Betsy was irritated with Emma who was finally asleep but whimpering all through the night to early morning.

The older driver was snoring so loud under the wagon that Betsy could hear him at their tent.

Betsy, was on her side trying to get some sleep.

The only one not disturbing her was Mattie.

Betsy thought, “Maybe I should go and move Mattie over and sleep on her mattress, but I know that will be a fight. She does not like to share anything. She really does not share with Joshua. I can’t tell when she became selfish. My mom and dad did not treat her anything different from me and Emma. Wait-----------!!”

Betsy raised up on her left elbow on the mattress with her back to Emma and was thinking.

Betsy said, “Yes hell my mom and dad did treat Mattie differently than me and Emma.”

She turned on her stomach and started saying in Emma’s ear, “Emma. Wake up.”

Emma mumble, “Huh?”

Betsy said, “Did mom and dad treat Mattie better than they did us?”

Emma said, “Yeah.”

Betsy said, “Didn’t they, at Easter, buy her an extra Easter dress?”

Emma said, “Yeah.”

Betsy said, “Didn’t grandma hold Mattie all the time?”

Emma said, “Yeah.”

Betsy said, “Didn’t they let her get away with running and playing when we had to help with washing clothes?”

Emma said, “Yeah.”

Betsy said, “What about the time the Mattie set the pasture on fire and we were blamed for it?”

Emma said, “Yeah.”

Betsy said, “Bitch I knew you were awake and lying.”

Emma said, “I want you to go and say something to Mattie, so she can whip your ass tonight. Telling me to shut up crying because my husband is to be executed this week and I don’t have an insurance policy that pays me if he dies.”

Betsy was getting up out the bed.

Emma turned and looked at Betsy.

Betsy said, “Me and Mattie do.”

Betsy ran out the tent.

Emma jumped up and ran after Betsy.

Emma stood still and looked at Betsy.

Betsy said, “Come on execution! I need a house and furniture for my baby.”

Mattie was awake and heard them talking about her and they were saying she was spoiled.

Mattie grinned.

She got them in plenty of trouble.

She knew their mom and dad would not whip an orphan.

Mattie was laying on her bed laughing to herself about how much trouble she got into and how Betsy and Emma were blamed for letting her get into trouble. From breaking windows, to running through neighbors’ flower beds, to letting the neighbors’ animals loose and they had to run through the neighborhood to try to find the animals.

Mattie screamed with laughter and had to cover her mouth.

Emma looked towards Mattie tent.

Betsy saw Emma’s face from the glow of the fire.

Betsy ran towards Emma.

Emma and Betsy were outside the tent.

Mattie was in her tent with her gun and the butcher knife.

Betsy ran passed Emma and slid into their tent.

She grabbed her rifle and the butcher knife.

She laid on her stomach.

All she could hear was Wes saying, Get off your stomach!”

Betsy yelled, “Shout up Wes!”

Betsy yelled, “Emma move!!!”

Emma screamed, “Mattie!!!!!!”

Mattie sat up and grabbed her gun and could not get her legs out the cover of the bed.

Mattie saw her whistle.

She grabbed it and begin to blow.

The older driver started rolling around under the wagon and finally woke up.

He peeped from underneath the wagon and grabbed his gun and crawled from underneath the wagon.

He pointed and said, “Don’t move.”

The soldiers stationed at the cute house ran to the dirt road.

The other soldiers surrounded the cute house and the tent.

Wes had just got up to start the governor’s new IV.

He heard the whistle.

He rushed out the governor’s tent and saw the soldiers running to the dirt road.

Wes ran and untied a horse and mounted it.

A soldier ran and jumped on a horse and rode behind Wes to the campsite.

Cate ran out her tent and was looking.

Harold ran out of his tent and did not know what was going on but he began to blow his whistle.

The soldiers in the back of the new settlement woke and jumped and ran out of their tents.

The soldier who cut his face was up and looking at his image in a mirror.

The soldiers at the front entrance of the new settlement jumped up.

One got on his horse and rode to Harold’s tent and yelled, “What are you blowing the whistle for?”

Harold was so afraid of the sentry all he could do was to point down the dirt road.

Another soldier from the entrance of the new settlement rode up to Harold’s tent.

The two soldiers turned and sped down the dirt road.

The sentries at the command post thought they heard a whistle from a mile away.

One sentry ran to the dirt road.

He could hear the faint whistle.

The sentry yelled to the other it is a whistle.

The soldiers did not know why the whistle was being blown.

The sentry ran to the captain’s tent and yelled, “Captain!”

Bruce just dose to sleep.

He heard his name.

He threw the cover off and put on his boots and said, “Enter.”

The sentry said, “Whistle captain.”

Bruce said, “Where?”

