Traditional Values

By Randall Austin

**PART TWENTY-EIGHT**

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One week after Martin Forestman’s sons began their
social service at Maple Valley Resort and Casino,
Martin’s brother Steven left on holiday, with his
wife, to the Azores.  When he returned three weeks
later, he received a call from the head of the
Governor’s Commission on Overseers’ Affairs.  He
immediately called Martin, told him he was dying to
see him, and that he had received some very good news.

Martin made a dinner for them and brought out several
bottles of his best wine.  Over a leisurely dinner
Steven told Martin that his son Jason was being freed.
Martin asked how that could be possible since Jason
was sentenced to a minimum of six years social
service, and could only be considered being released
for ‘good behavior and faithful service’ after his
initial six years were up, and he hasn’t yet been in
service for even six weeks.

Steven admitted to being as surprised as Martin was,
“But apparently the ‘pending good behavior and
faithful service’ clause is subject to varying
interpretations when you’re dealing with convicted
state overseers.  If there’s a ‘good old boy’ network
at work among police and overseers here in Vermont,
I’m not going to argue with it, certainly not in this
case.”

“When is he being released?”

“Next week.”

“What will he do?”

“Probably celebrate for at least a month!”  Martin and
Steven laughed and toasted.  The dinner over, Martin
took a new bottle of wine, told Steven to bring his
glass, and to join him on the couch in the living
room.

Settled next to each other on the couch, Martin asked
Steven about his vacation.  “It was an important time
for Claire and me.  We have decided to split up.
We’re not sure yet if we will get divorced.  Ever
since Jason was indentured we have been being brutally
honest with each other, and we have now come to
realize that it’s best if we separate.  We really
cleared the air between us out in the Azores.  We have
become, now, the greatest of friends, and ended up
having the best time together in all our years of
marriage.”

“The days ahead will be difficult, but for the best.
How are you and Barbara getting on?”

“Not well at all.  She’s accusing me of all kinds of
nasty things, and I don’t have the energy to deal with
her.  With her, along with my concern for the boys,
I’ve been frazzled.”

“How are the boys doing?”

“I don’t know.  I haven’t seen or spoken with them for
the last four weeks on the advice of Damian
Appomattox, my Social Service’s contact person.”

“Why is that?” asked a very surprised Steven.

“The boys, as you knew before you left on your trip,
were constantly calling me and telling me how horrible
things were at Maple Valley.  And you, as well as
everyone else, told me that such complaining coming
from servants in a new environment was common, and to
just ignore it and that they would soon adjust.”

“But on the day you left for your trip Alban called
me, crying as I had never heard him, saying he wanted
to come home.  It was very hard.  Then, on the
following day, Bradley called, also crying, with a
whole list of complaints.  He told me that the
overseers and hospitality workers are on their cases
constantly, 24 hours a day; that when he complained
that his snout rings and nipple rings hurt, they
refused to make adjustments; the food is awful; he was
promised that if he signed up for the mandatory
spankings, he would earn special privileges, but that
so far he hasn’t seen any; that the hospitality
workers are all basically just a bunch of thugs and
pigs, who constantly talk down to and demean the
rollerboys at every turn.  And when he told me he was
scheduled to be bullwhipped in four days, I was
furious and told him I would see what was going on and
get right back to him.”

“I immediately got in touch with Damian.  He said it
was common to use the bullwhip for doing fine tuning
on servants in new positions; that for initial
offenses Maple Valley uses the carbon filament whip,
which, although it hurts like hell, does not abrade
flesh; and that Bradley would only be getting four
strokes of the whip.  While that information calmed me
down, I was still very upset that my boys were having
such a hard time of it.  Damian told me the best thing
I could do was to just have no contact whatsoever with
the boys for at least a couple of months.  He said
that that would help the boys ease out of any
sentimental attachments they may be holding on to.  He
said I was actually doing the boys a disservice by
being a shoulder for them to cry on.  He told me,
basically, to just let go and to let Maple Valley do
what they do so well; make any necessary adjustments
in servants’ dispositions and attitudes by dealing
with each rollerboy on an individual, special needs,
basis.”

