Wes got up early and brought the water into the house.

He placed double the water in the black pot and he lit the fire.

He prepared his horse and feed it.

Wes bent down and was checking his horse’s feet and he heard some noise in the back near the brook.

The horse turned it’s head to listen.

He took his gun out the horse’s saddle.

He took one of the oil lamp sticks and jolsted it in his hand and walked towards the brook.

Mattie called for Natalie.

Natalie walked in the living room and said, “Mattie, you called me?”

Mattie said, “Wes. Somebody is out there.”

Natalie was scared.

She walked to the front door.

Wes turned to see Natalie.

He did not want to say anything to give his position away.

He cocked his gun.

Natalie was familiar with the sound of guns.

They heard running in the back by the brook.

Natalie grabbed the torch on the porch, as Wes pursued the intruders.

Wes was about to fire and the thought came to him that he was a healer.

Wes stood for a while and thought.

Natalie stood in the yard.

Dr. Obersteen rode in the yard.

Wes heard his horse and knew it was him.

Dr. Obersteen looked at Natalie and dismounted his horse and began to walk towards the pole to tie his horse.

He quietly said, “Wes.”

Wes said, “Here.”

Dr.Obersteen walked to Wes and stood and looked out over the perimeter.

They heard a wagon.

It was Emma and Bill.

Wes put the gun down.

Bill and Emma saw the gun.

Wes and Dr. Obersteen walked back into the yard.

Wes put his gun in his saddle.

Dr. Obersteen stood and watched everyone.

Emma walked to Natalie and said, “What’s going on? An animal?”

Natalie turned to go into the house and Emma followed.

Natalie put the torch back on the porch.

Wes called, “Emma.”

He knew she was coming to wash and dress Mattie, so they could start out to the big city before him.

Emma turned and walked off the front porch.

She walked to Wes and took the basin of hot water.

After she looked around, she walked in the house to bath and dress Mattie.

Wes thought she looked nice and so did Bill.

Bill looked back at Emma and watched until she went into the house.

Wes wanted to cut all conversation.

He looked at Dr. Obersteen and said, “John can you handle any intruders?”

John said, “Yes.”

He went to his horse and pulled his rifle and two guns out the saddle.

They heard running by the brook.

Bill took off and begin to run behind the noise.

Dr. Obersteen pulled up his rifle.

The day was breaking and they had light.

Wes ran and called for Bill.

Emma ran out the house and Natalie followed.

Dr. Obersteen yelled to them, “In the house and close the door.”

Mattie was trying to sit up and called, “Emma.”

She fell back on the sofa.

Emma and Natalie ran into the house. They twirled around in the floor and did not know what to do.

Mattie looked and said, “Emma.”

Emma looked at Mattie.

Mattie said, “Help me.”

Emma turned and realized she left Mattie’s beauty bag and clothes in the wagon.

She stood in the middle of the floor for a minute and ran out the door.

She ran to the wagon and got Mattie’s bag and clothes and ran back in the house.

Under the watchful eyes of Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen gave Emma a look and continued to watch the house and he walked to the dirt road and looked up and down and saw no movement.

Dr. Obersteen heard talking and walked back into the yard.

Wes and Bill were talking.

Bill said, “They have nerves.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “How many?”

Wes looked at Dr.Obersteen’s rifle and he shrugged his shoulders and said, “Maybe two or three.”

Wes got a basin of hot water and his clothes and went to the bath shed.

Bill and Dr. Obersteen walked and sat on the porch.

Wes was so nervous. He looked at his surgeon’s hand shaking.

He held his head down and he began to wash and get dressed.

He thought about the half healed little girl in the house.

The feeble Natalie whose mind could only handle death.

He thought about Harold who could think about nothing but Betsy.

He thought about the unfit Frank, Glenda and Cate.

He thought as long as Mike, Shelia and Thomas stayed in the back he did not have to worry about their clumsiness around the house.

He said, “Richard will stay away because he thinks Natalie has shared something with me. He will keep an eye on Rex and the children’s father.

He thought about the drinking Dr.Obersteen.

Wes said, “This is a mess. This is a total failure. I can worry about them and their disasters or what they will or will not do. I’ll stop by and tell Frank and Glenda to stay away and tell for them to tell the rest of them to keep their distance. I know they have to bring wood for the house.I’ll tell John to cut down on his drinking, because Thelma is not here and not to shot anyone because he has to stitch them up and that will take time away from the little girl. I’ll tell Natalie to wash everyday, I won’t tolerate her slipping. Because John will shot her.”

Wes said, “John is such a great shot, I read about him and thought why would a physician shot someone, until I meet Natalie. Even when he is drunk he is a great shot.”

Wes leaned his head on the wall and said, “Oh God.”

He said, “Who put me in charge! I am a physician not an administratior.”

Wes said, “John is such a great shot, even when he is drunk. I need help.”

