The horses and wagons could be heard at the hotel as the attendants and riders were checking out the horses for the two day ride and delivery.

The younger doctor did a great job in getting the supplies.

The other supplies should be in the next day.

The riders and wagons should be back so he could leave.

The riders were at the stable at five am.

The slim rowdy woman had the purple dress on for the two day travel.

She would ride the attendant’s horse back.

She was up and ready to leave.

She tossed and flipped all night and got broken sleep most of the night.

The slim rowdy woman had terrible dreams and flash backs.

She did not know why all those terrible things were coming back to terrify her.

She sat on the edge of the bed and thought about her life. She thought about the little girl that was so brave and was traveling alone. She wondered if she could travel with her.

The slim rowdy woman got up and got dress.

Before she left the room tears began to roll down her cheeks.

She wiped the tears from her cheeks.

She stood still and thought if she was still the tears would stop rolling but they did not.

She climbed the stairs to the younger doctor’s room and push the envelope with the remaining money under his door.

She pushed it far under the door so no one could see and steal the envelope.

The two women were peeping out their room door’s to see what was happening.

They saw the slim rowdy woman go down the stairwell.

They ran out of their rooms and ran passed the slim rowdy woman’s room.

They peeped up to the third floor where the younger doctor’s room was and ran down the stairs to the lobby.

The saw the slim rowdy woman walk towards the door and they called her, “Natalie”.

The slim rowdy woman stopped and turn with eyes full of tears. They hugged her and one wiped her tears and said,”Be safe.”

Ronald was watching and smiled.

Natalie walked out the door.

She stood on the front porch of the hotel, where she heard the horses that passed her.

She walked to the stables and got the attendant’s horse and rode behind the hired riders.

When they got to the merchants row she examined each of the wagons and when they handed her the contract, she signed it.

She got on her horse and followed the five full wagons that were going to her friends.

They reached Betsy’s town.

The riders stopped and she got off her horse and ran to Joshua’s house.

Joshua answered the knock of the door.

He was so shock at the slim rowdy woman standing at his door and smiling.

Joshua, blinked and said, “Nat?”

She said, “Where’s mom and dad?”

Joshua yelled, “Dad!”

Joshua leaned forward to smell the slim rowdy woman. He thought that’s her without the smell.

Bill ran to the door along with his wife and they stared at the clean woman.

The slim rowdy woman said, “It’s me.”

She began to cry out of nowhere.

Bill and Emma grabbed her arms and looked outside and saw the wagons.

The slim rowdy woman slightly turned and wiping her eyes said, “I can’t stay. The attendant had your names on the list to get supplies. He said the winter was going to be very bad and none of us are prepared for what is coming. Hurry. I want to get back to the little girl.”

Joshua said, “Yahoo! No school.”

Bill said, “I think we’ll be alright.”

Emma, elbowed him and said, “We’re going to get the supplies.”

The evening was approaching.

They rode fast that day to get to the town.

Bill ran around the back and grabbed his horse and wagon and walked to the supply wagons.

The towns people were looking.

The slim rowdy woman was showing Emma the attendant’s list with their names on it.

Emma leaned forward to smell the slim rowdy woman.

The slim rowdy woman said,”It’s me.”

Emma was embarrassed.

She stood still like she did not know what the slim rowdy woman was talking about.

Joshua said to his mother, “Got you.”

She looked at Joshua and rubbed his red head.

Bill looked at Emma and called Joshua to help him load the wagon.

The hired riders helped and stock the wagon.

One of the mob members that attacked the little girl and beat her in the face to scar her face walked over and said, “Give me some of that flour.”

He reached over Emma Bill turned around and ran back and said, “Steve get away from her now. You did enough hell when you beat the little girl and threw her in the well to kill her. Now get away!”

Joshua looked and his father walked back to him and their supply wagon.

Joshua pulled on his daddy shirt and said, “Nat didn’t know he was one of the gang. Look how she is looking at him, dad.”

