

MY PORTION
FOREVER



A Novel by
GEORGIA SCHMEICHEL

Copyright © 2021 by Georgia Schmeichel

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the author, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

Unless identified differently, scriptures are quoted from The Holy Bible, New Century Version®, copyright ©1987, 1988, 1991 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Scriptures marked RSV are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1952 [2nd edition, 1971] by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scriptures marked NRSV are from New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Softcover ISBN: 978-1-953314-41-3

Ebook ISBN: 978-1-953314-42-0

Library of Congress Control Number: 2021907889

*My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
Psalm 73:26, RSV*

PROLOGUE

Something was terribly wrong, but the niggling fingers of dawn couldn't pry open the sleepy cocoon that enveloped Tanna. She had a decision to make as soon as she opened her eyes. After tossing and turning all night, the shrill ring of the alarm snapped her eyes open to full awareness of her problem.

The letter.

The wedding.

The choice.

Yesterday started as an ordinary August day. The sky was a clear, brilliant blue, and the air had been washed by a refreshing morning thunder shower. Most of Tanna's pre-wedding doubts were behind her, and then, the local postmaster, a middle-aged man who had known Tanna since she was a toddler, toppled her carefully arranged plans with a simple telephone message.

"Tanna, we've found a letter for you...um... It's post-marked January second...from...uh...let's see, Josh Schmidt at...uh, South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD.

Somehow it got wedged between the counters in the post office. You understand these things rarely happen. We hope it's nothing important..." The voice droned on while Tanna's thoughts flew back to New Year's Eve.

NEW YEAR'S Eve at her parent's home was a tradition. For as long as she could remember, Tanna's parents, Sam and Sarah, had invited their neighbors, the Schmidts, to feast on her dad's secret-recipe chili and her mom's mouth-watering cornbread before ringing in the new year with a midnight sleigh ride. Leftover Christmas cookies and hot cocoa warmed them after the ride.

When Tanna was a child, everyone had piled onto the sleigh pulled by Sam's blue roan draft horse, Storm. As the children grew into adults, a full load was too much for the sleigh, so the parents opted to stay home while Tanna, her brother Matt, and his best friend, Josh Schmidt, braved the cold to carry on the tradition.

This year, Matt would be in Aberdeen where he was celebrating New Year's Eve with his girlfriend. Using the excuse that she didn't want to be the only single there, Tanna turned down an invitation for tacos and a movie with the young adult group in one of the nearby churches. She didn't want to let herself hope Josh would come to the party, but that's exactly what she found herself doing as she declined other invitations.

The day before the party, Tanna overheard her parents talking about their New Year's Eve party while she loaded the dishwasher in the kitchen.

“Sam, do you think we should invite some new people to the party this year?”

“Why? It’s always been just us and the Schmidts. Still sounds good to me.”

“But, Sam, Matt won’t be here and Josh may not come. Tanna doesn’t want to spend the evening listening to us reminisce about the good old days.”

“Sarah, just let Tanna decide what she wants to do.” Sam ended the conversation and Tanna whispered another prayer that Josh would be there. Maybe, just maybe, this time he’d see her as something other than a kid sister.

Tanna scavenged her closet the day of the party trying on outfit after outfit, wanting something that would make her look sophisticated and mature. She rejected one after the other, not wanting to be too obvious about her motives. If Josh came, he had a way of looking at her like he knew what she was thinking. She finally decided on a pair of skinny jeans and a sweater that matched her azure eyes.

She continued to pray she would have a chance and the nerve to finally tell Josh how she felt about him. “Please, Lord, let Josh come tonight, and give me the courage to tell him.”

Tanna repeated the prayer all day and jumped when the phone rang. She chose not to ask her mom who called after she heard her say, “Okay, thanks for letting us know. We’ll see you tonight.”

So far, Tanna had kept her feelings for Josh a secret from her mom, but lately she’d noticed “the look” Tanna knew so well. It had appeared every time she or her brother had tried to hide something from their perceptive mom. Without saying a word, Sarah sent a clear message: “You might as well tell me now before I figure it out, and I always do.”

