

Ch. 4

The harshness of the S. Ga. winter reaches its peak in the months of Jan.

and Feb. ~~U~~ Though the temperature rarely drops below twenty degrees the humidity increases the unpleasantness. The rain often combined with freezing temperature ~~xxx~~ blasts the resident of Seymore, ^{many of whom} ~~who~~ have inadequate clothing, shelter or food. It is during this inclement period ~~th~~ that the turpentine workers carry the gum barrells to the old tin shed behind the commissary, build a big fire by which to warm their hands and back sides frequently and begin tightening the hoops on the barrels ^{in preparation of} ~~getting ready for~~ ^{arrival of the fresh} the gum in the spring. Despite the cold and discomforts of their daily life, they use this time as an opportunity for comraderie. Lewd tales and bawdy jokes enter the conversation and exchanges of snake tales - who saw the biggest rattler last summer or ~~who~~ had the closest call from the vicious reptiles. The woods of S. Ga. is the habitat for the dreaded rattler ~~and~~, as ~~are~~ the swampy areas are for the cotton moccassin. One of the greatest dangers for the turpentine workers is an encounter with these poisonous creatures. The diamond back warning too often is untimely and the victim ~~is~~ is not forewarned. Death can result or at best the loss of a ^{limb} ~~limb~~ from ~~the~~ muscle deterioration ~~of~~ from the venom. ^{man} Jim, now almost fourteen,

Just start

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Character - Lola - Jim - Lola's baby brother

Problems - cold weather - Jim - Lola's death - guilt - shock

is to join the throng of workers in the spring in the turperine woods.

Deak patiently teaches ~~him~~^{him} how to tighten the bands on the barrels as the rain patters on the tin~~g~~ roof in time with the hammer tacking the small nails

back in ~~to their~~ places on the ~~tightened~~^{secured} bands encircling the barrells.

Listning intently to the colorful language of the others, Jim is ~~glad~~^{gratified that} he is ~~a~~^{now} a

man. ^{pcas} On days when the rain ceases and a mock spring makes its appearance the turpentine woods ~~must~~^{are} be secured against fire. ^{after} The weeds and flammable

palmetto ^{are} hoed away by the men, a fire line ~~drawn~~^{staked} by hoe also to contain the

fire within the perimeter. Then the fire is set by torches, monitored and avoided, until the woods are charred, leaving only the trees green. ^{para} Smoke drifting

and settling over the ~~small~~ quarters in the late afternoons, Lola, the ~~xxx~~

three younger children, and the mongrel, are enticed by the unseasonable but

welcome warmth. Through the long cold days Lola and the children ~~have been~~^{ARE}

confined to the house listening to ~~Mama's~~^{MAMA'S} grumbling and enduring Big Mo's abuse.

Mama's drinking has increased and the money for the ~~liquor~~^{whiskey} now comes from the

small amount Lola earns at Mrs. Junes on Sundays and Jim's salary. Unable to

tolerate the sloppiness of Mama's work any longer, Mrs. June ~~has~~^{has} to let her go.

Her many warnings unheeded, Mama's ~~contined~~^{continued} insobriety ~~had~~^{has} forced her hand. Ther

is now barely enough money to buy the necessary food to keep them alive after

Mama's ~~liquor~~^{drinking} expenses are met. If not for the generosity of Mr. Lee, who

extends them credit at the commissary, and Deaks offerings of turnips, fish

and sometimes coon, they would surely have starved weeks ago. Mama's quick

tounge results in numerous blows from Big Mo; Her face ~~puffy~~^{puffy} and eyes swollen

most of the time. The smaller children feeling his wrath learned to ~~keep~~^{keep} quiet

and for Lola his molestation^{and abuse} have become of no more significance that the hunger

and the cold.

^{pcas} The landscape along the road ^{tight cold brackly under suntype} is completely colorless and ~~bare~~^{bare} except for the ~~green~~^{long leaf yellow} pines and light brown broom sage, but Lola's spirit is undaunted.

Happily skipping along with the three younger children at her heels, she wander

past the commissary over to the railroad track. Walking the tracks she continues westward towards the warm sun and makes a game of trying to step on only the creasote dinned crossties. Suddenly she sees livid raging water below and realizes she has wandered onto the railroad trussel and the river is below. It is the time of the year that the river is out of banks, swollen by the winter rains ~~and from~~. She tosses a few pebbles into the water, which she has collected along the way, and continues staring, intriqued with the motion of the ominous current bidding her to follow. She hears a loud ~~er~~ splash and a scream above the sound of the lashing waters. Looking behind her and down towards the sound, she sees her little brother being pulled under by the angry river, rising again to the surface, then down again. ~~She~~ She runs back ^{ALONG} ~~across~~ ^{ACROSS} the trussel, along the tracks to Seymore as fast as she can hearing a terrible screaming voice, never realizing it is her own. ^{nears} ~~XXXXXXXX~~ As she ~~XXXXXXXX~~ the commissary Mr. Lee and Deak meet the ^{hysterical} sound and try to force her to speak but she can not. Taking her home and finding the other two children there, they are able to ^{piece} the story together. The two children had decided to go back after they had gone a short distance ~~and they~~ had seen their brother following Lola toward the trussel. The two men go back to the site but know that finding a drowned victim would be impossible at this time of the year, ^{because} The sucking motion of the vortex is as deadly to a grown man as it is to a small child. Helplessly they return to Seymore and report the news. Lola remains in a state of shock, her tiny feet torn by the rocks and splinters. Mama is hysterical and of little use so Mr. ^{Lee} gets Mrs. June to come over to tend the cata- tonic child. She removes the splinters and cleans the wounds through tears, then bandages the tiny feet, which have rebelled against the restraints of the second-hand shoes she had given to her. When nothing more can be done by her and she knows time has to do the rest, she leaves the house, returning daily for the next four weeks, bringing soup which she forces into the ^{Lola's} drawn mouth. Finally Lola emerges and seemingly rememberes nothing of the catas- trophy. Her life continues as usual, the absent child never ^{to be spoken of} ~~mentioned~~ ^{mentioned} by her again.