The sentry alerted the troop.

The troop was mounting their horses.

Bruce figured it was a threat to Mattie.

He put on his uniform.

He ran out of his tent.

He saw his troop mounting their horses.

Bruce said, “My horse.”

The fourth in command heard the sentry yell.

He was sitting on the edge of his bed reading his telegrams he sneaked and sent to his girlfriend.

He hurried and dressed and went and got his horse and the captain’s horse.

Bruce ran to the entrance of his command post.

The fourth in command, Foster rode to the captain and had the captain’s horse.

The captain mounted his horse and he looked at his troop and gave them a signal.

Only twelve soldiers rode out the post with the captain.

Six soldiers stopped at the cute house and lined in front of the yard to block anyone from entering.

The little girl managed to get out the door and was standing on the front porch.

Joshua and Natalie ran out on the porch.

The soldiers yelled, “Get inside and stay.”

The captain told his troop a very sick child was at the cute house and to not shot her.

The captain met his two sentries from the entrance of the new settlement.

Bruce saw Wes and his soldier turning into the campsite.

Bruce yelled to the sentries from the entrance to look out for the residents, especially the women and boy.

They rode into the campsite.

The other two soldiers saw Wes and the soldier ride into the campsite, they followed them.

Bruce heart stopped but he rode into the campsite with six soldiers.

After the attacks on the governor and his wife and the deaths of his soldiers, Bruce instituted additional procedures for his troop and their response times.

They practiced for the whole week and will be practicing onward.

Bruce rode into the campsite and four of his six men rode throughout the new settlement to make sure it was secure.

Two soldiers followed Bruce and the fourth in command into the campsite.

Bruce looked around and he saw Emma standing in front of the tent and the older driver had his gun pointed.

He saw Betsy in the tent on her stomach with the rifle pointed.

Mattie was still blowing the whistle.

Wes dismounted the horse and went and got the whistle from Mattie.

Wes ran to the tent with Betsy and grabbed her.

Emma stood in front of the tent to keep Betsy from shooting.

She knew Betsy was scared and would shoot to put an end to the peril and the threat.

Bruce said to the fourth in command, “Go back to the men and dis-alert them.”

The fourth in command went to the troop and told the ready men to go back to bed.

The troop dismounted their horses and tied the horses up and went back to their tents.

The soldiers on look out at the governor’s mother-in-law tent put their guns in the holster.

And returned the rifles back by their chairs.

They were determined not to be killed like Bishop, the cook and his two soldiers.

The six soldiers Bruce left at the cute house, formed a line and blocked the yard.

Natalie grabbed the little girl.

She looked at Joshua and said, “Joshua.”

Joshua said, “That’s my family.”

Natalie was bending down to pick up the little girl, who beat them out the house, Natalie grabbed Joshua by the collar and threw him in the house on the floor.

The soldiers in the yard were watching Natalie.

Natalie yelled at Joshua and said, “I am not Betsy. You will not get us killed.”

The little girl went and crawled up in the chair.

She turned to Joshua and patted the chair next to her and whispered, “Here Joshua.”

Joshua could not believe Natalie threw him on the floor.

Natalie was huffing and puffing.

She locked the door and went and got a cup of water.

The children watched her.

Joshua said, “She threw me on the floor.”

The little girl said, “You know she is scary.”

Joshua said, “But she should not have thrown me on the floor.”

The little girl lifted her finger up to Joshua and said, “Shush.”

A soldier saw them in the window and tiptoed on the front porch and scarred them.

When the little girl turned around she was looking in the face of the soldier.

She and Joshua climbed out the chairs.

They passed Natalie in the hallway who was standing and drinking a cup of water.

Joshua walked into the bedroom and laid on his pallet.

The little girl crawled to the bed, but tried to get in the bed, but she could not get in the bed.

She did not want to call Natalie.

She said, “Joshua call Natalie for me.”

Joshua said, “No. I am mad with her because she threw me on the floor.”

The little girl looked at Joshua.

She tried again to get on the bed.

Finally, she exhaled and said, “Natalie, please.”

Natalie put down her glass of water.

She was still trying to calm her nerves.

Natalie turned and walked into the bedroom.

She picked up the little girl and put her in the bed and kissed her on the head.

The little girl grinned and said, “Natalie are you going to fuss?”

Natalie said, “No.”

The little girl said, “Are you going to tell Wes I was outside?”

The little girl was lying on her side and looking at Natalie.

Natalie said, “Yes.”

The little girl did a double take at Natalie.

The little girl yawned and went to sleep.

Natalie said, “I knew that would make you go to sleep.”

Natalie said, “Joshua, come and look out of this window.”

Joshua said, “I am not your friend anymore.”

