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Have a Little Faith

By Lucette Nel

Chapter One

TEXAS

Pecos Bend, Spring, 1867

'Please Lord, let it be over soon.'

Faith Conway prayed as she reluctantly allowed Guy Royal to lead her onto the dance floor.

Her body so stiff it was almost impossible to move. She wondered if he could see the dreaded look in her eyes, feel it in her body. If he could, he was ignoring it unfortunately.

It was the spring dance and Pecos Bend, a small town built a couple of miles from the bigger Pecos, held it every year to celebrate spring and bid the winter farewell. At the dance they had time to visit with friends they hadn't seen during the long winter months when it was simply impossible for most to travel. It was an unspoken agreement that folks were to put their differences aside and have a good time. That meant Hayman Black and his rival Abe Johnson. A lot of work and effort was put into the preparation of the night and so far it had always been an enormous success.

Faith attended every year. It was her favorite event of the season and most folks looked forward to it too. Spending time with friends and loved ones, and for a while

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Comment [G1]: Format: The capital letters seemed clumsy.

Deleted: CHAPTER ONE¶

Comment [G2]: Stylistic: Unto is a very out of date word and didn't seem to fit here.

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Comment [G3]: Punctuation - dash needed to show a break in the sentence.

Comment [G4]: Punctuation: Hyphen's are only to be used to combine two words together so an open en dash is used instead.

Deleted: , u

Comment [G5]: Punctuation: A Capital letter was needed as this is the name of a place.

Deleted: b

Comment [G6]: Parts of speech: Determiner added before the noun.

Comment [G7]: Stylistic: Farewell seemed to work better than goodbye with this style of writing.

Deleted:

Deleted: good bye

Comment [G8]: Stylistic: Counted for just didn't seem to make sense here.

Deleted: counted for

Comment [G9]: Spacing: Only one space allowed after full stop.

Comment [G10]: Spacing: only one space allowed after full stop.

Deleted:

Comment [G11]: Parts of speech: Determiner was incorrect. An is needed before a vowel.

Comment [G12]: Redundant wording: Year was too repetitive.

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Deleted: year

Comment [G13]: Stylistic: 'Along with her' sounded clumsy.

Deleted: along with her

forgetting the harsh winter pass and the damage it had left behind. This year the winter had nearly wiped out two spreads.

Comment [G14]: Verb tense: I felt that 'brought' was used in the wrong tense.

Deleted: s

Deleted: brought

This was, however, the first year Guy Royal had showed up for the dance. He had never taken the time to attend it before, his excuse was that he was far too busy, and Faith didn't know what he was doing here this year.

Comment [G15]: Parts of speech: A pronoun was needed before excuse.

Comment [G16]: Parts of speech: incorrect use of pronoun.

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Deleted: to-

Comment [G17]: Stylistic.

Deleted: -

She would've never agreed to the dance. If she had a chance, she would've refused flatly, but her mother practically pushed her into the rancher's arms before she could open her mouth. So now, here she was, in his powerful arms, dancing. She wondered if her mother would have had her gift wrapped if she could.

Guy Royal was handsome, it was impossible to deny it. Tall and powerful, with broad shoulders, and strong arms he held her close. His hair was a rich dark brown, long and wavy, his eyes as blue as the sky. His square jaw shadowed with a neat trimmed beard and mustache. Most girls in town sighed at the sight of him and almost fainted when he spoke as his voice was deep, with a hint of a southern accent. Apparently he hailed from Virginia. And not only was he handsome but he was also the richest rancher in the county. He had more influence in the town than the mayor, Adam Brooks.

Comment [G18]: Parts of speech: a pronoun was needed before this vowel.

Comment [G19]: Stylistic: Originally the description of Guy Royale seemed too split up in the paragraph so I placed it closer together.

Deleted: . He was not only handsome but also the richest rancher in the county. H

Comment [G20]:

Comment [G21]: See comment above.

Comment [G22]: Spacing: Only one space required after full stop.

Deleted: ¶

Comment [G23]: Stylistic: There was no need for the formality here.

Deleted: Mr.

Comment [G24]: Stylistic: The word younguns seemed clumsy and I feel readers would be confused by it.

Deleted: uns

Comment [G25]: Stylistic: This is a better way to say this.

Deleted: to Guy's tune

Her family, as well as the other residents of Pecos Bend respected him, the young ones admired him, and some folks were even depended on him. Even her brothers worked for him. Except Samuel, he still worked for the Watt's at the general store on weekends and helped them at the boarding house during the week. For some reason most people, if not all, jumped to attention whenever he snapped his fingers.

And here she was, dancing with him! She ought to be grateful, flattered, fascinated! Most girls would die to be in her shoes – and she would give anything if they could be! She was tense and uncomfortable, hardly able to breathe as he led the dance.

“You don’t dance, you float.” His lips were so close to her ear she could feel his breath on her neck. Normally Faith didn’t get nervous, she had always been very confident in herself, but her nerves were unraveling at the speed of galloping mustangs.

“Don’t be silly.” She managed a smile. “Grady says I’ve got two left feet.” She glanced at the rancher.

“Grady’s a cowboy, you shouldn’t take anything he says too seriously when it comes to the finer things in life.”

She bit her tongue. The dance would go faster and smoother without having to endure a conversation with the man.

Barely a minute passed before he broke the silence again. “You look beautiful tonight.” He said approvingly, his gaze running over her. The dozen or more lanterns that lit the dance floor helped little to hide her face. She struggled to keep her expression blank. She really didn’t want him to notice her discomfort.

“Thank you.” She wondered if he meant it, since he had looked disappointed when he saw she hadn’t worn the dress he had sent, a beautiful yellow creation with white lace at the hem of the full skirt. Privately she thought the dress was a bit too much. It would only make a statement. Not even the mayor’s wife could afford something like that.

“How’s your family?” He was very interested in her family and their wellbeing, especially since she had caught his eye. And so far no one, least of all her mother, seemed to mind that he was nearly nineteen years older than she.

Comment [G26]: Spacing: only one space needed after full stop.

Comment [G27]: Tense. I felt that feel was more of a present tense while because it is in past tense I felt that get was a better word to use.

Deleted: .¶

Deleted: feel

Comment [G28]: Verb Tense: I changed serious from an adjective to adverb.

Comment [G29]: Verb Tense: Added because there was no tense marker to show past tense.

"She's doing well." She hoped that was it, it was hard enough to dance with him, it would be impossible to make conversation as well.

Comment [G30]: Stylistic: In this type of period piece the reply 'okay' felt out of place and too colloquial.

Deleted: Okay

He gave a pleased nod. Faith could swear his grip on her tightened and her heart started beating even more wildly. She prayed the tune would end soon. She forced herself to smile. She'd rather be dancing with Robby Summers, the town's sheriff, than dance with Mr. Royal. But Robby wouldn't dare cut in. He wouldn't risk losing his job.

Comment [G31]: Spacing: Only one space needed after full stop.

Deleted: ¶

Comment [G32]: Punctuation: hyphens are only to be used to join two words.

Comment [G33]: Punctuation: Hyphens can only be used to join two words.

Deleted: -

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Faith glanced at the hand that held hers. His hand was so big, hers nearly disappeared in it. Ironically he was controlling the dance the same way he controlled the town. The sleeves of the crisp white shirt he wore were rolled up, revealing powerful forearms with a mat of dark hair.

"How's your father?"

Her father was ill, very ill. "He's fine." She felt a tinge of guilt. All Mr. Royal has ever been to her and her family was good and here she was wishing the dance to end. She felt so unappreciative. When no one wanted to employ Wade because of his temper, Mr. Royal had stepped in and offered him a job on his ranch. Mr. Royal came to the rescue when the Randeens' bullied Samuel. He was a knight in shining armor to them – no wonder her mother wanted her to marry him.

Comment [G34]: Stylistic: Again the use of good here didn't feel right in the period setting of the novel.

Deleted: good

Comment [G35]: Editors Addition

She didn't miss the way he tightened his jaw. She figured he was getting annoyed at her resistance to talk. "Did you like the present I sent you?" He was talking about the one Grady had brought yesterday when he had stopped by the boarding house. It was a pair of boots that probably cost more than any thing else in her entire wardrobe. She couldn't imagine where she would ever be able to wear the boots.

“Yes.” She didn’t want them though, but her mother had insisted she take them. Her mother had tried to force her to wear them tonight too.

“Do they fit?”

She nodded. “Thank you – but it was unnecessary.”

“You don’t like them?” He asked with a frown.

“Oh no.” She said quickly. “The boots are beautiful.” She assured him, everything he bought her was beautiful. He had remarkable taste. She didn’t know where he bought half of the things he sent her though; no store in Pecos Bend sold anything so fine. But according to her he was merely wasting his money, buying her all the presents, most of the things she would never even be able to use.

A pleased smile curved his attractive mouth. “Good.”

She forced herself to smile again.

“I think the blue dress suits you, it brings out your eyes.” He remarked. She could feel her cheeks burn and dipped her head to hide her blush.

“Thank you.” She glanced around. Was anyone even noticing her discomfort? She glanced at him.

He lowered his head and her entire body stiffened. Dear Lord! He wanted to kiss her! She dipped her head and felt his beard brush the bridge of her nose. She felt his breath on her forehead. She heard the sigh that escaped his lips.

Fortunately they finished the dance, and he led her back to where her parents stood at the edge of the dance floor. She forced herself not to sigh out loud in relief.

Comment [G36]: Stylistic:
Again just simplifying
things.

Deleted: n’t

Comment [G37]: Syntax:
Sentence structure needed
fixing.

Her mother, Eloise Conway stood with a bright pleased smile. “Thank you for the dance.” Guy said, his hand still resting on the small of her back. She figured it was only her imagination but she could swear it was burning her.

Comment [G38]: Editors addition: I don't think the author meant that the character had a particularly small back but was referring to 'the small of her back' which is often used in romantic fiction to mean the lower back.

Deleted: her

Faith nodded. He was nearly a foot taller than she so she could easily avoid his piercing blue eyes.

“Folks you enjoy the rest of your evening.” He said nodding at her parents.

“Are you leaving, Mr. Royal?” John Conway asked, settling his hand on his daughter’s shoulder. Her father was about five or so years older than the rancher, but because of his ailing health he looked much older. He was dreadfully pale but was too stubborn to stay at home tonight. He too had faithfully attended the dance every year.

Comment [G39]: Syntax: Fixing the sentence structure.

Deleted: faithfully

Guy nodded with a wry smile. “I’m exhausted from chasing cows all day.” He informed them with a low laugh. Faith glanced up at him, he hardly looked tired. She looked away before their eyes could meet.

John smiled and nodded with understanding. “Grady said the same thing.” He said with a grin.

“And Grady is almost half my age.” Royal said and both men laughed. “You folks take care.” He said. He looked at Faith, who stood with her eyes downcast. “Goodnight, Faith.”

Her mother bumped her in the ribs and she met his gaze, but only for a second. “Goodnight, Mr. Royal.” She replied quietly. She felt her cheeks burn under the intensity of his gaze. The thought that he wanted to kiss her disturbed her. He smiled, turned and started away, several men followed.

Faith released a deep breath and dared a glance at her mother, who stood with a pleased smile as her gaze followed the rancher.

“I really think he likes you.” Her mother said, as if that was not obvious enough. She was still smiling.

“Don’t be silly, Mother, I have nothing he’d be interested in.”

“Sure you do.” Her mother insisted, eyes round. “You’re the prettiest girl in town.” Eloise added proudly.

“I’m not his class.” Faith retorted.

Eloise rolled her eyes. “I know men. I saw the way he looked at you.” The mother of three boys, Faith had no doubt that her mother had some knowledge of the opposite sex. “He’s very interested.” Her mother insisted, and she couldn’t be more pleased. She clasped her hands together. She couldn’t wait to rub it in the other women’s faces!

Faith decided not to reply, she didn’t have the strength to argue with her mother. Turning her gaze to the dance floor she spotted her oldest brother, Grady, eagerly spinning around a girl. He was a handsome man, blond and green eyed like all of his siblings. The girl dancing with him was Lottie, the daughter of the preacher. Faith smiled. Grady was evidently enjoying himself, though he wasn’t nearly as good a dancer as his employer. Then she spotted her other brother, Wade, at twenty he was three years younger than Grady, though he was taller and his frame bigger, he too was dancing. Faith frowned. It surprised her that he hadn’t followed Mr. Royal. He admired the rancher very much, especially since Mr. Royal was the only one willing to give him a job with his reputation.

Her youngest brother, Samuel was stuffing his mouth with the snacks the women had prepared for the evening and had loaded the refreshment table with.

Comment [G40]: Stylistic: Some women's faces sounded as though there were particular women that she wanted to snub whereas I changed it to make it sound more general.

Deleted: some

“Grady and Lottie looks good together.” Faith remarked, hoping it **would** change the subject.

Comment [G41]: Verb Tense: Wrong use of tense.

Deleted: ill

Eloise nodded. “They do indeed.” She agreed with a smile, secretly Faith thought her mother had a very soft spot for Grady. He was, after all the golden child. He didn’t have a problem with his temper like Wade, he **wasn’t** as impulsive as she, and he weren’t as irresponsible as Samuel. Everybody adored Grady.

Comment [G42]: Concord: Wade is a singular object and thus must be followed by singular verb 'wasn't'.

Deleted: weren’t

Faith sighed in relief; fortunately she had succeeded to change the subject – for now.

“I really do think Mr. Royal is interested in you.”

Her shoulders sagged in defeat. Nothing could keep her mother off course for too long. **Eloise** gave her a disapproving look. “You should’ve worn that dress he sent you, not that dull thing you put on.”

