

In the hands of the woman who was spinning the thread broke, and the song died in the white throat of the girl who stood in the doorway. For a moment the two gazed with widening eyes into the green September world without the cabin; then the woman sprang to her feet, tore from the wall a horn, and, running to the door, wound it lustily. The echoes from the hills had not died when a man and a boy, the one bearing a musket, the other an axe, burst from the shadow of the forest, and at a run crossed the greensward and the field of maize between them and the women. The child let fall her pine cones and pebbles, and fled to her mother, to cling to her skirts, and look with brown, frightened eyes for the wonder that should follow the winding of the horn. Only twice could she remember that clear summons for her father: once when it was winter and snow was on the ground, and a great wolf, gaunt and bold, had fallen upon their sheep; and once when a drunken trader from Germanna, with a Pamunkey who had tasted of the trader's rum, had not waited for an invitation before entering the cabin. It was not winter now, and there was no sign of the red-faced trader or of the dreadful, capering Indian. There was only a sound in the air, a strange noise coming to them from the pass between the hills over which rose the sun.

The man with the musket sent his voice before him as he approached the group upon the doorstep: "Alce, woman! What's amiss? I see naught wrong!"

His wife stepped forward to meet him. "There's naught to see, William. It's to hear. There was a noise. Molly and I heard it, and then we lost it. There it is again!"