The commander stood close to the front door.

Amy sat in the chair where Angelica sat.

Dr. Obersteen sat on the coffee table and pulled his stethoscope out.

The commander looked at Dr. Obersteen and said, “This doctor is so tired. GOD help him.”

Dr. Obersteen said, Peter I am Dr. Obersteen.”

Peter said, “How you know my name?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I heard you and Amy talking and called each other by your names. To be a doctor the first thing you should learn to do is to listen.”

Peter looked Dr. Obersteen in his eyes and thought, He talk hard but he is a good person.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Peter I want to listen to your heart and your lungs.”

Wes walked in the house.

He spoke to the commander.

The commander spoke.

Wes saw the little girl and the little boy.

Wes peeped around the commander and saw the bedroom door closed.

He waited.

Dr. Obersteen pulled Peter up and listened to his lungs.

Dr. Obersteen finished, he looked at Wes and said, “Why are you in here?”

Wes said, “I’m hungry. I want food.”

The commander smiled and looked at Wes.

Dr. Obersteen laid Peter back on the sofa.

He began to touch Peter’s stomach, then he stopped.

The commander looked.

Wes made a one footstep towards Dr. Obersteen and Peter.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Who is with the patients?”

The commander looked from Dr. Obersteen to Wes.

Wes said, “Skip.”

Dr. Obersteen yelled, “Skip!! He is not a doctor.”

Wes said, “He was the only person available. I need something to eat. We have no more crackers and cheese.”

Wes exhaled.

The commander looked at Wes.

The commander said, “I think the cook…”

Peter yelled in pain.

Amy looked.

The commander looked.

Angelica yelled, “I’m trying to sleep.”

Betsy said, “Hush little girl.”

The commander snickered.

Wes said, “Excuse me.”

The commander watched Wes opened the bedroom and close it.

Amy sat still.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Peter I am not for sure sure, but I believe you have an ulcer.”

Peter looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen put the thermometer in Peter’s mouth and took his blood pressure.

The commander could hear Wes say, “Hello everyone.”

Wes walked to Betsy and kissed her a long time.

They hugged.

Wes saw Joshua’s sailboat on the dresser.

He said to Betsy, “Did you put it there?”

Joshua said, “No. Dr. John.”

Wes tried not to laugh and he said, “Joshua you have been playing with that sailboat for months. It has gotten on everybody nerves.”

Joshua said, “Let the marbles.”

Wes could not say anything.

Betsy hollered.

She lifted her head off Wes’ chest to his face.

Wes was at a lost for words.

Wes said, “I need to eat.”

Betsy batted her eyes at Wes.

Wes took his right hand and pushed Betsy’s face from him.

Joshua was angry and turned his head.

Wes walked over to Angelica who was propped on one elbow looking at Daddy Wes and Momma Betsy.

Wes said, “Angel baby do you need anything?”

Angelica said, Yes.”

Wes thinking, “Oh God what is wrong with her?”

Wes said, “What Angelica are you in pain? What hurts? What is it?”

Angelica said, “Why that girl don’t have on shoes?”

Wes was leaning on Angelica’s bed with his fists, waiting for bad news.

He could not shift his thoughts from pain to shoes that quick.

Betsy said, “Look little girl, I told you to hush.”

Wes was still perplexed about what Angelica said.

Betsy playfully slapped Wes on his back.

Wes stood and was wondering about the words Angelica spoke.

Wes mind was only on two things, medicine and women.

Now he has a family and more administrative duties.

He has to become more broad minded.

He has to learn that he doesn’t have the help that he would have at a hospital. Nor a hotel, where he could have a hot bath everyday. Those luxuries he doesn’t have.

Betsy pulled Wes up from Angelica’s bed and said, “Go to work baby. I ‘ll run the house.”

Betsy looked back at Angelica who was laying looking at him and Momma Betsy and then at Joshua who had his head turned looking at the window.

We opened the bedroom walked out and closed the door.

The commander leaned back a little to look.

Wes said, “God I need to eat.”

The commander was about to say something and there was a knock on the door.

Angelica said, “Momma Betsy why did you bat your eyes at Daddy Wes when he said, he need to eat?’

Wes head Angelica.

The commander heard Angelica and snickered.

Betsy was so out done she leaned her head on the door and closed her eyes.

Wes walked to the door and opened it, he was thinking we have a family now. It just not the two of us away by ourselves which is not what I wanted!!”

The strange man and the new commander and the six thousand holy angels knew Wes’ thoughts were directed toward the attendant.

JESUS looked at Wes and said to the holy angels, “Wes is getting bitterness in his heart, because life is getting harder and harder every day and he does not see progress. He wants to leave the new settlement and enjoy the life he wants with Betsy.”

JESUS said, “Gabriel take the poison and infections out of Newsom’s intestines. Heal the wound in Bruce’s chest they do not know about, cause the medicine in the IV to go to that spot.”

Gabriel walked to the governor’s tent.

The governor was in and out of consciousness and he saw Gabriel walk into the tent.

Skip was standing holding Bruce’s hand.

David made a noise and pointed towards the tent door.

Skip looked at David and he turned and looked at the tent door.

Skip said, “Whatever it is it won’t take my son nor anybody else.”

JESUS looked at Skip and thought about the hard day Skip had.

JESUS thought about Skip’s heartfelt pain to be a very good father. He thought about Arnold turning his back on Skip that day and the terrible pain Skip felt for Peter and his siblings. Then to see his own son near death from a satanic attack.

JESUS said, “Skip is getting cold.”

JESUS said, “Strange angel go to Shelia and touch her heart that she tells them the name of the person who came that night and spoke to her to let them in the new settlement.”

JESUS saw some devils leaving the evil town and trying to spread their control over no man’s land between the new settlement and Betsy’s town.

