Summary: When Adam receives his father’s permission to take one brother with him on an extended trip east to visit the Centennial Exposition, even he is surprised at which brother he chooses and at the critical turn the grand adventure takes.

Rating: K+    Word Count: 277, 566

Note: This story follows the timeline of my Heritage of Honor series, which is, for historical reasons, somewhat later than that used for the series Bonanza. While this difference results in certain incongruities with the series, it opens up other interesting and historically viable possibilities, particularly for the eldest Cartwright brother. Some of these are alluded to in this story and will be more fully developed in a future one.

Heritage of Honor Series:

A Dream Deferred
A Dream’s First Bud
A Dream Imperiled
A Dream’s Darkest Hour
A Dream Divided

Heritage Companion

Never Alone
Centennial! A Journey of Discovery

CHAPTER ONE

The front door blared open, bringing with it a brisk gust of March wind and two Cartwrights coated with
dust. From his chair by the blazing fire, Adam scowled at his younger brothers and sharply ordered them to close the door. “You’re late,” he continued, his voice accusative, “and Hop Sing is fit to be tied. He’s threatening to throw supper out the back door, and a return to China has already been mentioned.”

Hoss Cartwright scrunched his nose in the direction of the stone fireplace. “Well, pardon us all to pieces, big brother. It ain’t like we wanted to be out this late in that cold wind.”

“Yeah,” Hoss’s younger brother groused as he shrugged out of his green corduroy jacket. “Some of us actually had to do more today than just ride into town for the mail.”

Adam favored Little Joe with a superior smirk. “Just the privilege of age and maturity, sonny. Someday we might even consider you grown up enough to fetch the mail.”

Eighteen-year-old Joe scowled. If there was one thing he hated, it was being reminded that he was the youngest, and it seemed to him that his oldest brother rarely missed an opportunity to throw it in his face. “Listen here, Adam,” he began, moving toward the objection of his irritation.

Before Joe could even start his intended tirade, however, sharp words cut him off. “You late,” Hop Sing snapped from the dining room. “Always people late to suppah. Hop Sing work hard all day and this thanks he get!”

Hoss lightly rested a beefy hand on the shoulder of the diminutive factotum of the Ponderosa. “Just put the food on the table, Hop Sing, and you’ll see how thankful I can be. I’m hungry enough to eat a bear!”

“Hop Sing no feed dirty boys,” the Chinese cook snorted with a disdainful look at the cherubic, but grimy face of the middle Cartwright brother. “You wash up, chop-chop, then maybe-so I
put food on table.” His quick exit to the kitchen left no room for argument, so both Hoss and Little Joe headed for their respective washbasins upstairs, passing their father on the way down from doing similar duty. Adam chuckled and turned back to reading the latest copy of *Manufacturer and Builder*, which had arrived in the mail that day.

His nose was still buried in the journal as the other three Cartwrights took their places around the table. Ben cleared his throat loudly and, when that still brought no response from his eldest, sharply uttered the young man’s name. Startled, Adam tore his eyes from the printed page and with a sheepish apology, set the journal aside and moved quickly to the table.

Four heads bowed as Ben Cartwright offered thanks for the bounty spread before them. Then, as Joe made a vain attempt to grab the platter of pork chops before Hoss, Ben smiled at their older brother. “Interesting article, son?”

“Oh, let me guess,” Joe snickered as he speared a pork chop with his fork and dropped it onto his plate, “the Centennial!”

“Yeah,” Hoss cackled, dragging three chops into his plate. “Couldn’t be nothin’ else, could it, now?”

As he finally snared a piece of meat for himself, Ben smiled indulgently at the young man seated across from him at the foot of the table. Seeing the flush rise from Adam’s chin to his broad brow, he knew the younger boys had guessed correctly—and small wonder. Since the beginning of this year of the Lord, 1876, each new issue of *Manufacturer and Builder*, or any of the other eastern publications to which Adam maintained a regular subscription, had inspired him to enthusiastic eloquence about the upcoming celebration of America’s one-hundredth year. “Now, boys,” Ben cautioned with
a glance to either side, “I’m sure we’re all interested in what your brother Adam has to share.”

“I’m not,” Joe grunted. “It’s got nothin’ to do with us.”

Hoss took warning from the steely glare Ben fixed on his youngest son and quickly said, “Yeah, Adam, tell us all about what them folks back in Philadelphia is plannin’ now.”

Eyes locked on the boy who was pointedly ignoring him, Adam responded to his other brother. “If you’re genuinely interested, Hoss, I’ll loan you the journal. I wouldn’t want to force information on the willfully ignorant.”

As he helped himself to potatoes and gravy, Little Joe tried to disregard the pool of silence forming around him, but he could feel three sets of eyes staring him down. With a sigh he looked up. “Okay, okay, let’s hear all about it”—he lowered his voice to mutter, “like we’ve got a choice.”

“Oh, you’ve got a choice, young man,” Ben announced sternly. “You can leave your dinner on your plate and march yourself upstairs until you learn to be civil.”

Joe slammed his fork to the table. “Well, maybe I’ll just do that! I don’t see why I have to pretend that this is interesting two, three times a month, just ’cause some stupid magazine came in from back east. From what I hear, they ain’t even gonna pull it off, so it’s all just a bunch of pointless palaver.”

Ben snapped his fingers and aimed one toward the stairway. With a disgusted glare at Adam, Joe started to rise, but Adam waved him back into his seat. “Don’t bother,” he said. Glancing toward his father, he snorted as he inclined his head toward Joe, “Since when has dietary deprivation ever had any effect on that one? I’ll change the subject.”

“You don’t have to,” Ben stated firmly. “I will not
countenance that level of rudeness at the table—or anywhere else under my roof! Joseph, either apologize to your brother or go to your room.”

Temper flared in Joe’s green eyes, and he jerked the chair back. Just then he caught sight of the food on his plate. He’d put in a hard afternoon’s work since dinner, and his belly was rumbling. Suddenly, the quarrel with Adam seemed too unimportant to sacrifice a good meal over. “Sorry,” he grunted, though it rankled his pride, and scooted back up to the table again.

It was a pathetic, obviously unfelt, apology, but both Ben and Adam let it slide. Adam, however, could not allow his brother’s last criticism of the centennial celebration to go unchallenged. “I’m aware, little brother,” he said, “that certain journalists have expressed doubt that the Centennial Exposition will take place, but the article I was reading tonight removes the slightest reservation. It will open, and on time.”

“Yes, sir,” Joe said meekly, with a longing glance at his mashed potatoes and gravy. Adam rolled his eyes and changed the subject, as promised. The conversation turned to the work of the ranch, what had been accomplished that day and what needed to be done on the next.

Not until the younger boys had retired for the night did Adam again broach the subject of the Centennial with his father, moving from his blue chair by the fire to the end of the sofa nearest Ben. “It’s really going to be a marvelous celebration, Pa,” he observed after filling Ben in on the latest news. “Countries from all over the world will be sending their greatest works of art and machinery, their finest agricultural products and manufactures—and the buildings themselves! An unprecedented illustration of the latest ideas in architectural design.”
“I’m sure it will be wonderful, Adam,” Ben responded, rubbing the arm of his thickly padded chair, “but while I don’t approve of the rudeness with which Joseph expressed his opinion, I’m afraid I have to agree that it doesn’t have a great deal to do with us out here. Virginia City is planning her own celebration of the centennial year, of course, and although it won’t be as grand as the one in Philadelphia, at least we’ll be able to attend this one.”

“Is attending the one back east such an impossible dream?” Adam ventured softly.

Ben felt a lump rise in his throat, and his fingers tightened on the burgundy leather. Though he hadn’t permitted himself to admit it, he’d known for a month or more that dreams of seeing the Centennial himself lay behind all Adam’s insistence on sharing the latest developments as they became known. His own reluctance to see what should have been self-evident came from the simple fear that if Adam once again tasted the culture of the East, he’d be lost forever to his reawakened appetite. How often Ben had seen that yearning in his son’s dark and soulful eyes, the same light of longing that now transfixed them. “You want to go?” he asked hesitantly.

“You know I do,” Adam said, leaning forward earnestly. “I realize summer is our busiest time, and I know you’re going to be tied up with outside activities yourself, this being an election year. That’s why I’ve been reluctant to mention it and why I’ll understand if you tell me I can’t be spared, but I figured it was time I worked up the nerve to ask, at least.”

Ben’s smile was warm with the love he felt for this firstborn son. Though all the boys did their fair share of work around the ranch, Adam alone shouldered its responsibilities with him. At times, he thought that Adam alone truly understood and shared the dream that had found fruition in the Ponderosa, and it seemed ironic to him that Adam alone seemed to visualize a future beyond its boundaries. Yet this young man
had given so much of himself to his father’s dream that Ben couldn’t refuse, had never been able to refuse him when he tentatively brought forth a dream of his own. Even at the risk of losing him, Ben knew he couldn’t deny this request, any more than he had denied the one that had sent Adam east years before. “How long would you be gone?” he asked.

The dark eyes sparkled, and then thick eyelashes dipped to hide them. “Well, the Exhibition lasts from May 10th to November 10th,” Adam replied.

The lump caught in his throat, but Ben forced himself to chuckle. “Be serious.”

Adam looked up, a hint of humor brushing his lips. “No, I realize I can’t stay that long, but I would like to be there for the Fourth of July celebration—it’ll be the biggest in the country—and I’d like to attend Commencement at my old alma mater. I haven’t had a chance to do that since my own graduation.”

“When is that?” Ben asked.

“The twentieth of July,” Adam replied and waited, holding his breath.

Ben’s expression was thoughtful. “You’re talking about being away a month or more, then.”

Adam licked his lips. “I know it’s asking a lot.”

Ben raised his gaze to his son’s face. “No more than you deserve,” he said softly, touched by the yearning his son was trying so hard to conceal. “As you say, you haven’t been back east since college, and I know there are things you’ve missed, things you’ve given up for my sake, for your brothers’ sake. You’ve always given a hundred and ten percent to this ranch, Adam, so you take whatever time you need.”

Adam flashed a rare smile. “If you’re sure you can spare me .
Ben cleared his throat and adopted a light tone to cover his emotion. “We managed five years without you; I guess we can muddle by for four or five weeks!”

“Thanks, Pa.” Adam slid onto the table, laying a hand on his father’s knee. “Why don’t you come with me? It’s been longer since you’ve been back east than it’s been for me.”

Ben gave his son’s firm biceps a light rub. “You know I can’t. As you pointed out, it’s our busiest season, and I’ve got that political convention to attend.”

“Not ‘til August,” Adam reminded him. “We’d be back by then.”

Ben shook his head. “I’ll be involved in meetings leading up to the convention, as well, some of them taking place during the exact time you plan to be gone. No, as much as I’d love to make the trip with you, Adam, I simply can’t.”

Adam nodded. It was the answer he’d expected, so he was ready with another proposition. “The boys, then? If I pay their way?”

Ben cast a suspicious glance at his son, knowing from the speed with which this second request followed the first that it had been waiting in the wings. “You know I can’t spare all three of you,” he chided. “I guess I could get by with just one son to help me through our busiest season,” he added with a touch of tartness, “so if it’s worth footing the bill for you to have one of your brothers with you, take your pick.” The smile that followed this statement clearly conveyed Ben’s amused certainty regarding which of his brothers Adam would choose as a traveling companion.

The smile jolted Adam out of his complacency. His first instinct was, as his father had accurately discerned, to take Hoss on the trip, but Adam resented the idea of being that
predictable. In fact, he prided himself on being able to read the minds of others, while keeping his own thoughts and feelings close to his vest. Unwilling to admit that he might be as open a book to his father as, say, Little Joe was to him, he pursed his lips and murmured, “I’ll have to give that some thought and let you know.”

The statement didn’t budge the smile on his father’s lips. In fact, they were definitely twitching as Ben said, “Fine, fine. Take all the time you need, but I will require one thing more of you, Adam.” Waiting until he had his son’s attention, he continued, “You will be the one to explain to the brother you leave behind why you made that choice. You won’t saddle me with that chore!”

Adam quickly agreed. Though Little Joe had acted uninterested in the Centennial, he would be both disappointed and angry on learning that Adam and Hoss were taking an extended trip, while he had to stay behind, stuck with their chores for a month or more. Pa had every right to expect him to blunt the force of that anger by taking it on himself.

Father and son said good night and retired for the evening. Adam lay on his bed in the dark room, trying to think of the best way to explain to Little Joe why he was choosing Hoss, but the more he tried to come up with reasons that would appease the boy, the more unfair he felt. Another thing Adam Cartwright prided himself on was fairness, and it simply wasn’t fair to reject Joe out of hand. Besides, if the decision were really the right one, it would stand up to careful analysis. So, think it through logically, he told himself. Weigh the pros and cons of choosing each brother; then decide. Now, why should I take Hoss?

It was so easy to tally up the positive points for choosing Hoss. Hoss was his best friend and would make the most enjoyable companion. They always got on well together, seemingly understanding one another without words. With Hoss,
there would be no conflicts, no problems to deal with, just a pleasurable journey for both, and Hoss’s interest in inventions would guarantee his fascination with Machinery Hall, which would exhibit the latest mechanisms from around the world.

Were there any negative points to taking Hoss? To be totally fair, Adam had to admit that there were. Hoss was uncomfortable in big cities, even the less rigid ones of the West. Philadelphia, with its stricter societal mores might be absolute torture for a man most comfortable under open skies. Then, too, Hoss thoroughly hated being away from home for long stretches of time, almost as if he drew his life’s breath from the fragrance of the pines. Would a month be more than he would enjoy, even of exciting new inventions? And what of the other aspects of the Exposition? Machinery Hall and Agricultural Hall would naturally appeal to him, but the other areas might not, at least not to the same extent. Reluctantly, Adam was forced to admit that Hoss had neither the interest nor the scholarly intellect to take in everything that the Centennial had to offer.

Little Joe, on the other hand, was smart as a whip. Not much got past those ever-active green orbs. While Joe had always been a reluctant student, there was no doubt whatsoever in Adam’s mind that his youngest brother could more readily profit from the educational experience of the Centennial than Hoss. It might even be an opportunity to interest the boy in a college education. Adam had, on numerous occasions, tried unsuccessfully to convince Joe to continue his education, but perhaps a trip east would awaken the boy’s interest, particularly if he visited some colleges and got a feel for what the experience was really like, how it could broaden his life.

Joe’s youthful exuberance was another point in his favor. He was more likely to relish a new experience around every corner than Hoss, but taking the kid had definite drawbacks, as
well. There were certain parts of the Exposition that he wouldn’t enjoy any more than Hoss, and if Joe were to receive the full educational benefit, Adam would have to force him to take it all in and that could lead to conflicts.

Hoss, of course, would willingly go along with anything his big brother suggested, just to be congenial, and try his best not to let Adam see how bored he really was. With him, there would be no problems, but taking Joe almost guaranteed facing conflict somewhere along the way. The two of them mixed about as well as—Adam rejected the easy metaphor of oil and water for a more accurate one—coal oil and a lighted match. Conflict was inevitable if they were thrown together for several weeks without either Pa or Hoss on hand to douse the match before it struck the oil. Joe’s youthful exuberance, too, was as much a weakness as a strength. The interest in new experiences could lead just as easily to an education of the wrong sort. Do I really want to saddle myself with watching out for him in a city with a wider range of temptations than Virginia City?

That was the dilemma. Should he selfishly cater to his own pleasure or do the “big brotherly” thing and put the other man—well, boy, in Joe’s case—first? The decision he had thought would be so easy kept Adam awake late into the night and consumed his thoughts throughout the next day. He pondered the problem, giving each of his younger brothers careful examination as they worked side by side. Hoss and Little Joe became increasingly uncomfortable with the feeling of eyes boring into their backs and wondered why Adam seemed so distant.

Adam spent several hours alone in his room that night, mulling his decision until he was finally certain he’d made the right one. Hearing his brothers bid each other good night in the hall, Adam made his way downstairs to tell his father which brother would be accompanying him to Philadelphia. He smiled, taking almost perverse satisfaction in the thought that Pa was
about to learn that he didn’t know his eldest quite as well as he thought he did. Nor, for that matter, had Adam known himself as well as he’d thought, for the choice he’d made had come as a total surprise. His father’s shocked face when he mentioned Joe’s name made Adam wonder for a moment if he would be allowed, after all, to take his youngest brother with him.

Ben had obviously been caught completely off guard. Raking a hand through his silver hair, he fell back into the leather chair and stared at the man seated on the fireside table before him.

“Surprised?” Adam asked with a sportive smile.

“‘Flabbergasted’ might be a better word,” Ben admitted. “I never gave a moment’s thought to your taking Joseph. I just assumed you meant Hoss.”

Adam pinched his nose bridge. “Yeah, I know. That’s why I thought I’d better discuss this with you before I said anything to Joe.”

Ben smiled wryly. “Thank you for that, at least.”

Adam stood, took a step toward the fire and turned to face his father. “Look, I’ll confess I had Hoss in mind when we spoke before, but, just to be fair, I tried to look at both of them, and I think Joe will benefit more from the trip.” He went on to describe the process of reasoning that had led to his decision. “So how about it? Can I take the kid?” he asked when he’d finished.

Ben motioned for Adam to take a seat and when the young man was once again perched on the table, he leaned forward, laying a hand on his son’s muscular thigh. “You say you’ve considered potential problems. Have you also considered that Joseph may not respond at all the way you hope he will to these ‘educational opportunities,’ that he may, in fact, resent your bringing up this issue of college yet again? He
has been adamant that he has no such interest.”

Adam nodded slowly. “I know, but he has no factual basis for forming that decision, just his own stubborn belief that it’s not for him.”

Ben shook his head. “Nevertheless . . .”

“Look, Pa, it will still be his choice,” Adam insisted. “I’ll make that clear. I just want him to make an informed decision.”

Ben frowned, concerned that he already saw the basis for a continuing clash between his two sons. “Have you also taken into consideration just how difficult your young brother can be to handle?”

The expression on Adam’s face was almost smug. “I’ve had to handle him many times before.”

The furrows in Ben’s brow deepened. “Yes, but not for such an extended time,” he reminded his eldest. “You’ll be completely on your own.”

“I can handle that boy, Pa,” Adam assured him.

He hadn’t said, “Better than you,” but Ben could read it in his son’s almost cocky expression, and he arched a critical eyebrow. *Fool boy, always has thought he could do a better job of parenting than me. Serve him right if I did make him put that theory to the test. Might end up having a bit more respect for his poor, befuddled father.*

“Besides,” Adam chirped on, blithely unaware of the affront he’d given, “maybe some time alone together will help us toward a better relationship.”

*Or an open break,* Ben thought, but feeling trapped by his earlier agreement that Adam could take whichever brother he chose, he reluctantly gave his permission for his
youngest son to accompany his eldest to the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia. “Provided,” he added firmly, “that Joseph wishes to go under the conditions you set down and agrees to put himself under your authority. I’ll make it clear that I am delegating my authority to you, but whether he’ll respect that when I’m a continent away is something I cannot guarantee.”

“Don’t worry, Pa,” Adam chuckled. “We’ll do just fine.”

As he watched his son climb the stairs to bed, Ben shook his head in consternation, scolding himself for his lack of foresight. Should have seen this coming. So like Adam to make that decision based on what would be best for his brothers. Been looking out for their welfare before his own his whole life. Should have known he wouldn’t just pick for his own pleasure. Well, maybe fathers weren’t meant to be clairvoyant; maybe that was strictly the purview of the Almighty. He stood and stretched, then headed for bed, still wondering what the outcome of this adventure would be. Adam and Joe, together for four weeks or so—would it be the unifying experience Adam envisioned or the disaster his father dreaded?

CHAPTER TWO

The Cartwright brothers worked apart the next day and arrived home that evening at separate times. Hoss and Little Joe, though, got there within fifteen minutes of each other and had already started evening chores when Adam rode in. “Look who’s tryin’ to get out of his share of the work by comin’ in late,” Joe scoffed as his oldest brother led Sport into a stall and began to unsaddle the white-stockinged chestnut.

Adam tossed the saddle over its curved wooden stand and pulled the blanket from the horse’s back. “For your information, little brother, I have done more than my share of the work
“Aw, Adam it just seems like more work ‘cause it’s harder to do at your age.” Joe ended the quip with a high-pitched giggle. “Better hustle through your chores, though, old timer, or you’ll be missing your supper. Hop Sing don’t cotton to folks bein’ late to the table.”

“Well, since you’re feeling so spry, sonny, maybe you’d like to take over my chores for me,” Adam jibed back.

Joe folded his arms across his chest and regarded his older brother with a saucy smirk. “Nope, doesn’t appeal to me at all. How about you, Hoss?”

Hoss leaned on the pitchfork he’d been using to rake out one of the stalls. “Nope, don’t appeal to me none, neither.”

“Since when does work appeal to either of you lazy louts?” Adam commented dryly, picking up a curry brush.

“I just follow the example set before me, older brother,” Little Joe observed with a grin.

“Oh, if only you did!” Adam laughed as he began to brush the glossiness back into Sport’s coat. “Listen, Joe, I need to talk to you privately after supper.” He intended to talk to both of his brothers that evening and had decided to start with the younger one. Though he felt certain Joe would agree to accompany him to Philadelphia, he’d been fooled on other occasions when he’d tried to figure out which way the quixotic little scamp might jump. If Joe were foolish enough to turn down a marvelous opportunity like the one his big brother was about to offer him, Adam would be having an entirely different kind of conversation with Hoss than he at present envisioned, so talking to Joe first was a wise precaution.

As if to prove how quickly his moods could swing, Little Joe bristled abruptly. “Listen, older brother, if you’ve got any
complaints, you just spit ‘em out now. I’ve done every bit of work Pa set out for me today, and as far as I know, I haven’t done anything to rile a single soul. ‘Course, some rile easier than others.”

“And you easiest of all,” Hoss grunted. “You just pull in them horns, little brother; Adam didn’t say nothin’ ‘cept he wanted to talk to you.”

“Privately,” Joe snorted. “Sounds like a dressing-down to me, and I don’t got one comin’.”

Despite his irritation, Adam managed to hold his temper, but he couldn’t resist correcting the younger boy’s grammar. “You don’t have one coming, and as far as I know, that’s true. Why do you always assume the worst, boy?”

“Experience, brother, experience,” Joe grumbled, still clinging to his offended stance.

Adam came close to laughing in his face. “Yeah, well, don’t bank on it this time, kid. I have an idea I want to discuss with you, that’s all.”

Curiosity sparked in Joe’s eyes. “Yeah, what?”

“After supper, Joe—my room—be there,” Adam said and turned his attention back to grooming his horse.

Seeing that he wasn’t going to be able to pry anything more out of his stubborn oldest brother, Joe rolled his eyes at Hoss, who just shrugged and went back to his chores, figuring that if Adam needed to talk to Joe private-like, it was none of his business.

Adam went to his room directly after supper, while Joe dawdled around downstairs, mostly to demonstrate that he wasn’t at anybody’s beck and call. Curiosity, however, prevented his keeping up that pretense for long and within half an hour he was tapping on his older brother’s door. When Adam called,
“Come in,” Joe did, closing the door and leaning against the jamb.

“Come on in; I won’t bite,” Adam teased. When Joe stepped forward, Adam nodded toward the bed.

Joe took a seat. “Okay, I’m here. What’s this all about?”

Adam pulled the chair out from his desk and straddled it backwards, facing his younger brother. “I talked Pa into letting me go to Philadelphia this summer for the Centennial.”

Joe cocked his head. “Yeah? Well, that’s real fine, Adam. Much as you’ve talked about it, I guess it means a lot to you. Look, if this is about me takin’ over your chores while you’re gone, I don’t figure Pa’ll give me much choice about that, anyway.”

Adam laughed. “You just don’t ever credit me with an unselfish thought, do you?”

“Well, sure—sure I do,” Joe protested.

“Uh-huh, sure.” Adam folded his arms on the back of the chair. “Well, believe it or not, I’ve had one. Of course, an objective scrutiny might only confirm that I’ve taken leave of my senses, but—”

“Are you gonna get to the point or not?” Joe demanded.

“I’m trying to,” Adam said tersely, “if you could avoid interrupting me. I’m trying to tell you that I asked Pa if I could take you with me and he said yes.”

Joe’s mouth dropped and his eyes grew large. “You want me to go,” he babbled, “and—and Pa said I could?”

Adam sat back, savoring the astonishment on his little brother’s face. “That’s right.”

“Hoss, too?”
Adam shook his head. “No, Pa said he couldn’t spare you both, so I picked you.”

Joe’s eyes narrowed with suspicion. For Adam to choose him over Hoss—for anything, much less something as marvelous as this trip sounded—was so far out of the ordinary that it definitely required further investigation. “What’s in this for you, Adam?”

Adam lifted his eyes to the ceiling; then he looked directly at his brother. “You can’t believe my motives are altruistic?”

After straining a moment to recall the meaning of a word he’d learned in school, but rarely used, Joe shook his head. “Nope, not in character for you at all, big brother.”

Adam licked his lips. “All right, I have to admit there is a price tag.”

“Aha!” Joe ejaculated in triumph. “And just how high is it?”

Adam shrugged. “Depends on your attitude. In my opinion you’re getting a bargain. I will pay all the expenses of the trip: rail fare, lodging, food, whatever you need. In return, I want you to visit a few college campuses.”

The match of Adam’s ambitions having been touched to the coal oil of Joe’s resistance, the younger boy’s temper flared. “I might have known you’d have something like that in mind! I made my decision about college already, big brother.”

“Yes, but that was an uninformed decision,” Adam argued. “You have no idea what college is really like.”

“I know what school is like, Adam!”

“Not at that level,” Adam stated calmly. “It’s a different world, Joe, and you owe it to yourself to see it before you turn it down.” He opened his hands, palms up in a gesture of
conciliation. “Look, it will still be your decision. All I’m asking is that you give the issue a fair consideration.” He steepled his fingers and rested his chin on them. “Frankly, boy, I think looking at a few college campuses is a small price for what you’ll get in return, several weeks’ vacation from your chores and a chance to visit places you’ve never seen. Just being there will broaden your education, without your even trying, and I don’t intend it to be all work. You’ll have a good time, Joe.”

“How many colleges?” Joe demanded, obviously trying to calculate the exact cost before committing himself either way.

Adam threw up his hands in exasperation. “I don’t know; I haven’t had much time to think it through. We’ll be attending Commencement at Yale, so that’s one, although it’s more for me than for you.”

Joe’s mood abruptly brightened. “Well, that’s okay,” he said. “I’d like to see where you went to school, Adam.”

“Then there’s the University of Pennsylvania,” Adam went on. “Since we’ll be staying in the town where that’s located, it makes sense to visit it. Those two might be enough, or we might work in one or two more if you’re interested.”

“I won’t be,” Joe stated bluntly.

“Don’t be so quick to decide,” Adam admonished, raising a hand to silence Joe’s attempt to interrupt yet again. “It’s your decision, but I do ask that you try to keep an open mind.”

Joe shook his head, incredulous that a man as smart as Adam could find it so hard to understand a simple “not interested.”

“Just try,” Adam urged.

“Okay, I’ll try,” Joe conceded grudgingly.

Adam rolled his eyes. You’d think I was suggesting he try out
a medieval rack, instead of offering him the opportunity to broaden his understanding of the world! “I think you’ve made a wise decision,” he said, keeping his darker opinion to himself, “and one that will bring you a large measure of enjoyment, as well. If you’re willing to listen to another word of wisdom, youngster, I suggest you save your pennies between now and late June. For one thing, you’ll need some dress clothes suitable for the East and appropriate footwear. I can assure you, little brother, that you do not want to walk the streets of Philadelphia or the twenty-five or so miles of walkways on the Centennial grounds themselves in a pair of boots made for riding horseback.”

Joe’s nose crinkled as he tried to calculate just how much this “free” trip might set him back.

Adam laughed. “Of course, you can probably wheedle Pa into paying for that, the way you have him wrapped around your little finger.”

There was a hint of jealousy in his tone, and Joe’s alert ear caught it. “I don’t get everything I want from Pa,” he muttered, sounding peeved.

Adam arched an eyebrow. “More than the rest of us, boy, and you know it! You’ll want to save up for souvenirs, too. I think it would be especially appropriate to bring home some nice remembrances for Hoss, since you’re getting to go and he isn’t.”

Joe smiled softly. “Yeah, I’d want to do that.” His expression brightened. “And Hoss’s birthday will be coming up right after we get back, too; I could get him something nice—and—and Christmas presents, real special ones, huh?”

Adam nodded. “Yes, you definitely could find some unique gifts from practically anywhere in the world, so I’d watch how much I wasted on beer and poker if I were you. I also think you should bone up on your early American history. You’ll be
seeing some of the places where history took place, and it will be more meaningful if you have a fresh recollection of the key events of the Revolution.”

Not wanting to admit that his brother’s suggestion was a reasonable one, one that would probably enhance his enjoyment of the trip, Joe forced a soft moan. “Older brother, you can find ways to make even a vacation seem like extra chores.”

Chuckling at the exaggerated scowl with which Little Joe had met his final word of advice, Adam stood up. “Do it, anyway. I’m gonna break the bad news to Hoss if you’re sure you’re willing to accept the conditions of going with me.”

Joe frowned. “You already got me looking at colleges and reading up on the Revolution. You mean there’s more?”

“Just one more, and it comes from Pa,” Adam replied, folding his arms and eyeing his young brother with a patronizing air. “You can only go if you agree to put yourself under my authority and give me the same respect and obedience you’d give him. Is that agreed?”

Joe’s first reaction was an angry outburst. “Oh, this just gets better and better!” It took only two seconds, however, for him to realize the inevitability of minding Adam while he was away. Protective Pa would ask that of him, no matter where he went, even if it were only to Virginia City, so he quickly agreed and scurried out to tell Hoss that Adam wanted to see him next.

Joe had left the door to Adam’s room ajar, so Hoss merely opened it enough to poke his head through and ask, “What’s up? Joe’s lookin’ like the cat that ate the canary.”

Adam waved his brother in and gave him an amused smile. Hoss’s expressions might be colloquial, but they also tended to hit dead center. “I don’t doubt it for a minute. Sit down, Hoss.”
Hoss settled on the foot of Adam’s bed, and Adam sat down near the head, facing him, with one leg tucked under the other, which rested on the floor. “You know how interested I’ve been in the Centennial,” he began.

Hoss grinned broadly. “Been kinda hard to miss, big brother.”

Adam uttered a soft, self-deprecating laugh. “Yeah, I guess so. Well, I finally talked to Pa, and he agreed to let me go—and to take one of my brothers with me. I just told the canary-eating cat that he was my choice.”

Though Adam wouldn’t have thought it possible, Hoss’s grin grew even wider. “Hey, that’s great! I’m mighty proud for the both of you,” the big man said enthusiastically.

The genuine warmth of the response caused Adam to stutter. “Hoss, I—I can’t tell you how sorry I am that I couldn’t take you both.”

Hoss leaned forward, grasping Adam’s shoulder in a solid, supportive grip. “Aw, no, no, Adam, don’t feel bad,” he said. “You done right, pickin’ Joe, ‘stead of me. The youngun’ll get more out of it than I ever could—and enjoy it more, too. You know I ain’t much for big cities and fancy doin’s.”

Adam blinked back the drops forming at the corners of his eyes. While Hoss was listing reasons he himself had used in making his decision, Adam knew that Hoss was saying most of this for his benefit, and he loved his brawny brother all the more for his unselfish generosity. “Buddy, you know if I were deciding strictly on whose company I’d actually enjoy, you’d win, hands down,” he said with all the warmth he felt toward this man who was his closest friend, as well as his brother.

“Don’t sell the youngun short, Adam,” Hoss advised. “He can be right good company, if’n you let him.”
Outside the door, crimson-faced and ears flaming, stood the “youngun” in question. Deeply wounded by words Adam had intended only for Hoss’s ears, Little Joe crept down the hall to his own room, closed the door and flopped disconsolately down on the bed. So Adam didn’t really want him. Well, he’d known that, deep down. In fact, though he could only now admit it to himself, that suspicion was exactly what had motivated him to eavesdrop on what he knew to be a private conversation.

Ought to march right in there and tell him what he can do with his fancy trip east, he groused inwardly. It would be the right thing to do, to let Hoss go in his place and let Adam have the brother whose company he really wanted, but Joe couldn’t bring himself to make the sacrifice. He’d never been back east or much of anyplace outside home territory. A few trips to California with Pa or one of his brothers, a few a short ways east, but never past the boundary of his own state. He’d heard about those places in stories told by Pa and Adam, but he’d never seen them for himself, and he wanted to—badly.

Joe tried to make himself think of Hoss, who had never seen those things, either, but anger was fogging his mind with too dark a cloud for the light of generosity to penetrate. Adam may not have wanted him, but with a rigid set of his jaw, Joe determined to make doggone certain his older brother lived up to his bargain and to drive as hard a one as he could while he was at it! Adam would pay for giving such a wonderful gift with such a miserly spirit—oh, yes, he would pay!

CHAPTER THREE

Over the next several weeks Adam began to plan his trip to Philadelphia, with input from the other traveler neither requested nor desired. Careful perusal of back issues of his journals quickly apprised Adam of an oversight, and it was with hesitance that he requested an extension of his time
away from the Ponderosa to attend the National Convention of Mining Engineers, which would convene in Philadelphia on June 20th. Ben had scowled at being left shorthanded an additional ten days, but as mining was an adjunct to their timber business, as well as a personal interest of his eldest son, he felt he had to agree. The convention was being held so close to the time that the boys would be in Philadelphia anyway that it seemed illogical to refuse.

Though no one had consulted him about the change of plans, Little Joe was delighted at the thought of ten extra days of vacation. To him, it meant more time to see more sights and the chance to have more fun, and while Hoss grumbled about taking on his brothers’ chores even longer than he’d bargained for, it was good-natured grumbling. Knowing how much Adam wanted to see the Ponderosa involved in the mining business, Hoss viewed the convention as a natural outlet for that interest, and it didn’t bother him one bit to see his little brother get some extra fun packed into his trip, either.

No longer did Adam have to force discussion of the Centennial on his family. Little Joe’s attitude evidenced the most marked change, of course, now that the national celebration actually did have something to do with him. Both Ben and Hoss found themselves caught up in the nightly discussions, as well, for each was interested in what the other two would be seeing and doing during their time away. Adam dragged out every issue of every journal he had that contained even a smidgen of information about Philadelphia or the festival to be held there. After rereading them himself he passed the magazines on to his youngest brother and found him much more responsive than usual to the offer of reading material. “Start with this one,” Adam suggested as he handed Joe the July 1875, issue of Manufacturer and Builder. “It should give you a good overall view of the buildings themselves.”

“Okay,” Joe agreed readily and started to scan the short article. “This says the Main Building covers twenty acres!”
he exclaimed a few paragraphs into the text.

“And every acre covered with fascinating exhibits from around the world, little buddy,” Adam reminded him. Joe’s face fairly beamed with enthusiasm, which quickly faded at Adam’s next comment. “In order to get the full benefit from the experience, I’m working out a plan to cover the entire exhibition in a thorough manner, charting each day’s activities in a logical sequence.”

“Oh, that sounds like fun,” Joe muttered with a sarcastic edge to his voice.

Adam’s head shot up, and only the awareness of his father’s watchful eye kept him from giving the impudent kid the tongue-lashing Adam felt he had coming. With strained patience he waited for Joe to make eye contact before saying, “You’ll have plenty of fun, Joe”—his voice grew firmer—“but I don’t want to hear any complaints about seeing things you’re not interested in. It’s my trip, too.”

Joe’s innate sense of fairness brought a blush to his cheeks. It was Adam’s trip in every way that mattered: his idea, his money funding the trip, his invitation the only reason Joe was included at all. Embarrassed by the ingratitude he had been showing, Joe murmured an apology. “It’s only right for you to do the planning, Adam, since you’re the one footing all the bills.”

“I’m glad you realize that,” Adam responded, going back to his own reading. He completely missed the look of exasperation his father gave him, as well as the discouraged sigh with which Little Joe returned to the journal article.

By the time the brothers had absorbed everything in the journals, a book Adam had ordered as soon as he’d received permission to make the trip arrived in the mail. Every night thereafter found the two brothers sitting side by side, perusing with avid attention a guidebook to Philadelphia.
Though Adam had visited the Quaker city during his sojourn in the East, much had been forgotten and much had changed, so he had felt a recent book noting the city’s attractions to be a prudent investment. From time to time he would point out places he considered worth seeing, but when Little Joe suggested that Colonel Wood’s Museum and the zoological park sounded interesting, Adam merely hooted his contempt for his young brother’s childish choices. Within moments Joe moved away from Adam and challenged Hoss to a game of checkers. Adam felt the snub, but chalked it up to another display of childish petulance.

By the time Joe had defeated Hoss at three straight games, his good temper was restored, and the two younger Cartwright brothers headed off to bed, teasing each other about who would win the next night’s contest. Yawning, Adam laid aside the guidebook. “Guess I’d better turn in, as well. We have a lot of work lined out for tomorrow.”

“I’d prefer you stay,” Ben said, taking a final draw on his pipe before laying it aside. “I want to talk to you, Adam.”

Something in his father’s tone gave Adam an uneasy feeling. “Something wrong?” he asked.

Ben folded his arms across his chest as he settled back in the leather chair. “Not yet, but there will be if you continue on this course you’ve set.”

Adam exhaled slowly. “If we’re going to play guessing games, we’ll be up far later than is conducive to an early start tomorrow.”

Disturbed by his son’s apparent inability to see what was painfully clear to his own eyes, Ben shook his head. “Do you honestly not realize what you’re doing to your brother?”

Adam pursed his lips. “I presume you’re talking about Joe?”
“Then you do know what I mean,” Ben said, watching Adam’s face carefully.

Adam lifted his palms toward the ceiling. “Not really. I just know that if there’s a problem, it’s bound to be with Joe. Hoss and I don’t have problems.”

“That’s obviously due to Hoss’s skill with people, not yours,” Ben grunted.

Adam sat up stiffly. “What does that mean?”

“It means, young man, that you are shutting your young brother out of the planning of this trip,” Ben stated bluntly. “Adam, you told me that you hoped this time with your brother might draw the two of you together. Well, son, if you keep charting the same course, I can guarantee that ship will crash upon the breakers, and you will find yourself cast into some very choppy water.”

“You’re talking in riddles again,” Adam accused.

Ben groaned. For an intelligent man, sometimes his oldest son could be amazingly obtuse. “Why do you automatically assume that all of your ideas are correct and all of Joseph’s are wrong?” he demanded.

A stubborn glint flashed in Adam’s dark eyes. “Because I have a better understanding of the options we have to choose between. We can’t do everything, Pa; we don’t have the time. That makes it incumbent on me to make the best possible use of what we do have. I’m going to show the kid a good time, but I want it to be a profitable one, as well.”

“What’s so unprofitable about a museum—or a zoo?” Ben pressed.

“The museum he mentioned is decidedly inferior to others in the area, more of a popular pleasure place than an educational experience,” Adam argued. “I suppose there might be some profit in a visit to the zoological gardens, if I can find the
time to work it in.”

“Make time,” Ben said.

The statement was less than a command, but more than a suggestion, and Adam’s face clearly showed that he understood his father meant what he said. “All right, Pa,” he murmured. “I’ll take the kid to see the monkeys. May I go to bed now?” The question, tinged with sarcasm, demonstrated, as he fully intended it to, Adam’s disgust with being treated like a small child.

Feeling that there was little point in further conversation, Ben waved his son off to bed. *I’d need a chisel to break through that granite head of his*, he told himself, *which means I’ll have to come down harder on Joseph, instead.* He sighed, glad that he had a few weeks to prepare that final lecture to his youngest son on obedience and submission to his brother’s authority. Considering Adam’s arrogant attitude, it would have to be a firm one, and Ben was likely to need every minute of the intervening time to find just the right words.

*  *  *  *

March drifted into April, and Ben and Hoss became accustomed to the atypical sight of Little Joe curled up on the sofa each evening, nose buried in a history book. Having decided that Adam wasn’t listening to anything he had to say, anyway, Joe ignored the plans for the trip and turned his attention to other things. Doing the reading assignment Adam had suggested was high on his list. Joe viewed it as a condition of the trip and intended to give Adam no reason for withdrawing his magnanimous offer. Besides, although Joe did not for one minute consider admitting it, he was enjoying the stories of the early days of his country, now that he didn’t have to concentrate on memorizing dates and other useless information for some test in school. After all, the events of 1776 were on everyone’s tongue in this centennial year, and Joe had
found, to his surprise, that girls were impressed by the gems of knowledge he dropped into conversation from time to time.

Adam noted with satisfaction the diligence with which Joe refreshed his grasp of history. In his view, however, far too little of his young brother’s time was spent in such worthwhile pursuits and far too much in playing checkers with Hoss or squiring some cute skirt to a local dance or dawdling over a beer or a poker table in the Bucket of Blood. In fact, as April turned into May, Adam began to be concerned that Little Joe was not making the proper personal preparations for the journey. “Have you even seen a tailor to be fitted for a proper suit?” Adam asked irritably one evening while Hoss was out making a final check on the stock before going to bed.

Stretched out on the sofa, Joe took another bite of a juicy apple and mumbled, “Nope.”

“Well, don’t you think it’s time you did?” Adam persisted.

“Nope.” Joe grinned back amiably.

“I do not intend to walk the streets of Philadelphia next to someone wearing grubby range trousers,” Adam cautioned, “so I would advise you to start putting your wardrobe together, boy.”

Joe bounced up, eyes snapping. “Mind your own business, Adam! I’ll do my shopping when and where I see fit.”

Ben cleared his throat and both boys turned toward him. “You probably shouldn’t put it off much longer, Joseph. By the time spring roundup is finished, you’ll only have about a month, and if you delay too long, you may get tied up with other things.”

Turning his back on Adam, Joe directed his response solely to his father. “Pa, I was thinking that I might just wait ‘til I
got to Philadelphia to get the fancy clothes Adam seems to think I need. I mean, the guidebook says some of the biggest and best department stores in the country are in Philadelphia, and Adam’s gonna be tied up in that mining meeting the first two days we’re there, so I’d have plenty of time to do my shopping then.”

Ben nodded, considering the idea, but Adam immediately interrupted. “No, that won’t do,” he said sharply. “If you think I’m turning you loose on the streets of Philadelphia alone, little boy—”

Joe swiveled to glare at his brother. “Don’t call me that! I’m not some little kid who can’t find his way around, Adam.”

Adam looked down his nose at his irate younger brother. “Joe, it’s a huge city; you have no idea how easily you could become disoriented.”

“Look, Adam, you can’t expect me to just sit in a hotel room for two days!” Joe snapped.

“I expect you to do as you’re told!” Adam shouted back. “Frankly, boy, I wish I could have a couple of days to rest up from that long train trip, instead of having to take in those meetings the day after we arrive.”

“Breakers ahead,” Ben growled. Little Joe merely gave his father a blank look, but Adam, who recognized the metaphor from the earlier discussion, slumped with frustration. Why couldn’t Little Joe—or Pa, for that matter—see that he had the boy’s welfare at heart?

“Isn’t the purpose of that guidebook, Adam, to acquaint those unfamiliar with the city with how to get around?” Ben suggested.

“Well, yes, of course,” Adam acquiesced grudgingly, “but do you really want to see your baby son running the streets of a
major metropolis all by himself?"

Joe’s hands tightened into fists. “Oh, now we’ve gone from ‘little boy’ all the way down to ‘baby,’ have we? Keep it up, Adam, and that smart mouth of yours will get a taste of this baby’s knuckles!” He shook his left fist toward his older brother.

“Put that down,” Ben ordered tersely, and Joe let the fist drop, his fingers slowly uncurling under Pa’s reproachful gaze.

Adam smiled. “You see? Can you really trust anyone that childish on his own in the second largest city in the United States?” He lifted a supercilious eyebrow in Joe’s direction.

Noting Joe’s crestfallen face, Ben smiled gently at him. “I don’t have a problem with it so long as he stays within a proscribed area,” he said and was rewarded by the tender glow of emerald eyes. “You’re staying downtown, near the business district, aren’t you?” he continued to query Adam.

Adam nodded in reluctant agreement. “At the Washington Hotel, yes. It’s a central location, part of the reason I chose it.”

“So Joseph could do his shopping without going more than a few blocks from the hotel, couldn’t he?” Ben prodded.

Adam exhaled with exasperation. “Yes, of course, but you’re overlooking another pertinent fact.”

“And that is?”

Adam tried to keep his tone reasonable. “The very fact that I will be tied up in meetings for two days means that I won’t be available to supervise his purchases.”

“I don’t need you to supervise my purchases!” Joe retorted. “I know how to pick out a pair of pants, older brother.”
“I just want to make sure you get the proper garments and that no one takes advantage of you, kid,” Adam tried to explain patiently.

“I can take care of myself!” Joe shouted.

“Lower your voice,” Ben admonished.

“But, Pa . . .”

Ben silenced the protest with an upraised hand. Hearing his oldest son chuckle at the curbing of his youngest, however, he turned severe eyes toward the man in the blue chair. “I believe Joseph is perfectly capable of selecting his own clothes, Adam, so I will expect you to acquaint him with the business area, give him some reasonable boundaries within which he’s required to stay—by my order, Joseph—and leave it at that. Is that clear?”

The smug grin faded from Adam’s face and reappeared on Joe’s. “Yes, sir, that’s clear,” the older boy stated tersely, his tone indicating that while his opinion had been overruled, it had not changed.

* * * * *

Around the middle of May, Little Joe turned nineteen, and all the gifts he received related to the journey that he would be making a month later. Hop Sing delivered his gift early that morning, as Little Joe was dressing for the day. Opening the slender box, Joe found a gray silk cravat. “Silk come all-a-way from China,” the Cantonese cook announced. “You wear with fancy suit so not fo’get Hop Sing when gone.”

Joe feigned offense at the suggestion. “As if I would! Hop Sing, you know I’d take you with me, except my poor brother Hoss would pine away without you here to keep him going.”

“How you pay fo’ Hop Sing ticket when Mistah Adam have to pay fo’ yours?” Hop Sing asked tartly. His attempt to cover his
emotion failing, he added, “You be a good boy, Little Joe.”

Joe pressed his palm to his heart. “Good as gold–just like always,” he vowed, then threw his head back and cackled.

Hop Sing wagged his head at what he typically referred to as “foolishment” and turned away quickly so Little Joe would not see the merriment twinkling in his almond eyes. “Hmph! You good like fool’s gold,” he scoffed, using a simile he’d picked up from Adam.

Recognizing the source, Little Joe poked his tongue at the back of Hop Sing’s head, but he didn’t really mind it when Hop Sing said the words. Knowing his friend spoke them in jest, the words didn’t carry the same sting they did when his much-too-critical eldest brother uttered them in complete sincerity.

The family’s celebration, a private one this year, took place after a supper of Joe’s favorite foods. His father presented him with a plain white envelope, which contained a brief, but valuable letter, informing Joe that the family tailor would be expecting him for a fitting within the week. “I thought you should have one proper suit before you left home,” Ben explained, “in case what you buy in Philadelphia can’t be altered as quickly as you have need. You pick whatever style and fabric you want, son, and have Mr. Barton send me the bill.”

Joe flashed a grateful smile and thanked his father before opening Adam’s gift next. As he had expected from the size and shape of the box, it contained a comfortable and stylish pair of balmorals. Despite his insistence that he wanted to do his shopping in Philadelphia, Joe had done some investigation in the stores of Virginia City, and he knew that these shoes were of better quality and higher price than he would have considered buying himself. His expression of thanks to Adam was heartfelt and hearty.
Hoss’s gift aroused almost as much curiosity in the youngest Cartwright as had his father’s, for Joe had no more idea what aid to his trip the bulky bundle might conceal than he’d had about the contents of that unassuming envelope. It turned out to be a new carpetbag, the first Little Joe had personally owned. On previous travels he had always borrowed whatever luggage he needed from another member of the family and had planned to do so for this journey, as well, but he was delighted to have a bag of his own and told Hoss so.

Hoss crinkled his nose in the self-effacing way he had. “Just figured you’d need an extra, with havin’ to pack for such a long trip,” he said. “Or maybe you’ll just wanna save this one for totin’ back them fancy duds you buy back east.”

Joe flung an arm around his bulky brother. “Not on your life,” he declared. “I’m using this for my on-train clothes. I want to keep it close to me.”

Hoss blushed with pleasure and, to take attention off himself, suggested that it was time for Joe to blow out his candles and cut the cake. A couple of loud amen’s met this suggestion, and with a happy grin Joe moved toward the table, where Hop Sing stood ready with matches to light the nineteen candles.

* * * * *

The next four weeks flew. Both Adam, in business matters, and Little Joe, in his horse-breaking responsibilities, were diligent in making sure that their work was caught up so the load on those left behind would be as light as possible. On the night of June 12th both excused themselves directly after supper to complete their packing, for the long-anticipated journey would begin early the next morning.

Little Joe had just finished laying out what he would wear on the train when he heard a rap on his door and called, “Come in.”
Though Joe had expected to see Adam, come to offer yet another piece of unwanted advice about what he should pack in his bag for the train and what should be checked through to Omaha, he was pleased to see his father, instead. “Hey, Pa, come on in,” he said with a bright smile. “I wanted a chance to say good-by.”

“No need for that now,” Ben said as he closed the door behind him. “You can do that at the depot tomorrow.”

“You gonna see us off?” Joe asked, eyes glowing. “I figured you wouldn’t want to get up that early.”

Ben reached out to caress the back of his son’s neck. “I’m not the one who has a hard time getting up in the morning, young man,” he teased. “Besides, I want to keep you in sight as long as I can. I’m going to miss you, son.”

Joe moved into his father’s arms. “I’m gonna miss you, too, Pa.”

“Now, you’re not getting homesick already, are you?” Ben chided playfully as he broke the embrace and took a seat at the foot of Joe’s bed.

Joe plopped down companionably next to him. “Naw, that’s for kids.”

“Oh.” Ben smiled wryly, amused, as always, by Joe’s deep-seated need to be considered a man. He patted the boy’s knee. “It’s nothing to be ashamed of, you know, longing for your loved ones when you’re far from home.”

Joe shrugged as he offered his father a sheepish smile. “I guess.”

“Getting excited?” Ben suggested, to point his son’s thoughts in another direction.

Joe almost bubbled. “Oh, yeah! So much I don’t know if I’ll
sleep a wink tonight. Been looking forward to this for so long, I can’t believe it’s really happening. I was kind of scared I’d manage to bang myself up somehow and have to miss it, after all.”

“Oh, Joe,” Ben commiserated. “I wish I’d known. That’s not a good frame of mind to have when you’re breaking horses.”

“I did a good job,” Joe murmured defensively.

“You did an excellent job,” Ben praised warmly, “but if I’d known how you were feeling, I could have gotten you some more help, so you wouldn’t have had to do so much of that bronc-busting yourself.”

“I wanted to do it myself,” Joe assured him, “and I was extra careful. Just a silly little idea nibblin’ at the back of my mind, that’s all. Nothing to it.”

Ben drew an envelope from inside his vest. “I have something for you.”

Joe took the envelope and gave his father a cheeky smile. “I don’t think I have time for another visit to Mr. Barton, Pa.”

Ben laughed at the reference to the birthday gift he’d given his son. “No, but about half the money in that envelope is intended to go toward your clothing purchases in Philadelphia, the rest being an advance on your next month’s wages.”

Joe whistled at the sum inside the envelope. “Thanks, Pa, this’ll really help. I–uh–haven’t done quite as good a job as I intended of saving my pennies, as Adam puts it.”

“I know,” Ben said, a touch gruffly.

Joe glanced up hesitantly, wondering if Pa knew that he had not only failed to save his pennies, but had, in fact, lost a goodly number of them at the poker table. The look on Pa’s face clearly showed that he did know, so Joe didn’t bother
trying to hide his failings. “Seemed like a good way to make more pennies at the time,” he sighed, “but I came up short, instead of ahead.”

Ben had to laugh. Joseph, at barely nineteen, was simply too young to have developed a proficient poker face. His open countenance instantly told opponents whether his hand was a good one or he was trying to bluff through a bad one. “Let that be a lesson to you, young man,” Ben said lightly and then grew more serious. “Try to stay out of poker games while you’re away, Joseph, and don’t go near anything riskier.”

Joe squirmed a little. “Hey, I don’t think I’ll have much chance to get into trouble with that old watchdog of a brother along,” he quipped.

“That old watchdog is filling that role at my behest,” Ben stated firmly. “I want you to remember that while you are away, you are to give the same obedience and respect to your older brother that I would expect you to give me.”

“Pa, I know,” Joe said. It was not the first time he’d heard that lecture and saw no reason for another repetition. “I’ll mind Adam best I can.”

Ben arched an eyebrow. “You will mind him totally, Joseph.”

Joe straightened up and nodded briskly. “Yes, sir, that’s what I meant.” Seeing his father’s smile, he loosened up. “Thanks again for the money, Pa. I sure never expected anything like this. It’s an awful lot of money for you to throw away on your slapdash son.”

Ben brushed the comment aside. “Far less than I would have spent on your college education, had you chosen to go that route, and I figure this trip will stand in place of that as an opportunity for learning.”

Impulsively, Joe grabbed his father for another hug, his heart
brimming with gratitude that Pa, at least, understood his feelings about college and held out no expectations that this trip would change them. Now, if he could just convince stubborn old Adam.

Ben brushed a quick kiss behind the boy’s ear, and then stood up. “Better turn in soon, Joe,” he advised. “It’ll be a short night, as it is.”

“I will,” Joe promised. “Good night, Pa.”

“Good night, son,” Ben said with one final ruffle of the boy’s chestnut curls, an indulgence he knew he couldn’t allow himself at the depot tomorrow.

Ben moved down the hall to the room of his oldest son and knocked on the door.

“That you, Joe?” Adam called.

Ben opened the door. “No, it’s me, son. I know you’re busy, but I’d like a moment of your time.”

“I’m finished,” Adam said, gesturing for his father to enter, “but I probably should check on Little Joe one last time. I’ve tried to give him good advice about his packing, but I don’t think he’s been listening.”

“Leave him be, Adam,” Ben advised. “He’s not likely to make any mistakes he can’t live with, when it comes to simply packing a carpetbag.”

“I suppose not,” Adam admitted. “Is that what you wanted to tell me, to go easy on Joe?”

Ben frowned, and his voice carried an air of irritation as he began, “I don’t want you ‘to go easy’ on him, but”—the tone softened to an entreaty—“be good to him, son.”

Adam sat on his bed, folding his arms behind his head and
leaning back against the headboard. “I was under the impression that I was already being rather expansively ‘good to him,’” he observed.

Ben shook his head. “You’re being expansively generous—with your money. I just wish you could be as generous with your heart, Adam.”

Adam bristled. Though Pa rarely brought up the issue, he had, on other occasions, admonished his eldest son about what he called Adam’s “inclination toward aloofness,” his tendency to hold even those he loved at arms’ length. Adam slowly sat up, prepared to defend himself if his father broached that uncomfortable subject yet again.

Seeing the reaction, Ben softened his counsel. “Enjoy your brother’s company, Adam. Most people do, you know, and there must be some reason. I think it’s time you discovered it.” He pulled from his vest an envelope identical to the one he’d given Little Joe. “This contains your wages for the time you’ll be gone,” he explained, “as well as a bonus to spend as you see fit. I just gave Joseph a similar sum, which I expect him to spend on clothing.”

“I’ll see to it,” Adam assured him.

“No need,” Ben said firmly. “I trust Joseph. Adam, I’m sure there will be plenty of instances when you have to pull him up on a short rein, but don’t make problems for yourself by yanking the bit when you don’t have to.”

Adam smiled at the image of a bit in his little brother’s mouth. It would make him so much easier to control! As that was not a thought he could share with his father, he said, instead, “It’s good advice, and I’ll bear it in mind, Pa.”

Ben nodded at the envelope in his son’s hand. “Don’t be afraid to ask for more if you need it; it’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I want you to enjoy it fully. You’ve
always been trustworthy and frugal, Adam, but I don’t want you to stint yourself—or Joseph—unnecessarily. And as we’ve discussed before, make whatever purchases for the Ponderosa you deem worthwhile. I have implicit faith in your judgment, son.”

Though less open emotionally than the other Cartwrights, Adam glowed under the warmth of his father’s praise. “I’m sure I won’t need any extra money,” he told his father, “but I do appreciate your ‘expansive generosity,’ and I thank you, especially, for your trust. It means a lot to me, Pa, and I’ll do my best to be worthy of it.”

Ben rested a hand on Adam’s shoulder, as much physical contact as his eldest normally was willing to accept. “Best turn in soon,” he said softly. “You don’t want your little brother dragging you out of bed in the morning.”

“That’ll be the day!” Adam laughed.

CHAPTER FOUR

An apricot glow was peeking over the amethyst horizon as the Cartwright buckboard pulled into Mill Station, the closest stop on the Virginia and Truckee Railroad, which would carry Adam and Joe as far as Reno. Ordering Little Joe to unload the luggage, Adam hopped off the wagon and headed inside the small depot to purchase two tickets.

Joe swung down from his black and white pinto, tying the reins to the rear of the buckboard. “Beginning to think the real reason he asked me along was to fetch and carry,” he muttered as he stroked Cochise’s muzzle.

Hoss, who was tying his big black next to the smaller pinto, heard the complaint and gave his little brother a playful chuck under the chin. “I’ll give you a hand,” he offered, “if’n you’ll wipe that scowl off your face.”
Joe flashed a grin. “You got a deal.” Adam did have other things to take care of, after all, and it was too early to get riled over something as silly as toting a few bags. His mood improved even more when his father gave him a pat on the back and reached for one of the bags, too.

Adam returned in time to supervise the loading of their luggage into the baggage car. Then, since the train was scheduled to pull out in just a few minutes, he shook hands in farewell, first with Hoss and then his father.

Little Joe started to imitate the grownup behavior, but a sudden realization of how long it would be until he again saw Pa or Hoss washed over him, and, instead, he impulsively flung himself into his father’s embrace.

“Be a good boy, Joe,” Ben chuckled, twining his fingers through the freshly shorn chestnut curls on his shoulder, “and have a good time.”

“I will,” Joe promised; then he pulled away to exchange a quick hug with Hoss. “Take care of Cooch for me,” he urged.

“You know I will,” Hoss assured him. He had no time to say more, for Little Joe, embarrassed by his public display of emotion, broke free to bound for the long yellow passenger coach, gripping his new carpetbag by its padded handle.

“Take care of him,” Ben charged Adam, smiling as he gestured with his head toward the departing figure of his youngest son.

“Oh, I will,” Adam replied easily. From the lofty peaks of adulthood, he found Little Joe’s child-like behavior amusing, but he felt a touch of wistfulness, as well. Although he almost never expressed himself with his little brother’s affectionate abandon, there were times when he wished he could. Moments like this headed the list.

Noticing the small hamper still sitting on the wooden
platform, Hoss picked it up and handed it to Adam. “Hey, don’t forget your lunch,” he said. “Hop Sing done fixed you up an extra nice one. I know; I peeked.”

“And there’s still food in it?” Adam teased.

“Well, I did snitch one cookie,” Hoss confessed. “Don’t you be tellin’ on me now, older brother.”

“My lips are sealed,” Adam promised, raising his hand as if taking an oath in court. With a final wave he headed toward the train. Entering the passenger car, he found that Little Joe had already snared the spot next to the window on the red velour seat and was pressed up against the glass, waving to Pa and Hoss.

“Homesick already?” Adam sniggered softly, as his brother continued to wave until the train pulled out of the depot and the other Cartwrights faded from view.

Little Joe’s nose crinkled, Adam’s question having a completely different feel than when Pa had uttered the same query the night before. Joe was used to his big brother’s brand of teasing, though, and didn’t really take offense. “Naw, ’course not,” he alleged, brushing the comment aside, “but I will miss them. Won’t you?”

Adam nodded companionably at the younger boy. “I have to admit I will.”

While Adam, yawning, stretched back with his eyes closed, Little Joe watched the miles rush past the window, but not for long. Since it was only twenty-four miles to Reno, the first leg of the grand expedition took just under an hour. Joe could hardly contain his excitement when the train pulled into the Reno depot, for here would begin the real adventure as they transferred to the Central Pacific Railroad for the next stage of the long journey.
Adam seemed determined to squelch that enthusiasm, however. At least, that’s how his younger brother viewed the order to bring the bags to the check-in window and then run fetch a copy of the *State Journal*, the local newspaper. Joe chafed under the imperious attitude, but did as he was told, reminding himself that Adam was busy with final arrangements for the trip: buying tickets, checking bags through to Omaha, securing their sleeping berths and whatever else needed to be done before they boarded. *Don’t be a baby, Joe*, he scolded himself. *Buying a paper is nothing compared to all that.* Disgruntlement reared up again for a moment, though. *Just don’t like being ordered around, is all.* Then, with a determined effort, he swept the sour disposition aside and was all smiles again when the conductor called, “All aboard!”

Joe scampered up the steps ahead of Adam and down the carpeted aisle, aiming once again for a seat by the window, but Adam took a firm grip on his elbow and pulled him back. “Not this time, little boy.”

“Aw, come on, Adam,” Joe wheedled. “I’ve never seen any of these places. You have. Besides, you’re just gonna read.” He tapped the journal in his brother’s hand.

“Precisely why I need the window seat, for better lighting,” Adam stated matter-of-factly as he settled in next to the window. “I paid for these seats, boy; I will decide who sits where.”

Little Joe flopped down next to his brother, folded his arms and sulked, which produced no effect on Adam except mild amusement. The train crossed the valley and started up a mountain—so far, all scenery that Joe had seen from horseback at one time or another. The cars plunged down that mountain to lush Truckee Meadows below and then up another, for Nevada was composed of range after parallel range of mountains, stretching north to south across its width. Joe gave some attention to what he could see of the mountains streaked in
variegated shades of white, red, yellow and pale green clay, but this, too, was scenery he’d seen before. Bored with the familiar and weary of acting glum for Adam’s benefit, he began looking around the car, watching his fellow passengers with interest and eventually striking up brief conversations with those nearest him.

They’d been traveling about an hour when a boy of thirteen or fourteen came down the aisle, hawking candy, nuts, fruit, newspapers and magazines. Deciding to follow his older brother’s example and maybe merit a share of the light from the window, Joe stopped the boy and asked what he had to read.

“Oh, I got all the latest magazines and dime novels, sir,” the train boy said, eagerly rattling off a few titles. “And I’ve got Croffut’s Trans-Continental Guide, too. Tells you all about what’s coming up down the track, that one does, and it’s only twenty-five cents.”

“All right, I’ll take one of those,” Joe decided, reasoning that Adam would probably not poke his nose out of his own magazine long enough to give his brother any kind of information. He also selected one of the dime novels, The White Chief; or, The Track of the Avenger by Joseph F. Henderson, in case he wanted something light to read later on. It had been a tough choice between that and the most recent addition to Beadle’s New Dime Library, The Squaw Spy; or, The Rangers of the Lava-Beds by Captain Charles Howard, and Joe’s final decision had been based solely on his sharing a first name with the author of The White Chief.

Glancing at his brother’s choice, Adam rolled his eyes. Trash, utter trash. Didn’t the kid ever want to fill his mind with something more substantial than pabulum? He was, however, glad to see Little Joe set aside the salmon paperback and open the railroad guide first. That, at least, was a wise investment, something he himself might like to skim through when his brother was finished.
The rails crossed the Truckee River just before pulling into Wadsworth, a town of only four hundred people, but a base of operations for the Central Pacific with a twenty-stall roundhouse and a machine shop where engines could be entirely rebuilt. One end of the shop was fenced in, enclosing a bottle-green oasis in the dry terrain. A central fountain provided enough water to sustain a few trees, as well as alfalfa and bluegrass, proving the wonders that irrigation could produce in Nevada’s arid climate. That dryness was again evident as they pulled away from town. On both sides of the track, wind had whipped sand around scattered clumps of sagebrush, making mounds similar to the hills in which farmers of more moist regions planted corn or potatoes.

Leaving the mountains behind temporarily, the train began a long pull across an unappealing stretch of desert, with Humboldt Lake providing a much-needed break in the barren landscape. In an effort to see the salt-rimmed expanse with pelicans and wild geese sporting around it, Joe craned his neck toward the window, practically draping himself across Adam’s lap.

“Do you mind?” Adam asked dryly, and Joe pulled back, again folding his arms in childish discontent as the train passed the reddish brown Trinity Range on the left. Growing warm, Joe twisted out of his corduroy jacket. Both he and Adam had dressed in their comfortable range wear for the early part of the trip, although, at Adam’s insistence, each had a suit packed in his carpetbag to change into before reaching Philadelphia.

When the train stopped at Humboldt for the noon meal, the Cartwright boys had been on the road for almost six hours since leaving Reno, and breakfast had been about three hours before that. “I am famished,” Little Joe announced as Adam pulled the lunch hamper from beneath his seat.

“Small wonder,” Adam commented, “considering what little
justice you did to your breakfast.”

“Aw, don’t you start ridin’ me about that, too,” Joe grumbled. He’d been too excited to eat, and Hop Sing had flown into an almost apoplectic rage at sight of the food remaining on Joe’s plate.

“I have a feeling I have you to thank for the abundance in this basket,” Adam sighed. “I tried to tell Hop Sing packing a lunch was unnecessary, but he wouldn’t listen. Now not only do we miss the chance of dining at what is supposed to be one of the best eateries on the line, but we have a completely unnecessary basket to juggle around once it’s empty.”

“He meant it as a kindness, Adam, so we wouldn’t have to rush around, getting off the train for food,” Little Joe said, quick to defend his friend. He pulled a fried chicken leg from the basket and sank his teeth into the flavorful flesh.

“I know that,” Adam replied. “It was, of course, very thoughtful of him, and you’re right; I shouldn’t complain. After all, we can eat here on the way home.”

“Sure,” Joe said brightly. “That’ll be something to look forward to. Hey, the train’s gonna be here awhile, isn’t it?”

“Thirty minutes,” Adam informed him.

“I want to get out and stretch my legs a little,” Joe said, standing up.

“All right,” Adam agreed, “but be back here in fifteen minutes. I don’t want you getting left behind; it would be no end of trouble getting back together again.”

Joe rolled his eyes, frustrated by the amount of control his big brother seemed to think it necessary to exert. “I’ve got some sense, older brother!”

“And absolutely no experience!” Adam declared. “You do as I
“Yeah, sure,” Joe muttered, figuring fifteen minutes would be enough. After all, he was hungry and eager to explore the depths of that amply packed hamper. Grabbing a wing with his right hand to go with the leg in his left, he ambled down the aisle toward the exit, munching as he went.

I need to talk to that boy about his manners, Adam observed, but then he shook his head. No, that was probably the kind of thing that would cause his father to mutter, “Breakers ahead,” if he were here. Better save my lectures for more serious offenses. No doubt the opportunities will be plentiful!

Little Joe wandered down the plank platform, sniffing the air appreciatively. If you could go by your nose—and Hoss always said you could—the fare at the Humboldt House was probably as good as its reputation. Not, Joe was sure, as good as Hop Sing’s, though, and he, for one, was grateful to have one last home-cooked meal before trusting himself to the mercies of roadside restaurants. The only thing he regretted was not dipping into that hamper sooner. Sort of defeats the purpose of carrying your food with you, to wait ‘til almost one o’clock, like folks that got no choice. Surprised old Adam didn’t think of that, except he’s so caught up in whatever he’s reading that his belly’d probably have to rumble louder than a train engine for him to notice.

Joe walked over to look at the fountain outside the building to which his fellow travelers were headed for dinner. The fountain was surrounded by an iron fence, but the gate opened easily and Joe went in to dabble his hands in the lukewarm water, washing away the chicken grease and bathing the back of his neck with the few drops that clung to his fingertips. Grinning at the gold fish in the basin of the fountain, he bent to test the texture of the bluegrass growing around its base. Here, as back in Wadsworth, water made all the difference between fruitless desert and nourishing meadow
grasses, fit for fattening cattle. Joe smiled, recalling with pride that his father had been among the first cattlemen to irrigate pastureland and plant it with alfalfa, thus extending the range available to their cattle. The fine feed was one of the reasons Ponderosa beef was considered the best in the West.

He spotted an apple orchard down a slight slope and was tempted to take a walk beneath its shady green canopy, for the day was growing hot. The time limit Adam had imposed was almost up, however, and the aromas wafting from the Humboldt House reminded Joe of how hungry he was. More for that reason than from obedience to Adam, Joe tripped back along the boardwalk and onto the train, though he did relish the smile of approbation from his older brother as he took his seat within the time designated.

Joe polished off another piece of chicken before the train departed and was doing all the justice Hop Sing could have wanted to the oatmeal cookies when he caught sight of a freckled-faced boy three rows down the aisle. The kid was staring with obvious yearning at the cookie in Joe’s hand, so with a grin Joe held one up and called, “Want one? I’ve got plenty.”

Pulling on his mother’s arm, the boy pointed at Joe and whispered a plea for permission to take the treat. The mother smiled and nodded, and before Adam knew what was happening, his little brother was sitting beside the lady, holding the boy in his lap as they both gawked out the window at the changing scenery. Joe caught Adam’s eye and tossed him an sassy smile, as if to point out the contrast between his mean-spirited brother and the unselfish lady, who probably needed the light for her knitting, but had without grudging given her little boy and the charming stranger the window seat.

As the train pulled into Winnemucca, the ten-year-old boy with hair the color of ripened wheat gasped at the size of the
city. “Wow, that’s the biggest place I ever seen!” Petey declared. “You ever seen one bigger, mister?”

Winnemucca, boasting a population of only twelve hundred, wasn’t really all that large a city, but Joe didn’t want to put the boy down by pointing that out. He just answered the question directly. “Yeah, I’ve been to San Francisco, and it’s lots bigger than this.”

“Bet it don’t got as big an engine house, though,” Petey argued. “Ain’t that a whopper?”

Joe smiled, enjoying the kid’s enthusiasm. “Yeah, sure is. San Francisco’s the end of the line, so it might have a good-sized one, too, but this is a big one ‘cause it’s the end of a division. I read that in the railroad guidebook.”

Petey’s eyes widened in awe. “Say, mister, you know ‘most everything!”

Joe couldn’t resist flinging a frown at Adam. “Some folks think I know next to nothing,” he muttered.

“Well, they must be plumb dumb, huh, mister?” the loyal boy declared.

Joe giggled. “In the things that count, I’d have to agree. But what you mean by calling me ‘mister’? We’re friends, aren’t we? Call me Joe.”

Petey flashed a crooked grin and thrust out his hands. “Yeah, friends. Shake on it, Joe?”

Solemnly, Joe gave the small hand a firm shake, and he and Petey turned their attention back to the window. There weren’t many sights to see, though, and when the boy’s head came to rest on his shoulder, Joe handed him to his mother and took his seat at Adam’s side, peeking over his shoulder at what his older brother was reading.
Feeling the eyes boring into him, Adam shifted uneasily. “Must you?” he asked tartly.

“What’s it about?” Joe asked.

Adam sighed. “It’s a treatise on new mining techniques, sure to be discussed at the convention. I’m trying to absorb them so I’ll be able to make appropriate comments, if I’m asked.”

Joe scowled, wondering how Adam could possibly be interested in anything that sounded as dry as that. “Can I read the newspaper, then?” he asked.

Adam shot him a perturbed look. “If you ask for it properly, you may.”

Joe rolled his eyes at his brother’s ability to catch every grammatical mistake he made. “May I read the newspaper now, older brother, sir?” he asked, uttering the request with word-by-word care. Adam smiled in self-satisfaction and handed over the copy of the Reno State Journal that Joe had purchased for him that morning.

The paper didn’t hold Joe’s interest long. There wasn’t much going on in Reno that he didn’t already know about, at least nothing that he was interested in. Pulling out The White Chief, he opened the thin book and glanced inquiringly toward Adam. “Don’t suppose you’d be willing to share that window light?”

Adam just hooted. “I don’t intend to encourage your reading such trivial trash!” In truth, he had no real faith that even such light reading material would long hold Joe’s flighty attention and sighed at the realization that this was going to be a very long trip with this restless child at his side.

Joe read for about an hour; then, as Adam had predicted, he was up, wandering the aisles, talking to other passengers and, before Adam realized it, had left the car to stand on the
platform at its end. Adam finished one article and had just turned the page to begin another when he noticed that his little brother was nowhere in sight. By instinct, he headed for the door at the end of the enclosed car and exited to find the boy leaning over the rail. “What do you think you’re doing?” Adam demanded.

“Just lookin’,” Joe replied, turning to face his brother and propping his elbows on the rail behind. “It’s a better view, even, than that window seat you won’t share.”

Adam jerked him away from the edge. “You are not supposed to be out here; it’s against company rules.”

Joe twisted his arm free. “It ain’t the company makin’ the complaint!” he retorted hotly.

“Get back inside this instant,” Adam ordered sharply, pointing his index finger toward the door, “and don’t let me catch you out here again!” Fool kid, doesn’t he realize those rules are meant for his safety? Oh, what am I thinking? When has the little idiot ever understood the purpose of any rule?

“Okay, okay,” Joe growled. Wonder if old Adam knows how ridiculous he looks with his feathers all ruffled. The thought made him giggle, a sound a glowering Adam read as disrespect for his authority.

Back inside, Adam again opened the mining journal, thumbing through it to find the article he intended to read next. Joe, tired of reading, even though the plot was exciting, made an attempt to strike up a conversation with his brother. “Is this the way you came west with Pa?” he asked.

Adam, whose eyes were growing tired, laid the magazine aside. “Not the precise route,” he replied, “but the paths do cross here and there. Mostly, we followed the Humboldt River through this section, sorry excuse that it was.”
“Yeah, it’s rough country,” Joe agreed sympathetically.

“Yeah,” Adam recalled. “Dry, dusty days with nothing to quench your thirst but water so full of alkali you had to make it into coffee, just to disguise the taste.”

“You were just a kid,” Joe snickered. “You probably drank milk.”

“Couldn’t,” Adam muttered, leaning against the window to face his little brother. “Cow was nearly dry, and what little she gave had to be saved for Hoss—after Inger died, that is.”

“Yeah,” Joe said softly. “I wish I could have known her. From what I can tell by looking at her picture and what Pa’s said, she was a real sweet lady.”

“The sweetest,” Adam whispered. “Left a big hole when—when she was gone.”

Joe folded his right leg up on the seat, in imitation of his older brother, and asked shyly, “Did Pa take it hard, like when my mother died?”

“Yeah, he took it hard,” Adam said, gazing past Joe as if seeing the scene afresh. “Just kept stumbling through the desert in some kind of daze, but he had to keep going out here. We all did.” The muscles in his cheeks tightened. “It was different when your mother died. He sort of holed up inside himself for a while. He had people to take over for him that time, so he could afford to let himself go—or so he thought.”

The trace of bitterness in his voice made Joe wonder how Adam had felt about taking on that responsibility, but he couldn’t ask directly. “I guess it was hard on you,” he hinted, hoping to open up the conversation.

Adam swung his leg off the seat and looked away, obviously uncomfortable with talking about his feelings. “I want to
read a little more before the light fails, Joe,” he said, picking up the mining journal once more. “I’d advise you to do the same.”

Little Joe knew he was being brushed aside and it hurt. His own memories of that time were painful, especially in regard to what Adam called Pa’s holing up inside himself. He could remember Adam holding him, though, supporting him through the first difficult days when Pa had seemed so distant. Now he found himself wondering if Adam, who had been such a rock of solace at the time, had resented taking on that responsibility. *Does he blame me?* Joe asked himself. *Is that why he’s always so hard on me, ‘cause I was such a burden to him back then?* He didn’t dare ask his brother, who seemed as holed up inside himself now as Pa had been long ago, so as Adam had suggested, Joe again took out his dime novel and began to read.

The train made a brief stop at Battle Mountain around 4:30 in the afternoon. Adam stood up to stretch, looking down at his brother, who had been uncharacteristically quiet for the last couple of hours. “You can either eat here,” Adam told him, “or wait ‘til we get to Elko about eight o’clock.”

Joe groaned. “So I’ve got a choice of a supper that’s too early or one that’s too late, huh?”

Adam smiled sardonically. “Something like that—or you could just save me the money and skip both.”

Joe sneered at the suggestion, since saving Adam money was precisely the opposite of his intentions. “I’ll wait ‘til Elko, but I’m definitely going to eat, older brother.”

Adam’s brow furrowed as he pondered why his younger brother suddenly seemed incapable of taking a little ribbing. Tired, probably, as he was himself. Adam shook his head. If the kid were already this cross after only one day’s travel, what would he be like by the time they’d been on the rails for
“Hey, is there anything left in that hamper?” Joe asked about half an hour after the train had departed from the station.

“Are you kidding?” Adam chuckled. “Hop Sing packed enough to feed a small army. There’s not any more chicken, but plenty of cookies and even a fried pie or two.”

“That’s what I want,” Joe said with a grin, taking out one of half-moon pastries filled with apples in sweet cinnamon syrup. Glancing down the aisle, he noticed that Petey had finally awakened from his long nap. “Adam, you mind if I give one of these pies to my friend?” Joe asked.

“Huh? Oh, sure, go ahead,” Adam agreed readily. “Get me a couple of cookies while you’re in there.”

“Here you go,” Joe said, handing his brother the cookies and making his way toward the beaming little boy. Presenting Petey with the fried apple pie, he leaned close to whisper, “You share some with your mama, you hear? That’s a big pie for someone the size of you.”

“I got a big appetite,” Petey said with a gap-toothed grin, “but I’ll share.”

“Thank you, young man,” his mother said, smiling at Joe. “You’re very generous.”

Joe shrugged. “Aw, no, ma’am, it’s nothing. Our cook is so used to feeding my brother Hoss, who isn’t along on this trip, that he packed enough to feed this entire train.”

“Horse is a funny name,” Petey giggled, pastry flakes cascading from his open mouth.

“Don’t talk with your mouth full, Petey,” his mother admonished, “and it isn’t polite to call anyone’s name funny, although”—she struggled to keep from laughing herself—“I do
believe that’s the most unusual name I’ve ever heard.”

“It’s Hoss, not Horse,” Joe laughed, “and it’s just a nickname. His real one is Eric.”

“Now, that’s a fine name,” the lady said with a decided nod. “It has a strong and manly sound.”

Joe grinned. “Yes, ma’am, and that’s just how he is, too. Well, I guess I’ll see if I can grab another oatmeal cookie before my other brother gobbles them all up. See you later, Petey.”

Mouth full, Petey could only respond with bright eyes and a brisk bob of his head.

The orange orb of the sun began to drop behind the distant peaks of the Cortez Mountains, and the temperature soon fell to a level that had all the passengers pulling on the coats and jackets they’d discarded during the day. Yawning, Joe looked around the car with a puzzled expression. “Hey, Adam, I thought these seats were supposed to make into beds,” he said. “They don’t look like they would. How’s that work, huh?”

Adam gave him an impatient sigh. “They don’t, Joe; I chose not to pay for a silver palace car. This is just a day coach.”

“You mean we gotta sleep sittin’ up for a week?” Joe squawked. “You’re hard, Adam, doin’ that just to save a little money.”

Adam chuckled, shaking his head from side to side at the foolish fear. “Don’t be ridiculous, Joe. I’m not that tight-fisted,” he assured the younger boy. “They’ll attach a sleeper when it’s time for you to go beddy-bye and drop it off in the morning after you get up. Considerably cheaper than riding in the hotel car, but quite comfortable, from all
reports.”

Joe sported a cheeky grin. “Oh, they’re workin’ that all around me, are they?”

“That’s right, little brother,” Adam observed dryly. “The entire world revolves around you.”

Not sure whether Adam was teasing or expressing more bitterness, Joe scowled back, folded his arms crossly and settled back in his seat. Adam just laughed at this latest demonstration of his young brother’s immaturity.

The road began to climb steadily until, by the time the train reached Elko, it was almost a mile above sea level, according to the railroad guide. “Supper, at last!” Joe chirped, bouncing out of his seat almost before the train pulled to a stop.

“I hear it’s a long stop, so we’ll have plenty of time to get a hot meal,” Adam stated as he followed his brother out.

“Sounds good,” Joe replied, jumping off the final step. “Feels good to get off that train awhile, too. I mean, it’s comfortable and all, but I get tired of sitting still so much.”

Adam chuckled, wrapping an arm around the boy’s slim shoulders. “So I noticed. Well, get your legs a good stretch after supper, youngster, and if you like, you can crawl right into bed. They’re attaching the sleeper car now.”

Shoshone Indians, feathers in their felt hats and paint on their faces, greeted the departing passengers, each one’s hand stretched for a handout. Joe was surprised to see his brother press a silver coin into the palm of two or three as they walked toward the nearby hotel. “Wouldn’t’ve thought you’d want to encourage begging,” Joe commented.

“I don’t, especially in your case,” Adam said brusquely, “but
I do make exceptions when I know people have been deprived of their normal means of livelihood."

"Yeah," Joe agreed, looking back at the natives with more sympathy. "Kind of sad, seein’ ‘em painted up like that, like they were at war."

"Fitting in with the way the white man chooses to see them," Adam muttered bitterly.

Uncomfortable with his brother’s darkening mood, Joe made a deliberate attempt to turn Adam’s thoughts back to the more pleasant prospect of supper. "Boy, am I hungry!" he announced. "You reckon this place is as good as that one back in Humboldt? I sure hope so, ‘cause it’s been a long time since dinner."

"But not that long since apple pie and cookies," Adam teased, giving the younger boy’s shoulder a squeeze. "I don’t know anything about the diner here, but I doubt you’ll starve."

Crowding in with the rest of the passengers, the Cartwright brothers managed to find a table in the back corner. Joe perused the menu carefully, searching for the most expensive item on it, to begin his campaign to make Adam pay dearly for not wanting his company. To his chagrin, Joe learned that at eating establishments patronized by the railroad, the price for any meal was a uniform dollar per plate. Setting aside his ulterior motive, he simply picked a meal that looked appetizing: pot roast, with potatoes, carrots and onions cooked with the meat, and green beans, seasoned with bits of bacon, on the side.

When the boys finished eating, it was almost time to re-board the train. As they stood side by side, watching the Humboldt River tumble down from the snow-capped East Humboldt Mountains, however, neither felt eager to exchange the cool mountain breezes for the stifling, stale air of a full passenger car. "A promise of better scenery ahead," Adam
observed.

Joe burst out laughing. “Oh, fine! We’ll sleep right through it, big brother!”

Adam smiled. “Not all of it. You’ll see some fine sights tomorrow, Joe.”

Joe’s eyes lit up hopefully. “Does that mean I get to sit by the window tomorrow?”

Adam frowned and then relented. “Well, maybe for a little while.” He yawned and stretched. “I’m for bed as soon as we board. It’s been a long day.”

The yawn was contagious. Putting his hand over his gaping mouth, Joe nodded. “Yeah, me, too. We sure got an early start this morning. Hope it’s not gonna be like that tomorrow.”

“Oh, not too bad tomorrow,” Adam consoled him as they walked toward the train. “We get into Ogden about 8:30, so I’ll wake you about an hour before that.”

Joe yawned prodigiously. “Okay, whatever you say.”

Adam chuckled. Joe’s rare cooperation was a sure sign that he was about to fall over. They returned to their seats to pick up their carpetbags; then Adam led the way to the sleeper car and pointed out the berths assigned to them. “You get the top one, sonny,” he decreed.

“Sure, grandpa,” Joe snickered. “I know how hard it’d be for an old fellow like you to hop up there.”

“Keep a civil tongue in your mouth,” Adam snorted.

Joe cocked his head to scrutinize his brother’s expression and smiled when he realized that Adam was only teasing.

“The gentleman’s closet is down that way,” Adam suggested as
he opened his own bag.

“You gonna change?” Joe inquired.

“I most certainly am, and so are you,” Adam ordered. “Those clothes will get gamy enough without wearing them day and night.”

Joe snickered. “I think some of the folks travelin’ with us have been wearin’ theirs a whole lot longer than that.”

“Yes, and it’s probably been a lot longer since they had a bath,” Adam said wryly, “but it isn’t particularly mannerly to say so.”

“I’m not sayin’ it to them, Adam,” Joe protested.

“All right,” Adam said with a conciliatory pat on his brother’s back. Taking a gray-striped nightshirt from his carpetbag, he headed toward the gentlemen’s closet to change. Joe quickly dug his own sleeping garment out and followed.

Only one other man was in the gentlemen’s closet at the time, so the Cartwrights were able to change in relative privacy. Dressed for the night, they both visited the gentlemen’s lavatory across the aisle before returning to their berths. Adam watched Little Joe pull himself into the upper one and stretch out in the body-length space. Well, for Joe it was body-length. Since the cubicle was only six feet long, Adam would have to curl up a bit to fit inside. “Good night. Pleasant dreams,” he whispered, for others were already sleeping in the darkened car.

“Night, Adam,” Joe whispered back. “Sleep good.”

“‘Well,’ sleep ‘well,’” Adam hissed as he drew the floor-length, wine-colored curtains enclosing both his berth and Joe’s.

“Uh-huh, you, too,” Joe yawned.
Shaking his head in amusement, Adam crawled through the curtains into his lower berth and drew the gray wool blanket up to his chin. Though the car was heated, the stove was near the other end, where the ladies’ lavatory and closet were located. Nights turned chilly in the mountains, so the warm cover would be much appreciated.

Little Joe had fallen asleep almost immediately, but when the train rolled to a stop, he woke with a start. *Doggone that Adam, he said he’d wake me,* Joe grumbled inwardly, assuming that the train had pulled into Ogden and it was time to get off. “Sure felt like a short night,” he mumbled as he pulled the curtains back and swung one leg over the side. He halted abruptly. The car was pitch black, and Joe immediately realized that it wasn’t morning yet. Why had the cars stopped, then? Curious, he dropped to the floor, being careful not to wake Adam, and pattered down the carpeted aisle to the door at the end of the car. The sign on the depot revealed the mystery, for it said, “Wells.” From his perusal of the railroad guide, Joe knew that this was a water stop for the steam locomotive.

Adam never knew what had wakened him: the snores of his neighbors, the cessation of movement or just some innate sense of something wrong. Probably the latter, for his first thought was to check on Little Joe. Uncurling his long legs, he stood in the aisle and felt his heart leap into his throat at the sight of the empty upper berth. Hastily he threw on his robe and slippers, and after checking the lavatory, which was completely empty, he went outside, where he found his young brother on the platform of the railcar. “What are you doing out here?” he asked, concerned.

“Just getting some air,” Joe said, adding defensively, “The train isn’t moving, Adam.”

“I can see that,” Adam chuckled.
Joe smiled, glad to see that his older brother wasn’t upset with him. “So, what are you doing out here?” he returned lightly.

Not wanting to admit the worry that had driven him from his bed, Adam shrugged. “Just felt a need to stretch,” he alleged.

“Uh-huh.” Joe didn’t for one minute believe Adam’s explanation. In fact, he was sure he knew the real reason that Adam had come looking for him. *He don’t trust me not to fall off the train in the dark, like some fool kid.* It was too late and he was too tired to argue, however, so he kept that opinion to himself.

A gust of wind whipped Joe’s beige and blue plaid nightshirt around his legs, drawing Adam’s attention to his bare feet. “Where are your robe and slippers?” he chided.

“Packed in that bag you checked through to Omaha,” Joe answered matter-of-factly.

Adam regarded him with a wry smile. “Well, that figures. You must have packed your brain in that bag, too—running around barefoot in this chilly night air, wearing nothing but a thin nightshirt.”

“It’s not that cold,” Joe argued, but the goose pimples on his legs told a different story.

“Come back inside,” Adam urged, taking his arm. “You’re shivering, and it looks like the train will be starting up any minute.”

“Yeah, I guess I’ve had enough air,” Joe said with a saucy smile.

Adam cuffed his neck and pointed him toward the door. Back at their berths, he watched Joe climb into bed, and then tucked the covers around him with exaggerated tautness. “See that
you stay there this time,” he commanded with a teasing lilt.

“Don’t worry, big brother; a water stop won’t fool me again,” Joe yawned as he wriggled to loosen the blanket. “Thought we were in Ogden already and you’d forgot to wake me.”

“Joe, Joe, it’s barely midnight,” Adam laughed softly. “Pleasant dreams,” he said once again.

“You, too, older brother,” Joe murmured as he snuggled under the warm blanket, “and thanks again for bringing me on this trip. I’m havin’ a great time.”

    Adam drew the curtains together and climbed once more into his own berth. Curling up, he chuckled to himself. Only Joe, with his zest for life, could enjoy a long, dreary train trip. Let’s see how much he’s enjoying it by the time we get to Philadelphia, Adam mused, or even Omaha, for that matter!

    CHAPTER FIVE

    As Adam rose the next morning, he missed by a whisker smashing his face into the foot dangling down from the berth above. Though sorely tempted, he resisted giving the protruding limb a quick jerk that would toss his younger brother onto the carpet. Instead, he pulled back the curtains of the berth, took hold of and tickled the sole of Joe’s foot.

    Eyes still closed, Joe moaned softly, trying to wriggle his foot free, but Adam grasped the ankle firmly and continued the torment until Joe squinted and hollered, “Doggone you, Adam, cut that out!”

    Adam gave the bare sole a solid slap and turned loose. “Up and at ‘em, Sleeping Beauty. We’re almost to Ogden, where we have to switch railroads—unless, of course, you want to head back home, ’cause that’s where you’ll be going if you don’t get off this train.”
The threat was sufficient to propel Little Joe, always a reluctant riser, into action. Pulling his shirt and pants from the carpetbag at the end of his bed, he hopped down and headed for the gentlemen’s closet to change. Adam was right behind him, black clothes and shaving kit in hand.

Both the dressing area and the lavatory across the hall were crowded, for everyone on the train would be leaving, to make connections with either another train or a stagecoach, Ogden being the end of the line for the Central Pacific Railroad. Little Joe dressed and then squeezed his way through to the lavatory. Spotting his brother at one of the washbasins, he called, “Hey, Adam, can I borrow your razor?” He’d been so anxious to get dressed that he’d left his own kit back in his carpetbag.

“What for?” Adam teased.

A general ripple of laughter flowed through the room. “Yeah, what for, sonny?” a man with a prodigious set of rough black whiskers snickered. “You don’t need a razor; you need a cat’s tongue to lick off that peach fuzz.”

Joe’s visage darkened, and he pushed men aside to grab the burly farmer by the straps of his overalls.

Adam spun around, wrapped an arm around his younger brother’s waist and yanked him back, easily lifting him off the floor. “Don’t even think about it,” he growled.

Joe’s opponent folded his arms, staring at the boy, and then let loose a booming laugh. “I think, maybe, I make your little boy mad, mister.”

“I’m not his little boy,” Joe protested, struggling to get free; then he wilted as another round of laughter greeted his inadvertent acceptance of the juvenile designation. “I—I mean, I’m not anybody’s little boy,” he sputtered. “I mean, I’m not a little boy; I’m—”
Another passenger guffawed. “I don’t think the little lad knows what he means!”

“I’m nineteen and I do shave!” Joe yelled, lunging forward, only to be grabbed back once more by Adam’s strong arm. “Settle down, boy, and I do mean now,” Adam demanded.

The farmer laid a ponderous paw on Little Joe’s shoulder. In the open palm of his other hand he held a straight razor. “Here, sonny, you borrow mine,” he said. “I wasn’t meanin’ to make you mad. I still don’t see much whiskers on you, but if you wanna shave, that’s your business, huh?”

“Yeah!” Joe announced to the general assemblage in the lavatory. “My business!” Thanking the farmer, he took the razor, elbowed Adam out of his way and began to wet his face with the water in the basin.

Adam just folded his arms, leaned against the wall and waited.

Joe cut his eyes to the left and saw Adam sporting that catlike grin that usually meant his big brother was two steps ahead of him. “Uh, could I borrow your shaving soap and brush, brother?” he asked sheepishly.

Adam arched an eyebrow and waited again. Seeing that Joe didn’t have a clue to what he was waiting for, he whispered, “Grammar—and manners.”

Joe rolled his eyes. “May I please borrow your shaving soap and brush, sir?”

With a chuckle Adam produced them. “Get a move on,” he directed. “There are other men waiting for this basin and mirror, and you’ve put on quite enough of a show for one morning.” He left the room and went back to his berth to pack his nightshirt and razor and sat down to wait for Joe. It would obviously not pay to leave him unsupervised this morning. Considering the state the kid was in, he was likely
to walk off without his carpetbag—or worse, without returning his brother’s shaving equipment.

Joe came loping down the aisle, smiling broadly. “I feel like a new man,” he announced cheerily.

Taking his brother’s chin in his right hand, Adam turned the smooth face this way and that. “Nope, looks like the same baby-faced boy to me,” he said with a needling smile.

Joe’s jaws tightened. “You’d better cut it out, Adam,” he warned.

“All right, all right,” Adam appeased, patting the boy’s cheek. “We don’t have time for this nonsense, anyway.” He took his shaving soap and brush from Joe and placed them in his own bag. “Get your gear together and meet me in the passenger car. We’ll be pulling into Ogden any minute now, and we’ll have exactly one hour to get our things transferred and have breakfast. No dawdling, Joe.”

Joe popped a sassy salute. “Yes, sir!”

Smirking, Adam saluted back. “Dismissed. Now, get to work!”

The transfer proved to be remarkably easy. Most of the luggage had been checked through to the end of the line and was automatically shifted to the baggage car of the Union Pacific train that would take the Cartwrights to Omaha, Nebraska. Since they were through passengers, their seats and berth assignments remained the same, so all that was necessary was to deposit their carpetbags and the now empty, but still cumbersome picnic hamper either under their new seats or in the overhead storage compartment. “Wish there were some way to check this thing through,” Adam grumbled under his breath.

“What are you griping about?” Joe muttered. “I’m the one who had to carry it.”

Palm pressed to his chest, Adam feigned innocence. “Why, I
thought you’d want to, to keep the memory of home alive in your young breast."

“It’s not young folks that have memory problems,” Joe snorted, “but, then, you wouldn’t remember that, would you, old codger?”

Adam laughed. “Come on, let’s get some breakfast, or did you forget we’re working under a time limit here?”

“Nope, my memory’s working just fine,” Joe grinned back, “and I definitely remember being hungry.”

As they walked toward the Beardsley House, Joe smiled at the beauty of the surrounding mountains. “Nice place,” he commented.

Adam, who had visited the town several times on cattle-selling trips for the Ponderosa, nodded. “Yes, a very pleasant, well-planned community. I’ve always enjoyed staying here.” Ogden was a town divided into two parts: the lower, where the depot and most businesses were located, and above that, on a shelf adjoining the mountains, the residential area with its landscaped yards, shaded by beautiful trees leafed out in gowns of apple green.

“So this is where they drove the Golden Spike, huh?” Joe asked.

Adam chuckled. “No, that was about fifty miles back, buddy. You were asleep when we went through Promontory.”

“Aw, shucks,” Joe muttered. “I kind of wanted to picture Pa standing there with all those railroad bigwigs.”

Adam took his elbow to steer him toward the restaurant. “Maybe you can see it on the way back, depending on which train we take. It was quite an honor for Pa to be invited to that ceremony uniting the tracks of the two companies that make up the transcontinental railroad.”
“Well, Pa deserves great honors, doesn’t he?” Joe remarked.

Adam laughed. “Oh, yeah. Just for putting up with you, he deserves great honors.” He held open the door to the Beardsley House and motioned for Joe to precede him.

Joe scowled at him and went inside, wondering if his face might freeze forever in that position before this trip was over. His countenance brightened quickly, however, when he heard a youthful voice calling his name. Joe grinned, waved and wove his way through the tables, Adam trailing in his wake. “Hey, Petey, how you doin’ this morning?” Joe asked, ruffling the wheat-gold hair.

“I’m doin’ great!” Petey declared and then asked eagerly, “You gonna sit with us?”

Joe glanced inquiringly at Petey’s mother. “Please do join us,” she said, “you and your brother.”

Adam felt perturbed when Little Joe simply pulled out a chair and sat down without inquiring into his wishes, but since there really was no reason to decline the gracious invitation, he thanked the woman and sat down. “I don’t believe we’ve met,” he said suavely. “My name is Adam Cartwright.”

The woman smiled. “Your brother’s told us so much about you that I feel as if I knew you already, Mr. Cartwright, even without a formal introduction. I am Mrs. Peter Conners, but please call me Marian. My son is named after my husband, but we call him Petey to differentiate.”

Little Joe felt foolish, not only because he had failed to make proper introductions, but because it had never even occurred to him to refer to Mrs. Conners as anything but “Petey’s mother.” It was the kind of thing kids did, and it reminded him of all the teasing about his youthfulness that he’d taken that morning in the gentlemen’s lavatory. He covered his discomfort by burying his nose in the menu and was
soon ready to order.

“What you havin’, Joe?” Petey asked, the expression in his eyes clearly communicating that whatever his friend was having would be his choice, as well.

“I’m havin’ flapjacks and sausage, with stewed apples,” Joe said, with a wink at Marian Conners, “and, of course, a tall glass of milk to wash it all down.”

“Me, too,” Petey said at once, as every adult at the table had anticipated.

Mrs. Conners smiled her gratitude at Joe, and then turned to Adam after all their breakfast orders had been placed. “I understand you’re traveling to Philadelphia, Mr. Cartwright, to see the great Centennial Exhibition. How I envy you that opportunity!”

“It’s Adam,” the elder Cartwright brother replied. “You’re not going that far yourself, I take it?”

“No, Adam, we leave the train at Evanston,” she explained. “We’re visiting my sister and her family, who live there.”

Again Little Joe felt a moment’s embarrassment. Why hadn’t he thought to ask Petey’s mother—Marian, he corrected himself—what her plans were? He’d just rattled on about himself, mostly to Petey. What a childish way to act! Maybe he should start taking to heart some of Adam’s oft-repeated criticism of his manners.

Adam’s next comment effectively put that idea out of his head. “I do hope my young brother hasn’t been making a nuisance of himself,” Adam said to Mrs. Conners.

“Indeed, not,” Marian responded swiftly, noticing how Joe bristled at his brother’s words. “He’s been delightful company and has definitely made the miles go faster for my son. A trip of this length is so hard on an active
“Yes, so I’ve observed,” Adam said, cutting a glance toward Joe as he took a sip of coffee.

Hot words were on the tip of Joe’s tongue, and only the timely arrival of the food kept them there. Ignoring Adam, he said, “Boy, doesn’t this look great, Petey?”

“Yeah,” Petey agreed, “and I want lots of syrup on my cakes. You like lots of syrup, Joe?”

“Only way to eat pancakes, Petey. You gotta drown them in a whole pool of maple syrup and let the sausage take a swim in it, too.”

Petey giggled. Pouring an excessive amount of syrup over the stack of pancakes, he lifted a sausage patty to its top and made it dive off into the maple pool below.

“Petey, your breakfast is not intended to be a plaything,” his mother chided.

“Nor is yours, Little Joe,” Adam reprimanded, pointedly emphasizing the diminutive.

Joe regarded his brother with a narrowed gaze before turning to his friend’s mother. “Sorry. I didn’t mean to make trouble.”

“No harm done,” she said with a smile, “although a good example of how to clean one’s plate would be appreciated about now.”

Joe grinned. “Oh, I’ll be happy to set that, ma’am—uh, I mean, Marian.”

Adam frowned, but said nothing, resolving to speak to Joe about that breach of etiquette later. He waited until they’d left the restaurant and were alone on the street. “Joe, Mrs.
Conners did not give you permission to address her by her first name.”

“Yes, she did,” Joe protested.

“She was talking to me,” Adam insisted, “and it is inappropriate for you to assume that she was including you when it’s obvious you were not on a first-name basis before. It’s improper for a boy of your age to—”

“A boy!” Joe squeaked. “When are you gonna realize I’m a man, Adam?”

“When are you going to realize that you’re not?” Adam replied firmly. “Now, you will address Mrs. Conner and all other elders by title and surname unless given specific permission to adopt the familiar, is that clear?”

Joe shook his head in disgust. “Yes, that’s clear,” he muttered through gritted teeth. “Look, we’ve still got some time before the train pulls out, don’t we? Okay if I look around town a little, Mr. Cartwright?”

Adam laughed and rumpled his brother’s unruly curls. “You’ve got fifteen minutes, kid, so whatever you can see in that time, you’re welcome to look at.” He flipped a dime toward Joe, who deftly caught it in the air. “Pick up a newspaper while you’re at it,” Adam directed, “and make sure it’s the Ogden Freeman and not the Daily Junction.”

“There’s a difference?” Joe asked with a tinge of impertinence.

Adam arched an eyebrow. “Obviously, or I wouldn’t be telling you which to buy. The Junction is little more than a vehicle for the Mormon Church, while the other has a more secular slant, which I prefer.”

Joe tossed him an impish smile. “Not interested in any sermons but your own, huh?”
Adam playfully boxed his ears. "Oh, get going or you won’t have time to buy either one." After Joe scampered off, Adam spotted some street vendors and wandered over to see what was available. As he’d suspected, many of the market carts held fresh fruit, which grew in abundance locally, and he laid in a small stock of apples, peaches and pears to eat on the train.

Little Joe scurried back at almost the last minute, and Adam handed him the bag of fruit in exchange for the newspaper. Joe took a peek inside. "Hey, thanks, Adam! These’ll come in handy."

"And so will that hamper Hop Sing saddled us with," Adam chuckled. "Maybe he knew what he was doing, after all."

"Well, of course, he did," Joe declared loyally.

"On board, boy—now," Adam ordered, snapping his left index finger toward the train.

Joe grinned and climbed the steps to the passenger car of the Union Pacific train.

Departing the depot, the cars began to climb steadily upward, with the scenery growing more majestic by the minute. When they stopped in Weber, twenty-five miles down the track, a number of passengers left the train. "This is as close to Salt Lake City as the train goes," Adam replied in answer to Joe’s inquiry about why so many were getting off at this seemingly insignificant town. "A lot of people are curious about the Mormon way of life, so it’s common for travelers to make a side trip of a day or two." He pointed to the sign over a local business. "That’s a sure indication you’re in Mormon territory," he observed.

Joe leaned across Adam to see what he was referring to. "‘Z.C.M.I’—what’s it mean, Adam?"

"Zion’s Cooperative Mercantile Institution," Adam replied.
“All Mormon businesses are required to be members and to pay tithes on their profits, and all Mormons are expected to patronize the Z.C.M.I. stores.”

Joe’s nose wrinkled in distaste. “Sounds like a way to fix prices to me.”

“That’s one of the complaints,” Adam told him, “but they have a right to set whatever laws they choose regarding their own adherents. There’ve been some charges, however, that gentile merchants in the area are being coerced to tithe their profits to the church, as well, and that is where I think the line must be drawn. No one should be forced to support another man’s religion.”

After depositing tourists and locals, the train pulled out, and for the next seven miles or so the road moved around several short curves and then past a group of balanced rocks that looked as if they were ready to topple into the valley below. Since Adam was still maintaining proprietary right to the window seat, Little Joe wandered down the aisle to sit with his friend Petey and his mother.

The train steamed through a couple of tunnels, and Joe, sighting a landmark noted in the railroad guide he’d purchased the day before, pointed out Devil’s Slide to the boy on his lap. Two parallel ledges of granite, turned on their sides, jutted out fifty feet from mountainside, about fourteen inches apart and eight hundred feet high. “Wouldn’t it be fun to slide down that, Petey?” Joe suggested.

“Yeah!” Petey quickly agreed with a bounce of enthusiasm.

His mother peered out the window at the serrated edges of the “slide” and clucked her tongue at both boys. “And tear your pants for your mother to mend,” she teased as she lovingly stroked the back of her son’s head.

“Sorry, ma’am,” Joe apologized sheepishly. “I seem to be full
of bad ideas this morning."

“No danger involved with a temptation so inaccessible,” she laughed, “so I don’t mind his indulging in a little make-believe. Just see to it you don’t try anything that risky yourself, young man.” She wagged a playful finger before his face.

“No, ma’am, I won’t,” Joe assured her. “That place looks like a broken bone about to happen, and doctors and me don’t get along real well.” He licked his lips nervously. “Uh, Mrs. Conners, I—I just wanted to apologize for being forward before.”

“I don’t know what you mean,” she said.

“Uh—when I called you by your first name at breakfast, ma’am. My brother said it was wrong for me to assume you were including me when you said he could call you Marian.”

She patted his shoulder. “Nonsense. Of course, I meant you, too.”

Joe grinned, relieved. “Yeah, I thought so, but old Adam’s got some pretty strict notions of right and wrong and manners and such.”

Marian smiled. “You’re very fortunate, then, to have someone who cares enough to instruct you in right and wrong—and manners and such.”

“I’ve got a pa for that, ma’am—Marian. Trouble is, Adam has trouble remembering that it isn’t him!”

“But he is a good brother, now, isn’t he?” she probed persuasively.

“Yeah, most of the time,” Joe conceded. Sunshine sparkling in his emerald eyes, he added, “Did I tell you that he’s paying for everything, so I can come on this trip with him?”
“There now, I knew I was right!” Marian said, laughing at Joe’s sudden change of disposition.

Joe nodded, smiling. “I guess I just have to keep reminding myself whenever he gets too bossy.”

Marian patted his hand. “Well, I’m glad I could help remind you today.”

“Hey, Joe! Look at that,” Petey exclaimed, pointing out the window.

Joe looked and saw a tree with a sign nailed to its trunk that read “Omaha 1000 miles.” He set Petey down and stood up. “I think there’s something about that in my guidebook,” he said. “I’m gonna get it.”

He bounded down the aisle and took the guidebook from the hamper, where he’d stored it for easy access. “We just passed Thousand-Mile Tree, Adam,” he informed his brother. “So it’s a thousand miles to Omaha, huh? How long ‘til we get there?”

Adam replied without looking up from his journal. “Day after tomorrow, Joe, for supper.”

“Okay, thanks,” Joe said and took off down the aisle once more. Back in his seat with Petey perched in his lap, he opened the book and showed the boy what it had to say. “I’ve got to ride the train two more days before we get to Omaha.”

“That’s a long time,” Petey said, sounding awed. He turned to his mother. “How much longer we gonna stay on, Mama?”

“Just ‘til noon, sweetheart,” she answered.

“Aw, shucks,” Petey pouted. “I’m gonna miss you, Joe.”

“Hey, me, too, pal,” his older friend said earnestly. “You sure have made the trip a lot more fun for me.”

Marian laid her hand over his, which was resting on Petey’s
thigh. “As you’ve made it for him. Thank you, Joe, for your kindness to my little boy.”

Joe shrugged off the compliment. “Sure, ma’am. Like I said, it’s been a pleasure to me, too.”

“Joe, Joe, look!” Petey again called his friend’s attention to an interesting sight out the window.

Joe peered through the pane, seeing a high bluff on the right with a multitude of wind-worn holes near the top. Nests filled the crevices, and eagles were perched atop them, wings spread protectively over either eggs or chicks. From this distance, Joe couldn’t tell which.

“It’s called Eagle’s Nest Rock,” Petey informed his friend excitedly. “I just read it in your book. Ain’t they something!”

“Uh, yeah,” Joe muttered. A slight sliver ran through him. Near home was a precipice of almost the same name, and for some reason Joe had never been able to fathom, that place had always had the same effect on him.

The locomotive rounded another rocky point, revealing gray rocks so close to one another that they looked as though they were carrying on an intimate conversation. “Those are called ‘The Witches,’” Petey said, again consulting the guidebook. “Creepy, huh?”

Joe just laughed, though he wondered why an eerie image like a witches’ conclave didn’t bother him when something as commonplace as an eagle’s nest did. “Naw, they look more like gossiping sisters to me,” he snickered. “Kind of remind me of these two ladies I know back home.”

“For shame, young man. What would your mother say if she heard you gossiping about those women?” An indulgent smile softened Marian’s reprimand.
“I don’t have a mother, ma’am,” Joe said softly. “I mean, she died when I was about half the age of Petey here.”

Marian’s gaze grew more tender. “Oh, I’m sorry. I should have realized, since you’ve only mentioned your father and brothers.”

“It’s okay, ma’am. Can’t miss what you never had.” Joe shrugged.

Only a mother’s eye would have spotted the slight hesitance preceding the words and motion. “Can’t you?” she asked gently.

Joe glanced at the floor. “Well, yeah, sometimes,” he conceded. He looked up and spoke in quick defense. “But my Pa’s been as much a mother to me as any man could—and then there’s Hop Sing. He’s our cook, the one who made that great food we brought with us yesterday, and he takes real good care of us.” With a mother’s instinct, Marian patted his hand and gave him a tender smile, and Joe’s disarming grin was back.

The train entered a lovely valley, cradled between the hills, its carpet splashed with flowers of blue, yellow and purple; then the road steepened as it curved southeast to enter a narrow opening where rocky cliffs seemed to press in on either side. When the travelers passed Castle Rock station, they were six thousand feet above sea level, and a little east of the station, Joe and Petey, almost simultaneously, spotted the landmark for which it was named. “You can almost see knights in armor riding through there, can’t you?” Joe suggested, pointing to the arched doorway on one corner, its red sidepieces capped with gray. Nearby a series of needle-sharp rocks aimed skyward like the shafts of a knight’s lance, another fanciful observation Joe shared with Petey.

“Such grand scenery,” Marian sighed with deep content.

“Yes, ma’am, it sure is,” Joe agreed, looking at her. “I read
in that book that Echo Canyon here is just about the most impressive sight there is on the whole fifteen hundred miles of the railroad. Good thing you got to see it before you got off.”

Marian smiled. “Yes, a very good thing.” As the train reached a point level with the top of the rocks, it began a slight descent into Evanston on the west bank of the Bear River. “We’ll be parting company here, Joe,” she said. “Let me say again what a pleasure it’s been to travel with you.”

“The pleasure’s all mine, ma’am,” he responded politely. For some reason, perhaps because she’d been acting so motherly toward him, he didn’t feel right calling her by her first name, even though he knew he had her consent. “I’m really going to miss you. Not just Petey—you, too.”

When the time came to part, Petey clung to Joe, almost inconsolable at the imminent separation. Then Joe spotted a boy a couple of years older than his friend, standing beside the man waving to Mrs. Conners. “Hey, Petey, would that be your cousin, maybe?” he suggested. “I bet the two of you are gonna have tons of fun together.”

Petey followed Joe’s pointing finger and a grin split his face. “Yeah, that must be Cousin Aubrey; he’s the one just older than me. I gotta go now, Joe.”

Joe gave him a light swat on the backside. “Yeah, me, too. You have yourself a great visit with your folks, you hear?” The words faded on the wind as Petey took off to meet his cousin.

Seeing his brother’s slightly disheartened countenance, Adam put an arm around his shoulder. “We’ve only got half an hour, Joe. Come on and have some lunch.” He steered Joe toward the Mountain Trout Hotel, where both boys ordered the specialty of the house, speckled trout. Both beamed with pleasure as the Chinese waiter slid plates of crispy fish and slices of fried
potatoes with the almost-universal green beans before them. This time the vegetables were seasoned with onion, as well as bacon and both Cartwrights considered it a flavorful addition.

“Bet there’s some great fishing around here,” Joe commented between bites.

“Oh, yes. The Bear River’s full of these beauties,” Adam agreed. “This is one meal I knew we would enjoy.”

“And, for once, you were right!”

Adam cleared his throat. “For once?”

Joe just returned a saucy grin.

Adam pursed his lips and nodded his head gravely. “You’d better hope I’m right more than once, boy, since I’ll be choosing where you eat your meals for the next month or so.”

“Aaw, come on, Adam,” Joe complained. “I ought to get to pick once in a while.”

Adam patted his lips with the napkin. “My trip, my choice. I have no intention of leaving myself to your tender mercies, boy. You have all the culinary discrimination of a hog at the feeding trough.”

Joe was stung by what he considered unfair criticism. He knew good food when he tasted it, and just because Adam had been exposed to more fancy fare didn’t make him some kind of expert on where to eat. Well, maybe it did, when it came to food back east, Joe conceded, but he still felt disgruntled.

Adam cast an appraising eye over his brother’s dark countenance. What’s the matter with the kid? Can dish it out, but can’t take a little teasing in return? Or maybe he misses his little friend more than I thought. Neither brother shared his thoughts with the other, however, and both returned to the train with unresolved feelings.
Crossing the Bear River, the grade continued to climb, and the track passed under a twenty-four-mile logging flume like those the Cartwrights were familiar with back in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of home. High hills lined either side of the track as the locomotive steamed up a ravine after going through a cut. Finally reaching the summit of the mountains, the train began to descend, passing through a series of snow sheds. The need for these was obvious from the snow still visible on the mountains to the right, which never melted at this altitude, but in winter was deep enough to stop trains without this protection.

Rough, broken terrain edged both sides of the track, with high buttes thrusting up to the clear cerulean sky. As the track met Black’s Fork of the Green River, the valley, thickly covered with sagebrush and greasewood, grew broad in places ‘til a high projecting tower north of the track crowned a bluff six hundred and twenty-five feet above the river, signaling the next stop.

Here, at Green River, the sleeper car was attached while the travelers dined, but as it was only 6 p.m. when they re-boarded, neither Adam nor Joe felt ready to retire. About eight o’clock, both turned in, for the rhythmic motion of the darkened cars began to have a soporific effect, especially on the younger of the two brothers.

CHAPTER SIX

“Joe, Joe, wake up,” Adam urged, shaking his brother’s shoulder with what seemed to Little Joe unconscionable persistence.

Joe opened one eye and muttered, “Go ‘way; it’s still night.” The eye closed once more as Joe buried himself in the pillow.

Adam gave him another shake. “If you want breakfast, Sleeping Beauty, you’d better rise and shine.”
Joe groaned and edged up on his elbows. “It’s too early,” he complained. “I know it’s earlier than we got up yesterday.”

“It is,” Adam admitted, “but that’s the railroad’s doing, not mine. It’s an early breakfast stop today.”

“These irregular hours can’t be good for digestion,” Joe crabbed.

Adam laughed. “I’d have to agree, but there’s nothing you can do about it, kid—except starve.”

“Nope, not a chance,” Joe said, yawning and stretching. Maybe the meal would only cost Adam a dollar, but Joe intended to squeeze every one possible from his miserly spirited big brother.

“Come on, then,” Adam ordered, giving Joe’s thigh a smart slap. “They’re going to detach this sleeper car—and you with it—as soon as we get to Laramie, if you don’t haul out of that bunk now, kid—and if you want a shave, take your own kit this time.” Gathering his own gear, Adam disappeared down the aisle.

Sitting up, Joe ran his hand across a virtually smooth cheek. Truth was, he really didn’t need to shave every day, though he preferred, most days, to indulge the fiction that he did. Not wanting to be the center of another scene like the one that had transpired in the gentlemen’s lavatory the day before and in view of his early morning grogginess, he decided to forego a shave this time.

Primarily because of the altitude, the air was crisp and cool as the Cartwright brothers got off the train. The streets of Laramie, which nestled next to the river of the same name, were laid out in a regular pattern at right angles to the railroad, and Adam and Joe walked a short way down one of them to the large hotel run by the company. They enjoyed a filling breakfast of ham and eggs with hot, buttered biscuits and
blackberry jam and were ready to board the train again after Joe picked up the obligatory morning newspaper for his older brother.

Laramie was situated over seven thousand feet above sea level, and as the rail cars left the town and its three thousand inhabitants behind, the tracks continued to climb into the snowcapped mountains. Then they traveled over Great Laramie Plain, some forty miles broad, with the sharp-pointed cones of the Diamond Peaks of the Medicine Bow Range rising on their right. The train was less crowded this morning than it had been previously, so Little Joe was able to take a window seat facing Adam and enjoy the majestic mountain scene for almost one hundred miles without peering past his brother’s head.

As the road curved left, Adam grew visibly excited. “Look, Joe,” he said, pointing down the track ahead. “Isn’t it splendid?”

Joe looked through the window. “The water tank?” he asked skeptically.

“No, look past that,” Adam urged. “It’s Dale Creek Bridge, one of the wonders of the transcontinental route: six hundred fifty feet long, a hundred and thirty high and completely constructed of iron. Isn’t it a wonder, Joe?”

Joe shrugged. “I guess so, Adam.”

Adam laughed. “Well, to an engineer, it is. I assure you the engineering journals resounded with praise when it was constructed. I’ve been looking forward to seeing it for myself—and it’s given no cause for disappointment.”

Joe smiled and, for Adam’s sake, made an effort to appear interested. “It’s a real fine bridge, Adam”—he paused to point at the mountains still edging the plain—“but I’d rather look at those.”
Adam gave his brother a nod of concession. “Yeah, they had a pretty terrific Engineer, too.”

“The best!” Joe exclaimed, smile widening into a grin as his brother smiled back.

Two miles past the bridge, the train pulled through Sherman, the highest point on the transcontinental railroad, and began to descend out of the mountains. Just outside town stood a set of balanced rocks, and half a mile to the left a lone pine tree on a rugged peak stood guard over the landscape below. Snow sheds became more frequent on this stretch of track, but would be left behind shortly after the train made its dinner stop at Cheyenne, Wyoming.

“From what I’ve read, this is one of the best-kept hotels between our two coasts,” Adam observed as he and Little Joe got off the train in what the guidebook referred to as the “Magic City of the Plains.”

“Sure looks fine,” Joe commented, as they entered the elegant dining hall, decorated in rustic flair with the heads of antelope, elk, mountain sheep, black-tailed deer and buffalo hanging on the walls. The trophies were indicative of the choices available on the menu, and the Cartwrights feasted on antelope steaks, although thirty minutes scarcely seemed enough to properly enjoy such a delicious meal. Soon they were rumbling down the track once more through countryside much like that through which they’d been traveling all day—a rugged, broken landscape, awesome in its beauty. Even Adam found it impossible to keep his nose buried in a book when there was so much of interest to see outside the window.

The elevation dropped with each mile traveled, until by the time the brothers reached the supper stop at Sidney, Nebraska, they were three thousand feet closer to sea level than when they had awakened that morning. The food here suffered by comparison with that in Cheyenne, but neither Adam nor Joe was
interested in more than a light meal, anyway. Sitting in a
train all day simply hadn’t provided sufficient exercise to
work off what they’d already eaten earlier in the day.

When they re-boarded, Little Joe noticed that they had lost a
large number of fellow travelers. “What’s going on?” he
asked. “It’s not that big a town.”

Adam smiled as he handed Joe his carpetbag and gave him a
light push toward the newly attached sleeper car. “It’s not
the town itself that’s the attraction,” he explained, “but its
proximity to the Black Hills.”

“Oh, yeah, the gold strike,” Joe muttered. “I read about
that.”

“And don’t get any ideas about going off to prospect
yourself,” Adam dictated, half in jest.

“Shoot, no!” Joe exclaimed. “You couldn’t pay me to work
underground.”

“Not even if we owned a mine ourselves?” Adam queried
probingly.

“That is your dream, brother, not mine,” Joe insisted,
plopping his carpetbag on Adam’s lower berth, so he could take
out his nightshirt before tossing the valise up to his own
bed. “Me, I’d rather ride a fast horse across the ground than
plunge down a steam hoist into its belly.” He gave a shiver,
not noticing the look of disappointment that crossed his older
brother’s face. It had been a long day, so the brothers bid
each other good night as soon as they’d changed, and both were
almost immediately lost to the land of dreams, each man’s
vision of a nature markedly different from that of his
sibling.

The next morning, for the first time, Little Joe woke without
assistance. Leaning his head over the edge of his berth, he
saw the empty bed below him and panicked. Practically tumbling to the floor, he hurried to the closest window and discovered that the sun was well up. The mountains had been left behind during the night, and the train was now crossing an open prairie, the view unobstructed by the high bluffs that had bordered the path heretofore.

“Oh, you’re up,” said a voice behind him. “I was just coming to rouse you.”

“It’s late,” Joe accused.

Adam ruffled his brother’s sleep-tousled curls. “Later than yesterday, to be sure, but we won’t reach the breakfast stop until 8:30 this morning, so there was no need to wrestle you out of those cozy covers, for a change.”

Spirits quickly brightening, Joe grinned. “That’s a mighty fine change, brother.”

“Well, don’t get too used to it,” Adam laughed. “There are some more early mornings in your future, my boy.”

Joe pretended to pout, but he felt much too well rested and, therefore, in too pleasant a mood to hold the expression for long. As soon as the train pulled up to the depot at Grand Island, he bounded into the aisle. “Come on,” he hollered back to his brother. “I’m half-starved.”

Adam chuckled, although he was having the same difficulty regulating his appetite to the convenience of the railroad as was his younger brother. Here, the hotel and restaurant were new, having been built by the company only the year before, but the fare was much as it had been at every breakfast stop along the route, adequate, but little more.

“I suppose you want me to trot out and get you a newspaper,” Little Joe offered after tucking away a substantial amount of scrambled eggs and sausage.
Adam flipped a coin at him, which Joe deftly caught. “You learn slowly, sonny, but I’m gratified to see that you do learn.”

“Any special variety this time?” Joe asked as he stood and pushed his chair under the table.

Adam laughed. “No, just buy whichever looks thickest. Lot of flat country to ride through today, and I can use the extra distraction.”

Joe sported a puckish grin. “Probably be chock full of society news in a big ole town like this.”

Adam displayed a twisted smile. “No doubt!” He finished a second cup of coffee after Joe left, paid the bill and then walked toward the train, looking this way and that in search of his younger brother. Though Joe had never boarded ahead of him, he entered the passenger car to check. Joe wasn’t there. Consulting his pocket watch, Adam frowned. Three minutes until departure. Where could the kid be? He stepped out onto the rail car’s platform and scanned the street in both directions—no Joe.

In fact, the wheels of the train had started to roll slowly forward when an anxious Adam finally spotted his brother and gestured imperiously for him to hurry. Joe sprinted toward the train, grabbed the hand his brother stretched toward him, jumped aboard and stood grinning at the end of the car. “Whew, that was close!” he cried.

“What happened?” Adam scolded. “Did you see some pretty skirt you just had to chase?”

Joe pouted eloquently. “I was doing you a favor, big brother, remember?” He handed Adam a copy of the Independent. “Just took me awhile to decide which was thickest.”

Adam shoved him through the door into the rail car. “Getting
yourself left behind might be considered doing me a favor, little brother, but I’m afraid my ears would be burning by the time Pa got through with me.”

“Oh, shut up,” Joe growled grumpily at this further reminder that Adam would be happier without him.

Adam frowned, but decided to overlook the kid’s bad temper, chalk ing it up to the weariness of the journey. After all, this would be their fourth full day on the train, and he was feeling a little frazzled at the edges himself. Settling into his seat next to the window, he opened the newspaper and began to read.

When he finally folded it, Joe, who had grown bored with the sameness of the prairie scenery, asked to read it, and when Adam willingly handed it over, asked if he could sit by the window. Adam nodded and they switched seats.

Joe read the newspaper with greater attention than was his custom, but when he’d read all that struck his interest, the prairie still stretched endlessly from horizon to horizon. While the grassland held a beauty of its own, the monotonous flatness lulled Joe to sleep, and his head came slowly to rest on Adam’s shoulder. Adam impatiently shrugged it off, and, without waking, Joe curled the other direction, his head falling against the window-pane. He didn’t wake until the train stopped at Fremont for the noon meal.

“You hungry?” Adam asked his yawning brother.

“Little bit,” Joe said, reluctantly admitting, “but I couldn’t eat a full meal.”

“That’s what I figured, since we had such a late breakfast,” Adam said. “We’ll be pulling into Omaha around 4:30 this afternoon, so we could have an early supper.”

Joe gave a catlike stretch. “Yeah, that sounds good, but I
could use a bite or two now if you don’t mind.”

“Of course, I don’t mind,” Adam responded, sounding slightly perturbed. “I said I’d feed you, and I haven’t failed yet of my promise, have I? Why don’t you grab something for both of us at the lunch counter and we’ll eat it here.”

Joe scowled and finally voiced a complaint he’d felt since leaving Mill Station. “Sometimes I think you brought me along just to be your personal servant, Adam.”

“Oh, you’re really hard used, aren’t you, boy?” Adam laughed. He pulled a silver dollar from his pocket and tossed it to Joe. “That should more than cover anything your little heart desires.”

Joe scowled again, but playfully this time. He didn’t really mind running errands, at least not too much. After all, an old man like Adam couldn’t be expected to hop fast enough to get the job done in the time the railroad’s unrelenting schedule allotted them. He ran out to the lunch counter, one of which was attached to every eating station on the line for passengers wanting a lighter meal, and returned minutes later with a ham sandwich and boiled egg for both himself and his brother. Not being particularly hungry yet, Joe ate only the egg, dropping the sandwich into Hop Sing’s handy hamper for later.

Not long after the dinner stop, another train boy hawking food and reading matter passed down the aisle, as one of his breed had done almost hourly throughout the journey. Having already finished the dime novel he’d bought the first day, Joe selected another to wile away the dreary hours when there was nothing to see out the window except one windmill after another. Finally, the conductor announced, “Next stop, Omaha—end of the line,” and all the passengers put away their books and other diversions in preparation for leaving the train.
Right on schedule, the Union Pacific pulled into Omaha, and Adam sent Joe to the baggage car, brass claim check in hand to fetch their bags. “What are you going to be doing?” Joe grumbled.

Adam ticked off his duties on his fingers. “Purchasing tickets for Chicago, checking departure time, inquiring as to whether we can check our bags tonight or need to take them to the hotel with us.”

“Boy, I sure hope we can leave them here!” Joe exclaimed.

“Just go get them, please, so we’ll be prepared in either event,” Adam directed sternly, “and don’t leave this platform until I come back for you.”

Joe gave a weary salute. “Yes, sir, Captain Brother, sir.”

“Scat!” Adam snorted and emphasized the order with a swat on Joe’s rear.

Joe came back, loaded down with luggage. There was no sign of Adam, but Joe felt quite content to simply wait until his brother returned. Omaha was a large enough city that Joe realized he could easily lose himself if he were to try to track Adam down. He’d begun to grow concerned, but the emotion quickly faded when his brother rounded a corner and headed toward him. “So, can we check all this tonight?” he asked hopefully.

“We can,” Adam replied. “We just need to carry it to the Chicago and Northwestern depot.”

Joe groaned. “‘We’? Don’t you mean me?”

Adam chuckled. “I’ll give you a hand. Relax, kid; it’s not far.”

Joe smiled in relief as he handed some of the bags over to his older brother. “Where are we gonna stay tonight, Adam?” he
asked. “You know any good hotels here in Chicago?”

“Just by reputation,” Adam admitted, “but I planned to stay at the Grand Central. It’s supposed to be one of the best-run hotels between here and San Francisco.”

Joe grinned. “Only the best for the Cartwright brothers, right?”

Adam smiled wryly. “Actually, I chose it because of its proximity to the depot, and since we economized by going second class on the train, I felt I could afford to splurge on the comfort of a decent mattress. The dining hall at the hotel is reported to be superb, as well.”

“That sounds great, brother,” Joe sighed in contentment, “but don’t even mention the word ‘train’ to me tonight, okay? My bones start aching every time I hear it!”

“Well, I’d advise you to turn in early, little buddy,” Adam suggested. “You’ll be getting up bright and early tomorrow.”

“How early?” Joe demanded.

“The train leaves at 5 a.m., so if you want breakfast . . .” As his voice trailed off, Adam tried to keep a straight face, although Joe looked so pathetic, he could only do so with significant effort.

Joe moaned, debating whether he preferred to travel sleepy or hungry. “I may have to get up early, older brother, but I can guarantee I won’t be lookin’ bright.”

They had arrived at the depot of the railroad line they would board the next morning, and Adam once again supervised the checking of their bags, pocketing the claim checks for safekeeping. Then, leading the way to the Grand Central Hotel, he rented one of the least expensive rooms. Joe grumbled as he toted both his carpetbag and his brother’s up to the top floor, but no sign of his professed exhaustion
showed as he trotted down the same four flights to the dining hall. After a satisfying meal, Adam recommended that Joe follow his example and take a bath before retiring. As he planned to change into fresh clothes in the morning, Joe readily agreed and gratefully accepted Adam’s offer to let him go first. Returning from the bath down the hall, he went straight to bed, having decided that he did want breakfast the next morning. Adam took a long leisurely soak in a hot tub and after reading for a few minutes, just to unwind, followed his own advice.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Boarding the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, the Cartwrights left Omaha the next morning and crossed a bridge over the Missouri River. Since the sun had not yet risen, however, they couldn’t really see it. Both boys were feeling sleepy from the short night and dozed during the first couple of hours of the trip. Finally, the warmth of the sun on his face woke Little Joe.

“Good morning, Sleeping Beauty,” Adam chuckled.

Joe stretched his arms over his head, yawning. “Don’t you ever get tired?” he complained.

Adam laughed aloud. “I’ve only been awake about twenty minutes, kid; so, you see, your big brother is quite human, after all.”

“Glad to hear it,” Joe said, still sounding somewhat grumpy. “Where are we?”

“On a train,” Adam replied with a sly grin.

Joe groaned. “You know what I mean.”

Adam rubbed the scruff of his brother’s neck. “That’s as close as I can come, Joe. Somewhere in Iowa, judging by the time, but I was asleep when we went through the last town.”
Joe peered past his brother at the passing countryside with its vast unfenced fields in varying shades of green, depending on whether they were planted in grass or grain. Herds of cattle grazed in the verdant meadows or rested in the shade of pale yellow-green willows, while occasionally an isolated village introduced the hand of man into the bucolic setting. Though Joe would never have chosen this flat land over the mountains of his home, he had to admit it was restful to the eye to see the green expanse stretch from horizon to horizon.

The fertility of these lowlands was amply demonstrated by the abundance of fresh produce on the menu at their dinner stop, and the entrees featured farm-raised meat, instead of the game dominating the restaurants at which they had dined in the mountains. At Adam’s suggestion, Joe ordered ham, for which the Midwest was famed, and added liberal helpings of peas, corn on the cob and buttery cabbage.

Throughout the afternoon homes grew closer together, but the scene was still largely rural. Adam, who had consumed the early edition of the Omaha newspaper that morning, purchased a copy of a Chicago paper from one of the train boys and spent the afternoon perusing it, page by page. Little Joe, scorning such boring fare, lost himself for several hours in *The Bear-Hunter; or Davy Crockett as a Spy*. Though the Harry Hazard dime novel had been out since April, it was a title Joe had not as yet read. He had hoped that Adam might approve, since the story concerned an early American hero, but his older brother had merely snorted in derision and informed him that there was probably not a single paragraph of truth in the whole “dime drivel,” as Adam called it.

Over supper, Adam reiterated a message he had preached the last couple of nights, the necessity of turning in early, now that the sleeper car was available. “Within the hour,” he commanded.

“That’s awful early, Adam,” Joe grumbled. “Sure, I’m tired,
but I’m not sure I’ll sleep if I turn in that early.”

“You’d better hope so,” Adam said firmly, “because it will be a short enough night as it is. We’ll be traveling straight through to Philadelphia, with only a few hours layover in Chicago, and I didn’t feel the expense of renting a hotel room was warranted, no longer than we’d be using it. I probably shouldn’t even have taken berths for us on the train, since we won’t get their full benefit, either, but I felt we needed to get some sleep tonight! Now, you’re going to bed, and I don’t want to hear any further argument on the subject.”


Adam laughed. “The train arrives around 2:30 in the morning. The only sights you’ll see, kid, are a couple of train depots.”

Joe groaned. “We’ve got to switch trains?”

“Yes, of course,” Adam explained with strained patience. “This line only goes as far as Chicago. We have to transfer to the Fort Wayne and Pennsylvania line to reach Philadelphia.”

“You know, big brother, turning in right after supper is sounding better all the time!” Joe sighed as he envisioned himself stumbling sleepily from depot to depot, buried beneath a pile of baggage.

When they left the train in Chicago, however, it was Adam who struggled under the load of luggage, for Joe was too groggy to provide much assistance. In fact, Adam had to virtually lead the younger boy by the arm to the depot of the Fort Wayne and Pennsylvania Railroad. “Good thing I let him sleep in his clothes,” Adam muttered to himself, “or I’d have had to dress him like when he was a little fellow.” He couldn’t help smiling indulgently, however, when he deposited Joe on a bench
at the depot and the boy immediately curled up, his countenance that of a sleeping cherub. Brushing his hand through the cherub’s tousled locks, Adam went to buy their tickets and check their bags.

Though Little Joe had confiscated the greater part of the bench, Adam chose to sit beside him. There were vacant benches where he could have stretched out full-length, but it just went with the territory of big brotherhood to stay close, hovering protectively over the younger boy, even in sleep. The depot was near enough to Lake Michigan that the wind off its surface, breezing through whenever anyone opened a door, was chilly, and it also went with the territory to keep the kid warm. Draping his own jacket over his brother, Adam slumped down to rest his head on the end of the bench, arms wrapped tight to his chest, with one leg bent at the knee near Joe’s head and the other falling to the floor.

He’d bought tickets on Express Train No. 2, which departed at nine o’clock the next morning. That meant he had a little more than five hours to sleep. The awkwardness of his position almost guaranteed that Adam would not get even those five hours, however, and he awoke to find his younger brother using him as a mattress. He let Joe sleep a little longer; then, lifting the boy’s head from his lap, Adam roused him and suggested he visit the men’s lavatory and wash the sleep from his eyes. “We board in about an hour, so if you hurry, we’ll have time for breakfast,” he informed Joe.

“Breakfast sounds good, brother,” Joe said. “I’ll hurry.”

He was true to his word, and the Cartwright brothers were able to enjoy a leisurely breakfast and still board the train about ten minutes before its departure. “Adam,” Joe said after they’d been traveling awhile, “is it my imagination or is this train going a lot faster than the ones west of the Missouri?”

Adam glanced up from the newspaper. “It’s faster,” he said.
“Trains on the transcontinental railroad only travel about twenty-two miles per hour, while the ones back east can reach speeds up to forty.”

Joe shook his head in awe. “Forty miles an hour! Did you ever think anything would move that fast, Adam?”

“Yes, of course,” Adam responded a bit curtly, turning the page of his paper. “I’ve kept up on engineering developments.”

Joe frowned. “No, I meant—oh, never mind. I guess it’s a good thing, considering how big this country is, but I think I enjoyed the trip more at the slower speed.”

“Hmm?” Adam wrestled his attention from the printed page and back to his brother. “Oh, yes, I suppose it is more enjoyable, especially when there’s so much scenic grandeur, but I’m weary enough of train travel that I frankly wish it could go even faster.”

“Faster!” Joe hooted. “Adam, that’s crazy. Nothing’ll ever go faster than forty miles an hour!”

Adam laughed. “Someday it will. You may even live to see it, kid.”

Joe shook his head, grinning. “Big brother, with an imagination like that, you should be writing dime novels.”

Adam clapped his hand to his forehead and gave a melodramatic shudder. “Heaven forbid,” he uttered in tones of direst dread.

Not until the train reached Fort Wayne about 2:30 in the afternoon did it stop for dinner. Declaring himself famished, Little Joe was dismayed to learn that he would have only twenty minutes to eat. He opted, as did Adam, to grab a sandwich and fried peach pie from a nearby lunch counter and eat with less haste as the train continued east.
By the time they finished their supper at Crestline, the sun was starting to go down, and Adam, who’d had almost no sleep the night before, headed directly to the sleeper car. He did not, however, insist that Joe turn in at the same time. After all, the kid had slept more, if not better, than had his older brother. Joe tried to stay awake, but growing bored with sitting alone in the dark, he retired about half an hour after Adam and fell asleep almost at once.

He woke to see Adam leaning over him, arms folded on the edge of the upper berth. “What time is it?” Joe asked.

“Six o’clock,” Adam replied. “I thought you’d want a little extra time to dress this morning, since you’re changing into your suit.”

Joe smiled, knowing that meant they were on the final leg of their journey. “Gettin’ close, huh?”

“Well, we’re in Pennsylvania, at least,” Adam chuckled, “although we won’t arrive in Philadelphia itself until middle of the afternoon.”

“A real bed tonight,” Joe murmured wistfully.

“What are you complaining about, Shortshanks?” Adam teased, borrowing Hoss’s name for their brother. “At least, the berth fits you.”

Frowning at that reminder of his less-than-normal-for-a-Cartwright height, Joe swung his legs over the side, knocking Adam’s arms aside. “How you like them short shanks?” he growled.

“Boy, did you get up on the wrong side of the berth this morning!” Adam exclaimed, stepping back.

“There isn’t any other side,” Joe grunted, dropping to the floor, carpetbag in hand.
Adam swung the arch of his foot toward his brother’s backside, but Joe, who moved fast once he got going, was already out of reach, even for his older brother’s long leg.

* * * * *

“You look very nice,” Adam complimented as they waited for their breakfast order to arrive at a restaurant in Altoona.

“Thanks,” Joe said, smiling. “You, too.” Though he would have preferred wearing his comfortable ranch clothes on the train, he could see that he and his brother blended into the general populace much better in their dark suits, white shirts and string ties. In fact, Joe almost wished he had worn the new suit Pa had provided, but that was in the bag checked through to their final destination. He was wearing an older and somewhat outdated suit today, as was Adam, and both were a bit crumpled from their six-day residence inside the carpetbags. Adam assured his brother, however, that the wrinkles would be smoothed out by the time they reached Philadelphia.

Since they had eaten a filling breakfast before leaving Altoona at 7:30 a.m., neither of the boys was really ready for dinner when the train stopped at Harrisburg four hours later, but as the restaurant was a fine one, they both ate heartily. “Towns sure are getting thicker,” Joe commented over his steak, smothered in onions and gravy. “Bigger, too.”

“Wait ‘til you see Philadelphia,” Adam suggested with a smile.

Swirling a forkful of mashed potatoes through the gravy, Joe grinned, wondering how he could possibly wait to see a city larger than any he’d ever visited before and suddenly wishing that train could go faster than forty miles per hour, like in Adam’s crazy imagination.

Four more hours brought them to their final stop, as the train pulled into the West Philadelphia depot. “I suppose you want
me to get the luggage,” Joe said glumly, holding out his hand for the claim check.

“No need,” Adam said with an amused smile. “It will be delivered directly to our hotel, a service provided by the railroad.”

A broad smile transfixed Joe’s face. “Now, that is what I call service, brother!” As they stood on the platform, he looked around at the buildings surrounding the station. “So, which one is our hotel?”

Adam shook his head in dismay. Had the kid absorbed nothing of what he’d read in the guidebook back home? “No, Joe. Our hotel is downtown, remember?”

Joe stared at the tall buildings closing in the view on all sides. “I thought we were downtown.”

Adam laughed. “Kid, this is nothing compared to the city itself. Grab your carpetbag, we’ll catch a horse car and you’ll soon see what I mean.”

Joe had, of course, ridden horse-drawn streetcars in San Francisco, so that was not a new experience. Consequently, he could focus his full attention on the growing congestion in the streets and the increasing height of the buildings as the car approached the city’s center. “Oh, wow, Adam,” he whispered, overwhelmed. “I never—I mean, I—I . . . .”

Adam slipped an arm around his brother’s slim shoulders. “I know what you mean, kid,” he said, kindly covering Joe’s loss of words and, at the same time, his own rising emotions at being back in one of the cultural havens of the East.

Forty-five minutes after leaving the depot, the Cartwright brothers were ascending the steps into the Washington Hotel. By comparison with others they had passed, the building at the corner of Seventh and Chestnut streets seemed unassuming, but
it was still as nice as most that Little Joe had seen in San Francisco and definitely grander than any he’d stayed in elsewhere in the West. With an extra person to pay for, he didn’t begrudge Adam the frugality of renting them less expensive rooms. Besides, he didn’t plan to spend much time in his!

As Adam approached the polished walnut counter to the left of the lobby, a pencil-thin man with straight black hair cut well above his ears said, “Good day, sir. May I be of assistance?”

“Yes, we’re checking in,” Adam replied. “Our reservations are under my name, Adam Cartwright from Nevada.”

“Nevada?” The desk clerk adjusted his pince-nez and scrutinized the applicants for a room with a frown. “Well, let’s see,” he murmured, flicking through a stack of cards in a wooden box. “No, no, I don’t see any reservation for gentlemen from Nevada, sir. Perhaps you’ve merely mistaken the name of the hotel at which you intended to register.”

Adam graced him with a supercilious smile. “I’m not the one who is mistaken, sir. This is the hotel at which I made reservations, and I expect you to honor them.”

The clerk straightened to his full five feet, seven inches and looked down his nose at the westerners. “Sir, as I have said, there is no record of such a reservation, and with the crowds coming to the Centennial Exposition, I simply have no rooms to spare for gentlemen such as yourselves.”

“Adam?” Joe interrupted with concern, as he began to envision himself spending the night on the street.

“It’s all right, Joe. The gentleman is simply mistaken,” Adam said. He’d noted the disfavor with which the clerk had appraised their simple apparel, as well as the emphasis placed on ‘gentlemen,’ so he gave the word a similar inflection when he spoke its singular. Suspecting that he knew what lay
behind the sudden lack of rooms at the Washington Hotel and feeling certain that it was no mistake, he turned a cool gaze on the clerk as he pulled a thin sheet from his vest pocket, unfolded it and laid it on the counter. “This, sir, is a registered letter from this hotel, confirming receipt of my reservation and the payment I transferred to secure it. Now, perhaps, if you adjust those spectacles a bit closer to your eyes, you’ll be able to find that reservation card.”

With a shaking hand the clerk reached again for the box and began thumbing through its alphabetically arranged cards. “Let’s see. Cartwright, you said? Why, yes, here it is. I don’t see how I overlooked it. Two rooms with an adjoining parlor, was that correct, sir?”

“That’s correct,” Adam said smoothly. “Shall I sign the register now?”

The clerk quickly swiveled the guest book and extended an ink pen for Adam’s use. “If you please, sir.”

Adam signed his name with a flourish. “I trust my brother’s name is also on the reservation card. While I am the financially responsible party, he will undoubtedly be receiving mail.”

The clerk consulted the card in his hand. “Yes, Adam and Joseph Cartwright from Nevada. It’s all here, sir. All mail will be held here at the desk, and you may call for it at any time.”

“Thank you,” Adam said. “Now, may I have the keys? I presume you do have one for each of us.”

“Indeed, yes,” the clerk said, taking two from a rack of hooks behind the desk. “One for each of you, gentlemen,” he said with no arrogant emphasis on the word this time. “Suite 307. The elevator is to your right.”
Adam handed the clerk his brass claim check. “Please exchange this for our luggage when it arrives and either send it to the room or inform us of its arrival and we’ll carry it up ourselves.”

“Oh, it will be sent to you, sir, absolutely,” the man insisted. “I’ll see to it personally.”

Adam turned, bending to pick up his carpetbag, but Little Joe, eyes alight with admiration, quickly grabbed it. Resting a hand on his brother’s shoulder, Adam guided him toward the elevator.

Joe balked a moment. “I hate rising rooms,” he muttered.

“It’s three flights up, Joe,” Adam reminded him.

“Maybe the exercise would be good for us after all that time sitting on the train, Adam,” he hinted hopefully.

Adam just laughed as he pushed the boy onto the elevator. “Don’t worry. You’ll get plenty of exercise when we visit the Exposition.”

“Sure was smart of you, carrying that letter, Adam,” Joe said as the elevator doors closed and the teenager operating it started the car in motion. “That fellow must be half blind not to have seen our card the first time!”

“Don’t be naïve, little brother,” Adam chided. “A five-dollar gold piece would have cleared his eyesight even more quickly.”

“You mean he—”

“Yes, of course,” Adam stated, reminding himself to be patient with his inexperienced brother. “I’m sure rooms are at a premium in Philadelphia this summer and will become even harder to find as the Fourth of July approaches, so an unscrupulous clerk can probably pocket a tidy sum. I just don’t happen to approve of bribery for acceptable service. I
do, however, tip for it.” With a suave smile he handed two bits to the elevator operator when the doors opened at their floor.

“You handled it so smooth, Adam,” Joe said as they walked down the thinly carpeted hallway. “I wouldn’t have known what to do, except maybe punch the guy in the snoot.”

Adam cuffed his brother’s ear. “All that would have gotten you was a night in jail, little man. As for handling the situation, it’s all a matter of proper record keeping, the same as I do for ranch business.”

Joe beamed with pride as Adam turned the key in the door to their suite. “Yeah, you always do a great job of that, too, Adam.”

Adam opened the door. “Why, thank you, Joe.” It was rare that he heard a compliment from his younger brother, and his warm smile showed how much he enjoyed it.

Entering, Joe looked around. The room was simply, but tastefully furnished with an autumn-brown brocade settee and two armchairs, upholstered in a fabric covered with green and gold oak leaves and tawny acorns wearing caps of nut-brown. A reading lamp stood beside each chair, and another sat on a writing table, with a straight-backed wooden chair, nestled in one corner.

Adam cleared his throat. “I trust it meets with your approval.”

“Huh?” Then Joe grinned, realizing how strange he must have looked, standing there, staring silently at the furniture. “Oh, yeah, it’s just fine, Adam.” Aware again of the weight at the ends of his arms, he asked, “Which room do you want your bag in?”

“That one,” Adam said, pointing to the one on the right.
Joe’s eyes sparkled when he saw that Adam had left the room with windows on the street for him. “Hey, thanks!”

Adam’s breath caught in his throat for a moment. Joe obviously thought he was being generous, when the truth was that he personally preferred the quieter room without windows. Thinking it imprudent to confess that to his younger brother, however, he merely said, “You’re welcome.”

Thinking of what a good brother he had, after all, Joe dropped Adam’s bag in his room first and then carried his own to the other.

By the time they’d unpacked their carpetbags, the other luggage arrived and, at Adam’s insistence, those things, too, were put in their proper places for a long-term stay. “And now, my boy, I suggest you have yourself a little nap,” Adam told his brother.

“A nap!” Joe squealed. “How old do you think I am—five?”

“No,” Adam drawled with a sly smile. “I just think you act that way. Seriously, Joe, aren’t you tired? I know I am.”

“Well, yeah,” Joe conceded. “I guess I wouldn’t mind stretching out for a while, but I probably won’t sleep—and don’t go calling it a nap, okay, Adam? Naps are for kids.”

Resisting the temptation to say, “And that’s just what you are,” Adam merely nodded and went to his own room.

Little Joe walked over to the window to take in the view. It overlooked Chestnut Street, down which stretched block after block of tall, stately business buildings. Joe couldn’t wait to get shed of Adam and explore them for himself. *Guess I’ll have to wait, though,* he admitted as he dropped onto the edge of his bed to unlace his city shoes. With a gaping yawn he sank into the plump pillow, intending merely to rest his eyes for a few minutes, but he fell into a deep slumber from which
he didn’t awaken until Adam roused him to go down to supper.

They ate in the hotel’s dining room at a round table covered in crisp white linen. After perusing the menu, Adam observed, “You might like to try the pepper pot soup. It’s a Philadelphia specialty, and you probably aren’t any more in the mood for a heavy meal than I am.”

“What’s in it—besides pepper, that is?” Joe asked with a sassy grin.

“It’s a stew of tripe, potatoes, onions and dumplings, seasoned to a delicious spiciness with cayenne pepper,” Adam answered. He laughed at the look on his brother’s face. “It really is good, Joe.”

“It would have to be, for me to eat cow innards,” Joe snorted.

“You mind your language,” Adam said sharply. “That kind of talk is not appreciated at the table in genteel company.”

“So, who’s in genteel company?” Joe sputtered.

“All around you,” Adam hissed, leaning forward so his voice would not carry past Joe’s ear. “Now, do you behave or do I escort you back to the room without your supper?”

“Okay, okay,” Joe appeased quickly, glancing at some of their elegantly dressed fellow diners. “Didn’t mean to embarrass you. Hey, I’ll even eat your old tripe soup if you’ll start actin’ genteel toward me.”

Adam released a couple of short chuckles. “Eat what you like, boy. I’ve always thought one of the pleasures of travel was sampling unfamiliar foods, but you’re welcome to choose whatever you fancy.”

Good humor restored, Little Joe decided he would try the pepper pot soup, after all, and although he found the tripe disgustingly chewy, the soup itself was very flavorful. He
ordered coleslaw and sliced tomatoes to round out the meal and finished up with a slice of lemon cheesecake, the most expensive dessert on the menu.

After supper Adam escorted his brother on the get-acquainted tour of the city that their father had mandated. Four blocks to the south of their hotel, they entered a five-story brick building with wires running out in all directions and posted a telegram via Western Union to apprise the family back home of their safe arrival. Then, exhausted from the long journey, both boys went straight to bed. Adam fell asleep readily, but Joe, excited over the adventure to begin tomorrow, lay awake a long while, listening to the sounds of traffic coming through his open window.

CHAPTER EIGHT

“There.” Adam stepped back to admire the expert bow he had just tied in his brother’s gray silk cravat. “That’s perfect, though I still think you should save this for evening wear.”

“I want to look my best while I’m shopping,” Joe insisted. “It makes folks treat you better.”

Adam cocked his head and nodded once. He had to admit that his brother had made an astute observation. Clerks did tend to give more attentive service to someone who appeared to be a man of means, and a customer as young as Little Joe was wise to provide them all the incentive he could muster if he wished to be treated with respect. The boy looked positively dapper in his new gray broadcloth suit and burgundy vest, and Adam had no doubt that the handsome lad would turn some pretty heads as he walked down the street.

“I hope you’ll just look today and delay your final purchases until I can be with you,” Adam said.

The suggestion met almost exactly the response he’d expected,
but hoped to avoid. “Pa trusts me,” Joe sputtered. “Why can’t you?”

“I trust you, Joe,” Adam tried to explain, although, in truth, he had some reservations about his brother’s wardrobe wisdom, “but I don’t necessarily trust those you’ll be dealing with today. Some—like the clerk on duty when we registered, for instance—are more than willing to take advantage of a green kid from the country, and I just don’t want that to happen.”

It was the same argument Adam had advanced back home, and it was no more effective in Philadelphia than it had been at the Ponderosa. “I’m not a kid, and no one’s gonna take advantage of me,” Joe asserted tersely. “I can take care of myself, Adam.”

“Uh-huh,” Adam drawled. When did I hear that before? Oh, I remember, right before the last time the kid got himself into a scrape I had to get him out of!

“I can, Adam!” Joe insisted.

“All right, Joe, whatever you say,” Adam sighed.

The Cartwrights made their way to the hotel dining room for breakfast. After placing their orders, Adam laid out a strict itinerary for his young brother. “You’re to stay on Chestnut Street exclusively today, Joe. If you start one block east of here and work your way west, you’ll cover most of the business district within a few blocks. Anything east of that is warehouses, not retail shops, so you don’t need to go there.”

“Chestnut isn’t the only street that has clothing stores,” Joe complained. “I should be able to go where I please.”

“You will stay within the boundaries I set,” Adam emphasized, “and as you well remember, that is Pa’s order, not just mine. You can shop on Market Street tomorrow, but Chestnut, which is
the main retail street, anyway, is the limit for you today, boy, and I expect you to adhere to that.”

Joe frowned, but nodded agreement. “Yes, sir. Are you going to meet me somewhere for dinner?”

The waiter arrived with their orders, so Adam delayed his answer until they were alone again. “No, I’m sorry, Joe, but you’ll be completely on your own today. A luncheon is being provided by the convention, so I’ll be dining there.”

“No problem,” Joe said, stretching his palm across the table and doing his best imitation of Adam’s Cheshire-cat smile.

It paled by comparison with the real thing, with which Adam responded. “You’ll be in the area. Come back here to eat and charge it to the room.”

Joe grimaced, resenting the curtailment of his freedom of choice, but he shrugged it off as something beyond his control.

“Now, if you grow weary of shopping,” Adam continued as he cut a bite of his veal chop, “you’re welcome to visit either Washington Square or Independence Square.”

“Oh, but not both?” Joe asked irritably.

“Or both,” Adam amended. “I showed you how to get to those last night, and either—or both—will make a pleasant place for you to relax this afternoon. The only stipulation I’ll make is that you are not to go inside Independence Hall. I wish to visit it, as well, and the least you can do is wait, so that we can see it together.”

Joe smiled agreeably. “Sure, Adam, that’s fine.” He wanted to spend time with his brother and knew that he would enjoy seeing the historic landmark more if he saw it with Adam. Besides, he basically considered himself a guest on Adam’s trip and figured it behooved him, for the most part, to be a
good one. “We will have supper together, though, won’t we?” he asked.

“Yes,” Adam replied. “I have something rather special planned for tonight, so I want you to meet me at the corner of Eighth and Chestnut at five o’clock. We’ll need to catch a horse car there, so we can get to Fairmount Park in time to board the May Queen at 5:30.”

“A boat?” Joe queried.

Forking a piece of fried egg, Adam nodded. “A steamer, to take us down the Schuylkill River to the Falls for catfish and coffee.”

“Now wait a minute!” Joe protested, stabbing a sausage-laden fork toward his brother. “What if I want something different? You already picked where I’m eating dinner, and now you want to control supper, too? Just because you’re paying for the meals doesn’t mean you get to pick my food for me!”

Although he felt more like plowing a fist into his brother’s face, Adam calmly caught the boy’s wrist and lowered his fork to the plate. “Trust me, all right? Catfish and coffee is all they serve where we’re going, but you won’t be disappointed. Even Hoss wouldn’t be disappointed by what you’ll have put before you.”

“Oh, all right,” Joe muttered, giving in a bit less than gracefully. “Is it my imagination or is he rubbing it in my face that he’d rather have Hoss here?”

They finished their breakfasts and left the hotel together. “Have a good day,” Adam said, giving his brother’s back a couple of pats in farewell.

“Hey, you, too, Adam,” Joe bubbled, eager to start his solo adventure. “Get all educated on that mining stuff.”

“I’ll try,” Adam laughed, “and you try to stay out of
trouble.”

Joe was sorely tempted to poke his tongue at his exasperating older brother, but since that would be childish, he settled, instead, for what he hoped was a snappy rejoinder. “Hey, you, too, Adam!”

Adam smiled as he affectionately shook the youngster’s neck. “Should be easy without you around to drag me into any of your shenanigans.” He looked intently into his brother’s face. “Seriously, Joe, take care of yourself. It’s a big city.”

Though Little Joe did not appreciate what he viewed as a needless admonition, he saw the genuine concern reflected in Adam’s ebony eyes and was touched by it. “I will,” he promised. “See you at five.”

The two brothers went in opposite directions. Deciding to follow Adam’s instructions to the letter, at least for now, Joe walked exactly one block east down Chestnut Street, where he almost laughed when he saw the business on the corner, Fred Brown’s Drugstore. Probably oughta buy some headache powders, he joked with himself, since Adam is bound and determined to give me one!

He stood on the corner for a few minutes, looking again at the United States Custom House across the street, whose architecture Adam had praised so profusely on their get-acquainted tour of the city the previous night. The white marble structure was, Joe had to admit, fabulous. According to Adam, it was an imitation of the Parthenon in Greece and was what his big brother called “one of the most classic examples of Doric architecture in America,” a phrase meaningless to Joe until Adam pointed out the eight fluted columns as characteristic.

When Little Joe turned to head west, he saw a brunette beauty about his age, walking out of a shop with an older woman, probably her mother. With an appreciative sparkle in his eye,
he tipped his gray felt hat to the girl, and she giggled, but smiled pleasantly in response. Her mother, however, deliberately pulled her away from the forward young man. Though he couldn’t hear the lecture the older woman was delivering in the younger one’s ear, Joe was pretty sure it had something to do with the dangers of dallying with strange, albeit dashingly handsome, young men.

With a shrug he put the girl and her provocative bustle out of his mind and entered the store the women had just left, the four-story dry goods emporium of Morgan, Young, Altemus & Co. Stepping through the door, his eyes met a daunting display. While much of what was offered was similar, in type at least, to the goods sold in the general store back home, the mass of merchandise here was so overwhelming that Little Joe didn’t know where to start. His bewilderment must have been evident, for a tall clerk with a brushy mustache appeared at his side to ask if he needed assistance in finding a particular department.

“Um, I was just going to look around,” Joe stammered, the clerk’s discerning appraisal stripping him bare of any pretensions of sophistication. “I-I mean I haven’t been in your store before and just wanted to acquaint myself with it.” Joe shook his head, blushing in self-disgust. Buck naked with “country boy” scrawled all over my chest!

Choosing to overlook the well-dressed young man’s evident disconcertment, the clerk gave him a congenial smile. “Ah, a visitor to our fair city, in town for the Centennial, perhaps?”

The clerk’s kindly manner putting him at ease, Joe nodded back. “Yes, sir, and in need of some—uh,”—he scrambled for a citified way of expressing his need—“some things to complete my wardrobe, so while I do want to look around, it would help if you could tell me where to find that.”
“Certainly, sir,” the clerk replied smoothly. “Feel free to browse all you like. When you’re ready, you’ll find the men’s haberdashery department on the second floor. We’re having a sale on shirts today, if that represents one of the additions you need to make to your traveling wardrobe.”

“Yes, sir, it does. Thanks a lot!” Joe said, flashing his dazzling smile and thrusting out his hand.

The clerk looked a bit surprised at the gesture of familiarity, but, captivated by the boy’s charm, took the extended hand and gave it a warm shake. “You’re welcome, young man, and I trust you’ll find what you desire upstairs. Ask for Emil should you require assistance in that department.”

“I will, sir. Thanks,” Joe said. He moved around the first floor for a short while, but seeing nothing he needed, he mounted the stairs, grateful that Messrs. Morgan, Young and Altemus had not gone in for the modernized torture chamber folks back home called a rising room.

He intended only to look, saving his purchases until he’d had a chance to compare quality and price elsewhere, but the shirts on sale struck him as stylish and well worth the price. He bought two, one for everyday wear and one of crisp linen, with ruffles down the front placket and around the cuffs, which would go well with evening apparel. Adam had told him they would be attending the theater while in town, so Joe hoped even his mother hen of a brother would agree that the fancy shirt was something he needed. He gave the name of his hotel to Emil, who promised that the package would be delivered that afternoon.

Coming out of the dry goods store, Little Joe next noticed the establishment of Henry A. Dreer. He paused briefly to admire its attractive display windows with baskets of ivy and ferns hanging from their ceilings and over the central entrance to
the store, whose sign proclaimed trees, plants and garden tools for sale. Not being in the market for those items, Joe continued west up Chestnut Street.

According to the Philadelphia guidebook, some of the handsomest dry goods, clothing, jewelry and book stores in the city were located in the seven hundred block of Chestnut, and Joe went inside each of them, perusing carefully all that was offered. His only purchase, however, was two new cravats of the style favored by the men he’d seen on the street that morning. Though he felt more comfortable in a simple string tie, Joe also enjoyed dressing up on occasion, and he suspected there might be more opportunities for that here than at home. Too, while reluctant to admit it, he knew Adam was right when he said that Hop Sing’s gift was too dressy for daywear; the additional purchases, in less showy fabric, would enable him to save that for special occasions.

Crossing Eighth Street, Joe noticed another fine building across the street. Although he had no idea what name to give its style of architecture, he found its arched windows and sharp pinnacles impressive. “Too fancy to be a store,” he muttered. “Wonder what it is.”

“That’s the Old Masonic Temple, young man,” a fellow pedestrian stopped long enough to tell him, “in process of being renovated as a hotel.”

“Thank you, sir,” Joe called to the departing figure. He gave the building a nod of approval. Now, that would have been an interesting place to stay! Not that there was anything wrong with the Washington. It just didn’t have the flair of this place or some of the others along Chestnut, especially the Continental, situated just above Ninth Street. Well, to be honest, that one didn’t have any particular flair about it, either, but according to the guidebook, its accommodations were the best America had to offer and its dining room the finest in the country. Joe understood why he and Adam were
not staying there, since the Continental charged two dollars
more per day than their hotel. He felt a moment’s
perturbation, however, because he had entertained the idea of
sampling that fine food—at Adam’s expense, of course—one of
the two days he was on his own. Adam had spoiled that plan by
his refusal to hand over the cash Joe had requested, but it
was probably too much to expect his older brother to cooperate
with the scheme to empty his pockets.

Just above Tenth Street, Little Joe tripped past McCallum,
Crease & Sloan’s carpet store and paused to look across the
street at Fox’s New American Theater. Wonder if that’s the
one Adam plans on us going to, Joe pondered. Maybe, since
it’s close. Unanswerable questions weren’t worth much
consideration, however, so he just kept walking westward until
he reached Twelfth Street. On its southeast corner was a fine
marble building, housing the largest jewelry store in
Philadelphia. Joe wandered inside, out of curiosity, and was
pleased by the wide selection of cuff links and stickpins.
Maybe Pa’d like something on that order for Christmas. It was
worth thinking about, although the nice ones cost more than
Joe thought he could afford to spend without shortchanging
others for whom he planned to buy gifts, too.

Leaving Bailey’s Jewelry Store, Joe craned his neck to read
the words printed on the pennant flying atop the building. He
laughed when he saw “Dental Depot” in bold letters and decided
it was definitely time to head back to the hotel when dentists
started showing up. A glance at his pocket watch revealed
that it was later than he’d realized, and just knowing that it
was almost two o’clock made his stomach rumble. With a burst
of energy, Joe sprinted back to the Washington and almost ran
into the dining room—a room virtually empty.

A man clearing dishes from one of the far tables looked up as
Joe entered. “Dining room closes at two, sir,” he called.

Joe groaned. Bet the Continental stays open all day, he
groused to himself as he walked to the registration desk, but he knew it was an unfair thought. It was more likely that all the hotels in the area kept the same basic hours. “Have any packages arrived for Joseph Cartwright?” he asked the clerk behind the desk, a different man than the one who had greeted them their first day.

“No, sir. Were you expecting some?” the clerk asked solicitously.

“Sometime this afternoon,” Joe replied. “It was all right to have them sent here, wasn’t it?”

“Certainly, sir. Shall I inform you when they arrive?”

Joe shook his head. “No, don’t bother. I’ll be in and out today, so I’ll just check back again later.”

“Very good, sir.” The clerk turned back to his paperwork.

Little Joe decided to go up to his room for a little while, to rest his weary feet. They weren’t so weary, however, that he was willing to brave that rising room when there was a perfectly good stairway close at hand. He took the steps two at a time and was soon stretched out on the sofa in the suite’s parlor. Lying there with his arms folded behind his neck, he had a sudden inspiration and went in search of the picnic hamper. He found it and, as he’d hoped, two pieces of fruit remained inside. “Bless you, Hop Sing,” he chirped, grabbing both the pear and the apple. “Uh, and you, too, I guess, big brother,” he added, as he remembered who had bought the fruit in Hop Sing’s basket. Flopping back on the settee, he consumed both pieces down to the core and felt his hunger sufficiently appeased to be ignored.

After relaxing for about an hour, Joe grew bored with lying around the stifling room and decided to pursue the only other option Adam had permitted him, a visit to the nearby public squares. There were actually seven within the bounds of
Philadelphia, but the others were further away and probably not much different, in Joe’s opinion. After exchanging his cravat for a more relaxed string tie, he skipped down the stairs and walked the half block that separated the hotel from Independence Hall. Standing on the wide slate sidewalk before the famous building, he admired once more, as both he and Adam had the night before, the white marble statue of George Washington in front of the building. Though tempted to run inside long enough to see the Liberty Bell, Joe decided it would be imprudent to make waves with Adam this early in their adventure, especially over an issue so insignificant as when he saw the bell.

Independence Square lay behind the famous landmark, so Joe walked south on Sixth Street until he came to an entrance. It was marked by a lamppost, with the names of the thirteen original states inscribed on its base and, also, four representations of the Liberty Bell, each surrounded by thirteen stars. Entering the park, he enjoyed the shade of the lofty trees, for the afternoon was growing increasingly warmer, but he walked straight through the grounds, planning to check out Washington Square before deciding where to spend the next couple of hours.

Washington Square lay cater-cornered to the other public park, so Joe dodged carriages and a passing horse car to cross the intersection of Sixth and Walnut and was glad he had when he saw the large trees, which provided even finer shade than those in Independence Square. Spotting a stone fountain with an eagle perched on a globe, Joe took a drink, and then settled on a nearby bench to watch the people passing by. It seemed to him as if all of Philadelphia were on parade, men in straw hats and women in fashionable bonnets, strolling arm in arm or riding in two-wheeled runabouts or stately black family carriages. He took special notice of one flashy dark-blue carriage with both a red and a green stripe running down its side. Wouldn’t the girls’ heads turn if he drove something
like that down the streets of Virginia City! Observing the
elegant clothes of the men and women on promenade, Joe was
forced to admit that Adam had been right. He did need
different clothes to fit in with these fancy folk, and he
resolved to purchase whatever he needed tomorrow, even if he
had to dip into his own funds to do it. He wanted Adam to be
proud to be seen with him.

Thoughts of Adam made him consult his watch. Thirty minutes
left before he was to meet his brother, but having already
missed one deadline that day for lack of attention to the
time, Joe decided not to take chances. He started walking up
Walnut toward Eighth Street and found himself in a pleasant
residential area, the majority of the houses constructed of
red brick with white trim and roofs of either tile or slate.
There were no front yards, which Joe thought greatly detracted
from their beauty, but white steps led to small square
porches, most having two benches that faced each other on
either side of the front door. The houses were, typically,
two stories tall with a dormer window in the attic and a
narrow roof over the first floor windows, a style Joe had
never seen before. Have to ask Adam what kind of architecture
this is, he determined. Bet he knows. Seems to know ‘most
everything ‘bout buildings.

Joe arrived at the horse car stop well before five o’clock,
but Adam came running up to him just as the streetcar pulled
up to the corner. “I was afraid you weren’t going to make
it!” Joe exclaimed as he jumped onto the car after his
brother.

Adam shrugged. “I knew it would be close, but I did have to
hoof it to make it here on time. Glad to see that you did the
same, kid.”

Having had an enjoyable day, Joe was in a good mood and was
too excited about the prospective boat trip to take offense at
the didactic tone. “I wouldn’t want to miss the last boat,
now would I?” he queried with a grin.

Adam chuckled. “Actually, there’s one more, but taking that one wouldn’t leave us much time to eat before the final boat back from the Falls.” He noted with amusement Joe’s change of neckwear. “Spill gravy on that fancy silk cravat?” he teased.

“Couldn’t. Didn’t have dinner,” Joe grunted.

“Oh, for mercy’s sake!” Adam castigated. “If that’s your way of pouting because I wouldn’t give you cash—”

“It isn’t,” Joe countered testily. “I just lost track of the time.” He explained about the restricted dining hours at the hotel.

“I should have thought to warn you about that. I’m sorry,” Adam apologized sincerely. “It just never occurred to me that you’d wait ‘til after two to eat.”

“Didn’t mean to,” Joe admitted, “but there’s so much to see, even on just that one street, Adam, that I plain forgot.”

Adam grinned, thinking how like Joe it was to forget food in his interest over other things, but all he said was, “Well, perhaps that will teach you to take out your pocket watch once in a while.”

“All I can say, brother, is that this catfish and coffee better be as filling as you said,” Joe teased back, “or we’ll be making a second stop somewhere.”

“Not a chance,” Adam laughed. “I guarantee you’ll be stuffed like a Thanksgiving turkey.”

A twenty-five minute ride brought them to the steamboat landing. Jumping off the horse car, Little Joe eagerly scampered down the dock to the waiting boat, calling, “Come on!” as he waved his older brother on.
Making a quick check of his watch, Adam saw that the boat was not scheduled to leave for five minutes, so he slowly sauntered toward the eager youngster. Soon they were steaming down the Schuylkill River, which Adam informed Joe meant “hidden river,” a name the Dutch had given the waterway because ships ascending the Delaware couldn’t see the mouth of the other river until reaching its junction.

Leaning on the rail, Joe smiled, not so much because of the information—he’d already read it in the guidebook—but because he enjoyed floating lazily past the rustic scenes along the shore. After a day in the big city, the tree-lined shores of the meandering stream soothed his pastoral yearnings. “This is nice,” he said softly. “If I had to live in Philadelphia, I’d come here every day and just . . . breathe.”

Ruffling the boy’s wind-blown curls, Adam laughed lightly. “Can’t you breathe in the city?”

Joe smiled a little shyly. “I guess I don’t put what I mean into words too well.”

Adam slipped an arm around his brother’s shoulders and enjoyed the view with him. “No, I know what you mean. I prefer open spaces myself.”

“When you, Adam?” Joe asked, his voice tinged with a hidden fear.

“Sure,” Adam replied, missing the meaning behind his brother’s inflection. “It’s what I chose, isn’t it?”

Joe nodded, not totally reassured, but not comfortable pursuing a more definitive answer.

The *May Queen* landed at the Falls of the Schuylkill and Adam led the way to the Falls Hotel. The dining room was crowded, but the Cartwright brothers were fortunate enough to get a table by a window overlooking the river. “Catfish and
“Yes, please,” Adam said at once. Looking across the table, he noticed the petulant pout on his brother’s face. “Straighten up,” he dictated, “or you’ll wish you had.”

