

Wes stood on the front porch.

He was quiet.

He thought about the brave Joshua.

He saw how scared Joshua was for his mother.

He thought about Mattie who had no one.

Wes thought about how Joshua was very brave and told Mattie he knew she was his mother.

How Joshua's revelation of his knowledge of Mattie gave her a little strength to fight.

He thought, "I need her to fight all the way."

Wes heard a wrestling in the house. He did not if it was Mattie, Natalie or the little girl. He turned his head to listen.

He heard crying and sniffing. He knew it was Mattie.

He looked at the restless Betsy.

He walked into the living room and picked up a washcloth on his way to Mattie.

His heart was broken.

He needed help.

Wes sat on the sofa.

Mattie turned her head.

Wes began to wipe her tears.

Mattie cried for a long time.

Wes sat and was quiet and wiped her tears.

Betsy laid on the porch facing the window.

She heard Mattie's grievous crying.

Betsy begin to cry. She was hurting so badly for Mattie.

She thought of her baby Joshua and he was about to lose his mother.

How would she raise Joshua with Emma and Bill along with her child.

Betsy was distraught.

Betsy said, "Help."

JESUS and the HOLY GHOST were standing on the front porch.

They walked into the house and saw Wes tenderly wiping Mattie's tears.

They saw Mattie's heart was broken.

She wanted to live and be with Joshua.

She wanted to see him grow up and marry.

She wanted to see her first grandchild.

Mattie felt she was a failure in life.

Wes was thinking, "Oh, Mattie the pain you are about to go through is nothing to this. But I will be with you every day. I wish I could heal you or extend your life without all of this pain."

He said to himself, "I need you."

His heart was breaking terribly.

JESUS walked to Mattie and said, "Be still. I will give you time with Joshua."

JESUS looked at Wes.

He saw Wes' heart to want to heal Mattie. He saw his compassion to heal the sick.

JESUS walked to the HOLY GHOST.

They walked to the little girl.

Natalie was staring off in space.

She was numbed.

She loved these people.

She thought, "Everyone is sick or dying."

Natalie could not believe this.

Her little girl wiggled.

Natalie touched her leg and shook it.

The HOLY GHOST gave the little girl the Word from God for that day.

He expounded the scripture to her.

Bill was lying on the front porch with his back to Joshua.

He could not face Joshua.

Bill said, "I can't fix this my son."

Joshua heard Bill and knew he was talking about his mother.

Joshua cried silently and tears rolled down his face.

He pulled the quilt from him and walked to the front door and looked at his mother.

Wes watched as Mattie drifted off into sleep.

Wes stood, then he saw Joshua looking at his sleeping mother.

Betsy sat up and moved the quilt and pillow.

She was listening for Joshua.

Wes touched Joshua's shoulder to comfort him.

Joshua fell into Wes' arms.

Betsy heard Joshua crying.

Bill heard Joshua and did not know what to do.

Betsy stood and walked to the front door. She saw Wes hugging his adversary.

Betsy said, "Come on baby we got a lot to do today."

JESUS was watching the great despair of the people.

Wes eyes were filled with tears.

He stooped to Joshua and rubbed his head.

Wes said, "Joshua go home with Betsy."

He walked Joshua to Betsy.

Wes saw Betsy's tears.

Betsy reached for Joshua.

Joshua held onto Betsy's waist and rested his head on her stomach.

Betsy, not paying Wes any attention turned and walked off the porch with Joshua.

They cried all the way home.

Wes was standing on the front porch and heard their crying.

Bill sat up and folded the quilts and took the pillows and looked in on Mattie and walked home.

Wes thought, "There's nothing I can do."

JESUS and the HOLY GHOST left.

The attendant spoke into Wes' ear, "The herb therapy."

Wes sat on the front porch.

Then he thought about the little girl and the herbs.

He thought about the herbs, the attendant showed him that would keep the little girl sedated and the ones to ease the pain.