Storm was munching on hay in the barn and patiently waiting to be harnessed to the sleigh for his yearly jaunt when the Schmidts arrived in their red Ford pickup truck. The house and yard were still decked for the holidays in Sarah's festive and inviting style. The lights twinkled on the trees, and candles flickered on the window sills, casting an inviting glow inside and outside. Soft music and the faint smell of pine and gingerbread filled the air, making Tanna wish this was the beginning of the season rather than the end.

Sam and Sarah opened the heavy wooden door to greet their neighbors, and Tanna took one final look in the mirror before stepping into the hall where she heard Mr. Schmidt's hearty laughter as he hugged her mom and shook hands with her dad.

"We never see you folks now that our sons don't spend every waking minute turning our hair gray!"

"Hey, no fair picking on me. Without Matt here, I'm outnumbered, and Tanna's no help. She's still a good girl." Josh winked and flashed a playful grin at Tanna.

Caught off guard, Tanna rolled her eyes and hoped her wry smile hid her frustration. Why hadn't he noticed she was no longer a teenager but a college graduate who had been teaching at the local high school for four and a half months? Yes, she lived with her parents, but that was only until she paid off some of her college loans. Josh would rent a dreary room from a stranger before he would live with his parents after college.

He loved his parents and their home, but it wasn't his style to be dependent on his parents if he could afford to live on his own. Joining the National Guard was his strategy for working his way through the state university without owing

anybody anything even if it took him extra years to complete his degree. He sought a business degree only because his dad wanted him to have an alternative to farming and ranching.

Supper conversation was dominated by her dad and Mr. Schmidt reminiscing about Josh and Matt's teenage pranks.

"Remember the night the boys taped bright, yellow caution tape across all the cafeteria doors after basketball practice? When the cooks came the next morning, they were afraid to go in because they thought something criminal had happened."

"Every meal served in that cafeteria was a crime when I was in high school." Mr. Schmidt laughed at his own joke. "Didn't you boys have to mop the cafeteria floor for a month after that, Josh?"

"It was only a week, probably because we confessed after everybody made such a big deal about missing breakfast. We didn't get off as easy at home, though. We were grounded for a month."

"Mom made Matt clean up the kitchen every night for a month to teach him how hard the school cooks had to work, but I thought it should have been longer. Didn't you guys always say to me, 'You do the crime...'"

"...You do the time." Josh finished Tanna's sentence. "But when did you ever do anything wrong, Little Miss T?"

"You'll never know." Tanna hoped her enigmatic expression told Josh that he didn't know everything about her.

"I don't remember if I made Josh do anything besides coming home right after basketball practice and staying there until school the next day. Somehow, Josh always charmed his way out of any long-lasting consequences with those pleading, brown eyes of his." Mrs. Schmidt smiled at her son.

“You boys were never mean or destructive, and I remember Matt assuring me that there was no reason to worry. He told me it was a good thing he and Josh were Christians, or they would have gotten into some serious trouble.” Sam stopped to think for a moment before shaking his head. “That’s what he told me after I found that *Welcome to Cedar Creek* road sign in the trunk of his car. You two always avoided crossing the line we set for you even if you often came close enough to touch it.”

Josh rose from the table ready to end the embarrassing table talk. “Who’s ready for a sleigh ride?” Reaching for his empty bowl and plate, he looked from person to person at the table.

“Not tonight, Josh. These old bones are headed for that recliner right there.” Sam pointed to the chair positioned by the fireplace in the large, open living area adjacent to the dining room and motioned for Sarah and the Schmidts to follow him.

Sarah stopped to clear the bowls and plates from the table, but Josh took them from her. “We got this. Right, Little T?” Josh flashed that lopsided grin of his and winked at Tanna, causing the dreaded heat to travel up her neck to her cheeks.

Dropping her head to hide the blush, she gathered the silverware and napkins willing herself to take control. “You’re the boss, Josh. Always have been. The little sister doesn’t get a choice, does she?” Tanna hadn’t meant to sound so snarky, but Josh just laughed.

“Somebody needs a nap!”

Shooing his mom and Sarah away, he carried the dishes into the kitchen and waited by the sink for Tanna to join him. Dangerously close to tears, Tanna answered most of

Josh's questions with short, simple answers. He finally gave up trying to engage her in conversation until they finished and put the last bowl away.

