

Excerpt from Theawatoosa, 1957

Then Kenny asked, “Brother Pritchard, who is Theawatoosa?”

We should have expected it by then, but were nonetheless uneasy when a dark scowl came over his face.

“Oh Lord, spare these young men from the demons of this earth. Kenny, have you encountered this demonic spirit?” He grabbed Kenny by both his shoulders.

“Nosir, Wendell and I just heard his name and we’re wondering who he is.”

“Thank you, Lord!” Brother Pritchard addressed his comment to the ceiling. He still held Kenny with both hands. He took one hand off long enough to pull me about two feet closer.

He took a deep breath and leaned toward us. “Theawatoosa is a spawn of the devil, a spawn of the devil! Do you know what that means?”

“Nosir.” We weren’t even sure what spawn meant, but we looked it up later and found it meant offspring, children, especially a whole brood of them.

“When God created the heavens and the earth and saw that it was good, Satan looked down at the Lord’s beautiful creation, and he was jealous and decided to create something of his own. He hadn’t no idea how to make a whole universe, so he made creatures that slouch about in God’s creation. They’re misshaped and horrible in all kind of ways. Nothing right or good comes from Satan. You know that. They’ve lived on since the creation of the world, some 6000 years now, and they hide from God’s good creatures. Theawatoosa is one of them, and some people say he hides down there.”

He swept his left arm out and pointed toward Grimsley’s farm and the swamp.

“Don’t you boys never go down there alone. Shun the very appearance of evil. Clothe yourselves in righteousness and gird yourselves with the sword of the Spirit. Ephesians, Chapter 6”

“Have you ever seen him?” we asked almost in unison.

“No, I haven’t. He mayn’t live down there, but then, he just might. I don’t doubt that his kind are all around us. We tend to run into evil when we least expect it.”

We got several more admonitions to avoid evil and attend church regularly. We attended church very regularly since our parents gave us no choice, and we usually steered away from evil except when it looked too nice. We certainly weren’t going to hang out with a deformed child of the Devil. No need to worry, Brother Pritchard.