

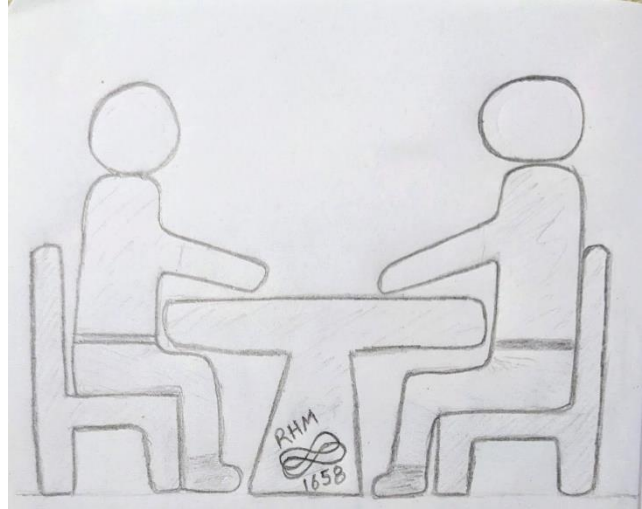
Resist Conformity

Challenge Convention

The Griegos

May 1658

**San Juan de los Caballero,
New Mexico**



Jose Eduardo arrives at his parent's house with his tribe in tow. His wife, Elsa, keeps their four children moving in the right direction as they approach the gate leading into the property. After closing the gate behind them, the kids are free to roam. They quickly go in search of their cousins. Jose Eduardo and Elsa relax their guard once they see their kids running toward the house. This is a weekly routine to which they are well accustomed. Every Sunday after church, together with his siblings and their families, they gather here for dinner.

As is usually the case, most of those present are sitting or standing on the ample front porch, which at this time of day provides a shady refuge from the sun's penetrating rays. They greet all present with a short embrace and kiss on the cheek as is their custom. They are surprised to see a drink prepared with what appears to be fresh fruit.

"Where did you get the fruit; has it been growing on some trees all winter in a secret hiding place we don't know about?" Elsa asks, her eyebrows arching slightly surprised to see fruit at this time of the year.

Her sister-in-law, Maria Isabella, explains they preserved the fruit from last season and were saving it for a special occasion. She suspects she is pregnant and that their family will soon be adding another member, so she wants to celebrate the day with something special. The cool spring afternoon with fresh buds of green on the trees promise to bring more fruit in the months to come, but for now are just starting the process of producing the succulent bounty which will soon populate its branches and end up with a similar fate as the drink they now enjoy.

Inside, they find Jose Eduardo's mother, Carolina, bustles around the kitchen, as usual. They greet her and put their contribution for the meal on the table while they chit chat about the day and the church service. She quickly chases them out of the kitchen, telling them she has things to do, and urging them to go out on the porch with the others, refusing their offer to help her by saying she has everything under control.

Outside once again, José Eduardo and Elsa gravitate to where the men are gathered around Juan Junior, Jose Eduardo's father, who sits in the most comfortable chair on the porch.

“Juanto and Antjo, my brothers in arms,” Jose Eduardo says jokingly, addressing his brothers by their nicknames, as he approaches them and grabs each by an arm. “How are you both doing, and where’s the whiskey?”

On cue, they produce a bottle hidden behind their father’s chair. Jose Eduardo briefly looks to his glass, which he had left on the table before going inside. It’s still more than half full with juice. He notes that the others seem to be drinking their whiskey with the same fresh juice his sister-in-law has prepared.

“I understand we have cause for celebration,” he tells his brother-in-law, Pedro. “My sister says you are expecting to bless us with another child. What’s it going to be this time?”

“Well, just as you and Elsa have two boys and two girls, I suppose I am hoping for another girl to round out our bunch with two and two, but I believe Marisa would like another boy.”

Jose Eduardo nods and then asks, “How does the whiskey taste with the juice?”

When they all assure him the combination tastes quite good, he takes a drink of the fruit juice to empty the glass some more and then puts his glass out for them to fill it with the golden liquid. He mixes the concoction with his finger, puts his finger into his mouth, tastes it, and pleased with the results, pops his finger in his mouth as he takes it out.

“Who taught you your manners, Joed?” Elsa asks her husband, feigning a frown and laughing at his antics.

“He did!” Jose Eduardo replies, pointing immediately to his father, who they all know is in the habit of doing the same thing.