"Are you still up for a sleigh ride or are you too tired?" Josh searched her face with a concerned look.

Tanna hesitated, knowing the conversation she wanted to have with Josh would either develop into the relationship she longed for, or it would end their easy friendship.

Ill help you, the voice in her heart whispered.

Tanna faced Josh with renewed confidence. "I'll meet you outside after I put on my coat and boots."

JOSH STOPPED Storm at the top of the hill overlooking her parents' ranch, and they silently surveyed the panoramic view before them. The gently sloping, snow-covered hills stretched into the velvety blackness of the night sky dotted by a few twinkling stars and the lights of a ranch miles away. The glowing moon and murmuring breeze seemed to be urging Tanna to say something, but when she shifted in her seat to face Josh, he turned to her with a concerned expression.

"Are you too cold? I better take you home, or your mom will have my hide. I promised I'd get her little girl home safely."

"Why do you always think of me as a little girl? I've grown up, and I'm old enough to have a little girl of my own!" Tears sprang to her eyes as she struggled to control her frustration.

The wounded look in Josh's eyes made her regret her outburst, causing more tears to flow. Gently wiping her tears

with his thumbs as he cupped her face in his warm hands, Josh studied her face, and she could see in his deep, brown eyes that he already knew.

“It won’t work, T.”

The expressive face she had dreamed about so often was now clouded with anguish. Josh rested his hands on her shoulders and looked up at the sky as though searching for something.

“I have nothing to offer you, Tanna. We’re as different as two people can be. You’ve always—and I mean always—walked the straight and narrow, and I’ve... Well, let’s just say, I’ve taken a few detours. You know exactly where you’re headed. You always have. I’m still searching. If I had definite plans for the future, you’d be right there, but don’t expect anything from me. I have too many complications in my life right now, and the last thing I want to do is string you along when Mr. Right could be waiting for you around the corner.”

Determined to hide her deep disappointment, Tanna swiped at her tears and attempted to lighten the mood. “Don’t toss clichés at an English teacher.”

She had hoped to bring back the light in his eyes, but instead, he turned away. The lonesome call of a coyote filled the air as they began the cold, silent trip back.

Now, after all these months, the letter he’d written two days after their talk said he’d thought and prayed about it on the long drive back to college.

*I can’t make any promises right now, but I’d like to see
where this takes us.*

Tanna didn’t know why Josh hadn’t tried to contact her

when she didn't respond to his letter, but she had taken his advice and found "Mr. Right."

At least that's what she'd thought until yesterday.

THE NEW SEMESTER after Christmas had brought several new teachers. One was Joshua Swenson, a history teacher, who attended her church and was the exact opposite of Joshua Schmidt with a few exceptions. Their names, of course, were strikingly similar, and they had both served in the National Guard in Iraq. That's where the similarities ended.

The new Josh was quiet and reserved, but Tanna was attracted to him despite the differences - or maybe because of them. Most significantly, he was stable and ready to make a commitment, and her parents welcomed his willingness to help on the ranch. More than once during their courtship, Tanna had asked herself if this Josh was simply a substitute for the other, but in time, she came to see the qualities in Josh Swenson she knew she'd always wanted in a husband. He was dependable, thoughtful, and attentive.

More importantly, he was a devoted follower of Jesus. Still, she sometimes longed for more spontaneity and passion to go with the love she was beginning to feel for him. Her mom counseled her to pray and wait, but then, out of the blue, Josh Swenson proposed in an uncharacteristically romantic manner. Tanna hesitated but then decided he must be the answer to her prayers for a godly husband. Plans were made for a late summer wedding in the same location where Josh had proposed.

Tanna was blissfully preparing for her happily ever after.
Until now...



CHAPTER ONE

Ten Years Later

“Jaz, what are you doing? We can’t wait any longer, or we’ll be late for school!” Tanna stood outside her daughter’s room, urging her brown-eyed six-year-old to hurry and hoping Josh would hear her. He was usually lost in his sphere of coffee and online newspapers every morning if he was in the house when they left for school. She wondered how her husband could be so oblivious to the struggle she faced. Making sure their children were ready to leave early enough to reach the school at the time mandated for teachers was quite a feat.

