Harold practiced throwing and catching the baseball all winter.

He thought about how he fell.

He thought about how he fixed the games.

Harold wondered did the governor know why he was thrown out of baseball.

He was very mournful.

He was mournful because he did not have the life style he had before. He was not regretful of his wrong doing. He still wanted to use people to get what he wanted.

He was sorry only because he could not live, drug and gamble as he did in the past.

Richard was not allowed to come near Natalie.

He was not allowed at the cute house.

Wes was glad to be back in the country.

He could spend all his time with her, the little girl and Mattie.

The medicine and herb therapy he put Dr. Obersteen was working.

Dr. Obersteen seemed content with his healing progress.

He liked Emma and moved his campsite to Emma’s and spent his time in her tent.

Joshua did not like it.

He stayed in Betsy’s tent, which was near to Mattie’s tent.

Wes would come everyday and examine Mattie and Dr. Obersteen.

Wes still wondered about Mike.

But he only went out to check on them once per week.

Cate stayed in her tent.

She moved her coal into her tent.

She told Emma ND Dr. Obersteen she swore her coal was disappearing.

Emma and Dr. Obersteen thought she was lonely and making up the story.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Cate what are you going to do when the spring comes and the weather gets better?”

Cate stood and looked stunned.

Dr. Obersteen looked at Cate and said, “You know the attendant only provided these things so you can survive the winter. But you will be on your own and making your own living and not selling yourself.”

Emma elbowed Dr. Obersteen.

Cate turned and walked back to her tent.

Dr. Obersteen said, “I have never know people who did not want to work to live or feed themselves.”

Mattie heard the words she said, “Emma are we having the fish for dinner that Joshua and Wes caught yesterday?”

Emma and was still stunned by Cate and rubbing her hands on her dress in nervousness.

Dr. Obersteen looked at Emma and knew she was thinking about what she was going to do for a living since Bill has disappeared.

They walked back to the inside of their campsite.

Emma was moving slow.

Mattie said, “Emma I can help you. Let me help you.”

Emma, “No Mattie are you are still healing.”

Mattie nodded at a seated Dr. Obersteen and said, “Well fine. But let him help you.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Mattie you are jealous Emma has someone in her tent and you don’t.”

He reached for the vegetables.

Mattie said, “You damn right. I maybe sick but I am not ugly and decrepit.”

Dr. Obersteen laughed and said, “I’ll look out for you someone.”

He looked up at a worried Emma and said,”When I get back.”

Mattie looked at Emma and said, “What’s wrong Emma? Did Cate say something that upset you?”

Emma did not respond but sat next to Dr. Obersteen and began to prepare the fish.

They sat in silence.

Mattie was reading a book.

Emma looked around nervously and said, “Where is Joshua?” I want him here now.”

Mattie looked up from her reading and held the place with her finger. She looked at Dr. Obersteen and said, “Emma what is wrong with you? I am glad Joshua is spending time at the house as opposed to around here where he knows his father is not.”

Dr. Obersteen listened.

He knew the story of Mattie’s vicious and near deadly rape by Bill, because Mattie was trying to get Emma to leave Bill.

He could not believe Mattie and Betsy lived with such evil.

They heard talking.

They turned and it was Betsy and Joshua and Wes.

Joshua stopped and got the oil and began to light their oil lamp sticks.

He looked and said, “Cate’s has not lit her lamp sticks. I’ll run with my oil and light her sticks and come back.“

Emma said, “Hurry back.”

Wes and Betsy looked at Emma.

Dr. Obersteen watched Wes and Betsy.

Betsy said, “OH you’re doing the fish…”

Patting Wes on the face, “That my baby and Joshua caught yesterday.”

Wes was blushing and grinning.

Dr. Obersteen smiled and thought, “Maybe I can find that love after Thelma.”

Mattie lifted her head from her pillow.

Wes walked to her to help.

Mattie said, “No Wes I am fine. You saw Dr. Obersteen did not move.”

Dr. Obersteen gave a fake laugh, “Ha. Ha.”

They all laughed.

Mattie said, “I was trying to see that Joshua was gone.”

Betsy turned and looked back.

Mattie said, “I truly want to thank you Wes and Dr. Obersteen for all of your help. If you were not here.”

Mattie turned her head and began to cry.

Wes patted her shoulder

Mattie said, “I knew I was sick. I had determined to die. I had nothing to live for. Everyday I did not have my son. Everyday Bill reminded me through actions not to say anything. I had given up. I wanted to die. Maybe I could have peace in death which I did not have in life.”