Adopting a more pacifying tone, he added, “You know, people have been enjoying catfish and coffee here for over a hundred years, Joe. In fact, when Philadelphia was the capital of our country, George Washington himself may very well have dined on what you’re eating tonight. Give it a chance and I doubt you’ll be disappointed.”

“George Washington, huh?” Joe said, trying not to look impressed. “Well, I guess if the father of our country lived through it, I can, too.”

“Live through it,” Adam scoffed. “Why don’t you quit now before you cough up more words you’ll have to eat?”

Joe wrinkled his nose, but made no further comment—and a good thing, he decided when the heaping platters of food were placed on the table, for, as Adam had said, he already had enough hasty words to chew on. “This isn’t just catfish,” he sputtered. “When did you order all this?” In addition to the fish he had expected, the table was also spread with beefsteak, broiled chicken and waffles.

“You heard what I ordered,” Adam laughed. “This is what comes with catfish and coffee, just a few extras.”

“A few!” Joe croaked. “Adam, I’ll bust if I eat all this.”

Adam found himself unable to resist saying, “I told you so,” but he kept it light and Joe took it well.

“I was wrong, Adam,” the younger boy said earnestly. “You’ve done real well with your plans so far, and I’m sorry I made such a fuss.”

“Just try to remember that tomorrow, will you, kid?” Adam
suggested with that maddening arch of his eyebrow.

Joe struggled to hold onto his temper. He’d admitted he was wrong; he’d even apologized. Why couldn’t Adam have just left it at that?

“How was your day? Any problems?” Adam asked as he carved his steak.

“What? Oh, no, no problems,” Joe assured him, pouring maple syrup on his waffle, which seemed, to him, the best place to start.

“And do you have any money left?” Adam teased.

“Yeah, sure,” Joe said, irritated, but not wanting to spoil the meal. “How was the convention? You learn anything or did you know it all already?”

It was Adam’s turn to feel irritated. “Of course I don’t ‘know it all already.’ That’s why I came, to learn, as well as to share what I know.”

“Okay, so what did you learn?”

Adam laughed. “You wouldn’t understand much of what we discussed today, Joe, and I don’t want to bore you.”

“I’m not stupid, you know, Adam,” Joe muttered darkly.

“I know that very well,” Adam said, trying to pacify the offended child. “You have a good mind, when you choose to use it, but you haven’t paid much attention to mining matters, so it’s unlikely you would understand a discussion of its technical problems, isn’t it?”

“I guess so,” Joe said, cutting off a bite of broiled chicken and forking a piece of waffle to go with it. “The food’s really good, Adam,” he added in a glaringly obvious attempt to change the subject.
Recognizing the comment for what it was, Adam immediately dropped the discussion of the convention. “I’m glad you’re enjoying it,” he said simply and was rewarded by his brother’s brighter countenance.

“I am; I really am,” Joe said enthusiastically. With a brilliant smile he popped the chicken and waffle together into his mouth.

The two brothers dallied so long over the hearty meal that they had to race to catch the final boat back to Fairmount Park. From there they took the Ridge Avenue line of horse cars back downtown and walked arm in arm to the Washington Hotel. Joe picked up his two packages at the desk and headed for the stairs.

“Joe, what are you doing?” Adam called. “Come take the elevator.”

Joe shook his head, grinning. “Race you up,” he challenged.

Adam chuckled, shaking his head as the boy took off. Where did the kid find all that energy at the end of a long day? He rode the elevator up and was not surprised to find Joe waiting for him at the door to their room. “You know, you really should get over that foolish fear you have of heights,” he scolded.

“I’m not scared,” Joe insisted. “I just don’t like rising rooms.”

“Uh-huh,” Adam said as he opened the door. Once inside, he looked at the packages in Joe’s hands. “Show me what you bought,” he directed in a voice that came across more authoritatively than he intended.

“It’s none of your business what I bought,” Joe snapped.

“Oh, for mercy’s sake!” Adam fumed. “Are you so afraid you spent your money unwisely that you can’t even let me see the
things? It rather misses the point of buying new clothes if you have to hide them!"

Joe sat on the settee and began to unwrap the packages. “I think I did fine,” he said, his voice carrying a trace of nervousness, “but you’ll probably find fault, no matter what.”

“I’ll try to judge fairly,” Adam said, gaining control of his own temper, which no one could trigger as easily as Joe.

Joe showed him the cravats first.

“Yes, those are more practical than what you wore this morning,” Adam observed. “How much–never mind; I won’t ask.”

“Good, ‘cause I ain’t tellin’,” Joe declared firmly. “It’s my money, not yours.”

“Agreed,” Adam said.

Joe unwrapped the other package and handed it to his brother. “I think you’ll approve of this one,” he said, pointing to the ruffled shirt. “I figured I might need something dressier for the theater and such places.”

“Yes, you do, and this looks fine, Joe,” Adam praised. “Excellent quality if the price wasn’t too steep.”

“It was on sale,” Joe told him eagerly and, disregarding his adamant announcement of a few moments before, he quoted the price.

“That is a good buy,” Adam agreed. “In fact, if you wouldn’t mind, I’d like you to pick up a similar shirt in my size tomorrow.”

Joe was so pleased by the unexpected praise that he bubbled over with cooperative spirit. “Sure, Adam, I’d be glad to.”

Adam rolled his shoulders. “Well, I’m for bed. It’s been a long day, with another ahead.”
“Yeah,” Joe agreed.

Saying good night to each other, the brothers turned in, each pleased with the way his first day in Philadelphia had gone.

CHAPTER NINE

Having finished his breakfast, Adam patted his mouth with his linen napkin and laid it aside. “Now, are you certain you understand your boundaries for the day?” he asked.

Joe rolled his eyes. “Market Street, from Sixth westward, and anyplace on Chestnut I care to revisit.”

“Very good, my boy,” Adam chuckled, “and do try to remember to eat dinner today.”

Joe laughed, pushing back his breakfast plate. “No fear of that, big brother! I have learned my lesson: I’ll be here at straight up noon.”

“There’s another luncheon for the convention guests today, with special speakers this time, so it will be somewhat lengthy,” Adam explained, “but I’ll be free after that. Meet me in the room at two o’clock sharp, and we’ll make a short excursion together.”

“Where to?” Joe asked, smiling flirtatiously at the waitress pouring him a second cup of coffee.

Adam held his hand over the rim of his coffee cup to signify that he wanted no more. “Just a brief visit to the Exposition. I want to check in at several of the State houses. They’re supposed to have books in each, where I can register the dates we’ll be in town and where we’re staying, in case friends are here at the same time and want to arrange a meeting.”

“So that’s all we’ll be doing, just signing a couple of register books?” Joe frowned. “I’d just as soon stay
downtown and do some more shopping or sightseeing, Adam. None of my friends will be lookin’ me up!”

“No, I realize that won’t interest you much,” Adam replied, “but I also thought we might make a trip around the grounds on the West End Railway—if you think you can stand the sight of another train. It’s only four miles long and will give us a good feel for the ‘lay of the land,’ so to speak.”

The joke brought a good-natured grin to Joe’s face. “I can probably survive a train trip that short,” he jibed back, “but I ain’t makin’ no guarantees, Adam. ‘Course now, if I could have the window seat this time . . .”

Adam put his head back and laughed. “They’re all window seats, Joe; they’re open, like observation cars.”

“Oh. Well, that’s good,” Joe said with a sheepish shrug.

Adam stood and pushed his chair under the table. “Have a good day, kid—and don’t be late.”

“Yeah, yeah, two o’clock. I remember,” Joe muttered. Honestly, sometimes Adam acts like I don’t have a brain in my head!

Per Adam’s instructions, Little Joe trotted one block north to Market Street and then turned south into the six hundred block. His first stop was a store called Garden and Co., whose merchandise had nothing to do with gardens, Joe noted with amusement. It was, in fact, a stylish haberdashery, where he bought himself a jaunty-looking braided straw hat with a flat brim, such as he had seen many gentlemen wearing while in the company of lovely ladies the previous afternoon. In another department of the same store, he purchased a pair of soft kid gloves for eveningwear. At the suggestion of the helpful clerk, he wore the straw hat and arranged for his gray felt and the gloves to be delivered to the Washington Hotel. Stepping onto the street once more, he fancied himself quite a
dashing young dude, dressed to dazzle all the lovelies of Philadelphia with his new sartorial splendor.

A bit further east Little Joe entered John Wanamaker & Brown Co., the premier department store in the city. Though he hadn’t bothered to tell Adam, he had asked the family tailor, Elias Barton, to suggest the best place to purchase suits in Philadelphia. While disappointed at not getting all of the Cartwright boy’s business himself, Mr. Barton had readily recommended Wanamaker & Brown. Joe left there the proud owner of two new suits, one a lightweight nutmeg broadcloth and the other a formal black, suitable for nights at the theater. Both were promised within the week, and Joe urged the tailor to complete the formal suit first, hoping it would be ready by the time Adam chose to attend a theater. The money his father had allocated for clothing now spent, Joe turned his attention to gifts for others. He looked around the department store for a birthday gift for Hoss, but nothing struck him as just right for his beloved brother, so he left and made his way to the next place of business on Market Street.

While bookstores ordinarily didn’t draw his attention, Joe decided that today might be his best chance to buy a Christmas gift for Adam without trying to hide the purchase while its recipient stood right at his shoulder. And what could be more perfect for Adam than a book? Joe strolled into Claxton, Remsen and Haffelfinger in hopes of finding something his oldest brother would really like. The building was five stories tall, but Joe quickly learned that only the first floor dealt with retail sales, the others being devoted to the business of publishing.

Adam was always hard to buy for, at least in Little Joe’s opinion. Quickly bypassing anything that he himself would find interesting, he considered a book called simply Studies in Literature, which looked boring enough to capture Adam’s stodgy imagination, with its sketches of the lives of authors Joe had never heard of. He passed on that, however, when his
eye fell on what he was certain would be the ideal present for his studious brother. *The Civil Engineer’s Pocket Book* was a costly gift at five dollars a copy, but it was, after all, six hundred and forty-eight pages long and bound in expensive Morocco with gilt edges. Adam would appreciate its value, as well as enjoying its technical content, and Joe was quite certain that “the Plato of the Ponderosa” had nothing like it at home. Hopefully, Adam wouldn’t buy anything similar while he was here in Philadelphia, either. That was the biggest problem with buying gifts for Adam. While Joe had to admit that his oldest brother earned the higher wage Pa paid him, it meant that Adam could buy for himself almost anything he really wanted, and that made it hard for Joe, with his more meager means, to buy his brother something he’d like. Little Joe was sure he’d found a winner this time, though.

He hadn’t expected to find anything for Hoss at the bookstore, but when he spotted a volume entitled *The Grey Bay Mare, and other Humorous American Sketches* by Henry P. Leland, he decided to buy it. Hoss wasn’t much of a reader, except when winter kept him housebound, but Joe thought his animal-loving big brother would like this one, and it only cost a dollar and a half. Although Hoss had a birthday coming up, Joe decided to set this gift back for Christmas, as well, when Hoss would be more likely to enjoy it. On learning that the bookstore charged extra for delivery, Joe took the books with him. It was nearing dinnertime anyway, so returning to the hotel was no problem. *Better this way, too, Joe concluded, so I’ll have a chance to hide it before Mr. Busybody sees the package and demands to know what’s in it!*

He walked the two blocks to the Washington Hotel and scampered up two flights of stairs. Secreting the books in the bottom drawer of his bureau, he ran downstairs to the dining room, having missed his goal of straight up noon by about thirty minutes, but still arriving in plenty of time to be served. Not knowing what Adam had planned for supper, he decided to
eat heartily and ordered a New England boiled dinner of corned beef, carrots, potatoes, turnips, cabbage and squash. Since no opportunity to run up Adam’s bill should be neglected, he added brown betty, a pudding of apples and breadcrumbs, for dessert.

Leaving the hotel, Joe stood on the corner for a moment or two, pondering which direction to take. He’d really had his fill of shopping, especially now that Pa’s gift money had been spent, so the thought of more stores didn’t entice him. Nor did another visit to the same public squares he’d seen yesterday. Sure, they were pleasant places to relax, but he wasn’t feeling particularly tired and, besides, he preferred new sights. Trouble was, there weren’t any new sights within the area to which Adam—with complete unfairness, as far as Joe was concerned—had restricted him.

Only a few blocks east lay the Delaware River, one of the two waterways that encompassed Philadelphia, and Joe decided he might as well have a look at that. Sure, it meant breaching the bounds his brother had set, but not by much. He could stay on Chestnut Street, in fact, so there was no danger of his becoming “disoriented,” as Adam had put it. He took off in that direction and counted himself fortunate that the sight of Morgan, Young, Altemus & Co. reminded him of his promise to buy a dress shirt for his brother. Adam had given him the money for that this morning, and Joe knew he would be in for another stern lecture on responsibility if he failed to fulfill the commission.

Purchase made and information given for its delivery to the hotel, Joe was ready for his exploration of the river. He took his time, looking at the other businesses along the street as he passed. They were mostly warehouses, as Adam had said, so he stopped at none of them and soon found himself at the Chestnut Street Wharf on the Delaware. This was a passenger wharf, and as Little Joe watched people getting on and off the steamers, he wondered where they might be heading,
just across the river into New Jersey or perhaps as far as Boston or New York, where they could make connections for Europe. In his imagination Joe sailed along with those travelers, and then his mind reached further back and he was sailing the Atlantic alongside First Mate Ben Cartwright, seeing all the places his father had described to him and, of course, meeting adventure and beautiful women in every port.

The blast of a steam whistle disrupted his dreams, and Joe finally thought to take out his pocket watch to check the time. It was precisely two minutes past two o’clock. “Oh, I’m in for it,” he yelped and started running up Chestnut Street, hoping against hope that his older brother’s luncheon had lasted longer than expected.

Adam’s luncheon had, in fact, ended at 1:30, and as he walked back to the Washington Hotel, he was feeling a fine sense of satisfaction. The convention had afforded the opportunity for an informative exchange of ideas, and he was looking forward to discussing the latest innovations with his friend Jim McKay, superintendent of the Consolidated Virginia mine, when he returned to Nevada. He’d participated himself in the discussion of hydraulic mining and felt he’d given convincing testimony of its devastating effect on the environment.

Warm with the respect of his peers, Adam arrived at the hotel about ten ‘til two and was not at all surprised to find the room empty. Trust Joe to squeeze the last minute out of any time allotted! When two o’clock came and his young brother still had not appeared, Adam’s mood began to darken, and by the time Joe showed up, twenty minutes late, the older brother was belching steam blacker than any boat the younger had seen at the wharf.

Joe’s straw hat had blown off, and chasing it down had wasted more precious minutes, so it was with dread that he eased the door to the room open. His countenance fell as soon as he saw his brother’s livid expression. “Hi, Adam. How was the
meeting?” he asked edgily. “Did they feed you good?”

“Where have you been?” Adam roared.

Joe jumped back a step. “On Market and Chestnut, that’s all, Adam. I-I lost track of the time again. I’m real sorry, but the boats got me to dreaming and”—he moaned, realizing the words were a dead giveaway to his transgression.

“What boats?” Adam growled. “There aren’t any boats within the boundaries I set for you, boy!”

“Oh, for crying out loud, Adam,” Joe protested. “I just went down to the Chestnut Street Wharf. I know it’s further east than you said I could go, but—”

“You deliberately disobeyed,” Adam snapped, “not only me, but Pa! You were told where you were allowed to be, but could you keep to a few simple rules? No, not you! You’ve got to exalt your judgment over that of your elders and traipse off on your own, no matter what the risks!”

“So what?” Joe demanded, bristling like a porcupine under attack. “I didn’t get lost; I didn’t get in trouble. Why should you care what I do with my free time as long as that’s true?”

“What if something had happened to you?” Adam argued, flailing his arms passionately. “Where would I even begin to look in a city of eight hundred thousand people if you’re not where you’re supposed to be? Have a little consideration for something besides your own pleasure, boy!”

Joe folded his arms across his chest and stared at his brother, his eyes as hard and sharply faceted as the emeralds they resembled. “You know, Adam, sometimes you can be worse than Pa!”

Adam snorted. “Pa is much too easy on you.”
Joe’s gaze rolled toward the ceiling. “Oh, boy, where have I heard that before?”

Adam grabbed hold of his brother’s arm. “I’m not sure you ever hear anything that’s said to you, but you are going to hear this: do not flout my authority again, boy, or you will live to regret it!”

Joe tried to squirm free, but Adam only tightened his grip. “Ease up, Adam,” Joe pleaded. “I didn’t mean any harm.”

“No, you never do,” Adam scolded, still hot. “You just waltz on your merry way without a thought for anyone else’s plans—”

“You want to get to that exhibition or just stand here dressing me down the rest of the afternoon?” Joe retorted.

“Or whether they might be worried,” Adam ranted on, ignoring his younger brother’s interruption.

Joe finally managed to jerk his arm free. “All right, Adam, I’m sorry! I didn’t mean to worry you. I just lost track of the time.”

Adam barely controlled his urge to slap the boy’s exasperating face. How could the little fool so entirely miss the point? But, then, he always did. “Oh, you’re hopeless,” Adam growled. “Let’s go.”

By the time they caught a horse car for Fairmount Park, Little Joe was beginning to see the incident from his brother’s viewpoint, and his apologies took on a more sincere tone. Adam, however, made no response, choosing to let the kid stew in the juices of his contrition, in hopes that the broth would simmer into a more palatable spirit of submission. Probably a futile hope, in Joe’s case, but a better alternative, or, at least, one more reportable to their father, than smashing his fist into the kid’s jaw.

“What’s up?” Joe asked when Adam had them transfer from the
Eighth Street cars to the Race and Vine line. “The streetcar we were on goes out to Fairmount.”

“Must you question every decision I make?” Adam muttered gruffly. Then, realizing that the query was a perfectly reasonable request for information, he replied, “We’re going to the opposite end of the park from where we were last night, Joe, and this will deposit us at that entrance.”

“There’s more than one?”

“Joe, Joe,” Adam chided. “I know that was in the articles you read in *Manufacturer and Builder*.”

“Oh, yeah, you’re right,” Joe admitted with an embarrassed crinkle of his nose. “Let me think a minute. Thirteen entrances, right?”

“That’s right.”

“I just figured we’d be using the main one,” Joe said, “so I didn’t pay much heed to the others.”

“We will most of the time,” Adam explained, “but the far west entrance leads more directly to the area I plan to visit today.”

“Okay,” Joe laughed, trying to jolly his brother into a better mood. “I don’t care which gate I walk through.”

But Adam was not quite ready to let the worm wriggle off the hook. “You don’t care about a good many things,” he observed dryly, “including following instructions.”

Joe slumped. His big brother could hold onto a grudge longer than anyone he knew.

The streetcar dropped them at the westernmost Elm Street entrance, marked by a flagstaff on either side, as were all the entrances to the Centennial grounds. Adam led the way
through the gate labeled “Visitors,” paying fifty cents each for two paper tokens, which he presented to the keeper at the turnstile. Then they followed the slanting path that led to a second turnstile ten feet away. “It’s a safety feature,” Adam observed, “so the security officers can easily pull from the line anyone creating a disturbance.” He pointed to a small building just to the right as they passed through the second gateway. “There’s one of the Centennial Guard stations close at hand, so I suggest you stay out of trouble unless you want a personal tour of that facility.”

Seeing the twitch of Adam’s lips, Joe felt relieved. While he didn’t enjoy being ribbed, at least the teasing indicated that Adam was beginning to get over his fit of anger. “Yeah, I’ll–uh–do that,” he said, flashing a genuine smile when his older brother chuckled and drew him into a one-armed embrace.

They passed another small building, this one belonging to Gillander and Son Glass Factory, but didn’t go inside, as today’s visit was only a get-acquainted tour of the grounds. Continuing east up Fountain Avenue, the Cartwright brothers came to one of the two structures that gave the broad boulevard its name. The granite platform of the Catholic Total Abstinence Fountain was in the form of a Maltese cross, with steps ascending toward it from all directions. From the center of a circular basin forty feet across, rose a massive rock topped by a gigantic statue of Moses, holding in one outstretched arm the Ten Commandments. In the other hand the prophet held the rod with which he had just struck the rock, sending several streams gushing into the basin below.

At each of the four points of the cross, stood a white marble pedestal, topped by a nine-foot statue of a Catholic leader of either the temperance movement or the Revolutionary War, and at its base was a drinking fountain. Adam and Joe approached the fountain below the statue of Commodore John Barry, known as the father of the American Navy, and cupped their hands beneath the stream of water spewing from a lion’s mouth.
There was one like it on each of the pedestal’s four sides, and the water, cooled by flowing over a large block of ice, was refreshing on a hot afternoon.

Following a broad loop that curved north, the brothers passed between a number of State houses, each different in its architecture. While Adam could have studied each at length, he realized that such an attentive perusal would hold no interest for his younger brother; therefore, he simply paused briefly in front of each, to note its general structure. When he came to the Japanese government building, however, he leaned against the fence, along with crowds of other Americans, to examine the exotic structure of the low, two-storied, wooden building, roofed in black tiles of ornamental shape.

Standing beside his brother, Joe, too, stared in fascination at the movable panels that formed the sides of the building and the intricately carved timbers over its entrances.

“Would you believe it, Joe?” Adam shared, clearly in awe. “There’s not a single nail in the entire structure.”

“Oh, there must be, Adam,” Joe scoffed. “What would hold it together?”

Adam pointed to one of the corners. “See there? It’s mortised and dovetailed together so tightly it doesn’t need nails.”

“Does look tight,” Joe admitted. He pointed toward the garden outside the dwelling for the officials Japan had sent to the Centennial. “What makes those trees so small, huh? They got some special way of keepin’ ‘em little or is the climate so bad where they come from that they can’t grow tall?”

Adam chuckled. “No, it’s deliberate, Joe. I’m not sure precisely how it’s done, but I’ve read about dwarping trees and shrubs for ornamental purposes. That must be what they’ve
done here.” He drew in a deep breath of the grape-scented fragrance wafting from the lavender flowers of an attractive green vine covering the bowers in the Japanese garden. Just as he was wondering what the unfamiliar plant might be, he overheard a woman with a distinct southern drawl telling her male companion that she absolutely had to have some of that sweet-smelling kudzu for their bower back home. The gentleman, evidently her husband, remarked that he couldn’t be sure the vine would find their Georgia climate compatible, but he was willing to make the experiment. Adam pondered for a moment whether kudzu might thrive in the Nevada foothills, for it certainly would look beautiful growing up the posts of the porch and over the roof. He’d have to check into that while he was here. Sensing his younger brother’s boredom, however, Adam set the idea aside for later consideration, took Joe’s arm and moved around the loop to the northeast.

Little Joe pointed to a building atop an elevation known as George’s Hill. “Hey, look, it’s a restaurant! Can we give it a try?”

“No?” Adam asked, arching an eyebrow. He frowned. “You didn’t miss your dinner again, did you?”

“No, of course not,” Joe declared. “I had a real fine dinner, but I wouldn’t mind having a piece of pie—just to tide me over ‘til supper.”

Adam started to laugh, but realized that he, too, was feeling a little hungry, despite the filling luncheon provided by the convention. “Oh, I guess we could,” he conceded and started up the flower-dotted hill.

Since he’d thought his brother was still irked with him, Joe had not really expected a positive response and had to trot to catch up with Adam. “Hey, thanks!” he exclaimed, beaming happily.

“Maybe I’ll get lucky and you’ll want to skip supper after
“Oh, I wouldn’t count on it,” Joe joked. “Walking all over the city works up a fellow’s appetite, you know.”

Adam caught him by the scruff of the neck. “You weren’t supposed to walk ‘all over the city,’ remember?”

Joe looked away. “I’m sorry about that, Adam, honest. I hope my tardiness doesn’t keep you from doing all you planned. I-I mean, I know this is extra, so if you’d rather not stop here, I can make do without the pie.”

“It sounds good to me, too,” Adam admitted with a smile, “and a piece of pie shouldn’t take too long.”

Since it was mid-afternoon, the restaurant was not crowded. The Cartwright brothers quickly found a table, and both ordered a slice of cherry pie, Adam because he particularly liked that flavor and Joe, as he put it, “in honor of George Washington.”

“That’s an old folk tale, you know,” Adam commented drolly. “Washington never did chop down a cherry tree when he was a kid.”

“I cannot tell a lie,” Little Joe jibed, quoting the youthful future President’s supposed words. “I like the story, even if it isn’t true. Teaches kids a good lesson.”

“Some kids, maybe,” Adam said dryly with a significant look across the table. “Others never seem to learn.”

“Aw, come on, I was never much of a liar,” Little Joe protested.

“Not for lack of trying,” Adam chortled. “You just have a face that gives you away every time, little buddy.”

Joe, too, laughed, knowing his brother’s evaluation was
correct. When he was younger, he’d wondered why Pa always seemed to know when he was fibbing. Now he knew he was his own worst tattletale, but he hadn’t yet figured out how to mask his emotions. What he felt showed, and at times that weakness, as he perceived it, was decidedly inconvenient.

The pie arrived and was quickly consumed, and the Cartwright brothers were on their way to the next building, a large wooden pavilion shared by California and Nevada, with striped awnings over each window. They entered a striking hall, its pillars finished in imitation of the native woods of the Pacific coast, and made a brief tour of the agricultural and mineral resources of the two states. Then Adam signed the register book, noting his temporary residence at the Washington Hotel. “Why don’t you sign this one, too, Joe?” he suggested. “It’s possible some of your friends might visit the Centennial.”

Joe shook his head. “Naw, anybody from home would have told me they were coming, ‘cause I been talkin’ this trip up for months, and the people I know in California are probably more your friends than mine.”

“I suppose so,” Adam agreed. “I’m not really expecting anyone from the western states to look us up, anyway. I am hoping some of my eastern friends will be in town for the Fourth, though, so I plan to register at the New York and Connecticut State houses.”

Joe cocked his head and gazed quizzically at his older brother. “I understand Connecticut, but why New York? You never lived there, that I know of.”

Adam stared back at Joe. “Of course, I did. Just during summers, of course, but that’s where I got my practical architectural training, on the job with one of the finest firms in New York City. Surely, Pa told you that, if I didn’t do so myself.” Because of Joe’s youth during those college
days, Adam had kept his letters to the boy short and simple, but while he had no clear memory of any particular letter, he thought he had surely conveyed information as basic as his whereabouts.

“Maybe,” Joe conceded, “but all I remember is that you wouldn’t come home, even when summer came. I remember when school let out for Hoss that first year, I kept expecting you every day—until Pa finally told me you just weren’t coming.”

Sensing the pain the young Joe must have felt long ago, Adam laid his hand on his brother’s shoulder. “Joe, I couldn’t,” he explained gently. “I only had two months between terms, and transportation then wasn’t what it is now. I’d have spent three quarters of that time just traveling back and forth, and money was a lot tighter in those days than it is now, too. I didn’t want Pa spending money he could ill afford, just for the pleasure of a couple of weeks at home, so it made more sense to stay back here and work during the summers, to help pay my way through college.”

Embarrassed that his treacherous emotions had once again betrayed him, Joe shifted out from under Adam’s hand. “Well, at least, now I know why you want to sign up at the New York house. Best get to it, I guess.”

“Especially since it’s just next door,” Adam quipped, to lighten the atmosphere for both their sakes. Though he generally kept his emotions in better control than Joe, he found himself just as uncomfortable with their expression as did his younger brother—or, to be perfectly honest, more so.

New York’s offices were housed in a light-colored, two-story cottage, surrounded by a wide verandah, studded with pillars and with a central tower rising from the front of the roof. “We’ll just register and be on our way,” Adam said.

“To Connecticut,” Joe chuckled. “Kind of feels like we’re touring the whole country this afternoon, Adam!”
Again Adam draped an affectionate arm about his brother’s slim shoulders. “Little buddy, by the time we finish seeing this exposition, you’re going to feel like you’ve toured the entire world!”

Joe grinned, figuring that this was probably the closest he’d ever come to making a world tour. He intended to make the most of it.

While the Connecticut building was also a two-story cottage, it bore no resemblance to the highly ornamented New York facility. Smaller than the New York house, this one was intended to represent a colonial homestead of one hundred years ago and was exactly forty-feet square with a front composed of octagonal shingles, timber and plaster. Adam and Joe stepped onto the wooden porch and passed through a door divided horizontally in the middle. As they entered a room finished with wood smoke-stained to make it appear aged, their eyes were drawn to the old-style fireplace opposite the front door. Picture tiles surrounded the red brick and brownstone hearth, and above it sat a wooden mantelpiece with two shelves, supported by heavy brackets and showcasing old brass and crockery. A spinning wheel stood in the chimney corner, with an old clock opposite it, and even the walls were adorned with arms and relics of Revolutionary days. Furniture such as the antique sideboard contrasted with the more modern melodeon also exhibited behind a railed gallery that surrounded the front and sides.

Adam had just finished signing the register book when he spotted a man coming from an office at the back of the reception room. Gazing intently at the man’s features, Adam suddenly smiled and moved toward him. “Saul Breckenridge, isn’t it?” he asked, extending his hand.

The man paused, examined the face before him and broke into a wide smile. “Lieutenant Cartwright!”
Little Joe, who had been casually studying a Revolutionary musket, spun at the sound of the title and saw a solidly built man enthusiastically pumping his brother’s hand. Hurriedly, he stepped toward the man, who sported a bushy set of rust-colored sideburns, which extended down the sides of his cheek below the level of his chin and met a mustache above his upper lip. “Did you know him in the war?” Joe eagerly asked the stranger.

Adam cleared his throat. “Saul, I’d like to introduce my brother Joseph,” he said, speaking with assiduous courtesy. “Joe, this is an old friend, Mr. Saul Breckenridge of New Haven, Connecticut.”

Reading Adam’s look of mild disapproval as a reminder to watch his manners, Joe extended his hand to his brother’s friend. “Pleased to meet you, sir.” He leaned closer to whisper. “So did you know him in the war?” Quavering under Adam’s darkening visage, he stammered, “I-I mean you called him Lieutenant, so I thought, maybe . . .”

Adam worked his mouth and then cocked his head to regard the other man. “Did I mention that he’s my younger brother?” he asked airily. “My much younger and hopelessly ill-mannered brother.”

Blue eyes twinkling beneath thick auburn eyebrows, Saul Breckenridge laughed heartily. “No need,” he jibed. “No man with one of his own could fail to notice the unmistakable marks of the breed.” Seeing Little Joe’s quick flush, he clapped the young man on the shoulder. “To answer your question, young fellow, I did, indeed, have the pleasure of serving as sergeant under Lieutenant Cartwright during the War of Rebellion.”

Joe tossed an impish grin toward his brother. “Well, I don’t want to question your judgment, sir, but I’ve been following this slave driver’s orders for years, and I sure never thought
of it as a pleasure.”

“That’s because you don’t actually follow orders,” Adam observed wryly. “You spend all your energy trying to get around them.”

When Joe’s complexion deepened to crimson at the reference to his earlier transgression, Breckenridge guffawed, his voice booming through the small room. “I’d forgotten that dry wit of yours, sir. Definitely a pleasure to hear it again.”

“It’s not ‘sir,’ now,” Adam insisted. “I’m just plain Adam Cartwright, civilian, now, and I’d be pleased if you called me by my first name. So, are you visiting the Centennial or are you here in a more official capacity?”

“Always an astute observer,” Saul chuckled, “just as I remember you. Yes, that’s my office back there. I’m one of the state commissioners, so I’ll be here throughout the summer. And you? Here through the Glorious Fourth, I presume.”

“And beyond,” Adam replied. “I’m planning to attend Commencement at Yale and attempt to interest this barbarian in a college education.” He inclined his head toward Joe.

Saul smiled at the younger man. “Always glad to see a young fellow aiming toward higher education,” he said. “I’m a teacher myself, though not at the college level.” He snapped his fingers. “Oh, I say, I’ve just had a fantastic idea to help advance the lad’s education.”

Joe groaned, waving aside whatever Adam’s old sergeant intended to say. “Oh, that’s all right, Mr. Breckenridge. My brother’s got plenty of ideas of his own when it comes to that—even made me read up on the Revolution before he’d let me come on this trip, so don’t give him any more ideas, okay?”

Again Saul’s deep laugh boomed forth, loud as a cannon. “Now,
now, you might actually like this, young fellow, if you’ve any interest whatsoever in that history you read.” He turned to Adam. “Had you heard about the activities at Independence Hall on July first?”

“The first? No,” Adam answered.

“Oh, it’s the real beginning of the celebration,” Saul declared enthusiastically. “Leading writers of the Union have been asked to submit biographies of our great Revolutionary men, and while I don’t count myself worthy of inclusion in such esteemed company, I’ll be presenting my own work that morning.”

“Wonderful!” Adam enthused, his hand gripping the other man’s thick shoulder. “You always had a way with words, Saul, and I’m sure you fully deserve the honor.”

“It would be my great honor, sir, if you and your young brother would attend the ceremony as my guest,” Breckenridge offered.

“The honor is entirely ours,” Adam answered warmly.

“I’ll have the invitations delivered to your hotel, then,” the Connecticut commissioner stated. “You’ve registered your address?”

Adam nodded toward the registration table.

“Excellent,” Breckenridge said. “Much as I’d love to continue our conversation, Adam, I’m afraid I was on my way to a meeting, and if I delay longer, I’ll be late.”

“Please don’t let us hold you back,” Adam said, shaking his friend’s hand in farewell. “We’ll be looking forward to seeing you on the first, won’t we, Joe?”

There was obviously only one acceptable answer, but it was also the answer Joe felt in his heart, for he was taken by
Commissioner Breckenridge’s jovial manner. “Yes, sir, I surely will. Thanks for the invite to the special doings. They sound right interesting.”

Adam rolled his eyes at Joe’s colloquial expressions. “Barbarian” was definitely the correct word to describe his brother. Outside the Connecticut house, he collared the young offender. “Are you ever going to demonstrate the manners—or the grammar—you’ve been taught?”

“Mr. Breckenridge didn’t think I was ill mannered, just you,” Joe snorted.

Adam smiled sardonically. “Of course, Saul’s used to dealing with grammar-school children, but that doesn’t mean you should act like one.”

“I’m not!” Joe sputtered. “Maybe I did get a little overeager, but I was interested in talking to him, that’s all. Bet he has some stories to tell on you, and that’s why you jumped in so fast!”

“Oh-huh, sure.” Adam took his brother’s arm and steered him up the curving State Avenue. “We still have a lot of ground to cover, Joe, so you’ll just have to hold your imaginative theories for another time.”

“I thought we were gonna ride that train around,” Joe complained. “It’s all footwork so far.”

“There’s a station just ahead,” Adam said.

Purchasing two tickets for five cents each, Adam gave them to the guard as he and Joe stepped onto the platform, where they waited behind the protective wire rope for the next train. Adam had also purchased a topographical map of the Centennial grounds at the same time, and he and Joe swiftly studied it, to help them recognize the buildings they would soon be passing. Fortunately, the wait was a short one, for the
unsheltered platform afforded no protection from the glaring sun, and the heat made them miserable in their black frock coats. A small locomotive, bearing the name *Emma*, chugged up to the platform, and entering the open, breezy cars, Adam laughed as he pushed Joe into the outermost seat. “Now, don’t go tumbling out, or you won’t get the window seat again,” he teased.

The train pulled away from the station, moving along State Avenue past the cross-shaped United States Government Building, which the Cartwright brothers had already identified while waiting on the platform. Almost immediately, the tracks crossed Belmont Avenue. Little Joe pointed at a small building at the intersection. “What’s that, Adam?” he asked.

Adam took a quick peek at the map lying open in his lap. “The Southern Restaurant, I think.” Then his voice raised in excitement. “Joe, there’s the Grand American Restaurant!” he cried, drawing his brother’s attention to the large building on their right.

Following his brother’s pointing finger, Joe gaped, open-mouthed. “That’s a restaurant?” he squeaked.

Adam chuckled, wrapping a protective arm around the younger boy, who was leaning out so far that the elder really did fear he might fall overboard. “The largest and handsomest on the grounds,” he said. “Seats up to five thousand people.”

Joe tossed a cheeky grin across his shoulder. “Yeah, but how’s the food?”

Adam lightly cuffed his ear.

“Will we be eating there?” Joe asked breathlessly.

Adam nodded. “Probably. We’ll hit most of the eating places before we’re done.”

Joe flashed a delighted smile. “Great!”
“Are you sure you’re not Hoss?” Adam asked with a wry grin.

Joe’s smile disappeared abruptly. “Yeah, big brother, I’m sure. Sorry about the mix-up,” he grunted.

“Huh?” Adam asked, at a loss to comprehend the sudden change of mood.

“Nothin’. Never mind,” Joe said. He quickly pointed to an even larger building opposite the huge restaurant. “What’s that?”

“The Agricultural Building,” Adam answered. The Emma made a wide loop around the extreme northeastern corner of the grounds, passing a number of windmills on a hill overlooking the Schuylkill River. Joe craned his neck to see if he could spot the restaurant where they’d had catfish and coffee the night before, but before he could locate it, the train swept back to the west, running behind the Agricultural Building this time after passing the adjacent Brewers Building.

Returning to Belmont Avenue, the train made a left turn and passed between the front of the United States Government Building and the much smaller Women’s Pavilion. Just beyond, the railroad crossed Fountain Avenue, where Adam drew Joe’s attention to another fountain. Pointing out the thirteen-sided wooden pavilion housing it, Adam said, “It’s intended to resemble a Greek temple.”

“So, does it?” Joe asked.

Adam laughed lightly. “From the pictures I’ve seen, yes. Many of the water fountains on the grounds are works of art in themselves, Joe.”

“Yeah, sure is fancy,” Joe agreed as he took another look at the fountain, whose eight-foot circular basin was surrounded by a passageway for those who wished to drink from its twenty-six self-acting spigots. He almost missed the next building,
but pointed excitedly when he did spot it. “Hey, look, Adam! That’s gotta be the French restaurant.”

“What was your first clue?” Adam teased when he saw the striped awnings of Aux Trois Fréres Provençeaux, as the sign declared.

“We’ll go there, won’t we?” Joe asked, almost bouncing in anticipation of sampling the cuisine of his mother’s heritage.

“Well, I don’t know,” Adam began.

“Oh, Adam, please,” Joe pleaded. “It—it would mean a lot to me.”

Adam squeezed the younger boy’s shoulder in understanding. “I promise you we’ll eat at a French restaurant before we leave, Joe, but not necessarily that one. It’s just about the most expensive place on the grounds, from what I’ve heard.”

That information, of course, only made the restaurant more enticing to Little Joe, but he simply smiled his gratitude at his older brother. For the moment, at least, he was feeling magnanimous, and, besides, there would be plenty of time to work out a plan for getting inside Aux Trois Fréres and ordering the most expensive items on the menu.

“There’s another fountain,” Joe grinned, pointing to the open square between the two largest buildings on the exhibition grounds. The train turned left, and Joe stared in awe as they rode past the Main Building of the Centennial. “I’ve never seen anything that big!” he cried.

Amused by the boy’s enthusiasm, Adam chuckled. “Well, how could you, little buddy? It is the largest building in the world!”

“No lie?” Joe asked. “In the whole world?”

“Eighteen hundred eighty feet by four hundred sixty-four,
covering almost twenty-one and a half acres,” Adam quoted from *Manufacturer and Builder*. “I thought you were supposed to have read all about the Exposition. I see you paid the same level of attention that you did in school! Gonna have to do better, boy, if you hope to carry home anything you learn here.”

“Aw, come on, Adam,” Joe protested. “Sure, I remember reading the dimensions, but it’s not the same as seeing them.”

“No, it’s not,” Adam conceded graciously, “and it’s not the same as walking it, either, little brother. It’ll take us two days, at least, to do justice to that one building!”

“Let’s do it first,” Joe urged.

Adam scowled, half playfully, half irritated. “Obviously, you need to be reminded that I am calling the shots, and we will not be starting with the Main Building. That’s what everyone does; therefore, it will be the most crowded place of all.”

Brow wrinkling, Joe shook his head. Didn’t Adam realize it would be just as crowded on whatever day they did visit?

The West End Railway reached the end of the Main Building at the easternmost edge of the Centennial grounds and turned around to again traverse the broad Avenue of the Republic. This time the Cartwrights focused on the buildings opposite the mammoth one to their left. They first passed the Photographic Building, dwarfed by Memorial Hall, the art gallery, just beyond it. “And that’s the Carriage Annex,” Adam told Joe as they again approached the central plaza.

Beyond it, on the opposite side, lay Machinery Hall. “That’s where we’ll start,” Adam said.

“Oh, yeah!” Joe almost squealed. “The Corliss Engine, right?”

Adam chuckled. “I’m glad to see you remember something of
what you read! We’ll tour it on Monday.”

Joe really did squeal this time. “Monday! That’s almost a whole week away, Adam.”

“Oh, don’t whine like a little kid who can’t wait ‘til after dinner to lick his lollipop,” Adam scolded. “It’ll be an all-day sucker when you do get it, little buddy.”

“But what can we do in town for a week?” Joe demanded. So far, he hadn’t seen much to do but shop, and while he wouldn’t object to doing a bit more, he preferred to see more closely some of the tempting sights they’d ridden past that afternoon.

Adam moaned, as if in actual pain, at the ludicrous statement. There was so much to see in Philadelphia itself—historic landmarks, museums, theaters—that they had no chance of seeing everything during their visit. His unsophisticated little brother, however, couldn’t begin to comprehend the wealth of culture in the Quaker city. Remember he’s young and inexperienced with life outside Nevada, Adam reminded himself. Be patient with the kid. “Trust me, Joe,” he said as the train pulled into a station in front of Machinery Hall. “There will be plenty to see and do. Let’s get off here and walk back to the Elm Street entrance. We’ve already seen most of what the train will pass from here back to where we got on.”

“Okay,” Joe said agreeably.

Adam laughed at the energy with which his younger brother sprang onto the platform. “This way,” he said, pointing to a narrow path to the west of a small lake.

“Aw, that’s pretty,” Joe said, smiling at the glassy blue surface. He spotted a statue and walked over to it. “Who’s this?”

“You can read,” Adam observed dryly.
“Oh, yeah,” Joe said sheepishly, bending to read the inscription on the statue’s base. “Elias Howe. I don’t remember reading about him in the history book.”

Adam almost choked. “Oh, for mercy’s sake, boy, he’s not a Revolutionary hero; he’s the inventor of the sewing machine.”

“Huh!” Joe snorted. “Wouldn’t’ve thought that was important enough to earn a man a statue.”

Adam laughed. “Well, getting those suits you bought in short order is pretty important to you, isn’t it? The sewing machine is what makes it possible.”

Joe grinned. “Oh. Yeah, I guess old Elias is a pretty important fellow, after all, Adam!”

“Uh-huh,” Adam drawled. “Anyone who contributes to dandifying you for some pretty skirt gains immediate importance.”

The little lake stuck a long finger to the northwest. Following it, Adam and Joe came once more to Fountain Avenue, and at the point the lakeside path intersected the larger boulevard, Little Joe almost danced with excitement. “Hey, Adam, it’s Paris!” he cried.

Adam nodded. “Along with Switzerland, Jerusalem and Naples,” he added. For a long time he and Joe stood looking down at the miniature depictions of the foreign places, constructed by Colonel Liénard, the distinguished French artist. “I understand Liénard also has a panorama depicting the Siege of Paris in 1870 just outside the grounds,” Adam told his brother.

“Let’s go find it!” Joe exclaimed.

“Oh, Joe, don’t be ridiculous,” Adam reproved. “It’s at the opposite end. Perhaps you can see it, but not today.”

“Aaw, come on, Adam,” Joe wheedled.
“No,” Adam stated bluntly. “We’ve seen quite enough for an initial visit, little boy, and I, for one, am getting tired.” Doesn’t he ever wear out? Stupid question. Never did as a little kid. Why would he start now, when he’s nothing more than an overgrown one?

Pouting, Joe turned his back on the relief plans of the cities and saw a soda water fountain. It wouldn’t cost much, of course, but Adam deserved to shell out some money to pay for calling him a little boy. “I’m thirsty, Adam,” he announced. “Buy me a drink?”

Adam started to point out that they were on Fountain Avenue, where free ice-cold drinking water could be found only a few steps in either direction, but caught himself. After all, fifteen cents wasn’t much, and he rather wanted to try the fizzy water, too. “Sure,” he said, reaching into his pocket. “Get one for both of us,” he said, handing Joe three dimes.

“Which flavor you want?” Joe called after a closer look at the soda fountain.

“Whatever you’re having,” Adam said, smiling back.

Joe ordered two birch beers, and the brothers thirstily quaffed the refreshing drinks. “Heat sure drains the strength out of you, doesn’t it?” Joe suggested with a grin.

Adam chortled. “I hadn’t noticed its affecting you much!”

“Oh, yeah,” Joe insisted. “I’ll probably be needing a lot of this soda water when we’re out here walking around in the hot sun.”

Something in his tone alerted Adam. The kid was definitely up to something, although Adam wasn’t sure what. Well, time would tell, for as he’d observed earlier, Joe was not an adept deceiver. Sooner or later the kid would give himself away, and in the meantime, so long as it meant nothing more than an
overabundance of drinking water, Adam figured he could live with the mystery.

“Hey, there’s that French restaurant again,” Joe said, pointing up the avenue. “How about having an early supper there?”

“Not tonight,” Adam said firmly. “We’re eating at the hotel. Come on; it’s time we headed back that way.” He turned toward the exit, and Little Joe had no choice but to follow.

“That looks interesting,” Joe said, nodding toward a small, exotic building with a steeply pointed square roof. “How about . . .”

“No,” Adam growled. “You’ll have plenty of time to shop in the bazaar later, as if you hadn’t done enough of that the last two days! Now, we’re going to march out the gate, catch a horse car and get back to the hotel, is that clear?” Without waiting for an answer, he headed toward the exit, with Joe trotting to keep pace with his brother’s long-legged stride.

~~ Historical Note ~~

Kudzu was first introduced to America at the Centennial Exhibition. Americans fell in love with the decorative vine and began to incorporate it into their landscapes when they returned home. It not only thrived, but showed a remarkable propensity for taking over every other plant it came near, and research now focuses on how to get rid of the pest, which buries trees in eerie curtains of leafy green. Fortunately, dealing with urgent matters in Philadelphia kept Adam from pursuing his idea of introducing it to the Ponderosa!

CHAPTER TEN
Refreshed by a good night’s sleep, Little Joe was all sunshine and smiles as he waited for his breakfast order to be delivered. “What are we going to do today, older brother? Go back to the Exposition?”

Adam smiled over his coffee cup. “Nice try. You know perfectly well that I said we wouldn’t be returning there ‘til Monday.”

Joe shrugged. He hadn’t expected to get his way, but it didn’t hurt to remind Adam of where his preference lay. Sometimes, though rarely, big brother could be worn down. “So, what are we doing today, then?”

“We’re going to concentrate on your education for the next couple of days,” Adam said, setting the coffee cup down to await the inevitable. Though he had anticipated an explosion of protest, Joe merely groaned aloud, so Adam promptly dropped the stern lecture he had planned. “No, it won’t be that bad,” he assured his young brother with a chuckle, “especially today. We’re going to visit some of the historic sights in Philadelphia and see if we can’t make colonial days come alive for you.”

That didn’t sound too bad to Joe. “Independence Hall?” he inquired.

“Among others,” Adam replied, lifting his coffee cup again. “Woohoo!” Joe exclaimed, almost tipping over his water glass in his exuberance.

Seeing several of the other diners turn in their seats, Adam castigated Joe soundly for his rowdy behavior.

Chagrined, Joe murmured, “Sorry.”

Adam arched an eyebrow in mock severity. “Getting to be your favorite word, little buddy, or at least the one most frequently employed.”
Joe sighed. “Yeah, I know; I’m s-”—he put his face in his hand as the word almost slipped out again.

Adam grinned, but spared his brother further teasing when their breakfast plates arrived. The two brothers made short work of the meal and were soon walking north on Seventh Street, Adam refusing to answer Joe’s questions about where they were going first until they arrived at Market.

Looking at the three-story brick building on the southwest corner, Joe cried, “Hey! I was shopping here just yesterday.”

“And paid not a bit of attention to the historic significance, I’ll wager,” Adam snickered.

Joe studied the building again. “It’s just a clothing store, Adam. You’re not gonna tell me George Washington bought his pants here or something stupid like that, are you?”

Adam rolled his eyes. “It wasn’t always a clothing store, Joe,” he grunted, then draping an arm around his brother’s slight shoulders, he added, as he pointed to a second story window, “That, my boy, is the parlor where the Declaration of Independence was written by . . .”

“Thomas Jefferson,” Joe answered in quick response to the test question he’d perceived Adam’s tapering drawl to indicate. “Can we go up and see the room?”

“No, it’s privately owned,” Adam replied.

“We could ask,” Joe suggested.

“We could not,” Adam dictated firmly, “unless, of course, your goal is to demonstrate what uncivilized boors men of the West are.”

Joe cocked his head and gave his brother’s face close scrutiny. “You ashamed of being from Nevada?”
Shocked by the question, Adam shook his head. “No, of course not,” he affirmed, “but I would prefer to show people what we’re really like, rather than live up to the popular image.”

Sporting a saucy grin, Joe stuffed his hands in his pockets and started up Market Street, his legs as bowed as if he were riding Hoss’s big black, Chub.

Adam snared Joe’s elbow and pulled him back. “You’re headed the wrong way, pardner. Independence Hall is back the way we came.”

Joe cackled and resumed his normal gait as they walked back toward Chestnut and east to the marble-trimmed brick building, which was once the most impressive in the colonies. “Its architecture is Georgian, a style that originated in England,” Adam stated as his hand swept from one wing of the structure to its mirror on the opposite end.

“Uh-huh,” Joe muttered, clearly disinterested in a scholarly lecture. He leaned his head back to gaze up at the tall steeple over the center of the building. “Is that the Liberty Bell?” he asked, squinting to see into the bell tower.

“No, it’s been taken down,” Adam explained, “but you’ll see it inside.”

“Well, let’s go in, then!” Joe urged.

Adam laughed at the boy’s enthusiasm. “Seeing as how that’s what we came here to do . . . let’s.”

Joe grinned and led the way. Inside, he glanced around in search of the famous bell, but saw no sign of it. “Where is it, Adam?” he demanded. “You said—”

“All in good time, impatient child,” Adam said, steering the boy toward the eastern hall. They passed through a door, above which hung a medallion with the head of George III, King of England during the time of the Revolution, and began to
look at the furnishings.

Little Joe touched the green tablecloth spread over one of the square tables scattered across the room. “These really the same things used back then?” he asked, recalling the information from the Philadelphia guidebook.

“The furniture, yes,” Adam said, running his hand over the smooth wood of one of the spindle-backed armchairs beside the table. “National treasures, Joe.”

“Yeah,” Joe whispered with wonderment.

“Come here,” Adam said, taking his arm. “This is really special.” He led his brother to the east end of the room, where an elaborate chair graced a dais. “This was used by John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress,” he told Joe, “but this is what I wanted you to see.” He touched with near reverence the silver inkstand, from which protruded a white quill pen. “This inkstand was used by Hancock and the other men who signed the Declaration of Independence; it was only found again last year, so not many Americans living today have ever seen it.”

Joe whistled, tentatively touching the treasure. Then, looking at the walls lined with portraits of the signers of the famous document and other Revolutionary War heroes, he murmured, “So this is where it all happened, where we became our own country.”

Adam rubbed the back of his brother’s neck. “Where we proclaimed our independence, yes. As you know, just saying it didn’t make it so. A lot of men gave their lives to make what was declared here a reality.”

Overwhelmed with pride in his country, Joe could do nothing more than nod. He followed Adam to gaze, mesmerized, at the Declaration itself, framed and raised on a stand elsewhere in the room. “Oh, wow,” Joe whispered and then fell speechless.
Adam smiled. Though he had seen the Declaration once before, during his years in the East, he, too, felt the same sense of reverent awe. For several moments they simply stood there, gazing in silent respect at the inspiring words that began, “We the people;” then Adam tapped Joe’s arm. “We should move on,” he said. “Others want to see this, too.”

Coming out of his reverie, Joe smiled at the people behind him and moved out of the way. “Now the Liberty Bell?” he queried.

“Not quite yet,” Adam chuckled. “Let’s look at the exhibits in the west wing first.”

With a sigh Joe followed where he was led, wondering why they had to do everything Adam’s way. As soon as he entered the newly opened Museum of National Relics, however, he became engrossed with all there was to see: furniture, weapons, clothing, silver, china, pictures, embroidery and parchments of the colonial period, as well as visiting cards engraved with names memorable in American history. He saw the ale mug belonging to naval hero John Paul Jones and General Anthony Wayne’s field glass, but had to laugh at the case containing the baby clothes of President John Quincy Adams. “Say, Adam,” he asked with a cheeky grin, “has Pa saved any of my baby clothes, just in case I become famous?”

Adam lightly swatted his brother’s backside. “Sorry, buddy,” he commented drolly, “but we got rid of your smelly diapers as soon as we could!”

The joke being as malodorous to him as any soiled diaper, Joe crinkled his nose in distaste and said sharply, “Now who’s acting like an uncivilized boor!”

“All right, all right,” Adam chuckled, giving the boy’s shoulder an appeasing pat. “To make up for my boorishness, I’ll let you see the Liberty Bell next.”

A bright smile lifted Joe’s countenance as the promise was
made. They quickly viewed the few remaining exhibits and left the museum, walking to the ground floor of the steeple, where the giant bell hung suspended from a wooden frame. Little Joe rested his palm against the cool metal, and Adam placed his hand, in similar position, next to that of his brother. Joe slid his hand over until it was touching Adam’s, as if only through touch could he share the emotions welling up inside.

As if inadvertently, Adam brushed his fingers over the back of Joe’s hand and stepped back, folding his arms across his chest. “Let’s see how much you’ve absorbed about the history of this bell,” he began didactically. “Can you name some occasions on which it was rung.”

Joe’s brow wrinkled in thought. “Well, uh, lots more times than I know about, I’m sure. Uh, when the Declaration was signed, for sure.”

Adam arched an eyebrow. “That’s my little brother, always going for the easy answer first.”

“Okay, I’m thinking,” Joe protested. “You didn’t tell me there was gonna be a test!”

“All of life is a test of what we’ve learned before,” Adam philosophized. “Now, is there anything else you can pull out of that muddled brain of yours?”

Joe searched his memory furiously, his face lighting as another response finally flashed through his mind. “When the war started,” he related hastily, “and, and”—he fought frantically to retrieve the bit of information niggling at the edge of his thoughts—“when Washington was named Commander-in-Chief,” he finished in triumph.

“Not bad,” Adam assessed. “Among other occasions, it was also rung after the surrender of Cornwallis, at the proclamation of the Treaty of Peace and when the United States Congress assembled for the first time.”
“I didn’t know all those,” Joe admitted. “Are they gonna ring it again for the centennial Fourth?”

Disappointment flickered in Adam’s eyes and was reflected in Joe’s as the older brother answered, “No, they were planning to, but decided the old bell was just too fragile to be rung, except on very special occasions.”

“The one hundredth birthday of America isn’t special enough?” Joe demanded.

“Evidently not,” Adam said quietly.

Uncomfortable with the somber mood, Little Joe quickly pointed to the stairway ascending the steeple. “Hey, let’s climb up,” he suggested. “Bound to get a good view of the city from up there.”

Adam emitted a startled cough. “There are easier ways to see the city than climbing up that steeple,” he maintained.

“Aw, come on, Adam. You’re too young to be that old!” Joe challenged with an impish grin.

“All right,” Adam agreed reluctantly. “I’ll need to get the tickets from the superintendent before we can go up.” That necessary preparation made, he began to climb upward in his energetic brother’s wake.

Little Joe reached the top quite a bit before his more deliberate brother and was ready to point out the sights when Adam arrived. “There’s the Delaware River,” he said, excitedly gesturing one direction; then swinging his arm toward the opposite side of the city, he added, “and there’s the Schuylkill and the Exposition grounds.”

“At least, we know you don’t need your eyes checked,” Adam quipped.

“Can’t you see them?” Joe asked, eyes wide with astonishment.
“Yes, Joe, I see them,” Adam said, pulling his brother close to his side. “They are pretty small from up here, though.”

“We going back there tomorrow?” Joe pressed and when Adam shook his head, muttered, “Don’t see why we can’t.”

“Because it’s not what I have scheduled,” Adam said bluntly.

Joe started to pout, but the reproachful look in his brother’s eyes made him bite his lower lip, instead. “Well, okay, as long as there’s other fun things to see.”

Amused, Adam shook his head. “Is fun all you ever think about?”

“Don’t you ever think about it?” Joe countered swiftly.

Adam gave his brother’s jaunty straw hat a tug. “Oh, come on. Don’t tell me you’re not enjoying yourself today.”

Joe’s mood softened almost immediately. “No, Adam, I am. Where to next?”

“Carpenter’s Hall, where the first Continental Congress met in 1774,” Adam announced.

“Let’s go, then!” Joe scampered down the stairs, setting a pace Adam feared to keep.

“No wonder Pa has white hair!” the older brother mumbled to himself.

Since Carpenters’ Hall, originally a colonial guildhall, was only a couple of blocks east, the Cartwright brothers were soon standing before it. “Kind of like a little Independence Hall, isn’t it?” Joe observed.

“Hmm?” After looking puzzled for a moment, Adam understood what Joe was saying. “Oh, you mean the architecture? Yes, it’s the same style on a smaller scale.”
Joe threw his palms up. “That’s what I just said, isn’t it?”

“Well, sort of,” Adam chuckled. “And do you remember what this type of architecture is called?”

Joe moaned, raising a hand in defense against the withering look his brother gave him. “I know, I know; all of life is a test. Just wish someone would tell me what’s gonna be on it!”

Adam delivered his finest smirk. “Fine. Architecture will be on it—regularly.”

“Fine,” Joe spat back. “Georgian, like that king’s name.”

“Precisely correct,” Adam said, giving the boy’s cheek a pat of approval, from which Joe flinched away. “Very popular style in Philadelphia.”

Now that he’d passed the test, Joe relaxed. “Yeah, I was noticing that the other day. I was gonna ask you what kind of houses they were.”

Adam looked flattered. “You were?”

Joe scrunched up his nose. “I don’t lie worth a hoot, remember? Yeah, I was; I just forgot.”

Pleased to see that Joe did have a spark of intellectual curiosity, Adam smiled. Perhaps his desire of seeing the boy properly educated was not such an impossible dream, after all.

As it was shortly past noon and their hotel was nearby, the brothers returned there for dinner, where Adam was once more amazed by the amount of food his slender brother was able to pack away. When they finished eating, Adam escorted Joe to a horse car stop, once again refusing to tell him where they were going. The destination proved to be the Penn Treaty Monument on Beach Street in Kensington. Little Joe was less familiar with the earlier period of history from which this landmark derived its existence, so Adam explained how William
Penn had made peace with the Indians under the branches of a spreading elm tree. “Penn did it the right way, buying his land from the Delaware Indians,” Adam commented, “and he never broke the treaty he made with them, although those who came after him were not as scrupulous in keeping it as Penn himself.”

“There’s no tree here,” Joe observed.

“No, it blew down in 1810,” Adam told him, “but this monument marks the spot. It was much revered while it stood. Even when the British occupied Philadelphia during the war, their commander, General Simcoe, stationed a guard beneath it so the soldiers wouldn’t cut it down for firewood.”

Joe looked at the simple obelisk for several minutes, and then asked, “Did Pa do it the right way? The Ponderosa, I mean.”

“In a manner of speaking, though no money changed hands,” Adam observed. “When he saved the life of Chief Winnemucca’s son, Winnemucca granted him permission to stay on the land, and you’re aware, of course, of how often Pa has sent food to the Paiutes and the Washos, as well, during hard times.”

“Tell me again,” Joe cajoled. He’d heard the stories before, from his father, as well as his oldest brother, but he rarely tired of family tales from the days before his birth and Adam told them especially well. As he listened to Adam once more recounting those early days on the Ponderosa, Joe reflected that the motto engraved on the simple monument, “Unbroken Faith,” could have been said of the Cartwrights as much as of William Penn, and his heart filled with pride in his family.

After indulging in lemon ice cream, purchased from a passing wagon labeled Breyers, the Cartwright brothers caught a horse car back to the center of town, where after resting a short time in their room, they again dined downstairs at the Washington. Over plates of veal cutlets with corn oysters and tender asparagus, dripping with drawn butter, they talked of
all they’d seen that day. “Thanks for showing me all those places, Adam,” Joe said sincerely. “Like you said, it really makes the history come alive when you see where things happened.”

Adam couldn’t resist the temptation. “Just one of the benefits of coming back east for your education, Joe.”

Joe pulled a pout. “Oh, you’re not gonna start that up again, are you?”

Adam laughed. “Yes, I am, seeing as we’re paying a visit to your first college tomorrow.”

Suddenly, the expensive cut of meat seemed less appetizing to Little Joe. He had a feeling tomorrow would be one miserable day, but there was no way to get out of it. The time had come to pay the price tag for this wonderful trip. As he pushed the food around on his plate, Joe asked himself what he could possibly do to convince Adam that his mind was set against more schooling. Big brother could be mighty stubborn when he wanted something. But not as stubborn as me, Joe decided, cutting the tip from a spear of asparagus, especially when I know I’m right!

Little Joe’s demeanor, as he and his older brother toured the Gothic stone buildings of the University of Pennsylvania the next morning, was decidedly glum. To him, it had definitely not been worth the long streetcar trip to West Philadelphia, and not even the hearty chicken pie, which he and Adam had ordered for dinner, seemed likely to lift his spirits.

Adam was getting fed up with his brother’s sour attitude, but he felt compelled to create in the boy at least minimal interest in a college education. “If you were to pursue a course of study, what do you think you might prefer?” he asked.

Little Joe stabbed a large chunk of chicken. “Horse training,
cattle ranching, timber management, checkers strategy,” he listed snappishly and popped the bite into his mouth.

Adam folded his arms and leaned over the table. “Could you be serious five minutes?”

“I am being serious, Adam,” Joe insisted, as he forked a bite of flaky crust, along with some of the vegetables in the pie. “There is nothing here I need; it’s all back home. I’m just not cut out for this, but you can’t accept it.” You can’t accept me.

“You promised to keep an open mind,” Adam reminded him, slicing off another piece of ham. “Now, if you’re not interested in liberal arts, how about studying the law? It would certainly benefit the Ponderosa to have legal counsel.”

Little Joe almost choked on the food in his mouth. “Me a lawyer? You gotta be kidding!”

Adam shrugged. “I suppose not. Too likely to need one yourself. Medicine, then?”

Joe shook his head in disbelief. “Oh, sure, Adam, I’d make a great doctor. Can’t hardly stand watchin’ a calf birthed or a horse foaled and you want me doctorin’ people?”

Despite his irritation with his provoking little brother, Adam had to laugh. “No, I don’t think I’d want you doctorin’ me, little buddy, and I have to admit, you’re more likely to need one than to be one.”

Joe sneered contemptuously. “Can’t you think of a new joke? Gotta keeping rehashin’ the same one? You’d think a college-educated man could find new words to say!”

“Oh, all right,” Adam conceded, pushing away his empty plate. “Time to put you out of your misery, I suppose. We need to catch an early supper, so we’ll have time to dress for this evening, so if you’re finished . . .”
“What’s happening this evening?” Joe demanded, using his spoon to scoop up the last bit of savory chicken gravy. “Don’t tell me there’s some school that meets at night!”

“Well, there are, of course, for working men who want to improve themselves,” Adam replied testily, “As education goes, however, I think you’ll find tonight’s class relatively painless. Now come on!”

Joe’s lips puckered. “I want dessert,” he demanded.

Adam exhaled gustily. “All right, fine, if that’ll improve your disposition.”

Joe quickly sported a self-satisfied grin. “Oh, that’ll sweeten me right up, big brother.”

“Well, something sure needs to,” Adam muttered with a shake of his head. “What do you want?”

Little Joe had already discerned that Madeira Cream Pudding was the most expensive dessert on the menu, so he ordered that right away, as Adam surveyed him with an appraising glance from the corner of his eye.

When his young brother’s supper choices also ran to the expensive end of the menu, Adam smiled knowingly, but said nothing. Let the kid have his petty revenge. I can always call him on it, if it gets out of hand, and maybe it’s one way of getting him to cultivate a taste for finer things. They say the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach; maybe it’s also the way to whet a foolish boy’s appetite for spending a few years back east.

As instructed, Joe had laid out his new formal suit, which had arrived from Wanamaker and Brown’s that afternoon, so it would be ready to change into immediately after supper. Toying with his water glass while waiting for the meal to be served, he hinted to be told what their evening’s activity actually was.
“I know it’s not really night school, not with the fancy clothes we’ll be wearing.”

Adam chuckled. “No, it’s not. I know today wasn’t overly enjoyable for you, so I thought I’d make up for that with an evening at the theater.”

“Which one?” Joe asked, eyes sparkling.

“The Arch Street,” Adam replied, “and I might as well tell you now that we’ll be seeing Shakespeare.”

“Not Romeo and Juliet,” Joe pleaded. His sentimental schoolteacher, Abigail Jones, had ruined him forever on that particular work of the immortal bard.

With a throaty laugh, Adam assured him that none of Shakespeare’s tragedies were on the bill that night. “We’ll be seeing a historical drama, Henry V,” he said, “which should be to your liking.”

“Yeah,” Joe murmured with relief, for while he wasn’t as enamored of the English playwright as his older brother, he enjoyed a good play, and this one promised to have plenty of action. He glanced shyly across the table, “If you’ll help me with the history . . .”

“I will,” Adam said warmly. Whenever he and his younger brother had attended any Shakespearean drama together in Virginia City, Sacramento or San Francisco, he had delighted in explaining the play’s background for Joe and was looking forward to doing so tonight. Those evenings at the theater had always seemed to draw the oldest and youngest Cartwright brothers closer, and Adam thought they needed just such a break from the perpetual sparring in which they’d been engaged throughout this trip.

The theater on Arch Street was only a few blocks north, so Adam and Joe walked there. “Sun’s down, and it’s still hot,”
Joe grumbled, running his hand over the sweat-beaded back of his neck.

“I know,” Adam murmured in shared misery. “According to the *Public Ledger*, Philadelphia’s been experiencing unprecedented heat since the summer solstice—just about the time we arrived, in other words.”

“I swear I’m not to blame,” Joe pledged with upraised hand.

“Don’t swear,” Adam said in pretense of scolding; then he threw an arm around Joe’s shoulders and pulled him close. “Let me tell you a little about the play. I’m sure it will please you to know that Henry V, like all the Plantagenets, was more than half-French. In fact, his claim to the throne of France was just about as good as that of the man wearing the crown, although it came through the female line.” Throughout the remainder of the short walk, he offered comments he felt would help his brother better understand what he was about to see.

They paused a moment outside the theater for Adam to admire the stylish marble front. When he noticed, however, that Little Joe’s eyes were fixed on the draped nude figure holding a lyre above the center second-floor window, he grabbed the boy’s elbow and dragged him through one of the three arched doorways.

“Oh, this is nice, real elegant,” Joe murmured as Adam walked up to him after purchasing their tickets.

“One of the best arranged and most comfortable in the city,” Adam observed.

“You been here or is that the guidebook talking?” Joe asked impishly.

“Guidebook,” Adam admitted. “Shall we find our seats?”

Joe nodded and they entered the auditorium. He noticed that
the seats Adam had purchased were quite good, definitely better, in fact, than those he was used to sitting in when he paid for his own ticket. “Thanks, Adam,” he whispered.

“Hmm?”

“We should be able to see real well from here,” Joe amplified.

“Yes, of course; that’s why I requested this location,” Adam said, still not quite following his brother’s train of thought. There was no time to inquire further, however, for the curtain rose, and an actor portraying William Shakespeare spoke the Prologue to Act I. Then the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely entered the scene, and the Archbishop began to describe the king:

“The course of his youth promised it not.
The breath no sooner left his father’s body,
But that his wildness, mortified in him,
Seem’d to die too; yea, at that very moment
Consideration, like an angel, came
And whipp’d the offending Adam out of him,”

Joe looked at his brother with a naughty grin, as if to say that there was another “offending Adam” he sometimes felt like whipping. Seeing Adam arch a reproving eyebrow, he straightened up at once and gave his attention to the play, as he really needed to do if he were to follow the tale told in unfamiliar language.

From time to time, Adam would lean close to his brother’s ear and whisper a quick definition of some Elizabethan word, and
during the intermissions between acts, he clarified for Joe anything that required fuller explanation. As usual, though, the action itself helped Joe understand enough to follow the drama, while Adam’s additions served to take his comprehension to a deeper level.

Everything was going well until the beginning of Act III, when King Henry, dressed for battle, delivered his stirring speech to the English troops:

“Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
Or close the wall up with our English dead.”

Suddenly, a high-pitched giggle pierced the quiet auditorium, and heads turned to stare in censure of the inappropriate response. Adam’s censure took a more physical form; drawing his foot back, he gave his tittering brother’s shin a sharp kick.

“Ow!” Joe yelped.

“Be quiet,” Adam hissed. “One of the finest monologues in the entire play, and you have to distract everyone from hearing it.”

Seeing the attention they were attracting, Joe slid down in his seat. “Sorry,” he whispered. “It’s just that I suddenly realized where you got that saying. You really can’t think of new words for yourself, can you?”

Adam tried to hold onto his irritation, but couldn’t. Joe saw the twitching lips with which his older brother shushed him and knew he was forgiven. With a grin he sat up straight again in time to enjoy the second scene.
“Wasn’t she beautiful?” Joe sighed as they exited the Arch Street Theater.

Adam chuckled as he steered the starry-eyed boy down the street. “Princess Katherine, I presume?”

“Um-hmm,” Joe murmured. Giving his brother a more focused look, he asked, “Say, Adam, you have that play at home, don’t you?”

“Of course, the complete works of Shakespeare. Surely, you’ve at least seen the covers,” Adam replied, with a trace of condescension, for which he almost immediately rebuked himself. After all, if the kid was expressing interest in classical literature, he should be encouraged. “I’m sorry, Joe,” he apologized quickly. “Would you like to read this play?”

“Well, just parts,” Joe muttered, reddening. He thought King Henry’s speech about the “sugar touch” of Katherine’s lips might work well on the girls of Virginia City, but he wasn’t about to trust big brother with a confidence that incriminating. Fishing for a safer response, he mentioned, instead, “I kind of liked what the Dauphin said about his horse.”

“Ah.” Adam began to quote the passage to which he thought Joe was referring. “‘When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk: he trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it; the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes.’”

“Yeah,” Joe said. “Made me think of—”

“Cochise!” Adam burst out laughing. “You and that horse! What’s the matter, little buddy, homesick for your pony?”

No longer were there stars in Joe’s eyes; daggers had replaced them. Trust Adam to find some excuse to twit him, no matter
how hard he worked to avoid it! “Just ‘cause you don’t have any feeling for that flea-bitten nag of yours.”

Adam’s laughter only intensified. “Feeling! Well, I may not treat Sport as if he were human, the way you do Cochise, but he and I have a fine working relationship, as is proper between man and beast.”

“Oh, shut up,” Joe growled. Finally becoming aware of his surroundings, he realized they were not headed toward the hotel. “You don’t seem to have much of a working relationship with north and south tonight,” he snorted.

“I know exactly where I’m going,” Adam said, bringing his mirth under control. “It’s rather customary to take refreshment after a night at the theater, so restaurants near here stay open late for that purpose. Since we had a rather early supper, I thought we might indulge in the custom. Of course, if you’re not interested . . . ”

“I’m not starving,” Joe said, his mood improving at the mere mention of another opportunity to empty his uppity brother’s pockets, “but I could eat a bite or so.”

Certain he could read his brother’s childish motive, Adam worked his tongue inside his mouth before saying, “Whatever you want, but I would advise you to eat lightly this late at night or you will regret it in the morning.”

Knowing that was simple truth, Joe didn’t argue, and Adam was pleased to see that his brother’s selection, when they reached the restaurant, amounted only to a bowl of oyster stew, a small slice of pound cake and coffee. One battle of the budget won, with numerous others yet to be fought, Adam had little doubt.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

When Little Joe stumbled, bleary-eyed, from his
room the next morning, Adam folded the newspaper he’d been perusing. “Ah, Sleeping Beauty awakens,” he teased.

Joe yawned. “Well, you could’ve woke me, if we needed an earlier start.”

“I’m averse to wrestling grizzly bears before my morning coffee,” Adam said, chuckling at the scowl that met the remark. “Actually, I figured we could both use a little extra sleep after coming in so late last night.”

“Umm, good figuring,” Joe murmured, stretching his arms behind his back. As he looked more closely at his brother, his brow wrinkled at the familiar black shirt and pants that Adam customarily wore back home. “You’re not dressed,” he said in shock.

“I most certainly am!” Adam chortled.

“Not for the East,” Joe insisted, “unless you mean to hang around the room all day.”

“Are you that tired?” Adam asked with a smile.

As Adam had expected, Joe hooted at the idea. “Course not. What are we—”

“Having breakfast, for a start,” Adam chuckled, “unless you’ve lost your newly prodigious appetite.” At the firm shake of Joe’s head, he added, “Then hustle into your duds, little buddy.”

“Ranch clothes?” Joe asked.

“Whatever you like,” Adam said. “I just thought we were due a day with more relaxed garb, even if the easterners do think we’re western boors.”

“Thanks!” Fully awake now, Joe dashed into his room, pulled off his nightshirt for a quick wash at the basin and dressed
in the comfortable gray slacks and tan shirt that he’d worn the first couple of days on the train, which had been freshly laundered since their arrival in Philadelphia.

Little Joe had learned over the past several days that Adam simply would not respond to questions about the day’s activities until breakfast was served. Being especially curious today because of the easing of older brother’s stringent wardrobe standards, Joe all but exploded with the question the minute the waitress presented his sausage and waffles. “What you got planned for today, Adam?”

Smiling to himself as he cut his slice of Smithfield ham, Adam replied, “Not a thing.”

Joe almost dropped his fork. “Huh?”

Relishing the look of total surprise on his brother’s face, Adam laughed. “Your choice today, little buddy. What would you like to do, excluding the Exhibition itself, that is?”

“Y-you’re kidding, right?” Joe stammered.

“Nope,” Adam said laconically. He put the meat in his mouth, chewing slowly to savor the distinctive flavor the pigs’ diet of peanuts gave to pork raised in Virginia.

“You mean it? I really get to choose?” Joe pressed, eyes wide with wonder.

“I mean it,” Adam said, feeling slightly chagrined when he saw how much that freedom of choice obviously meant to his young brother. Should’ve listened to Pa, I guess, when he talked to me about letting the kid have some voice. “So what’s it to be?”

Joe didn’t need to give the decision much thought. Obviously, he wanted to pick a place that Adam himself wouldn’t select, as he’d eventually see everything his big brother considered worthwhile, anyway. “Could it be the zoo?” he asked
Feeling as if he were the one being tested today, Adam nodded. “The zoological park it is.” Joe had made exactly the choice he’d expected, that assumption the real reason behind his personal wardrobe choice that morning. Though he would not tell Joe until later, he planned to combine the trip to the zoo with a walk through one of the rustic sections of Fairmount Park, and eastern suits simply weren’t appropriate for a ramble through the woods. Lifting his coffee cup, he couldn’t resist a little teasing, however. “Unless you would prefer to tour the House of Refuge for juvenile offenders, that is. They admit visitors on Saturdays, and we could get tickets at the Public Ledger Building. Might give you extra incentive to stay out of trouble.”

For a moment Little Joe thought his brother was serious. Then his characteristic grin broke wide, and he gave Adam’s knee a playful tap under the table. “You had me going there for a minute, Adam!”

“Well, it doesn’t happen often,” Adam laughed. “Fellow has to pick his shots with you, kid.”

Joe tapped his index finger against his cheek. “Hmm. I might just have to drop a line to Pa about you taking pot shots at his favorite son.”

Eyebrow arched, Adam surveyed his brother coolly. “I could probably drop Pa a line or two he might find interesting, as well, ‘favorite son.’”

Good-naturedly conceding that round to his older brother, Joe laughed and thrust out his hand. “I won’t if you won’t. Deal?”

Adam reached across the table to close the bargain with a handshake. “Deal.”
Having finished breakfast, the two brothers again caught the horse cars out to the narrow strip on the west side of the Schuylkill River, where America’s first zoological park had opened only two years before. A number of families were standing in line at the small, peak-roofed building that served as entrance, so it was several minutes before Adam handed the gatekeeper two bits each for himself and Joe and they were able to enter.

Once inside, Adam found keeping up with his lively little brother almost impossible, for Joe dashed from one pavilion to the next, only slowing down when he spotted some exotic animal hitherto seen only in pictures in a book. Pausing to study the attractive architecture of the towered Carnivora Building, Adam suddenly realized that Joe was nowhere in sight, and he hurried in to find his young brother staring, mouth gaping, at lions, tigers and other ferocious beasts.

Leaving that exhibit, Joe pummeled toward the next building, and Adam chuckled when he saw that it was the Monkey House. *Now, who says opposites attract?* he mused as he watched Joe mimicking the mobile facial expressions of the chimpanzee. *May have to rethink all I’ve been taught about magnetic principles after a demonstration like this.* “Trying to prove Darwin’s theories?” he suggested as he sauntered up to Joe.

“Hmm?” Joe murmured, eyes fixed on the simian.

“Darwin’s theories on evolution,” Adam began, stopping at the tight frown replacing Joe’s animated smile.

“No lectures today, professor,” Joe declared. “You said it was my choice today, and listening to you spout all your supposed wisdom on every subject under the sun is not what I choose.”

“Well, it wouldn’t hurt you to learn a little in the midst of the fun, would it?” Adam demanded irritably.
“Yup, it’d be downright painful,” Joe insisted as he walked toward the cage containing a small, black-haired monkey.

With a sigh, Adam followed. Maybe a college education would be lost on a kid as determinedly ignorant as Little Joe.

After spending extensive time with the monkeys, the Cartwrights left that pavilion, and Joe tore toward an outdoor enclosure with a group of people surrounding it. Adam charged after him to see the zebra and other denizens of the African grasslands.

Whistling, Joe craned his neck back to look up at the long-necked giraffe near the fence. “Did you ever think they’d be that tall, Adam?” he asked breathlessly.

“Of course,” Adam said pedantically. “I’ve read their vital statistics and compared their height with that of buildings before.”

“Statistics!” Joe screeched in horror. “Oh, Adam, no! Look at him. What a beautiful piece of work he is!”

Smiling, Adam looked more closely at the animal, trying to see it through Joe’s exuberant eyes, and had to admit the kid had a point. An animal like this should be seen and enjoyed and analysis of his makeup left for another time. “Yes, as beautiful a piece of architecture as any building, I must admit.”

Joe clapped him on the back. “That’s better. Now, no more talk about statistics, brother. They’ll take the fun right out of anything.”

Adam chuckled. “Well, we wouldn’t want that, now, would we, Joe?” He turned to his right, where his younger brother had been moments before. “Joe? Joe!”

“Over here,” Little Joe called. “You gotta see this, Adam!”
Shaking his head, Adam walked over to see “this,” which turned out to be the rhinoceros donated to the zoological park by P. T. Barnum. “Will you quit doing that?” he scolded.

“Doing what?” Joe asked, turning back to the animal before his brother could answer. “Hey, Pete,” he called to the rhino, having read the animal’s name on the plaque outside the cage. “How you like it behind those bars? Yeah, that’s what I thought. Feel the same way myself, fellow.”

“Sure sign of addled wits,” Adam snickered, “when you start talking to the animals. Oh, but wait. You always did—” to that persnickety pinto of yours, at any rate.”

“You’re just jealous,” Joe accused, knuckling his brother’s biceps, “’cause your uppity chestnut can’t carry on a conversation.” Cackling, he careened toward the bear pits.

Adam rolled his eyes in disbelief. Sure, he talked to Sport, but he didn’t delude himself into thinking the horse talked back. When it came to Cochise, however, his little brother lost all sense of reality; he really did think that temperamental little black and white communicated with him. Adam sauntered down the path to stand next to Joe, who was leaning over the stone wall to gaze at the grizzly bear in the deep pit.

“Hey, Adam, meet Rose,” Joe said with a grin.

“Oh speaking terms already?” Adam twitted.

“Of course not,” Joe snorted. “She’s just a bear, big brother.”

“Ah, I see,” Adam teased. “It’s only horses that talk.”

Joe’s nose wrinkled. “Only the intelligent ones. That’s why you got no experience—nothin’ smart to listen to.”

“Why, you little”—but Joe was gone again, running across the
road to see Jennie the elephant, whose pavilion was always surrounded by children. Adam couldn’t help noticing the similarity between Joe’s open delight and that of the other youngsters watching the elephant. What must it be like to let your heart take wing that way and not worry about how people perceived you? Ah, to be a child again, Adam thought; then a dark cloud passed across his thoughts. When had he ever been a child?

“That’s sad,” Joe was whispering as his brother ambled up to his side.

“Hmm?” For a moment Adam feared he might have spoken his dismal thought aloud.

“That chain around her leg. I’d hate that.”

“Joe, Joe,” Adam chided gently as he rested his folded arms on the fence between them and the elephant. “It’s a dumb beast; it doesn’t have the same feelings as a man.”

“You don’t know that,” Joe argued. “Horses like to run free. Why wouldn’t an elephant need freedom just as much?”

Adam cocked his head and gazed thoughtfully at his brother. “Maybe so, Joe, maybe so. You ready for something to eat?”

“Half starved, but I don’t want to leave ‘til we see it all, Adam.”

Adam draped an arm around his brother’s shoulder and turned him around. “You don’t have to leave; there’s a restaurant on the grounds.”

Joe grinned. “In that case, brother, lead on. I have worked up a hearty appetite out here this morning.”

Adam uttered a throaty groan. “Oh, I wouldn’t doubt that for one minute.”
The zoo restaurant had an almost picnic-like atmosphere, with its tables set beneath towering shade trees. The menu was simple, compared with that of the hotel dining room, but neither boy was likely to go away hungry. Joe ordered a large bowl of beef stew, while Adam opted for a salad of chicken and celery, dressed with mustard, vinegar, sweet oil, egg yolk, cayenne pepper and salt. Both boys indulged in a plate of sliced, ripe tomatoes and selected wedges of cool, fresh watermelon for dessert.

“Seems like a shame to pen wild animals up this way,” Joe observed, thinking of the bars and chains again.

“How else would you ever see them?” Adam pointed out. “Not everyone can make a safari to Africa or Australia.”

“Yeah, I know,” Joe admitted, “but such small cages, Adam! You’d think they’d make ‘em bigger, give the animals room to run.”

Adam smiled. “Not a bad idea, buddy. You know, with the proper education, you could develop those ideas and design—”

Joe jumped to his feet. “You’ve got the proper education. You design ‘em.” He stalked off in a huff.

Leaving the last of his watermelon, Adam chased after Joe. Catching up, he snared his brother’s elbow and pulled him to a stop. “Sorry. No more lectures on education the rest of the day, I promise.”

Easily appeased since he was enjoying himself so thoroughly, Joe smiled, and the Cartwright brothers walked into the aviary arm in arm. When they came out, Joe saw a balloon vender just outside the door and bought a bright yellow one, gazing up at it, face beaming with delight at the way it danced against the cotton-clouded sky.

“You are such a child!” Adam chuckled, secretly envying that
carefree spirit.

His pleasure in the sunny shape spoiled, Joe frowned and put some distance between himself and his brother as he headed for the pavilion exhibiting mammals and birds from Australia.

“Boy, he’s touchy today,” Adam muttered, trailing behind.

Next they visited the deer and buffalo parks, and to make amends, Adam recounted the story of Pa’s first buffalo hunt on the trail west, congratulating himself on how easily he seemed to have dissipated Joe’s fit of temper. Making short work of the beaver dam and prairie dog town, both of which were familiar sights to boys from the West, they then toured the winter house for tropical animals.

Afterwards, walking toward the historic home that housed the snakes and white mice, Joe overheard a small child whimpering. Turning, he saw a little brown-haired girl, pointing at another balloon vender with one hand, while with her other she wiped her tear-stained cheeks.

“Darling, I’m sorry, but we can’t afford one,” he heard the child’s mother sadly explain.

Looking at the balloon in his hand, Joe moved quickly toward them and tipped his hat to the woman. “Ma’am, I wonder if you could help a stranger to your city,” he said.

Taken aback by the forward young man, the mother pulled her daughter close to her side. “Well, I don’t know how I could assist you, young man.”

Adam, coming up in time to hear the concern in her voice, started to apologize for his brazen brother, but Joe only raised his voice to speak over him. “It’s like this, ma’am. I’m getting awful tired of carrying this balloon around, and I was wondering, maybe, if your little girl would take over the chore for me.”
“Oh, Mama!” cried the child, eyes luminous with hope.

The mother’s view of the forward young man underwent a radical change, and she smiled warmly into his kind eyes. “Why, yes, young man, I believe she would be willing.”

Flashing his brilliant smile, Joe knelt to tie the balloon string to the little girl’s wrist. “So it won’t fly away,” he explained.

“Thank the young man, Jenny,” the mother directed, and Jenny did so by planting a kiss on Little Joe’s cheek.

When Joe stood up, he saw Adam looking at him. “I’m sorry I interfered,” Adam said and tried to express his pride by adding, “You’re quite a kid.”

Still disgruntled with his older brother, Joe glowered. “Yeah, you already told me that, remember?”

Adam’s breath caught in his throat. The offense he had thought so easily smoothed over was obviously still eating away at his brother, beneath the calm exterior. “I was trying to compliment you, Joe.”

Joe shrugged it off. “Yeah, I know, but you were right before; balloons are for kids.”

As they walked toward the exit, Adam pondered how to heal the hurt, his young brother’s slower pace continuing to hint at inner pain, but he couldn’t come up with any easy solution. Like Pa always said, it was hard to call words back, once spoken. Maybe a direct apology was the best way. “Joe, I didn’t mean anything by it,” he finally said as they were leaving the zoo.

“I know. It’s okay, Adam,” Joe replied, and though the words were the ones Adam had wanted to hear, somehow there wasn’t enough force behind them to make them convincing.
“If you’re not too tired, I have an idea,” Adam began.

Joe cut him off abruptly. “You said today was my choice!”

“It is,” Adam assured him with deliberate patience. “This is only a suggestion. If you don’t like it, you can choose something else.” At this point he would even have consented to visiting the Exhibition itself, just to bring back Joe’s child-like smile, though the change would play havoc with his meticulously outlined schedule. When Joe made no response, he asked, “Want to hear it?”

“I guess,” Joe whispered, feeling ashamed of his foul mood after what had really been an enjoyable excursion. Not quite ready to give up his affronted attitude, he added, lips pouting, “It had better not be anything educational, though.”

Adam solemnly raised his palm toward his brother. “I promised, and I do hereby reaffirm my vow. Not one elucidating word will pass these lips until the next rising of the sun.”

A soft smile flickered on Joe’s lips. “Okay, what’s the idea?”

“East Park,” Adam replied. “A few sights to see, but mostly just some pleasant scenery: rocks, trees, ravines.”

Joe’s smile grew less tentative. “That sounds real good. How do we get there?”

“Just cross the Girard Avenue Bridge over there and then follow the carriage road underneath it on the other side,” Adam said, pointing, and the brothers began to walk toward the northeastern section of Fairmount Park.

The further they went, the broader Joe’s smile became. “Oh, this is great,” he sighed in contentment as they passed beneath arching oaks and gazed up at the cliffs overhanging the curves of the river.
“If you don’t think this is being too educational,” Adam said, pointing to a structure under construction, “I’ll mention that that is the new water reservoir for the city.”

Joe chuckled. “I guess I can handle that much.” He licked his lips. “Look, I’m sorry I’ve been such a bear this afternoon, Adam.”

“Serves me right for taking you to see Rose,” Adam chuckled. He cuffed Joe’s neck and drew him close. “It’s okay, kid. I had some of it coming.”

Joe nodded in agreement, but put out his hand. “Peace treaty?”

Adam laughed and gave the slender, but strong hand a solid shake. “And may we keep it as well as William Penn did his.”

“Got my doubts about that,” Joe admitted ruefully, remembering how briefly any pact he made with Adam tended to hold, “but I’ll try.”

“And I will, too.”

Near the lower end of the reservoir, they walked up a romantic ravine and stopped to refresh themselves in the cold, clear water of a rivulet making its way to the Schuylkill. Just to the north, they came to a stone colonial mansion. “Mount Pleasant,” Adam responded to Joe’s inquiring look, “once the property of Benedict Arnold.”

“Boo!” Joe hissed noisily. “Who wants to see that traitor’s home?”

Slipping an arm around his brother’s waist, Adam amplified, “Well, he never actually lived there, though he bought it as a wedding gift for his bride. The state of Pennsylvania confiscated it because of his treason.”

“High price to pay for going your own way,” Joe murmured,
thinking of how much losing the Ponderosa would mean to him.

Despite his earlier promise, Adam couldn’t resist the temptation to wax didactic. “Yes, our homes and families are always affected by our actions. Something to remember, little buddy, next time you’re tempted to ‘go your own way.’”

Joe jerked out of his brother’s grasp. “Doggone you, Adam! We’re supposed to be doing what I want today, and I dadgum sure don’t want to listen to another one of your brotherly lectures. You promised!”

Though Adam might have made a case that admonitions concerning responsible behavior did not fall under his promise to curtail educational lectures, he conceded easily. “Okay, buddy. Today is your day. No lectures ‘til tomorrow—and then maybe just from the preacher."

“We going to church?” Joe asked.

Adam shrugged. “I figured we would. Not much open in staid old Philadelphia on a Sunday, anyway.”

“Yeah, I guess it beats sitting around the hotel all day,” Joe agreed.

Adam shook his head, amused by his brother’s need for constant activity. “Ah, the boundless energy of youth!”

“Yeah? Well, let’s see if you can keep up, old man,” Joe challenged and took off.

With a groan Adam gave chase. He knew from attempts back home that there was no catching Joe when he had a head start. For that matter, it was getting harder by the year to best the kid in a race that started even. Adam had length of limb on his side, but Joe seemed to have more native athletic talent, not to mention more practice at eluding some earnest pursuer, whether Pa, one of his brothers or the irate father of a pretty girl.
When he finally caught up, Adam discovered his brother seated beside a rippling stream, pulling off his balmorals, which he’d learned were more comfortable for long walks than his western boots. Huffing, Adam dropped beside him. “If I hadn’t made you that promise, I’d be giving you some strong words about taking off like that.”

Joe grinned. “Didn’t it feel great, though?”

Leaning back on his elbows, Adam smiled. The run had, indeed, done him good. “Planning a swim?” he queried with a glance at Joe’s bare feet.

“Just gonna wade a little. My feet are hot.”

“Be my guest,” Adam said, lying down and folding his arms behind his neck. He closed his eyes, muscles relaxing as he listened to the splashing sounds coming from the stream. His breathing slowed, and he drifted between the realms of sleep and wakefulness until a dash of cold water slapped him alert. Eyes jolting open, Adam saw his brother’s open hands, dripping wet, inches from his face. With a quick grab he imprisoned Joe’s wrists and pulled him to the ground. “You little brat,” he scolded, rolling Joe onto his back and crouching over him. “I oughta toss you bodily into that creek.”

“Go right ahead,” Joe giggled. “Won’t bother me none.”

Adam sat back, laughing. “All right. You win that round.” Looking around, he noticed that the sun was starting to drop. “About time for supper. I presume you’re hungry?”

“Oh, always, big brother,” Joe replied with a maddening grin. “You can count on that at least three times a day. Do we have to go back to the hotel?”

“Only if that’s your choice,” Adam said, preparing to spring another surprise. “Strawberry Mansion up ahead has been turned into a restaurant, so we can eat there if you like.”
Any place different sounded good to Joe, so he lifted his arm for Adam to help him up, and after putting his socks and shoes back on, he was ready to leave. The restaurant was only a short distance away, atop a hill with an excellent view of the surrounding countryside. After enjoying it a few minutes, the Cartwright went inside and ordered. While Strawberry Mansion did not serve the traditional catfish and coffee available at other restaurants near the Falls of Schuylkill, fish was prominent among the menu choices, and both Adam and Joe selected that as an entrée. Adam took his boiled with egg sauce and mashed potatoes, while Joe opted for pan-fried crappie with slices of potato, fried with onions and sweet peppers. Strawberry short cake, topped with rich, whipped cream, completed the meal, and both boys declared themselves as stuffed to the gills as if they were being bred for the table.

“Could you tolerate one more suggestion from your big brother?” Adam asked as they were leaving the restaurant.

“Oh, I guess you’ve behaved well enough to earn that,” Joe chuckled.

“Amazing what a good meal will do for your disposition,” Adam teased. “Come this way.” Pausing a few moments to admire the stone bridge of the Reading Railroad, Adam crossed it, pulling Joe along. “There, take a look,” he said.

Joe smiled at the low building, from which emerged a couple of men carrying long poles. “Hey, could we go fishing?” he asked eagerly.

“I think you have to be a member, Joe,” Adam said. “I just wanted you to know that there were places to get away from the bustle of city life, if—”

“Adam . . .” Joe drawled out in warning.

“I remember,” Adam assured him. “I’ll say no more. Anyway,
it’s getting late. We should head back to the hotel.”

“Can we take a boat?” Joe asked.

Adam smiled at his brother’s newfound love of the water. “Maybe you inherited some of the salt water in Pa’s veins, after all.”

“Did you?”

Adam grew wistful. “Yeah, some. All the stories he told when I was a kid. Sometimes I think I’d like to sail off on a sleek clipper and see the world the way he did.”

Joe bit his lip nervously, disturbed by the thought of Adam’s leaving home again. As irritated as he sometimes got with his older brother’s imperial ways, he knew the Ponderosa just wouldn’t be the same without Adam, but he said nothing, covering his emotions by running down the ramp to the steamboat waiting to take them back to Fairmount Park.

As they steamed toward their destination, Adam puzzled over his boisterous brother’s unusual quietness. Probably just tired, he decided. I know I am. It’s been a long day, a series of long days. Maybe it’s a good thing Philadelphia does shut down for the Sabbath. He draped an arm across Joe’s shoulders as they leaned over the rail and felt Joe lean close, kind of the way he had when he was a child. Smiling, Adam ruffled the boy’s wind-tangled curls and knew by the smile he received in return that all was once more at peace between the Cartwright brothers. Now, if we could just keep it!

CHAPTER TWELVE

Melodious chimes were ringing as Adam and Joseph Cartwright walked toward Christ Church that sunny Sunday morning. “It’s an eight-bell chime,” Adam observed, “supposedly the oldest in America.”
“Yeah?” an impressed Little Joe murmured. He looked up at the huge white bell tower gracing the brick building. “Is it still Georgian, even with that?”

“Yes, it’s Georgian. You’re getting to be quite an expert on that style of architecture, my boy.”

Joe chuckled. “Not too hard when almost every building in town has the same style.”

“Remind me to point out some other varieties,” Adam said, hoping to whet his brother’s interest in that field of study.

“Don’t get your hopes up,” Joe cautioned, reading his brother’s mind.

“I don’t want to argue today, Joe,” Adam said. “Shall we go in?”

The morning service had not yet begun, so the brothers took a few moments to examine the interior of the colonial church, ornate with fluted columns and sweeping arches supporting the balconies on either side. Walking down the center aisle between the enclosed pews, Little Joe fingered a brass plaque on the end of one. “Look, Adam,” he whispered in awe. “It’s George Washington’s pew.”

“He worshipped here regularly during the early years of the government,” Adam said, “as did many others whose names you would recognize from history: Patrick Henry, James Madison, Betsy Ross, even Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin on occasion.” He decided not to mention names from the opposing side of the Revolutionary conflict, such as Lord Howe and General Cornwallis and certainly not Benedict Arnold. While all of them had also worshipped in the historic church, Adam didn’t trust his impulsive younger brother’s response and judged silence to be a wise precaution.

The service began, and the Cartwright brothers relaxed in the
quiet peace that pervaded the house of worship. In fact, Joe almost fell asleep, simply because he was still. *Just about the only time he’s been still since we got here*, Adam observed, smiling at the nodding chestnut head beside him. **Better keep things light today.**

As the congregation began to file out after the service, Joe noticed that a number of people were ascending a staircase and turned to give his older brother a questioning look.

“They lead to the steeple,” Adam said, stifling a moan when he saw the light flash in Joe’s eyes. “I suppose nothing will do but for you to climb them.”

“Yup, can’t pass it up, seein’ as how it’s historical and all,” Joe said, adding with a mocking grin, “but I guess you could wait down here, grandpa, if you think it’s too much for your tired old legs.”

“Not on your life do you get out of my sight, sonny,” Adam chuckled, with a grand gesture toward the stairs. “Lead on.”

Joe took the steps two at a time, so Adam felt compelled to do the same, arriving at the east window only moments after his younger brother. Looking down, they saw the Delaware River almost at their feet, and to the south its shining surface met the waters of the Schuylkill River at League Island.

“There’s the Navy Yard,” Adam said, pointing downriver a little north of the junction, “and there, across the river, that’s Camden, New Jersey.”

“How far to the Atlantic Ocean?” Joe asked.

“Too far to see,” Adam replied, chuckling. “Around sixty miles, I think.”

“Wish we could see it,” Joe murmured.

Adam rested a hand lightly on the boy’s shoulder. “You will,
when we go to New Haven. Might even take a dip in it.”

Joe turned back to smile at his older brother. “That’d be nice, especially if it’s as hot there as here.”

“Yeah, I know, another scorcher,” Adam commiserated. “From what I’ve read in the papers, it’s hot everywhere this summer, but it should be a bit cooler at the seashore.”

“Still three weeks away,” Joe sighed. “I may melt by then.”

They turned their gaze inward and enjoyed the magnificent view the almost two-hundred-foot-high steeple afforded. The tall white standpipe of the Kensington Water Works stood out above the steeples of numerous churches, and seven large patches of green dotted the city, the public squares of Philadelphia. Beyond them lay the largest green spot of all, Fairmount Park itself.

“Seen enough?” Adam asked.

“Yeah, and ready to see dinner,” Joe said.

“You can wait an hour, can’t you?” Adam grunted. “You had a late breakfast.”

“Well, sure, I can wait,” Joe muttered, “but you said there wasn’t anything to do in Philadelphia on Sunday.”

“Not much,” Adam admitted, “but I thought we might walk down by the docks since it’s only a couple of blocks from here. Then I’d planned to show you a couple of other places—exteriorly only, of course.”

Joe agreed readily, and the brothers soon found themselves overlooking the Delaware River. Like the Chestnut Street Wharf that Joe had visited earlier, the one at the end of Market, which he and his brother saw today, was a passenger wharf.
Adam couldn’t resist pointing out that Joe hadn’t needed to go off on his own. “Everything worth seeing, both in Philadelphia and at the Exposition, is included in my plans, little brother,” he proclaimed, “so if you’ll just trust me, you can have it all.”

Joe sighed. “Tell me again, big brother; I’m afraid I’ll forget if I don’t hear that every other day.”

With an exasperating grin, Adam said, “So am I, little brother, so am I.” After they watched the ships glide by for a short while, he led the way up Front Street to Arch, turned west and walked to an unassuming two-story house with attic dormer at number 239.

“Am I supposed to notice different architecture or something?” Joe queried, rolling his eyes.

“No, you’re supposed to ask what happened here,” Adam replied. When Joe cocked his head with a quizzical expression, Adam said, “This is where Betsy Ross made the first American flag.”

“No kidding? The very house where the first stars and stripes was sewn?” Joe asked, looking at the simple structure with more respect.

Adam shrugged. “According to legend, at least. Just a common house, Joe, like most places where uncommon things happen.”

“Nothing common about the Ponderosa,” Joe quipped, “and uncommon things happen there all the time!”

Adam chuckled, pleased to note Joe’s pride in the home his older brother had helped to design. “Gotta agree with you there, buddy.”

Joe grinned. “Hey! Now this house has been the site of another historic event, Adam Cartwright agreeing with something his kid brother said.”
“Oh, shut up,” Adam scolded, cuffing the boy’s ear so lightly Joe knew he was only playing. “There’s another historic sight a couple of blocks north. We’ll have a quick look at that and get some dinner.”

Mimicking the gesture Adam had used at the church steeple, Joe made a sweeping movement with his hand. “Lead on, professor, lead on.”

Three blocks west, Adam stopped outside a barred enclosure. Pointing through the iron bars, he said, “Benjamin Franklin and his wife are buried here.”

Joe gazed with respect at the simple stone slabs covering the graves. “He was a great man, wasn’t he? I used to like reading about him in school, how he discovered electricity and wrote Poor Richard’s Almanac. Lots of good sayings in that book.”

“A great diplomat and statesman, as well,” Adam added.

Not wanting to be outdone, Joe contributed, “Yeah. Part of the Continental Congress, ambassador to France . . .”

Adam tipped his brother’s straw hat forward over his nose. “Ah, so you did pay attention to a few of your school lessons.”

“The ones I liked,” Joe admitted with a nonchalant shrug.

“Few and far between, no doubt,” Adam twitted. When Joe made no response, Adam chuckled. “Well, your mind must be on your empty belly, if you’re not going to rise to that bait.”

“Fish are more likely to rise to bait when they are hungry, older brother,” Joe snickered. “I’d’ve thought you’d know that much about fishing, even if you did spend your best years back here learning a bunch of useless nonsense. No wonder I always come home with the longest string!”
Adam snagged Joe’s elbow and turned their steps toward Chestnut Street. “Oh? I always thought it was because you took the fish off Hoss’s line and added them to your own.”

“Not just Hoss’s,” Joe laughed, “but I haven’t had to resort to that for years.”

As they came to the Washington Hotel, Little Joe automatically turned for the door, but Adam pulled him past the entrance. “What’s up?” Joe demanded. “I thought we were having dinner next.”

“We are,” Adam said, “but, personally, I like a change of menu occasionally. Let’s try the Girard House’s dining room.”

“Hey, thanks!” Joe bubbled. While it wasn’t the Continental, Joe knew from his perusal of the guidebook that the Girard House was considered Philadelphia’s second-best hotel. The food there was bound to be good.

The Girard House was only a few doors north of the Washington Hotel, so the Cartwright brothers were soon seated and examining the extensive menu. Feeling the heat of the day, Little Joe opted for a cold meal of lobster salad, dressed the same way Adam’s chicken salad at the zoo had been, with a side of sliced tomatoes once again and an exotic relish of pickled mango. Lobster, of course, had the added advantage of being expensive.

Adam selected hamburger steak, a dish made famous at Delmonico’s Restaurant in New York, potato pudding and English peas in mint sauce. Then, as if to point out his little brother’s greed by an extra display of generosity, he ordered a platter of oysters on the half-shell for them to share.

Little Joe picked a shell from the iced plate and let the oyster slide down his throat. “So we just relax the rest of the afternoon?” he asked after swallowing. “Nothing’s open, you said.”
“Except the libraries,” Adam amended, reaching for an oyster. “I thought we’d visit the Philadelphia.”

Food forgotten, Joe raked the ceiling with disgusted eyes. “Books? We’re gonna spend the afternoon looking at stacks of books? Professor, someone has got to teach you how to have fun!”

Adam grinned, propping his elbows on the table and leaning forward. “Oh, and you’re just the one to teach me, I suppose?”

“Yeah!” Joe shot back.

Adam reached across the table to pat his brother’s hand. “What did I tell you at the dock? Just trust me, Joe.”

Joe groaned elaborately. “I only thought saying it every other day would satisfy you. I should have known better!”

Chuckling, Adam sat back, for their food had just arrived, and conversation was suspended in the enjoyment of the exceptional cuisine of the Girard House.

The Philadelphia Library was only a couple of blocks from the restaurant, so the walk there was a brief one. Adam could not help noticing the disgruntlement plastered all over his brother’s face. “I think you’ll find a number of interesting things to see,” he said, by way of appeasement, “but we won’t stay long.”

“Well, that’s good news, at least,” Joe grunted.

“Oh, don’t be such a sour belly,” Adam scolded. “Have I led you astray yet?” He pointed at the statue of Benjamin Franklin over the entrance. “Why, look! There’s your hero, shining down on you.”

Despite himself, Joe couldn’t hang onto his determination to be bored. “Okay, that was worth seeing,” he admitted. Then
he flashed a naughty grin. “So, can we go now?”

Adam pressed a palm against Joe’s back and pushed him forward. “Trust me. There’s more ‘worth seeing’ inside.”

They walked into a long room, lined floor to ceiling on four sides with shelves of books. A balcony with books arranged the same way circled the room, too. “Do you suppose anybody’s read all these?” Joe whispered.

“Oh, probably not,” Adam conceded. “The point is that you could research almost any topic of interest to you.”

“I guess so,” Joe admitted with grudging respect.

Adam directed him up the stairs to the balcony and led the way to a huge bust of a helmeted woman.

“Whoa! Look at the size of that gal!” Joe exclaimed. “She’d be a handful, even for Hoss.” With a laugh he added, “Hoss has enough trouble managing Bessie Sue, but this gal could probably throw him nine times out of nine.” Propping his elbows on the thin wooden rail surrounding the balcony, he leaned back for a better look at the bust towering over his head. Joe, in fact, barely reached her eyebrows.

Adam shushed him with twitching lips. “Try to remember you’re in a library. People come here to read, not to be entertained by some loud-mouthed kid from Nevada.”

“Just goes to show eastern folk ain’t got good sense,” Joe snorted.

“It’s a bust of Minerva,” Adam said, trying to bring Joe’s mind back to instructive purpose, “and formerly presided over the Continental Congress.”

Joe’s eyes twinkled with sass. “Okay, so she’s old, as well as big.”
Shaking his head, Adam hooked his brother’s elbow and pulled him toward the next artifact, which was a desk that had once belonged to William Penn.

“Wouldn’t Pa love something like that?” Joe tittered. “All those little cubbyholes to stash papers in?”

Adam chuckled. “Maybe in his room. Can’t afford to have something like this downstairs.”

Little Joe stepped blindly into the trap. “Oh, yeah? Why’s that?”

“Too tall for him to see over,” Adam said with a straight face, “so he’d have to face the wall.”

“So?”

Adam grinned and released the verbal loop of his snare. “Can’t keep his eye off you that long, little buddy. At the very least, you’d be putting your feet up on the furniture the minute his back was turned.”

Joe groaned, finally realizing that his leg had been pulled in another of Adam’s carefully laid traps. “And you can put your big stompers all over the furniture right in front of his face and he never says a word,” the younger boy complained. “Why is that?” His nose wrinkled in perplexed thought.

Adam lifted an eyebrow in such a good imitation of Pa’s expression that Joe almost jumped. “Privilege of age, boy,” Adam proclaimed with a smirk, “just the honor due the first-born.”

“It just plain ain’t fair, Adam,” Joe declared with a petulant pout.

Adam patted his shoulder in exaggerated consolation. “Well, come on back to the hotel, little buddy, and you can put your feet on anything you like.”
Good nature easily restored, Joe grinned back, and after looking at a few more objects of interest in the library, he and Adam returned to the Washington. At Adam’s suggestion, they both spent the remainder of the afternoon writing letters home.

Joe’s letter to his father fairly sparkled with enthusiasm as he expressed appreciation for receiving permission to come and gave assurances that he and Adam were getting along fairly well and having a good time. He described the historic sights he’d seen and mentioned his enjoyment of boating on the river. He wrote with energetic flourish:

Now I’m a sailor like you, Pa! Well, maybe not quite like you, but I feel you close when we’re on a boat, even if it is just a river and not the ocean, like you sailed. Hey, maybe I’ll just ship out, long as I’m back here! (Just kidding, Pa; you know I wouldn’t leave you, not like that oldest boy of yours.) Miss you lots.

Love,

Joe

Little Joe was somewhat more honest about how things were going in his epistle to Hoss, beginning with “Adam is being his usual pain-in-the-neck old sober sides, but I’m having fun, in spite of him.” Then he recounted some of his adventures in Philadelphia, being especially descriptive of the trip to the zoo and East Park because he knew that would interest Hoss most. After supper he laid out his clothes for the next day, not wanting anything as mundane as wardrobe selection to slow him down on his first real visit to the
Standing in line at the Centennial Exposition’s main entrance, Joe, with typical restlessness, sent his eyes searching all directions for interesting sights with which to pass the time. Outside the grounds, to the east, he noticed a long row of buildings, some wooden, some bright red brick, but all covered with huge signboards and festooned with flags. “What’s that, Adam?” he asked.

Adam turned to see what his brother was looking at. “Oh, that’s just Shantyville,” he said with a disdainful brush of his hand. “According to the Public Ledger, there’s nothing worth seeing there, just a lot of low shows, saloons, shooting galleries, that kind of thing.”

“Hey!” Joe cried, eyes lighting with interest.

Adam took firm hold on his brother’s shoulders and pointedly swiveled him away from the enticement of Shantyville. “No, absolutely not; put all thought of that place out of your mind this minute,” he ordered brusquely.

“Aw, Adam, you’re just no fun at all,” Joe complained.

Adam surveyed his brother with narrowed gaze. “You mind what I say, boy.” He handed the tickets he had purchased earlier to the gatekeeper and moved toward the turnstile.

Joe’s irritation with the stern admonition was temporarily forgotten as he watched a dignified matron maneuver her outlandishly broad bustle through the turnstile just ahead of them. Snickering softly to himself at the absurd spectacle, Joe scampered through the gateway as soon as it was clear and aimed for Machinery Hall.

“Not yet,” Adam said, hooking his brother’s elbow and directing him, instead, to a much smaller building to their
immediate left.

Joe saw, above the doorway, a huge painting of a man operating a machine to make shoes and grimaced at the building’s name in which it was centered. “The Shoe and Leather Building? Aw, come on, Adam. Ain’t we ever gonna see any of the big exhibits?”

Adam painstakingly corrected his brother’s grammar before answering his question. “Yes, of course, but we will be covering the exhibition grounds in a systematic manner.” Catching the melancholy cast of his brother’s countenance, he added, “Now, don’t worry; we won’t spend long in here.” He entered the wooden structure, and with one last, longing glance at Shantyville, which seemed all the more alluring by comparison, Joe also went in.

As the brothers made their way through the building, whose roof was draped in broad swaths of red, white and blue, they observed machines in operation at every stage of boot making and saw every conceivable item related to shoe construction, from raw leather to blacking polish. Glass cases of shoes and boots to suit every person and every need lined both sides of the central aisle and filled the galleries upstairs. Although Little Joe was reluctant to admit it, some of the exhibits were actually quite interesting. One manufacturer’s exhibit, for instance, offered five hundred different patterns for shoe construction, while another showcase showed the changing styles from 1776 to the current year.

“Everything from Ben Franklin to Ben Cartwright!” Joe tittered.

Adam raised an index finger. “Ah, but not Hoss,”

Joe laughed, too, at the reminder that shoes for Hoss’s big feet had to be special-made. “Wish I’d thought to draw off the shape of his foot. We could’ve taken him home a first class set of boots, maybe with that fancy morocco leather or
alligator skin.”

Adam nodded, wishing that he had thought to do the same. “Maybe we can purchase some of the leather and have a cobbler back home make the boots to order.”

Joe looked impressed. “Say, Adam, sometimes you do some good thinking.”

Adam feigned offense. “What? Just sometimes?” He flicked his thumb hard against the back of Joe’s noggin.

At an exhibit by manufacturers of India rubber, Little Joe decided it was payback time. Tapping a rubber bathtub, portable for use on trips, he suggested that Adam should buy one, “as many baths as you seem to need!”

Adam countered by picking up a toy duck made of the same substance. “I should probably buy one of these, too, then, so I can lure you into the tub more than once a month.”

Joe scowled. Doggone, but it was tough work to get one up on Adam! He’d have to try harder.

When they reached the case enclosing the fine-tooled and highly ornamental boots made by the company of Burt and Mears, Adam could hardly drag his brother away, and it was even worse when they came to the exhibit of harness and saddles. “We have a schedule to keep,” Adam chided, “and this is all the time I’ve allotted for this building that you didn’t even want to enter.” With a sheepish grin, Joe gave a last fond look at a saddle he deemed perfect for Cochise and left in his brother’s wake.

Leaving the Shoe and Leather Building, the Cartwright brothers followed a diagonal walkway to the Bartholdi fountain. The shrubbery-edged square in which it was set was divided into eight grassy triangles by four intersecting avenues, and the iron fountain, populated with griffins and nymphs, stood at
its center. The boys stopped for a drink, as the day was already warming up, and then headed for the large, light blue building just to the west.

Though much smaller than the Main Exhibition Building, Machinery Hall still covered almost fourteen acres, including the upper galleries, and was the second largest exhibit hall on the Centennial grounds. Just before entering the handsome east façade, Adam pointed out the tower on the northeast corner, which mirrored those on the other three corners. “There’s supposed to be a chime of thirteen bells in that one,” he told Joe, “one for each of the original colonies.”

Joe smiled. “I guess that’s why there’s thirteen entrances, too, huh?”

Adam shook his head. “Don’t tell me you’re just now figuring that out. Anyway, the bells weigh 21,000 pounds and were erected at a cost of $12,000.”

Joe rolled his eyes. *Adam and his statistics! I hope he’s not gonna be like this all day.*

They entered the hall, and Adam stopped at a stand just inside the door to purchase a catalog of the exhibits.

“There it is, Adam, the Corliss Engine!” Joe squealed.

Adam started to say that they would see it soon, but Joe took off excitedly, and Adam had no choice but to give chase as soon as he’d paid for his catalog. He caught Joe at the center of Machinery Hall and grabbed his arm. “What is the matter with you?” he scolded. “Running off like a three-year-old child.”

Joe couldn’t take his eyes off the shining red machine that towered toward the ceiling. “Sorry, Adam, but look at the size of it! Wouldn’t Hoss drool over this?”

Though feeling a strong obligation to castigate his brother
soundly for reckless behavior, Adam, like every other visitor to the Centennial, stood in awe of the mighty Corliss steam engine, largest in the world. The giant machine stood on a platform fifty-six feet in diameter and rose a majestic forty feet high. Capable of producing 2,520 horsepower, it supplied the power for every machine in the hall.

Though he found the Corliss Engine fascinating, Adam forced himself to keep on schedule. “Time we were moving on,” he dictated, “and this time you stick to me like a leech, boy. Do you have any idea how easy it would be to lose each other in this crowd?”

Secretly, Little Joe thought that might be a fine idea. He felt certain he could have a better time without his own personal watchdog, especially one determined to point out all the educational aspects of the fair and few of the purely fun ones. It was a tempting prospect, but Joe reluctantly gave it up after evaluating what it might cost him later. “So, what do you want to see first?” he asked.

Adam still sounded perturbed as he responded, “Well, I planned to start where we came in and make an orderly tour, of course, but as long as we’re here, we may as well begin with the American exhibits.”

Joe smiled proudly. “Well, they’ll be the best, won’t they? That’s what that Manufacturer and Builder magazine you loaned me said.”

Adam’s mouth skewed to one side in a wry half-smile. “To be precise, it said that we didn’t need to fear comparison with other countries.” He laughed as he saw Joe’s eyes roll, a motion that had taken up habitual residence on his brother’s face since coming east. “I’m glad to see you read it to some purpose, however, and I do agree. In the machinery department, our exhibits probably will outshine the rest of the world. We’re going to see it all, though—good, bad and
mediocre. Now follow me, and let’s see if we can’t be a bit more systematic than careening off whenever something catches your capricious eye.”

Only the surrounding crowds and the dignity he felt, dressed in his eastern finery, kept Little Joe from thrusting his tongue at Adam and his systematic approach. His expression much like that of a reluctantly obedient puppy, he followed his brother to the north aisle, where Adam had stopped at the first exhibit, that of a company demonstrating how their India rubber boots were made. “I believe I’ll order a pair, in case it rains,” Adam said, glancing at Joe.

Little Joe hooted. “Rain! We should get so lucky. It’s been scorching hot ever since we got here and not a cloud in sight!”

“It can’t stay sunny forever,” Adam pointed out, “and a wise man prepares for rain while the sun shines, not after the storm hits.”

“An excellent observation, sir,” the company representative said smoothly. After taking Adam’s order, the salesman turned to his companion. “How about you, young man? A wise investment for the protection of one’s footwear.”

“No, thanks,” Joe said, mostly because he didn’t want to squander his meager monies on something he thought it unlikely he would need. He did, however, enjoy watching the boots being made and tried to memorize every detail of the process, as he would with other exhibits throughout the day, so he could describe it all later for Hoss.

Moving past small mills for grinding coffee and spices, the Cartwrights next stopped at a model of an old Virginia tobacco factory, which demonstrated how the industry had functioned in the era of slave labor, so recently ended. Four black men, singing spirituals of the Old South, sat twisting the leaves into rolls and pressing the rolls into plugs for commercial
use. Little Joe was entranced with the plaintive melodies, but for Adam the music and, more particularly, the singers only awakened painful memories, and he tried to hurry Joe along. Joe looked at him, puzzled, but deciding it was that infernal schedule at fault again, he left that exhibit and moved toward the next.

Passing the flourmills, the brothers paused briefly to examine a machine making bonbons. They exchanged a silent smile, words being unnecessary to convey their shared thought of how interested Hoss would be in this particular machine, as well as the one making crackers just beyond it. Feeling a bit guilty for dragging Joe from the tobacco exhibit for strictly selfish reasons, Adam purchased a small bag of the candy from Whitman and Sons’ exhibit and handed it to his brother.

Thanking Adam with a bright smile, Joe popped a chocolate in his mouth and mumbled through the creamy filling, “Oh, Hoss would love these, for sure. They melt right in your mouth.”

“We’ll see about getting him some right before we leave,” Adam promised; then with one finger he gave Joe’s chocolaty lips a corrective tap. “And don’t talk with your mouth full.”

Joe carefully swallowed the contents of his mouth and licked his lips before speaking again. “Yeah, maybe they’ll have a chance of not melting if we wait ‘til then.” He wiped his forehead, for the crowded building was even hotter than the sun-baked outdoors, and he was beginning to chafe in the frock coat Adam had insisted he wear. Noticing the boy’s discomfort, Adam offered to buy him a soda water at the first fountain they came across.

While Adam watched a machine producing paper, Joe trotted across the aisle to see the fascinating glassblowers at work. Suddenly, Adam grabbed his arm. “I thought I told you to stick close to me,” he rebuked sharply.

“I was five feet away, Adam, for mercy’s sake!” Joe protested.
Adam favored him with a sardonic smile. “That’s five feet too far, boy. Now, stay with me or I’ll get a leash!”

Joe lifted his front paws, let his tongue hang out and panted like a pup.

“Oh, behave,” Adam chided, incipient laughter draining force from his words.

Having reached the west end of the north aisle, Adam turned south for a few paces to reach the north avenue, which was half again as broad as the space for the exhibits they’d previously seen. Since there was a fountain, advertising Tuft’s Arctic soda water, at its end, he stopped and fulfilled his promise with lemon seltzers for both himself and his brother.

Refreshed, Little Joe scampered past the exhibit of steam engines and stood, enthralled, before the machinery of the National Suspender Company of New York. “Hey, Adam,” he called. “This is really something! Come look.”

Shaking his head at the hopelessness of keeping up with Joe without that threatened leash, Adam walked over to see what had grabbed the kid’s attention this time.

“See, Adam,” Joe said, pointing to the samples of the machine’s finished product on display. “They can weave your name right in the suspenders. Pretty spiffy, huh?”

“Be glad to make up a pair while you watch, young fellow,” the representative suggested.

“Hey, how about getting a set for the whole family, Adam?” Joe gurgled. “We could split the cost down the middle. Put our first names on the right suspender and Cartwright on the left. What do you think?”

“Well, it would certainly give people something to gawk at,” Adam snorted.
“Yeah!” Joe agreed, evidently considering that a good thing.

Adam, on the other hand, was appalled. “I’m quite certain we can come up with more appropriate souvenirs for Pa and Hoss than that! It’s not as if every man, woman and child in Virginia City didn’t already know our names.”

“Not all of them,” Joe argued. “There’s twenty thousand people in Virginia City, and some of them have never even heard of the Cartwrights.”

“Well, they’re not going to learn that way,” Adam declared.

“Spoilsport,” Joe pouted.

“Spoiled child,” Adam retorted with the superior air that always infuriated his little brother.

At odds, they moved on to the exhibit of John A. Roebling’s Sons, where Adam was intrigued by the company’s wire rope and suspension bridge cables. He viewed with scientific interest the section of cables and the drawings of bridges over Niagara Falls and the Ohio River.

Adam and his bridges, Joe thought as he tapped his foot impatiently. He was interested, however, in the model of a large merchant ship rigged with the wire rope and wondered if it were anything like the ones his father used to sail. When he’d examined its every detail and Adam still wasn’t ready to leave, Joe cleared his throat. “Don’t we have a schedule to keep or something?”

Adam started, as if unaware of how long he’d been looking at this particular exhibit. “I suppose so,” he admitted and left reluctantlly.

The next exhibit of looms and cotton machinery held little interest for either boy, except Joe found the lady operating the corset-weaving loom quite attractive and tried to turn on the charm when Adam’s back was turned. Adam noticed almost at
once, however, and quickly moved his younger brother out of temptation’s reach.

Approaching the exhibit of the Pyramid Pin Company from New Haven, Joe was shock to see a little girl about ten years old operating the machine. “It’s not right, Adam!” he protested. “She’s just a kid; she could get hurt.”

Adam nodded soberly. “Yes, there should be laws protecting young children from working with dangerous machinery. I’ve advocated that for years, ever since I lived back here and saw it going on.”

“I just never realized,” Joe sputtered. “I mean, I had chores when I was that age, but nothing that could’ve got me hurt.”

“You seemed to find plenty of ways to do that on your own, without your elders’ putting you at risk,” Adam said, trying to lighten the mood.

“Oh, Adam, don’t; I’m serious,” Joe protested.

“I know, buddy,” Adam said sympathetically, “but it’s not a problem you can solve this afternoon.” Though he was glad to see Joe’s awakening consciousness of social problems, he was freshly reminded of how sensitive the boy could be and didn’t want to see him upset. “Come on. I think you’ll really like that next company’s exhibit.”

Adam was right. The American Watch Co. of Waltham, Massachusetts, provided just the right distraction for his young brother with its fine array of timepieces. This is what I’d like to get Pa,” Joe declared animatedly. “Do you think there’s one I could afford?”

“Perhaps,” Adam said tentatively, “and these are certainly regarded as the best watches manufactured in America.” Noting the hungry look in the salesman’s eye, he hurried to add, “but why don’t you save your purchases until you’ve seen all there
is to see?” The salesman’s countenance abruptly dropped.

Adam couldn’t help noticing that his generous-spirited brother wanted to buy everything he saw for those he loved, whether it was candy for Hoss, a watch for Pa or, perish the thought, gaudy suspenders for all of them. Knowing that Joe’s pockets were not well padded enough to purchase as largely as his heart might wish, Adam felt an obligation to help the younger boy manage his money. There was also a less worthy motive behind his admonition, however. Secretly, Adam hoped to buy his father a nicer watch, perhaps a Swiss one, so he wanted to steer Joe toward something else. After all, he rationalized, there is no way Joe can afford as fine a watch as I could give Pa, and it’s Pa we should be thinking about.

Being male, the Cartwright brothers gave only a cursory look at the machine that engraved patterns for embroidery and laces and the same quick appraisal to the carpet exhibits on the opposite side of the avenue. Moving into the central aisle, they again found little of interest until they reached the fire engines, and Adam feared for a moment that his little brother would climb right up one of those hook and ladder carriages. To prevent that catastrophe in the making, he moved Joe quickly into the north-south transept of the building and let him worship the Corliss Engine again for a little while before heading into the south avenue.

Here they came across another exhibit Joe thought Adam would never leave, for his older brother seemed totally absorbed in the work of students from the department of mechanical engineering at Cornell University. “I heard about this at the convention,” Adam shared by way of apology for his lengthy perusal of the drawings. “The students really do fine work, don’t you think, Joe?”

Having no real affinity for drawing of any kind, Joe just shrugged.
“I don’t suppose you . . .”

“No!” Joe almost shouted his outrage at the suggestion. “One engineer in the family is more than enough.”

“I suppose so,” Adam murmured, wanting to calm his brother, but clearly disappointed. Remembering Joe’s previously demonstrated interest in historic artifacts, he directly the boy quickly to the first steam engine brought to the United States. “Imported from England in 1753 to pump water from a copper mine near Newark,” he said, consulting the exhibit catalogue.

Peering at the plaque attached to the exhibit, Joe snickered. “Look, it was called a fire engine back then, Adam. That means something altogether different now.”

Pleased to see the improvement in his brother’s mood, Adam smiled. “Words do change their meaning sometimes. You’ve read Shakespeare.”

Joe put his head in his palm, as though in great pain. “Don’t remind me.”

Though he knew his brother was only teasing, Adam gave the boy’s skull a solid thump with the heel of his hand. “I’m only using it as an illustration of how language changes.”

Joe grinned. “Yeah, well, if that’s an example, methinks it sure doth!”

Adam laughed. “You are determined to remain ignorant, aren’t you, little buddy?”

“Only because you’re so determined to turn me into you,” Joe countered.

The accusation continued to bother Adam as they finished viewing the exhibits on the western end of building. Is that how Joe sees it? he asked himself; then he posed a more
troublesome question. *Is that what I’m trying to do?*

“Adam, I’m starving. Aren’t we ever gonna eat?” Joe asked petulantly.

Adam didn’t need to consult his watch, for the very fact that the machines were still running indicated it wasn’t noon yet. His own belly confirmed, however, that it had been a long time since breakfast. “Sure, buddy, of course we are,” he responded soothingly. “There’s a restaurant in the central transept that is supposed to have good meals for only fifty cents. Let’s try that, shall we?”

“Anything!”

As they were walking toward the north entrance, where the restaurant was located, they saw a crowd gathered around the Corliss Engine. “Must be about time to shut it down for the noon rest,” Adam told Joe. “Want to stick around and see that?”

“Yeah, I do,” Joe said. “Why do they shut it down, though?”

Adam chuckled. “Well, according to the catalogue, it’s because ‘machines, like men, require repose.’ If you ask me, though, it’s just plain showmanship.”

Joe grinned and prepared to watch the show. The giant flywheel slowly stopped turning, and as it did, all the shafts, pulleys, belts and machines in the huge hall came to a clattering halt. “Think we’ll finish dinner in time to see it start up again?” he asked eagerly. “We missed that this morning, ‘cause you had to see the old Shoe and Leather Building.”

Putting an arm around his brother, Adam drew him up the transept toward the dining area. “Oh, you enjoyed it; you know you did.”

“Yeah, but I didn’t want to do it first, Adam,” Joe insisted.
“After dinner, let’s watch the machines start up again, okay?”

“Okay,” Adam agreed. “Youth must be served, I suppose.”

Over a hot meal Adam broached the subject of his supposed desire to turn Joe into himself. “Do you really believe that?” he asked with concern.

Joe kept his eyes on his plate of roast beef. “Isn’t that why you’re so keen on my going to college, so I’ll be more like you?”

Catching the hint of despondency in his brother’s voice, Adam quickly replied, “No, no—at least, I hope not. Maybe I do sometimes think we’d get on better if we had more in common, but, honestly, Joe, I just want you to be the best person you can be.”

“Even if it’s not as good as you,” Joe muttered bitterly.

The allegation rankled, but Adam focused on his brother’s unmistakable heartache, discounting his own. “I didn’t mean it that way. You’re a good person, Joe, with many fine qualities, one of which is a sharp mind. I just hate to see you waste that.”

Looking up cautiously, Joe asked, “Do you really think I could handle college work?”

“Of course!” Adam responded without hesitation. “You haven’t applied yourself as well as you might, but the ability is there, if you ever see the worth of using it. That’s all I’m after with these visits to schools, just, hopefully, to spark your interest in developing the abilities you have and seeing what you can do with them. You could be anything you want, Joe!”

Joe toyed absently with his potatoes and gravy. “It’s not that I’m against learning, you know. I’ve been out of school long enough—working long enough, I mean—to realize there’s
things I wish I knew more about.”

“Such as?” Adam probed.

Joe shrugged as he scooped up a bit of potato. “You’d just laugh.”

“No, I wouldn’t, I promise.”

Joe set the fork full of food down. “Well, not just the practical things, although I know I could use some more arithmetic and geometry and such,” he began tentatively. “Besides that, things like, well, history and—and—well, okay, even Shakespeare and the like and what people have thought about long before we came along.” He stopped, face flushed with embarrassment.

Adam gazed at him with surprised, but supportive eyes. “Mathematics, history, literature, philosophy—Joe, don’t you understand that those are the kinds of things you’d be studying in college?”

“Of course, I understand! I’m not stupid, remember?” Joe snapped. “I’m just not sure that going away to school for four years is the best way to learn them—for me, I mean. I guess it was for you.”

Adam reached across the table to touch the slender hand fidgeting with the fork. “Look. There’s a couple more places in Philadelphia I’d like to show you, and after that I promise not to bring the subject up again. I do realize that it’s your decision and that what was right for me might not be right for you.” While he knew those were the right words to say, however, Adam wasn’t certain he really meant them, and by the uncertainty etching his face, neither was his young brother.

Just outside the restaurant stood a popcorn vender, demonstrating every stage of the preparation of what a sign
proclaimed to be “I. L. Baker’s celebrated sugar popcorn,” from popping the corn in a wire basket to mixing it with sugar syrup to hand-shaping it into spheres of patriotic red, white and blue. “Buy me one?” Joe asked, pointing at the tri-colored balls as they left the restaurant.

Adam stared at him, incredulous. “You just ate! You can’t be hungry.”

“I want it for later,” Joe insisted. “It’s a big building, Adam. I’m bound to get hungry again before we finish, and you don’t want me dragging you back here later, do you?” He closed the appeal with his captivating, child-like smile, the one women and even older brothers found hard to resist.

“Oh, all right, little boy,” Adam chuckled, tossing him a silver coin. “Get a popcorn ball to have on hand.”

When Joe bounced back to his side, carrying three balls, Adam protested that Joe didn’t need to have that much popcorn within reach to fend off starvation.

“One is for you,” Joe told him with wide-eyed innocence. “You’re gonna get hungry, too, Adam.”

“Not for that, I’m not!” Adam sneered. “You can have every bite of that trashy fodder, little brother.”

“Oh, well, okay,” Joe said, looking not the least perturbed at the prospect.

After watching the Corliss Engine start up again, and all the other machines with it, Adam indicated that he wanted to finish the American department before moving on to those of other countries. He and Joe started east down the north aisle, coming first to a marine exhibit from Massachusetts. Draped with flags and streamers, the area featured models of steam and sailing vessels: fish schooner, yacht, clipper ship, man-of-war and whaler. Only when Adam pointed out that none
of those represented the type of ship on which their father had sailed could he pull his younger brother away.

Once he spotted the next exhibit, however, Little Joe was just as absorbed by the new invention for putting printed words on a page. “How about getting some letters typed and sending them home?” he suggested. “I know Hoss would get a kick out of it, and probably Pa, too.”

“All right,” Adam agreed amiably. “You write one to Hoss and I’ll send one to Pa.”

The stereotyped letters were, of necessity, impersonal, mostly of the “having a great time, wish you were here” variety, but few people, the Cartwright brothers included, would really have wanted to compose a personal message amid the crowd and clamor of Machinery Hall. Adam and Joe watched, amazed, as the operator of the typewriter tapped out the words, and they willingly paid the fifty cents charged for each letter, knowing that both Pa and Hoss would treasure the memento of the Centennial.

Joe proudly held the envelopes with their neatly typed addresses. “There’s someplace here to mail them, isn’t there?”

“Yes, right here in the building,” Adam replied. “This exhibition has been well planned, and almost anything a person might need can be found, from postal boxes to telegraph stations to rolling chairs.”

Joe laughed. “At least, we won’t have need of those! They’re for ladies.”

“It’s for anyone who needs them,” Adam disagreed. “I’ve seen an older gentleman or two using them, as well.”

“Well, if you’re feeling that old, Adam, I guess I could find the strength to push you around,” Joe tittered, the infectious
sound making many a bonneted head turn his direction. He ducked quickly to dodge the playful cuff Adam aimed at his head. “You know, if you keep knocking me around like that, you’ll scramble my brains so bad I won’t be able to attend college, even if I take a notion to.”

Aiming again, Adam clipped the side of Joe’s head this time. “Actually, it will probably take a few more good licks to settle your scrambled wits back in working order,” he observed dryly.

Joe scampered out of reach, stopping before the working presses of the *New York Herald*. Adam picked up a gratuitous copy of the newspaper, printed in Machinery Hall every afternoon, from stereoplates sent down from New York on an early train, while Joe watched the presses, whose continual action contrasted markedly with the nearby exhibit of the hand press Benjamin Franklin had used as a journeyman printer on his first trip to London.

At the end of the aisle was another soda fountain, and while Joe deposited their letters in a nearby letterbox, Adam bought them each a refreshing drink. Joe nibbled on one of his popcorn balls between sips of spruce beer and declared it delicious. “Sure you don’t want yours, Adam?”

“I’m sure,” Adam replied, chuckling as Joe promptly bit into a second one. Where was the kid putting it all?

Next to the Tuft’s soda fountain, the Otis Elevator Company demonstrated its lifting mechanism. “I want you to examine this carefully, Joe,” Adam directed. “If you understand the safety features, maybe you’ll be less afraid.”

“I’m not afraid,” Joe insisted defensively.

Though he knew differently, Adam didn’t argue the point. He merely asked the sales representative to explain the elevator’s safety features for his brother.
Joe tried to act disinterested, but he was, in fact, listening intently, and though still unwilling to acknowledge his fear, he did feel somewhat better about rising rooms after hearing how much had been done to keep them from falling with a load of passengers.

Next down the line was the Phoenix Manufacturing Company of Paterson, New Jersey. While neither boy was much interested in seeing the Jacquard loom at work, Adam purchased Centennial silk bookmarks for Pa and Hoss, and in a burst of enthusiasm bought Centennial badges for himself and Joe.

As Adam pinned the badge to his brother’s vest, Joe asked, “Won’t this make people gawk?”

Adam guffawed. “Not as much as those suspenders you wanted! Three quarters of the people here are wearing Centennial badges. I thought you’d want to fit in.”

Joe waved his hand from side to side. “Me? Oh, no, big brother. You’re the one always worrying about fitting in with these eastern dudes!” Looking down at the red, white and blue symbol of the Centennial, though, he smiled, and that was thanks enough for his older brother.

“I’m kind of tired,” Adam said. “You want to take a rest?”

“Where?” Joe asked, not seeing any chairs in the vicinity.

“In the Hydraulic Annex,” Adam suggested. “It should be cooler in there.”

Joe closed his eyes and sighed. “If there’s a cool spot in this whole building, lead me to it, big brother.”

“Come along, then, little brother,” Adam chuckled. Taking Joe’s arm, he walked to the southern end of the transept, tugging Joe along when the younger boy’s steps slowed as they once again passed the Corliss Engine. Entering the annex, the Cartwright brothers approached a double row of benches
surrounding the main attraction, known as the Cataract, the spray of whose arching jets of water cascaded into a basin ten feet deep. They were fortunate to find a seat in the front row, where a fine mist of water occasionally touched their hot faces.

Leaning back, both boys relished the refreshing coolness, and as Joe bit into his third popcorn ball, he declared the Cataract the best part of the entire building.

“Surely not better than the Corliss Engine,” Adam scoffed. “You’re just hot.”

“Aren’t you?” Joe asked with just a hint of whine.

“Swelltering,” Adam acknowledged. “I must admit, right now this is the best part of the whole building.”

Joe leaned forward, so the jets of water would be sure to mist his face. “I’m tempted to take off my shoes and soak my feet in that cool water.”

“Don’t you dare,” Adam warned in slow, emphatic syllables.

Joe grinned. “I was joking, but my feet are mighty hot and tired.”

“Yeah, mine, too,” Adam commiserated. “Only about a third of the building left to go, though. Time to see what the other countries of the world have to offer in machinery.”

Joe groaned as he stood. “Might as well get to it, then, I guess.”

As they were leaving the annex, Adam’s broad shoulders brushed against a portly man just entering. “I’m sorry,” he apologized.

“Think nothing of it, sir,” the man said and then stopped, staring up into Adam’s face. “Cartwright?” he asked, as he
grabbed Adam by both arms. “It is you!”

Adam looked at the man until he grew embarrassed. “I’m sorry, sir, but I’m afraid you have the advantage of me,” he admitted reluctantly.

“I’m not surprised that you don’t recognize me,” the man said, patting his florid face with a handkerchief of white Irish linen, “but perhaps you’ll recognize the name of B. L. Morganstern?”

“Bert!” Adam exclaimed. “Of course. I’m so sorry I didn’t recognize you at once. Must be the facial hair. You were clean shaven when I knew you.” And considerably thinner, he added to himself.

Morganstern stroked the narrow tuft of hair gracing his chin, which contrasted with the broad mustache that drooped down to his jaw line. “Ah, yes, man of business needs a more distinguished look, don’t you think?”

Adam chuckled. “Where I come from, fair business practices do more to advance a man’s career than his appearance, my friend.”

“Yes, yes, of course,” the other man agreed at once. “You’re not still hiding your talents in God-forsaken Nevada, are you?”

Adam laid his hand on Bert’s shoulder. “We think of Nevada as God’s country, I’ll have you know. And you? Still working with our old firm in New York?”

“Oh, no, not at all,” Bert replied. “Moved home to Philadelphia several years ago, when my older brother and his wife died, so I could help my parents look after his children. It’s been providential for my career, I must say. Amazing opportunities for Philadelphia architects lately.”

“Did you have any part in designing the Centennial buildings?”
Adam asked eagerly.

The chest of the shorter man puffed with pride. “I’ll have you know, old comrade, that I’m working under the main architect for the Centennial, Mr. H. J. Schwarzmann himself.”

Adam could barely contain his excitement and envy. “Oh, what an opportunity! Are any of the designs yours?”

Morganstern shrugged. “A couple of the minor buildings. Mostly, I acted as assistant to Mr. Schwarzmann.

“I’m very proud for you,” Adam said warmly. “I always said you had great potential in the field.”

“Yours was greater,” his old friend responded. “Have you managed to put it to any use at all out West?”

“Some. Not as much as I’d like,” Adam admitted.

“How long are you in town?” Morganstern queried.

“Through mid-July.”

Morganstern looked pleased. “If you’re free, come to dinner tomorrow evening, Adam, and we’ll make a night of it—at the opera, perhaps. I’ll invite Schwarzmann, as well. I know you’d enjoy meeting him and he, you.”

Adam beamed with enthusiasm. “That sounds wonderful, but I’m here with my brother.”

For the first time the architect appeared to notice the young man fidgeting beside his former co-worker. “Oh, of course. Well, bring the lad along. I presume any brother of yours must share your love of the arts.”

“That’s presuming a lot, mister,” Joe declared, rankled at being ignored throughout the lengthy conversation.

With eyes sharp as knives, Adam glared at his brother. “My
brother and I would be honored to accept, and we thank you for your gracious invitation.” After exchanging addresses, Morganstern continued into the Hydraulic Annex, while Adam took fierce hold of his brother’s biceps and dragged him into an isolated corner of one of the less popular exhibits. “How dare you insult my friend that way!” he snapped.

Little Joe was momentarily cowed by the fierceness of his brother’s anger. “I wasn’t trying to insult him,” he insisted, “but he was presuming a lot, thinking you and me were just alike.”

Seething, Adam unconsciously tightened his grip on Joe’s arm. “Oh, and you’re bound and determined that everyone in Philadelphia knows the difference, aren’t you?”

Joe jerked his arm, but couldn’t break free. “What do you mean, lecturing me on my manners?” he demanded indignantly. “What about your own? You didn’t even introduce me!”

Adam released Joe’s arm and took a step back. “All right, I was remiss in that. I apologize, but it scarcely excuses your behavior.”

“And that apology comes too late to excuse yours,” Joe sputtered. “How could you tell him I’d come without even asking me?”

Adam folded his arms across his chest and stared his brother down. “Because I am in charge of your activities for the duration of this trip east, boy—a charge given me by Pa, and you had best remember that. You will go where I say and do what I say, and that’s all there is to it. Now, is that clear?”

Remembering his promise to Pa to accept Adam’s authority, Joe bit back the hot words ready to spew from his mouth. “Yes, that’s clear,” he grunted through gritted teeth.
“Fine, let’s try to enjoy the remainder of our tour through this building, then,” Adam said. “We’ll begin with the exhibits from Great Britain.”

A white-lettered, red banner, suspended from the roof marked the area devoted to machinery from Great Britain, whose exhibits amounted to one-third of those sent by foreign countries to the United States’ Centennial. In sullen silence the Cartwright brothers made their way down one aisle and up the next, coming to the most interesting exhibit near the spot where the central aisle met the north-south transept. Here a model of a railway junction illustrated the English system of managing railway switches. To understand it fully, Adam intently studied the photos and drawings provided.

Joe, on the other hand, grew bored as soon as he’d given the miniature railway a good look and inched over to the next exhibit, that of the *London Times*. A working press was set up, but not being able to readily receive news from London, the British newspaper had formed a temporary partnership with the *New York Times* and was printing that for free distribution to exhibition goers each day. While he was waiting for Adam to finish with his eternal examination of the railway drawings, Joe picked up a copy of the paper and scanned the front page.

Passing steam engines and cranes, spool-winding machines and looms, the boys finally came to the world’s largest sewing machine. Ordinarily, a sewing machine would have held no appeal for men, but this one was used to make sails for the ships of Glasgow, and both Adam and Joe were reminded of their father’s sailing days as they watched the machine in operation.

The German exhibits, butted up against the English department, were dominated by the huge Krupp guns, twelve-hundred-pound breech-loaders. “I understand one’s already been sold to Turkey, for use in their current war,” Adam commented, finally
deigning to speak to his brother.

Joe wasn’t as ready to bury the hatchet. “Do tell,” he muttered sarcastically.

Adam shrugged and moved on. Why bother? Little Joe was obviously still too much a child to understand the massive destruction such a gun could inflict, while Adam’s own memory of what cannons could do to men was still far too vivid. Privately, he was glad that his little brother had no such point of reference. The kid might irritate the life out of him on an almost daily basis, but Adam’s first instinct remained to protect that youthful innocence, as he’d done all his life.

Joe’s attitude perked up considerably when they entered the French section. Stopping at the exhibit of Beyer Brothers of Paris, he hinted for a taste test, alleging that they only wanted to take the best home to Hoss.

Adam shook his head, but bought a few bonbons, hoping to appease the infant he’d been saddled with—by my own choice, he was forced to admit.

Little Joe bit into a cherry cordial and declared forcefully that French chocolates were vastly superior to those of the Philadelphia confectioner they’d sampled earlier. “And Hoss would bear me out in this,” he added for emphasis.

Adam gave him a sour smile. “Are you sure it isn’t just that they cost more, little buddy? Don’t think I haven’t noticed that your taste runs to the most expensive item on any menu!”

Joe’s gaze dropped to the floor. That was exactly what he had been doing, of course, to make Adam pay for not wanting him along on the trip. He refused to acknowledge his fault, however, because he was still mad about the high-handed way Adam had treated him earlier. He’s the reason some folks call us Cartwrights high and mighty. Just plain full of himself!
The boys worked their way through the final two aisles of Machinery Hall, quickly viewing the exhibits of Belgium, Sweden, Russia and Brazil. The machines, though somewhat different, were beginning to run together, especially for Joe, who told himself that even Hoss, the Cartwright most likely to be drawn to any new invention, would have had enough by now. “Is that it for today?” Joe asked when they’d seen the final exhibit.

“It can be,” Adam replied, noting the weary tone of Joe’s voice, “or if you prefer, we could have refreshments at the Turkish Café. It’s not far.” Little Joe brightened immediately, seeming to draw extra energy from the opportunity to see and taste something new and exotic. Or, maybe, Adam thought with a sardonic smile, from a fresh opportunity to pilfer my pockets!

Leaving by the north door, the Cartwright brothers walked a short way down the Avenue of the Republic to an octagonal pavilion with a dome roof, surmounted by a crescent and star. In the center of the building was a large room with a luxurious divan running all around the sides. Round tables and chairs were scattered around the room, as well, but Joe aimed at once for the comfortable blue and straw-colored cushions of the divan. Having no objection to that choice, Adam joined him. “Now, I have no intention of buying you a complete meal both here and at the hotel tonight,” he stated firmly. “You can sample the Turkish coffee and have a dish of sherbet, if you like, but that’s all.”

“Sure, that’s fine.” Joe responded quickly.

A native Turk, wearing a traditional red fez and dressed in a crimson jacket, tied with a yellow sash, and baggy blue silk trousers over white stockings, arrived to take their orders. Both boys requested Turkish coffee and tamarind sherbet, the specialty of the house. Pulling back the heavy blue embroidered curtain, Joe looked through the long, pointed
window behind him. “You can see the lake from here,” he told his brother.

Adam took a brief look. “Nice view,” he agreed, “but if you’ll look in that corner, you can watch your coffee being made. They have quite a distinctive method of preparation, according to what I’ve read.”

Joe felt his suspicious nature rising up, but even though his brother’s suggestion had an educational ring to it, he turned to watch with interest the coffee being heated over a charcoal brazier. First the man who had taken their order put a spoonful of coffee into a silver dipper and added hot water. Holding it over the brazier, he brought the liquid to a boil, and then poured it into a porcelain cup in a silver holder and brought it to the Cartwright’s table. An assistant brought two dishes of sherbet about the same time.

Grinning in anticipation, Joe took a sip and almost choked. “It’s sweet,” he gasped between coughs.

“And strong as brandy,” Adam added, struggling to keep his face from discourteously revealing his distaste for the foreign brew. “Not quite what you were expecting, eh?”

“I was expecting coffee,” Joe sputtered.

“I expected it to be different,” Adam chuckled, “but not quite this different.” He took a second sip. “I suppose one could acquire a taste for it.”

“I don’t think so,” Joe said, but he forced himself to finish the drink, intending to use the sherbet to void his mouth of the cloying flavor. The first bite crushed that hope. While the sherbet was cool and refreshing, tamarind was not a flavor that Joe found entirely enjoyable.

“Sorry, kid,” Adam said. “I guess this wasn’t such a good idea.”
“Oh, no, it’s fine,” Joe assured him quickly. “That’s part of the fun of this trip, trying new things, and I guess we can’t expect them all to be winners. At least, it cooled me off.”

“That’s the spirit,” Adam commended, “and such a cooperative attitude merits a reward, so go ahead and look around the bazaars.”

All past grievances forgotten, Joe flashed a dazzling smile. “Thanks.” He bounced up from the table to visit the four small bazaars on the open porches of the building, which held a collection of pipes, carpets, knives, daggers, dresses and jewelry. Joe couldn’t resist buying himself an ornate dagger that reminded him of stories from the Arabian Nights and thought seriously about getting a Turkish pipe for his father.

Adam stroked his chin between his thumb and index finger. “A little exotic for Pa, don’t you think?”

“Maybe,” Joe conceded. “More something to look at than to use, I guess. I-I should probably look around more before I decide.”

Recognizing the restatement of advice he had himself given the boy, Adam smiled. “I’d say that’s good thinking.”

“Oh, quit braggin’ on yourself,” Joe snickered. “Hey, how about those other bazaars over there? They look like they might have different stuff.”

“Maybe,” Adam conceded. “Go ahead, but we need to leave soon. The gates close at six, remember?”

“Of course, I remember,” Joe said, failing to mention that he hadn’t looked at his watch once all day and had no idea what time it was. He trotted over to the kiosk, labeled “Jerusalem Bazaar” and looked inside. Something caught his eye, and as he held it in his hand, he knew he had to have the cross of olive wood and mother of pearl.
“Is that for Pa or Hoss?” Adam teased. The dagger hadn’t surprised him, but he had no idea what Joe wanted with a cross.

“Don’t be stupid,” Joe snorted. “It’s for Aunt Nelly—and don’t say I should look around more, either. I couldn’t find anything more perfect for her, Adam, and it’ll be extra special to her ‘cause it came from the Holy Land.”

“Yes, it will,” Adam said softly, surprised by his younger brother’s thoughtfulness. Adam had known Nelly Thomas long before Joe was born, practically from the first day their families had started west together, but he hadn’t thought to buy her a gift. It was another demonstration of Joe’s generous nature, a quality that had always been there, Adam supposed, but one to which he had not given particular notice before. He smiled ruefully, wondering how a kid so thoughtful on some occasions could at other times be so exasperating and rude.

They took the streetcar back to the hotel. After a light supper Little Joe started a letter to Hoss, telling him all about the things he’d seen in Machinery Hall “before I forget ‘em,” he explained to Adam.

Adam opted, instead, for relaxing with a good book after a long soak in a hot tub down the hall. Neither he nor Joe stayed up late, however, for they were weary and tomorrow was another full day.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

When Adam came out of his bedroom the next morning, he was surprised to see Little Joe, who had arisen later than he, already dressed, sitting in their parlor, so lost in the newspaper that he didn’t even look up when his older brother walked in. “What do you have there?” Adam asked.
Joe hastily folded the copy of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, delivered to their door every morning, and laid it aside. “Oh, nothing,” he said. “Just passing the time.”

Looking back later, Adam realized that he should have known at that moment that his little brother was up to mischief, but not fully awake, he had overlooked Joe’s unaccustomed attention to the newspaper, as well as his, on retrospect, obvious attempt to hide what he was reading.

Over breakfast, Adam outlined the agenda he had planned for the day, visits to two institutions of higher education. There was one other place on his list, but choosing to save that as a surprise for his little brother, he merely concluded by saying, “We’ll return early so we can bathe and dress for dinner and the opera.”

Already disgruntled at the prospect of a boring day, Little Joe grimaced in apparent agony over an evening that promised to be even worse. “Aw, Adam, do I have to go?” he whined. “Your friend doesn’t really care anything about having me around, and I don’t care anything about the opera.”

“I thought you said you were interested in learning about cultural things, not just practical ones,” Adam reminded him, lifting an eyebrow for emphasis.

Joe groaned as his own words were thrown back at him. “I never said opera. I hate that caterwauling, Adam.”

Adam’s smile was totally devoid of sympathy. “Well, let’s just see if a little more exposure will teach you the difference between caterwauling and artistry, shall we?”

Joe’s nostrils flared with resentment. “I guess we shall, like it or not.”

“You straighten up right now,” Adam warned with a glare, “and, so help me, if you dare to embarrass me in front of my friend
again, I will thrash you within an inch of your life.”

Joe put his hands before his face, cowering back as if in
dread of retribution from the mighty Adam Cartwright. Then,
with an impish smirk, he said, “Don’t worry, big brother; I
have no intention of embarrassing you in front of any of your
stuffed-shirt friends.” If things worked out the way he
planned, in fact, he wouldn’t even have an opportunity to
embarrass his big brother.

Though the Philadelphia Collegiate School was only around half
a mile from their hotel, to save time Adam suggested that they
take the horse cars to Broad and Walnut. When the public
transportation dropped them at the corner, he pointed out the
school building to Little Joe. “This would be a very good
place for you to begin to further your education, Joe.”

Not finding the building impressive, Joe asked, “Why here? I
figured you’d want me to go to Yale, like you did.”

Adam erupted with a shocked laugh. “You’re not Yale material,
Joe!”

Joe’s emerald eyes glinted along hard facets, and his voice
had an edge equally sharp. “And just yesterday you said I was
smart enough to be anything I wanted. Oh, yeah, you really
meant that, didn’t you, brother?”

Sensing that his inadvertent burst of humor had wounded the
boy, Adam laid a consoling hand on Joe’s shoulder. “I did
mean it, of course. You certainly have the native
intelligence to succeed at any college of your choice, Joe,
but you have some deficiencies to make up before you could
pass the entrance exams of a major university, like Yale or
Harvard. You have to be able to read and write in both Greek
and Latin, and that’s why you would need to attend a
preparatory school like this first, buddy. I’m sorry for
laughing, but that’s all I meant.”
“What are we talking about now—five, six years?” Joe ended the query with a high-pitched, horrified screech.

“Well, about that, yes,” Adam admitted.

Incredulous, Little Joe stared at his older brother. “Adam, you are plumb crazy. This hot sun has addled your brains if you think I’m gonna spend six more years in a classroom!”

Adam nodded, beginning to understand that his dream for his brother was destined for failure. “Don’t make a final decision until you’ve seen Yale, all right? Perhaps it will inspire you to make the effort.”

Joe sighed. “I’ll try, Adam, but I gotta tell you it’s getting harder by the day.”

Entering the building, Adam located the office and introduced himself to the principal, R. H. Chase, who gladly agreed to escort a potential student on a tour of the school. “The term is almost over,” he told the Cartwright brothers. “We keep roughly the same terms as the universities for which we prepare our students, another way of easing their transition into academic life.” They visited several classrooms briefly, and as they walked from room to room, Principal Chase outlined the course of study, which consisted primarily of elementary and advanced English courses, as well as work in the classics and mathematics.

As they toured the preparatory school, Joe reluctantly admitted to himself that he probably would fit in here better than at a school like the University of Pennsylvania, which they had visited a few days before, and if Yale were even more demanding, attending there was beyond consideration. He did not, of course, share that revelation with Adam, who would probably have countered with another mind-numbing lecture on the importance of scholastic discipline or some such folderol.

Finally returning to the office, Mr. Chase asked Little Joe
his impression of the collegiate school.

“It’s a fine school, sir, and I appreciate your showing us around,” Little Joe replied, “but I honestly can’t see myself spending several more years cooped up in the four walls of any school.”

“Higher education isn’t for everyone,” the principal said kindly. He had discerned early on that the younger man was there under coercion from the elder and felt sympathy for both. He extended his hand. “Thank you for the opportunity to show the school to a distant visitor. We don’t get many such callers, especially with the Centennial in full swing. I hope you’ll give us consideration, young man.”

Warmed by the principal’s congeniality, Joe smiled as he took the man’s hand. “Well, my brother says this would be a good place for me to start if I do decide to go that way, so if I do, then I will.”

Adam moaned at this further demonstration of how much work Joe needed in basic sentence construction, but the principal just smiled at the circuitous route the young man had taken to say what he meant and told Joe that he understood.

Outside, Adam steered his brother south on Broad Street. “I’m glad to see you can mind your manners when you choose to,” he offered by way of commendation.

“Yeah?” Joe snorted. “Well, I’d like to see you mind yours for a change—with me!”

“I guess it was sort of a backhanded compliment,” Adam admitted. “Well, perhaps our next stop will put me back in your good graces.”

“Another school? I don’t think so, Adam,” Joe groused.

Adam pointed to a circular building with a tiered tower jutting skyward from its center. “That is not a school,
“youngster.”

Joe grinned. “Not like any I ever saw! What is it, Adam?”

“You can read, can’t you?” Adam grunted.

“Of course, I can read,” Joe muttered back, looking at the banner floating from a flagpole at the very top of the tower, “but ‘Colosseum’ doesn’t tell me much, unless it’s a hint that they throw folks to lions inside.”

Adam laughed, partly in surprised pleasure that Joe even recognized the historical reference. “No, no lions, I promise. Just a treat to make up for the things I knew you’d merely endure today.”

“Oh.” Joe looked down with chagrín, knowing his attitude hadn’t merited such consideration.

Before entering, Adam pointed out the Academy of Music, just across the street. “That’s where I’d intended to take you this evening.”

“Can’t we do that, instead of going to that stupid old opera?” Joe pleaded.

Adam frowned sternly. “We’ll do whatever the man who invited us wishes, of course. Where are those manners you put to such fine use a bit earlier?”

Joe shrugged, disinclined to listen to another dressing-down, even one he felt he deserved.

Not wanting to spoil his surprise, Adam let the issue slide. “The building itself is unusual, not only in shape, but material,” he observed as they walked toward the narrow front façade of ornamental galvanized iron, frescoed in bright colors. “Though it has a foundation of masonry, capped with granite, the walls have a wrought iron framework, covered with corrugated iron.”
“Fascinating,” Joe commented, mouth puckered as if he’d just sucked a lemon.

Chuckling, Adam flipped off Joe’s straw hat and tousled his brother’s chestnut curls. “Come on, let’s go inside. You shouldn’t have to fake interest in what you’ll find there.”

Catching his hat before it hit the ground, Joe smiled in anticipation and went through the arched doorway with his brother. Inside, the tower stretched upward from the center of a broad promenade supported by decorative columns and pilasters. Fifteen alcoves dotted the circumference, each displaying objects of interest and beauty, but Adam said that they really didn’t have time to look at those and drew Joe toward the tower itself.

Joe looked up and saw a balcony one hundred feet above his head and a second one, twenty to thirty feet above the first. “We going up there?”

“That’s right,” Adam said and moved toward the Otis elevator that carried forty visitors at a time to the upper balcony.

“Adam, there’s a perfectly good staircase here,” Joe insisted.

Adam pinched the bridge of his nose, but gave in to his brother’s whim. The kid was hopeless, he decided. Even after his showing Joe the safety features of this type of steam elevator, the boy seemed addicted to climbing stairs. Well, maybe, like a temperamental horse kept in the barn too long, the kid needed exercise, although Adam personally found all the walking they’d been doing more than ample.

The steps up the inside of the tower were seven feet wide, so the two brothers took them side by side. Reaching the central platform, Adam first directed his brother’s attention out the windows for a bird’s-eye view of the city, something else to which Little Joe seemed addicted. Joe leaned on the windowsill, gazing out, for a long while. Then Adam circled
his waist and turned him back to the interior of the tower. “This is what I brought you here to see.”

Joe looked down and gasped, for spread below him, circling the building was a vast canvas panorama of a city. “That’s not Philadelphia,” he murmured.

“No, it’s called ‘Paris at Night,’” Adam said softly, smiling at the possessive light that instantly flamed in his young brother’s eyes. “Isn’t it beautiful?”

Joe nodded, too impressed for words. The cyclorama showed every street and building of the city, and above it, a painted moon and twinkling stars against a black sky represented the heavens. While he watched, suddenly a cloud obscured the moon and a pummeling rainstorm, simulated by mechanical means, dimmed the stars. “Oh, wow,” Joe whispered, awed by the spectacle. He smiled across at his brother. “Oh, Adam, thanks. This is great!”

Adam draped a long arm over Joe’s slender shoulders. “Quite a city, isn’t it?”

Joe’s lips curved in a dreamy smile. “Oh, yeah!”

Adam looked fondly down at the canvas of the city. “It’s one of the places I’ve most wanted to see.”

Joe turned abruptly to face his brother. “No!”

Adam’s brow immediately furrowed with concern. “What’s wrong, Joe?”

“I don’t want you to go away, not again!” It was the voice of a child, desperate in its pleading.

Adam was puzzled by the intensity of his brother’s reaction. “Again?”

“School, the war—never again, okay, Adam?” Joe begged, voice
Adam stared, amazed that his younger brother could still feel so disturbed by something that had happened years before. He remembered the tear-streaked face of a four-year-old, seen through the window of the departing stagecoach, and saw that child reflected in the eyes of the young man standing before him. *Has he carried that pain all these years?* There’d been a hint of it earlier, outside the New York State House, but this anguish seemed deeper, coupled, as it was, with dread. “Joe, buddy, I-I don’t know what to say.”

“Say you won’t leave,” Joe entreated. “Promise, Adam! I know we rub each other the wrong way, but I don’t want you leavin’ home again.”

Adam kept his voice gentle, as if he were still dealing with the child of four, rather than the youth who normally demanded recognition for his budding manhood. “Joe, I hesitate to make promises for the future. Life is too unpredictable for that, but I don’t have any real plans. It’s just something I think about from time to time—all the places I’ve read about in books and never seen. Wouldn’t you like to see Paris sometime?”

“Yeah, sure,” Joe answered, for anything that brought him closer to his mother’s heritage held a natural attraction, “but I wouldn’t stay. I’d want to come home.”

“And I probably would, too.” Adam slapped his younger brother on the back. “Hey, maybe I’ll just take you with me, huh?”

The dreamy smile reappeared on Little Joe’s face. “Would you, Adam? I’d like that. I’d like seeing Paris with you.”

Adam scoured the back of the boy’s neck with his hand. “Even if I made you do some things you didn’t want, like here in Philadelphia, like the opera tonight?”
Joe moaned. “Don’t remind me.” The visit to the Colosseum and the warm conversation he’d shared with his brother made him feel worse about what he was planning to do later. He almost reconsidered, but the thought of wasting an entire evening at the opera with Adam’s pretentious friend served to re-ignite his flickering intent.

The Cartwrights walked a few blocks to the southwest corner of Fifteenth and Chestnut streets for dinner in the first-class dining hall of the seven-story marble Colonnade Hotel. Glancing down the long menu, Little Joe’s eyes were drawn by habit to the choices listed next to the highest prices. He knew in his heart that it was time to let Adam off the hook, especially now that he had caught on to what his younger brother was doing, but Joe couldn’t stop himself. Besides, overeating overly rich food was part of his plan, so he chose as unwisely as he could. Beginning with succotash, a thick combination of corn, lima beans and pork, he worked his way through roast pork with haslet sauce; greasy, fried potato cakes and buttery creamed peas to the grand finale, a sinfully sumptuous slice of Washington cake, flavored with brandy, wine, nutmeg, cinnamon and currants.

Adam stared in utter disbelief. While Joe had always had a healthy appetite unless he were ill or upset, Adam had never seen him pack away food the way he had here in Philadelphia, and today’s meal was topping even that record. “You know, I thought one of the benefits of bringing you, instead of Hoss, would be a smaller food bill,” he muttered with a shake of his head. “Boy, was I wrong!”

“I’m a growing boy,” Joe said sharply. With granite gaze, he continued to eat, the reminder that Adam would have preferred Hoss’s company to his being all it took to release him from any feelings of guilt over his planned insurrection of the evening.

“Boy, if you keep this up, you’re going to grow right out of
those new suits you bought,” Adam chuckled and turned his attention back to his own, much lighter meal.

After dinner the Cartwrights walked about three blocks to the Polytechnic College at Seventeenth and Market. “Now, I know you already said that one engineer in the family was enough,” Adam reasoned, “but I just wanted you to realize that there are schools for practical vocations, as well as the more classical education available at Yale or Harvard or the University of Pennsylvania. Just another path you could take, and I’m not pushing one direction or the other.” He went on to explain that the Polytechnic College was divided into five schools: mines, practical chemistry, civil engineering, mechanical engineering and architecture.

Joe listened politely, but shook his head. “Honestly, Adam, I can’t see myself doing any of those.”

“What do you see yourself doing ten years from now, Joe?” Adam asked as they entered the school’s main building.

Joe shrugged. “Not something I think about much, Adam. Living and working on the Ponderosa, of course, or maybe having a place of my own if . . . if . . .”

Adam smiled. “If the right girl comes along?”

Joe grinned, at first with a touch of embarrassment, which changed before Adam’s eyes to cocky bravado. “Yeah, but not anytime soon, big brother. I got a lot of wild oats to sow first.”

Adam chuckled, setting his brother’s hat straight as they reached the door to the administrative office. “And it’s my job to make sure the crop is a small one, little brother. Seriously, though, you should be setting some goals for yourself, for your future . . . something to work toward.”

“Yeah, maybe,” Joe said with a nervous look at the door before
him.

“Well, give it some thought,” Adam urged as he lifted his knuckles. He knocked on the door, and soon he and his brother were being escorted around the school. The man showing them around was crisply courteous, but not particularly cordial, so neither brother felt inclined to extend their visit. Being some distance from the Washington Hotel by now, they caught the horse car back.

Adam was surprised when his younger brother immediately opted for a nap in his room, though not as surprised as Joe when the pretense became reality and he actually fell asleep. “That’s enough beauty rest,” Adam teased when he woke Joe later that afternoon with a shake of his shoulder. “Time to roust out and dress for dinner.”

Joe’s groan was real as he was roughly roused from slumber, but the way he dragged through his grooming and drooped into the parlor afterward was careful enactment of a well-scripted plot.

“Oh, cheer up. It won’t be that bad,” Adam cajoled playfully, assuming that Joe’s flagging spirit was due to his disenchantment with the plans for the evening.

Joe sighed deeply. “It’s not that, Adam. I’m just not feelin’ so good.”

Adam surveyed him with a skeptical eye. “Rather a convenient illness, isn’t it? Like the ones that used to assault you when Abigail Jones scheduled a big test you hadn’t prepared for properly?”

Joe managed to look offended, but too lethargic to strike back. “Fine, don’t believe me,” he muttered weakly. “Just don’t blame me if I retch all over your friend’s fancy damask tablecloth.”
Adam instantly looked more concerned. “Is your stomach bothering you?”

Joe plastered a look of pure misery on his countenance. “Yeah, I think maybe you were right about all the junk I’ve been packing into my stomach. I ate way too heavy a dinner.”

“Well, I tried to warn you,” Adam said, his face reflecting both satisfaction at having his admonition verified and regret for the consequences his imprudent little brother had brought upon himself.

Adam’s supercilious attitude, as Joe viewed it, chafed like a pair of woolen underdrawers on a midsummer afternoon, but Joe was not above working that authoritative stance to his own advantage. Sighing as though with newly awakened remorse over his failure to heed his older brother’s wisdom, he murmured, “Yeah, I should have listened, I guess.” Oh, how big brother always loved to hear those words!

Swallowing the bait, Adam was warm with solicitude. “I’ll go down to the drugstore and get you some bicarbonate. Maybe that’ll settle your stomach enough to enjoy the evening.”

A still deeper sigh met this suggestion. “I guess I could try, Adam, if it means that much to you, but I sure feel like just crawling back into bed.”

Little Joe really looked pathetic, and Adam was beginning to feel selfish for insisting the boy attend a function in which he had no interest when he was so obviously ill. What way was that to introduce the little barbarian to culture? More likely, it would intensify his antipathy. Poor kid, he must have been feeling poorly all afternoon, but he had gamely toured the Polytechnic College without a word of complaint. Though disappointed, Adam felt there was only one way he could respond, by putting his brother’s need above his personal pleasure. “Well, I’ll send word that we can’t make it. I’m sure Bert will understand.”
Panic flared Joe’s eyes wide. Having Adam hover solicitously over him all evening was not part of his plan at all! Quickly turning away so his brother wouldn’t see his agitation, he said, “Aw, no, Adam. I don’t wanna spoil your evening. Go ahead and go.”

Adam ran a tender hand through his brother’s tousled curls. “Don’t be ridiculous. I won’t leave you alone if you’re ill.”

Facial expression under control once more, Joe turned to gaze earnestly at his brother. “I’m not sick, not really, just ate something that didn’t agree with me, that’s all. . . . or, more likely, just ate more than agreed with me, like you tried to warn me.” It couldn’t hurt, Joe concluded, to give big brother’s ego an extra feeding.

Adam pressed his palm against Joe’s forehead, checking for fever. Find none, he asked, “You’re sure that’s all it is?”

Joe curved his lips into a soft, sacrificial smile. “Yeah, I’m sure. Don’t worry about me, Adam,” he urged, conscience getting in gear again, at least enough to spare his brother needless concern.

Adam really hated to give up the evening among cultured people and, especially, the opportunity to meet the principal architect of the great Centennial buildings, so he fell easy prey to his little brother’s stratagem. “Well, all right, I’ll go, as planned, but don’t hesitate to use the hotel’s messenger service to get word to me if you start feeling worse.”

“I won’t,” Joe assured him, “but I’m sure a little rest is all I need. You just go on and have a good time, and don’t waste a minute worrying about me, okay?”

“I’ll try,” Adam said and hurried to finish dressing. Just before leaving, he looked into Joe’s room, where his brother once again lay stretched on the bed, hand resting on his
stomach as if touch might settle its distress. “Why don’t you have a little soup?” he suggested. “You’ll probably sleep better with something on your stomach, and you can even have it delivered to the room.”

Conscience really was twisting a knot in Joe’s stomach by this time, so he answered briefly and quietly, thereby sounding all the more ill. “Yeah, I’ll do that.” He rolled over and looked up, biting his lower lip. “Thanks for understanding, Adam.”

“Sure, kid,” Adam said. “Take it easy, and, hopefully, you’ll feel up to visiting the Exposition again tomorrow.”

“I hope so,” Joe whispered, knowing full well that he would make a complete recovery by morning, in fact, by about two seconds after Adam left the room. He lay still for several minutes after his brother’s departure, however, on the chance that Adam might have forgotten something and pop back in unexpectedly. Then he got up and dressed in his comfortable gray pants and tan shirt, smiling in anticipation of an evening of his own style of fun.

