

Jake rode in front of Laura and Clara.

He heard the wagon full of children playing and talking.

He turned and rode back to Laura and Clara and said, "I am going to check in with Skip. You continue to the new settlement. I told the soldiers you were coming to the residents prepare for Wes's funeral. They will let you pass."

Jake peeped in the covered wagon at the children and said, "You all stay in the wagon until everything is clear. OK?"

All the children said, "OK."

Jake turned and sped away.

The governor's son watched Jake.

Laura turned back and saw him watching Jake.

The governor's son looked at Laura and continued to watch Jake out of sight.

The governor's children became quite for the rest of the ride to the new settlement.

The governor's son said, "Joshua and Angelica lost their father who saved our father."

Laura shook her head at the depth of what the governor's son just said.

Clara looked at Laura.

Mellissa and Ida returned to the town as Laura approached the new settlement.

Mellissa stepped out Ida's wagon and looked around at the soldiers.

She saw Clarence watching her.

Clarence ran over and got the three horses and split the money from the horses' saddles with the five. He met his mother and brother in the next city and sent them home with three new horses and he kept their old horse which he will ride home in thirty days.

Clarence watched Mellissa he could not stand her.

Mellissa went into her house and was in the house for fifteen minutes and ran out the house to Ida's house and told the security soldiers she had been robbed.

The security soldiers watched the soldiers across.

The soldiers across the street watched Mellissa and the white security soldiers.

Ida ran out the house and said, "Mellissa what is wrong?"

Mellissa said, "I've been robbed."

Ida just stood and looked at Mellissa.

Ida knew she was accusing the black soldiers of robbing her.

The security soldiers knew Mellissa was accusing the black soldiers of robbing her.

They did not see the soldiers move that week-end.

The sentries patrolled all week-end.

The lead soldier had come and talked to the five soldiers.

Isaiah became angry.

The security soldiers watched him.

The other soldier was on his back reading his bible.

He stood up and watched this unfolding scene.

Tim was in the sweet shop getting his candy for that day.

William was walking to Ida, because he saw when she came back.

Tim heard Mellissa and walked out on the porch.

He saw William and called William.

William walked to Tim.

William reached his hand into the bag and grabbed a few pieces of candy.

Tim said, "That woman is accusing these five soldiers of robbing her."

William looked at Tim and walked out the door and stood and looked at Mellissa.

Tim walked out the sweet shop and closed the door.

They stared at Mellissa and the security soldiers.

Ida liked the soldiers across more so than the stiff security soldiers at the house.

One security soldier saw Tim and knew he was a furloughed soldier.

They went through training at headquarters together.

He said, "Ma am why are you telling us?"

Ida said, "Mellissa what was taken?"

Mellissa threw her hands in the air and said, "Stuff."

Tim and William walked down the boardwalk and stood by the black soldier who was standing on the porch.

The other security soldier saw Tim and William stopped by the black soldiers to show their support.

Tim offered the soldiers candy.

The soldiers said, "No."

The soldier on top of the building said, "Did you pay for that?"

Tim frowned up and said, "Of course I did. And what is your business with it?"

The soldier said, "That's my shop. I am going to buy it."

Tim turned his head to the side and smirked and unwrapped a lollipop and began to suck on it.

Ida said, "Mellissa are you sure you have been robbed?"

Mellissa said, "Yes..."

She turned and looked at Clarence and said, "One of them did it."

Ida screamed, "Mellissa?"

The sentries were coming down the street in front of the buildings and another pair was coming down the street in front of Mellissa's house.

The security soldiers looked at Mellissa.

She had accused the soldiers of a felony they had to tell the sentries.

The sentries sensed tension.

The two pairs of sentries stopped.

The governor's drunk mother-in-law was standing and peeping out of the door.

The security soldier that stood on the left of Ida's house told. "Ma am you said the soldiers robbed you. You go and tell the sentries. I don't want nothing to do with this because you are a liar."

Ida threw up her hands and walked back to the house and passed the drunk mother-in-law.

Mellissa looked at Ida.

She looked at the security soldiers and said, "Fine."

She walked to the two white sentries and told them she was robbed.

The black sentries watched Mellissa.

One of the black sentries that Chester was his captain looked at the five black soldiers and saw they all had their fingers on the trigger.

The white sentry dismounted his horse and said, "Ma am where do you live?"

Mellissa pointed to her house.

He said, "Let's go."

Mellissa walked to her house.

The sentry followed her.

The other sentry watched the black soldiers. He saw they were ready to shoot.

The security soldier that stood on the left of Ida's house went back to his post.

The sentries looked at him.

He remembered he was poor.

His family stayed in the shanty area of the city.

They could not go to school. The school required children to wear shoes.

He would go to the lake and the men at the lake would pay him a penny if he would place the bait on the hook.

He would go into the fields and pick blackberries and plums.

He would take the berries home, but people would see him and buy the berries and plums from him.

He wanted to go to school so bad, but since his daddy died his mother married another man, who would curse the five children or beat them or slap them. He would not buy the children nothing, not shoes so they could go to school.

The money that Roger made he would bury in his secret place in the back yard. One day his mother's new husband saw him and went out in the back yard and dug the money.

Mr. Tony whose back of his house was to Roger's family house back yard.

Mr. Tony saw the man dig up Roger money.

He would beat his mother also.

One day Roger was very hungry and stop by Miss Lillie to sell her some berries on the way home.

Miss Lillie had baked a blackberry pie from the berries he sold her earlier that week.

Roger knocked on her ragged door frame.

Miss Lillie walked to her door and saw Roger and said, "Roger you are a hard worker. You out there in the fields with all those snakes to pick all these berries and sell them for a dime. I just don't have any money myself. I just use the last of flour and sugar to make that blackberry cobbler I put in the window to cool off."

Roger held his head down.

Miss Lillie looked at him and her heart hurt for him and his brother Marvin. They worked so hard and she looked at them.

They would go out in the winter with ragged socks to find work, because they did not have shoes. The new daddy said he could not afford shoes for five children.

