

RESTRICTED TERRITORY

Act VIII Restock & Reload

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Act VIII

[Restock & Reload]

Act VIII, Scene 1

[Slipping Out]

Scene: Cabin bedroom. Victoria is sleeping on top of the blankets, holding onto Austin who is wrapped snugly in the blankets. The cabin is very quiet. Sam enters the room carrying a bowl of beans and a cup of water.

Sam: This (His voice trails off to a whisper as he sees Victoria and Austin asleep.) is about all we have left.

Sam reaches down and checks Austin's radial pulse, breathing and capillary refill. He leaves a bowl of beans, with spoon, on the chair and the cup of water on the floor by the bed. Austin's eye lids move a little when Sam puts his hand on his forehead. Sam smiles. Sam takes a blanket from the other bed and puts it over Victoria. Sam goes to the main room and stokes and feeds the fires. Then he adjusts dampers. He then goes to the cook stove and does the same. He then puts the kettle on, near the warming plate of the stove. He takes his jacket and hat from the kitchen table and quietly goes out the back door. He is carrying a white sheet with him.

Act VIII, Scene 2

[Scene of the Crime]

Scene: Snow is coming down steadily. Sam is standing on the back porch. He unfolds the sheet he was carrying and puts it over his head. His head sticks out of hole cut in the middle. He has made a poncho from the sheet to maintain his cover.

Near the wood pile, Sam looks toward where the ranch house should be, but the snow is too dense to see that far into the valley. Sam continues away from the house, carefully making his way down the hill. He looks around often and deftly moves from tree to tree to for cover. Once at the creek, he survey's the waterway to find the best crossing point that has both cover and rocks on which to cross. He follows the tree line around the meadow, always looking around for others. Half way across the large meadow, the ranch house starts to become visible.

He makes his way to the house. He carefully looks into a window. The house is dark. He then makes his way around the house, looking into any window that presents itself. The window that he saw the men in last night

was still open. He continues to carefully make his way around to a point where he can see the front. There are no horses in front and the door is closed. He goes back around to the open window and quietly climbs through it.

He sees the straps at the corners of the bed. The house is dark and quiet. He removes the poncho and sneaks to the doorway and stealthily peers into the main room. There is no one there. As he checks the main room, he finds the four dead people. He checks the carotid of each as he makes his way around the room. There is a lot of blood around Dylan. His pants are down and the blood is obviously from his groin. He has a bullet wound to the head. Mark also has a bullet wound to the head. Ben and Marsha both, have bullet wounds to the chest.

He checks for heat from the stove. It is cold. He continues to check the rest of the house in the same careful manner. Once he is satisfied that there are no others in the house, he lights a lamp and keeps it trimmed low.

Sam looks through the kitchen for food to take back to the cabin. He starts placing it all on the table. He hears a horse whinny. He quickly turns off the lamp and takes cover. He peers out the door and sees no one. While he is still looking, the horse whinnies again. He can now make out the barn, through the snow. Sam releases a big sigh.

Sam continues to collect the supplies for the cabin then ties them up in a bundle. He then goes back up to the loft. There is a letter on the small table between the beds. It reads: [See file Acceptance_letter.wpd]

Dr. Frank Dell
Director of Admittance,
Youngstown Medical University
420 Wick Avenue
Youngstown, Ohio

First day of November, 1877

To:
Miss. Victoria Creighton
Harmony Valley, California

Dear Miss. Creighton,

As Director of Admittance, on behalf of Youngstown Medical University, I am pleased to inform you that your application for Resident Nurse has been accepted. The formality of a personal interview will be conducted upon your presentation of this letter of introduction to Dr. Peter Du Reax, Dean of Nursing.

I shall wait with anticipation, your wire, confirming your receipt of this letter and acceptance of the position.

Best Regards,
Dr. F Dell
Director of Admittance

Sam carefully takes the letter and puts it in his shirt pocket.

He tosses down a bundle from the loft. He puts on the poncho, collects both bundles and leaves through the window.

Cautiously, he makes his way to the barn. Sam puts the bundles down so he can better survey the barn. Using the same technique as he did for the house, he circles the barn, looking for any evidence of unwanted guests. Once he is sure there is no one in the barn, he goes inside. Sam looks around and sees that there are four horses, tack, feed and a buckboard among the other stuff normally found in a barn. Sam makes his way to the horses.

Sam: (Speaking softly to a horse as he pets its nose.) I bet you guys are pretty hungry. I'll get you fed properly when we get back to the cabin. Right now, I think it's best to get out of here quickly.

Sam grabs one of the four saddles to put on the horse. This is Austin's saddle that has a scabbard with a rifle in it.

Sam: (Referring to the rifle as he checks to verify it is loaded.) That could be handy.

He checks the other saddles, but no other items of interest are found. He saddles up the horse he was talking to and puts the two bundles across the saddle. Puts the halters on the other three horses and saddles them up too.

Sam: (As he is putting on the second saddle, referring to the possible need the three of them having to use the horses to escape.) Who knows, we might need these as well.

He ties some large saddle bags on a couple of the horses. He stuffs hay into feed bags and slings those over the saddles as well. He strings the horses together and leads them outside, where he ties them to a rail. He closes the barn door mounts the lead horse and heads down the road, past the ranch house, to where the other ranches are.

Act VIII, Scene 3

[Mistaken Identity]

Scene: Back at the cabin. Sam sneaks out the barn door, carrying two bundles and the rifle, being very careful to not make a sound. He makes his way up the back stairs, takes off his improvised poncho and quietly makes his way into the house. Just as he closes the door, he gets hit with a bucket across his head. Sam is knocked to the floor. During the bucket onslaught, the rifle get slid under the kitchen table.

Victoria: (Yelling, while she is still hitting him with the bucket.) You aren't going to get us this time!

Sam: (Fending off the bucket blows as best he can.) Hey! Wait! It's me. Sam!

Victoria: You son-of-a (Now understanding what Sam said. She stops wailing on him. She drops the bucket. In an exhausted, quiet but angry voice.) You son of a bitch. Why didn't you tell me you were leaving? I thought you just ran off.

Sam: You fell asleep with Austin. You both needed the rest and (Becoming a little indignant.) we needed food. (Sam gets up, picks up the bundles and puts them on the table.) So I went down to the ranch and got some supplies and fed the livestock. (Victoria shows concern. She is afraid that someone will find them. Sam stops, takes a deep breath and continues with empathy.) I'm sorry, but there was no one there alive. I found four bodies. (Victoria slumps into the chair at the kitchen table.) Looked pretty bad.

Victoria: It's my mom and dad. The other two were the ones that tried to kill us. I guess Austin killed them when we escaped.

Sam: (Getting down on hands and knees to get the rifle.) Austin? (Surprised that a kid that young could do that much damage.) How is He? (After looking it over, he places the rifle on the table.)

Victoria: (Concerned. Putting the buckets back near the door.) He hasn't moved at all . . . and now he is starting to get a fever. (Victoria crosses to the dining table.)

Sam: (Puts his hand to the back of his head, then checks his hand for blood.) That's normal for such a big system shock. He'll be pretty sick for a couple of days. (Victoria is surprised that Sam knows so much about medical stuff.) Have you checked his pulse lately? (Sam crosses to the stove. His motion shows he still hurts a bit from the bucket attack.)

Victoria: (She plops down into a chair.) Yeah. Just a few minutes ago. It's still pretty rapid. His color looks better.

Sam: The color is a good sign, but the pulse concerns me. (He pours himself a cup of coffee. He wraps his hands around the cup to warm them.) He's probably very dehydrated. We need to get some liquids in him and it'd be a lot easier on all of us if he wakes soon. (He holds his cup up toward Victoria, gesturing if she would like some.)

Victoria: (Shakes her head no, declining the offer.) Are you a doctor?

Sam: No, but I've some medical training that I used in my previous job. (Sam sees that he piqued some interest, but he doesn't want to get into that topic just yet, so he changes the topic.) We can talk about it over dinner. I'll fix something to eat while you go check on Austin. If you would, please check his responsiveness.

Victoria: Okay. I'll be back to help soon. (Victoria gets out of the chair and crosses toward the bedroom.)

Sam: Wait! (Victoria stops and faces Sam. He picks up one of the bundles and tosses it to her.) I grabbed some clothes for you and Austin while I was there. You should, at least, put a night shirt on him before he wakes up. He'll feel less vulnerable. He's had too much trauma already.

Victoria: (Catching the bundle.) Thanks. (She smiles at Sam.) That was thoughtful.

Victoria exits into the bedroom and closes the door.

Act VIII, Scene 4

[When am I?]

Scene: Dinning table. Victoria is seated at the kitchen end of the table. She is now wearing her own clothes. Already on the table are some biscuits, coffee cups, butter, salt and pepper shakers and three dinner settings. Sam comes from the kitchen, using a towel, to carry a hot bowl of stew.

Victoria: Mmm. Smells good.

Sam: I'm not real good with stew, but I hope it's good enough to fill the void. (He places it on a trivet on the table and sits down.)

Victoria: (Bows her head and prays. Sam sees her bow her head to pray and follows her lead.) Lord, we thank thee for thy bounty that we receiveth. We ask that you look upon Austin and give him strength. Amen.

Sam: Amen.

Sam starts dishing stew for Victoria.

Sam: I know that you have some reservation about my sanity. After today, I have some as well. It would really help me out if you'd answer some questions for me. They may seem a bit strange, but please humor me with accurate answers, as best you can.

Victoria: (Sensing that this is going to get weird.) Okayyy.

Sam: What is today?

Victoria: (Slowly, as if she were talking to a small child.) It's Thursday. (She looks at him as if he is acting strange.)

Sam: Okay, Thursday. But what's the date? . . . The whole date?

Victoria: Thursday, the twenty-second of November (Victoria is watching Sam. He moves his hand in a circular motion as to encourage her to continue.) eighteen hundred seventy-seven.

