The Rider turned and rode out of the state capital.

They spent the Christmas Holidays with a very large family celebration at the family house.

They left early the next morning and all the next day to get to the capital for a second inauguration of the youngest governor ever in the history of the country.

Many from the nation’s capital would be attending the governor’s official inauguration.

He went to the outer part of the state to have an inauguration and a swearing in because the people in that region of the state have no contact with any politicians especially not the governor.

The governor’s actions already have him destined for the presidency.

He was a very caring governor who was extremely ambitious.

The rider wanted to get to the capital a few days early so he can get the family settled in and then go and see how Mattie was doing.

He rode all day and well into the night.

He stopped because he could no longer see the map.

He pulled over,

He got his guns off the horse and fell asleep thinking about Mattie.

He was biting on his beef jerky with force.

He wanted to know if she was alive and if she had her son.

He wanted to know if that evil woman was still alive.

He swore to himself that he lost Mattie and her son when he was young, but he is older now and have learned how to fight.

He bit hard the beef jerky with angry.

He camped by the road and woke when he heard the birds chirping.

He quickly rolled over and check for horse and guns.

The rider thought, “Thank God.”

He got up and loaded the horse and gave the horse some water.

He did not want food to eat but only to see if Mattie was alive and well.

He looked over his map and mounted his horse.

He rode all day and late into the night.

He was very tired.

He knew the horse.

He wanted revenge on the evil woman for keeping Mattie and her son away from him.

His hatred began to seep through the thin walls of his heart.

He had many sleepless nights.

Nightmares.

Wandering thoughts.

Thoughts of Mattie on the streets and being abused.

Thoughts she was treated inhumanely.

He never committed to another because he knew Mattie was his true love.

He could not bare going to church or social events.

The single women or widowed women would always find him.

He could think of no one else but Mattie until now.

Before he make the commitment to another he must know the truth.

He must see Mattie.

The rider realized his horse was not his problem.

He pulled over and made camp that night at the beginning of a brook.

He fed his horse and gave it water.

He walked his horse to the brook and filled his water cans.

He sat and looked around and began to feel a coldness in the air.

The rider thought about people were talking about the city God destroyed and now it was freezing there.

He thought, as he was getting some more to store for his horse, now another thing for me to worry about.

Whether Mattie and her son were in that town.

He pulled his blanket from the horse’s saddle then he removed the saddle and his guns.

His horse rested.

He patted his horse and said, “Sorry boy. I had you caught up in my wrath. Forgive me.”

The horse neigh and rested for the night.

The rider heard another horse.

He stood up and was quiet.

He had his hand on the trigger of the pistol in his vest.

He yelled “Who goes there?”

William yelled, “A good feller. I just wanted some water.”

William was late leaving the settlement that day, because the little girl woke and whispered,

 “Bye William.”

He wanted to adopt her.

Natalie said she was the king’s daughter going inviting everyone to the king’s banquet. She was no ordinary child.

William was worried about three sisters’ relationship and whether Dr. Obersteen would send Joshua to a boarding school because as a child he has many problems to cope with.

But he believed God had everyone there for a specific reason.

That day when he left the new settlement, Shelia had walked the seven miles to the cute house in the freezing cold.

Wes saw her entering into the yard and yelled, “Shelia!”

Everyone in the house ran out.

Joshua, Harold and Dr. Obersteen were outside saying goodbye to William.

The women were in the house.

Including Emma.

Wes yelled, “Betsy a quilt!”

Betsy ran into the house and got a quilt and ran outside.

Wes reached for the quilt and wrapped Shelia and everyone ran into the house.

Wes stood Shelia by the fire to get warm.

Emma was sitting in the little girl’s bedroom with Natalie.

Dr. Obersteen watched Emma, who turned around and stared at Shelia.

Emma was telling Mattie everything that happen the day before.

Natalie reached for Emma’s hand and shook it.

Dr. Obersteen saw it.

He looked back at Shelia.

Wes said, “What are you doing in this freezing cold?”

Shelia said, “Thank you for caring Wes.”

Dr. Obersteen took a double look.

Emma yelled, “I am not running behind no damn rabbits.”

Joshua peeped around dr. Obersteen to look at Emma who use to his momma.

Mattie was just started shaking her head.

Wes looked at Mattie and said., “Mattie?’

Mattie threw up her hands and said, “I won’t no parts of this.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Betsy?”

Betsy was quiet and in deep thought.

Wes was trying to understand what was going on.

Betsy heard her name in her deep thoughts and realized her enemy Dr. Obersteen called her name.

He was putting her into the madness again with Emma and Mattie.

Betsy stood up and yelled at Dr.Obersteen and said, “Why the \*\*\*f\*\*\* you call my name?”

Wes was dumbfounded.

Joshua jumped and looked at Betsy.

William was startled and looked from Wes to Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen said, “You can be seated.”

Betsy said,”Who you’re…”

Betsy started walking across the living room floor at Dr. Obersteen.

Wes tried to catch Betsy.

Dr. Obersteen looked around for his gun.

Joshua said to Dr. Obersteen, “You gonna shot my aunt?’

Dr. Obersteen, “Only…”

Wes looked at Dr. Obersteen like he was crazy.

Dr. Obersteen lifted his hands up and said, “I apologize.”

Wes was holding Betsy with one arm and was holding the quilt on Shelia with the other.

Betsy yelled, “What are you apologizing for Dr. Obersteen. You are calling all of us crazy.”

Dr. Obersteen could not think fast enough.

Wes said to Betsy, “Betsy please sit down and let us see about Shelia.”

