The nosey group reached the cute house in an hour.

They said nothing walking that dirt road.

Harold thought, “That was my buddy.”

Cate, “That boy was friendly to me. He would make sure they brought me firewood and water. He would watch my house and come and light my oil lamp sticks. God help him if he is alive. I don’t know what to think. Emma has lost her mind. What happened to Joshua. What does Thomas has to do with Joshua?”

Frank looked at Glenda.

Glenda sensed Frank looking at her and she turned her head and looked at him.

They knew none of the people at the cute house would want to see.

Glenda said to herself, “We acted like trash Christmas Eve. Betsy and Mattie had decorated the house and they prepared the food for us. We acted like savages. But Joshua saw us. He did not say anything. I saw the disappointment in his face. Oh God!”

Frank thought, “I knew better but I acted like an absolute savage.”

The attendant escorted them to the cute house.

The four did not know what to do.

Harold looked at the tent and went to the tent and he saw William camping put in the freezing cold.

William turned backwards and saw Harold.

William did not say anything but laid back down.

Harold swallowed hard.

He thought, “It’s bad for William to be back and out here.”

Harold looked at the tent that Betsy maybe in.

Betsy cried all night.

She was sitting in the middle of the bed freezing.

She wanted to be tormented.

She wanted to feel bad for damaging Joshua.

She wanted to be punished.

Cate, Glenda and Frank were watching Harold.

Cate walked boldly to tent and called “Betsy.”

She looked over and saw William.

Cate said, “Good morning.”

William said, “Good afternoon.”

Cate said, “Betsy we know something happened to Joshua. What Happened?”

Betsy said, “Come in Cate.”

Cate went into the tent.

Cate said, “Betsy.”

She stepped back out and said, “Harold help me with a fire. She is frozen.”

Frank and Harold set the fires around the perimeter of the house.

Glenda went and carried water pails and filled the black pot.

Cate started the black pot fire and the fire near William that would help heat Betsy’s tent.

Frank carried fresh into the house, behind Harold who carried coal.

Harold knocked on the door and no one answered.

Frank opened the door and pushed Harold in by his shoulder.

Harold looked at Frank and walked in and he looked around and saw Mattie.

Harold said, “Good afternoon, Mattie.”

Mattie sat and looked into space.

Frank and Harold looked at Mattie then they looked at each other.

Harold started the fire over.

Frank put the water in water basin by the door and poured fresh water into the pitcher.

He left a full water pail for them to bathe the little girl.

Natalie turned and saw Frank and Harold.

Natalie looked at Wes who was asleep in the chair.

Wes had his legs stretched out and crossed and his arms folded and his head bowed.

Natalie was awake all night and she cried all night.

She stood and walked out the room.

That’s when Frank and Harold saw Joshua covered on the floor.

Their thoughts were no signs of wounds. But whatever it is it is bad.

Natalie took the water pail from Frank and filled the little girl water basin.

She took the water basin for the house and took it in the bedroom for Joshua.

Frank did not know what to say.

He stood in the floor and waited for Harold.

Harold started the fire over in the bedroom fireplace.

Natalie was busy getting Joshua washcloth and soap.

She closed the bedroom door.

Natalie looked at Mattie who was staring into space.

She went to the chest of drawers and retrieved her clothes.

Natalie ushered Frank and Harold out of the house and shook her head.

Frank saw the stash of food behind the door.

Harold looked at the food.

Natalie said, “William brought the food here. Wes and the rest did not know he brought the food here. Come on.”

Natalie burst out into great sobbing.

She went to the black pot and got hot water and went to the bath shed.

Betsy was walking out the tent.

She sat down and stared into the fire.

Frank looked at Glenda.

Glenda did not know what to say.

Cate went into the tent and came back with a quilt and threw it over Betsy’s shoulder.

William turned over and saw Natalie coming back from the bath shed.

William stood and went to meet sobbing Natalie.

He held her for a long time.

Natalie lifted her head from William and walked into the house.

Wes was woke.

He watched Joshua. He could not think. He could not remember his classes on mental health.

He remembered a neighbor, Danny when he was growing up, who was crazy.

Danny was forty years old and acted like he was ten.