“Seed doesn’t fall far from the tree,” Juan Junior responds, affirming his son’s accusation with a wink and a nod.

After their brief interchange, Elsa takes a healthy sip of her juice, and then thrusts her glass forward, asking for equal treatment as her husband. The only difference in their style is that instead of mixing the drink with her finger, she finds a twig on the ground, picks it up and twirls it around a few times to mix the whiskey with the juice before throwing the twig back on the ground.

“You know, Elsa, it’s probably worse using the twig than your finger,” her husband tells her jokingly, “who knows what that twig has been through? At least I know I washed my hands this morning.”

“That’s exactly the problem, honey. No one knows what your hands have been doing since then. More than likely the twig has just been lying there all day, who knows what you’ve been up to?” Several people laugh at her joke and agree that her twig was likely cleaner than his hands.

Jose Eduardo's sisters and his sister-in-law sit off to the other side of the porch, momentarily distracted by the exchange between Elsa and the men before getting back to their conversation. Elsa pays little attention to them. She is more comfortable drinking whiskey with the men, than talking with the women about anything at all.

Since Elsa was younger, she has always been something of a tomboy. She was always more prone to go chasing frogs in the creek with her brothers, than to stay home playing dolls with her sisters. Her older brothers initially didn't take kindly to their kid sister tagging along with them, but their mother insisted they watch over her whenever she was with them. They had no other choice than to put up with her, or bear the wrath of their mother. It wasn't long before they found she could keep up with them just about everywhere they went, so they got used to her being around them since long ago.

Jose Eduardo, in large part, fell in love with just this part of Elsa. Her adventurous spirit and independent thought captivated him from early on. She was never one to sit back taking orders, instead being much more likely to be the one to come forward and give them. He can't imagine being married to someone more interested in cooking and sewing than in hunting and fishing. As far as he is concerned, they make a good pair. While some of the women have some jealousy issues regarding Elsa's choice to spend time with the men rather than the women, she doesn't flirt with them, nor has she every given Jose Eduardo cause to be jealous, so it works out most of the time. He enjoys his wife's company and her enthusiasm for life, regardless of what other might say about her behavior.

After having a couple of drinks, and when everyone has arrived, they get ready for dinner. In short order, they expertly convert the veranda into a dining room and sit down to eat. The adults are at one large table in the middle, while the children are split between two smaller tables positioned off to the sides, where the adults can keep an eye on them.

There is no fixed order as to where everyone sits, yet with few exceptions, they generally sit in the same place every time. Juan Junior, as patriarch, sits at the head of the table with his wife, Carolina, to his left. Beside her sit their two daughters, followed by their daughter in law, with their respective husbands sitting directly in front of them on the other side of the table. Juan Antonio, the only sibling who is not married and with no kids, sits to his father's right and directly in front of his mother. At the other end of the table, Jose Eduardo sits next to his brother, while Elsa, sits at the foot of the table, with one open space to her right. As is typical, Elsa chooses not to conform, electing to be the only woman not on their side of the table.

For many years, Elsa originally sat in front of her husband, keeping all the women on one side and the men on the other, with the exception of Juan Junior at the head of the table. Then one day, there was a heated discussion between Elsa and her sister-in-law, Petra. That same day, Elsa took it upon herself to move to the foot of the table, and she has sat there ever since. Juan Junior actually enjoys having his feisty daughter-in-law sitting across from him, at the other end of the table, since many of the liveliest of discussions at dinnertime involve the two of them.

After serving themselves, and as is their custom, Juan Junior elects someone to say grace. Today he asks Elsa to do the honors. She is briefer and more concise than usual with her prayer. This leads the older man to believe she has something on her mind, so he asks her about the abbreviated version of the blessing after they have served themselves.

“It just seems to me that there is so much hypocrisy in the church,” she says, her voice challenging anyone to say otherwise, as is often her style. “I wonder sometimes if all they tell us is just a well thought out story.”

“Why do you say that, Elsa,” her husband asks, taking the bait immediately and opening the door for his wife to express what she feels. By now, they all know her well enough to figure that until she has her say, the conversation will likely go nowhere other than where she wants to direct it.

“In church, they talk a lot about doing good deeds, and about redemption for when we are bad,” she pauses momentarily looking at each of them. She has obviously been thinking a lot about this and biding her time for the right opportunity to voice her opinion. “But, does that really happen in actuality?”

