pickup and spotted Tallchief's car.

"Crap," Tallchief complained. "I hope he doesn't see you."

"Why it's our tribal sheriff!" Macklin announced as he approached Tallchief's vehicle. "What brings you all the way out here?"

"Please stay in the car, Jim," Tallchief said in a low voice as he exited the vehicle.

"When my grandfather was younger than I am now, the land where we stand was his favorite hunting ground," Tallchief said to Macklin.

With a devilish smile, Macklin replied, "Your grandfather had his time, Henry. He was the last of his kind to live freely out here, but as we know all too well, everything changes eventually. Look at you – driving out here in a fancy automobile, living like a white man. Hell Henry, you've got it made!"

Tallchief shook his head, knowing that Macklin was incapable of contemplating what had been lost by so many Osage and other native people.

"Come on inside," Macklin said, pointing at the majestic ranch house that sat in the shade of four majestic oak trees. "I'll pour you a drink of some of Canada's best whiskey." Leaning over to look in the police car, Macklin added, "You can bring your friend along too."

"Uh, he's a new man in my department," Tallchief improvised. Pointing at Clarke, he said, "Deputy, you stay out here. I'll be right back."

Clarke stifled a laugh but knew it would be best if he didn't make himself known to Macklin. He watched as Tallchief and Macklin disappeared into the house.

It was hot inside the car, but all Clarke could do was sit and sweat. Finally, after about fifteen long minutes, Tallchief emerged from the house and walked back to the car.

They were well down the road before Tallchief began to talk. "He said he's saddened by White Horse's passing. Said White Horse was one of his best men."

Clarke grunted. "I'm sure he's grieving. But White Horse's money will make him happy when he gets his hands on it."

"I didn't press him on the money, Jim. That's for the lawyers to figure out."

"But it does provide a motive for Charley's murder."

Nodding, Tallchief replied, "We'll have a hell of a time proving that he was murdered. The doctor said that Charley was drunk and died by hitting his head on a rock."

"But wasn't White Horse a good distance from town?"

"Five miles," Henry answered. "Found in a gully. If a cowpuncher hadn't been lookin' for a lost cow, Charley would still be lying out there."

"How'd he get there, Henry?"

“Charley White Horse was a known drunk.”

“But he was miles from town. Someone had to drive him out there. Did you ask Macklin about that man his rancher mentioned? Andrew Wilkes?”

“Yeah. Said Wilkes was sent out from Tulsa by a friend to see about getting a job in the ranch office. Macklin tried him out for a few weeks but decided he didn’t need ‘em.”

“Tulsa? Hmmm. Wonder who this ‘friend’ might be. And I’m beginning to wonder about this man Wilkes. The timing of his arrival here isn’t coincidental. I’ll bet that if we find Wilkes we’ll get some answers.”

Now with Henry behind the wheel, they drove away from the ranch. Clarke realized that they weren’t heading back towards Pawhuska. “Where you takin’ me, Henry?”

“Thought you should see where we found Charley. It’s not too far as the crow flies.”

Henry Tallchief navigated the car over a bumpy two-track that served as a main road in this part of Oklahoma. He expertly maneuvered the vehicle around the worst ruts and after about 30 minutes, came to a stop among a stand of cottonwoods.

“That was some fine drivin’ there, Henry. I was gettin’ a little queasy there just before we stopped. Thanks for that.”

Smiling, Tallchief led Clarke down a steep slope that ended in a jumble of boulders. “This is where the cowboy found Charley White Horse.”

Clarke looked around carefully, paying special attention to the rocks. “Has it rained since Charley was found?”

Thinking for a moment, Henry answered, “Nope. It’s been unusually dry for the last two weeks.” Then Henry led Clarke a few yards away and pointed at several hoofprints in the dirt. “This is where that fella rode up and spotted Charley’s remains.”

Clarke walked back up the slope and looked down at the boulders. He could see where the grass on the slope had been bent, but several people besides Charley White Horse had been up and down this hill. Shouting down at Henry, Clarke asked, “Did you see where Charley landed?”

Henry shook his head. “His body had been removed before I found out about his death.”

Clarke frowned. He carefully made his way back down to the rocks and said, “As the tribal authority in these parts, you have jurisdiction when one

of your people is involved.”

“Tell me somethin’ I don’t know. That good-for-nuthin’ constable in town’s never done me any favors. He had Charley brought to the funeral home before I knew somethin’ happened.”

Pointing at the boulders, Clarke said, “I expected there to be some blood on these rocks. You know, a guy falls down a steep slope and bangs his head...”

Nodding, Henry said, “I get your drift.”

“We might as well head into town. There’s nothing here to tell us what happened. Other than it’s a hell of a strange place for a fella to wander off to.”

That evening, Clarke met and briefed Agent Scott on what he’d learned that day.

“There’s not a lot to say, except that I don’t believe that Charley White Horse wandered into that ravine all by himself.”

“You think he was taken there to be killed?” Scott asked.

“I do. I think a fella from Tulsa named Andrew Wilkes is involved. Ranchhand out at the MMM said the guy was around for a couple of weeks but after White Horse died, Wilkes disappeared. I might have to go back to Tulsa to see if I can find him.”

Scott was standing and staring out the window, lost in thought. “I’m trying to get information from the bank that Macklin and the Winters brothers use. Today I found a bank teller that I’m going to try to recruit to our cause. It’s gonna take me a bit of time to get her to talk to me, but I’ll bet she can get us information that will clarify their financial positions.”

Clarke nodded. “Is she married or single?”

Turning, Scott shrugged. “Single, I guess. I followed her to a boarding house. She’s a bit... frumpy.”

“Oh, you’re gonna use the romance angle then.”

“Hell no!” Scott stomped across the room and poured himself a glass of water. “I’m going to tell her that I need her to act as a confidential informant for the United States Government.”

“That might work,” Clarke said. “Providing she’s not too loyal to the bank.”

“Well, she did seem to be the lonely, quiet type. Hopefully, she’ll play along with me.”

“Heck, this might be the most important thing that ever happened to her in her life.”

CHAPTER 6 – GHOSTS AND KILLERS

May 24, 1922

Emma spent her first day back in Tulsa feeling like her head would explode. Eleven months ago, she endured an attack by one of the men responsible for the burning of the neighborhood she called home: Greenwood.

As a person who'd never been one to suffer from nerves or show excessive displays of emotion, Emma was surprised to find that she hadn't yet begun to heal. *I really thought I was over this*, she mused as she walked the sidewalk towards what had been her home on Detroit Avenue. The west side of the street was full of life, for the homes there had all belonged to whites. But on the opposite side, all that remained were the charred remains of modest houses where Tulsa's negro families lived. With each step, Emma felt that she was becoming heavier as her body filled with the grief of the loss of so much by so many. *Maybe when I put this all on paper, I'll begin to put this behind me.*

Emma had not yet started writing about what happened on that day nearly a year earlier, but she had a good idea of how she'd go about telling her story. There were plenty of folks in Tulsa who were there that day, and all she had to do was get them to open up to her. Her own experiences of the days before and after the massacre would frame the story. She'd write about the good days in late May when she'd meet Jeremy Stick, the young man who would take a room in her house and become her lover. As a woman who'd resigned herself to a long life of being a spinster, she'd been surprised at the pure joy she received when she was in the arms of Jeremy. *I thought I'd never know true love, but Jeremy was the man who showed me that I was worthy of happiness.*

As she approached her former home, she reflected upon her life growing up there as an only child. Her early years had been unexceptional. Never one to be picked first to dance at a school social, Emma melted into the background and found herself taking care of her aging father. After his passing, she remained alone, spending her days reading in her quiet house. Money was tight, for her father had only left her a small inheritance. So

over the years, she occasionally rented out a spare bedroom to bring in extra cash.

When you showed up, Jeremy, I was sure you'd be like the other men. You'd look at me with lustful eyes and I'd look away, ashamed even though I had done nothing to deserve it. But you did the opposite, Jeremy. You were kind. Respectful. Patient. You were the man that I thought I'd marry.

Looking at the house, Emma could see that it sat empty. She'd sold the house to Captain James Clarke immediately after the Greenwood Massacre, thinking that she'd never return. But here she was now, wondering if she'd have the nerve to knock on the door. *Nah, there's no one here. I'll just stay at the Ambassador Hotel for a while and write my book there. That way I'll be closer to downtown and the people I want to interview.*

Back at the hotel, Emma sat at her Underwood Number 5 typewriter and entered the first words of her new book:

The storm approached from the west, as they usually do in these parts. But another storm had already begun in the heart of the city, we just didn't know it yet. A young white woman would accuse a negro of assaulting her, while at the same time, a drifter would take refuge from the rain and lightning on my porch. Jeremy Stick, a man of rare integrity, would enter my life like an Oklahoma twister and wake up feelings I thought were long forgotten.

Emma wrote about her initial shyness with Jeremy, and she fondly recalled Jeremy's willingness to help around the house and share in her friendship with a negro family, Abraham and Mary Jo Johnson. She wrote about the city and how wonderful it was that the negroes had prospered along with the whites.

On Monday mornings, well before dawn, a parade of negro women marched south, crossed the Frisco Tracks, and entered the white side of the city. Once there, some would raise white children as their own while their employers spent their days drinking tea at garden parties. Others would

cook or clean, working hard to bring much-needed money north to Greenwood. The negro women would live among the whites until the following Saturday when they'd march north to Greenwood, where their men and children waited. Saturday nights were a raucous time in the district. Men and women, eager to forget their troubles for a few hours, drank bathtub gin made in the backrooms of speakeasies. On Sunday morning, the women would then rise from their beds and head to church, leaving their husbands alone to sleep off their hangovers from the night before.

The men worked too. Abe Johnson, the husband of my dear friend Mary Jo, was a skilled telegraph operator for the railroad. He wasn't paid the same as a white man who did the same job, but the money Abe earned was more than he'd make nearly anywhere else in the west. Other negro men worked as gardeners, trimming the flowers and cutting the lawns of the wealthy residents of Tulsa. But in Greenwood, the most enterprising negroes owned their own barbershops, law practices, doctor's offices, restaurants, and movie theaters. It's been said that Greenwood was the most prosperous negro community in America. Black Wall Street. But for some whites, this wasn't a situation that could last forever. They said that the negroes were "uppity" and that they were taking jobs away from the whites. So the whites found a reason to destroy it all.

The words poured from Emma's heart and appeared on the page as if by magic. After several hours of writing, she pushed herself away from the Underwood and stood. *I think I'll go out and stretch my legs a bit. Maybe see if I can find someone to interview who can tell me what they saw on the white side of the Frisco Tracks.*

A small soda fountain sat just around the corner from the hotel. Emma found a corner table and sipped Coca-Cola. The shop wasn't busy, but a young couple sat at a table next to hers.

"Excuse me," Emma said to the man and woman. "I'm writing a book about what happened here last June. Were you in Tulsa during that time?"

The man scowled. "Why would anyone care about that?"

Agreeing, the woman nodded. "It's best if we just put it all behind us."

Shocked, Emma replied, "You are just going to act as if nothing happened?"

The man shrugged. "Like I said, who cares?"

"But over a hundred people were killed. Their houses were burned. They burned down the school!"

"Come on, Claire." The man stood and took his date's hand. "Let's go somewhere where the damn do-gooders won't bother us."

Emma was stunned. She didn't expect people to act like this. But it made sense. Despite overwhelming evidence, there had not been a single arrest of a white person who participated in the massacre.

For the next hour, Emma approached others and received the same result. She was just about ready to give up when she saw the *Tulsa Tribune* building. Maybe she could talk to the publisher, Richard Lloyd Jones. It was said that he had a hand in stirring up the trouble that led to the burning of Greenwood.

She entered the lobby of the newspaper and was greeted by a receptionist. "May I help you?"

"Yes, please. My name is Emma Larson. I'm a writer." She decided it would be best to keep her reason for wanting to see the editor to herself for the time being. "Is Mr. Jones available to speak with me for a moment?"

The receptionist picked up a telephone and called the office of her employer. Nodding, she said, "Yes sir. I'll bring her right up."

"Mr. Jones said he has a few minutes. Please follow me."

Emma was led past a busy newsroom. Typewriters clicked and clacked, telephones rang, and everyone seemed to talk at full volume. It was a scene of controlled chaos, and Emma found it intoxicating. *I could work in a place like this! Oh, what fun to be part of a team that reports the news.*

They left the hustle and bustle of the newsroom and climbed an impressive staircase that led to the offices of the editors. A few of the most sensational front pages of the paper were framed and displayed. There was one that announced the U.S. entrance into the war in Europe. Another featured the sinking of the Titanic. There were no papers depicting the tragedy that happened just a few blocks away in Greenwood.

They entered a well-lit corner office where a portly older gentleman sat behind a massive oak desk. He was on the telephone, finishing a conversation. Spotting the women, he held up one finger, indicating that he'd be done in just a moment. "Yes, Macklin, you heard me correctly,"

Jones said. "You play your cards right and you'll make out better than you ever thought possible." He hung up the telephone and said to the receptionist, "Thanks for bringing Mrs. Larson up, Marcie. You may leave now."

"Actually," Emma said, "It's *Miss* Larson."

"Oh, sorry about that. Marcie said you are a writer? I'm always looking for good people to join our staff. It turns out that you showed up at exactly the right time because I need a woman to write home and garden features."

Emma blinked. This was not what she had in mind when she made the snap decision to visit the *Tribune*. "Thank you for the offer, Mr. Jones, but that's not why I'm here."

"The job pays \$65 per week. You could start tomorrow."

Emma suddenly found herself to be tempted. "But you haven't seen my work."

"Pshaw. Anyone with a high school education can write a home and garden column. The problem is that I can't find anyone lately who wants the job! All of the young folks are leaving for greener grass, if you know what I mean."

"I do sir. But may I ask, what happened to the previous home and garden writer?"

"Got herself, uh, with child. Had to leave suddenly."

Nodding, Emma said, "I understand."

"So you'll take the job?"

Emma paused. She didn't want to lose a golden opportunity, yet she also wanted to focus on her memoir of the massacre. "May I think about it for a few days?"

Jones's friendly demeanor suddenly became chilly. He wasn't a man who waited for anyone. "You have until Monday unless another capable person shows up before then. Now, what is it you came up here for?"

"I'm researching a book about what happened here last June."

Jones's eyes suddenly seethed with anger. "No one wants to read about that. Nothing happened."

"Nothing happened?" Emma replied with a touch of venom in her voice. "Nothing happened? Why, Mr. Jones, you only need to walk across the Frisco Tracks to see hundreds of homes that were burned to the ground. I

was a victim of a..." Emma paused, unable to say the words. "I was attacked. Some of my friends lost loved ones and were forced to leave Tulsa forever. And you say that nothing happened?"

Jones stood and stared at Emma. "You may show yourself out. And forget about writing the home and garden column."

Without a word, Emma turned and left Jones's office. Emma thought of several things she might have said to Jones but didn't get the chance. *It's well-known that his paper has always favored articles that disparage negroes. Some say that Jones himself aspires to the top seat of the Ku Klux Klan when they come to this city. He doesn't know it yet, but I'm going to expose Jones and his paper if it's the last thing I do.*

On the sidewalk directly across from the *Tulsa Tribune* building, a man with a slight build watched as Emma Larson emerged into the hustle and bustle of the busy street. The man was the sort of fellow that people barely noticed. He had few friends, and those that did encounter him quickly forgot his face shortly upon his departure. He found employment doing the jobs that no one else wanted. During his 38 years on the planet, he'd made charcoal, hauled trash, dug latrines, and killed horses at the rendering factory. Those were the honest jobs he'd had. After spending a wet, desperate year fighting the Hun in the trenches of France, he returned to Oklahoma where he began to practice the skills he'd been taught in the U.S. Army. Even though he stood barely five feet tall and weighed 120 pounds dripping wet, his years performing hard work had created a hidden strength in his arms and hands. With a pair of brass knuckles, he could knock even the most belligerent brute to the ground with just one sucker punch. He also carried a concealed blade that had been used to slice more than a few throats, both in Europe and on American soil.

Looking at Emma, the smile on Andrew Wilkes's face reflected a mixture of pure evil and joyful anticipation. *I didn't think I'd be seeing you again so soon, pretty lady. Maybe we need to rekindle our relationship. I'll bet you've been missing me all of these lonely months.*

Wilkes brought back the memories of that glorious day in early June when he set about killing negroes and setting fire to countless homes and

businesses. A bonus at the end of the day was his chance encounter with a pretty white woman and the killing of her beau, Jeremy Stick. Wilkes and Stick were brought together by a mutual friend to ignite a bomb in the Greenwood District, but the attack on a white shopgirl by a shoe-shine boy interrupted their plans as the entire white population set about looting, killing, and destroying all negro-owned property. It wasn't until weeks after the massacre that Wilkes learned from one of his employers, Andrew Lloyd Jones, the editor of the *Tulsa Tribune*, that Jeremy Stick had been working undercover for the government. Wilkes laid low for a bit until he'd found out that the one witness to Stick's murder, Emma Larson, had left the region for somewhere out east. It didn't take long for Wilkes to find new employers who required his considerable talents.

On this day, Wilkes was back in Tulsa to meet with Jones to discuss the progress of the KKK's arrival in the city. Jones had set himself up to be the man in charge of the local Klan, which would bring Jones plenty of wealth and prestige. The wealth would come from the dues-paying members, who would be required to purchase all Klan clothing, books, and other items directly from Jones. The prestige would come from keeping Tulsa white now that the negroes had been run off.

Wilkes knew that there would soon be plenty of money flowing into the Tulsa Klan, and he expected to rake in his fair share. As it stood, he was currently receiving \$200 per month to do whatever Jones asked. So far all he'd done is run a few of the remaining negroes out of the county. With time on his hands, Wilkes found opportunities in other places, and Pawhuska was proving to be a gold mine. All he had to do was kill an Osage or two and he'd be rolling in the dough. Then he could decide if he wanted to stick around and work with the Klan or maybe move on to somewhere like San Francisco, where it was said that there was plenty of work available for a man who wasn't afraid to get his hands dirty.

He watched as Emma disappeared into the lobby of the Ambassador Motel. *I'll see to you soon enough, Emma Larson. You and I will resume our relationship, and this time you'll thank me for it.* His devious smile was witnessed by a nearby child, who broke out bawling. Ignoring this, Wilkes crossed the street and entered the *Tribune* building.

CHAPTER 7 – FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

May 25, 1922

No one will ever be able to replace what was lost on that hot night in June. Young couples used to sit together at the soda shop and share a cool vanilla ice cream soda. Others would get out of work and sit in the cool darkness of the Williams Theater where they could watch newsreels for hours for only a nickel. Weekends were full of laughter and music as gardeners, drivers, housekeepers, and other working folks would blow off steam at a speakeasy. Yet Greenwood was safe. It was the sort of place where mamas could let their children run off to the park to play because they knew that people watched out for one another.

But nothing lasts forever, and one powerful man was doing everything he could to make sure that Greenwood never rose above the rest of Tulsa. The negroes had created a community that rivaled the “white” side of the Frisco Tracks, and Richard Lloyd Jones, the editor of the Tulsa Tribune, was afraid that the “uppity niggers” would take over the entire city. Week after week, Jones’s vitriolic prose fomented hate against the God-fearing, hard-working folks of Greenwood. He used his newspaper as a tool to rile up the working men of Tulsa. “The niggers will take your jobs! The darkies are not to be trusted!” The whites, most of whom were simple working-class folks who were no better off than their negro neighbors, accepted Jones’s editorials as truth, for why would a wealthy newspaperman lie to them?

During the months after Greenwood was burned, there was talk about the Ku Klux Klan coming to Tulsa. In fact, some say that the Klan was behind the massacre. But the truth is that the Klan was twiddling their collective thumbs elsewhere and only one person was responsible for igniting the flames that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of good people: his name is Richard Lloyd Jones.

Emma pushed herself away from the typewriter, her hands shaking. I might be going too far, she thought. Jones will try to keep this from being published, and if my story is printed, he’ll do everything he can to ruin me.

Needing a break, Emma left her room and went for a walk. It was a day of stifling humidity, but she barely felt the heat. She wandered aimlessly as she thought about what she would say in her book. She needed to find some folks who would share their stories, and so far she'd struck out. There were still people around who'd had homes in Greenwood, all she had to do was find them.

She was lost in thought when she heard someone call her name. "Emma? Is that you?"

Looking up, Emma saw the tall, lean form of Captain James Clarke walking toward her. "What are you doing back here?" he asked.

Emma realized that without thinking, she'd ended up walking right back to her former home on Detroit Avenue. "Captain Clarke! What a surprise!"

They stood awkwardly for a moment, then Clarke suddenly said, "I'm just returning home for a day or two to see if I can find some answers on a case I'm involved with. But enough of that, come on to the house. I'll get us each a cold drink."

They entered the house where Clarke retrieved a pitcher of lemonade from the icebox. "I just got back to town this morning but I picked up a few things first. Are you hungry? I could make us each a roast beef sandwich."

Smiling, Emma said, "That would be wonderful. But let me help."

Even though Emma had been gone from Tulsa and this house for nearly a year, the kitchen still felt as if it were her own. She soon made a sandwich for each of them and they sat at the kitchen table and ate. Emma tried hard not to look beyond the kitchen to see how the Captain might have changed the home she'd lived in for over 30 years.

"Tell me about your time in Michigan."

Emma let out a large sigh. "I met a kind woman on the train who offered me a job working for her in Detroit. She's a professional author, and I was excited about the opportunity. But I really had my heart set on going to the town where Jeremy grew up first. I had to know what made him into the man he ended up being."

Clarke nodded. "I only knew Jeremy briefly, but I'll tell you that I've never forgotten about what he did in his time here in Tulsa."

"I think a lot of people are alive today because of Jeremy," Emma said. "He tried to stop the killing that day, but he was only one man against hundreds."

“Did you find out anything about him in Michigan?”

“It took me a while, but I eventually had a long talk with his sister. Jeremy found himself as the odd-man-out more than once in his life. Back when he was a boy, he witnessed a lynching. According to his sister, he went from being a happy-go-lucky kid to being a serious young man after he saw the hanging. He went away and joined the army, and the family lost track of him for years. It wasn’t until I showed up that they found out that he’d died.”

“Some men are hardened by death, Emma. I think in Jeremy’s case, he thought that there had to be a way to resolve conflict without resorting to killing.”

With tears streaking her cheeks, Emma continued. “After learning all I could about Jeremy, I went to Detroit and worked as a proofreader and editor. But I always knew that I’d want to write about what happened here, so I made plans to return.”

Emma told him about her brief time back in Tulsa. She explained that so far she hadn’t found anyone who’d been here that night who would talk to her.

“I’m not surprised. Folks are trying to forget about what happened. They think that if they don’t talk about it, it will disappear and they’ll never pay for their crimes.”

Emma nodded in understanding. “I believe you are correct. As far as I know, there hasn’t been a single arrest.”

Clarke took a bite of his sandwich and nodded. “That’s right. The sheriff isn’t gonna do anything. The prosecutor runs with the same crowd that that newspaperman, Jones, runs with. Nothing’s going to be done. And that’s a damn shame.”

They chatted and ate, and eventually, Clarke said, “You know, there *is* a fella you could talk to. Name’s Bobby Wright. He and his ma are the last of his family. They lost everything that day.”

Perking up, Emma asked, “Do you know where I might find him?”

“That should be easy enough. I dropped him off at the jail just a few days ago.”

That afternoon the Captain accompanied Emma to the jail to visit Bobby Wright. "Bobby's a decent fellow, but I fear that he won't get a fair shake in this town."

As they entered the building, Emma asked, "Is there anything you can do for him?"

"I put the fear of God in the Sheriff when I left Bobby here. But I have zero influence over the judge. Unless Bobby pleads guilty, he'll get a trial by a jury of 12 white men, and they'll want to string him up before they hear the first word of testimony."

After checking in with the desk sergeant, Emma and Clarke were shown to a tiny, windowless interview room. Three chairs sat around a small table. "We might as well have a seat," Clarke suggested.

They didn't wait long. Bobby Wright, with chains around his ankles and wrists, was led into the room by a Tulsa deputy sheriff.

"Does he really need to be shackled like this?" Clarke asked the deputy.

"The nigger ran last time he got a chance. Hell, you're the one who brought him back to us. You wanna go after him again?"

"Jesus," Clarke muttered. "This isn't how you treat a man. Uncuff him. He's my responsibility while he's with me and Miss Larson."

The deputy let out a huge sigh. "Okay. He's your problem now."

Bobby, unshackled, sat opposite Clarke and Emma. "Thanks, Captain."

"It was the least I could do for you," Clarke replied. Pointing at Emma, he added, "This is Emma Larson. She's a friend of mine who also happens to be an author. She's writing a book about what happened here last June and we thought you might have some things to tell her about your experiences that day."

Bobby looked at his feet and said softly, "There's not much to tell. Crackers burned my house. I found 'em a few days later and shot 'em."

Emma reached across the table and placed her hands upon Bobby's. "I was here that day, Bobby. It was the worst day of my life. But all I know is what happened to me, and I'll be writing about that. I think the world needs to hear about what happened to other people too."

Looking up, Bobby said angrily, "Do you really think anyone will care about me?"

Emma looked him in the eyes and said, "I care. Let me tell your story."

Bobby pushed back from the table and stood. Emma looked at Clarke with a look of fear on her face.

Turning with his back to his visitors, Bobby whispered, "I knew that somethin' was gonna happen. I got home from work – I was a meat cutter at the market - and made all my little brothers and sisters stay in the house because usually they are all outside playin' in the afternoons. We waited, and my Mama..." Bobby choked back his emotions. "Mama made us supper. Pork chops. I went outside after we ate and noticed that it was quiet. Too quiet."

"Did you stay at the house all night?" Emma asked.

"I told Mama that I needed to know what was goin' on. She tried to stop me, but I told her that if the whites were comin' after us, we needed to be ready. So I ran off towards the Frisco Tracks."

"What happened when you got there?"

"At first, not much. There was a bunch of Greenwood folks hunkered down behind some wagons. They had their huntin' rifles, but so far no one was shootin'. I thought maybe nothin' would happen and the whole thing would blow over, but just as I was fixin' to leave, a car full of crackers drove right towards where I was, and them men, they just started blastin' away. I saw three folks get hit, and if I'd had a gun, I'd have fought back. But I didn't, so I ran. Before I could get back home, another car drove up the street and the men were throwing bottles filled with kerosene at anything that would burn. I ducked into an alley, but I saw them torch at least five cars. I decided right then that I needed to get home and get my family out of that house."

Emma was shaking as she heard Bobby's story. Memories from her own experience that night were still close to the surface, and listening to Bobby was painful.

"Are you all right, Emma?" Clarke asked. "We can finish this another time."

Emma took a huge breath. "No, please go on, Bobby."

Bobby turned and returned to his chair. "I ran towards home, but by then half of Greenwood was burning. I was just getting' my mama and my brothers and sisters out onto the street when a group of men ran up and jumped me. I shouted for my mama to get everyone up to Standpipe Hill, thinkin' that the fire wouldn't reach anyone there."

Emma and Clarke listened intently as Bobby told them about how at least four men kicked and beat him. “I saw those men, and while I was lying on the ground, I made sure to get a good look at their faces. They was smilin’, but they didn’t really look happy. Know what I mean? I made a promise to myself that if I survived, I was gonna find ‘em and kill ‘em.”

“Did your mother and brothers and sisters make it to someplace safe?”

Bobby nodded but struggled with the next words. “My younger brother got everyone to the hill, but just before that my mama was jumped and hit a bunch of times...”

“I’m so sorry, Bobby,” Emma said. “Is she...?”

“Mama will be all right. Takes more than a few whacks to bring that woman down.”

“I’m glad to hear that.”

Clarke interrupted, “Would you like to take a break?”

“No sir, but I could use some water.”

Clarke left the room and returned a minute later with a pitcher of cool water and three glasses.

Bobby took a sip and continued his story. “I was beat up real bad, but I made it to a church that was helpin’ folks who was hurt. After I started feelin’ better, I left. I spent two days staggerin’ ‘round, lookin’ for my family. I didn’t find ‘em, and it got real hard because the National Guard was everywhere. I dodged ‘em because I figured they’d just take me somewhere and put a bullet in my head. I was restin’ in a back alley when I found a guy I knew – he bled out. But he had a pistol, and I took it. I stayed in the dark all night, and the next day I snuck over to the fairgrounds where I heard that the police were holdin’ Greenwood people. When I got there, I saw that they’d made folks spend the night outside. I was burnin’ with rage. Couldn’t see straight, if you know what I mean. But then I saw someone layin’ on the ground. It was my little sister, Jeannie. Next to her was another of my sisters and two of my brothers. I asked someone how this could happen to my family, who never hurt nobody? The answer I got? After they all left Standpipe Hill, they hid out by the river with a bunch of other folks and they was all shot. I went to look for my mama, and she was being looked after by a nurse. She knew what happened to my brothers and sisters and told me that even though the Bible doesn’t condone killin’, there’s a passage in the good book that talks about “taking an eye for an

eye.” So I kissed her goodbye and lit out of there. But before I left the fairgrounds, I spotted one of them crackers that jumped me and I just raised my gun and shot him right then and there. I killed two more – it didn’t matter that they weren’t the men who beat me - and hightailed it out of there as quick as my feet would carry me.”

Emma nodded, fully understanding Bobby’s need for revenge. “How far did you make it?”

“Muskogee. Hid out for months in a deserted shack. Mostly hunted for my food, but I found some spuds in a root cellar that kept me goin’. I figured the dust had settled on what I done, so I went to town to see ‘bout gettin’ some supplies, but I didn’t count on that sheriff in Tulsa arrestin’ every nigger he saw.”

“Bobby broke out of the Muskogee jail,” Clarke told Emma. “That’s how I got involved. They knew I was good at tracking escaped prisoners, so I went up that way and found Bobby taking a nap near a creek.”

At this point, Emma didn’t know what to say. “Thank you for telling your story, Bobby. I’ll try to tell it right in my book.”

Clarke and Emma stood. Clarke asked Bobby, “Would you like me to bring you anything on my next visit?”

“Speakin’ of books, I’d love a book or two. The days drag without nothin’ to read.”

“Anything in particular you’re interested in?”

“I was readin’ *Riders of the Purple Sage* before I highlight it out of town.”

“Consider it done. In fact, I’ll see that the library runs some books over here on a regular basis. Not just for you, but for the other fellas too.”

Outside the jail, Emma thanked Captain Clarke for getting her access to Bobby. “His story will be an important part of my book.”

“Glad that I could help. What are your next plans?”

“I’ll head back to my room and write everything down while it’s still fresh in my head.”

“Uh, I hope you don’t think this is forward, but if you’d like to meet me for dinner...”

Emma smiled. Having no friends left in the city, it would be fun to have an evening out on the town. "I would love that!"

They made plans to meet at Bishop's, a popular restaurant downtown.

Emma walked away and began thinking about how she'd tell Bobby's story. She didn't want to be overly sympathetic, considering that he'd killed at least three men. But Bobby seemed like such a nice person. He took care of his family. He was educated. If Greenwood hadn't been burned to the ground, Bobby Wright might have made something of himself.

Rounding a corner, Emma suddenly stopped and gasped for breath. Standing just a few yards away was the man she thought she'd never see again – the weasel who'd attacked her and murdered Jeremy Stick. The man didn't notice Emma. He took a drag from a cigarette, threw the butt in the gutter, and turned and headed into a building.

Standing there, Emma realized that she was standing right in front of the *Tulsa Tribune*.

James Clarke saw Emma enter the busy restaurant. She quickly walked up to his table and without saying "Hello!" blurted, "It was him, James! It was the man who murdered Jeremy and, and..."

Clarke stood and pulled out a chair for Emma. "I believe you, Emma. You said he went into the newspaper building?"

"Yes." She relaxed a bit and sat directly across from her friend.

"You didn't try to follow him?"

Emma looked down at the table and whispered, "I froze."

"I get it, Emma, I do. After what you've been through..."

Clarke sat back and scratched his head, thinking. "It doesn't surprise me that your man is somehow in cahoots with Jones. That newspaper's been stirring up trouble for years. But I wonder..." Clarke trailed off, lost in thought.

"What is it, James? Is there more?"

"I'm looking for someone from Tulsa who's involved in some killings in Pawhuska. I know it's a stretch, but the feller that attacked you could be the same man."

"What can we do?"

"We? There's no 'we', Emma. I'll handle this on my own."

"Promise?"

"I promise. I'll stay in town for another day or two and see if I can identify this guy. I'll need to get back to Pawhuska soon though, but I'll be come here from time to time."

Emma didn't seem happy with this plan. "But he's here now! What if he takes off and we never see him again?"

"Emma, I'm not the sort to give up on bringing in someone who's broken the law. I'll find him."

The waiter brought menus and they were forced to change the subject. *This dinner didn't go like I'd planned, Clarke thought. For once I'd like to just enjoy a quiet evening out.*

The next morning, Clarke entered the newspaper building and went directly to the receptionist. Showing his badge, he said, "Excuse me, Ma'am, I'm U.S. Marshal James Clarke. There was a man that came in here yesterday afternoon. Slight build, balding. Do you have any idea who he might be?"

The receptionist frowned. She pretended to look in a visitor's register, but quickly answered, "No, I don't know who you're talking about."

Clarke leaned toward the woman and glared. "Are you certain? He's a suspect in a murder and an attack on a woman here in Tulsa."

The woman was incredulous. "I told you I don't know of a man that matches your description."

"Maybe I should talk to your employer. Is Mr. Jones available?"

"No. He's away on business."

"When will he return?"

"I have no idea."

Clarke grunted. "You are the most unhelpful person I've encountered in quite a while." He turned and left the building, but made sure the door closed with a SLAM! on his way out.