Mattie turned her head and cried.

She did not want their hugs and patting.

She waved them away from her and said, “Since all of this came out I have peace. I have not had peace in nearly twelve years. I thank God for help in a time of need. He knew Joshua had the right to knew part of the truth so he could be whole. He knew I needed to get forgiveness for myself and maybe that was part of the sickness. I had to live a few feet from this evil man.”

Betsy sat on Mattie’s chair.

They heard whistling and it was Harold.

Harold stopped and looked at them he knew it was something going on and this time it was not him.

He looked and said, “Where’s Joshua?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “He went to lght Cate’s lamp sticks.”

Harold felt his pocket and said, “I forgot to give her her whistle.”

Wes looked at Harold and sighed.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Harold where are going with that bucket of coal?”

Harold said, “I left my coal at the house.”

Dr. Obersteen said “Why?”

Betsy said, “Harold said he thinks someone was stealing his coal.”

Emma sat in a chair and had the plates in her hand.

Dr. Obersteen said, “That’s strange because a little while ago Cate said She believe someone was stealing her coal.”

Harold said, “Might be. I won’t…”

Joshua was running back from lighting Cate’s oil lamp sticks.

Emma said, “Joshua wash your hands and did Cate come out or say anything.”

Joshua ran to the wash bowl and said, “No.”

Harold said, “I’ll go by and give her her whistle.”

Emma said, “Harold join us for dinner. You have worked all day and no need to go home and try to cook tonight.”

Harold said, “What you got?’

Wes looked at him.

Harold said, “What? I might not want it.”

Betsy looked back and said, “Fish and vegetables.”

Wes sighed and looked at Betsy.

Betsy gave Wes a look and said, “What?”

They had a beautiful dinner and nice conversation.

Harold licked his plate.

Betsy watched Wes.

Wes did not say anything but kept his head straight.

Betsy said, “We need to get back so Nat can eat. She’s been looking funny.”

Harold said, “Yeah I noticed.”

Betsy said, “I think it’s close to Christmas.”

Dr. Obersteen, “Maybe so.”

Betsy said, “Dr. Obersteen you have become talkative since you ran from the first lady.”

Dr. Obersteen smiled and looked at Emma.

Emma smiled.

Betsy watched them and looked at Mattie.

Joshua said, “He sleeps in momma’s tent.”

Betsy jumped up from Mattie’s chair and looked at them and said, “Is this true?”

Wes mouth opened and he thought about that incredible Thelma and compared her to the “country woman Emma.”

Emma grinned and handed a covered plate to Betsy.

Wes looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen knew what Wes look was and he already knew he was not going to hurt Emma.

He told Emma the first week of January he was going back to the big city to assume the position of the city hospital’s administrator and to continue to practice medicine.

Harold thought maybe he could fool around with Emma for a while, since Bill was gone.

He stood up.

Wes and Dr. Obersteen watched him and looked at each other.

Harold said, said, “I did not bring my torch. Can I borrow one of yours until tomorrow. I‘ll bring it back in the morning.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Sure.”

He turned to get up.

Joshua looked at Dr. Obersteen and walked passed him to Harold with a torch.

Joshua lit the torch and gave to Harold.

Harold began to walk to Cate.

Betsy and Wes walked to their home.

Joshua came and sat next to Mattie.

Dr. Obersteen looked at Joshua and said, “I’m sorry because of Bill. I will try to be more sensitive to you and your feelings.”

Joshua looked at Dr. Obersteen and continued to play with his sailboat.

Dr. Obersteen watched Joshua play with his sailboat and said, “Is that how you want to escape Joshua?”

Emma and Mattie were watching Joshua.

Joshua stood to go to his tent, but Emma caught his hand.

She stood and hugged Joshua.

Emma said, “Bill left because he had to go and it is not your fault. You did nothing wrong. “

She bent down and looked in Joshua’s eyes and said, “You are the best child anyone could have.”

Joshua began to cry.

Mattie reached for him.

He hugged Emma and ran to Mattie and fell on her.

Dr. Obersteen jerked because Mattie was still in pain and sore from all of those tests.

Dr. Obersteen touched Emma’s hand and pulled her to his lap.

Emma sat in Dr. Obersteen’s lap and cried.

Harold reached Cate’s homesite and called for Cate.

Cate did not come out.

Harold had to give her the whistle.

Harold walked to Cate’s tent and yelled, “Cate you better here come now or I am coming in.”

Cate did not say anything.

Harold peeped in her tent and she was sitting knitting.