JESUS threw HIS hand towards the devils, which had a spear in it.

Lightning hit the devils with fierce destruction.

The new commander went and chained the devils in darkness and took them into outer darkness until they would be thrown into the lake of fire.

JESUS said, “Michael have Dr. Obersteen’s angel go with him and keep him awake and speed his horse, because he has a crisis taking place at the hospital.

Gabriel walked to Newsom and looked at his intestines.

Gabriel’s hands turned into flaming fire.

He put his hands in Newsom’s body and went into his intestines and burned the poison and infections out of his intestines.

Newsom began to grunt, swirl and twist.

Skip looked over at Newsom and said, “JESUS I don’t know him, but he sacrificed his life for my son and others. Please heal him.”

Skip continued to watch Newsom for those fifteen minutes.

The cook walked in the house with a tray full of food.

The cook made soup and different types of sandwiches and hot coco with whipped whip, coffee and tea.

Gabriel finished healing Newsom.

Skip watched Newsom as he calmed down and drifted back to sleep.

David saw Gabriel walked to Bruce.

He whispered Bruce and pointed.

Skip looked at David and then at Bruce.

Skip felt the presence but did not see anything.

He looked at Newsom.

Skip turned back to Bruce.

He said, “David I believe it is JESUS.”

Gabriel looked at David and put him to sleep.

Why David was seeing him, he did not know, because it was not time for David to go home to heaven.

Then Skip perceived his presence.

Gabriel wondered.

JESUS sat and watched Gabriel work on Newsom and Bruce.

Gabriel turned from David and walked to Bruce.

He looked at the IV and then the unknown wound in Bruce’s stomach and chest area.

Gabriel caused the IV liquid to flow to that spot.

Skip saw the IV move in the bag like someone was squeezing it.

Gabriel stopped squeezing the bag when the medicine started to flow to the spot that was immediately being healed.

Skip was shocked. He stared at the IV bag, then he looked at Bruce.

Wes told Skip, he misdiagnosed the infections in Bruce’s body.

He told Skip he did not know what was causing the non- healing in Bruce’s body.

He took the three bullets out.

Skip closed his eyes and cringed.

Wes said, “Sorry, but I need to tell what I see. Unless the bullets hit him and ricochet or pressure or heat from the bullets caused a wound we can’t see. I put the bullets in his container in case you need them.”

Skip said, “For what?”

Wes rocked under kip’s stern rebuke and said, “In case you need them for proof in trial.”

Skip said, “It won’t be a trial. They all are dead.”

Skip turned back to Bruce.

Wes heard the wagon.

He said to Skip, “Sir I need to get something to eat and Dr. Obersteen is over at the new settlement drawing blood. Can you stay for a minute so I can get something to eat.”

Skip was leaning over Bruce and holding his hand.

Skip stood up and Wes reeled under his disapproving look.

JESUS said, “Skip Wes is not a soldier, he is a doctor. He does not have your physical stamina.

Skip said, “What am I suppose to do if they start screaming?”

David said, “Scream.”

Wes looked at David and smiled at his humor.

Skip looked over at David and said, “David!”

Wes looked at Skip for talking to his patient rough.

David said, “I’ll show you. Like now.”

Wes ran to David and checked on his wounds. One in particular.

Wes gave David another IV and put more medicine in it.

He sat and wrote detail notes in David’s chart along with the time.

Skip’s heart struck him, he knew that was GOD telling him to do right by Wes.

He saw how dedicated Wes was to his patients.

He was in a wilderness by himself without any help.

Skip thought, “I have a whole office and thousands of staff and soldiers and I still need help.

Skip nodded his head he was too proud to apologize and said, “Wes.”

Wes held his head up and looked around.

Skip thought, “He is an air head. I know Betsy has to love him for her bedroom.”

Wes looked at Skip, then he realized he was telling him to go and get something to eat.

Wes put on his quilt and nearly stubbled walking out the tent.

Skip saw him.

Skip said, “Get better Bruce.”

Bruce moved his mouth.

Skip jumped and looked at the door to call Wes.

He turned back to Bruce when he felt a twist of Bruce’s hand in his hand.

Skip knew from Shirley to stay and not miss one moment.

Skip stayed in the governor’s tent.

Wes went to the house for fifteen minutes.

He was so glad to see the cook.

Amy and Peter and Dr. Obersteen was glad to see the cook.

The commander was trained not to eat.

He ate breakfast with the other commanders that morning. He has seen Sip gone for nearly two weeks without food and water and be fighting and shooting in battle. He thought the same thing with Jake they were two of a kind. He thought how good it was to see Jake. They need him at headquarters or a branch out in that wilderness.

Joshua ran to the bedroom door and opened and said, “Hot coco with whipped cream.”

Betsy said, “Joshua!”

Wes heard the little girl say, “Run Joshua.”

Betsy said, “Angelica you need to go to sleep and wake up tomorrow.”

Angelic said, “Not without my coco with whipped cream.”

Wes was bent over the tray to give Joshua his coco with whipped cream.

He looked at Dr. Obersteen who was examining Amy.

Dr. Obersteen shook his head for no.

Wes looked at Peter and said, “What is your name?”

Joshua said, “Peter and turned and said, “She is Amy. She does not have on shoes.”

Betsy yelled, “Joshua.”

Wes stood and looked at Joshua and handed him a mug of hot coco with whipped cream.

Wes watched Joshua walk to the bedroom.

Angelica said, “Joshua where mines?”

Wes walked to the bedroom and said, “You don’t get any hot coco, Angelica.”

Angelica looked at Betsy.

Wes said, “Why are you looking at Betsy?”

Betsy did not say anything but looked towards the corner by the window.

Angelica said, “Dr. Obersteen gave me some.”

Dr. Obersteen did not say a word but shook his head.

