

the money from customers he put into his pockets, only my sales were all rung up. I think that's illegal: tax defraud or something.

Sometimes, when he was real pleased with himself, he'd look at me over his glasses and say, "See, Jonnie, that's how you run a good business. You're learning from me. You're learning and getting good experience; that's worth more than wages. So pay attention, and one day you'll run this store."

It wasn't that I wanted his store. It was just as old and dirty as he was. He was just so old. It wasn't right that he should be so old and go on cheating people, and taking their money. Some of the men worked awfully hard and they'd come in and want to buy a pin or something for their girl friends. Then he'd put on a lot of fuss and talk of Fifth Avenue, and make up prices. Hell, the dime stores wouldn't have carried the stuff he sold them. So I figured maybe it wasn't right that a useless old man like him should cheat young ones like that. I used to work pretty hard keeping the place clean at least, and he'd just sit at his desk in the back room in his dirty old clothes, and when he didn't pay me in full he'd say I was earning experience.

Then one day he got a letter asking what happened to a certain shipment. Well, I mailed it all right. I'm sure the clerk at the Post Office would have remembered, because I wrapped it in cut-up paper sacks—we were out of paper—and he laughed at it. But Mr. Hicklemeyer wouldn't hear of going down to check, he just claimed I must have lost it, or kept it. So he was going to make me pay for it. But I felt this wasn't right. It wasn't fair for him to carry on and take advantage of me because I was young and his rheumatism bothered him too much to go to the Post Office. Then I got real mad all of a sudden, and I guess I killed him. I guess I just hit him very hard. He was sort of like a dried up mosquito suckling blood from the young and juicy ones. They do that, you know: we read about it in school. So I swatted him, like a mosquito. They're pest and no good. So that's how I came to kill him. That's all there's to it, I guess.

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A Sketch

Ruth Paller

DAVE swam to the edge of pier where two rowboats tugged at the ends of short ropes which held them prisoners. In the nearest boat an armless negro boy was bailing. Dave tossed the wet sun-bleached hair out of his blue eyes and squinted at the child silhouetted against the glare of sky and water.

"Is the boat ready, Chester?"

"Jes' about, Dave. One mo' pailful'll do it."

The counselor watched the boy grip the small pail with his feet, dip it into the bottom of the boat, and with a deft twist of his agile big toes, tip the water over the side.

"Say, you do that real well, boy." Dave braced his feet in the sandy lake bottom, reached into the boat and put his hands around the small brown waist. His fingers touched around the narrow span.

"Hold yourself stiff. I'll lift you out. Up we go!"

He set the laughing boy on his feet on the pier and climbed up after him.

"Hop down to the other end of the pier. Dutch is going to practice your float with you while I take some of the other campers out in the boat."

"Ain't I goin' in the boat with you, Dave? I never get to ride with you any mo'. Always with Dutch." Pleading chestnut eyes looked at him out of wide open lids in a long triangular face, the grey-brown skin now tinged by the sun to a glowing mahogany shade.

"I can't take you this time, Chester. I'm giving a life-saving lesson." He slapped the bony buttocks outlined by the shiny blue trunks. On your way, fellow! Dutch is waiting for you."

"I don't want Dutch to teach me. He gets sore if I don't kick right. I learn better from you. I'm not so scared."

Dave jabbed him gently in the ribs. "O. K., I'll work out with you later. But get out of my way now. I have to load the boat."

He raised the whistle attached to a cord around his neck and blew a shrill signal. Four boys ran to the boat, dropped their towels on the dock, and scrambled into the seats. Dave untied the rope and climbed in after them. He fitted the oars into the locks and pulled out to the middle of the glassy lake.

On the dock, he could see the solitary figure apart from the other children who were splashing with Dutch in the shallow water close to shore. He waved and the boy raised the short stump of his right arm with its curious single long finger and waved back. He looked like a lone shore bird, lifting a multilated wing.

The boy moved down the pier to where the second boat rocked in the wake sent shoreward by the oar strokes. The wavelets turned the craft so that it scraped against the wood of the dock. Chester kicked the front of the boat away from the pier. It drifted back. He lifted a crane-like leg to kick again and his other foot slipped on the wet boards. Dave saw the dark trunk weaving for a second on the edge of the pier. Then it was gone.

Neither Dutch nor the other children seemed to have noticed.