Comment [G43]: Format change.

Comment [G44]: Spacing: only one space needed after full stop.

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Faith didn’t want to wear the clothes the rancher sent her, she glanced down at her dress. She thought she looked rather pretty in the pale blue dress she had sewn for herself several years ago.

“I think she looks lovely.” Her father said gently, putting an arm around each of them. God had blessed him abundantly. He had three strapping sons, a beautiful wife and a lovely daughter, he couldn’t have asked for anything more. He squeezed the two women in his life. He was mighty proud.

“Evening folks.”

Faith smiled at Robby Summers. The tall angular sheriff with the red hair and dust of freckles across his face, making him look several years younger, smiled back.

“Evening Sheriff.” John replied. “What a fine party.”

Robby nodded. “And as always we’re having fine weather, too.” he said glancing up at the clear indigo sky.

“Has there been any trouble yet?” John asked.

“Nope Abe went home early, so I don’t think there will be any.” He said, **sounding mighty relieved**. He had been sheriff in town for nearly two years now, and he was doing a fairly good job. Of course his success was mostly because people were afraid of Mr. Royal. He wasn’t as handsome as the rancher, but Faith felt more comfortable around him.

Comment [G45]: Stylistic: Left it as it was so as to keep the Authors voice and tone of the novel.

Not too long ago Eloise Conway had praised Robby countless times. **She** had wanted Faith to marry the sheriff at first – but that was before she noticed Guy Royal was interested in her daughter. Robby was still a good sheriff, and a fine young man, but he was not Guy Royal.

Comment [G46]: Syntax: Original sentence too long.

Deleted: , s

“You look lovely Mrs. Conway.” Robby said with a genuine smile.

“Thank you, sheriff.”

“Why don’t you take Faith for a dance?” John suggested.

Robby couldn’t help smiling, he wanted very much to dance with her, only he hadn’t had the nerve to ask. He looked hopefully at Faith. She was the most beautiful girl in town, especially after she had put her tomboy ways behind her, and exchanged her trousers for skirts.

Faith smiled and nodded. Since she danced with Mr. Royal she might as well dance with Robby, she was convinced he would be better company. Eagerly he led her to the dance floor.

Eloise looked at her husband, her expression of pure annoyance.

John frowned. "What?" he knew that look all too well, still he tried to act innocent and ignorant.

"Was that necessary?" Eloise demanded angrily, jerking her chin toward the dancing pair.

John shrugged. "I thought you liked Robby."

"He's a nice young man, but our daughter is not interested in him." His wife said flatly. John merely smiled, his dear wife was up to something, and after being married to her for so long he knew her well enough to know that.

"Shall we dance?" He asked, hoping to get her mind off Faith and Robby.

Eloise smiled, softening her features. "I was wondering when you'd ask." She said and followed her husband unto the dance floor.

Faith smiled at the Sherriff. "I'm surprised."

Robby frowned. "Why?"

"You're very good at dancing."

He grinned. "I'm only good at it because my sister taught me." His face colored slightly.

"She said she can't have me injuring women when I danced with them."

"I should let her know how well her efforts paid off."

"She'll be relieved to hear that." he said smiling down at her.

Faith smiled again, she and Robby had been friends for some time, yet she suspected that as she grew older he was getting interested in something more than friendship. She was

Comment [G47]: Editors addition. I just wanted to make who Faith was looking at clearer.

Comment [G48]: Format change.
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not ready to give it to him, nor to Guy Royal. Privately she believed Robby would make a better husband than the rancher, he had a lot of the same qualities her father had. He might not have as much money as Guy, might not own the biggest spread, and he might not be as breathtakingly handsome – but he was kind, sincere and genuine. She also enjoyed dancing with Robby much more than with Guy. She didn't feel tense and nervous. Robby always made her feel relaxed and at ease. He made her laugh too. She appreciated that.

Comment [G49]: Spacing: Only one space allowed after full stop.

Deleted: ¶

When the dance ended she went to stand at the refreshment table and Robby went to do his rounds, making sure that the town was safe and Billy Bob wasn't up to any of his mischief again. This time the band played a faster tune and she was relieved she was skipping this dance. She giggled as she saw Grady struggling to master the quick and sure dance steps. He was such a lousy dancer, but he was a good cowboy – even Mr. Royal said he was one of his best – and he was a wonderful brother. She noticed Wade was gone, and Samuel was now dancing with Peggy, the doctor's little sister.

Comment [G50]: Verb Tense: Story is written in past tense, 'it' is not past tense.

Deleted: it

Lottie joined Faith at the table, along with a couple of the other girls when the dance ended. The other girls weren't too keen on Faith because of Mr. Royal's interest in her, but Lottie wasn't bothered by that. Jenifer Walsh stopped speaking to her when Mr. Royal started courting her. Not that she blamed her; Jenifer was lovely, black hair, golden eyes. Unlike Faith the girl had always been a beauty; Faith had hid hers with her brother's clothes and always had tied her hair into a tight bun at the nape of her neck. Faith also spent her days working in the boarding house or in the garden. Only recently she had pleased her mother when she had packed away the breeches and dungarees to wear dresses or skirts.

"I think my brother likes you." Faith said.

Lottie was very pretty, a bit tall for a girl she had thick golden brown hair and faded grey eyes. She turned a delicate rose. She had liked Faith's brother for some years now, only recently had he noticed her."Do you think so?" she asked in a heavy Texas drawl.

Faith nodded. "I truly do." She assured Lottie.

Lottie glanced over her shoulder at Grady and returned his smile. "I like him very much." She whispered, more to herself than to Faith. "At least he's handsome, too." Jenifer put in. She just had to make sure they didn't forget her presence. Faith pressed her lips together to hide her annoyance. She didn't know how Jenifer could be Lottie's best friend. Lottie wasn't shallow or self centered.

Jenifer let her eyes run over Faith, her look disapproving. "I see Mr. Royal was here." She said, arching a finely sculpted brow.

"He was." Faith replied. Jenifer rolled her eyes and started away, heading toward her brother and his friend, both of whom worked on Mr. Royal's ranch.

Comment [G51]: Syntax.

Deleted: as well

Lottie looked ready to burst out laughing. "Don't mind Jen, she's battling with jealousy." She informed her, and taking two glasses of punch she headed towards Grady. Faith clasped her hands together in front of her and took a deep breath. She remained at the table, smiling as she watched Lottie and Grady together; they really made a cute couple.

Comment [G52]: Stylistic:
'Nice' doesn't seem appropriate. Especially in a romantic fiction story.

Deleted: nice

Twenty year old Chase Morgan stood in the shadows, leaning against the oak tree that was bare from lanterns. He was observing everything from a distance, like the outsider he was. His velvet brown eyes were mostly on the girl with the blond curls and the lovely smile. Her name was Faith Conway; her parents owned the boarding house down Main Street. Her

father was one of the few folks that had taken the time to greet him once or twice. Nice man, if he was any good at judging character.

He folded his arms and lowered his eyes to his dusty moccasins. There was a fluttering feeling in his stomach. He still couldn't believe he had kissed her. Should someone ever find out – it could get them into some really big trouble.

He muttered a curse under his breath, instantly annoyed with himself and his thoughts. He was a fool, here he was, spying on a white girl and wasting his own precious time remembering that darn kiss. He really had better things to do. Maybe not better, but he did have things to do.

“Hi.”

Startled he looked up. He hadn't heard her approach, but here she was standing in front of him, a smile on her face, her hands clasped behind her back.

“Hi.” He replied, hesitatingly, looking around. Actually she had kissed *him*. Either way, that kiss shouldn't have happened, even if it was only a mere thank you kiss, a peck on the corner of his mouth. It had been so slight so quick it was over in a heartbeat. It should've been forgotten shortly afterwards. Yet he couldn't forget it.

“Would you like to dance?”

Chase looked at her as if she was speaking Japanese.

“Me?” he mouthed the word.

“Please?”

“No.”

She looked stunned; he figured it was because no one had probably said no so flatly to her before.

“Why not?” Faith asked, frowning slightly.

This time he was surprised. Why couldn’t she just take no for an answer? Why didn’t she just go and dance with someone else? He’d bet his moccasins that every young man here would want to dance with her. Why was she wasting her time asking him?

Comment [G53]: Verb tense:
Wrong tense used.

Deleted: ill

She folded her arms and cocked her head slightly. “Don’t tell me you just came to watch.” That was exactly why he had come... only he shouldn’t have come in the first place. Pecos Bend was like every other town when it came to Breeds and Indians.

“I was just leaving.” He said under his breath. No he wasn’t, he had planned to stay a while longer until she had approached him, and already her talking to him was drawing the kind of attention he tried to avoid. Faith didn’t look as if she believed him. “Why don’t you want to dance with me?”

Chase leaned forward, at six feet he was a good four inches taller than she. “I can’t dance.” He whispered, a little embarrassed. Hopefully that would send her back to her own kind. With a bit of luck she would stop pestering him and leave him in peace.

Faith smiled, clasped his hand in both of hers and tugged. “Oh come on, it’s easy.” She insisted. Lightning shot through him at the touch of her hand for a second he almost stopped breathing.

He shook his head determinedly and didn’t budge. He’d only be making a fool of himself.

“You’ll see, it’s easy.” She insisted. He found himself believing her; he didn’t know why he allowed her to pull him out onto the dance floor. He noticed some folks stiffen when they saw him; most didn’t look too pleased to have him there. Chase wasn’t really surprised at their response, since arriving in town several weeks ago he had realized the residents of Pecos Bend didn’t want Breeds there, he was fortunate to find a job at the livery stable.

Faith took his hand and settled it on her lower back, took his other hand and put it in her own, lifting their arms as she raised sea green eyes to meet his velvet brown ones. She had such a confident air about her.

Comment [G54]: Syntax:
Sentence structure was
clumsy.

Deleted: s in it

He swallowed hard, feeling beads of perspiration forming on his brow, he hadn’t even been this afraid when his pa had him ride a horse for the first time.

“Relax,” she said gently. “It’s not as hard as it looks.” He desperately wanted to believe her. He gave a faint smile.

“It’s easy.” She assured him and started dancing. Slowly and hesitatingly he started to follow her lead. It was just about the hardest thing he had done in a long time. He found it almost difficult to breathe while concentrating to keep from stepping on her toes. Even worse he could feel his cheeks burning.

“Very good.” He heard Faith say. “I thought you said you couldn’t dance.” He glanced at her to see if she was making fun of him. Her look was so sincere he doubted she had ever made fun of any one in her life.

“I can’t.” He said quietly, his eyes locked on their feet again. He couldn’t dance a lick, she was only being nice. He had stepped on her toes at least a dozen times already. It was a wonder he hadn’t broken any of them yet.

She grinned broadly. “Then I must be a good teacher.”

He didn't reply. It felt wonderful to hold her in his arms, she was so small and delicate. She fitted him so wonderfully, he felt as if she was specially made for him. A ridiculous thought.

Comment [G55]: Punctuation: There was no need for ellipsis as sentence was clearly ended.

Deleted: ...

"We shouldn't be dancing." Chase said glancing at her.

She looked surprised, her smile disappeared. "Why not?"

"Your man won't like it." He replied.

She frowned. "My man?"

"The rancher." He didn't need to be a genius to notice the man was interested in her.

Her eyes flashed, she looked angry. "Guy Royal is not my man." She snapped. "I can dance with who ever I like."

Chase didn't reply, out of the corner of his eye he noticed her brother abandoning the woman he was dancing with to start their way, determination in his every step. The man's expression was pure anger. He stopped dancing, reluctantly released Faith and took a step backwards before Grady Conway could reach them. Faith gave him a questioning look, and then she spotted Grady marching over as if he was on a mission, Lottie short behind him.

Faith gasped and bit her lip. How could she have been so stupid? Grady Conway was so angry he was going to kill the Breed! He didn't care that it was against the law, or that he'd get hanged... he was still going to kill that darn Breed. Slowly and painfully. How dare the breed touch his sister! When he reached the pair he spun the Breed around.

Comment [G56]: Spacing: Only one space allowed after full stop.

Deleted: ¶

Comment [G57]: Punctuation: Semi colon was not needed because a conjunction is present.

Comment [G58]: Tense: He'll is present tense while sentence is in past tense.

Deleted: ;

Deleted: ||

The musicians fell silent.

"Who the hell do you think you are?" He demanded.

“Grady!” Faith exclaimed.

“How dare you touch my sister?” Grady demanded, ignoring his blistering sister.

Chase didn’t reply, he wasn’t surprised at the man’s reaction, it was always the same, father’s and brother’s didn’t want their daughters or sisters to mingle with a no good Breed.

“Grady Conway you leave him alone!” Faith said, aware that every eye was locked on them. What had gotten into her? She had done it perhaps to spite Guy Royal slightly, and because she had really wanted to spend some time with him.

Grady merely tossed her an angry look, silencing her. “I don’t want you near my sister.” He growled at Chase. “Got that?”

Chase took a deep breath but said nothing; he really should’ve left the minute he got here. Besides, what did he really want here?

Grady lost his temper, he shoved Chase backward. Chase staggered, but he didn’t fall. The look he fixed on Grady verged on hatred. He was ready to lunge the man when Faith took a step forward.

“Grady stop it!”

“What’s the matter Breed?” Grady sneered through clenched teeth, ignoring his sister. “Swallowed your tongue you no good bastard?”

Faith glanced at a square jawed Chase, his face expressionless. Grady came around her and shoved Chase again. Chase looked ready to attack, his nostrils flared, his jaw tightened. His hands clenched at his sides.

“Stop it!” Faith planted herself between her brother and Chase. Her brother looked angry enough to kill Chase. Faith had never seen him look this angry before.