He walked from Amy with the stethoscope in his hands and walked to the bedroom room.

The commander was laughing, because the little girl was telling on all of them.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Look Benedict I gave you two swallows.”

Wes stood in the doorway and said nothing.

Angelica was sitting up in the bed.

She stretched her arms out on the bed and grinned and flashed her big smile and said, “And it was delicious.” She batted her eyes like Betsy.

Betsy grinned and laugh.

Wes looked at Angelica and said, “I have told you, you are not Momma Betsy. You don’t get the same effect.”

Joshua said, “Wes put her to sleep.”

Angelica said, “You want me to go to sleep so you want share your coco and whipped cream with me.

Joshua said, “Yeap.”

Dr. Obersteen walked out and said nothing.

The commander watched Dr. Obersteen and grinned.

The cook left out.

Dr. Obersteen gave Amy a bowl of soup. He gave Peter a bowl of soup.

He said, “Peter I believe you have an ulcer. You can’t eat hard food for two weeks.”

The commander said, “I thought that was what was wrong with him. “That’s what I had from starving most of my life and worrying about having a piece of bread to eat.”

The commander had to stop thinking about his pass.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Amy what kind of sandwich you want?”

Wes looked at Betsy and then Joshua.

They knew he was looking at them because they knew Angelica had hot coco and whipped cream against his orders.

Amy said, “What kind do you have?’

Angelica said, “Why she does not have on shoes talking about a sandwich?”

Betsy was so embarrassed.

Betsy was leaned over in the chair and covered her eyes with her hand.

She whispered, “Shush child.”

Joshua said, “Angelica I will give you some of my coco if you go to sleep.”

Angelica beckoned for the coco.

Angelica and Joshua looked at Wes as he closed the door.

Angelica had the mug up to her mouth and was about to take a swallow of coco and said, “Momma Betsy you didn’t tell me what Daddy Wes said about eating.”

Betsy was so embarrassed, she stood and walked out the house with her quilt.

She went to her and Wes’ tent and covered her head under the many quilts.

She went to sleep thinking about her being a failure to the little girl and what kind of mother she would be to her children.

Wes was about to take a bite of his bologna sandwich.

He stared at Betsy and looked back towards the bedroom.

Dr. Obersteen put his cheese omelet over the rack in the fireplace Betsy invented.

The commander was watching how Dr. Obersteen was treating Peter and Amy.

He showed no disparity with them and Joshua and that little bossy girl.

Dr. Obersteen took his hot plate from the fireplace and bowed his head and said grace.

He ate his hot his cheese omelet and drank his coffee.

Wes ate his bologna sandwich and a little soup.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Wes.”

Wes said, “I know. I am going. They are too quiet.”

Wes was seated next to Peter.

He stood and said, “Excused me Peter.”

Wes had grown so much with children.

Joshua taught him so much about treating children like he treats the adults. The children knew what was wrong with them.

We had learned to respect children.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Wes.”

Wes stopped and looked back at Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen said, “I believe Peter has an ulcer. He may need to come…”

Thelma begin screaming.

Peter and Amy jumped up and begin to run in the house.

Wes said, “it’s ok. They fine.”

Dr. Obersteen whose arms were folded and his legs stretched out looked at the children and said, “I ‘m going to see about her.”

Dr. Obersteen stood and stretched and said, “I don’t know if that’s exactly wrong with Peter until I perform a few tests at the big city hospital. Arrange it Wes.”

Wes stood with his hands on his hips.

He hugged Amy and Peter and told them the lady was going to be alright.

Dr. Obersteen walked out the house and ran to the tent.

Skip was peeping out the tent calling for Terry.

The soldiers said, “We can’t find Terry.”

Skip looked at the soldiers and turned back in the tent.

Dr. Obersteen said, “I got to talk to him before I leave.”

Peter was trembling and said, “Is that what you are going to do to me?”

Wes stooped down and looked in Peter’s eyes and said, “No. No. You have a sore in your stomach and you can’t eat food that rubbed against it. Just like you had a sore on your finger. You don’t rub against it do you?”

Amy wiping her tears and catching her breath said,”No.”

Wes said, “Why?”

Amy and Peter both said, “It hurts.”

Wes said, “It won’t’ heal if you keep touching it right?”

Peter said, “Yeap.”

Wes hugged the children and sat them on the sofa.

The commander looked at the food left.

The front door opened.

Skip walked in.

He looked at Wes and said, “A few minutes.”

Skip looked in the bedroom as Wes opened it and he did not see Betsy.

The commander said, “She left.”

Skip said, “Why?’

The commander said, “I think that little girl got to her.”

Betsy sat straight up in the bed.

After a minute she pulled the cover off her face. She sat and got her composure.

She stood up and got her quilt and begin to walk to the cute house with her hair tossed over her head.

Wes opened the bedroom door and walked in.

He caught Joshua and Angelica.

They thought he ran to the tent to attend to the first lady.

Joshua had moved the chair to the dresser and was hanging onto the dresser to get his sailboat.

Angelica had the mug to her mouth and cut her eyes over the mug at Wes.

Skip looked in the bedroom at the children.

Betsy opened the front door.

Skip knew not to say anything about Betsy’s beautiful hair thrown all over her head.

The commander looked at the commander because they heard Skip old flame lived in the new settlement.

Betsy closed the front door. And opened the chest of drawers.

She looked at the bottom on the floor.

A pair of Natalie’s boots was left.

Natalie was in such a hurry to leave, she did not see them.

She would never come back for the boots.

Betsy picked up the boots and walked to the bedroom.

Skip said, “Hello Betsy.”

Betsy said, “Hello Skip.”

Skip smiled.

Betsy said it sexy with her hair over her head.

The commander looked.

