

*Don't let that swarthy derelict come in here. Where did she find him? Riffraff aren't to be in this area of the warehouse. Tell her that that piece of trash doesn't belong in here. Why did you let that sweet old lady go look for someone else to be here with me? I really need her to stay here. Oh no – another contraction.*

*Why haven't I tried to learn Spanish? I've got to get her to push harder. You know that she can't. She needs to be at the emergency room – not here. An IV . . . she's getting weaker and weaker.*

*What I wouldn't do for those long black curls. She cared about herself. The cops better be out there right now looking for her . . . I see that look. I don't need right now a homeless misfit's derisive stare. Don't let him get any closer. He can't stay here. Tell him to leave.*

*Don't let those little children get near him. They can't grab his hands like that. They can't know him – can they? Good. He doesn't want to have anything to do with them. Can't they tell that he's looking at them like they're his worst nightmare? He probably has never seen a cleft lip before.*

*Come on granny – I don't want to know his name. I don't want him here. I don't want that black cloud that's hanging over him in this room. There's no way that that brute is going to be able to help me.*

*This having to pray for an hour beginning at midnight . . . why won't she change with someone else instead of . . . it's another contraction. Come on baby – give your mother a break and . . .*

*He just said something. That wasn't English. Did they just tell him their names? Those three fingers that the . . . oh no – you needed to stop that white-haired nana from going through that door. What am I going to do now? I don't have anyone around here now who speaks English.*

*Focus gal. You're a P.A. You've been volunteering here at the warehouse ever since . . . plus she isn't the first gal expecting who . . . but she has been so beaten up. The hospital should've let me call an ambulance for it to take her to their emergency room. Why doesn't she have insurance? You can guess gal.*

*How could that sweet old lady just up and leave me alone. Now I'm trapped in the same room with a crazed monster. Why did the cops leave? Why is it that no one is around when I need help?*

*Why didn't you keep that thug away from her? The nerve of that creep to take her hand just like that.*

*I need to get away from him. Go to the other side of the gurney. Like that's going to help if . . . another contraction. How does she do it? I would've needed a block when . . . you don't want to go there now gal.*

*Stare real hard at her guy. How many times have you battered someone like that? She must've been really pretty. There's no way that she can see out of that eye from all that swelling. Thank goodness though that the bleeding has stopped from that deep, ragged gash on her jaw. It needs to be sutured.*

*She can't talk. She needs to keep her strength. What's she trying to do? Why is she holding unto his hand like . . . does she know him? She sure is looking at him like she does. How can she look so at peace?*

*You need to get that goon away from her before . . . and what do you think that he's going to do to her?*

*Your paranoia gal that you have of guys . . . he's a transient who obviously doesn't understand English. He won't be able to help you if you need help. How do you know that he doesn't speak English? Just because that sketchy vagrant was probably speaking Spanish to her two children, that doesn't mean that he doesn't speak English. Would it hurt you gal if you asked him if he can speak English? So why don't you?*

*He doesn't need to glower at me like . . . it's not my fault that she has been beaten to a pulp. It could be a lot worse. He could be looking at a corpse instead of . . . at least the baby's heartbeat sounds strong.*

*You've got to answer him gal. He just asked you a question. It was in English. Stop standing there with your mouth open. You sure aren't acting very professional around him. Why should I? He's a numskull.*

*Just tell the crude ignoramus . . . like he's really going to care that her spineless imbecile of a husband – who was probably drunk, decided to show by pummeling his pregnant defenseless wife how tough he was?*

*Tell him to let go of her hand. Like you think that he's going to listen to you gal? Do guys really think that having a twelve o'clock shadow, getting tattoos and wearing a piece of jewelry around their necks make them manlier? Why do guys always have to be such self-absorbed heels? And you know this because . . .*

*Why won't guys ever look at me like I'm somebody? This always being treated by guys like I'm an incompetent twit has sure gotten old. And what're you doing gal to have guys treat you otherwise?*

*Is he blind or something? How could that lamebrain not figure it out that the way that the gal is lying on her back on the gurney that she's having a baby? Tell him to stop looking at me like I'm supposed to do something that I'm not doing. The blockhead probably has never seen a gal having a contraction. You've got to get that raving lunatic out of this clinic before . . . what's he thinking? The way that he's balling up his fist and scowling . . . why has he gotten so mad? This isn't good. He has got to go – like right now.*

*That's another contraction guy. Good morning. Congratulations. You figured it out. Let her squeeze your hand. What's he saying to her? He must've told her to breathe in and then breathe out while pushing as that's what she's doing. How can she not see what he looks like? You can't let that dirty hobo stay here.*

*Those two squirrelly little children need to sit back down on those chairs where they were sitting. They don't need to be right there next to their mother.*

*Why do they keep acting like they know that ogre? Does he even notice that the adorable little boy has his arms wrapped around his leg? The way that those two children won't stop looking up at him . . . why are they looking at him like he's some sort of superhero to them? How could you be so disappointed with me father when I was born? I know that you wanted a boy – not another girl, but father to make Mamie put a boy's name on my birth certificate – why did you do that? Why couldn't I've been born first instead of my spoiled lucky sister? You could've at least treated me father like you're now treating your grandkids.*

*Another contraction. She has to be getting close. Come on baby – it's time for you to be born.*

*Those towels and that blanket should be enough for when . . . for all the pregnant gals who're showing up at this clinic to have their babies, why isn't this place equipped at least with a crib. At least there's a scissor in this place that I can use for cutting the umbilical cord. This hydrogen peroxide will sterilize the scissor. I sure don't blame the little tyke for not wanting to come out into this unfair world that's out here.*

*I need to call Mamie just as soon as the poor gal gets past the next contraction. If I don't, she'll have the entire city police force out looking for me if I don't answer my home phone when she calls me tonight to make sure that I've gotten home okay. This thinking Mamie that you've to always call me at night on my home phone instead of my cell . . .*

*What did she just say to him? Why suddenly the chagrined, unsettled look? Maybe he didn't understand what she said? That cute little doll has to have quite a lisp. That crooked smile that's filling up her face and the way that her eyes are sparking . . . she sure seems to be happy with whatever it was that she just told him. Why doesn't he smile back at her? Like you really think that he knows how to smile?*

*Why is he looking at the door? The grimy bloke better not dare leave me now. Maybe it'd be better if he did leave. Whatever it was that she said to him sure wasn't something that he wanted to hear by the way that he's . . . he needs to keep holding on to her mother's hand. Check and see if she's crowning. Nothing.*

*This isn't good. Her blood pressure has gotten way too low.*

*This jumping up and down like silly school children . . . it's not a time for them to . . . their mother needs to focus on pushing instead of . . . come on guy – snap out of it – help her breathe. Gal – forget the insensitive hoodlum – you're on your own. That's the way it has always been. You're used to it. Except when . . .*

*Stop standing around. You've got to do something. I don't know what to do. Maybe the drifter will know what to do if . . . where's your mind gal; the guy is totally out of sorts about whatever it was that that little cherub told him. Ask him what she said. Why is he looking at me now like he has just seen me for the first time? He sure can make someone feel like a nonentity. You should be used to it by now gal by the way that father has always . . . stop it. You know that you need to keep your attention on your patient. You're her only hope right now to . . . don't go there gal. She isn't going to die. She can't. I can't let her.*

*Her pulse can't get much weaker. I've got to get her to the hospital. Why does the warehouse have to be located where it is? Okay – it has to be in the inner city in order that . . . here comes another.*

*Why still that befuddled, unnerved look? He won't even look at me. Why? I wish that he'd stop shaking his head back and forth. You could ask him what's bugging him. Good going gal – now you've really . . .*

*Quick call Mamie before the poor gal starts contracting again. Now the repulsive lunk is looking at me like I'm doing something really wrong calling my mother. If it hadn't been for that pregnant gal, I'd be in the midnight van right now heading with a police escort to where we're to park our vehicles while we . . .*

*Mamie must've been sitting on the phone. She better not start asking me questions. Tell her that you'll call her again in an hour or so – that a pregnant gal came into the warehouse's clinic and that the gal should have her baby sometime real soon. Why won't my mother talk one time with me without asking me questions? Why does she want to know if I've someone here with me? This always coming across Mamie like you don't think that I can do anything is . . . I saw that look guy. I'm not about to tell Mamie that I'm stuck in a room with someone who has to by the way that he looks knows what the inside of a jail looks like.*

*Just stop talking gal and hang up before . . . you had to tell your mother didn't you that there's a guy here who speaks Spanish and that the pregnant lady has a five or six year old cutie and a three year old little man. How do I get Mamie to get it that I can't talk to her right now as . . . why does she always think that I need to know that she's praying for me? Have any of your talks Mamie with your God ever helped me?*

*That was a head nod for me to get over here – wasn't it? And what makes him think that he's running the show around here? Mamie probably doesn't even know that I shut off my cell while she was praying.*

*Who does he think he is that . . . what doesn't he understand about me having called the hospital for an ambulance to . . . I know that she needs to be getting more help than what I'm able to give to her but . . . the guy really does think that I'm an inept, bungling dolt – just like everyone else does. How could he have not seen me checking her pulse? Does the illiterate fool really think that I don't know that her pulse has gotten weaker and weaker? He can't really think that this place is set up for performing a C-section? Can he?*

*How does he know that the baby is coming? The children are going to have to sit down again on those chairs. Have him hold her shoulders while . . . here comes the baby. I know lady – you don't have any strength left to push but . . . you've got to get her to keep trying. How did that happen? Be glad gal that you caught the baby before . . . it's a boy. Listen to him howl. I want to cry. You can't cry.*

*Point to him where the scissors are. Tell him to cut the cord. You could've at least thanked him. That look in his eyes though when he looked at me . . . why does he want me to lay the baby on his mother's chest? I sure would be as pleased and as happy as she looks right now that her little guy finally decided to . . . the guy needs to tell her not to talk. She needs to save her strength. You've got to get the bum away from her.*

*How can he understand what she's saying to him? I can barely hear her. Whatever it was though that she just said to him . . . that look that he now has on his face – like she just smacked him . . . then why is he nodding his head up and down as if he's letting her know that . . . now what's this with the no – no – no?*

*Why won't those two rambunctious imps stay sitting in those chairs? I guess that I'd be really excited, too, if . . . why are they looking up and waving? Did that little prancer just say music? Why won't the guy . . . he could tell me what she's saying? He looks like he's ready to . . . her face . . . it's normal looking. She's really beautiful. The bruises – that cut – they're gone. She's smiling like . . . no – no – she couldn't have.*

This is the warehouse's clinic? Oh great – a doc light. This doesn't look good. She's way over her head.

The gal on the hospital bed the way that her legs are . . . that has to account for why that pathetic looking P.A. has on her face the deer in the headlights look. She probably has never delivered a kid.

What? Not kids. No. No. You can't let them . . . the rad . . . you need to once and for all put what took place behind you. You know that rads have orders to . . . but . . . you've got to stop letting those stupefied, frightened looks on their faces . . . guy – you know that you're never going to forget those faces.

What's wrong with her upper lip? Her eyes . . . don't look in them. They're looking way too excited. Why? Why did she just call me that? You had to have heard her wrong.

El patojo must be her hermanito. He looks like her. Ask them como se llaman. ¿Mamita? ¿Papito? Those are apodos not . . . ask the little dude cuántos años tienes? He doesn't look like he's only three years old. La princesa bonita probably tiene cinco o seis años. Tengan que ser los niños de la señora.

Now what? Just tell the meddlesome troll that . . . I really didn't want to know the fruitcake's name. How did the old busybody know the name that I'm using? I didn't tell her. El maestro . . . the judge had to have told her. Talk about interactive teaching. All reverend knows how to do is . . . do assessing guy – that's what you're to be doing right now instead of reliving things that you can do absolutely nothing about.

She's leaving? It's just about time for her to pray? What? You missed that happening here guy.

Had she been helping here with . . . she must've been. You should've gotten on your knees gal. I would've liked to have seen you begging that old meddler to stay. What a sad looking doofus. Just keep looking at me like that gal. I'll gladly leave if that's what you're wanting me to do. I don't need to be here. I can't be here. I need to . . . I've got to pull the plug on this op before . . . having me infiltrate this place in order to put a finger on who's behind the contra government paramilitary training that's allegedly going on here . . . I haven't found anything nefarious happening here. And how do you plan to get GIF to accede to . . .

What? Those presumptuous little . . . why are you letting los patojos pequeños pull you over to sus madre? What happened to her? The way that her eye is swollen shut and that nasty looking lacerated jaw . . . what kind of asinine coward would beat up a gal who looks like she's nine months pregnant?

The look in her eye . . . it's the same look that her daughter has. Her face is smiling. How can that be? There's no way that she's able to smile the way that her jaw looks but . . . she's tensing. She must be starting to have a contraction. Take her hand. Why did I do that? I don't do compassion.

Good grief – what's so wrong with me taking her hand? What a nutcase. She's obviously got a case against guys. Like what makes you think that she has to worry about guys? Anyone who thinks that wearing an oversized pajama-like . . . at least they're blue and not pink. She's about as girlish as a . . .

You could at least ask the P.A. to bring you up to speed on . . . why is she staring at me like . . . doesn't she understand English? What a dingbat. She's acting like she's scared stiff of me. Does she think that I'm going to do something to la señora – or to her?

Someone sure sounds vindictive. How does she know that whoever he was who beat up la señora had to have been drunk? The police were here? Does she really think that they're going to find the guy who . . . how does she know that he was the gal's husband? If he's here illegally, they're never going to find him.

La señora looks like she has her act together. Los patojos are fortunate to have a mother who obviously cares about them. She should've though had the surgery done by now on her daughter's lip. My bet is that they haven't been here in the country all that long.

Is she trying to squeeze my hand because . . . tell her to keep breathing in and out while she's pushing. The P.A. has to know that la señora doesn't have the strength left to . . .

La señora should be in a hospital right now instead of . . . she doesn't have insurance? So? Doesn't she know that a hospital doesn't have a choice; that it has to admit her. What a dimwit – everyone knows that.

That wannabe doc has to do something like right now. She has to know that la señora's pulse is almost nonexistent. She can barely squeeze my hand let alone push. Ask the P.A. what la señora's blood pressure is. What're you doing guy? You can't get involved. The only thing that you're to do is to follow GIF's orders. This domestic assignment though that GIF has assigned me to . . . if what the BEP guys told me during their break tonight is right, why are you letting your own country's régime turn you into a domestic mercenary just so . . . she's trying to squeeze your hand again guy. Help her.

It'd be good to know how long she has been having contractions. They're not that far apart. Just as soon as she has the baby . . . then what're you going to do guy? I've got to do something. I can't let this place be . . . this place isn't what I was briefed that it was.

Los niños – they're . . . don't look at them. Pretend that they're not here. Like they're going to let you? This wanting to hold on to my other hand and hanging on to my leg . . . whoever is watching clops at GIF wherever the place is . . . face it guy – nothing is going to stop GIF from sending a rad or a UWA to . . .

I'd do anything right now to take a hammer to I-Clops and to I-WIMP. This always having to send text updates has really gotten . . . all a mon has to do is to react to what clops is sending him. The honeymoon has long been over for you guy. Being picked by GIF wasn't the big deal that you thought that it was going to be. There's no way that you can get a divorce from GIF. The tattoo . . . hang in there señora.

The scarecrow look-a-like needs to do something. This place doesn't look like it has anything. What was so wrong with me asking her how many babies has she delivered here? Have you done anything guy to . . . I'd be scared of me, too, if I . . . just stick with helping la señora.

La pobre señora – I know that she's really wanting to say something to me but . . . I hope that I'll get the chance to platicar with her after her baby is born. The priority though at this time has to be to find a way to get this whole place evacuated before . . . you need to think guy. You can't let GIF destroy this place.

Guy – squeezing la señora's hand like you are isn't going to help anyone. The doc has a cell. Ask her if you can use it. And who'd you call if . . . and you know that clops would . . .

Pay attention guy – your lively little friend – by the way that she's pulling down on your arm, wants to say something to you so . . . you did hear her right the first time. Why is she telling me . . . for that to happen would be . . . it'd be impossible. Tell her that it just won't ever happen. And why would you guy want to do that right now? Let her be happy. Get yourself out of this place. You don't have any reason to stay.

Why are you . . . you know that there's absolutely no way that you'd be able to do it so . . . once su madre recoups, she'll be able to . . . don't fool yourself guy, la señora has a long road to haul before she'll be back on her feet. It'd be good for her to have someone around to help her care for these little scallywags but . . . and even if I . . . there's no possible way that I could ever do it.

The contractions – how long can she keep having them before . . . there has to be something that that useless doc can give her to . . . I bet reverend wasn't holding on to mother's hand while I was being born. Poor mother – having to live with reverend – only being able to do what he tells her to do. Getting out from under reverend's thumb was supposed to be my lucky day. Yah – right way. Being in GIF's clutches has to be what life is like down in purgatory.

With the exception of the panicky look that's plastered all over that inept doc's face and in spite of the awful pain that la señora has to be feeling from probably having some broken facial bones and from trying to have her kid, this room is sure exuding warmth and . . . los patojos are acting like they're at a fiesta.

Why isn't this room darker? It should be. There's only the overhead light that's hanging over the hospital bed. Where's all the light coming from anyway? Why am I feeling like I'm in someone's dream?

Why did you have to ask her what la señora's blood pressure is? You didn't need to ask her guy to know that it has gone down even more. If la señora took some body shots, she may be bleeding internally. Where did that cordiality come from – wanting to tell me that the baby's heartbeat is still strong?

At least a GIF mon has something else to look at right now. It has to be really boring watching me in the rooms that I'm told to use when I'm not scoping out GIF's target sites. Saying though that this place is being used to foment a domestic extremist pod – what a bunch of crock.

If she knew that . . . you've got to tell her. You need to find a way guy to get everyone out of this place before . . . here's hoping that wimpy will give me a warning before . . . who all are in this place right now anyway? You're really slipping guy. Those are things that you're already supposed to have found out.

She doesn't begin to have a clue how complicated that she has made my life. Like it's her fault guy? Do you really think that she wants to be here right now? She's clearly scared of her own shadow. She doesn't want to be here. And if los patojos are still here when . . . you can't let it happen again guy. You just can't.

If there's one old spinster doing praying duty someplace in this place, there probably are more of those overly spiritual old maids around here. How can they believe that talking to air is really going to help? No matter how hard and how often you spanked me reverend, there was no way that I was ever going to talk to someone who I couldn't see. And who has wimpy been to you ever since GIF . . . that's not the same. Those diktats that GIF sends me are a whole lot different than . . .

This never to ever remove the I-Clops from hanging from my neck or else and this to never ever get more than a couple of meters away from the I-WIMP that's around my wrist . . . how could something that made being an extremist or a terrorist a sure quick trip to a grave, that put a real dent in drug trafficking and that made gangs obsolete become a tool for local politicians to . . . she's contracting again. Breathe for her. Push for her. You've got to do something.

The niños – their jumping, clapping, jabbering . . . I can't do this any longer.

She can't do that. She has to help la señora – she can't talk on her cell. Who is mamie? Do you really think gal that whoever mamie is really cares that you're with a pregnant gal who was knocked around by her yellow-bellied husband? La señora is tensing up again. Like a reverend glare is really helping you isn't it guy? She's not about to stop talking.

She's with a guy who speaks Spanish? Wow. Mamie must really be impressed. If you're not going to talk on your cell doc, you need to get yourself over here as . . . so mamie is praying for you. Big deal.

That's her pulse rate? She needs to get an ambulance over here – like right now. I'll call for one if . . . okay – accept it. You're not going to convince her that an ambulance will come here so . . .

Ask her if she can do a C-section. What kind of clinic is this if . . . something is happening. I think that the baby is coming. She could've moved faster. She can at least tell me if I was right.

She's crowning? I was right. The baby is coming. Why won't los patojos just sit down in las sillas?

That noise – it's a baby's cry. Talk about someone looking relieved. I probably look relieved, too. Guy – pay attention – the P.A. is telling you to cut the umbilical cord with those scissors. Why can't she do it herself? Tell her that you don't want to do it. Then why are you doing what she told you to do?

It's a boy. He's perfect. La señora needs to . . . have the doc lay el muchachingo on her chest. What does she want? Tell la señora that she shouldn't . . . she wants me to do what? You heard her guy. Why would she ask me to . . . stop nodding your head yes. Tell her you can't do that. She's not breathing. Where's that useless wacko? Where's the defibrillator. Her face . . . the swelling, the gash . . . how can that be?

Why are they waving? They can't say chau now to their mother. She can't leave them. She has to stay.

*She's not dead. She can't be. Tell him to start chest compressions. Where's my bag? There's got to be something in here that I can . . . why isn't he doing chest compressions? Do you think that screaming at him is going to help? Get ahold of yourself. Think. I can't. You just let someone die – again.*

*Why won't those rascals stop acting so excited? Can't they see that their mother just . . . what makes him think that he has the right to hold the baby? Take the baby away from him. You can't – you have to wake up his mother. She has just passed out – that's all.*

*There's no pulse. If he'd just started giving her heart compressions . . . look in this place's pharmacy. Maybe it'll have something that I can use. You know there's nothing here that . . . I need to start doing . . .*

*He's coming towards me. Is he going to help me? I can't let him stop me from . . . I have to wake her up.*

*This room – it's too light in here. Something spooky is happening here. I don't like it. The kids aren't supposed to be acting so happy? Why is he looking at me like that? What does he know that I don't know?*

*Don't let him touch me. Why am I letting him put his arm around me? What if I don't want to sit down? Why did you let him . . . why is he giving me the baby? I don't want to hold him. He has to take him back. You're going to let him sit next to you? Stand up. Get away from him. Run. You're having a nightmare.*

*He's going to let them climb on his lap? Why aren't they scared of him? He's a disgusting vagrant. This can't be happening. Maybe if I scream . . . there has to be someone awake hanging out in the lounge.*

*You know where that old lady is praying. Go there. She'll know what to do. Like her prayers really helped. No prayer has ever helped you gal – or will ever help you. Just crawl back to your pity party. Why did this have to happen to me again? Why me? Why me? Why me?*

*You can't stay sitting here. You've got to do something. Start with her body. Find something to cover it. Then call the cops. They need to know that she died. I don't want to move. I don't want to think anymore. I just want to go home and . . . let the bum clean up your mess. By the way that the children are snuggling up to him and how tolerant he is with those two bumpkins, the guy can't be as horrible as he looks.*

*I can't let father find out what happened. You know what he'll tell you. When are you going to stop gal letting father control your life? Begin living your own life. Why should I? No one cares about me.*

*He's staring at me like he can see me. A baby can only see a blur – right? Don't look in his eyes. Then why are you looking in his eyes? I hope that he never finds out that I'm the one who let his mother die.*

*These children . . . I'm going to have to call child services first thing in the morning. The children have to have family someplace around here that can take them. But what if they don't, what'll happen to them? Letting their mother die along with having let . . . how are you going to live for the rest of your life with what you've done? You sure have done a great job gal of making an awful mess of your life.*

*Why is she pulling on my arm? She knows that I don't understand Spanish.*

*You could've at least thanked him for telling you what she was saying to you. But how can it be okay that angels took her mother to be with Jesus? How does she know that . . . her mother's body is still lying on that gurney. How could that cut and those contusions just disappear like that? There has to be a reason.*

*Just give the baby to the grubby transient so that you can call the police. Oh no – he has that haunted look back on his face. Why? At least he took the baby without giving me another criticizing, demeaning look.*

*If I'm ever going to start taking responsibility for my actions, this would be a good time. Call the detective. Tell him that . . . you know that he's going to blame you for her death. You've become nothing more than a fall person. Why is it always me who gets into these kinds of rotten messes? Maybe if I ask whoever he is, he'll call the detective who left his card. Do you really want him talking to that detective about you? No.*

*I really don't want to be doing this. Then why am I calling him? Maybe he won't answer his phone. What do I say to him if . . . can't something just once go my way? I hope that the number that I dialed is wrong.*

*Why did he just ask me if I know what time it is? He has to know that it's after midnight. So? Where is he that . . . he can't do that. He just hung up on me. His job is to talk with me – to tell me what to do next. He doesn't care that she died. I don't want to wait until morning to . . . why won't all this just go away?*

*Wake up. You're not alone here. That repulsive freak just asked you what you're going to do next. Tell him that it's his call. I need to get out of here. Like running away has always worked for you – hasn't it?*

*Her body needs to be someplace where it's cooler. Rolling the gurney that she's on outside into the open patio area would work. The below freezing temperature would . . . I can't do that. Keep her body in here.*

*How can someone who's dead look so serene?*

*What am I going to do with the children? They don't begin to look like they're tired. Is he going to let her hold the baby? He can't do that. What if she drops the baby? She sure looks like her mother. Someone should've told her mother that there're places and medical teams who would've happily done without cost the kind of surgery that would've fixed her lip. It sure doesn't seem to bother that little dynamo that she has a cleft lip. If I'd been born with an upper lip like that, father would've . . .*