Emma’s cousin, who was the town’s elementary teacher was standing and watching all the parties.

Two other members of that mob were sitting on the rim of the well where they threw the little girl.

They were watching Mattie.

Mattie was standing with a shawl wrapped over her shoulders and her school books in her hands.

Mattie walked over to the slim rowdy woman and sniffed.

Emma caught Mattie’s elbow.

Mattie looked at Emma.

Emma said,”Yes it is Nat and she knows we are smelling her.”

Nat turned and looked at Mattie.

Mattie walked over and hugged Nat.

Nat began to cry.

Emma ran to Nat.

She and Mattie said, “What’s wrong Nat?”

Natlie wiped her face and said to Mattie, “The attendant bought you a bunch of yarn and needles. Do you know why?”

Mattie looked at the supply wagon and said, “I know how to knit blankets and shawls.”

Emma said, “The attendant said the winter will be very bad and to get prepared.”

Mattie said, “There is a chill in the air. And with those scavengers I think we should board up and leave for the winter.”

Emma looked back at Steve, Tom and Bruce.

Emma said, “We need to talk inside.”

Mattie said to Nataie, “I have no place for that load. Take it to the house and I will come and knit.”

Mattie looked back at old Mrs. Greene who was still going to the well to get her night’s water.

Natalie said, “I can help. I can learn to knit, while I’m watching the baby.”

Bill and Joshua returned after they locked he wagon in the fence.

Bill saw Mrs. Greene and he and Joshua ran and helped draw her water.

They looked at the three thugs hanging around the well.

Bill and Joshua carried Mrs. Greene’s water to her house.

Mattie and Emma and got as much yarn as they could carry and the needles.

They told Natalie to rest.

Natalie got on the attendant’s horse and sped down the King’s highway.

Mattie and Emma watched Natalie and wagons.

Steve turned to look at what they had in their hands.

He said, “What you’ll got?”

Bill and Joshua had returned and Bill walked up to bad Steve and said, “Never address my wife nor any member of my family.”

Steve, Tom and Bruce jumped up in Bill’s face.

Tom said, “You all bad now. Why? Because you got food.”

Steve said, “Share!”

He pushed Joshua out of the way to swing at Bill and the three jumped on Bill.

Tom and Bruce held Bill’s arms while Steve punched him in his stomach over and over.

Emma and Mattie were shocked.

They overcame their shock and ran and began to stab Steve in the face with the long needles.

Joshua ran to their house and returned with the sickle they used to get wheat.

His father saw his little boy and he kicked Steve hard between the legs.

Steve balled over while Emma and Mattie began to stab Tom and Bruce with the knitting needles.

Joshua was about to cut Steve with the sickle when the strange man grabbed the sickle out of Joshua’s hand and said , “Vengeance is mine.”

Joshua looked bewildered.

The other members of the mob that ruled the town ran out to the water well.

The strange man said, “You’ll move back.”

Bill, Emma, Mattie and Joshua moved back.

Some of the people said, “I didn’t see him.”

A nosy woman said, “Did anybody see him coming?”

The strange man waited for the mob of thirty men to run upon him.

He slung the sickle and cut them all.

The mob began to fall to the ground.

Several of them held their badly cut arms and ran away.

The sheriff came running and yelled at the strange man to put the sickle down.

The strange man put the sickle down.

The sheriff looked at the mob on the ground.

The sheriff looked at his brother Steve lying on the ground.

He yelled at the strange man and said, “Get out of here.”

The strange man picked up his bag, looked at Bill, Emma, Mattie and Joshua and said, “You need to leave this town for the winter.”

Mattie said, “I need to knit Mrs. Greene some blankets.”

The strange man said, “She won’t need them.”

The sheriff yelled, “I said get out of here.”

The strange man began to whistle and walk out of the town.

He appeared walking into the yard of the cute house.

The holy angels cheered him.

He bowed and walked to the new commander.