Skip looked at the children sniffing and said, “Thelma?”

The commander looked at the children and said, “Yes.”

Skip said, “Did they find out what was wrong?”

The commander said, “A possible ulcer.”

Skip said, “How are they going to be sure?”

The commander said, “Test at the big city hospital with Dr. Obersteen.”

Wes out done. He stood in the door.

Betsy passed Wes an got a washcloth and cleaned the inside of the boots and the outside of the boots.

Since Wes did not say anything, the little girl drank the last sip of hot coco.

Joshua jumped and got the sailboat.

Angelica sat and watched Betsy clean the boots.

Wes reached for the coco mug.

Angelica put it up to her mouth and wiped the coco with her tongue.

Wes was disappointed.

JESUS looked at them.

Joshua jumped out the chair.

Wes did not say anything.

He pulled the chair back from the dresser.

He looked at Betsy and pressed her hair down.

He left the door opened and walked in the living room.

Peter and Amy were sitting on the sofa.

Angelica said, “Momma Betsy what you doing with Natalie’s boots?”

Betsy said, “Cleaning them.”

Angelica said, “To give to that girl in there?”

Betsy said, “Yes.”

Peter and Amy were surprise and smiled.

Angelica said, “Why she doesn’t have no shoes?”

Wes shook his head.

Angelica looked at Betsy, and said, “Momma Betsy are you mad with me. Why?”

Angelica batted her eyes at Betsy.

Wes was listening and stepped back to look.

Skip and the other commander sat.

Skip looked and got a clean bowl and got some soup.

Dr. Obersteen placed the soup on the rack in the fireplace to keep it hot.

Skip bowed his head and blessed his food.

Peter and Amy watched him.

Betsy said, “Look little girl. You listen too much to grown folks conversation when you should be reading your bible and preparing yourself to leave.”

Joshua said, “Leave and do what?”

Betsy pointed her finger at Joshua and said, “You sit down and be still. You haven’t drank water in a week. I’m going to put a pitcher in front of you and make you sit until you drank it all up.”

Joshua stood and looked at Betsy.

Skip peeped into the bedroom but could not see Joshua.

He laughed because he remembered the times she did it to Andrew and Bruce.

Betsy said, “Angelica Amy may not had money to buy a pair of boots. I believe she and Natalie may wear the same size. And I am going to give her this pair of shoes until she gets another pair.”

Skip looked at the girl’s feet and picked up a bologna sandwich.

Angelica said, “Momma Betsy that’s why I asked why she had no shoes on.”

Wes was standing trying to process Angelica reasoning.

Betsy said,”Angelica sometimes people don’t have the money to buy things they need.”

Angelica said, “That’s why JESUS had Natalie those boots here because HE knew that girl would come and need a pair of boots.”

Betsy said, “That’s a good way to look at Angelica.”

Angelica said, “Momma Betsy I did not want to hurt her, but I did not know why anyone would not have shoes, especially now since it is cold.”

Betsy smiled at Angelica.

Angelica said,”I want to say I am sorry to her before she leaves.”

Betsy said, “Ok Angelica.”

Angelica said, “Now for your hair.”

Skip nearly fell out his chair.

He was glad someone said something. Because he saw Wes had been trained by Betsy not to say anything about her hair.

He thought about the night Betsy’s hair nearly got them caught trying to get Andrew out of a married woman’s apartment while her husband was climbing up from the outside.

Wes turned and walked in the living room.

Angelica said, “Joshua, give me that brush.”

Joshua said, “I can’t move. She told me she is going to make me drank all that water. Where is Wes?”

Joshua walked into the living room.

Skip looked at Joshua.

The commander looked at Joshua.

Joshua looked at Wes.

Wes looked at him.

Wes said, “What is it Joshua?”

Joshua looked at the commanders and said, “Excuse.”

He beckoned for Wes and walked to the bedroom.

Wes bent down.

Joshua said, “Aunt Betsy said she‘s going to make me sit down and make me drank a lot of water.”

Wes said, “Joshua why did Aunt Betsy say that?”

Joshua looked in Wes eyes and said, “I knew you were going to take her side.”

Wes walked out the bedroom and put on his coat to go and help Dr. Obersteen.

Wes said, “It’s getting late in the evening, who is taking Peter and Amy home?”

Skip was eating the last of his soup.

He said,”Not you. You have enough to do.”

Wes said, “Thank you Joshua.”

Wes walked out the door.

Skip and Betsy hollered.

Betsy stood up and gave Angelica her brush and sat on Angelica’s bed and let Angelica brush her hair.

The commander stood to take Peter and Amy home.

Skip said, “Peter and Amy. I told our cooks to bring your family at least one per day, until you get on your feet. That’s the least we can do is to share our bread with you and your family. We will see if we can locate any of your family to come and see about you. Now Peter we have to see about someone taking you and your mother to the big city hospital for the tests that Dr. Obersteen would give you. Dr. Obersteen works there.”

Peter shook his head for yes.

He looked at Skip and the other commander and said, “I thank both of you sirs. I feel better already.”

Skip smiled.

The commander thought, “I guess so with food in your stomach.”

Skip said, “Betsy, Peter and Amy are leaving.”

Betsy stood up.

The little girl like to brush Betsy’s beautiful hair.

Angelica said, “Can you bring Amy in here?”

Betsy picked up the boots and walked out the bedroom and looked at Angelica.

Joshua put himself in isolation and turned his back to Betsy.

Betsy walked in the living with hair brushed and laid around her front on her chest.

Amy said, “Whoa.”

Angelica was sitting on the bed and smiled because she did a good job brushing Betsy’s hair.

Skip smiled.

Betsy said, “Amy here is a pair of boots that were here. Can you tried them on and see if they fit you. If they do then you can have them.”

Wes came back and walked into the bedroom.

