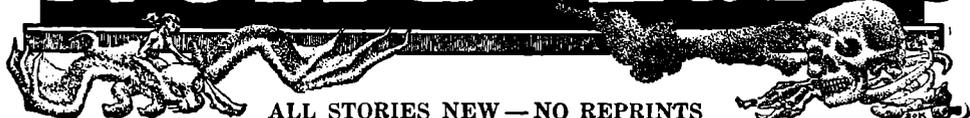


Weird Tales



JULY, 1946

Cover by Matt Fox

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The Shingler

By E. L. WRIGHT

“W E’RE almost there boys,” I said as I steered the old jalyopy off the main highway onto an apparently long unused lane, a lane overgrown with weeds. It was difficult keeping the old buggy in the tracks. It jounced up and down, but we kept on going.

My six-year-old brother, Tommy, was having a fine time. We were scouts on the

lookout for Indians. “There’s one, Louie. Behind that tree. I’ll get him. *Bang.*” He brought an imaginary rifle up to his shoulder and fired. He settled back, satisfied. “I got him.”

“Think we can go fishing—maybe catch some fish for supper?” eagerly queried Bill, my in-between brother.

“I think so,” I answered with adult im-

Heading by A. R. TILBURNE

Shingling this lodge was his job and no one else could do it—ever!

portance. I was remembering my mother's thousand-and-one instructions covering this week's outing. At first she had been reluctant for us to go. But Dad had talked her out of it.

"After all," Dad had said, "isn't Louie practically a man? It'll do him good . . . having the responsibility of looking after Tommy and Bill."

So Mom had agreed.

Personally, my only worry was that Tommy would get homesick and want to return home after a day or two.

Right now he was the liveliest of the trio. "There it is," he shouted. "Boy, oh boy!"

Ahead lay the lodge my boss had practically insisted on my using when he heard I had no definite plans for my vacation other than camping out for a week. I had protested, but Mr. Cabot exclaimed: "Nonsense, my boy, it'll be almost the same as camping out. I'm afraid the lodge isn't in every good shape—we haven't used it in years. Belonged to my wife's grandfather."

I brought the car to a halt.

Tommy was out immediately, prancing about.

"Looks like Mr. Cabot was right," I remarked to Bill as I surveyed the scene before us.

The weatherbeaten lodge, a low rambling affair, sprawled between tall pines, the foliage so dense the sky above was scarcely visible. A veritable wilderness.

"The door's open," yelled Tommy from the lodge door. He disappeared inside.

I shrugged, stuffed the key back in my pocket, got out of the car and stretched my legs. Bill started loading his arms with camping paraphernalia.

"We won't take anything in till we've cleaned the joint up a bit," I told him.

THE lodge was indeed in a bad state of disrepair. The hinges on the door creaked rustily. At our every step the floor boards groaned.

"Hope it doesn't rain." Bill cast an anxious eye at the ceiling. "Doesn't look as if anyone's been here in a thousand years."

"Not quite that long," I retorted.

A loud resounding crash caused us to run into one of the rooms off the main

living room. Tommy, a ludicrous expression on his face, sat in the middle of what was once a bed.

"I was only testing it," he said ruefully.

"Bill and I'll do the testing around here. Good thing it didn't go clear through the floor with you." I lightly fanned his backside as he scrambled from the bed. "You come along with us where we can watch you."

"Carry me piggy-back, Louie," he begged.

So our tour of inspection was completed with my acting as beast-of-burden for Tommy.

The lodge consisted of a huge living room with a fireplace, a kitchen with a wood-burning stove, and three bedrooms.

"One for each of us," beamed Tommy.

We were standing in the third bedroom.

I looked about thoughtfully. "This looks like our best bet," I said to Bill, ignoring Tommy. "If it does rain there are fewer places for it to leak in and it'll be easier for us to fix."

"Okay," agreed Bill. "The three of us in here, huh?"

"Yeah. We can move this bed in one of the other rooms and set up our cots in here.

Tommy whined a little at sleeping in the same room, but his attention was soon diverted. As soon as we'd brought everything in from the car we'd go down to the lake and see if we could catch any fish for supper.

A little elbow grease made the lodge livable, and we were soon down by the lake.

The fish were so plentiful that even Tommy caught four without half trying.

Game was plentiful too, I noticed as we followed a path overgrown with weeds back to the lodge.

"Wish we'd brought a gun along," sighed Bill.

