Chapter 3

Three months had gone by since Kid's return. In all this time Louise had felt that little by little her life was adjusting to being with her husband again. She had been on her own for so long that somehow it felt kind of strange to wake in his arms every day. Many days she had to consciously remind herself that Kid was back and the thought made her feel like the happiest woman on earth. Their married life couldn't be better. When they had first begun back in their Pony Express days, they had fallen into a routine of fighting, but now things were really different. Since his return, Lou couldn't recall one single time that they had fought. Things were as smooth as silk and Lou couldn't complain. They acted as if they were a couple of honeymooners. Kid lavished her with kisses, caresses and attention all the time; they really couldn't keep their hands off each other for long. It was practically the same as when they had first got married. In fact it felt as if everything between them was new and fresh. Back on their first days as a married couple they hadn't really enjoyed much of their brand new marriage as Kid had left just a few months after the wedding, just enough time for him to make sure that Lou'd have a house and the means to get by. So now they were making up for that time they had been apart. Four years felt like a lifetime. It was as if they had to reacquaint with each other, like they were first rediscovering the person they had married. They usually talked for hours on end, something that had somehow lacked on the first moments of their awkward courtship. Express rides could take days or even weeks, it was a very unsocial kind of work. That was basically the reason why the other riders had never really had a steady girl for long. Kid and Lou had been relatively luckier as they had met and fallen in love while working together in the same place. However, working in that relationship under those circumstances had been very hard. They had very little time to be together; either one of them was on a ride or there was always somebody else around to enjoy any kind of privacy with each other. So in those snippets of time they had been able to grasp to be with each other they had been more interested in exploring the passion they felt than in sharing words and thoughts. For that reason now they could really revel in the long conversations they had. Kid talked to her about the tortuous years of the war, all the calamities he had witnessed and the horrible things he had felt forced to do just to survive, to survive for her. Hearing him had been absolutely soul-shattering for Louise; her heart went out for her husband and for all those who had gone through that senseless war. In a way Lou wished she didn't have to listen to Kid's account, but she knew that it did him good to unload his heart to her. It was a way to heal inside. His nightmares hadn't completely stopped, but they were not so often now. When they happened, Lou had to shake him violently to wake him. In a first moment Kid looked as if he had no clue where he was, and when finally Lou's face made way into his hazy mind, he threw his arms around her and held her for dear life. The following day Kid was all apologetic for keeping her awake, despite her assurances that she wanted to be there for him no matter what. Since the first night of his return, Kid hadn't talked about the content of his haunting dreams, but Lou presumed that all of them

were pretty similar. He always kept tossing and thrusting, yelling her name desperately.

Apart from that, everything seemed to run smoothly. Even though she hadn't liked it a bit, she had finally relented on Kid working as Teaspoon's deputy. She had to admit that Kid was right. Rock Creek hadn't known many problems in these years and sometimes Lou and Rachel teased the old marshal for the laid-back job he had. Anyway, she couldn't help but worry about her husband. Now that the war had finished, more and more drifters and less than desirable people were seen around town. The end of the conflict brought many changes, which made evident how the war had ripped the country and shattered the soul of its people. She hated to think that Kid could get involved in the middle of something nasty again now that he was one of the marshal's deputies. Lou just hoped that he could soon leave the job. Actually, he didn't work many hours there, just enough to earn some money to add up to her wages and still have some time to work on building their ranch. However, Lou didn't feel at ease with the idea of Kid working for the marshal. She wondered when the worries would end once and for all. The long years of the war had been anything but easy and now that Kid was finally back, she still didn't get her peace of mind. Hopefully, they would eventually be able to make a living out of their ranch. So far Kid had only managed to save enough to make some repairs and have the stables in perfect condition to house the future horses. He expected that in a couple of months they'd be able to get and train the first horses and if they were lucky, next year they could even begin breeding. However, at the moment they had to live on their incomes from the hotel and the marshal office.

