Betsy was in bed and thinking about her beautiful husband.

She thought, “God put the gift in him to be a wonderful caring being. I love that gift of God in him. I want to help him do what God wants him to do.”

Betsy reaches her hands over her head and pick up the drawings of Shelia.

She kept looking over the drawings. She thought about her little princess and how Wes decided not

To go to the city with Dr. Obersteen to stay and learn how to use the herbs.

Betsy said, “This facility should be for the critically sick or injured. The care would be free and the herbs. But they cannot be treated by herbs along. There are tests, examinations, procedures and surgeries. They have to be transported to the big city hospital for those. Wes works by himself to keep this place up and spend most of his time with the patient. Harold helps out.”

Betsy thought she can help him pick the herbs, but she could not help with patient care.

Betsy shook her head for no way can I help with patient care. She thought how good Natalie was, but Natalie was there only because of the little girl. No one else there could have that patience, not even Shelia.

Betsy began to cry as she thought about Shelia and her dead children. Why did she think about Shelia. How she put together the pieces of Shelia’s puzzle.

Betsy laid in the bed and cried for a long time.

Wes stood outside the tent and listened to Betsy cry.

He did not know what to do.

He married a woman he only knew for a month.

He did not she had a college degree in business. He just thought she made jelly and she is fluent in French.

He thought about how they all shut down about people with mental illness and he knew it had something to do with their grandmother and all of this mess with Bill. That is enough to drive a sane man insane. Now with Shelia and her children in the equation.

Wes thought. “I think I could have found a way to help Betsy, but a child is involved. I need to talk to Thomas. I’ll take Harold, Mike and Dr. Obersteen with me. I can’t put him out. What will happen to Shelia. I cannot depend on Emma and her damn rabbit. Mattie just stare out the window into space and Betsy be ready to fight all the time. I know dr. Obersteen was looking for his gun. I am missing pieces.”

Wes sighed and said, “God this is one of those things I need You to help. Well it is more than one thing. I can’t think through one problem before all hell break loose with something else. Harold, Frank, Abraham, Bill, Thomas the murderer. Then Betsy and my baby or “two” nearly left me yesterday and I don’t know that happened or how it came about. I don’t know where to look or if there was a medical reason for what happened to her. I am scared to leave her alone, but I have to attend to the baby.”

Wes put his hand to his nose to sniff.

Wes said, “God I need Your help. Amen.”

The LORD GOD Almighty sat and watched Wes and listened to his heart not his mouth.

There were two beings standing on each side of the LORD GOD Almighty

Wes stood outside of his tent.

He did not know whether to go in and comfort his wife or go and take the food to the others.

He heard someone on the front porch.

It was Natalie running to the bath shed.

Wes wiped his tears and nose and took the oatmeal and coffee and bread and jam to the others.

Betsy did not know Wes was outside of their tent.

Betsy said, “God I need Your help. Amen”

The LORD GOD Almighty said, “Go.”

The two beings disappeared.

Wes hurried to the house.

Joshua ran out the house with his quilt.

Wes said, “Good morning Joshua.”

Joshua did not say anything but ran to his Aunt Betsy.

Wes knew Joshua was running to Betsy. His sturdy. His anchor. Who was going through something he could not understand not did he know how to treat.

Natalie was coming out the bath shed and saw Joshua running.

She knew he was making it to Betsy.

Wes looked.

Natalie saw Wes when he bowed his head.

Natalie ran up the steps and caught the door and closed it.

As Natalie closed the front door, she watched Joshua enter Betsy’s tent.

Mattie was standing in the bedroom door watching her son run from her to his aunt Betsy.

Wes saw Mattie and he took the breakfast tray into the living room.

Natalie saw Mattie and said, “Come on Mattie and get something to eat. I know you hate oatmeal.”

Wes said, “Really?”

Mattie walked in the living room and sat.

She spoke French.

Wes looked at Mattie, who got a cup of coffee.

Natalie responded to Mattie in French.

Wes slowly looked at Natale.

Wes said, “Natalie, you speak French also?”

Natalie looked at Wes and cautiously said, “Yes.”

Wes was not going to complain anybody learning languages.

He said,” Mattie what did you say?”

Mattie, who was leaning forward in the chair and blowing her coffee said, “I am glad my son has someone to turn even though it is not me.”

Mattie looked at Wes and said, “What happen to Betsy yesterday?”

Wes said, “She was nearly dead and God gave her back to me and my baby.”

Natalie said, “Or “two”.”

They were all quiet.

The clanking of the spoons in the bowls could be heard.

Mattie stared.

Wes watched Mattie and ate his oatmeal.

Natalie was watching everybody. She knew she had slipped back into the darkness of her past yesterday. But Dr. Obersteen and Wes would not let her go any further back into the darkness.