Natalie said, “I don’t care Joshua. When the spring comes I am leaving. So you never have to see me again.”

Natalie went and opened the window, a soldier was at the window.

Joshua stopped and stood still.

Natalie did not look, she let the window down and closed the curtain.

Joshua began to cry, the little girl did not move because she did not want Wes to know she was out the house.

She had decided to sleep late.

Maybe when she wake Wes won’t be as mad.

JESUS said, “You were disobedient. They told you not to go outside because the soldiers are ordered to shoot to kill. Be obedient. You will leave soon.”

The little girl began to cry and said, “I am sorry.”

Joshua looked at the little girl.

Natalie touched the little girl’s leg and patted it.

Natalie could feel her bone and a little skin.

She did not know what to think.

She thought about taking the little girl with her, but she would not be a bum anymore.

She would not subject the little girl to that evil life of homelessness and starvation.

She would get a job sitting with a sick person and find a small place for her and the little girl.

Natalie saw she would never marry nor have a family or children.

She thought she was so unworthy to be loved and cared for.

She thought William was the person to help her to enjoy this life and help her to be a better person.

Natalie had been thinking, “If William did not want children. She would be fine with that. It would be the two of them. She thought it has been nearly two months since he has been back from the capital. He has stayed his distance.”

Natalie began to cry.

Joshua sat up on his pallet and said, “Natalie, what are you crying about?”

Natalie did not stop crying.

There was a knock on the front door.

Joshua looked at Natalie.

Natalie continued to cry.

The little girl continued to cry.

Joshua looked around at them, he knew he had to go to the front door.

He scooted off the pallet and walked into the living and unlocked the front door, it was Wes.

Joshua looked around behind Wes he did not see, his beloved Betsy and his mommas, not even the drunk driver.

Wes knew what Joshua was looking for.

He touched Joshua on his head and turned him around and closed the front door.

Wes heard Natalie and the little girl crying.

He glanced at the clock and knew he had to finish attending to the governor and his wife.

Wes touched Joshua’s shoulder and they walked into the bedroom.

Wes looked at the little girl and walked over to her and peeped at the watered face.

Wes touched her hips and said, “Baby are you sick?”

The little girl kept on crying.

Wes stood up and looked at Natalie, he was still very hard on Natalie, said “Natalie why are you crying?”

Natalie said, “You don’t care about me?”

Wes turned and looked at Joshua who was standing next to Wes looking at Natalie.

Joshua was thinking, “Is she crying because I told her she was not my friend anymore?”

Wes looked at Joshua and said, “Joshua?”

Joshua was looking at Natalie very hard and thinking, that Wes looked at him.

He said, “Joshua .”

Joshua said, “I meant it.”

Wes said, “What did You say?”

Joshua began to cry.

Wes looked at Joshua and said, “Joshua the crying won’t work.”

Wes heard the first lady screaming.

He thought, “Why is she the hollering now?”

He ran out the door.

Joshua said, “I bought us some time.”

Wes heard Joshua and opened the door, “I’ll be back. I don’t know what happened here, but I will find out when I get back and faking sleep will not work.”

Joshua was standing by the bed and looking at the front door at the bossy and mean Wes.

The soldiers were looking at Wes, because the first lady was getting on their nerves.

The six soldiers guarded the yard fell in line behind Bruce and the other six soldiers.

They rode the short distance back to the command post.

Shelia’s hands were tied in front of her and they put her on one of the soldiers horses.

They put Shelia under guard in a separate tent.

Cate ran to Mattie, Emma and Betsy.

She looked at the older driver.

They all sat around the fire.

Emma made coffee.

The older driver went to his wagon and got his whiskey and turned his back to the women.

Betsy held up her coffee cup and said, “Give me some of that.”

The older driver turned and saw the four women with their coffee cups in the air.

The two sentries from the front entrance rode passed Harold.

Harold was trying to see from his homesite.

He could see nothing.

The sentries went to the soldiers at the back of the new settlement.

Harold turned around and pointed his ears with his hands and tried to hear what the sentries were telling the other soldier .

The soldiers were standing and waiting for a report.

The one who cut his face did not care.

He was lying in his tent on his sleeping bag, flossing his teeth.

The two soldiers said, “Shelia had wandered down to the Wilson’s campsite and had a butcher’s knife.”

The soldier with the cut on his face continued to floss his teeth.

He said, “I told you’ll that woman was a killer.”

The other two soldiers said, “Whoa.”

One of the soldiers said, “Where is she now?”

One of the sentries said, “The captain arrested her and took her back to the post.”

The soldier stopped flossing his teeth and leaned up off his mat and said, “We go back to the troop tomorrow, that heifer better be gone.”

One of the soldiers said, “Look around here. There is no law enforcement but us.”