He looked at Joshua sulking with his back turned to the room.

He looked at Angelica watching him.

Angelica said, “Momma Betsy!!”

Betsy reached the boots to Amy and ran into the bedroom.

Wes said, “Angelica why are you hollering like that? You have not had your physical therapy for several days.”

Angelica began to cry and Betsy sat on the bed and held Angelica and rock her.

Joshua turned around and looked at Angelica and said, “Your not doing theatrics?”

Amy put on the shoes and began to laugh with Peter.

The boots fit Amy. She was so glad.

Wes walked towards Angelica and she buried her head in Betsy’s chest.

Joshua said, “I guess not.”

He walked over to Angelica and sat on the bed and held her hand.

Betsy said, “Wes wait a minute.”

Angelica hit at Wes and said, “Go away.”

The commander stepped back so he could see.

Skip said, “I don’t need to see.”

Betsy wiped Angelica’s face and said, “Apologize to Amy and Peter.”

Angelica said, “Peter?”

Betsy said, “Because you were rude.”

Angelica looked up in Betsy’s eyes and started crying and said, “Momma I did not mean to?”

Betsy said, “I know.”

She shook Angelica head and kissed her on her forehead and said, I love you.”

Wes looked and his heart was aching for Angelica and he could do nothing more for her.

Wes was getting bitter everyday.

Betsy called and said, “Amy and Peter can you step in here for a minute Angelica like to say something.”

Amy was so excited about her shoes.

Skip was seated at the first chair so he could look into the bedroom.

The other commander stood in the floor and looked.

Amy was grinning and twirling in her new shoes. They were new to her.

She and bare feet Peter walked in the bedroom.

Wes watched as Angelica looked up in Betsy’s eyes and drew strength from her love for her.

Betsy nodded and Angelica looked at Betsy and said, “I’m sorry for being rude. Forgive me.”

Joshua was still holding Angelica’s hand.

Amy and Peter, “We forgive you.”

Peter said, “Our daddy left and hasn’t come back yet. We knew God was helping us when HE sent the soldiers to help.”

The commander looked at Skip.

Betsy said, “What’s your momma name?”

Angelica went to sleep with her head on Betsy’s chest.

Wes watched Angelica.

Amy said, “Brianna.”

Betsy’s face changed.

Skip saw Betsy’s face change.

Wes was still upset over Angelica.

Brianna said, “Is your daddy name Jerome?”

Peter was so excited and said, “Yes ma am.”

Amy said, “Do you know our daddy?”

Skip was trying to think.

Betsy said, “Yes he went to college with me.”

Amy was so excited and sat on the foot of the bed and looked at the attractive Betsy.

The commander looked at Skip.

Skip was trying to figure out who these people were.

The commander said, “We have to go, Peter and Amy.”

Amy and Peter turned and waved at Joshua and Betsy.

Wes was frustrated.

He was propped against the chest with his elbow on the top of the dresser and his other hand on his hip.

The commander looked at Wes.

Amy and Peter hugged Wes and said, “Bye Dr. Wes.”

Wes hugged them and said, “Peter soft food for about two weeks.”

Peter said, “Yes sir.”

Skip was watching Betsy.

He stood to tell the children bye.

Amy and Peter hugged Skip and the commander was standing at the door and said, “Get your blankets.”

Amy said, “We can have them?”

The commander said, “Yes.”

The commander, Peter and Amy got in the wagon and they rode away.

They arrived home just before dark.

The commander helped the children out the wagon and walked them to the door.

The commander stood back and watch the children enter the house.

He turned to walk away after Brianna opened the front door and let them in.

He heard Amy say, “I got shoes.

Brianna said, “Take off so I can sell them.”

Amy started crying and running through the house fighting with Brianna.

The soldiers saluted.

One soldier said, “That woman has been beating and wiping on those children all day. I want to sleep.”

The commander said, “We are working on it.”

The soldier said, “The cook sent a large pot of beef stew, bread, lemon teacakes and milk.”

The commander said, “That’s what the lead commander said to bring.”

The soldier said, “That woman ran out the house and grabbed the food and threw it all over the porch and yard. She yelled she did need our handouts.”

The commander said, “Did the children eat?”

The soldier reeled back and looked at the commander.

The commander remembered when he and his brothers and sisters would go through trash and get food. And if they found a piece of meat it was treasure. The one who had it could barter for whatever they wanted.

The soldiers stared at the commander.

The commander turned and looked at the porch and did not see food.

He looked at the soldiers staring at him.

He walked away and got in the wagon and drove back to the command post.

Wes said, “Betsy wake Angelica.”

Betsy looked at Wes.

Skip watched and turned his head.

He knew it was going to be bad but he knew it had to happen.

JESUS was watching.

Betsy did not want to wake Angelica.

Wes walked over to wake Angelica.

Betsy stood up and walked out the room.

Angelica began screaming.

Betsy went and sat in Skip’s lap and Skip walked her to the sofa.

He said, “Betsy I know you are upset but I can’t touch you to comfort you.”

Dr. Obersteen walked in the door.

Skip was looking at Betsy.

Dr. Obersteen left the door opened.

Skip said, “What are you doing? My son.”

Dr. Obersteen looked at Betsy and said, “Betsy you know she has to work her muscles.”

Skip looked around and said, “Where is Joshua?”

Dr. Obersteen nodded and said, “He is her helper. He holds her hand and comforts her through her pain.”

Skip stood and looked at Dr. Obersteen and said, “Dr. Obersteen I don’t like you.”

Betsy looked at Skip and said, “Skip.”

Skip turned slightly to Betsy and said, “My son is out there laying tore and ripped up.”

Betsy turned her head.