Betsy looked into her husbands brown eyes and said, “Ok.”

Wes was surprised and he smiled at Betsy and said, “I appreciate it.”

Betsy sat next to Mattie and patted her hands, and said, “You’re ok.”

 Emma tipped out the bedroom and looked at Mattie.

Dr. Obersteen realized it must be a deep rooted family problem. Then add Emma’s dirtiness to this it is escalated.

Shelia looked around and said, “I did not mean to cause trouble.”

Joshua said, “Your not the one causing trouble.”

And looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen was thinking military.

William sort of smile.

Emma was standing behind dr. Obersteen peeping at Mattie and William saw her.

Emma turned and tiptoed back to the bedroom and sat next to Natalie.

Natalie said, “I love all of you. You are my family. You got to work this out.”

The little girl giggled.

Dr. Obersteen was heard Natalie and thought, “Well said. Natalie.”

Then he caught something out of the corner of his eye and it was Joshua rolling his eyes at Dr. Obersteen.

Wes said, “Go ahead Shelia.”

Shelia said, “God gave me a dream last night.”

Emma threw her arms up in the air and looked out the window.

Dr. Obersteen looked at Emma.

William had moved so he could watch Emma.

He heard Betsy and Wes fussing all night about the big blowout.

Shelia said, “God said for you Wes to get the land from this house to the mile marker of the next city.”

Wes said, “Shelia I don’t have any money to buy anything not only land.”

Shelia grabbed Wes’ hands and said, “No. No. God said the land is free land. And the attendant left the map here for you.”

Wes looked at Shelia with a questioning look.

Shelia began to grin and shake her head for yes.

Emma threw her arms in the air and jumped up out the chair.

Natalie looked at Emma.

We said, “Who’s in the bedroom?”

Emma jumped up and ran towards the living room, Dr. Obersteen caught her.

Emma yelled, “I am not chasing any damn rabbits.”

Dr. Obersteen whispered in Emma’s ears, “You keep it up you will be locked away.”

Emma looked at Dr. Obersteen and sighed.

Wes walked passed a disturbed Emma and went into the bedroom and begin to go through the drawers.

Betsy and Mattie looked at Shelia.

Shelia was rocking and looking at them and smiled and nodded her head.

Wes pulled out a piece of paper.

He opened the paper and it was the deed for the land within a mile of the next town.

Wes began to shake.

He handed it to Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen turned Emma loose and said, “Don’t move.”

He looked very stern at Emma.

Emma looked at him and did not move. All she could see was her hands tied and he riding her to the crazy house.

William walked over to see the paper.

Joshua walked over too.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Joshua you don’t know what you are looking at.”

Joshua said, “I suppose William does and he is just a few months older than me.”

Betsy burst out in laughter.

Mattie and Emma saw nothing funny.

William said, “Master Joshua, I have you to know I can read mapping. That is one of my jobs as a member of the governor’s staff. He requires his staff to read maps.”

Joshua looked at William and lifted his chin up.

Betsy laughed and clapped her hands.

William said, “Military.”

D. Obersteen said, “Agreed.”

Joshua said, “I know you’re talking about me. But my mother is the only one that will send me off to a boarding school and it will not be military.”

Joshua walked to Mattie and looked at William.

William bowed his head to Joshua.

William said, “From this house all the way down to the mile marker for the next town is free land.”

Shelia was standing and smiling.

Wes was leaning on the wall.

William said, “Apparently your attendant knew this land was free and built this cute house on it. The brook.”

He looked at Wes and said, “Your precious herbs are on the land. What a blessing.”

Wes was stunned he just leaned on the wall.

Betsy watched her poor husband.

Mattie said, “Well congratulations Wes, you are a land owner. I guess you have to register it.”

Wes said, “Where?”

Shelia said, “You want to hear more. He said only tell you if you believe.”

Emma said, “I don’t care.”

Every one looked at Emma.

Joshua was sitting on the edge with his elbows resting his head in his hands.

He said, “We know Emma, you ain’t running behind no damn rabbits.”

Mattie looked at Joshua and said, “Watch your mouth Joshua.”

Joshua said, “But that’s what Emma been saying.”

Betsy laughed.

Mattie turned her head to Betsy and said, “All of this is not funny.”

Betsy said, “The hell if it is not.”

Mattie said, “Over the years I have asked you to watch your mouth.”

They were shocked Betsy did not jump in Mattie’s face.

Wes said, “Shelia I am a little shocked but continued.”

Shelia was excited and was looking around and said, “Paper and pencil.”

Wes stepped into the bedroom and got his pad and pencil.

He walked and handed the paper and pencil to Shelia.

Shelia fell on the floor to the table and begin to draw a blueprint.

Shelia drew a whole complex.

Joshua and Betsy got on their knees and was watching what Shelia was drawing.

Betsy was following the pictures and moving them to the end of the table.

Betsy looked at Shelia.

Shelia finished drawing the pictures and put the pencil down.

Everyone stared at Shelia.

Dr. Obersteen walked and picked up the pictures to look at them.

Joshua looked up at Dr. Obersteen and said, “Don’t get them out of order.”

Shelia said,”Oh no. They are organize. It is not possible to get them out of order.”

Dr. Obersteen was holding two of the pictures in his hand and moved over and looked at We.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Wes.”

Wes could not move.

Betsy looked at her husband and smiled.

He looked at Betsy and pushed off the wall and walked by Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen turned and looked at Wes.

He showed the pictures to Wes.