Sam: (Drops his head in exasperation.) Damn. I knew it.

Victoria stares at Sam. As a lady, she is offended by the casual swearing.

Sam: (Looking up and seeing the stare, he realizes his error.) Oh, sorry.

Sam sits back in his chair both relieved and confused. Relieved because the evidence around him proved that he was at another time and his sanity may yet, still be intact, but confused as to how he could possibly be there at that point of time.

Sam: (Sam sits back upright. In an effort to set things straight in his mind, he attempts to ‘set the stage’ for his current situation.) Let me know if I make an error here: Your full name is Victoria Elizabeth Creighton. You were born May, Twenty-second, Eighteen Sixty. You are engaged to Colin Fauntleroy Owens. . . . Correct so far?

Victoria: (A little concerned he would know so many details, she trails her response.) Well, Yess.

Sam: (Continuing with a little more confidence.) Your brother is Austin Jeremiah Creighton, born on February Third, Eighteen Sixty-seven?

Victoria: (Now that he talking about her brother, she is more concerned. She tries not to show it, but her defensive response belies her indifference.) Of course, so?

Sam: And the Harmony Valley town marshal, who’s been under the control of Hank Wilson for the past fifteen years, is Pete McGinn.

Victoria: (Trying to deflect his detailed knowledge as general information.) Everybody knows that.

Sam: (Knowing that Victoria will not believe him, he is obligated to let her know what he thinks has happened.) I can’t explain how or why, and I know that what I am about to tell you will certainly not help my sanity case, but here it goes. (Sam takes a sip of coffee.) My name is Sam Reynolds. I was hired by Robert Owens, from Prescott Memorial Pediatric Medical Research Center in Ohio, to look into some shady real estate deal about this property. He says that this land was falsely claimed by a large land interest, namely the Bar R Bar ranch.

Victoria: [\(In a manner that makes his ‘unbelievable’ explanation seem dull.\)](#) I don’t know a *Robert Owens*, but that’s not so hard to believe.

Sam: This is the story I was told before I came up here. [\(In a story telling tone.\)](#) One hundred, forty years ago, a band of outlaws murdered the family that owned this land and had fake deeds drawn up. Even though one member of the family survived the attack and produced the real deeds to a district court, the outlaws also produced deeds and bills of sale. There was, supposedly, no way for the district judge to tell which deed was real and no way to verify the authenticity of the bills of sale. Because of that, the judge ordered the disputed land to be held in trust for up to 150 years. If not enough evidence was produced to prove either side was the lawful owner within that time, the land would be ceded to the state of California.

Victoria: [\(Protectively.\)](#) My family got this land by the government land grant. That couldn’t happen if there was a title dispute.

Sam: [\(Continuing the story. Ignoring Victoria’s statement.\)](#) The murders were never proven. The houses were burned for [\(Sam puts up some ‘air’ quotes.\)](#) ‘public health’ reasons, destroying any evidence. The outlaws had paid a traveling doctor to say that the families died as a result of small pox.

Victoria: Small Pox? Here?

Sam: Yep. Right here.

Victoria: [\(Questioning the date of 140 years that Sam had said.\)](#) When? This was all Indian land just 50 years ago.

Sam: From what I’ve been told and what I’ve seen today, . . . This is the *beginning* of that story. It started yesterday with the murder of your family.

Victoria: What? Us? What do you mean? [\(In a disbelief, irritated tone.\)](#) You’re saying you can tell the future? How could you know what’s going to happen. [\(She contemplates the story, then realizes that only one person survived. She becomes scared and very concerned about Austin. \)](#) Wha, what about Austin? [\(Quietly and directly.\)](#) You said only one person survived. Does that mean . .

Sam: (Understanding that she now thinks she is being told that Austin is going to die.) No. I mean, . . . I don't know what it means. To me it's a one hundred and forty year old story. It can have a lot of errors and omissions.

Victoria still has a very concerned look on her face.

Sam: (Trying to calm Victoria's fears, without making a promise about Austin's survival.) Look. Just two days ago, I arrived here expecting no one to be here. But a native American man named Wac ih a' showed me around the property on horseback.

Victoria: (Insulted that he is using unfamiliar terms again.) Native American?

Sam: (Recalling that PC wasn't even considered back then.) Um, an Indian. (Victoria sits back in her chair and crosses her arms, her contempt of the information is obvious.) What he showed me was a lot of beautiful land, the power line easement, (Agitated at the continual use of unfamiliar terms, Victoria's anger returns. She sits upright again to display her distrust of a story filled with made-up terms. Sam gestures her to hold on.) the boundary fences and three ranch sites with nothing left but foundations. (Victoria, her posture relaxing a bit, is starting to look confused.) He's the one I suspected of stealing my stuff. Anyway, when I got up yesterday morning, he was gone. All my stuff was gone and even the horses we rode were gone. Everything that I had, that didn't exist in 1877, wasn't here. When I went down to the ranch this morning, the fences and the power lines were gone, but where I saw just a foundation yesterday, there was a ranch house and a barn today. You can say I'm crazy, and right now I might even agree with you. I don't even know how to explain it or even where to start looking for answers. What I do know is that I'm here. . . Now. I'll have to make the most of the situation. And even though I can't explain how I got here, I swear to you that I do not want to harm you or your brother and that I do not work for the Wilson's.

Victoria: (In a strong tone.) Mister Reynolds, you are dead right. (Sam looks a little relieved and surprised.) I do think you're crazy. Crazy as a bat. (Sam is no longer relieved.) You think you can predict the future? (Victoria becomes more and more agitated.) How do I know that you are not working for Wilson and trying to trick me?

Sam: (Matter-of-factly.) You don't. I have no proof of anything I just told you. I also don't expect you to think I can predict the future. The most unbelievable part, even to me, is that I don't predict the future, (Pause.) I'm from the future. 2017, to be exact. To me, everything I just told you is one-hundred forty years in the past.

Victoria: (In a disbelieving teasing tone.) Well future man. (Victoria kicks him under the table.)

Sam: (Jumping when he gets kicked.) Ouch! What the heck was that for?

Victoria: (Argumentatively.) Why didn't you know I was going to do that? Huh? You think I'm some kind of idiot?

Sam: (Still trying to convince Victoria about his time displacement.) I don't know everything that's going to happen. I can only relate to the stuff I read when I researched this case before coming up here. (Trying to downplay the single survivor information.) And a lot of that is probably wrong.

Victoria: (Unconvinced.) So far you could be just making stuff up. (Challenging.) Tell me something you can't make up.

Sam: (Thinking for a second. Speaking sincerely.) I don't know that I can. I found out that you go to Ohio and become a nurse at your husband's hospital. (Reaching into his pocket, he pulls out the letter he found in the loft.) Here, (Handing the letter to her.) here is the letter I found at the ranch.

Victoria: (After taking a quick glance at the letter.) That doesn't prove anything . . . except that you read other people's mail.

Sam: True, but I do know that you leave from Placerville next Tuesday and that you get into Ohio on Saturday, where you meet your husband to be, Dr. Colin Owen, at the train station.

Victoria: (Tilting her head slightly to indicate that he just got caught in a lie. Accusingly.) I arrive on Friday!

Sam: (Correctively.) No. You're supposed to arrive on Friday, but due to the snow, your train will be a day late.

Victoria: (Adversarial, almost yelling.) Nothing you've said can be proven. There's no reason for me to believe you.

Sam: I don't know how to convince you. (Reflectively. Knowing that revealing too much information of her possible future could be problematic.) Or even if I should try. There's stuff I'm sure I shouldn't tell you.

Victoria: Like what?

Sam: Like if you have any kids or the date of your death. Maybe all that changes because I'm here now. I don't know. I just don't.

Victoria: (Victoria begins to believe that Sam thinks he is telling the truth; however, she still is unconvinced he can be from the future.) Well, I don't believe you about being from the future. That's just absurd. But I do feel like I can trust you about not wanting to hurt us. You've had plenty of chances to do that already. (She takes a big breath and holds it for a second, then lets it out.) I don't know what to do with you. You saved our lives. I can't just throw you out in the snow, but at the same time I can't have you messing up our lives either.

Sam: (Letting her know that this time displacement is not a one sided deal. It has big consequences for him, as well.) Don't for a moment think, that this doesn't mess with me, too. I have a wife and friends that I will likely never see again. I have no idea how I got here, if I can get back to my own time or if I'm stuck here forever. I don't know if it matters whether you believe me about when I'm from or not. I just know that I'm here now. So, if you want my help, just let me know. I'll be happy to do whatever I can. If not, I'll leave first chance I get when the weather clears.

Victoria: (Takes a couple seconds to consider her options. She weighs the fact that Sam seems to be considerate of their best interest. Also, she could use the help in caring for Austin. He hasn't made any attempt to locate a deed or money.) Okay, you can stay here for a few days, then we'll see how things are. But if you start acting crazy, I'll have no choice but to send you on your way.

Sam: I can live with that. I'll move my stuff to the middle room. (Sam begins to get up from his chair.)

Austin: (From in the other room. He coughs a couple times then calls out in a raspy voice.) Victoria? Victoria?

Sam and Victoria both get up and rush into the room. Sam stays at the door to not startle Austin too much. Victoria goes to the head of the bed and holds Austin's hand.

Victoria: I'm here Squirrel. I'm right here.

Austin: (Looking only at Victoria.) I had a terrible dream. I dremt that something happened to mom and dad and that we had to run away. It was real cold and , (He senses something out of the norm.) and, (he notices that he is not in his bed at the ranch.) where are we?

Victoria: (In a very motherly voice.) We're at Ren's cabin. (Pointing at Sam in the doorway.) And this is Sam. (Austin looks at Sam. Sam smiles at Austin. Austin looks back at Victoria, ignoring Sam as if Sam was intruding.) He lives here.