Six-year-old Josephine Anne Zelda, Jaz for short, always wanted to put “just one more thing” in her backpack, and four-year-old Tucker Joshua liked to dawdle over his cereal and pretend he was a cowboy out on the range, eating his grub before the big round-up. The only way Tanna could get her energetic, blue-eyed towhead out to the car quickly was to ask him why his horse was so slow.

Her own appearance had become less important to her lately. Whatever clean and comfortable sweater and pair of slacks she could find became her automatic choice. Choosing jewelry and other embellishments simply took too much

effort, and she'd fallen into the routine of pulling her long, blond hair into a ponytail after her shower. It was either that or cut it short enough to wash and wear, but she wasn't quite ready for that yet.

If she wore any makeup at all, it was a few quick brushes of concealer to cover the dark circles under her eyes and a swipe or two of clear lip gloss to moisten her lips. Her unblemished complexion and the natural pink tinge that lit up her cheeks and lips made her look much more put together than she felt.

"Once in a while Josh could lend a hand zipping their coats and buckling them into their car seats," Tanna muttered to herself as she slid behind the steering wheel.

Have you told him you need help?

"I want him to notice!" Her audible response prompted her children to lean forward inquisitively in their seats behind her.

She smiled into the rearview mirror as she put the car in gear. "Mommy is just talking to herself again."

The twenty-five-mile drive to school every morning was both blessing and blight. The barren country roads seldom saw more than one car at a time, and the daily journey gave her a little time to clear her head if her children weren't talking about their own concerns for the day. Most often, she replayed the argument with Josh from the night before. It was almost always about the little time Josh had to spend with his family.

This wasn't what she had expected when her mom had asked if she and Josh wanted to buy the ranch following her dad's sudden death. Matt and his wife had declined the offer, preferring to stay in Denver with their daughter. The opportunity to give her children the same carefree childhood she

had experienced thrilled Tanna, but what she hadn't anticipated were the financial obligations that required her to go back to teaching.

Josh put in fourteen-hour days too frequently, and they quickly learned that a teacher's schedule and a rancher's calendar didn't mesh. If he had time off during the winter, she was in the thick of her school year. When she had a break during the summer months, he spent every daylight hour working outside and then fell into bed exhausted after eating supper.

But something else was on her mind this morning. Yesterday afternoon, the dean of students had stopped at Tanna's classroom during her planning period to introduce a new freshman English student who would start school today, more than halfway into the second semester. Tanna had written down the pronunciation of her unusual name so she could remember it. *Shi-vawn*, a pretty name, but she wondered how it was spelled. The defiant look the new girl gave Tanna forecast a looming challenge to her authority and patience.

It wasn't unusual for students to transfer with only three months left of the school year, and those students had usually made the rounds of living with different relatives. When a new student started school in Cedar Creek this late in the year, he or she was often behind the other students. Some had missed large chunks of their education by going to a variety of schools in numerous states. Sometimes, their worldly education far exceeded their knowledge of the fundamentals in English, science, and math. The heart-breaking part was that many were bright, talented students who had fallen so far behind that they would never catch up.

Don't be one of the lost ones, Tanna hoped for both of their sakes.

“Mommy, Tucker won't leave my backpack alone. He's messing up my papers and Teacher will blame me.”

Tanna's thoughts turned back to her children as she slowed for the approaching town speed zone.

I have to concentrate on what I'm doing. It was a familiar rebuke, one she gave herself every time she drove while her mind was elsewhere.

The wide streets of Cedar Creek on the Rushing Waters Indian Reservation in South Dakota were lined with an eclectic mix of old and new buildings. Some were towering, dilapidated reminders of the thriving community that once existed, while others were new and squat, erected for practicality rather than style.

Sighing as she approached the brick school building that was partly old and partly new, Tanna reduced her speed to avoid students haphazardly crossing the street. The hot breakfast available every morning beckoned even the most reluctant pupils.

Tucker gave Tanna a quick hug goodbye after Tanna unlocked the back door of the school. He was always anxious to see his preschool teacher, and Tanna was grateful she didn't have to coax him anymore. Positive that his dad couldn't possibly get along without him at home, there had been many tearful mornings at the beginning of the year. He liked school and his teacher, but Tanna suspected that the snacks available for anyone who hadn't eaten breakfast played a part in his eagerness to go to his classroom in the morning.