For a medical facility the buildings flowed. They could not be out of order.

Dr. Obersteen handed Wes a picture.

Wes was shaking.

Betsy looked at her poor husband and said, “No money huh.”

Betsy said, “Emma I forgive you. If my forgiveness of you will get help to people. I want it recorded I forgive you.”

Joshua looked at Mattie.

Mattie was looking out the window.

Emma looked at Mattie and held her head down.

Joshua looked at Emma.

William watched all of them and reached for the drawings and looked at Shelia.

William said is there more?

Shelia shook her head for yes and grinned.

Shelia said, “God said only will the other be released when you Wes seek Him for help. He said He put in you to care for people and healed them naturally.”

Mattie was looking out the window,

Emma went back and sat in the chair in the bedroom and looked out the window.

William said, “What I do know Master Joshua”

Joshua was sitting on the sofa and looked passed a zone out Mattie and to Betsy, “Why he kept calling me that?”

Betsy was looking over some of the pictures and thinking, and said, “It is title for a proper man.”

William said, “The new settlement is new land. Anybody can claim it. This piece of land is a goldmine, because of the herbs.”

Betsy leaned forward and said,”This can work.”

She looked at Wes and said, “Baby this can work.”

Wes said, “Baby no money.”

Joshua said, “God that part worked out.”

He picked up his sailboat and began to play with it.

Shelia said, “Can I go now?”

Wes was stunned.

Betsy stood and said, “I take you home Shelia and don’t come out again without a quilt or two.”

Shelia said, But I had to tell Wes.”

Betsy said, “We love you for doing so, but it is cold outside.”

 Dr. Obersteen said, “Mike has the wagon and horses to run you all around.”

Harold was looking over the drawings and pointing to different things on the drawings.

He was explaining how things were connected.

Harold said, “I’ll talk to Mike.”

Harold continued to explain things to Wes and Dr. Obersteen could take it no more and said to Harold, “How do you know that?”

Harold said, “My brothers own contruction and transportation companies. I come from money.”

Dr. Obersteen rolled his eyes at Harold.

Wes, “My father own a construction company but I did not work for him. But I can follow what Harold is saying.”

Harold said, “Betsy can I get a ride home too? I don’t care to walk in the cold this morning.”

William shook Harold’s hand and said, “It was a pleasure holidaying with you. Contact your family and let them now the governor maybe developing this area centered around a hospital. Keep their ears opened.”

Harold looked like a child with tears filing his eyes.

Dr. Obersteen huffed.

William shook Dr. Obersteen and he shook Joshua’s hand.

He hugged Natalie, Emma and kissed the little girl on her head and she smiled.

He came back to the living room and hugged Betsy and looked at her beautiful hair.

Wes looked at William and he smiled at Wes.

Mattie remained seated and waved.

William leaned over and hugged Mattie and said, “I pray all goes well.”

Betsy, Harold and Shelia were on the porch.

Betsy said, “Wes I am going to take the wagon.”

Wes walked William out to his horse.

Dr. Obersteen walked out and Joshua.

Betsy said, “Mattie come and ride with me?”

Mattie screamed, “I will never ride shotgun again.”

Dr. Obersteen was stunned.

Emma yelled, “Nor me.”

Betsy said, “Joshua.”

Joshua went to the wagon and jumped in.

William said, “You see that there is a problem with mental illness. They can’t bare the memories.”

Dr, Obersteen said, “Good diagnosis William. You are in the wrong profession. Come and join us in medicine.”

William mounted his horse.

Wes said, “William do you have enough food and water for three days?”

William said, “Yes sir.”

He looked at the front door and Natalie was standing in the door and smiled at him.

She flashed the beautiful smile God gave her.

Joshua saw Natalie’s smile and said to Betsy’s, “Let’s go.”

He knew God had answered his prayer about Natalie’s beautiful smile. And he knew God will answer his prayer about his family staying together.

Joshua had peace, because God had given him an answer of peace.

They all waved to William as they left the yard at the same time.

Betsy flew and dropped of Harold.

Harold was quiet and jumped out the wagon and ran into his tent.

His fire was about out.

He went and got coal and placed on the fire.

Betsy waited.

Harold said, “I’m ok.”

Betsy sped up and took Shelia home, because she knew she and Joshua had to help her.

When they arrived at Shelia’s Joshua was laying in the wagon playing with his sailboat.

Shelia’s fire was out.

Betsy jumped out the wagon and said, “Joshua.”

Joshua did not move.

Betsy started Shelia’s fire over.

Betsy looked around and said, “Shelia, where is your water?”

Shelia just shrugged her shoulders.

Betsy saw Shelia’s water pails.

She and Joshua jumped in the wagon to go and bring Shelia some water.

Joshua sat up front and stared at Shelia until she was no longer in sight.

They got to the brook and jumped out the wagon.

Joshua said, “Is that what you call crazy?”

Betsy said, “Joshua I don’t know what you call that.”

Joshua said, “Do you believe God gave her those pictures?”

Betsy was filling up her pail and reached for Joshua’s pail.

Betsy said, “Joshua, I believe God gave her those pictures.”
Joshua said, “But you think she is crazy. Huh.”

Betsy just stared at Joshua and his smart mouth.

She was not upset because of how he spoke his mind.

But she was beginning to see what Mattie said. Joshua was too big for the small town.

They got back to Shelia and poured a bucket of water in her black pot and lighter lit the fire so the water could last a few days.

Betsy left enough water in the pail for Shelia to drink for nearly a week.

Betsy thought, “We will come and check on her in a few days.”