Wanting to give Adam time to get well away before starting his adventure, Joe picked up that morning’s copy of the *Public Ledger* and read once more the article by Mark Twain, describing the most alluring attraction of the unofficial midway across from the Centennial grounds. The way Twain, who had gotten his start as a writer back in Virginia City, described the Can-Can made it sound like an experience not to be missed by any red-blooded American man. “I placed my hands before my face for very shame,” Twain had written. “But I looked through my fingers. . . . A handsome girl . . . grasped her dresses vigorously on both sides with her hands, raised them pretty high, danced an extraordinary jig that had more activity and exposure about it than any jig I ever saw before, and then, drawing her clothes still higher, she advanced gaily to the center and launched a vicious kick.” While Joe
entertained doubts about old Adam, he knew exactly what flowed in his own veins, and since he was as red-blooded, American and manly as anyone on the continent, it was obviously imperative that he see the show.

Leaving the room, Joe’s first stop was the hotel dining hall, where he ordered a light, but solid meal, figuring he might as well let Adam pay for that much of the night’s fun, since everything else would be coming out of his own pocket. By this time he knew his way around the city well enough to catch the appropriate streetcar, and he was soon headed for that forbidden, but enticing area near the Centennial grounds known as Shantyville. Getting off opposite the Exposition’s main entrance at Elm and Belmont avenues, he noticed that everything was shut up tight across the street. The attractions of Shantyville, however, did not close at night, so Joe turned right and within a block found himself in the midst of the ramshackle collection of buildings.

Snaring a bag of hot roasted peanuts, he decided to tour the sideshows first, but found them less interesting than he had hoped. The menagerie seemed meager after the diverse collection of animals at the zoological park, and the freak shows not much different from what he might have seen attached to a circus back home. Trying to convince himself that he was having fun, Joe viewed the Man-eating Feegee, Wild Man of Borneo and the Wild Children from Australia, but he flatly refused to view the deformed animals, like the two-headed calf or the five-legged cow. He had visited such gruesome sideshows when he was a kid and had discovered that seeing the unfortunate beasts only made him sick. That thought stung his conscience, as it reminded him of how he had deceived Adam, but he silenced the pangs by stopping at a nearby booth to buy a bologna sausage.

Nibbling as he walked, Joe stopped to watch the fat lady, advertised at six hundred and two pounds, break a chair by sitting on it. Again, instead of enjoying the spectacle, he
found himself feeling sorry for the lady and angry with the people laughing at her. It reminded him of all the times people had laughed at Hoss because of his size, and he was glad Hoss wasn’t here to see this show. His big-hearted brother, who couldn’t stand to see any living being hurt, might have taken on the whole crowd of guffawing gawkers.

Concluding that this was no fun at all and feeling thirsty after finishing the sausage, Joe decided to seek refreshment in the first saloon he came across. He passed a huge soda fountain, proclaiming itself to be the world’s largest, and listened briefly to the blaring music of its calliope, but he didn’t buy anything. While he liked soda water, he really wanted something stronger tonight. After all, he hadn’t had anything more potent than an occasional glass of wine with his meals since arriving in Philadelphia, and he decided it was time to reacquaint his tongue with the taste of a cold, foaming beer.

Spotting a flimsy, wooden building, whose oversized signboard advertised liquor of all varieties, Little Joe went inside and, beer in hand, passed the time until the Can-Can was scheduled to start with a pretty barmaid. Giving more attention to her deep cleavage than to the amount he was drinking, Joe lost track of how many beers he’d had, and when the lady twitted him for partaking of a mere “schoolboy’s beverage,” he began ordering whiskey to impress her with his maturity and manhood. As usual, it didn’t sit well on his stomach, especially on top of the peanuts, bologna and beer.

The exit of a number of the saloon’s other patrons made Joe consult his watch and he stood quickly. “Gotta go,” he slurred in apology to his companion of the last hour. “Time to see the show.”

The barmaid pouted. “And just when we were starting to have a good time.” She twirled her index finger on his Adam’s apple and let it slip down his throat. “Sure you wouldn’t rather
Joe felt his resolve weakening under her provocative touch. She was so pretty, but, then, so were the girls who danced the Can-Can, according to Mark Twain, and they showed their legs, too, and maybe more. “No, no, gotta go,” he drawled.

“Well, you come back later, sweetie,” the girl urged. “I’ll be waiting.”

Little Joe staggered out of the saloon and somehow managed to find the building where the Can-Can was being performed. The house was packed, with an all-male audience, and Joe was lucky to find a seat. When the dance started and the girls began to swish their skirts, he knew it had all been worth it, though—all the scheming to get free of Adam and all the elbowing to make his way through the crowd. And when the dancers trotted to the edge of the stage, kicking their legs high to reveal more than he’d ever seen of the female figure, Joe was in absolute heaven.

Suddenly, a whistle pierced through the music, and there were shouts all around of “Police!” and “It’s a raid!” The audience scattered in all directions, and Joe, too, began to run for the exit, ducking under arms, dodging grasping hands and shoving other fleeing audience members out of his way. It was every man for himself, and fearing what his staid older brother would do if he landed in jail, Joe wrestled furiously to get away. Breaking through the crowd, he ran blindly, exhilarated by having successfully evaded the law, but unable to stop his mad dash down the street. Which street? He had no idea. He only knew that he had to keep running, had to get away, had to stay free, for there would be hell to pay if Adam found out.

He finally stopped in a dark alley, where the combination of exercise, liquor and unusual food made him empty the contents of his stomach into the street. Wiping his mouth with the
back of his hand, Joe decided the sudden sickness was his just punishment for lying to Adam about being ill before. He backed up against the wall of a building and, eyes closed, leaned into it for support. But when the fetid odor of his own bile wafted up to him from the street, he again bent double, expelling yet more of the peanuts and bologna, along with what appeared to be the remains of succotash and roast pork. Realizing that it would only happen again if he stayed where the nauseating smell could reach his nostrils, he stumbled aimlessly down the alley. When he reached its end, he discovered that he had no idea which way to go, but turning around, he saw bright lights at the other end of the alley. Covering his nose and mouth, he weaved back down the passageway toward the light and eventually found himself again in Shantyville.

The clamor of the vendors, stridently hawking their wares, set his head ringing, but he stopped at one of the unpainted wooden stalls to buy a glass of lemonade to wash the foul taste from his mouth. It didn’t help; in fact, the acidic beverage burned his raw throat. Maybe a little hair of the dog would be better, he concluded, so he wandered into another saloon. After several shots of whiskey, he still felt wretched and decided it was time to go home, especially if he hoped to get there before Adam returned. “Won’t have to play sick now,” Joe giggled as he stumbled outside. “Now, where’d that streetcar go? Know I left it somewhere ‘round here.” He hiccupped and, finding the sound terribly amusing, did it again for the entertainment of the patrons of Shantyville.

Finally sighting a streetcar, Joe stumbled aboard, paid his fare and sat down to await his arrival back at Chestnut Street. He’d been riding a long time before his head cleared enough for him to notice that he wasn’t headed downtown, but was far out in a residential area. Seeking the conductor’s help, he finally managed to transfer to the correct streetcar, but it was now long past the time he had intended to be back
at the hotel. “Adam’s gonna have a fit,” he twittered with a nervous giggle as he tripped over the step getting off the streetcar and staggered toward the Washington Hotel.

The windows were all dark and the lobby empty when Joe lurched through it. He felt barely able to crawl, but, his distaste for elevators accentuated by an already-reeling stomach, he pulled himself hand over hand up the stair rail. When he came to the Cartwright suite and saw no light beneath the door, Joe tittered with sappy hilarity. He was safe; Adam wasn’t home yet. Fumbling with the key, he got the door open and tottered inside the room, which was illuminated only by the light from the window.

Then, as he closed the door behind him, from the darkness a furious bellow issued forth. “Where have you been?”

Leaning his aching head back against the door, Joe groaned. “A-Adam, I—I can explain.”

Silhouetted against the rectangle of light from the window, Adam stood with folded arms, glaring at his prodigal brother. “Don’t bother. It’s all too obvious what you’ve been up to, you . . . you . . . I can’t even think of a word adequate to express what I think of you at this moment, boy!”

Joe winced. Adam was never at a loss for words, so this unaccustomed verbal inadequacy could only be an indication that he was too furious to think straight, not a favorable sign. “I’m sorry, Adam, he whispered, “but can’t we talk about this in the morning? I feel wretched.”

“You expect me to fall for that again!” Adam roared. “But it’s the truth this time,” Joe wailed piteously. “I-I’ve had too much to drink and—”

“That’s more than apparent!” Adam shouted. “Now I want to know where!”
“Sh-Shantyville,” Joe stammered, adding with a smile hopeful of mercy, “It’s—it’s not as bad a place as you think, Adam.”

Suddenly, Adam was towering over his brother, a glowering personification of righteous wrath. “After I strictly forbade it? How dare you?”

Joe staggered a step back from the forbidding shadow. Had he been thinking clearly, he would have realized that attack was the worst strategy he could have employed at that moment, but still numbed by alcohol, he began to sputter, “Aw, doggone it, Adam. You promised I could have some fun on this trip. That’s all I was doing, keeping that promise for you when you wouldn’t.”

With cold fury Adam asked tersely, “And what about your promise, boy?”

“Huh?” Joe mumbled, still muddled.

“Your promise to Pa to obey my authority,” Adam reminded him frostily.

Chagrined, but still defensive, Joe continued to spew out ill-considered words. “I didn’t know what a tyrant you planned to be!”

“Well, if you’re not willing to stick to your word, I can put you on a train for home first thing in the morning, little boy!” Adam yelled.

Finally getting a grip on his erratic brain, Joe muttered snidely, “What, and admit to Pa that you can’t handle me any better than he can?” He smiled smugly, knowing he’d hit big brother where he was most vulnerable, smack in the center of his insufferable pride. Joe yelped as sharp talons gripped both shoulders.

Adam shook his brother ‘til his teeth chattered. “I oughta tan your hide!”
Joe almost lost his balance when Adam let go, but grabbed onto a chair to keep himself upright. “You wouldn’t dare,” he muttered darkly.

Adam, who had walked away to avoid an almost overwhelming urge to strangle his aggravating brother, spun around at the cloaked threat. “Wouldn’t I?” he asked with sardonic smile. “It’s always been my opinion that you should be treated in strict accordance with the level of maturity you’re showing. Tonight’s little escapade was worthy of a kid of about fifteen, and if you’ll recall, Pa certainly didn’t consider you too old to have your britches warmed at that age!”

Joe backed away, fearful his furious brother might actually carry out the implied threat, since he had clearly been pushed past the brink of reason. Stumbling over his own feet, Joe fell, bottom first, to the floor.

“I give up,” Adam said with a look of disgust. “There is no point in trying to talk to you while you’re so besotted with alcohol that you can’t stand up. Go sleep it off; I’ll let you know in the morning what I intend to do with you.” He stalked into his room, slamming the door.

Rising to his hands and knees, Joe crawled to his room, clambered up onto the bed, and despite his fear of the retribution Adam was planning, soon fell asleep. For Adam, however, sleep remained a distant goal. He leaned against his bedroom door, fingertips massaging his temple. Well, I guess we hit those breakers you warned me about, Pa, but I don’t see how I could have navigated around them. Why didn’t I see them coming? After all the times I’ve watched him manipulate Hoss, I let the little conniver pull the wool right over my eyes. Oh, he’s getting good at it! Well, I’ll be on my guard from now on, but what do I do about this little mutiny he’s staged?

He paced the hardwood floor, debating the alternatives. The one thing he determined was that Little Joe would not get off
lightly, with the kind of slap on the wrist he might expect from Pa. The harshest penalty, of course, would be to send him home, as threatened, but pride wouldn’t let Adam swallow the boast he’d made to his father that he could “handle that boy.” The kid had measured him correctly with that barb, he acknowledged ruefully. It was equally obvious that he couldn’t really take a nineteen-year-old across his knee, however much he might think the little wretch deserved it. Pa would be furious, rightfully so, and if Adam were to resort to any punishment that humiliating, in lieu of sending the kid home, there would be no living with Joe the rest of the trip.

How, then, could he discipline the brat? Keep him away from the Exposition? Adam shook his head. That would mean either depriving himself, as well, or leaving Joe in town alone. Not likely! Adam snorted at the idea. He’s already proven what mischief he’s capable of getting into, left to his own devices. No, he’ll have to stay with me, but how do I penalize him without making myself miserable? That question kept Adam awake, long into the night, until he thought he’d finally developed a course of action calculated to chafe his brother raw without curtailing any of his own plans.

~ ~ Historical Notes ~ ~

R. H. Chase was the principal of Philadelphia Collegiate School in 1873, and I have made the presumption that he still held that office in 1876.

Mark Twain’s commentary on the Can-Can is authentic. Its appearance in the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* on the specified date is the author’s conjecture, based solely on the needs of the plot.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Wanting some time to compose his disciplinary
lecture, Adam had risen early. Shaved, dressed and speech prepared, he still deemed it too early to wake Joe, who clearly needed to “sleep it off,” so he picked up the newspaper, and as he read the article on page one, his visage darkened. Something else he would need to discuss with his imprudent little brother, and now that he thought of it, the little wretch didn’t deserve extra sleep. Tossing the paper aside, he headed for his brother’s room.

As he had suspected, Little Joe was sprawled on his stomach, still dressed in his street clothes and dead to the world. Raising his palm, Adam brought it down hard on the upturned buttocks of the sleeping boy, the closest thing to a well-deserved spanking he dared mete out.

Jolted from sleep, Joe cracked a blurry eye.

“Get up,” Adam ordered, voice strident.

“Let me sleep,” Joe groaned, hand groping up to shield his eyes from the painful light of day.

Resisting the temptation to give his brother’s butt one more satisfying smack, Adam rolled him over and grasped his jaw between iron fingers. “Listen, boy, I have no intention of changing my plans because you didn’t have the sense to watch your alcohol consumption last night. Get up and get dressed. I have a few words to say to you.” He turned and stalked from the room.

Moaning, Joe sat up, certain Adam’s words would be far from few. He rested his splitting head in his hands for a few moments, then grimly stood up and staggered to the washbasin to splash cold water on his face. He briefly considered asking Adam what he should wear, but decided there was no point. In Adam’s current mood, he would want his brother to be as uncomfortable as possible, so Joe laid out his nutmeg suit, along with a broad moss-green cravat to cinch around his neck. As soon as he was dressed, he gathered his courage and
walked into the parlor to face the music. “Adam, before you start in on me—”

“Be quiet,” Adam ordered. “Stand up straight, keep your eyes on me and your mouth shut.”

Quickly assuming an erect posture and focusing on his brother’s face, Joe took a deep breath and exhaled slowly. This was going to be bad, very bad.

“First things first,” Adam said, picking up the newspaper and pointing to one specific article. “You wouldn’t, by any chance, have first-hand knowledge of this little incident, would you?”

Mindful of his brother’s edict to keep his mouth shut, Joe merely nodded as he read the headline.

“Answer me!” Adam shouted.

Joe jumped. “Y-yes, sir. I-I was there.”

Adam flung the paper to the floor. “You were there. Not only did you lie about your physical condition, not only did you go to a section of town you were expressly forbidden to enter, not only did you drink yourself into a stupor, but you attended a performance so indecent it became the subject of a police raid. I suppose we have only your fleet feet to thank for the fact that you got home at all last night, instead of ending up in a jail cell!”

Joe lowered his eyes and nibbled on his lower lip. “Yes, sir,” he whispered.

“Speak up,” Adam growled, “and get your eyes back on me.”

Joe raised his head and forced himself to meet Adam’s stern gaze. “Yes, sir, it’s all true, except . . .”

“Yes?” Adam probed, irritation keeping an edge on his voice.
“Except it wasn’t an indecent show,” Joe said with a wistful smile. “It—it was a very fine show.”

Adam snorted. “You’ll understand if I don’t accept that as an entirely unbiased evaluation. Somehow, I feel more inclined to trust the judgment of law enforcement officers than that of a green kid who has already proven that he has no judgment whatsoever.”

Joe bristled at being called a green kid, but fought to keep his temper under control. He’d done wrong the night before and was willing to acknowledge his transgression—if Adam would just stop raking him over the coals long enough to let him apologize.

“When I invited you on this trip, I told you that there were certain conditions, did I not?” Adam demanded. “And these conditions were reaffirmed by Pa, as well, were they not?”

Joe nodded and when Adam appeared to be waiting for a verbal response, said wearily, “Yes, sir.”

“And have you met those conditions?” Adam pressed.

Deciding it was time he said something in his own defense, Joe squared his shoulders. “All but once. I’m sorry about last night, Adam, especially about lying to you, but I still don’t see why I had to go out with you and your friends. All I wanted was one night of fun of my own choosing.”

Adam pursed his lips and nodded slowly. “Well, you’ve had your night of fun. I hope it was worth it because it is the last you will see, boy. If I agree to let you stay, you will have to adhere to my dictates to the letter. Step over the line once and you will be packing your bags so fast, you’ll be dizzy from the pace.” He narrowed his gaze. “Furthermore, if I agree to let you stay, the emphasis will be on your education, not ‘fun.’ So you decide now, boy. Do you accept these conditions or do I put you on that train for home?”
Joe’s face was grim, but he answered meekly, looking at the floor. “I’d like to stay, Adam. Please.” He had hopes that after a day or two to work out his spite, Adam would ease up on him. However, even if the rest of the trip were pure misery, staying with his older brother, angry as he was, would still be preferable to being sent back to his father like a naughty child. Joe didn’t even want to think about what Pa would say or do in that event.

Adam stood, with his feet planted shoulder-width apart and his arms folded, liking what he saw. Now that he had the kid subdued, it was time to tighten the reins. “In addition, there will, of course, be a little discipline today to atone for your misbehavior.”

Joe’s head snapped up. “Now wait a minute!”

“Dietary discipline,” Adam announced, the crisp staccato of his words intended to imply that there would be no discussion of the prescribed punishment.

Joe’s lip curled with sarcasm. “Oh, what? Bread and water?”

Adam thrust his index finger directly at his brother’s nose. “Keep up the smart mouth, kid, and that’s exactly what it will be!” He took a step back and folded his arms across his chest again, to control a strong urge to slap Joe’s impudent face. “What I intend is to make certain you put proper food in your stomach today, instead of the most expensive item on the menu and every snack food in sight. You will eat what I say today or go hungry. Is that clear?”

Realizing that it could have been much worse, Joe quickly murmured, “Yes, sir.”

“And you will go where I say and nowhere else—today and every day we remain in the East. Is that clear?”

With a sigh Joe again whispered, “Yes, sir.”
The glow of triumph in Adam’s eyes made his smooth smile, as he issued the next edict, an ugly thing. “Furthermore, after we return from the Exposition, you will spend the evening writing a report on what you have learned about the exhibits we visit.”

Joe groaned. “In five hundred words or less?” he scoffed, that being Abigail Jones’ favorite length of essay assignment. “In as many words as are required to make a full and detailed report,” Adam demanded. “Is that agreed?”

Feeling he had no choice, Joe nodded and once again muttered a perfunctory, “Yes, sir.”

“One more thing,” Adam began.

“Just one?” Joe grunted bitterly.

“You watch your tone, boy,” Adam ordered sharply as he extended his hand, palm up, “and hand me your room key. You won’t need it, as you’ll be spending every waking moment under my supervision, and just maybe it will discourage you from sneaking out at night if you don’t have a way to get back in.”

Joe reached into his pocket, withdrew the key and angrily slammed it into his brother’s hand, thinking that Adam had now gone too far in the role of stern parent. Given the degree of self-satisfaction Adam was displaying, though, nothing would stop him from playing the part to the hilt. As they headed downstairs for breakfast, Joe tried to calculate just how long it would take to work the martinet out of Adam’s system and, of lesser importance, just how punitive his “dietary discipline” was to be.

A partial answer to the latter was revealed when Adam placed their breakfast orders. “I’ll have bacon and eggs, with fried potatoes and hot cakes, please,” he told the waitress, and when she turned, by habit, to take Joe’s order, he cleared his
throat. “The boy will have milk toast, easy on the butter, and beef tea.”

At first surprised, the waitress smiled in sympathy when she noticed the green cast to Joe’s countenance. “Very good, sir,” she told Adam and left to turn in the order.

Little Joe gave his brother a sour smile. Milk toast and beef tea, food for an invalid, only marginally better, in Joe’s opinion, than bread and water. He had to admit, though, that Adam’s choices sat easier on his touchy stomach than bacon and eggs would have. In fact, even the sight of Adam’s greasy plate was enough to send waves of nausea rippling through his abused digestive system.

* * * * *

As he was dragged down Elm Avenue to the eastern entrance to the Centennial grounds, Joe decided he would never understand the way his older brother’s mind worked. The horse car had let them off right in front of the southern entrance to the Main Exhibition Building. But, no, Adam had to insist on going in the east door to the huge hall, and he, of course, offered no explanation to his brother, who was still, obviously, in disgrace and, therefore, not deserving of enlightenment. Spotting a huge circular building of corrugated iron, just outside the Exhibition grounds, however, Joe was glad they had come this way. “Hey, Adam, it’s the ‘Siege of Paris,’” he cried, stepping toward the Panorama. “Let’s”—his face fell as Adam’s grip on his arm tightened.

“Some other time, perhaps,” Adam said.

“But, Adam, it’s educational,” Joe pointed out as he was pulled away.

“Try to get this through your thick head,” Adam growled. “Nothing today is being arranged for your pleasure, and I will decide what area of your education requires attention. I
don’t feel a further exploration of your French background quite fills the bill today, boy.”

While Adam was purchasing a catalog of exhibits just inside the east entrance, Joe saw a sign announcing that most of the exhibits upstairs pertained to the Education Department of the State of Massachusetts. He felt sure he now knew why Adam had chosen this as their starting place; evidently, part of his punishment was to avoid anything of interest in favor of whatever would bore him to distraction. When they climbed the stairs to the gallery and entered one room of the educational exhibits, Joe found it every bit as dull as he’d expected, with its dreary display of school furniture, tiresome textbooks and exam papers bound in volumes, like a regular book. “Don’t guess anyone would want to bind my test papers in a book!” he joked, trying to clear the atmosphere.

But Adam was in no mood for humor, especially regarding his brother’s educational inadequacies. “No, most of yours were best used as tinder for the fire,” he observed with a cynical half-smile.

With a scowl, Joe turned away, feigning sudden interest in a table of mathematics texts.

Once the torment of that room had been endured, the Cartwright brothers exited to the gallery again. They passed the huge instrument by Boston organ-builders Hook and Hastings, the bellows for its 2,704 pipes blown by a hydraulic engine on the ground floor beneath it. Since a concert was in progress, they stopped to listen for a few minutes, Joe keeping a careful distance between himself and his older brother and taking the opportunity to peer over the rail at the intriguing scene below.

A dazzling display met his eyes, the exhibits themselves forming a crazy quilt of varied shapes and colors, while the crowds in the aisles declared the multinational appeal of the
Centennial Exhibition. Ornamental silks of Oriental visitors brushed past baggy brown trousers and red jackets, similar to those Joe had seen on their visit to the Turkish café. Crimson caps atop the heads of swarthy men declared them to be Egyptian, just as the buckskins indicated the presence of Native Americans in the crowd. Other costumes were unfamiliar to the boy from Nevada, and he would, under other circumstances, have asked his older brother to identify them for him. Not a good idea today, he decided, with a cautious look at Adam. Nope, still mad; best leave him alone. Pot’s only simmering now, but it wouldn’t take much to set it boiling again. Besides, any questions he asked would only add that much more information to put in his report that evening, and one look at the ground floor assured Joe that he would be at it for hours, without requesting more details to include.

Joe was quite willing to stay for the entire concert, on the assumption that nothing more enjoyable would be permitted that day, but Adam was soon ready to move on. Probably that infernal schedule again, Joe mused. Gotta keep on track if he’s gonna make his little brother as miserable as possible.

Sure enough, Adam’s next destination was the second room of the Massachusetts educational exhibits, a room the older brother found even more absorbing than the first, with its architectural plans and models of principal schools in the state, including Boston High and Evening Schools. Adam frowned with disapproval when he heard Joe yawn loudly beside him.

Reading the message in his brother’s severe countenance, Joe attempted to simulate some interest, an effort he soon gave up as completely futile. Adam might be able to envision what a building would look like, just by reading a set of diagrams, but to Joe, they were just meaningless lines on paper. Looking around the room, in hopes of spying something that wasn’t unutterably boring, he noticed a crowd of people huddled around a table in the corner and decided that anything
that drew that much attention merited investigation. Besides, no matter what it was, it had to be more interesting than architectural plans. Seeing that Adam was still engrossed in those boring schematics, Joe sidestepped to the right and, when Adam didn’t even look up, took one step backward.

Step by step, he inched away from his brother, until he was back in the corner drawing so much interested attention. Joe peered between shoulders and saw some kind of mechanism on the table. A lady holding a dark cylinder to her ear suddenly gasped and set the apparatus down. “What is it?” Joe asked a tall man standing just in front of him.

“Professor Bell calls it an Electric Telephone and Multiple Telegraph,” the man replied, turning sideways so Joe could see more clearly.

Joe squinted at the twisted wires running from the cylinder to another part of the mechanism. “New kind of telegraph, huh? Don’t see a key to click out the dots and dashes. How’s it work?”

“Why not see for yourself, young man?” From behind the table a man with dark wavy hair, bushy sideburns and a congenial smile gestured toward the cylinder.

Joe picked it up and held it tentatively to his ear as the man lifted the device at the other end of the wires to his mouth. “Hey, it talks!” Joe screeched, almost dropping the cylinder, as the words came tickling into his ear. The surrounding crowd responded with a loud burst of laughter.

Across the room, Adam, surprised to hear such a hullabaloo in an educational room, looked up and immediately noticed that his younger brother was no longer at his side. With discernment cultivated over nearly two decades’ service as older sibling to Little Joe, he swiveled toward the sound, instinctively knowing that he would find his young brother at the center of the commotion. Fire in his eyes, he moved
toward the corner and took firm hold on Joe’s arm to pull him back where he belonged.

“Adam, you gotta see this!” Joe exclaimed.

“What I want to see is you, doing what you’re told,” Adam hissed through gritted teeth.

“But, Adam, it talks!”

“Talks?” Adam turned a skeptical eye toward the table, but the minute he saw the invention, his curiosity overcame his ire, and he stepped closer to view the mechanism. Soon he was posing technical questions to the man behind the table, who introduced himself as Alexander Graham Bell and willingly explained the principles of electro-magnetic transmission of sound.

“It is, of course, in a rudimentary stage,” the inventor explained. “That is why I am only able to transmit the human voice in one direction at present, but I expect to soon solve that problem, and then distant speakers will be able to carry on conversations as readily as though they were in the same parlor.”

“How far?” Joe asked eagerly. “All the way to Nevada?”

Bell laughed lightly. “That is a considerable distance, young man, but perhaps in time it would be possible. After all, telegraph wires stretch that far, so it should be possible for telephone wires, I would think.”

“A most fascinating demonstration, Professor Bell,” Adam said by way of farewell, for he felt that he and Joe had taken up enough of the man’s time. “I’ll be expecting to hear more of you and your invention.”

Joe seemed reluctant to leave, especially in light of the only other exhibits on offer in this room, but Adam hauled him away with a firm hand. “That was very interesting, but you are not
setting the itinerary today. Do not leave my side again,” he ordered crisply as he dragged his brother toward a display of photographs of several colleges in Massachusetts. “I want you to pay special attention to these, Joe,” he said firmly.

“Do I need to list them in my essay?” Joe sneered. Seeing Adam flare with anger, he quickly wiped the sarcasm from his face. “Sorry. Any here from Yale?”

Adam sighed as though weighed down by his brother’s colossal ignorance. “Yale’s in Connecticut, Joe; this is the Massachusetts exhibit.”

“Oh, yeah, I knew that,” Joe stammered, chagrined.

Noticing his brother’s embarrassment over the simple mistake, Adam added with a less acerbic tongue, “Maybe they’ll have some photos in Connecticut’s educational department, as well. According to the catalog, it’s in the southern gallery.”

“Let’s go look,” Joe suggested, brightening with real interest this time and moving toward the exit.

Adam laid a restraining palm on his brother’s chest. “All in good time. Now, here are some interesting shots of the Harvard campus.”

Oh, great, Joe thought, another place I’m not smart enough to go. What’s the point in even looking? He dutifully examined the photographs, however, certain Adam would expect to see them mentioned in his evening’s homework.

Finally escaping from the educational exhibits, Joe eagerly trotted down the stairs, an action his stomach protested, but he recovered quickly and headed toward the main aisle. A familiar grip tightened on his biceps and pulled him back.

“Just where do you think you’re going?” Adam demanded tersely.

Little Joe pointed down the aisle. “See that sign, ‘Great
Britain and Ireland’? Wouldn’t it be better to start down there— you know, save the best for last?”

Adam laughed. “We are, you little egotist. The United States may have excelled in machinery, but it will be a different story in this building.”

“Adam, that’s downright unpatriotic,” Joe declared.

“And downright truthful, too,” Adam grunted. “Now, come with me, little boy, and I don’t want to hear so much as a suggestion from you the rest of the day.” He began walking south down the easternmost aisle. “I assume you’re taking note of the architecture and the interior décor,” he observed with a cutting glance over his shoulder.

“Oh, you bet,” Joe tossed back. Architecture, huh? He had no idea what style of architecture this building sported, and he wasn’t about to ask. The interior décor was easier to appraise: light blue and cream walls, tiled pavement in the vestibule and, circling the walls near the top, small, round stained-glass windows, designating the arms of the United States, as well as of individual states, territories and other nations represented at the Centennial. It was pleasing to the eye and would be easy to remember when it came time to write down the description.

“Joseph,” Adam called sharply.

Joe scurried to catch up. “Coming, Pa,” he mocked.

Adam flushed, momentarily aware that he was overdoing the authoritarian stance. To compensate, he pointed out a shining display of cutlery and asked, “Do you think Hop Sing would appreciate some new knives?”

Since Adam sounded almost normal with that question, Joe decided to test the waters to see if his big brother had regained a particle of his sense of humor. “Like these?” he
asked, pointing at the huge Centennial knife and fork suspended above the cutlery department.

“No one but Hoss would have a chance of handling those,” Adam chuckled, amused despite his determination to stay severe with Joe today.

“Not even him, big brother, not even him.”

The brothers smiled at each other, as if the very mention of Hoss had pulled them together the way their middle brother so often did back home. It was only a small step forward, but Joe began to breathe a little easier. Only a little, though, as it was too early in the day to assume that he was out of the woods yet.

Pausing briefly to look at an exhibit of carpet manufacturers, Adam raised a quizzical eyebrow in his brother’s direction.

“Maybe,” Joe said, though he sounded uncertain. “They’re not bad. Maybe in Pa’s bedroom. His is getting kind of thin.”

Adam nodded. “I’ll think about it.”

Joe’s nose scrunched up. Yeah, it’ll have to be you, ‘cause I sure don’t have the money for that—or anything else Pa would really like.

The next showcase presented a new product for the consideration of American consumers. Manufactured out of cork and linseed oil, linoleum was proclaimed by the trade card being passed out to all in sight to be softer and more durable than oilcloth. “Hop Sing might find this practical,” Adam observed, running his hand over the smooth surface.

“Ugh! Don’t even think about it,” Joe declared with a vigorous shake of his head. “You’d cover up those great old wood floors with this ugly stuff? All that book learning has addled your brains, Adam.”
“Maybe just in the kitchen?” Adam suggested. “Think how it would expedite mopping the floor.”

“Hop Sing would hate it,” Joe stated emphatically. “It’ll never last, I tell you.”

Adam shrugged and moved on, pocketing the trade card to show later to their household factotum. Secretly, he thought that Joe’s opposition probably guaranteed the success of the new product with people of good sense. Hoss, for instance, would have seen the value in time saved right away.

Odd that it’s the youngster in the family that’s so hidebound against change, Adam mused. The kid hasn’t had nearly as much to deal with in his life as I have in mine, but he doesn’t handle change half as well. Lack of practice, maybe? Is there such a thing as too much stability in a boy’s life? It was an almost unthinkable thought when he considered the upheaval of his own growing-up years. Which of us is really better off? Adam wondered. Which will, ultimately, make the better man? It was a moment of rare self-examination for the oldest Cartwright brother, and uncomfortable with the questions pounding in his head, he pushed them aside to look at the next exhibit.

In the southeast corner of the gigantic hall rose the two-story black walnut pavilions of the publishing industry, divided according to publisher. From the moment they entered, Adam seemed lost in a world of his own, so Joe sat on one of the padded benches surrounding the Lippincott Publishing Company’s exhibit and thumbed through an illustrated edition of the works of Sir Walter Scott, whose swashbuckling tales were old favorites with the youngest Cartwright.

Finally dragging himself away from row after row of tempting volumes, Adam noticed the title of the book in his brother’s hand. “I’m glad to see your taste in literature occasionally rises above dime-novel drivel,” he commented airily.
Joe slammed the book shut. “I’ve always liked Scott, Adam. Don’t you ever pay attention to what I’m really like, or are you just so busy looking for something to criticize that you ignore everything else?”

Adam yanked Joe up from the bench, his nails digging painfully into the boy’s biceps. “You keep a civil tongue in your mouth today, boy,” he growled testily. “You’re in a deep enough vat of hot water without heating things up with that notoriously fiery tongue of yours.”

Embarrassed by the heads that turned to look their direction, Joe said nothing as he was dragged from that pavilion into the next, an exhibit by the American Bible Society. Yeah, Adam could do with some time spent in the Good Book, all right. Something about doing unto others or . . .

“Joseph, are you paying attention?” Adam demanded.

“Quit calling me that,” Joe muttered under his breath.

Adam spun around. “Why?” he demanded. “Hoss calls you that all the time, and you never object.”

“Hoss don’t say it like he thinks he’s my pa,” Joe sputtered.

“Fine,” Adam snapped. “Maybe I’ll just call you ‘brat’ for the rest of the day.” He gave Joe a supercilious smile. “Yes, I think that would be the most appropriate appellation for a smart-mouthed kid. So, brat, I want you to give diligent attention to the contents of this case.”

Bristling with the knowledge that he’d come out on the short end of that exchange, Joe leaned both hands on the polished oak showcase and peered at the Bibles inside. Though they lay open, he couldn’t read most of them, for this display represented all the languages of the world in which the Holy Book had been printed, twenty-nine in all. Joe filed the number away for repetition, if quizzed, and moved on to a case.
of rare and valuable Bibles, before which his older brother stood enthralled.

“This one belonged to John Milton,” Adam whispered, clearly in awe at the sight of something that one of his literary idols had touched.

“Do tell,” Joe grunted. *He’s got some gall, calling me a brat one minute, then expecting me to share his excitement the next.*

Adam glowered at him. “Behave, brat.”

Joe rolled his eyes. “Yes, sir,” he said, with an impudent expression that made it evident the respectful words were spoken under duress. Turning his gaze on the first Bible printed in America, a sudden blush of shame crossed Joe’s face, for it occurred to him that his behavior flew in the face of what the Good Book taught. Respect for God and respect for his elders had been drilled into him at an early age, and Joe knew his father would be disappointed in the attitude he’d shown today. Maybe Pa’d be disappointed in Adam, too, but that was for Adam to deal with. You weren’t responsible for what the other man did, Pa always said, just for your own behavior. The words came hard, but Joe knew he had to say them, if he were not to reflect poorly on the man who had reared him. “I-I’m sorry, Adam,” he stammered.

Adam looked up, surprised by the swift change of emotion. “What?”

Joe’s lower lip trembled. “I said ‘I’m sorry.’ I have been acting like a brat, and I-I want to stop that right now.”

Knowing that his little brother wasn’t the only one at fault, Adam swallowed hard. “Well, I might have been a bit harsh myself,” he conceded, somewhat reluctantly, for he still felt a need to maintain authority over the impulsive boy under his charge. Then he laid a conciliatory hand on his brother’s
shoulder. “I’m sorry, too, Joe. The discipline stands, but I will try to be less nasty about it.”

Joe smiled and extended his hand, which Adam took and gave a warm squeeze.

“Have you finished here?” Adam asked. At Joe’s nod, he led the way downstairs to the main floor again, where he was soon absorbed in a model of the bridge over New Jersey’s Raritan Bay, declared by the sign to be the longest swing bridge in the world.

The painting behind the model helped Little Joe understand how the bridge operated, but his interest waned after a quick look. Finally feeling less queasy, he was getting hungry after such a light breakfast, but he knew without question that the day’s discipline did not include feedings on demand. He shifted impatiently from foot to foot, until, deciding he couldn’t look at that bridge one second longer, he asked permission to move to next exhibit. “I’ll keep in sight,” he promised Adam.

Adam glanced across the aisle. “All right, but no further,” he directed.

Joe flashed a relieved smile. “Thanks!” Skipping across the aisle, he eyed with longing the handsome timepieces displayed in glass-enclosed cases by the American Watch and Elgin companies and listened to representatives of both touting their product as the best. When Adam joined him, he pointed to one with a scrolled silver case. “You think Pa would like this?” he asked eagerly.

“Well, maybe,” Adam said tentatively, still hoping to buy something finer for their father.

Reading his brother’s hesitance as disapproval, Joe moved further down the line. “A clock, maybe?” He felt hurt that he couldn’t afford anything Pa would really like and even a
little resentful that his rich older brother never had to make such tough choices. It had been that way every Christmas and birthday that Joe could remember his father celebrating, Adam giving wonderful gifts that thrilled Pa, while the best he could afford looked like a child’s trinket by comparison, though Pa had always acted just as pleased with Joe’s simple offerings as with either of his older brothers’ better ones.

“Maybe,” Adam said, again with that note of uncertainty in his voice. Catching sight of his brother’s crestfallen face, he suggested gently, “Why don’t you quit trying so hard, Joe? I’m sure just the right idea will come to you in time.”

“I want something extra fine, Adam,” Joe explained urgently, “something worthy of our pa.”

Adam rewarded the generous words with the warmest smile he’d bestowed that morning. “That’s commendable, Joe, but do we have to find it today?”

Joe shrugged sheepishly. “Guess not,” he muttered.

The boys made their way back to the main aisle, skirting past a plethora of less interesting exhibits. Ore they had seen regularly on the Comstock, and neither contemplated the purchase of a granite monument, while even Adam found the maps and charts of the Geological Survey of New Jersey utterly boring. Surprisingly, though, Little Joe spent considerable time looking at the pottery exhibit. For his report tonight, I suppose, Adam assumed and let the kid take his time.

He was about to turn west, toward the Centennial Safe, where guests might check valuables during their visit, when Joe looked across the aisle and saw the big guns near the east entrance. “Can’t we go see those now, Adam?” he begged, child-like whimper in his voice. “Most of this stuff would bore anybody but you.”

“Have you forgotten last night?” Adam queried with severe
aspect. “We are not here for your amusement today, naughty boy, and if you’re bored, it’s only an indication that you need to broaden your horizons.”

“I’m trying, Adam, honest I am,” Joe replied with a deep sigh and then looked up again with sad, pleading eyes. “We’re gonna see it all anyway, aren’t we? What difference does it make if we mix in some interesting stuff along the way?”

“Well, if you’re going to pout like a spoiled child, come on!” Adam said sharply and crisscrossed the aisle to the Parrott cannons and Gatling guns. He chided himself almost immediately for once again evincing a nasty attitude. He didn’t really want to see the guns himself, and it was easier to ridicule his brother’s interest than to reveal the reasons he couldn’t share it.

Employing the distraction technique that had so often worked with his little brother when he was a child, Adam insisted that Joe look first at the trophy of twenty-five flags suspended from the ceiling over the doorway, illustrating the history of the American flag. “Notice, please, that our flag is a descendant of those that flew over the mother country of England,” he lectured. “There, for instance, is the flag of St. George, used by Henry the Eighth, and that’s the St. Andrew standard of James the Sixth’s time.”

“Adam,” Joe whined with a yearning glance at the cannons, just to his left.

“Pay attention!” Adam scolded. “This is much more important than those iron monsters, and I will expect your report to include a full description of the evolution of our flag. Now, as I was saying, you see that both British flags display stripes of the same basic colors as our own, although the arrangement differs from the design used in the American flag.”

With a sigh, Joe focused diligently on his brother as Adam
rumbled on about the various colonial flags. Beginning with the Liberty Tree flag, he progressed through those using the popular device of a snake, with its ominous message, “Don’t Tread on Me,” to end with the current flag of thirteen alternating red and white stripes and thirty-eight white stars on a blue background.

It was interesting, and if Joe hadn’t been so tired, hungry and still suffering from a splitting headache, he might have enjoyed listening to Professor Cartwright’s vast array of knowledge. The origin of the flag did not, however, as Adam had hoped, distract Joe from his main purpose. “Now can we see the guns?” he pressed when Adam appeared to have wound down.

“Oh, all right.” Adam sighed and prepared to face the inevitable.

Almost before Adam got the words out of his mouth, Joe bolted away and was soon running his hands all over the long, cold barrels of the military hardware. Looking for his brother, he noticed that Adam had his back to the exhibit and, moving toward him, Joe asked, almost in a whisper, “Don’t you think they’re interesting, Adam?”

“No,” Adam said, the word staccato-sharp. “Nothing that can wreak that much destruction is interesting.”

Joe bit his lip. “Did they use this kind during the war?” he asked hesitantly.

Adam swung a hand toward the cannon without looking at it. “The Parrott, yes, and I believe the Gatling gun was tested late in the war, but didn’t see much actual combat.” Keep to the facts, he cautioned himself. Don’t think about the fields strewn with bodies; don’t remember the maggots crawling on the gaping wounds after days of bloating in the sun.

“You ever fire one?” Joe asked, his voice pulling Adam back to
the present.

“No, I was in the infantry, not the artillery,” Adam said, rolling his shoulders to ease the tightening muscles. “That’s enough questions about the war, Joe.”

Offense flared quickly in Joe’s expressive eyes. “Why? Why do you always cut me short if I ask anything about what it was like back there? I want to know, Adam!”

Adam licked his suddenly dry lips. “You just wouldn’t understand, kid.”

“Quit calling me that!” Joe protested. “That’s the whole problem, Adam. You still think of me as a little kid, too young to understand anything.”

“This isn’t the time or the place,” Adam said, looking away.

“It never will be, will it, Adam?” Joe muttered bitterly.

Adam reached out to touch his brother’s shoulder. “Joe, I—we need to move on to the next exhibit now.”

“Oh, by all means, let’s keep on schedule,” Joe snorted, shifting out from under his brother’s hand.

The military uniforms in the next case, however, did nothing but keep the divisive subject in their minds, so Adam hurried Joe past it, pointing out a display of mechanical toys nearby. “I’m not a kid, Adam!” Joe snapped. “How many times do I have to tell you?”

“How many times do I have to tell you to watch your tongue?” Adam retorted.

At odds with one another yet again, the brothers viewed in silence the exhibits on the north side of the main aisle, including clothes from Wanamaker’s, terra cotta and ropes and cordage of all sizes, from delicate thread to thick cable.
Reaching the western end of the American department, they crossed the aisle to stay within the country. Joe looked longingly at the soda fountain, but Adam hardened his heart against the unspoken plea. I told him no snacks, and I can’t back down. He needs to learn I mean what I say!

With the clocks by Seth Thomas, they finally reached an exhibit that Joe, at least, found interesting again. Even he didn’t give them a long appraisal, however, for his heart’s desire, however impossible it might eventually prove, was to buy his father a pocket watch he could wear with pride.

Passing the telegraph department, Little Joe pondered sending a wire home, begging his father to intervene with Adam, and then immediately dismissed the idea as foolish. No, worse than foolish—downright crazed, considering what else he’d have to confess. Yeah, Joe, bright idea. Tell Pa that you gave Adam the slip, got yourself stinkin’ drunk and looked up girls’ skirts. Uh-huh, that’ll really make Pa want to dress Adam down for being so rough on me! More likely, I’d end up being the one raked over the coals.

Just beyond, a display of beautiful pianos was arrayed, and the brothers stopped briefly to listen to a demonstration by a skilled player. Since no one in the family played the instrument, they had little need of a piano, but Adam mused for a few moments about how nice it would be to have one available for parties. He even indulged, briefly, in dreams of concerts at the Ponderosa, but then he returned to reality with a soft sigh. No matter how much he missed cultural opportunities, a piano simply wouldn’t get enough use back home to justify the expense.

Next to the pianos, the furniture dealers showed their wares, the most tasteful arrangement being that of Smith and Campion of Philadelphia, who had set up a four-room suite—parlor, dining room, library and chamber—completely furnished. Another Philadelphia dealer displayed a maple chamber suit,
carved from a two-hundred-year-old tree that had once stood in Independence Square. “Seems like a shame to cut down a tree that old, just to make beds and such,” Joe commented to the air.

Adam chuckled. “I’m sure that wasn’t the main consideration for cutting it down.”

Joe threw a sideways glance at his brother and relaxed a bit when he saw a pleasant smile. *Looks like older brother may have decided to forgive me for—well, for whatever set him off this time—asking about the war, I guess.* He still felt he had to walk on eggshells, however, because Adam, today, seemed as moody as—*well, as me most days*, Joe conceded with an honest smile to himself.

Quickly passing an exhibit of scientific instruments, the Cartwrights again reached the main aisle, where they gave the model of a Pullman hotel car a cursory look. “There’s a full-size one in the Carriage Annex. You can see that another day,” Adam said.

Joe sighed. Trust Adam to drag him away from anything he really wanted to see. He had to admit, though, that he’d enjoy seeing the bigger one more; maybe he could even climb aboard it and take a good look around.

Feeling a surge of sympathy for that drooping face, Adam said, “What do you say we look at lunch, instead? You hungry?”

The transformation of Joe’s countenance was like a swift sunrise. “Am I! I could eat”—the sun abruptly plunged, and he finished with a sigh, “whatever you say I can.”

“I scarcely think you’ll starve,” Adam drawled dryly.

There were two restaurants in the building, at opposite ends of the central transept, which crossed the Main Exhibition Building north to south. Adam chose the one at the north end
and scanned the short menu, while Joe waited in silence to learn his fate. Cost wasn’t a factor, since each meal was a standard fifty cents. No, the only factor—or, at least, the paramount one, in Joe’s view—was the degree to which older brother wished to punish younger. It had been an up-and-down morning, and Joe wasn’t sure which way Adam would lean.

Adam selected for his brother a plate of plain meat and vegetables, without rich sauces or gravy, but they were all foods that Joe liked. Flashing a smile of gratitude, Joe dug in as soon as the food was served. He was famished and ate with relish, the effects of the alcohol having worn off, except for that persistent headache. The only really punitive part of the meal was watching Adam tuck away a slice of apple pie, topped with vanilla ice cream, while denying any dessert to his younger brother. Oh, well, guess I’ve got that much meanness coming, Joe admitted, though it still bothered him. Apple pie was his favorite, and he had a nagging suspicion that Adam really was eating it in front of him just to rub his face in the “dietary discipline.”

A band was playing at the music stand in the very center of the hall as the Cartwright brothers left the restaurant, and Adam guided Joe to one of the benches in the main aisle, which intersected the transept. “Let’s listen to the music awhile, to let our meals settle,” he suggested, examining Joe solicitously for any signs of malaise.

Joe nodded and sat down at once. His food was setting just fine, but he was tired and, realizing that they had covered little more than a quarter of the building, quite content to rest awhile longer. All too soon for his tired feet, Adam declared that it was time to begin again.

Before they returned to finish the American section of the Main Exhibition Hall, Adam directed Joe’s attention to the paintings on the four sides of the central transept, which ran north to south through the building. Each was forty feet wide
and fifty feet high and represented the four major continents exhibiting at the Exposition. On the east, America was depicted by Columbia, holding a staff and wearing a Liberty cap. On the right of the gracefully draped lady was a bust of George Washington, and one of Benjamin Franklin was painted on her other side. The national colors were displayed in the background, while flags of the original thirteen colonies flanked either side.

Pivoting to the south, the boys viewed the painting of the Asian group, represented by a female figure seated between busts of Confucius and Mohammed. Chinese and Japanese symbols were scattered across the canvas, and flags of the Asiatic nations were pleasingly grouped. A female figure also graced the painting that symbolized Europe. Beneath her, on the right, was a bust of Shakespeare and on the left one of Charlemagne. A horse and lion were conspicuous in the foreground, while behind them were the flags of the major European nations. The final painting was hung at the north end of the transept to signify the African continent. Similar in style to the other paintings, this one featured an Egyptian woman, flanked by busts of Rameses and Sesostris with characteristic scenes of the continent and flags of the African states in the background.

Moaning, Joe tried to memorize every detail. Should’ve brought paper to take notes, he mourned. How am I ever gonna remember all this long enough to get it down on paper for picky old Adam? The paintings were attractive, but having to be so meticulous in viewing them spoiled what would otherwise have been an enjoyable experience.

Though the Cartwright brothers had almost completed the American exhibits, some of the most beautiful still remained. The gas fittings, of course, did not fall in that category, but the glassware and fine jewelry near them did, although Adam insisted both would suffer by comparison with European craftsmanship, in particular that of Great Britain.
crescent-shaped Moorish pavilion housing the fine workmanship of Tiffany, Gorham and others, however, was the most beautiful in the building. Its warm, luxuriant colors provided the perfect backdrop for the jewelry and other works of art, including some of the most opulent and costly articles in the entire Exhibition. Though Little Joe was feeling increasingly glum about the task set before him, he found it impossible not to be impressed with these beautiful pieces.

Seeing the awe on his young brother’s face, Adam couldn’t resist teasing. “Don’t even think about buying any of these, little brother.”

“Are you kidding?” Joe squeaked. “Look at the prices!”

Embarrassed by Joe’s loud forthrightness, Adam shushed him. “Just enjoy the workmanship, boy; they’re marvelous works of art.”

“Yeah, they are,” Joe agreed. “Look at this one.” He pointed to a solid-silver vase produced by Gorham Manufacturing Company, which stood over four feet tall, measured more than five feet long and was embellished with symbolic figures. At the lower front a pioneer and an Indian sat, surrounded by the fruits, flowers and cereal grains of America, while thirty-eight stars, one for each state of the Union, circled the base. On the left, above these figures, the Genius of War stood, with a torch in his right hand, while his left grasped a chain holding back the “dogs of war.” On the opposite side, figures represented the antithesis of war as little children led a lion through a field of musical instruments and flowers. The cover of the vase supported figures signifying Asia, Europe and Africa, while the central figure of America welcomed them all to the celebration of her centennial year. The Centennial Vase was an exquisite piece that carried a price tag of seven thousand dollars.

By contrast, the display of chemicals and paints of John Lucas
and Company of Philadelphia seemed to epitomize the mundanity and humdrum of everyday life. The next exhibit, a black marble fountain that sprayed jets of cologne, was much more to Joe’s liking, and he bathed his aching temples in the cool fragrances, sampling first one and then another. He would have liked to stay longer, but Adam reminded him that there was still much more to see. “You won’t be buying anything today anyway,” he added, “so there’s no need to try each and every one.”

“More punishment, big brother?” Joe asked with a sulky pout.

Adam shrugged a single shoulder. “Just protecting you from yourself, kid. I promise you can buy anything your greedy little heart desires before we leave for home—‘til your money runs out.”

“Well, okay, then. I guess it is better to wait,” Joe granted, though he didn’t appreciate being reminded of his meager resources.

“Of course,” Adam said, with an attitude that clearly communicated a message that everything big brother said was, “of course,” better.

“Ugh,” Joe grunted as he headed across the central transept toward the German exhibits. Having seen all of the American department, or so he thought, Joe was anxious to view what the rest of the world had to offer.

Adam caught him by the arm. “No, we need to finish up the American educational exhibits first.” Joe groaned audibly, which so irritated Adam that he snapped his fingers beneath the nose of his younger brother. “Upstairs now, brat,” he ordered, and then bit his tongue. He hadn’t meant that ugly word to slip out again, but it was too late to call it back. His aggrieved little brother was already bounding up the stairs to the south gallery, racing to its end—*to get away from me, no doubt*, Adam sighed, *and small wonder.*
Though he hadn’t intended to start there, Adam followed and stood beside his brother as they viewed the display devoted to schools for black children. Spurning the exam papers of the students, Little Joe was gazing, instead, at an oil painting of the Jubilee singers from Fiske University in Nashville, Tennessee. “They look happy,” he murmured, sounding so miserable himself that Adam felt all the worse.

“Singing lightens the heart,” Adam stated and, feeling guilty for having needlessly hurt his little brother, he forced himself to open up a little. “I remember hearing the plantation slaves sing while my regiment marched through Virginia,” he said softly. “They had little to be happy about, but they sang their sorrows away with the most beautiful, plaintive melodies I’d ever heard.” Darker memories of things he’d seen down South came rushing toward him, though, and Adam felt an instinctive need to protect his baby brother from the shadows that still hovered over his own soul. “They’re famous, too,” he said, nodding at the picture in a noticeably abrupt change of subject, “here and in Great Britain—great singers from what I’ve heard.”

“Like the ones you heard when—”

“Drop it, Joe,” Adam ordered sharply.

Joe’s gaze fell to the floor. He wanted Adam to continue, to let him into the closed closet of that part of his life, but after the way Adam had acted about the artillery guns, he didn’t dare ask. He just began making his way through the unbelievably boring educational exhibits of various states. “Hey, Adam, here’s Connecticut,” he called, feeling this a safer subject than the one Adam clearly wanted to avoid.

Adam moved toward him, smiling. “Let’s see if they have some pictures of Yale,” he suggested. There proved to be an album of photos of the university Adam had attended, and thumbing through the pages brought back warm memories for him, though
he didn’t think to share them with his brother. For Joe, he simply listed the names of the buildings until one caught warmer notice. “Why, there’s old North Middle, my junior dorm,” he said and pointed out the third-story window of the room he had shared with his childhood friend, Jamie Edwards.

Wanting to keep Adam in a good mood, Joe forced a saucy grin. “So that’s where greatness was born, huh?” he quipped.

Adam coughed out a chuckle. “Oh, behave yourself.”

He was obviously warming up to Joe again, and sensing the subtle change, Joe returned a tentative smile.

Finishing the other educational exhibits, Adam and Joe made their way back to the ground floor, where Joe halted, unwilling to risk the uneasy peace by any suggestion of his own interests.

Seeing his usually animated younger brother standing so quietly and soberly, so obviously afraid of expressing himself, pierced through Adam like a scalding poker. I’m ruining this for him. What a fool I’ve been! Instead of opening his eyes to the joys of learning, I’ve only reinforced his opinion that education is painful. His touch was gentle against Joe’s back and his voice kind as he asked, “Would you like to start with Germany, as you suggested before, or”—he made a wide sweep of his right arm toward the opposite side of the hall—“walk ‘all the way’ to France?”

Joe’s head came up, and there was fresh sparkle in his eyes. “You mean it?”

“I mean it, buddy.” The words, again, were kind and just a touch apologetic.

Buddy, he called me buddy, Joe noted with amazement. First time since—since what I did. Now, if he’d just make it ‘little buddy,’ I’d know we were okay again. He waited for a
moment, hoping, but Adam only cocked his head and gazed quizzically back. Feeling his eyes start to mist, Joe blinked back the betraying droplets and said with vigor, “Let’s go to France, then!”

The French exhibits were located just east of the central transept, running from the main aisle to the north wall. Each exhibitor showed his wares in simple black cases with ornamental lines of gilt and identified them with his name in gilt letters at the top of the display. Those in the front line, as the Cartwright brothers approached, were also festooned with dark, scalloped drapes at both top and bottom, and a gilt sign on either side proclaimed “Bronze D’Art” with the name of L. Marchand between them. A rope across what looked like an arched doorway prevented entrance from the front, so Adam and Joe walked around the side.

The smaller bronzes in the first case were exquisite, but both boys were drawn, as if by magnet, to the black marble mantelpiece at the center of the exhibit. Standing fifteen feet high, it was decorated with statues and high reliefs in gilt and verd antique. “I’ve read that it’s the finest piece in the entire Exhibition,” Adam commented, “and I’d have to agree. The French do have artistic flair.”

When Joe beamed triumphantly, as if the compliment were personal, Adam chuckled, amused, as always, by the high level of identification his little brother felt with his mother’s heritage. Then he recognized, in a sudden burst of self-realization, that it was no different for him; only the heritage was different, French for Joe and that of New England for him. His love of that culture most likely came from a desire to identify with his mother’s roots, for neither of his brothers shared it, although, of course, their father also came from that part of the country.Probably could find no finer Christmas gift for the kid than something French, Adam noted, and began viewing the remaining exhibits with that pursuit in mind, watching closely to see what caught his
brother’s eye. Finding it impossible to stay angry with Joe while thinking about presents for him, Adam soon discovered that they were both enjoying the afternoon more than they had their morning together.

In back of the front line, the brothers came to a display of antique furniture and cabinets and close by that, one of porcelain and pottery, the finest specimens any country had sent to the Exposition. Adam thought one of the faience vases with a realistic depiction of a hunting dog might appeal to his young brother. When he glanced at Joe, though, he found the boy engrossed in a more delicate vase with the figure of a woman, fully nude, her arms raised enticingly over her head. Clearing his throat, Adam gestured with his head toward the next exhibit, only to learn that the French had such appreciation for the female form that there was no keeping it from the bedazzled gaze of his baby brother.

They finally came across a safer display of porcelain tableware, beautiful pieces with flower-shaped handles and floral decorations. “What do you think of these, Joe?” Adam asked. “One of the things I thought we could use was some new serving dishes, for entertaining prominent business associates and other special guests.”

Joe licked his lower lip. “Umm, well . . . ”

“Speak up,” Adam said, concerned to see that his brother still felt nervous around him. “I’d value your opinion.”

“Okay,” Joe said, though still with hesitance, “if you really want it.”

“I really do,” Adam said sincerely. “Your mother used to select beautiful things for our table, and I suspect you might have inherited her French flair.”

Joe took a deep breath and plunged in. “Well, they’re nice, Adam, real nice, but I like these better.” He pointed to a
similar surtou de table with sculpted peacocks perched on the lids.

“Yes, I see what you mean,” Adam said, nodding in consideration. “A unique design with more graceful lines. I’m not ready to make a decision yet, but I will certainly keep this in mind. Thanks, buddy.”

“Sure,” Joe said, still half in disbelief that his older brother had respected his evaluation.

After a brief inspection of wax figures in court dress—anything with a female form, Adam noted with an amused smile—the Cartwright brothers came to an exhibit of Aubusson tapestries, most of which were hung around the outer walls of the French booksellers. Using as many as three thousand shades of wool, the hangings at a distance resembled fine paintings. Even so, Adam was surprised by the degree of attention his younger brother gave the beautiful objects. Sadly, they were too costly to consider as a gift, but Joe’s interest indicated that his older brother was on the right track.

Adam had intended to enter the booksellers’ exhibit next, but seeing Joe eye the plaster religious statues nearby, he took the boy’s arm and led him over for a closer look. The centerpiece was the “Adoration of the Infant Savior by the Shepherds and Wise Men,” three-quarters-life-size figures displayed in a stable of boards with real straw on the floor. Little Joe, however, seemed more caught up in a statue of the mother Mary, holding the slain Christ in her arms after his removal from the Cross. With good reason, Adam decided. It’s done so well you can see His pain, and her love is poignantly portrayed in the way her delicate hands caress his lifeless flesh.

With a soft smile on his lips, Little Joe looked up at his brother. “Mama would have liked these.”
Adam nodded. “Yes, she would; her religion was very important to her.”

“I remember,” Joe whispered, wistful look in his eyes.

“Oh, how could you?” Adam objected gently. “You were a baby.”

Joe bristled a bit. “No, I wasn’t, Adam—not then and not now.”

Adam rested a comforting hand on his brother’s shoulder. “Okay, little buddy.” Knowing how sensitive Joe could be about anything relating to his mother, he let his fingers communicate the tenderness he felt, but found difficult to express verbally.

There it was, the affectionate term Joe had waited all day to hear, the pet name that told him all was well again. The minute he heard it, Joe determined to make a greater effort to be congenial, even in the face of the everlasting educational exhibits with which Adam was, in his opinion, punishing him. “Would you like to see the booksellers now?” he asked. “I didn’t mean to pull you away from what you had planned.”

With a warm smile, Adam accepted the generous offer. “Yes, I would, but I promise not to stay long.”

The pavilion of the book publishers of Paris displayed some beautiful, illustrated books, including Bida’s etchings of the four gospels, and the architectural books from Ducher and Company quickly absorbed Adam’s attention. Joe cast an appraising eye over the volumes, even though he had already bought Adam one book on the subject. Just as well, too, Joe realized as he gulped at the price tag on the book in French. “You read French pretty good, huh, Adam?”

“I read French quite well, Joe,” Adam said.

As usual, Little Joe ignored the grammatical correction. “Wish I did,” he murmured.
“You remember some, don’t you?” Adam asked, catching the longing in Joe’s voice.

Joe shrugged. “Some. Bits and pieces, mostly. I couldn’t string enough together to read a page, though.”

It was a golden opportunity, and Adam couldn’t resist it. “One of the things you could learn in college, Joe. I learned my first French from your mother, but I took courses in it, too, first at the Sacramento academy and later at Yale. If you’ll recall, it forms part of the course of study at the Philadelphia Collegiate School.”

Not wanting to argue, Joe turned away to look at the reproduction of an oil painting in colored lithography at the center of the pavilion. He fought down the irritation threatening to rise again. Did Adam have to turn everything into an opportunity to sell him on college?

Silently, the brothers worked their way through exhibits of cutlery, chemistry and glassware before Little Joe again found his tongue at the display of perfumes. Though not as lavishly dispensed as at the American exhibit, one particular fragrance had Joe almost bubbling with the excitement of discovery. “Mama used to wear this one, Adam!” he cried.

Mindful always to be gentle regarding references to Joe’s mother, Adam suggested softly, “Are you sure, buddy? That’s an old, old memory.”

“Yeah, but it’s a strong one,” Joe insisted, still keen with enthusiasm. “I—I could smell it whenever she held me.” Embarrassed by the quaver in his voice, he walked quickly away.

Adam, however, made a mental note to purchase some of that fragrance for Joe when he wasn’t around. A small bottle wouldn’t cost a great deal, and the kid would appreciate it, for memory’s sake, even if all he could do with a ladies’
perfume was open the bottle and sniff once in awhile. Lucky kid, Adam sighed, wishing he had any memory of his mother’s favorite cologne . . . or even knew its name.

He caught up with his brother at the department of engineering and architecture, and, for once, Joe was as involved as Adam in viewing the drawings and photographs. *That French influence again*, Adam laughed to himself. *Now, if it were just possible to construct an entire college course around things French, why then Joe would beg to go!* Adam found the maps and plans for the Suez Canal of particular interest and tried to explain to his younger brother what the project might mean for the shipping industries of the world.

Passing the case of scientific apparatus, the Cartwright brothers next looked at one filled with musical instruments of various types, and then a display of music boxes caught Adam’s eye. He picked several up, listening to the tune each played, closing his eyes in reverie at the sound of a familiar melody. It was the same tune as the music box his father had given to his mother before their marriage and which Pa had handed down to Adam for a remembrance. Closing the lid, he quietly told the sales representative he would like to purchase it, much to Joe’s mystification. “It’s for Pa,” was all Adam would offer as explanation.

“After all the advice you’ve given me about waiting ‘til we’d seen it all before buying anything,” Joe scoffed. “Why would Pa want a music box, anyway?”

Irritated and preferring to keep his memories to himself, Adam muttered sharply, “You wouldn’t understand.”

Joe just rolled his eyes. *Back to that again, are we? Fine, let him keep his old secrets.*

Having finished the French department, the boys moved east to the next one, presented by the country of Switzerland. The unenclosed area was one of the plainest in the hall, but it
housed a wide array of intriguing novelties, beginning with the very front line. An attendant held in his hand a gilt and enamel jewel box, only three inches long and half that wide. When he opened the lid, however, a showy little mechanical bird sprang out to warble a happy song, flapping its multi-colored wings and opening and shutting its beak as it swung from side to side. The effect was so natural the boys almost expected the little bird, only an inch long from beak to tail, to take flight, but after singing for two or three minutes, it popped back into the box.

Joe’s face was alight with joy. “Wouldn’t Hoss love seeing things like this!”

“He would,” Adam agreed with a smile, “but you seem pretty impressed yourself.”

Joe shrugged, in a manner he hoped would appear nonchalant. He felt a little embarrassed by what he viewed (and felt certain Adam also viewed) as childish behavior. It was one thing for Hoss to be child-like, for no one ever doubted his manliness, no matter how gentle and ingenuous he might show himself. Joe, however, always felt like he had to fight for acceptance of his manhood, to overcome the disadvantage, as he saw it, of a baby face and a boyish body.

Watches, of course, formed the most important part of the Swiss exhibits. Little Joe was soon absorbed in surveying the well built and unique timepieces, from a stem-winder set in a finger ring only one-third inch in diameter to an elegant watch in a case studded with diamonds and pearls. The prices overwhelmed the boy, though, especially one tiny watch that was tagged at eleven hundred dollars. “They’re really something, aren’t they?” he said to Adam.

Adam agreed quickly. “Oh, yes, the Swiss are renowned for their craftsmanship.”

Joe nodded glumly. “Guess Pa’d probably like one of these
better than a Waltham or Elgin, huh?"

“These are definitely of superior workmanship,” Adam said, watching his brother closely.

Joe sighed, obviously disappointed. “Yeah, that’s what I thought.”

“Does it have to be a watch—your gift, I mean?” Adam asked sympathetically.

“It’s what I wanted,” a crestfallen Joe admitted. “He’d like one of these, I know, but they’re out of my range. Even if I bought nothing for anybody else—which isn’t right, either—I still wouldn’t have enough.”

“That’s what I figured,” Adam said.

For a moment hope lighted Joe’s eyes. “Maybe if we went together?” The light vanished as quickly as it had appeared, for he could tell by look on Adam’s face that his older brother didn’t care for the idea at all. “Never mind,” he said quickly. “I’ll just find something else.”

“Yes, I think that would be best,” Adam said cautiously, trying not to hurt Joe’s feelings.

“Yeah, well, I’ve seen enough watches, then, I guess,” Joe sputtered. “What’s next?”

“The educational exhibits,” Adam said, quirking a half-smile. “They’re in that large pavilion near the north wall.”

Joe groaned and resigned himself to the inevitable. Evidently, every country in the whole world was in cahoots with Adam on this subject. When he and Adam entered the pavilion through its arched doorway, however, Joe was relieved to discover that it contained more than the usual textbooks, drawings and specimens of pupils’ work. They were there, of course, but the first thing that caught Joe’s eye was a two-sided map.
The first side drew Adam’s immediate attention with its geological survey of the country, while Little Joe found the other side, showing the geography of Switzerland much more to his liking.

The Swiss publishers also showed their wares inside the pavilion, and while Adam looked at the volumes on display, Joe scanned scenic photos of the country, wondering what it would be like to sail across the ocean and see them in person. Just the day before Adam had mentioned taking him on such a trip one day, but Joe figured he’d lost that opportunity, if it had ever been real, by his misbehavior the previous night.

The final exhibit was, in Joe’s opinion, the best, except for those wonderful watches. The woodcarvers’ table presented a parade of subjects: churches and cuckoo clocks, birds and beasts, tables and ornamental brackets. Pointing to a miniature Swiss cottage, carved in intricate detail, with small drawers below and on the sides, Joe informed his brother that he wanted to buy it.

“I told you, no spending today,” Adam replied sternly.

“You don’t follow your own advice, so why should I?” Joe demanded. “I want this, Adam, and I’m not going to change my mind, so I don’t see why I can’t buy it now—except you’re still mad.”

Adam took a deep breath. “Is it for you or someone else?”

Joe almost spat out that it was none of Adam’s business, but thought better of it before the inflammatory words spewed forth. “It’s for Uncle Clyde,” he answered. “He’ll like it, Adam.”

“Yes, he will,” Adam agreed, with fond memories of the toys and other gifts Clyde Thomas had carved for him and his brothers over the years, “and it’s not too expensive, so you might as well get it now, I suppose.” At first, he chided
himself for giving in to Joe’s whining and wheedling. One of the principles his father had emphasized in child-rearing was the importance of carrying through any discipline assessed, and here he’d let the little scamp charm him out of it with his generosity. Then Adam reminded himself that the restriction against spending had been intended as protection, not punishment, so yielding a single time would not actually undermine his authority. So long as I don’t let him talk me out of any of the other restrictions I’ve laid down.

Joe made his purchase and smiled as he clutched the wrapped chalet. “Belgium next?” he asked, nodding at the elegant showcases just to the east. At Adam’s nod he scampered ahead.

“So long as I don’t let him talk me out of any of the other restrictions I’ve laid down.”

“Joe, come back here,” Adam called from a bench next to a cross, mounted on a base of rough-hewn stones, and Joe dutifully came to sit beside him.

“What did you want me to see, Adam?” Joe asked.

Adam grinned. “The bench. Maybe you’re still brimming with vitality, kid, but I am tired.”

Joe sprawled back against the wooden bench. “Naw, I can do with a rest, too, even if I’m not an old man like you.”

Adam ignored the jibe. “Good place to view that, anyway,” he said, pointing with his chin to an enormous pulpit directly in front of them, which towered almost to the ceiling. Its wood was carved with scenes from the life of Christ and figures of the saints, and a canopy at the top was ornamented with angels blowing trumpets.

“A little fancy for the church back home,” Joe suggested.

Adam chuckled and agreed. “Quite a work of art, though.”

“So, you rested enough, old man?” Joe asked, stretching like a cat.
“You’d better lay off the ‘old man’ jokes, youngster,” Adam warned in jest as he stood up, “or I may have to teach you some much-needed respect for your elders.”

“My much elder,” Joe teased and took off for the cases of plate and colored glass. After they had looked at those and then a grouping of oval and rectangular mirrors, stretching up to the ceiling, Adam pointed out a set of glass boxes, filled with rags and waste papers. He pointed to the Latin motto on one box, *Colligite fragmenta ne pereant*, and asked Joe to transcribe it.

Joe groaned audibly. He had taken a smattering of Latin in his final year at school, but having hated every minute of it, he’d forgotten most of what had been forced upon him. “Well, that means fragment,” he said, pointing to the word “fragmenta.”

“How astute of you,” Adam stated dryly, “and the rest?”

Joe scrambled to remember something, anything, that would help decipher the puzzle his brother had set. “Okay, ‘ne’ is a negative, so, um, ‘no fragments wanted’?”

Adam shook his head in disgust. “Pathetic. Did you pay any attention while you were in school?”

Joe sneered. “As little as possible to stupid stuff like this!”

Still shaking his head, Adam translated. “It means ‘Gather up the fragments, that nothing may be lost,’ a message I’m sure our conservationist father would approve. See why I said you couldn’t possibly pass the entrance exam for Yale?”

“I don’t want to pass the entrance exam for Yale, Adam!” Joe almost shouted the angry words. “Why can’t you get that through your thick head?”

Adam grabbed his brother’s upper arm with an iron grip and
hissed through gritted teeth, “Lower your voice, and I do mean now.”

Seeing the attention they were attracting, Joe nodded brusquely and pulled away. He stalked to the next exhibit, only to discover that it was Belgium’s version of the universal educational torment. Adam, of course, insisted on entering the twenty-foot-high model schoolhouse, built of native pine, and while Joe found the textbooks and school papers as boring as always, he did think the presentation more effective than he’d seen elsewhere. They had entered through a small hall with a row of pegs for hats and coats and a shelf set up with basins and towels, where little scholars could wash up before beginning their day of learning. Joe smiled, with fond memories of jostling his friends in a similar anteroom to his childhood school.

Walking through the door at the end of the hall, he again viewed a familiar scene, with its rows of small desks and a platform at the end with one large desk for the teacher, the tall stove in the center of the room and blackboards surrounding the sides. A door at the opposite end led to a gymnasium. Now, that’s something we could have used back home, Joe approved, recalling cold winter days when recess had to be held indoors. Even with all this to hold his attention, however, the young man still was ready to leave considerably before his older brother.

Adam finally responded to the impatient tapping of a foot beside him and moved on to an exhibit of marble mantels, both white and colored, some with landscapes and figures etched in aqua-fortis. “Nitric acid, that is,” Adam added when Joe’s brow wrinkled at the caretaker’s description of the process.

After the mantels came a quick perusal of a case of Brussels lace, which left Joe pondering whether he should purchase some for his special girl back home. If I could just decide which one that is, he admitted with a saucy grin. Susan, maybe,
who’d caught him working without his shirt on one day and had been trying to get it off him ever since, or possibly Lindy, who loved to run her fingers through his chestnut curls or Josephine, who shared his name and had made it clear she’d like to share a lot more. Joe sighed. So many lovelies, and all of them wanted a piece of Joe Cartwright. No, he decided, no need to bribe those ladies with expensive lace, especially since he couldn’t afford to do it for all. *I’ve got them in the palm of my hand, anyway.*

Adam cleared his throat. “Do you have some particular interest in lace, little brother?”

Joe gazed dreamily at his brother and then snapped to attention, as if fearful that older brother could read his thoughts. “Uh, no, not really, Adam. I mean, well, they’re nice, of course, but . . .”

“Uh-huh,” Adam drawled, with a smirk that convinced Joe that his older brother really did have to the power to read minds. He didn’t, of course, but Joe’s mannerisms and the crimson flush creeping up his face told Adam that his little brother’s thoughts had strayed somewhere they shouldn’t. Unfortunately, leading the boy past exhibits of books, scientific and musical instruments and iron doors wrought in vines and flowers wasn’t likely to keep him from daydreaming about . . . oh, of course . . . girls . . . what else? *Should’ve guessed sooner.*

Not ‘til they reached the tapestries from Malines did Joe again show interest in the exhibits, though not quite as much as he had given the Aubusson tapestries of France. These were fine pieces, however, particularly the portrait of Rubens and the eight-paneled depiction of the gods of Olympus and their attributes.

“How many more countries we gonna see today?” Joe asked as they came away from the Belgian area back to the main aisle.

“Getting tired?” Adam asked.
“Yeah,” Joe admitted.

“Well, there are three more countries exhibiting at this end of the building,” Adam explained. “I’d like to finish those up today, if possible.”

“Okay,” Joe agreed. “It’s all kind of starting to run together, though, especially those educational displays you’re so fond of.”

“And which you will peruse with undivided attention,” Adam dictated with a raised eyebrow. “In fact, perhaps we should skip everything else in those three countries and just concentrate on”—interrupted by a loud groan, he chuckled. “I’m teasing. The catalog doesn’t even list educational exhibits in Brazil.”

“Now, that is my kind of country!” Joe exclaimed. “Let’s go to Brazil!”

Adam grinned, proving that he could, on occasion, sport an expression as impish as that so often seen on his little brother’s face. “As it’s next in line, we’ll do just that.”

Unlike the exhibits of the countries viewed thus far, the Brazilian ones were enclosed in a specially constructed court of Moorish design. A colonnade of wooden pillars with capitals and scalloped keyhole arches supported the pavilion, which was painted in the bright national colors of red, yellow, green and blue. At the top a fanciful cornice pointed toward the ceiling, which the central portion of the pavilion almost touched. The plate glass showcases inside were embellished with ivory and gold and lined with dark maroon cloth.

The largest showcase stood directly inside the entrance, and dodging around a railed parking area filled with rolling chairs, Little Joe made straight for it. Behind the glass artificial flowers, made from the feathers of birds, were
displayed. Almost entirely the work of the nuns of Brazil, some of the sprays reached nearly two yards in length, and one flower in a vase was as large and white as a calla lily, with long, fern-like leaves of vibrant green. Since the plumage came from tropical birds, all the colors of the rainbow were represented, and their fibers were so fine they were all but invisible.

Next to the flowers was a collection of butterflies and insects, and Little Joe again found himself thinking of Hoss, who would have dearly loved to see so many different types and varieties. One showcase also displayed jewelry, as lustrous as real gems, made from the vividly colored tropical insects. Some of them were as small as a pea and changed from emerald to azure, depending on how the light struck them. Others, large as hazelnuts, were a blaze of red, while still others were speckled and veined like pebbles in colors of the earth. “Unique, aren’t they?” Adam observed.

“Yeah, but I can’t see any girl I know wearing blue bugs on her ears,” Joe tittered. He pointed to a brooch and earring set that shone as if coated with a film of silver.

“Why not?” Adam asked. “They’re beautiful.”

Joe shook his head in pity for his big brother’s ignorance. “You just don’t know women, Adam.”

“Oh, and you do?” Adam almost doubled over, trying to contain his urge to laugh out loud at the supposed sophistication of this child of nineteen.

Joe pursed his lips in annoyance, for he could read that mocking expression as easily as Adam had earlier read Joe’s emotions. “Enough to know how they feel about bugs!” Joe snorted. “Go ahead, older brother, buy your lady fair a set like this. Just don’t come whining to me when she throws them back in your face.”
“I’ll bear it in mind,” Adam promised, holding back the chuckles. The kid might have a point, he admitted, though he did not for one moment consider inflating Joe’s ego by acknowledging that concession.

Many of the remaining Brazilian exhibits reflected the natural products of the country, coffee being its major export. “There’s a café serving Brazilian coffee elsewhere on the grounds,” Adam told Joe. “We’ll have to sample a cup when we’re in the area.”

“Sounds good,” Joe said. He would have enjoyed a cup right then, in fact, but even though Adam’s attitude toward him had improved markedly, Joe was still aware of the fact that he was under discipline and likely to win few concessions to his comfort from older brother today.

He and Adam passed displays of rice, cocoa, ginger and yams before coming to one that both boys of the high timber country found intriguing with its samples of Brazil’s native woods. The Cartwrights had furniture in their home of rosewood and mahogany, although they had not before seen the wood in its raw state, and they were, of course, familiar with cedar, from the forests of the Sierra Nevadas. Other trees were more exotic, like the castor tree, logwood and caoutchouc, from which came milk for rubber. “Here’s the tree that gave the country its name,” Adam said, tapping the deep red grain of a sample of brazilwood. Joe didn’t ask, but seemed engrossed as Adam went on to explain, “The dye made from this tree was the color of burning coals, which the early Portuguese traders called ‘bresil’ or ‘brasil,’ and they gave the color’s name to the land that grew its source in such quantities. The valuable wood was a favorite target for buccaneers on the high seas.”

If he had failed to attract Joe’s interest before, there was no mistaking the fascination with which the boy pictured pirate ships sailing the Atlantic. “You suppose Pa ever had
to fight off pirates?” he asked, eyes ablaze with the fires of imagination.

“I was speaking of the sixteenth century,” Adam chuckled, “but I do seem to remember a few tales of Pa’s run-ins with brigands in the Caribbean.”

“Tell me one,” Joe urged.

“Well, maybe for your bedtime story, little buddy,” Adam teased. “No, better not. That kind of excitement would only keep a little boy awake, and I don’t care to deal with one of your nightmares tonight.”

“Oh, shut up,” Joe muttered, though he wasn’t really irked. This was the kind of teasing he was used to at home, and while it bothered him, he didn’t mind being twitted about his youth nearly as much as when Adam was serious in calling him a child.

After viewing the Indian artifacts on display, Adam and Joe were ready to leave Brazil for the short journey to the Netherlands, just next-door here in Philadelphia, though thousands of miles apart on the globe. Like its neighbor, the Netherlands had enclosed its court, although in a cream and gold-colored framework so light and airy one could see many of the exhibits from outside the enclosure. Little Joe was tempted to do just that when he noticed that the western portion of the pavilion, which was divided into three sections, housed an exhibit of public works, primarily schematic drawings, pictures and models of docks, railroads and bridges. However, he dutifully walked through the arched entrance draped in heavy maroon velvet curtains ornamented with gold braid and tassels. After giving the drawings as diligent a perusal as he could tolerate without dying of boredom, Joe slipped outside to rest on the benches attached to the front of the pavilion. Meanwhile, Adam continued to pore over renderings designed to enthral the heart of any
engineer and exhaust the brain of any mere mortal.

When Adam finally came out, wearing a smile that could only be described as sheepish, Joe stood up and with a pat of forgiveness on his brother’s back walked beside him to the center entrance, passing through a larger, but otherwise identical archway with the same luxurious velvet curtains. Here Little Joe found curiosities much more to his liking, such as the paneled screens, decorated in papier-mâché with scenes of an encounter between a man and a devil. “They’re from Faust,” Adam explained. “I don’t suppose you’ve read that.”

“No,” Joe replied, “and I’m not sure I want to read about the devil, Adam.”

“You really should; it’s a classic,” Adam urged.

“Yeah, well, so’s the Good Book, and I figure it tells all Pa would want me to know about the devil,” Joe said, with a twinkle in his eye.

Suspecting that his father might agree, Adam chuckled under his breath.

Moving past exhibits of lacquered ware and Delft carpets, the brothers came to a display of blankets both agreed would make an excellent contribution to the Ponderosa on cold winter nights. Nearly an inch thick, the coverlets were soft as down and generously padded for extra warmth. With Joe’s complete approval, Adam placed an order, to be delivered by freight shipment to Nevada.

The aisles were lined with a multitude of products, one of the most interesting being the models of Dutch houses with thatched roofs and the miniature farm with plaster casts of cattle with the plague. Though these, too, might have pleased Clyde Thomas, Little Joe was satisfied that he had not done wrong to purchase the Swiss cottage earlier. The Swiss
workmanship was clearly more detailed, and Uncle Clyde, so talented in woodcarving himself, would appreciate the delicate lines.

The pavilion of the Dutch publishers showed some fine illustrated volumes and rare etchings, and then came the all-too-predictable school exhibit almost every country felt compelled to inflict on the viewing public. Adam laughed at his brother’s woebegone face. “I think it’s the last one of the day, kid,” he consoled. “None listed for Mexico.”

Joe smiled with relief. Leaving the central area, he and Adam went into the eastern third of the pavilion to see the exhibits from the colonies of the Netherlands. Mostly, these were displays of the colonies’ natural resources, but they also included an exhibit of weapons and clothing of the native tribes, which Joe enjoyed as much as Adam had those drawings of bridges. The primary colonial exhibit came from Java and mainly consisted of coffee, although cinchona, the bark from which quinine was derived, was also on display.

“One country to go,” Joe chirped as he stepped toward the Mexican pavilion, which was housed in a cream-colored enclosure whose architecture reflected the country’s Aztec roots. He and Adam entered through a wide arch, topped by the gilt arms of the Republic, centered in a trophy of banners in the national colors of red, green and white.

As they gazed at historical remains of the Aztec civilization, Adam began to tell Joe what he knew about these early inhabitants of Mexico. Joe listened, absorbed in his brother’s ability to weave a story, despite knowing that he’d have to regurgitate it all in a report he fully expected would take the entire night to write.

The Mexican mineral display was also fascinating to boys from an area whose economy was based on mining, especially because of the large size of some of the specimens. One of quartz and
bromide of silver weighed thirteen hundred pounds, and there were also large lumps of lead ore, iron ore, coal and native marble. In addition, the boys saw a new mineral called libinstone and volcanic matter from the recent eruption of Ceboruco on the west coast of the country.

Near samples of native woods, they came across a table of wooden platters, painted with bright flowers. “Do you think Nelly would like something like this?” Adam queried, not wanting to be outdone in his generosity to friends by his baby brother.

“Sure she would,” Joe replied, then added with a naughty grin, “but you should look around more before you decide. Someone older and wiser, in his own opinion at least, told me that.”

Adam laughed. “Follow my own advice, huh?”

Joe arched his eyebrow in deliberate imitation of his older brother. “Shouldn’t you, if it’s good enough advice to be throwing around?” His tone was a trifle sharp, for he still felt miffed that Adam had bought that music box for Pa, going against what he preached to his little brother, without explaining why.

Adam heard the note of discontent and threw a conciliatory arm across Joe’s shoulder. “Indeed, I should, little brother; indeed, I should.”

Joe glanced up, all smiles again. “Want some more good advice?” he offered cheekily.

“Oh, I don’t know,” Adam replied with a rumple of the curls trailing down the back of his brother’s neck. “Considering the source, that might be dangerous.” Seeing Joe’s lips pucker into a playful pout, Adam gave the boy’s neck a slight shake and said, “Well, I guess I’ll chance it. What further advice do you have, little one?”
Joe’s nose crinkled in distaste. “Two things,” he said. “First, don’t call me little one ‘cause I’m not, and second”—his voice took on a childish whine—“take me home. I’ve walked through half the world today and I’m tired.”

“The second, at least, is good advice,” Adam agreed with a grin, “and I’m going to act on it.”

They returned to the hotel for supper, where, instead of selecting his brother’s meal, Adam merely told Joe he could have what he pleased, with the exception of dessert, within a specified price limit. Little Joe was thrilled to regain a measure of his independence, and since his appetite was now fully restored, he ate with relish all he could afford on the somewhat restricted sum Adam had allotted.

Entering their hotel room afterwards, Joe flopped onto the settee and stretched out.

“Don’t get too comfortable,” Adam advised. “You have homework to do.”

Joe moaned. He had hoped Adam’s pleasanter demeanor throughout the afternoon and his easing of the dietary discipline meant that he could get out of the essay, too. “Aw, Adam,” he whined.

“Don’t even start,” Adam warned, taking a sheaf of hotel stationery from the drawer of the desk in the corner. He laid the paper on the top, along with an ink pen, and pulled out the chair.

Taking the hint, Joe walked over and sat down.

“I will be checking for grammar and accuracy, so do your best,” Adam said as he lighted the lamp sitting on the desk.

Joe frowned. “And if you don’t think it’s good enough?”

“You’ll rewrite it until it is,” Adam said with a smug smile.
“Unless you wish to be up ‘til time for breakfast, I would suggest you do it right the first time.”

“Yes, sir,” Joe muttered and started writing, nibbling on his lower lip. Three hours later he was still hard at work.

Adam finally took pity on the obviously exhausted boy and, walking to the desk, took the pen from Joe’s hand. “That’ll be enough,” he said.

“I doubt it’s as complete as you’ll think it should be,” Joe said nervously, “and I tried hard with the grammar and spelling and such, but I’m not sure it’s right.”

“I’m sure it’s fine,” Adam said with a light caress of his brother’s neck. “You’re quite capable of producing good work when you try, and it’s clear to me you have made a sincere effort with this. Now, off to bed with you.”

Joe stood, eager to obey that order, but something needed to be said first. “Adam, I want to apologize for going against your orders last night,” he said, fidgeting with his belt buckle. “I was wrong and, well, I’m sorry.”

“I hope you mean that,” Adam said, “because I would prefer not to go through another day like this has been.”

“No, sir, me, either,” Joe said softly. Clearing his throat to ease its tightness, he asked, “Can we start fresh tomorrow?”

“Of course. Isn’t that the way it’s always been at home?” Adam replied matter of factly.

“With Pa, yes, but . . .”

Slightly offended by the implication, Adam responded more coolly than he might have otherwise. “Well, it’s not different with me, regardless of what you think. Tomorrow we start fresh.”
Shuffling his feet, Joe stared at the floor. “Yeah, well, thanks.”

The boy’s apparent edginess again touched Adam’s heart, and his voice was gentler as he said, “You’re welcome. Sleep well, Joe, and you can even sleep in, if you like. We don’t really need an early start tomorrow.”

With more effusive thanks than he’d expressed before, Joe headed for bed and fell into a deep sleep minutes after his head touched the pillow.

Adam sat down at the desk to read through his brother’s essay, marking errors as he went. Predictably, there were several, but the overall content was so complete, Adam didn’t have the heart to make the boy do it over. He sighed as he set the papers aside. It was a shame Joe was so set against going to college; if he would only make this kind of effort consistently, he’d stand high in his class.

Adam stood, yawning and stretching, and headed for bed. Lying there beneath the sheet, arms folded behind his neck, he smiled. Well, we did get tossed into some choppy water, just like you warned, Pa, but I think I navigated the breakers rather well. I didn’t like taking such a hard tack with the kid, but I feel confident he won’t jump ship that way again.

Had Ben Cartwright been there, he might have pointed out that the Good Book said, “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” But Ben wasn’t there, and Adam fell asleep, his belief that he could “handle that boy” reconfirmed. In one sense he was right. Little Joe would not “jump ship” again, but he and his older brother would soon be thrown into waters more turbulent than either had ever seen, a storm so violent neither could be assured of weathering it.

~ ~ Historical Note ~ ~

Due to the late entrance of Alexander Graham
Bell’s invention in the Centennial Exposition, the only place that could be found for it was in the corner of an educational exhibit. Since he was from Boston, I have surmised that Bell’s first telephone was demonstrated in the rooms of the Massachusetts Department of Education. The invention created a sensation and won a medal of merit.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Adam leaned against the doorjamb of his bedroom and stared at the boy sitting at the desk in his gray nightshirt, bare feet wound around the chair legs. “Aren’t you dressed yet?” he scolded. “I know I said we didn’t need an early start, but that doesn’t mean you should dawdle half the morning.”

Little Joe lifted a woebegone face. “What difference does it make? I’m not going anywhere.” With a sigh he shoved the papers on the desk aside. “I did lousy, so I gotta do it over.”

Adam squatted down at Joe’s side and laid a hand on his knee. “Wrong on both counts.”

“Huh?”

Adam gave the knee a couple of pats. “You didn’t do lousy—terrible word choice, incidentally—and you don’t ‘gotta do it over.’”

“But it’s all marked up, and you said . . .”

“I know, I know,” Adam said, standing up. “Maybe I’ve succumbed to your boyish charms, but I think you’ve done well enough—quite well, in fact. I’d like you to look at the mistakes I’ve marked, so you can learn from them, but you don’t have to rewrite the paper.”
Joe smiled, relieved. “Hey, thanks, Adam.” He gathered up the papers. “I did good, huh? Can I keep it?”

“You did well,” Adam said, emphasizing the adverb over the adjective that Joe had incorrectly chosen, “and certainly you may keep it. It will make a nice remembrance of your visit.”

Joe nodded. “Yeah. What I was thinking, though, was maybe I’d fix it up and copy it out to send to Pa. You think it’s good enough for that?”

Adam rumpled his brother’s uncombed curls. “Of course, it is, and Pa will be pleased and proud. But not now, little buddy. Jump into your clothes—your suit from home would be best—and let’s get down to breakfast.”

“Don’t have to tell me twice!” Joe exclaimed, jumping up from the chair and hurrying to his room. He dressed quickly and soon he and Adam were perusing menus downstairs in the dining hall. Joe noted with satisfaction that nothing was said about what he could or could not order. Just as Adam had promised, they were starting fresh today, as though nothing had happened between them, and Joe intended to do his best to see that he did nothing to remind his older brother of the earlier unpleasantness. In that vein, he ignored his first urge to order the most expensive thing on the menu in retaliation for yesterday’s deprivations. After all, Adam really hadn’t done badly by him, and even to Joe, draining his brother’s wallet was beginning to seem like an act of childish spite.

“So, big brother, what’s the plan today?” Joe chirped after placing his order for ham, eggs and hotcakes.

Adam lifted his cup of black coffee. “I think we can both use a lighter day after seeing the Main Building at the Exhibition yesterday.” He took a sip, savoring the rich flavor.

“That’s for sure,” Joe agreed, adding a generous stream of cream to his cup, “and we only saw half of it!”
Adam nodded. “We’ll try to finish it up tomorrow, but I planned to visit a couple of places here in the city today. First, Girard College.”

The sugar Joe was aiming toward his coffee cup scattered across the linen cloth as he slammed the spoon to the table. “You promised me we were through visiting colleges, except for Yale!” he blurted out, face flaming. “You just added another one because you’re still mad about me going off to Shantyville without you.”

“I am not!” Adam declared. “You get hold of yourself, boy. If you’ll just listen for one minute—”

“Go ahead!” Joe snorted, leaning back and folding his arms. “This should be good, you trying to explain how a broken promise isn’t a broken promise.”

Adam took a long, deep breath, trying to get his own temper under control before dealing with the unreasonable child across from him. “We’re not going to this school for your benefit; we’re going because I would like to see it,” he explained tersely. “Girard College exhibits one of the more excellent examples of Greek architecture in the country. And since the students there are all orphans between the ages of six and ten, I am scarcely suggesting it to you as a place to further your education—although you’re not acting much more mature than the boys there!”

Joe slid down in his seat, muttering sheepishly, “Oh. Sorry.”

Adam shook his head, gazing at Joe with patronizing eyes. “Trust, little brother, a quality you obviously need to develop.”

The words hurt, but as Joe believed himself to be clearly in the wrong this time, he said nothing. Fortunately, their food arrived just then and the uncomfortable silence was broken with routine comments on how tasty it was and when, if ever,
the unprecedented heat would let up.

After breakfast the Cartwright brothers went first to the Public Ledger Building, where Adam obtained tickets to visit Girard College. Then they caught the Ridge Street horse car and rode it about a mile beyond that street’s junction with Vine.

Hopping off the car, Joe noticed first the high stone wall, capped with marble slabs, surrounding the property. Poor little orphans, all fenced in, he sympathized. Walking through the lodge that served as the south entrance, though, he revised his opinion on seeing the forty-five-acre grounds themselves. The wide sweeping lawn offered all the room a kid could crave to run around, and there were tall trees with beckoning limbs to climb. Not a bad place, after all, Joe decided, ‘cept it’s still a school, any way you look at it.

Adam pointed out the main building, a three-story white marble replica of a Greek temple, surrounded by Corinthian columns, eight on each end and eleven on either side. “The lecture and recitation rooms are housed there,” he explained, “with those other buildings used for the college officers’ residences and dormitories for the orphans.”

Joe nodded, straining to share his brother’s enthusiasm. “They’re real graceful buildings, Adam, and they look kind of like a college, but I sure never thought of that as a word for a school for kids.”

Adam laughed. “A bit ostentatious, you think?”

Joe broke into a wide grin. “And downright misleading!”

“Only to those who yelp before they give a person time to explain,” Adam observed dryly.

Joe’s mouth skewed awry. “I said I was sorry.”

Chuckling, Adam cupped his hand behind his brother’s neck.
“Shall we go inside?”

Entering via the south porch, the Cartwrights paused before the statue of Stephen Girard, the founder of the school, and then went inside. After a brief tour through schoolrooms, dining room, bathing rooms and the school’s hospital, they came out again. “Hey, look at that!” Joe cried, pointing to an area of the lawn where boys in military-style uniforms stood in ranks. As he and Adam watched, the cadets began to wheel and turn in response to the crisp orders of a young man facing the assembled units. “Pretty impressive, huh?” Joe commented.

“They’re too young for that,” Adam muttered morosely. Suddenly, he saw himself walking across an indistinguishable battlefield, trying, in vain, to avoid stepping on the outstretched hand, foot or bloated belly of some motionless fellow soldier. Soldiers—some of them had been boys, scarcely older than these children marching on a quiet, grassy lawn—but they had lain there, staring blank-eyed into the sun, with limbs that should have been running and playing in some schoolyard frozen, instead, in the grotesque shapes of rigor mortis.

Looking up, Joe was surprised to see the hard set of Adam’s jaw and the faraway, bitter look in his eye. “What’s wrong, Adam?” he asked.

“What?” Shaking off the shadows, Adam forced a careworn smile. “Oh, nothing, Joe; it’s nothing.”

The war, Joe thought. It’s got to be that; it’s always that when he gets this way. But what set him off this time? They’re just kids playing soldier . . . playing . . . yeah, maybe that’s it. The war wasn’t a game to Adam, and he can’t stand seein’ anyone take it that way. Joe would have loved to ask Adam if his guesses were correct, but he preferred not to upset his brother and risk having Adam jump down his throat.
Adam again had a faraway look in his eye, but this time he was smiling dreamily. “Oh, I don’t know. I’d be proud to claim this work as my own, but I suppose if I were to serve as master architect for any project, I’d want to do something more original, like Schwarzmann has at the Centennial Exhibition. There are some beautiful and creative designs there.”

Joe smiled, too, pleased to have pulled his brother’s thoughts from whatever dark corner in which they had been lurking. “Yeah, I can tell you really like them, just by the way you look at them,” he said, adding almost shyly, “You—you could do just as good, I bet, Adam.”

“Just as well,” Adam said, ignoring the careless shrug with which Joe dismissed the correction, “and I hope I could, but I’ve never really been tested in that field.”

“You sorry about that?” Joe asked, swallowing the lump in his throat. “About coming back to the Ponderosa, instead of staying here?”

Adam smiled and shook his head. “I think about it sometimes, but, no, I made my choice, and I think it was the right one. It’s just at times like this, seeing buildings as beautifully designed as these . . .”

“Then let’s leave now, brother,” Joe suggested firmly, “’cause I don’t want you getting any crazy ideas.”

Adam laughed. “Okay, kid. It is time we made our way to the next stop, anyway.”

“Dinner,” Joe pleaded. “I sure hope it’s dinner.”
Adam cuffed his neck and pulled him toward the street. “Dinner first, then a surprise.”

“Hope it’s something fun for a change,” Joe mumbled under his breath.

Adam just grinned, choosing to keep his secret to himself as he pushed Joe onto the streetcar, then transferred them to another and finally debarked near Seventh and Arch for dinner at the St. Cloud Hotel. Joe looked all directions just before entering, but he couldn’t figure out what Adam’s surprise might be. There was a theater about a block to the east, but it was too early in the day for anything to be playing. The nearby photography studio was a possibility. Yeah, that must be it, Joe decided. We’re gonna get our pictures made to send home to Pa. Good idea, but I wish he’d told me, so I could dress nicer.

He had to revise his thinking when, after dinner, Adam walked right past the photography studio without stopping. They continued west for two more blocks, stopping in front of an attraction known as Colonel Woods’ Museum.

“You mean it?” Joe asked, eyes lighting with pleasure. “But I thought you said it wasn’t any good.”

“I haven’t changed that opinion,” Adam admitted, “but I decided to let you see for yourself.”

Joe interpreted those words as reflecting an I-told-you-so attitude, although Adam hadn’t meant it that way, so even when it became obvious that his older brother’s evaluation was correct, Joe couldn’t bring himself to admit it.

“Well, did you enjoy it?” Adam asked as they left the museum. “You’ve been awfully quiet.”

Joe bit his lower lip and looked away. “Uh, yeah, I did. Thanks, Adam.”
Adam planted a hand on each of Joe’s shoulders and turned the boy to face him. “Okay, what’s wrong?”

“Nothing,” Joe started to say, but one glance at Adam’s face told him his older brother wouldn’t buy that lie. “It’s just—just—well, you were right. It’s not as good as the Exhibition.”

Adam gave both shoulders a clap and released his brother. “Well, it was better than I expected and made for a lighter day, which we needed. It wasn’t a bad idea at all on that basis, little buddy, so let’s just say we were both right.”

Not accustomed to such a magnanimous attitude from his older brother, Joe warmed to it immediately. “Hey, it’s still early. You got something else planned?”

Adam shook his head, amazed anew at the boundless energy of youth. “Maybe you’re not tired, kid, but I am! I’m for heading back to the hotel and relaxing awhile, maybe writing some letters home. Then I thought we could take in a concert tonight.”

Joe immediately looked edgy. “Concert?”

“At the Academy of Music,” Adam explained. “You said you’d prefer that to the opera.”

“Oh, yeah, anything’s better than that—”

“Caterwauling,” Adam interrupted. “Yes, little brother, I remember your opinion on that quite clearly, and I would prefer not to hear it expressed again.”

Chagrined by the reminder of his misbehavior, Joe looked down and nodded.

Arriving by streetcar at the Washington Hotel, both brothers stretched out for a while, and then both spent the remainder of the afternoon writing letters home. Little Joe carefully
copied out a corrected version of his essay and put it in an envelope for his father, without, of course, any explanation of why he’d written such an unusually lengthy and well-constructed report of his activities. As far as Joe was concerned, Pa was welcome to believe that it was simply time spent in the presence of so much culture that had produced the marked improvement in his composition skills. See, Pa, you’re getting your money’s worth, helping send me on this trip.

Adam, who had finished his briefer letters long before Joe, closed the book he’d been reading while reclining on the settee. “Joe,” he called. “It’s time to dress for the theater. Your best suit, please.”

Joe spun around in the desk chair. “Aren’t we waiting ‘til after supper to dress, so we don’t spill gravy on our fancy cravats? That’s what we did before.”

Adam sat up, stretching out the kinks in his back. “Nope, not possible, as we’re not eating downstairs.”

Joe immediately perked up at the prospect of a new dining experience. While the food at the Washington was tasty, he got tired of looking at the same selections night after night. “Yeah, where?” he asked.

Adam smiled, knowing he was about to give his young brother a thrill. “The Continental. It’s close to the theater; besides, I wanted to give our guests a better repayment of their hospitality than the Washington affords.”

Joe’s face scrunched with sudden uneasiness. “Guests? Repayment?” He groaned. Not Adam’s stuffed-shirt architect friend!

Adam fired an indignant finger at his younger brother. “I don’t want to hear any complaint from you, boy! It is quite enough that you spurned Mr. Morganstern’s generous offer without adding rudeness tonight to your previous offenses.”
“Yes, sir,” Joe said at once. “I mean no, sir—that is, I’ll be on my best behavior, I promise.”

“You had better be,” Adam ordered sternly, “or, I assure you, yesterday’s consequences will seem like a slap on the wrist by comparison to what you’ll earn if I see the slightest hint of discourtesy to Bert or the smallest gesture of impropriety to his niece.”

The light of hope sprang back into Joe’s eyes. “Niece?” Then he eyed his brother with narrowed gaze. “How old? Is she pretty?”

It was all Adam could do to refrain from laughing aloud at the look of skeptical distrust that passed over his young brother’s handsome face. “Well, she’s about your age, possibly a year younger,” he replied, drawing the words out slowly as Joe sat forward, eagerly, “and as for looks . . .”

Joe perched on the edge of his seat. “Yes?”

“Well, you know you shouldn’t judge a person by mere physical appearance, Joe,” Adam began, voice tapering off as though he were reluctant to continue.

Joe slumped against the back of his chair. “That bad, huh?”

“No, no.” Adam appeared to be searching his vast vocabulary for words to describe the lady with both justice and mercy. Finally, he sighed dramatically and surrendered to defeat. “She looks well enough, I suppose . . . except for that wart on the tip of her chin.”

“Oh,” Joe said, face deflating as quickly as an uncinched balloon.

Adam schooled himself to adopt once more a stern expression. “The smallest gesture of impropriety, Joe,” he warned.

Looking miserable, Joe nodded. “Yes, sir. I’ll be polite to
“See that you are,” Adam stated firmly before turning away to hide the sudden twitch of his lips.

Decked out in their finest, the Cartwright boys walked the two blocks between the Washington and Continental hotels. They both wore black broadcloth suits with fancy, frilled white linen shirts under brocade vests, Adam’s embossed black and Joe’s deep maroon and gray paisley. Joe proudly sported the gray silk cravat that Hop Sing had given him, and he was content with his decision to go bareheaded, rather than spend money on a hat for infrequent evening wear. The straw one he’d purchased was cooler than felt during the hot days, but the young man saw no need to cover his curls inside a theater and, frankly, thought Adam looked rather foppish in his black top hat. Adam, of course, would have disagreed vehemently had Little Joe been so foolish as to voice that uncultured opinion.

They entered the lobby of the Continental Hotel, its interior opulent by comparison with the Washington. Registry and courtesy desks of rich mahogany flanked the room on either side, while the center was tastefully arranged with intimate groupings of brocade settees and Queen Anne side chairs. Running his eyes over the room, Adam spotted his friend. “Over there,” he told Joe, nodding toward a settee to their left.

Joe gathered his strength to face the warty one . . . and saw, instead, a vision straight from heaven: a heart-shaped face framed by a thick wreath of brown ringlets with a warm touch of copper, eyes as blue as a fairyland lagoon and a rose-ivory complexion unmarred by a single blemish. After planting a sharp, but discrete elbow in Adam’s ribs, Joe put on his most charming smile and, ignoring his older brother’s low, throaty chuckle, walked forward to make the pleasure of Miss Morganstern’s acquaintance.
The young lady bounced up from her seat, eyes shining in appreciation of what she saw. “Oh, how splendid!” she cried. “I was so hoping your brother would be able to accompany you this time, Mr. Cartwright.” She turned, smiling, to the handsome boy standing beside Mr. Cartwright and thrust out her hand. “Hello. I’m Penny and so happy to meet you.

Bertram Morganstern hefted his considerable weight from the settee. “Honestly, Penelope, you have the most atrociously unladylike manners. You haven’t even been introduced to the lad."

“Oh, pooh, of course I have,” Penny contradicted. “I just introduced myself, didn’t I?”

“And very graciously,” Little Joe said, lifting her hand to his lips for a continental kiss. He frowned at Adam when he felt a hard thumb flick against the small of his back.

“I’m afraid ‘the lad’ is being rather forward himself,” Adam said, “but by way of formal introduction, Joe, let me present Miss Penelope Morganstern. Miss Morganstern, my brother, Joseph Cartwright.”

Penelope curtsied, spreading her azure silk skirt with a mischievous twinkle in her dark blue eyes. “Pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr. Cartwright.”

Little Joe clicked his heels together and made a smart bow from the waist, one arm folded across his midriff, the other behind his back. “The pleasure is mine, Miss Morganstern.” Then he flashed the famous grin that charmed the girls back home. “I really am pleased to meet you, Penelope. Please call me Joe.”

“It’s Penny,” the girl said brightly. “I insist,” she added with a determined jut of her chin toward her uncle.

Bert sighed as if controlling his unconventional niece were an
all-too-familiar and all-too-hopeless struggle. “Shall we go in now?” he suggested. “We don’t wish to incur indigestion by rushing the meal or to be late to the theater.”

Joe quickly stepped forward and offered Penny his arm. With a smile she took it, and the two young people led the way into the dining room, their elders following, shaking their heads in dismay at the social ignorance of modern youth.

The Continental’s dining room was even more ornate than its lobby. Crystal chandeliers hung overhead, lighting the room full of round tables, covered in dazzlingly white damask tablecloths. The chairs at each table were gracefully scrolled rosewood with cushions and oval inserts on their backs of royal blue velvet. “They’ve decorated the room to enhance your beauty,” Joe whispered in Penny’s ear as he eased her chair under the table.

“Monsieur est très galant,” she murmured in response.

Joe wasn’t completely sure he’d understood the French phrase, but the words sounded enough like their English equivalents that he thought he’d interpreted her compliment correctly. “Thanks,” he said as he slid into the chair next to Penny. He opened the menu, only to discover that large portions of its contents were also in French. He knew a few words, from having dined with his father in French restaurants in Virginia City and San Francisco, but soon realized that he had no idea what most of the entrees were.

“So many choices,” Penny sighed, looking at the menu. “What are you having, Joe?”

“Umm, I’m not sure yet,” Joe mumbled, his red face a dead giveaway to his dilemma.

Penny touched his arm with cool fingers. “Shall I tell you what is particularly good? It’s so hard to know what to order in a new restaurant, isn’t it?”
“I hadn’t noticed that being much of a hindrance heretofore,” Adam observed dryly.

Joe’s eyes threw daggers at his brother; then he turned a completely different countenance to the young woman seated on his other side. “Miss Penny, I would appreciate that. In fact, I trust your judgment so much that I’ll just have whatever you’re having.”

“Oh, what fun!” Penny cried. “We must make it an adventure for you, so I’ll try to pick foods you wouldn’t normally have at home. Please correct me if I select something commonplace. I’m not familiar with Nevada cuisine.”

“Is there such a thing?” her uncle chuckled.

Penny gave his arm a light slap. “And this is the man who lectures me on manners! Honestly, Uncle Bert, you are worse than Papa, God rest his soul, ever was. I’m sure the Cartwrights are accustomed to excellent food, simply different from ours.”

“Not so different,” Adam said, feeling compelled to defend his home territory. “The International House in Virginia City boasts cuisine comparable to Delmonico’s, especially now that the railroad brings in supplies more easily than in the old days of freighting everything over the mountains.”

“Oh, dear, that will make it more difficult to fashion a novel eating experience for you, Joe,” Penny said, lips pouting prettily, “but I’m determined to try.” She decided, eventually, on mock turtle soup with sherry, escargot in garlic butter, ham with champagne sauce, baked potato, peas with mushrooms, and Brussels sprouts. “Now please tell me you haven’t tasted any of those before,” she entreated.

A mischievous twinkle sprang into Joe’s emerald eyes. “Well, I think I’ve had potatoes a time or two.”
“Oh, you naughty boy,” Penny scolded with a playful wag of her finger. “Of course, you have, and peas, too, I’m sure.”

Joe laughed. “Yeah, but not with mushrooms. I’ll bet they’re good that way. The only other thing I’ve had before is the escargot, but I’m glad you picked that ‘cause it’s an especial favorite of mine.” Just like Mama. She loved escargot, Pa says. Joe always felt close to his mother when eating those little “slugs,” as he’d called them the first time his father insisted that he try the French delicacy.

After all the orders had been placed, Penny turned once more to Little Joe. “I was so disappointed when you couldn’t join us the other night. Uncle Bert told me how handsome you were, and so, of course—”

“Penelope, please,” Bert protested feebly.

Penny waved the admonition aside. “I trust you’ve fully recovered from your malaise,” she said to Joe.

Crimson creeping up his neck, Joe fumbled with the napkin in his lap, not sure what to say about his counterfeit illness. “Well, I—uh . . . .”

Surprisingly, Adam came to his rescue. “He was feeling quite rocky that night, especially after I returned to the hotel, but you’re much better now, aren’t you, Joe?”

“Um, yes. Yes, I am,” Joe said, barely above a whisper, shooting Adam a glance of gratitude for not revealing the precise nature of his “malaise.”

A waiter, dressed in a white coat, served the soup: mock turtle for Joe and Penny, consommé for Adam and rich, buttery oyster stew for Bert Morganstern. “So, how are you enjoying your visit to the Centennial, gentlemen?” Penny asked, and the wonders of the Exposition consumed the conversation throughout the remaining courses.
After dinner the Morgansterns’ private carriage took the quartet to the Academy of Music. The Italian Byzantine exterior of pressed brick with brownstone trim gave little indication of the magnificence inside. The front doors led to a large lobby with retiring rooms and cloakrooms to the side. Bert and Adam checked their hats in the room to the right, and making their way past one of the grand stairways sweeping up to the balcony on either side, the party entered the main auditorium.

Drawn by the light from a crystal chandelier that made the one at the Continental Hotel seem like a coal oil lantern by comparison, Joe looked up and stood for a moment, entranced by the frescoed dome that simulated a starlit sky.

Penny squeezed his hand. “Beautiful, isn’t it?”

Joe smiled down into eyes that seemed brighter to him than any star. “Not as beautiful as you,” he whispered.

“Children, please,” Bert remonstrated. “Not in a public aisle. Try to remember proper comportment for a young lady of society, Penelope.”

“Yes, Uncle Bert. I do try,” Penny replied demurely, but it was obvious to her young companion that she had to purse her lips to keep from laughing.

The proscenium held lavishly appointed boxes between six Corinthian pillars, three on each side, and Joe was thrilled to learn that Adam had purchased seats in one on the left. They would have a marvelous view of the stage from its velvet seats, upholstered in the house colors of gold and crimson.

“The acoustics of the hall are outstanding,” Bert informed the visitors from Nevada as they took their seats, “and the musicians always excel.”

“So I’ve heard,” Adam replied. “I’m looking forward to an
enjoyable evening. I’m pleased we could obtain such fine seats on short notice.”

Joe and Penny, heads touching, examined the program together, and Joe was pleased to see that the performance would contain both classical and popular songs. He winced, however, as the first singer began to yodel an aria from Aida.

Adam couldn’t resist sending a smirk Joe’s direction when he noticed his younger brother’s taut, suffering face. Despite his well-planned mutiny, the kid had had to listen to grand opera, after all!

Joe started to scowl back, but the grimace froze on his face when his pretty companion asked if he liked opera. Though tempted to lie, to impress her, Joe’s inherent honesty took over. “Well, no. I can’t say that I care for songs when I don’t understand the words.”

Penny giggled and leaned close to whisper conspiratorially, “Me, either. I know a little Italian, but I can’t sort it out quickly enough to keep up with songs. And those piercing arias are just . . . just . . .”

“Caterwauling?” Joe suggested helpfully.

“Exactly,” Penny said with a decisive nod of her chin. “Isn’t it just the most boring stuff you’ve ever heard?”

Joe grinned, happy to find a kindred spirit in the blue-eyed beauty. “No, the most boring would be my brother Adam talking about how wonderful it is.”

Ringlets bouncing on her shoulders, Penny shook her head. “Oh, no. I’m sure my uncle could far surpass him in ability to bore.”

“What were you children chattering about?” Bert chided as the aria ended. “You should give attention to the singer. Must I again speak to you about your manners, Penelope?”
“Why, no, Uncle Bertie, I do wish you would not,” Penny answered. Then she exchanged a puckish smile with Joe, and they both faced forward, hoping the next singer would be one who had the good sense to sing in English.

“Have you seen Aida?” Bert asked, turning to Adam.

“No, I haven’t had the pleasure,” Adam admitted, “although I do admire Verdi.”

“I thought not,” Bert observed, a slightly superior glow on his florid face. “It only made its American debut three years ago, so it’s quite understandable that it hasn’t made its way west yet.”

Adam took a long breath to gather control, his opinion of his old friend growing closer to Joe’s by the minute. “It’s possible the opera may have played in San Francisco.” He spoke with the kind of measured precision anyone who knew him would have recognized as a danger signal. “Most of the major productions do, although Aida hasn’t been on the bill when I’ve been in town.”

Loud applause indicated that the singer making his entrance was a popular one, and Adam pointedly turned to face the stage.

For the most part, the remaining musical numbers were in English and were entertaining for the entire audience, even to those as opposed to culture as Joe and Penny. Afterwards, Bert insisted that they return to the Continental for coffee and coconut steeples, an incredibly rich cookie. Then he drove the Cartwrights back to their hotel.

Joe and Penny gazed fondly at each other until the carriage was out of sight; then Joe walked inside the Washington Hotel with his brother. “You know, Adam, maybe it wouldn’t be so horrible if we went to the opera with your friends. It would give me a chance to make up for bailing out on you the other
night.”

Adam gave the boy a supercilious smile. “It would give you another chance to make calf-eyes at Penelope, you mean. Oh, no, little brother, you are quite difficult enough to handle without my providing extra opportunities for you to chase skirts. The emphasis now is on education, remember?”

Joe groaned. “Don’t remind me! But you should realize, Adam, that when a fellow’s got a bitter pill like education to swallow, it helps to have a pretty nurse hold his hand.”

Rolling his eyes, Adam shoved his brother across the lobby toward the elevator. “You are incorrigible!” he exclaimed. Well, that was stating the obvious, he reminded himself. If I didn’t know that the word had been around since the fourteenth century, I’d be certain it had been coined with Joe specifically in mind!

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

“Come on!” Adam yelled as he loped toward the streetcar at the corner of Eighth and Chestnut.

Joe, jogging behind, barely managed to swing aboard the car before it pulled away. Grabbing onto a pole, he scanned the length of the car for a seat and scowled at his brother, who had taken the last one available. Adam merely laughed. “I told you to hurry,” he reminded Joe with a disgustingly superior leer.

Joe lurched across the aisle to snare a strap next to his older brother. “Doggone it, Adam. How come we didn’t wait for the next car?” he grumbled. “Gates don’t open ‘til nine, and we’re gonna be there half an hour before that.”

“Which should insure our getting inside at straight up nine,” Adam stated calmly. “You’ve seen the Main Building, Joe, so you know we don’t have a minute to spare if we’re going to
Joe gave an eloquent sigh for Adam’s benefit, but it elicited no sympathy from his older brother. A woman sitting across the aisle, however, smiled kindly at the boy, and he responded with a shrug and a shake of his head, followed by a gleaming grin. The lady was attractive, her stylishly looped black hair setting off an almost milk-white complexion, but she was much too old for him, at least as ancient as his brother Adam and possibly a year or two older. Despite that disadvantage, Little Joe had a hard time taking his eyes off the lady, and not just because she was pretty and fashionably dressed. What he was really drawn to was the gold watch pinned to her blouse or, more precisely, the unique strap to which it was attached. A Centennial ribbon of red, white and blue had been creatively fashioned into a watch fob, and Joe couldn’t help admiring it, although it was, of course, a little too broad and ostentatious for a man to wear.

The woman tilted her head to one side and looked steadily back at him, a quizzical cast to her dark brown eyes.

Joe flushed under her scrutiny. “I’m sorry, ma’am,” he apologized quickly. “I didn’t mean to stare. I was just admiring your watch fob and wondering—”

“Joe,” Adam hissed, for in the East one simply didn’t speak to an unknown woman without introduction.

“It’s all right,” the woman said, her face relaxing as she smiled again at Joe.

The glint in Adam’s eye, however, clearly communicated that it was not all right, and not wanting to be on the receiving end of another of his older brother’s lectures on proper behavior, Joe deemed it prudent to keep his questions to himself and to direct his gaze elsewhere. Even when the seat beside the woman became open at the next stop, he remained standing. Another gentlemen soon took the seat, but only briefly. As
the streetcar pulled up to the next corner, he stood and after apologizing for practically tumbling into the woman’s lap, lurched down the aisle toward the exit while the car was still moving.

His attention drawn by the lady’s soft grunt when she was jostled by the exiting passenger, Joe looked back toward her again, and his eyebrows came together in a troubled line. Something didn’t look right. For a moment Joe wasn’t sure what was wrong. Then he saw the Centennial ribbon, now sans watch, hanging from the woman’s blouse and immediately discerned what had happened. “Hey! You there, stop!” he yelled, charging down the aisle after the clumsy oaf who had just left the lady’s side.

The man took one look and tried to swing off the car. Lunging forward, Joe grabbed him and pulled him back in.

“Joe! What are you doing?” Adam yelled, coming to his feet and charging toward the men grappling on the floor of the streetcar.

“Help me!” Joe shouted from beneath his opponent, for while the other man didn’t have his fighting skill, he did have the advantage of size. “He’s got the lady’s watch!”

The woman gasped and clutched at the ribbon. “Oh, no,” she cried. “Not Grandmother’s watch! Oh, please, stop him.”

Adam had already flown into action, plucking the culprit off his younger brother and decked him with a powerful right upper-cut, just as the streetcar jerked to a stop and a man in uniform strode swiftly back to investigate the commotion. “What’s going on here?” the conductor demanded. “Get off my car, the lot of you!”

The woman stood. “Oh, please, sir. I believe that man has taken my gold watch.”
The conductor stared at the man dangling by his collar from Adam’s strong hand. “Oh, a pickpocket, is it? We’ve had a rash of the like lately, preying on unsuspecting guests to our law-abiding city.”

The man quickly protested his innocence, demanding protection from “these ruffians who have accosted me for no reason.” He sneered at the youth dusting off his trousers after scrambling to his feet. “More likely, that boy himself is the thief, casting aspersions on an innocent man to cover his own crime.”

Joe flew at the man. “You filthy liar!” he yelled.

More to keep his brother out of trouble than to protect the pickpocket, Adam pulled the man out of Joe’s reach, as the conductor planted himself between the belligerents. “This is easily settled. Both of you turn out your pockets and let’s see what we find.”

Joe was indignant at having his word questioned, but when Adam growled tersely, “Do it,” he turned his pockets inside out, revealing only a small amount of cash, a pocket comb and his own watch, clearly a man’s.

Satisfied, the conductor turned to the man trying in vain to squirm out of Adam’s grip. “And now you, sir.”

“I have never been so insulted in my life,” the man declared. “I most certainly will not submit to a search of my person.”

“Then we’ll just have to subject you to one against your will,” Adam proclaimed, pinning the man’s arms behind his back and nodding to the conductor.

The conductor reached into the man’s pant pockets and found nothing, but from the inner pocket of the vest he pulled a small gold pocket watch. “Would this be yours, ma’am?”

The woman gave a cry of joy and reached eager hands toward the watch. “Oh, yes! Oh, thank you, thank you.”
“Not at all, ma’am,” the conductor said, touching his hat after returning the watch. He turned toward Adam, who was still holding the culprit’s arms in a vise. “If you would assist me, sir, we’ll locate a constable and have this thief taken into custody.”

“My pleasure,” Adam said, propelling the pickpocket toward the exit.

As his brother and the conductor wrestled their prisoner off the car, Joe scooped up his straw hat and pressed out the dent in the crown.

“I hope it isn’t damaged,” a gentle voice said.

Joe smiled at the woman. “No, ma’am, no harm done, but it would have been in a good cause if it had been.”

The woman laughed softly. “What a gallant young gentleman you are!” She patted the seat next to her.

Joe immediately took it. Glancing at the ribbon hanging on her chest, his face flushed with anger. “That brute! He cut it.”

“Yes, I’m afraid so,” the woman said, “but it doesn’t matter. I can easily make another. The important thing is that, thanks to you, I still have Grandmother’s watch. It’s very precious to me, young man.”

“I can see as how it would be,” Joe said, knowing how he treasured the few keepsakes he had from his mother. “You made that watch fob, then? You must be mighty good with a needle, ma’am, ‘cause it was a fine one. I figured you probably got it at the Centennial.”

The woman laughed. “Well, in a manner of speaking, I did. I work at the Singer Sewing Machine Pavilion, doing demonstrations, and I made this from some scrap materials one day when the crowd was light.”
Adam returned shortly to find his young brother chatting away with complete familiarity with the woman he had met only minutes before and to whom he had yet to be properly introduced. As the conductor signaled for the driver to start again, Adam looked across at Joe and shook his head. “You just can’t stay out of trouble more than a day at a time, can you?”

The lady next to Joe shook an admonishing finger toward Adam. “Now, you mustn’t scold this brave young man. He’s done me a valuable service.”

Adam chuckled. “Ah, yes, he’s a regular little Sir Lancelot, always ready to aid a lady in distress.”

The woman smiled. “Indeed, he is! And Queen Guinevere would like to bestow a reward on her brave knight,” she said, opening her reticule.

“No, that’s not necessary,” Adam said at once. “I’m sure my brother wouldn’t consider taking anything.”

“No, I wouldn’t,” Joe retorted, angry that his brother had felt it necessary to answer for him. Just another example of Adam’s lack of trust in him.

Sensing the strain between the two brothers, the woman at once closed her reticule and struck up a new subject with Little Joe. They continued talking and laughing, Joe pointedly ignoring his brother, as the streetcar made its way toward Fairmount Park.

When two more ladies boarded the car at the next stop, Adam immediately gave up his seat with a polite tip of his black bowler. As the other lady looked sadly at the crowded car, he said, “Joe.”

When his brother didn’t respond, Adam cleared his throat. “Joseph.” Joe continued to appear deaf, so Adam took a deep
breath and lifted his voice. “Joseph Francis Cartwright!”

That got Joe’s attention. No one but Pa ever called him by his full name, and it always meant trouble when Ben Cartwright reached that level of frustration. Joe raised his head and looked up at his brother. “What, Adam?” As soon as he looked up, however, he saw the lady standing in the aisle and immediately bounced to his feet before his brother could say a word. “I’m sorry, ma’am. I didn’t see you,” he apologized quickly. “Please take my seat.”

“Thank you,” the woman said briskly, but her smile of gratitude rested on Adam’s face and not that of his young brother.

Joe gave Adam a sheepish shrug and grabbed onto a strap for the remainder of the ride to the Centennial grounds. When the horse car arrived at the main entrance, he jumped off and reached back to assist his “Queen Guinevere” in alighting from the conveyance.

“Thank you, gentle knight,” she said with a bit of a royal curtsey. Then she looked up at Adam, who had come to stand beside them. “Would you escort me to the employees’ entrance, sir?” she requested.

“I’d be happy to, your majesty,” Joe offered with a bow.

Seeing the woman give a slight shake of her head, Adam clapped a hand on his brother’s shoulder. “Sorry, lad. Your king has another commission for you.” Taking a dollar from his pocket, he ordered Joe to purchase their tickets. As a scowling Joe trotted off to do the “king’s” bidding, Adam offered his arm to the lady.

As they started toward the entrance whose gilt sign indicated that it was for exhibitors, the press and employees, she smiled up at him. “I don’t really require an escort. I merely wanted a private word with you.” She stopped and said,
“I work in the Singer Sewing Pavilion. Do you know where that is?”

“I believe so,” Adam said. “I have a map with me, at any rate, should I need to find it.”

“Please do,” she urged, “and please bring the boy. I truly wish to reward his chivalry. One sees it so rarely these days.”

“True enough,” Adam conceded, “but as I said before no reward is required, nor will one be accepted.”

She lifted a remonstrative hand. “A mere token,” she insisted, “of no monetary value. Think of it simply as a remembrance of our brief acquaintance.”

Adam couldn’t find a reason to refuse an offer presented on that basis. “Very well. We’ll drop by after lunch, if that won’t interfere with your work.”

The woman laughed. “But attending to visitors is my work! After lunch is an ideal time. Should you not see me on entering the pavilion, just ask for Mrs. Atkinson.”

“Oh, you’re married,” Adam said, adding with a teasing smile, “Sir Lancelot will be so disappointed.”

“Queen Guinevere was, as well, if you’ll recall,” a twinkle-eyed Mrs. Atkinson reminded him, pleasing Adam with her knowledge of the literary reference. “I’m a widow, but too old to tempt that valiant young knight, I think.”

“Speaking of the young knight, I’d better get back before he goes off on another quest,” Adam chuckled and with a tip of his hat, he bid the lady farewell and joined Joe in the line of visitors awaiting the opening of the gate. As usual, it opened promptly at 9 a.m. that Friday morning, and the Cartwright brothers at once made their way to the south door of the Main Exhibition Hall, to avoid the crowds heading for
the western entrance. Although the German exhibits, where he planned to begin, were unenclosed, Adam insisted on passing the cases nearest the door to walk up the central transept to the main aisle.

Joe didn’t complain, despite the extra steps. He’d learned that each country liked to put its best foot forward, in essence, by placing its finest products on the front line. What lay behind that was all too often, Joe recalled with distaste, educational. Germany’s front line was no exception to that rule, with its crescent-shaped case filled with porcelain from the Royal Prussian Factory of Berlin. At each end stood a tall column of ebony and gold with a gilt Prussian eagle perched on top.

“Bert said this was the most beautiful single exhibit in the entire building,” Adam reminded Joe.

Joe nodded, recalling the conversation over dinner at the Continental, and turned his attention back to the beautiful pieces. Set off against black velvet, the delicately painted porcelain filled two long shelves, with flatter pieces hung on the wall behind them, including framed paintings on rectangular plates. In front of all these cups and saucers, plates, statuettes and busts, were three large vases, each on a separate stand. Joe was again astounded by the prices affixed to the works of art. One cost five thousand dollars, the second forty-five hundred and the least expensive, an olive green piece with a painting of Otho in the tomb of Charlemagne, was still a staggering nine hundred dollars. Joe was more taken with a small table of carved oak with a porcelain top, on which was painted a reproduction of Raphael’s *Poetry*. At twenty-two hundred dollars, however, it was unlikely to grace any room at the Ponderosa.

West of the porcelain was an exhibit of plate glass and near it one of jewelry. For some reason Adam examined the cameos with special interest. A gift for a female friend, Joe
assumed, but he wasn’t sure which girl his older brother cared for enough to spend that kind of money. Becky, maybe, since she shared Adam’s love for books and he seemed to squire her around more often than the other fillies that caught his eye. Well, at least older brother’s taste was improving, both in gifts—no blue bugs this time—and women, for brown-eyed Becky was pretty enough to capture Joe’s personal interest, if she weren’t so much closer to Adam’s age than his own.

Further west, a collection of bronzes was exhibited, including a copy of a monument to Frederick the Great, whose original stood in Unter den Linden in Berlin. Near it, Joe spied a group of shields and swords that reawakened his boyish love for tales of knights and medieval chivalry and his memory of the events on the streetcar that morning. As far as he was concerned, they could have skipped the next cases of hosiery, yarn and gloves from Saxony, but since Adam, of course, still insisted on seeing everything in order, Joe simply suffered through those exhibits, as well as the fancy fabrics from there and Nuremberg.

Turning into the next aisle south, Little Joe found a tall ebony case enclosing a huge tusk of ivory in its native state. Smaller glassed-in areas below showcased items made from the expensive material, such as spoons, frames and cameos. Again Adam eyed the latter appraisingly. Becky—or whomever else Adam had in mind—was going to be one lucky girl when Adam returned to Virginia City, Joe surmised.

Even Adam, to his younger brother’s evident relief, seemed willing to pass the case of chemical canisters with barely a glance, though the lamps and lanterns of Leipzig, just west of them, merited more attention, in Adam’s view, at least. As they turned south into the next aisle back, Joe readily understood his brother’s interest in the cases of musical instruments, especially the guitars. Joe himself found the cases of brass, wind and string instruments worthy of note, for he had never before seen so many different varieties, and
he listened attentively as Adam named each one: cornets, bugles, trombones, tubas, clarinets, violins and, perched on top of the display case, two violoncellos. Adjoining the other musical instruments on the east, a number of both upright and grand pianos, some in artistically carved ebony, were displayed, with a group of cabinet organs and one large pipe organ exhibited beside them.

Life got boring again after that, as Adam examined and Joe endured cases of scientific and philosophical instruments. Then, when they reached the south wall of the hall, life went from boring to downright depressing, at least according to Little Joe. The litters and camp beds of the German hospital system were bad enough, but Joe absolutely drew the line at viewing photographs of surgical operations. “So help me, Adam, I’m gonna be sick if I have to look at pictures of men with their guts gushing out.”

Adam laid a sympathetic hand on his brother’s shoulder. “Okay, buddy, we’ll move on,” he said, unwilling to admit to his kid brother how eager he was to do just that. Though he had stared in morbid fascination at the photos, the buried memories were once again rushing toward him, bringing a queasiness to his stomach unrivaled since the day such scenes had been real.

The next exhibit, by the clockmakers of the Black Forest, seemed a safe alternative. Here again, though, Adam was brought face to face with his young brother’s desire to purchase a timepiece for their father. “Why don’t you consider buying a small musical clock for Pa’s bedroom,” Adam suggested, as they were attractive pieces, but less costly than the Swiss watch he himself hoped to buy.

Joe frowned in thought. It would take a major portion of his budget to get one of the more nicely carved ones, and nothing less would do for Pa. “I think I’ll wait,” he said, and Adam nodded his approval.
Passing a display of religious figures, similar to the French ones they’d seen before, the Cartwright brothers came to two models of the Hamburg steamship *Frisia*, one complete in every detail and the other a longitudinal section of the interior, from keel to deck. Opposite them, A. W. Faber of Nuremberg presented a collection of lead pencils, crayons and colors. Recognizing the maker of the colored pencils he had used in school, Little Joe laughed. “Hey, Adam, you remember that time I made a valentine picture of Pa with pencils like these?”

Adam chuckled. “Yes, and I remember the first one you drew, too—for Cochise!”

Joe, quite willing to laugh at his younger self, emitted a high-pitched cackle. “Yeah, she was the only girl I saw any use in back then.”

“And how we’ve all wished it had never changed!” Adam offered dryly.

Joe gave his brother the obligatory nose crinkle, but as they made their way toward the final German exhibits, he found himself remembering how graciously Adam had helped him that day when he’d been in such trouble with Miss Jones over misinterpreting her valentine assignment. *Didn’t have a doubt back then that he loved me*, Joe mused. Well, not many, anyway, not after those first rough days when he came back from college. *Wonder why it’s so hard to be sure now, why we seem to be at each other’s throats half the time. Who changed—him or me?* Mulling it over, Joe resolved to make a determined effort to keep the peace that day and to look for things that bound them together, rather than those that pulled them apart.

In that vein, he made a droll comment as they entered the pavilion of the German booksellers. “I suppose you read German, too, big brother?”
Adam smiled at the pride twinkling in his brother’s expressive eyes. “A little, but I probably won’t be buying a book here, just admiring the view.”

“Gotta admit it’s a good one,” Joe responded, with a determinedly cheery grin.

Adam threw an arm around the boy’s slim shoulders as they passed through one of the four portals into the pavilion and pointed at the cornice surrounding the interior with gilt sentences in Greek, Latin, German and English. “Like the mottoes?” he inquired.

“Well, I can only read one of them,” Joe admitted with a self-deprecating laugh that sounded just a bit forced to his older brother.

“The others are similar,” Adam said, hoping that Joe didn’t think he was ridiculing his lack of learning. “They all laud the friendship of books and the solaces of study.”

“I might buy the friendship bit,” Joe said with a pert smile, “but study a solace? That’s too big a stretch, Adam!”

“Only proves you need more exposure,” Adam teased. He brushed a stray curl behind his brother’s ear and was surprised to see Joe lean into the affectionate touch he ordinarily spurned as an insult to his manhood.

“Now, that’s what I’d really like exposure to,” Joe declared, pointing at a sign for the Café Leland, which could be seen outside the pavilion by peeking above the sentences about the friendship of books.

“You can’t be hungry already,” Adam moaned. “We’ve barely started.”

“Like Hoss says, ‘I can always eat,’” Joe replied with a saucy smirk.
“It’s too early for dinner,” Adam scolded. “I’ll buy you a popcorn ball at the next stand we pass.”

“I was just kidding, Adam,” Joe chuckled. “I’m more thirsty than hungry, so how about making that popcorn ball a glass of soda?”

“I’ll even join you for that,” Adam agreed quickly. “It’s another hot one.”

“They’re all hot ones in Philadelphia, brother,” Joe moaned.

A quick tour through the furs of Leipzig, ebony and oak furniture from Stuttgart, and the exhibit of the Royal Saxon Cabinetmakers of Dresden finished the German exhibits. Walking back to the main aisle again, Adam purchased the promised soda waters for himself and his brother, and, thus refreshed, they set out to visit another country.

The next exhibits belonged to Austria-Hungary, although all but a few came from Austria alone. Adam and Joe first came to a four-tiered display of porcelain and china, everything from the hand-sized candleholder on a shelf six inches off the floor to the lidded ewer forming the pinnacle of the pyramid, a container so heavy Hoss would have found it hard to heft. Between these two extremes were arrayed plates and platters, tureens and teapots, everything a family might need to entertain lavishly. Little Joe pointed to one of the tri-level serving dishes. “Something like that would be nice for parties, to show off Hop Sing’s fanciest cookies.”

To Joe’s gratification, his older brother appeared to be giving the suggestion serious consideration, although all Adam said in response was, “Maybe.”

The next exhibit, one of meerschaum pipes, really caught Joe’s excited attention. The ornamental pipes were intricately crafted with the heads of famous people or more simply in shapes of animals, birds and fish. Others portrayed hunting
or historic scenes or the comic episodes of everyday life. “Pa would love one of these, Adam!”

“They’re fine works and would make a unique gift,” Adam agreed, “but a little high for you, aren’t they?”

“Yeah, but so is everything,” Joe sighed, adding hesitantly, “Maybe you’d like to go in together, so we could do better by Pa?” He remembered, too late, his brother’s reluctance to join forces to buy Pa a watch, and Adam’s response now made him wish he hadn’t brought it up again.

Adam snorted. “I can do just fine by Pa without your help, little brother, and if you’d followed your older brother’s sage advice to save your pennies, you wouldn’t find yourself cramped now.”

“Yeah, yeah, I know,” Joe muttered, turning away. Evidently, education wasn’t the only bitter pill Adam wanted him to swallow, but Joe had to admit he deserved this particular trip to the medicine cabinet. If he hadn’t spent so much of his money on Saturday nights at the Silver Dollar or squandered so much in high-stakes poker games, he could have had the pleasure of buying anything he wanted, too, just like his deep-pocketed big brother. *Naw, I could never be that rich, but maybe Pa and Adam have a point about my money habits*, he conceded with a sigh. *Guess the only way out is to spend what I’ve got on Pa and Hoss and my friends and go home with nothing for me.* He smiled, then, face brightening. What did he need with some trinket to remember this trip by, anyway? He’d had the trip itself and that thanks to the generosity of Mr. Deep Pockets. Suddenly, the pill didn’t seem so bitter to swallow.

“Ready to move on?” Adam inquired and Joe nodded.

The exhibit of stained glass and other glassware drew the avid attention of the older Cartwright brother. Most of it came from Bohemia and was displayed on broad counters with mirrored
The colors were marvelous, particularly the cerulean shade that looked like a sky effused with the blushing glow of the setting sun, but Adam seemed particularly enchanted by a set of ruby glasses overlaid with gold vines. “Beautiful,” he whispered.

“They’d match,” Joe offered, referring to the red and white dinnerware often used at home for regular meals.

“We’ll see,” Adam commented, shaking himself. “Time to move on.”

Joe almost groaned aloud when he saw what they moved on to, another exhibit of engineering and architectural photos, models, designs and reports. He was beginning to realize that Adam couldn’t pass up a single piece of paper on this subject, but he decided to bear with his brother’s weakness patiently. It was too early in the day to have a row with Adam over something the poor guy just couldn’t help.

The Cartwright brothers traversed the remaining Austrian and Hungarian exhibits quickly, for few of them inspired lengthy attention. The carpets were of good quality, but not as fine as the ones from France, America and, according to Bert Morganstern, Great Britain. The musical instruments were much the same as those crafted elsewhere, and neither Adam nor Joe was particularly drawn to the sets of iron furniture. The jewelers’ exhibit, with mother-of-pearl from Vienna and garnet from Prague, was beautiful, but so small it didn’t take long to view, while there was nothing in the cases of cloth from Moravia or silk and buttons from Vienna to keep men staring into them for long. They spent a little more time examining the leather goods and then were ready to see what Russia had sent to represent her best products.

The unenclosed exhibits of Russia were indicated by a shield with the imperial arms, placed in a trophy of Russian and American colors and affixed to a pillar on the main aisle. In
the front line octagonal and square cases of dark oak and plate glass displayed a variety of pieces crafted in silver and bronze. At the east end, where the Cartwright brothers began their tour, Felix Chopin of St. Petersburg exhibited bronzes with scenes from the life of Russian peasants, as well as more elaborate pieces in costlier metals, such as the candelabra of gilt and porcelain. Standing fifteen feet high with flower vases around its base, the lamp stand held one hundred candles. Opposite it was a four-foot clock with the hours encircling a large globe of silver and an angel in flight pointing to the appropriate hour with one hand, while the other gestured toward heaven.

Next, P. Ouchinnikoff of Moscow and St. Petersburg displayed finely crafted articles in gold and silver, including an altarpiece with a portrait of the Savior holding the Gospel, painted on enamel and mounted on gold. A tankard, made from a single piece of silver, decorated in gilt, featured a replica of a statue of Peter the Great at its top, while around the sides, in high relief, was depicted the entry of Peter into Moscow after the battle of Pultawa. “Hard to see drinking beer from a mug that costs three thousand dollars,” Joe quipped.

“Mug,” Adam repeated with pretended scorn. “You have such an affinity for art, little brother.”

“Well, I do have some affinity for it.” Joe thrust forward a playfully puckered lip.

Adam chucked him under the chin. “I know, kid; I’m just trying to enhance it beyond Faber pencil sketches of Cochise.”

“Oh, you’re funny,” Joe said with a light scowl as he turned to view another example of the Moscow silversmith’s work, a massive salver whose centerpiece was carved with a depiction of the Kremlin. “Well, at least platters come cheaper than drinking mugs,” he chuckled, glancing at the price tag of a
mere two thousand dollars. At the west end of the front line, Sazikoff of Moscow displayed two showcases of gold and silver articles for table service, personal use and household ornament, equally exquisite in their workmanship and equally high in price. Somehow, Joe had a feeling nothing from Moscow was going to find its way onto the Ponderosa table.

The next row of exhibits, while beautiful, merited short appraisal by the Cartwright men, who anticipated little need for cloth of gold decorated with silver. Behind this, however, cases of furs and stuffed specimens of fur-bearing animals held their attention longer, Joe being especially taken with the stuffed bear holding an example of dressed fur between his paws. Behind the huge animal, above cases of garments made from Arctic fox and wolf fur, were stretched hides of bear, tiger, leopard and other animals, with their heads still attached and still higher, practically touching the ceiling, was another stuffed, fur-carrying bear, flanked by smaller specimens of other types of fur-producing animals.

Passing a case of uniforms of various branches of the Russian army, Joe winced as another exhibit of mathematical and philosophical instruments came into view. For once, though, Adam didn’t spend much time perusing the scientific materials, and they moved on to a case of statuettes, busts and vases in ornamental cast iron. These were of lighter weight and lesser expense than the bronze pieces, but Joe thought the copy of the statue of Peter the Great at St. Petersburg was well done. Adam merely shrugged, conveying, to his brother’s eye, at least, that there were many more artistic pieces on view in other areas.

Reaching the southwest corner of the Russian court, Adam stopped to admire a billiard table of carved oak. As Joe knew, his brother was fond of the game, but found few opportunities to test his abilities in Virginia City, although a number of the saloons had tables—none so fine as this one, of course. Sorry, brother, Joe mused. Can’t afford a watch
or pipe for Pa, so drooling over this in front of me ain’t gonna do you a lick of good.

Only a few Russian exhibits remained, and the Cartwrights finished them quickly, Adam insisting that they would see better examples of furniture, perfume, soap, porcelain, majolica and pottery elsewhere. With a staggering number of countries yet to visit, Joe was happy to give these a quick once-over.

Walking back to the main aisle, Adam motioned for Joe to sit with him on one of the benches facing the faux-granite façade of the Spanish pavilion. “I wanted to explain the architecture to you,” he said, “if you’re interested.”

“Sure, why not?” Joe responded, plopping down with a sassy smile. “Anything that gets me off my feet for a spell.”

Adam moaned softly, hoping the kid was only feigning the superficial motivation. Knowing Joe, though, if the disinterest had been real, there’d have been no disguising it, so Adam took heart and launched into a description of the style represented before them. “It’s called Plateresque,” he began, “and was widely popular in Spain during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.”

“Going back kind of far for a modern building, ain’t it?” Joe inserted.

“Isn’t it,” Adam corrected, “and the purpose, I’m sure, is to celebrate their heritage. Now, listen and learn, please.”

“All ears, big brother,” Joe said, with a grin so wide it almost touched both auricular orifices.

With a roll of his eyes, Adam continued. “The term means “silversmith-like” and was suggested by Cristóbal de Villalón to describe the richly ornamented façade of the Cathedral of León, which, to him, appeared as intricate as the work of a
silversmith.”

“That’s pretty intricate, all right, judging by the Russians,” Joe commented.

Pleased to see his brother taking apparent interest in his favorite topic, Adam went on warmly, “It’s really a Spanish version of Renaissance style, but more ornamental than the Italian. You see how the bare walls make a backdrop for the clusters of decorations over doorways and on other building details.”

“What about the pictures?” Joe asked, gesturing toward the circular portraits of a Spanish lady and gentleman, enclosed in panels on either side of the central entrance of the three leading into the court.

“Well, heraldic escutcheons would be more traditional,” Adam chuckled. “Those two are Isabella and Columbus, in honor of Spain’s connection with our part of the world, and according to the catalog, there are portraits of Ponce de Leon, Cortez, De Soto and Pizarro on the other sides. We’ll be sure to look at those before we finish.” Though he could have gone on at length, describing each aspect of the architecture in detail, neither time nor his young brother’s attention span was likely to permit him that luxury, so Adam suggested that they enter the pavilion and see what Spain had sent to the Centennial.

Before going inside, though, the brothers looked at the items exhibited in cases built into the façade itself. On either side of the velvet-draped central arch, works of gold, silver, ornamental iron and steel were showcased, while the glassed-in cases around the sides of the pavilion represented the mineral wealth of the country in silver, lead, copper, iron, coal and Spanish marble. Still others revealed a collection of photographs of government museums of ancient armor. “You think they have any real ones inside?” Joe asked, obviously hoping for a positive response.
“I don’t recall any listed in the catalog,” Adam responded with an indulgent smile, “but let’s go inside and see if we can’t find you a sword or shield, my little knight errant.”

“Oh, will you quit teasing me about that?” Joe grumbled, knowing that his brother was referring to his defense of the woman on the streetcar.

“I’ll think about it,” Adam responded, amusement twinkling in his dark eyes though he kept a straight face as he gestured toward the entrance.

None of Spain’s exhibits were commercial in nature, but were presented solely to educate visitors to the Exposition about the natural resources and manufacturing products of the country. The Cartwright brothers dutifully walked past cases of fabrics and tapestries, glassware, painted porcelain tiles and pottery, the latter being quite different from that exhibited by other European countries. The cream-colored earthenware with a rough-textured shell pattern suggested a Moorish origin. “Reminiscent of the Etruscan,” Adam murmured.

“It’s more reminiscent of big pots I’ve seen in California,” Joe snickered back.

“Well, there probably are similar cultural roots,” Adam pointed out. “If you’d like, I could amplify.”

Joe waved his hands before his face. “Some other time, professor, some other time. Just now I—uh—have to look at these real interesting”–he spun around, searching for something to name–“uh—blocks of coal,” he finished lamely, voice fading.

Adam laughed. “All right, kid. I’ll spare you the lecture on the Etruscan civilization—at least for now.” He and Joe walked past displays of building stones and chemicals and cases of hats, shoes, clothes, wool blankets and carpets before finally something so caught Joe’s attention that Adam
thought he might have trouble pulling his brother away.

One sight of that long, narrow Toledo blade, and it was love at first sight for the youngest Cartwright. Good thing they’ve got it behind glass, Adam observed, or he’d take off, swashbuckling down the aisles, terrifying everyone in sight. “Hers was much lighter, you know,” he said softly.

The pronoun needed no antecedent for Joe to identify to whom “hers” referred. “Of course, I know,” he said. “I’ve handled Mama’s epee, but this is a beautiful blade, Adam. I’m just admiring it.”

“Are you sure the word isn’t ‘coveting’?” Adam inquired wryly. Joe grinned. “Why, no, big brother, that would be a sin, and you know what a saint I am.”

Adam put his hand to his throat and pretended to choke. “Saint Joseph,” he gasped. “No, those words simply don’t belong in the same sentence, much less side by side.”

“Much you know,” Joe snorted. “At least there is a Saint Joseph in the Bible—even got a town named after himself. Maybe you remember it—somewhere in Missouri?”

“I seem to recall passing through there,” Adam muttered dryly. “Yeah, but what you don’t recall is any mention of a Saint Adam, in the Good Book or anywhere on any map,” Joe jibed, “now, do you?”

Adam rolled his tongue inside pursed lips, and then replied, “That’s because they don’t make men saints ‘til after their death—and I’m still among the living.” He ended with a wide, triumphant grin.

Apparently overcome, Joe collapsed against his brother’s chest. “I can’t take that on an empty stomach,” he sputtered.
“Your stomach is not empty,” Adam chuckled, “or at least it had better not be, because I’m not feeding you for . . . oh . . . about seven or eight more countries.”

Pushing away from his brother, Joe groaned. “Let’s get started then. I would like my dinner before suppertime.”

Adam loosely circled the boy’s waist. “It’s not as bad as it sounds, buddy; some of them have very few exhibits and won’t take long at all. The next one, for instance.”

“Hawaii?” Joe said, reading the sign over the next pavilion. “Where’s that, Adam?”

“Don’t you know?” Adam teased and when Joe only looked back, perturbed at the twitting, he explained, “You probably know the country better as the Sandwich Islands.”

“Oh, sure,” Joe said. “In the Pacific. I know them.”

The brothers walked through one of the two arched entrances into the small pavilion and discovered that despite its limited size, it held some of the most fascinating materials they had yet seen. The barrels of coffee and sugar didn’t look any different here than in the general store back home, but the specimens of lava from Kilauea, the largest active volcano in the world, were unlike anything exhibited elsewhere, except in the Mexican pavilion. The furniture styles were similar to those of the European countries and America, but the native woods from which the tables and other pieces were constructed gave each an exotic flavor.

The displays of native culture interested the Cartwright boys, as well, from the calabashes used to hold food to the Hawaiian version of millinery. The flora and fauna of the small nation were shown in cases of stuffed birds, along with another of ferns and mosses, and one case attractively displayed pink and white coral, shells and seaweed. Photographs of island scenes helped place the exhibited items in context.
As lovely as the Hawaiian exhibits were, however, viewing them took only a short while, as Adam had promised, and he and Joe soon moved on to another even more limited, the exhibits from Tunis. These were so similar to what they had seen displayed in the Turkish bazaar that the brothers sped through that country as if carried by transcontinental train. Everything displayed was the property of the Bey of Tunis and included gilt furniture, wool blankets and shawls, woven silks and jewelry, along with antique relics from the ruins of Carthage. Not even the daggers and swords caught Joe’s eye, for he’d already purchased one almost identical to those displayed.

Exhibits from Portugal stood just north of those from Tunis and were enclosed in a line of wooden showcases, stained in imitation of black walnut. Adam and Joe walked in through the east entrance, one of three into the area and found, first of all, more fabrics. A quick perusal and they were ready to move on to something of greater interest, for Adam, at least. He viewed with close concentration the topographical and geological maps and charts and paid particular attention to the drawings of Portugal’s principal harbors, while Joe, as usual, took greater pleasure in the photographs of the countryside and the large specimens of natural minerals arrayed below the charts and maps.

Glassware, pottery and porcelain were displayed on tables and pedestals in the center of the other exhibits. While well formed, the shapes seemed simpler and the lines less detailed than the pieces from France. Little Joe passed by them with a brief glance, but Adam was amazed and amused by what stopped the boy in his tracks, a table of papier-mâché figures in native Portuguese costume.

“Dolls?” Adam asked in wonder when Joe reached over to check the price tag. “Oh, for one of your little girlfriends, I suppose.”
Joe flushed. “No, but you’d laugh if I told you what I was really thinking.” He gave his lips a nervous lick and fell silent.

Noticing and correctly interpreting that Joe wanted to tell him, but feared ridicule, Adam touched his arm with a supportive hand. “No, I won’t laugh. What’s your idea, little buddy?”

Still looking hesitant, Joe took a breath and plunged in. “I was thinking, maybe, for Pa. Kind of a reminder of places and people he once saw—back when he was sailing, I mean. I know it’s not much, but I can afford this, and I think a watch is just gonna be more than I can handle. Stupid, huh?”

Adam actually thought the idea was the worst Joe had come up with yet, but sensing his brother’s need for reassurance, he quickly said, “No, not stupid, but I’d think it over awhile before deciding, if I were you, in case you see other reminders he might enjoy more.”

“Oh, yeah, I intended to,” Joe hastened to say, obviously eager to earn his older brother’s respect.

Adam nodded and turned him toward the final exhibit in the Portuguese area, a case of flowers, baskets, ships and other articles made of fig tree fiber from the island of St. Michael in the Azores. After that, he and Joe were ready to see one of the larger exhibits again.

Egypt had enclosed her displays inside a replica of an ancient temple. Made of wood, the structure had been painted in imitation of stone, and two massive pillars with lotus flower capitals flanked the sides of the entrance. A simulated engraving on the two sides declared, “Egypt—Soodan—the oldest people of the world sends its morning greeting to the youngest nation.”

Entering, Joe noticed first the model of the pyramid of Giza
on his right, but Adam called his attention to the plaster bust opposite it. “This is the man thought to be the Pharaoh in the time of your namesake.”

Joe gave him a blank look. “Hmm?”

Adam smiled. “Joseph, the one in the Old Testament; surely you remember him.”

“Oh, yeah, him. The one whose older brothers treated him so bad,” Joe said, puckish twinkle in his eye. “Yeah, I always found it real easy to identify with him.”

Adam gave the impudent rascal’s ear a playful tug.

“See what I mean!” Joe tittered, bouncing off toward the side wall to look at the photographs and drawings of Egyptian scenery. Mere pictures couldn’t hold his attention, however, in the face of what, to Joe, seemed the most marvelous display of any he’d seen that morning. “Adam, look!” he cried, all but running to see the case of magnificent saddles used by the pashas of Egypt on ceremonial occasions.

“Joe, for goodness’ sake,” Adam began to scold, but stopped when he saw his brother’s worshipful gaze upon the hangings of crimson velvet, embroidered with gold, the harness and trappings of pure bullion and the silk saddle blankets. Truly, riding gear worthy of royalty—worthy, even, of young Prince Cartwright and his noble steed, Cochise. Adam finished the thought with a grin. Sorry, little buddy, can’t help you out; even for me, this would be too costly a gift. “They’re wonderful, Joe,” he said, “but we can’t stand here staring at saddles half the morning. Now, stay with me, please. No more running off.”

“Yes, Pa,” Joe muttered, casting a final fond look at the wonderful saddles as he was led toward a far less fascinating display of furniture. Nothing within the exotic Egyptian pavilion could fail to excite interest, however, for
everything was so different from the world the Cartwright brothers knew that each turn revealed yet more wonders. Even the furniture featured pieces of rare beauty and value, such as the ebony cabinet inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, priced at $5,500. There were two large cases of silk, woven with gold and silver thread, but Little Joe ignored them to stare, gape-mouthed, at the huge, stuffed crocodile resting on a low platform between them. “Whoa! I’d sure hate to meet up with one of those up in the hills.”

“They don’t live ‘up in the hills,’” Adam grunted with a perturbed shake of his head.

“I know that,” Joe shot back. “I was just sayin’ they look dangerous.”

“They are dangerous,” Adam agreed. “Better stand back, little buddy, before those jaws snap shut on your scrawny little arm.”

“You better stand back, if you’re scared of a dead lizard.” Joe tossed the advice aside with a saucy grin and took off again, destination unknown.

Adam took a deep breath and gave chase, fortunately finding his flighty little brother not far away, entranced by another collection of saddles, these intended for use on dromedaries. After almost forcibly dragging the boy away, Adam directed his attention to an exhibit of red pottery and then to one of books and manuscripts written in Arabic.

“If you tell me you read Arabic, too, I’m gonna throttle you, Adam,” Joe said, his tone serious, but his eyes merry.

Appreciating the joke, Adam chuckled. “I’m safe, then; it’s as meaningless to me as it is to you. Beautiful script, though.”

Joe smiled, noticing that Adam was responding with greater
warmth toward him. *Reckon it’s ‘cause I’m trying harder to get along?* Feeling fairly certain that it was, he felt rewarded for his efforts and inspired to continue trying to keep things light and friendly between himself and his older brother.

The Egyptian pavilion was a good place to put those good intentions into practice, since almost everything inside its walls, from household implements of ivory, horn and metal to tableware of solid gold, interested both of the Cartwright brothers. Even the silk exhibit held their attention, for instead of just displaying bolts of fabric, cocoons were arranged in orderly patterns, according to tint, and attached to an upright branch to resemble clusters of glass grapes.

Passing a display of rugs and carpets, Adam and Joe came to the exhibit from the Khedive, America’s newest rival in the cotton trade. Though the Khedive had only begun growing cotton in 1860, it was able to send two thousand samples of native cotton to the Centennial. Also on display were sugar, leather, gum, bark, nuts, wheat and other grains and grasses from the region. Though none of these excited lengthy examination, it wasn’t until they reached the educational exhibit that Little Joe had to exercise much patience. Adam, of course, was immediately consumed with the mechanical instruments made by students from the Polytechnic Institute in Cairo, but Joe willed himself to wait quietly until his brother was finished. Somehow, it seemed easier today, although, he reminded himself, the day was still young. Plenty of time left for one of their traditionally explosive battles.

“Sorry,” Adam muttered ruefully when he glanced up to see his younger brother standing with his hands clasped behind his back, the image of strained patience. “I guess we shouldn’t spend half the morning looking at engineering tools, any more than saddles.”
“It’s okay, Adam,” Joe said, although his face revealed how eager he was to move on.

Adam smiled, instantly discerning that his little brother was making a sincere effort to be good-natured. Could he afford to do less? “What do you say we check out the Danish exhibits now?”

The bright smile beaming from Joe’s face made words unnecessary.

Denmark’s exhibits were enclosed in a triple court, the entrance to the first being a triumphal arch, with the country’s name inscribed on either side in circular medallions capped with crowns of gold. Over the arch a shield with the national arms was placed against a sextet of banners bearing the Danish colors, but the adornments that caught Little Joe’s immediate attention were two nude statuettes flanking the arch. Seeing his little brother gawking in adolescent fascination at the pieces, Adam cleared his throat loudly and made a wide, sweeping gesture toward the portal.

Passing into the north court, the Cartwrights discovered it to be largely devoted to works in terra cotta. There were Etruscan imitations from Copenhagen, vases of a yellow background with figures and borders boldly painted in black and others, whose surface was blackened and covered with landscapes, figures or flowers in oil colors. One large vase, however, was made of solid silver, priced at $4,290. In its center was a statue of Fame with the Arts grouped around her feet, while the wide base supported figures depicting the triumph of Neptune. A small table directly in front of it held two curiously wrought silver knives. Joe almost instinctively reached out to touch them, but a tap on his wrist reminded him that they were for observation only. Joe nodded and pulled his hand back.

The exhibits of the central court, reached through a red-
draped doorway, were entirely different. Adam and Joe first encountered a sample of the native woods of Denmark and then a display of spindle-legged furniture made from wood of the pear tree. Clothing worn by the native Eskimos of Greenland was also exhibited within the middle court, as well as the furs and skins from which it was made.

The south court was devoted to exhibits from Greenland. With his love of architecture, Adam was intrigued by the model of an Eskimo winter house, its board walls enclosed in a layer of brown sea moss. It was Little Joe, however, who lifted its lid and giggled at the large family, dressed in skins and lying in bed, inside the model. “Control yourself,” Adam scolded gently. Still, he couldn’t resist a couple of chuckles himself, although the real object of his amusement was not the Eskimo house, nor its tiny inhabitants, but the laughing boy now busily exploring the kayak exhibited nearby.

Though interesting, Denmark’s contribution to the Centennial was small by comparison with some of the other countries, so Adam and Joe soon left its court for the Japanese one, which was enclosed in a light bamboo framework, ornamented with Japanese flags. As this country’s space was three times as large as that of Egypt and equally exotic, the Cartwrights would spend considerable time there. Even as they entered, they were drawn, as if by magnet, to a simulated garden. A twelve-foot circular area had been enclosed by rough boulders, which retained the earth necessary to grow ferns, coleus and other green plants. These were arrayed in relief against a mass of rock-like bronze, which rose two feet high to spread and blend into a bronze vase four feet in diameter. Decorated with flying cranes, from its center rose the figure of an old tree crag, supporting a green-bronzed, winged dragon. Little Joe shivered, feeling as though he were seeing a monster from one of the old tales Hop Sing used to tell him as a child, during the long hours when everyone else was off working the ranch. Those had been Chinese dragons, of course, and Joe
looked forward to seeing that country’s exhibits and comparing its dragons with these.

The surrounding area was filled with bronze vases, as exquisitely crafted as the European ones and seeming to draw even greater attention from the Exposition’s American visitors. “Oh, we must take home something from Japan,” a woman dressed in the latest fashion was overheard to comment.

“Oh, everyone is, my dear,” her female companion responded. “It’s quite the latest thing. I intend to redo my entire parlor in Oriental furniture.”

“Why, that’s what I was thinking,” the first lady announced.

As the two waltzed off to examine the Japanese furniture, Joe turned to his brother, taking off his hat and crimping his curls with one hand while saying in a high-pitched voice, “Oh, Adam, we simply must take home something from Japan”—he broke into his typically infectious giggle—“but not this vase, okay, brother? It’ll break even your bank account!” He pointed to one of the largest bronzes, tagged at two thousand dollars.

“Will you behave?” Adam chided with a chuckle. “Our foreign guests will think you’re laughing at them. As a matter of fact, I happen to consider that price rather low when you realize that it involved an equivalent of twenty-two hundred and fifty hours of steady labor.”

Joe whistled. “You get that from the catalog?”

“Yes, of course,” Adam said. “It wouldn’t hurt, you know, if you read about the areas we plan to see the night before, as I do.”

“How could I when you don’t ever tell me what we’re gonna do the next day?” Joe snorted.

Adam laughed, despite his recent admonition to his young brother. “Yes, I suppose that could pose a difficulty, but
you did know we’d be coming back here today, little brother.”

Joe conceded the point with a shrug and turned to look at two more high-priced vases, a pair with a background of delicate blue and white, decorated with golden dragons and graceful landscapes. “If you are going to take home something Japanese, Adam, I’d like these.”

Adam laid a hand on his brother’s shoulder. “Surely you jest. Hop Sing would have my head if I brought home Japanese art. He would consider it an open insult.”

Joe tittered. “Oh, yeah! You got a point there, and we’re going to China next, aren’t we?”

Adam nodded. “The Centennial version of it, yes.” His lips began to twitch. “Just because you’re thinking of Hop Sing doesn’t mean you have to use his favorite threat!”

The brothers shared a restrained laugh over the memories of Hop Sing’s oft-voiced threat to return to China, a threat which could be expected whenever anyone did anything that didn’t suit him. “When I was a kid, it really scared me,” Joe shared softly. “I’d lost Mama, and you and Pa and Hoss were away from the house most of the time, and I didn’t think I could stand it if I lost Hop Sing, too.”

Adam looked back in surprise, for Joe had never shared that childhood fear, at least not with him, nor, he suspected, with Pa or Hoss. “Sorry, kid. We should have told you it was all idle talk.”

“Yeah, you should have!” Joe said reproachfully. “You always acted like you took it serious, giving in to just what he wanted and all. Why wouldn’t I think he meant it?”

Adam pushed a chestnut curl from Joe’s forehead. “Poor baby,” he cooed with a chuckle, mildly irritated by the suggestion that he’d done wrong by failing to read the mind of a child of
four or five.

Joe stepped back with a scowl. “Cut that out,” he growled as he put his hat back on to keep his curls safe from his brother’s prying fingers. Should’ve known better than to tell him my feelings! When has he ever cared what I feel? He was silent as he and Adam continued their tour of Japanese ceramics, including the green or scarlet and gold pieces from Kaga, the Banko ware with its characteristic brown or purple color worked through to the inside and droll figures from Tokyo, really caricatures of different classes of Japanese society.

The brothers came next to a huge exhibit of lacquered ware, everything from tiny trays to large, costly cabinets, the jewel of the group a 250-year-old cabinet, available for purchase to anyone having five thousand dollars. The vases of ivory tusks with lacquered decoration were expensive, as well, but Little Joe gathered up a dozen of the trays, which were priced at a mere fifty cents apiece.

“Not for Hop Sing, I hope,” Adam said, hoping to break the silence by bringing up the joke they’d shared earlier.

‘Course not,” Joe scoffed. “I want something better for him. These are just for some friends.”

“Oh. Girls,” Adam guessed with a smile.

“Yeah, girls,” Joe muttered grumpily. “I have a lot, you know.”

“Oh, I know,” Adam chuckled. “Believe me, I know how broadly you spread your affections around, little brother.” He paused, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Joe, if I’ve done something to offend you . . .”

Joe responded with his most Adam-like nonchalant shrug. “Aw, forget it, Adam; it’s nothing.”
“Brighten up a bit and I might believe you,” Adam said softly. Joe returned a weak smile. “That better?”

“Some. Are you getting tired . . . or hungry?”

Joe nodded, willing to let his older brother think that the only thing bothering him was an empty belly. “You weren’t planning to eat this soon, though, were you?”

“I planned to finish here and see the Chinese exhibits before taking a break,” Adam admitted, “but if you’re really . . .”

“No, no,” Joe insisted quickly. “I’d rather see China first, maybe find something real nice for Hop Sing.”

“Sure,” Adam agreed, “he’d appreciate something from his native country, but you don’t have to decide today, Joe. When we’re completely finished with all the buildings, we’ll spend a day just shopping before we go home. I should have explained that; it’s the reason I keep urging you to wait before buying.”

“Okay, that helps,” Joe said, “but I want these trays anyway. The girls will like them. Everybody wants something from Japan, you know; you hear it all over.”

“Everybody except Hop Sing.” Adam grinned, draping an arm across the boy’s slender shoulders and turning him toward the silk screens mounted on light frames and decorated with scenes of the daily life of common people. The outlines of the figures and the landscapes were painted, while the costumes, faces, animals and houses were embroidered on the silk. Beautiful works, but the boys gave them only a cursory examination, preferring, due to Hop Sing’s influence, to spend more time seeing the Chinese version of similar articles.

As was becoming habitual, their tour of the country ended with a perusal of the educational exhibits. Joe groaned as yet another nation dangled the distasteful topic before his eyes,
but he did find the unique characters and backwards way of writing of greater interest than specimens he’d seen in the pavilions of other countries. Taking pity—or maybe because he couldn’t read the papers, either—Adam spent far less time than usual in the Japanese educational department, and the brothers took off for next-door China, each excited to see what he might find that would please the cook to whom both were devoted.

Immediately to the west, the enclosed Chinese pavilion was less than half the size of the Japanese one. The entrance was a copy of the portal to a celestial pagoda and was painted in bright hues of vermilion, indigo and green. Carvings of curled-up dragons, fierce and ugly enough to haunt any small boy’s nightmares, ornamented the entrance, and every projection of its curved roof ended in an animal shape. Above it were Chinese characters, which Adam said meant “The Chinese Empire.”

“You read Chinese, too?” Joe gasped.

Adam chuckled. “No, I read the catalog.”

Joe grinned, obviously relieved that there was some end to his older brother’s vast knowledge.

Near the entrance stood a row of silk screens in elaborately carved frames, which drew Joe’s immediate interest, until he saw the price tags. Some were painted in brilliant colors and all took their subject matter from animal life. A couple displayed undersea scenes, in which the translucence of the water had been caught in a manner true to life. “Could you afford something like this for him?” Joe asked shyly. “I can’t, but they would fit perfect in Hop Sing’s room.”

“How would you know?” Adam inquired with a jesting smile. “Hop Sing doesn’t let anyone in there—at least not that I’ve heard—and you had better not have been sneaking in behind his back or Pa will have your hide.”
“It’s been a long time,” Joe admitted, “but Hop Sing used to let me take naps in there when I was real little ‘cause he knew how much I hated being upstairs by myself.”

“I didn’t know,” Adam murmured.

Joe shrugged. “Why should you? I was past the nap-taking stage by the time you came home from college.”

That wasn’t what Adam had meant, but he didn’t correct the misimpression. What had surprised him, more than Joe’s having taken naps in Hop Sing’s bed, was the revelation that he had done so because of a dread of being alone. Makes sense when you think about it, Adam decided. He’s such a sociable kid that he would want people around, even while he slept. Letting his mind travel back, Adam recalled times when his youngest brother had been ill or hurt and had begged to be allowed downstairs. Adam had always assumed that the kid was rebelling against the enforced inactivity of Doc Martin’s orders. Maybe all he wanted was company, he mused. Wonder if Pa knows; wonder if that’s why he caves in so easily to Joe’s wheedling to get out of bed before he should.

“So, how about it?” Joe pressed. “You are gonna get him something, aren’t you?”

“Huh?” With a shake of his head, Adam pulled his thoughts back to the present. “Why, yes, of course, I’ll be taking something back to Hop Sing, just like the rest of the family. The screens cost a little more than I’d planned to spend, but if you think he’d really like one, I’ll keep it in mind.”

“One of the underwater ones,” Joe suggested. “He’ll like them best.”

“Because you do?” Adam chuckled.

“Because I know him better than you,” Joe insisted, smiling when Adam nodded in acceptance.
Walking further in, the brothers came to a huge, intricately carved wooden bed. “Don’t even think about it,” Adam said, in awe.

“No,” Joe scoffed. “It’s too big for Hop Sing’s room.”

“Thank goodness,” Adam chuckled. “It’s too big for my wallet, too!”

“I didn’t think anything was,” Joe muttered.

To Adam, he sounded serious. The kid really must think my pockets are deep! Maybe that’s why he pays so little attention to the price of his meals.

After viewing the porcelain and pottery, he and his brother took a quick look at the lacquered work. “Not as good as the Japanese,” Adam observed.

“You want to be the one to tell Hop Sing that?” Joe inquired with a smirk.

“Credit me with a little sense, will you?” Adam retorted dryly.

Joe held his fingers about an inch apart. “Sure, big brother, just about that much.”

Adam cuffed him by the neck and pulled him toward the case of carved ivory, where Joe stared in morbid fascination at the carving of a human skull, not two inches high, with a snake coiled on its head.

“Good workmanship,” Adam commented.

“If you can get past what it is,” Joe said, swallowing as if choking down a mouthful of bile.

“Too close to dinner, eh?” Adam suggested with a sympathetic smile.
“Sunup would be too close to dinner for that!” Joe declared. “Let’s look at something else, Adam.”

“Maybe-so you like this mo’ bettah?” suggested a Chinese attendant, extending a ball of carved ivory, five inches in diameter.

Joe’s eyes lighted, like those of a child with a new toy on Christmas morning. “Can I?” he asked, holding out his hand before Adam could stop him.

The little man in blue silk pants and tunic bowed and handed the small ball to Joe, smiling as the enchanted boy turned it over and over to see the intricate carvings of cities, men, flowers and trees that covered every inch of the exterior. “Now look inside,” the Chinaman urged.

Joe peered into the hole the man indicated and gasped. “Oh, wow! Adam, you gotta see this.”

Curious, Adam took the ivory ball and looked into one of several other holes scattered over the surface. Only his greater emotional control kept him from also gasping at the beauty within, for inside the ball was another, similarly carved, and inside that another, still smaller, and another and another, more than he could count. “How many in all?” he asked, returning the ball to the attendant.