Walking around to the back of the building, he saw a beautiful Mercedes-Benz touring automobile parked in a space that said, "Reserved for Richard Jones, Editor."

"Away on business, huh?" Clarke said to himself.

Rather than entering the building and demanding to see Jones, Clarke decided to just sit tight and wait for the editor to return to his car. Finding an outside table at a conveniently located café, Clarke sipped coffee while watching. At 11 a.m., Jones exited the building and briskly walked to his vehicle. Clarke was one step ahead of the man and slid into the passenger seat just as Jones was starting the engine.

"What's this!" Jones said in surprise. "Get out of my car!"

Showing his badge, the Captain said, "Your receptionist deserves a raise, Jones. She did her best to convince me you were out of town."

With a smirk, Jones replied, "Marcie's been with the paper for a long time. She does her job well."

"Since you are obviously not out of town, I wonder what she was trying to hide."

Jones laughed. "As I said, she's just doing her job. I had a busy morning and didn't want to be bothered."

Clarke shook his head. "That won't do, Jones. I represent the United States government. When I ask to see someone, I expect to be admitted at the front of the line."

"Oh well," Jones replied. "I'll remember to tell Marcie this next time I see her."

"You do that. There was a man that visited your building yesterday. Small guy, balding. Now I'm going to ask you a question. But before you answer, think long and hard. Because if I get the wrong answer, you won't like what happens next."

"Bullying me won't work, Marshal."

"Oh? Because you're a bully yourself, Jones? Let's be clear. I don't care for you or your filthy newspaper. So I ask you, who was this man?"

"I have no idea who you're talking about."

It took all of Clarke's restraint not to punch a dent into the car's dashboard. Gathering his nerves, Clarke said, "Okay. Have it your way. But I will find out who this man is. If it turns out you two are connected, you'll both go to jail."

Before Jones could come up with a snappy retort, Clarke exited the car and for the second time that morning, slammed the door.

Even though the sale and drinking of alcohol in the U.S. had been made unlawful in 1920, every lawman in the country knew that people were still purchasing and imbibing their favorite intoxicating beverages. Most drank liquor in the privacy of their own homes, while others enjoyed social drinking in the numerous speakeasies that were “hidden” in the backrooms of restaurants and businesses.

Clarke knew that the Stagecoach Café was still serving alcohol to anyone with the money to buy it. All a thirsty customer needed to do was knock three times on a non-descript door near the rear of the saloon to gain access to a crowded bar where you could get anything from beer to expensive imported gin. Most drank the cheap moonshine that was distilled by a group of negroes somewhere out in the scrublands.

As he entered the front door of the saloon, Clarke tried not to smile as he saw a few people lazily sitting around playing cards and drinking coffee. He knew that some of these folks were “plants,” put there to make the establishment appear to be on the up and up. Clarke thought about going directly to the speakeasy but instead decided to sit and watch the room for a while. A waiter approached and asked if Clarke needed to see a menu.

“No thanks, coffee will be fine.”

Clarke began reading a newspaper that he’d purchased just before entering the café. *The Tulsa Star*, which was known for its lighter take on local and national news, didn’t disappoint as Clarke read about a cowboy in Kansas who claimed to be rained on by frogs during a heavy storm. Chuckling to himself, Clarke shook his head and thought, *that saddle tramp was probably smoking some of that marijuana I’ve been hearing about. Still, stories like this are a whole lot more entertaining than reading about what’s happening in Washington.*

Letting out a heavy sigh, Clarke pondered the road that led him to where he was on this fine spring day in Oklahoma. *I’m getting tired of chasing after damn law-breaking fools. Been at this game for nearly 40 years. I’ve seen so much of the bad side of people and I’m tired of it.*

Clarke had wondered more than once if it was time for him to hang up his badge and gun. He had enough savings in the bank to live a comfortable life of leisure. *I’d like to do some fishing, or if there’s nothing better to do,*

just sit on the porch and put my feet up. After this Pawhuska job is done, I think I'll be done for good.

A moment later the waiter returned and set a steaming cup of coffee in front of Clarke. Before the man could turn away, Clarke said quietly, "Hold on a second. I'm looking for a feller. About five and a half feet tall, going bald. Most people remember his eyes though – they are said to be... cold."

The waiter hesitated, then shrugged. He held out his hand and said, "The coffee's ten cents. Information costs a bit more."

Clarke pulled out his wallet and handed the man a fiver. The man remained where he was, his hand still held out. Rolling his eyes, Clarke removed another five-dollar bill and handed it over.

"I believe I may know the man you are seeking. Ran with another person last year, a big fellow who disappeared right after... Greenwood."

"Hmmm. I didn't know about another man. Did you see them here, in this sal... I mean, café?"

The waiter nodded. "They didn't frequent this part of the building though. If you get my drift."

Smiling, Clarke replied, "Sure. I follow you. Do you know the guy's name?"

Once more, the waiter held out his hand. Clarke, annoyed at the man's greed, thought about rising to his feet and giving the man a good thrashing. Instead, he took a deep breath and handed the man another five-dollar bill.

"Name's Wilkes. Andrew Wilkes."

Clarke nearly fell out of his chair. *The man suspected of killing Charley White Horse is the same man who attacked Emma and killed Jeremy Stick?*

"Are you all right, sir?"

Clarke, shaking his head quickly, stammered, "Just tryin' to get my head around... Are you sure his name is Andrew Wilkes?"

"Yes, I'm confident that's your man. Does a bit of business down the street, at the *Tribune*."

Clarke was floored. With this news, he could see a way to get at least a little justice for last year's events *and* bring in a man who has information about a killing in Pawhuska. If he could find Wilkes, he could pressure the man into spilling his guts about what Frank Macklin is up to. He also might

get something that he could use to bring down the self-important editor of the *Tribune*, Richard Lloyd Jones.

Thinking, Clarke asked another question. "Do you know where Wilkes stays when he's in town?"

The waiter shook his head. "Can't say that I do. Mr. Wilkes has been away for most of the year. It's only recently that I've seen him back here in Tulsa."

To show his appreciation, Clarke handed the man another five dollars. *Best twenty bucks I've ever spent.*

CHAPTER 8 – STRICTLY BUSINESS

May 27, 1922

"You did the right thing," Agent Scott said to Clarke. "By bringing Miss Larson to Pawhuska, we can both keep an eye on her."

"She wasn't too keen on the idea at first," Clarke replied. "I think she wanted to use herself as bait to catch Wilkes."

Scott smiled and nodded his head. *That wouldn't have been a bad idea...* "No, she'll be safe with us. If Wilkes is a hired killer for Frank Macklin, he'll be back here sooner or later."

Clarke and Emma had arrived at the hotel late the prior evening, this time bringing Honcho along on the train. After settling Emma in her own room, Clarke found Honcho lodging at the local livery.

It was only 7 am and the morning sun was just beginning to become visible in the eastern sky. "Emma's down the hall, room 307. Oh, and I brought my horse in case I need him."

"Think you'll be heading out into the backcountry?" Scott asked.

"You never know on jobs like these."

There was a light knock on the door. Scott looked at Clarke with concern.

"It's probably Emma," Clarke said as he went and opened the door. "I told her your room number."

Scott stood and watched as the pretty young woman entered his room. He was immediately taken by her bright green eyes and light brown hair. "You must be Miss Larson," Scott said, extending his hand.

Emma smiled and took Scott's hand in her own. "Please, call me Emma, Agent Scott."

As they shook hands, a jolt of energy seemed to pass between the two young people. Scott had little prior experience with women and had only courted one other woman in his life. That relationship sputtered to an unglamorous finish as neither party bothered to put in the effort to make it work. As he greeted Emma, Scott could feel the blood rushing to his head. Certain his face had turned bright red, he turned away and replied softly, "Only if you call me Jacob."

Captain Clarke, watching this exchange, let out a hearty laugh. "Now that the dating is over, when are you two gonna get hitched?"

This made Emma blush in a shade of deeper red than that of the FBI agent standing across the room.

"Captain Clarke!" she scolded. "How could you..."

Laughing, Clarke interrupted, "Did you sleep well, Emma?"

Standing in a room that was identical to her own, Emma answered, "Even though the accommodations leave a lot to be desired, I fell asleep right away. I guess I was more tired than I thought."

"Good. I'm afraid you'll get plenty of rest while you're here with us in Pawhuska," Clarke said. "We can't have you gallivanting about town and being seen by that man Wilkes."

Emma frowned. "But what am I to do about food?"

"We'll have someone bring your meals to your room. Captain Clarke tells me that you are a writer? I hope you'll be able to work on your book while you are spending your time with us."

Nodding, Emma replied, "Yes, I brought my typewriter with me. I should be able to make quite a bit of progress while I'm here." Emma paused and added, "But I hope this doesn't take too awfully long, since I'd still like to interview more people from Greenwood and Tulsa."

"You never know on these jobs," Clarke said. "I've been involved with investigations that take weeks. Just when you begin to believe that you'll never make an arrest, you get a break and it gets wrapped up lickety-split."

"Don't worry about the cost of your lodging," Scott said. "You are under our protection and we'll take care of your expenses. Now if you'd excuse the Captain and me, we have some things to discuss."

Clarke chuckled as he watched Scott appreciate Emma's graceful exit from the room. "She's quite a gal, Jake. If I were 20 years younger..."

"That's enough, Captain. We're here to watch over her, nothing more."

Scott and Clarke spent the next hour updating each other on what had transpired during the last few days. Scott told the federal marshal that he was going to make a move on the bank teller that afternoon.

"She's a creature of habit. Takes her lunch promptly at noon at a park by the river. I'll find an excuse to befriend her. I think If I can get her to trust me, she should be able to get us information about the Winters brother's financial arrangements with Frank Macklin."

"Is she as pretty as Emma?" Clarke teased.

Scott's face puckered up as if he'd just sucked on a lemon. "Not even close." Quickly changing the subject, he added, "Tell me about what you know about Wilkes and his connection to the editor of the *Tulsa Tribune*."

"I didn't find out much, to tell the truth. It's common knowledge that the *Tribune* makes its money by pandering to bigots and bullies. Richard Lloyd Jones was instrumental in what happened in Greenwood last June."

"Yes, I've heard some things."

"Jones didn't light the fire, but he certainly provided the matches."

"And Miss Larson... I mean Emma, she's certain that Andrew Wilkes is the same man that attacked her?"

"She convinced *me*. Emma's a woman with a good head on her shoulders. If she said Wilkes was the man who attacked her and killed her friend Jeremy Stick, I believe her."

Scott rubbed his chin, stroking an imaginary beard as he considered their next move. "If we can catch Wilkes, maybe we can get him to roll over on Richard Lloyd Jones."

"That's what I was thinking," Clarke replied. "Jones is up to no good, and he needs to pay for what happened in Greenwood."

Jacob Scott knew that he had to get results soon. All it would take was one call from Director Hoover to Chicago and he'd find himself chained to his desk again. As he walked to the Pawhuska State Bank, he thought about ways he could get the teller to talk to him. Some agents might try to sidle up to a female and use charm, but Jake just wasn't built that way. He knew his nerves would expose him if he tried to be someone he wasn't.

The teller, with brown hair pulled back in a severe bun and dressed in a plain black skirt and a white blouse, emerged from the building promptly at noon and walked at a brisk speed to the park. Finding her usual bench occupied by a young couple, she moved to a less desirable spot that was

only partially shaded. Pulling a sandwich from her bag, she sat and ate while reading a book. Scott noticed it was *Women in Love*, a book that was widely considered to be packed with trashy sexual content.

"Enjoying your book?" Scott removed his hat and smiled.

The teller looked up and quickly closed the book. She had a slightly embarrassed look on her face as if she'd been caught doing something improper.

"Pardon me," Jake continued. He could see that he'd made the woman uncomfortable. "What you read is your business. I am curious though – is it as racy as I've read in the papers?"

"It's not nearly as bad as those puritans make it out to be," she said. "I'm enjoying it, but I doubt most men would find it interesting."

"You never know," Jake replied. "I enjoy reading about new things, especially ones that run counter to social mores." He paused and took his badge out of his jacket pocket. "I'm Agent Jacob Scott from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Do you mind if we chat for a moment?"

"Federal agent? Have I done something wrong?"

Shaking his head, Jacob said, "No, of course not. This isn't about you. But you may have the opportunity to serve your country."

Her eyes perked up. Jacob had hoped that by appealing to her sense of patriotism, she'd help. She looked from left to right, evidently checking to see if anyone she recognized was watching. Then she slid to the end of the bench and said, "Sit on the other end and pretend you're looking at the river. Pawhuska's a small town. I don't want anyone to see us talking."

He took a seat as directed. Even though Jacob had taken the time to learn her name, he felt it would be better if she didn't know he'd been watching her. "Your name is..."

"Loraine Gathers."

"How long have you worked at the bank, Miss Gathers?"

"Ten years."

"Have you been a teller the entire time?"

"Yes." She paused and considered saying more, then making a decision, added, "I'd hoped to one day be promoted to customer service and loans, but I guess they like the way I handle my window."

Good, Jacob thought. *She feels unappreciated. I'll work that angle.* "You could be very helpful for the Bureau. Things are happening in this town

that have come to the attention of my boss, Director Hoover.”

She gasped. “J. Edgar Hoover? He knows what’s going on in Pawhuska?”

“That’s right. The Bureau has...” He searched for the word. “...Concerns. But before I tell you more, I need to know that you’ll help me in any way you can. I may ask you to do things that run counter to your loyalty to your employers.”

Jacob, using his peripheral vision, could see that Miss Gathers was considering her options. He imagined a woman, smart but plain and overlooked by nearly everyone, finally getting an opportunity to show what she was capable of. Would she take the bait? Or would she refuse to help due to an overinflated sense of propriety?

Loraine shrugged and said, “I really don’t owe the men who run the bank anything. Did you know they haven’t ever given me a holiday bonus, even though that lazy Mr. Clemmons who works the other teller window gets one every year? And I only get one lousy week of vacation. Unpaid!”

It took everything Jacob had not to laugh out loud. She was not only willing to help, but she’d probably do anything he asked. “Really, Miss Gathers? No bonus? No paid vacation? That’s a horrible way to treat a long-time employee.”

“All those men care about is getting rich.”

“Men?” Jacob asked, playing along.

“Mr. Call and his hoity-toity board of directors. They all think that their poop doesn’t stink. But I know better.”

Wow, Miss Gathers is harboring quite a bit of hatred. If I’m not careful, she’ll go too far and get my investigation exposed. “I understand. But we need to tread lightly. I wouldn’t want anyone in the bank to know you’re involved.” Jacob didn’t add, *at least until a court trial, if there is one.*

Loraine pulled a small watch from her purse. “I have to be back at the bank in 30 minutes. What do you want me to do?”

Taking a deep breath, Jacob jumped in with both feet. “Does the name Frank Macklin mean anything to you?”

“He’s the chairman of the board.”

“The bureau and Mr. Hoover believe that Frank Macklin is using the bank to gain access to money that belongs to Anna and May Winters.”

“But their husbands are the guardians of the sister’s wealth.”

“So you know about the Winters family?”

"I've seen how that snake Robert spends May's check's as soon as they come in. His brother Ralph isn't much better."

"Did you know that Charley White Horse is the brother of Mary and Anna?"

"Yes. Everyone knows that. He worked for the MMM Ranch. Such a sad thing, the way he was found dead in the ditch."

Jacob paused for effect. "What if I told you he was murdered?"

"Murdered! By who?"

"I can't say yet. But we think Frank Macklin had something to do with it."

Loraine pursed her lips and shook her head. "I never liked that man."

"Macklin?"

"He's a snake. I wouldn't put it past him to kill his own brother if he thought he'd benefit from it."

Nodding, Jacob said, "We think that Macklin is trying to take control of the Winters' oil wealth. He got rid of Charley White Horse, and Robert and Ralph Winters are up to their eyeballs in debt to the bank. Macklin might force the Winters to sign over their oil rights... or worse."

"You mean... hurt Anna or May?"

"I'll do everything I can to keep that from happening."

"I don't know the sisters very well. I mean, I've seen 'em around town and they seem friendly enough. I'd hate to see something happen to them."

"Would you be able to look at Macklin's accounts to see how much money he's loaned to the Winters brothers?"

Loraine thought for a moment. "I think I can do that. The main account book is kept in Mr. Call's office. It's not unusual for me to go in there. Mr. Call spends time every day at the Cattlemen's Club, so I could easily sneak a peek."

"Just jot down the numbers. If we find that Macklin is taking advantage of the Winters, we'll move on him."

"Give me a day or two, Agent Scott. I'll find what you're looking for."

Standing, Jacob watched a pair of swans floating in the river. "I'll be at this spot every day at noon. But please hurry. I'd like to end this investigation before someone else is hurt. Or worse."

Emma stared at her typewriter. A blank sheet of paper sat waiting for her words, yet she was unable to force her hands to do the work. It wasn't that she had writer's block – she just had too much on her mind. The last year had been full of events that most people wouldn't endure over a lifetime. Her city burned, she survived an assault, her lover died, she spent several months in Michigan, and now she found herself hiding out in a fleabag hotel in Osage County.

I can't do this. She pushed herself away from the typewriter, stood, and began to prepare herself for a walk outdoors. *Fresh air will do me good. I know that I'm supposed to stay where that man Wilkes won't see me, but I just can't sit in this room one minute longer.*

Looking out at the street below through her third-floor window, she could see that it was a bright, windy day. *Perfect. I'll wear a scarf and sunglasses as a disguise.*

Out on the sidewalk, Emma saw her reflection in a window and thought her own father wouldn't recognize her. Satisfied, she headed out to explore the town. Unlike Tulsa, Pawhuska was comprised of only a few blocks separated by dirt streets. Wood sidewalks kept pedestrians away from the animal filth that collected flies in the hot sun. She walked west and crossed a small bridge over the river. She enjoyed the view for a moment, then turned around and walked back into town.

She headed north and found what appeared to be the main street. She passed the Cattleman's club, two banks, a diner, and a printing shop. On the opposite street, a small sign designated the office of Dr. Gavin Reynolds. Next to the doctor's office was a barbershop. Emma's curiosity caused her to peek inside as she walked by. Standing in the middle of the room was the one person she never hoped to see again. Wilkes! Wearing black work pants and a dark gray shirt, Wilkes was paying the barber for his services. Emma quickly darted away, praying that she'd not been spotted. *He can't be here in Pawhuska already! I have to tell Agent Scott and the Captain right away. What if he leaves town again? I'll watch carefully from the end of the street and see where he goes.*

Moments later, Wilkes emerged from the barbershop and entered the doctor's office. *Hmmm, Emma pondered. Is he ill? I hope so. I hope he's*

good and sick and that no doctor can fix him. She watched for several minutes, then concluded that Wilkes could be in the doctor's office for quite a while. She began to feel conspicuous so she decided to return to the hotel where she could tell the two lawmen what she'd seen.

Back at the hotel, Emma knocked on Jake's and the Captain's doors but both men were gone. *I pray they get back before Wilkes leaves the doctor's office. This is their chance to break the case wide open.*

"How much longer before that fat Osage woman is dead?" Wilkes sat in a chair in the doctor's personal office and puffed a cigar. "My employer is beginning to consider other options."

This was far from the truth. Frank Macklin's express orders were to move slowly so they wouldn't get the law interested in their activities. But Wilkes wanted to wrap things up here so he could proceed with his next operations: first, getting back to Tulsa to rekindle his relationship with Emma Larson, and second, working with Richard Lloyd Jones to bring the Klan into the city. There was a lot of work to be done and he hated being stuck in this backwater burg.

"Using the proper precautions," Dr. Reynolds said, "I wouldn't expect Mrs. Winters to survive the summer."

Wilkes took a puff from his cigar and blew the smoke directly at the doctor. "That's too long. I need her gone by... let's say the middle of next month. June fifteenth."

"Do you want everyone to know what we're up to? Her death..." The doctor carefully chose his words. "...So quickly after her brother... will arouse suspicion."

Wilkes noticed that the doctor would not use the word "murder." *It's like if you don't say the word, he thought, it never happened.*

"If you don't get the job done, Dr. Reynolds, then I'll have to do it for you."

"What about the money I was promised? I have debts..."

Wilkes knew that the good doctor had exhausted his liquidity at the weekly high-stakes poker game at the Cattleman's Club. It was said that

Reynolds had no concept of bluffing and that he was the easiest mark in town.

"Like I said, June fifteenth. Otherwise, I'll take over." Wilkes smiled. *I might get the job done earlier, and you can worry about your debts all by yourself.*

For the last hour, Emma paced across the hotel room, unable to calm her nerves. The sun was getting low in the sky as she heard someone enter Clarke's room next door.

She quickly walked out into the hallway and knocked on his door. "Howdy, Emma. Come on in."

"How's your book coming along?"

Emma ignored the question. "I saw that man today." Emma spoke quickly and it seemed as if she would soon hyperventilate.

Seeing she was anxious, Clarke poured a glass of water and handed it to Emma. "Slow down. What man?"

"Wilkes."

"He's here? In Pawhuska? He sure is a cheeky bastard."

"I saw him at the barbershop."

"Wait, you were out galivanting around town? I thought I told you to stay put."

"I wasn't *galivanting*, as you so eloquently put it. I wore a scarf and sunglasses. No one knows me here."

Shaking his head in disappointment, Clarke replied, "Well, what's done is done. Are you certain it was Wilkes?"

She nodded. "After he left the barbershop, he spent quite a while at Dr. Reynolds' office."

Clarke scratched his head. "I suppose Wilkes needed to see the doctor for his own health reasons. But we'll tell Agent Scott as soon as he gets back here. Go ahead and have a seat while I go wash the sweat and dust off my face."

A few minutes later, there was a knock on the door. Scott entered the room and announced, "I've made headway with my bank teller. My contact

is going to see what she can find out about Frank Macklin's financial dealings, especially the loans involving the Winters family."

"That's great news," Clarke said. "But Emma and I have even more interesting news. Emma saw Andrew Wilkes today."

"Here? In Pawhuska?"

"He was getting his hair cut. Then he visited a doctor's office."

The federal agent paced across the small room, thinking. "Okay. This is what we'll do. I'll stake out the downtown area and keep an eye out for Wilkes. No one in Pawhuska knows me, so I shouldn't be noticed. Jim – you have your horse here, right? I think you should ride out to the MMM ranch and see if you can spot Wilkes there. Let's get back together here tonight, say ten o'clock?"

"Emma said Wilkes is short," Clarke said. "Probably a little over five feet tall. He's wearing black pants and a gray shirt."

Turning to Emma, Scott said, "You must promise to stay in your room until we return. There's no telling what Wilkes would do if he knew you were in town."

Emma nodded. "It's going to be a long afternoon."

"I know this sort of thing can be tedious," Scott said. "But it's for your own good, Emma. I'll have the man at the front desk bring dinner up for you."

The two lawmen left and Emma returned to her room. She stood at the desk that held her typewriter and wondered how she'd ever manage to write a single word until this ordeal was over.

The afternoon and early evening passed slowly for Emma. She ate alone, and with no interest in writing, she sat and watched the nearly deserted street from her window. Dozing, a knock on the door woke her.

"Nothing was going on at Macklin's ranch today," Clarke told Scott as they entered Emma's room. "I watched from the scrub as close to the ranch as I could without being seen, but other than normal cowboy work, it was quiet."

Scott nodded. "Same here in town. I don't know where that scoundrel Wilkes is hiding. People like him seem to have a way of knowing when it's

time to lay low.”

Emma, listening to the two lawmen, shook her head and grimaced. “I wish you’d let me help.”

Simultaneously, both men said, “You’ve helped enough.” They laughed, then Scott took Emma’s hand in his own and said, “I’d never forgive myself if anything happened to you.”

Clarke began to head towards the hotel room door.

Emma asked, “Where are you going, Captain?”

Clarke laughed. “I thought I’d leave you two lovebirds alone.”

Both Emma and Scott blushed three shades of red.

“We’d never...” Scott blustered something that sounded like “Strictly business.”

Strictly business? Emma looked at the floor and pondered a future with the FBI agent. *Please God, let this be more than just a passing fancy for the two of us. I sense that Jacob Scott is a good man. I don’t know if I love him, but at this point, I really don’t care. I’m so tired of being so alone.*

Looking up at Clarke, Emma sputtered, “Strictly... business.”

CHAPTER 9 – DEATH IN THE TALL GRASS

May 28, 1922

The Chevy Touring Car bounced along a rutted two-track that was more suitable for hooves than wheels. A cloud of dust would have choked anyone following, but the motorist was fairly certain that there wasn't another soul around for miles. He reached a small rise and saw nothing more interesting than the grass and scrubby trees he'd been driving through for the last 45 minutes. Driving with one hand on the wheel, he pulled a bootleg bottle of beer from a cooler (his third since he'd been driving), popped the cork, and took a swig. He quickly drained the bottle and threw it out the window. He continued on, heading nowhere in particular. It was enough to wander the countryside and explore the backroads that were once the escape routes of the Daltons, Bill Doolan, and even the notorious Jesse James. The wastelands of Oklahoma, hostile to all but criminals, lawmen, and natives, provided little in the way of comfort but offered a surprising array of hideouts for those seeking to evade arrest. Anyone who wished to escape from a vengeful posse would be hard-pressed to find a better landscape.

Rounding a bend, the driver spotted a line of trees that indicated water. Possibly a creek. He slowed the vehicle, looking to see if there was a place where he could rest and add water to the Chevy's thirsty radiator. The man who sold him the car said that it was in "perfect condition," which turned out to be anything but true. There would be an accounting with the car seller at a later date, that much was certain.

The road ran parallel with the creek for a bit, and he soon found a spot where other motorists had paused for the odd picnic or roadside automobile repair. He turned off the engine and sat for a moment, listening to the hot engine as it cooled. *Click... click...* He drained another bottle of beer, sighed in contentment, and pitched the empty bottle into the weeds.

Other than the sound of the engine and the trickle of water in the creek, it was quiet. Even the wind had died down for the moment. He

grabbed a water can from the trunk and squatted by the creek and watched the can slowly fill. *What was that? Did I hear somethin'?*

He stood and slowly turned his head, listening. *There it is again. Voices. On the other side of the creek.*

Curious, he set the can down. He easily jumped across the water and scrambled up the steep bank, which was four or five feet higher than the side where he'd parked his car. Keeping his head low, he looked to the east and spotted two negro boys playing on a small pile of boulders. Creeping through the grass as quietly as possible, he watched the boys without being detected.

"Rufus! Renny!" It was a woman's voice. "Come and get yourself some food."

Why, ain't that sweet. A nigger picnic.

Reaching the edge of the tall grass, he squatted and saw a blanket spread on the ground beneath a scraggly cottonwood. A negro man lay on his back, relaxing. The negress, a plump little thing, was smiling as she went about making a meal for her boys and husband. Just a little bit away, a mule rested beside the wagon that served as both a home *and* transportation for the family.

As the boys ran toward their father, they suddenly stopped and froze in fear. With open mouths and bright, white eyes, they were speechless as they saw the man emerge from the grass and point a revolver at them.

Bang! Bang! Both boys fell immediately to the ground, their bodies kicking up small clouds of dust. The mother turned and screamed as she watched what could only be a demon from the darkest bowels of hell put two bullets into her husband. The demon, certain that the man and boys were not breathing, walked slowly towards where the woman had been buttering bread only a moment earlier.

Holding the gun to her brow, he ripped the woman's dress, causing buttons to fly off into the dirt one by one. Knocking the woman to the ground, the demon forced himself upon her, grunting and moaning with pleasure. Finished, he stood, pulled up his trousers, and put a bullet into the sobbing woman's forehead. The unfinished sandwiches lay on a plate that sat on a rock. Seeing this, the man placed a chunk of ham on bread and went about eating his lunch.

Showing no further interest in the dead family, Andrew Wilkes retraced his steps, returned to the Chevy, and filled the radiator. After cranking the motor, he got back behind the steering wheel and allowed himself a moment of reflection. *That was for the nigger who got my sister pregnant and took her away to Chicago. That was for the darkies who are trying to take jobs away from us hard workin' men. There's four fewer darkies to spread their seeds and make even more babies.*

He pulled away from the creek and headed nowhere in particular with a smile on his face.

Jefferson Rose watched as buzzards circled in the distance. The afternoon heat had risen well into the nineties, and he was looking forward to a splash in a cool creek. Sitting upon a gray mare, Rosie decided to see what the scavengers had spotted. His thirst could wait.

As he approached a small wooded area, he first saw the wagon and mule. *That looks like Rupert's rig.*

He climbed from his dappled gray mare he called "Esther" and let her graze while he walked into the clearing. His friend, Rupert, lay on the ground with what looked like two gunshot wounds in his chest. The boys, Rufus and Renny, lay face down in the dirt beside a group of boulders. Worse of all was seeing Missy, Rupert's wife, lying naked on the ground. A single gunshot wound had entered her forehead and blown out the entire rear of her skull.

Before entering the kill zone, Rosie carefully looked at the ground for footprints or other evidence. He'd never forgotten the skills acquired as Captain Clarke's deputy all of those years ago, and it didn't take him long to see that not only had someone killed this decent, hard-working family, but had also taken the time to eat a sandwich. From the size of the footprints, the killer was a person of small build.

The trail through the grass to where the killer had parked his automobile was as easy to read as lines on a map. Rosie figured that the killer stopped to rest by the creek, had heard Rufus's family in the distance, and then killed them all as if it were the easiest thing in the world to do. Then the killer drove off, probably not giving a single thought to what he'd

done. Rosie studied the tire tracks carefully, hoping to match the tracks with a car that would lead him to the killer. As he walked around the clearing, he looked for anything else that would provide a clue as to who the murderer was. He kicked around in the weeds for a moment and heard his boot clank against something made from glass. Bending, he lifted a beer bottle, careful not to smudge any fingerprints. If this bottle belonged to the killer, and they caught the guy, then they'd have proof he was at this exact location. It would be circumstantial, but as he'd learned while working with Captain Clarke, men were sent to prison on far less evidence. Rosie, finished with looking at the bottle, carefully replaced it in the grass where he'd found it.

With a grim look on his face, Rosie went back to Rufus's wagon. He hated to abandon the family out here where the scavengers would get them, but he had to leave the site alone so it could be investigated by the authorities. He found blankets in the wagon and carefully covered the four bodies where they lay. Retrieving his horse, he retraced his steps back to where the car had parked. Seeing nothing more, he rode towards Pawhuska.

Rosie spotted another beer bottle a half-mile from where the car had parked. It matched the one he already had in his possession. He left it alone but made a mental note of where it rested. *I'm gonna find you, whoever you are. Any man who'd put bullets in two boys, murder their pa and rape their ma will end up swinging from a rope if I have anything to say about it.*

Nobody looked twice as the large negro rode into Pawhuska. The citizens went about their business, assuming that Rosie was passing through or looking for work. He stopped in front of the jail, tied his horse to the rail, and went inside the building.

A deputy sat at a desk, leisurely browsing a newspaper and drinking a cup of coffee. Seeing Rosie, he grunted and continued reading.

In his low baritone, Rosie told the deputy, "Rupert Jackson, his wife, and two boys were killed."

The deputy lowered the paper and looked Rosie over from top to bottom. "Never heard of 'em."

"Friends of mine. Found 'em dead down by the Middle Bird Creek. There's a place where cars park to get water or have a picnic."

The deputy grimaced and set the paper down. "I know the spot. Did you see it happen?"

"No. I was ridin' about a half-mile away and saw buzzards circling. I went over to check it out and saw Rupert and his family were all shot. Missy, Rupert's wife, was assaulted before she was killed."

"How do you know that? You don't look like no doctor that I've ever seen."

"I could tell. Been working with Captain William Clarke most of my life."

Nodding, the deputy said, "Are you that fella that I used to see ridin' with him? I heard you quit the business and started a restaurant over in Tulsa."

Rosie turned away and shook his head. "Had to leave that town after they burned it to the ground."

The deputy chuckled. "You and a couple thousand of other niggers. Some of 'em passed through here on their way to wherever the hell they thought they were headed." He paused for a moment, then said, "I wonder what the Jackson's were doin' out there?"

"I have no idea," Rosie replied. "From what I could tell, they were just travelin' 'round. Rupert was a capable ranch hand and he also knew a bit about diggin' oil wells. I imagine he worked odd jobs during the last year."

The deputy rubbed his chin and pondered his next move. "I'll guess I'll have to find a doctor and ride out to where they was killed."

"Where's the town constable?"

"He's in Oklahoma City, visitin' family. Won't be back until next week."

Rosie didn't like that there wouldn't be anyone with more authority than this deputy at the murder site. "I'll go with you."

"Suit yourself. Meet me back here in an hour and I'll be ready to go."

Rosie walked down the street and found a restaurant that he was familiar with. Taking a window table, he ordered a bowl of beef stew. "Does that come with bread?"

The server, an attractive young woman of mixed blood, replied, "If you want it."

"Please. And I'd like a large glass of something cold to drink."

"All we have is tea and lemonade."

He ordered the lemonade and stared out the window. He was beginning to think of his days as the owner of a diner similar to this one when he spotted a familiar-looking man walking past on the sidewalk. Jumping out of his chair, he ran to the door and yelled, "Is that you Cap'n?"

The man turned and smiled when he saw who was addressing him. "Rosie? What the heck are you doing here?" The two friends shook hands and briefly embraced.

"I was on my way back to Tulsa to see about gettin' the last of my money from the bank," he replied. "But on my way here, I stumbled onto somethin' that you'll be interested in."

Clarke followed Rosie into the restaurant and sat across the table from his old friend. "God, it's good to see you, Rosie. It seems like I've been lost ever since you left Tulsa."

Rosie nodded. "It's been a tough year."

Clarke nodded. "Where are you coming from? I remember that you always wanted to see the ocean."

A small smile appeared on Rosie's face. "Never made it there. Mostly, I wandered around lookin' for a place to live. I finally ended up in Denver."