Another piece of good news reached them a few weeks ago. Rachel had received a letter from Cody, saying that he was safe and sound. In his very long letter he told them in detail what his life had been like in the last years and described his adventures in the army in an exaggerated and detailed fashion. On reading his words they had to laugh; it was unmistakable to see Cody through the lines. He sure hadn't changed a bit; he was still the same extravagant fella. Seemingly, he was still serving for the army and he promised to visit sometime, but he never mentioned when. At least, they could feel relieved to know that another one of the boys had returned from the war undamaged, and it was not only Cody, in his letter he also mentioned that he saw Jimmy quite often as well. Lou knew that Jimmy wouldn't write; it wasn't his style, but she was sure that one day he'd turn up at their door. That was Jimmy. Cody's letter had taken a load off their minds, knowing that their two friends were safe, but unfortunately, they didn't know anything from Buck yet. They didn't even know where he had gone when he left Rock Creek. Every day Lou prayed that wherever he was, he was fine and could sometime find the way back to them. But that was all she could do so far.

That morning Louise got up early and began fixing a big tasty breakfast. Kid was still sleeping and hadn't even stirred when she had left the bed, which she was glad for. Kid needed his rest; working for Teaspoon and spending long

hours around their homestead made him feel exhausted. On top of it all, when his nightmares kept him awake all night long, he looked as if he were on the verge of a breakdown. She just loved to listen to him as he proudly told her about his ideas and plans. He really didn't mind all the hard work and she knew that someday they would remember these first months of effort with fondness. Kid had even promised to her that one of those days they would go away for a honeymoon that they never had. Lou didn't care about honeymoons; she was just happy to have him back and thinking about the way they had taken on their relationship, she didn't see much difference between them or any newlyweds. He was as romantic as ever and she felt as if she touched the moon whenever they were together. They really couldn't keep their hands from each other. It was no wonder that by the pace they were going a little surprise might be on its way.

Louise was frying some eggs and bacon when she felt a couple of hands circling her waist. She smiled broadly as Kid kissed her neck, sending shivers all over her body. "Why didn't you wake me?" he whispered in her ear, "You know I hate to be in our bed without you."

Lou turned around in his hold and standing on tiptoe she kissed him on the lips briefly. "Why don't you sit at the table and I'll bring breakfast over? I've made your favorite." Kid didn't move but grinned mischievously. "I know what I'd like for breakfast and it's not quite what's in the skillet," he said huskily as he untucked her blouse and ran his hands under the material.

"Kid!" Lou chided, slapping his hands away as she made herself presentable again. She giggled amused at her husband's antics and added, "There's no time for that now." Lou turned him around and playfully smacking him on the backside she said, "Come on, I won't be a second."

Kid pouted teasingly and sat at the dining-room table and not long afterwards Lou appeared, bringing two plates brimmed with eggs, crispy bacon and sausages, and the coffeepot. She placed one of the plates in front of her husband and another at her place at the table. Kid smiled at her as he dug in the food. After a while, Louise cleared her throat and said hesitatingly, "Kid?"

Noticing the hesitation in her voice, he turned his full attention to her at once. "Yes, Lou?" She didn't speak immediately, choosing her words carefully. "Uh… do you think Teaspoon could spare you for a couple of hours today?"

"What for?" he asked breezily.

"I want you to come to the doctor with me," she said tentatively. Kid stopped the movement of the fork towards his mouth in mid-air and looked at her apprehensively with his mouth agape. "Lou…" he uttered faintly, his voice tinged with fear. She took hold of his hand and said, "I think I might be pregnant." No sooner had the words left her mouth than she felt being lifted by strong hands and swirled around in the air. She laughed as Kid stopped his

display of excitement, naively realizing that he shouldn't do a stunt like that in her condition. However, he kept her in his hold and looking her in the eyes he asked, "Are you sure?"

"Well," she answered, "apart from missing my monthly, I don't really feel much different. That's why we need to see a doctor."

Kid smiled broadly, his eyes shining with a mixture of emotion and excitement. "Oh Lou," he cracked and kissed her on the lips softly. "Nothing could make me happier than this. I'm the luckiest man on earth right now."