*Good – he took the baby back. It's obvious that something sure has him really bugged. It's apparent that he likes children but . . . it's also clear that he doesn't want to be here anymore than I do. Who is he?*

*Finally – a clean sheet. That was nice of him to help me put the sheet over her. Ask him to push the gurney up against the outside wall. For someone who looks like he could be a bouncer someplace . . . just be glad gal that he's not an alcoholic. How do you know that he's not an alcoholic? He's not. I know.*

*So – what's it about him that . . . he's a man. Gal – he's not going to do anything to you with children in this room. Besides – what do you think a mirror would tell you right now if you looked in one? You know that it'd tell you how really unattractive that you are. It's something that you've spent years perfecting.*

*Just give the guy a break. If he decides to leave, it'll just mean that you'll be stuck alone with the children. Maybe the old white-haired chatterer will show up in here again. You know that she will. Then what?*

*This walking around like an idiot not doing anything proves father right again that I'm nothing more than an airhead who . . . there has to be something that I can do now. Maybe he'll let me hold the baby.*

*Was that supposed to be a rhetoric question? Of course the sink has hot water. He had to know that. Has snapping someone's head off like that ever made you feel better? So – why do you keep doing it then? Being exhausted isn't an excuse. You know that. Then why do you keep playing that game? And what makes you think that he'll take advantage of you if you don't do what you have to do to push him away? Gals know that guys are nothing more than callous imbeciles. Okay – not all of them are but . . .*

*Just ask the homeless cad why he wants hot water. You did it again gal. The poor baby. He's been so good in spite of . . . the area next to the sink should be large enough to clean up the little fellow. There has to be some alcohol pads around here to use on his umbilical cord.*

*Good – here's some wipes that we can use. Here's hoping that there's another clean blanket or sheet around here. The blanket that he's been wrapped in needs to be washed first before it's used again.*

*Now what? Those two little tigers need to stay sitting on those chairs instead of . . . what're they going to do with that chair? It's way too dangerous for them to be standing together on that chair. They'll fall off and . . . and what makes them think that they need to help us wipe off their little brother? Yes sir – if that's what makes you happy, I'll stand here and hold the baby over the sink while the kids do their thing. Good grief guy – you sure do know how to make someone feel like a worthless worm.*



*How am I going to tomorrow morning explain to the cops what happened? You know that they're going to hold you accountable for . . . it's their fault. That idiot detective should've called the hospital and . . .*

*This wasn't the way that my night was supposed to turn out – me standing here in the middle of the night holding a newborn baby over a sink while . . . I don't want to be doing this. I don't want to be standing right next to a grubby ingrate. I can't believe that I'm letting his shoulder touch my shoulder.*

*I know that I'm proof that life doesn't play fair but . . . when it dawns on these children that their mother will no longer hold them – and then when they realize that they're being farmed out to different homes to live . . . you can at least help them remember this moment as being a happy moment instead of leaving them to remember you as . . . maybe it's time gal that you stop moping about what life has dwelt you and . . .*

*Just be thankful gal that the master intimidator next to you doesn't think that he has to do a lot of talking. Let him entertain the children. They clearly like him so . . . it would be nice to know how it feels to be liked by someone. Okay – Mamie likes me but . . . mothers don't have any choice but to like their children.*

*Helping people with medical needs sure hasn't been a ticket to becoming liked – that's for sure. It'll be a real miracle if somebody doesn't show up in the next few days – with a lawyer, to sue me.*

*Why didn't I think of that? Of course one of those towels over there will do for now to wrap the baby in until another baby blanket is found in this place. You need to stop feeling sorry for yourself and . . . why is this place not getting colder? It has to be below freezing outside. It's not too warm in here either. And the light that's in this room . . . with just one overhead light?*

*What're you doing gal? You're following a strange guy to the chairs and now you're sitting down next to him. Why did you do that? You don't do that. Does he have a wife? He can't have. Guys who live on the street aren't married. How do you know that? And what makes you think that he lives on the street? You're a good one to talk. You're as much of a recluse as you're accusing him to be.*

*Those children trust him. Why? He hardly ever says anything to them. He doesn't even smile at them. The way that he's looking at the little baby though . . . you need to take the baby from him – like right now. That black look though that's on his face right now could kill. What's his problem? And I thought that I was fighting demons. Something sure has him doing battle with himself right now.*

*I don't believe it. He didn't even react when I took the little fellow. What an adorable, contented baby. Why did I let it happen? And how many years gal are you going to continue to . . . why couldn't it be father who's dead instead of . . . when is it going to stop feeling like it happened just yesterday instead of . . .*

*This place needs a supply of baby clothes, diapers, safety pins, blankets, a bassinet . . . I'll use some of my rainy day savings to stock this place. The little guy must be getting hungry, too. Add to the list plastic baby bottles, formula . . . the children must be getting hungry, too. Maybe what's his name won't mind walking to the kitchen to see if there's some cookies and milk over there that he can bring back here.*

*Why is he looking at me like that? He knows that the warehouse has a soup kitchen. Why else would he be here in this place? He probably was planning to sleep in the warehouse's shelter tonight. Why doesn't he say something? What's so hard about saying yes or no to planning to stay in the warehouse's shelter tonight? There's that dark look again. I don't like the way that he's clenching his fists. He's mad. I wonder why? You probably don't want to know. Just get up and start walking around with the baby.*

*You children really don't want to do that. Climbing on his lap and hugging him isn't a good thing to do right now. I sure wish I knew what she's saying to him. Why is he shaking his head back and forth?*

*I sure hope that that surly brute doesn't mind that little scamp playing with that oversized marble that's on the chain that's around his neck. The thing looks like a bunch of eyes that're always . . .*

*What's that noise? Where did he get that thing? Isn't that thing what he had around his wrist?*

Why are they still looking up? Their eyes – they're as big as saucers. I don't see anything.

¿Música? I don't hear any music. ¿Y un luz? I don't see a light.

¿Mama no está aquí? ¿Ella se fue el cielo para estar con Jesús? ¿Qué? Guy – they're patojos with huge imaginations. Sus madre is still lying on that hospital bed. Why won't they look at her? They're right. She's not there. What's lying there is nothing more than a beautiful cadaver. All those bruises that were on her face are still gone. There has to be a medical reason why . . . but why didn't that gash leave a scar?

Why is she screaming at me? I'm to start doing chest compressions? Why? She's gone off the deep end. She has to know that there's really nothing more that she can do for her. Does she really think that all that wild screeching is going to help? That black bag isn't going to have anything in it that she can use to . . .

She has really lost it. She needs to let esos patojos bounce around like a couple of rubber balls. If they want to act right now like nothing has happened, she needs to let them do what they want to do.

You need to stop that unstable dolt from destroying this place. She isn't going to find anything that'll . . . now what? Why won't she just accept the fact that la señora is dead? It's obvious that there's no life left in her. Her spirit has . . . the next thing you know guy you're going to believe those two little imps and . . .

Talk about someone feeling like a wet noodle. Guide her over to the chairs. Get her to sit down. Maybe she'll get her act back together again. I doubt it. Once a flake always a flake – and she's one. And what are you? I'm not a flake – that's for sure. And you would rather continue to be what you've been?

Just let her hold the baby. Forget that the baby's name is to be . . . there's absolutely no way that you're going to . . . so you're just not going to do what la señora got you to promise her that you would do?

You need to focus right now on the immediate. You may have just hours left before . . . how can I concentrate with esos patojos thinking that I'm a tree? I can't be who they want me to be. I just can't be. I'm a GIF gofer. There's no way that I'm ever going to be able to get out of GIF's tentacles so . . . the least that I can do now for los patojos is to get the P.A. in a place where she can function normally again.

She's definitely edgy about something the way that she's acting? What've you done guy that has earned her trust? Nothing. Ever since you walked through that door, you've been non-verbally communicating to her how much you dislike her. What has she done to make you want to like her? Nothing. She's someone else who has gotten way over their head thinking that they're a lot more capable than what they really are.

What a fruitcake. She has to have held a baby before. She's looking at him like he's her worst nightmare while he's looking at her like . . . how can she not . . . he's going to make some gal a lucky gal someday.

In spite of her deformity, it's easy to see that the young lady who's standing in front of me already knows that she's going to conquer the world. If I ever have a kid . . . like that's ever going to happen. At least the odds are in her favor that she'll end up in a home someplace that'll give her survivor skills – like she really needs them. She sure doesn't lack for verve.

You're going to have to interpret for her. She's looking at you guy like she doesn't believe what you just told her. Well . . . if she'd taken the time to learn Spanish, she'd know that what I just told her was what little mamita was trying to tell her – that angels took her mother to heaven to live with Jesus. Why didn't you tell the P.A. what else the little sweetheart was trying to tell her – that she isn't to be sad? Why aren't these kids feeling distraught that their mother is no longer alive? What's the matter with them?

What kind of dismal life has the P.A. had? It sure doesn't take much to see that she has absolutely zero self-worth and utterly no self-confidence. You failed reverend in your attempts to push me into those corners. You didn't fail though reverend in pushing me out of your life and out of the lives of everyone else in my family. Guy – think about it – you're no different than reverend – especially since GIF shanghaied you, for not calling her to have her call your family to let them know that you're not dead.

You know guy what you have to do if you want to survive this op. You've already proven to yourself that you're gutless. So leave. Yah – leave just like you left los patojos when . . . when are you going to start to do the right thing guy?

Why didn't la señora fight to live? What made her think that I'd . . . you should've told her that there's categorically no way that you can do what she asked you to do. And even if I could, she had to see that . . .

GIF owns you guy. You know that. Thinking that GIF would make planet Earth a better place to live through . . . it has really worked hasn't it. Trying to stop coco leaf, marijuana and poppy harvests has resulted in easily made, backroom concocted synthetic drugs turning up everywhere. Trying to wipe out established cartels and gangs has them randomly popping up and proliferating all over the place. Trying to liquidate despots has opened the door for a whole new generation of narcissistic sociopaths.

It really wouldn't surprise me at all that in spite of all the precautions that GIF takes to keep their pool of international draftees from succumbing to taking grafts or to compromising to an op's specs that a head of state – like a President, has somehow found a way via a top level GIF official to wield the kind influence that'd secure the election or the reelection of a crony or even his or her own reelection.

Was I like esos niños locos when I was a kid? If I was, no wonder reverend and I . . . how could someone not get a kick out of their antics? But to have them always calling me . . .

Now what's she doing? Who's she calling at this time of the morning? Everybody is asleep. If she didn't want someone to answer her call, why did she dial a number that must be on that card? If whoever he or she is on the other end of the line could see how upset she looks . . . that someone evidently didn't want to talk to her as the call sure didn't last very long. So help me – if you start crying now gal . . . and what would you do guy if she did start bawling? You're as pitiable as she is.

Are you just going to continue to sit here not saying anything because . . . clops never misses anything. The mon know what's happening here. Everything gets recorded – you know that. You let your guard down guy when you let that pushy old lady pull you out of the class to . . . you don't want to violate GIF's number two point in their mandated code which is to not let personal feelings influence an op's outcome.

Civilians are going to be slaughtered here sometime real soon if I don't do something. You can either use the rest of the night guy to enjoy what it's like being the dad of three little heart stealers or . . .

You were trained to survive guy so go there. You can get everyone to leave who's in this place right now. Sure – right away. Like everyone who's here right now has another place to go to at this time of the night. With how cold it is outside right now, putting everyone on the street isn't an option. Remember what you were taught. What do I have for available resources? Clops and wimpy are worthless. The P.A. has a cell that I could use. Who would I call? Maybe because GIF's op target won't be here again until . . . call the judge. Have him cancel tomorrow's class. Plus you still haven't found the warehouse's deep pocket so . . .

Ask the P.A. if she knows what the protocol is as to what to do next about la señora. Is there anything in there? That sure was one wacked out look. Okay – I'm fine right now with calling the shots.

Didn't she just say that it's fine with her that I . . . why is she giving him to me? Why doesn't she want to hold this little guy? He's sure looks really tranquil. Aren't babies supposed to cry? He's one alert little dude. What's she looking for now? Why won't she just sit down here and . . . now what has she found? That's a sheet.

You can help her guy to spread that sheet over la señora. Your mother little guy sure was pretty. See. There's not even a scar or anything where . . . that can't be a smile on her face? She looks so at peace. Having her remain here in the room – against the back wall, is probably as good of a place as any.

I need to do something to put that poor P.A. at ease. Just because she overtly has issues regarding guys, she needs to know that she doesn't have to be intimidated by me. There's nothing about her that's appealing.

She doesn't need to be a part of any plan for getting everyone out of this place. And what has suddenly made you the judge and jury over her life? How'd you like to have someone give up on you? You know that someone did give up on you. Reverend. At least I didn't cave in to his constant verbal bullying.

Talk to her. This pacing that she's doing back and forth in this room is driving me crazy. There has to be something that you can find for her to do. She's going to wear out the floor if I don't.

The little guy still hasn't been cleaned up. If hot water comes out of that tap, you can suggest to her that she wash him in the sink. Wow – where did that spunk come from?

Don't just stand there staring at her like she has gone bonkers or something. Admit it guy – it actually feels okay having her try to take your head off. It's nice to know that there's a real alive being hidden behind that dowdy veneer. Besides – who're you to talk about someone putting up an impenetrable wall so that no one will get the chance to get to know you? Would you even know who you are if . . . where would I even begin doing normal life again if everything suddenly went away? Like that's ever going to happen.

Interesting – point her in a direction and . . . why not – the side of the sink will work just fine to lay him and to clean him up. Good idea – using those things to clean him up for now.

Now what're those two overactive goofballs up to anyway? And what do they think that they're going to do with that chair? Are those two ever going to run out of energy? There should be enough room for them to slide that chair next to us to help wipe off their little bro.

What's your problem gal? What's wrong with them wanting to help? And I thought that I had control and trust issues. Now I know what it's like when opposing magnetic fields . . . she's definitely emitting some serious I really don't want to be near you vibes. My guess is that the way that she looks and acts is that she doesn't like herself any more than she likes me – which she is blatantly communicating that she doesn't.

She probably hasn't thought about what she's going to do with the little tyke once we've got everything wiped off him. What a brave, unruffled little hombre. Why do I have the feeling that instead of crying, he's putting a plan in place to . . . the tiny bloke isn't missing anything around him.

I hope that she wasn't planning to wrap the little guy back up in that blanket. That bloody blanket needs to be washed before it's used again. One of those towels should work. They look big enough.

Gal – if you really think that a poor me look is going to . . . now what's she going to do? What did I do to make her think that I wanted her to follow me and then to sit down right next to me? You need to explain to her your three foot rule – that your comfort space with a gringo or with a gringa has to always be at least three feet or more – plus there has to be no touching. You need to get her to move out of your space.

Why won't she find something else to do besides sitting practically on my lap? Even los patojos don't want to have anything to do with her. She probably doesn't even notice that they won't get an arm's length away from me. If she understood Spanish . . . why did I promise la señora? There's absolutely no way guy even if GIF didn't have you trapped in its web that you could – or would . . .

What's going to happen to these kids though when . . . guy – you really need to stop thinking about them and start thinking about how you're going to get everyone out of this place before GIF sends in a rad or a UWA to wipe it off the map. Civilians being to GIF unfortunate collateral to an op's interdiction . . . if that made you happy lady – have fun holding the kid. You could've asked me first though before you took him.

Soup kitchen? What a birdbrain. Everyone knows about the soup kitchen. It's the front for . . . you're the knucklehead guy – believing wimpy's brief. It sure doesn't add up why GIF didn't include in their pre-op briefing all the other goings-on that're happening in this old warehouse. Someone has sure gotten sloppy.

Was I planning to sleep tonight in this place's shelter? She's asking way too many questions. You need to tell the scrawny dingbat that she needs to shut her mouth or . . . now what does wimpy want?

*How's he getting that thing to open up like that? He's just kind of unfurling it. Is that a screen? It is. Okay guy – I didn't want to see that text anyway. You're a liar gal. How could a shiftless tramp like him have such a fancy gizmo like that? He must've stolen it.*

*He's about to blow a gasket. The veins in his neck are about ready to pop. His face . . . you need to get the children away from him. And where would you take them? There's always the lounge. There could be someone there who . . . what if he follows me? The children probably wouldn't come with me anyway. They don't like me. That's a news flash? No one likes me anymore. Not even Mamie. She's just pretending that she likes me because I'm her daughter.*

*Why did he just let her take that bracelet thing from him? It can't be a toy – can it? Make up your mind guy – either pull father and throw some things at Mamie or at a wall before barging out of here – which I'm sure that you've had plenty of experience of doing, or . . . you can't let that little boy touch that overgrown marble that you have on that chain that's around your neck. That thing is really spooky. It really does look like it has eyes – and one of those eyes seems to be always staring at me.*

*He keeps staring at me, too. He's a precious little baby – he really is. It was your job gal to keep his mother alive. Why didn't you? He deserves to have a mother. What'll child services do with him? He'll be put up for adoption – you know that. If there's no one who wants to adopt him . . . someone will want to adopt him. What about his sister though? Will someone want to adopt a child who has a cleft lip? Child services wouldn't split them up – would they? Like you're going to stop them gal if . . .*

*You know that you don't deserve having any children after what you did. How could I ever think that jumping through years of hoops to becoming a doctor in order to save lives would erase what you let happen? Nothing is ever going to erase that memory.*

*That probably wasn't good that she did that – letting that gadget drop on the floor like that. It's making that buzzing noise again. Staring at it like that guy isn't making it go away. Pick it up. He's acting like the thing will bite him if he does. Why? There are those fists again. It's a good thing that whoever is sending those texts can't see the dark, livid expression that he has on his face. Familiar look isn't it gal.*

*Whatever it is that he's reading on that thing sure has . . . this muttering that he's no longer going to . . . that's a desperate look. I should know since I see that look staring back at me each time I look in a mirror.*

*Ask him what's wrong. Tell him that you're sorry that . . . please don't let him hit me. He wouldn't hit me in front of the children – would he? Father wouldn't stop hitting Mamie in front his little girls.*

*You need to stop that precocious little darling from pulling on his arm like that before he does something to her. I sure wish that I knew what it is that she's saying to him. If I make it through the night, I'm going to learn to speak Spanish if it's the last thing that I do. This night is going to last forever. Sooner or later those children are going to get tired and then . . . and then what? You know that that scary brute is going to turn on you the moment that the children fall asleep. You need to find a way to get him to leave before he . . . why do guys always think that they have to mistreat women? You know that's not true gal. But . . .*

*That hour that the old granny said that she needed to pray should be over with by now. Why hasn't she come back here? She has to come back here. She'll know what to do. And what if she doesn't come back here, what're you going to do? I need to talk to someone. I won't make it through this nightmare if I don't.*

*There's nothing around here for those children to sleep on if . . . and do you really think that those kids are going to stop their nonstop antics long enough to sleep? Dream on gal.*

*I need to get in some sleep before my next shift starts. I'm going to be a zombie tomorrow if I don't. What am I going to do about all that paperwork that everyone is going to ask me to do? You shouldn't have let her die? It's that numskull's fault. If that ignoramus hadn't been here, she'd still be alive. I hate him.*

*He can't be doing that. He's too . . . he's looking at me like . . . am I supposed to understand his cooing?*

*I can't let him look at me like that. I'm not his mother. Gal – you know that there's no way that he can know who you are or what has happened or . . . what's that demented maniac up to now?*

*Where's he going? He's going to leave me alone with these children? He can't do that. I don't know how to take care of children. Can't the moron tell that they don't like me?*

*Isn't that what you wanted gal – that he get lost? So – feel relieved that . . . he's going to come back in a few minutes? Where's he going? Sleeping pads? He knows where some pads are stored – that he's going to bring some back so that . . . maybe he'll bring back enough pads so that . . . and do you really think that you'll be able to sleep if . . . there's absolutely no way that with a guy in the room that I'm going to be able to go to sleep. What did he just tell those little pests? Did he just tell them to . . . I can take care of myself.*

*Why does the room suddenly feel like something is missing? I feel so helpless. You're hopeless. You always have been. You're nothing more than an appalling . . . that sure didn't take him very long.*

*It's her. It's about time that she showed up again. That warm smile sure disappeared in a hurry. I don't want her hugging me? Then why are you letting her hug you? Tell her that her words are meaningless – that you don't want her telling you that she feels sorry for what happened. Tell her that if she had stayed that . . . why does she want to know about the music that she and everyone else over at the lounge heard coming from this room? There wasn't any music coming from this room. Why won't she believe me?*

*Tell her that you don't want her praying for you anymore. She should know that this praying thing is nothing but a waste of time. I know that it is. It never ever has worked when Mamie has prayed for me.*

*She's going to do what? Where's she going to find some cookies and milk? Maybe the children don't eat cookies or drink milk. How could those children know what she just said to them? Guess if I used my hands like that to . . . oh no – there they go again – doing those crazy jumping jacks.*

*Why did you let her leave again? Maybe she'll bring back a cup of black coffee or . . . gal – there's absolutely no way that your stomach is going to let you put something in it right now.*

*Why didn't I ask the old lady to stay? You could've gotten her to give you a break from holding this little guy. This always looking at me like he . . . my face has to be just a blurry blob to him. I sure hope that he ends up in a home that . . . he needs to stay with his brother and sister. I sure do hope that he has family around here who can give him the kind of home that he deserves. He has been such a good little baby.*

*What's this now – sitting on either side of me – practically on my lap? I sure wish that I knew what she's saying to me. This hugging my arms . . . who's this person sitting here holding a baby with a couple of children hanging all over her? Where has she been? I don't want her to go away. It's like these children have known her all their lives. She feels so accepted. Now you know that you've dreaming. Just get out of bed and . . . I want to keep dreaming this dream.*

*Wake up – someone is breaking into your place. I'm not dreaming. It's him. Remember – he left to get some sleeping pads. Where did he steal that coat? He wasn't wearing one when he left to get those pads.*

*What's that surprised look for anyway? Just because I probably look like I'm buried under a squirming tribe of kids . . . that's a grin on his face. Why am I feeling happy that he's back here again? It's like everything is going to be okay now that he's back.*

*This snuggling up to me instead of . . . if this is what a real family is like – a dad taking charge while his wife does doing mother hen . . . it'll never happen gal. Life has already passed you by. You know that you could've had this if . . . if he hadn't . . .*

*You needed to talk to someone gal about what happened. I know – Mamie was there. Mamie had to have known that something really bad had happened when . . . if she had just asked me . . . you know that you wouldn't have told her anything. Mamie has enough drama of her own with father.*

*That didn't take her very long. There really were cookies and milk over at the lounge. Does she really think that the guy cares at all that the gal died? She knows now. Talk about just shut up and leave look. Thanks a whole lot guy. I could really use a friendly face around here who . . .*

*Why are you doing apologizing to her for his brutish behavior? There's that look again. Now I know how that poor old lady felt when . . . I don't blame her if she decides to leave. I would leave if I was her.*

*I'd take that platter with those glasses of milk and cookies if these children would just let me. Are you really wanting them to continue to . . . what has gotten into you? I'm so sapped I can't think straight.*

*Why doesn't he just take the platter instead of fiddling with those sleeping pads? The pads are just fine where he has them. He's ignoring you gal. Just let him act like a bratty baby and . . . and who else has been acting like an obnoxious nitwit around here? You've been and you know it.*

*How can the children not get it that they can each take a glass of milk and a couple of cookies? I sure wish that I could've understood what that loveable little urchin just asked the guy. By the way that he's shaking his head . . . where did that determined look come from all of a sudden? Is she folding her hands to pray? She is. Did she ask him to pray and he . . . I'm sure glad that she didn't ask me to pray.*

*You had to look at that old granny didn't you? She looks like she's about ready to . . . this isn't funny.*

*I wish that I could understand what the little twerp is saying to me. He must want me to fold my hands by the way that . . . you better close your eyes now if you don't want him to stick a finger in one of them.*

*If you're going to pray little boss lady . . . that doesn't sound like a prayer. Someone sounds more than a bit exasperated.*

*A peek won't hurt if . . . it's a stare down. You know that you're not going to win guy. Whatever it is that she has told you to do, you know that you're going to have to do it. Don't look at me guy for help. I don't know what she's saying. Besides – I'm supposed to have my eyes closed. Good move guy. I knew that he was weak-kneed. Like is there a guy who isn't a coward?*

*Why is she getting up? Don't let her get up. Why did you let her get up? Why is she pulling him over here to these chairs? And I thought that I owned being conflicted. He so wants to get out of here yet . . . good move granny – sitting down before that self-appointed queen . . .*

*That can't be her praying. It is her. Where's her lisp? She can't be thanking God for . . . how do you know that she's thanking God? You don't understand what she's saying. But . . . why do I feel like I'm floating? You're dead tired gal. You're letting your emotions catch up with you.*

*This can't be what it's like when someone prays – can it? It has gotten so quiet. It'd be so easy to fall asleep. Just let yourself relax. Everything feels so right. Let time stay stopped. Let that angelic voice . . .*

*Open your eyes gal – she has stopped praying. I don't want to open my eyes. You better open your eyes gal as your little friend isn't going to stop trying to pry them open until you do.*

*That was a good idea. Those two little rambunctious squirts are doing a number on those cookies. Here's hoping that they'll leave me a couple as . . . talk about getting caught in the middle of something – there's a white-haired old granny staring at me now with the friendliest look that I've ever seen plastered all over a face while at the same time, there's a glaring bear staring at me with the most ominous look that . . .*

*What? That good-natured old granny can't be heading for the door – is she? She has to stay here. Why doesn't she want to stay? Let her leave. That was nice of him to get the door for her. The children will probably fall asleep now that they've something in their stomachs. The little guy though . . . when did he fall asleep. He looks so at peace. You can't keep on holding him as . . . plus sooner or later he's going to want something to eat and then . . . maybe time will stop and . . . now what does he want?*

Who does the mon think he is waking up wimpy right now? GIF mons have degenerated to becoming nothing more than a pool of brainless dunces. Just because a GIF opoff . . .