The soldier flossing his teeth said, “Huh.”

He continued flossing his teeth.

The sentries and the other two soldiers looked at the soldier flossing his teeth.

The two sentries rode to the rest of the troop at the front entrance of the new settlement.

The two sentries told the other soldiers about the soldier with the cut on his face of his comments.

One of the sentry dismounting his horse said, “I hope he doesn’t kill her.”

The other troop soldiers mumbled and said, “Yeap.”

One of the troop’s member said, “I don’t want that damn captain to keep us out here.”

One of the other troop soldiers said, “I don’t mind. We don’t have to be bothered with all that ass kissing”

One of the sentries said, “We have to go through training. That’s why we are going back to the troop tomorrow.”

The four women sat around the fire with the older driver.

He older driver kept watching Betsy.

He said, “I not sure if you should be drinking whiskey.

Betsy said, “Wes is not here. I need something.”

The older driver said,”That damn nosey husband of yours will find out and I don’t want him to say nothing to me.”

Betsy, Emma, Mattie and Cate burst out screaming in laughter.

They sat and continued to drink.

Emma said, “Joshua was right.”

Mattie said, “What the attendant knew about all this hell we are going through. He had a lot of money. He is probably going to all the high society balls and will come back in the spring.”

Betsy said, “To see how the poor residents are doing.”

They all laugh.

The attendant was standing in the dirt road with the angel over the new settlement watching the women and the driver.

The older driver looked at Cate and said, “You made a lot of money with the soldiers.”

Emma, Mattie and Betsy laughed.

The older driver looked at them and figured out that Cate was a prostitute.

He said, “I was talking about the knitted coverings.”

Cate smiled and said, “I know. I did do well.”

Emma noticed Cate was not acting ignorant and she used correct grammar.

Cate said, “I put all my profits in the bank each time I went to the big city. Now they are going to start delivering the yarn here. So I won’t be spending money buying Harold’s horses hay. He has to find out a way to fed the horses.”

The older driver said, “How is that couple feeding their horses?”

Cate said, “They stole the dead and wounded assassins’ money and valuables. They get Abraham to take them into their old town and buy hay. They pay Abraham with hay for his horses. This is a mess.”

They all took a swallow of coffee.

Cate and Mattie said, “This Is a mess.”

They all laughed.

The older driver said, “You are drunk. I am going to bed. Because I believe that nosey ass husband of yours will be back and I don’t want to hear nothing about letting you have whiskey. My wife and family will be here Wednesday. So I will be busy with them.”

Mattie said, “How can you let them come to this iceberg.”

Emma said, “Yes.”

The older driver said, “No one would ever believe this place is in our state. My younger brother was killed in this fighting and Bruce have buried him and I did not know he was even here. He requested to buried in that evil town and for his family to move into the town. So ladies you will have to get back to cooking your own food and other errands.”

Mattie said, “Sorry, and thank you for all you have done for us.”

Emma said, “Sorry about your younger brother.”

Betsy said, “Joshua was right about this place. I am sorry for your loss.”

The older driver said, “Thank you and good morning.”

The women giggled.

Cate said, “Well the campsite is half empty. I am glad Frank and Glenda moved with those stinking horses. I am going to get some sleep.”

She handed her cup to Emma and said, “Thanks.”

Cate walked back to her homesite.

She looked around at the wilderness.

She looked in the direction of Mike’s homesite, Shelia’s homesite, (which she will never be allowed to return to), her cousin’s homesite.

Cate turned and looked at Thomas’ homesite.

Cate smiled and said, “Now I can sleep at night.

She walked into her tent and looked at the knitted coverings insulating her tent’s ceiling and walls.

She kicked off her slippers, she bought in the city and threw her shawl at the foot of her bed and crawled under the numerous knitted coverings on her bed.

She pulled the knitted coverings up to her neck and slept until late the next morning.

Betsy said, “I did not want to say anything while Cate was here, but Mattie you got us into a lot of trouble with mom and dad.”

Mattie said, “I know. I apologize, but I loved it. That’s what part of the fun was, you’ll taking the blame.”

Mattie laughed.

Betsy and Emma looked at Mattie.

Betsy said, “You got us into trouble with the neighbors and the times you let the neighbor’s animals loose and Mr. Booster would catch the chickens and kill them and invite us for dinner.”

Mattie was laughing.

Betsy said, “That’s why half the city attacked us that night.”

Mattie stopped and said, “It was because of Emma.”

Betsy and Emma stood and went to Joshua’s tent and went to bed.

Emma said, “You know that fool is going to be out there going over all the details in her mind to show she did not cause the attack on our family.”

Betsy fell with her knees on the mattress and said, “Emma move over. That was the truth as Mr. Booster told me years later.”