Wes saw Natalie’s tears and he no longer held anything in after the episode with Betsy he said, “Natalie, what are the tears about?”

Natalie was sat.

Mattie looked at Natalie.

Wes said, “Mattie what are you doing looking off in space?”

Mattie said, “Who do you want to go first me or Natalie?”

Natalie laughed and kicked up her knees and responded in French to Mattie.

Mattie laughed.

Wes stared at them.

Mattie and Natalie looked at Wes and they realized he did not like them to play with him.

Natalie coughed and sit still.

Mattie said, “Wes you do not scare me. I am tired of being scared. Since yesterday.”

Mattie began to cry out and cover her mouth.

Natalie wanted to go to Mattie but was afraid of Wes.

Wes said, “Mattie, I have no idea of the horror you have lived with nor what you have endured, I cannot imagine your life or the part of living you did to be near your son. I do not take healing of the human soul lightly. I may not know what to say or what to do, maybe that will come one day, but if I can keep someone alive so they can have that chance to live as a total human being I will.”

Natalie said, “Amen.” And sipped her coffee.

Betsy and Joshua were standing in the door.

Wes looked and stood.

Natalie said, “Can you close the door. Merci.”

Wes looked at Natalie.

Betsy looked at Wes and said,”Je ne patle pas le francais?”

Natalie lifted her cup to her mouth and smiled.

Mattie said, “Wes I was not dropping out of reality, I was looking at the food William put behind the door and thinking why are we eating this damn oatmeal and you are enjoying it.”

Betsy walked over to Wes and hugged him.

Joshua walked right behind Betsy and held her.

Wes sat and Betsy sat on his lap and Joshua sat on the sofa next to them.

Wes peeped over at Joshua and said, “Joshua do you want to talk about Shelia and Thomas?”

Betsy looked very sad.

Joshua said, “Non, merci.”

Betsy, Mattie and Natalie burst out in laughter.

Wes nearly stood and he rocked Betsy off his lap. But he looked at Betsy and said, “Baby I thank God He gave you back yesterday.”

Betsy grabbed Wes face and kissed him.

Joshua was sitting on the sofa leaning forward with his elbows on his knees and he was tugging at his right ear.

Mattie saw him and said, “Joshua let Wes look at your ear.”

Wes stopped kissing Betsy to look at Joshua, who was forcibly pulling on his ear.

Betsy jumped up and Wes grabbed Joshua and held his hands.

Mattie stood and said, “God my boy!”

Natalie could not move.

Betsy stood in terror.

Wes said, “Natalie the sedative.”

Wes was fighting with Joshua.

Natalie could not move.

He looked at her and said, “Betsy please baby.”

Betsy shook her head and said, “Which?”

Wes said, “The yellow top.”

Betsy stumbled in the bedroom and ran back with the yellow top.

She was shaking so bad.

Mattie walked calmly over and took the bottle out of Betsy’s hand and unscrewed it and poured a capful and leaned down and poured it in Joshua’s mouth.

Mattie said, “Wes is that enough?”

Wes said, “Let me think.”

They waited for a minute.

Wes said, “Give him another capful.”

They heard a wagon and horses. Stop in the front yard.

They could not take their eyes off Joshua.

Mattie poured another capful of the herbal sedative and poured it in Joshua’s mouth.

Dr. Obersteen knocked on the door and swung it opened for Emma to enter with a platter of brunch food.

They stopped because of the scene in the living room.

Wes held a kicking and shaking Joshua.

Emma fell to her knees with the platter in her hands.

Dr. Obersteen closed the front door.

He looked in the bedroom with the little girl.

He looked at a clam Mattie.

He saw Natalie had blinked out of reality and that Betsy was shaken.

He looked down at Emma sitting on the floor with the brunch platter in her hands.

Dr, Obersteen walked over to the sofa and sat. He looked at Joshua who was fighting to stay awake.

The house was quiet.

Mattie said, “Wes is my boy crazy?”

Wes sat and did not say anything.

Mattie walked to the middle of the sofa and kneeled and looked at her sleeping boy and said, “Will they lock him away forever?”

Wes sat and held Joshua and held his arms tight.

At daybreak William was up and tending to his horse.

Harry Westerfield was up and strapping on his guns.

William watched him and William saw the two shotguns on his blanket.

William said, “You really believe in your guns.”

Harry did not respond.

William said, “If you don’t mind. I can ride back to show you how to get there.”

Harry said, “Why? You think I would harm them?”

William said, “Let’s go.”

He mounted his horse and flew back to the new settlement. He did not stop. He did not rest. His mind was on his friends and who this strange man was. He did not trust him. Why did he have that many guns. He knew that Wes and Dr. Obersteen were good shots, but why cause all of that hell.