Sam: (In a friendly, calm tone.) Hi, Austin. You had us scared for a while. (Austin only looks at Victoria.)

Austin: Where's mom and dad? (Austin's voice becomes harsh.) Why is *he* still here? (Sam knows that Austin is uncomfortable and distrustful of him.)

Sam: (Excusing himself to keep Austin from getting more upset.) Victoria. Make sure you get some water in him. Like I said before, he'll be very dehydrated by now. I'll leave you two to talk for a while. I'll just be in the other room.

Victoria nods as she picks up the water cup. Sam steps out of the room, closing the door part-way.

Victoria: (Heard from the room as Sam walks to the table where he was seated previously.) Austin, you really shouldn't be so mean to him. He saved your life.

Sam is sitting at the table, takes a sip of coffee. Voices are heard from the bedroom. Sam looks across the room and out the front window. The snow is still falling rather heavily. The voices from the room become crying. Sam takes another sip of coffee, puts his cup on the table, gets up and starts clearing the table.

Act VIII, Scene 5

[Not Guilty]

Sam is sitting at the table. The table is cleared of everything except two mugs. Sam is staring out the window. Victoria comes in from the bedroom. The bedroom is quiet, the house is quiet. Victoria approaches the table.

Sam: (Quietly.) How is he?

Victoria: (Sits at the table where Sam placed her coffee cup, in a chair facing Sam. She speaks in hushed tones.) He's doing better. He's taking it pretty hard though. (She sips from the cup.) He blames himself for the whole thing. I don't know where he gets it, but he's always taken on the responsibilities of the world. He makes friends with everybody and whatever problems his friends have, they become Austin's problems too. (Victoria takes a break and the room becomes silent. She can't help but to explain more about Austin. She breaks the silence.) He's been teaching English to a Chinese prostitute (Sam is surprised that she uses the term casually and that Austin is even allowed to talk to her.) he calls Dragon Fly, while learning Chinese from her. He's been learning the Miwok Indian language from his half-breed Indian friend Falling Leaf. He plays some sort of treasure hiding game with his friend, Paul from the livery. . . . He befriends almost everybody, especially those that most people ignore or disparage. He knows the printer, the rail station manager, the bartenders, the black smith, and nearly everybody else. The only people he doesn't like are from Wilson's ranch, the Bar R Bar.

She takes a break. Looks out the window watching the snow fall. Then she continues.

Victoria: (Almost apologetically.) I was really surprised by how mean he was toward you. He never acts like that. After I told him what you did, he said he was sorry that he was rude. He said he just got really scared and mad when he saw you again. He doesn't know why.

Sam: Again? I never met him before last night.

Victoria: He said that he saw you here last night before Hank's men came to the house. He doesn't remember a lot about the attack. He's scared and confused.

Sam: I'm sure that the trauma of what I saw in the ranch house has a lot to do with it. He must have been terrified. His drive for survival is only way a kid his size could do so much damage to those bastards. One had a severe head injury and the other had quite a cut across his groin.

Victoria: So you think Austin's upset about killing those men.

Sam: I'm sure he's traumatized, who wouldn't be? But . .

Victoria: (Blurts out, in defense of Austin, interrupting Sam.) They were going to rape and kill us! (Victoria starts crying.)

Sam: Hold on. I know. I know. [\(Pause while collecting thoughts.\)](#) I saw the ropes and I can guess the situation in the kitchen. [\(He puts his hand on her shoulder.\)](#) You don't have to defend him . . or his actions. He could have done much more to them and I wouldn't think it was enough.

Sam: [\(Removing his hand from her shoulder.\)](#) What I was going to say is that what killed them was a bullet to the head. They may have eventually died from the other injuries, but there was no surviving the head shots.

Victoria: [\(Still defending Austin.\)](#) He hit one with the frying pan and cut the other, but he didn't shoot those bastards!

Sam: [\(Reassuring her that he doesn't think Austin is a bad person.\)](#) Austin doesn't seem the type to go around shooting people in the head. My guess is that the two men I saw in the window last night, shot the two that attacked you. You, [\(Correcting himself.\)](#) We won't have to worry about those two any more. But, I'm pretty sure we're not out of trouble yet. I expect that tomorrow, when this storm lets up, they'll be back to find us.

Victoria: They don't know we're alive. And they don't know that you're here. We can just hide out here until we can catch the train next week. With as much snow as we've had, it'll be a few days before they can come back around.

Sam: [\(Taking note of the extended time line for the return of the ranch hands. He also wants to let Victoria know that he expects them to return and that he is planning to be ready for them.\)](#) Of course, we'll do our best to keep a low profile; however, from everything I read, Wilson will make sure there are no loose ends. They'll come looking for you. They won't have any qualms about killing a stranger, too. Especially if they think I may have seen anything. We're going to need to make some plans for their return. Also, we have to meet with the district judge before you leave. You have to present your case, or this whole valley goes to Wilson.

Victoria: [\(Making her priorities known.\)](#) I don't even care anymore. I just want to take Austin and get out of here.

Sam: Of course, the safety of you and your brother are top priority. At the same time, it would be wrong to have your parents die for nothing. And we both know, until Wilson is sure you and your brother are dead, the Bar R Bar be watching every route out of here.

Victoria: ([The fury builds within her. Her anger indirectly indicts Sam for making her realize the danger they are in.](#)) I know, . I know. . I know, damn it! I know. I feel like there's no scenario that has Austin and me leaving alive.

Sam: ([Looking for possible safety solutions.](#)) Maybe the district judge will be able to help. If he rules in your favor, then Wilson will go to prison for fraud. Once he's in jail and can't retaliate against the townsfolk, we could get him convicted of the murders as well. From what I read, the townsfolk won't even think about convicting him, if he's free. I'm sure that'll change if he's behind bars.

Victoria: That means an extra trip to town. I don't like it. ([Victoria thinks about it for a few seconds.](#)) There's no reason we can't see the judge on Monday, the day before Austin and I leave for Ohio. We'll need to be in town that night anyway.

Sam: Our research showed that Wilson has set up a special court date on Sunday. Not sure how he managed that, but it's clear that he didn't want anyone to contest his claim.

Victoria: 'Our' research?

Sam: My wife and I. She's a real estate lawyer. She did a lot of digging to get this information.

Victoria: Oh, sorry. I forgot. ([Sarcastically.](#)) You're from the future.

Sam: ([Getting weary of the confrontation while he is doing his best to help by cooperation.](#)) That's not helping.

Victoria: Okay. ([Indicating that the future-man thing is not resolved.](#)) I'll drop it for now.

Sam: About this hearing, since Wilson will be there, he'll find out you're still alive. I don't know how we're going keep you safe after that. Any ideas?

Victoria: Austin can tell us how to get in and out of town without being seen. He does it all the time. We should be safe in town during the day, but it's the nights that concern me . . . a lot!

Sam: When Austin wakes up again, we can see how he is progressing. We can decide then, how best to do this. He may have ideas that can help.

Victoria: (Uneasy.) Sam?

Sam: Yeah?

Victoria: I (Long pause as she composes herself.) I've been afraid to bring this up . . . because I'm afraid I know the answer. What happened to my Uncles and Aunt Gwen?

Sam: I'm sorry. (He pauses to let her take in the meaning. Victoria's eyes begin to well up.) When I got the supplies, I also checked on the other two ranches. They were killed last night, too.

A couple of tears make their way down her cheeks.

Sam: (Almost apologetically.) With all that's been happening, I couldn't find the right time to tell you. (Sam gives her some time to grieve.) I'll have to move the bodies before they burn the houses, so we can give them a proper burial.

Act VIII, Scene 6

[Government Visit]

Scene: Trish's office. It is a large, well organized office. Her large, solid wood desk is high class executive style and tidy with three comfortable, stuffed guest chairs in front and a high-back office chair for Trish. The desk has three computers. One computer is for law reference, one computer is used for general reference and the main computer, with two screens, is used for documents and communications (email etc.). There are several file cabinets, a full wall bookshelf, and three tables that match the desk. Each table is for a different case. The case files are neatly placed on each table for easy access. Trish uses the tables for her pressing, active cases. There are signs above each table with the case names: Weber vs CA, Simons vs Simons and Creighton vs Bar R Bar. Trish is sitting at the desk working on the main computer.

Desk phone rings. Trish answers it.

Voice over phone: Mrs. Reynolds, there is a Mr. Philips from Special Services here to see you. He states it has to do with the Reynolds case.

Trish: Sure, show him in.

The door opens and a man in a black suit enters. He is carrying a brief case. His tie pin resembles the amulet worn by Wac ih a'. Trish stands and crosses to greet him halfway to her desk.

Roger (Man in suit.): Mrs. Reynolds. (Extending his hand.) I'm Roger Philips from Special Services, specifically, witness protection. (He shows her a gold badge that has Special Services across the top and Supervisor across the bottom with an ID card that has Special Services and his picture.)

Roger puts his brief case on the desk, opens it and takes out a thick file folder. The folder has written on it: 'R, Aj. #17-099a-01 Sensitive'.

Trish: Special Services? This just got a lot more interesting.

Roger: (He hands her the folder.) I suggest you read through this a couple times. It'll make more sense if you give it some time. I understand that this person will help with what you've been looking for. (Pointing out the word sensitive on the folder.) As you see, this is considered sensitive. You may want to limit the number of people with whom you share this.

Trish: (Receiving the heavy folder.) I'll look through this tonight. Thank you very much.

Roger: My pleasure.

Trish: Have a seat. (Indicating one of the chairs in front of her desk.) Can I get you something? Coffee?

Roger: No thanks. I have to be going. Good luck! (He shakes her hand, turns and leaves.)

Trish starts looking through the folder and after reading a little bit, gets a confused look on her face. She then takes a quick scan through the file looking for a business card. Finding none, she goes to the office phone and presses a button.

