Chester arrived at the troop around six thirty am.

The troop was making their way to the area to start their two hour physical strength training.

Chester dismounted his horse and watched the soldiers walked to the area.

He was wondering where the other soldiers were and he realized he sent thirty to guard the wounded assassins.

He saw Benson walking to the chow wagon for breakfast.

Chester yelled, “Soldier Benson come to the office.”

The soldiers turned and looked at Benson.

Benson had his plate in his hand.

He just stood.

The soldiers said, “Move.”

Benson looked at the bacon.

The cooks said, “Look that is Chester Brown he is nearly a legion and he does not like any slackers. You better move boy.”

Benson reluctantly put his plate down and ran behind Chester.

The cooks shook their heads.

One cook said, “You’ll better learn he does not play. We heard he shoot five assassins in the dark and was injured and you see him looking like nothing is wrong.”

The second in command said, “What do you know about those five assassins”

A cook said, “Nothing. But we hope this is the end of this mess.”

The other cook said, “That was a discipline yell.”

The soldiers laughed.

Chester entered the tent.

The office soldiers saluted.

Chester saluted and went to his desk and struggled to pull off his coat.

He pulled off his coat and put his bag on the desk.

He had Soldier Benson’s disciplinary papers on his desk.

Chester pulled his folder and reviewed the papers.

Soldier entered the tent out of breath.

The office soldiers were trying to tell Benson to salute.

Benson had no concept of protocol.

Chester watched him and the office soldiers.

Chester said, “Benson.”

Bright was beginning to listen to Chester’s tone. He knew it was not a good tone Chester was using with Benson.

Chester sat and looked at Benson.

The second in command walked in and saluted.

He looked at Benson and he thought, “Why is he still in here?”

Benson looked at the second in command and said, “Have they finished breakfast?”

Ferguson stared at Benson and then he looked at Chester.

Chester told Bright give me the re-assignment form.

Bright went into the form drawer and could not locate the form.

Chester watched Bright.

Chester was reviewing Benson’s military folder.

The office was quiet.

Bright finally found the form and hurried the form to Chester.

He saw the bloodied shirt and the bandages.

Chester said, “Folder,” he stared at Bright.

Bright looked at the office employees and closed his eyes.

He picked up the folder and walked back to Chester and handed him the folder.

The telegram machine started sending telegrams from the national office.

Soldier Woodsen monitored the telegram machine.

Chester wrote an order for Benson to be re-assigned to the cook staff.

Chester said, “Benson step to my desk.”

Benson looked at Chester all the office soldiers stopped what they were doing.

Chester held a folder up in the air and dropped it on his desk.

Benson looked at the folder

Chester said, “That’s your military folder. You have been in the military for three years. You have made no efforts to grow. You have made no efforts to become a better soldier nor a better human better. You spoke out of turn and what you said was ridiculous. You had no recognition that your heads were near you and heard what you said. You are slow to move when you are directed. You respond very slow to commands. You refuse to follow protocol. You walked in here and just stood. You did salute and you act like this is a game. Everyone life depends on each of our individual actions. While I am talking you are trying to talk. You don’t even know to shut up. You show a lack of respect for your fellow soldiers and even more for yourself. There is nothing in your folder for advancement. They used you and passed you on to the next troop. I do not want you to have a gun nor rifle. I do not trust you. Turn your weapons to the second in command Soldier Ferguson.”

Chester stood up and looked in Benson’s eyes.

He said, “Ferguson walk with Benson and get his weapons and returned them the weapons here and count them in government inventory.”

Chester pointed at Benson and said,” My gut is to kick you out the military. I will find a department you can work until you can develop a trade or get a job outside the military. But until I get you a transfer you help the cooks with the meals and you join group one in the morning and follow the requirements for that group. Excluding the time you are helping with the meals. Do you have any questions?”

Benson said, ”He’s gonna take my gun?”

Chester said, “Yes.”

Chester said, “Next question.”
Benson said, “What I’ supposed to do without my gun?”

Chester said, “You run like you did last night when I was ambushed.”

Benson said, “You saw me?”

Chester said, “Yes I saw you run.”

Chester sat at his desk.

He took Benson’s folder and put the order in it to re-assign him to the cooks.

Benson was still standing at Chester’s desk.

Ferguson walked to Benson and said, “Let’s go.”

Benson said, “Where?”

All the office staff looked at Benson.

Ferguson was holding Benson by his upper arm and he looked back at Chester.

Chester handed the folder to Bright.

He said, “Send that order by telegram to headquarters. Ask them what city Benson’s family lives?”

Chester said, “Woodsen, where are the telegrams?”

Woodsen jumped up and handed Chester the folders with the telegrams.

Chester sat on his desk and turned and walked to his chair.

The soldiers were looking at Chester because he was bleeding through his shirt.

Ferguson walked back in the tent with Benson’s gun and rifle.

Chester said, “Ferguson, Woodsen, Bright, Garrison and Glover. You know now that Benson is slow. But he is a human being. I needed to see where he was mentally. You will treat him with respect. By you treating him with respect, he will not be a burden on you but a co-laborer. Do you understand Ferguson?”

Ferguson sighed and said, “Yes…”

Everyone looked at Ferguson and he jumped and said, “Yes sir.”

Chester said, “I was about to write a transfer order for you. There is no excuse for you. Do you understand?”

Glover said, “Sir?”

Chester looked at him and said. “Glover what is question or concern?”

Glover said, “How long are we going to be in this freezing hell? And second, What are you going to do with those five assassins?”

Chester said, “I believe the military is going to establish a base here.”

Glover said, “It’s cold as hell here Sir. Excuse me.”

Chester said, “I have requested housing. The contractors will not be here until the spring. The governor had that plan in the works. We have a bout thirty days before the contractors get here. There is nothing on this side of the state. It’s like it is a lost place. I do not know why we can send telegrams and but none can be sent a mile away. I am going to see the five assassins in a few minutes. They should not have any life threatening wounds. I need them alive.”

Chester said, “Ferguson I need twenty soldiers armed to escort the prisoners to the capitol. I need them to rotate and only give the horses two hours rest each day. I need for them to reach the capitol in two days instead of four.”

Ferguson said, “Yes sir.”

Chester said, “Make sure they pack their food and water and rest it is a hard ride to get to the capitol. And give them a first aid kit.”

Bright pointed at Chester‘s arm.

Chester looked at his bloody arm and continued to his desk.

Chester sat and went through each telegram and wrote his response and orders.

He hand the responses and orders to Garrison.

Chester sat at his desk and re-loaded both of his guns.

He pointed at his desk and said that is the order for the twenty soldiers to escort the prisoners to the capitol. I am giving them two days to rest and three days to get back to the troop…”

The office soldiers looked at one another.