“Twenty-three,” the Chinaman replied, “all from one piece ivory. Velly fine work. You like buy, maybe-so?”

“Maybe so,” Adam agreed, “but not today. I must think first.”

“Ah, you wise like Confucius,” the man said, “but wise man also know delay may lead to disappointment.”

Adam bowed. “That is true; I will remember. Thank you for showing us this beautiful object.”

Though disappointed not to make the sale, the Chinaman bowed
politely.

“You thinkin’ about that for Hop Sing?” Joe asked once they were out of earshot. “The screen’s are nicer, I think, but this would be cheaper.”

“I’m not sure. Clyde Thomas might appreciate a beautiful carving like that, too,” Adam said.

“Yeah, he would.” Joe fell silent after that, his thoughts growing gloomy. He’d thought the little Swiss chalet was such a perfect gift for that old friend of the family, but Adam, with his greater resources, seemed determined to outshine him with every gift he bought. Joe swallowed down the hurt. There just wasn’t any help for it, given the difference in their bankrolls, and he didn’t want to see Pa or Hoss or any of their friends deprived of a fine present from Adam, even if it did make his own look like a piece of junk.

Adam stopped before a display of porcelain tiles, painted with Chinese figures. “This might be something you could afford for Hop Sing.”

Joe’s eyes brightened. “Yeah, that might do. I could even manage a set of three, I’ll bet, and they’d look nice on his wall. Gonna give it some thought, though, since you said we could come back.”

“Smart boy,” Adam praised with a pat on the cheek.

“Adam,” Joe chided, pulling away from the gesture more appropriate to a child than a man, in his opinion.

Sniggering with his mouth closed, Adam walked over to a tall pagoda holding a wide variety of Chinese products: cloth, shoes, stockings, hats, leather trunks, samples of native paper, musical instruments and dozens of examples of China’s natural resources and manufactures. There were, to Joe’s unending gratitude, no educational exhibits, so Adam contented
himself with a final look at the offices of the Chinese Commission, a colorful structure of carved and gilded woodwork, whose chief attraction was its panels of scarlet silk painted with scenes from Chinese life.

Though they hadn’t reached the western end of the building, Adam knew that neither he nor Joe could wait that long before eating. After all, five more countries were exhibiting on that side of the aisle alone, with another quarter of the building still to be viewed on the opposite side. So, though it meant extra steps, Adam decreed that it was time to eat and he got no argument from his younger brother.

Seated in the Café Leland at the southern end of the central transept, they put in their orders, both choosing a cold platter because of the heat of the day. “I can’t believe we’ve spent a day and a half in this building, and there’s still so much we haven’t seen,” Joe said between mouthfuls of ham sandwich.

Adam stifled an urge to rebuke the boy for talking with his mouth full. It was past their normal dinner hour, so he felt obligated to cut the obviously starving kid some slack. “I know it’s tiring to see so much so quickly, Joe, but it’s that or miss something, given the length of time Pa said we could be away from home.”

“Well, we could always skip going to Yale, instead, if you wanted to spend more time here,” Joe suggested.

Catching the sassy sparkle in his brother’s eye, Adam responded with a wry smile. “Maybe I could skip Commencement, but you, my boy, are obligated to visit Yale. Part of the price tag for the trip, remember?”

Joe just grinned. “Would you trust me to go there on my own?”

Adam nearly choked on a bit of beef. “Not for a minute, kid! You’d probably take off for New York City—and catch a boat for
France.”

Joe’s expression was suddenly serious. “No, I wouldn’t want to be away from the Ponderosa that long. Anyway, I know what that Commencement means to you; I was just joshing about skipping it.”

“I know that,” Adam responded warmly. “Getting homesick, kid?”

“Kind of,” Joe said, reluctant to admit what he considered a weakness. “I’ve never been away from home as long as we’re going to be on this trip. I don’t think I could stand it for four years, Adam.”

Adam cut a bite from his slice of cantaloupe. “You’d get used to it, as I did.”

Joe sliced his fork through a mound of potato salad. “You mean you really missed us? I thought . . . .”

“What?” Adam asked, looking up.

“Never mind,” Joe muttered, quickly popping a bite of potato salad into his mouth.

Adam reached across the round table to lay his hand on Joe’s. “I missed you, kid,” he said softly.

Joe shook his head, not in denial, but as though disappointed in his childish thoughts of long ago. “Guess I was a kid then, but I just didn’t understand.”

“I know,” Adam said with regret, “and I didn’t know how to make you understand, not at four years old. I’ve always been sorry about that. I’ve thought, maybe, it created a lot of resentment in you.”

“It did,” Joe whispered.

Again Adam’s hand stretched across the table. “Joe—”
Joe jerked his hand back. “Not here, Adam, for the love of mercy!”

Understanding that Joe was concerned about showing emotion in public, Adam settled back in his chair, telling himself that he would continue the conversation later. Obviously, things needed to be said, but they needed to be said in private, for his own sake as much as Joe’s. In a forcibly bright tone he began to list the countries whose exhibits they had not yet seen.

“Oh, my aching feet!” Joe moaned, but he was smiling again. “Don’t tell them how much more they have to travel. They feel like they’ve been all over the world already!”

Taking pity, Adam quickly made a change of plans. “Tell you what, we’ll just take care of Great Britain, Ireland and the colonies this afternoon and come back Saturday afternoon to finish the building.”

“Oh, Adam, you do have a heart!” Joe cried.

“Well, of course, I do . . . and feet as tired as yours,” Adam chuckled. “Besides, we have an extra stop to make this afternoon, so we probably couldn’t finish today if we tried.”

“Extra stop? Where?”

“Wait and see,” Adam said and laughed when Joe groaned at being kept in the dark yet again. When they had both finished eating, Adam led the way up the central transept to the north door and exited the building. Skirting around Memorial Hall and the Art Annex behind it, he stopped before a frame cottage on the south slope of Lansdowne Valley.

“Singer Sewing Machine?” Joe queried, and then his eyes lighted with understanding. “That’s where she works, the lady we helped this morning.”

Adam nodded. “That’s right. She insisted I bring you here
this afternoon. Evidently, she wants you to have a remembrance of her. She assured me it wasn’t anything costly, but if it is, I expect you to refuse it.”

Joe gave his head a perturbed shake. “Adam, you don’t have to tell me every little thing. Pa’s done a fairly decent job of raising me.”

Adam coughed to cover his shock at the suggestion that he was criticizing their father. “Well, I know that. Just—just see to it you do as you’ve been taught.”

They went inside, and Adam asked where he might find Mrs. Atkinson. Directed to a machine not far away, he and Joe walked over and were warmly welcomed by the lady from the streetcar. “I have something for you,” Mrs. Atkinson said.

“Yes, ma’am, my brother told me, but you really didn’t have to do that,” Joe insisted.

“Just a sample of my work,” she said, handing him a man’s handkerchief. “And I have one for you, as well,” she added as she held another out toward Adam.

Joe grinned at the monogram embroidered by machine on his handkerchief. A large “C” was scrolled in one corner, surrounded by smaller letters, “J” on one side and “F” on the other. “It’s my initials,” he said, “but how did you know what they were?”

“Oh, I have very good ears,” she laughed, and Joe did, too, when he realized that she had figured out his initials when Adam had hollered his full name on the horse car. Turning to Adam, she added almost apologetically, “I didn’t know whether you had a middle initial, but I assumed the last name would be the same.”

Looking up from the diagonally linked “A” and “C” in the corner of his handkerchief, Adam smiled. “It is, but these
are more than the mere tokens you told me you wished to present.”

“Not really. I hand out samples like this all day long, gentlemen,” Mrs. Atkinson assured them, failing to add that the sample monograms were not normally stitched on handkerchiefs of such fine linen.

“Nonetheless, thank you for the time and effort you put into these beautiful remembrances. We will carry them with pride,” Adam said.

“We surely will, ma’am,” Joe added quickly, lest Adam again think him remiss in manners.

“But you, my young knight, must agree to carry one more thing for me,” the lady said with a smile as she slipped her hand into her pocket. “A knight often wore the favor of his chosen lady, and while I know that I am too old to be the choice of such a handsome young knight, I hope you will wear my favor, nonetheless.” She laid a watch fob, made of braided Centennial ribbon, in his hand. “The strap I wore this morning was too badly damaged to mend, but I salvaged enough material to make a smaller one, more fitting for a man.”

“I love it,” Joe said and impulsively thanked her with a quick kiss on the cheek.

“Don’t scold,” she told Adam, for she could see the look of rebuke in his eyes, adding with a light laugh, “Queen Guinevere commands it.” She laid her hand against Joe’s smooth cheek. “You’re a dear boy; never change.”

Joe blushed. “Thank you, ma’am.” He ducked his head, fumbling for his watch.

While Joe was fastening it to the colorful new fob, Mrs. Atkinson turned to Adam. “May I show you around this pavilion? We have sixty-one different machines in operation,
and I’d be happy to show them to you.”

“Thank you, but we really don’t have much time to spare today,” Adam said, “and being bachelors, we wouldn’t have any real use for a sewing machine.”

“No, I suppose not,” she said. “However, if your mother or a lady friend is in the city with you, do tell her to register in our reception parlor. The company is giving away our two millionth machine to one of our lady visitors.”

“We’re alone, I’m afraid,” Adam said, “and we had best get back to our tour of the Main Building. Ready, Joe?”

Still admiring his new fabric fob, Joe nodded and slipped his watch into its pocket. “Thanks again, ma’am,” he said.

“No, young man, thank you, for your brave actions of this morning,” she insisted. “Thank you both.”

“Our pleasure, your majesty,” Adam said, and he bowed as Joe had that morning.

Their spirits refreshed by the pleasant interlude, the two brothers walked side by side back to the Main Exhibition Hall and entered again by the same door through which they had left. They began their afternoon tour at the intersection of the central transept with the main aisle, for Great Britain’s exhibits began on its northwest corner. Unenclosed, the national origin of the rows of simple black showcases with gilt moldings was designated solely by a red banner, with white letters, hanging from the roof. At the entrance the highlight of the British exhibits, silver and plated ware by the silversmiths of Birmingham, had been arranged.

“Hang onto your heart, little brother, when you check the price on this one,” Adam teased, pointing to the richly enameled Helicon vase.

“Thirty thousand,” Joe croaked. There was no denying that the
vase was a work of art, with two classical semi-nude figures reclining gracefully against its base, while two small angels sat at their feet, perhaps to hear the music from their lyres. In Joe’s opinion, however, nothing you put on a table just to look at could possibly be worth thirty thousand dollars. *Think of the cattle we could buy with that!* He didn’t say anything aloud, however, thinking that Adam would probably consider him an uncultured, money-grubbing boor with no understanding of the proper value of art.

He really hadn’t needed to speak his thoughts, though, for Adam read them easily in his emotive face. Secretly agreeing with Joe’s assessment of spending that kind of money on tableware, he nonetheless delighted in seeing such beautifully crafted pieces and wanted to instill in his younger brother a kindred appreciation. Case by case, they viewed the porcelain, pottery and majolica, which rivaled, without surpassing, the French examples.

Adam stopped to look longer at a couple of vases featuring Cupid and Venus. One showed the curly-haired cherub turning the wheel of fortune for the Goddess of Love, while the other portrayed him presenting a weeping Venus with a bleeding heart. Unable to resist the temptation, Adam swept off Joe’s straw hat to run his fingers through the curls of the copy of Cupid standing beside him. “Better not stand too close, little buddy,” he teased, “or people will swear you sat as model for these and start running from you and your little arrows.”

Joe responded by thrusting a derisive tongue at his annoying older brother.

Adam laughed. “Well, that’s one way to shed that cherubic image!”

Joe slumped forward, shaking his head in self-disgust for having given Adam more ammunition. Sometimes there just
wasn’t any way to escape big brother’s sharp wit. The hearty clap he felt on his back made him look up, and Adam’s warm smile as he returned the hat brought one in response. *Might as well get used to it; ain’t never gonna get old enough for him to quit teasing—nor Hoss, neither.*

“Let’s look at the pottery next,” Adam suggested, still chuckling. “One of the other guests at Bert’s the other night said it’s the best display of any country here.”

“Okay, I’m all for looking at the best,” Joe agreed readily. *Sure hope it ain’t more Cupids—or I’ll really have to act up ‘to shed that cherubic image!’*

The terra cotta works exhibited by Galloway and Graff were, indeed, populated with figures from Greek mythology, but not by any jest-provoking, curly-headed tykes, as far as Joe could see. Instead, powerful images of men and women adorned the vases, and Joe was particularly drawn to a couple of small statues, one of the huntress Diana and a deer and another of Psyche, whose lovely female form Joe could have spent the entire afternoon gazing upon in abject worship. She stood in a pensive pose, index finger touching her lips as her head leaned forward in thought. A set of fairy-light wings rose from her back, and her only other adornment was a loose drape knotted low across her hips and falling to her bare feet. Seeing that his little brother’s attention appeared to be fixed somewhere near Psyche’s naval, Adam coughed loudly and reminded Joe that the British exhibit was a huge one and they had much left to see.

With a sigh Joe smiled a fond farewell to the lovely lady and obediently followed Adam to a display of fine glassware with an exceptional crystal chandelier, the finest in the building, suspended above it. Adam seemed to give particular attention to the glassware and finally told Joe that he was considering buying some for the ranch, “especially for when we entertain. These would attract a lot of attention, don’t you think?”
“Yeah, but I thought you liked those ruby ones from Austria-Hungary,” Joe responded.

Adam cocked his head to look closely at his brother. “You like them better, buddy?”

Joe again seemed surprised that his brother really wanted his opinion. “Yeah, I do, Adam,” he said earnestly. “They were beautiful.”

Adam’s head bobbed slowly up and down. “Well, I guess I’d better do some more thinking before I buy because it’s a hard choice,” he said finally.

“You could buy both,” Joe suggested with childlike candor.

Adam laughed. “Pa didn’t give me that much leeway, boy! No, I’ll have to make a decision, and I appreciate your help in making it.”

Truly flattered, Joe smiled. “Sure, anytime, brother.”

Throwing an arm about the boy’s shoulders, Adam directed him toward the furniture display, whose chief attraction was the collection of brass beds. “They’re nice enough, I guess,” Joe commented, “but I prefer wood.”

“I probably do, too,” Adam admitted, “although I hear this is becoming quite popular.”

“Amazing,” Joe snickered. “It’s not even Japanese.”

As they approached a tent with purple velvet hangings and a scroll above the entrance announcing it as the home of the Royal School of Art and Needlework, Joe protested, “Oh, Adam, you’re not serious.”

“Just a quick look,” Adam consoled him. “I hear there’s a piece by Princess Christian.”

Obviously unimpressed by royalty, Joe shook his head. “Boring
is boring, no matter who does it.”

Adam gave him a conspiratorial wink. “Well, it’s the kind of exhibit that will attract a lot of girls, Joe.”

Suddenly, a broad grin transformed Joe’s drooping countenance. “What are we waiting for then, brother? Let’s see that royal gal’s stitchery, shall we?” Taking Adam’s arm, he practically dragged his older brother into the tent. Inside, the screen worked by Princess Christian drew much attention from the largely female spectators, but both Joe and Adam thought the three-leaved screen by Miss Gemmel more effective. Light green leaves and flowers, with white fruit blossoms on two panels and wild roses on the third, had been embroidered in shimmering silk on a dark green background. Pretty as the piece was, though, it wasn’t the kind of thing men cared for, and there weren’t enough pretty girls flocking around to make Joe want to stay inside that stuffy tent for long. Adam kept his promise and soon delivered both his brother and himself from the claustrophobic closeness of a tent full of needlework.

Back at the main aisle, the Cartwright brothers entered another department of little interest to men, with its cases of cotton and woolen goods. The best displays of textiles were the linens from Ireland, exhibited nearby. “We really need a fresh stock,” Adam declared, “and since this is undoubtedly the finest in the world, I’m going to go ahead and place an order now.”

“Okay if I take a look at that jewelry while you do that?” Joe asked.

“Sure, just don’t take off anywhere else,” Adam warned.

“Yes, Pa, I’ll be a good boy,” Joe tossed back in the voice of a tiny child.

Adam shook his head. And if I treat him like a child, I get
my head bit off—or worse, an afternoon of stony silence! He completed his order quickly and joined Joe at a case of jewelry made from precious stones found in Scotland. The jeweler from Edinburgh was only too happy to show the pieces he thought might appeal to American gentlemen, though Adam found the highland ornaments more interesting, from a cultural standpoint. Another jeweler, this one from Belfast, displayed jewelry made from Irish bog oak, which was also unlike any the men from the Ponderosa had seen elsewhere in the hall.

Uh-oh, Joe thought when he saw the exhibit of submarine cables by the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company. There’ll be no tearing Adam away from this one. Fortunately, there was a display of cutlery, tools and hardware from London, Sheffield and Birmingham nearby, so the time passed quickly for the younger half of the pair.

In alcoves along the north wall, the Cartwright brothers found carpets from Axminster, Wilton and India, the larger ones hung against the wall. “Hey, if you’re still thinking about a carpet for Pa’s bedroom, I like this one,” Joe said, indicating a patterned floor covering from Axminster.

“That color would look well in his room,” Adam agreed, but decided to wait before making a final decision. He and Joe made their way down the wall, coming next to the pavilion of book publishers at the west end of the space allotted to Great Britain and Ireland. Here, Messrs. Bradbury, Agnew and Company of London, publishers of Punch and the British Encyclopedia, had erected a comely pavilion. Mr. Punch himself stood at the entrance, bowing in welcome to all visitors. Little Joe stopped to listen and laugh at the antics of the red-nosed glove puppet with the rascally attitude, while Adam hurried inside to the greater attraction of beautifully bound books.

“Hey, Mr. Punch, anything worth reading in there?” Joe asked in merry jest.
The little puppet whipped his slapstick toward the audience and would have knocked off Joe’s hat had the boy not ducked just in time. “Take that, you cheeky Yank,” Mr. Punch spewed forth in apparent rage. “Anything worth reading, indeed! Why, any British child could tell you that the magazine inspired by yours truly is the finest in the world. Inside with you, you Yankee lout, and improve that befuddled brain of yours with a good British book! In your case, it might take several.”

Joe joined the rest of the audience in laughter and quickly assured Mr. Punch he would follow that advice. Scampering inside, he found his brother, predictably, standing in awe before a table of books. *Tsk, tsk, older brother. Mr. Punch won’t think much of you reading Shakespeare, instead of ‘the finest magazine in the world,’* he joked to himself.

Glancing up, Adam noticed that his younger brother had finally joined him. “Oh, these are marvelous editions,” he said as he leafed through a copy of one of the immortal bard’s plays. “Just look at the quality, Joe.”

Joe peeked at the price tag. High, of course, but he just might be able to swing it, as an extra gift for Adam. Happening to see his younger brother glancing at the price, Adam decided then and there that he would have to sneak back later to get the boy a volume or two. After all, Joe’d said he had some interest in Shakespeare, and if the kid continued to be as adamantly opposed to higher education as he’d been thus far, the best thing his big brother could do was put a little good literature in his path.

The educational exhibits were next, but not even Adam spent much time viewing them. The small exhibit did little justice to Britain’s contribution to education, and her great universities were not even represented. Little Joe was delighted with how quickly they left these behind for the more intriguing display by the *London Illustrated News* and *London
The *London Graphic* exemplified the printing of illustrations with a collection of original sketches and complete drawings of scenes and incidents in the Franco-German War, and a series of carved blocks showed the different stages in the process of wood engraving. Joe studied the battle scenes intently, wondering if they resembled those in which his brother had participated during the American conflict fifteen years before. He didn't dare ask, however, for Adam had turned away after giving the drawings only a cursory look, seeming to be totally absorbed in a small gas-operated press nearby, which was publishing illuminated circulars of the firm. It was too simple a machine to merit that much attention, so Joe knew immediately that his brother was only doing it to avoid the other option. “There’s some stained glass over there that’s a lot nicer than those,” Joe suggested softly.

Adam looked up, surprised that Joe would express interest in stained glass. What he saw melted his heart. Those perceptive green eyes were seeing straight through his anguished soul, and Adam instantly knew that Joe didn’t really care anything about stained glass; the kid was simply offering him a chance to escape gracefully from scenes that were upsetting to him. Sometimes that little brother of his could be such a sweet kid that Adam wanted to reach out and pull him into a bear hug, as Hoss so easily did. Adam never gave in to the urge, though. For some reason he didn’t care to analyze, he just couldn’t, and it was no different today. “Sure, Joe, you’re right; we should be moving on.”

They “moved on” to the exhibits from India, although, in truth, most of them had come from the India Museum in London, rather than directly from the colony. Specimens of everything the natives of India ate, wore or used was displayed, including jeweled weapons and fans inlaid with ivory and precious stones. Boxes made of porcupine quills and sandalwood made Joe wish they were on sale, for he knew more
than one person back home who would treasure such unique gifts. There were only a few commercial exhibits, one of the best being the carved blackwood furniture from Bombay, with borders and details so intricately carved that some of them looked like black lace from a distance. A survey of the photographs of India’s scenery and her native peoples brought the Cartwrights to the end of that colony’s exhibits, and they were ready to visit one closer to home.

The Dominion of Canada, next to India, displayed exhibits from the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and British Columbia in neat, uniform cases of walnut. After viewing cases of cotton and woolen goods, hosiery, boots, shoes and apparel, Adam and Joe looked at others full of hardware, sewing machines, drugs and chemicals, before finally coming to something both found of greater interest. The models of the shipbuilders reminded them both once again of their father’s seafaring days, but Canada had so much on display that they didn’t spend much time going over the models in detail.

Furniture from Toronto and Ontario, furs from the Hudson Bay Company and finely sculpted marble mantels from Montreal vied for their attention, but, oddly enough, even Joe was more drawn to the educational exhibits here. The geological charts and maps had been attractively hung on the north wall, although Adam was quite certain that the suits of armor stationed as guards at the portal were the real magnets for his younger brother’s sudden interest in an educational display. Anything to do with knights seemed to have special appeal to Joe today, for reasons perfectly apparent to his older brother.

The geological department offered some interesting exhibits of ores and petroleum, including a lump of plumbago, declared to be the largest ever mined. Since the chunk of graphite measured six feet by four feet, Adam and Joe could easily believe that statistic, and both considered the red granite
from New Brunswick a beautiful stone for building. Viewing the final case of beaded skins worn by the Indians of Canada, the brothers were ready to check out the displays of the next British colony.

“Queensland,” Joe said, reading the banner above the next area. “I don’t know where that is, Adam.”

“Look at that huge map suspended from the ceiling, buddy,” Adam said. “See? There’s Queensland in northeast Australia, and you can see the location of the other divisions of the continent, as well. Originally a part of New South Wales, Queensland has only been a separate colony since 1859, but I would have thought that Miss Jones would include it in your geography studies.”

“Maybe she did,” Joe conceded with a shrug. “Back then I didn’t see much point in learning about all those foreign places and their capitals. Memorized what I had to for a test and then forgot it all, just as quick. Other countries interest me some now, though, especially learning about them the way we are here at the Centennial. Makes ‘em seem like real places, not just dots on a map.”

That one remark made Adam feel that all his efforts in getting his little brother to Philadelphia and the frequent struggles to keep that active mind focused on profitable subjects had been repaid. With a buoyant bounce in his step, Adam approached the exhibits from Queensland, determined to build upon his brother’s expressed desire to learn about the world outside Nevada.

Queensland’s exhibits were in an enclosed apartment on the north side of the British space and opposite that of its former parent, New South Wales. Black tablets suspended around the enclosure gave vital statistics about the mining, grazing, agriculture and geology of the country, with paintings and photographs of Queensland and its people
displayed below. A tall obelisk, covered with gilt and with a collection of gold-bearing quartz surrounding it, indicated the amount of gold exported from the area during the period from 1868 to 1875, over sixty-five tons in all, valued at thirty-five thousand dollars. “Enough to make a single vase in good old Mother England,” Joe quipped.

“That was silver,” Adam reminded him. “Gold is costlier.”

“Okay, half a vase,” Joe cackled. “Or is it two?”

“Try to behave yourself,” Adam urged, his own chuckles rendering the rebuke totally ineffective. “It’s the craftsmanship, not strictly the amount of metal used, that determines the price. Now, if you’ll notice, Queensland produces even more tin than it does gold and is, in fact, its principal source in the world.”

“Fascinating,” Joe replied with an impudent grin. “No, I mean it, very interesting,” he added quickly, fanning his hands protectively before his face when he saw Adam’s dark eyebrows pull together in a grim line. “They must mine a lot of copper, too, seein’ as how they sent five tons here, just to show off.”

Adam licked his lips. “All right, I get the point; you’ve seen enough minerals. Shall we look at the samples of native wood? According to the catalog, there are twenty-two different varieties being displayed.”

“Sure,” Joe said. “I’m fond of wood.”

Deciding to take the kid at his word, even though he had sounded flippant, Adam pointed out the various samples, what trees they came from and what products they were used for. He was pleased to see that Little Joe really did seem to be paying close attention.

Not quite as much, however, as the boy gave to the case of
implements and clothing used to illustrate the dress and lifestyle of Australia’s aboriginal population. Those held, for him, the same appeal that eastern Americans felt regarding the Native Americans of their own western states. For Adam, the aboriginal exhibits afforded an opportunity to expound on what he considered unfair treatment of native peoples, both in his own country and in foreign lands.

“You’re preaching to the choir, brother,” Joe pointed out.

“Am I?” Adam demanded. “Don’t be so cocky, boy; you’re too young to have seen much of what I’m talking about.”

Joe immediately bristled at the inflammatory reference to his youth. “I’ve seen enough! If it was worse before, then I’m glad I didn’t see it!”

Adam’s mood abruptly changed and he said softly, “So am I, little brother; so am I, but you’re not a child anymore, or so you frequently assert. It’s time you opened your eyes to the wrongs around you that still need to be redressed—toward Indians and black citizens and the Chinese.”

“Adam, I do see,” Joe insisted defensively. “I just don’t know what I can about it, other than treat each man like I treat every other.”

“Well, that’s a beginning, Joe,” Adam agreed, sensing that he had offended the boy, who had little personal prejudice, and wanting to correct that at once. “In fact, it’s the best beginning, but we do have a long way to go, even in this country.”

“Couldn’t we just enjoy the exhibits today and wait ‘til tomorrow to solve the problems of the world?” Joe pleaded.

He sounded so world-weary and so child-like at the same time that Adam gasped out a coughing laugh. “I guess so, little brother. Sorry about the sermon.”
“Hey, I’m used to it,” Joe struck back with a smile. “I hear more sermons from you than from the minister back home.”

Adam favored his brother with his characteristic Cheshire-cat smile. “Well, he has less inspiration; he doesn’t have to see you every day!”

“But you get to,” Joe fired back in quick repartee. “Count your blessings, brother.”

Adam pretended to choke on the blatant misrepresentation. “Seeing you every day? Since when is that a blessing? Tidying up after your daily mischief is tantamount to cleaning the Aegean stables, my boy, and I’m no Hercules!”

Admitting that he’d been bested at the war of words, Joe merely scowled and walked toward the next colonial exhibit, while Adam beamed in triumph of mythological proportions. Within a week, however, he would wish that he could recall those jesting words and tell his little brother, instead, that seeing him every day was, indeed, the most cherished blessing of his life. Unaware of the breakers lying ahead, Adam sailed blithely on toward the unforeseen storm looming on the horizon.

The exhibits of New South Wales, which the Cartwrights visited next, were enclosed in a light, open framework that provided structure while permitting complete view of the displays from the aisle. Walking inside, Adam chuckled as they were again presented with tables of minerals from the colony, much the same ones as those shown by Queensland. Like the daughter colony, New South Wales displayed an obelisk revealing the amount of gold exported from 1851 to 1874. Mining being undertaken sooner here, the value was even greater, $165,949,355, an impressive amount, even to men from mineral-rich Nevada. Displays of copper, antimony and iron were also on view, along with specimens of kaolin and coal, from which a pyramid of black blocks had been constructed, along with a
large block of kerosene shale, the source of the oil for lamps. Timber, silk and wool completed the presentation of the colony’s resources, but by far the most interesting sight in the enclosure of New South Wales was the scenic photograph of Sydney, purportedly the largest ever taken.

Tasmania came next in the Cartwrights’ exploration of the world, but they spent little time in the tiny pavilion, as the exhibits of the small island colony were devoted almost entirely to agricultural and mineral specimens. Finishing Tasmania quickly, the Cartwright brothers entered the area assigned to the colony of Victoria, and Adam automatically reminded his brother of its geographic location. “In the southeast corner of Australia,” Adam lectured, “with Melbourne as its capital, Victoria boasts good railroads and an educational system that is free, secular and compulsory.”

Little Joe raised his hand. “Please, Professor Cartwright, sir, will there be a test and will spelling count?”

Adam pursed his lips. “What answer have I given to that question before . . . or have you forgotten that as quickly as you did Miss Jones’ geography lessons?”

Joe sighed and quoted back in singsong, “‘All of life is a test,’ but do you really expect me to remember all this? Adam, my mind’s a jumble of geography and minerals and who makes the most what. It’s an awful lot to take in all at once.”

Adam gave him a sympathetic nod. “I know, and I don’t expect you to remember everything. Just try to get a general impression of what each country is like. You can always look up the facts and figures later, if you’re interested.”

“Okay, I can live with that,” Joe sighed in relief. “Can we see those pictures over there, then? That kind of thing helps me more than anything else to know what the country is like.”
“Sure,” Adam agreed, turning toward the wall of photographs and paintings hung around the walls of the enclosure. “I’ve read that the Australian climate is the best in the world for photography.”

“I don’t know about that,” Joe replied, “but they’ve sure got some great scenery for it!”

In addition, Victoria featured a fantastic array of minerals, including enormous nuggets of gold and a dazzling collection of gems and precious stones. Crystal diamonds, blue sapphires, Oriental emeralds, rubies, aquamarine, topaz, spinel, beryl, opal, garnet and tourmaline splashed a riot of color inside the glass showcases. The rest of the colony’s offerings, however, were more mundane displays of manufactured and agricultural products, along with an exhibit of the educational system and the work of Victoria’s penal institutions. These took only a short time to peruse, so the Cartwright brothers were soon exploring another part of the continent.

South Australia, according to Adam, lay west of Queensland and New South Wales, with about a quarter of the population of the latter. “The chief exports are wool, wheat and copper, and all those are exhibited here,” Adam expanded.

“I’ve seen wool, wheat and copper,” Joe complained. “Theirs can’t look much different.”

“No, they don’t,” Adam conceded with a chuckle. “Well, since you prefer pictures, let’s start with those. Here’s a nice photo of the capital, Adelaide.”

Smiling in appreciation, Little Joe looked at the pictures and with that as reference felt prepared to face the other exhibits, which, as it turned out, weren’t much different from those of the other parts of Australia.

New Zealand presented the final exhibits from that part of the
world, and fortunately for Joe, its location was outlined on the same map as Australia. “It’s made up of three main islands,” Adam commented, pointing to them on the map, “North, South and Stewart, with some smaller ones neighboring those.”

“Yeah, I see that,” Joe said. “Doesn’t look like they sent much.”

“No, not much,” Adam admitted. “We won’t be here long.” He led Joe first to the scenic paintings and photographs, then to the usual display of minerals. In the case of New Zealand, those included copper, lead, zinc, manganese, iron and coal, and there was little else to see except an exhibit of Maori weapons and implements.

Leaving the South Pacific, the Cartwrights next encountered exhibits from the British colonies of Africa, beginning with the Cape of Good Hope. While this, too, was a small exhibit, Joe’s eyes lighted with new interest when he saw the racks of antlers hung on the walls of the enclosure, the animal skins and the stuffed birds and animals of the Cape. The usual photographs and mineral displays were on hand, but so were more exotic exhibits, like native weapons, clothing and jewelry. Of course, the necklace made from the extremities of human fingers and toes, nails still attached, was a trifle too exotic, and Joe quickly turned away in favor of four tiered shelves of wines and brandies. A fellow could use a stiff drink after seeing that! he concluded.

The exhibit from the Gold Coast was also small, but well organized. The display of gold dust, of course, was too familiar to hold any interest for either of the Cartwrights, but both looked favorably on the native ornaments made from the precious metal. Other curiosities of tribal life absorbed their attention, as well, from commonplace household implements as simple as a ladle to religious idols of the tribes of the region. Adam gave particular notice to the musical instruments, and even Joe was amazed by the variety of
drums on display, some worn around the neck, some carried under the arm and one so large a man would have to stand up to play it. There was even a drum made from a large gourd, about twenty inches in diameter, which was played with sticks of stiff rhinoceros hide.

“Great Britain sure has a lot of colonies,” Joe commented as he and Adam moved toward the small pavilion housing exhibits from Jamaica.

“Well, you know the saying, ‘The sun never sets on the Union Jack,’” Adam said.

“Yeah,” Joe replied with a grin. “That much I do remember from good old Miss Jones.”

“Five more small pavilions and we’re done for the day,” Adam promised. “No need to walk our legs off.”

“Mine are already walked off, big brother,” Joe said. “Wouldn’t wanna give me a piggyback ride, would you?”

“No, I remember how hard you used to kick the ‘piggy,’” Adam observed drolly.

“Piggy was too pokey,” Joe teased and scampered out of reach of Adam’s long, swinging arm.

Jamaica’s exhibits proved to be exclusively devoted to her natural resources and products made from them, including, of course, rum. Sugar was prominently displayed, along with coffee, cotton, medicinal barks, hemp and native woods. The island colonies of the Bermudas and the Bahamas presented similar exhibits, including intricate works of art made from shells and corals and palm leaf baskets, mats and fans. Tough fibers of native woods and agricultural products such as cotton and tobacco completed the exhibits, and when the Cartwright brothers visited the pavilions of Trinidad and British Guiana, they found much the same emphasis on natural
Totally exhausted, Adam and Joe dragged their way to the streetcar stop and were enormously grateful to find two seats, although they weren’t together. They returned to the Washington Hotel, had a light supper and retired to their suite, too tired to think about going out for the evening. Adam stretched out on the settee with a good book, while Joe began a letter to Hop Sing, describing the Chinese pavilion. Neither had the energy to stay up long, however. Adam shut his book in the middle of a lengthy chapter, and Joe decided to finish his letter sometime when he felt less groggy.

Just before entering his own room, Adam peered into Joe’s and told him to sleep as late as he liked the next morning. “We don’t have to be at Independence Hall ‘til 10:30, and it isn’t far, so let’s just have a late brunch and catch a bite at the Centennial after the ceremonies end.”

“That’s the best news I’ve heard in days.” Joe yawned and sank into his pillow, for as much as he was enjoying the new sights and experiences, for all his youth and energy, he was tired.

Adam smiled at how quickly Joe began to snore, and rolling his shoulders to ease weary muscles, he dressed for bed and soon followed his younger brother’s excellent example. As he drifted to sleep, he recalled his earlier intention of talking to Joe about his childhood resentment of a brother who had left him to go off to college. Oh, well, another time would do as well. After all, it couldn’t possibly be bothering the kid much after all these years. Adam fell asleep, not realizing how soon or how harshly he would be struck with just how much those hidden hurts still bothered the kid brother who seemed to rush through life with never a care.

--- Historical Note ---

Pickpockets were prevalent, especially on the Market St. line resources.
of streetcars, and while Mrs. Atkinson is a fictional character, history does record that a woman’s gold pocket watch was stolen and recovered on a streetcar of that line during the time frame of this story.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Adam and Joe woke to a city gone mad, crazed by crowds thronging the streets, pressing their way into overbooked hotels and packing dining halls all over Philadelphia. Entering the lobby after their late brunch, the Cartwright brothers got their first taste of the general mayhem when they overheard a thin man in a top hat pleading with the desk clerk for a room. “I’m sorry, sir,” the belabored clerk replied stridently, “but as I’ve been trying to explain, it was simply impossible to hold your room when you did not arrive as planned yesterday.”

“But it isn’t my fault that the railroad has been changing its hours every blessed day, nor that it refused to stop at my station because it was already full and not in need of passengers,” the frantic man shouted. “I arrived as quickly as I could!”

“Again, sir, I am sorry,” the clerk responded with crisp politeness, “but that room has been rented, and we have no others available.”

“What about my luggage?” a portly man demanded, pounding his fist on the counter to get the clerk’s attention. “I checked in yesterday morning and have yet to see a single piece delivered to my room.”

The clerk sighed and began an explanation he had obviously been repeating all morning. “My apologies, sir, and, I assure you, your luggage will be brought to your room as soon as it arrives. We have no control over the express companies being
used by the railroads for transport of baggage, but it is my understanding that the livery men are working around the clock, some having gone without sleep for the last two nights, and their poor horses are becoming candidates for the intervention of the S.P.C.A. They are simply overwhelmed by the number of trunks to be delivered.”

“Well, this represents incredibly poor planning on someone’s part,” the portly man fumed and stalked off in a huff.

Joe leaned close to Adam’s ear as they exited the hotel. “Sure glad we had you doing our planning.”

“Be thankful that mining convention required an earlier arrival date,” Adam said with a shake of his head. “I’m not sure any amount of careful planning would have saved us those men’s fate if we had arrived in Philadelphia in the last day or two, and it’s probably going to get worse, the closer we get to the Fourth. Despite the city’s best efforts—and they’ve been considerable—the systems in place are inadequate for an influx of this size.”

The streets were as busy as the hotel lobby, with triumphal arches being set up on Chestnut Street and practically every building in sight being decked out in flags and streamers of red, white and blue. “Good thing we left a bit early,” Adam observed, taking Joe’s arm so they wouldn’t become separated in the crowd of passersby thronging the sidewalks, even though most commercial business had been suspended and would remain so throughout the city’s celebration of the Glorious Fourth.

As they entered Independence Square, Adam pointed to a recently erected platform covered by a canvas awning. “That’s where the public ceremony will take place. We’re very fortunate to have an invitation to the private presentation, Joe.”

“Yes, sir, I know,” Joe said. “It was real nice of that old sergeant of yours to get us the special invite.”
“Invitation,” Adam corrected. “Yes, Mr. Breckenridge did us a
great kindness, and I hope you will express your appreciation
by conducting yourself in a manner appropriate to the
occasion.”

Joe frowned. “Adam, you got no confidence in me at all, do
you?”

Adam skewed a twitting smile in his brother’s direction. “I
have some confidence, yes, but let’s just say it isn’t
unshakable.”

Arriving at the door to Independence Hall, Adam presented
their tickets, and he and Joe were ushered into the west
chamber of the building, where all the guests were gathering.
Joe spotted Breckenridge before Adam did and gave him a wide
wave, accompanied by a bright smile.

“Keep your hands at your sides, please,” Adam muttered through
his teeth. “He doesn’t have time to deal with a brash
younger this morning.”

Saul Breckenridge, however, quickly moved toward them, beaming
with pleasure. “Lieutenant Cartwright, so pleased you could
be here this morning—and you, too, of course, young man.”

“Now, Saul, what have I told you about using that old military
title?” Adam chided, taking the man’s hand.

“Old habits die hard,” Saul said, “but Adam it is—and Joseph,
if I remember correctly.”

Joe nodded as he shook the older man’s hand. “Yes, sir, and
I’m real grateful to you for inviting us this morning. I
expect I’ll learn a lot.”

“Young man, you do know how to gratify the heart of an old
teacher,” Saul said warmly. He turned to Adam. “Adam, I’d
like to introduce you and young Joseph to some of the other
authors.”
“We’d be very pleased and honored to make their acquaintance, wouldn’t we, Joe?” Adam responded.

“Um, yes, sure we would,” Joe mumbled, somewhat hesitantly. He trailed silently behind his brother and the Connecticut Centennial Commissioner as they went from one distinguished writer to another, being introduced, shaking hands and, in Adam’s case, making complimentary remarks about the work of several of the men to whom they were introduced. Even when meeting men he hadn’t heard of, Adam managed to come across as a suave, knowledgeable man, while Joe felt as awkward as a newborn colt, tottering on shaky legs. Probably all that time back here that did it for him, Joe concluded, but while he envied his older brother’s poise, he still thought four to six years away from home too high a price to pay for a little social polish.

Promptly at eleven, the guests were directed into the east chamber of Independence Hall, and Adam and Joe took their seats. Saul Breckenridge, of course, was seated with the other presenters of revolutionary biographies in a separate section. Colonel Frank M. Etting, Chairman of the Committee for the Restoration of Independence Hall, opened the ceremonies with a welcoming address. Then the Reverend William White Bronson led the opening prayer. A choir of fifty voices sang John Greenleaf Whittier’s newly composed “Centennial Hymn,” and it was then time for the presentations to begin.

When the first name was called, Little Joe tittered softly into his hand, for the name was not that of any man there, but one he recognized from American history books. A sharp jab from Adam’s elbow gave him further incentive to control his urge to burst out laughing. Even so, Joe couldn’t keep his lips still as he saw “George Washington” and “Ethan Allen,” among other prominent men from history, walk to the platform in suits no colonial gentleman would recognize and lay their memoirs on the table for submission to the archives of the
State House. “Don’t look quite like I pictured them from the history books,” he whispered to Adam and was promptly and brusquely hushed.

Once all the essays had been delivered, the small gathering proceeded outside for the public ceremony, set to begin at 12:30. As invited guests, Adam and Joe were seated in a reserved section, only two rows back from the canvas-covered platform, where they would have an excellent view. In fact, as the Centennial Music Association struck up Helfrich’s “Centennial Triumphant March,” Joe wished they were a dozen rows further back, for the music was loud. After a brief welcoming address, the song sung inside the Hall was again performed, this time by a choir of one hundred fifty voices. The rest of the program featured speeches, alternating with patriotic vocal and instrumental offerings, from the band’s rendition of “God Save America” to the choir’s ode, “The Voice of the Old Bell,” both composed to celebrate the American centennial. The ceremonies ended with the singing of “The Star-Spangled Banner” and prayer.

After again expressing their gratitude to Saul Breckenridge for extending them the invitations, the Cartwright brothers caught a streetcar out to Fairmount Park and once again entered the Main Exhibition Hall, with dinner being the first item on their agenda. The Café Leland was closest to the entrance, so they chose that restaurant again. Adam selected several seafood items from the menu: deviled lobster, lobster salad and oyster pie, while Little Joe, for once, made choices from the low end of the price range, having chicken pie, cheese slices and a fruit cup. “Care for a piece of pie to finish out the meal?” Adam asked when they had both cleaned their plates.

“Could I have the macaroons, instead?” Joe asked. “I know they cost more, but that’s not why I want them, honest. I just don’t think I’m hungry enough for pie.”
Adam chuckled softly. “I’m not going to quibble over a five-cent difference, especially since you let me off easy on the main part of your meal. Have the cookies, if that’s what you want.”

Joe thanked his brother, and after he and Adam had eaten their desserts, they were once more ready to tackle their around-the-world tour, beginning with the exhibits from the Orange Free State.

The Dutch republic in southeast Africa had enclosed its exhibits in a pavilion painted in imitation of black walnut and draped with festoons of red, white and blue, as well as the national colors of white and yellow. The exhibits were entirely the work of the government and featured the usual mineral and agricultural products, along with native artifacts, such as the shields and whips of rhinoceros leather. There were cases of stuffed birds, flaunting singular and stunning feathers, such as ostrich plumes, along with collections of insects and bird eggs. Little Joe pointed to an ostrich egg of remarkable size. “Hey, finally an egg big enough to fill Hoss up!”

Adam chuckled wryly. “You sure?”

Glad to see Adam in a mood for fun, Joe teased back, “Well, two would do the trick, for sure!”

“Three would be safer,” Adam quipped drollly, and Joe laughingly agreed.

Passing two enormous tusks of ivory, the brothers viewed the modest display of art created by the Dutch settlers, a collection of crude, but effective scenes of domestic life carved by a pen knife. The best showed an old pastor, seated in an armchair, reading the Bible.

The Peruvian pavilion, decorated with arms of the republic and its national colors, stood next to that of the Orange Free
State at the far western end of the Main Exhibition Hall. Minerals were displayed around the sides of the pavilion: gold, silver, precious stones, quicksilver, copper, iron, lead and others. Some of the manufactured products were similar to those of other countries, but some were unique, as well. The principal displays were products of leather, soap and sugar, while the collection of native wines and liquors was also extensive. Peruvian bark, from which came quinine, was one of the more notable products, and the republic had also sent examples of more rare goods, such as cinnamon, pimento, indigo, sarsaparilla and vanilla. The dress and weapons of the Indian tribes were interesting, but one look at the exhibit of skeletons and skulls with the hair still attached was enough to make Little Joe wish he’d eaten a less substantial dinner. “Uh, can we get out of here?” he asked Adam, who seemed fascinated with the native pottery displayed amidst the human remains, with their long wavy hair and sharp yellow teeth.

Adam gave him a sympathetic smile and nodded. “I didn’t see anything like this listed in the catalog of exhibits from the Argentine Confederation,” he assured Joe.

“Thank goodness,” Joe whispered, heading eagerly for the circular pavilion next door.

More minerals met his eye, none different from those seen elsewhere, but some of the textile specimens were more rare, such as the fabrics made from native plants and the mats woven by prisoners of the State. Joe particularly liked the wool hats and tried on several, with obvious pleasure. His hand lingered longest on a black one with a gray band, but he laid it aside with a sad shake of his head.

When the boots displayed nearby met the same response, Adam began to realize that while Joe wanted them for himself, he was saving his money to spend on others. *Admirable, of course, but if the kid had just used better sense in handling*
his money, he could have had enough for both. Still, either the hat or a pair of Argentine boots would make a nice gift for his younger brother, so Adam filed that information away with all the other ideas he’d been gathering as they toured the Exposition. No, he chuckled to himself, finding something that the greedy-eyed youngster might like should be no problem at all.

Hearing the soft laughter, Joe looked across at his brother, but Adam just shook his head to indicate that the joke was a private one. Joe frowned and continued looking at other items made from leather.

Sitting in the midst of them was a trunk, which at first excited no great interest. Then a sales representative began to display its wonders, and neither Adam nor Joe could tear his eyes away. Without disturbing what was packed inside, the trunk could be transformed into a stylish sofa. The salesman pressed on one arm, and a writing desk appeared, with everything needed to conduct correspondence. Pressing on the other arm produced a container for every convenience of travel, the clothes now situated in a receptacle at the back of the sofa. But the wonders of that trunk had not yet been fully revealed, for the Argentine salesman next let down the back of the sofa to form a comfortable bed, and then transformed it into a table for four, with a receptacle for linens, dishes and cutlery included.

“Amazing, truly amazing,” Adam said as the representative folded everything back into a trunk again. He lifted the luggage, finding it surprisingly light.

“Can’t you just see Pa toting that along on a trail drive?” Joe giggled.

“Not really,” Adam muttered out the side of his mouth. Not only would carrying along a combination sofa, table and bed probably strike men sleeping in bedrolls as the affectation of
a snob, but Pa was likely to think that six hundred dollars was too much to pay for the privilege of being laughed at by his hired crew. Thanking the salesman for the demonstration, Adam moved quickly away, and almost immediately a finely tooled briefcase caught his avid attention. “Would Pa like this?” he asked his younger brother.

“You bet!” Joe agreed enthusiastically. “For Christmas?”

Adam made a noncommittal shrug. “Maybe his birthday. That’s coming up in September, you know.”

Joe groaned, wondering how he would ever find enough money to buy two great presents for Pa, without scrimping on his gifts to others. Those poker parties at the Silver Dollar were coming back to haunt him, not to mention the money he’d wasted at Shantyville, but it was too late now to brood over past sins. Somehow he’d work out the dilemma, but at the moment he had no idea how, and the remaining exhibits of Indian weapons and figures of Argentine peasants provided no clue.

The contents of the gaily painted circular pavilion of Chile yielded no inspiration, either, especially not in the showcases of minerals surrounding the sides. Adam and Joe spent some time looking at the old pottery, domestic and agricultural tools and the weapons of the Indian tribes, but, to Joe, especially, the most interesting display in the pavilion was the stuffed hides of animals native to Chile: cougar, jaguar, llama, guanaco and monkeys.

Having finished the exhibits in the southern half of the building, the Cartwrights crossed the main aisle to view the three remaining countries they had not had time to tour the previous afternoon, beginning with Italy. The Italian pavilion was enclosed with a light framework with three arches fronting the main aisle. Over the center one a shield bore the white cross of Savoy, surmounted by a trophy of national flags. Each of the other entrances bore a shield with the
arms of the Kingdom and a similar trophy of national colors. A tall flagstaff stood at each end of the entrance, but each bore a different banner. The one on the east proclaimed, “Italy United Forever,” while the western banner was dedicated “To the Great Italian Navigator, Christopher Columbus.”

The first thing the Cartwrights saw on entering the pavilion was a collection of bronzes, some half-size reproductions of ancient works of art. “They’re beautiful,” Joe murmured in awe.

Adam rested a hand on his shoulder. “We’ll see even better specimens in Memorial Hall. Nobody creates sculpture as exquisite as the Italians.”

“Not even France,” Joe whispered, and Adam pursed his lips tightly to keep from laughing at his brother’s obvious disappointment that France did not lead the world in all things artistic.

Beautifully carved furniture was displayed beside the reproductions. An Episcopal chair and desk were carved with scenes from Scripture and the heads of cherubs, evidently a popular device among Italians. An entire case from Venice was devoted to carved wooden cherubs, and one of them reminded Adam so poignantly of Little Joe as a child that he gasped in wonder. Although he admired the carving, Adam couldn’t bring himself to buy it with the older version of the cherub standing beside him. If Joe were to figure out the reason behind the purchase, there’d be no end to the ribbing his older brother would have to tolerate, so Adam said nothing and moved on to a mirror frame carved in dark, rich wood, around which a flock of chubby wooden children danced.

An old sideboard stood out among the newer pieces of furniture. Decorated in imitation ruins, the piece showed one pillar, broken midway, with an owl perched thereon and a cornice covered with vines hanging down like tears. The
inlaid tables from Milan, ornamented with pictures in papier-mâché were exquisite pieces, too, but Adam stopped short at the cases of jewelry, eyeing thoughtfully the beautiful corals and ornaments in filigree and gold.

Joe almost laughed when he saw the case that drew his older brother’s most careful attention. Cameos, of course. “You might just as well go ahead and buy her one, older brother,” he teased. “With only Norway and Sweden left to look at, I doubt you’ll find any better.”

“Well what I was thinking,” Adam admitted.

“And who is the lucky lady?” Joe queried. “Becky?”

Adam arched an eyebrow. “That’s Miss Montgomery to you, boy.”

“Oh, yes, sir, absolutely, sir,” Joe said, popping a sassy salute. “So, does this mean you’re getting serious about the lovely Miss Montgomery?”

Adam surveyed him with cool eyes. “None of your business.”

Joe gave a low whistle, slowly slid a safe distance away and concentrated on the display of stages in cameo cutting, from shell to finished silhouette, while Adam purchased his gift in relative privacy.

Package in hand, Adam rejoined his brother, and they made their way past displays of glassware, pottery and straw goods from Tuscany, giving most of them only cursory attention. It was a different matter, of course, when they came to the north end of the pavilion, where a large map detailed Garibaldi’s plan for improving the navigation of the Tiber and draining the marshes of the Campagna. Adam was typically lost in study of the Italian liberator’s design, but there were, fortunately, enough scenic photographs nearby that Joe wasn’t completely bored.

When Adam was finally able to tear himself away from the
absorbing map, he and Joe moved toward the Norwegian pavilion, enclosed in a framework of pine, ornamented with red lines. “The pavilion itself is on sale, according to the catalog,” Adam commented drolly as they entered.

“Hey, maybe we ought to buy it, set it up in the front yard and give Pa and Hoss and all the hands a real taste of the Centennial,” Joe teased. “I could make a few pots, and you could set up a tiresome old educational exhibit.”

Adam responded with an indulgent smile, the kind adults bestow upon foolish children.

Easily reading the patronizing expression, Little Joe folded his arms and stalked over to the east side of the pavilion, where a group of figures caught his attention and dispelled the clouds forming on his brow. A family of Laplanders, dressed in furs, was represented: father, mother, infant and child. The baby was carried in a leather case, suspended from the mother’s neck, while the other child stood by her side, decked out in a holiday suit of white bearskin.

“There’s another set on the other side of the pavilion,” Joe heard a voice behind him say softly. “Would you care to see them?”

Joe turned, face still petulant. “Won’t that ruin your systematic plan to see everything in order?”

Though he felt the strain on his patience, Adam forced himself to hold on to his temper. “Not enough to matter. Come on.”

Allowing himself to be appeased, Joe slipped past three cases of jewelry and silverware with barely a glance and came to stand before the bride and groom on the west side of the pavilion. “Why, if it isn’t Adam Cartwright and the lovely Rebecca,” he tossed over his shoulder with a naughty smirk.

Adam rolled his eyes and landed a light swat on his brother’s
backside. “All right, you rascal. See if I indulge one of your whims again. There’s some glassware from Christiana over there that should effectively take your mind off nonsense, and if that fails, we’ll head straight for the ‘tiresome old educational exhibit.’”

“Anything but that!” Joe pleaded. “I’ll be good, bubba.”

Adam groaned. What am I supposed to do with a kid who wants the full respect of manhood one moment and plays the part of a child the next?

The brothers worked their way amiably through exhibits of pianos, various types of cloth and shoes and a collection of antique coins and medals, only to come face to face with a daunting display of bottles of cod liver oil. My turn to tease, Adam thought and said aloud, “Just let me know if you’re feeling poorly, little buddy, and we’ll get you fixed right up.”

Joe scrunched his nose at the malodorous jest. “Oh, you are funny, aren’t you? I’m feeling fine, just fine.”

“Oh, well, if you’re feeling fit, maybe you’d enjoy these more,” Adam chuckled, pointing to a suit of ancient armor and weapons of the same period.

“Much better,” Joe agreed with a grin.

The odd Norwegian carriages with a perch behind for the driver to either sit or stand also interested Little Joe, as did the sledge made in a mountain district in 1625, but he groaned when he was once again faced with another country’s educational exhibits. Past those, however, at the very rear of the court, stood a galleon with a big Viking at the helm. Joe stood staring at it for a long time. “Kinda looks like Hoss’s Uncle Gunnar,” he whispered.

Adam’s hand immediately came to rest against his younger
brother’s back. It was only last year that Little Joe had been captured by comancheros, led by Hoss’s uncle, and shot by one of his henchman when Gunnar tried to help Joe and the neighbor girl abducted with him to escape. “Gunnar was Swedish,” Adam said gently, “and that’s where we were headed next, but if the memories are too bitter, little buddy . . .”

“Don’t be silly,” Joe scoffed with a quick shrug of his shoulder. “The memories aren’t all bitter. Besides, the Swedes are Hoss’s people, too—and his mother’s. I want to learn about them, so I can tell Hoss when we get home. Let’s go.”

“Okay, but you tell me if you need to leave.”

“I won’t need to leave,” Joe snorted. “I’m not a baby, Adam.”

*You’re not made of iron, either, little buddy.* But Adam merely nodded, concealing his concern and his intent to keep a watchful eye on his younger brother as they toured through Sweden.

Enclosed along the sides, the front of the Swedish pavilion stood open on the main aisle, marked by a series of tall flagstaffs, bearing banners of blue with the yellow Swedish cross. Festoons of blue and yellow streamers were draped between the flagstaffs, and a group of life-sized figures in national dress, similar to the Norwegian ones, greeted the Cartwright brothers as they entered. Coming from the west, they first encountered a hunting scene. A large elk had just been brought down and lay bleeding on the ground as the hunter’s family, obviously proud of their provider’s triumph, watched the animal’s death struggle.

Moving to the east side of the front entrance, they came upon a domestic scene in which a tall, handsome lad, hands clasped awkwardly behind his back, was evidently asking permission to wed the blushing beauty of the household. The father was sitting opposite the youth, still holding the clock he had
been mending, as he gazed down, pondering whether to accept this suitor to his daughter. Mother appeared to be intervening for the young couple, while daughter stood nearby, awaiting the verdict. “Might as well give in, Pa,” Joe chuckled, noticing the way the girl’s eyes were riveted on the young man. “It’s three against one.” He smiled up at Adam. “I was teasing about that Norwegian pavilion, but this is something I really do wish we could buy and take home. Hoss would love seeing these!”

A Swedish commissioner turned at the sound of Joe’s voice and stepped forward. “They are all for sale,” the man stated; then he laughed. “We will even separate the husband and wife and sell the bride away from the groom!”

“You and your big mouth.” Adam hissed softly at his younger brother.

Joe had the grace to look chagrinned and the sense to keep his mouth shut. Adam was much more adept at handling ticklish situations than he, and Joe was completely satisfied to let older brother do just that.

“I wish we could, as they exhibit fine workmanship,” Adam told the foreign commissioner politely, “but I’m afraid we’ll have to decline.”

“Quite all right, sir,” the Swedish official said smoothly, “but perhaps I could interest you in this book of statistics about our country, which the commission has prepared. Only fifty cents, and it comes with a free list of the exhibits.”

Adam felt there was no gracious way out of buying the booklet. Besides, the list of exhibits might prove useful, and fifty cents was little enough to ask. He quickly put two quarters in the man’s hand and accepted the reading material in return, handing it to Little Joe. “Keep it for Hoss,” he instructed.
“Yeah, he’ll like that,” Joe said with a warm smile. He began thumbing through the pages. “Hey, it says there are four more groups of figures like these. I’d like to see them, Adam.”

“If you can keep your mouth shut about purchasing them, we will,” Adam said under his breath, “but we’re not chasing around the four sides of the pavilion looking for them. This time we do things in order.”

“Yes, sir,” Joe said, dutifully turning his attention to the porcelain and pottery in the front line.

Close by, an old and shabby glass tumbler stood in stark contrast to the sparkling crystal glassware surrounding it. Joe hastily consulted the catalog and told Adam they were looking at the first glass ever pressed in America. “Says here the man who made it was threatened with death by the glassblowers,” Joe said. “Guess they were afraid they’d be out of a job, huh?”

“Probably,” Adam agreed. “Men can get pretty desperate when they’re faced with loss of their livelihood.”

“Yeah, I’ve seen that back home,” Joe commented, “especially when the railroad quit needing all those Chinese workers they brought in.”

Adam nodded soberly, remembering the violence between white miners fearful of losing their jobs and Chinamen willing to work for half-wages. Joe had been barely twelve years old during the worst of it, but his loyalty to Hop Sing had made him keenly aware of the danger to the diminutive cook’s people. Really was foolish of me to tell him he was too young to have seen prejudice against ethnic peoples. He’s seen plenty—not as much as I, perhaps, but more than enough.

Looking around for something to distract his younger brother from his uncharacteristically sober mood, Adam spotted a unique meerschaum pipe. “Look at this, Joe,” he urged.
Joe turned to look at the intricately carved, temple-shaped pipe, which stood over two feet high in the center of a table. He snickered when he saw four long tubes attached. “One for each Cartwright.”

It was a feeble joke, but Adam made himself laugh at it. “Except Pa’s the only one who smokes—unless you’re hiding something I don’t know.”

Joe shook his head. “Naw. I tried it once, when I was just a kid, and got sick as a dog. Never wanted it after that.”

“When you were just a kid,” Adam scoffed, his smile clearly communicating that Joe was still “just a kid” in his older brother’s view. “And when would that have been, little man?”

“Thirteen, fourteen, somewhere in there.” Joe cocked his head inquisitively. “You ever try it? When you were living back east maybe?”

“Not exactly,” Adam said, too quickly. He could pinpoint the exact moment he had developed a genuine distaste for tobacco, but he was not about to share that memory with his younger brother. A vivid description of that hazing incident during his freshman year couldn’t possibly do anything but discourage the kid, and Joe didn’t need more reasons to reject going to college. “Let’s just say I was around other people’s smoke enough to decide that I didn’t want to add mine to the general haze.”

Joe could tell Adam was holding something back from him again, and, as always, it hurt. Adam knows everything there is about me, and he won’t let me know nothin’ about him, nothin’ except how smart he is and how much better than me he thinks he can do everything!

“Why, look here, little buddy,” Adam said with deliberate brightness. “More of the kind of thing you like best.” He indicated the stuffed wolf near a case of furs.
Licking his lips, Joe nodded without comment. He really does think I’m a baby. ‘Just put a stuffed animal in front of the little boy, and he’ll forget all the things I don’t want to talk about.’ While Joe didn’t appreciate the attempt to distract him, he did like the way the large white wolf stood out against the pack of smaller brown ones in the scene Adam had shown him. Nearby was an enormous and lush rug made from natural fur and Joe smiled dreamily, now thoroughly distracted, as he pictured himself lying before a blazing fire, lost in the luxury of the soft pile and in the glowing azure eyes of the flaxen-haired girl stretched beside him on the rug.

“Joe,” Adam called for the second time, “aren’t you interested in seeing these knives?”

“Huh?” Joe said, reluctantly leaving the lovely blonde Swede of his dreams and hurrying over to the exhibit of Bessemer steel before which his brother impatiently stood. It featured articles as small as a lady’s toilette mirror and as large as a fifteen-foot piston rod for a five-ton steam hammer, all made from the gleaming metal.

As Adam had surmised, of course, Joe was most drawn to the swords and knives, picking up several of them with obvious longing. He set them down again with wistful eyes, and noting the regretful expression, Adam added another note to his long list of ideas for his little brother. Not a sword, though. Can’t stand seeing him with a blade made for killing, but maybe a new knife. This is going to be a tough decision, he realized. What is it the kid would like most? In the meantime, Adam selected several items he thought would be useful back home, including a sharp pair of scissors for Hop Sing and some steel files to keep their other tools sharp, and placed an order.

After viewing a display devoted to safety matches, one of Sweden’s prominent industries, and the inevitable educational
exhibits, Adam draped an arm around his brother’s shoulders as they returned to the main aisle. “Well, that finishes the Main Building,” he said.

“Thank goodness,” Joe replied, letting his tongue hang out to demonstrate how tired he was.

“Except for the Carriage Annex,” Adam added with a devilish grin.

“Oh, boy,” Joe groaned.

“Why, little brother, I thought you were fond of horse-drawn vehicles,” Adam snickered as he pulled the boy by the elbow toward the west exit.

“When I’m riding in them, yes,” Joe grumbled. “Walkin’ through acres of ‘em, that’s a whole different thing, brother.”

“It’s nowhere close to that large an exhibit,” Adam scoffed.

They came out into the central square separating the Main Exhibition Hall from Machinery Hall, and Joe made a beeline for the Bartholdi fountain to splash his face with cool water. Sure scampers fast for all the whining about how tired he is, Adam observed as he stood waiting, arms folded in cool appraisal. Hope he doesn’t treat this like the water trough back home and stick his head under and shake off, like a dog drying his fur!

Joe returned—dry-headed, to Adam’s relief—but looking so refreshed that his older brother was tempted to follow his example. Opting for dignity over comfort, however, Adam merely walked north, crossed the Avenue of the Americas to the opposite side and entered the Carriage Annex.

Most of the exhibits inside were American, but Great Britain, Canada, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy and France had also sent examples of coaches, carriages, sleighs, omnibuses and
railway cars. The first vehicles the Cartwright brothers saw when they walked in the west door were carts designed for children. “Hey, why didn’t you grown folks get me a rig like this when I was a kid?” Joe queried, admiring the lightweight carriage that could be pulled by a small pony.

“Because we had to chase you all over the countryside as it was,” Adam responded with a sardonic smile. “Besides, you’re still a kid, so if you really want one, little buddy . . .”

“Oh, shut up,” Joe suggested, although he took the ribbing with good humor this time.

As they approached a display of Concord stagecoaches, the boys overheard a matronly woman reminiscing with a young girl about “the old days” when one of these “quaint old Concords” was the only way to get from place to place. “What does she mean, ‘old days’?” Joe laughed as the lady moved on to another exhibit of carriages. He doffed his straw hat and addressed the woman’s back. “Why, in our part of the world, ma’am, this here’s the newfangleddest means of gettin’ ‘round.”

“Scarcely even true for us, anymore, Joe,” Adam chuckled. “The railroad is changing the face of the country. You can reach all but the most remote places by rail now.”

Joe nodded, recalling their trip to Philadelphia. “And the East is thick with them,” he said as he put his hat back on. “Guess the kids who celebrate America’s second hundred years won’t even know what it is to bounce around in an ‘old’ Concord.”

“Oh, you would have preferred to come here on a stage, instead of the transcontinental railroad?” Adam asked with a playfully arched eyebrow.

Grinning, Joe shook his head. “Not on your life, brother! I like my comfort.”
“Speaking of comfort, take a look at this,” Adam suggested, moving toward a full-scale Pullman Palace Hotel car.

“Hey, yeah!” Joe cried, immediately climbing aboard for a closer look.

Adam smiled indulgently. Having ridden in a hotel car before, he had no particular desire to see this one, but he willingly followed his younger brother up the steps and into the car. “All the comforts of home,” he commented. “Eat, sleep and relax all in one car.”

“I know how the beds work,” Joe said, “and I see the kitchen, but where do you eat, in your lap?”

Adam laughed. “No, there are removable tables that can be set up between each set of seats at mealtime and taken away when you’re through. Look, there’s a couple set up at the end of the car.”

Joe looked impressed as he moved down the aisle for a closer look at the table between two facing train seats, set with all the flair of a first-rate restaurant, even to the flowers on the table. “Now, that’s some idea! Sure would be better than hopping off the train and racing to and from some eatery in thirty minutes or less.” He cocked his head and put on his most disarming smile. “Any chance of our riding home in style like this?”

Laughing, Adam shook his head. “You don’t care how much of my money you spend, do you, kid?”

Joe’s face fell at the reminder of who was footing the bill for the trip. Figuring Adam wasn’t likely to shell out any extra cash for his kid brother’s comfort, he muttered, “Well, let’s look at something else then,” and trotted back down the aisle and out of the car. There was a parlor car, full of comfortable individual chairs, next to the hotel car, but Joe just shrugged when Adam pointed it out. Just another luxury
he wasn’t likely to experience. He went aboard and looked
around briefly, without comment, and left as quickly as he’d
entered, treating all the other rail cars in the same manner.

When he saw a streetcar on display, however, Joe protested,
“We sure don’t need to look at those! I’ve seen enough horse
cars to last me a lifetime.”

Adam chuckled, not so much because he was amused as in an
attempt to restore a lighter attitude in his younger brother.
“Okay,” he said drolly. “Since you’re getting to be such a
cosmopolitan traveler, we can skip these, I suppose.”

Joe tried to hang on to his bad mood, but his native sense of
humor overcame the urge. He gave the joke a chuckle or two,
and he and Adam finished looking at the Carriage Annex without
further friction. At Adam’s suggestion they sat outside on a
bench on the north side of the building, enjoying the view
down into the woods of beautiful Lansdowne Valley, as a slight
breeze caressed their faces with cool fingers. In the
distance they could see the towers of Agricultural Hall, and
closer by, Horticultural Hall stood out like a fairy palace
with its variegated colors. On the slope directly below them
a number of smaller buildings were scattered and Joe asked
Adam what they were.

Adam threw his head back and laughed heartily. “Why, I’m so
glad you asked, little brother. They’re your favorite kind of
exhibit. That’s the model kindergarten just below us, with
the Swedish schoolhouse on the left and the Pennsylvania
Educational Department on the right.”

Joe groaned loudly. “Whole buildings? They built whole
buildings to stuff full of that boring stuff?”

Adam bent forward, grabbing his knees as his belly shook with
mirth. “I do want to see them eventually,” he said, coming up
for air, “but I’ll spare you today. I thought we’d just have
an early supper at the French Restaurant and go back to the

“Aux Trois Frères Provençaux?” Joe asked, eyes lighting in eager expectation. “I hear it’s great!”

“And so are the prices,” Adam responded with dour expression. “No, little buddy, I don’t plan to give you that much assistance in your petty campaign to empty my pockets. I meant Lafayette’s, down there.” He pointed past the kindergarten to a building edging the valley below.

Hurt by the reminder of how he had childishly run up the tab in the past, Joe glanced away. “Oh, well, it’s probably good, too.”

Adam nodded firmly. “Good and reasonably priced, that’s the report.”

“Well, I’m hungry enough to eat now, if you are,” Joe suggested, looking back tentatively.

Agreeing readily, Adam stood up, and he and Joe walked down the slope and crossed a curved pathway to the frame building that housed the French restaurant. The second story had been arranged as an open-air pavilion, and because the day was still warm, Adam suggested that they have their supper there. Wanting to make the meal more special for his younger brother, he selected a couple of appetizers for both of them, raw oysters on the half shell and *pâté de foie gras*; then he suggested they each begin the meal with a bowl of soup. “I’m having the tomato, but you choose whatever strikes your fancy.”

As Adam had anticipated, Joe selected the only soup on the menu that had a French-sounding name, Soup Julienne, but Joe surprised him by turning down the chateaubriand with béarnaise sauce, which Adam selected for himself. “Pa always said that was too big a cut for me,” Joe explained.
“Well, you’re a big boy now,” Adam teased, “with the appetite to match!”

Joe grinned. “Not tonight, I’m not, especially not if I do justice to those appetizers you ordered. I want the chicken with truffles, and I’ll have the French green peas and French string beans with it, please.”

_Now, that was predictable,_ Adam thought, smiling. He started to order the string beans, American style, for himself, but then he decided that his younger brother probably had the right idea. After all, what was the point of dining in a French restaurant unless you supped on French food? Ignoring that theory when it came time for dessert, however, Adam ordered plum pudding a l’Anglaise, but Joe stayed true to form with his selection of French vanilla ice cream, topped with brandied cherries.

As they were waiting for the desserts to be served, Adam looked down on the avenues of the Centennial grounds, filled with people making their way toward the exits, as closing time was fast approaching. “Larger crowd than usual,” he commented.

Joe, who had been enjoying the opposite view of the wooded valley to the north and east, turned and nodded as he followed his brother’s gaze. “Must be folks coming in for the big Fourth, don’t you think?”

“Yes, of course,” Adam agreed, “which is why we won’t be returning to the Exhibition until after that, to avoid the crowds.”

“Makes sense,” Joe replied amiably. Then he grinned. “Of course, it wouldn’t be open tomorrow, anyway. You got something planned or are we just gonna lay around the room and rest up?”

Adam chuckled. “We could, if you’re that tired, but I thought
we’d go over to Wissahickon Park. You haven’t seen that part before, and I doubt that it will attract the kind of crowds other places might. Should be cool, as well, because of all the shade trees.”

“Sounds good, brother,” Joe said, casting another appreciative glance to the woodlands below. “You really have done a fine job of planning this trip, Adam.”

“Thanks, Joe.”

The waiter arrived with their desserts and coffee, and both brothers concluded that there was no better way to end their day at the Centennial Exposition.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Little Joe grabbed hold of the upright bar as the streetcar swung around a corner, grinning as he saw Adam also lurch for a pole to hang onto. Though the car was packed full, he didn’t mind having to stand up. Adam had decided they could skip church, since there would be a service the next morning in conjunction with the centennial festivities, so Joe had been able to sleep as long as he liked. After breakfast in the crowded dining room, he and Adam had walked up to Eighth Street to catch the direct line to the park. Dressed in ranch wear, his straw hat and flat-soled balmorals being the only concessions to eastern style, Joe was comfortable and content with the plans for the day, a guaranteed impetus toward a good mood.

Though it was only mid-morning, salvos of gunfire punctuated the air and sent a haze drifting over the tops of buildings all around Philadelphia. “Sounds like the celebration is already starting,” Joe said, looking back at Adam, who was standing behind him.

Adam adjusted his black felt hat, which an exiting fellow passenger had bumped down over his nose. “I’m surprised staid
old Philadelphia tolerates that on a Sunday.”

“It’s the birthday party to end all birthday parties, older brother!” Joe proclaimed, raising his voice to be heard over another thunderous burst of cannon fire. “Even old stick-in-the-muds like these Philadelphians understand that. Oh, but not you, of course.”

Adam calmly removed his hat and moved to cuff the side of Joe’s head with it. Sporting a puckish grin, Joe ducked, as others on the streetcar watched, some amused, some critical of the misbehavior of these coarse characters in clothing completely unsuitable for “staid old Philadelphia.”

Jumping off the streetcar, Little Joe trotted down to the boat landing, while Adam ambled leisurely behind him. “What’s your hurry?” Adam called. “We’re obviously between boats.”

Joe jogged back to join his brother. “Just got energy to burn, I guess. How long you think it’ll be before the next steamboat?”

Adam consulted his pocket watch. “Boats leave here every forty-five minutes, beginning at 7 a.m., and judging by the time now, I’d calculate a fifteen-minute wait.”

“Not too bad,” Joe said, hopping up on the top rail of the wooden fence separating them from the dock.

The Star pulled in on schedule and after loading passengers chugged its way up the Schuylkill River to the Falls of Wissahickon, where the Cartwrights debarked. They walked about three-quarters of a mile over gentle terrain to the riverside town where they had dined before. “Hey, are we gonna eat that catfish and coffee there again?” Joe asked as they passed the Falls Hotel.

Adam looked back at the hotel. “Well, I suppose we can, if you like, although I thought we might try one of the other
restaurants here in the park. Most of them serve the same menu.”

“Okay, I’ll trust you, big brother,” Joe said, puckish grin back in place. “You sure were right about the first one— just don’t rub it in.”

The smile with which Adam met this dictate bordered on wicked. “I’ll try, but it is an almost irresistible temptation.”

“Yeah? Well, if you expect me to resist any temptations, you’d better set a good example,” Joe advised, impudent twinkle in his eye.

Drawing in his cheeks, Adam puckered his lips and nodded as if in deep thought, but Joe could see the levity in his brother’s dark eyes. They walked on a bit further, and Adam pointed to another restaurant. “We might have supper here, but there’s one up ahead where I’d planned to eat our first meal.”

“Still kind of early,” Joe commented.

“I warned you it would be,” Adam chided, “so it’s your own fault if you’re still full from that rather sizeable breakfast you put away.”

“I’ll make room,” Joe tittered, and Adam rolled his eyes, fully believing his brother meant every word.

Leaving the town behind, they entered the park proper. While Wissahickon Park included only a narrow strip, less than an eighth of a mile wide, on both sides of the river, it was one of the most beautiful sections of Fairmount. Wissahickon Creek lay in a rocky ravine, with trees and vines thickly covering the steep sides up to the summit on either side. In a dry season, such as this centennial summer had been, the waters were quiet and clear, trickling over rocks and pebbles with gentle, melodic splashes. Little Joe’s eyes sparkled
with delight in the sunlight reflected off the gurgling rill. Lost in the rustic beauty of the scene, he felt a lump rise in his throat. “Closest thing to home I’ve seen since we’ve been here.”

Catching the slightly choked murmur, Adam congratulated himself on choosing the right activity for the day’s outing. *This is just what the kid needed.*

They came to an imposing three-story white building with porches on the lower two levels, nestled in trees within a stone’s toss of the creek. A freestanding sign out front declared that it was the Maple Spring Hotel, so Adam and Joe climbed the steps beneath a striped awning that ran the width of the building and entered the dining room. A middle-aged woman in a crisp white apron over a light blue seersucker dress seated them at a table with a good view of Wissahickon Creek through the front window. “Catfish and coffee, gentlemen?” she asked with a pleasant smile.

“Please, for both of us,” Adam said, adding after she left, “though I don’t know if you’ll be able to do justice to yours, little brother.”

“Sure I will,” Joe assured him and, when the platters were placed before him, provided all the evidence his brother could need that he came equipped with hollow leg. Despite having eaten a lighter breakfast than his younger brother, Adam still couldn’t keep pace with Joe’s rather remarkable appetite. He wasn’t even sure Hoss could have.

After dinner the two brothers stayed in the hotel to explore the proprietor’s collection of wildlife carved from laurel roots. Little Joe was especially taken with a cunning pair of squirrels companionably sharing a meal of acorns. “I’m gonna get this for Hoss,” he said, to the proprietor’s smiling satisfaction.

“You don’t want to carry that all over the park,” Adam chided.
When Joe started to put the carving back, the proprietor spoke up. “I’ll be glad to keep the squirrels for you until this evening, young man, and you can pick them up on your way out of the park.”

Joe’s countenance lighted up as if the noonday sun had suddenly come out from behind dark clouds. “Hey, that would be great, Mr. . . .”

“Smith, Joseph Smith, at your service.”

Joe extended his hand. “I’m a Joseph, too, Mr. Smith, Joe Cartwright of Nevada.”

Smith shook the young man’s hand. “Ah. Here for the Centennial, of course, and since it’s closed today, you’re taking the opportunity to see our beautiful park.”

“Precisely, sir,” Adam said.

Joseph Smith shook his hand, as well. “As you’re travelers from a distant place, let me give you a piece of advice. The best way to see this section of the park would be to rent a bateau. It’s the most convenient way to reach the west bank, and you can return it this evening when you pick up the squirrels.”

Joe brightened at the idea of boating down the creek. “Sounds like a good plan, Adam.”

“Yes, it does,” Adam agreed. “We’ll do as you suggest, Mr. Smith.”

“Excellent!” Smith exclaimed. “You’ll find a boat in the shed to your left as you leave the building. Take any one you like, and be sure to pull in near the first bridge and take the path to Hermit’s Glen. Quite a sight.”

Adam thanked him and paid for the rental of the bateau, as well as a carving of a bird the proprietor identified as an
eastern wood pewee. “You’ll probably see some this afternoon,” Smith informed Adam, “since you’ll be on the creek. They tend to stay close to water because they feed on the insects, and you won’t have a bit of trouble recognizing their song. Sounds just like their name.” He warbled an imitation that made both Cartwright brothers smile.

As soon as Little Joe paid for his carving, he and Adam walked down to the shed, selected a bateau, carried it across the dirt path to the bank of Wissahickon Creek and slid it into the water. When they were seated, facing each other, Adam handed his younger brother a set of oars and then leaned back, arms locked behind his neck. “You’ve got energy to burn, sonny, so get to it.”

“Hey, you should do your share,” Joe grumbled.

“I have done my share,” Adam said, tilting his hat over his eyes. “I paid for the boat.”

Joe shrugged and pulled away from the bank.

Adam didn’t stay in his relaxed position long, however. Though he didn’t offer to take the oars, he soon sat up to enjoy the view, arms locked around his knees. As his brother rowed them around a sharp bend to the west, he pointed to a promontory above them. “Washington’s Rock. The President used to go there when he needed to get away, back when Philadelphia was the capitol.”

“Is that the guidebook talkin’ again?” Joe asked.

Adam laughed. “Not entirely. I have been here before, kid.”

“In Philadelphia? I guess I should have known that.”

Adam shrugged. “No reason you should. My trips to Philadelphia were just cultural outings, whenever I could find enough time and money to make the trip. I probably wrote home about them, but it’s not the kind of thing a youngsters would
have remembered.” He deliberately omitted any reference to the times he’d come through the city as a Federal soldier. Those particular memories weren’t bad, but he didn’t want to give Little Joe any encouragement to probe deeper into ones that were.

Joe grinned. “Cultural outings, huh? That what these city folks call rowing a boat?”

Adam reached out a long, black-trousered leg and gave the boy’s shin a sharp tap with the top of his balmoral. “The park was for relaxation—and for a reminder of home.”

Joe smiled softly then. “Yeah, about as close as you could get back here, I guess.”

“Yeah.” Adam gestured with his chin toward the right bank. “Pull in over there, and we’ll tie up the boat for a while.”

Understanding now that Adam was acquainted with the area, Joe simply did as he was told and waited expectantly to see what his brother wanted to show him. Getting out of the boat, he followed Adam across a bridge to the west side of the creek and went up a tree-shaded lane into the woods.

“This is the Hermit’s Glen Mr. Smith referred to. A German man named John Kelpius and about forty of his followers, called the Hermits of the Ridge, used to live in the caves up here,” Adam explained. As they came out into a clearing, he pointed to a gnarled old cedar. “Kelpius is supposed to have planted that, and there, beneath it, you can still see some stones from the well he dug.”

With a sweep of his arm, Adam gestured for Joe to turn right and follow the creek. About a quarter mile from the bridge they had crossed, they came to a high bluff, from which a rock rose upward. “Lovers’ Leap,” Adam said in answer to Joe’s inquiring look.
“Let’s climb up to the top of the bluff,” Joe urged.

Adam groaned. “I thought this was supposed to be a day of rest! Must you climb something every Sunday?”

“Aw, come on, Adam,” Joe nagged. “I just know it’ll be a great view.”

“Oh, I hope so, little buddy.” Shaking his head, Adam trudged up the path after his more energetic brother.

Seeing Joe gaze at the rock towering above when they reached the bluff’s summit, Adam snagged his elbow. “No. We are absolutely not climbing that!”

“No argument here, older brother,” Joe said, feeling a shiver rise up his spine. Much as he relished a grand view, he wanted plenty of territory around him when he was up this high, and Lovers’ Leap looked precarious enough to have earned its name. Leaning over to look at the gorge two hundred feet below, Joe felt his stomach leap into his throat and backed away as unobtrusively as he could.

The boys returned to the creek, and following Adam’s instructions, Joe rowed another half mile upstream, where he pulled to the side once more. He and Adam walked along a woodland path bordered with violets ‘til they came to a steep slope close to the river. “Mom Rinkle’s Rock,” Adam said as they gazed at the precipice jutting up from the stream. “According to legend, an old woman fell from there and floated out to sea. People thought she was a witch because she drank dew from acorn cups and had an evil eye—and, well, perhaps because she survived the fall, if the story has any basis in truth.”

Joe feigned a look of total shock. “Why, Adam, I didn’t think you went in for superstitious claptrap like that.”

Adam cleared his throat loudly. “I don’t. It’s just a
story. I thought you’d enjoy it.”

Joe grinned and winked. “I did. I was just teasing.”

A smile skewed to one side of Adam’s face. “Ah, yes, your greatest talent.” Noting the path that led up to the top of the precipice, he sighed. “I suppose you have to climb this one, as well.”

Joe took a careful look and gulped. The path looked incredibly steep, the kind of place that always gave him the “crawly skin,” as Hoss called it, but he didn’t want to admit that weakness to his fearless older brother. Pasting a challenging smirk on his face, he chirped back cheerily, “Why, of course, older brother. After all, it’s probably a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to stand on the very spot that old witch lady fell off of.”

Adam groaned, fighting down the temptation to push Joe over the edge for the criminally bad joke. At least one mystery is solved, he decided, shaking his head. I’ll never again ask myself how he can eat so heartily and never gain a pound; it’s obvious he needs fuel to expend this much energy.

The path to the hilltop was not only steep, but strewn with loose rocks, acorns and broken twigs, as well. Halfway up Adam slipped and fell to one knee. Hearing the grunt of pain, Joe skidded swiftly back to his side. “Hey, you okay? We don’t really have to climb this if it’s too much for you, Adam.”

Affecting insult, Adam glowered at his younger brother. “Too much! You never saw the day you could outwork—or out-climb me, youngster.”

Joe grinned with false bravado. “Prove it, then. Race you to the top!”

Adam grabbed him by the wrist. “No racing, Joe. The footing
is treacherous, and I have no intention of spending the rest of my vacation tending your broken bones.”

Joe laughed to hide his relief that Adam hadn’t taken him up on his impetuous challenge. “Okay, no race, but you know I’d’ve beat you.”

As punishment for that display of sass, Adam gave his brother a shove up the trail. He was gratified to see, however, that Joe appeared to be watching his step, even though he did move faster than Adam thought completely wise.

Naturally, Little Joe reached the summit first, and as he stood atop the most massive rock in the park, waving his hat wildly, with the wind ruffling his hair, he called out, “Hey, brother, wish you were here!” He listened with obvious delight to the returning echo, almost as if Hoss were returning the cry.

Adam draped an arm across Joe’s shoulders, in part to support himself after the tiring climb, but mostly to share the enjoyment of the moment.

Joe looked up sheepishly. “Silly thing to do, I guess, but I feel close to him out here in the woods.”

“I’ve been thinking of him all day, too,” Adam admitted. “Just something about the place.”

“Yeah. His kind of place—mine, too.”

Adam chuckled. “Well, don’t leave me out. It was the peace of places like this that drew me back to the Ponderosa.”

Joe’s eyes twinkled with mischief. “Peace? I thought you liked the hustle and bustle of city life.”

“For pleasure and culture, yes,” Adam agreed. He hesitated, and then continued, “But when your heart needs healing . . .”
“Did yours?” Joe asked quietly, not wanting to rush his brother and cause him to slam shut the door he’d opened just a crack. “Why? The war?”

Adam closed his eyes, as if the memories were still painful, and simply nodded.

“You still don’t want to talk about it, do you?” Joe whispered, disappointed, but for once not taking it personally.

Adam looked away. “Not really. Some parts of it are best left buried, I think, but I suppose I could . . .” He trailed off, his reluctance obvious.

“No, that’s okay,” Joe said quickly. “Not ‘til you’re ready.” Will he ever be? he wondered sadly.

Adam smiled softly as he ruffled his brother’s already windblown curls. “Thanks, kid. Back to the boat?”

Joe nodded his agreement and followed Adam down to the Wissahickon again. A short row upstream brought them to the entrance of Paper Mill Run. It was only a small creek, but it joined the larger stream in a series of waterfalls, the final one a twenty-foot drop over dark shale-like rock. Joe held the oars still and looked at the rushing water. “Aw, that’s pretty.”

“Umm hmm. Historic, too,” Adam offered. “Site of the first paper mill in America, established back in 1690.”

Joe set the oars down and folded his arms across his chest. “Now, brother, you said this was a day of rest, and there you go trying to make it a school day again.”

“Okay, I’ll make you a bargain,” Adam chuckled. “I won’t give you any more educational lectures if you don’t make me climb any more rocks.”
Joe reached across the boat to shake Adam’s hand. “Brother, you’ve got a deal! I don’t really mind taking my lessons this way, though.” He picked up the oars and began to row upstream again with strong, smooth strokes.

After they’d glided another quarter mile, Adam pointed to another hilltop. “There’s an old monastery and graveyard up there. You want to climb up or go on to the caves?”

Joe’s lip curled in distaste. “Caves? You know how I feel about going underground, Adam, but I don’t really want to do any more climbing, either.”

“Oh, so there is an end to the boundless energy of youth!” Adam observed with a sardonic smile.

Joe shrugged. “I could do it, but I’d kind of like to stay in the boat awhile.”

“Fine with me,” Adam said quickly. “It’s about a mile and a half to the Pipe Bridge, which was completed six years ago. I’ve heard it’s a beautiful structure, and I’d really like to observe that in some detail.”

Joe crinkled his nose. “Another bridge, huh? Sounds educational to me, brother.”

“True, but for me, not you, buddy.”

“I’m teasing, Adam, my greatest talent, remember?” Joe snickered. “Look at your old bridge all you want.” He rowed another mile or so, enjoying the birds twittering in the trees overhanging the creek and waving to a fisherman casting his line from the rockbound shore before coming to the sight Adam was eager to see. Surprisingly, Joe also found this bridge interesting, for it was unlike any he had seen before. From a distance its delicate framework looked like scalloped lace, but it was made entirely of iron pipes, except for the base of its piers, which Adam told him were set in masonry.
They pulled to the side of the creek and got out of the boat, so Adam could take a closer look. “It’s used to transport water to the reservoir at Germantown,” he further explained. “See those two large pipes that form the top cord of the bridge? Those carry the water.”

“Uh-huh, real interesting,” Joe said.

Adam laughed. “All right, I get the message. You’re bored with bridges.”

Joe grinned back, but shook his head. “Naw, it’s a nice bridge, Adam. Just don’t take me as long to look at one as it does you.”

“That’s because you don’t understand what you’re seeing,” Adam announced airily, and then smiled so Joe would know he was teasing. “To reward your patience, my boy, we’ll move on to a sight more to your liking.” His voice dropped, and he whispered in an eerie tone, “The Devil’s Pool.”

Joe shook his fist in jest under Adam’s nose. “Hey! Are you calling me an imp?”

Adam sported a mocking grin. “I wasn’t, but if the description fits . . .”

“Hey!”

Adam laughed and pulled Joe by the arm. “Come on. You’ll be glad you did.”

Walking about a hundred yards, they crossed a wooden bridge over Creshein Creek, a small tributary of the Wissahiccon, and followed a short path to a basin surrounded by great masses of rock. Long trunks of hemlock and pine thrust out from the darkness into the sunlight bathing the pool, creating a place of wild beauty, seemingly untouched by man. “You’d never believe a big city was so close by, seeing this,” Joe said with admiration. “Don’t see why they call it the Devil’s
Pool, though. Looks more like a piece of heaven to me.”

Understanding his brother’s appreciation of the untamed splendor, Adam squeezed his shoulder. “I think it’s the appearance at night that gives it that name. The moonlight does strange things to all those tree limbs hanging over the pool. It’s supposed to look like fairies dancing or maybe something more grotesque.”

“Can we stay and see it?” Joe asked eagerly.

Adam’s loud guffaws rang through the trees, frightening a red and black tanager from its nest. “Don’t you ever think anything through, kid?” he asked when Joe stared at him in puzzlement.

“I don’t know what you mean,” Joe muttered, brows coming together.

“Which only proves my point,” Adam observed with a condescending smile. “Obviously, we can’t stay here ‘til nightfall because we’re obligated to get the boat back to Maple Spring and pick up those carvings before then.”

Joe’s face fell. “Oh, yeah, I wasn’t thinking,” he mumbled, feeling foolish now that his error had been pointed out. “Let’s get started back then.” He turned his back on Adam and hurried down the path toward the boat.

Only then did Adam realize that his brother was genuinely hurt. Hurrying to catch up, he caught the boy’s elbow. “Joe, I didn’t mean—”

Joe jerked his arm free. “Oh, yes, you did!”

Adam cupped his hand behind Joe’s neck and pulled him closer. “I’m sorry, Joe. Let me make up for it, huh?”

“How?” Joe demanded.
“There’s a hotel about a quarter mile further up.” Adam rushed his words, feeling he had mere seconds to make things right with this touchy child. “Let me buy you an ice to cool you down.”

Joe exploded. “I’m not Hoss, Adam! It takes more than food to make it all better.”

Taking a deep breath, Adam put an arm around his brother, finding the shoulders that usually yielded readily to an embrace rigid with offense. “Come on, buddy,” he urged with all his persuasive powers. “You’re hot and tired or you wouldn’t be reacting so strongly to a joke, although, admittedly, a bad one. We’ve had a good day together, and I don’t want to see it end this way, do you?”

He had touched the right nerve. Joe relaxed, giving him a weak smile. “No, and I would like something cool. I’ll take you up on that ice.”

“Fair enough,” Adam said, as he slipped his arm down to Joe’s waist and turned him back toward Devil’s Pool.

The valley widened as they continued north, the shadows receded, and the sun shone hot, bringing beads of sweat to both their faces. Coming to a stone bridge with only one arch, Adam indicated that they needed to cross, and when they did, the Valley Green Hotel came almost immediately into sight.

The establishment presented a far less inviting front than had the hotel at which the Cartwright brothers had eaten dinner. Only two stories tall, it had none of the elegance of the Maple Spring Hotel, but the ices were cool and flavorful. Refreshed and in good humor once again, Joe stepped out onto the roofed porch and leaned against one of its narrow supports to admire the view of the valley.

“There’s a bit more of Wissahickon Park we haven’t seen,” Adam
said, standing shoulder to shoulder with his brother, “but I think it’s time we headed back.”

“We gonna eat at Maple Spring again?” Joe asked.

“I’d thought about Wissahickon Hall, but I’ll let you pick, buddy.” He had, of course, already pointed out that hotel when they came through town that morning, but he didn’t want to risk offending his volatile little brother again by reminding him of something else the boy had obviously forgotten.

The flush on Joe’s face revealed that he’d realized his own error, but sensing that Adam was trying to make peace, Joe made a similar effort. “Naw, let’s try a new one. That way we can decide who really makes the best catfish and coffee on the Wissahickon.”

“All right,” Adam said with a congenial smile. “We’ll do just that.” In a further effort to appease his little brother, he took the oars, once he and Joe were back in the bateau. It was a somewhat empty gesture, since there wouldn’t be as much rowing to do, going downstream. To Joe, though, it was further proof that his big brother was trying to ease the hurt he had inadvertently caused, and the gesture touched him.

After a relaxing float down the Wissahickon, the brothers enjoyed another filling meal of catfish and coffee, but when it came time to discuss which hotel served the meal in the finest fashion, they typically voted for contradictory choices. They were able to laugh at their difference of opinion, however, and good humor prevailed as they caught a horse car back to the hotel and turned in early, wanting to be well rested for the excitement of the morrow.

~~ Historical Note ~~

Joseph Smith was the actual proprietor of the Maple Spring Hotel and was the creator of animal carvings in laurel root on
CHAPTER TWENTY

Dressed in their finest, the Cartwright brothers pressed their way through the multitude packing Second Street and all other roads leading to Christ Church. Though the doors of the church were not yet open, people were crowding the entrance, and when the chimes rang out and the doors swung back, they pushed in, hurrying to find a place to sit in the few pews not already filled by regular worshippers. Adam and Joe squeezed into one of the high, old-fashioned pews near the back, where they were packed close as sardines in a tin, but at least they got a seat. Those not so fortunate resorted to sitting on the stairways leading up to the galleries. Once seated, however, everyone was silent, waiting reverently for the service to begin.

A long procession of bishops and lesser clerics moved up the aisle as the organ began to play. Once the clergymen were in place, the choir started to sing John Greenleaf Whittier’s “Centennial Hymn.” It was the third time the Cartwright brothers had heard the same song, but nothing could have seemed more appropriate to the occasion than its stirring words:

Our fathers’ God! From out whose hand
The centuries fall like grains of sand,
We meet today, united, free,
And loyal to our land and Thee,
To thank Thee for the era done,
And trust Thee for the opening one.
When the song ended, Adam and Joe, along with others, bowed their heads in sincere thanks for America and the freedom they enjoyed as her citizens. As the minister leading the prayer began to express thanks for those who had sacrificed their lives to procure this freedom, Joe opened his eyes to glance at his brother. Thankfully, Adam hadn’t had to make that ultimate sacrifice, but he, too, had risked his life, his future, for the defense of the Union. As he gazed at his brother’s still face, Joe wished he could tell Adam how much he appreciated it, how much he admired his courage and his devotion to his convictions. With Adam so reluctant to even talk about what had happened during those troubled days, though, Joe knew he would never find the right words to convey what he felt. Instead, he slipped his hand into Adam’s and squeezed it, hoping his older brother would understand.

Adam’s eyes opened and he cocked his head to gaze, puzzled, at the brimming emerald eyes. He didn’t really understand what had so moved his younger brother—perhaps just the emotion of the moment—but he pressed the slender hand resting in his to give Joe the support he seemed to need. By the time the service ended, the moment was forgotten, and neither Adam nor Joe mentioned it. There was far too much else to occupy their minds as the nation’s grandest birthday party began.

When the Cartwrights had returned to the Washington Hotel the previous night, they had found a message from Connecticut Commissioner Saul Breckenridge, inviting them to a reception for Connecticut citizens on Monday afternoon. While, technically, neither Adam nor Joe fit that description, Breckenridge had urged them to come, since he’d gotten word that there would be at least a few of Adam’s old acquaintances in attendance. Joe felt a little hesitant about spending an afternoon in a roomful of sophisticated strangers, but Adam refused to go without him, making reference to what had happened the last time he left his younger brother alone in
Philadelphia. With all the businesses closed, there wasn’t much else for Joe to do, anyway, so he tagged along without further argument, determined to make the best of it.

Many other states and organizations were holding receptions that afternoon, as well, so the horse cars again were crowded, with people hanging on from all sides. The Cartwright brothers again spent the thirty-minute ride out to the Centennial grounds standing up, gallantly giving their seats to two grateful middle-aged ladies.

Adam having bluntly rejected his request to visit the encampment of the West Point Cadets on the Exposition grounds while Adam met his friends, Joe dutifully trailed into the Connecticut House behind his brother. As Breckenridge’s note had informed them, a buffet was spread for all guests, and Joe concentrated on filling his plate, while Adam searched the room for familiar faces. Finishing the food, Joe grabbed a cup of punch and wandered the room, examining once more the colonial artifacts and firearms he’d seen on their first visit; then, bored, he went into the gentlemen’s parlor and stretched out on one of the settees.

“Oh, there you are,” Adam said when he peeked in a couple of hours later. “You should have told me where you’d be, Joe. I was afraid you’d taken off for parts unknown.”

“You said I couldn’t, remember?” Joe grunted. Should’ve done it, anyway, since that’s what he expected; don’t look like he missed me none ‘til he was ready to leave.

Adam leaned against the doorjamb. “Oh, and you can always be counted on to do exactly as you’re told, can’t you?”

Joe scowled. “I’m here, aren’t I?”

“Yes, you are,” Adam acknowledged, “and I know it hasn’t been the most interesting afternoon for you. You ready to head back to the hotel?”
Joe practically jumped to his feet. “Sure am!”

Adam smiled and gestured for Joe to follow him.

“Did you see a lot of old friends?” Joe asked as they walked back to Elm Street to catch a streetcar.

“Several,” Adam said. “It was a most enjoyable afternoon for me. Sorry if you were bored, kid, but I do appreciate your cooperation.”

“Aw, that’s okay. At least, the food was good!”

Adam laughed as he jumped onto the streetcar and held out a hand to his younger brother. There weren’t as many people heading back into the city at that time, so both of them found a seat for the return trip.

A festive mood prevailed in the streets as the Cartwright brothers walked the block from the streetcar stop to their hotel, and Joe was all for checking out the source of the excitement. Adam immediately squashed that idea. “We’ll be up late, with the torchlight parade starting at 8:30, so we need to rest up this afternoon.”

“I’m rested up,” Joe argued.

Recognizing the reference to the time his younger brother had spent reclining in the gentlemen’s parlor of the Connecticut House, Adam chuckled. “You probably are, but I’ve been on my feet most of the afternoon, and you are not going out without me.”

“What am I supposed to do up in that hotel room for hours?” Joe whined.

“Read a good book, improve your mind,” Adam suggested. “It’s only a couple of hours ‘til suppertime. Somehow, I think you’ll survive.”
Scorning Adam’s suggestion of reading a book, mostly because he’d already finished the ones he had available and didn’t think it likely that his brother had anything interesting to borrow, Joe spent the time perusing that morning’s edition of the Philadelphia Public Ledger. The newspaper gave a full description of activities planned for that day and the next, and Joe gave his greatest attention to the articles concerning the celebration of the Glorious Fourth. The time passed surprisingly quickly, and soon Adam was saying that it was time to go downstairs for supper.

Due to the crowds, many of the items on the menu were out of stock, but the Cartwright brothers found plenty still available to sustain even Joe’s appetite and returned to their rooms after finishing the meal to wait for darkness to fall. “We’ll just watch the parade from the window,” Adam said as he pulled off his crimson cravat.

“Nothing doing!” Joe screeched. “I’ve been cooped up in this room all day, and I’m not staying up here for that, too!”

“Joe, be reasonable,” Adam urged. “The parade will pass right beneath us; you’ll have a great view from up here—without being trampled.” He added what he thought would be the best selling point. “And since no one will be seeing you, you can get out of your suit and into something more comfortable.”

Joe’s stance and his expression, feet firmly planted shoulder-width apart and arms folded, with rigid jaw and firm frown, were the picture of stubborn determination. “Stay up here if you’re scared, big brother, but I’m gonna be down where the excitement is, not just watching it like some old man in a rocking chair.”

Adam was sorely tempted to challenge the boy’s mocking defiance, but he suddenly remembered that Joe had already stuck with him through a lengthy church service, a boring reception and several hours in the hotel room. In all
fairness, he couldn’t ask more of a kid as energetic as his younger brother. Though Adam did not want to join the crushing crowd, he was unwilling to let Joe enter it alone, so he sighed and put his tie back on.

Joe bounded down the stairs, and for once Adam didn’t insist on using the elevator, considering it wise to let his brother work off some of that excess energy in a safe manner. When Joe bounded across the lobby for the front door, however, Adam charged forward and grabbed his elbow. “Stay with me,” he ordered tersely.

“Okay,” Joe said, starting forward again. “Let’s go.”

Still clinging to the boy’s elbow, Adam was dragged through the door and onto a street thronged with excited celebrators. Colored lanterns had been strung along Chestnut Street and Broad Street, as well, according to the Public Ledger, for the parade would actually start there. As it was timed to arrive in front of Independence Hall at midnight, neither Adam nor Joe saw any marchers for quite some time after the parade actually started. What Adam did see was people perched at every window, door step and roof in sight, and while he wished he were among them, Little Joe obviously preferred mingling with the crowd covering every square inch of the street along both sides of the parade route.

Craning his neck, practically climbing onto the shoulders of his older brother, Joe at last yelled that he’d seen the parade turn onto Chestnut. As the marchers were still several blocks away, they looked like stick figures in the distance, but they slowly came close enough to be distinguishable as real men, fireworks being set off and cheers going up from the multitude lining the street as each group passed. First in line were deputations representing various trades of the city, followed by the Centennial Commissioners from the foreign countries participating in the Exposition. Behind them marched the governors of the states of the Union and officers
of the United States Army and Navy. Representatives from civic and political associations filed past next, with the officers of foreign men-of-war who were visiting the city bringing up the rear.

Adam and Joe fell in with the rest of the throng streaming toward Independence Square, where a spotlight bathed the clocks on each side of the steeple in a golden glow of expectation. One hundred thousand people fell silent as the hands of the clock inched the final minutes toward midnight, and when they both pointed straight up, the new State House bell began to toll thirteen peals. Almost before the final one faded away, the crowd let loose a mighty shout to welcome in the one hundredth birthday of the United States of America, and hundreds of hats, Joe’s included, flew into the air with reckless abandon. Musicians and singers stationed on stands in the square burst into “The Star Spangled Banner,” and everyone in Independence Square joined in.

Adam and Joe stood with arms wrapped around each other’s shoulders, singing as loudly as they could, but neither could distinguish the other’s voice. It wasn’t just the loud singing of their neighbors drowning them out, though. Every bell and steam whistle in the city had added its voice to the general cacophony at the stroke of midnight, and fireworks and discharging firearms contributed to the hubbub. No one seemed to mind, though, and when the first excitement died down a bit, the chorus began to sing the “Doxology,” with the crowd once more singing along. From then until about two in the morning, the orchestra continued to play patriotic songs as total strangers thumped one another on the back and shouted congratulations to the nation and all her citizens.

Adam had tried to draw his brother back to the hotel room after the midnight festivities, but Joe was still brimming with vitality and begged to stay a little longer. Adam gave in with only slight reluctance, for he, too, had become caught up in the excitement all America was sharing that night.
After all, he reminded himself, this is the reason I chose to come at this particular time, and he smiled at the enthusiastic little brother who had brought him back to that original purpose.

When the music ended and the orchestra began to pack up their instruments, Adam took firm hold on his brother’s arm and insisted that it was time to turn in. “You’ve partied long enough, kid, and the activities start early in the morning.”

Realizing that he did need some sleep, Joe reluctantly agreed and followed Adam back to their hotel room, turning in immediately. He found it hard to doze off, however, for he knew that the following day’s celebration would be even bigger.

Joe woke with a start a scant three hours later when the thunder of cannon from the Navy Yard, Fairmount Heights and the Swedish, Brazilian and American war vessels docked in the Delaware River saluted the dawn of Independence Day, 1876. Bells tolled from every steeple in Philadelphia, and steam whistles and foghorns echoed their joyous clamor. Eyelids heavy, Joe staggered into Adam’s room. “I guess it’s time to rise and shine, huh?”

Moaning in joint commiseration, Adam struggled to prop himself up from the mattress on reluctant elbows. “So it would appear. I knew I’d regret letting you keep me up all night.”

“It’s not my fault,” Joe protested, hand pressed to his heart. “Nobody forced you to stay up, Adam.”

Adam dragged himself upright, swung his legs over the bed and sat there, raking his fingers through his thick, black hair. “Just the responsibility of keeping you out of trouble, kid.”

“I didn’t get in any trouble,” Joe reminded him curtly.

Adam favored his brother with a sour smile. “Which only
serves to prove that I did my job well.” It was a line he found frequent occasion to use on his little brother, and he laughed at the scowl with which Joe met the all-too-familiar taunt. “Scurry into your clothes, little fellow,” he added with his most big-brotherly voice, “if you want to catch a bite of breakfast before the parade begins.”

“That’s not ‘til 8:30,” Joe argued.

Adam stood and gave his brother a light shove toward the door. “Yes, but the parade starts forming at seven, and since I assume you’ll insist on being right in the thick of things, you’ll want to get down on the street early enough to find a decent spot. So, as I said, little boy, scurry, scurry.” He clapped his hands for emphasis.

Resenting the baby talk, even though he knew it was in jest, Joe scowled more fiercely. Being hungry, however, and realizing that there would be little time to eat later, he followed his older brother’s instructions without argument.

After a quick and scanty breakfast, due to the decreasing choices available, Adam and Joe made their way out onto the street and took up a position close to the huge triumphal arch straddling Chestnut. In it, each state of the Union was represented by a stone engraved with its name, from which flew a pennant of red, white and blue. Hanging from the top of the arch, beneath which the members of the parade would march, a sign proclaimed, “In the course of human events.”

By the time the parade was scheduled to start, Little Joe had definitely seen the wisdom of his older brother’s advice to find a place early. Later reports would reveal that five hundred thousand people teemed the streets that day. Joe didn’t know that, of course; he only knew that the crowd was far too numerous to count—much larger than the excited throng the night before and definitely larger than any group of people he’d ever been part of in all his nineteen years.
As the parade began, the Centennial Legion, with detachments from each of the thirteen original colonies, in token of a Union restored and citizens reunited, took a prominent place in the line moving down Chestnut Street to Independence Hall. This troop of ten thousand soldiers, veterans of both the Confederate and Union armies, was commanded by former Confederate General Henry Heth of Virginia, under overall command of General John Frederick Hartranft, also a veteran of the Civil War and presently Governor of Pennsylvania. Still dark-haired and straight-backed eleven years after the war’s end, the Grand Army of the Republic filed past, to the First Virginia Regimental Band’s renditions of “My Maryland” and “Dixie.” Seeing them together, each marching to the other side’s music, Adam felt the hard crust covering his heart begin to crack, and mist fogged his eyes as chips of bitter memories flaked free.

Intending to ask if Adam had known the Governor while he was in the service, Joe turned toward his brother, and deep furrows of concern plowed across his forehead when he saw his brother’s face. “You okay, Adam?”

Momentarily unable to speak, Adam nodded, but needing some outlet for the emotions surging through him, he pulled his younger brother into a one-armed embrace. “I’m fine, buddy,” he said, close to Joe’s ear, so he could be heard. “I’m more than fine. I’m—how do I even tell you what I’m feeling, seeing those men walking side by side with men they once fought against so furiously, with such acrid anger?”

Wanting to communicate his support, Joe circled his brother’s waist and touched his head to Adam’s shoulder. He realized that he would probably never fully comprehend either what Adam had gone through during the war or what moments like this meant to him, but pride and admiration and outright love flooded his heart for this older brother, so different from himself in temperament and experience. Different as North and South, he thought, understanding with sudden intuition that,
just like these former foes, he and Adam would have to make a conscious decision to accept one another and live in unity. Surely, if people that different could do it, brothers who shared as much as he and Adam could, too.

Several large wagons, fitted up with scenes of Army life, rolled past. One presented thirteen miniature tents with typical camp equipment, while another showed a large tent with two soldiers forming a tableau of life in a field camp. “Guess that all looks pretty familiar to you, huh, Adam?” Joe suggested.

Adam’s smile was the warmest Joe had ever seen cross his brother’s face when the war was mentioned. “Yeah, a lot of memories rush back when I see scenes like those.”

“Good or bad?” Joe asked so softly that Adam barely heard him above the music of a band down the street.

“Both,” Adam admitted, but the bad memories didn’t seem to haunt him today. “The tedium of camp life drove me wild at times,” he continued, “but the companionship of my comrades in arms—I’ve never experienced anything like it elsewhere, not even in college, which was a small, closed society, too. Sharing hard times with someone just seems to forge a firmer bond than anything else can.”

Just then a carriage of disabled veterans came into view, a poignant reminder of the price paid for the peace they now found so inspiring. “There’s some fellows that look like they know about hard times,” Joe whispered reverently.

“The hardest—and these are the survivors.” Adam shook his head, the dark clouds hovering near once more. “Half a million wounded, and sixty thousand died of their wounds, maybe six times as many from disease. Some men came out of battle a lot worse—and others not at all.”

“And some a lot better, thank God!” Joe cried, looking
directly into his brother’s face.

Realizing that Joe was expressing gratitude for the spared life of his older brother, Adam nodded and, characteristically, looked for some way to distract the boy from the intense emotion, which Joe showed so openly and Adam fought so desperately to hide. “Let’s move close to the stand,” he suggested. “General Sherman’s going to review the troops.”

“Oh, okay,” Joe agreed, eager to see everything that was happening at the big birthday party for the nation and especially keen to get a closer look at the famous Civil War general.

General Sherman and the Secretary of War, with a host of other dignitaries from both home and abroad, watched reverently as the troops filed before them, each saluting as they passed. Governors of several states and General Hawley, President of the Centennial Commission, paid homage to the men in uniform, and such guests as sixteen-year-old Prince Oscar of Sweden and Lieutenant-General Saigo of the Imperial forces of Japan also showed respect to the veterans, the soldiers currently serving in the United States Army and the West Point Cadets, the army of the future.

The Cartwright brothers got as close as they could, but it was no small task, given the crowd in the streets. Though they were far back, Adam pointed out a couple of distant figures he didn’t think his younger brother would recognize, despite pictures printed in newspapers across America during this election year. “Those are the Presidential candidates, Samuel Tilden and Rutherford B. Hayes.”

“You decided who you’re gonna vote for yet?” Joe asked.

“Not yet,” Adam admitted, “although I’m leaning toward Tilden. Considering the corruption of the current administration, I think we’re due for a change of party, although Hayes promises reform, if he’s elected.”
“Pa’s Republican;” Joe stated, adding with firm assurance, “he’ll vote for Hayes.”

Adam waved the conclusion aside. “That allegiance was born during the war years, but Pa believes in voting the man, not the party.”

Joe grinned. “So he wouldn’t vote against Hayes just ‘cause we’re ‘due for a change.’”

Adam had to laugh. “No, I guess he wouldn’t. Maybe I’d better rethink that position. I do believe it will be a close race, largely based on sectional differences. We still have a long way to go to heal all the wounds of the Civil War, buddy.”

The parade ended sooner than expected, for the route had been shortened, due to the extreme heat of the day. Though it was only ten o’clock, the temperature was approaching ninety degrees, but not even the oppressive heat could flag the patriotic spirit prevalent that day. Adam and Joe, in company with hundreds of thousands of fellow citizens, pressed toward Independence Square. They made it and even had a decent view of the ceremonial platform on the north side of the Square, no mean feat, considering streets so jammed that a number of those who had marched in the parade never arrived.

Cheers went up as prominent and popular personages took their place on the canvas-covered wooden platform, one of the loudest greeting the Emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro. The only reigning member of royalty who had ever set foot in the United States, the little man had made himself beloved to the American people by his humble manners and obvious admiration for the country. Vice-president Thomas Ferry was also in attendance, but noticeably missing was the beleaguered President Grant, whose administration had been struck by one scandal after another in recent months. Rumbles passing through the crowd openly criticized the sitting President for
his lack of patriotic zeal, though when Little Joe started to chime in with a similar opinion, Adam clamped the boy’s biceps in an iron grip. “Don’t judge a man without knowing the facts,” he said sternly. “Grant was here for the opening ceremonies back in May, and there may be good reason for his not coming today—ill health, pressures of the office, personal responsibilities. You don’t really know why he’s not here, do you, boy?”

Realizing that he’d been guilty of convicting a man without hearing his side of the story, something he personally resented when it happened to him, Joe bit his lip. “No, sir. Sorry, Adam.”

Adam nodded his acceptance of the apology. Though he knew his younger brother had only become caught up in what was going on around him and, at least, had the excuse of youth for doing so, Adam felt a strong responsibility to steer the boy aright. Today, however, was not a day for criticism, either of youngsters or politicians. It was a day for celebration, and as clocks around the city struck the quarter hour past ten, General Hawley signaled for the orchestra to begin playing.

After a number of patriotic songs had been rendered, Hawley introduced Thomas Ferry, the acting Vice-president since the death of Henry Wilson the previous year. After a few brief remarks Ferry presented the Right Reverend William Bacon Stevens, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Pennsylvania, calling him the ecclesiastical successor to the first chaplain of the Continental Congress. Dressed in canonical robes, prayer book in hand, the bishop led a solemn and stirring prayer, as the audience stood, hats in hand, heads bowed in silent reverence.

Following the prayer, a hymn, “Welcome to All Nations,” with lyrics by Oliver Wendell Holmes, was sung by a chorus of five hundred voices, and then Richard Henry Lee, namesake grandson of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence,
approached the podium, which was near the ground because the platform sloped to the front. As he started to read from the original document, now creased and discolored with age, the crowd could not contain its enthusiasm, and the square exploded with resounding cheers, Little Joe waving his hat and hollering along with the rest.

While Adam’s dignity would not permit him to join in, he saw no reason to curb the boy’s enthusiasm. *I’m the one with the problem; he’s fitting right in today,* he realized, and in that moment Adam made the kind of impulsive decision for which his younger brother was justly famous. Removing his black hat and throwing dignity to the winds, he, too, began to wave wildly and cheer loudly, his heart bursting with the sudden sense of freedom.

Joe flashed a broad grin when his sedate older brother cut loose, as he so rarely did. “That’s the spirit, brother!” Joe cried.

Lee raised the Declaration and again prepared to read. “Turn it around!” came a loud cry from the audience, echoed by countless more, and Lee proudly obliged, holding the revered, but crumbling document in the simple frame aloft for all to see. Then he began again to read the immortal words, and all within the bounds of Independence Square listened in hushed reverence.

As Lee finished reading, five women in black silk dresses approached the platform with bold determination. Their entrance at first went unnoticed because the attention of the audience was focused on the orchestra as it prepared to play, but the shocked faces of platform officials soon communicated that this intrusion was not part of the program planned for the morning. “Susan B. Anthony and her suffragette hussies,” a man near the Cartwright brothers hissed. “What’s she doing here?”
Susan B. Anthony calmly approached Vice-president Ferry and handed him a rolled document, stating simply that it was a declaration of the rights of women. Ferry paled, but his customary courtesy made him bow automatically, and he received the scroll without a word. Then Miss Anthony and her four followers made their way back down the aisle, passing out copies of the women’s declaration to all who wanted them. Men leaped onto their chairs, waving their hands to get a copy, and to Joe’s gape-mouthed shock, his older brother suddenly charged forward, pushing men aside to get one for himself as General Hawley shouted for order. Cutting loose with a cheer was one thing, but this was . . . Joe had no words to describe how horrified he was to see his older brother chasing down suffragettes. *If I’d done anything like what those women just did, Adam would have lambasted me—and look at him now, running right into the middle of the fracas!*

When Adam returned to his side, Joe eyed him with deep disapproval. “Joe, they had to,” Adam explained quickly. “They’d already asked permission to present their declaration today—just present it, not read it—but none of the men in charge would grant them even that much consideration.”

“Don’t make it right to horn in where you’re not wanted.” Enjoying the reversal of their usual roles, Joe folded his arms and shook his head in tight-lipped reproof. “Maybe you want women to get the vote, Adam, but I got my doubts about them knowing enough to vote right.”

“You tell him, young fellow,” a bystander tossed in.

“I’ve got the same doubts about you, little buddy, but I wouldn’t deprive you of the franchise,” Adam snorted sarcastically. “Women have as much right to representation as men.”

“You’re crazy, mister,” their opinionated neighbor scoffed. “Your ‘little buddy’ there’s got more sense in his little
finger than—"

“Ain’t it the truth?” Joe cackled, mostly to cover his embarrassment at having anyone other than Adam call him by that pet name. Though he wasn’t ready to admit it, Adam’s staunch defense of the ladies was making him less sure of his own conviction. Maybe he shouldn’t be prejudging them any more than Hayes or Tilden or President Grant. Maybe, when Adam wasn’t looking, he might sneak a peek at that women’s declaration of independence and see for himself.

Joe’s infectious laugh, met with smiles from onlookers and a chuck under the chin from Adam, cleared the air, and the suffragettes’ intrusion was forgotten as the eighty-piece orchestra finally began to play “A Greeting from Brazil,” composed at the special request of the Emperor. Because of Dom Pedro’s popularity, the anthem was so well received that it was repeated. Then Bayard Taylor, the poet of the day, recited “The National Ode,” and a chorus was sung before the Honorable William M. Evarts of New York presented his oration, a lecture reviewing the lessons of the past and emphasizing America’s great contributions to the world.

At its conclusion, “The Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel’s Messiah was sung, and Joe was surprised to hear his brother, obviously from memory, join in the complicated counterpoint. He’d always admired Adam’s voice, but rarely had he heard it sound so triumphant. **Probably sang this kind of thing all the time when he was living back here**, Joe mused. **Bet he misses it.**

As the song ended, the Vice-president requested that everyone join him in reciting the One Hundredth Psalm, and this time even Joe spoke the words from memory, gladly obeying the Scriptural command to “make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.” **That’s what we’ve been doing all day**, Joe decided, grinning at his older brother, who, for once, had been a willing participant in joyful noise.
Arm in arm, the two brothers returned to their hotel, heading immediately for the dining room. Arriving at the entrance, however, they found their way blocked by a waiter in black vest and white shirt, apron tied about his waist. “Gentlemen, I’m sorry, but the dining room is closed.”

“It doesn’t close ‘til two o’clock,” Joe protested.

“Normally,” the waiter admitted. “My regrets, sir, but we have no more food. The crowds, you know. We thought we’d prepared sufficiently, but the demand has been unprecedented—and unforeseeable.”

“Understood,” Adam said, pulling Joe away. “Let’s try another restaurant, but quickly, kid, or we’re likely to hear this sad tale again,” he whispered.

Joe nodded in complete compliance and strode briskly for the front door. He and Adam didn’t move fast enough, however, for at the next three businesses they visited, the sad tale was repeated in almost identical words. “It’s hopeless,” Adam sighed. “I guess we go without dinner today.”

Joe licked his lower lip hesitantly. “I might have an idea where we could find something, but you probably won’t like it.”

“Beggars can’t be choosers today,” Adam grunted, “though I can’t imagine a restaurant in Philadelphia that you know about and I don’t.”

“Not a restaurant,” Joe said hurriedly. “They’re all full, but I saw all kinds of food booths when I—when I took off to Shantyville.”

Adam groaned. “That’s your idea? That awful—”

“Hey, it’s food,” Joe argued, “and maybe folks won’t be as likely to think of looking there.”
“Maybe not,” Adam conceded with a shake of his head, “since the idea does have ‘Joe Cartwright’ written all over it. We’re only going there to eat, though. Don’t you even think about giving me the slip and having some more ‘fun’ like you did the other night.”

“Can’t you ever let anything go?” Joe complained, moping. “I give you my word, I’ll stick right to your side.”

“See that you do,” Adam ordered.

They were only about a block from a streetcar stop, so they jogged over as fast as their legs could trot and clambered up onto the roof of the car, the only place left on the overcrowded vehicle. With a forlorn gaze at the competition, Adam began to wonder if even the booths of Shantyville would have a bite to spare by the time he and Joe got there.

The ramshackle area across from the Centennial grounds was packed with people, too, but the Cartwrights did manage to find something to eat, although the meal was quite a hodgepodge of snacks. Not deeming it wise to pass up any opportunity on this crazy day, they snatched up the first food they found, bologna sausage and hot roasted potatoes. Then they grazed through other possibilities, including pie and lemonade, and even laid in a couple of bags of peanuts, along with some apples and oranges, in the likely event that food would be even scarcer by suppertime.

Scorning the menageries and freak shows, Adam did condescend to a contest with his brother at one of the shooting galleries, since they had time to kill before the fireworks that night. Adam won the first match and Joe the second, and the tie, of course, demanded a third round, much to the chagrin of the man running the booth. He sincerely wished both of these crack shots would leave the area before they wiped him out of the Centennial souvenirs that served as prizes. Both Cartwrights hit every target in the third round,
and the grim-faced caretaker handed each a loaded rifle for a fourth attack on the moving targets. Adam again hit every one, and while Joe did, too, one of his shots merely glanced off the edge of one target without knocking it over. “I guess you win,” Joe conceded.

“Not by much, kid. Nice shooting,” Adam praised, handing Joe the bookmarks and badges he’d won. “Send them home to your friends,” he said in answer to his brother’s questioning look.

“Thanks,” Joe said and tucked the trinkets inside his jacket pocket.

It was a good thing they had purchased food when they could, for by suppertime not a scrap of bread could be found anywhere in Philadelphia. After wandering through Shantyville until its scant pleasures held no more attraction, Adam and Joe perched on the banks of the Schuylkill River, nibbling roasted peanuts as they watched the boats glide past. Some were racing boats, manned by crews in crimson, blue or cream uniforms, others recreational vessels shaded by striped awnings and some rowboats with only two passengers, one dressed in lace-edged muslin and shaded by a frilly umbrella good for nothing else. Joe gazed at the young men rowing those small craft with undisguised envy.

Slowly the sun began to sink below the western horizon, bathing the riverbank in a warm ginger glow. As the daylight faded, the population of the riverbank grew proportionately, everyone feeling that to be the best place to view the fireworks display to be presented by the municipal authorities. When the darkness was full, rockets and Roman candles illuminated the sky, and each burst of colored light was echoed with jubilant cheers and thunderous applause. To Adam, though, the best show of all was his exuberant little brother—whistling, stamping his feet, clapping and crying his rapture aloud to the world.
By the time they returned to the Washington Hotel, Adam was exhausted and ready for bed, but Little Joe was still wound up, unwilling to see so satisfying a day end. Only one thing could make it more perfect for him, and since Adam had seemed more open that morning, Joe decided to risk nudging a toe in that crack in the door of his brother’s hidden past. “Adam, you think you’ll ever be ready to tell me about how it was back then?” he asked cautiously.

“Back then?” Adam asked, certain he knew what Joe meant and wanting to forestall confrontation.

“The war,” Joe said simply.

Adam exhaled slowly, wearily. “Joe, I’m tired. Some other time.”

“That’s what you always say!” Joe snapped. “Why don’t you just admit you don’t trust me? You never have.”

Adam took another deep breath, fighting for control. He didn’t want to hurt Joe again; on the other hand, he was getting tired of the endless questions, tired of eternally treading on eggshells with this kid who just wouldn’t take no for an answer. “It’s not a matter of trust. It’s just not easy to talk about.”

“It would be to Hoss, wouldn’t it?” Joe’s tone was raw, harsh, openly accusing.

Adam shrugged. “Easier, yes, but not easy. Can’t you understand that there are things that happened ‘back then’ that I want to forget?”

This time when Joe spoke, his voice was soft, gentle with compassion, but still firm in his intent. “Can you, Adam? Or does keeping them inside just keep them hurting long past the time they should have stopped? I’m not a kid anymore, Adam. I know you think I am, but I’m not. Maybe, just maybe, I
could help, if you’d let me in.”

The idea of unburdening himself to his baby brother, of all people, struck Adam as ludicrous, but he didn’t really feel like laughing. “Well, I suppose there are some things I could share,” he hedged, “to help you understand that era of American history a bit better.” The minute the words left his mouth, Adam realized they were the wrong ones, and Joe’s instant explosion only confirmed what his older brother instinctively knew.

“I’m not interested in another lesson in American history, Adam!” Little Joe shouted. “It’s your history I want to know about!”

Adam surrendered in defeat. “All right, all right. I’ll try, but does it have to be tonight?”

“Forget it, brother,” Joe snapped bitterly. “I won’t bother you about your precious secrets ever again.” He stormed toward his bedroom.

Wearily rising from the armchair, Adam moved toward his brother. “Joe, wait.” Loud as a firecracker, the door slammed shut. Adam sighed and cast pleading eyes to the ceiling. Would one conflict-free day be too much to ask—just one? Too tired to think, he went to bed, hoping the problem with simply disappear with the morning, as Joe’s furies so often did.

Little Joe lay staring at the ceiling a long time, his thoughts too tumultuous to even consider sleep. He hadn’t meant to explode at Adam and already felt profoundly ashamed of the angry words. Just a couple of days before he’d promised his older brother patience, promised he wouldn’t prod until Adam was ready, and now he’d gone back on his word and rebuilt the barrier between them. He was disgusted with himself, but still broiling with bitterness and resentment toward his brother, too. Was it really too much to ask, just
to be part of Adam’s life?

Joe got up and walked to the open window, hoping for a breath of air, but there was none—and no hope of Adam’s ever sharing his heart, either. *He’ll never feel about me the way he does Pa or Hoss, but couldn’t he give me just a little?* Joe asked himself as he gazed sadly down at the street that had been the scene of so much unbridled joy earlier in the day. The answer, he was certain, was no, but he made himself a firm promise and prayed he’d have the strength of mind and purpose to carry it out. Never again would he ask Adam to share anything whatsoever with him. He crawled back into bed, knowing he’d never have the kind of relationship with his oldest brother than he yearned for, but at least Adam would get what he wanted—a little brother who had learned to leave him alone.

~~ Historical Note ~~

If you would like to read the text of the Women’s Declaration of Independence, you will find it here: http://womensspace.wordpress.com/2006/07/04/the-womens-declaration-of-independence/

**CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE**

Adam stared at his brother’s closed door, pondering what to do. Ordinarily, Joe would have, at least, made an appearance by this time, and if he hadn’t, Adam would have simply barged in and rousted him out. Today, however, he preferred to let Joe take his time, hoping the extra sleep would improve his mood. Still, it was getting late.

Opting to show a little more patience, Adam opened the door to the hall and picked up the newspaper delivered there every morning. He rarely had time to do more than scan the headlines each morning before leaving for a day of activity. Then, later in the day, he’d read the articles that had sparked his interest. Today, it looked as though he might
have time to read the entire newspaper. Unrolling the July fifth issue of the *Public Ledger*, Adam was shocked by the headline blazoned across the page. He quickly read the article below it, horrified by the tragic loss of life.

The door to Joe’s room finally opened, and Joe came out, fully dressed. At first, Adam was surprised, for Joe almost always made his first appearance while still in his nightshirt. *Didn’t want to see me before he had to*, Adam correctly surmised, saddened by the revelation. All thought of the lead story in the newspaper fled from his mind as he rose to bid his brother good morning and try to smooth over the quarrel between them. “Joe, about last night . . .”

“Never mind,” Joe said sharply. “Let’s just forget it happened, Adam.”

Adam’s dark brows drew together in a straight line. “I’m not sure that’s the best way to handle it.”

“Well, I am. Look, I’m sorry I pushed you to talk about things you just don’t want to talk about. I’ll try not to do it again, so let’s just leave it at that.” He reached for the straw hat he had laid on the desk the previous night. “Can we go downstairs now, please? I didn’t have much to eat last night, and I’m hungry.”

“No guarantees they’ve gotten fresh supplies, you know.”

“Can we just try?” Joe snapped.

Adam threw up his hands, grabbed his black bowler and led the way to the elevator.

When they exited into the lobby, they walked into a caldron of turmoil. The floor was covered with women dabbing at their eyes with lace handkerchiefs and men excitedly flapping open papers while they discussed some calamity. Joe managed to catch a word here and there.
“Massacre!”

“Hundreds dead!”

“Custer’s a fool, didn’t have a chance.”

“Old Sitting Bull caught ‘em napping, sure enough.”

Joe looked up at his brother. “What’s going on? You know?”

Adam nodded soberly. “Yes, I read about it this morning. Apparently, General George Armstrong Custer attacked the Sioux near the Little Big Horn in Wyoming about ten days ago, and his entire force was wiped out. Four hundred men against four thousand—they didn’t have a chance.”

Joe paled and his body swayed. “You don’t think it’ll start a general uprising, do you, Adam?”

Adam noted the sudden pallor, the visibly shaken stance, but not understanding the reason for his younger brother’s evident distress, he simply answered the question factually. “Hard to say, I guess. The Sioux’s success might motivate other attacks.”

Joe swallowed hard, and his eyes were anguished as he asked, “The Paiutes? Would they . . . ?”

“Good lands, no!” Adam cried in sudden comprehension. He drew Joe into a quiet corner. “I didn’t mean it could reach that far, boy. Besides, the Paiutes learned long ago what the Sioux soon will, that one victory only leads to later defeat when your foe outnumbers you a thousand to one. Pa and Hoss are just fine, Joe. Don’t worry about them for a minute.”

Joe nervously twirled the hat he was holding. “Could we check? I mean, ten days, Adam—anything could have happened in ten days.”

Adam ran a soothing hand over the boy’s chestnut curls. “Joe,
there’s no need. They’re fine.” Then, seeing his brother’s face tighten, he relented. “All right, buddy, if it’ll ease your mind, we’ll send a wire. You should have an answer by tonight.”

Joe exhaled with obvious relief. “Thanks, Adam. I know you think it’s a waste of money, but—”

“No, not at all, Joe,” Adam assured him kindly. “I’m glad to do it for you.” He placed his hands on the boy’s slim shoulders. “Now I want you to do something for me: put the worry aside and come along with me to the Exhibition and enjoy yourself.”

“Don’t seem right, somehow, with all those men dead,” Joe murmured, looking away.

Adam pulled his brother’s face back toward him. “Depriving yourself of pleasure won’t do anything to help them.” He gave the smooth cheek a soft pat. “Come on. Let’s head straight there, and if they aren’t still completely out of food, we’ll sample the pastries at the Vienna Bakery for breakfast.”

It was an enticing offer and, despite his agitation, Joe smiled a little. “You still tryin’ to pretend I’m Hoss, that a good meal will make me forget everything that bothers me?”

“No, although you’ve been doing a pretty good imitation at the table, buddy,” Adam returned drolly in a deliberate attempt to lighten the kid’s spirits. Joe’s broadening grin told him he’d been successful.

“Not as many people out today,” Joe remarked as they rode a horse car toward Fairmount Park. “I guess the ones from out of town probably went home.”

“And the Philadelphians with sense are probably lying in their beds,” Adam chuckled, “as we might well do if we didn’t have such a tight schedule.”
Joe grinned back. “You in bed this late? That I’d like to see.”

“Almost as rare a sight as you awake this early,” Adam retorted with a smirk.

When they reached the Centennial grounds, Adam directed Joe to turn east on Elm Avenue. Joe was a little surprised at that choice of entrance until he recalled that the Vienna Bakery lay on the eastern edge of the enclosed grounds. When Adam moved past the last gate, however, Joe was totally perplexed. Then he saw the circular building of corrugated iron, a hundred yards outside the fence, and flashed a wide grin.

“I didn’t give you a chance to look at this the other day,” Adam said, “so I’d like to make up for that now.” He bought two tickets and walked inside with Joe. They climbed the stairs to the central platform and began to look at the vast panorama painted around the circular interior. The besieged city of Paris was depicted with life-like accuracy, and Joe carefully scrutinized the images of the Seine River and the Arc de Triomphe, as well as every street and lane of the city with which he felt such kinship, even though neither he nor his mother had ever been there.

Adam touched his brother’s arm to get his attention. “I’m through here,” he said, “but you take as much time as you like. I’ll go over to the Main Building and send that telegram to Pa and meet you on the porch of the bakery.” He set no time limit, trusting hunger to insure that Joe didn’t dawdle overlong.

“Thanks!” Joe said and immediately turned back to gaze intently upon the city once more.

Predictably, Adam was already sitting on the porch, which surrounded the building on all sides, when Joe finally walked up the curving path toward the Vienna Bakery.
“What did you think of *The Siege of Paris*?” Adam asked when Joe joined him.

Joe smiled. “I liked it, except for those Prussian soldiers, trying to get in. That picture at the Colosseum did a better job of making me feel like I was there, though.”

“I agree,” Adam said. “Ready for breakfast?”

“Oh, yeah, starving!”

“Let’s go inside then.” As they entered, Adam said, “It’s not actually representing Austria, you understand. The bakery is really an exhibit of Gaff, Fleischmann and Company, to demonstrate their compressed yeast.”

“So why call it the Vienna Bakery?” Joe asked.

“Because the attached café is supposed to be like those in Vienna, and they bake Vienna bread here. I intend to try the Vienna coffee.”

“Guess I might as well, too,” Joe tittered. “Can’t be worse than that Turkish brew.”

Adam chuckled. “No, I think I can safely predict that we’ll both enjoy this more.”

On inquiry, the Cartwrights learned that a shipment of flour, yeast and other ingredients had been delivered by train in the night, so there were plenty of fresh pastries for the hungry men. Joe declared them perfection and the coffee quite satisfactory, though different from the kind to which he was accustomed. Adam heartily agreed.

“So, where do we start this morning, big brother?” Joe inquired, cutting off another bite of iced coffeecake.

“You won’t like it,” Adam warned with a smile.

Joe groaned. “Oh, don’t tell me— not more educational
“More and still more,” Adam responded dryly, hiding his mirth in his coffee cup.

Joe signaled the waiter. “I’m gonna have to fortify myself with more coffee,” he informed his brother, “and maybe another pastry.”

“Oh, by all means, we wouldn’t want you to leave one empty corner in that greedy belly of yours,” Adam scoffed.

Fortified with pastry and coffee, Joe followed Adam toward the first torture chamber of the day, the Swedish schoolhouse. It turned out not to be torture after all, but an attractive model of a typical public school building, constructed from native woods of Sweden and brought to the United States in sections. Though unpainted, the wood had been polished ‘til it gleamed.

“Beautiful,” Adam whispered.

“Yeah,” Joe agreed. “This is the way a building ought to look, built of warm wood, not the cold stone they use so much back here in the East.”

“Stone can be warm and beautiful, too,” Adam argued. “You can’t tell me some of the buildings in Philadelphia haven’t taken your eye.”

“Yeah, they’re all right,” Joe conceded, “but I still like this better—and the Ponderosa better yet.” A cloud crossed his countenance as the name of the ranch reminded him of his concern for those at home.

Caught up in his admiration of the simple architecture, Adam didn’t notice. “Shall we go in?” he asked after taking in every detail of the structure’s exterior.

“Huh? Oh, yeah, sure, can’t wait,” Joe muttered.
The interior looked much like any schoolroom in any land, rows of desks filing the length of the single room, students’ papers covering all four walls. Joe pointedly ignored them and stood staring out an arched window, his mind three thousand miles away, until Adam was ready to leave.

Their next stop was a single-story Gothic pinewood cottage. Architecturally, it suffered by comparison with the Swedish schoolhouse, but inside was something of far greater charm than the paperwork displayed in the other building. An alcove for spectators was set at the side of the large hall, and Adam and Joe filed in behind other visitors, and each took a seat to watch a demonstration of the teaching techniques of Frederick Froebel, who called his school a kindergarten, a garden for children. Tiny rocking chairs circled a low table in the center of the room, and sixteen little scholars between the ages of three and six were already at work, if it could be called work. Their teacher, Miss Burritt of Boston, was helping them play educational games with cubes, blocks and cylinders, and when that task was completed, she led them in songs.

When the demonstration concluded, Adam and Joe and the other observers went outside to see the children’s gardens. Each had his or her own plot, where vegetables, flowers and even a tree were planted and their growth regularly observed. As the Cartwright brothers turned toward the next building, Adam asked if such a system might have given Joe a better introduction to school.

“Maybe,” Joe said with a shrug. “Have to admit the little tykes looked like they were having fun.”

Fun was definitely not on the agenda at the Pennsylvania Educational Department, although its architecture was interesting, even to Little Joe. The building was circular, with a dome rising from the center of the roof. Entering the south door, he and Adam came into a large central hall, which
opened into an outer corridor encircling the building. The corridor was divided into sections, one devoted to each level of schooling available in the state. Starting to their right, the Cartwrights saw another exhibit of Froebel’s kindergarten materials. Though attractively displayed and more complete than what they’d seen in the last building, no rosy-cheeked cherubs graced this exhibit.

Section by section, the Cartwright brothers worked their way through the Sunday school, primary, secondary, grammar, high school, normal school and college displays, ending with the University of Pennsylvania. “Doggone it, Adam,” Joe protested, “I saw the real thing. Why do I have to look at all these blamed papers?”

“You watch your language,” Adam growled ominously.

“Yes, Pa.” Joe’s sarcastic sneer faded as soon as he mentioned his father, and he turned away quickly so Adam wouldn’t see the tears threatening to destroy all pretense of manhood.

Released from educational torment at last, Joe pointed out a soda water stand across the road.

“Running up the food tab again, eh, little brother?” Adam chuckled.

“It’s hot, Adam!” Joe snapped, reaching into his own pocket.

Adam grabbed Joe’s wrist and pulled his hand from his pocket. “I’m just teasing, Joe. I don’t begrudge you fifteen cents worth of refreshment on a hot day, for goodness sakes. Now, which flavor do you want?”

“Root beer,” Joe said curtly.

With a shake of his head, Adam ordered a Hires root beer for Joe and a ginger ale for himself. “Better?” he asked when Joe had quaffed his drink.
“Much,” Joe muttered. “Thanks.”

Adam lifted an eyebrow. He wasn’t used to such laconic responses from his loquacious little brother, but he chalked it up to disgruntlement with educational exhibits and discomfort from another scorching day beneath a sun that gave no respite.

Continuing east along the same path, another building came into view, and when Joe saw its name, he stopped abruptly, folded his arms and refused to budge. “No, absolutely not. I am not looking at a bunch of boxes for dead people!”

Adam laughed and agreed that they could pass up the Burial Casket Building. “I’m not going to pass that one up, though,” he said, nodding toward the Public Comfort station at the end of the path.

“Me, either,” Joe agreed with a grin, and they went inside briefly to relieve themselves. “End of the road,” Joe said when Adam rejoined him outside. “Where now, big brother?”

“Let’s take a look at the hunter’s camp, down in the ravine,” Adam suggested.

Joe perked up immediately. “That sounds fun.”

“Yeah, I thought you might approve,” Adam snickered, grasping Joe by the nape of the neck and heading him toward the path that led down into Lansdowne Valley. Each step seemed to take them away from the bustle above them into a world more familiar, a realm of woods and streams like that in which the Cartwright brothers had grown up.

Finally, they came to the camp erected by Forest and Stream Publishing Company of New York, where professional hunters stood before log and bark huts, explaining techniques of hunting and fishing to people who had lived in cities all their lives. It was all the Cartwright brothers could do to
keep from laughing out loud at the foolish questions some of the visitors asked, which each of them could have answered by the time he entered grammar school. They went inside the hut for a few minutes to see the hides, horns and stuffed poultry, but there wasn’t anything they hadn’t seen before, except the snow-white coat of an albino skunk, the only one known in America. After a brief look at the collection of firearms, rods and lines, specimens of game birds and kennels of sporting dogs, the Cartwrights, both feeling a bit nostalgic, were ready to climb out of the ravine.

They paused a few minutes at the edge of the camp, where a stream had been developed into a little lake and stocked with fish for the angling demonstrations being performed for an ignorant public. “Either one of us could teach those professionals a thing or two,” Adam chuckled. “Still, it was a nice touch of home.”

“Yeah, home,” Joe murmured wistfully, with a trace of tension underlying the words.

As they arrived back in “civilization,” the Cartwright brothers came to a music stand, where musicians were just tuning up to begin a concert. “Why don’t we sit down and listen for a while,” Adam suggested. “As much as we’ve been on our feet the last couple of days, I can use the rest.”

“Sure, that’s fine,” Joe agreed.

The music was pleasant, and the trees in the valley provided enough shade to make the benches surrounding the stand a cool place to relax for half an hour, the duration of the concert. The interlude was so soothing, in fact, that Adam almost drifted off to dreamland, and Joe had to nudge him when everyone else stood up to leave.

Making their way further up to the main Exposition grounds, the boys moved toward Agricultural Avenue, stopping before a state building on the side path. “Delaware?” Joe inquired.
“What does that have to do with you? Have you been everywhere?”

Throwing back his head, Adam laughed. “Scarcely everywhere. No, little brother, this time my interest is purely architectural. I just want to look at the building a minute or two; then we’ll move on.”

“Okay. It is kind of nice. Umm, Gothic?”

“Norman Gothic,” Adam replied, pleased that Joe had recognized the style.

“I like the way the front porch pushes out and has the same shape as the tower over it,” Joe observed. “Makes it look like a castle.”

“Yes, it definitely adds interest to the plain walls,” Adam agreed. He walked toward the building down a central path divided by a diamond-shaped flowerbed and pointed out other diamond-shaped beds on either side. “Can you guess why they’re shaped that way?”

Joe shrugged. “’Cause Normans like diamonds?”

“No,” Adam snickered as he turned the boy around to walk back to the main road. “Delaware is the ‘Diamond State.’ It’s in honor of that.”

Joe shook his head in dismay. “You know everything,” he sighed.

“Guidebook,” Adam admitted, eyes twinkling. “I told you to read it each night before we came.”

“Oh, sure,” Joe scoffed. “We had lots of time yesterday to lay around and read.”

Adam clapped his shoulder. “No, I admit it was a full day. You’re excused this time, my boy.”
Joe scowled. “Thanks all to pieces.”

Adam squeezed the boy’s shoulder a couple of times and then released it. “Okay, maybe you’ll feel more genuinely thankful if I offer to feed you. Now, if you want a full meal, we’ll have to walk a ways to find it. If a little light refreshment would suffice for the time being, the Dairy’s just next door.”

“I’m not all that hungry,” Joe admitted. “I know it’s past noon, but breakfast was sort of late this morning.”

Adam nodded. “Just what I was thinking. So, how about a glass of milk or a dish of ice cream?”

“Or both,” Joe suggested with a grin.

Adam rolled his eyes. “Or both.”

The Dairy was housed in a lightly framed pavilion, open on all sides, with only a striped awning to shield its guests from the bright noonday sun. Bounding up the short flight of wooden steps, Joe took a seat and promptly ordered a dish of vanilla ice cream and a tall glass of fresh milk. Adam, sliding into the seat opposite him, chose just a glass of buttermilk, and both brothers soon felt cooler, inside and out, for a soft breeze blew through the open framework and across their sweat-beaded brows.

The conversation trickling from surrounding tables was less refreshing. Most of it concerned the massacre of Custer’s Seventh Cavalry at the hands of the “savage Sioux,” as most of the anxious voices termed the Lakota. A few people alleged that the reports were false, that the United States Cavalry couldn’t possibly have been caught off guard so badly, General Sheridan’s name being mentioned as one who discounted the early reports. Most, however, considered the “red menace” all too real and advocated that stern measures be taken to punish the savage beasts who had killed—and most likely scalped and mutilated—the Civil War hero’s cavalry unit.
Little Joe jerked his chair back. “I’m finished if you are,” he said sharply.

Adam’s eyebrows knit together with concern. “Yes, I’m finished. Joe . . .”

Joe stood up and moved briskly toward the exit, and Adam followed at once. “Are you all right?” he asked solicitously. “Maybe we should have gone for a real meal, instead of more sweets. Pastry, coffee and ice cream—I haven’t done too well by you today.”

“No, the food’s fine,” Joe said. “I’m just ready to see something else.”

The words didn’t match the strained tone with which they were uttered, but Adam decided to take them at face value. After all, Little Joe had always been a kid who couldn’t sit still and even now, as a young man, he seemed to crave constant activity.

Leaving the Dairy, Adam led Joe across Agricultural Avenue to a knoll on which stood the government building of Brazil, pleasingly painted in shades of brown, yellow and red. “Oh, magnificent!” Adam cried when he saw the octagonal building, whose spacious porch and bay windows on all sides except the front kept the structure from a strict mathematical precision that would have diminished its charm. A smaller turret of roughly the same shape rose from the center, the broad roof of the porch below serving as an attractive, railed promenade. “I’d like to go inside this one,” he announced.

“Sure,” Joe agreed with a shrug.

They walked through a garden landscaped with Brazilian plants, up the short stairway and across the wide front porch to enter a long central hallway, running the length of the building. The hallway opened onto two rooms, one on either side. Adam and Joe went into the one set aside for visitors and found a
pleasant reception hall, its walls covered with gold paper, embellished with vines and flowers, and its floor covered with plain, but tasteful furniture. At the rear of the room, a stairway led to the turret, which contained four rooms.

While Adam examined the finer details of the turret’s interior, Little Joe walked out onto the promenade. It offered a fine view of the Exposition grounds, but with his thoughts far away, Joe couldn’t enjoy it today.

Adam came to his side as he stood leaning on the low rail surrounding the promenade. “I’m ready to see the German Building now,” Adam said.

Joe straightened up, though his shoulders still slumped forward. “Okay,” he sighed.

Catching sight of Joe’s drawn face, Adam reached out to touch his arm. “You look tired.”

Joe merely nodded, but as he scrutinized the boy’s face more closely, Adam realized that more than simple weariness was etched across that taut countenance. “What’s wrong, Joe? And don’t put me off, as you did back at the Dairy.”

Joe shrugged, not comfortable admitting what was tugging at him so strongly he could think of little else, a concern he was certain Adam would only belittle for its childishness. “Just tired, I guess. I don’t suppose you’d hear of me going back to the hotel by myself.”

“Not on your life!” Adam hooted; then he sobered as he saw Joe blinking back the moisture in his eyes. “Now, if you’ll tell me what the real problem is,” he said gently, “maybe I can help.”

Licking his lips nervously, Joe took a deep breath and murmured, “I guess I’d just like to see if Pa answered that telegram.”
Suddenly, Adam understood; suddenly, he realized that his little brother had been carrying this worry all day, letting it eat away at him through each passing hour. “I thought we agreed that you would put that out of your mind and enjoy yourself,” he said, laying a supportive hand on the boy’s slim shoulder.

Joe’s face contorted as he fought for self-control. “Well, I tried, Adam, I really did, but, doggone it, there’s not much to enjoy in more architecture and more educational exhibits, and my mind just keeps drifting back to . . .”

Adam tightened his grip on the boy’s shoulder. “Okay, I understand. Let’s go back to the hotel.”

Facial muscles tight, Joe shook his head. “Look, Adam, I don’t want to spoil your good time. You can stay here; I promise I’ll go straight back to the hotel and that’s all.”

“No,” Adam said firmly. “We stay together.” Seeing Joe’s eyes flare with anger, he made an attempt at reconciliation. “Look, we’ve had a full schedule the last few days, and I’m feeling tired, as well. We’ll check on the telegram, rest up awhile and maybe take in a play or concert tonight. How does that sound?”

Joe looked up, his eyes warm with appreciation. “Great, real great, Adam. I know you think I’m actin’ like a fool kid, but—”

“No, just a worried one,” Adam said kindly. “Let’s get out of here.”

Joe nodded gratefully and set a lively pace toward the main entrance. As far as he was concerned, they couldn’t get back downtown fast enough, and the horse car seemed inordinately slow today, although it took its accustomed half hour to make the drive. When they finally got off, Joe jogged down Chestnut Street and ran to the hotel desk. “Any telegrams for
Cartwright?” he asked, gripping the edge of the counter.

The desk clerk checked the cubbyholes behind him. “No, sir, but there are two letters, one each to you and your brother.”

Joe stared at them, but made no move to take them. “Just letters, no telegram?”

“No, sir.” The spectacled young man gazed with concern at the hotel guest’s agitated face. “No trouble, I trust, sir?”

“No, no trouble,” Adam assured him, taking the letters. “Come on upstairs now, Joe.” He steered his brother into the elevator, where he rubbed the back of the boy’s neck. “You know how long it takes to ride out to the Ponderosa,” he consoled. “There just hasn’t been time for the message to get there and for an answer to return here.”

“Maybe the wires are down,” Joe fretted. “Maybe the Indians chopped down the poles.”

“Don’t borrow trouble, boy,” Adam said firmly. The elevator opened, and they walked down the hall to their suite. Unlocking the door, Adam guided his brother inside. “Now try to relax,” he urged. “I’m sure that telegram will be here by suppertime. Look, here’s a letter from Hoss, addressed to you. Sit down and read it.”

Joe smiled, weakly, but opened the letter and read his other older brother’s description of activities taking place on the ranch. Much as he enjoyed what Hoss had to say, however, he couldn’t escape a morbid fear that he was reading his best friend’s final words. When he’d finished the letter, he folded it carefully and tucked it into his shirt, close to his heart. Then he reached for that morning’s issue of the Public Ledger.

Adam grabbed it first, holding it out of Joe’s reach. “Unh-uh, not ‘til you’ve heard from Pa.”
“Aw, come on, Adam. Ain’t like everybody at the Centennial today wasn’t talkin’ about it.”

“No,” Adam dictated firmly. “You are not going to spend the afternoon working yourself into a deeper and deeper depression. Go read the guidebook to the Centennial. We’ll be going to Memorial Hall tomorrow, so prepare yourself for that.”

“Aaw, Adam!”

“Do it!” Adam snapped his fingers for emphasis.

Joe snatched the guidebook from the desk in the corner and, taking it into his bedroom, flopped down on the bed and tried to concentrate on the facts and figures about Memorial Hall.

About an hour later Adam heard a tap on the door and went to answer it. “Telegram, sir,” said the uniformed messenger boy.

“Thank you,” Adam said, handing a coin to the youngster. Shutting the door, he glanced up to see Joe standing in the doorway to his room. “You want to open it?” he asked, holding out the telegram.

Joe shook his head. “You read it.”

Nodding, Adam tore open the envelope and scanned the brief message. He smiled across the room at his brother and began to read:

ASSURE JOSEPH ALL WELL STOP
RELAX STOP
HAVE FUN STOP
MISS YOU BOTH STOP
“Satisfied?” Adam asked.

Joe was beaming, and his relieved smile spread from ear to ear. “Yeah—and starved. Can we eat early?”

“May we eat early?” Adam corrected with a teasing wink. “Yes, we may. Since we didn’t actually eat dinner, I can just imagine the dent you’re going to put in my pocketbook tonight!”

“How’d you guess?” Joe snickered, heading for the door.

Adam took hold of his brother’s neck as he passed and gave him a light shake. “Oh, I have great faith in you, little brother, great faith. Just don’t overdo it, because we’ll probably want to catch a bite after the theater, too.”

“Oh, no doubt about it.” Joe tossed his brother an impish grin. “Which theater we going to?”

“Fox’s American, just up the street,” Adam replied as they walked toward the elevator. “It’s the closest, and I’m too tired to walk further than I have to.”

They rode the elevator down and entered the dining room, where Joe made good his promise to drain his brother’s pocketbook. Then, with satisfied stomachs, they walked three blocks north to the theater to enjoy a light-hearted comedy. Over dessert and coffee, they laughed at the funnier lines of the play and afterwards walked back to the hotel in happy-hearted companionship.

It was the last such walk they would share for weeks to come, for the storm clouds that had been building in the distance were rushing closer. They would begin to break the next day, and by the day after that, the Cartwright brothers would find
themselves caught in a tempest whose fury threatened to sunder their companionship forever.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Little Joe awoke with a groan and a general feeling of uneasiness. The room was almost black, though had he been outside, in an area whose view was not obscured by tall buildings, he might have seen the first tentative touch of a rosy dawn on the eastern horizon. Inching up on the mattress, he hunched over his knees and bit his lower lip to stifle another groan, his face relaxing into a relieved smile as soon as the spasm passed.

He’d been dreaming, a dark nightmare in which he rode at the side of the famous yellow-haired general of the Seventh Cavalry toward a suspiciously familiar trio of men hopelessly surrounded by Sitting Bull’s painted warriors. As he charged through a hail of sharp-tipped shafts, one had struck him in the gut, and it came as a comfort to wake and discover that he was not the victim of a Sioux arrow, but merely of a garden-variety bellyache.

Joe sat up, swinging his legs over the side of the bed and leaned his head into his hands. Well, looks like older brother was right, though I’ll never hear the end of it if I tell him. Better watch what I eat a little closer from now on. He sighed, thinking it a shame that he’d have to curtail the sheer pleasure of sampling all the new and unfamiliar foods of Philadelphia, but he had to admit he’d probably been overdoing it, especially yesterday. After having little but sweets during the day, he’d eaten a supper far heavier than usual and after the theater had capped that with a dessert so rich it was almost sickening. While Joe had always had a healthy appetite at home, here it had been—what was that word Adam kept using?—prodigious?—yeah, that’s what it had become, and now he was paying the price of his intemperate exploration of culinary diversity.
Joe stumbled over to the open window, hoping a breath of air would make him feel better. It did, slightly, so he crawled back into bed and curled up on his side, finally falling into a restless sleep. It seemed like only minutes later, though the sun was well up, when Adam shook him roughly and roused him with the usual barb about Sleeping Beauty. The groan that passed Joe’s lips was so typical of his normal reaction to being awakened from a sound sleep that Adam never gave it a second thought, and that’s just the way Joe wanted it. The last thing he needed was another lecture from his older brother, so he just staggered out of bed, washed and dressed and followed Adam down to the dining hall, trying to look ready to face the day.

Ordering only a bowl of oatmeal for breakfast, Joe reacted grumpily to the skeptically arched eyebrow with which his brother greeted the selection. “What’s your problem?” he demanded. “It’s one of the cheaper things on the menu.”

Shaking his head, Adam chuckled. “Which is precisely what makes me wonder why you’re choosing it.”

Joe grunted and gave up all hope of avoiding a lecture. “Ate too much last night, I guess. Just not hungry this morning.”

Adam sported an I-told-you-so grin. “Well, it’s about time your appetite returned to normal. Any chance this salutary behavior will last the full day?”

Joe’s upper lip curled, almost into a snarl. “Yeah, I’ll try to go easy on your pocketbook today, okay?”

Adam continued to smile. “My pocketbook thanks you.”

Eager to change the subject, Joe said, “We’re visiting Memorial Hall today, you said.”

“And I don’t want to hear a single complaint from you,” Adam admonished.
What makes you think . . . oh, never mind.

Breakfast arrived, and Adam heartily dug into his ham and eggs, while Joe found that he didn't have much appetite, even for oatmeal, leaving nearly half of the cereal in his bowl.

Noticing, Adam merely said, “I don’t want you asking me for popcorn balls halfway through the morning.”

“I won’t ask you for anything,” Joe growled, lurching to his feet. “Let’s go, all right?”

As they walked toward the streetcar stop, Adam observed that Joe wasn’t his usual perky self, but he attributed it to the weariness of packing so much into each day or, more likely, disinterest in the artistic offerings scheduled for this particular day. He assured himself, however, that the uncultured boy had to be exposed to fine art, even against his will. *It’s for his own good, and in the long run, he’ll thank me for it, especially,* he added with a grin, *when we reach the French gallery.*

When the streetcar careened around a corner, Joe touched his hand to his stomach, wondering whether he’d be able to keep the oatmeal down. He was feeling just a touch queasy, but his stomach seemed to settle down again as soon as he left the moving car at the main entrance to the Centennial grounds. After Adam handed the gatekeeper their tickets, Joe made a beeline for the Bartholdi fountain and washed the sensation of bile from his mouth, while his brother waited, bemused. Though the day promised to be another hot one, the temperature wasn’t high enough yet to account for Joe’s apparently urgent thirst, but Adam just shrugged off the inconsequential mystery.

Turning to the right, the brothers walked down the broad Avenue of the Republic, past the Carriage Annex to the building directly north of the Main Exhibition Hall. Adam took Joe’s arm to halt him before they entered. “I know
you’re probably tired of hearing my lectures on architecture, but I do want you to take special note of this building, Joe. Unlike the temporary structures here only for the Exhibition, it’s intended to be a permanent memorial to the Centennial.”

Joe nodded. “It’s about the prettiest one on the grounds, so I can see why they’d want to keep it.”

“It’s one of Schwarzmann’s personal designs,” Adam said, his admiration obvious. “The style is Modern Renaissance.” He sang at length the praises of the building overlooking the Schuylkill River a hundred feet below, pointing out the square pavilions at each corner, the arches and columns of the entrances and the four-sided dome, with a zinc statue of Columbia rising from its center. In fact, some figure, either soaring eagle or classical symbol, graced every corner of each of the building’s projections. At the base of the dome, four seated forms represented the four corners of the globe, while standing statues honored Industry and Commerce on the south front, which the Cartwright brothers were viewing. “There are similar figures on the north side, representing Agriculture and Mining,” Adam informed his brother. “We’ll see them later.”

“Oh-huh,” Joe muttered perfunctorily.

Adam’s brow wrinkled. “Don’t you think Memorial Hall is a superb work of art in itself and a suitable backdrop for the masterpieces it exhibits?”

“Oh-huh.”

Adam shook his head at the plain hopelessness of instilling an appreciation of architectural beauty in his brother, not realizing that the real distraction was the nagging ache in Joe’s belly.

As they mounted the wide steps, with shrubbery-lined banks on either side, Joe pointed to one of the two bronze sculptures
flanking the top step. “I do like those, Adam,” he said, trying hard to demonstrate interest.

Adam took one look at the statues of Pegasus, being held in check by the Muses Erato and Calliope and laughed. “Oh, you would! Females and fillies always catch your eye. What’s the matter, little fellow, missing Cochise?”

“Oh, shut up,” Joe growled, in no mood for teasing, especially when the joke was one he’d heard before.

“They are impressive pieces,” Adam stated, choosing to ignore Joe’s ill temper. “They were originally intended for the Imperial Opera House in Vienna, but were considered out of scale for that building. A Philadelphia man, who happened to be traveling in Austria at the time, saved them from the melting pot and bought them for Fairmount Park.”

“Uh-huh.”

Adam threw up his hands and with a shake of his head moved toward the iron doors, which were decorated with bronze panels showing the coats of arms of all the states and territories. Hand gingerly touching his side, Joe followed him into the vestibule, where a crystal chandelier shone down on a setting of classic beauty, as open and airy as the piazza of a Roman villa. Above a wainscoting of colored marble stretched walls of pure white, with bronze and marble statues set against them. The Cartwrights dutifully stopped to examine each one, although Little Joe seemed to barely glance at most of the pieces. Guess I was wrong about his having artistic flair, Adam mused. *Not displaying a drop of it today.*

At the east and west sides, doors led into the gardens, but Adam moved through one of the three arches on the north, which led into the central gallery. Sales stands surrounded the sides of the large room, and he stopped at one to purchase a catalog of the exhibits. He saw no need to buy opera glasses and didn’t want to take time to look at the photographs for
sale until he’d seen the original works. “We’ll probably buy some later,” he told Joe. “That would be the best way to share the art gallery with Pa and Hoss, don’t you think?”

“I guess so,” Joe murmured; then seeing Adam’s frown, he lifted his head and responded more brightly, “I mean, yes, that’s a good idea.”

Adam nodded and moved toward the center of the room. “I wish they had painted the walls something other than plain white,” he commented. “It doesn’t make the best background for marble statuary.”

“No, it kind of blends right in,” Joe agreed.

“This one stands out, at least,” Adam said, leading the way toward the centerpiece of the main gallery. Flooded by light from the overhead dome, a terra cotta group represented America as a woman crowned with eagle feathers, on the back of a buffalo. She was attended by four figures, depicting the major sections of the New World. A virgin wearing a belt of stars personified the United States, while Canada’s representative was dressed in furs and pressed the rose of England to her heart. An Aztec chief symbolized Mexico, and South America was embodied in a man wearing poncho and sombrero.

“Not bad,” Joe said, since Adam appeared to be waiting for some kind of comment.

Adam chuckled. “Good enough for the Albert Memorial in Hyde Park, London! This is a copy of the sculpture there.”

Feeling criticized, Joe flushed. “I like real folks best, like that one.” He pointed to a group of statues on the south side of the hall.

Remembering all the classical figures on the porcelain and pottery Joe had admired in the Main Building, Adam raised an
eyebrow. Of course, those had been nudes, which might explain Joe’s adolescent interest. Though amused, Adam decided he would have to start where the kid was, artistically, and see if he couldn’t, somehow, pull him a step closer to fine art later on. With a sweep of his hand, he directed Joe toward the statues he had indicated.

The first was a life-size figure of Samuel Morse in the act of sending the first telegram, and beside it stood a bronze of statesman Robert R. Livingston of New York. For all his professed preference for “real folks,” however, Little Joe gave the statues scant attention, soon wandering over to a gigantic one of Prince Bismarck, which stood at the portal to the German gallery. “You wanna start here?” he asked, though seemingly without any particular interest.

“Let’s see the American exhibits first, shall we?” Adam suggested.

The knowing smile on his brother’s face irritated Joe. “Oh, ’cause you think other places are better and you’re savin’ them ‘til last?”

Adam folded his arms and stared at the petulant face before him. “Was I wrong about the Main Building?”

Joe shrugged. “Guess not.”

“Then let’s do this my way, shall we?”

Though formed as a question, it was obviously meant to be a rhetorical one, yet Joe responded anyway, with another rhetorical question. “Is there ever a choice?”

Adam rolled his eyes and led the way, trying to figure out what was bothering his younger brother. The kid was obviously in a sour mood today, but Adam could see no reason for it. Although he’d known Pa and Hoss were in no danger, he had understood the concern Joe felt yesterday. Surely, that
wasn’t still worrying him. No, Joe had been fine at the theater the night before—laughing, light-hearted, truly himself again. Well, sometimes there was just no understanding Joe; he could swing from light-hearted laughter to volatile anger to soft sentiment, all in the space of half an hour.

Deciding patience was the best way to handle Joe’s unaccountably touchy attitude, Adam explained his reason for viewing the American section first. “I’m starting here because this exhibit is the largest and probably treats subjects of greater familiarity to you.”

Joe shrugged one shoulder. “Okay.” Suddenly, his eyes fell on the mammoth painting covering the entire end of the American gallery. “Hey! Look at that.”

Adam groaned when he saw what had grabbed his younger brother’s attention, Rothermel’s painting of the Battle of Gettysburg. Naturally, Little Joe would be drawn like a magnet to the one piece of art Adam had no interest whatsoever in viewing. Art? No, the painting was not worthy of the name, not in the eyes of any critic with reasonably good taste. The public, however, apparently loved the canvas, which was little more than a mass of bloody bodies of dead and wounded soldiers. People were crowded around it, and pushing through them, Joe studied it intently, as if searching for his brother in the battlefield scene. “Where were you, Adam?”


There was pain in Joe’s eyes, the same pain Adam had seen before when he’d tried to evade his brother’s unending questions. “No, I meant when you were there,” Joe said.

“I know what you meant,” Adam said, his voice hushed. He brushed his hand toward the canvas. “Somewhere to the left; I can’t pinpoint the exact spot, especially not from a painting
this bad. Now, may we move on to less gruesome subjects?”

Joe nodded, tight-lipped, upset with himself for having violated his vow to avoid this subject so painful to his older brother. Besides, although the pain in his belly had subsided to a dull ache, he didn’t really have the energy to do battle with Adam this morning. He moved toward another historic canvas, this one called *Miles Standish and the Indians*, and forcing a cheerful grin, he asked, “You got anything against this one?”

Adam chuckled. “Only that it’s another large, bad painting. See how coarse the colors are, how wooden the figures.” Seeing Joe’s blank expression, he started to think that he should have started with the best art in the world, instead of the literal, almost photographic representations the American artists seemed to favor, so his brother would have something with which to compare these remarkably poor pieces.

He revised that opinion when he saw Joe gaze, enraptured, at two excellent marine views by Edward Moran. “The colors are better in these, don’t you think?” Joe asked, almost timidly.

So he had been listening! “Yes, these are well done,” Adam agreed.

“Makes me think of Pa,” Joe whispered wistfully.

Ah, so that’s it, Adam decided. *The kid’s suffering a severe attack of homesickness, probably because he spent so much time thinking about Pa yesterday.*

“I guess you remember scenes like this from when you lived back on the coast, huh?”

Certain he’d diagnosed the cause of his little brother’s dispirited mood, Adam draped a supportive arm across the boy’s shoulders as they viewed *The Coming Storm over New York Bay*. Waxing a bit nostalgic, he said, “Yes, I’ve seen a storm rush
in over the same bay, and this painting captures the essence of that moment well. You’re developing a better eye already, little brother!”

Joe shrugged out from under Adam’s arm. “I know I don’t have your education in such things, but I’m trying, Adam, and I wish you wouldn’t twit me so much.”

The words hit Adam with the force of a blow to the breastbone. “You’re right,” he admitted with genuine contrition. “This is a new experience for you, and I should let you take it in at whatever level you can. I apologize.”

Joe smiled warmly at the words he almost never heard from his older brother. He realized Adam only made an apology when he meant it, and Joe treasured such words all the more for their rarity.

Adam again placed his arm across his brother’s shoulders, and this time Joe let it stay. “You’ll probably enjoy the work of this artist’s younger brother, too,” Adam said, turning Joe toward a nearby set of paintings.

“Oh, wow,” Joe gasped as he caught sight of Thomas Moran’s *Mountain of the Holy Cross*. “That has got to be about the most beautiful picture I’ve ever seen! It’s so—so grand.”

“Yes, a splendid capture of mountain grandeur,” Adam agreed. “An exquisite work.”

Joe’s gaze kept swinging from the paintings of one Moran brother to the other, as though he were making a futile attempt to decide which he preferred. “Wish we could take them home,” he said finally. “I could stare at them for hours.”

“Good art has that effect on a person.” Adam patted his brother’s shoulder. “Like to indulge you—and myself—little buddy, but the price would be rather steep, I fear. Besides,
marvelous works like these should be in a museum, where hundreds can appreciate them.”

“Yeah, I guess you’re right,” Joe said, hand resting against his right side. “It would be selfish to hog something like that all to yourself.”

Adam chuckled, giving the boy’s neck an affectionate stroke. “Come on, kid. There’s plenty more to see.”

“Nothing I’ll like better; I can tell you that now!”

Adam started to rebuke the narrow interest, but caught himself just in time. No sense apologizing and then turning right around and committing the same offense. Besides, the kid was probably right; nothing else was likely to touch Joe as forcefully as these scenes reminiscent of home.

The next painting evoked the first laughter of the day from Little Joe. Eastman Johnson’s The Old Stagecoach portrayed a group of children hard at play with a red stage that had lost its wheels. Every role, from driver to passenger to the team of four horses, was filled by energetic children, and Joe had obviously identified with their spirit of frolic. “Hoss and I used to play stagecoach when we were kids, while you were back east. Wish we’d had a real stage like this, though. Just a worn out old buckboard for us.”

“Ah, but I would guess the power of imagination transformed it into the finest Concord ever built,” Adam suggested with a smile.

Joe grinned, trying to picture Adam letting his imagination run wild like that, but he just couldn’t. To say what he did, Adam must have had that capacity somewhere inside, at least as a child, but Joe just couldn’t hold such an incongruous image in his mind. Adam and play just didn’t go together—had never gone together. No, Adam, in his younger brother’s view, was always linked with work. Maybe it wasn’t a fair picture.
Maybe it wasn’t just war secrets Adam hadn’t shared, but better times, as well. Before Joe could pursue that thought, however, another wave of discomfort hit his stomach, and his attention riveted on keeping a secret of his own. He didn’t even object when Adam pulled him away from Johnson’s other painting, *Old Kentucky Home*, whose scene of Negro life in the South clearly evoked for Adam more memories he preferred not to relive.

Both brothers were more comfortable again, Joe physically and Adam emotionally, when they viewed a painting by Martin Heade. *On the California Coast* suggested a scene with which both were familiar, but the artist’s extraordinary use of light created a landscape of eerie allure, giving the familiar a feel totally new. “I suppose you’d like to hang this one on your wall, too,” Adam teased, wanting to bring the smile back to his brother’s face.

Joe shook his head. “No, I like it, but not as much as those sea scenes by Moran.”

Adam nodded. “More grandeur, more power.”

Just when Adam had begun to believe that only nostalgic landscapes could hold his brother’s attention, Joe surprised him by looking with delight at the portrait of a mother and son called *Tantalizing*. It caught the image of a charming child, arms and head impatiently stretched forward, as he strained to grasp a bunch of grapes held just out of reach. For a moment the scene reminded Adam vividly of Marie’s struggles with a very young—and very inquisitive—Joe, and Adam wondered if a similar childhood memory lay behind his younger brother’s appreciation. *He seems to need an emotional tie to truly enjoy art.*

Adam’s conclusion seemed demonstrated by the next painting that caught his little brother’s eye, for *Elaine* surely stirred the memory of a favorite childhood tale. Adam could
remember reading to Joe about the Knights of the Round Table and the Lady of Shallot, depicted here on her death barge, holding against her heart a letter to her love, Sir Lancelot. Evidently, the passion of that story still resided within the youngest Cartwright and increased his enjoyment of the canvas.

“Nice?” Joe asked hesitantly.

“Nice,” Adam affirmed. “I saw this painting when it was exhibited in San Francisco in April of last year, and I thought then that it would create a lot of interest.”

