

Day 108

Litature & Composition

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The Reins of my Heart

.1888.

I can't believe it came to this, thought Cassie Oke. Why did it have to happen God? As she sat in the chair across from the banker, Cassie fought the urge to cry. No way would weakness and another round of crying help right now. So caught up in her thoughts, Cassie almost missed the bankers words.

".....Miss.Oke, I know this is hard to believe, but when your parents passed away, they left a debt on the house, the acreage, and the bakery. Despite this sad state of affairs I am quite willing to pay you for everything. A total of nine-hundred dollars seems like a respectable amount for it all. Although you will need to pay the two-hundred dollars of debt." Before Cassie could respond Mr.Ross continued "That leaves you with seven-hundred dollars which should be plenty for you to use on whatever you may wish."

Her voice came out in a scratchy whisper "Can't I use it to buy the house back?"

As soon as the words were out of her mouth she knew the answer.

"I'm sorry Miss.Oke, but the house is facing foreclosure. Now child, don't you cry. You have until Monday morning to move out, but first I need you to sign this form."

As Cassie left the office she felt hopeless. Only four days. *What am I supposed to do God?*

.Monday Morning.

*Do not cry Cassandra Amelia Oke, you have cried enough tears to fill the Sea of Gallilee. Despite the scolding more fell. Thank the Lord for Pastor Timothy and his wife Elizabeth for allowing her to stay with them temporarily. Yesterday Pastor Timothy's message was on surrendering our hearts to God and all of our burdens and worries, as well as our lives for him to lead us where he wants us to be. The message was bittersweet. Cassie couldn't really believe that this was God's will for her: an orphan, practically homeless, and feeling discouraged. As Cassie dragged her wandering mind away from all the sadness, she again thought of yesterday's sermon; particularly one special verse. Psalm 26:2. *Examine me,O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and my heart.* It was a verse her mother used to read every morning. Cassie closed her eyes and reminisced on the past.*

Now Cassandra, you must remember this verse, God will walk with you and always be with you. Whether you believe this or not it is up to you, but sweet child you must give God control of your heart because he will lead you. Now don't give me that look young lady, I know your stubborn streak Cassandra, and you think you can face anything on your own, but honey if you surrender your heart to God, He will take you places you can't go on your own.

Oh Mama! Cassie opened up her eyes and reached for her mothers bible and hugged it to her heart.

O Lord, I know I haven't been trusting in you like I should. I have tried facing this all on my own, but Lord I cannot. I want to trust in you Lord, because you are far Greater. Lord, I surrender my heart fully to you. Lead me Jesus! In your holy name, Amen.

Cassie immediately felt a peace and calmness that she hasn't felt since before her parents deaths. What felt like hopelessness, now feels like a purpose. Thank You Jesus!

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Later that week, Cassie was looking around the local Mercantile as well as hoping to run into her lifelong best friend, Grace Vandermark...Well now Grace Irvine. Grace married the oldest Irvine; Levi, Three years ago. Just last Christmas they were blessed with a little girl; Emma Rose Irvine. Once Cassie held the little sweetheart she was instantly filled with the desire of Motherhood.

In all truth, Cassie wouldn't mind seeing Wyatt Irvine, the youngest. When Levi and Grace got married, Wyatt and herself formed a friendship and on Cassie's part an attraction and growing love.

Ever since her parents death two years ago. Wyatt spent every spare minute with the then eighteen year old Cassie, but now as of lately the haven't seen each other for nearly six months. Cassie's thoughts broke off at the sound of the bell jingling a greeting to the customers.

Ezekiel Brookes, the storekeeper, peeped around the corner. "Cassie since you helped me out some last summer, would you mind helping the customers?"

"Sure thing, Mr. Brookes." Cassie turned to greet them and to her surprise it was; Levi, Grace, little Emma, and Wyatt.

"Hi y'all! Can I help you with anything?" Cassie wiped her sweaty palms on her skirt as she looked at Wyatt "Hi."

"Hi Cassie, how have you been?" There was the Wyatt she knew; thoughtful and sweet.

"Not to bad. How is everything at the ranch these days?" As if her words slapped him Wyatt tensed.

"I'm so sorry Wyatt. I shouldn't have said anything. I know that it has been tough since your pa passed away. I didn't mean to sound heartless."