As is typically the case, the women roll their eyes with Elsa’s rhetorical question, focusing on their food, and settling in to listen to Elsa’s diatribe, as the men do the same.

“Let’s take the case of our coming to the new world, to ‘civilize’ the uncivilized Indians, who, by the way, have been here for hundreds of years since long before we got here. Do we really think that we are doing them a favor by getting them to change their ways and their beliefs to follow ours?”

They all realize she doesn’t expect an answer to her question and correctly surmise that she will continue talking if they say nothing.

“They seemed to be doing just fine since before we got here. Since we arrived and began to institute our way of life upon them, it seems to me they are worse off, rather than better off. The other day, I was talking to one of the Indian women in the village who now basically works as a slave with no wages or other benefits. She was telling me about how the Indians have lived off this land for centuries, careful to avoid disrupting the delicate balance between nature and man. She explained how carefully they worked to live in harmony with the land rather to simply take advantage of it, as the settlers tend to do. She pointed out how, since we arrived in these parts, that the Indian have been ravaged by disease and pestilence.”

“And you believe this to be true?” Juan Junior asks between bites. “I would say that by converting them to be God fearing people, we are helping them, don’t you think, Elsa?”

“No, I don’t think we are helping them, nor do I doubt we have done more harm than good for them since we got here. Every Sunday, we hear about what we should do to live in God’s good grace, to get to Heaven; but then as quickly as we walk out the door, we forget about all we have learned.

“Don’t get me wrong. I believe much of what is taught in the Bible, and much of what we learn on Sundays is valuable. I just think it’s our adherence to the rules and regulations which leaves much to be desired. When we are unable to live by God’s intention and do break the rules, be it by intent or by mistake, all we need do is to say a few ‘Hail Mary’s, in order to be forgiven and go merrily on our way. I’m sorry,” she says shaking her head, “I’m just not buying it. I don’t think we can undo all the bad we do in the world by simply uttering a few convenient phrases. It seems to me that to be a good Catholic, we need to do much more than to have good intentions, and apologize for our actions when we are unable to do so.”

“So, what would you propose?” Jose Eduardo asks his wife. Knowing her, he is confident that she has already thought of a solution.

She doesn’t disappoint him:

“I think we should leave the Indians alone with their thoughts and their beliefs. Maybe we could even learn a thing or two from them about living a better life and staying away from temptation.”

“It seems to me that there is something else beyond what you’ve just told us that is bothering you Elsie, what is it?” Jose Eduardo asks, correctly guessing that what his wife has just mentioned is the tip of the iceberg of what is really bothering her.

Elsa is quiet momentarily, judging the mood of each of those at the table. As tends to be the case, the women are paying little attention to her, or at least pretending not to do so. Her husband is encouraging her to express herself, despite any repercussions, as he usually does. The other men, with the exception of her father-in-law, seem to be minding their own business, in their own worlds, so as to not raise the ire of their respective spouses with any kind of a response to her which they might have to pay for later on when they get home. Besides her husband, only her father-in-law and mother-in-law seem to be truly interested in what she has to say, so she directs her comments more to the three of them than any of the others at the table.

“The woman I was just telling me about confided in me regarding the behavior of several men we know well regarding their treatment of the Indians. What she described is reprehensible.”

She briefly has the attention of all of them, as they are eager to know what the woman said. Elsa goes into great detail about how the Spaniards not only took everything of value on a recent raid of their village, but also had their way with several of the women who could do nothing but succumb to their wishes, or risk losing their lives. One of those women is now pregnant with what she is sure is the child of the Spaniard who raped her.

“In what world and under what religion can this be acceptable?” she demands, after she finishes telling her story. “Do any of you believe that our religion condones such behavior and that we are truly any better than them?”

Again, though a question of importance has been proposed, they are all quiet, chewing their food and focusing on their plates, rather than venturing into a discussion with Elsa, who can be so passionate about her beliefs and so scathing with her words.

When no one answers, she continues:

“That’s what I thought,” she says when no one speaks up. “A bunch of fearful chickens afraid to speak up against the atrocities we know to be true. We talk about living honorable and respectable lives, except when it doesn’t behoove us to do so. We talk about redemption and salvation in a world which may or may not exist, while those around us suffer the consequences of our actions.”

Carolina is normally accepting of her daughter-in-law’s diatribes, understanding that she is simply expressing her own frustrations. Now with Elsa questioning their most fundamental religious beliefs, she can remain quiet no longer:

“Are you saying that you don’t believe in redemption, in Heaven, or in a life after this one, Elsa?”