Joe’s interest, however, appeared to be waning. What is it with this kid? Adam pondered. One minute he’s completely enthralled with some majestic scene and the next it’s like he’s not even in the building. But, then, Joe had always been quixotic in temperament, so Adam shrugged off the impression, especially when the six landscapes by Albert Bierstadt again lit a spark in his brother’s eye. Adam had to laugh when Joe’s dreamy gaze lingered long on Spring in California, a bucolic landscape, complete with cows grazing on a grassy knoll bestrewn with red, purple and yellow wildflowers.

Hearing the laughter, Joe glanced up at his brother. “You don’t think it’s good?”

“No, it’s wonderful,” Adam said quickly. “It’s you that amuses me, kid. I’m afraid if I don’t get you out of the American department soon you’ll develop an overwhelming case of homesickness.”

Joe smiled softly. Home—Adam had no idea how good that sounded right now. Home—where Pa would set all things right, including a persistently irritable stomach. He followed Adam without really seeing the next several paintings until he felt his brother touch his arm.

“This might be you and your friends in the schoolyard,” Adam commented lightly.
Joe looked up and smiled at the painting by Winslow Homer. *Snap the Whip*, with its chain of barefoot boys running, hand in hand, across a grassy lawn, did, indeed, remind him of schoolyard games.

“You’ve seen this artist’s work before, of course,” Adam commented. Smiling at Joe’s puzzled expression, he continued, “In the pages of *Harper’s Weekly*. He’s one of their chief illustrators.”

Joe smiled then, for like all the Cartwrights, he had always looked forward to the arrival of the weekly paper with its well-drawn woodcuts of topical events, although the news was usually a couple of weeks old by the time *Harper’s Weekly* reached Nevada. He’d be sure to check the illustrators’ names in future copies to see if he could spot a familiar one.

Since Joe had enjoyed seeing historic sights around the city, Adam thought that his younger brother would savor the patriotic portraits displayed nearby, but Joe only nodded absently when shown several of Washington, along with others of John Adams and Andrew Jackson. And when the painting of General George Meade did not inspire a single query about the Civil War, Adam shook his head in wonder, though he was secretly relieved. *The Spirit of ’76* by Archibald Willard, with its stirring scene of drum and fife against the Stars and Stripes in a cloudy background, inspired a little more interest. When Adam expressed the opinion that he didn’t think the painting well enough done to generate much enduring attraction, though, the comment brought only a token nod from Little Joe.

When they reached the end of the American department, Joe surprised his brother with a request to go out into the garden for a while. “You’re not tired already, are you?” Adam inquired. “We have a long way to go, just in this building.”

Joe glanced away and muttered defensively, “Like you said,
we’ve been keeping a full schedule.”

“All right, all right,” Adam responded with a conciliatory tone. “I don’t have any objection—just surprised, that’s all. Guess your youthful exuberance doesn’t include fine art, eh?”

“No, I like the pictures just fine,” Joe said, as they walked into the courtyard. “Just wanna sit a few minutes. No need to make something of it, Adam.” He wasn’t being entirely truthful. Though he was tired, Joe mainly hoped that some fresh air would make him feel a little less queasy. He was feeling better than he had earlier that morning, but every now and then a flutter of nausea would ripple through his stomach.

“Be my guest, little brother,” Adam chuckled, gesturing toward a bench. He sat down next to Joe, and for a few minutes both brothers enjoyed the floral fragrance of the garden and the small collection of statuary and vases scattered amongst the greenery.

“Now to see some of the best paintings in the exhibition,” Adam observed when they walked back inside.

“Hmm?”

“The British gallery,” Adam explained. “Not to dampen your patriotic zeal, little brother, but I’m afraid what you’ve seen thus far will simply not rise to the standard of what lies ahead.” When Joe made no response, Adam cocked his head and said with a taunting grin, “What? Can’t I even get a rise out of you today in defense of your country?”

“That why you said it, to get a rise out of me?” Joe grunted. “Don’t you ever get tired of pickin’ at me?”

“Sorry, guess I was doing that again,” Adam admitted, “but you’re just not yourself today, buddy. Not still worried about Indians attacking the Ponderosa, are you?”
Joe gave his lower lip a nervous nibble. Letting Adam think that was definitely preferable to admitting the truth, but he didn’t want to lie. “No, I reckon they’re fine.”

The slight hesitation that preceded the statement, however, was enough to convince Adam that his little brother was still feeling concern, but trying to hide it. *Better go easy on him the rest of the day,* he concluded, and he was careful to avoid any hint of teasing as he said, “We’ll start first with the more modern English painters.”

“Okay,” Joe murmured in reply, but neither the works of Sir John Gilbert, Frederick Layton, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema or a wall full of portraits by various other British artists induced a single comment from him.

Arriving at a painting by William Powell Frith, Adam made a deliberate attempt to stimulate some interest in the boy at his side. “*The Railway Station* is supposed to depict the arrest of a notorious forger at the moment the continental train is departing,” he said, but as he’d done with all the previous paintings in the English department, Joe merely nodded. *Just a hopelessly provincial little American boy,* Adam concluded.

Not until the brothers stood before a full-length portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart did Joe make any comment. “Funny, but I do like this one better than the ones by the American painters. You’d think we’d know more what our first president looked like than the redcoats.”

“Hush,” Adam hissed, looking around to see if any British visitors had overheard the ill-conceived word. “Don’t use labels like that.”

“Okay, okay, no offense meant,” Joe said with a quick touch to his side. “I was just saying this one makes old George look more—well, statesman-like, I guess—than the American ones.”
To Joe’s surprise, the serious observation was met by laughter from his older brother. “Well, I didn’t think I said anything that stupid,” Joe mumbled.

“No, not at all,” Adam assured him, resting his hand lightly on the boy’s shoulder. “I was just remembering something Inger said once when Pa called Washington ‘old George.’ She didn’t think it was respectful to refer to the father of our country that way!”

A wistful smile touched Joe’s lips, for he always felt privileged when Adam shared anything about his childhood. “You’re lucky, you know, knowing her. All me and Hoss know is what you and Pa tell us—and that’s not an awful lot, especially for Hoss.”

Adam’s face grew still in reflection. “I used to do that some when he was small. Maybe you’re right; maybe I should talk to Hoss more about his mother, share those simple memories of childhood.”

“Yeah,” Joe said, the pain fading as he put his thoughts on someone else. “I mean, I’ve got some memory of my mother, but Hoss doesn’t have any.” He stopped in sudden realization. “Well, I guess you don’t, either—of yours, I mean.”

“No, none at all,” Adam admitted with a touch of bitterness. Although he said no more, he couldn’t help thinking that his memories of his other mothers were, at best, bittersweet. Marvelous memories, but so many feelings of loss tied up with them. Joe, who had known only the one great loss in his life, couldn’t possibly understand, Adam told himself, so, as always, he kept the memories and their associated feelings to himself. Probably the real reason I haven’t shared more with Hoss—or Joe, either—about their mothers. Like all those other memories of ‘back then’ that Joe keeps pressing for, the good ones come laced with pain.

Between the two English rooms the Cartwright brothers passed
through a corridor, which was largely devoted to watercolors. Adam gazed a long time at a painting called *Interior of the Sistine Chapel*. “Now, that’s something I’d like to see in person.” Turning, he saw a frown on his younger brother’s face. Assuming it arose from the fear, expressed before, that his older brother might leave home again, Adam hurriedly added, “Just another dream, I suppose. I don’t have any real plans for traveling aboard.”

Joe, who had quickly dropped the hand touching his stomach when Adam turned toward him, made no response but a forced smile.

With a shake of his head, Adam turned into the northwest gallery, which housed the works of Britain’s deceased artists. “Now, here’s a literary scene you should be familiar with,” he said, pausing before a painting by Daniel Maclise.

Joe blinked. “Hmm?”

Adam took a deep breath and made another attempt. “It’s the banquet scene from *Macbeth*. I know you’ve seen that staged. Lady Macbeth is encouraging her husband to murder Duncan, and you can see how Macbeth cowers back from the ghost of Banquo in the forefront.”

“Oh-huh.”

Adam rolled his eyes. Was the kid being deliberately obtuse today, for some reason known only to himself, or was instilling an appreciation of culture in Joe simply as hopeless an effort as persuading him to attend college? Spotting a painting crowded by Centennial visitors, Adam moved toward it. Perhaps a work with such popular appeal would interest his unpredictable little brother, too. The painting turned out to be another by Frith, this one *The Marriage of the Prince of Wales*. “Here’s another by the artist who did *The Railway Station*, Joe.”
Joe looked up, for he had admired the energy of Frith’s other painting. This one was just as populated with well-drawn figures, but the setting in the great cathedral was one of pomp and splendor, in contrast to that of the bustling railway station.

“Queen Victoria herself loaned this painting to the Exhibition,” Adam said, “a good example of the generosity of many who have entrusted these great works to our keeping.”

“Yeah, it really was nice of her,” Joe replied. “I can see how she’d hate to lose that, it bein’ her boy and all.”

“A family treasure—and a national one,” Adam agreed.

Leaving the British department, the Cartwright brothers moved into a long gallery on the west side of the building. Spain, one of the two countries exhibiting in that hall had sent only a few paintings, several of them with Christopher Columbus as their subject. Joe gave them the briefest of glances, but he did try, for Hoss’s sake, to pay more attention to the paintings from Sweden, which shared the gallery. The most prominent painting displayed there was Hockert’s *Burning of the Royal Palace at Stockholm*.

Adam felt some concern as they viewed a couple of paintings whose subjects were drawn from Viking legend. The *Viking Fleet*, for instance, could not help but recall memories of Hoss’s Uncle Gunnar once again, though perhaps more for Adam than for Joe. *Come to think of it*, Adam reflected, *Pa probably never told Joe about Gunnar’s dream of a Viking ship sailing off into the sunset. All of us kind of skirt around mentioning anything about Gunnar to the boy. Probably for the best.*

That same protective impulse made Adam direct his younger brother toward safer ground with the paintings of Baron Otto Hermelin, the Swedish Commissioner in charge of the Art Department. “What do you think of this, Joe?” he asked,
indicating a scene called Winter Day in the Neighborhood of Stockholm.

“I like it,” Joe said with a smile, “and this one, too.” He pointed to a work entitled The First Snow.

“You always did look forward to the first snow of the season,” Adam recalled fondly. “The rest of us would have been content to bundle up by the fire, but not you. You just had to throw snowballs and build snowmen and drag your sled out of the barn the first time the ground was covered.”

“Someone had to save you from taking root in the front room,” Joe muttered.

“I suppose so,” Adam chuckled. “One more small room, here in the southwest corner, and we will have finished this half of the building.”

With a nod, Joe walked into the small gallery, bathed in rosy light from the windows of American stained glass.

“Norway’s collection in the Annex is larger,” Adam observed. “I think her better paintings are there, as well.”

“Nothing wrong with these,” Joe said. He was standing in front of two marine scenes by Hans Gude, A Fresh Breeze on the Norwegian Coast and Calm in Christianfiord.

Adam smiled. “Thinking of sailing off again?” he teased.

“No,” Joe said bluntly.

Adam drew in a long, slow breath. Grumpy again, as he had been off and on all morning. Well, it was drawing toward noon, and the kid had eaten a much lighter breakfast than usual. Maybe it was plain ordinary hunger making Joe such a bear. “You about ready for dinner?” Adam asked.

“I guess so,” Joe said with an uncaring shrug. He was hungry,
although a little scared of putting anything into his touchy stomach. Maybe it would help, though, if he did give it something to chew on besides itself. He perked up a bit. “Yeah, Adam, I’d like to eat. What’s close?”

“Unless you want a big meal, I thought we’d have sandwiches and coffee, maybe a confection at the Vienna Bakery.”

“I don’t want a big meal,” Joe said quietly.

“Let’s head out the north door then,” Adam suggested, “maybe look at the galleries near the entrance as we leave.”

“Sure, whatever you say.”

Deciding not to delay dinner long enough to see everything between them and the exit, Adam, instead, paused at the entrance to a small gallery just to the east of the north door. “We won’t stay long, but I do want you to see the work of Auguste Rodin. He’s living in Brussels now, so he’s exhibiting with the Belgians.”

“Uh, what is he really?” Joe asked as they entered.

Adam smiled. “He’s French, like you, Joe, and shows great promise, from what I’ve read.” As he had expected, Joe brightened immediately at the mention of his French heritage.

It was not Rodin’s sculptures, however, that excited the greatest attention from the Cartwright brothers in that room. Both were drawn forcefully toward the life-size marble by Charles Fraiken. A Mother and Her First Child revived particularly poignant memories for Adam, for the chubby child in the mother’s arms reminded him of Hoss as a baby. The mother looked more like a Roman matron than like Inger, but the look of love in her eyes was the same his Swedish stepmother had bestowed on her son—and on me. There was always room in Inger’s heart for anyone who needed love—Pa, Hoss, me, even my motherless friend Jamie. On second thought,
though, Fraiken’s sculpture reminded Adam more of his second stepmother than his first. “That’s the way your mother used to look at you,” he murmured, “like no one else was in the room.”

Catching the hint of envy in his brother’s voice, Joe said, “I’ll bet your ma looked at you that way, too.”

Adam pinched the bridge of his nose. “Maybe. I’d like to think so, but I lost her too young to have any memory at all.”

Joe frowned, recognizing in Adam an attitude that had bothered him whenever it reared its infrequent, but irritating head. “It wasn’t different for me. I was young, too, Adam—not as young as you, but—”

“I know,” Adam interrupted, again with that trace of self-pity in his tone, “but you have witnesses to tell you about your mother.”

“So do you,” Joe insisted. “Don’t you and Pa ever talk about stuff like that, Adam?”

Adam appeared to find the ceiling enormously interesting. “Not much. My fault, I suppose, more than Pa’s,” he murmured.

Touched now by genuine sympathy, Joe’s expression softened. “Oh, Adam, you should. It would do you good.”

Uncomfortable with the pity in Joe’s voice, Adam rebuffed him gruffly. “Oh, what would you know? You’ve had it easy, kid, in just about every way there is.”

Joe’s eyes filled with hurt, but he just bit his lip as another ripple of nausea left him without energy to argue. If he’d felt up to it, he probably would have tried to make his older brother understand that just because Adam had grieved for three mothers, while he’d only lost one, didn’t make that one loss any less hard to bear.
Sliding into the bentwood chairs at the Vienna Bakery, the Cartwright brothers both placed an order for a ham sandwich and coffee. “It’s good coffee,” Adam commented when their meal had been served, “but it should be at twenty-five cents a cup!”

Joe abruptly set the creamer down after realizing that he had already poured more thick cream than usual into his cup. “I wasn’t going to have more than one, anyway.”

“And I wasn’t chiding you,” Adam said. “You sure got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning, boy.”

“Guess so. Sorry.”

Adam rolled his eyes. The kid had turned laconic on him again, and he couldn’t fathom why.

Joe nibbled at his sandwich, concentrating so intently on just getting it down that he made almost no contribution to the conversation at the table. He managed to eat it all, though, and discovered, happily, that the food did seem to settle his stomach.

“I’m going to try one of their ice cream confections,” Adam said. “You?”

“No, thanks,” Joe said, not wanting to push his luck.

Adam laughed. “You really meant it when you said you’d go easy on my pockets today!”

“Well, if you’re so eager to spend money on me, I might take another cup of that two-bit coffee.”

With a nod Adam gestured for a waiter, ordering another coffee with extra cream for Joe and a log cabin constructed of ladyfingers and ice cream for himself.

Fortified with coffee and confection, the Cartwright brothers
cut across the lawn toward Memorial Hall. “I thought we might visit the Art Annex this afternoon,” Adam suggested.

“What’s the difference?” Joe asked. “It’s just an overflow from the main building, isn’t it?”

“Well, yes,” Adam conceded, “but most of the sculpture is in the Annex, and I thought it might be well to see a good mixture today.”

Joe frowned, for he had been enjoying the paintings and saw no reason for a sudden break from Adam’s established routine of seeing everything in a systematic order. However, though he did feel better than he had before eating, he still wasn’t up to an argument, especially over something as foolish as which piece of art they saw next.

Adam grew animated as they approached the entrance to the building directly behind Memorial Hall. “The work of the most famous sculptors of Florence, Rome, Bologna and Milan is represented here, Joe.”

They began with the works of Emanuele Caroni. “He’s Professor of Fine Arts at the academy in Florence,” Adam declared didactically. “This piece seems quite different from the rest of his work shown here.”

“Don’t know; ain’t seen ‘em,” Joe said.

Adam shook his head. “We just passed . . . never mind; I’ll point them out soon,” Adam said. “Now, will you please pay attention?” He indicated again the sculpture of a seated woman, clad only in feathered headdress and skirt, hugging one bent leg. “L’Africaine supposedly reveals the workings of the mind of a betrayed woman. See how her eyes burn with passion?”

“If you say so,” Joe muttered.

“If you’d get your eyes off her bare breasts for five seconds,
“Fine,” Joe snapped. “I’ll just put them on this little piece, instead. Shouldn’t be anything about it for you to worry about!”

Adam looked at the sculpture of a young child entitled First Sensation of Cold Water and smiled. “Well, that off-the-shoulder look is a tad risqué, and she is pulling up her skirts,” he said, lips twitching.

Joe groaned. “I give up; you could find fault with anything.”

Adam scratched the nape of his brother’s neck. “Just teasing. Caroni really captures children’s expressions well, doesn’t he?”

Joe nodded. “Yeah, I see what you mean. Like this one. Almost makes me shiver just looking at her.” He indicated another marble by the same artist, this one called simply Cold. The way the little barefoot girl huddled up in her thin apron conveyed the concept in a heart-rending picture of frigid misery.

“Now, I know you’re bound to like this one,” Adam observed, pointing out a statue of a lovely woman, sending a carrier pigeon into flight.

“Teasing again?” Joe asked flatly as he turned to look at Love’s Messenger.

“Just a bit,” Adam said, pleased to see that Joe was taking the light ribbing more easily than he had earlier. “I was mostly serious, though. I thought this piece might please you because it is supposed to portray a young woman separated from her lover during the Siege of Paris. The carrier pigeon is her only way to send him her message of amor. I was sure the romance of that would appeal to you.”

Joe smiled. “The Siege of Paris, huh? Yeah, it appeals to
me—and so does she. Quite a looker.”

Adam gave him a smug nod. “Yes, I was sure you would notice.” He was equally sure that Joe had noted the way the sleeves of the nightgown dropped off both shoulders down to the level of her breasts, implying, without explicitly revealing, the young lady’s feminine allure. “Well, before you get too lost in the lady’s assets,” he suggested, again in a light, teasing tone, “perhaps it would be better to cool your ardor with a nice patriotic statue or two.” Taking Joe’s arm, he directed him toward two companion pieces by Romanetti, each showing an early American hero in his youth.

Joe laughed when he saw little George Washington with his legendary hatchet. “There they go, rewriting history again! Why the wooden whistle for Ben Franklin?” he asked.

“Oh, I suppose, to presage his inventive spirit and interest in how things work,” Adam mused. “We’re probably supposed to assume he carved it himself.” He noticed a large group of people gathered around a nearby statue and walked over to see what objet d’art was garnering such interest. A single glance at Forced Prayer by Pietro Guarnerio told Adam why Centennial visitors found this sculpture so engaging. Like him, they had no doubt viewed in their own homes a figure like that of this sulking boy in the nightshirt, being compelled to say his bedtime prayers. Adam laughed in delighted recognition. “He reminds me of you, little buddy!”

Joe grimaced, the expression making him look even more like the little sculpture’s twin. “Aw, come on. I always said my prayers, good as gold.”

“Only because you had so much to repent of at the end of each day,” Adam teased, “and, believe me, there were nights you had to be forced.” Joe scowled as if the jest had left a vile taste in his mouth and walked toward the next sculpture, hand on his side. Shaking his head, Adam followed, at a loss to
explain his brother’s wide mood swings. Joe had seemed pleasanter since lunch, but now he was prickly as a cactus again. Dealing with him was like moving through a maze of Saguaro; sooner or later you were bound to brush up against one of their two-inch spines.

The brothers toured through the Italian department without a single comment from Little Joe, and all Adam’s attempts to inspire the boy’s interest met only with a cursory nod. Just when Adam had decided nothing could arouse Joe again, they came across a sculpture that hit his younger brother with more force than any yet. “Whoa! Get a look at that!” Joe cried, staring in amazement at the voluptuous figure portrayed in Philadelphia artist Howard Roberts’ La Première Pose.

Adam moaned, pressing his fingertips to his forehead. Of course, it would be a nude woman that caught Joe’s wanton eye! This one, unlike other figures that had been gracefully draped, displayed every enticing curve and showed the nipples pertly peaked. Adam quickly shushed his brother’s exuberance. “It’s intended to make you appreciate the beauty of the female form, not to arouse your lust,” he hissed.

“Oh, I appreciate it, Adam. You’d better believe I appreciate that!”

Rolling his eyes, Adam let him gaze for a while at the tempting form, but when Joe showed no inclination to move on—ever—Adam hooked his arm to drag him away. “Somehow I think your desire to linger here has nothing to do with artistic appreciation, boy,” he said sternly.

The minute he approached the next section, though, Adam knew he was only leaping from the frying pan of adolescent arousal directly into the raging fires of blazing ardor. “Just my luck,” he muttered, shaking his head when Joe glanced quizzically up at him. The French, with their love of the female form, would provide literally unending opportunities
for Joe to gawk at naked women.

With total predictability Joe’s eyes widened as they approached the first marble, a delicate, airy figure of Aurora. Only the long train of a drape that wound around her hips and covered almost nothing else touched the pedestal of the statue, as Aurora floated with her arms above her head, the left hand dangling a bunch of grapes toward her wavy tresses. It was obvious to Adam that he was going to have to drag his brother reluctantly away from this vision of womanhood, as well.

Just as Adam was about to remind Joe that Aurora was not the only sculpture in the hall, a gray-haired woman, dressed in a high-necked dress of navy silk and accompanied by a tall, much younger, man, approached the same statue and gasped in horror. “Appalling!” she cried. “How like the French to flaunt both decency and good taste by exhibiting this—this scandalous vulgarity.” With a sideways glance, she noticed Joe staring at the statue with avid attention. “Avert your eyes, young man!” she demanded with regal authority. “Have you no shame, no proper upbringing?”

Joe’s anger at the disparagement of his father reddened his cheeks. Had his critic been a man, he would most likely have answered with a fast-flying fist to the jaw, but since it was a woman, and an elderly one at that, he answered politely, with the respect he had always been taught to show his elders. “But, ma’am, it’s a beautiful work of art. I don’t see anything—”

The woman’s dapper companion interrupted brusquely, “To the contrary, boy, you have already seen entirely too much of this brazen example of French debauchery.”

Fire flashed in Joe’s eyes and his nostrils flared at this further insult to his French heritage, and since this was no elderly lady who must be respected, his knuckles tightened
instinctively. Recognizing the danger signals, Adam grabbed his brother’s left wrist. “Let’s go, Joe,” he ordered firmly.

“I intend to file a protest with the Centennial Commission for exhibiting such a detriment to the morals of our American youth,” the woman declared with a prim nod.

“Indeed, mother!” the owlish-looking young man at her side agreed forcefully. “Perhaps we should demonstrate what people of good character feel about such so-called ‘works of art.’” With a pointed glance at Little Joe, he lifted his mahogany walking stick and deliberately thrust it under Aurora’s ample belly, knocking the lovely lady off balance.

Adam let go of Joe’s wrist and made a frantic grab for the statue as it toppled toward the floor, while Joe, freed from restraint, lunged at the vandal. Setting Aurora safely upright, Adam breathed a sigh of relief until he turned to see his younger brother take a glancing blow to the stomach. To Adam’s surprise, Joe immediately doubled up and fell to the floor. As he started toward his brother, out of the corner of his eye Adam saw the self-proclaimed defender of the morals of American youth draw back his foot, obviously intending to kick his fallen foe. Outrage powered Adam’s solid fist, and soon the cane-wielding assailant of marble women and stricken boys found himself careening backward, knocking over yet another priceless work of art as he fell.

Ignoring the man sprawled on the floor, Adam seized the statue rocking on its pedestal and hugged it protectively to his chest, as he landed, bottom first, in the aisle. A silly grin split his face as he realized that he had once more rescued a Frenchman’s work from ending its artistic life in shattered fragments in Philadelphia. “Joe,” he called. “Take this and—”

“I’ll be the one taking that,” a harsh voice above Adam’s head growled.
Adam rolled his head back and stared up into the livid face of a man in the dark blue uniform of a Centennial Guard.

“Hand it over nice and gentle, if you will, sir,” the guard dictated, reaching for the sculpture with white-cotton-gloved hands.

Adam willingly released it and scrambled to his feet as the guard gingerly set the small statue back on its pedestal. “Thank you, officer,” Adam began when suddenly he felt his arms pinioned behind him. “No, wait, you don’t understand,” he protested as a second uniformed guard hustled him toward the exit.

The first guard hauled the victim of Adam’s punch to his feet, with one hand gripping that man’s elbow, while the other took firm hold of Little Joe’s slender arm. “Come along peaceably, please, gentlemen.” The voice, though courteous, brooked no argument, although that didn’t stop either of the men he’d taken into custody from loudly proclaiming his own innocence and the guilt of the other party. The mother of the Cartwrights’ opponent trailed behind, shrieking that her son had done nothing wrong.

Neither of the guards paid the slightest attention. They saw their duty clearly and performed it with diligence and vigor. “Oh, we’ll let you go,” the one wrestling Adam outside assured him. “A little time in one of our holding cells, and we’ll be more than glad to escort you to the front gate, sir, with instructions to keep you out from this day forward. Rambunctious guests are not welcome on the Centennial grounds.”

Rambunctious guest! Adam was indignant at the false accusation and aghast at the threat of expulsion from the Exposition he’d come three thousand miles to view. “If you’d just listen,” he protested as the guard roughly propelled him out the door, “I can explain.”
“Officer, officer, please wait,” cried a young woman, hurrying down the steps after the guards and their prisoners.

The guards turned and, pleased with what they saw, willingly waited until the young lady reached them. “One of these belong to you, miss?” the head guard asked, struggling to maintain his professional bearing in the face of such loveliness.

The woman shook her head with a demure smile. “No, officers, I’m a stranger to all these gentlemen. I must, however, speak in the interest of justice, as I saw the outbreak of this deplorable fracas and cannot bear to see the innocent condemned with the guilty.”

“Sure and we wouldn’t want that,” the second guard said, his smile almost sappy with admiration of the forthright young woman, who had just been joined by another man.

“Are you a witness, too, sir?” the first guard asked of the newcomer.

“No, sir, I didn’t see the beginning of the brawl,” the man stated, “although I did see this man strike the other to the ground.”

Adam’s heart plummeted as he saw the accusing finger pointed at him. It soared again, though, as the young woman gently rested a hand on the man’s arm. “No, darling,” she said quickly. “This young man is not the instigator. That one is.” She pointed to the irate easterner in the grip of the second guard. “Officers, these two young men actually saved the statue of Aurora after that brute deliberately pushed it off its pedestal,” she explained, indicating Adam and Joe. “They deserve commendation, not confinement with that horrid man who attempted to destroy a work of art.”

“Oh, that’s the way of it, is it?” The subordinate guard glared at the man collared in his left hand, giving him a
little shake to convey his disapproval of anyone who would assault a woman, marble or otherwise.

“Gentlemen, you may trust implicitly the word of my wife,” the gentleman at her side said. “She is a woman of honor and integrity.”

“I’ve every confidence of that, sir,” the chief guard declared. “For the love of mercy, Patrick, unhand that innocent boy,” he growled at the other guard, releasing his hold on Adam as he spoke.

“Oh, yes, sir, of course,” Patrick babbled, turning loose of Little Joe.

The chief guard doffed his hat. “My apologies, gentlemen, for the mix-up. Feel free to continue your tour of the grounds. I would ask, however, that you do so in another building. However well-intentioned, your actions placed some valuable artwork in jeopardy.”

“Understood,” Adam said curtly, straightening his frock coat. As the guards marched the culprit off to a holding cell, Adam turned to the woman who had spared him and his brother a similar fate. “Thank you for speaking up for us,” he said warmly.

The young woman smiled back. “As I said, I merely spoke in the interest of justice, as any American citizen should.”

“Quite so,” her husband added. “I’m proud of you, my dear. Now, shall we return to the Annex? We’d barely begun to explore its wonders when this miserable business started.”

Adam extended his hand to the gentleman. “We won’t delay you further. Thank you again for your prompt and most helpful intervention.” Irritated by his brother’s failure to speak, he gruffly ordered him to thank the young lady.

“Oh, yeah, thanks, ma’am,” a distracted Joe hastened to add.
“It was mighty good of you.”

She patted his arm in passing. “Not at all. Enjoy the Centennial, young man.” On the arm of her husband, she walked back into the Art Annex.

“‘Enjoy the Centennial.’ If she only knew what a challenge that is with you in tow!” Adam snarled, folding his arms and tucking his hands beneath his armpits to control the urge to throttle his exasperating younger brother. “You ill-mannered lout! You just couldn’t hold your temper, could you?”

Joe’s face was the picture of offended innocence. “Look, all I was doing was trying to keep him from doing more harm to your precious artwork.”

A cynical sneer curled Adam’s lip. “All you were doing was looking for an excuse to fight after he insulted your French ancestry.”

“That ain’t fair, Adam!”

“Isn’t fair!” Adam bellowed. “The least you could do is use proper grammar.” He would have said more had he not at that moment seen Little Joe wipe the blood dripping from his nose with the back of has hand. His fury with his younger brother immediately drained out, to be replaced with guilt as he realized that he hadn’t even noticed that the boy was injured. Catching hold of Joe’s face, he tipped it back, trying to assess the damage. “Hold still!” he demanded when Joe tried to flinch away. “Come on; let’s get you to the Centennial Medical Department and get that looked after.”

“I don’t need lookin’ after,” Joe snapped, pulling a handkerchief from his pocket and holding it to his nose.

“You need constant ‘lookin’ after,’” Adam snorted. “Now, you promised Pa you’d respect my authority, and I’m fully persuaded he would expect me to exercise it in this situation,
One hand to his nose, the other holding his right side, Joe followed his brother down the Avenue of the Republic. “Adam, please,” he pleaded. “It’ll stop in a minute.”

“Not another word,” Adam ordered, solid fingers closing around Joe’s right biceps. “I want a doctor to look at it and make sure it isn’t broken.”

Joe groaned at the mention of a doctor, but the look on Adam’s face told him there was absolutely nothing to be gained by disputing the edict. He allowed himself to be steered, like a calf headed for the branding pen, onto Agricultural Avenue toward the unassuming building at the western end of Lansdowne Valley.

The Cartwright brothers, one forcefully, the other with flagging footsteps, walked up two steps and under an American flag stretched across the entrance to the Centennial Medical Department, a six-bed infirmary for guests injured or taken ill during their visit to the grounds. A man in a white coat met them inside, introducing himself as Dr. William Pepper, resident physician in charge of the facility. “I think I see what the problem is,” he said with a smile. “Are you frequently subject to nosebleeds, young man?”

“No,” Joe responded tersely.

“Only when he’s been in an altercation,” Adam supplied. “I thought it wise to have him checked.”

“Certainly—a wise precaution,” Dr. Pepper said. “If you’ll step into the men’s ward, young man, I’ll have one of my associates examine you.”

“I’m fine,” Joe muttered, not moving.

“His standard answer,” Adam informed the doctor. Then he turned a narrowed gaze on his younger brother. “Get in
there,” he ordered, pointing to the door on their left, “and
don’t give the doctor any more trouble.”

“I’m sure Dr. Barnes will be able to handle one rather
reluctant patient,” Dr. Pepper chuckled. He followed the
Cartwrights into the men’s ward and, catching the eye of Dr.
Barnes, motioned him over and explained the nature of the
case.

Dr. Barnes had Joe sit in a chair and gave his nose a thorough
examination. “Nothing broken,” he assured the patient and his
brother, “and I’m sure we can get that nosebleed stopped
quickly.” He had Little Joe lie down on one of the three iron
beds in the room, holding a cloth rolled around chips of ice
to his nose. “He appears fine,” Dr. Barnes said to Adam, “but
it might be best if he rested quietly for an hour or two, just
as a precaution.”

Joe propped himself up on his elbows. “I’m all right. I
don’t need doctoring, and I don’t need rest.”

“You need to do as you’re told,” Adam said sharply. “Besides,
I think you’ve caused quite enough commotion for one day,
little brother, so if the doctor thinks you need to rest, then
rest you shall and that is final.”

“The doctor does think it best,” Dr. Barnes reiterated,
removing Joe’s shoes and then disappearing discreetly.

Little Joe fell back onto the pillow, his face etched with
disgruntlement.

“Oh, don’t make such a production out of it,” Adam scolded.
“I’ll be back to pick you up in an hour or two.”

“Where are you going?” Joe demanded.

“Wherever I choose, little boy!” Adam snapped. “I have no
intention of seeing my afternoon spoiled simply because you
can’t keep your fists to yourself. Now, behave yourself and
I’ll see you in a couple of hours.” He strode briskly from the room.

Lips taut, Joe watched him walk away and for a moment gave serious consideration to simply getting up and leaving himself. Better sense prevailed, though, for Joe realized that he had too much to lose by any display of disobedience. “Step over the line once, and you’ll be packing your bags,” Adam had threatened after that Shantyville fiasco, and Joe knew the threat was no idle one. Adam always meant what he said and was, in fact, far more likely to carry out promised discipline than Pa.

Joe curled up on his right side, realizing with a degree of surprise that he really did feel better lying down. He hadn’t expected to crumple as easily as he had back in the Art Annex, but the nagging pain that had subsided after eating had exploded when that dude punched him in the stomach, and he couldn’t have stayed on his feet to save his life. Fortunately, Adam hadn’t noticed. Now that Joe was resting, the pain was starting to fade again, so although he felt insulted by Adam’s accusatory attitude, he decided the orders were providential and, closing his eyes, he drifted into a light sleep.

Adam, meantime, had paused briefly outside the Medical Department, not sure which way to go. Despite his careful planning of each day’s activities, his little brother’s irresponsible behavior had completely disrupted that well-thought-out scheme. “I will not let him spoil my day,” Adam muttered as he turned south and retraced his steps back to the Avenue of the Republic. He’ll miss seeing some of the finest art in the world, but his interest obviously inclines more to the earthy than the aesthetic, anyway!

He went first to the Photographic Gallery, a tiny building just outside Memorial Hall and indulged himself in a thorough examination of its French Renaissance architecture, a pleasure
he had curtailed with other buildings out of pity for a boy who, frankly, deserved none. To avoid monotony, bay windows and porticos broke up the long line of the building’s 128-foot length. The single-story structure simply wasn’t as captivating as the more major ones, however, so Adam soon went inside to admire its lofty interior.

The roof was the finest feature, for it was constructed completely of glass, providing a clear, soft light for the photographs hung on twenty-eight screens up and down the length of the room. “Brings out the most delicate details,” he murmured, abashed when he realized that he had spoken aloud, when he had no one with whom to share his delighted observation. Up and down the aisles he walked, pausing here and there before a particularly affecting scene, but again the landscapes reminded him of Little Joe’s favorite part of all the educational exhibits they had trudged through in the Main Exhibition Hall. Really shouldn’t have taken this out of order. Now he’ll miss it, and he would really have enjoyed this.

Knowing he might not get another chance, however, Adam completed the building, and then walked next door to Memorial Hall. He paused inside the central gallery to purchase some photographs of paintings and sculptures he and Joe had already seen, but again guilt stabbed at his soul. Joe should be helping to make these choices for Pa and Hoss. Well, it was done, and still only an hour had passed. Should he return to the Medical Department and fetch his brother or let him have a full two-hours’ rest? Better safe than sorry, Adam decided with a sigh whose intensity surprised him. Might as well admit it; I miss the little scamp. Now, what do I look at for an hour that would be of least interest to him?

Almost instinctively, he passed through Memorial Hall and crossed the lawn to the annex behind it. He walked inside, hoping no one would recognize him as one of the men ousted from there earlier, and his hope was realized. He gazed with
admiration at the sculptures, telling himself that it was probably for the best to keep Little Joe away from any more provocative statuary. Conscience, however, was eating away at him. After all, the scuffle that had taken place wasn’t really Joe’s fault. The boy had merely been trying, although through admittedly ill- advised means, to defend a work of art. I was too harsh with him, Adam realized with regret, and suddenly none of the beautiful pieces of marble and bronze held any attraction for him. The only thing he wanted to see was his brother’s face.

Dr. Barnes stood up as Adam approached his desk at the front of the men’s ward a short time later. “Mr. Cartwright,” he said, extending his hand.

Adam glanced with concern at Little Joe, lying motionless in the middle bed. “How is my brother?”

“He’s fine,” Dr. Barnes assured him. “I was a bit concerned when he fell asleep so soon after you left.”

Adam laughed lightly. “That’s my little brother; get him still for five minutes and he’s out like a snuffed candle. Been that way since he was a kid.”

The doctor smiled. “I surmised that might be the case. I woke him after about an hour, just to ascertain that there was no concussion involved, although you hadn’t mentioned a head injury.” He looked across at the slumbering boy and chuckled. “He’s free to go, if you can rouse him. Didn’t seem to appreciate it much when I did.”

Adam grinned. “That’s typical, too.” He walked over, sat down on Joe’s bed and began patting his cheeks. “Up and at ‘em, Sleeping Beauty.”

Joe yawned and stirred groggily. “Hmm?”

“Bail’s been paid; you’re free to go,” Adam teased.
“Oh, you,” Joe muttered.

The flatness in his brother’s voice sent another stab through Adam’s conscience. “Yeah, me,” he responded quietly. “Come on, little brother, and let’s see what we can of the Centennial.”

Joe nodded, sat up and slipped on his shoes. “Where we headed? Not back to the Annex, I guess.”

“No, not today,” Adam replied. “I thought we’d just see whatever falls in our path on the way to supper. How does the Southern Restaurant strike you?”

“Okay,” Joe said.

Adam had expected a more animated response, but Joe was probably still put out with him for depriving him, as the boy surely saw it, of an afternoon of fun. “The German Government Building is near here,” Adam said. “We missed that yesterday, so if you don’t mind . . . .”

“Whatever you want.” Again, nothing but flat, disinterested acquiescence.

“Come on then, buddy,” Adam said, draping an affectionate arm over his brother’s hunched shoulders. Joe didn’t try to move away, which Adam took as a good sign, although the lack of response continued to bother him.

The German Government Building was just across a winding path from the Medical Department, so the two brothers were standing in front of it only a couple of minutes after leaving the latter. “Notice anything different?” Adam asked.

“Not particularly,” Joe said in a monotone, eyes no higher than the foundation.

Adam sighed. “You’re still upset with me, aren’t you?”
Joe finally looked up. “No. I think you were wrong to blame me, but it doesn’t matter, Adam.” Nothing does—except this miserable stitch in my side.

“I was wrong to blame you,” Adam admitted.

“Doesn’t mean much after the punishment’s over, big brother,” Joe grunted with a shade of bitterness.

“Punishment?” Adam looked puzzled; then suddenly he knew what his brother meant. “That wasn’t punishment, Joe; that was concern for your well being.”

“Sure.” Flat monotone again, not even the faint bitterness to give the words character.

Adam dropped his arm from Joe’s shoulder and rubbed his hand across his mouth. Despite Joe’s assertion, it was obvious that he was still holding a grudge. Nothing was likely to change that but time, so Adam resolved to just wait it out. After all, he was somewhat responsible for the kid’s sour mood, so it behooved him to show a little extra patience. Joe was notorious for his lack of that virtue, but he sure knew how to strain the supply of anyone trying to give him an example of endurance in action.

“The building material,” Adam said.

“Huh?”

“That’s the difference I wanted to you to see,” Adam explained. “Most of the other government buildings are wooden, while this is constructed of brick, plastered to represent stone. Care to guess the architectural style?”

“Georgian,” Joe responded woodenly.

Adam took a deep breath and reached for another measure of fast-fading patience. “No, Joe, it’s nothing like Georgian. It’s Italian Renaissance. The prominent feature is the
spacious portico."

"Okay."

Adam gave up. "Let’s go inside," he suggested.

As he moved up the broad steps, Joe held to the wide balustrade at their side. He and Adam passed through the portico into a square central hall with government offices on one side and gentlemen’s and ladies’ parlors on the other.

"Joe, look up," Adam urged, hoping the elaborately frescoed ceiling, at least, would capture the boy’s attention.

Joe followed the instruction and rewarded his brother with a ghost of a smile. A giant black eagle with red talons, wings spread wide, soared across the ceiling, while garlands and Cupids and other figures ran around the edges. "That’s something," Joe agreed. It was the only thing about the German building that sparked the slightest interest, however, and that included the neighboring building, where native wines were exhibited.

If this doesn’t work, I give up, Adam told himself as he guided Joe out the back of the German Building and headed toward a small one just to the northwest. "This is the French Ceramic Pavilion," he informed his brother. "The French had so many ceramics to display that they needed more room than could be afforded them in the Main Building. Would you care to see them?"

Joe’s eyes lighted and a soft smile touched his lips. "Yes, I would."

Pleased with the effectiveness of his cure, Adam playfully swept his arm toward the entrance, and Joe returned an even broader smile. The smile remained as they toured through the building, but it was a very small one and Joe’s interest seemed to wane the minute they left.
Adam decided to forego all but the New Jersey State building, only electing to visit it because it lay directly across the path from the restaurant. “This building has a unique structure,” he said, trying to keep alive the spark ignited by French ceramics. “Almost Norwegian in style. Makes for quite a fanciful appearance, don’t you think, Joe?”

“Fanciful? Uh, yeah, sure, Adam, whatever you say,” Joe mumbled. “You’re the architecture expert.”

Adam pursed his lips. “I take it I’m boring you.”

“I’m sorry,” Joe said quickly. “I’m just kind of tired, I guess. Didn’t sleep too good last night.”

Adam nodded, relieved to have finally discovered what must surely be the key to Joe’s lackluster manner all day. “I’ll bet you’re hungry, too.”

“I can wait,” Joe said. “Look as long as you want.”

“Very generous of you,” Adam said with a paternal smile, “but I believe it’s time for supper—for both of us.”

“Okay.”

The two brothers walked across the street and were escorted into one of the four large dining rooms of the Southern Restaurant. Seated at the linen-draped table, Adam peered around a huge vase of fresh flowers at his brother. “Know what you want yet?”

“No. What are you having?” Joe asked.

“I’m not sure. Possibly the fried chicken.” Adam laughed. “It’s practically the only thing on the menu that reflects southern cuisine—that and the hominy.”

Knowing he was supposed to, Joe smiled. “Guess I won’t eat southern style then.”
“Oh? I thought you were fond of fried chicken. You certainly polish it off whenever it hits the table at home!”

Little Joe didn’t want to say so, but the very thought of anything as greasy as fried chicken turned his stomach. “Just want to try something else,” he muttered.

Adam easily accepted the explanation. Trying new foods was an activity his little brother had been engaging in throughout their stay in Philadelphia. What his brother eventually chose, however, wasn’t anything unfamiliar, just a platter of Smithfield ham, with the hominy and green beans.

“You ain’t gonna be sorry, young sir,” the Negro waiter said, face glowing, though whether from pleasure or plain ordinary sweat, Joe couldn’t decide.

After the waiter took Adam’s order of fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots and green peas, Joe propped his elbows on the white tablecloth and listened to the music of the old-time plantation singers, their plaintive melodies accompanied by banjo. He seemed to relax for the first time that day. “Guess it used to be like this at the end of a hard day’s work down New Orleans way,” he observed dreamily.

Adam’s visage darkened. “Exactly like this,” he practically growled. “Men who’d sweated in the fields all day making music for those who’d done nothing but rest on their forefathers’ laurels.”

Joe straightened up, aware that he’d given offense, but not sure just how. “Something wrong?”

“Nothing you’d understand,” Adam sighed. “I fought a war to change that way of life, that gracious living based on the exploitation of others, and all you can see is how pleasant it was—for the white owners, that is.”

“I thought you fought to free the slaves, not to destroy a way
of life,” Joe said.

“Well, look at them.” Adam waved his hand toward the dark-skinned men serving food, pouring drinks and providing entertainment. “Still doing the same work they did before the war, waiting on white people. Nothing’s changed.”

“It’s not a bad job, is it, so long as you get paid for it?”

Adam shook his head. There was no way the kid could ever understand. Having grown up in the West, where slavery had never gained a foothold, Little Joe had no concept of how ugly it could be, how it could deprive a man of his dignity, his hope, his dreams. While he was glad that his little brother remained that innocent, he had to make one attempt to open those naïve emerald orbs. “The black man won’t truly be free, Joe, until he’s free to be whatever he wants—doctor, lawyer . . .”

“Beggar man, thief?” Joe parried, sounding more like his old self than he had all day.

Caught off guard, Adam laughed. “Well, yes, even that, if a man’s truly free—although, hopefully, a man who cherishes his freedom will make a better choice!”

Joe lifted a hand in mock solemnity, as if taking an oath in court. “I will, brother; I promise I will. I’ve seen all of the police I care to!”

Shaking his head in amusement, Adam gave up all attempts at serious conversation. Their food arrived, and Adam, who was hungrier than usual after the light lunch, attacked his meal with relish. Looking up, he noticed that Joe had hardly eaten half of what was on his plate. “Food not to your liking?” he inquired.

Joe licked his lips hesitantly. “The ham’s got a pretty strong flavor, but it’s fine. Just figured I’d turn in early,
since I didn’t sleep so good last night, and I think it might be better if I don’t eat too close to bedtime. Probably what kept me awake last night.”

“Could be,” Adam conceded, easily buying the lie. “So, you’re going to spare my pocketbook the price of dessert?”

“Just this once,” Joe said with a forced smile. He lowered his guilty gaze to the plateful of unappetizing food, wondering when that come-again, go-again ache in his belly would just go.

~~ Historical Notes ~~

Paintings and statues of nude men and women offended some visitors to the Centennial, and some displayed their outrage by defacing the paintings or knocking off portions of the sculptures with their walking sticks or umbrellas. Memorial Hall was temporarily closed, and when it reopened, canes and umbrellas had to be checked at the door. Though I have no record of the date this action was taken, it is likely that by the time Adam and Joe visited the art gallery, the rule was already in place.

Dr. William Pepper was, historically, the resident in charge of the Centennial Medical Department. His associate in this story, Dr. Barnes, is fictitious.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Moaning softly, Little Joe rolled to his right side and drew his knees up to his chest, seeking in vain a comfortable position. The pain that had troubled him off and on throughout the previous day had subsided shortly after he’d gone to bed, only to return with renewed intensity a few hours later. As darkness crept toward dawn, the stabbing pain settled low in his right abdomen and refused to leave.
Chilled despite the sweltering heat of the summer night, Joe pulled the lightweight blanket up to his chin, but it offered no warmth to his shivering flesh. While he had not yet vomited, each passing minute sent stronger surges of nausea through his stomach, and Joe felt that it was only a matter of time before he would have to empty its contents, either in the water closet down the hall or in his washbasin if the attack hit too suddenly for him to make it that far.

Joe knew that the time for keeping secrets had passed; yet he still couldn’t bring himself to call out to Adam. It simply wasn’t in his nature to admit to physical weakness until there was no alternative, so he shifted restlessly from side to side as the hours dragged by, both anticipating and dreading the coming of day. Finally, soft light began to filter through the window curtains, and hearing footsteps pattering around in the next room and the splash of water being poured into a basin, Joe sighed in submission to the inevitable and reluctantly tossed back the covers. Struggling to his feet, he pressed his hand against his right side and staggered toward the door. He passed through the parlor to his brother’s room, where, through the open doorway, he could see Adam, still clad in his striped nightshirt, performing his morning ablutions. Supporting himself with a hand against the left doorjamb, Joe swallowed hard and softly called his brother’s name.

Bent over the washbasin, Adam tossed a glance over his shoulder. “Up early, Sleeping Beauty? We’ll have to tuck you into bed early every night if it promotes such salutary behavior.” He splashed cold water on his face to rinse off the soap lather. “Seriously, it’s good to see you up and around. Thanks to yesterday’s debacle at the Art Annex, we have some ground to make up, so I want us to be at the Centennial the minute the gates open.” He reached for the towel hanging on a rod at the side of the washstand.

Joe winced. Adam had blamed that “debacle” on him, and now he
was going to have to spoil another day’s enjoyment of the Exposition for his brother. “Adam, I don’t think I’m gonna be able to make it,” he whispered weakly. “I-I’m feelin’ kinda under the weather.” It was, of course, a mild description of how he actually felt, but he remained reluctant to acknowledge the full truth. While confession might be good for the soul, in Joe’s experience confessions of illness tended to lead to the undesirable consequences of being bundled into bed and subjected to the attentions of a doctor.

Adam turned, slowly dragging the towel down over his face to reveal eyes hard and dark as ebony. “Do you seriously expect me to fall for that again?” he asked coldly.

“What?” Joe raised perplexed eyes to his brother’s face. Tossing the towel aside, Adam folded his arms across his chest and rolled his tongue around in his mouth before speaking. “You know, it would be a lot more believable if you were trying to cover being sick. The only times I ever remember you admitting to illness were those convenient ones that manifested themselves when there was something you wanted to avoid—like the opera the other night. What is it this time, a clandestine visit to the fair Penelope, perhaps?”

Feeling like the boy who cried wolf in the old fable, Joe flushed with shame and frustration. “Adam, no,” he protested softly, but insistently. “It’s not like that. I-I’m really sick this time.”

“Sure you are,” Adam snorted. “Sick of following instructions, sick of doing things my way, sick of—”

Joe brought his chin up, his right hand pressed to his side. “No. I swear, Adam!”

“Don’t compound your transgressions by swearing, boy!” Adam snapped.
Joe could feel his lips start to tremble. “Adam, please believe me,” he pleaded. “I’ve been sick since yesterday, just tryin’ to hide it, like always.”

The rigid set of Adam’s jaw reflected rejection. “Oh, excellent,” he praised scornfully. “Yes, indeed, little brother, you are becoming quite the accomplished actor. Setting this up by your behavior yesterday shows a definite refinement of your dramatic skills. Now, if you could just manage to shed a tear or two, you might affect some slight credibility.”

The emerald eyes did, indeed, swim with tears at the harsh words, but Joe managed to blink them back. “I guess I can’t blame you for thinking that,” he said, “but I’m telling the truth this time, Adam. I really don’t feel good.”

Adam waved a hand to silence his brother. “You know, Joe, I just don’t care anymore. I have tried to show you a good time.”

“I know, and—”

“Shut up, Joe!” Adam shot back sharply. “I won’t listen to another word, but you hear me well, boy. You have done everything possible to make me sorry that I invited you on this trip, and I am the one who is sick, sick of the complaints, the outright disobedience and, most of all, the deception. So, you just do whatever you want today—saunter down to Shantyville, traipse over to the zoo, visit the Centennial without your big brother’s watchful eye to keep you in line—whatever you want. But cover your tracks well, little boy, because if I find out you’ve set one foot outside this hotel, I will put you on the next train home and let Pa deal with you!”

“Adam, please!”

“Not another word!” Adam hissed hotly. “I don’t have any more
time to waste with you. Now, if you really want to make this ruse look realistic, you should put yourself back to bed and be certain not to leave it until I’m well away. You remember how to stage that scene, don’t you, little brother?”

Fearful his moisture-laden eyes would betray him, Joe turned away, walked back into his bedroom and, falling onto the bed, buried his face in his pillow.

With a contemptuous snort, Adam threw off his nightshirt and began to dress for his day at the Centennial. He didn’t even glance into Joe’s room before he left, slamming the door. Too angry to stay beneath the same roof as his prevaricating younger brother, he disdained breakfast in the dining room, deciding he would treat himself to more of the fine pastries of the Vienna Bakery and, perhaps, a rich cup of coffee at the Brazilian Café.

As he walked toward the streetcar stop, Adam rehearsed his brother’s faults and failures, and his temper blazed hotter with each step. By the time he leaped onto the car, his mind was a raging inferno, whose flames he fueled by repeatedly running the catalog of Joe’s offenses, from selfishly grabbing the window seat the moment they got on the train at Mill Station to this morning’s stellar performance of counterfeit illness. Can’t believe he tried the same stunt a second time, Adam fumed. Does he take me for a complete fool? Well, maybe that’s justified, ‘cause I certainly was a fool to pick him for this trip. Why on earth didn’t I follow my heart and bring Hoss, instead? But, no, I had to make the grand gesture, had to sacrifice my personal pleasure for that little wretch’s educational benefit, and this is my just reward for extending generosity to the hopelessly ungrateful. Well, never again, little brother.

As his exhausted anger began to drain, however, Adam found himself bombarded with images. He saw first the grief in his brother’s eyes when he’d accused him of lying that morning.
Just part of the act, Adam assured himself, but other images pressed in on him, the most insistent that first view over his shoulder of Joe, leaning against the doorjamb with his left hand, while the right clutched his side. Something about that picture bothered Adam; somehow it seemed familiar, and because he couldn’t figure out why, the image wouldn’t leave.

Then he remembered. He’d seen that same gesture several times the day before, particularly after that scuffle in the Art Annex. Was it possible that Joe had been injured? Adam dismissed the idea as ridiculous. That eastern dandy had gone down like the weakling he was under Adam’s own punch, so he couldn’t possibly have done Joe any real damage. Still, Joe had doubled up, holding his side, under that flea flick of a blow. Part of the act? It had to be. Nothing else made sense.

Adam settled back in his seat, determined to ignore the disquieting thoughts, but something kept niggling away at his brain, something just beyond recall. He couldn’t get away from the vague feeling of unrest that crawled through him every time he pictured that hand touching the right side. He’d seen that gesture before, somewhere, and not just yesterday. Sometime before that—sometime long before that—and not with Joe.

Adam jolted upright as the long buried memory surfaced. Dear God, no! It couldn’t be. He suddenly remembered seeing another boy holding his side the way Joe had yesterday and this morning. Luke Cameron had been a bosom companion during Adam’s college days, a boy much like his younger brother in personality—lighthearted, fun-loving, carefree and altogether too apt to impulsively rush in where angels feared to tread. How he’d ever passed the entrance exams at Yale remained a mystery to Adam, for Luke had always chosen frolic over study and had succeeded on far too many occasions in drawing his more sober friend into some hare-brained adventure. So much like Joe in that, too.
The resemblance that troubled Adam most, however, was that now-terrifying hand to the side. Luke had gone around campus, holding his side like that for two days before finally yielding to the pleas of his friends to see a doctor, and the doctor’s diagnosis of perityphlitis had proven to be a death sentence. During the final hours Adam had sat at Luke’s bedside, holding his hand as he writhed in agony that no pain medication could touch. Only the battlefields of the war had produced memories of greater horror.

The streetcar stopped before the main entrance to the Centennial grounds, and Adam automatically stepped off. Throngs of people pushed past him toward the gate, but Adam couldn’t go inside, instead pacing agitatedly up and down the sidewalk. *He’s faking*, he told himself. *He has to be faking.* But how would Joe have known to copy that gesture? A good actor he might be, but how could he play a scene he’d never seen in life?

He couldn’t, and the moment Adam accepted that, the fear that had been scratching at the back of his mind sank its talons deep into his brain. He closed his eyes and grasped his lowered head with one hand as he tried to slow his racing heartbeat and deepen his shallow breaths. As his fingers touched his own forehead, he realized that he had not so much as checked to see whether his brother had a fever. *Even if I thought he was shamming, I owed him that much*, he chided himself.

He glanced at the gate before him, trying to convince himself to just go inside and ignore that haunting memory from the past. In all likelihood his concern was being wasted on a boy whose only ailment was a defective conscience, but Adam couldn’t fully convince himself that that was true, and he knew he wouldn’t enjoy a minute of the day’s activities with that concern constantly nagging at him. Cursing himself for a fool, he caught a horse car and headed back to check on Joe.
The car was not crowded, but Adam’s anxious heart would not permit him to relax. Though there were open seats, he stood, hanging onto an upright pole, willing the horses to move faster and wishing he had strong-limbed Sport here in Philadelphia, so he could reach Joe sooner. Never had a half hour passed so slowly, and when the streetcar finally reached the corner of Eighth and Chestnut, Adam sprang from it and raced down the street. Dashing through the lobby of the Washington Hotel, he took the stairs two at a time. An elevator might be a modern convenience, but like the horse car, it simply moved too slowly for a man in urgent need of speed.

The doorknob to the suite turned easily in his hand, for the door was unlocked, just as he’d left it. That might indicate that Joe was still in the room, though on second thought, Adam realized that since he had confiscated Joe’s key after the Shantyville incident, the boy would have had no way to lock the room. Forcing his fear under control, Adam quietly approached his brother’s bedroom and looked through the doorway. His jaw hardened as he saw the empty bed. So he’d been right the first time. Joe had obviously taken off as soon as he thought the coast was clear. That settled it. The brat was going home on the first train west, along with a scathing letter to their father that should earn him restriction to the ranch until he turned twenty-one!

Behind him, Adam heard the door creak open, and he spun around, shouting, “Where have you”—the accusatory question died on his lips as he saw his brother slumped against the doorway, barefoot and still dressed in his nightshirt, though now its front placket was stained with bile. One glance at Joe’s ashen face confirmed Adam’s worst fears, and he rushed to his brother’s side. “You really are sick.”

Joe still had enough energy to glare at his older brother and to push him away with the hand that moments before had been grasping his aching side. “I told you that!”
Adam swung his arm supportively behind Joe’s back and pulled him close to his side. “I know, I know,” he soothed. “Let’s get you into bed, little buddy.”

Responding to the gentle tone, Joe collapsed in his brother’s arms, and a single tear trickled down his cheek. “I-I really feel bad, Adam—honest.”

Adam stroked the sweat-damp curls against his shoulder. “I know, Joe. Brother was wrong not to believe you. Into bed now, come on.” He helped Joe across the parlor and into the next room, easing him down to the side of the bed. Having noticed that his brother’s nightshirt was clammy, as well as tainted with the putrid remains of last night’s supper, Adam went at once to the bureau across the room and took a fresh one from the top drawer. “Let’s get you more comfortable,” he said as he unbuttoned the garment Joe was wearing. Gathering up the tail, he pulled the nightshirt over Joe’s head and tossed it aside so he could get the fresh one on more quickly. “There you go,” he said as he lifted Joe’s legs and slid his head onto the pillow.

Little Joe immediately curled into a ball, drawing up his knees with a moan as Adam drew the covers over him.

Adam squatted down at Joe’s head and laid his hand on the boy’s forehead. There was a fever, although Adam was relieved to find that it wasn’t too high. A good sign, perhaps. Luke’s body had raged with fever, toward the end at least. “Have you vomited more than once?” he queried.

Joe nodded briefly. “Twice—once just after you left and—and just now. Shouldn’t have tried to make it down the hall. M-missed the commode this time, made an awful mess in the floor. Tried to clean it up, but just retched up more.”

“Don’t worry about it. I’ll see that it’s tended to.” Adam laid his hand on Joe’s chest and felt his racing heartbeat. “Try to relax.” He licked his lips. “Joe, has your stomach
been hurting ever since that man slugged you yesterday?”
Though he knew he was being ridiculous, he couldn’t help hoping for a simpler explanation for Joe’s condition than the one that kept pounding inside his head. Not that internal injury was a trivial matter, either, but to Adam, anything was preferable to the haunting horror of perityphlitis.

Weakly, Joe shook his head. “Before.”

It was the answer Adam had both expected and dreaded. “Before?”

“It wasn’t the fight, Adam; I was hurting before.”

“Oh, Joe,” Adam sighed. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

“I dunno. Thought it would go away, I guess,” Joe murmured, “or, maybe, that it was from eatin’ too much of the wrong things, like you were always sayin’.”

Adam groaned, anguished by the thought that his petty complaints had kept Joe from confiding in him.

“It hurts bad, Adam.” Joe drew his knees tight to his chest, as if to make a smaller target for the pain.

Noticing, Adam stood up and reached under the covers to gently straighten his brother’s limbs. “That won’t help, buddy.” He sat beside Joe, taking his hand. “Brother’s here now, and I’m going to get this taken care of, so you just relax.”

The trusting smile with which Joe responded communicated absolute confidence that big brother Adam could take care of anything. While Adam was warmed by his brother’s faith, that smile wrenched his heart, for if this illness were what he feared, it might well lie beyond his power—or that of anyone else—to arrest. Luke’s doctor, a medical professor at Yale, had been able to do little for him; in fact, the hot fomentations and turpentine enemas had seemed to accentuate, rather than alleviate, the young man’s suffering, and draining
the abscess late in the illness had been followed within excruciating hours by death. Adam could only hope that medical science had made some advance in the last twelve years, but the hope was a feeble one. “I’m going downstairs for a few minutes, Joe, to send for a doctor.”

“Aw, no, Adam,” Joe whined. “It’s just a bellyache. Some bicarbonate, maybe, like you said before?”

Not wanting to alarm his younger brother with his own fear, Adam simply squeezed Joe’s hand. “Let’s just make sure, shall we?”

Joe pouted petulantly. “I don’t want a doctor.”

Adam smiled wryly. “Now you sound like my little brother.”

Joe made a feeble attempt to smile persuasively. “Please? You’re as good as any doctor.”

Adam shook his head firmly. “I’m flattered, but it’s not going to get you what you’re after.” With a final squeeze of his brother’s hand, he stood. “I’ll be right back.” He pointed his index finger authoritatively at Joe’s chest. “You stay put.”

As Adam turned to leave, Joe rose up on his elbows, calling after him, but when Adam merely ignored him and kept going, Joe flopped back onto the pillow, resigned to his fate.

When Adam returned only minutes later, he heard his brother groaning, although the sound ceased as soon as Joe realized his brother was back. “Don’t do that,” Adam chided gently as he reentered the bedroom.

“What?” Joe looked back blankly.

“Don’t be brave for my sake. I know you’re in pain, Joe.” And it hurts me to see you trying to hide it.
Joe bit his trembling lip and turned away, still unwilling to demonstrate weakness before his older brother, who never did. Through years of observation, Joe had come to believe that a real man met adversity with his brother’s calm stoicism, but it was a standard he found virtually impossible to live up to, given his emotional nature.

Knowing how Joe normally responded to touch, Adam rubbed circles on the boy’s shoulder with his thumb, as he’d often seen his father do. “The doctor will be here soon,” he assured his brother.

“Great,” Joe muttered with obvious displeasure.

Adam brushed his hand across Joe’s forehead. Good. Though climbing, the fever still didn’t seem dangerously high. Nonetheless, Adam dampened a clean cloth in water from Joe’s pitcher and began to wipe his brother’s face and neck. He knew the rhythmic motion was more busy work for him than a benefit to Joe, but he had to do something to keep the pictures of another suffering boy from surfacing in his brain. Repeating the same ministrations he’d performed for Luke, though, only kept the memories fresh in his mind.

“Adam, I-I think I’m gonna be sick again.” All attempt to act strong abandoned, Joe whimpered out the words.

With a nod Adam reached for the washbasin and helped Joe sit up and lean over it. After retching several times Joe raised his head and laid it back against his brother’s supporting arm. Adam set the basin aside and reached for a cloth to wipe Joe’s chin.

Joe curled his fingers around Adam’s wrist. “Sorry,” he said.

“Hush,” Adam ordered softly. “Don’t talk nonsense.” He gave Joe a sip of water to rinse his mouth of the vile taste and eased him down onto the pillow again.
Only twenty minutes after sending for help, Adam heard a rap at the door. As he walked to answer it, he reflected on how much more quickly medical help could be obtained here in the East. Pennsylvania Hospital, to which he’d sent the summons, was just three blocks away, but even so, Adam was surprised by so rapid a response. Sometimes prompt attention made all the difference in the world, and Adam could only pray that would be true in his brother’s case.

Opening the door revealed a man around Adam’s age with the distinguished air of a confident professional. “Mr. Cartwright?” the dark-haired, mustachioed young man asked. “I am Dr. Marcus Whittaker, a resident at Pennsylvania Hospital. I received a message that you were in need of a physician.”

Adam nodded and motioned the doctor in. “For my brother Joseph,” he explained. “He’s been experiencing pain and nausea since yesterday and has vomited three times this morning. The pain seems to be centered in his lower right abdomen and has been increasing markedly.”

Dr. Whittaker cocked his head and gazed with respect at the man who had given such a clear and concise description of the patient’s symptoms. Obviously, this was a man of breeding and intellect, not like the riffraff the doctor frequently encountered in the charity wards. “May I see the patient now?” he requested courteously.

“Yes, of course. This way.” Adam led him into the bedroom. Seeing Joe scowl at the stranger, Adam stepped quickly to his brother’s side. “Joe, this is Dr. Marcus Whittaker. I want you to give him your complete cooperation.” He looked up to smile apologetically at the young doctor. “He might most generously be described as a reluctant patient.”

“I’m sure he’ll give me no difficulty,” Dr. Whittaker said briskly as he removed a thermometer from his bag and popped it into Joe’s mouth.
Adam arched an eyebrow, wondering if this doctor’s no-nonsense, professional approach might actually be more effective on his recalcitrant brother than Paul Martin’s soothing strategies. He took a position at Joe’s head on the opposite side of the bed, though, in case his brother displayed his usual fractious attitude toward the medical profession.

Mouth closed around the thermometer, Joe cast piteous eyes on his brother as the doctor raised his nightshirt and pulled the covers down, stopping just short of exposing his manhood. Adam averted his eyes, knowing how modest the normally cocky kid could get at times like this.

After noting the flatness of the abdomen, Dr. Whittaker listened to the bowel sounds through his stethoscope. “Hyperactive,” he murmured to himself.

Removing the thermometer from Joe’s mouth, he gazed at the measurement and nodded, as though the instrument had registered what he expected.

“How high is his fever?” Adam asked, moistening his lips.

The doctor again reminded himself that he was dealing with a knowledgeable man and answered the question he might have skirted with a less worthy inquirer. “One hundred and one. Not particularly significant.”

Adam took a breath, letting that piece of information and the casual way in which it was delivered restore a measure of hope.

Dr. Whittaker, in the meantime, had turned his attention back to Joe’s abdomen, which he began to tap with his fingertips.

Biting his lower lip, Little Joe reached down to push the doctor’s hands away.

The doctor merely placed the intruding appendages flat on the
mattress. “Keep your hands at your side, please,” he said and immediately returned to his percussion.

Adam sat down on the bed, resting his right hand over Joe’s left one and urging him to let the doctor complete his examination.

“It hurts,” Joe whispered, his eyes on Adam.

“I know it does, young man,” the doctor responded, “and I’ll finish as quickly as I can, but I will need to palpitate your abdomen to determine its internal state.”

Joe groaned, whether in actual or anticipated pain Adam could not tell, but there was no mistaking the entreaty in those expressive emerald eyes. Joe was begging his brother to stop this torture, but though the pleading eyes pierced him straight through, Adam knew he couldn’t intervene. He just tightened his grip on Joe’s hand and told him it wouldn’t be much longer.

In inadvertent fulfillment of that promise, Dr. Whittaker soon stopped the probing pushes on Joe’s belly and without comment put his instruments back in his bag. “Could I see you in the next room, Mr. Cartwright?” he asked rhetorically as he headed for the door.

Adam stood to follow him, but Joe refused to release his hand. “Joe, I’ll be right back,” Adam assured his brother as he pried loose the clinging fingers. He went into the parlor of the suite, quietly closing the bedroom door behind him. If the news were as bad as he feared, he didn’t want Joe to overhear what the doctor had to say.

Dr. Whittaker turned to face Adam. “How old is your brother, Mr. Cartwright?”

“Nineteen, barely,” Adam replied.

The doctor’s thick brows drew together in consideration. “And
his parents? Not traveling with you, I take it.”

“His mother is deceased; our father is back home—in Nevada.”

The doctor’s brow furrowed still more. “Nevada—too far.”

“I assure you, doctor, that I have my father’s full authority regarding this boy,” Adam explained quickly, “and I will be responsible for any necessary decisions in my father’s absence. Now, please, tell me how he is.”

Dr. Whittaker nodded gravely. “You brother is a very sick young man, Mr. Cartwright.”

Adam’s mouth was set in a grim line. “I know. It’s perityphlitis, isn’t it?”

The doctor looked up in surprise at the technical term. “You’ve had medical training?”

“No,” Adam denied with a shake of his head. He briefly described the illness, treatment and eventual death of his college friend. “There was nothing the doctor could do then. Has that changed?” A lump rose in his throat and he swallowed it down.

The hospital resident scrutinized Adam’s face, as though trying to assess the man’s likely reaction to what he wished to say. “The standard medical treatment for what you knew as perityphlitis has changed little in the last twenty years,” Dr. Whittaker began cautiously. “A professor of mine at Harvard, Dr. Reginald Fitz, has suggested that a more accurate term for the illness might be appendicitis, as the appendix is the infected organ.”

“I don’t care what you call it!” Adam growled through gritted teeth. “Can you help him?”

The doctor took a long, slow breath, again appearing to analyze the character of the man with whom he was dealing.
“Dr. Fitz has also suggested a treatment, which I believe has merit, but I know of no documented case in which it has been tested.”

Adam leaped at the strand of hope. “What treatment?”

“Early surgical intervention,” Dr. Whittaker said with crisp professional certainty.

Shock registered on Adam’s normally guarded countenance. “Surgery? In the abdomen?” He had clearly not expected so radical a suggestion. To open up an abdomen, for any purpose, was virtually unheard of.

“For removal of the appendix,” the resident replied, acting as though unaware of the response his recommendation had elicited. “Dr. Fitz’s theory is that if the inflamed appendix is removed prior to perforation, the patient has a far greater chance of survival.”

“But it’s never been done?” Adam asked, his concern revealed in the slow deliberation of his words. “You want to experiment on my brother?”

Dr. Whittaker drew himself rigidly upright. “I want to offer your brother what I believe is his best chance for recovery, sir! I understand that abdominal surgery is generally considered a last resort, but I honestly believe that early intervention will one day be accepted as the treatment of choice, and Dr. Thomas Morton, the attending physician under whose supervision I work, is inclined to agree.” He took another long breath and continued. “I will also be candid enough to admit to you that I have been hoping for a test case, Mr. Cartwright, but I do not countenance haphazard experimentation on patients, as you suggest, nor would I take unwarranted risks with a young man’s life. As I said, the operation has not, to my knowledge, been performed successfully and is, in that sense, experimental. However, in theory, it should be quite a simple procedure.”
“In theory,” Adam muttered gruffly.

The resident clasped his hands behind his back. “I will, of course, understand if you prefer that I follow the established treatment in your brother’s case. There have been instances, admittedly rare, in which the inflammation simply subsided upon rest with the application of ice packs. Beyond that, standard medical treatment calls for waiting for an abscess to form and then draining it surgically.”

Adam paled visibly. He’d seen that treatment before, back in New Haven, and he shook his head briskly to jar loose the recurring memories of his friend’s anguished screams. “That’s a death warrant,” he said bluntly.

Dr. Whittaker nodded gravely. “In my view, it is. I believe, without this operation, your young brother will die. I’m offering him a chance for life, Mr. Cartwright.”

Adam pinched the bridge of his nose. “But you’ve never performed this operation—not even once?”

“Not even once,” the doctor admitted soberly, “and while it is likely that Dr. Morton would perform the actual surgery on your brother, I do know my anatomy, Mr. Cartwright, and should I personally be granted that privilege, I do know how to perform this operation.”

“In theory,” Adam added grimly.

“In theory,” the resident replied honestly.

Adam stared at the closed bedroom door for long, painful minutes, overwhelmed by the gravity of the decision he must make. Little Joe’s life was in his hands. Make the wrong decision, and the boy would die; make the right decision too late, and the result would be the same. Whichever course he took, there was no guarantee of the outcome and no time for lengthy internal debate. The decision had to be made and made
now. Though Adam prided himself on logical thinking, in the end he made it the way his younger brother would have, by sheer gut instinct, the deciding factor that lingering memory of Luke’s agonizing death. Squaring his shoulders, Adam faced the young doctor. “You have my permission. Operate.”

Though the doctor had waited patiently, making no further attempt to influence the decision, he looked pleased, almost eager, when he heard permission granted for the historic operation, an expression that caused Adam some misgiving. He had no opportunity to give that misgiving consideration, however, for the doctor’s next words required his full attention.

“I know that was a difficult decision,” Dr. Whittaker said, “but I believe you’ve made the correct one. Now, the first step will be to have your brother admitted to the hospital. The board will have to rule on his acceptance, of course. I realize that should be strictly a medical decision, but, unfortunately, that authority still rests with the civilian board of managers.” He paused briefly. “Forgive me, but I must ask whether your brother will be entering as a free or paying patient.”

Adam regarded him with a ruthless glare. “I’ll pay your fee, of course,” he said sharply.

The hospital resident flushed and hastened to explain. “It isn’t my fee that is in question here, sir, I assure you. While free beds are offered to those who cannot pay, the board of managers tends to look at such cases with a stricter eye. It would facilitate matters if your brother could enter as a paying patient. The charge for board is three dollars a day. As that’s no more than the charges at this hotel, I trust it’s not a problem. If it is, we could accept partial payment of one dollar per day, instead, which would accord him some status above the charity cases.”
“No, that sum is not a problem,” Adam assured the doctor quickly. “Whatever he needs, he can have.”

“Excellent!” Dr. Whittaker declared. “I’m sure there’ll be no difficulty with his admission, in that case.” He hesitated, looking toward the bedroom. “Would you like me to explain the procedure to the young man?”

Easily visualizing Joe’s response, especially if the verdict came from a stranger, Adam brusquely waved the offer aside. “No, that’s my job.”

The doctor looked relieved, but he maintained his professional bearing as he said, “Then I’ll begin mine by arranging for transport to Pennsylvania Hospital by ambulance.”

Adam shook the doctor’s hand and saw him out, and then turned to stare at the closed door to Joe’s room as he gathered courage for the struggle ahead. “Once more unto the breach,” he muttered and moved toward the door.

As he entered, he saw his younger brother straining to see into the parlor behind him. “Is he gone?” Joe asked hoarsely.

“Yes, he’s gone,” Adam answered softly.

“Good.” Relieved, Joe relaxed into the pillow. “I didn’t like him, Adam.”

“Like or dislike doesn’t enter into it,” Adam said, striving to maintain a cool, collected countenance so that Joe would remain calm. “He’s a competent doctor, and I believe he’s given sound advice regarding your illness.”

“Bet it’ll taste awful,” Joe grunted.

Adam exhaled gustily. This was going to go down harder than the bitterest potion, and there was no sense in putting it off. “There won’t be any medicine, Joe,” he began, taking the boy’s hand and massaging the palm with his thumb. “The doctor
feels you need an operation, and I’ve given my permission. He’s arranging for you to be transported to the hospital, and it shouldn’t be long before the ambulance arrives.”

Joe’s eyes grew large as the ceramic saucers they’d seen at the Centennial Exposition. “Adam, no,” he gasped. “You can’t let that man cut me open. You can’t!”

Adam tightened his grip on his brother’s hand. “I know it’s a frightening prospect, Joe, but this is what we have to do. There isn’t any other way, boy.”

“There has to be!”

“No.”

Joe began to thrash from side to side, babbling out protests that he wasn’t that sick and pleas to be left alone.

Adam grabbed his brother’s head between his strong hands and forcibly held it still. “Joe, stop it,” he ordered, his voice severe in its urgency, for he was afraid the boy would injure himself. “You have to have the operation. That’s all there is to it, and you’re only hurting yourself trying to fight it. Now be still!”

Tears of defeat brimmed in the emerald eyes. “Then take me home,” Joe implored. “If someone’s gonna cut into me, I want Doc Martin to do it.”

Adam’s calm, controlled mask almost cracked. Even if Dr. Martin had been competent to perform the untried operation, a week’s delay would inevitably mean death. However, Adam could scarcely share that bit of logic with his panicky little brother! “Dr. Martin is a good country doctor,” he argued alternatively, “but good as he is, he doesn’t have access to the latest medical developments and treatments. Pennsylvania Hospital is probably the leading institution in the country, Joe; there you’ll receive the best medical care available in
The tears spilled over, running down Joe’s cheeks. “I’ve heard about hospitals,” he sobbed. “They’re places to die. Don’t send me there, Adam—please!”

It was a commonly held belief, based on what had been true in the past, a heritage the hospitals of America would in time live down, but that would take years. Adam had only minutes, and he’d dealt with his little brother often enough to know that Joe wouldn’t respond to reason when he was in the grip of terror. That left but one path to follow, though Adam took it reluctantly. He stood straight, folded his arms and uttered the pronouncement in a firm voice. “Pa placed you in my charge, and you agreed to accept my authority. Whether you like it or not, little brother, I am holding you to that bargain.”

Joe bolted upright. “You think paying my train fare gives you the right to decide whether I live or die?” he shrieked. “Then send me home! I’ll pay you back. I want my pa!”

The words were a knife to Adam’s heart, but he had no time to spare for his own injury. As he saw Joe throw back the covers, he grabbed the boy by both shoulders and forced him down to the mattress. “Lie still!” he commanded. “I am your pa as long as we’re back here, and you will do as you’re told.”

A loud knock on the door to the suite caught Adam’s attention. Giving Joe’s shoulders one more emphatic push, Adam released him. “Don’t you move,” he ordered and headed into the next room.

Joe, of course, saw his brother’s departure as the perfect opportunity to take matters into his own hands. Jerking back the covers, he threw his legs over the side of the bed and lurched to his feet. With a cry of pain, he clutched his side and staggered toward the door, only to discover his brother
“Joe!” Adam cried, grabbing his brother as he stumbled forward. “No, boy!”

Joe tried to break his brother’s hold, but he was too weak, especially when the stretcher-bearers from the hospital joined forces with Adam. Though every movement was agony, Joe kicked and fought as the three men lifted him bodily and laid him on the stretcher.

“Sure this one ain’t bound for the lunatic asylum?” one of the stretcher-bearers asked the other.

“I’m sure,” Adam snapped. “He’s just frightened.”

“All the same, I think we’d best put the straps on him, mister,” the other man said. “He’s likely to do himself harm.”

“Joe, settle down,” Adam ordered, “or these men will have to put you in restraints.”

Eyes glinting with animosity, Joe continued to struggle, so Adam reluctantly gestured for the hospital attendants to apply the restraints. “I’m sorry, buddy,” Adam said. “I don’t like doing this, but you leave me no choice.”

Joe fought to free himself from the confining straps until he collapsed, exhausted, but as he was carried from the room to the waiting ambulance, he continued to plead for release. “Send me home,” he begged. “Doc Martin can take better care of me than any of these eastern quacks.”

One hand resting on Joe’s chest, Adam walked beside the stretcher as the party moved through the hotel lobby. The clerk behind the counter, as well as the guests registering, turned to stare, but other than a proud lift of his chin, Adam paid them no heed. Joe was behaving badly, of course, inexcusably so had he been well, but knowing the pain and fear
that motivated the egregious conduct, Adam excused it. When he tried to hush Joe’s frantic protests, it was for the boy’s sake, not because of any personal embarrassment.

Climbing into the back of the ambulance, Adam sat beside his brother, still trying to calm him. “Everything will be all right, Joe,” he soothed, all the time praying that the words would prove true.

As the ambulance began to move down the street, Joe turned his face away from his brother. “I hate you,” he hissed.

Blinking back the moisture in his eyes, Adam brushed a stray curl from his brother’s forehead. “Okay,” he said after insuring that he could speak without hurt tinting his tone, “you be as mad as you want, little brother. I can handle it.” What I can’t handle is losing you. He continued to stroke Joe’s tangled locks, but Joe made no response; in fact, he would not so much as look at his brother.

The drive was a brief one, and the ambulance soon pulled to a stop outside the high brick wall that enclosed Pennsylvania Hospital on three sides. Dr. Whittaker met them at the arched gateway. “I apologize for the delay, Mr. Cartwright,” he said as soon as Adam had jumped from the wagon’s back. “The board will be meeting momentarily to decide on your brother’s admittance. In the meantime, you may wait in our reception ward.”

The reception ward turned out to be merely an empty room in the old gatekeeper’s lodge, to the side of the entrance, where Joe’s stretcher was carried and set down on a bare cot. “The surgeons on staff will also be consulting, as is required in any emergency case,” the doctor continued to explain as he and Adam followed the stretcher-bearers into the small stone room.

Adam gazed at the resident with exasperation. “How long will that take?” he demanded.
“I’ll do all I can to expedite matters, Mr. Cartwright. As I indicated, we’re all aware that this is an emergency situation.” At Adam’s nod, he left and made his way toward the main building.

Adam knelt beside Joe’s stretcher and tried to reassure him that he would soon receive the help he needed and relief from the sharpening pain.

“Can’t we go back to the hotel?” Joe beseeched, though with little hope of success. “I don’t like it here, Adam.”

Adam looked at the unadorned gray walls and had no problem seeing their unbroken drabness through the eyes of a sick person. “I don’t blame you, buddy, but it’ll be better once you’re settled in your own bed.”

Joe bit his lip and turned away, refusing to respond to anything else Adam said.

After a lengthy wait, Dr. Whittaker returned to request that Adam come with him to answer some questions from the board.

“What now?” Adam demanded with irritation. “How long does this boy have to wait before something is done?”

“I’m sure it won’t be much longer,” the resident soothed. “As this is a new procedure, the board wants reassurance that you understand and accept the risks.”

“Adam?” Joe interrupted plaintively.

Adam touched his brother’s shoulder. “It’s all right, Joe. Let me handle this.” He turned back to the doctor. “I’ve already told you that I understand that.”

The doctor nodded. “Yes, but I need you to reaffirm that to the board, and there are a couple of routine matters they wish to clarify.”
Adam blew out his vexation in a blast of air. “Oh, all right, but I don’t like leaving him alone.”

“It will be brief, I promise,” Dr. Whittaker assured him, “and he’s in restraints. He can’t go anywhere or do himself any harm.” Seeing that his words had done nothing to relieve Adam’s concern, he added, “The gatekeeper is nearby; he can look in on the boy.”

Adam continued to stare in disbelief of the doctor’s insensitivity. Then, seeing no alternative if he wanted Joe admitted to the hospital, he turned back to his brother. “I’ll be back soon, Joe. Try to rest easy—and sing out for the gatekeeper if you need anything.”

Joe sent a frantic look around the gray walls. “Don’t leave me here, Adam. Please!”

Adam gave the chestnut curls a comforting pat. “I’ll be right back. Just lie quiet for me, boy, all right?”

Unable to move the rest of his body, Little Joe threw his head violently from side to side.

With a parting stroke, Adam left, heart torn apart by his brother’s suffering and the realization that he had compounded it by forcing Joe to submit to medical treatment against his will. His conscience prickled at the thought of leaving his brother alone, helpless in restraints, but he felt he had no choice. Without those confining straps, Joe would be out of that cot and staggering down Eighth Street the minute he was left alone.

At the side of Dr. Whittaker, Adam walked toward the impressive, three-story central building, flanked by wings on the east and west. Climbing the white steps, he entered under an arched transom and walked along a narrow tiled corridor to an austere room. Dark drapes hung at the windows and shelves of books lined two walls of the room. In the center was a
polished walnut table, surrounded by eight men. “Gentlemen, I understand you have some questions for me,” Adam stated, permitting no time for introductions. “Please state them at once. My brother is very ill, and I would like to expedite his admission to the hospital.”

A distinguished-looking man rose and introduced himself as Dr. Thomas Morton. “The board’s main concern, Mr. Cartwright, is the legal liability of this institution. You understand that the operation I would be performing is untried?”

Adam nodded brusquely, irritated by the delay. “Yes, Dr. Whittaker has fully acquainted me with the risks, and I accept them. I will hold neither you nor this hospital responsible should the result be less favorable than he predicts. Now, can we proceed?”

Another man spoke up. “You will sign a statement to that effect?”

“Yes,” Adam hissed through gritted teeth.

Dr. Morton turned toward the others seated at the table. “I see no medical reason for refusing this patient admittance to Pennsylvania Hospital, gentlemen.”

“There are a couple of other matters,” another board member inserted. “Obviously, you and your brother are gentlemen of means, Mr. Cartwright. While you would most likely prefer a private room, we have none available at present, due to the large crowds in our city for the Centennial. Your brother would have to be admitted to the general surgical ward, where he will be subjected to contact with patients of a lower class.”

For a moment Adam could only stare in amazement. “I don’t care who sleeps in the bed next to him,” he sputtered when he found his voice. “Just give him the help he needs—as soon as possible, if that’s not asking too much!”
Several of the men behind the table appeared offended, but Dr. Whittaker stepped in quickly to apologize for the worried brother’s seemingly belligerent attitude, reminding the board that this man and his brother came from the far West and were not accustomed to civilized separation of the classes.

Adam felt like exploding at that insulting insinuation, but for Joe’s sake he restrained himself.

“Only one further point, then,” the board member hurried to state. “You realize that this case will have great interest for the medical staff and their students. While we try to respect the privacy of our paying patients, it is standard practice for examinations of our charity patients to be open to such observers, and in view of the unique nature of this surgery—”

Adam interrupted, striving to curtail the seemingly endless discussion. “Fine, examine him all you like—just do something now!”

With another shake of his head at the uncouth conduct of westerners, the board member who had made the request turned to the others at the table. “With that understanding I believe we can accept this young man for admission into the hospital. Obviously, he poses no threat of pauperism.”

Another man in a black frock coat said, “I think we can excuse Mr. Cartwright now, while we deliberate our decision.”

Dr. Whittaker immediately escorted a livid Adam Cartwright from the room. “Deliberate!” Adam fumed as soon as the resident had closed the door behind them. “How long is this going to take?”

“I’m sure they’ll decide quickly in your brother’s favor,” the young doctor stated.

“And what was that about pauperism?” Adam ranted.
Dr. Whittaker shrugged. “Unfortunately, it is a concern when we accept charity patients. The board must determine whether a patient is being admitted for a medical need of fixed duration or whether he will become a financial drain on the hospital’s limited resources. In the case of a paying patient, that concern is negated, which is why I said your brother’s admission would be facilitated if you could pay.”

“Money talks,” Adam muttered bitterly.

“It does,” the resident admitted. “The day may come when appropriate medical treatment is available equally to all, but that day is not yet here, Mr. Cartwright. You and your brother are quite fortunate.”

Adam nodded, grateful, as never before, for his father’s foresight and hard work, which had afforded the opportunity for Joe to get the help he needed. Concerned that his brother had been alone too long, Adam excused himself and hurried back to the reception ward.

Joe at first looked relieved to see his brother; then the mask of offense dropped back over his face. “You said you’d be right back,” he chided pettishly.

The waiting had seemed interminable to Adam, too, and he could only imagine how time must have crawled for his brother, left alone within the uninviting gray walls. “I’m sorry,” he said, as he unfastened the straps that restrained his brother, feeling them unnecessary now that he was here to protect Joe from his own foolishness. “It shouldn’t be much longer, buddy.”

Joe refused to even make eye contact with his older brother, turning his back and curling up into a protective ball as soon as his body was free to move.

Adam rubbed his brother’s back with a solicitous hand. “Is the pain worse?”
“What do you care?” Joe muttered. “Go away.”

Closing his eyes, Adam shook his head, fearful that Joe would never forgive him for the actions he’d felt compelled to take. He said nothing, however, concerned that any explanation he offered would only upset Joe more, and since Joe refused to say anything else, the two brothers filled the gloomy room with heavy silence.

Hearing footsteps, Adam looked up and was surprised, after the history of delays, to see Dr. Whittaker return so quickly. “The board has agreed to admit your brother, Mr. Cartwright,” the beaming resident announced. “We’ll be taking him into the main hospital as soon as the bed carriage arrives.”

“Bed carriage?” Adam queried. “Can’t we just carry him in?” The thought of even a minute’s more delay was unbearable to the anxious older brother.

“Much better this way,” the doctor advised. “Invented by Dr. Morton himself,” he added, obviously intending to impress the grim-faced Mr. Cartwright with the stature of the man who would be performing surgery on his brother. The man from Nevada shrugged aside the information as unimportant, and the hospital resident correctly read the gesture as concern over another delay. “Ah, here it is,” he announced with relief a few minutes later, “so we’ll soon have your brother settled in.”

With his engineering expertise, Adam at once appreciated the efficiency of the four-wheeled conveyance being rolled into the reception ward. Built low, it slid under Joe’s cot; then an orderly turned the crank at one end, raising the center of the carriage until it lifted the cot from the floor for easy transport from place to place. It would, indeed, make the trip across the courtyard more comfortable for Joe, so waiting for the bed carriage was one delay Adam didn’t begrudge the hospital staff.
“This certainly is a convenient way of getting from place to place,” Adam observed as he walked alongside the bed carriage toward the main building. “This doctor of yours must be quite an intelligent man to invent such a useful device, don’t you think, Joe?”

The attempt to bolster Joe’s spirits fell flat, for Joe looked as unimpressed as Adam had been when Dr. Whittaker sang his superior’s praises, and rigid with anger, he remained unresponsive to any attempt to communicate.

As they came to a double staircase in the central hall, the resident paused. “This is where we separate,” he said. “You need to sign the admission papers in the office to your right. Then you can take these stairs up to the third floor, where you’ll find seating outside the surgical amphitheater. Doctor Morton and I will join you there after the completion of the operation.” Catching the older brother’s concerned look at the younger, he added, “We’ll take the patient in another entrance after he’s prepared for surgery. He’s in good hands, Mr. Cartwright.”

“Yes, of course,” Adam said. Bending over Joe’s cot, he tried to get the boy to look at him, but again Joe refused. Though Adam hated parting with bad feelings between them, he saw no alternative. “I’ll see you later, buddy.” With a final brush of Joe’s chestnut curls, he let the orderlies roll his brother away and went into the office Dr. Whittaker had indicated.

Papers signed, he immediately jogged up the stairs. On the third floor, Adam noticed a throng of people moving down the tiled corridor. Overhearing snatches of conversation, he realized they were all heading toward the observation level of the surgical amphitheater. _Word spreads fast when the operation is an interesting one_, he concluded. Wanting to be close to Joe, even though he was certain the boy would be unaware—and possibly resentful—of his presence, Adam trailed in with the rest of the crowd and took a chair near the aisle.
about halfway down the tier of seats.

The waiting began again, and again it seemed interminable. Adam passed the time by studying the structure of the amphitheater. The room was octagonal in shape, surrounded on all sides by rows of seats rising one above the other for thirty feet or more. Below, Adam saw the bare table on which his younger brother would soon lie. The amphitheater could hold three hundred spectators, Adam calculated, feeling grateful that not every seat was filled. As it was, there would be more than enough people watching the operation to give Joe fits, if he saw them. *Hope they put him under the anesthetic before they bring him in here*, Adam thought as he glanced around at the people continuing to enter.

Still the waiting continued, and with time on his hands, Adam couldn’t stop his thoughts from drifting to other surgeries he had seen, none of them under such pristine conditions as this metropolitan hospital afforded. Not that he’d ever gone out of his way to observe such procedures, like some of the curious onlookers here, but sometimes it couldn’t be avoided, at least not without shirking one’s duty. As a Union officer, Adam had felt it his duty to stand by injured men in his company whenever possible. He’d seen the doctors in their blood-spattered aprons cutting off limbs right and left, throwing them into piles outside the operating tent, and he’d held men’s hands as they screamed in torment when morphine was in short supply. There’d been times when he’d left that grisly scene to spill his last meal behind the nearest tree, but never once had one of the men under his command seen anything but calm and steady support in their lieutenant’s face. A man did his duty, however unsavory, and duty had always been strong in Adam Cartwright, from childhood up.

But the strength that had stood steadfast while he watched shattered limbs sawed off faltered when Little Joe was wheeled into the amphitheater and doctors Morton and Whittaker each put on one of the white coats hanging on pegs along the back
wall. Not a stranger, not a man he barely knew or even one whose comradeship he’d come to cherish. This was his baby brother, precious beyond words, and Adam suddenly realized he could not bear to watch a scalpel slice into that cherished flesh. He grasped the back of the seat in front of him, trying to tame the turmoil churning in his stomach, but he knew instinctively that he would fail if he stayed in that room. Bolting from his seat, he ran up the stairs to the third floor entrance, disdainful of the titters that rippled around the room. Let the ignorant fools laugh; they’d sing a different tune if it were their loved one lying on that table. There were sound reasons why doctors preferred to operate outside the view of family members, and although Adam felt as though he were abandoning Little Joe, he knew he would do the boy little good by passing out cold. He stumbled to a bench beneath a window and slumped into it.

The jeering laughter died as quickly as it had begun, but the self-recrimination that followed in its wake was unrelenting, as Adam castigated himself for the display of weakness. *Adam Cartwright, always calm in crisis,* he mocked his pride. *What if it had been a bullet that struck Joe down, instead of illness, with me the only one available to extract it? Would I just let him die because I was too squeamish to cut into him?* Adam shook his head, knowing that in that case, duty would take over. A man did what he had to do in an emergency, but to sit idly by, just watching without being able to help, was more than any man could stand.

So, maybe he hadn’t really failed Joe, at least not by fleeing the amphitheater. Other failures, however, rose high as the Sierras in Adam’s newly sensitive eyes. Just that morning he had composed a lengthy list of Joe’s faults, but it was his own that riddled him, like rapid fire from a Gatling gun, as he sat on the hard bench, waiting to learn whether his little brother would live or die. He had accused Joe of petty selfishness in snaring that window seat at Mill Station, but
he was the selfish one, demanding it throughout the rest of their journey across the country, denying Joe a good view of places he’d never seen. How did that enhance the boy’s education? A total stranger had been kinder to his brother in that regard than he. In fact, Adam flagellated himself, his selfishness had begun even earlier, in the planning stages of the trip east, when he’d ridiculed everything his brother suggested. Pa had tried to warn him that he was being unfair, but he’d told himself repeatedly that the trip was his, his brother being a mere guest, not a partner with equal rights.

As if that weren’t enough, he’d practically turned Little Joe into his personal body servant on the journey, making him fetch and carry, whether it was the daily newspaper or all their assorted baggage, justifying the dictatorial treatment as partial repayment for the trip. He’d teased the boy mercilessly, mocking his choice of reading material, for instance, when all Joe was doing was finding some way to occupy his time. *I should have spent those hours enjoying him, not with my nose buried in some engineering journal. What I wouldn’t give to have even one of those hours back!*

Adam stood and began to pace the hall as he continued the unremitting tally of his own offenses, the worst being the way he’d forced his will on his younger brother here in Philadelphia. How many times had he reminded Joe that he was paying the bills and, therefore, deserved to have everything his own way, even down to deciding where they’d eat every meal? What kind of mercenary wretch would wield such autocratic power over his own brother? And it hadn’t stopped there. *Oh, no, I had to throw his promise to accept my authority in the kid’s face, too. And don’t forget the threats to send him home in disgrace if he didn’t toe the line. Small wonder he felt the need to break free. Even so, it only happened once, and I’ve held it against him ever since.*

Adam paused at a window overlooking the courtyard and rested
his forehead against the sun-warmed glass, overwhelmed by the recollections rushing toward him now like the crashing waves of an angry sea. *Oh, Pa, Pa, these are the breakers you warned me about.* There was no pride this time as he reflected on his father’s words, only crushing shame for the bitter accusations he’d thrown in his brother’s face that morning. Anger and unforgiveness for Joe’s Shantyville escapade and the deception preceding it had blinded him to his brother’s all-too-real illness. He’d stormed away from that encounter and caught the streetcar in a huff. That’s when the gale had started to blow, driven by the wind of long-submerged memories, and his ship had hit those breakers of his father’s metaphor, though even Pa, Adam was sure, had never dreamed the waters could grow this choppy.

He’d caught a car back to the hotel almost immediately, but still the round trip had consumed an hour, an hour he could never buy back at any price. What if that one hour made the difference? If these doctors and that Harvard professor—what was his name? Oh, yes, Fitz—if they were right in believing that it was important to intervene early in cases like Joe’s, could that one hour have been the crucial one that decided his brother’s life or death? Adam pressed his palms heavily against the windowpane, knowing that if Joe died, he’d be asking that question the rest of his life. *Dear God, spare me that. No, forget me; spare him. He’s just a child, too young to—*

Too young to die? But Adam had seen boys younger fall on the field of battle. In fact, he realized with a jolt, he himself had been barely older than Joe was now when he had led those “boys” into battle, some of them to their deaths. They’d all considered themselves men back then, just as Joe did now.

Adam smiled softly as gentler memories flowed in to replace the tumultuous ones. That scene in the gentlemen’s washroom of the railcar, when Joe had confronted the burly farmer ribbing his request for a razor, had been priceless. Memories
like that made it hard to think of Little Joe as anything but a child. He remembered that child rushing from one exhibit to the next at the Centennial, eager to touch and taste all that was new and exciting in life. Though anxious concern hovered just past the pleasant recollections, Adam almost chuckled as he remembered Joe’s spontaneous suggestion that the four Cartwrights march down the main street of Virginia City, wearing those gaudy suspenders with their names woven in. Get through this, little buddy, and I promise that you and I, at least, will parade down C Street in suspender splendor, even if the entire population of our fair city lines the way to gawk at us.

Turning to lean back against the wall, Adam thought of the two days that he and Joe had spent relaxing at the zoo and rowing down the Wissahickon. Those were the days he cherished, not the ones spent dragging his brother from one educational exhibit to the next: that bright-eyed child gazing with wonder and delight at a tall giraffe or a yellow balloon bobbing against a sky of cloudless blue, the energetic lad who had wanted to scale every overlook, the young man whose child-like laughter had rivaled the twittering of the birds in the trees.

The thought of that laughter silenced forever brought the breakers crashing back over his soul, and Adam pressed steepled fingers to his lips. Dear God, don’t let me lose that, he prayed. How will I ever learn to laugh . . . to live . . . if I don’t have him to teach me? Grant me this one request, and I promise that from this moment on, this trip will belong to him, not me.

He made his way back to the wooden bench and sat down again, burying his face in his hands. It seemed like a trite bargain to make in exchange for a boy’s life—spare his life and I’ll show him a good time—but, then, one didn’t bargain with the Almighty, anyway. All a man could do was present his petition and plead for mercy, and as he waited for the operation to end, Adam Cartwright did exactly that.
Minute followed harrowing minute, as a restless Adam moved from bench to window to pacing the hall, time after time. He hadn’t thought to look at his watch when the surgery started, so he had no idea how long Little Joe had been on the operating table, but it seemed like forever. He was sitting on the bench when the doors to the amphitheater opened and people began streaming out, chattering about how fascinating the procedure had been. Adam leaped to his feet, fighting his way against the flow, dodging spectators still inside as he careened down the steps to the operating floor. The doctors were just hanging up their bloodstained coats when Adam vaulted over the rail that separated the observation tiers from the surgical area. “Where is he? Where’s my brother?” he demanded, for he had noticed that the operating table was now empty.

“Mr. Cartwright, I told you we would see you upstairs after the operation,” Dr. Whittaker chided.

Dr. Morton lifted a hand to silence further comment. “Your brother’s been moved to a quieter area, where he can be watched until the effects of the anesthetic dissipate.”

“Then he’s all right,” Adam gasped in relief.

Dr. Morton smiled. “He’s in stable condition at present. Though the appendix was severely inflamed, I was able to remove it before perforation.”

“He’ll be all right,” Adam babbled. It seemed to be the only phrase he could say, the only words that mattered in all the world.

“All indications are good,” Dr. Morton said, “but I must remind you that we are on untried ground. There are risks involved with any surgery, and while I believe I was able to remove all the infected tissue, we will need to watch him for signs of infection. Only time will tell us if the operation was a complete success.”
Adam nodded in understanding. “May I see him?” he asked.

“He’s still anesthetized,” the doctor explained again, “but if you wish to wait, you may see him briefly before we settle him in his bed in the surgical ward.”

“Briefly?”

“Yes, I’ll see to it that he’s given enough morphine to help him rest soundly through the night, and you may see him tomorrow morning, although that is an exception to our regular visiting hours.”

Adam’s brow furrowed. “I don’t understand. I assumed I’d be staying with him.

Dr. Morton laid a kindly hand on his shoulder. “I need to prepare for my next surgery, Mr. Cartwright, but Dr. Whittaker can acquaint you with hospital policy.” Nodding at the resident who had assisted him during the operation, he added, “Take whatever time you need, doctor, though I might suggest you find a better place to talk with Mr. Cartwright. This room will be needed again soon.”

“Yes, sir.” Dr. Whittaker put one hand behind Adam’s right elbow and gestured toward a door behind him. “If you’ll come this way, Mr. Cartwright, I’ll answer all your questions.”

From what Adam had seen of the two doctors, he much preferred to discuss his brother’s case with the senior physician, but he realized the chief surgeon of a large hospital would have other duties and so went along willingly with the resident. They had gone no further that the hall outside the amphitheater, however, before he demanded an explanation. “Why can’t I stay with my brother?”

Dr. Whittaker took a step back and then regained his composure. “Because your brother is in the public ward, sir. Had we been able to secure a private room, you could have had
as much access to him as you wished, but on the ward visiting hours are restricted—two hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons.” At Adam’s horrified look, he added, “It’s really for his benefit, as well as avoiding interference with necessary work on the ward.”

“Are you seriously suggesting that I leave this boy here alone until next Monday?” Adam protested. “That is completely unacceptable, sir!”

The resident squared his shoulders. “Those are the rules, Mr. Cartwright.”

Sensing that further display of outrage would gain him nothing, Adam resolved to reason with the man. “No, you don’t understand. He’s never been in a hospital before. He’s used to having one of his family sit with him through any illness or injury, and he will not respond well to being alone among strangers.”

The doctor stroked his mustache thoughtfully. “Well, as he is a paying patient, we might make some concession, I suppose. Dr. Morton did indicate that you might see your brother tomorrow morning, and I’m certain he would authorize more access than the rules permit. It will require a special order from the managers, but I will propose to them that you be allowed to visit your brother for one hour each morning and two each afternoon.

Disappointment washed across Adam’s face. “Only three hours a day? Can’t you see your way clear to—”

“Mr. Cartwright,” Dr. Whittaker interrupted sharply, “as I said, it’s in his best interest—and yours, as well—that these rules be kept. When he is dismissed from the hospital, you will, no doubt, be solely responsible for his care, as you are far from home and anyone who might assist you. How can you possibly do that effectively if you are exhausted from sitting by his bedside night and day?”
I’d manage, Adam thought, though he sensed that statement would carry little weight with the rule-conscious resident. “I understand what you’re saying,” he replied, choosing his words carefully, “but I still think that this particular patient would do better if I were with him.”

The doctor’s gaze narrowed. “I did not observe much in the way of harmony between the two of you at the hotel nor since arriving at the hospital. Can you really be certain your presence will not serve only to agitate the lad?”

Caught off guard, Adam had no answer. Joe’s last words to him had been an injunction to “go away,” and that bitter anger might still stand as a barrier between them. Perhaps the doctor was right in believing that his staying with Joe might only retard his recovery. Adam nodded in defeated acquiescence.

“Fine,” the resident concluded crisply. “You may see your brother between eleven and noon tomorrow and again from two to four, unless the board interposes objections, which I do not anticipate. Now, if you’ll come with me, I’ll show you where you can wait until your brother awakens from the anesthetic.”

Another bench in another hall, this one an inner corridor without windows, but the hour Adam spent there seemed short as he devoted the first portion of it to prayers of thanksgiving and the remaining time to planning his next steps. Obviously, Pa would need to be informed. There really hadn’t been time before now, and that was just as well, since he could now send word of the success of the surgery. Then, once that was taken care of, he would have dinner. Though he hadn’t eaten breakfast, Adam had only become aware of his hunger here in this hall. Then what? A trip to the bookstore, perhaps, for since he wouldn’t be allowed to keep Joe company, he would have many empty hours to fill in that lonely room at the Washington Hotel.
Adam looked up as he heard the sound of wheels rolling down the corridor and a broad smile hit his face as he recognized the figure in the bed. Standing, he hurried forward, though the raised hand of Dr. Whittaker stopped him short. “He’s still groggy,” the resident said, “so don’t be surprised if he doesn’t recognize you.”

Adam nodded and bent over his brother’s cot, which was again mounted on the bed carriage invented by his surgeon. “Hey, little buddy, how you doin’?”

Little Joe looked at the world through drug-blurred eyes, but he seemed to recognize his brother’s face. “Don’ wanna go school,” he muttered.

Adam released a light chuckle, remembering the many times a young Joe would mumble similar words when awakened on a school-day morning. He wasn’t sure whether his brother was lost in a dream of those uncomplicated days of his youth or reemphasizing his distaste for going to college. Either way, the same answer would suffice. “Okay, buddy,” Adam soothed, “you don’t have to go to school.” And however Joe may have interpreted the remark, in Adam’s heart it was a vow to never again push the issue of college with his brother.

“We should get him into his bed now,” the doctor reminded Adam.

“All right,” Adam agreed reluctantly and bent over Joe once more. “I have to go now, buddy. You get yourself a good rest, and I’ll see you in the morning.”

“‘Kay,” Joe muttered, eyelids drooping.

Adam stood in the hallway, watching until his brother’s bed was out of sight; then, having no more reason to remain in Pennsylvania Hospital, he left via the Eighth Street entrance. He should, of course, have headed directly to the offices of Western Union and sent that telegram to his father,
but he told himself that it could wait until after he’d eaten. A glance at his watch confirmed that the Washington’s dining hall would close within an hour, although if he were honest, he had time to post a telegram and get back to the hotel before two. Honesty made even deeper inroads after Adam placed his dinner order, and he was able to admit that he had delayed sending the telegram, not because he was hungry, but because he didn’t really want to send it at all.

As he waited for his meal to arrive, Adam debated the issue. He could not, of course, hide a crisis of this magnitude from his father, but it took little imagination to visualize what his father would do when that telegram arrived at the Ponderosa. Within minutes Ben Cartwright would be packing his bags and making preparations to catch the next train east, frantic with worry for the seven days it took to reach his baby son. More than likely, Hoss would be hopping that train, as well, and it wouldn’t be good to leave the ranch that short-handed, Adam rationalized. Then he checked himself. That wasn’t honest, either. Truthfully, he didn’t want his father showing up to take over. There were reasons he wanted to be left in charge, but what he wanted didn’t really matter. The only thing that mattered was what Joe needed—but did he really need Pa?

By the time Pa could get here, Little Joe would either be dead or, if he continued as he had begun, on his way to recovery. Either way, the trip east would be a futile one for their father. Knowing Ben Cartwright, though, he would want to be with his ailing son during his recovery, but that was want again, not need. Adam felt perfectly confident in his ability to provide the care his brother needed during his convalescence. More importantly, if he were to rebuild the broken relationship with Joe, he needed—yes, needed, not just wanted—unbroken time with his brother. And he could not have that if Ben Cartwright were to ride in on his iron horse, like a unit of cavalry charging to the rescue.
He could gain the time he needed by the simple stratagem of informing his father of Joe’s illness by regular mail, rather than telegraph, and a letter would afford him the opportunity to explain his actions more fully. By the time it arrived in Nevada, he should know for certain how Joe was progressing, and he could send a wire updating the boy’s condition for their father. Pa would undoubtedly skin him alive when he found out, but it was a price Adam was willing to pay.

The food arrived, but Adam dallied over it, not really looking forward to writing that letter. Then it occurred to him that he would be wiser to wait until evening, after he’d had time to compose his thoughts, and write during the hours when he could do nothing else. Another conclusion quickly followed. Since he wanted to be with Little Joe every moment he was permitted in that surgical ward and would need to be in full-time attendance on him after his dismissal from the hospital, this afternoon represented the most free time he was likely to see for several weeks. He needed to use it wisely, and Adam immediately realized that the wisest use of the remaining hours of the afternoon was to return to the Centennial, not as a tourist, but as buying agent for the Ponderosa. With that responsibility out of the way, he could devote his full attention to Joe. He hurriedly finished his dinner, foregoing dessert, and ran for a streetcar out to Fairmount Park.

He made a beeline first to Machinery Hall to buy four sets of name-bearing suspenders, just the way Joe had wanted. Then he practically ran the remaining aisles of that building, as well as the Main Exhibition Hall across the way, buying tableware and glasses and whatever else he thought the Ponderosa required and arranging for its shipment home. Every time there was a choice to be made, he selected the item that had appealed to his little brother, unless he had good reason to make a different choice. If worse came to worst, Pa and Hoss would appreciate those items all the more for knowing that their beloved son and brother had picked them.
Adam tossed his head abruptly to dislodge that thought. Joe wasn’t going to die; he was going to be just fine. Deep inside, Adam knew those doctors had been right: getting that infected appendix out had been the key. With it gone, Little Joe had every chance of recovery, and all that strong-willed, life-loving boy had ever needed, in any crisis of his life, was a fighting chance.

Only one item did Adam Cartwright purchase for himself that afternoon. As he passed the Italian pavilion, he remembered how much the wooden cherubs from Venice had reminded him of his little brother, and suddenly he had to have one of those curly-headed carvings. Returning to the hotel when the Exhibition closed for the day, he set the little figurine on the writing desk where he could see it as he began to put on paper the words he had worked out during the long rides to and from the Centennial grounds. He paused only a moment, and then began to write, the words flowing smoothly from pen to paper:

Dear Pa,

I regret to inform you that your son Joseph fell seriously ill this morning. To my shame, I must admit that I did not, at first, believe his illness was genuine and, therefore, delayed getting him the prompt medical attention his condition demanded. There were reasons I thought he was shamming, but I make no excuses. I should have examined him more closely. When I finally did, I realized the gravity of his condition and immediately summoned a doctor, who diagnosed his illness as appendicitis. Dr. Martin may be more familiar with it as perityphlitis and can certainly answer your medical questions more completely than I.

Joe’s doctor, the eminent Dr. Thomas Morton, advised surgery
for removal of the appendix before perforation, a departure from the standard treatment, but one that he and his colleague felt gave Joe a better chance of survival. I agreed to the operation over Joe’s strong personal objections because I did not consider him competent to make decisions at that point. The surgery went well, the appendix being removed prior to perforation, and Joe is stable at this time.

You may expect a telegram from me on the day this letter arrives, so that you will know his current condition within hours of reading this. If you have not received a telegram prior to the arrival of this letter, Pa, be assured that all is well with your youngest son, as I will certainly wire at once should Joe’s condition worsen in any degree.

I realize you are probably feeling intense anger with me as you read this. You are wondering why it is a letter you are receiving today and not a telegram a week ago, when these events occurred. In part, I have charted this course so that I can give you a more complete picture of Joe’s health, but I have personal reasons, as well. I hope you can forgive me, but it was something I felt I had to do.

I know your first instinct is to come here immediately, but I don’t believe there is any necessity of your making that long journey. I honestly believe I can give Joe the care he needs, so there is no need for you to neglect other responsibilities, which only you can fulfill. That isn’t my real reason for asking you not to come, however. Despite your warnings, I have treated Joe shabbily with my insistence on doing things my way and my failure to look at various situations through his eyes. I fear that my relationship with him will be at an end if I do not somehow make amends for my misguided attempts to force what I believed best on him, including the surgery that I firmly feel has saved his life. I need a chance to make it up to Joe, Pa, and there is no way I can if you are here. He’ll immediately turn to you, as he always does, and shut me out of his life, perhaps forever.
We hit the breakers, Pa, and we’re tossing about in choppy waters, just as you warned me, but I believe we can weather this storm if you’ll let me continue steering the ship. Please give me that chance. Please trust me.

Your loving and penitent son,  
Adam

Adam read the letter over, and satisfied that he’d made the best case he possibly could, he placed it in an envelope, sealed it and wrote the address on the outside. Then, picking up the wooden image of Little Joe, he carried it to his room and set it on the bedside table, so it would be the first thing he saw upon awakening. Though he found it hard to fall sleep, he finally drifted off, yearning for the morning to come when he could return to the hospital and begin his campaign to win back the heart of the carved cherub’s original.

~~ Historical Notes ~~

While Dr. Marcus Whittaker is fictitious, Dr. Reginald Fitz is a historic figure. Credited with coining the term “appendicitis,” he studied the disease extensively and in 1886 recommended that the appendix should be removed within twenty-four hours if symptoms persisted. This story makes the assumption that he might have discussed his beliefs in private prior to that date of their publication.

A British surgeon, Robert Lawson Tait, performed the first recorded appendectomy in 1880, four years past the time of this story. (Of course, if that Cartwright boy had just stayed put in the hospital, so that his case could be fully documented, medical history might read differently!) Dr.
Thomas Morton, who performed Little Joe’s surgery, is credited with the first successful appendectomy for a perforated appendix in 1887. In addition to the bed carriage mentioned in this story, he also invented a ward dressing cart.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Hands, touching him . . . a voice, calling him, but not one he knew. Little Joe moaned, turning his face into the pillow, seeking again the silent, pain-free realm of slumber. Covers pulled back, a faint breeze blowing across bare flesh, hands again. Still half-asleep, Joe reached down to push them away.

“Here now, lad, none of that,” said the voice. Joe opened his eyes to gaze groggily into the face of a big-framed man with pale complexion and rust-colored hair. “It’s sorry I am to wake you so early,” the man was saying, “but ‘tis the way of things here.”


The man bent over him with a kindly look. “Oh, me poor lad, still lost in your dreams, are ye? Or maybe ‘tis the morphine. Do ye not remember bein’ in the Pennsylvania Hospital, then? You’ve had an operation, so they tell me, so it’s the men’s surgical ward you’re on.”


“Just past four in the morning,” the Irishman replied, “a sorry time to wake a sick lad, I know, but it can’t be helped. With so many to tend, we’ve got to start early. Now lie still and let me do for you what has to be done.”

The last traces of drowsiness jolted loose as Joe felt cold
porcelain being slid beneath his buttocks. He was grateful, though, as soon as he understood what the object was and made immediate use of the bedpan. As his attendant moved to the next man to perform the same service for him, Joe glanced down the long aisle of beds, full of men like himself, either sleeping or looking as if they wished they could. He didn’t feel like counting them, but he could tell it was a large room, and that practically every bed was full, both in his aisle and in the one lining the opposite wall. The room was almost eerily quiet, virtually silent but for an occasional murmur or moan.

Finished with the bedpan, Joe called softly, “Mister?”

“Be back to you soon as I can, me boy,” the man, now two beds down, called. “I’ve six, in all, to tend to.”

Joe closed his eyes, resolving to endure the uncomfortable position until the man had time to help him, for the slightest movement brought pain to his side. Not the stabbing pain he’d felt the day before, though—more of a dull ache this time, but strong enough to keep him from moving about much.

Though the wait seemed eternal, only a few minutes actually passed before the Irishman returned to remove the bedpan. Joe sighed with relief as he again felt flat linen beneath him. He closed his eyes, still longing for sleep, but another physical sensation kept him awake, this time the touch of warm water on his bared chest. “What you doin’?” he asked blearily.

“Time for your mornin’ bath, me boy,” the Irishman chuckled cheerily, “and you’ll be wishin’ you could have another in a few hours’ time, for it gets fair hot in these wards, and you’re a good way from the window.”

“Are you a doctor?” Joe asked.

This time the attendant laughed so loudly that others working
in the ward turned to look at him in rebuke. “No, more’s the pity, for it’s a richer man I’d be if I were,” he said as he lathered Joe’s chest with soap. “I’m just Patrick, a poor bloke seekin’ his way through this world as best he can.”

“Oh,” Joe said and had no strength to carry on further conversation. He lay still and unresisting as Patrick washed his body, covered him carefully and moved on to the next bed to carry out the same routine for another patient. As Joe drifted back to sleep, questions ran through his head, only one seeming important enough to give more than momentary consideration in his weakened state: where was Adam?

* * * * *

Having spent a restless night, Adam awoke early. He smiled at the cherub sitting on his night table and swung his legs over the side of the bed. Realizing he had time to spare, he dawdled over his grooming. You’d almost think I was Joe, getting dandified for a dance, he told his reflection as he smoothed each dark hair immaculately into place. He took his time getting dressed and still had time to read that morning’s issue of the Public Ledger in its entirety before going down to breakfast.

Adam toyed with his bacon and eggs, almost as if he were the one ill, instead of Joe, too anxious to see his little brother to enjoy the meal. One paid a price, evidently, for the greater efficiency and availability of medical care here in the East. Back home, one might not receive a doctor’s attention as quickly, but neither would that doctor interfere with a family’s attendance on a sick member. To be fair, of course, that was only happening here because his brother was in a hospital. Even in the East, most families cared for their infirm at home, but in a hospital one had to submit to rules made for the good of all, even if sometimes they trespassed on the rights of an individual. Adam found it hard to respond to that philosophical wisdom in this particular
case, though, when the individual was one who meant the world to him.

Finishing the meal, he walked to the post office and mailed the letter to his father, his hand hesitating only a moment before releasing the envelope. Coming back to Chestnut Street, he paused, reminded by its nearness of Western Union, but assuring himself that he’d made the right decision for all involved by not wiring home news calculated to bring more worry than relief, he walked to Washington Square, where he rested beneath a shady oak until time to visit Joe.

He arrived at the hospital and went up to the second floor, where he’d been told he could find the men’s surgical ward. A woman in a crisp blue and white uniform, seated at a desk just outside the entrance to the large ward, stopped him and informed him that patients could not receive visitors on Saturday. “Dr. Morton and Dr. Whittaker both assured me that I could see my brother this morning,” Adam protested tersely.

The woman’s steely gaze softened at once. “Oh, of course. You must be Mr. Cartwright. There was a note on my desk concerning you this morning.”

“Then I presume I may see my brother,” Adam said, trying to speak in a more relaxed manner, though he still felt tension crawling up his spine.

“Certainly, for one hour this morning and two this afternoon,” the woman said. “Does that agree with your understanding, Mr. Cartwright?”

“Perfectly, Miss . . .”

“Miss Frances Irwin, Chief Nurse, Mr. Cartwright.”

“You’re in charge of this ward? Then, perhaps, you could tell me what kind of night my brother had,” Adam suggested.

“I supervise all the wards, Mr. Cartwright, as well as the
nurses’ training program instituted here just last year,” Miss Irwin stated with obvious pride, “although, of course, none of our female nurses directly attends any male patient. As to your brother, I couldn’t say, as I only came on duty this morning. He was sleeping restfully at that time, though. His chart did note that he had received an injection of morphine during the night.”

“He’s in pain, then?” Adam asked with concern.

“Some wound pain is quite normal after surgery, sir,” Miss Irwin assured him, “and the use of morphine standard for that purpose. It doesn’t indicate anything amiss.”

“Good.” Adam’s relief was evident in his ebony eyes.

“In fact,” the Chief Nurse continued, “I saw to it that your brother received another injection this morning, as the doctor’s orders permitted, for he seemed to be in some discomfort. I also noted that he did not touch his breakfast, but that’s not uncommon following surgery. You shouldn’t be overly concerned.”

Familiar with Joe’s typically poor appetite during illness, Adam smiled and again asked permission to enter the ward. Reminding him that his brother was probably sleeping, as were other patients, Miss Irwin asked that he enter quietly, but readily granted permission.

Adam walked in, searching for his brother’s face among the thirty or so beds in the ward. When he spotted Joe in the fourth bed from the door, he smiled and moved closer with light steps. Joe was, as the nurse had predicted, asleep, and Adam, of course, did not attempt to wake him. The boy had been through an ordeal the previous day and needed all the rest he could get. He softly touched Joe’s forehead and was relieved to feel it only slightly warm. Motivated by a mixture of concern and curiosity, Adam lifted the covers to examine his brother’s side. Since the area was swathed in
bandages, all he could see was a tube, the color of dark earth, hanging from his brother’s side—a drain, of course, necessary to combat infection, but an ugly and, most likely, uncomfortable thing.

There was a chair at the side of the bed, so after he’d eased the sheet back over the wound, Adam sat down to wait, willing his brother to wake, willing him to continue sleeping. Joe did the latter. Not once during the hour that Adam spent at his side did the boy’s eyes open. Disappointed, Adam brushed aside the lock of chestnut hair that had characteristically fallen across Joe’s forehead and before leaving the ward whispered a promise to see him later.

Having two hours to kill until he could again see Joe, Adam decided to have dinner at Fairmount Park. Since half of his time would be spent merely riding the horse cars there and back, he felt foolish, but he was too restless to simply sit in his hotel room. Besides, he’d been a bit hurried yesterday afternoon and thought it might be wise to take another walk through the Main Exhibition Hall, to be certain he hadn’t overlooked some important purchase. Beyond that, he had no desire to see any more of the Centennial until he could do so with Joe again at his side. He had no heart for the wonders of the world without that youthful perspective to freshen his vision of the familiar and intensify his awe of all that was new.

Still having time to spare after he’d eaten a light meal at the Café Leland and finished his shopping for the ranch, Adam wandered across the street to Shantyville, just because it reminded him of Joe. He meandered through the booths, remembering how he and Joe had scrounged for food on the Fourth of July. He thought about buying a bag of roasted peanuts for Joe, in remembrance of that pleasant day together, but then he realized that peanuts weren’t the best food for a boy who, thus far, hadn’t taken a bite of nourishment. Still wishing he could take some small present to his brother, Adam
spotted a balloon vendor and impulsively bought one—yellow, of course, like the one Joe had chosen that day at the zoo.

Catching the horse car, Adam struggled to keep the balloon under control as he rode back toward town. He couldn’t help noticing the stares of his fellow passengers, though most merely smiled, evidently having concluded that he was taking the balloon to a child. Not so far wrong, Adam told himself with bittersweet recollection of his first reaction to Joe’s buying a balloon, but I wouldn’t have him any other way.

The car stopped close to the hospital, and Adam wasted no time in bounding up the steps of the building, balloon in hand. Heads turned, but no one said anything. As he approached the door to the men’s surgical ward, he slowed his steps. Down the hall he saw Miss Irwin exit from another ward and waved to her as he went in to see Joe. He did not notice her hurrying down the hall after him.

Adam sighed as he once again saw his brother, sound asleep in the fourth bed, but he couldn’t begrudge the boy his needed rest. Although Adam suspected the sleep was again the result of morphine, it was obviously a peaceful one. Not wanting to hold the balloon until—or perhaps ‘if’ was more accurate—Joe awakened, Adam began to tie its string to the iron rail at the foot of his brother’s bed.

“Mr. Cartwright, what are you doing?” a brisk voice demanded.

Adam turned to see the stern face of the Chief Nurse. “Why, I’m visiting my brother, Miss Irwin,” he replied smoothly, “although I see that he’s again asleep.”

“As he should be,” the nurse said firmly. “I was referring to that.” She pointed at the yellow balloon attached to the bed rail.

Adam grinned. “I suppose it seems foolish, but I believe it will have special meaning for him.”
“You cannot leave that here, Mr. Cartwright.”

“Why?”

“Because—well, because—well, it simply isn’t in our regulations,” the nurse babbled.

“Do the regulations specifically state ‘no balloons’?” Adam asked with cocked head and quizzically arched eyebrow.

“No, not specifically,” Miss Irwin admitted, “but, really, it—it detracts from a professional appearance.”

An amused smiled skewed across Adam’s face. “If you can tell me a single way in which having something pleasant to look at will retard this boy’s recovery, or disturb any other patient, I’ll remove it, but otherwise I expect you to leave it alone.” Though his tone was pleasant, the firm set of his jaw left no question that he meant what he said, and he was quite willing to stand on his brother’s status as a paying patient to get his own way.

“Aw, leave it, ma’am,” called the patient in the next bed. “This drab place can use a spot of color.”

Miss Irwin’s lips twitched, despite her attempt to maintain professional aloofness. “Very well, Mr. Cartwright—unless the doctor specifically objects.”

“Thank you,” Adam said simply. He glanced toward his sleeping brother. “Has he been sleeping the entire time I was away or has he had another injection?”

“He was awake briefly and was given another dose of morphine after dinner,” the nursing supervisor said. “It’s standard the first day or two after surgery, Mr. Cartwright, which is why you really are wasting your time in coming to see him before Monday.”

“I don’t consider it a waste,” Adam said softly. “I’m pleased
to see him resting.”

Miss Irwin smiled, then, touched by the young man’s devotion to his brother.

“You said ‘after dinner,’” Adam recalled. “Did he eat?”

“A bit of broth,” she replied.

“Good. Thank you for speaking with me, Miss Irwin.”

The nurse nodded and returned to her desk, leaving Adam to his silent vigil at his sleeping brother’s side. Four o’clock came and Adam reluctantly took leave of Little Joe. Leaning over the bed, he whispered, “I’ll see you tomorrow, buddy,” and walked away, thinking, *I just hope you’ll see me!*

When Little Joe awoke several hours later, the first thing he saw was the bright yellow balloon, bobbing at the foot of his bed. He smiled, realizing at once who must have put it there, but he wondered why Adam himself was not with him. He finally decided that his brother must be busy visiting the Centennial. After all, it was the reason Adam had come to Philadelphia, and he had said after that fracas at the Art Annex that he wouldn’t allow Joe to spoil it for him. Joe didn’t want to spoil anything for his brother, either, but he couldn’t help feeling a bit saddened at the prospect of being left alone for who knew how long in Pennsylvania Hospital.

* * * * *

Little Joe was awakened for the second time Sunday morning, hazily opening his eyes to find his bed surrounded by six men, one of whom pulled down the linen sheet and lightweight blanket covering him, lifted his nightshirt, fumbled over his side and mumbled something about how an incision looked. Uncomfortable with the exposure, but having no strength to resist and with even his feeble protest silenced by the prompt insertion of a thermometer, Joe could only watch edgily as one
by one the doctors, as he assumed them to be, leaned over him to examine his side with probing fingertips. He recognized only one of the men, the one who had come to the hotel room, although the older man looked vaguely familiar, as well. Somewhat reassured by that doctor’s comment that he was “coming along nicely,” delivered with a pat on the knee after the covers had been replaced, Joe again fell into an exhausted sleep, only to be reawakened once more and presented with an unappetizing bowl of gruel for breakfast. After choking down a few bites he again dozed off.

Promptly at eleven, Adam stepped quietly to the side of his brother’s bed, shaking his head at the still figure lying in it. “Buddy, I am about to despair of ever finding you awake,” he sighed.

Hovering at the brink dividing daylight from dreams, Joe recognized a familiar voice and opened his eyes to smile with soft relief at the sight of his brother’s face.

Adam bent solicitously over him. “I’m sorry. Did I wake you?”

“I knew you’d come,” Joe whispered, his gaze falling on the balloon, now beginning to droop at the end of his bed.

Turning quickly to follow his brother’s line of sight, Adam was suddenly enormously glad that he’d given in to the childish urge to buy that bit of brightness. “You didn’t doubt that, did you?” he asked with concern. While he himself felt that he was abandoning Joe every time he left the hospital, he didn’t want Joe to feel that way. He certainly didn’t need that kind of misunderstanding to build a higher wall between him and his brother!

“I knew you’d come,” Joe repeated in a whisper, but it was obvious from the way his eyes stayed on the balloon that it was a token to which the boy had been clinging.
Adam rested his hand against his brother’s forehead, pleased by its coolness. “How are you feeling?”

“Tired,” Joe said, the words coming out with a pitiful whimper. “They won’t let me sleep, Adam.”

A surprised laugh burst from Adam’s lips. “Little buddy, you haven’t done anything but sleep!”

The luminous green eyes grew puzzled, then pained. Just like back at the hotel, Adam didn’t believe him. “No,” Joe insisted. “No, Adam.”

Adam tousled Joe’s hair. “You just think you haven’t slept because you’re tired, and that’s not surprising, after all you’ve been through, but I can assure you that you’ve been asleep every time I visited you.” Seeing Joe’s furrowed brow, Adam dropped his hand to his brother’s shoulder. “Look, I don’t want to keep you from your rest. Would you like me to leave, so you can sleep some more?”

Joe’s left hand crept from beneath the covers and he groped for his brother’s hand. “No, please . . . please stay.”

“As long as they’ll let me,” Adam said quickly, responding to his brother’s pleading tone. With Joe still clasping his hand, he pulled up a chair and sat down beside the bed. “Joe, has anyone explained the hospital’s visiting hours to you?” A shake of Joe’s head confirmed Adam’s suspicion, and he quickly explained that he was only allowed to visit three hours each day. “But I’ve been here every minute they would let me, and I’ll keep doing that.”

Joe had frowned at the recitation of the rules, but he smiled at his brother’s promise. His eyelids grew heavy, and several times Adam thought the boy had fallen asleep. Whenever he tried to slip his hand out of Joe’s, however, the green eyes would immediately open and the slender fingers tighten. Though uncomfortable, Adam continued to sit, quietly holding
his brother’s hand for the duration of his hour-long visit.

There were things he wanted to say to Joe, questions he ached to ask. He longed to beg the boy’s forgiveness for failing to believe him when he’d said he was ill. He yearned to ask whether Joe still hated him for forcing him into this hospital and compelling him to undergo an unwanted surgery, but Adam said nothing. Refusing to soothe his own conscience at the expense of causing Joe the slightest distress, he said almost nothing. The silence didn’t seem to bother Joe, though, so long as Adam continued to hold his hand.

Joe’s reaction when Adam stood to leave was even more pronounced than when he had merely shifted position. Adam reminded his brother that the hospital rules required that he leave by noon. “I’ll see you this afternoon, around two o’clock, Joe,” he said firmly and with determination pulled his hand free from Joe’s entreatying grasp. Settling the covers smoothly over his brother, Adam added, “You eat a good dinner, so you can get your strength back quickly, all right?” Looking decidedly unhappy, Little Joe gave a noncommittal nod, and Adam left, shaking his head, somehow doubting that the feeble acquiescence was a promise to be relied on.

As he sat in the dining room of the Washington Hotel, Adam had to admonish himself to follow the same advice he’d given his younger brother, for his own appetite was not much better than he imagined Joe’s to be. He had too much on his mind, and nothing seemed important except being with his brother. He’d seen the way the boy had been fighting sleep all through his visit and for the first time entertained the notion that the hospital might be right in formulating those restrictive rules. His presence in the ward was obviously keeping Joe from rest, as he strained to stay awake every minute Adam was with him. Odd, he never was such a clinging vine at home, Adam mused, but then he didn’t have to be. He knew one of us was always near, so he could relax, instead of grabbing for
every minute of contact. On second thought, his original opinion of those bothersome hospital rules had been the correct one, Adam concluded. Joe did need his family with him, but that wasn’t possible in the present circumstance, and the thought of his little brother, lying there, needing him, was enough to make Adam push away his plate, still half full.

He walked outside and strolled to the nearest bookstore, where he selected a couple of books for himself, one a volume on the care of invalids. *Notes on Nursing* had been in print for many years, but Adam felt there could be no better authority on the subject than Florence Nightingale. He didn’t know exactly how soon Joe would be released to his care, but he wanted to be ready to do whatever would enhance his brother’s comfort and speed his recovery, and that subject appeared to be well covered in the pioneer nurse’s treatise.

Then he began to look around for a book for Joe, who would need some form of quiet occupation during his recuperation. With a sigh he shuffled through a pile of dime novels, since Joe seemed to enjoy such fodder, but each lurid cover illustration only confirmed his belief that tales of murder, mayhem and violence would not be appropriate reading material for a young man who was supposed to be resting quietly. He wandered around the store, pondering what Joe would like and came to the conclusion that he didn’t know his little brother nearly as well as he should, for he had no idea which book to select. Oh, he’d bought Joe books all his life, ever since the youngster had spelled out his first words in a primer, but he’d always chosen what he thought the child, then boy and, finally, young man, should read. To make a selection based solely on what his little brother would enjoy, rather than on its educational benefit, was a new undertaking, and Adam felt lost until a picture flashed in his mind of Joe sitting in the booksellers’ pavilion of the Main Exhibition Hall, thumbing through an edition of Sir Walter Scott’s romantic tales. “I’ve always liked Scott,” Joe had fumed when Adam teased him.
Adam winced as he recalled Joe’s accusation that he’d been so busy looking for something to criticize that he hadn’t noticed what kind of material actually appealed to his little brother. You were right, little buddy, but I’ve learned my lesson. Scott, it is. He selected a beautifully illustrated volume of Ivanhoe, bound in red morocco leather with gilt edges, and purchased it. Even if Joe had already read the tale of medieval chivalry, as Adam suspected, he would appreciate having a copy as fine as this.

Since he had about half an hour before time to return to the hospital, Adam went to the hotel, laying the books on the desk. He wouldn’t take the gift to Joe today. The boy was obviously too tired to read, and Adam intended to encourage him to sleep this afternoon, visitor or no visitor. Perhaps by tomorrow Joe would be more alert and would welcome a new book to while away the lonely hours. Adam stretched out on the settee a few minutes, keeping an eye on his watch, so he wouldn’t miss a minute of the permitted time with his brother.

The afternoon visit went much the same as the morning one. Little Joe obviously didn’t feel like talking, but he fought every suggestion of sleep. Adam finally gave up and, except for an occasional soft-spoken sentence, just sat beside his brother, quietly stroking his arm, since Joe seemed to crave physical contact. Joe didn’t argue this time when Adam said he had to leave, probably because he was too drowsy to say much at all. At least, that was how he appeared to his older brother.

Adam returned to the hotel to stretch out on his bed until suppertime. After eating, he returned upstairs and began to read Notes on Nursing until it was time for him to turn in.

* * * *

Little Joe was again awakened before dawn on Monday morning, but while he still hated to be roused at what was, to him, an
ungodly hour, he felt alert enough to start a conversation with Patrick as the Irishman began to bathe him. “You like this kind of work?”

Patrick chuckled good-naturedly. “Sure an’ it matters not what I like, lad. ‘Tis me job.”

Joe’s nose crinkled in distaste at the thought of emptying bedpans and washing sweaty bodies for a living. “Can’t you get other work? This is an awful big city, must have lots of jobs.”

Patrick laughed, careful to keep his voice low, however. “Aye, and if I can ever pay me bail from this place, maybe I’ll be takin’ one of them.”

“Bail?” Joe looked perplexed. While he felt like he was in jail, he was surprised to hear a hospital worker speak of the place in those terms.

“Me bill, lad,” Patrick stated in a matter-of-fact manner that indicated his expectation that Joe would know what he meant. When the boy’s puzzled face communicated that he did not, Patrick went on to explain, “I hadn’t the money to pay me way, so as long as I’m here, I’ve got to help out all I can on the wards. ‘Twill be the same with you when you’re better.”

Uneasiness replaced puzzlement on Joe’s countenance. “You’re a patient, like me?” he queried nervously. “And they make you work off your bill?”

Patrick wrung out a damp cloth and began to rinse Joe’s chest. “Aye, sure, hurt in an accident at the docks, I was, and not strong enough yet for the heavy liftin’ I did there, but I will be soon, I’m thinkin’, and able to put this place behind me. Now, don’t let it fret you, lad. They won’t work you beyond your strength. ‘As you’re able’ is the rule of it.” Patrick patted Joe dry with a towel, told him he could go back to sleep if he liked and moved on to the next patient,
unaware of the distress he’d caused.

Confused by what he had heard, Joe couldn’t sleep for the troubling questions rushing through his mind. Was Adam refusing to pay his medical expenses? It wasn’t part of their original bargain, of course, but Joe hadn’t thought his brother capable of that kind of harshness. Adam had been awful angry, though, so maybe he didn’t care—or maybe he just plain didn’t have enough money. That was more like it, although it was hard to think of Adam ever running short of cash. Joe had no idea how much these fancy eastern doctors charged or how much it cost to keep him in this place, but there was a simple solution to that expense, if only he could persuade his older brother.

What happened shortly after breakfast, which Joe was too upset to eat, made him more determined than ever to talk Adam into letting him leave the hospital. The bevy of doctors again surrounded his bed, ignoring his demand to be left alone. A dozen curious eyes raked over his side, and the oldest man in the group announced that the patient showed no signs of infection, and therefore, it was time for his drainage tube to be removed. He asked who had not performed that procedure, and three hands were raised. “You do it then, Chambers,” the man who appeared to be in charge suggested.

Chambers lumbered to Joe’s side, took hold of the earth-tone tube and gave it a firm yank. Joe screamed, bolting upright, and several sets of hands pressed him to the bed.

“Sorry, son,” the older doctor said. He turned to castigate Chambers for his reckless and needless haste. “Johnson, you take over and stitch up that opening, hopefully with a more sensitive hand than this oaf.”

“No, go away,” Joe pleaded, eyes wide with terror.

“Easy, lad.” Dr. Morton patted the patient’s shoulder.
Johnson, as tall and lanky as Chambers had been short and stout, approached the patient with a nervous gait. “Uh, sh-should I anesthetize the patient, Dr. Morton?”

“For a couple of stitches?” Dr. Morton snorted. “Just put them in quickly and smoothly.”

“After all, westerners are reported to be a hardy lot,” the doctor who had come to the hotel announced with a chuckle, “more accustomed to biting on a bullet than to civilized anesthesia.”

“Nonsense, Whittaker,” Dr. Morton scolded. He patted Joe’s shoulder again. “Over soon, son. Try to relax and it will hurt less.”

If this was an example of something that ‘hurt less,’ Joe decided he didn’t want to experience these doctors’ idea of what would hurt more. Johnson made a genuine effort to stitch quickly and smoothly, as instructed, but his edgy hand shook as he inserted the needle into Joe’s flesh. The patient’s sharp grunt of pain halted him in mid-stitch, and he had to be encouraged to continue. Fortunately, only two stitches were required to close the small opening.

As the doctors and students moved on to their next victim, as Joe viewed his fellow patient, he lay still, eyes closed, lower lip quivering, waiting for the pulling pain to subside. It did, eventually, though not before the doctors finished their rounds and left the ward. Joe hitched himself up in the bed and began practicing a healthy smile.

When Adam arrived that morning, he was surprised to see Joe sitting up in bed. Though at first pleased, he noticed the strain on his brother’s face and quickly discerned that the boy was trying too hard to look well. Joe’s first words were a confirmation of that observation. “I’m feelin’ a lot better today, Adam.”
Adam pulled the straight-backed chair up next to Joe’s bed.  
“I’m glad to hear that, Joe,” he said, mouth quirking to one side, and sat down to await the wheedling that was sure to follow.

“I’m ready to go home, if you’ll have me,” Joe said, trying without success to keep his voice from quavering.

Reminding himself to be patient, Adam rubbed the back of Joe’s hand.  “It’s not a question of whether I’d have you,” he said calmly, “but of what is best for you.  It’s much too soon for you to leave your bed, Joe.  Your own body should tell you that—and don’t think for one minute that you’re fooling me with this sudden display of hearty health.”

Joe’s emerald eyes began to swim.  “If you can’t pay the bill here, Pa will,” he pleaded.  “I’m too sick to be nursin’ folks, Adam.  I-I don’t even think I could stand it if I was feelin’ good.”

“What?”  Adam drawled out the word as he stared at Joe in total confusion; then he laid his palm against the boy’s forehead to check for fever, delirium being the only explanation he could think of for the irrational speech.

Joe brushed his brother’s hand aside.  “I shoulda known you wouldn’t care.  You never think I pull my weight—not at home, not here.”  He turned his face aside, refusing to look at his brother.

Adam stood, placing his hands on his brother’s slim shoulders.  “Joe, what’s bothering you, boy?”

Joe flinched violently away, groaning as the movement sent a jab of pain through his side.  “Go away!”

The Chief Nurse, checking on patients across the room, heard the outcry and moved quickly to Joe’s side.  “Is he in pain?” she asked Adam solicitously.  “I know he suffered some
discomfort when they removed his drainage tube this morning."

"Some?" Joe gave a half-hysterical cackle. "Some, she says!"

"I think he’s just a bit overwrought," Adam replied, touching a soothing hand to Joe’s shoulder.

"Now, we can’t have that," Miss Irwin stated adamantly. "Perhaps a sedative would be in order. Dr. Morton did authorize it, if needed."

"No," Joe snapped, eyes jerking back to glare at the nurse.

Adam bent over his brother, urging him to relax and then rose up to speak to Miss Irwin. "I don’t think that will be necessary," he said, knowing Joe’s aversion to medication, a sentiment he shared. "You’re going to settle down now, aren’t you, Joe?"

Little Joe recognized the warning in his older brother’s words and with a furtive glance at the nurse, whispered meekly, "Yes."

Nurse Irwin gave her patient careful scrutiny, and while not taken in by the swift transformation, she decided not to push the issue of sedation unless continued agitation warranted it. "I would still prefer to see him lying down," she said firmly.

“And so he shall,” Adam promised, sliding his arm behind Joe’s back to ease him into a reclining position, his face and manner declaring that the edict was not to be disputed.

It was an expression with which Little Joe was well familiar, having frequently seen it on his father’s face, so he acquiesced without argument, although his eyes continued to shimmer with unshed tears.

When Miss Irwin walked back across the room, Adam adjusted his brother’s pillow. "Do you still want me to leave?"
Joe shook his head.

“Shall we start over, then? Good morning, Joe.”

“It would be if you’d take me home,” Joe suggested.

Adam took a deep, controlling breath and exhaled with a gust. “When I said ‘start over,’ I did not mean on the same subject,” he said tersely. “I’ve already told you that you’re not well enough to leave the hospital, and if you persist in this direction, you’re only going to upset yourself and have Miss Irwin running for a hypodermic needle. Is that what you want?”

Joe bit his lower lip, but said nothing. Seeing the nervousness, Adam chided himself for being overly firm with a sick boy and attempted to open a safer topic. “Did you have a restful night?” he asked gently.

“Okay, I guess.” Joe looked away. What was the use of saying anything about how things really were here? Adam wouldn’t believe him anyway. Adam would never believe him about anything, ever again.

Adam sat down, resting one ankle over his opposite knee. “Looks like it’s going to be hot as a firecracker again today,” he observed, “twenty-second day in a row, according to the newspaper.” The Public Ledger had also mentioned several heat-related deaths, but Adam chose to omit that particular detail from his discussion of the weather. Joe had problems of his own, and “death” was a word that Adam found uncomfortable in any conversation with his younger brother just now. Instead, he chatted on, mentioning several more news items he thought might interest Joe, but the boy just lay there, quietly listening, but making no comment whatsoever.

As the minutes crawled toward noon, Adam discovered just how hard it was to carry on a one-sided conversation, and he was rather grateful when he saw Miss Irwin appear in the doorway
and stare pointedly at him. “Time for me to go now, Joe,” he said, standing and pushing the chair back against the wall.

Joe’s face suddenly became animated. “No,” he pleaded. “Don’t go yet; it can’t be time so soon.”

Soon? Adam felt as though he’d been in that room for hours, but obviously Joe’s perspective was quite different. Sympathetic as he was, however, Adam knew he could not yield to those pleading eyes. “Don’t you think I ever get hungry, little brother?” he quipped, in an effort to lighten the mood. “I’d like to have some dinner—and you need to eat yours.”

Joe closed his fingers on the tail of Adam’s frock coat. “I’m not hungry; you can have mine if you stay.”

Adam eased the fabric from his brother’s fingers and resolutely laid Joe’s hand flat on the mattress. “That will not do, young man,” he stated authoritatively, cringing as he heard his poor imitation of Pa. Joe’s lower lip began to tremble, and Adam knew tears were not far behind. “Joe,” he said in a softer, less paternal voice, “I know your appetite disappears when you’re sick, but you know you need nourishment to heal properly.”

“The food’s terrible, Adam,” Joe pouted.

Adam patted his brother’s shoulder. “I’m sure it’s not up to Hop Sing’s standard—or even that of the Washington Hotel—but you eat, anyway. That’s an order.” Pleased to see Joe responding to the gentler approach, Adam smiled. “I have to leave now, but I’ll be back in about two hours. You behave yourself and maybe I’ll bring you something, all right?”

For the first time that morning Joe smiled back, in fond memory of the times Adam had appeased him with a similar promise when headed into town alone, and he responded with the same words he’d used as a child. “I’ll be good.”
Sharing the same recollection, Adam chuckled, ruffled his brother’s hair, just as he’d done back then, and took his leave.

For the first time in days he enjoyed his dinner of roast pork and stewed apples and even ordered a slice of lemon cheesecake for dessert. Little Joe was obviously feeling better today. Even the complaint about the quality of food at the hospital indicated improvement, for the day before Joe hadn’t been interested enough in food to complain. *Maybe I’ll have to sneak in a bonbon or two,* Adam mused over a final cup of coffee, *but not yet. Got to get him eating proper food first; then I’ll risk a treat.* This afternoon he would take the book to Joe, since he was more alert and might enjoy reading. *And maybe he’ll make less fuss about my leaving if he has good old Scott to keep him company.*

Little Joe was obviously delighted with the book when Adam presented it to him at two o’clock. “It’s beautiful,” he murmured, running his hand over the rich red binding.

“I hope it’s not one you already have,” Adam offered tentatively. “I know you said you liked Scott, but I couldn’t remember seeing this title on your shelf.”

“I have it,” Joe said, “but just a paper-covered copy, nothing like this.”

*Of course,* Adam realized. A number of publishers had put out cheap editions of popular works, some for as little as two bits a copy, and Joe would, of necessity, have purchased those, instead of the finely bound volumes his older brother prized. *Do you suppose that’s why he buys dime novels, because that’s what he can afford? I really haven’t paid much attention, have I, little brother?*

“Will you read some to me now?” Joe asked, shaking Adam from his reverie.
“Sure, buddy,” Adam said at once, taking the volume from Joe and sitting down. Florence Nightingale had advised against reading aloud to patients, alleging that few could do it well enough for the sick to tolerate, but Adam had read to his younger brothers from childhood up and knew that both Hoss and Joe enjoyed his flair for expression, especially when they were confined to bed. He opened the book and began to read. He continued for about an hour, when, coming to the end of a chapter, he noticed Joe’s eyelids drooping. Closing the book, he set it aside on the bedside table.

Joe stirred, legs moving restlessly beneath the covers. “Don’t stop,” he begged.

“No, you need to sleep,” Adam said. “No argument, Joe, and no more fighting the urge to drift off. The book will be here when you wake up.”

“But I want you to read it,” Joe wheedled.

“Fine, I will—tomorrow.”

Joe looked intently at his brother’s face and saw no sign of weakness, so with a sigh of resignation, he snuggled down in the bed and slipped into the welcoming arms of slumber. Adam remained until four o’clock, and then returned to the hotel.

* * * * *

As Adam entered the men’s surgical ward the next morning, he hoped to find his younger brother in a better frame of mind than the day before, but one glance at Joe’s tense face and the fingers wringing the covers disabused him of that delusion. “Rough night, kid?” he asked as he sat down beside Joe.

Joe had actually slept well, but another early morning arousal and another futile struggle to keep those doctors from prying beneath his nightshirt had left him exhausted and edgy.
“Can’t I go home today?” he implored.

Mentally counting to ten, Adam reached out to free the sheet from Joe’s frenetic fingers. “We discussed this yesterday, remember? It’s still too soon, Joe.”

Joe clutched his brother’s hand in entreaty. “Adam, please. I don’t feel up to working here, but as soon as I’m on my feet, I’ll see you get your money back.”

Adam’s forehead furrowed. Twice now Joe had voiced the same concern, and he seemed rational, so something must lie behind it. “Joe, what are you talking about?”

“The bill,” Joe whispered.

Adam laughed. “Don’t worry about that; it’s all taken care of.”

Joe shook his head. “No, he said . . . .”

“Who?” Adam demanded, coming to his feet. “Who said what?”

Joe squirmed a little, wincing as a twinge twittered along his stitches. “The man who takes care of me every morning. He said patients, like him and me, that can’t pay have to work off their bill. Don’t make me do that, Adam, please.”

Adam gave his brother’s temple a comforting stroke. “Joe, I don’t know what you’re talking about, but no one’s going to put you to work—here or elsewhere. Whatever you’ve heard doesn’t apply to you because I’ve already made arrangements to pay your board here.”

Joe’s worried eyes were riveted on his brother’s face. “You did? Honest?”

“Yes, of course,” Adam answered quickly, appalled that his brother would for one moment believe that he wouldn’t cover his medical expenses. Have I been so stringent with the boy
that he honestly thinks I’d begrudge him anything he needed, whatever the cost?  “Look, the only reason you’re not in a private room is that they didn’t have one available, because of the large crowds in town for the Centennial. I’m sorry someone has upset you with this nonsense, but it simply isn’t true.”

Joe bit his lip. “You got enough?”

Adam smiled, again taking his seat. “If I don’t, I know where to get it. No more worrying, understood?”

Looking relieved, Joe sank back into his pillow. “Thanks.”

Noting the paleness of his brother’s face, Adam suggested that he try to sleep awhile.

“I’ll sleep when you leave,” Joe bargained. “Read to me?”

Adam shook his head. “You’ll sleep now—and if you look well rested when I return this afternoon, I’ll read to you then.”

Joe pouted, but when that didn’t have any effect on his older brother, either, he sighed and closed his eyes, a soft smile curving his lips as Adam started to croon a slow melody. Despite his intent to stay awake, Joe drifted to sleep on the song.

As soon as he was sure Joe was asleep, Adam slipped out to find Miss Irwin and pose some pertinent questions about the use of patients as attendants at the hospital. She willingly confirmed that recovering patients were used, not only as nursing assistants, but for janitorial duties, cooking and laundry, as well, though she assured him that no patient was ever asked to do anything beyond his or her physical capability. “That is one way we keep this institution on a stable financial footing, Mr. Cartwright,” the Chief Nurse informed him, “but, obviously, no paying patient is required to perform such duties. I assure you that I will determine
who disturbed your brother and see that he is suitably reprimanded.”

“No, there’s no need for that,” Adam said, his sympathy for the unknown patient aroused. “I’m sure it was done in innocence, and the mistake is quite understandable since my brother is in the public ward. I would appreciate your correcting the man’s misinformation, however, so that Joseph is not disturbed by any further revelations that do not relate to him.”

“Certainly, Mr. Cartwright. Thank you for being so understanding.”

Adam nodded and went back to take his place at Joe’s side. Little Joe didn’t wake before the visiting hour ended, however, so Adam left quietly. After dinner, he walked to the Philadelphia Library and read all he could about Pennsylvania Hospital. Although hospital care had improved greatly since the days when the insane were housed in the basement of the building where Joe now lay and exhibited to a paying public for support of the charity wards, more changes were needed, in Adam’s opinion. The more he read, the more he understood Joe’s eagerness to leave the place and be back with his brother. Adam resolved to be more patient with those urgent pleas to “go home.”

Taking out his pocket watch, Adam checked the time and was dismayed to see that it was already past two o’clock. Thinking it fortunate that Little Joe didn’t have a timepiece with him, Adam shut the book he was reading, leaving it on the table for the librarian to re-shelve and hurried back to the hospital.

While Joe didn’t have a watch, he did, however, possess a fairly accurate internal clock, and he was visibly upset when Adam walked in. “I thought you weren’t coming,” he fussed.

Adam stroked his shoulder. “Joe, Joe, I’ll always come.”
“I’d rather you took me with you,” Joe urged, biting his lip as he waited to be rebuked.

Adam just gave the boy’s shoulder a soothing stroke. “You’re not strong enough yet, but soon, little brother, soon. Now, how about some more *Ivanhoe*?” At Joe’s nod, Adam picked up the book and began to read. Noticing that his audience included the men on either side of his brother, he raised his voice slightly as he continued the adventures of Sir Wilfred and the fair Rowena.

~ ~ Historical Notes ~ ~

Miss Frances Irwin was appointed Chief Nurse at Pennsylvania Hospital in 1875 and served three years in that capacity. As indicated in the story, it was not considered appropriate at that time for female nurses to attend male patients, and that attitude did not change until 1885, when they were first assigned to the men’s medical ward.

The following resources are recommended for those wishing more information about hospital care in nineteenth-century America:

*The Care of Strangers: The Rise of America’s Hospital System* by Charles E. Rosenberg

*The History of the Pennsylvania Hospital, 1751-1895* by Thomas G. Morton

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Little Joe had been determinedly bright-eyed and cheery ever since his older brother walked into the ward Wednesday morning, so Adam was not the least bit surprised when, about halfway into the visit, the boy hinted to leave the hospital. “I’m feeling really, really good, Adam,” he asserted with what he hoped was a convincing lilt in his voice.
Adam covered his mouth with his hand, so Joe wouldn’t see his twitching lips. Sometimes the kid was just so predictable it was hard not to laugh, but Adam knew he didn’t dare. Dropping his hand, he said softly, “Liar.”

The façade fell abruptly away, and hurt filled the emerald eyes. “No, Adam, I do feel better,” Joe insisted.

“Oh, I believe you,” Adam chuckled. “I just think ‘really, really good’ is stretching the truth—by a country mile.”

Joe’s chin started to quiver as he faced the prospect of remaining in the hated hospital. “Please, Adam. I don’t like it here. They won’t let me sleep, the food’s awful, and they gawk at me all the time like I’m in a sideshow in Shantyville. I hate it!”

Adam laid a calming hand on his brother’s shoulder. “What do you mean they ‘gawk’ at you?” he asked, having learned the previous day that Joe’s complaints merited investigation.

Joe scowled. “I guess they’re doctors, but there’s so many of them, and they poke and prod—and—and just plain gawk.”

With a degree of chagrin, Adam nodded his understanding. “Some of them are medical students,” he explained, “and I’m afraid you have me to blame for the ‘gawking,’ Joe. I gave a rather blanket permission for any doctor or medical student to examine you.”

“Why?” Joe demanded.

Adam took a deep breath as he tried to decide how much to tell his younger brother. “You may not realize this, Joe,” he began, “but the operation Dr. Morton performed on you is a new procedure, so naturally, all the doctors and their students are interested in your case because of that.” He put on his most persuasive smile. “Just think, Joe, you may be helping to advance the cause of medical science and—”
"I don’t care about medical science!" Joe yelped.

“—and, thereby, helping doctors treat other people stricken with the same condition,” Adam continued as if he hadn’t heard the interruption. “You care about that, don’t you?”

Joe shook his head violently. “All I care about is getting out of here, Adam.”

Adam kneaded his forehead. Okay, so diplomacy wasn’t going to work, much less an appeal to altruism. “Just try to show a little more patience, all right, Joe?” he suggested. “You’re recovering nicely, and you shouldn’t have to be here much longer.”

“I don’t need to be here any longer, Adam,” Joe insisted.

Adam held up a hand. “That’s enough.” Although it was still ten minutes ‘til noon, he stood up. “I’m going to dinner now, and I hope to find you in a better mood when I return this afternoon.”

“But, Adam . . .”

“No.” Lips set in a straight line, Adam turned and walked out of the ward, and Little Joe slumped down in his bed.

Adam’s hope of finding his little brother in a better mood was, predictably, destined for defeat. While Joe listened quietly to the reading of Ivanhoe, it was obvious that his attitude remained exactly what it had been that morning, and as the visiting hours drew to a close, Adam again had to fend off a plea to go with him. “You sure don’t give up easy, do you?” he said with exasperated respect. With a hand resting on Joe’s head, he adopted a soothing tone. “I know it’s hard, buddy, but you need time to recover from an operation as serious as the one you had.”

“I know,” Joe conceded, “but you can take better care of me than these people, Adam, and I won’t give you any trouble, I
Adam laughed. “That’ll be the day!” He took a breath and continued, his expression now serious. “Joe, I want you to quit begging me to take you out of this hospital. It hurts me to hear it, and it hurts me to say no repeatedly, but I have to do what I believe is best for you, whether you like it or not.”

Joe flopped back on the pillow and refused to acknowledge Adam, even when his older brother said good-bye for the day. Joe was upset, especially since he knew there was no point in arguing with Adam, who had always been the hardest-headed, hardest-to-sway Cartwright on the Ponderosa. Little Joe had been able to wrap Hoss around his little finger from the time he began to toddle, and even Pa had a soft spot in his heart for the wheedling of his youngest son. Adam, on the other hand, could always be counted on to stand like granite once he made a decision. That solidity comforted Joe when Adam was on his side, but when they were at odds, it infuriated him and frequently drove Joe to take matters into his own hands.

That was what happened that night. After hours of lying awake, trying to think of new ways to convince Adam that he really was well enough to leave the hospital, Joe gave it up as a futile effort. If he wanted out, he would have to get out on his own. Years of experience in sneaking out of his room at home convinced Joe that he could do the same here, even if the surroundings were unfamiliar. He knew the hotel was only a few blocks away, for he’d seen the hospital when he’d strolled around town that first day in Philadelphia. Walking those few blocks might be rough, given the way he felt, but once he showed up, Adam would have to take him in. Away from this place, Joe was sure he’d have a better chance of convincing his brother that he didn’t need to come back. Why, the walk itself would prove that!

When the Chief Nurse made her customary check before retiring
for the night at ten o’clock, Little Joe feigned sleep. His plan would fall apart at the first step if he were to be sedated, but he’d had plenty of practice in fooling Pa into thinking he was fast asleep, and tricking Miss Irwin was far less a challenge. With all lights extinguished, by regulation, the long room grew dark, but Joe waited another half hour, as best he could judge the time, before he rolled to one side and pushed himself up with both hands. His breath hitched in sharply as pain assaulted his side, but after he’d stood still for a couple of minutes the soreness subsided. Reaching for the rail at the foot of his bed, Joe took a step, and then slowly moved along the row of beds, using the foot rail of each one for support.

He came to the last bed and took a deep breath to inspire his courage, for the door suddenly seemed miles away, with nothing to give him support on the journey. Releasing the bed rail, he walked toward the exit with determined, though wobbly, steps. *Weak as a kitten, Hoss would say; that’s what layin’ in bed all day will do for you,* Joe told himself. He opened the door, narrowly, and slipped into the dimly lighted hallway, immediately leaning against the wall to rest from the effort. He scowled as he looked down and noticed his nightshirt. Not exactly the proper attire for a public street, but he consoled himself with the thought that it was dark out and more than likely no one would see him—at least, until he reached the lobby of the Washington Hotel.

Refusing to cross that bridge until he came to it, Joe pressed one hand against the wall as he began walking down the hallway toward the stairs, another bridge he’d have to cross if he were to get to Adam. He had almost reached that bridge when he came face to face with the night watchman, whose job it was to walk the halls and check each ward during the hours when the regular hospital staff was sleeping. “Where do you think you’re going, boy?” the short, but hefty man demanded, for Joe’s attire was a dead giveaway to his status in this
hospital.

“Just . . . out,” Joe said, trying to move past the man.

“I don’t think so, son,” the watchman said, placing a solid hand on each of the boy’s shoulders.

“Let me go,” Joe cried, trying to shift out of the man’s grasp. He gasped at the stitch of pain the movement provoked.

“Come on, now, back to your bed,” the man urged. “Which ward did you come from?”

When Joe refused to answer and still continued to struggle for release, the man took tight hold of Joe’s biceps and steered him toward the Chief Nurse’s desk, reaching behind it to pull a cord that would ring a bell downstairs to summon help. Soon footsteps clattered up the stairs and Joe found himself surrounded by people determined to block his efforts to escape. In addition to the watchman, a man Pa’s age grabbed hold of Joe, who continued to twist and turn, trying to break free.

“Stop that!” Miss Frances Irwin ordered as she looped the sash of her robe. “Stop struggling at once, young man! Do you wish to break open your surgical stitches?”

“Let me go!” Joe shouted.

“Is it the surgical ward he belongs on, then?” the night watchman asked.

“Yes,” Miss Irwin replied, “the fourth bed. Please return him there, Mr. Jamison.”

“Right away, ma’am.” The burly man, with the assistance of the second orderly, began wrestling Joe back toward the ward.

Dr. Whittaker bounded up the stairs, face red with fury at the scene. “Get him into bed—but carefully.” With Miss Irwin
close behind him, he followed the men into the ward and watched as Joe was forcibly laid on his bed.

Joe immediately tried to get up again, but again hands held him down. “Let me go!” Joe yelled.

“Lie still and be quiet,” Dr. Whittaker hissed, and when Joe did neither, the resident turned to Miss Irwin. “I want this patient put in restraints—and you’d better administer a sedative. We can’t allow this commotion to disturb our other patients.” Heads were already being raised in nearby beds.

“I’ll see to it immediately, doctor,” the nurse said, leaving the ward.

As the restraints were fastened to his wrists, Joe collapsed in exhaustion. “No, don’t do that,” he begged. “Please, no.”

“You brought this on yourself, young man,” Dr. Whittaker stated sternly.

The older orderly grunted in disapproval. “Count your blessings, boy. Back when I was a patient here, long years ago, they had harder ways of dealing with rule-breakers like you than just tying them down and putting them to sleep.” He shot a fierce look at the resident. “Maybe a nice cold shower would take the fire out of him, doctor. I’ve seen it work wonders.”

Dr. Whittaker waved the suggestion aside. “That day is past.”

Miss Irwin returned, hypodermic syringe in hand. The restraints made it impossible for Joe to resist, and the sedative soon sent him into the oblivion of sleep.

* * * * *

Adam arrived on the second floor slightly before eleven o’clock, hoping Miss Irwin would not hold him to the exact minute. Since she was not at her desk to object, he simply
walked in. As he approached the fourth bed, however, he was shocked to find his brother in restraints, as he had been when first brought to the hospital. “What’s this about?” he asked.

Joe raised pleading eyes to his brother’s face. “Adam, help me, please,” he whispered weakly.

With a nod Adam at once unfastened the straps and began to rub the wrists chafed by pulling against the leather. “Tell me what happened, Joe.”

Little Joe nibbled at his lower lip. “I—I just wanted to be with you; I was coming to you.”

Adam’s head jerked up abruptly. “Are you telling me you tried to leave this hospital?” When Joe turned away, unable to meet his eyes, he took hold of Joe’s chin and pulled his face around. “Answer me at once!”

Joe nodded, eyes flicking nervously from side to side. “Yes.”

“Yes, you tried to leave?” Unable to believe that even Joe would do something that unbelievably stupid, Adam demanded confirmation.

“I just wanted to be with you,” Joe said again, the words a plea for understanding. “Please don’t be mad.”

Though horrified, Adam forced his voice to sound calm. “I’m not angry, Joe, but that was very foolish. I’m not surprised they put you in restraints after a stunt like that. You could have seriously injured yourself and, therefore, obviously needed protection.”

As tears started to form in his younger brother’s eyes, Adam felt a vise tighten around his heart. If Joe was this miserable here, it was time to take his complaints seriously. It was obvious from looking at the boy’s drawn face that he was no longer improving, and more behavior of this sort would have him spiraling downhill fast. “Joe, I’ll speak with the
doctor as soon as I can about when you can leave the hospital.”

For the first time since he had entered the institution, Joe’s eyes lighted with hope.

Adam pointed an authoritative finger at his brother’s nose. “But you have to promise me you won’t cause any further problems—no more attempts to escape, whatever the result of that meeting.”

Joe grimaced. “Wouldn’t do any good to try,” he muttered glumly.

Having seen Joe squirm around straight answers before, Adam cleared his throat. “That is not a promise, and I am not leaving here until I get one.”

“I promise,” Joe agreed with obvious reluctance, “but get me out of here, Adam—please.”

“It may be this afternoon before I catch Dr. Morton, so don’t worry if I’m later than usual,” Adam admonished.

“Okay, but you will come?”

“Of course, I will,” Adam assured him. “That’s a promise, little brother.”

Joe willingly let his brother leave, and when Adam walked out, he saw Miss Irwin at her desk.

“Mr. Cartwright,” the Chief Nurse said, rising. “I didn’t realize you were here.”

“I arrived somewhat early,” Adam explained. “Had you been here, I would have requested permission before entering the ward.”

“I was hoping to speak with you before you visited your brother,” the nurse said. “I presume you’ve seen the
restraints. There was an incident last night.”

“Joe told me,” Adam said, not wanting to waste time on needless repetition, “and I appreciate his being prevented from leaving the hospital last night. I would like to discuss his case with Dr. Morton, however, if you can tell me where to find him.”

“Dr. Morton is not in the hospital today,” Miss Irwin stated. “Dr. Whittaker is in charge of your brother’s case for now, but I’m afraid he was called away, as well, though he is expected by one o’clock.”

“I’ll return at one, then,” Adam said and walked back into the ward.

“I thought you were gonna see the doc,” Joe said.

“He’s not here right now, so I thought I’d spend a little more time with you,” Adam said, taking a chair. Looking carefully at his brother, he noticed the boy’s evident exhaustion. “Did you get any sleep last night?”

“Some,” Joe said. “They stuck a needle in me.”

Adam nodded. “You still look tired to me, so I want you to close your eyes and try to rest.”

Joe didn’t argue, whether because he was too tired or because he wanted to present a picture of how obedient he would be under his older brother’s care, Adam couldn’t tell. It didn’t really matter, he decided, as he began to sing softly, so long as Joe slept.

Leaving his brother asleep, Adam went to the hotel at noon and mulled over the situation while he waited for his dinner order to arrive. He shook his head with an ironic smile as he realized that this was the day his letter would arrive at the Ponderosa, carrying the promise of a telegram to follow the same day. Yesterday he would have simply informed his father
that all was going well, but now he scarcely knew what to put in that message. He really needed to speak with the doctor first, but he might not have time to do that, get a wire sent and return to Joe by two o’clock. Today, of all days, he didn’t dare be late. Even though he had warned Joe that he might be delayed, Adam felt he couldn’t trust the kid not to panic if he didn’t show up on time.

He finally decided to send a wire, reporting that Joe was continuing to improve and that he would be speaking to the doctor that afternoon about his release from the hospital. Not the full truth, of course, but not a bald-faced lie, either. Joe had been improving and probably would continue to do so, once this problem was resolved. Maybe all the kid needed was a definite time limit to his hospital stay. Adam grimaced. More likely, that was an overly optimistic view of the prospects ahead of him, one of which might well be the necessity of sending a second telegram, contradicting everything he’d said in the first. What hide he had left after Pa got through flailing him for the contents of the original letter would probably be ripped off once Pa learned that his eldest son had misled him about Joe’s situation.

The more Adam considered the matter, however, the more convinced he became that while the operation had, without doubt, saved Joe’s life, staying in the hospital had become a positive hindrance to his further progress. Adam planned to argue strongly for the boy’s early release, and he felt confident in his ability to make the case. After all, on other occasions he’d acted as advocate for Joe before a much tougher tribunal, that of Judge Benjamin Cartwright. His dinner arrived, but Adam scarcely noticed what he was eating, while he wondered who would act as his advocate before that seat of justice when Pa finally got a full report of all that had gone on here in Philadelphia. As he ate, Adam formulated his own defense, ending with his closing argument. And, Pa, if I am ever again so foolish as to boast that I can handle
that boy, you have my personal permission to plant your boot in my backside!

* * * * *

Hoss was whistling as he came through the front door of the Ponderosa ranch house. Sitting at his desk, Ben smiled at the sound and called out, “You sound cheerful.”

Hoss turned the corner of the alcove to grin broadly at his father. “You will be, too, when you see what I brung back from town.” He took an envelope from his vest pocket and held it out.

Ben came around the desk to take the unopened letter and read its return address. “That Joseph,” he complained. “I specifically told him to write, but I get almost two letters from Adam to every one from that rascal.”

Hoss shrugged. “Aw, Pa, you know that youngun ain’t much for letter writin’, any more than I ever been.”

Ben arched a dark eyebrow, flecked with silver strands, at his middle son. “You could both take a lesson from your older brother, but I frankly expected Adam to see to it that I heard from my youngest son, as well.”

“Maybe Joe put a note in with Adam’s letter,” Hoss suggested.

“Yeah,” an unconvinced Ben grunted. He reached behind him to take a letter opener from the desk and slit the envelope. Drawing out the single sheet of stationery, he read it, front and back, color washing from his face.

Hoss’s broad brow creased with concern. “What is it, Pa? Bad news?”

Ben wordlessly handed the letter to Hoss and headed for the stairs.
Hoss looked down at the sheet in his hand and began to read, furrows in his forehead deepening. When he came to the end, he folded the letter, laid it down on his father’s desk and climbed to the second floor. Instinctively, he aimed for his father’s room at the end of the hall, not in the least surprised to see the open carpetbag sitting on the bed.

“‘Trust me, Pa’ he says—when he’s kept back things he knew I would want to know immediately,” Ben was ranting as he stuffed a shirt into the valise.

Hoss’s face scrunched up, almost as if he were the one getting the tongue-lashing, instead of his absent older brother, for whom it was obviously intended. “Pa?”

“Wants to spare me the trip, does he?” Ben continued to fume. “As if I’d stay here when my boy needs me!”

“Pa,” Hoss said more insistently.

Ben’s head jerked in his son’s direction. “What?” he snapped.

Hoss tried to act innocently curious. “Where you goin’, Pa?”

Ben glared at his middle son, defying him to continue the act. “Where do you think?”

Hoss leaned against the doorjamb. “Offhand, I’d say Philadelphia, and to be honest, I feel like packin’ up myself and headin’ there to bring that youngun home, where I can look after him proper, but I ain’t so sure it’s the right thing to do, Pa, for me nor you, either.”

“Did I ask your opinion?” Ben demanded as he turned to take underwear and socks from his bureau drawer.

Hoss gulped, for while he had probably drawn his father’s ire less frequently than either of his brothers, he was always more immediately affected by it than they were. “No, sir,” he said, voice apologetic and firm at the same time, “but I’d
Ben took a deep breath, reminding himself that it wasn’t—and almost never was—this son with whom he had a grievance. “You want to defend your brother, I presume.” He couldn’t keep the cynicism from his voice.