Voice on phone: Yes, Mrs, Reynolds.

Trish: Shelly, is the guy from special services still there? If not, did he leave a business card?

Shelly: No ma'am. He left right away and didn't leave a card. Sorry.

Trish: (Resigned.) That's fine. Thank you.

Trish hangs up the phone and returns to her seat behind the desk. She removes the stack of documents from the folder and starts to carefully read them.

Act VIII, Scene 7

[Help arrives]

Scene: The boys drive up on ATV's with tracks. They are dressed in winter riding gear and helmets.

CJ (Over the helmet comms.): This must be it.

Taylor (Comms.): Yeah. Looks pretty good. A lot better than I thought it would.

They take off their helmets and switch off the comms power as they approach the door. As they walk they remove their gloves and shake off any snow from their riding suits.

Tylor: I saw some smoke from the chimney as we rode up.

CJ: Knowing Uncle Sam, it'll be pretty toasty inside.

The boys step onto the porch.

Act VIII, Scene 8

[Humbling First Impression]

Scene: Sam and Victoria are seated at the table, same positions as end of Scene 5.

Sam: Um, (Sam pauses, but then continues, uncomfortably.) I don't mean to be disrespectful. Did your uncle have someone living with him? A male?

Victoria: No. (Becoming very defensive.) What are you insinuating?

Sam: I'm not insinuating anything. It's just that there's one extra body that I can't account for. Since he's not supposed to be there, one of 'em must be from Wilson's crew, just like the two in your ranch. I'm sorry, but you're going to have to tell me which one to burry. I don't want to make a mistake.

Victoria: *(Calming herself down.)* Okay, Okay, I'm sorry for getting angry. With the weather like this we only have a few more hours of light before

She doesn't finish her sentence before the door bursts open, snow, wind and two naked teenage boys come flying through the door. Victoria instinctively rushes toward the bedroom to protect Austin. The boys fly into the room as if they were pushed. They are CJ and Tylor. They get themselves up while Sam rushes, rifle in hand, to close the door. Sam looks out the door before closing and latching it. When the boys are getting up they see that they are naked and that, not only Sam is there, but a girl they don't know. They try their best to cover themselves and turn away from Victoria. She chuckles at the embarrassing site.

Sam: Victoria. *(As he points her to the bedroom.)* Could you throw some blankets out here? *(Victoria retreats to the bedroom to get the blankets.)*

Tylor: What happened? We were just outside and then this.

A blanket comes flying out the door, then another. Sam gets the blankets and hands them to the boys while they are talking. They turn around to face him when they are wrapped up.

CJ: I swear we didn't come up here naked. *(Defending himself as if being accused.)*

Sam: I believe you. Who would come up here in the snow without any clothes?

Sam motions them toward the table. Tylor, attempting to discover the cause of their embarrassing entrance, goes to the door, opens it a bit, looks outside, seeing nothing of interest, he closes it. They continue talking as they move to the table. The three of them, standing, congregate at one end of the table.

Tylor: It wasn't snowing just a couple of seconds ago. It didn't even snow the whole trip.

Sam: *(Understanding what may have just happened, Sam continues to tease them.)* So you did plan this? *(Calling to Victoria.)* They're covered up now.

Tylor: No. Really we didn't!

Victoria comes out of the bedroom and returns to the table. The boys step behind Sam.

Victoria: Sam. Do you know these boys?

Sam: ([Addressing Victoria.](#)) These are my nephews. They were supposed to meet me up here. And, . . . they usually don't run around in the snow naked.

The boy's hang their heads in embarrassment.

Sam: ([Addressing Tylor.](#)) What is today?

Tylor: It's Wednesday, November twenty-second. That's when you said to come up.

Sam: ([Addressing CJ.](#)) Year?

CJ: Duh, Two thousand seventeen. ([Immediately after saying it CJ knows he was rude. Tylor gazes at him, surprised by the comment. Sam gives CJ a stern look. CJ apologizes for his disrespectfulness.](#)) Sorry. Two thousand seventeen, sir.

Sam: Okay. And when was the last time we saw each other?

CJ: Before Thanksgiving. It was a week ago, Sunday morning, sir, before you came up here.

Sam: Thank you CJ. You can drop the sir. But I expect you and your brother to show our host and her home proper respect.

CJ: Yes, sir. ([Realizing that he forgot to drop the sir.](#)) I mean, I understand.

Sam: ([Still addressing the boys.](#)) There is a boy in the other room. His name is Austin. He's not feeling well right now, so let's keep it down. ([Sam directs his attention to Victoria.](#)) Please introduce yourselves. This is Victoria.

The boys carefully position themselves near Victoria, making sure they don't expose themselves again.

CJ: I'm very sorry about our entrance. I'm Sam's nephew from El Dorado Hills, CJ Davis, 16. It's a pleasure to meet you, ma'am.

CJ Gently takes her hand and makes a slight bow before releasing it.

Tylor: (As CJ steps back, Tylor steps forward.) I'd like to apologize for our entry as well. I'm Tylor Davis, 14, from El Dorado Hills, Sam's favorite nephew. Pleased to make your acquaintance, ma'am.

Tylor Gently takes her hand, makes a slight bow and releases her.

Victoria: Gentlemen, I am Victoria Creighton, Nurse. And, as already mentioned, Austin Creighton, 10, is resting in the other room.

Due to the calamity of their entrance, and the impossibility of Austin and Victoria being from 140 years ago, the boys do not recognize the names as those in the report.

Sam: (Addressing the boys.) I'm both happy and horrified to see you. (The boys get a quizzical look on their faces.) I'll have to explain later.

Tylor: (Whispering to Sam.) Austin Creighton? Must be a popular name in the family.

Sam: (Nods yes, then diverts the conversation to delay the time discussion.) There's a bundle of clothes in there. (Pointing to the bedroom.) Austin isn't well, so very quietly find something to wear and then come back out to the table.

Tylor: But our (Pointing toward the front door. Sam give him a stern look. Tylor then remembers that when he looked earlier, the ATVs weren't there.) Yes, sir.

The boys leave to find some clothes.

Victoria: (Confidentially addressing Sam, so she is not overheard.) Very well mannered young men. Where did they come from?

Sam: The same place I did. (Victoria gives a look of ‘Not that again.’) Looks like a lot more explaining ahead. (Uncomfortably.) Not sure how they’ll take it.

Victoria crosses over to the front window.

Victoria: (Looking out the window.) How did they get here. There’s no tracks, no horses.

Sam: Victoria. As I said before. I have no idea. I love them very much, so I’m happy to see ‘em. At the same time, this is *not* where they belong. I’d rather them stay in their right time, than see them here. (His voice showing his agitation.) I’m so pissed off and frustrated, I don’t know whether to scream or cry. But the bottom line is, neither will help.

Victoria: (Consolingly.) I’m sorry Sam. I don’t know what to say.

Tylor comes out of the bedroom dressed very much like Sam.

Tylor: Uncle Sam, nothing fits CJ and I don’t have any shoes.

Sam: Okay Tylor. Come here.

Tylor walks over to Sam. Sam stretches out his arms and Tylor walks right in. They both have a long embrace. After the embrace, Tylor steps back.

Tylor: (Sensing an emotional need from Sam.) You okay?

Sam: Just a little emotional, I guess. Good to see you.

CJ walks out still wrapped in the blanket.

CJ: (Informing, but not complaining.) There’s nothing my size. Is there somewhere else for me to look? By the way, I’m sorry, but Austin woke up. He wants some water. Can I get him some?

Sam: (Pleased to hear both that Austin woke up again and that he is thirsty.) By all means. He can have as much water as he wants, but only in small sips for now. We don't want him choking. I'll work on getting you some clothes.

CJ: Okay. Where's the fridge?

CJ, shuffling in his blanket, passes by Sam as he walks toward the kitchen. Sam grabs him and gives him a big hug. CJ, carefully keeping the blanket wrapped, returns the hug.

Sam: No fridge. Get the water from the pump in the kitchen.

CJ shuffles over to the pump and fills the cup. He then shuffles back to the table and puts the cup down.

Victoria: We don't have much time left for light.

Sam: Right. Okay. How's this for a plan? Tylor will go with you and me to handle the chores. CJ can stay here with Austin. CJ has had some medical training and is good with kids. He'll take good care of him.

Tylor: (Surprised and complaining in his most mannered tone.) We just got here.

Victoria: The extra pair of hands will be a big help, but it's not an easy chore. (Signaling to Sam about it may be inappropriate for Tylor to have to deal with dead bodies and the murder scenes.)

Sam: You're not wrong. It'll be tough on him, but it won't be too much. (Tylor resigns himself to the fact that he is going out again.)

Victoria: I know where we might find something to fit CJ during our trip.

Tylor: (Looking at his feet. Addressing Sam in a tone that suggests that Sam forgot about his lack of footwear.) Um, I can't ride the ATV without shoes.

Sam: There are no ATVs. We're ridding horses. (Tylor looks surprised.) You can wear these, (Sam takes off his boots.) I'll just get some boots at our first stop. And, by the way, no more talk of ATV's.

Tylor: (Taken slightly aback, and not sure why ATVs are gone and out of the vocabulary list.) Oh. . . Okay. So, where are we going?

Sam: We are going to visit some ranches. (In a no-nonsense manner, with a slight nod to indicate the importance.) I'll explain more on the way.

Tylor: Oh. (Looking down towards the floor, understanding that the timing is not right for more questions, still knowing that he will find out when he needs to know.) Okay.

Victoria: (Walking toward the back door.) I'll start getting the horses ready. (Stops to face Tylor.) Tylor, when you get your boots on, come on out and help me, please.

Tylor: Yes, ma'am.

Sam hands the boots to Tylor. Tylor puts on the boots and a jacket, then goes out the back door.

