The next morning William was fast asleep and snoring.

He tossed and turned the whole night.

He thought he saw the little girl standing in the living room door looking at him.

But he was so tired he could not think.

He did not know why he was tired and why he was tossing and turning.

His thoughts went to the young governor and the young first lady.

He was disturbed.

William laid on his back and wondered what was going on.

He heard a sound.

He said, “What was that?”

William laid still and did not hear anything but the crackling sound of fires in the fireplaces.

He thought about the people of this new settlement how they made a decision not to be bums but they were.

He turned on his side facing the little girl’s room.

William heard a noise.

He sat up.

He could not make out what the noise was.

William’s father told him always be prepared to run.

He eased the quilts off of him and searched for his boots. He put on his right boot and was about to put on his left boot when he looked and the little girl was standing in the living room door crying.

William was frozen with fear.

The little girl whispered, “Water.”

William fainted.

Natalie was still asleep.

The front door was not locked.

The little girl was crying and naked.

She fell many times to get to the front door.

She knew Betsy and Wes were outside.

She wanted the pain to stop.

The little girl reached the door and sat for a very long time and cried.

She finally was able to pull herself up and hold onto the doorknob.

The little girl looked at a sleep Natalie. She was in pain and crying. No body heard her.

She pulled the door open.

The little girl stood on the front porch naked.

She cried and she cried.

William came to.

He thought he was having a nightmare.

He heard the little girl crying and saw the front door open.

The little girl had crawled off the front porch and down the steps going to Betsy and Wes.

Wes and Betsy were sleep.

Wes was holding Betsy.

William yelled, “Natalie!”

Natalie heard William call her name and she started grinning and giggling.

Wes and Betsy heard William.

Wes woke and crawled to the tent door.

Betsy was sitting on the mattress with the quilts around her.

She was trying to wake up.

William saw the whistle on the dresser and grabbed the whistle and began to blow.

Wes said, “What?’

He jerked the tent door open and the little girl was at the tent door crying.

Wes nearly fainted but William blowing the whistle kept Wes from fainting.

Wes knew he was about to pass out.

Betsy was so shocked.

She knew the day would come but on Christmas.

Betsy reached for the little girl.

The little girl could move no more.

Wes jumped and scooted in his pants and picked little girl up and ran in the house.

He passed William still blowing on the whistle.

Emma and Dr. Obersteen were wake.

They were talking.

Emma told Dr. Obersteen, “You will forget me time you see an attractive woman.”

He laughed.

Emma looked at him.

He stopped laughing and was trying to think what to say because he did love attractive women.

He thought what can I say to Emma. She has a common face but her body and hair is attractive and she has traits I love.

Emma and Dr. Obersteen heard the whistle.

Emma said, “That can’t be Mattie I got the whistle.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Wes.”

They wrapped themselves in quilts and ran to the dirt road.

Mattie heard the whistle and sat in the bed.

She looked around and made sure she was not blowing the whistle. She remembered she told Emma she did not want the whistle.

Mattie fell back and went to sleep.

Joshua heard the whistle.

He crawled to his tent door.

He looked to Mattie’s tent and saw no one.

Joshua started rubbing his eyes and yawning.

He heard the whistle and jumped up and he started running.

He did not see Emma and Dr. Obersteen standing at the dirt road.

Joshua was still sleepy and ran towards the sound of the whistle.

Emma caught a sleep Joshua.

Joshua struggle to get loose from Emma.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Something is wrong. I am going down there.”

He went into the tent and put on clothes and was coming back when he heard Joshua throwing up.

Emma was standing at the dirt road and watching for a sign that all was ok.

Joshua fell on his knees and held his stomach.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Emma.”

Emma turned and saw Joshua and she could smell it from where she stood.

She turned up her nose.

Dr. Obersteen mounted his horse and rode by Emma and said, “I’m not going to say anything. It’s Christmas.”

Emma rolled her eyes at him as he rode by her.