Hoss came closer, circling the massive mahogany bedpost with his beefy hands. “Pa, it ain’t a matter of defendin’ Adam. For all I know, he might’ve made the wrong decision. Fact is, he says he’s made some wrong decisions, not done right by Joe and all. Likely, he’s bein’ too hard on hisself, like only Adam can be, but you can tell just from the letter that Adam’s feelin’ some powerful guilt, and I think you’d best let him work it out his own way.”

Ben sat down on the edge of the bed and looked up at his eldest son’s advocate. “Hoss, that would be fine if Adam were the only son involved here, but he isn’t. Joseph is ill; he needs me and has no doubt needed me for almost a week now, and I will not overlook his need, just to assuage Adam’s guilty conscience.”

Hoss nodded his agreement. “No, sir, I wouldn’t want you to, but if Joe really is doin’ good, he mightn’t need you, after all, not by now.”

Ben shook his head. “We don’t know that.”

Hoss reached over to lay a hand on his father’s slumped shoulder. “We don’t know anything different, either. Adam says he’s gonna be telegraphin’ this afternoon. Maybe you oughta see how Joe’s doin’ before you traipse all that way back east and go interferin’ in the best chance them two’ll ever have to come together. Adam’s right, Pa. The minute you show up, Joe’ll cozy right up to you, and Adam won’t have no more chance to make things right.”

Ben ran his hand raggedly through his thick silver mane. “I
suppose we could ride in and see what that telegram says.” Seeing Hoss’s wide-mouthed grin, he added firmly, “However, I fully intend to be packed and ready to take the next train east if Joseph is not on the road to recovery.”

Hoss nodded, realizing he would get no further concession from his father. Though tempted to pack a bag himself, he decided to trust his older brother. After all, Adam had said he’d send word if Little Joe was the least bit worse and there hadn’t been any message like that, so Hoss refused to believe that his baby brother was doing anything except getting better by the day. Probably naggin’ ole Adam to let him bust a bronc by now, Hoss grinned to himself, but then he remembered that there weren’t any broncs in Philadelphia. No matter. Joe would be naggin’ to do something he wasn’t up to yet, and Adam would be makin’ him toe the line, Hoss was certain. He knew both those brothers of his pretty well.

He knew his pa, too, so he knew that he didn’t have time to squander in this kind of speculation. He had to saddle two fresh mounts, quick as he could, ‘cause Pa wouldn’t let the fuse of daylight burn short before riding into town to check on that telegram.

* * * * *

After sending a carefully worded wire, designed to relieve concern without revealing anything specific, Adam returned to the hospital about 1 p.m. and rapped on the door he had been told led to Dr. Whittaker’s office. The resident answered the door and ushered Adam inside. “Come in, Mr. Cartwright. I was hoping for a chance to speak with you today. I understand you removed your brother’s restraints this morning.”

Adam took the seat the doctor indicated. “I certainly did. They’re no longer needed.”

Dr. Whittaker walked behind his desk and sat down. “That is a matter of opinion, sir. They were definitely needed last
night.”

“I agree, and I thank you for preventing him from leaving the hospital then.” Adam pursed his lips, wishing that he were presenting his case to the older, more understanding Dr. Morton, rather than this slightly pompous young resident. “However, he’s settled down now, and I don’t believe you’ll have any further problem with him.”

“No, we won’t,” Dr. Whittaker said with a cool cock of his head, “because I ordered the restraints reapplied.”

Adam’s face flushed with anger, but he pushed his outrage aside, not wanting personal feelings to cloud the real issue he had come to discuss. “That isn’t what I wanted to speak with you about. I’d appreciate an evaluation of my brother’s current condition.”

Dr. Whittaker settled back in his chair, relieved to see that the older Cartwright brother, at least, was a reasonable man. “Certainly. Prior to last night’s incident, he was recovering well—no signs of infection, incision healing nicely. It’s most fortunate that he did not pull loose any stitches in last night’s escapade, but his behavior as of this morning was most uncooperative. He refused his breakfast entirely and tried as best he could, given the restraints, to frustrate my examination.”

Knowing his younger brother, Adam had no doubt that Joe’s behavior had been exactly as the doctor reported. “He was angry then,” he offered as explanation. “As I said, he’s settled down now. What I specifically want to know is when you think he might be released from the hospital.”

The resident spread his hands in an equivocal gesture. “Oh, that would be for Dr. Morton to say definitively—a week, ten days, perhaps.”

Adam leaned forward, his folded hands resting on the desk.
“Why not now? It’s common for most patients to be treated at home, is it not?”

Resting one elbow on the arm of his chair, Dr. Whittaker cupped his chin in his hand. “Certainly, but as I recall, ‘home,’ in this instance, is Nevada. I couldn’t countenance—and I’m certain Dr. Morton would not, either—a journey of that distance for a recovering surgical patient. As for the medical resources available in such a remote area—”

Adam held up a remonstrative hand. “I didn’t mean ‘home’ in the literal sense. I meant the hotel here in Philadelphia.”

The doctor gripped both arms of his chair and bent forward to stare at the man he had, only moments before, considered reasonable. “You can’t be serious. That would require you to assume complete, twenty-four-hour supervision.”

“As I am perfectly prepared to do.”

With a supercilious smile, Dr. Whittaker asked, “And perfectly qualified to do?”

Adam responded with a brusque nod. “Yes, I believe so.” He added with a significant arch of his black eyebrow, “I certainly am capable of controlling the boy without tying him to a bed!”

“An action you thanked me for moments ago,” the resident pointed out bluntly.

Adam took a deep breath. “Yes, and still thank you for. Look, Dr. Whittaker, I have no complaint about the care my brother has received here. He, on the other hand, has been upset about it from the beginning, as you know.” He went on to detail Joe’s complaints: not being allowed to sleep, poor food, seeing other patients used as attendants and being “gawked at” by medical students.

Dr. Whittaker interrupted to declare testily, “You agreed to
that in the beginning, in the interests of scientific—"

“Yes, I know,” Adam replied, trying to hold onto his temper, “and if I were the patient here, I would have no objection, but I’ve begun to question whether I had the right to agree to an invasion of his privacy. He’s a very sensitive young man.”

“I might choose the word ‘spoiled,’ rather than ‘sensitive.’ Of course, if you insist on mollycoddling the lad, giving in to his every whim—"

“Call it what you will,” Adam interrupted tersely, suddenly understanding how his father must have felt all the times his oldest son had made similar accusations about spoiling his youngest. He took another deep breath, seeking self-control. “I have no doubt that the operation you advised saved my brother’s life, Dr. Whittaker. For that I will be eternally grateful, but I have concluded that his disturbance with these conditions has become an actual hindrance to his recovery. I lay no blame on this institution or anyone connected with it. I’m certain the patients here receive the best medical care available in America. I am equally certain, however, that this particular patient will progress more rapidly under the care of his family—in this case, me—and I want to arrange his discharge from the hospital as soon as possible.”

The resident stood, bracing his hands on the desktop. “Mr. Cartwright, it really is important that we see this case through from beginning to end, in order to provide complete documentation of the surgical procedure and its resolution.”

“Important to whom, to my brother or to others who might derive some future benefit?” Adam asked pertinently.

Dr. Whittaker straightened up to look with severity at the other man. “The latter is of paramount importance to me. Without full documentation, this operation might just as well never have been performed, in regards to its value in furthering medical knowledge.”
“That, sir, is where we differ,” Adam asserted, coming to his feet. “It is my brother’s well being that is of paramount importance to me. Now, will you discharge him?”

The doctor shook his head firmly. “I can’t agree to that. You’ll have to speak with Dr. Morton. Unfortunately, he is out of town for the next several days.”

“Joe can’t wait that long,” Adam stated. “He’s not sleeping; he’s not eating; he’s in a state of emotional exhaustion, and none of that will change until he is away from here.”

The resident folded his arms and stared into his opponent’s eyes. “I will not discharge him. If you choose to remove your brother from this institution, sir, it will be against medical advice. I would think carefully about that, Mr. Cartwright, for I could not guarantee that the board of managers would agree to his re-admittance here, should you leave under those circumstances.”

With his head cocked thoughtfully, Adam gave the doctor a curt nod. “I will take that into consideration, and I will think the entire situation over before I take any action, but if I decide that it is in my brother’s best interest, I will not hesitate to remove him, with or without medical consent.”

Dr. Whittaker moved around the desk and opened the door. “In that case, I believe we have nothing more to discuss, Mr. Cartwright!”

The door slammed shut on Adam’s heels. My, that went well! he concluded, taking out his watch to check the time. Still not two o’clock, but Adam decided to bank on Miss Irwin’s kindness and try to see Joe early. Hurrying upstairs, he received the Chief Nurse’s permission to enter the ward and walked in quietly, in case Joe or others might be sleeping, but it took only a glance to determine that his brother was awake and agitatedly pulling on the straps tying his wrists to the bed. Adam immediately unbuckled the restraints. “I’m sorry,
buddy. I told the doctor this was unnecessary, and I hope they won’t do this to you again.”

Joe’s chin began to quiver. “Ain’t you gonna take me with you, Adam? You promised.”

“That is not what I promised,” Adam stated firmly. “I said I would speak with your doctor and I did. Dr. Whittaker is not willing to release you yet. Dr. Morton is out of town, so I couldn’t talk to him, but I’m not sure his opinion would be any different.”

Joe reached toward his brother with a shaky hand. “Adam, I can’t—I—I—”

Adam began a circular massage on the back of Joe’s hand. “Shh, easy now. Don’t get yourself worked up again. Look, Joe, I want you with me. I think that will be the best thing for you—and for me, too, but going against your doctors is a big step for me to take and I need to think it through. Give me tonight, and I’ll give you an answer in the morning.” Seeing tears well up in his brother’s expressive eyes, he gave the hand he was holding a firm squeeze. “Joe, it’s going to be all right, one way or another. Now, I want you to relax and try to make up some more of that sleep you lost last night.”

“You’re not leaving now, are you?”

Adam straightened the covers and put Joe’s hands beneath them. “Yes, I am. If I do take you with me, there are some preparations I need to make, some items I need to buy, etc. I need some time this afternoon to do that, and you need to behave yourself and not make this situation worse than it has to be. I was told you refused your breakfast. Did you eat any of your dinner?”

Joe shook his head, lips stubbornly set. “They wouldn’t let me feed myself.”
“Well, that won’t do, Joseph,” Adam dictated, summoning up that paternal authority again. “I want you to make a serious attempt at eating everything on your supper plate, understood?”

“I don’t like bein’ spoon-fed,” Joe said with puckered lips.

“I’ll ask the nursing supervisor to leave the restraints off, at least for mealtime,” Adam offered, adding in a firmer voice, “but even if someone puts them back, so you can’t feed yourself, I expect you to eat. Is that clear?”

Joe nodded. “I’ll try, but the food’s—”

“Terrible. I know. Try, Joe.”

Seeing the concern reflected in his brother’s soulful eyes, Joe murmured a submissive, “Yes, sir.”

Adam smiled, bending close to his brother’s face. “See you tomorrow, buddy. Keep cheerful thoughts.” He picked up the volume of Ivanhoe. “I’ll just take this with me, okay?”

Joe smiled weakly, grabbing on to the gesture almost as a promise that he wouldn’t be here for another reading.

Adam returned to the hotel and stretched out on the bed, arms folded behind his head as he deliberated his decision, awed by the responsibility he would be assuming. Awed, but not daunted. After all, he’d cared for Little Joe, as well as the rest of his family, many times throughout his life, and he felt quite confident that he knew what to do. In fact, thanks to his perusal of Florence Nightingale’s Notes on Nursing, he felt better prepared than he had ever been before. In addition, Joe appeared to be out of danger and simply in need of rest and recuperation.

Still, what if that evaluation were wrong? What if Joe did require further medical attention? Where could he turn if he alienated the doctors of Pennsylvania Hospital? Yet to leave
the boy in the hospital would mean a steady decline. Of that, Adam was absolutely positive, and if he accepted that, then none of the other factors he had been weighing mattered one whit. He had to do what he believed in his heart was right, and what he believed in his heart was right was to bring his baby brother back under his personal care, not leave him in the hands of strangers, to whom Joe was little more than an interesting case.

* * * * *

“Coming in now, Mr. Cartwright.”

Ben moved quickly to the counter inside the Western Union office.

The telegrapher scribbled on a pad and then tapped the key to acknowledge reception of the message before tearing off the top sheet and handing it to Ben.

Ben grabbed the paper and with Hoss peering over his shoulder read the handful of words. He exhaled with relief. He felt like he’d been holding his breath for the last hour, since arriving at the telegraph office after a disturbing consultation with Dr. Martin, who had apprised him of just how dangerous an illness perityphlitis was.

“See, he’s doin’ good, Pa, gettin’ out of the hospital tomorrow,” Hoss said, face bright as sunrise over Lake Tahoe.

“It only says he might get out tomorrow, son,” Ben corrected.

“Yeah, but they wouldn’t even be thinkin’ about it if’n Joe wasn’t better.”

“I suppose,” Ben conceded.

“Any answer, Mr. Cartwright?” the telegrapher inquired.

Ben cocked his head in consideration. “No, no response,” he
said. Turning, he walked out onto the porch of the telegraph office.

Hoss followed, mouth puckered as if he’d eaten a sour lemon. “Ain’t you gonna wire Adam back, Pa, let him know if’n you’re comin’ or stayin’?”

With an arched eyebrow, Ben surveyed Hoss with cool gaze. “No, I’m not,” he said plainly. “I think your older brother deserves a taste of his own medicine.” Let that cunning scalawag see what it’s like to wait a week for a message he’s concerned about!

Hoss grimaced, trying to gauge how far he could go in defense of his brother without earning a tongue-lashing himself. “Kind of looks like you packed them bags for nothin’, huh, Pa?” he suggested tentatively. “I mean, there ain’t no need for you to go back East now, with Joe doin’ so good, and it’s gonna do them two a world of good, bein’ thrown together and havin’ to depend on each other.”

Ben cast a sidewise glance at his middle son. “Rather a one-sided dependence, Hoss.”

“No, it ain’t, Pa,” Hoss argued, unwinding Chub’s reins from the hitching post and twisting them through his fingers. “Adam had himself a good scare, and I figure he’s already learnin’ just how much he needs his little brother, too.”

Ben gripped the horn of his saddle and looked across Buck’s back at his son. “Hoss, it goes against every grain of my being not to be at my boy’s side right now.”

“Yes, sir, I know,” Hoss said with sympathy, feeling much the same way himself, “but if you do, you’re gonna cause your other son a heap of hurt, maybe the two of ‘em, even. Let ‘em work it out, Pa. They need each other, and if you give ‘em time, they’re both gonna see it.”
“Yeah, maybe,” Ben muttered and swung into the saddle. He kept the conversation to ranch business as he and Hoss rode back to the Ponderosa, but the first thing he did on arriving was to sit down at his desk to write two letters, a scathing epistle to his eldest son and one full of tender love to his youngest.

* * * * *

Arms loaded, Adam opened the door to his suite at the Washington Hotel and juggled packages all the way to Joe’s room, where he dumped them on the bed. As soon as he’d made his decision to bring the boy here, Adam had made a mental list of things he would need and gone shopping. Since Joe would be spending more time in bed than he had anticipated when packing his bags back home, he would need some extra nightshirts, so that had been Adam’s first purchase. For the same reason he’d stopped in at the bookstore and bought a copy of one of the dreaded dime novels, which had come out only two days before. He had a feeling that if Joe did do any reading on his own, something that required little concentration would be the right choice, and Prentiss Ingraham’s *The Masked Spy; or, The Wild Rider of the Hills* looked like the kind of story that might appeal to his younger brother’s adventurous nature, now that he was well enough to handle a little excitement. He had also picked up an inexpensive checkerboard and pieces, since Joe enjoyed playing the game and checkers also constituted quiet entertainment. Adam’s final stop had been Fred Brown’s Drugstore, just two blocks from the hotel, where he had purchased a bedpan, in the likely case that Joe wasn’t yet up to walking down the hall to the water closet, and some sedative powders, should the boy have difficulty sleeping.

Adam sat down on the bed and wiped sweat from his forehead. Though the window was open, the air was stifling, the heat unrelenting. He didn’t see how a person confined to bed could be anything but miserable in an oven like this, but it was no worse here than at the hospital. There wasn’t, in fact, any
place in this forest of tall buildings to find respite from the wave of heat that had descended on Philadelphia that summer. The only area where a cool breeze might occasionally be found was out at Fairmount Park.

Adam raised his head and stroked his jaw in consideration. With the mining convention concluded and most of their sightseeing done, there wasn’t anything tying them to a downtown residence. Across the street from the Exhibition, a number of hotels had been constructed, specifically for Centennial guests, but Adam had early dismissed the idea of staying in one of them because, being new, they charged a higher rent than older hotels like the Washington. Now, however, the extra money seemed unimportant. If Joe would be more comfortable, why not make the change?

Taking only enough time to splash himself with cold water and change his damp shirt for a fresh one, Adam caught a horse car out to the area along Belmont Avenue that was lined with hotels. He dismissed the Grand Exposition Hotel out of hand, for it was a fifteen-minute walk from the Centennial grounds, and Adam thought that as his brother began to regain strength, he might enjoy short excursions to the Exhibition. The United States Hotel was convenient for that purpose, but set back far enough to avoid some of the noise of Elm and Belmont avenues. Though Adam considered it briefly, it was smaller than the other hotels and featured fewer amenities. Wanting to provide Little Joe with the best room available, Adam continued to look.

The Globe Hotel was the largest and offered some fine features, including the ability to summon servants with the ring of an electric bell. However, it sat right next to the Centennial depot of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and Adam was concerned that trains arriving in the night might disturb his brother’s sleep. Across the street was the Transcontinental Hotel, and when Adam toured it, he thought it would suit the needs of the Cartwright brothers perfectly. Only half the
size of the Globe, it still offered five hundred rooms. Miss Nightingale’s book had stated that the sick suffered from movement in a room above them and advised always placing invalids on the top floor, so since the elevator made all the floors equally convenient, Adam inquired whether there was a suite available on the fifth. Learning that there was, he asked to see it.

He was thoroughly pleased with the suite. Triangular in shape, the Transcontinental Hotel surrounded a spacious courtyard on three sides, making each room light and airy. Miss Nightingale would definitely approve, Adam thought, grinning at the placement of the bed in the lightest part of the room with a good view out the window and close enough to it to provide some relief from the heat. The parlor opened onto a small balcony overlooking a garden in full bloom, a pleasant place for Joe to take his first steps, once he was ambulatory. And, in Adam’s mind, one of the finest features was the location of a bath in the suite itself, the very essence of convenience.

Only one question remained to be answered before Adam was ready to make a final decision, and he investigated that by taking his supper in the hotel’s dining room. The food was excellent and with a second restaurant also available on the premises, Adam was convinced that the quality and variety of the meals would tempt his little brother’s flagging appetite. Immediately after finishing his supper, he registered at the hotel desk, sent a second short wire to Pa, apprising him of their new address and confirming, without further explanation, Joe’s release from the hospital the next day. Then he caught the first streetcar back into the city to pack everything up and transport it to the new hotel.

While he was packing, he found one item in Joe’s bottom bureau drawer that surprised him. By its shape, it had to be a book, but it was wrapped in brown paper and tied with string, so Adam couldn’t see what it was. Something Joe didn’t want him
to see, evidently, considering where he’d found it, but though Adam was curious, he decided to respect his brother’s privacy and just slipped the package into Joe’s carpetbag.

Arriving at the Transcontinental Hotel, he unpacked and did all he could to insure Joe’s comfort in the new lodging. Then, exhausted, he fell into his bed, in the room on the other side of the bathroom from the one where Joe would sleep. Despite the comfort of the new mattress, however, Adam found sleep slow to take him. He was bound to face opposition when he removed Joe from the hospital tomorrow morning, and while that didn’t bother him for his own sake, he wanted nothing to disturb his brother. Well, whatever happens, I’ll handle it, he assured himself, wincing as he realized that his father must have received his letter and subsequent telegram by now. Wondering what Ben Cartwright thought of how his eldest son was handling things effectively kept sleep at a distance for another hour.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Having spent a restless night, Adam awoke early Friday morning, so he took time for a long soak in the tub before shaving and dressing. As he left his room, he gave the carved cherub a pat on the head. “See you soon, little brother,” he promised. The night before he’d considered putting the little statue in Joe’s new room, sort of a welcome-home gift, but he had decided the art object wouldn’t mean as much to Joe as it did to him, and he wasn’t willing to part with it unless it did.

Though tired, Adam was in good spirits as he ate breakfast in the second restaurant available at the Transcontinental. The food here was of equal quality with what he’d eaten the night before, so he felt confident that Little Joe would have no cause for complaint about his meals, even if it wasn’t quite the same as having Hop Sing around to tempt a capricious appetite with all his favorite foods.
Glancing at his watch, Adam planned his strategy for the morning. He would arrive at the hospital about nine o’clock to insure that Joe had had time to eat his own breakfast. Despite his complaints about hospital food, it was still better for the boy to have something on his stomach before making the long trip out to Fairmount Park. Adam planned to hire a carriage and have the driver take his time, and if Joe had already eaten, they could take all morning, if needed, and still arrive in time to have dinner here.

With a little time to kill, he walked outside. Though the Exposition wouldn’t open for another hour, people were beginning to line up at the entrance across Elm Avenue from the hotel. Adam spotted a balloon vender, and a broad grin split his face. Dodging around an oncoming streetcar, he hurried across the street and purchased a veritable bouquet of balloons, as bright as the flowers blooming in the courtyard of the Transcontinental. He took them up to Joe’s room, tying four across the foot of his brother’s bed and one on each side at the head. There was one left, so he looped its string through the towel bar of the washstand and stood back to survey his work.

Everything appeared to be in order: bed covers turned down, fresh nightshirt laid out on the chair, *Ivanhoe* and the dime novel placed on the bedside table, bedpan tucked out of sight beneath the bed, curtains opened and window raised to let in fresh air and give the room a cheery appeal. Passing into the parlor, he looked with satisfaction at the comfortable chaise, where Joe might spend daylight hours, rather than in bed; the overstuffed chairs and sofa, when he felt like sitting up; and the small round table, where they could take meals together in the suite. All the comforts of home, except the loving hands of his family. Well, mine will have to suffice.

Adam picked up the small bundle he’d prepared the night before, containing a robe for Joe to wear on the brief journey to his new home and his balmorals. Adam had, at first, put
his brother’s slippers with the robe, but had reconsidered when he realized that Joe would have to walk from the hospital to the gatehouse to get to the waiting carriage. Shoes built for the street would be better, he had concluded; they would give the boy firmer footing on paved streets and stone steps. Tucking the bundle under his arm, Adam locked the door to the suite and moved toward the elevator.

Half an hour later he walked into the men’s surgical ward, having encountered neither doctor nor nurse on the way in, and shook his head in dismay when he saw the restraints again fastened to his brother’s wrists. Joe’s eyes were closed, so Adam stepped lightly to his side, hoping that his brother was sleeping. The dark circles under his eyes declared that he needed to be, but when Adam gently unfastened the straps, Joe opened his eyes, looking pleased to see his older brother. “You’re early,” Joe whispered.

Adam rubbed his brother’s chafed wrists. “I figured you’d want to get out of this place as soon as possible, little brother.”

Joe’s face was radiant, his eyes suddenly alive again. “You mean it? You’re really taking me with you this time?”

Adam nodded as he released his brother’s hand after giving it a final pat. “Yes, I think it’s what’s best for you, but you are going to have to promise to do just as I say, Joe, or this arrangement won’t work.”

“I promise, Adam,” Joe said eagerly.

Adam chuckled. “I’m gonna hold you to it, little brother,” he said, wondering how long it would be before he had to remind Joe of the promise he’d made much too easily. He raised Joe up and held out the sleeve of the soft robe. “Okay, let’s get you into this. Then I’ll run down and hire a carriage and come back for you.”
Little Joe folded his arms against his chest. “I ain’t wearin’ that out on the street—not in broad daylight!”

“No one’s going to see you,” Adam chided. “You’re going straight from one bed to another, and getting dressed for the drive to the hotel is an affectation I don’t intend to indulge.”

“Then I won’t go,” Joe declared with a stubborn set of his jaw.

You obstinate little wretch, Adam fumed inwardly, though he schooled his face to reveal nothing. Just because I gave in to you once, you think you’ve got the winning hand, but this is one bluff it will be easy to call. “Of course, if you prefer to remain in the hospital . . .”

Joe’s eyes began to shimmer and his chin to quiver. “Why does everything always have to be your way?”

As Joe turned away, a sledgehammer crushed Adam’s heart. Joe’s question brought back the conversation he’d had with himself while his brother was in surgery, and Adam recalled the guilt he’d felt then for repeatedly forcing his will on Joe. Here he was, doing it again, without giving the slightest consideration to Joe’s feelings. Of course, he couldn’t always give in, not when it might affect his brother’s health, but this clothing issue really didn’t. In fact, upsetting the boy needlessly was probably detrimental, more of the same kind of indifferent treatment he’d received at this hospital. Adam leaned over and gently pulled his brother’s face back toward him. “Okay, buddy,” he said softly. “This time we’ll do it your way, but I’ll have to go back to the hotel to get your street clothes. It’ll take awhile, but if it means enough to you to wait, I’ll do it.”

Joe, of course, did not realize that Adam had changed hotels, so his calculation was based on how long it would take his brother to get to the Washington Hotel. “Not long,” he said,
eyes sparkling again, “and it’ll be worth it. It’s embarrassing, Adam, folks seein’ me in my nightclothes.”

“Longer than you think,” Adam said, though he didn’t explain, “but I’ll be back as soon as I can. You behave yourself, and don’t tell anyone what we’re up to.” His voice had dropped to a whisper for that final sentence.

Joe grinned, feeling as though he and Adam were conspiring to stage a jailbreak. There was no way the prisoner would tell his jailers about it ahead of time!

As Adam trotted down the hospital steps and sprinted toward the streetcar stop, he began to question his sanity. Surely a man with a solid grip on his senses wouldn’t have allowed even as artful a conniver as Little Joe to talk him into a pointless pair of pants to preserve his sudden and misplaced modesty! Should’ve told him about the move, but I was hoping to surprise him. Now he’ll worry, though, ‘cause it’s going to take over an hour to get there and back. He stopped short and laughed at his own stupidity. Why go all that distance? Just buy the kid a shirt and trousers at a store downtown. Stuffing his hands in his pockets, Adam began to whistle as he turned around and headed toward the corner of Eighth and Market, where the nearest dry goods store was located. By the time he reached Strawbridge and Clothier, Adam was getting into the spirit of celebrating Joe’s “homecoming,” so he purchased a fancy gray silk dress shirt, complete with frills down the front and on the cuffs, and a pair of gray broadcloth trousers, along with a royal blue cravat for festive flair.

Returning to the hospital, Adam was stopped this time by the Chief Nurse. “Mr. Cartwright, you’re not permitted to visit until eleven,” Miss Irwin reminded him. “The doctors are making their rounds now and must not be disturbed.”

“I have no intention of disturbing them,” Adam said smoothly and sailed past her toward the ward.
She frantically called his name, but Adam ignored her. Entering the long room, he saw a covey of a dozen or so doctors and students surrounding his brother’s bed. Though he looked extremely uncomfortable, Joe was not resisting the examination. He was obviously relieved, however, when his older brother stormed in and pulled Dr. Whittaker aside with a firm grip on his elbow.

“I told you how this boy felt about being put on public display,” Adam hissed. “I assumed you understood that I wanted it to stop.”

“You didn’t state that, Mr. Cartwright,” the resident replied so glibly that Adam felt like punching him in the jaw, but starting a brawl in the ward wouldn’t really help Joe. In fact, knowing his younger brother, the kid would be out of that bed, trying to join the fracas.

“Well, it will stop, as of this minute,” Adam declared. “I’m taking my brother out of the hospital at once.”

Dr. Whittaker surveyed him with narrowed gaze. “Mr. Cartwright, I beg you to reconsider—for his sake.”

“Has his condition changed since we spoke yesterday?”

“No material change,” the doctor conceded. “In my opinion, however, his case still merits medical supervision.”

Adam folded his arms and stood as unmoving as one of the marble sculptures at the Centennial. “I weighed carefully our prior conversation, and I’ve made my decision. He’s coming with me.”

The doctor raised his voice. “Then I repeat, in front of these witnesses, you do so against medical advice. Should your brother’s condition deteriorate, the responsibility will be yours.”

Adam favored him with a sardonic smile. “‘Twas ever thus.”
When had he ever not been responsible for Little Joe, from the time that green-eyed infant had taken his first peek at the world?

The doctor appeared puzzled, but he motioned to the others around the bed and continued on his rounds, shaking his head at the foolishness of the indulgent older brother’s giving in to the spoiled younger one.

Joe gazed at his older brother with almost idolizing admiration. “You were wonderful, Adam.”

Adam chuckled. “Hold that thought, little brother,” he advised. “It just might make things go smoother over the next few weeks.” He began to unwrap the package from Strawbridge and Clothier. “Let’s get you dressed, and I don’t want to hear any complaint about the outfit I picked, understood?”

“Sure, anything’s fine,” Joe said quickly. He looked curiously at the elegant clothes Adam took from the brown wrapper. “Hey, I didn’t mean for you to go out and buy me something new. My old clothes would’ve been just fine.”

Adam ran a hand through his brother’s tangled hair. “It’s okay; it was more convenient to do this than to go all the way to the hotel.”

Joe shook his head in bewilderment. “It’s not that far to our hotel; in fact, it’s closer than here.” He touched the tag tied with twine to the package, on which was printed the store’s name and address.

Adam chuckled, wishing he could keep the secret, but realizing the time had come to reveal it. “Well, I have another surprise for you, youngster. I’ve moved us to a different hotel, one that I believe will be more comfortable for your recuperation. It would have taken considerably longer to get there and back than to do a little shopping.” He put his arm behind Joe and helped him sit up.
Joe’s eyes shone with warm affection. “Aw, Adam, you’re sure goin’ to a lot of trouble for me.”

Adam rubbed the back of the boy’s neck. “Not at all. Now, can we get you dressed and out of this hospital?”

Joe grinned. “The sooner, the better, brother.”

“Fine. You just sit still and let me take care of everything,” Adam admonished as he began to unbutton Joe’s nightshirt.

Little Joe offered no resistance as Adam dressed him, though he laughed when his brother knotted the cravat around his neck. Sometimes he just couldn’t understand his older brother. Thirty minutes ago he tried to put me on the street in my nightclothes, and now he wants me dressed fancy enough to turn any girl’s head!

Adam took a comb from his pocket and ran it through Joe’s unruly curls. “Well, that’ll have to do for now.” He lightly clapped his younger brother on both shoulders. “Ready to go, kid?”

“I’m ready, Adam,” Joe said, pressing his hands against the mattress in an attempt to stand.

“No!” Adam said sharply. “Let me help you.”

Joe nodded meekly, for the frisson of pain in his side had been sharp enough to make him realize how much he needed help. Adam put his arm around his brother’s waist, lifted the boy to his feet and began moving toward the door, concerned at the strain he saw on Joe’s face, strain that contorted into dread as they approached the stairway.

As Adam stood at the head of the stairs, wondering if he had made a mistake, Miss Irwin came to his side. “Please don’t do this, Mr. Cartwright,” she implored, gazing at Joe with compassionate eyes. “You can see how weak the young man is.
This is too much for him. He needs proper nursing.”

“He’ll get it,” Adam assured her. For a moment, though, Adam hesitated as he took in the pallor of his brother’s face. He cupped Joe’s chin in his hand. “Are you going to be able to make it, boy? We still have some distance to go, even after getting down these stairs.”

“I can do it, Adam,” Joe insisted. “Just take it slow and easy.”

“All right,” Adam said. He turned to Miss Irwin. “Thank you for your concern and for the care you’ve given my brother while he’s been here, but we’ll be fine.”

With a shake of her head, Miss Irwin went back to her desk.

This is going to be hard, Adam admitted to himself as he looked down the lengthy staircase. Again he put his arm around Joe. “Lean heavy on me, buddy; let me do all the work.”

Pale from the minor exertion he’d already made, Joe nodded without comment. Resting his weight against his brother’s strong shoulder, he made his way, step by cautious step, to the first floor.

Adam walked his brother down the hall, stopping at a bench near the front door, where he set the boy down. “You stay here and I’ll flag down a carriage.”

Joe reached a pleading hand toward his older brother. “No, don’t leave me here, Adam.”

Adam squatted in front of the boy, resting one hand on Joe’s right knee. “Joe, it’ll be all right. No one will bother you or try to force you back into that ward.”

“I can make it, Adam,” Joe insisted.
“No. I will not have you standing out on that street, waiting,” Adam stated firmly. “When I have transportation arranged, I’ll be back for you.” He stood and pointed at the bench. “Don’t you dare move from there,” he said, emphasizing each word.

Joe nodded reluctantly, closing his eyes and leaning his head back against the wall as Adam headed out the door. After what seemed like only minutes, he felt a hand on his shoulder and heard a voice calling his name. He opened his eyes and saw Adam looking at him with concern.

“You okay?” Adam asked.

“Yeah,” Joe murmured. “You find a carriage that quick?”

Adam smiled wryly. Though he hadn’t been gone an inordinately long time, he could easily see that a brief nap had distorted Joe’s awareness of the interval. “Yeah, I have the carriage.” He helped Joe to his feet and again urged the boy to lean on him as they descended the outside steps and made their way toward the gatehouse. “Too bad they wouldn’t loan us that bed carriage,” Adam jibed. “Would have made the trip easier.”

“I like it better this way,” Joe said.

“Oh, you would,” Adam snickered, “with me doing most of the work!”

“Sorry,” Joe muttered.

“It’s okay, buddy; we’re making it just fine.”

They reached the covered carriage, and with the driver’s help Adam got his brother inside. He’d already instructed the driver to take the journey slowly, but he reminded the man again just before climbing in and sitting beside Joe. The driver followed instructions, keeping the horse to little more than a walk, but no amount of care could take all the bumps
out of the road, and it was obvious to Adam that his brother was uncomfortable. As he wiped beads of sweat from Joe’s forehead, Adam scolded himself for choosing a hotel so far away. True, it would be better for Joe once they got there, but he should have realized that the journey itself would be arduous for the boy. As the wheels bounced in another low spot, Adam slipped his arm around Joe and pulled him tight to his side to steady him.

Joe looked up, smiling weakly. “I’m okay, Adam.”

“Sure you are,” Adam said, sounding unconvinced.

“How—how far is it?”

“Clear out by the Exhibition grounds, I’m afraid,” Adam replied apologetically.

“Oh.” Joe nodded. “That’ll be real convenient for you.”

“How?”

The carriage hit a deep dip, and Joe lurched forward with a cry. Adam grabbed him and pulled him upright, the offhand remark forgotten in his concern for the boy’s safety. He wrapped his arms around Joe, determined to absorb the inevitable jolts. After hitting a few more rough spots, they arrived at their destination. Adam got out of the carriage first and helped Joe down. “Stand right here, Joe,” he dictated, “while I pay the driver. Don’t move, boy.”

Joe nodded and looked up the short flight of stairs to the hotel’s entrance, daunted. While there were fewer steps than there had been at the hospital, climbing would be harder than going down had been, and Joe was completely content to wait until he had his brother’s strong arm to lean on.

Adam returned quickly, putting that strong arm firmly around his brother’s slim waist. “Lean heavy on me, Joe,” he said, as he had at the hospital. “It’s just this one short flight
of stairs to the entrance, and then we’ll take the elevator to the room.”

“Oh, great, another rising room,” Joe groused.

Adam squeezed the boy to his side. “Would you really prefer more stairs at this point, little buddy?” he asked as they began their ascent. “We’re on the fifth floor.”

Pausing on the second step, Joe wrinkled his nose. “No, I gotta admit a rising room sounds a lot better than that much climbing right now.”

Chuckling, Adam helped him mount another step. “Now, that’s a sensible attitude, my boy.” He continued to help Joe climb, step by step, noticing how the slight effort seemed to enervate his brother. They moved slowly across the lobby to the elevator and rode to the fifth floor. Joe’s breath was noticeably shallow, though Adam couldn’t be sure whether that arose from his habitual unease with rising rooms or from sheer exhaustion or, most likely, from a combination of both. Worry growing, Adam supported his brother down the hallway to their suite, unlocked the door and guided the boy in, seating him in the closest chair.

Concerned, Adam knelt in front of Joe, looking up into the bowed face in an attempt to assess his condition. “Buddy, you okay?”

Joe dipped his chin, almost imperceptibly. “Just tired, Adam. I know I didn’t do anything, but . . .”

“Yes, you did,” Adam murmured. “More than you were up to, I’m afraid.” He finally gave voice to the doubt that had been whittling at the edge of his mind. “Maybe this was a mistake.”

Joe lifted his head abruptly, revealing eyes brimming with anxiety. “No! No, I don’t wanna go back.”
Adam placed a calming hand against his brother’s cheek. “Of course not. It’s the trip that tired you. Going back would only compound the error. I do think we should get you right into bed, though.” His concern deepened when Joe nodded without argument, that departure from the norm signaling just how exhausted the boy was.

Adam helped Joe to his feet and supported him for the short walk to the bedroom. As they passed through the parlor, he spared a single sigh for his dashed hopes. He had envisioned Joe’s favorable first impression of the luxurious new accommodations, but it was obvious the limp boy on his arm had not even noticed them. Entering Joe’s bedroom, he eased his brother onto the side of the bed and knelt to remove his shoes.

At first, Joe just sat quietly, letting Adam do whatever he deemed necessary. Then, glancing up, he saw the balloons tied all around his bed and grinned. “Aw, Adam.”

As Adam stood, he saw the smile on his brother’s face and felt rewarded for his efforts in making the room festive. “Welcome home, Joe—at least, your home away from home.”

Joe turned to smile at his brother and whispered, “Thanks.”

Nodding his acceptance, Adam unbuttoned his brother’s shirt and slipped it off. Then he picked up the nightshirt he’d left lying on the chair near the bed.

Joe noticed that the garment was new and asked about it.

“If thought you could use some extras,” Adam said with a shrug.

Joe looked disturbed. “I’m costing you a lot more than you planned on, aren’t I?”

Adam gathered the hem of the garment toward the neck and placed it over Joe’s head, pulling it down over his shoulders.
and guiding his arms into the sleeves. “Don’t worry about it. Don’t worry about anything, all right?” He swung his brother’s legs onto the mattress, easing his head onto the pillow, then removed his pants and pulled the covers up to his shoulders. “I’m going to mix you a sedative,” he said, moving toward the bedside table.

“No,” Joe said.

Adam was momentarily relieved. It was a good sign, he thought, that Joe felt like making even that feeble an objection to something he ordinarily hated. Irritation followed, however, and he had to take a deep breath to control his temper. “Joe, you promised me you would do as I said,” he reminded his brother.

“I know, but I’m so tired, Adam,” Joe said, his lifeless tone adding impact to the words.

Too tired to sleep? That made no sense. Adam paused a moment, trying to understand what his brother meant and was suddenly glad he hadn’t made the biting retort that had been his first instinct. “You mean you think you can sleep without the medicine?” he asked. “It would be better if you can, of course.”

Joe yawned, closing his eyes. “Yeah, I don’t think I need anything but this . . . nice . . . soft . . . pillow.”

Adam caressed his brother’s curls with a tender hand. “Okay. I’ll check on you in about half an hour. If you’re not asleep then, you will take the sedative without argument, understood?”

“Oh-huh,” Joe muttered, voice trailing off.

Adam left and when he returned thirty minutes later, he found his younger brother sound asleep. Leaving the door open a crack, so that he could hear if Joe called, he went back into
the parlor and threw himself down on the blue and gold brocade sofa, surprised at how tired he felt, especially since the day wasn’t half over.

Later that morning Adam bolted upright, some sound having penetrated his light doze. Glancing toward Joe’s room, he saw the door wide open and flew off the sofa. “Hey, I’m over here,” he heard a soft voice say and turned to see his brother near the front door to their suite.

“What do you think you’re doing?” Adam demanded tersely. “Get back in bed this instant!”

Joe’s suddenly crestfallen face was pitiful to behold. “But I need the water closet, Adam,” he protested. He took another determined step toward the front door, glancing over his shoulder. “Is it to the right or the left?”

Adam took his arm, intending to escort him back to bed and present him with the bedpan, but he realized that was putting the horse after the cart since Joe was already up. “It’s not down the hall, Joe,” he explained, his angry countenance relaxing. “It’s here in the suite.”

Joe crinkled his nose quizzically. “Funny place for it.”

Adam chuckled. “Unique, but highly convenient placement, I’d say.” He aimed Joe toward their private bath. “Go on, but be careful. I’m here if you need me.”

Joe looked appalled at the suggestion. “I won’t.”

As his brother disappeared into the bath, Adam perched nervously on the arm of the sofa. He wanted to respect his brother’s privacy as much as possible, of course, but he was concerned about the boy’s evident weakness. He smiled in relief when Joe came out, and he helped him back into bed. “I’m going to check your stitches,” he stated in his best imitation of Pa’s no-argument voice. “I have to be sure you
didn’t harm yourself with this latest little stunt.”

Joe nodded his acquiescence and lay still as Adam examined his incision site. “Looks fine,” Adam said, straightening up. “Now, don’t get up again without calling for assistance,” he instructed firmly. “I do not want you straining those stitches, so you let me help you.”

“Okay, I’m sorry,” Joe said, looking contrite. “I didn’t mean to worry you.”

“That’s all right,” Adam said, adjusting his brother’s covers. “I should have explained things like that to you when we first got here, but you were so tired I thought it was more important to get you into bed. Now you know, though, and I’ll expect you to do as I’ve said.”

Joe displayed his most disarming smile. “I’ll be good.”

Adam laughed at the phrase again resurrected from childhood. “Oh, you think I’ll buy you another present for that promise, do you?”

Joe sobered swiftly. “No, Adam, you’ve done way too much already. I-I guess Pa’ll help with the doctor and the hospital, though, huh?”

“I’m sure he will,” Adam said at once, “but you are not to worry about money matters, Joe. I don’t want you to concern yourself with anything except getting well.”

Feeling protected, Joe smiled warmly.

“It’s past noon,” Adam said, consulting his watch. “I’m going to order you some dinner. Anything particular you’d care for?”

“I’m not hungry, Adam,” Joe said.

Adam shook his head at the familiar words. “Don’t be
ridiculous. Of course you are.”

Joe’s mouth gaped in a drawn-out yawn. “Can’t I eat later? I’m awful tired, Adam. I ain’t had a decent night’s sleep in a week, and this bed feels so good.”

The reminder of one of Joe’s complaints about the hospital awakened Adam’s compassion. “Okay, sleep awhile, but you will eat when you wake again, is that understood?” He tapped Joe on the tip of his nose.

“Yes, sir,” Joe replied with a faint grin.

As the afternoon passed, Adam began to grow concerned about how long his younger brother was sleeping. About five o’clock he decided to order room service and once he had placed their supper order, he roused Little Joe. “I’m sorry to wake you, buddy, but you need to eat something.”

Joe seemed groggy, but compliant. “Okay, Adam. I—uh—need the water closet again.”

“Sure, kid,” Adam responded readily. “I have a bedpan, if you’d prefer to use that or I can help you into the bathroom if you feel up to it.”

“Rather go in there,” Joe said at once.

Adam grinned. Predictable, as always. He helped Joe into the bath and when he exited, led him to the small table in the parlor. “Dinner should be here soon,” he explained, “and you might as well sit here to eat it.”

Joe brightened perceptibly. “See? I knew you’d take better care of me than any old doctor.”

“Don’t squander your charm on me, you rascal,” Adam chuckled. “I’m immune to it.” Oh, if only I were!

A few minutes later their supper was delivered in metal-
covered dishes on a rolling cart. Adam lifted the lid of one and placed it in front of his brother. “I hope this will be to your liking.”

Joe smiled at the plate of crumb-crusted, baked fish with parsley-flecked potatoes and peas in cream sauce on the side. “It looks real good, Adam.”

“Good.” Adam sat down and uncovered his own plate, revealing roast beef with potatoes and carrots, accompanied by bacon-seasoned green beans.

For a few minutes the brothers ate in silence. Then Joe began to look around the room between bites. “This is some place you picked for us, big brother,” he observed. “Must cost a pretty penny.”

Adam’s knife stopped in mid-slice of his roast beef. “What did I say about worrying over expenses, hmm?” he asked, a slight rebuke in his tone.

Though there was no food in his mouth, Joe swallowed before answering. “Not to—and—and I won’t.”

“Good. That’s settled, then.” Adam resumed cutting his meat.

“It’s real close to the Exhibition, you said?” Joe recalled.

“You didn’t see it when we arrived?” Adam speared a carrot and then a bite of potato with his fork. “It’s just across the street. If this room were on the opposite side of the hall, you could see it out your window.”

“That’ll make it easy for you,” Joe commented, taking a bite of the buttery fish.

Adam raised his head. “I don’t know what you mean, buddy.”

Joe looked up. “To see the Exhibition—without leaving me alone too long at a time, I mean.”
Adam’s fork fell onto his plate with a clatter. “Do you think for one minute that I would leave you here and traipse off to the Centennial?”

Joe seemed surprised by his brother’s reaction. “Well . . . sure. I mean, I know the way they had those visiting hours set up made it hard for you to go while I was in the hospital, but it’ll be easier now that you’re so close. That’s why you picked this hotel, isn’t it, ‘cause it’s close to the Centennial?”

Adam gasped and then collected himself. “Yes, in part, but not for the ridiculous reason you’ve come up with.” He reached across the table to take his brother’s hand. “Joe, I wanted to be close so it would be easier for you to visit the Exhibition once you started to feel better, not so I could go alone. I have no intention of doing that.”

Joe’s expressive eyes reflected distress. “But, Adam, I don’t want you giving up anything else for me. You’ve lost days already.”

“Hush.”

“But, Adam . . .”

“Hush. Eat your dinner before it gets cold.”

Joe pushed the plate away. “I’m not hungry.”

“You haven’t eaten half of it,” Adam scolded.

“I’m tired,” Joe said. “I want to go to bed.”

Adam sighed, realizing it never did any good to urge food on Joe when he was upset. “Okay.” He pushed his plate aside and helped his brother back to bed. “Joe, you are not to worry about anything so foolish as when—or even whether—I see the Exhibition,” he said firmly, concerned by the tenseness he saw in his brother’s slight frame. When Joe turned away without
saying anything, Adam gently rolled him to one side and began giving him a relaxing rubdown. He slowly felt the taut muscles ease under his kneading fingers and heard his brother’s breathing slow down until it was obvious he was again asleep.

Walking back into the parlor, Adam finished his now-cold supper and wheeled the cart into the hall. Then he threw himself into the plush blue armchair and raked his fingers through his hair. Probably be snow-white as Pa’s by the time I get through ‘handling that boy,’ he mused ruefully. That kid can sure come up with some crazy ideas. How could he possibly have thought I’d abandon him and go out sightseeing? Does he really think I’m that selfish and callous? Well, maybe that’s understandable, since I did just that the day I left him at the Centennial Medical Department. Yeah, maybe so, but I’m glad we got that straightened out the first day. Now he can settle down and concentrate on getting well, knowing he has something to look forward to.

He walked out onto the balcony, breathing in the pleasant fragrances wafting up from the garden and watched as the sky slowly darkened. Though the hour was early, Adam felt exhausted and decided he would read a few minutes and turn in. He didn’t even make it through one journal article, however, before his black eyelashes drooped on his olive cheek, so he undressed and, after making a last check on Little Joe, slid under the covers.

He woke up, uncomfortable, in the middle of the night and got up to use the water closet. When he finished, he decided to look in on his brother, to make sure he was sleeping soundly. As he neared the door, however, he heard soft sobs coming from the room. Immediately alarmed, he hastened in and saw Joe, turned on his left side, face buried in the pillow to muffle the sound. “Joe, what’s wrong?”

“Nothin’,” Joe mumbled, the word barely audible in the
recesses of the pillow.

Adam took a deep breath, to calm his racing heart, and laid a hand on Joe’s right shoulder. “Joe, if this is going to work, you have to be completely honest with me. If there’s a problem . . .”

Joe raised his head. “There’s not.”

Adam pulled Joe’s shoulder to roll the boy toward him. “Are you in pain?”

Joe turned his head in hopes that Adam wouldn’t see his tear-streaked face. “No, it’s nothin’ like that.” He risked one quick look at his brother. “Honest, Adam.”

Adam licked his lips. “Are you upset?”

“Leave me alone, Adam!”

Joe tried to turn away again, but Adam wouldn’t let him. “No, I can’t do that. Tell me what’s upsetting you, buddy.”

Forced to face his brother, Joe lost the last vestige of emotional control. “I-I’m sorry,” he sobbed.

“You’ve done nothing to be sorry for,” Adam soothed, stroking the damp curls from the boy’s forehead.

Joe shook his head fiercely. “I been nothin’ but trouble to you this whole trip, and now I’m keepin’ you from what you came here to do and—and you won’t let me make it right.”

“You’re no trouble, Joe,” Adam murmured, keeping his voice calm and comforting. “Don’t think that for a minute.”

Joe’s eyes narrowed, bitterness toward what he perceived as a lie replacing his self-regret. “You didn’t even want me!” He hurled the accusation in Adam’s face.

Adam was taken aback, both by the charge itself and the
vehemence with which it had been made. “Of course, I did. I invited you, didn’t I?”

“I heard you.” Realizing he’d said more than he intended, Joe turned away.

Adam turned the tear-stained face back toward him, keeping firm grip on Joe’s chin when he tried to pull away again. “You heard what?”

Joe squeezed his eyes tight, wanting to avoid the confrontation, but knowing Adam wouldn’t back off until he had an answer.

“Joe, answer me. You heard what?” The question was sharper, more demanding this time.

Joe opened his eyes and fresh tears poured down his cheeks. “You told Hoss you really wanted him. The only reason you brought me, instead, was that business about college. You didn’t want me; you’ve never wanted me. Just thought it would be good for me to come, just some big sacrifice for you—and now you’re doin’ it again.” He pulled away again, hiding his face in the pillow. “You’re gonna hate me for it—more than you do already—and I can’t stand it.”

Adam stared, aghast in sudden realization that his youngest brother must have eavesdropped on his all-too-revealing conversation with Hoss—and had been hurting over it ever since. He couldn’t possibly deny what Joe had heard with his own ears, but he yearned to comfort that aching heart. “Oh, Joe, Joe,” he murmured, reaching for him.

Joe didn’t respond. He just continued to cry, back heaving, breath short, racking sobs assaulting Adam’s ears with the reverberating drumbeat of accusation. When words finally came, they spilled out still deeper pain. “I—I remember—you and him, always together—never you and me—never—not since you came back from here.”
Adam froze with shock. This couldn’t be Joe, that confident, cocky kid who always seemed so certain of where he stood with everyone. “Seemed” was obviously the significant word in that description, for this crushed child bore no resemblance to the little brother Adam thought he knew inside out. He’d always known that Joe had a sensitive vulnerability, but he’d never suspected this kind of deep insecurity. How long had the kid been carrying these hidden hurts? The answer to that was also obvious—since my return from college. Possibly, even before?

Memories surfaced of another time Adam had seen his littlest brother’s face streaked with tears, the day he’d left home for Yale. Such a tiny boy. How could he have understood? How could he have felt anything but abandonment? But Pa had insisted that Adam go, had assured him that he would help Joe understand, that the boy would get over it. You weren’t quite the miracle worker we thought you’d be, were you, Pa? But, then, maybe that was my job, my miracle to work—and I wasn’t up to it, either.

Guilt a decade and a half old rushed to engulf Adam, but he thrust it aside. His immediate concern was to calm his little brother, to give the comfort now he couldn’t give back then. His own heartache could wait; his little brother’s could not. Joe was emotionally overwrought, in large part because he was exhausted from the illness and had been in a state of high-pitched agitation throughout most of the past week, but to allow these intense feelings to continue unabated would lead to further emotional exhaustion, and that would, in return, affect the boy’s physical well-being. It had to stop—now.

Adam turned to the bedside table, tore open a packet of sleeping powder and emptied it into a glass, which he then filled with water. He put his arm behind Joe’s back and pulled him into a sitting position. “Joe, I’m sorry you heard what I said to Hoss, and I understand how upset you are,” he said, reaching for the glass with the sedative. “We need to talk things out, but not tonight. You’re ill; you’re in need
of rest. Now I want you to drink this down and get some sleep, and we’ll talk in the morning.”

Swiping at his cheeks, Joe shook his head. “There’s nothin’ to say.”

“All right, then, just drink this,” Adam urged, wanting to avoid argument. He cupped his left hand behind Joe’s neck and offered the medicine with his other hand. Too weary to argue, Joe drank it down. “That’s my boy,” Adam praised, easing Joe’s head to the pillow and returning the glass to the bedside table.

Florence Nightingale had insisted that no nurse should ever sit on a patient’s bed, but Adam tossed that advice aside as he settled himself beside Joe with his back to the headboard. Probably, Miss Nightingale had never nursed a patient who craved the human touch as much as did his little brother. Pa was adept at meeting that need, but he wasn’t here—thanks to me, Adam reminded himself. Determined to fill Pa’s shoes as best he could, he began quietly stroking Joe’s temple, humming a lullaby he’d sung when his brother was still of an age to appreciate such nighttime crooning, waiting for the sedative to take effect.

While Joe would have considered himself too mature for the simple words that had soothed him to sleep as a child, he slowly responded to the soft sound and tender touch, and as he grew groggy, he curled back toward Adam, snuggling into his thigh as he had when he’d first heard that gentle melody.

Adam continued humming and stroking until he sensed that his brother was asleep. Only then, when he was certain Joe could not see, did he finally allow his own emotions to surface. Tears began to fall down his own cheeks as he reviewed the events that had precipitated his brother’s pain, trying to see them through Joe’s eyes. He’d already done that with his departure for the East, but now he remembered his return. As
Joe had said, he and Hoss had fallen right in with each other again, their boyhood closeness easily regained, but it had been harder to bond with the boy so much younger than he.

For a while, in their excitement over their renewed relationship, he and Hoss had unintentionally shut that little boy out. At Pa’s admonishment, however, they had both made an effort to include Little Joe, and Adam had thought the problem solved, despite the frequent clashes between them. Now he realized that the hurt feelings, the sense of being unwanted, had only been buried, the pain festering away deep inside, ready to erupt in a moment of vulnerability. The only surprise was that the explosion hadn’t come sooner. Adam had always thought that his youngest brother had no emotional control to speak of and, though he blushed to admit it, he had prided himself on his superior ability to maintain a composed exterior, no matter what came at him. He was beginning to realize that he and Joe weren’t so different, after all, and he could only pray that Joe hadn’t developed this ability to hide his feelings by watching his oldest brother. Oh, God, don’t let me guilty of that, too!

As he sat beside his brother, continuing to stroke him long after Joe could feel his touch, Adam was overwhelmed with one tormenting realization. He doesn’t know I love him—and I don’t know how to tell him. I’ve never known how to tell him. He spent the remainder of the night, sitting there, trying to think of something he could say that would help Joe. Obviously, the boy was too ill to be confronted with the deepest issues lying between them, but the immediate stress had to be relieved or Joe just wouldn’t get better. Searching for the right words kept Adam awake while his brother continued his drug-induced sleep.

* * * * *

Adam would have sworn that he hadn’t slept all night, but the sky had been dark when he decided to rest his eyes for a few
minutes, and now it was clear blue, with a fluffy cloud floating past the open window. Glancing down, he noticed that his younger brother was still asleep, though he was stirring and soft moans, no doubt the sound that had awakened Adam, were slipping past his mobile lips.

Adam instinctively began to circle his thumb on Joe’s shoulder, hoping the rhythmic movement that had soothed the boy to sleep the night before would keep him dozing a little longer. At first he told himself that he was doing it for Joe’s sake, but then he smiled. He was facing a lot of facts about himself lately, but this discovery that he, too, could be comforted by the sense of touch was one of the more pleasant ones.

Too soon, however, the green eyes opened and Joe awoke to find his older brother, still sitting where he’d last seen him. “You been there all night?” Joe asked, eyes questioning.

Adam smoothed a curl from his brother’s forehead. “Um hmm.”

Joe’s eyebrows met in a straight line. “Why?”

“Just wanted to be with you, I guess,” Adam said, giving the curls one last tender tousle.

Joe’s face scrunched in pained remembrance of words he’d said the night before. “Adam, I . . . I . . .”

Adam moved around to face his brother. “Joe, I want you to listen to me.”

Joe shook his head. “No, I need—”

“You need to listen,” Adam interrupted gently, taking the boy’s face in his hands. “Please, Joe. You can say anything you want later, but hear me out.”

Not feeling strong enough to do battle with Adam, Joe looked away in resignation.
Reading the weariness in his brother’s expression, Adam began stroking Joe’s cheeks with his thumbs. “To begin with, Joe, I want to apologize. I’m sorry you heard what I said to Hoss.”

“My fault,” Joe muttered, still unwilling to face his older brother.

Adam gave him a wry smile, though Joe didn’t see it. “If you mean that you shouldn’t have been listening at doors, I agree, but I’m here to talk about my misdeeds, not yours.” Joe still didn’t turn his way, but Adam could tell the boy was listening. “As I said, I’m sorry you heard what I said to Hoss—and even more sorry that I said it in the first place. It was true at the time. I would have preferred Hoss’s company, and I was bringing you primarily for your ‘educational benefit.’” He leaned closer, and his voice softened as he continued, “But, Joe, I’m really glad I chose you. I’ve enjoyed being here with you.”

Joe began to shake his head in denial, but Adam, still holding the boy’s face between his hands, easily stopped the movement. “No, I mean it. We’ve had our difficult moments, but seeing all this through your eyes has made the old, new for me and the new, exciting, and I wouldn’t change a thing, buddy—except your illness.”

A tear trickled from the corner of Joe’s eye. “My punishment,” he whispered.

“What?” Adam bent closer, for he wasn’t certain he’d heard Joe correctly.

Joe finally looked into his brother’s eyes, his own burning with a plea for forgiveness, as if Adam stood in place of the Almighty. “P-punishment. I wouldn’t give my place to Hoss, when I knew you wanted him, so God—”

“Oh, good gracious, no!” Adam rushed to gather his brother into his arms. “Joe, no. This illness is not some kind of
divine retribution for selfishness. If it were, I’d be the one lying there sick.” His arms tightened as he began to rock slowly back and forth. “Joe . . . buddy . . . it’s just an illness. It would have struck you down back home if you hadn’t come here. I’m all the more glad you were here when it hit, where the best medical help in America was only a summons away, ‘cause, buddy, as good as Dr. Martin is, I don’t think”—he broke off, realizing he was about to reveal more than he intended.

Hearing his brother stop so abruptly, Joe guessed the rest of the sentence, and when he pulled back to gaze intently into Adam’s face, what he saw confirmed his sudden suspicion. “You don’t think he could have helped me?” His shoulders began to shake. “You think I’d’ve died back home?”

Adam bit his lip, wishing he could call back the words, but he realized that honesty was, as per the old proverb, the best policy to win his brother’s trust, so he nodded. “The treatment you were given isn’t even accepted here, and medical knowledge, like all other varieties, seeps west slowly. Yes, Joe, I think you might have died back home; in fact, I think it’s likely.” He laid his brother back on the pillow and gazed out the window, as if seeing another time and place. “I once knew a boy like you, who showed those same symptoms.” Briefly, he outlined for Joe what had happened years ago to his college friend.

When he finished, Joe was twisting the covers between restless fingers. “And that’s why you made me have that operation, even when I begged you not to?”

Adam blinked back the tears forming in his eyes. “That’s why. I was afraid I’d lose you the way I lost him. I’m sorry I had to force you, buddy, but I just didn’t think you were competent to be making life or death decisions right then.” As he looked earnestly at Little Joe, this time it was ebony eyes pleading pardon from emerald.
It was granted immediately. Joe reached up to lay his hand against his brother's cheek. "No, I wasn't," he admitted. "Thanks."

Adam pressed the hand against his cheek. "No thanks needed. I have my reward; I have you." Unable to contain himself any longer, Adam let the tears flow down to bathe their now-interlaced fingers.

Shocked into silence, Joe could do nothing but watch the tears roll down. Adam, crying? Adam, who never lost that iron grip on his emotions—crying, for him? Did he really care that much? The moment passed, and the controlled mask was soon back in place. But Joe had seen behind it, and he knew he'd never again doubt the depth of his brother’s love—not just for Pa and Hoss, but for him, as well.

Adam laid Joe’s hand down at his side. “Joe, I have one more thing I want to say to you; then it’s your turn, if you want it. I brought you on this trip for all the wrong reasons”—he laid his finger on Joe’s lips when he saw his brother preparing to speak—“and because of that I’ve done you a real disservice. I’ve made it clear to you that this was my trip, not yours—that you were, at best, an indulgently tolerated guest with no rights, no privileges but to tag along wherever I wanted to go and do whatever I wanted to do.”

Joe brushed the restraining finger aside. “Adam, it hasn’t been that bad.”

“Sure it has,” Adam contradicted softly. “Sure it has. Pa warned me about that attitude before we left home, but I wouldn’t listen. I just had to show you who was boss, and though only once did you really buck my authority, I’ve held it against you ever since—to the extent that I almost overlooked your critical illness because I let anger blind me to what was right in front of my face.”

“You came back.”
The love and gratitude in Joe’s eyes warmed Adam’s heart, but only intensified his guilt. “Yes, thank God, I came back, because I could not have lived with myself if anything had happened to you because I wouldn’t listen. I owe you an apology, and I want to couple it with a promise, Joe—a promise I made to God for sparing your life. From now on, buddy, this is your trip, not mine. We’re going to get you well again, and then whatever you want is what we’ll do—even if it’s nightly excursions to Shantyville.”

Amused by the selection of that particular example, Joe had to grin. “Adam, you don’t have to do that.”

“Yes, I do,” Adam said with a firm nod, “and what’s more, I want to. Now, I’m going downstairs to order a tray sent up for breakfast; then we’ll get you freshened up and tucked in for a nice nap.”

Joe affected a sour smile. “That’s what you call doin’ things my way? A nap?”

Adam laughed and ruffled his brother’s curls as he stood. “I said after we got you on your feet again, we’d do things your way. Until then, you will obey orders, young man.”

Joe faked a groan, but caved in with a grin. When Adam sounded that much like Pa, there was no defying his authority, though at this particular moment Joe had no desire to do so, anyway. He was content to lie back and let his big brother continue to take care of him.

After a breakfast of scrambled eggs and toast on a tray, to which Joe did some semblance of justice, Adam brought a basin of warm water from the bathroom. Setting it on the bedside table, he removed his brother’s nightshirt.

“What are you doing?” Joe asked.

“I’m giving you a bath,” Adam explained cheerily. “They did
that in the hospital, didn’t they?” He had noticed that Joe always appeared fresh and clean when he visited.

“Yeah,” Joe conceded. “Would’ve felt good, too, if they hadn’t woke me up so early to do it.”

Adam laughed as he soaped a washcloth. “Well, it’s late enough now, isn’t it?”

Joe grinned. “Yeah, after breakfast is perfect timing, big brother.”

Smiling, Adam began to wash his brother’s chest and arms.

“You’re ‘most as good as that fellow at the hospital,” Joe observed.

“Oh? So it wasn’t all bad there, huh?”

“No, not all, I guess,” Joe admitted, willing to be honest now that he was safely outside those hated walls. “I liked that man, Adam. He had real gentle hands, kind of like Hoss’s, and he talked friendly to me.”

Adam rinsed out the washcloth and wiped the soap from the area he’d already washed. “He’s the one who told you that you’d have to work for your keep at the hospital, though, isn’t he?”

“Yeah, but he was just mixed up.”

Adam smiled at that fresh reminder of his little brother’s forgiving nature, a quality he hoped would be applied to him for all the shortcomings he’d demonstrated over the last several weeks. After the bath he examined Joe’s incision, redressed the wound and dressed him in a clean nightshirt. Then he tucked the sheets up to his brother’s chest and slipped out, as he could see that Joe was growing drowsy again.

Back in the parlor, he glanced at the bathroom door and
pondered the idea of a long, relaxing soak, but lack of sleep made the sofa look even more inviting. He stretched out, intending to rest a short while before tending to his own grooming, but exhausted by the emotional confrontations of both last night and that morning, he fell soundly asleep.

He woke, yawning and stretching, and reached into his pocket for his watch. Nearly noon! He cocked an ear and heard nothing, but decided he should check on Joe. Looking in, he saw that his brother was still asleep, so he went to his bedroom for a quick wash and to change into fresh clothes. The bath would have to wait ‘til later, as he wanted to get his brother’s meals on a regular schedule, and it was already late.

When he’d finished freshening up, Adam again entered Joe’s bedroom and was pleased to see that his brother was beginning to stir. He woke Joe gently and presented him with a menu from the restaurant downstairs, which he had picked up that morning. “What looks good, little buddy?”

Pleased with being allowed to order his own meal again, Joe brightened at once, for this one simple privilege made him feel he’d left the hospital behind for good. He selected chicken salad, which seemed to Adam like a good, although not filling choice. “Are you sure that’s all you want?” he queried. He started to suggest a piece of pie, but stopped himself. If Joe’s appetite was still this small, he shouldn’t squander it on sweets.

“I’m sure,” Joe said. “Can I get out of bed for dinner? I mean, I did yesterday, and I kind of need to get up anyway.”

Adam chuckled. It certainly appeared that he’d wasted his money on that bedpan! “Sure, I don’t see why not,” he said and pulled the covers back.

While Joe’s dinner was a light one, Adam was gratified to see that his brother ate all that was on his plate. His appetite
was obviously not up to the level he’d maintained before the illness, but he was eating adequately, and while he seemed more tired than expected, returning to bed without complaint after the meal, his color was good and he was resting well—all evidence that Adam had made the right decision in removing his brother from the hospital to care for the boy himself.

After indulging in a mid-afternoon bath and shave, Adam wrote to his father, but he couldn’t bring himself to explain the exact circumstances under which Joe had left the hospital. Instead, he wrote a glowing description of his brother’s improvement since doing so. However, he couldn’t help feeling, as he wrote, that he was only digging himself in deeper, since he’d have to confess eventually and Pa was bound to be furious with him for again taking matters into his own hands.

As he sealed the envelope and addressed it, Adam wondered for a moment why he hadn’t already received a wrath-filled wire from Pa. Of course, to fully express Pa’s wrath would probably require the longest telegram on record, even surpassing the Nevada State Constitution, wired to Washington to secure statehood, which had previously held that distinction. The absence of a wire meant one of two things: either Pa didn’t want to send a telegram that long or he was already on his way to deliver the fiery castigation in person. Adam fervently hoped it was the former.

Not having had time earlier, he sat down to read the morning newspaper and shook his head, saddened by the death tally from the heat. Eighty deaths so far this summer, and that was only in Philadelphia. Other cities were suffering, too, but the paper had no statistics on casualties elsewhere. Adam was doubly glad he’d moved his brother to the coolest part of town for his recuperation.

About halfway through the newspaper, he heard Joe calling his name and immediately set the paper aside. “Right here,
buddy,” he said, leaning through the doorway. “You need something?”

“Water closet,” Joe muttered tersely.

Walking in, Adam smiled. “And you remembered to ask for help. Good boy.” He helped Joe to his feet, pleased to see that his steps seemed steadier as he walked to the bathroom. When Joe came out again, Adam asked if he wanted to go back to bed or if he’d prefer to sit up awhile.

Joe offered an eager smile. “Could I?”

“Sure,” Adam said easily. “I’ll get your robe.” He brought the garment from the bedroom and helped Joe put it on. Then with his arm draped over his brother’s shoulder, he asked, “Would you like to sit out on the balcony? It overlooks the garden and is a very pleasant place to relax.”

Joe brightened still more at the thought of being outdoors and murmured quick assent. “Oh, this is nice!” he said when Adam steered him through the French doors to the balcony.

His arm still behind Joe’s back, Adam pointed out Fairmount Park to the east. “That’s the part where the zoo is located,” he reminded Joe.

Joe nodded. “I really liked it there. You think, maybe, we could go there again before we head home?”

Adam rubbed his brother’s back. “Anything you want, buddy. This is your trip now, remember?”

Joe smiled, the repetition of the promise assuring him that Adam had meant what he’d said that morning. “Sit with me?” he asked as Adam settled him in one of the white wicker chairs with blue-sprigged, cream-colored cushions.

“Sure.” Adam pulled the other chair close. To make light conversation, he began to point out the various kinds of
flowering plants in the garden below. “When you’re able, I’ll take you down there for a walk. That should help you get a little strength back in your legs.”

“Sounds good,” Joe said, stifling a yawn.

Adam tilted his head to get a good look at his brother’s face. “Ready to go back to bed?” he asked.

Joe took a deep breath of the fragrant air. “No, I’d rather sit here awhile, if that’s okay with you.”

“For a while,” Adam agreed, “but I don’t want you to overtire yourself.”

In response, Joe gave him the trusting smile that Adam had come to treasure, but he was soon ready to return to bed. When he was settled back in his room, Joe asked Adam if he would read to him. Adam complied, and the rest of the afternoon passed quickly. Soon it was time to order supper, but Joe at first said he didn’t want anything. “I’m not hungry, Adam. I haven’t done anything to work up an appetite,” he offered as an excuse.

“Appetite or not, you need the nourishment,” Adam insisted firmly. “I’ll just order you a bowl of soup, all right?”

Joe shrugged. “I guess so, if you want to throw your money away, but don’t expect me to eat much of it.”

“I’ll risk it,” Adam said wryly. As he had suspected, once Joe began to eat, the tasty food stimulated his appetite, and the boy finished more than half of the light meal. Well satisfied, Adam praised his brother and again earned the smile in which he delighted, the one he would have missed so much had Joe been taken from him.

After supper he prepared his brother for bed, giving him a rubdown as he had the night before.
“A fellow could get real spoiled for this kind of thing, you know?” Joe murmured, his sigh of contentment fading into a sleepy yawn.

Adam chuckled, remembering how Dr. Whittaker had accused him of spoiling his brother. Guilty, as charged, he admitted, but he didn’t care. The rubdown was having the effect he intended, and Joe was soon asleep.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Both of the Cartwright brothers had benefited from a good night’s sleep, and both appeared to be enjoying breakfast, although Adam felt some concern when his younger brother ordered only a soft-boiled egg and toast. The kid simply wasn’t eating enough yet to gain back any of the weight he’d lost over the past week or so. Adam had insisted on adding a glass of apple juice to that order and was pleased when Joe didn’t object.

As they ate at the small table in the parlor of their suite, church bells began to peal in the distance. Seeming surprised, Joe looked toward the open French doors. “Is it Sunday?”

“Yes, it is, Joe,” Adam replied. “Would you like some strawberry jam with that toast? It’s really delicious.”

“No, thanks,” Joe said quickly. “Plain bread is fine. Which Sunday?”

“Which?” Adam looked confused; then he smiled as the light dawned. “Oh, you mean the date. It’s the sixteenth. Lose track of time a bit, did you?”

Joe laughed lightly. “Yeah, I guess I did. So, what day will we leave for Yale? Commencement is this week, right?”

Adam’s mouth gaped for a moment. “Oh, Joe, we’re not going to Yale.”
The toast in Joe’s hand fell to his plate. “But you promised!” he cried, eyes burning into his brother’s face.

Adam was caught completely off guard by the intensity of his brother’s reaction. “Joe, surely you realize that you’re simply not up to an eight-hour train trip.”

“Yes, I am!” Joe insisted. “You promised, Adam. You made me visit all those other colleges, and now you won’t let me go to the only one I cared about seeing. It’s not fair!”

Adam stared at him, nonplussed. “You’re interested in attending Yale? But I thought—”

Joe brushed the air with his hand. “No, no, ‘course not, but I wanted to see where you went to school. You always talk about it like it’s a special place.”

“Well, it is to me, of course.”

“And that makes it special to me,” Joe declared. “Why are you always shutting me out of your life, Adam?”

Adam reached across the table to grasp his brother’s hand tightly. “Joe, I’m not. I was looking forward to showing you around Yale and introducing you to my friends, but you’ve been ill, boy—or did you forget?”

Joe pulled his hand away. “How could I with you hovering over me like some kind of mother hen? Worse than Pa, even!”

Had he been in a mood to argue, Adam might have pointed out that his young brother had voiced no objection to the “hovering” before. If anything, he’d seemed to welcome it. But Adam was too concerned about the effect that working himself up like this would have on Joe to voice any sarcastic comment. “Settle down and eat your breakfast before it gets cold,” he said with firm authority.

Joe pushed his half-finished meal away. “No!”
Adam took a deep breath and pushed the plate back. “Now, don’t be childish,” he chided. “If you think this display of petulance will change my mind, you are sadly mistaken. I’ll be glad to take you to New Haven after you’ve recuperated fully, but I’m afraid you just won’t be strong enough to make the trip by Tuesday, and that’s when we’d need to leave.”

Joe flushed with embarrassment in sudden realization that he had been acting like a child. Not only was that behavior an exhibition of ingratitude for all Adam had done for him, but it wouldn’t work anyway. He knew from experience that he wouldn’t get anything by throwing a tantrum, not from Adam, but he had other methods he was skilled in employing. With a pleading look plastered on his face, he implored, “Will you at least think about it, Adam?” He glanced up slyly. “I’ll eat if you promise to think about it.”

Adam almost laughed aloud at the blatant attempt to manipulate him. The little scamp must be feeling better if he’s up to bargaining and blackmail. Aloud, he said, “Well, if I’m going to agree to that, my conniving little brother, I’m afraid you’ll have to make a better offer. Promise me you’ll eat three substantial meals today, and I promise I’ll give some thought to taking you to Yale for Commencement.”

Joe smiled, relishing the challenge of give-and-take with his older brother. Adam had plenty of conniving talent himself, but he evidently needed to be reminded that he was competing with a master. “Well,” Joe said, drawing the word out to get Adam’s attention, “if you’re gonna up the ante, big brother, you’ve got to make a better offer, too. I’ll eat the best I can today if you promise to give just as much thought to figuring a way to get us to Yale for Commencement as you do to all the reasons you think we shouldn’t go. Deal?”

Fingers stroking his jaw line, Adam sat in silent consideration; then he stretched his hand across the table to seal the bargain. “Deal.” He pointed at Joe’s plate. “Now,
eat.”

With a cocky grin Joe picked up his fork and lifted a bite of egg. With the fork halfway to his mouth, he halted. “Well, what are you waiting for? Start thinking!”

Adam laughed and nodded his acquiescence.

After breakfast and his morning bed bath, Little Joe was sitting on the balcony. Adam joined him, carrying the copy of *Ivanhoe*. “Want to hear some more?” he suggested.

“Well, I would,” Joe said puckishly, “except that’ll keep you from thinking, like you promised.”

Adam chuckled. “You have a one-track mind, little brother.”

“I know what I want, if that’s what you mean,” Joe replied with a grin, “and you did promise.”

“True,” Adam conceded, ‘but I need some time alone for any serious thinking. Tell you what, I’ll spend this morning with you; then, since you’ll probably be tired, I’ll put you to bed after dinner and take a walk out in the garden while you’re resting.”

Joe nodded in agreement. “Yeah, that’s what you need, Adam. Some fresh air is sure to help you think straight.” He favored his brother with his most beguiling smile.

Adam shook his head, chuckling as he opened the book. Even when he knew the smile was a deliberate attempt to captivate, he still found himself susceptible to his younger brother’s considerable charm.

Little Joe made a credible attempt to eat a good dinner and went to bed willingly after reminding Adam that he needed to get outside “to do some proper thinking.” Armed once more with that persuasive smile, he added, “And remember, I was right about that hospital, Adam, and I’m right about this,
“Quit trying to influence the jury, boy,” Adam snorted as he smoothed the sheet over his brother. “Are you sure you wouldn’t like to take up the study of law? I see some definite talent in that direction.”

“That’s not time for the jury, Adam. I ain’t made my final argument yet,” Joe quipped, keeping up the analogy.

Adam groaned audibly, but he was grinning as he left the hotel room and made his way toward the elevator. The kid was sharp as a tack today, but that was a source of encouragement, even if it did make his younger brother harder to handle. Exiting the elevator, Adam walked through the handsomely appointed lobby and out the back doors into the garden.

As he made his way through the graveled walkways separating the colorful flowerbeds, he pondered the decision before him. His first inclination, of course, was to reject out of hand the inane notion of attending Commencement. If they left on Tuesday, that would be only eleven days after Little Joe had undergone abdominal surgery, only four since he’d left the hospital. The idea was utterly ridiculous!

Still, he had promised to give the matter some real thought, and the little conniver would hold him to that bargain. For that matter, Adam would hold himself to it, for he couldn’t expect Joe to be honest with him if he didn’t display the same integrity to his younger brother. So, as promised, Adam tried to analyze the possibility that Joe could tolerate the journey. Eight hours was longer than the boy had sat up at one time since his illness began, but he was staying up a bit more each day. With only two days remaining until the trip would have to begin, however, would he be able to make enough improvement? Hard to determine, but Adam suspected that the answer was no.

Was there a way to ease the journey, then, so the boy didn’t...
have to sit upright for eight hours straight? They could leave tomorrow, instead, perhaps spending the night in New York, to break up the travel time. Adam sat down on one of the garden benches, crossing his right leg over his left knee. What about a night train? If there were one leaving Tuesday night, Joe could spend most of the trip lying down, sleeping. Not quite as restful a night as in a stationary bed, but it was an attractive possibility. Joe would have a few hours extra rest here in Philadelphia and a more relaxing eight hours to New Haven than if he spent them sitting up. *I’ll check the train schedules,* Adam decided.

He realized, though, that he needed to see how much exertion Joe could handle before making a final decision. *I’ll bring him down here for a short walk later this afternoon and see how he holds up to that. Maybe shortly before supper, and we could eat in the restaurant together afterwards.*

Looking up at the fifth floor windows, Adam decided that he had left Joe alone long enough, so he headed back upstairs. His brother was sleeping soundly when he entered the room, so, leaving both Joe’s bedroom door and the French doors wide open, Adam took a book out onto the balcony, where he could catch the slight breeze, and began to read. He hadn’t been there more than an hour when he heard Joe calling him and went at once to his brother’s side.

“So, what did you decide?” Joe asked eagerly, rising on his elbows.

Adam slid him gently down and pulled up a chair. “I haven’t made a decision yet, Joe.”

Joe was crestfallen. “But, Adam, you promised.”

Adam tapped his brother’s forearm with his index finger. “To think about it—and I have, but I have not yet come to a decision. There are some things I need to check out first.”
Curiosity flickered in Joe’s eyes. “What kind of things?”

“First, I have to more fully evaluate your strength,” Adam said with a smile, almost knowing what his little brother would say next.

“Oh, that’s easy; I’m doin’ great, Adam. I’m strong enough, honest I am.”

Adam shook his head, amused by the predictability of younger brothers, this one in particular. “There is nothing honest about that assessment. It is based entirely on what you want to be true. It may be correct, but you’re going to have to prove it to me.”

Joe looked thoughtful. “Well, okay. How do I prove it?”

“First, I’m going to get you dressed and take you out to the garden,” Adam explained. “If you’re not up to that brief an outing, there is no way you can tolerate a trip to New Haven.”

That test seemed fair and reasonable to Joe, and he was eager to demonstrate that he was strong enough for a simple walk in the garden. Adam had only said, “First,” though, so that meant there were other tests to be passed, too. “Then what?” Joe asked.

Adam chuckled. “One step at a time, all right? I’ll get your clothes.”

Joe was the perfect picture of cooperation as Adam helped him sit up and assisted him in dressing in a shirt and trousers. After a brief stop by the bathroom for both brothers, they headed out to the garden and began strolling leisurely through the beautiful blooms. Concerned for his brother’s stability on this first extended jaunt since leaving the hospital, Adam insisted on holding Joe’s elbow. Joe didn’t think he needed the support, but he made no objection.

Despite the slow pace, after awhile Little Joe had to request
that they sit on one of the garden benches. Adam eased his brother down and then sat beside him. “More tiring than you thought?” he asked.

Joe nodded, but lifted his chin with determination. “Not more than I can take, though. Besides, it’s all that time in bed that saps the strength out of a fellow. You should know that, Adam.”

It was Adam’s turn to nod, for his own experience with enforced bed rest had taught him the same lesson. “I do know that,” he admitted, “but there are still limits to what someone who has been as ill as you were can handle, Joe.”

Joe licked his lips nervously. “Yeah, but this is my first time out, Adam. I’m bound to be a little shaky at first, but I’ll be stronger tomorrow. Try me again then, okay?”

“Okay,” Adam agreed. “Do you feel like sitting here or on the verandah awhile longer or would you prefer to go upstairs and lie down?”

Though Joe didn’t realize it, the question was another test, one he passed with flying colors, in Adam’s view. “Oh, I’d rather stay here,” Joe answered honestly. “It’s cooler outside.”

Adam smiled, pleased to see that the brief walk had not so exhausted his brother that he felt a need to lie down. They sat side by side, enjoying the fragrant scents wafting toward them on the gentle breeze and chatting conversationally until the sun started to dip toward the horizon. “Getting close to supper time,” Adam suggested. “Feeling hungry?”

“Yeah, I kind of am.” Joe sent a mischievous grin in his older brother’s direction. “See? Being up and out is good for me, helps work up that appetite you’re so worried about.”

Chuckling, Adam stood and helped Joe to his feet. “Since
we’re already downstairs, shall we eat in the dining room?”

Something in Adam’s face must have given him away, for this time Joe recognized the query as a test. “Absolutely, big brother!” he declared with energy. “Just like we’ll do in New Haven.”

Adam had to laugh. Sometimes the kid was just too sharp for him. “Come on,” he said, guiding Joe toward the back verandah and helping him up the short stairway.

They shared a delicious meal in the main dining room, and for once Joe ate almost everything on his plate, though he had again selected a light repast. Adam was satisfied that this test, at least, had been successfully passed. After the meal, Joe admitted, somewhat reluctantly, that he was tired, and he submitted without complaint to being put to bed as soon as they returned to their suite. As Adam pulled the sheet over him, Joe couldn’t resist asking one more time if Adam would take him to Yale.

Adam wagged a remonstrative finger beneath his brother’s nose before sitting down to answer him seriously. “I’m still not sure, Joe. In fact, it will probably be tomorrow afternoon before I make a final decision, so stop nagging, all right? I’ll tell you as soon as I’ve made up my mind.”

“All right,” a frustrated Joe muttered, “but you sure make it hard for a fellow to sleep, not knowing.”

“Oh, you’d better sleep,” Adam admonished with a sardonic smile. “A restless night will not work in your favor, my boy.” Laughing at the alarmed expression on his brother’s face, Adam turned him gently over. “Seriously, Joe,” he said as he administered what was becoming a nightly rubdown, “if you have trouble resting—for whatever reason—just call. I can give you a sleeping powder.”

“Thanks, but I don’t think I’ll need it. I was just—well,
just . . .”

Adam quirked a crooked smile. “Tightening the thumb screws?”

Joe tittered. “Yeah, something like that.”

Adam patted his brother on the shoulder. “Sleep well, Joe.”

Joe did sleep well and when he awoke, he did his best to look chipper and cheerful. “Good morning, big brother,” he said when Adam came in to find him already awake. “I had a good sleep, and I’m feeling really—”

“Persuasive,” Adam interrupted with his Cheshire-cat smile. “You’re feeling really persuasive.”

Realizing he’d been caught, Joe shrugged. “Yeah, but I am feeling good, Adam. Why don’t I get dressed, so we can have breakfast downstairs?”

“All right, let’s do that,” Adam agreed. He first bathed his brother, as he had every morning, and helped him tend to his personal needs before assisting him in dressing, allowing Joe to do a little more for himself this morning than he had before. As they breakfasted downstairs, he could tell that Joe was trying hard to look better than he really was, but even taking that into account, the boy seemed much improved. Maybe he needs this kind of incentive, Adam mused. Maybe light activity will speed his recovery more than if all he has to look forward to is lying around, reading and resting.

“Shall we go out to the garden again this morning?” Joe suggested after finishing his meal, which for the first time had included a slice of bacon with his scrambled egg. “I’m ready for another walk, big brother.”

Adam snickered at the obvious attempt to sway his decision. “You can have a brief one,” he told Joe. “I need to check on some things outside the hotel, and I want you lying down before I leave.”
“What kind of things?” Joe inquired, brow wrinkling.

“Well, the train schedule, for one thing, in case we do travel tomorrow,” Adam said, not wanting to reveal too much.

Seeing that informational quest as an indication that Adam was leaning the direction he wanted him to, Joe agreed at once.

Upstairs after their walk in the garden, Adam removed Joe’s shoes and shirt and let him stretch out on the top of the sheets, instead of tucking him in, as before. “If you need the water closet before I get back, get up slowly and carefully,” he cautioned, “and sit on the edge of the bed ‘til you’re certain you won’t be dizzy.”

When Joe acknowledged the instructions, Adam left the hotel and walked up to the corner of Elm and Belmont. Turning left, he went about half a block to the Centennial depot of the Pennsylvania Railroad. On inquiring about train schedules, he learned that a train for eastern destinations would leave at 10 p.m. on Tuesday. Adam was a little disappointed that the departure time was that late. He’d been putting Joe to bed shortly after supper each night, but maybe it wouldn’t hurt the boy to stay up a little later one night, especially if he got some extra rest during the afternoon. Putting him in his berth that late should insure that Joe would be tired enough to sleep through the entire trip, but leaving at ten would rush Adam himself a bit. He’d have only about three hours between the train’s arrival in New Haven and the meeting of Yale’s alumni on the campus that morning—barely enough time to get to the hotel, register, have breakfast, take a bath, shave, dress for the meeting and get his brother settled. Traveling at night would be better for Joe, though, and, therefore, worth the sacrifice.

Adam felt fairly certain now that the trip would not be overly tiring for Joe, but what about Commencement itself? A full day of activities was slated, quite possibly more than Joe
should attempt at this early stage. Still, the hotel would be nearby, just two blocks off campus. If the boy appeared tired, he could take him back and put him to bed at any time.

Adam walked around the neighborhood awhile to give himself time to mull over all the factors involved. If only he could ask a doctor’s advice, but having made himself odious to the doctors at the hospital, he felt he couldn’t return there, and to consult a stranger, some doctor unfamiliar with Joe’s case, would provide him no real peace. Suddenly, he thought of Dr. Havershaw at the Yale Medical School. What a relief it would be to have him examine Joe and get some reassurance that he’d made the right decisions regarding the boy’s health. Adam knew he would get a completely honest evaluation from the professor, and if there were problems, Joe might even be better off in New Haven, where Dr. Havershaw would feel a more personal concern for the brother of a former student. Adam would not, of course, mention the possibility of another examination to Joe, who had no trust whatsoever in doctors at the moment and wouldn’t welcome being “poked and prodded” by anyone except his own brother. A few days’ stay near the seashore might be good for Joe, too. If nothing else, it would get him away from the stifling heat of Philadelphia, which according to the Public Ledger, was experiencing the highest temperatures in eighty years.

Checking his watch, Adam noticed that it was nearly noon, so he hurried back to the hotel. Joe was sitting up in bed, reading the dime novel Adam had bought him, but he immediately set the book aside when his brother walked in. “Did you decide yet?” he asked, and then bit his lip as he remembered Adam’s admonishment to stop nagging.

Adam seemed unperturbed by the query this time, though. “Let’s go down to dinner and talk about it over the meal.”

Joe rolled his eyes. “Would it really kill you to just say yes or no, Adam?”
Adam twirled his tongue around the inside of his mouth. “Yup, pains me mightily to say anything but ‘maybe.’” He drew Joe’s shirt back on and while Joe was buttoning it, he tied his brother’s balmorals. Then he ran a comb through Joe’s pillow-mussed curls and helped him up.

Joe could barely contain his curiosity long enough to select his food, and as soon as their orders had been placed, he began to wheedle. “Come on, Adam. How long are you gonna keep me in suspense? I don’t think that’s real good for me, you know—probably upset my digestion or something.”

Adam laughed, knowing how little it took to turn Joe’s attention off a meal. “It probably would, at that! Okay, buddy, no more suspense. Unless I see something today to change my mind, we’ll plan to travel to New Haven tomorrow.”

“Whoopee!” Joe cried. Other diners turned in their chairs, as Adam, embarrassed, shushed his exuberant little brother. Joe gave him a sheepish grin. “Sorry, but I am happy enough to shout, Adam.”

“You might want to hold that shout until you hear the conditions,” Adam advised with an arched eyebrow.

Joe frowned. “Conditions? Aw, come on, Adam, what kind of conditions?”

Adam folded his arms on the table and looked seriously into his brother’s questioning eyes. “Joe, I am still concerned about the trip being too long for you this soon.”

“No, Adam. I’ll be fine. I—”

Adam held up a hand for silence. “Hear me out. Because of that concern, I’ve decided to purchase tickets for the train leaving at ten tomorrow night. You’ll go to bed immediately and spend the rest of the journey lying down, hopefully asleep.”
Joe grumbled a little about not being awake when they passed through parts of the country he’d never seen before, but Adam remained adamant and Joe gave in fairly soon. In his heart he knew Adam was right. He really wasn’t ready yet for a long train trip, and if sleeping through places as fascinating as New York City was the price he had to pay to make sure his older brother didn’t miss his first chance in ten years to reunite with fellow students, then it seemed a small return for all Adam had already given up for his sake.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Following breakfast the next morning, which Adam had insisted on their taking in the suite, he announced that he was going out for a while. “You are to stay in this room and rest,” he told his brother.

“Where you goin’?” Joe inquired.

“I have several errands to attend to,” Adam replied. “First, I want to purchase our tickets, so we’re assured of getting the train and berths we want.”

“Well, that won’t take long,” Joe said. “Depot’s right across the street, isn’t it?”

“Basically,” Adam admitted, “but I need to go downtown, as well, Joe. I need to take some cash from the bank for the expenses of the trip, among another things. Now, can I trust you to stay put?”

“What? No adventures in Shantyville?” Joe chuckled. “It’s a big temptation, brother, but I’ll try to resist.”

Adam regarded his brother with a serious expression. “I mean it, Joe. No further than the balcony. If I’m detained, you can go downstairs for dinner, but use the elevator.”

“I’d rather wait for you,” Joe said at once, “and you don’t have to worry, brother; I’ll be good”—he flashed a quick
Adam smiled. He did have a purchase or two in mind for his younger brother, but he said nothing.

“I guess I’ll put the time to good use by packing my bag,” Joe said as he wiped his mouth with his napkin.

“You’ll do nothing of the sort!” Adam admonished sharply. “Absolutely no lifting, young man.”

“Oh, for goodness’ sakes, Adam,” Joe sputtered, tossing the napkin to the table. “Since when is a shirt a heavy weight?”

“Since eleven days ago,” Adam responded dryly. “Mind what I say, boy. I will pack for you after I return, and you will ‘put the time to good use’ by resting up for the trip.”

Joe’s lips drooped in a petulant pout. “You are no fun at all, older brother.”

“And you, younger brother, are not up to what generally passes for ‘fun’ in your book,” Adam remarked dourly. He pointed an authoritative finger at his brother. “Rest.”

“Yes, sir,” Joe grumbled.

“See that you do,” Adam admonished again. Getting up from the table, he pushed the cart into the hallway and continued to the elevator. Exiting into the lobby, he went first to the hotel desk to inform the clerk of their plans to be in New Haven for a few days. “We do wish to retain the room, however,” he said, “and I’d like to pay in advance to secure it.”

“Very good, sir,” the clerk demurred, taking the money and making a note in his registry book. “Oh, there are two letters here for you, Mr. Cartwright,” he added, reaching into a cubbyhole behind him.
“Thank you,” Adam said automatically. As he moved back toward the elevator, he stared at the envelopes, one addressed to him and one to Little Joe in their father’s neat script. Though he felt a genuine dread of what his letter might say, Adam knew he needed to read it before doing anything else, in case what was written necessitated a change of plans, and certainly Joe would want to read his right away. Joe, after all, had nothing to fear from Pa. Retracing his steps, Adam returned to the suite he shared with his brother.

Joe was reclining on the padded chaise, but he pulled up when the door opened. “Hey, you back already?”

Adam placed his black hat on a side table and walked toward his brother. “I haven’t left yet. There were letters from Pa waiting downstairs. Here’s yours.”

Joe sat up and reached eagerly for the letter, tore it open and began to read, while Adam settled himself in a plump-cushioned armchair and opened the one to him. As they read, the expressions on their faces were markedly different, however. Adam’s somber countenance revealed that his letter contained caustic words of reproach, while Joe’s face glowed with the love he felt pouring from each line:

My beloved Joseph,

How concerned I was to learn of your recent illness and how grieved I am that I was prevented from being with you when you needed me most. It appears that you are now out of danger, for which I thank God, and your brother Adam feels that you do not need me at this time. However, if you wish me to come to you, Joseph, you have only to send me word, and I will be there. Your brother will not deny you this—or he will answer to me, as I have so informed him in his letter. I would
cherish hearing from you personally as soon as you feel able to write.

Please be assured that I will provide anything required for your comfort during your recovery. I will be forwarding a letter of extended credit to the bank in Philadelphia, to insure that you need lack for nothing. Do not hesitate to ask your brother for anything that would ease your convalescence or speed your recovery. Let me spoil you a bit, son, as it is all I can do from this distance.

Adam has told me that you and he have encountered some difficulties, but he seems to feel the two of you can work out your problems if you are allowed time together to do so. I realize that you may feel very vulnerable right now, Joseph, perhaps unable to withstand your brother’s arbitrary decision, but if you are in any way dissatisfied with your current circumstances, please write me, and I will come at once to personally assume your care.

Mere words are inadequate to express my sentiments as I write this to you, son. I yearn to be with you, to hold you in my arms and impart to you my strength in your hour of weakness. If you—not Adam, but you—feel that it is best for me to deny myself that joy for a brief season, then I will do so. I do hope that I will hear from you soon, so that I may be assured of your contentment and your continuing improvement. I remain

Your loving,
Pa

As Joe looked up, smiling, he noticed his brother’s downcast countenance, and his eyes clouded with concern. “Something wrong back home?” he asked anxiously.

Everything’s fine back home.” He returned his letter to its envelope and placed it inside his coat pocket.

The lines creasing Joe’s forehead only deepened. “You wouldn’t keep things from me, just ‘cause I’ve been sick?”

Adam came to his brother’s side and rested a reassuring hand on his shoulder. “No, it’s nothing like that. I just got the written equivalent of a ‘very necessary little talk’ from Pa, that’s all.” *And it hurts worse than if he’d tanned me!*

Joe cocked his head, regarding his older brother with eyes wide with amazement. “What on earth did you do, brother?” Unlike him, Adam never seemed to get in trouble with Pa, and he couldn’t help wondering what could possibly have gotten back to Pa to land his brother in this much hot water now.

Adam sat at the end of the chaise and took a deep breath. “Pa’s upset with me because I didn’t wire him about your illness or the surgery. I sent the news by regular mail, so it would be too late for him to do anything about it.”

“Oh.” Joe’s eyes fluttered to the side, as if he were fearful that a direct gaze would reveal too much. “I wondered why he—why I hadn’t heard from him ‘til now. Didn’t seem like Pa, but I never figured he just didn’t know. Just thought he was busy, with political meetings and such.”

“He’d never be too busy for you; you know that.” Adam placed a hand on his brother’s knee. “I’m sorry, Joe. I didn’t mean to cause you concern. I probably overstepped my bounds in keeping things to myself, but—well, I had reasons, but they seem like pretty selfish ones now.”

Joe looked back at his brother. “So we could work things out? Pa said you’d written him something like that.”

“Well, yes, that was my reason,” Adam admitted. “Like I told you before, I want a chance to make up for how miserable I
“Adam, I haven’t been miserable,” Joe objected. “Not then, not now.”

“And I still think you’re being overly generous,” Adam stated, “but we won’t argue about that now. The important thing is how you feel. Do you want me to send for your pa, boy? ‘Cause I will, if you need him.”

Joe pressed his lips together in thought. “I miss him,” he admitted. “Hoss, too, but I knew I would when I left home.”

“You’re dealing with a little more than just homesickness now, Joe,” Adam said gently. “If it’s Pa you need, then I want you to have him.” Even if it ruins our chance to come together. He waited for Joe’s decision, trying not to let his anxiousness show.

“I think you’re takin’ real good care of me, Adam,” Joe said finally, “and I guess I’d rather we did just go on as we are. Pa’s got things he needs to be doin’ back home, especially with the convention comin’ up, and maybe you and me do need some time to work at gettin’ along better. I can’t say I think you were right, keepin’ things from Pa—or from me, either—but mostly, you’ve done right by me.” He smiled brightly. “I’ll write Pa and tell him that, okay? See if I can’t get you out of some of that hot water. Pa says he wants to hear from me as soon as I feel up to writing.”

“Well, presumably, since you feel up to an eight-hour trip to New Haven, you’re strong enough to lift a pen,” Adam said wryly.

Joe grinned. “Yeah, I can do that while you’re out—if you’ll loan me some stationery.”

Adam released a deep, throaty laugh as he stood up. “Oh, I’ll gladly donate to the cause of getting me back into Pa’s good
graces.”

Joe’s high-pitched giggle followed Adam as he walked toward the desk. “There’s a change,” Joe teased, “me getting you out of trouble!” He swung his legs to floor and stood up carefully.

Adam smiled as he opened the desk drawer and took out three sheets of stationery. He had to admit the shoe was usually on the other foot, but he really could use his little brother’s intervention this time. “Incidentally, I didn’t write Pa about the circumstances under which you left the hospital. He just thinks you’d improved enough to be dismissed.”

“We’ll just let that be our little secret, brother,” Joe said as he sat down at the desk. “Like I’ve tried to tell you many a time, Pa don’t have to know everything.”

“I seem to recall arguing that point a few times,” Adam said, “but I’m willing to test your theory this time, little brother.” He gave Joe’s curly head an affectionate tousle. “Well, I’ll head out now. I’m glad we talked, but this has put me a little behind schedule, so don’t wait to have dinner with me. You eat downstairs, and I’ll get a bite downtown.”

“Okay,” Joe said, nibbling on the end of the pen.

Adam stared at the blank page. “Lay it on thick, huh?”

“As only I can, brother,” Joe promised.

After purchasing the train tickets, Adam caught a horse car and rode downtown. Reading his father’s letter a second time while he rode, he decided that it wasn’t all bad news. Though Pa had held his eldest suspended over a roasting fire through several painful paragraphs, he had ultimately agreed to stay home “unless Joseph is dissatisfied with your cavalier treatment,” and he had promised to send a letter of credit to the bank, to cover Joe’s medical expenses and anything else
the boy might need. That help was sorely needed, for Adam had incurred unexpected expenses, and while he didn’t begrudge Joe the money, even if he had to pay it out of his own pocket, having the extra funds to draw on would mean he could do more for the boy. Pa’s letter had made it clear that his baby boy was to be pampered, no need—or even want—to go unmet. “This is no time to practice your renowned New England frugality,” Pa had written. “Be expansively generous with him, and this time I do mean financially, as well as with your heart.”

Getting off the streetcar at the familiar Eighth Street and Chestnut stop, Adam walked a block to the Bank of the Republic, where he had deposited his funds on arriving in Philadelphia. Discovering that the letter of credit had already been transferred to his account, he withdrew a larger amount than he had at first intended, so that he would have funds available for some additional pleasures for his little brother.

His next stop was the Western Union Building, where he sent a telegram, apprising Pa of his sons’ trip to New Haven and where they might be reached for the next few days. Then he wired the New Haven Hotel, praying they would have accommodations for him and Joe. Though Adam had originally made reservations before leaving the Ponderosa, he had cancelled them while Joe was in the hospital, believing that they would be unable to attend Commencement. Though messages tended to receive prompt replies here in the East, Adam elected to do his shopping first and drop back by for the reply before having dinner.

He headed for Market Street, his prime target the gargantuan dry goods store of Hood, Bonbright and Company, where he felt certain he would find the specialized clothing he was seeking. Sure enough, on the fourth floor he found a wide assortment of bathing clothes and selected a set for both himself and Little Joe. He had been hoping to make a short trip to the seashore as a surprise for Joe, and Pa’s letter of
credit had made it possible for him to do so without worrying about the added expense. As he started to leave the store, he snapped his fingers, thinking of another item his brother would need for Commencement. As attached as Joe was to that straw hat, it really wasn’t quite the right accessory for the gray suit he would undoubtedly wear to the ceremony, so Adam bought a stylish gray bowler.

Clothing purchases taken care of, Adam stopped by Claxon, Remson and Haffelfinger to pick up another dime novel for Joe, who would have some time to kill at the hotel in New Haven, while Adam attended his alumni meeting. He’d noticed that Joe had already half-Finished the one he’d bought him last week and seemed totally disinclined to read Ivanhoe for himself, preferring to hear his older brother read it aloud.

“We have the latest Frank Starr American Novel,” the clerk told Adam when he saw him looking at a table of dime novels. “Just out today and selling like Centennial waffles.”

“Is this J. Thomas Warren a decent writer?” Adam inquired, examining the cover when the clerk handed him the slim booklet. “I’m not well acquainted with the dime novel genre. This is a gift for a youngster.” A prideful demurral, of course, and one that would probably have earned him a punch in the snoot from the “youngster,” if Joe heard himself called that, but Adam didn’t want the clerk to think that this was his normal choice of literature.

“Oh, excellent, sir,” the clerk bubbled, tapering his enthusiasm as he added, “judging by what I hear from our younger customers, that is.” Obviously, he, too, wanted to be seen as a connoisseur of finer literature.

“Well, at any rate, I can be sure the boy doesn’t have this one,” Adam said with a smile, “if this is, as you say, the first day it’s been on sale. I’ll take it.”

“Very good, sir. Anything else?”
“Possibly,” Adam replied. “If you’ll hold that, I’d like to look around a bit more.”

“Take as long as you like, sir.”

Adam wasn’t sure what to buy for himself. Something light, for reading on the train or in odd moments when his brother was napping, but he didn’t want to waste his time with dime-novel fodder, either. He finally settled on *The Poet at the Breakfast-Table* by Oliver Wendell Holmes. Though he’d read most of the pieces when they came out in the *Atlantic Monthly*, it would be nice to have them bound in a single volume, and Holmes’ sophisticated humor should lighten those long hours of travel and keeping an eye on Joe.

After dinner he returned to the Transcontinental Hotel, where he presented Joe with his new book, having left the clothing purchases at the hotel desk downstairs to be sneaked up after Joe went to bed. After expressing his thanks, Joe immediately opened *Old Ben Manx; or, The Secret Dispatches*, but Adam took the book from him before he could read a single paragraph. “That goes in your carpetbag, to be used in New Haven,” Adam dictated, wagging his finger under Joe’s nose.

“Aw, Adam, it looks good,” Joe pouted, “and I gotta do something, since you won’t let me help pack.”

“I’m glad you mentioned that, little brother,” Adam said with a smirk, “because I have just the job for you.” He put his arm around Joe and helped him up from the chaise. “Go find your bed and hold it down for me while I pack.”

“Adam, I’m gonna be sleepin’ the whole way to New Haven,” Joe complained. “I don’t need to sleep now, too.”

“You look tired,” Adam said, his eyes more serious. “I think you would profit by lying down ‘til suppertime, and I insist that you do.”
Grumbling that he wasn’t sleepy, Joe went to his bedroom and stretched out on the bed. Though he was determined to stay awake, enforced stillness had its usual effect, and he soon dozed off. Adam moved quietly about the room, selecting the clothes and grooming accessories his brother would need and packing them, along with *Ivanhoe* and the new book in the carpetbag Hoss had given Joe for his birthday. He slipped downstairs long enough to pick up the packages he’d left there and included them with his own luggage.

Joe never knew he was gone and, characteristically, when suppertime arrived, he had to be awakened from the sleep he had declared he didn’t need. “I’m not hungry, Adam,” he mumbled from the folds of the sheet covering him. “You go on without me.”

“Nothing doing,” Adam snorted, jostling Joe’s shoulder. “I will not have you going to sleep with nothing on your stomach.”

Joe groaned. “You’re gettin’ bad as that other brother of mine, always pushin’ food on me.”

“I have not done that,” Adam denied, “although, to use one of our brother’s colorful expressions, you have not been eating enough to keep a bird flying.”

Joe yawned, stretching his arms above his head. “So buy me a couple of popcorn balls to eat on the train.”

Adam lightly slapped his brother’s cheek. “You’re going to sleep as soon as you get on the train, remember? And I most certainly am not going to put you to bed after eating nothing but popcorn balls. Surest road to nightmares, in my opinion.”

Joe eased up to a sitting position and grinned. “I was kidding, but I’m really not very hungry.”

“Just eat something,” Adam urged. “I laid out your ranch
clothes for the trip, so go ahead and get dressed in them and we’ll head down to the dining room.”

Joe cocked his head. “Won’t you be ashamed to be seen with me, dressed like that when you’re in a suit?”

On his way out the door, Adam spun around. Leaning back against the doorjamb, he folded his arms. “Nope. You can even sleep in your clothes tonight without hearing your older brother make a fuss. That way I won’t have to wake you so early in the morning.”

Joe chuckled. “Brother, sometimes you seem almost human.”

Adam rolled his eyes and went to his room to freshen up before going downstairs to supper. When Joe saw that his brother had changed into his familiar black shirt and pants from home, he looked surprised. “Trying to go beyond ‘almost human’ to fully so,” Adam quipped.

Joe grinned back. “You’re making real progress, brother. Now, if you’ll just agree to sleep in those clothes . . .”

“I intend to,” Adam returned with a smile. “I can clean up after we get to New Haven.”

“Brother, I’m thinkin’ there’s real hope for you.” Joe crooked his arm through his brother’s elbow. “Let’s see how these city folks take to a couple of cowmen in their fancy dining room.”

After eating, Adam gave in to Joe’s earnest entreaties to go outside into the garden for a while. The fragrant air was refreshing to both of them, and there was really little point in telling the boy he had to rest until time to go to the depot. Better to let him stay up, even past his normal bedtime, so he’d sleep well on the trip.

About 9:30 the Cartwright brothers walked to the Centennial depot, where Adam immediately parked his brother on the
nearest bench. Though the walk had been a short one, Joe was obviously fatigued. “Joe, are you sure you can make it?” Adam asked as he squatted in front of his brother. “It’s only a five-minute walk from the depot to the hotel on the other end, not much more than what you just did, but I don’t want you to strain yourself.”

“I’ll be fine,” Joe insisted. “Will you quit worrying and sit down, Brother Hen?”

With a grin Adam took a seat beside his brother and, draping an arm across the slim shoulders, intoned solemnly, “Cluck.”

Joe panned the waiting room, surprised to see it so crowded at nearly ten o’clock at night. “I figured we’d be about the only folks on the train at this hour.”

“It wouldn’t be profitable to run it if that were the case, Joe,” Adam pointed out, with no hint of mockery in his voice. “Most eastern travelers, unless they’re new to the experience, prefer to travel at night and avoid the boredom of long journeys. Nothing to see they haven’t seen a hundred times before.”

Joe grinned. “Sort of like us wishin’ we could sleep through a cow gather, huh?”

Adam laughed. “Something like that.”

Soon it was time to board, and when they did, Adam immediately steered Joe toward the sleeper car. “Aw, Adam, I think I could sit up a bit,” Joe cajoled. “After all, I did all that extra resting this afternoon.”

“Nope. Bedtime for you,” Adam insisted, seating Joe on the lower berth and stooping to remove his shoes after stowing their carpetbags beneath the berth. He eased Joe down and tucked him in. “I’ll be sleeping right above you. Call if you need anything.”
“Okay,” Joe said, yawning in spite of himself. “You turning in now, too?”

“Soon,” Adam said. “I’m going down to the parlor car to read, just enough to unwind, and then I’ll be hitting the hay, too.” He tapped Joe’s nose. “You had better be asleep when I get back.”

Adam made his way to the parlor car, with the Holmes book in hand, and settled into one of the comfortable, tufted chairs. Half an hour’s enjoyable reading was sufficient to relax him, so he made his way back to the sleeper car, checked on Joe, who was snoring softly, and hitched himself up into the berth above his brother. Wish the kid was still spry enough to jump up here, he moaned as he drew his long legs up into the cramped space. A healthy little brother was definitely a luxury when traveling by train. Well, it was a luxury he would just have to do without this trip—and all the way back to Nevada, as well. He had no intention of allowing Joe to put any strain on his abdominal muscles until he was safely home and had been examined by dear old Dr. Martin.

Adam tended to be a light sleeper, compared to either of his younger brothers, and he was always especially so whenever he was watching over one of them. When he woke, sometime in the middle of the night, he cocked an ear, sensing something wrong. Hearing soft moans coming from the lower berth, he immediately sprang out of his own bed to see what was causing his brother’s discomfort. He squatted at Joe’s side, pulling the dark curtains aside. “Joe, did you call me?” he asked anxiously.

Joe made no response, though he continued to moan at intervals. Looking more closely, Adam saw that his brother had fallen onto his right side, jarred by the movement of the train, and was lying directly on his incision. The discomfort hadn’t been enough to wake him, thank goodness, but it might if allowed to continue, so Adam reached into his upper berth
and, taking the pillow, propped it against that tender side after rolling his brother back to a more comfortable position.

“Excuse me, suh, but is dere sumtin wrong?” a dark-skinned porter asked, coming up to Adam.

“No, not really,” Adam answered. He explained briefly what he had done and why. “Would it be possible to get another pillow?” he requested.

“Yassuh, I get you one right away,” the porter replied. Adam thanked him and made certain to reward the man’s helpfulness with an appropriate tip. He stood in the aisle, watching Joe for a few minutes, noticing that the pillow did help keep the boy from rolling about in the berth. Then he climbed back into his own bed and after listening carefully for any further sounds from below, fell asleep once more.

He woke to the sound of the porter moving through the aisle, announcing the next station. It wasn’t New Haven, but Adam recognized the name and knew that the train was about thirty minutes from their destination. He got up, slid down to the aisle and began the arduous task of waking his younger brother. When Joe finally responded, Adam observed dryly, “Now I know you’re feeling like your old self—hard to get to bed, harder to get up.”

“We in New Haven already?” Joe asked, yawning.

“Almost. Let me help you sit up, and I’ll put your shoes on.”

Once he was upright, Joe giggled at the sight of Adam’s stocking feet. “Don’t you think you ought to get your own on?”

“I hadn’t forgotten,” Adam grunted, reaching under Joe’s berth to pull out two pairs of balmorals. Once both of them had their shoes on and had combed their hair, more by feel than sight, Adam led his brother into the parlor car and eased him
into a chair. “Almost there now,” he said. Taking a chair opposite Joe, he pointed out the window to a smooth-sloped elevation about three to four hundred feet high. “That’s West Rock, about two miles from New Haven.”

“Pretty country,” Joe observed, looking at the bushy-topped trees lining the foot of West Rock; the green fields before it, divided by dark rail fences; the picturesque farmhouses and the steeple of a small white church set against the golden blush of the rising sun.

“It was always a pleasant walk from New Haven to here,” Adam said, smiling in fond memory. “We’d often make up a party and walk out on a Sunday, just to enjoy the exercise and the fresh air.”

Pleased that Adam was sharing a memory with him, Joe wanted to ask for more detail, but the train was pulling up to the depot, and he knew Adam didn’t have a lot of time to spare. He followed his brother, who was carrying both carpetbags, down the aisle and out onto the platform.

“Tell me if you need to stop and rest,” Adam urged as they headed down the street.

“I think I can manage to stay on my feet for five minutes,” Joe grunted with a roll of his eyes.

“Okay, follow me,” Adam ordered.

They soon arrived at the hotel, and Adam told Joe to take a seat in the lobby while he checked them in. Joe shook his head at the over-solicitousness of Brother Hen, but he had to admit that sitting down did feel good. Adam was back soon. “I’ll take our bags up,” he said. “You just sit here, and I’ll be right down, so we can go to breakfast.”

Joe nodded in agreement and spent the time looking around the lobby. It was nicely appointed and comfortable, although its
décor was simpler in style and less elaborate than that of the Philadelphia hotels. *Bet they don’t have the bathroom right in the suite here,* he observed, surprised that he would miss what had at first seemed to him so strange. Adam had been right; it was downright convenient, having it so close, especially when a fellow didn’t feel up to a trip down the hall or out back, the way it would have been at home.

Having taken time only to place each carpetbag in the appropriate bedroom and to lay out his suit, Adam wasn’t gone long. He guided Little Joe toward the dining room, which had a homey appeal. White wallpaper, twined with vertical rows of ivy vines sat above thigh-high white paneling. That, along with the bank of tall windows with white lace curtains across the front side gave the room the feel of a garden bower. The food, while not quite up to the standard of the Transcontinental, was tasty, at least in Adam’s opinion. He didn’t think Joe was qualified to pass judgment yet, since he’d only ordered a bowl of oatmeal and a glass of apple juice. *Don’t watch every bite he eats,* Adam lectured himself. *He’s right; you are getting as bad as Hoss.* He smiled wryly. Of course it would be easier to resist tallying up every bite if the kid would just give him more bites to count!

They went upstairs after finishing the meal. The parlor to this suite was very small, holding just a square table between a settee and side chair in Queen Anne style, both upholstered in autumn gold, while the curtains at the room’s single window were cream with gold roses. After taking a quick peek at his bedroom, sparsely furnished with only a bed, washstand and starkly plain chest of drawers, Joe sat down in the chair, while Adam got into his robe, gathered his grooming gear and headed down the hall for a bath and shave.

When Adam came back, looking refreshed and slightly damp about the ears, he took an appraising look at his younger brother, who was sagging in the chair, his head falling to one side.
“You look tired. Do you want to undress and go to bed?”

“Naw, I’m not that tired,” Joe insisted, straightening up. “I might lie down after while, but I’m not going back to sleep.”

Adam’s lips curled in a dubious expression. “Uh-huh.” He knew that as soon as Joe put his head down, he’d be out, so he decided not to argue the point. “I’ll turn down your bed, just in case.”

“I won’t need that, Adam.” Joe sounded a trifle perturbed.

“Just in case,” Adam said and went into Joe’s room to turn back the covers and plump up the pillows. While he was there, he unpacked his little brother’s carpetbag, mostly so Joe wouldn’t be tempted to do it himself, but he brought Joe’s slippers back with him and knelt down to remove the boy’s street shoes.

“Why are you doing that?” Joe demanded.

“Just to make it easier if you should decide to lie down,” Adam explained. “I don’t want you bending over, straining those muscles.”

As his older brother placed the slippers on his feet, Joe gazed warmly at him. “You think of everything, don’t you, Adam?”

Adam gave his brother’s leg a pat as he stood up. “Well, I try.” He went into his own bedroom then and dressed in the suit he’d laid out earlier and combed out his damp hair. When he was ready to leave, he set the new dime novel on the small end table next to Joe. “In case you’d like to read while I’m out,” he said.

“Everything,” Joe said softly.

“Hmm?”

Adam touched Joe’s shoulder with a tender hand and started to leave. Then he laughed at himself. “Well, I did almost forget something pretty important.” He came back to face his brother. “If you need me, for any reason, just ask the desk clerk to send a message to Alumni Hall. That’s where I’ll be.”

“I won’t need you, Adam,” Joe said, “but thanks for thinking of that, too.” He gave a short laugh. “That way, I’ll know where to come looking if you stay out too late.”

Adam tousled Joe’s hair. “I’ll be back for dinner, you scamp; wait for me.”

“I will,” Joe promised. “Have a good time, Adam.”

Adam found it hard, however, to think about having a good time as he walked the short distance to Alumni Hall on the campus of Yale University. He’s tired, he scolded himself, too tired. Can’t believe I let him talk me into this. I’m supposed to be the strong one, the one member of the family impervious to that kid’s cajoling charm. Yeah, impervious, you bet. Getting so he can wrap me around his little finger as easily as he does Pa. Not quite as easy a prey as Hoss, though, at least not yet; that’s one comfort—mighty small one.

When he reached Alumni Hall, however, and found himself caught up in greeting old friends and hearing them express how glad they were to see him again after all these years, the encroaching guilt faded to the back of his mind, and Adam began to let himself enjoy the moment. After all, it’s what Joe would do, Adam concluded, so he decided to take a lesson from his baby brother’s book for once and felt forced to admit that the kid did have a knack for getting the most out of life, a kind of inner wisdom, one might even call it. A chance to learn that wisdom was one of the reasons he’d given
God for sparing Joe’s life, so it was time to start putting the lessons into action now that God had blessed him with the opportunity.

The meeting began promptly at half past nine, and the next couple of hours were devoted to offhand speeches from Yale graduates. Adam himself spoke of his fond memories of life on the college campus, the lessons learned and the friendships formed. He mentioned how thrilled he was to see so many familiar faces already and how he hoped to renew still more acquaintances as the Commencement ceremonies continued.

When all the alumni who wished to speak had done so, the obituary record was read. Many of the names were familiar to Adam. Seventy-five Yalensians had died in the Civil War, and while he hadn’t known them all personally, others were close friends, young men with whom he’d competed for school honors, rivaled in sports matches—and lost in a far deadlier contest. These were the memories Adam always tried to avoid: lives snuffed out when their flame was brightest, others irreparably altered by the loss of limbs and livelihood. Somehow, though, it seemed right to remember them here today, in this way; somehow the load seemed lighter as he sat with men who shared it. He’d always known that many hands made light work when dealing with ranch chores; funny he’d never made the application to his inner load. That, too, was something Joe, that intuitively wise child, had sensed. Keeping the horror inside had made the pain last long past the time it should have ended, just as the boy had said on Independence Day. It was time to let it go, and the reading of the obituary was, for Adam, the first moment of release.

The program moved on to the oration, given by a graduate unknown to Adam. Since the man was only an adequate speaker, Adam found his flowery words less moving than the simple list of those who had passed on, whether in battle, through illness or, for those most blessed, of old age. Following the oration, officers of the alumni were chosen for the following
year. As most of the candidates were unknown to him, Adam voted only for the orator to speak at the next alumni meeting and was pleased when his choice, a man of his own graduating class, was chosen. Without doubt, next year’s oration would be more worthy of an attentive ear than the one presented today.

The meeting broke up just past noon, and the alumni scattered, rushing to nearby restaurants for a dinner that was already late. Several fellow students invited Adam to join them, but he turned down all invitations, explaining that his brother was expecting him. “Well, at least join us down at Eli’s for a game of billiards this afternoon, Adam,” urged the classmate who had been elected orator for next year’s alumni meeting. “I haven’t had a decent game since our senior year.”

Adam laughed. “I’ll try to oblige you, Peter, if I can get away, but prepare to be trounced.”

Peter groaned. “The same old Adam, I see. I was hoping that they didn’t have billiard tables out west yet, so you’d be out of practice and I’d have a chance for a change.”

Adam placed his palm on his friend’s firm shoulder. “Ah, but we do have billiard tables ‘out west,’ spoopsey, and I assure you I’m up on my game.”

Peter feigned offense at Adam’s use of the old college slang term for a silly fellow, but he punched Adam lightly in the ribs to signify acceptance of the joke. “I’ll look forward to seeing you at Eli’s then.”

“If I can,” Adam promised. He spotted the medical professor he’d hoped to see across the room. “If you’ll excuse me, I’d like a word with Dr. Havershaw.”

He came up behind a gray-haired man about a head shorter than he. “Dr. Havershaw?”
The man turned, dark eyes lighting with pleasure. “Adam! Adam Cartwright,” he said, enthusiastically pumping Adam’s hand. “I knew you the minute you walked forward to address the group. What a pleasure to hear your fine speaking voice once more! How long has it been, my boy?”

“Ten years since I graduated, sir,” Adam replied, returning the handshake with warm affection. Though he had taken only a few science courses under the professor of medicine, they had been among his most enjoyed classes, for Dr. Havershaw was an excellent teacher.

“And what finally brings you back from the wilds of—Nevada, isn’t it?” the doctor inquired.

Adam smiled. “Yes, Nevada, though it’s not so wild as you might think. I came back here for the Centennial.”

Dr. Havershaw nodded. “Oh, of course. Hoping to get there myself, now that the term has ended. Well, it’s marvelous to see you again.”

“And you, sir,” Adam said, hurrying to add, “but I came over because I need your help, your medical opinion, that is.”

Dr. Havershaw’s eyes showed immediate concern. “You’re not ill, are you, my boy?”

“No, sir,” Adam assured him quickly, “but I traveled to Philadelphia with my youngest brother, Joseph—he’s just nineteen—and he became gravely ill while we were there, with an inflammation of his appendix.”

Concern wrinkled the doctor’s face. “Oh, dear. That is serious. You consulted a doctor, I presume.”

“Of course. He advised admitting Joe to the hospital, and Dr. Thomas Morton, whom I’m sure you know, if only by reputation, operated on him there twelve days ago—to remove the appendix.” Adam paused to give the professor time to absorb
the unexpected news.

Dr. Havershaw leaned forward, his interest intense. “The result?”

“The surgery was successful,” Adam stated, “and Joe seems to be doing well.”

The dark eyes now reflected sympathy for the man standing before him. “I’m certain it was difficult for you to leave him behind, especially in a public hospital, but the Pennsylvania is one of the finest in the nation and—”

“I didn’t leave him behind, sir,” Adam interrupted to say. “He’s here with me in New Haven.” He hesitated, took a deep breath and continued. “You may think me a fool—and I’m not altogether sure myself that I did the right thing, but I removed him from the hospital—against the advice of the resident in charge of his case in Dr. Morton’s absence.”

If Dr. Havershaw was surprised, his face, while grave, did not reveal it. “May I ask why?”

“You’re better acquainted with public hospitals than I, sir.” When Dr. Havershaw nodded, Adam asked, “Would you want a member of your family in such a place?”

“No, I would prefer to care for a family member in my own home, of course, as most people of means do.” The doctor laid a supportive hand on his former student’s shoulder. “Were I far from home, as you are, however, I would not hesitate to seek medical help at any public hospital of good reputation, as that one certainly is. Were you dissatisfied with the care young Joseph received?”

“No, not really,” Adam admitted. “I will be eternally grateful to the surgeon for helping my brother, and I believe Joe received the best care available. I simply came to believe that having him with me would enhance his recovery.
There were certain policies of the hospital that were disturbing to the boy—and to me, for that matter—but Joe was becoming increasingly distraught, to the point that it was affecting his recovery, in my opinion.” He explained briefly the hospital policies that had upset his brother and told about his attempt to escape.

Dr. Havershaw nodded in slow acknowledgement. “Those are much the same policies in effect across America, Adam. I’ve advocated the need for change for some time, but change happens slowly.”

Adam pinched the bridge of his nose. “That escape attempt is what motivated me to remove Joe from the hospital. I believe I did the right thing, and his improvement since leaving there seems to bear me out. Now I’ve let that boy wheedle me into bringing him here for Commencement, and I’m concerned that the trip may have been too much for him this soon after surgery.”

Dr. Havershaw’s eyebrows, which were a shade darker gray than the hair on his head and his beard, drew together. “Well, I definitely wouldn’t have advised it, Adam. If you had wired me, I would probably have suggested leaving your brother in the hospital until you could return.”

“I would not have left him,” Adam declared, “although missing Commencement would have been a bitter disappointment.”

More friend than physician now, Havershaw smiled. “He’s very important to you.”

Adam licked his lips and gave a nervous nod. “More than I know how to say. I realize I’m asking a huge favor, but would you be willing to examine him, see what you think of his current condition, give me some advice on his further care? There is no one whose opinion I would respect more, sir.”

The professor laughed. “I see that your young brother comes by his ‘wheedling’ talent legitimately.” He clapped Adam on
the back. “You know I’d do anything for you, my boy, though you did hand me a disappointment in not choosing medicine as your career. Certainly, I’d be happy to examine your brother. In fact, I could do that right now.”

“I don’t want to keep you from your dinner, sir,” Adam demurred. “The hour grows late. Just come at your convenience.”

“Nonsense!” Professor Havershaw proclaimed with another hearty clap to Adam’s shoulder. “It will take only a few minutes, and my family is quite used to my arriving at all hours for meals. Where are you lodging?”

“At the New Haven Hotel.”

“Ah, a pleasant block or so away—excellent choice.”

“Thank you for agreeing to come, sir,” Adam said as he fell into step beside his old professor. As they walked toward the hotel, beneath the shady elms arching over the street, Adam and Dr. Havershaw briefly brought each other up to date on the changes in their lives in the last ten years. Adam talked about the growth of the Ponderosa and the engineering and architecture projects in which he’d been involved, while Dr. Havershaw mainly spoke of the birth of his three grandchildren and what joy they had brought into his life.

When they entered the hotel suite, Joe was not in the parlor. “Must have decided to lie down,” Adam told the professor. “He seemed very tired, even after sleeping the entire trip.” He walked into Joe’s bedroom and found him sound asleep, linen sheet reaching about halfway up his bare chest. The shirt was lying across the foot of the bed and his slippers sat in the floor at the side, but no other clothing was in sight, so Adam presumed that his brother was still wearing his trousers and socks. He touched Joe’s shoulder and gave it a gentle shake.

“Guess I was more tired than I thought,” Joe said, stretching
his arms above his head. As he looked up at Adam, he suddenly became aware of the stranger standing at his brother’s side and pulled the sheet up to his shoulders.

Adam knew he was in trouble the minute he saw his brother trying to hide behind that sheet. Really shouldn’t have sprung this on him. It was too late to correct the mistake, however, so Adam decided to bluff his way through it. “Joe, I’d like you to meet Dr. Abraham Havershaw.”

Joe cut a suspicious glance at his brother. “Doctor?” he asked, his tone laced with acid.

Adam cleared his throat. “Yes, an old professor of mine.”

Joe relaxed a little, although he still felt awkward at being caught half-dressed and in bed in the middle of the day. After another cutting glance at Adam, Joe tried to sit up, clutching the covers to his chest. “Oh. Well, nice to meet you, sir.”

As Adam helped his brother up and placed pillows behind his back, Dr. Havershaw extended his hand. “Nice to meet you, young man.” Joe pulled his hand out from beneath the sheet to shake the professor’s hand.

Adam drew a deep breath, bracing himself for an explosion. “Joe, I’ve asked Dr. Havershaw to examine you.”

Emerald eyes shot arrows at ebony ones, but, angry as he was, Joe didn’t want to be discourteous to his brother’s old teacher. “I—uh—don’t see any call for that. I don’t mean any disrespect, sir, but I’m doing just fine. I don’t need any more doctors pokin’ at me.”

“Joe!” Adam hissed, face flushing.

“It’s quite all right, Adam,” Dr. Havershaw offered conciliatorily. “I’m sure this young man and I can come to an understanding.” He smiled at Joe. “I’m glad to hear that
you’re feeling well, son, and I understand that you’ve probably seen as much of doctors as you care to. Your brother, however, is feeling some concern about his decision to remove you from the hospital and to bring you here for Commencement. I’m here simply to ease his mind. Wouldn’t you like to see his concerns relieved?”

“They’d be relieved if he’d just believe me,” Joe complained. He appreciated being treated with respect, as if he had the right to decide whether he were examined or not, but he was still disgruntled by what he saw as a betrayal by his brother.

Dr. Havershaw chuckled. “Well, some men are just stubborn enough to prefer the opinion of a professional, and frankly, my boy, I always found your brother Adam to be more stubborn than most.”

Despite his desire to maintain an offended attitude, Joe quirked a smile. “You really do know him!”

Adam cleared his throat loudly. “I didn’t invite you here to give my brother ammunition for sniping at me later, Professor Havershaw!”

The doctor laughed, mostly to put his patient at ease. “Oh, but younger brothers need all the ammunition they can stockpile; at least, that’s how it was in my family.”

Joe was grinning broadly now and beginning to feel more comfortable with the genial old man.

Seeing the patient’s relaxed attitude, Dr. Havershaw asked, “May I examine you, Joseph, just to give our stubborn Adam some peace of mind?”

“I guess I can put up with it,” Joe conceded, “seein’ as how I’m not as stubborn as him.”

Adam rolled his eyes in disbelief at the enormity of this falsehood.
With a smile the doctor drew back the sheet, unbuttoned Joe’s pants and pulled them down below his hips. He conducted the exam in a casual manner, keeping his touch light on the tender area of the incision, especially after seeing the patient bite his lower lip when the mildly arthritic fingers passed over that area. The doctor asked a few questions that Joe found embarrassing, regarding the function of his bowels and bladder, but didn’t dwell on that subject, once assured that everything was in working order. Finally, he drew Joe’s pants up and buttoned the opening, thanking Joe for allowing him to make the examination.

“Is that all?” Joe asked, looking surprised. The doctors in Philadelphia had pestered him much longer each morning.

Dr. Havershaw smiled and patted the boy’s leg before pulling the sheet over him again. “That’s all. Not too horrible, was it?”

Joe grinned, his relief evident. “No, sir. I’d sure like to send some of those Philadelphia doctors here to your school. You could teach them a thing or two!”

The professor laughed. “And perhaps they could teach me a thing or two, as well, but I accept your compliment, young man.” He shook Joe’s hand in farewell. “Again, it was a pleasure to meet you.”

Adam moved swiftly to Joe’s side and helped him sit up again. “Put your shirt back on,” he suggested. “I’ll see Dr. Havershaw out and be back to help you with your shoes.” He escorted his old professor into the parlor, closing the bedroom door behind him.

“A most personable young man,” Dr. Havershaw commented.

Adam gave a brief nod. “Yes, he’s quite the charmer, especially with young ladies.”
The doctor chuckled. “I can see how he would be—incredibly handsome lad, though that seems to run in the family.”

“How is he?” Adam asked anxiously. “Have I done him any harm by the unorthodox actions I’ve taken?”

Dr. Havershaw grasped Adam’s shoulder in support. “He appears to be recovering from the surgery very nicely, Adam. I would say that both the doctors at Pennsylvania Hospital and you have provided the young man excellent care. He is tired from the journey, of course, and I would advise keeping him relatively quiet today.”

“And tomorrow?” Adam inquired. “Is he fit enough to attend the activities?”

The doctor stroked his whiskers in thought. “It will be a long day, of course—always is—but I’d say so, as long as he doesn’t overextend himself.”

“I’ll see that he doesn’t,” Adam stated firmly.

Dr. Havershaw smiled at the expression of determination, which he had so often seen on Adam’s face when he was a student at Yale. “Yes, I was sure you would. Do you intend to return to Philadelphia after Commencement?”

“He doesn’t know yet, but I had intended to take him over to Savin Rock for a few days.”

“Oh, excellent!” the doctor said enthusiastically. “A few days of good sea air should act as a natural tonic.”

“That’s what I thought, especially since the heat in Philadelphia this summer has been stifling. I planned to return to Philadelphia afterwards, though, and begin touring the Centennial again, if you think he’d be up to that.”

Again the doctor scratched his beard. “Well, I don’t know, Adam. From what I’ve heard, that entails more walking than I
would advise this soon after surgery.”

Adam spread his hands toward the ceiling. “He’s normally such an active boy, though, that I know keeping him confined to a hotel room is going to be very difficult. I thought perhaps taking him out for half a day, using the rolling chairs available at the Exposition . . .”

Dr. Havershaw nodded. “You’ve thought it out well, Adam, but that was always your hallmark. I think that might work. Just keep an eye on him to ascertain that he isn’t becoming overtired. He doesn’t strike me as the kind of lad who would volunteer that sort of information.”

Adam laughed. “Oh, no, he’s definitely the type to hide any discomfort that might get in the way of a good time. I’ll watch him like a hawk.”

Or, more applicable, like a mother hen, the professor thought, unconsciously echoing a description Adam had already had tossed in his face by a certain little brother. “Those stitches really should come out right away,” the doctor advised. “If you’d like, I could return this evening and tend to that.”

“I’d appreciate it, sir. What time?”

“Let’s say eight o’clock,” the doctor suggested. “I’ll administer light sedation, so he’ll be more comfortable, and then he can go directly to sleep.”

“That sounds ideal,” Adam said. “Thank you.” He saw the doctor out and then returned to Joe’s room, as promised, picking up the balmorals, which were still beside the chair in the parlor.

Joe was sitting on the side of the bed, impatiently tapping the toe of his stocking on the floor. “Well, that took long enough. You and the doc have a nice talk about me, behind my
“We talked about you,” Adam said, squatting down at Joe’s feet, shoes in hand, “but there’s nothing secretive about it. I just asked him how you were doing, and he assured me everything was looking fine, and we talked some about how much activity you could handle.” He glanced up after slipping on Joe’s left shoe. “Still mad at me for bringing him?”

Joe shrugged. “No, I guess not, but I don’t much like bein’ surprised like that, Adam.”

“Sorry,” Adam said as he tied the laces on the shoe. “I was a little afraid you’d bolt if I told you ahead of time.”

Joe smiled slightly as Adam eased his other foot into its shoe. “Yeah, maybe, but he was okay, treated me like a real person.”

With the shoestring looped in one hand, Adam looked up in surprise. “Didn’t the doctors in Philadelphia treat you like a ‘real person,’ Joe?”

Joe scowled. “Not like he did. Mostly, they talked about me, not to me, and they didn’t even call me by name, just ‘the appendix surgical case’ or something like that.”

Catching the meaning, Adam nodded as he finished tying the shoe. “They were treating the illness, not the person. Well, that’s all past now,” he said as he stood, “and what’s directly ahead is dinner. You want yours on a tray or would you prefer to eat downstairs?”

“Downstairs, of course,” Joe replied with complete predictability.

They were soon seated in the dining room, and Adam shook his head when he heard Joe order only veal pie. Meat and gravy in crust might make a good entrée, but as a full meal, it left much to be desired. “Add baked squash and buttered peas to
that order, please,” he told the waitress, “and I’ll have the same.” He gazed back imperturbably at Joe’s glare. “You’ve got to start eating more, boy,” he said.

“That some of the good doctor’s advice?” Joe snorted.

“No, just common sense,” Adam said. “You don’t have to clean your plate; just eat a little of each, please. I’m concerned about you.”

The final sentence wiped the anger from Joe’s face. “Don’t be,” he said softly. “The doc said I’m doing fine, remember?”

“I remember.”

“You have any more meetings this afternoon?” Joe asked, smiling at the waitress as she delivered the iced tea chosen by both him and his brother.

“Not exactly,” Adam said, handing Joe the sugar bowl so he could sweeten his drink first. “I was invited down to Eli’s for a game of billiards. That was a popular student hangout when I attended school here, and some of my old classmates are meeting there this afternoon.”

“Could I come?” Joe asked. “I’m rested up now, and I don’t want to sit up in that room alone all afternoon.”

“I wouldn’t leave you alone, Joe,” Adam assured him, “but if you think you’re up to it, you may come with me. I would enjoy a good game of billiards.”

“I’m ready, older brother,” Joe said with a smile.

“No, you’re not,” Adam said pointedly. The waitress chose that moment to deliver their food, so he waited until he and Joe were alone to explain his statement. “Eat your dinner, little brother, or there’ll be no outing for you this afternoon.”
Recognizing the teasing tone in his brother’s voice, Joe feigned a pout, but he also knew that Adam meant what he said—no food, no fun. He cut into the pastry covering the veal pie to let the steam escape and took a bite of squash while he waited for the meat dish to cool. He ate about half each of the entrée and squash and all of the peas, one of his favorite vegetables, especially when they came fresh from the garden, as they obviously did here.

Adam seemed satisfied with the amount Joe had eaten, and they were soon walking to Eli’s. “There it is, just past the post office,” he said, pointing to a small building behind a white picket fence.

To Joe, the place—from the outside, at least—looked like it held a more sedate style of fun than was his preference, but once they walked in, his smile widened. The walls of the front room were paneled in dark wood, but the gas lighting kept the darkness from being oppressive. Round tables for four were scattered across the floor, and a long, marble-topped bar stood along one end. The room rang with lively conversation, and it was obvious that the patrons were having a rollicking good time.

“The billiard tables are in the back room,” Adam chuckled, seeing his brother’s lingering gaze on the bar. Snagging an elbow, he guided Joe into the next room, a much lighter one, for it was lined with windows on three sides.

A brown-haired man, slightly shorter than Adam, raised his arm and waved to attract their attention. “Adam!”

“Hey, Adam! Glad you could make it,” called a man on the opposite side of a billiard table, and several others in the room echoed the welcome.

“I’d about given you up, old boy,” the first man said as he walked over to grasp Adam’s hand. Noticing the boy at his friend’s side, he asked, “Who’s the lad?”
Joe rolled his eyes, wondering why all these eastern fellows insisted on calling him lad.

“This is my brother, Joseph Cartwright,” Adam responded. “Remember, I told you he was with me? Joe, this is Peter Pierson, an old friend.”

“Pleased to meet you, sir,” Joe said politely.

Peter looked up and down Joe’s slight frame. “Well, this can’t be the burly one, big enough to lift a horse, so I take it you’re the little mischief Adam used to tell me about.” He laughed at the irritated glare Joe sent toward Adam and extended his hand to distract Joe. “Welcome to Eli’s, young fellow. First drink’s on me.”

Shaking Peter’s hand, Joe cut an inquiring glance at his older brother. He hadn’t tasted liquor since his illness and wondered whether Adam would permit him to have it.

Adam nodded. “As long as it’s beer—and nurse it slowly because you won’t get more than two this afternoon.”

Peter laughed. “Holding the lad to a higher standard than you ever kept yourself, aren’t you, spoopsey?”

Joe’s mouth curved upward. “Spoopsey?” He just barely avoided giggling out the question.

“Never mind!” Adam said curtly. He glowered at his friend, who only laughed at how successfully he’d repaid Adam for the earlier jibe. Finally, Adam smiled in acknowledgement of being trumped. “He’s been ill,” he explained to Peter, “and I’d prefer he save his appetite for nourishing food.”

“And I’d prefer you quit worrying,” Joe muttered.

Peter looked sympathetically at the young man. “Well, I’m sure he has your best interest at heart, lad, but I’ll still claim the honor of buying you that first beer.”
Joe smiled, irritation diffused by the man’s friendly manner. “Thank you kindly, sir.”

“Almost done with this game,” Peter said, pointing to the billiard table, “and I’ll be ready to take you on by the time you’ve ordered that beer for the boy, Adam.” He pressed a quarter into Adam’s palm. “Does your brother play billiards, too? I might stand a better chance against a youngster like him.”

Adam laughed. “You could probably defeat him with one arm tied behind your back. Joe’s never shown much interest in the game. His taste runs more to arm wrestling, I’m afraid.”

Peter chuckled. “Since he’s been ill, I won’t challenge him to a match at that. However, you, sir, will receive no mercy from me.”

“Nor need any, unless your game has vastly improved,” Adam retorted with an arch of his eyebrow. He went to the bar and brought back a foaming mug of beer for his brother, handing it to Joe after taking one long swallow. It was all he had time for before the billiard match began. Several of Adam’s old acquaintances gathered around in anticipation of a challenging match.

As the balls were racked and the game began, Joe stood watching, sipping at his beer. He’d never paid much attention to billiards before, mostly because Adam’s explanation of the playing technique sounded like an arithmetic lesson, all angles and calculations. Now, seeing Adam in a sporting competition with his friend, exchanging crisp banter back and forth, the game looked like fun. Adam . . . fun . . . Joe shook his head. The words scarcely seemed to fit together. Adam was always associated, in Joe’s mind, with words like ‘work’ and ‘study’ and ‘responsibility.’ He was seeing a different Adam today, though, one capable of making friends and sharing a good time. Adam had friends back home, too, of
course—not as many as Joe, but a few tried and true ones. However, Joe sensed that his brother was more at ease among these eastern comrades. Stood to reason, he figured. Adam had more in common with these educated folks; he could relax and be himself without anyone staring at him if he used a long-handled word or made some reference to a book or play. Joe soon grew weary of standing, however, and took a seat at a nearby table, where he could still watch the action of the game.

Several minutes passed before Adam noticed that Joe wasn’t where he’d last seen him. Looking around, he spotted his brother and walked over while Peter was racking up another set of balls. “You okay?”

“Yeah, fine,” Joe assured him. “Just got a little tired of standing up. Can I have that second beer now?”

Adam chuckled as he lifted his hand to attract the attention of a barmaid. He laid a long bit, worth fifteen cents, on the table, so Joe would be able to pay for the beer when it arrived.

“Hey, Adam, you’re going to give me another chance, aren’t you?” Peter queried, walking toward the Cartwright brothers.

Adam folded his arms and coolly surveyed his friend. “And what makes you think another chance will lead to a different outcome?”

Peter shrugged and looked at Little Joe. “Sure you won’t give me a game, lad?”

Joe grinned. “No, thanks, but I’ll wager five dollars my brother gives you another sound thrashing.”

“Joe!” Adam thumped his brother lightly on the top of the head. “You rascal, you absolutely will not bet on this contest.”
“Why not, Adam?” Peter sparred. “Afraid you’ll be the cause of the little lad losing all his pocket money?”

Joe started to rise in response to the insult of being called a little lad, but Adam pressed down on his shoulder and turned to Peter with a lofty smile. “The ‘little lad’ will soon be five dollars richer.” He ambled toward the billiard table, crowing, “Like taking candy from a baby”—his voice dropped to a mutter—“and giving it to another one!”

Adam once again won the game easily, and Peter, though disgruntled by the second loss, willingly paid his debt. Adam winked at Joe as the boy pocketed his winnings. Then he noticed the strain on his brother’s face and turned to his friend. “Much as I’d like to trounce you again, my friend, it’s time we took our leave of you.”

“Here now, that’s not fair!” Peter protested, though with a good-natured smile. “Take my money, then run off without giving me a chance to win it back? It’s not done, sir!”

“I need to get him back to the hotel,” Adam said seriously. “He’s tired, and we have a big day ahead tomorrow.”

Joe raised a pair of drooping eyelids. “No, Adam, go ahead,” he urged. “I’m all right.”

In answer, Adam merely assisted Joe to his feet and, taking firm hold on the boy’s arm, said good-bye to his friend.

Peter shook his hand. “Perhaps we can have another go before you leave town, and I’ll take you next time, spoopsey.”

“Follow my advice, spoopsey,” Adam tossed back, “and don’t wager against me next time, especially not with this little sharper. Come on, Joe.”

“Good-bye, lad,” Peter said. “Don’t spend it all in one place.” He laughed as he gestured to the barmaid for another drink.
No sooner had he and Adam cleared the swinging picket gate on leaving Eli’s than Joe began to protest. “I can go back to the hotel alone. No need to sacrifice your fun with your friend.”

“No sacrifice involved,” Adam replied. “Peter’s a good opponent, but I’d probably just hand him another defeat if I stayed, and I’d prefer not to do that.”

“You’re really good at this game, aren’t you?” Joe asked, his admiration showing.

Adam shrugged. “It’s all a matter of applied mathematics.”

Joe groaned. Now, this was the Adam he knew! Adam laughed at his brother’s woebegone expression and circled his waist as they walked the short distance to the New Haven Hotel. Joe looked up, mischievous twinkle in his eye. “Whatever you say, spoopsey, whatever you say.”

Adam dug his fingernails into his brother’s ribs. “If you repeat that word back home, I will personally bend you across my knee—and that is no idle threat, sonny.”

Joe nodded in exaggerated solemnity. “Yes, spoopsey.”

Adam let his hand slide up to take hold of Joe’s neck. He gave it a slight shake and then slapped Joe’s backside with a chuckle, just before they mounted the steps to the hotel. As soon as they were inside their suite, Adam told Joe to get undressed and go to bed.

“It’s the middle of the afternoon,” Joe whined. “I’ll lay down for awhile, but—”

“You will lie down the rest of the day,” Adam dictated firmly. “You look exhausted, and tomorrow’s schedule will be heavy, so get into bed like a good little boy, and I’ll have your supper brought up on a tray whenever you’re ready.”
“You are just plain bossy, spoopsey,” Joe grumbled.

“Bed,” Adam ordered laconically, and with a sigh Joe headed for his room. Adam followed him in, took a fresh nightshirt from the chest of drawers and helped Joe change clothes and get settled into bed. Then he pulled a chair over and straddled it, resting his arms across the back. “You know, Joe, you don’t really have to attend the ceremonies tomorrow if you don’t want to.”

Joe looked up with a pained expression. “Are you afraid I’ll embarrass you in front of your fancy eastern friends?”

“Joe, no, of course not! I wouldn’t have invited you to Eli’s this afternoon, if that were the case. I’m simply concerned that the day will be tiring for you, as well as rather boring. There’ll be a dozen speeches, most of them on literary subjects, which would be of little interest to you, and since I’ll be sitting with the alumni, we wouldn’t even be together.”

Joe frowned for a moment. “That’s not all there is, though, right?”

Adam shrugged one shoulder. “It’s the major part, yes, so I’d understand if—”

Joe interrupted, “But it’s like what you did when you graduated, right?”

“Yes. In fact, I was one of the speakers back then,” Adam told him, pride showing through just a bit.

“Well, I didn’t get to see that, so I’d like to go now, so I could at least get a feel for what it was like for you,” Joe said.

“All right, little brother,” Adam said gently, nonplussed by the intensity with which Joe seemed to yearn for knowledge of those years the two of them had been apart. “You can see
whatever you like. Get yourself some rest now, and I’ll wake you for supper. Know what you’d like?”

“Just some soup.”

Shaking his head, Adam left the room. Soup again. It was becoming standard fare for the boy who had eaten everything in sight when he first came east. Still, Joe’s appetite was beginning to pick up, so he wouldn’t push the issue. No, he would not be like Hoss and beg or bully the boy into eating “just one more spoonful”! He did, however, choose the heartiest soup on the menu, beef and barley in rich, dark gravy with peas, carrots, potatoes and onion.

When Joe, sitting up in bed, finished it later, Adam set the tray outside the door and returned to his brother’s room. “I don’t have to go right back to sleep, do I?” Joe whined.

“In an hour or so,” Adam replied, taking a seat and facing him. “I don’t want to be accused of ambushing you again, so I’d better tell you that Dr. Havershaw is coming back over about eight o’clock.”

“Why?” Joe demanded. “Not even those docs in Philadelphia pestered me at night.”

Adam smiled. “You really didn’t like them, did you? Well, you probably won’t like what’s happening tonight, either, but it’s necessary. Dr. Havershaw said it was time for your stitches to come out, and he offered to take care of that tonight.”

“Ugh!” Joe grunted. He’d had stitches removed on a few other occasions and wasn’t looking forward to repeating the experience.

“I know, I know,” Adam soothed sympathetically, “but you know it has to be done, Joe, and you’ll feel better once they’re out.”
“I guess so,” Joe muttered. Looking up, he added, “Thanks for telling me before he got here.”

Adam nodded. “Sure, only fair. Would you like to hear a bit of Ivanhoe ’til he arrives?”

“Yes, please,” Joe said with a smile.

Adam took the book from the top of the bureau, and he and Joe were soon absorbed in medieval adventures in merry old England. About an hour and a half later there was a rap at the door. Adam answered it and ushered his old professor into Joe’s room.

“Ready to get rid of those stitches, my boy?” the doctor asked.

“Ready as I’m gonna get,” Joe replied with a trace of nervousness in his voice. “Sure hope you’ve got a steadier hand than the fellow that put ‘em in.”

Dr. Havershaw gave the boy’s knee a kindly pat. “I’ll be as gentle as I can,” he promised. He opened his doctor’s bag and took out a syringe.

“What’s that for?” Joe asked, eyeing the instrument with edgy distaste.

“Just a mild sedative,” the doctor explained as he filled the syringe from a small vial. “It’ll make you more comfortable for the procedure.”

“Couldn’t I just bite down on a piece of wood?” Joe grunted. “Westerners are tough—or so I hear.”

“Joe,” Adam scolded.

The doctor just laughed. “Let’s do it the easy way, shall we?”

Joe gave in and was soon glad he had, for even the “easy way”
was pretty tough to take. Each stitch stung and pulled the tender flesh as it was removed, and the stinging was only accentuated by the swabbing of alcohol that completed the procedure. The sedative helped, although it wasn’t until the doctor had redressed the wound and slipped out to the parlor with Adam that Joe actually fell asleep. Adam was glad that Joe had the extra aid to rest that night. Since the ceremonies would begin at 8:30 the next morning, they would need to rise early to dress, eat and be on campus by then.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Dressed again in the black range outfit he’d worn on the train, Adam set a loaded tray atop the chest of drawers in Joe’s bedroom and moved toward the bed to wake his brother. “Up and at ‘em, Sleeping Beauty,” he teased. Joe groaned and tried to roll away from his older brother, but Adam blocked the movement. “Joe, you have to get up. It’s seven o’clock. Come on, boy.” When he saw Joe’s eyes open, he walked across the room to retrieve the tray. “Breakfast is served,” he announced cheerily.

Joe scooted up in the bed, and Adam positioned the tray over his legs. “We could have gone downstairs together, Adam,” Joe said.

Adam perched at the foot of the bed. “I wanted you to sleep as late as you could. It’s gonna be a long day.”

Joe grinned impishly. “Now, why can’t you be that accommodating back home?”

“Because back home, letting you sleep in also means doing your chores,” Adam returned with a whimsical smile. “Now eat.”

Joe dragged his left hand to his eyebrow in a salute so sloppy it would have earned him a court martial in the military. “Yes, sir, spoopsey!” As he picked up the fork, he frowned down at the tray. “Awful lot of food here, Adam. You
mistakin’ me for Hoss again?”

“Now, don’t hand me that nonsense. I ordered the short stack,” Adam said, referring to the buckwheat cakes.

Joe drizzled maple syrup over the three hotcakes. “That’s still about two too many,” he complained, “and sausage and bacon, both. How you expect me to eat all that?”

Adam shook his head. “Just eat what you want. I won’t complain, so long as you drink all the juice.”

Joe shrugged. “Okay, but it seems like a waste of money to me.”

“Since when do you worry about the condition of my pocketbook?” Adam chided and immediately regretted the words when he saw his brother’s countenance drop. “Oh, Joe, that’s not why you’re eating so little, is it, to save me money?”

Joe shook his head. “No, but I am sorry about the way I ran up your bill before, Adam. I wish you could forgive me.”

Adam waggled Joe’s foot back and forth. “Already done, little brother. Now, while you finish your breakfast, I’ll dress for Commencement. Then I’ll help you get ready.”

“What about your breakfast?” Joe asked, cutting off a bite of buckwheat cake and swirling it through the syrup.

“I ate downstairs earlier.”

Joe nodded, satisfied, and turned his attention to the meal as Adam went into his bedroom to change clothes. He returned a short while later, dressed in his black suit and matching crimson vest and cravat. He shook his head as he carried the tray out to set it in the hallway. Joe had eaten the equivalent of, maybe, one and a half hotcakes, two slices of bacon and none of the sausage, but the juice glass had been drained, so Adam felt he couldn’t complain. At least,
buckwheat flour made hearty hotcakes. Hopefully, they’d stick with the kid throughout the long morning.

Coming back into Joe’s bedroom, Adam saw that his brother had started to dress, putting on a crisp, white linen shirt. He helped the boy into the gray broadcloth trousers of his suit and after putting on his brother’s stockings and shoes, asked Joe which vest and cravat he’d like to wear. “What do you think would look good?” Joe queried. “I mean, you know more what’s proper for an occasion like this than I do.”

Pleased to be asked, Adam suggested the gray broadcloth vest that had come with the suit, set off with the royal blue cravat he’d purchased the day Joe left the hospital. When Joe agreed, he brought them from the chest of drawers. Joe put on the vest and jacket; then Adam tied the cravat into a snappy bow and stepped back to view the finished product. “You look very handsome, Joe,” he said when he saw Joe suck in his lips under the scrutiny.

“Hey, you, too, brother,” Joe returned, smiling in relief that he’d passed muster.

Adam stroked his chin. “There is just one thing. You should wear a hat.”

“I’ve got my straw. We left the other one in Philadelphia.”

“No, that’s too casual,” Adam said. “I’ve got an idea; wait here.” He went into his bedroom.

Joe followed him as far as the parlor. “Any hat of yours is gonna be too big, Adam.”

Adam came out, smiling, gray bowler in hand. “Try this one,” he suggested. “I think it might fit.”

Joe knew instantly that the hat had been specially purchased for him. “Aw, Adam, you shouldn’t have.”
“I thought we agreed that the condition of my pocketbook was none of your business,” Adam said as he placed the hat on his brother’s head. “There—the perfect picture of a stylish college candidate.”

“Adam,” Joe remonstrated, drawing the word out.

“Which you’re not,” Adam agreed at once, “but I think you might want to look the part today, just to fit in.”

Joe grinned. “Yeah, guess so. You’re sure I look okay?”

“Perfect,” Adam assured him. He drew his pocket watch from his vest pocket and announced that it was time to leave.

They went down the front steps of the New Haven Hotel, with Adam keeping a solid grip on his brother’s elbow as they descended, and started walking up Chapel Street toward the college. It was a short walk, just two blocks, not even as distant as the depot had been the day before. After covering half that distance, the Cartwright brothers passed by an open area of grassy lawn with wooden benches scattered beneath shady elms. “Easterners go in for these squares, don’t they?” Joe commented, looking approvingly at the patch of park.

“This one is called the Green,” Adam explained. “It’s sort of the unofficial boundary line between the town and the college.”

“It’s pretty, in a tame sort of way,” Joe said. “Just not enough of it to do much good.”

“Oh, you’re just missing Wissahickon Park,” Adam teased. Not to mention the Ponderosa.

“Yeah, I liked that place,” Joe said wistfully.

“We’ll see about visiting it again after we get back to Philadelphia,” Adam promised, though he knew it would be awhile before Joe was up to traversing anything but level
terrain. They had passed the Green now, and Adam paused at the corner of College and Chapel streets to run his hand over the round wooden rails of the fence that surrounded Yale University. “Oh, this brings back some grand memories,” he said, smiling at his brother.

“The fence?” Joe asked, one side of his mouth curling up in a lopsided smile. “We’ve got plenty of fences back home, brother, if you’re feeling homesick for them. I bet Pa would be glad to save all the ones that need mending for you.”

“Spare me that!” Adam laughed. “It’s not the fence, buddy; it’s what we did here. When the weather was agreeable, we’d come out by the dozens after dinner or supper to perch on the fence. Sometimes all we’d do was chat or laugh about some antic that had gone on in the classroom or chapel that day, but most times we’d sing, sometimes by classes, sometimes all together. A hundred hearty voices made a glorious sound. I’ve never heard singing like that anywhere else.”

Joe smiled up at his older brother. “I can see why that’s a fond memory. You sing so well, Adam. Did you have a favorite spot on the fence?” he asked as they turned right and began walking alongside the round rails.

Adam shook his head. “There were traditional areas where each class held court,” he explained. “Nothing official, but accepted by consensus. Where we’re walking now, for instance, was sophomore territory. Juniors and seniors ruled along Chapel Street, and freshmen, of course, simply weren’t allowed to join in.”

“Well, that’s mean,” Joe said. “Makes me all the more glad I’m not ever gonna be one.”

Adam nodded. “Yes, the hazing could get bad, but mostly it was just a time of proving yourself, of earning the respect of your elders. I went through something very similar when I went back home. Took awhile for some of the men to accept me
as an equal, much less a boss.”

Joe shook his head, for what his brother was saying didn’t mesh with his memory of how the men had always felt about Adam. As long as Joe could remember, Adam had been treated like just what he was, Pa’s right-hand man. The nineteen-year-old couldn’t conceive that it had ever been any other way, any more than he could conceive that he might ever earn the kind of respect that seemed to flow naturally to his older brother.

Adam led Joe through a gateway in the fence and down a row of brick buildings. He pointed to one as they passed. “That’s the Lyceum, where I’ll be gathering with the graduates and other alumni before we march in. I’ll take you down to the chapel first, though, as that’s where the Commencement exercises will take place.” He walked past one more building before stopping at the one beyond that, a large structure with four smooth white pillars across the front and topped by a tall, white steeple. A crowd was gathered on the lawn, and two policemen stood ready to handle any problems. “Here’s where you go in,” Adam told Joe. “The right side is reserved for the graduates, the center for alumni and the gallery for ladies, so pick a spot on the left, preferably near the aisle”—he saw the questioning look in Joe’s eye—“so I can find you more easily afterward.”

“Okay,” Joe said. There were only three steps up to the entrance, but Adam insisted on supporting his brother as he mounted them. Then, as Adam turned back toward the Lyceum, Joe went through the arched doorway, and an usher helped him find a seat on the left side of the main auditorium and handed him a program. Joe took a quick look at that and then craned his neck to see up into the gallery, thinking it a crying shame that he couldn’t sit up there with all those pretty ladies. He was feeling particularly handsome in his eastern finery and sincerely wished he could exercise his charms on a few of the younger beauties he spied up there.
A bell rang, signifying that half past eight had arrived, and the strains of a band playing outside could be heard. Little Joe turned toward the back of the auditorium, hoping to see Adam enter. He saw the doors open, and the band entered first, marching to the front, but the men who came to the doorway next looked so young that they almost had to be graduates of 1876. The students had marched to the door in double file, but then the ranks opened to permit older men to pass between the rows of younger ones. The first men through the door were very old, indeed, several of them as silver-haired as Pa, and Dr. Havershaw was among them, so Joe was sure they must be the faculty, trustees and other important guests. That conclusion was confirmed when they headed for the platform at the front. As each man came through the door, he doffed his hat, and Joe quickly raked his off his head, embarrassed that he hadn’t noticed before then that all the other male spectators had bared their heads. *Blame it on the ladies*, he thought with a grin. *They’re just too doggone pretty.*

Behind the faculty and dignitaries came younger men, but still older than Adam, who finally entered about two-thirds of the way down the long line of what Joe decided must be the alumni, since they filed into the center section to be seated. Joe was tempted to let out a whoop when he saw his brother, but decided that would not reflect well on either his older brother or Pa’s upbringing. He saw Adam searching the aisles on the left side of the auditorium, trying to spot him, so he gave a discreet wave. Adam nodded and turned his attention to taking his seat. Those marching in after him appeared younger and younger until, finally, the ones Joe had seen at the doorway took their places with the other fresh faces on the right side of the room, so Joe knew he’d correctly guessed their identity.

A distinguished-looking, gray-haired man in a black silk and velvet robe rose from his cushioned seat within the pulpit and
stood behind the lectern to welcome the graduates, alumni and guests to the Commencement exercises of Yale University, which he then opened with prayer. A quick glance at the program told Joe that this was the President of Yale, Noah Porter. The speeches Adam had warned Joe about began next, but bored didn’t begin to describe how Joe felt as the first orator started speaking in a foreign language. Joe recognized the language, but couldn’t understand a single word, despite the fact that he’d studied—or, rather, hadn’t studied—a smattering of Latin in school. Joe just blocked out the meaningless words and pictured his older brother, standing behind that pulpit and impressing everyone in the room with his profound oration.

The young speaker appeared to make three separate addresses: one to the President, one to the graduating class and the final one to the audience. When he concluded, he was applauded, and a young lady in the balcony tossed down a bouquet of flowers. Blushing as he endured the teasing laughter of his peers, the first speaker scooped up the bouquet and hurriedly took his seat.

The next speaker just bowed to the President, instead of addressing a speech to him, and when he did begin his oration, he spoke in English. That’s a relief, Joe thought, but he didn’t find the young man’s remarks about the poetry of John Milton to be much more interesting than the Latin gibberish of the speaker before him. There was applause, but no bouquet for this young man, though the third speaker did get an honorarium from a pretty girl. Joe shrugged. Some fellows had a way with girls and some just didn’t.

There were musical interludes between each speech, and Joe noticed that a number of people would get up to leave while the music was playing. He couldn’t understand that; they were missing the best part of the program, in his opinion, but it wasn’t long before neither daydreams nor music could hold his attention. As the fourth speaker droned on, Joe slumped in
his chair and closed his eyes. He didn’t fall asleep, but he was startled when he felt a tap on his shoulder during another musical interlude and looked up to see Adam motioning him out. He wanted to object, assuming that Adam was leaving only for his sake, but he didn’t want to disturb the program, so he followed his brother out quietly.

No sooner had he passed through the outer doors, however, than he began to protest vociferously, plopping his hat on his head. “You didn’t have to leave on my account, Adam!”

Adam put on his black bowler and hooked his brother’s elbow so he could help him down the steps. “I didn’t, entirely. I was getting a little bored myself, as a matter of fact. I thought we’d walk around a bit, let me show you a few of the major buildings and then go back for the valedictory.”

“The what?”

Adam waited to explain until they were on level ground again. “The final speech, made by the top man in the class. It should be worth hearing.”

“Is that the speech you made when you graduated, Adam?” Joe asked eagerly.

Adam draped an arm across his brother’s shoulders as they began walking down the row of brick buildings facing the Green. “No, I made the salutatory.” Noting Joe’s expression of puzzlement, he added, “That means I stood second in the class. The first speech you heard today was the salutatory.”

“Oh, the one in Latin.” Joe had seen ‘salutatory’ on the program, but it hadn’t meant anything to him. He glanced up with a smile only slightly diminished by the revelation that his older brother wasn’t quite perfect. “Well, I’ll bet yours was the best of the day, anyway.”

Adam chuckled, pleased but amused by Joe’s fraternal pride.
“I’m wondering now if all those speeches I thought were so wise and philosophical back when my class graduated really sounded as simplistic and juvenile as these!”

“You, simplistic or juvenile? Naw,” Joe scoffed with an impish grin. “Stuffy and boring, maybe, but—”

Adam cut off the rest of that sentence by tipping Joe’s stylish gray bowler over his nose. Joe grinned and pushed it back into place.

“This is North Middle,” Adam said, gesturing toward the building next to the chapel. “It’s one of the four main dormitories, at least in my time. I understand a couple of new ones have been built.”

Joe glanced quickly at the four-story building, remembering it from the picture he’d seen in the Main Exhibition Building in Philadelphia. “I’ll bet I can guess which ones are the other three. They all look alike: same size, same number of windows.”

“They are all alike, architecturally,” Adam admitted, “though some are older than others. Each has thirty-two chambers; that’s an apartment for two students.”

“Oh, yeah, you roomed with that friend of yours from St. Joe, didn’t you?”

“Wouldn’t have had anyone else,” Adam concurred. “Jamie’s been a good friend from the time I was six.”

“Yeah, I know. Too bad he couldn’t make it to Commencement this year, but I guess he’s busy with his preaching chores, huh?”

Adam laughed. “I don’t think he considers it a chore, little buddy. He always was a good speaker; in fact, he usually bested me in any class that required skill with language. I was better at mathematics and science, though.”
Joe scanned the bank of windows as they walked past North Middle. “So, which room was yours?”

Adam guffawed this time. “Which year, kid? Seniors always get first choice, so you sort of have to work your way up to a good chamber. Freshmen generally have to lodge in town, for lack of space on campus, which is what Jamie and I did our first year. We had a terrible draw our sophomore year—fourth floor of South Middle. That’s this next building,” he said, pointing to one just past the Lyceum, which was used mostly for class recitations. “Worst dorm on the yard, oldest on campus, but I didn’t end up staying there because that was the year I enlisted.”

Joe’s eyes brightened, and he started to ask Adam why he’d decided to enlist in the Army, but he stopped himself just in time. Today was a special day for Adam, and he didn’t want to spoil it by bringing up bad memories. Besides, he’d promised himself he wouldn’t pry into his brother’s private recollections ever again.

They had come to a building similar in style to the Lyceum, although obviously older. “This one looks different,” Joe said, “not like the dorms.”

“No, it’s not, although sometimes indigent freshmen did lodge here in the Athenaeum,” Adam told his brother. “It was the original chapel, but it was used for classes in my day. I attended my first recitation here. Scared to death I wouldn’t do well, but I got through it with a decent mark.”

“Well, of course, you did, Adam,” Joe said. “I could’ve told you that.”

Adam hooted. “Joe, you were four years old at the time!”

“But I knew, even then, that you were the smartest man alive,” Joe insisted. He tossed a naughty grin in his brother’s direction. “‘Course, you’ve gotten a lot dumber since then,
spoopsey.”

Adam cuffed his brother’s ear, and then pulled him between the Athenaeum and the building beyond it. “That’s South College, where seniors generally stay,” he said, gesturing to his left at the dormitory at the very end of Brick Row.

“So you stayed there your last year?”

“Second floor front,” Adam said, pointing to a particular window. “It was a good room.” As they reached the back of the building, Adam turned his brother back in the direction from which they’d come, but they were walking along the backside of Brick Row now. He began pointing out other buildings across the yard as they came into sight: the laboratory, scientific cabinet, library and gymnasium. “I spent many a pleasant hour in both of those,” Adam said, referring to the final two buildings.

“Well, the library I can believe,” Joe laughed. “You and your books! What did you do in the other one?”

Adam grasped his little brother by the nape of the neck and gave it a gentle shake. “Kept myself in shape for dealing with you when I got home!” They were standing directly behind the chapel now, where the Commencement speeches were still going on. Adam pointed toward the two-story red sandstone at the northwest corner of College Yard. “That’s Alumni Hall, where my meeting yesterday was held—and here we are back where we started.” He gestured toward the chapel.

Joe gave the obligatory moan. “No more Latin, I hope. What’s the use of that, anyway, Adam? Nobody talks that stuff in the real world anymore.”

Adam shrugged. “No, no more Latin. You have a point, but there is something to be said for reading the classics in the language in which they were originally written, Joe.”
Joe shook his head at this further confirmation that his older brother was stark, raving crazy when it came to book learning. His alert ears picked up strains of music coming from the chapel. “Does that mean it’s okay to go in now?” he asked.

Adam smiled at his brother’s quick perception. “Yes, that’s the way it’s done. Anyone can come and go during the music, but it’s considered rude to walk in or out while a man is speaking. From the number of people heading for the door, I’d say we timed it just right to hear the closing speech.”

“We’d better hustle in then,” Joe suggested.

“No hustling for you, young man,” Adam said with mock severity. “Slow and easy, and let your big brother help you up the stairs.”

“Yes, sir,” Joe said, willingly taking the arm Adam offered him. Though he would not have admitted it, the walk had tired him, and he was ready to sit down for a while.

He was surprised, but pleased when Adam took a seat beside him on the left side of the auditorium. Must’ve figured there wasn’t much use sitting with his friends for just one speech.

When the music ended, the final speaker approached the pulpit and made a brief speech to the President, just as the first speaker had done. Joe was surprised to see the entire graduating class rise to their feet when the valedictorian turned to address them.

“Tradition,” Adam whispered, seeing Joe’s questioning look.

Joe nodded. Yes, the top man in the class deserved that extra honor. He felt just a tinge of disappointment that such an honor had not been accorded his older brother and wondered if Adam himself hadn’t been bitterly disappointed when he failed to achieve the highest goal. Was that why he’d pushed his
little brother to do well in school, to make up for some empty feeling inside? Probably not, but Joe suddenly wished that he’d worked harder at his studies. Though it wasn’t likely he could ever have stood first in his class, he wished he had done more to make his big brother—and Pa, too—proud.

When the valedictory ended, the seniors left, and Little Joe started to rise from his seat. Seeing the movement, Adam pressed down on his brother’s knee. “It isn’t over,” he said. “We can leave if you like, but you might like to see the conferring of the degrees.”

Joe smiled, nodded and scooted back in his seat. Only a few minutes passed before some of the students who had just left returned, accompanied by others who hadn’t chosen to be in the auditorium for the valedictory, a dozen in all. The twelve seniors came down the center aisle and stood in a semi-circle before the president’s desk. The president spoke briefly in Latin, handing several scrolled diplomas to the man nearest him. “He’ll hand them out to the others once they’re outside,” Adam whispered to his brother. The twelve seniors bowed to the president and then departed via the south aisle, while twelve more filed down the center aisle, and the simple ceremony was repeated.

Finally, all the diplomas had been awarded, and the Cartwright brothers made their way out with everyone else. “Four years of work for one little piece of sheepskin,” Joe murmured with a shake of his head. “Not much of a bargain, Adam.”

Adam chuckled. “It’s not the document, foolish child. It’s what you’ve store away in here that matters.” He tapped Joe on the forehead. “Ah, just as I suspected . . . hollow.”

Joe rolled his eyes, but grinned in acknowledgement of walking straight into that barb.

Adam put an arm about the boy’s slim shoulders and gave him an affectionate squeeze as they moved toward the Green.
They were stopped by a familiar voice. “Adam, wait a minute, my boy.”

Both brothers turned to see Dr. Havershaw, still in his formal dark robes, hurrying toward them. When he caught up with the Cartwrights, the doctor smiled at Little Joe. “Well, young Joseph. Good to see you, lad. How are you feeling?”

Joe responded with the same words he almost always used when a doctor asked that question. “I’m fine, sir.”

Dr. Havershaw gave Joe’s arm a supportive pat. “I’m glad to hear it, young man.” Looking at Adam, he inquired, “You’re not leaving now, are you? Surely, you’ll join us for the dinner.”