He heard a wagon.

He frowned and came out the shed.

A man walked into the yard and said, “Where’s the attendant?”

Bill stood and Dr. Obersteen sat with his rifle upward.

Bill said to the man, “Who..”

Wes cut Bill off and looked at the man, “He has gone for the winter.”

He looked at Dr. Obersteen and his rifle and his two guns beside him.

Wes looked around the man and saw a covered wagon and another man standing by the wagon.

The man looked at Wes distraught and nervous face and wondered.

He said, “He ordered coal for a new settlement a few weeks ago. We are just able to get here and it.”

Wes said, “Pardon me?’

The man turned and pointed to the wagon.

He motioned for Wes to follow him.

Bill and Dr. Obersteen followed.

Wes looked at Dr, Obersteen and pointed to the rifle.

Dr. Obersteen twisted his mouth and put the rifle down flat on the porch.

Wes stood and waited for John.

Bill walked and stood at the dirt road.

Wes and John walked up and saw three wagons.

The drivers pulled back the covers and showed wagons full of coal.

Bill said, “We have to tell them to come and get their share of this coal.”

Wes and Dr. Obersteen looked at Bill and said, “No.”

Bill said, “Don’t they have a right to the coal for the new settlement.”

Wes said, “By the time we get back they would have used all this coal up or stolen it to sell.”

Dr. Obersteen looked at Bill as though he was stupid.

Wes turned and said, “Where to put this? We don’t want them to see it until we get back.”

The driver walked to the back and pointed out a space near the bath shed.

Wes and Dr. Obersteen agreed.

Natalie and Emma heard the wagons and walked out the house.

They were so excited about the coal.

Bill stood in the yard and said, “Wes said not to tell the rest of them.”

Wes said, “Not until we get back.”

Emma said, “Bill they would use all this coal up before we get back.”

Natalie said, “And steal it and go and sell it for themselves.”

Wes looked at Bill.

Emma and Natalie went back in the house.

Emma cleaned living room and it was looking very nice.

She sat Mattie up and went and made oatmeal for everyone.

Wes saw Emma and he peeped in the house and saw Mattie sitting up.

His heart felt a little lighter.

The driver peeped in the house and saw Mattie.

He reached Wes the delivery form to sign.

Wes stared at the driver.

He signed the delivery slip.

The driver saw the others taking the covers back to the wagons.

JESUS and the HOLY GHOST were standing on the porch.

JESUS said ,”Cover the coal.”

He told them, “Leave the covers here. Put them on the piles of coal.”

He felt Wes watching him.

He watched his men.

He turned to Wes and tilted his hat.

The men walked back to the wagons and turned the wagons around and sped towards the next town.

Wes looked down and read the paper work from the State Coal company.

He stood and held the paper. He thought I never heard of this company.

He cleaned up the bath shed and ate some oatmeal.

The little girl screamed, but immediately went back to sleep.

Mattie sat and thought, “Will that be me? I at least know they care.”

Emma was hysterical.

Bill hugged her.

Wes reached his bowl to the hysterical Emma.

Bill was holding her tight.

Emma said, “Mattie,”

Wes looked at Emma and ran into the house.

He looked at Mattie, who was quiet and slowly eating her oatmeal.

Wes thought it was good she was eating.

He washed his hands and were drying them.

He said, “Mattie, are you ok?”

Mattie said a very tearful, “Yes.”

Natalie stood in the bedroom door and whispered , “She’s a sleep.”

Wes stared and could not understand what just happened.

Dr. Obersteen walked in the house with his rifle and two guns.

He put them on the floor in the living room.

Mattie said, “Dr.Obersteen, you are a doctor.”

Dr. Obersteen was thinking about the little girl that he looked at Mattie and kept his eyes in the bedroom.

Wes looked at the quiet Mattie and then Dr. Obersteen.

He walked into the bedroom followed by Dr. Obersteen.

Wes looked at the little girl.

He was trying to think if he should give her the sedative or not.

Natalie said, “Give her the herbs.”

Wes stared at Natalie and said, “I have to decide.”

Natalie looked at Wes because he hurt her feelings.

Dr.Obersteen looked at Wes because he hurt Natalie’s feeling on purpose and said, “Doctor what is your hesitation?”

Wes took his stare from Natalie to Dr. Obersteen.

He heard Betsy’s voice in his head fussing at him for being hard and cold.

He said, “She normally scream for a long time and has to be calmed down. But this time she only screamed for three minutes and calmed herself down.”

Natalie cut her ashamed eyes at Wes.

Dr. Obersteen said, “You mean she is healing quicker?”

Wes said, “I believe so.”

Natalie heart felt lighter.

She turned her head.

Wes said, “Natalie, I am sorry for talking to you that way. I know Betsy would hate me for speaking to you that way. I am working on my attitude.”

Natalie begin to cry.

