

## THE HANGMAN WAITS.

Hands trembling, she dropped the knife as if it was a red-hot poker, unbearably painful. The cacophony of noises outside, children playing and screeching their delight in some game in the moonlight, the dissonant screeching from a radio being tuned by an impatient operator to a preferred station, a distant trundling of a mammy wagon, all drifted through the open shutters of the kitchen window, normal everyday sounds in sharp dichotomy to the horror within this house. She looked down at the subject of her horror, stunned. She stared at her trembling hands, suddenly chilled to the bones, despite the sultry heat. ‘What have I done?’ she whispered, in a shaky voice. The red film of rage had receded. She looked down her torn dress, wet and clinging to her belly. As the reality struck, panic and terror seized her, paralysing her. She fought to shake off the sensation as she suddenly realized the danger she was in. She could not be found here with the subject. Erratic thoughts tumbled through erratic mind. She was in big, big trouble. She needed help. She had to get away. Where can she go? Who will help her? Who *can* help her?

Suddenly making her decision, albeit a temporary one, she bolted out the back door, leaving everything as it was. She felt her eyes swelling close and a salty taste in her mouth. But she did not dwell on that. Not now. Time for that latter. She looked out towards the backyard of the other houses on Government Quarters from whence she planned to get to her destination. It looked quiet. The cooks and stewards were probably in their masters’ main house, serving and clearing evening meals. When she got to the end of the row of houses, she stopped to check for human presence. No-one. Stealthily, she crossed the dusty road, looking around furtively to see that it was all clear, before darting quickly into a backyard on the other side of the road, where the natives lived. Then she broke into a frenzied run.

