Dr. Obersteen was wrapping a glass in paper.

He looked around as he wrapped the glass.

He had no sleep for the past two nights.

Dr. Oersteen was fired from the big city hospital administrator.

He was fired from being a practicing medical doctor of the big city hospital.

The board filed the papers to strip him of his medical license, that he could never practice medicine again.

The board called him into the meeting when they had completed all of their business.

Dr. Obersteen walked into their meeting and around at the twelve men.

He spoke and said, “Good morning.”

One spoke and the rest mumbled.

The two doctors who wanted to experiment on Mattie and Wes said, “no” were present but not members of the board.

Bryce, who the governor fired was conducting the meeting.

Bryce made the announcements against Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen said, “You could have asked for your hospital administrator job back. I am not the one who fired you Bryce. The governor did. You, whether all of you have performed treason. I am sure the governor will deal with you all once he recovers. And by the way he is doing a remarkable job at recovery. You could have asked me to remove myself or resign, I would have gladly done so, but to fire me because I am not incompetent. You have taken a false report to the state’s licensing board to strip me of my medical degree and license so I can not practice gain. That I can never help the sick again. That I cannot be a healer, as I have been called…”

Dr. Obersteen walked and leaned on the table with his fists and said, “Dear sirs you have gone too far.”

The secretary, Bryce’s wife was sitting and taking notes.

Her heart broke for Dr. Obersteen.

Her husband, Bryce, stood and yelled at Dr. Obersteen, “Get out!!”

Dr. Obersteen looked at Bryce and the rest of the doctors’ in the room and said, “This is pure jealousy. You all are poor medical doctors and very incompetent and when others come who are better than you and genuinely care for the patients and their health you try to destroy them.”

Andrew walked in the boardroom.

He walked in with his hands behind his back.

He stood with a very arrogant demeanor.

He stood by Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen turned and looked at this boy who has walked into a hornet’s nest of evil.

Dr. Obersteen thought, “Where is Emma!!”

Andrew said, “Hello uncle.”

The Uncle on his father side.

The Uncle said, “Hello Andrew.”

Andrew pointed to Dr. Obersteen and said, “Dr. Obersteen is father’s official medical doctor. He is the only doctor in the entire state that father trust beside another. I hope you are telling these medical doctors that twenty seven percent of my trust fund goes to operate the medical school…”

The uncle said, “That’s true.”

The two medical doctors were returning to the board meeting.

Bryce had re-assign Skip to the two doctors.

They entered the ward with all the military brass, so to big shot doctors and told Skip they were taking over his care, because one of them shrugged his shoulders and said, “Well Dr. Obersteen wasn’t qualified to practice medicine.”

Andrew said, “How so? ”

The two doctors looked at Andrew.

Skip looked at the doctors and said, “The commander asked you a question. Answer him. I want to hear this.”

The doctors could not explain themselves.

The other commanders walked over and surrounded the doctors.

The Christian doctor heard the gossip that Bryce and the rest was firing Dr. Obersteen. The doctor looked at the two doctors and said, “Huh.”

Sondra, Bryce’s wife, told Dr. Obersteen of the plot against him.

Dr. Obersteen continued to work all day and all night.

When he arrived at home that night.

He slowly unlocked the front door.

He walked over to his bar and poured a glass of brandy.

He looked at his house, which he really liked.

It was big enough for him, Emma and Joshua.

He walked to the kitchen and unlocked the back door and stepped out in the backyard.

He sat in a chair he put in the backyard, until Emma would come and decorate the house to her liking.

Dr. Obersteen sat in the chair with his legs crossed and swinging the glass of brandy in the glass.

He could not think.

All of his thought was “I am a good doctor.”

He took a sip of brandy and another and another and said, “I am a damn good doctor. How could this happen to me?”

He bowed his head over and wail for a long time.

The strange man stood by the right corner of the house and looked at Dr. Obersteen.

The attendant walked next to the strange man and said, “Everything is ready.”

JESUS was sitting and watching Dr. Obersteen.

JESUS begin thinking about Dr. Obersteen, when he was in medical school, how he thought he was going to fail out of school.

How he earnestly went into the chapel and got on his knees and prayed.

JESUS turned and pulled Dr. Obersteen’s book and began to read his prayers.

JESUS read each of Dr. Obersteen’s prayers about his medical desire to help people and be a benefit to people.

JESUS saw none of Dr. Obersteen’s prayers were for people to exalt him or he puff himself up or want riches or wealth.

JESUS knew Dr. Obersteen loved his women and alcohol, but he did not seek fame or fortune.

JESUS thought about Wes.

Dr. Obersteen went in the house and locked the door and was about to put the half full glass of brandy on the cabinet but drank and went upstairs and barely got dressed for bed.

He fell across the bed and slept.

He heard someone call his name.

Sleep left him.

He raised himself up on his right arm and lifted off the bed to see who call him.

He rested his back on the pillows.

Dr. Obersteen looked at the door and no one was there and he turned his head to look at the windows.

He saw the sun beginning to peek through the morning darkness.

Dr. Obersteen thought, “That’s like GOD always bring lightness to my darkness.”

He sat up on the bed and covered his eyes and cried.

He said, “All I ever wanted to be was a very good doctor. Why do they want to take that away? I don’t understand why.”

The strange man called Dr. Obersteen to wake him.

The strange man looked at the time.

Dr. Obersteen stood and walked into the bathroom and heated the water the housekeeper brought in the day before.

He walked downstairs in the kitchen and started a pot of coffee.

He poured a cup of black coffee and leaned against the kitchen cabinet and drink a swallow of the hot coffee and stared into the cup.

He took another swallow of the hot black coffee and stared ahead of him at the doorknob.

Sondra was sitting and brushing her hair at her vanity.

She was so worried about that ten am morning board meeting.

Bryce walked over and grabbed her by her shoulders and planted a heavy kiss on her temple.

Sondra smiled at her husband.

She wanted to know was the second bad marriage she entered into.

The first was when she was young and thought a marriage to an older man would open doors and opportunities to her to scape her poverty and see the world.

Neither materialized.

She thought about how the governor fired him and put Dr. Obersteen in his position and he swore to her he was fine with that.

She was wondering how he got to the board an called a meeting to have these horrible things to be done to Dr. Obersteen, who has done nothing to him, but brought good business to the hospital.

Could this be the type of person she married.

Sondra thought, “I will see today in this meeting. It will be either divorce or annulment.”

Dr. Obersteen went upstairs and got in the bathtub and sit for a good time until the water started getting cool.

He stepped out the bathtub and shaved and dressed for the day.

He thought, “I haven’t prayed this morning. What can I say to GOD.”

Dr. Obersteen bowed on his knees and asked the same prayer he always asked GOD, “Dear FATHER. I am in trouble. I tried to be a good doctor and asked for YOUR help…”

Dr.Obersteen waved his hands and said, “Not that I am saying YOU have not helped. But I just don’t know what wrong I have done. I have not back bitten anyone I have not killed a patient. I have been with the patients day and night. I have any paid some of their bills. I have tried to read and study so I can learn more. Can YOU fix this? But please help my patients to get better and be healed. I know JESUS to be a healer I have seen HIM heal. Can YOU heal me?”

He chuckled.

He held his head down in total misery.

He thought, “If Emma was here she would go and fist fight them.”

Dr. Obersteen waved his hand for ‘no’ and started laughing.

The thought of Emma and Mattie beating up the board members delighted Dr. Obersteen.

He was sitting on his heels and took a deep breath and said, “In JESUS’ name.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “LORD GOD Almighty, please help Emma and Mattie. In JESUS’ name. Amen.”

Dr. Obersteen liked his eggs in the morning, but he knew he was running late and breakfast was over.

He passed his favorite restaurant and the waiter waved at him and pointe to his watch.

Dr. Obersteen pointed at his watch and said, “No time.” The waiters and patrons looked at Dr. Obersteen.

He continued to the hospital and thought about his patients, what type of care he need to give to each.

He thought about Skip and said, “His test results should be back this morning. I should be able to give him a diagnosis.

Dr. Obersteen continued to work.

He noticed the hospital was dark. He wondered why.

He entered the lobby and spoke to the nurses.

They spoke, but he did not know they were the night shift nurses.

Dr. Obersteen walked up the stairs to his office.

Andrew and Skip saw him when he passed the ward.