The little girl was screaming in pain.

Betsy ran to the front porch and held onto the pole.

She was sick and fainted.

She fell off the porch onto the ground.

The strange man said to her angel, “Why you let her fall?”

Her angel said, “I was told to.”

The strange man and the new commander looked at him.

The attendant angel continued to work on the little girl until he got her calm.

He walked out the house and stood and saw Betsy on the ground.

He looked at the other angels.

They looked at him.

He was about to transport her back to the chair, until he saw Harold run into the yard.

The attendant walked down the steps to get to Betsy and Harold bet him to her.

Harold grabbed Betsy and put her in his arms and started yelling for “Help.”

The attendant was standing next to Harold.

The attendant looked around at Betsy’s angel, the strange man and the new commander.

He stooped down to get Betsy, but Harold was fighting him.

The strange man giggled.

The attendant did not know what was going.

He saw the slim rowdy woman walked into the yard and stand.

The attendant leaned back from Harold’s swings and said,”Harold stop. She apparently fainted from the little girl’s scream and fell off the porch.”

Harold said, “I am not stupid. I figured that much.”

The attendant said, “If she comes to while in your arms, she will be upset.”

Harold reached Betsy to the attendant.

The attendant took Betsy out of Harold’s arms.

He looked around at the other angels and carried Betsy back into the house.

Harold still sitting on the ground said, “Be careful with her. That’s mine.”

He looked hard at Harold.

He put Betsy on the sofa in the living room and covered her with a blanket.

The attendant stood to leave and go back to the little girl.

JESUS said, “Wake her.”

The strange man giggled.

The new commander looked.

The attendant said, “Wake.”

Betsy woke and lifted her head up.

She grabbed her head and said, “Oh God, my head is hurting.”

The attendant handed her a cup of water.

Betsy slightly sit and took a sip of water.

She fell back on the bed and the cup fell out her hand and broke.

The attendant looked at the cup and picked the cup up whole.

Harold had slipped in the house while the attendant was wiping up the water.

Harold peeping over at Betsy said, “I heard something break. Why is still fainted?”

The attendant looked at the strange man and then at Betsy’s angel.

He stood up and Harold said, “Are you bigger? Taller?”

The attendant called Betsy’s name so she could only hear it.

Betsy began to move her head.

Harold peeped around the attendant and when Betsy turned her head towards the door Harold ran.

Harold ran and sat on the front porch and peeped back at the attendant who was sitting in the chair looking at Harold.

Harold turned around and said, “I’m not stupid, he looked bigger and taller.”

Harold looked back at the attendant and the attendant looked at him.

Betsy was holding her head and staggered into the bedroom and sat.

Betsy sat with her head down.

Harold watched her and said, “Give her some herbs for her headache, since you let her fall.”

The attendant looked at Harold and stood up and gave Betsy a sip of something to drink.

Betsy shook her head for no and then the pain hit.

She took the cup from the attendant and very quietly mouth thank you.

The attendant said you’re welcome and took the cup and place it on the dresser and sat.

He looked at Harold and although Harold was afraid of him, Harold stared at the attendant.

The attendant folded his arms and sat back in the chair with his feet stretched out.

Harold turned around and breathed the cold night’s air.

He thought, “We’re gonna die.”

He folded his arms and bowed his head and fell asleep.

JESUS was sitting watching everything.

He walked to the sleeping Harold and gave him a dream of hope.

Harold fell back on the porch and sleep until the next morning.

The sheriff walked over to the Gates and said, “Bill you’ll need to leave town for awhile, I’ll watch over your homes and stuff.”

The sheriff looked at his brother and the other mob members and said, “I have to figure this out.”

Mattie went home and stayed up all night writing letters to all her students’ parents that due to unforeseen circumstances her class would not be in school for the winter but will start up in the spring. She wrote the books and homework they were to complete.

Mattie had a one bedroom home next to Betsy.