"It's okay Cassie, I know you didn't mean anything by it. Like you said it has been tough." His smile warmed her.

A throat cleared. Oh- Grace and Levi. Cassie pivoted to face them, her face flushing all the more.

"See Grace, I told you they had it bad. What do you think little brother? Care to comment?" Always the funny guy of the group, Levi can't every pass up the oppurtunity to tease.

"Now hush Levi. If I recall correctly, I used to be the same way with you, but you didn't tease me." Grace always the rescuer.

Levi winked at Wyatt and Cassie "Nope, I married you." Wyatt looked away and Cassie felt her internal furnace get seventy degree's higher.

"Now shame on you Levi, you made them quite uncomfortable." Levi and Grace could bicker for days but their love showed clearly.

Grace came and hugged Cassie "Oh Cas, it has been awhile since I last saw you. What do you say about coming to the ranch for supper tonight. A little cowboy told me tonight is gonna be a special night."

"I would love to Grace. I always enjoy a good homecooked meal." The girls shared a laugh, which Miss. Emma Rose joined in on.

Later that night at the Irvine family ranch Cassie felt at home. Of course Marietta personality always made everyone feel welcome. Once supper was finished, the special began.

Levi and Grace kicked it off " Come spring time a little one will be joining our family." As sheers and applause went up and around them all, Cassie couldn't help but feel ecstatic for Grace. Caught up in the moment Cassie was quite surprised at the sudden turn of events.

Levi turned to Wyatt " Say little brother, didn't you tell me that tonight was gonna be special."

Wyatt cleared his throat, twice. "Er,um, yes it will be special if Cassie says yes." The room grew quiet as all eyes turned to Cassie. As Wyatt helped Cassie up from her chair a sudden surge of lightheadiness hit her.

"Cassie we have been friends for years now. I have personally felt our friendship grow over the time, and I have prayed for wisdom for this moment. I truly feel God's hand upon this." All of a sudden Wyatt was on one knee. "Cassandra Amelia Oke, will you be my wife?"

With zero hesitation she nodded "Oh Wyatt, yes, one hundred percent yes!" For the second time that night cheers went around the room. It felt as if nothing could spoil this moment. Although a sudden announcement from Marietta dimmed the joy.

"Boys, I am so very happy for you two. Your father would have been very proud. I never would want to ruin that joy for you, but this cannot wait- the ranch is under foreclosure."

Cassie couldn't believe her ears "Foreclosure?"

Tears gathered in the older woman's eyes "Yes, we have until the end of next week to come up with seven-hundred dollars or the bank will kick us out."

Levi cleared his throat "Ma, I have two hundred dollars set aside from side jobs. Please take it and use it."

"No Levi. Your pa wouldn't want to do that if he was alive right now. I have a hundred dollars set aside as well, but to get six hundred dollars in such a short time will require a miracle."

Wyatt stood up "I'm going out to the barn."

Why God? Why my only home I have ever known? My parents worked so hard to build this ranch. Lord, please give me understanding in tough time. Once inside the barn Wyatt went straight to his favorite gelding, Prince. Him and Prince have been inseparable since the first time Wyatt saw the foal. Everytime Wyatt was with Prince a scripture came to mind.

Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and my heart. It was a verse his father always quoted. Wyatt buried his face in Prince's mane and let the tears fall.

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A Miracle. Cassie didn't stop praying since Mama Irvine's announcement. "Lord how can I help. The Irvine's have been a second family to me. Seven hundred dollars is a lot of money to come up with in a short amount of time, if only-" Mid prayer a thought hit her like a Texas storm.

The money left over from the house. It's exactly seven hundred dollars.

Right then and there Cassie knew what she could do. *Thank You Jesus!*

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During the rest of the week Cassie prayed about the situation. Today was the day she went to the bank.

Ironic, Cassie thought, last time I was in here I went through foreclosure and now I'm helping get people out of it.

She knocked on Mr.Ross' door.

"Come in." His expression took everything in Cassie not to laugh.

"Mr.Ross, I have come on a mission;" she held up a hand before he could respond " I would like to buy the Irvine Ranch."

Disbelief filled his eyes "The Irvine family? Twin Creek Ranch?"