Chester said,” Get a second wagon because that top folder is a supply list. Have them to pick up the supplies from headquarters.”

Chester stop and was thinking.

Everyone in the office was quiet.

Chester said, “Put Benson down and let him ride in the second supply wagon. And tell the soldiers to be accountable for him.”

Bright said, “Yes sir.”

Chester said, “Like you are going.”

Chester said, “Where are the prisoners?”

Glover picked up his hat and said, “I’ll show you sir.”

Chester said, “I know this campsite. Where?”

Glover being anger and smart said, “About a third of a mile on the left and the third tent with thirty guards around it.”

Everyone looked at him and dropped their heads.

Chester looked at Glover and walked out the tent.

Glover went to the tent door and peeped out.

Then he ran to Chester’s desk and wrote his name down.

Garrison watched Glover and he jumped up and ran and got the telegram folders and put his name down as a volunteer.

Bright said, “You’ll know he is going to go over that list with a fine tooth comb. He is going to know who is to be where doing what.”

Garrison, “You just mad that he caught you straight up.”

Glover said, “Like you’re slick.”

Woodsen laughed.

Woodsen said, “I tell you what. I see he is concern about slow Joe. I gonna be slow Joe’s best friend, if I can get a chance to leave.”

Bright stood still.

Garrison did not say anything.

Glover turned all the way around in his file cabinet.

Woodsen was in a file cabinet when he realized a figure was standing in the door.

Chester walked to his desk and put on his coat and walked out.

Woodsen put his head in the file cabinet and tried to close it in the file cabinet.

Garrison turned around to the telegram machine and opened the supply list folder.

He said, “He put a lot of stuff on these lists.”

Glover said,”How much headquarters will send is another story.”

Ferguson walked back to the office thirty minutes later.

Bright said, “Chester said to put Benson’s name on the volunteer list.”

Garrison said, “I wrote his name down.”

Ferguson said, “Let me see the order.”

Garrison looked at the other soldiers and said, “Why?”

Ferguson said, “I am not a traitor. I watch him and I now he has put something else in that order.”

Garrison said, “I’m not giving it to you. I don’t know how five assassins laid in the open and no one saw them, including myself.”

 Glover said, “How did they know that cap was gone and the way he was coming back and when he was coming back.”

Ferguson, Garrison, Glover, and Bright said, “Benson.”

Woodsen lifted his head out the file cabinet and said, “Who else in trouble?”

Garrison said, “They were in the civilian part of the new settlement, so they did not have on uniforms.”

Ferguson said, “So they did not have on uniforms, how did we miss them.”

Glover said, “We better get that second wagon and put supplies in it for the trip.”

No body move.

Glover said, “Ok. You’ll know he liked to see you busy.”

Garrison said, “I can’t because I have to man the telegram man.”

Bright got his hat and said, “I’m going to get Benson ready to move.”

Ferguson looked at Woodsen and said, “What’s wrong with you?”

Woodsen, “He caught me talking about slow Joe.”

Chester walked to the tent and he had a folder in his hand.

He stood and looked at the thirty soldiers.

He pointed to three soldiers and called them by name.

Chester said, Gibson, Harrison and G. Smith.

The soldiers were impressed.

The soldiers saw the bullet hole in Chester’s coat and the blood.

They did not know how badly he was injured when he left that night.

Chester said, “Your guns held in attack mode.

Chester said, “I need five witnesses. Blaylock, Murphy, Gunnison, Kennedy and Michaels.”

Chester nodded at the three guards.

They moved into the tent.

The wounded assassins looked to see who was coming to interrogate them.

Chester walked in with his eyes dead on the prisoners.

Followed by the five witnesses.

Chester was very angry.

He looked at the men he recruited.

He said, “I am charging each of you soldiers with the attempted assassination of the governor and the first lady and your attempt on my life.”

One of the prisoner looked at Chester’s coat.

Chester saw his eyes and lifted his arm up and said, “A miss like your mission. You will be transported to the capitol and stand trial immediately and be executed the same week.”

One of the prisoner said, “I’ll be dead from my wound.”

Chester said, “Wishful thinking. I knew exactly where to shoot you so you would have pain but no endangerment. I want to make sure you stand trial and embarrass your family and friends.”

Chester said, “Search them, Blaylock, Murphy and Michaels.”

Chester stood in power and authority he said, “That prisoner is Hunnicutt. A solider of two years recruited by me. Put his items in this envelop. That prisoner is Wilkinson a two year soldier.”

Chester handed the envelopes to Gunnison and Kennedy.

Chester said, “Prisoner Robinson a three year soldier. The next is alters a three year soldier. The last prisoner is Matteson a two year soldier.”

Chester heard the wagons.

He stood and looked at the soldiers in their eyes.

He had a fierce look of wrath.

The eight soldiers in the tent was scared.

The prisoner Hunnicutt said, “You think you know everything. Do you know why we wanted to kill you?”

Chester stared at him and said, “You can tell the devil why you lost and failed your assignment.”

Robinson said, “Damn you Chester. They are coming for the little girl.”

Chester knew immediately who he was talking about.

Chester was so angry and said, “You are traitors to your fellow soldiers.”

Robinson said, “We have allegiance to Donovan only.”

Walters said, “You two shut up.”

Matteson said, “Look at him. He has put everything together. If he had not he would be angry.”

Chester stood with full authority over the prisoners.

Wilkinson said, “I want to live. What do you need to know?”

Chester said, “Absolutely nothing.”

Wilkinson held his head down.

Chester said, “Prisoners and traitors you have four days to live and then to hell.”

Robinson said, “You will know hell when they come for the little girl.”

Chester said, “Your chariot to hell awaits.”

The guards lifted them up and walked them to the wagons and tied and chain them to the wagon and gave them a blanket and water.

Bright gave Chester the list.

Chester said, “You did not put your name on the list?”

Bright looed at Chester as he signed off on Garrison and Glover going.

Chester looked at Benson, who was sitting up front with Garrison.

Bright was mad and he rolled his eyes at Garrison.

Glover was from the city next to the capitol.

Glover was going home and leave and be back two and a half days.

He had a girlfriend at home who was seeing two more men.

His family told him to leave her alone.

Glover would send her money out every pay.

Glover sent a telegram for his mother to bake him her macaroni and cheese casserole.

Chester watched the twenty armed soldiers.

Chester had a weird feeling coming over him about Glover.

Chester yelled before they pulled out and said, “Glover stay.”

Glover tried to pretend he did not hear Chester all the soldiers looked at Glover.

Glover closed his eyes.

He was in rage mode.

He rode away to the troop.

Chester watched Glover and said, “Bright can you get your horse and catch up with them?”

Bright jumped and saluted and said, “Yes sir.”

He ran back to his tent and packed quickly.