Harold said, “Are you crazy?”

He looked around and saw she made so many knitted coverings and placed over all her walls.

Harold reached her the whistle.

He tapped her on the shoulder and said, “Get this whistle. I told Wes I would give it to you. It’s for medical emergencies but I guess you can use it for anything. Cate why do have coal in your tent?”

Harold looked at the walls and looked at Cate with a questioning look and ran out of her tent.

He ran home and lit his oil lam sticks and wondered why they were not lit.

Harold pulled out two whistles and said, “I ‘ll take one to Thomas, because Mike has one and then the last one to Richard. I’ll check on the kids father.”

Harold thought as he was getting ready for bed about Christmas time at home.

He said, “I did not think about Christmas when I was in the streets. What is this?”

Harold lit the fire outside and thought about how Cate’s tent was not cold.

He thought she maybe on to something.

He went into his tent and brought his pail of coal inside.

Harold turned on his side and fell asleep.

Joshua sat up on Mattie’s lap.

Emma stood from Dr. Obersteen’s lap and wiped her face.

Emma said, “Joshua are you ready for bed?”

Joshua shook his head for yes.

Emma got him by his hand and walked him a few feet to Betsy’s tent.

They moved Betsy’s tent so he could be closed to Mattie.

Dr. Obersteen watched them and then he heard Mattie.

Mattie said, “Oh God.”

Dr. Obersteen jumped up and ran to his tent and gave her some aspirins.

Mattie was crying from the physical pain of Joshua falling on her stomach.

He sat next to her and held her hand.

Emma was saying prayers with Joshua.

Mattie and Dr. Obersteen listened.

Mattie was patting her stomach.

Dr. Obersteen was watching her.

He looked for the whistle so he can get some herbal pain therapy.

Emma walked out Joshua’s tent and saw Mattie patting her stomach and Dr. Obersteen holding her hand.

Emma looked back at Joshua’s tent and walked over to them.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Her stomach hurts. I gave her some aspirins. Where is the whistle?”

Emma said, “Why?”

Dr. Obersteen, “To get some pain therapy.”

Emma said, “You’re not thinking. Where would Wes get some from. Why should he walk all the way back for you to tell him that. I got some left, just a bit.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Woman, bring me that herb.”

Mattie said, “Yes.”

Emma went to the tent and got the first lady’s bag and opened it in front of Dr. Obersteen and Mattie.

She said, “I thought you were through with this.”

Dr. Obersteen whispered and said, “Joshua fell into her stomach.”

Emma said, “We have to give the first lady her bag back. Probably in the spring when Wes and Harold go to the governor.”

Mattie said, “Give me the damn herb!”

Dr. Obersteen shook his head in agreement and grabbed the bottle and gave Mattie a capful but Mattie grabbed his hand. He poured another capful.

Mattie reached again and was smacking her lips.

Dr. Obersteen looked at the bottle and said, “No.”

Mattie looked at Emma to make him give her some more.

Emma looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen looked at both of them and said, “No. Suppose Wes does not have anymore or has to go and make some more up. Mattie come and lay down and try to go to sleep. “

Dr. Obersteen and walked Mattie into her tent and put her in bed.

He said, “Emma where is that whistle.”

Emma said, “Who is she gonna call but us.”

Dr. Obersteen looked at Mattie and said, “Mattie only if the pain gets worst.”

Mattie said, “You want your time.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “You’re damn right.”

Mattie tried to laugh but cried.

Emma ran to their tent and got the whistle and ran back and handed the whistle to Mattie.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Only if the pain gets worst. I want my time with Emma.”

Emma hit him.

He looked around and thought, “Whoa she has coverings over her walls.”

They covered Mattie with some blankets and put some coal on her fire.

Emma looked around.

Dr. Obersteen said, “What are you looking for?”

Emma shrugged her shoulders.

Dr. Obersteen held her hand and they walked to their tent.

He put some coal on their fire and stirred it up.

He looked around while Emma was undressing.

Emma said, “You are suppose to be watching me.”

Dr. Obersteen looked at Emma and grin then he turned his head.

Emma said, “What the…”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I really thought there was more coal in the pail.”

Emma said, “You know I thought Mattie’s coal was short.”

Dr. Obersteen was thinking.

Emma walked to him and pulled him onto their mattress.

He jumped up and dressed for bed.

He pulled the quilts and covers over them.

He looked at their walls and could feel the cold.

He whispered to Emma and said maybe we should put coverings over these walls tomorrow.

He put out their oil lamp.