Betsy turned her back to Emma and was quiet.

Emma looked at Betsy’s back.

Mattie went to her tent and was going over each neighbor in her head. She resolved the neighbors loved her but could not stand, as they said, “That Emma and Betsy.”

Mattie grinned and fell asleep.

Wes went to the governor’s tent.

He finished the governor’s IV and gave him the herbal pain and infection and poison therapy.

The governor was semi - conscious and whispered, “Wes you left.”

Wes stood and was stunned at the lucid governor.

The governor whispered, “You said you would never leave us.”

Wes stood because he told them that when they were screaming or unconscious.

Wes said, “Governor you are conscious. I had a personal emergency. But I came right back. I apologize. Now you go back to sleep.”

The governor said, “Rest.”

Wes smiled and patted the governor on his shoulder.

He turned and went to the screaming Thelma.

Wes begin to work on Thelma.

He examined her wounds and thought, “The wounds looked different today.”

Wes leaned over and smelled the wounds.

He said, “It’s not gangrene”.

He stood and was trying to figure out what the smell was.

The attendant stood by Wes and said, “The poison from the bullet wounds are coming out her body. Now apply the paste.”

Wes continued with his routine.

He kept looking at the first lady’s wounds.

He sat in his chair and wrote many notes in their charts.

The attendant knew Wes heard him, he delivered the message to Wes from JESUS.

Wes was mad because they were there and felt ill equipped for the weather.

Wes left the tent went back to the house.

Two of the soldiers in the yard, looked at Wes and looked at their time pieces.

One of the soldiers said, “Sir you have about an hour and a half before they start screaming again.”

Wes continued to the cute house.

He was thinking about the paste.

He was thinking and trying to remember when the attendant start the paste on the little girl’s back. Whether she was still having discharges from her wounds or if the infections had mostly stopped.

Wes wrapped in his quilt walked up the steps of the front porch and walked into the house.

Joshua tried to quickly lay down.

The little girl was still crying an hour later.

Natalie was staring off in space.

Wes said, “Joshua I see you.”

Wes walked into the bedroom with the three.

He knew they had been caught, he did not know about what.

Wes looked at the dying fire.

He pulled off his quilt and coat.

He put coal on the fire in the living room and the bedroom.

Wes sat in his chair.

He looked at Natalie.

He stared at her.

The little girl said, “Wes, I confess.”

Joshua said, “What are you confessing to?”

Wes turned and looked at Joshua and saw Joshua was too close to the fireplace.

Wes said, “Joshua you are too close to the fireplace.”

Joshua looked at the fireplace and said, “I’m not too close.”

Wes had turned his head to talk to the little girl.

He looked at Joshua and stood up and pulled him from the fireplace to his pallet.

Natalie turned and looked at Wes and Joshua and threw up her hand.

Wes said, “Natalie what is wrong with you? Do you need to be sedated?”

Natalie said, “You touched him.”

The little girl sat up in the bed and looked at Natalie then at Joshua.

Wes looked at her and back at Natalie.

Wes said, “Am I not suppose to touch Joshua? Especially when I see he may be in danger. I saw enough burnt children at the hospitals.”

The little girl shook and breathed heavily.

Wes looked at her and said, “You just wait a minute before you start your theatrics.”

The little girl giggled.

Wes looked at her.

Wes looked back at Natalie and said, “Do we need to talk in the living room?”

Natalie looked straight ahead.

Joshua looked at Natalie and said, “No, you are not suppose to threw me on the floor.”

He looked at Wes said “Nor dragged me across the floor from the fireplace.”

Wes stood up and put his hands on his hips.

He said, “Joshua. I pulled you from the fireplace because you were too close and told me no. I will not allow you as a child to dictate to me what is a possible dangerous situation. Now why did Natalie throw you on the floor?”

Joshua said, “I don’t want to talk about it.” He fell onto the pallet and laid on his quilt.

Natalie was looking at Joshua.

Wes looked at the little girl who was looking from Natalie to Joshua.

Wes knew she knew what happened with her nosey self.

She was his delight but he was not going to let her get away with nothing.

Wes said, “What are you confessing?”

The little girl looked at Natalie.

Natalie looked at the little girl.

Wes knew then it was bad.

The little girl said, “Natalie you tell him I just can’t.”

The little girl put her face in her hands and began to cry and shake her head.

Joshua lifted up and looked at the little girl and said to Wes, “Is that what you call theatrics?”

Wes was exasperated with the three.

Then the unconscious governor reprimanded him.

Shelia tried to kill his wife.

Wes thought, “What has this little girl done?”

Wes said, “Yes, Joshua. She is a little actress.”