Dr. Obersteen arranged for the commanders to stay with Skip in the ward.

The orderlies and Samuel and Zachry were thrilled.

Andrew looked at Skip they knew something was wrong.

Skip looked at Andrew and said, “Find out.”

Andrew walked to the ward door and looked for an orderly.

He did not see an orderly, he did see Samuel and Zachery running into the lobby.

They were jostling each other and elbowing each other.

Until they nearly ran into Andrew who was standing and watching them.

Andrew said, “Good morning sirs.”

Samuel and Zachery could not speak.

Everyone was talking about the young commander with the hair.

Andrew pointed to the ward.

They could not figure out what for.

They walked in the ward.

One of the commanders was snoring.

Andrew walked with his hands behind his back and walked in front of Samuel and Zachery.

He stopped at Skip’s bed.

Samuel and Zachery mouths flew open.

Andrew said, “Gentlemen this the head commander of the military Skip Costner.

Samuel and Zachery stood speechless.

Skip said, “Good morning young gentlemen. You Zachery came with Dr. Obersteen to the new settlement but left after a few days.”

Zachery was spellbound. “You remembered me?”

Andrew smiled because had his hook in him.

Skip said, “Yes. What is wrong with Dr. Obersteen?”

Samuel tipped to ward door.

Zachery was peeping at the commanders that were pretending to be sleep.

Andrew looked at Samuel and Zachery, “Thinking are they serious.”

Samuel ran back to Skip’s bed and he and Zachery began to blabbered out sentences.

Andrew looked at them and said, “The board is going to fire Dr. Obersteen this morning and he doesn’t know.”

They both looked at Andrew and said, “Yes.”

Skip said, “Thank You. Have a nice day.”

Samuel and Zachery looked at Skip with such admiration.

Commander Wallace pulled he curtain back from his bed.

All the commanders were awake and fully dressed.

Andrew looked at a worried Skip.

Skip said, “Dr. Obersteen said, my tests results will be back today and he will give me a diagnosis. I know Dr. Obersteen and I trust him. I don’t trust no body else.”

Skip looked at the commanders and said, “Where’s Malcolm?”

The commanders looked around and was shocked he slipped out and no one saw him.

Skip was thinking.

He had hand selected thirty commanders over each section of the military and thirteen were assassins and they were scheduled to be executed.

Commander Wallace’s son was one of the dead assassins.

Commander Wallace requested of Skip to take his son home and be buried in the family plot.

Skip signed an order and had a telegram sent to the family to have his grave dug.

Commander Wallace was still grieving but when the headquarters received the telegrams about Skip.

Commander Wallace told his wife he had to go and support Skip.

His wife was angry with Skip.

Commander Wallace was standing in his son’s doorway looking around.

He had not been in the room for several weeks.

He decided he would go and begin to search his room to see if he could put pieces together that drove his son to be a part of such a diabolical plot.

Commander Wallace yelled at his wife and said, “You want to angry with anybody be angry at yourself. I told you not to spoil our son. I told you to let him go to school and learn a trade because he was lazy like your side of the family. Skip had nothing to do with you being a bad mother. Blame yourself and keep Skip out of this. Be thankful he allowed me to bring our son home and bury him with the family. Many were buried in a large hole in the ground. I pray he accepted Salvation through JESUS. You need to also. I got my peace.’’

The little girl was watching from her prayer room.

She looked up at JESUS.

JESUS held out HIS hand to her.

She looked at HIS hand and reached her hand to HIM.

Skip was in deep thought.

The commanders including Andrew went to the cafeteria for breakfast.

Sheryl and a distraught Vivian were having coffee in the hotel lobby.

Sheryl leaned over and said, “Vivian come to yourself. You are a commander’s wife everyone is looking.”

Vivian looked around at the women and continued to drink her coffee.

Sheryl said, “Look at me. I am the wife of the head of the military. My husband is sick, and I am polish.”

Vivian said, “And sick.”

Vivian stood and said, “Pay for my coffee.”

Sheryl looked at Vivian and sighed she tried to safe face and said, “I will join you shortly.”

Vivian looked back at her and continued to walk out the door.

She continued to walk to the hospital to see Skip.

Men on the street would give her a double look.

Before Vivian would be flirty but now she wants her husband, even though he was twenty five years older than she.

Harold just told people he was twenty years older so it would not seem improper or perverted.

Vivian laughed and said, “It’s perverted Mr. Harold.”

Vivian could not have children at all.

Sheryl would become pregnant and lose them.

Vivian said, it was because they were malnourished.

Vivian met Harold at the restaurant she worked.

She was cleaning tables at two different restaurants.

One for breakfast and one for dinner.

Vivian worked at a beautician during the lunch hours.

She learned how to style hair.

She and Sheryl would have the best looking hair for the barns.

Harold came in one day while she was bent over getting some plates.

Vivian said, “He made a crude remark. And I cursed him out. He did not leave. He kept tossing napkins and forks on the floor for me to bend over and pick them up. I did not see him for months. Then he came back with the same crude remark. And forks and napkins were on the floor and I realized he was purposefully tossing them on the floor. He gave a big tip. I looked at him and missed the beautician that day and every day he came into town. After six months I did not see him. I decided to move out of state with Sheryl and her new husband that was older than she. I started working at a restaurant in the capital and staying in a studio apartment. I did not eat but when I was at work and made extra money from doing hair. One day Harold walked into the restaurant. She saw a napkin on the floor and she looked up and it was Harold.

She ran to him.

They embraced and kissed.

They had been together for the next fifteen years.

Now Harold is gone. He is gone for good.

Vivian sighed over Harold.

She stepped on the hospital’s steps.

Vivian thought, “What is wrong with Sheryl?” She’s acting like she is the queen. And Andrew is not having it. He is letting her know she is blue collar and cannot compare to that powder princess mother of his. Skip lucked out with Shirley. He did not have to change the initials with Sheryl.”

Vivian walked into the lobby of the hospital.

Vivian smiled and did not speak because she was being watched because of her and Harold fighting in front of everybody yesterday.

The nurses begin to whisper and watched her as she walked into the ward.

Skip looked at her as she entered.

She sat in Andrew’s chair.

Vivian said nothing but stared into space.

Skip said, “Vivian what are you going to do?”

Andrew walked back with the commanders and Percy.

Vivian looked at Skip.

Skip said, “Percy who do you have training the horses?”

Percy named the three soldiers.

Dr. Obersteen was in his office reviewing his patients charts for that day.

He got up and started his rounds.

He was nearly through with his patients when Zachery found him with his patient.

Zachery told Dr. Obersteen the board wanted him in the board room.

The patient looked at Zachery.

Dr. Obersteen pulled his stethoscope from his ears and said, “Zachery…”

Zachery said, “I know, but they said it was very important.”

The patient said, “Sounds like trouble.”

Dr. Obersteen looked at the patient then bucked his eyes at Zachery.

Zachery said, “Sorry sir.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I’m coming. Zachery. Tell them I am coming.”

He stood and Zachery nearly cried.

Dr. Obersteen put his hands on his hips and turned back to his patient.

The patient watched Zachery who lowered his head and walked out and closed the door.

Dr. Obersteen looked back at the door and said to the patient, “They want to fire me.”

The patient yelled, “What? Why?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I told you that so you can hear me and what I said your treatment should be. Do not let anyone change what I am saying to you. Understand. Listen.”

The patient’s wife was sitting in the chair listening.

Dr. Obersteen explained everything to the patient and said, “I don’t have any more of the herbs for pain. You don’t need anything for the pain, but it eases over time. They want to give you morphine.”

The wife said, “No.”

She realized she spoke out of term and said, ”Sorry.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “GOD made the body to heal itself. Sometimes we need a push to get the healing process started, that is what the herbs do.”

Nurse Watson walked in and said, “Dr. Obersteen the board is demanding you cease see the patients and come immediately to them.”

Nurse Watson looked at the patient and his wife.

Dr. Obersteen said, “What is the rush?”

The patient said, “Doc, can I go home?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “All tests are good. Your healing is good. No fever. Blood pressure fine. I guess you can if you want to.”

His wife said, “We want to.”

He wife stood up and started getting her husband’s stuff together.

Nurse Watson went and helped the patient out the bed, she said, “I’ll go and get the orderlies to come and take you out.

Dr. Obersteen completed his notes in the patient’s chart and handed the chart to Nurse Watson.