Sam: (Looking at CJ.) Make sure you keep Austin from getting too excited. He's recovering from extreme hypothermia. (Pulling CJ closer to him, and speaking in a hushed voice.) There shouldn't be anyone here but us. When we come back we will be coming from that road (Sam is pointing through the front door.) and we'll have six horses and a couple wagons. I'll be in the front.

Sam takes the rifle from the table and makes his way to the front window. He motions CJ to follow. At the front window, Sam points to a location on the road.

Sam: See that stump out there?

CJ: Yeah.

Sam: When we come back, we'll stop right there and holler to you. (CJ nods in understanding.) You just open and close the door once, and we'll come on in. If there is any trouble in here, open the door and wave us in, keep the door closed, open it twice or any other signal.

CJ: Okay? (Not sure why all the code and security.)

Sam: We'll take that to mean that you need help, and there's someone in here that shouldn't be. (CJ nods in understanding.)

Sam: (Pauses, makes sure that there is a round in the chamber, hands CJ the rifle, and looks him in the eyes. In a forced whisper.) If anyone else comes up here and doesn't stop there or if they come up from the back, shoot them.

CJ: (Shocked.) What? (He raises his voice in objection and disbelief of the order, as he steps back, trying to hand the rifle back to Sam. Sam rejects the rifle and holds up his finger in front of his face to make CJ quiet down. In an excited but hushed tone, looking at the rifle.) I can't just shoot people for nothing!

Sam: (Whispering emphatically.) Keep it down. Don't upset Austin. And it's not for nothing. (Sam recaptures CJ by the shoulders. In as much of a calming tone as Sam can muster.) I don't have time to explain it all. Here's the short version. There are some men out there that want to kill Austin and Victoria. They won't have any problems killing you, too. There's absolutely no reason for anyone else to be here in this weather, except to kill them.

Sam releases CJ.

CJ: (Putting the responsibility of security and safety back on Sam.) Shouldn't you stay and protect him then?

Sam: (Trying to calm CJ down and let him know that this is just a precautionary step for a very unlikely event.) If Austin wasn't so sick, and you had clothes, we'd all go. Because of this storm, I don't expect the men I'm talking about to come back for a few days, so this is by far, the safest time to leave you two here. When I get back I'll give you and Tylor the full rundown. Trust me, I am just being (Stressing.) *way* overcautious. The chance of them coming today is like one in a million; however, it'd be wrong of me to not tell you. Okay?

CJ: (Somewhat relieved about the odds, but still quite nervous.) Okay. You know, you're scarin' me pretty good.

Sam: (Sam is now standing in the doorway. The horses can be heard behind him.) I know and I'm sorry. I wouldn't ask this if I had another choice. And don't be scared, just stay alert. Love you. (Sam turns and heads out the door.)

CJ: (Before the door closes.) Love you, too. (CJ has worried look on his face).

Austin: (Calling from the other room.) CJ?

CJ: Oh, Right. (Calling back to Austin.) Coming, Austin.

CJ grabs the cup of water, stops, then looks at the rifle he is carrying. He puts down the water, carefully and skillfully checks to make sure it is loaded and chambered, picks up the cup and heads back to the bedroom with both the cup and the rifle.

Act VIII, Scene 9

[Moving the Family]

Scene: Crossing the creek heading to the meadow. Snow is falling. Tylor, Sam and Victoria are on horseback heading to the first ranch. Sam is wearing only socks on his feet.

Sam: Tylor. Did you read the report we received about this place?

Tylor: Yes. It was real sad. I suppose that Austin is like the great, great, great, grandson of the one in the report.

Victoria and Sam look at each other, trying to figure a way to break the news to Tylor. The first ranch house comes into view through the snow.

Tylor: Is that one of the ranches? I can't believe it is still standing. I thought it was burned down.

Sam: It will be. That's why we have to go there now.

Tylor: I don't get it. Why are we going to burn it down?

Sam: We aren't. Wilson's men plan on doing it to hide their crimes. Times are a lot different than what you think. I'll get into the details later, but for now you'll have to trust me on this.

Tylor: Okay, but trust you about what?

Sam: What we are going to do is going to seem wrong, but when I finally get to discuss it with you and CJ, you'll see that what we are doing is actually the right thing to do.

Tylor: [\(Timidly. Trying to ask a serious question, very delicately.\)](#) Uncle Sam, you know I trust you, but are we going to go to jail?

Sam: [\(Both Sam and Victoria laugh a little. They both see the irony in the faith of Tylor to Sam, and the uncertainty of the legality of the task.\)](#) No. Not for this.

Tylor: [\(Not fully confident, but relieved that he's not going to get arrested.\)](#) What, exactly, are we going to do?

Sam: We need to get some supplies, save whatever Victoria wants to keep from getting burned and move her parents, aunt and uncles to a proper burial area.

Tylor: Oh. [\(It takes a second for Tylor to figure out what he means.\)](#) We're moving dead people? [\(Visibly troubled.\)](#) I don't know if I can do that. I haven't even seen a dead person before.

Sam: [\(Trying to calm Tylor down a little.\)](#) I'll make it as easy on you as I can, but I'm going to need some help. It's too much for Victoria to deal with right now. I hope you can understand. It'll be tough, but we can do it.

Tylor: [\(Still hasn't convinced himself he will be able to do it.\)](#) Okay. [\(He is starting to see the parallels between the report, the people he has met and the context in which he now finds himself.\)](#) I do understand. I'll try.

Victoria: Tylor. I know we are asking a lot from you. I want to [\(Voice starts to break.\)](#) thank you. It means so much to me.

Tylor: [\(In a tone reflective of duty.\)](#) Ma'am. If my uncle says we should do something, then I'm sure we should. And I will do my best to help. I'm sorry for complaining.

Sam: Victoria, we need to also get whatever we can to help with any *visitors* we may have in the near future.

Victoria: [\(Understanding that he means firearms and ammo.\)](#) I'll make sure we get what we need.

As they approach the barn, Sam gestures (Looking at Tylor he points to his eyes and then to the ground in a sweeping motion. Tylor nods in acknowledgment.) to Tylor to keep an eye out and look for tracks. They reach the barn quietly with no sign of visitors.

Sam: (Hushed.) Tylor, you help Victoria with the wagon and I'll get things ready in the house.

Tylor: (Hushed.) Okay. Why are we being so quiet. The horses and wagon will make a lot more noise that us talking?

Sam: (Feeling silly, he nods in acknowledgment. Speaking regularly.) Habit, I guess.

Sam rides off toward the ranch house.

Camera - Montage, with emphases on the sounds:

Victoria and Tylor tying horses in front of the barn.

Sam's horse in front of the house.

Victoria knowing exactly where the matches are, striking a match and lighting a lantern.

Sam putting on a pair of boots.

Victoria and Tylor hooking up the buckboard to the two horses.

Sam wrapping the parents bodies in sheets.

Victoria and Tylor putting some feed bags and hay on the buckboard.

Tylor putting hay in the feed bins for the cattle outside of the barn.

Victoria putting feed corn in the chicken coup.

Sam getting more clothes from the loft.

Victoria showing Tylor how to drive the buckboard.

Sam and Tylor moving the bodies, wrapped in bedding, to the buckboard.

Victoria looking through cabinets grabbing boxes of ammo, some cash, and a small handgun from her parent's room.

Sam putting on a gun belt.

Victoria handing stacks of clothes and bedding to Tylor.

Sam packing the stuff on the buckboard.

Victoria looking around taking a family portrait off the wall and closing the door.

Tylor, on the front porch, turning off the lamp.

The buckboard leaving the house headed to the next ranch.

The buckboard arriving at the next place.

The interior of the house is a shambles.

The cart pulls up to the buckboard.

The bodies being moved to the cart.

Victoria going through the cupboards.

More food supplies being gathered.

More ammunition being taken from hiding spots.

The stove tool used to pry up a floorboard.

Two rifles and a money box being taken from the hiding spot under the removable floor board.

A box of cash taken from a hidden spot in the pantry.

One body, wrapped in a sheet, added to the cart.

A body still on the floor.

Victoria closes the door.

The buckboard drives off with the cart following and a horse trailing the cart.

The buckboard stops at the last house.

The interior is a shambles.

Saddles are placed in the buckboard.

Two bodies, wrapped in sheets are placed on the cart.

The cart leaves with Sam and Tylor.

More rifles are found under floor boards, more money is found in the pantry.

The cart stops at an explosives shed away from the ranch.

The cart returns with no bodies.

Leaving the last house, Sam is driving the cart, Tylor is driving the next buckboard and Victoria is driving the last buckboard. One horse is tied to the back of the last buckboard. The cart and buckboards head back up the road to the cabin.

Act VIII, Scene 10

[Intense Return]

Scene: Front room of the cabin. CJ, still wrapped in a blanket, is sitting on a rocking chair. Austin, wearing his nightshirt, socks and a cap, is asleep on his lap, wrapped in another blanket. The rifle sits in a chair next to them. It is very quiet. It is dusk outside.

CJ hears a faint sound from the front of the cabin. He gently gets up and places Austin back in the rocker without waking him and quietly picks up the rifle. He turns off the lamp that was sitting on the table, trimmed low. He starts to cross to the door and stubs his toe on a chair making some noise.

CJ: (In a shouted whisper. Obviously in pain, but trying to not make too much noise.) Son of a . . .

He finishes crossing to the door with a slight limp. He cracks open the shutter and peering out the front window, sees something coming up the road toward the cabin. He cocks the hammer back on the rifle, keeping the muzzle in a safe direction. He is visibly upset while keeping a keen eye to the approaching unknown. His breathing gets labored. As the sound draws nearer, CJ can make out the shape of a carriage with a single rider. CJ carefully unlatches the door and opens it a crack so he can put the barrel out. He lies down in a prone position with the rifle pointed in the direction of the carriage. CJ takes a deep breath, holds it for a couple seconds, then lets it out. There are other vehicles behind that one, but the dim light and heavy snow make it unclear as to what follows.