Louise couldn't stop giggling all the time. She had never seen Kid look so excited and the thought comforted her. He deserved something really good after all those years of deprivation in the war. Kid was the best man she had ever met and Lou thanked heaven every day for bringing him into her life. A man as noble and handsome as Kid could have had any woman, but surprisingly he had chosen her. Louise really felt lucky to be married to him and sometimes she wondered why he had fallen in love with her in the first place. When they had initially met in the Express, she had to admit that she was far from being beautiful or womanly. She had always felt that she was very plain, so plain that she had managed to fool people into thinking that she was just another boy. She really wasn't anything special to look at. She was lanky, scrawny and not very feminine. However, Kid had seen something in her that had drawn him almost from the beginning. For some time Lou had thought that him being the first to find out her true gender had bonded them together and that had eventually led them to something deeper. However, soon she became aware that it was more than that. That first stolen kiss they had shared and had begun all might well not have meant anything to him; it might have been just the result of being young and lonely in a new place with a new reckless job. Kid could well have stopped things then and there; after all a stolen kiss didn't involve any kind of promises or commitments. It was nothing. Kid was a heck of a match and after those first weeks of adapting to that new life in the Express, he could easily have fallen for one of the pretty girls in Sweetwater. Louise was in a really awkward position where proper courtship was unthinkable. Any other man would have fled from a relationship which was too complicated to start with, but not Kid. Surprisingly, he stuck to her and it was her who he sought out to talk, to keep company with and to timidly flirt. Their beginning was slow, too slow in her own opinion, as Kid wasn't one to rush into anything. However, even under those circumstances she always knew that it was her who he had fallen for. She loved the way he had timidly let her know without actually verbalizing his feelings. It wasn't such a wonder that he had caught her eye from the very first day. He was all a girl could dream of, but in those first moments she had never thought that the feeling could be reciprocated. Even today she marveled at the undying passion he had for her. Although she had changed greatly from her days as a "boy", she still didn't feel special to look at. Evidently, she wasn't like one of those proper ladies that she had felt so jealous about. Louise knew that she could be obnoxious, rude, stubborn and an innumerable list of other defects, but at the end of the day

there was one and only one reality: Kid loved her. He had really given her more than he realized. Having a baby was a dream come true for Louise. To have a piece of him growing inside her was the greatest gift life could grant her and in a way she felt extremely happy to be able to give Kid something so precious back. She knew that he would fly over the moon when he learnt the news, and she hadn't been wrong. He had always wanted to have children; he had openly talked about it even before getting married. Louise had been warier about the subject, but now she was ready and nothing could be better than to be the one to give Kid his first child.

It was mid-morning when Kid and Lou headed for the doctor's office. She began feeling uneasy as soon as they were at the door of the surgery. She had always hated going to the doctor and not even the reason for their visit today made her feel less jittery. A lady welcomed them as she let them in. She introduced herself as Mrs. Logan, the doctor's wife, and asked them to sit while they waited for the physician. The waiting room was deserted and the lingering smell of medicine and the complete silence surrounding them gave the place an eerie atmosphere. Lou shifted on her seat uncomfortably and began biting her nails nervously. Kid turned to her and smiled briefly at seeing her look so fidgety; he took her hand in his and said, "Will you stop that? There's nothing to worry about, honey."

"I know," she mumbled. She knew that her fear of doctors was irrational, but she couldn't help it. The image of the doctor who had treated her mother so many years ago when she had fallen sick was imprinted on Lou's mind and still haunted her. He had been anything but kind to her; Louise remembered his imposing figure hovering over her small size as she looked at him fearfully and him blurting out the news unmercifully the day her dear mother passed away. It was a moment she would never forget as long as she lived and the image of that unkind physician was linked to her irrational apprehension around doctors.

In that moment they heard steps coming down the stairs at the end of the room and a man appeared. Noticing the couple in the waiting area he came towards them and introduced himself as the new doctor. He was a relative young man, in his late thirties, slender and tall, sleek black hair and the whitest teeth Lou had ever seen. He kept smiling all the time as he and Kid made small talk. Louise remained silent while she took in the scene before her eyes and especially the image of the doctor. This was the new physician that Teaspoon had talked to her about and she wondered why the man had specifically chosen a small town like Rock Creek for his practice. Clearly the fella was the city type and Rock Creek wasn't the most exciting place in the world. Unquestionably Kid seemed quite taken by Doctor Logan as the physician made a display of all his kindness and charms. He turned to Lou and tipping his head he added, "Could you bear with me for a moment? I'll be with you in a few minutes." He showed

his white teeth in a smile and Louise forced herself to smile back. The couple watched as the doctor disappeared behind a door just opposite the seats they were occupying in the waiting room. When Lou was sure that they were alone she blurted out, “I don’t like him.”

Kid turned his head to her and asked with a bemused expression, “Why?”

“He’s … too nice,” Lou muttered.

