

A family conference was held. All stood mute. Finally, in exasperation, my grandmother said, "Somebody in this house has told a lie! I don't know who it is now. I may not find out for a long time, but when the Day of Judgement comes, all things will be revealed and I will know who told that lie!"

With this awful threat ringing in their ears, Sara and Anna went to bed. They didn't talk much, each on her own side of the sheet's center seam. Each felt the weight of that lie heavy on her conscience.

During the night a fearful storm came up. The lightning flashed, the thunder roared, the heavy rain pounded like bullets on the roof of the log cabin.

The little girls awoke to listen and worry. They thought about the Boy in his shelter. The leafy canopy would be sufficient protection in a gentle shower but this was a raging downpour; he would be soaked to the skin!

Then, as the storm increased in intensity and fury, the children became worried for themselves. They lay in each other's arms and trembled at each new flash of light or crack of thunder.

The other members of the family were uneasy too. Candles were lit, and a tour of the house made for leaking roofs and flapping shutters.

Finally, Grandma Benedict called up from the foot of the stairs, "Are you all right, Sara and Anna?"

Two little white clad forms leaped from their bed, raced down the steep stairs and came flying into their mother's arms. "If this is the day of Judgement come upon us, we told that lie!"

Confusion ensued; but finally out of the welter of fear of the terrible Day of Judgement, conflicting loyalties and naturally obedient dispositions, the story emerged.

When Grandfather Benedict realized that a young boy was out alone in that torrential storm, he threw some blankets around Sara and himself, grabbed a lantern and pulling Sara by the hand, cried, "Show me the "Hidey-hole" quickly," as they ran. The thick wet grass slashed at their bare ankles. They were momentarily blinded by each flash of lightning. They bumped into trees in the ensuing darkness, but finally reached the little bower.

Holding tight to her father's hand, Sara called out reassuringly to the Boy, not certain whether he could hear her voice, or not, in the deafening noise of the storm about them.

When the grandfather parted the vines and saw in the faint light of his lantern, the drenched child, the wary look and the quick recoil: "I won't go back!" his heart was full of pity.

"No, Boy" he assured in his gentle voice, the voice that had encouraged the faltering, eased the sick, held steadfast the traveler to the other shore -- "No, Boy, we'll never send you back. We are your friends. Come with me where you can be warm and dry."