Her brother gave a cold grin. "Oh look, the Breed's hiding behind a girl's skirt."

Some folks chuckled. People could be so cruel.

"Grady, come on, leave them be." Lottie said, trying to pull Grady away. He shrugged free and shot her a look that caused her to take a step back.

Chase took Faith at her arm and moved her aside, gently and swiftly, and then he took a step forward. Boldly and determinedly.

A muscle worked in her brother's jaw. "If you ever come near my sister again, I'll shoot you down." He warned. "Come on, we're leaving." he said, taking her by the arm in an iron grip.

"Let go of me." Faith said, trying to pry her wrist free.

"I said we're leaving." Grady growled.

"I am not leaving!"

"Yes you are." Grady countered through clenched teeth.

Faith stomped her foot in frustration. "I am not leaving."

Grady shot her a sharp look, "Let's go."

Before Chase could stop himself his hand shot out and his fingers closed around Grady's wrist in an iron grip. "Leave her alone." His voice was low and toneless.

Grady glared at Chase. Chase glared back. Slowly and much to her surprise her brother released her. Chase released Grady.

She took a deep breath. Everything was just too good to be true!

Comment [G59]: Punctuation.
The thought is clearly over.

Deleted: ...

Then Grady lunged for Chase.

She released a scream and her hands flew to her mouth. The crowd parted for the wrestling pair on the ground like the sea parted for the Israelites. Her brother and Chase rolled in the dirt, grunting, both too close to land precise blows but it didn't stop them from trying.

Robby came running up, followed by the blacksmith and his son. The blacksmith, who was a bear of a man grabbed hold of Grady and his son took hold of Chase, they pulled them apart with seemingly little effort. Blood dribbled from Chase's nose, Grady's lip was split, blood stained the front of his shirt, and she noticed there was a couple of buttons missing too. Her mother would have a heart attack if she should see Grady now.

Faith looked at Chase, his hair was messed, dirt stained his clothes and he was breathing hard – and she was crazy to think he looked more attractive than ever.

“What's going on here?” Robby demanded, breathing hard.

“I'm warning the breed to stay away from my sis.” Grady growled, wiping his bloodied lip. He struggled to break free from the blacksmiths grip, but it was useless, Aaron Kinkaid had the grip of a bear.

“Grady you can't go around beating people up.” Robby said angrily as he fixed hard eyes on Grady.

“He was looking for trouble sheriff.” One man in the dispersing crowd said. “That Breed is nothing but trouble.”

“Take him away.” Robby ordered with a waving gesture of his hand. “He'll sleep in jail tonight.” He said and Al Kinkaid nodded as he started away with Chase.

Comment [G60]: Spacing. Only one space needed.

Deleted: ¶

“That’s not fair!” Faith exclaimed incredulous at Robby’s unfairness, shocked at how easily the folks could blame Chase.

“Faith now is not the time.” Robby informed her, the last thing he wanted to deal with tonight was an angry crowd.

The blacksmith released her brother, and Grady took her by the shoulder and started away, pulling Faith reluctantly behind him.

She glanced over her shoulder to see the man take Chase away, Robby following them.

“How dare you?” She demanded and jerked free.

He stopped and turned, pointing angrily at Chase he demanded. “Do you think ma would want you dancing with the Breed?”

Her mother would not be pleased. Her stomach made a dive just to think of what her mother would say.

“Ma won’t know if you don’t tell.” she replied. She pointed at the direction where the fight had taken place. “That was not fair, Grady.” She was so angry she was shaking.

Her brother rolled his eyes, “You shouldn’t go near him, it ain’t proper.”

Faith looked angry enough to scream. She took several fortifying breaths. Grady grabbed her wrist again and started walking; she tried to pry her wrist free. “What do you know about proper?” She demanded and came to an abrupt stop. Her brother stopped and pinned her with a hard look.

“You embarrassed me.”

He looked away for a second. “Would you rather have people tell tales about you and that Breed?”

“No one’s going to tell any tales about us!” Faith argued.

“Mr. Royal won’t like hearing you danced with that Breed.”

“I don’t care!” Faith exploded. “I don’t belong to him.” She managed to break free from her brother’s grip and started away from him. “He’s got a name, too, Grady.” She said over her shoulder. He caught her at her arm and turned her around. “I don’t care if his name’s Poppy; I want you to stay away from him.” His features softened. “It’s for your own good,” he said gentler this time. “Now will you stop being so difficult?”

“Will you stop treating me like a child?” Faith countered, her jaw set hard.

Grady threw up his hands. “For crying out loud Faith – you are still a child!” he exclaimed. She shrugged free again and changing her direction started to the boarding house, she had never been so embarrassed, or disappointed. She had always thought Grady was a fair and good judge of character.

Grady released an exasperated sigh. “Faith slow down.” He said and started after her.

She didn’t. “I don’t want to.”

“Faith, stop being so stubborn.” Her brother demanded.

She still didn’t slow down; it forced him to hurry after her. “I don’t want Mr. Royal to get upset-“

“Mr. Royal has nothing to do with this!” She exploded, clenching her hands at her sides. She was surprised at how angry she felt. Her heart was racing, her throat was dry and she wanted to smack her brother!

Grady didn't agree. He knew all too well that his boss had his eye on his sister, and privately he thought the rancher would be good for Faith. Marrying the rancher would be better for his sister than to marry some struggling, poor fella that didn't even have a place to stay.

"He might get jealous." Grady informed her. He knew Mr. Royal well enough to know it wouldn't be wise to upset the man.

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Faith threw her arms in the air. "So what?"

"Faith." He caught her at the arm and brought her to a stop.

She glanced at him. "What?"

"I won't mention this to ma or pa, but I want you to stay away from the breed," he said gently. "Ma won't like it anymore than Mr. Royal."

She wanted to scream at the sound of that name. Shrugging his hand off her, she started away.

Chapter two

Comment [G61]: Format change.

Deleted: CHAPTER TWO

“You shouldn’t cause trouble in my town, Breed” Robby said, feeling mighty good sitting behind his desk, feet on the edge and arms crossed over his chest. He had an annoying smirk on his face.

Comment [G62]: Punctuation.

Deleted: .

Chase, the only prisoner in the cells, said nothing. He sat on the edge of the iron bed, arms rested on knees, head down, ignoring the boasting sheriff. The cell was small and smelled rotten. The iron bed creaked threateningly with the slightest movement.

Comment [G63]: Stylistic:
Bowed didn't seem appropriate here.

Deleted: bowed

“You answer me when I talk to you.” The sheriff sneered.

Chase didn’t even look at him. He heard the chair creak and listened for footsteps, when he heard nothing he felt a twinge of relief.

Robby stretched and folded his arms behind his head. “You’re gonna get into more trouble if you don’t leave them proper white girls alone.”

Comment [G64]: Stylistic: Left in because it shows how the characters I this book speak, their particular accent.

Still nothing. “Some gals’ pas won’t like you talking to their daughters.” A small laugh. “I’ll be forced to keep you locked up in here for your own safety.” Chase could just imagine the smirk on the man’s face. The lawman made it sound as if it was a favor, as if he were saving Chase from certain damnation.

Comment [G65]: Punctuation.

Deleted: ’

Deleted: ’s

He wasn’t surprised that he got locked up; it was what he was used to. Because of his skin color some whites treated him with the greatest indifference. He laid down on the musty smelling mattress. It was as uncomfortable as it looked. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He’d explain things to Mr. Pierson, his boss, tomorrow.

Comment [G66]: Concord: Object/subject is singular and so verb must be singular.

Deleted: weren’t

Comment [G67]: Stylistic: Use of Americanism.

Comment [G68]: Verb Tense: Wrong tense used.

Deleted: ;

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“What’s the matter, Breed?” He could hear the mockery in the man’s voice. He wished the lawman would just shut up. He didn’t want to listen to the man’s endless yapping all night.

“People might think Guy Royal’s running my town.” The irritating laugh grated Chase’s ears again. “But they are wrong. I’m just allowing him some fun.” Robby pressed his lips together, the Breed was deliberately ignoring him. How dare he? He stood and crossed the room, floor boards creaked with every step. He stopped at the cell door. “Faith Conway is too nice for a Breed like you. That’s why she’s going to marry me one day.”

Comment [G69]: Punctuation.

Deleted: .

Chase wanted to laugh. He doubted Faith would even consider a proposal from the lawman.

Comment [G70]: Verb Tense: Wrong use of tense.

Deleted: ill

“Enjoy your night; you’ll be free to go in the morning.” Robby said, swinging his keys round his fingers as he started to the door.

Chase knew trouble when he saw it.

He knew trouble makers when he saw them.

Wade Conway was both.

He knew the man was looking for trouble the moment he saw him, followed by two cowboys, entering the livery. He straightened with a solemn look on his face. Lowering the pitch fork he watched them closely. "Can I help you?" He knew they weren't here to hire a horse.

Comment [G71]: Redundant wording.

Deleted: the man

"I want you to stay away from Faith." Wade said coolly, his gaze running contemptuously over him. Chase suspected that his motives were different than Grady's. Wade probably only want to make life easier for his boss.

Comment [G72]: Punctuation.

Deleted: .

"You look smart enough to know that I mean it." He said his hand resting on the butt of his revolver holstered on his hip.

Chase didn't reply as he didn't want to waste his breath. Wade toyed with the handle of his gun. The threat was clear.

Comment [G73]: Format changes.

Comment [G74]: Spacing: Only one space allowed after full stop.

Deleted: ¶

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0 cm

Comment [G75]: Punctuation.

Deleted: ,

Deleted: t

"Mr. Royal won't hesitate to get rid of you if you don't back off." The taller man sneered. He looked much older than Wade.

Chase clenched his jaw. He didn't like being threatened.

"I won't go near her again." He heard himself say. Only he didn't believe himself. Of course it's not that he didn't want to stay away from the blond, it's just that he couldn't stop thinking about her since the dance. Even when he was locked up, he had found himself thinking about her.

Comment [G76]: Punctuation: Ellipsis unneeded.

Comment [G77]: Parts of speech: The verb was written as a noun in this sentence.

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Deleted: f

Comment [G78]: Parts of speech: wrong use of a preposition.

Deleted: of

“Good, ‘cause I don’t want to have to repeat myself.” Wade said coolly. “Mr. Royal won’t just lock you up.” He said with a smirk on his face. “He’ll do much worse.” He gave him one last warning look before striding off, his two cowboy friends following behind him.

Chase watched them leave. He wondered if Guy Royal had sent them. When they were out of sight he turned and resumed his work.

“Hi.”

He nearly jumped a foot high at the sound of her voice. Spinning around on his heels he found Faith Conway standing in the entrance of the stable. She continued to surprise him over and over again.

“What are you doing here?” He asked, his voice low, instantly feeling uncomfortable.

“I wanted to apologize.” She said gently, tentatively.

Chase frowned and shifted his weight to the other foot. What was wrong with this girl? “For what?” He found it ironic, only a few minutes ago he had agreed not to go near her again.

“For last night.” She sounded as if she blamed herself.

He saw her eyes stray to the bruise of his cheek and he turned his face, not wanting her to feel worse about it.

“You needn’t apologize.” He said flatly.

“Yes, I do.” She replied solemnly, her jaw set in determination. “Robby was unfair.” She lowered her eyes. “So was I, and Grady.”

Comment [G79]: Punctuation

Comment [G80]: Stylistic: The sentence did not flow properly.

Deleted: .

Deleted: had a

Deleted: .

Comment [G81]: Continuation of the same tense.

Deleted: ed.

Deleted: ed

Comment [G82]: Stylistic: Corrected the flow of the sentence.

Comment [G83]: Stylistic: Original sentence was from Faith's perspective when this is a chapter from Chase's perspective.

Deleted: Noticing the bruise on his cheek bone made her feel even guiltier.

"I'm used to it." He replied coolly, still he failed to see how she had been unfair. He had suffered from unfairness since he could remember. Most whites expected him to walk ankle deep in mud instead of allowing him on the boardwalk beside them. Most didn't want to allow him in their towns, around their people.

"Grady's over-protective and he usually overreacts." She said with a shrug and a tiny smile.

"He's your brother, big brothers tend to be that way." Chase said, hoping that it would be the end of it. He had two horses he needed to shod and other things he ought to be doing.

Comment [G84]: Verb Tense: Wrong tense used.

Deleted: ;

Deleted: it will

"Do you have a brother?" It sounded as if he had one or maybe he was one himself?

Comment [G85]: Editors addition: Original meaning was unclear.

Deleted: one

He shook his head. "I was an only child." Thank goodness for that or maybe he had a couple of half brothers and sisters he didn't know about parading around.

"Oh." She folded her arms, she looked a little uncomfortable. "Still, I am sorry about earlier." She didn't seem to want to give up too easily.

Comment [G86]: Stylistic: Again this is written in the wrong person's perspective.

"You don't need to apologize, you did nothing wrong." He looked away. "Go home." He said flatly and finally, and was about to turn away when she spoke.

"You don't understand." Her cheeks colored slightly. "I danced with you to spite Guy Royal." She blurted out quickly and looked ashamed of herself.

Comment [G87]: Stylistic and deletion: All written in Faith's perspective and was out of place.

Deleted: She shouldn't have done it. It was cruel and heartless; she had never been more embarrassed in her life about something she had done. Right now she was wishing the earth will open up and swallow her whole.

He looked at her hard and long, and before she could say another word, he told her to leave. He knew it was the right thing to do. Still his heart raced as she evidently hesitated to do as he asked. He studied her and couldn't help to admire her. Her blond curls cascaded

Comment [G88]: Syntax: Sentence was too long.