“Too nice?” he repeated, a note of amusement in his voice. He knew of the irrational fear his wife had for doctors. Sometimes Louise really surprised him. Somebody who usually acted so soundly and sensibly like Lou also seemed to have this senseless streak that Kid found really disconcerting but very endearing at the same time.

“He seems too eager to please and be kind with that fake smile of his,” she whispered with a scowl.

Kid chuckled at his wife’s words. “Of course he’s kind, he has to be. He’s the doctor and new in town,” he tried to reason with her. “Maybe we should have him and his wife for dinner sometime.”

Louise remained silent and simply shrugged her shoulders. If she had any say in it, of course she wouldn’t have that man under her roof, but she decided not to say anything. She knew that she was being completely irrational, but this man didn’t inspire good feelings. Kid really was too kind to everybody and never saw anything bad in anybody. Not that this man had done anything to her, she had just met him, but that smile of his with those sickening white teeth gave her the creeps and he was a doctor on top of it all, which wasn’t the best quality in her personal list.

Kid squeezed her hand and kissed her on the cheek softly. “Stop that beautiful head of yours from worrying. He’s just gonna tell us whether our baby is growing in there,” he added, placing his hand on her abdomen, which brought a smile to her lips. They remained in silence for a few minutes and then looking at him sideways, Lou said, “I still don’t like him.”

In that moment the door through which the doctor had disappeared reopened and he gestured at Louise to follow him inside. Lou rose to her feet, feeling jittery. She was about to head for the doctor’s surgery when Kid grabbed her by the hand, stopping her. She looked at him quizzically and he said, “I love you, Louise McCloud, and let me tell you that I’m very proud of you.”

Louise smiled broadly and bent to kiss him lightly on the lips. Somehow his words had a soothing effect on her and she walked towards the doctor’s office decisively, but as soon she stepped inside, she was once again overcome by shyness and nervousness. The doctor was sitting behind a big mahogany desk

and his wife was also in the room, busy tidying the medicine bottles on the shelves. Her presence didn't surprise Louise as on most occasions doctors' wives acted as their nurses and she found the thought of another woman in the room comforting. The doctor smiled at her and told her to take a seat. Louise timidly sat on the chair in front of the desk and kept her eyes downcast, turning her wedding band on her finger over and over again. She heard the doctor clear his throat and she forced herself to look up at him.

"So Mrs. McCloud, your husband tells me that you have strong suspicions that you might be expecting," Doctor Logan began.

"That's right," she answered with a soft voice.

"How long have you been married?" he asked curiously.

"Four and a half years," she said proudly.

"Any more children?" he asked again.

"No," was Lou's curt answer.

"Any miscarriages?" was the doctor's next question and Lou just shook her head no. "And you've been married nearly five years?" he repeated the question, his smile turned into a surprised frown for a second.

"That's right," was all she said. She was in a hurry to end the whole thing as quickly as possible, and she didn't bother to explain to the doctor that the reason there were no children yet was because her husband had been fighting in the war for four long years.

"Very well, then," the doctor said, his smile returning radiantly. "Let's see if your suspicions are correct."

Outside the room Kid couldn't keep calm. Even though he had been the one to try to soothe Louise, he had to admit that he felt as nervous as her or even more. Thinking that she might be expecting his child was really the best news but at the same time it filled him with apprehension. A child was a great responsibility and he didn't know if he would be up for the job. Neither he nor Lou had had good models in both their fathers, but Kid knew that he'd never turn into the man his father had been. He had been a drunkard that had forced him, Jed and his mother to a miserable life, beat them up for no reason and had finally abandoned them to their luck. No, he'd never been that man; he'd kill himself before hurting any of his loved ones. Kid thought proudly that he was already a better husband than his father had ever been to his poor mother. She had been a good woman, but life hadn't been kind to her. Kid couldn't understand how a man could hurt a woman, let alone his own wife, the woman he was supposed to love and cherish over everything else. Just the thought of

anything or anybody hurting Lou infuriated him and filled him with terrible fear. This fear for her safety had been what had caused their rift in the past, but back then he couldn't help feeling like that. He just wanted her fine and safe, but she had thought that he doubted her abilities. Fortunately, that was far in the past and they had been able to overcome their differences. Now they couldn't be better and if the doctor confirmed that they were going to have a baby, it would definitely complete their life together. He knew that Lou would be a terrific mother; she had done so well with her brother and sister that Kid didn't doubt that she would be wonderful with their own child. Kid smiled at imagining Lou holding their baby in her arms. He could picture them perfectly as the baby learnt its first words, walked its first clumsy steps or called him 'pa'. He just couldn't wait for that.