"Why can't we set a snare, Louie?" asked Tommy eagerly. By this time he was a thoroughly dirty little boy—but having the time of his life. "Will you help me fix a trap, Louie? Will you? Promise."

I promised. "You'd think Mr. Cabot would be up here every week-end, wouldn't

you?" I inquired of Bill, "It's a regular sportsman's paradise."

Bill shrugged. "Maybe he's an indoor man."

"Maybe so—but I can't figure out why he let the place practically decay."

Tommy had been running ahead of us, his line of fish trailing in the high weeds. Now he came tearing back, brought the fish up suddenly barely missing my face. "Can I fry my own fish? Can I, huh?"

"Yes, you can fry your own fish—and eat them too."

Satisfied, he ran ahead again.

SUPPER over, we sprawled in front of the fireplace, which we had cleaned out so it didn't smoke too badly. Tommy's eyes began to droop. Bill picked him up, carried him into the bedroom.

I yawned, looked at my watch, then pillowed my head in my arms.

A sudden rush of cold air swept over me.

Bill, stepping out for a bit of fresh air before retiring, I thought drowsily.

"Hey there—close that door." I opened one eye.

The cold night air continued to flow in.

"Bill!" I called. Both eyes were open now.

No answer. The dying embers of the fire cast weird shadows about the room. The wind was rising too and the rustling trees whispered to one another.

Sitting up, I looked at my watch. Almost midnight. I'd been sleeping there almost an hour. Better hit the hay, I decided. Tommy'd be up at the crack of dawn. And that would mean no more sleep as far as Bill and I were concerned.

Wondering why Bill was remaining outdoors so long, I hoisted my hundred sixty-one pounds from the floor and lumbered to the open door. "Bill," I called, peering out into the night. "Bill!" This time a little louder. Only the sounds of the forest nightlife greeted me.

Suddenly: "What do you want?" The sleep-filled voice came from behind me.

Turning I saw Bill, clad only in his shorts, shivering in the bedroom door. I blinked, feeling rather foolish.

"Gosh, Bill, I'm sorry. The wind must've blown the door open. I thought you'd

gone out." I stepped inside and firmly latched the door, then tried it to make sure Mr. Wind couldn't get in again.

"Come on to bed," Bill mumbled. His cot creaked as he flung himself down.

I BANKED the fire in the fireplace, then stripped down to my underclothes. For some reason my feet carried me over to the door. I tried it again. Satisfied, I went into the bedroom, straightened the covers over Tommy, then tumbled into my own canvas cot. A second later I was fast asleep.

The next thing I knew I was awake, listening intently for something. I raised up on one elbow.

There it was again.

A tap-tap-tap. Almost a hammering sound.

Then silence.

Silly, I told myself. Probably a branch hitting against the roof.

I lay back, closed my eyes.

Another sound—like someone walking back and forth on the roof.

I shook my head. Only a squirrel—or some tiny animal. But it didn't seem a tiny creature like a squirrel could make that much noise.

Bill slept peacefully on.

Tommy turned from side to side. Too much fish. The kid was probably having nightmares.

Then once again the tap-tapping started up.

I could stand it no longer. Separating myself from the blanket in which I was wrapped, I walked stealthily to the window, peered through into the inky blackness. There was a thin wavering light straggling through the tall trees. The moon. The tall pines swayed to and fro.

Such darned nonsense! Why couldn't I accept these noises for what they really were? But I continued to stand there, waiting for the tapping to start up.

Apparently the tapping had ceased for the night. Becoming aware of the cold, I hugged my shoulders and half-turned from the window.

A harsh rending sound caused me to leap at least three feet in the air, landing with my face up against the window. Something came hurtling down past the window

to land with a dull thud on the ground.

I must have exclaimed for Bill and Tommy both materialized at my side.

"What's up?" Bill was wide awake.

Tommy tugged at my shorts. "What is it, Louie? Let me see."

"Something fell from the roof," I said to Bill, rather foolishly.

"Cripes! Probably a pine cone or twig." Bill stuck his face against the window.

"Lift me up. I wanna see too." Tommy was insistent, and my shorts were threatening to slip over my hips. Reaching down, I lifted Tommy with one arm, swung him up to my shoulder.

The rending noise came again. This time Tommy reacted and I had to hold on with both arms to keep him from falling to the floor.

Even Bill looked startled.

A DARK shadow outside the window followed by a thud as the shadow hit the ground.

Then Bill's taut face relaxed into a grin of derision. "You've been reading too many weird tales, Louie."