Dr. Obersteen said, “I don’t care about your personal attitude towards me. Get Wes some help. Terry. I have watched him. Let him help Wes, burn the medical items and get stuff Wes need if he just sit and watch the patients while Wes eat or take a nap. Wes has to rest and sleep. Craig is busy with Bishop’s family…”

The n Skip remembered Ida.

He sent five additional soldiers to stake out her house.

Skip said, “I don’t trust no doctors now but you and Wes. So how am I suppose to get him help?”

Betsy looked at Skip and smiled.

Dr. Obersteen saw Betsy smile.

He knew it was important.

Dr. Obersteen said, “I can’t stay I feel very disturbed. I have to leave in the morning.”

Skip said, “You are tired and weak. I will drivers take you back to the big city.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “No. I am fine. I am disturbed. I will send Wes’s telegrams to keep him abreast of what is happening at the big city hospital. Would you give them to him please?”

Skip bucked at Dr. Obersteen and said, “Of course.”

The bedroom door was opening.

Dr. Obersteen ran out the door and closed it.

He ran to the governor’s tent.

He saw Terry, he yelled and said,”Terry come here to me now.”

The soldiers turned and looked at Terry.

Skip walked out on the front porch of the house to leave.

He and Wes were talking.

Joshua was comforting Angelica until she fell asleep.

Skip was asking Wes type of help he need and whether a soldier can help out around the governor’s tent.

Wes looked at the governor’s tent and saw Dr. Obersteen waiting for Terry.

Terry walked to Dr. Obersteen.

Dr, Obersteen said, “Terry I have been watching you since you have been here. I know they switched you out at the last minute to be lead soldier and that is a lot of decision making thrown upon your back. I need you to get your mind straight. I asked your head commander to let you help Wes out around here at the governor’s tent.”

Terry looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Terry I don’t want you to feel this is overwhelming and the end of the road for you. I want your head commander to give his approval for you to help Wes. You would have to sit out here and let Wes take a nap or get something to eat or attend to the little girl in the house or anyone else that comes.”

Terry began to cry.

Skip and Wes walked over to Terry and Dr. Obersteen

Skip said, “Terry I am going to try you out at the governor’s tent to help Wes for seven days. You better not fail.”

Terry was crying and said, “Yes sir.”

Wes looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Skip turned and went to his horse and left and rode and checked on the troop at the beginning of the new settlement.

The cook from Wes was there playing cards with some soldiers.

He hid from Skip until he was able to slip away back to Wes.

Terry walked away and took a long walk along the brook.

He sat and wondered about his life and what to do with it. He was only twenty three and wanted to be something. He wanted to be somebody. He finished his formal training, but his mother hated his father who left her. And she said it was Terry’s fault. Terry could not take her brutal cursing him. He was fourteen he left and never returned home. Bishop was his friend. Bishop was helping Terry get rid of all those feelings of worthiness. When the captain was shot and everything was in chaos, Terry knew he was going to lose his mind. He knew he was going to take his life and join Bishop and be happy.

Terry thought, “I would have ten years if I stay until April. Two whole months. Bishop wanted his family to move here. Everyone say the town is evil, but there are vacant houses I would have a small pension, but if I don’t pay for a house. I can make it. The troop rotate tomorrow. I don’t have to be bothered with that.”

Terry laid back on the freezing ground and put his hands behind his head.

Terry looked up to the clear night’s sky and went to sleep in peace.

The soldiers were watching him.

Some soldiers said Terry was loosing his mind.

A soldier went to terry’s tent and got his blankets and came back and covered him.

A soldier in front of the house said to the other soldiers, “I would have acted crazy to get another assignment.”

Wes heard them.

Wes turned to Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen was filling the patients’ individual containers for the next few days so Wes would not have.

Wes was speaking low and said, “John the soldiers are saying Terry is crazy.”

Dr. Obersteen stopped counting the bandages for Bruce and looked at Wes and said,”Wes, I watched him and I knew something was wrong with him. I knew he was at least depressed. But I saw his eyes today and knew it was deeper than that. The military was in chaos and the person assigned to be these soldiers lead just vanished…”

Wes cut off Dr. Obersteen and said, “What do you mean the soldier just vanished?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I was standing outside when they arrived. I went and sat on the front porch and was eating an orange before I wake you. I counted the soldiers it was twenty one. The soldier who dropped them off called the soldier Callahan and said he was the lead soldier. He looked around for him and walked around he yard and did not see him and turned to Terry, who was passing by and said, “you’re the lead signed these papers. Terry signed the papers to be lead soldier. He has felt overwhelmed.”

Wes said, “Why didn’t you tell me this before John?”

John said, “Terry is suicidal.”

Wes said, “John I am not talking about Terry.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I am. These soldiers rotate tomorrow and I wanted Terry to be here and just do non thinking chores with you so his brain can rest and think on something else.”

David said, “Tell Skip.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Skip knows about Terry, governor had to approve it and write the order.”

Wes was getting nervous.

He walked outside the governor’s tent and started walking and mumbling.

JESUS told the attendant to tell Wes where Skip was.

The attendant spoke New settlement in Wes’ ear.

Wes jumped on his horse and flew out of the yard.

Dr. Obersteen continued to fill the patients’ containers.

The soldiers in the yard were watching Wes.

They knew something was wrong.

Dr. Obersteen had a thought about the secret assassin. He said, “My God.”

Dr. Obersteen looked for Wes.

The soldiers said, “Dr. Obersteen is there a problem?”

Dr. Obersteen looked for Wes’ horse. It was gone.

The soldiers knew there was something wrong.

Dr. Obersteen stepped backwards into the governor’s tent.

Wes passed Betsy’s old campsite and Cate.

He flew passed Harold and saw Natalie.

She waved abut took her hand down.

Wes got to the beginning of the new settlement.

The soldiers said, “Where are going?”