Wes got off the porch and waked into the woods and begin to pick the herbs.

Emma was not feeling well.

Joshua and Betsy walked into their campsite still crying.

Emma listened to them.

Joshua crawled into bed with Emma.

Emma placed cover on him.

Joshua cried.

Emma wrapped her arms around Joshua.

Betsy was standing in the middle of the campsite with her arms folded holding her shivering body.

The weather was turning bad.

Betsy said, "I'm going to the city tomorrow with Mattie."

Joshua lifted his head from a pillow and said, "Me too."

Betsy stopped before she went into her cabin and said, "If he ask, I will marry him."

Bill walked in and heard Betsy comment about marrying him. He did not have a funny remark.

Betsy said, "I need to pack."

Joshua moved the covers off himself.

He jumped down from the wagon and followed Betsy into her tent.

Betsy pulled her suitcase from under her full size bed.

She looked at Joshua.

Joshua looked at her.

She packed a lot of underwear and the two dresses Wes bought her and a few gowns and her toiletries.

Betsy said, "Joshua sit on this suitcase so I can close it."

Joshua sat on her suitcase.

He said, "Lets pack momma a suitcase."

Betsy stood and understood he was talking about Mattie.

Joshua ran to Mattie's tent.

He stood and looked at the number of books she had over her bed.

Bill was standing at the wagon and Emma was in bed with her back turned to Bill.

Dr. Obersteen was passing and looked at their campsite.

He did not see Mattie.

He did not stop but kept riding because he wanted to talk to Wes.

Dr. Obersteen saw some of Mattie's books on the ground and said, "I wish they picked them up and carry them into the tent. She loves to read like I do."

Dr. Obersteen continued down the road.

Emma turned to see who was passing.

Bill read her mind and said, "Obersteen."

Emma got out of the wagon and walked to the road and watched Dr. Obersteen.

Bill said, "Wes wants to leave in the morning to get Mattie to the city hospital."

Emma turned and looked at Bill.

Bill was moving the stuff from the wagon.

Emma looked towards Mattie tent where Betsy and Joshua were.

She walked to Mattie's tent.

Bill looked at Emma and said, "I can use your help."

Emma looked back at Bill and said, "I'll be back."

She picked up Mattie's book and her shawls.

She looked around for anything else and did not see anything.

She pulled Mattie's chair into the tent and placed her books on the bed.

Emma started going through Mattie's suitcase that Joshua and Betsy packed.

Betsy and Joshua watched Emma.

Emma took out a dress and stockings and said, "This is what Mattie will wear tomorrow."

Betsy looked at Emma.

Emma took out the dresses and put all of Mattie's gown and undies in the suitcase. She kept her toiletries and comb and brush and some hair pins.

Joshua said, "Momma, why you unpack the suitcase and took out momma's dresses. She's not died."

Emma begin to cry.

She caught her breath and said, "Joshua. No, your mother is not died and I do not want her to die. But she is sick and will be in the bed most of the time. So lets just pack her nightgowns and slippers for now. We'll be back home soon."

Emma packed one of Mattie's Sunday dresses and a coat.

Betsy said, "Why you packed that?"

Emma said, "For your wedding."

Betsy said, "He has not asked me."

Emma was bent over going through Mattie's suitcase said, "Not yet. We need some good right now."

Betsy had her arms wrapped around Joshua's shoulders.

Bill was standing outside the tent waiting for help.

Emma took all of Mattie's books and shoes and put them on her bed.

Joshua helped her.

The three looked around and saw Mattie's tent was secure.

Betsy said, "What's going to happen to our stuff? This is our livelihood. It's not much."

They all stood and looked around.

Dr. Obersteen rode to the cute house.

Wes was putting the washcloths and towels in the black pot to wash.

Dr. Obersteen sat on the front porch.

Wes knew they would be gone for three weeks and Natalie would be alone without any help.

He knew Harold would keep the yard clean.

