

Tom and Chip

By: Vance M.

Tom did everything outdoors, he caught snakes, bugs, and other stuff including fish, salamanders, and mice - he also swam in the creek. Being raised in the Appalachian Mountains, Tom likes to eat the spicy wild onion leaves that surround his favorite climbing tree – the low branched white pine. Although, he doesn't like the sticky sap that gets on him. After all of that climbing, he loves to drink from the cold fresh spring to wash down the flavor of the onion and wash away some of the sap.

On Tom's way to the cold refreshing creek he decides to look for the deer antlers since it's the beginning of spring. Today was Tom's lucky day! He found a five pointed antler hanging on a buckeye tree sapling and then made it to the creek to swim. Lucky for Tom, no one was there – he forgot his swimming trunks! He realized the mistake, but decided to swim butt naked, after all, it was only him and the woods.

When Tom finished swimming, as he was walking, Tom heard an animal and decided to investigate the yelping. When Tom looked around a huge red oak trunk, he saw a puppy with its back left leg stuck in a hunting trap. It appeared to be stray skinny black lab. Tom held the puppy still then released a lever to let him out of the hunting trap then he held the deer antler in front. As the puppy was chewing on the deer antler, Tom gently picked up the lab and wrapped a cloth around its bloodied leg. Since Tom was five years old, he had always wanted a black lab, because they are so playful. As an only child, he dreamt of a playmate.

He was not worried about this parents saying no. His parents had always wanted for Tom to have a dog to occupy Tom's time since they were so busy working in the vegetable beds for the farmers market and keeping up with the house chores.

On Tom's way home he saw a tree that had a name carved in it. "Chip." Tom said to the pup, "That's what I'll name you!" pausing and then cheering, "Chip!" Limping, Chip walked beside Tom on the way home.

Suddenly Chip started barking. Tom heard chainsaws and what he thought was a tree falling. He knew something was wrong, so Tom started walking faster and luring Chip with the deer antler so that he would pick up his pace. Four minutes later, they arrived to their home, the cabin. Tom's dad was already loading his gun because he had heard chainsaws in the distance - so Tom, Pa, and Chip went to investigate. They feared that their large trees in the woods were being cut down without permission, because it had happened before, several years ago.

Pa realized what was going on when Chip started barking at the illegal tree loggers. When they got there, Tom's dad yelled "Get out of here!" and shot his gun up in the air. Chip started barking and growling. The loggers dropped their chainsaws by the low branched white pine, which was getting ready to be cut down. The gruff looking men started running to their old pickup trucks. Tom was grateful they had caught them before his prized pine was demolished.

The next day, the tree loggers came to the cabin and apologized. They told Tom's family they were selling firewood for money because they didn't have any money to get a permit for logging and had been out of work for a long time. They needed to make money any way they could to help feed their family. They apologized several times. Pa and Ma forgave them and offered them a generous basket of vegetables and food for their family. Tom carefully watched Pa and Ma, and realized that it's good to forgive, so he forgave them too.

When they left, Tom got to tell his mom about finding Chip and how he got his name. Mom told him that was his grandfather's name and that he had probably carved that in the tree when he was young, since he had lived there and roamed the woods as a child, just like Tom.