Wes said, “I am looking for your head. Where is he?”

The soldiers said, “Who are you?”

Wes looked at the soldiers and rode away.

He began to yell, “Skip!!!!”

The soldiers began to run out of their tents.

Skip heard Wes and the sentries tried to stop Wes.

They surrounded Wes.

Skip turned and he and the second in command rode fast to Wes.

Wes saw Skip and yelled, “They are coming!!”

Skip said, “Who?”

Skip learned over the years to ask on many occasions a one word question. Keep the questions simple.

Wes said, “A soldier came and was not assigned with the twenty and has vanished.”

The big soldier said, “Wait. I saw a soldier the other night while I was on patrol I thought he was out of place.”

The second in command said, “When?”

The soldier thought and said,”Yesterday. Last night when I got up to do my sentry duty.”

Skip said, “Where and don’t point.?”

The big soldier said,”Over by the shed.”

Skip said, “Why didn’t you say something?”

The big soldier said, “Sir. I am sorry. But he had on an uniform.”

The second in command said, “Your group is closest to that end, that was not abnormal for you?”

The big soldier swallowed.

Skip said, “Tell it.”

The big soldier said, “Well no sir because some of the soldiers discovered the meat in the shed and would and get it and cook it.

Skip saw the cook easing pass on his horse.

The second in command saw the cook also.

Skip said, “Put your men on high alert. Put out most of the fires and follow protocol. You sentries they have been watching you and getting your pattern down for one or two things. To slip in and bypass you or to kill you and take your horses and get to the governor’s tent and kill him and leave.”

Skip looked at the second in command and said, “We don’t have time to alert all the troops. Because the telegram machines may be compromised.”

The big soldier said, “I ride fast Sir.”

The lead commander said,” Let’s began to ride away. I will go back with you Wes. Chester will your new Captain and he will be here tomorrow. Let your men do a back to back. You six men, listen you who can ride the fastest go to the lake area and put the soldiers on alert, stop by the command post and get a battery gun and ammunition. You West go to the command post and a battery gun and ammunition and take it by the governor’s tent down by the brook. It is much quicker. You Donnelly go to the head quarters and get the last battery gun and ammunition and take it to the captain at the beginning of the town.”

Skip looked around.

The second in command said, “This place offers no cover.”

Skip told the second in command, “You brought a wagon of ammunition with you. Be careful and check the guns and weapons and give your men a thousand rounds per ten tents. Keep your men at the front, but moved them back but leave their tents and fires going. Better yet let ten of them be hiding in the bushes across at the no men territory.”

Skip was thinking.

He said, “You three ease through the troop and alert them.”

The second in command looked at Wes and said, “Do you have a name?”

Wes said, “Callahan.”

The second in command spit.

Wes looked at the soldier and turned up his nose.

Skip looked at Wes and then the soldier.

The soldier said, “Wednesday with chow wagon. A soldier that I was not familiar with stood in front of me and he kept his head down and would turn away to keep me from seeing his face and his name tag had Call. I did not see the rest. I was not familiar with a Call, So I was checking the roaster for the blood and I did not see a Call.”

Wes said, “Did he have a gun?”

The second in command said, “Yes.”

One of the three soldiers said, “If he is bold to eat amongst us. Who say he is not bold enough to sleep amongst us.”

Skip said, “Do as I told you.”

He and was Wes rode to the cute house.

Skip called the soldiers and said, “Ready yourselves and double check your ammunition.”

The soldiers woke Terry.

Terry checked his weapons and ammunition.

Each soldier had two guns and a rifle with plenty of ammunition.

Bruce initiated the policy from the last time instead of the soldiers running to a supply wagon to load up.

Skip said, “I am going to finish getting everyone positioned and I will be here tonight.

Wes tied his horse.

He looked at Dr. Obersteen’s horse and feed the horse and gave it water.

Wes went to his tent and got his two guns and ammunition and a medical journal.

The soldiers looked at Wes.

One soldier said a gun toting doctor. A gun in one hand and a medical book in the other.

Dr. Obersteen had packed his bags and they were by the tent door.

Wes said, “John.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I figured it out. I guess I was so concern about getting you help that I was not listening to you.”

Wes said, “When you leave tomorrow be careful.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I feel something is going on at the hospital. I told Skip I would be sending you telegrams to keep on top of everything and said he would give you the telegrams.

Wes said, “What?’

Dr. Obersteen said, “I don’t know. It is a feeling. So I am going back to face it.”

Wes said, “I am going to get Betsy settled in.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Right.”

Wes laughed and walked out the door.

Skip called an alert meeting.

The soldiers readied themselves.

Skip said, “Collapse all tents that are not being used. We can put them up later. Move one supply wagon in the town near the lake area. Move another supply wagon at the new settlement and I will take a supply wagon with me to the governor’s tent.”

Chester had two uniforms with him.

He did not have to go home and ride three days straight to get to his new command post.

When he entered the beginning of the town, he saw the troop was on high alert.

He spoke to them and continued to the town.

He saw the sentries patrolling the streets.

Chester spoke to the sentries.

He wondered what was going on.

He did not have to go home and ride three days straight to get to his new command post.

Chester passed Clara’s street.

He knew she lived on the street, but he did not know the exact house.

Chester knew he would spend the night with her and be late to report to his duty station.

He had to keep riding.

Clara was entertaining Jake, Marc, Joseph who were at the front door to leave.

He wondered what happened to Ricky.

They had a wonderful supper with “the gals.”

Laura ran to the door.

Joseph stepped back and kissed a grinning Laura.

He whispered in her ear, “Stay and work things out with Mellissa.”

Laura moved her head in protest.

Joseph said, “I know you are stressed, but I hope I relieved some of that day. I will feel better if you tried to work things out.”

Laura grinned and whispered, “Only God can make me stay.”