Deleted: ,

Deleted: s

freely down her shoulders and slender back in a rich mass, her defiant sea green eyes met his

Comment [G89]: Redundant wording: 'Leave' sounded repetitive.

Deleted: leave

boldly. She had a delicate angelic face, a dainty nose, high cheekbones and a little cleft in her chin that kept it from being perfectly round.

“You shouldn’t be here.” He repeated.

Comment [G90]: Stylistic.

Deleted: replied

Oh Faith knew that! Only she wanted to be here very much. She was fascinated by Chase. He wasn’t anything like the rest of the men in town. Guy Royal didn’t control him, and she could tell that just by looking at him.

His face was bruised from the fight last night, but it couldn’t hide his handsomeness. He had a strong lean face, thick eyebrows, velvet brown eyes that looked much older than his years, a straight nose and sensual lips. She felt her cheeks burn. She had never before studied a man this closely before. His straight black hair, parted in the middle reached his shoulders.

Comment [G91]: Stylistic: Moved description to more appropriate place.

Deleted:

Comment [G92]: Punctuation.

Deleted: . His skin was smooth and sun bronzed

Deleted: .

Deleted: S

His skin was smooth and sun bronzed No other man had fascinated her like this before. She found him so very attractive.

Comment [G93]: Concord: The words she had spoken are plural and thus they needed to be referred to as plural later on as well.

Deleted: it

“I want to be here.” She regretted her words the moment they left her lips. Even though they were the gospel truth she should have kept them to herself.

Chase frowned. “Why? You already apologized.”

Comment [G94]: Stylistic: Perspective has shifted to other character, his thoughts are out of place.

Comment [G95]: Punctuation. Double quotation marks were inserted.

Deleted: . Why would she want to be here?

Deleted: ” He put his thoughts into words.

Deleted: “

“Why are you so -”

“Why aren’t you at home?” He cut her off abruptly.

“I told you why I’m here.” Faith said, unable to give him a straight answer. The truth was she desperately needed to get away from the boarding house. Her father was exhausted from coughing through last night, her mother was irritated from lack of sleep and she was tired of hearing about Guy Royal. Lately it felt as if her mother would gladly sell her to Guy Royal just to get rid of her.

Comment [G96]: Editors addition.

Comment [G97]: Punctuation.

Deleted: ...

“Decent girls shouldn’t be hanging around the livery stables.” He said, his face expressionless.

Her eyes flashed. “Who says I’m decent?” Faith countered.

“Men can tell that kind of stuff.”

She planted her hands on her hips, her jaw set. “You might be wrong, I might be one hell raising woman.”

He arched a brow. “You’re barely a teenager.”

She felt angry enough to scream. “I’m seventeen!” she snapped with a lift of her chin.

“Go home Faith Conway.” he said. Mr. Pierson won’t be pleased to find a girl here, he might get the wrong impression and Chase didn’t want that to happen. As nice as the old man was, he knew the man would find it hard to believe his explanation of her presence at the stable. If Mr. Pierson should find her here he might tell the wrong folks. His employer was one of the few **people** that weren’t bothered by his Comanche blood.

“Why?” She challenged.

“You shouldn’t be here.” He replied, more firmly and serious **ly** this time.

She folded her arms. “Why don’t you just say you don’t want me here?” she said.

Chase met her gaze squarely. “I don’t want you here.” he said, his gaze unwavering. He didn’t, but for reasons vastly different than she would ever imagine.

She stared at him for a moment – the longest moment it seemed – before nodding. He was right, she shouldn’t be here. **She** didn’t know what had possessed her to come. Besides she ought to be too ashamed to **go to places like this on her own**.

Comment [G98]: Redundant wording: Folks was repetitive.

Deleted: folks

Comment [G99]: Punctuation: Ellipsis was unneeded here.

Deleted: ...

Comment [G100]: Editors addition.

Deleted: come

“I truly am sorry,” she said quietly. “Good bye,” she turned and marched out of the stable, leaving Chase with a wake of feelings, regret among the dozen.

He shook them off by reminding himself how much trouble he would get them both in if he hadn’t sent her home. After finishing his chores he mounted the ladder that led to his loft where he slept, part of his employment agreement. In exchange for taking care of the livery and seeing to the horses he got a dollar a day and the loft to stay in. It wasn’t much, a lumpy straw mattress that smelled musty, and an old blanket. It was nothing a home should be like, but he didn’t complain as it was still better than some of the places he had stayed in before.

Chase slumped down on the mattress with a sigh. He figured it was about time he moved on again, he never stayed too long in one place. He’d pack up and move on before the week was over. Only, this time he really didn’t want to. Even though he would rather not admit it he knew Faith Conway was the reason for his lingering.

Comment [G101]: Syntax:
Sentence didn't flow.

Deleted: in

Chapter Three

After breakfast Faith helped with the dishes. This time of the year business was usually slow, with only a few boarders. This year they were stuck with Mr. Tomkins, who ate for two, and as every year Mrs. Charlton. Both boarders had healthy appetites.

Her father and Samuel were still seated at the table in the kitchen, where the Conway's had their meals. Samuel finishing off his second plate of flapjacks, and her father was contently sipping coffee. The fact that her little brother remained twig thin puzzled Faith. She watched him swallow down another mouthful in awe.

Her mother was washing the dishes at the sink and it was her chore to dry and pack them away. The kitchen held the welcoming aroma of freshly baked bread and brewing coffee. It was a spacious room, the work table at the far end of the room, the pot bellied stove in the corner closest to it. Pots and pans according to size hung on the wall. The room was a little dreary, save for the bright blue curtains that covered the windows over the sink. Her mother didn't believe in anything fancy and Faith had grown used to it.

Deleted: ,

Comment [G102]: Punctuation.

Comment [G103]: Editors addition.

Deleted: ,

Comment [G104]: Stylistic: While was out of place.

Deleted: while

Comment [G105]: Parts of speech: Wrong preposition used.

Deleted: from

Comment [G106]: Parts of speech: Wrong preposition used.

Deleted: at

Faith was lost in thought when her father cleared his throat. “Lyman Gibson told me the sheriff locked up that Chase fellow.” Faith stiffened and hoped he wasn’t trying to pry something out of her. She knew all too well it was her mother’s least favorite topic. She had given Robby Summers her piece of mind after leaving the livery yesterday.

“Lyman didn’t say why though.” John said, apparently he wasn’t noticing the fierce way his wife attacked the dishes.

“Leave it John. I am sure the sheriff had a very good reason.” Eloise said over her shoulder.

John arched a brow. “Some folks just like picking on that boy because he’s a Breed.” Faith smiled, loving her father even more. He was so kind and generous and thoughtful. Her mother looked ready to hurl a fork at him.

“It’s not fair I tell you.” John said, more to himself than to them.

A knock sounded at the door.

Not expecting anyone his early all eyes turned to it.

Eloise dried her hands on her apron and went to answer **it**. Faith nearly gasped out loud, she couldn’t help staring when the door opened and revealed Chase Morgan on the other side.

“Mornin’ Mrs. Conway,” He said, his voice clear.

Her mother was not pleased **by** his presence. Faith wondered for a second if her mother would actually slam the door in the man’s face. Eloise glanced at the basket he held in his hand. “Morning Mr. Conway,” he said **as** Faith’s father rose and joined Eloise at the door.

“Hello Chase.” John said with a nod. “How are you?”

Comment [G107]: Redundant wording: We had already established the noise at the door.

Deleted: the door

Comment [G108]: Parts of speech: Wrong preposition.

Deleted: at

Comment [G109]: Parts of speech: Wrong use of preposition.

Deleted: when

“Can I help you?” Her mother asked stiffly, not giving Chase the opportunity to start a conversation. Eloise had never been so cold and aloof towards anyone before, at least not that Faith knew about.

Comment [G110]: Stylistic.

Deleted: ol

“Mrs. Watson asked me to stop by and give this to you.” Chase said, lifting the basket a little. Unwillingly his eye caught Faith, standing behind her mother, absentmindedly drying a plate.

Their eyes met, she smiled. He looked away.

Mrs. Conway took the basket. “Thank you. Good day.” She dismissed him with a stiff nod and closed the screen door. Faith was shocked. Chase wasn’t. He turned and started away. Eloise slammed the basket down on the table, ever so aware of the looks her husband and daughter were giving her.

“That was rude.” Faith accused angrily.

Comment [G111]: Adverb: Wrong tense used with adverb.

Comment [G112]: Verb tense:

Deleted: y

“Hush Faith.” Eloise said as she went back to the sink to resume her washing of the dishes. Appalled Faith looked at her father, who mirrored her expression. “Come on Samuel, let’s go see to the garden.” He said quietly.

Comment [G113]: Punctuation.

Deleted: ;

Comment [G114]: Stylistic.

Deleted: our

Eloise glanced over her shoulder and her gaze locked with Faith’s. “Grady is coming to dinner tonight.” She informed John as he headed to the door. “I invited Lottie as well.”

John gave a pleased smile. “Grady will appreciate that.” He remarked, knowing how badly Grady fancied Lottie. Lottie was having the same impact on his son that Eloise had on him so many years ago. “What about Wade?” he asked hopefully. Wade, unlike Grady, was a loner, he had always been aloof and distant. Since he was little he wasn’t nearly as attached to his family as his siblings were.

“No, he need’s to help Mr. Royal.” Eloise said. Her voice uncomfortably tight.

“With what?” Faith wanted to kick herself for asking.

“Things, Faith. **R**anches are full of work that needs to be done.” Her mother replied impatiently.

Comment [G115]: Punctuation.

Deleted: ,

Deleted: r

“I’ll never work on a ranch.” Samuel stated determinedly

John laughed, and he **ruffled** his son’s hair. “I am not surprised.” He said. Samuel sidestepped hard work as much as possible. “It’s plenty of hard work.” John said with a knowing grin.

Comment [G116]: Malapropism: Roughened seemed like the wrong word to use.

Deleted: oughened

“Exactly.” Samuel said his eyes bright.

Eloise rested her hands on her hips, evidently annoyed about something. “I want you two to fix the chicken house today. I don’t want the critters to get hold of our chickens **again**.”

Faith’s father nodded. “That’s the first thing we’ll take care of today.” He assured her and stood. “Come on **u**son, we’d best get started.” Faith suspected he was fleeing. She didn’t blame him. She wanted to do the same.

Comment [G117]: Punctuation.

Deleted: ,

Samuel stood with a nod. “I’ll get the tools.” He said. John turned to the women. “**W**e’ll see you ladies at lunch.”

Comment [G118]: Stylistic: So long is a South African expression which does not fit into this period romance.

Deleted: so long

Eloise nodded and the men left the kitchen. Faith quietly continued to pack away the dishes.

Comment [G119]: Punctuation: Quotation marks were missing.

She opened a drawer, took out the scissors and thread and sat down on the chair closest to the window. She needed to fix Grady’s shirt. The sooner he and Lottie decide to marry the sooner she could stop fixing his shirts.

Eloise joined her, she needed to sew on a button to Samuel's shirt. Faith didn't know how her brother's managed to tear shirts the way they do.

Comment [G120]: Stylistic: Word seemed out of place here.

Deleted: Gosh

"Mr. Royal really likes you."

Reluctantly Faith lifted her eyes to her mother's. Her mother's eyes were pinned on the shirt.

Comment [G121]: Parts of speech: the wrong preposition was used in this case.

Deleted: at

"I think he wants to marry you,"

"Mother!" Faith exclaimed incredulously.

Comment [G122]: Adverb: Adverb tense incorrect.

Eloise glanced at her. "Why else will he be sending you all those fancy gifts?" Her mother said matter-of-factly. Eloise couldn't imagine why her daughter wasn't thrilled by all the attention the rancher was giving her.

"I don't know," Faith replied, irritated. "I don't want his gifts, I don't even like the man." Faith regretted the words even before glancing at her mother's face. Still she was annoyed, her mother only liked Mr. Royal because he was rich, and if he should marry her daughter she could rub a lot of woman's noses in it.

Comment [G123]: Redundant wording: Repetitive use of irritated.

Deleted: irritated

Eloise tossed the shirt on the table. "You are ungrateful." She scolded angrily. "Most girls would do anything to be the object of Mr. Royal's affection."

Comment [G124]: Tense: Wrong tense.

Deleted: will

"I'm not most girls." Faith muttered. The room, although very spacious felt suddenly smaller than a jail cell.

Eloise looked her other. Oh she knew from first hand experience that her daughter was not most girls. Her only daughter was a strong willed stubborn character. Her daughter had been a tomboy most of her life, only recently had she packed away her pants and shirts for skirts and dresses, revealing what a beauty she had grown into, catching Royal's eye.

Faith didn't miss the disapproval in her mother's eyes. "No, you're not like most girls." She said; her voice toneless. Eloise had always dreamed of a little lady as s daughter, a girl she could dress in lace and frills. Faith hated it. Since she was young she had been head strong and stubborn.

Comment [G125]: Stylistic:
Young worked better than little in this sentence.

Comment [G126]: Concord:
Subject is singular and so verb must be singular as well.

Deleted: little

Deleted: was

Comment [G127]: Punctuation:
Quotation marks must come after full stop.

Deleted: .

Faith bit her lip and finished Grady's shirt in silence and stood up. "I'm going for a walk." She announced. She didn't want her mother to know how upset she was.

"You should sort out your room first." Eloise commented, opening a drawer to put away the table cloth.

There was really nothing to sort out in her room, but she suspected her mother was referring to the corner where she stacked the gifts the rancher had sent her. She merely refused to put any of his things among her own. She had been thinking about going to the pastor and maybe he could do something with it so that they could help the needy.

Comment [G128]: Editors
deletion: too vague.