She considers her mother-in-law’s question carefully before answering. “I do believe it is a possibility, but far from a certainty. Heaven may be open to those of us who have led decent lives, but I don’t think it would be for those committing these terrible acts this woman told me about, no matter how much they repent for their actions, or how many times they confess to having committed them. What they are doing by subjugating and torturing the local population is wrong, there’s no two ways about it as far as I’m concerned.”

Juan Junior, more than any of those present, has borne witness to just how evil the Spaniards can be with the Indians. Though he has never instigated any of the terrible things Elsa is talking about, he has been present when they have taken place, so he knows what she is saying is fact rather than fiction, but he wisely decides to say nothing, instead deferring to his wife, who has set the conversation going in a different direction.

“And in this Heaven of yours, which would not allow certain people in based on their actions, would you get in based on yours?” Carolina asks, curious as to how Elsa will judge herself.

“That’s a good question, and I would have to say that up until fairly recently, I did think that regardless of my shortcomings, I would go to Heaven. Now I’m not so sure.”

Now it is her husband who looks at her, surprised with her confession and not sure what to think. “Is there something I don’t know about, Elsa? Maybe you have a sin or two that I’m not aware of, or perhaps a lover? I thought we told each other everything, but now it seems like maybe you have been holding out on me.”

“No nothing like that, Joed. I have never done anything for you to be ashamed, and you do know many of my thoughts and dreams. But that doesn’t mean I haven’t thought about being with someone else, or dreamed about things that I haven’t told you about.”

Jose Eduardo, moves his chair slightly, facing her now more directly. “You mean you have thought of being with someone else, romantically?”

Elsa sees she has painted herself into a corner she didn’t want to be in, with no escape. As is her style, she is forthright and honest. “Yes, I have thought about it, though I have never acted on any of my fantasies involving anyone else other than you.”

“And just who have you fantasized about, Elsa?” Jose Eduardo’s normally trusting nature as to his wife’s thoughts and actions is suddenly in question by him and others at the table. The men wondering if they might be the object of her fantasies, and the women are also wondering about where Elsa’s thoughts take her.

“I won’t go into details with you, Joed, or with anyone else, about my most private thoughts. What I will say is that I am willing to bet that I’m not the only one with fantasies. I’ve seen the way you look at the butcher’s daughter, Joed, and I’m sure your thoughts and intentions about her are far from noble.”

Her husband becomes quiet, knowing that his secret lusting after the butcher’s daughter is no longer a secret to any of them, least of all to his wife.

“We all like to pretend to be so holy and righteous, when the reality is that sinful thoughts can populate our minds at the most uncommon of times. If our minds could write an accurate depiction of our thoughts, likely much of what is written would not be fit to be read in public venues.”

“Speak for yourself,” Maria Ines replies, indignant as to her sister-in-law’s alleged mind reading capabilities.

“So, Marines, are you trying to tell me that you have never had an impure thought, or have never done something you were later sorry for doing?”

Knowing that she is likely to lose in any kind of a verbal battle with her sister-in-law, Maria Ines says nothing, instead simply staring back at her in defiance to show her disapproval, but refusing to answer.

“Who of us has not thought an impure thought, at some point in our lives? The bible tells us that it is quite common. Afterall, we are taught that we are born with the handicap of original sin. Yet rather than try to stay away from it and focus on trying to live a good, and honest life, instead we are told that it is okay if we stray every once in a while, as long as we confess our sins. If we repent properly, we can still be admitted into Heaven with a golden ticket, even if it has been tarnished a bit along the way by our actions. Instead of teaching us not to sin and to live a good life, we are instead told that when we do sin, we have an immediate fix to make it right. Isn’t that convenient?”

Elsa looks around the table to see who might have the audacity to challenge her and her thought process. The only one willing to take her on this time is Juan Junior, who despite his occasional misgivings about religion, remains firm in his faith in God and in their ability to get to Heaven despite being imperfect beings.

“I think this is exactly what religion does tell us Elsa. We are taught to do the best we can with what we have been given, then to forgive ourselves and others, when we are not able to do so. I don’t see any hypocrisy in our faith, or in our path to reach Heaven. It seems like it’s pretty well spelled out in the Bible. They are precepts that have withstood the test of time and been lived by for hundreds of years. Who are you to question what we hold to be true?”