Dr, Obersteen looked at Natalie and touched her bobbing shoulder.

Mattie sat and listen.

She finished the two tablespoons of oatmeal. She hated oatmeal and only ate it because Wes wanted her to.

Wes walked out the bedroom and looked over at Mattie.

Mattie dropped her spoon in the bowl so Wes could hear the bowl was empty.

Mattie thought, “He is really a good physician. He watches everything. I don’t know why he hates Natalie.”

He poured water in the little girl’s water basin.

He returned to her bedroom and washed her as Dr.Obersteen looked on.

The men who delivered the coal walked into the yard and walked to the new commander and said, “Completed.”

They disappeared.

The attendant was standing in the yard and saw them.

Wes prepared the herbs and showed Dr. Obersteen what to do.

Natalie watched.

He made the herb paste therapy and put it on her backside.

He stopped.

Natalie looked at Wes.

Dr.Obersteen was watching how he was smoothing the paste on the little girl’s.

Hurt Natalie, said,”Wes?”

Then Dr.Obersteen looked at Wes and noticed he had stopped spreading the paste on the little girl.

Wes said, “Hello little one.”

Natalie pushed her chair back and stood up.

Mattie turned her head.

Dr. Obersteen walked over and peeped at the little girl.

She was wide awake.

Emma and Bill walked in the house and saw everyone standing in the little girl’s room and their hearts dropped.

Betsy, Joshua and Harold walked in the yard and saw Bill still holding Emma.

Their hearts dropped.

They stood in the yard and did not move.

Wes said, “Do you hurt.”

The little girl began to cry and wiggle her hand.

Wes said, “Natalie she wants you.”

Natalie walked over and was holding her heart with her hand.

Natalie kneeled down at the bed and she and the little girl looked in each other eyes.

Natalie rubbed the little girl’s arm.

They cried together for a while.

Mattie listened.

Joshua finally walked in the house.

He pushed passed Emma and Bill ,because the two women he loved were in that house.

Joshua walked in and looked up at Bill and Emma and then he saw Mattie sitting up.

He walked to the bedroom door and saw Dr. Obersteen and Wes standing. and

He saw Natalie on her knees at the little girl’s side.

Joshua swallowed hard.

Wes saw him and beck oned for Joshua.

Dr.Obersteen looked back and stepped to the side.

Joshua walked to Wes.

Wes held Joshua by the shoulders.

When Joshua looked at her because she was looking down at Natalie and Natalie holding the little girl’s hand Joshua thought she was died.

The little girl looked up at Joshua.

Betsy walked in and was ready to start screaming.

Joshua ran to the bed and sat next to Natalie.

Mattie was peeping around into the bedroom.

She liked the way the walls were made in the cute house.

Betsy and Mattie heard Joshua say, “Hi.”

Betsy dropped to her knees and cried out covering her mouth.

Wes looked at Dr.Obersteen, who was overcome with emotions , that he did not catch Betsy.

But Harold ran into the house and went to help Betsy up.

Wes ran over and pushed Harold away.

Harold stepped back into the living room.

Mattie reached and touched Harold.

Emma and Bill looked at Mattie and wondered what she was about to do.

Mattie said, “Harold.”

Harold was watching Betsy more so than Wes.

He looked over at Mattie and said very dry, “What?”

Mattie patted the seat next to her.

Harold looked at Wes as he picked up Betsy and held her.

Harold sat on the sofa.

Mattie said, “I’m sorry.”

Harold was lost in thought.

Mattie patted his hand, “Harold she is not for you. God has a beautiful woman for you. A woman that will love all of who you. She will bring out your best and you will bring out her best to the glory of God.”

Harold raised his eyes and looked at Mattie.

Mattie said, “I’m sorry for fighting you and being mean to you to get you away from Betsy. She had been hurt for a long time.”

Wes was holding Betsy but was listening to Mattie talking to Harold.

Mattie said, “I did not know how to tell you to leave her alone. All I knew to do was to fight to protect her. I did not want her to be hurt anymore. I do not know if you can understand the type of rejection she has gone through and it’s terrible pain.”

Mattie turned her head and called, “Betsy.”

Betsy looked up at Wes.

Wes smiled and nodded his head.

Betsy held onto Wes’s hand.

Dr. Obersteen watched Betsy who was dressed and looked nice.

Betsy walked to the living room.

Harold looked at her then Wes who was standing behind her and holding her hand.

Betsy turned her head and looked at her beloved Mattie. She was thinking “Here she is feeling towards me the way I have felt about her for nearly twelve years. I just wish all of this could go away. And the days of our carefree youth will return. I wanted to leave the town along time ago but stayed because she wanted to teach in our town. To give our children an opportunity to think bigger and to do bigger things. I stayed here for her dreams. Now her dreams have ended.

Emma and Bill were holding their breath.

Betsy said, “Harold, my friend. I am pregnant with Wes baby.”