Deleted: stuff

"Can I go see the Watson's first?" The Watson's were an old couple that lived down the street, they owned the general store. Faith had known them since she was a toddler, and they had always felt like grandparents to her.

Comment [G129]: Concord:
Subject is plural and thus verb must b plural too.

Deleted: was

Comment [G130]: Punctuation:
Semi colon is unneeded because there is a conjunction present.

Deleted: ;

Her mother seemed hesitant but nodded. "Just don't take too long."

As she headed to the store she passed the saloon. Her mother made no secret of what she thought about this place. The devils domain her mother would say. Normally Faith hurried past the place as if she was being chased. Yet today there was a magnificent powerful stallion tied to the post. She couldn't help but stop and admire the horse. Spartan, the old plow horse wasn't nearly so fine.

Comment [G131]: Spelling:
Author misspelled past.

Deleted: s

The stallion was a chestnut with a shiny coat and a black mane.

“His name’s Prince.”

Faith recognized the voice immediately. Her heart dropped. She decided against stroking the horse and lowered her hand.

“He’s a nice horse.”

“He’s magnificent.” Guy Royal stopped at the rail of the boardwalk and rested his hand on it. “Do you like horses?”

Faith nodded. “Very much.” She said reluctantly.

“Do you have one?”

“We have Spartan.” According to Samuel the horse was old enough to use a walking stick and have glasses.

“Your little brother said that horse is too old to be of any use.” Guy said, giving her a narrow eyed look.

“Sam exaggerates.” Faith said, feeling a little embarrassed.

“I’ve noticed.” Guy smiled. He looked at the horse, then at her. “Perhaps we can go for a ride one day.”

“It won’t be possible.” Faith stammered, glancing up at him for a split second.

Guy arched a brow. He looked suspicious.

“Things at the boarding house are very busy lately.”

He didn't look convinced. "Are you lying to me, Faith Conway?" There was a note of laughter in his voice. It surprised her.

Feeling guilty and exposed she struggled to reply. "Good day, Mr. Royal."

He was down the boardwalk so fast she was baffled. He towered over her. She gasped and took a step back. "I'm looking forward to our ride together, Faith." He had an air of confidence that was almost annoying. Couldn't he just take no for an answer?

She rounded him and hurried away. Her back straight and her hands clenched at her sides. She glanced over her shoulder to find his gaze still locked on her. Heat flooded her cheeks. And she had to force herself from running.

Guy's gaze followed her until she reached the store and disappeared inside.

Chase hammered the last nail into place, took the picture and hung it on the nail.

"I think it adds color to the place." Mrs. Watson said, beaming with excitement.

Chase took a step back to allow her to take a good look at the picture. It was the ugliest thing Chase had ever seen, a painting of a bowl of fruit; actually it looked like a bowl with bright balls in it.

Mr. Watson grunted. "I think this place is colorful enough."

"Oh, shush Rufus," Mrs. Watson scolded.

Chase had to agree with the older man. He studied the narrow kitchen; there was a welcome air about the narrow room. He appreciated the homeliness he felt. Full yellow

Comment [G132]: Parts of speech: Interjection. The Oh did not need an exclamation mark as the whole phrase was said in the same tone.

Deleted: !

Deleted: s

Comment [G133]: Spelling.

Deleted: hominess

curtains hung at the window, a yellow table cloth covered the table, pots and pans were neatly stacked on a shelf. On the table a vase with bright wildflowers stood.

The old man smiled at Chase. "I'll be in front if you need me, just holler." He said and limped out of the kitchen.

Mrs. Watson smiled and gestured to the chair, "Sit down and I'll poor us some coffee."

He nodded and pulled a chair from the table and sat down. After eating breakfast he had spent most of the time fixing little things around the Watson's apartment.

Since arriving in Pecos Bend the old couple had taken a shine to him. If it weren't for their generosity Chase would've gone to bed hungry most of the time.

Mrs. Watson's black hair was almost completely streaked with gray, she was short and plump, with the friendliest smile he had ever seen. She poured them a cup of coffee and turned away from the stove, the smile on her face.

Comment [G134]: Spelling.

Deleted: b

"I heard you were at the dance the other night." She had a mischievous glint in her pale eyes.

Chase felt his face burn. He shrugged indifferently. "It was a waste of time."

The old woman arched a brow. "I also heard you got into a scrap with Grady Conway." She handed him his cup, concern darkening her expression.

Again he merely nodded, embarrassed. What else had she heard?

Comment [G135]: Punctuation.

Deleted: . E

Mrs. Watson pointed at his cheekbone. "Did he give you that bruise?"

“Yes,” he answered, a little irritated. He took a sip from his coffee. Hot, strong and sweet. Mrs. Watson made the best coffee.

Comment [G136]: Punctuation.

Deleted: ,

Deleted: h

Mrs. Watson sat down on the chair across him. “You must like her a lot.” She remarked.

Chase nearly choked on his coffee, he gave her a surprised look. “What do you mean?” He nearly exclaimed.

The woman laughed, and her features softened in understanding. “Don’t look so shocked young man, boys tend to find girl’s interesting.” She smiled. “You’re still a man, not much different from other young men.” According to everyone else there was. He was a Breed after all.

Comment [G137]: Adverb tense:
Wrong tense used.

Chase tried very hard to look innocent and ignorant at the same time.

“Besides, what’s there not to like about Faith Conway?”

Chase had never felt this guilty and exposed before. He lowered his eyes to the cup he held in his hands. Actually there were a dozen reasons why he shouldn’t find the blonde likable. Even if he thought she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

“I have a wonderful idea!” The woman explained after a moment of silence.

Chase met her gaze, he was almost too afraid to ask.

“Why don’t you join us for church on Sunday?”

Chase almost choked on his coffee again. Church! Him? Was this woman crazy! Why would he want to go to church?

“I really do think you’ll enjoy it.”

Chase shook his head. “Nah, I don’t think so.” He remembered the few times he had gone in the past, none of the memories were too pleasant.

Comment [G138]: Concord:
Subject is plural and so verb
must be plural too.

Deleted: as

Mrs. Watson folded her arms. “And why not?” she countered.

He glanced at her. “I don’t like church.” He replied.

“You don’t?”

He shrugged. “I don’t.”

“Have you ever been in one?”

Much to his embarrassment he had to nod. The woman looked surprised. “Really?”

“When I was still a boy I went once or twice.” He answered, barely audible. One of his foster family’s insisted that he went.

“Why didn’t you like it?”

“I just didn’t. I don’t fit in.” He still remembered the way some folks glared at him while his foster parents beaming with pride because they were doing their Christian duty.

Comment [G139]: Parts of
speech: although 'and' was a
correctly used conjunction, I
felt that while 'while' fit
this sentence as it clearly
combined these two phrases
together.

Deleted: , and

He took another sip of coffee. In the distance he could hear the bell ring, and realized Mr. Watson had opened the shop. He’ll have to hurry with his coffee and get back to the stables.

“Morning Mrs. Watson.”

Chase nearly choked on his coffee for a third time when he recognized her voice. He was on his feet nearly instantly.

“Morning deary.” The old woman beamed. “Would you like some coffee? I just poured Chase and myself some.” She said and stood.

Comment [G140]: Syntax

Deleted: me and Chase

Faith glanced at Chase. He didn't meet her gaze but he responded with a nod. She felt her heart skip a beat and smiled. "I'd love some." She said.

"How's your Pa doing, dear?"

"He's all right, doc Bitters says he's doing surprisingly well."

Chase frowned; he wondered what was wrong with the man, he looked fine this morning.

"Everybody's praying for him dear, he's a good man." Mrs. Watson gave a quick reassuring smile. "How's your mother?" The woman started to the cupboard to fetch another cup.

"She's okay."

The old woman nodded and motioned to a chair. "Sit down and I'll pour you u coffee."

Faith sat down on the chair closest to her.

"I know it's still early but would you two like a piece of apple crumble pie?" The woman clasped her hands together, her face still beaming.

"I wouldn't mind a slice." Faith replied. Mrs. Watson made the most delicious apple pie. The old woman looked at Chase, noticing only then that he was on his feet. She frowned in questioning.

He shook his head. "I should be getting back to the stables, Mr. Pierce is probably waiting for me already."

“Oh don’t be silly, I’ll send Fred a slice and he won’t mind at all.” Mrs. Watson said with a wink, knowing the old man well enough to know he had a sweet tooth. She motioned to the chair. “Sit down and I’ll slice the pie.”

Hesitantly Chase sat down again.

Comment [G141]: Spelling.

Deleted: Hesitatingly

Suddenly the woman smiled broadly. “Why Chase, if I didn’t know any better I’d swear you’re shy.” She winked at him.

Chase didn’t reply. Shy probably wasn’t the best word to describe what he was. How about uncomfortable, and uneasy? He couldn’t really describe the feelings Faith Conway aroused in him, and at twenty he still had limited experience with women.

Mrs. Watson handed them both a plate with a generous slice of pie. Both responded with a thank you. The woman was about to sit down when her husband called her. “I’ll see you two in a minute.” She said and left the kitchen.

“I’m sorry about this morning.” Faith said when the silence stretched.

Chase met her eyes, a frown between his brows. “What are you talking about?”

Faith shifted on her chair, and settling the fork on the plate clasped her hands together. “About the way my mother treated you. I...”

Comment [G142]: Punctuation.

Deleted: ...

“You needn’t apologize.” Chase cut her off. He hadn’t expected anything more from her mother, hadn’t expected the woman to invite him in with a smile on her face. He didn’t live in the idealistic world he suspected Faith was living in.

“Would you stop it?” She snapped.

He gave her a questioning look, surprised by her heated response.

“It’s not right the way some folks treat you.” She sounded angry.

He finished his coffee.”Rights got nothing to do with it.” He replied gravely.

Before she could stop herself her hand grasped his. Her hand, pale and delicate in sharp contrast against his bronzed work hardened one. Her heart raced and she remembered the kiss- though it was a mere kiss of gratitude it had made a lasting impression on her- forever.

“You have to stop letting people walk all over you.”

Chase glanced at her hand, and then met her gaze.

“I have to go. Mr. Pierce won’t be too pleased if I linger here longer than necessary.”

Faith dropped her hand away, an awkward feeling tingling through her.

“I’ll tell Mrs. Watson you thanked her for the pie.”

He nodded, pushed the chair back and left.

Comment [G143]: Syntax.

Deleted: said thanks

CHAPTER TEN

Chase's body ached. Everywhere. In places he had never known possible. His head throbbed mercilessly.

His mouth was dry and he moistened his lips with the tip of his tongue then swallowed. His throat hurt.

In the back of his mind he became aware of a fire crackling, it was a soft distant sound. He also realized he wasn't lying on the hard cold floor, and as he reached down beside himself, he felt only fur.

Where was he?

Something cool and wet touched his face.

Slowly he opened his eyes just as the dog licked him again. Startled Chase shot up.

The room shifted several times before standing still and allowing his eyes to adjust to the dim interior.

Nothing seemed familiar.

Comment [MM144]: Repetitive use of word dry.

Deleted: dry

Comment [G145]: Verb Tense: Wrong tense of the word used.

Deleted: laying

Deleted: touched a spot beside

Deleted: and

An old pot bellied stove stood in the corner of the room, coffee was brewing on it, he could smell it. A table and two benches were at the far side of the room, and a faded worn curtain separated one side of the room from the side where he was.

He was overwhelmed with a surge of dizziness and he swayed on his feet. He heard the dog bark but it sounded so far away. He dropped to his knees and the animal licked him again.

“How are you feeling?”

With a start he looked at the door, he hadn’t heard it open. A man stood there. He was big and old, completely gray with a bushy beard that covered the lower part of his weathered face. His shirt was old and covered with stains.

“Okay.” Chase managed, he sat back down on his behind.

“Come on Spike, out you go.” The old man ordered, pushing the door wide open.

The dog trotted over to the man with his tail wagging and he slumped down at the man’s feet. The stranger smiled and scratched the animal’s head.

Chase touched his head and wasn’t surprised to feel a bandaged wrapped around his head like a turban. He wondered how long he had been unconscious.

“Are you thirsty?”

Chase nodded. His throat was as dry as a desert.

The man headed to the stove and Chase noticed he limped. He poured a cup of coffee and started to Chase. He held it to him. “Careful, it’s hot.” He warned.

Comment [G146]: Concord: The subject is plural and this thus the verb must be plural too.

Comment [G147]: Syntax: a conjunction was needed here.

Deleted: was

Comment [G148]: Syntax: confusing word order.

Deleted: from

Comment [G149]: Parts of speech: The wrong preposition was used here.

Comment [G150]: Punctuation.

Deleted: then

Comment [G151]: Editors addition.

Deleted: and the

Deleted: ed

Deleted: . T

Comment [G152]: Editors deletion.

Deleted: and he pulled back.

Comment [MM153]: Quotation marks missing.

Comment [G154]: Syntax.

Deleted: stained and old

Comment [G155]: Punctuation

Comment [G156]: Punctuation: Comma use was more appropriate.

Deleted: . O

Comment [G157]: Editors addition: Added to make two short sentences into one.

Deleted: . H

Chase gratefully took the cup, then put it down almost immediately again. He didn't feel strong enough to hold it **up** too long.

"Where am I?"

"You're in my cabin."

Chase frowned. The last thing he could remember was Grady bursting into the shack. The rest was a blur. "How did I get here?"

The man lowered himself onto a trunk with a groan. "I found you near the river." He replied settling a walking stick next to him.

Chase's eyes widened. That didn't make sense to him. He touched his bandaged head.

"Guess you were attacked by thieves." The man informed him.

"Who are you?"

