

It was one of those hot, sleepless summer nights, when the moon comes through the window spreading its light about the room. Through the window on the other side of the room I could see the wing of the house where the kitchen was - its light still on. I could hear mother still moving around in there and outside some Junebug thumped and buzzed against the screen while the crickets made their slow and rhythmic noises in the dry grass. Now and then a lighthouse wren ruffled his feathers and made a half-hearted, laggard challenge to the moon, followed by the sleepy cackles of the hens then quiet again. I buried my head deep into my pillow to shut out the moonlight. (before)

Some time had passed when I heard my dog coming into the room. He was lonely so he came over to my bed and nuzzled his cold nose under my hand while I made a feeble effort to pet him. He was happy and panted contentedly. Suddenly he jerked his head up toward the window, a low growl sounding in his throat. I managed to look up to see what was bothering him. The dog had his ears perked up and was straining to catch the scent. A raid in the hen house I wondered. It sounded like that sure enough, for the chickens began to cackle nervously. I looked over to the kitchen to see if ma had heard it, but the light was turned out, and she had probably been upstairs in bed for a long time. It was my duty to guard the hen house so I was about to raise myself when suddenly I heard the sound of scratching on my screen. My dog began to growl louder.

"Keep your dog quiet!" came a voice. "It's me - Charlie."

I swung myself out of bed and leaned over toward the screen.

"What are you doing out this late at night, Charlie?"

"I got my dogs staked down the road a piece. It's a quiet night for coon hunting and the dogs are ready for it. Come on let's go."

"I don't know, Charlie," I said. "My pa would skin me alive if he knew I was out running around without him knowing it. You remember what happened when he caught us foolin' around last time."