Betsy looked around and saw Shelia’s goodies laid out in the open.

Because it was cold and because no pests or bugs were there she was not too concerned about the food going bad.

Betsy sorted out the pastries from the fruits and gave Shelia an apple and an orange to eat.

Betsy and Joshua walked into Shelia’s tent and saw Cate had been there and covered Shelia’s walls with the knitted coverings and most of Shelia’s coal was on the tent.

Joshua looked at Shelia’s bed and grabbed a picture on the bed.

Betsy tried to catch him and then quickly looked around to see where Shelia was.

Joshua stared at the picture.

He showed the picture to Betsy.

Betsy started to cry but stopped quickly.

Joshua looked at Betsy.

She motioned for Joshua to put the picture back.

Joshua put the picture on the bed.

Betsy put her hands on Joshua’s shoulders and they walked out the tent.

Shelia said, “You met my kids. They are good kids. Yeap they surely are”

Betsy said, “Shelia go inside or at least get two quilts.”

Betsy went inside Shelia’s tent.

Joshua stood and stared at Shelia.

Shelia stared at Joshua and reached out to touch Joshua’s face and Betsy walked between them with two of Shelia’s quilts and wrapped them around Shelia.

Shelia looked at Betsy and said, “I just wanted to touch him. I would not hurt him.”

Betsy said, “Joshua to the wagon. Shelia, I don’t know what you will do. I have been around crazy people before. They are unpredictable. Take care.”

Betsy went and hopped in the wagon and turned the wagon around.

Joshua kept his eyes on Shelia.

Even when Betsy turned the wagon around, Joshua kept his eyes on her.

Shelia sat and peeled her orange and ate it.

She smiled at Joshua.

Thomas heard the wagon and ran outside and flagged down Betsy.

Betsy stopped the wagon and said, “What Thomas?”

Thomas said, “What you brought Shelia?’

Joshua said, “Water.”

Thomas ran in his tent and brought his two water pails and jumped in the back of the wagon and said,”That a way.”

Betsy looked at Joshua.

Betsy turned the wagon around and headed to the brook.

Joshua said,”Why?”

Thomas said, “So I can get some water boy.”

Joshua looked back at Thomas, as they passed Shelia.

Joshua looked at Betsy.

He saw Betsy was angry.

Thomas yelled out the wagon at Shelia.

Shelia said, “WuWu.”

Thomas got to the brook and said, “Come on boy and help me with this water.”

Joshua looked at Betsy.

Betsy head was straight and said, “It is your choice Joshua.”

She looked at Joshua.

Joshua did not know what the look represented.

He sit for a minute

Joshua put off his quilt and got out the wagon.

Thomas was standing on the freezing ground waiting for Joshua and when he saw Joshua jump out the wagon he said, “Get that other pail boy.”

Joshua got the pail and walked to the brook and mostly filled up the water pail.

Thomas saw Joshua’s water pail and said, “Boy filled that pail up.”

Betsy jumped out the wagon and walked to Thomas and got in his face.

He looked at Betsy and tried to smirk and held his head back to keep Betsy from toughing his face.

Thomas started grinning and stepped back and said, “I better step back before that husband of yours think we got something going on.”

Betsy said, “You filthy dog. You are vomit. He has a name His name is Joshua, a servant of God not you. You are the reason that Shelia’s children are all dead. You killed them and tried to put everything on her. You set her house on fire. You murderer. You get your filthy self in this wagon. Let this be the last time I ever lay my eyes on you scum.”

The angel over the new city stood and watched them.

The scribe was writing down everything that was spoken and unspoken words.

Thomas stood and tried to smirk and said,”I don’t know if I want you to take me home.”

Betsy said, “Joshua in the wagon.”

Joshua got in the wagon and covered up with his quilt.

Thomas saw they were leaving him, yelled, “Wait.”

Betsy stopped and said to Joshua, “Filth.”

Joshua said,”Why are you stopping for him.”

Betsy said, “I got something else to say.”

Joshua looked at Thomas as he put the water in the wagon.

Thomas jumped in the back and sat there.

Betsy drove back by Shelia who was still sitting out in the freezing cold.

Joshua said, “Why is she out in the cold.”

Joshua yelled and said,”Shelia go inside!”

Shelia said, “Wuwu.”

Shelia was drinking something.

Betsy noticed and said nothing.

Joshua was so disappointed and sat down and whimpered.

Thomas tried to smirk, but he was thinking about what Betsy said.

Betsy pulled up to his homesite and stopped.

Joshua looked at Betsy.

Thomas got his water pails.

Betsy jumped off the wagon and walked into Thomas’s homesite.

Joshua was watching Betsy just in case he had to go and get Wes.

Betsy said, “Thomas, this is the last time you better see me and never come near me and my family not even Wes if you are sick. You better not kill Shelia.”

Thomas tried to smirk and gave a smart answer, but he did not know if everyone else.

Betsy stared Thomas down and went to the wagon and drove home.

Betsy hollered and cried all the seven miles home.

Joshua cried with her all the way home.

They drove up to the house.

Wes and Dr. Obersteen were outside sitting at the fire drinking coffee.

They saw the wagon pull in the yard.

Wes was about to get up and greet his wife who took a long time to get back.

When he heard her screaming and Joshua hollering with her.

Wes and Dr. Obersteen put down their mugs and ran to the wagon.

Emma, Mattie and Natalie ran onto the front porch.

Emma and Mattie ran to Joshua who was in pain.

Dr. Obersteen tried to get him out the wagon.