Jaz stopped outside her first-grade room where some of her classmates were talking and laughing. As Tanna climbed

the steps in the older part of the building, she moaned when she realized she still had to develop a game plan for dealing with the new student.

“Good morning!”

Monica, the biology teacher from the classroom across the hall, approached Tanna as she juggled her book bag and purse, trying to work the key into the ancient lock on her classroom door.

“Morning.” Tanna was too preoccupied with working out strategies for the new girl to show much interest in Monica’s latest news. Gossip was always plentiful in their small community, and Monica was the chief purveyor on this floor. Tanna’s conscience told her not to listen but her hunger for adult conversation often won.

“What do you think of the new girl?” Monica closed the door as she walked into the room. “I hear she was expelled from her school in Sioux Falls, and that’s why she’s here. Her mom couldn’t control her, so she sent her to live with her grandparents in Cedar Creek. Just what we need, all the boys trying to get another cute girl to notice them. That won’t make her popular with the girls.”

One of the freshman girls was already mad at her boyfriend for helping the new girl find her locker. Tanna had offered her assistance when she saw the girl wandering down the hall perusing the locker numbers, but she rebuffed the offer, “Not that dumb, I am. I know numbers.”

Tanna had learned to accept the sentence pattern occasionally used by some of her students on the reservation. The wording changed, depending on the situation: “Not that nosy, you are” when someone asked too many questions or “Not that cheesy, she is” when describing a smiling person.

Monica continued and showed no sign of ending her monologue despite Tanna's lack of response.

"And, her aunt is going to move back here, too."

After Tanna briskly shuffled the papers on her desk and pretended to look for something, Monica stood and whispered her last tidbit of gossip before leaving to find someone who would show more enthusiasm for her inside information.

Tanna's thoughts returned to the new girl, and she prayed for a way to set a better tone when she came to class. A wise teacher she'd once known, as well as a few of her own experiences, had made Tanna understand that most students who misbehaved and spat out insolent insults were not angry at her. Their home life was usually the source of their ire, and she was simply the unfortunate beneficiary.

Too soon, the bell rang, and it was time to face the problem. The new girl entered the classroom.

"Welcome to freshman English," Tanna smiled, hoping to put yesterday's animosity behind them.

"Whatever," the new student flicked her long, black hair over her shoulder. Many teachers considered the gesture disrespectful, but Tanna knew she had to pick her battles. This battle was one she couldn't win.

Sliding into an empty desk, the new student immediately turned her attention to the boy closest to her. Tanna placed a piece of paper onto her desk and asked her to please write her name on it.

"With what?" Her sarcastic tone drew snickers from a few nearby students. Concerned she might lose control of the class, Tanna flashed a warning look at the students who knew better than to break her rules. She had worked patiently and consistently with her students since the begin-

ning of the school year to develop an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Most of her students knew how far they could go without losing her approval. A few didn't care, and Tanna wondered if she had enough time to draw this troubled girl out of the latter group.

"A pen or pencil—whatever you have." Tanna fought to keep her voice calm and congenial.

The new girl held out her hand to the student beside her. "Got a pencil?"

Tanna slowly walked to the front of the room and lifted two books and a notebook from her desk. By the time she walked back to deposit them on the new girl's desk, she was rewarded with a name scrawled in flowing letters, *Siobhan Lynch*.

Glancing at the paper she held in her hand with the pronunciation of Siobhan's name, Tanna prayed she would pronounce it correctly. This girl seemed ready to erupt at the smallest provocation, and Tanna didn't want to trigger an outburst. She mentally reminded herself it was *Shī-vawn*, before saying her name out loud.

"Siobhan, we're reading *Romeo and Juliet*; have you read it?"

Her indifferent manner slowly vanished as Siobhan shook her head, and Tanna glimpsed what she thought looked like fear in her luminous brown eyes.

"You've missed the notes for the introduction, but I'll give you a copy of those. Tell me tomorrow if you have any questions." Tanna did her best to calm Siobhan's anxiety by lightly patting her shoulder with her fingertips, noting that the young girl didn't flinch or pull away.

