

Most days, things went well, but this was not one of them. Victoria stared at the ticker tape in disbelief. How could they have been so wrong? All signs pointed toward a rally for Erie Railroad. Instead, the stock tanked.

She would have to tell Mr. Vanderbilt. What if they lost their jobs over this? The money James made was adequate, but not enough to support the lifestyle to which they were growing accustomed. What would they do?

Her worries were interrupted when Tennie entered the room.

“The commodore sure is a grump today,” Tennie said, sliding behind her desk.

“Well,” Victoria said, “he’s about to be in a worse mood.” She looked up from the tape. “I have to tell him he lost a hundred thousand dollars today, and it was our fault.” She passed the thin white strip to Tennie. “Well failed this test miserably.”

“Hmmm,” her sister mused, examining it. “Well, we know not to bet on that one again unless Josie tells us to.”

“You aren’t upset? What if he fires us?”

Tennie shrugged. “Isn’t the old goat the one who told us to expect ups and downs? This isn’t his first loss and it won’t be his last.”

“Since you’re so confident, would you be willing to break the news to him? He may take it better coming from his lover than from me. I’m only an employee.”

“So you, Mrs. Suffragist, want me to use my feminine charms to soften the blow, eh?” Tennie giggled. “I’ll tell him tonight once his belly is full and his other needs are met.” She winked at her sister. “He won’t even blink an eye. We’ve got a tip from Josie on tomorrow’s Canada Southern, right? If worse comes to worst, I’ll promise him we’ll make it back with that.”

Victoria swallowed hard. Tennie made everything sound so simple. This job was easy when the “spirits” were speaking, but when they were silent, her skills weren’t yet up to par. She didn’t want to have to rely on Josie, so she would have to study all the harder.

“Thanks, Tennie.”

Tennie reached toward her and enveloped her in a hug. “What are sisters for?”