Wes was searching Betsy’s body to see if she was hurt.

He kept saying, “Betsy!!!.Betsy!!!”

Betsy was hysterical and in such pain.

Dr. Obersteen tried to search Joshua for injuries and could not.

Joshua was bent over the seat screaming.

Mattie ran up to Joshua to get him.

Dr, Obersteen said, “Get back Mattie.”

Wes was looking for blood or bullet holes.

He had never seen such grief.

Emma stood and covered her mouth with her hands.

Mattie stood frozen.

Dr. Obersteen said to Mattie, “Go and get another covering for them.

Mattie stood frozen.

Natalie ran and got two knitted coverings.

Dr. Obersteen took one and wrapped himself in it and said, “Give one to Wes.

Natalie gave a knitted covering to Wes.

She had her head down and thinking, “Why not give them to Joshua and Betsy.”

The little girl began to cry.

Natalie ran into the house with the little girl.

While Betsy and Joshua were gone, Wes and Dr. Obersteen went outside and build up the fire.

They put on the remaining of the leftovers for an early dinner.

Dr. Obersteen said he wanted to get back to the homesite and help Emma pack.

Mattie sat in the living room and was reading a book.

Emma and Natalie were sitting and talking in the bedroom.

Dr. Obersteen and Wes could not get Joshua and Betsy out of the wagon.

They waited for nearly an hour.

Dr. Obersteen yelled at Mattie and said, “You are not out of the woods Mattie. Please go inside the house.”

Dr. OBersteen said, “Emma you too. Help Mattie inside.”

Emma and Mattie both stood and rolled their eyes at Dr. Obersteen.

He stared at them and they turned and walked in the house and were freezing.

Both stood at the fireplace to warm.

Mattie went and opened the window and turned the chair around to see and hear.

Emma walked over and turned the chair around next to Mattie.

They were wrapped in their quilts.

They were stunned.

They knew an evil must have taken place.

Dr. Obersteen kept saying, “Joshua what is it?”

Betsy passed out.

Wes caught her and ran into the house with her.

Mattie and Emma turned and looked at Wes as he ran into the house with Betsy.

Natalie was standing in the bedroom doorway.

He little girl whispered, “Joshua.”

Natalie heard her.

Wes heard her.

He realized Betsy was passed out from exhaustion.

Mattie and Emma turned and looked at Betsy.

Wes touched her stomach.

He stood and went to the little girl.

He kneeled down and looked into her beautiful brown eyes.

She looked at this man who has helped her all this time.

Wes said, “Baby..”

Dr. Obersteen burst into the door with Joshua.

Mattie and Emma ran from the window.

Dr. Obersteen yelled, “Closed the window.”

Mattie turned and closed the window.

Wes looked at the little girl and said, “Rest I will be back.”

Wes touched Natalie’s arm and nodded to the little girl.

Natalie was so perplexed.

She stepped back to the bed and sat in her chair.

Wes closed the bedroom door.

Dr. Obersteen was freezing he moved Joshua to the fire.

Wes stood and watched Betsy and watched Dr. Obersteen with Joshua.

Emma and Mattie ran to Joshua.

Wes saw the love emma had for Joshua.

He saw Mattie hated Emma.

Wes said, “God you got to fix this. I don’t know how.”

Joshua started screaming, “He killed them. He killed them. He killed them!!!”

Dr. Obersteen grabbed Joshua and shook him and said, “Who?”

Joshua said, “He killed Shelia’s children.”

Mattie and Emma were still.

Wes was still.

Dr, Obersteen said, “Who killed Shelia’s children?”

Joshua said, “Thomas.”

Joshua fell into Dr. Obersteen’s lap.

Joshua was exhausted.

The little girl begin to cry and whispered, “Joshua”.

Natalie heard Joshua.

She opened the bedroom door and looked at Joshua.

Wes looked at Natalie.

Natalie said, “she’s crying. She wants Joshua.”

Wes said, “Joshua is in shape to talk to her.”

Natalie pointed and said, “Can he sleep on a mat in here?”

Wes said, “Wait a minute.”

Dr. Obersteen was holding the hysterical Joshua.

Wes said, “John do you want to give him the herbal sedative?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Yes.”

Wes went and got the herbal sedative and dropped it in Joshua’s mouth.

Mattie made Joshua’s a mat in the little girl’s bedroom.

Wes lifted Joshua and carried him and put him on the mat.

He covered Joshua with a quilt.

The little girl watched Wes carry Joshua in her room and put him on the mat.

The little girl reached out her hand.

Natalie saw her and when Wes turned he saw her.

He thought, “She is such a sweet baby.”

Wes smiled and remembered how Joshua would sit and hold her hand for hours, when she was screaming in pain.

The attendant and the strange man watched all the people.

Their angels were recording every thought, action and deed.

The little girl held Joshua’s hand until they both fell asleep.

JESUS called the strange angel.

The angel went to heaven.

Jesus said, “I need you to go seventy- three years in man’s future to Birmingham Alabama and stop the total destruction of a church bombing.

The strange man returned from Birmingham in an instant.

Wes stood and walked in the living room and Mattie and Emma ran into the bedroom.

Emma sat in the chair and Mattie laid on the floor next to Joshua.

Dr. Obersteen reached to move the book from under him that Mattie was reading.

It was written in French.

Wes closed the door and stepped into the living room and saw an exhausted Betsy.

Dr. Obersteen flipped through the book and lifted it to Wes and said “French. It is written in French. They are reading it as if it was written in English. I wonder if Emma can speak French.”