You've an audience guy. Don't forget where you are. Don't let her see wimpy's screen. You can't let her know what the text says. Why not? It's not my fault that she's here. This to never let a civilian know that the thing around my wrist is more than a . . . what? rg vio? I've had it with GIF telling me what I have to do and what I can't do. I know – I didn't send a text to . . . you know that GIF expects you to advise them of whatever. There was no way that I could've sent a text. Why can't what clops tells GIF and sends to GIF keep everyone happy? You know guy that you're really pushing the mon's button now by letting . . .

The mon had to have been watching everything as la señora was having her baby. It must be nice while sitting in a sealed cubicle to be the judge and the jury for GIF. Telling me that I've violated regulations while a local bureaucratic oaf is using GIF to countermand the right of self-determination is just wrong. How did this country get to this place – force feeding entitlements in order to get votes? The warehouse's BEP graduates and students need to be applauded for doing what they've already done, are doing and hoping to do where they're living with their families in this city's marginalized inner city instead of . . .

Now what's wrong with her? I'm so tired of her staring at me like I'm a freak. She's the one around here who has screws loose. Makes you feel good guy doesn't it scaring her like you are? Well . . . it's her fault. She should've had an ambulance take la señora to the hospital. If she had . . . guy – get real. Having her in the mix now doesn't change anything. It's up to you guy to get GIF to abort this op before . . .

Just let her do whatever she wants with wimpy. If I never feel or hear wimpy's irritating buzz again . . . so help me – if I ever find that joker who's telling me that I'm doing something wrong, I'll wring his neck. Send him a text telling him that you want this op aborted – that if it's not aborted, that you're going to . . . and what're you going to do if the op isn't aborted? At least you'll be on record with GIF as being insubordinate. Okay wimpy – I don't need you doing this to me now. I'll put you back around my wrist.

Is there a problem? The nerve to ask me what's wrong? She needs to mind her own business. Did she really think that I was going to smack her? If she knew how much I can't stand a gal who has baggage . . . I can't wait to get away from her. I've got to think. I need some fresh air. Let her take care of los niños.

What if GIF decides to . . . there's no way that GIF will risk burning down or blowing up this place right now. And do you really believe that guy? GIF has no conscience – you know that.

Okay – I didn't have any problem with believing that GIF can bring about a better world using death and destruction indiscriminately savaged on terror regimes, crime families, warring gangs and anyone else who thinks that laws do not apply to them. No one is breaking a law around here. GIF has to know that. Someone really needs to be hanged – like right now. You know that's never going to happen guy so . . .

Los patojos are going to need something to sleep on once they've worn themselves out. No one is going to care if I get some of those pads out of the shelter's depósito. Now is as good of a time to get them as any.

Good grief gal – if you only knew how much that you're pushing your luck. Why won't someone just let me make a decision – just once, without me having to . . . let her wallow in her self-pity and just go.

Whoa – it has gotten really cold and dark out here. The guard must turn off the quad lights at midnight. The warehouse's open area probably gets used a lot when it's warmer out but now with the cold and with the snow that's on the ground . . . get your bearings guy. Watch out for the basketball court that's near the edge of the courtyard. It wouldn't feel good running into one of the basketball or volleyball stanchions. The warehouse's shelter has to be to my right some. I wish that I could see better where I'm going.

How could I've missed finding out that there's a room here in the warehouse where people pray. I should've checked out more about the lounge when I was told about it but . . . wimpy's brief was to just find out who the driver is who's behind the brainwashing of the guys who're showing up here to be trained to be saboteurs. The only thing that those guys are being supposedly indoctrinated into doing is to . . .



Instead of trying to track down the phantom who's behind this place, you should've spent more time guy doing reconnoitering. You had the time. The opoff probably knew that those presumed extremist nightly programming sessions weren't scheduled to begin until a couple of days after you were to check into the warehouse's shelter. Thinking that you were going to find the answer after the judge decided that he really needed someone in his class who spoke Spanish . . . talk about a multi-ethnic mix among the dozen guys.

I feel like I've been out here forever. This warehouse has to cover more than a quarter of a square block. The shelter's door has to be around here someplace. Here's one. You've found the lunchroom. Where's the light? Okay – here's hoping that no one decided to lock up the depósito. For once something has gone right for me with the depósito being right inside the shelter's door. The shelter has to be full tonight with how blustery cold it is outside right now. Good – the door is unlocked and there're plenty of pads in here.

This has to be enough pads. There's no way that I can carry more. Since you're here in the shelter, you should get your jacket – and your flashlight. Just leave the pads here while . . . with all that snoring, no one is going to hear you get anything from your bunk. That was a good idea guy. Now to find the clinic again.

Someone just opened that door over there. That looks like the clinic inside that door. It's that meddling old crone. Good – she's leaving. She must've decided to check to see if . . . she's really fortunate that she decided not to stick around as . . . I've had it with pious fakes who think that there's a god who hears them.

That might've been the lounge that she . . . it may also have been the hair salon or the food pantry or the used clothes room or who knows what else that's on this side of this place. That was a real epiphany that someone had to have the BEP classroom in the back corner of this facility. This place has a lot going on with the shelter, soup kitchen and cafeteria and chapel taking up the whole other street side of this complex.

Los patojos listen. And why wouldn't they've done what I asked them to do? After all, they . . .

She could've at least given me a welcome back look instead of . . . she probably was hoping that I wouldn't show up back here again. I shouldn't have left her alone with los niños. Why are you making it about her? It's about you. You can't stay in denial. You knew that sooner or later there was going to be the moment guy when . . . it's here. GIF is done with you. You need to figure out what to do next. Stop wasting time.

Just spread out the pads over there. And what're you going to do when los patojos crash? Use the time guy to tell miss personality who you are and . . . it's the least that you can do now. It's because of you that she's in GIF's crosshairs. You know that GIF will have no compunction at all about making her disappear.

What's she doing back here? She doesn't belong here. If she only knew how much she has made things a real mess around here. If I never see her again . . . she's nothing more than a self-righteous old prattler. How can she not get it that I want her to leave – like now? What made her think anyway that estos patojos would want some leche and galletas? Can't she see that they don't want anything to drink or to eat?

Who does that lamebrain think she is that she has to tell that nosey busybody that she's sorry for how I'm acting towards her? She needs to shut her mouth – like right now. She has absolutely no right criticizing me for anything. She needs to start taking responsibility for her own actions. What a mental case. GLJ

Are you going to let her ignore your look to callarse? Take the tray from the old lady so that she'll leave.

Tell los patojos that la leche and las galletas are for them – that they . . . what? She's asking me to do what? No way am I . . . who does la señorita pequeñita think she is asking me to pray? I don't pray. Tell her that. Even reverend never prayed before eating a snack so . . . do you really think that's going to make a difference to her? As long as you're around here, she's going to expect that her . . . I can't be who she's claiming me to be. I can't be. It just wouldn't work. But who else is going to be if . . .

Those two munchkins sure have a handle on persistence. They probably got that from their mother. You don't have a choice gal – fold your hands and close your eyes before . . . did he just call her . . . no way. He couldn't have. He can't call her that. She's not his . . . I won't let it happen.

If that pintsize troublemaker doesn't stop staring at me like that, I'm out of here. I'm not letting anyone anymore tell me what to do. That obstinate little whippersnapper can stare at me like that all day long if she wants to; she's not going to get me to pray. There's no way that she's going to make me do something that even reverend couldn't make me do.

Why don't people get it? If people would really seriously think about it – if there really is a perfect being who's supposedly in charge of everything even to the point of making and planning out everything, why is whoever it is letting hurt and hate and pride and jealousy and ego and . . . dictate what it is that happens?

What is it guy that's keeping you here? Leave. So why are you letting la reina pequeña . . . doesn't that shapeless piece of nothing know that she's to keep her eyes shut? She better close her eyes again or . . .

How could've I let myself be manipulated into sitting next to . . . good idea granny before . . . I saw that look. We're not in a comedy you old . . . she has no right enjoying what's happening here right now.

Vamos a orar? I'm going to pray? She's going to pray? That can't be her praying. It's her praying. That voice though . . . you just had to look at the P.A. She looks as flummoxed as I did when . . . she can't be listening to la patoja doing whatever it is that she's doing? She doesn't understand Spanish. But . . .

How can that be la patoja talking, praying, whatever? It has to be her. There isn't anyone else in this room besides . . . how can esa muñeca pequeña habla tan claramente with her upper lip like it is? Her voice . . . how can it sound so different now than when . . . she sure is taking this praying duty seriously.

You can at least listen guy to what la patoja is saying. That's not praying. She's not doing it right. And what makes you an expert guy on praying? Reverend was always asking whoever he thought who he was praying to for more money, for more people to come to his church, for someone to get healed, for everyone to confess something that they hadn't already confessed, for his kids to be better kids, for me to become a Christian so that he won't be seen as having failed to raise his kid the way that the Bible supposedly tells him how to raise his kid, for . . . what a waste of a life.

She's not asking for anything. Hey little miss – wait – I'm not going to be . . . I can't be. And she's not going to be either. I can't believe it. Why did she thank su Padre Dios for wanting to have her madre a ir al cielo to be with Him? She needs her madre. And where was your mother when you needed her? How can she thank su Padre Dios for su papi? Hace un poco su madre se murió porque su papi . . . she can't really believe – can she, that su Padre Dios ya ha perdonado su papi . . . there's no god that forgives . . .

What? Who does that nutcase think that she is that she can open her eyes? She can't do that. She needs to be listening to that young lady who really believes that she's chatting with su Padre Dios.

And what're you doing guy? You're letting your mind wander all over the place. Why are you doing that?

Why am I feeling now like I'm in the most secure place that I've ever been in my life? You've let yourself get so wiped out guy that you're starting to hallucinate. I still don't get it how there can be so much warmth and acceptance emanating in this sterile clinic?

Wake up guy – she's not praying anymore. I didn't doze off – did I? Open your eyes. What were you expecting? Nothing changed while she prayed. How long did she pray? It couldn't have been that long.

The P.A. needs to open up her eyes before she has that little hombre . . . what kind of weird, goopy look is that on her face? Has she forgotten where she is? I hope that she had a good nap while . . .

What's wrong with her? Your pet glower isn't even getting a reaction from her. What's the matter with you guy? Why are you all of a sudden thinking about her instead of . . . come on guy – you really have got to tell her sometime that . . . make it now before she starts throwing darts at you again.

Leche and galletas was a good idea. You could've told that kind old lady that she could stay here.

*That's a way too serious look that he has on his face. He has to tell me something? I don't like that intense way that he's looking at me. This isn't going to be good.*

*Who is this guy? This can't be the same guy who . . . who does that guy in front of me think that he is that he can look through my eyes into my heart? What has he done with all those scary looks and with that black cloud that he always has following him around? Is he really able to care about something? I sure hope that he doesn't decide now to leave. Have you gone wompy gal? You haven't wanted a guy anywhere near you since . . . and he'd be the very last guy who you'd ever want to be alone with in the same room.*

*Is he waiting for me to say something? Why can't we just keep things at a status quo instead of . . . those children will sooner or later wear themselves out rolling around on those pads. Nothing seems to faze this little fellow. I really should find a place to lay him. Why? You really like holding him – don't you? And he seems to like you holding him so . . . he's such a good little man. Why is life always so unjust? These children deserve a home with a father and a mother who'll . . . and you really believe that that's going to happen? It has to happen. And what're you going to do gal to make it happen?*

*Look out gal – he's coming over. Tell him that you don't want him sitting down next to you. And why do you want to tell him that? He doesn't look nearly as petrifying as he did when you first saw him.*

*Oh great – sitting next to me is one thing but pulling a chair over so that he's facing me . . . what he thinks that he has to tell me can't be that important unless . . . what if tells me that he has killed someone or that he's an escaped convict or that . . . come on gal – keep your cool. Don't act nervous. He's not going to do anything to you with those children playing on those pads. Those hyperactive, zany goofballs are going to crash sometime and then what? Why are you always worrying about something gal that never happens. You did think before nothing would happen to you but . . . horrible things have happened to you so . . .*

*Just sit there and listen to him. Like I've a choice? Come on guy – this can't be the first time that you've ever talked to a gal so spit it out. Quit stalling guy – say what you want to say so that . . . I don't want to find a place to lay the little dude. I'm quite okay with holding him on my lap. I need to keep holding him on my lap. If I don't keep him on my lap, I know that the brute will . . . and what makes you think that he's going to do something to someone like me who always looks like death washed over? Just go along with what he wants gal. He's trying to be helpful. You know that so stop being a whiner and do what he says.*

*It'll have to work laying him between these rolled up towels. You needed to stretch your legs anyway. Here's hoping that his brother and sister will tone down all the noise that they've been making.*

*I sure, sure, sure do hope that I haven't gotten myself into something else that I'm never ever going to be able to forget. There's a cadaver on that gurney because I didn't keep their gorgeous mother alive. All those years that I've spent trying to learn how to keep someone alive have been just a waste of time. I've proven father right again – I was born to be a failure. No matter how hard I try, I'm never going to make muster with father – so why do I keep trying? It really would be so great to not to have to worry about what father will think. Just go ahead gal and resign yourself to who father says you are.*

*This room definitely is not paradise but . . . that cheery feeling that's in this room though . . . you're just emotionally and physically drained gal. If that poor battered gal hadn't shown up here a couple of hours ago, you'd be getting real close to your dump and crawling into your bed instead of . . . why does it seem though that this is where I'm to be right now? Shouldn't I be wishing that I was in my place instead of . . . I'm so confused. Like that's a news flash? I need to talk to Mamie before I completely lose my mind.*

*Okay – I know that look. I'm to do what he's going to tell me to do. He's going to first of all tell me that I need to rethink being a physician's assistant as . . . why would those kids have to decide to come over here now. I feel so trapped. He's definitely the kind of guy who'd tell someone in front of everyone how terribly bad he or she is. It'd be something that father would do so . . .*

*Now what? The kids are looking at you guy like . . . why doesn't he just say once and for all what he thinks that he needs to tell me? I'm not going to stay sitting here all night. What a dork.*

*Now what's he going to do with that thing that he has on that chain that he has around his neck? It's a what? An I-Clops? Have I ever heard of cyclops? Cy what? If that moronic clown thinks that I'd be interested in listening to him talking about a mythical . . .*

*Those eyes are what? They're nano cameras? They're sending a constant video stream to where? How can he not know where the guys are located who're monitoring what the cameras are sending? The guys could be anyplace in the world? What? Tell him that he's giving you way too much information at this time in the morning. Some other day when I'm a whole lot more alert I'll . . . eh? That little marble like thing is also an audio receiver? It's always sending a constant audio stream to . . . is he saying that there's a guy someplace right now someplace on planet Earth who has been and who's now watching me and who has heard everything that I've said? Isn't that against the law? It has to be. Tell him to get rid of that thing.*

*He has to get rid of it – like now. I don't want a complete stranger always watching what I'm doing and hearing what I'm saying? That's wrong. No one has the right to intrude into my life without my giving him permission first – and that's never going to happen. I can't let anyone know me.*

*Tell him to get that invasive doohickey out of this room or else I'll . . . that's that billfold like texting thingamajig. That's an I-what? He couldn't have called it a wimp. Okay – it's called an I-wimp. At least he didn't jump all over me this time for opening up my mouth.*

*Wimp is an acronym? Okay – W is for wireless. I is for intra-communication. M is for mobile and P is for portal. So that's an interactive wireless intra-communication mobile portal? Okay – if he gets a text first from a mon telling him that . . . he can call the mon? Mon? How was I supposed to know that a mon is short for monitor? Now he really knows how intuitively challenged I am.*

*He called himself a what? You need to tell him that he lost you again when . . . ask him what a recon does.*

*I've got to get him to get rid of that marble gadget and that wrist thing. I don't want to have those kinds of insidious gadgets anywhere around me. They're really creepy. I need to get him to stop talking. It's like he's gotten on a roll and . . . that wasn't very bright gal – just reaching out like that and putting your hand on his knee. Talk about a kneejerk reaction. He definitely has a no touch rule. I'm not to apologize to him for . . . but . . . he has done what he was ordered not to do? He doesn't know what's going to happen now? What does he mean that he doesn't know what's going to happen now? Something sure has him irritated.*

*You've got to get him to get rid of those invasive things. He can't? Ask him why. Looking at me now guy like . . . I don't need reminding that there's always someone constantly watching us and always hearing everything that's being said. Now how was I supposed to know that he can't get rid of those gizmos?*

*I don't want to look at that tattoo. I can't stand tattoos. There's a microchip embedded under that tattoo? So? If he gets more than a couple of meters away from either one of those two interactive devices . . . how does he know that the chip will initiate excruciating pain in that arm if he . . . why does he always think that he has to look at me so condescending? Just accept the fact gal that he knows what he's talking about.*

*Why is he making it such a big deal about being a recon? He's a GIF conscript who has been doing reconnoitering for how long? That's longer than I've been a P.A.*

*You need to tell him that you've absolutely no idea at all what he's talking about – that you've never ever heard of GIF. Another acronym? Has he forgotten what time of morning it is? He's doing information overkill. I don't want to hear his story. And if he thinks that he's going to hear my story . . . it might be one way to get rid of him. My story would bore him to death.*

*Global interdiction force? And I'm now one of very few civilians who know that there's a clandestine international entity out there that's called GIF? What? There's no way that . . . he has to be making that up. Nothing that he's saying is making any sense to me anymore. Tell him that you're too tired to think.*

*Why are the kids suddenly so quiet? There's something wrong. They know something that I don't know.*

*That look has to mean here it comes whether I want to hear it or not. Just tell him that if he doesn't want to tell me whatever it is that it's okay. I don't need to know. Why won't he just let me stop thinking?*

*The warehouse is a GIF op target? This is really getting ridiculous. I don't want to hear anything about GIF or about an op target – whatever that is, or about . . .*

*If you don't start acting like you're getting it gal, you know that he'll bite your head off so . . . there's a very good chance that GIF will kill me? There's a possibility that GIF is going to kill everyone tonight who's here in this place right now? Now you know gal that you're just having another awful nightmare.*

*Why did he tell me that everyone here is going to be killed? It's unconscionable for him to tell me that I'm going to be killed. Who does he think he is? He has to leave. Tell him that you're going to be fine. Tell him that the children will be just fine with you. Tell him . . . do you think that your yelling at him is going to get him to . . . when did I start shaking? Please kids – why won't they leave me alone? They need to . . . I don't want them hanging all over me. I've got to be fine. I'm so beat. So I die tonight. I don't care.*

*Why won't they stop looking at me? I've got to call Mamie. She'll help me. I don't want to die. I'm not going to die. People just don't kill other people because . . . GIF just might decide to send in a what? Why would GIF using whatever he called it obliterate this warehouse to kill everyone in it or task a rad to burn this place down with everyone in it? Whatever is behind GIF can't be that heartless – can it?*

*When did he start shaking me? He needs to stop. He's scaring the children. I've been listening. Nothing what he has said is plausible. I want to keep my hands over my ears. I won't believe a word that he's saying. I'm getting out of here. He has to let me leave. He has to let me take the children with me. I want to start today all over again. There has to be a way that I can do that.*

*Why doesn't he get it that I don't want to hear anything else about GIF? Okay – okay – okay – the guy is blind if he can't see that I've glued myself to my chair. What makes him think that I'd really want to know that GIF exists to do covert operations using international specialists who've been conscripted from cooperating countries? So what if the DEA, Interpol, etc. are . . . how does he know that there's someplace where guys are right now identifying target sites which . . . he has gone bonkers. There's no way that anything that he's telling me can possibly happen. Gal – you need to use your cell to call 911 before . . . what about that thing that he has wrapped around his wrist? There's someone out there who just a little while ago told him to . . . what if what he has told me is true? You've got to help him. How? Why?*

*I'm not going to take that look from him anymore. There was nothing wrong with me asking what kinds of nefarious things are happening here at the warehouse that'd have . . . there's nothing? Do I dare ask him then why . . . just blurt out how you feel guy. Just forget that there're children here. So they don't understand English. There's enough vehemence in his voice to kill.*

*You just told him gal to tone it down before he wakes up the baby – and you're still alive. Maybe not for long the way that he's looking at me. Those children need to be careful. He probably has no idea that they're trying to get his attention. If I ever tried to get father's attention like that . . .*

*Whoever is listening is getting an earful. That thing has to be doing what he says that it does as no one could fake the kind of tirade that . . . and you thought that you had the market on doing venting. He needs to do anger management. Walk him to the door. Have him do his ranting outside instead of in here.*

*Those poor children. You need to help them. They don't know what to do. There's nothing that anyone can do for him right now. You know that. How many times have you gone to your pet isolated place to do primal screaming because . . . it's probably a sure bet that he doesn't have friends in his world either.*

*Why is she going over there? I hope that that's her mother's purse. It's probably okay for her to get something out of it. What's that that she's looking at? Why is she . . .*

*I didn't see that coming. His face has gone from purple to gray in a . . . why is he taking off his belt?*

What has gotten into you guy? You know that you're not to tell anyone at any time about anything that has to do with GIF. You'll be signing her death warrant if you tell her about GIF. You know that. Don't dump your dilemma on her just because . . . there's nothing that she can do to change GIF's plans. Then why do you feel that it's so important now for her to know what GIF tasked you to do?

Don't do it guy. Don't do it. Then stop looking into her eyes. I can't let her be a number without her knowing why. Like it's really going to help her to know the reason why what might happen here?

Think about it guy – to tell her about GIF will for sure force GIF's hand to wipe out this place. And if you don't tell her about GIF, maybe GIF will . . . get real guy – your first mistake was to let that old biddy rope you into coming here to this clinic. Then you compromised your cover which you know puts you on GIF's blacklist. You've made yourself worthless to GIF. GIF can't afford to have anyone loose like you who could decide to tell the world about them. GIF doesn't have a choice now but to eradicate you so . . .

Where happened to the scaredy-cat? She's looking back at me like . . . guy – what're you doing? There's no reason for you to begin to think of her as a somebody. She's a nobody. I very much doubt that she has many if any friends. I sure wouldn't want her attending me if I needed medical attention. As indecisive as she comes across, making diagnoses and writing prescriptions sure can't be the easiest things for her to do.

You've no right to disparage her just because . . . you've got to do it. Pull that chair that's next to her over in front of her and tell her. I should've asked her first if she was okay if . . . this not always first thinking something through isn't like you guy. She's the one who has gotten it together. Give her credit for that.

If you continue guy to let her hold su tocayo, she's going to have an excuse not to listen to you so . . . you need to get her to lay him down someplace. Tell her that over there on that pad will work for her to lay him down. You did it again guy. You didn't give her a chance to tell you what she'd like to do. You could've made the suggestion that . . . let her hold him. I don't want her to hold him anymore. Why are you letting it be so important to you guy that . . . he's bonding to her. She's getting up. Tell her that she can keep on holding him – that you didn't mean to . . . having him lay over there between those towels is a good idea.

Maybe she has kids of her own. She sure seemed okay with holding mi tocayo. Just because she's not wearing a ring . . . and what difference would it make if she was married? She's not married. There's no way that . . . just because you'd never let her get her claws in you, that doesn't mean that . . . no guy is ever going to give the time of day to a gal who's scared of her own shadow. Well . . . she's an obvious loser so stop worrying about her. She's feeling guilty enough knowing that she's responsible for la señora dying.

Not hearing anything from the mon after . . . he has to be letting someone know what's going down here. Maybe the mon . . . yah – sure guy – you know that mons are in the same boat that you are. You know that if the guy doesn't take action on what he sees or on what he hears that violates any of GIF's operational codes that he'll become history. The guy has to be initiating action right now to bring an immediate resolution for me having breached an established GIF's protocol when I . . . I just can't keep on following GIF's order not to step in to help when help is needed. It's time for GIF to become history.