She said, “You know they are going to accuse you of telling the patients to leave.”

Dr. Obersteen opened the door for Nurse Watson.

They passed the ward.

Skip watched Dr. Obersteen.

Andrew was taking the notes and the commanders were writing their notes.

The commanders met with Skip each morning and he conducted business as usual.

The two new doctors walked in the ward with all the stately commanders.

The commanders looked at them.

The doctors introduced themselves to Skip and the commanders.

Andrew demanded an answer why they were there and not Dr. Obersteen.

Andrew put his note pad on Skip’s bed.

He stood and walked out the ward.

He walked down the hall and looked to see where the board meeting was.

Nurse Watson and Nurse Morgan pointed at the door.

Andrew winked at Nurse Morgan.

Andrew opened the door and walked into the board meeting.

The nurses ran to Nurse Morgan giggling.

Nurse Morgan fainted.

Zachery and Samuel ran back to the door and put their ears to the door.

Andrew said,”I am Commander Andrew Stith Simons Costner…”

The board members looked at this boy.

Andrew said, “Your benefactor. My family owns the railroad and the shipping. We donate fifty three percent to your medical school and twenty seven percent is from my trust fund.”

His uncle said, “Fifty five percent this year.”

Andrew said, “Do not increase my part. Gentlemen our great state gives this hospital sixty three percent of it’s operating capital, the other thirty seven percent is raised once per year by my family.”

Andrew touch his chest and bowed.

Andrew said, “My family will meet in two weeks to have all the details for the benefit ball. I will be there and present to them your belligerent and treacherous attitude towards Dr. Obersteen, a personal physician to my father the head of military and a staunch supporter of Dr. Obersteen. I will also speak with the governor, who is a childhood friend. I will especially tell him how you sir, who he fired called a board meeting to fire Dr. Obersteen his physician. You sirs did not stop there but filed papers to strip Dr. Obersteen of his license. The reason why the state pumps money into the two hospitals here is so the people can have medical care. Now I doubt the cause is not so noble.”

Andrew stared hard at his uncle and said, “Uncle.”

The uncle swallowed hard and nodded his head.

Andrew turned to Dr. Obersteen and said, “Dr. Obersteen.”

Andrew pointed towards the door.

He opened the door and Zachery and Samuel ran from the door and tried to walk back.

Andrew allowed Dr. Obersteen to walked out the door and he followed.

Andrew said to Samuel and Zachery, “You are too slow.”

They stared at Andrew with admiration.

The nurses were still fanning Nurse Morgan.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Thank you Andrew. But I am still out of a job. Maybe I can get on at the city’s baptist hospital.

Andrew said, “Why don’t you go to Wes until you get a job?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I need money to live.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I have to see your father and then I will go and pack my office.

Dr. Obersteen went to his office and had Zachery to send a telegram to Wes and tell him what happened to him.

Andrew went back to the ward and told his father and the commanders what happened.

He said, “I suggested that he go back to help Wes until he gets a job. He said, he needed money.”

Skip said, “Chester is in charge of that. He has been busy. Check on that.”

Dr. Obersteen went into his office and reviewed Skip’s tests.

He kept looking over the tests.

Sondra walked in with Bryce.

Bryce turned his back to Dr. Obersteen’s opened door.

Sondra looked at Bryce.

She walked to the door and said, “Good afternoon Dr. Obersteen.”

Dr. Obersteen barely looked up and said, “Good afternoon Sondra and Bryce.”

He put his head back down in his charts and tests results.

He began to write his recommendations for Skip.

He finished with Skip’s chart.

Sondra and Bryce were leaving work to go and order that night’s dinner for the commanders.

They stopped at the ward to speak to the commanders.

The commanders gave them a battle look.

Bryce swallowed hard and said, “no dinner.”

No commander answered him.

He looked at Andrew who stared at him.

Andrew let them know he was a blue blood and he gives them charity, including his uncle.

The board did not know he was any kin to the Stiths and Simons.

He told the board he was way down the line and he and his wife and children could not afford to attend the ball for the hospital because they make everyone by a ticket.

Dr. Obersteen walked in the ward fifteen minutes later.

Andrew went to send the telegram to Chester about the pay for Dr. Obersteen and Wes.

Dr. Obersteen stood at the foot of Skip’s bed and was going over and over his notes.

Dr. Obersteen stopped and was looking off in space.

Andrew returned from sending Chester the telegram.

Andrew looked at the other commanders.

They shook their heads for no.

Dr. Obersteen said,”Skip?”

Sheryl and Vivian were seated in chairs.

Andrew moved and stood next to Skip.

Skip said, “I want them to know. You can speak.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I can guarantee you two years. You have blockages in your heart. We have not yet discovered how to remove them. I truly believe there is an herb that can do it. I will be researching. There’s no medicine we have created that can move the blockages. Take an easy. Don’t over work your body. Rest. Take a nap during the day. I don’t know what type of house you have…”

Sheryl looked at Andrew.

Andrew gave her a look.

Dr. Obersteen said, “If you have stairs or no stairs, if you have to move your bedroom do so. The trip back you can sleep in the wagon. But try to ride your horse for several hours each day. I believe you can be comfortable and live a good quality of life.”

Andrew was solemn.

Skip said, “Thank you Dr. Obersteen. Go to Wes. I’ll take care of your expenses.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I want to. I now he needs help. But I have a few letters to write to get a job.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I hate it there, it is freezing.”

Arnold said, “Skip we can build temporary housing for them so they won’t be so cold and with gas heaters it can get them through the next couple of months.”

Skip said, “Dr. Obersteen will you go back for a few months to help Wes?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Yes.”

Skip looked at Arnold.

Skip said, “I know you will do us proud.”

The commanders cheered.

Chester received the telegrams from Skip and Andrew.

He sent back a response.

He said the money has arrived and Betsy Ross is anxious to receive Wes’ portion.

Skip and Andrew laughed. It was a personal joke between them.

He can wire Dr. Obersteen portion or send it by two soldiers.

Chester said, “Tell Commander Arnold building supplies and fifteen carpenters arrived and on base. Bishop’s family found two vacant houses and my parents found a small vacation home not far from the lake. Newsom is in much pain and needs a lot of help. His family is on their way to take him home to die. Wes very upset and does not want Newsom to leave.”

Andrew read the telegrams in the presence of all.

Skip said, “Tell Chester to send two soldiers with Dr. Obersteen pay so he can pay bills and be ready to leave and go back with the soldiers. He did not say anything about Bruce. Find out Bruce’s condition.”

Arnold said, “That lake area is so beautiful. I would love to go fishing there in the summer.”

Skip grinned, “Yes it is beautiful untouched land.”

Vivian said, “Arnold Dorothy is a city girl.”

Arnold said, “I heard you Skip you know I am a developer, but I would not do too much, because I do believe in nature. Vivian there is a restaurant and a dress shop there.”

Vivian laughed.

Skip looked at Vivian and remembered her laughed when they would be together, it reminded him of his love Betsy.

Andre watched Skip and Vivian. He realized his father had the affair with the married Vivian because she did remind one of Betsy with her hair and hearty laugh. Maybe that’s why he liked her. Full of life and fun.

Andrew left he ward and walked to Dr. Obersteen’s office to send the telegrams.

Dr. Obersteen was packing up his office.

He looked around and was upset.

Andrew said, “Chester wants to know if you want your pay wired or for two soldiers to bring. Father said for two soldiers to bring it for you to pay your bills and leave with the two soldiers when they arrive and turn around and go back.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Really? I am not in the military for Skip to make decisions about me. “

Andrew said, “Wes said Newsom is going home to die.”

Dr. Obersteen jumped up and said, “No. Newsom requires a lot of attention that he can’t get from any where else.”

Andrew said, “Pack and be ready to leave in two days.”

Dr. Obersteen turned around in the office and put on his coat and gloves and walked out the office with his box of personal items.

He walked home and thought, “GOD this started out as one of the worst days of my life. My heart was heavy today and last night. But I don’t feel as heavy as I did, especially with the soldiers bringing me some money. I don’t know how much it will be. I’ll send Samuel a notice and see if he and his sister can stay at my house or check on it until I return.”

Dr. Obersteen walked home and unlocked the door.

He put down his box.

And walked through his house.

He took his bags and packed them with books and plenty of wool socks and thermals.

