

Mayor Vivian Claxton sets down her fountain pen, having finished the final stroke. The death-threat note was done. Leaning back in her chair, she relaxes, knowing that the adventurers would be ensnared with this letter. She stands up from her writing desk and walks out to her portico, calling for her carriage to be brought round. The sky is heavily covered with clouds, and the smell of rain is in the air. Even before she can see the carriage pull around the corner, the clatter of metal hoofs on brick and the hissing of the steam horses is audible. Climbing into the carriage, she reviews her agenda for the afternoon. Two visits are scheduled, one to the orphanage and one to the hospital.

As they get closer to the city proper, the beautiful scenery of mountains, lakes, and lush grasslands turns very harshly into smog, buildings, and factories. What previously had been a quaint little farming village seemingly transformed overnight into this industrial powerhouse. All thanks to her, she proudly reflects. She was the one who, as a young child bored and willing to explore, had found the hidden entrance to the cave on the outskirts of town. A cave seeded with crystals so valuable that just one was worth hundreds of gold coins on the market, even before haggling. Once grown, she used the hidden source of wealth to develop a mine. An entire town soon grew to support the industry.

The time for pleasant reminiscing is over. The carriage has pulled up to the orphanage. As she descends from the carriage, the children pull on her dress and crowd around her, wanting her attention. Their clothes are not much better than ruck sacks, poorly disguising their malnourishment and poor hygiene. She ponders on how sad the situation of these children is. "These children have no place to really call home, no purpose to their lives, and no role-model to show them what is proper and what is not. If we give them jobs in the factories and mines, they would have a purpose and somewhere to work. Granted, they probably will not live long, but during that time they do, they will feel needed rather than cast aside". Having spent nearly an hour talking with the owner of the orphanage about funding and visiting with the children, Vivian climbs back into her carriage to move on to the hospital and tells her attendant, "Make sure those children are working in the factories and mines by the end of the week." She sits back in her seat, pleased with her solution for improving the childrens' lives.

Reaching the center of town, the pipes to carry steam are now visible on the side of buildings and along the cobblestone road. The mayor steps out of the carriage and into the horror that is the hospital. Her horses are driven around the corner to be refueled. Inside the hospital, every room is packed with miners and workers lying on pallets crowded together on the hard flooring, too debilitated to work any longer. The sick and injured look to catch a glimpse of the mayor as she walks the halls. Hundreds of eyes with the exact same lime green color follow her progress. Vivian walks about, shaking hands with those that are still strong enough to do such a thing, and offering words of kindness to those who can't. Those most afflicted by the sickness are almost too awful to even look at, as shards of stone protrude from their flesh. All of this pain and suffering lowers Vivian's spirits. She knows that the pain in their bodies must be accompanied by despair in their souls, knowing their disabilities have left their families without a source of income.

Having seen too much, she returns to her carriage, convinced of what she needs to do. While she had been toying with the idea of building a machine that would end physical suffering, this decides it. While it won't cure that which is affecting the townsfolk, it will take away their sense of pain. Her spirits rise again. Although the affliction will not dissipate, the workers will be able to continue to work the mine and provide income to their families until their last breath. As the carriage pulls away from the hospital, she thinks that while ruling isn't always pleasant, being able to improve people's lives makes the job worthwhile.