Betsy turned the downstairs as her shop and had two bedrooms upstairs. One was to be her nursery, until the doctor broke off their engagement when he found out Betsy could not have children.

He went two cities over to another city and married a school teacher.

Mattie thought, after five years maybe this doctor will work out.

Mattie was up all night boxing up her books and taking them to her attic to be safe.

She boxed up all her kitchen items and most of her bed linens.

She was being watched all night by a couple of nosey neighbors.

It was daybreak and a knock on her door.

She eased to the door and said, “Who is it?”

Emma said, “Me and Joshua.”

Mattie hurried and unlocked the door.

It was day break.

Emma looked around and asked “Are you just about finished?”

Mattie, holding the letters to her students parents in her hand said, “Just about.”

Emma said, “What are those.”

Mattie reached her one and Joshua lend over and was reading it.

Joshua turned away and pumped his fist and said,”Yes.”

Mattie grinned and said< “I need to deliver these this morning.”

Emma said, “Why”

Joshua said,”Yeah Ms. M. The kids are coming to school today. I can help hand them out and then we can get in the wagon and leave.”

Mattie said, “We didn’t discuss where we are going.”

She sat in her favorite chair.

Joshua said, “Were we are going is to be with Aunt Betsy and my future…” and he looked at his mother.

She looked at Joshua.

Joshua said, “…our friend until the spring. Dad already left with the loaded wagon. He said he will be back this evening after he fixed stuff up. We should be ready by then.”

Emma said, “Mattie is there some place you want to go?”

Mattie and said, “No.”

Emma looked around Mattie place and said make sure you bring all the oil and your pillows and quilts. I sure do not like the way this is sounding.”

Mattie looked around and said,”I need to board us these windows. I did not know there were so many.”

Joshua tossing his football the strange man gave him said, “I noticed. Especially at spring cleaning.”

Mattie and Emma laughed.

Joshua went and sat down and looked towards the window.

Emma sighed and said, “I’m going to Betsy and began to clear her place out. It’s mostly ready to be packed. She put most of the business on hold. So that stuff I don’t need to be worried about.”

Mattie was going not the storage shed to get pieces of wood to board up her and Betsy’s windows.

Emma looked at Joshua and nodded to Joshua for him to go and help.

Joshua looked at his mother and tossed the football the last time and followed his cousin outside.

Mattie and Joshua both began to shiver and said, “It’s cold.”

They hurried and got the share wood that Mattie and Betsy kept in the joint shed.

Mattie told Joshua, “Count Betsy’s downstairs windows.”

Joshua did not move and said, “Twelve.”

Mattie looked at Joshua and said, “Josh you did not move.”

Joshua said, “I have counted your windows and Aunt Betsy’s window every spring and every summer. I know how many windows you got. You better board up that shelter.”

Mattie jumped and looked back at her house and slapped her head and said, “Josh, you’re right!”

Joshua rolled his eyes and tossed his football.

Mattie was frustrated now and said, “Joshua put down that football and help me.”

Mattie had the nails in her mouth.

Joshua held the wood.

They pounded and pounded the back of the house windows.

Joshua heard people walking and said, “Are we going to school today, Mattie?”

Mattie said, “I know what that tone means Joshua.”

She looked at Joshua and said,” Lets go.”

Mattie and Joshua had secured both she and Betsy’s back windows, the now empty storage shed and Mattie’s shelter.

Emma was looking out the window when Mattie and Joshua left and walked to school.

Emma boxed all Betsy’s porcelain and dishes and took them in the back of the first floor and away from the windows.

She got Betsy’s pillows and quilts.

Betsy only had two quilts because they always had fire wood.

She heard the children playing as they went home.

Emma began to think, “Oh God help us.”

The younger doctor woke around Seven a.m.

He sat on his bed and then stood and stretched.

He did a few exercises.

He saw the envelope on his floor.

He walked over and picked it up and counted over and over the amount of money that was left.

He got the list the slim rowdy woman left and went over it again again.