The carriage stops at the stump. CJ listens carefully. He sees the carriage driver wave his hands and yell “CJ! CJ! Its Sam, Victoria and Tylor. Can we come in?” CJ knows that no one else would know all those names. While still laying on the floor, he opens the door fully and then closes it. He rolls onto his back and after taking a huge breath lets out a large sigh, relieving himself of all the tension. He carefully drops the hammer to half cock. Remembering Austin, he glances over to see that Austin is still sleeping. He then gets up, latches the door and moves over to the window on the north side of the cabin to watch the parade of horses and vehicles go by.

The second buckboard stops by the back door and driver gets off, grabs a stack of clothes and heads to the back door. The back door opens and Victoria steps in.

Victoria: CJ, see if these fit. (She hands CJ the clothes.) Sam wants you to help him with the buckboards. I'll get dinner started. How's Austin?

CJ: He's fine, ([Pointing into the front room.](#)) out on the rocker. He drank a lot of water. I put some ointment on his back like he asked. Those are some pretty big cuts. I'm surprised that he didn't complain when I put the ointment on. It was nice that we got to talk a little. Man, is he smart.

Victoria smiles and nods in agreement and pride.

CJ heads off to the bedroom to get dressed. Victoria lights a lamp and then checks the state of the fire in the cook stove. After filling it from the pump, she puts the pot on the stove. She walks over to Austin and puts her fingers through his hair. CJ goes out the back door. Austin wakes up slowly.

Austin: ([In a hoarse, soft voice.](#)) Hi Victoria. Did you get CJ some clothes?

Victoria: ([Laughs a little.](#)) We sure did.

Austin: ([In a hoarse, soft voice.](#)) Why didn't he have any clothes?

Victoria: I'm not sure. I guess they got wet or something. At least he has some now. Right?

Austin: ([In a hoarse, soft voice.](#)) Yeah. I really like him. He's real nice. And he likes to talk to me.

Victoria: His brother is pretty nice too. You can talk to him more tomorrow. How are you feeling? ([While she is talking to him, she checks his pulse and forehead.](#))

Austin: ([Trying to sound more natural.](#)) I'm feeling a lot better. ([He starts coughing.](#) [Back to a hoarse, soft voice.](#)) Just a little weak.

Victoria: ([Smiling at his attempt to sound normal.](#)) I'll have something for you to eat in just a little while. You just stay here 'till I call you. ([As she heads back to the kitchen.](#)) Okay?

Austin: Okay. ([Austin adjusts the blanket a little, curls up onto the chair a bit more and struggles to keep his eyes open.](#) [He soon gives up and falls back to sleep.](#))

Tylor comes in through the back door, quietly, and puts a bundle on the kitchen table.

Tylor: ([Addressing Victoria](#)) Sam said you would need this for tonight's dinner. We should be done in about fifteen minutes. Where should I put the firearms?

Victoria: Um, ([Looking around.](#)) Put them in that room there. ([Pointing to the ante room right off the kitchen. They'll stay warm and dry in there tonight. We will find better places in the morning.](#))

Tylor: Okay, I'll start bringing them in.

[Tylor heads back out the door.](#)

Act VIII, Scene 11

[Everyone Up to Date]

[Scene: Dinner table. Dishes are set for the five of them around the east end of the table. There is food on the plates. Seating is clockwise as follows: Sam, Tylor, Victoria \(at the head\), Austin and CJ. Austin has changed into regular clothes.](#)

Sam: Sure smells good. ([He takes a deep breath and smiles.](#))

Victoria: Austin, ([She takes the hands of CJ and Tylor. And bows her head.](#)) please. ([The others follow suit and take each other's hands.](#))

Austin: ([Hoarse.](#)) Oh, God. We thank thee for thy bounty before us. And for our new friends. ([He starts to tear up.](#)) Please tell Mom and Dad that Victoria and I are okay. Amen.

[CJ's eyes gloss over in a sympathetic reaction to Austin's tears.](#)

Everybody else: Amen.

[The atmosphere is somber.](#)

Sam: ([Picks up a piece of bread and dabs it in his stew. He speaks softly.](#)) Well we better get everybody up to date, so to speak. We'll start with when we are.

CJ: (Puts his spoon down.) You mean where?

The group continues eating while the conversation goes on.

Sam: No CJ, unfortunately, I mean when. Did you get a chance to read the report on this place like Tylor?

CJ: I skimmed through it. I didn't look too much into the details. Why?

Sam: The survivor mentioned was Victoria Creighton. Right? (Austin looks directly at Victoria. Tylor nods his head in the affirmative.)

CJ: Yeah. I think so. (He gets an uneasy feeling, as though everyone is watching him. His eyes dart about the dining party.)

Austin: What report? (Excitedly.) Was I in it?

(Sam, Victoria and Tylor all get very nervous about the question.)

CJ: Sorry, Austin. (Sam is about to stop him. CJ sees the look in Sam's eyes and interprets the sensitivity of the question.) I didn't read it all. But it mostly about this place a hundred and forty years ago.

(Austin is confused. This place wasn't even built just five years ago.)

Sam: That same Victoria is seated at the head of the table. As we sit here, today is Thursday, November twenty-second, 1877.

CJ: No way! That's impossible! (Austin is confused further by CJ's adamant refusal of the date.)

Sam: And losing all your clothes, just by walking through the door . . . I suppose that happens to you every day?

CJ: and Tylor: (Looking down, embarrassed.) Nooo.

Sam: (Looking from CJ to Tylor.) Tylor, how many cell towers, power lines, or airplanes did you see when you were out with Victoria and me?

Austin: [\(Quietly to CJ.\)](#) What's a cell tower?

Tylor: None.

Sam: What about earlier, on your way up?

Tylor: We saw a few power lines and a couple towers.

Sam: And if you are lost, what can guide you back to civilization at night?

Tylor: The glow from the city.

Sam: We were about forty miles from town. [\(Pointing through the front window, even though the shutters are closed.\)](#) There should be quite a glow from right over there in the midst of the blackness. Yet, it is totally dark.

Tylor: [\(Softly, not questioning the result, but the method.\)](#) How did we get here?

Sam: I have no idea. None. CJ, I know it is unbelievable; however, if you can come up with a more plausible explanation, I would really like to hear it. [\(Sincerely.\)](#) Really. Even though I'm trying to convince you, I'm still having a hard time with it myself. You can ask your new best friend what year it is. [\(Gesturing toward Austin.\)](#) Since he's been sick a couple of days, I wouldn't ask about the day.

CJ: [\(Looking at Austin, hoping for an answer of 2017.\)](#) Austin?

Austin: [\(Confidently.\)](#) It's 1877. [\(With much less confidence.\)](#) I don't know if it's Thursday or Friday.

CJ: [\(Looking at the ceiling, then, with a sigh, putting his head in his hands.\)](#) This is going to take some time to sink in.

Austin: [\(In an attempt to reassure CJ, he puts his hand on CJ's forearm. Addressing his new best friend, CJ.\)](#) What are you guys talking about?

CJ: [\(Looks at Sam for approval. Sam gives a nod.\)](#) This is going to be hard to believe, [\(He takes Austin's hand off his arm and puts it on the table, covering it with his hand. Speaking clearly and carefully in a soft tone.\)](#) but

Sam, Tylor and I are from the year 2017. (CJ senses that Austin is not quite sure what he is saying. Clairifying.) We are from the future.

Austin: (Thinking about it carefully.) Are you really from the future? (Excited.) Can you tell me stuff like if I get to see San Francisco? Am I going to be rich or famous? (Austin starts coughing again.)

Sam: (In a caring and concerned tone.) Take it easy Austin. Whether you like it or not, you are still sick. (Answering the question posed.) Austin, even if I knew all those things, I'm not sure I should tell you or, even, if it will still be accurate. It's possible that, in fact, likely, that by being here, we might change the future. So what I know of the past may not be your future. If that makes sense.

Austin: (Uncertain.) Kind of.

Sam: (Takes a sip from his cup.) And to tell you the truth, I'm not too happy about coming to this time. (Austin looks disappointed and offended.) Not that I don't like you and Victoria, quite the contrary, (Austin becomes more relaxed.) but we had lives that we just disappeared from. I had . . . or have? a wife. Tee and CJ had parents and girl friends. (Teasing CJ about the girlfriend, Austin hits CJ with an elbow and a big grin.) They had plans for college. Now what? We know very little about how to live in 1877.

Tylor: (Hoping for a good response.) How do we get back?

Sam: I'm repeating myself, but I have no idea. Where would we even start to try to figure that out. We've nothing to go on. Tylor, what did you do to get to this time?

Tylor: I just stepped (Pointing at the front door.) through that door.

Sam: And I went through that same door, maybe a dozen times, and I was still in 2017. I got here sometime in my sleep. There's nothing in common.

Austin: (Looking at his plate.) I know you don't want to be here, but I'm glad you got here when you did. (Now looking at Sam.)

Victoria: (Trying to lift the atmosphere.) Austin's right. One day later and we wouldn't be having this conversation.

Sam: [\(Trying to not take a hero's credit.\)](#) I suppose, but I still don't understand it.

Austin: Maybe there's a reason for you to be here.

CJ: Let's just say we are in 1877. That means we know what's going to happen. Right?

Tylor: Maybe not. Like Uncle Sam said, since we're here, we may do something to change what will happen. [\(Confusing himself more as he speaks.\)](#) Or maybe by us being here it makes the future the past that we knew or will know have known? [\(He stops because he realizes that he is not making any sense.\)](#) This is too weird.