Harold jumped off the sofa and Mattie was still holding his hand.

He looked at the wall in front of him.

Wes stepped behind Betsy and watched Harold.

Dr. Obersteen was nosey and stepped back to see Harold’s reaction. He looked at his guns on the floor.

Then it was like he could Wes telling him, “To stop with the guns.”

Dr. Obersteen did a double take at Wes and saw Wes did not say anything.

Dr. Obersteen thought, “I drank a big glass of whiskey but not a pint.”

Harold looked at Betsy and saw she was holding Wes’s hand.

He turned his head and swallowed.

Emma and Bill were holding on to each other but they were still, waiting for Harold’s response.

Harold looked at Betsy and said, “Friend, think you for telling me. I wish I can one day find a woman much like you, but not as bossy.”

Everyone laughed.

The strange man smiled.

He turned and the new commander and the attendant walked to the brook and saw Steve and the rest of them trying to sneak back.

JESUS said, “They have to continue, they cannot stay here. Let Frank and Glenda see them so they can tell everyone else.”

Glenda and Frank walked into the yard.

Glenda looked towards the brook. She liked the scenery of the brook and trees.

She and Frank would walk there and go to the back.

The attendant knew they would sit there for hours and enjoy the scenery.

Everyone else called them lazy and that they were not pulling their weight.

The attendant did not say anything because his job was take care of the little girl and bring her back to health.

Glenda saw them at the brook and grabbed onto Frank.

Frank looked up and saw them.

Frank said, “What do yall want?

Everyone in the house rushed out.

Bill turned and saw Glenda and Frank and heard Frank.

Bill turned Emma a loose and Wes and Dr. Obersteen walked out followed by Harold who touched Betsy’s arm.

Wes looked at him.

Harold said, “It’s going to take time.”

Emma walked to the door.

Betsy sat next to Mattie and they held onto each other.

Dr. Obersteen saw who it was stepping forward, he stepped back into the house and got the rifle.

Wes looked at him and between his teeth said, “Put it back.”

Steve said, “You’ll gonna shot us?”

Harold walked off the porch and stood next to Bill.

He said, “What do you’ll want?”

Priscilla looked at Glenda and Frank and saw they had on new clothes.

She gabbed onto Steve’s arm and whispered n his ear.

Wes looked at Frank and Glenda.

Harold said, “Leave. You don’t belong here.”

Steve said, “You can’t tell us to leave.”

Natalie walked out and Betsy.

Natalie waved a piece of paper and said, “The attendant left us this house. Get off my property.”

Harold said, “The attendant gave you a chance to work for some supplies but you chose not to.”

Priscilla looked at the cute house and was peeping around. She started to walk around the back.

She lifted up the cover and yelled, “They got coal!”

Steve and the other two men ran and picked up the coal and stuffed it in their pockets and bags.

Priscilla stuffing her bag with the coal looked at Glenda and Frank’s shocked faces.

She said, “They didn’t tell you’ll about the coal. Did they?”

Glenda looked up into Frank’s face and realized they were not wanted at the camp.

Harold ran around and saw the coal and stood there and looked back at Wes.

Wes said, “We did not know about the coal until it arrived this morning. The attendant ordered the coal the time he went into the big city. He did not tell any of us.”

Harold said, “Now leave.”

Steve ran in Harold’s face and said “You cant make us leave.”

Wes said, “John.”

John acted like he did not hear Wes.

Wes turned and looked at John.

Emma passed by them and walked out in the yard and pointed Dr. Obersteen’s rifle at Steve.

Bill was in shock.

Joshua was still on his knees talking to his friend.

Joshua told her they were leaving to take his mother to the city hospital.

He told he little girl it was getting cold.

She said, “Feels good.”

She fell asleep.

Joshua looked at his mother and saw everyone outside.

Mattie called Joshua but he kept walking.

Wes saw Joshua walked pass Betsy.

Joshua saw Bill and walked next to Bill.

He looked up at Bill and then followed his eyes and saw Emma with the rifle.

Joshua threw his head back in shock.

Wes saw Joshua’s reaction.

Emma said, “You had a chance to change. Everybody here decided to change. That’s why they don’t look nor act like you’ll. I got a sick baby and a sick cousin in the house. You are wasting our time. You can waste it here or when they are digging your graves.”

Wes realized Emma was about to shot all of them.

He saw Betsy holding her mouth.

Steve realized Emma was serious.

Rex was coming back from the other direction and saw the activity.

He stopped and dismounted his horse.

He grabbed the gun from Emma.

Steve grinned and said, “You better take that rifle from her.”

Priscilla and the others laughed.

Rex cocked the rifle and aimed it at Steve.

He said, “Run.”

They all started running out the yard.

Dr. Obersteen gave Emma an improper look.

Wes saw him.

Rex said, “Who rifle?”