"Haven't been there," Clarke replied. "But I hear it's very pretty in the mountains."

"It's a damn sight better than the dust and wind of this place."

"What are you going to do up there?" Clarke smiled. "The gold rush has been over for a long, long time."

"I found a place. It needs some work, so I decided to come back to Tulsa and clear out anything that I have left. I've got enough money to make a new start in Denver. The people there are nice."

The waitress brought Rosie's food to the table. "Is there anything I can get you?" she asked Clarke.

Seeing Rosie's stew, he answered, "I'll have what he's having." The waitress left, and Clarke said, "You said there was something I'd be interested in?"

Between spoonful's of delicious beef and vegetables and mouthfuls of homemade bread, Rosie described the tragedy he'd found at Middle Bird

Creek. "I'm going to ride back out there with the deputy as soon as I finish eating."

"Nasty business, finding a dead family. Where's the sheriff?"

"Out of town."

"I guess I'll go with you then and make sure that the local yokels don't muck things up. We'll need a doctor." Clarke thought for a moment and added, "I've got a friend that'll want to go with us."

It took longer than expected to get the investigation team together, but with less than two hours of daylight remaining two vehicles were heading toward the murder scene. The first car, driven by Deputy Hanks of the Pawhuska Police Department, was occupied by Doctor Reynolds and a portrait photographer who was under contract by the county to shoot crime scenes. Clarke drove the second car. Agent Scott, who sat in the passenger seat, was unhappy that his participation in this event blew his cover.

"I wish you hadn't told that deputy about me," he grumbled. "Now everyone in town will know what we're up to."

"All I said was that you work with me for the U.S. Marshals. For all we know, they think you're a new recruit into the service. You don't have to say anything when we get to the sight. But I want to make sure they do a thorough job on the investigation."

Rosie, who up to now had sat quietly in the rear of the car, said, "The Jackson's were friends of mine."

Scott turned to look at Jefferson Rose. "I understand. We'll do the best job possible to make sure we have every bit of evidence. But our work in Pawhuska goes beyond the death of your friend's family."

The two cars pulled off the road and parked well away from where the alleged murderer's vehicle had stopped. "I want you to take the lead, Jim," Scott said to Clarke. "I'll continue to play the part of junior partner."

The deputy stood aside while Rosie showed the Captain and the photographer the beer bottles. Before the bottles were moved and placed in a secure box, the photographer took multiple images. He also photographed the tire tracks which were still clearly visible in the dirt.

When they were finished on this side of the stream, Rosie led everyone to the other bank and through the tall grass to where the Jackson family rested.

Standing silently under the lowering afternoon sun, Rosie said, "I covered 'em up best I could, but I left 'em where I found 'em."

Turkey vultures crows had pecked a bit at exposed flesh where the wind had removed the blankets. Clarke shook his head in sadness as he saw the violence that had visited this innocent family. "Go ahead and take your pictures," he said to the photographer. When that was finished, Doctor Reynolds, who was also the county medical examiner, examined the bodies and made notes for the report that he would turn in later.

"Boy one..."

"His name is Rufus Jackson," Rosie interrupted.

The doctor cleared his throat. "Boy one, who has been identified by one..." he looked at Rosie and asked, "What's your name again?"

"Jefferson Rose."

"Boy one, who has been identified by Jefferson Rose as Rufus Jackson, was killed by a .38 caliber bullet."

Doctor Reynolds repeated the process for Renny Jackson, who lay just a few feet from his older brother. When the doctor got to Rupert Jackson, he read aloud as he wrote his notes. "Rupert Jackson, male, negro, age approximately thirty-five years, two .38 caliber bullet wounds to the chest."

When the doctor got to Missy Jackson, he paused. Turning to Rosie, he shook his head in dismay and said, "This is nasty business."

The woman lay with her dress up over her belly. Her underpants lay in the dirt nearby. Taking a deep breath, the doctor continued his exam. "Negro woman," he jotted as he spoke. "Evidence of intercourse. Bullet wound..."

Rosie put his hand on the doctor's shoulder and said, "Intercourse? Any fool can see she was raped."

Blanching, the doctor replied, "That will be determined during my autopsy."

"You afraid to admit what happened here?" Rosie challenged.

The doctor, trying to ignore Rosie, continued, "...bullet wound to the forehead. .38 caliber. Significant damage to the rear of the skull."

Rosie turned to Captain Clarke and complained, "Our doctor ain't gonna tell the truth of what really happened."

Clarke shook his head in agreement. "I'll make sure that the written report is accurate."

The deputy, who had done his best to avoid looking at the dead bodies, said, "The undertaker should be along any minute now. Let's go back to the cars and wait."

As they walked through the tall grass, Captain Clarke whispered to Scott, "Did we miss anything?"

"Not that I could tell. I looked over the wagon that was left and there doesn't appear to have been any theft. This was nothing more than a crime of opportunity."

"What sort of person does something like this?" Clarke asked. "Don't answer. I've seen it so much during my life... but I still don't understand it."

They waited a short while for the undertaker to arrive. As he headed towards the murder scene, Rosie said to Clarke, "I'll go with the undertaker. When he's done, I'll bring the rig back to town."

"It's going to be dark by then," Clarke replied.

Rosie didn't answer. He just walked away and disappeared into the tall grass with the undertaker.

Back in town, Agent Scott and Captain Clarke sat in Clarke's hotel room and discussed the events of the day. The two shared a bottle of Scotch as they planned their next moves.

"I'd ask where this came from," Scott said, indicating the illicit liquor. "But if there was ever a time for a stiff drink, it's now."

Clarke grunted. "Been saving it. Bought it just before it became illegal."

There was a quiet knock on the door. "That would be Emma," Clarke said. "I really don't feel like talking about what we saw today with her."

Going to the door, Scott said, "She'll find out soon enough." He opened the door and said, "Come on in. We were just sharing some of the Captain's fine Scotch."

At first, Clarke thought Emma seemed angry, but as Clarke thought about it, he concluded she was probably frustrated at being cooped up all

day with nothing to do but work on her book. "Did you get any writing done today?" he asked.

"Some. It's difficult sitting alone in an unfamiliar town and not being able to go out to stretch one's legs."

"It's for the best, Emma. If Wilkes is in town, there's no telling what he might do if he spotted you."

Scott took a drink of whiskey. "Our day wasn't exactly a lot of fun either."

Emma looked at the two lawmen and waited for further explanation. "Pass me the Scotch."

Letting out a huge sigh, Agent Scott told Emma about the murder of the Jacksons. He didn't leave out many details, but he was reluctant to talk about the assault on Mrs. Jackson.

"Even though we aren't in Pawhuska to investigate new crimes against regular folks," Clarke explained, "It seemed that since we were here, we should lend a hand."

Emma sipped her whiskey and immediately started coughing. When she recovered, she gasped, "Strong stuff."

"It gets smoother the more you drink," Clarke replied with a smile.

Emma took another small sip. "Did you know that when I went to Michigan, I was employed as an editor of true-crime stories? There's not much that surprises me these days."

"We don't know much about any motives for why that family was killed," Scott said. "I think it was likely that it was what you call a 'crime of opportunity.' The killer stumbled upon the Jackson's picnicking by the creek and saw a chance to murder four innocent folks."

In a matter-of-fact tone, Emma said, "It was white on black murder."

"Huh?" Clarke replied, astounded that she'd arrived at this conclusion so quickly.

"Everything in this state revolves around the color of one's skin. I have no doubts that given a chance, most white men would murder innocent negroes if they thought they could get away with it."

"Now look here, Emma," Agent Scott interrupted. "There's a lot of decent white folks who do what they can to make sure that everyone gets the justice they deserve, no matter what color they are. It could have been

that the Jackson's were killed just so someone could have his way with Mrs. Jackson..."

"Wait a second. You didn't tell me that the mother was raped."

Clarke grunted. "We won't know for sure until the Doctor examines her more closely."

Emma stood and paced across the room. She looked as if she was about to explode.

Both lawmen watched her, but it was Clarke who spoke first. "What is it, Emma? Is it because of what happened to you?"

"Don't you see it!" she yelled. "It's Tulsa all over again."

"You don't know that," Scott said. "This was just one isolated killing."

Staring directly into Agent Scott's eyes, Emma replied, "Mark my words. That man Wilkes has something to do with this."

CHAPTER 10 – THE FUNERAL

May 29, 1922

A loud banging dragged James Clarke from his deep sleep. He sat up and put his feet on the floor, checking first to see how badly his head ached from the rare whiskey hangover. “Hold on, hold on. I’m coming.”

Opening the door, Henry Tallchief burst into the room, ignoring the fact that Clarke stood wearing nothing but boxers and an undershirt. “Anna Winters is dead.”

“Huh? What time is it, Henry? And how did you know I was living in this hotel?”

Tallchief pulled back the curtains and revealed a city that had been awake for hours. Seeing the whiskey bottle on the side table, he added, “I didn’t know you were a drinkin’ man, Jim.”

Clarke snorted and coughed. “I’m not. Normally.”

“It’s after ten. And to answer your second question, I make it a point to know who’s spending time on my reservation. I know that a federal agent’s livin’ down the hall. And some woman lives next door, but I haven’t figured out her angle yet.”

“She’s a friend.”

Tallchief smiled at this, but his face suddenly soured. “Word’s gettin’ ‘round about the business out by the creek. Sad state of affairs.”

After pouring cold water into the basin, Clarke splashed his face and did what he could to wake himself up. “You said Anna Winters is dead?”

“They found her in her bed this morning.”

“Any sign of foul play?”

“I don’t know. She’s already been taken to the funeral home.”

“Damn, they move quickly around here. Let me get my pants on and we’ll go see what we can find out.”

As the two men left the room, Clarke knocked on Agent Scott’s door but received no answer. Tallchief shrugged. “Must be an early bird.”

The two men walked across town to the funeral home. Finding no one in the main parlor, they walked to the rear of the building and heard music playing from the cellar. They found the stairs and descended into the room

where bodies were kept. An oddly cheery fellow was singing along to a nearby Victrola while he prepared a body for viewing and burial. "Excuse me, Mr. Gibbons!" Henry shouted. "We're here to see Anna Winters."

Turning, the pudgy man smiled and said, "Oh, hello, Henry! I didn't hear you come downstairs. Hold on while I turn off the music."

Once the needle was removed from the spinning record the room quieted. "I love listening to Al Jolson while I work," Gibbons said. "Makes this place feel like it's not so... if you excuse the expression, dead."

"Right." Indicating his companion, Tallchief said, "This is U.S. Marshal Jim Clarke. We're here to see Anna Winters."

"Oh, the Indian woman. She's back with the four negros that I brought in last night. I haven't had time to look her over yet. Follow me."

They walked through the cellar past empty caskets awaiting new customers and came to a large room that was accessible to the outside via a large ramp. They passed the covered bodies of what could only be the Jackson family. Indicating a corpse covered with a white sheet, Gibbons said, "This is... I mean *was*... Mrs. Winters."

"Has the coroner seen her?" Clarke asked.

"Doctor Reynolds issued a death certificate at her home this morning before she was transported to me."

Clarke frowned and thought for a moment. "Did the doctor look at the Jacksons?"

The mortician looked confused. "Oh, you mean the negro family. No, hasn't been here yet."

Letting out a heavy sigh, Clarke said, "I would have expected Dr. Reynolds to do a more thorough autopsy. He only did a brief investigation at the crime scene."

"He didn't seem interested in the black family."

"Do you have a copy of Mrs. Winters' death certificate?"

"Sure. It's right here on the table, next to Mrs. Winters."

The mortician handed the carbon copy of the death certificate to Clarke.

"It says she died of natural causes," Clarke said. "Whatever that means."

"As I said, I haven't had a chance to look her over," Gibbons replied. "But I've known Doctor Reynolds for years and trust his judgment."

Clarke thought for a moment and then pulled Henry away from the mortician where their conversation wouldn't be overheard.

"I want my associate, Agent Scott to look over Anna before anyone else gets their hands on her."

Henry shrugged. "Is he trained for this sort of thing?"

"I hope so."

Leaving Henry to stand guard over the corpse, Clarke walked through town hoping to find Scott. Remembering that the agent met his bank teller confidant at the city park, Clarke headed that way and immediately spotted the woman talking animatedly to the agent. Clarke patiently waited until the conversation concluded and the woman had departed.

"That looked like an intense discussion," Clarke said as he sat on the bench next to Scott.

"The bank wouldn't lend the Winters brothers more money, so they borrowed thousands from Frank Macklin. The Winters used their oil holdings as collateral. The notes don't come due for another three years, but that doesn't mean much. I still think it's possible that Macklin would have the Winters' killed so he can claim their property."

"It looks like your bank teller came through for us."

"There's more. Remember the story I told you about an Osage woman, Clara Cross? Her house was burned to the ground while she slept alone in her bedroom. Her husband, John, was killed two weeks later."

"Don't tell me they were also victims of Macklin's schemes."

"I believe they were. I didn't even ask Lorraine to look for info on the Cross accounts, but she said it was all right there on the same ledger. Macklin made loans to the Crosses just like he did to the Winters."

Clarke let out a heavy sigh. "I've got other news. Anna Winters is dead."

Scott let out a whistle. "Another death in the city of Pawhuska. This is getting to be a dangerous place to live."

Clarke filled Scott in on the details of Anna's death while walking to the funeral home. "I think you should take a look at her and see if this death was actually due to 'natural causes,' as Doctor Reynolds reported on the death certificate."

Back in the basement of the funeral home, Agent Scott was introduced to Henry Tallchief. Loud music played from another part of the basement. Tallchief shook his head and grimaced. "The mortician likes to listen to Al Jolson while he's working."

"Let's see what we have here," Scott said in a voice loud enough to be heard above the orchestra playing in the distance. "I was trained in basic forensic science," he explained as he removed the sheet covering Anna Winters. Looking over the body as it lay, he grunted a few times and shook his head. "Subject is morbidly obese. Also, the high number of blood vessels visible on her nose would suggest that she was a heavy drinker."

Agent Scott carefully examined the woman's body, withdrawing a flashlight from a pocket and going over her skin inch-by-inch.

After several moments, Scott said, "I'm done. But I want to see Doctor Reynolds here as soon as possible."

Clarke and Scott waited in the basement of the funeral parlor while Henry went to find the doctor. Clarke found himself whistling along to the melody playing on the funeral director's Victrola.

"Do you have to do that?" Scott complained.

"Whistling? No, it's not mandatory," Clarke teased. "But I *do* enjoy it from time to time."

"I'm trying to think."

Looking at his watch, Clarke said, "Henry should be back soon. He's been gone nearly a half-hour."

"When the doctor arrives, let me do the talking."

They continued waiting. Clarke dusted off an old chair and sat down. Finally, just when Clarke himself was about to see what was keeping Henry and the doctor, the two men entered the room.

"Sorry it took so long," Henry said. "The doctor was on a house call and I had to find him."

The doctor, seeing Clarke and Scott for the first time, had a concerned look on his face. "What's this about?"

"Doctor Reynolds," Scott began, "I'm Federal Agent Jacob Scott." Indicating Clarke, Scott continued, "My associate is U.S. Marshal James Clarke. We're in Pawhuska to investigate the suspicious deaths of prominent Osage tribal members."

If this concerned the doctor, he showed no sign of any nervousness. "What's this got to do with me?"

"Maybe nothing," Scott said. "But I took it upon myself to examine Mrs. Winters."

"Really?" Reynolds asked. "Are you a pathologist?"

"No, I'm not. But I have been trained to do some basic pathology while working cases." Scott, who was now standing next to the corpse of Anna Winters, pulled the sheet away and revealed the woman's fleshy arms. "I am particularly interested in what appears to be needle marks in Mrs. Winters' arms."

"Oh, there's a simple explanation. As you might know, I was Mrs. Winters' personal physician."

"No, I didn't know that."

Reynolds smiled. "Anyway, I was treating Mrs. Winters for diabetes. She had high blood sugar and I injected her with insulin several times each week."

Scott nodded. "I was just reading about insulin in the newspaper. It's pretty new stuff, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is."

"How'd you get your hands on it?" Scott asked. "It's gotta be difficult to obtain and Pawhuska isn't exactly Chicago."

"Mrs. Winters was fortunate that I have a dear friend who practices medicine in Toronto. I wrote him and he sent me enough to provide treatment for several weeks."

Clarke, listening intently, interrupted. "Did the insulin work?"

"Absolutely. Mrs. Winters' blood glucose levels dropped to nearly normal levels after administering just a few doses."

Nodding, Agent Scott said, "Okay. That explains the marks on Mrs. Winter's arms. I suppose it's possible she died from other health issues."

"The woman was living on borrowed time as it was," Reynolds said. "She was morbidly obese and she was a heavy drinker."

Scott nodded. "Thank you, Doctor. Captain Clarke and I would appreciate it if you didn't tell anyone that you met with us. We're trying to keep a low profile."

"Sure," Reynolds responded. "Always happy to assist law enforcement."

"Much appreciated. When are you going to examine the Jacksons?"

"Uh, the negro family that was brought in last night?"

"That is correct. We think Mrs. Jackson may have been sexually assaulted."

Reynolds cringed. "I have patients waiting in my office. I'll come back around noon."

As the doctor turned to leave, Scott said, "One more thing, Doctor Reynolds. I'll need a sample of insulin to share with my colleagues. I'd like to have it tested just to make sure that she wasn't accidentally poisoned."

Reynolds, who up to this point had been friendly and helpful, suddenly became defensive. "Uh, I used the last vial just two days ago."

"Do you keep the empty vials?" Scott asked. "There might be a drop or two that we can examine."

"No, I don't keep the vials. They're probably in the town dump by now."

Nodding, Scott said, "All right. Thanks for your help."

After the doctor left, Captain Clarke looked at the federal agent and smiled. "You think he's up to something, don't you?"

"While insulin might be a new miracle drug to treat high blood sugar, the stuff is impossible to get. A hospital in Chicago has been trying to get it for months. As far as I know, they're still waiting."

"So what's next?"

"I'm going to borrow a syringe from our musical mortician and get Anna Winters' blood tested. My lab in Chicago will be able to tell us if she'd received insulin... or something else."

After putting blood samples and bullets recovered from the Jackson remains on a train to Chicago, Agent Scott walked to the cemetery where the burial of Anna Winters was already in progress. Spotting Captain Clarke watching from a distance, Scott similarly found a place to view the proceedings without being noticed.

Under a sky washed white with the heat of a relentless sun, Scott noticed few in the gathering appeared to be grieving. Only May, Anna's sister, was in tears. The Winters brothers stood respectfully stoic, dressed in black. A lovely young woman stood directly behind Robert Winters.

Hmmm, Scott pondered. This must be the mistress I've heard about. Genevieve Gray. Odd that she's here. Then, noticing Miss Gray reach out and take the arm of Frank Macklin, who was standing beside the beautiful saloon singer, Scott realized that even though Miss Gray was there for her lover, Robert Winters, she used the pretext of being with Macklin as a cover.

Looking across the lawn at Captain Clarke, Scott saw that he too had noticed Miss Gray's attendance. Scott subtly nodded at Clarke, acknowledging that they both had seen the same thing. Clarke, making sure he wasn't being watched, pointed towards a mausoleum. Standing in the shadow but not entirely out of sight was a small man. Scott's forehead broke out in a sweat. *Is this the Wilkes character we've been looking for?*

The preacher finished his prayers and the small audience began to disperse. Both Scott and Clarke began to move towards Wilkes, but they both stopped in their tracks as Frank Macklin made a beeline toward the man. *This is bold, Scott thought. Macklin is so sure of himself that he's unafraid to be seen talking to his hired killer in public.*

Scott watched as Clarke moved towards the rear of the mausoleum, where he could easily grab Wilkes. *What the heck, Scott thought. I might as well see what Macklin and Wilkes are up to.*

It took Scott only a few minutes to reach the two men, who were in the middle of an animated discussion.

"I said I'll get it taken care of," Wilkes said to Macklin with a touch of anger in his reedy voice.

Reaching the two men, Scott said, "Excuse me, Mr. Macklin, may I have a word..."

Wilkes, startled, suddenly sprinted away, jumping over gravestones and dodging monuments. Captain Clarke, who was closest, made a valiant effort to give chase but lacked the stamina of the much younger man.

Everyone from the funeral party watched as the older man was forced to stop and rest his hands on his knees as he fought to regain his breath.

Macklin, still standing next to the mausoleum, said, "What's all this about?" He had the incredulous look of someone who believed he was incapable of doing wrong.

Deciding that subterfuge was no longer necessary, Scott pulled his wallet and badge from his pocket. "I'm Federal Agent Jacob Scott. Who was that man you were just talking to?"

Macklin, who hadn't got to where he was by being stupid, said, "I have no idea who he is. Just a stranger looking for a handout."

"Oh really?" Scott said. "You went directly to him once you saw he was here."

"I don't know what you're talking about." Macklin then walked away and joined Miss Gray and the Winters family.

Captain Clarke, still breathing heavily from his failed chase across the grounds, returned to Scott. "Thanks for helping," he gasped.

Shrugging, Jacob replied, "Sorry. I honestly believed you'd collar the man."

"That had to be Wilkes. He matched Emma's description perfectly."

"Damn," Scott complained. "If we'd known he was going to show up here we could have had additional help apprehending him."

"Did you hear anything they were saying?"

"One thing: Wilkes told Macklin that 'He'd get it taken care of,' whatever that means."

"It can't be good," Clarke replied.

CHAPTER 11 – STRYCHNINE POISONING

May 30, 1922

It all started with an alleged assault on a white girl by a negro shoeshine boy. But to some, the violence that took over that day had always been present. White Tulsa benefited from the labor of those who lived in Greenwood, but they never accepted the negroes as equals. It's been said that Richard Lloyd Jones himself penned the editorial in his newspaper titled, "To Lynch Nigger Tonight!" This was the match that lit the flames of hatred. It wasn't long before hundreds of raging men stormed the courthouse, hell-bent on revenge or retribution or whatever it is that drives a mob to commit violence upon innocent people. It didn't matter that the white girl who was allegedly assaulted was known to be of dubious moral character. No one cared that the dapper shoeshine boy, Dick Roland, regularly attended his church and was known to be a reliable and trustworthy worker. White Tulsa only saw a negro with sharp clothes and a carefree attitude.

A recent visitor to my town, Jeremy Stick, befriended Mr. Roland. Jeremy, a veteran of the U.S. Army, didn't see color like others did. Jeremy judged a man by his attitude and character. While renting a room in my house, Jeremy told me that he knew that Dicky Roland was his friend. Jeremy said that Dicky wasn't the sort who would attack a white woman. But when Jeremy left my home late that afternoon to see what he could do to calm the violence at the courthouse, I had no idea that I would never see Jeremy alive again.

It had taken Emma all morning to find the desire to write. Her mind was consumed by thoughts of Andrew Wilkes running freely through the city. I don't understand how someone like Wilkes can escape the law when so many innocent people end up swinging from a rope.

A loud knock outside in the hallway startled Emma. She opened her door a crack and saw a large negro standing outside the door of Captain

Clarke.

"Can I help you?" she asked.

The man removed his dusty hat and replied, "Sorry to bother you, Ma'am. I'm lookin' for someone."

Emma had every reason to be suspicious, yet she found herself fighting the urge to stereotype the man as an unwanted visitor. "A lawman is staying in that room."

"Cap'n Clarke?"

Emma blinked. "Wait – are you the man they call 'Rosie'? I believe you were at Jeremy's burial."

"That was a bad day, Ma'am."

"It was a bad year, Mr. Rose."

The big man hesitated, as if uncertain what to say next. Finally, he said, "I was with the Cap'n in Cuba and also in the Marshal's Service."

Emma wanted to invite the man into her room to wait for Clarke to return but knew that would cross the lines of propriety should anyone see them.

"I'm Emma Larson. Why don't we go outside and talk? It seems that you and I have a mutual friend in the Captain."

Emma followed Rosie down to the lobby where they caught the sanctimonious eyes of the deskman. Ignoring this, they walked outdoors and found a bench to sit upon.

Thinking about how to begin, Emma decided that it would be best to jump in with both feet. "The night of the massacre, I was assaulted by a man named Andrew Wilkes. While I was unconscious, Wilkes murdered my friend Jeremy."

"I'm aware of what happened, Ma'am. The Cap'n told me everything."

Emma paused for a moment as a noisy truck carrying a load of drilling machinery passed on the street. "I went away for a while but decided to return to Tulsa to write a book about what happened. But I saw the man who... assaulted me... and Captain Clarke brought me here for my safety."

"The Cap'n is a good man. I'm sure you'll be okay with him."

"Everything was going fine until a few days ago. I saw Andrew Wilkes here in Pawhuska."

Rosie's big brown eyes practically bulged from his face. "Is the Cap'n lookin' for him?"

"Yes. I've heard the Captain and the federal agent he's working with, his name is..."

Rosie interrupted. "Agent Scott. I've met him."

"Oh, I forgot. You went out with the Captain and Agent Scott to the place where that negro family was murdered."

"Uh-huh. I've been out lookin' 'round for whoever done the murder ever since that day..."

Emma lowered her head and slowly nodded, thinking about the poor family that had been murdered. "The Captain and Agent Scott think Wilkes is involved in the deaths of some Osage here in Pawhuska."

Rosie sat quietly for a moment before speaking. "A man like this Wilkes... he's capable of doing most anything. Money don't mean much to him. He does it for the thrill."

Emma gave Rosie a description of Wilkes and asked him to keep an eye out for the man. "I won't rest until he's behind bars."

The two stood and before Emma could walk away, Rosie said, "Do you think Wilkes murdered the Jacksons?"

"Oh my God," Emma gasped. "I never thought of that."

Agent Scott entered the Stagecoach Café in the late afternoon, found a table that offered at least a little privacy, and took a seat. A surly waiter, a man Scott suspected would be happier serving drinks behind a bar, brought over a menu and asked, "Whaddaya want to drink?"

"I'll have lemonade if you have it," Scott replied.

"That's 'bout all we've got these days," the man muttered as he began to turn away.

"Wait a moment, please. I'm hoping to see Miss Gray."

"You and about ten other fellas. Take a number."

Flashing his badge, Scott said, "Maybe this will move me to the front of the line."

The waiter disappeared. Scott sat alone, waiting for his cool drink. It was another dry, dusty day and he was parched.

Several minutes later the lovely Genevieve Gray emerged from the rear of the dining room. Every man in the joint turned to watch as she

sauntered across the floor, each hoping they would be the one to be visited by Pawhuska's most desired woman.

When she sat across from Scott, the men then resumed what they'd been doing. Scott smiled and stood, saying, "Thank you for taking the time to see me, Miss Gray."

In a lilting drawl that was intended to sound like southern-plantation wealth, Genevieve Gray replied, "I always find time to speak with those who uphold the laws in our fine country."

Scott smiled, yet he wasn't the least bit amused by the act. *If she thinks she's putting me on...*

"What may I do for you, Special Agent Scott?"

Surprised that she knew who he was, Scott decided that if she could be direct, so could he.

"How long are you going to wait to marry Robert Winters?"

Genevieve Gray's face revealed a wry smile. "It's straight to business then, is it?"

"I see your accent is suddenly that of someone from the east. New York?"

"The Bronx, actually. But close enough."

"Well, now that we've got that straight..."

"I have no intention of marrying Ralph. Oh, he's good for a few laughs now and then, but he's not the sort I'd place any bets on. If you get my drift."

Scott frowned at this. "You don't think he's long for this world?"

"Oh, you never know around here. Everybody knows he and his loser of a brother are both up to their eyeballs in debt."

Nodding, Scott asked, "How well do you know Frank Macklin?"

She sat back in her chair and took a deep breath. Finally, she leaned forward and whispered, "Is what I tell you confidential?"

Scott nodded again. "This will remain just between you and me."

"Macklin's a snake."

"But I saw you two together today at the funeral..."

"I'm just doing what I have to do to stay on Frank's good side. Listen, I've seen his other side and have the bruises to prove it."

Jake frowned at hearing this. "I see. Do you think he's capable of hurting the Winters?"

With no hesitation, she replied, "I wouldn't put it past him. But I don't have any proof. It's just that he's a bully and a conniving creep who thinks he can do anything he wants around here."

The two quieted as the waiter finally brought the lemonade for Scott and a cup of coffee for Genevieve. "Will there be anything else?"

"No," Scott said. "This will be enough."

They remained silent until the man left their table.

"You have to watch out for that one," Genevieve said, nodding towards the waiter. "He's on the Macklin payroll."

"I imagine a man like Macklin has people under his thumb all over this town."

Genevieve nodded. "The local law, the newspaper..."

Scott interrupted. "What about Doctor Reynolds?"

"Gavin?" Her face blushed, leading Scott to surmise that Miss Gray might have a romantic interest in the good doctor."

"Why not?" Scott asked.

"Gavin... I mean, Doctor Reynolds. He's a kind, decent man."

"But anyone could be coerced to do something they wouldn't normally do."

"What are you getting at?"

Scott took a deep breath and considered telling Miss Gray that they suspected the doctor of poisoning Anna Winters. Finally, he said, "Let's just say that we're looking into how Mrs. Winters died."

Genevieve laughed. "Hell, everyone knew she was an alcoholic."

"Did you know she had high blood sugar?"

She shook her head. "No, but I'm not surprised. She never took care of herself. But look, everyone knows that Ralph only married her for her money. That's how it works around here. The woman was at least 100 pounds overweight and she drank gin like a fish. If you ask me, she drove herself into the grave."

Hearing this, Scott was convinced that Genevieve Gray had no further information to offer. He drained the last of his lemonade and stood. "Thank you for your time today, Miss Gray. Our little chat has been most enlightening."

Helping Miss Gray to her feet, she whispered, "Keep your eyes on Macklin. If anything bad is happening around here, he's got his hands in it."

After leaving the Stagecoach Café, Scott went directly to the Western Union office at the train station to see if he had messages from Chicago. The window clerk handed Scott a telegram.

STRY IN SAMPLE. RESOLVE AT EARLIEST DATE.

Scott thought for a moment about the word “STRY.” *Is this code for “strychnine?”* He stood, looking at the telegram, and had the realization that the lab in Chicago was telling him that Anna Winters had been slowly poisoned to death. Doctor Reynolds told everyone he was administering insulin, when in fact he was slowly killing Anna with rat poison.

“Will there be anything else, sir?” the telegraph clerk asked.

Lost in thought, Scott turned without replying and left the office. He knew that Reynolds had no reason to kill Anna Winters on his own. So that meant that either her husband, Robert, or someone else put him up to the task. *Frank Macklin is the most likely suspect. But didn’t Emma say she saw Andrew Wilkes talking with the doctor? The line from Wilkes to Macklin has been established. Maybe it’s time to put some pressure on the good doctor to see if we can get him to tell us who’s pulling his strings.*

It was still early in the afternoon. Moving quickly, Scott returned to the hotel and found Captain Clarke. “Come with me.”

“What’s up?” Clarke asked as they walked to the doctor’s office.

“Just follow my lead.”

The two lawmen entered the office and saw that the waiting room was full. Children, parents, and the elderly all waited for their chance to see Doctor Reynolds.

“Busy place,” Clarke said under his breath.

“Excuse me,” Scott said to the receptionist while brandishing his badge. “We must see Doctor Reynolds immediately.”

The woman, a middle-aged matron, cringed when she saw the badge. “He’s with a patient, but let me see what I can do.”

She disappeared and left Scott and Clarke to wait. Several minutes passed, and just as Scott was beginning to think he should enter the exam

room without permission, she returned with a worried look on her face. "I told him that two lawmen are here to see him and he ran from the room! I followed him out into the back where he parks his Buick, but he was already pulling away!"

"Damn!" Scott shouted. Everyone in the waiting room looked at him, expecting an explanation for his cursing.

Embarrassed, Scott said, "Sorry folks. It's been a long day." He then ran through the office with Clarke hot on his heels. They emerged into the back alley and immediately saw where Reynolds had spun his tires as he fled in his car.

"I guess that makes him guilty," Clarke said. "But of what, I have no idea."

"Strychnine poisoning."

"Anna Winters?"

"Yes." Scott handed Clarke the telegram. "I just received this today. I was hoping we could put some pressure on him to tell us who was making him inject poison into Anna Winters."

Clarke nodded. "Wilkes is behind this. And Wilkes works for Macklin."

"I agree. But with the doctor's testimony, we could have arrested Macklin."

"What are you going to do now?"

The two men entered the doctor's office and saw that the receptionist was sitting in what was now an empty waiting room. "Sorry to bother you with this, Ma'am, but could you provide us with a photo of the doctor?"

"Certainly. Wait here."

She disappeared into a back room and returned a moment later with a photo of Reynolds wearing his University of Oklahoma Medical College graduation gown. "Will this do? It's a bit dated..."

Scott looked over the photo and said, "Close enough."

Without saying goodbye, Scott left the office with Clarke obediently following. "I'm going to wire a description of Doctor Reynolds to my office. They'll put out an APB on the man. With luck, we'll have him before he gets too far away."

Clarke asked, "What are you going to do with the photo?"

"I'll mail it to Chicago." Scott suddenly stopped walking, causing Clarke to nearly overrun the young Federal Agent. "Sorry about that. I was just

thinking how wonderful it would be if we could wire this photo to all of the law enforcement agencies in the region.”

Clarke shrugged. “That will never happen.”

Scott resumed walking. “Probably not, but you never know.”

CHAPTER 12 – STAKEOUT, ARSON, AND ESCAPE

June 1 and 2, 1922

“I’m going to find this man, Wilkes.” Rosie was sitting in the one rickety chair that decorated Captain Clarke’s hotel room.

Clarke nodded. “We’re all lookin’ for Wilkes. But if you find him, all the better. Just make sure you don’t go after him alone.”