Victoria: [\(In a tone of caution.\)](#) One thing's for certain. You can't let anybody know you're from the future. You're going to have to learn how we do things in 1877. I've noticed that you mention a lot of things that we don't have like ATV, cell phone, power lines. If you mention that stuff to anybody else, it could bring trouble.

Austin: [\(Noticing a role he could fill that would give him more time with his new friend.\)](#) I could teach CJ how to fit in.

Victoria: [\(Correctively.\)](#) And Tylor.

Austin: [\(Trying to recover from showing favoritism.\)](#) Sorry. Yes, and Tylor too.

Sam: [\(Redirecting the conversation.\)](#) The time change is something we have no control over. I think we should address a more pressing issue. Wilson is still planning to kill Victoria and Austin and then burn the ranches. [\(The mood turns somber, and the cabin quiet. Austin shivers as he gets a chill up his back.\)](#)

Victoria: [\(In a matter-of-fact manner.\)](#) Wilson's men would have chased after us if they thought we had any chance of surviving the night, so they think we're dead. [\(She puts her hand on Austin's.\)](#) But I know Wilson. He'll send his men out to find our bodies to make sure. Since the storm stopped this evening, we should expect them to come looking for us in a few days.

Austin: [\(Angrily.\)](#) I bet he wants to put us in the house so nobody will know how we died.

Tylor: That's exactly what he wanted to do. According to the report, the town marshal is going to claim it was small pox. That's how they're going to justify burning the houses.

Austin: [\(To CJ.\)](#) The town marshal works for Mr. Wilson too.

Sam: That's another reason we moved the family. [\(Austin, surprised, looks at Victoria. Victoria puts her hand on his arm to confirm the statement and reassure Austin that it was done with her permission.\)](#) If, in 2017, Wac ih a' shows them the burial site, they can determine the cause of death and bolster Mr. Owens' case for rightful ownership.

Victoria: [\(Slightly confused, slightly hopeful.\)](#) Colin Owens?

Sam: No. Robert. I don't know the relationship, but it must be at least a five generation gap, but I'm not sure.

Victoria: Oh. [\(Nodding in understanding.\)](#) Of course.

Austin: [\(Out of nowhere, trying to clear his name.\)](#) I didn't mean to kill those two guys.

[CJ is shocked that his young friend would be involved in killing anyone. Sam is taken a little off guard, but understands that Austin wants to clear his name.](#)

Sam: [\(Looking directly at Austin.\)](#) You didn't. Those two men were killed when they were shot. Must have been another of Wilson's men that shot them. Of course, none of us would be upset with you if you had killed them. So don't let it bother you. You did what was necessary. You and your sister are alive because of your quick thinking and decisive action. [\(Pauses for a second.\)](#) You did well.

Sam: [\(Lightheartedly, but delivered as fact, referring to the conversation.\)](#) Where was I, before Austin became a hero.

[Austin becomes a little shy and embarrassed to be called a hero. CJ gives Austin a one-armed-side hug and Victoria gives is arm a slight squeeze.](#)

Sam: Oh, yeah. I was thinking it's kind of curious though, Wac ih a' said he was a caretaker on behalf of the Creighton's, not Robert Owens.

Austin: [\(Chuckling.\)](#) Wac ih a'?

Sam: Yes. That's the guy in 2017 that showed me around. [\(Quizzically.\)](#) What's so funny?

Austin: [\(Explaining as a teacher.\)](#) Wac ih a' is Miwok for fox. Indian's know foxes as tricksters. He might have been tricking you.

[Everyone gets a big smile at Sam's expense.](#)

Sam: [\(Also amused by the meaning of the name.\)](#) I guess he was pretty tricky, but he was also very helpful. [\(Not knowing if he was given any misinformation.\)](#) I Think.

Sam: [\(Re-focused and Directed. \)](#) Back to our top priority. Victoria and Austin. How are we going to keep them safe?

Victoria: [\(Offering a solution.\)](#) I'm leaving next week for Ohio. I'll just take Austin with me. [\(Austin nods in agreement.\)](#) Wilson shouldn't follow me there. Besides, I'll have a new name in not too long, Lord willing.

Sam: That sounds fine, but we'll have to keep you two out of sight 'till then. We also need to get to the district judge before you leave. And we know Wilson will eventually look for you here.

Austin: [\(Brightly and straightforward.\)](#) If he comes here, we can hide in the mine.

Victoria: The mine's been closed off for years. I don't know if there is even a way in any more.

Austin: [\(Rather excitedly.\)](#) There's a secret door behind the pantry shelf. Ren and I played treasure hunt in there all the time. I'll show you. We even made maps. [\(Now, more somber.\)](#) He gave me a special key that I was supposed to use after he died, but I never felt good about coming up here after that.

Sam: [\(Trying to keep the tone from getting any sadder.\)](#) Sounds great, Austin. You can show us as soon as we're finished here. [\(Now addressing Victoria.\)](#) We need a cover story for the boys and me to be here. Wilson will probably bring the marshal when they burn the houses. They'll be looking for you and Austin, as well.

CJ: Why can't we be caretakers for Victoria's dad? . . I'm sorry, I forgot his name.

Austin: ([A little irritated. Scolding CJ.](#)) Ben. My dad's name is Ben. My mom is Marsha. You need to remember that.

CJ: ([Directly to Austin.](#)) Yes, I know. I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.

([The room gets quiet as everyone settles down.](#))

Austin: ([Directly to CJ. Softly.](#)) That's okay. Didn't mean to get angry.

CJ: ([Responding to Austin, but basically apologizing to everybody for his lack of preparation and inattentiveness.](#)) No, I should be more attentive.

Sam: Wilson's men are going to be snooping around and probably coming from both sides. We'll have to make it overwhelmingly clear that they're not welcome here. Any show of weakness puts all our lives in jeopardy.

Tylor: Can't we just load up the wagons and ride away?

Sam: Non-confrontation should always be considered the first option; however, the weather makes that impossible. As soon as the roads are passable, Wilson and his men will be here. Our only way out is west, into trouble. Eastern trails won't be passable 'till spring.

CJ: That means we stay here and wait for 'em. ([Concerned.](#)) We'll be like sitting ducks!

Sam: I hope that's what they'll think. Fortunately, we have three things in our favor. First, they don't know we're here. That will surprise them. If they're caught off guard, then they won't have a plan for us, but we'll have a plan for them.

CJ: Second?

Sam: They don't know if we know about Victoria and Austin, yet. That means they won't know if they're alive or if we've seen anything.

Victoria: Yet?

Sam: I'm sure Wilson will have somebody secretly check the ranch houses. Once they see we've been there, they'll know something's up.

Austin: What about the third thing?

Sam: They don't know how many of us there are. Hopefully, sitting ducks, or, better yet, one sitting duck, is what they'll expect. We'll use the next couple of days making plans for their arrival and make them the sitting ducks. The tactics you learned over the last few years playing paint ball will come in handy, but don't start thinking, for even a split second, that this is a game. *(In a chilling tone.)* We'll use whatever force is necessary. . . *(Staring into the eyes of CJ. CJ and Tylor both loose color, as if they've seen a ghost.)* Do you understand?

CJ: *(Dryly.)* Yes, sir.

Sam stares into the eyes of Tylor.

Tylor: *(Apprehensively.)* Yes, sir.

Austin: *(Trying to take some of the pressure off CJ and Tylor.)* But they don't even know Victoria and I are alive. Can't you just say that you don't know where we are?

Sam: Of course, we'll start with that. Even if they don't believe me, it will still put some doubt in their minds. One more distraction for them to deal with.

Victoria: They'll insist on searching.

Austin: That's when Victoria and I could hide in the mine. I know lots of places in there to hide.

Sam: *(Addressing Austin.)* Right.

Victoria: They'll kill anyone in their way.

Sam: We'll have to persuade them to think differently. Even a tiger looks for an escape if he thinks he's surrounded.

Sam: ([Addressing CJ and Tylor.](#)) We'll have to outnumber them. ([CJ and Tylor nod in understanding.](#)) (Pause)
Next item is watch keeping.

Sam: CJ, Tylor, we should take turns keeping watch tonight. From what Victoria told me, it would be almost impossible for them to come here tonight. Unfortunately, if Wilson has any doubts about Victoria and Austin making it through last night, he'll send his men, even in these conditions. It's a long shot, I know, but we don't want to be caught unprepared. If they don't come tonight, then it should be a few days before they come up.

CJ: Understood.

Tylor: Yeah. ([Both nodding their heads in understanding.](#))

Sam: Victoria and Austin need to stay away from the windows and we'll keep the shutters closed on all the windows not being used for watch. ([Addressing Victoria.](#)) And I hate to impose, but tonight, we should all sleep in the same room. It will be easier to communicate if we are all in the same place.

Victoria: Yeah, Okay. ([Nodding in agreement.](#))

Sam: If they don't come tonight, then we can stand down the watch until the weather clears.

Austin: ([Quietly to Victoria.](#)) Can CJ or Tylor sleep with me when they're not on watch?

Victoria: ([Addressing the boys.](#)) If it is okay with you, ([Looking at reactions from CJ then Tylor. Austin looks down in embarrassment and to not see them reject the idea.](#)) Austin would prefer to not sleep alone tonight.

Tylor: ([Nodding.](#)) Sure. It's okay with me.

CJ: ([Nodding.](#)) I don't mind either.

Sam: Tomorrow we'll come up with some early warning systems so we won't have to be so wary. I'll take the early morning shift. ([Knowing that Austin will likely fall asleep better with CJ by his side.](#)) Tylor, are you good for a few hours now?

Tylor: Sure. I'm pretty wound up right now. Probably couldn't sleep if I tried.

Sam: Okay. In a few hours, or if you start getting sleepy, trade with CJ.

Tylor: Okay.

Sam: Austin. If you don't mind, this would be a good time to show us the hiding place.

As they stand to leave the table, camera shows that they are all wearing side arms, except Austin. They all get their dishes and head to the kitchen.

