

Now Frankie was a sturdy little fellow—round-headed and bent-browed—and he had learned that he could domineer over his milder brother by flying into a childish passion whenever he was crossed. He struck at Don, at once; but Don, enraged by the loss of his two best crackers, closed with him; and in a wild interchange of buffets, Frankie took a blow on the face that sent him to the floor howling with a bleeding nose.

Don, stiff and white with fright, was still standing in the door of the closet, looking as guilty as Cain, with Frankie yelling on the carpet at his feet, when their father—home for the holiday—flung angrily into the room. He took in the situation with one furious glance; and then, without waiting for any explanation, seized Don by the collar and began cuffing him with a brutally hard hand.

No doubt he did not know how heavily he struck the boy, for he had never beaten any of his children before—being able to awe them with the mere threat of his voice—and Don was too stunned to cry out. As soon as he was released, he staggered back against the wall, his head ringing, the breath all out of his body, blinded with tears. His father, taking Frankie up, carried him, still bawling, out of the room.

It was Don's first experience of these passionate griefs of childhood—griefs that rend the body with terrible convulsions, griefs that seem to rend the very soul of the child with the pain of an injustice from which there is no appeal. It was his first experience of them, and he threw himself on the floor of the