He turned the rowboat and stroked for shore, turning his head with every pull to shout at Dutch; but the children's noise drowned his calls.

The boys took up the shout, and at last Dutch stood up in the water and waved a beefy arm to signal that he heard them.

Dave pointed to the tethered boat and Dutch lumbered down to the end of the pier, then spread his hands and shook his head. He

shouted something, but his words did not carry out over the lake.

Dave pointed down to the water. Obediently the other lowered his bulk into the water and surface dived. He came up beyond the boat empty-handed. Cupping his big hands into a megaphone, he shouted, "What's down there?"

By this time Dave was close enough to hear.

"Chester fell in. He's still under. Try below the dock."

The hulking figure disappeared under the water. The boat was close to the pier.

"I can take her in, Dave," said the biggest boy. "You go after Chester."

Dave dived overboard and sped for the pier. As he came around the tied boat, he saw Dutch back out from under the boards. The boy was in his arms, retching and crying. As the brawny counselor straightened, the child wound his reedy legs around the thick hips and flung his stump around the red neck of his savior.

At the touch of the long finger with its sharp nail, Dutch shuddered. He tore the claw from his neck and with his elbows pushed away the clutching legs.

The boy screamed his terror as he slipped back into the water. With a final stroke, Dave reached the pair and caught the boy by the armpits.

The child fastened his legs tightly around Dave's waist. Dave could feel the sharp heels digging into the small of his back. He nestled the wet woolly head against his shoulder, and the sharp chin cut into his chest. He could feel the reaching claw searching for a grip in his hair. From the muffled mouth came cheeping cries.

"Give me a hand up," Dave called to Dutch, who had clambered up on the dock. Dutch squatted on ham-like haunches and pulled at Dave's hand.

"I can't get you out of the water this way," Dutch protested. "Put the kid down on the dock."

"No! No! No!" shrieked the child. "Hold me, Dave!"

"It's O. K., fellow. Take it easy. I won't let you go."

Dave walked with his burden through the water alongside the pier and climbed up the bank of the shore. Dutch followed above on the board walk.

Dave dropped down onto the beach, the little body clinging ever more tightly to him. He rubbed the trembling brown back and felt great goose bumps under his hand.

"The kid's chilled through, Dutch. He wants me to hold on to him, so will you rub him down with that towel lying under the tree?"

Dutch snatched up the towel and threw it over the boy. "Here, rub him yourself. I hate the feel of him."

Dave's slow glance measured the ponderous figure that was Dutch, from the toes gripping the sand past the huge hands clench-

ing and unclenching at the sides to the flaming face and the little eyes filled with loathing.

"Get back to the kids on the pier," he said. "Chester and I will manage by ourselves."

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Emily

Jane Bachman

EMILY'S brown curls bounced as she jumped from the car and stood looking around her. Muffled noises came from underneath the car where her father was fixing something. Her mother sat in the front seat fanning herself with a handkerchief. Her eyes were closed. Emily watched a yellow-haired boy across the road who was jumping rope. He was very good at it and he seemed to be counting to himself. She went to stand closer and was surprised when he spoke.

"Hi," he said.

"Hello," Emily said gravely. "Do you like to skip rope?"

"Sure—when there's nothing else to do."

"My goodness. What else is there to do—around here." Emily emphasized the "around here."

He stopped in the middle of a particularly good skip and stared at Emily. "Where you from?" His eyes narrowed.

"Oh," Emily said loftily, "back there." She pointed down the road. "Elmwood."

He skipped twice and then dropped to the ground. "My name's Jackie."

Emily smiled and sat on a stone at the end of the path that led to the house. "I suppose you live there?" she asked.

He nodded.

"But what a funny house." Emily blinked. It was the strangest house she had ever seen. In fact, it wasn't one house—it was two; one in front of the other.

"It's not funny. Everybody has a house like it."

"Everybody does not," Emily said scornfully. "I haven't. Mine's brick and glass. And I only live in one house."

"So do I. The other's for my brother and his kids."

"Your brother? But . . ."

"I have four brothers, and a lot of sisters."

"My goodness, how many?" Emily caught her breath.

"Oh, 'bout five I guess."

"Well, I don't. Mother says children are hard on a house."

"C'mon, I'll show you the barn," Jackie said.

"Will I get my dress dirty?"

"Well," he crossed his arms and looked at her. "You might."