“I’d like to, of course,” Adam replied, “but the boy—”

“Appears to be fine,” Dr. Havershaw, smiling, interrupted to complete the sentence.

“I am,” Joe insisted with an irritated glance at his brother. “What kind of dinner is it? Will there be more speeches?”

Professor and former pupil both laughed, and Dr. Havershaw explained, “Well, perhaps a few, but I’m confident you’ll find them more enjoyable than what you heard this morning, my boy. This is just an informal dinner for our new graduates and alumni.”

“Oh, well, that wouldn’t include me,” Joe said, “but you go ahead, Adam. I can get dinner back at the hotel.”

“Nonsense,” the professor declared. “We do permit a few guests, primarily graduates of other colleges, but I think I have enough pull to issue an invitation—and, after all, some privilege should be granted one of our war heroes, such as Adam here.”

Adam flushed crimson. “I did no more than others—and far less
than many.”

Dr. Havershaw shook his head, giving the young man a chiding smile. “Adam, Adam—you always were too modest about your service to our country. Never mind. I have no wish to embarrass you, my boy, but I must insist that both you and young Joseph attend the dinner as my guests. Perhaps, between us, we can influence another Cartwright to matriculate at Yale.”

Adam laughed. “I wouldn’t hold out much hope of that, sir, but we’ll be glad to attend—provided Joe feels up to it.”

“I’m fine, Adam,” Joe said tersely, for he was getting tired of repeating the same message.

Adam arched an eyebrow, but let the remark pass. As the doctor left to join his colleagues on the faculty, Adam looked at his brother with concern. “Are you sure? I would like to spend a little more time with my friends, but I don’t want you pushing yourself.”

Joe shrugged. “I’ve got to eat somewhere, don’t I?”

Adam gave him a nod of concession. “This is liable to take considerably longer than a meal at the hotel, however; in fact, it generally lasts throughout the afternoon, though we don’t have to stay for all of it. You let me know if you need to leave, and we’ll go at once.”

“Yeah, sure,” Joe muttered impatiently. “Now, where do we go?”

“To Alumni Hall.”

Thanks to his earlier tour of the campus, Joe needed no directions. He walked around the chapel and headed northwest, with Adam at his side. The distance was the shortest one he’d covered that day, only a few hundred yards. “Are we eating outside?” he asked when he saw the huge tent spread on the
lawn.

“No, that’s just to give some shade while we wait for the tables to be set,” Adam explained.

“Good idea. Hey, there’s your friend!” Joe waved at Adam’s billiard opponent from the day before, and the man smiled and waved the two of them over.

“I was afraid you’d left when I didn’t see you,” Peter Pierson told Adam. “You’ll sit at our table, won’t you?” He gestured toward some other alumni nearby.

“If there’s room for both of us,” Adam said.

“Of course, there is,” Peter declared enthusiastically. “Can’t have the little lad roaming about on his own, can we?” He laughed when Joe scowled at him.

“If you recall,” Adam remarked with his best Cheshire-cat smile, “the last time you twitted the ‘little lad,’ you ended up handing him five dollars.”

“Ouch!” Peter exclaimed, but his eyes were twinkling. He turned to another alumnus standing nearby. “What did I tell you, Jacob? Still the same rapier wit!”

“Now, the two of you don’t intend to duel over dinner, do you?” curly-haired Jacob inquired. “That is one memory of the old days I shall be quite content to forego. I, for one, want nothing more than good food, good music and good company for the remainder of the afternoon.”

“As do I,” Adam agreed, smiling. He extended a hand to Peter. “Truce?”

“Truce,” Peter chuckled, shaking Adam’s hand.

Someone came to the door of Alumni Hall to request that those who would be sitting at the head table, the same dignitaries
who had been seated on the platform in the chapel that morning, enter and take their places, followed by the alumni, oldest class first. No one exactly lined up, but the various classes began to congregate in the approximate order in which they would enter. “You stay with me,” Adam said.

“I feel funny, marching in with your class,” Joe whispered. “Are you sure it’s all right?”

“I’m sure,” Adam said. To the contrary, he knew that guests ordinarily entered after the graduating class, the newest alumni, but he preferred to keep Little Joe at his side. *If anyone says anything, we’ll just leave,* he determined.

When the Class of 1866 was called, Adam and his friends, with Joe a bashful tagalong, entered Alumni Hall and sought out an available table, where they could all sit together. Platters of food were already set out, but none of the five hundred guests ate until everyone was seated and grace had been offered by one of the trustees sitting at the elevated table of honor. Little Joe spotted Dr. Havershaw at that table and waved to him, though he lowered his hand quickly when Adam cleared his throat rather noticeably.

“Hunky blowout, as always,” Jacob proclaimed, standing to carve the roast beef for his tablemates.

“Now, how am I supposed to convince my young brother here that a college education improves a man’s communication skills if you insist on using that old college slang?” Adam kidded his friend. He winked at Joe. “What this disgrace to the institution is trying to say is that the school always lays out an excellent spread for the Alumni Dinner.”

“They sure do,” Joe agreed, adding with a giggle, “spoopsey.”

Adam’s eyes glinted as he heard Peter laugh at Joe’s use of the college slang he’d picked up the day before. “You, sir, are a cad,” Adam intoned with exaggerated solemnity. “You see
what you have foisted upon me? How could you place such a
weapon in the ‘little lad’s’ hand?” He arched an eyebrow in
his brother’s direction. “As for you, sonny, get that word
out of your system quickly, for the consequences will be dire
should you repeat it outside New Haven.”

“Who, me?” Joe queried, laying his hand on his chest with an
air of total innocence. “Would I do such a thing, brother?”
His impish grin implied that he not only would ‘do such a
thing,’ but that he was not above using the inside information
as blackmail in some appropriate hour of need.

“Gentlemen, you promised a truce,” Jacob reminded them, laying
a slice of beef, dripping with succulent juices on Adam’s
plate. “Cut that with your rapier wit, old chum.”

Platters of beef and bread made the rounds, along with bowls
of mashed potatoes, gravy, buttered carrots and tender green
peas. Everyone at the table dug in heartily, with the
exception of Little Joe, who took more modest portions, but
still ate more than he had at any meal since his surgery,
perhaps because, feeling inadequate to converse with Adam’s
learned friends, he kept his attention on his food. Joe could
not help noticing how at ease Adam was, regardless of the
topic of conversation, and how much he seemed to be enjoying
the sophisticated banter. The old fear rose up within Joe
that his older brother would rediscover the pleasures of life
in the East and want to stay.

When everyone had eaten his fill, the plates were cleared and
replaced with others holding fat slices of rhubarb pie.
Finally, those, too, were swept from the tables, and one of
the younger alumni passed out printed sheets of words so
everyone could join in the songs that would begin the
afternoon’s celebration. “We’ve really missed hearing your
voice, Adam,” Jacob said, and the sentiment was echoed by
every other man at the table.
“And I’ve missed singing with all of you,” Adam returned graciously.

The music began, and they all lifted their voices. Though Joe was unfamiliar with the college tunes, he soon caught the melodies and was able to sing along. Though not as gifted a vocalist as his older brother, having a slight tendency to go flat, Joe enjoyed singing, especially those times when the four Cartwrights would sit around the great room after supper and sing song after song to the accompaniment of Adam’s guitar. The singing this afternoon reminded Joe of those happy times, and he hoped Adam would remember that this was one pleasure he didn’t have to give up to stay on the Ponderosa, where he belonged.

As Dr. Havershaw had warned Joe, a speech followed the singing, but this was no classical oration, such as had been presented at the Commencement exercises. Instead, the symposiarch, the man chosen the day before as president of the alumni, congratulated the newest graduates on their achievement and welcomed them to the ranks of the alumni. Then he called on several other Yalensians to make toasts. Though the only potables available were water, lemonade and coffee, the toasts were drunk as enthusiastically as though more traditionally celebratory drinks were on hand. Toast followed toast, speech followed speech, until finally the name of Major-General Wager Swayne was announced, and a man on crutches made his way to the front to the sound of heart-felt applause. Joe swallowed hard at the sight of the man’s right leg, amputated above the knee, a keen reminder of the price some had paid to hold the Union together.

General Swayne, however, appeared to give no attention to his disability, nor did he make mention of any part of his distinguished military career. He was there as an alumnus among other alumni, and his words were warm with welcome for the newcomers to their ranks.
As the general made his way back to his table, a man leaned to whisper something in the ear of President Porter, who then came forward to address the alumni. "It has been pointed out to me that another of our graduates, who distinguished himself in service on the opposite side of the late conflict, is among us today. Knowing you would wish to hear from him, gentlemen, I give you Colonel Luke W. Finlay of the Class of '56."

General Swayne, who had just sat down, seized his crutches and came forward to meet Colonel Finlay and escort him to the speaker’s stand. The two one-time enemies shook hands, and the room erupted in thunderous applause as every hard feeling washed away in the renewal of the bonds of mutual brotherhood.

“Oh, bravo, bravo!” cried Peter Pierson. There were similar shouts voiced throughout the room.

Adam leaned forward, elbows resting on the table, both hands covering his mouth, eyes fixed on the two men at the front. He felt a slight hand on his arm and turned to see his brother’s eyes shining with understanding of what the moment meant to him. Adam dropped one hand to cover Joe’s, and the two brothers sat in silent reverence for the scene, so symbolic of what was happening across America in this centennial year. The wounds of war were finally being healed.

More toasts, more songs, more talk followed, but nothing could reach the heights of emotion achieved by that poignant reuniting of North and South. It was nearly six o’clock when the final song was sung and the benediction given. The alumni slowly made their way outside, but many lingered to continue conversations beneath the striped tent on the lawn.

As they reminisced over old times, Peter and Jacob seemed especially reluctant to let Adam leave. “You’re not heading back to Philadelphia tonight, are you?” Peter asked. Adam had told them about traveling to New Haven on the night train, so that Joe could lie down on the journey.
“No, I plan to take Joe over to Savin Rock in the morning,” Adam responded, “and spend a few days at the old Rock House.”

“Oh, Adam, you can’t,” Jacob inserted quickly. “It burned down several years ago.”

Adam’s face fell. *I should’ve checked*, he chided himself. “Surely, there are other hotels.”

“Oh, yes, of course,” Jacob replied.

“The Sea View House is the best, don’t you think, Jacob?” Peter suggested.

“Definitely,” Jacob agreed, “but very popular. You might find it hard to book a room without a reservation.” He snapped his fingers. “What a dolt I am! My family maintains a suite there throughout the summer, for weekend use. You can use that.”

“Oh, no, I couldn’t possibly keep your family from their planned recreation,” Adam argued.

“No, it’s perfect,” Jacob insisted. “The wife’s been wanting us to make an excursion to the mountains, and this would be an ideal time.” He clapped Adam on the back. “No more argument, my friend. I’ll drop the key by your hotel this evening on my way to the peanut bum—unless you’re coming, that is. Hope you will.”

“Of course, he’s coming,” Peter announced with a determined nod.

“I’m not sure I’ll be able to,” Adam said. “It depends on how Joe is.” His head snapped up as he suddenly realized how long it had been since he’d seen his younger brother. He began to look around frantically. *Where was the boy?*

“He’s over there,” Peter said, in answer to the unspoken question. “Maybe you’d better check on him, Adam.” He
sounded concerned.

Adam glanced in the direction of Peter’s pointing finger and saw Little Joe, back to them, leaning against a tree about twenty yards away. He excused himself quickly and hurried toward his brother. “Joe?” His voice was laced with worry as he touched the small of his brother’s slumped back.

Joe turned slightly and looked up at Adam with enervated eyes.

“Oh, buddy, I’m sorry,” Adam apologized. “You must be exhausted.”

“I’m okay, Adam,” Joe said, but his voice was weak.

“Don’t lie to me,” Adam ordered firmly. “We’re going back to the hotel immediately, and you, young man, are going straight to bed.”

Joe smiled faintly. “No argument here, big brother. I am kinda tired.”

Since Joe was notorious for hiding any weakness, Adam knew that “kinda tired” was euphemistic for “completely done in,” and as he took his brother’s arm, he cursed himself for getting so lost in his own enjoyment of the day that he’d failed to watch over Joe as he should have. He set a slow pace for their walk back to the New Haven Hotel, for it was obvious that Joe could barely put one foot in front of the other.

The walk that had seemed short and pleasant that morning felt endless to both brothers that evening. When they finally arrived, Adam immediately undressed Joe and put him to bed, apologizing again for not noticing how tired the boy had become.

“I didn’t want you to notice,” Joe said. “You were having a good time, and I was, too, Adam. It just got to be a little much toward the end. I guess I’m still a little wobbly.”
More than a little, Adam thought, but he kept a cheerful countenance for Joe’s sake. “Shall I order some supper sent up?” he asked once his brother was settled in bed.

Joe groaned. “Are you kidding? I couldn’t eat another bite after that spread they put out.”

Adam chuckled. “I know what you mean, though you had considerably less to eat than the rest of us. I’ve been invited to a peanut bum tonight, but I’m not sure I could eat a single one.”

“What’s a peanut bum?” Joe asked, turning on one side.

Adam pulled up a chair. “Oh, just a gathering of my senior society members—food, drink, cigars and good conversation—just another part of college life, Joe.”

Joe tried, but failed, to stifle a yawn. “Sounds like one of the fun parts, the ones you never tell me about.”

Adam looked chagrinned. Had he really made college sound like all work and no play to Joe? No wonder the fun-loving boy had no inclination toward it! “Joe, I promise I’ll tell you about ‘the fun parts,’ but not tonight. You need to sleep—now.”

Joe nodded groggily. “Uh-huh. You gonna go to that peanut thing?”

Adam ran his hand up Joe’s arm to focus his attention. “If you’re just tired and not hiding anything else, yes.”

Joe presented him with the spectacle of a prodigious yawn. “Just tired, Adam. Go away and let me sleep.”

Adam stood, rumpled Joe’s hair and started to leave. Joe’s voice stopped him at the door. “Bring me back some of those peanuts, okay?”

Adam laughed aloud. This was the little brother he remembered
from the Exposition, willing to put anything into his mouth, especially if it were something he didn’t normally eat at home. A key, perhaps, to tempting a better appetite? The notion would bear mulling over. He closed Joe’s door quietly after promising to bring him back some peanuts; then he freshened up a bit and headed out for the meeting of his senior society.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Little Joe slowly opened his eyes, squinting at the unaccustomed brightness of the light pouring past the lacy curtains of his bedroom window. He wondered for a moment if, perhaps, Adam might be sleeping in, too, after his late night out, but the sound of soft footsteps, moving about his room, told him otherwise. “Hey, brother,” Joe murmured, pushing up on his elbows.

“Hey, yourself,” Adam chuckled. He placed the nightshirt he’d just taken from the chest of drawers into the carpetbag sitting, open, on the Windsor chair and moved toward his younger brother. “Hungry?”

“Not especially,” Joe said, stretching. “What time is it?”

“Just past nine o’clock,” Adam said, turning back to the chest of drawers.

“What time’s our train?” Joe asked, noticing the carpetbag for the first time.

Adam dropped three pair of dark socks into the bag. “No train.” Lips twitching, he turned away.

Joe’s forehead wrinkled in thought. No train? Then, how were they getting back to Philadelphia? “It’s kind of a long walk, older brother,” he muttered.

Adam laughed. “I don’t know what this younger generation is coming to. Why, I used to walk it regularly.”
“To Philadelphia?” Joe shook his head in disbelief. “You never did.”

A droll expression on his face, Adam turned, leaning back to prop his elbows against the chest of drawers. “Philadelphia? No, that would be an amazing feat, even for my stalwart generation. Whatever made you think I meant Philadelphia, youngster?”

Joe cocked his head, mouth twisting awry. “We left our things there?”

“Oh.” Adam chuckled. “Not a bad piece of deductive reasoning, little buddy, but I had a different destination in mind today.”

Joe pulled himself up and folded his arms across his chest. “And just where might that be?”

“It’s a surprise,” was all Adam would say, turning back to his packing duties.

“You’re just full of those lately, older brother,” Joe said, a smile playing about his lips.

Adam threw a grin across his shoulder. “Aren’t I, though?” Dropping another garment into the carpetbag, he walked to Joe’s side, helped him swing his legs over the edge of the bed and assisted him to his feet. “Get yourself washed up, and I’ll lay out your clothes.” He pulled Joe’s nightshirt over his head and then poured water from the pitcher on the washstand into the waiting basin.

Bending over the basin, Joe splashed his hands in the water, lathered soap between them and scrubbed his face and torso well, rinsing and toweling himself off vigorously. He wasn’t surprised to see his ranch clothes lying on the bed since Adam had indicated they were going for a walk. He just hoped it wouldn’t be a long one since he still felt drained from the
amount of time he’d spent on his feet or sitting upright the
day before. He didn’t really want to confess that to his
brother, so he asked tentatively just how far they would be
walking that morning.

“Not far,” Adam said cryptically. Closing Joe’s packed
carpetbag, he caught a glimpse of his brother’s nervous nibble
on his lower lip and felt a sudden concern. “Joe, we don’t
have to go anywhere if you’re tired. I know yesterday was a
long one for you.”

“Yeah, it was,” Joe admitted.

“Can you make it as far as the college?” Adam asked, troubled
by Joe’s atypical acknowledgment of weakness.

Joe shrugged, reaching for his shirt. “Sure, but I thought
Commencement was over.”

“It is,” Adam said. “The campus is not where we’re going, but
you won’t have to walk much further than that, just down to
the dock to catch the ferry.”

Joe perked up at once, at the prospect of a boat ride. Adam
might be full of surprises, but for the most part they were
turning out to be pleasant ones. “Just for fun?” he queried.

Chuckling, Adam gathered up Joe’s pants and helped his brother
step into them. “Our destination is only four miles away, by
land,” he said, finally answering his brother’s earlier
question, “but I thought traveling by water would be easier on
you than taking the stage or the horse cars.”

“You sure take good care of me,” Joe murmured warmly as he
fastened his pants.

“Ah, then you’ll understand why I insist on our stopping by
the dining room for breakfast before we leave,” Adam said with
a wry smile.
Joe rolled his eyes, but by the time they reached the dining room, he had managed to work up enough appetite to eat a couple of glazed donuts and drink a cup of coffee.

Adam checked them out of the hotel and tucked one carpetbag beneath his arm, while holding the other by its handle. That left him one arm free to help Joe down the steps. When they were on level ground again, he switched the bag under his arm to his other hand and led the way toward the dock.

Joe felt bad about letting Adam do all the toting, but he knew there was no purpose in arguing. More to the point, he didn’t feel like arguing. Though it rankled him, he knew he had no business carrying anything. It would be enough of a challenge just to get himself to the dock, much less his baggage.

Adam paid the fare of ten cents for each of them and tucked one carpetbag back beneath his arm so he could steady Joe’s ascent of the gangplank. Soon the little steamer was chugging its way across the harbor toward the smaller community of West Haven. The Cartwright brothers stood at the rail, letting the cool breeze feather through their hair and the salt spray mist their faces.

The voyage was a short one; nevertheless, as the Cynthia pulled into the dock, Adam noticed his brother’s white-knuckled grip on the rail and slid a supportive arm behind his back. "You okay, buddy?"

Lips set, Joe nodded. "Is it far to the hotel?" he asked, irritated by the tremor he heard in his own voice.

"I don’t think so," Adam said. "Sea View House is supposed to be about a hundred feet back from Beach Street." He caught sight of a three-story building with a tower and broad verandas facing the waterfront. "That must be it." He pulled Joe close to his side. "You’re going straight to bed when we get there."
Joe gave his brother a dismal nod. He couldn’t help feeling that he was once again interfering with Adam’s plans. He wasn’t sure why his brother had wanted to come here—some old memory he wanted to relive, maybe—but as far as Joe was concerned, one bed was pretty much like another, and it was beginning to look as though he didn’t have much to look forward to except spending time in some bed somewhere. The two days they’d spent in New Haven had been wonderful opportunities to answer some of the old questions he’d had about Adam’s years here in the East, and he had thoroughly enjoyed everything from the billiard match to the rousing songs at the alumni dinner. Now, however, his body was demanding a price for that pleasure, and Joe knew he didn’t dare ignore its pleas for rest.

They walked the short distance to Sea View House, pausing to admire the beautiful lawn and gardens surrounding the beachfront hotel. When they crossed the verandah and passed through the lobby, however, Joe was surprised that Adam didn’t stop at the registration desk. “Don’t we need to check in?” he inquired.

“No. You remember Jacob?” Adam asked.

Joe chuckled. “You mean, all the way from yesterday? I’m not feeble-minded, big brother, just wobbly in the legs.”

Adam swung one of the carpetbags toward a hallway on the left. “That way. Anyway, he was kind enough to loan us the use of his family’s suite here for the weekend, and he’s already sent word to the hotel that we’re here by his permission.”

“Real nice of him,” Joe said as Adam set down their bags and unlocked the door to Suite 104.

Opening the door revealed exactly how nice Jacob had been. The parlor was luxurious, particularly after the austere quarters of the New Haven Hotel. The furniture was white
wicker, padded with flower-bedecked cushions, which matched the draperies at the wide windows on either side of French doors that led to a private verandah with direct access to the beach. Thick, intricately patterned Turkish carpets covered the polished hardwood floors in each room. The bedrooms left somewhat to be desired, as they were obviously set up to accommodate a family with small children. One was spacious, with a double brass bed, while the other was miniscule by comparison and held two single beds about the same width as a Pullman berth. “We can sleep together,” Joe offered when he saw Adam set his carpetbag in the doorway to the smaller bedroom, while carrying Joe’s into the larger one.

Adam arched an eyebrow. He could just imagine what Florence Nightingale would say to that suggestion! “We cannot,” he said firmly. “This is your bed, and I want you in it now.”

“But I wouldn’t mind—honest.”

“But I would. Bed, Joe.”

Joe nodded, sitting in the spindle-backed Windsor chair to unbutton his shirt.

Adam, stooping down to unfasten his brother’s shoes and remove his socks, heard Joe’s deep sigh and looked up. “Something wrong, buddy?”

“Just don’t understand why I give out so easy,” Joe murmured. “All I’ve done today is walk a few steps.”

Adam pulled back the covers and eased his brother, still wearing his trousers, onto the plump mattress. “It’s not the few steps today, buddy; it’s all your body went through leading up to today. You’ve been through a lot, and it doesn’t help that your older brother neglected to keep a proper eye on you yesterday.”

“I enjoyed yesterday; I wouldn’t change a minute,” Joe
insisted.

“I know, and neither would I,” Adam admitted as he drew the coverlet over his brother, “but you need to take it easy today because you overextended yourself yesterday. It’s about an hour and a half ‘til dinnertime. You rest ‘til then, and if you’re feeling up to it after we’ve eaten, I’ll take you out on the beach. How’s that sound?”

“Sounds good.”

Joe drifted into a light doze, during which Adam unpacked both carpetbags and arranged their belongings to create as homelike an atmosphere as possible in temporary quarters. When Joe awoke, about an hour later, Adam helped him freshen up, pleased to see a livelier spark in the boy’s eyes.

In the dining room, bright with light from banks of windows on two sides, Joe perused the menu with greater interest than Adam had seen his brother exhibit since his illness. “They sure go in for seafood here,” Joe commented.

Adam laughed. “Well, what did you expect at a place called Sea View House? The old Rock House, where my friends and I usually ate when we visited Savin Rock, always served excellent seafood, and I’m sure that’s true of this hotel, as well, since they have such ready access to a fresh supply. You should try some.”

“Yeah, I think I will,” Joe said, “the crab cakes, maybe. You know what Saratoga potatoes are?”

Adam nodded. “Yeah, they slice them paper-thin and fry them crispy. They’re good.”

“I think I’ll try them, too,” Joe said.

Adam smiled. Joe was doing a good job of proving his theory that variety was the key to a better appetite, and the clean plate at the end of the meal gave further evidence. “I
understand from Jacob that the blackberry pie is the specialty of the house,” Adam stated. “Would you like a slice?”

“Maybe tomorrow.” Joe patted his stomach. “I don’t think I could do justice to it right now.”

“Perhaps the rice pudding with brandy sauce, then?” Adam suggested. “That would be a little lighter.”

Joe put his elbows on the table and rested his chin on his interlaced fingers. “You trying to fatten me up?”

“That obvious, huh?” an abashed Adam asked.

“That obvious,” Joe chuckled, “but I might try that pudding if you don’t mind me leaving some in the dish.”

“I don’t mind,” Adam assured him. He motioned for the waitress and ordered the pudding for Joe and the blackberry pie for himself.

After they finished their desserts, Adam polishing off the remainder of Joe’s pudding, Joe was surprised to see his brother head back down the hall toward their borrowed suite. “I thought we were going out on the beach,” he said.

Adam turned the key in the lock and held the door for Joe to enter first. “We are, as soon as we change.”

Puzzlement wrinkled Joe’s brow. He looked down at the familiar tan shirt and gray pants he often wore at home. “What’s wrong with these clothes? How fancy does a fellow have to be to walk in the sand?”

Adam laughed. “Not fancy. You just need to wear the proper kind of clothes for water bathing.” He pushed his brother through the parlor into the large bedroom and opened the second drawer of the bureau. “Here you go,” he said, holding out a beige and blue sleeveless striped jersey with tight, knee-length, solid blue pants.
Joe gaped at the odd costume. “You’re not serious.”

“You don’t expect to go skinny-dipping like back home, do you?” Adam smiled in amusement. “It’s pretty crowded out on the beach, buddy.”

Joe plucked at his shirt. “Why can’t I just wear this?”

“Well, you could,” Adam conceded, “but a bathing outfit is more practical when there’s a chance of getting wet. Besides, you’ll look more out of place wearing a shirt and pants than this. Didn’t you notice what people were wearing on the beach when we arrived?”

Joe lifted his eyes with chagrin. “Can’t say as I noticed much when we got here, Adam. Kind of tired, if you remember.”

“Well, I can assure you that all the gentlemen were wearing outfits just like this.” Adam dropped the jersey and tights into his brother’s lap and rested a hand on his shoulder. “Come on, buddy, get into your new clothes, while I change into mine.”

Joe frowned as his brother left the room. He held the bathing outfit at arms’ length and shook his head. He just couldn’t see himself parading out in public in anything that looked this ridiculous, and it was even harder to imagine his staid and stodgy older brother wearing something so outlandish.

Within five minutes Adam came bounding back into his brother’s room, sporting an outfit identical to Joe’s, except that Adam’s bathing clothes were cream and crimson. Joe laughed aloud at the way the tights clung to his brother’s muscular thighs, revealing every bulge and ripple. “Okay, okay,” he giggled. “If you’re brave enough to let folks see you looking like that, I guess I can, too.”

Pleased to hear his little brother laughing again, Adam struck a series of manly poses with biceps flexed and calves
extended, just to elicit more of that endearing sound.

“Stop, stop,” Joe begged, falling back onto the mattress, clutching his side. “I’ll do it, but don’t make me laugh any more. You don’t know how bad it hurts!”

Instantly, Adam was kneeling at his brother’s side. “Joe, I’m sorry; I didn’t think.”

As the tremors in his lower abdomen subsided, Joe grinned up at his brother. “It’s okay, just don’t do anything that funny again, okay, spoopsey?”

Adam stood up. “I shall be at my boring best the rest of the day,” he vowed as he helped Joe sit up again.

Joe struck his chest melodramatically and emitted a horrified groan. “Oh, anything but that. I’d rather you kill me with laughter than boredom.”

Once Joe was dressed, Adam led his brother through the French doors, out onto the verandah, and helped him down the two steps to the lawn surrounding Sea View House. Crossing the grass, the two brothers reached the smooth sand and headed toward the gentle waves slapping the shore. Darting his eyes this way and that, Joe began to relax as he saw other men costumed just as he and Adam were, and when he started to notice the young ladies walking around in their long bathing dresses, striped stockings and India rubber slippers, he automatically flashed his dazzling smile in their direction.

“Oh, no, Romeo,” Adam cautioned. “Don’t even think about it. You are in no shape to chase skirts.”

Joe’s emerald eyes were sparkling in the sunlight reflected off the rippling water. “But they’re cute, Adam—and look! I think that tall brunette has her eye on you.”

Adam tried to take a quick peek without being observed, but the trio of young ladies suddenly giggled nervously, turned
and ran the other direction.

“Nice work, brother,” Joe grumbled.

Adam shrugged. “They looked a little young for me, anyway.”

“They weren’t too young for me!”

Adam just laughed and with a firm hand on his brother’s elbow led him into the water.

“Not much surf, is there?” Joe commented as the waves lapped lightly over his bare feet.

“Long Island acts as a barrier against the rough waves,” Adam explained. “That’s what makes this such an ideal spot for water sport—boating, fishing, swimming—although you have to go out a long way before it’s deep enough.”

“Are we going out that deep?” Joe asked.

“No, of course not. Nothing but wading for you today, little buddy.”

Joe nodded, knowing that Adam was right. Even walking along the beach, sand squishing through his toes, soon grew tiring, but Adam was quick to notice his brother’s flagging steps and lead him back to the verandah, where they could sit overlooking the water and observe the men, women and children flitting up and down the beach. After a while even that was too much for Joe, his eyelids growing heavier and heavier, and he finally told Adam that he thought he needed to lie down for a while.

“Sure, buddy,” Adam said at once. “Let me help you.”

Joe smiled, but laid a restraining hand on his brother’s arm. “I don’t need help. Stay out and enjoy the sights—especially the brunette ones.”

Adam laughed. “Are you trying to marry me off?”
Joe grinned. “Well, I’m pretty sure Pa would thank me if I did. I think he’s about to despair of getting any grandchildren out of you.”

Adam tweaked his brother’s ear. “That does it; I am definitely sending you to bed before you have a chance to spout any more nonsense.”

Though Joe had said he needed no help, Adam assisted him to his feet anyway, and the two brothers walked into the suite, where they were surprised to see a basket of fruit on the table. Adam read the card that protruded from the basket’s side and smiled; then he read it aloud for Joe:

Hope this helps put the bloom back in the “little lad’s” cheeks.

Your constant friend,

Peter.

Joe smiled. “That was thoughtful of him. I really liked your friends, Adam. They were a lot different than I thought they’d be.”

Adam guffawed. “Oh, let me guess. You assumed we did nothing but spout Shakespeare and debate the principles of applied physics.”

“Well . . . yeah.”

Adam shook his head, grinning, and pointed toward Joe’s bedroom. “Get some rest. I may be out for a little while, but not long.”

“Sure, go ahead and enjoy yourself,” Joe said, stretching his arms back. “I think I’ll just leave this rig on while I
sleep; it is kind of cool and comfortable.”

“Yeah, it is.” In fact, Adam wished that he, too, could stay dressed in the comfortable beach clothes, but eastern etiquette required that he don his high-collared shirt and tie, trousers and frock coat before entering the hotel. Since he had some arrangements to make for that evening’s activities, Adam was forced to change. Completing his preparations, he returned to the suite and immediately stripped down to shirt, unbuttoned to mid-chest, and pants. Taking his Holmes book out to the verandah, he sat down to read.

Little Joe, peeling a blushing-sunset orange, found him there a couple of hours later. “Adam, Adam,” he chided. “That is not what I meant by enjoying yourself.”

Smiling, Adam closed the book. “Ah, but I did. Life may be more than Shakespeare and physics, but it’s more than frilly frocks, too, my boy.”

Joe grinned. “Yeah, I know, but if I gotta make a choice . . .”

“Oh, everyone knows what choice you’d make, little brother,” Adam hooted, “and I’d advise you to watch your step. Pa may be looking for grandchildren from me, but he is definitely not ready to see any progeny from you!” He patted the arm of the slatted deck chair beside him and Joe sat down. “Ready for some more time on the beach?” Adam inquired.

“Yeah, I’d like that, but it’s getting close to suppertime, isn’t it? Guess I’d better change.”

Adam stood up and patted his brother’s shoulder. “No, you sit still and I’ll change. For what I have planned, you’re dressed just right.”

Joe started to ask what Adam had planned, but he realized with
a shake of his head that his surprise-filled older brother would probably just tell him to wait and see. By the time he finished his orange, Adam was back, dressed in his crimson and cream beachwear. Helping Joe to stand, he held his brother’s arm as they descended the short steps to the lawn. Then Adam turned toward the side of the hotel. “We’ll begin our supper with a cup of chowder in the beer garden,” he said.

“That sounds good,” Joe agreed, “and I probably won’t want more than soup, anyway.”

“You’d better,” Adam chuckled, “because I’m preparing a feast tonight, boy.”

Uneasiness marked Joe’s countenance. “You’re cooking?”

“I certainly am—and don’t look so worried. I know what I’m doing.” Adam selected a wooden table beneath shady elms and told Joe to wait there while he ordered their clam chowder. He returned a few minutes later, carrying a bucket that sloshed with each step and a burlap bag. “Soup’ll be here soon,” he said as he sat down across from his brother.

“Okay, I give up,” Joe said. “What kind of feast are you fixing, big brother?”

“Oh, I just thought I’d give you a taste of the fun of college life,” Adam chuckled, “in this case, a good, old-fashioned clambake. It’s traditional for the freshmen to take some sort of day-trip after Commencement, and my class came here to Savin Rock for just the kind of meal you’ll be enjoying tonight. Of course, we dug our own clams, but we’ll do it the lazy way.”

“Because you don’t think I’m up to digging clams?”

“I’d rather you just rested,” Adam admitted. “I’m honestly not sure what you’re up to and what you’re not, Joe, and I probably will err on the side of caution. If it irritates
“It doesn’t irritate me,” Joe said quickly, wanting to alleviate his brother’s concern. Then he broke off with a sheepish grin. “Well, maybe it will if you go overboard with it, but right now I just feel real . . . well . . . cared for.”

“Good,” Adam said.

Steaming bowls of clam chowder and crisp oyster crackers were delivered to their table, along with two mugs of beer, and conversation died as the Cartwright brothers began spooning in the rich, creamy broth, generously laden with minced clams and diced potatoes, onions and bacon. “That should hold you until the rest of the meal is ready,” Adam said when they had both finished. “Let’s get down to the beach. I know the perfect spot.”

“Lead on then, brother,” Joe said.

With Adam cumbered by the pail and bag, Joe walked unassisted to the place his brother had selected, but his older brother eased him down to the sand when they arrived. “Now, sit and watch,” Adam instructed.

Joe gave his brother a lazy salute. “Yes, sir.”

“Shouldn’t that be ‘aye, aye, sir’ so near the ocean?” Adam chuckled and Joe laughed in response.

Adam started by digging a pit in the sand, which he then lined with rocks. On the rocks he built a bonfire and settled down beside his brother to watch the fire die down to coals. When it had, he took the lid from the pail and placed a layer of clams on the hot coals. Covering them with seaweed, he next layered ears of corn, whole potatoes and onions, with seaweed between each layer. Finally, he put two lobsters on top and covered everything with a piece of sailcloth, weighted down
with rocks. “Now, all we have to do is let it steam, dig in and stuff ourselves silly,” Adam said.

As they waited for the food to steam to perfection, Adam began to share with his brother some of the good times he remembered from his college days: the mad free-for-alls when one class challenged another for possession of a city street, carrying off the gates of New Haven citizens to pile them in the college yard on the night before Thanksgiving, glee clubs, baseball games, boating, walking and camping out, just as they were doing tonight. As Adam talked, Joe began to understand that college and the East had meant more to his brother than just book learning and culture. It had also been a time for building relationships and making memories.

At first, seeing Joe’s warm response, Adam felt encouraged that his younger brother might be losing some of his opposition to a college education, but when asked, Joe still insisted that college, even with fun mixed in, just wasn’t for him. “There are some things I’d like to learn, though, if I had someone to help me along, kind of show me what to read, explain the hard parts, that kind of thing,” Joe hinted with a shy glance at his brother.

Surprised and pleased, Adam asked, “Are you asking me to be your mentor?”

Embarrassed, Joe dipped his long eyelashes toward the sand. “I guess so, if that’s what you call it.”

“That’s what you call it.” Adam gently lifted his brother’s chin. “Joe, I’d be honored.”

Joe responded with a nervous giggle. “Not just any and every thing you think I ought to learn, though, understand?”

Adam chuckled. “I understand, little brother. I won’t try to make a Yale scholar out of you.” He scooted forward to the pit and began to remove the sailcloth. “Get the plates out of
that bag, will you? I believe this meal is ready for the attack.”

Attack, they did. Adam had to finish his brother’s lobster, but other than that, their appetites were evenly matched. Holding his gorged belly, Joe scooted back to lean against a boulder behind them as Adam built up the fire again and moved back to sit beside Joe. Gazing into the fire, they talked over old memories of camping out in the Sierras, and though Adam knew he should get his brother into bed, he was enjoying the camaraderie too much to listen to the voice of reason. They sat, side by side, backs against the boulder, long after the sun had set.

As the light from the fire cast a ruddy glow over their faces, Joe’s head dropped to Adam’s strong shoulder, and with a smile Adam slipped an arm across his brother’s shoulders and pulled him close. His throat tightened as he thought about how close he had come to losing moments like this, and a tear splashed down onto Joe’s face.

Joe’s eyes immediately opened, and he called his brother’s name with concern. “Adam? What’s wrong?”

Adam dashed the dampness from his cheek. “Nothing, Joe; it’s nothing.” Then, seeing the rebuke in his little brother’s eyes, he swallowed the lump in his throat. “I was just remembering how I felt back in the hospital, while you were in surgery and I thought I might never see my kid brother again. Kind of got to me for a moment, that’s all.”

Joe smiled up at him. “That’s a lot, big brother. It’s—it’s special.”

Adam brushed his brother’s breeze-blown curls. “Yeah, special.” Shaking free of the sentimental mood, he doused the lingering fire with sand and announced that it was time Joe was in bed. Joe’s nod of unquestioning acceptance aroused Adam’s concern. Fearful that he had again overtired his
brother, Adam helped the boy to his feet and supported him as they walked back to the hotel. After stopping on the verandah to wash the sand from both Joe’s feet and his own, Adam helped the sleepy boy change into his nightclothes, much as he had when Joe was very young. Warm with memories both recent and distant, the two young men soon entered the land of dreams.

* * * * *

The Cartwright brothers practically lived on the beach throughout a long, lazy Saturday, though Adam was careful to alternate light exercise with lengthy lounges in the shade. After breakfast he and Joe changed into their bathing attire and headed for the dock, where Adam rented a boat and took his brother on a short excursion along Long Island Sound. Their only moment of friction that morning arose from Joe’s attempt to take a pull at the oars. Surprised into a sharp rebuke, Adam then tempered it by remarking that it was only fair that he do all the work today. “After all, you did the rowing on Wissahickon Creek, so turn-about here is simple justice.”

Joe knew there was more protective hovering than simple justice involved, but he played it the way he might have had he been fully well and, therefore, more inclined to shirk work. “That being the case, older brother, I’ll just lean back here and enjoy the ride.” To complete the picture of lazy languor, Joe tipped his straw hat over his nose and stretched back against the hull of the boat.

Having gotten exactly what he wanted, Adam merely smiled and continued to row.

Joe gazed eastward toward Long Island. “That’s the one across from New York City, isn’t it?”

“Glad to see you remember some of your geography,” Adam teased. “Yeah, we could follow this channel all the way to New York City, if we were of a mind to.”
Joe sat up straight and asked eagerly, “Are we of a mind to?”

“We most certainly are not!”

“Aw, Adam, it would be real educational,” Joe wheedled.

“But I’m through educating you, remember?” Adam joked.

Joe shook his head. “No, you’re not; you’re my mentor now, remember?”

“Touché.” Adam conceded the point gracefully, but added, “My mentoring duties, however, will not begin until we’re home. We’re just after fun now.”

Joe quickly sported his most disarming smile. “But, Adam, the night life of New York City would be fun, I’m sure, and if we’re doing things my way now . . .”

“All right, I give up,” Adam laughed, “but I am not rowing you all the way to New York City. We’ll stop there on our way back to Philadelphia.” He didn’t tell Joe, of course, but he had already discussed with his friends possible ways to ease the return journey and had developed a plan that would take them, by short stages, through the great metropolis. “Don’t get your hopes set too high, though, little brother. We won’t be doing much sightseeing, and we will definitely not be sampling any of the nightlife!”

“Aw, Adam!”

“Oh, hush.”

After dinner and a brief nap for Joe, the brothers were back on the beach, wading for a while and then settling down on the wet sand to build sandcastles. While Joe’s structure looked completely uninhabitable, Adam’s was an architectural wonder that drew a flock of admiring girls. Seeing that, Joe scooted over to pat the sand walls of Adam’s castle, as if he and his brother had been partners in its construction. It soon became
apparent that the young ladies admired the handsome architects as much as the architecture, but since each came well equipped with chaperone or doting parent, the boys weren’t able to enjoy the company of any one of the bathing beauties for more than a few minutes.

As they walked through the gentle surf at various intervals throughout the day, Adam could almost see his brother gaining strength, and the delicious seafood served in the dining room had definitely improved his appetite. They took one last walk as the sun dipped beneath the western horizon, casting a golden glow over the rippling Sound and bathing the distant island in a harvest haze. Returning to the hotel as twilight faded to night, Joe went to bed at once, while Adam stayed up to write a letter to their father, describing how well Joe seemed to be recuperating from his illness and when they expected to return to Philadelphia.

* * * * *.

Concerned that he had kept his brother too active the day before, Adam basically enforced Sunday as a day of rest. Joe slept late, only waking when the church bells began to call the devoted to their houses of worship, and it was nearly eleven o’clock when the Cartwright brothers entered the dining hall for brunch. Adam personally thought that crab cakes and scrambled eggs made a ridiculous combination, but he restrained his laughter. At least, the kid was eating.

Afterwards, they changed into their beachwear and took a short walk along the shore, and then Adam suggested that a nap was in order for his younger brother. Joe, of course, protested, just as he had at two and three and four years old.

“We’ll be traveling tomorrow,” Adam pointed out, “and I want you well rested for that.”

“In the morning?” Joe asked with sly calculation. If resting today meant he would be allowed to travel to New York City in
daylight, instead of sleeping away the journey at night, he intended to be cooperative.

“Yes, in the morning,” Adam responded with sly subterfuge, knowing that tomorrow’s journey would not be nearly as lengthy as what his young brother was obviously envisioning.

“Oh, then,” Joe agreed with a smile of triumph.

Adam responded with a soft chuckle of the same.

While Joe stretched out on the bed in his swimming jersey and dozed lightly, Adam moved quietly around the suite, packing their bags after laying out what they would each need that night, a suit for supper and a nightshirt for bedtime. Then, dressing in his suit, he slipped out to check available departure times. He couldn’t purchase the tickets on Sunday, but he made all the advance preparation he could. When he returned, Joe, who had at first declared himself not tired enough for a nap, was still snoozing soundly.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Over breakfast Monday morning, Little Joe inquired about the trip plans. “What time is our train? Must not be too early ‘cause you didn’t wake me up.”

Adam cut off a piece of waffle with his fork. “What train?”

Joe rolled his eyes. “The one to New York City, obviously.”

“We’re not taking a train to New York City.” Adam popped the bite of waffle into his mouth.

Joe propped his elbow on the table and, cupping his chin in his hand, regarded his brother thoughtfully. Yes, there was that Cheshire-cat smile that always told him when big brother was up to something. “ Hmm, let’s see. The last time we had a conversation like this, it turned out we were taking a boat, instead of a train. Couldn’t be that again, could it?”
Amused by his brother’s perceptiveness, Adam laughed. “It could.”

Joe’s green eyes sparkled. “Really? A boat down the Sound? That’ll be grand, Adam.”

“Not down the Sound,” Adam corrected, “just across it to Greenport. We’ll board the Long Island Railroad there.”

“Oh. Well, that sounds good, too.” He couldn’t imagine why Adam thought it was better to go down the Island, rather than along the mainland shore, but since Joe hadn’t seen either, he really didn’t care which route they took.

Adam hid his smile in his cup of coffee. Joe still hadn’t guessed his older brother’s real plan, but that wasn’t surprising; with his limited knowledge of eastern geography, it was unlikely that he could.

Adam carried both carpetbags to the boat dock shortly before time to board and led the way up the gangplank onto the ferry. As the Cartwright brothers leaned on the rail, watching gulls swoop above their heads, the boat pulled away from shore, heading slightly northeast toward the narrow strip of land near the end of Long Island. Little Joe looked fondly back at the shore behind them. “Kind of hate to leave,” he said. “We had good times here.”

“Who says they have to end?” Adam queried, a smile playing about his lips.

“I guess they don’t,” Joe conceded. “I’m just trying to say thanks. It was a special time, Adam.” His voice held a wistful note as he remembered how close he and his brother had seemed their first night at Savin Rock, and he wondered if Adam might have shared more memories of the hidden years if they could just have stayed a little longer in that magic setting.
Reading the longing in Joe’s eyes, Adam nodded silently, for he was still waging an internal debate. There was no doubt in his mind what his younger brother most yearned to hear, but to share those memories would be harder than talking about camping trips and college pranks. Adam wasn’t sure he had the courage to open up that dark period of his personal history, especially to the boy he still thought of as little more than a child, however much he tried to play the part of a man.

The ferry pulled in to the old whaling center of Greenport, and Adam and Joe got off and made their way to the railroad depot. “How far to New York?” Joe asked as the train pulled out after half an hour’s wait.

“Ninety-four miles,” Adam replied.

“That’s not shorter than going down the coast, is it?”

Adam hid his mouth behind his hand until he could control his expression. “No, it’s not. About six hours to New York City this way. You don’t object to the slow, scenic route, do you?”

“No, of course not,” Joe said, gazing out the window as the massive bay between the two narrow arms at the northeastern end of Long Island moved past on his left. He was somewhat puzzled, though, for Adam had consistently tried to make things easy for him since his illness, and extending the journey would do the exact opposite.

As the train reached Mattituck, Adam began to reconsider his original idea of springing a last-minute surprise on his little brother, and by the time it rolled through Jamesport, he knew that this was one surprise Joe probably wouldn’t immediately welcome. Better give the kid some warning and some time to express his frustration, Adam concluded. “Joe, we’ll be getting off at the next station,” he said.

Joe’s head snapped back from the window. “It hasn’t been six
hours, so I know that’s not New York City.”

“No, that would be Riverhead,” Adam stated calmly.

Joe’s gaze grew grim. “Oh, let me guess. You don’t think your poor, frail baby brother can make it all the way in to the big city.”

“Not without exhausting himself,” Adam admitted, “not if the way he held up at Commencement is any indication.”

“I made it,” Joe growled through gritted teeth.

“Just barely.” Adam laid a conciliatory hand on his brother’s arm. “You’ll still see New York, buddy, just a few days later.”

“When?” Joe demanded.

“Thursday.”

“Thursday!” Joe screeched. “We’re gonna stretch a six-hour trip out to four days? Adam, I’m not that feeble!”

“Well, your grip on that famous temper of yours certainly is!” Adam hissed. “I’ve tried my best to plan a pleasant excursion for you, and the least you could do is exhibit a trace of patience ‘til I can explain the details.”

Sudden chagrin closed Joe’s mouth for a moment. “Sorry,” he muttered when he found his tongue.

Adam nodded acceptance of the apology. “We’ll just spend the night in Riverhead. It’s a quiet place, not a lot to do, but you can spend a little more time on the beach this afternoon. Then in the morning we’ll move on to our next stop, where we’ll spend a day and a half on the Atlantic shore before traveling on to the city Thursday morning.”

“I’m gonna see the Atlantic Ocean?” The emerald eyes began to glow with expectation.
“If you’re a good boy, I might even let you sail on it.”

Little Joe put on his most angelic aspect and said in a little-boy chirp, “I’ll be good, bubba.”

“You always were easy to bribe, little fellow,” Adam chuckled. With a final pat he withdrew his hand from his brother’s arm.

To Joe’s view, “quiet place” did not begin to describe the summer resort at the head of the Peconic River. “A fellow could get a real rest cure in a place like this,” he grumbled as he and Adam walked down a nearly empty street to one of the few hotels available at Riverhead.

“Precisely,” Adam said, laughing heartily at the scowl that met his laconic reply.

Despite the scarcity of accommodations, the Cartwrights had no difficulty obtaining a ground-floor room, even without a reservation. “We don’t often get guests on a Monday,” the clerk offered in apologetic explanation, “but many families appreciate our quiet amenities for a weekend away from the city.”

Joe slumped against the registration desk. Quiet. There was that word again, a word Webster should have defined as “exhibiting no possible hope for fun.”

Adam, however, misinterpreted his brother’s drooping posture. “Do you need to lie down awhile before dinner?”

Joe straightened at once. “No, of course not.” As they moved toward their room to drop off the carpetbags, he glanced quickly over his shoulder to make sure the clerk couldn’t overhear him. “You think there’s a chance a decent meal is among those ‘quiet amenities’?”

“I’m sure the food will be fine,” Adam said as he unlocked the door to a single room with two narrow beds. “Some fine
fishing goes on in that harbor.”

The food in the small hotel’s dining room proved to be all either young man could have hoped for. With fried strips of clam as an appetizer, grilled sea bass, well basted in butter, formed the centerpiece of the meal, accompanied by a pleasing complement of corn on the cob and cabbage slaw.

Afterwards, Joe confessed that he was feeling a little tired and agreed to lie down for a couple of hours. Then he and Adam walked down to the bay to watch the ships plying its waters. Adam pointed out the various types he recognized, adding when his knowledge gave out, “It’s a shame Pa can’t be here. Obviously, he knows much more than I about sea vessels.”

“You think any of those is like the ships Pa sailed?” Joe asked, gazing out at the harbor.

Adam shook his head. “I doubt it. Pa sailed merchant vessels most of the time. I’m sure they would dock closer to the city. It’s fairly unpopulated out here.”

“Yeah, I noticed,” Joe grunted. “Not a pretty girl in sight.”

Adam threw an arm across his brother’s slim shoulders and turned him back toward their hotel. “Like you said, a fellow could get a real rest cure in a place like this, and when it comes to pretty girls, little brother, I do believe a rest cure is in order.”

“Only goes to prove you don’t know any more about girls than you do about sea vessels,” Joe tossed back with a naughty smirk.

Adam let his arm slide down to swat his brother’s ill-padded posterior.

Suppertime was drawing near as they entered the hotel, so after changing back into their suits and freshening up, the
two brothers made their way to the dining room for another excellent meal centered around seafood, oyster pie for Little Joe and codfish cakes for Adam. Both finished the meal with a dish of apple cobber, topped with vanilla ice cream.

Though Adam suggested that they make an early night of it, he did consent to walk with Joe out to the beach, where they sat on the sand to watch the setting sun casting a fiery splash across the horizon, against which were silhouetted the tall spars of sailing ships and the broad sides of steamers.

* * * * *

“The desk clerk was telling me that we could get to East Hampton by stagecoach,” Joe offered at breakfast the next morning.

Adam chuckled as he reached for the salt and pepper. “Oh, so that’s what you were up to when you disappeared this morning,” he said, sprinkling his eggs with both seasonings. “I thought you were gone a rather long time for a simple visit to the water closet.”

“Well, you’re not exactly forthcoming with information,” Joe grumbled in a purely token manner, “so I asked him to recommend a nice spot on the Atlantic shore, just to see if I could figure out your plans, and that’s what he mentioned. Is that where we’re going?”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Adam scoffed. “You’re in no condition to be bounced around that far in a public stage. I’m sure East Hampton is very nice, but that’s not where we’re going.”

Secretly, that news pleased Little Joe, for the clerk had described East Hampton as an extremely quiet spot, one that didn’t even have a single hotel, although local families would board guests. If there was a summer resort quieter than Riverhead, Joe had no desire to see it. Of course, knowing Adam, the spot he had picked might turn out to be even quieter
and mind-numbingly boring than East Hampton.

Joe spread his toast with plum jam. “So you gonna tell me or leave me guessing?”

“The latter suits me fine,” Adam replied dryly as he swirled the white of his sunny-side-up egg through the runny yolk. Then he laughed at the pout that met his remark. “All right, Sir Curiosity, the first leg of our journey today will be on the Long Island Railroad again, just as far as Medford. Then I’m afraid we will have to take a stage to connect with the South Side Railway at Patchogue. I regret that, but it’s only four miles, so I hope it won’t be too hard on you. We’ll take the train to Bayshore, and that’s as much as I’ll tell you ‘til we get there. Now eat or we’ll miss our train.”

Satisfied with what he’d learned, Joe dug into his breakfast with hearty appetite.

Passing through a pleasant plain lined with trees and farmland, the train ride to Medford was uneventful. After a brief layover, Adam and Joe boarded the stagecoach, with Adam settling Joe next to the window, so he could watch the scenery. About halfway through the brief journey, however, Joe turned away from the window to lean heavily against his brother’s side.

Instantly concerned, Adam bent forward to examine his brother’s face. The tense jaw and taut smile said it all. “Pain?” Adam asked anxiously.

“Some,” Joe grunted.

“Oh, buddy, I’m sorry,” Adam said, putting an arm around his brother and bracing the boy against his strong side. “I guess it’s still too soon for this, even over these smooth eastern roads.”

“I’ll make it, Adam,” Joe assured him. “I just get a real
jolt every now and then.”

“Is the young man ill?” asked a solicitous matron on the facing seat.

“No, ma’am, I’m fine,” Joe answered quickly, fearful that Adam, left to himself, would provide too many details.

“At least, he will be once we’re off this rather bumpy conveyance,” Adam added with a smile at the woman. “Recent surgery,” he confided, ignoring the curl of Joe’s lip.

“Oh. Well, I wish you a speedy convalescence, young man,” the woman said. “You’re quite right, of course,” she continued chattily. “The condition of the roads is appalling. I do wish someone would build a branch between these two rail lines and abolish this interminable jostling.”

Both Cartwright brothers were tempted to laugh aloud. Having careened up and down the switchbacks of the Sierras on some of Hank Monk’s wild stage rides, the “interminable jostling” here seemed negligible, even to Joe. Both boys controlled the temptation, however, and Adam responded politely, “Perhaps someone will.”

Warming to the topic, the woman began to tell them how frequently she made this trip to visit her married daughter and, by her own account, the two most precocious grandchildren ever to grace the face of the earth. Only reaching the terminus at Patchogue rescued the Cartwright brothers from her recitation of the antics and exploits of her wonderful progeny, aged five and seven.

When the vehicle came to a stop, Adam quickly opened the stage door and reached back to assist his fellow travelers, which included the loquacious woman and an elderly gentleman, apparently unrelated. Then he reached for Joe. “Let me help you,” he said firmly enough to make the offer an order.
“No argument here,” Joe said, bracing his hand on his brother’s shoulder as he stepped down.

Adam slid an arm around his brother’s waist. “How far to the train depot?” he asked the driver, who was taking their carpetbags from the boot of the stage.

“One block that way,” the man said, jerking his head over his shoulder.

Adam handled both bags with one arm, leaving the other free to continue supporting Joe. “Can you make it that far?”

“Sure, I’m okay now,” Joe insisted.

“Oh-huh.” Adam’s mutter was clearly skeptical.

Joe pushed away from Adam’s side, pulled his back straight and forced himself to walk steadily toward the depot. The charade ended as soon as they entered the depot of the South Side Railway, however. Spotting the nearest bench, Joe collapsed onto it.

“Oh-huh, you’re okay now. I can see that,” Adam muttered as he squatted in front of his brother. “Just how bad is this pain?” he demanded.

Joe shook his head. “No pain now. Just tired. Is there much of a layover ‘til the next train?”

“I’ll check.” Adam stood and approached the window of the ticket agent and then returned to sit beside his brother. “Next train’s in twenty-seven minutes,” he reported, “and then four hours before another one comes through.”

“We better take this one then,” Joe said.

“Not if you need more rest than that,” Adam replied tersely. “We can even spend the night here and continue in the morning if you need to lie down.” With effort he lightened his tone.
“We’re on a holiday, Joe, no set schedule.”

“Yeah, I know, but I’m sure I’ll be okay by the time the train pulls out,” Joe insisted. “Just need to settle down a bit from that ‘interminable jostling,’” he added with a chuckle.

Adam laughed. “What was really interminable was that woman’s tongue!”

“Boy, wasn’t it?”

At Adam’s suggestion, Joe stretched out on the long wooden bench, and by the time the train pulled in, he appeared rested and ready to continue the journey. Careful scrutiny convinced Adam the appearance wasn’t an act, so he once again hefted the bags and assisted his brother up the three steep steps into the railcar.

Joe, once again being given the window seat by his accommodating older brother, peered through the glass at the calm water as the train glided past the shore. “So that’s the Atlantic. I thought the surf would be heavier.”

Adam laughed as he tousled his brother’s chestnut curls. “That’s Great South Bay. There’s a long string of narrow islands between it and the ocean. You’ll see it later today, I promise.”

“Okay. Fair enough.” Joe turned his attention back out the window.

Sometime later a conductor moved down the center aisle, announcing, “Next stop, Bayshore.”

Joe glanced over at Adam. “Ours?”

“Yes,” Adam agreed.

Three minutes later the train pulled into the small town on the south shore of Long Island, and a few passengers,
including the Cartwrights, disembarked. Adam immediately herded his younger brother into the depot. “Sit here while I check on a couple of things,” he directed, motioning toward a bench by the window and depositing their carpetbags at his brother’s feet.

Through the window, Joe watched as his brother went across the street and down to the waterfront. Must be checking dock times, he concluded. Sure. Stands to reason we’d have to take a ferry across this bay to get to that Atlantic shore he keeps promising me. He was puzzled, however, when his older brother didn’t return immediately, but made his way up the main street.

Within five minutes, though, Adam was back at his side. “Ready for dinner?” he asked.

“Is there time before the ferry leaves?” Joe asked with a knowing smile.

Adam chuckled in acknowledgement of his brother’s powers of deduction. “Yes, we have just over an hour, and I’ve located a restaurant that looks favorable. Shall we?” he asked, reaching to help Joe to his feet.

“Seafood on the menu, I presume?”

“Without a doubt,” Adam agreed with a wink.

Being assured by the waitress that broiled lobster was the finest dish on the menu, both brothers chose that, cracking open the scarlet shell to dig out the snowy flesh and dip it in clarified butter. Roasted red potatoes and creamed peas were served on the side, and while apple brown betty was the only dessert available, its crispy crust and cinnamon-seasoned apples left neither young man wishing he had another option.

Finishing the meal with time to spare, Adam and Joe strolled leisurely toward the dock, where they left their carpetbags
with the ticket agent and walked along the beach for about ten minutes. “The sign said ‘Fire Island,’” Joe commented. “Is that where we’re headed?”

“That’s right,” Adam replied. “Peter recommended it. He said both hotels on the island were of good quality, the beach is particularly fine for surf bathing, and the fishing is superb.”

Joe looked up eagerly. “Are we going fishing?”

“Tomorrow, if you’re willing to get up early. Peter said the boat heads out about 6:30.”

“I’m willing,” Joe bubbled. “You bet I’m willing!” He looked away for a moment and then turned back, his voice almost shy as he said, “You’re so good to me.”

Feeling awkward, Adam forced a laugh. “Well, you don’t have to make it sound like the surprise of your life!”

Joe stopped. “No, I didn’t mean . . .”

Adam’s awkwardness vanished in a desire to alleviate his brother’s display of the same feeling. “I know, and I didn’t take it that way. I guess I just don’t handle a compliment very well sometimes.”

Joe smiled softly. It was a rare occasion when his virtually perfect brother admitted a personal weakness, and it made it easier for him to acknowledge his own. “Yeah, me either, sometimes.”

Adam wrapped an arm around his brother’s shoulders. “Come on. We’d better get back to that dock or the boat will leave without us.”

By the time the ferry docked at Fire Island and Adam had checked them into the larger of the two hotels, Joe was willing to admit that he was exhausted from the journey, and
he spent most of the afternoon napping. When he awoke, it was so near suppertime that Adam suggested they eat first and then change into their bathing jerseys to spend the remainder of the evening on the beach.

The surf was stronger on the Atlantic shore, so Adam kept a firm grip around his brother’s waist as they waded through the white-topped waves pummeling the crystalline sand. Joe’s face showed keen delight in the fierce attack upon his calves, but he was less steady on his feet than he had been in the gentler waters of Long Island Sound and the bay at Riverhead. Noticing the weariness that quickly set in, Adam steered him out of the water and suggested they rest awhile. “We can go back in later, if you’re feeling up to it.”

Joe shook his head. “No, I’m tired, and if we’re getting up early, I should probably turn in fairly soon.”

“After sunset?” Adam suggested, knowing how Joe enjoyed watching the burning path of the fading sun on the water.

Joe smiled. “After sunset.”

* * * * *

Despite the early hour, the emerald eyes peering from beneath the floppy tan fabric hat that Adam had purchased the previous afternoon while his brother slept were almost dancing as the sailboat pulled away from the shore of Fire Island. Adam, sporting a similar gray hat, smiled at the boy’s air of excited anticipation. Glancing up at the sails billowing in the wind, he was certain he knew what Little Joe was feeling, for the same emotion was surging through his own breast, just as the blood of the man they both were thinking of flowed in both their veins. Here, on the ocean Ben Cartwright had sailed, it was impossible not to think of him and try to imagine what that young man had felt when first driven before the wind.
After half an hour’s sail Adam slipped closer to his brother’s side. “How you doing?” he inquired. “Not seasick, I hope.”

Joe shook his head. “Just a touch at first, but my stomach’s settled down now. You?”

“I’m fine,” Adam said with a light clap on his brother’s back. “I guess we’ve both got a trace of Pa’s salt water in our veins.” They stood shoulder to shoulder, gazing out over the endless aquamarine expanse, as the wind continued to push the small sailing vessel out to sea.

Finally, it dropped anchor, and a bowlegged mate ambled down the deck. “Fishing gear, gents?” he inquired as he passed each guest on this morning’s sail.

“Can we?” Joe asked his brother when he first heard the offer.

“Well, I can,” Adam said, his teasing manner dropping at once when he saw how quickly Joe’s countenance fell. “Oh, all right,” he agreed, “but you’ll have to call out for help if you hook anything very large.”

“Oh, when have I ever needed your help to land a fish?” Joe scoffed.

“I can remember a time,” Adam chuckled, thinking of Joe at three or four. Then his expression grew serious again. “I mean it, Joe. These won’t be little perch biting on your bait out here. If you feel the slightest strain on those abdominal muscles, you sing out for help.”

“Okay, okay,” Joe said, wanting to stop that line of conversation before the mate, now approaching, reached them.

Adam selected appropriate tackle for both himself and his brother and paid the small rental fee for use of the equipment.

“Good luck with your fishing, gents,” the mate said, “and if
you should happen to catch more than meets your need, there’ll be local buyers waiting when we come back to harbor. They’ll be expecting a bargain, of course, but anything of eating size should still fetch a fair price.”

“That’s good to know,” Adam said. Reared to respect and conserve the natural resources of land and water by Ben Cartwright, neither he nor Joe would have been comfortable seeing the fish wasted.

“Guess we’ll be selling all ours,” Joe sighed.

“Do what you like with yours,” Adam said with a grin, “but I intend to eat all I can.”

“Really? Can we?” Joe asked eagerly.

“A nice fish fry on the beach tonight is what I’m planning,” Adam replied as he took a position slightly down the rail from his brother. “Sound good to you?”

“Sounds great!”

Adam was the first to land a fish. Hurrying over to see the foot-long fish with blue-green back and silver belly, Joe exclaimed, “What a beauty! What kind is it, Adam?”

“Not sure. Bluefish, maybe,” Adam said as he removed the hook from the fish’s mouth. “Peter told me they’re prevalent hereabouts.”

“Aye, bluefish it is,” said the ship’s mate, coming up behind the Cartwright brothers, “and you’d best let me gut and bleed it for you, sir, and get it on ice. Bluefish spoil easy.”

“I’ll take your advice on that,” Adam said at once, considering the service well worth the small fee charged. “Is this the typical size for bluefish, sir?”

“Aye, though I’ve seen some better than a yard long,” the mate
confided. “It’s a fine fighting fish when it gets that size.”

Joe’s eyes glistened. What he wouldn’t give to bring in a bluefish of that length! The one he hooked some ten minutes later was only about half that size, but the struggle it put up proved what a fighter the bluefish was. Determined to bring the fish in, Joe tensed his muscles, trying to ignore the painful pull along the line of his stitches.

Hearing a strangled grunt to his left, Adam looked up from rebaiting his hook after landing a second fish and saw at once the strain on his younger brother’s face. Dropping his own pole, he grabbed for Joe’s. “Let me have it!” he ordered tersely when Joe didn’t immediately turn loose.

Unable to fight both Adam and the fish, Joe let go and, gasping for breath, took hold of the ship’s rail for support as Adam landed sixteen inches of flopping, fighting fish.

Seeing the struggle, the mate hurried over to help with a net. “Oh, that’s a grand one, sir!” he cried. “A real prize. You might wish to have that mounted.”

“No, thanks. Just treat it like the others, please,” Adam said, handing over the shimmering fish. As the mate left, he took hold of his younger brother and spun him around, a hand clamped firmly on each shoulder. “Didn’t I tell you to call me if you needed help?” he scolded. “What am I going to do with you?”

Joe peered up with sheepish eyes. “Give me another chance?” he suggested.

The response was so typical of Joe that Adam found laughter hard to resist. “I’ll think about it,” he conceded, “but what I’m going to give you right now is some enforced rest.” He swept a hand toward a deck chair. “Sit,” he ordered.

Adam’s face had a definite no-argument look, so Joe just
scowled and sat down, hoping his older brother would soon relent and give him that second chance to behave himself, as the soreness in his side indicated he should.

Twenty minutes later Adam dropped into the chair at Joe’s side. “How you doing, kid?”

“Fine,” Joe assured him.

“Any pain? Be honest.”

“No, none—well, okay, just a little sore, but not much more than before; it’s nothing to worry about, and that’s honest.”

“Good.”

“So, does that mean I get a second chance?” Joe was almost begging. Pleasant as it was to sit on deck with the salt breeze caressing his cheeks, it wasn’t nearly as interesting as angling for bluefish or sea bass, even given the indignity of having older brother help pull them aboard.

Adam patted the knee peeking out beneath his brother’s blue bathing jersey. “You get another chance, but why don’t we check out the contents of that lunch hamper the hotel fixed up for us first? I’m getting hungry.”

Joe smiled and nodded his compliance, for though it was still well before noon, their early breakfast had been a light one. “Yeah, me, too. Let’s eat, and then we’ll see who can catch the biggest fish.”

Adam gave his brother’s bare calf a solid pinch. “It had better not be you,” he declared as he got up to get the wicker basket.

Between the two of them, Adam and Joe managed to demolish the entire contents of the hotel’s hamper, from fried chicken to oatmeal cookies. Then they gathered their fishing tackle and took to the rail of the ship. Joe was on his best behavior
the rest of the afternoon, possibly because Adam carefully positioned himself at his younger brother’s elbow, and he quickly called out for help whenever he felt a warning strain in his side. “We make a pretty good team,” Adam said as he brought the foot-long bass over the rail, the words taking the sting out of the need to ask for help. Toward middle of the afternoon, both brothers decided they had fished enough and sat, side by side, in deck chairs, enjoying the salt-tipped fragrance of sea air for the final two hours of their excursion.

At five o’clock the boat pulled back into harbor at Fire Island, and all the passengers disembarked, many pausing to thank the captain or a member of his crew for an enjoyable trip. Adam made a point of speaking to the mate who had assisted them with their fish and inquired if he had a family who might enjoy a taste of bluefish for supper. “Aye, sir, I do,” the mate said.

“Take the large one, then,” Adam offered. “The smaller ones are really better suited to cooking over a campfire, as I intend.”

“That they are; this size is better stuffed and roasted. Me and the missus and my young ones thank you, sir. We’ll have a grand supper this night.”

Joe sent an admiring smile toward his older brother as they went down the gangplank. “That was nice of you. The big one would have brought a good price.”

“The look on his face was a better one,” Adam said. As the mate had informed them, a number of locals met the ship, and he had no trouble selling the extra fish he and Joe had caught. When he had the money in hand, Adam passed it over to a surprised Little Joe. “There’s a little extra spending money for you, kid,” Adam chuckled.

Joe smiled as appreciatively as the ship’s mate had. It
wasn’t a large sum, but it would help buy more souvenirs and presents when they returned to Philadelphia. At least, he hoped he would have an opportunity to do that before leaving. “Adam, when do you think we’ll be heading home? I mean, we were supposed to start back right after Commencement, but I guess you don’t think I’m up to that yet, and I was just wondering . . .”

Adam ran his hand over Joe’s shoulder blades as they walked along the beach. “Let’s just take it a day at a time, all right? I think it’s too soon to even consider a journey of that length, and I’m sure Pa would prefer that we remain here until you’re fully fit to travel.”

“I’ve been traveling,” Joe pointed out.

Adam gazed back with sober eyes. “Short jaunts, and some of them have been too much for you. I hope today wasn’t overly tiring.”

“I am tired,” Joe admitted, “but resting on the boat helped. I definitely want to stay up for that fish fry you promised.”

“I want that, too,” Adam said. He wanted it, in fact, more than his younger brother could possibly have dreamed. Adam had finally decided to share some of his darker memories, and before doing so he wanted to revive that spirit of closeness he and Joe had shared around the campfire in New Haven. “Here, this looks like a good spot. You settle down on the sand there and relax while I get the fire started and the fish cooking.”

“Okay.” Joe stretched out on his side and, cradling his head in the crook of his right arm, watched as Adam prepared their supper. While the fish was roasting over the open fire, Adam walked into the hotel and came back bearing two plates, two sets of utensils and two steaming mugs of soup. “Bluefish chowder,” he said. “Specialty of the house.”
Joe sat up to take his mug and began to spoon in the soup at once. “It’s good,” he reported.

“Excellent,” Adam agreed as he scooped up a second spoonful.

By the time they’d finished the chowder, the fish was ready, and Adam divided them equally, hoping Joe would eat his full share. Picking flaky flesh off the bones, they almost burned their fingers in their eagerness for the sweet, satisfying meat. When nothing remained but bare white skeletons, Adam built up the campfire, just as he’d done that night in New Haven. Moving next to Joe, he put his arm around the boy and drew him close. “You still want to know about the war?” he asked softly.

Joe looked up, trying, but not quite succeeding in his attempt to hide the longing in his eyes. “Not if it’s too painful for you to remember, Adam. I—I shouldn’t have pushed before.”

Adam gazed up at the stars sprinkling the blue-black sky. “No, you may have been right—when you said it might help to talk, I mean. Just never figured it would be my kid brother I’d share that horror with.”

“That bad?” Joe asked quietly.

Adam’s grip on his brother’s shoulder tightened. “Not all of it, but, yes, what was bad was very bad.” He relaxed his hold and began to talk. “I didn’t really plan to go to war when I came back east. I was here strictly to attend college. In fact, I had promised Pa that I would stay out of what he called ‘the conflict back east’ and at first it was an easy promise to keep. I’d had a taste of warfare with the Paiutes back home, and that was enough to lose all my schoolboy notions about the glories of war; I wanted no part of more.”

“Bet Pa had a fit when he found out you went against him.” Though Joe couldn’t remember his father’s reaction when that news had arrived at the Ponderosa, he had no difficulty
reconstructing the picture from his own memories of times he’d bucked Pa’s authority.

“Oh, yeah,” Adam drawled slowly. “His pen poured forth fire, but by that time it was too late; I was a soldier.”

“So why’d you enlist?”

Adam shrugged. “Who knows? A combination of reasons: a strong opposition to slavery, a sense of guilt for not doing my part when men all around me were doing theirs, fear for the future of my country if we did become ‘a house divided,’ as Lincoln had called it years before. I couldn’t see interrupting my education for three years, though, and that was the term of enlistment, so I held off, tried to crush what I was feeling inside. I’d gotten good at that over the years. Then Lincoln issued a call for men to serve just nine months, and I felt I no longer had any excuse for not answering that call. It would put me behind my class one whole year, but my country needed me, so I joined up in October of 1862.”

He talked about how his unit was put together and related how his previous experience with the Army during the Pyramid Lake Indian War had led the men of his company to vote him their sergeant. “Experience!” Adam laughed ironically. “I’d been proud of my service back home, thought I knew what war was all about, but I knew nothing. I had no more idea what I was in for than any of those other raw recruits—and here I was a leader.”

Joe lightly touched his brother’s knee. “You’ve always been a leader, Adam. They were right to choose you.”

Adam shook his head sadly. “You’ll never know how many times I wished I were nothing but an enlisted man, following orders, instead of giving them, and it only got worse when I was promoted to second lieutenant. I had to actually order men to their deaths then.”
Joe’s grip tightened on his brother’s leg as if to give support. “I guess that weighed heavy on you.”

Adam closed his eyes and nodded slowly. “I was only relaying orders from above, of course, but I felt responsible for my men. Yet there was nothing I could do to protect them, little I could do even to make their lives better when we weren’t fighting.” His chin began to quiver as he recalled life in camp. The memories spilled out in bits and pieces, one disjointed phrase at a time, as he described the filth, the stench of hundreds of men living in close quarters for months on end, the disease that had taken more men than died on the battlefield, the senseless killing to capture a point some officer deemed essential, only to lose it again the next day. “It was almost a relief when I was captured and out of it for a time.”

Joe jerked forward. “You were captured? You mean you were a prisoner of war?”

Surprise in his eyes, Adam turned toward his brother. “You didn’t know? No, of course not. How could you? It’s not the kind of news Pa would have shared with a little boy.”

Bitterness crept into Joe’s voice as he muttered, “No one ever shared anything, and I wasn’t that little.”

Adam brushed a soothing hand through Joe’s chestnut curls. “Of course you were, a child of five—well, almost six, you’d have been then. It was about a week before your birthday that I was captured at Chancellorsville. Pa was right to keep it from you; you couldn’t possibly have understood. You were in my thoughts a lot that week, though, little buddy.”

“Is that why you never wrote to me, just to Pa and Hoss, ‘cause I was too little to understand?” Joe demanded, voice hardening. “You were my brother, too, you know! I had a right to know how things were with you.”
Adam nodded, pulling Joe’s head to his shoulder. “I’m sorry, Joe. I tried to write a couple of times, but there was nothing going on around me that I felt I could share with my innocent baby brother. I wanted to keep you that way, little buddy, and I just couldn’t bring myself to write about the fly-bloated bodies of dead horses and the screams of men as their arms and legs were sawed off. I only wrote Hoss a few times during those nine months, for much the same reason, but I thought about both of you all the time—and Pa. I carried your pictures with me into every battle, and when I felt like giving up there in Libby Prison, I’d take out those pictures and remind myself why I had to keep going.”

Always quick to react emotionally, Little Joe blinked back the tears brimming in his eyes. “I thought you didn’t like me. I thought you loved them, but not me.”

Tears also began to fill the eyes of the Cartwright who always held his emotions in. He took his young brother’s face between his hands and looked steadily into the expressive emerald eyes. “You were a shining star in my darkest nights—Pa and Hoss and especially you, Joe. You were a symbol of all that was pure and good and untouched by the wrath of man.”

Unable to control himself any longer, Little Joe fell against his brother’s shoulder, sobbing.

Adam stroked the curly head consolingly. “Shh, shh, easy now. Don’t get yourself all worked up.” Though he felt like crying himself, his concern for Joe kept his own emotions in check. Becoming this overwrought couldn’t be good for the boy. “I think it’s time we got you back inside,” Adam said softly. “It’s been a long day.”

Joe pulled back, wiped his eyes with the back of his hand and nodded.

Adam quickly doused the embers of the fire and packed their
dirty plates and cups into the hotel’s hamper. When he had helped Joe to his feet, the two brothers walked back to the hotel, each one’s arm about the other, Adam carrying the basket in his other hand. “I didn’t mean to upset you,” he apologized. “Maybe I shouldn’t have—”

“No,” Joe interrupted quickly. “I’m glad you did. I’ve needed to know for a long time.” When his brother nodded, he asked, “Did it help to talk, Adam, or make it worse?”

Adam pressed the boy to his side. “It helped, Joe; it helped.”

Joe smiled. “I’m glad.”

Inside, Adam helped Joe get ready for bed and soothed him to sleep with a backrub, as he had most nights since bringing his brother home from the hospital. The rubdown was a lengthy one that night, for each touch of his hand seemed to remind Joe of all that his older brother had endured, and the boy was slow to settle into sleep. Even after Joe was finally deep in his dreams, Adam continued to stroke those soft curls. “You’re still my shining star, you know that?” he whispered to the sleeping boy. “Still, to me, that bright-eyed innocent I want to protect from all the dark things of this world. It’s what makes me so hard on you sometimes, that need to protect. Maybe someday you’ll understand; maybe someday it won’t be so hard to tell you. Maybe . . . someday . . .”

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Adam patted his younger brother’s right cheek, the left one being firmly ensconced on Adam’s sturdy shoulder. “Joe, wake up. End of the line.” He chuckled as Joe slowly blinked his eyes. “Much good it did, giving you the window seat this morning, little buddy; I don’t believe you’ve seen a tenth of the scenery available.”

Joe yawned. “We got up kind of early, big brother.”
“I know,” Adam soothed as he smoothed the tousled chestnut curls into place. “Two early mornings in a row, but ferries to and from Fire Island are relatively infrequent. I felt we needed to catch the first one available, but you can sleep all you want once we get to the hotel in New York.”

Joe frowned at the prospect of the enforced bed rest that he suspected his older brother had in mind. “I’ll be fine by then,” he alleged.

“Or, at least, acting as if you were,” Adam scoffed as he plunked Joe’s straw hat atop his curly mop.

The train pulled to a stop, and Adam, juggling their luggage, assisted his brother from the car.

“Hey, it landed us right at the dock,” Joe said. Then he squinted at the steamer just pulling away. “Uh-oh, Adam, I think we missed the boat.”

“Relax,” Adam laughed. “The ferry service here is frequent, about every ten minutes, unless it’s changed since I lived here.”

Taking advantage of some wooden benches placed at dockside, the Cartwright brothers waited for the ferry that would take them from Brooklyn to New York City. As Adam had predicted, it arrived some ten minutes later and began loading passengers. “Lot of people making the trip,” Joe observed as they took their favorite place at the rail.

Adam nodded. “Some for business, some for pleasure. Many people prefer living in the outlying areas, and the excellent transportation system makes that possible, even for people who work in the heart of the city.”

“Yeah, that is one good thing about the East,” Joe conceded. “The transportation sure is better—and faster.”

Adam lightly cupped the back of his brother’s neck. “And
pleasanter,” he added as the ferry began making its way through the Narrows between Brooklyn and Staten Island. “You’re developing such a taste for water transportation, little buddy, that I’m afraid you’ll be selling Cochise for your own steamboat on Lake Tahoe.”

With a wrinkled grin, Joe shook his head. “Not a chance, though I might be willing to sneak Sport out of the barn and trade him in for a sleek sailboat.” The hand on the back of his neck tightened like a vise, but Joe just laughed. “Besides, if I get homesick for the water, there’s always those steamers from Sacramento to San Francisco.”

“True,” Adam agreed, charitably releasing his hold on a certain impudent neck.

Though he was enjoying the ride, Joe almost immediately opted for seeing the scenery from a deck chair, and Adam settled companionably next to him. “You’re tired, aren’t you?” the older brother asked, his concern written in the lines creasing his forehead. Though Adam had tried to ease the journey for his brother, it had still entailed a lot of hours of sitting upright, and although Joe had tried to hide it, the strain was beginning to show.

Joe started to make his usual protestation of feeling fine, but with those ebony eyes fixed firmly on his face, he couldn’t lie. Nodding, he whispered, “I still tire out so easy, Adam.”

Adam rested a reassuring hand on the slim shoulder. “Well, you’ll have plenty of time to rest up today. No activities planned except getting to the Astor House, and when we do, you will go straight to bed.”

Joe grimaced. Just what he’d feared. “Adam, I don’t think I can stand stayin’ cooped up in a room all day.”

“You don’t have to stand it; you’ll be lying down,” Adam
quipped lightly. At Joe’s groan, he slid his hand over to
caress the boy’s neck. “I’ll take you somewhere nice
tomorrow,” he promised.

“Where?” Joe demanded petulantly.

“I think I’ll just let you entertain yourself this afternoon,
trying to figure that out,” Adam chuckled. “You’ll need
something to do while I’m out.”

Joe’s eyes narrowed. “You’re going out?”

“Not ‘til after dinner,” Adam said. “It’s nothing that would
interest you, Joe; I just want to stop by my old architectural
firm and say hello.”

“And you think that wouldn’t interest me?” Joe challenged
hotly. “I’m going with you, Adam!”

Adam set his shoulders as squarely as he could in a deck
chair. “Not if I say otherwise.”

Joe’s chin jutted out, and his eyes snapped. “You’d better
take me with you, older brother, or so help me, I’ll take off
on my own, and I guarantee I’ll find New York City’s
equivalent of Shantyville, just to spite you.”

Adam folded his arms and fixed a stern glare on the flaming
face before him. “You’d better rethink that threat, little
boy, or I just might have to take you across my knee.”

“No, you won’t,” Joe retorted with a sneer. “Two reasons: I’m
too old, and I’m too sick.”

Adam thought the first point might be open to debate, but he
knew Joe had him with the second. He couldn’t possibly be
heartless enough to lay that tender belly across his hard-
muscled thighs, however much the kid might deserve a few
heavy-handed swats on his rear. Adam cut a quick, appraising
side-glance at his brother and knew that, if left to his own
devices, the brazen rascal would do exactly what he’d threatened, heedless of the consequences. Joe had him over a barrel and knew it, the smug smirk on his face the best proof of that equation. Adam slumped forward, fingers massaging his suddenly aching temple, wondering how Pa ever put up with the stress of managing this little hellion day in and day out.

Seeing defeat stamped on his brother’s face, Joe made a swift change of attitude, from threatening to wheedling. “Please, Adam. I want to see where you worked. It’s very important to me, Adam.”

Head still in his hands, Adam sighed. *I should have known; the kid is absolutely compelled to know everything I said, did or thought while I was back here.* With that understanding of his brother’s motivation, he lifted his head, hoping the boy would respond better to reason than to dictatorial demand. “Joe, it isn’t that I don’t want you to see where I worked or to meet the man who taught me most of what I know about architecture. Nothing would please me more. I’m simply concerned for your welfare, boy. You are in serious need of rest.”

“I know,” Joe admitted, willing to be reasonable as long as he got his way, “and I will rest. I promise I’ll go straight to bed without a fuss and stay there ‘til dinnertime.”

Realizing it was probably the best bargain he could make, Adam nodded, but he added one additional condition. “You will also go straight to bed when we get back from downtown, young man.”

Joe’s lips puckered for a moment, but he could see almost immediately that Adam wouldn’t be swayed by anything as puny as a pout. “Okay, you win, big brother,” he sighed.

Shaking his head from side to side, Adam choked out a laugh. Somehow, he didn’t feel like the big victor in this little contest of wills.
The ferry pulled into Peck Slip, and Adam unerringly led the way to the streetcar with the most direct line to the Astor House. The car was so crowded that Adam had to stand, clinging to a strap, but he managed to manipulate Joe into a seat.

Tired as he was, Joe craned his neck out the open window to gaze in awe at the mass of tall buildings that seemed to thrust the very clouds further into the heavens. “And I thought Philadelphia was big!” he exclaimed. “How’d you ever keep from getting lost, Adam?”

Adam laughed down at him. “The same way you do back home, by learning the landmarks. Actually, I did lose my way a couple of times my first summer here, so I would advise you to give up any notions you have about sneaking off on your own, little man.” He gave Joe a light chuck under the chin.

Knowing he was being teased, Joe smiled. “I didn’t really mean that.”

“Oh, yes, you did!”

Joe suddenly found the buildings of New York City to be of paramount interest. Arriving at Astor House, he stood looking up at the five stories of gray granite. The building was plain, almost utilitarian, except for the classic columns on either side on the entrance, and definitely had been around years longer than the Transcontinental back in Philadelphia. Still, Adam must have his reasons for choosing the place. Cheaper, maybe, though cost didn’t seem to motivate many of older brother’s decisions these days. “You’ve stayed here before?” Joe asked as Adam circled his waist to help him up the steps. “I mean it looks old enough.”

“Yes, I’ve stayed here, and frankly, I wouldn’t stay anywhere else,” Adam said.

“That good, huh?”
Adam chuckled. “It’s a first-rate hotel, yes, but that’s not my reason. Let’s just say the proprietor earned my loyalty long ago.”

“How?” Joe demanded.

Having arrived at the top of the steps, Adam pushed Joe toward the front door. “Surely, that bit of research into my personal history can wait until we’ve registered.”

“Oh, well, I guess so,” Joe muttered.

Depositing Joe on a cushioned circular seat in the lobby, Adam went to the desk to sign in. Since he had specifically planned to stay at this hotel, he had wired ahead for reservations from New Haven, and registration took only a few minutes. Collecting Joe, he directed him toward the elevator, for their room was on the third floor. As usual, Joe looked as though his stomach had jumped somewhere in the vicinity of his Adam’s apple during the ascent of the enclosed chamber, but he gamely accepted the inevitable. Three flights of stairs were still beyond his strength. In fact, just walking down the hall very nearly was at this point, but he was determined not to let older brother see that.

Adam unlocked the door and ushered Joe into a richly appointed parlor of classic, though not particularly modern, comfort. “This is a nice room, just like you said,” Joe commented as he stood in its center, looking around.

Adam nodded. “Glad you like it. Now, let’s see you live up to what you said. Take either bedroom you like, but strip down and get under the covers at once.”

Though he had little faith in its effectiveness, Joe let a pout come to his lips. “But you haven’t told me yet why you wanted to stay here.”

“I’ll tell you over dinner—provided you get into bed right
now,” Adam said, gesturing toward the bedroom on the right. “Otherwise, you will die wondering. You promised no fussing, Joe.”

“I wasn’t fussing, just stalling,” Joe tossed back with a grin. He moved deliberately toward the bedroom on the opposite side of the suite from the one Adam had indicated.

Chuckling, Adam shook his head. Well, that was predictable, or should have been. He set each carpetbag in the appropriate bedroom and settled down to relax with a copy of the New York Herald, which he’d purchased from a newsboy outside the hotel. After reading the headlines, he turned to the business news, hoping to see some mention of Bracebridge, Harwood and Associates. He smiled when he spotted a small notice of a new office building, whose construction contract had just been awarded to his old firm.

Paging through the rest of the paper, he came to the entertainment section and began to scan its offerings, although he didn’t actually plan to visit any of the theaters of New York City. While he would dearly love to see a new dramatic production of the quality generally presented on Broadway, his younger brother didn’t need to be keeping late hours, and given recent threats, Joe couldn’t be trusted to stay in the hotel by himself. Not that I’d do anything that callous and cruel, anyway, Adam told himself.

Then his eyes fell on a notice that made callous and cruel seem a viable option, after all, at least for one selfish moment. Adam licked his lips, as if tasting the pleasure of seeing Edwin Booth once more in his most famous role. One night only, tomorrow night, the great Shakespearean dramatist would appear in the theater that still carried his name, although financial reverses had deprived him of its ownership. Edwin Booth was more, however, than just the finest actor Adam had ever seen; he was, as well, a personal friend, one whom Adam had not seen in several years. How
could he possibly pass up the opportunity? It was inconceivable, especially in light of how much Booth needed the support and encouragement of friends in the aftermath of his bankruptcy three years ago. And to be compelled by financial constraints to act as a hired player in the theater he had once owned would only rub salt in the wound; it would be like suddenly losing the Ponderosa and being forced to hire on as a wrangler for the new owner.

Adam’s dark eyes flicked toward the closed door to his brother’s bedroom, and his countenance clouded. He’s tired, so very tired. How can I even think of keeping him up past midnight, for my own selfish pleasure? Yet Joe, too, would enjoy a night at the theater. In fact, he’d even hinted at something like that back in New Haven, and while Joe had seen Edwin Booth perform on tours out west, he had never seen him as Hamlet. What kind of mentor would deprive his young protégé of an opportunity like that when it lay within his grasp? Wasn’t it worth a little weariness? Joe would be quick to answer yes, of course, which made it all the more incumbent on his older brother to carefully weigh the consequences, to provide the protection the rash younger boy would both require and resent.

Tossing the paper aside, Adam began to pace the Turkish carpet of the parlor. There had to be some way to work this problem out logically, some way to have his cake without overloading his little brother on sweets, so to speak. One late night might not hurt the kid, provided he got plenty of rest prior to and after the performance. Adam started to total up the hours. The two hours of rest before dinner would be offset by the two it would take to make the visit downtown this afternoon, but he could insist that Joe go back to bed as soon as they returned. Two or three more hours, then up briefly for supper and straight back to bed. Yes, that should be sufficient rest for the day.

He’d promised Little Joe some activity tomorrow, however, and
it couldn’t be anything strenuous or the boy would be too exhausted to attend the theater. His original plan had been a shopping expedition to Stewart’s Department Store, the nation’s first, and a carriage ride through Central Park. They might have to abbreviate both activities to some degree, but Joe wouldn’t object if he knew the icing on the cake would be a night at the theater. He’d be tired and willing to rest quietly the remainder of the afternoon. At least, Adam hoped so.

Adequate rest after the performance was the sticking point in these calculations. Adam had planned to take the Saturday morning train back to Philadelphia, and that would mean rising relatively early. Up late the night before and up early the next morning? No, that just wouldn’t work. It was simply too much for the kid. Back and forth Adam paced, heels clacking on the hardwood floor each time he came to the end of the carpet, fist pounding the side of his thigh as he tried to walk off his frustration.

Hearing a door open behind him, Adam spun around. Little Joe, stripped down to his drawstring drawers, was standing in the doorway. “What are you doing out of bed?” Adam demanded tersely.

“I heard something,” Joe said.

Adam flushed, realizing that it must have been his energetic pacing that had disturbed his brother. “I’m sorry, Joe; I’ll be quieter.”

Joe’s dark eyebrows came together in one long line. “Is something wrong?”

“No, of course not; go back to bed.”

“Then, why are you wearing out the carpet?” Joe asked, head cocked quizzically to one side. He caught sight of the newspaper tossed carelessly on the settee. “Bad news? More
Indian trouble?”

Adam crossed the room swiftly to rest consoling hands on his brother’s upper arms. “No, no, nothing like that. I’m just trying to sort some things out in my mind.”

“What kind of things?”

Adam rubbed his hands down Joe’s biceps. “Nothing for you to worry about. Just making plans for tomorrow, the trip home, that kind of thing.”

Joe’s face relaxed. “Need some help?”

“No,” Adam stated firmly. “Go back to bed.”

With a sigh of resignation, Joe turned and went back into his room, and Adam quietly closed the door. He walked back to the settee, pushed the newspaper aside and sat down, bending forward, forearms resting on his knees, thumbs twiddling around each other in a noiseless equivalent of pacing the floor. Just one more problem to sort out, but he really couldn’t do it without an extra piece of information. Getting up, he went to Joe’s door, opened it and stepped inside. “Joe, I’m going out for a few minutes,” he said.

Little Joe rose up on his elbows. “You promised I could go with you,” he chided.

“No, no, I’m not going far,” Adam explained, “probably just downstairs. I want to check train schedules back to Philadelphia. I need to know when we’re leaving before I can decide what we’ll be able to do here.”

“Oh, okay.” Joe willingly settled back into his pillow, not tempted by an outing of that sort. He yawned drowsily. “Wake me up in time to dress for dinner.”

“Will do,” Adam promised. Once again he noiselessly closed the bedroom door, and then he exited the suite, taking the
elevator to the lobby. He approached the desk clerk and inquired whether he had any knowledge of train schedules for the New Jersey Railway.

“Indeed, sir, I have a complete listing,” the clerk offered. “How may I assist you?”

“Specifically, I’m interested in any train that might leave early enough in the afternoon to put me into Philadelphia’s Centennial depot before dark tomorrow,” Adam replied.

“Tomorrow afternoon, sir? Let’s see.” The clerk consulted a printed listing kept at hand for just such inquiries. “There is one that leaves at 1:35, sir, which should bring you to your destination shortly after five o’clock. Would that meet your requirements?”

Adam grinned broadly. “To perfection.”

“Might I make a suggestion, sir, for your greater comfort on the trip?” the clerk said.

If there was anything that might add to his younger brother’s comfort on the journey, Adam was interested and said so.

The clerk enthusiastically began to tell him about the special Midland Centennial cars, designed with Washington air brakes for safety and furnished with luxurious interiors, including adjustable folding chairs that could be set in four separate positions, even making into a bed, if desired. “In fact, arrangements can be made to use the cars as your lodging while in the Centennial city, should you find the hotels overcrowded,” he advised.

“We have rooms already, but I’m sure those cars would provide precisely what I’m looking for.” It could not have been more perfect, Adam reflected as he returned upstairs after accepting the clerk’s offer to make travel arrangements for Saturday afternoon’s train. Joe could sleep the morning away
and still be in his bed at the Transcontinental at an early hour. Furthermore, those special reclining chairs would insure his complete comfort on the train trip. Adam rubbed his hands together in glee at the prospect of seeing *Hamlet*. He would not, of course, mention it to Joe today. Time enough for that once he was certain the boy had rested well and was up to a night at the theater.

To Joe, it seemed that no time whatsoever had passed before Adam was bending over him, gently rousing him from slumber, though it had actually been almost an hour. Joe had reached a stage in his recovery where he didn’t really need assistance dressing, but Adam helped him into his trousers anyway and, as usual, insisted on lacing his shoes. “I want my blue cravat,” Joe said when Adam started to loop the one he’d worn that morning around his neck.

Adam lifted his brother’s chin with an index finger. “You don’t have to dress up for Mr. Bracebridge. He’d be just as cordial if you sauntered in, wearing dusty britches and smelling of horse sweat.” Nonetheless, he picked up Joe’s carpetbag, set it on a chair and began rummaging through it for the desired neckwear.

Joe giggled. “Bracebridge. There’s a name for an architect, if ever I heard one!”

Adam laughed as he tossed Joe’s blue cravat to him. “Oddly enough, that’s just what drew me to the firm. Sort of made it stand out from the others.”

“You and me, thinking alike? That’s scary, big brother.”

“I know; I’m quaking in my boots.”

Joe snickered. “You mean your balmorals.”

Adam groaned. “Let’s get downstairs quickly, so you can fill your mouth with something besides nonsense.” He walked over
and tied Joe’s cravat for him, to speed the process. Then, wrapping an arm around his brother’s shoulders, he steered him toward the door. “Did you rest well?” he inquired.

“Sure did. I’m right as rain and ready to go downtown.”

“Uh-huh. I know a con job when I hear one, little buddy.”

Bantering back and forth, they rode the elevator to the first floor and entered the dining room to the left of the lobby. The menu was extensive, and it took Joe, especially, some time to decide what he wanted. Finally fixing on fried veal with tomato gravy, he turned in his order and, propping his elbows on the white damask tablecloth, rested his chin on his interlaced fingers. “I’m waiting,” he said as if exercising supreme patience.

“Well, of course, you are,” Adam teased. “You just turned in the order, after all.”

Joe cleared his throat loudly. “I meant for the reason you always stay at the Astor House. You promised, Adam.”

Adam chuckled. “All right. As I said, it’s a matter of earned loyalty. The proprietor in those days, Charles Stetson, always had a room for any Union soldier, whether he could pay or not.”

“And you needed that kind of help?”

“Personally, no,” Adam replied, “but a number of my men did, and it’s in appreciation for the help Mr. Stetson gave them that I patronize this establishment, although I can’t imagine he’s in active charge these days. He’d be sixty-five to seventy by now, if he’s still alive.”

“You should ask,” Joe said.

“I think I will,” Adam agreed. “I’d like to pay my respects.”
On their way out of the hotel after finishing dinner, Adam stopped at the registration desk to inquire after Charles Stetson and learned that while the elderly man was still living, he only visited the hotel occasionally nowadays. “I’d like to leave a note for him later,” Adam said, “if you would be kind enough to give it to him on his next visit.”

“My pleasure, sir,” the clerk said, his smile indicating that the words were more than simple courtesy to a customer.

Adam refused to take the first streetcar that passed their stop. “Too crowded,” he told Joe. Another car came by five minutes later, however, and while it also was nearly full, there were two seats available.

Trying to put himself in an architectural frame of mind, Joe examined the tall buildings nestled shoulder to shoulder along the streets of America’s largest city. Occasionally, as the horse-drawn streetcar passed a particularly striking edifice, he would ask Adam about its style and whether anyone from Adam’s company had been the architect. Usually, Adam laughed and shook his head, but once or twice, the structure was one for which Bracebridge, Harwood and Associates had been the builders. Once Adam pointed to a red brick building graced with Doric pillars of white marble and said that he himself had been involved in the construction of that one, although only as an apprentice under Mr. Bracebridge’s direct supervision. Nonetheless, Little Joe beamed with pride and leaned far out the car to gaze at that building, as if memorizing every cornice and column, until it was out of sight.

Finally, Adam signaled that it was time for them to get off the streetcar. Standing on the street, he gestured toward an imposing building of New Jersey brownstone, trimmed in creamy marble from Ohio. He helped Joe mount the five marble steps to the entrance, where the younger boy stopped and, peering into the glass panels inserted into the double doors, adjusted
his wide cravat and settled his gray bowler. “Will you come on?” Adam scolded, opening the door and depriving Joe of his mirror. “You look fine, and, anyway, there aren’t likely to be any girls up there, waiting to swoon over your boyish charms.”

Joe returned a sheepish smile. Girls were the furthest things from his mind at the moment, but he let his older brother think whatever he wanted. It was better than admitting the truth. Adam, who had probably never felt himself less than the equal of any man, just wouldn’t understand. When it came to meeting folks who held his brother in high regard, “fine” wasn’t good enough. Joe had to be perfect, he felt, in both appearance and behavior, so he wouldn’t embarrass his brother in front of his sophisticated eastern friends. Adam, on the other hand, never gave it a thought.

Exiting the elevator at the fourth floor, Adam opened the familiar carved walnut door and held it for his younger brother. The two Cartwrights stepped to a plain, maple desk, just as a clerk, the sleeves of his pinstriped shirt pushed up his arms by narrow black garters, dumped an armload of architectural drawings onto its surface. The young man adjusted his spectacles to examine the visitors. “How may I help you, gentlemen?” he inquired.

“I’d like to see Mr. Bracebridge, please,” Adam replied.

“Mr. Bracebridge only sees clients by appointment, sir,” the clerk advised, “and as his personal secretary, I happen to know that he is not expecting anyone this afternoon. If you would like to schedule . . .”

With strained patience Adam cleared his throat. “No, I’d prefer to see him now. Please tell him that Adam Cartwright is here to discuss his offer of employment.”

The clerk’s brushy mustache jerked with a haughty twitch. “I am quite certain that Mr. Bracebridge is expecting no job
applicants this afternoon. In fact, sir, I know of no position open with this firm.”

“And I was assured by Mr. Bracebridge personally that there would always be a place for me with this firm,” Adam returned with an equally imperious arch of his eyebrow. “Just give him my name, and if he refuses to see me, I’ll leave at once.”

“As you will, sir,” the clerk said with cool courtesy, apparently thinking that the quickest way to get rid of this intruder was to do as he suggested.

Wrapped up in the exchange, neither young man noted the reaction of the boy standing silently by. At Adam’s first mention of an offer of employment, Little Joe had begun pulling nervously at his lower lip, his mind racing down apprehensive avenues. Was that why Adam had wanted to come here alone, to see if there was still a place for him with his old architectural firm? Suddenly, Joe had no desire to be there and an overwhelming urge to get his older brother back through that walnut door. “Maybe we should leave,” he suggested. “Sounds like your old boss is kind of busy.”

“Relax; he’ll see us,” Adam assured him, oblivious to his brother’s agitation since the mention of a standing job offer, while true, had been only a device to move the self-important clerk to action.

The door to the largest inner office burst open and out it flew a lean-limbed man in his mid-fifties, whose unruly mop of warm brown hair, flecked now with a few strands of white, fell loosely over his collar. “Adam Cartwright!” he cried. “I had never hoped to have the pleasure of seeing your face again, but I’m delighted! Come in, my boy; come in.”

At Mr. Bracebridge’s side, his personal secretary adopted an obsequious smile. “Yes, please, sir, do come in. I apologize for not recognizing your name, sir, but I am somewhat new to the firm.”
Stretching a hand toward Joe, Adam replied with a mere nod for the clerk. “Mr. Bracebridge, I would like to present my younger brother, Joseph Cartwright. Joe, Mr. Addison Bracebridge.”

“Welcome, young man,” Mr. Bracebridge said, greeting Joe with a hearty handshake. “Please, come in.”

Now reluctant, where moments before he had been eager, Joe dragged after the two older men into the inner office.

Closing the door, Bracebridge leaned back against a massive mahogany desk and smiled at Little Joe. “So, Adam, have you come to introduce another promising young Cartwright architect or were you serious about finally joining this firm, as I all but begged you to do years ago?”

“Don’t tempt me,” Adam chuckled. “No, my young brother and I are in the city on holiday, and I just wanted to stop in to see you. Of course, the boy was so insistent on meeting you himself that perhaps he is beginning to entertain notions of an architectural career.” He winked saucily at Little Joe, to which the younger boy responded with a decidedly wan smile and a shake of his head.

“Ah, too bad,” the senior architect said in response to that negating motion from the younger Cartwright. He turned back to Adam. “Perhaps I could be more successful in tempting you, however, with a look at the plans for our latest project.”

“I’d relish seeing them,” Adam admitted. Glancing at Joe, he noticed for the first time the downcast face, and his brows drew together in concern. “Here, sit down,” he urged, moving Joe toward a chair placed at the outer corner of the desk.

Moving toward the door to request the plans from his secretary, Bracebridge paused. “Anything wrong?”

“He’s been ill,” Adam explained briefly, to spare Joe’s pride
as much as possible, “and still tires easily.”

“Oh, how unfortunate on a holiday,” the architect sympathized. Opening the door, he made his request, and the clerk quickly returned with the plans. Bracebridge spread them out on his wide desk, and soon he and Adam were lost in discussion of the projected building’s salient features. Little Joe sat watching them, silently nibbling his knuckles, miserably contemplating the use of his weariness as an excuse to get Adam away from those tempting plans and job offers.

Looking up after expressing enthusiastic endorsement of the plans, Adam caught sight of his brother’s strained face and assumed its tautness was an indication of exhaustion. “Much as I’d like to continue this discussion,” he told his former employer, “I think it’s time I got my brother back to the hotel.”

“I’d hoped you might come home with me for supper,” Bracebridge urged. “We have a guest room, where the young man can rest.”

“Thank you. It would be a pleasure, of course, but I feel an early night would be best for both of us.” He moved to help Joe rise from his chair.

Addison Bracebridge walked with them to the outer door of the architectural offices. “I’m so pleased you stopped by, Adam, and I hope you’ll remember that there will always be a place for you here.”

Adam shook the man’s hand.

“And it was nice to meet you, young fellow,” Bracebridge said to Joe.

Only a nudge of Adam’s elbow brought a response from the younger Cartwright. “Uh, yes, sir. I mean, thank you.”

The architect chuckled and smiled at Adam. “The lad’s a bit
shy, isn’t he?”

Adam’s eyebrow went up. “Shy” was not a word he’d ever heard used to describe his loquacious little brother. “Not normally,” he muttered. After a few more words of farewell, he parted from his former employer and moved toward the elevator. “Do you realize you didn’t say one word while we were in there?” he observed.

“Sorry,” Joe mumbled.

“I didn’t mean it as a rebuke,” Adam hastened to explain. He touched a supportive hand to Joe’s back. “You really must be tired.”

“No, I’m fine,” Joe grunted. The elevator doors opened, and he stepped hurriedly in.

Forehead furrowed, Adam followed, but he made no attempt to continue the conversation until they left the elevator on the ground floor. Then his fingers closed around Joe’s biceps. “All right, what’s wrong?”

“Nothing.”

“Joe.” The boy’s name was drawn out and spoken in a tone of doubting reproach.

“Do you have to tell everyone that I’ve been sick?” Joe growled.

“There’s no shame in that.” Adam emitted a short laugh. “Would you prefer to let people think you’re just a natural weakling?”

“I don’t know. Never mind.” Joe pushed through the front door of the building and hurried outside.

Adam snared his brother’s arm. “Slow down, boy,” he ordered, helping Joe down the steps. He continued to regard his
brother with concern as they waited for their streetcar. “I wish you’d tell me what’s bothering you,” he said, his voice barely more than a whisper.

“You want to take that job,” Joe accused, his face hard.

Adam would have laughed, had not his younger brother looked so utterly despondent. “No, Joe, I don’t,” he answered simply.

“Oh, sure, you do,” Joe insisted. “I saw how excited you were, just talking about what’s being planned.” His hand swept from right to left, indicating the ornate buildings lining the opposite side of the street. “Look at them and tell me you don’t want to be part of creating such things.”

“Come walk with me,” Adam said, taking his brother’s arm.

Joe pulled away. “Horse car’s coming.”

“There’ll be another soon. Come on.” Adam again took hold of Joe’s arm and moved him down the street. “Look all around,” he suggested gently, “and tell me what you see.”

“Buildings, beautiful buildings,” Joe grunted, “row on row of them.”

“That’s right. I’m glad you can appreciate their beauty. Now point out any one of them that is as majestic as a single ponderosa pine, lifting its evergreen spire to the cerulean heavens.”

Joe didn’t know that “cerulean” meant “sky blue,” but he understood what his brother was saying. “None,” he whispered, head lowered. “Not to me.”

Adam lifted his brother’s chin with open fingers. “Nor to me. I made my choice long ago, Joe. I’ve never regretted it.”

“Never?” Joe whispered, eyes brimming.
“Well, maybe a time or two when my baby brother was being particularly ornery,” Adam teased and was relieved to see a twinkle replace the tears threatening to trickle down his brother’s cheeks. “Come on; let’s catch that horse car and get you back to the hotel for some much-needed rest.”

Joe nodded, slipping an arm around his brother as they walked back to the streetcar stop.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

Adam set aside his copy of The Poet at the Breakfast Table and took out his pocket watch. As his inner clock had suggested, it was nearly time to wake Little Joe from his afternoon nap, so he could dress for supper and the theater afterwards. Adam still had a little time left, though, to mull over the events of the day, and he did so with satisfaction. He and Joe had enjoyed a wonderful day together, beginning with the trip to A. T. Stewart’s department store. The largest in the world, it occupied an entire block, bounded by Ninth and Tenth streets, Broadway and Fifth Avenue. The huge building featured rows of plate-glass display windows, and Adam had had a hard time tearing his young brother away from the enticing wares exhibited behind the glass. “You have to go inside to buy anything,” he’d finally felt compelled to point out.

“Oh, I probably won’t be buying anything, anyway,” Joe had asserted as they entered the huge rotunda on the ground floor. “Gotta save my pennies for the Centennial. We are shopping there, too, sometime, aren’t we?”

Adam had assured him that he would be able to shop wherever he chose before leaving Philadelphia. “But I want you to pick out something nice for yourself today, too,” he’d added. “My treat.”

The smile with which Joe had greeted that offer had been dazzling, but even with that prospect before him, the boy had
stared in awe at the domed ceiling five stories above them. “It’s as grand as any church,” he had commented. Typically, Joe had been unimpressed by the store’s three hydraulic elevators, but he’d used one without more than a sour frown as they’d begun their exploration at the top of the store and worked their way down. From the top, they had both leaned over the iron railing to stare down at the shoppers entering the rotunda.

When Joe, with his brother’s guidance, had selected a vest of green silk, flecked with gold threads and a matching cravat, Adam handed a large bill to the cash boy, who carried the money and invoice for the sale to a cashier in an enclosed wood-latticed booth and returned with the change while the salesperson attended to wrapping the package. “Sure must be a lot of people working here,” Joe had commented as they left the department store.

“Two thousand,” Adam had told him, “more than half of them women.”

Joe had, of course, simply shrugged off the statistic, failing to see in it the significance that seemed apparent to Adam.

Since raising his younger brother’s social consciousness was no longer a priority, Adam had not pursued the subject, suggesting, instead, that it was time for dinner. Over the meal he had told Joe about the plans for that evening and the necessity of keeping the afternoon’s activity light. In fulfillment of his hopes, Little Joe had agreed without argument and had not complained about the short time they spent in Central Park. While park omnibuses stopped at all interesting perspectives, Adam had insisted on hiring one of the carriages available at every entrance to the great greensward of nearly eight hundred and fifty acres, so that he could better control the coach’s speed and stop whenever Joe appeared to need rest. The result had been a pleasant drive, with a short stroll near the largest lake to watch the
pleasure boats and milk-white swans floating on the tranquil green water.

When they returned, Joe had accepted the edict of extra rest in preparation for the late night and, being tired, had almost immediately fallen asleep, but now it was time to wake him. Adam rose from his chair, stretched and went in to perform what was never a welcome task.

Groggy at first, Joe came fully alert when reminded of that evening’s entertainment and eagerly asked if his nutmeg suit would be appropriate.

Certain he knew the motivation for that query, Adam chuckled. “I think it would be better if you dressed more formally.” Seeing his brother slump with slight disappointment, he added, “Your new finery will look almost as attractive with your black suit, you know, and since we’ll be dining at Delmonico’s . . . .” He let the surprise drift out slowly.

Joe’s chin lifted at once. “Really? Delmonico’s? It’s supposed to be the best there is in the whole country, isn’t it?”

“Just about,” Adam agreed. “Scurry into your fancy suit, little fellow, so we’ll have time for a leisurely supper.”

“Better do the same yourself, old fellow,” Joe parried back.

Adam had also purchased a new vest and cravat, both midnight blue with thin silver threads, at Stewart’s that morning, and he, too, wore his new finery with his formal black suit. Both brothers caught the eye of female admirers as they passed through the lobby and caught a streetcar straight down Fifth Avenue to the corner of Fourteenth Street. Like the offices of Bracebridge, Harwood and Associates, Delmonico’s three and a half stories were built of brownstone, trimmed in marble. The Cartwrights entered between marble pillars, above which, on the lintel, was inscribed the name of the restaurant. They
were seated by waiters in black swallowtail coats and crisply tucked white linen shirts.

Presented with the seven-page menu, printed in both French and English, Joe was overwhelmed by the choices available. Though he had enjoyed the day, he was feeling somewhat tired and found it hard to concentrate on the dazzling array of options. Finally, he closed the menu and asked, “Would you just pick for me?”

“Are you sure?” Adam asked. “Our tastes sometimes differ.”

“I’m sure. I’ll just have whatever you do,” Joe insisted. “I trust you, Adam.”

Rare and pleasing words. Wanting to prove himself worthy of them, Adam gave the menu diligent attention and selected a meal that began with consommé Sevigne, followed by filet de sole, filet of beef with mushrooms, potatoes lyonnaise and petit pois, since he knew the French-style peas were one of Joe’s favorite vegetables. To Joe’s delight, Adam even ordered Veuve Cliquot, a rich champagne, with the meal and, for dessert, a specialty of the house, Baked Alaska.

“I’ve never seen anything like that,” Joe said when the meringue-covered ice cream and cake was served.

“Frankly, neither have I, but it looks good,” Adam said.

After eating the confection, Little Joe declared that it was not only good, but downright sinfully delicious.

“Well, you can repent at leisure later,” Adam laughed in response.

“Hey, you, too,” Joe insisted. “You ate more of it than I did.

“Which only means that you need to repent of the sin of wastefulness, as well as gluttony,” Adam observed airily.
Joe placed his face in his left palm and groaned. He had little time to bemoan his defeat in the war of words, however, for it was time to leave for the theater, especially since they were almost a mile away and would need to locate and board the appropriate horse car. Adam’s familiarity with the city again proved an asset, and they were soon on their way.

The streetcar let them off practically at the door of Edwin Booth’s Theater, and Adam, of course, had to spend some time examining the Renaissance styling of the majestic building of Concord granite under a mansard roof. Flags waved from the towers that rose a hundred and twenty feet above the sidewalk, and even the lightning rods were adorned with stars and crescents.

“It’s like a castle,” Joe suggested.

“Well, why not?” Adam said. “It was built by the Prince of Players, and a prince should have a palace.” Unfortunately, the prince had also had to pay for the palace, sparing no expense on either the building or the lavish productions staged within it. Edwin Booth was long on talent and short on money-managing skills; he’d lost everything as a result.

The reason for that bankruptcy was even more evident once the Cartwright brothers went inside, for the lobby was faced with marble and winding marble staircases led to the private boxes on the upper level. Ordinarily, Adam preferred to view any play from a box, but this time he led Joe into the main auditorium on the first floor. Once the younger boy was seated, Adam said he’d be right back and left without explanation.

While Adam was gone, Little Joe looked around the opulent room. There were paintings on the ceiling that looked like Greek gods, and others on the wall. Joe recognized Cupid and assumed from her proximity to the little god of Love that the lady driving the chariot must be Venus. Other paintings
appeared to be of Shakespearean characters, and there were busts all around of people Joe couldn’t identify, actors or writers, he suspected.

He was surprised to see his brother return within five minutes. “I guess he didn’t have time to see you before the performance, huh?” Joe asked as Adam settled into the seat next to him.

“What?” Adam looked puzzled for a moment and then shook his head. “No, I wouldn’t dream of disturbing Edwin before a performance. We’ll go backstage afterwards.”

Joe’s nose crinkled with curiosity. “Water closet?” he queried tentatively. That didn’t seem likely, since they’d both gone at Delmonico’s, but it was the only other destination he could imagine.

Adam laughed. “Wrong again, inquisitive child.”

“Aw, come on, Adam,” the inquisitive child whined with pouty lips.

Adam rumpled his brother’s chestnut curls. “I just went to see the statue of Edwin’s father. He mentioned it in a letter, and I was curious.”

“Why couldn’t I see?” Joe demanded.

Adam let his hand rest consolingly on the back of his brother’s neck. “Stairs,” he answered simply.

“Oh.” Mood brightening the minute he knew he hadn’t been deprived without reason, Joe pointed out the paintings on the ceiling.

“That would be Apollo,” Adam explained, “and those are the Muses and the Graces.”

“Uh-huh.” Joe gestured toward the painting of a slender, pale
young man on the wall. “That’s Hamlet, isn’t it? I seem to remember him bein’ dressed all in black that time Pa dragged me to Maguire’s to see it.” He cut a sudden, sharp glance at his older brother. “Hey, is that why you deck out in black so much, to look like Hamlet?”

Adam almost choked. “No,” he intoned slowly with a droll shake of his head. “Where do you come up with these ridiculous ideas?”

Joe just shrugged and quickly changed the topic. “So, Hamlet’s your favorite play, huh? I never much cared for it, except for the ghost; it just plain didn’t make sense.”

Adam smiled. “How old were you when you saw it, Joe?”

Joe’s brow wrinkled in thought. “Fourteen, I think.”

“That’s why,” Adam chuckled. “You’ll understand it better tonight, especially the way Edwin makes the Danish prince come alive.”

“He’s that good, huh? I mean, I really liked him in Richard III the last time he came to Virginia City—‘my kingdom for a horse!’—but you think he’s better as Hamlet?”

“He is Hamlet,” Adam said with evident awe. “Did you know that he once played the part one hundred nights in a row? That record has never been matched, nor is it likely to be. That’s when I first met him. I had come down to New York to see a special performance of Julius Caesar, with the three Booth brothers appearing together for the only time ever. I was so impressed with Edwin that I stayed over the following day and saw the first of those one hundred nights of Hamlet. After that I came down practically every weekend and finally worked up the courage to go backstage and meet the man.”

“And the great friendship was born,” Little Joe declared, striking his breast melodramatically.
Adam rolled his eyes. “You are no Hamlet, boy.”

“Wouldn’t want to be,” Joe threw back. “Black just isn’t my best color. Yours, either, if you want my opinion.”

“I don’t.” Mercifully, the curtain rose just then, sparing Adam any more of his brother’s dubious attempts at wit. The first scene passed quickly, and then came the entrance of Edwin Booth and the first soulful look from those dark, luminous eyes. From the first words, “A little more than kin, and less than kind,” the melodious voice wove a spell from which there was no escape—nor none desired. Little Joe edged forward in his seat, enraptured, for through the subtle use of intonation, cadence and meaningful gestures, the skilled actor revealed the complex character of the melancholy Dane to the complete understanding of his audience. Only during intermissions between acts did the two Cartwrights or anyone else in the auditorium speak and even then in hushed tones, as if fearful a raised voice would break the spell.

Thunderous applause greeted the final fall of the curtain, but in adherence to his common practice, Edwin refused to appear to receive the accolades of the audience. “Come on, let’s get backstage before my shy friend has a chance to escape out the back door,” Adam urged, hauling Joe up by an elbow. He kept a tight grip on his brother as he jostled through the crowd and made his way backstage, where a frazzled man with an unruly thatch of dark sandy hair was waving his palms at a throng of theatergoers, each longing for a glimpse of the famous actor.

“Mr. Booth will not be accepting visitors in his dressing room tonight,” the man was repeating again and again to an unheeding crowd.

Not tonight, nor any other night, Adam knew. Reticent and retiring even before the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, since then Edwin Booth had abhorred and avoided crowds. Knowing that he was an exception to that rule, however, Adam
called, “Mr. Barrett!” He waved his arm to attract the attention of Booth’s personal manager, who had also accompanied his friend on tours of western theaters, but Barrett ignored him as just one among many eager to disturb the man he protected. Adam raised his voice and cried, “It’s Adam Cartwright, Mr. Barrett!”

That name caught the manager’s ear and drew his eye. Recognizing the familiar face, Barrett motioned him forward, and Adam pressed through the jealous crowd, towing his younger brother in his wake. “Cartwright! What a surprise!” Barrett cried, enthusiastically pumping the strong hand extended to him. “Mr. Booth didn’t mention that you were in town.”

“He doesn’t know,” Adam said with a smile. “I hope it will be a pleasant surprise.”

“Oh, I’m sure,” Barrett replied. “Goodness knows, the poor man could use one. Times have been hard of late.”

“Creditors?” Adam asked as Barrett escorted him and Joe toward Booth’s private dressing room.

“Always,” Barrett conceded and then dropped his voice to a whisper, “and there’s the heartache over his wife.” Though Adam arched an inquiring eyebrow, Barrett merely raised a finger to his lips and rapped on the closed door before them. Opening it, he said, “A most welcome visitor, Mr. Booth.”

“No, no visitors,” came the automatic response. “I wish to see no one.”

“Not even me, Ned?” Adam asked softly.

Edwin Booth spun around, and his eyes lighted at sight of his dear friend. “I’d know that voice anywhere, but I can scarcely believe my eyes. Is it really you, Ad?”

Smiling warmly, Adam came forward. “It’s me, Ned, and I hope the surprise is a pleasing one.”
Booth took both strong hands in his own slender ones. “You know it is.” His eye fell, without recognition, on the young man standing behind Adam, and a slight frown touched his lips.

Seeing it, Adam pulled Joe forward quickly. “You remember my brother Joe, don’t you?”

The frown faded, to be replaced by a gentle smile. “I remember his being much smaller.” He reached out to lay tender fingers against the young man’s cheek. “The happy Joseph,” he whispered dreamily, “always so happy—unlike my poor Joseph.”

Not knowing how else to respond, Little Joe returned a strained smile. On his first visit to the Ponderosa, Edwin Booth had told him that his youngest brother was also named Joseph, so that was obviously whom he meant. Joe didn’t understand the sadness with which the older brother now mentioned the younger’s name, though, and he didn’t dare ask. Before Booth’s first visit to Nevada, Adam had cautioned him, upon penalty of a thrashing, never to mention Edwin’s infamous brother John, and Joe feared the restriction might apply to this one, as well. He could always ask Adam about “poor Joseph” later.

“Come take some refreshment with us and we’ll have a good talk,” Adam was suggesting when Joe came out of his reverie.

Joe bit his lower lip. Though he hated to say anything, he knew he had to; his body was sending him definite signals that it had been upright a painfully long time. “Umm, Adam,” he said tentatively. “I don’t think I should.”

Adam spun to face his brother, and the tremor of his brother’s lips registered immediately. “Oh, Joe, I’m sorry; I wasn’t thinking.”

Joe touched a hand to his brother’s arm. “It’s okay, Adam. Just put me on the right streetcar, and I’ll go back to the
hotel. Then you and Mr. Booth can take as much time as you like together.”

Adam shook his head. “No, I’ll take you back.”

“So the lad’s fallen prey to the constraints of proper society, has he?” Booth muttered bitterly. “He doesn’t want to be seen with the brother of . . . of him of whom we do not speak.”

Adam, of course, knew exactly whom Booth meant, for not once since the assassination of Abraham Lincoln had Edwin uttered the name of John Wilkes Booth. In those first early days after the tragedy, society had, indeed, turned against everyone who carried the same last name as the killer, placing two of the brothers and a brother-in-law under actual arrest, while at the behest of friends like Adam, Edwin himself had been put under a sort of house arrest, instead. Adam was horrified, however, that his friend thought such a sentiment might lie in the bosom of anyone named Cartwright. “No, Ned,” he hastened to say. “It isn’t that.”

Even Little Joe had caught the connotation and felt terrible that his covert hint of physical weariness had created such a reaction in his brother’s friend. “No, it isn’t, honest, Mr. Booth. I don’t care about”—embarrassed that the taboo topic had almost come flying out, Joe hung his head. Then he raised it and looked steadily into the dark, troubled eyes of the tormented man. Adam was right; there were worse things than having someone know he’d been ill. “No, sir, it’s not that; it’s just that I’ve been real sick, and I’m worn out. I need to go to bed, but it has nothing to do with you . . . or anyone in your family.” It was the closest he dared come to speaking the forbidden name.

“He’s telling the truth,” Adam added in soft confirmation.

Edwin nodded. “I can see that. He always was a forthright lad, and I shouldn’t have leaped to conclusions. I have a
morose leaning that way, I fear. My apologies, dear boy.”

Though still feeling awkward, Joe smiled. “That’s okay.” Turning to Adam, he again urged that he be put on the right streetcar and sent back to the hotel alone. “No side trips, Adam; I promise,” he added with a grin, in reference to his previous threat to find New York City’s equivalent of Shantyville. “I really am too tired to get into mischief.”

Adam chuckled, but shook his head. “No, I’ll have to take you back to the Astor House myself. There’s a change of streetcar involved, and I will not leave you on the streets of New York City alone.”

“But, Adam—”

“No argument, Joe,” Adam said sharply. He turned back toward his friend. “I’m sorry, Ned, but—”

“Wait,” Mr. Barrett interrupted. “There’s an easy solution to this problem—your private carriage, Mr. Booth.”

“Of course!” Edwin Booth exclaimed. “You know I never use the public trolleys, Adam—too much chance of being recognized, so we’ll simply take my carriage, drop the lad off at the Astor House and find a quiet place for conversation.”

“That’ll work,” Adam agreed at once, to the satisfaction of all involved. The party slipped out the back door into the waiting carriage and drove directly to the Astor House. Adam stepped out briefly to assist his brother down to the sidewalk. “Straight to bed,” he said, an affectionate hand cupping the boy’s neck, “and sleep as late as you like. Our train doesn’t leave ‘til after dinner.”

“I know, and I’ll be good, I promise,” Joe said with a smile. He cast a quick glance back at the carriage and whispered, “Cheer him up a bit, will you? He’s gloomy as Hamlet tonight.”
“I’ll try,” Adam said, “although I’m not as good at that as you. Off to bed with you now.” He gave Joe’s backside a light pat before climbing back into the carriage.

“How ill was the boy?” Edwin asked as Adam settled into the seat opposite him in the covered carriage.


“Ah, how fortunate that you did not,” Edwin murmured. “To lose a brother is to lose a piece of oneself.”

Adam took a breath to steady his nerve. “You seemed concerned for your brother Joseph. Have there been any recent problems?” Goodness only knew, that boy had been a burden on the heart of his older brother times enough in the past, virtually disappearing off the face of the earth for almost three years, only to be arrested in Panama on his way home, where young Joseph Booth had first learned of Lincoln’s assassination by his older brother and temporarily lost his grip on sanity.

“No, just the usual gloomy attitude, what he calls his ‘melancholy insanity,’” Edwin sighed. “Poor boy, what chance did he have, born into such a family? My oldest brother June once said he thought all the men in our family were liable to be unbalanced.”

“You’re not unbalanced, Ned,” Adam said softly. “Anyone who can come through what you have with his sanity intact has little to fear on that account.”

“Perhaps,” Edwin conceded with a faint smile. “I think giving up drink has helped in my case. It was my father’s downfall, you know; the man was quite mad when in his cups, and I saw the beginnings of that in me when I was young.”

“You’ve told me.” Adam knew, as well, that it was the death of Edwin’s first, beloved wife and his failure to be with her
at the time that had sworn the man off liquor forever. He’d been too drunk to read the first three telegrams telling of her illness, and though he hastened home after reading the fourth, he’d been too late. In an attempt to change the subject to a happier one, Adam inquired after his friend’s present wife. It was a huge mistake.

“Oh, Ad, leave me one evening free of thinking about her,” Edwin sighed morosely. “Perhaps it’s poetic justice that a man whose family is tainted with madness would marry a madwoman, as well.”

Adam leaned forward, concerned. “Are you sure?”

“The doctors seem to be. We lost a child, you know, and that apparently unhinged her mind, though there were signs of a nervous disposition before. She has good moments, but others when all I can do is rock her in my arms while she screams out her rage through the walls for all our neighbors to hear.”

Adam reached across the coach to lay a compassionate hand on his friend’s knee. “Little Joe told me to cheer you up, but, as usual, I’m bungling that job.”

“You don’t bungle, Ad. No more now than when you rushed to my side after that misguided boy ruined all our lives. I, too, would have come unhinged in those awful days but for friends like you, and just seeing you again cheers me and reminds me that there is still good in life. I do wish we could have brought the lad along, though. I always found his silvery laughter quite contagious. You’re very blessed in your family, my friend.”

Later, as Adam slipped into the bedroom to check on Joe before retiring himself, he recalled those words. Edwin was right, of course; he had been blessed with a wonderful family. He’d had a father who had been a bulwark all his life, who had seen that he had every advantage hard work could bring, whereas Edwin, at the age of thirteen, had been commissioned to ride
herd on Junius Brutus Booth, Sr., keeping him away from the bottle so he could fulfill onstage commitments. Adam had been blessed in his brothers, too, both of them strong, truehearted and good. In Hoss, he had the best of friends, and even this slumbering little scapegrace, who had so often given him cause for concern, had never brought shame to his family and never would, Adam knew. He drew up the covers, which Joe had, as usual, tossed off, and covered the boy tenderly with a prayer of thanks in his heart.

~ ~ Historical Note ~ ~

Information about the life of Edwin Booth comes from American Gothic: The Story of America’s Legendary Theatrical Family–Junius, Edwin, and John Wilkes Booth by Gene Smith, published by Simon and Schuster in 1992. Edwin had a friend named Adam Badeau, for whom he used the nickname “Ad,” which has here been applied to Adam Cartwright. Booth’s record of one hundred straight performances of Hamlet was unbroken until John Barrymore did so in 1924. While Booth did tour as Hamlet in 1876, his appearance in New York City in late July is an invention of the author.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

Over the rim of his upturned coffee cup, Adam regarded his younger brother with grave, steady gaze. Not only had the boy been almost morosely silent throughout the Sunday-morning breakfast, but he had eaten virtually nothing, just pushing the food around, the way he only did when something was wrong. “Did you not sleep well?” Adam queried as he lowered the cup. Though the reclining seats of the Midland Centennial cars had eased the journey back to Philadelphia yesterday, he knew that his brother had been exhausted by the time they arrived. A restless night, combined with that residual weariness, might account for the
boy’s unaccustomed gloom.

“I slept fine,” Joe said, eyes glued to the fork toying with his scrambled eggs.

“You’re very quiet,” Adam observed.

Joe looked up sharply and then immediately shuttered his eyes. “So?”

“You’re not eating, either,” Adam pointed out.

Joe picked up a slice of bacon with his fingers and bit off a sizeable chunk. “Satisfied?” he mumbled with his mouth full.

Adam emitted an audible sigh. “I thought we’d gotten beyond this, Joe,” he chided softly.

Joe glanced up again, this time seeing the sadness etched on his brother’s face. “Beyond what?” he asked.

“Beyond keeping secrets from one another,” Adam said, ebony eyes locking onto emerald. “I had hoped we were reaching a point where you didn’t feel you had to hide your troubles from me.”

Emerald eyes skewed to the side. “I’m not.”

Adam reared back, nostrils flaring. “Oh, don’t. If you don’t feel you can confide in me, fine, but don’t bother denying that something is wrong. I’ve learned to read the signs quite well over the years. You can keep your precious secrets—with one exception. I insist that you tell me if you’re feeling ill.”

“No, I’m fine, Adam,” Joe said quickly, the truth of his words conveyed in the fact that he could now meet his brother’s eyes. He licked his lips slowly, weighing the risk of exposing too much emotion to the paragon of emotional control. Finally, remembering all the kindnesses that Adam
had shown him these last three weeks, he decided to chance having his older brother consider him a sentimental fool. “Don’t you know what day it is?” he asked.

Adam’s dark brows came together. “Well, of course, I do; it’s Sunday, the thirtieth of July”—suddenly, the light dawned—“and Hoss’s birthday.”

Joe nodded glumly. “We—we were supposed to be home by now.”

“I know,” Adam murmured in instant sympathy. Birthdays were big occasions in the Cartwright family, so naturally the kid would feel more homesick than ever on this special day. “I’m sorry you can’t be there, Joe.”

“You coulda been, ‘cept for me.”

“Don’t give that a thought,” Adam urged hurriedly. “Hoss wouldn’t want you to mope like this; you know he wouldn’t.”

Joe’s lips curved just enough to call the expression a smile. “I had such a nice present for him, too. Should’ve thought to mail it to him, but I ain’t been thinkin’ ‘bout nothin’ but myself.”

The grammar was appalling, as Adam had noticed it tended to become whenever his brother’s emotions were in control of his tongue. He wasn’t a mentor at that moment, however, but a concerned older brother. “I think you can credit the illness for that, buddy,” he suggested kindly. “Most of us do get a little self-centered when we’re feeling poorly. You’re not a selfish person; you’ve just had a lot on your mind.” He reached across the table to lay his hand over Joe’s. “Besides, you have a big brother to do your thinking for you.”

Joe raised puzzled eyes to his brother’s face.

Adam’s smile broadened, for he knew he was about to impart good news. “I shipped those carvings we bought Hoss at Maple Spring in plenty of time for them to arrive for his birthday.
That is what you intended to give him, wasn’t it?”

Joe’s face lit up. “Aw, Adam, thanks!”

Adam drew back his hand and, adopting a stern, paternal visage, shook his index finger at his brother. “You can thank me by cleaning that plate, young man.”

With a grin Joe picked up his fork and attacked the eggs. “So, do you have plans for today? The Exposition’s closed, and it’s kind of late for church, and—uh—I really don’t want to go to the library again. You aren’t gonna make me stay in the room and rest all day, are you?”

That was precisely what Adam had intended, but he realized instantly that keeping the kid cooped up would guarantee a morbid fixation on how homesick he was. Making a quick change of plans, Adam motioned to the waitress for a second cup of coffee. “If you’re feeling up to just a bit of walking today, we might see some more of Fairmount Park,” he suggested, “the part outside the exhibition grounds.”

Joe flashed his bright smile across the table. “I feel almost good enough to climb those rocks on the Wissahickon again, big brother.”

Adam laughed. “Well, I do not! All this sightseeing does get a bit tiring for an old man like me, youngster, so I’m in favor of a quiet, relaxing day for a change. I’m even going to hire a carriage to spare my legs most of the walking.”

Shaking his head, Joe directed his smile so only the eggs could see it. He knew whose legs Adam was really sparing.

At Adam’s suggestion the two brothers composed a birthday greeting for the one back home in Nevada and sent the message by telegraph. Birthday or not, Pa and Hoss would be going to church, so the wire should reach the birthday boy quite early in the day. After trusting their good wishes to Western
Union, Adam made arrangements to hire a phaeton, so he could do the driving and insure greater privacy and freedom of movement for their tour of the park. Though the day was warm, he elected to keep the folding top of the small carriage down, so as not to obstruct their view of the scenery. After all, the towering trees would provide ample shade while they were in the park itself.

Adam guided the horse over the Girard Avenue Bridge to the Green Street entrance into the section of the park known as Old Fairmount. The road led almost to the banks of the Schuylkill River and then turned north, passing the Fairmount Water Works. Tall trunks of birch and black walnut lined the path, spreading their leaves to form an arched green canopy. Arriving at an open space at the foot of a hill, Adam stopped the horse and suggested they get out. “This is Lemon Hill,” he informed Joe as they walked past the steamboat landing that had taken them to the Falls of the Wissahickon on previous trips, “and there’s something here I think you’d like to see.”

Passing women in billowing skirts of rainbow hues on the arms of men in frock coats and fancy cravats, they walked a short distance to the foot of an immense monument. The granite pedestal stretched toward the treetops, and the nine-and-a-half-foot bronze figure seated on it rose above the leafy bower. The bearded man of bronze held in his right hand a pen and in his left the scroll of the Emancipation Proclamation. The Cartwright brothers walked around the base, reading the inscriptions on each of the four sides. On the east the words, “To Abraham Lincoln, from a grateful people,” were etched, while the other three sides all carried words made famous by the beloved president during the Civil War, powerful words that recalled to both Adam and Joe the greatness of the man.

“Did you ever see him in person, Adam?” Joe asked, craning his neck to gaze up in awe.
“Yes, twice,” Adam said, “but only from a distance. “Once, when he came to review the troops, and later at the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, though I had to skip class to do it.”

Joe stared at his brother, in shock. “Adam! I never knew you had it in you!”

Adam clasped his brother by the nape of the neck. “Oh, I’ve got lots in me you never knew, you scamp.”

Joe clucked his tongue. “Adam, Adam, I thought we were beyond that.”

Adam’s fingers dug into the scant flesh of his brother’s neck. “Throw my own words back at me, will you? For that, I should douse you in yon pond.” He proceeded to drag a perfectly willing Joe toward a small goldfish pond just beyond the monument. Once there, though, he released his brother with a light laugh, and they both sat on the edge of the basin, dabbling their fingers in the sun-warmed water and applying moist drops to the backs of their necks.

“Are we going up the hill?” Joe asked, glancing up at the terrace above them.

“I’m not sure you should,” Adam answered carefully. “It’s a nice view, but quite a few stairs to climb, and I have another place picked that will give you just as nice a view with less effort.”

Joe smiled ruefully. “Not that I’m turning into an old man like you or anything, but I don’t think I’m quite ready for that many stairs.”

“Okay, we’ll skip it,” Adam said with obvious relief. “There’s a restaurant up there, too, but it’s not where I planned to eat. Ready to get back in the carriage?”

Joe agreed and accepted the helping hand Adam extended as he
rose from the rim of the pond.

Adam turned the horse around and headed back the way he had come, ascending a hill toward the Girard Avenue Bridge again. Re-crossing it, he drove under the bridge of the Pennsylvania Railroad and turned north onto Lansdowne Drive. The road rose and then descended, giving another fine view of the tree-lined shores of the Schuylkill River, this time from the opposite bank. Ancient oaks and chestnuts shaded the open carriage for about a mile, and then the road curved west through more open country, affording excellent views of the Centennial buildings as the Cartwright brothers followed the meandering path to Belmont Hill, on the west side of the grounds.

“Whoa,” Adam said, pulling up on the reins. “This is where we get out, Joe.” With a grand gesture he indicated the Georgian mansion at the crest of the hill. “There you are, my boy, the home of Judge Richard Peters, a restaurant now.”

Joe looked askance at the statement. “Am I supposed to know who that is?”

Adam chuckled. “Well, you would if you’d read your guidebook to better purpose. According to that, he was Secretary of the Board of War during the Revolution and a friend to several of its important leaders: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Hancock and John Adams.”

Joe grinned. “Them I know! So we’re having dinner where those men once ate? I’m impressed, Adam.”

Adam clapped a hand to his brother’s shoulder. “Ah, then let me impress you a bit more. Lafayette is also said to have been a guest here.” He smiled into his brother’s face, knowing that Joe would identify with the Frenchman who had aided the American struggle for independence.

They climbed the steps, strolling first along the wide verandah, from which park, river, bridges and buildings of the
Exhibition spread out before them, with the tall buildings of the city far to the south. “You were right,” Joe said. “It is a nice view.”

Adam uttered a throaty laugh. “Oh, this isn’t the view I meant. You’ll see that after dinner.” Joe wheedled to know the location of that promised view, but Adam, typically, wouldn’t tell him. “In fact, you’ll only see it if you eat a substantial dinner, my boy. The meager amount you put away at breakfast was a disgrace.”

“Oh, it was not,” Joe protested, “but just for that I won’t show your pocketbook an ounce of mercy.”

“Suits me fine,” Adam tossed back with a sly grin.

Joe eyed his brother suspiciously; then he lifted both eyebrows and asked with a crooked smile, “You gonna charge it to Pa?”

Adam threw an arm around his brother’s shoulders and turned him toward the front door to the mansion. “Yup. After all, if we were at home, he’d be paying for a fancy meal, either in town or at home.”

“Brother, I like your logic,” Joe said, wrapping his arm around Adam’s waist. They entered the restaurant and were ushered to a table in a small room with low ceilings of elaborately molded plaster and finely carved panels of wood. The view through the narrow windows was limited, but for the moment the Cartwright brothers were more interested in the menu than the scenery outdoors.

It took but a brief consultation for them to decide to make the meal a truly festive celebration in honor of their absent brother. Both elected to order the same meal, beginning with a hearty bowl of corn chowder, followed by a first course of salmon croquettes with egg sauce and asparagus salad. Next came stuffed leg of pork, the deep incisions in the meat
packed with a dressing of mashed potatoes and onion, seasoned with cayenne, salt and sage and served with gravy and cranberry sauce. Buttery turnips and greens in bacon drippings completed the main course, and the meal wouldn’t have been complete without thick slices of chocolate cake with boiled white icing. Knowing Hop Sing, that was exactly the dessert being served at the Ponderosa this very afternoon, and eating it made both the travelers feel close to their hefty middle brother, even after the very last crumb had been scraped from their plates.

Leaving the restaurant, Adam pointed out a tall wrought-iron tower adjoining Belmont Mansion. “That’s where you’ll get that grand view I promised you—Sawyer Observatory.”

Gaze slowly rising to the pinnacle a hundred and seventy feet into the clouds, Joe gulped. “Harder climb than up Lemon Hill, don’t you think?”

“We’re not going to climb it,” Adam snorted. “There’s an annular car around the shaft that will take us up.”

“Um, Adam, I—I think maybe I ate a little too much dinner to be trying that kind of thing,” Joe stammered, “but you go right ahead. I’ll just wait down here.”

Adam knew his young brother’s reluctance had nothing to do with an overfull stomach. The problem was, rather, the same one that made the boy eschew elevators in favor of staircases at every available opportunity, at least until his physical debility had forced him to make the opposite choice. Resolving to show patience, Adam laid a solid hand on his brother’s shoulder. “Joe, it’s perfectly safe,” he assured the boy. “Look, it’s carried by eight steel ropes, three-quarters inch in diameter, and if all but one of them broke, that one could still hold four times the weight of the car.”

Joe bit his lower lip. “How heavy is that car?”

“And one wire’s supposed to hold all that?” Looking away, Joe shook his head. Adam didn’t lie, of course, but maybe whatever book or journal he’d gotten that particular statistic from wasn’t as careful of the truth.

“If need be,” Adam stated with cool confidence. “Furthermore, even if they all broke at once—as I’m sure even you would agree is highly unlikely—there are other safety features built in to keep the car from falling. So, how about it? Hey, do it in Hoss’s honor; he’d snap at the chance, you know.”

“I keep telling you I ain’t Hoss,” Joe muttered.

“I know who you are,” Adam said softly, turning his brother’s face back toward him. “It’s a marvelous view, Joe; don’t cheat yourself out of it. Please.”

Again looking to the top of tower, Joe took a long breath. “Okay. Let’s get it over with.” He strode toward Sawyer Observatory with grim-jawed determination.

Adam rolled his eyes. What an attitude with which to approach an exceptional experience. Catching up with Joe, he paid fifty cents to the attendant in charge and escorted his brother into the car ringing the shaft of the tower. They sat down, and as the car began to slowly rise, Adam stretched his left arm across his brother’s shoulders. “I’m proud of you, you know, for facing down your fear of these things.”

“Who says I’m afraid?” Joe demanded. “Don’t you ever say I’m afraid!” His eyes cut sharply around the car to see if anyone had overheard his older brother’s embarrassing accusation.

“All right, my mistake,” Adam soothed, though the slight shudder beneath his hand belied the prideful boast. Mindful now of other passengers nearby, he kept his voice low as he
added, “Just for the record, I don’t consider fear a sin or even a weakness, little brother. That may be the biggest lesson I took home from the war. Everybody has fears, but a good soldier faces them. You’re a good soldier, Joe.”

Joe glanced up at his brother. It was still hard for him to see Adam as anything other than the fearless, undaunted hero of his boyhood dreams, but those ebony eyes seemed to shine with an understanding that could only have been born in a battle against the same foe. “It’s easier when you have a good lieutenant to look up to,” he said softly. “You—you’re a good lieutenant, Adam.”

Adam responded with a pat on Joe’s left arm, but the analogy gave him something to ponder as the car made its way skyward. Lieutenant, huh? Sure, Joe had only chosen that word because of his own reference to the war, but wasn’t that what he really was in the family chain of command, a lieutenant serving under Captain Ben Cartwright and responsible for those two young troopers who had looked to him for guidance practically from birth? A heavy responsibility at times, but one of which he hoped he would always prove worthy.

The annular car came to a stop, and the passengers got out and began walking around a gallery two and a half feet wide. After giving the wire network enclosing the space a test shake, Joe relaxed and looked out, a smile coming to his face as he enjoyed the grand panorama. Glancing to the side, he noticed people ascending a short staircase. “We going up?”

Adam gave the number of stairs a quick appraisal. The distance wasn’t great, but it was definitely more climbing than his younger brother had attempted since his surgery. “I’m not sure that’s a good idea, Joe. The view would be even more spectacular, of course, but—”

“Aw, come on, Adam. You’re not gonna give in to fear now, are you?”
“There’s a difference between fear for yourself and concern for someone else, boy,” Adam snorted.

“Yeah, I know,” Joe appeased quickly, “but I think I can make it, Adam. I promise I’ll go slow.”

“Real slow,” Adam insisted. He took his brother’s elbow and guided him up the stairs. They paused on practically every step, but by the time that Adam realized the climb had been a mistake, they were so near the top that it seemed wiser to go on than to head down immediately. Why do I let him talk me into these things? Adam scolded himself when he noted the strained set of his brother’s lips and the shortness of his breath. Some lieutenant I am.

Reaching the top level, Joe clung to the wire netting for support, but his face was enraptured. “Oh, wow, Adam, look how far you can see!”

“Yup, only aeronauts in a balloon have ever been higher,” Adam suggested.

“Ugh; don’t remind me,” Joe groaned. With his hands safely enmeshed in the wire net, however, he dared to peek down at the ground, amazed by the ant-like proportions of people wandering around on Belmont Hill.

They stayed up on the top platform longer than they might otherwise have, for Adam wanted to be sure that his brother was rested before again tackling the stairs. Going down was easier, of course, but Joe readily collapsed on the seat of the annular car. When they reached ground, Adam immediately herded his brother toward the carriage and drove back to the Transcontinental Hotel. Pulling up at the door, he asked Joe if he could make it to the room on his own.

“Sure, but I do think I’ll lie down awhile after I get up there,” Joe replied.
“An excellent idea—and use the elevator,” Adam ordered.

Joe raised a weary hand to his eyebrow. “Yes, sir, lieutenant.” Then he grinned. “Just for the record, though, I still don’t like rising rooms. Not scared, you understand, just don’t like ‘em.”

“Duly noted, trooper,” Adam chuckled. “Now get out so I can return this carriage.”

Joe climbed out of the carriage, gave his brother another sloppy salute and made his way inside. As ordered, he used the elevator and, as promised, went directly to his bed. When he awoke around five o’clock, Adam asked if he felt like going out for the evening.

“Sure, I’m fine,” Joe said, “and we really ought to do something special to close out Hoss’s birthday.”

“You don’t think we’ve milked that excuse enough already?” Adam asked with a chuckle.

Joe grinned back at him. “Can’t ever milk birthdays too much, big brother.”

“Ah, I’ll have to remember that when my next one comes around. Well, would dinner at the largest hotel in the area constitute milking it?” Adam queried, leaning back and lacing his fingers behind his neck.

“Excellent beginning,” Joe agreed, “and maybe a show?”

“Well, you may not consider this enough milk since the admission is only fifty cents,” Adam chuckled, “but I thought we’d visit Operti’s Tropical Garden. It’s right next to the Globe, and I’m really not in the mood to travel all the way downtown for something grander than a band concert.”

“Band music is fine with me,” Joe said. “I think I’ve done enough riding around for one day, anyway.” Catching a glimpse
of his brother’s telltale smile, he knew he’d guessed correctly the true reason his older brother wasn’t “in the mood” for a trip to a downtown theater.

The two boys freshened up and strolled leisurely across the street to the dining room of the Globe Hotel. Ordinarily, Adam would have been concerned when Little Joe ordered only a bowl of oyster stew for supper, but in this case his own overstuffed stomach provided ample motivation for a light meal. He had to restrain the urge to laugh at Joe’s choice, however, for it was another clear reminder of their brother back in Nevada, one of whose favorite meals was oyster stew at Chapman’s Chop House in Virginia City. For himself, Adam selected lobster salad and a fruit-and-cheese platter. “Let’s save dessert ‘til after the performance,” he suggested.

When they had finished the meal, the Cartwright brothers walked to the adjacent concert hall, a huge wooden building covered with corrugated iron and painted in light colors. The first glance, as they entered, revealed a musical setting unlike any either young man had ever seen. Operti’s Tropical Garden lived up to its name, for the room abounded with the sights and smells of the tropics, with its rocky nooks and beds of rare and beautiful flowers. At the back a large waterfall gushed over painted rocks, and Adam and Joe counted themselves fortunate to be seated where the coolness of that water abolished memories of the heat of the day and exotic scents seemed to be carried on the cascade plunging into the pool. The room was also decorated with frescoes and other paintings, and long lines of colored globes, each with its own gas jet, bathed both artwork and audience in a multi-hued glow.

The water slowly ceased falling, in preparation for the beginning of the concert, and Signor Guiseppe Operti, resplendent in a dark blue coat with red and gold trim, white pants and vest and military cap, led his sixty-member band onto the stage. For the next hour rousing music, more
pleasing to Joe than to Adam, filled the air, but for both it had been a satisfying conclusion to an enjoyable and relaxing day.

“Would you prefer dessert back at the Globe or a beer in one of barrooms of Shantyville?” Adam asked as they walked outside.

Joe grinned. “Beer, of course.” Adam must be feeling in a festive mood to suggest a trip to the ill-fated Shantyville!

Adam chuckled. “Hoss would choose dessert, you know, and we are supposed to be honoring him.”

Joe shook his head, a glint of mischief in his eye. “Hoss would choose both,” he asserted.

“That he would!” Adam admitted with a hearty laugh. “Both it is.”

Both boys elected to eat only a dish of sherbet at the hotel, since the food booths along the street would supply ample protection from starvation later on. Then they made their way down Elm Avenue and hoisted a couple of mugs as a final toast to Hoss.

Later, as he lay in bed, Little Joe gazed at the ceiling, a warm, but wistful smile touching his lips. “Happy birthday, Hoss,” he whispered. “Hope Pa made your special day as grand as Adam made mine.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

Smiling dreamily, Little Joe stretched his arms up and his toes toward the foot of the bed. He really appreciated the way Adam had let him awaken at his leisure since his illness, although he feared there might be more rest in his immediate future than he could possibly stand. Yesterday had been fine, of course, but he didn’t really relish another carriage ride around the park and, face facts,
there wasn’t much else he was feeling up to.

Joe got up and padded to the window in his bare feet, leaning over the sill to look down into the garden. Surely, he could talk Adam into at least letting him go outside for a walk today. It wasn’t an exciting option, but he couldn’t think of any others his protective older brother would approve. Judging by the light outside, it was around seven o’clock or, possibly, closer to half past the hour, late by Ponderosa standards, but earlier than he’d been waking most mornings back east.

Deciding that Adam would find it harder to say no to an outing if he were already dressed, Joe turned back to his bureau. Then he noticed his tan shirt and gray slacks, lying on the chair with a fresh set of underwear and socks. Frowning, Joe picked up the clothes and started to dress, supposing that Adam’s choice indicated a day spent in the confines of the hotel suite. He shrugged. At least, there was still hope for that walk in the garden.

Sitting on the settee, Adam looked up from his perusal of the newspaper when he heard the bedroom door open and saw his brother come into the parlor. “Good morning,” he called pleasantly. “I was hoping you might wake earlier this morning, as I was getting hungry. Ready for breakfast?”

Noticing that Adam was dressed in eastern style, Joe plucked at his western shirt. “Won’t you be ashamed to be seen with a cowboy in the dining room?”

“Never, never will I be ashamed to be seen with you,” Adam said fervently as he stood up.

“Ease up, Adam,” Joe said with a light smile. “I was just kidding.”

“I know,” Adam said, “but having previously made some uncharitable comments about your appearance, I want it clearly
understood that my feelings for you are not dependent on what
you wear.” He stroked his freshly shaven chin. “Still, it
wouldn’t be right for me to let you go out half-dressed like
that.”

Joe took a swift glance down his body. Shirt, pants, socks,
shoes—everything appeared to be in place. “I’m dressed,” he
muttered, “unless you mean I should wear a tie.”

Adam laughed. “A string one, if you like, but I wouldn’t
insist.” He cocked his head. “No, I’m sure there’s something
missing.” He snapped his fingers. “Ah, I have it!” He
stepped briskly into his own bedroom and came out with a
package. “Open that,” he ordered. “I’m sure you’ll know
which to put on.”

Curiosity stirred, Joe took the package wrapped in brown paper
and unfastened the string. Opening it, he grinned when he saw
four sets of suspenders with “Cartwright” stitched down one
side and the first name of a member of the family down the
other. “I thought you said this would make people gawk,” he
reminded Adam.

“Let ‘em,” Adam said, picking up the suspenders with his name
on them and attaching them to his trousers before putting on
his frock coat.

Joe laughed with delight and put on the set with his name.“I
think I’d better add that string tie, if we’re gonna look this
fancy,” he said, moving back toward his bedroom.

“Suit yourself,” Adam called after him. “I want you to be
comfortable.”

Joe sighed. Comfortable. That signaled another day in the
room, sure as the world. Nonetheless, the fancy suspenders
merited a tie, even if no one but a few fellow diners would
see it, so he drew out a black string one and looped it around
his neck.
Downstairs, he placed his order for scrambled eggs, bacon and a waffle topped with fresh strawberries; then he put on his best pleading look and said, “I don’t see why I have to stay in the room all the time, Adam. I’m really feeling much better. Just look how my appetite’s improved!”

Adam swirled his coffee around his mouth and swallowed. “I’ll judge the improvement when I see whether you actually eat all you ordered.”

“I will,” Joe insisted, “or most, anyway. I’m not wasteful, Adam.”

“No, you’re not,” Adam admitted, “and I’m not unreasonable, either. I don’t intend to make you spend the day inside.”

“So, a walk in the garden?” Joe suggested.

“If that’s your preference,” Adam said, nodding his appreciation to the waitress as she automatically poured him a second cup of coffee. “I thought we might take in the Centennial this morning, but it’s your choice.”

Joe ran his finger around the rim of his coffee cup. “How can I, Adam? I mean, I want to, of course, but that trip we made showed me that I just can’t stay on my feet that long.”

Lifting his coffee cup, Adam smiled. “I’ve got that all worked out.” He took a sip of the hot brew. “I’m going to rent one of the rolling chairs for you—”

“Aw, no, Adam,” Joe interrupted, whine back in his voice. “That’s for—”

“Ladies and invalids,” Adam interrupted in turn. “Yeah, I remember what you said before, but what do you think you are right now, kid?”

Unwilling to admit his physical weakness, but unable to deny it, Joe scowled.
Adam reached across the table to lay his palm over his younger brother’s hand. “Joe, it’s either that or sit around the hotel room reading and playing checkers until you’re stronger. Is that really what you want, buddy?”

“No, of course not,” Joe said quickly. “It’s just so doggone embarrassing, Adam. Folks’ll stare something fierce.”

“Let ‘em,” Adam said with a pull on his gaudy suspenders to emphasis his point. “You’re tough enough to handle a few stares, aren’t you?” Seeing that Joe still looked dubious, he added, “Well, you’re brave enough to give it a try, aren’t you? After all, if I’m brave enough to sport these suspenders, you can’t afford to let me outdo you, can you?”

Joe flashed a sudden smile. “No, I’d never live that down. Okay, I’ll ride in the silly chair.” The waitress served his breakfast, along with the ham, eggs and sweet rolls Adam had ordered. “What will we see today then?” Joe asked.

Adam sliced off a bite of sugar-cured ham. “That’s up to you, Joe. This is your trip now, remember?”

Joe nibbled on a strawberry. “You were doing a great job of the planning, Adam,” he said after swallowing the bite of fruit. “I’d rather you went on doing that, except . . .”

Adam sat with the ham poised on the end of his fork. “Yes?”

Joe kept his eyes on his plate as he cut a bite of waffle and swirled it slowly through the syrup. “Well, I didn’t get a good look at that art building, ‘cause I was feeling so rotten—or the annex, either, ‘cause of the fight, and . . . well . . .”

“You’d like to make another visit to Memorial Hall?” Adam inquired.

“If you don’t mind seeing those things again,” Joe said hesitantly.
Adam waited for Joe to look up, so the boy would see his smile. “I could look at those marvelous works of art again and again without ‘minding,’ little brother. Memorial Hall, it is. We probably won’t have time for the Annex today because I don’t want to keep you out too long. We’ll have dinner at the Centennial and come back here afterwards.”

Joe grinned. “Sounds good. See, I told you; you make the best plans.”

After finishing breakfast the Cartwright brothers walked across Elm Avenue to the main gate of the Exposition promptly at nine o’clock. Adam bought their tickets and handed them to the man at the gate before entering the turnstile. The two brothers then moved past the Bartholdi fountain and turned right, walking a short distance to Memorial Hall.

Adam stopped just inside the door to rent a rolling chair.

“One for each, sir?” the gray-uniformed attendant suggested. “Really, the best way to see the Centennial.”

Getting a taste of his younger brother’s embarrassment, Adam licked his lips. “Uh, no. No, thank you, just one for my young brother here.”

The employee of the Rolling Chair Company gave the younger man a surprised look, for Joe showed no outward sign of his recent illness, other than a slight loss of weight, and that wouldn’t be apparent to a stranger. Recovering quickly, the attendant rolled a chair toward the young man.

With a sigh of resignation, Joe sat down, propping his feet on the footrest.

The man in the gray uniform looked inquiringly at Adam. “Would you like to hire a porter to push the chair, sir? Only sixty cents per hour or $4.50 for the day.”

Adam politely refused. “No, just the rental of the chair,
“Please. I believe that’s one dollar for three hours?”

“Yes, sir,” the attendant agreed, taking the silver coin Adam offered, “with thirty cents back for each unused hour.”

“I think we’ll be using them all,” Adam said with a smile. He got behind the chair with two huge back wheels and two tiny front ones, grabbed the handles projecting from the back and began to push. “Comfortable?” he asked his brother as they moved away from the rental stand.

“Yeah,” Joe said. He tipped his head back to gaze up at Adam. “Thanks for doing the pushing yourself. I like it better without some fancy porter along with us.”

“I figured you would,” Adam chuckled, “and face it, kid. Pushing you around isn’t exactly the kind of chore it would be if it were Hoss in this chair!”

Joe giggled. “Hoss wouldn’t even fit in it! They’d have to special-build one for him.” That comment was a slight exaggeration, but the chair would definitely have been a tight squeeze for a man of Hoss’s bulk. Joe, on the other hand, had room to spare on all sides.

“Where to first, my little art connoisseur?” Adam inquired.

“We don’t have to see everything again, Adam, just some of the better ones, okay?”

“All right,” Adam agreed quickly. “You tell me which are ‘the better ones,’ and we’ll see them again.”

“I like those Moran paintings best of all,” Joe said.

“Thomas, I presume?” Adam chuckled.

Joe returned the laugh. “Yeah, those remind me of home, but I wouldn’t mind looking at the other Moran’s, too, those nice sea scenes. I can appreciate them more now that I’ve actually
seen the Atlantic Ocean.”

“Okay. The Cartwrights will visit the Morans—and Bierstadt, too, unless I miss my guess.”

Joe agreed, and the two brothers spent several enjoyable minutes gazing at majestic scenes of seas and summits.

“I know you don’t like it,” Joe said hesitantly, “but I would like to see that Gettysburg painting again. It means more to me now, Adam.”

“Okay,” Adam agreed, his voice dropping almost to a whisper. Though obviously still reluctant to view the bloody battle scene, he wheeled his brother directly before it. Folding his arms across the back of the chair, he leaned close to Joe’s ear. “You won’t find me there, you know. My regiment was placed just to the left of this scene that final day. We had a front-row view, but fortunately the Rebels didn’t charge us directly, as General Hancock had feared they would. The Twenty-seventh was only able to muster fifteen men that morning, and our position was the weakest of the entire line.”

Joe shivered as he realized how heavy had been the odds against his brother’s being one of that final fifteen. “I think I’d like to see something else now, Adam.”

“ Anything in particular?”

Joe shook his head. “No, you pick. Things we didn’t see before, but you pick.”

“Let’s visit the French gallery then,” Adam suggested, thinking that the quickest way to distract his little brother from his somber mood. As he wheeled Joe past the Belgian gallery, however, he paused at the doorway, noticing the sculpture by Fraiken that they had seen before. “Joe, I’m sorry I said that you’d had life easy,” Adam murmured, recalling his earlier words when they’d viewed this
representation of a loving mother with her child. “You’ve had some rough times, too.”

It was obvious from the look that crossed Joe’s face that he remembered the previous conversation and still felt a twinge of hurt feelings. Typically, though, Joe was quick to forgive. “Everyone has, Adam,” he said. “Maybe yours were rougher. I don’t know.”

Adam laid a hand on his brother’s shoulder. “I don’t see much profit in competing for that honor, Joe. Everyone has his load to carry, and maybe what we need to remember is that our own burden gets lighter when we’re trying to help someone else carry his.”

Joe glanced up at his brother. “Like you’re doing now, for me?”

Adam rubbed his hands down both of his brother’s arms. “You’re no burden, buddy. I’m enjoying every minute of this time with you. Shall we see what the French have to offer now?”

“Yeah, I’m ready for some French flair,” Joe replied with a grin.

Adam laughed as he continued down the corridor. “I’m afraid you’re in for a disappointment, mon frère. Unlike some of the other countries, France didn’t send her best works.” He stopped the chair before a large painting. “This is probably the best one on exhibit.”

As he gazed at Carolus-Duran’s portrait of his sister-in-law, Mademoiselle Croisette of the Comedie Francaise, Joe smiled. “Beautiful woman on a beautiful horse—oh, no, I’m not disappointed, brother.”

Adam chuckled. “No, I guess you wouldn’t be.” He rolled the chair toward another painting. “This one’s quite popular, but
thoroughly gruesome, in my opinion."

Joe winced as he saw George Becker’s portrayal of Rizpah Protecting the Bodies of Her Sons, in which a Hebrew woman fought off an enormous vulture that wanted to feed on the five bodies tied to a scaffold above her. “Yeah, it’s gruesome,” Joe admitted, “but I always liked that Bible story. I used to think that Mama would have fought that hard to protect me—you and Hoss, too, of course—if anyone had tried to hurt us.”

“She would have,” Adam said simply; then he laughed as he squeezed his younger brother’s shoulder. “She’d have skewered that bird with her epee!”

The two Cartwrights viewed the other paintings in the French gallery, including another Biblical theme, Story of Ruth by Paul de Curzon and the Morvan King by Evariste Leminais, but when they had concluded their tour, Little Joe was forced to admit that Adam’s opinion had been correct. “They aren’t as good as the English paintings. I even like the American ones better, though you probably don’t think they’re as good.”

“Oh, the ones you like, the Morans and Bierstadts, definitely appeal to me more—partly, of course, because of the nostalgia they elicit,” Adam observed.

Joe had to think for a moment, but when he understood what his brother meant, he nodded.

Entering the Austrian gallery, Adam directed Joe’s attention first to a painting by Hans Makart. “Venice Paying Homage to Catharine Cornaro is reputed to be the finest painting at the Centennial,” he commented. As Joe looked at the grand court scene crowded with maids-of-honor, courtiers and attendants in opulent garments of every shade, Adam explained the history behind the painting. “On the death of her husband, the King of Cyprus, Catharine made a gift of the kingdom to the Republic of Venice. This represents the reception of that gift.”
The smile with which Joe met this information was so wan that Adam chuckled. “You do prefer landscapes, don’t you?”

“To this kind of thing, yeah,” Joe admitted. “I guess I don’t know enough about European history to have much feeling for scenes like this.”

“Maybe your mentor will have to do something about that,” Adam suggested.

“Yeah, maybe he should,” Joe said. “I mean, I know this is a much better painting than that Gettysburg one, but the other still means more to me ‘cause . . . .”

“Because you identify with it more easily,” Adam finished. “I understand, Joe. Just soak in what you can and don’t worry about whether your reaction is what it should be, okay? Art is to enjoy, not to inspire guilt, something I had forgotten when we were here before.”

The Cartwrights viewed the rest of the paintings in the Austrian collection, but the piece that inspired their longest attention was a sculpture by Francesco Pezzicar, *The Freed Slave*. “Art critics don’t think much of this work,” Adam said, trying to keep an instructive attitude, but his voice broke and he could only stare in choked silence at the triumphant figure of a powerful black man, a broken chain dangling from his right wrist as his left hand held aloft a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation.

“I think it’s powerful,” Joe said, reaching back to touch his brother’s hand. “It’s—it’s what you fought for, isn’t it?”

Adam nodded, still so overcome by emotion that he couldn’t speak. As he stood before the sculpture, a black family approached to gaze in near awe at a moment in history that clearly had deeper meaning for them than for anyone else in Memorial Hall that morning. Few citizens of their color could be seen among the crowds attending the Centennial Exhibition,
but the fact that they were here at all, mingling without restriction among those of lighter skins, indicated that the barriers were slowly beginning to fall. *It was worth it,* Adam thought, *all the seemingly meaningless maneuvering for position, all the lives sacrificed. We have a long way to go, but it was worth it.* He looked down to see his brother’s emerald eyes shining in understanding of the emotion he still felt inadequate to express. No words passed between them, but none were necessary. The squeeze of a hand and the pat of a shoulder communicated all that words could not.

Adam rolled Joe’s chair through a short corridor leading from the Austrian gallery to the room containing the German paintings. They paused briefly to look at the few canvases lining that hall, which included *A Courtyard in Venice* by Henry Jaeckel and *Mt. Vesuvius* by Heck, but nothing really caught the eye of either Cartwright until they entered the room beyond and saw the large equestrian portrait of Crown Prince William-Henry by Steffeck. Adam teased Joe about being drawn to any painting featuring a horse.

“Or a beautiful woman,” Joe reminded his brother with a grin.

“Not too many of those in this gallery,” Adam pointed out. Many of the German paintings were historic in nature, such as the two depicting the *Surrender of Sedan* in 1870 and *The Flight of Frederick V from Prague, after the Battle of the White Mountain* by Faber du Tour, one of the best in the German exhibit. There were not, of course, many beautiful women in the battle scenes, but a couple of the historic portrayals did feature female figures. One was Julius Schrader’s *Elizabeth Signing the Death Warrant of Mary of Scotland,* and another by Tolingsby, *Lady Jane Grey Confuting Bishop Gardiner* acted as its companion in tribute to the history of England.

Joe’s favorite German painting, however, was Herdert’s *Evening Scene in the Zoological Gardens at Berlin* with its life-like detail. To Adam, it was a reminder of how much both he and
Joe had enjoyed their day at the zoo, and he resolved again to get Joe back there before they returned home.

The boys quickly finished the relatively small German gallery, and Adam suggested that they sit in the garden a short while before going to dinner. Assuming that Adam must be tired from pushing him around, Joe readily agreed. After briefly gazing at busts of Dante and Michelangelo amidst the greenery, they sat on a stone bench, and together they enjoyed the fragrant air and the slight breeze rising from the river nearby.

Since the Lafayette Restaurant was close, Adam returned the rolling chair and let Joe walk down the slope to the edge of Lansdowne Valley. After an enjoyable meal they returned to the hotel, where Joe at once decided to strip off his shirt and tie and stretch out on his bed. He napped for a couple of hours, and then at Adam’s suggestion moved to the balcony to enjoy the view of the garden and catch a breath of fresh air.

Joe heard the door to their suite shut and wondered where Adam had gone. Had it been somewhat later in the day, he would have suspected that his brother was ordering supper to be delivered to their room, but it was too early for that, and Joe couldn’t imagine what other errand might have taken his brother away. The mystery was solved when Adam returned, bearing a tray with a plate of sugar cookies, a tall pitcher of iced lemonade and two glasses. The brothers sat out on the balcony, munching cookies and washing them down with cool, refreshing lemonade. Draining the last glass, Joe gave a sigh of contentment. “You do come up with the best plans, brother,” he murmured.

* * * * *

Tuesday morning found the Cartwright brothers entering the Art Annex, not without a certain sense of trepidation, for both remembered being ignominiously ushered out on their previous visit. Not wanting to call attention to himself in any way,
Little Joe sank into the required rolling chair without protest, but he couldn’t help noticing the odd looks several other visitors to the Centennial threw his direction. Some, evidently thinking him a cripple, gazed with pity; others seemed almost incensed by the sight of such a lazy boy. *Doggone, but this is embarrassing!* Joe thought.

“I’m going to show you the worst piece first, just to get it over with,” Adam declared, pushing his brother toward the back of the building. He stopped before an animated wax representation of a scantily clad Cleopatra coming to meet Mark Anthony in her barge. She was fanned by a black slave and attended by Cupid, who moved his head from side to side. A parrot perched on her finger, opening and closing his wings, while Cleopatra lifted her right arm and let it fall, over and over again, as she rolled her head alluringly. “Don’t ask me why this is so popular,” Adam said. “It’s really terrible, as I trust you agree.”

Joe’s eyes twinkled with mischief. “Oh, I don’t know; I kind of like the old girl.”

Adam groaned, melodramatically striking his palm to his temple. “I had so hoped you were developing better taste than this, little brother. This is nothing but an explicit—and I do mean explicit—advertisement for the museum of anatomy here in town.”

Copying his brother’s dramatic attitude, Joe clapped a hand to his heart. “Why, Adam, I figured you’d be in favor of anything that advertised a museum!”

Adam turned the chair away from Cleopatra’s ample anatomy. “Well, if you’d really like to visit the museum, little buddy, and learn all about the parts of the body, perhaps consider going into medicine as a profession . . .”

Joe gagged. “How can you suggest such a thing so soon after breakfast?”
Adam chucked Joe under the chin. “Touché, little brother; you had that one coming! Now, if you’d like to see a better treatment of the ‘old girl,’ I’ll be glad to show it to you.”

Joe swept his hand forward. “Push on, brother; push on.”

Adam pushed as vigorously as the crowd would permit, and soon he had Joe parked directly in front of a two-ton marble, which depicted the Queen of the Nile seated in an ornate chair, head dropping over her left shoulder, right hand still clasping the fatal asp. “What do you think, Joe?” he asked after giving his brother a few minutes to examine The Death of Cleopatra.

“Yeah, this is a lot better,” Joe admitted. “The other one looks like a kid’s toy next to this. She looks strong, even in death.”

Pleased by his little brother’s discernment, Adam nodded. “Just what I was thinking; it really communicates a personality triumphant over all obstacles, and that reflects the background of the sculptor, from what I’ve read. Edmonia Lewis is the daughter of a Chippewa Indian and a free black man; in fact, she’s one of only two black artists represented here at the Centennial.”

“Who’s the other?” Joe asked.

“I’ll show you.” Adam immediately swiveled the chair around and began pushing in the opposite direction. To see the exhibits in such a haphazard way went against his grain, but if it made the art more meaningful to Joe, he was willing. “Here’s the other one,” he said, stopping in front of a canvas on which a herd of sheep grazed along the branch of a creek with a hill in the background.

Joe read the metal plaque below the painting. “Under the Oaks. I like this one, too.”

“It’s very well done,” Adam agreed enthusiastically, “and, in
fact, won a prize here. An article I read by a prominent art critic expressed the belief that this is one of the finest paintings in the American department and predicted that Edward Bannister will one day be considered America’s first important black artist.”