He got dressed and went to the merchants and confirmed the arrival of the supplies and paid for them.

He stopped and had breakfast at Lydia and Bruce.

The younger doctor, Lydia and her husband sat and talked for hours.

They talked about the destruction of the town and the little girl.

The younger doctor told them of his dinner with some of the doctors and how they wanted him to bring the little girl to them so they could experiment on her.

He told them of the attendant and his extensive knowledge of herbs.

He them the attendant said the winter was going to be very, very bad and the people are not prepared and he sent them into the big city to buy supplies.

He told them the slim rowdy woman was gone to some of the supplies and he would leave the next day with the remaining supplies.

He left and walked to the clothier and bought Betsy another dress with the last of his money.

The dress was burgundy and red.

He showed the dress to the workers at the salon and they were very pleased with it.

The younger doctor took a bath and shave and was leaving the salon, when they told him because the slim rowdy woman would not be using her time he had a refund.

The younger doctor stepped back and took the money but he divided between the three workers and left.

He stood outside for a minute thinking.

The workers watched him.

He turned left and one ran to the window and looked and said “He went to the clothier.”

One of the works said, “I bet he is buying Nat a dress.”

The other worker putting her tip in her pocket said, “I’m going and buy me a new dress for church Sunday.”

They al screamed.

The worker said, “I have been praying for months for enough money to buy me a new church dress.”

The younger doctor was about to pass them and he turned and walked in and spoke again to the workers.

The workers saw a second bag under the younger doctor’s arm and asked if they could see what he bought.

He showed them a pink dress he bought for the slim rowdy woman.

The worker that was going to buy her a new church dress looked in a basket of ribbons they had and matched some ribbon for Betsy’s dress and Natalie.

The younger doctor asked for some scented soap for the slim rowdy woman and he picked out some soap for Betsy.

The younger doctor stopped and picked from the street vendor a large order for candles.

The candles were made by the children of the family and the large order helped them to pay for the two children’s school and allowed them to buy two new quilts and extra flour and oil.

The mother of the children was so happy because she told the younger doctor, “My mother had dreams the winter would be bad and we could not survive. So my children began to make candles in case the oil supply is short. Sir your order has helped us tremendously.”

The younger doctor nodded and looked at the children and walked away. He thought about Joshua and wondered what he was doing, besides fussing.

He saw others walk up and place orders.

He smiled and hauled the candles to his room.

The younger doctor left the hotel and went to the stable to check on his horse and looked at the horse and examine it.

Pat’s son who worked in the stable did a very good job grooming his horse.

The younger doctor was on the way back to the hotel when he ran into the older doctor, Dr.Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen was on his way home and invited the younger doctor to join him for dinner.

They went to a nice steak house, where other doctors from the city’s hospital were dining.

The younger doctor told the older doctor he was leaving in the morning to take the supplies back.

He told Dr. Obersteen the attendant said the winter was going to be very very bad and the people are not prepared.

Dr. Obersteen listened.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Stay here.”

The younger doctor said, “You know I am not.”

The older doctor leaned over the table and looked around and said, “I have met a truly wonderful woman. Of the opera. I dine with her tomorrow night.”

The younger doctor said, “What happens to the city ‘s hospital patients if the winter is bad and they cannot be kept warm and cannot get medical supplies.”

The older doctor said, “I’m quite sure they have a contingency plan.”

The younger doctor said, “Suppose they don’t” and he drank his coffee.

The younger doctor said, “Good coffee.”

The older doctor looked at him.

The younger doctor asked for the check and he paid for dinner.

They walked out the restaurant and saw workers pasting posters.

The older doctor said, “Let’s see what the posters is about. Maybe about my opera star.”

They ran across the street and read the poster.

There was a new governor and he chose that city for his inauguration.

The other doctors were reading the poster and slapped Dr. Obersteen on his back and said “Parties and dinners galore” and they walked away.