A few minutes later he thought he heard walking.

Emma hit him.

A little while later Dr. Obersteen and Emma was laying in bed and Mattie started blowing on the whistle.

Dr. Obersteen jumped up.

Emma yelled,” John!”

He looked and grabbed his robe and was nearly knocked down by someone.

John started to run behind the person but Mattie was blowing on the whistle.

Joshua was still sleep.

Emma grabbed a shawl and wrapped it around her.

She ran out of their tent and looked back at the oil lamp sticks.

Then she ran to Mattie.

Emma and Dr, Obersteen ran in Mattie’s tent.

Wes and Betsy were in their tent and they heard the whistle.

Wes said, “That better not be Joshua.”

Betsy hit him.

He put on his pants and boots and coat and walked to the dirt road.

Natalie was wrapped in a quilt and stood in the door.

Wes said, “Natalie it is freezing. Go back inside. Everything is fine. Dr. Obersteen is there. You see Betsy did not move.”

Betsy was sitting up on their mattress and said, “I’m pregnant.”

Wes turned and looked back at their tent.

He had a big fire roaring.

He stood at the dirt road.

Mattie said, “Check Joshua.”

Dr. Obersteen ran out to Joshua’s tent.

Mattie got enough composure and turned and saw Emma with nothing on but a shawl.

Mattie grinned and said, “Ouch.”

Dr. Obersteen returned to Mattie’s tent and said, “Mattie no more medicine tonight.”

Emma said, “Suck on a lemon.”

They wa;ked out.

Mattie said, “That’s not what you sucked on!!”

Dr. Obersteen closed his eyes.

Emma went to the kitchen area and got a lemon and took it to Mattie and said, “Huh.”

Mattie said, “Heifer.”

Emma walked out.

Mattie said, “Pain. Oh pain.”

Emma rolled her eyes and began to walk back to their tent.

Dr. Obersteen walked to the dirt road.

He saw Wes with a torch.

Dr. Obersteen got a torch and waved it to let Wes everything was fine.

Wes returned to pregnant Betsy.

Wes grabbed and hugged Betsy and said, “Pregnant huh.”

They laughed.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Emma it is freezing out here. Come in.“

He said, “Are there any more shawls or coverings?”

Emma went to area next to the kitchen area in Joshua’s old tent and dragged several to their tent.

Dr. Obersteen was standing in the tent looking around.

Emma said, “What are you doing?”

He knew she was about to get upset.

He turned and looked at Emma and said, “Baby you have lost nothing.”

He continued to look around.

Joshua walked into their tent half asleep and laid down on their mattress and tried to cover up.

Emma jumped and ran to her clothes and threw on a nightgown.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Take him back to his tent.”

Dr. Obersteen was lying on Joshua’s mattress with the extra knitted coverings.

Joshua was snuggled next to Emma in her tent.

Joshua smiled.

Dr. Obersteen was prompted on his elbow holding his head and thumping his fingers on the mattress.

Mattie was laughing because she saw Emma put Dr. Obersteen out.

Mattie laughed out for a minute and then cried out in pain, ”Ouch!.”

Dr. Obersteen heard Mattie and he did not care about her pain he said, “Mattie, you are not getting any more pain relief tonight.”

Mattie said, “You neither.”

Dr. Obersteen looked and said, “Foul mouth. I got to find her somebody nasty. That will keep her busy and out of my business.”

Dr. Obersteen was sitting in Mattie’s tent looking at her after she finally feel asleep.

He was checking her vitals when Emma sneaked.

Emma looked at the sleeping Mattie.

She looked at Mattie’s walls and said, “This is why you wanted the knitted coverings.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Shuh. I don’t want to wake her.”

Emma smiled.

He got up and escorted Emma out and towards Betsy’s tent.

Emma stopped and looked back towards their tent.

Joshua was sitting in the tent door.

Dr. Obersteen said, “We have to send him to boarding school.”

Emma laughed and said, “Or with Mattie.”

She leaned to Dr. Obersteen and he said, “Oh yeah,” he flashed a big grin.

Joshua walked and got Emma by her hand and pulled her back to her tent.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Joshua, I was going to walk her back.”

He said under his breath, “In the morning.”

Joshua looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Emma looked back and grinned.

Dr. Obersteen waited until they got in the tent he looked back at Mattie’s tent.

He went into Betsy’s tent and slept at the foot of the bed so he could hear any noise.

When he was put out of their tent he stopped at his saddle and got a pistol and put it under the mattress.

Dr. Obersteen nearly froze but managed to get some sleep.