At least I don't think I have to add physical abuse to whatever other traumas she's experienced.

Siobhan's expression quickly transformed from concerned back to uninterested as she averted her eyes and began doodling on her notebook. Tanna had learned to accept downcast eyes from some of her students as a cultural practice, but she struggled with not being able to look directly into their eyes.

Conversations began to erupt among her students, reminding Tanna that there were other students in her classroom and Act I of *Romeo and Juliet* to discuss.

"Billy, what do we know about the Montagues and the Capulets?" Tanna called on her go-to guy, who was always a reliable source for answers to her questions, even if he didn't always have the correct answer.

"The monta-*whose*?" Uproarious laughter caused Billy to give Tanna a sheepish grin.

Trying to stop herself from laughing, Tanna looked around and called on several other students, who either looked down at their books or shook their heads when she called on them. It was obvious that most of the class hadn't read the first act, and those who had didn't want to answer her questions. Even with a modern version of the play included in their book alongside Shakespeare's original words, it still required the willpower to work at understanding what they read. Tanna could explain what they were saying and why they were saying it, but she had to find a way to interest them in the plot if they were ever going to discuss more than just what was happening and to whom.

"Okay, let's try this again. I'll give you the notes, but you'll have to read the assignments, or you won't understand the information we discuss."

Wishing there was a better way, Tanna presented infor-

mation on the setting, events, and characters in the first act and assigned Act II for Monday.

“You have a little time, so start reading Act II, and you can ask me if you read something you don’t understand.”

Knowing she had only five or six minutes before her students would give up trying to understand the difficult Shakespearean language, Tanna reviewed the plot for something that would capture their interest.

Suicide was a touchy subject on the reservation, one she didn’t feel qualified to address. Many of her students had friends or relatives who had decided life was too much of a struggle to continue, and hanging was the method of choice for most who died deaths as painful as their lives had been. Tanna wondered how many regretted their deadly decision when it was too late to change it.

The class again broke out into chattering groups, and Tanna realized her rapidly wandering thoughts weren’t making her search for a way to interest her students very fruitful. She was determined to unravel the play and make it just as memorable for them as it had been for her when she was a freshman student in this classroom all those years ago.

Everybody needs love.

Thank you, Jesus. You always come through for me, even when I forget to ask.

Tanna knew the concept of love was an easy-to-understand theme in *Romeo and Juliet*, and that was what she would use to entice her students to read it

“Shawn, please read the first two lines in the second scene of Act II. This takes place after Romeo and Juliet have met at a party, and then they go their separate ways. Romeo is walking and sees Juliet on her balcony, but she doesn’t see or

hear him when he says this.” Tanna looked at Shawn and nodded.

“But, soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!”

A few of his classmates snickered, and Shawn turned to Tanna. “That part?”

Tanna nodded and flashed a warning look at one of the laughing students, “What does that mean, Mike?”

His blank look told Tanna he needed a little prompting. “Can you live without the sun?”

“I don’t think so.”

“Welcome to Romeo’s world,” Tanna managed to squeeze in just as the bell rang.

Tanna looked at Siobhan as she stood to leave. “I’ll give you a copy of those notes if you wait a minute.”

After walking to her desk and gathering the notes, Tanna turned, but Siobhan was walking out of the room without a backward glance.

Help me, Lord. Her hurt is deep, and the walls are high.

The second-period class discussion of *Romeo and Juliet* was livelier than the first, but Tanna was surprised when a popular girl asked her if her husband ever said things to her like Romeo said to Juliet.

“No, my husband doesn’t speak the language of Shakespeare, if that’s what you mean.”

“Would you like him to?”

“He tells me he loves me.”

“Like how?”

“That’s a little too personal for me to answer.”

“Then, will you tell me what it’s like to be married?”

Knowing that this young student had never known her

father's love or maybe even his name, Tanna hesitated. "It's nice."

"Just nice? Isn't it better than nice to have someone who won't ever leave you?"

Tanna took a deep breath and prayed for an answer that would be truthful without crushing the girl's hopes about marriage.

"Well, I'm not going to tell you it's always easy. There are tough times, but if you're committed to each other, better times eventually come." Tanna hoped her words were true.