He knew the soldiers were laughing at his fur boost and vest, but it knocked the freezing cold off and enable him to bear the cold.

He stared at his alcohol for a long time.

Newsom came to his mind and he locked the cabinet.

Dr. Obersteen checked his house for food. He only had an egg. He scrambled the egg and had a toast.

He looked at the bags of books and then he looked at the time.

He was able to carry the books down to the transporters for them to take the books to Wes in the new settlement.

He paid them.

He sent a telegram to the job to Samuel and asked if he and his sister would stay at his house or check on it until he returned.

Samuel received the telegram and was excited because he and April’s time in the clerk’s apartment would end in a few days and they could move into Dr. Obersteen’s by the end of the week.

Samuel ran all the way to Dr. Obersteen’s house with the telegram in his hand.

He could barely knock on the door.

He was bent over trying to catch his breath.

Dr. Obersteen opened the door.

He saw Samuel.

Samuel waved the telegram.

Dr. Obersteen looked around and said, “Come in. “

Samuel walked in the door.

He looked around the small foyer.

Dr. Obersteen saw Samuel looking at the small foyer and said, “I was about to turn around and leave until the man said, please look around. So I say that to you ’look around’.”

Dr. Obersteen heard Samuel running through the drawing room and the dinning screaming “Whoa.”

Dr. Obersteen grinned.

Samuel ran upstairs and looked out the wall of windows in the master bedroom.

He ran into the two bathrooms and the other two bedrooms.

The upstairs hallway was huge. Dr. Obersteen had purchased a desk and chai rand a few pictures and placed in the hallway.

Samuel was mesmerized and walked downstairs and pass Dr. Obersteen.

Samuel walked outside and looked at the beautiful manicured yard.

He sat out there for a few minutes.

Dr. Obersteen continued to wrap his breakables and box them and put them away.

Samuel pointed and said, “Me and April have learned and grown since then.”

He exhaled and did a facial expression of embarrassment.

Samuel said, “Dr. Obersteen I love your house. It’s big and a whole wall of windows!”

Dr. Obersteen was standing with his hands on his hips.

He let Samuel out and gave him the spare key.

Samuel said, “Ugh the window bedroom.”

Dr. Obersteen shook his head for no.

Samuel was leaving and nearly bumped into the neighbors.

Samuel apologized and kept looking at the teenage girl.

She would take a few steps and stopped and look at Samuel.

Her parents looked at her and smiled.

The blond teenager turned and looked at her parents.

Dr. Obersteen was standing in the window and watched the teenagers.

He giggled and held his head down, “How I know they are meant to be.”

Dr. Obersteen knew Samuel and April’s father was Abraham in the new settlement and would not tell them.

He thought they should work out their relationship problems, including finding out where each other was.

Dr. Obersteen returned to the kitchen and wrapping his glasses and breakables.

Samuel and April knew how particular Dr. Obersteen was about his breakables.

He and April broke a few glasses and Dr. Obersteen was about to throw them out.

They deeply apologized to him.

Dr. Obersteen forgave them and let them stay in his apartment until his return.

Samuel and April began to respect others property and take care of it as their own.

He went home and stayed up for two nights packing up his glasses and breakables.

Skip was leaving the hospital the same day Dr. Obersteen was leaving the big city.

Dr. Obersteen was shocked at the amount of money Skip had him paid.

He ran to the bank and paid for his house note for six months.

Dr. Obersteen paid for Mattie’s part of the stay and received a stamp that said full paid.

He bought Joshua a train set and a complete football outfit.

He bought Angelica two pairs of special shoes, one for now and one pair later when she was bigger, and a bag.

Dr. Obersteen’s heart pained him for Angelica.

He bought Wes another shaving kit and perfume for Betsy.

He was ready to leave and brave the freezing city.

He went to the poultry house and had them to transport chickens, turkeys, eggs, milk and cheese to Wes.

Dr. Obersteen left town with the military caravan.

The caravan split.

Most of the commanders went back to the headquarters.

Skip sent Tony and the three riders to the two different cities to find the identity of the beneficiaries. And to report secretly back to him at headquarters.

Skip, Andrew, Sheryl and Vivian along with Arnold followed the two soldiers and Dr. Obersteen.

When they got to Emma and Mattie’s town, Dr. Obersteen wanted to stop and see them but the soldiers kept riding until they were halfway from the town.

They small group camped that night outside Emma and Mattie’s town.

Sheryl was complaining about the long and dusty road and having to sleep in the wagon and not a hotel.

Vivian was upset over Harold and was ignoring Sheryl.

The soldiers heard her.

Dr. Obersteen walked to her.

Skip looked her and he saw Dr. Obersteen walked over.

Dr. Obersteen said, “You don’t understand…”

He pointed to Skip and said, “He cannot tolerate this foolishness. You either be quiet and keep your complaining to yourself or leave.”

Vivian looked at the fake Sheryl.

Andrew was giving Sheryl a look that it is going to be you.

Sheryl looked at Skip and thought, “Do you hear him talking to me like that.”

Skip said, “Sheryl you either shut up or leave.”

Sheryl stood in shock and looked at Skip.

Arnold, Andrew and the two soldiers watched Sheryl.

Arnold said, “I have not been around Sheryl until now. I knew your mother.”

Skip thought, “If Bruce was up you would be missing right about now.”

Andrew looked at the truly perplexed Arnold.

They made it to the new settlement late that night.

Chester waited for them at the governor’s tent.

Sheryl wrapped her coat around her and said, “It’s freezing…”

Everyone looked at her.

Vivian said, “You got your husband with you what are you faking so badly about? The man married you for you. Not you faking to be a blue blood, but for a blue collar.”

Sheryl turned up her nose and snatched her head off from Vivian.

Skip and Andrew saw Sheryl.

They entered the governor’s tent along with Arnold, Chester and Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen went directly to Newsom.

He and Wes were discussing Newsom.

Newsom‘s family arrived that evening and went to the command post because it was freezing in the new settlement.

Dr. Obersteen said, “He won’t make the trip.”

Wes said, “I know.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “When is Newsom’s family coming back?”

Wes said, “In the morning.”

They walked to Bruce.

Bruce was in and out of consciousness, but he was healing.

Wes was happy.

The first lady was a hit or miss.

Her condition was bad, because of the shrapnel that was in her body and Wes had go back in and find it.

He and Dr. Obersteen prayed they got it all.

Andrew walked over to David and spoke.

David said, “I’m freezing.”

Wes said, “Governor I’m coming.”

David said, “With heat.”

Wes grinned.

Andrew looked at Wes.

David said, “I hear Dr. Obersteen.”

Andrew leaned down and whispered in David’s ear, “He was fired.”

David said, “By who? He was the boss.”

Dr. Obersteen and Wes looked at the two whispering.

David whispered, “Andrew facts.”

Andrew patted David’s shoulder.

Arnold looked around the tent.

He saw Wes and Dr. Obersteen slept on the freezing cold floor.

Andrew went to Betsy in the cute house.

Andrew saw Joshua and Angelica were asleep.

Betsy caught her beloved Andrew’s arm and they walked out the front door.

Andrew pointed and said, “This is Skip’s wife Sheryl who is a former teacher and her sister Vivian.”

Vivian reached to shake Betsy’s hand and said, “A former housewife.”

Betsy saw Sheryl’s nasty attitude and said, “Skip’s former girlfriend.”

Andrew laughed and held his hand up for years.

Sheryl mouth flew opened.

Vivian started laughing and pointed at Betsy and looked back at Sheryl.

Vivian said, “How did you let him go?”

Andrew smiled and looked at Betsy.

Her beautiful hair was wrapped and twisted on her chest.

Andrew knew Angelica had to do that, because Betsy always wore her gorgeous hair up.

Especially when they had to fight or run.

Betsy said, “Skip decided he wanted someone his age.”

Vivian laughed.

Andrew loved it.

He saw Skip, out the corner of his eye, walking out the governor’s tent.

Betsy said, “Sheryl you are a retired school teacher right? Where did you teach?”

Sheryl was huffing.

Andrew knew if Betsy asked a question it was for a good reason.

He waited for Sheryl’s answer.

Skip was watching the scene as he and Chester talked aside.

Skip knew that dirty Andrew must have introduce Betsy and Sheryl for a show down.

Skip thought, “I better stop that mess.”

He and Chester continued to talk.