Everyone remained in their positions all day and into the evening.

Mattie said, “I’m going to start packing. The nearest mental facility is four days away. I am going to sell my house and get a teaching job near the facility.”

Touching Joshua’s arm and she said, “I will be near my boy until the end.”

William pulled in the yard at dark.

He jumped off his horse and ran and knocked on the door and yelled, “This is William.”

Dr. Obersteen stood and said ”William we are here.”

Dr. Obersteen stood and picked up an oil lamp they kept on the fireplace mantel and he lit it.

Harry slowly moved to the front door.

William saw Wes holding Joshua

William could say nothing.

Dr. Obersteen patted William’s shoulder.

Dr. Obersteen walked William out and he saw the other man and he closed the front door.

William said, “This gentleman is Harry Westerfield. I met him right outside of the town, he said he is a friend of Mattie from college.”

Harry reached for Dr. Obersteen hand to shake.

Dr. Obersteen did not reach for his hand.

William said, ”What is going on?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Let me get some light around here. Walk out in the yard with me.”

They walked off the porch.

Dr. Obersteen lit the oil lamp sticks.

He lit the torchces by the porch.

He told them to follow him.

They went out to the burned out fire and they put coal on the fire.

Dr. Obersteen told them of the terrible events of the past few days.

He told them Betsy and Joshua realized Thomas had killed all five of Shelia’s children.

He said, Joshua has had a nervous breakdown.”

Dr. Obersteen cried.

William held his head down and cried

Harry Westerfield sat and mourned for his fiend Mattie.

Harry said, “What about Mattie?”

Dr. Obersteen said “Mattie is taking it calmly. She said the mental facility is four days away.”

Harry said, “I know the place. It is in my city.”

William got up and took a torch and walked to the brook and sat.

Harry looked around and said, “It is really cold here.”

Dr. Obersteen did not make any comment.

Harry said, “I came here ten years ago to see about Mattie. Not to this place but to her hometown. I wrote to Mattie and for months my letters were returned. Mattie and I had promised to marry. I worked at my family’s newspaper. I came here, rather to her hometown and searched for her. I found her cousin, Betsy. Betsy told me everything that happened to Mattie. I went to her cousin Emma.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I need to tell you Emma is now with me and we are to be married.”

Harry said, “Your Emma fought me when I wanted to take Mattie and the baby away to be with me.”

William could hear them at the part of the brook he was sitting.

Harry said, “Now this. A child has had a nervous breakdown and does not have a life or a future.”

Harry looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Harry said, “How much can one person endure.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Mattie is calm and stable. She was the weakest one. Yesterday Emma and Mattie finally had their confrontation.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Did you know who raped Mattie and left her for dead?”

Harry blood was rising in his face, he said, “No.”

William was listening.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Well nobody knew until Wes rushed Mattie to the big city hospital.”

Harry said, “Doctor finish the story.”

William walked back and sat.

Dr. Obersteen said, “While Mattie was undergoing one of the test and under anesthesia, she began to talk. Wes was by her side every step of the way. Wes keep it to himself and they had to leave the big city hospital to come back here to help me. That’s where William, the governor and the first lady came.”

Harry said, “Who raped Mattie? Is he still alive?”

He stood up. Showing off his guns.

Dr, Obersteen said, “I need for you to listen and let not your revenge get you in trouble. We have too much going on now. Somebody has to be stable.”

Harry sat for a moment.

William was thinking about Harry’s guns.

William and Dr. Obersteen watched Harry.

Harry exhaled and said, “Alright.”

He sat down.

Dr. Oberseen said, “Emma’s husband raped Mattie and beat her and left her for dead.”

Harry said, “Why?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Something you may know about.”

Harry looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Dr, Obersteen said, “He hated Mattie because she was trying to keep him for Emma.

Emma hated Mattie for trying to keep she and Bill apart. That’s why she had a conservatorship signed so she could manipulate Mattie’s life.”

Harry was angry.

Dr. Obersteen said, Bill told Mattie if she told he would take the boy…”

Dr. Obersteen’s voice cracked as he pointed back to the house.

Dr. Obersteen ,”That has lost his beautiful mind. If Mattie told anybody. Mattie wanted to leave but Emma had the conservatorship. Mattie endured hell for elven years. Now this I can’t believe God would let this happen to a child.”

Harry said, “Where is Bill?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Sit down Harry. You lost the fight legally then, Don’t let revenge cost you to lose your life. We don’t know where Bill went after yesterday. I had him to sign the divorce paper from Emma.”

Harry, “Where is she?”

