

The dog placed its front feet on the stump and tried to reach the boy.

The rage swelled in the boy and he aimed at the wide spot between the dog's eyes and shot as the dog attempted once again to get on the stump. The shot did not hit the dog where the boy tried to aim but broke its back, and the dog filled the orchard with sharp animal yelps of pain; before the boy could reload the gun the dog was moving away, dragging her hind legs. The boy felt horror and terribly sick, so he rushed at the dog. He swung the butt of the rifle in a frenzied arc so that it hit the dog with crunching, sickening blows, until the frenzy of the arc became rhythm, until the stock of the rifle broke from the barrel, and then the boy kicked the dog until the sickness became too great and he ran.

On the other side of the marsh the old man smiled and watched for the rabbit.

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A Day Begins

Margaret Ellis

I woke up slowly, the sheets feeling smooth and cool under me. I heard the soft, pillowy coo coo of a turtle dove outside the window. I began to be alive again. When I breathed I could smell the pine and the water mixed in the breeze that puffed out the blue and white curtains. If I lifted myself a little on one arm I could see little flashes where the sunlight bounced around on the top of the lake. A boat cleared its throat, spat and then came nearer with a steady putt-putt-putt-putt. I tried to see it by sliding over to the edge of the bed, but the Christmas trees in front of the cottage were in the way. I turned myself back into the room.

Bud was already sitting up in the big bed at the end of the room, with his hair all spiked up on top of his head. He made a face at me and turned a somersault on top of the bed. He slid off and landed, splunk, on the floor with a big eyed look. I giggled and was happy that I was at the lake and that my cousin, Bud, was there, too. He always made me laugh, even just to look at him. Will jumped out of bed, and I sat down

with a pillow in my middle before I even saw him throw it. I threw it back, pushing it hard at him, but he caught it. The door opened and Fathers' head came in.

"Last one down is a ring-tailed monkey. Up and at 'em, kids," he said. His head went out again and I could hear his wooden slippers go off down the stairs, plip plop, plip plop. I hurried to dress and when my head came through the top of my shirt I could see Father out on the dock looking at the lake. He pointed his hands at the water and gave a little shove with his feet and went in. His head came up way out. He turned and started to swim back. Since I had to hurry and beat Will and Bud down so I wouldn't be a ring-tailed monkey, I couldn't wait to watch him hit himself on the head when he got back to get the water out of his ears. I tied my shoes and started out the door. Will grabbed me and shoved me back till he and Bud got down ahead of me.

"Mag's a ring-tailed monkey. Mag's a ring-tailed monkey," they shouted, and ran into the dining room. Madness started way down in me and when it got up to my head I couldn't keep it in.

"You held me, I could've gotten down. You cheated," I shouted. I wanted to pound and pound on them till it hurt. I made tight fists and ran after them. Ida, our cook, came thumping out of the kitchen waving a big fork at us.

"Now you all stop fussin' 'roun' my table. Git on. Willis, I needs coal oil fo' my stove, 'n' Marget, you knows you gotta git at them steps fo' brekfes. Go on wif you now. Bud, you sit on that there dufoe till brekfes. You hear?" She shrilled at us. She flipped a big pink-lined palm at us and gallumped back into the kitchen mumbling to herself. Ida always came to the lake with us, taking up more room than Will and I together with her big black body in the back of the car. She growled and threatened us, but always had an apple or a cookie to give us when we went into her kitchen. She had her own words for things that always made me want to laugh, like "dufoe" for davenport and "Rumbo Cleanser" for Roman Cleanser.

Will grabbed the coal oil can and was out the door and down the road with a slam and a clatter. I hoped he'd get bawled out for slamming the door, but nothing happened so I went into the pantry for the broom. The pantry was cool and smelled like raw potatoes and cold butter. I sneaked a forbidden sliver of ice from the big lump in the ice box. I let it melt in my mouth and the cold tasteless water ran down my throat. The broom thumped and scraped behind me till I got to the front door. Bud asked me if he could help me but I pretended not to hear him. It was my job every day to sweep the long stairway that

led to the seawall and the dock. The broom got hard to push after a little while, so I sat on one of the wooden benches on the landing half-way down. I let the wind tickle the back of my neck with a tree twig while I watched my father drip up the stairs from below. When he was part way up he stopped and called for me to come and see. I dropped the broom and went down to where he was.

Between a post of the banister and a bush was a thing that made me sit down all tight on the steps and just look and almost hold my breath. Tiny drops of dew were strung along each strand of a perfect spider's web. When the breeze moved the bush each drop had a million colors and they flashed and sparkled in the early morning sun. It was a beautiful fairy bed in a green room with a tiny princess asleep right in the middle. Was ever anything so pretty before? I watched it till Father's voice told me to finish the stairs and then I could watch it if I wanted. I worked as fast as I could, but I thought the stairs would never end. Finally I was done. I found the place again, but all that was there was a grey spider web and a very small brown spider that skittered away when I put my face down close to him. The fairy princess had changed herself to a spider, her beautiful jeweled bed to a web, and her pretty green room to the green leaves of a bush. I didn't care if I was the ring-tailed monkey. Will hadn't seen the fairy, so I was even. I went up the stairs to breakfast.

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Panda

Allen Sutherland

It was December twenty-fourth, and they were returning from overseas. Hot, arid islands still waited far behind them. Standing near the lifelines, they watched the sun set. Gusts from the sea tried to sting them. The first seagull which perched on the stern promised the three that home was near, and a ghostly wake arrowed remotely toward the islands. When the harbor loomed, two little tugs tooted at the troop ship and it belched back an obscene greeting. Seamen heaved their chains and lines; and as the ship crawled into its berth, the men felt satisfied and secure. They were home on leave.