“Damian also reminded me that Bradley really was
something of a complainer.  He reminded me of the
awful fuss Bradley made whenever he was faced with
having to get nude, say, in front of his mother or
sister.  I mean, if he made such a big fuss over such
a minor thing as a family member seeing his winkle, it
stands to reason that he’s probably the type that
would raise a ruckus over anything.  Damian told me
that Bradley is basically a complainer by nature, and
that I would do well to ignore his complaints.  He
told me that Bradley probably takes pleasure in
pulling my ropes, and I needed to realize he’s playing
games.  Bradley is, after all, a servant, and servants
tend to try and pull the wool over their overseer’s
eyes.”

“He also reminded me that all social servants get
punished on a pretty regular basis for their own good,
and that if I simply would get more into the culture
of social service by hanging out with other owners and
overseer more frequently, I would soon get over my
misplaced free-person sensitivities.”

“So I called Bradley back and told him to hang in
there.  I reminded him that he’s a servant now, and
that everything he mentioned sounded like pretty
standard orientation difficulties, and that I was sure
that things would be mellowing out for him and his
brothers.”

Steven nodded, “So do you know if things have mellowed
for them?”

“I can only assume that they have.  Damian told me not
to answer the phone and to turn off the voice mail.
He said servants complain, especially during
orientation periods, and that it would be safe for me
to assume that everything was progressing on par for
the course.”

Driving home with her mother and her Aunt Karen after
a visit with Timothy Witherspoon, Flora asked her mom
if she could marry Timothy.  Barbara smiled, “I
wouldn’t mind if that was what you really wanted.  I
assume you know that Timothy would not be able to
provide you with any kind of shareable income.  But
more than that, I think it would be difficult to work
out living arrangements with a servant.”

Karen’s gaze steeled over, “You can bet it would be,
thanks to the current administration in Washington!
President ‘Knucklehead’ has made us the world’s
laughing stock on slave/servant rights.  In just a bit
over three years in office he has brought our country
back to the middle ages with regard to slavery.
Thanks to him and his letting states have almost total
authority on slave matters, things have never looked
worse for slaves.  Already in Texas and Kentucky if an
owner kills a slave it isn’t even considered murder.
In most southern states, slave offenses are also
registered as civil offenses.  So if an owner writes
up a slave for sloppy work, before the slave could
ever be freed, he would have to pay the civil penalty
for any and all accrued slave infractions, and that
usually means extended terms of slavery.  Slavery and
our president are both obscene!”

Flora admired her strong willed aunt, and wanted to be
just like her someday in most ways.  Flora differed in
only that she would support slavery if there were
humane laws in place.  But Flora was glad,
nevertheless, that some boys were social servants; it
made them so soft, pliant, and kissable.

Martin, not much of a church-going man, couldn’t
understand why he sought counseling with Father Peter
Lucarelli.  He figured it was probably because he was
attracted to him when he met with him regarding the
Jay and Rasby situation.  But whatever the reason, he
needed to hear some confirmation from a spiritual
authority that indenturing one’s children was not a
wrong thing to do.

Since Father Lucarelli was the chief overseer of the
parish’s social servants, Martin figured he would be
just the man to give him some comfort in his turmoil.

The two men hit it off rather well, and it was only
after at least 15 minutes of small talk in the office
of Father Lucarelli that Father Lucarelli realized
just what Martin was after, “So just what do you want
to hear from me?”

Martin answered that he assumed that Father Lucarelli
supported the social servant system.  Father answered
him, “Why assume that?  Because a physician hangs out
in hospitals where there is illness, does that mean he
supports illness.  On the contrary; he is there in an
attempt to improve the lot of the ill, and hopefully to
destroy the illness and the cause of illness.”

Martin sank in his seat, embarrassed.  Father
Lucarelli thought how handsome Martin looked.
He looked deeply into Martin’s eyes, “Look, Martin.
You’ve told me you love your sons.  You’ve said that
that love has grown since they became servants.  If
that is true, why don’t you act on your feelings?”

“But society has said that social service is
acceptable.  One doesn’t act on feelings.  One follows
society’s values.  Traditional values.”