"All right, mastermind, what is it?"

"Just stay put a minute and I'll show you." In a flash he was out of the bedroom, bare feet and all. Tommy quivered a little. Pulling the blanket from my cot I threw it around his shoulders.

Another minute, then Bill was back in the room, grinning derisively. "Here's your bogey man." He thrust two battered wooden shingles at me.

Tommy laughed with Bill. Taking a shingle from Bill, he began hitting me over the head with it, chanting: "Louie saw a bogey man . . . Louie saw a bogey man."

"I'll bogey-man you, young fellow." Unceremoniously, I dumped boy, shingle, blanket and all on the cot. I tried to relieve my feelings by being gruff. "You'll have to admit these surroundings are conducive to witchcraft and spook lore." I addressed Bill.

"Yeah. I know, I know." Bill took the shingle and whacked me with it. This was a signal for Tommy to begin again. The fighting was fast and furious—then I had to admit defeat. It took some time to fix up the cots again. In the wild melee mine

had overturned, strewing bedclothes over the floor.

Tommy thrashed about in his cot, no longer sleepy.

Before Bill got into bed he came and stood over me, assuming a mock-serious posture. "Now let Dr. Bill feel your pulse. Hmm . . . normal. Go to sleep like a good little boy and Mr. Sandman will bring you a nice big lollipop."

I slapped his hand away.

Tommy giggled. "Feel my pulse, Bill." He bounced up and down a couple times.

Going over to Tommy, Bill went through the same routine, then tucked the blanket up around his chin.

"Maybe we can catch the squirrel on the roof, huh, Bill?" Tommy murmured happily.

"We'll catch Louie's bogey man for him," Bill said, but I ignored him.

I had acted pretty silly. Getting upset over the wind whipping shingles loose. We'd better fix them, tack them on a little more securely.

I turned on my left side, looked out of the window. The thin wavering streak of moonlight shone in. The old man in the moon was laughing at me.

A BREAKFAST of flapjacks, bacon and strong coffee. Tommy insisted on equality—so he had coffee too . . . diluted heavily with milk. This outing was a treat for him in more ways than one. I hoped we weren't spoiling him too much.

"What'll we do first?" questioned Tommy, his mouth full of bacon.

Innocently, Bill kept his eyes on his plate. "I think the first thing on the agenda will be the bedroom roof. We'd better nail those loose shingles on more securely or your big brother Louie'll be having nightmares every night."

Poising my tin coffee cup as if to heave it at him, I suddenly remembered something. I'd been the first one up—and the outside door had been standing open. Eagerly I brought him to task.

"Begging your humble pardon, I hate to mention it, but I found the door standing wide open this morning. In your haste to show Tommy what a dope he has for a big brother, you left the door open for all the

bears and wolves in the forest to enter and eat us alive in our beds."

Bill's face showed disbelief. "You're screwy. I made sure the door was latched."

"Sorry—it was wide open when I got up this morning."

Bill turned to Tommy. "You didn't get up before we did this morning, did you, Tommy?"

Tommy vigorously denied this accusation.

Shrugging, Bill passed it off. "Guess we'll have to fix the door, too."

Man like, we let the breakfast dishes set. I persuaded Bill the business of repairing the roof could be put off for the time being.

The woods was teeming with animal life. We fixed a couple of rude traps and could hardly pull Tommy away from them. He wanted to stick close by and watch the snares in operation, but we lured him on. Finding a beautiful little cave, we were soon frolicking in the water sans bathing trunks. The water was soft, velvety. After a lot of splashing on the part of Tommy, we stretched out to dry.

"This is the life!" Bill stretched out luxuriantly. "Wonder what the gang's doing now?" he mused.

"Envyng you," I gave satisfactory reply.

Tommy popped out with: "I'm gonna tell Bobby and Jacky I went in swimming without any clothes at all. And I'm gonna tell Jimmy and Harold and Willis and Denny and. . ."

"Hey there," I interrupted. "Sounds like you're going to tell all the world about it."

Purring contentedly, he wriggled into a more comfortable position.

Sure enough, on our way back to the lodge we discovered a rabbit in one snare. Taking it out, we fixed the snare up again.

"Fried rabbit!" Bill smacked his lips together.

Tommy put in his claim. "I get the tail. I'm gonna give it to Mamma for a powder puff."

The rabbit cleaned and Tommy in possession of its tail, Bill and I proceeded with the job of repairing the roof.