He did not trust Frank and Glenda anymore and he did not want Cate to come near the house.

He hung the washcloths and towels.

Dr. Obersteen watched him and thought, "He's a true physician."

Wes turned and looked back at the woods because he knew he heard something.

His horse turned it's head to listen.

Wes said, "Good day Dr. Obersteen. We leave in the morning and I have a lot to do."

Dr. Obersteen was reviewing his notes and waved his hand to Wes.

Wes went into his tent and packed his clothes. He took everything else in the house.

He collapsed his tent.

He went back into the house and said, "Natalie I need you to keep the windows down and the door locked. I have been hearing noise outside. I do not think it is animal."

Natalie became very scared.

Wes looked at her.

He went through out the house and secured the windows.

He placed his packed bags in the living room.

Wes took care of his horse and prepared him for the next day.

Hours later he felt the washcloths and towels they were partially dry.

Dr. Obersteen looked said, "Put them over the fire."

Wes thought for a minute and put the washcloths in the black pot.

He looked around the yard and everything was in order.

He put oil on the lamp sticks Joshua's made.

Joshua made them two extra oil lamp sticks.

Wes just saw the additional oil lamp sticks.

He put oil on them and placed the lamp sticks away from the front porch but over where his tent was and towards the bath shed.

Wes took the herbs he made for Mattie and put them in a separate bag. He kept them secret. He did not tell Dr. Obersteen. He did not want anyone to know, especially not those physicians at the city hospital. He remembered they wanted him to bring the little girl o them and the herb therapy so they could experiment on her.

He sat next to Dr.Obersteen and wrote on his note pad all of Dr. Obersteen instructions.

Dr. Oberseen said, "Who is going with you?"

Wes said, "Her family."

Dr. Obersteen was surprised and said, "That's going to be expensive. Where are they going to sleep?"

Wes said, "I do not know."

Dr. Obersteen said,"I would offer you my apartment but I have someone there until I get back. And besides the whole city is sold out for the governor's inauguration."

Wes said, "I am going to the city hospital's administrator and sit and talk with him. I believe Betsy and I can stay in the physician's residence. I was going to stay there when I first moved to the city."

Dr. Obersteen turned his head and looked at Wes and said, "You're going to marry her."

Wes, "If she says yes."

Dr. Obersteen, "I guess it's congratulations. Emma can stay with Mattie in the ward."

Wes said, "That leaves Bill and Joshua. If there are no rooms, they have to sleep in the wagon."

Mattie laid on the sofa and tried to listen.

Natalie listened.

She got the envelope with her money.

She did not count the money.

Natalie walked onto the front porch and reached the envelope to Wes and said, "Here."

Wes turned and looked at Natalie and said, "No. You deserve every penny."

Natalie pleaded that Wes take the envelope.

Wes told Natalie, "Natalie, I am not taking your money. This has been worked out."

He looked at her and refused her money.

Natalie walked into the house dejected and sad.

Mattie very quietly called, "Natalie."

Natalie was crying, but she heard Mattie and walked to her.

Mattie raised her bandaged arm and Natalie held her hand.

Mattie said, "Let him work this out."

Natalie said, "How do you feel?"

Mattie said, "I fell like making this trip tomorrow. You take care of Betsy's baby. Harold is going to be busy."

Wes and Dr. Obersteen walked into the house to check on Mattie.

Mattie was weak but said, "Wes did you ask Shelia to cook for Natalie for the next few weeks?"

Dr. Obersteen said, "Let them stay down there. I can cook. I will cook once per day for her."

Mattie said, "A cook and a scholar."

Mattie fell asleep instantly.

Dr. Obersteen said, "That's one of the effects of a low blood count."

Wes said, "Yes."

Natalie looked at Mattie.

The little girl screamed.

She jarred Dr. Obersteen.

But Mattie remained asleep.

Natalie and Wes ran to the little girl.