Mr. Tony told Miss Lillie what the new daddy said about getting the kids shoes.

He said, "Their daddy wasn't shit and this one is worst than their daddy."

The new daddy stole Roger and Marvin's money.

He went into town and bought him some whiskey.

He saw Lillie's blackberry pie on the way home drinking his whiskey.

He looked around to see if anyone was watching.

Mr. Tony side of his house was next to Miss Lillie's kitchen.

Miss Lillie's blackberry pie was still in the window.

The new daddy went home and beat the mother very bad.

He told the five children he was going to beat each one like that until he get Miss Lillie blackberry pie.

He started to try rape the two girls at the house, two of the boys tried to keep him away from the girls, who were five and seven.

Mr. Tony ran into their backyard. His wife ran behind.

Mr. Tony did not have anything.

His wife was with him looking around for something.

Roger ran to Miss Lillie's house and snatched her blackberry pie,

Miss Lillie saw Roger and ran out of her and called him a thief.

That word stung Roger all his life.

Mr. Tony and his wife went to Miss Lillie and told what the new daddy did and was trying to rape the two little girls that what he did to force Roger to come and steal the pie.

Miss Lillie said, "I was hunger and I called that child a thief. Because of that low down dog. I don't know why his mammie married that trash."

Mr. Tony's wife said, "Some women just have to have a dog. They don't care about their children and what they are putting the children through."

For three years Roger heard people calling him a thief because of the blackberry pie.

Finally he could no longer try to protect his brothers and sisters and be called a thief.

Roger left home and lived in the woods.

His sisters ran away and stayed in the woods with him.

The mother did not know what to do.

Roger could not take care of his sisters.

Roger had picked a lot of berries and plums and was trying to sell them.

A man in a military uniform looked at Roger and dismounted his horse and asked Roger how old he was, because he saw his sisters and said, "How old are you and how old are they?"

Roger looked back and said, "I'm fifteen and they are eight and ten."

The soldier shook his head and said, "You have a long way to go and to carry them. I am passing through to go to the military headquarters three days away. I will see what I can do to help you."

The soldier looked at them with no shoes and he looked at the sky and knew it was going to be a bad winter.

He gave them his only blanket and a few dollars.

The soldier said, 'If you can stay around here as long as you can until I come back.'

Roger was excited and said, "Yes Sir."

Soldier Bentley continued to headquarter.

He prayed every day for the boy and his sisters he did not have money.

He just came back from helping his brother who was in jail for killing his wife and family and setting their farm on fire.

Soldier Bentley prayed and said, "God You just set my brother free from this evil. I know You got a plan for these little children. You put them in my life, because You trust me to do Your will. Help me to hear Your voice and follow Your direction about them O God."

Soldier Bentley tossed and turned.

The next day he went to the commander and asked if he could see him for a few minutes.

Normally the commander would say. "Follow the chain of command he put in place. The commander knew Bentley had just returned from six weeks of helping his brother being cleared of murder and arson.

The commander nodded his head for yes.

Bentley walked in the commander's office.

The commander closed the door.

The commander said, "I have exactly five minutes. What do you want?"

He pointed to the chair for Bentley to sit.

Bentley leaned forward and did not know what to say.

The commander sat and looked at Bentley.

He saw he was terribly disturbed about something.

The commanders were outside waiting for their morning briefing.

The office soldier knocked on the commander's door and opened it.

The commander looked at Bentley and said, "I told you five minutes and you wasted those five minutes."

The commander stood and Bentley looked at him and saluted and walked out.

Bentley saluted the other commanders as he passed them.

He thought they are very dignified and have money.

Bentley stood in the office for a minute.

The office soldier named Arnold walked over to him and said, "You are not to be here if you don't have an appointment."

Bentley said, "I got a problem and need help."

Arnold and Harold felt good because they had just helped another soldier named Skip."

Harold looked back at the commander's door and said, "Tell us your problem."

Bentley said, "When I was returning to base from helping my brother, I passed through the city and these children lived in the woods. They were selling blackberries. They had on totally ragged clothes and no shoes. I gave them my blanket and a few dollars. I promised them I would come back in thirty days to help them."

Arnold said, "Whoa."

Harold looked and his eyes swell with tears.

The commander walked out his office to get a report.

Bentley walked fast out of the office.

Arnold and Harold had tears in their eyes.

The commander saw them but did not say anything.

He said, "Harold I need the supply report."

Harold ran and got the report and gave it to the commander.

The commander stood and looked over the report.

He said, "Harold get a supply wagon and load it with blankets, socks, thermal underwear and winter outerwear for the troops in the far west city. It is going to be cold this winter. Get two soldiers to deliver these goods. Have the soldiers leave today."

Harold stood and ran to the supply tent.

He pulled extra supplies.

He saw Bentley walking dazed.

Harold looked at the supplies and packed extra blankets and coats.

He peeped around and did not see anyone and he ran and caught Bentley.

Harold said, "The commander just orders winter supplies to be sent to the troop in that city/ He needs two drivers.

Bentley was dazed and did not know what to think.

Harold said, "I can put you down as a driver. So you don't have to ask the commander for time off to see about the kids. I put extra blankets and socks for the children and coats they can wrap up in. You will be paid today. You can them boots and find a rooming house for them to stay until you get a chance to go back and check on them."

The commander was standing in the window watching Bentley and Harold.

Harold looked up and saw the commander watching them.

Harold turned his head and said, "G damn. He's watching us."

Bentley said, "Who?"

And started looking around.

Harold hit Bentley on his head and said, "You knuckle head. Now he knows we were talking about the supply wagon. Damn know I have to face his wrath."

Harold had the wagon pulled up to the front of the headquarters and Bentley was grinning.

Harold rolled his eyes at Bentley and said, "The next time dumbass I won't try to help you. You got me out here in this damn cold because the commander got mad.

Bentley said, "Thank you Harold."

Harold looked at Bentley wide eye, because he was so mad with Bentley.

Harold drove the drive the wagon all day and most of the night.

