



## Chapter Three – by Kay Hively

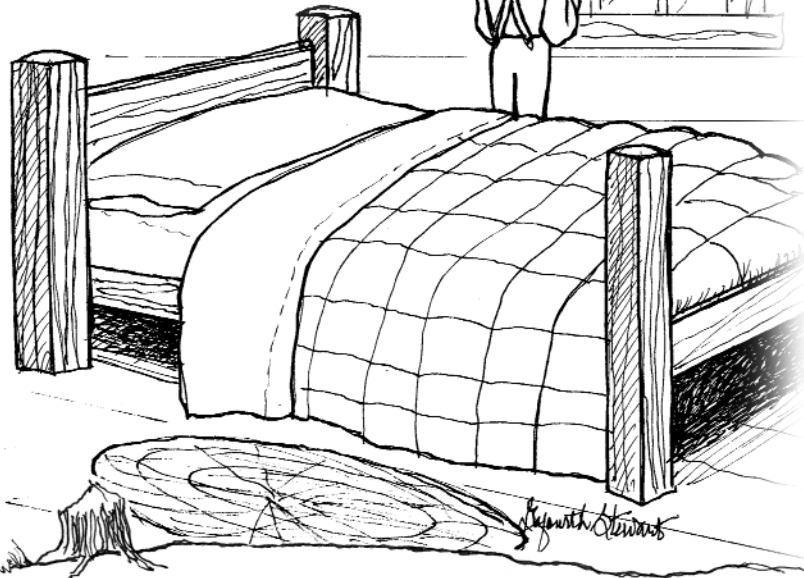
After supper, John Robert hurried outside and searched for the big dog that had come to the water trough that afternoon. Staying within sight of the cabin, he looked in the little barn, in the meadow, and in the wood lot. But as the sun set and darkness began to fall, the disappointed boy gave up his search.

Mrs. Herman was waiting for John Robert when he returned to the cabin. Spread out on the kitchen table was a reading book. Even though John Robert wanted to be a farmer like his dad, he looked forward to the schooling his mother gave him each night. For two years he had been studying with his mother as his teacher. His reading was very good, and his arithmetic was getting better and better.

Reading was his favorite thing to do after dark. But it was difficult to find books on the frontier in Tennessee. When the family moved there from Georgia, Mrs. Herman had brought a few books. But they had all been read three or four times.

Late last fall, Mr. Herman made a trip to a settlement upriver to get supplies. Then, on Christmas morning, John Robert and his mother found four books under the little Christmas tree. For the rest of the winter, John Robert and his

*Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Mo. Produced by the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2007.*



mother read the new books. They even read them out loud to Mr. Herman. Even though John Robert's father could not read, he loved having someone read to him.

After reading time, John Robert made one more trip outside, hoping to find the big black dog. Only the sound of the animals in the barn broke the silence of the night. A big round moon filled the countryside with a soft glowing light. John Robert liked the full moon. He thought the cabin and the barn, and even the meadow and the woods, were beautiful in the moonlight.

As he walked back to the cabin, John Robert could feel a cool breeze coming from the north. After the long hot day, the breeze felt good. Maybe autumn was finally on its way.

Autumn did come to Tennessee that night, and John Robert awoke to find a quilt on his bed. In the night, when it turned cold, Mrs. Herman had covered her son's bed with the quilt she had just made. With the bed nice and warm, John Robert wanted to turn over and go back to sleep, but then he remembered the big black dog. Quickly he bounced out of bed and pulled on his britches and shirt.

Without stopping in the kitchen, he raced outside. And, to his great surprise, the big black dog was sound asleep by the water trough. As John Robert approached the dog, one of its big dark eyes opened to greet the excited young boy.

## Things to Think About and Do

- A. Mr. Herman could not read. Do you know anyone who does not read? Do you know anyone who can read another language, but not English? If you could read a story or book to someone who does not read, what book or story would you choose? Why?
- B. John Robert liked the full moon. What is a full moon? Can you name all the moons? Draw a picture of the four moons. What is a blue moon?
- C. John Robert doesn't have many things available to him to read. Using your newspaper, pick out four stories you think a 10-year-old boy would find interesting. Now pick four stories you think his mother would want to read. Are they different or the same? Why?

Next Week: Chapter Four – Chinking the barn