Jake sat on the ground with his back on the shed.

He felt what he was waiting.

He yelled and said, “Get ready.”

Jake told the troop hold to pass a silent ‘armed and ready’ message.

He pulled out the rifle and had both guns by his sides on the ground.

Chester and Simmons had ran to the brook.

The sentry saw Chester and was about to salute and Chester put his hand up for quite.

Chester pointed to the sergeant Pearson.

The sentry slowly walked to sergeant Pearson.

Sergeant Pearson looked at the sentry.

The sentry nodded.

Sergeant Pearson started fussing and following the sentry.

When he walked a little farther he saw Chester.

Sergeant Pearson said, “Sir.”

Chester said, “Pretend that you are looking at brook.”

Sergeant Pearson stood with his hands on his hips looking at the brook.

Chester said, “We found twenty eight more soldiers in the troop that was supposed to be there. We have arrested all but ten.”

Sergeant Pearson said, “JESUS Christ.”

Chester said, “Simmons said he can face recognize if it is not a troop member.”

Sergeant Pearson said, “I’m a member of the troop. I recognize all the members of our troop. Now the new troop at the beginning of the city left twenty five of their members here to help dig graves. I do not know them.”

Simmons said, “Some from that troop came to the post a couple of times.”

Chester said, “Why. They had no business coming to the post.”

Sergeant Pearson, “I remember that. I remember a few that said, they needed to go and see their captain.”

Sergeant Pearson saw Danny and Adam were fully loaded.

He said, “Captain what do you want to do?”

Roger was walking and saw the sergeant standing and looking at the brook.

Roger said, “Evening sergeant.”

He saw the men in brushes.

Chester said, “It’s me Roger.”

Sergeant Pearson said, “Turn around and pretend we are talking about the brook. Here comes one of them Chester.”

Chester said, “Simmons?”

Simmon’s said, “He’s not one that came to the post.”

Danny said, “Get him and tie him up.”

Chester said, “Right.”

Adam said, “I got him.”

The soldier walked up to Roger and before anyone knew anything.

Adam had knocked him out and dragged in into the buses and tied him up and used his handkerchief and gagged his mouth.

The sentry saw the activity.

Chester said, “What he got?”

Adam said, “A key, a…”

Chester said, “A map.”

Adam said, “Right.”

Chester said, “Who is that?”

Simmons said, “He came to the post.”

Sergeant Pearson saw the soldier and said, “I don’t know him.”

Roger was getting nervous.

Sergeant Pearson was talking to Roger and said, “I know it is hard.”

Danny had grabbed and knocked the man out and tied him up and gage him.

Danny said, “Cap a key and a map.”

Chester said, “Roger are you ok?”

Roger said, “Yes. They are going to attack tonight. Do we have enough men?”

The sergeant said, “Remember the battle is not won by many.”

Chester looked at Simmons and said, “You walk back with Rogers and Identify anyone that came to the post. Eight lose assassins can kill all fifty men here.”

Simmons put his gun in the holster.

He and Roger were walking and talking.

Two soldiers passed them and were walking towards the sergeant.

Rogers and Simmons stopped and looked at the two men.

Simmons said, “Yes.”

Roger looked at Simmons.

Simmons said, “What we do?”

They said to walk through the troop.

They continued to walk through the camp.

The sentry saw the two soldiers approaching.

Chester shot the two men.

They pulled a knife out and was about to cut the sentry’s throat.

The boy looked at the dead two men.

Sergeant Pearson said, “What to do?”

Chester said, “Pretend they had a spat with the sentry and you shot them.”

Sergeant Pearson pretended he was putting his gun in the holster.

Chester said, “Four. Six is too many left.”

Simmons and Roger stopped and stood and looked.

Simmons said there’s two more at two o’clock.

The two men Simmons identified stood to see what happened.

They did not move.

Many soldiers did not move but looked.

The sentry was shaking.

The sergeant patted him on his soldier.

And quickly said, “Before the soldiers reached them. Calm down because something bad is about to happen.”

The other troop members ran and looked at the two men.

One of the soldiers said, “He’s not from our troop.”

Sergeant Pearson said, “They stole soldiers’ uniforms and snook in here to hurt this young soldier.

Sergeant said, “Sentries change duty position. You go and rest. But first help me to move their bodies to the grave.”

Chester said good.

Danny was rubbing the ground.

Chester looked at Danny.

Danny said, “Movement. At thirty minutes away.”

Chester said, “I want those six.”