Kid was smiling from ear and ear as all these thoughts occupied his mind when a shrill pierced the air, coming from the room next door. "Lou!!!" Kid called and was on his feet in no time, rushing towards the door. He tried to open it, but on doing so he found himself face to face with Mrs. Logan, who pushed him out of the way and closed the door behind. "You can't go in there, Mr. McCloud."

Kid was getting more and more agitated by the minute, especially when this woman didn't let him go to Louise. "My wife needs me!" he almost shouted at her.

"Your wife is fine," the woman stated seriously.

"Fine? What the hell is that husband of yours doing to her to have her screaming?" he asked at the top of his voice.

"Some complications arose, that's all," she said, "but I beg you to stay calm."

"Complications?" Kid snarled. "We came here to get confirmation about my wife's pregnancy. She was perfectly fine and now she's screaming in pain!"

"Please, Mr. McCloud, everything's under control," the woman tried to appease him with a stiff tone. "Getting all wound up isn't gonna help your wife any. And I insist, she's fine."

Her words managed to calm him down, but only barely. Worry didn't leave him and he was out of his mind. The woman gestured for him to sit down and wait, and after that she slipped into the room again. Kid was in turmoil, fearing of what was happening to Lou inside the other room. His gaze bored in the door opposite him, praying he could see through the wooden frame. His nerves didn't leave him and he found himself pacing up and down the small waiting room. The words that the doctor's young wife had told him kept repeating on his mind. Some complications had arisen. But how? Louise was fine just this morning as she had every day in the last three months. They only wanted to know if they

were gonna have a baby, only that. Kid sat down again and turning his hat in his hands nervously he watched the door intensely, hoping it would open soon. He didn't know how long it had been, but for Kid it seemed like forever when finally the door opened and Doctor Logan appeared. Kid was on his feet in no time and grabbing the doctor strongly by the arms he shook him hard. "Where's my wife? How's she?" Kid demanded roughly.

The doctor managed to disengage himself from Kid and he said, "Your wife's fine, Mr. McCloud." His words lifted some pressure off Kid's troubled mind and he hung to the doctor's every word as he spoke. "I'm afraid that your hopes for a pregnancy were basically ungrounded and unfortunately, it was something quite different. I had to carry out a thorough examination and …" The following words were lost to Kid completely. The doctor's medical gibberish was making him feel sick and Kid felt the bile rise to his throat as the physician seemed to glow at sounding so technical and clever. In a haze Kid managed to get snippets of the doctor's harangue "unexpected problem", "deep hemorrhage", "internal damage". Finally, his last words made way into Kid's hazy mind but he had to ask again out of shock, "What?"

The doctor cleared his throat uncomfortably and for the first time he wasn't smiling. "I'm afraid that Mrs. McCloud won't be able to bear children."

The words were like a punch to his face. It seemed so absolutely unreal that the doctor's words sounded like a cruel joke. They had been so elated at the prospect of becoming parents; Lou had been over the moon and she had a special brightness in her eyes that he hadn't seen before. And now this man was saying that they couldn't even dare to dream of having children ever. His first thought went for Louise and when he had finally managed to pull himself together, he managed to say, "I need to see my wife."

The doctor nodded understandingly and added, "She might still feel a bit weak but there's no reason why you can't take her home." Kid didn't seem to hear the doctor's words as he rushed inside the room where Lou was. As soon as he stepped inside, his eyes fell on her figure lying on the bed at the far end of the room. Her head was turned towards the opposite side, so Kid couldn't see her face from his position. He wondered if the doctor had told her everything, but when he came closer and saw her bleak expression, he knew that she knew. He approached her tentatively and called her name but she kept looking ahead of her. He sat down on the bed next to her carefully and stretched his hand to take hold of hers, but Louise moved it away from his reach, a gesture that surprised and hurt him at the same time. "Honey, I'm so sorry," Kid whispered, his voice cracked with the pain he was feeling for them both.

"I want to go home now," she said loud and clear. Her tone was demanding and her voice sounded cold and detached as if she wanted to hide the pain that Kid knew she was feeling.