Mellissa watched Laura, as she leaned on Joseph.

Jake and Mellissa sat in the living room after dinner and talked for a long time.

No one knew what they were talking about.

Clara was standing at the door to let out their company.

Jake was going home to check on the other horse and light his candles.

Joseph and Marc were leaving to report to the command post.

Jake called, Mellissa, Clara and Laura the “gals”.

Clara was laughing at Jake’s pet name.

Melvin ran and knocked on the door.

Jake looked at Clara and opened the door since he was standing with his hand on the doorknob.

Jake opened the door.

Chester heard Clara’s loud laughter and he turned and rode back to the house he heard her loud laugh.

When he rode back to the house where he heard Clara.

He stopped and saw Melvin bent over and out of breath.

He wondered at him.

Chester dismounted his horse and was walking in the yard when he heard Melvin.

Melvin was bent over out of breath.

Jake looked at him.

Marc said, “Melvin!”

Marc stood up and said. “Something is going on.”

Melvin said, “Laura, William said for you to stay tonight until this thing passes.”

Chester said, “What thing?”

Jake looked at the stranger.

Melvin could barely move but he turned his head and looked at Chester.

Marc and Joseph rushed out the house to see who was out there.

Clara knew the voice and rushed out the house and ran to Chester.

They kissed.

Jake said, “That answers that question.”

Chester held Clara tight.

Everyone was coming out the house.

The sentries were patrolling the street in front of Ida.

They saw the small group standing out the door.

The sentries rode to Mellissa’s house.

One of the sentries said, “Are you folks alright?”

Joseph said, “What the…”

Laura pulled his arm.

Marc said, “Just finished a beautiful turkey dinner and headed to report to the command post.”

Chester said, “I know that voice.”

Chester turned and saw the sentries and said, “Turner!!!”

Turner flew down the street.

The other sentry looked at Turner and he looked back at Chester and said, “Sir.”

He rode away to catch Turner.

Laura laughed.

Chester said to Melvin, “What is going on.?”

Melvin said, “We don’t know, Ida, William mother came and said something was going after their visit with the governor. Oh, the governor is up and moving.”

Chester heart hit him in his chest.

He could not show any feelings. He and his twin, Tony were two of the twelve riders that escaped with the governor and his wife.

The plan was devised by Skip and the governor’s lead security man. No one knew of the operation until afterwards when the governor and his wife were missing. That gave the twelve enough time to get out the capitol and have a good start before anyone could catch them.

Skip mapped out the whole plan with Andrew laying down distractions. They knew high officials were involved but did not know who are why.

His twin was over the whole operation and they followed him.

Chester was thinking, “I love the challenge and danger.”

Chester thought, “We will take that secret to the grave.”

Jake said, “Thank the Lord. Finish and leave.”

Melvin looked at Jake and turned his back to Jake.

Jake said, “You’re rude.”

Marc and Laura looked at Jake.

Joseph was still mad at the sentry.

Laura laughed holding onto Joseph’s arm and whispered, “Work it out Joseph.”

Joseph shook his arm.

Laura giggled and put her head on his arm.

Mellissa looked sadly at Laura.

Joseph felt bad for Mellissa.

Melvin said, “That head man sent five more soldiers to Ida. Me and William are going to Ida for the night.”

Jake said, “That doesn’t make sense.”

Chester looked at Jake and said, “No it doesn’t.”

Melvin looked at Laura and held up his hands for no questions.

Alice and Jason laughed and threw their hands up for no questions.

Clara watched them.

She said, “ Melvin, what are you not saying?”

Melvin looked around and said, “That head man sent those big guns to the troop at the lake and he has sent to the team by us a whole wagon of guns. We saw the soldiers going through the wagon.”

Chester said, “I don’t like the sound of that. Let me report.”

Jake said, “Nall.”

Chester reached to shake Jake’s hand.

Chester said, “Chester Brown.”

Jake said, “Jake Jameson.”

Chester held Jake’s hand and was thinking. He heard that name.

Clara and Laura looked at Jake.

Melvin rolled his eyes at Jake and mumbled, “Called me rude.”

Mellissa heard Melvin.

Alice and Jason heard Melvin and laughed heartily.

Chester looked in Jake’s eyes and bowed his head to Jake and said,” Sir. I salute you. You are a legend.”

Jake felt pride rising in his chest and he saluted Chester.

Marc was still angry with Jake and walked to his horse.

Alice and Jason looked at each other with their mouths opened and said, “Whoa! A legend.”

Melvin walked passed Jake and rolled his eyes and walked to Ida and went into the house.

Chester kissed a worried Clara and whispered, “You can’t be a worried military wife.”

Clara looked Chester in his eyes.

Clara gave him that look.

Chester knew he better go or be court martialed.

He kissed Clara on her head and walked to his horse.

He thought, “Clara Brown. Brown, Clara nice ring.”’

Joseph whispered in Laura’s ear, “God.”

Joseph kissed Laura’s hand and walked to his horse.

He rubbed Jason on his head and winked at Alice.

Jason and Alice giggled.

They were happy.

But they knew that would come to an end soon.

The three soldiers rode down the street to the command post.

Jake walked to the street to his horse.

Jake was swelling with pride and he thought about those days he rode away from his home and family to report to duty.

To serve with glory and honor.

He teared up.

He heard Melvin slammed Ida’s door.

Laura walked to the edge of the street to join Jake and Clara as they watch the men ride to the command post.

Laura and Clara heard Ida’s door slammed.

Jake said, “I’ll talk to that boy.”

Laura looked at Clara.

Clara looked at Jake and said, “He’s not a soldier neither are you.”

Jake said, “It’s in my blood until I die.”

Alice screamed.

Jake did not turn around.

He got on his horse and rode home.