The man grinned. "Folk's call me crazy old man Cooper. You can just call me Cooper."

Chase had heard about him. The man lived in a shack a couple of miles outside Pecos Bend and never came in to town. He lived on whatever nature had to offer. Apparently he chased everyone away that dared to set foot on his land with a loaded shotgun and his vicious dog. Chase glanced at Spike. The dog was sprawled out on his **backy**. He looked like an overgrown puppy.

"What's your name?"

Chase looked at the man. "Chase."

The other man nodded. "You worked for Pierce, right?"

Comment [G158]: Parts of speech: a preposition was needed here.

Comment [G159]: Punctuation: There is no full atop after a question mark.

Deleted: .

Comment [G160]: Malapropism: Bag and back sound familiar but have very different meanings. The author meant to say "back".

Deleted: g

Chase nodded, surprised that the man knew so much.

“Did you know him?”

Cooper nodded. “He was a good friend.”

Chase closed his eyes when a fit of dizziness took hold of him.

“How long have I been here?”

The man scratched his jaw. “Four days.”

Chase stared at the man in shock. Four days! The man must be joking!

“Someone had beaten you up pretty bad.” Cooper said.

Chase figured that was why his body ached so badly. Slowly he remembered the fight in the shack.

“Someone shot you, do you know who?”

Slowly Chase shook his head. “No.”

“You’re lucky, you have a hard skull, and the bullet only grazed the side of your head and exited just above your temple.”

Chase took the cup of coffee and took a sip.

He was engulfed with fear. He wondered where Faith was. All he could remember was her screaming and the fight on the ground with Guy. His head started to ache from all the thinking.

“You need to lie down some more, get more rest, build up your strength.” Chase finished his coffee and the old man took the cup. “Lie down.” He advised.

Comment [G161]: Verb tense:
Wrong tense of the word used.

Deleted: built

Chase didn't want to, he had so much he wanted to ask, so much he needed to figure out. More importantly he needed to find out if Faith was okay. But his aching head forced him to lie down. He closed his eyes, slowly the pain started to subside.

Four days! Heaven only knew where Faith was. He only hoped that she was okay. He needed to go back to Pecos Bend as soon as possible.

Seven days had passed. Faith had barely left her room. She rarely got out of bed. Eloise was convinced she was just heartbroken. Her daughter remained in her bedroom with curtains drawn and Eloise couldn't begin to wonder what her daughter so desperately wanted to keep out.

Comment [G162]: Verb tense:
Correcting tense.

Comment [G163]: Spelling.

Deleted: heart broken

Comment [G164]: Editors
addition. I felt more
explanation was needed to how
Eloise felt.

Eloise was washing dishes when she heard floor boards creak. She turned to find Faith standing in the doorway. Her heart twisted in her chest. Her daughter's face was drawn and pale, her lips pressed tightly together. Her eyes red and swollen. She had lost weight, her dress hung loose at her sides.

Comment [G165]: Malapropism:
Wrong word was originally
used.

Deleted: draught

Comment [G166]: Editors
addition.

"Have you finally decided to come out of that room of yours for a change?" Eloise almost immediately regretted her remark.

Faith wordlessly fetched a glass and filled it with water. Seven days. Seven long and lonely days and still no sign of Chase. She had spent hours a day waiting for him, wondering where he was ? Why he hadn't come ? It. Then the dreadful realization that he might be dead almost devastated her completely.

Comment [G167]: Punctuation:
A question mark was needed.

Comment [G168]: Syntax: The
sentence was not complete.

Comment [G169]: Punctuation:
A question mark was needed.

Comment [G170]: Punctuation:
A capital letter was needed
at the beginning of the
sentence.

Deleted: ,why

Deleted: ,

Deleted: t

She glanced at her mother. She wanted to tell her what Royal had done to her but she couldn't. She didn't have the guts, and as she knew her mother, her mother would most likely blame her.

Her eyes welled up with tears. The memory of that night still burned brightly in her mind. The images were still so vivid. When Guy had finally left she had torn her clothes to shreds, had used the water in the wash basin to scrub her self until her skin was raw red and on fire, yet she couldn't stop, not even when she could barely see through her teary eyes.

She had lain on the floor for what seemed like hours, u crying uncontrollably. Someone had knocked on the door but she had refused to answer. Her clothes was spewed on the floor, silent reminders haunting her that nothing would ever be the same for her. She had fought against anger, hate and resentment. She lost terribly. If she had a gun she would've marched over to Guy and shot him down. She had gagged several times that night, and along with all the crying it had made her tired and weak.

The next morning she had woken up in the bed, dressed in a soft nightgown. The room had been cleaned. Her clothes were missing.

"Faith?"

Her mother's voice sent her thoughts scattering. Startled she turned to find her mother standing beside her, a soft look on her face. Grady had brought her home almost immediately afterwards. She had asked him where Chase was and he refused to say anything. She hated him for taking her to the ranch. Her mother had spent the days trying to convince her that Chase was a coward and had fled Pecos Bend. Faith feared it was much more serious than that.

Eloise gave her a gentle smile and squeezed her shoulder.

"I need to get the washing on the line." She turned and left the kitchen and Faith slumped down on a chair.

Comment [G171]: Syntax:
Sentence too long.

Comment [G172]: Punctuation:
Capital letter needed at
beginning of sentence.

Deleted: .

Deleted: C

Comment [G173]: Verb Tense:
Wrong tense used.

Deleted: will

Comment [G174]: Verb Tense:
Wrong tense used.

Deleted: o

Comment [G175]: Verb tense:
A tense marker was needed to
show past tense.

Comment [G176]: Parts of
speech: A preposition was
needed here.

Deleted: a

The door opened and she looked up. Her heart stopped beating. Guy Royal removed his hat.

Faith shot to her feet, a bewildered look on her face. He held up a hand.

“Faith.” His voice was so gentle, almost soothing. He looked terrible actually. “I need to talk to you.” He said his voice tight. He hadn’t shaved. He had a haunted look about his face.

Faith’s eyes swept the kitchen, looking for a weapon. She couldn’t see anything, so she backed up until her back pressed against the wall.

“I’m sorry, Faith. I don’t know what came over me.”

“Leave.” Faith hissed; her teeth clenched. Sorry? How dare he?

Guy chewed the insides of his cheeks. “I want you to know my offer still stands.”

All color left her face. “I will never marry you.” She screeched. Her voice filled with venom. She felt so angry she wanted to attack him and scratch his eyes out.

His eyes hardened. “After that night you might not have much of a choice.” He snapped angrily. “Do you honestly think the Breed would still want you?” Guilt washed over him but he ignored it.

“What if you...”

“I’ll kill myself then.” Her voice dripped with hate.

Anger flashed in his eyes.

“You’re parents still need the money. When your father dies the bank will take the boarding house. You’ll be homeless.”

Comment [G177]: Punctuation.
Hyphen is only to be used to
combine two words together.

Deleted: -

She swallowed hard.

“Your Breed’s not coming back.” Guy said. Wade had assured him of that.

The look Faith gave him made Guy took a step back. Silently he turned and left the kitchen. Faith collapsed. She took several fortifying breaths.

Two more days had passed and Chase was feeling much stronger. He decided to ride to Pecos Bend tonight. He was eating venison stew with the old man when the man cleared his throat.

Comment [G178]: Verb Tense: Addition of tense marker needed.

“I’m not really crazy, you know?”

Chase glanced at him. He smiled. “I managed to figure that out.”

The man nodded, apparently pleased. “You know Chase, if you want people to treat you better you’ll need to start treating yourself better.”

Chase gave the man a questioning look. That was a random piece of information.

“I’m not good at giving advice, but you might want to give it a try.”

Chase didn’t say anything. ↓

Comment [G179]: Redundant wording.

“If you treat yourself like nothing then that’s the way other folks will treat you.”

Deleted: It was a random thing for the old man to say.

Comment [G180]: Syntax. The words were in the incorrect order.

Chase nodded, chewing on a mouthful of stew. He hoped that would be the last of the

sage advice.

Deleted: allow folks to treat you

Deleted: they

Deleted: random suggestions

Faith was near tears when she crawled into bed. She closed her eyes. She had heard Robby tell her brother about the shack that had been burned down and the body inside. Chase was dead. She was alone. The thought was terrifying.

Comment [G181]: Redundant wording: The reader knows who we are talking about.

Deleted: Faith

She heard her father's guttural coughing and bit her lip. Not much good praying had done her lately.

After blowing out the candle she laid curled up on her side. She heard a soft clicking sound. Ignoring it she turned to her other side. She couldn't even cry. She was spent with tears. She was too embittered to even try. Chase was dead.

She heard it again, and again.

She sat up.

Tap.

There it was again. Faint but unmistakable.

She looked at the window, frowning.

Tap.

Slowly she swung her legs to the floor and stood. The floor boards cold under her feet. She decided not to light the candle and headed to the window and pushed it open. It was too dark outside to see anything.

She narrowed her eyes and surveyed the ground. Nothing.

"Faith."

Then her eyes spotted him. He was standing near the oak. It was Chase! Her heart skipped a beat. It was Chase!

“Chase!” She cried in disbelief.

He motioned for her to come down and she nodded eagerly, hurrying out of the room.

She was careful not to wake anybody up as she tiptoed down the creaking stairs and hurried out of the back door.

When she reached Chase she threw herself into his arms.

He held her tightly to him, burying his face in her hair and took a deep breath, filling his lungs with the smell of her.

“You’re okay.” She whispered through the tears. She pulled back to look at his face, he cupped her face gently in his hands. Their eyes met and locked. “I’m so glad you’re okay.”

He lowered his lips to hers and kissed her passionately. She slumped against him, then stiffened and pulled back. He gave her a questioning look, and she smiled, hoping it would reassure him. He wore a red checked shirt, the sleeves an inch or two too short, it spanned tightly over his shoulders and faded black Levi’s.

“Where were you?” She whispered, her eyes searching his face. He had lost some weight, his eyes looked hardened.

“It’s a long story.” He replied, his eyes studying her face.

“But I came to fetch you.” He said with a smile to reassure her.

“Fetch me?” She repeated.

He nodded. “I’m leaving Pecos Bend.” He took her hands in his and held them tightly.

“I want you to come with me.”

Comment [G182]: Editors deletion. Sentence did not make sense.

Deleted: and her eyes flew to her mouth.

Comment [G183]: Parts of speech: Conjunction needed.

Comment [G184]: Tense: wrong tense was being used.

Deleted: ,

Deleted: and

Deleted: ied

Deleted: C

Comment [G185]: Stylistic: Hugged did not fit as well in the sentence.

Deleted: hugged

Comment [G186]: Wrong tense used.

Deleted: ill

Faith felt relief wash over her. They were leaving, they were leaving this dreaded town forever! He cupped her face again. Hope burned brightly in his eyes. "Say you're coming with me?" He sounded so hopeful, so expectant. "We'll head for Nevada, Montana even Mexico if we need to." He smiled. "I don't care, as long as we're together."

Comment [G187]: Noun/Verb.
The noun was originally written as a verb.

Deleted: ve

Comment [G188]: Punctuation:
Phrase is a question and needed a question mark.

Deleted: .

She felt tears well up in her eyes and swallowed hard.

"I'll find a job. I'll even be a cowboy if I need to."

He took a deep breath, something was wrong, he could sense it. As happy as she was to see him, she was distant.

"What's wrong?"

She thought about what Guy had said. *Do you honestly think the Breed will still want you?*

Slowly she shook her head. Chase would understand. He wasn't anything like Guy.

"I won't be able to do anything around here. No one will hire me in this county. They'll be too afraid Royal will do to them what he had done to Mr. Pierce."

Faith thought about her father and her heart ached. His health was failing rapidly, he was wasting away more and more as the days passed. She couldn't leave without seeing him one last time. Without having him smiling at her once more and tease her about her unruly curls. The gentleness in his eyes, the approving look and encouragement she always found there.

"I want to say goodbye first."

Comment [G189]: Tense: Wrong
tense used.

Comment [G190]: Syntax:
Original word order was wrong.

Deleted: ill

Deleted: just

"We need to leave now, that way no one will stop us." Chase insisted. He didn't think Guy would stand back and just let them go.

“Chase I...”

Comment [G191]: Punctuation:
hyphen is only used to
combine two words together.

Deleted: -

He frowned at her hesitation. “Say yes.” He pressed earnestly.

She swallowed hard. She wanted to go with him. Right now! In the middle of the night. She cared little for her few possessions, even less about what the folks would say. She would be free, she would be with Chase. She would be away from Guy Royal.

What about her father? He didn’t have much longer to live. She couldn’t just leave. Not now. She could at least stay until after the funeral.

“I want to stay until Papa’s...”

Comment [G192]: Punctuation:
Hyphen's will be used only to
combine two words together.

Deleted: -

Chase looked shocked. He stared at her wordlessly.

“You want to stay? After everything?” his voice was sharp.

“I can’t leave, not now.” She replied and swallowed hard. “My father is dying, he needs me. I want to be here with him for his last few days.”

Chase looked hurt and angry. “He’s dying Faith.” He said; his expression incredulous, his voice low. The words cut her deep and she recoiled. “What about me Faith? I need you too.”

Faith swallowed hard. “Just wait a couple of days, Chase.” She whispered, her tone begging.

“What about you Faith? What about what you need?” He challenged. “You say you love me. Then come along.”

“I can’t.” she said barely audible. “They need me here, just for a while...” Perhaps just until she could gather the courage to tell him what Guy had done to her.

Comment [G193]: Punctuation:
Hyphen will only be used to
combine two words together.

Deleted: -

The look he gave her broke her heart. He looked hurt and betrayed. He took a step back and released her hands.

