

*(Taken from the middle of the chapter)*

Now many paper wasps, that year, had built their nests in the great willows arching over the waterway. Some of those nests were nearly as large as a lunch plate. Each nest was filled with eggs, larvae and baby wasps. High up in the foliage those nests looked black, for they were shielded with a solid covering of the dark brown-winged savages.

It was big brother Raymond who mustered the first daring to disturb them. He reached to the bottom of the stream, and brought up a handful of mud and sand. Then, he threw it high into their domain. When it peppered their headquarters, did they get mad! Dozens of storm troopers dropped off that nest and down at us ...and were they scrappers!

The war game was on. When they would zoom in, we would disappear under the water. So, the air was buzzing with them with their formidable stingers cocked. We were afraid to come up and join the fray, but when you run out of air, ya gotta come up. Up we came a gasping for a fresh breath. We cut loose whoopin' and a hollerin' somethin' fierce, we splashed, and we batted at them. We gasped again, and down we went. It was first class excitement. I think we sustained a sting or two, and we tried to be brave.

One detail that did put a crimp in our fun right away was little Wandnetta. She was too small to wade, and she had to stay in the boat that floated close by. Well, the whole scene terrified little sister, and she set to screaming first-degree murder. We four were carried away in our frolic, and it was just too much fun to quit the game. But she...? She wailed on and on in her torment.

Now, that is what mothers are for. However, this time, Dear Momma was far away from her baby; she was down at the house. But the noise of our uproar carried along the water downstream, up the mound upon which our home sat, and right into Mother's sharp ears. Her heart leapt to her mouth—she believed one of her children was drowning. She dropped what she was doing. In a fright, she streaked down the hill, through the open gate and across the cow lot. Scuttling through a fence and up along the field she raced, following the screams. Every second was critical, she believed.

Our first awareness of Mother's concern was when she broke through the trees at the river's edge in sight of us. She was pitifully terrified, and when she saw our foolishness, was she upset! She adamantly charged us, "Don't NEVER do *that* again"! -our thoughtlessness and the bloody screamin', that is. The screamin' had nearly scared her spitless.

We don't believe Wandnetta was in very bad shape, but Mother commanded that she be delivered to her side immediately. (Poor Wandnetta, she has done so well over the years considering the trauma to which the baby of a family is commonly subject.)

*And the story continues...*