The sergeant was watching the reaction of the soldiers to see if he recognized the other two that told him they were going to the post.

He saw both of them watching him and the sentry.

They were standing near the burnt up little house.

Roger and Simmons were standing near the two Simmons identified.

Sergeant told the sentry to rest.

He told him to sleep by the brook and say nothing to no one and have his guns fully loaded.

It was getting dark.

The sergeant hurried and walk back to the brook and pretending he was stooping down where the two were shot and said, “Chester we got four. What to do?”

Chester said, “We heard the shots and came to investigate. Start walking to the closest two and where is Roger and Simmons?”

The sergeant said, “Standing by the other two.”

Chester said, “Go.”

Danny and Adam put their guns in the holsters and walked behind the captain.

They pretended they were running and got to the brook.

The soldiers saluted them.

Chester saluted and said, “Where is the sergeant in control?”

The soldiers looked around.

One soldier looked and pointed and said, “There sir.”

When the soldier said, “There.”

Chester yelled, “Sergeant.”

Sergeant stepped back and walked to Chester.

Chester, “Go and get the two by Simmons and Rogers and keep your eyes opened for the other two.”

Danny pretended he was looking at the ground where the men were shot but he touched the ground and stood, “He said at least a thousand and some of the horses are heavy”

Adam said, “Battery guns.”

Danny said, “Let’s go and get these Bs.”

The telegram machine was running.

The office soldier was standing by the machine and had plenty of folders.

The telegram machine stopped.

The office soldier ripped the telegram off and placed it in a folder and ran to Skip.

Skip turned and reached for the folder.

He looked over the list of the men in the troop.

He saw three of his twelve men.

The office soldier was standing by.

Skip marked three names and said, “Where are they.”

The commanders looked because they all knew Skip had trained special soldiers.

Skip looked at Malcolm and said, “What is your relationship with Vincent?”

Malcolm said,”I was his boss. That is it.”

Skip looked at Malcolm, “Why did Vincent raised his hands in surrender when he was identified as taking a new protocol book and you were with him?”

Malcolm looked at Skip and turned his head sideways thinking.

Skip was looking at Malcolm and was thinking.

Skip and Malcolm said, “Damn,” at the same time.

The commanders were looking to understand what was going on.

Skip leaned back and said, “Bring me the training record.”

Another office soldier went into the files and pulled out the current rooster of trainees.

He ran and gave the list to Skip.

Skip went over the list several times.

Skip said, “Where is Andrew?”

Malcolm said, “Dating somebody he shouldn’t.”

Skip looked up from the list at Malcolm.

Skip said, “Is that girl tied to this mess?”

Malcolm said, “Not her and her family.”

Malcolm heard Commander Greene moving, he jumped out his chair and turned to face Commander Greene.

Arnold said, “Who?”

Harold said, “So she is dating Andrew and someone else…”

He made a motion with his head and said, “…that means what?”

Commander Wallace said, “Skip didn’t you give Andrew the night off?”

Malcolm giggled.

Skip looked at Malcolm and said, “Yes.”

He looked at his office soldier and he wrote an order and said go down to the dormitory and tell these six soldiers to come here and be ready to travel out of state with some commanders.”

Skip saw two of his twelve soldiers were at headquarters in training.

He selected Cal and Charles and four more soldiers.

The four soldiers Skip selected had been in the military for five years. Cal and Charles had been in the military at least ten years.

The office soldier ran to the dormitory and called out the six soldiers.

The six soldiers got up and packed their supplies for an overnight ride and dressed.

They walked to the barns and got their horses.

The six soldiers were quiet they knew this was big.

Cal looked at Charles.

They rode to the front of the building and walked into headquarters.

The office soldier who went and gave them the order saw them walking up the stairs.

He stepped out for them to come into the office.

The six soldiers walked in the office.

The commanders turned and looked at them.

Skip stood up and walked into the outer office.

The six soldiers saluted Skip.

Skip saluted the six soldiers.

Charles said, “Sir I am happy you are still with me.”

Skip did a stern look into Charles eyes and grinned.

Charles told Skip, “I’m going to beat you out the military.”

Skip said, “You will go with Commanders Porter and Bentley. They have to find out who made the saddles for the assassins. Who owns the company and who runs the company?”

Charles said, “Sir is the symbol an abstract horseshoe that people mistake as a pentagram?”

Skip said, “Yes.”

The commanders looked at the soldier.

Skip said, “What do you know?”