Dr. Obersteen stepped off the porch and reached for it.

Rex said, “Since everyone is here. I’m giving up my residence here and I am moving to the next town. I got me a place there. I’m leaving today.”

Glenda said, “Hate to see you go.”

Rex Walter looked around at the others who did not say anything because they were in shock.

He smiled and said, “If you ever need me I’m next door.”

The little girl screamed.

Rex looked and he saw Frank and Glenda running pass him.

He mounted his horse and went to his homesite and packed his wagon and passed by the cute house late that night.

Natalie and Dr. Obersteen heard the wagon passed by.

Emma, Bill and Harold stood in the yard.

Emma and Harold covered their ears.

Betsy went and sat next to Mattie.

Mattie looked at Betsy.

Betsy began rocking.

Natalie and Joshua ran into the bedroom.

The little girl was sleep.

Wes washed his hands and was drying them.

He stood and looked at Betsy rocking and then at the collapsing Mattie.

Dr. Obersteen was on Wes heels.

Wes saw the little girl was sleep and gave her a little sedative.

He knew she was excited and that may have been causing her to wake.

He touched Joshua.

Joshua looked up at Wes.

Wes said, “We have to go. I need for you to be strong.”

Wes said, “Get Betsy to the wagon. I’ll get Mattie. You can bring your friend a gift back from the city.”

Natalie heard that and turned and handed Joshua her envelopes. She nodded at the little girl and said tea set and me a new dress.”

Joshua said, “I’m a kid.”

He handed the envelope to Wes and went and got Betsy by her arm and said, “Come on.”

Mattie had fallen over on the sofa.

Wes remembered his envelope.

He opened the drawer and got the envelope.

Dr. Obersteen handed Wes another sheet of paper.

Wes sighed.

Dr. OBersteen said, “It’s for an apartment in my building. That’s if they have any vacancies. “

Wes looked at him.

Natalie was sitting sideways looking at Wes.

Dr. Obersteen said, “Oh. I am going to pay for all of it. Consider it an early Christmas present.”

The little girl giggled.

Natalie smiled.

Dr.Obersteen said, “That was funny.”

Wes didn’t know what to think.

He said, “Natalie.”

She stared at Wes.

Wes saw tears forming in her eyes.

Dr. Obersteen watched Wes.

He said, “Nothing.”

He looked at Dr. Obersteen and said, I cannot tell you no drinking and guns, but I can tell you Emma is married.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I understand.”

Wes said, “I do not want Mike, Shelia and Thomas here.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “I gave them my whistle so they know not to come up here.”

Dr. Obersteen said, “Let’s pray.”

Wes was shocked and stood there.

Dr. Obersteen walked passed Wes and went to the porch and said to Emma, Bill and Harold to come inside.

He told Joshua and Betsy to come back in the house.

Wes was concerned about Mattie. Betsy and Emma ran to her and sat her up.

Dr. Obersteen said, “This is a very terrifying illness and you are traveling into the big city at a very large hospital with good and bad people. With the people here and everyone having all kinds of problems I think to pray and ask for help is necessary.”

Natalie stood in the doorway.

Dr. Obersteen said, “God first forgive us for our sins.”

Wes was watching Mattie.

He was becoming scared.

Dr. Obersteen, said “It seems as if you brought all of us together to save each of us. I ask you that you keep the bad people from us here and on the dirt road. So we would not do anything that would destroy our character and the testimony you would give to us to share. Please heal Mattie and show Wes what to do to help us and bless the little baby here and the ones that are coming. Amen.”

Wes said, “Amen.”

He ran and picked up Mattie and ran to the wagon with her in his arms.

He said Emma come and pulled back the covers.

Bill and Emma put Joshua’s mattress in the wagon and then covered it in blankets and quilts.

Joshua jumped in the wagon with his mother.

Betsy ran towards the bath shed and vomited.

Wes was wondering where she was going.

Then he heard her throwing up.

He saw Harold peeped around the back.

Dr. Obersteen and Natalie were on the porch. Bill and Emma were sitting up in the wagon ready to go.

Harold ran and got Betsy a cup of water when she finished throwing up.

Wes untied his horse and he saw the other horse at the wagon.

He looked at Dr. Obersteen.

Dr. Obersteen said, “I do not know.”

Betsy took the cup of water from Harold and rinsed her mouth.

She walked to her horse and gave Harold a hug and he held her horse as she was mounting.

Wes went and pulled her off the horse and walked her to the wagon.

Harold held the horse.

Bill got down and Emma moved to the driver’s position.

Betsy was about to sit up front with Emma.

Wes said, “Joshua come up here.”

Bill got on the horse.

Wes put Betsy in the wagon with Mattie and he touched her stomach.

He said, “Go to sleep.”

He looked at Dr. Obersteen who was smiling at Emma.

Wes said, “Did you just pray.”