Emma yelled, “Joshua don’t you fall in that!”

Emma said, “Damn!!”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Military boarding school. Yeah.”

Natalie ran outdoors and to the little girl as Wes picked her up.

Natalie looked at a hysterical William.

She ran behind Wes.

Betsy put on her nightgown and slippers and a quilt.

Wes looked back at William because the whistle was getting on his nerves.

He saw Betsy running from their tent and said, “Whistle!”

Wes said, “Please don’t let her jump on him.”

Betsy shook her head for yes at Wes.

She remembered the last time that whistle got her into a big fist fight with Emma.

She ran and looked at William.

She stopped and held out her hand.

William blew the whistle into Betsy’s hand.

Betsy and William turned to see Dr. Obersteen riding into the yard.

He hurried and dismounted the horse and tied it to the rail.

William and Betsy ran to Dr. Obersteen and they both were gabbing so fast and interjecting between themselves. They made no sense. They were shaking their heads between themselves like they understood what each other said.

Dr. Obersteen turned to walk in the house and looked back at the two.

He stopped because he swore he heard Emma cursing. He shook his head thinking that was not possible because she was a mile away.

He turned around and Natalie ran out the house with the little girl’s water basin.

She missed two steps and fell in the yard on her stomach and slid to a stop. She held the little’s girl’s water basin up to keep it from getting dirty.

Dr. Obersteen, Betsy and William looked at Natalie.

Dr. Obersteen ran in the house.

Betsy ran in the house.

William ran in the house.

Natalie sit on the cold ground and stared at the house.

She flipped over and got off the ground and tripped over her gown.

She stood and pulled up her nightgown.

Natalie walked to the black pot and filled the little’s girl water basin with hot water.

She slowly walked in the house.

She looked at William who was peeping in the living room where Wes was sitting with a covered little girl.

He was giving her water from a clean washcloth.

Wes looked at Dr. Obersteen and said, “Please give me the herbal pain therapy.”

Dr. Obersteen walked in the little girl’s room and got the bottle.

The little girl was crying but looking around at everyone.

She whispered, “Joshua.”

Dr. Obersteen walked in and handed Wes the herbs and heard her, he shook his head.

Betsy looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Betsy touched her little girl with tears falling down her face.

Wes watched his beautiful wife.

The little girl would brush Betsy’s hair.

She looked at Betsy’s hair, and said, “Pretty.”

Betsy burst out crying and fell on Wes’ leg.

Wes was so overcome. He touched Betsy’s head to comfort her.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Joshua is at home.”

The little girl looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Wes handed the bottle to Dr.Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen opened the bottle and poured a capful of the herbs.

Wes dripped the herbal pain therapy in the little girl’s mouth.

Natalie stood and cried.

Natalie eased next to William and laid her head on his shoulder.

William was so mesmerized he did not notice Natalie.

Wes looked at Natalie and wondered what was going on in her head.

Wes said, “Natalie take the water in the bedroom. I have to make sure no dirt is in her back.”

Natalie walked in the bedroom with the basin of water.

Dr. Obersteen walked over and lifted Betsy off Wes’ leg.

The little girl who was crying looked Dr. Obersteen in his eyes.

His heart melted.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Hello beautiful. I’ll bring Joshua back later today to see you.”

William looked at Natalie and said, “Your nightgown is dirty.”

Natalie looked at William.

Wes carried the little girl in the bedroom and placed her on the bed.

He took his time and gently bathed the little girl and gave her the herbs and put the paste on her back.

Natalie walked in the living with everyone else.

Wes retrieved his notebook from the dresser and begin writing.

The little girl was calming down and drifting to sleep.

Betsy sat numb on the sofa.

She said, “Does this mean this is the way she is?”

Wes was sitting on the other side, because the little girl wanted her head to be turned.

Wes looked back and said, “Betsy.”

Betsy stopped for a moment and said, “Did he just call me to be quiet?”

Dr. Obersteen looked straight ahead.