Bentley took over and he drove through the night while Harold slept.

Harold was tired but he heard Bentley praying for hours and singing church songs until daybreak.

Harold knew he heard Bentley say, "God where can the children stay that they will be warm, fed and protected?"

Harold was still mad. He mimicked Bentley and pulled several blankets on him to go to sleep.

But Harold could not go back to sleep. The sleep had departed from him.

He could not figure out why he was sleep and now is awake and had no sleep in his body.

Then he heard Bentley praying again.

Harold laid on his back and said, "is that the reason, I am mad with him?"

Harold was stout hearted and laid there for hours and finally said, "Forgive me for being mad with him, god."

Harold instantly went to sleep.

They pulled into a city and asked for the general store.

Bentley went into the store and bought each child a pair of boots.

Harold was sitting in the drivers side of the wagon waiting for Bentley.

He joined the military at fifteen and had been in constant battles for fifteen years. He was ready to do something else, but whatever he did he had to learn a trade.

He saw a restaurant and wanted breakfast. He had gotten use to eating breakfast everyday.

He did not like for anything to mess with his breakfast.

Harold saw Bentley returning, he jumped out the wagon and pointed at the wagon and pointed up the street at the restaurant.

He went into the restaurant and sat at a stool and ordered breakfast.

He was still mad and looked around and saw the young girl picking up dishes and she dropped some forks and bent over to pick them up.

Harold liked her body and waited until she was at his seat and he dropped his napkin.

The young girl picked up his napkin and reached it to him.

The owner looked at Vivian and smiled.

Harold dropped his fork.

The young girl picked it up and reached it to Harold.

He was trying to get her to look at him.

He ate his breakfast and watched her until she finished cleaning the tables.

Bentley was irritated because he thought they should be on their way, because he had to spend at a day taking care of the children for winter.

Harold finished his breakfast and he looked at the owner and smiled.

He paid for his breakfast.

He saw Vivian wrapping up to leave for the day.

He hurried and took out a large bill out of his wallet.

The owner bucked his eyes and whistle and said, "Whoa."

Vivian passed Harold.

He reached and caught Vivian's hand and put a five dollar bill in her hand.

Vivian looked in her hand and saw the money and grinned.

She looked at Harold.

Harold said, "Finally you look at me. What is your name?"

She said, "Vivian."

Harold said, "I'll come back to see you Miss Vivian."

Harold walked out the restaurant.

Vivian, the owner and his wife screamed.

Harold heard them and grinned.

He walked to the wagon and looked at the supplies.

Then he looked at an angry Bentley who was sitting with his arms folded.

Harold looked up at heaven and thought, "You gonna say something to him."

Bentley said, "We will getting there late tomorrow,"

Harold said, "I met my wife thanks to you."

Bentley looked at Harold and Harold looked at Bentley.

Bentley said, "You better marry her too."

He poked his mouth out and turned his head.

Harold could not believe Bentley's attitude over breakfast.

Harold was wounded in the last battle and was recuperating at headquarters in the commander's office.

He did such a great fight the commander gave him two medals.

Harold was thinking about the young girl he saw in the restaurant.

He drank, gamble and spent all his money on women.

He thought about the fact he had no house, no furniture, no horse, no money.

He had to think how to recover something and show the attractive woman he could provide for her.

He was about to retire from the military and the pension was nothing for him to provide her life with.

Harold thought all the way to the next city.

Bentley was watching Harold.

The more upset Harold was he drove fast.

They made it to the city at the end of breakfast.

Harold jumped out the wagon to go and get breakfast.

Bentley yelled at Harold, "Where are you going?"

Harold pointed to the restaurant.

Bentley said, "The children."

Harold looked and pointed across the street.

Bentley looked and the building said, "Rooms."

Bentley looked at Harold and pointed to the supplies.

Harold exhaled and held up his hand.

He went and got coffee the boiled egg and a piece of bread.

He walked out the restaurant and pointed at the rooming house.

Bentley ran across the street and reserved two rooms.

Harold drove and found the troop at the end of the city.

They gave the troop all the supplies.

The troop was only twenty five, but Harold gave all the soldiers two blankets, three pairs of socks, two sets of thermal underwear and their gloves, hats and coats. Harold had sneaked several large containers of coffee and sugar.

They left the troop and went to the wooded area.

Bentley got out the wagon and Harold looked around and was watching.

Harold said, "Call them."

Bentley said, "I don't know their names."

Harold looked at Bentley in disbelief and stared off in the distance.

Bentley said, "Children. It's me the soldier. I came back to help you."

Roger stepped out and peeped.

Bentley looked back and around.

Bentley said, "What's wrong."

Roger said, "Some came and was trying to steal us."

Bentley said, "Are you ok?"

Roger nodded his head for yes.

Bentley said, "Let's go. I found you all a room in the city and I got you socks and boots.

Roger did not know whether to trust Bentley.

Bentley said, "I am a good man. I won't hurt you."

The girls fell out the bushes. They were sick and weak.

Bentley picked up one.

Roger picked up the other sister.

They put the three in the back of the wagon and laid them in the wool blankets.

They were in the wagon and Harold turned the wagon around and went back to the troop and said, "Fellows these children are sick and need help."

The medic ran to the children and check them and said, the ten year may not make it.

Bentley looked at Roger.

Roger was breaking down and said, "It's my fault. I could not take care of her."

The captain said, "Where are you folks?"

The eight year old said, "Daddy is dead and momma married a man that beat us black and blue everyday. So when Roger left we knew he was in the woods and we followed him. The man would open our legs up and our other brothers would fight him. Then he would get mad and beat momma so she could not move."

The captain bit his tongue.

Two soldiers said, "Show us where you live."

The captain looked at the men and said, "Greene and Williams don't move."

The captain said, "Troop you heard the little girl. Do you want to take on the parent role or send them to the city?"

Greene said, "Send them to the city out here in the cold would be too much on these children."

The soldiers said, "We chip in every pay and pay for their expenses."

Bentley and Harold stayed two days.