"No, you're not getting up on the roof." I was firm with Tommy. "You can gather up the shingles on the ground and hand them to us."

BILL from his perch on the roof, yelled down, "Go in the bedroom and bring out the shingles I took in last night."

Dutifully, Tommy streaked into the house.

I climbed to the rooftop, started pounding with my makeshift hammer.

"They aren't there." Tommy stood on the ground looking up at us.

"Did you bring them out this morning?" Bill turned to me.

"I didn't touch 'em," I replied, then called down to Tommy, "are you sure you didn't do something with them?"

He shook his head.

"You didn't use them for kindling wood this morning and forget about it?" I asked Bill sarcastically.

He frowned. "Come to think of it, I don't recollect seeing them when I got up. . ."

Pursing my lips together, I admitted, "Neither do I." Then added impatiently, "Someone's crazy around here—but it isn't me." Bill let go with a shingle.

I looked down again for Tommy but he was gone.

"He's probably trying to play some sort of joke on us . . . let it go," Bill said soothingly.

"Why get upset?" I asked myself. "Bill's right—the kid's trying to get my goat." But I relieved my pent-up emotion by hammering fast and furiously.

"Louie . . . ! Louie . . . !" Tommy had reappeared below and was calling my name insistently.

I stopped hammering. "Yes?"

"The man says for you to stop shingling." Tommy was looking up, wide-eyed and innocent.

Usually I could tell when he indulged in fairy tales or pranks. He couldn't keep a certain tell-tale twinkle from his eye. But now his entire mien was serious.

"What man?" asked Bill.

"The man in the bedroom," returned Tommy.

"Oh—so now there's a man in the bedroom?" Bill leaned over the edge of the roof. "And what's the man doing in the bedroom?"

"Sleeping."

"Did you hear that?" Bill turned his head

toward me. "There's a man sleeping in our bedroom."

"Oh, he isn't in our bedroom," protested Tommy.

Bill's eyebrows raised. "No?"

"No . . . he's in the bedroom in the back."

"And just what were you doing in the back bedroom?" I asked rather harshly.

TOMMY looked somewhat hurt at the sharpness of my voice. "I was looking for the shingles. He's a very nice man. I showed him my rabbit's tail and he said he gave one just like it to his mother when he was a little boy . . . and she liked it very much." He looked up appealingly. "Do you think Mama will *really* like it?"

"Listen, young man," I said truculently. "No one's going to like *you* if you persist in making up tall tales like this man in the bedroom." I began hammering again.

Bill, realizing Tommy was getting my goat, grinned and called out: "What's the man's name, Tommy?"

"I didn't ask him—but I will," replied Tommy soberly. He turned to enter the lodge.

"Just a minute—I'll go along." Bill slid down the roof and made the short jump to the ground.

"I'll go along, too," I said casually and followed them through the lodge into the back bedroom.

It was empty.

Tommy looked about, surprised.

He was a good little actor, I thought, as he walked over to the dust-covered bed, then turned to face us.

"He *was* here . . . truly he was—cross my heart and hope to die." He went through the motions of making the cross.

"And he said for us to stop shingling," repeated Bill.

"Uh-huh. He said shingling this lodge was his job and no one else could do it." Tommy looked us squarely in the eyes. "You don't believe me, but that's what he told me. He said nobody else could shingle . . . he'd only have to tear the shingles off and do it over again." He drew a deep breath, then continued. "He said if I was a good boy and got you to stop hammering so he could go to sleep again, he'd let

me help him shingle some night." He added forlornly, "I guess he couldn't sleep."

I clamped my teeth together, but Bill burst out laughing. "Looks like we've got the makings of a writer in the family, eh, Louie? Tommy can write 'em and you can read 'em."

But I didn't think it at all funny.

"What'll we call your friend, Tommy?" Bill led the way back into the living room.

"He's The Shingler," replied Tommy matter-of-factly.

"That's good—or The Shingling Ghost," was Bill's suggestion.

I added sarcastically: "Or The Ghost Who Shingles At Night."

Gaily we set off on another fishing expedition. But secretly I was having qualms about nightfall.

TOMMY had never been an overly-imaginative child, I mused as I lay on my cot that night. What had made him concoct such a wild story.

Or was it?

Anyway I had taken the precaution of rearranging the cots. Turning slightly I could see Tommy, sleeping peacefully on his cot placed between mine and Bill's.

Bill's breathing was deep, interspersed by an occasional light snoring sound.

But I couldn't sleep.