If someone has found a way to get GIF to do their thing on this place, others more than likely are getting GIF to do hits on other places. Unscrupulousness has to have gotten itself someplace in GIF's op control. What's taking place here at this warehouse has to be a good thing if what the BEP guys told me tonight is really happening in this city – that crime numbers here in the inner city are going down and that the numbers who're cashing in on the entitlement programs are also going down.

Someone needs to do an exposé on this city's mayor. Like that's going to happen seeing that the mayor has the local news outlets in his back pocket. I've got to believe that that psychotic narcissist – per the BEP guys, isn't a happy camper these days seeing his principal voter base diminishing the way that it is.

You're putting it off guy talking to her. Just let her stay in the world that she's in right now. You can wait to talk to her. She seems like she has enough on her mind. She doesn't need to know that she might die tonight. You'd want to know wouldn't you guy if . . . okay – where do I begin?

Where's she going now? Just let her alone. Forget her. Talk about a lost cause. No one would ever miss her if . . . and do you think esos patojos whose mother was shot during that op have forgotten their mother? You know guy that they'll never forget what they saw. You sure haven't been able to forget that look that they had on their faces after that rad shot their mother.

What's your mind doing to you guy? She's not their mother. Just because los patojos . . . no way would it ever work for her to . . . she's not a mother type. And what's it about her that's telling you that she isn't a mother type? Los patojos have accepted her as their . . . what're you doing? Why are you letting your feelings make your decisions for you? Get your mind back to the real world and into a survival mindset.

Just start by explaining to her the tech tools. Okay – my eyes probably would be glazing over, too, if . . . clops really has some ingenious innovations – like gyros to keep absolutely steady the micro cameras inside its impermeable, indestructible multifunctional agate sphere that I'm always to . . . that got her attention. I've got to get her to understand that I really do know that there's always someone watching what I'm doing and what I'm seeing. You've got to get her to get it that there's categorically nothing that I can do about the someone who's out there someplace watching her right now?

You're losing her again guy. I can't wait until morning to escape this place. You've got to get her to listen to you now to what you're trying to tell her. Explain to her about clops – that clops' audio transmitter is another nifty contrivance that . . . now you know for sure that she wasn't listening to you. Hearing that there's some joker out there someplace who is . . . she's definitely engaging now to what you're telling her.

She's not believing you guy that . . . just tell her to leave. There has to be enough room in the lounge for her to . . . but what if los patojos decide to go with her? You can't let them leave. They have to stay here.

This mad railing though about . . . you started it guy. Let her vomit out her feelings. She's quite right that it's wrong that someone is continually watching her without her permission. She has got to understand though that there's no way that I can do anything to . . . explain wimpy to her. Maybe hearing what wimpy does will shut her up and then . . . and then what? She's not an impersonal item that you can throw away after you're tired of it; she's a . . . she might as well be an inanimate object by the vacuous way that she . . .

Are you really enjoying yourself guy being the consummate character assassin? There's utterly no reason for you to consider yourself better than her. Just because you've let yourself become a GIF robot, you don't have the right to try to put her on the same sycophant level with you. She doesn't answer to you.

Hey – what do you know – there's an interest there in knowing about wimpy. Good – she's got it that wimpy is a wireless portal but . . . why guy would you ever think that she'd know op lingo?

Tell her that a mon is the monitor who . . . did you have to say it to her that way? What has she done to you that you think that you always have to . . . she really should've demanded that an ambulance come here to get la señora instead of . . . and you'd be lying on your cot right now over at the shelter mulling over what you should do next. Come on guy – for someone who thinks of himself as a forward thinker, why do you keep trying to change something that cannot be changed? Stop it. You have to tell her who you are.

You did it again guy. How would she know what a recon is? She's so fixated on wanting you to get rid of clops and wimpy that she's not listening to you again. What? Why did she just . . . what makes her think that she has the right to put her hand on my knee? She can't do that. Get away from her before . . .

You know guy – you just made a total fool of yourself. She shouldn't be telling you that she's sorry for what she just did – you're the one who overreacted.

Here's hoping that she'll be able to get her arms around why GIF. . . like you really believe that she's going to get it why GIF tasked you to be here at the warehouse. And then because you breached a core GIF guideline when . . . why won't she take my word for it that I don't know what GIF is going to do next. Like getting uptight at her is going to help her understand? Just what los patojos need to see – a couple of adults who're acting like a couple of kids who don't want to have anything to do with each other.

Why won't it sink into her thick skull that I can't get rid of clops and wimpy? It only took just once for me to remember to make sure that I had both clops and wimpy on me. I wish that I could make that chip in my shoulder go away. I'm tired of it running my life. I'm tired of GIF controlling my life. I'm tired of life.

What're you going to do now guy – now that you . . . if all my bridges with GIF hadn't been burned before now, this blurring out to her how you ended up with GIF, what you do for GIF, what GIF is and what GIF does . . . if GIF didn't have an excuse to assassinate me before, GIF sure has a good reason to do so now. It must be nice to be the guy who has gotten himself in a place where he gets the goods on everyone else.

This having to live in the underground maelstrom that GIF always has me living has gotten extremely old. There's no way though for me to escape GIF's reaches even if I was able to get out from under este lío.

Someone sure knows how to do ranting and raving. She told you that she didn't want to hear anything else but . . . you needed to tell her what possibly might happen tonight. Los patojos have to know that what you told her isn't sitting well with her just by that scared look that's plastered all over her face.

She's going over the edge. Good going guy. Those crazed, shrieking noises that she's making are loud enough to wake up everyone in this place. You need to get her to shut up. Los patojos need to get away from her. Why can't they tell that she doesn't want them anywhere near her?

Now you know for sure guy that she's nothing more than a demented banshee who's concerned only about one person – herself. And how'd you be reacting now if you'd just been told that there's a possibility that you're going to be killed tonight? I wouldn't go manic though like the way that she's acting right now. I've got to stop her before . . .

That was a good move guy – shaking her like you did in front of los patojos. You're making a really good impression for someone who . . . hey – it worked. Just let her sit there in that chair with her hands over her ears. If you're lucky guy, she'll leave. That'd make my day right now. I'm tired of trying to explain to her why she could die tonight. If she hasn't learned by now from what she does as a vocation that no one ever wants to die . . . now that it's not the patient who's facing death but it's her who might die, she's showing her true colors. Why is the world filled with so many melancholy, wishy-washy gals like her?

La reina pequeña better not . . . I don't like that look that she has on su cara. It'd be just like that little pretentious hornet to tell me that I've been way out of line in the way that I've been treating the P.A. You do know guy that that pintsize smart aleck thinks that the P.A. is now her . . . maybe now would be a good time to check on how su hermano pequenito is doing. Talk about a good natured baby.

Did she just . . . you heard what she asked you guy. What made that useless pill dispenser think that she could talk to me like that? Talk about a nervy, presumptuous flake. It's not right that I'm stuck in the same room with her. She's got to go. Why won't she listen to me? What's the matter with her? Why isn't she leaving? I don't need her help to take care of los patojos. Now who's doing immature squawking?

You're the one guy who needs to leave. Maybe if you leave, GIF won't . . . and you're going to break your promise to la señora that you made to her? La señora had no right to ask me to . . . how did la señora know that she was about to die? She wasn't scared of dying. Why? Why isn't anyone getting it that all this isn't really happening? It's not right that I'm trapped in a room with bossy kids and a scatterbrain.

Now what's that whacky doc think that she's doing? Why is she pushing me towards the door? If she thinks that she's going to get rid of me . . . does she really think that if I go outside that the mon isn't going to hear me? I'm not leaving this room. I don't care what she thinks of me. I don't care what los patojos think of me. I don't care. I don't want to care for anyone else but myself.

What's la tigre pequeña up to now? I sure hope that's her mother's handbag and not the P.A.'s handbag. There's that determined look again. You're in for it now guy. Whatever it is that she just took out of that handbag . . . it can't be. It can't be. Where did la señora get that folleto? It can't be the same one. Come on belt – open up. Now – where is it? It's in this thing someplace.



*Don't let him take off his belt? You can't let him take off his belt. He's going to . . . you can't let him hit the children with his belt. Just because father . . . how did he do that?*

*Belts aren't made to do that – are they? What did he do to make it open up like that? Why does he have money stuck in his belt? Is that black thing really a passport? That's what it says. How did he get it to fold up like that? There's no way that the inside of his belt could've held all that stuff. There's no way.*

*Don't guys use billfolds anymore? At least whoever he is hasn't become sissified. Why do guys anymore think that they've to let their feminine side show by . . . why can't guys be guys instead of . . . like you're a good one to talk. When is the last time that you've acted like a gal instead of . . . keep beating yourself up gal. Just because you're letting life pass you by because . . . what's he looking for anyway?*

*Is that a driver's license? That photo on that thing looks like him. How many different kinds of licenses or whatever those cards are does he have stuck inside his belt? How could he have gotten those things to fold over like that without . . . is he going to take everything out that he has inside that belt? Why?*

*That must be what he was looking for inside his belt. He's holding the thing between his fingers like it's on fire? It's just a purple brochure with a stick figure about to climb some steps and some words on the front.*

*You're letting this bad dream gal get too real. You've got to stop it. You know where you are. You're in your cold, dark, empty bedroom. Just get up once more and make sure that your apartment door is . . . why can't I wake up? Will I ever be able to sleep through a night again without waking up thinking about . . .*

*What he's holding definitely has the assertive little cherub's attention as . . . it can't be the same thing that she's holding in her hand? It is. How can that be? Why did he let that nervy little pixie take the one that he was holding just like that right out of his hand? It really would be nice to know what it is that's printed on the front of it. The words probably are Spanish since . . . why is she looking at the back of the thing instead of . . . that's a disconcerted look if I've ever seen one. What did she expect to find? Why is she pointing to the bottom of the one that he had and then to the bottom of hers? There's something written on the bottom of her thing. It looks like a name plus something that looks like a child's scribbling.*

*By the way that that adorable fireball is acting, he should've had something – maybe his name, written at the bottom of his thing. Does he think rubbing the top of his head back and forth with his hand will help? Looking at me guy isn't going to help either. Absolutely nothing is making sense to me anymore.*

*You've got to get away from him. You've got to get yourself out of this place. But . . . you can't leave those children with him. Those children need someone to take care of them. Like you're the perfect person to do that? Remember – you let their mother die. And besides – running from life has become what you always do anymore. So – go for it. Leave. Run. Do something. Call Mamie.*

*You know that you can't call Mamie. Even though Mamie has never said anything to you, you know that she has been concerned about your mental stability ever since that awful day. You know that she knows that something traumatic had to have happened for me to be doing whatever I can ever since to live like a hermit. But this not asking me why . . . Mamie doing meddling . . . that's not Mamie. How has she done it over the years – acting like she's totally okay with life while being married to an unloving, overbearing skunk like father who . . . just be glad that you're not married gal. Yah – like I really feel glad that I'm not. Keep lying to yourself gal. Being a wife and becoming a mother . . . why didn't I do something when . . .*

*This walking around this room gal isn't getting you anyplace – is it? The little fellow looks like and acts like a little angel lying over there on the pad. And now you're the expert gal on what an angel looks like and how an angel acts. You'll never qualify to be an angel – that's for sure.*

*The poor sap looks as discombobulated as I've ever seen anyone look. For someone who seems to always have a handle on everything that's happening around him, that perplexed look sure doesn't fit him. This staring back and forth at the two pamphlet things like he can't believe what he's seeing . . . ask him how he ended up with his pamphlet.*

*You're going to have to ask him again. He has completely lost himself in another place. That's something that you've become a real expert in doing.*

*You've got to get him to snap out of it. Remind him that . . . what're you thinking gal? The guy is crazy. Make him leave. Make him take all of his thingamajigs with him. That eyeball thing really is giving me the heebie-jeebies. And what if he doesn't leave? He has to leave. I don't want him to stay here one minute longer in this room with me and the children. That barbaric lout has made everything a mess for me ever since he showed up here. This room will keep me safe with the children.*

*Has the guy gone completely schizophrenic? He sure is acting like he has. Maybe you should tell the children that pulling on his arms is something that they shouldn't do. Like they're going to understand what you're saying to them? What's it about that whatever it is that has unsettled him.*

*Does he really think that I'm understanding what he's mumbling? Tell him that he's going to have to repeat what he just said if . . . maybe what he said was in Spanish? Okay – that look on her face tells me that she didn't understand what he was saying either.*

*Here we go again. Now what's he going to tell me? This thinking that I have to sit down first before he tells me something . . . is there a guy anyplace out there who doesn't have a control issue? Why do guys think that they can always order gals around? Maybe I don't want to sit where he was sitting? What's wrong with just letting me stand? Why is it so important to him that he has to sit facing me?*

*He's looking through you again gal. Don't let him. You don't want him to know you. Look away. His eyes though . . .*

*He was where? Is that a country? It must've been a country because that sounds like the name that a Spanish town would have. You sure do great gal showing your ignorance? He already knows that you're a dimwitted simpleton so . . .*

*Tell him that he doesn't have to apologize for not telling me where the country is located. This never ever leaving town for any reason . . . what's wrong with just staying home? I could never go to another country.*

*Why makes him think that I'd want to know that it was a couple of years ago that while he was doing recon that he ended up with a what? Tract? What's a tract? Now what? White gold was being moved through the area? White gold? Gold isn't white – is it? What's he talking about? What does he mean that his GIF orders were to track down the white gold's source as well as to find out where it was being staged out to other countries? You need to tell the poor guy that if thinks that I know what he's talking about that . . .*

*Just sit here gal and listen. Can't you see that the guy really wants to tell you something? There was an expatriate couple living in the town? Expatriate? What's that? In what kind of world has he been living? How can he not tell that nothing that he's saying is making sense to me? Where's that old granny when I need her? There has to be somebody in this warehouse who'd understand what he's talking about.*

*An area local told him that that couple was living where? What kind of central something was that couple administrating? So he ended up spending a couple of days in that town – so? Like that was something that I really needed him to tell me?*

*What has happened to this place being blown up at any moment? He needs to do something about that. He doesn't have the time now to tell me some wild, preposterous story that took place on another continent. Don't let him make what happened in his life become a part of your life. My life is messed up enough without . . . I just want to be back in my black hole of an apartment where it's just me and no one else.*

*Now he's going totally random. What has whoever she was got to do with . . . so the gal there looked different than any gal who spoke at his dad's church? He's nothing more than a pathological liar. There's no way that this coldblooded monster in front of me could ever have darkened a church's door. How do you know gal who goes into a church? It's for sure a place that you don't ever want to go into again.*

*What's the big deal about . . . so what if all the whoever they were wives who spoke at his dad's church were short, plain and had their hair up in a bun? Why is he telling me this? What's it to him how whoever she was looked like? Having someone care about how I look isn't something that's ever going to happen again so . . . remind him what he was dumping on you about just a short time ago.*

*You just didn't let him do that. No one touches me. No one. He can't leave his hands on my knees. How do I make him get it that I don't want to hear what he's saying? How can something be more unbelievable to hear than hearing that I could be blown to bits? You've got to get him to leave.*

*You just had to look at that little scamp. She's not supposed to be looking so happy. How can she not see that I'm not at all thrilled that the muscle-bound bruiser is still here?*

*Why can't he tell that I don't care that whoever she was couldn't have had anything to do with white gold? Talk about having a fixation about . . . what? So she taught Bible stuff to the wives of the guys who were students at . . . what do I have to do to get him to see that I don't care what she did? What a dunderhead.*

*You've got to get him back to reality. If you don't . . . you can't let these precious children die. Since when did you start caring for children? You know that you don't deserve to have a life with children in it so . . .*

*That can't be true. This warehouse can't be like that place? How does he know that the judge's wife teaches the wives of the students in the afternoon? Students? Is that what the room in the back of the warehouse is used for – for classes?*

*When are you going to learn to keep your mouth shut? He has to believe me that I didn't know. Like how was I to know that that was what the room was being used for each weekday evening when no one ever told me? Why would he think that I've asked someone about that room? I don't ask questions. I just sign up to be at the warehouse's clinic – which so far has been about once a month because . . . he probably doesn't know that it's the in thing to do these days among the recovery room staff to donate time in this place. Why couldn't it have been someone else who had signed up for tonight instead of me?*

*Why won't he just shut up and let me sit here in peace. I can't be on any more information overload than what I'm right now. Gal – you're blind if you can't see that he's a self-ingratiating buffoon. All guys are. They don't care what a gal thinks or feels. Just let the self-absorbed imbecile get it out of his system what he wants to say and then hopefully he'll come back to the real world again.*

*Does he really think that I'm going to believe that that place out in the boondocks someplace had courses taught in two week modules just like they're being taught here at the warehouse? Okay – so each class was taught over thirty hours, too. He needs to think coincidence.*

*What am I missing? Do I believe him? What is it that he wants me to believe? Just because the warehouse is being used for teaching what's in the Bible . . . it seems to me that the Bible probably gets taught in a lot of places. How am I supposed to know? Anything to do with religion isn't anymore a part of my life so . . .*

*How can someone go from being so full of doom and gloom to being so animated? It must be nice to be able to go so easily to a happy world.*

*Do I have to believe that the two places are somehow connected? Why won't he let go of it? So what if the two places are linked somehow? Nothing will change here even if the places are . . .*

*You might as well tune in to the self-centered bore as he gives you the skinny on that whatever it is. Why would I care if the students in that central place were using the identical . . . so that's how he got his – one of the students there gave him one. So the student was leaving with another student to the village where they'd been assigned to go to by that gal's husband. Did I need to know that? No.*

*Where's she going? Why did she slide that chair next to him? It sure would be nice to know what she's saying. If she's thinking that she's going to get him to read that thing . . . good luck.*

It's in here someplace. I would've remembered it if I'd taken it out. When is the last time guy that you cleaned out this thing? How did I end up with so many fake I.D.s? A lot of good they'll do me if . . . someone at GIF has to be really having a cow right now about me and these civilians who . . . here it is.

It's the identical folleto. Both folletos have the same purplish front. Both say Cinco Pasos Hacia La Vida in white print and both have a yellow stick figure climbing up some yellow steps.

Guy – you were at least eight hours away by land from any kind of population center when . . . how could the pequeña reina's madre have gotten hers? Could she have come here from . . . no – you know that she couldn't have lived there. Maybe she was given the folleto when she lived on the other side of the boarder?

That brazen little half-pint. What made her think that . . . why is she staring with that disappointed look at the back of my tract? What was she expecting to find there? Why would she think that I would've written my name on the bottom of the back of the folleto that I had? Okay – so that's su madre's nombre, that's su nombre y este nombre es de su hermano. Why did they write their names on the back of that folleto? Not having written my name on the back of the folleto that I have definitely hasn't made that little lady's day.

You need to back up time guy before . . . you need to get back to where you had GIF and mons controlling your life. GIF has conditioned you to only find the presumed bad guys who it wants found. You aren't to be here in this clinic. Come on brain – think. Where are you when I need you?

Think guy – you have do something. I don't know what to do. Someone needs to tell me what to do. And did you really think that the scarecrow impersonator could help you? She doesn't have any better grasp right now on life than what you do. Then being an uninformed bottom feeder . . . come on guy – give her a pass. That's the least that you can do. She didn't ask to be in this mess with you.

How though can the same folleto be in both places? Maybe someone had some where la señora lived before she . . . those Bible thumping types do do their thing everywhere – you know that. But . . .

Where's she going? I didn't tell that airhead loser that she could leave. She has no right leaving me alone with los niños. Guy – what's wrong with you? She's a hopeless featherbrain. Let her go.

Just tell her that it's okay if she leaves you alone with los niños. There's no reason that she needs to stay here if she doesn't want to stay. I don't blame her for wanting to leave. The mon though sure won't be happy if she leaves. She probably should stay as . . . she's not leaving anyway. She's out to drive me bonkers. Why the walking in circles around this room? She needs to sit down before . . .

What's her problem? You probably don't want to know. You already know that she doesn't have any friends. And how did you come to that conclusion? And how many friends do you have? Get her to stop that ridiculous pacing so that you can tell her about the folleto. You know that you've got her mind so messed up with telling her about GIF that . . . there's no reason at all why she'd want to know how you ended up with your Cinco Pasos Hacia La Vida folleto. But . . . there's no one else in this room to tell – except her, so . . . okay – I can't forget the mon who's always watching and listening. You know that he has to be recording everything. Nothing ever escapes GIF. What I wouldn't do to be a fly in the GIF deb room where what has taken place over the last hour and a half or so and what's happening now will be reviewed. It really wouldn't surprise me at all if the mon hasn't already alerted a deb unit about me and . . .

I still can't believe that I'm looking at the same folletos. The only difference is that la señora wrote her name on the folleto that la pequeña jefe got out of su madre's bolsa.

What're you going to do guy about the promise that you made la señora about sus niños? Like la señora is going to know if I don't keep my promise to her. Los niños know what su madre asked you to do and to be. Do you really want to have another one of those looks cemented in your mind? You know that you can't abandon estos niños like you did with esos niños during that jungle e-rat when the rad shot sus madre.

Why is she staring at me like . . . does she really what to know where I got the folleto that I had in my belt?

You could've answered her guy with a whole lot more compassion than what you did. Like there's really something about her that'd want to make me want to be nice to her? Maybe it's about time guy that you start treating women like women instead of treating them like they don't know anything or aren't able to do anything. Well . . . women need to know what their place is.

If you only knew gal how close your luck is about to run out. It's because of her incompetency of not being able to do what she was trained to – which is to keep someone alive, which made me make a promise that I'm not going to be able to keep because GIF is going to eradicate me a whole lot sooner than later. It's her fault that I'm stuck here in this room. Everything is her fault.

If she had the brains to read body language, she'd know that I'm really close to being at the end of my rope. She's got to leave before . . . I've had it with her staring at me like I'm a ghoulish fiend.

Why can't the inept dud see that she's really upsetting los niños? Do you really think that she'd care if she did know? You know that she wouldn't care. That empty apparition cares only about herself – which she obviously isn't very good at doing. Talk about a deplorable wretch – that's her.

You've got to tell estos niños that there's no way that you can keep the promise that you gave their mother. Face it guy – having estos niños hanging all over you like they are . . . they trust you guy. They already have it in their minds that you're their dad. If it wasn't for the fact that I can literally see a dead gal in this room, I'd think that I'm having a dream. Why is this happening to me now? And then why is it that I keep feeling like . . . you know that there's no one else here. You're wacked out guy.

There's no way that there's going to be a good ending to all this. You've been an arrogant moron guy – thinking that you've got enough smarts and training to fix anything and everything. But . . . I've got to find a way to get estos niños out of this mess before this place is blown up. Okay – I know – I can't forget about her. So – what do I do next? It's in your corner guy – and you don't have a corner man to help you.

She really needs to get it about GIF. You've got to make her believe you. Make her sit down. Okay – I see that cowed look. Aren't you happy that you're able to intimidate her? I don't care. She just better stay sitting in that chair in front of me or . . . you need to stop looking in her eyes. Talk about a disconnection to the rest of her.

Guy – just focus on the folleto for now – like where and when you were given the one that you've been carrying around in your belt for a couple of years.

Did she really not know that that's a country in . . . it's obviously guy that she didn't know. You're going to have to do a whole lot better guy explaining every detail if you really want her to . . . she doesn't have a clue how thin skinned she is. What do estos niños see in her that has them acting like they're totally okay with her being their . . .

Come on guy – stay on point. Keep it concise. You were on a recon. GIF had found out where white gold was being staged out of to be flown to neighboring countries. Do you really think guy that she knows that white gold is cocaine? Probably not but . . .

GIF should've told me in their brief about the couple who was living in that small community. I still can't envision the wife riding for full days in the back of trucks or pickups over rough potholed, rocky roads as well as through swollen streams to get to places. I really should've sensed a yellow flag when a local guy told me that there was a gringo couple living in his pueblo and that they were drug dealers. As not going to visit the couple would've . . . it did seem like a good idea to check in on the couple to somehow find out to what extent they were caught up in the movement of the cocaine shipments.

I really did smell something fishy when that local yahoo told me that the couple was living in and using the town's church to move cocaine. It was by now not an option to not to head for the church as . . . you've got to somehow get her to picture a church located on the front corner of a piece of property that was at least the size of a quarter of a square block. She had to be there to know how much vitality was in that place.

Do you really think that she'll believe you if you tell her that the couple immediately invited you into their place to join them and another gringo couple to eat breakfast with them? And that they invited you to come back later in the day to stay for a couple of days in the room where the second couple was staying – as the couple – after spending about two weeks there teaching a class, was leaving that afternoon to head back to the village where they lived? There's no way that she's going to be able to fathom that . . . then why . . .