Chester yelled, “Go!!!”

The prisoners saw Chester from the back opening of the wagon.

Chester stared at them until they were out of sight.

Chester was reviewing the list of volunteers.

Bright ran and mounted his horse.

Bright flew past Chester.

 Gunnison and Kennedy were standing behind Chester watching as the twenty and the two wagons thundered out the camp.

The soldiers already had a plan.

They were paid.

They discussed among themselves to get to the capitol as soon as possible and have a long week-end.

Chester turned and saw Gunnison and Kennedy.

He said, “Follow me.”

They went into the tent and sat and went through the envelopes and the contents matched the others. A key, a map and the pentagram on their bodies.

Chester said, “Maybe the pentagram is real, since he knew of the little girl. I need to talk to Clara and bring them here to talk to the little girl.”

Her name came into his mind he said, “Angelica.”

JESUS said, “Yes.”

Chester had the two soldiers to write a statement and signed the items in the case that were in the envelopes.

Chester sat and begin to think.

The pain in his arm was burning.

He had not eaten for a few days he thought, “Not fasting like Marc and Joseph.”

Chester was getting weak.

He felt like someone said to him, “Rest.”

He rolled out his mat.

He had not put up a tent therefore he slept in the office.

Glover walked in the office two hours later.

Chester, Gunnison and Kennedy had completed filing the reports.

Chester changed the bloody bandages.

Chester had some jerky in his bag and he drank some water.

He was about to lie down behind his desk.

He got up and sent a number of telegrams to the headquarters.

Chester pulled off his boots and put them behind his desk.

He checked his guns and laid down on his back.

He thought, “They would have shot my firing arm.”

Chester went to sleep hoping the headquarters would send the gas heaters for the troop.

He was thinking,”What is this evil and against this child.”

A voice said, “Angelica.”

Chester fell asleep saying, “Angelica.”

Ferguson and Woodsen peeped over at Chester and tipped out the office.

Glover was so mad he sat in the office for hours.

He heard his rotation getting started on the physical strength training.

He stood and walked out the office.

He left no lamps on.

Chester had his gun pointed at him.

Chester place the gun across his chest and went to sleep.

In his sleep he could hear the telegram machine.

He knew it had to be headquarters and he knew Skip had one placed in his house for extremely important messages.

Benson went and laid in the back of the wagon and went to sleep.

Garrison was so excited about leaving he did not realize he had to drive wagon straight.

He looked back in the wagon at Benson and said, “Whoa. I did not think this through.

Around midnight they were entering the next city to the evil town. They rested for two hours.

Garrison had to check the horses.

He was envious of Benson, who was solidly asleep in the back of the wagon.

Garrison laid across the seat and slept about an hour.

The troop entered the capitol in two days.

The troop pulled into headquarters.

Garrison fell out the wagon on the ground.

Bright was falling off his horse.

Skip was standing in the window watching them along with the rest of the commanders.

Arnold said, “Soft.”

They saw Benson pop his head out the wagon.

Skip said, “Benson.”

He knew Benson, because Chester sent a report and orders for him to be left at the headquarters.

Skip said, “Harold do we have the gas heaters for them?”

Harold said, “We got twelve.”

Harold was looking at the soldiers.

Arnold said, Bruce allowed some of the soldiers stay to have a job. I looked over his records. He would never send them into conflict but stay and guard the post. But I just had to get rid of them. They just stood there and let that Newsom’ family enter the governor’s tent and sexual and physically attack the governor and the first lady and Newsom. I had to let them go and when I yelled at them as I am jumping off the building they just looked at me and said, “Whoa.”

Harold said, “Who said ‘whoa?”

Arnold looked at Harold and said, “What’s wrong with you Harold?” The six soldiers I had to run away and told the other soldiers to get them out the camp because I did not want to see them when I got back to the camp.”

Wallace said, “My God.”

Arnold said, “The mammie was so though I had to do hand to hand combat with her.”

All the commanders turned and looked at Arnold.

Skip said, “Arnold you did not say but did they touch Bruce?”

Arnold turned and looked at Skip and said, “I did not want to tell you. “

Skip braced himself.

Arnold said, “The mammie and her brother pulled the sheet off of Bruce and she sexually assaulted him. The brother was grinning and had his tongue licking.”

Skip looked.

The commanders watched Skip.

Skip said, “When are they scheduled for trial?”

Wallace looked over his folders and said, “Tomorrow at nine am.”

Harold looked at Skip, “Skip just leave your gun.”

Skip looked at Harold and said, “You don’t tell me what to do.”

Harold turned his head.

Arnold said, “Emma showed up.”

Skip thought and said, “Emma?”

Arnold said, “She claimed because Bill’s body was not buried but laying on the ground. Chester left to go and confirmed it apparently he was laying for nearly two weeks decaying on the top of the ground and he was right at the grave.” Commander Arnold was pointing infactly at the ground.

Arnold said, “Betsy told her the mammie touched Bruce’s weewee.”

Skip smirked.

Arnold said, “I have never seen two women fight like that. My daughters don’t fight like that. They fought out the governor’s tent and that Emma did a back flip and picked up a shovel and beat that old whore over and over again with the shovel.”

The soldiers in the office stopped working and watched while Arnold was demonstrating how Emma was beating Newsom mother and how Newsom mother was taking the licks.

Commander Bentley said, “Damn.”

Skip said, “Where was Betsy?”

Arnold said, Dr. Obersteen kept her away from the fighting because he was working on Newsom. The children ran and tried to put their hands in Newsom’s wounds. Chester slammed both of the boys on the floor and he tried to get to the governor. You know what those bastards did?”

Commander Bentley was puzzled and said, “What?”

The soldiers in the office had turned to look at Commander Arnold who was very demonstrative.

Arnold said,”They shook themselves and jumped off the floor and charged back to Newsom.”

Chester had to beat them down and another soldier that was helping out in the tent was coming back from getting some water and he ran into the tent and grabbed them.”

Commander Bentley who was the preacher with his own church said, “Arnold those were demons.”

Arnold said, “Newsom came to and said ‘kill them’”.

Commander Porter said, “You should have.”

Skip looked for a minute and said, “You just can’t kill people, Porter.”

Commander Porter said, “Look at all this hell we are in. We are disrespected and have no honor anymore because of all these bastards.”

The office soldiers said amongst themselves, “Uh huh.”

The commanders turned and looked at the soldiers.

The five soldiers were so embarrassed.

The soldiers quietly turned back to their duties.

Skip was thinking and said, “Harold, that’s sufficient, each tent one heater and the office two heaters.”

Skip said, “Wallace direct them to the dorm.”

Commander Bentley said, “Excuse me, Arnold how did the women stop fighting?”

Commander Wallace looked in space and said, “I thought about that.”