Dr. Obersteen smiled.

Emma drove the wagon out the yard followed by Bill and Wes.

Wes told Bill, “We got to get to the hospital in the morning.

Emma drove the horses hard.

Joshua waved at Glenda and Frank as they passed their homesite.

They passed Richard and the children’s father.

The children’s father was working around his tent.

He waved at them.

Joshua waved.

Emma mind was that she had to get Mattie to the hospital.

She had to make the two day trip in a day and a half.

She saw how scared Wes was.

They saw Rex Walter loading up his wagon.

Joshua said, “I hope he leave the oil lamp sticks.”

Emma said, “Betsy.”

Betsy, “What?”

Emma said, “Are you and Mattie comfortable?”

Betsy said, “The wagon is not hard and because it is a supply wagon we haven’t fallen out.”

Joshua started laughing.

Emma said. “Hold on.”

Emma hold the horses and they sped up.

Joshua yelling, “Go Momma!!”

Betsy laid down and covered Mattie.

Bill and Wes had to sprint to catch up with Emma.

Wes roe up to Emma and said, “What’s wrong?”

Joshua was laughing.

Emma said, “Nothing.”

Wes crossed over and looked in the wagon at Mattie and Betsy who were sleeping.

They had several of Mattie’s books in the wagon and several in her suitcase.

Wes was so scared for Mattie.

He thought they should have left a week earlier.

Bill could tell Wes was upset, because he did not tell Emma to slow down.

They were exiting the new settlement.

They reached their hometown after ten pm.

Joshua was falling asleep.

Emma said, “Joshua lay down.”

Joshua was excited.

Betsy was reading to an unconscious Mattie all day. When it got dark, Betsy covered up Mattie and laid there and prayed.

Emma still driving the horses said, “Betsy get Joshua and watch your stomach.”

Betsy sat up.

Wes could barely see them.

Betsy grabbed Joshua who was reaching for Betsy.

Wes sat up in his saddle and saw Betsy getting Joshua who was holding Betsy’s neck.

Betsy laid Joshua down on her other side.

Because she knew he slept rough and she did not want him to hit Mattie.

Wes was thinking about the horrible day.

Then he recalled Dr. Obersteen said,”…bless the babies.”

Wes said, “Bill can you tell Emma to pull over and let us rest tonight?”

Bill said, “You tell her.”

Wes said, “You scared of your own wife.”

Bill could hardly talk and blew at Wes and shook his head for yes.

Wes rode in front of Bill and looked back at him as he approached Emma.

Wes had to think fast.

He said, “Emma. I need to check Mattie can you pull over and we need to rest tonight.”

Emma was looking terrified.

Wes said, “Emma, She’ll make it.”

Emma pulled the wagon over.

Wes dismounted his horse.

He walked to the wagon and helped Emma down.

Bill had pulled his horse over and dismounted and pulled Betsy’s sleeping bag out and feed his horse.

He looked Wes was helping his family, so he decided to feed the horses and give them water.

Emma reached at the bottom of the wagon and got a quilt. It was very cold.

She said, “Wes do you want something to eat?”

Wes. Was checking Mattie and her vital signs. He was counting and said “No.”

Betsy sat up in the wagon and unpinned her beautiful hair.

Wes looked at her.

Emma said, “You haven’t eaten all day.”

Wes said, “I’m fine.”

Betsy said, “Wes.”

He looked at her.

Joshua started giggling.

Wes did not what they were doing.

Emma took an apple and muffin and was reaching them to Wes.

Wes had stepped down off the wagon.

Betsy said, “Wes.”

Joshua laughed but covered his mouth.

Emma had the quilt in one hand and the apple and muffin covered in a napkin in the other.

She walked around to Wes.

Joshua raised his head to see.

Betsy sat and watched.

Wes looked at them.

Emma reached the napkin to Wes.

Wes turned from Betsy and Joshua and looked at Bill who covered his head and laid down.

Wes looked at the approaching Emma and wondered what was going on.

Emma reached the napkin to Wes.

Wes said, “I’m fine. I really…”

Emma screamed, “You better take this food and eat it, because you have to take care of Mattie and you ain’t getting sick and weak on her.”

Joshua sat up and looked at Wes.

Betsy looked at Wes and said, “Take the damn napkin.”

Wes reached for the napkin and Emma gave it to him and walked to Bill.

Wes was still looking in Emma’s direction.

They heard a bump and then Bill said, “Whoa.”

Joshua said, “Aunt Betsy what she get him for?”

Betsy was trying to climb over Mattie get out the wagon and said,”No telling Joshua.”

Joshua said, “Where you going?”

Wes said, “Yeah, where you going?”

They saw a fire start over with Bill and Emma.

Joshua laughed.

Betsy hit Wes,and reached her hand to him.

He held the napkin in his elbow and helped Betsy down.