Father Lucarelli knew Martin wanted some kind of
affirmation for placing his sons in social servitude.
“Traditional values.  Let’s see, what are traditional
values?”  Father Lucarelli rubbed his chin.  “The
first value the traditionalists are always talking
about is family.  Family love.  Sounds good.  If you
really loved your family, would you put them into
social service for your own profit?”

The conversation went on for almost two hours.  Martin
left feeling more conflicted than ever.  He had also
wanted to discuss a few other things with Father
Lucarelli.  But after feeling like he must look like a
slimeball to Father Lucarelli, he no longer wanted to
bring up with the good priest that he was having sex
with his own brother, and that he was now, as well,
lusting after his own sons.

Several days later, Bradley, unable to reach his
father, called his Aunt Karen and was able to get in
touch with his mother through her.  Barbara conveyed
to Martin that Bradley was scheduled to receive ten
strokes of the rawhide bullwhip in one week.  While
Barbara had little sympathy with Martin, she was
pleased to see that her husband was as upset as she
was over the scheduled punishment.  She wanted the
punishment stopped at all costs, and she told Martin
so.

Martin got in touch with Damian Appomattox as soon as
Barbara left the house.  Damian once again attempted
to calm Martin down, “Bullwhip, schmullwhip!  It’s not
a big deal; at least not the way they do it at Maple
Valley.  The whole purpose of announcing a punishment
and scheduling it for several days ahead is to gain
the psychological advantage over the servant.  Making
a servant live in dread for several days of an
upcoming punishment is part of the punishment and adds
to its effectiveness.  The hide whip they’ll be using
on him isn’t going to hurt any more than the carbon
filament bullwhipping he’s already received.  The only
difference is that this time Bradley could end up with
a permanent scar or two.  That’s why they’re making
him anticipate it for a week.  Knowing that your back
could be torn up and scarred for life adds greatly to
the punishment’s effectiveness, and it may well prove
to be the thing that finally gets Bradley’s ass in
line. And so what if he ends up with a few battle
scars?  It’ll just be something he can show his grand
kids.  No big deal!”

“But there’s more than likely a chance that Bradley
won’t end up with any permanent scars.  The average is
that every eight strokes of the bullwhip results in
approximately a one-inch permanent scar.”

Martin took in all of what Damian had to say in
silence.  Damian knew he was making headway, and
continued, “But what is really going on here is that
Bradley is finally going to get a real man’s
punishment.  Isn’t it about time?  He’s a social
servant and social servants get punished, and once in
awhile they get severe punishment.  To me, this all
has a good feeling about it.  Bradley simply has to be
brought up to servant speed, and if it’s going to take
a few hard knocks to get him there, so what?  Why is
this such a big concern of yours?  Are you his
overseer?  On top of everything else, please remember
that Bradley agreed to his own indenturement.  It’s
not like he was enslaved against his will.  Bradley is
an adult now and you need to let him follow his own
chosen path.  Stop meddling in his affairs!”

“And you, Martin, rather than worrying non-stop about
your sons, you need to finally sit back, relax, and
take pride in your three beautiful sons and all that
you have done for them.  By your concern for your sons
you have proven that you have nothing but their best
interest at heart.  You’ve done so much for your boys
by giving them such a wonderful upbringing and
education.  And now, by unselfishly turning your boys
over to Social Services where they can serve and be a
delight to the entire community, and not just
yourself, you have, so to speak, put icing on the
cake.  Icing in the form of complete obedience.
Obedience, after all, is the primary object of all
sound education.  Obedience is the mother of success,
and success the parent of salvation.  And the reason
social servants are such special people in our eyes is
because it is usually only servants who can get to
that exalted level of obedience towards which we all
strive.”

“You have done good not only for your sons, but for
all of society.  Remember that every time a new person
joins the ranks of social servitude, everyone
benefits, both free and servant.  Servants basically
generate ‘free’ money into the economy thereby
improving the overall financial well-being of all the
citizens of Vermont.”

Martin attempted to get back to the matter of Bradley,
“Since servants do add so much to the quality of life
for all of us, maybe it would be good if I showed
Bradley how much I appreciate what he is doing and
intervene for him, just this once.”