The soldier said, “I just heard people talking and said, it was the mob business ran by a woman.”

Skip said, “Take another horse loaded with guns and ammunition.

He looked at the office soldier.

The telegram machine started.

Skip waited and walked to the telegram machine.

The office soldier ripped the telegram message and handed it to Skip.

The telegram came from Todd at the troop and said, “Jake had organized the soldiers and the ones at the new settlement and the three soldiers he listed were at the governor’s compound.”

Cal and Charles watched Skip every movement.

Skip gripped the telegram message that meant he was pleased.

The soldier came back and said he had loaded with the horse with four rifles and six guns a very large amount of ammunition.

Skip said, “Your lives are more important than anything. We don’t need any heroes nor any prisoners.”

The Commanders Porter and Bentley saluted Skip and walked out the office followed by the six soldiers.

Skip stepped out the office and watched the eight soldiers who were walking into death.

Skip said, “GOD please bring them back alive and whole. And allow them to get the information they need. In JESUS name.”

Skip looked at the telegram machine.

He said, “I need to hear from Chester. I worry they maybe out numbered.”

Jake was at the arch of the horseshoe.

He thought, “I have not shot a gun in nearly ten years. GOD please help me to lead these men into victory. In JESUS name.”

Jake stooped down and placed his ear to the ground and he put his rifle to his eye.

The soldiers near Jake saw him lifted up his gun they lifted up their guns and the soldiers next to that soldier put up their gun.

Steve moved the governor.

Dr. Obersteen felt strongly to go and get the rifle and gun he left at the cute house.

He ran out the tent to the cute house.

He passed Wes who was standing on the porch waiting for Chester.

Steve moved the first lady out the tent.

Terry stuffed pillows and put them on the governor’s bed.

Dr. Obersteen checked the rifles and guns.

He gave Betsy the gun and put the ammunition on the coffee table.

He looked at Angelica and Joshua and said, “You children should not have to go through this.”

Angelica said, “Uncle John Mr. Skip is fighting for you.”

Dr. Obersteen smiled.

He said, “Let’s pray this ends now. In JESUS name.”

Angelica said, “Amen.”

She looked at Betsy.

Angelica turned her head and looked at Joshua.

She looked back at Dr. Obersteen.

He leaned over and kissed her on her forehead.

Another office soldier returned to the headquarters office.

He saluted Skip and said,”Sir I disable the telegram machine in the training complex. We locked all the guns in another part of the training complex. We locked and barricaded the forty four soldiers in the dormitory and the moved the six instructors.”

Skip said, “Commander Vincent?”

The office soldier said, “We moved him and put him under the control of the six instructors according to your orders, Sir”

Skip said, “Good.”

Commander Greene returned to the office and heard the office soldier confirming the fulfillment of Skip’s orders.

He had several rifles and much ammunition.

Skip said, “Commanders Greene, Whatley, Montgomery I need you to try and find some of the horses the assassins used.”

Commander Montgomery said, “How? When the horses were sent to different troops?”

Skip was thinking.

Malcolm turned his head.

Arnold looked at Malcolm and said, “Malcolm if you know who is behind this or what is going on you need to talk.”

Malcolm looked at Arnold and turned his head.

Commander Greene said, “Where is the paper for whoever got rid of the horses?”

Skip was leaning on his desk with his balled fists on the desk.

Skip stood and called an office soldier, “Send a telegram to Captain Tony and tell him to take ten well armed soldiers and start riding tonight to meet Commanders Greene, Whatley and Montgomery at…”

Skip stopped talking.

Malcolm stared at Skip.

Arnold leaned over to Malcolm and said, “You know who bred and trained those horses. You better tell.”

Skip yelled, “Arnold. Send a telegram to Jake. That townspeople have a lot of those horses. Tell Jake to let a few horses loose and follow the horses. He is the best ever tracker and he will allow the horses to go back to their breeding place. Now.”

Malcolm shrugged his shoulders and said,”I thought I was the best ever tracker. Huh.”

Harold was still staring at Malcolm.

Malcolm looked at Harold and said, “You trying to pull all your strength together to hit me or fire your gun?”

Skip looked at Harold and said, “Commander Harold watch yourself or you can be dismissed this evening.”

Harold turned his head from Malcolm.

Skip looked at Malcolm.

The office soldier said, “Sir where to send this telegram for Jake?”

Skip thought for a minute and said, “send it to Chester’s post.”

Commander Greene said, “Send it Bruce’s troop too.”

Skip said, “Good idea Greene.”