“Chase, wait, you don’t have to leave. Not right away.” She implored. Her voice was hoarse with emotion she reached out to grab his hand but he pulled back.

“Good bye Faith.” He whispered; his own voice hoarse. He clenched his hands at his side.

“Chase, please wait.” Tears blurred her vision.

He turned and started away, head bowed. She couldn’t move. Her heart raced.

“Chase! Wait!” Her cry was barely audible.

He whistled and his horse came trotting closer. She watched, wordlessly as he mounted and leaned forward to take the reins. He hesitated a moment then whipped the reins and the animal leapt forward. Not once had he glanced at her.

Faith felt the ground rumble beneath her. She stifled a cry and sat down in the dirt. She watched him ride off into the distance, tears rolled down her cheeks. She wiped at them but more tears rolled down [her face](#). Her hands gripped the loose dirt and she took a shaky breath.

Comment [G194]: Syntax: the sentence was not complete.

Chase had just ridden off, without her...

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Texas Hill Country

Springhill, 1872

Springhill wasn't as big as Denver or Colorado Springs, but it had all the facilities and necessities to attract strangers and in the few years the town existed its residents had grown from twenty to nearly four hundred. It was just north of Denver and false fronted buildings lined the main street on both sides, looking like children's building blocks.

Today was a rainy day. The streets were wet and muddy, the wind cold. Almost everybody in Springhill was gathered in the parlor of the boarding house. The room was sparsely furnished, the furniture old but still in good condition. It was a wide airy room with tall windows and lace curtains. The curtains were yellowish from years of use and cigarette smoke. A few framed pictures hung in the room, probably to add a bit of class. Two round tables stood beside the sofa with old vases on with withered flowers. The wall was covered with old brownish wall paper, peeling at spots.

The previous owner, Mr. Stanley Gilbert had moved east and the place was for sale. The mayor of Springhill, Mr. Dean Clayton had decided on a public auction. The town was bustling with excitement. Several ranchers were present, as well as a few local store owners and business men, the owner of the hotel, Virginia Cox and the owner of the saloon, Clyde Mayberry were the most likely to buy it.

Comment [G195]: Consistency: Date was not in the same format as original date at beginning of manuscript. Date was changed to remain consistent.

Deleted: ¶
1872¶

Comment [G196]: Redundant wording: Word repeated.

Deleted: hundred

Deleted: . F

Comment [G197]: Concord: Clyde Mayberry is a single subject so it needed a singular verb.

Deleted: was

"I believe we all agree that this is a fine establishment." Mr. Clayton announced, with a bright smile on his face. Before becoming the mayor of Springhill he had been a general in the War between the States. He had lost his arm in battle; the empty sleeve was tugged in to the pocket of his trousers. He had a very proud air about him. Held himself as straight as a post. "As you all know, Mr. Gilbert decided not to return to our fine town."

Comment [G198]: Punctuation:
A capital letter was not needed here.

Deleted: B

A muffled sound left the small crowd. It sounded like a *good*.

"We agreed on a public auction. This will include the boarding house, all loose assets including the live stock Mr. Gilbert has left behind." The live stock included several pigs, a milk cow, plow horse and a dozen or more chickens.

Comment [G199]: Wrong tense.

Deleted: d

Deleted: L

He cleared his throat. "Only those who can pay immediately, with sufficient money present will be able to make an offer."

Comment [G200]: Stylistic:
You don't make a bet at an auction.

Deleted: bet

The mayor informed them. "No one will be allowed to leave this room until the auction is complete." He nodded at the lawyer. The lawyer, a burly looking man, seated behind a desk nodded in agreement.

Comment [G201]: Tense. Wrong tense was used.

Deleted: d

"Our good sheriff is away on business, but his fine deputy will escort any trouble makers to the jail." The mayor pointed toward the young tall man standing at the far end of the room. He looked very boyish still, but he had a hard set lmouth. The residents nodded in agreement. The deputy tipped his hat.

Comment [G202]: Stylistic:
Unneeded wording.

Deleted: about his

The lawyer cleared his throat and the mayor took his seat.

"The bidding starts at seven hundred dollars."

There was a murmur among the residents, and then Virginia Cox said in a clear voice. "Eight hundred." Heads turned to face the beautiful red head. She had thick red hair, styled

beneath an expensive bonnet. Her skin was ivory and her eyes the color of new grass and shaped like almonds. She had prominent cheekbones and full lips. Men flocked around her constantly, making fools of themselves. Apparently she was a widow and originally came from Kentucky. She turned and flashed a challenging smile at Clyde Mayberry.

Clyde Mayberry smiled. "One thousand dollars." He said with a wave of his hand, apparently not very interested.

"Two thousand." She said, smiling back.

"Two thousand one hundred." Clyde said, a muscle working in his jaw.

"Two thousand three hundred." A local rancher put in. Both Virginia and Clyde flashed the old man a look that warned him to stay out of this. The man took a step back and held up his hand in apology. The residents all knew how competitive Virginia and Clyde could be. Since her arrival in town two years ago the two had been battling it out. Most folks were smart enough to stay out of it.

"Two thousand five hundred." Virginia snapped and made a proud toss of her head.

Clyde arched a brow. He was the wealthiest man in Springhill. A very handsome Southern gentleman he fought with the mayor in the war. He almost laughed at Virginia.

"Two thousand eight hundred." Did she really think she could beat him at this? He knew her all too well.

The mayor smiled. It was always entertaining to watch Virginia and Clyde. He glanced at the lawyer, and the lawyer smiled back. Both had expected this.

Virginia squared her jaw. "Three thousand." She said, her eyes hard.

A fellow whistled in surprise.

Comment [G203]: Parts of speech: wrong use of preposition.

Deleted: with

Comment [G204]: Stylistic: Sentence did not feel complete.

“Three thousand one hundred.” Clyde countered.

“That’s a lot of money for a place like this.” Another fellow whispered.

“I got three thousand one hundred dollars; do I hear three thousand two hundred?”

The lawyer called. His eyes were pinned on Virginia, who was evidently hesitating. She bit her lip.

Clyde chuckled proudly. He fixed her with a challenging look. “What’s wrong my dear, can’t-”

“Three thousand five hundred.” Virginia said head held high.

Clyde’s smirk disappeared. He did not look pleased in the least. He didn’t want it to go that far. Three thousand five hundred dollars was a lot of money to pay for a place that still needed a lot of other things. Still he refused to loose to her. His pride took over. “Three thousand five hundred and eighty.”

Deleted: and

Comment [G205]: Malapropism.
Wrong word used.

Deleted: other

“Three thousand eight hundred.”

Silence. All heads turned to the corner of the room, to the young woman who had arrived in a wagon loaded with meager possessions the day before yesterday.

Faith hadn’t planned to take part in the bidding; she hadn’t even planned on staying in Springhill. She was so nervous she had her hands clasped together. Ever so aware of everybody staring at her she held her head high.

The lawyer arched his brows and looked at the red head. “Miss Cox?”

Virginia merely tossed her head and left. Her pace told folks she was vivid. The sound of the front door slamming was evidence of her emotions. A window rattled. The lawyer turned to look at the Clyde.

“Four thousand.” He said with a smirk. He glanced at the blond, giving her a victorious smile. He wondered where she got the money to bid on the boarding house, her clothes were rather plain and old.

Comment [G206]: Concord: Clothes is a plural and so the verb must be plural.

Deleted: was

“Four thousand two hundred dollars.” She replied.

Clyde felt his jaw go slack. “But that is outrageous!” He exclaimed turning to the lawyer. He hadn’t even planned to pay three thousand for this old building. “Allow me to get some more money out of the safe?” He started to turn.

Comment [G207]: Tense: wrong tense used.

Deleted: then turned

“That’s against the rules.” Faith said. “The mayor said only those with sufficient money present will-”

“This is pathetic.” Clyde exploded. He looked at the mayor. The man had a serious look on his face.

“Sorry Clyde, the young lady is right.” He said.

Furious he looked at Faith. “Do *you* even have that kind of money?” he challenged, giving her a head to toe look.

Faith stood. “Indeed I do.” She snapped, lifting her chin.

“I have Four thousand two hundred. Going once.” The lawyer paused, his gaze sweeping the room. “Going twice.” He looked at Clyde. The saloon owner silently shook his head. “Sold to the lady in black.” He announced proudly.

Folks clapped hands. Some turned to congratulate her. Clyde Mayberry glared at her.

Faith made her way to the table and dropped the carpet bag on it. “It’s all there. You’re welcome to count it.” Her eyes met and held Clyde’s who had lingered to see for himself that she really had that kind of money on her.

The lawyer pulled the bag closer and handed it to the banker. “Will you be so kind and check it, Mr. Smith?”

Comment [G208]: Punctuation: Question mark was not used at end of question.

Deleted: .

The banker nodded.

After a few minutes the banker announced it was all there. Every penny of it.

Clyde gave her a measuring look then slapped his hat on his head and marched out of the boarding house.

“Congratulations miss-”

“Conway, Faith Conway.” She replied.

The mayor smiled and nodded. “You just bought yourself a fine business young lady.” He said proudly.

“Would you sign here?” the lawyer asked and handed her the pen. She took it with a nod and signed the paper work at the places he instructed her to. A pleased smile on her face.

Looks like they’ll be staying here after all. Her mother wouldn’t be thrilled but she was. She felt it was time to settle down somewhere nice.

The crowd started to disperse.

“Welcome to Springhill, Miss. Conway.” The lawyer said with a smile and handed the deed to the boarding house. “Keep that in a safe place.” He advised as he stood.

Comment [G209]: Stylistic.

Deleted: and

Comment [G210]: Editor's deletion.

Deleted: Faith smiled brightly as she studied the piece of paper.¶

Her mother was not pleased. As they packed away the few possessions Eloise made no secret of her disapproval of Faith’s decision, a hasty one according to her mother. All Eloise could do was complain and accuse Faith of being impulsive.

“I wish you hadn’t bought this place.” Her mother said smoothing out the wrinkles in the clothes she was removing from the trunk. She had a disgruntled expression on her face. The years that followed the death of her father had not been kind to her mother, she had aged terribly. She looked almost haggard.

“I wish you wouldn’t be like that.” Faith retorted, fixing her mother with a hard look. She pushed herself from the floor, balancing a couple of neatly folded pillow cases draped across her arms.

“A boarding house is nothing but trouble.” Her mother said with a huff.

Faith pursed her lips together. She didn’t agree with her mother. She thought it was a perfect way to start again, a perfect way to put their roots down and settle in. The thought made her feel good all over. She was so tired of moving around. She wanted a home again. She was done running.

“I wish you would relax, the least you can do is give it a chance.” Faith implored.

“Don’t be absurd, this was a silly idea.” Her mother snapped. “We hardly know anything about this lousy town.”

Faith folded her arms, hugging the pillow cases against her breast. “There’s nothing wrong with this town and there’s nothing wrong with the boarding house.” She said, only barely able to keep the irritation from her voice. The only thing that was wrong was her mother’s attitude, but she decided it best not to put her thoughts to words. Sure the house wasn’t as prim and proper and well taken care of as the one they had in Pecos Bend, but there was nothing a little hard work wouldn’t be able to fix. She had spotted a broken window in one of the rooms, a few creaking floorboards and a few spots where the paint had started to peel. The wall paper lifted and a there was a spot in the parlor where the ceiling was turning

Comment [G211]: Parts of speech: Tense marker needed.

Comment [G212]: Syntax: Sentence too long so it was shortened.

Comment [G213]: Punctuation: Capital letter needed at beginning of sentence.

Deleted: and t

brown. There really was nothing seriously wrong with the place. They could fix that in no time. “We need to settle down. We can’t keep moving around.”

Deleted:

All she ever wanted was a normal life, if not for her, then for her son. The last four years had been tough and hard and Billy didn’t deserve it. He needed a better life, he needed a home and friends, and maybe now she could get him that dog she promised him. This just had to work. For Billy’s sake.

“You should have talked to me first.” Eloise said still irritated. She pushed herself from the floor and slammed the trunk shut. It almost reverberated in the quietness of the room.

“If you don’t want to do this fine, but Billy needs a home, he needs to know we are done moving.” She snapped and walked to the door. “For once think about someone else.” Faith opened the door. “I intend to do anything in my power to make this work.” She stepped outside and nearly bumped into a teenage girl.

“I’m so sorry.” The girl said.

“I’m sorry.” Faith replied then frowned when she realized the girl wasn’t one of the boarders. “Can I help you?” She asked. She didn’t want random strangers just barging in like this.

The girl had short auburn hair, brown eyes with a splash of freckles across her nose and cheekbones. She looked a little boyish.

“I hope so, I’m Sadie Gilbert.” She held out a dirty hand.

Faith was almost relieved her hands were too full to take the girl’s. “Are you -”

Comment [G214]: Redundant wording.

Deleted: hand

“Mr. Gilbert’s my grandpa.” Sadie answered. “I heard you bought the boarding house.” The girl glanced around the place.

Faith nodded. “I have.” She didn’t know the man had any relatives.

Sadie took a deep breath. “Can I have a word with you Miz?”

Comment [G215]: Stylistic:
Left in place to highlight
authenticity.

“Faith, call me Faith, please.” She said with a nod.

Sadie nodded. “Can we talk in the kitchen?”

Faith nodded again, she wanted to lead the way but Sadie was already heading toward the kitchen, she forgot the girl knew the place. Faith followed. She was dressed in a loose shirt and loose trousers. Very unladylike. The clothes hid every trace of femininity her body probably had developed. Faith wondered if she dressed like this on purpose. According to the mayor and the lawyer, Mr. Gilbert was mean and cunning.