The medic stayed with the little girl until she started moving.

The children sleep in the wagon.

The soldiers set up the spare tent and boiled hot water and used it as a bath room.

Bentley went into town and paid for the two rooms.

The clerk said, "She gave away one room because he had not returned."

Bentley stared at the clerk.

Another worker said, "If there are children Miss Nealie would take them."

The other clerk turned to the clerk and excitedly said, "That's right."

Bentley was still angry and said, "Where is this house?"

The other clerk ran to the door and showed Bentley.

Bentley left and went to the house.

The woman was in her forties and a widower.

Her husband was in the military and he died years ago and his pension was hardly nothing. So she rent out rooms.

Bentley knocked on her door.

He was looking around the neighborhood. He looked up at the sky and knew it was going to be a bad winter.

Bentley introduced himself to Miss Nealie and told her his story.

Miss Nealie looked around and did not see the children.

Bentley was wondering what she was looking for.

He said, "Ma am, what are you looking for?"

Miss Nealie said, "The children. That is who we are talking about right?"

Bentley said, "They are with the troop."

Miss Nealie screamed, "The troop. That is not a place for children to be."

Bentley looked at Miss Nealie and said, "There's more."

She looked at Bentley.

Bentley said, "One of the girls was sick and the medic was working to bring her back. And there are two more boys, one twelve and the other thirteen."

Miss Nealie sat for a few minutes.

Her helper walked out the kitchen and stood in the parlor and listened.

Miss Nealie said, "I will definitely take the three who ran away. What is the condition of the two boys that are left?"

Bentley said, "I haven't checked on them."

Miss Nealie said, "You can let the other two know where the three are, but they can't stay. I have others that board."

Bentley said, "Ma am thank you very much."

Miss Nealie said, "I don't want trouble with the children's parents."

Bentley said, "I will leave you my information. The children needs the basic necessities. I will go to the general store and buy them something."

Miss Nealie said, "You can have the military to send the monthly charge. They will go to school while they are here. And you can have a little extra sent for my troubles."

Bentley nodded his head in agreement.

He said, "The troop will send someone once a month to check on them and pray we don't have problems but you can reach the troop and Captain Gaston to inform him."

Miss Nealie said, "Where is the troop?"

Bentley said, "At the end of the city, where the large wooded area is."

Miss Nealie thought for a minute and looked at her helper and said, "Yes I know."

Bentley went and bought the basic necessities, combs, brushes, soap toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap underwear, washcloths and towels.

Bentley went back to the troop and told them the room was given away, but a military widow had rooms.

Bentley was about to talk and he saw Greene getting ready to jump on Harold's back.

The very young Captain Gaston looked at Harold and Greene and said, "They have been fighting all day."

Bentley stared at Captain Gaston.

Captain Gaston said, "They are ok."

Bentley said, "She wants to know the condition of the other two boys and let them know where these three are."

Greene was sitting on Harold's shoulders twisting his neck and said, "I don't agree the bad daddy will coming looking for his children and then you will another problem. It will look as if the military was involved."

The young captain looked at the red face Harold and said, "Greene turn him loose."

Greene said, "He likes this."

He looked in Harold's face and saw he was about to pass out and jumped down and sneaked away.

The captain looked at Greene and back to Harold and said, "You're ok. I'll talk to him. He's violent and likes to fight. He is in a tent by himself because he jumped on everyone in this troop."

Bentley said, "He hasn't jumped on you."

The captain said, "He did and I shot him. I will shoot him again. The medic fixed him up and I reported it as an accident.

Harold stood up and said, "We're ready to go now. I want to ask you captain, how did you advance and you are so young?"

The captain said, "The commander believes in education. I joined out of college and worked hard in training and took all kinds of assignments to show headquarters that I am willing to work hard. So if I advance now. I can be home with my family for the holidays."

Harold tried to nod his head and was in pain.

The captain called Soldier Johnson, and said, "See if you can straighten out his neck from Greene."

Porter walked to Harold and worked his neck and popped it.

Harold screamed, and Bentley jumped.

They thank the troop and the captain and got in the wagon and drove into the city.

Bentley was driving because Harold was weak and could not drive.

Bentley kept watching Harold and said, "Why did you let him do that to you?"

Harold said, "I wanted to see if he was strong and had techniques."

Bentley said, "Did he?"

Harold nodded his head and said, "Yes he did."

Bentley turned his head and mumbled.

Harold looked at Bentley.

They went to Miss Nealie.

Miss Nealie said, "I prepared the attic for the boy."

She looked at Roger and said, "Go up there and see if you like it."

Roger liked the room.

Bentley and Harold walked and looked at the room.

It was kind of large with a mattress and clean furniture.

Roger walked and looked out the round window that was there.

He really liked the room because he could see a lot of the street and houses.

She showed the girls the room underneath Roger.

The girls liked the room.

Excitement flooded their faces.

Miss Nealie and her helper were thrilled at the children's excitement.

The girls saw their necessities that Bentley bought for them.

Miss Nealie put Rogers necessities in a bag because she moved his room.

Roger was looking at his sisters necessities and he did not have any.

Miss Nealie handed Roger his bag.

He was so excited.

It was Christmas to them.

He opened his bag and began to pull out his toilet tries and thermal underwear and socks.

Bentley had given them new boots.

Miss Nealie said, "You all will go to school. I will help you get into school."

Roger stopped going through his bag and stared and said, "What about my other two brothers?"

Miss Nealie said, "I can't take them. It would be too much for me. Once you grow and leave then I maybe able to take another until you all grow up."

She looked at Bentley.

Bentley said, "Well the troop thought it was best to not tell the other two where these were, because they did not want the parents to come and disrupt their lives."

Miss Nealie understood what Bentley was saying that the troop did not want to hurt the children's daddy.

Roger said, "I like the soldiers, can I join them."

Bentley said, "How old are you?"

Roger said, "I am fifteen and return sixteen on Christmas."