William looked at the dirty Natalie and said, “Natalie.”

Who was looking at Betsy, she turned and looked at William

William said, “You must have been tired that you did not hear her.”

Natalie said, “I felt someone on me. I thought it was you.”

Dr. Obersteen stood and walked out the door. He knew he had to get water for the next day he looked around and did not see anything.

 He got on his horse and went home.

He looked at the night sky.

He looked at his pocket watch which showed one o’five.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Only You.”

William was dumbfounded and looked at Betsy.

Betsy burst out laughing.

William though, “I better get this cleaned up.”

He could not respond.

Betsy was laughing.

Wes listened as he wrote his notes.

He was so very scared. He did not want to address Betsy’s question because he did not want to give the wrong answer.

Dr. Obersteen got home and saw Emma put dirt over Joshua’s vomit.

He did not fuss or say anything.

He tired his horse and walked over to check on Mattie and then Joshua.

Dr. Obersteen put more coal on their fire.

He added more coal to their black kettle only a little water was left.

He wondered if he should go and get the water now or wait until it was light.

Emma put on a dirty dress to see about Joshua.

Once she finished covering the vomit, she lifted the dress over her head.

Dr. Obersteen jerked around quickly to see if anybody else see Emma’s naked body.

Emma walked into their tent.

He grinned and went to the lack kettle and got a basin of hot water and followed Emma into their tent.

Abraham was sneaking there the new settlement and saw Emma.

Dr. Obersteen and Emma enjoyed the night and woke up late in the morning.

Joshua woke up refreshed.

He kicked the covers off and yawn and stretched.

He smelt his breath and said “Whew.”

Joshua ran to Mattie’s tent and shaking her said, “Merry Christmas.”

He jumped on her bed.

Mattie was still under the influence of the herbal pain therapy.

She smiled and opened her eyes and saw her son for the first time on Christmas morning. This was really important to both of them.

Joshua laid and saw a Mattie drifting in and out of sleep.

Dr. Obersteen was awake and Emma woke and laid for minute and was about to get up when Dr. Obersteen grabbed her hand and pulled her back down.

Emma looked at him.

Dr. Obersteen said, “The little girl is fully awake.”

Emma looked startled.

Dr. Obersteen pushed Emma’s hair from her face, said, “You seemed startled. You knew she was eventually going to live or die. So God decided she would live.”

Emma was puzzled.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Wes is afraid so am I. There is no case history of this sort. We have to go slowly.”

He pulled Emma to him and they kissed.

Emma rested her chin on Dr. Obersteen’s chest.

She shook her head and cried and got up and dressed.

Dr. Obersteen watched her, he said, “All of you have pain and must be healed. She asked for Joshua.”

Emma was putting on the dirty dress shook her head for yes.

Dr. Obersteen said, “I’ll go and get the water for today. I’ll take the wagon so I can get double.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Emma?”

Emma still sniffing turned.

He walked over to her and touched her stomach.

Emma did not pay that any mind.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Come for a minute.

Emma thought he wanted to play.

Dr. Obersteen began to touch and examine her stomach.

Emma looked at him and said, “What are you doing?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Shu.”

Then he thought who he said that to and tried to smile when Emma jerked her head and looked at him.

Emma moved his hand and said, “I am not Betsy” and stood.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Who told you, you had scar tissue? Do you have a cycle?”

Emma could not think and was mumbling.

Dr. Obersteen stood up and kissed her on the head and said, “Merry Christmas. We will talk later.”

He hitched the horses to the wagon and went to the cute house to get water.

He saw Abraham going to Cate’s homesite.

Dr. Obersteen thought it was too early to be visiting and he better not stop by my place.

Dr. Obersteen kept looking back and thought, “Did not Wes say they believed Abraham went to Cate’s homesite.

Dr. Obersteen turned around and sped back and passed Emma looking at him.

She walked to the dirt road and watched him.

Dr. Obersteen saw Abraham leaving Cate’s homesite.