Just then there was a quick knock on the door and Agent Scott entered. “Ah, it’s Mr. Rose! I didn’t know you were still in Pawhuska.”

Standing, Rosie replied, “I looked around out in the scrub for a few days and didn’t find nuthin’. But when I came here to talk to the Cap’n, Miss Emma told me you was lookin’ for a man called Wilkes.”

“That’s right, Mr. Rose,” Scott said. “We’d love to have you on our team. Consider yourself deputized.”

“You can bunk here with me, Rosie,” Clarke said.

Rosie spent the next two days searching for Wilkes. Driven by anger and a desire for justice for the murders of the Jackson family, the big man watched the seedy parts of town, looking for anyone who matched the description given to him by Emma.

Even though Pawhuska was small by Tulsa standards, there was a warehouse district on the north side of town. Rather than standing around looking conspicuous, Rosie found quick employment loading and unloading wagons of corn and wheat at a nearby grain elevator. The job enabled him to move about without being questioned as he traveled back and forth to the train terminal. While the Captain and Special Agent Scott were looking elsewhere, Rosie transferred hundreds of eighty-pound burlap bags of grain from a railcar to his wagon. The heat, always miserable this time of year, would have put a weaker man on his knees before lunchtime. But Rosie plugged away, doing the heavy lifting without complaint. He kept his eyes open and carefully looked at every man he encountered. Emma told him to be especially aware of Wilkes’s eyes, saying, “You can see evil lurking there.”

The first day proved to be fruitless, and during the afternoon of the second day, he was beginning to believe that he was wasting his time. But

as he drove the heavy wagon around a corner he spotted a small, shifty-looking man hurriedly disappearing into a dilapidated warehouse. Rosie desperately wanted to approach the man right then and there, but his years of training under Clarke prevailed. *I'd best go get the Cap'n and Agent Scott and bring 'em back here.*

It took longer than expected for Rosie to find Clarke and Scott. The two men were on separate ends of town, hoping to spot Wilkes. To complicate matters, Emma was with Scott. She'd refused to wait alone in her hotel room and without being invited, and after changing into trousers and comfortable shoes, joined the FBI agent on his stakeout.

"I found 'em," Rosie said to Scott. "He's holed up in a warehouse near the grain elevator."

Emma's face was a combination of dread and anticipation. "Let's go get him!"

"You best return back to your room, Emma," Scott said. "Things could get dicey."

Emma, who felt she had every reason to participate in the arrest of Andrew Wilkes, refused. "I am going with you. Don't try to make me change my mind."

Scott casually pulled open his jacket and showed Emma the .38 revolver that rested in a shoulder holster. "Emma, when I say things could get dicey, I really meant..."

"Lead will fly," She interrupted. "I spent the last year editing detective stories and know what happens in situations like this."

Scott turned to Rosie. "Will you take Miss Larson back to the hotel?"

"Yessir. This ain't no place for a lady. Beggin' your pardon, Miss Larson."

Emma scowled. "Stupid men. Always shoving us women into the background."

"Meet the Captain and me at the grain elevator, Rosie. We'll whistle when you get there and then you can take us to the warehouse where Wilkes is hiding."

As Rosie led Emma away, she suddenly turned towards the agent and said, "Please be careful."

Scott blushed. "I will."

He then walked briskly towards where he knew Clarke was on stakeout. Finding the Federal Marshal, he told him that they'd found Wilkes and would rendezvous with Rosie there.

"Rosie had to return Emma to the hotel first," Scott said sheepishly.

Clarke grunted and smiled. "You do realize that you two are perfect for each other, don't you?"

Jake shook his head and looked at the ground. "She's... something. She's really something."

It was dark when the two lawmen saw Rosie approaching the grain elevator. Agent Scott did his best to whistle but was only able to blow out a bit of spit and air.

Smiling, Clarke put two fingers in his mouth and gave Rosie a birdcall.

"Robin?" Jake whispered.

"Goldfinch."

"Wish I could do that."

"Comes in handy in the bush."

"He went in that building over there," Rosie said quietly as he approached. He pointed at a one-story building that had seen better days. *"There's a door on the north side that's hidden behind some bushes."*

The three men hid in the shadows and watched in the evening quiet, with only the sound of a distant cricket chirping to interrupt the silence.

"I can see why Wilkes chose this place," Clarke muttered. *"It's as peaceful as a cemetery."*

More time passed, and Scott took out his pocket watch. *"It's after ten. What do you think about breaking in and seeing if we can catch him now?"*

"Seems like a good idea to..." Clark was interrupted as the hidden door of the warehouse opened. Wilkes nonchalantly exited the building and headed down a dark alley.

"Let's get 'em!" Rosie whispered.

Scott reached out and held Rosie back. *"We'll follow him and see what he's up to."*

This is crazy. I can't just go to my room and wait...

As soon as Rosie deposited Emma in the hotel lobby, she ran to her room and grabbed a jacket. She ran back to the street, praying that she'd be able to find Rosie and follow him. Under dimly lit street lights, Emma spotted the large deputy just as he was beginning to round a corner. She jogged a bit to close the gap and soon she was at a safe trailing distance. After a few blocks, he reacted to the sound of a birdcall and disappeared into the shadows. Taking her cue, Emma also retreated into the darkness and waited. As the evening deepened, Emma was glad she'd brought a jacket. Cool dampness fell upon the town, a sign that rain might be on the way.

It didn't take long for Emma to realize that stakeouts weren't glamorous *or* fun. She found a rusty bucket to sit on and did her best to remain alert. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, she heard the unmistakable sound of squeaky door hinges. Wilkes emerged from behind some bushes and began walking down a dark alley. From where she was hiding, she could see that Wilkes was climbing into a car.

Why aren't Jacob and the Captain making the arrest? Don't they see that Wilkes is getting away? Emma watched, sweat pouring down her back. She looked over to where she thought her friends were hiding but saw nothing in the darkness. Wilkes started the car, then rolled and lit a cigarette as if he didn't have a care in the world. Finally, he began to slowly drive away.

Without thinking, Emma emerged from her hiding place and stood, wondering how she might stop Wilkes. She looked around for Jacob, Clarke, and Rosie, but saw nothing. *What am I going to do?*

"It's Emma!" Jacob whispered. *"What does she think she's doing?"*

A Chevy emerged from the same alley that Wilkes had disappeared into.

"He's got a car!" Clarke yelled.

Just then, Emma emerged from the shadows. Wilkes saw her and sped the vehicle in her direction. Before anyone could react, the car door flung open. Wilkes jumped out and grabbed Emma by the arm and shoved her towards the car. Emma fought back, slapping at Wilkes's face, but the man possessed extraordinary strength despite his small stature. He punched

Emma in the stomach, which seemed to knock the breath out of her, threw her in the car, and drove away just as the trio of lawmen were nearly upon him. Pulling his pistol from its holster, Jacob thought about firing at the escaping vehicle but lowered the weapon when he realized that he could hit Emma.

"Son of a ..." Jacob said out loud. "We should have nabbed Wilkes when we had the chance."

Clarke stood, shaking his head. "Come on, Rosie. Let's get our horses and see if we can track him."

"You can track a car?" Scott asked. "That won't be easy."

"It doesn't help that it's dark. But we have what they call a ringer in our friend Rosie here. He's tracked worse desperados than Wilkes. Plus, I figure that Wilkes will head towards the Macklin Ranch. We'll start our search there."

Thinking quickly, Scott replied, "Okay. I'll go to the town constable's office and wait by the telephone. Call me as soon as you know what Wilkes is up to and I'll join you in a car."

"Are you going to call in some assistance?"

"I'll alert the other lawmen in the area. I'll telephone my superiors in Chicago and let them know what's going on."

Rosie and Clarke briskly walked the several blocks to where their horses Honcho and Esther were stabled. After rousing the stable manager from his slumber, they retrieved the animals. Next, they returned to the hotel where Clarke quickly changed into clothes more suitable for the range. He also found his Colt Revolver and Winchester rifle. Rosie brought along his weapons of choice - a 10-gage double-barreled shotgun and a saber that he'd carried since his days as a Buffalo Soldier.

Under a new moon, the two lawmen quickly made their way toward the Macklin ranch. Rosie stopped a few times to examine tire tracks on the dirt road, using a match for light. He shook his head and said, "I don't see any tracks from Wilke's Chevy."

The road headed to the top of a small hill, and once at the top, they stopped to check for tire tracks once more.

Clarke was unhappy with himself for possibly getting it wrong about where Wilkes was heading. "If you don't see the tracks here..."

A sudden WHOMP followed by a WHOOSH blasted from the town of Pawhuska, which lay a mile or so away on the plain below them. A moment or two later, the same sound was repeated. Rosie stood and stared and said, "I think we'd better get back to town. Someone's lit a big fire."

Clarke pressed his spurs into Honcho's ribs and began a full gallop back into town. Rosie's large mare had no trouble keeping up, and they were soon at the site of the first fire. It was the majestic home of Robert Winters.

The house burned, and even though the volunteer fire department arrived shortly after Clarke and Rosie, there was little that could be done to save the structure. Fortunately, the house sat on a large lot that would keep the fire from spreading to other nearby homes.

"God, I hope there wasn't anyone home," Clarke said, shaking his head in dismay.

"What about the other one?" Rosie asked. "We heard the sound of two fires gettin' started."

Just then, someone yelled, "Ralph Winters' house is on fire too!"

With little else to do, Clarke slowly rode down the street, where just a few blocks away, the home of Ralph and May Winters was nearly consumed by flames. Just as everyone watching was beginning to believe that there was nobody inside, May Winters, who was still a strong and healthy woman, appeared in the large picture window of her second-story bedroom. She threw a heavy chair at the window, smashing the glass. As smoke billowed from the room, May stood silently, perhaps thinking about her escape. Flames began to burn the window curtains, and before the fire department could get a ladder to the window, she collapsed to the floor. Some said later that they saw a hand reach up to the windowsill seconds before the entire second floor was engulfed in fire and the entire structure collapsed.

Seeing Agent Scott standing nearby, Clarke dismounted and walked towards the FBI agent. "I fear we didn't fully appreciate just how evil Andrew Wilkes is."

Jacob Scott let out a huge sigh. "I failed at the primary reason I was sent to this place."

"You couldn't have known..."

"Chicago won't care. I might as well resign now."

“Hell, Jacob. We won’t know if anyone’s been killed until the fire cools down enough for us to look. That will take hours.”

Scott walked down the street towards the house of Robert Winters with Clarke at his side. “Anna has already been murdered. I have evidence of strychnine poisoning. Plus, I stopped at the hotel for a moment before heading to the constable’s office. A telegram from Chicago was waiting for me.” He reached into an inside pocket of his jacket, pulled out a sheet of paper, and handed it to Clarke:

GAVIN REYNOLDS MD FOUND. DECEASED BY HANGING. PROBABLE SUICIDE.

“Well don’t that just tear all,” Clarke said as he handed the telegram back to Scott. “Guess that proves he killed Anna Winters.”

“What good does it do... us knowing this?” Scott wadded up the paper and threw it towards the burning house. The paper fluttered to the ground, falling well short of the flames.

Rosie, who’d been canvassing the area on foot, returned to the two lawmen. “I found tire tracks. Chevy Touring Car. Looks like it’s headin’ where we figured it would – Macklin’s.”

Clarke understood that his friend Jacob Scott was frustrated. This assignment, as difficult as it was, would help the young agent gain a reputation. *The question is, what sort of reputation? Incompetence? No, we still have time to see that justice is served.* “Rosie, you and I will resume our search for Wilkes. Agent Scott? I think you should head to the constable’s office and make some calls. When I get to Macklin’s, I’ll telephone you.”

Without waiting for an answer, Clarke remounted Honcho and rode away with Rosie following closely behind. Before the pair left town, they saw the sedan of Henry Tallchief. “Hold on a minute, Rosie. We’d better let Henry in on the news.”

After filling the tribal sheriff in on the location of Wilkes’s hideout, the abduction of Emma, and the two fires, Henry stood as silent as a pile of stones. Finally, he said, “May Winters is dead. She never slept anywhere but in her own bed as far as I know. I will return to my people and let them know that the entire Osage Nation is to look for this man, Wilkes.”

Clarke put his hand on the tribal sheriff's shoulder. "Thank you, Henry. We'll take all of the help we can get."

"Wait for me at Macklin's. I will join you."

"Be quick," Clarke replied. "Wilkes already has a head start."

"He does. But he's driving an automobile. We will catch him."

Clarke and Rosie trotted off towards Macklin's. It was now after midnight, and neither man acted the least bit tired. Rosie stopped a few times when the dim moonlight poked through the clouds, allowing him to confirm that they were still following the tire tracks of the Chevy. "He's definitely headed this way, Cap'n."

An hour later, Clarke and Rosie entered the long driveway that led to the Macklin ranch house. They dismounted and tied their horses to a fence post. Grabbing his rifle, Clarke said, "Best we sneak up quietly now."

They stayed in the shadows and stealthily made their way to the front of the house. Squatting behind the well, Clarke whispered, *"I expected to find Wilkes' car."*

"Looks like he's been here and gone already. Did you see the front door?"

Clarke looked over the well. The front door of the house was wide open.

"We're too late..."

Without speaking, Rosie sprinted across the open ground and made it to the front porch without incident. Clarke followed, but before he could reach Rosie, his friend entered the house alone.

"Wait for me!" Clarke went inside the house just a few seconds behind his friend. But before he made it ten feet, Rosie was back.

Shaking his head, Rosie said, "I found Macklin. Dead. His throat's cut."

It took Clarke a moment to accept what Rosie was telling him. Then he managed to choke out, "...Emma?"

"Miss Larson isn't here."

"Thank God for that," Clarke replied. *If Emma's with Wilkes, she's still alive.*

Clarke walked slowly through the sparsely-furnished house, looking for the deceased owner.

"Macklin's over here."

The rancher lay on his stomach in a pool of his own blood. Clarke saw a wound in the back of his neck, then carefully rolled the deceased rancher

over to his back. His throat had been punctured as a knife missed the spinal column. "Looks like he was stabbed from behind. The blood is fresh, so this happened shortly before we got here."

"I looked around," Rosie said quietly. "Didn't find no murder weapon."

Avoiding the blood, Clarke squatted and closed Macklin's eyes. He then pulled a natty blanket from a nearby chair and placed it over the dead man's face. *Look what your greed got you, Macklin. No wife, no kids to inherit this ranch. Unless you left a will, one of your neighbors will likely get it all at auction.*

Clarke looked at Rosie and said, "Let's see if there's anything else in the house that looks interesting."

The two men went down a hallway and entered a room that looked like it had been Macklin's office. An electric light burned in the corner. A telephone, installed at what must have been great expense, sat on the office desk. On the wall behind, they saw a safe with its door left wide open.

Clarke looked in the safe and saw some legal papers but that was it. "If I was to guess, I'd say that Wilkes came here to collect his payment from Macklin."

Rosie nodded. "And then he killed his boss as he was being led from the house."

"What a waste." Clarke leaned back against the office desk and crossed his arms, lost in thought. *This job sure hasn't gone anything like I thought it would. This Wilkes character is one of the vilest criminals I've gone against.* With a heavy sigh, Clarke said, "Go on out and wake the ranch hands and tell 'em what happened. I'll call Agent Scott."

It took a minute for Clarke to reach Scott. The conversation was brief, for Scott was still trying to wrap his mind around the events of the last six hours.

"That makes thirteen dead so far, assuming that Robert and Ralph Winters were home when their houses burned to the ground," Scott said quietly. "The Crosses, Charley White Horse, the Jackson family, Anna and May, Dr. Reynolds, Macklin..."

"And one kidnaped woman."

"Right... I hadn't forgotten about Emma, James."

“Rosie and I are going to wait a bit for Henry Tallchief to show up. He and some of his people are going to join the hunt for Wilkes and Emma.”

The phone crackled and went silent for a moment. “You still there, Jacob?”

“Oh... yes. I was just thinking. You do what you said: go after Wilkes. We’re fortunate to have you on the job, James.”

Clarke grunted. “With Rosie and the Osage helping, we’ll track that dirty scoundrel and bring him in.”

Scott replied, “At this point, I don’t care if he’s not breathing.” Then the telephone went silent.

Wilkes was grinning as he drove over the bumpy backroads south of Pawhuska. He was enjoying the cat-and-mouse game with the police. His role in the Tulsa massacre a year earlier proved he was capable of doing things he’d only imagined in the past. He wasn’t averse to the occasional killing for money, and while he didn’t possess what you’d call “book smarts,” so far he’d been able to avoid arrest for his many crimes.

But he also understood that he’d been lucky. Back in town earlier that same evening, he’d failed to realize that lawmen were watching his hideout. It was only after he’d shoved Emma Larson into his car that he’d seen the lawmen coming after him in the car’s side window mirror. He’d sped away and headed straight to the street where the Winters’ lived. Using strong tape and rope, he bound and gagged Emma and shoved her onto the floor in front of the rear seat. Then he went to the first Winters’ house and set it ablaze, using kerosene he’d hidden around the house the previous evening. He repeated the process at the second Winters’ house. He didn’t stick around to watch his work, for he knew that he’d used enough accelerant to burn down an entire city block.

On the previous evening, he met with Macklin to get the go-ahead and his first payment of \$5000. The conversation didn’t go as planned. It seemed that now the rancher was getting cold feet.

“Let’s just hold off on this business for a while,” Macklin had pleaded.

Wilkes just stared at the man. Despite the coolness of the evening, sweat beads were forming on Macklin's forehead. "It's funny that you didn't have any problems with hiring me to kill that other family a while back. What were their names?" Wilkes paused, relishing the control he had over the wealthy rancher. "Oh, that's right. Clara and John Cross. How much did you make from that little episode?"

When Macklin didn't answer, Wilkes shrugged. "No matter, what's done is done. As for the Winters' ... you'll pay me what I'm owed. I'll do the job and then be back for the rest."

Macklin silently handed over the \$5000 payment and Wilkes headed back to Pawhuska, laughing the entire way.

When Wilkes returned to the ranch after setting the fires, Macklin acted as if he was unaware that the killings had proceeded as planned. "I never told you..."

Wilkes backhanded the rancher across the face and grabbed the older man by the front of his shirt. "You'd better stiffen up, Macklin. I did what you hired me to do, and I expect my final payment."

Macklin coughed and struggled to regain his composure. "Okay, okay. But how do I know that the Winters' are dead?"

"The same way you knew that Clara Cross was dead. When they find the bones."

"I'll get your money and then I hope to never see you again." Macklin headed to his personal office with Wilkes following to make sure that the rancher didn't sneak out of the house through a back door.

Wilkes smiled as he watched Macklin open the safe. "I don't see why you're suddenly acting like you had no part in this. After all, you'll be a very wealthy man soon, won't you?"

Macklin handed Wilkes another \$5000. "I'm already a very wealthy man. Maybe if I'd thought about this longer I'd have done things differently."

"Don't get all namby-pamby on me now, Macklin. We've eliminated a couple of rich old Osage women and their good-for-nothin' husbands. Although most folks will wring their hands and say how sorry they are about what happened, secretly they'll thank us."

Macklin, deep in thought, left the safe open as he escorted Wilkes towards the front door of the house.

This wasn't lost on the little man, and seeing an opportunity, he pulled a six-inch-long knife from his boot, reached up, and stabbed Macklin in the back of the neck. As Macklin fell to the floor, blood gushed from both the front and back of his neck, resulting in a fast and rather surprising death. Wilkes wiped the knife on Macklin's pants and returned it to his boot. Then he returned to the safe where he found another \$15,000 sitting there, just waiting for him to take it.

As Wilkes drove through the darkness of the Oklahoma night, he smiled. *Twenty-five grand! I think I'll forget about the penny-anty stuff in this hellhole and head somewhere less dusty. Maybe New Orleans.*

A groan and muffled sounds came from the rear of the vehicle.

Wilks frowned at the distraction but then smiled when he thought about the fun he'd have with his captive once they found a place to hole up.

"Shut up back there," he commanded. "I'm trying to think."

CHAPTER 13 – BOUND AND GAGGED

June 3 and 4, 1922

Jacob Scott dreaded the call that he had to make to Chicago. Deputy Director Anderson would relish the opportunity to bring him back to the home office and stick him behind a desk. As the sun began to peek over the eastern horizon, Scott stood from the chair he'd been sitting in at the Constable's office and began to leave the building.

He kicked the snoozing deputy in the boot, waking the man. "I'll be out for a bit. If anyone calls for me, get their telephone number and I'll call them back."

The streets were quiet as he walked towards Wilkes' hideout. After all of the pandemonium of the previous evening's two house fires, the silence allowed him to think. His mind was stuck on the amount of death that was all caused by one person. Now that Macklin was dead and Wilkes was on the run, the reign of terror in Pawhuska was likely over. While there were still many white men in charge of Osage wealth here, once word got out that the U.S. Government was looking into financial crimes the killing would stop.

Scott reached the warehouse where Wilkes had been hiding and found that the door was locked. He walked around the building and found a window that he could climb through. As he bent over to pick up a large rock, he thought *I really ought to get a warrant before I enter this building*. He tossed the rock from hand to hand as he considered his options. *The hell with it. Things have gone far enough already*. He used the rock to smash the window, removed as much jagged glass from the frame as he could, and climbed inside. The place was a dusty, cobweb-filled mess of broken and forgotten machinery, wooden boxes, and empty grain bags. Sunlight filtered through high windows, revealing dust as it hung in the air. A blackbird flew past Scott's head, startling him.

The interior of the warehouse was dark, but there was just enough light for Scott to move about without bumping into things. After a few minutes of looking around, he spotted a cot and blanket sitting in a small room that

might have been used as an office at one time. A wooden crate was about half-full of empty beer bottles. *Aha! Exactly what I was looking for.*

There was little else that Scott was interested in. After picking up the crate of bottles, he left and walked quickly back to his hotel room. The bottles he'd collected at the site of the Jackson murder sat in a box on the floor. He moved the bottles to the window where he'd have the best lighting and carefully began looking for fingerprints. The first three of the Jackson bottles only had fingerprint smudges, but the fourth had clear prints of the left thumb and index finger. Presumably, Wilkes had been drinking with his left hand as he steered his car with his other hand. The bottle had a label attached, and in Scott's own handwriting it said, "Found in weeds near murder site."

He began rummaging through the bottles that he'd collected that morning and found a few that had fingerprints. Using a magnifying glass, he easily matched one with the Jackson bottle. *Okay, Wilkes. I can prove that you were at the site of the Jackson murders. This evidence will help convince a jury... if it comes to that.*

After a quick splash of water in the basin and a trip to the indoor privy, Scott left the hotel and headed to the street where the Winters' houses had been. A couple of volunteer firemen lingered and kept the public from getting too close to the still-smoldering remains.

One of the firemen, a tall and lanky fellow, noticed Scott and walked over to where he was standing. "You must be the federal agent."

Scott looked at the man and nodded. "Nasty business last night."

The fireman nodded. "Three killed in the fires last night."

"Three?"

"Robert Winters's body was found in his bedroom. The bodies of May and Ralph Winters were found in their house an hour ago."

"Such a waste."

"Very similar to what happened earlier this year," the fireman said. "To that other family..."

"John and Clara Cross."

"Yeah, that's the ones. I didn't know 'em well. Just saw 'em on the sidewalk once in a while."

"I understand that Mrs. Cross was Osage."

"She was. Her father was one of the original Injuns who moved to these parts. I hear he became a millionaire when oil was found."

Scott removed his hat and ran his hand through his hair. "That's true of most of the original Osage who were moved here by the government. They were able to get the oil and mineral rights to the land. Only thing, the government put white folks in charge of the money."

The fireman, who up to now hadn't considered what Scott was telling him, rubbed his chin as if in thought. "You mean... the Crosses? They were murdered? For their money?"

Scott turned and began walking away. "That's what I was sent here to find out, but I think we already know the answer."

Back at the constable's office, Jacob finally called Chicago. He'd been checking in every day as ordered, but the events of the last 24 hours would likely be his undoing.

After a few moments of waiting, the operator said, "Go ahead, sir. You are connected to Chicago."

"Scott? Is that you?"

The gravelly voice on the other end of the line nearly caused Scott to drop the telephone to the floor in surprise. He'd expected to be speaking to his superior in Chicago, Deputy Director Anderson. Instead, he had the Deputy Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, J. Edgar Hoover, on the line.

"This is Agent Jacob Scott, Director Hoover... I was expecting..."

"That turd, Anderson? I 'promoted' him to an office of federal archives in D.C. He won't be working in the field under my watch."

Scott could think of nothing to say about this development. It was good news, but why was *Hoover* on the telephone?

As if reading Scott's mind, Hoover said, "I'm in Chicago for a couple of weeks reviewing our offices in the midwest. The whiskey has continued to flow from Canada into our wonderful, tea-totaling union, and I intend to have it stopped."

"Uh, that's great news, Sir."

“Right.” Hoover paused and Scott imagined his superior taking a puff on the cigar he was rarely without. “But I’m also very, very interested in your ‘situation’ in Oklahoma. What do you have to tell me other than that you have a poisoned Indian and a dead physician on your hands?”

Scott took a deep breath. “There’s more, Sir. Much more. I have evidence that Macklin...”

“The rancher?”

“Yes sir. Uh... he’s dead.”

“Any idea who’d behind killing him?”

“We think it was the fellow he hired. Name’s Wilkes. Andrew Wilkes.”

Hoover paused and Jacob stood and paced as far as the telephone cord would allow. “I’ll have our men check on this Wilkes,” the Deputy Director finally said. “What else can you tell me about Macklin?”

Jacob’s mouth was bone dry but somehow he managed to speak. “He was extorting the Winters’ families. The Winters’ women were wealthy Osage. Their husbands took out some hefty loans from Macklin, using their oil holdings as collateral.”

“Good work. That’s why I sent you out there. Unfortunate though that everyone you just mentioned is deceased. But that won’t be the end of this. I’ll assign some of our best financial people to investigate the bank...”

“It’s the Pawhuska State Bank, Sir.”

“Right. I’ll have it looked at. If we stop the bankers, Scott, we remove the criminal’s reason for committing the crimes.”

Scott went on to tell Hoover about the fires, abduction of Emma Larson, the murder of Frank Macklin, and the manhunt for Andrew Wilkes. “I take full responsibility for my failure to stop these killings, Director Hoover.”

Hoover grunted. “Make no mistake, Scott, you are the man in charge on the ground out there. But if I held every agent under my supervision to be responsible for the deaths that happen during their investigations, I’d have ‘em *all* supervising document archives in D.C.”

Feeling a little relieved, Scott said, “Yes sir. I understand.”

“Now, tell me about how you plan to apprehend this Wilkes scoundrel.”

Scott told the director that while Wilkes had a car, Captain Clarke and his men would try to intercept the murderer at places where he’d stop to buy fuel for his vehicle. “Wilkes is heading south, possibly to Mexico. There aren’t a lot of places to gas up between here and Dallas. It also helps that

the roads aren't in great shape. I believe, as does Captain Clarke, that in this part of the country, horses can travel farther and faster than an automobile."

"I understand some places in this country are yet to be civilized. Your plan seems sound. I'll turn the telephone over to another agent so you can coordinate the hunt for Wilkes. Do you believe his captive is still alive?"

Scott swallowed again. "Wilkes has a history with this woman, Sir. He assaulted her in Tulsa last June."

"I see... nasty business that. An entire community wiped from the face of the earth."

Scott held onto the telephone earpiece and only heard hissing. Then the telephone clicked and a different voice came on the line. "Agent Scott? This is Agent Daniel Gooding. Agent Hoover assigned me to be your coordinator in Chicago."

Scott told Gooding his plan to box Wilkes in. It was unlikely that Wilkes would try for Tulsa, where he might be recognized. Oklahoma City, which lay to the southwest of Pawhuska, was more likely.

"We need to have our men and the local police block all of the roads leading into Oklahoma City. If Wilkes makes it there, there's no telling where he might escape to."

"Agreed. But I'll also put roadblocks on the roads that lead into Tulsa," Gooding said. "If we can keep Wilkes on the roads that head south, he'll have trouble refilling his gas tank."

"Plus," Scott added, "I don't imagine that the roads are in great shape." Scott was looking at a map of Oklahoma as he spoke. "The ground between Oklahoma City and Tulsa belongs to the Creek Indian Reservation. I'll have the Osage leaders here in Pawhuska contact the Creek tribe and ask for their help."

"Are you sure about this?" Gooding asked. "I imagine Director Hoover wants to bring Andrew Wilkes in alive."

Scott was glad that Gooding was unable to see him scowl over the telephone. "At this point, Agent Gooding, I just want to end this and bring Emma Larson home in one piece."

Emma, bound and gagged and lying on the floor in the rear of Wilke's automobile, had only one thought: killing Andrew Wilkes. She knew murder wasn't something a nice Christian girl would normally do, but she felt that in this case, God would forgive her. As the car bounced over the washboard dirt road, she did her best to remain calm. Other than an urgent need to relieve her bladder, she had not been treated poorly. *I wonder what Wilkes has in store for me? I imagine that he intends to have his way with me as he did last June in Tulsa. That cannot happen! I won't allow it!*

She began to cry, but choked back the tears rather than give Wilkes the satisfaction of knowing she was upset. The panic she'd felt just a moment earlier turned to calm as she began to think about the book she was writing. Even though she was only able to compose her story in her head, the act of remembering helped Emma relax and forget the danger she was in.

What is it that makes men hate those who are different from themselves? I have known of men who treated their negro employees with kindness, but the same man would willingly profess to "hate all niggers" at his social club. The negroes do the work that no one else will do, yet working-class men say "They're stealing our jobs!"

On the day that Greenwood burned, a mob of several hundred men formed in front of the courthouse, waiting to hear if charges would be filed against Dick Roland, the shoeshine boy accused of assaulting the white girl. It's possible that out of that mob, only a few were actually willing to resort to violence. But these few were able to use words of hate to coerce the others to join their cause. Barbers and schoolteachers, filled with rage, raided a hardware store and stole baseball bats, axes, pitchforks – anything that could be used to hurt another human being. The owner of a popular Tulsa restaurant was known to have joined the men who raided the National Guard Armory in search of firearms. Good, decent men almost instantly allowed hate and fear to turn them into monsters. They went on to loot and burn the homes and businesses of Greenwood. Some committed murder that night. Yet when the sun rose the next day, they pretended as if nothing happened. The teachers taught math and English and the barbers cut hair. The wealthier residents of Tulsa might have wondered why their

negro housekeeper or gardener did not show up to work that day. The collective minds of the white Tulsa residents, business owners, and lawmakers convinced themselves to forget the terror they inflicted on the good people who lived on the other side of the Frisco Tracks.

In the year after the mob burned Greenwood, not a single white man who participated has been arrested.

Emma had no idea how much time had passed as she was being driven to God-knows-where by Wilkes. She'd fallen asleep, lost in her daydream. The car was silent. *Has Wilkes left me?* Her first thought was to escape, but she was still tightly bound. She wiggled around and managed to sit on the rear seat. Looking out the window, she saw Wilkes smoking a cigarette in the pre-dawn light. Seeing Emma awake, he returned to the car and opened the back door. "Get out. You've been sleeping for hours. I imagine you need to take a piss."

Grabbing Emma by her hands, which were bound behind her back, he yanked her from the car. "Go over there and do your business."

Emma, who had tape over her mouth, mumbled something that Wilkes was unable to understand. Without hesitation, Wilkes tore the tape from her face, removing a good bit of skin in the process.

Cringing from the pain, Emma said, "I need... paper."

Wilkes swore. He stomped over to the car and rummaged around. He returned to Emma and held out a filthy rag. "This will have to do."

"You'll either have to untie my hands. Or you can help me..."

Swearing under his breath, Wilkes raised his arm and made as if to strike Emma. At the last second, he stopped himself.

Emma raised her eyebrows. *Oh, so he does have an ounce of self-control.*

He walked behind Emma and untied her. "Don't get any ideas."

Emma stepped away from the man and saw that he held a large revolver. Indicating a couple of scraggly trees nearby, she said, "I'll just go over there."

When she was finished, she returned to the car. Wilkes twirled the rope and whistled, acting as if he didn't have a care in the world. "Put your hands back behind you, same as before."

Emma refused. "You can tie me from the front."

"I said, put your hands behind you."

Emma held her hands out to the front and stared straight ahead. Cussing, Wilkes tied her but made sure that the bonds were tight and uncomfortable. "How's that suit ya? He pushed Emma over to the open rear door and gave her a push. "Get inside."

I need to show him that I won't be abused. I won round one by getting my hands tied in front instead of behind my back. Now for round two.

Emma bucked away from the car, startling Wilkes. She then scampered over to the front passenger door and proclaimed, "I'll sit up front."

Wilkes's face had turned beet-red. He let out an impressive burst of cursing, then walked around the car and shoved Emma in the front seat.

Smiling, Emma sat quietly as Wilkes entered the car. He picked up his roll of tape, looked at Emma, and said, "The hell with it" and tossed the tape into the back seat. *Emma Larson wins round two AND round three!*

As the car sped away in a spray of gravel and dust, Emma thought, *I've gotten under your skin, Andrew Wilkes. If you thought that having your way with me was going to be easy, you've got a lot to learn.*

CHAPTER 14 – A STORM IS COMING

June 4 and 5, 1922

Rosie and the Captain needed sleep and food. They'd been awake for nearly 28 hours, and all they'd had to eat was some leftover roast beef that they'd scraped up at Macklin's before departing. Bright morning sunshine lifted their spirits a little. Their mounts, who'd carried the men nearly 20 miles since leaving the ranch, also needed rest. They were riding on the same road that Wilkes was using, as the tire tracks of the Chevy weren't difficult to follow. The route wandered through wooded areas separated by small farms. Every now and then they spotted crows, but other than the noisy jet-black birds, wildlife was scarce.