Commander Whatley said, “I just assumed Arnold you stopped them.”

Commander Arnold said, “No. I learned from my daughters to let them wear themselves out.”

The commanders laughed.

Commander Arnold said, “Chester and I had drawn our guns. But I did not want to shot Emma, Skip’s future daughter-in-law.”

The commanders laughed and said, “Oh No.”

The soldiers in the office turned to look at Skip.

Skip said, “We have to wait and prayed about that.”

Commander Whatley said, “What to pray about? I wished my sister knew how to fight. She would be alive today with her six children.”

Harold rubbed Whatley’s shoulder.

Skip looked at Whatley.

Arnold looked at Whatley and said,”I told Chester to go and stop them from fighting. And guess what he did?”

The commanders in oneness said, “What?”

Arnold said, “That little girl that lives in the house asked Chester “What you doing?” Like she was somebody momma.”

The commanders hollered.

Skip laughed.

Arnold said, “You know he actually stopped and talked to her and that boy. The boy said, “Where are you going? I think he said, That’s my momma.”

Skip grinned and said,”I swear Andrew and Bruce.”

Andrew stared at his daddy.

Commander Greene said, “I think all of this is horrible.”

Arnold said, “It is so stupid I did not want to write it all down in my report I gave to Skip this morning. Chester just let the women continue to fight until he decided------he wanted to stop them.”

Commander Greene just shook his head and said, “That’s Skip’s chosen boy.”

Arnold said, “Weird family.”

Skip looked at Arnold.

Harold laughed.

Commander Wallace, “She did not like for nobody to touch her stuff.”

Arnold kept his head turned, “I don’t think my five daughters and wife could have beat Newsom’s mammie.”

Harold laughed.

Skip looked at the snickering commanders and said, “We still got a lot of work to do to clear our name, establish trust and respect again. The thirteen commanders have been tried, executed and buried. All of their known relatives have been dismissed from the military. Now the trial of these five, Shelia and Dexter and the last one that was caught by Terry. We need to do something for all of these men.”

The commanders said, “Right.”

Commander Greene said, “For doing their jobs?”

The office soldiers rolled their eyes at Commander Greene, because he was unbelievably hard on everybody but Skip. Because Skip is a legend. It was an honor for the soldiers to be selected to work in the office with Skip. They saw Skip as very strict. He was hard on Commander Andrew as anybody else. He did not like slackers, because they would be a loose chain in the link that could get soldiers killed. He told Bruce to dismiss those six soldiers and put Benson on cook status. What decision he made he stuck by it and took the consequences and tried to correct it. He never condemned a soldier for making the not best decision. He scolded them and made them go out and face their problems. They thought he favored Bruce, but that day they saw he had chosen Chester to succeed him. Skip chose Chester because he would make a decision based on his gut and took the discipline for that decision.

Skip shook Commander Greene’s shoulder.

Commander Randall said, “Sometimes a soldier needs to know they did something right.”

Andrew sat and was quiet.

Commander Montgomery he was looking at all the pentagrams and hotel room keys and said, “What is this mess?”

Skip said, “I don’t know. We are working on all of this.”

The telegram machine started printing.

Skip beat the office soldiers to the telegram machine. He pulled the telegram off the machine and walked back in his office and closed the door.

He read over the telegram several times.

The commanders knew it was important.

The telegram was from Tony and the three riders.

He said, “Commanders, the two addresses and the beneficiaries were Donovan.”

Harold said, “Sr. or Jr.?”

Skip said, “We are going on both.”

They saw a carrier enter the building.

The carrier walked upstairs and to Skip’s office.

The commanders turned and looked at the messenger.

The messenger became nervous and swallowed hard.

He handed the soldier at the desk the letter and left.

The soldier stood up and carried the letter to Skip.

Skip took the letter and opened it.

Skip said, “This some mess. Donovan Jr. want to cut a deal.”

Arnold snickered and shook his head for no.

Harold said, “Greene what you think about that?”

Commander Greene said, “No deal.”

Skip said,”He wants to meet tomorrow at nine am.”

Andrew said, “I’ll go and meet him.”

Skip turned his back to Andrew.

The office soldiers snickered.

Commander Greene said, “I’ll go.”

Harold said, “No.”

Arnold said, “No.”

Skip said, “What are you talking about? I am the head and I will decide who will go where.”

Commander Montgomery said, “I am meeting with the governor’s security people at six am and I don’t know how long that will take.”

Commander Randall said, “I will be meeting with the prosecutors and judges about Shelia and Dexter beginning at seven am. I don’t think Commander Greene should go, because we won’t get anywhere.”

Commander Greene jumped up and said, “You get that case closed.”

Commander Arnold said, “Greene why are you so upset, because Jr. got to your daughter.”

Skip cut his eyes at Arnold.

Arnold did not care because he would be retired in thirty days he was no longer quiet.

Andrew looked because he thought he was her first.

Skip saw the way Andrew was looking and shook his head.

Skip said, “I have two years left and all of you better be retired because if Chester becomes the head he will fire all of you.”

Commander Whatley said, “Come on Chester.”

Skip said, “Commanders Arnold, Harold and Bentley meet with Donavan Wilson Jr. at this location and take six armed soldiers with you.”

Harold said, “like I am not going to be armed.”

Skip looked at Harold and said, “The purpose of the meeting with Jr. is to see what information he has to offer and if it is viable and we can get a conviction. Not the purpose to shot and kill.”

Harold turned his head.

Skip very firmly said, “Harold understand.”

Skip did not aske Harold but made a statement.

Harold looked at Skip and said, “Yes sir.”

Harold was still mad about the soldiers that came to his house.

Skip said, “Commanders Adams, Johnson and Smythe go to the trials of the soldier that was at Commander Harold’s house and the last soldier they caught at the governor’s tent.”

Skip said, “Commanders O’Hara, Vincent, Bronson and Gaston you are assigned to these five assassins and see about their wounds, isolation and interrogation and set their trial for Monday and hopefully the judges set their execution for the next day.”

Skip said, Commander Wallace see to the twenty soldiers and get all their supplies and have the wagons loaded for them. This their supply list.”

Commander Wallace looked over the list and said, “Some of this we don’t have.”
skip looked at him.

Commander Wallace swallowed and said, “I’ll get all items on this list.”

Arnold and Andrew exhaled.

Skip said, “Commanders Porter and Bentley investigate where all these saddles came from and how they were paid and transported. You may have to leave and go under cover.”

Andrew was counting who was left just him and Commander Greene.

Andrew rolled his eyes at his daddy and waited for his assignment.

Harold said, “Sir, may I ask a question?”

Andrew stared at his uncle, he was angry because he wanted to hear his assignment so he could cuss.