Natalie said, “I’m telling you because I told her I would tell you.”

Wes turned in the floor and looked at Natalie.

Natalie rolled her eyes at Joshua.

Wes looked back at Joshua.

He did not like that Natalie rolled her eyes at Joshua, but he would get to that in a minute.

Joshua stared at Natalie.

Joshua was wondering if she was going to tell Wes on him.

Natalie said, “She was outside standing on the front porch, when the whistle was blowing.”

Wes looked at the little girl in sadness.

Joshua said, “That remind me about my family, are they ok?”

Wes said,”Yes Joshua they are fine.”

Joshua asked Wes, “What was that about? Why did they blow the whistle?”

Natalie looked at Wes.

Wes said, “Because Shelia came to their campsite tonight and had a knife.”

Natalie could see the concern on Wes’ face.

Joshua said, “Why did Miss Shelia have a knife?”

The little girl said, “Joshua let Natalie finish telling Wes about me so he can give me pain medicine.”

Wes looked at the little girl.

He walked to the pain therapy and picked it up from the dresser.

He sat at the foot of the bed.

The little girl could not look at Wes.

She saw his look of disappointment.

She began to cry over again.

Joshua said, “Stop the theatrics.”

Wes looked at Joshua.

He knew the little girl really strained herself and probably pulled her skin when getting out the house.

Wes said, “Where were you going? And what you thought you were going to do? I told you there are armed soldiers here to protect he governor. Suppose they would have shot you. The pain of losing you would be great.”

Wes held his head down.

Natalie saw Wes heart break over the little girl’s disobedience.

Natalie turned her head straight forward.

Joshua said, “At least you would not have been dragged across the floor.”

Wes could hardly talk.

He said, “Here’s the herbal pain therapy.”

The little girl looked in Wes eye’s and cried even more.

She reached for Wes.

Wes reached and held her.

The little girl said, “I am sorry. JESUS said I was disobedient. I don’t want to be disobedient.”

Wes kissed her on her cheek and said, “I could have lost you.”

The little girl said, “I am sorry and about the soldier.”

Wes pushed her back and looked her in the face and said,”What?”

Natalie said, “She and Joshua sneaked in the living room.”

Joshua interrupted Natalie and said, “After you threw me in the floor.”

Natalie said, “She and Joshua sneaked in the living by her slickness and sat in the chairs to look out the windows. A soldier was on the porch and looked at them. They got out the chairs and came back into the bedroom.”

Wes said, “The soldier was right. Stay away from them. They are not here to play with you. Take this so you can go to sleep. I need for you to sleep.”

The little girl looked at Joshua as she was taking the herbs and said, “Do Joshua need to say he is sorry?”

Wes looked at the little girl.

Natalie looked at the little girl.

Joshua said to the little girl, “Who are you talking to? I didn’t do anything wrong to thrown on the floor.”

Natalie stared at Joshua.

Wes looked at Natalie.

Wes put the yawning little girl to bed.

The little girl laid on her back and she screamed.

Wes flipped her on her side.

He sat and patted her until the pain started easing up and she fell asleep.

Wes looked at the time.

He had about fifteen minutes before the smart governor and Thelma would need help.

Wes said, “Joshua you want to go first?”

Then he looked at Natalie and said, “Or do you want to go first.”

Joshua looked at Natalie and laid on his pallet.

The little girl was grunting.

Wes patted her on her legs.

Natalie said, “We, Joshua and I…”

Wes was impressed Natalie used correct grammar.

Natalie continued, “Ran out on the front porch. “

She pointed to the little girl and said, “She was already on the front porch. The soldiers yelled for us to get in the house.”

Wes was thinking that’s right, out of fire.

Natalie said, “Mr. Joshua tells the soldiers he ‘s going to check on his family. I had her in one hand and falling and I grabbed him, Joshua, by his collar and pulled him in the house and yes I threw him on the floor. Because I could not carry both of them.”

Natalie twitched.

Wes looked at her.

Joshua said, “See, I told you she threw me on the floor.”

Wes said, “I am truly sorry.”

Joshua said, “I told you.”

Natalie looked as though their precious Joshua was right and won a case against her.

Wes said, “Natalie.”

Joshua’s mouth dropped open.

He laid back down on his pallet.

Natalie was surprise.

Wes said, “I won’t offer any excuses for Joshua’s behavior.”

Joshua was still lying on his pallet and said, “My behavior. That’s the way I act right?”

Wes said. “Yes Joshua. Behavior is the way you act. I don’t like how you acted tonight with Natalie. The soldiers told you to come in the house. They can shoot you on sight for being disobedient. We know you have been through a lot over the past five months. No child should have been in your position. I apologize for that. But Natalie was trying to help you and keep you safe. There are times we, people are in not normal situations and we make the best decision for what is needed. Natalie made the best decision which was to get you out of the soldiers’ line of fire. Natalie was looking out for you.”