“Oh sure, my love,” Kid said, trying to smile at her softly but she wasn’t looking at him; in fact, she seemed to avoid his gaze completely. Kid wanted to tell her that everything would be fine, that she needn’t worry or anything that would bring her some comfort, but somehow he felt unable to utter anything intelligible. That lost and blank look that she now had was something that frightened him and he felt frozen and drained of all energy. He wanted to erase that coldness from her eyes and to have her back laughing and playful. It really wasn’t fair, Kid thought. It seemed that life didn’t give them a well-deserved respite. He had barely been back three months and a new heartache was tumbling their rocky existence. All in all, Kid was grateful that Louise was fine after all; she was the most important bit of his life and he’d be happy as long as she was with him. Coming to terms with the fact that they’d never become parents would be hard but nothing mattered if Lou was in his life.

About half an hour later they were ready to leave the doctor’s office. Kid had tried to help her and make her take his arm for support, but Lou had roughly shoved him away. Kid was really hurt by his wife’s behavior, but he decided not to say anything about it. He knew that she was in pain and he was more than happy to be on the receiving end of her frustration if that meant she could release some of her pain. She hadn’t said a word since she had demanded to go home, not one single word. Kid wished she would talk to him because he had the weird sensation that the woman who had entered the surgery this morning and the one now before his eyes were not the same. He had never seen Lou look so cold and stiff. Kid understood that the day’s events had been a terrible blow to her and somehow she needed to give vent to her pain. But those expressionless eyes that she had were scaring and somehow Kid wished she could yell at him and hit him instead of looking so deadly calm. They would have to grieve together for what they couldn’t have and Kid hoped that the pain would bring them even closer than they had been since he came back.

Kid stopped for a moment to thank the doctor and his wife for their help, but Lou continued her way out without even looking back. He knew that he had been hard to both Doctor Logan and the lady, but he understood that they had only helped Lou. It was ironic to think that he and Lou had begun their day with so many hopes and in a matter of minutes those hopes and dreams had been completely shattered. It really wasn’t the doctor’s fault if things were this bleak, but his first instinct had been to launch his frustration into the physician. Kid felt that he owed an apology to the man and did so. The doctor disregarded his words, assuring him that Kid’s attitude was completely understandable. Anyway, Kid really felt in debt with him; after all Lou was fine and that was the important part. Even though he was still confused about what had been wrong with Lou, he knew that the doctor had just done what he had to for her welfare.

Kid bid a quick good-bye to Doctor Logan and his wife as he was worried

about Lou, who had wandered out of the office on her own after her predicament. He had seen that her legs were wobbly and he could tell that she was still dizzy, but she was so stubborn that she had refused his arm for support at all. He dashed out of the doctor's office after his wife, slamming the door shut in his hurry. The doctor and his wife stayed in the middle of the waiting area, looking at the door which had just closed loudly. After Kid's raucous exit, the room was in silence until suddenly Mrs. Logan turned to his husband, her eyes shining furiously. "What the hell were you thinking?" she bawled, violently hitting him on the upper arm with her fist.

He roughly pushed her hand away and spoke in a very calmed way. "I made a mistake, all right?"

"A mistake?" she exclaimed in the same loud tone. "You caused her a miscarriage! She could have bled to death."

"She didn't. I knew what I was doing," he continued without losing his composure.

"Ha!" she let out sarcastically. "We can't attract people's attention, you know that, Charles."

"They're just two ignorant farmers like the rest of this town of bumpkins," the man said spitefully. "There's nothing to fear, this is the perfect place to hide."

"What if somebody finds out," the lady mumbled with a shaky voice.

The man grabbed her face by the chin and forced her to look at him. "Nobody knows a thing and nobody will, Mrs. Logan," he stated without the slightest hesitation and in a quick movement his lips were devouring hers avidly. The woman pulled away breathlessly and for the first time she let out a peal of laughter. "And all that hogwash you talked to the husband." She guffawed uncontrollably and then she added, "You know how it makes me want you whenever you talk business."

The doctor joined her in the mirth and said in a low voice, "I'd be delighted to oblige, Mrs. Logan. Let's call it a day." He locked the main door, closing down the office even though it was just the middle of the day and then he began to steer the woman up the stairs. She let him pull her along delighted but she asked anyway, "What if somebody needs the doctor?"

The man curled his lips into a sneer and just blurted out, "Damn them."