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SYNOPSIS

The story starts with a description of the incident when Chick Mallison, a young boy, falls into the ice creek and Lucas offers him the hospitality of his home and his food. Chick offers Lucas money for the "service", but Lucas refuses the payment as an insult to his prestige as a man of social position.

The time continues. Lucas is accused of having murdered a white man, Vinson Gowrie. The white people shout that they have to lynch Lucas. Lucas challenged Chick Mallison throughout his life to set aside his conventional view of what a black is and to treat him as a man instead.

Later, Chick is "commissioned" by Lucas to go to the graveyard and prove that Lucas could not commit the murder. This task is given to a sixteen-year-old. The mission is undertaken in the night by Mallison, the old lady, and Chick's black companion, Aleck Sander. This attempt to discover the facts are not because of Lucas's danger of being lynched is a "racial outrage", but because it is a "human shame". This adventure has its own complications, and it adds to the shame of the white - since Gowrie is murdered not by a black man, but by his brother.