"We're not far from Wynona," Clarke said as they moved along at a slow trot. "We'll get some grub and rest the horses for a spell. If they have a telephone, I'll check in with Agent Scott back in Pawhuska."

An hour later they began to see houses on the outskirts of the village. A scrawny woman who was hanging her day's laundry on the clothesline watched with sad, dark eyes as they passed. Chickens pecked at the weedy ground and somewhere nearby a dog barked loudly.

They dismounted and tied the horses to a rail outside of a spotless general store that doubled as a post office. Flowers bloomed in a planter placed in the front window.

"Nice place," Rosie remarked.

Clarke pointed at a wire that ran from the building to a nearby post. "Looks like the telephone company strung up some line."

Rosie grunted. "Good thing. But I'm more interested in knowing if the food delivery company's been here."

"I don't recall you ever complainin' about food back in our early days together."

"Easy livin' will do that to a man."

Clarke smiled. "I imagine we'll both get toughened up pretty quickly on this excursion."

They walked inside the store and found a young man minding the counter, smiling. "Hello, gentlemen! How may I help you?"

“Well I say, young feller,” Clarke replied. “It’s a real pleasure to speak to someone with decent manners.”

The proprietor smiled and blushed. “Thank you, Sir. I am only recently from the east – trying to escape the damp air which causes me no end of difficulty with my asthma – and have yet to pick up the local vernacular.”

Nodding, Clarke said, “It won’t be long then before you start speakin’ like the rest of us from these parts.”

The man laughed. “I suppose that may be true.”

“My name is Captain James Clarke.” He pulled out his badge and showed it to the store owner. “My associate is Deputy Jefferson Rose. We’re lookin’ for a fella. Short, balding. Squinty eyes. Drives a Chevrolet Touring Car. Black. You see anyone like that?”

The man thought for a moment and replied, “No, I believe you are the first to come through town this morning.”

Turning to Rosie, Clarke said, “You think Wilkes passed by before sunup?”

Rosie nodded. “It was only just a little past midnight when he killed Macklin. He could be well south of here by now.”

“That’s what I figured.”

Clarke asked to borrow the store telephone, promising to reverse the charges. He called and updated Agent Scott while Rosie purchased provisions. When Clarke concluded the call, he paid their bill, gave thanks to the store owner, and departed.

Back outside he asked Rosie, “What did you get us to eat?”

“Found some saltines, jerky, a chunk of cheese, and six cans of beans.”

“The beans will have to wait. Give me some jerky and cheese now. Scott told me on the phone that agents and police are blocking all of the roads that lead east and west. There’s only one bridge crossing over the Arkansas River – it’s about twenty miles south of here in Cleveland.”

“Are police headed there now?”

“Yes. He’s alerted the local sheriff. FBI agents are on their way. You and I will make sure that Wilkes doesn’t double back and escape down one of the unmapped roads.”

“What about that tribal sheriff? The one that’s a friend of yours.”

“Henry Tallchief? I asked Scott if he’d heard from Henry, and he said he hadn’t. I imagine that Henry and some of his friends are conducting their

own search for Wilkes. After all, four wealthy members of his tribe are dead because of that man.”

Rosie took a swig from his canteen. He pointed to the west. “Storm coming.”

Clarke looked and only saw a clear sky. But he knew his partner never guessed wrong when it came to the weather. “We’d best get going then. I figure it will take us three hours to get to Cleveland. If we don’t catch Wilkes there, he could disappear most anyplace in the southern half of the state.”

While Captain Clarke and Jefferson Rose were returning to the dusty road that led to the only bridge crossing the Arkansas River in that part of Oklahoma, Richard Lloyd Jones, editor of the *Tulsa Tribune* was making his own plans to end Wilkes’s reign of terror.

Two sharply-dressed men sat in Jones’s office. Both were above average in height and had muscular builds. Each sported bushy mustaches and short black hair. One would be forgiven for concluding that they were brothers, but in fact, the two were unrelated. Circumstances and coincidence had brought them together in the famous Pinkerton Detective Agency.

“You gentlemen come to me highly recommended. By the Governor of Oklahoma himself.”

The man on the left, Harry Black, nodded and smiled. “That’s high praise indeed.” Black, who was born Clarence Downer, was born to a life of violence. He worked as a muscle for various bosses during his younger years before he found employment in the Pinkerton Agency. He only lasted a few years with the Pinkertons before finding himself once again unemployed.

“High praise,” the other parroted. He was known now as Thomas Smith, but he’d gone by other names in the past. As someone skilled at riding the fine line between law and criminal activities, he’d been known as Tom Cotton when he was breaking up strikes at the steel mills in Pittsburg. But it was after working to end the coal strikes in West Virginia that he’d gone too far and was forced out of the Pinkertons. He’d been caught assaulting

the pretty young wife of a United Mine Workers representative and was fortunate to escape to the western United States, where he changed his name and began working for himself as a union buster or collecting on past-due loans, and breaking the occasional leg in the process. He hooked up with Harry, who was an old friend. The two offered their skills as “fixers” ever since. Most recently, the governor of Oklahoma used the pair to convince a girlfriend and her new beau to end an attempt at blackmail. The boyfriend lost a finger before he acquiesced. The governor’s wife (and more importantly, the press) never found out about the affair.

Jones pulled a cigar out of a humidor. “These are Cuban. Would either of you like one?”

Black and Smith took cigars and moments later the room was thick with smoke.

Jones took a puff and smiled. “I trust you are going to use utmost discretion for the task I’m about to ask of you?”

“Absolutely,” Black answered. He was the talker and planner of the pair. His partner, Smith, preferred to work with brass knuckles or similar tools of the trade.

Jones told them that they were being hired to make sure that a former “employee” of his, a certain Mr. Andrew Wilkes, was not captured by the police. “It would be best for all parties concerned if Wilkes...” Jones was unable to say the words, so he slowly drew his index finger across his throat.

Black nodded and replied, “Understood.”

Jones walked across the room where he removed a painting of himself from the wall to reveal a safe. While he was entering the combination, he briefly thought about what he was about to do. *I can’t have Wilkes come back here and testify against me. Even though I had absolutely nothing to do with what happened in that Osage city, Pawhuska, he might spill the beans on our joint actions here in Tulsa in order to make a deal with the Feds.*

After opening the safe, Jones removed a large sum of cash. He walked back to his desk and placed the money before the two men. Here’s two thousand dollars. You get two grand more when the job’s done.”

As Mr. Black reached out to take the money, Tom Smith reacted and placed his hand on Black’s, stopping him. “One thing, Mr. Jones.”

Jones had a puzzled look on his face. "Not enough money? This is what I was told..."

"It's not that," Smith interrupted. "I saw in the newspaper that a woman from Tulsa has been kidnapped by this Wilkes character."

Jones scowled. *It would be best for my purposes if that nasty woman, Emma Larson, went away forever. She's going to publish her story about what happened here last year, claiming that I was the instigator of what happened in Greenwood.* Jones stood, walked back to the safe, and withdrew additional money. "Here's another grand. See to it that Emma Larson doesn't survive."

A short time later Black and Smith were on the road heading south. A contact in the Tulsa Police Department told the former detectives that the search for Wilkes and his captive was being conducted in the rural country south of Pawhuska. All of the roads were blocked, and they were hoping to intercept Wilkes at the bridge in Cleveland.

Black, who was behind the wheel of the brand-new Ford Model T (a gift from the Governor), sped as quickly as the surface of the road would allow. "This is some real podunk country out here."

Smith sat in the passenger seat and smoked a cigarette. "It's a good place to disappear."

"If I had to disappear, I'd do it in Chicago or Manhattan. You can get lost among the crowds there, but still catch a show or get a decent drink once in a while."

The Ford carried Black and Smith on a road that would take them well south of the bridge in Cleveland. The plan was to turn north and intercept Wilkes at the bridge, and using fake badges, take him and his captive in their custody. The only flaw in their plan was that if the Feds got to the bridge before them, they'd have to figure out another way to grab Wilkes.

It took nearly three hours for the car to reach the road that led to Cleveland, Oklahoma. As they drove over a rise, a flash of lightning lit up a darkening western sky. Moments later, a rumble of thunder rolled across the countryside.

As Black navigated the Model T around potholes dotting the washboard surface of the dirt road, he complained, "I hope this isn't one of those famous Oklahoma storms I've heard so much about."

Less than a minute later, hail the size of golf balls began to fall from the sky. The icy balls struck the little car with a vengeance, denting the metal finish and cracking the windshield. Unable to see, Black swerved off the road and came to a violent stop in a small gully, directly under a massive oak tree.

"You all right?" Black looked at his companion, who had struck his forehead on the metal dashboard. Blood was beginning to stream from Smith's forehead.

Pulling a handkerchief from his jacket pocket, Black handed it to his friend and said, "Hold this over the cut for a minute, then let me look at it."

"It's nothing," Smith replied.

"You probably need stitches. Stay here while I see how badly we're stuck." The hail storm was over, but heavy rain continued to fall from the clouds. Black climbed out of the car and landed in a foot of water. "We ain't goin' nowhere," he shouted over the din of the downpour. While he pondered the situation, his clothes quickly became completely soaked. He climbed out of the gully and tried to see if there was a shelter nearby. The rain reduced visibility to less than a quarter of a mile or so, but he caught sight of a stone structure in the distance.

Black yelled down to Smith, who still sat inside the Model T. "Come on, I see a building we can wait this out in."

Smith slowly emerged from the car and promptly fell onto his back, landing in cold water. It was obvious to Black that his partner was injured. Possibly with a concussion. Black climbed back down to the car, lifted his friend over his shoulder, and carried him out of the gully, slipping and sliding the entire way. "You're puttin' on the pounds, Tom. Now, where's that building I saw?"

Black had no way of knowing that a massive ridge of low pressure had been building over central Oklahoma during the last several hours. Heat from the panhandle, which had reached nearly 100 degrees the previous day, was colliding with cold air crashing down from Kansas. The wind, ever-present in this part of the country, began to build and soon trees were bending and branches were crashing to the ground. Just a short distance directly west of where Smith and Black struggled to find safety, a group of small twisters formed. As the storm intensified, the twisters quickly crossed the landscape and converged to create a funnel that spun at well

over 200 miles per hour. Human structures were no match for the power of this tornado. Cars, tractors, and livestock were yanked from the ground and pulled deep into the vortex before being thrown hundreds of feet in every direction. The path of destruction was at least a mile wide and after just a few minutes covered nearly 15 miles. Anyone who hoped to survive had to find a storm cellar or end up perishing in the maelstrom.

Wilkes had a tight grip on the steering wheel as he raced towards Cleveland. Rounding a sharp curve, he nearly lost control in loose gravel but was able to correct his mistake at the last second. As the Chevy bounced and lurched over a bridge that crossed a small stream, he noticed that water was already beginning to rise from the storm he saw forming to the west.

Emma, her hands still tied, struggled to brace herself. "If you don't slow down you're going to kill us both!"

As they crested a ridge, a flash of lightning illuminated a sign announcing "Cleveland, Population 312." The approaching storm was just beginning to reach the outskirts of town, and the bridge that led to their escape across the rapidly rising Arkansas River was less than a mile away. As the rain began to fall harder, Wilkes saw one police car watching on the south side of the bridge. Punching the accelerator, Wilkes shouted, "Hold on!"

It was a testimony to the Chevy Touring Car's engineering and craftsmanship that the car survived the next half mile. The wind, suddenly gusting to well over 80 miles per hour, nearly blew the small car off the road. Wilkes, who was not lacking confidence in his ability to control the machine, managed to keep the Chevy on the path he'd chosen. Wooden boxes, branches, and clothes, driven by the approaching maelstrom, flew around the vehicle as it climbed up the ramp to the bridge. The Cleveland Police could have easily blocked the bridge here, but considering their own safety in the approaching storm, they had parked just far enough away to allow Wilkes to pass. With the rain now falling in torrents, the Cleveland Chief of Police and a deputy stood behind the village's one police car, wearing slickers in an attempt to stay reasonably dry. The Chief held a

shotgun while the deputy waited with his sidearm cocked and ready. Neither man could really see the approaching vehicle, but they could hear its wheels rattling the wooden planks that made up the one-lane surface of the old bridge.

Seeing the police car blocking the road, Wilkes cursed as he looked for a way to evade capture. He downshifted and swerved the Chevy to the right and executed a perfect slide, nearly throwing himself and Emma out of the vehicle in the process. For a moment the narrow tires seemed to get stuck in the saturated grass, but with the luck of the devil, Wilkes was able to regain traction and dart past the Cleveland Police. Both officers opened fire, aiming low in an attempt to blow out the escaping car's tires. The Chief, certain he had a bead on his target, was struck in the side by a wind-blown tangle of barbed wire fencing, knocking him to the muddy ground. The twister had reached Cleveland, and in minutes there would be little left standing in the small town.

Knowing that the storm provided perfect cover for his escape, Wilkes sped down Main Street, barely believing the carnage that was appearing before him. A church steeple was sucked into the sky as if it were as light as a toothpick. The rest of the church seemed to explode, sending shards of wood in every direction. The twister jumped over the jail (Wilkes somehow found this amusing) but then struck the library with a ferocity never before seen in this area. It was later said that Cleveland Public Library books were found near Claremore, which was over 60 miles away. All of this happened in a matter of seconds, with Wilkes driving right through the center of the carnage.

After Wilkes and Emma reached the south side of town, he saw that his path was blocked by flooding. Spotting a barn that had miraculously escaped the twister, he drove up, jumped out and opened the door, and drove the vehicle inside.

Listening to the engine click as it cooled, he calmly pulled out a cigarette and lit it. Emma, who had decided that sitting on the floor of the car was the safest place to be, stared at her captor with wide eyes.

"That was somethin'," he remarked as he took a drag. "That was really somethin'."

CHAPTER 15 – THE STORM

June 5, 1922

James Clarke and Jefferson Rose sat upon their horses and surveyed the bridge leading into Cleveland. The pair had managed to wait out the storm in the cellar of a farm a few miles north of town. Rosie's mysterious ability to predict the weather provided ample time for them to seek shelter, yet when they found a place, the owner wasn't happy about sharing his cellar with a negro.

With the wind howling and rain beginning to splatter the dry ground, the farmer had pointed at Clarke and said, "You are welcome, Marshal. But I can't abide being close to no darkie."

Speaking loudly, Clarke replied, "That won't do, Sir. My companion is not only a deputized Federal Marshal, but he is also my friend."

Clarke nodded at Rosie and nearly had to yell to speak with him. "Let's see to the horses and then join the farmer and his family."

Rather than putting Honcho and Esther in the barn with the farmer's animals, they tied the two horses behind a sturdy stone outbuilding. They returned to the cellar and climbed down the steep, cobweb-lined stairs. When Clarke reached the farmer and his family below, he noticed that Rosie was lingering at the top of the stairway.

"Come on Rosie, you'll be safe down here."

Even though they were well underground, occasional thundercracks could still be heard. The room was lit by a single lamp. Three small children, all dressed in hand-me-downs and sporting bare feet, sat closely with their mother. Even though she was likely only in her late 20s, her gray hair and tired eyes made her appear to be much older.

The cellar door rattled as the storm passed directly over the farm. Clarke stood at the base of the stairs and yelled at his friend. "Come on down here, Rosie. I can't afford to lose you!"

With great caution, the large black man descended the stairway, one rickety step at a time. When he reached the bottom, he sat upon the lowest stair. His entire body was shaking, and for a dark-skinned person, his face almost appeared white with fright.

Seeing this, Clarke joked, "I never took you for someone who's afraid of a storm. Hell, you and I've made it through some humdingers in our times out on the plains."

"It's not the storm..." Rosie said with a shaky voice. "I'm... I'm not overly fond of tight spaces. Make that tight *underground* spaces."

Clarke nodded. "I see." Patting his friend on the shoulder, he said, "You just sit right there and we'll get back topside as quickly as the storm passes."

The farmer stared at Rosie with menacing eyes but remained quiet. There were a few "oohs!" and "wows!" as the noises aboveground intensified, but the storm was over nearly as quickly as it had started.

Rosie wasted no time in exiting the cellar. As Clarke and the family joined him, everyone was pleased to find the farm had survived with only the loss of a chicken coop.

"Looks like the storm just skirted us," Clarke told the farmer.

"Praise the Lord!" he replied, while at the same time giving Rosie the evil eye.

Back on their horses, Clarke and Rosie departed the farm. They had to ride around the occasional downed oak or cottonwood, but for the most part, the storm had traveled south of their current position. The sun was shining bright and a cool wind blew from the north as they reached the Cleveland bridge. Flooding upriver had uprooted large trees, and the roof of a large home was lodged under the bridge, causing the river to back up and flood the flatlands for miles to the southwest. All sorts of other debris covered the bridge, which was unpassable by the horses in its current state.

"I doubt we'd find anyplace better to cross," Clarke said to Rosie.

Of the two lawmen, Rosie had the best vision. He slowly rode up the river bank a few yards and found a small knoll to survey the damage to Cleveland.

"You see anything?" Clarke asked.

Rosie nodded. "Police car."

Clarke joined Rosie on the small hill and saw the car. Lying in the mud was a man who was tangled in barbed wire. "That's gotta hurt," he said under his breath.

"If he's still breathing."

“Come on, let’s see if we can cross the bridge on foot.”

Leaving the horses to graze, the two men worked their way across, at first climbing up and over lumber and the remains of small trees. Nearing the halfway point, a massive oak struck the roof that had created the original logjam. Momentum carried the tree up and over the bridge’s stone side in a thunderous CRASH while simultaneously throwing limbs and sticks in every direction. The two lawmen escaped being hit by anything large but both were beginning to doubt their sanity. More trees, dead animals, and pieces of buildings lodged against the rapidly forming wall of debris. “Be careful, Rosie,” Clarke said as he looked over the bridge’s construction from where he crouched under a large limb. “This bridge looks like it might have been built well before our time.”

It took longer than they thought, but the two were able to reach the south side safely. “Someone’s going to have a hell of a time clearing that mess,” Rosie said as he looked back at the bridge. “I suppose we’ll have to help if we want our horses back.”

“First things first.” They walked over to the man who was tangled in barbed wire. Seeing the man was wearing a police uniform, Clarke exclaimed, “It’s the police chief!”

They knelt on the muddy ground and checked to see if the man was still alive. Clarke checked for a pulse, then shook his head. “I don’t feel anything.”

Just as they were beginning to stand, the man coughed and his eyes fluttered open. A weak voice gasped, “Help me.”

“Hold on buddy,” Clarke said softly. “We’ll get you out of this mess.”

Rosie took off in search of something to use to cut the wire while Clarke remained by the man’s side.

“Are you the town constable?”

The man nodded.

“I’m sorry about your predicament.” In fact, in all of his years, Clarke had never seen anything like this. The storm must have blown the barbed wire fence directly at the man. Clarke could imagine the fence wrapping around the policeman as he rolled on the ground.

The man took a deep breath and whispered, “Are you the marshal who’s looking for that killer?”

"I am. But don't worry about that right now. You just rest a spell until we can get you free."

"Saw him," the man said. "Made it over the bridge just before the twister came through."

Clarke swore under his breath.

"He was drivin' like a ..." the man paused and appeared to pass out. Clarke stayed at his side, and then in what was the policeman's final breath, said, "...madman. Drivin' like a madman."

A few minutes later Rosie appeared with a pair of local residents. Seeing their constable bleeding and trapped inside the wire fence, they ran over and began trying to free him.

"Take your time, fellas," Clarke said. "He's gone."

The death toll in Cleveland that day was low, considering the damage caused by the massive twister. Experience had taught the residents not to underestimate the storms that frequented their region and nearly all were in cellars by the time the hail began striking their town.

Besides the gruesome death of the Chief of Police, his deputy was found floating face down in a mudpuddle. It was decided that a branch or similar object struck him in the head, knocking him into the water, where he drowned.

A handful of dazed citizens helped Clarke and Rosie clear the debris from the bridge, and as badly as the two lawmen wanted to resume their pursuit of Wilkes, they felt obligated to spend at least part of the day helping anyone in need. The mayor asked the pair to search the town for people who might be trapped in their storm cellars. While at first, the task would be easy, it turned out that there were two large families trapped underground due to a large water tank that had fallen on the angled doors of their shelter. Even though the water had spilled from the demolished tank, the remaining structure was heavy. It took the strength of both Honcho and Esther to drag the tank clear, allowing everyone to emerge into the sunlight. All were shaken but otherwise in good health.

It was late in the afternoon before the two lawmen felt like they could resume their manhunt. They'd both filled their hungry stomachs at a pot-

luck meal in front of the destroyed First Baptist Church, enjoying cold roast beef sandwiches and lemonade made by people who'd lost nearly everything that day. The generosity of the residents of Cleveland nearly choked up Clarke as he said goodbye to the people who were watching their departure.

"I hope to pass back by here soon," Clarke said to the mayor and everyone else within hearing range. "I believe you'll have Cleveland back better than ever before in no time."

Rosie, tipping his hat, added, "Y'all are fine folks. I believe that God is with you."

As the pair rode out of town, Clarke removed his hat and scratched his thinning hair. "Hey Rosie, that was a fine thing you said back there."

"I believe that the Lord will provide."

"In many ways, I agree. But tell me first why God destroyed their town? It's not like everyone here were evil sinners like those in Sodom or Gomorrah."

"The Lord works in mysterious ways, Cap'n."

Clarke nodded and remained quiet. *That's what they always say. Maybe it's my line of work, but I've known terrible people to get away with murdering innocent folks over and over again. I doubt I'll ever understand God's "mysterious ways."*

Not more than a quarter of a mile from the south end of Cleveland, a swollen tributary of the Arkansas River blocked the road. Several feet of water flooded a small valley, forming a lake that extended before them as far as they could see. In the distance, a farm that had miraculously escaped damage stood high and dry on a hill. The lawmen watched as a small man opened the barn door from the inside. A woman was tied to the rear bumper of a black Chevrolet. The man said something to the woman and then headed towards the farmhouse.

Squinting, Clarke asked, "Is that who I think it is?"

Rosie grunted. "And there's not a damn thing we can do about it until the water's gone."

Clarke watched for a while. Finally, he said, "Maybe they're stranded on that little island. We'll just have to wait and see who gets to move first."

Nodding, Rosie said, "The Lord works in mysterious ways."

Emma worked hard to free her hands from the rope that bound her to Wilke's car. It seemed like the more she tried to loosen the knots, the tighter the rope got. She tried using her teeth but found she could get no meaningful purchase on the smooth rope.

Exasperated, she sunk to the ground. *That little creep sure knows his knots.* Tired, hungry, and feeling as if she had lost all control of her life, she choked back tears. *I won't give Wilkes the satisfaction of seeing me cry.*

When her captor returned, she pretended to be sitting comfortably. He carried a small bundle and set it down. Then he untied her hands and pointed into an empty horse stall. "Go ahead and take care of your business over there." Emma stood and entered the stall as directed, where she squatted and relieved her bladder while a horse in the next stall watched.

When she finished, she took a moment to stroke the horse's massive head. "Hi there," she whispered. "My, but you're a big one! I'm happy you weren't carried away by that twister." She kept her eyes on Wilkes and saw that he was watching the house. A man emerged and walked towards the barn. Turning to Emma, Wilkes said, "Don't you say nothing. If you do, the farmer and his family dies."

The farmer, dressed in overalls and sporting a straw hat entered the barn and did a double-take upon seeing Emma. "You didn't say you had a lady with you."

"I didn't want you to worry." Wilkes opened the bundle he'd brought from the house and said, "Besides, there's more than enough food here for the both of us."

The farmer looked at Emma, and perhaps seeing fear in her eyes, said, "You can come on inside and sit with the Missus if you want."

When Emma began to move towards the farmer, Wilkes jumped up and said, "That's okay, she'll stay out here with me. We don't wanna be no bother to you kind folks."

Looking back and forth at Wilkes and Emma, the farmer shook his head and said, "It's fine with me either way."

Wilkes, taking half of the ham sandwich that the farmer's wife had made for him, gave the other half to Emma. "Let's take a gander at the

countryside and see how long we'll be stranded in this barn."

The farmer watched as Wilkes and Emma walked outside. "It's flooded here before," he said. "I was a boy, I think it was back in '02, and we were stuck on our hill for nearly a week before we could get out. Not that we minded, as we had a cow, chickens, and plenty of canned food stored in the cellar."

Wilkes, looking at the body of water surrounding them, kicked the ground. "Did you say it took a week for the flood to recede?"

"Yup. It took another couple of days for the ground to dry out. We lost nearly everything that my pa planted that spring and had to replant everything. My old man nearly died working to keep the bank from foreclosing on our mortgage."

Emma, who up to now had been quiet, said, "It looks like your family survived."

"We were fortunate that the weather was cooperative the rest of that season. Our corn got a late start but we had a dry autumn and were able to get it all picked before the November rains came."

"Where's your farm most likely to dry out first?" Wilkes asked. "I'd rather not hang around here any longer than I have to."

Pointing towards the southwest, he said, "Generally, that's our driest piece of property. If the sun shines and the wind blows like it usually does, it might dry out quicker than the area towards town."

As the afternoon dragged on, Wilkes began to act like a caged tiger. After reminding Emma that the farmer's family would be killed if anything was said about who he was, he spent his time pacing the grounds around the farm. The farmer's wife, a shy woman who had two toddlers hanging onto the hem of her skirt, entered the barn. She handed Emma a blanket and pointed at a nearby cottonwood. "There's shade over there. I'll bring you some dinner later."

For a moment Emma considered telling the woman to let her husband know that they were all in danger. But when she considered Wilke's temperament and history of violence, she simply replied, "Thank you for your hospitality. I know you weren't expecting visitors."

The woman looked at her bare feet and said quietly, "It's not a problem. Even though town's just a short distance away, I don't get off the farm but once in a blue moon. I enjoy having someone besides Fred to talk to."

The farmer was puttering around in the back of the barn, repairing a broken plow. "He's a good man," the woman replied. "He just works so hard that there's no time to enjoy livin'."

Emma thought she understood the difficulties of farming, but until now she'd never really seen that the job really was a day-to-day existence. There wasn't time to travel much more than a few miles away from home, because there were always animals to be cared for, crops to tend, or as in the case today – machinery to fix.

The children wandered off and became mesmerized by a butterfly that fluttered across the farmyard. "My name is Emma. I'm from Tulsa."

The woman looked at Wilkes, who stood staring at a couple of men who sat upon horses on a distant ridge. "What about yer fella?"

Emma almost laughed. *My fella? Is that what she thinks? God, I'd love to tell her the truth.* "Andrew? He's just someone I'm stuck with for a few days."

"Oh, I see." The woman turned and stood looking out at the flooded valley below them. "I hope you're not in any sort of trouble."

"I'll be fine," Emma said, only half believing the words as they came out of her mouth.

The woman turned to Emma and said, "My name's Margaret Pike. But you can call me Margie. It's nearly time for supper. Instead of eating out here, why don't you get Andrew to come inside and we can all eat together?"

Wilkes stomped over to the barn as Margie gathered up the youngsters and headed back towards the house. "What were you to talkin' about?"

"She invited us in for supper."

He grabbed her forearm and squeezed it. "Is that all you talked about?"

"She's got a hard life here. Her name is Margie and her husband's name is Fred." Emma angrily yanked her arm away and gave Wilkes a hard stare. "And don't you ever grab me like that again or I'll make you wish you hadn't."

Wilkes stepped back and reacted as if he'd been slapped in the face. Emma felt satisfaction knowing that she had some sort of power over the man. *He's never found a woman that he couldn't control. I'll go along with him as long as I have to to see that nobody gets hurt. But first chance I get...*

Now, speaking more calmly, Wilkes pointed to the north and asked, "Did you notice those two men over yonder watchin' us?"

Emma pulled herself from her thoughts and looked at where Wilkes was pointing. "I see them." Even though the men were quite a distance away, there was no mistaking that one was Captain Clarke and the other was Jefferson Rose. *I knew you two would be on the trail!*

"They're probably just waiting for the water to subside so they can go about their business."

Wilkes spat in the dirt, then began to roll a cigarette. "For your sake and the sake of Farmer Fred and Farmer Fred's wife, I hope you're right."

As the sun began to lower into the western sky, Fred finished his work on the plow. "I guess Margie wants you two to join us inside for supper."

Wilkes looked as if he would refuse, but before he could answer Emma said, "That would be wonderful. I hope it's not too much of a bother."

"T'aint no bother," Fred answered. "Besides, Margie never passes up a chance to share her buttermilk biscuits."

After Fred washed his hands at the pump the trio walked to the farmhouse. Emma noticed that Wilkes never took his eyes from the two distant watchers. Before going inside the house, she saw the Captain and Rosie mount their horses and ride back toward town.

"Looks like they decided to try a different direction," Wilkes said, smiling.

Oh, they'll be back. You just wait and see. Emma hid her joy at the knowledge that her time with Wilkes was nearly over. But for the time being, she had to see that Wilkes didn't hurt the Pike family.

Indoors, Emma complimented Margie on her spotless little house. Margie beamed as she showed Emma a quilt she was working on and the two chatted like sisters as they brought the food to the table. The little ones sat quietly, shyly looking at Wilkes and giggling. For his part, Wilkes did his best to relax and enjoy the company and good food.

After eating their fill of fried chicken, potatoes, and Margie's famous buttermilk biscuits, the men escaped to the porch for a smoke. Margie washed the dishes, using water from the outdoor pump heated indoors on a woodstove. "How is it that you're with Andrew, Emma?"

Emma had had plenty of time to create a story that would keep herself and their hosts from danger. "I need to get to Dallas. My sister lives there.

She's not been feeling well and needs my help."

Margie rinsed a plate and handed it to Emma. "Surely, you could've taken a train."

Emma sighed. "Oh, I wish I had now! But Andrew, who's an old friend of the family, said he'd take me since he had business in Texas anyway."

"I guess that makes sense. You saved money on a ticket."

"I did. But after the close call with the twister, I'm beginning to wonder if I made the right decision."

Margie smiled and replied, "Sure you did. If you'd taken the train, you and I wouldn't have ever got the chance to be friends."

Emma gently put her arm around Margie. "Thank you for saying that." *Because if I ever needed a friend, today is the day.*

Emma watched as Margie prepared the children for bed. "This is my favorite time of the day," Margie said. "Once these two go to sleep I can finally relax and work on my sewing."

"I envy you, Margie. I've never had a chance to raise a family."

Margie laughed. "And here I was, envying you! I've never lived in a city or been free to travel any farther than town."

The two women giggled and chatted until Fred returned indoors. "I hope you two will be comfortable sleepin' in the barn."

Emma smiled and answered, "It will be an improvement on sleeping in Andrew's car."

"Would you like me to wash your clothes, Emma?"

"Oh, Margie, that would be too much to ask of you..."

"Really, it's no bother. I'll find you somethin' to wear and I'll have your things cleaned and dry for you tomorrow morning."

Margie disappeared for a moment and returned with bedding and an old nightgown. "I wish we had better accommodations for you."

"You have already done more for us than most folks would do, Margie. Good night."

Out in the barn, Emma handed Wilkes a blanket and pointed up at that hayloft. "I'm sleeping up there. You stay down here."

With that, she climbed the ladder and made a fairly comfortable bed on a pile of hay. Wilkes muttered and complained as he went about preparing a place to sleep, but to his credit, left Emma alone for the entire night.

After watching the farm for a while, Clarke and Rosie climbed upon their horses and pretended to ride toward Cleveland. Once the horses were below the crest of the ridge, they tied them to a stump and returned to the ridge, taking care not to be spotted by Wilkes. Crouching behind a fallen tree, they ate beans and jerky and considered the ways they could rescue Emma and put Wilkes in handcuffs.

Clarke used a pocketknife to remove jerky from between his teeth. "We ought to borrow a boat and row over to that farm."

Rosie looked at the fast-flowing water and shook his head. "Don't you think we should wait a spell for the water to slow down?"

"Nah, we'll be fine. Why don't you see what you can find?"

Rosie muttered as he walked down the hill to Esther. "We'll be fine, he says. Most likely we'll end up floating on the river bottom with the fish picking at our eyeballs."

While he waited for Rosie to return, Clarke considered what he would do if he were Wilkes.

The way Clarke saw it, Wilkes was stuck for the time being. It was anyone's guess at when the flood would subside, so leaving anytime in the next day or two was unlikely. Clarke didn't want to put the family at the farm in danger, and if Wilkes thought he was cornered, who knew what he'd do? The best play was for him and Rosie to get to the barn and grab Wilkes there before he could take any hostages.

It took Rosie longer than expected to return to the ridge. It was nearly evening when he dismounted Esther and sat down on the ground beside Clarke. "Most of the boats nearby washed away in the flood. Plus, I had a hell of a time getting anywhere. I was blocked by water, deadfalls, and demolished buildings."

"Well," Clarke replied, "It *was* an idea."

"Hold on there, Cap'n. I found a boat. It's not much, and it's up the river a good spell." He pointed to the northeast. "Probably a half-mile as the crow flies, but more like three miles on horseback."

Clarke slapped at a mosquito. "Will you be able to find it in the dark? I was hopin' we could sneak over and grab Wilkes before we both catch malaria."

"I tied the boat to a tree. I can find it. But to be honest, I'm not sure of our chances of rowing this far upriver."

Clarke stood and started walking towards Honcho. "We'll never know if we don't try."

It was well after 11 pm when they found the boat where Rosie had left it. It was a small rowboat with one set of oars.

"You sure this yacht is seaworthy?" Clarke joked. "Let's pull it over to the river and see how she floats."

Clarke began yanking on the rope tied to the bow, expecting Rosie to assist.

"Uh, Cap'n?"

Stopping, Clarke looked at his friend and said, "What? Aren't you going to help?"

"I didn't get a chance to mention that the river is at least a half-mile to the east. This boat must've floated over here in the storm."