Natalie had her head down.

Joshua was on his knees listening to Wes.

The little girl said, “Apologize Joshua.”

Joshua said, “You suppose to be asleep. You go to sleep.”

The little girl grunted.

Wes knew she was hurting rather badly.

He pulled the cover up on her.

He eased a pillow behind her back because she was sleeping on her right side.

He put the pillow behind her in case she fell on her back.

Wes sat in the chair and looked at Natalie.

He did not like the way Natalie looked over the past week.

Wes said, “Natalie I am going to say this in front of Joshua.”

Joshua said, “What?”

Wes looked at Joshua.

He looked at Natalie and said, “Natalie, I really appreciate your help. Not only with her…”

Nodding at the little girl,”But all you have done around here. You keep me on my toes. You bring laughter here when the burdens are heavy.”

Natalie began to cry.

Wes said, “Natalie, if I had money I would give you a very large sum, because you are worth every penney. You have grown so much and you have allowed me to apologize to you for the bad way I have treated you. I am saying it again I apologize to you for every mean thing I said and done against you.”

Wes looked at Joshua who popped up on his knees and looked at Natalie.

He said, “Natalie God has to work on Joshua. He is a child that has lived an adult life over the past five months.”

Joshua shook his head for yes and said, “That’s right. I don’t like it at all.

Joshua said, “Natalie I don’t know about apologizing for you throwing me on the floor. I saw how you throw Dr. Obersteen. You could handle us two children. I ask you to forgive me for saying I don’t want to be your friend anymore.”

Wes looked at Joshua.

Natalie said, “Fine Joshua.”

Joshua said, “Are we friends?”

Natalie said, “Yes.”

One thing Natalie learned from watching Wes was opened your mouth and say what you mean.

Natalie stood and walked outside.

The two soldiers down by Wes tent looked at her.

She went around the back by the bath shed and began to throw up.

The soldier looked at the other one and said, “Maybe not.”

Wes stood and put the cover over Joshua and pat him on his head.

Joshua said, “No kiss. You kissed her. Is this the way it will be when your kids come along? You gonna push me out the way.”

Wes bent down and kissed Joshua on his head.

Joshua said, “I don’t know if I accept that kiss or not.”

Wes shook his head.

He walked out the bedroom into the living room.

He was buttoning his coat when Natalie returned to the house.

Wes said, “Natalie. William?”

Natalie was so shocked and stood stunned.

Wes got his quilt.

He looked at Natalie and said, “Natalie you are so thin. But we will talk later. Get some sleep.”

Natalie stood at the front door.

Wes walked to her and passed by her.

He could smell the vomit and said, “Rinse your mouth out.”

Natalie said, “Nothing.

Wes opened the front door and was met by the soldiers looking at the cute house and the first lady hollering.

Wes turned and ran back in the house and got the paste.

Natalie was still standing by the door.

Wes said, “Get some sleep. I know William has not been back. All of this will work out. At least you can teach your baby French.”

Natalie started crying.

Wes ran out the door.

He ran to the governor’s tent and attended to their medical needs all day.

He took naps every two hours.

He read his medical books and kept detail information in the charts of the governor and the first lady’s health and made charts to graph their healing progress.

Wes attended to the needs of the governor and the first lady.

He would bathe them each day and brushed their teeth.

Wes was about to leave and go and take care of the little girl.

The first lady whispered, “Wes.”

Wes had her wash basin in his hand.

He looked and though, “What could she want?”

He leaned over her and she whispered a name.

Wes looked at her.

He patted her shoulder and said, “Rest.”

Wes would not say sleep to them anymore since the governor said, they don’t sleep.

West went to the bath shed and disposed of their wash water. He returned the water basins inside the governor’s tent.

He stood and looked at the two resting patients.

He was happy they were far from the point of death. But they were not as close to the healing mark he wanted them.

He knew with the medicines which were chemicals they could produced some kind of healing effect, but he did not trust man made medicine anymore.

He knew he could trust the healing God put into the leaves, but it will take longer.

Wes thought maybe their children can visit next Sunday.

Joshua needs someone to play with.

He thought, “What is Mattie ever going to say to Joshua about Bill? This is a mess”

Wes gathered all the medical items that were to burned.

He went to the barrel he used to burn the bandages and IVs and medicine and soiled linen. He burned all the items.

He went to the cute house.

Wes walked in the house and it was still.

He saw Natalie lying on her stomach on the sofa.

Wes saw her glass of water.

He said, “Now I have two of the stomach sleepers.”

He walked in the bedroom.

Joshua was sleep.