"Yes sir, I believe the debt is seven hundred, I happen to have that amount on me at the present moment. I will pay you in full right now. Take it or leave it."

As the seconds ticked by it felt like hours until Mr.Ross made any attempt of acknowledgment.

"Okay Miss.Oke, that proposition sounds most agreeable. I believe madam that by the end of the hour you will be the owner of a ranch."

"Thank you Mr.Ross, but under one condition. The deed for the ranch will be put under Wyatt Irvine's name."

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"She what?" Wyatt asked the banker.

"Miss.Oke bought the ranch full out." He looked to Marietta "She is now the full owner of Twin Creek Ranch."

Levi slapped Wyatt's back "At least the ranch is going to a good person."

Wyatt's irritation grew "Yes Cassie, is a good person, but this is *our* childhood home. How could she do this?" Without waiting for an answer Wyatt went out of the bank in search of his fiance'.

He didn't have to wait long because Cassie came around the corner of the church. She broke into a smile when she saw him.

"Hi Wyatt."

"Cassie." He couldn't ignore the confused expression on her face from his tone.

"Cassie, how could you? That ranch is my home."

"I know Wyatt, I thought you would be happy."

He smirked " You thought I would be happy? Happiness isn't the word that comes to mind when the woman you love breaks your trust and goes behind your back." Wyatt practically spit nails.

Cassie blinked back tears " Mr.Ross didn't tell you did he?"

"Tell me what?"

"That I-" Cassie couldn't finish because Marietta came running across the street calling her name.

"Oh Cassie, thank you. Thank you so much." She folded Cassie into a hug " You are truly a blessing, buying the ranch and putting Wyatt's name on the deed." She started crying "Bless you, child."

Wyatt couldn't believe his ears "You put the deed in my name." all the fire went out of him in an instant. "Why?"

Cassie pulled away from Marietta to face him "Because Wyatt, I love you. I thought you would appreciate it. It seems that I was wrong. I wish y'all the best with the ranch."

"Cassie wait." but the words bounced off of her retreating back and slapped him in the face. *Stupid fool, why did you judge her? Why did you jump to conclusions . She wasn't taking away the ranch, Cassie was gifting it to you.*

"She's a blessing mom. I love her, but I doubt she will want to talk to me anytime soon."

Marietta laid a hand on his arm " I don't know about that Wyatt, but I do know that you have to apologize to her and make things right."

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Later that night Cassie and Grace were preparing supper at the ranch. "I shouldn't have come Grace. Wyatt hates me now."

The bread she was kneading got mixed with her tears.

"Oh Cassie, he was shocked and in disbelief. That is no excuse for his actions though. I know he said some harsh words, but he still loves you. In fact, let me finish that bread while you go talk to your man."

Once Grace successfully shooed Cassie out of the kitchen, she went in search of Wyatt. Once in the barn she saw him mucking out some stalls.

"Hi." Her voice came out in a whisper.

"Cassie, I've missed you." Wyatt took her hands in his "Can you ever forgive my foolishness? I was wrong to act that way."

Cassie smiled up at him "Of course I forgive you Wyatt. I agree with you being foolish."

He laughed and whirled her around "So you'll still marry me?"

"Yes Wyatt. How does a summer wedding sound?"

Wyatt crushed her into a hug "It sounds perfect."

Epilogue

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"Oh Cassie, you look beautiful." Grace with a three month old Daniel Joesph in her arms, motioned for Cassie to twirl again.

"My son is one blessed man to be getting a wife like you Cassie." Marietta pulled out a hankie to stop the threatenng tears.

Once the girls were all satisfied with the way Cassie looked, they went outside to begin the ceremony.

From where she sat with her daddy, little Emma Rose shouted to her uncle

"Here comes your bride!"

Wyatt fixed his eyes on Cassie and her mother's wedding dress. "You look beautiful " he whispered once he led her up front.

As Pastor Timothy led them through their vows, Cassie couldn't take her eyes off of Wyatt. Her Husband.

After the ceremony, Wyatt took Cassie outside onto the porch.

"Cassie, God has the reins of my heart and he led me straight to you."

"Wyatt I love you." She put her head on his shoulder."And, how did you know that, that is my mother's favorite verse?"