He got up early and build their fires.

He rode his horse to the cute house and filled their water pails for the day.

He told Wes he need the pain herb for Mattie and that someone nearly knocked him down.

He said, he believe that Cate was not crazy that someone was stealing coal.

Betsy laid in their bed and listened.

Wes and Dr. Obersteen went and got the herbs for the pain and the little girl needed some more herb therapy.

They returned to the hurt house.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Wes you are happy.”

Wes looked at Dr. Obersteen and said “It’s better than I ever thought.”

Betsy just begin to grin and kick the mattress.

Wes said, “Yes that country woman.”

Betsy stopped and flipped on her side to really hear.

Dr. Obersteen said, “I’ll get your water and build up your fires. Mattie has those shawls covering her tent walls. Last night was bitterly cold but her tent was not freezing. Maybe you should try it.”

Betsy said, “Mattie put up the knitted coverings on her wall because she did not want to give them any more coverings because she said they were lazy and did not deserve them.”

Dr. Obersteen and Wes looked at each other and wondered what else she heard.

Wes said, “Thank you nosey.”

Betsy said,”You are welcome Dr. Nosey.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “They are lazy. I asked Cate what she was going to do come the spring. She walked away.”

Wes said, “I’ll be finished in about an hour.”

Dr. Obersteen went and bought several pails of water to fill up the black pot so they would not have to re-do it the next day. He took the water inside and filled the water basins and the water pitcher.

He build the fires in the fireplaces and came back outside and build the fire under the black pot and the fire in front of Wes’ tent. He feed Wes and Betsy’s horses.

The water was hot.

Betsy came out of the tent and got some water and ran to the bath shed and washed.

It was freezing outside.

Betsy yelled out the bath shed and asked Wes to bring her clothes she laid out.

Dr. Obersteen smirked and shook his head and drank some coffee he made.

Wes kneed him and took Betsy her clothes.

He was standing watching Betsy dressed then he remembered Dr. Obersteen and said, “Shuh.”

He ran back to dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen was in Wes tent.

Wes looked around and saw Dr. Obersteen in his tent.

Wes walked in and said, “What?”

Dr. Obersteen, “I don’t mean any harm. But it was taking you a minute. I understand because you are newlyweds. But I am trying to figure this out. I love these large tents.”

Wes looked around and said, “Yeah.”

Dr. Obersteen, “Give me one of those coverings.”

Wes handed him one of the coverings.

Dr. Obersteen looked at Wes and said, “Help me. I got a country woman I want to get back to.”

Wes and Dr. Obersteen put the coverings on the walls and they hanged to the floor.

Betsy passed the coal pile.

She walked into the tent and saw the their coverings on the tent walls and said,”Ok.”

She said, “Wes where did you put the coal?”

Wes and Dr. Obersteen looked at each and walked to the coal pile.

Betsy ran into the house because it was bitterly cold.

Natalie came out and got water and went to the bath shed.

Dr. Obersteen said, “A coal thief.”

He turned and went to his horse to leave.

Wes called him and went in the house and came back with the pain therapy.

Wes said,”What happened that she needs this?”

Dr. Obersteen, “Emma told Joshua it was not his fault that Bill left and that he is a good kid. Joshua cried and ran to Nattie and fell into her stomach and laid there for a while.”

Wes said, “Whew. That will do it. How is she?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Beside foul mouth. Ok.”

Wes, “Mattie? You are kidding? I can see Emma before Mattie.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Emma is mines. I have to find somebody for that Mattie, to keep her busy. That’s going to be my priority when I get back and find a boarding school for Joshua.”

Wes laughed.

He said, “So you like Emma?”

Wes said, “She is married. How are you going to handle that?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I have to get a lawyer. Because I have to have some legal right to send Joshua off to boarding school.”

Natalie returned out the bath shed and they turned and saw Betsy staring at them.

Wes said underneath his breath, “Did she hear that?”

Dr. Obersteen mounted his horse and said, “I don’t care. Noboody gets between me and the mrs.You don’t need to come and check on me and Mattie, we are ok. I will bring your dinner tonight. It’s too cold to be out. I know Joshua will try to come down here. But I will see.”

Dr. Obersteen tilted his hat to Betsy and carried the water and pain therapy to their campsite.

Wes walked to their tent and said, “Now I have to see if Betsy heard anything.”

Wes filled the large bowl with oatmeal and he put their coffee and her tea on the platter.

When he turned around Betsy was standing on the front porch wrapped in a shawl and quilt staring.