Skip said, “Commander Harold.”

Harold said, “What are they charging the murder with that came to my house and why did it take this long for him to go to trial?”

Skip took a deep breath.

Andrew did not hear an immediate response from Skip, so he turned his head to see his father’s face.

Skip said, “The head of the governor’s security left him in the locked basement without food and water and the room he left him in was infested with rats and flooded.”

Commander Greene said, “What was wrong with that?”

Skip turned and looked at Commander Greene and said, “You accompany me tomorrow to the Newsoms’ trial.”

Commander Greene looked like why me.

Commander Porter said, “I agree what was wrong with that?”

Commander Bronson said, “Are you’ll nuts?”

Skip said, “One of his security aide sent me a telegram. Harold I contacted the head of the governor’s security to release the prisoner to the prosecutors. The prisoner wanted to talk and get out of the death sentence. I don not know if the prosecutors talked with him or not. All of that is what Adams, Johnson and Smythe will tell us tomorrow evening when we all are gathered back here with our reports.”

Commander Harold said, “Tomorrow evening?”

Andrew cut off Harold and said, “Commander Skip, I did not hear my assignment. What is my assignment?”

Arnold raised his head up and looked at Andrew.

Commander Vincent said, “What the hell?”

Commander Gaston, “Are we ready for a war?”

Andrew looked at the commanders and sat back in his chair and turned his head to Skip.

Skip looked at Andrew and said, “You manned the office while we are gone.”

Harold looked at Andrew who was citing his lips.

Andrew said, “Cinderella again!”

Skip leaned across the table and said, “You are too, too hot headed Andrew.”

Andrew said, “And Chester is any better!”

The commanders started snickering.

Skip said, “Andrew which assignment would you want?”

Andrew looked at Skip because he knew it was a trick question.

Arnold said, “Chose wisely.”

He and Harold held their heads down and snickered.

Andrew said, “I know that is a trick question.”

Skip did not say a word.

Andrew said, “Look at who you are taking to the trial with you tomorrow. He is far worst than me.”

Commander Greene said, “Why did you threw me into this conversation? You spoiled ass brat.”

Skip did not move but stared at Andrew.

Andrew studied his father’s face.

Commander Johnson was the next youngest commander. He was ten years older than Andrew. He had a run in with Skip once in the past and he said he will never go down that road again. Skip showed him no mercy and pity. Johnson was saying to himself, “Daddy or no daddy be careful, But just in case let me get ready to move.”

Johnson eased his seat from Andrew.

Andrew looked at him.

Arnold and Harold saw Johnson ease his chair from Andrew.

Andrew looked at his father’s hands.

Arnold leaned over the table and watched Andrew.

Commander O’Hara watched Andrew, because son or not Skip will hang him.

Skip said, “Andrew.”

The soldiers in the office moved away from Skip’s door.

Andrew said, “Can I go to the Newsom’s trial and let Commander Greene controlled the headquarters.”

The rest of the commanders started sighing and some laughed.

They thought Commander Greene being in charge of the office was worst than Andrew and he was older.

Skip said, “I don’t believe you said that.”

Johnson was bent over in his chair ready to move quickly but he was watching Skip.

Arnold and Harold were watching Commander Johnson because they knew Skip nearly destroyed him for challenging him.

Skip said,”You want to go to a civilian trial with children and people who sexually assaulted your critical ill brother?“

Arnold said, “And the first lady.”

Commander Johnson who grew up in the neighborhood with Thelma said, “Thelma?”

Skip turned and looked at Arnold.

Harold looked at Arnold and said, “Do you have anything else before we get to this meeting with Jr. tomorrow?”

Arnold turned up his nose and shook his head for no.

Arnold sat back in his chair because he knew Skip was going to give him a disciplinary write up.

Andrew thought about his friend Thelma and his beloved brother Bruce.

He looked at his father and said, “I’ll stay in the headquarters and you can take Commander Greene.”

Skip said, “Fine. We will meet back here tomorrow evening and write and file our reports.”

Harold said, “Tomorrow evening?”

A telegram was coming through.

Skip walked to the machine and retrieved the telegram.

He read it, “Jake sent it and was asking him who trained the horses at the headquarters.”

Skip was in thought and said, “Commander Whatley be very careful doing your investigation of the horses and who trained the horses. Keep your back covered.”

Commander Whatley looked at the telegram in Skip’s hand and said, “Yes sir.”

Commander Percy Gaston said, “She’ll still be home.”

Harold jumped over the table at Commander Percy Gaston who Vivian had sex with in the reflecting pond.

Andrew grabbed Harold with one hand and knocked Percy back with his other hand.

The commanders jumped up and pushed back from the table, they all heard about what happened between drunk Percy and drunk Vivian.

Commander Johnson jumped up and made it to the door, where the office soldiers were watching the fight.

Skip said, “Andrew turn them a loose.”

Arnold looked at Skip and said, “Damn.”

Commander Johnson did not want to get caught in no scuffles he had been having sex with Commander Porter’s wife for years. He now know these commanders knew intimate details of each other lives and he eased out the door passed the office soldiers.

Commander Percy Gaston ran behind Skip.

Harold was angry.

Andrew caught Harold and held him.

Andrew whispered in Harold’s ears and said, “It’s out now. You have made up with Aunt Vivian let it go.”

Commander Percy Gaston said, “Harold I am so sorry. I know it is not excusable we were drunk.”

Commander Greene said, “If I say anything you all will think I am evil. So can we have dinner tomorrow?”

Skip looked at Commander Greene.

Arnold said, “I see I am not the only one that will be written up for today.”

Arnold sat back in his chair.

Commander Whatley said, “Come on Chester.”

Andrew looked at Whatley who was over the shooting training.

Wallace said, “Commander O’Hara can you get us a dinner for tomorrow?”

Commander O’Hara turned his head and looked at Skip.

Commander Whatley said, “Come on Chester.”

Skip said, “Commander Johnson is gone. I understand everyone is under stress and this disorder is from that stress. Yes, I am going to write up Wallace.”

Wallace who sat in his chair turned his head and looked at Skip and said, “Me. Why?”

Commander O’Hara frowned up and looked at Wallace and shook his head.

Commander Bronson put his hand over his eyes and sighed.

Skip said, “I know you are distraught over your only son. You are not thinking nor listening. That is why I assigned you to supplies, because you don’t have to think only count.”

Commander Wallace broke down and cried and he covered his face with his hand.

Commander Porter walked over to his old friend and patted his back.

Commander Wallace could barely talk and shook his head and waved his hand and said, “I’m a good man. I don’t know what happened. Where did I fail my son? Where did I fail my fellow man?”

Andrew and Harold looked at the pitiful Commander Wallace.

The office soldiers were watching.