He would run and play with the ten year olds.

Danny was bald and overweight.

Wes shook his head and bent over his knees and looked at Joshua.

He thought God,“ Created this child for so much more. I don’t know what to do. How can I treat him to make him better? I don’t like the shock treatment nor the mistreatment.”

Wes felt something on his hand and turned his hand over, thinking he was shaking off a insect.

The little girl whispered and said, “Joshua friend.”

Wes looked and realized it was the little girl’s hand she had touched him with.

Wes could not smile. His grief had taken hold of him.

Tears filed his eyes.

The little girl’s big brown eyes were watching Wes.

Wes leaned over and kissed her on her head.

She fell asleep.

JESUS and the HOLY GHOST were standing in room.

The HOLY GHOST gave the little girl God’s Word of Life for that day.

They explained the scripture to the little girl.

Wes was getting the little girl’s bath together.

He walked over to bath the little girl.

The little girl said, “Joshua.”

JESUS and the HOLY GHOST knew the little girl was interceding for Joshua.

Wes looked at her.

He said, “Baby I know Joshua is over.”

Wes looked and realized the little girl was sleep.

He did not understand what just happened.

He bathed her and gave her the herbs and put the paste on her back.

Wes went to Joshua and bathed him and did not know whether to give him any herb, because Joshua was not sick nor had any wounds.

William went and made coffee.

He went into the house and began to pull out the food.

Natalie was sitting in the living room with a disturbed Mattie.

Natalie watched as the aide for the first lady arranged the food on two platters. One of the platters for the house and the other platter for those outside.

Mattie said, “With all the food they received, Frank was eyeing that food this morning.”\William said, “Mattie it is ok.”

Natalie said to William, “I told Harold and Frank they did not know about the food, but you put the food in here.”

William said, “That’s right.”

Wes opened the bedroom.

He saw William and said very tearfully, “Good morning.”

William said, “Afternoon.”

Wes saw the platters and said, “Nice.”

William said, “I am the first lady major aide. Thank you.”

Wes went outside to dispose of the children’s bath water.

He looked out at his tent and saw Betsy siting at the fire with Frank, Glenda, Harold and Cate.

He knew they knew something.

Wes continued to the bathe shed.

William walked out to the group with the platter of food.

Betsy told them what took place at Thomas.

What happened to Joshua.

William got his clothes and rolled up his bag.

He feed the horses and gave them water.

William brought dishes and cups for the those outside.

William went to the bath shed and washed and shaved and went into the house.

He peeped at Joshua and the little girl.

He kissed Mattie on the temple.

Natalie stood and walked him out on the front porch and they kissed good bye.

Natalie went back into the house and got some food and went into the room with the children.

Wes walked to the group and said, “Good afternoon.”

William walked back and got his roll and put the saddle on the horse and his roll of quilts and blankets.

He had filled his many water bottles.

He shook Wes’s hand and kissed Betsy on the head.

William said, “Good day” to Frank, Harold, Cate and Glenda.

Frank got up and began his mile walk home.

Wes looked around and said, “Thanks for helping out around here.”

Cate said, “We came because Emma was fighting with Thomas in the street.”

Wes said, “Thomas?”

Betsy said, “Where was he?”

Cate said, “At your old campsite.”

Harold said, “We don’t know what happened. We know Emma was beating the stuffing out of Thomas.“

Wes said, “Where was Dr. Obersteen?”

Harold, “At the campsite sitting by the fire drinking and smoking.”

Cate looked at Harold and said, “We only saw the bottle.”

She looked at Wes and said, “We can’t saw he was drinking.”

Cate said, “We walked Emma to the campsite and she collapsed in Dr. Obersteen’s arms. We sat there for a while and decided to come here for answers.”

Glenda said, “Wes can you help Joshua?”

Wes was watching William ride out the yard to go back to the governor and the first lady.

Wes had his hands on his hips and held his head down.

Wes said, “Glenda. I know nothing, but I will be here for Joshua for the next hundred years.”

Harold said, “Me too.”

Cate looked around and said, “Glenda, where is Frank?”

Glenda said, “I don’t know but back to the tent.”

Glenda said, “ I want to know what happened this morning with Emma.”