He said, “Yeap, she heard.”

Wes walked up to her and he had a medical book under his arm.

He waved his arm for her to get the book.

She got the book and stared at him.

Wes said, “It’s bitterly cold. In the house woman.”

Betsy walked in the cute house.

The strange man said, “Bossy woman.”

JESUS and the HOLY GHOST walked into the cute house and walked to the little girl and the HOLY GHOST expounded the Word of God to her for that day.

Natalie and Betsy sat in the living room and ate breakfast.

Wes bathed the little girl and gave her the herb therapy and he made the paste for her entire back.

He sat and wrote in her case journal.

He turned and saw tears.

He took a washcloth and dried her tears.

Wes said, “Baby you have been through so much. I wish I could make it all go away.”

He patted her for a good while.

Natalie walked in to relieve Wes.

She saw the washcloth and said, “What you got that for?”

Wes said, “Tears. She was crying.”

Natalie covered her mouth and sat and patted the little girl.

Wes said she might be fully wake by Christmas.”

Betsy said, “That would be glorious!”

Wes was scared.

He did not know what to do. He thought Dr. Obersteen would be there. He can help. He would know what to do.

Dr. Obersteen went to their campsite and no one had moved.

Mattie was still sleep and he was happy.

Joshua and Emma were laughing and going over some reading Mattie told him to do.

Dr. Obersteen put the water pails down.

He put water in their pot.

He ran to Emma’s tent and turned his head from Joshua.

Emma smiled and rubbed Joshua on his back.

Dr. Obersteen looked around the tent and left.

He went and got the knitted coverings and brought them back.

He looked around the tent and told Emma to help him.

They put the extra knitted coverings on the tent walls.

Joshua said, “It seem we all will be in here tonight.”

Emma and Dr. Obersteen pulled two of the knitted coverings off the walls and went to Joshua’s tent and covered his walls.

They sat outside around the fire until they made breakfast.

Joshua came to eat.

Dr. Obersteen got up and gave Emma the herbal pain therapy.

Emma said, “Should I take this and put it in my tent or leave it out here.”

Emma took the herbal pain therapy her tent.

Dr. Obersteen and Joshua shook their heads in agreement.

Dr. Obersteen check Mattie’s vitals and covered her up.

Joshua was trying to get to the little girl.

Emma made him put on two pairs of long johns and two pairs socks.

Dr. Obersteen was taking his medicines.

Emma got dressed and wrapped herself in a blanket and said, “John can I take your horse.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Yes.”

Emma said, “Joshua hop up.”

Joshua mounted the horse and Emma took Joshua down to the cute house.

They counted all the way.

Emma was cold.

She was fully dressed.

She wrapped a quilt around them.

She rode Joshua to the front steps.

Joshua jumped off the horse and ran into the house.

Wes came out with a quilt around him.

Wes said, “Hi Emma.”

Emma said, “It’s not warm in the house?”

Wes said, “Not at all. Can you tell Harold not to come today. Dr. Obersteen did everything”

Emma was about to dismount the horse and thought about Mattie.

She said, “Put the extra knitted coverings over the windows.”

They made so many for the little girl.

Emma returned to her campsite.

Mattie was still sleep.

Dr. Obersteen walked to Emma.

Emma said, “Wes said to tell Harold not to come today because you did everything. Good boy.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Do I get a treat?”

They heard the little girl screamed. Dr. Obersteen mounted his horse and they rode to Harold and called for him.

Harold rushed to his tent and peeped out.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Wes said you don’t need to come today.”

Harold was shivering.

Dr. Obersteen dismounted his horse.

Emma looked at him, because she was ready to get back to Mattie.

Emma said, “Harold why is your fire low? Put some coal on it.”

Harold went into his tent to get the coal and he turned around and around.

Emma and Dr. Obersteen watched him.

Harold said, “Do yall see a coal bucket outside?”

Emma and dr. Obersteen said, no.

Harold said, “My coal is gone.”

Dr.Obersteen said try this put those two extra coverings over your tent walls. What are you going to do today Harold?”

Harold said, “There’s some wood in the shed. I just got to get to the shed.”

Dr. Obersteen looked around and said, “Put on your clothes Harold and lets go and get you some wood, because I am not coming back here today nor tomorrow. I will tell Wes I told you not to come tomorrow.”

Dr. Obersteen looked at Emma.

Emma was mad and slid off the horse.

Harold said , “You can sit out here.”

Emma rolled her eyes at Harold and passed him and went in his tent and sat on his mattress.