Betsy walked to a water container and got a cup of water and said, “Joshua, you want some water?’

Joshua jumped down out the wagon and ran to Betsy.

He said, “I got to let the water out.”

Betsy looked around and pointed to a clearing.

Joshua ran over to it.

Wes went and made a fire and took down his sleeping bag.

Betsy helped Joshua get in the wagon and she covered him up.

Wes was looking at Betsy taking care of Joshua.

He knew she would be a good mother.

She sat and ate his apple and drank some water.

Betsy was walking towards Wes with a quilt and she had pulled off her dress and had her nightgown on with a shawl wrapped around her.

Wes said, “I’m ok. I don’t need a quilt.”

He bit his apple and thought, “I better take this quilt.”

Joshua was trying to peep over the wagon.

Emma said, “Joshua.”

Joshua yelled, “What!”

Then he didn’t hear anything.

He turned and looked at Mattie.

He put the quilts between them so he would not kick her.

Joshua said, “Momma, my friend said you will be sick for a while but you will get better and live with me. She also told me that me and her won’t get marry and have children. I ‘m ok with that especially that you will get better and live.”

Betsy got to Wes and got on her knees and spread out the quilt.

Wes bit his apple and smiled.

They were all a sleep and heard some loud the people.

Wes was awaken and stared at the group passing by and recognized the rowdy bunch.

Wes kept Betsy’s head covered.

He reached over under his saddle and got his gun.

Bill was sleep.

Emma turned over and watched them as they peeped at the wagon but kept on going.

They woke up at daybreak.

They put water the fire and Emma made coffee and oatmeal and apples.

Wes ate his oatmeal.

They all washed and dressed.

Betsy washed and dressed Mattie.

Emma changed dresses and Joshua sat up front with her.

Betsy slept.

Emma sped up and they passed the rowdy group.

Betsy sat up in the wagon and stared at them.

Wes and Bill rode close behind the wagon.

The rowdy group saw them heading to the big city so the rowdy group turned to go the other big city.

Harold was at the cute house until evening.

He told Dr.Obersteen he was taking some coal.

Dr. Obersteen said, “What about the others?”

Harold said, “I don’t care.”

Natalie reached Harold a pot and said, “Harold, this is fried rabbit and gravy and biscuits Emma brought for us to eat. Put it on the fire.”

Dr, Obersteen ate. He said the rabbit was good.

He and Harold sat and ate and talked.

Dr. OBersteen was trying to peep n house.

Harold was wondering what he was peeping for.

Dr. Obersteen walked to his saddle and pulled out a bottle of whiskey.

He was about to take a drink and he saw how Harold was drooling and then he realized Harold was an alcoholic. He threw the bottle away. He washed the dishes.

He saw Natalie come to the door with her plate.

Dr. Obersteen gave Harold the dishes and he went to Betsy’s homesite and retired to bed for the night.

Dr,Obersteen sat at his fire to read. He wrapped his quilt around him and was still cold.

He looked back at the coal and went and filled a bucket and came back and put some coal on the fire and read his medial book until late.

He made a pallet on the front porch and covered his head and slept into early morning.

He made coffee and oatmeal.

He took Natalie oatmeal.

He put hot water in the black pot.

He feed his horse and gave it water.

Natalie went and washed and changed dresses.

Dr. Obersteen washed the little girl and gave her herb therapy. He made his note and watched the little girl all day.

That evening he made He, Natalie and Harold eggs for dinner.

Emma pulled their wagon in front of the city hospital.

Joshua was so impressed at the city.

Betsy got out the wagon.

She and Emma spruced up to look presentable to anyone Wes introduced them to.

After a few hours Wes came back and blew air out of his mouth.

They all looked at Wes for the bad news.

Wes smiled and they all exhaled.

He said, “It was work, but they are going to help. I have to work here for the summer. Betsy.”

Betsy looked at Wes.

Then Samuel and Zachery came out to the wagon.

Nurses came out and they all put an unconscious Mattie on a stretcher and carried her inside the huge hospital.

Bill and Emma followed.

Emma had their bags.

Wes meet with the doctors and told them the tests Mattie needed.

Mattie was placed in a ward. They gave Emma the bed next to hers.

Emma got Mattie ready for the night.

Joshua, Bill and Betsy found them to tell them good night.

The nurses gave Emma a few bed pans and vomit basins.

Emma put them under the bed.

Emma asked the nurse for blankets or quilts.

The nurse said, “We don’t have any.”

Emma said,”Bill, it’s cold in here. Bring me and Mattie a few blankets and those quilts.”

Bill said,”Come on Joshua.”

Bill and Joshua went to get the quilts.

Betsy was sitting on Emma’s bed.

Wes found them and introduced them to the doctors.

The doctor’s pulled the screen around the bed and examined a crying Mattie.

Betsy held Emma.