Bentley looked at Miss Nealie and then back at Roger he said, "I know you want to leave so another one can come. I need you to hold on and finish school. It is better because you can get promoted quickly and make more money. Once you get to the military they will send you to college to get an education so you can advance. But I can not tell you what to do."

Roger said, "So I can leave right now with you."

Bentley trying to pray between the conversation said, "I can't take you back right now, because I am on assignment, If you hold out for the next four months and spend your Christmas and birthday with your sisters I will get permission to come and get you and take you back. I will send a telegram to the troop and they will tell you what the commander said. No one can go over him."

Miss Nealie said, "I know my husband was in the military for thirty years and we never spent a Christmas together. So enjoy this time Roger. Go to school for the next few months and then go back with Mr. Bentley when the commander say for you to come."

Roger sat and he was thinking about Marvin and Eric.

Bentley and Miss Nealie watched Roger.

Bentley turned to Miss Nealie and looked at her and he saw her face and realized she was not as old as he thought.

Bentley said, "Miss Nealie thank you. I gave you their stay for two months maybe the military will have the paper and pay right."

Miss Nealie said, "They won't."

Bentley said, "If not I will wire the money to you. The medic from the troop will find you and come to check on the little girl."

Miss Nealie said, "I might need him to check on me."

Bentley looked at her as he walked to the door and said, "I need you. They need you. I pray GOD keep you to enjoy this life and continue to provide shelter to those in need."

The children ran to the door and said, "Bye."

The two little girls hugged Bentley legs and waist.

Miss Nealie and her helper smiled with tears in their eyes.

Bentley saw Roger's eyes that he was very concerned about his other two brothers.

Bentley said, "Roger it will work out fine for your brothers and mother."

Roger did not say anything.

Bentley walked to the wagon and looked back at the five.

Miss Nealie was shooing the children into the house.

Bentley looked and drove off.

He looked over at Harold.

Harold crawled into the back of the wagon and went to sleep.

Bentley was so concerned about the children.

He drove all day and through out the night and arrived in the city he bought the boots in.

Harold woke and sit in the wagon and looked around.

He peeped out front and saw the restaurant where Vivian worked.

He put on his boots and tried to look presentable.

Harold said to Bentley, "How do I look?"

Bentley said, "What?"

Harold said, "I am going to get breakfast and I want to see how I look."

Bentley said, "Wash your face, brush your teeth and shave."

Bentley walked away and went to the barber shop.

Harold kind of shook his head and followed Bentley.

They wash their faces and had a shave.

Harold liked how he looked and counted his money.

He paid for his shave and put the rest of his pay.

He invited Bentley to join him for breakfast.

Bentley said, "I am going back to the wagon and sleep. You have to drive back to the capitol. We should make it back on schedule."

Harold said, "But my neck."

Bentley said, "I don't care. You did it to yourself. I am going to take a nap."

Harold walked to the restaurant and looked around.

The owner watched Harold.

The owner nodded his head at Harold, to let Harold know Vivian was in the back.

Harold grinned at the owner and thought, "My breath."

He said, "Water and eggs and bacon."

The owner said, "No bacon but ham."

Harold was preoccupied watching for Vivian and said, "Ham is fine."

The owner walked back to his wife.

His wife peeped around at Harold and grinned.

The owner's wife cooked the eggs and ham and took it to Harold.

She returned with his water.

Harold tried to squish his mouth and gargle his throat so no one could hear him.

The owner and his wife looked at Harold.

Harold looked around to see if anyone saw him.

The owner and his wife held their heads down so Harold could not see them making faces at him.

He had just finished when Vivian walked out the back from washing dishes.

Harold was eating and saw Vivian walk out the and his face lit up and his became full of wonder.

The owner and his wife felt Harold was for Vivian.

They smiled and turned their heads.

Vivian felt someone staring and looked up and saw Harold.

She looked into his eyes and felt love.

She stood and watched Harold as he held his head down and ate his breakfast Vivian had just turned sixteen and knew he was much older than she.

She did not know what to do,

She looked at the owner and his wife and they shrugged their shoulders letting Vivian know they did not know what to do.

The owner nodded his head to Harold.

Vivian walked to Harold.

Harold looked up at Vivian.

She smiled and he smiled.

He offered her breakfast she said, "No."

He handed her a five dollar bill and he stood to leave.

Vivian waved the five dollar bill at the owner and his wife.

They said, "Whoa."

Harold nodded at them and left.

He walked down the street to the wagon and said to himself, "I'm too old for her. But she is what I have been looking for, pure, simple and sweet."

As Harold drove back to the capitol he was mosing along thinking about Vivian and he had nothing to give her.

Bentley was laying in the back of the wagon becoming angry with Harold because he was taking his time and driving the wagon and they had to be back by sundown the next day.

The time saved when they went was taken away when Bentley spent the two and a half days seeing about the children.

Bentley laid in the back and was thinking about the children and what he could do for their Christmas and he shuddered at asking the commander to sign up Roger.

Then Bentley thought, "I did not get his last name."

Harold and Bentley reached the headquarters just at dark.

Arnold was watching out the window.

He was so relieved, because the commander was still at work.

Arnold said, "Sir, Bentley and Harold are back."

Arnold was ready to go home.

He had a small room.

He enjoyed the long walk to work and the long walk home.

He enjoyed the scenery and he liked a young lady he saw each morning.

He did not know her name nor where she would be going each morning.

Arnold thought she was a very pleasant person and that's what he wanted after the job peace.

Arnold finished formal school.

He started college and quit because his father became ill and died after two years.

Arnold helped with the family horseshoe business.

His father would do the horseshoes for the military.

It was hard work and Arnold did not want to spend his life doing one thing.

He had a mother and three sisters.

He started looking for them suitable husbands.

Arnold decided he was not going to keep his father's horse show business.

He determined he was not going to marry any woman and move her into his family house.

He wanted peace.

He told his mother and sisters he would d be selling the horseshoe business and moving on.

He told them to look out and find them suitable husbands.

Arnold looked at his mother who was crying and said, "You too mother."

Anna his oldest sister said, "You too what?"