After attaching a longer rope to the boat, they tied the other end to Esther's saddle. The boat was heavy, so Rosie led Esther by the bridle as they made their way to the river. In the darkness, they kept running into obstacles and had to backtrack several times. Finally, after a lot of swearing and slapping at mosquitos, they reached water. Out from under the trees, bright stars shone in the night sky, providing just enough luminance for them to see.

"I hope this is the river and not just some huge mudpuddle," Clarke complained.

They tied the two horses where they could munch on grass and put the boat in the water.

"Well," Clarke joked, "It didn't sink. That's a good sign."

The two men, neither of which had much experience with boats, would have had any casual boater laughing hysterically as they went about getting seated and ready to row. Clarke sat at the oars and realized he was facing the wrong way. Rosie climbed aboard and stood, causing the boat to rock and nearly tip over. Then, just as they were ready to push off, Clarke remembered that he'd forgotten his rifle.

"That's okay, Cap'n. I forgot my shotgun too."

Once they were certain they had everything they needed to capture Wilkes, Clarke pulled on the oars and took them out into the river. The boat

didn't seem to move at all in the direction Clarke rowed.

"You need to pull harder on the oars, Cap'n."

"I'm giving it everything I've got..."

Eventually, Clarke got the hang of paddling upstream. They went a short distance and then Rosie took his turn at the oars. With Rosie's strength, they felt like they were making decent progress. Every now and then a floating tree trunk or other debris threatened to crash into the boat, which would certainly end up with both men swimming for their lives in the muddy water.

Clarke sat at the bow and acted as a spotter, giving Rosie directions as best he could with nothing but the starlight to see by. "Paddle hard right! No, the other way! That tree's gonna hit us! Paddle harder!"

Even though they avoided being struck by anything large enough to cause damage, Clarke groaned when he noticed that there were at least six inches of water in the bottom of the boat. "We have a leak and I don't see a bailing can anywhere."

Rosie began steering the boat towards the riverbank. With Clarke now distracted by finding the leak, he didn't see the barn roof barreling down on them. Rosie suddenly lost control of the boat in an eddy, which likely saved the two men's lives. Almost silently, the barn roof swept past and pulled the little rowboat along in its wake. With wide eyes, Clarke held his breath as Rosie pulled the oars with every bit of his strength, saying, "Please Jesus, get us to safety!"

After what seemed like an eternity, the rowboat finally reached the riverbank. Clarke carefully jumped onto dry land and tied the rope securely to a stout tree. Rosie, who only seconds ago was praying for help, scampered out of the boat and said, "I ain't never doin' anything like that again."

As Clarke and Rosie stood in the darkness catching their breath, they heard the whinny of a horse.

"Are you kidding me?" Clarke complained. He went to the sound and found Honcho and Esther, who were only a few yards away. "After all that rowing and nearly getting ourselves killed, we only managed to travel about sixty feet."

CHAPTER 16 – REFUGE AND WATER

June 6, 1922

The twister that decimated much of Cleveland County disappeared before it reached Tulsa, 35 miles away to the southeast. Agent Jacob Scott had commandeered an office in the Tulsa Police Station and waited to hear from Captain Clarke. Jake felt that he could coordinate law enforcement more effectively from the larger town and with its more reliable telephone system – except that the phones were temporarily out of service. Even though the tornado missed Tulsa, the thunderstorm that hit the city caused significant damage. Trees and branches had taken down telephone and power lines, and the city was in the dark until linemen could affect repairs.

Jacob paced the room, frustrated that he had no idea how the pursuit of Wilkes was progressing. *I'm just as much in the dark here as I was in Pawhuska.* With the lines down all the way to Oklahoma City, Jacob was tempted to leave Tulsa and go looking for Wilkes himself. He paused at his desk and carefully lifted one of the beer bottles he'd found inside Wilkes's hideout. Holding it in the light streaming through the office window, a smug smile of satisfaction appeared on his face. *I've got you, Mr. Wilkes. The prints on this bottle match the prints on the bottles found near the creek where you murdered the Jackson family.*

He sat the bottle back down and gazed for the thousandth time at a large map of Oklahoma that was pinned to the wall. *I'm convinced you're making a run for the south. Dallas? A man could get lost in that sprawling city. Then it's an easy matter to hitch a ride to the border.*

But Jacob's intuition told him to be wary of underestimating Wilkes. *He could also head for Louisiana, where he could live for years in the swamps without anyone ever finding him. Poor Emma! She doesn't deserve this. I cannot allow Wilkes to triumph.* Jacob pounded his right fist into his open left hand in frustration. *I WILL not allow Wilkes to win.*

A knock on his office door brought Jacob from his thoughts. "Enter."

The man was a Native American, wearing blue jeans but dressed in an official shirt of a tribal police officer. He held a cowboy hat in his left hand. "I'm Henry Tallchief. They tell me you are the FBI man."

Jacob laughed. "You must be Captain Clarke's friend."

Henry nodded. "It took me all morning to track you down, but a federal officer told me I'd find you here in Tulsa."

"Do you have something to report, uh... Chief Tallchief?" Jacob frowned at the redundancy.

Tallchief laughed. "Call me Henry. My men and I rode south from Macklin's ranch. We stayed off the roads and used old shortcuts that my people have known about for generations. When we got to the Arkansas River, we could see that a storm was going to strike south of us. We found a place to cross the river, then waited until the storm was well past."

The story Henry told Jacob made it seem as if the storm he and his men had encountered had been an insignificant thing. This was far from the truth. Henry and his men had found themselves in an open area with little available in the way of cover other than a slight depression in the ground. Much like their fathers and grandfathers had done, Henry and his companions faced the approaching twister with equal parts courage and fascination. Chanting to the wind spirit, the men stood and faced the tempest head-on. Stinging dirt, sticks, and small stones pelted the group, and it took everything the men had to remain standing while holding their horses. The chanting never stopped during the ordeal, and after what seemed like an eternity, the tornado jumped over the group and continued on its eastward path.

"I figured we might get lucky and find a spot where we could get the jump on Wilkes," Henry continued, "Since he was in a car and there was only one road that he could use."

Henry pointed at the map on the office wall. "Right here. Cleveland."

"Makes sense," Jacob agreed.

"When we got a few miles out of town, we saw that a twister had destroyed everything. The way into Cleveland was blocked by flooding, so we worked our way around the south where I eventually ran into one of your men, who told me I'd find you here."

Scott went to his desk and sat on the top, careful not to disturb the beer bottle evidence. "You think Wilkes is stuck in Cleveland?"

"Not think. *Know*. There's a farm a short distance south of the town. Sits on a hill. It's surrounded by water from flooding. We spotted Wilkes, who's most likely waiting for the water to recede. I figured your agent wouldn't

be able to get back here to Tulsa in his car, due to all of the trees being down across the roads. So I hightailed it here myself.”

Scott jumped to his feet. “Let’s get going then! We haven’t got any time to lose.”

When Tallchief didn’t directly follow Scott from the office, the FBI man turned and scowled. “Is there a problem, Henry?”

“It’s your clothes. You aren’t exactly dressed for a ride through some pretty rough country.”

Jacob groaned. “You mean...”

“Yup. The only way through the mess that the storm left is on horseback.”

Harry Black, the former Pinkerton who was currently in the employ of the editor of the *Tulsa Tribune*, groaned and opened his eyes. His head felt like it had been struck with an anvil, but he had no recollection of how the injury might have happened. He wiggled his toes and found that he had feeling there, which was a relief. Looking up from where he was lying on the ground, he could see a circular brick structure that was open to the sky above him. Clouds scampered by as a stiff breeze whistled through cracks in the mortar.

“He lives!” Tom Smith climbed through a square opening and entered the odd building. “I thought you were a goner there for a while.”

Through his dry throat, Black gasped, “What...happened?”

Smith put a bottle to his partner’s lips and said, “Drink. I imagine you’re quite thirsty.”

Warm water filled Black’s mouth and dribbled down his chin. He coughed a couple of times, then indicated that he wanted more.

“Don’t drink it too fast,” Smith said. “You might get sick.”

Feeling a little better, Black asked again, “What happened?”

“You don’t remember the storm?” When his friend didn’t reply, Smith continued, “Hail the size of walnuts. And the wind! Pushed our beautiful new car right off the road and into a ditch. That’s where you hit your head.”

Indicating the brick surrounding them, Black asked, “Where...?”

“Lucky thing! We’re in a silo. Turns out that there used to be a farm here. Most likely flooding drove the owners away. This is the only structure still standing.”

Black carefully began to sit up.

“Here, let me help you, Harry.”

With his back against the cool brick wall, Black began to feel a little better. His vision was clear and other than a rip-roaring headache, he felt all right. “How long have we been stuck here?”

Pulling out rolling papers, Smith began preparing cigarettes for himself and Black. “The storm struck around noon yesterday.” He pulled out a pocket watch and said, “It’s goin’ on four o’clock.”

“Judas priest,” Black complained. “We’ve been here more than a full day?”

“And that’s not the bad news,” Smith said as he handed a lit cigarette to Black. “Take a gander outside.”

With care not to rattle his head, Black managed to get to his feet and walk to the silo door. To his right, a lake had formed. A dirt path, riddled with puddles, headed straight away from the silo. In the distance, he could make out their car, which appeared to have come to an abrupt stop in a shallow ditch.

“It was touch and go for a while,” Smith said. “The flood from the river just began to reach this silo, but we must be livin’ right because the water never got in here. I thought the silo would be blown to bits. I never heard a sound so loud! And you were right here, knocked out and ignorant of the whole thing.”

Black grunted, which was all the thanks he would give his companion. He carefully climbed through the silo door – a three-foot square opening about four feet from the ground - and went outside. Water surrounded them on three sides, and as he walked toward the car, he could see that they weren’t going anywhere for a while.

Walking behind Black, Smith said, “I managed to capture some rainwater for us to drink. I have dry matches. But other than that, unless we get lucky catching a fish or turtle, we’re gonna get hungry.”

Black reached the Model T – the one that was given to them by the governor – and saw that it wouldn’t take much to back it out of the ditch.

Water splashed over the front bumper, but the rear wheels sat high and dry.

"I tried to start her," Smith said. "Water must've got in the engine. When things dry out we'll have to borrow some tools. I suspect the plugs and points are wet."

While Smith was talking about the car, Black stared into the distance. A mile away, across an expanse of floodwater, he could see a farm sitting on top of a hill. "They'll have everything we need over there," he replied.

Henry Tallchief was nearly out of patience. When he'd asked Agent Scott if he'd ever ridden a horse before, the FBI man said, "Certainly." The way that Scott was lagging behind and struggling to control his animal, a gentle old mare named Catfish, Henry figured that the only riding Scott did was on a pony connected to a turnstile at a carnival.

To be fair, the going was difficult. They traveled on roads as far as possible, but deadfalls and other debris forced them to frequently take detours through ditches, muddy pastures, and thick brush. By the time they'd gone five miles, Scott, still wearing his FBI suit, had rips in both pantlegs. A welt had formed on his neck where Catfish had carried him into a stiff branch. The only thing that kept Henry from yelling at Scott was that he knew the agent was having such a miserable experience. It was getting late in the day. They'd ridden west about 15 miles, and it was time to head north towards Cleveland and the farm where Wilkes was trapped by the flood. The pair hoped to find other lawmen, along with Henry's Indian friends, waiting for them near the farm.

Hearing a noise in the distance, Henry stopped his horse and raised his hand. Scott didn't see this and nearly rode right into Henry.

"Oops, sorry. I wasn't looking."

"Shhhh..."

In the distance, a POP was followed by another POP.

Scott looked at Henry. "Was that...?"

"Gunfire. About three miles away."

More gunfire was carried to them on a stiff breeze blowing from the northwest. Henry spurred his horse and said, "Come on, Agent Scott. That

shooting sounds like it's comin' from the farm."

After another half hour of difficult travel, the pair eventually came upon the scene of the gunfight. Watching from behind a massive oak, they saw two men in suits taking potshots with pistols at a man and woman who were trying to ride a horse through shallow floodwaters.

"That looks like Wilkes," Scott said quietly. Then, much louder, he added, "And Miss Larson!"

Tallchief gave Scott a nasty look. "Keep your voice down. We don't want those two turning their weapons on us."

With his voice lowered, Scott said, "Looks like their bullets are falling short."

"Tie up your horse and follow me."

"What's your plan, Henry?"

"We're gonna get the drop on those men, *that's* the plan."

Now on foot, the two lawmen worked their way closer to the shooters. The water from the flood, already receding, allowed Tallchief to lead Scott into a clearing where a farm had once stood. A lone grain silo stood sentinel over the vacant property. One of the men who was shooting at Wilkes and Emma casually reloaded his gun and continued firing. Henry indicated that Agent Scott should stay back and provide cover while he'd sneak up on the men.

Scott stood beside the silo, which was the only cover he could find. Tallchief walked slowly, careful not to step on a branch and alert the two of his arrival. As he approached, one of the men said to the other, "I dunno, Harry. It doesn't look like we'll be able to plug 'em from this distance."

The other man grunted. "If I'd known that this would be a long-range shootout, I'd have brought a rifle."

With a distance of only ten feet between himself and the two men, Henry spoke with a calm and steady voice. "Keep lookin' forward and drop your weapons."

One of the men began to turn around to see who was threatening them. "I wouldn't do that, mister," Henry threatened. "There are five guns pointed at your backs."

"Do as he says, Harry. No sense getting shot for nothing."

The men dropped their weapons on the muddy ground.

"Now turn around."

Seeing Henry alone, both men smiled. The one called Harry shook his head and said, "Well it's only one injun."

Agent Scott, emerging from the silo, ran towards the trio.

"And one federal agent," Henry added, nodding at Jake.

When Jake reached Henry, he pointed at Wilkes and Emma and said, "Look. They're almost on dry ground."

"You stay here with these two while I go grab Wilkes before he gets away."

For the first time that day, Scott had a look of uncertainty on his face. "I don't know, Henry. He's got Miss Larson..."

Henry, running to retrieve his horse, shouted back, "I'll make sure nothin' happens to her."

Tom Smith had a confused look on his face. "Are you after Wilkes also, Agent...?"

"Federal Bureau of Investigation Jacob Scott. Wilkes is a wanted man and that woman is his hostage. Why were you two shooting at them?"

"I'm Tom Smith and my friend here is Harry Black. We're both private investigators. We heard that the law was looking for Wilkes, so we thought we'd help."

Jacob shook his head. "You aren't trying to help. There hasn't been time for any wanted posters to go up for Wilkes. I don't know what you are up to, but I doubt it has anything to do with the law."

Emma was relieved that for the moment the shooting had stopped. Bullets had landed perilously close, splashing in the shallow floodwater just yards away from them. She was pressed uncomfortably against the horn of the saddle. Wilkes, sitting directly behind her, expelled cigarette-tainted breath on the back of her neck. The large chestnut mare, formerly belonging to Anna and Fred Pike, seemed unaware of the urgency of the situation.

Kicking the horse in the ribs, Wilkes complained, "I can't believe this durn animal won't go any faster."

In a mocking tone, Emma replied, "I can't believe you traded your car for her."

It had come as a surprise when back at the farm, Wilkes declared that it was time to leave. "I'll give you my beautiful Chevy Touring Sedan in exchange for your horse, even up," he'd told Fred.

The farmer's eyes opened wide in astonishment. They were in the barn, and Fred whistled as he circled the car. "She sure is a beauty."

"But Fred," Margie urged, "We need Mirabelle around the farm more than we need an automobile."

Fred wouldn't be dissuaded. Reaching out his hand, he and Wilkes shook on the deal. A half-hour later, Mirabelle was saddled and ready to go wherever her new owner wanted. With neither Wilkes nor Emma weighing more than 120 pounds, the horse had no difficulty slogging through the three feet of water that sat upon the fields on the southern side of the Pike farm.

Wilkes gave Mirabelle another kick in the ribs with the hope that the horse might be persuaded to trot. "Since I couldn't drive the car I decided it made sense to trade the car for this horse. Hell, I can get a car anytime. Besides, someday they might make a moving picture about us. Imagine that, *The Story of Emma and Andy*. Two famous outlaws on the run for fame and glory."

Before Emma could reply with a snide remark, a trio of horsemen appeared on a ridge to the west, about a half-mile distant. They were heading directly towards Wilkes and Emma, intent on intersecting their path.

"Well crap," Wilkes muttered, "It seems like everyone's got it in for us today." He slapped Mirabelle on the rump and kicked her again in the ribs, which was the combination of prodding that the horse required to suddenly begin galloping at something approaching full speed. The beast was used to pulling heavy farm equipment and this jaunt through the water wasn't overly difficult for her. The pursuers to the west seemed to be having a more difficult time, as they disappeared into a gully and didn't immediately emerge.

Emma, beginning to despair, suddenly felt optimistic as she saw another man on horseback approaching from the east. He was only about a quarter of a mile away when gunfire broke out behind him, which caused the rider to reverse his direction. Seeing this as an opportunity, Wilkes directed Mirabelle towards a distant forest where he was confident he could evade

those tracking his escape. Realizing her best chance at being rescued was close to evaporating, Emma lunged her body in an attempt to escape from her captor.

Wilkes wasn't fooled and he held Emma tighter. "Hold on now, I can't have you falling off this fine steed and getting yourself hurt." Moments later, the pair disappeared into the thick woods. Wilkes slowed Mirabelle to a walk and laughed as he reached around Emma and stroked the animal's neck. "Good girl, Mirabelle. I bet you're having more fun today than you've had in your entire life."

Back at the grain silo, Jacob had his hands full with the two men who claimed to be private investigators. At the moment when Henry was certain to overtake Wilkes and Emma, Harry Black, seeing that the FBI agent was watching his Indian companion, dropped to the ground and pulled a small pistol from his boot. He fired at Jacob at close range. The bullet was only a .22 caliber, so the damage it did to Jacob's thigh was minimal. But the audacity of the action was enough to give Black and Smith enough time to charge the young federal agent and knock him to the ground, where he dropped his revolver. Smith picked up the gun before Jacob could recover.

"If you ain't hurt too bad, get on your feet," Smith commanded. Jacob did as he was told, and as he rose he saw that Henry had heard the shot and was returning to help. In what seemed like a reckless action to Jacob, Henry fired his revolver toward the two henchmen. Wasting no time, Smith got directly behind Jacob and jabbed his firearm into the lawman's back. "Tell the injun to stop or you're dead."

Letting out a heavy sigh, Jacob shouted, "HOLD ON, HENRY!"

Henry's mount pulled up, splashing mud and water at the men on the ground. He kept his pistol trained on Black and said, "If you kill Agent Scott, your partner dies with him."

A look of disbelief appeared on Jacob's face. *That doesn't seem like a fair trade to me!"*

But the two gangsters had plenty of experience with standoffs such as this. Smith smiled back at Henry and said, "No, you won't let this young FBI

man die. Get off your horse.”

Seeing that his bluff had been called, Henry had no choice but to obey. Black collected Henry’s weapons and forced the two men to return to the silo. Using rope and twine found among the farm ruins, Henry and Jacob were put inside the silo where their feet and hands were securely tied. A handkerchief was tied around Jacob’s bleeding thigh. “I think you’ll live,” Black cracked as he stood. “The bullet barely grazed you.”

“Gentlemen,” Smith said as he stood looking down at the two captured men. “We’re taking your horses. For your trouble, you can have our fine new Ford Model T. It’s a pity that it’s stuck in the ditch, but I think in the end that you’ll agree you got the better end of the deal.”

Moments later, Jacob could hear the sound of the horses sloshing through the receding floodwaters. Squirming to a sitting position, he looked at Henry and said, “I don’t know who those two men were, but one day I intend to get even with ‘em.”

It had taken a full day for the water to slowly drain away from the fields and valleys south of Cleveland. Clarke and Rosie led their horses on foot, carefully stepping around boot-sucking mudholes and over debris left by the storm. Bright sunshine and a stiff wind from the north left the survivors of the flood to hope that their remaining possessions would soon be dry.

As they climbed the final yards up the hill that ended at the Pike farm, Clarke looked back toward Cleveland and surveyed the damage to the village and surrounding homes. *Those poor folks sure have a mighty big mess to clean up.* He could see that the river still overflowed its banks in places. Many of the town’s trees were destroyed, leaving ugly broken, limbless trunks. Crows and turkey vultures circled in places, waiting for their chance to peck at dead pets, cows, or horses. A breeze brought with it the smell of death and decay.

Fred Pike, seeing the two men approaching, shook his head and muttered, “We ain’t had this much company in years.”

Clarke dismounted and walked up to the farmer. “Howdy. My name’s Clarke. I’m a federal marshal and this is my deputy Jefferson Rose. How long ago did Andrew Wilkes and Emma Larson leave your place?”

Shaking the lawman's hand, Pike replied in his slow drawl, "You're lawmen, eh? You after them? I never figured they was on the run."

The farmer's wife emerged from their modest house and walked over to stand by her husband's side.

"This is my wife, Margie. My name's Fred. Fred Pike."

Clarke removed his hat and nodded at the woman. "Pleased to meet you both. We watched your farm from way over there. We could see Wilkes and Emma, but the flood kept us away until just now. How long ago did they leave?"

Pike rubbed the whiskers on his chin. "I figure it's been five or six hours. Let me show you somethin'."

Clarke and Rosie were led to the barn where Pike proudly showed his new automobile to the lawmen. "Andrew traded me this fine car for my horse."

Clarke whistled. "I'd say you made a good deal."

"That's what I thought. That old horse was nearly played out anyways."

Hearing this, Margie Pike kicked the ground and grumbled, "Mirabelle was a fine animal. You had no good reason to trade her away."

Pike ignored his wife. "I guess Andrew figured he could leave quicker on a horse. Now that I see that the law was after him, I see why he was in such a hurry to skedaddle."

Clarke nodded. "The woman that was with him, Emma..."

"She seemed nice for a city gal," Margie Pike said.

"She was kidnapped."

Hearing this, both Margie and Fred gasped.

"You m...mean..." Margie stuttered. "She t...told me she w...was with Andrew because it was c...convenient"

The captain's eyes followed a circling hawk as he replied softly, "Wilkes is a killer and Emma was protecting you."

Hearing this and realizing that the lawmen were on an urgent manhunt, Fred Pike led Clarke and Rosie away from the barn and pointed to the south. "They rode 'ol Mirabelle that way. The goin' was a bit of a slog through water and mud, but I doubt it bothered that old mare much. Funny thing - I didn't give it much notice at the time - but I heard some shootin' a little while after they'd left."

"Shooting?" Clarke pressed. "At Wilkes? Or was he doin' the shooting?"

"I dunno. They were out of my sight by then."

Clarke frowned. "Did they give you any indication as to where they were heading?"

Pike shook his head. "Nope. I figured once they got clear of the flood they'd either gone to Tulsa or Oklahoma City and catch a train."

Hearing this, Clarke turned to Rosie and asked, "What do you think?"

Rosie pursed his lips and thought for a moment before replying. "If I were Wilkes, I'd stay out of the big cities for a spell. I'd head well south of Tulsa and then veer to the east. There's some rough ground thataway."

"What about the shooting?"

"Maybe it was Henry Tallchief?"

"Hmmm," Clarke mused. "Could be. I know it's a long shot, but just maybe Henry's already caught Wilkes."

"That would be a fine conclusion to this adventure, Cap'n. But I suspect that Wilkes has the luck of the devil. It's gonna take more men and plenty of blood before he's brought in."

Clarke thought back to the times he'd chased outlaws in southeastern Oklahoma. While most of the middle of the state was a mixture of forest and grassland, the region Rosie was talking about was rough country. First, anyone traveling that way would encounter a difficult crossing of the Canadian River. In places, the river was so wide that it resembled a lake. Once on the eastern side of the river, the ground began to get lumpy. Endless rocky escarpments, covered with pine, dogwood, and walnut trees, made the area a haven for anyone who didn't want to be found.

While the men were planning their next move, they hadn't noticed that Mrs. Pike had disappeared. Returning, she handed Rosie a heavy bag.

"What is this, Ma'am?" he asked.

"Food and supplies. I figure you'd best get goin' if you're gonna bring Miss Larson home safe and sound."

CHAPTER 17 - EVASION

June 7-10, 1922

Wilkes held Emma tightly as the horse carried them through what seemed like an endless forest. They'd ridden through the Creek Nation the previous afternoon and evening and hadn't seen a soul. It was now well after midnight and Mirabelle needed feed and rest. Spotting a clearing under a full moon, Wilkes said, "This looks as good a place as any. Let's stop here for a bit and rest."

Emma was nearly in tears from the pain of sitting for hours and hours with Wilkes pressing up against her backside. So far he'd been a gentleman and not assaulted Emma in any way. Wilkes tied Mirabelle to a tree and tied the feed bag over her mouth, never taking his eyes from Emma.

"Here's the deal," he said, holding a short length of rope in his hands. "I don't wanna tie you up, so instead I'll tie one of your legs to one of mine. That way if you get a notion to make a run for it, I'll know."

Emma nodded. It made no sense trying to get away in the woods anyway, for she had no idea where she was or which direction she'd go to find help.

"Throw that blanket down on the ground. Get some sleep. We're leavin' at sunrise."

It didn't take long before Wilkes was lying next to Emma with their legs tied securely to each other. Even though his snoring would wake the dead, Emma thought about Margie and Fred and how kind the couple had been during their forced stay at the farm. *I've got clean clothes on for the first time in days. We've got ham and bacon to eat. Even though God makes life hard sometimes by creating someone evil like Wilkes, He balances the scales with good people too.* Before she knew it, Emma was fast asleep, dreaming of better times.

The next day Wilkes purposely navigated Mirabelle over the rockiest ground he could find. Emma figured that this was an attempt to throw off anyone tracking them. Wilkes never seemed to lose focus on what he was

doing, which made it difficult for Emma to leave signs of their escape route. It was only during the rare times that Wilkes let her down from the horse to “go about her business” that she could break a branch or leave a semi-hidden footprint.

Sometime during the afternoon, Wilkes reached into the saddlebag and pulled out a bottle of moonshine. “I’ve been savin’ this until I figured we were clear of the law, so now seems like as good a time as any.” He removed the cork and took a swig. “Whooee! That there’s some mighty powerful devil water.”

He handed the bottle to Emma, but she refused to take it. “Suit yourself. Just leaves more for me.”

With his spirits lifted by the 80-proof whiskey, Wilks became talkative. “You know, I never started out being a desperado. It was all because of that filthy nigger that ran off with my sister.” He took another pull on the bottle and then put it away. “I was just thirteen or fourteen when it happened. Rosemary and I... well, we had somethin’ special. That big black buck showed up at my daddy’s little farm, smiled his huge white teeth at little Mary and she took off with him.”

They rode on for a bit while Wilkes brought back the painful memories of his youth. Without thinking, he pulled the bottle back out and took another long pull. “I didn’t find out until ten years later that Mary had a passel of half-nigger babies. That’s why I decided to go to work for Mr. Jones, you know, the man from the newspaper.”

Emma was stunned. “You mean, the *Tulsa Tribune*?”

“Yup. He hates the darkies even more than I do, if you can believe that. He was gonna make me his lieutenant in his chapter of the Klan. But I guess that ship has sailed...”

If she ever got away from Wilkes, Emma had one goal: To expose Richard Lloyd Jones as the man who lit the match that started the Tulsa massacre. It didn’t surprise her one bit that someone like Jones would want to bring the KKK to her hometown. People like him claimed that they were all about “purifying” America of anyone of color, but she knew that the real motivation was money and power. He’d be at the top of a heap of dues-paying racists, all of whom would subscribe to his newspaper. His top lieutenants would be local businessmen, and the money from advertisements would earn him a fortune. As Emma brooded upon this,

she saw only one possible outcome: *I've gotta get out of this mess and get my book published. It's the only way that I can get enough people to know what really happened last June.*

As they rode on, Wilkes continued to take pulls from the moonshine jug. Emma feared that her captor might be an angry drunk, but instead, he became morose. By mid-afternoon, he was struggling to stay on the saddle so he stopped Mirabelle at a creek and stumbled to the ground. "Come on," he said to Emma. "I'm tyin' you up so I can sleep for a spell."

With her arms uncomfortably bound behind her back, Emma sat with her back against a stump while Wilkes slept off his drunkenness. *Now would be a good time to make a run for it*, she thought as she listened to Wilkes's snoring. The knot that held her arms had been tied sloppily, and it took her little time to work her hands loose. She carefully stood and crept towards Mirabelle, who was grazing on grass in a nearby meadow. Just as she was beginning to feel she would make her escape, she heard a *CLICK*.

"Where the hell do you think yer goin'?" She turned and saw Wilkes standing about 20 feet away. He held a revolver that was pointed at her midsection. "Here I've been treatin' you with respect, hopin' that you'd begin to see me as someone you could learn to admire and you go and do somethin' stupid like this. Now get over here and I'll tie you up properly this time."

Unable to help herself, Emma stood her ground. "You think I could ever admire *you*? After what you did?"

Putting away the gun, Wilkes smiled and approached Emma with the rope in his hand. "That all happened over a year ago. It was just a crazy situation... I went along with the crowd."

"You raped me. You killed Jeremy."

The rope lashed across Emma's cheek, instantly leaving a bright red welt. "YOU SHUT YOUR MOUTH."

"Oh, you don't like hearing what you did?"

The rope lashed again, but Emma stood her ground and didn't flinch. "Go ahead and strike me all you want, it won't shut me up. You are a murderer and a rapist. Oh, and I'll add kidnapping to your list of crimes as well."

Hearing this, the rage that always simmered in his devious mind was revealed in full. He ran at Emma and knocked her to the ground. "Let's see

how you like it this time!” Emma screamed in terror as Wilkes fell upon her body and pinned her arms to the ground with his knees. He reached back and pulled his knife out of the ground and jabbed it towards Emma’s eyes. At the last possible second, he instead pushed the knife deep into the soil next to her ear. Then he lunged forward and wrapped the rope around her wrists.

Emma fought with the energy of a thousand women but she was unable to keep Wilkes from pulling down her trousers. He slapped her head, stunning Emma. With his own pants around his knees, he attempted to force himself upon Emma for the second time but found himself unable due to his intoxication. “Stupid woman,” he complained as he struck Emma again. He then tied her arms and feet tightly and left her where she lay, her pants still pulled down. Before turning away, he gave Emma a swift kick in the ribs.

“I was civil to you,” he said to the nearly unconscious woman as he walked away. “You deserved what you got.”

The remaining members of the Osage Indian posse found Jacob and Charley inside the old silo. They had a bit of a chuckle as they untied their boss and his companion. “White man get the best of you, Charley?” an older Osage asked.

“Shut up and let us have two of your horses,” White Horse grumbled. “We’re goin’ after the men that did this to us.”

Fortunately, the Indians had extra mounts. Before departing, Charley took a moment to look at the gunshot wound to Jake’s leg. “It’s nothing. Keep it clean and it should be fine.”

Jake nodded. “The pain will help me keep my mind on the task ahead.”

Just as the group of Osage and Jacob were ready to return to the pursuit of Wilkes, they spotted Captain Clarke and Rosie riding in their direction.

“What happened here?” Clarke said as he slowed Honcho.

Letting out a huge sigh, Jake said, “Charley and I stumbled onto two fellas who were taking potshots at Wilkes. They claimed to be private investigators. Unfortunately, they got the drop on us and stole our horses.”

With a chuckle, Clarke replied, "I'm glad you're with us." Seeing the bandage around Jake's leg, he added, "Are you hurt?"

"It's just a scratch."

Henry decided to send his men back to their homes, as a large posse was unnecessary. "I reckon that the four of us can track Wilkes."

"What about those other two fellas?" Clarke asked.

"I think they're after Wilkes too. But they looked like city dudes, so I doubt they'll be much trouble from here on out."

Rosie had a reputation as one of the best trackers in the west. His years as a Buffalo Soldier and serving as Clarke's Deputy had created a man who knew how to read signs that many other self-proclaimed trackers would miss. As he and the other horsemen rode across a beautiful meadow, bumblebees buzzed over wildflowers as the low sun began to cast shadows from the few trees nearby. They'd been following Wilkes, his trail made easily visible by the large horse that was carrying both Wilkes and Emma. Rosie and the other lawmen had been riding steadily for over 20 hours and everyone needed a rest. A small stream meandered through the meadow, so Rosie pulled up and said, "I figure we're about eight hours behind Wilkes, but this looks like a good place to stop for the night."

The troupe of lawmen dismounted and went about setting up camp silently. Henry and Jacob, who were both still stinging from their capture by the two ex-Pinkerton thugs, were surly and defensive in their conversations with Captain Clarke that day, and Clarke had had enough.

"You two! You best get your heads out of your behinds. You aren't the first lawmen to be snookered, and you won't be the last. Shake it off!"

Jacob, who blamed himself as much as Henry for allowing themselves to be hoodwinked, kicked the ground. "I doubt that the great Captain James Clarke never found himself tied up inside a grain silo."

Clarke smiled at that. "No, I gotta say that's a new one. But in my younger years on the range, I had my horse stolen by a bandit disguised as a missionary and had to walk for days before I found anyone who could help me."

"That don't seem so bad," Henry said.

"I was in New Mexico at the time. Down by the border. Not a place you want to be on foot."

Henry chuckled. "I guess you're right. A man could die out there in that desert."

"I nearly did! But a wandering old-timer came across me while I was resting in the skimpy shade of a Mesquite tree. He had water and a mule, so I went along with him for almost a week before we came to a village where I could get re-outfitted."

"Did you ever find the bandit?" Jacob asked.

"It took a while, but yeah, I found him. I guess my horse brought him closer to God. When I finally caught up with the guy, he had a small congregation of followers in a mission near Las Cruces."

Everyone laughed and Jacob and Henry lost their sullen attitudes and became more like their old selves. It wasn't long before the foursome was sitting around a small campfire, telling stories about the scoundrels they'd encountered during their careers.