Do you really think that she cares that the wife had a handle on hospitality? Where does a guy find a gal like her who supports her guy by bravely jumping on his adventure trips and who willingly befriends gals by teaching them along with even being their midwife if . . . and . . .

That perception that I had of people like that couple spending most of their time taking pictures that they show when . . . sure got rocked that day. I need to get her to picture small, single rooms – enough for a dozen families and several single guys, edging the place's property – that these families and single guys came from different villages – that some of the families and single guys had to be flown out of their areas in a Cessna because of no roads in their areas – that . . . guy – what're you doing? By the way that her eyes are glazing, you're giving her way more info than she . . .

You might as well stop talking guy as . . . the wife? Eh? Guy – now you've gotten the poor gal fixated on the lady who was living there at the training center. She sure did break a stereotype that I had.

It makes sense that the couple called the place that they were administrating el centro de capacitación as it really was a learning center for everyone there. That place had a lot of similarities to what's going on here at the warehouse – like . . . you just put your hands on her knees. What's got into you guy? Why has it become so important to you that she listens to you? At least she hasn't tried to jerk her knees away from my hands or tried to stand up or . . . guy – that's a petrified look that she has on her face.

You just had to look at those two squirming imps didn't you? The scaredy-cat probably doesn't even realize that she has one sitting on either side of her. She does now as . . . the sonrisas that they both have right now on their faces . . . they're having way too much fun.

How can I get her to believe me that what's being done here at the warehouse – in that sala in the back corner of this place, are the same things that were being done out in the middle of nowhere? It should've registered with me when the judge started his class. The courses there were being taught in two week modules just like how they're being taught here – that all the courses were somehow Bible related – which is the same here – that each guy was assigned practicums each week – which the guys have here, too – that the guys' wives had to attend a class of their own in the afternoon – like the kind that the judge's wife has been teaching – that . . . if she keeps shaking her head back and forth like that . . . now what's her problem?

Students here? What did she think that the room in the warehouse's back corner was being used for anyway? Let it go guy – there wasn't any reason for her to know that Bible courses were being taught in that sala. You didn't even know yourself what the room was used for until just yesterday when they needed a translator for a Hispanic who barely speaks English.

At least you've finally gotten her to do something other than phasing out or going on a screaming binge. She could be right that the Bible is probably taught most everywhere but . . . maybe the training program in that town is no longer a prototype like the guy who was running the show there was calling it and . . . I'm sure that there're enough guys – and gals, around here in the different churches in this city who're willing and who've the credentials – like the judge, to teach Bible lessons in formal Bible classes.

The guys here seem to be as glad to have the opportunity to study the Bible as the guys were back in that isolated rural town. I've no doubt that when those guys returned to their villages after two years of doing classroom stuff that most of those guys became their village leaders – just like the guys who've graduated from this warehouse's program are the ones who've been in the middle of the positive changes and the dramatic improvements that're taking place in the blocks that surround this warehouse.

What's that little terror up to now? Why is she moving that chair next to me? If she thinks that I'm . . .

*This could be interesting. You're enjoying yourself way too much. Talk about a dogged little . . . she sure has him squirming. Serves that compulsive liar right after all that he has put me through.*

*Why is he pulling on my arm? How did he get that what's it called? That's the one that his mother had. I don't want to take it. If those are Spanish words on the cover of whatever he called that thing . . . that charming little pest should know by now that I don't understand Spanish.*

*Come on guy – if you really don't want to read the thing, just get up and . . . too late guy. I think that she's reading it for you. She can't read. She's too young to be able to read. But . . . this using her index finger to . . . she has to be reading word for word what's written on the front of that thing.*

*Now what does he want? You need to tell the little reprobate that pulling on my arm is getting old. Is he wanting me to read along, too? Guess so. He's doing exactly what his sister is doing.*

*So that's what the inside of that thing looks like. Why is he folding it over so that . . . that number one must mean something by the way that he's pointing to it. The thing definitely is not written in English as . . . ask whoever he is if it's Spanish. That was a cynical look. He has no right to take his frustrations out on me.*

*This apparently isn't a time to ask questions. That look says someone wants to stay on point. There goes that index finger again. It sure would help if I knew what she was saying. How did she learn to read so well? Why doesn't she have him read it? Maybe he can't read Spanish – if that's Spanish.*

*Okay you little persistent runt – I'll follow along with you if it's that big of a deal to you. It's unfair. Why didn't I get to have a disarming smile like his? I hope that he doesn't mind if I put my arm behind him. It'll help me see everything better. Hey little guy – this snuggling up against me like you are . . . don't go there gal. I'm never ever going to let another guy put an arm around me again.*

*Just pretend that you understand what she's reading. Your little buddy seems to know where she's reading. He's doing exactly with his index finger what his sister is doing. Somebody has had to have done this with them. My guess would be that it was their mother.*

*I sure could use some help with that drawing. Okay – I think that I get it. That pointing to the stick figure and then to me must mean that the stick figure represents me. I don't have a clue what those words say that are under the stick figure and on the other side of whatever it is. You might as well just smile at your little boyfriend and look at where he's pointing.*

*Someone is sure tensing up next to me. I don't even have to look at that uncouth barbarian to know that he doesn't want to be sitting here right now having that brazen little sweetheart read whatever it is that she's reading. I can't believe that I'm even enjoying sitting right next to that barbaric lout. I'm the one for once who isn't the one who wants to bail out instead of . . .*

*Letting your mind wander gal isn't going to work. What's written on what looks kind of river like must really be important by the way that he's pointing to the stick figure and to the other side of that river or whatever it is. Now this pointing to the stick figure and to himself and to his sister and to . . . whatever it is that's written under the drawing must apply to each one of us.*

*Could those words that are italicized be quotes or something from the Bible? Isn't Romans one of the Bible books? Seems to me that it is.*

*It has to be over twenty years ago that I last touched a Bible. Poor Mamie. You sure didn't make her day when you told her that you didn't want anything more to do with those hypocrite kids who went to the same church where she still goes. Like what could Mamie do seeing that father has always been adamant that going to church is a complete waste of time*

*Those are big words. How's she doing it? She's reading like she has whatever she's reading memorized. She couldn't have memorized everything in that thing. She's too young.*

*Why is he staring at me? Am I supposed to do something? That's a question mark. He's nodding his head up and down so . . . nod your head up and down like he is. It must be the right answer as . . .*

*That number two on top of the page must mean page two or something. That's a no next to the two. Is no in English the same in Spanish? If there are English words that're similar in Spanish, I sure don't see any other words I recognize besides no.*

*That looks like the same drawing that was on the last page. Okay – I get it you little turkey – you're not going to let me look at that first page again.*

*What's that stick figure doing? It looks like the stick figure is trying to salute or something. It'd be nice to know why the stick figure is now standing on those things sticking out into the river. Gal – why do you want to know why the . . . you know why you want to know. You're always letting your mind go back to experiences when someone offended you. But . . . if what she's reading is like that booklet that that snooty gal had the last year that Mamie got me to go to her church's camp . . . that booklet had drawings in it, too.*

*There's that beguiling grin again. You have to admit it gal – it sure feels good having the little guy cuddle up against you. You know that you're never going to forget the time that you had with him so . . . what happened wasn't your fault. You know that. But if I had just gone with him, I know that I could've done something to keep him from . . . and what would've you done?*

*Talk about having an angelic sounding voice. How can that little angel speak so clearly with that cleft lip?*

*You just had to take a peek at whoever that itinerant bum is. Now I know what it feels like to sit next to an angry bear. Talk about someone being seething mad. That brave little sweetheart has to know that he's fuming. How can she keep on reading as if everything is hunky-dory? I'd have thrown that thing in his face and . . . sure – right away gal. You've never thrown anything at anyone. You just get things thrown at you.*

*Sorry little man. I'm going to have to pay attention better. This is one guy friend who I'll do whatever I can to please. For being just three, the little chap is more of a gentleman than any other guy who I've met in my life. Well – except for . . . I actually feel like he respects me. You can even hope gal that he likes you.*

*That cute little cherub sure doesn't waste any time. That must be some more stuff that's being quoted from the Bible. Cristo Jesus? Cristo has to be Christ in English and Jesus . . . the words in italics have to be quotes from the Bible. There's something else from that Romans book. It's a good thing that I'm not being asked right now to find that book in the Bible as I don't have a clue where it is.*

*Now what? It's that look again telling me that I . . . it's another question mark. I'll nod my head up and down again. Am I to read into that reaction that that wasn't what I was supposed to do? Does his moving his head back and forth mean that the answer to that question is a no? Do what he's doing. How did I miss that no after the question? I've got to learn to speak and to read Spanish if it's the last thing that I do.*

*Did he just turn the page over like he's reading a book? That number three must mean page three.*

*It's that same drawing again. Why? Why is there a yellow cross lying across the river? The two sides of the drawing now look more like cliffs with a ravine or something between the cliffs. Those two words on each side I think are the same words in each drawing. Maybe he'll let me this time . . . okay – that look that he just gave me says that it's not going to happen. Just let that little pipsqueak show you where his sister is reading – like he really knows where she's reading. There's no way that this little scamp can read.*

*There's a Cristo written in that cross and under the cross. That other word on the cross with Cristo could be crucified in English. That'd make sense. Your gut instinct was right for once gal; that thing is like the one that that condescending camp counselor was using to read to the gal who was sitting near you.*

*There's something else that's being quoted from that Romans book. Maybe when the children decide to go to sleep . . . who's trying to fool who? The ignoramus has no reason to give me the time of day so forget it.*



*There's another question mark. What am I to do now? Am I to nod my head up and down or . . . it must be nod my head up and down by the way that my little pal is really shaking his head up and down. It'd be nice to know why you just made him such a happy camper.*

*Why suddenly the really serious look? Did I do something wrong? Page four must be an important page.*

*It's that drawing again. Why is the stick figure walking on top of the cross? If that stick figure is supposed to represent each one of us in this room, I'm not seeing it at all.*

*Why do I now feel like everything is happening in slow motion? There's something eerie taking place right now in this clinic – as if something completely bizarre is about to happen. I need to get out of here – like right now. I don't want to be a part of whatever it is. Why can't I move? Maybe if I scream . . .*

*Why is he taking my arm from around his back? Maybe I want to keep my arm there. You can't let him hold your hand. He's not going to be able to hold that thing and point to it at the same time.*

*You're wasting your time now gal doing something that doesn't make any sense to you. Then why . . .*

*Is she going to read every single word on every single page? Is it really that important for you to know what she's planning to do? Is it because you don't want the night to end because you know that once it begins to get light that . . . or is it because you feel safe in this room – and that you don't want to go out into that big, ugly world again. You deserve gal whatever happens to you for letting her die.*

*That didn't take her long to read that page. If this is page five why is she stuck in the middle of the page. Those two things in the drawing must've been cliffs. The yellow cross was used by the stick figure to get from one cliff to the other cliff.*

*Now what's he up to anyway? What's this with trying to put my hands together? Was that nod up and down for me to nod my head up and down, too. It must have to do with the question on top of the page. It sure would be nice to know to what I just said yes. I'm to close my eyes now?*

*Oh-oh – someone doesn't want to close his eyes. Someone is getting awfully uptight. It's a stare down. You better do what she wants you to do guy. I can't believe it. This taking his hands and . . . he must be doing what she told him to do. Is he repeating exactly what she's saying? Why?*

*It's that prayer. That's not right. I wanted to do that. That brain dead camp counselor – if she'd just helped me pray the prayer that was in the booklet that she had instead of telling me that she only had to go through that booklet with just one gal and because she'd already done that with the gal who'd been sitting on the other end of the log that I was sitting on . . . I really did believe then that what she had just read from the booklet was really true for me. Why couldn't she have taken a moment to go through the prayer with me like she'd tried to do with the other gal? That other girl who'd been sitting on that log with me had even told that self-righteous phony that she didn't want to repeat that prayer – and she didn't.*

*That pea-brain telling me that she'd already done her duty when she read that prayer to that gal – do you really think that things would be different today if you'd repeated that prayer with her? You did repeat that prayer gal – remember. The addlebrained fool had said that all someone has to do is to read through that prayer and . . . and what changed in your life gal after you repeated that prayer. Nothing changed in my life after I repeated to myself the words that that self-absorbed gal thought that she had to read.*

*Why did he have to smile at me like that? What did he just say? He couldn't have just called me . . .*

*I've got to think. I can't stay in here any longer. I have to go outside. I don't care how cold it is.*

*And do you know what you're going to do when you . . . I don't know. I just don't want to stay on the kind of life track that I've been on for way too long. I've got to get off it. This getting caught up in one train wreck after another . . . why can't I just start all over again like right now with a new life slate. Why?*

She can't make me read that folleto. That audacious little lady has no right telling me to do something that I categorically don't want to do. Then stop looking into her eyes. Face it guy – if a gal had looked into my eyes like she's looking into them right now . . . those gals who thought that they could get their clutches in me need to count themselves very lucky. Marrying me would've been a terrible life move for any gal.

Why has this have to happen to me now when . . . you did promise sus madre that . . . there's no way that I can do what sus madre made me promise to do. I'm not a padre type. Besides – los niños necesitan una madre a lot more than they need un padre. And you're going to stay in denial about that fact that los niño's have been calling you . . . talk about someone who'd be an even worst parent than you. I can't let her be.

I just can't sit here and wait for GIF to send in a rad or a UWA to . . . there's no way that I'm going to be able to focus on reading that folleto knowing that at any moment a GIF conscripted eradicator could bust through this clinic's door to eradicate everyone here or that a GIF controlled unmanned weaponized assassinator will fire an explosive projectile into this warehouse or carry in an incendiary device or . . .

You can't let . . . you're letting an impudent little six year old . . . this is wrong. You're the one in charge.

Is she expecting me to just sit here while she reads through that folleto? She can't be. She's too young to read. Does she think that I can't read? So then why are you letting that presumptuous little . . . just look guy at where she's pointing and . . . okay – the words are cinco pasos hacia la vida. That's five steps that leads to or makes or . . . life. She probably remembered the title of the folleto from when . . . she wouldn't have scribbled her name on the back if someone – probably her mother, hadn't gone through it with her.

Is she going to do the same thing that el estudiante al centro did when he showed me how to use the folleto? She is. I know – I can see – paso uno says todos somos pecadores. Why don't you ask her if she can tell you what sin is? You missed your chance guy to . . . okay – the cliff on the left represents muerte espiritual and the cliff on the right represents vida eterna and that el pecado ha traído la muerte espiritual.

Why are you letting her use up el tiempo that you need to . . . okay – el hombre sobre el peñón representa a cada uno de nosotros. So the bottomless gorge between those two cliffs represents sin and that sin is what keeps every guy, gal and kid stuck on the spiritually dead cliff. And why would someone want to be on the life eternal cliff – especially seeing that's where reverend thinks that's where he is. Plus you've crossed paths with lots of guys who claim to have had a so-called born again experience who think that they now have the right to do verbal abusing and emotional maligning.

How could she perfectly read estamos separados de Dios without a lisp? Those are big words for someone her age. She looks like she's reading the way that she's following the words with her finger.

You need to tell la tigre pequeña sitting next to you that you don't want another dose of what's in the Bible. So what if whoever God is and I aren't on the same page? I really don't care. Yo sé que la Biblia dice en Romanos 3:23 que todos han pecado y no han llegado a ser aprobados delante de Dios. That's one of the verses that the reverend . . . so what if whatever sin is keeps everyone from measuring up to God?

Does she really expect me to answer whether or not estas palabras lo incluyen a usted como pecador? If I define sin as to how the Bible defines sin, of course the verse applies to me being a sinner but . . . you're going to have to shake your head up and down guy otherwise . . . the least you can do guy after all that she has gone through is to humor her.

I know – paso dos. No podemos salvarnos a nosotros mismos. We can't save ourselves. Reverend needs to see this folleto. He'd disagree that obras, bautismo and iglesia are not enough for that eternal life objective that . . . of course good works, baptism, church, etc. son puentes cortos que no llegan a la vida eternal. How can anyone believe that there's a bridge to eternal life?

Reverend believing that la vida eternal es un regalo – I don't think so. If reverend really thought that eternal life – whatever that is, is a gift, why was it always so important to him that his kids do this or do that or . . . plus anyone with a brain knows there's always a prerequisite to something purportedly free.

So Ephesians 2:9 dice no es por medio de algo que lo hace, de modo que nadie puede sentirse orgulloso. Am I really supposed to believe that this eternal life gift isn't the result of works because if it was, I'd boast that . . . just because that's what the Bible says . . . if I believed everything that's written in a book . . .

Is she really going to read each verse that's included in this folleto? It's going to take forever to go through this thing. That was a follow my finger look so . . . lo único que el pecado da como pago es la muerte, pero el regalo que Dios da es vida eternal en unión con Cristo Jesús, nuestro Señor. So it says in Romans 6:23 that death is the price for sinning, but that God gave the free gift of eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord – so? Guy – you know that your time is way too valuable to be wasting it on some mumbo-jumbo.

Why are you letting yourself then . . . so what if Marcus 2:7 dice que nadie puede perdonar pecados, sino sólo Dios. So an invisible being – this God, is the only one who can forgive sins. And who believes that?

What's this thing about expecting me to answer those questions when . . . okay – según estas palabras, puede usted salvarse a sí mismo? Per what the verses say, I can't save myself but . . . tell her to stop staring at me like I'm a yokel. I see that it says desde luego que no but . . . okay – the verses do say so but . . .

This isn't what I want to be doing right now. If that useless broom rider sitting next to me had . . . why are you letting her stay sitting next to you? Come on GIF – please end my misery. The mon has to have already . . . but . . . it's not every day when a mon can fill up his or her time with comic relief so maybe . . .

Paso tres. Cristo murió por nosotros y resucitó. Why should I believe now after all those years of reverend not being able to get me to acquiesce to this Christ character having died and then rising from the dead for everyone? Like really – using a cross that says Cristo crucificado por mi to bridge the gap between those two cliffs in el dibujo. Everyone knows that the jury is still out that a guy by the name of Christ or Jesus was really crucified. And then to claim that that Cristo es el camino a la vida . . . Christ being the path to life – really. No way am I going to believe in something that allegedly took place two thousand years ago. I'm pragmatic. I live in the real world. The only way to survive in the real world is to be forward thinking.

Si Dios me ama, why haven't I ever felt God's love? So la Biblia dice en Romanos 5:8 que pero Dios nos demuestra su amor, en que Cristo murió por nosotros aunque éramos todavía pecadores. Anyone who believes that because God ostensibly demonstrated His own love towards us by having Christ die for us when we were still sinners really needs to have his or her head examined.

And then to believe what the Bible says about Christ's supposed resurrection – pero lo cierto es que Cristo fue resucitado de entre las muertos. I need to find a Bible and look up 1 Corinthians 15:20. How could someone write that it's for sure that Christ was raised from the dead? No one can be sure about anything.

How many times have I already answered cree usted que Cristo murió por usted y que vive aún hoy? The answer is no to do I believe that Christ died for me and . . . no one has died for me. How do you know that? What've you been willing to do with your life? Haven't you been willing to die for a GIF cause?

Whoever wrote that thing sure is taking things for granted to say las palabras que anteceden lo afirman así. How does he or she know for sure that the words in those verses are true? Anyone can use Bible verses to back up whatever. Everyone knows that. Put reverend right on top of the list.

Paso cuatro. Only one more paso to go after this one. Thank goodness. I feel like I'm going toe to toe again with reverend and with my bros. There's no way that I'm going to believe any kind of Bible tripe.

Yah – just like that – por fe debemos entregarnos a Jesucristo el Salvador – a verse is going to make me want to surrender my life to Jesus Christ? Only a fool would think a entregarse a Cristo es creer y confiar en El. There has to be more to just believing and trusting when surrendering one's life to Christ. There's nothing that simple in life. Everything has a price tag to it. Plus GIF already has my soul so . . .

Como entregarse a Cristo? I don't want to know how to surrender my life to Christ. I would think that saying I accept Christ would . . . this having to surrender myself to Christ – that's going way overboard.

Why won't she just skip over verses instead of reading each one? So Juan 1:12 dice pero a quienes lo recibieron a Cristo y creyeron en él, les concedió el privilegio de llegar a ser hijos de Dios y Juan 3:16 dice pues Dios amo tanto al mundo, que dio a su Hijo único para que todo aquel que cree en él, no perezca, sino que tenga vida eterna. I bet that most of those bottom feeders who think that holding up a placard that says John 3:16 don't have a clue that that verse says that for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. That was the first verse that reverend thought that I needed to memorize. It's the other John verse – but who receives Christ and believes in Him gets to have the privilege of being a child of God . . . call it what it is guy – an absurdity.

If cree en el Señor Jesucristo y serás salvo is really what it says in Acts 16:31, why isn't everyone jumping on the bandwagon to get saved by simply believing in whoever Jesus Christ was or is? This claim of needing to be saved is a marketing tool by churches to . . . just like the claim of needing to go green is a . . .

Sure right away – al entregarse a Cristo millones han pasado de muerte a vida, those millions who think that because they somehow buried or accepted Christ in their lives means that they've passed from the spiritually dead cliff to the vida eternal cliff are delusional.

You've finished reading everything that's written on that page you little . . . I can see that it says la entrega a Cristo se efectúa por fe y oración. She's worse than reverend. This believing that what's called faith will drive praying a prayer that'll . . . if that pigheaded little troublemaker doesn't back off with that expectant look . . . where did that thought come from? It'd be totally absurd for you to . . . just because she has such a trusting, vulnerable look in her eyes, you just can't up and hug her. What's the matter with you guy?

What? She must've gone to the next page when . . . that's the question that she just asked me? Quiere entregarse a Cristo ahora mismo? Do I want to surrender myself to Christ right now? No. No. No. The answer has always been no. Tell her no. Just tell her no. You've got to tell her no. What're you doing guy? Why are you shaking your head up and down like you're ready to . . .

I'm to simplemente hable con El? Just pretending that you're talking with someone who isn't here shouldn't really be that hard to do. At least I don't have to parse what I say – like I've had to do for the past how many years with those texts that I've had to exchange with those mons.

Puede usar la siguiente oración y decir . . . she's looking at you again guy with that I'm waiting for you to do something look. If she's expecting me to read that prayer right now word for word, she can just dream on as . . . it's not going to hurt you guy to read what's written so just read the prayer.

Dios mío. Nothing like starting out a prayer with a lie. Why isn't she continuing to read the prayer? Does she want me to . . . no way. I'm not going to repeat those words out loud. No way. She can't make me. Then why did you just say my God. I don't believe that there's a God. If you don't believe that there's a God, then there's nothing wrong guy with making her happy by repeating the words as she says them so . . .

Soy un pecador. So what if I'm a sinner – whatever that means? Sé que no puedo salvarme a mí mismo. What's wrong with me trying to save myself? Ahora crea que Cristo murió en me lugar, para perdonar mis pecados. If there really was a Christ who died in my place so that my sins could be pardoned . . . but since I don't believe that really happened . . . stop letting your mind wander guy and just keep repeating after her. Sé que resucitó y que vive hoy. Since it's impossible for someone to come back to life after dying, I don't believe what I just repeated so . . . me arrepiento y confieso mis pecados. How can I repent and confess something that I don't know what it is? Creo en Jesucristo, y me entrego a El por fe como mi Salvador.

You know guy that you just said that you believe in Jesus Christ and that you now have Him buried in you because of your faith in believing that He's your Savior. What've I just done? What if I . . .

Your pequeña nemesis is patiently waiting for you again to . . . gracias Dios por haberme hecho pasar de la muerte a la vida eterna según tu promesa. Guy – you just thanked God that He . . .

Why is the doc standing up? Where's she going? She can't leave here. You've got to stop her. Why?