The younger doctor was still reading the poster and he walked away. He stopped and ran back and Dr. Obersteen was in shock.

The younger doctor saw the new governor’s wife name “Thelma”.

The younger doctor was still bent over reading the poster and he looked back at Dr. Obersteen.

Dr, Obersteen was in shock. He was hitting his walking stick on the sidewalk. He was thinking very deeply.

The younger doctor looked at dr. Obersteen and realized he was in shock so maybe he could get truth out of him whether this is his “Thelma”.

The younger doctor looked at Dr. Obersteen and said, “You may finally see her at one or all the parties and banquets,”

Dr. Obersteen said, “See who? My opera lady?”

The younger doctor thought he’s good. Even in shock he is steady.

The younger doctor said, “No Thelma.”

Dr.Obersteen looked at the younger doctor and said, “Good night and happy travels to the country woman.”

The younger doctor smirked and said, “I can’t get mad with you for calling Betsy country.”

Dr. Obersteen lifted his umbrella to the younger doctor and hurried home.

He nervously unlocked his apartment, and walked inside.

He could not breathe.

He fell against the wall and tried to untie his necktie.

He started to catch his breathe and ran to his table and looking through his alcohol and grabbed a bottle and said, “You will do.”

He did not use a glass but drank from the bottle.

He sat and looked out at the city’s lights.

He said, “It’s beautiful and cosmopolitan. That’s why he chose the city. Thelma did not know I live here.”

As he poured the whiskey into a glass, he said “Maybe she won’t remember me.”

He burst out into sarcastic laughter and pointed to himself like who can forget him.

He lit a cigar and sat and thought about Thelma.

He fell asleep in the chair facing the city lights.

The younger doctor went to the hotel and stopped at the front desk to settle the accounts.

Pat was standing at the front desk.

Since the younger doctor did not speak, Pat said “Good evening.”

The younger doctor nodded.

Pat looked at Ronald, they did not know what to say.

The conversation hit him when the women with the candles said they bought quilts.

He looked at his watch and ran out of the hotel.

Ronald and Pat looked at the younger doctor and he passed the two women and said nothing nor opened the door for them.

He caught the woman just as she was about to leave.

He had to catch his breath and said, “Where did you buy quilts?”

The candle woman said, “Here.”

The younger doctor said, “What?”

She smiled and said “My mother makes the quilts all summer.”

He said, “Why do you buy your own craft?”

The woman said, “We are fair in all our business dealings. We pay each other for our crafts.”

The younger doctor said, “Does she have any more quilts?’

The women said, “Yes. How many?”

The younger doctor said, “I need twenty two but I’ll take twenty five.”

The women began to fan and say, “Oh, thank you God.”

The younger doctor said, “I’m leaving in the morning at day break can you deliver to the hotel?”

The woman to think and said, “Yes”.

He asked the price and she said ten dollars each.

He paid her and had her to sign and date the receipt.

He learned that from his father.

His father reigned in his thoughts.

He walked back to the hotel and to the front desk.

Ronald looked at the younger rude doctor and said,”May I help you?”

The younger doctor said, “I check out in the morning and I need to settle my bill and the young lady bill.”

Ronald began to calculate the bills.

Pat was looking.

The younger doctor looked at Pat, because he knew the slim rowdy woman said something.

The younger doctor said, “Mame you need some help?”

Ronald looked at Pat.

Pat said, “No sir.”

And turned to walk away from the front desk but stopped and said, “Did you like the stables?”

The younger doctor said, “Satisfactory.”

Pat said, “What about the help? That’s my son. I want him to be a doctor.”

The younger doctor was watching Ronald and made no reply.

Ronald said, “You get back money for her room.”

The younger doctor held out his hand.

Ronald gave him the money and the younger doctor went upstairs to his room and went over the list and counted the attendant’s money.

He pulled off his boots and undressed.

He laid in the bed with his hand behind his head.

He about the extra money that was left and the journey on tomorrow.

He fell asleep.