Wes smiled and thought this another one of his wife’s surprises.

Wes watched Betsy and thought she wasn’t breathing right.

He ran to her.

He began to call her, “Betsy.”

He said, “How much time lapsed since I brought her into the house?”

Dr. Obersteen stood up and was watching Betsy.

Wes was trying to wake Betsy and began to cry out.

Natalie, Mattie and Emma ran to the living room.

Wes was crying and said, “God give her back.”

The attendant looked.

The new commander looked.

The strange man looked.

JESUS said, “Go and call her back without any side effects.

Emma fell back on the wall and slid down.

Mattie was jumping in the air.

Natalie nearly snapped.

Natalie said, My only friend.”

Dr. Obersteen had his hands on his head.

The attendant walked in the living room and bent over and called, “Betsy.”

Betsy’s body was going limp.

Wes was holding onto Betsy and holding her head.

He was crying into her hair.

The attendant looked and called, “Betsy.”

Betsy’s body shook.

Betsy started gasping for air.

Wes started blowing in her face.

Betsy started wrestling and swinging her arms to fight.

She began to cough.

Betsy whispered to Wes, “Hold.”

He knew she meant for him to hold her.

He said, “You bet.”

He continued to blow air in her face, until she began to breathe.

Betsy was falling asleep.

Wes said, “Not so fast.”

He held onto her and she was awake.

Wes saw Mattie crawl back into the bedroom.

He did not see Mattie get on the floor.

Natalie said, “Can I leave?”

Dr. Obersteen looked at Natalie and said,” Wes.”

Wes was making sure Betsy was not closing her eyes.

The angels were watching.

Wes turned to Natalie and said, “You want to leave the bedroom?”

Natalie said, “Yeah.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Natalie, where would you go?”

Natalie said, “Back to the street. No one died there.”

She looked off in space.

Wes said, “Oh God.”

He cried.

Dr. Obersteen walked out the house.

After a while Emma got off the floor and followed Dr. Obersteen outside.

He was walking a little further in the yard.

Emma was wrapped in a quilt and began to also look around the yard.

Dr. Obersteen saw something close to the brook and began to run towards it.

Emma stood for a minute and thought it must be an herb and began to run and Dr. Obersteen picked up the bottle of alcohol he threw away over a month of ago.

He hurried and unscrewed the top and began to drink it when ran to him and snatched it out of his hand.

They stood and stared each other down.

Emma took the bottle and turned it up.

Dr. Obersteen ran to Emma and they began to tussle over the bottle of alcohol.

Wes walked out the house carrying Betsy to their tent.

Wes thought about Harold found Natalie’s stuff packed up.

He walked to the bedroom with Betsy in his arms.

He said, “Mattie I need help. Joshua and the baby are fine. I am concerned that Natalie has snapped .I don’t know where Dr. Obersteen and Emma are. I have to depend on you. Come and lock this door to keep Natalie from leaving. Talk to her and see if we can bring here back. I am afraid to leave Betsy out in the tent by herself. But I have to.”

Mattie stood up and walked to the door.

He saw Natalie’s stuff rolled up behind the chest of drawers.

Wes nodded and Mattie saw the bundle.

Wes walked out the door with a semi- conscious Betsy.

He noticed the freezing cold air was helping Betsy to breathe.

The attendant was splashing the freezing air in Betsy’s face to help her breathe.

Wes kissed Betsy on her lips.

He looked in time and saw Dr. Obersteen and Emma fighting over a bottle of alcohol.

Dr. Obersteen pushed Emma down and gulped down the alcohol.

Wes looked at them and carried Betsy to their tent.

He put Betsy to bed.

He pulled off her boots and covered her with the quilts.

Betsy tried to take the quilts off but Wes put them back on.

He laid down on the mattress and the top of the quilts to keep her from pulling them off.

Betsy laughed.

Wes laughed.

Then he cried.

He said, “I mis-diagnosed you. My Baby.”

Betsy smiled and they looked into each others eyes for a long time.

Wes said,”Natalie I am going to check on everyone else. I don’t want you to go asleep now. I want you also to eat something. You only had tea this morning and nothing else. I don’t know what happen to you.”

He picked up her hand and kissed it.

He said, “Baby I am so scared that I my lose you and our two little ones.”

Betsy laughed.

Wes very seriously said, “We fussed all night. I don’t want to fuss anymore.”

Wes turned to stand off the bed.

Betsy said, “I don’t want to eat.”

Wes aid, “I am not going to fuss Betsy. You are going to eat.”

Wes stared at her and she laid across his side of the bed and her hair flowed onto his quilts.

He smiled’

He went outside and added much coal to the fire., because he did not know how long he would be in the house.

He looked at the water and thought he need more water.

He took his quilt which he left by the fire and wrapped it over his shoulders and took the two water pails to go to the creek.

He passed Dr. Obersteen and Emma out in the open in the freezing cold having sex.

Wes thought he need to be helping me with this water and Natalie. Out here drinking, fighting and having sex. I can’t complain. This has been a hell of a day.

Wes passed Emma and Dr. Obersteen trying to get up.

He put a pail of water in the black pot and took a pail in the house.

He came back and got a pail of coal.

He went into the house and put coal in both fireplaces.

He looked on the little girl and Joshua and saw they were fine.

He looked at Natalie and Mattie sitting in the living room.

He sat across from Natalie.

Dr. Obersteen and Emma entered the house and said they were going to their campsite.

Wes said, “Dr. Obersteen I really need your help.”