Act VIII, Scene 12

[Into the Mine]

Austin leads them into the pantry.

Austin: This is how you get to the mine.

The cabinet has several knot holes in the back. They are marked by letters. He puts his finger through the hole with the letter P around it and pushes down on a lever behind the cabinet. He then pushes the cabinet open to reveal a well maintained mine.

Austin: (Pointing to the hole with the P.) Ren said to only use this one. The others set traps for people trying to steal his gold. He found a lot of gold in here.

The mine has a lot of shovels, picks, hammers, and drills. There are some small casks of black powder and rolls of fuse. There are also a rifle, a shotgun and two revolvers. Along the wall is an assortment of rods, leavers and animal traps.

Sam: Wow. This is a big mine.

Victoria: Why didn't I know about this?

Tylor: That's really cool. Look at all the mining stuff.

CJ: What kind of traps do the other holes set?

Austin: I don't know. They must be dangerous because he said to never use them. Ren only showed me this one and the R.

Sam: What does the R do?

Austin: You need a key. I was supposed to use the key after Ren passed away, but I didn't really feel like coming up here. Maybe tomorrow, ([addressing CJ and Tylor.](#)) if you're with me, I might feel like it. Ren said it would be our last game. That's kinda why I didn't want to . . .

Victoria: ([Seeing how hard it is on Austin to talk about it, she interrupts.](#)) How far does this go?

Austin: ([Mentally returning to the present.](#)) It goes all the way through the mountain. It runs into a cave that looks into Harmony Valley.

Tylor: Why did he keep it a secret?

Austin: Ren was a prospector. This is the mine he was working. He would get supplies in town, head out of town at night and circle back here to the mine. When his supplies got low, he'd sneak out at night and go back to town in the morning from another direction. He said it was to keep from get'n robbed.

CJ: Pretty smart. He never did get robbed, did he?

Austin: No, not once.

Sam: You said he did pretty well here. Any idea how much he got out?

Austin: He never said directly, but he said she, meaning the mine, was good to him. He showed me a stack of gold coins once.

Sam: It's been a long day for everyone. Austin, especially, needs his sleep. He can show us the rest tomorrow. For now, if we see anyone approaching the cabin, this is where Victoria and Austin will hide. Okay?

All: ([Not in unison.](#)) Okay.

Act VIII, Scene 13

[Getting to Know You]

Night - everybody is in bed. Victoria is in a bed along the wall, Sam is in the bed he used last night, Austin and CJ are in the other bed along the wall. CJ is laying on his back, staring at the ceiling. Austin is laying on his stomach, due to his back injuries, staring at the wall. Austin and CJ talk quietly with each other.

Austin: (Turning his head from looking at the wall to looking at CJ.) You must think I'm a baby for wanting you to sleep with me?

CJ: Of course not! After all you've been through. . . . I'm just happy to be here for you. . . . (Thinking to himself for a moment.) It must be really hard to deal with. If you need anything at all, just ask. You know, I think you're one of the bravest people I know. I've only known you for less than a day, but I can tell by your character, that you had good parents that truly loved you I bet your parents would be really proud of you. I'm not even related and I'm proud of you. You're one tough hombre.

Austin: Thanks for say'n so, but I don't feel tough. I feel like crying . . . a lot.

CJ: You can cry all you want. It doesn't mean you're weak, just that you really loved them.

Austin: (Pauses to gather courage.) Tell me about your mom and dad. You must miss them too.

CJ: Of course I do. But it's a little different for me. I can't believe I'm say'n this, but we're like a hundred years before my parents are even born. Still, I know that they'll be heartbroken when my brother and I just disappear without a trace. Everything that's happened today makes me really miss 'em . . . and it's only been a day. I usually don't miss 'em this much, even after a few weeks.

Austin: What were they like? I bet they were kind like you.

CJ: They were kind . . . (Remembering that they aren't born yet.) or will be kind . . . Anyways, my parents meet in college, fell in love and got married in 1997. Three years later they had me, and a couple years later they had Tylor. My dad is a fireman like Sam used to be. I don't think you have 'em yet, or at least firemen today aren't like my dad.

Austin: What do you mean?

CJ: Dad and Sam spent the last thirty plus years helping others, especially in dangerous situations. It was their job. They would go into burning buildings to rescue people and put out the fires. They also rescued people when they would get stuck on cliffs or tall buildings, when there were floods or earthquakes. They also helped people when they were sick or injured. They were called paramedics and did all kinds of medical stuff.

Austin: [\(In defense of his time period, feeling like CJ was boasting a little.\)](#) We have people that help when there's trouble.

CJ: [\(Sensing the defensive comment and trying to not be confrontational, he explains as best he can.\)](#) I'm sure you have lots of people that help when there is a problem, it's different though, it's not their job. They're good people helping the best they know how, and I think that's great. I think the main difference is that Dad and Sam were professionals. They had special training to handle almost any problem. They would be quick and safe. They didn't just try to help, they did help. They saved a lot of people.

Austin: How many?

CJ: I don't know, exactly, . . . lots. Both of them got awards for saving people. They didn't talk much or brag about their saves. To them, it was just what they were supposed to do.

Austin: Wow. I guess Sam was just being a fireman when he saved Victoria and me.

CJ: Yes and No. I'm sure he used his training, but he would have helped anyway - that's just the way Uncle Sam is. I think that's just the way fireman are. My dad is always helping others. Neighbors would always come by asking for help or advice on how to do something.

Austin: What else, besides being a fireman.

CJ: He was smart and funny. He took Tylor and me on adventures. Usually with Uncle Sam, but sometimes on our own, just the three of us. He would teach us stuff about survival, how to shoot, what plants to eat and not eat, how to use a map and compass. [\(CJ starts to tear up.\)](#) How to start fires . . .

Austin: [\(Trying to not cry too, interrupting to change the topic slightly.\)](#) What . . . What about your mom?
[\(Wiping a tear from his cheek.\)](#)

CJ: [\(After composing himself.\)](#) Um, yeah. . . She was a nurse at the hospital.

Austin: Like Victoria's going to be?

CJ: Yeah. She's in charge of the terminally ill treatment wing at the Children's Hospital. I don't know how she does it.

Austin: What do you mean?

CJ: Every patient she sees will die soon. There's nothing they can do to stop whatever disease the kids have. She becomes friends with most of them, but then she has to watch them get worse and die.

Austin: That would be hard.

CJ: She was also very kind and thoughtful. To me, she was the best mom in the world.

[CJ can't hold back the tears any longer. He looks away from Austin and takes a few seconds to wipe away the tears.](#)

CJ: [\(In a broken voice.\)](#) Tell me about your parents.

Austin: I . . . I can't yet. [\(Austin almost immediately tears up.\)](#)

CJ: [\(Looking again at Austin.\)](#) That's okay. Tell me later. I really want to hear about 'em though.

Austin: Your parents were like mine. [\(Still wiping his tears.\)](#) I bet they miss you.

CJ: You know, they probably don't even know I'm gone yet.

Austin: Why?

CJ: Because Tylor and I are supposed to be staying with Uncle Sam for four days up in this cabin. They know we're safe with him, so it may be a week or more before they look for us. [\(CJ pauses to compose himself.\)](#) Of course, we're here now, so they'll never find us.

Austin: [\(Waits for a few seconds for the emotion to recede.\)](#) I know you'd rather be at home. And it is selfish of me, but I'm glad you're here. [\(Pauses to construct his next question.\)](#) What do you think will happen to us? Do you think Sam will take care of us, I mean, like a family, you, Tylor and me?

CJ: [\(Confidently.\)](#) Don't worry. Uncle Sam will definitely take care of us, including you and Victoria.

Austin: He won't have to worry about Victoria, she's getting married soon.

CJ: He'll take care of *all* of us for as long as we need or want him. You can be sure of that.

Austin: [\(Hesitantly.\)](#) I don't know if he even likes me, after all the trouble I put him through.

CJ: Don't be silly! First of all, none of this was your fault and secondly, of course he likes you. I can tell by the way he talks to you. He's always asking me how you're doing. You probably don't notice it, but he keeps a very close eye on you. He watches to see how you move, respond to questions and how fast you get tired. I heard him talking to Victoria about you. They were talking about your recovery. He really cares about you; not just physically, but emotionally too.

Austin: Really?

CJ: Yeah, really. They said we'd have to become a family. I think that somehow makes you my little brother.

Austin: Do you really think so?

CJ: [\(Reassuringly.\)](#) I know so. You're like his third nephew. And, I for one, couldn't be happier. [\(In a softer, but instructional tone.\)](#) Let's get some sleep. I have to get up in a few hours. [\(Pauses.\)](#) By the way, do you want Tylor to sleep with you, or in Sam's bed?

Austin: [\(Shyly.\)](#) With me, . . . please. Just for tonight. Do you think he'll mind?

CJ: I'm sure he won't mind a bit. Good night, Austin. [\(They both turn away from each other.\)](#)

Austin: Good night CJ, and thanks for talking with me, . . . big brother. (Austin quickly gives CJ a peck on the cheek and turns back away. Austin is not sure what CJ's reaction will be, or even why he felt compelled to do it.)

CJ: (Surprised.) What was that for?

Austin: For caring.

CJ: (As he's slightly laughing.) That's what brothers are for, silly. (Austin gets a smile on his previously concerned face.)

Camera: Due to the back injuries, Austin makes a little noise and crinkles his face in pain as he rolls onto his side. With their backs toward each other, they adjust the pillows for sleeping.

New camera angle - During the night, CJ and Tylor exchange places. CJ carefully lifts Austin's head off his arm and slips out of bed. CJ shakes his numb arm to bring it back to life. Tylor slips into bed with his arm in the same position that CJ's was.

End of Act VIII

[To Act VII](#)

[To Act IX](#)