The little girl was crying.

Wes got her bath water and washcloths and towels and bathed her, while Joshua was sleep.

Wes went to her drawer and got a new pink nightgown.

The little girl whispered, “Blue.”

Wes looked at her and said, “Blue?”

The little girl shook her head.

Wes asked her the question to see if she would give him a verbal response, and he could gauge her pain.

Wes washed her and put her a new nightgown on and socks.

He said, “Baby I have to give you physical therapy today. It will hurt. Do you want a washcloth?”

She nodded for yes.

Wes got a washcloth and rolled and let her bite down on it.

He cut the physical therapy short, because she was in tremendous pain.

He held her and gave her two spoonfuls of apple sauce.

She placed her head on Wes’ chest and cried.

Wes was beginning to hate himself for not being able to do more for her and to make her whole.

JESUS was sitting and watching Wes and his care for the little girl.

JESUS wrote on paper how to do surgery to help the tissue grow back on the human body.

JESUS called an angel and told the angel to stay with Wes and help him learn the process of skin grafting and complete the process on every patient.

The angel bowed and walked into the yard.

The strange man said, “Amen. Amen.”

The new commander said, “Amen. Amen.”

The attendant said, “Amen. Amen.”

Natalie jumped up and ran to the bath shed in her night gown and no socks and shoes.

The little girl was in so much pain.

Wes could only hold her.

He asked if she wanted to sit on the porch for thirty minutes.

The little girl shook her head for no.

Joshua woke.

Wes said, “Joshua go and wash and get clean clothes and put on.”

Joshua looked at his friend and stood and walked over to her.

Joshua touched her on her shoulder and said, “You hurt?”

The little girl shook her head for yes.

She pointed to the bed.

Wes said, “You want to get in the bed?”

She shook her head.

Natalie walked back in the house and picked up her glass and rinsed her mouth.

She went back out to the bath shed.

She lit the fire under the black pot.

Natalie lit the fires around the perimeter of the house.

She covered her puke.

Natalie stood in the yard.

There was a little water left in the black pot.

She made oatmeal.

She carried the pot of oatmeal to the cute house, but left the bowls and spoons.

She just stood and stared in space.

The soldiers looked at her.

Wes put the little girl to bed.

He got Joshua clothes together.

Wes looked and saw Natalie’s quilt and shoes.

He picked up her quilt and walked out the house looking for her.

Wes saw Natalie standing in the yard.

He thought,”God please don’t let her lose her mind.”

The soldiers were looking at Wes because the first lady had started hollering.

Wes ran off the porch and wrapped Natalie up.

He looked at one of the soldiers and said, “Can you take her into the house?”

The soldier said, “I can’t.”

Bruce rode into the yard in time to hear his soldier’s reply to Wes.

Wes thought, “Ok. I know what to do about that.”

He slowly walked Natalie into the house and sat her down.

Joshua was about to go outside to the bath shed.

Wes said, “Joshua wait I need to clean the bath shed.”

Joshua looked at Wes.

He went into the living room and sat in a chair at the window.

Wes put some crackers and cheese down for them.

Joshua looked at the food.

He said to Wes, “I rather have oatmeal.”

Wes was thinking Natalie need some starch.

Wes looked around and said, “The dishes are out at the black pot.”

Joshua jumped up and ran to the black pot in his underwear.

Bruce was on his horse in the yard, he watched Joshua.

Joshua ran back to the cute house with bowls and spoons and closed the door.

Joshua put down the bowls and spoons and opened the living room door and waved at Bruce.

Brue smiled and nodded his head.

Wes walked out the house wrapped in his quilt.

He saw Bruce.

He walked over to him and said, “Good afternoon Bruce.”

Bruce said, “Good afternoon.”

Wes whispered and said, “The first lady whispered a name today.”

Bruce got off his horse and followed Wes to the governor’s tent.

One of his soldiers in the yard held Bruce’s horse.

The other soldier said, “Why didn’t just walked the lady to the door and opened the door and push her inside. We have to hear a few more minutes of this torture.”

Wes walked in the tent and washed his hands.

Bruce stood at the tent door.

Wes attended to Thelma first so Bruce could leave.

Wes said, “Thelma the captain is here who fought for you and saved your lives.”

Thelma whispered, “Am I decent.”

Wes pulled the sheet up to her neck.

He laughed.

He said, “Now you are.”

Wes looked at Bruce and said, “One minute.”

Bruce did not want to stay for a minute, with all of that human suffering.

Bruce walked to the first lady’s bed and gave his name.

Thelma whispered a name.

Bruce looked at her and said, Yes ma am.”

He turned and walked out the door.

Wes looked at the captain as he left.

Wes went to the governor and attended to his medical needs.