

slipped into the kitchen and stood behind the settle, for I was surer than ever he was a rascal since I'd seen him nearer. He was a tall man, dreadful shabby in an old coat and boots, a ragged hat over his eyes, and a great beard hiding the lower part of his face. He had a little bundle and a big stick in his hands, and limped as if foot-sore or lame.

"I was much afraid; but those were times that made heroes of men, and taught women to be brave for love of home and country. So I kept steady, with my eye on the window, and my finger on the trigger of the old gun, that had n't been fired for years. Presently the man looked in, and I saw what a strange roll his great eyes had, for he was thin-faced and looked half-starved. If mother had been there, she'd have called him in and fed him well, but I dared not, and when he tried the window I aimed, but did not fire; for finding the button down he went away, and I dropped on the settle, shaking like a leaf. All was still, and in a minute I plucked up courage to go to look out a bit; but just as I reached the middle of the kitchen, the buttery door opened, and there stood the robber, with a carving knife in one hand and my best loaf of spice bread in the other. He said something, and made a rush at me; but I pulled the trigger, saw a flash, felt a blow, and fell somewhere, thinking, 'Now I'm dead!'"

Here grandma paused for breath, having spoken rapidly and acted out the scene dramatically, to the intense delight of the children, who sat like images of interest, staring at her with round eyes.