Elsa knows from experience that she can count on her father-in-law for a lively debate on just about any subject. While her husband and the other men seldom call her on her antics, Juan Junior enjoys a spirited conversation and is no way threatened by her presence or by her ideas.

“All I’m saying is that during the week, we should walk the talk we hear on Sunday mornings. Instead of just taking for granted that we will be pardoned for any sin, whether acted on or imagined, we should live what we are taught. Isn’t one of our religion’s basic precepts that we should treat others as we would want to be treated ourselves? Should we rape and pillage our neighbors, when we would not like for them to do so to us?”

They all know she has a point and that there is little to nothing they can do to change her opinion on just about anything, let alone her religious beliefs, so they say nothing.

“I just think that if we are going to walk into church on Sunday straight and tall, that we should live a life justifying us doing so. Instead, we find people, who sin throughout the week, go into church with their heads hung Sunday morning, and walk out later on absolved of any wrong doing and free to do so again whenever they like. We can’t just blindly follow where others may lead, regardless of the consequences. If we do, we may very well be led off of the proverbial cliff that drops into the oblivion of eternity.”

The Griegos 1658

Generation	Name		Spouse		Children
I	Lucas Lorenza	(1540 ~ 1614) (1536 ~ 1620)	María Isabel de García Pedro Herrera	(1542 ~ 1566) (1528 ~ 1598)	*Juan (1564)
II	Juan	(1564 ~ 1628)	María Romero	(1576 ~ 1646)	*Juan II (1598), Sara (1601), José (1604)
III	Juan II	(1598 ~ xxxx)	Carolina de Cantillana	(1602 ~ xxxx)	Juan Antonio (1619), Antonio José (1620), María Inés (1624), María Isabella (1626), *José Eduardo (1629)
IV	José Eduardo	(1629 ~ xxxx)	Elsa Lujan	(1632 ~ xxxx)	*José Eduardo II (1648), Josefa Sara (1650), Samuel (1652), María Eugenia (1655)

Flow with Change

The McKees

May 1658

County Antrim, Ireland

Liam's family is gathered in his living room. They have just finished dinner and the adults are relaxing on a lazy Sunday afternoon, while the children play. He does a quick mental count to make sure everyone who is important for his proposal is present. Seeing they are, and sensing the time is now right for what he has in mind, he stands up to speak. As he does, the others become quiet, aware something important is about to happen, since he was so insistent, they all be here today for their traditional Sunday dinner.

"I have been waitin' for this day for quite some time," Liam begins. "Since my mother died, some 18 years ago, this community has embraced all of us. We've all growed up here together as individuals and as a family. For that I am eternally grateful."

He suddenly becomes more emotional than he thought he might be. Seeing his loved ones before him makes him realize the significance of what he is about to say. After collecting himself, he continues. "I know my mood lately has been rather sour, and I'm sorry for all of you who have had to put up with me, especially to you, Hannah," he says to his wife. "I know how difficult it must be for you to deal with my moodiness and I'm sure the rest of you has sensed it as well. For some time now, I have realized somethin' has not quite been right with my life, but I really couldn't put my finger on what was wrong."

Liam's gaze looks at each of those present. On one couch, Billy Boy, his oldest son and namesake sits next to his wife, Ruth, along with his second son, Alexander and his wife Anna. His three daughters, Lydia, Edith and Hannah Elizabeth are on a second couch, flanked on one side by Lydia's husband James, and with his youngest son James on the other side next to his sister. Only Edith's husband is missing from the group. Hannah sits off to the side on a chair observing the others and her husband, who is acting strange.

"Several months ago, I was sitting by myself, close to the stream relaxin' in the sun, and it suddenly came to me. I realized what I was missing." He is quiet momentarily before adding, "I miss my extended family."

While he wasn't very close to his mother's family growing up, Liam's father and his side of the family were always present. Now, many years later, he realizes the bond which at one time was so strong between them has slowly fizzled away.

"When my mother died, I lost contact with my father after he remarried and moved north. Shortly thereafter I lost my siblings as well, when we moved here. There has been an empty space they once filled, and until the other day, I couldn't put my finger on the

loss I felt. Now I realize what I was missing. It has to do, in great part, with all of you and what you represent to me.” He pauses as he looking at each in turn before continuing. “More important than anythin’ else in the world to me is my family.”