Harold said, “I was about to tell you that. Doc what you looking like that for? She’s not going to catch nothing. Your program wont be stopped.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Harold, lets go.”

Harold ran to the tent and got the whistle.

They went to Mike’s first.

Harold said, “Why are we here?”

Dr. Oberstee said, “The attendant bought the horse and wagon and hay for the use of this new settlement.

Dr. Obersteen call Mike.

Mike came to his tent door.

Mike fire was low.

Dr. Obersteen said, “We need you to load the wagon with wood for Harold and Richard and the kids’ father.”

Mike stood for a minute.

Dr. Obersteen looked at Mike and said, “Now.”

Mike went back in his tent.

Harold said, “No coal.”

Mike came back and Harold rode with him to the shed.

Dr. Obersteen rode to Shelia and Called to Shelia, “Do need any wood?”

Shelia ran to her door and said, “I need some coal.”

Dr. Obersteen thought, she‘s a lunatic.

Dr. Obersteen said, “You were there. The coal was equally divided out. You were told how to use the coal. If you have used all your coal up and there is two and a half months left. You have to use wood.”

Shelia said, “Can they order some more for the next two and a half months?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Do you have any money Shelia to order anything. How did you survive living on the streets during the winter?”

Dr. Obersteen turned and rode away.

Harold and Mike looked at Shelia as if she was a lunatic.

Mike said, “I put my coal in my tent. I keep my clothes even my boots on all the time. I go outside to put my food on the fire and stay inside until it is done. I even bring that inside until the next day.”

Harold said, “So you got some coal?”

Mike said, “Yeah.”

They were loading the wagon. They unloaded a lot of wood at Shelia.

They unloaded almost the wagon at Thomas.

Harold left him the whistle and told him only to blew it if he has an emergency.

Harold and Mike went back to the shed and loaded the wagon again and Shelia was peeping out her tent and said, “Ask dr. Obersteen if they are gonna order some more coal?”

Mike said, “Look he already told you no.”

Harold did not say anything to Shelia but jumped in the seat and they beat Dr. Obersteen back to his homesite.

Dr. Obersteen dismounted his horse and walked to Harold’s tent and meet Emma’s glare.

He said, “I’m sorry.”

Emma stood, “Are we leaving?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Yes.”

Emma walked to the horse.

Harold and Mike were unloading the wood.

Emma walked over and let the flap down and the wood fell onto the ground.

Dr. Obersteen looked.

Mike and Harold were in shock.

They did not know the wagon was made like that.

Dr. Obersteen smiled and helped Emma onto the horse and said, “Smart girl.”

Emma did not say anything because she was angry and cold.

Mike and Harold unloaded all the wood at his place and ran back to the shed and loaded up again.

They dropped off a lot of wood at Richard.

The children’s father took his wagon to the shed and loaded it up.

He said it seemed his coal wasn’t as much as he thought.

Mike and Harold looked at each other.

They made the last stop with frank and Glenda and dropped off what they had left.

Mike said, “We have to get Cate another day.”

Mattie was awake and did not want anymore oatmeal.

Mattie said, “I rather have that beef jerky and some tea.”

She got up and washed and changed clothes.

Mattie was very comfortable in her tent.

Mattie began to prepare dinner.

Emma said, “No Mattie.”

Mattie stood and prepared a very large pot of soup.

Dr. Obersteen was covered with a quilt and sitting by the fire and reading a medical book.

Emma saw hm and said, “John. Your help.”

He put down his book and took the very large pot of soup and put it on the fire.

Emma threw the dish cloth and began to cry.

Dr. Obersteen did not know what to do.

He walked to the tent.

Emma was lying on the bed crying.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Emma what is wrong?”

Mattie walked to the tent door and said, “Pain.”

Emma pointed to the bottle she had hung on the wall.

Dr. Obersteen got the bottle of herbal pain therapy and reached outside to Mattie.

Emma said, “The only thing Bill got us was the set of large cooking pots.”

Dr. Obersteen kneeled on the bed and said, “Silly.”

Emma pointed outside.

Dr. Obersteen ran behind Mattie and grabbed the bottle of herbal pain therapy as she turned it up.

She swallowed about a fourth of the bottle.

Dr. Obersteen said, “You had no business standing on your feet. Go and lay down.”

He turned and walked away.

Mattie was about to say something.

Dr. Obersteen threw up his finger and said, “Not a word.”

Dr. Obersteen walked back in the tent and looked around and placed the bottle in a corner.

He was mumbling, “With your foul mouth.”