Dr. Obersteen stopped the wagon and jumped out he ran to Cate’s homesite and called her.

She ran out crying and holding onto her nightgown.

She was trying to talk and pointed down the road.

Dr. OBersteen said, “Calm down. Do you want to go to Emma and Mattie?”

Cate shook her head for yes.

Dr. Obersteen had no idea why he asked Cate did she want to go to Emma and Mattie.

He thought. They are going to kill me.

He said, “Go and get somethings and I will drop you off.”

Frank and Glenda heard the wagon and ran to the dirt road thinking they were getting some more goodies.

Frank yelled and said, “Dr. Obersteen, what you got?”

Glenda laughed.

Dr. Obersteen was thinking whether to go and confront Abraham or tell Wes, who had no authority.

Dr. Obersteen did not address Frank and Glenda.

Cate ran out of her place with her clothes and coverings over her arms.

Dr. Obersteen stopped at Frank and Glenda.

They saw Cate distraught.

Frank and Glenda looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Keep an eye on her place and light the oil lamp sticks today.”

Frank smirked and said, “What’s in it for us?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Not to go to jail.”

He pulled off and looked back at Frank and Glenda who stood in the dirt road.

Dr. Obersteen stopped by his campsite and helped Cate out the wagon.

Mattie and Joshua were coming out of her tent and yelling, “Merry Christmas!”

Until Cate ran to them.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Help me. They are going to kill me.”

Mattie and Emma pushed Joshua to his tent.

Joshua went to his tent.

Dr. Obersteen saw Joshua peeping out.

Emma put the turkey stew on the fire and it should be ready when Dr. Obersteen returns.

Emma and Mattie cooked the green beans and potatoes for dinner and made the rolls.

William told Natalie, “You think so little of me Natalie?”

Betsy was laughing.

Wes could not think why Betsy was laughing.

He wanted to know if Natalie had physical contact with the little girl.

William said,” suggested to the governor and the first lady to send this gift just so I could see you. I spent two and a half days driving a wagon full of food for these bums just so I could get to see you. I am not spending Christmas with my family.”

Natalie stood and was overcomed by a pure heart towards her.

William said, “I want to spend time with you. My mother and father excused me from my family’s Christmas so I could get my heart answer, that is why I wanted to spend time with you. I wanted to get to know you and see if there would be a relationship. I am popular Natalie and I can get nearly any woman I want.”

William said, “Natalie did you touch that child?”

Natalie was stunned.

Betsy stopped laughing and said, “I did not think of that.”

Wes turned his head to hear the answer.

Natalie grabbed her heart and said. “No.”

Wes exhaled.

Betsy sat and was quiet.

William said, “You were tired. I heard you snoring.”

Natalie said, “I felt someone on me and they rolled off and I turned over. I woke when you were screaming.”

William said, “I was not screaming.”

Betsy said, “You did.”

Natalie said, “I am not evil.”

Natalie ran out the door.

Betsy ran behind her.

They sat on the front porch.

Natalie told Betsy, “I know I am trash.”

She turned and looked at Betsy and said, “I would never do that.”

Betsy looked in Natalie’s eyes and said, “We all know that Natalie. William does not know you. He was angry because you accused him of taking advantage of you. That’s why he is angry.”

Natalie said, “I would never ever do that.”

Wes walked in the living room and looked at William.

William did not look at Wes but said, “I’m going.”

Wes peeped out the door and went into the bedroom and got a quilt and stopped and looked at William to got off Betsy’s covering.

William lifted his butt off Betsy’s covering and he still had his mouth poked out.

Wes got Betsy’s covering and walked outside and covered Natalie and Betsy.

He sat next to Natalie and hugged her.

Betsy’s heart was touched, because she knew Wes wanted to shot Natalie.

Wes said, “Natalie you are not trash. You have grown so much over these few months.”

William walked out on the porch wrapped in a quilt and said, “Natalie, forgive me. I was being mean. I have no excuse for retaliating against you.”