Everyone is taken aback by his manner. In particular, his wife Hannah is concerned with what he is saying, and how he is saying it.

“Aren’t we enough family for you, Liam?” she asks, hurt with what he is says and implies with his words. “This family, the one you have right here?”

“Yes, you are enough for me, Hannah, and each of you are more important to me than you can possibly imagine,” he says, doing his best to calm her anxiety. “I am grateful to each of you here, for what you have all brought into my life. Especially for you, my dear wife, I am so blessed to have you; and for you my children, along with your families, for the hope you give me for the future. I am also grateful to your family and friends, Hannah, who welcomed us all into this community when we had almost nothing.”

“So, what is it then, Liam, what are you trying to tell us. You’re worrying me, I’ve never seen you talk like this.” Hannah looks to their children and their significant others, before addressing her husband again, now in a more informal and direct manner usually reserved for when they are together. “Maybe you coulda told me in private you was gonna go crazy, rather than gatherin’ everyone here to do so like this.” She shakes her head in disbelief, spreading her arms out before her. “What’s gotten into you, Liam? Have you gone bonkers?”

The mood is tense in the room. Although Liam has rehearsed what he wants to say time and time again in his head, he feels now almost as if he isn’t a part of what is happening. Almost as if he is outside of his body looking down upon the situation from above, seeing each of his family members and their loved ones as if in a dream with him addressing them from below.

“Because of everyone here, in this area, we have all been able to make our lives and grow with our families. Yet, recently I have become painfully aware of this void in my inner soul. As a result, I put out inquiry as to my father’s whereabouts.”

They are all surprised since it has been so long since mention of Liam’s family has been made. Their children were all quite young when they moved to this area and none of them remember any of their father’s relatives. Though they know they exist, none of them have met them, nor could they recognize them on the street if they were to come across one another.

“Do you remember, Hannah, last week when I went to the coast to pick up the delivery for the mill?” She acknowledges that she does remember it, and thought it odd for him to go since he isn’t normally the one to do so. “Part of the reason for that trip was to see my father, whose address I found through a friend of a friend.”

“Oh, my goodness, Liam, why hadn’t you told me about this?” Hannah says, her voice wavering and incredulous with anger.

“I know I should have told you, Hannah, and I also realize that I probably should have talked to you in private before bringing everyone else into this discussion. After thinking long and hard about it, I decided this was the best way for me to make a proposal to all of you. All on equal footing, and all at the same time.”

“So, pray tell, what did you find out? Don’t keep us hangin’ like this, Liam,” Hannah is indignant he would not first consult with her about what wants to say, which seems so important to him.

“Well, I found out my father, Samuel, isn’t doing too well health-wise. He’s been sick now on and off for about a year, and the doctor isn’t sure what’s wrong with him.”

“And what about your brothers John and Andrew, and your sister Sarah. I heard years ago they had also moved north.”

Liam is surprised she even remembers their names since it has been so long since they have even talked about them.

“My father told me Andrew died in a freak accident several years ago. As for Sarah and John, as you say, Hannah, they have both relocated north as well and live fairly close to my father, his wife and their three kids.”

They all soak in the information, momentarily considering what Liam is telling them. They are now discovering relatives they imagined existed, but whom they never knew anything about.

“I heard that your father converted to Presbyterian along with that new wife of his,” Hannah says, her tone indicating disapproval. “Is that true?”

“Yes, it is, Hannah, and I must say, it seems to be suitin’ them just fine. I was happy to see how well they live, and how well respected my father has become in the community. His wife, Rose Marie, is the daughter of the deacon of their church and together they’ve done very well for themselves. So well, in fact, that my father promised me that for any of us that want to move there, he can get us good paying jobs at a new linen factory in town and help us to get settled.

“After a lot of soul searchin’, I have decided that I would like to go and live there for a while, to be close to my father. I know all of you have your lives pretty well set up here, but I would like to take my father up on his offer and would love for any of you, or all of you, to come with me.”

“Well, how nice for you to include me in your plans,” Hanna says with contempt riddled in her manner. “Besides wantin’ to leave me, do you want to convert to their heathen religion as well? How can you even consider goin’ to live among them?”

“I imagined you might not be happy with me, honey, and I know how much you like to be with your family here. That’s why I really didn’t count on you necessarily wanting to go with me, though I would love for you to do so, along with the rest of you as well,” he says to include all present. “I would like for you all to accompany me on this new

adventure in life. I feel it could bring great opportunities for all of us. I'm not sure how much more time my father has to live, and I feel that going to live close to him and his family now is the right thing to do."