Samuel and Zachery watched so they could report back to the city hospital administrator’

After an hour the doctors pulled the screen back and Emma ran to Mattie.

She wiped Mattie’s tears.

The doctor’s walked away and were talking to Wes.

Wes walked away from the doctors and looked out the window while he thought.

Samuel and Zachery watched from Wes to the doctors.

Wes looked at Mattie and walked back to the doctors and they walked out.

Wes looked over all the tests and said no.

He selected the tests to do.

He eliminated over half the tests.

He walked to Mattie and told her he was not going to allow all the tests.

Because it was just too much.

He told her the very painful tests they will perform first.

Joshua started crying.

Betsy held him.

Wes had forgotten about where to stay, until he reached in his pocket and had the letter from Dr.Obersteen and turned to Samuel and Zachery and said, “Do either one of you know where Dr.Obersteen lived. He told me to check there for availability of an apartment.

Samuel said, “I live in his apartment. Me and my sister. I’ll go ahead of you and check and see. After you finish here stop by the apartment and I’ll let you know if there are any vacancies.”

Samuel said, “I can take you to the stables. They are filing up.”

Wes said, “Thank you.”

Samuel and Zachery stepped back.

They were being watchful of Wes. Every move he made they watched him.

Wes leaned over a crying Mattie and touch her hand.

He said, “Mattie, I brought some of the herbs from the little girl. They should help some.

Get some sleep. The tests start in the morning. I will be here. I told the doctors that I must be at every test. I may have to perform some of them.”

Betsy was proud of her husband being a doctor.

Wes looked back at Samuel and Zachery and said, “Emma. I need for you to listen. In your bag the herbs with the yellow mark on the top give that a half hour before the test. I f the test is delayed it is fine. And tell no one. I f they ask, it is your herb medicine.”

Joshua hugged Mattie.

So did Bill and Betsy.

Wes walked away over to Samuel and Zachery.

He was watching his family.

Wes said, “Do either of you know where the nearest church is?”

The Samuel said, “I pass two every day coming to work here. I think a lot of doctors from here attend those two churches.”

Mattie said, “Cold.”

Emma put on Mattie’s hair bonnet and placed on her a very pretty blanket Mattie had been saving and a quilt.

Emma put on Mattie a pair of thick socks.

Mattie immediately went to sleep.

Everyone else walked out the ward.

Wes walked back to Emma and said, “Emma, can you do this?”

Emma shook her head for yes.

Wes said, “No fighting nor cursing. And you don’t have a gun to pull out on anyone.”

Emma stared at Wes.

Wes was serious.

He walked to Samuel and Zachery.

Emma pulled out her bible and read it.

She got in the bed and fell asleep thinking how she and Bill mistreated Mattie over her being raped and Joshua.

Emma said, “God forgive me.”

Samuel said, “The city hospital administrator said there is a room and bath for you and your wife in the physician’s residence. I’ll take you there. It is closer than Dr. Obersteen’s apartment.”

Wes looked at Bill and Joshua.

Samuel said, “I still have to check for the apartment for you. Do you want to get your suitcases and things and take and let me take you over there.”

Wes walked to the wagon and got the suitcases and Betsy got two blankets and a quilt.

Wes waited and looked at her.

They went to their which had a fireplace and a bath next door.

Betsy was cold and hurried and put the blankets and quilt on the bed.

She called for hot water.

Wes, Bill and Joshua went to Dr. Obersteen’s apartment.

Samuel check and there was only a one bedroom and bath no parlor apartment.

Wes said they would take it.

He gave Dr. Obersteen’s letter to the apartment clerk.

The apartment clerk handed Wes the paper work and said Samuel and April was moving into his apartment in a few weeks.

In the meantime they were going to Betsy’s own to look for a place to stay, because his wife-to-be will be teaching there.

Joshua said, “She will be teaching in my momma’s place.”

Wes looked at Joshua.

The apartment clerk looked at Joshua and said,”Then you can tell us about your town.”

They went to the wagon and brought in their belongings.

They saw the small apartment, but it was big enough for Bill and Joshua.

Samuel walked towards the hospital with Wes.

He showed Wes how to get back to the physicians’ residencies, because he had to get April.

Wes thank him.

He returned to Betsy who had a hot bath waiting to share with him.

He locked the door and added another log on the fire and went and joined Betsy.

Betsy said, “I liked this. I ordered you hot water for six thirty am.”

Wes said, “I prefer six am.”

Betsy looked at Wes and he caught on and smiled.

Betsy said, “So you got a place for Joshua and Bill?”

Wes said, “Yes and clerk’s wife got a job as the teacher.

Joshua said she would be taking his mother’s place.”

Betsy did not say anything.

Wes said, “Betsy I am not going to tell you this won’t be very difficult. But I will be here with Mattie.”

Zachery drove the wagon to the stables and unhitched everything and gave the horses food and water.

He locked up everything and went home a little earlier.