Natalie was boohooing and said, “I don’t know what that mean. Wes?”

Wes stood up and reached over Natalie’s head for Betsy.

Wes looked mean at William.

Wes and Betsy walked to their tent.

William yelled,”I’m trying to make things right.”

He looked at the pitiful Natalie and sat next to her.

Natalie was too weak to move she reached for the pole and leaned towards it and cried with all of her heart.

Betsy said, “Wes.”

Wes said, “Baby, I am not wise. I do not know what to do. I can’t fix this.”

They went to their tent and fell asleep.

The little girl was in the house asleep. She slept late into the morning.

Wes got up a little late and got the water.

He saw Willian and Natalie on the porch.

Wes thought the little girl was by herself.

Wes realized the little girl was healing. He did not let his thoughts go any further.

He filled the black pot.

William got up and lit the fires and cleaned the bath shed.

He brought two buckets of coal in the house and rebuilt the fires.

William cleaned up the living room.

He checked on the ham.

Natalie laid on the sofa and slept until noon.

William looked at the Sleeping Natalie.

He wanted to tell her to move. He did not have the heart.

William moved his in front of the fireplace.

He instantly fell asleep.

Wes bathed the little girl and gave her the herbs.

Wes sat and watched the little girl for hours.

He heard the wagon pulled into the yard and knew it should only be Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen looked around and did not see anyone. He figured they had a hard night.

He saw the kettle Emma used for the turkey stew.

He looked in the pot and put it on the fire.

He feed Wes, William and Betsy’s horses and the horses that were hitched to the wagon.

Dr. Obersteen put a pot of coffee on the fire.

He went to the brook and loaded the water pails. He said, “I should have brough the wagon further to the brook.”

He was tired. He leaned on the wagon for awhile.

He walked to the cute house and knocked on the door and entered.

Wes looked and saw Dr. Obersteen and walked outside.

The two stood and looked around at the house.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Who would have thought?”

Wes said, “I am married and have a baby coming. I am scared to death. I am broke and poor. I have a patient I don’t know what to do to help with the healing process. Then Natalie and William had a bad thing last night.”

Dr.Obersteen said, “Really?. I thought they have a relationship.”

Wes said Natalie wanted to open and said when the little girl fell on her she thought it was William. He got fighting mad.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “All the bad stuff in life, he thinks she did something to the little girl.”

Wes said they were out here until a little while ago. Now they’re inside asleep.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I saw Abraham going to Cate’s tent.”

Wes, “This morning?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I was coming here to get some water. Emma used nearly all the water last night because Joshua threw up everywhere and apparently fell in it.”

Wes frown and said, “Whew.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I swear I heard Emma cursing all the way down here last night.”

Wes looked at Dr. Obersteen and said, “That’s a mile.”

Dr. Obersten said, “Yes I know. Don’t want her cursing that loudly in the city.”

Wes said, “What you mean?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I want to take Emma back with me and put Joshua in a military boarding school.”

Wes said, “What about Mattie?”

Dr. Obersteen, “I have been thinking about that. I need to find her a nasty man.”

Wes said, “First she can’t do anything until she is healed.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I know.”

Wes said and, “Why a nasty man?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “A good man. Have you heard Mattie’s foul mouth.? She needs somebody that will keep her busy.”

Wes said, “Mattie.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “She say it in an undertone way.”

Wes laughed.

He said, “All of these people with all kind of problems.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I know they are going to kill me. I asked Cate did she want to go to Mattie and Emma and she said yes. I dropped her off there and has been wasting time here.”

Wes said, “I see you put coffee on and the horses and gave them water. Is that the turkey stew?”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Yes. I guess I should be going back now. They probably have thought about what to do against me.”

Wes laughed.

Dr. Obersteen said, “No really. She really is organized. That is one of her qualities I like. She has an area cornered off for the kitchen and bath area. I know she has to wash Joshua and her clothes from last night. I might come and get some more water. Because we may have another guess for dinner.”