Dr. Obersteen shook his head for no. “I really can’t help you. The baby and Joshua should sleep until the morning. Have Mattie to lay across the front door to keep Natalie from leaving. You go to your tent and watch Betsy all night. I ‘ll see you in the morning.”

Dr. Obersteen walked to the front door and looked at the horses.

He slurly said, “I’ll take care of the horses.

Emma walked outside with Dr. Obersteen.

He fed the horses and gave them water.

Emma took the water pails to the brook and nearly fell in.

Dr. Obersteen caught her.

They loaded the wagon and was getting ready to leave.

Emma said wait and she down and got a plate and cut she and Dr. Obersteen some ham

and bread.

She yelled to Betsy, “Betsy you want something to eat?”

Betsy said, “A small piece of ham and a sweet potato.”

Emma got a plate and put on it a piece of ham and a baked sweet potato.

Emma went in the tent and gave Betsy the plate.

Betsy said, “Thank you.”

Emma just stood.

Betsy begin to peel the sweet potato, and said, “Emma go.”

Emma ran and hugged Betsy and said, “I’m so sorry for what I did to Mattie and Joshua.”

Emma was not as drunk as Dr. Obersteen.,

As children they loved to put sweet potatoes under the ash from coals and let them bake.

Emma gave Betsy a plate and realized the sweet potatoes would burn. She ran and got a platter and arranged the rest of the ham and sweet potatoes and green beans and carrots and bread on a large platter and kicked on the door and Mattie opened the door.

Emma went and got their plates and forks and took them back to the house.

Wes said, “Did you give Betsy anything?”

Emma walking out the house said, “She wanted a sweet potato and a piece of ham.”

Wes said, “Did she eat?”

Emma said, “When I left.”

Wes said, “Thank God.”

He walked to the door and looked across at their tent.

Emma went to the wagon and stood on the side and Dr. Obersteen drove home and they yelled all the way.

Wes heard them drive away.

Wes, Mattie and Natalie sat and ate.

He was trying to gauge Natalie’s mental stability.

They were talking and when Wes looked the little girl had gotten out of bed and was crying.

She was naked and cold and standing in the door.

She scared Wes.

Wes had to sit for a minute to compose himself.

Mattie jumped in fear.

Natalie rushed to her and threw her Knitted shawl around the little girl.

The little girl said,”Food.”

Natalie said, “Wes she said food.”

Wes sat for a moment.

Natalie looked at him.

The little girl had really scared Wes and Mattie.

Wes said, “Hey baby. Natalie nothing heavy. I’ll go and see if there is some bean broth left. Take a vey small piece of the sweet potato and mashed and only give her a bit. She has not had food for nearly a half of year. We must be careful.“

 Wes wrapped up and went outside.

He peeped in on Natalie who ate her sweet potato and was slowly eating her ham.

Wes stepped the tent and said, “I’m glad you are eating Betsy. The little girl is up and wanted something to eat. I don’t know how she is walking. She scared me to death. I believe she scared Mattie to. Mattie has not moved. Natalie got her and wrapped her up. You know I had a dream several weeks ago she was walking around and even came to this tent.”

Betsy said, “She did.”

Wes said, “Maybe God was trying to tell me He was raising her up. I just thought she would be in that state until she died”

Betsy frowned up but did not say anything, because it had been a bad day and she did not want to fuss.

Betsy said, “Emma was drunk when she brought this food.”

She reached her plate to Wes.

Wes leaned over to get it and said, “Dr. Obersteen too. They were having sex out there.”

Betsy said, “Out where?’

Wes pointed. “Outside, in the open, in the freezing cold.”

Betsy stood and began to undress for bed.

Wes watched.

Then he thought he had to carry the little girl food.

He went outside and put Betsy’s plate in the bucket for the dishes.

He just enough green bean broth Emma had reserved to give to the little girl.

Wes thought Emma was a good person but allowed hate to kill and destroy her life.

Wes took the cup of green bean broth and went into the house and gave it to Natalie.

Natalie fed the little girl the green bean broth.

Mattie still had not moved.

Wes said, “Natalie how much sweet potato did you give her?”

Natalie said, “A half of teaspoon.”

Wes was thinking.

Natalie and the little girl were watching him.

Wes was thinking about ulcer patients and patents with stomach cancer.

Mattie watched Wes.

Wes said, “Good decision Natalie.”

Natalie smiled.

The little girl was sipping the green bean broth.

Mattie said, “Sometimes our grandmother would not eat for weeks. We would start her off with vegetable juice like you are doing. But no more solid food.”

Wes sat on the sofa and watched and listened to Mattie very intensely.

He was learning more about this family and he was learning how they dealt with dementia that was causing them grown up problems now.

Joshua was asleep and should sleep until he morning. Natale carried the little girl to bed.

Mattie cleared all the dishes away and took them outside and washed them.

Wes got his note pad and pencil and wrote every detail of everything that happened that day.

Wes said, “Natalie are you alright?”

Natalie sat for a minute and held her head down.

Wes said, “Can I trust you to help them out and to help me out?”

Natalie shook her head.

Wes said, “I did not hear what you said.”

Natalie began to cry and said, “Yes.”

She looked at Wes.

She realized Wes was a very stern doctor.

She wondered how he got along with the doctors at the hospital.

Wes check the coverings on the little girl.

He thought.

Natalie looked at Wes.

He said, “You know think she is waking up more because her blood is building up and we are keeping her warm and her circulation is getting better. “

Wes covered her with the cool cotton sheets and one of the knitted coverings and he pulled the rest of the knitted coverings and quilts to her back.

