

DESPERADO

CHAPTER 1

The old house, its timbers rotting with time, is a relic from the past sitting on a prairie in Missouri. The now decrepit structure was once a place called home, a dream realized by early settlers whose goal was to conquer this new land they would call their own. Driven by purpose and a sense of adventure, such men and women gathered in small communities far from their origin, their lives dependant on one another for order and semblance in their new homeland.

Julie and Robert were a young couple who, in the mid 1860's, made their way across the ocean, landing in this newfound land called America. Castle Garden was their destination, located in Battery Park, New York City. Here the couple would register their arrival in this new land and begin the process of becoming citizens of this country they would call home.

Upon their arrival in New York, the couple found a center in chaos. Recent immigrants were flooding into New York from Europe, with the promise of prosperity being only a dream for most of these early settlers. Julie and Robert were well-off financially, compared to most of the passengers accompanying them on their journey to America. The couple hailed from rich and powerful families in England, where their journey began. With the approval of both of their aristocratic families, a considerable amount of money had been gifted to the couple. Julie and Robert's travel plans to America were finalized and a glorious sendoff was planned. The attendees left this celebration with the realization this may be the final time they would see their loved ones again.

Traveling by ship to New York, Julie and Robert were happy to have finally arrived and be off the water, but were beset upon by unsavoury characters, trying to lure the young couple with false promises and scams to acquire quick wealth. Many newcomers became innocent victims to these criminals, losing the little money they had by trusting bad characters. After exchanging their funds for American dollars and completing the immigration process, the young couple were finally ready to leave Castle Gardens and enter New York City.

Robert hailed a rig waiting for a client, and the couple loaded their luggage onto the carriage. The driver took Julie and Robert to a hotel in Manhattan, where they spent two days pondering their future. The couple, having already arranged the purchase of land, knew their journey to a place called Missouri would be long, and take them many miles west of New York. They would travel by rail to Kansas City, a main transit point for cattle being shipped east in rail cars. From there, they planned to transfer to a stage line, finally arriving in the growing town of Raytown, southeast of the city.

The trip from New York to Kansas City was uneventful until their arrival, where cowboys, rail employees, and other workers dominated the train station. Hawkers yelled, wanting to rent out their wagons or buggies to new arrivals. Robert and Julie had never felt such energy and grew fearful of what awaited them in this new land of opportunity.