Harold pulled away form Andrew and he looked at Commander Gaston and said, “It’s not worth this pain. It’s going to take time.”

Commander Percy Gaston said, “You are not going to kill me?”

Harold said,”No.”

Commander O’Hara sighed.

Skip said, “I know you are a good man Greg. I know you are a good father. I know you are struggling everyday to function and I know it is a struggle and you are afraid to mis-stepping and making a mistake. Because you don’t know if that’s the mistake you made with your son to turn him to a path of evil. I watched you over the years guiding your son. I know a good father tries their best to guide their children into life. I saw that in you. That’s why I released Gregory to you to bury your son with your family. You weren’t to come with us because I needed you here at headquarters, but you determined you wanted to go with us. I believe God meant for you to go and see your son and take him home to your wife and family. GOD did not want you to be worried for the rest of your life where your son is or if he is hurt or in need and if he will reach out to you and can you help him. I have covered for you Greg over the past month and corrected errors. I was in the hospital and I thought dying, I left very specific orders for you. I know you. I knew you were not thinking. I have sons and I know it is difficult to know what they are thinking and why they do things contrary to their up bringing.”

Wallace shook his head at Skip for yes.

Andrew looked at his father’s wisdom. These men were not only his commanders, but men with flaws and his friends. He got to know them over the years and worked passed his faults and their flaws to get to the guiding principle to be a benefit to mankind.

Commander Vincent said, “Thank YOU GOD.”

Skip said, “Commanders Arnold, Gaston and Harold I am going to write up disciplinary papers. Because you all were disrespectful.”

Commander Arnold said, “Can’t you just apply that understanding to me, I’m jumping off of buildings and freezing to death.”

Commanders O’Hara and Vincent stared at Arnold.

Skip said, “No.”

Skip said, “Commander O’Hara do you think you can pull together a dinner tomorrow evening?”

Commander O’Hara said, “I’ll ask my wife and daughters. If not we can order from the diner.”

The telegram machine started.

Skip went to the telegram machine and stood until he got all the pages.

He smiled.

Commander Arnold said, “I hope good news.”

Skip said, “Commanders we have a long day in front of us tomorrow to be old men.”

Commander Porter looked around and said, Talking about old men where is Commander Johnson?”

Commander Bronson looked up at Commander Porter.

Skip said, “He left. I will talk to him tomorrow.”

Arnold said, “Talk to him. Ok. He walked out an important meeting. He get’s a talk to.”

Harold laughed.

Skip said, “You are pushing it Arnold. If I suspend you for thirty days that extends your retirement for thirty days. Read your protocol.”

Arnold just stared at Skip.

Skip said, “Let’s help Wallace and get the six armed soldiers that will be going with Commanders Bentley, Harold and Arnold.”

Skip stared at Arnold.

Arnold raised his hand.

Everyone looked at him.

Skip was not playing with Arnold.

Skip said, “Yes Commander Arnold.”

Arnold said, “Where is Commander Malcolm?”

Skip said, “I don’t know. That is why Commander Vincent is here. He is taking Malcolm’s place.”

Arnold said, “You knew Malcolm was not going to be here.”

Skip said, “Yes, He disappeared while I was in the hospital. I told he was involved in this evil but I did not have evidence.”

Harold said, “So you gave him a chance to get away because you thought you were dying.”

Skip said, “Yes.”

Andrew looked at his father in shock.

Arnold said, “Can you write yourself one of those disciplinary papers?”

Skip said, “No.”

Harold said, “Why not?’ You are writing us up for arguing you let a treason person go.”

Skip, “I know Malcolm. I bluffed him. I believe he wants to save his face with us and he is going to give us something about this case. Lets wait.”

Arnold raised his hand and shook his head and said, “Excuse me Mr. Skip.”

Harold looked at Arnold.

Commander Smythe watched Arnold.

Arnold, “You let a person involved in probably the most treacherous case in our state’s history to go because you believe he may give us so information? But you Mr. Skip is going to write me up?”

Skip looked at Arnold and said, “Yes.”

Arnold raised his hand again and said, “Can I write you up?”

Skip said, “No.”

Arnold started coughing.

Skip rolled his eyes at Arnold.

Andrew watched his father’s facial expression. He looked at Arnold.

Commander Percy ran and poured Arnold some water and reached it to him.

Arnold drank the water.

He thought this pretty good.

Arnold said, “Excuse me Mr. Skip but I feel quite ill.”

Andrew saw Arnold was playing a sick game with Skip.

Arnold stood and said,”I don’t think I can make this meeting with the treason Jr. tomorrow. Get Commander Vincent to go. May I be excused?”

Skip said, “I won’t detain you but add another day to your retirement.”

Arnold said, “I have sick leave.”

Skip said, “You have not red your new protocol from the state. If you are within thirty days of retirement you cannot use your sick leave.”

Arnold looked at Skip.

Skip looked at an office soldier and said, “Bring Commander Arnold his copy of the new protocol he said did not need.”

The soldier picked up Commander Arnold’s copy and a clip bard and walked it to Arnold who was staring at Skip.

Skip was staring at Arnold.

The soldier handed Arnold his copy of the new protocol with his name on it and he reached him the clip board to sign for his receipt of the ne protocols.

Arnold signed for the receipt of the new protocols.

Skip said, “You are free to leave.”

Arnold looked at Skip and the rest of the commanders and said, “Good day.”

Commander Vincent said, “Whoa intense first meeting.”

Commander O’Hara stared at Commander Vincent ho was over the hand to hand combat training under Andrew.

Commander Porter said, “Skip what happens if you are wrong and Malcolm disappears forever.”

Skip said, “I really feel he will give us something that can fit in because he doesn’t want us, the commanders to hate him.”

Commander Bronson, “Normally that is suicide.”

Skip said, “I pray not.”

The telegram machine started.

They all looked at the telegram machine.

It was a very long telegram.

They waited.

Skip said, “Whatley what happened to Mr. Gray?”

Commander Whatley threw up his hand like nothing and said, “They gave him twenty five years. He can’t get out. He wants to talk.”

Skip said, “About what?”

Commander Whatley shrugged his shoulders.

Skip said, “Find out why. What he got to give us.”

Commander Whatley was more arrogant then Andrew and said, “I can tell you nothing.”

The telegram machine stopped.

The office soldier put it in a folder and walked it to Skip.

Skip took the folder and begin to read it.

He leaned back and peeped out the door and said, “Where is Arnold?”

Skip raised the telegram up and said, “Malcolm.”

The commanders said, “What?”

Skip said, “He wants to trade his information in for a general military dismissal.”

Skip said, “All of this stuff is in code. Greene and Montgomery you know what these codes say. Interpret it and gave me the standard version of what he is saying.”