*Why did I . . . I don't want to be out here. You can head for the lounge. And what if someone is there?*

*Why did that endearing little gentleman have to smile at me like he likes me? You've got to stop thinking about those children and what's going to happen to them and start thinking about yourself and what you're going to do next. There's absolutely nothing that you can do for those children anyway so . . .*

*This can't be me standing here in pitch black darkness. You've been scared of the dark ever since you were little. But it feels so right though to stand here and . . . you're going to freeze to death if you stay out here.*

*Are stars always so bright? They really do sparkle. What was that? That must've been a . . . quick make a wish. What if it's really true that . . . when are you going to stop being such a fool gal? Nothing good ever happens in your life so stop going there. Thanks father for passing on to me your pessimist genes.*

*How does Mamie do it – always spinning everything in a positive way? I guess the only way that someone like Mamie can survive in the kind of textbook co-dependent relationship that she has with father is to see life optimistically.*

*I could call Mamie. And what good would that do if I did? I already know what she'll say to me. Maybe someday Mamie will realize that I'm no longer that little girl who she still thinks that she needs to help grow up to be a big girl. Just because she has footed through her job all my undergraduate and now all my postgraduate studies . . . she has made me indebted to her. She's worse than father. She's never ever going to through her subtle way of saying things let me forget that I have no survivor skills.*

*You really ought to get out of this frigid cold gal before . . .*

*Make up your mind gal. If I go back inside the clinic, the gurney next to the wall with the corpse on it will remind me of my incompetence plus there's that uninvited brute there who enjoys making me feel really small and if I go to the lounge, there'll more than likely be a well-meaning senior citizen or two who think that giving a hug will . . . why does everybody always think that they've all the answers for me?*

*You really should've stayed in the clinic gal. Leaving that uncivilized ogre with those children . . . it's obvious though that those children can take care of themselves. That precocious little lady has that overbearing ghoulish wrapped around her little finger.*

*Another option gal is to just stay outside here in the cold and freeze to death. It'd make so many things go away once and for all. No one would miss me. No one has wanted to have anything to do with me ever since he . . . including you Mamie. If you really cared about me Mamie, you would've asked me why I . . . instead it's always why don't you do this or why don't you do that or why . . . and this thinking that I really want you to always pray for me . . . what's wrong Mamie with just going out sometime with me to buy something or to a restaurant to eat or to . . . I'm nothing more than a project to you Mamie for you to fix.*

*Did he honestly think that I was . . . you know the answer to that question gal. He did. But why did he want to . . . he could've made any gal feel like she was the most beautiful, the smartest, the funniest, the . . .*

*If he had told me who his folks were before . . . and you know the answer to that question, too. I'm never going to fall for another guy. No one will ever make me feel so safe and secure again. If I had only told him that I didn't want him to sit at the table where I was sitting in the university's cafeteria just maybe . . .*

*It was a dream gal. A very, very bad dream. It had to have been. That certificate though – and the photo of us together – and our times together after . . . if there's a heaven, that has to be what that place has to be like. And if there's a hell, that place can't be any worse than what my life has been like ever since . . .*

*There's no way that I'm ever going to let anyone treat me like that again. I don't want to ever again go from being an invisible nobody to being pampered because . . . and then having to go back to being an empty nothing. You need to be congratulated gal; you couldn't be doing a better job than what you've been doing ever since . . . in building an impenetrable wall around you to keep everyone out of your life.*

*You do know gal that there're a couple of little guys right now on the other side of that door who . . . newborn babies can't communicate what they're thinking or how they're feeling – can they? But the way though that he always looked at me . . . and you can't deny what that spunky little three year old smurf was communicating to you through that considerate, understanding, caring look and smile that he gave to you as you were leaving. Once he figures it out though that I was responsible for his mother's death . . .*

*I sure do hope that there's a mother out there who'll give those children a home that they deserve. It won't take much to like them a lot.*

*How can those children be okay with being near that warped deviant? A person has to be blind not to see that he's nothing more than a social outcast. He's not a spy – or whatever he called himself, for anyone or for anything. You fell for it gal hook, line and sinker that this place is to be blown up into smithereens.*

*Those doohickey things that he has . . . that has to be just a marble looking piece of jewelry that he has hanging on that chain. Then that thing that he has around his wrist has to be one of those techy toys that are getting more sophisticated all the time. It probably wasn't hard for him to steal it from someone. The belt is just a glorified billfold.*

*How can it feel so good to be standing out here in the cold? Those stars are giving me the feeling that they're smiling at me. Where did that thought come from – God is smiling with me right now? Remember gal – you prayed the prayer. You did tell this God that you do believe that He sent His Son to earth to . . .*

*You're doing it again gal. Why are you letting yourself unequivocally believe something that cannot be true? God smiling with you – you know that's rubbish gal. Even if there's a God and that God can smile, there's no way that that God would ever want to smile with me after . . . plus if there really is a God, that God has to be way too occupied with . . . there's no reason why He should notice or even care that I'm nothing more than just a necessary evil to my co-workers, to my patients, to my family, to . . . my neighbors must think that I've the plague by the way that they're able to disappear when they see me coming.*

*There has to be someone someplace who can help me with knowing if it's true that there's a God. Mamie says that she knows without a doubt that there's a God but . . . and then there's father who swears by it that there isn't a God so . . . being totally convinced that there isn't a God sure hasn't been giving father any inner peace while Mamie never seems to be at peace about anything.*

*Why won't Mamie just talk with me instead of at me – thinking that she always has to tell me what she thinks that I need to know or to do? I'm really glad though that she insisted that I find my own place to live after . . . why do I feel like I can say whatever I want to to that obnoxious creep who I just met while . . .*

*If I go to the lounge – what'd I say to whoever might be there? Asking how someone knows if there's a God is going to sound really ignorant. Like everyone in this place doesn't know by now your ineptitude?*

*Why don't you ask Honey? You're funny gal. Honey can do nonstop berating even better than father. How does her husband do it? It's your fault gal that you rarely see your nieces. How can someone be okay with a father who detests a daughter but fawns over her sister? Why couldn't I've been someone else?*

*Why is it that I can feel the cold air but . . . all I have on are the scrubs that I put on before I left my place. My coat is still hanging in the clinic. How can it be that I don't feel cold? It has to be well below freezing.*

*You're going to your dream world again gal. This dream is as bizarre as any other dream that you've had. It isn't the first time that you've dreamt that someone died because you . . . but . . . those children did seem so real. That sinister oaf though definitely fits into the narrative of all the bad dreams that you've had.*

*Hearing voices isn't something new for you either. How many times have you thought that he was in bed talking with you but when you . . . if I had just said yes to going with him to meet his folks after we . . . how many times gal are you going to go over what you might've done that would've changed everything? Like their meeting me would've changed everything? It's a good thing now gal that you didn't meet them as . . .*

*How can this be a dream when . . . I feel so alive. I don't feel tired at all. This isn't me. I want it to be me.*

*You need to either head back to the clinic gal or head to the lounge. Even though you aren't feeling the freezing cold, hypothermia can set in in a hurry and . . . so what – if that happens, there'll be just another cadaver to . . . it'd save you once it gets light from having to deal with those tactless authorities who you don't want to deal with at all. You know that they're going to blame you for letting her die.*

*If I could just stop living in the past, maybe . . . allowing circumstances that I couldn't control use up all my emotional energy has really worked hasn't it? Blocking others from my life hasn't worked either.*

*You're beginning to hallucinate gal. The cold is . . . the trauma of someone dying on your watch is pushing you over the edge. You're losing your sanity. You've gone nuts. You need help – psychiatric help.*

*You've known all along that you're never ever going to cut it as a pediatrician so why are you continuing to . . . if I could just keep a surgical mask on over my face all the time . . . it has to be really disconcerting to see me go from being a wishy-washy mouse to a super confident, capable P.A. and back to a . . .*

*What would I be doing if . . . being convinced that I could be a doctor was just an idealistic pipedream that he had. It's something that I don't have to work at becoming anymore as I've clearly proven that . . .*

*I wish that I could keep on standing under this star studded canopy. It's so quiet and peaceful out here. The air feels so invigorating. I feel . . . say it gal – you're feeling happy. Why? It's not right for me to feel happy after . . . you know that it isn't your fault that she died. But why didn't she try to fight to live? It was like she knew that she was going to die – and she was prepared to die.*

*Those children – they really need her. How did they know that she'd die? They didn't act surprised at all when . . . this even waving good-bye like they did . . . they couldn't have heard music – could they?*

*The least that you can do for those children is to insure that they're able to stay together and that they're found a good home that'll take good care of them. If I lived in a bigger place . . . don't gal – don't. You'll only get your hopes smashed again if . . . social services will have every reason in the world to not let the children be assigned to the single gal who let their mother die. Besides – how would I begin to care for them in your single bedroom apartment? And what were you going to do when you found out . . .*

*There has to be a way for me to . . . Mamie has a job so . . . Honey – forget her. What a misnomer of a nickname that father gave to her. Honey doesn't have time for her own kids let alone . . . daycare is a definite no-no. I wouldn't want to wish any child the experiences that I went through those years when . . .*

*I'm just going to have to find a husband. I shouldn't have any trouble at all finding a guy who really likes children, who has plenty of money and who can put up with anyone. You're turning into a real comedian gal. It's a good thing that your audience is just you as you're the only one who knows all your inside jokes.*

*The way that the children were tolerating – okay – acting around that insufferable hooligan and the way that he was accepting the children, there probably are other guys out there who'd make really good dads. And how would someone like me find that kind of guy in the real world? You might as well just stay living in your dream worlds gal as guys aren't interested in someone as unappealing as you.*

*I wonder though what kind of guy is hidden under that veneer that he thinks that he has to hide behind? The way that he's able to look through my eyes into my . . . it's like he already knows me. You have to admit it – the guy kind of intrigues you even if . . . there's something really real about him even if his absurd, cockamamie fabrications are way too far out there for anyone to believe.*

*Cold air does this to me every time. You're going to have to head for the lounge. Thank goodness that there's a bathroom in there. The lounge's door has to be this one.*

*Here's hoping that there's a light still on in the place as . . . oh no.*

The nerve of her to just up and leave. Let her go. The kids seemed to be just fine with her deciding to bail out on us. That listless sad sack has-been wasn't doing anything around here anyway. Talk about the proverbial bump on the log.

Do you feel better now guy that you've once again disparaged the character of someone who you don't know. You could begin treating women as women instead of . . . and now you're letting reading that prayer change how you think and act?

She should've asked me first though if it was okay with me if she could leave. Maybe she'll come right back. There's no way that she can stay out in that cold air for more than a few minutes.

You could go out and look for her. And who's going to stay with these kids if . . . what has gotten into you guy? Why all the sudden are you thinking about her?

No hemos terminado todavía? We're not done yet? I read the prayer – what more does she want me to do?

Okay – so that's paso cinco. This having to read everything out loud to me like I can't read Spanish . . . like is she giving me a choice but a escuchar? I can read that step five dice cuando nos entregamos a Cristo, El nos da vida eterna. You can at least act like you're really glad that you supposedly have crossed from the muerte espiritual cliff across that yellow cross bridge that has Jesucristo spelled horizontally and el camino spelled vertically to the cliff that says vida eterna. And what makes you think that you've been fooling those two little manipulating terrors who've completely invaded your personal space that you . . . why are you letting them snuggle right up against you guy? The mon has to be freaking out.

Do you really think that's going to help – holding up clops so that one of its cameras could aim directly at your face while you . . . rolling your eyes isn't you guy. You know that GIF is done with you. You're now a walking dead man. Forget GIF. Focus on what the folleto says.

John 5:24. Another verse that reverend tried to make me memorize before . . . Jesús dijo: en verdad les digo: el que pone atención a lo que yo digo, y cree en el que me envío, tiene vida eterna, y no será condenado, pues ha pasado ya de la muerte a la vida. So that's how it goes in Spanish. This verse in English – if I remember right, goes verily, verily, I say unto you, he that hears my word and believes on Him that sent me will have everlasting life and he will not come under condemnation but will pass from death unto life. Now I know which verse was used for el dibujo that's on a lot of the folleto's pages.

She's going to read more. This is ludicrous. She doesn't have to go through this whole thing – does she? You're going to have to answer se entrego usted por fe a Cristo en oración? Did I really surrender my faith to Christ through that prayer that I just prayed? I don't think so but . . . guy – you need to follow her finger while she . . . sí así lo hizo, – okay – if this is what I've done, dónde está usted – or since this refers to me, dónde estoy yo ahora? En la vida eterna? Sure – just like that – without jumping through any hoops other than . . . a guy who has been as degenerate as me can now claim that he's on the life eternal bandwagon – I don't think so.

En qué basa usted su confianza? In what do I base my assurance that . . . en las promesas de Dios en la Biblia. Just because there are Bible verses that say that . . . le engañaría Dios? Do I think that God fools someone to . . . puede Dios mentirle? Do I think that God lies? Tell the little shrimp that she has to slow down as . . . okay – por supuesto que no. Am I really going to let a folleto tell me what I believe?

I can't let her go on until . . . tell her that she doesn't have to read 1 John 5:11-13 as . . . you're going to have to let that persistent imp read it as . . . okay – este testimonio es que Dios nos ha dado vida eterna, y que esta vida está en su Hijo. El que tiene el Hijo de Dios, tiene también esta vida . . . les escriba esto a ustedes que creen en el Hijo de Dios, para que sepan que tienen vida eterna. These verses do say that this is God's testimony that God has given us eternal life – that this life is in His Son. Does this mean that if I have God's Son in my life that I have life and that if I don't have God's Son in my life that I'm spiritually dead? What's wrong with being spiritually dead? That's what I've been. But . . . maybe that's why there has always been an emptiness in my life?



John sure sounds like he believes what he's writing. This really wanting to insure those who've been led to believe in God's Son that they've eternal life . . . since I'm not one of those . . .

Why would she agradezca a Dios porque ahora usted tiene vida eterna? Just because the folleto . . .

Thanking God because I now have eternal life . . . I really don't care what ocurrió cuando se entregó a Cristo. There's no way that she can know whether or not I've eternal life. Tell her to stop reading. Tell her that you didn't . . . just play along for now with her theatrics. Keep her feeling happy. It's all going to be over with soon enough so . . .

So en el momento en que usted se entregó a Cristo por fe, grandes cosas le ocurrieron: I sure didn't feel any great thing happening the momento when I . . . what? Where did that thought come from? You're totally exhausted guy. You really didn't . . . but what if there is a God and He took me seriously when . . .

Número uno. Usted pasó de muerte a vida. She just read that in Juan 5:24. I sure don't feel like I've just passed from death to life. This living for so long with death being right around the next corner . . .

Okay – número dos. Colosenses 1:14 dice sus pecados fueron perdonados. Sure – just like that – all my sins have been forgiven because . . . tell that to those kids who saw their mother slaughtered because . . .

Número tres. Usted fue hecho un hijo de Dios. That's what Juan 1:12 dice? That because I . . . that I'm now one of God's children? Why would God want to have me as one of His children after all that . . .

You need to get her to slow down as . . . follow her finger. Número cuatro. Usted está libre de temor. Does John 8:36 really say that I'm free from fear because . . . fear? What does this verse mean by fear?

Tell her that you want a chance to think before . . . número cinco. 2 Corintios 5:17 está diciendo que usted es una nueva creatura en Cristo. I'm a new creature in Christ? Creature probably is a good word that describes me. But if I could become someone else right now, this would be as good of a time as any to . . .

Puede usted imaginar algo más glorioso que le haya sucedido? Can I imagine anything more glorious than what just took place? Why is she looking at me? Am I supposed to do something? What's with this shaking her head back and forth? Is she wanting me to do that, too? Okay. That must've been what she wanted me to do as . . . dé gracias a Dios ahora por lo que El ha hecho en usted por medio de Cristo. She just read that like . . . she's serious. She really thinks that I . . . well – didn't you . . . but shouldn't I be feeling differently if . . . how can I feel differently? I don't have feelings. Reverend took them from me.

I sure hope that this is the last page. Qué hacer ahora que usted cree en Cristo come su Salvador? Here it comes – the rules. Why does every church have to have pet rules that they expect everyone who shows up to adhere to or else.

Here they are. Número uno. Lea la Biblia todos los días. I'm to read the Bible every day? So Mateo 4:4 dice no solo da pan vivirá el hombre, sino también da toda palabra que salgo de los labios de Dios – that man cannot live by bread alone but that man needs to live by the words that God has given to him to live by. I don't have a Bible so how am I going to read the Bible every day? Even if I had a Bible, why would I want to read the Bible every single day? It's just something that has been compiled and edited from . . .

You've got to get her to stop as . . . I can see – número dos. Ore a Dios siempre. I'm always to be praying to God? First it's always having to read the Bible and now . . . just because 1 Tesalonicenses 5:17, 18 dice que oren en todo momento. Den gracias a Dios en todo, porque esto es lo que El quiere de ustedes como creyentes in Cristo Jesús. There's no way that I'm about to begin now to talk with God just because . . . orar es conversar con Dios. And I'm to gullibly believe that God is going to verbally interact with me if . . .

I know – I know – I know. Talk about a little rascalion. She needs to count herself lucky that she's not my kid. You really need to face up to the fact guy that she believes that she's already your kid. What am I going to do? Even if I'm able to get out of this mess, there's no way that I keep my promise to her mother.

Yah you little pixie – I can see it's número tres. Confiese a Dios cada pecado. I'm to confess to God all my sins? That's not feasible. Si confesamos nuestros pecados, podemos confiar en que Dios hará lo que es justo: nos perdonará nuestros pecados y nos limpiará de toda maldad. Is that really what 1 Juan 1:19 says – that if I confess my sins to God, I can be confident that He'll be just to forgive me of my sins and that He'll always make me clean from all my wickedness? If that's something that God really expects from me to do, He's asking for the impossible after the way that I've . . . plus – I still don't know what makes up a sin?

Número cuatro. Cuente a otros su experiencia. I'm to tell others about what happened? Like who'd I want to tell what happened if it really is something that . . . just because Luke 8:39 dice Jesus dijo: vuelve a tu casa y cuenta todo lo que Dios ha hecho por ti. I sure wouldn't go back home to tell that to reverend let alone to anyone else in my family.

Call her? It won't be the first time that you've called her in the middle of the night. Calling her just might add her to GIF's hit list – you know that. Do you want that to happen?

When is the last time that you called her? It was before GIF . . . your family probably thinks that you're already dead. What I wouldn't do to see reverend's face when he finds out that his black sheep kid is still alive. There's no way though that I want him to find out that . . . why did I have to go and pray that prayer?

You're going to have to sit on whether or not to make that call as you've no way to make any kind of call as . . . maybe that relationally challenged moonbeam will decide to show her face in this room again? She's the only one around here who I know who has a cell that I can maybe use. Where did she go?

Where's that energizer bunny going to now? Isn't she going to read that last whatever?

Why that disapproving look? When did she read número cinco? That's what you get for letting your mind wander.

Congréguese con otros creyentes? I'm to hook up with other believers? Like where am I going to find other believers to . . . what about the BEP students? They're a bunch of great guys. Tonight when . . . and do you really think that you're going to still be around come tonight when the guys show up here again?

What's the verse anyway that tells me that it's important that I'm to congregate with other believers? It's Hebrews 10:25. It does say no dejemos de asistir a nuestras reuniones, . . . sino démonos ánimos unos a otros. It does make sense that if believers make it a practice to always get together that they'll end up animating or encouraging each other so . . .

What's she looking for now in her mother's handbag? That's a pen. What does she want with that pen? Why is she giving it to me? I'm to write my name in that space? You don't have a choice but to do it guy. Just do it. What harm will it do? It's just a piece of paper. You're not going to sign your life away. The thing isn't a contract. So – stop stalling and write your name in that space.

What's the date? You do know what you just did? You're now on record of having . . . you've sure made the kids happy. Their dancing around like that is going to wake up their baby bro. Let them be. So they wake him up. You've got to keep your promise. How? Who's going to believe you that the little tyke's name is to be . . . the only one in this room – other than his siblings, was that dippy P.A. Since she doesn't understand a word of Spanish, there's no way for that scatter-brain to know what la señora asked me to do.

How can she not know any Spanish? Why wouldn't she at least try to learn some Spanish if she's going to spend time in this part of town? It's fun to interact in Spanish.

Why don't you make a quick check outside to see if she's out there. Do you really think that she doesn't have the commonsense to . . . forget her. She's not going to come back. She has left you with the kids. It's easy to see by the way that she acts that she has been running away from something all her life. She needs to find someone who'll . . . good grief guy – how in the world could you've come up with that repulsive thought? There's no way that she has it in her to be a mother let alone be a wife to anyone.

*Don't go in gal. Turn around. Run back to the clinic. Why won't they stop staring at me? There isn't supposed to be anyone in the lounge. Why are there so many people? Why do they look so happy? Put your hands over your face so that . . . they can still see you gal. You're acting really . . . just tell them that you need to use the bathroom. Maybe they'll be all gone by the time that you come out of the bathroom.*

*That was really lame. How embarrassing. You didn't have to ask. You knew where the bathroom is.*

*Don't look at anyone. Just head down the hallway and . . . here's the lady's room. I made it.*

*What're you going to do now that . . . you can't stay in here forever. Maybe the hallway leads to a backdoor. And where would you go? It's way too cold to . . . there has to be an explanation why the freezing cold didn't . . . you just had to look at yourself in that mirror. Now for sure you can't . . .*

*Look at your hair. It looks like a rat's nest. And your face – it looks like . . . that's what it always looks like gal – death warmed over. No one has ever cared what I looked like so why all of a sudden . . . even he didn't care what I looked like. It was to him all about my inner beauty that he cared about. You should've asked him what he meant by . . . and how would it help you now to know what he meant by inner beauty?*

*Father constantly telling me ever since I can remember that no one will ever want to have anything to do with me because I'm so hideous looking – that's something that you proved him wrong about. You can go through life knowing that someone loved you. I know that he did. He had to have otherwise he wouldn't have asked me to marry him. Why didn't I tell him before he . . . you couldn't. You really didn't know yet.*

*My scrubs are filthy. They're covered with blood. And I've been letting those children . . . no wonder everyone was staring at me when I . . . they have to know what happened in the clinic. That blabbermouth had to have told everyone here about the dithering P.A. who botched saving that poor gal who was . . .*

*Just lock the bathroom door and . . . the shelf over there is filled with clean towels that you can spread out in the tub and . . . what I wouldn't do right now to be able to curl up in my own bed.*

*Get real gal. You know what you have to do. You don't have a choice. You need to get back to the clinic. Those children need you. Who're you trying to kid – you know that those children don't need you. But . . . you really did chance it leaving those children alone as long as you have with that madman.*

*Come on – think about it gal – did you really feel like you were with a lunatic? You know that by the way that he looks through your eyes that . . . brings back memories doesn't it? I can't let it happen again.*

*Why can't all guys be gentle and unassuming versus being dark and mysterious? This always thanking me for letting him sit at my table . . . I should've been the one who did the thanking. It was like the cafeteria's corner back table had an invisible wall around it before he showed up. And do you think that the way that you looked was sending an open invitation to anyone and everyone to join you at your table? You really were thinking that no one would ever want to have anything to do with a wallflower.*

*It has really helped hasn't it writing down those questions that you wish that you had asked him? It's unfair that I never got the chance to really know him. And then to lose that one memory that would've . . .*

*How come someone as calm and considerate as he was have to end up dying? Why couldn't it have been someone like that belligerent, insensitive bore who thinks that the sky is going to fall down at any moment?*

*You're the tragedy gal. You let yourself be convinced that you'll always be a failure. Father is right as usual – that you'll go from one debacle to another.*

*What have those children seen in that overbearing lout that I haven't seen? Cozying up to him like they've been doing isn't right. What's wrong with you gal? You can't keep going back to what it was like and what it could be like right now if he hadn't died; you've got to move on with your life. You don't have a choice. You can't keep living with a victim mentality. But . . . I'm a victim – right?*

*If it had only been me who died instead of him. His world had no limits to it while the potential of my world . . . it has been your choice to create a micro-world to survive in instead of . . . I need to remember what he really believed about me – that there's nothing that I can't do if I decide to put my mind to doing it.*

*It's going to have to be you gal who's going to have to ensure that those children have a . . . what? Why is there someone knocking on the door? Dah – gal. Maybe it's because someone needs to use this bathroom. Just tell her that you'll be out in a few seconds. Stop stalling. Open the door. Who is she? Why the happy smile? She doesn't know me. And she's younger than me. She doesn't belong here. Tell her to go away.*

*What? I'm to do what? Where did she get . . . from the warehouse closet? How could she have . . . the closet's backdoor is never locked? Was I in this bathroom that long that she had time to get those clothes?*

*You're caught again gal. Those clothes don't begin to be the kinds of clothes that you'd ever wear. And you're going to burst her balloon by . . . and I'm to wear those shoes, too? I can't let her leave. I've got to tell her that . . . I'm to take this, too? What? You just let her leave. Now what're you going to do?*

*Just go ahead and look in the bag that she gave to you. A small bar of soap? Take off the wrapper. That's a really nice smell. What's in these little plastic ampules? This one says conditioner. There's shampoo in this one and mouthwash in this one. Mouthwash? The hospital has the same kind of little toothbrush, toothpaste kits like this. There's even a deodorant stick in this bag.*

*What am I supposed to do with all this? Like you can't figure it out gal? That gnarly mob out there must've decided that I need to . . . what were they all doing out there anyway? What makes them think that they've the right to . . . why does everyone think that they have to complicate my life?*

*A nice warm shower though would sure feel good. You need one – that's for sure. I can't put on those clothes though. They're way too . . . they look like what someone in their teens would wear.*

*Start taking a shower. Maybe someone else will show up with something more appropriate for you to wear. Yah – sure right away – like everyone around here knows that whatever you wear has to be at least a couple of sizes too big, that it can't be a loud, bright color – like this blouse, that . . .*

*Why do people want to be seen? What's so wrong with wanting to be invisible?*

*Why can't someone make a user friendly shower instead of . . . it takes a genius to . . . hey – you figured it out gal. Give yourself a pat on the back. Now to get out of my clothes and . . . don't forget the soap and the shampoo and conditioner ampules.*