Dr. Obersteen stood and walked in Harry’s face and said, “Emma is in the house and you are not going near the house. Emma did not know Bill raped Mattie and left her for dead. Emma has confessed her hatred for Mattie for trying to keep her and Bill apart and she has asked Mattie to forgive her. Have you confessed the same hatred and asked God to forgive you?”

Harry stumped away.

William stood up and kept a watch on Harry’s gun.

Emma opened the door and stepped on the front porch and still had the brunch tray in her hand.

Dr. Obersteen whispered to William keep him from Emma.

Dr. Obersteen walked fast to Emma. He said, “Get in the house.”

Emma looking at Dr. Obersteen and was peeping around him said, “Who is that?”

Dr. Obersteen walked fast to Emma he said, “Get in the house.”

Emma looked at Dr. Obersteen and turned and ran into the house.

Dr. Obersteen “Everybody get down on the floor and don’t move until I tell you.”

Wes was putting Joshua on his mat in the little girl’s room and checking on the little girl

Wes cut off the light in the little girl’s bedroom and closed the door and walked in the living room and retrieved his gun and check for the bullets.

Wes said, “What?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Mattie do you know a Harry Westerfield?”

Mattie said, “Yes. He was my college boyfriend and we to marry and Emma stepped in and blocked us.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “He’s outside and he has plenty of guns.”

Mattie said, “He’s here to kill Emma?”

Emma was on the floor by the fireplace and stood up and said, “I will go outside.”

Dr. Obersteen, “That will not happen.”

He said, “Wes, I am sorry but I hid this here yesterday. The only person who saw me was the little girl, and I asked her not to tell.”

Wes smirked.

Dr. Obersteen checked the rifle.

He looked at Emma and said, “Sit down!”

Emma said, “I’ll take responsibility for my actions.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Not to him. To God only.”

Mattie walked to the door and looked at everyone and walked out to William and Harry who stood at the fire.

Mattie walked up and she stood face to face with Harry Westerfield.

She smiled.

He looked at her and said, “Mattie how are you?”

Mattie said, “Nothing that GOD can’t fix.”

Harry said, “Is He fixing it Mattie?”

Mattie said, “Yes.”

William had eased his pistol out of the back of his pants and put by the tree stump he was sitting on.

Harry said, “How do you know. It doesn’t sound like it to me with your kid and all.”

Mattie said, “You are here. That’s proof he is fixing it Mr. Harry.”

Mattie stuck her tongue out at Harry as she did in college.

William laughed.

Harry forgot he was there and caught Mattie by her arm and walked with Mattie towards the house.

Wes had slipped out the bedroom and eased by the horses.

Dr. Obersteen was on his knees at the front window.

No one but Joshua knew William had a gun. William was teaching Joshua how to shot, because the governor required all his staff, male and female to know how to shot.

Mattie stop walking to the house with Harry and said, “My love why are you here?”

Harry said, “Mattie I am married and have three wonderful children.”

Mattie held her head down and took her foot and drew in the dirt.

Harry grabbed Mattie’s arm and said, “Stop Mattie. You need help.”

Mattie said, “Harry why are you here.”

Harry said, “Before I fall in love with my wife and commit my heart to her, I wanted to know if it is alright to let you go?”

Mattie looked in his eyes and said, “Yes. You have the right to live and love Harry. I would not put my messed up life...”

Pointing to herself, “… on any man.”

Harry said, “You have a son.”

Mattie smiled and said, “I have a son. I will spend the rest of my life taking care of him. I just hope the world will allow me to enjoy him.”

Harry grabbed Mattie and held her close to him and hugged her and cried.

Mattie pushed off him and looked deep in his eyes and said, “My love set yourself free. Don’t hate what happened to me. I got a son. I don’t know how God’s fixing it. I do want my son. He has gone through stuff no child should have to face, Go home. Love your wife. Love your children. Enjoy every moment you have with them. The more you let the hate out of your heart the more love you have for those you truly love. Go home Harry my love and enjoy your beautiful life God has given you.”

Harry kissed Mattie for a long time.

Mattie smiled in the midst of her tears.

Harry wiped her tears with his hand and went to his horse and untied it.

William stood and waved at Harry.

Harry mounted his horse and bent down to Mattie and said, “I will not be back Ms. Mattie to rescue you and me from your messed up life.”

Mattie smiled and walked to the dirt road and watched Harry ride away.

She said, “Wes what you thought you were going to do against a sharpshooter for the military.”

Wes walked around the horses and looked at Mattie.

Mattie said, “He was well aware of you, William and Dr. Obersteen. And could have taken you out quickly. Why do you think he walked here? I stopped him before he got into his position.

Mattie said, “William come on.”

William said, “I heard you. I am going to bed.”

Mattie said, ”Let’s heal my boy.”