They are all quiet initially, each of them soaking in the information their father has just given them. Each considering their options. The first to speak is Edith.

"I understand what you want to do father, and I encourage you to do it. As you know, my husband, George, is right now doing something very similar, taking care of his elderly parents who are both failing in health."

"Yes, I have thought of George quite a lot recently, sweetheart. Thanks for your support. I know it has been difficult for you since he left several months ago, and I imagined I might cause similar hardship on all of you with what I have planned. That is why I would like all of you to come with me, and this is why I wanted everyone together to make my proposal."

"I would love to join you, father, but I'm afraid that with George gone, it would just be too difficult for me and the children to join you," Edith adds, with regret in her tone.

"I also wish you the best, father, on your endeavor," says the oldest of the siblings, Billy Boy, "and would like to join you, but I'm afraid it too would be too hard for us as well." He turns to his wife for her thoughts and she nods, knowing that it would be quite difficult for them to move to another place, particularly considering the fact that her husband is so important to her own father's business.

Hannah's original displeasure with her husband seems to be waning slightly but she says nothing for the time being, anxious to see what her other children might say.

Their daughter Lydia turns to her husband and asks, "What do you think, James, would you be game to move to a new place and a new job?"

He looks up to the ceiling, scratches his head, and then nods his head slowly before speaking. "I think I might be able to make it happen, but I would first need to talk to my partners to see if we can work something out. It might take a while to get everything set, but yes, I could use a change of environment, and I think it would be great for our kids to get to know your father's side of the family."

Of the other children, the youngest, James and Hannah Elizabeth, both say they would be willing to go. James has been seeing a girl he likes for several months, but has no other ties, and Hannah Elizabeth, who is a single mother with a four-year-old son, depends almost entirely on her parents to help her get by. Her ultimate decision, she realizes, will be influenced heavily by what her mother decides since she relies so much upon her, but she is willing to accept her father's proposal from the get go.

With almost all of the children speaking their mind, except for Alexander, which is not unusual, everyone's attention turns to Hannah, who considers carefully not only her

husband's proposition, but also the manner in which he chose to make it. She shakes her head back and forth with a sardonic smile before speaking to her husband.

"Liam, you are a work of art and a tricky devil to the last card. You know that if you would have approached me first that I likely would have said no, and nipped your idea in the bud. Instead, you have now got several of our kids willin' to join you on your wild-eyed adventure with no more than a few choice words. I should say no, just to spite you. There are many things I do not like about your idea, but instead of declinin' right now, I will instead give you a definite: maybe."

This is all Liam needs to hear. He kneels down beside Hannah, takes her hands in his and smothers them in kisses. "I know this is a lot for you to take in, honey, and I do apologize for springing all of this on you in this way. As the old saying goes: I figured it would be better to ask for forgiveness later than for permission beforehand."

"You sly old fox, you tricked me this time, and while I wish you wouldn't have brought all this up just you did, I think I understand why you did it. Can I make a suggestion?"

"Sure, Hannah, whatever you want, honey," he agrees.

"You go along first. Maybe you can take James with you and then when you are able to get a place, and get settled, the rest of us who want to and can go will follow. How does that sound?"

The first sincere and genuine smile most of them have seen from their father in ages spreads across his face, dominating his expression as joy exudes from his inner soul. "Thank you, dear, you've just made me the happiest man in the world."

The McKees: 1658

Generation	Name		Spouse		Children
I	Hugh	(1560 ~ 1598)	Mary MacDonnell	(1564 ~ 1652)	John (1582), Sarah (1583), Andrew (1585), *Samuel (1588)
II	Samuel	(1588 ~ xxxx)	Lydia McVie Rose Marie Alexander	(1590 ~ 1640) (1608 ~ xxxx)	Samuel II (1606), Ruth (1607), *William (1610), George (1642), Mary (1644), Edward (1647)
III	William (aka Liam)	(1610 ~ xxxx)	Hannah Kelly	(1612 ~ xxxx)	William II (1630), *Alexander (1632), Lydia (1633), Edith (1635), Hannah Elizabeth (1636), James (1638)
IV	Alexander	(1632 ~ xxxx)	Anna Lloyd	(1633 ~ xxxx)	*Alexander II (1650), Michael (1652), Anita (1655), Louis (1658),