Harold walked the grounds and looked.

He shook his head at the beauty.

Sheryl said to Betsy, “You would not know the school.”

Betsy stared directly into Sheryl’s eyes.

Vivian looked at Betsy and Sheryl and stepped back.

Andrew was grinning.

Skip eased up on them and Chester saw what was happening.

He mounted his horse and rode back to his troop.

Andrew tried to turn his head but he was taking much delight in this situation.

Betsy said, “Try me.”

Sheryl looked at Betsy.

Betsy stared her down.

Vivian slightly turn to see Chester ride out the yard and she jumped when she saw Arnold and Skip standing by her.

Skip saw Sheryl did not answer Betsy.

Betsy had to work with the teacher’s association for two years to keep Skip and Andrew out of jail for breaking into the office and going through some files. Because Andrew and the married woman had broken up and he was trying to get her fired and Skip told him to put the woman’s file  
 back and not to put false information on he in her folder. The secretary said, would telegram the police nor the military if they would file all of her work for two years. They could not do it. So they volunteered Betsy. Betsy was happy to do it because she loved her Skip and baby Skip.

Skip did not know what was being talked about but he said, “Ladies this is Betsy my former girlfriend.”

Sheryl said very haughtily as she stuffed her handkerchief in her purse, “We know.”

Arnold walked forward and shook Betsy’s hand.

Andrew said, “We should have invited you to the wedding and a picture taken for the mantle.”

Andrew could barely stand when he looked at Sheryl who was about to die.

Vivian was so stunned with Betsy and her attractiveness.

Andrew was about to burst out in laughter.

Arnold knew it was tension between Betsy and Sheryl and looked at Skip.

Skip felt Arnold looking at him and said, “It’s ok I knew it had to come out one day but not today and that damn Andrew is the ring leader.”

Arnold snickered and said, “You forgot I know about cat fights. I have five in my house and six with my wife. Everyday I ask God to get them out from under my roof.”

Arnold turned around and said, “You know a small house by the lake is not a bad idea. You say Jake lives in that town?”

Skip said, “Yes.”

Skip was not taking his eyes off the four.

Vivian had stepped back not to caught in the fight.

She knew Andrew wanted Sheryl to be defeated and she could not blame him, because she started to act like people were her servants. The pension she got each month was from her dead husband Walter military retirement.

Vivian said, “How is she going to get out of this mess of lies about being a retired school teacher. All she had to do was tell Skip she was a housewife.

Sheryl looked up and saw Skip watching all of them.

She walked to Skip.

Arnold laughed and stepped back.

Sheryl called, “Vivian.”

Skip said, “Betsy, my love see you later. Especially when you have your babies.”

Sheryl jerked Skip’s arm.

Betsy said, “Babies?”

Skip said, “You can handle it.”

Betsy knew he was talking about his anatomy. She was shocked at everyone telling her she was going to have twins.

Andrew and Betsy begin to dance their waltz.

Skip knew the waltz dance meant they had won the victory.

Andrew went and mounted his horse and rode with Arnold behind the wagon that Vivian drove down the dirt road to the command post.

Andrew had turned his horse around and was serenading Betsy as his father heard him.

Betsy laughed.

Skip smiled. It was good hearing her, it lightened his heart.

Skip had climbed in the back of the wagon and was thinking on Bruce and Newsom. He wondered about Thelma and she did not look good. But she had not died.

He was happy with David’s progress.

Skip thought, “What was David and Andrew talking about. I hope not the trials and Dr. Obersteen. If Dr. Obersteen was not observant like Wes…”

Skip shook his head in disbelief. “GOD thank YOU for extending my life and giving me a wiliness to stay here and finish this case. I would like to see at least one grandchild. But you know what you are doing. Before I talked about someone else I wanted to bow before the GREAT GOD and humbly say Thank You for extending my life. I ask for help with Wes. Wes is nosey but not observant. Can YOU help him to be more observant. I know YOU uncovered the plot against the governor. But Wes told it. If we had not followed up we would be burying a dead governor and first lady and maybe my son”

Skip thought, “I better keep all troops on alert but first alert not high alert. I don’t feel in my heart this is over. I believe we are close to crushing this evil forever. I know GOD will bring the end. I just can’t question HIS timing.”

Skip was falling asleep and he thought he saw soldiers lined in attention on the dirt road he wondered where all the bright light came from.

Skip and Sheryl slept in the wagon that night.

Vivian followed Andrew to the place to stop the wagon.

Vivian, Andrew and Arnold slept in tents Chester had the soldiers to put up.

At daybreak, Skip peeped out the wagon to see if anyone was around so he could crawl out of the wagon.

He saw two guards posted at his wagon, either by Andrew or Chester order.

Skip had been awake and just finished his prayer time.

He sat there for a minute in the wagon thinking he did not want to be weak and sickly before the troops.

He thought about how he sat in the saddle with strength and pride.

Skip’s heart was becoming weak.

A still small voice came to him and said, “Skip your strength will not fade. You will have strength until the day you die. Enjoy your life I have given you. You have the power to strengthen yourself. The more you forgive your brethren, including Sheryl you break the grip the devil is using to oppress you with physical weakness on your flesh. Remember forgiveness from your heart releases the devil’s grip on your flesh. Go and teach man to forgive.”

Skip began to cry.

He did not feel strength in his body.

A thought came to him that he hid Bruce and Andrew’s Christmas presents in his house.

They did not get their presents until they ran through the house to find them at Christmas.

Andrew was only two and he would stand and watched Bruce run through the house looking for his presents.

Once Shirley helped Bruce find a present and he opened it and showed it to baby Andrew.

Baby Andrew ran to play with Bruce’s railroad car and Bruce held it up to keep Andrew from playing with it.

You took Andrew by the hand and helped him to find his first Christmas present.

Bruce and Andrew took you and Shirley at your word.

Now take GOD at HIS Word and MOVE.

Skip thought, “JESUS has given us all things, These are HIS presents to us. All we have to do is believe HE put them here for us and go and get them.”

Skip thought about those wonderful Christmases he was there with them and the Christmases he was not with them. He thought about Betsy’s babies first Christmas and wanted to be a part of that day with them, since he will not have grandchildren, especially from Emma.

Skip shook his head and said, “What?”

He thought and said, “GOD have YOU heard and resolved that problem?”

The little girl laughed out.

Wes and Betsy were standing looking at her and Joshua.

Betsy said, “There’s no telling what she is laughing about.”

She placed her head on Wes and said, “I am so glad John came back. Not under the best of circumstances but he is a good Christian doctor and I know God will help hm.”

Betsy patted her stomach.

Wes held her by her waist.

Wes said to himself, “GOD I know you have plans for Joshua and Angelica but I really want them. Forgive me for my selfishness.”

Wes held Betsy’s hand and led her out the bedroom and closed the door.

They embraced and kissed for a longtime.

That made Wes feel better.

Betsy pulled Wes from the bedroom door into the living room towards the sofa.

Wes said, “Betsy we just finished.”

Betsy hit Wes on his chest and whispered and said, “Not that. Have they buried Bill?”

Skip looked at his clean shirt and his toilet bag.

He pulled both to the end of the wagon and stepped backwards out the wagon.

The two guards ran to Skip.

Skip SAID, “I can do all things through Christ WHO strengthens me.”

The guards stepped back.

Skip picked up his clean shirt and his toiletries bag and looked at the guard soldiers who saluted him.

Skip saluted them back and started his walk to the wash tent.

The more he walked and breathed and praised GOD for another day, the more strength he had.

He looked at the darkness of the morning sky giving away to the beautiful blue.

Then he thought, “How dare Bryce Porter put himself in a position to fire the governor appointed hospital administrator. Who put him back at the hospital.”

Skip said, “Thank YOU GOD for bringing that back to my mind.”

Andrew was shaving when he saw his father, in the mirror, walk into the wash tent under his own power and strength.

Andrew rarely tear up but he had tears in his eyes and he turned quickly to run to Skip.

He did not see the guards Chester posted.

Skip waved his hand at Andrew to stop.

Andrew learned some bad lessons in his life for not being obedient and not obeying a command.

When his father or an honorable person told him to stop and he was disobedient he always ended up hurt or in bad trouble.

Skip would tell Andrew all the time,”…to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

Andrew had 1 Samuel 15:22-24 plastered on his ceiling over his bed or on the wall in jail or military detention.

