**CHAPTER 1, PAGES 10-1**

When I was finished, I walked into the alcove, pulling the curtain closed behind me. It was a small space my sister and I shared. There was one window high in the wall that let in the late afternoon light. At night, we would lie next to each other and look up at the stars through the thick pane of glass, gossiping or telling each other stories and laughing until our sides hurt. Our mattress was tucked into a corner, topped with a featherbed and wool blanket. Tacked to the wall above our pillows were pictures we had drawn over the years, notes our friends had written us, school notices, and the academic ribbons Esther had received for handwriting and etiquette and I had received for mathematics. A small writing desk passed down from my father’s brother stood in the other corner with our schoolwork spread on top