Commander Greene reached for the folder and he and Montgomery sat at the conference and got a notebook and started interpreting the telegram from Malcolm.

Skip watched them and said, “Come and let’s help Wallace. Andrew you get the six armed soldiers.”

Andrew said, “Yes sir.”

Andrew passed by his father and stepped back to Skip.

Skip looked at Andrew because he did not know what Andrew wanted.

Skip waited.

Andrew said, “Sheryl is not getting the house.”

Harold looked.

Commander O’Hara looked.

Skip said, “I meet with your uncle Michael and had him state Sheryl will not inherit your and Bruce’s house. I have told Sheryl she would not get the house. Your uncles were ready to fight me over the house. It is resolved Andrew. I will show you and Sheryl my will.”

Andrew reached and kissed his father on his cheek.

Andrew left the office and danced all down the hall.

Porter watched Andrew and said, “The things that can make a child happy.”

Skip said, “I believe that was the hardest decision I have ever made. To take the house from my wife and give it to my children.”

Wallace looked at Skip.

Wallace stood.

Skip said, “Wallace you’re ready?”

They opened the door and walked out with great dignity and pride.

The commanders saw Andrew dancing down the hall and sliding down the rails.

Wallace laughed.

Skip caught Wallace by the neck.

Wallace said, “I have been in my son’s room. I believe he left me something. Maybe I am overlooking it.”

Andrew landed on the next floor and said, “Whoa.”

Commander Greene rushed to the door and opened it and said, “We got a different name.”

The commanders stopped and looked back at Commander Greene.

They heard Andrew land on the next set of steps and he hollered and danced out the door.

Skip took a deep breath and he thought, “Shirley all the boy wanted was your house.”

Shirley smiled and shook her head for yes at Skip.

Skip said, “We need to help Wallace.”

The commanders heard the telegram machine.

They looked at Skip.

Skip, “We are going to help Wallace and go home and rest and go to bed.”

Wallace said, “I hope they have some of ox tails and butter beans left from dinner last night.”

Commander O’Hara said, “That sounds good.”

Commander Vincent turned up his nose and frowned.

Commander Randall looked at Vincent.

Vincent straighten his face.

O’Hara said, “What about fried chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy and biscuits?”

Vincent said, “What about something healthy like spinach or rutabagas or cabbage. Something green.”

Randall looked at Vincent.

They walked down the steps and out of the building.

Wallace said, “Skip we need to move your office on this first floor.”

Skip was about to agree with the restriction on his strength, but the word of GOD came back to him, “That his natural strength would not be abated.”

Skip said, “I will continue to come up these steps to the end.”

Skip opened the door for his commanders and said, “Gentlemen.”

The commanders walked outside and went to the storage area.

The soldiers were shocked.

They wanted the commanders to leave because they were playing cards and kicked the cards under the counter.

They never had any commander to come to that area.

They saluted the commanders.

The lead soldier in charge said, “Sirs. How can we help you?”

Wallace gave them the supply list.

The six soldiers ran into the back and started getting the items.

The lead soldier said, “Where are the wagons?”

Wallace stepped back and pointed to the two wagons.

The lead soldier and another soldier went and got the two wagons.

Skip saw Andrew when he got the six soldiers.

Andrew was dancing and twirling in front of the six soldiers.

The soldiers looked at each.

Andrew got the chart off the wall and signed off on it and skip to the other commander and saluted.

He told the six soldiers they would be working with Harold and Bentley in the morning.

The commanders had very stern and hard looks amongst themselves.

Andrew skipped away and was singing.

The six soldiers turned and watched Andrew.

They were told he was worst than the old men on the commander board.

Harold looked at Andrew and back to the six soldiers and said, “Met us at seven thirty at the front entrance,”

The soldiers saluted and walked back to the dorm.

Andrew was still skipping in front of the soldiers.

He went to his horse and rode away.

Skip was wondering where he was going.

Andrew rode the hour to the cemetery.

He stopped at the vendors just before the cemetery and got some flowers.

He lighted off his horse and skipped in the cemetery and all the way to Shirley’s grave.

People looked at him especially with that kind of uniform.

Andrew stopped at Shirley’s grave and sat on it.

He rubbed his hand over the grave and placed the flowers on her grave.

He started crying, but he stopped.

He leaned back on Shirley’s grave he would lean on her bed and talked to her everyday.

Skip had arrived and stood back and watched Andrew.

Skip figured his child was going to tell Shirley he was getting her house.

He wanted to make sure Andrew was mentally fine.

Skip cried and apologize to Shirley.

He said, “Shirley he is still our baby boy. All he wanted was to hold onto his mother. The only thing he and Bruce could hold onto was the thing you loved besides them was the house, your family build for them. I don’t know how he and Bruce will work it out bit I believe they are fine with it still in your family. Baby I apologize for giving the thing you loved and worked so hard to keep to someone who had no idea how important the house was to you, because your family poured their love for you into that house. Andrew knew that that’s why he fought me so and was bitter towards Sheryl, He was not going to let anyone take your love from him.”

Andrew sat up on Shirley’s grave and talked to her about the house and how his day was and how Bruce was doing.

He said, “Mother, Bruce needs help. I think I will become a doctor.”

He nodded his head for ok.

People were walking and looking at Andrew.

They saw Skip watching Andrew, and thought Andrew was his child.

Skip looked at the people and smiled.

He walked to Shirley’s grave.

Andrew did not look back but said, “Hello skip.”

Skip was trying to determine if Andrew had lost his mind. He could not bare loosing two sons. Wes told Skip. Bruce could not stay in the military because of his injuries, he could not ride and fight with his injuries.

Skip told Wes when he was leaving with Dr. Obersteen, “Get him well.”

Wes looked at Skip and nodded.

Skip said, “Andrew are you ok or do I need to put you in the mental hospital?”

Andrew looked at Shirley’s headstone and reeled back and looked at the serious Andrew and said, “Mother I know you heard Skip?”

Skip stood still.

Andrew stood and walked to Skip, he hugged Skip and said, “Father I am free. You set me free today. I have my mother back. I have peace, that a stranger will not come and take my mother’s lovefrom me and Bruce.”

Skip said, “Andrew why didn’t you and Brue tell me why you were so angry and upset with me and Sheryl. I thought you two disapproved of her because she wasn’t from our background.?’

Andrew looked at his father and said, “That too.”

Skip laughed because he thought Andrew was joking.

Andrew was back to himself he stared at Skip.

Skip stopped laughing and said, “Andrew you want to have dinner with us tonight?”

Andrew said, “After the trial tomorrow I want to go and spend time with Bruce. I will take a leave of absence.”

Skip said, “Andrew.”

Andrew said, “I’m going to school and become a doctor so I can help Bruce.”

Skip was so shocked, he nearly fell forward.