Andrew stopped.

Skip walked into the wash tent, the soldiers saw him and saluted.

Andrew watched Skip. He saw the pride of what Skip does swell up in his heart.

He saluted the soldiers.

The soldiers looked at Skip with pride.

Andrew watched Skip every step.

Skip went and into one of stalls and washed.

Arnold walked in and saw Andrew.

He figured Skip was in the wash tent.

He saluted Andrew and the soldiers saluted Arnold.

Arnold saluted the soldiers.

He went into the stalls and washed and dressed.

Arnold came out and saw Skip shaving himself.

He looked passed Skip and saw Andrew standing back and watching his father.

Andrew knew something happened to Skip since late last night.

Arnold and Skip finished shaving.

The guard soldiers were outside waiting for Skip.

Andrew and Arnold walked behind Skip.

He reached his dirty shirt and toiletry bag to one of the guards.

The three commanders walked out the wash tent with dignity and pride.

The soldiers and the sentries saluted with pride and dignity.

Vivian was awaken by a soldier who brought her hot water from Andrew.

Andrew knew Vivian would try to be promiscuous and go by accident to the soldiers wash tent.

To keep down bad feelings and making Skip sick, Andrew took over.

Andrew had hot water sent to Sheryl.

Andrew had no love for Sheryl.

Andrew, Skip and Arnold entered the dining tent and stood line with the rest of the soldiers.

The soldiers did not know what to do.

They all saluted the commanders.

The soldiers moved back for the commanders to go ahead.

Skip pointed for the soldiers to go ahead.

Andrew was higher in rank than Arnold so he stood behind Skip.

Andrew went through a lot to get to be next to his father.

No one could ever deny him of his position that he earned.

It was his love for his father and mother that drove him farther.

The day all the commanders gave their recommendations to exalt Andrew and give him the highest rank of that type of commander.

Skip was so shocked and stunned, he had to sit.

Harold said, “Skip, I would be the first to say no. But I watched Andrew over seven years and he worked so hard to make you proud of him. Be proud.”

Skip had to push himself out his chair and go to the window and look out and take deep breaths and he was thinking, “Shirley our baby boy”.

Skip felt that Shirley nodded and smiled for yes.

Even the commanders that turned against them voted for Andrew.

The only thing all of the commanders complained to Skip about was Andrew non-stop running women.

Commander Wallace said, “I can’t too much complain, because he is young and single. It can be used as a trap.”

Skip walked back to the table and cast his vote for Andrew.

Andrew was outside the door with Bruce, Tony and Chester and Cal.

Cal had his head to the wall trying to listen.

The commanders called for Andrew.

Andrew was very nervous and walked into the meeting room.

The commanders in one accord stood and saluted Andrew and offered him his chair.

They gave Andrew a cheer.

Bruce and the rest could hear the cheer they yelled for Andrew.

Andrew work very hard for the military to make his father proud.

Skip told Andrew, “I am proud of you. You have a heart to help people and you push your self to be the best person you can be. That makes me proud of you. Andrew be who you want to be. I trust you to make the right decision.”

He whispered in his father’s ear and said, “Suppose I marry Betsy?”

Skip did a double take at Andrew.

The cook saluted and said, “Sir?”

Skip said, “One scrambled egg and a dry toast and black coffee.”

The cook looked at Andrew.

Andrew said, “A toast and black coffee.”

The cook looked at Arnold.

Arnold said, “Black coffee.”

One soldier had a stack of pancakes and looked back at Skip’s one toast and toast and black coffee.

Skip looked at the soldier as he looked at his stack of pancakes and said, “Sir, not today maybe tomorrow. I love my pancakes.”

Skip laughed.

Andre always kept a stern look.

The soldier went and sat with his back to Skip and Andrew.

They sat at the table with him.

The soldier looked around to see another table.

Andrew said, “Soldier you don’t want us to sit with you?”

The soldier said, “No. Sir. I didn’t mean that.”

Skip said, “We know what you meant.”

Skip heard that still small voice, “Tell him to forgive himself and let ME heal him.”

Andrew was about to get comfortable next to Skip.

Skip looked at Andrew and Arnold.

They stood and talked to themselves.

Skip said to the soldier, “Ask JESUS for forgiveness. HE said forgive yourself.”

The soldier sat and stared in space.

Skip looked at Andrew and Arnold who were watching and came and sat.

They saw Sheryl and Vivian walk in the tent.

Andrew seethed at Sheryl.

Skip said, “Andrew. Let me handle Sheryl.”

Andrew watched her as she and Vivian went and stood in line.

The three commanders were watching them.

Vivian became very nervous.

She saw a side of Skip last night with Betsy that she did not know he had.

She realized Skip played with her during their affair, but now he was not tolerating nobody.

Specially since he has only two years to live.

Vivian said, “He looks good this morning. I wondered what Harold is doing.”

She sniffed.

Sheryl looked back at Vivian, then she saw the three commanders watching her and Vivian.

Sheryl became scared.

She realized last night that Skip was not going to put up with her anymore.

She looked at Andrew who was ready to send her away forever.

Sheryl looked at Arnold, who looked at her like Skip married beneath himself.

The soldiers saluted and they sat for breakfast.

Andrew watched Sheryl because he wanted her to show one iota of disrespect to the soldiers.

Vivian and Sheryl got eggs and a toast and orange juice.

Andrew looked and said, “Where did the soldier go?”

Arnold looked around.

Skip looked around.

The soldier plate and coffee cup were gone.

Andrew said, “Skip what did you say to him?”

Skip said, “Who?”

Andrew swallowed, “Commander Skip.”

Arnold saw fifteen men not in uniform and said, “Those must be the fifteen contractors. Excuse me.”

Arnold went over and shook a man’s hand and they begin to talk.

Skip said, “Andrew what did you mean you want to marry Betsy?’

Andrew said, “I just felt something dad. I don’t know what I was saying.”

Skip said, “Pray about it.”

Andrew said, “I like Wes.”

Skip saw Sheryl and Vivian walking towards them he said, “I ‘m glad all of this mess came out. I worried about it for years. Andrew ask GOD for forgiveness everyday.”

Andrew bite his toast and said, “I haven’t committed adultery in years evil father.”

Skip said, “Andrew I don’t believe you are still holding that against me.”

Sheryl and Vivian and Arnold sat at the table the same time to hear Skip.

Skip said, “Andrew forgive me for telling you to do your job because it was your time to monitor the telegram and not letting you have a charge of dereliction of duty just so you could go to the ball.”

Arnold turned his head and snickered.

Sheryl looked at the spoiled brat.

Andrew said, “Imagine aunt Vivian that could have been you and me.”

Vivian held her head down.

Skip hit Andrew on his arm.

The soldiers saw him.

Andrew held his arm and said, “Ouch. Forgive me aunt Vivian. Forgiveness is father’s new word for today.”

Andrew rolled his eyes at Skip.

Skip watched Sheryl and Vivian he was waiting for anything.

He was going to leave both of them in that town.

Arnold said, “Skip the contractors say they can put up a simple structure in a week.”

Skip said, “The patients need their own bath area. Have that structure made.”

Arnold said, “Let me think. That is a beautiful piece of land to be the sick so they can recuperate. GOD knew what he was doing. The patients need to be able to look out the windows and see GOD’s grace and be healed. The first lady did not look good.”

Andrew said, “No she didn’t. She has small children.”

Skip was watching Vivian and Sheryl.

He turned to Andrew.

Andrew looked at his dad waiting for him to hit him again.

Skip said, “Andrew if anything should happen I would love for you and BB to marry.”

Andrew looked at his father.

Sheryl was being watched by everyone.

Andrew was ready to send her packing.

Sheryl tried to be polite and spoke to the soldiers.

Vivian said, “Sheryl what you thought about Betsy last night?”

Andrew and Skip looked at Sheryl.

Sheryl looked at Vivian and then Skip and Andrew.

Arnold watched Sheryl. He really did not like her.

A contractor walked over to Arnold and he sat.

He and Arnold begin to talk.

Sheryl looked at Skip and said, “Skip, I lied. I am not a retired teacher.”

Andrew turned to Skip and said, “Can we get rid of her?”

Vivian looked in shock at Andrew.

Skip said, “Shush Andrew.”

Sheryl looked at Andrew and said, “Please forgive me Skip. I wanted to be important being around all those important people coming from all kinds of families. I know I can never be like Shirley.”

