

Hooty hollered to me an' says, "Buck, les' you an' me run over to where the close is. Somebody might swipe them while we was swimmin' across the pond."

"I'm willin', says I, "cause we can get to them close quicker by hoofin' it."

"Needn't mind," says Kirky, "I can see them close from here." Then he says, "Le's swim her together, 'taint more than eight feet in the middle anyhow."

"Eight feet," screamed Hooty.

"'Taint much," says I, "I've seen holes twice as deep. I'd swim this one only fer cramps."

"I would too," says Hooty.

But I knew how much of a liar Hooty was.

"I tell you Kirky, we'll let you swim the middle, it'll be shorter for you, an' me an' Buck'll take the sides. You'll have the shortest swim."

"It's a bet," called Kirky, "only look out fer cramps."

He didn't beat us much, fer we had to swim further than he did. He jest finished dressin' when we pulled up.

"Hooty beat you," he yelled to me.

I knew Hooty swum with one foot on the bottom, 'cause he was afear'd to go in over his head, so I yelled back, "No you don't. He swum with one foot on the bottom."

Kirky said I swum the same way, an' I come pretty near tellin' him he was another. Finally he says,

"Youse kids stay in while I go up by the road and get some Indian tobaccor. When I come back I'll learn you how to swim." Maybe you think Hooty didn't feel cheap when he said that.

When he come back he said he'd come when he got his chew eat up. All of a sudden we heard a hoot owl holler twice. That meant danger, and when twice, it meant fer Kirky. Hooty, with them cross eyes of his, had scented trouble. I looked on the top of the hill and there come Kirkenbury's rig. I was behind Kirky, who was just pullin' off his shirt, but when he heard the signal he turned sideways and that shirt came back on in a hurry. When the buggy got about fifty yards away, Kirk's mother got out while another woman held the lines. His mother crawled through the fence and come a sneakin' up behind Kirky. I was surely scared. I thought Kirky was takin' his last look at the swimmin' hole. He stuck