Damian was quick to retort, “What you need to do
Martin is to keep your nose out of it, and let the
overseers over at Maple Valley do what they have to
do.  The overseers at Maple Valley are some of the
highest paid in the state, so you can be sure they
know their stuff.  And, also, one of Bradley’s best
friends is one of Maple Valley’s lead overseers,
Andrew Ricker’s son.  You can be sure nothing untoward
is going to happen to Bradley.  Just relax.  Bradley
is a servant now, doing servant stuff, learning the
ropes.  He’s young, smart, and resilient.  He’ll be
fine!  Just keep your nose out of it.  After all,
Bradley wasn’t forced to sign the papers of
indenturement.  I’m sure he knew what he was getting
into.  Give him some credit.  He was an ‘A’ student
after all!”

“And it’s time that you, Martin, face reality, as
well.  If you thought your sons could get through
service without a bullwhipping or two, then you’ve had
your head in the sand.”

Damian saw the conflicted look on Martin’s face, “If
you were to stick your nose in there and do a parental
objection to a scheduled punishment, you would be
setting up a real bad vibe between Bradley and the
overseers.  Just stay out of it!  Overseers respect
servants who submit to a bullwhipping without trying
to get out of it through family intervention.
Overseers can’t stand that.”

“But overseers don’t mind servants doing a little bit
of last minute pleading once they’re getting strapped
to the whipping frame.  In fact, they’re amused by it.
I can assure that once they strip Bradley and start
securing him to the whipping frame he’ll be doing some
pretty serious pleading, just like they all do.  I’ve
seen it often enough.  Bradley will be bawling and
promising this and that, breathing heavy, and heaving.
It’s actually a satisfying spectacle to observe; a
servant coming face to face with the consequences of
disobedience.”

“In fact it might do you good to witness it for
yourself.  As you may know, as a parent you have a
right to witness any and all punishments on your
child.  I think it would give you a whole new respect
for the work that the overseers do out there.  And
they treat family members out there very well and, not
to downplay the seriousness of Bradley’s punishment,
but you’d probably have a very good time.  You’d get
to meet other parents of rollerboys, get to talk to
the hospitality workers and overseers, and see their
side of things.  And maybe you could even give Bradley
a good old-fashioned pep talk while you’re out there.
And your presence at his whipping would give Bradley a
nice dose of humiliation that could add dramatically
to the bullwhipping’s effectiveness.”

Damian saw that the idea interested Martin, “Martin,
it’s time that you, as a person who has indentured his
own sons, start taking comfort in the fact that
servants are disciplined on a regular basis, rather
than worrying about it.  Punishments in general help
the social service system run smoothly.  Watching
social servants get punished always feels good to me
because when you punish a servant you are, so to
speak, oiling the wheels of social servitude.  It
never ceases to amaze me, watching servants hop around
like little monkeys after their spankings, how
discipline really is a good, life-improving,
experience for a servant.  It really does change them
for the better.  Punishments help ensure that the
system runs smoothly.  Remember our adage out here at
the County. “If a servant gets punished, it’s because
he deserves it.”  Bradley is no different than the
thousands of other servants out there.  Most of them
do not have their parents stepping in and stopping
deserved correction.”

“Martin, you’ve told me yourself how much comfort it
gave you when your boys were at home and being so
super obedient.  Well just imagine what they’ll be
like if you just let the highly trained overseers over
at Maple Valley do their thing.  When Bradley gets out
in 13 years you won’t be able to stop him from licking
your shoes clean!”

“Martin, this whole bullwhipping thing is another
non-issue Bradley is trying to use to pull your ropes.
Servants complain about the smallest things all the
time.  It’s what they do, and I see it every day.  Just
ignore it, Martin, please!”

“I think Bradley is a pretty typical garden variety
worker boy, and this whipping will do him a world of
good.  Once he realizes that if he keeps up his
stubborn ways his pretty little body is at risk of
getting torn up by the whip, he’ll get with the
program in no time, and very soon he’ll be scurrying
around, shuffling to please, just like any other
little corporate janitor slave.”

“Martin, my advice; relax, pour yourself a scotch, and
be grateful that your sons are in such a protective
environment.”

Martin took the advice, and was able to relax and
enjoy a very good night’s sleep after his chat with
Damian Appomatox.