Wes shook his head.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Do you know that sorry Frank and Glenda heard me at Cate’s tent and ran to the road and asked me what I had for them.”

Wes walked back to the house.

Dr. Obersteen drove the wagon home.

He pulled the wagon to the bath area.

Emma came and helped him fill the black pot to the brim.

She put all their dirty clothes in the washer that Bill got from somewhere.

Emma started a fire in the other black pot to dry the clothes, because it was freezing and they could not hang them out.

They all sat down and ate Christmas breakfast.

Dr. Obersteen asked Emma whether to tell Mattie and Joshua about the little girl or let it be a surprise.

Emma said, “Let them be surprised.”

Mattie was tired.

She went to bed.

Cate washed the dishes and helped Emma with the laundry.

Emma made Joshua take his bath and change his clothes.

She told Dr. Obersteen to bath next, then Mattie and Cate.

Emma invited Cate to go with them for Christmas dinner.

Cate said, “I want to be home. But can I have some turkey stew for later today?”

Emma said, “Cate you can have the rest of this. Whenever get ready just heat it up. Come on I ‘ll take you home. You have been a great help to me today. Mattie is still sick.”

Emma noticed Cate kept looking at the potatoes.

Emma said “Cate take a couple of these potatoes. You just have to finish cooking them.”

They got in the wagon and pulled off.

Emma told Cate to go in and check and make sure everything was fine.

Cate walked outside and started her fire.

She lighted her oil lamp sticks and the two torches she had in the tent.

Emma told her to put the whistle around her neck.

Emma turned the wagon around and went home.

Frank and Glenda ran to the dirt road.

Emma passed them and went home.

Everyone was dressed and everything was put up.

Dr. Obersteen put hot water in the basin for Emma.

Emma said, “Joshua light the oil lamp sticks.”

Dr. Obersteen checked on the water and he was thinking.

He put the water pails in the wagon.

He thought Mattie has to ride up front.

They were all dressed.

Their campsite was clean.

They rode the mile down the dirt road.

Dr. Obersteen went and filled the water pails.

William helped him carry the pails of water to the wagon.

William gave Dr. Obersteen his cologne from the first lady.

He gave Natalie her dress. It was the perfect color and fit.

Joshua said, “Did we children have any gifts?”

The little girl was awake and Natalie put ribbons in her hair.

Wes walked out with the wake little girl.

Mattie was jumping in excitement.

Joshua did not know what Mattie was jumping for.

The little girl whispered,”Joshua.”

Joshua turned and saw Wes holding his friend. Joshua scared her by screaming.

She started crying.

Emma hugged her.

Joshua reached for her.

Wes said, “No Joshua. Not yet.”

Joshua said, “When you woke up? Do you hurt? You can’t talk a lot?”

Wes sat on the sofa with the wrapped little girl.

He said, “Emma, is there anything with broth?”

Emma was trying to think and said, “Green beans.”

Wes said, “That’s good. Can you put some as much as you can in a cup for her. She hasn’t had food for months.”

Joshua said, “Gifts for the children.”

Emma came back with the broth.

The little girl whispered, “Thank you.”

She kissed the little girl on top of her head and said, “Merry Christmas.”

Joshua said, “Presents. “

He sat next to Wes and his friend.

Dr. Obersteen opened the cologne from the first lady.

Emma had a straight look.

Dr. Obersteen eased the cologne on the floor.

Natalie opened her dress from William and went to the bedroom and changed.

Betsy reached a gift to Mattie wrapped in brown paper bag with a green ribbon on it.

Mattie opened it and it was a book.

The little girl saw how excited Mattie was.

Mattie handed Betsy a little box.

Betsy opened the little box.

Mattie, Emma and Joshua knitted the baby some blankets.

The little girl said, “Two.”

Betsy and Wes looked at the little girl.

Wes kept feeding her vegetable broth.

Wes smiled at the little girl.

Betsy handed Emma a gift.

Emma opened it and it was a journal.