"We've got our problems on the reservation," Henry told the group. "I'd hoped that prohibition would slow the smuggling of liquor to my people, but it's gotten worse. I think I've put at least a dozen people in jail this year."

Clarke nodded. "The more you take somethin' away from folks, the more they want it. I don't think this prohibition thing is gonna stick. What do you think Jake?"

Agent Scott was poking at the fire with a small stick. "Heck, everyone in the federal government knows that people are still getting all the alcohol they want. The only thing that's changed is that the government isn't getting the tax revenue and the people distilling the stuff are getting rich. You've got your creeps selling paint thinner in booze bottles, causing all sorts of unnecessary deaths. Then you've got gangsters sneaking the good stuff into the country from Canada – and the rich folks can't seem to get enough."

"The teetotalers got their way, getting the law passed," Clarke remarked. "It's been a year since we've been a dry country, and I don't see that much has changed for the better."

The four men sat quietly for a few moments when Henry spoke up. "Tell me, Jim, about how you and Rosie rode with Teddy Roosevelt in the Rough Riders."

Clarke let out a snort and thought back to that grand adventure. "That was so long ago, it almost seems like a dream."

"It was real enough alright," Rosie said.

Nodding, the Captain thought for a moment while he measured his words. "At the time..." he stumbled as he remembered the blood and waste of lives lost in yet another senseless war. "At the time, it didn't seem like much good would come out of sending a bunch of poorly trained cowboys to Cuba, where half caught malaria and the rest never got off their troop ships."

"Did you meet Colonel Roosevelt?" Jake asked.

"Sure, plenty of times."

"Was he as magnificent as I've heard?"

Now it was Rosie's turn to snort. "Crazy was more like it."

Jake frowned. "What do you mean by that?"

"The man seemed like he was havin' the time of his life," Rosie said. "People was dying all around him, bombs were fallin', and there was the Colonel, high on Little Texas without a care in the world."

"It was a sight to see," Clarke added. "The man was fearless. But he was also a leader, and his men knew he wouldn't ask any of them to do what he wouldn't do himself."

The men all nodded at this as they remembered the tales of Roosevelt on his hunting expeditions throughout the west. The fire was burning to embers and a chill descended on their little camp.

All evening they'd avoided talking about Andrew Wilkes and what would happen when he was captured. It was like they'd collectively decided that they'd not mention his name and ruin the camaraderie they were enjoying.

Finally, after a long sigh, Agent Scott said, "I have a clear fingerprint of Wilkes's on a bottle I found in his hideout back in Pawhuska. The bottle's stashed in my hotel. It ties him directly to the bottles we picked up at the creek where the Jacksons were murdered."

Clarke nodded. "Will this get him convicted?"

"It won't hurt. But we clearly have him on the kidnapping charge. I haven't worked out how we're gonna pin the deaths of the Winters on

him. I'm hoping that Emma saw or heard something. She was in Wilkes' car when he lit the fires."

Rosie stood and picked up his shotgun. "I'll stand first watch."

"I'll be turnin' in now myself," Clarke said. "I'll relieve you in a couple of hours, Rosie."

Harry Black and Tom Smith were shadowing the Captain's group, never coming close enough to be spotted. It was fairly easy following the tracks that the four lawmen's horses left. "A blind man could track these jokers," Harry cracked.

Both men had struggled to keep up with Wilkes after they'd stolen Henry's and Jacob's horses. Smith and Black had lived most of their lives in cities and neither was comfortable sitting on a saddle for hours. A few hours after they lost Wilkes's trail, Tom Smith spotted the four horsemen heading in their direction.

Black and Smith dashed for cover and hid behind a thicket of brambles and bushes. The four lawmen were visible as they rode through a clearing about a quarter of a mile away.

Speaking quietly, Smith said, "I hope that blackie who's doing the tracking doesn't see our horse's hoofprints."

Just then, the foursome stopped while the lead tracker rode around in circles as if he was confused. He looked directly towards where the pair of hired guns were hiding but didn't seem to see them. He removed his hat, scratched his wiry gray hair, and pointed to the southeast. The group followed their tracker and soon disappeared into another wooded area.

"All we have to do is follow those guys and they'll take us to Wilkes," Black said.

But after a full day had passed, the pair began to wish they'd brought food. They'd found some meager rations of hardtack and jerky in the saddlebags of their stolen horses, but that was long gone.

They sat cold and tired on the ground far enough away from the lawmen that they wouldn't be discovered. "I bet that posse has a fire," Black whined to his partner.

"Shut up. They'd find us for sure. And complaining doesn't help."

After a few minutes of quiet, Black said. "They've probably got beans and bacon. Maybe coffee..."

"I said shut up! I'm hungry too, but we'll just have to tough it out for a while. Maybe we'll get lucky tomorrow and find something to eat." With that, Smith lay back on his saddle and promptly fell asleep.

Black tried to mimic his friend, but as he lay back his stomach gurgled and rumbled loudly. Glancing at his partner, who wasn't bothered in the least by the loud noises, he grumbled, "That SOB can sleep through anything."

The sound of birds singing startled Harry awake. "Huh," he said to himself. "I guess I *did* fall asleep." It was a bright, cool morning and the sun was already well up in the sky.

"Who are you talking to?" Smith asked in a grumpy voice from behind a nearby tree where he was taking a piss.

"No one, Tom." Harry stood and worked the kinks out of his sore back and hips. "Might as well get saddled up and see if we can get back to following them lawmen."

The cool breeze from the north switched to the south, bringing heat from Texas and Mexico to Central Oklahoma. The tracking party, led by Rosie, began to slow as the horses needed to frequently rest. Here and there the lawmen were able to purchase feed and supplies at settlements and homesteads they encountered on their journey. No one in the group was familiar with the Canadian River in this part of the state, and the track Wilkes left was frequently confusing as he'd backtracked to go around beaver ponds or swampy lowlands.

The four men stopped on the crest of a hill that gave them an expansive view to the southeast. Captain Clarke removed his hat and wiped the sweat from his brow. "Didn't there used to be a place where desperadoes hid out somewhere around here?"

"I'm not sure," Rosie replied. "I recall hearing about the Daltons using eastern Oklahoma as a home base, but that was somethin' like thirty years ago."

They rode on, and as they entered more swampy lowlands the mosquitoes descended upon both man and horse. Using bandanas to

cover their faces as best they could, they soldiered on. In the mid-afternoon, clouds began building to the west, a harbinger of approaching thunderstorms. Captain Clarke checked his watch. It was nearly four p.m. and the sky was darkening and the wind had increased to near gale strength, blowing away the biting insects but stinging the men with dust. Spotting a small cabin, the lawmen picked up their pace and headed for cover.

Rosie, Henry, and Jake tied the horses on the leeward side of the cabin while the Captain banged on the front door. Just when he was beginning to think the place was deserted, a toothless old man opened the door, pointing a double-barreled shotgun directly at Clarke. "What do you want?"

Clarke held up his hands to indicate that he didn't intend to cause trouble. "I'm James Clarke, a U.S. Marshal. I was hoping you'd let me and my men rest here until the storm blows over."

The old-timer stared at Clarke with squinty, grey eyes. When the other three men came around from the back side of the building, a flash of lightning lit the sky. The cabin's owner lowered his weapon and muttered, "Might as well get in here before someone gets 'lectrocuted."

The interior of the cabin was dark and dank. The old man, who said his name was Sammy, smelled like he was two years overdue for his annual bath. "Don't have but one chair," he said, "So just find a place to sit yourselves down."

The men did as their host asked. While the thunderstorm raged outdoors, Sammy, working by the light of one dim candle, sat in his lone chair and resumed working on the bridle he'd been repairing before he was interrupted. Clark was puzzled – he didn't see a horse anywhere near the cabin. "Excuse me, sir, are you repairing a bridle?"

Sammy spat a wad of tobacco juice on the floor. "Yep."

Clarke looked at his friends and shrugged. "But we didn't see a horse outside."

"Mule."

"You have a mule?"

The old man looked at Clarke like he was daft. "Hell yes, I have a mule. How do you expect me to get anywhere without one?"

"But..."

"I know, Sadie ain't here right now. She wandered off last night. It's happened before. When she's tired of traipsing across the countryside she'll find her way back home."

Right away Clarke realized that Wilkes might have stolen the mule. "Did you see anyone else around here yesterday?"

After Sammy worked an awl into the leather for several minutes, he spat another blast of tobacco onto the floor. "Yep. Man and woman on a horse. I saw them lookin' at my place, but they rode on by without stoppin'."

Jacob, unable to contain his excitement, blurted, "It's Wilkes and Emma!"

The old man frowned. "Them the people yer after?"

"Yes sir," Clarke replied. "He's a stone-cold killer and the woman is his captive."

This must have been the most exciting thing the old man had heard in a long time, for he jumped to his feet, slapped his hands on his thighs, and danced a jig. "I'll be danged! I knew that feller didn't look like he was on the up-and-up."

"Do you have any idea where they might be headed?"

Sammy suddenly stopped his happy dance and began scratching his chin while he pondered the question. "I suppose they could be headin' east towards Arkansas. There's some rough ground over that way."

Clarke nodded. "That's what we thought. There's nothing but scrub to the south of us."

"It would be hard to hide between here and Dallas," Sammy admitted. "Nothin' to hide behind but puny trees and grass."

"I think the man we're after might have taken your mule," Clarke said.

Hearing this, Sammy walked to the corner of the cabin and retrieved his shotgun. "Well, what the hell are we waiting for? Let's get after 'em and bring Sadie back home!"

It took a bit of persuasion for Clarke to convince their host that it would be best to wait out the storm, which showed no sign of abating. It was nearly the dawn of the next day before the rain slowed to drizzle. Sammy roused everyone and handed each man a cup of the nastiest coffee they'd ever tasted.

"I'm ready whenever you fellers are," Sammy announced.

Henry, who'd been quiet since arriving at the cabin, spoke up. "You plannin' on walkin'?"

Nodding, Sammy said with confidence, "I can outwalk any man in this part of the world. Hell, I don't ever *ride* Sadie. That wouldn't be nice. She doesn't mind carryin' my supplies though."

Rosie looked at the Captain and made a face that said, *do you really want this man to tag along with us?*

"How well do you know the land to the east?" Clarke asked.

Sammy answered this by launching into a lengthy tale of how he'd trekked between his cabin and Hot Springs, Arkansas, many times. "The water there's good for when my rheumatiz is actin' up." He told the lawmen that there was a decent trail that their man was most likely using and that he'd be happy to go along as their guide.

Clarke asked Sammy to remain indoors while he went outside to confer with his partners. Rosie was the most skeptical of the old man's ability to keep up. "We can't have him slowin' us down. Miss Emma might not have much time left."

Hearing this, Jacob nodded. "Wilkes has had Emma for over a week now. We're lucky he hasn't already..."

Clarke interrupted before Jake could finish. "I understand, Jake. We can't be too far behind though, because the storm would have slowed them down just like it slowed us down."

Jake turned to Henry. "What do you think?"

"It will help havin' someone with us who knows the ground."

As the four men considered the merits of having a guide, Sammy emerged from the cabin holding his shotgun. He was outfitted with a small pack and a canteen and wore buckskin pants. "While you four are out here jabbin' yer jaws, I'm gonna go find Sadie."

With that he began jogging away from the cabin, his moccasins splashing the puddles on the muddy trail.

Clarke let out a hearty laugh. "Well fellers, I guess the decision's already been made for us. Let's follow Sammy."

Emma, now sitting on a stolen mule, was in misery. Her feet were tied around the bottom of the mule's stomach. Her hands were also tied, which made it difficult to swat the mosquitos and gnats that had been attacking her for what seemed like days. She'd only been let off the mule once that day for a call of nature, but she left signs for a tracker to follow every chance she got.

The theft of the mule happened during the darkest part of the previous evening. Wilkes snickered as he secured Emma to the animal, but his smile disappeared when he found out that the mule wasn't going to budge. Finally, he improvised a rope bridle and made Mirabelle pull the stubborn animal. The result was some kicking and braying, which Emma had desperately hoped that the owner of the mule would hear and come running to her rescue. But her luck continued to be evasive and she soon found herself being pulled along by her captor.

The same storm that struck the lawmen hit Emma and Wilkes just as they were beginning to look for a place to camp for the evening. Wind and rain lashed at them as they rode towards the east. Finally, with little else to use as cover, they hid behind the roots of a massive oak that had fallen in a previous storm. The base of the tree had been pulled from the earth and created a ten-foot diameter wall, keeping the worst of the wind from striking them and their animals. After enduring a long, wet evening, Wilkes, who'd run out of whiskey, was in a particularly sour mood. He yelled at Emma to get on her mule, and they resumed their forced ride towards the rapidly rising sun.

CHAPTER 18 - THE CAVE

June 11-12, 1922

The Canadian River, swollen well over its banks by the thunderstorm, churned with brown, angry water. A dour man and his son worked the cables that pulled their ferry from the west bank to the east. Wilkes was through with being nice. He sensed that the law was on his trail and that he wouldn't know peace until he escaped deep into the bayous of

Louisiana. There were some fine riverboat casinos in that part of the country, where a man with grit could find work, honest or otherwise.

The ferry owner, who pulled hard at the cable, said, "We'd get there quicker if you helped."

"Shut up, or I'll put a plug in you." Nodding at the pistol he held, Wilkes added, "It won't kill you right away, at least not until you and your boy get us to the other side."

Seeing the gun pointed at his father, the boy, who had the broad shoulders and strapping biceps of a man but the intellect of a child, said, "We don't usually cross the river when the water's this high."

"Be quiet, Jimmy," his father gently admonished. "Let's get them across and then we'll be done for the day."

The ferry, which was really just a plank raft, seemed to rock in every direction at the same time. The animals fought for their balance even though they were securely tied in the center. There was a rudimentary railing around the entire contraption that wouldn't stop anyone from falling into the water. Wilkes had a firm grip on Emma, who now had her hands tied behind her back.

"You better hope we get across safely," Wilkes whispered in her ear. "Otherwise, you'll have one hell of a time trying to swim."

When the four humans and two animals were about halfway across the water Mirabelle began to tug against the "D" ring that was used to hold her lead rope in place. Her hind legs, which had been left unhobbled, bucked and stuck a solid blow to Jimmy's ribs, knocking the boy to the deck. Seconds later the terrified horse broke her lead and found herself free. The horse seemed to have only one thing in mind – escaping to solid ground. She jumped from the raft perhaps thinking she could reach the far shore, but instead found herself being swallowed by the raging water. The mule was unperturbed by the event and remained calmly in the center of the raft. As Mirabelle was swiftly taken down the river, Wilkes gasped. "The saddlebags..."

Jimmy, incapacitated by the horse kick, did his best to hold onto one of the vertical posts that held the outside rail.

The raft was stationary in the middle of the river. The ferryman held the cable with all of his strength but would not be able to pull the raft to the other side alone.

“Help the ferryman!” Emma yelled at Wilkes.

With a stream of curses, Wilkes let go of Emma and took Jimmy’s place on the cable. At first, it looked as if they would be pulled downstream, but after what seemed like an eternity the raft began to inch forward. It took nearly all of the strength of both men but the raft eventually reached calmer water before coming alongside the unloading dock.

When the raft was secured, Wilkes fell to the deck of the raft, exhausted. He buried his face in his hands and sobbed.

The ferryman and Jimmy, who had recovered somewhat, watched this and must have thought that Wilkes was distraught over the loss of his beloved horse.

When his breakdown ran its course a little while later, he grabbed Emma roughly by the arm and said, “Let’s get goin’ and see if we can find the twenty-five thousand dollars I just lost.”

Wilkes, with Emma in tow, found the riverbank to be completely impossible to traverse. “That stupid animal is probably twenty miles away by now anyway,” he complained. They returned to the dock and raft where the ferryman and Jimmy waited with the mule.

“Sorry ‘bout your horse, Mister,” the ferryman said. “You should’a put a blindfold on ‘er.”

Wilkes was in no mood to hear that the loss of the horse and money was *his* fault. He lashed out and pistol-whipped the ferryman across the side of his head, causing the man to fall to the ground, out cold.

As an extra measure, Wilkes gave the man a sharp kick to the ribs. “Shut up. I lost a whole hell of a lot more than that stupid animal, you idiot.”

Turning to Jimmy, Wilkes said, “You, boy! Where’s your pappy keep his whiskey?”

The boy pointed at a nearby tree. “He keeps a jug over there.”

“Go get it.”

The boy did as told and went to retrieve the moonshine, walking with his hand on his ribs that were most likely broken by Mirabelle’s powerful kick. Wincing, he dropped to the ground and retrieved a brown and tan jug of moonshine from the cool hole it was kept in. With difficulty, he regained

his feet and returned to where Wilkes and Emma stood waiting. "Here you are, mister."

Wilkes took the jug from the boy, pulled the cork, and took a swig. After wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, he looked the boy in the eyes. *I oughta kill you and your daddy right here and now.* But instead, he took another drink and replaced the cork. *You can die another day.*

Wilkes climbed on the mule and left Emma to be dragged along behind as they headed back out on the trail. He held the jug in his lap and took frequent swigs of the strong homebrew. He kept quiet for the next few hours, still seething from his misfortune at the river. Eventually, the whiskey began to lift his spirits and he shook off his anger. There would be more money to be made when they finally reached New Orleans.

"I bet you've never been in this part of Oklahoma, have you?"

Emma grunted. "No." As they passed through the wilderness, dodging the occasional rock outcropping, she added, "Doesn't seem like I missed much."

Wilkes chuckled. "Oh, you'd be surprised at the things that went on around here. Quite a few of the folks who live here are descended from Confederate deserters from the war. A few years ago I was at a saloon in Quinton – that's a bit north of here - and a feller told me that the great Belle Starr had a place to the north of where we are now."

"I remember reading a book about her a long time ago," Emma admitted. "She died young if I remember it correctly."

"Hmmmph. I guess most who live a hard life on the wrong side of the law die well before their time."

"Then it seems like you're overdue."

Wilkes thought about reaching back and slapping Emma for that comment, but for the moment the rotgut had him feeling almost friendly, not at all like the poison that made him so nasty the other day. "I'll probably live to be a hundred and die rocking in a chair out on the porch of the old folk's home."

They'd spent quite a bit of time on the ferry crossing and it was now late in the afternoon. Wilkes seemed to know where he was going as he led them between rocky escarpments and up and down steep inclines. As the sun lowered in the west, the forest darkened. Every now and then they crossed streams and allowed the mule to drink while Wilkes refilled his

canteen. Emma broke twigs and left footprints every chance she had, for she still hadn't lost hope that they were being pursued by the Captain and his friends. Finally, near sunset, they passed a small lake. Emma hoped they'd stop for the night, as her feet were killing her. But they pressed on for a few more miles.

Finally, at the bottom of a steep hill composed of shale and sandstone, Wilkes dismounted and led the mule up a rough and craggy trail. Emma, with her hands now tied in front, tripped over an unseen rock and fell to the ground, narrowly avoiding landing on some craggy rocks.

"You ain't much of an outdoors person, are you?" Wilkes chided.

Emma regained her footing without assistance. "I'd do better if my hands weren't tied."

Wilkes continued up the path, pretending he hadn't heard her. After about twenty minutes of climbing over boulders and through slick passages, they came to a massive cave.

"Found it!" Wilkes was jubilant. "I've always wanted to spend a night in this place."

Emma sat on a boulder and rested. Looking around in the near darkness, she said, "What's so special about it?"

"Why, this was a famous outlaw hiding place! They say that the Daltons and Youngers used this cave. Maybe even Jesse James." Wilkes quickly retied Emma's feet and then went off to search the cave. He was suddenly as happy as a child, and it wasn't long before Emma heard him cackling with joy deep in the rear of the cave.

He returned to where Emma sat and bent over and put his face inches away from her ear. "I found the secret escape route," he whispered. "If the law finds us, we'll be gone before they know it."

Feeling secure in their hideout, Wilkes first saw to the mule and then scrounged up firewood. He soon had a small fire burning. Fortunately, their food had been strapped to the mule. They still had beans and bacon that they'd acquired before the ferry crossing, and Emma was untied so she could cook supper.

Eating a spoonful of hot beans, Wilkes smiled and said, "Ain't this the life? No more answering to rich bosses like that high falutin Richard Lloyd Jones."

"You mean the editor of the *Tribune*?"

"You know the man, huh? I've been in his employ for quite a while." Wilkes finished his beans and took another swig of moonshine. "I was originally hired to stir up trouble in Greenwood, but that nigger shoeshine beat me to it. After that simmered down, Jones sent me to Pawhuska to help one of his cronies. Before all that I was promised a position in the KKK chapter Jones was starting in Tulsa. But after I caught you and grabbed the money from Macklin, I decided to look after my own interests for a change. So here we are, just you and me. I've gotta find another way to make some money, but that's never been a problem for me. There's plenty of opportunities out there for anyone willin' to do what others are too scared to do themselves."

Emma heard every word Wilkes said and committed it to memory. Richard Lloyd Jones was responsible for sending Wilkes to Pawhuska! Add this to his crimes in Tulsa, and when she told this to Jacob and James, maybe they'd have enough information to indict the editor.

Wilkes sat with his back against a boulder smoking a cigarette and sipping his moonshine. Emma sensed that her captor was in a relaxed mood. *Who is this man? He's a killer, that much is certain. He's also a rapist and a brute.* She knew that alcohol seemed to be the catalyst for his rage. On this night, he was fairly drunk, but the man seemed morose, not angry.

A question had been on Emma's lips ever since she was first abducted. The only thing that had kept her from bringing it up was that she didn't want to stoke the fire that burned inside the man. But tonight, maybe he'd be willing to talk.

Emma asked for the jug.

"You want a slug of this?" Wilkes held up the moonshine and laughed. "It's strong stuff, but you can have a taste if you like."

She took a small sip and cringed. The liquid was sickly sweet, but once the concoction hit her throat it burned all the way to her stomach. An uncontrollable coughing fit overcame her, and it was several moments before she recovered.

Wilkes had a smirk on his whiskered face. "I *said* it was strong."

Just to spite the man, she took another drink from the jug. She managed to contain the cough and instead faked a contented sigh. "It's got a nice burn once you get used to it."

She handed back the jug to a surprised Wilkes. He shook his head in wonder and put the cork in the jug. "That's enough for both of us until tomorrow."

Wilkes tied Emma's ankle to his as he'd done every night. For the first time, he left her hands untied. Whether this was a mistake or a form of kindness? Emma lay back and tried to relax on the hard rock floor of the cave. It wasn't long before Wilkes was breathing deeply and on his way to a sound slumber.

"Andrew...?"

"Huh? What? I was just driftin' off."

"Tell me about the creek and the black family."

Wilkes lay quietly for a while before he spoke. "There's nothin' to tell. I saw 'em, I killed 'em."

It was a good thing Wilkes couldn't see her face, for her eyes were wide open at this unapologetic admission. "But... but...they were little boys."

"Who grow up to be big niggers who do nothin' but corrupt every white person they meet. I say kill 'em all."

It made little sense at this point to try to reason with the man, but Emma couldn't help herself. "They aren't in the United States because it was their choice."

Wilkes was quiet for a moment. Crickets chirped nearby and now and then embers from the dying fire crackled. Just when Emma thought that Wilkes had fallen back asleep he said, "Every last one of them should have been sent back to Africa or shot after the south lost the war."

Hearing this, Emma knew that there was no convincing Wilkes that the only way forward was to find a way for people of all races to learn to live together. Was this philosophy naive? Probably. But with so many generations of negros, Chinese, Irish, and others already living in the country, she could see no other way. She knew that most whites held racist opinions. They truly believed that anyone who wasn't white was inferior. But she also knew that it was the cheap labor from the slaves that created the economic climate for the country to grow and prosper. But now, almost 300 years after the first slaves were brought to the Americas, the whites

were fearful of losing their superiority in the workforce and government to non-whites.

With nothing left to say to Wilkes, Emma rolled to her side and tried to fall asleep.

It was early on the morning of the next day when Clarke and his fellow lawmen reached the ferry crossing of the Canadian River. In the hours since Wilkes and Emma used the same crossing, the river had subsided to its normal flow.

The group had made up a lot of lost ground on Wilkes by using Sammy as their guide. Even though the hermit was almost as old as the hills they traveled through, he was spry and quick on his feet. He knew every shortcut and was nearly as adept at tracking as Rosie.

Now, as they all dismounted and looked at the river, they collectively felt as if their long journey was nearing its end. Rosie and Sammy both agreed that the signs that Emma had left were less than a day old.

"With any luck, we'll find 'em before the day's over," Sammy announced.

The ferryman emerged from his cabin and stood staring at the five men. Right away everyone noticed the bruise that covered the right side of the man's face.

"Did a scrawny feller and a woman cross here recently?" Clarke asked.

The man spat black tobacco juice between his rotted teeth, hitting a wasp that was lazily hovering over a flower. "Yep. He was a real bastard, that one was."

"How long ago was this?"

"Yesterday, 'round noon."

Scott pressed the man for more information and learned that Wilkes had lost his horse in the raging river water. "His supplies, and from what I gather, a substantial amount of money was in the horse's saddlebags when he went into the drink."

"They left here on the mule?"

"Uh-huh. The runt cold-cocked me with his pistol and then took off with a jug of my best hooch."

"We need to get across the river as soon as we can then," Clarke said.

"I'm not running the ferry today," the man said. "My boy's got an injury and it takes two to run the cables."

Clarke wasn't pleased to hear this. "There's more than enough of us to help. We'll take two trips to take the horses and men over."

The ferryman spat black tobacco juice out from between his rotted teeth. "How am I supposed to get back here by myself?"

"The raft will be light enough," Clarke replied. He pulled out his wallet and asked, "What's the charge?"

It took the man a moment to come up with a number that would suit him for all of the work he was being asked to do. "Five dollars for the horses and two dollars for the men."

Clarke handed over a ten-dollar bill and said, "Keep the change."

The ferryman spat again. "That was *each*."

"Cripes, that's robbery!" Clarke shook his head, pulled out more bills, and paid the man.

It took only a half-hour for everyone to get to the other side. Without looking back, Clarke grabbed Sammy and the two rode double on Honcho. They took off in hot pursuit, feeling that they were closing in on their adversary.

"What now?" The poor ferryman, exhausted from running the raft across the river twice and then returning by himself, watched the two horsemen approach just minutes after he returned to his cabin.

"We need to get across this river," Harry Black announced.

The ferryman, who was sitting on a bench under the shade of a sycamore tree, didn't budge. "What the hell is on the other side of the river that everyone's so dad-gum anxious to get to?"

"What's it matter to you?" Black said. "Do you want to get paid or not?"

With a groan, the man stood and said, "Ten dollars each. I'll take you both over at the same time, but I'll need your help on the cable."

"Ten dollars!" Black pulled his pistol and was about to put a hole in the ferryman's chest when Smith reached out and stopped him.

"Pay the man, Harry. We don't need any more trouble."

Fifteen minutes later and twenty dollars poorer, the pair were soon on the trail, not more than a few miles behind the posse.

Sammy stopped the lawmen shortly after noon. "Do you smell that?" He smiled a near-toothless grin at the four horsemen. "Smoke."

Everyone dismounted and the horses were left in a small meadow to graze. Clarke nodded at the old hermit and said, "Go ahead. But be careful. The man we're after is dangerous."

"If he's hurt my Sadie, *I'm* the one who's gonna be dangerous."

With Sammy in the lead, Clarke, Rosie, Henry, and Jacob followed. Clarke and Rosie carried long guns, while Henry and Jacob had pistols. Ancient pines shaded the rocky ground as they made their way to the source of the smoke. They followed a deer trail which eventually ended at a clearing. A short distance away a rocky escarpment rose from the ground. The five men all stopped and stared, each seeing the thin whisp of smoke escaping from the summit.

Sammy chuckled. "I figured this might be where your feller was headed."

"What is this place?" Clarke asked.

"Some call it Robbers Cave. It's been a hideout for unsavory characters since I was a lad."

"Do you know the way to the top?"

Sammy shook his head. "Nope. Can't say as I've ever been up there."

The four lawmen stared at the challenge before them. Each understood that anyone that held the high ground had an advantage and would easily be able to fire at those below.

"We could wait him out," Rosie suggested. "He'll run out of water sooner or later."

"But if Emma's up there..." Jacob said with a concerned look on his face.

"I think we should all approach from different places," Clarke suggested. "What do you think, Henry?"

"What?" Henry said, smirking. "Because I'm an Indian you thought I'd know what to do?"

"Maybe we should call up to whoever's up there," Jacob said. "What if it's not Wilkes?"

"It's Wilkes. I've been following the mule's footprints all the way here," Rosie said. "Someone with small feet was walking behind the mule."

Jacob nodded. "That *has* to be Emma."

Clarke looked at each of his friends and said, "If no one has a better idea, we'll each find our own way to the top. Hopefully, we'll find Wilkes drunk or asleep. If you can take him without putting Emma in danger, do it." He looked at Sammy and added, "You've done enough for us. I suggest you stay down here and be our backup in case something goes wrong." He handed Sammy a spare loaded pistol and nodded at the group. "Let's go."

Clarke took the center route, which started with a steeply angled ridge and wound around massive boulders. The afternoon heat caused sweat to drip into his eyes. He stopped to wipe his brow and spotted Rosie to his right. He looked for Jacob or Henry on his left but saw no one. The going got rougher the higher he climbed, and eventually, the steepness began to take a toll on his aging body. *This old man isn't fit for this sort of activity. I'd better take it slow.*

He could see that Rosie wasn't having nearly as much trouble with the climb. As he continued, Clarke was relieved to find the pitch was beginning to level out. But as he worked his way around some large rocks, a gap opened up in front of him. The crevice was nearly five feet wide and thirty feet deep. Taking a deep breath, the old lawman had no choice but to try to jump across the chasm. Running as fast as his body would take him, he went for it. He easily made it to the other side, but some rocks under his feet crumbled and fell into the gap, landing loudly on other rocks below. Clarke stumbled forward and fell to his knees. *Crap! Surely whoever's up there heard that.*

A gunshot ricocheted off a boulder just above Clarke's head. *Yup. He's heard us.*

Clarke managed to work his way between the rocks as an occasional bullet landed nearby. *If that's Wilkes, he must not have a lot of bullets, otherwise, he'd fire quicker.* So far, none of the other lawmen had fired their weapons. *Maybe Wilkes hasn't spotted them yet.*

Clarke decided it was time to try to end this chase. Wilkes wasn't going anywhere, as he was essentially surrounded. "Wilkes!" he shouted. "You're

surrounded. Drop your gun and come out where we can see you.”

A scratchy, thin voice yelled down from the summit. “I’ve got yer woman, lawman. The only way I’m comin’ down from this hill is with my gun pressed to the back of her head.”

Hearing Wilkes’ voice for the first time after all the weeks of investigation sent a chill up and down the Captain’s spine. “Emma!” he yelled. “Are you all right?”

He heard the reply, “I’m okay...” followed by a sharp slapping sound.

“Wilkes! You’d best not be harming Miss Larson!” It was Jacob, who was watching from a different position.

“Then tell her to keep her trap shut!” Wilkes replied.

Clarke knew they had few options. If they all rushed the cave opening, Emma might get injured in the crossfire. He decided to try to stall for time instead. “We’ll just wait you out then, Wilkes. You’ll get thirsty soon and then be begging us to take you in.”

In reply, Wilkes fired another bullet toward Clarke. Stone chips struck the Captain’s forehead but caused little damage otherwise. He kept his head down and waited, hoping that somehow they’d find a way to end this without anyone being hurt. *Except for Wilkes. I wouldn’t mind seeing him bleed.*

Unknown to Clarke’s posse, the ever-persistent duo of Harry Black and Tom Smith were observing the siege at Robbers Cave. They’d nearly stumbled into Sammy, who was thankfully hard of hearing. Backing away, they dismounted and quietly snuck back into the woods. “Let’s leave the horses here and see if we can see what’s going on,” Black said.

Smith nodded. “Lead the way.”

They stayed together and walked nearly a mile before finding themselves on the other side of the large and rocky hill. Every now and then a gunshot was heard firing from the top.

“That must be our man, Wilkes,” Smith said. “He’s holed up on top... but there’s four of them. Think they’ll rush him?”

Black thought for a moment before replying. “Yeah. But they’ll wait him out first. He’s got that woman with him.”

Nodding, Smith answered, "Remember, we're supposed to take her out too."

Black kicked at the ground and looked at his boots. "I ain't crazy about killing a woman."

"Me neither, but it's what we're being paid to do."

Black turned away from his partner and looked up at the summit. "How about we just wait until they either kill Wilkes or bring the pair down? Then we can end it one way or the other."

Smith shook his head. "And take on four lawmen? I'd rather take on Wilkes up there while he's alone."

"Okay. We'll go up together."

The climbing route up the back of the hill would have been difficult for a professional climber, but it was nearly impossible for the two former detectives. It was a testimony to their dedication to duty that kept them moving higher and higher, even if they only gained a foot or two at a time. Gunfire continued to occasionally ring from above them, an indication that Wilkes was still alive and breathing. When they were nearly two-thirds up the climb, they stopped and rested in the shade of a deep crack.

The day was getting hot and sweat dripped from the brows of both men. Black removed his hat and was relieved to feel cool air blowing from deep within the crack. "Ahhh, that cool air feels good."

Smith looked at his friend and then more closely at the crack. He stood and said, "Stay here for a minute. I'll be back." Using every available hand and foothold, Smith worked his way up and into the crack. He was gone for quite a while, and just as Black began to believe his partner had injured himself, Smith's head appeared above. "Come on up. I've found a way into the back."

A few minutes later Black found his buddy sitting on a rock next to a small opening in the back of the mountain. "The cool air you were feeling? It came from here. I think it's a secret way into this pile of rocks."

There was evidence by scrapes on the rock that someone – or something – had used this entrance.