Arnold said, "She too find her a husband."

Anna said, "Over daddy."

Arnold said, "If she wants to eat."

They jumped on him.

Arnold told them in six months he was leaving.

His next to the oldest sister, Greta thought about what Arnold was saying.

She did not want to be poor nor live a boring life.

She went and got into school.

She met an older doctor who immediately married her and put her in a nice house.

The doctor paid for the wedding.

Arnold went to her wedding and carried his sisters and mother.

His mother was running around their house packing up things.

After the reception, his mother went to Greta and said, "I have a bag in the buggy and we can get the rest of my things later."

Her sisters were smiling because they thought they could move in also.

Greta stared at her mother.

Her husband stared at her mother.

He looked at Greta and Greta did not look at her husband.

Greta said, "Mother you are not moving in with me and my husband."

Her mother dropped her mouth open and put her hand on her chest.

His sisters' mouths opened.

Arnold sat and ate his cake.

He was thinking, "Times have changed. You need to work or marry up."

A shocked Anna came and sat next to Arnold.

Arnold looked at her and continued to eat his cake.

Paulina and his mother stumped over to the table and stood and said to Arnold, "We're ready to leave."

Arnold said, "I'm eating my cake! Go and get in the buggy and wait."

Paulina was named after her mother Paula.

Anna sat and saw her sister beautiful but simple wedding.

She saw that Greta was really happy.

The people at the wedding said she married the older doctor for financial security.

The older doctor never married.

He saved every penny and worked himself up at different hospitals.

He settled in their town and bought a bigger house and had a buggy and horses.

He practiced medicine to heal people.

He saw Greta on the campus of the school, where he taught a class to earn extra money.

Greta had her books and did not see the doctor and tripped over the doctor while he was sitting on the lawn enjoying his lunch and reading a book.

Greta nearly knocked herself out.

Her books flew all over the doctor and she was dazed and could not move.

The arrogant doctor was upset that his perfect liverwurst sandwich was ruined by Greta shoe.

Greta could not move off the professor lap.

Her friends ran to help her up.

The girl Greta was walking with was so shocked she stood and clutched her books.

The dean of the school rushed over to help the doctor up as Greta's friends were helping her up.

The dean said, "Young lady are you alright?"

Greta could not answer.

Her friends pulled her away.

The other friend was still in shock and stood for a while looking where Greta fell.

The dean bent over to help the doctor up and the doctor said he was fine, but his liverwurst sandwich was ruined.

The dean turned and looked at the young woman who was still in shock and she slowly walked away.

The dean sat on the ground next to the arrogant doctor and he looked at the liverwurst sandwich.

The arrogant doctor said, "You want the sandwich?"

The dean said, "Yeah."

The doctor gave the dean the sandwich.

They sat and looked over the nice lawn and talked about classes.

The dean, "I hope that young lady is fine."

The dean started laughing and said, "The other one stood with her mouth open in shock. It was the funniest thing I ever saw in my life."

The arrogant doctor said, "I did not think about if the young women were ok but my lunch was ruined. ..."

The arrogant doctor looked at the dean and said, "That you seemed to be enjoying."

The dean shook his head for yes and continued to bite the sandwich. He offered the sandwich to the doctor.

The doctor took a bite and nodded his head to agree it was good.

The dean and the arrogant doctor sat and looked over the nice yard and talk about classes.

The arrogant thought about he did not think about the young women welfare but his meat.

He wondered how he had fallen so far from where he started out from.

When he was at the college, he looked for Greta every day.

He saw one of the fellows that helped Greta up and walk away.

The arrogant said, "Fellow the young lady who accidentally tripped over me how is she?"

The fellow and another one of his fellows stopped and looked at the arrogant doctor.

They were trying to remember who the doctor was talking about.

The fellow whom the arrogant doctor asked thought and said, "Oh. Her. No. I haven't seen her since that day."

The arrogant doctor was trying to follow the young fellows thought process he leaned forward in a vain attempt to push out of them their thoughts.

It did not work.

The arrogant doctor stood in the lobby and turned and walked to the dean's office for his morning meeting.

The rain was pouring down.

The dean waved the arrogant doctor into his office as he and his secretary were going over some papers.

The doctor walked in the dean's office and went to the window.

He looked out at the downpour of rain.

Everyone was standing back on the porches of and pathways to stay out the rain.

The rain began to ease.

The arrogant doctor said, "the rain is lifting."

The dean and his secretary walked to the window and watched the downpour ease.

The arrogant doctor said, "I saw one of the young fellows today that picked the young woman up and walked her away. I asked if the young woman was alright and he had to think about who I was talking about."

The dean said, "Really. Young people, where are their minds?"

A large group of female students passed the window with umbrellas and they were laughing and giggling.

The secretary said, "Those are the nursing students. I am so proud of them."

The arrogant doctor was peeping out the window.

He was watching another group of young women walking down the path and he said, "Is that...?"

The dean looked out the window and said, "Those are the teaching students."

The secretary said, "What's her name. I can see what school she is in."

The dean said, "Yes that's here."

The arrogant doctor was jumping about trying to run out the window and down the hall to exit the building.

The doctor ran out the building.

The dean and his secretary laughed at the arrogant doctor.

She said, "Love."

The secretary started laughing.

The dean looked at her and turned his head.

They saw the arrogant exit the building.

Both the dean and his secretary yelled, "Puddle!"

The dean and his secretary ran out the building and tried to pick up the young woman he had knocked down and help the arrogant doctor up.

The arrogant doctor sat and said, "I'm sorry please forgive me."

He tried to get up and kept slipping.

The young woman who was in shock at the first incident said, "What is wrong with you?"

Most of the young women students helped Greta up and picked up her books and began to walk home.

One young woman said, "Greta!! My God."

The arrogant doctor and the dean sat in the puddle.

The secretary sat with them in the mud and said, "You know her name."

The arrogant doctor looked around the dean at the secretary and said, "You got her name?"

The secretary grinned and said, "It's gonna cost you."