Skip looked at the office soldier and said,”Send it to both troops.”

Skip said, “Send Captain Tony a telegram and tell him extremely dangerous situation. Select ten soldiers and be ready to ride with heavy ammunition.”

Skip said, “I’m short of men. They knew based on the new protocol that we needed fifty soldiers here at all time. How they selected their soldiers from each troop I don’t know. They had Donovan to leave so their men could pursue him and rendezvous at a particular location.”

Commander Greene said, “We have been training our own enemies.”

Commander said, “What? I don’t understand, they had an army that came after our governor to kill him, so where would these deserters go. Like we would not know where their homes are.”

Commander Randall said, “That’s why they had a small fortune on them. They were not returning home.”

Commander Greene said, “They would be living in the state with this witch or close by to her reach.”

Arnold said, “What are they to do.”

Commander Adams exhaled and walked out the corner.

Malcolm turned around and looked at him.

Arnold stared at Adams because Adams acted like Arnold was very dumb.

Malcolm looked at Arnold and snickered.

Arnold looked at Malcolm and said, “I have rested and I have enough strength to knock you out.”

Commander Adams said, “They used us to train their army of assassins. They figured they would end everything tonight and we would be whipped and every state would bow to they command for all the contracts and all the money.”

Malcolm jumped up and said, “Finally somebody got the pictures. You just can’t ride in on them and shoot them up. You have to use brain cells…”

Malcolm looked at Harold and Arnold.

Harold was still looking dazed.

Arnold looked at Skip.

Skip said, “Malcolm you are in danger.”

Malcolm said, “Can I leave now.”

Skip said, “Sit down.”

Skip said, “I follow what you said Adams. The question I have is who wrote the new protocol and was able to get it printed and come in and distributed it and who signed off on the new protocol. I want the root of this evil.”

Malcolm was looking up at Skip.

Malcolm said, “I kept my part of the bargain. Can I leave? I know they should becoming at seven pm.”

Skip walked in the hall and said, “Gather soldiers. We are going to have a run in with the group of assassins that have tried to kill our governor. They have been successful in killing many of our soldiers. They have used us to train their assassins. They think we are vulnerable and they are coming to make us an example of what they will do to each state…”

The telegram machine started running.

Skip said, “Soldiers lets end their reign of terror. There will be others and we will destroy them. No examples will be made out of us. They will be example.”

Soldiers and sentries saluted Skip and said, “Yes sir!”

Skip thought, “Oh GOD I need my sharpshooter. Where is Andrew?”

Andrew’s horse was walking around the capitol.

Andrew mind was gone.

He could not think. He could not think how he missed her deception.

He started thinking about the times they were intimate.

He could not think.

The six commanders split at the road into the two different cities.

Commander O’Hara and his commanders went to the west.

Commander Johnson and his commanders took the east.

Both set of commanders were watching their routes in case they need to cross through fields to get to the other commanders.

Commanders Porter and Bentley and the six armed soldiers with them were exiting the capitol.

Skip said, ”Commanders Arnold, Randall and Andrew I need you to go to the new settlement.”

Commander Wallace sat and watched.

He said, “Skip, Arnold just got back from the new settlement. I want to go in his place. I know why you are not sending Harold.”

Harold said, “Why? Why is that?’

Malcolm said, “Because you are old. You don’t have even more brain cells.”

Harold pulled out his gun.

Arnold threw Malcolm on the floor and Skip jumped in front of Harold and said, “Give me your guns.”

Harold looked at Malcolm.

Skip pushed Harold out the office.

The other commanders were looking in shocked.

Harold was standing out Skip’s office but was looking in.

Malcolm had turned his butt to Harold and bent over acting like he was Vivian.

Arnold turned his head and snicker.

Commander Greene pointed at Malcolm.

Malcolm stood up straight like he did not do anything.

Skip turned and looked at Malcolm.

Skip looked at a snickering Arnold.

Commander Greene pointing to himself said, “Skip, If I would do that what Malcolm just did. You would throw me under the detention floor.”

Skip said, “Malcolm is no longer a man of honor.”

Malcolm turned his head and held it down.

The other commanders looked at Malcolm.

Commander Greene stared Skip in his eyes for a long time.

The office soldier ripped the telegram from the machine and put it in the folder and took it to Skip.

The office soldier looked around at the commanders and then at Commander Greene.

Skip said, “Tony replied he will be ready.”

Commander Wallace said, “Skip?”

Skip said, “You have said enough.”