He sat and wrote in his note pad.

Wes checked on Joshua.

He asked Natalie, “How many quilts and coverings we have? because Mattie is spending the night. You two can share the living room.”

Natalie said, “Mattie she is going to sleep on the floor with Joshua. She said she prefer only a quilt for a pad and she could use her knitted covering she brought today.”

Wes said, “Give her a quilt. Even though the fire would be burning. That was a symptom before that her body would be hot. Where did she go?”

He put up his note pad and pencil.

Natalie pointed and said, “She took the dishes out.”

Wes got up to leave.

Natalie said, “Can you ask Mattie to bring me cake.”

Wes said, “Which one?”
Natalie was hesitant and said, “A slice of each.”

Wes walked out the door.

Natalie turned around and said, “Right I should never said that to a doctor.”

Wes ran out the house with his quilt and looked around and did not see Mattie.

He said, “It is getting cold.”

He called, “Mattie.”

Mattie heard him and said, “Here.”

He ran into his tent.

She was sitting on the foot of his bed and talking with Betsy in French.

Betsy was leaning on her elbow.

He said, “Excuse me.”

Betsy and Mattie looked at him.

Wes said, “I am ready to go to bed. Natalie want you to bring her cake. And I told her to give you a quilt. This is a symptom of that illness.”

Mattie looked at Wes and said,”Saveur?”

She and Betsy looked at Wes.

Wes said, “What?”

Betsy said, “Flavour?”

He said, “All.”

Mattie look for a minute and she and Betsy continued to speak in French.

Wes said, “Mattie I am ready to go to bed. Get some cake and take it to Natalie. Lock the front door and maybe the bedroom door to keep the little girl from wondering out in this freezing cold. And use the quilt. Let me determine whether it is necessary.”

Mattie gave Betsy a face and spoke in French.

Betsy fell back on the bed and hollered.

Mattie passed by Wes and looked at Betsy.

Wes said,”I know you said something about me and it was foul mouth, because Betsy only laugh at foul mouth language.”

Mattie ran to where the cake was being stored ad cut several slices and ran into the house.

Wes was standing in the tent door.

Betsy spoke in French.

Wes did not turn around but said, “English.”

Betsy said, “You are letting that freezing cold air into the tent.”

He watched until Mattie was in the house.

Mattie locked the front door.

Natalie was sitting in the living room and Mattie handed Natalie a plate of cake.

Natalie was excited and ribbed her hands together to dig into the cake.

Mattie said, “You know Joshua got sick from eating all that cake.”

Natalie said, “Joshua is not a pro, let me lire a tentivement.”

Mattie said, “You speak French?”

Natalie said, “Yes. I worked for someone who was French and I had to learn what she said, if I wanted a job until she passed.”

Wes briefly looked around the yard.

He thought, “Thank God, they helped. Now I can read.”

He went into the tent and dressed for bed.

He laid on his back and begin to read until it got dark.

Betsy laid on her stomach and was looking over the plans Shelia gave to Wes.

Wes too scared to touch Betsy.

Betsy turned over and looked at Wes and said, “Can we skip tonight?”

Wes said, “Are you alright with skipping?”

Betsy laughed.

They looked at each other and Betsy fell asleep.

Wes pulled a medical journal from underneath the bed and looked at the sleeping Betsy and said, “Good.”

Natalie and Mattie spent most of the night talking in French.

Natalie dressed for bed.

Mattie went and made a mat on the floor.

She closed and locked the bedroom door,

She double check the fire and laid on the mat and covered with the quilt.

They slept until late morning.

Wes was knocking on the bedroom door.

Mattie got up to unlock the door.

She looked at the little girl and Joshua and feel back asleep.

Natalie slept until her stomach started cramping.

Wes heard Natalie moaning.

Made a glass of bicarbonate of soda and walked in the living room and handed it to Natalie.

Natalie ran outside several times to throw up.

Wes continued his routine of bathing the little girl and giving her the herb therapy.

Dr. Obersteen and Emma slept through the night and went to the cute house later that morning and took breakfast.

Shelia sat out all night in the freezing cold.

It took William the entire day and part of the night to get through the next town the little girl had to go through.

William told the rider he was at the mile marker and that when he leave the next morning don not stop in that town for nothing.

The rider asked far Betsy’s town was away.

 William said another day’s ride.

William said, “The new settlement is very cold. He said after you get through this town and the new settlement then the town you are asking about is an additional day.”

The rider was looking over his map.

William said, “If you are tired and want to camp with them then stop at the only house when you leave this town. They will put you up for the night. If they do not have any room then they will put you up at the Wilsons. I just spent the holiday with them. They are good people. Mattie baked seven cakes and I ate none, Because I am not a sweet eater.”

The rider was so focus on getting to the town he did not hear what William said.

The rider laid on his blanket and nearly fell asleep.

The he realized what William said.

The rider sat up and said, “Did you say Betsy?”

William said, “Yes.”

The rider said, “Do you know Mattie Wilson?”

William said, “Why?”

The rider said, “That’s who I am going to see.”

William said, “Why are you going to see her?”

The rider said, “Is she your woman?”

William said, “No they are friends of mine and I do not want trouble.”

The rider said, “I am Harry Westerfield. My family owns the major newspapers in the state. I met Mattie Wilson at the state university and were engaged to be married. I am coming to check on her after all these years.”

William said, “After all of these years.”

William turned over to sleep but laid awake all night trying to decide whether to continue to the capital or escort this man and see what he is about and that he posed no danger to his friends..