The arrogant doctor said, "Deal."

The secretary said, "Lunch."

The arrogant doctor said, "Her name?"

The secretary said, "Greta. Teaching student. That won't be hard to find out her last name."

The other professors were passing the dean and the arrogant doctor sitting in the mud.

The next day the secretary found Greta's name and her schedule.

She wrote it down for the arrogant doctor.

The arrogant reached his arm out and he and the secretary went to lunch.

The secretary said, "Dr. Benson look."

He turned and saw Greta and several of her friends entering the restaurant.

They all ordered coffee.

The secretary said, "Pay for their coffee."

Dr. Benson said, "It's the one that scolded she is drinking tea."

The secretary started laughing and cut off her laugh and said, "Pay for her tea."

Dr. Benson called the waitress over and told her was paying for the young women beverages.

The secretary finished her lunch and leaned over the table and said, "You are on your own."

The waitress walked over to the table of young women and pointed to Dr. Benson and said he was paying for their beverages.

The young women saw it was Dr. Benson, they stood and slipped and got up and walked out the restaurant.

He was sitting proud of himself.

He turned around to see the appreciation on the young women's faces.

He saw the table was empty and he looked around the restaurant and people were looking at him.

They figured he was a mean professor and the young women were his students and did not care for him.

Dr. Benson did not know what to think. He was very embarrassed.

He finished his coffee and the waitress walked and he looked up at the waitress and she pointed to the table.

Greta had left her umbrella and was to sneak in and get it.

Dr. Benson rushed over to Greta who stepped back and Dr. Benson said, "Please let me get your umbrella."

Greta stood still.

Dr. Benson bent down and picked up her umbrella and reached it to Greta.

He said, "Please let me apologize to you."

Greta did not know what to say.

Her mouth was opened and said, "I have bruises from you."

Dr. Benson waved his hand and said, "Please let us sit."

Dr. Benson and Greta begin their lives together that day.

They were inseparable only in his death.

They had three boys, who all went to medical college and became surgeons.

Greta later a younger man who stepped into Dr. Benson's shoes.

Dr, Benson left Greta and his three sons well off.

She continued to work as a teacher and loved her twelve years with Dr. Benson as the best of her life.

Her new husband worked at the school with her and he made life fun for her.

They laughed a lot and enjoyed the spring rain showers and the soft summer breezes and their after dinner walks around the neighborhood.

Arnold was glad Greta found someone to love not once but twice.

Greta enjoyed life.

She felt truly blessed for the life God had given her.

She enjoyed it to the end.

Arnold was putting up his work folders for the evening so he could leave for the day.

The commander said, "Tell Bentley and Harold to come to me."

Arnold looked at the commander.

The commander did not hear Arnold move.

The commander looked at Arnold.

Arnold put the files away and ran out the door and caught Bentley and Harold and said, "The commander wants to see you two."

Harold and Bentley turned and followed Arnold back to the commander's office.

The commander was in the window watching the three men.

The commander walked away from the window.

He stood in his office door with his hands behind his back.

The three entered into the office.

They saluted the commander.

Arnold went and cleaned his desk and put on his coat to leave.

The commander watched Arnold.

Bentley and Harold watched the commander.

Arnold was about to pass them.

The commander said, "I have not dismissed you Arnold."

Arnold completed school to be an architect.

He loved building offices and houses.

After three years he completed school. Great and Dr. Benson attended his graduation ceremony.

Arnold could not find a job.

He started drawing houses for families.

He would work to get the houses up and he could not get his business up.

He started washing dishes at two different restaurants.

Greta and Dr. Benson would come to the restaurants.

One restaurant was very upscale and they loved going to that restaurant.

Because many of the city's prominent people.

Harold saw a group of military soldiers come into the restaurant and he watched them.

Greta saw Arnold watching the group of soldiers and turned to Dr. Benson and said, "Watch Arnold. He's going to become a soldier."

Dr. Benson watched Arnold and said, "That's an honorable profession."

Arnold waited and went to the headquarters and joined the military.

Arnold had five years of hard battles.

He became tough and agile.

He knew how to jump off buildings and land on his feet.

Arnold was very fierce in battle.

He earned three medals in five years.

Greta and Dr. Benson attended Arnold's very prestigious medal ceremonies.

The commander said, "I want you three to work hard and move up in rank. I will help you as much as I can. You have the skills and the heart of a soldier. You lack motivation. The younger soldiers want a paycheck and a pension if they live to retire. Dismissed."

Arnold was working on the side as an architect.

He found a large lot and he would build on his house on furlough and the week-ends.

He loved the area, because it was at the end of the prestigious college community, but not as expensive.

Arnold would use the scrape materials from the jobs he was working on.

He was constantly studying.

He did not intend for the military to be his life.

But he thought about the young woman he had seen.

He decided to get extra money and move to the next level.

Arnold got the promotion and he would be eligible for the sergeant training and position in a year.

Harold thought about Vivian.

He realized he was still a corporal after fifteen years in the military.

He was ready to retire and all he had to do was to hold on another year and move up to the sergeant position and go to training for the next six months and after that time another six months in the position.

Harold said, "Another year. What would I offer Vivian. I would have to go and find a job and I don't want her to wash dishes for her entire life. She deserves a better life."

Bentley was laying in the dorm and thinking.

He said, "I joined the military at the age of fifteen and have been for fifteen years. I need education. Arnold got college behind him and they are really pushing him. I am not jealous but I need to move up to that sergeant level. That's one year. Then I will concentrate on finishing and getting my diploma. How can I help anyone if I can show them how to better themselves and improve their lived."

Bentley flipped on his side and laid there thinking how to apply for the sergeant position.

Bentley, Arnold and Harold applied for the sergeant positions along with Greene and many others.

Twenty were accepted in the program.

Greene, Bentley, Arnold and Harold were accepted in the program'

The program started in October and would be through March.

Bentley wondered how he was going to get Roger being since he had to be at headquarters for the training segment of the program.

Bentley went to the commander and told him he promised to go and bring Roger to headquarters.

