

Ivy watched as her daughter's family piled into Bobby Lee's truck and pulled slowly down the driveway, mattresses and furniture bouncing in the back. As she turned around and walked through the empty rooms of the cabin, she could feel the memories of their life buried in these walls.

She pictured her older son Paul crawling around in the front room, stacking blocks that Louis had made from scrap wood. Jake sitting at the table, poring over that old, tattered biology book he loved so much. Ella standing in front of the fireplace, singing for them and curtsying while they clapped. All three kids wading in the stream and chasing each other through the meadow. The five of them sitting on the porch, shelling peas, laughing.

Then she pictured Paul lying unconscious on the floor of the tobacco barn, his body twisted at an odd angle. Jake hidden away in Herbert Allen's truck like a criminal. Ella putting a screwdriver in her pocket every time she walked to the Big House.

She pictured Louis toiling in the fields in the scorching summer heat, scrubbing the tar off his fingers and struggling to get out of bed each morning. All the while knowing that not one ounce of the soil he tilled nor the harvest he produced would ever belong to him. Louis had endured the indignities of a lifetime of sharecropping with grace and humility, but Ivy was thankful he'd never spend another day in a tobacco field as long as he lived.

Finally, Ivy pictured the face of Gordon Talmadge, both the teenage bully he'd been all those years ago and the weak man he'd become.

Louis walked back in. "You ready? We might have to set that last box on the seat in between us. The back of the truck is plumb full." He noticed Ivy's tears. "Hey there now, what is it?" He put his arms around her.

She returned his embrace and wiped the tears away. "It's nothing." She smiled at him and kissed his cheek. "Let's go. This ain't our home anymore."