Andrew said, “Right.”

Skip said, “Andrew.”

Shirley said, “I married Walter when I was twenty and he was thirty and had just retired from the military and we moved to this state and he started a horseshoe repair shop. He did good. We had a very simple life. Our ends were met everyday. We tried to have children and I was pregnant three times and lost our three children. Finally we moved to the coast and bought a small beach house. It was really quaint. I haven’t been there since we have been married. I rent it out. I use that money and Walter’s small military pension to pay the maid at our house.”

Andrew said, “At our house.”

Skip rolled his eyes at Andrew.

Andrew sulked and turned his head.

Vivian’s eyes were stuck on her sister.

Sheryl said, “Walter died five years after we moved to the coast. We were married for twenty wonderful years. We did not have anything. Walter repaired most people’s horseshoes for free…”

Sheryl turned her head in pain.

Sheryl said, “I was a housewife and made our home comfortable. l learned to quilt and sold quilts and made enough to help meet our needs. Buying candles and fuel, you know coal and gas for the winter. Vivian sent for me each Christmas after Walter died. Then three years later I came to the capitol and met you. You changed me. I had food and a very nice house. You bought me nice clothes and shoes. I knew about you and Vivian that was not enough to force me to go back to being alone and poor. So I held on and pretended I was someone I was not.”

Arnold and the contractor were listening to Sheryl’s pitiful story.

Vivian leaned over the table to look in Sheryl’s eyes.

Andrew looked at Sheryl and he cut his eyes at Skip, because he knew his father’s new word was forgiveness.

Andrew sat to hear his father.

Skip said, “Sheryl I forgive you.”

Andrew threw a fit.

He threw his napkin on the table.

And folded his arms and pushed his chair back from the table.

Vivian was shocked at Andrew.

The soldiers were looking.

Arnold started laughing.

The contractor looked at the young commander and sat still.

Sheryl looked in Skip’s eyes and looked at Andrew.

Sheryl said, “Thank you Skip. Andrew I am not a blue blood like your mother and I will never replace her. I just can’t replace a woman that special...”

Andrew’s arms were still folded.

Andrew was shaking his head to agree with Sheryl that she could never be like his mother.

Arnold laughed.

Skip looked at Andrew and said, “Please Andrew let your bad feelings toward Sheryl go. Now we know the truth.”

Andrew said, “How do we know that is the truth? Did you ever searched her out?”

Vivian said, “I can vouch for her.”

Andrew said, “Whore.”

Skip said, “Andrew I don’t believe you called Vivian that name.”

Andrew said, “Forgive me aunt Vivian…”

Before Vivian could say anything, Andrew said, “Adultress.”

Andrew moved fast from Skip.

Vivian sat with her mouth opened.

Andrew stood.

Skip said, “Andrew please sit.”

Andrew said, “No.”

Skip said, “Sit.”

Andrew said, “I understand that this woman came into our lives and lied that she was someone important and tried to rule over us and destroy the legacy of our mother heart and love she placed in us just so this uneducated treacherous woman would not be cast out back into the street.”

Vivian said, “She was not on the street.”

Andrew bent down and leaned over the table and said, “Forgive me madame--- adultress. Back to the poverty line.”

Vivian said, “I will kick your ass.”

Andrew said, “Is that your line?”

Vivian jumped up in Andrew’s face.

Arnold laughed.

He was used to arguing all the time.

Skip said, “You two fools sit down.”

Andrew and Vivian both looked at Skip and slowly sat.

The contractor said, “Will the young commander be here.”

Andrew looked at the contractor and said, “Why does it take fifteen men seven days to put four walls and floor together?”

The contractor said low to Arnold, “Who is he?”

Arnold whispered, “You better answer him.”

The contractor said, “Sir we are working on the plan and may finish in five days.”

Andrew stared at the contractor and the contractor got fearful because of Andrew’s stare.

Skip said, “Andrew you understand why you dislike Sheryl. She said she can’t be like your mother. Forgive her for that and let GOD heal you. You know who you want to marry and why. You can’t grow and get what you pray for until you forgive from your heart. Yes that is my word the LORD GOD Almighty gave me today. Look at me. HE helped me to get up this morning and walk and wash myself and eat. Trust what you see Andrew.”

Andrew searched his father’s eyes.

Sheryl was hoping for a forgiveness from Andrew.

Vivian did not want a forgiveness. She wanted to fight Andrew.

Andrew looked at Sheryl and then at Vivian.

Vivian balled up her fists at Andrew.

Skip said, “Really Vivian.”

Andrew said, “That worked on Harold. He is forty years older than me and don’t train everyday.”

Andrew arrogantly shook his head and turned his eyes back to Sheryl.

Skip motioned to the cook.

He walked over to Skip.

Skip said, “We are traveling and I don’t want to stop. What food can you prepare and give us within thirty minutes?”

The cook was standing thinking and mumbling to himself.

Skip said, “What ever is ready we will take.”

The cook looked at Skip and walked away.

Andrew noticed the cook did not properly leave.

Vivian was still showing Andrew her small fists.

Andrew shook his head.

Skip said, “I mean what I am saying Vivian Andrew is trained to use his hands to kill. Stop.”

Vivian looked at the very serious Skip.

She eased her hands under the table.

Skip said, “Andrew.”

Andrew looked at Vivian and Sheryl and said, “I have to think.”

Skip looked at his son and said, “Thank you.”

The cook walked back and said, “Sir. I have some boiled eggs, and sandwiches and juice and some fried chicken and bread.”

Skip said, “Thank you.”

Andrew took the basket from the cook and went to the wagon and put the basket in the wagon.

He feed the horses and gave them water.

Andrew untied Skip’s horse and went into the wagon and got the saddle.

Skip, Sheryl, Vivian and Arnold walked out the dining tent.

Arnold went and got his horse, so he could ride to the end of town and see where Jake lived.

Skip old Chester to have Jake help with his investigation.

Arnold wanted to see Jake and have him help him out with the structures at Wes.

Skip said, “I’ll tell Dorothy you will be here for an additional week. I don’t feel right about this thing.”

Arnold said, “I don’t either. I feel we are missing a piece.”

They saw Andrew come out the command center with telegrams.

He handed the telegrams to Skip.

Arnold walked to get his horse.

Skip read the telegrams,

He looked up and saw Andrew had his horse ready to ride out of the command center.

Skip looked at Andrew and said with quivering lips, “Thank you son.”

Andrew bowed.

Vivian rolled her eyes at Andrew.

Skip gave Andrew the folder with the telegrams and he took them back to the office.

Andrew walked out as Arnold walked up with his horse.

Skip mounted his horse on his own strength.

Vivian and Sheryl got into the wagon’s seats.

Andrew help them into the wagon’s seats.

Sheryl tried to be lady like and said, “Thank you.”

Andrew ignored her and went and mounted his horse.

Vivian turned the wagon around and followed after Skip and Andrew and Arnold rode behind Skip.

The sight was very dignified.

The soldiers were lined up and saluting as Skip rode passed them followed by Andre and Arnold.

Skip stopped at Jake’s house.

Jake was in the back with the horses.

Skip dismounted his horse.

He walked to the fence and called, “Jake.”

The horses beat Jake coming to the fence.

Skip looked at the horses and said, “The assassins’ horses?”

Jake said, “Yeah. I haven’t figured it out yet, but I will.”

Skip said, “I want you to help Chester out on this investigation.”

Jake said, “He has been here. I will. How’s Bruce?”

Skip said, “I believe he is going to make it.”

Jake said, “I heard you were going to the big city hospital to die.”

Skip said, “I was. The doctor up there told me I had at least two years. I thank GOD that will give me time to put you in command hold that position for Bruce or Chester.”

Jake teared up and his mouth quivering.

Skip looked at Jake and hit him on his shoulder and looked back at the horses and said, “Come and meet my wife and Arnold who I want you to help out with the simply housing at the temporary hospital.”

They walked to the wagon.

Andrew and Arnold dismounted and saluted Jake.

Jake said, “My GOD is this spoiled Andrew?”

Vivian smirked.

Skip said, “Yeap.”

Jake looked at Andrew’s uniform and said, “Boy you have made your mommy and daddy proud.”

Andrew bowed his head and said, “I really tried.”

Jake said, “I feel it strongly in my spirit.”