They reached the kitchen and Faith motioned Sadie to sit. The kitchen was long and narrow. The floorboards creaked alarmingly, and she only hoped it would hold her. Shelves lined the one wall, from top to bottom. She had dared to look at them and was pleased to find them clean, not a spot of dust anywhere. In the far corner of the kitchen stood an enormous black stove, clean as a pin with an old coffee pot on it. The table was old but steady, Sadie sat down on one of six ladder backed chairs. The kitchen was much smaller than the one Faith was used to but it had lovely big windows.

Comment [G216]: Tense: Wrong
tense used.

Deleted: ill

“What can I do for you?” She wondered why the girl’s grandfather had left her behind but decided it best not to ask. She dropped the pillowcases over the back support of one of the chairs and rested her hands over it.

"I live in the attic." Sadie said with a quick smile. "I was wondering, since you're new that maybe I can help you. Work for you or something."

Faith rounded the chair and sat down, careful so that her back wouldn't wrinkle the pillow cases. They really didn't have the finances to hire someone, not just yet. She looked at the girl. Hope and expectation shone in the girl's eyes. She couldn't just say no. She smiled at the girl.

"How old are you, Sadie?"

"I'll be seventeen come December."

"Why didn't you go with your grandpa?" She had to ask.

Sadie shrugged. "We never got along too well." Sadie looked away. She looked uncomfortable and Faith decided not to probe.

Deleted:

"We can't offer you any pay just yet." Faith said. "But we can offer you a place to stay and food. If you're interested?"

Sadie smiled. "Great." She sighed in relieve.

Smiling Faith said. "I guess we have a deal then."

Sadie nodded.

"We'll talk about wages in a month or two."

"Okay. What do you expect from me?" Sadie asked. She didn't look lazy. The girl looked ready to repaint the walls if that was what Faith wanted.

"What did you do when this was your grandpa's place?"

"I cooked some, and I took care of the washing and ironing."

“Will you mind going on with that?”

The girl shook her head. “I don’t mind.”

“Good.” Faith said with a nod and stood. “I still have a few things to unpack, come with me so that I can introduce you to my Mother and son.”

A knock sounded on the front door. Sadie jumped to her feet. “I’ll get it.” She hurried to the front door. Faith took a deep breath and hurriedly pinned a few stray curls into place and smoothed her skirt. She had the feeling that the person that come to call was for her. She wasn’t a vain woman but wanted to make a good impression.

After a second Sadie’s head appeared, her eyes round. “It’s Clyde Mayberry. He wants to have a word with you.”

Faith arched a brow. “Where is he?” Not really surprised.

“In the parlor.” Sadie arched a brow.

Squaring her shoulders she headed to the parlor, mouthing the words *thank you* at Sadie.

Clyde Mayberry stood at the window of the properly furnished parlor. His back to her, his hat in his hand. He was tall with broad shoulders, clad in a crisp white shirt with a fancy waist coat and black trousers.

“Good morning Mr. Mayberry.”

Clyde turned around and smiled. The smile was fake and emotionless. “Morning Miss. Conway.”

“Can I help you?” Faith wanted to get rid off him as quickly as possible.

He smiled. “I came to apologize for my behavior earlier.” He touched the brim of his hat.

Comment [G217]: Malapropism: Wrong word used.

Deleted: e

Faith nodded stiffly. “Apology accepted, Mr. Mayberry.”

“Please call me Clyde.”

She forced herself to smile. “Very well, Clyde. Is there anything else?” She didn’t feel comfortable in his presence

He smiled again. “Well, yes. Actually,” He replied with a nod.

“I would like to make you an offer.”

She arched a brow and folded her arms. “Oh? An offer I can’t refuse?”

Comment [G218]: Parts of speech: Interjection. The Oh in this sentence is said as a question and thus needed a question mark.

Deleted: a

A chuckle followed with a firm nod. “For the boarding house.”

“I just bought it.” She reminded him, frowning. She had the feeling he wouldn’t be able to just give up.

He nodded. “Yes, I know. But a woman won’t be able to do everything that needs to be done.” He made a waving gesture with his hand.

She studied him. He clearly didn’t know anything about her yet.

“Virginia Cox seems to manage.”

Clyde’s eyes softened. “Virginia is an extraordinary woman.” He snapped his mouth shut when he saw anger flash in her eyes.

“If there’s anything that needs to be done that we can’t do ourselves we’ll hire someone.”

“I’m willing to pay you double what you paid for the boarding house.”

“No.”

The look he gave her reminded her so much about someone else. She faced him squarely. “The boarding house is not for sale.”

“You don’t know how difficult it is to run a boarding house in our town.”

“Are you threatening me?” Something snapped inside her.

“Of course not.” He gave a quick smile. “I’m only enlightening you to a few facts.” He said smoothly, holding up a hand defensively.

She smiled sweetly. “You don’t know me Mr. Mayberry. Or are you afraid of more competition?”

Clyde laughed. “You’re no threat to me.” He assured her.

“Good, if you’ll excuse me then, I have work to do.”

Clyde slapped his hat on his head and nodded a silent good bye, then left. Defeated.

She heard the door close with a click behind him. She released a deep breath. Clyde Mayberry was the kind of man she wanted to avoid at all cost. He reminded her too much about Guy Royal.

“Mama.”

Faith’s thoughts scattered and she whirled at the sound of Billy’s cheerful voice. She smiled at the four year old boy.

Comment [G219]: Punctuation:
Full Stop was needed here.

“Come.” He made a waving gesture with his hand. “Come see.” His face bright with excitement.

She lifted her skirts and followed.

Billy was outside, a black and white puppy in his arms by the time she reached the back door. Sadie was there too, she was scratching the puppy behind his ear. A sturdy **built** man stood there, dirty apron and sweaty forehead, but a bright smile on his face.

Comment [G220]: Wrong tense of the word used.

Deleted: d

“Hello.” She greeted. Her gaze dropped to her son when she heard him squeal in laughter. The puppy was slashing his tongue all across the boys face.

“Me and my wife owns the general store, I’m Allen Wheeldon.”

“Faith Conway pleased to meet you.”

The man glanced at Billy and smiled. “Fine lad you have here Miss.”

She smiled. “Thank you.”

“My wife and I wondered if he could have that little mongrel.” He smiled. “Just a little something to welcome him to our town.”

Comment [G221]: Syntax: Word unneeded to make full sentence.

Deleted: with

Billy was looking at her now, eyes shining and expecting.

“He’s the only one we couldn’t find a home for.” The man explained sounding a little worried.

Billy walked to Faith, hugging the puppy lovingly to his chest. Faith smiled. He wanted a puppy since she could remember **and she** didn’t have any reason to refuse him now. They were settling down in Springhill

Comment [G222]: Punctuation: Considering new sentence created, there needs to be a capital letter at beginning of a sentence.

Deleted: . S

She scratched the dog’s tiny head.

“Can I have him, please?” He asked hopefully.

“We can keep him.” Faith said.

“Yippee!” Billy exclaimed happily.

“But I don’t want him in the house.” Faith said sternly. Her son didn’t seem too bothered about that, just yet.

“What ugly creature do you have there?”

Billy grinned proudly as he rounded his mother to stand with his grandmother. “It’s my puppy.” He said proudly, hugging the animal lovingly.

Eloise arched a brow. “As long as he don’t frighten the chickens [then](#) he’s adorable.” Eloise said, a smile curving her lips.

“He won’t.” Billy promised, his eyes sparkling.

“Perhaps you should put him down a bit?” Sadie suggested. Billy didn’t want to so he sat down on a porch step with the dog.

“Thank you Mr. Wheeldon.” Faith said with a smile.

Billy looked up at the older man. “Thank you.” He said happily.

Allen nodded. “It was my pleasure.” He started away after nodding at Eloise. “I hope you folks feel right at home.” He said over his shoulder.

Faith hoped so too. She turned and settled her gaze on her son, whose attention was locked on the dog.

That night at dinner Sadie informed them a little about Springhill. She started with the trouble they had with a local gang a few years ago, how they had raided the ranches and stores. Faith **had begun to feel** worried.

“Wonderful! We are living in a town terrorized by vagrants and misfits.” Eloise exclaimed, worsening Faith’s mood.

“Don’t worry.” Sadie said quickly. “That was before we got the sheriff. Since he’s been here we don’t have any problems with outlaws.”

Relief flooded Faith. Then she thought about the deputy she had seen at the auction. The man didn’t look like any threat to outlaws. He looked a little young and wet behind the ears.

“Well, where is this wonderful hero like sheriff?” Eloise asked, sipping her tea.

“Out of town. He escorted a prisoner to Denver. He’ll be back in a day or two.”

“What kind of man is he?” Faith asked, and then blushed when Sadie smiled. She realized the girl must think she was interested. “Not that it matters.” She said hurriedly.

“He lives here.”

“Where?” Faith and her mother asked in unison.

“Here in the boarding house. He’s been living here since he was elected as sheriff.” She informed them.

Faith stood and started clearing away the dishes.

“He’s quiet, doesn’t like mingling a lot. He and Clyde had a few differences in the past **but** he gets along fine with everybody else though. Ellie says he has a kind nature.”

Comment [G223]: Stylistic:
This is supposed to be from Faith's perspective and previous statement didn't make sense.

Deleted: and

Deleted: looked

Comment [G224]: Common tense error with author

Deleted: ve

Deleted: ,

Faith scrapped out the leftover food into Domino's bowl, the newly named puppy.
"Billy please take this outside for Domino. Then get ready for bed." She instructed. Billy
hopped to the floor and nodded. He took the bowl and carried it outside for his puppy.

Comment [G225]: Punctuation:
An apostrophe was needed to
show possession

Deleted: bowl.

Comment [G226]: Malapropism:
Wrong word was used.

Faith slipped the plates into the sink, filled with warm soapy water.

"So while your hero-like-sheriff is away that deputy is in charge?" Eloise asked.

Sadie nodded. "Willie Hayes really isn't that bad." Sadie said, not sure if Faith's
mother was being mean or just didn't like him.

Faith silently started to wash the dishes. Her mother called Billy. "It's time for your
bath you little tyke." She said as she opened the door. He was crouched on the floor, playing
with Domino. Slowly he stood. "Goodnight Domino." He said with a long face and entered
the kitchen. Faith glanced at him, and then shook her head firmly before he could ask.
Pouting he started to the staircase.

"I'll carry up the water for his bath." Sadie offered. Stiffly Eloise nodded and Sadie
hurried away.

Eloise took the towel to start drying the dishes.

Faith glanced at her mother when Sadie left. She suspected that if it wasn't for Billy
they wouldn't be standing here together.

"Stop being so mean with the girl." She said, handing her mother a plate.

"I don't see why we needed the extra help. We can manage just fine. There must be a
reason why the old man didn't take her with him." Eloise replied.

Faith rolled her eyes. "Sadie is nice. We need her as much as she needs us. So be
nice."

Eloise dried the plate and stacked it with the rest on the shelf.

Comment [G227]: Parts of speech: Wrong preposition used.

Deleted: on

“What are you going to say when people start asking about Billy?”

Faith glanced at her mother.

“You already introduced yourself as Miss.” Eloise said; an eyebrow arched as she shined a glass with the towel. Faith took a deep breath. Her mother had insisted they pretend she was a widow, to save Billy from unnecessary name calling and meanness. She had complied several times in the past. This time she had to stop pretending.

Comment [G228]: Punctuation: A semi colon was needed to join these sentences as there is no conjunction joining them.

Deleted: ,

Deleted: f

“I don’t know.”

Eloise looked at her, shocked. “You haven’t thought of it yet, have you?” Her mother accused bitterly.

Faith lowered her gaze to the dishes in the water. She shook her head. “Not yet, no one might even bother to ask.”

Eloise made a snorting sound. “And you believe that?”

Faith bit her lip to keep herself from spitting an answer at her mother. “I’ll handle it when it happens.” She said solemnly.

Eloise shook her head. “You should get married; give Billy a man’s name.”

Comment [G229]: Punctuation: a semi colon was needed here as there was no conjunction joining the sentences.

Deleted: ,

Faith fixed her mother with a hard look. Eloise closed her mouth and silently dried the last few remaining items.

After washing the dishes Faith went upstairs and found Billy still in his bath water, his face was scrubbed clean but his neck and ears were still grimy.

Comment [G230]: Concord. Ears is plural so the verb needed to be plural.

Deleted: as

“Well young man.” She said kneeling beside the sink tub and taking the wash cloth to start rubbing it with soap. “You forgot to wash your neck and ears.” She smiled at him.

Comment [G231]: Parts of speech: Wrong preposition used.

Deleted: ed

Deleted: on

Comment [G232]: Syntax: A subject was needed here.

“I washed there.” Billy said with a grin as she lathered his dirty skin with the soapy cloth.

“Sure you did.” She said with a giggle. “You still have soap suds in your hair.” She noticed. “Cover your eyes.” She said taking the pitcher of water from the washstand. As the water and dirt washed down over his shoulders Billy let out a squeal.

Comment [G233]: Malapropism: Wrong use of word.

Deleted: squall

She gave a small laugh. “I’ll get your night shirt. It’s way pass your bed time.” She noted as he yawned.

She helped him get dressed and taking the brush, ran it through his hair. Fortunately he didn’t have her unruly curls.

Billy yawned again. “Are we going to stay here forever?” he asked as she led him to his cot.

Faith pulled the covers back and he hoped on top.

She smiled at him and planted a kiss on his cheek. “Maybe not forever... but we are going to stay here for a long, long time.”

Billy looked pleased and laying down she pulled the covers up to his chin.

“Good night.” She whispered.

“Night.” He muttered and was asleep almost immediately.