Leaning over the edge of my cot, I fumbled for the flashlight I had carefully placed on the floor. Its beam on my watch indicated a quarter of twelve.

I lay waiting.

Waiting for what? I asked myself scornfully.

The night was chilly, but perspiration beaded my forehead. My ears strained for every sound.

Crickets chirping.

The rustle of the wind through the trees. An owl policing the deep woods.

My throat was parched.

I wished we were home. Back in the city with its flashing neon lights and the rumble of the elevated.

Something was wrong with this place with its eerie atmosphere. Nothing you could actually lay a finger on. But it was there nevertheless.

Unable to stand it any longer, I kicked the covers down to the foot of the cot, then stood. A tremor ran through my entire frame. Picking my way carefully past the other two cots, I made my way to the living room, leaving the door between the living room and bedroom ajar.

A faint glow came from the fireplace.

I had undressed in the living room and my clothes were hanging over the back of the chair where I had left them. I slipped into my pants, drew on a lumberjacket, then headed for the kitchen where I practically drained the tin bucket of well water we had brought in from the outside pump.

Why I did it I don't know, but I stood by the door of the back bedroom, listening. On a sudden impulse my hand reached out and turned the knob.

Only shadows.

Big shadows . . . small shadows . . . fat shadows . . . thin shadows.

But that was all.

Back in the living room I tested the outside door.

Satisfied, I stretched out in front of the fireplace, using Bill's jacket for a pillow. Drawing a deep breath, I closed my eyes and began counting . . . mumbling to myself. . . .

"One shingle . . . two shingles . . . three shingles. . . ."

One hundred fifty-four shingles and I was out.

But no sooner had I entered that limbo known as Slumberland than I was wide awake again, sitting bolt upright.

It had started.

Someone was up on that roof—shingling!

THERE was the rhythmic tap-tap at the hammer.

Then came a rending sound like a shingle being torn loose from the roof and ending with a dull thud as it landed on the ground.

What was that Tommy had said about his Shingling Ghost? Shingling this lodge was *his* job and nobody else could do it—he'd only have to tear the shingles off and do it over again!

And it sounded exactly like that was what the puckish fellow was up to now.

This was no job of the wind. No figment of the imagination.

Someone WAS up there—busily shingling the roof in the dead of night.

And to make matters worse—the *outside door was now standing wide open!*

Like a flash I was on my feet, armed only with a thick ugly stick of wood.

"Better get Bill," something whispered inside me.

Keeping a cautious eye on that open door, I stepped to the bedroom door, called softly. "Bill. . . ."

Then I froze as my glance extended beyond Bill's cot to the one in the center.

EMPTY!

Tommy's cot was empty!

Roughly I shook Bill by the shoulder.

Rolling over, he opened one eye and muttered: "Nightmares . . . Louie's having another nightmare. . . ."

This time I shook him so hard his teeth chattered.

"Bill—Tommy's missing . . . and the front door's open. . . ."

He was on his feet in an instant. "The back bedroom!"

Armed with the stick of wood in one hand, flashlight in the other, we raced for the back bedroom.

The tapping noise had stopped but now Bill, too, heard the sound of shingles being ripped from the roof then tossed to the ground.

Stopping dead still, he cocked his head to one side and listened, frowning.

"You're right!" he exclaimed. "There *is* someone on that roof."

The back bedroom revealed only Tommy's rabbit tail, laying on the foot of the bed as if dropped there hurriedly.

I didn't like it. "Outside," I said to Bill.

As we neared the door the hammering sound started up again.

Cautiously we crept out into the night.

The lodge was L-shaped and from where we stood, a shadowy figure was visible on the roof.

"Tommy!"

He was standing as if listening to someone—standing dangerously near the edge of the roof.

I started forward, but Bill placed a restraining arm in front of me. "Don't startle him," he hissed. "He might fall off."

I nodded silently and we padded forward on the soft cushiony grass.

Our eyes glued to that rooftop. The hammering continued. But it was not Tommy who wielded the hammer.

I blinked, screwed my eyes up tight then opened them wide.

Everything within me strained to see the other person on the roof. But there was no one.

The hammering stopped. Then came the rending noise.

Tommy took a step nearer the edge of the roof, stooped down. I held my breath. One more step and he would come hurtling from the rooftop to the ground.

He rose from his stooping position, turned, and let the shingle he had picked up fall to the ground. It landed within a few feet of Bill and me. Tommy said something, smiled.