Skip said, “Jake this is my wife Sheryl and her sister Vivian.”

Jake walked and looked on the women.

Skip said, “This is my brother Jake.”

Jake said, “Hello.”

Vivian said, “Sir I can tell you must be a great man. How do you do?”

Jake said, “Fine.”

Sheryl tried to smile and reached her hand to shake Jake’s hand.

Jake looked at her and her hand and shook it.

Jake looked at the commander with Skip and said, “I see an older version of a water soldier.”

Arnold grinned and said, “Yes sir.”

He reached and shook Jake’s hand.

Skip said, “We have to leave. I do want to cut the four day trip to three.”

Andrew looked at Skip.

Skip said, “Jake send me updates by telegrams to the headquarters.”

Jake saluted and said, “Yes sir.”

Andrew walked to Skip and said, “Do you want to lay down?”

Skip said, “No. Once we pass the last troop.”

Skip got on his horse by himself.

Vivian and Sheryl watched Skip.

Andrew mounted his horse.

He rode next to Skip and they lead Vivian out the town.

Vivian waved, but Sheryl smiled.

Jake watched them out of sight.

The troop at the beginning of the town saw Skip approaching.

They stood and saluted.

He and Andrew rode until passed dark.

They were at the end of the next town.

Andrew rode back to the wagon and told Vivian, “Pull the wagon over for the night.”

Vivian pulled the wagon over.

Skip nearly fell off the wagon.

Vivian was about to jumped off the wagon and saw Skip.

Andrew caught him.

Sheryl sat and did not move.

Vivian said, “See about your husband.”

Vivian went into the wagon and got the basket of food and the mats.

She pulled back the cover and helped Andrew put Skip in the wagon.

Skip was tired.

Andrew pulled off Skip’s boots and placed them on the step of the wagon.

Vivian said, “Skip you must eat or drink something.”

Skip said, “If I must. An apple and water.”

Sheryl said, “Give me a piece of chicken and a sandwich.”

Andrew looked at Sheryl as she was pulling off her shoes to get in the bed with Skip.

Dr. Obersteen had them put a mattress in the wagon and blankets to make Skip comfortable.

The wagon was very comfortable.

Vivian handed Skip some water and apple.

She handed Sheryl a piece of chicken and a piece of bread.

Sheryl was telling Vivian to give her a piece of fruit.

Vivian walked away from the wagon with Andrew.

Vivian made separate mats for she and Andrew.

She made a small fire with the supplies the military attached to the wagon.

Andrew had to relieve himself he walked away a good distance.

Vivian feed the horses and gave them water.

Vivian pulled off her shoes and sat on her mat and pulled out a sandwich.

She was staring at the sandwich.

Andrew looked around and saw she had fed the horses and gave them water and build a small fire for them and his mat and had the food out for him to select what he wanted.

Andrew got the liverwurst sandwich and drank some water.

Andrew went to sleep.

Vivian was tired, she fell on her mat and went to sleep on top of the mat and sleep without cover for the whole night.

The fire kept the cold from her.

The next morning she was awaken by some animal noise.

She sat up and looked around.

She saw the sandwich was in her hand and she took a bite of the sandwich as she looked around.

Vivian went to the wagon and got more coal and put it on the fire.

She got the coffee pot and coffee.

She walked back to her mat and put everything down and laid on her mat and covered up.

She covered her head, and sleep until Andrew woke her.

Vivian sat on her mat and looked around.

She stood up and went to the wagon and got the water and the water pan and put it on the fire along with the coffee pot.

Vivian was dazed. She could not believe her husband lived like this. How did he make it home sleeping in the open.

She took the hot water to the wagon and said, “Good morning” to Skip and Sheryl and handed them the hot water basin.

Vivian went back and sat down and pulled the basket to her and took out the juice, hard boiled eggs and bread and fruit.

She reached Andrew the basket and took the plate of food to Skip and Sheryl.

Skip and Sheryl were finished washing their faces.

Vivian put the plate on their mattress and was about to walk away and picked up the water basin and poured out their dirty water and filled the water basin for her.

Sheryl was calling Vivian.

Vivian put the water basin on the fire and poured a cup of coffee for Sheryl and Skip.

Vivian walked the coffee to the wagon.

Sheryl said, “Vivian I was calling you because I wanted half of cup of coffee.”

Skip was about to eat a boiled egg.

He stopped and looked at Sheryl.

Vivian said, “Only drink a half of cup.”

Skip looked at Sheryl.

Vivian walked away.

Andrew was listening, he drank a quarter of a cup of coffee and a half of boiled egg and an apple.

Andrew was perplexed as he watched a dazed Vivian.

He said,” Vivian you act as you never camped before. You just made a three day trip with Harold in four days. What is the problem?”

Vivian said, “We fought everyday all through the day. He would off and leave me. Then he had to come back and get me. I would jump in the wagon and leave him and had to go back and get him. So I don’t remember anything else. I could not sleep because Harold would try to get on top of me.”

Andrew had his mouth open to eat his sandwich and he could not stomach eating after Vivian’s testimony.

He turned his head.

Skip was listening and said, “Love.”

Andrew was thinking, “I don’t believe these two fools out in the street fighting like this…”

Sheryl started calling, “Vivian.”

Andrew looked at the wagon and thought, “I can see how someone can force you to beat them.”

Andrew was angry and bite his sandwich.

He got up and put on his boots.

He hitched Skip’s horse to the wagon and gave the horses food and water.

Vivian put out the fire.

Packed up all the food and the mats and blankets and put everything on the wagon.

She sat on the step of the wagon to put on her boots.

Andrew looked at the sky and walked to Skip who was getting in the seat to drive.

Andrew looked at Skip.

Andrew looked at Sheryl who was sitting up in the wagon.

He said, “Let’s make it to the next town by dark. It looks like heavy rain. I don’t want to sleep in the rain.“

Vivian walked to jump in the driver’s seat and did not see Skip.

Andrew said, “Vivian go and sleep.”

Skip looked at the dazed Vivian.

Vivian was facing the wagon with her hand out for the horses’ bridle.

Andrew did not have patience he dismounted his horse and went and picked up Vivian and put her on the mattress.

Vivian slept the entire day.

They entered Tony’s city at dusk.

Andrew found the hotel, but hey had only one.

He got the room for Skip and Sheryl.

He tied his horse to the hotel and drove to Tony’s camp.

He left Vivian in the wagon and he slept under the wagon.

Andrew had reviewed all the telegrams.

The trials for the third set of assassins concluded and they all were found guilty and their execution was set for the next day.

Andrew took some stray and it under the wagon and put his mat on it and his raincoat over the mat.

Andrew was thinking about these assassins don’t say anything. They kept their mouths shut. A blood oath. He went to sleep thinking on the case.

The soldiers followed protocol.

Andrew saw the sentries through out the night.

The soldiers got up at dawn and went through their routine.

Andrew got up and watched the soldiers.

He drove away with Vivian still sleep.

He went to the hotel.

Sheryl and Skip had washed and were seated having breakfast.

Vivian peeped out the wagon and got a change of clothes and walked into the hotel and had a hot bath and changed clothes and ordered breakfast.

They left the hotel after she and Andrew ate.

While she was bathing, Andrew feed the horses and gave them water.

They pressed through the rain and drove all night.

Vivian was fine.

Andrew had his raincoat on and he was fine.

She drove all day and all night.

They arrived in the capitol early the next morning.

They went straight to the headquarters.

The soldiers were happy to see Skip.

Skip told the soldiers not to tell Harold.

He and Sheryl and Andrew were in his office.

Andrew was looking out for Harold from the window.

Vivian waited at the end of the hallway.

Headquarters was a buzzed, when Harold arrived.

Harold noticed the soldiers but his mind was on his work for that day.

When he walked into the office and got the folders for that day he was about to sit on Skip.

Harold caught movement out of the corner of his eye.

He looked up and saw Sheryl, then Andrew.

He looked at the chair and saw Skip and the two men embraced.

Vivian walked in and said, “Harold.”

Harold did not address Vivian.

Andrew walked out.

Vivian walked out to Andrew.

Harold rushed out the office to give Vivian the house key.

Vivian did not turn around, because Harold did not call her name,

She told Harold to keep the key.

Harold walked back in the office,

Vivian and Andrew walked out side in the Headquarters’ yard and talked.