*The hot water sure does feel good. If only I could wash away what happened tonight when . . . why did God have her die? Why wouldn't God want her to be alive for her children's sake? If you get the chance, you can ask one of those people who came here to pray to ask God that question. I sure would like to know the answer. You can also ask whoever to ask God why He would let . . . and why would you tell the whole world now what happened years ago? Besides – the only person anyone cares about anymore is . . .*

*This feels so good. I don't want to ever get out of this shower.*

*There's no way that those children could've heard music when . . . they can't really understand that they're never going to see their mother alive again – can they? This waving like they were saying good-bye – it was like they were ready to move on in life the moment that their mother breathed her last breath.*

*They're children. If they were as old as I was when . . . no one is ever going to understand how I feel.*

*I hope that there's enough shampoo in this thing to wash my hair. This is what you get for wanting to have long hair. Someone out there was thinking to remember to put a conditioner ampule in the bag. It'd be nice to have a brush to brush out my hair once I'm finished with . . . and since when have you ever worried about what your hair looks like? As long as you can still stuff all your hair in a hairnet when you're . . .*

*Why do I have to get out of this shower? Well . . . there're three small children who need you. Yah – sure. They probably haven't even noticed that I haven't returned. That uncivilized caveman has to be glad that I'm not around anymore. Skipping out like I did though had to have proved to him how flighty I am.*

*If that snotty snob had just read through that prayer with me from that booklet thing that she was using instead of . . . it still makes me feel mad whenever I think of her. Repeating under my breath the same time though the prayer that she was reading . . .*

*Did God hear me repeating that prayer? I didn't repeat it out loud. Everything made so much sense then when that lazy brat read what was written in that little booklet. If God heard me repeating that booklet's prayer . . . you really need to talk to someone gal. Maybe that cheery old granny will be out in the lounge area when I finish up here. And what would you ask her if she's out there?*

*You're clean enough gal so . . . I hope that no one will mind that I'm using more than one towel. I'll just wrap my hair up in this towel. No one around here is going to care what I look like so . . .*

*Now is as good of time as any to use this toothbrush and toothpaste. It sure does feel good to be clean again.*

*How many times have I thought about putting a complete change of clothes in my bag? If I had, I could ask someone to go to the clinic to get my bag. I'm going to have to either put my scrubs back on or . . . you really don't want to put those scrubs back on. Just throw them away into that wastepaper basket. If these slacks don't . . . they do feel a little tight but . . . here's hoping that this blouse fits me. How did that gal know what size clothes would fit me? I really like these shoes but . . . I've never worn open toed shoes.*

*It's going to take a whole lot more than some fancy clothes to make me . . . you've done a really good job gal of making yourself look twenty years older than what you are. Isn't that how you've wanted to look?*

*You don't want to go out there. Stay here in this bathroom. It's a safe place. Stick door so that I can't open you. You're a real schmuck. There's nothing out there that'll hurt you – you know that.*

*I never noticed these signs before. Why do they say men's room on one side of the hallway and women's room on the other side? Maybe those rooms are where . . .*

*Where did everyone go? There're just a couple of gals who . . . they're way too young to be here this late.*

*Who are they? I don't remember seeing them before. Why are they both looking at me like – like a cat that has just caught a mouse? They're looking way too eager about something.*

*What's that that she's holding in her hand? If that's a hairdryer, maybe she'll let me borrow it so that . . . does she really want me to sit in that chair that's in front of her? Why? Is it okay with me that she combs out my hair? Why would she want to do that? I can brush out my own hair. I'm not an invalid.*

*Why are you sitting down where she asked you to sit if . . . just let her blow dry your hair if that's what she wants to do. You need to stop once and for all gal trying to figure out what someone's motive might be.*

*This talking back and forth about my hair though like I'm not here . . . just tell them that it has a natural curl when it's shorter – that it really isn't naturally straight.*

*Why are you letting these gals be nice to you? You know better than that. They don't care who you are. They're just filling in time until they . . . why are they here anyway? They for sure can't be here to pray with those old wags.*

*Why does she want to know when I last had my hair cut? Ask her if she has ever trimmed her own hair. She owns a beauty salon? She thinks that my hair is beautiful? You know that she's just trying to make you feel good. Whatever it is though that she's doing right now with my hair, she doesn't have to stop.*

You heard them calling her sus mamá. She's already their mother to them. She can't become their mother. I can't let that happen. Why? What other option is there?

The kids have to have family in these parts who'll take them in and care for them. Even if they don't have family around here, you know that Hispanic communities are always one big family. Hispanics know how to work and how to take care of each other. It's a shame that Hispanics have gotten the rap that they've gotten – that they're lazy, thieves, can't hold liquor . . . the fact is, all ethnic groups are invariably tainted by bad apples.

About time that the kids . . . tell them that those mats that're over there are for them to sleep on – that they don't have to use my legs to lay their heads on while they sleep.

Just let them fall asleep where they are. Once they're asleep, you can carry them over to the mats.

It has sure gotten quiet in this room. Not having the drama queen around here . . . like you should talk. At least I don't work at bringing the whole world into my life. This thinking that everything has to be centered around her . . . it's good that she left. Having this alone time with the kids has been great. What's wrong anyway with going along with what they've been calling me? At least I can always say now that I've been called papá by some kids who genuinely believe that I'm now their daddy.

Kids aren't always so accepting and so entertaining – are they? If they are . . . like finding someone who'd marry you let alone finding someone who'd have kids with you was ever an option. And then when you accepted GIF's marriage proposal . . .

You know guy – even if GIF does nothing with this warehouse tonight or tomorrow or . . . and you're able to walk away from here without anything happening to you, you'll never be able to escape GIF. That embedded chip in your shoulder's tattoo will make sure that clops and wimpy are always with you. GIF is always going to know where you are.

What if blowing up or burning down this warehouse isn't GIF's objective? Your task order was to find out who was putting up the money for the subversive training that you were briefed was happening in this place. Since you haven't uncovered yet who he or she is or what foundation or corporation . . .

Think about it guy – what has been going on in this warehouse has gotten on too many guys' radar screens. You'd have to guess that there's someone out there who'd decide to ask a whole lot of questions if . . . especially if some old fogies end up being collateral casualties. This isn't an underdeveloped country that you call home – where someone who gets killed is quickly forgotten by everyone; this is a westernized country where getting killed is news. You've been way overthinking and overreacting guy to . . .

GIF going with a recon instead of tasking a PIM to ferret out whoever is putting up the resources for what's going down in this warehouse . . . something isn't jibing. A PIM can mine within a matter of minutes the kind of private or personal info that would pinpoint the identity of the fat-cat while a GIF assigned recon will normally have to do days of legwork at a domestic site in order to find out who is behind something.

Because of what those personal information miners can do, my days with GIF had to have been numbered even before I unloaded on that innocent P.A. what GIF is. Where could she have gone? There's no place to go to out there – is there, other than to where the lounge is? Do you really care guy where that apathetic quack is right now? It's obviously that the kids don't care that she's not here so . . . so – forget her.

Whoever bought this warehouse shouldn't be hard to find. With all that's happening in this place, there has to be some sort of operating board or committee or . . . there's way too much coordination going on for this being an ad hoc operation.

The ingenuity though of using a vacated warehouse that's located strategically in the low income part of this city as a centralized place for the homeless to have a place to sleep as well as . . . and then to have the kind of guy – like the judge, to be willing to come into this area to . . .

Whoever is the brains and maybe putting up the capital behind this place had to have heard about or even eyeballed the training center's teaching and training concepts. There're way too many constants between the programs for it to be a coincidence that BEP isn't a sister program with el centro de capacitación that has been enabling host country guys in a remote town that's located thousands of miles away.

If I had the chance to investigate the two programs . . . sure – like that's going to happen, but . . . but if it's true per what the BEP guys told me tonight during their break that they've a lot of ownership to their BEP – like they themselves decided who the twelve guys would be who're in their BEP, that they chose from a list what courses that they want taught and that they decided when the courses will be taught – as long as their BEP is completed in two years, that's pretty much the same thing that that curmudgeon who was administrating el centro de capacitación said were some of the core concepts driving the setup there.

Finally – they're asleep. Now what am I going to do? How do I get them over to the mats?

Hey doc – I could use your help. You're hoping guy that she'll come back – aren't you. Why? She can't be as old as she looks – plus you've always been a dupe for gals who've eyes like hers.

Just stand up slowly so that their heads will be lying on your chair and then . . . good – it worked. Instead of carrying them over to the mats, why don't you leave them lay where they are? Then where will you sit? I could lie down on one of the mats. And that's how you want her to find you – sleeping. I don't think so.

Just carry them over to the mats. They're not going to wake up – you know that.

Good. He didn't wake up. I'm so ready to join este hombre pequeño in whatever la-la land that he's in right now. What I wouldn't do right now to be living a normal life again.

It's your turn now señorita bonita. Why did you let her do that? How could I've stopped her? She just reached up and put her arms around my neck like it's something that she has always done. Guy – you need to stop letting her hug you like you're her dad. You aren't – and you never will be.

One of the very first things that I'd do if . . . how can someone have such a sonrisa tan preciosa with an upper lip like hers? Te amo? No. She couldn't have just said that to me. I can't let that happen. It can't happen. I can't be in their lives. There's no way that can happen. GIF won't let it happen.

They look so at peace lying there on those mats. Life from now on isn't going to unfold the way that they act like they believe that it's going to for them. Once those kids are caught in the social service system . . .

Sit down guy before you . . . sitting on this hard, uncomfortable chair probably will keep me awake.

Here's hoping that la señora will have a decent burial. That's something that you need to make happen. And how're you going to do that? But . . . you've got to stop thinking about what took place a couple of years ago. You can't make up for what you couldn't have done after the rad shot la mujer. But it was wrong to just leave her body lying there on the ground. If I could just erase once and for all those stunned, traumatized looks that those kids had on their faces as they . . . her poor kids weren't much older than . . .

How could GIF not know that if a dent was put into cocaine production that it'd open up a door for the underground manufacturing of synthetic drugs? If GIF was really interested in eradicating drugs, why isn't GIF putting all its resources now into the domestic producing of illegal designer drugs instead of . . .

There's nothing that's being done in this place that's against the law. The down and outers around this area are being helped. There's a place here where the homeless can sleep. There's even a free clinic here. This place could do better though checking someone's medical qualifications before . . .

The mon needed to hear that the local city hall needs a recon to uncover corruption. Speaking out loud to the mon like that guy is going to wake up the kids so . . . you're on record now guy for alerting GIF to a shady political thug – as if GIF doesn't already know everything about the mayor's unethical conduct.

If the mayor is as narcissistic and as pompous as the BEP guys say that he is, the guy very possibly doesn't have a clue that GIF has a dossier on him probably a mile thick – just like they've on everyone. There has to be a PIM someplace who has had a field day following that greedy fool's illicit money trails in order to find out who he associates with as well as perusing all of his medical records, uncovering all of his hidden assets, listening to all of his recorded calls, reading all of his e-mail correspondence and seeing what he looks at on his computer as well as what he watches on TV.

Hey. Think guy. Suppose there wasn't anyone in GIF's top level leadership in on the tasking of me to . . . that could be why wimpy's briefing lacked relevant, pertinent data. It could also be why the mon sent me only a perfunctory, cursory warning about me clueing in a civilian about GIF.

A rogue mon? Could be. Getting in on the take has become more and more the norm. It wouldn't be hard at all for a GIF monitor during his or her off time to . . . the guy sure wouldn't do anything on the clock as everything that he does and says is recorded just as everything is that I say and do.

If you really think about it guy, this assignment has never had a GIF feel. GIF getting caught up in petty politics – I don't think so.

My GIF assignments have always been to uncover the key player or players, call in a rad, apprise the rad on who to take out and then let the rad make the call on how he does it. The only time anything went wrong during any of my tasked assignments was when the rad . . . I didn't tell him to shoot her. He didn't have to shoot her. If I ever cross paths with that rad again . . . I'm never ever going to forget the murderer's face.

Those kids' mother shouldn't have died either. She should've fought harder to stay alive. Her kids need her. If the P.A. had just . . . the P.A. deserves a break guy. Give the poor gal a pass. The kids have.

Why did I let la señora make me promise to be their dad? What made la señora think that I'd want to be her kids' father. Just one look at me and . . . it should've been obvious to her that I'm not the father type.

And then telling me that I was to . . . she didn't give you a choice guy. You're going to have to see to it that your first name is his first name on his birth certificate. Su hermanita will know su apellido.

When the doc . . . where can she be? She needs to be here instead of wherever she is. What if she didn't go inside? I need to talk to her about what needs to be done once it gets light.

She's going to have to be okay with me going with her. She's going to need help going places with the kids. The cops – you need to get them to come here instead of going to the area precinct. The kids will have to be taken to social services so that . . .

And what's your plan guy to convince those callous social service employees that you're the perfect parent for those kids. You don't have a permanent address. You live in motel rooms. You've no credit. You don't have a vehicle. You're a nonentity guy. You're going to have to come up with plan B.

Family isn't an option – period. Besides – they're all living hundreds of miles away. You could call her. You don't even know her name. What possessed her anyway to tell me to call her at any time if I wanted to get a message to someone? You only met her that one time. Maybe she'd know what I can do if the kids don't have family around here.

You can't leave the kids alone. You're going to have to just sit here and hope that she comes back here. And why would she want to come back here? What've you done to make her feel appreciated?

Invite yourself into her life? Why would I have to think of doing that right now? Just because the judge used Zacchaeus tonight as an example of a guy who was willing to do whatever to see Jesus . . . and then Jesus noticing Zacchaeus staring down at Him from whatever tree that was that Zacchaeus had climbed to get a glimpse of him because . . . just because Jesus invited himself into Zacchaeus' life and into his house, there's no way that I'm going to invite myself into her life. Her life is obviously one big morass.



*Close your eyes gal and go back to sleep. It was just another one of those awful dreams that you keep having. You know that no one really died. But those children seemed so real. Your nightmares gal always have a child in them. And you know why that is. And you're never going to be able to escape father's constant criticisms, disparagements, putdowns – they're always going to be hanging over your head.*

*You really should've turned off the light before you climbed in bed. You need your sleep gal – don't worry about the light. You must've forgotten to turn off the TV, too, before . . . why is Mamie combing my hair? Mamie is never in my dreams.*

*That's not Mamie's laugh. Don't open your eyes. Did I have a nice nap? I took a nap? Why is she telling me that I dozed off for a few moments while . . . why is there a brush in her hand? It was her combing my hair – not Mamie?*

*You've got to snap out of it gal. You went to the lounge – remember. You needed to use the lounge's bathroom. A gal came to the bathroom's door with a change of clothes. You took a shower and . . . and after you got dressed, you came back to the lounge where . . . that's who these gals are. They were asking you about your hair.*

*If that wasn't another dream that . . . you really did let someone die and you really did leave three children in the clinic alone with a psychopath. I need to get back to the clinic before he . . .*

*Am I okay? Why is she asking me if I'm okay? Would she be okay if . . . where did she come from? What a relief to see a familiar face again.*

*Is that cup that's in her hand for me? It's coffee? Would I like . . . that's a rhetorical questions. Great – it's hot – and really tasty. He'd probably really like a cup of this coffee, too. Ask her if she'd . . . what're you doing gal? He doesn't care about you so why are you . . . he's probably sleeping by now anyway.*

*Do I think that he'd like a cup of coffee? Let the old granny take him a cup of coffee if that's what she wants to do. He probably is still awake. While she's in the clinic, have her grab my bag for me. It isn't that I don't trust him but . . . this lack of trust gal that you have for everyone really needs to go.*

*You need to go back to the clinic yourself. You're the one who has the responsibility for the fiasco that took place there. You're the one who's going to have to answer all the questions that're going to be asked. You're the one who's going to have to face the children's family when they . . . what if the children don't have any family around here? Then you're going to have to take on social service's bureaucracy so that you can take those children home with you.*

*Whether you like it or not gal, you're going to have to call Mamie first thing in the morning. She'll need to come here to the clinic. Having her here when I meet up with the detective about . . . you do know gal that if you ask Mamie to help you tomorrow, you're just proving father right again – that you don't have it in you to . . . that you're nothing more than a feckless twinkie who won't even try to tie her own shoestrings.*

*Maybe if that old granny doesn't have any reason to take off early from here tomorrow morning . . . there you go again gal – putting in play how you're going to find someone to help you bring to resolution a mess that you've made. It was sure nice of her though to bring me that coffee and to . . . another cup would . . .*

*You've got to stop looking over your shoulder gal at what could've been if nothing had happened to him instead of looking ahead at what might be if you try stepping outside your cowardliness and . . .*

*What – did she just ask me if she could cut my hair? Why does she want to cut my hair? I don't have time for her to cut my hair. Why would I want my hair cut anyway? I can trim off the dead ends myself – she doesn't have to do that. Why didn't you tell her that instead of acquiescing to her?*

*You know that you're making her day – don't you gal? She's having way too much fun. Tell her that she can cut off all of your hair if she wants.*

*Why that surprised look when . . . it's true – my hair has always been one of those nuisances in my life that I could easily live without. Who's she kidding? She can't really think that my hair is beautiful the way that it . . . what's someone's hair supposed to look like anyway after it has been washed and blow dried?*

*What about those times gal when . . . I had a real good reason then to care about how I always looked.*

*Good grief – this acting like she has just been given a gift that she was really hoping that she'd get – to cut and style hair can't be that fulfilling let alone fun – can it? The way that she's acting though and that really happy look that she has right now on her face . . .*

*This is wrong. It's not right for me to sit here letting someone treat me like a queen after what I let happen less than a couple of hours ago. But . . .*

*What? It's the gal who brought me the stuff. Where did she come from? Why does she want to know when the last time was when I got a pedicure or a manicure or both? Eh? Why would I want to go someplace to do something that I can do myself? That'd be wasting money. I can't believe that someone would . . .*

*Why is she staring at me like I'm some sort of alien? I don't like the way that she's rubbing her hands together. Why are you letting her take off your shoes? No one touches my feet. You've got to tell her that you don't want her . . . what're all those things?*

*How was I supposed to know that . . . good going gal – now you've let the whole world know the kind of sheltered, secluded life that you've been choosing to live. So I don't get out much. Much? About the only places you go to gal are the hospital, grocery store and maybe once a month the gas station.*

*Whoever the gal is who's giving me a pedicure definitely seems to know what she's doing. You could ask her what her name is. That's a different name. I like it. That was a really sweet smile. But thanking me for asking her what her name is . . . I need to thank her for telling me her name.*

*That was nice of the gal who's messing with my hair to volunteer what her name is. For gals who look like they're barely out of high school, why would they want to be here? Ask them why they're here. To pray?*

*Do you think that they really care that that's what you have to do, too, to be given a shift here at this warehouse's clinic? They're right. It's easy to do. It's just sign into the warehouse's website, go to the clinic page and . . . then it's planning out my work schedule so that I can be here either for the day slot or for the evening slot. Why couldn't it have been someone else here tonight instead of me?*

*The prayer slots are getting further and further apart? What? There's that many people out there who're into praying? What did that strange look mean? Can that really be happening – that there're now a number of suburban churches hosting twenty-four hour prayer cycles – seven days a week because . . .*

*Am I ready? Am I ready for what? Am I okay if she cuts my hair to what length? To my shoulders? Why not. It's not every day that I can be someone's special project.*

*Think about it gal – once these gals get done with you, you're going to be looking a whole lot more presentable when you show up tomorrow at social services.*

*My hair wasn't that long – was it, that she needed to cut off that much to make it shoulder length? It's going to feel weird having shorter hair again. The last time that I had my hair shorter was when . . .*

*That's nail polish that . . . tell her that you don't want your toenails painted. It's too late. Why didn't you stop her? At least it's not the brightest color in the world. In fact, I kind of like it.*

*That didn't take her long. Good – she has my bag. That's a good idea to put it under my chair. The children are sleeping? Good. He wasn't sleeping? Why did she think that I needed to know that? Guess I needed to know that he's glad to know that I'm here and that I'm fine.*

*So this is what it's like to be pampered. You need to find out where the gals' salon is located. It'd probably make Mamie happy if you start doing something with your hair. It'd be like her though to read something into it but . . . Mamie should be resigned to the fact by now that there isn't a guy out there who'd look at me twice.*

*What? That can't be. This can't be the first time that they've met? They have to have known each other before tonight by the way that they've been talking with each other. I should've figured it out that they're not from the same area just by the way that they've been comparing their churches, what they sing in church, what their pastors preach . . . they sound like all they do is go to church meetings – and have fun doing it.*

*Why are they treating me like I'm someone special? Maybe they don't know what I let happen? They have to know. You know that that old blabbermouth told as many people as she could find what I did. I'm sure she couldn't wait. Why couldn't she have been a Mamie who wouldn't have said anything to anyone?*

*Did she just say that this has been a really blessed evening – hasn't it? Why would she say that?*

*Ask her why she just said what she said. God taking one of His children home to be with Him . . . what? God couldn't have anything to do with that gal being beaten like she was and then . . . could He?*

*They heard what? Angels singing? No. They could've. Tell them that you didn't hear anything. How can they be that sure that they heard angels singing?*

*Why did you want to tell them what the children did right after their mother . . . now you're the one being questioned whether that's what the children were doing. I know that I saw the children looking up and waving when their mother died. They have to believe me.*

*There're not going to believe you that her face looks totally normal now. So – then why are you telling them that's what happened?*

*Look at them gal – what you just told them doesn't seem to have surprised them at all. They believe you. But this acting like silly schoolgirls . . . a gal dying – leaving three kids with an unknown future, isn't something to be excited about from my perspective.*

*What? It's fascinating how God answers prayer? God couldn't have answered anyone's prayers. She died. That's not an answer to anyone's prayer. No one ever prays that someone should die – do they?*

*Was that really a miracle when her face . . . let those gals think that it was. There're going to find out soon enough that no one else is going to think that it was a miracle.*

*My feet are done? Your wishing now gal aren't you that she was still doing whatever it was that she was doing with them. That sure was feeling good.*

*Now my hands? How can someone obviously enjoy so much what she's doing?*

*Someone sure seems happy, too, with what she's doing with my hair. It feels nice not to have it in tangled knots anymore.*

*I sure hope that the children recognize me when they see me again. They will. You know that. The guy though . . . and what're you hoping that he'll do when he sees you again? You know that you're hoping that . . . it'd be nice to be able to have a civil conversation with him.*

*That was really awkward – having to tell her that I don't have a church home. Why don't you tell her that you'd go to church if . . . just tell her that you've prayed the prayer. Why don't you tell her? What if she doesn't believe me? Plus it'd really sound corny to tell her that I've prayed the prayer. Why could've God have me be like these gals? They're so transparent about everything.*

Come on guy – you’ve been around her personality types enough times to know that that invisible wall that she has built around her is impenetrable. The kind of temperament that she has installs so many internal deadbolts no one is ever able to break through into really getting to know someone like her.

You know her well don’t you guy – as you’re the expert on how not to develop a serious relationship.

You need to give that P.A. credit guy for at least trying to do what she has been doing to be empowered to help others. There has to be something inside of her pushing her to pursue medicine. She has to have some smarts and abilities to be able to get as far as she has.

Face it – you’ve been running away from real life just as much as she has. This thinking that I could escape dealing with life by signing up for the military and then jumping for GIF’s inducement has really panned out hasn’t it? Admit it guy – it has gotten real old letting impersonal text messages dictate what you do with your life.

There has to be something around here that I can do besides sitting on this chair thinking about my cesspool of a life.

The kids sure have crashed. My namesake has to be one tough, good natured little dude as he’s sleeping like a log. Check and see if he needs another clean towel to lie on. If there are disposable diapers around here, I don’t see them.

Now that you’ve stretched your legs, what’re you going to do? Going outside in the cold air right now would . . . do you really want to leave this room’s warm coziness? As sterile and as stark as this room is, I’d think that it’d be a whole lot cooler in here than what it is.

What’s this? It’s a business card. Remember guy – the judge gave it to you when you first met him.

Talk about una buena onda . . . hey – maybe he’d be willing to help. There’s no doubt in my mind that he would. When the doc comes back . . . here’s hoping that she does, I’ll use her cell to call him.

Talk about a guy who really thought that he has been blessed – having his name come up first – which has given him the chance to teach the first BEP module at the start of this new BEP.

For something that seemed so random at first, it didn’t take long to figure out why the BEP prototype has had the success that it has.

By the time that a guy has up to twelve hundred hours of Bible related classes under his belt – that’ve been taught by forty different maestros, plus all the practicums and all the upfront stuff that a guy does during the couple of years that he’s going through a BEP, a guy is going to end up knowing a lot about and being able to do a lot of things. It makes a whole lot of sense that the BEP graduates are becoming visible community voices.