Emma pulled him to her and laid with her and he said, “You know I think those coverings are helping to keep the cold out.”

Emma said, “I did not sleep well tonight. Huh.”

She fell asleep.

Mattie went to her tent and fell asleep and slept to dinner.

Dr. Obersteen went and got his medical book and read until it was getting dark.

Emma got up and made bread.

She put the soup in a large covered kettle and put the bread and butter in another pot.

Dr. Obersteen lit the oil lamp sticks and a torch.

He looked at he water and got the pails.

Emma watched him.

He could see Cate had her oil lamp sticks lit.

He was balancing the water pails and the pots on the horse.

He made it to the cute house and Wes came out and got the food.

Wes told Dr. Obersteen Emma told him to cover the windows with the knitted coverings and it really helped.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Shelia has used all her coal and said for yall to order more. Harold said, his coal bucket was in his tent and it was stolen. I told him since you said for him not to come today and tomorrow he better get fire wood. Mike said he keeps his coal inside his tent. Thomas was doing so much better and he had a little coal left. Harold and Mike loaded everyone with firewood. Emma was having an emotional breakdown and Ms. Foul mouth pulled one over on me and drank a quarter of the bottle of herbal pain therapy before I caught her.”

Wes said, “What? How did that much affect her?”

Dr. Obersteen, “It affected her good. She slept about five hours and woke when I was leaving to come here.”

Wes, “What caused her to need the herbs?”

Dr. Obersteen, “She stood and made this soup. She did not want Emma to cook.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Tell Joshua to come out.”

Wes said, “She cried tears today.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Who hasn’t?”

Wes said, “The little girl.”

Dr. Obersteen thought for a minute as Wes went into the house and took their dinner.

Joshua walked to the steps and looked at the water pails.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Get on this horse boy.”

Joshua got on the horse and Dr. Obersteen said, “Your momma sent this covering for you and I see you have the one from this morning.”

Dr. Obersteen put the covering on Joshua and they balanced the water pails and made it home.

Dr. Obersteen was determined not to move the next few days.

Wes went into the house and sat next to the little girl’s bed and thought for a long time.

He heard Natalie Betsy eat the soup and talk about how good it was.

Wes wrote everything Dr. Obersteen said about Mattie’s pain and her overdosing on the herbal pain therapy and no visual effects only she slept for five hours.

Betsy walked into to relieve Wes so he could eat.

He heard Natalie slurping and he turned his head.

Betsy laughed.

She told Wes, “You better go and get the soup or starve. I don’t want you to be weak.”

She twisted her eyebrows.

Wes looked at Betsy and knew what she meant.

Natalie walked into the room.

Wes looked at Natalie then at Betsy he did not say anything he stood and touched Betsy’s elbow and walked into the living.

He lifted the top of the soup and smelled was very pleasant. He got the clean bowl and dipped a little soup.

It was delicious. He got some more and ate the fresh cooked bread.

He fell asleep thinking about Shelia and the soft laughter of Betsy and Natalie.

Emma, Joshua, Mattie and Dr. Obersteen all were covered with quilts.

They ate by the fire next to Mattie’s tent.

Emma and Joshua put the food and the dishes away.

Emma tucked Joshua in bed.

Joshua said, “Momma I think she hears me.”

Emma said, “She probably does Joshua.”

They prayed.

Emma walked out to Mattie and said, “You need anything for pain before I turn in.”

Mattie tried to twist in her chair.

Dr.Obersteen watched her.

He said, “Emma can you bring my bag and the pain therapy.

Joshua yelled and said, “I’m not cold.”

Emma went and retrieved Dr. Obersteen’s medical bag.

He picked Mattie up and carried her to her tent and put her in the bed.

Emma ran in with his medical bag.

Dr. Obersteen examined the quiet Mattie.

He felt a knot in her stomach.

Mattie flinched when he touched it.

Emma jumped.

He gave her a capful of the herbal pain therapy.

He and Emma stayed until Mattie fell asleep.

Dr. Obersteen put some logs and coal on Mattie’s and Joshua’s fire and added logs to he and Emma’s fire.

He put down his medical bag.

He was thinking.

He and Emma dressed for bed.

Betsy and Wes went to their tent.

Wes put some coal on the fire.

Betsy said, “Wes it’s not too cold in here.

They dressed for bed.

Wes who liked the cold said,”It’s not bad.”

Betsy put the extra quilt at her feet. She pulled it up.

Natalie covered the little girl with extra coverings.

She went in the living room and made a mat on the floor and laid on the mat

and slept until the morning.