She looked at it and covered her mouth and cried.

Joshua stood and said, “What is that? Hand it to me. Why did it make my momma cry. Let me see.”

Joshua walked over to Emma, and took the journal and flipped it open and he patted Emma on her back.

He looked at Mattie and said. “Why is this book empty?”

Mattie was crying and said, “Joshua it is empty for you to write your own story.”

Joshua said, “Why would an empty book my momma cry?”

Mattie said, “Because she never wrote her story before others wrote her story for her.”

Joshua looked down in Emma’s face and said, “Momma is that true?”

Emma shook her head for yes.

Joshua said, “Momma are you alright with this gift?”

Emma shook her head for yes.

Joshua said,”So you are just happy sad?”

Emma said, “Yes.”

Joshua patted Emma on the shoulder and kissed her forehead and said, “You can stop now.”

He went and sat down between Wes and Betsy and watched Emma.

Dr. Obersteen watched Joshua. He was amazed at how Joshua was observant and took charge over Emma.

Wes watched Dr. Obersteen.

Mattie handed Natalie a gift. It was a beautiful shawl that matched the dress she was wearing.

Everyone was surprised and laughed.

Mattie said, “Joshua picked out the colors.”

Joshua stood and took a bow.

William laughed.

Dr. Obersteen thought, “I can’t take this boy from his family.”

Joshua said, “Now the kids.”

Betsy reached under the sofa and pulled out the doll for the little girl.

She walked over and said, “Baby this from me and Dr. Wes.”

Betsy kissed her on the forehead.

The little girl smiled.

Natalie reached on top of the chest of drawers and got Joshua’s gift.

Joshua stood and shrugged his shoulders and said, “I would never figured a gift was up there. But I will know to look there the next time.”

William clapped his hand and laughed.

Joshua opened the train set and said, “Whoa.”

He showed each piece to his friend.

She was getting tired.

Natalie reached up there again and got the little girl tea set.

Natalie and Joshua unwrapped the gift and showed it to the little girl.

She smiled.

Betsy said, “One more Joshua.”

She handed him a gift.

Joshua was so excited. He opened it and it was a sailboat.

The little girl smiled.

Joshua kissed Betsy on the cheek.

The little girl had fallen asleep.

Wes carried her to her bed and put her in it.

He closed her door.

Wes said, “Emma what do we have to store this broth in?”

Emma reached for the cup.

They sat around the fireplace and read the Biblical story of the first Christmas.

Natalie and William sang songs.

They had beautiful voices.

Dr. Obersteen went and got the yuletide punch and passed it out to everyone and Joshua.

He told Joshua. “Only one cup.”

Emma said, “Drink it slow and enjoy it.”

Mattie had gone to the goodies and made a very nice entertainment platter and passed around the room.

Mattie said, “What happened with Joshua and the yuletide punch?”

Joshua was drinking the yuletide punch and said, “Nothing.”

Emma said, “He threw up everywhere and I had to clean it up. And he fell in it.”

Betsy sniffed Joshua’s hair and said, “That’s not what I ‘m smelling in your hair?”

Joshua said, Hu. Hu. That’s Dr. Obersteen cologne.”

They all laughed.

They prayed and had a wonderful Christmas Ham dinner.

They had coffee and cake.

Joshua only ate two pieces of cake.

Wes walked out to the fire and joined Dr. Obersteen.

Wes said, “What’s going on?’

Dr. Obersteen said, “I want a child and I want Emma to have it.”

Wes stood and walked back in the house.

He passed William on his way inside.

They left late in the night.

They washed all the dishes and put the food away.

Everyone went to bed.

Natalie slipped on the floor next to the little girl’s bed.

William slept on the living room floor.

Wes and Betsy slept in their tent.

And Wes touched Betsy’s stomach and said, “Two.”

Joshua was sleep.

Mattie had dressed for bed and went to sleep.

Dr. OBersteen placed coal on the fires.

He and Emma fell asleep.