The commander said, "Why?"

Bentley told of the children living in the woods of sexual abuse and terrible physical abuse and Miss Nealie could not take all the children and as one leaves she would bring the others in.

The commander said, "Nalie Clever?"

Bentley said, "I don't know her last name."

The commander said, "How is it that you don't get all information? I looked over your military folder. It shows no awards, no honors no medals. How can you be on any job and not be anything but average?"

Bentley stared at the rough commander and thought, "I am in the sergeant program."

The commander said, "You are in the sergeant program because I overrode the commitment. Their position was you did not show the extraordinary ability necessary to lead. Work on that..."

The commander picked up his pencil and said, "What is Nealie Clever's address? Wait don't tell me you don't have it? How are you going to communicate with her and pay her?"

Bentley sat for a minute and it came back to him she wrote it down on a piece of paper.

Bentley said, "She gave it to me."

The commander said, "How would you pay her?"

He shook his head and said, "Fine her address and bring it to me."

The commander selected Soldier Wallace and Porter to be in his office after Arnold and Harold were selected for the sergeant program.

Later that evening Bentley told Arnold and Harold the commander requested Nealie's address.

Arnold said, "What did he say when you gave it to him?"

Bentley said, "I did not give it to him."

Harold said, "Why not?"

Bentley shrugged his shoulder.

Harold leaned over to Bentley and said, "Are you retarded?"

Arnold, "What is wrong with you?"

Harold said, "You can be dishonorably discharged."

Bentley looked at them.

Harold stood to leave, Greene had slipped in their dorm room.

Arnold jumped.

Harold turned and saw Greene.

Greene had slipped on Harold's bed.

Harold stared at Greene and said, "I thought I felt hot air on my back."

Arnold turned up his nose.

Greene said to Arnold, "That's me."

Harold grabbed Greene to sling across the room.

Greene said, "I'm sleeping over there next to Arnold."

Bentley and Harold told Arnold about this short soldier that twisted Harold's neck and how his captain shot him and had the medic to fix him up.

Arnold grabbed his gun and click it.

Harold had Greene by an arm and had him in the air to throw him.

The commander was standing in their door.

The commander was appalled, he said, "Were you going to shoot the gun?"

Arnold could not say anything.

The commander looked at Harold and said, "Release him."

Harold dropped Greene on the floor.

Greene jumped up fast.

The commander said, "You're not tired of people treating you like that?"

The commander said, "Bentley I will have you dishonorable discharged, I gave you a direct command and you did not follow through. And no you did not stand at attention and salute. Bentley you are still sitting there looking as if you are really retarded."

Greene looked back at Bentley and said, "The commander is talking to you Bentley."

Bentley fell on the floor.

He woke up two weeks.

He had a fever and the doctors tried to break it and did not know whether it was successful or not.

The commander had drawn up Bentley's papers to have him medically discharged from the military.

He could not be taken to the local hospital.

Greene volunteered and stay in the room with Bentley and took care of him for two weeks.

Arnold and Harold moved out.

They would peep in the dorm room each day to see if Bentley was making it.

Greene put a chair by the door and would stand in the chair and give Arnold and Harold a sign how Bentley was doing.

Bentley finally opened his eyes.

He began to stretch his legs and sticking his tongue out for water.

Greene heard him and jumped from the bed and was so happy that Bentley was alive.

Greene stood by the bed for several minutes.

He said, "Bentley. You are ok."

Bentley said, "Water."

Greene jumped around and ran and got the pitcher and poured a little water in the glass and ran back to Bentley.

Greene raised Bentley's head and allowed him to swallow a few drops of water.

Bentley closed his eyes and went to sleep.

Greene looked at Bentley and lowered his head back onto the pillow.

Greene stood for a few minutes and looked at Bentley.

Greene began to cry and he turned and walked from Bentley's bed back to the table to place the glass of water.

Greene was crying uncontrollably.

The commander, Arnold and Harold were outside the door watching.

They saw Bentley when he woke.

How Greene was laying on the next bed on his back reading the comics and laughing and kicking his heels up in the air and doing birdies on the bed.

Greene was laughing so hard he was holding his stomach.

But when Bentley slightly moved Greene heard him and jumped to assist him.

The commander liked what he saw in Greene.

They liked the way Greene ran for the water and gave it to Bentley to sip.

They liked the care Greene showed Bentley.

Arnold and Harold would stop by everyday to ask Greene about Bentley.

Arnold could not stand Greene.

Greene would pull up a chair to the window and sometimes pulled down his pants, or stick out his tongue or shot them signs.

Greene's behavior did not bother Harold.

Harold position he would take anything as long as he can make more money to help Vivian be comfortable.

They watched Greene sniff and wiped the tears from his eyes.

The head commander and several of the commanders were standing and watching through the glass.

The lead commander kept his eyes on Greene.

He was thinking about his caring personality and his fierce battle fighting.

Arnold knew Greene was going to do something, so reached passed the commanders and knocked on the dorm door.

Harold said to Arnold, "You dirty dog."

The lead commander heard Harold but he kept his eyes on Greene and would give Bentley a quick glance.

Greene recognized the knock.

He pulled the chair up to the door and stuck out his tongue and threw signs at the commander.

The commanders looked at Greene.

Harold and Arnold flew down the hall and out of the building.

The lead commander cut his eyes and he saw the door closing.

Greene put his head on the door in total shame and embarrassment.

The lead commander and the other commanders walked away.

When Greene held his head up they were all gone.

Greene put his face on the glass window and looked down one end of the hall to the other end and he did not see any commanders.

He wondered what that meant.

Why he was not scolded.

He jumped out the chair and pulled down his shirt and shock his head and thought, "Maybe they look abuse. If that is the case, I got more for them."

Greene stopped and said, "Hey! Wait a minute that dan Arnold and Harold must have been out there. They knock like that on the door."

Greene's face changed. He put on his mean face.

He was frowned up and scowls took over his face.

Bentley coughed, Greene instantly changed his face to the care face and ran to Bentley.