"Good God," whispered Bill hoarsely. "What is it? Something's got to be up there. Tommy could never have climbed up there by himself."

He uttered my very thoughts. Tommy took a step back and I heaved an inward sigh of relief. Then suddenly his body jerked and he slid forward.

My heart almost stopped beating. It was as if an unseen hand had reached out and shoved Tommy.

EVERY nerve in my body tingled.

I heard Bill gasp in horror.

In that same split second we both rushed forward to try to receive that tiny body before it hit the ground. I braced myself, arms ready.

My lips moved in silent prayer. The roof was higher at this point. A fall from this height could result only in tragedy.

It seemed I stood there an eternity—then mercifully Tommy's lean young body landed squarely in my arms with such force that I fell back onto the soft springy grass.

Tommy began to cry. I didn't blame him. I felt like crying too. Bill rushed over to us, helped me to my feet. I was still clutching Tommy in my arms.

"Let's get out of here," Bill cried out.

Then began the barrage that was to haunt us all.

Shingles began flying from the roof

—all aimed straight for us. One hit me on the forehead and I felt a trickle of blood run down the side of my face.

A hammer came hurtling through the air, barely missing Tommy's head.

Shingles. . . . Nothing but flying shingles.

Bill cried out as one crashed against his skull.

"The car!" I thrust the keys at him. "Start the car!"

Catching the keys, Bill turned and sprinted towards the old jalopy parked a short distance from the lodge.

I followed but Tommy's weight slowed me down a bit.

The shingles kept coming. Now and then one found its target and stung like fire.

Bill had the jalopy tuned up, waiting.

Hastily, I dumped the sobbing boy into the seat. "Get her going," I yelled to Bill. Clinging to the side of the car, my feet planted firmly on the running board, I looked back to see the brick chimney shatter and crumple as though from a mighty blow.

"Faster," I urged Bill as a brick sped like lightning through the air, striking the rear of the car.

That mad shingling ghost was hurling everything in sight at us.

Fortunately, however, the distance we had now covered was sufficient so that this new barrage could do no damage.

I heaved a sigh of relief when the main highway came into sight.

IT WAS morning when we reached the city. The hands on the big clock on the tower pointed to eight-thirty.

My fright was now gone; in its place, a cold anger.

"Turn here," I instructed Bill tersely. "I want to stop off at the office."

"Yeah," Bill replied. "I'd like to say a thing or two to that boss of yours."

An auto horn beeped.

Tommy stirred, sat up suddenly.

"It's all right," I reassured him and wiped his tear-stained face with my handkerchief. "We'll soon be home."

Mr. Cabot was in his office already dictating to his secretary. He jumped up when we barged in, dismissed the secretary.

"What happened, boys? What are you doing back so soon?"

"Mr. Cabot, *you* know what happened. But why did you send *us* there?"

Mr. Cabot mopped his forehead, poured a glass of water from a carafe on his desk and gulped it down.

"You're all right?" he asked anxiously.

"We're all right *now*—but Tommy came pretty close to being killed."

Anxiety creased Mr. Cabot's features. "Tell me what happened."

Briefly I sketched the previous night's adventures.

He kept nodding from time to time. When I finished he turned to Tommy, started asking questions.

Tommy, realizing the danger was over, began to enjoy his position in the spotlight. Yes, he *had* actually seen an old man. The man had been asleep in the back bedroom the first time Tommy had seen him. He said he liked Tommy and wished Tommy would stay at the lodge to keep him company.

Then the next night the old man had come into our bedroom, wakened Tommy and told him he could help shingle the roof.

Tommy hadn't been at all afraid. The old man had been so very nice. Everybody had a job, explained the old man. His particular task was to shingle the lodge roof. So every night after midnight he nailed down so many shingles—tore loose so many for work the next night.

It was beginning to be rather lonesome up there night after night all by himself. Tommy was such a nice little boy.

And he had thought out a way so that Tommy could remain there with him. Such a simple, easy way.

Then he had pushed Tommy off the roof.

Mr. Cabot stopped his pacing. Perspiration stood out on his forehead. He asked Tommy one more question.

"Did the old man tell you his name?"

Without hesitation Tommy replied: "Sylvester Whiteneck."

All color drained from Mr. Cabot's face and he sagged back against the desk for support.

"Boys," he said, "Sylvester Whiteneck was my wife's grandfather . . . forty-five years ago while shingling the roof of the lodge Sylvester Whiteneck fell from that roof—dead.