Andrew caught Skip and sturdy him.

Andrew said, “I know Bruce will need help to recover from his wounds. Do you wants to return here or stay there?”

Skip said, “Son I want to spend the holidays there and with Betsy and her babies.”

Andrew bent over and looked into Skip’s eyes and said, “You are a mind reader. That’s exactly what I want.”

Skip playfully slapped Andrew.

Andrew said, “I invite you to join me for dinner at the diner.”

Skip said, “I like that Andrew. I like to dine with the real Andrew.”

Andrew bowed to his father.

Skip said “I want to talk to your mother I haven’t been for a long time. I talk to her everyday.”

Andrew begin to skip to his horse.

Skip was about to have a heart attacker.

Andrew turned around and said, “That’s a joke.”

Skip took a deep breath.

Andrew walked to his horse and saw Skip had tied his horse next to his horse.

Andrew patted Skip’s horse and laid his face against the horse and said, “I got my father back today.”

Skip looked at Andrew.

He heard Andrew.

He stood back for a few minutes to give him some time to bask in his glory.

Skip walked to Andrew and patted him on his shoulder and said, “Let’s go eat.”

Andrew mounted his horse and he watched for Skip to mount his horse.

Skip mounted without a problem.

They rode the hour back to the headquarters and saw Harold and Vivian sitting having dinner.

Andrew and Skip spoke and sat at a different table.

Andrew said, “I like the calf liver.”

Skip said, “That sounds great.”

The waitress walked over and Andrew said, “two calf dinners with beets and spinach and mashed potatoes and gravy. “

Skip said, “That’s a lot of food.”

Andrew said, “Not really but you need the beets and spinach.”

Vivian leaned over and said, “Don’t you think they should have invited Sheryl?”

Harold said, “Vivian don’t start your shit. We are still not whole. You don’t know what type of day they had and you want to drive a wedge between a son and a father. If your sister wanted to have dinner with her husband she could have done what you did come to the office and wait for her husband.”

Vivian was talking with her fork and said, “I’m just saying.”

Harold sat and watched Vivian and said, “Ass tonight.”

Vivian put her fork into her plate and turned her head to see if anyone heard Harold.

Vivian motioned to the waitress and said, “What kind of dessert you have?’

Harold watched Vivian order chocolate cake.

He was drinking his coffee.

Vivian would not look at Harold.

Harold said, “I don’t care how many desserts you order. The solution is the same. You will give me that ass.”

Vivian looked around to see if anyone heard Harold.

Andrew was sitting with direct eye contact on Vivian and Harold’s table.

Skip was sitting to Andrew’s side and his back to Vivian and Harold’s table.

Andrew lifted up his coffee cup to Vivian to let her know he heard them.

Skip turned and looked back at Vivian.

Vivian was embarrassed and held her head down.

The waitress brought the chocolate cake.

Vivian said, “I lost my appetite.”

The waitress was upset and turned to take the cake back.

Harold said, “Ma am we’ll take the cake for a late night snack. We will be up all night.”

Vivian stared at her husband.

Harold looked at his wife.

He reached in his wallet and paid the bill and left the waitress a nice tip.

He waitress was walking back when Vivian was going through the money and said, “Take that bill.”

The waitress walked upon Vivian and stood, while Vivian told Harold, “That’s too much. I was once a waitress.”

The waitress said, “Sir.”

She reached the bag to Harold and said, “Thank you sir.”

She looked at Vivian and said, “You still act like a waitress.”

Vivian was shocked and could not respond in time because the waitress walked away.

Harold took a dollar out of his wallet and tossed it at Vivian.

Vivian rolled her eyes at Harold.

Harold said,”Alright,” and tossed her another dollar.

Andrew was watching Vivian and Harold.

He snickered as he drank his coffee.

Harold stood and reached for Vivian’s hand.

She turned her head.

Harold said, “You better get that money or leave it for the waitress.”

Vivian was mumbling and grabbed the two dollars and stood and did not take Harold’s hand and walked out he diner.

Skip looked back as they walked out the door.

Andrew and Skip laughed.

Andrew leaned on the table and said, “Should I go to the medical college at the big city hospital or the one here? In the capitol?”

Skip said, “Andrew are you serious. You can’t stand the sight of blood.”

Andrew looked Skip in his eyes and continued his conversation, “If I attend the big city hospital school. They can’t put me out because I contribute twenty seven per cent of my trust fund to the hospital and the family contribute fifty three per cent.”

Skip was shocked and said, “You contribute that much money?”

Andrew said, “Yes, because I wanted them to find a cure for what took my mother away from me.”

Skip said, “Your mother was born with birth defects because your grandmother fell on her stomach when she was pregnant with your mother.”

Andrew sat back and put his left arm over the top of his chair.

Andrew continued, “They can’t fail me out of medical school.”

Skip was eating his mashed potatoes and looking around and smiling at the other diners.

Skip said, “You can’t buy your way through medical school”

Andrew said, “Why not?”

Skip stopped eating and thought, “The real Andrew is a thousand times worst that the vengeful Andrew,”

Skip said, “Andrew you are a very intelligent young man. You worked so hard for seven years to make commander. And in different disciplines. Which no one can do. I was and am extremely proud of you.”

Andrew said, “Can I move into the house now.”

Skip did not miss a beat and said, “No.”

Andrew said, “I have finished with the military. I know Bruce can’t return to the military because of his injuries. We are young enough to start a new life.”

Andrew leaned on the table and said, “Dad you won’t be here. I want to make you and mom proud and help Bruce.”

Skip looked into his son’s eyes and said, “You already have.”

They finished their dinner and Andrew rode back to the dorm to his room.

Skip sat on his horse and watched Andrew ride down the street with his arms spread out going back to the dorm.

Skip laughed.

He turned and rode his horse home to Sheryl,

She was sitting in the parlor waiting for Skip.

Skip took rode the horse around the back and feed it and gave it some water.

He entered the house from the kitchen and locked the door and double checked the windows.

He walked into the foyer and looked upstairs and did not see movement.

He turned around and saw Sheryl standing outside the parlor.

Skip smiled and walked to Sheryl and said, “Are you ready to go upstairs because I have a very big day tomorrow.”

Sheryl said, “No I thought we can have a brandy and talk.”

Skip said, “You don’t drink and I have stopped drinking since the hospital. I am going to bed. Good night.”

Sheryl said, “Where were you?”

Skip kept walking and said, “Shirley grave and dinner with Andrew. Ask Vivian. She and Harold were at the diner.”

Sheryl was nodding her head like she was thinking.

Skip went upstairs and dressed for bed.

Sheryl was thinking she will ask Vivian, even though Vivian cheated with Skip before.

Vivian was at home on her bed in misery with her only pair of bloomers in her mouth.