Can I see reverend teaching here? No way. Reverend thinks that a preacher is to lecture not to . . . all that reverend knows how to do is to indoctrinate instead of to elucidate.

For something that’s supposedly a clandestine domestic radicalization site, this place hasn’t done a thing to hide what’s going down inside its’ walls. It took me only a few minutes after I walked into the sala and began assimilating the different papers that’re tacked to the walls to know what’s happening in the place.

That really was an ingenious idea that someone had to take the forty titles that the BEP guys picked to be taught – or thirty-nine titles because of the two Timothy books and the Titus book always being taught the first two weeks at the start of a BEP, and putting six titles the first year under the discipleship emphasis, seven titles under the teaching emphasis and six titles under the preaching emphasis and then for the next year, putting seven titles under the evangelism emphasis, seven titles under the home Bible study emphasis and the final six titles under the church polity, missions, ordinances, etc. emphasis.

The one thing that you can boast about guy is your memory. What you see and what you hear you don't forget. It doesn't take a genius to know why you ended up on GIF's short list.

If it's true what the judge said – and there's no reason for me to doubt the guy, that pool of guys and gals who've been vetted to teach BEP modules has to be growing all the time.

There's no way that reverend would do what the BEP maestros have to commit to do from the time that they teach the first hour of their first class to the end of their last class. The way the judge talked about their time there, he and his wife sure enjoyed last evening with their hosts. Talk about being willing to step out of a comfort zone – that's what the judge and his wife are doing by spending an evening at each one of the different BEP students' houses – including eating dinner with his family. The judge thinking that he's learning more from the students than what the students are learning from him . . . could be?

I've a feeling that a BEP student and his family have to feel very honored about having someone like the judge eating at their table. It has to be a real eye-opener for someone who has never had to worry about where the next meal is going to come from to . . .

This drawing names out of a hat to decide when and which house a BEP maestro and his wife are to go to the different evenings seems like a real good way to handle a decision making process.

From my short time observing the BEP, it seems to be functioning like a well-oiled machine even though I haven't seen anyone pulling the levers. There has to be someone out there who's in charge. A PIM wouldn't have any trouble at all finding out who he or she is and then making all his or her assets go away or creating and circulating a derogatory or incriminating narrative or . . .

Having though to make a two year promise to receive teaching on Bible related stuff – that's a commitment. I get it that it has to be that way but to get a dozen or so guys to do it . . .

If it was me, I'd require each guy to pay something instead of there being no fees or costs for them. This telling the guys that their sacrifice and willingness to invest the time and energy that it takes to go through the BEP is their payment – and telling them that their lives are gifts – that's just drivel to me.

Like you buying into what you perceived as bona fide reasons for GIF's existence is that much different than what those guys here have bought into when they . . . eh – that's someone opening the door.

It's about time that she . . . oh drats – it's just her again. If that's not a hot cup of coffee that . . . it is. Great. Give her a hug. Yah – sure. You need to be careful guy – she probably can read thoughts.

You could tell her that she can sit down if she wants. Why would she want to get back to the lounge? Just because the P.A. is taking a break there . . . I guess I needed to know that she's fine. Now that's something that I'm having trouble internalizing – she and fine said in the same breath.

One would have to be blind not to see that the kids are totally out. It really is okay if the doc wants to hang out in the lounge instead of coming back here. Guy – you're looking at an old lady who has been around the block a few times. You're not fooling her at all.

A black bag? She must be asking about that one over there that the doc was tearing the stitching out when she went bazonky when . . . she probably has her personal stuff in it. More likely guy is that she thinks that if she leaves it here that you'd go through it. She'd be right. It'd give me something to do. She'd never ever know that I'd gone through it either.

She'll be back soon enough? What was that all about? Why did she say that? I don't miss her. Don't you think guy that it's time that you stop lying to yourself.

Your life guy isn't and hasn't been something that you'd ever want to brag about to anyone. If I were to take the challenge that the judge challenged the BEP guys . . .

That state college prof who thought that it was important that everyone knew that he was a liberation theology and Marist proponent may have been more on to something than what anyone was giving him credit for when he told that sociology class that I was taking that if we don't have anything to live for, we don't have anything to die for.

If I had ended up being killed during a GIF op, who'd know? Who'd care? No one.

If you really think about it guy, you let GIF be your god. You gave GIF control of your life so that they can use you to do their bidding.

How could I've allowed it to happen? I don't think of myself as naïve. But . . . you let yourself be taken in by GIF's altruistic gambits instead of recognizing what GIF really is – a self-appointed judge and jury who makes death judgments on targeted underworlds.

The judge's challenge to the BEP guys to be the composite of each one of those entities in whatever chapter that was in Timothy sure resonated with me. If I tried doing that, I'd have something to live for. Why isn't there ever a Bible around when . . .

Maybe la señora carries a Bible in her handbag. Just go over there to where her handbag is and . . . what's got into you guy? Why all of a sudden would it be wrong for you to go through someone's purse? So the kids wake up. So – it's just a Bible that you'd be looking for – nothing else so . . .

Sit down guy and think. Picture in your mind who each guy was – besides me, who the judge used as a visual to get the concept across that he wanted embedded in each student's life.

Two-two – I remember – that's the first verse that the judge used in his thing. The verse says that a guy is to teach another guy the stuff that he's being taught from the Bible so that the guy who he's teaching will be able to teach someone else what he's being taught so that that guy can . . .

That was a really effective thing for the judge to do to ask the guys if one of them was a teacher or had taught. That poor guy who has been helping out at one of the nearby middle schools had no idea what he was in for when he raised his hand. Getting asked to come up front to be interviewed by the judge was clearly the last thing that he expected or wanted to do.

The questions that the judge grilled the student with – like how many years does he think that it takes for someone to become a teacher, like is someone a really good teacher the first time that he or she teaches a class, like can a teacher be a teacher without ever going to school, like . . . really made everyone think.

The judge is right – a guy isn't going to have any knowledge to pass on to someone else if he isn't intentional about accruing knowledge first. Look at how many years of postgraduate work that I've completed. What've I done with what I've learned? Really not that much as . . . I just took the classes because I was told to take them. I didn't take classes to pass on what I learn to others.

To think that – if the judge has his facts right, that somewhere around nineteen out of twenty pastors in underdeveloped countries have very little if any Bible education . . . how in the world can those guys teach something that they've never heard taught? Guy – just look at all the guys who you've met over the years who've had minimal education and experiences who think that if they aren't the head honcho, that . . .

Look at reverend though. Having a seminary degree in reverend's case gives him something to brag about versus . . . the guy really believes that he was given a special dispensation from heaven to judge others.

Reverend should've taught his kids instead of . . . if I ever have a kid . . . you have kids – remember?

You did promise her guy that . . . and what does someone say to someone like her who has taken the kind of pummeling that she took? Besides – you really didn't think that she'd die. What am I going to do? Those kids don't deserve a single parent. They need a mother. Me doing courtship – forget it.

*Why is she staring at my fingers? So – my fingernails are short. I have to keep them short. I'd like to see her try to put on a pair of surgical gloves with the fingernails that she has.*

*Why is she asking me if it's okay if she puts polish on them, too? The hospital gossip mill is going to have something to . . . you need to call the hospital first thing to let them know that you need to take today off.*

*It sure must be nice to be able to make someone feel like they've always known me. Admit it gal – you know that you're not all that bad at relating with your patients. But . . . interacting with a patient in recovery is different as it's just their health that's being discussed.*

*You can't keep on gal going through life trying to take vengeance on death because of his death. I sure wish that I knew why God – if He really cared, is continuing to let something so harsh happen to me.*

*Am I okay? Why didn't you tell them gal what you were thinking instead of just saying that you're okay? I can't believe though that someone would ask such an intrusive question.*

*There you go again gal – looking to build a case against someone who meant well. You need to work on having a mindset of accepting who someone is instead of immediately trying to shut them out.*

*Makeup kit? Do I look like someone who puts on – let alone, carry makeup with me? They're going to just have to believe me that there's no makeup in my bag.*

*Where in the world did she . . . now I know what she meant when she said no problem. If she thinks that she's going to put any of that stuff on my face . . .*

*Why isn't she asking me instead of her hair stylist partner which lipstick would look better on me? Like I'd know what color . . . no – not that color. Tell her that color is way too . . . you can't let her use that on me. Tell her that you don't want to pucker your lips. So why are you . . .*

*Why would someone want to volunteer to do something like spending the kind of time that she did on my cruddy feet and on my fingers? There's no way that I'd ever touch someone's feet – unless I'm being paid to do it.*

*Am I ready to see what I look like now? And if I say no . . . of course she'd have to have a mirror. Don't be a pinhead. Look in the mirror.*

*It can't be. That can't still be me. I got rid of her. I really don't want her around anymore.*

*What's wrong? I'll show her what's wrong. Where's my purse? Remember – you put it under your chair.*

*Where's my billfold. Here it is. The photo – it has to still be where I put it. It has been years since I last looked at it. That was right after I found out for sure that . . . where are you photo? I've got to find you. Why? Seeing his face again is only going to bring back memories that . . . here it is.*

*Why are they looking at me like I've gone loopy? Can't they see that's me in the photo? How did she know to fix my hair exactly like I had it when the photo was taken – which was the same day that . . .*

*Who's the good looking dude with me? Why is it that a guy is always the first thing that gals notice?*

*They've got to stop asking me who the guy is. Tell them that he's your brother. Like you really believe that they're going to believe that? Plus – it'd be a lie. They don't need to know anything more than that he's a guy that you knew. You've really satisfied their curiosity haven't you? Tell them to stop looking at you like they're expecting you to . . . I'm not telling them anything.*

*Oh no – where did she come from? She must've heard the gals talking. As loud as they were jabbering, it's surprising that they didn't wake up everyone in this place.*

*It's my photo. I didn't give her permission to show it to her. Why is that meddling old granny scrutinizing that photo like . . . why is she looking at me now like she has just seen a ghost. Someone say something. It has gotten way too quiet around here.*

*I'm the what? Mystery women? What's she trying to say?*

*How does she know his name? You've got to tell her that she's mistaken – that the guy in the photo is someone else.*

*I don't like that look that she has on her face. She looks like she's ready to bust. She knows too much. She can't wait to tell the whole world what she knows. I've got to get out of here.*

*Don't let her hug you. Why did she just say that she's so sorry? What's she sorry for? She doesn't know what happened – does she? She can't know.*

*Does anyone know? Why did she ask me if anyone knows? Of course no one knows – and no one is ever going to know that . . . gal – someone knows now.*

*Ask her how she knew that he was married? He was wearing a wedding band? She can't know what he was wearing. It was all over the news that . . . but he only wore the ring when . . . and the mall cameras showed him walking around with a gal? This isn't good. I really don't want everyone to know what I did.*

*You can't run now gal – like you did after you saw him suddenly collapse as he was walking to a counter to get you a drink. The food court was full of people. Everyone immediately converged on him. They have to believe me that I couldn't get near him. And then when I heard someone say that he didn't have a pulse . . .*

*They've got to believe me that I stopped watching the news and reading newspapers the moment the news broke that an aneurysm had . . . that can't be true. Why would his folks want to find me? Why would I care about a trust fund?*

*She has to believe me that I don't want to talk about it. Tell her to let go of you. Tell her that you've got to get back to the clinic. Tell her . . . don't let yourself cry now.*

*Why won't they just leave me alone? I need to get out of this room. I need air. I don't need them to . . . let them hold you gal. They care about you. You know you're safe with them.*

*Do I want to tell them about him? Maybe it's time to . . . it's time gal. You're going to make those gals' day. They're dying to hear all about a gal who no one knew or could find.*

*They probably don't even know who the guy was? They had to have been in high school or even younger when he died. Ask the old lady what she remembers.*

*That really is it in a nutshell. The guy's dad really is the city's media mogul and the wealthiest guy in these parts. So what difference does that make that he was their only son? There really wasn't any reason not to believe him that his folks would accept me as another daughter but . . .*

*Was I really married to him? How did I meet him? What was he like? How was it like to be married to someone filthy rich? You don't have a choice now gal but to . . . first you're going to have to get them to stop asking you questions.*

*Nobody can be that interested in someone else's story – can they? This gaping at me though with their mouths open like I'm sort of celebrity . . .*

*Just start at the beginning – you sitting at the university's cafeteria's back corner table and he shows up. They're believing you gal – that that's exactly what he did – asking me if he could sit at my table, thanking me when I said that he could and then thanking me as he was leaving that I'd let him sit at my table.*



*It really was a couple of months before he . . . can't they tell that I'm not the most outgoing gal in the world? Like what's so hard to believe that having a guy in my life was the last thing that I was looking for?*

*How was I supposed to know who he was? Why would I want to ask him who he was? Why didn't she ask why didn't he tell me who he was? It really was almost a full school year before we did anything together. Okay – that look gal says that walking down the hall with a guy . . . it really was a big deal to me.*

*Why is she asking me how did I know that he was the guy? I just knew – like she'll know when . . .*

*Nothing is going to change gal – dumping on these gal your sorry story. So why are you? You know that that they can't begin to understand the feelings that you had for him. They're just some nosey . . .*

*What did my parents think about him? They don't have to look that shocked that I didn't tell my folks anything. If they knew father . . . first of all – that unloving sap wouldn't have been able to get his arms around the fact that a guy would marry me. And then when he'd finally get it that . . . who knows what he would've done. That unscrupulous monster wouldn't have hesitated to try and weasel himself into . . .*

*What's it to her whether or not I like my father? She just needs to take my word that the guy is a totally unprincipled creep who only thinks about himself.*

*My mother . . . what about Mamie? You can tell them that she does call you every day. She isn't the kind of person though who someone confides in – that's for sure.*

*So tell us? What do they want to know? There really isn't anything exciting or romantic about a couple of kids crossing a state line to elope. It's true that because we wanted to be more than just friends that we . . . was there something wrong with using his middle name on the marriage certificate as our married name?*

*Why are they acting like it's something really bizarre that we didn't live together after we were married? I was still living at home. How can they not know what trysts are? If they only knew what those couple of months that I was married to him were like before he . . . they were magical.*

*You're getting another hug gal – whether you like it or not. I need to be thanking them for listening; they don't have to thank me for . . . why are you doing that again? You never cry. But . . . you've got to tell them everything otherwise . . . this always remembering what you did isn't going to go away unless . . .*

*How do I tell them? What do I say? If I'd just told him that I was pregnant . . . but you weren't sure until after he died that you were pregnant. If I had just . . . instead of making it all about myself – like not eating, not taking care of myself, not . . . I'd have part of him with me today. They can't tell me that I didn't kill my baby. I did. I know that I did. It was all my fault.*

*Where's she going? That was a devilish look that that old white-haired bird just had on her face. She can't leave me now after I spilled my guts out in front of her. She's getting some coffee? What if I don't want more coffee? I'm to make sure that my makeup is . . . all old geezers can't be like her – can they?*

*What's this with a tray? Why is she pushing it at me? I'm to take it where? I don't want to go back to the clinic. Why doesn't she want to go with me? She has to go with me if . . . what if I want to stay here? Like you've a choice gal? You're going to have to do what she wants. That cup obviously has to be for him.*

*Suppose he doesn't recognize me? You want him to don't you? You're at the door gal. Just open it. That look – he's relieved to see you again. That was funny – suddenly noticing that . . . talk about a once over.*

*Just take the tray over to him for him to take that cup. Do I have to take that cup off the tray and give it to him? Why is he staring at the cup and then at me and then back at the cup like . . . why is he turning the cup around like he's hoping that . . . that conniving old coot.*

*How did she know? That's what's filling this room. That's what I see in his eyes. It has found you again.*

If this is what it's like to always have kids around . . . all kids can't have the kind of energy and enthusiasm that they have – can they? Your life guy is going to be so different once . . . your life is already different. You can't pretend that what happened didn't happen. There's no way that you're going to be able to pull that same stunt that you did when you turned your back on those kids whose mother was wasted by that rad. Those kids here are going to need your help. And there's no reason that you can't help the gal, too.

Plus you read the prayer – something that you said that you'd never do. Like you really meant what the prayer said. It was just some words. Were they? What if they weren't and God heard me and . . .

The judge's composite model will be what I'll need to be if God really is leading me to align with what the Bible says. The judge's role playing activity really did resonate with the BEP guys – and with me.

It probably doesn't take much to know that I've been in the military. I shouldn't have been surprised that the judge would ask me to come up front next instead of checking first to see if any of the BEP guys had armed forces experience.

The questions that he asked about boot camp, training, discipline, comradeship, fighting were all spot on. There's no way that I could've been an effective soldier if I had just said to someone give me a rifle and point me to where you want me to fight.

I can see a BEP being like a boot camp for the guys who're studying there. Some of those older guys hadn't opened up a book for years before this first BEP class. The couple of single guys are going to learn a lot from what the married guys have experienced. There's already a camaraderie between everyone.

Being a soldier in the Lord's army – that sure sounded trite just hours ago when the judge said it.

What would a guy do if he fought for God? Did you know what you were going to do when you signed up to fight for your country? Well . . . it was to do what you were told to do or else. It was to learn to do something and then to do it without question or else. It was all about being as prepared as possible for when that moment came when . . . and having been as well prepared as you were, you're still alive today.

Then about being an athlete, it really is about practice and conditioning and desire and . . . for an athlete to have any chance of winning. It's interesting that someone would refer to athletics in the Bible.

I need to find out more about Timothy. If I remember right, I think that he was supposed to have been timid. Someone being fearful having to think of himself as an athlete – I don't think so.

But . . . a sport actually is a good venue for a guy to get a handle on the importance of continually improving his innate abilities if he wants to contribute to his team winning plus he'll learn how his actions reflect on the whole team when he doesn't comply with a rule.

You're going to have to go one of these days to one of Pepe's games. The guy sure is still passionate about playing soccer. If he continues to be willing to use the English that he already knows, he's going catch up real quick to his classmates. I sure hope that he has a green card to be in the country. He has to have. There's no way that his classmates would've given him the okay to join them if he didn't.

If you ever see him again, you need to ask Pepe how old he is. The guy has to be in his fifties – at least. This still playing soccer at his age in the winter indoor league – the guy must be good.

Next if I remember right was the industrious farmer. It looked like half of the BEP guys raised their hands when the judge asked if anyone knew anything about farming.

If I wasn't already the soldier in the judge's visual exempling of what he says whoever wrote what has to be the second Timothy book says a disciple or a Christ-follower is to be like, I would've been the best guy in the room to be interviewed by the judge as none of the BEP guys grew up in a rural community – they just had grandparents who farmed.

Having farmers back home – who put up with reverend’s weekly ranting because of all the money that they’ve poured into the church, hiring me to help them each year with their plowing, disking, dragging, baling, harvesting and whatever else that they were wanting done, I know a bit about farming.

If someone thinks that anyone can buy a piece of property and begin to farm it has to be living in a fantasy world. A farmer has to know when the right time is to plant what he wants to plant, whether what he wants to plant can be grown in the area, what kind of fertilizer to use, how something needs to be planted if he wants a good crop and on and on. And then if a farmer wants to have some livestock . . .

The judge could’ve used my help with his questions. You could’ve told him that you grew up on a farm. Like volunteering is something that you’re going to start doing now when you never do volunteering?

The judge really needs to spend a few days in a small rural town. They’re great places. Farmers like to get together and talk. There’s always a local dive where farmers go for coffee. Farmers are always full of good insights about things that someone would want to know if he’s going to farm.

For all the time and energy that a hardworking, dedicated farmer puts into what he grows and what he raises and all the anxieties that he has to face – such as the weather and disease, that kind of farmer deserves every dollar that he earns.

That rabbit trail that the judge went on – telling the BEP guys that their lives are now being prepared to be like the good soil that Jesus referred to in a parable . . . you’re really ignorant guy about what’s in the Bible.

The least that you can do now guy – that’s if you don’t end up having GIF cold storage you, especially if you’re the only recourse for those munchkins over there is to start familiarizing yourself with the Bible. It really wouldn’t surprise me if that little lady over there doesn’t know more Bible stories than I do.

There were three other examples that the judge identified. They were all more towards the end of that second chapter. That first one was about being a laborer who’s not ashamed of his work because he did what he did well. Construction jobs must not be that hard to find by the number of BEP guys who . . .

Could I build something without ever having helped someone build something similar? Can someone really follow a blueprint if he has never seen a blueprint before?

I’m sure there’re guys out there who can make anything out of wood or metal or whatever. I’m sure not one of those guys. Being an apprentice to someone who already knows what he’s doing seems to me to be the best way to learn – especially doing such things as doing wiring, plumbing, roofing, etcetera.

The clay thing example probably made more sense to Timothy and to whoever else ended up reading that letter way back when than it does for me. I’ve never seen anyone making anything out of clay.

The clay jug or whatever it was representing a BEP student – that seems to me to be a bit of a stretch. The idea though that God is still molding me – that I can buy. Because I know that I’m not turning out in a way that God can use me for whatever reason, now would be a really good time for God to ball me back up into a lump of clay and to start all over shaping me into someone who He can use.

What if my life has been more like a clay something that God still hasn’t toasted in His kiln thing? Or could it be that God is toasting me now in His kiln metaphor?

I’m so confused. Where are you judge? It’s not hard to guess what that white-haired nemesis – who got me into this mess – is going to be telling everyone in her next garden meeting. That crazy loon – hearing music when there wasn’t any music. She didn’t even go to faking being sad that la señora died. But this cheerful, happy demeanor . . . you need to put her at the bottom of the list of who you might talk to if . . .

Why in the world guy did you let these last couple of hours happen? What were you thinking guy when you followed that, that, that . . . no one just shows up, grabs my hand and makes me go someplace. No one.

Why do I have to be a dad? I've never been a dad. How am I supposed to be a dad when I've never been a dad? When I see that P.A. again, I'm going to . . . and what're you going to do, say, whatever to her?

Why am I thinking about being a dad when it can't happen? You're a GIF recon. You can't escape GIF. You've got to stop thinking about something that you can't do – just as you couldn't do anything for those kids whose mother was shot. If only there was a way that I couldn't see their faces again. You being the dad of those kids lying on those mats isn't going to erase what you saw that dad do to that innocent mother.

You've got to stop picturing those kids trampling coco leaves barefoot in acetone filled troughs. How can parents live with themselves letting their kids do something like that? Just because chewing coco leaves is part of their culture, kids shouldn't have to suffer because of it. You know that nothing is going to change when someone can go to a local market and see unrefined gray cocaine pieces being sold right in the open.

Just go back guy to ruminating about the clay jug guy. You need to be glad that you weren't the one who the judge asked to come upfront to answer his questions. That poor guy who ended up front had no more clue how a jug was made than I did. I had no idea what went into making something that a king would be more than happy to use. The constant turning and manipulating of the clay – like having my life being shaped, and then having to spend time in a very hot kiln – like having my life tested . . .

How could this stuff that the judge was talking about just hours ago – which was interesting but just words, seem more than words now? You're losing it guy. You're letting everything get to you.

That last illustration – just focus on what it was about. There was this servant guy who purportedly did something to prove to his master that even though his master had given him his freedom, that he still wanted to stay indebted to his master for the rest of his life.

Why would the judge want to use this verse as his life job description if each time that he talks about this verse, something confrontational occurs that'll make him have to apply the verse to his personal life?

Even though he says that he can be, I don't see the judge as someone who's ever argumentative. He does definitely show kindness to everyone. He definitely has the aptitude to teach and he definitely is obviously patient. But for me to have to accept the fact that when I'm wronged – not if I'm wronged, that I need to have a mindset to always to be ready to forgive instead of . . . that doesn't compute with me. There's no way that I'm ever going to let reverend off the hook for all that he has done to me. My brothers either.

How long has she been gone? It sure seems like hours. What're you going to do if she doesn't come back? She has to show up back here again. She can't let those kids down. They've gone through enough already. You'll need to tell her what they're calling her. And if she doesn't believe you, what're you going to do?

The least you can do guy is to offer to help her with everything that she's going to have to do when it gets light. It wouldn't hurt you to be kind to her. It also wouldn't hurt you to do all that you can to become that amalgamated teacher, soldier, athlete, farmer, laborer, jug and servant who the judge says is a . . .

What's that noise? It sounds like someone is trying to open the door. What? Who's she. Those eyes . . . I've seen those eyes before. They're her eyes. But . . . what has she done to herself? Whoa, whoa, wow – oh my word. You just had to do that didn't you guy? I sure hope that I'm not seeing a mirage.

Why is she carrying a tray? That smells like coffee. That was thoughtful of her to put this cup in front of me instead of that flowered cup. Why did she put this cup in front of me with what's written on it? Maybe she doesn't know what's written on the cup. That innocent look that she has on her face tells me that she probably doesn't know. Turn the cup so that . . . that sudden consternated look says that she didn't know.

Where did she have that smile hidden? That look that she has on her face – it's that same look that those kids have been giving me. I think that I know what she's feeling. If this is how it always feels, I want it.

Love.