"I hope there ain't a bear in there," Black muttered as he followed Smith into the darkness.

CHAPTER 19 – BOOZE, BULLETS, AND BROKEN BONES

June 12, 1922

Emma worked on trying to loosen her bonds while Wilkes was firing his gun at the lawmen. *I knew that James and Jacob would find me!* Wilkes fired another bullet down the slope and laughed. Ignoring Emma, Wilkes took a long pull from his jug. It was early afternoon and the man was already quite drunk.

The mule had been moved inside the cave. Emma scooted over to the animal and carefully got to her feet, which was difficult as her legs were tied as tightly as her hands. With her hands behind her back, she spun around and felt the saddlebags for anything she could use to cut the rope. It was difficult to reach into the bags, but she found that if she bent forward she could lift her arms and scrape the rope against the side of a buckle. The mule snorted, telling Emma that he wasn't fond of what she was doing. *"Easy there, old girl,"* Emma whispered. *"I'm going to get loose and then see if I can help get us out of this mess."*

Wilkes fired a couple of rounds down at the lawmen, then stopped to reload, muttering. His drunken condition had clearly worsened. Emma frantically rubbed the rope against the sharp metal, hoping she was making progress. When the gunfire stopped, she quickly sat back down and hoped that Wilkes wouldn't spot the frayed rope.

Wilkes turned and saw that Emma wasn't where he'd left her. "Why'd ya move over there?" he asked in slurred speech.

"I thought it would be safer."

He grunted and took a long drink from the jug, emptying it. "Damn, that was some good hooch." Holding the jug towards Emma, he grinned and said, "You liked it, didn't you?" When there was no reply, he casually pitched the jug over the side of the ledge, where it smashed harmlessly on the rocks below.

Wilkes had the look of a man who was so drunk he was ready to pass out. Instead, he stumbled to Emma and fell on his butt, laughing. "Whoa! The floor is farther away than I 'spected it to be."

Seeing Wilkes in this inebriated condition gave Emma the confidence to continue working to free her hands. The knot was noticeably looser, yet she was still tied securely. Seeing a jagged rock to her right, she said, "You stink worse than the mule," and moved away from her drunken captor. Now at the sharp rock, she was able to cut the rope.

Wilkes staggered back to his feet and returned to the front of the cave where he wildly fired his pistol two more times. He tried to fire again but found himself out of bullets. This angered him, and he threw his pistol to the ground. Turning towards Emma, he complained, "Damn it all! What am I supposed to do now?"

Just then, a gun fired from deep at the back of the cave. The bullet struck Wilkes squarely in the middle of his chest, knocking him to the rocky floor.

I'm saved! Emma stopped working on freeing herself, as she was certain that Jacob or the Captain had discovered a rear entrance to the cave. But when a stocky man, dressed in a filthy suit and fedora of a city dweller, emerged from the darkness, Emma was startled. "Are you with the Captain?"

The man, who was followed by another similarly-dressed fellow, walked directly to Emma, grabbed her, and said, "Shut your trap." Easily lifting Emma to her feet, the man grabbed the rope and dragged Emma towards the rear of the cave.

"What the hell are you doing, Harry?" The other man stood over Wilkes. "He's not breathing. We're supposed to kill her too."

"I know, I know. But I think we should hold onto her for a bit until we get well away from those lawmen. Consider it insurance."

Working together, the men pushed and pulled Emma through the claustrophobic rear cave opening. Once or twice they had to crawl on their bellies through tight gaps in the rocks in the increasing darkness. Emma's forehead struck the edge of a rock, causing a deep gash. Fortunately, the distance they had to travel was short. Sunlight was visible just ahead. At the rear opening, Emma cringed in terror as the man called Harry pulled a switchblade from his pocket. With a CLICK! the blade appeared. He roughly turned Emma to her stomach. *Oh God, he's going to stab me from behind!*

But seconds later, Emma found that her feet were free. "Get up." He pulled her to the ledge. "If you fall, it's no skin off my nose."

Looking below, Emma's eyes blinked through the blood that was streaming down her face. "How am I going to get down there with my hands tied behind my back?"

"I really don't care if you fall," Harry said.

The other man spoke up. "We should untie her until we get to safer ground."

With a grunt, Harry began to untie the rope bonds. "Whatever you say, Tom." He immediately saw that the rope was frayed. "You almost got yourself untied. If we'd been five minutes later, you'd have been free." When he was finished, he gave Emma a push forward. It was enough to startle her into thinking she was going over the edge.

With a laugh, Harry pulled her back. "Had you worried there for a second, didn't I?"

Emma untucked her shirt and wiped the blood from her forehead. *Why have I been forced to suffer at the hands of these evil men? Wilkes has haunted me for over a year. Now I have these two cretins who believe they are in control of my fate.*

"I'll go first," Harry said. Looking at his partner, he said, "Send her down after me."

Harry disappeared over the ledge, but as Emma began to follow, she found that the descent was more difficult than she'd expected it to be. She did her best to use the same toe and handholds that Harry was using, and despite the fatigue and hunger that she'd felt for days, she soon found herself waiting for Harry to get out of her way. The other man, Tom, was well above her and moving slowly as well.

As they emerged from the same crevice that led Harry and Tom into the rear of the cave, they found themselves standing upon a narrow ledge. A pile of jagged boulders waited for them about 50 feet below.

"When we get to those rocks down there, we're home free," Harry said with a chuckle.

Emma turned her head and didn't see Tom following. Seeing that she had no option but to take control of the situation, she took a half step back from the ledge and gave Harry a strong shove. As he fell towards the open air, he spun and managed to reach out and grab a weak handhold on a gnarly vine that clung to the side of the rock wall. With one hand on the vine, Harry's feet scrambled to find anything to stop his eventual fall.

Without hesitating, Emma grabbed a softball-sized rock and pounded it against the man's hand. He screamed in pain but did not release the vine. With all of her strength, Emma slammed the rock on Harry's knuckles. But instead of letting go, the dry and ancient vine cracked and separated from the cliff wall. Harry never let go of the vine, perhaps thinking it would slow his fall to the rocks below. His eyes glared at Emma as he fell backward and landed on the pile of boulders at the bottom of the rock wall. Astonishingly, Emma saw that he wasn't dead from the fall. He moaned and attempted to stand but found his legs wouldn't move.

Hearing footsteps from behind, Emma quickly scrambled to the cliff edge and started her descent. After about ten feet of scrambling down the rock wall, she looked up and saw Tom looking at her.

"What happened to Harry?"

When she was certain she had a secure grip on the wall, Emma replied, "He slipped."

"Well, crap. He never was good for much other than driving and playing poker."

Emma began moving down the rock wall, hoping to reach the bottom well before Tom. Then she'd make a mad dash to the other side of the hill with the hope that she'd find a lawman waiting there.

Clarke and Rosie both reached the front cave entrance nearly simultaneously, despite taking different routes to the entrance. After checking to see that Wilkes wasn't waiting to ambush them, they looked over the rock wall and saw the body lying on the floor.

"Looks like someone got here before us," Clarke said as he climbed up and into the cave.

Rosie walked to Wilkes and jabbed him with the toe of his boot. The large hole in his chest made it unnecessary for either man to suspect that their adversary had any chance of being alive.

"Come on," Clarke said. "Let's see if there's another way out of this cave."

In the increasing late-afternoon darkness, it took the pair a few minutes to find the escape route. Clarke held a lit match and stared at the narrow

opening that waited for them. “Uh, I can do this, Rosie. I know you ain’t too fond of tight places.”

Rosie pulled out a handkerchief and wiped the sweat from his eyes. “I’m obliged, Cap’n. But if you go first, I’ll do my best to follow.”

Clarke began crawling into the narrow opening. “I feel cool air blowing,” he said to encourage his friend. “It can’t be far to the other side.”

The Captain moved as rapidly as possible, hoping to find whoever had taken Emma before they reached the forest below. After crawling for several minutes, he soon found that he could stand. The escape route worked its way through a jumble of massive fallen boulders which had miraculously left a hidden walkway that exited the rear of the hill. Forward movement was hindered by the slanting boulders, some more than sixty degrees from being level. He scooted on his behind for the last 30 feet and saw a dark-blue sky ahead. Before emerging into the light, he pulled his revolver from his holster and held it before him, ready to engage anyone waiting to do him harm.

Without waiting for Rosie, Clarke moved swiftly towards the cliff that would lead him to the descent – and hopefully, Emma.

Just as he was beginning to peer over the edge, a gunshot was fired from below. Clarke saw a man fall to his death upon the jagged boulders below, near where another stranger also lay wounded or dead.

Sammy stood next to Emma on solid ground at the bottom of the hill. Emma was holding the pistol that Clarke had given the old-timer. She dropped the gun and slowly sunk to the ground, where she buried her face in her hands and sobbed.

The four lawmen, plus Sammy all stood a few feet from Emma. She’d recovered a bit from her ordeal, but even after she wiped the tear streaks from her filthy face, she knew she would never forget the suffering she’d been forced to endure over the last several days.

Jacob shyly approached her and said quietly, “You were right to kill him, Emma.”

She looked up at the FBI agent and shook her head. “You’ve got it wrong. I’m not upset about killing that man.”

“Oh,” he replied. “What is it then, relief that the whole thing’s over with?”

“No.” She turned away and listened to the lone call of a mourning dove. The five men all looked at each other and shrugged, not understanding. With a quiver in her voice, she added, “I wanted to kill Wilkes.”

The “coo-coo” of the mourning dove rang out again. Emma slowly walked away from the men, desperate for a few moments of silence and peace for the first time in many days. *The evil man that killed my Jeremy is dead, but I didn’t play a part in that. I wanted payback for your death, Jeremy. I really did. Those other men – they said they were going to kill me, so they had to die. But I don’t even know who they are or what their role in this is.*

She followed the path back to the creek she’d crossed nearly two days earlier. Clear, cool water flowed across mossy rocks in a display of nature’s beauty that she hadn’t noticed since well before arriving at Pawhuska many days earlier. *I need to start paying attention to such things. Life is hard. Life is short. But this creek has been here since before man and it will be here long after the last human has left this earth.*

Sitting on a rock, she removed her shoes and let the cool water wash over her feet. The mourning dove cried again, and Emma smiled at the sound.

“This man’s still alive,” Henry Tallchief said from the top of the pile of boulders where Harry Black lay. “I think his back is broken.”

Clarke scrambled to the top of the rocks and joined Henry. “He was with the other fellow when they stole our horses and left me and Jake tied up back in that silo,” Henry said.

“Any idea who they are?”

“From the looks of ‘em, I’d say someone hired these two to go after Wilkes and Emma.”

The Captain rummaged around in the man’s jacket pocket and pulled out a wallet. It was stuffed with hundred-dollar bills. “I believe you are right, Henry. This man has been well-paid.”

The man groaned and opened his eyes.

"Who are you?" Clarke asked.

"Water..." the man gasped.

Henry opened his canteen and handed it to the Captain. "Here you are. Drink." Clarke continued inspecting the man's wallet and was surprised to find a Pinkerton Detective Agency identification card. "Are you a detective?"

The man, who appeared to be suffering from immense pain, blinked and nodded. "Used to be... went out on my own... years ago."

"What about the other man you were with?"

The man's eyes were closed now. He opened his mouth and said, "Water."

Clarke gave the man another sip, but the man began coughing and was unable to stop for several moments.

Henry, who was standing nearby said, "I think he's got internal injuries."

Clarke nodded. He lightly slapped the man's face. "This card says your name is Clarence Downer."

Slowly, the man's eyes opened. "No one's...no one's...called me Clarence for years."

"Who are you working for, Clarence?"

Clarence Downer, AKA Harry Black, smiled at the Captain. His mouth opened, and Clarke was certain that he'd find out who hired these men to follow them and kill Wilkes.

But the air that emerged from the man was his last breath. He lay upon the rocks with his eyes open, seeming to stare up at the cliff from where he fell to his death.

Standing, Clarke said to Henry, "I suppose we should bring these two in."

It took a while to round up the horses. Sammy climbed up to the cave to retrieve his mule and Wilke's body. When they were all back together, they found Emma sitting by the creek.

"It's nearly dark," Clarke said to her. Do you want to rest up for the night here or head back towards Tulsa now?"

She stood and brushed her hands against her filthy pants in a futile attempt to remove some of the grime. "I cannot consider spending another night at this place. Take me somewhere far from here as quickly as possible."

CHAPTER 20 – HOMECOMING

June and July, 1922

Even though Andrew Wilkes was only in my life for less than an hour on the day of the Tulsa massacre, he has scarred my soul forever. How is it that a chance encounter can lead to an all-consuming desire for revenge? Wilkes was a nobody, a desperate man who never aspired to anything more than whores and whiskey. He was a bottom-feeder. But during my time as his captive on our journey from Pawhuska to the boulders of Robbers Cave, he wasn't completely dishonorable. Other than the one drunken attempt, he didn't try to have his way with me again. When he didn't have whiskey he could almost be what you'd call "personable."

For me, the catalyst that was responsible for dragging me into this maelstrom was Wilkes. Even though I was raised to believe that vengeance was not the answer, this nightmare would be truly over if I'd been the one to kill him instead of those "detectives." He murdered my Jeremy. He killed the entire Jackson family and raped Mrs. Jackson. No, someone like Wilkes needed to be scrubbed from the face of the earth. It turned out that I wasn't the one chosen to execute him, but he died just the same. The world is a better place now that Andrew Wilkes is gone.

My good friend, Captain James Clarke, testified this morning on behalf of Bobby Wright. Bobby was charged with three counts of 2nd-degree murder and the jury found him guilty after just a half-hour of deliberation. Even though the men Bobby killed were also known to have participated in the massacre, the jury was determined to see Bobby hang. It seems like the killing that began a year ago will never end and that it is my curse to live in these troubled times.

Emma sat upon the porch of the little house that she and Captain James Clarke were now sharing. Her book, now finished, was being shopped around to various publishers in the east. Her good friend, the mystery writer Mrs. Pratt, promised that her agent would find a home for her memoir. Emma decided that it didn't matter if the book received acclamation or languished in obscurity. What mattered was that the story

was told and the record was set straight. Those involved in the burning of Greenwood would not escape the truth.

The cry of a mourning dove took Emma back to the final day of her captivity and her return home. It had been nearly three weeks since the lawmen and Emma rode into Tulsa with the bodies of the two former Pinkertons and Wilkes.

People had emerged from their homes and businesses and stared as the procession passed by, perhaps remembering that this wasn't such a strange thing just 20 years earlier.

Rosie, Henry, Jacob, Emma, and the Captain went directly to the center of the city and stopped in front of the *Tribune* building. Reporters from all of the newspapers had already caught wind of a major story brewing and were peppering the lawmen with questions.

"Who are these three men?" one reporter shouted from a safe distance, as the stench and flies had become a problem over the last two days.

"Why are you at the *Tribune*?" another asked. "What do these bodies have to do with the newspaper?"

Clarke, who was known by most newsmen, kept his mouth shut as he dismounted Honcho and began to walk toward the front doors. Just then, Richard Lloyd Jones – the editor of the paper – emerged with two other large men and blocked the door.

"Well," Clarke said loud enough for everyone nearby to hear. "If it isn't Mr. Jones. You are just the man I came here to see."

Jones looked at Clarke and then at the dead bodies. There was no hint that Jones recognized the men, but he had a reputation of having a keen poker face.

Emma, now dismounted, stood next to the Captain. "We've brought back your henchman, Mr. Jones."

Jones squinted at Emma. "I remember you. You're that nigger lover who came to me a few weeks ago looking for a job."

Emma laughed. "It turned out that I didn't want a career writing *Home and Garden* columns."

The crowd had begun to grow. At least twenty people were listening to the conversation.

"I really wanted information...", Emma continued, "...about your role in what happened last June."

“Nobody cares about that anymore,” Jones retorted angrily.

Someone behind Emma echoed Jones’ earlier words: “Nigger lover!” Another shouted, “Go live with the blackies if that’s what makes you happy!”

Captain Clarke turned and stared at the crowd until they quieted. “More than a week ago,” he began, “Two families in Pawhuska were murdered by a man who has confessed to being in the employ of Mr. Jones.”

The reporters scribbled away, not wanting to miss a word of this exchange.

Jones, with a look of immense self-importance on his face, shouted, “I know nothing of this!” He turned and began to head back into his building.

Emma knew that this crowd of witnesses and reporters was more than she could hope for. Without missing a beat, she shouted, “Andrew Wilkes!”

It was later said that Richard Lloyd Jones might have flinched upon hearing this name. Others said that the name meant nothing to Jones and the “Larson woman” was just making it all up. Jones disappeared inside and for the rest of his days never acknowledge that he’d ever known anyone named Andrew Wilkes.

The *Tribune* reporter, taking his cue from his employer, exited the scene. Some of the crowd shuffled away too, concluding that it was a lot of noise about nothing.

One reporter from the *Tulsa Star*, a more moderate local publication, shook his head in dismay and said, “You won’t get anyone interested in talking about what happened here last year. It’s old news and it doesn’t sell papers.” What the man didn’t say was *most of these folks were involved directly with what happened here last year. Their hands are all dirty.*

“Jones hired the man who burned down two houses in Pawhuska,” Emma said with conviction. “This same man, Andrew Wilkes, also killed Frank Macklin and murdered the Jackson family.”

“I’ll follow up on the Pawhuska news,” the reporter said. “But I suggest you keep Mr. Jones’s name out of it if you know what’s good for you.” He put away his notepad and walked away.

Ringling from the newly-installed telephone brought Emma back to the present. Sighing, she went inside and picked up the handset. "Yes?"

"Emma? This is Jacob." Even though the line was full of static, she was happy to hear the FBI agent's voice. She'd been waiting for days to find out if there was any further information about what had happened in Pawhuska. "I've got some news to share with you."

"Oh, Jake! I've been hoping for... some clarity over what happened to the Winters' families."

"I'm in Pawhuska now. If it's alright with you..." he hesitated and Emma could hear the nervousness in his voice. "... I'll take the next train to Tulsa."

Emma smiled at this. "You may join James and me for dinner."

"The train arrives at five o'clock."

She went back outside and smiled at James, who was taking a well-deserved nap on a hammock under a nearby willow. Upon returning to Tulsa, he'd promptly resigned his position as Federal Marshal saying simply, "I'm done chasing bad men." The two, along with help from Jake, had hoped to cause Richard Lloyd Jones trouble by exposing that he was the ultimate catalyst for what happened in Tulsa one year ago, but it seemed like the public had no stomach for news concerning the massacre. After all, few white men in Tulsa were innocent of events that ended up with hundreds of dead negroes. Even those men who didn't pull a trigger themselves were involved in the coverup. Only they knew where the bodies were buried and they would take the secret to their graves.

Now energized by Jacob's upcoming visit, Emma set about preparing a delicious meal of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, and early sweet corn. For dessert, she baked a rhubarb pie, which had been a favorite of her father.

When the Captain entered the kitchen he was surprised to see Emma so fully engaged with cooking. "This is a nice turn of events," he chuckled. "Other than working on your book, you haven't been interested in anything else since we got home."

"Jacob is on his way here. Could you be a dear and go meet him at the train station?"

Clarke smiled at this. "Oh, is he coming to sweep you off your feet?"

Blushing, Emma smiled. "Just do as I ask and pick him up. He's going to tell us what he learned in Pawhuska."

Emma was waiting on the porch as her two friends walked up the front sidewalk later that afternoon. Jacob, dressed in a clean suit, looked every bit the professional investigator. The men were deep in conversation. "Rosie didn't stick around?" he asked as they climbed the porch stairs.

"Nope. Said he was going back to the mountains."

"Can't say that I blame him," Jacob said. "There's nothing here for him."

Seeing Emma, the FBI agent removed his hat and smiled. "Hello, Miss Larson."

"Oh? Am I 'Miss Larson' now?" she laughed. "Am I to call you Mr. Scott?"

Interjecting, the Captain said with a smile, "Come on you two. Quit pretending you barely know each other."

When both of the young people began to talk simultaneously, it was Emma who took control of the situation. "I'm happy you're here, Jake."

Looking at Emma, he answered, "I couldn't go back to Chicago without seeing you first."

There was a moment of awkward silence. Finally, Emma stood and said, "Come inside. Dinner is ready."

"That was a fine meal," Jacob said to Emma. "I haven't had any home cooking in a long, long time."

Smiling, Emma replied, "Why don't you two men go out to the porch while I clean up the kitchen."

The Captain pointed at the pie on the counter. "What about the rhubarb..."

"I'll bring pie and coffee out to you," Emma interrupted.

Jake and the Captain did as they were told while Emma hurriedly washed the dishes. A short time later she found the two men sitting on the porch where she served them the homemade pie.

The three friends enjoyed the tangy taste of the rhubarb.

"My mother made rhubarb pie," Jake said. "It seems like everyone back home in Michigan has a rhubarb patch."

"It takes a fair amount of sugar to cut the tartness," Emma said.

The Captain shoved a large fork of the pie into his mouth. "This is wonderful stuff. I don't think I've ever had it before."

"That's what you get for being an old bachelor," Emma teased.

There was a moment of awkward silence. Everyone knew that Jacob was there to tell them about what he'd learned in Pawhuska, yet they didn't want to spoil the wonderful evening. Fireflies flitted around the yard, flickering on their lights in an attempt to attract a mate.

Jacob cleared his throat. "I guess you'll both want to be hearing about Pawhuska."

Clarke nodded. "I doubt that there's a conclusion that will satisfy us, Jake."

"Maybe," the FBI agent answered. "Maybe not."

"Go ahead, Jake," Emma said. "I want to know to what degree Macklin was involved. And did you find out who those Pinkerton men were?"

Jake laughed. "One thing at a time!" He took a sip of coffee and continued. "First, I was able to match Wilkes' fingerprints with the prints left on the beer bottles found near where the Jackson family was murdered."

"I suppose that conclusively proves, along with what Wilkes told Emma, that Wilkes murdered that innocent family," Clarke said.

Jacob nodded. "It does. Now, regarding Macklin: Remember Clara Cross? We found bank records of huge loans he made to her husband, John. They both ended up dead. Guess who ended up with their estate?"

"Let me guess. Macklin."

"Uh-huh. We also found out that he was after Anna and May Winters's money. He was most likely responsible for getting their brother, Charley White Horse, killed. Macklin had loaned Charley quite a bit of money and was Charley's financial guardian. With Charley's death, Macklin would get Charley's oil income. We found a contract among the bank records that corroborates this."

"How much money was involved?" Emma asked.

"Charley's annual income was around fifty thousand dollars."

The Captain whistled. "That's a lot of dough."

Jake continued. "Macklin, using his leverage at the bank and his control over Charley, kept the man dirt-poor. We found records that showed that Macklin gave Charley an allowance of only twenty dollars per month."

Emma gasped. "That's terrible!"

"I agree," Jake said. "But it's quite common in the Osage community. There's all sorts of ways for white folks who manage the Indian's money to skim the wealth. For instance, a wealthy tribal member will tell their conservator that they need a new automobile. The conservator makes a deal with a car dealership for twice the actual value of the car and pockets the money. But in Charley's case, Macklin paid him less than any of the other ranch hands in his employment. Charley inevitably turned to drink, and Macklin and Wilkes used it against him."

Emma had an angry look on her face. "Are you going to be able to stop this abuse, Jake?"

"I hope so. We'll be watching the people who manage Osage wealth."

"What about Charley's sisters? Anna and May?"

"This gets complicated, but I'll give you the main points. Both of the sister's husbands, Robert and Ralph..."

"Aren't they brothers?" Scott asked.

"Yes. They were both on the board of the Pawhuska State Bank. Macklin was also on the board. Anyway, they were the conservators of their wives' wealth. Because their monthly oil income was less than what they needed for their lavish lifestyles, they borrowed heavily from the bank and Macklin to cover their debts."

"Did you learn this from going over bank records?" Clarke asked.

"Some of it. I got the rest of the story from Genevieve Gray."

Clarke was stunned. "The dancer?"

"It turned out that she had relationships with Frank Macklin *and* Robert Winters."

"Don't that just take all," Clarke said under his breath.

"Miss Gray told me that she'd been promised by Winters that he would marry her soon. His wife was ill and as soon as she died they'd be married."

"That scoundrel!" Clarke slammed his fist on the table.

"That's not all," Jake said. "Under Macklin's orders, Dr. Reynolds was not administering insulin to Anna Winters for her diabetes. I sent blood samples from Mrs. Winters to the lab in Chicago. They identified strychnine."

"It's a damn shame that everyone involved in these crimes is already dead," Clarke said. "I'd prefer to see 'em all hang."

Emma concurred. "Macklin, Wilkes, and the doctor... dead. All of their schemes got them nothing in the end."

"Don't forget about Robert and Ralph Winters," Jacob said. "They both died in those horrible fires."

"So in the end, nobody wins," Clarke murmured.

"Actually," Jacob said, "That's not entirely true. "Genevieve Gray is the benefactor of Macklin's estate."

Clarke looked at Emma and shook his head. "Well, she played both men for all they were worth. So I guess somebody *did* win after all."

The three sat quietly for a moment, each thinking about the investigation and the ordeal of Emma's kidnapping and recovery.

Jacob stood and said, "I'm knackered. It's been a long day and I think it's time I got some sleep."

As they said their goodbyes, Clarke remembered that he had one last question for the young FBI agent. "What about the Pinkertons?"

Jacob shook his head and grunted. "Those two... they were not good lawmen. The Pinkerton Agency fired them after they got into trouble during the West Virginia coal strike. They found employment from anyone who needed to have someone's legs broke – or worse."

"Who put them onto Wilkes and Emma?" Clarke asked.

"My best guess is they were hired by our friend, the editor of the *Tribune*."

Clarke's head snapped back in surprise. "Are you sure? Why would he hire men to kill Wilkes and Emma?"

"I'm only speculating," Jake said, "But I think Jones was covering his tracks."

The Captain nodded. "Makes sense. With Wilkes out of the picture, there was no one else left to expose his role in what happened in Greenwood."

"But why did those men take me?" Emma asked. "They said they were going to kill me."

Jacob shook his head and placed his hand on Emma's shoulder. "Do not underestimate how much the editor of the *Tribune* hates you."

Emma's eyes had the look of someone who would walk through fire to see that Richard Lloyd Jones would be brought to justice for lighting the

flames that consumed Greenwood that night in June. “I am *not* afraid of that man.”

EPILOGUE

July 3, 1922

Emma waited inside the busy train station. Most wouldn't notice that there were very few people of color present. A race-driven massacre had that sort of effect on folks. In many ways, she longed for the days when the Greenwood district thrived. She missed hearing the neighborhood children playing, as her house was just across the street from several negro families. She no longer had the choice to attend the Greenwood movie theaters or have ice cream at Williams Confectionary. These businesses and every other negro-owned business had been burned to the ground.

"I'm all set," Jacob said as he approached.

"Do you really have to go?" Emma asked, already knowing the answer.

"I'm anxious to get started in my new position in Chicago."

Emma nodded. She'd learned from Jake earlier that morning that due to the successful conclusion of the Osage investigation, he was being put in charge of a new task force to stop the smuggling of alcoholic beverages from Canada to the United States. When he told her this news, he'd joked, "All I had to do was make sure that everyone died," referring to the misfortune that befell nearly every participant in the Pawhuska affair.

The conductor yelled, "All Aboard!"

Emma could tell that Jake was too nervous to initiate an intimate moment, so she took control, thinking, *if I don't do it, it will never happen!* She stepped forward and embraced Jake, who suddenly relaxed and bent to allow their lips to meet. If there had been any doubt either that they were in love, the kiss was proof. Emma stepped back and smiled. "Why Mr. Scott!" she ribbed. "I'd say, you are a very capable kisser."

Jacob blushed three shades of red. "I... I... I...", he stammered and pointed at the train. "...I'd better get going."

Emma rushed forward again and embraced Jake. "Please come back to me," she whispered in his ear.

Jake pulled away, reached into his pocket, and handed her an envelope.

"What's this?" she asked. She opened the envelope and found a train ticket. To Chicago. "Oh, Jacob..."

"It's got an open date," Jake explained. "You can visit me as soon as you're ready."

She patted Jake on his chest and murmured, "You lug. I'd come with you now if you'd let me."

"But I have my new job..."

"Right. You go ahead and get yourself settled in your new position. But be quick! I'm tired of waiting for the men in my life to make up their minds."

"ALL ABOARD! LAST CALL!"

Jake climbed up to his coach and stood in the doorway, looking down at Emma. "I love you, Emma Larson."

As the train began to puff steam and move slowly away, Emma walked along next to where Jacob was riding. "I love you too, Jacob Scott! I love you!"

There were at least thirty people who saw this exchange, and every one of them smiled and clapped at the joy of witnessing two people announce their love for one another in front of the world.

Emma stood and watched the locomotive disappear into the distance. Tears of joy streaked her cheeks, but she made no effort to dry them as she turned and began the walk back to the little house on Detroit Avenue.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

While *Into the Maelstrom* isn't intended as a sequel to my previous novel, *The Lynching of Billy Sullivan*, it does feature some of the same characters and is set in roughly the same location. In *The Lynching*, I introduced the reader to Captain James Clarke, who would be played by John Wayne if that book had been a movie produced 60 years earlier. I wanted to explore Clarke's back story and his friendship with Jefferson Rose, so I invented their meeting at the battle of San Juan Hill. While writing *The Lynching*, I stumbled upon the tragedy of the killings of numerous Osage in Pawhuska. My nature is to always try to understand why those in power are so frequently corrupt, so the Osage story was something I had to tell. My research included reading David Grann's wonderful nonfiction book, *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*, which I recommend to anyone interested in this time in American history (At the time of this writing, *Killers of the Flower Moon* is being developed as a feature film starring none other than Leonardo DiCaprio and directed by Martin Scorsese. I can't wait to see it!). I also recommend the motion picture *The FBI Story*, which stars the great Jimmy Stewart and is frequently played on Turner Classic Movies.

I want to make it perfectly clear that while Richard Lloyd Jones was a real person, everything I write about him in this novel is a fabrication. He was the cousin of the great architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Mr. Jones's wife, Georgia, was a liberal activist, and I hope she was able to counter Jones's staunchest right-wing tendencies.

Robbers Cave is a real place. If you are ever in south-eastern Oklahoma, I recommend visiting this beautiful state park. I hiked there recently - it's impressive, but I found no evidence of a secret rear opening.

The words in this book are all mine, but I need to credit my wife, Carol, with helping me with keeping the plot moving. I don't sit down to write each day with a plan. I make it up as I go along. My ideas aren't created by banging on the keyboard – they come when Carol and I are out walking or

bicycling together. She is always the first to read the first draft. Her honest appraisal of my work is beyond value and she makes my writing so much better than it would be if I had to rely on outside help.

I owe a great deal to The Shiawassee Area Writers. We meet once or twice monthly to learn how to hone our craft and promote our work. This is the third book I've published since joining the group. I hope I'm showing improvement!

My good friend Ken Algozin performed a thorough grammar and spelling edit of the manuscript. I can't thank him enough for his help in making this story more professional and polished.

A Note to You, Dear Reader

I sincerely hope you found this novel to be entertaining and enlightening. I realize that the subject matter is difficult but I felt it was important to keep reminding people that the racism we've experienced in this century has always been part of the fabric of this nation. Until we confront and atone for the crimes that were perpetrated against non-whites in the past, we will never achieve harmony among *all* of the citizens of our great country.

Authors these days don't have it easy. I don't have a publisher and I have to beg and bribe people to proofread my writing. When I think that all of the mistakes have been found and fixed, I self-publish my books on Amazon. Sometimes I see reviews of my work that complain about "bad writing" or grammar errors, which is fine because I really do want my writing to be as good as it can be.

If you find an error or have an idea about what I could do better or differently, please drop me a note at dirtkahuna@gmail.net. You may also find me at www.facebook.com/dcornellauthor.

Also, reviews posted on Amazon are extremely valuable to any independent author. Please take a moment to post a short review about what you liked or disliked about this book.

Douglas Cornell
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About Douglas Cornell

Douglas Cornell (1959-?) is an American writer, adventurer, musician, and information technology consultant. Doug and his wife, Carol, spend several weeks each year backpacking the wilderness regions of North America. In addition, Doug is a highly-competitive bicycle and cross-country ski racer.



Also by Douglas Cornell

Plastipocalypse: A Novel

Greg and Trixie Bowman are having a bad day. The dashboard in their car is dissolving... their clothes are shredding... they can't see through their eyeglasses.

With the grim realization that their lives have changed forever, the Bowmans do whatever it takes to keep their family safe in a world that is suddenly without plastics or other synthetic compounds. And the plastic just doesn't disappear - it changes into something deadly and terrifying.

Plastipocalypse, Book II: The Barrens

One year after all plastic unexpectedly destabilized, the survivors struggle to live without even the most basic possessions of modern daily life. The search for food, clothing, and shelter is complicated by the powerful fire and ice storms that sweep across the landscape.

Greg Bowman, who lost everything in *Plastipocalypse*, is on a quest to find his son. Unfortunately, Bowman encounters a terror that exceeds his wildest imagination.

The Lynching of Billy Sullivan

As a boy, Jeremy Stick watched a man hang, strung up by a lawless mob.

Years later, U.S. Army Sergeant Stick struggles to understand what drives normally decent men to defy law and order. He encounters racial hatred on the dusty streets of Nogales, Mexico, and the burning of an entire community known as "The Black Wall Street" in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

After finally meeting the woman who may be the love of his life, their future together is threatened by an evil force that is beyond their wildest imaginations.

"Cornell's characters are full of intrigue and mystery, keeping a reader engrossed in the story from start to finish. It's as if you're transformed to the late nineteenth century." - Elizabeth Wehman, Author of "The Year the Stars Fell."

All novels are available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) in deluxe paperback and Kindle editions