Joe grinned. “I guess I don’t feel qualified to pass judgment on that, but I do think this Bannister fellow would do better with a more worthy subject.” He laughed at his brother’s quizzical look. “Come on, Adam, I’m a cowman. You can’t expect me to get too excited over a herd of sheep, can you?”

Adam shook his head, amused, but a bit perturbed with himself for falling into the trap so easily. He was glad, however, to see Joe acting more like his old, healthy, exasperatingly teasing self again. Although emotional displays of all kinds—anger, sentiment, turmoil—were always close to the surface with Joe, it was what Edwin Booth had called his “silvery laughter” that seemed most natural, and Adam realized that it was what he had missed most during the early stages of Joe’s illness and recovery. Thank God those somber days were behind them!

“Hey, there’s Aurora!” Joe cried, pointing off to their left. “We really ought to pay our respects, don’t you think?”

Adam laughed. “Oh, by all means. After all, we did defend the lady’s honor.”

“Honor, nothing!” Joe cried. “We saved the lovely lady’s life.”

“Raise your voice, little brother,” Adam snorted. “I don’t think the Centennial guards heard you.”

Joe ducked his head. “Yeah, I guess I was a little loud, and I sure don’t want them comin’ ‘round again. Sorry, but can we see the lady?”
“Sure.”

After paying their respects to Aurora and a number of other voluptuous ladies wearing little more than a smile, Adam pointed the rolling chair in the direction of less provocative pieces of marble. Looking at one, Caroni’s *Butterfly Youth*, Adam was struck by how it captured his younger brother’s impetuous spirit, flying from one thing to another, only to end up trapped in his own net, just like this boy chiseled from stone.

“Oh, you’re funny, Adam,” Joe said with a scowl when his brother shared this observation. “Maybe I’ll just have to find a sculpture that reminds me of you, something like a man being buried under an avalanche of books!”

“Decide to study art, little brother,” Adam suggest with twitching lips, “and you can sculpt it yourself.”

Joe reached back to slap his brother’s hand. “No more school talk. You promised.”

Chuckling, Adam rubbed the back of his brother’s neck. “Just teasing. Here, take a look at this piece. I know you like Caroni’s children.”

“Aw, now that one makes me think of Hoss,” Joe murmured. *First Capture* showed a little boy catching a sparrow in his hand.

“Yeah, he was like that as a kid,” Adam said in fond reminiscence, “always picking up some bird or animal in the woods. Always skittered off when I tried it, but they just seemed to know he’d be gentle with them.” He pulled out his pocket watch and opened the case. “It’s getting close to noon. Is there anything else you’d like to see here before dinner, buddy?”

“No, I’m hungry,” Joe said. “Where are we eating?”
“I thought we might try the Grand American Restaurant today,” Adam suggested. When Joe expressed his pleasure with that idea, Adam aimed the rolling chair for the entrance, where he turned it in. “We’ll walk straight through Memorial Hall and catch the West End Railroad to the restaurant,” he informed his brother.

“I can walk, Adam,” Joe protested. “We’ll have to circle half the park to get there on the train.”

“So?” Adam rested a hand on his brother’s shoulder as they climbed the steps to the north entrance to Memorial Hall, centered between twelve arched windows. “Look, Joe. I know I said it was your trip now, but I will still make all decisions relating to your health. You probably could make it, but it’s a hefty hike and I don’t want you tired out needlessly. We take the railcars.”

“Yes, sir, whatever you say,” Joe grumbled, “railcars, rolling chairs, afternoon naps.”

“Right on all three counts,” Adam said, grinning as he threw an arm around his brother’s shoulders.

They passed through Memorial Hall, where they purchased their five-cent tickets for the West End Railroad, and walked to the platform outside to wait for the next cars. Joe looked at the cloud-covered sky. “Hey, you think it might rain?”

“They don’t look like rain clouds,” Adam replied, “but it’s definitely cooler than it’s been since we arrived back east.” The light breeze wafting across the unsheltered platform made the wait for the train positively pleasant, but the Schuylkill, the larger of the two locomotives operating on the line, arrived within ten minutes and the Cartwright brothers boarded.

Getting off the railway in front of Agricultural Hall, they walked across the road to the Grand American Restaurant, just
south of that exhibition building. Passing through a pavilion devoted to the sale of ice cream and other light refreshment, they entered the largest restaurant on the grounds. It was built around three sides of a courtyard, and Adam asked to be seated where he and Joe would have a good view of the well-trimmed lawn with its fountains and flowers.

“Do you wish to order à la carte or table d’hôte?” the waiter seating them inquired.

Joe stared blankly at the man.

“Do you want to see the menu or eat from the buffet?” Adam interpreted for him. “I believe I’ll try the buffet, but you may do as you please.”

“I’ll do that, too,” Joe said quickly, smiling at his brother after the waiter told them where the general table was located and left. “Thanks. I had no idea what he was saying.”

“Let’s see what that buffet has to offer, shall we?” Adam suggested, standing.

Joe got up, too, and followed his brother to a long table loaded with a variety of meats, vegetables and condiments. They filled their plates with slices of carved roast beef and pork, stuffed bullock heart, fried fish and chicken, green beans and peas, carrots and potatoes, eggplant fritters and corn on the cob, along with pickled mushrooms and eggs and spiced peaches. There were several types of pie and cake available for dessert, but neither boy found room on his plate for that on the first trip to the table. Adam was pleased to see that his younger brother had put a little of almost everything on his plate and only hoped the boy would eat a decent portion of what he’d taken.

Adam had finished one plate and made a second trip to the buffet table for roast beef and vegetables, while Joe, whose eyes had been a bit bigger than his stomach, had only
completed about three-fourths of his meal and was dawdling over the rest. Suddenly, from behind Adam came the sound of furniture crashing and women shrieking. Adam’s head jerked up, and the first thing he saw was his brother’s green eyes, flared wide in astonishment. Adam swiveled in his chair to see what was causing the commotion, and he, too, gaped at the sight of a horse bolting through the main dining room, scattering tables, chairs and diners in all directions.

Before he could recover from the shock of seeing an animal loose in the restaurant, however, Adam caught a glimpse of a pair of gray broadcloth trousers streaking past him, and his heart leaped to his throat. “Joe, no!” he yelled, springing from his chair and charging after his brother.

Normally, Joe could outrun him, but the boy’s recent illness must have slowed him down, for Adam managed to catch up just as Joe reached for the black horse’s trailing harness. Adam snatched his brother away from the horse, shielding him with his own body as he propelled Joe back out of danger. Hearing a wild neigh, he thrust the boy into a chair. “Stay!” he dictated fiercely; then he turned and ran back toward the rearing horse. “Easy, boy, easy,” he said, moving cautiously toward the head of the terrified animal.

“Watch yourself, sir!” warned the liveryman, grappling for the horse’s harness. “Best leave this to the professional.”

Adam arched an eyebrow, thinking that he’d probably put in more hours handling horses than the self-proclaimed professional, although there was, of course, no way for the man to know that. All the liveryman saw was a stylishly dressed eastern gentleman, well intentioned, but likely to get himself hurt.

Ignoring the needless admonition, Adam grasped the harness on the opposite side of the horse and helped the liveryman bring the excited animal under control.
“I’ve got him now, sir. Please, sir!” the man pleaded.

Seeing that the man did, indeed, have a firm grip on the draft animal, Adam turned loose. Straightening his frock coat, he headed back toward Joe.

When he saw his brother again out of his chair, standing far too close to the scene of the recent ruckus, Adam exploded. Grasping the boy by both shoulders, he gave him a single, solid shake and then released him, remembering, even in his anger, that Joe wasn’t up to any rough handling. “What were you thinking?” he demanded.

“That someone could get hurt!” Joe protested, seemingly oblivious to the reason for his brother’s agitation.

“Someone certainly could have gotten hurt—you!” Adam fumed. “You’re in no condition to play the gallant knight, young man!”

“Well, someone had to,” Joe insisted hotly, “and I’m good with horses, Adam.”

Adam took several deep breaths, trying to calm himself down. “Yes, someone had to,” he hissed, “preferably someone who wouldn’t rip open his recent surgical incision doing the job!” He took two more slow, calming breaths. “Are you all right?” he asked anxiously.

“I’m fine,” Joe muttered testily.

“Are you sure? Are you in pain?” Adam inquired, noticing the hand resting on Joe’s right side. “I can take you to the Medical Department if you’re the least bit shaken. In fact, I probably should.”

Seeing his brother’s genuine concern, Joe’s scowl evaporated. “I’m sure, Adam. Don’t worry.” He touched a hand to his brother’s shoulder. “Look, I guess I did sort of act first and think later. I—I wasn’t the best person for the job this
time, no matter how good I am with horses, but it all happened so fast, I just didn’t think.”

Adam resisted the temptation to say, “You never do,” and simply nodded, realizing that Joe couldn’t have reacted differently, any more than he could have. He had been only seconds from lunging for that horse himself when the sight of his younger brother flashing past him had driven out all other considerations. “I understand, Joe,” he said after taking another deep breath. “Just don’t give me another scare like that, all right?”

Joe smiled a bit wryly. “I’ll try, Adam, but horses bounding into restaurants are a little hard to predict.”

Adam put his head back and guffawed, but in the pandemonium around them, no one noticed. “That they are!” He looked at the shambles the incident had made of the restaurant and shook his head. “I think it’s definitely time to get back to the hotel. If you didn’t get enough to eat, we can pick up something in one of the booths outside.”

“Well, maybe a piece of pie or a Centennial waffle,” Joe said.

Adam arched an eyebrow. “Or both?”

Joe grinned at the reference to his pre-surgical appetite. “Just the pie, I think.”

“Why don’t we get that back at the Transcontinental, then?” Adam suggested. Wanting to get away from the chaos as quickly as possible, he led Joe out the south entrance, which opened onto the courtyard. As they exited, however, he noticed the Adam’s Express wagon from which the horse had broken free, and the fear he’d felt minutes before came rushing back at him. His legs buckled and he sank abruptly to the steps, dropping his head into his hands.

Concerned, Joe sat down beside him, touching a hand to his
brother’s bowed head. “Adam?”

Expression dazed, Adam looked up. “And I thought this would be such a nice, relaxing place for dinner.”

Joe gave him a sheepish grin. “Well, you always said I was a magnet for trouble.”

Adam just shook his head.

Concern growing when his brother didn’t rise to the bait, Joe leaned forward to look intently into Adam’s face. “Hey, you okay? Maybe I should take you to that Centennial Medical Department!”

That jest, at least, brought a faint smile to Adam’s lips. “No, I’m okay; just got to me for a minute. You really could have been hurt in there, kid.”

Joe gave Adam’s knee a quick squeeze. “Not with you around. I—I always feel safe when you’re around, Adam.”

Adam’s smile broadened.

“Guess I don’t give much thought to how hard it is on you, though, always having to be the responsible one,” Joe said. “Hey! Maybe we ought to rent one of those rolling chairs for you, and let me push you to the gate.”

Adam cocked his head, pursed his lips and stared his brother down.

“Uh, no, probably not a good idea,” Joe admitted with chagrin.

“No, not a good idea,” Adam stated dryly, adding with a smile, “but I do appreciate the thoughtfulness behind it. Let’s just catch the train and ride back to the entrance, shall we? I could definitely use an afternoon of relaxing in our suite.”

Joe let loose a mischievous cackle. “So long as no horses come up the elevator!”
Adam gave an obligatory groan as he stood to his feet and took Joe’s arm to help him up. They walked around the restaurant to the railcar station, boarded and rode back to the main entrance. Crossing the street, they each had a piece of pie and a cup of coffee in the peaceful, uncrowded dining room of the hotel. After they reached their suite, however, Adam insisted that Joe lie down for a while. It was obvious to him that his younger brother was tired, and Adam feared that the morning had been too stimulating for the recuperating boy. For that reason he decided to forego his original plan of taking Joe to the theater that night. Thinking a quiet evening was best, he took his brother, instead, to nearby Doyle’s Restaurant for supper and then returned to the hotel to make an early night of it.

~ ~ Historical Note ~ ~

The incident in which a horse from an Adam’s Express wagon bolted into the Grand American Restaurant is historical.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

Having heard his brother moving around in the other bedroom, Adam rapped on the door and popped his head in to say, “Dress nicely this morning, please. I’d recommend the outfit you wore to Commencement.”

Reaching for a towel, Joe turned from his washbasin. “Why? Yesterday you didn’t care what I wore, and today it’s got to be practically the best I own? Sometimes, Adam, you just don’t make sense.”

“I know I’m being inconsistent,” Adam admitted with a self-condescending laugh, “but I have my reasons.”

Joe tossed his brother a playful scowl. “Any reason a fellow can’t know what they are?”

Adam shrugged. “Just thought I’d surprise you, but I guess it
doesn’t matter. I thought we’d stop in at the Photographic Building and have our pictures taken.”

A vibrant smile replaced the half-hearted scowl. “That’d be nice. Can we each have a copy—and one to send home to Pa and Hoss, too?”

Wagging an admonishing finger, Adam nodded. “We may, yes.”

Joe threw back an impish grin. “I thought you weren’t going to start that mentoring ‘til we got home, but there you go, correcting my grammar again.”


“Sure,” Joe said. “May take a little more time, though, to spruce up nice enough for a picture.”

Adam rolled his eyes. He didn’t doubt it for a minute. Vain little peacock. Knew I shouldn’t have told him. “Try to leave time for breakfast,” he grunted and headed back to his bedroom to finish his own grooming.

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After placing his breakfast order, Little Joe folded his arms on the table and leaned toward his brother. “You gonna tell me your other plans for the day now or is that a surprise, too?”

Adam chuckled. “No, the photograph was my big surprise of the day. After all the excitement yesterday, I thought we’d try to have a light, easy day today.”

Joe’s emerald eyes twinkled with mischief. “Well, if that’s what you want, maybe we ought to plan an exciting one, instead. Things sure worked by opposites yesterday!”

Adam winked in acknowledgement of the jest. “Much as I admire the logic behind that suggestion, I’m too lazy to change my
plans now, though I’m afraid you may not find them exciting enough to insure a calm, uneventful morning—only a couple of stops, starting with the Horticultural Building. We’ll just absorb the beauty of the conservatory without trying to learn about all the exotic plants.”

Joe’s infectious giggle bubbled across the table. “If you think you can resist showing off all your knowledge, professor, but this I’ve got to see! What’s the second stop?”

“The New England Farmer’s House and Modern Kitchen,” Adam replied. “It’s a nice exhibit, but it shouldn’t take long.”

Joe grinned. “You’re taking me to see a kitchen, huh? I think you’re mixing me up with Hoss again.”

“Well, if I am,” Adam observed drolly, “the first push of that rolling chair should disabuse me of the notion.”

Joe moaned at the reminder of the embarrassment to come.

Immediately after breakfast the Cartwright brothers walked across the street and made their way to the building of the Centennial Photographic Association. Being among the first in line, they didn’t have to wait long for their turn in the studio. As posed by the photographer, Adam stood behind Little Joe, who was seated; the hand resting lightly on his young brother’s shoulder, however, was Adam’s idea and added an affectionate attitude to the portrait.

Being told that the finished photos could be picked up the next day, Adam and Joe began a short tour of the pictures within the photographic hall. Adam, of course, had already seen them, so when he noticed that Joe, not in a chair yet, appeared to be growing tired, he suggested that they move on to Horticultural Hall. “If you want to see more here, we can do that tomorrow when we pick up our portraits,” he advised.

Joe protested when Adam led him toward the waiting platform
for the West End Railroad. “Aw, come on, Adam. We don’t save that many steps going by train.”

“We save enough,” Adam insisted. “You’re already tired, Joe, and don’t try to tell me otherwise.”

Joe slumped, mostly in self-disgust at how easily he grew fatigued, and got on the train, as ordered. Instead of staying on until the train reached the stop on Belmont Avenue closest to Horticultural Hall, however, Adam had them debark in front of Agricultural Hall. “If you’re trying to confuse me completely, you’re succeeding, big brother,” Joe grumbled. “We don’t save any steps getting off here.”

Adam sported a playful smirk. “Yes, we do—by transferring to the monorail.”

Joe grinned, then, for he realized that the unusual arrangements were not intended solely to spare his poor, feeble limbs. The engineer in Adam naturally wanted to experience the new mode of transportation being tested here at the Centennial. The Prismoidal Railway for Rapid Transit covered a distance of only five hundred feet, but it provided the easiest, as well as the most scenic, way to span Belmont Ravine, which lay between the Agricultural Building and the botanical conservatory.

Paying three cents for each of them, Adam took his brother’s elbow as they boarded the prism-shaped car. “Let’s get a seat in the lower tier, if we can.”

Joe shrugged. “Sure, whatever.” The car held sixty passengers, and since Adam and Joe had a place in line no more than a third of the way from the front, the older brother got his wish. “So, why is this better than going upstairs?” Joe asked. Before Adam could answer, he sighed. “I guess I just answered my own question, didn’t I? Stairs.”

Adam laughed as he threw an arm around his brother. “I hadn’t
thought of that, actually, but you’re right; you don’t need to be climbing stairs. My real reason was so we could face outward and have a better view of the ravine. The seats upstairs face in.”

Joe gave him an uneasy grin. “Oh. Not sure but what I wouldn’t have preferred that, Adam.”

Adam’s arm tightened around his brother. “Hey, now, I thought you always felt safe when I was around?”

“And when we’re on the ground,” Joe amended, though the reference to the incident in the restaurant the day before brought a more relaxed smile to his lips.

“I understand one of these monorails is under construction right now back in California,” Adam told Joe, mostly to distract him from his nervous reaction to heights.

“Yeah?”

“From Norfolk to Sonoma, a distance of about three and a half miles,” Adam said.

“Who says westerners lag behind the times, eh, brother?” Joe laughed.

Adam chuckled as the car pulled to a stop and people stood to exit. “Nope, nothing backward about our neck of the woods, little buddy. Wish I’d thought to rub Bert’s nose in that little fact!” He scowled at the remembrance of several deprecating remarks about the West his former architectural colleague had made.

“Well, we could always ask them to the opera and let you do just that,” Joe suggested, giggling when Adam rolled his eyes. He could read his older brother’s mind, and he knew that this time Adam had hit the nail right on the head. Another evening with Bert’s lovely niece Penelope was exactly what he’d had in mind, though Joe figured he had about as much
chance of that as he had of staying out of that miserable rolling chair.

Leaving the monorail, the two brothers stood for a few minutes, enjoying the view from the top of the bluff on which Horticultural Hall stood. Below them, the Schuylkill River meandered, and they could trace its course for many miles through the verdant countryside. To the south stretched a scenic panorama of Philadelphia. As the Cartwrights walked toward the west entrance of the conservatory, they looked down the quarter-mile-long parterre along Fountain Avenue, whose flowerbeds were as vivid and variegated as a living stained-glass window. The hyacinths and crocuses were beginning to fade under the hot summer sun, but tri-colored cannas, geraniums, verbenas, dahlias and roses made a vibrant floral display.

“In my opinion, this is Schwarzmann’s finest design,” Adam commented as they turned to enter the building.

“It’s different,” Joe agreed. “What kind of architecture is it, Adam?”

Adam chuckled. “I’m afraid I’ll be accused of getting too educational if I answer that!” With a light clap to his brother’s back, he added, “It’s Moresque, similar to the Spanish Alhambra, Joe.”

“Oh, yeah—kind of like that Tiffany’s pavilion in the Main Building,” Joe recalled.

“That’s right,” Adam said, pleased to see his brother making the connection between similar structures.

The pleasant conversation took the sting out of that moment when Joe had to consign himself to the indignity of the rolling chair, and soon the Cartwright brothers were passing under the horseshoe arch, set between sweeping staircases, into the conservatory under a glass roof. Adam kept his
promise, and unless Joe specifically asked, he offered no information about the tropical plants and trees through which they went. The orange and lemon trees, of course, seemed less exotic to boys from the West than to many eastern visitors to Horticultural Hall, for they’d seen them in California. However, Adam and Joe did view many plants they’d never seen before, plants that ordinarily grew in far distant parts of the world: camphor and banana trees, eucalyptus and mahogany, feathery ferns and sago palms with their wide-spreading fronds. The largest of these was ten feet high, which Adam remarked was close to the maximum height for this species, according to the catalog he consulted repeatedly as they toured the conservatory.

Joe cackled. “I knew you couldn’t keep it up for long, professor.”

“Huh?” Adam looked up from the catalog, giving a sheepish grin when he realized what he’d been doing. “Oh, yeah. Sorry.”

“It’s okay,” Joe said with a condescending smile and a patronizing pat to his brother’s hand. “I know you can’t help yourself, older brother, so tell me what else that marvelous book has to say about this—what was it again?”

“Sago palm,” Adam said, “and this one is kind of special, Joe; it belonged to Robert Morris.”

Joe’s forehead wrinkled in thought. Obviously, he was supposed to recognize that name, but he finally had to give up. “Who’s he?”

“Financier for the Revolution,” Adam said, “and this tree is supposed to date back twenty-five to thirty years before that!”

Joe whistled. He’d seen forest monarchs of the Sierra Nevada that were said to be even older, but for a tropical plant to
have survived over a hundred years out of its native country seemed incredible.

The two brothers paused to relax before a sculptured fountain in the center of the conservatory. “Why, look! It’s the Cartwright brothers,” Joe tittered, indicating the three unclad boys featured in the sculpture, “and you said easterners didn’t skinny dip!”

Adam chuckled. “The Cartwright brothers, huh? Which is which?”

“Easy,” Joe said, pointing to each marble boy in turn. “That one standing off by himself, blowing a shell, is you, that one on the opposite side is Hoss, and I’d be the one cozying up right behind him.”

Adam nodded easy acceptance. “Well, it all fits, buddy, except that last little fellow looks scared to go into the water, and you never were.”

Joe grinned broadly. “No, that was Hoss.”

“Oh, yeah,” Adam drawled out slowly, “and I can remember how mortified Pa was to have sired such a landlubber for a son!”

“Aw, Hoss was never that bad,” Joe said in his beloved brother’s defense.

“Oh, yes, he was,” Adam insisted. “You were just too young to remember how hard it was to get that other brother of mine out past knee-deep. In fact, I think he’d still be wading in the shallows if it weren’t for you.”

“Me?”

Adam perched on the broad brim of the fern-rimmed fountain. “Yeah, you. You took to water like a fish when you were just a tiny thing, and Pa was so proud that it made Hoss jealous, and then he insisted that Pa teach him how to swim, when he’d
been fighting it tooth and nail before. He’s still not a good swimmer, but at least he lost that paralyzing fear he had before his baby brother showed him up.”

“I love it when you tell me stories about those days,” Joe murmured as he watched the water from the fountain’s single jet splash into the circular pool surrounding the three boys of stone.

“‘Those days?’”

“The ones I don’t remember—especially the ones before my time,” Joe explained.

“I knew what you meant, buddy. I’ll try to share more of those stories with you from time to time.”

“So, what else has this place got to offer?” Joe asked hurriedly, as if fearful of showing too much emotion in public. “More plants, I bet.”

“More and still more,” Adam admitted with a chuckle as he wheeled Joe’s chair toward the eastern gallery. There they found a collection of tree ferns from around the world, as well as a superb show of rhododendrons from a greenhouse in Surrey, England. Pale, cream-colored azaleas from Belgium formed a background for Japanese crimson maples, while blotched green pitcher plants from the South Seas served as contrast for the scarlet flowers of the flamingo plant—aisle after aisle of bright-colored jewels in settings of emerald.

Just before leaving, the boys listened to the music of the Electromagnetic Orchestra, invented by two men from Philadelphia. Adam was fascinated with the mechanism, whose perforated sheets of music were drawn under a row of electrically charged feelers, which could distinguish the notes and, with the aid of ordinary bellows, produce the sound of a twelve-piece band, plus drum. “I’d rather hear you play the guitar,” Joe declared emphatically.
“Why, thank you, little brother,” Adam said, rubbing the back of the boy’s neck. “For that kind word, I shall release you from that chair and let you walk to the New England Farmer’s House.”

“Oh, thanks all to pieces,” Joe snorted. He knew the distance between the two buildings represented little more than a walk through the gardens at the Transcontinental Hotel.

“Oh, dear, dear,” Adam intoned theatrically. “Grumpiness being a sign of fatigue, perhaps I should reconsider.”

Joe waved his hand wildly from side to side. “Oh, no, no, no. I’m feeling cheerful, honest I am.”

“Good.” Adam laughed and spun the chair toward the north exit, where he returned it to the attendant at the door.

Outside, the brothers moved down a short walkway toward a curving path that led to their destination. Just before turning onto it, Adam stopped to buy each of them a soda water, which they quaffed thirstily, even though the temperature was, once again, low by comparison with previous days.

There were no chairs for rental at the twin exhibits of the New England Farmer’s House and Modern Kitchen, but the buildings were so small that Adam didn’t worry about Joe’s becoming overtired. They first toured the single-story log cabin designed to represent a farmhouse of one hundred years before, its three rooms furnished with heirlooms of that time. The parlor, bedroom and kitchen displayed such treasures as John Alden’s desk, an old-fashioned sideboard filled with the figured china of the period, and the cradle used by Peregrine White, a child born on the Mayflower. Joe gazed for a long time at a spinning wheel from Plymouth, although Adam was quite certain that his brother’s real interest was in the pretty girl, costumed as Priscilla, who demonstrated the tool.
As other ladies costumed in Colonial linsey-woolsey explained the difference between how household tasks were performed in 1776 and in 1876, the Cartwright brothers had to fight down a temptation to laugh. Where they came from, many settlers lived almost as simply as those of a century earlier, and much that they saw that afternoon seemed totally familiar. A frame building attached to the log house demonstrated the latest improvements for the home.

Coming out, Adam noticed the sun directly overhead and nodded in satisfaction that they had concluded their tour precisely at dinnertime, just as he’d planned. “Would you prefer the Southern Restaurant or the Grand American?” he asked Joe. “Both are about equally convenient.”

Joe laughed. “Not that I’m scared of another horse plowing through, but I’d kind of like to go back to the Southern. I was feeling too rotten to enjoy that at all the first time we went.”

“Sure, kid, the Southern it is.” Adam started west down State Avenue. “I bet you won’t be sparing me the price of dessert today,” he teased, secretly pleased that his brother’s appetite had seen such an improvement the last day or two.

“Nope,” Joe joked back. “I want fried chicken and all the fixings and hominy and green beans and peach pie, to boot.”

“Are you sure you aren’t confusing you with Hoss?” Adam laughed, recalling the banter at breakfast.

Joe let loose an infectious cackle that made strangers turn to smile in his direction. It wasn’t that the joke was that funny, but Joe was suddenly aware of how he had reacted to similar teasing earlier in the trip, and he was laughing in sheer joy that the barrier of misunderstanding between him and Adam had broken down at last. It was almost worth going through that awful surgery, he thought. No, doggone it; it was worth it!
Adam jumped off the West End Railroad Thursday morning and reached back to offer his hand to Little Joe, as he customarily did when they debarked from the train. “Let’s go in the north entrance,” he suggested, indicating the cross-shaped building directly in front of them.

“Suits me,” Joe said. The north entrance was, after all, the closest.

As always before entering a new building, they paused outside a few minutes to let Adam absorb the structural style. While not as architecturally interesting as some of the other edifices at the Exposition, the United States Government Building, while utilitarian, featured some ornamentation that added to its grace. The main portion of the cross was two stories high, with a single-story cross arm. From the point at which the two met rose an octagonal dome with windows on all sides, and similar domes topped each of the offices set in the four angles of the cross. The plain brown exterior was accented with lines of red and figures of yellow.

Shaking himself from his scrutiny of the structure, Adam pointed to a smaller building just north of them. “That’s the Post Hospital,” he told Joe, “chock full of papier-mâché figures illustrating the treatment of all types of wounds, if you’d care to see it.”

“You gotta be kidding,” Joe said with an elaborate groan.

Adam tweaked the brim of his brother’s straw hat. “I was. Frankly, I’ve seen enough real amputations in progress that I don’t care to see pictures or models of wounds being treated. There is, however, a nice painting of the Gross Clinic inside, which I’ve been told is a fine work of art. You might enjoy seeing that.”

Joe shuddered. “No, not really. I don’t think my taste in
art runs to paintings of doctors at work, but if you want to see it, go ahead. I can sit here by myself for a while.”

Adam shook his head. “No, I think I’ve had my fill of doctors, too; let’s just see the other government exhibits. There’s a lot to see, Joe, but we’ll just skim the cream today, and if you want to see more later, you may.”

“You pick, Adam,” Joe urged. “You’ve got a better grasp of what’s in there.”

“All right,” Adam agreed. “Let’s start with what’s outside first, shall we? I think this will have personal significance for you.” He pointed to a display of boats and wagons strewn across the lawn. “These pontoons are the type we used to cross the Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg,” he explained; then a cloud settled over his countenance. “Raised at quite a cost in human lives, since enemy sharpshooters in the town had a clear aim at the soldiers while they built the bridge—a wasted sacrifice.”

Joe placed a comforting hand on his brother’s back. “Because you didn’t win the battle?”

Eyes on some distant horizon, Adam shook his head sadly. “Because we didn’t have a chance to begin with. Dead of winter with the enemy holding the high ground—stupid, unnecessary waste, the kind that convinced me that nine months was enough of my life to squander following such orders.”

Noticing Adam’s dark mood, Joe deliberately made his voice bright. “Maybe we should go inside, huh, see some things the government does right?”

Smiling, Adam cupped his hand behind his brother’s neck. “Yeah, let’s do that, buddy; there’s too much right about this country to focus on mistakes of the past.”

They walked inside, where Adam immediately rented a rolling
Joe reluctantly climbed aboard. “When you figure you’ll think I’m strong enough to get around on my own two legs, huh, Adam?”

Adam chucked his brother under the chin. “About the time we step off the train at Mill Station.”

“Aw, Adam,” Joe whined.

Adam stopped the chair and moved in front of it to face his brother. “I mean it, Joe,” he said seriously, bracing his arms on the arms of the chair. “You’re coming along nicely, but you do still tire easily, and the only way you’ll see this exhibition is sitting down. I hope we don’t have to discuss this every day.”

Suddenly realizing that his grumbling put extra pressure on Adam, Joe reached toward him with a reassuring hand. “No, no more discussion, big brother. I’ll be good—if you buy me a Centennial waffle before we leave today.”

The light-hearted reminder of the bribery of Joe’s youthful days brought the smile back to Adam’s lips. “If you want one. I doubt you’ll be hungry after seeing the menu at the place I’ve selected for dinner today.”

Joe’s eyes lit up. “Yeah? Where?”

“Wait and see,” Adam said with a maddening grin as he positioned himself behind the rolling chair.

“Aw, Adam, come on; give me a hint,” Joe wheedled, twisting around.

“Nope. Wait and see.”

The interior of the Government Building was as plain as the exterior. Beneath a roof of dark blue, the wood-hued walls
were relieved only by narrow red bands and divided by diamond-shaped spaces, inside of each the emblem of the department of the government it represented. Eight departments were exhibiting in the building: the Agricultural Bureau, Interior Department, Smithsonian Institute, Army, Navy, Treasury, Post Office and Fisheries. Adam suggested that they begin with the military exhibits. “I think you might find this interesting, Joe,” he said, stopping in front of an exhibit by the Signal Service. “It represents the way messages were communicated during the war in places we couldn’t reach by telegraph. General Albert J. Myer—we called him Old Probabilities—created the system of flag movements to represent each letter of the alphabet, etc.”

“Old Probabilities, huh. Why’d you call him that?” Joe asked. “Didn’t his signals get the message through right?”

“What? Oh, no, the signals worked just fine,” Adam explained. “The nickname comes from his other duty, that of predicting the weather. He’d take the readings three times a day and wire Washington the results, which would be published in the newspapers as ‘probabilities.’ Not predictions, mind you, just ‘probabilities’—trying to hedge his bets in case he was wrong, I suppose.”

Joe laughed. “Nobody can predict the weather. I mean, sure, I can tell a storm sky when I see one, but–”

“General Myer provided a lot more information than that,” Adam insisted. “Let me show you.” He pointed out the barometer, thermometer, rain gauge and anemometer to Joe and explained the data each instrument was designed to provide. Then he picked up a chart of predictions for the day to illustrate how the information was used.

Seeming fascinated by his first science lesson from his new mentor, Joe nodded through the brief lecture. “Thanks, Adam,” he said when his brother concluded. “It makes a lot more
sense when you explain it.”

Adam gave his brother’s shoulder a warm squeeze. “You’re welcome. We’ll stop by the telegraph station later and see what the ‘probabilities’ are back home. They post them for all the major cities.”

“Yeah, I’d be curious to know what’s going on back there.”

The wistful note in Joe’s voice told Adam that he was hearing an expression of homesickness. Silently, he ran his hand back and forth between Joe’s shoulder blades, offering the only comfort he could. At this point it was simply too soon to consider taking Joe home. He didn’t dare mention the word ‘doctor’ to his brother, but if—perish the thought—anything were to go wrong, Joe needed to be close to medical attention, not on a train at the summit of the Rocky Mountains. Hopefully, by the time they had seen the entire Exposition, the boy would be thoroughly healed and strong enough for the long journey back to Nevada.

“Ah, here we are at the quartermaster’s department,” Adam said, forcing brightness into his tone, “a most important force in a soldier’s life, I can tell you!”

“Uniforms?” Joe asked with a quizzical smile.

Adam tugged on one of the loops of his brother’s brown string tie. “You try wearing the same clothes for months on end, little buddy, and see if you don’t think the man who gives you a new set is important.” He moved toward the display of military uniforms, each clothing the plaster cast of a soldier from the Revolutionary War through those serving in the current year. “This is the standard issue that I wore,” he said, pointing to a figure wearing a sack coat of dark blue flannel with woolen trousers of lighter blue.

Joe snickered. “Shucks, I knew that; I’ve seen the one you sent home after you mustered out.”
Feigning shock, Adam grabbed the younger boy by the collar. “You little wretch, you’ve been pawing through my things!”

With a taut pout Joe folded his arms across his chest. “Well, you sure never offered to show ‘em to me, did you?”

Hearing the tinge of bitterness in his brother’s voice, Adam suddenly remembered the hurt Joe had previously expressed about things kept from him. “Yeah, I’m sorry,” he said softly. “I never meant to shut you out.”

Joe’s arms dropped to his lap, and he smiled up at his brother. “I know that now, Adam. It’s okay.”

Adam squatted down in front of the chair. “If you ever do feel that way again, though, I hope you’ll tell me,” he said earnestly. “You held that in a long time, little buddy, and that’s not good for you.”

Joe shook his head reproachfully. “You hold things in worse than I ever did, Adam.”

“I guess we’ve both got some room for improvement in that department, buddy,” Adam said, standing up quickly and beginning to point out various types of equipment he had been issued during the war. To Joe, the abrupt change of subject was only proof of the point he had tried to make. Adam had opened up some, but he still had a long way to go. Then he chided himself for the judgmental thought. *I accuse him of trying to turn me into him, and here I am, trying to make him, me. Yeah, we’ve both got room for improvement.*

The chair slowed as Adam wheeled it past the exhibit of the Engineering Corps, but he didn’t actually stop. Seeing the craving in his brother’s eyes, Joe put up a hand. “Wait, Adam, I’d like to see this.” He leaned forward, straining to demonstrate great interest in the maps and drawings to illustrate improvements on coasts, rivers, lakes and harbors in the last one hundred years. Adam, of course, saw through
the pretense immediately, but he merely smiled, appreciative of his younger brother’s thoughtfulness. He kept his perusal brief, though, quickly moving on to the Ordnance Department, which he knew would be of greater interest to his younger brother.

The large guns were displayed outside, on the lawn between the angles of the arms of the cross, but Joe and Adam had seen most of them, at least from a distance, while visiting other sites on the Exposition grounds. Inside, though, was an exhibit both Cartwrights found fascinating, a step-by-step portrayal of how rifles were put together at the Government Armory in Springfield, Massachusetts. From there, they moved on to a gun collection, featuring everything from fourteenth century matchlocks to modern breech-loading rifles.

Joe’s eyes gleamed as they ran over the intriguing specimens, resting particularly on the antique weapons. “Wouldn’t Pa love to have some of these in his collection?”

“Not for sale, unfortunately,” Adam pointed out, “but you’re right. Pa’s always had an appreciation for fine firearms, and he would find the antique ones especially appealing.”

The two brothers breezed through the Treasury department, where nothing seemed to interest Little Joe except the collection of all coins minted in Philadelphia, and entered the Agricultural department. Sensing Joe’s boredom here, too, Adam whisked the chair past charts and diagrams of the distribution of agricultural products and farm animals in the country. He stopped, however, to let his brother examine in more detail the glass-encased exhibit of the production of vegetable products, from raw crop through each stage of manufacture: flour, meal and starch from cereal grains; sugar from cane, beet root, maple and sorghum; the fermentation process for wine or whiskey and the preservation of fruits and vegetables in glass jars, tin cans and by other means.
At first Joe listened with interest to his brother’s explanations, but when the onslaught of information became too much, he quipped light-heartedly about how much more mesmerized Hoss would be with this exhibit. “Bet you couldn’t tear him away!”

“Sure I could,” Adam teased back. “All I’d have to do is point his nose toward any restaurant within three miles.”

Joe laughed and agreed. “Hey, let’s look at those tree samples,” he suggested.

Adam nodded and wheeled Joe over to the display of sections of logs from every variety of tree in America: conifers of Maine and the Northwest, subtropical trees of the Gulf Coast, canyon live oak from the Southwest and the evergreens of their own Sierra Nevada Mountains. Not just local prejudice caused them to feel that the specimens from their own backyard were the most remarkable; the crowds surrounding the multi-ringed slices of sugar pine, white pine and red silver fir, the youngest almost four hundred years old, bore out that opinion.

The boys hurried through the exhibits of the Microscopical and Entomological divisions, stopping only to see the case of stuffed birds and the collection of insects, showing varieties both beneficial and harmful to farmers, as well as the case of stuffed poultry.

“Good thing Hoss isn’t here; he’d be getting hungry about now!” Joe declared, looking intently at the latter.

That being the second time Joe had alluded to their middle brother’s famous appetite, Adam suspected that he was hearing a none-too-subtle hint. “And you’re not?” he asked.

Feeling caught, Joe grinned. “Well, getting that way, for sure.”

“You want to eat now?” Adam inquired. “We can come back later
“Naw, let’s finish it up first. That’s the way you planned it, isn’t it?”

“Yes, but it’s up to you,” Adam insisted.

Joe laid his right hand on the one resting on his left shoulder. “I like your plans, Adam, honest I do. We don’t miss a thing this way.”

Adam basked in the praise he so rarely heard from his younger brother, and he couldn’t help noticing how much better he and Joe were getting along, now that each was thinking more of the other’s pleasure than his own. He smiled as he rolled the chair toward the Interior Department’s exhibits. Why should he be surprised? “Do unto others” was a simple truth from the Good Book that he had learned as a child. There was no reason—really, had never been a reason—to make each other an exception to the Golden Rule.

That consideration became even more evident as the brothers viewed the exhibit by the Patent Office. Joe patiently allowed Adam to examine the models of patented devices, and Adam suppressed his inner desire to look at all five thousand of them. It would, after all, have taken a full day to thoroughly view what amounted to a miniature Machinery Hall. Neither had to exhibit patience, however, as they gazed with awe at the collected relics of George Washington, displayed by the National Museum. Against the backdrop of a huge tattered flag could be seen the great man’s uniform and articles of his camp equipment, including his mess chest, cooking utensils, rifle and case of pistols.

Adam pushed the rolling chair through the exhibit of the Indian Office, giving scant attention to the map of reservations. Seeing the papier-mâché figures of Native Americans, however, he could barely contain his rage. “They make them look like savages!” he fumed, gesturing toward the
faces streaked with red paint and the belts of dangling scalps. “If the government really wants to promote peace with the native peoples, it shouldn’t portray them geared out for war!”

Joe swiveled in his chair to look up at his brother. “Yeah, I know, but face it, brother. This is the way folks want to see Indians, especially after what happened to Custer.”

“Yes, and that will only make it harder to forge a lasting peace,” Adam insisted.

Not liking to see his brother so upset, Joe glanced around frantically for something to draw Adam’s attention from the ghastly representations. “Hey, Adam, look at these,” he cried, enthusiastically pointing to the models of primitive cliff dwellings at Rio de Chelly in Arizona. “Pretty fancy architecture for so-called savages, huh?”

Adam, of course, realized at once what his young brother was trying to do, and he couldn’t resist chuckling at the obvious attempt to lighten his mood. Bending over to examine the models intently, though, he observed, “Amazing, isn’t it, that they built these into the sides of mountains, with primitive tools?”

“Maybe we could go see the real ones sometime,” Joe hinted.

“Maybe,” Adam agreed with a smile. “It would be something to see, and Arizona Territory isn’t all that far.”

“Sure—and it’s bound to be more interesting than another one of Pa’s ‘cultural visits’ to the Paiutes.”

“Oh, that’s for sure!” Adam chortled, and Joe’s face beamed with undisguised triumph at the sound.

Immediately after that they passed the Education Office, and Adam teased that perhaps Joe would like to pick up one of the college catalogs available.
Joe shook a playful fist in his brother’s face. “You want to see someone act like a savage, big brother, you just keep it up.”

Adam affectionately cuffed the boy’s neck. “Just teasing; no need to get out your war paint, little brother.”

The Smithsonian Institute had also put together a collection of stuffed animals. Little Joe, in particular, viewed these with delight, for there were several animals he’d never seen, such as the caribou, polar bear and musk ox from the Arctic. While he had seen a grizzly bear before, the specimen on display was enormous, as was the elk, which stood nearly six feet tall. The bison, too, was an animal Joe had only seen in pictures and at the zoo, but Adam mentioned seeing them in great numbers when he first traveled west with Pa and Inger. “Herds that stretched from horizon to horizon,” he said, adding sadly that they had practically been hunted to extinction now.

Though Adam would scarcely have thought it possible, his younger brother soared to still greater heights of rapture as he gazed at the long display of food fish of the United States. “Never knew there were so many types,” Joe enthused. “Get me a pole!”

Adam swiftly swiveled the chair in a new direction. “Your wish is my command, Sir Angler,” he chuckled as he aimed toward the exhibit of fishing poles, hooks and harpoons, everything needed to catch any denizen of the water, from smallest trout to hugest whale. Every type of boat used for fishing was also on display: canoes, kayaks, dinghies and boats used by the commercial fisheries on the Great Lakes.

In one case a fully rigged model of a whaler sat on a green surface representing the ocean. Other models detailed each step of the process of bringing in a whale. “I’m gonna give Moby Dick another read when I get home. I can picture it
better now,” Joe announced, and Adam made a note to pick up a copy of that book for his brother to have on the train. After all, there would be lots of hours to while away before they reached Reno.

As both boys were getting hungry, they made a quick perusal of the Indian artifacts and collection of mineral resources and virtually skipped the Navy Department’s exhibits. In fact, Little Joe insisted on skipping the long south wall devoted to a display of photographs of naval hospitals. “You’re just plain determined to stick pictures of hospitals in front of my face, aren’t you?” he sneered.

Though he was fairly certain his brother wasn’t really accusing him, Adam forced himself to chuckle, as if the question were a joke. “I plead innocent to that charge, sir; I wouldn’t dream of reminding you of that unpleasantness.” And Joe smiled up at him softly, again wrapped in the warm cocoon of his brother’s protection.

The Post Office Department was their final stop before dinner. Actually, Adam had intended to wheel right past it, but Joe stopped him, insisting that he wanted to observe how envelopes were made. Adam grinned, understanding perfectly well his little brother’s sudden interest in this process when he saw the pretty girls in charge of the machinery. All the young ladies actually did was paste little strips of paper around every set of twenty-five envelopes the machine produced, and this simple duty left them plenty of time to blush and titter at the attentions of male visitors. Little Joe seemed quite willing to provide that attention indefinitely, but after watching for what he considered a more than reasonable time, Adam mentioned his hunger.

Buying several of the stamped envelopes as souvenirs for friends, Joe reluctantly tore himself away. Although Adam would not normally have thought of giving his friends such a simple remembrance of the Centennial, the idea struck him as a
good one, and he, too, bought several stamped envelopes. Not as many as his younger brother, of course. Joe had always made friends more easily than he, but Adam wouldn’t have traded superficial quantity for the deep relationships he had with the few he let within his inner circle.

Turning the rolling chair in at the door, Adam and Joe stepped out into the bright sunshine. “There’s our destination,” Adam said, pointing across Fountain Avenue to the building surrounded by tables under striped awnings.

Joe gasped. “Oh, Adam, no. You don’t have to do that.”

“But I thought you wanted to eat here,” Adam said, herding his brother across the street to Aux Trois Frères Provençeaux.

“Yeah, I did,” Joe admitted, a blush of crimson crawling up his neck, “but that’s when I was trying to run up the bill to get back at you for wanting Hoss, instead of me.”

Adam paused momentarily. “Oh, I see. I knew you were doing that; I just didn’t understand why.”

“Well, I’m not feeling that way now,” Joe rushed to explain, “so you don’t have to take me to the most expensive restaurant in the place, just to make up for—”

“I’m not. I’m taking you there because I want to, because I’m learning that my little brother’s pleasure means more to me than saving a few dollars.”

Joe shook his head. “No, it’s because you’re feeling guilty about making me do things your way and—”

Adam clapped a hand on his brother’s shoulder to silence him. “Maybe in part, but I’m learning your way of doing things isn’t so bad, either, little brother, and I’d like to give this place a try. Hang the expense; we’ll charge it to Pa!”

A bright grin split Joe’s face. “Like the birthday dinner?
Now you’re really thinking like me, brother! Not sure how the new you will set with Pa, though. He sort of thinks one son like me is more than enough.”

Adam laughed. “I have a feeling he thinks one like you is exactly the right number, but since he’s not likely to deny his puny baby boy anything right now, you don’t mind if I enjoy a few of the dividends, too, do you?”

“Not a bit,” Joe replied with a naughty wink. “Let’s see if this place really is the best this side of Paris, like they say.”

“We can dine *al fresco* if you prefer,” Adam offered. “It would be cooler, but I understand there are some fine tapestries inside.”

Joe looked at the dirt floor of the area under the awnings. “I’d like to go inside,” he said. “It’s not really hot today, and if we’re gonna eat at the most expensive place on the grounds, we might as well get the full treatment.”

With a chuckle Adam nodded and led the way to the door. Entering, he requested a table on the southern side of the building.

At first puzzled by the request, Joe smiled when they were seated by a window overlooking the lake, for the view was a beautiful one. The waiter handed each of them a menu, and Joe fought down the urge to whistle at the prices. “Boy, you weren’t kidding about how expensive this place is,” he whispered as the waiter walked away. “Almost five dollars for a plate of beef!”

“And a dollar sixty for a serving of asparagus,” Adam added with a grin. “Pa’s paying, remember? Order what you want.”

“Oh, I intend to,” Joe laughed, “starting with escargot.”

“And oysters on the half shell,” Adam suggested.
“Definitely!” Joe declared. “And what are oysters and escargot and—um—chateaubriand without that dollar-sixty asparagus to complement the meal, eh, brother?”

Both brothers went a bit overboard in their consumption that noonday. While waiting for the food to arrive, they examined the bright-colored, finely detailed tapestries of hunting scenes, which truly merited a place of honor in Memorial Hall. Then toasting each other with a glass of red wine, they dug in, eating so heartily that neither had room for dessert.

Adam leaned back, satisfaction suffusing his face. “I have to admit that was one fine meal.”

Joe nodded quietly. “But not that much better than the other French restaurant, to be real honest. Thanks for doing this for me, though, Adam. It meant more than I let on.”

“I know, and I was glad to do it,” Adam replied. “How are you feeling? Tired?”

“Some,” Joe admitted. “A big meal always makes me sleepy, but I could go a little longer, if that’s what you mean.”

“Just thought we might take a quick look in the Women’s Pavilion,” Adam suggested. “Not really supposed to be much different from what’s on view elsewhere, but it’s small and it’s close.”

Joe grinned lecherously, “Older brother, you ought to know by now that if there’s one thing I never get tired of looking at, it’s pretty girls.”

“Who says they’ll be pretty?” Adam teased as he motioned for the bill.

Joe cocked his head. “Law of averages, brother. You need me to educate you on that subject?”

“No, not on that or any other subject, baby brother,” Adam
observed airily. “I’m your mentor, remember, not the other way around.”

Joe let loose a most inelegant cackle. “I don’t need a mentor when it comes to women, older brother. I wrote the book!”

Groaning, Adam got to his feet and shoved his brother toward the exit. A short walk north brought them to the light blue-gray Women’s Pavilion, and they entered through a doorway with panels inscribed with the words of Proverbs 31: “Her works do praise her in the gates.” The interior was decorated in light blue tones, and a chandelier hung from the center of the roof. Jets of water sprayed from a fountain below toward the crystal fixture and cascaded down in a graceful arc into a basin surrounded by rockwork and ferns.

The first thing that caught the eye of the Cartwright brothers was the face of Dreaming Iolanthe, a vision of loveliness sculpted in fourteen pounds of butter, displayed in an ice-cooled tin frame. “Kind of a shame not to do it in something that won’t melt,” Joe observed with just a trace of impish grin. “She’s really pretty.”

Most of the inventions displayed in the Women’s Pavilion were designed to lessen household labor and, thus, were of little interest to the young men, except in terms of something that might help Hop Sing. “Maybe this lockable barrel cover—to keep Hoss out of the sugar,” Adam chuckled.

“Naw, wouldn’t work; the lock ain’t been built that can keep Hoss from food,” Joe snickered. “How about this?” He pointed out an iron, heated by gas. “It would save heating the irons on the stove time after time.”

Adam shook his head. “Joe, Joe, where would we get gas out where we live?”

“Oh, yeah.” With a sheepish grin, Joe shrugged. “Dumb idea.”
With one arm Adam pulled his brother to his side. “Not dumb, just slightly ahead of the times. Not a bad trait, Joe, looking ahead to the future. You just need to temper it with some practicality.”

“Not my strong suit,” Joe tossed back with a grin.

“Oh, you can say that again!”

The two brothers walked down rows of exhibits, seeing little new or different from what they’d seen elsewhere in the Exposition. The only added attraction was that the exhibitors here were all women, and Joe’s “law of averages” was proving correct. The ladies made a pleasant change from the scruffy-bearded men dominating the rest of the grounds.

Adam picked up a copy of the eight-page journal, The New Century for Women, edited and printed here exclusively by women, and then he expressed interest in seeing the engine room, “if you’re not too tired.”

Joe assured his brother that he was okay, and he couldn’t help grinning when he saw what he believed to be the real attraction in the engine house—a female engineer. It was abundantly obvious that Adam was attracted to the neatly attired Miss Emma Allison. In fact, he was soon in complete rapture as he discussed engineering principles with the intelligent woman so well versed in one of his favorite fields.

Joe, on the other hand, was bored stiff by the technical talk, but wanting Adam to have his chance with the girl, he struggled valiantly not to show it. And Adam, who had for weeks been so solicitous for his brother’s slightest sign of fatigue seemed to lose all remembrance of his little brother until another visitor called Miss Allison away. Suddenly chagrined, Adam stammered out an apology.

“You look smitten, older brother!” Joe tittered. “And she’s
just your kind of girl, too—head full of facts and figures and book learning.”

Adam arched a dark eyebrow. “Believe it or not, little brother, that is not the only thing I look for in a woman.” He abruptly caught Joe’s elbow and steered him outside. “You’ve been on your feet long enough, I think. Back to the hotel for a nice, lengthy lie-down for you.”

“Hey, no,” Joe objected. “We have to pick up our pictures first—or did the lovely and gifted Miss Alison drive that out of your head, too?”

A flush crept across Adam’s face, for in his enjoyment of the female engineer’s company, he had, indeed, forgotten virtually everything else. He had no intention, however, of giving his younger brother the satisfaction of knowing he’d scored a hit. “Nonsense!” Adam scoffed with a trace too much emphasis. “The Photographic Building is directly on our way out. It will take only a few minutes to get the portraits, and then it’s straight to bed for you.”

Joe would have liked to protest the cavalier treatment, but he was feeling tired by the time they reached the hotel, so he submitted to his older brother’s arbitrary order and lay down on the chaise lounge for a couple of hours. After a brief nap he spent the rest of the afternoon writing letters to his friends, to be mailed in the special Centennial envelopes, and Adam did, as well. It had been a longer day than usual, so the Cartwright brothers had a quiet dinner in the Transcontinental Hotel and retired early.

~~ Historical Note ~~

Pity poor Dreaming Ioanthe, whose buttery features were marred when a deliveryman sat upon her face! Nonetheless, the sculpture, presumably mended, attracted extraordinary attention and was described by one author as “beyond all comparison the most beautiful and unique exhibit in the
Centennial.” Judging by the illustration in the McCabe book, the lady was quite lovely.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

Just past dawn on Friday the Cartwright brothers were awakened by the low rumble of thunder. Adam rose at once and went to the balcony to look out, for his bedroom had no window. Opening the French doors, he saw gray clouds rolling up from the river and didn’t know whether to count them a blessing or a curse. The plain truth was that Joe could use a day off from the constant activity, but keeping him occupied indoors was a challenge Adam had no reason to anticipate with pleasure.

A jagged dagger of lightning struck in the distance, followed by rain that fell in sheets, soaking the balcony and quickly driving Adam back inside. He opened to the door to Joe’s bedroom, to see if the storm had awakened his younger brother. Noticing the empty bed, he glanced toward the window, where his barefoot brother stood watching as driving droplets pelted the glass. “Joe, come back to bed,” he urged gently. “It’s early.”

Joe turned. “Might as well, I guess,” he sighed. “I’m betting you won’t let me out in this.”

“Safe bet, even for as poor a poker player as you,” Adam chuckled. “It’s what Hoss calls ‘good sleeping weather,’ so make the most of it, little buddy.”

Yawning, Joe stretched his arms back and to the side. “Yeah, I think I will.” He crawled back under the covers, turned his face to the pillow and within minutes was oblivious to the steady rain. Adam returned to his bed, as well, and while pondering what he could do to keep Joe entertained kept him awake a short while, the effect of the “good sleeping weather”
soon overcame him, too.

It was well past ten in the morning by the time both brothers again awoke, but even though the day started late, Adam thought it would never end. He kept Joe busy ‘til dinnertime, writing long letters to both Pa and Hoss, but the hours stretched long after dinner. The brothers played checkers ‘til neither could stand the sight of the board, read the newspaper, cover to cover, and even resorted to afternoon naps to pass the time. The sun finally came out at half past three, and they took a walk through the garden of water-beaded daisies and dahlias, both grateful to be outside, even for so short a period. After supper both Adam and Joe read a little and retired early, each praying the next day would be bright and sunny.

Their prayers were answered, for August fifth dawned clear and cloudless, though the rain had left behind a welcome coolness that made an excursion to the Exposition even more attractive. Adam and Joe stepped down from the open car of the West End Railway and stood looking at a dark brown building roofed in green. “The Agricultural Building is the third largest,” Adam related, “and while we probably could finish it in a single day, I think we’ll take two mornings, instead.”

Though he nodded, Joe sighed, for he knew exactly why their tour was being protracted. Big brother Adam, otherwise known as Brother Hen, was still not convinced that his little brother could handle a full day’s effort. And who could blame him when said little brother had practically slept the day away yesterday? Joe was thoroughly disgusted with himself and battled the feeling by balking when his brother headed toward the stand for the rental of rolling chairs. “I can walk, Adam,” he insisted, but a sense of futility made the protest a feeble one.

“Maybe,” Adam conceded, “but I’ll enjoy the exhibits more if I
don’t have to worry about overtiring you.”

It was an argument for which Joe had no counter. If his performance on previous days had taught him anything, it was that he might well give out sooner than he wanted, and Adam would, of course, refuse to continue his own sightseeing while Joe sat somewhere to rest or returned to the hotel. No, he’d simply give it up, and Joe didn’t want to be the cause of that, especially when his brother had been so considerate of his every need. So, frustrated as he felt, he sat in the chair, shrugging his shoulders in embarrassment at the attendant’s odd look and consoling himself with the thought that Pa, at least, would be pleased to see him working so hard at getting along with his older brother. Trouble was, Pa wasn’t here to see it.

They had entered through the north door of the nave and began their tour in the northeast quarter of the building, where agricultural machinery and farming implements were displayed. The plows, reapers and threshing machines were not of much practical use to cattlemen, although Adam suggested that perhaps some community-owned hay-cutting and baling machinery might be profitable, each rancher or farmer paying in proportion to the size of his crop.

“Remind me to be busy bustin’ horses when you bring that one up to the Cattlemen’s Association,” Joe scoffed.

“Oh, you just don’t know a good idea when you hear one,” Adam accused.

“But I know a good idea when I see one,” Joe tittered, pointing at a soda machine halfway down the aisle, “and that’s a good idea, right there.”

“You don’t even have the excuse of the heat today,” Adam teased. Seeing a pout threatening, he chuckled and gave his brother’s neck an affectionate shake. “What flavor this time, kid?”
“I like that Hire’s root beer best, I think,” Joe said.

Adam handed the operator a dime for a single glass of root beer soda, taking a sip before passing the rest on to Joe. When the glass had been drained and returned, he got behind the chair and started pushing through row after row of more equipment the Cattlemen’s Association would probably spurn.

As they moved into the southeastern section of the building, their interest picked up. Though the cider-processing machine there wasn’t something they needed on the Ponderosa, either, both Adam and Joe found it fascinating, and the model stables sparked even closer perusal. These were made of iron, and the two brothers debated the relative virtues of these over stalls built of wood, finally agreeing to disagree.

As Adam pushed him back north, Joe was drawn to the exhibit of the Rumford Chemical Works of Providence, Rhode Island, which was demonstrating its baking powder by baking fresh biscuits and distributing them to visitors. “Now, these folks know how to advertise!” Joe mumbled with his mouth full.

Not particularly enjoying the sight of biscuit crumbs falling from his younger brother’s mouth, Adam glanced aside. “I can’t believe you’re hungry already. It hasn’t been that long since breakfast.”

“I’m a growing boy,” Joe insisted, latching on to an old excuse.

Though Adam shook his head at both the tired joke and the atrocious manners, he was secretly glad to see Joe’s appetite return to the “sample everything” heights of the days before his illness. It was a good sign.

A bit further on, the two brothers came across an exhibit of canned meats, fish, poultry and soups, and Adam made note of those he thought would be good to stock in their line shacks. Anything canned would keep well and laying in a good supply of
such foods from time to time would mean less frequent trips to those outlying cabins.

He and Joe paused at a bronze fountain in the center of Agricultural Hall, which sprayed jets of water almost to the ceiling, seventy-five feet above their heads, and went on to see the windmill in the nave, whose sails also stretched near the roof. North of the windmill, which was dated 1776, various confectioners displayed their sugary temptations, the most eye-catching being a pyramid of candy with edible figures illustrating the signing of the Declaration of Independence and other historical events.

Seeing the Whitman’s chocolates, Little Joe reminded Adam that they planned to buy some of these for Hoss.

“We’ll get them our last day here, Joe,” Adam explained patiently, although he was fairly certain he’d already had this discussion with his younger brother. That had been before his illness, however, and perhaps, considering what the boy had been through, it was reasonable that he might have forgotten a few things. “We’ll probably take two days, just to shop at our leisure, but I’d advise you to make a list of what you want so we can do that in an orderly fashion, without a lot of backtracking.”

Joe nodded, but his face fell slightly. Decisions would be hard; there was so much he’d like to buy, but so little he could afford.

Adam noticed the drooping countenance and guessed its cause. “You realize, of course, that since we’ve been back here longer than expected, you have some more wages coming,” he commented.

Studying his balmorals, Joe shook his head. “I haven’t earned any wages; in fact, I’ve already cost you and Pa more than I’m worth.”
Adam jerked the chair to a stop. “Don’t you ever say that; don’t you ever think that,” he ordered tersely. He moved around to squat in front of his brother. “Has Pa ever begrudged you anything you needed, especially when you were ill?”

“No, of course not,” Joe said, eyes still cast down, “but that doesn’t mean he thinks I deserve wages when I ain’t been workin’. He was being kind when he gave me what he did before we left, and you’re just trying to be kind now.”

“Of course I am,” Adam admitted, “but that doesn’t change the fact that you have wages coming, and I’m quite certain Pa would want you to have them. He never stops a man’s pay just because he’s sick or injured, and he certainly wouldn’t make you an exception to that rule. Besides, he as good as told me to spoil you rotten.”

“Oh, he did not,” Joe muttered, smile quirking at his lips.

“Oh, yes, he did,” Adam chuckled. “I quote from the letter he sent me after learning you were ill: ‘Spoil Joseph a little for my sake.’”

Joe’s smile blossomed bright. “Yeah? Well, I guess I’ll take you up on those wages then, brother—and spend some of ‘em on a better Christmas present for Pa.”

Adam stood up, shaking out the cramps in his legs. “Good. Now that we’ve settled that, let’s have our dinner, shall we?”

“Sure. Where?”

Adam aimed the chair toward the north door. “Right here in Agricultural Hall, at the California Restaurant,” he suggested. “They only serve cold lunches, but I think we’ll still enjoy it, even though it’s not hot enough to make that quite as appealing as when I first planned it.”

“It’ll be fine,” Joe assured him.
“Especially with a glass of California wine? That’s their specialty.”

Joe grinned broadly. “Oh, yeah, a cold plate and a cool glass of wine sounds real good, older brother.”

They entered a small, but comfortable room, enclosed by a white and gilt wooden screen and dined on chicken salad, with cheese and fruit for dessert. “Not too crowded, is it?” Joe observed.

“There’s more than one restaurant in the building,” Adam explained. “I think Reuter’s gets most of the business, but we were close to this one.”

“Well, those folks don’t know what they’re missing,” Joe said as he took another sip of wine. “This is one fine meal.”

“Glad you’re enjoying it,” Adam replied.

Joe chuckled. “I’m not that hard to please, Adam—when I’m not trying to punish your pocketbook.”

Adam put his head back and laughed. “Oh, I am definitely glad you’re over that, little brother.” He swirled the ruby wine around in the glass. “Listen, I know I said we’d just stay the morning here, but maybe we should finish the American exhibits and leave only the international ones for tomorrow.”

“Fine by me,” Joe said. Then he added with an impish grin, “I’ll just need another glass of wine to fortify me for the extra effort.”

After dinner the two brothers headed south to view the western half of the building, where they saw an exhibit of horseshoes and a model of a machine for making them. Beyond that, the State of Oregon displayed dried products, including dried fruits, which the state shipped all over the world. Though neither Adam nor Joe could claim to be thirsty this soon after having wine at the restaurant, each of them took a sample of
the reconstituted dried cider as they listened to the salesman’s explanation of how the water had been evaporated and the solid residue wrapped around wooden rollers for transport. Dissolved in water, it became cider once again.

“What do you think?” Adam asked Joe as he handed their glasses back to the salesman.

“I think we should order some, put it up in the line shacks with that canned meat and such,” Joe said enthusiastically.

Adam jerked the straw hat over Joe’s nose. “We are going to have the most pampered set of ranch hands in the state if I keep listening to you.”

Joe just shrugged. “So maybe that’ll keep ‘em from hiring on at the mines, instead.”

“Maybe so,” Adam conceded as he set his brother’s hat back in place. He placed an order for the dried cider and arranged for its shipment to the Ponderosa. Soon they came across exhibits of Borden’s condensed milk and the new tomato ketchup by Heinz and added both of those items to the list of foods available to the Ponderosa’s pampered employees.

“Hoss’ll be begging to ride line now,” Joe chortled.

“At the rate your appetite is coming back, you’ll be wanting to hole up in those shacks right alongside him,” Adam quipped.

“Naw, I can get Hop Sing to pamper me right at home,” Joe snickered.

“Truer words were never spoken, you pampered pest,” Adam snorted. He gave the rolling chair a powerful push. The next several aisles were lined with the agricultural products of various states, but none of the tables of potatoes, carrots, watermelons or other familiar foods caught the Cartwrights’ eyes. They’d eaten every one of them many times, and one potato was pretty much like another.
When they reached the exhibits of Wisconsin, however, Joe begged Adam to stop. Like other exhibition visitors, he wanted to see the famous eagle that had served as mascot for the Eighth Wisconsin Infantry during the Civil War. Joe listened, spellbound, as a stocky man with gray eyes told the eagle’s exploits to an admiring throng. “Yep, ole Abe here, he went into every battle with the regiment,” the former sergeant related, as his plug of tobacco bulged first one cheek and then the other, “even though he was wounded twice. Even the Rebs knew what a hero Old Abe was. Why, I heard tell of one Reb general sayin’, ‘I would rather capture Old Abe than a whole brigade.’ They knew, you see, how this brave bird gave us the courage to fight on.”

“Do you think Hoss would enjoy reading the record of Old Abe’s public service?” Adam asked when the sergeant concluded.

“Only fifty cents a copy, sir,” the sergeant quickly said, “a real bargain.”

“Joe?” Adam asked, for there was a slight furrow on his brother’s forehead. “I’m sorry. Did you mean to buy it for him yourself?”

Joe laughed. “No, I’m pretty much finished with Hoss, except for some candy, although fifty cents is more my usual price range than yours. You tend to go in for grand gestures, you know.”

“So maybe I’ve learned a few things from my kid brother on this trip,” Adam said, “like how much pleasure simple gifts can bring. Now give me your honest opinion.”

“Hoss’ll like it,” Joe said. He looked up, eyes wide with child-like candor. “Can I read it first? I’ll be careful with it, so Hoss won’t know.”

Adam laughed and held up two fingers to the salesman as he dug a dollar out of his pocket and paid for two booklets.
Only a few state exhibits remained, and the Cartwright brothers toured them quickly, pausing only to gape at the mammoth grape vine from Santa Barbara, California, its huge tendrils spread over the top of the wooden framework of a small, open booth. As they moved past that, Joe grabbed his brother’s arm, exclaiming with exaggerated excitement. “Hey look, Adam—minerals from Nevada!”

Adam tossed off the clutching hand of his playful brother. “I didn’t come three thousand miles to see what’s in my own backyard, little buddy, and since that’s all that’s left of the American department, I suggest we take our leave of the Agricultural Building until tomorrow.”

Joe grinned. “Whatever you say, big brother.”

Adam clapped a hand to the boy’s shoulder. “Oh, may you always be so accommodating! As a reward, we’ll stop by the Tunisian Bazaar and Café for a cup of coffee on our way out.”

Joe grimaced. “I’ll go along as far as the bazaar, but if Tunisian coffee is anything like that Turkish kind, I’d just as soon skip it.”

“It probably tastes just as sweet as that did,” Adam admitted, “but you’ll be glad you went in for a cup, anyway. Trust me, little brother.”

Joe spotted the sly smile. “Okay, what have you got up your sleeve, besides a hairy arm?” he demanded.

Adam responded with those frustrating words with which he so often answered his younger brother’s questions, “Wait and see.”

Of course, Adam insisted that they ride the West End Railway as far as the United States Government Building stop. Then it was only a short walk down Fountain Avenue to the octagonal coffee house, which was colorfully decorated in designs of
red, blue and black, with intersecting bars of green and gold. The interior looked much the same as the Turkish coffee house the boys had visited early in their tour of the Centennial, except for the raised and cushioned platform across one end. Adam pointed Joe toward a table with a good view of the platform and, when they were seated, ordered two cups of Tunisian coffee.

“What’s the platform for?” Joe asked. “Is there a show?”

“I believe so,” Adam replied with premeditated ingenuousness.

“You know so!” Joe accused. “What kind?”

“Musical, I believe.”

“Tunisian music? Okay, but it had better be good ‘cause the coffee’s bound not to be.”

The coffee, served by Tunisian waiters in native dress, proved to be every bit as insipidly sweet as its Turkish counterpart, and Little Joe was looking thoroughly disgusted with this so-called reward. When elderly men in flowing robes and turbans began to play stringed instruments and exotic drums at the back of the platform, however, all traces of discontent evaporated as quickly as dew on a midsummer morning. It wasn’t the men or the music that produced the transformation, but a shapely native girl with incandescent eyes of darkest chocolate, who waved silk scarves in graceful arches over her head and around her body, as her bare feet, encased in anklets of gold, moved in rhythm to the oriental melody.

Watching his brother’s steadfast stare at the girl’s sensuous movements, Adam began to question the wisdom of bringing the boy here. “Pa would have my hide for taking you to a show like this,” he muttered.

Without taking his eyes off the girl, Joe said, “You think I’m gonna tattle on you?”
Adam laughed aloud. “Nope, not worried about that for a minute, but you get your eyes back in your head or I’ll take you out right now.”

With a sigh of resignation, Little Joe sank back into his chair. “Sure thing, brother. I’ll just sit here and enjoy this remarkable coffee.”

“Uh-huh,” Adam said dryly, as he, too, settled back against the plump cushions. “I know what you’re enjoying.”

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On Sunday morning Adam fulfilled his promise to take his younger brother back to the zoo. This time Joe didn’t bounce from one pavilion to the next as he had on his first visit. He seemed content simply to walk and made frequent use of the benches scattered throughout the park, but Adam could tell that his brother was feeling stronger. It showed in the way he carried himself, in that easy saunter that seemed so familiar, though it had been missing for weeks. Joe was well again; of that Adam was certain. Sure, the kid still didn’t have his full strength back, but Adam no longer feared taking him away from ready medical attention. “We’ll probably finish seeing the Exposition tomorrow,” he told Joe over lunch at the restaurant on the grounds. “Then we’ll shop a couple of days, take another to pack up and relax and head for home on Friday, unless there’s something else you care to see.”

Joe looked across the table and smiled. “The Ponderosa is what I’d most care to see. It’s been a wonderful trip, Adam. I’ve enjoyed every minute of it—well, almost every minute,” he corrected quickly in answer to his brother’s arched eyebrow, “but I miss my pa—and that big lunk of a brother.”

“And Cochise?” Adam asked with a wink.

Joe laughed easily at the joke. “Yeah, her, too—and ‘evergreen spires that touch the cerulean heavens’ and Lake
Tahoe and—well, just . . . home. I’m ready to go home.”

Adam nodded. “Me, too, kid; me, too.”

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The Cartwright brothers entered Agricultural Hall through the south doors Monday morning. After Adam had paid for the rental of the rolling chair, which he still insisted that Joe needed to use, he suggested that they begin in the southeast corner, with the exhibits from Great Britain and Ireland. “Jolly good,” Joe piped in a high-pitched and utterly pathetic attempt at a British accent. “Let’s see what those foreign folks grow, shall we, old chap?”

Adam clenched the handles of the rolling chair, to help him resist the temptation to throttle his brother. “Do me a favor: don’t call them that while we’re looking at their exhibits.”

Joe looked slightly perturbed. “Believe it or not, older brother, I do have a few manners.”

“More than a few,” Adam said with a conciliatory pat on the slumped shoulder. “Just saddle ‘em up, okay?”

Joe grinned at the folksy metaphor and sat up straighter. “Okay.”

The British exhibits were enclosed in the familiar black and gilt cases that country always used. A semicircular one in the front line held a choice selection of pickles, potted meat, mustard and extracts, including Crosse and Blackwell’s famous Chow-Chow and Lea and Perrin’s Worcestershire sauce. “A wonderful accompaniment to beefsteak,” the sales representative touting its virtues declared. “You lads do have access to good beefsteak from time to time, don’t you?”

Sensing that Joe was about to let loose an uncontrolled cackle, Adam slid his hand off the chair handles to squelch it
with a gripping pinch to the biceps. He cleared his throat. “Why, yes, we do, on occasion, find an acceptable beefsteak, even in our remote corner of the country.”

“Ah, I thought so, what with the transcontinental railroad linking the country coast to coast now.” The salesman smiled in triumph. “I guarantee you’ll enjoy those occasions much more with a bit of Lea and Perrin’s to bring out the flavor.”

“Go ahead, Adam,” Joe suggested, propping his elbow on the chair arm and his cheek on his fist. “I’ll bet you can sweet-talk Pa into buying us a bit of beef to test it on.”

Adam silently mouthed, “Behave,” at his brother and then turned to the salesman. “I’ll take a case.”

When the order was filled out and the shipping information given, Adam pushed Joe through samples of wool from all parts of the world and displays of Irish whiskey and oatmeal to an exhibit by the Colonial Produce Company of London. “Imagine the convenience, gentlemen,” the company’s representative urged. “Each of these airtight gelatine envelopes contains the proper proportions of tea, milk and sugar—or as you Yanks may prefer, coffee, milk and sugar—to make three cups. Just drop the entire pack into hot water; the gelatine will dissolve, along with the powder inside, to make a delicious brew, whether at home or when traveling.”

“You can’t tell me that wouldn’t be handy on the trail!” Joe exclaimed.

Adam chuckled. “I prefer my coffee black, but it would be handy. Yeah, let’s ship some of that home, too—and not just for those pampered ranch hands of ours.”

Italy’s exhibits were crammed into a small space in the southeast corner of Agricultural Hall. There were Parmesan and Gorgonzola cheeses from Milan and macaroni and dried fruits from Naples and Sicily. Sicily also displayed oranges,
lemons, olives and figs, and Little Joe purchased a small bag of Sicilian licorice for Hoss.

“So he can compare it with the American, I presume?” Adam teased.

They crossed the aisle to Canada’s department, opposite that of Great Britain, but practically breezed past the front line of grains, peas, beans and flour and the case of wool directly behind it. Spending a little more time on the cases of stuffed birds, insects and other animals, they moved on to the exhibits of Germany. The Germans had made no effort to show either their agricultural system or its products, but the Royal Steel Works of Fredericksthal, Wurtemburg, had found a fascinating way to display their wares with a palm tree whose branches were made of scythe blades. Not being in the market for scythes, however, the Cartwright brothers headed for another country.

Adam didn’t know whether to be amused or appalled by the way his younger brother nibbled his way through the products of Austria-Hungary. Joe didn’t turn down a single sample of raisins and other dried fruits, nuts and candied fruits from Vienna. Adam was glad to see that Spain, next in line, offered no further temptations, showing, instead, immense logs of mahogany and rosewood lying on the ground, with skins and Spanish leather suspended from the ceiling.

Portugal offered bottles of fine port and Madeira wines. “I remember Pa mentioning the Madeira from his sailing days,” Adam commented as he purchased a bottle for his father’s upcoming birthday.

The most distinctive displays from the Netherlands were, of course, the wooden shoes and the round Edam cheeses, which Joe simply had to sample. “I’ve never tasted this kind,” he insisted when he saw Adam shaking his head in consternation at his brother’s willingness to put anything and everything into
his mouth.

“Uh-huh,” was all Adam offered in response, but he was feeling more convinced by the minute that Joe was back to normal.

The Scandinavian countries of Norway and Sweden, as well as Japan, featured their fishing industries with models of fishing vessels and tackle, samples of dried and preserved fish and even some larger fish suspended in alcohol. Denmark and Belgium had very small exhibits, with brandies, cordials and Danish punch prominently displayed.

Many of the products of the South American countries were similar to those grown in the United States. The Cartwright brothers passed by those quickly, but others, by virtue of their uniqueness, invited more lengthy perusal. Brazil, for instance, had an intriguing collection of over one thousand native woods arranged around the entire court, a display of rubber in both its crude gum form and its marketable variety, twelve kinds of sugar and ninety varieties of edible beans. They didn’t offer free samples of any of their agricultural products, but bananas, wrapped in silver foil, were on sale for only ten cents, and naturally Joe had to have one. As Adam had never tasted a banana, either, he decided to indulge in one, as well, and quickly discovered that one wasn’t enough. Like most other visitors to the Centennial, who were also sampling bananas for the first time in their lives, the Cartwright brothers couldn’t get enough of the creamy-flavored, crescent-shaped fruit. Joe declared himself quite willing to make a meal of bananas, but Adam had other plans for dinner, and muttering something that sounded like “little monkey,” with determination he pushed his brother away from temptation.

The exhibits from Venezuela had arrived too late to find a place in the Main Exhibition Hall, so they were all here, but that was just as well since they were almost entirely agricultural in nature, anyway. A large part of the display
was devoted to the vivid red dye derived from the dried bodies of female cochineal insects, developed by the Indians of pre-Hispanic Mexico, but probably the strangest exhibit in the entire hall was the portrait of George Washington, done in human hair by a Venezuelan artist. The Argentine Republic, though it offered nothing not seen elsewhere, had sent a huge collection of everything from native woods, gums and resins to cotton, silk and leather goods.

Little Joe found himself impatient with the amount of time his older brother spent in the Liberian exhibit, for he was anxious to tour the French department, which Adam had, irritatingly, left ‘til last. The Liberians didn’t have that much to show, in Joe’s opinion, but Adam stood talking to the native Africans on duty for what seemed like an eternity. All of them had been educated at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, and they all intended to return to Liberia to establish schools there. The proceeds from the sale of coffee here at the Exposition would go toward building the schoolhouses, and when Adam finally finished talking over the project with the men, he placed a rather large order for coffee. “You’ll do just about anything to educate somebody, won’t you?” Joe teased, earning himself a cuff on the ear.

Joe moved through the French department with slow deliberation guaranteed to test his brother’s patience as much as the Liberian discussion had tested his own, and Adam could only groan when he noticed the number of free samples being handed out. Joe had to try the Roquefort cheese, of course, but he didn’t care for it, despite its French origin. When Joe followed this up by testing the chocolates of Munier of Paris, the oldest maker in the world, Adam thought it was time to intervene. “Candy, of all things,” he scolded. “Don’t you realize it’s almost noon? You’ll spoil your dinner completely.”

“I’ve gotta pick the best to take home to Hoss, don’t I?” Joe argued, reaching for another bonbon. Since Adam hadn’t taken
one, he figured he was entitled to two.

Adam folded his arms and shook his head. “That is the worst excuse for nibbling I’ve ever heard!”

Joe grinned as he licked melted chocolate from his fingers. “Best one I’ve got. These are awful good, but I’d like to take him some of those Whitman ones, too. Can’t afford both, though.”

“You buy the French ones; I’ll pick up a box of the Philadelphia company’s,” Adam offered. Anything to stop this kid’s insatiable snacking, he thought.

Joe beamed his gratitude at the proposed solution, and the two brothers moved on to the most prominent product of France, wine. There were bottles and stone jugs of champagne, burgundy, claret and liquors of almost every type imaginable. Following Adam’s example, Joe selected a bottle of fine French brandy for his father and, like the Madeira Adam had ordered, arranged to pick it up later in the day.

“Well, that pretty much finishes the Agricultural Building,” Adam said as he pushed Joe toward the exit to turn in the rolling chair. “I don’t suppose you’d be interested in dinner after snacking your way around the world.”

“Sure I am!” Joe declared enthusiastically.

“Unbelievable,” Adam muttered as he extended a hand to help his brother out of the chair. “I’d planned to eat at Lauber’s, but German food tends to be hearty, so I doubt you can do justice to it at this point.”

“Try me,” Joe challenged with a grin.

The Cartwrights rode the monorail across Belmont ravine to Lauber’s. Since the weather was still pleasantly cool, they elected to dine in one of the open-air wings of the main restaurant, which had been floored and covered with canvas to
accommodate the crowds flocking in. The German restaurant, though located a long distance from the entrance to the Exposition, was easily the most popular on the grounds, primarily due to the rousing music of the band, which played from mid-morning to dark, the good food and the reasonable prices, especially the beer at only five cents a glass.

When Adam told his brother that he could only have one mug, though, Joe looked up with irritation. “Why? You haven’t stopped me before. Look if you’re still worried that I won’t eat enough—”

“No, it’s not that,” Adam said. “I’m thoroughly convinced that your leg is hollow. It’s because we’re going to the Brewers’ Building directly after this—free samples, little brother, of any kind of brew you might favor—and given your limited capacity for liquor . . .”

Joe grinned, well satisfied with that explanation. “Okay, that’s worth waiting for!”

After tucking away substantial amounts of sauerbraten, sausage, potatoes and cabbage, the Cartwright brothers re-crossed the ravine and made their way to the building whose roof supported a beer barrel, decorated with the flags of all nations. They entered from the south, where hop vines trailed along the front and a statue of King Gambrinus, the universal symbol of beer and brewing, greeted visitors.

Inside, a working brewery demonstrated the process of making beer, and throughout the building methods for steeping, germinating and drying malt were shown. There were models of malt houses and breweries, one showing how everything was done by hand in 1776 and another illustrating a modern brewery run by machinery. It was all too obvious, however, that Little Joe’s mind was so set on the free samples that he had no attention left over for learning how they were produced. Tossing aside all notions of any educational value to this
visit, Adam conducted a round-the-world drinking tour.

Following Adam’s advice to take only a small amount of each, Joe was able to sample many different types of lager. Although his already-crowded stomach began to protest halfway through the building, he persevered and managed to take a sip or two, at least, of every variety offered. Adam, who hadn’t abused his belly as extensively in Agricultural Hall, took slightly larger portions, but even he had to admit the hearty meal at the German restaurant had left little room for liquor.

“You know, I still favor that brew your old friend from Placerville makes,” Joe commented as they left the building, headed for nearby Agricultural Hall to pick up their purchases of the day.

“I think I do, too.” Adam put an arm around his brother’s shoulder as he confided, “Of course, in my case, it might be personal prejudice. Stefán Zuebner was someone I looked up to on the trail, especially the way he grew up almost overnight when his father died. I’m glad to see his dream come to such prosperous fruition.”

“If you mean you’re glad to see his business going good, I am, too,” Joe said enthusiastically, “and not just ‘cause I like his beer. I remember him showing me around the place when he first went into business. I was just a little kid, but he took the time to do that, and it made me feel real good.”

Adam nodded thoughtfully as they entered the building. Time, the greatest gift a man could give. He found himself wondering how generous he had been with that gift, especially with his younger brothers. Trying to look at himself through their eyes, he saw a man driven by responsibility, always pushing them to get the job done, when, maybe, they all should have been spending time just being together. Joe’s illness had forced him to give extra time and attention to the boy while they’d been back east, and his reward had been increased
closeness with the brother who had before been somewhat distant. Though he longed for home as much as Little Joe, Adam hated to see their time together come to an end. Maybe it didn’t have to, though; maybe, if he gave Joe—and the rest of his family, too, for that matter—the gift of time back home, the rewards might be even richer.

Purchases collected, the brothers caught the West End railcar outside Agricultural Hall, and as they rode back toward the entrance, Adam again mentioned that they would spend the next two days shopping for gifts and souvenirs. “Have you decided what you want to buy?” he queried.

“Everything except Pa’s Christmas present,” Joe replied.

“I thought you wanted to get him a timepiece.”

Joe sighed deeply. “Yeah, but I hate to buy him a cheap one, and I don’t have the money to do better, even with that extra advance, unless I short everyone else.”

Adam placed a hand on the back on his brother’s neck. “You suggested once that we go together to buy him a Swiss watch.”

“And you turned me down flat!” Joe snapped.

Adam ignored the display of temper, genuinely feeling that his own behavior had fueled it. “I know. Selfish of me. I’d like to do that now, if you’re still willing.”

“You don’t need my help,” Joe grunted, quoting his older brother’s previous statement. “You can buy Pa anything you want, same as always.”

“I could,” Adam admitted, “but I’d rather make it a joint gift. I think it’ll mean more to Pa that way. Please, Joe?”

A smile hovering on his lips, Joe looked up. “Us working together on something? Yeah, that would be the best gift we could give Pa.” The smile broadened to one of gratitude. “I
know you’re really doing this for me, more than for Pa, Adam, and I just want you to know I appreciate it.”

“You’re welcome, little brother, very welcome.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

Adam had just lowered the lid of the large trunk and was reaching for the latch when Joe called out, “Hey, wait! Got room for one more thing?”

Perturbed by his brother’s perennial procrastination, Adam glanced toward the bedroom door, through which Joe was hurrying toward him. “You do believe in waiting ‘til the last minute, don’t you, kid?” he grunted. “It had better be something small.”

“It is,” Joe said, handing his brother the morocco-bound copy of *Ivanhoe*, “and, yeah, I know it’s the last minute, but I was figuring to take it with me on the train, but then I decided I didn’t want to read it again this soon.”

“All right,” Adam said, slipping the book inside the trunk and closing the lid quickly, “but that had better be the last of it, little brother, ‘cause this thing is bulging at the joints now.”

“Yeah, we sure bought a lot, didn’t we?” Joe chuckled. With Adam’s help he’d stretched his pennies further than he’d thought possible, and the trunk was packed with souvenirs and gifts for both himself and folks back home. Adam, of course, had stuffed in a similar array of his own gifts and souvenirs, until one more item might really have been the straw that broke the backs of whoever had to lift it.

“We sure did,” Adam agreed as he locked the trunk. “There! That’s ready for shipment now. He stood up and made his way to the settee. “Come here, Joe,” he requested, patting the seat beside him. When his brother settled next to him, he
continued, “I’m going out for a while, to arrange for this trunk to be picked up and shipped home so we won’t have to worry about it on the train. Are you sure there’s nothing in there you’ll need on the trip?”

“Adam, of course, I am,” Joe replied with strained patience. His older brother’s admonitions on that subject had been, in his view, excessive already and downright annoying.

“Good. You can finish packing your carpetbag while I’m gone, but don’t lift it, understood?”

Another admonition Joe had already heard more times than he could count. “Yes, sir. No lifting, though I don’t see why. I’ll all better now.”

“Close to it,” Adam agreed, “but you do as I say—and to answer your next inevitable question, because I say so, that’s why.”

Joe rolled his eyes. Another thing he couldn’t count was the number of times he’d heard his older brother employ that tried and true answer, and he’d never yet been able to come up with an argument to counter that one stubborn statement.

Adam patted his shoulder. “There, there, little fellow. Big brother will relent and send you on an errand while he’s gone.”

Joe skewed a suspicious glance toward his brother. “Errand? Where?”

Adam’s lips twitched as he replied, “Shantyville.” Then he laughed aloud at the surprised expression on Joe’s face and explained further. “I’m going downtown, to close out our bank account and run a couple of errands. Why don’t you take that hamper Hop Sing sent and pack it full of whatever you think we might like to nibble on the train? I know how hard it is for you to make it from breakfast to dinner without an extra snack or seven.”
Joe scowled. “Very funny. I’ll be happy to run the errand for you, if you’re sure that hamper won’t be too heavy for your poor, weak little brother.”

“If it starts feeling heavy, quit putting things in it,” Adam suggested practically, as he handed his brother some folded bills, “but buy some extra sausage, if you can, for that other brother of ours.”

Joe grinned. “Yeah, he’ll like that. Too bad the pie won’t keep a week. He’d like that even better!”

“We’ll consume some in his honor,” Adam replied, standing up. “Wait ‘til Wells, Fargo picks up the trunk before you leave. Unless you dawdle, you’ll be back before me, and I would advise you to lie down for a while. We have a long, hard trip ahead of us, Joe, and it would be best if you began it well rested.”

Joe poked his tongue at the closed door to the suite after Adam departed. “‘It would be best if you began it well rested,’” he mimicked the advice he’d heard more than once already. Honestly! Here it was, five weeks since he’d had that operation—well, it would be tomorrow—and Adam was still treating him like some kind of weakling, barely able to heft a picnic hamper. After the men from Wells, Fargo had taken possession of the trunk, Joe left for Shantyville, determined to pack that hamper to its utmost capacity and engage in a little fun along the way.

Joe made his way from food stall to food stall, stopping here and there to play a game of chance, ending up just better than even by the time his hamper was brim full of sausage, caramels, peanuts, polished apples, cupcakes and two slices of raisin pie, all the pastry he thought the two of them could eat before it went stale. After that, he had another try at the shooting gallery, winning a few more Centennial souvenirs, and headed back to the hotel.
When he realized that Adam still hadn’t returned, a crafty smile curved Joe’s lips. There was one more thing he’d like to do, over at the Exposition grounds, an experience Adam had denied him and one curiosity—contrariness, Adam would have said—demanded he seek out. While they’d been shopping the last two days, a special exhibit had arrived at the Centennial, and both afternoons he and Adam had relaxed on the lawn near the lake just north of Machinery Hall to watch it being set up. As the twenty-one boxes were opened and the pieces put together, Adam had explained that this was only part of a statue being presented to America as a gift from France, to commemorate the country’s one-hundredth birthday. When it was assembled, the forearm, wrist and hand holding aloft a giant, flaming torch, towered thirty feet above them. “On completion,” Adam had told him, “the statue will stand on an island in New York harbor. They’re taking donations here for its pedestal.”

Learning that there were stairs inside, leading up to the base of the torch, Little Joe had begged to climb up, but Adam had pointedly refused. “You don’t need to be climbing that many stairs,” he’d insisted and had dragged a protesting Joe away. But Adam wasn’t here to stop him now, and Joe had the price of an entrance ticket in his pocket, as well as the fifty cents he’d need for admittance to the stairway. Pausing on the hotel porch, he craned his neck both ways, and seeing no sign of Brother Hen, he skittered across Elm Avenue, paid for a ticket and went through the turnstile of the Centennial one last time.

When he saw the long line of people waiting to ascend Lady Liberty’s arm, however, Joe almost gave up the notion of a climb. There was no shelter from the scorching sun, and this long a wait almost insured that Adam would return to the hotel before he could get back. A mischievous grin twisted Joe’s mouth. Adam had already provided him with an alibi when he’d said that Joe would be back before him “unless you dawdle.”
That he had dawdled would be perfectly believable and lightly excused. Joe tipped his straw hat to give his nose more protection from the sun and gazed up at the dark brown, almost black, arm of copper and tried to judge how tall the entire statue would be.

He’d been standing in line about half an hour and still was about twenty feet from the head of the line when iron fingers gripped his upper arm and Joe felt himself hauled out of the line. Angered, he looked up, ready to lambaste the stranger who had treated him with such indignity—and found himself staring directly into the snapping ebony eyes of his elder brother. “A-Adam, wh-what are you doing here?”

“What am I doing here?” Adam exploded. “What are you doing here?”

Joe winced. Talking himself out of this one would be hard, but he had to try. “Uh, Adam, I-I can explain.”

“Uh-huh,” Adam muttered, stepping back and folding his arms. “All right, little brother; give it your best shot.”

Joe gulped. The dawdling excuse wouldn’t work now, and having counted on that one, he had to scramble for another alternative. “Well, it’s—uh—like this, Adam. I filled that hamper, just like you said, and took it to the room and you weren’t back yet—and then I thought of something else we really ought to put in it—for Hoss, that is—some—uh—popcorn balls. Yeah, that’s it; I had the money, so I came on over here for some of those special red, white and blue popcorn balls.”

“For Hoss,” Adam said dryly.

“Yeah!” Joe’s momentary hope that Adam was buying this cock-and-bull yarn evaporated under his older brother’s stern and skeptical gaze.
Adam stretched a long arm toward the ticket booth at the head of the line in which Joe had been standing. “And you mistook that for a popcorn stand, did you?” he demanded tersely.

Joe quirked half a grin, which faded quickly when Adam continued to glower at him. “It don’t wash, do it?”

“No, it ‘don’t,’” Adam drawled.

“Doesn’t, I meant ‘doesn’t,’” Joe corrected himself quickly.

Adam’s mouth worked from side to side. “I’m not interested in your grammar.”

Joe cringed. Adam not interested in grammar—bad sign. He shrugged sheepishly. “Okay, you caught me. Guess there ain’t no sense tryin’ to deny I was gonna climb up that gal’s arm.”

“After I said no,” Adam accused.

“Aww, doggone it, Adam!” Joe protested. “You had no call to say no. I’m just about back to normal and—”

“That you are!” Adam snorted. “Lying, sneaking out, disobeying—yeah, I’d call that back to normal, all right!”

“Aww, come on, Adam!” Joe’s eyes suddenly narrowed. “Hey, wait just a doggone minute. Maybe all that’s true, but you ain’t exactly where you said you’d be, either. You’re supposed to be downtown, so just what were you sneakin’ over here for, huh?” Trying to copy Adam’s stance, he folded his arms and scowled severely at his older brother. “Give it your best shot, older brother.”

As a crimson flush crept up his neck, Adam licked his lips. He could, of course, simply stand on status and tell Joe that he didn’t have to answer to his baby brother, but a response like that would only take them back to the belligerent antagonism that had so long marked their relationship. Adam didn’t want that, but neither was he prepared to tell Joe that
he had snuck over to the Centennial to pick up an extra Christmas gift for his youngest brother without his knowledge. That wasn’t the full truth, anyway; otherwise, he’d have been in the Main Exhibition Hall, instead of here by the lake. He had wanted to go up that arm himself, to examine the engineering from the inside, and had thought this afternoon presented the perfect opportunity to do so without tempting Joe to make a climb that might prove too rigorous for him. “Okay, you caught me,” he sighed. “I’m after the same thing you are.”

Joe rested a conciliatory hand on his brother’s shoulder. “Let’s go up together then, Adam.”

Adam shook his head, in defeat, rather than denial. “Joe, it’s a thirty- to thirty-five-foot climb,” he argued weakly.

Joe’s grip tightened. “I can do it, Adam! And if I’m tired afterwards, I’ll just go back to the hotel and lie down.”

“Oh, you’re gonna do that anyway!” Adam declared.

“Yes, sir, whatever you say, sir.” Joe aimed his most submissive smile at his older brother, as always the picture of cooperation once he was sure of getting his own way.

Adam shook his head and led the way to the back of the line, where they endured a wait of forty-five minutes under a sweltering sun. As he had predicted, Joe found the steady climbing difficult, and they had to pause to rest twice on the way up the stairs. Adam took advantage of those breaks to give the statue’s inner structure closer scrutiny. They finally reached the top and walked to the edge of the torch to look out over the roofs below them. “Well, was it worth it?” Adam asked, resting his hand against Joe’s back to feel for himself how hard the kid was breathing.

Winded, Joe only smiled at first. Then, taking a deep breath, he admitted, “Sawyer’s Observatory had a better view, but once
this lady stands at her full height in New York harbor, I’ll bet you could see clear to Lake Tahoe.”

Adam laughed. “I think that’s a slight exaggeration, but it will be quite a view.” His arm slipped around his brother’s waist. “Maybe we’ll see it someday, Joe.”

Joe grinned back. “Maybe we will, Adam; maybe we just will.”

After giving Joe ample time to catch his breath, the two brothers descended. Adam stopped at the booth below long enough to make a donation to the raising of the statue, and then he and Joe moved toward the exit, pausing at the fountain designed by Bartholdi, who was also the sculptor of the statue they’d just climbed. “Maybe I should go in and get those popcorn balls for Hoss,” Joe suggested, pointing toward Machinery Hall. “He really would like them.”

“You get back to the room and lie down,” Adam ordered. “I’ll get the popcorn.”

“Okay,” Joe agreed willingly. “I am kind of tired.”

“Can you make it back alone?” Adam asked, lifting Joe’s chin to force the boy to meet his eyes.

“Sure. I’m fine, Adam, just tired,” Joe insisted. “Don’t worry so.”

“Okay. Off with you.” Adam waved his brother toward the exit, but he stayed by the fountain, watching, until Joe was out of sight. Then he moved toward the Main Exhibition Hall. He could find those popcorn balls just as easily in there, along with the Christmas gift he’d decided on for Joe, one of those gaucho hats from the Argentine Republic. The little peacock had displayed an appreciation for a wide array of headgear of late, so Adam was sure he’d made the right choice. He had no difficulty sneaking the bandbox into the hotel suite, for Joe was sound asleep when he came in.
As evening shadows lengthened, the Cartwright brothers took one last ride down the Schuylkill River for a final taste of catfish and coffee at the Falls of the Wissahickon. Returning, they both retired early, for the train that would take them toward home would leave at eight o’clock the next morning.

* * * * *

“No, take the window seat,” Adam urged when his younger brother started to sit next to the aisle.

“Thanks,” Joe said, moving over with a smile. He couldn’t help reflecting on how differently the trip west was starting out from the way their journey east had begun. Though Joe considered himself fully recovered, Adam had continued to show him every consideration, and Joe had decided to give up feeling insulted by the extra attention and to just relax and enjoy it.

“Do you want your book before I put up your bag?” Adam inquired after stowing his own carpetbag in the overhead storage area.

“Maybe this afternoon,” Joe said. Yesterday evening Adam had presented him with a new copy of Moby Dick, its binding identical to that of Ivanhoe, but Joe wanted to save the book for later, when he grew tired of gazing out the window. After all, he had a week’s travel ahead of him and, therefore, plenty of time to read.

For the time being, however, he was content to watch the scenery slide by, even though, in the beginning, the sights were familiar ones: the broad curve of the Schuylkill River, the water falling over the dam at the Fairmount Water Works, the snow-white marble columns of Girard College and, as the tracks curved west, the Centennial Exposition, whose broad avenues had become as well-known to him as the streets of Virginia City.
Twenty miles from Philadelphia they passed through Paoli, descending a hill into a pastoral limestone valley. Traveling along its southern boundary for another twenty miles, Joe smiled at the high, timber-rich hills on either side of the two-mile-wide valley and thought of the pine-covered hills of home. Hundreds of farms, rich with golden grain, tawny-tasseled corn and verdant timothy and clover lined the tracks through the fertile valley of Chester County. Occasionally, Adam would point out a spot of historic significance, such as the crossing of Brandywine Creek, near where Cornwallis had defeated Washington.

The train soon passed through Downington and then a number of small towns, stopping for water at Parkesburg, forty-five miles from Philadelphia. “Mind if I stretch my legs?” Joe asked.

Adam looked up from that morning’s edition of Philadelphia’s Public Ledger. “Just don’t get left,” he teased.

Joe rolled his eyes, stood up and moved past Adam into the aisle. Knowing that the train wouldn’t be here long, he kept the distinctive Tuscan red and cream cars of the Pennsylvania line in sight as he moved down the platform. There weren’t many sights to see here—a large hotel, some machine shops, a few residences and stores further back from the tracks—but it was mostly air and exercise Joe wanted. He knew it was much too early in the journey to be this restless, but every mile was taking him closer to home, closer to Pa, and he couldn’t restrain the anticipation that bubbled up inside whenever he pictured that best-loved of all faces.

Hearing the train whistle, Joe hurried back onto the train and scrambled over Adam’s long legs into his seat again as the wheels started turning. The tracks ran into Lancaster County and passed through an opening in a hill to begin its descent into another valley. “Mostly German settlers here,” Adam commented as the train rumbled through Lancaster itself, with
its anthracite furnaces, cotton factories and locomotive works.

Joe nodded, although the information had little personal meaning to him. As the train stopped briefly in Middletown, at the mouth of the Susquehanna River, however, Adam said something that made his brother’s ears prick up. “Just nine miles to Harrisburg. We’ll be getting off there.”

“Why?” Joe demanded. “You’re not gonna drag this trip out the way you did the one from New Haven to New York, are you? We’ll never get home!”

“Relax,” Adam said, brushing his hand through Joe’s chestnut curls. “Just this one side trip. We’ll leave Harrisburg tomorrow, and I promise we’ll travel steadily after that, except for a brief layover in Chicago.”

“Well, okay,” Joe muttered, still slightly disgruntled, “but what’s in Harrisburg?”

“Not a thing,” Adam chuckled.

“Adam!”

“We’re not staying in Harrisburg,” Adam explained with another conciliatory tousle of those tempting curls. “We’ll just eat dinner there and then transfer to another railroad—to Gettysburg.”

Joe drew in a sharp rush of air and let it out slowly. “Adam, are you sure?” he asked softly. “I mean, you don’t have to do that, if it’s just for me.”

“It’s for both of us,” Adam said, his hand sliding down to Joe’s shoulder. “I need to be there again, Joe, to turn the memories loose and leave them there to rest—and I need you by my side while I do that. Will you help me, little brother?”

Joe choked back the lump rising in his throat. “You know I
The Pennsylvania Central rolled into Harrisburg just past noon, and the Cartwright brothers disembarked, with Adam taking charge of the two carpetbags and Joe handling the hamper, whose contents thus far remained intact. After inquiring of the station master the name and location of a good hotel, Adam led the way to the Jones House, which had been described to him as centrally located and well ordered. Eschewing luxury for an overnight stay, he checked into a single room with two beds; then he and Joe headed downstairs to dinner.

After a satisfactory meal, the two Cartwrights boarded the Northern Central Railroad and traveled about forty miles to Hanover Junction, where another transfer was required. After a layover of an hour, another train took them the final thirty miles to Gettysburg, but each turn of the wheels along the metal rails seemed to bring an added line of tension to Adam’s brow. Little Joe longed to reach out, to take part of the load, but he didn’t know how. His older brother seemed to be steeling himself for the onslaught of painful memories, and Joe didn’t dare intrude.

Leaving the train, Adam went immediately to a nearby livery to rent a buggy, for though the battlefield wasn’t far from town, he was still concerned—perhaps needlessly, he conceded—about overtiring his younger brother. He drove south, down the Taneytown Road for about two miles, where he reined in the horses and turned to Joe. “Think you could make it up that ridge?” he asked, pointing to the rising eminence just to the west.

“Of course,” Joe scoffed. “It’s just a little hill.”

“Yeah,” Adam muttered as he stepped down and moved around to help Joe down.

Discerning that intent, Joe quickly jumped from the buggy, an
action that earned him a glowering rebuke from his older brother. Adam took him firmly by the elbow, and together they climbed the slope to its top. Gazing down at the farmland below, Adam gasped at the unexpected serenity of the pastoral scene. While he knew that the images that haunted him were phantoms, he had almost expected to top that rise and see the fields below still strewn with bloated bodies as they had been those three horrendous days in July of 1863. But all traces of the battle were gone; the countryside was beautiful again, beautiful and at peace.

“I wasn’t here the first day,” he said softly, gazing at the ridge on the other side of the valley, whose dark woods had once sheltered an opposing army. “Our regiment was among the last to leave the Rappahannock River, and we were taking our time, moving along leisurely, never dreaming that a battle had already started up ahead. When we found out, we hurried forward, took our assigned position on this ridge and worked ‘til about midnight, throwing up entrenchments from whatever rocks and wood we could find, mostly fence rails—and then the waiting began, the long, weary waiting.”

Adam halted and closed his eyes, as if trying to shut out the memories rushing toward him. Only when a strong, young hand came to rest on his shoulder was he able to open his eyes and continue. “Waiting—we spent most of our time waiting, it seemed, the whole nine months I was enlisted. You’d have thought we’d be used to it by then, but somehow this waiting seemed harder than all that had gone before it. We knew Robert E. Lee was out there, with the whole Confederate Army of Virginia, but we didn’t dare attack. We had the high ground, and we’d learned at Fredericksburg just how important that was. So we waited for him to come to us. That was General Meade’s plan, at least, but one man changed all that, one man who wouldn’t obey orders.”

Joe held his breath, from the gravity in his brother’s voice, fearful for a moment that Adam was going to say that he had
been that man, but Adam almost immediately said, “General Sickles. He had his reasons, I suppose, for leaving his position, but that one mistake set the stage for the horror that followed. Sickles’ men got too far in front, and when the Confederates finally attacked about four o’clock that afternoon, those soldiers were alone down in that wheat field, outnumbered two to one, and they were being mowed down like grain before an relentless scythe. Someone had to help them, and my division was elected.”

A shudder passed through his body, and the hand on his shoulder tightened, in an attempt to transfuse the strength of the younger into the older brother. His somber attitude momentarily lightened by recognition of the reversal of their normal roles, Adam turned toward Joe and smiled briefly, but his face grew grim as he took a deep breath and again began to speak. “It was the hardest fighting I ever endured, down there in that field of ripening wheat—golden grain, soon dappled with crimson. “Do you know what it’s like, Joe, to have minié balls hurtling toward you by the hundreds, with nothing to stop them but slim stalks of wheat?”

“No,” Joe whispered. “How’d you ever come through it, Adam?”

Adam shrugged. “Pa would say ‘by the grace of God,’ and I don’t have a better answer, though I know that some who died deserved life as much or more than me.” He glanced at his brother. “I honestly don’t know, Joe. It was mass confusion down there—smoke from gunfire so thick you couldn’t see, roar of the fusillade so loud you couldn’t hear, bodies falling all around me, bullets flying from every direction, men running pell-mell to the rear.”

“But you didn’t run,” Joe said confidently.

“No.” There was no pride in Adam’s voice as he said the word, however, and something more akin to regret as he continued. “No, I fought, fired my rifle ‘til I ran out of ammunition,
and then fixed the bayonet, as our brigade commander ordered, and just kept going.” He scrubbed his hand along his jaw. “I’d never done that before, always considered myself too civilized to ram a blade into a man, but we were all a little uncivilized that afternoon.” He gave a short, harsh laugh. “You’ll never know how many times I wanted to rip that fool epee out of your hands when I’d catch you playing with it.”

“As I recall, you did a few times,” Joe said softly, quirking a half-smile.

Face taut, Adam nodded. “And as I recall, I usually ended up getting a lecture from Pa about who the father in the family was, but Pa just didn’t understand and I couldn’t bring myself to tell him. Every time I saw you stabbing the air with that monkey pick, I felt sick to my stomach, just the way I’d felt each time I thrust my bayonet into the unresisting flesh of another human being.”

Joe touched his head to his brother’s upper arm. “Adam, don’t,” he pleaded urgently.

“You wanted to know what it was like, remember?” Adam accused bitterly. “Did you think it was grand and glorious adventures I was keeping from you, boy?”

“No. I—I don’t know. I don’t know what I thought, Adam,” Joe floundered, taking a step back. “I’m sorry I pestered you to death about it, but I just didn’t think it was as bad as that. Don’t go on. I hate seein’ you hurt like this, Adam. We shouldn’t have come.”

Adam gazed out over the former battlefield. “No, I’m glad we did. Look at it, Joe, that green field down there, that fruitful peach orchard off to the south. That’s the way it looked that morning when the sun painted rosy tips on the waving wheat. By the time we left it that evening, the crops were trampled flat, the stalks of grain tinged a ghastlier red, and there would be no harvest that year except the one
that lay rotting across that ruined field. All that night we heard the groans and cries for help, wounded men screaming for a drink of water in the sultry summer heat that not even darkness cooled down much. I got to as many as I could, but it was impossible in the darkness to help many, especially with snipers from both sides shooting at anything that moved, so all night long we listened to those cries of anguish. Even after I mustered out and returned to Yale, I could hear them in my dreams—my men, out there . . . dying.”

“Adam, don’t. Please.” An earnest plea.

He turned to see Joe, tears shimmering in the expressive eyes, and instantly became the older brother again, anxious to comfort the younger, and in doing so found comfort himself. “But look, Joe,” he urged, his right arm coming around his brother’s trim waist. He swept his other arm down toward the fertile pastureland. “The nightmare is over: the day did dawn again; the fields were planted anew; the peach trees blossomed once more. There’s life again in this place, not just the death I remember. The land is whole again—and so, I think, am I.”

Joe looked down at the field and then up into his brother’s eyes, and a smile trembled on his lips. “I’m glad, Adam,” he said simply, “but I thought you said you didn’t do much fighting here. Sounds to me like you did.”

“You mean when we were discussing Rothermel’s painting?” Adam asked. “That depicts the assault on the third day, and what I said was that the main thrust didn’t come toward my regiment. General Pickett aimed his charge toward that grove over there”—he pointed to a small cluster of trees just north of where they were standing—“but, of course, we fought that day, too—not as hard as the day before, when we were in the thick of it, but, ironically, the third day is the one I was wounded.” He glanced at Joe. “I suppose Pa kept that from you, too.”
“Like everything,” Joe grunted.

“Joe, you were six,” Adam said, obviously considering that reason irrefutable.

Joe didn’t argue this time. “You ready to go?” he asked.

Adam nodded. “I’d like to stop by the National Cemetery; then we’ll head back to town.”

Joe accepted Adam’s assistance as they moved down the ridge, back to the buggy, and even, for Adam’s sake, let his older brother hand him up into the vehicle. Then Adam turned the buggy around and headed back up the Taneytown Road toward the cemetery. They halted outside the arched stone entrance, inscribed with the names of the eighteen states that had fought at Gettysburg. Leaving the buggy, they walked down the manicured path to the very center of the graveyard, where a tall marble monument stood in the midst of concentric circles of small, flat headstones.

“It didn’t look like this when I was here before,” Adam said softly. “We spent the Fourth of July that year burying the bodies where they fell, mostly in shallow graves.”

“Some celebration,” Joe murmured sympathetically.

Adam ran his palm across his brother’s shoulder blades. “Yeah, but I guess just living through the battle was celebration enough for most of us. More people died here than in any battle of the Civil War, Joe—around fifty-three thousand, from both sides—and we didn’t have time to give them a proper burial, just scooped out a shallow grave and covered them as best we could. The first rain washed the earth away, and arms and legs started sticking up, like some grim crop planted haphazardly wherever the seed fell. Later, the hogs got at the bodies and”—he broke off, and for a moment his eyes glazed over, his shoulders slumped and his hand fell to his side.
Joe slipped his hand into that of his older brother. “You saw that?”

Licking his lower lip, Adam nodded. “When I came for the dedication, the work of digging up the bodies and reburying them in the cemetery was only about a third done. Up here on the hill it didn’t look so bad, but down there”—he turned to gaze toward the lowland where he had once fought in a field of golden grain—“you could still see the half-covered bodies. I tried not to look, but”—again words failed him.

Joe squeezed his hand. “I understand. It’s the kind of thing that pulls at you ‘til you have to look.”

“Yeah.” A whisper, barely audible.

Joe deliberately turned his brother back toward the concentric circles of headstones. “They’re at peace now, Adam, in the prettiest spot I’ve ever seen for a final resting place—except the one where my mother’s buried.”

Adam smiled softly. “Nothing could be as fine as that, but it is nice, isn’t it?”

“It sure is. You wanna look for anyone in particular?”

Adam glanced back at his brother. “Yeah, I think I’d like to say a final farewell to my men.”

The search was a brief one, for the soldiers from each state were buried together, and Connecticut’s section was located in the innermost circle, where the Cartwright brothers began. Adam, with Joe close behind him, moved from stone to stone, searching for familiar names. From time to time, he would pause for a moment to gaze solemnly at a stone with “27th Connecticut” written on it and then move on. When he came to one headstone, however, his knees buckled and he collapsed to the ground. From that reverent position, he reached out to touch the cool, gray stone.
Joe squatted at his side and read the name silently. “One of your men?”

Blinking back tears, Adam nodded, and he stroked the gravestone as if the man lying beneath it could feel his tender touch. “One of the best.” He looked up, scarcely seeing the cottony clouds floating in a clear, blue sky above the shiny green canopy of the trees. “To me, that’s the most tragic part of that awful struggle. We didn’t lose the worst among us, Joe; we lost the best, the bravest and brightest. This boy, so artistic, so talented; you might have seen his work at Memorial Hall had he lived.” The tears broke through the barrier of his blinking eyelids and began to spill down his face as he whispered through quivering lips. “Inventors, teachers, future statesmen, the ones who would have made the greatest impact on the world—that’s what we lost, Joe, what we stole from each other, for this was a war, not with some foreign foe, but between brothers.” He swiped the tears from his cheeks, but once the dam was broken, there seemed to be no stemming the long-restrained flood. His back began to heave, as sobs were wrenched from his throat and poured out into the quiet air of the graveyard.

Joe reached out and, pulling Adam into his arms, began to rock him back and forth, as if his older brother were a small child. “It’s all right, Adam,” he whispered again and again. “It’s all right.” Then, recalling words that had been spoken by the man now sobbing in his arms to a child who had just lost his mother, he murmured, “Let it out, Adam; let it all out.” And throwing himself into his brother’s embrace, Adam did.

The storm passed, the sobbing slowed, and the tears trickled to a stop. Adam looked up into the surprisingly gentle face of his younger brother. “Thank you,” he whispered.

Not sure what to say, Joe just nodded and helped his brother to his feet. “Time to go,” he suggested. “Wouldn’t want to
miss our train.”

“There’s time,” Adam said, “but I’m ready to leave.” Walking back toward the gateway, he paused at the monument to Liberty at the cemetery’s center. “This stands where Abraham Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address.”

“And you heard it,” Joe said with awe.

“Yes,” Adam replied, his awe almost as great. “Edward Everett, one of the finest orators in the country, was the main speaker that day, and he gave a wonderful speech, full of historic significance and inspiration. Two hours of stirring words from a silver tongue, but it couldn’t compare with the impact Lincoln achieved in just two minutes.”

“We had to learn it in school,” Joe said. He flashed a quick grin at his brother. “One of the few times I didn’t mind doing memory work.” Gazing up at the monument, his face grew sober, and he began to quote softly, “Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” His eyes dropped to the battlefield spreading out to the south, and though he’d never seen it except through his brother’s eyes, he seemed to visualize the armies of blue and gray clashing against one another. “Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met here on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.”

Joe turned back toward the concentric circles of headstones, and as he felt his brother’s arm come supportively around him, he went on, sensing that for both of them it was a moment of healing. “But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate—we cannot
consecrate—we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living”–he smiled up, gratefully, at the man who had lived through the struggle and then his gaze rested on the three thousand or so sleeping beneath the sod—“and dead, who struggled, here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but can never forget what they did here.”

He took his brother’s hand and held it, making the final words a pledge. “It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they have, thus far, so nobly carried on. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom; and that this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

“Amen,” Adam murmured, feeling his chest swell. He looked out over the graves of his fallen comrades and then back to the emotive face of one for whom they had fought. “I was wrong, you know,” he said softly, his eyes focused on his brother. “We didn’t lose all our best.”

Joe looked steadfastly into his brother’s face. “No, we didn’t. The best, the very best man on that field, is still here.”

Adam chuckled, touched by the sentiment, but amused by Joe’s typical excess. “Come on, little brother. Time for a cup of coffee before our train pulls in.”

“And maybe a piece of pie?” Joe hinted with a grin as they walked out of the cemetery.

Adam laughed. “Are you sure you’re not Hoss?”
The joke carried no sting at all this time. “Yeah, big brother, I’m sure. He don’t eat as much as me.”

Adam clapped the younger boy on the back. “I’m beginning to believe it!”

~ ~ Historical Notes ~ ~

Historical sources differ on the date of arrival in Philadelphia of the arm and hand of what would later be known as the Statue of Liberty. Most place the time in mid to late August, with one source giving a date as late as September 1, 1876. By any estimate the statue probably arrived slightly past the time of the Cartwright brothers’ visit, but it has been included here for added educational information and interest. Dark in color when first constructed, the statue has weathered to a beautiful green patina over time. While Bartholdi’s great statue was intended as a gift for America’s Centennial, it was not actually completed and erected on Bedloe’s Island in New York harbor until ten years later.

More than one version exists of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. The words quoted in this chapter come from the Hay Version, chosen because it seemed closest to the way I memorized the Address as a child.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

Little Joe dug into Hop Sing’s picnic hamper for a link of sausage and an apple. Since the west-bound train of the Pennsylvania Railroad hadn’t left Harrisburg until noon, he had awakened quite late and, having eaten a late breakfast, he had insisted that he wasn’t hungry when Adam suggested that they eat before boarding. True to form, he had become ravenous the minute the wheels started to roll.

Sitting once again at the window of the railcar, Joe nibbled
on the end of the sausage and watched the crazy-quilt patchwork of green and red beyond the river, as fields of growing crops alternated irregularly with the bare red shale of those already harvested. At the far side of the cultivated fields, mountains of sandstone framed the pastoral panorama.

“Is there enough in that basket to hold you ‘til Altoona?” Adam teased. “I believe that’s where we stop for supper.”

“Very funny,” Joe snorted. “This is all I’m eating ‘til then.”

“No, no, eat up, little brother,” Adam urged playfully. “Fill up now and spare my pocketbook the price of another meal.”

Joe smiled smugly. “Not a chance.” By the time the train had crossed Little Buffalo Creek over a five-span stone aqueduct, he’d finished his light lunch, and when the train pulled into Newport, where the tributary emptied into the mouth of the Juniata River, Joe had decided that the scenery, while still lovely, wasn’t changing much from one mile to the next. “Can I have my book, please?” he asked his brother. He would have hopped up to get it himself, except that Adam was still strictly forbidding him to do any lifting.

“You may, yes,” Adam said. Standing up, he took Joe’s carpetbag down from its overhead storage, removed his copy of Moby Dick and returned the bag.

Joe opened the book, which he had started the previous night after supper, and began to read, glancing out the window from time to time to make sure he wasn’t missing anything of interest. Sometime later the light through the open window abruptly dimmed, and Joe instinctively looked up to investigate the cause.

“It’s just a passage between two mountains, called the Long Narrows,” Adam said, shutting his own book. “It only lasts a few miles, but you shouldn’t try to read in this low light.”
Joe shrugged and closed *Moby Dick*. “How far you figure we’ve come?”

Adam chuckled. “Fifty-five to sixty miles, I’d guess. Long way to go yet.”

“I know that,” Joe snorted with a toss of his curly head. “Still almost a week from home.”

“I meant to Altoona,” Adam said dryly, and Joe supplied him with the groan he had expected and angled for.

Exiting from the Long Narrows, they came into Lewistown at the west end. “Nice country around here,” Adam commented as the train rattled through a fertile valley, “and the home of an old friend of yours.”

“Mine?” Joe looked perplexed. “I don’t have any friends back east.”

“Remember Logan?” Adam asked with a smile. He could well remember how entranced his younger brother had been with stories of the Mingo chief. Like Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, Logan’s appeal to the white man for mercy for his people had been words the youngster willingly memorized.

Joe smiled, too, in nostalgic recollection. “Yeah, I remember him. This is his land, huh?”

“And a fine one, as I said. Lots of caves full of stalactites to explore and streams jumping with trout.”

“Umm, sounds good,” Joe murmured dreamily. “Any chance of getting some trout at Altoona?”

“Good possibility.”

The river made a horseshoe bend, and at its western side the rails crossed the Juniata over a bridge seventy feet above the water and then entered a gap in a mountain almost bare of
vegetation, covered, instead, with massive gray boulders. The tracks followed the course of the river for many miles until, leaving its deep gorge, they entered Tuckahoe Valley to run almost dead center through fifteen miles with rich limestone land on the southern side and clay soil to the north. “Coal country,” Adam said, pointing toward the nearby Allegheny Mountains. “Next stop, Altoona.”

“Hey, great!” Joe cried. “Sure hope they have some fresh mountain trout fried up.”

The supper stop was a short one, but in the time allotted by the railroad, both brothers managed to gobble down crispy, crumb-coated trout, fried to golden perfection, with corn on the cob, slathered with melted butter, savorily seasoned greens and a tall glass of iced tea. Leaving Altoona, the rails began to ascend the Allegheny Mountains, and until daylight started to fade, Adam and Joe enjoyed the scenic splendor of the type of country they loved best.

Catching Joe yawning, Adam suggested that they have their berths made up and turn in. Darkness and motion having made him quite groggy, Joe agreed, and soon both brothers were snoring softly as the wheels continued to roll through the Pennsylvania countryside. Around ten o’clock Adam roused briefly and made a trip down to the water closet at the end of the car. Peering out the window beside a vacant seat, he noticed the gaslights of a large city and realized they were passing through Pittsburgh, technically the terminus of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Their sleeping car, however, would continue through to Chicago, though it would be past noon of the next day before it arrived in that hub, where they’d need to transfer to another rail line.

* * * * *

“Does it not meet with your approval?” Adam inquired with an arched eyebrow. He had just set the carpetbags inside their
suite at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Chicago and looked up to find a perturbed frown on his young brother’s face.

“You didn’t have to rent us the most expensive room in the place,” Joe grunted. “We could’ve shared a room, like we did at Harrisburg. We’re just here overnight.”

Adam shrugged. “So I want one more night of luxury before I resign myself to a Pullman berth for five days. What’s that to you? It’s my money.”

“I know why you did it!” Joe snapped. “The three-dollar rooms are upstairs, and you don’t want me climbing. Well, I got news for you, big brother. My bed at home is upstairs, so I’m gonna have to climb those just a few days from now!”

Arms folded, Adam leaned back against the nearest wall and regarded his younger brother with mild amusement. “Oh, I don’t know. I could probably persuade Hoss to carry his poor, weak baby brother up those stairs.”

“Adam,” Joe growled in slow warning.

Adam laughed. “All right, all right, guilty as charged. You are sturdier than I thought you might be when I telegraphed from Philadelphia for this reservation, but I didn’t rent a first-floor room just to spare your feeble limbs. I want a long, lazy soak in a tub tonight, and this room provides that, as well as a private water closet. Don’t even try telling me you don’t appreciate that convenience.”

Ill temper fading away, Joe smiled. “No, and that long, lazy soak sounds good, too. Okay, older brother, one more night of luxury.”

“Do you want a late dinner or an early supper?” Adam inquired. The train had reached Chicago at one o’clock that afternoon, and it was now half-past that hour, later than they generally ate the midday meal.
“Early supper, I guess,” Joe said, throwing himself down on the plush settee, upholstered in dark brown brocade with narrow olive-green stripes. “I ate some stuff on the train.”

Adam nodded. “That’s what I figured. Stretch out and relax awhile, then, kid. I’m gonna do the same, and in an hour or so, I’ll take you down to see the stockyards, if you’re interested.”

“Yeah, I’ve heard they’re some kind of sight,” Joe said, lying down. Within minutes he had nodded off, but Adam wasn’t there to see it, for he was also asleep, sprawled on the top of the bed in his room.

Refreshed by a half-hour’s nap, Adam came out of his room to chuckle at the sight of his still-slumbering brother. From the sweet smile on Joe’s face, it was obvious his dreams were pleasant ones, and Adam hated to wake him. It was necessary, however, if they were to make the planned excursion without putting their supper too late. Since they had to be up early to catch the morning train to Omaha, Adam would be insisting that they retire early, and that left little enough time for a bit of sightseeing, supper and that long, lazy soak they both wanted.

Not pleased at first to desert the lovely redhead he’d been kissing in his dreams, Joe rebounded quickly when reminded of the trip to the Union Stockyards. Half an hour from the center of Chicago, the stockyards were a veritable city built for cattle, complete with streets, sewers and gaslights. The “city” had its own bank and exchange, telegraph and post offices and a newspaper, as well as a hotel for drovers and cattle owners. The place was immense: fifteen hundred open pens, heavily fenced with double plank; one hundred acres of pens for cattle, all floored with three-inch planks; and eight hundred covered sheds for sheep and hogs. “And I thought the Ponderosa raised a lot of beef!” Joe cried as he and Adam stood gazing out over the herds that seemed to extend to the
horizon. “I’ve never seen so many steers in one place before.”

“Yeah, it’s quite a place,” Adam agreed, “but you never know, Joe; some of those cattle out there just might carry the Ponderosa brand.”

Joe grinned. Though he knew the Ponderosa shipped cattle east, he didn’t think it likely at this time of year that any stock with a pine tree burned into their rumps were roaming around in those open pens. Still, it was a pleasant image and one that made him all the more nostalgic about seeing that brand again soon.

Returning to the six-story Grand Pacific, the Cartwright brothers freshened up. Watching his younger brother comb out his shaggy locks, Adam shook his head. “You need a haircut in the worst way.”

“Can’t,” Joe tossed back. “No barber shops open on Sunday.”

“Oh, and I can see how torn up you are about that!” Adam hooted. “Pa’s likely to start spouting his Mississippi-riverboat-gambler speech when he gets a gander at you, though, buddy.”

Joe caressed the curls framing his ears. “Yeah, I reckon, but let’s not cross that bridge ‘til we come to it, okay, older brother?”

“Okay,” Adam agreed. “Now, will you quit preening in front of that mirror? I’m famished.”

Joe gave his reflection a good squint and decided to quit tampering with perfection. He laid down the comb and walked with Adam across the lobby to the hotel’s magnificent dining room, a well-lighted hall decorated with stunning frescoes and gilding. As they ate with relish the superb meal, Adam observed that it was a good thing they were only spending one
night here. “A week of this would be enough to ruin a man’s digestion for life!”

Laughingly, Joe agreed, but he continued to pack away food as though trying to ruin his digestion in a single night. “Food’s great, all right. Is that why you wanted to lay over in Chicago? I mean, we could’ve gone straight on today, couldn’t we?”

“We could have,” Adam answered, “but only the morning train to Omaha carries sleeping cars, and since the trip takes twenty-one and a half hours . . .”

“Oh. Good thinking,” Joe said, pushing back his plate. “Now, what should we have for dessert?”

Adam simply rolled his eyes.

* * * * *

“A Pullman palace?” Joe almost squealed with delight when his brother directed him into the parlor car at the extreme rear of the train that would be their home until they reached Ogden. “Aw, Adam, you didn’t have to do that. It’s awful expensive.”

“Didn’t have to, wanted to. It’ll be a more restful journey this way, something we can both use,” Adam replied, hanging his hat on the hook on the wall and taking one of the two cushioned armchairs. “Besides, I figure Pa won’t mind shelling out an extra seventeen dollars for his baby son’s comfort, though I expect to pay for my own.”

“Seventeen? That much?” Joe whistled.

“Including the silver palace car from Ogden to Reno, yes,” Adam answered. “We’re going in style all the way, little brother.”

Joe hung up his hat, plopped down in the comfortable armchair
across from Adam and gazed around the enclosed apartment with satisfaction. Except for a narrow passage, their parlor extended the width of the railcar and was as elegantly appointed as any of the hotel rooms at which they’d stayed during their trip. French plate mirrors hung on walls ornamented by woodwork of polished black walnut, and thick Axminster carpet covered the floor. A gas chandelier hung from the ceiling, to provide light at any hour, and the furniture was ornately carved of solid black walnut and upholstered in royal purple velvet plush. In addition to the two armchairs near the outside windows, a long sofa sat against the opposite wall, and above it were windows looking out on the corridor. They couldn’t have been more comfortable in the great room at the Ponderosa. “Style is right,” Joe murmured and then smiled at Adam. “Thanks, brother.”

“My pleasure. Incidentally, the sofa’s yours, anytime you want it.”

“After dinner, maybe,” Joe said. “Where is the dinner stop, anyway?”

Adam laughed. “I thought I just fed you!”

Joe grinned. “Just planning ahead.”

“Ah, admirable, I’m sure. I don’t really know where the train stops for dinner, Joe, but it doesn’t affect us. This is a hotel car; we just order dinner whenever we’re hungry.”

Leaning back into the armchair, Joe gave a long, contented sigh. “If you gotta travel, this is the way.”

“Yeah. Sorry I deprived you of this on the way out, kid,” Adam said.

Joe sat up straight and looked directly into his brother’s eyes. “Adam, you got nothing to apologize for. It was your money, and you had every right to be frugal with it. I’m
gonna take a lesson from your book and see if I can’t do better with mine.”

“Sure, kid.” Adam smiled; he’d believe it when he saw it.

Five hours down the track, the cars of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad crossed the Mississippi River at Clinton, Iowa, and Little Joe declared that he was hungry.


After perusing the menu for a while, Joe announced, “I want the porterhouse steak with stewed new potatoes and green peas.”

“Why don’t you have mushrooms with your steak?” Adam suggested. “I know you like them, and it’s only twenty-five cents extra.”

“Okay,” Joe agreed quickly. Since it was only the added expense that had kept him from ordering the steak that way, he yielded readily to the encouragement. “What are you having?”

“The steak sounds good, but I had beef last night,” Adam said. “I think I’ll have the mutton chops with tomato sauce, corn on the cob and the peas, with some good Boston brown bread. I presume you want the French loaf?”

Joe grinned. “That’s good presuming.”

After dinner Joe read for a short while and then stretched out on the sofa for a brief nap. Around six he and Adam enjoyed a light supper of Welsh rarebit, since neither had exercised enough to work up a large appetite. About eight o’clock a gray-uniformed porter answered Adam’s summons and turned both sofa and armchairs into beds after pulling the legs of the table together, so it would disappear into a corner. From one of the hinged shelves above the cabin, which could also serve as beds for a larger party, the porter took fresh linen,
pillows and thick, colorful blankets.

Dressed in his nightshirt, Little Joe took his toothbrush and powder and moved toward the closet door, where Adam had told him he would find a washbasin.

“Better knock first,” Adam advised. “We share that with the next stateroom. You wouldn’t want to walk in on some lady unannounced.”

Joe grinned over his shoulder. “Well, I might.”

“She’s probably sixty-two and takes her teeth out at night,” Adam snorted. “Do as I say, you lecherous scamp.”

Looking properly awed at the prospect of meeting such an apparition, Joe obediently rapped on the door and, hearing no response, opened it to attend to his personal hygiene. Adam followed, and soon both brothers were asleep.

* * * * *

The train crossed a bridge over the Missouri River, from Council Bluff into Omaha, just about the time Adam and Joe were ordering breakfast Tuesday morning. Though they were switching rail lines here, the Pullman palace car would simply be detached from one train and hooked onto the end of the other, so there was no need for the brothers to transfer their belongings.

Knowing that, Joe was surprised to see Adam head for the exit as soon as he’d given the porter their orders. “Where you going?”

“I’m just getting a newspaper. Take it easy,” Adam said as he disappeared out the door.

When he returned, Joe gave him an annoyed look. “I could have done that.”
“You did it all the way east; I’ll take over going west,” Adam answered easily.

Joe shook his head, clearly annoyed. “Adam, you don’t have to keep trying to make up for everything you think you did wrong the first time around. I’m not an invalid. A little exercise might even be good for me.”

Adam tapped the paper against his brother’s arm. “Okay, buddy. You can stretch your legs and get the paper tomorrow morning. We’ll take turns.”

“You got a deal, brother,” Joe said with a smile.

Cheese omelettes, with sides of ham and fried potatoes, arrived just then, along with steaming cups of coffee, and Adam waited until the porter had left before he spoke. “There is still one thing I’d like to make up for, though,” he said as the Union Pacific train pulled out of the depot, headed west.

Stirring sugar into his coffee, Joe looked up. “Yeah? What’s that?”

“On the way out you were asking about my first trip west, with Pa and Inger, and I cut you off pretty short,” Adam explained, slicing his ham. “If you’re still interested, I’d like to share some of those memories with you while we travel.”

Joe laid the spoon down and smiled across the table. “Oh, yeah, I’d like that, Adam. It would really make the miles go faster. We’re just about where you started, right?”

“A bit north, actually.”

“I remember, from St. Joe.”

Adam grinned. “Saint . . . Joseph . . . somehow, those words still don’t seem to fit together.”
“Aw, hush.” Recalling how he and Adam had traded the same teasing barbs in the Main Exhibition Hall, Joe giggled. “Like I told you before, nobody ever heard of a Saint Adam, either!”

Adam chuckled and reached across the table to give his brother’s arm a couple of light pats. “Nope, neither one of us is a saint, just a couple of mere mortals, trying to muddle our way through life as best we can, maybe learning a little bit along the way.”

Swallowing a bite of egg, Joe said, “I feel like I’ve learned a lot on this trip.”

“Didn’t I tell you that you would?”

Joe waved a chunk of ham, speared on the tines of his fork, toward his brother’s nose. “There you go, actin’ unsaintly again! I didn’t mean just that kind of learning.”

Adam looked up and smiled into his brother’s eyes. “I know what you meant. I learned a lot, too, Joe.” After tucking away a few bites of his breakfast, he began, “We won’t be traveling quite the same route we did back then. The railroad follows the old Mormon Trail on the north side of the Platte, while we followed the south shore.”

“So you were just across the river from here,” Joe commented, popping a forkful of fried potatoes into his mouth.

Adam sliced off another bite of ham. “No, we started further down the Missouri, remember, and came up toward the Platte at an angle. The trails weren’t in sight of each other for about the first two hundred and fifty miles. I’ll let you know when you can see where we were.”

“Thanks,” Joe said. “May seem silly to you, but I kind of feel like it’s part of my story, too, a part I don’t know nothin’ about.”

Taking a sip of coffee, Adam peered over the rim of his cup.
“You evidently ‘don’t know nothin’ about’ proper grammar, either.”

Joe put his fork down and stuck out his lower lip in playful petulance. “I’ve been sick, Adam; I shouldn’t have to worry about verbs and such.”

Adam put his head back and laughed. “Yes, and you know exactly when to claim that and when to conveniently forget, don’t you? Not too frail to run after a newspaper, but still feeling much too poorly to mind your sentence structure.”

“Yeah!” Joe had to laugh at his own inconsistency.

“Well, I guess I’d better start at the beginning of ‘your story.’ There wasn’t any bridge across the Missouri back then, and we waited in line for hours for our turn at the ferry.” Over breakfast and the ensuing miles, Adam shared his memories of the wagon train, talking not only about the terrain and how it had changed over the years, but also relating some amusing incidents of how Pa had struggled to learn the ways of the trail. Joe leaned forward, eager-eared, scarcely crediting the words he heard, for it was almost impossible for him to imagine that his father had ever been unfamiliar with trail life and the ways of livestock.

Although less than fifty miles from Omaha, the train made its dinner stop for regular passengers at Frémont, but neither Adam nor Joe wanted to eat again that soon. Riding in a hotel car had definite advantages, Joe decided, and meals served when you wanted them and eating at leisure, instead of choking the food down in twenty to thirty minutes, rated high on his list of those advantages.

The supper stop was at Grand Island, and the Cartwright brothers put in their orders just before getting off the train to stretch their legs. “Okay, little buddy. Look across the river,” Adam instructed, draping an arm across Joe’s shoulders. “See that bluff across the way?”
Joe peered across the placid waters of the broad, but shallow Platte. “Uh-huh.”

“That’s where I first saw the Platte River, from up there.”

Awed, Joe stared at the high bluff. “You came down that in a wagon?”

Adam chuckled. “Yes, and it was far from the roughest part of the road, kid.”

“What was the roughest?” Joe asked.

Adam shrugged uncertainly. “I’ll have to give that some thought. We’d better get back aboard. Our meal will probably be ready soon.”

“Hope so,” Joe said. “I’m feeling pretty hungry, believe it or not.”

“Oh, I believe it!” Adam laughed. “Eat hearty, though, little brother. You’ve still got a pound or two to gain back, and Pa’s sure to notice.”

Walking back toward the train, Joe groaned. “Oh, I’m in for more coddling when I get home, aren’t I?”

Adam guffawed as he helped Joe mount the steep train steps. “Oh, you can count on that! Pa, Hoss, Hop Sing, Doc Martin—they’re all gonna have their fingers in that pie.”

On the railcar’s end platform, Joe spun around, genuine alarm flaring in his eyes. “Adam, you gotta protect me!”

Adam grinned broadly. “Unh-uh. I’m not going anywhere near that! Besides, I think you could still do with a little mollycoddling. I know you think you’re ‘all better,’ but you’ve got a ways to go before you’re ready to tackle regular ranch work, buddy, much less busting broncs.”

“Wish I’d ordered dessert,” Joe muttered, feeling his flat
stomach, apparently searching for the requisite amount of padding that would keep Pa from fretting.

“You still can,” Adam chuckled as they walked down the narrow corridor.

As their supper was being served, the train pulled away from Grand Island, and the prairie widened out, unrestricted now by the tall bluffs that had bordered the track thus far. A couple of hours after finishing the meal, they pulled into Fort Kearny. “Aw, it’s too dark to see anything,” Joe said, disappointed.

“From what I hear, there’s not much left to see,” Adam said. “I’ve got some good memories of that place, though.”

“Tell me about them,” Joe demanded.

Adam gave his brother a close look. “You must be tired. Why don’t I have the porter make up our beds? Then I’ll share my memories as a bedtime story.”

Joe giggled. “Like when I was a kid?”

Adam tweaked his nose. “What do you mean, ‘when you were a kid’? You’re still a kid!”

As soon as their beds were made up, both brothers crawled under the covers and as they lay there, facing each other, Adam began to talk about his first visit to an Army fort. He talked until he sensed that his words were drowning in a great silence and realized that Joe was asleep. Sometime during the night, they were both awakened by loud, rumbling thunder, and Joe came across the room and clambered up on Adam’s bed to peer out the window at the crashing bolts of lightning that lit up the prairie from horizon to horizon. Watching the electrical storm together sparked still more memories, which Adam shared as they knelt side by side.

* * * * *
Breakfast came late for the regular passengers, but when the train stopped at Sidney for that purpose, the Cartwright brothers were already more than half-finished with their first meal of the day. Little Joe wiped his mouth and set the napkin aside as the wheels slowed.

“Where you going?” Adam asked, seeing his brother push his chair back.

“To get a newspaper, of course,” Joe responded.

“No, you finish your breakfast,” Adam urged.

Joe shook his head, disgusted by the protective attitude. “Adam, you said we’d take turns.”

“And we will,” Adam replied, lifting his coffee cup. “I think they only publish a weekly here, so let’s wait ‘til Cheyenne to get a paper. I promise I won’t fight you for the privilege.”

They finished the meal and were sitting in the armchairs by the window when the train wheels again began to turn. Adam started once more to reminisce about his journey west. “We’re traveling south of the old emigrant trail now,” he told Joe. “Before dinner we’ll pass near some of the major landmarks, but I’m not sure you’ll be able to see them from the train. Chimney Rock, for instance. That was an important one to me, as a kid.”

“Why?” Joe asked.

Adam shrugged. “Oh, I don’t know. Pa had loaned me his guidebook, and for some reason that stood out as a place I wanted to see. Then when we got there, I was almost too sick to care. Cholera had hit our wagon train, and we’d lost several good people: Stefán Zuebner’s father, Clyde and Nelly’s youngest boy and my good friend, Johnny Payne. Hit just about every family.”
“Ours, too,” Joe murmured.

“Yeah, but just me,” Adam said. “Pa and Inger somehow managed to escape it, though I’ll never know how. She spent so much time helping the sick that it’s a wonder she didn’t come down with it. A good thing, though, ‘cause she didn’t need that on top of being ‘great with child,’ as the Good Book puts it—and I do mean ‘great with child.’ Pa thought sure she was going to have twins!”

Joe laughed. “Hoss always was big, huh? I mean, I don’t remember him being any other way, so it’s hard for me to picture him as a baby.”

“Oh, he never was,” Adam affirmed with dry humor. “He was born half-grown—and I’m not exaggerating much.”

They had left the prairie during the night, and now, as the train began to climb, the terrain was broken, with rough bluffs on either side and stunted pines along the tops. The grade grew steeper as they went up the divide between Lodge Pole and Crow creeks, and still it continued to climb. Sixty miles to the southwest, snow-capped Long’s Peak appeared, and soon the train began to pass through the snow sheds that protected the tracks during harsh mountain winters. Disliking the blackness of the tunnels, Joe curled up on the sofa, shut his eyes and slept a little.

The train stopped at Cheyenne, and Joe got off to get a copy of the Cheyenne Daily Sun. He and Adam turned in their dinner orders, and while they waited for the food to be served, Adam read through most of the important news of the day. After dinner Joe took his turn with the paper and was still reading it when the train passed through Sherman, the highest point on the line. Adam got another chance to look at the Dale Creek Bridge, this time from the opposite perspective, and soon the road turned left to reveal a beautiful vista.

Laramie was the supper stop, and the Cartwright brothers chose
to eat about the same time as the other passengers, although their meal was more leisurely and they continued eating after the train left the depot. Both of them read for a short while after supper, but noticing that his younger brother was beginning to yawn, Adam slipped out to request that the porter make their beds early. Both of them had lost sleep the night before, because of the rainstorm, and both were ready to turn in as soon as their beds were prepared. Here in the mountains, the nights were chilly, but the porter had thoughtfully provided extra blankets, so both Adam and Joe slept snugly through the night.

* * * * *

The train erupted from a narrow gorge into a valley at Green River, and regular passengers scurried off to grab a bite of breakfast. Having already finished theirs, the Cartwright brothers strolled toward an overlook with a good view of the river. “You remember asking me what the hardest part of the trip west was?” Adam asked as he gazed down into the water.

“Yeah, but I figured you forgot,” Joe said.

“No, just couldn’t decide,” Adam admitted, “but this might be it.” He nodded toward the curving stream. “One of the hardest parts ended here at Green River. We knew we had fallen behind schedule because of the cholera and other problems, and the men decided the best way to make up some of that time was to take the Sublette Cutoff, more than fifty miles of dry, hot desert, not a drop of water except what was in our barrels, and that had to be rationed out to make it last. We walked all night to spare the animals the heat of the day, and I whined like a baby the whole time, even pouting because Hoss got to ride in the wagon, while I had to walk.”

“What were you . . . six . . . seven?”

“Seven.”
“Deserts are hard on grown men, Adam, much less a little kid. You’re too hard on yourself.” Joe moved in front of Adam and forced his attention. “You’re almost always too hard on yourself.”

Adam smiled. “Another lesson I need to learn from my kid brother?”

Joe gave him a saucy grin. “You asking me to be your mentor?”

Adam laughed, shaking his head. “In taking life easy? Oh, you would be the expert in that department!”

“Hey! I do my share,” Joe declared stoutly.

“Yes, you do,” Adam conceded, adding with a naughty wink, “Sometimes you have to be prodded to do it, but one way or another, you do your share.”

Joe scowled and gave his brother a punch on the arm. “Something else you need to work on, Adam, is how to give a compliment that isn’t backhanded.”

Feeling Joe had a point and wanting to keep the peace, Adam nodded. “Yeah, I should work on that.”

Seeing other passengers making their way back to the train, the brothers hurried to take their place in the parlor car, and the wheels rolled west once more. They’d been traveling about three hours when a rap came at the door, and the porter entered, a broad smile on his dark face. “We be makin’ good time, sirs, so de conductor say we can stop and let any what wants have some of de soda water here’bouts. Step off and have you’self some, young gen’mons. It be good for them what’s ailin’.”

“I ain’t ailin’,” Joe muttered testily with a hard look at his brother, who, he suspected, had at some time given theporter that excuse, when asking for the beds to be made up early, for instance.
Adam flicked a hand toward Joe to silence any further rudeness and thanked the porter for the information. “Come on, Joe. Ailing or not, you’ll enjoy the water,” he suggested when the man in the gray uniform had departed.

“I ain’t ailin’,” Joe insisted.

“All right. Point carried. Come taste the water, and I’ll share another story with you,” Adam offered.

Susceptible as always to simple bribery, Joe followed his brother out and walked to a spring at the base of a bluff near the tracks. Quaffing the effervescent water, he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. “Okay, not bad. Now, what’s the story?” he demanded.

Adam gave the boy’s neck a rough caress. “This just reminded me of when our wagon train stopped near here and Inger mixed lemon essence with the soda water. Not even Hop Sing’s best lemonade ever tasted as good as that.”

Having just tasted the water, Joe wrinkled his nose. “You have got to be kidding.”

Adam laughed. “No, I mean it. His is better, of course, because the water’s better back home, but when you think about the day-in, day-out boredom of salt pork and beans, you can understand what a treat that bubbly lemonade was. If you come right down to it, Joe, that may have been the toughest part of the whole trip, just doing the same things day after day and eating the same foods over and over again.”

Joe smiled. “Sure can’t say that about this trip. We’ve done something different every day—and the food! I think you took me to every kind of restaurant there was, Adam.”

Arm about his brother’s shoulder, Adam walked back toward the train. “I promised you a good time, didn’t I?”

“And you delivered, big brother, better than I ever dreamed
you would.”

When they entered their parlor car, they found the porter inside, lighting the gas lamps of the chandelier. “I’se seen how de young gen’mens likes to read,” the black man explained, “and wid all de snow sheds up ahead, I thought you’d be needin’ mo’ light.”

“Thank you for your thoughtfulness,” Adam said, slipping his hand into his pocket.

The porter waved the coin aside. “Oh, no, sir. You’s been more dan gen’rous already. No, sir, ain’t no need t’do mo’.”

“Now, you told me you had a boy you were trying to put through college,” Adam said, pressing the coin into the man’s cream-colored palm. “You take that for him.”

The man beamed his gratitude and nodded. “Thank you, sir, and if dere be anyt’ing else I can do for yo’ comfort, you jest ask me, hear?”

“I hear, and I will.”

Picking up his copy of *Moby Dick*, Joe stretched full-length on the sofa. “How’d you find out about his boy?” he asked.

“Well, I’ve got to talk to someone while you snooze the afternoons away, don’t I?” Adam chuckled. “It just came up yesterday afternoon, and, of course, you know how interested I am in seeing young men pursue higher education.”

Joe responded by firing a sofa cushion at his brother’s head. That laughing face made such a perfect target. An hour later, coming to the end of a chapter, Joe closed his book. “Adam, it doesn’t cost you extra if we don’t eat on the train, does it?”

Adam looked up from the newspaper he had purchased in Green River. “No, we pay for each meal separately. What are you
“I was just remembering how good the food was at that hotel in Evanston and wondering if we could eat there, instead,” Joe said, licking his lips as though the taste still lingered on them.

Adam folded the paper and set it on the table. “Sure we can. Having a hotel car is for our convenience, not our confinement. I’d like that myself, and since the train stops a full thirty minutes there, we won’t be rushed.”

Eyes shining, Joe smiled. “Thanks, Adam.”

“None needed. Like I said, I’ll enjoy the change, too.”

The train pulled into Evanston, and Joe bounced up from the sofa, obviously set to make a dash for the Mountain Trout Hotel. Adam, back against the door to the parlor car, grabbed him by both shoulders. “Walk,” he said.

Arms akimbo, a disgruntled Joe stared at his brother. “When are you gonna stop playing Brother Hen?” he demanded.

Adam arched an eyebrow. “Oh, you’ve got about a day and a half more to put up with it.” Seeing Joe’s face brighten, he added with his best Cheshire-cat smile, “Then you can start putting up with the hovering wings of Papa Hen.”

Knowing it was all too true, Joe collapsed against his brother’s chest. “I give up; just carry me to the food.”

Adam laughed as he opened the door and with a slap against Joe’s back pushed him through it. The two brothers walked to the Mountain Trout Hotel, where they saw Chinese waiters again, for the first time since they’d eaten here last. “I don’t know whether to order the speckled trout or the antelope steak,” Joe muttered, tapping his index finger against his cheek. “The trout was sure good last time, but I’d like to try that antelope.”
“Order it then,” Adam instructed. “I’ll get the trout, and we’ll divide the plates any way you please. Deal?”

Joe straightened up in his chair and grinned. “Deal! Sometimes, Brother Hen, your wings ain’t such a bad thing to hover under.”

“Wouldn’t that qualify as a backhanded compliment?” Adam teased.

After an enjoyable meal they re-boarded the train and ascended a beautiful valley into the next station, the first within the Territory of Utah. Leaving Wasatch on a rapid downgrade, they entered the most exhilarating scenery on the entire line, and though both boys normally read or napped during the afternoon, neither could tear his eyes from the rough majesty of Echo Canyon. With so many eye-grabbing attractions—unique rock formations, snow-capped mountains, narrow canyons and a rushing river—the hours passed quickly, and before the Cartwright brothers realized it, the Union Pacific had arrived at its terminus.

“Time to switch trains, I guess,” Joe said as they pulled into Ogden. “Do they have Pullmans on the Central Pacific?”

Gathering their loose items to place in the carpetbags, Adam said, “No, but their silver palace cars are supposed to be just as comfortable. It’s not a hotel car, however, so we will have to hop to get our meals with the regular passengers. Sorry about that, kid.”

“Oh, Adam, don’t apologize,” Joe pleaded. He took a bolstering swallow and suggested, “It’s just one more day. If you didn’t want to go to the expense of a silver palace . . .”

“Hush. I won’t hear of it,” Adam said, fastening the final carpetbag. “Now you just run along—make that, walk along—and stretch your legs, sonny, while I get our baggage transferred over, and we’ll meet in front of the Beardsley House for
Perturbed smile playing on his lips, Joe shook his head, but didn’t argue. Brother Hen seemed determined not to let him lift a single piece of luggage or anything heavier than a book ‘til they reached the Ponderosa. Joe sighed. And then Pa would take over. Pa. Just the thought of Pa made the smile soften into one more relaxed and dreamy. Yeah, seeing Pa was worth putting up with a bit of coddling. He’d just have to fight to make sure that bit didn’t turn into a bunch.

With an hour allotted for the change of rail lines, the Cartwright boys had time for a leisurely supper and still were able to board the train well before the scheduled time of departure. Joe spent the time looking around the car, noting the differences between this and the Pullman car of the Union Pacific. The biggest difference was the lack of a parlor car. Since Adam had gone out of his way to be conversational and entertaining, Joe had enjoyed the privacy of having a car to themselves. Adam had explained that they might have company at any time, since he hadn’t paid for exclusive use of the parlor, but the train had few first-class passengers on that run. He had not felt compelled to tell his brother that the thoughtful porter, on learning that Joe had been ill, had made a special effort to see that their car remained private.

Here, on the Central Pacific, it would be different. Although there were extensive sitting rooms at each end, the Cartwright brothers would be surrounded by other passengers. The accoutrements of the cars would still be opulent: soft Brussels carpet with floral design, inlaid woodwork, mirrors on the walls, potted ferns and rubber plants. There was even an organ, and as the train pulled out, a bearded man sat down to play, and several passengers gathered around to sing, Adam joining in for a little while, with Joe as a proud and appreciative audience.

Being advised by the porter that the sleeping car was ready
for any who wished to use it, Adam suggested that they turn in as soon as it grew dark outside, and Joe agreed. Because the scenery had been so grand, he hadn’t taken his accustomed nap that afternoon and was feeling tired. Together, the brothers passed through the double doors. After they had both changed into fresh nightshirts, Joe crawled beneath the clean linen and sank into the hair mattress of his lower berth.

Leaving only enough room to get into the berth above Joe, Adam drew the green and crimson curtains, striped with gold, over their silver rods and perched on the edge of Joe’s bed. “Will you be glad to get home?”

“Oh, yeah,” Joe said, eyes glowing. “Guess we won’t make it all the way back to the Ponderosa tomorrow, though, will we?”

Adam shook his head. “No, we don’t reach Reno until 11:30 tomorrow night. I wired Pa from Ogden that we’d spend the night there and take the V&T to Mill Station the next morning. I’m sure he’ll be there to meet us, Joe.”

Joe yawned prodigiously. “Yeah, that’s for the best, I guess.”

Patting his brother’s cheek, Adam chuckled softly. “Nighty-night, little brother. See you in the morning.”

Virtually asleep already, Little Joe mumbled an unintelligible reply.

Adam hitched himself up into the upper berth and, drawing his long limbs into the limited space, closed the curtains the rest of the way. Though the space was a few inches too short and its width only three and a half feet, the mattress was comfortable enough. Had he been more tired, Adam could have fallen asleep easily. He wasn’t tired, though, and sleep was slow to come as he reviewed the long journey and all that had happened while he and Joe had been together.
In a way he’d be glad to turn the responsibility for his younger brother back to their father. It had, at times, been a heavy load, and more than once he had wished his father’s strong shoulder had been available to lean upon. The time had passed, however, when he really needed that help, and now he felt more as if he were being forced to relinquish something rightfully his. He could almost hear Pa’s booming voice, reminding him of who was Joe’s father and who was his brother. *But he’s mine now, too,* Adam argued, *in a very special way.* *The bond between us was always there, but it’s tighter now, and I don’t want anyone—not even you, Pa—untightening it.* Though with regret, he realized, of course, that he would have to turn loose and let himself and Joe each take his accustomed place in the family circle. Remembering the might of that circle, Adam knew he would be able to let go and let Pa and Hoss join hands with Joe once more, for the circle really was stronger when it was unbroken. He could almost feel that circle closing around him, too, as he drifted to sleep.

* * * * *

Adam pushed aside the floor-length berth curtains and shook his brother’s shoulder. “Joe? Joe, wake up.”

“Go ‘way,” Joe muttered, burrowing into his pillow.

“Sorry, buddy,” Adam said, “but we have to get off the train if we want breakfast, remember?”

“Okay, be up in a minute,” came a muffled voice.

Adam gave a sharp pull on Joe’s shoulder and finally saw the green eyes open. “You’ll get up now! Come on, Sleeping Beauty, rise and shine.”

Joe sat up, yawning. “Okay, okay, I’m up.”

“On your feet. I’m not leaving ‘til I see you headed for the
dressing room,” Adam said, half-lifting the sleepy boy from the berth.

“I said, ‘I’m up,’” Joe grunted when his feet hit the carpet.

As his brother began to move toward the end of the car, Adam shook his head and dug into the carpetbag for Joe’s shaving kit and his familiar gray slacks and tan shirt. Snatching up his own equipment and clothes, already laid out, he followed Joe to the men’s dressing room.

By the time he was shaved and dressed, Joe was feeling much more chipper. Sitting by the window of the day car, he looked with renewed interest at the buildings of the University of Nevada, on the right just as they reached Elko. “Our state school doesn’t look like much, next to those back east,” he observed with a trace of deflated pride.

“It’s not really a college, of course,” Adam said, “more like a high school, like the Philadelphia Collegiate we visited. Maybe someday Nevada will boast a real university.”

“Oh, great,” Joe joked. “Then you’ll be nagging me all the more to head off to college.”

Adam was tempted to smile, since he considered that Joe would be well beyond college-age by the time this small beginning blossomed into a true institute of higher learning, but he responded seriously, instead. “No, I may be disappointed in your decision, but I’ve accepted it. You won’t hear another word on the subject from me.”

Joe smiled his appreciation. “I am sort of glad you made me look at the real thing, though. You were right; I had no idea what it was really like.”

Adam nodded once. “Always best to make an informed decision—about anything.”

“Yeah, one of the lessons I’ve learned from you on this trip,
older brother.” Joe gave Adam’s thigh a light slap. “Now, ease up. You’re getting much too sober.”

Adam tweaked Joe’s ear. “As you say, Professor Levity. I hear and obey.”

After breakfast Adam sent Joe on ahead to the train. “I know it’s your turn, but since it’s the last time, I’ll get the paper,” he offered.

“Don’t get left,” Joe teased.

“Oh, I won’t,” Adam said with a smirk. “Otherwise you’d nod off and snooze all the way to Oakland, and Pa’d have both our hides.”

Adam returned with a copy of the Elko *Independent*, a misnomer since the newspaper had a decidedly Democratic bias. It was, however, the only daily in town, the Republican paper coming out but once a week. The column of news from Virginia City was disturbing, for it told of the formation of the Order of Caucasians, whose chief demand appeared to be a prohibition on the hiring of Chinese labor. The Republican Convention would be meeting in Carson City in less than a week now. Pa would be there, and Adam felt quite certain that his father would be addressing this issue forcefully. *Good thing I’m getting home*, he concluded as he folded the paper. *Pa may need support.*

“Anything interesting?” Joe asked, nodding at the paper in his brother’s lap.

“Not really, mostly local news.” *No need to spoil Joe’s homecoming with that piece of unpleasantness,* Adam thought.

Easily satisfied, Joe returned to gazing out the window.

Peering past him, Adam observed. “This stretch of track follows the emigrant trail pretty closely.”
Joe turned to look at him. “More dry country, hard on kids, huh?”

Adam shrugged. “Not too bad until we got to the Forty-Mile Desert. Had to make another dry drive then, like at Sublette’s Cutoff, but I handled myself better the second time.”

“Did a lot of growing up between there and here, did you?” Joe asked with a trace of mocking humor.

“That’s right, a lot,” Adam said sharply, irked by the boy’s taunting tone. “I’d lost my mother by that time.”

“You mean Hoss’s,” Joe corrected.

Adam cast a stern eye on the younger boy. “I mean mine—my mother Inger, and don’t you forget it.”

Instantly sensing that he’d caused offense without meaning to, Joe ducked his head and said in a hushed voice, “Sorry.” He glanced up shyly. “Did—did you feel that way—uh—about . . .”

Adam’s gaze softened. “Your mother?”

“Yeah.” Joe gave his lower lip a nibble. “Did you?”

Adam shook his head, and a look of infinite sorrow flooded his dark eyes. “No, I never thought of her that way—until it was too late. She called me ‘mon ami’ because that’s as far as I would let her in.”

Joe’s brow wrinkled as he strained to remember the little French he could recall from his early years. “My friend?”

Adam nodded, his voice choking as he said, “I thought she was too near my own age to be anything else. It was only after—after the accident that I realized I had lost more than just a friend, that she really was as much a mother to me as Inger or the woman who had given me life—more, in a way, since
I’d had her longer. I wished then that I could tell her, but it was too late.”

Joe pressed his brother’s hand. “She knew, Adam; I’d bet anything that she knew.”

Adam licked his lips and nodded slowly. “Yeah, I think maybe she did; I hope she did.” Eyes brimming, he looked earnestly at his brother. “I hope the people I love understand what I feel, even though I find it hard to get the words out.”

Joe squeezed his brother’s hand even more tightly. “They know, Adam; I promise you they know.” Embarrassed by the tears he could feel welling up, he turned quickly toward the window.

Grateful for the moment of privacy, Adam dashed away the moisture in his own eyes and, although he’d already read everything of interest in the Elko Independent, he again opened the paper and buried his nose in it.

* * * * *

Smile hidden behind his hand, Adam shook his head as Little Joe stepped across him and started down the aisle—again. The kid couldn’t possibly have needed to visit the water closet this often, but ever since dinner at Battle Mountain, he’d been out of his seat every thirty minutes, on some such excuse. Restless, Adam supposed, and getting more so with every mile they put behind them, every mile that brought them closer to home. Hate to think what he’ll be like tomorrow morning, when Pa’s really waiting to meet him, Adam mused, letting the smile break into a benevolent grin. Probably have to tie him to the seat. Pulling out his watch, he checked the time. Well, if the train ran on schedule—and so far it had—they’d soon be stopping in Humboldt. Supper at the best restaurant on the line should distract the kid for another half-hour, and Adam had every intention of insisting that he go to bed directly afterwards. With having to leave the train
in the middle of the night, they’d get little enough sleep as it was. He’d paid for the berth, and he had no scruple against using that financial leverage to get his restless little brother to lie down for a while.

* * * * *

Ben paused at the end of the wooden platform and peered out into the night, willing a light to appear in the black expanse. When none did, he kicked a loose slat and, stuffing his hands in his pockets, turned back toward the depot. Stepping over the long legs extending into his path, he took his watch from his vest pocket and squinted to read the dial in the faint light coming through the window. 11:20—still ten minutes to go, if the train were on time. He spun around to face the owner of the long legs. “See if the train’s still on schedule, would you, son?”

Hoss shuffled uncomfortably on the wooden bench in front of the office. “Doggone it, Pa, I’m plumb embarrassed to pester them folks again. Don’t seem like more than fifteen, twenty minutes since I asked, and it was on time then. Can’t have slowed down much since, and if it has, I reckon it’ll get here when it gets here.”

Ben turned up the collar of his jacket. Though the temperature had been a typical ninety-five in the shade that August afternoon, it had dropped below sixty with nightfall. “Hope Joseph thought to unpack his jacket today,” he muttered. “Probably never crossed his mind,” Hoss said, “not with the weather bein’ so all-fired hot back east, like his letters said.”

Ben spun around to glare at his grinning middle son. “It’s no laughing matter, young man.”

“Oh, no, certainly not,” Hoss agreed, still grinning. “Relax, Pa. The way ole Adam’s been lookin’ after the boy, I reckon
he’ll see to it the jacket’s there when he needs it.”

“Yeah. Yeah, I suppose so.” Ben scuffed his right boot on the solid wooden planks beneath him and began once more to pace the length of the platform.

Hoss shook his head, gave a mighty yawn and leaned back against the outer wall of the depot. He was anxious to see his brothers, too, of course, but he wasn’t frettin’ over it like Pa. They’d get here when they got here, and not a minute sooner, no matter how much pacin’ Pa did. It was a plumb waste of effort.

Ironically, for all Pa’s impatient peering into the night, it was Hoss who first spotted a light. “Hey, somethin’ comin,’” he called.

Ben, on his way back from the end of the platform, made the kind of fast spin for which his youngest son was justifiably famous, and he drew a long, relieved breath. There, on the horizon, was a pinprick of light, coming steadily toward town, and soon the evidence of his ears confirmed that the Central Pacific was arriving in Reno. The train pulled up to the depot, and passengers began to disembark.

“Hey, look there, Pa!”

On the steps of the end car, Adam turned toward the familiar voice and laughed. “I should have known.”

“What?” Joe, still on the car’s end platform, asked.

“Brace yourself,” Adam muttered. “They’re here.”

Joe looked puzzled for a moment; then his face lit up like sunrise on snow-capped mountains. “Pa?” he squeaked, practically tumbling into his older brother in his eagerness to get down.

“And Hoss. Just couldn’t wait one more day, I guess,” Adam
chuckled. “Take it easy; these steps are steep.”

Ben finally spotted the slim figure in the green jacket behind the man dressed in black, and a smile burst across his face. They were home; his boys were home.

“Hey, little brother!” Hoss hollered, charging forward to grab Little Joe up in a giant bear hug that lifted the boy off his feet.

“Easy, easy,” Adam urged.

“Oh, yeah, sorry,” an abashed Hoss mumbled, setting Joe down gingerly.

“No need to be,” Joe declared with a sturdy clap on his brawny brother’s shoulder and a solid glare at Adam. Then he turned toward the face he had longed for weeks to see. “Pa,” he said softly and moved into his father’s outstretched arms.

“Joseph,” Ben murmured, a world of love in the single word. “Oh, Joseph.” His arms tightened around the boy, and all the anxious worry that had gnawed at him for weeks melted away.

Adam stood back and watched the long embrace. He’d known, of course, that his father’s first greeting would be for Joe, the boy for whom he felt the greatest concern. That was only natural, considering how close they’d all come to losing the kid. It was exactly what Adam had expected to happen tomorrow morning, and it didn’t bother him to wait his turn. He just stretched a hand toward Hoss and felt warm welcome in that powerful grip.

Ben continued to clasp his youngest to his heart, stroking the chestnut curls dangling about the boy’s ears, whispering his name again and again. When his lips pressed tenderly against his son’s neck, however, Joe squirmed uncomfortably. “Pa, there’s folks all around,” the young man hissed in protest.

Ben chuckled. Folks all around? Five or six, maybe, down the
length of Reno’s pitch-dark main street, but he didn’t want to embarrass his son’s manly dignity. “Oh, all right. Let’s have a look at you.” He held the boy at arms’ length and scrutinized him from head to toe. “How do you feel, son?” he asked soberly.

Joe plastered on his brightest smile. “I feel great, Pa, just great!” Seeing the skeptical arch of his father’s eyebrow, he amended the statement. “Well, I am kind of sleepy; it’s pretty late, you know.”

“Yes, it is,” his father agreed. “I rented rooms for all of us at the hotel, so your bed’s ready, son.”

“Yeah, and there’s a right fine spread laid out, too,” Hoss inserted with enthusiasm.

“Just sandwiches,” Ben said in answer to his oldest son’s inquiring look. “Hoss seemed to think you boys would want a bite to eat before retiring.”

“Is there a bite left?” Adam asked with a significant nod toward his bulky brother.

Hoss feigned insult. “Well, ‘course, there is. Come on and have some, fellers.”

“I’ll be along,” Adam said, sensing instinctively that his father would want to speak to him privately. “You two go ahead.”

“Let me take these, anyway,” Hoss offered, reaching for the two carpetbags Adam held.

“Don’t let him lift anything,” Adam dictated with a nod toward Little Joe, who responded with a roll of his eyes.

“‘Course not,” Hoss said, looking genuinely insulted this time. Hefting the bags with one hand, he wrapped his other arm around his younger brother. “Sure did appreciate all them
letters you sent me, Shortshanks,” he was saying as he steered Joe down the platform toward the hotel. “Made me feel like I was right there ‘longside ya.”

A strong hand closed around Adam’s biceps, as his father pulled him into a firm embrace. It didn’t last as long as the one he’d given Joe, of course. Ben knew his boys: Joseph could handle extended physical contact and, in fact, would even have tolerated the kiss, had he been in his own home; with Adam, embraces had always had to be quick, fleeting, never long enough to satisfy a father’s need to pour out his love, but all his eldest could handle, from the time he was a boy. As they broke apart, Ben nodded at the two boys disappearing into the night. “How is he, really?” he asked.

“He’s all right,” Adam assured his father. “He’s tired, needs rest in one place—well, it’s been a long trip.”

Ben risked slipping an arm around his son’s shoulders. “And a harder one than you realized, setting out?”

Surprisingly, Adam leaned into the embrace. “I won’t deny it. I guess I understand you a little better now, Pa, now that I’ve had to shoulder the responsibility a father carries for his sons.”

Ben squeezed the broad shoulders and released them. “You’ve done that before, of course, though not for such an extended time—nor in such grave circumstances. I’m proud of how you handled yourself in the emergency, Adam. I had my doubts, at first, about some of those decisions you were making, but the final result bears out their wisdom. Thank you for taking care of my boy, son.”

A possessive gleam sparked in the ebony eyes. “My boy, too, you know.”

Ben arched a dark eyebrow, flecked with a few strands of silver. “Oh, really? We may just have to have another
discussion about who that boy’s real father is, young man.”

Adam laughed at the familiar—and expected—response. “Oh, no, I’ll gladly turn that responsibility back to you, but he does belong to me now in a stronger way than he did before. That’s what I meant.”

Beaming, Ben clapped him on both shoulders. “Good. Good.” Nothing could have pleased him more than to see these two habitual opponents establish a solid bond, and it seemed that they had come through the breakers with their bark not only intact, but fully rigged and ready to run before the wind.

Shoulder to shoulder, they walked down the plank sidewalk, entered the hotel and climbed the stairs to the suite Ben had rented for himself and Joseph, while acquiring a shared room down the hall for Hoss and Adam. Hoss was alone in the parlor when they entered. “Joe was mighty tuckered and headed straight to bed,” he told them, adding with obvious disappointment, “Didn’t even want a sandwich, and the youngun could do with some fattenin’ up, you know.”

Lips twitching, Adam nodded as he set the picnic hamper on the table with the rest of the food. “I know, but, believe me, he’s well on his way to solving that on his own, without any help from you.”

Hoss grinned. “If you say so, older brother. Joe said he wanted to see you before he turned in.”

“Okay.” Adam headed toward the door Hoss had indicated and then turned back to face him. “There had better still be sandwiches on that table when I get back.”

“Sure thing, older brother,” Hoss promised with a twinkle in his lake-blue eyes as he got up to investigate the contents of the hamper. “You could do with some fattenin’ up yourself.”

Smiling, Adam turned away and rapped on Joe’s door before
“You wanted to see me?” he asked, closing the door behind him.

Sitting cross-legged on his bed, bare knees poking out beneath his nightshirt, Joe nodded. “I just wanted to thank you again for all you did for me these last few weeks.”

Adam came to the foot of the bed and leaned against one of its four posts. “Joe, it’s all been said, no need to say it again.” He wagged a finger of mock authority at his younger brother. “You are just looking for an excuse to stay up, young man, and it’s time you were in bed.” He knew the accusation was untrue, but he sensed an awkwardness in Joe and hoped the playful scolding would put the boy at ease.

It didn’t work. Joe stood up slowly, fidgeting with the buttons of his nightshirt as he said, “I—I feel like I got to know you a lot better on this trip, Adam.”

“Same here, kid,” Adam said softly.

Joe’s chin began to quiver. “I feel closer to you than I ever have—and—and I don’t want to lose that, Adam.”

Adam’s heart leaped into his throat, in sympathy with an emotion he, too, shared. “I don’t want to lose it, either, Joe,” he murmured. Feeling that he had to be strong, for Joe’s sake, he straightened up. “I’m sure we’ll have our differences in the future, as we have in the past, but I’m confident that the closeness that began back east came home with us and will be there to bridge whatever differences still lie between us.”

Joe swiftly bridged the few steps that lay between them and impulsively threw his arms around his brother’s torso. For a moment Adam felt too inhibited to return the embrace; then, slowly, his arms closed around his brother, as he felt the love flowing from Joe’s heart into his own. Adam shut his eyes, longing for that moment to last forever. As he had
realized the night before, the bond between them had always been there, but Adam knew—and was sure that Joe did, too—that they were no longer merely brothers, but friends now, as well. As he continued to cling to that moment of perfect understanding, Adam reflected on the discoveries he and Joe had made on their journey, not only about the world around them, but about the hidden depths within each other. He touched his chin to Joe’s curly head, resting against his chest, and realized that there would be more discoveries for them to share in the years to come. For, when you came right down to it, wasn’t all of life a journey of discovery?

The End

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A Dream’s Darkest Hour
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Historical Notes

If you would like to see some of the exhibits viewed by the Cartwright brothers at the Centennial Exhibition, you will find many of them at this site: http://libwww.library.phila.gov/CenCol/index.htm. The Digital Collection has a marvelous search engine, so type in whatever you’re interested in seeing, i.e. sculpture, restaurants, Horticultural building, etc. If you’d like to see what a
specific country sent to Philadelphia, you may need to type in alternative versions of the nationality (both France and French, in other words) to see all the collection offers.

Those wishing to read more about the Centennial Exhibition may consult my chief reference for this story, *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition* by James Dabney McCabe. This mammoth work is available online at the Making of America site: http://moa.umdl.umich.edu/ and features many drawings of the buildings and exhibits. Put the author’s name in the search engine to bring up this and other historical books by Mr. McCabe.