Natalie held her little hand.

Wes gave her the sedative.



He sat and wrote in his journal.

Wes said, "Dr. Obersteen, let me show which herbs to give her. Natalie come and look just in case Dr. Obersteen isn't here."

Dr. Obersteen said, "I resent the accusation."

Wes continued showing them the herbs.

Wes showed them the additional herbs he made that day.

Harold was passing to go to the cute house.

Bill called Harold and told him what was wrong with the family and they would go to the city the next day.

They asked Harold if he would stay in their campsite until they returned.

Harold said, "It would be closer than his five mile walk every day."

Bill said, "Thank you."

Betsy said, "Bill you did not tell Harold I am pregnant?"

Emma said, "He might have rejected our proposal."

Joshua went and got his travelling bag Betsy bought him.

Betsy walked to Joshua and helped him pack his bag.

Bill said, "We have no money. We can't afford a hotel. We have to sleep in the wagon near the stables."

Emma said, "That means all of our quilts and pillows."

Betsy said, "Let's take our oats and bowls."

Joshua turned up his nose.

They emptied their wagon and set up the tents.

They put all their stuff in the tents.

Emma said, "Oh my God. Natalie will have no body to help her with the little girl and cook her food."

Joshua said, "I thought about that."

They all looked at Joshua.

Emma packed she and Bill's bags.

Bill had placed all of their quilts and pillows in the wagon.

They only had to attach their bags and the oats.

Harold was coming back.

Bill had attached the two horses to the wagon and said, "Harold, get in. Come on Joshua."

Joshua frowned up because he didn't want to go and work anymore.

Betsy said, "Leave Joshua."

Joshua smiled and thought "That's my aunt."

Then he heard white noise.

Bill and Harold got in the wagon.

Betsy told Joshua to come to the bathe shed and take a bath.

Emma cooked the rest of the prepared food.

When bill and Harold returned, they set Harold's tent up at the beginning of their campsite.

Betsy and Joshua were returning from bathing.

Emma and Bill rode the wagon to take dinner to the cute house.

Harold was about to leave.

Betsy told him to stay and have dinner.

She gave him some of the stew and bread Emma made.

Joshua did not want to eat.

He climbed on the wagon and went to sleep.

Betsy looked at Joshua's bandaged arm.

Betsy had changed into a clean nightgown and went to sleep.

Harold looked around and then got a second helping.

Betsy heard him but did not care.

Dr.Obersteen passed by Harold sitting in Emma's and Bill's campsite.

He went home and made a big fire because it was getting cold.

He rode to Mike and checked on him.

Mike did not come out of his tent but yelled and said that he was fine.

Dr. Obersteen wondered about Mike.

He went to Shelia and called her.

Shelia came out of her tent and looked down at Thomas.

Dr.Obersteen said, "Good evening. I was checking to see how you felt and if you need anything?"

Shelia said, "No."

Dr. Obersteen said, "Have you check on your brother today?"

Shelia said, "No."

Dr, Obersteen was surprised.

He looked at the sky and said, "It's getting quite cold. You need to make yourself a fire."

Shelia said she was trying to conserve the wood.

Dr. Obersteen said, "If that is the case go to the shed or move in with Thomas."

Shelia looked at Thomas's tent and then at the shed.

Dr. Obersteen gave Shelia his whistle.

Shelia stared at the whistle.

Dr. Obersteen said, "You don't take it you blew it when there is a medical emergency. And the next person will blow theirs until they get help. Wes and Mattie's family will leave tomorrow to take Mattie to the city hospital and will be gone for three weeks. I will move to the house until they returned. I need for you to keep an eye on Mike and Thomas."

Dr. Obersteen rode to Thomas and heard a small cough.

He put the handkerchief over his nose and went in the tent.

He checked on Thomas and he was improving.

Dr. Obersteen went to his vacation home and settled in for the night

He drank vodka and read. He went to sleep so he could get up early.